

SCENE ONE

(An empty stage. There is a podium and a projector screen emblazoned with the logo "WELLSTONE PROJECT." A spotlight comes up on STEPHEN, who stands at the podium, dressed in formal attire. He carries a drink in his hand.)

STEPHEN

Thank you all for being here tonight – for your support – for honoring my brother’s life and legacy. *(as HE speaks, the screen behind him flashes a portrait of Paul Wellstone)* It would mean the world to them – Paul, and Sheila *(the screen flashes a photo of Paul and Sheila together)* – to see you all here tonight. *(he sips his drink liberally and shakes himself out)* I just want to apologize in advance – I never had my brother’s knack for public speaking. *(HE chuckles 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. *(without looking backward, the screen raises out of view, and the set changes to the beach seen in the photo, complete with a sunbathing SHEILA, reclining on a beach chair, reading a book)* The beaches our parents took us to as kids... I haven’t set foot here in years, but I can still see it all like it was yesterday. *(HE mimes to various parts of the set)* The stand where they used to sell popsicles on hot days. *(another)* And over there, see? That’s where I built the biggest sandcastle you’d ever seen... Until Paul stepped in it. And... *(he hesitates a moment, as a teenage PAUL jogs in, carrying a football – he tosses it offstage upon noticing SHEILA)* Paul. Look at us. Not a care in the world. God, what I wouldn’t give...

1. In Memory

STEPHEN

OUR PARENTS TOOK US TO THESE SHORES
BEEN HERE A THOUSAND TIMES BEFORE
AND IT’S MESMERIZING
A SUMMER BREEZE FLOWS THROUGH THE AIR
MY FACE IS FRIED, AND I DON’T CARE
‘CAUSE I’M REALIZING

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN WE WERE BOTH SO CAREFREE
HOW COULD I LET IT PASS ME BY?
TO BE SO YOUNG, AND WE WERE BOTH JUST BARELY
BIG ENOUGH TO SEE THE SKY

THERE’S A PLACE I KNOW WHERE WE CAN BOTH BE FREE
WHERE THE SKY IS CLEAR AND YOU CAN TASTE THE SEA
IF YOU WANT TO FIND IT, THEN JUST FOLLOW ME
I’LL BE THERE
SAFE WITH YOU IN MEMORY

(PAUL nervously approaches SHEILA)

PAUL

H-hey there.

STEPHEN

Pay attention, you're about to witness history –

SHEILA

Hello, and you are?

PAUL

(run together) I'm Paul what's your name?

SHEILA

Come again?

PAUL

(clearing his throat) I'm Paul, Paul Wellstone. *(he extends his hand stiffly)* What's your name?

SHEILA

(taking his hand, amused) Sheila Ison. You're Stephen's little brother, aren't you?

PAUL

(excitedly) Yeah! *(then, a weak attempt at bravado)* I mean... yeah. *(beat)* So, uh, what are you reading?

SHEILA

Evelyn Reed. "The Myth of Women's Inferiority." Ever hear of it?

PAUL

Oh, yeah! I mean, no. I'm not very well-acquainted with feminist theory, to be honest.

SHEILA

That's too bad. Men could learn a lot from women. *(SHE lays out a towel next to her. PAUL looks blankly)*
Well?

PAUL

Oh, right. *(he scrambles to sit down)* So, do you live around here, or – ?

SHEILA

Just visiting for the summer. I go to school in Washington.

PAUL

No kidding? Same here. How much longer are you in for?

SHEILA

I'll be a senior next year.

PAUL

Me too. Any plans for the future?

SHEILA

As far as college, or...?

PAUL

Yeah. Or... whatever.

SHEILA

Hm... You know, I haven't really thought about it yet.

PAUL

Yeah, totally. One step at a time, right?

SHEILA

What about you? Any big dreams on the horizon?

PAUL

Not really. *(beat)* I mean... besides being president someday.

SHEILA

President of what?

PAUL

The United States?

SHEILA

Setting your sights a little high there, don't you think?

PAUL

Maybe so. But why not? Anyone can be president.

SHEILA

Well, you've just got it all figured out, don't you?

PAUL

Most of it. I'm still missing one piece of the puzzle.

SHEILA

You'll have to let me know when you find it.

(she gets up and exits, leaving PAUL seated on the towel)

PAUL

I think I already have. *(HE picks up her towel and exits after her)*

STEPHEN

It was hard to see coming at first, but once it was Paul and Sheila, there was no denying it – they were inseparable. Different schools, different states, none of it mattered. The big day was less a question of “if” than “when.”

(as STEPHEN sings, the beach setting transforms into a wedding scene, with PAUL and STEPHEN both donning traditional yarmulkes, along with a RABBI officiating and various wedding guests)

LIKE SUMMER TURNING INTO FALL
SO TOO DID SHEILA TURN TO PAUL
THEIR EMOTIONS CARRIED
THOSE SUMMER DAYS OUT INTO YEARS
FILLED BY THEIR LAUGHTER, LOVE AND TEARS
AND THEY'D SOON BE MARRIED

THE WEDDING DAY ARRIVED LIKE ANY OTHER
WE HAD BEEN WAITING FOR A WHILE
I STOOD UP PROUD BESIDE MY LITTLE BROTHER
SHEILA WALKING DOWN THE AISLE

(SHEILA enters in a wedding dress. PAUL takes her by the hand as she approaches)

PAUL

THERE'S A PLACE I KNOW WHERE WE CAN BOTH BE FREE
WHERE THE SKY IS CLEAR AND YOU CAN TASTE THE SEA
WE CAN GO AND FIND IT, GIVE YOUR ALL TO ME
I'LL BE THERE
BY YOUR SIDE IS WHERE I'LL BE

(PAUL leans in and kisses SHEILA as the RABBI sets down a glass and lays a sheet over it. PAUL lifts his foot, but hesitates – SHEILA lifts her foot as well, and the two stomp the glass together, leading to a round of "Mazeltov!" from those in attendance, who disperse to mingle afterward. PAUL and STEPHEN step into their own conversation)

STEPHEN

Nice one, Paul. *(he pulls PAUL in and administers a noogie)* Now how long before Sheila realizes she's stuck with a total egghead for a husband?

PAUL

(he shoves STEPHEN off, playfully) Hey now, this "egghead" still has some fight left in him.

STEPHEN

Wouldn't expect any less from my little bro. *(beat)* Still can't believe you beat me to the altar.

PAUL

Don't worry, she's out there somewhere, Stephen. It's always when you least expect it.

STEPHEN

(chuckles) Ever the optimist. *(he swipes a drink from a passerby and takes a gulp)*

PAUL

You might wanna take it easy, there.

STEPHEN

Come on, I'm just getting in the *spirit* of it.

PAUL

Just try and keep it under control, alright?

STEPHEN

You don't need to worry about me. *(he takes another gulp of the drink)*

(SHEILA approaches PAUL)

SHEILA

Paul, they're about to play our song. *(to STEPHEN)* Do you mind if I borrow my husband for one dance?

STEPHEN

Sure thing. *(to PAUL)* It's your night, Paul – just try and enjoy yourself. I'll be fine. *(beat)* I promise. *(SHEILA and an uneasy PAUL exit, leaving STEPHEN to nurse his drink. He returns to narrating)* Of course I was happy for him. How could I not be? Still, it's hard living in your younger brother's shadow. Paul was living the life I never had. All I could do is watch from the front row.

THE TIME GOES BY
LIKE THE WAVES RECEDING
MOMENTS FLEETING
SO WHERE DO I
FIT INTO PAUL'S PICTURE-PERFECT LIFE
WITH A FAMILY, JOB AND PICTURE-PERFECT WIFE?
AM I WRONG HERE?
DO I BELONG HERE?

(the party winds down around STEPHEN, who's left alone, stage bare. He recovers a chair from the party and sits in it, looking rather pathetic. PAUL and SHEILA re-enter with a doctor)

SHEILA

How did you know to call us?

DOCTOR

He just showed up in the middle of the night. Handed over an ID and a list of emergency contacts. You two were the first ones on it.

SHEILA

Has he said anything to you?

DOCTOR

Not a word. We took him to his room and he's been quiet as a mouse ever since. Has anything like this ever happened before?

(the DOCTOR looks to SHEILA, who then looks to PAUL. Without taking his eyes off STEPHEN, he nods slowly. SHEILA then takes the DOCTOR aside)

SHEILA

Do you have any idea what might be... *(she tries fishing for a different word)* Wrong with him?

DOCTOR

We think he might be in the middle of some kind of nervous breakdown. It's hard to figure out what's causing it. There's still so much about the mind we don't know.

SHEILA

I wish there was something we could do.

DOCTOR

What's your relation to Stephen?

SHEILA

In-laws. Paul. They're brothers.

(PAUL approaches STEPHEN)

PAUL

Stephen. It's Paul. *(STEPHEN glances over, but still says nothing)* I'm going to put my hand on you. Is that okay? *(after a moment's hesitation, PAUL rests his hand on STEPHEN's shoulder. STEPHEN's face flinches, but he does not move)* I know you probably don't feel like talking. I wish I knew what to say to you to snap you out of this... I have no idea what you're even thinking right now. I just want you to know that I'm here for you. Anytime you need me. Okay? *(STEPHEN turns away, a moment of resignation)* Let's go, Sheila.

SHEILA

Paul?

PAUL

We've done all we can here. Doctor, please keep us posted.

DOCTOR

Of course.

(the DOCTOR corrals PAUL and SHEILA out of the room – as they exit, STEPHEN turns back towards PAUL, but goes unnoticed by PAUL)

STEPHEN

OSEH SHALOM BIMROMAV *(“He who makes peace in his high places”)*

HU YA'ASEH SHALOM ALEINU *(“He shall make peace upon us”)*

V'AL KOL YISRAEL *(“And upon all of Israel”)*

V'IMRU AMEN... *(“And say Amen”)*

(blackout)

SCENE TWO

(JESSE enters into spotlight, speaking at a rally)

JESSE

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.

(JESSE exits as the lights come up and we are now in the living room of the WELLSTONE residence. SHEILA is watching TV on the sofa, nursing her morning coffee)

NEWSCASTER

(heard from the TV) That was the Reverend Jesse Jackson in Chicago today, making a sermon-esque statement to supporters of Operation Breadbasket, one of Dr. Martin Luther King's pet projects before his untimely death just last year. Reverend Jackson was...

(PAUL enters, dressed to the nines. SHEILA mutes the TV)

PAUL

How do I look?

SHEILA

Like a professor.

PAUL

I hope that's supposed to be a compliment.

SHEILA

You're the sharpest-dressed professor this side of the Mississippi.

PAUL

That's better. How're the kids?

SHEILA

Mark and David just got on the bus to school. Marcia's fine, she's been quiet all morning. I don't know who she gets that from.

PAUL

Just wait until her first word, then she'll never stop. *(HE looks at the TV)* Who's this?

SHEILA

Jesse Jackson, the Reverend.

PAUL

Oh right, I've heard of him. They say he's supposed to be the next Martin Luther King.

SHEILA

Would *you* say that?

PAUL

I don't know. But someone has to pick up the pieces Dr. King left behind. *(beat)* Are you sure you're okay with all this?

SHEILA

What do you mean?

PAUL

Moving here, to Minnesota. I know it's not the coast –

SHEILA

We've been over this, Paul. I don't care where I am, as long as it's with you. *(beat)* Could have done with a little less snow, though.

PAUL

At least it's only what, nine months out of the year?

SHEILA

Yeah, inbetween three months of the hottest summers you've ever seen.

PAUL

It's not the heat, it's the humidity, don'tchaknow.

SHEILA

See? You're fitting in already. *(HE moves over and they kiss, then)* You'd better get going, Professor.

PAUL

(checking his watch) Oh dear, you're right. Wouldn't want to be late for the first day of school. I'll see you later, honey. *(he moves to exit, then)* Oh, by the way, if Stephen does call –

SHEILA

I'll let you know.

(PAUL exits, and the lights fade on the living room scene – STEPHEN enters in his own spotlight)

STEPHEN

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.

(STEPHEN exits, and his spotlight goes out, leading into our next scene...)

SCENE THREE

(Lights up on a nearly empty classroom. ROGER, a young student, is sitting near the front of the room, reviewing papers in a folder. PAUL enters, flustered)

PAUL

Oh, I didn't think anyone would be here already. I'm not late, am I?

ROGER

Just in time. *(he gets up to shake PAUL's hand)* Professor Wellstone?

PAUL

Yes, and you are?

ROGER

Roger Warren. *(the two shake)* I'll be your T.A. this semester.

PAUL

Excellent, I'll need all the help I can get. First day, you know.

ROGER

Well, you've sure got your work cut out for you, I can tell you that.

PAUL

Why's that?

ROGER

Let's just say that no one is chomping at the bit to talk politics right now, much less freshmen. I'm just saying, don't be surprised if you're up against a tough crowd.

(a group of STUDENTS – ABBY, JAMIE, MATT and REN – file into the classroom disinterestedly and take their seats at random, PAUL greeting them each individually as they enter)

PAUL

(after everyone finds their seats) Hello there, everyone. Welcome to Introduction of Political Science. I hope everyone made it to the right place, or else I'm in the wrong one! *(HE chuckles, though no one else does)* 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. *(ROGER obliges with a curt wave to the room)* Now, I know most classes start by reviewing the syllabus, but today I just want to get a feel for where everyone here is at. *(HE moves over to the chalkboard and writes out the word "POLITICIAN")* When you see this word, what's the first thing that comes to mind? *(a beat)* Come now, don't be shy.

ABBY

"Phony?"

PAUL

(he writes the word "PHONY" underneath "POLITICIAN") Good, any others?

REN

“Broken promises.”

JAMIE

“Corrupt.”

MATT

“Big money.”

PAUL

(HE writes the various words out) Good. This all paints a pretty clear picture, and to be honest, I can't blame any of you. But there's one I had in mind specifically. Anyone want to take a stab at it? *(a beat, and then)*

ROGER

“Tool.”

PAUL

“Tool.” *(he writes the word “TOOL” underneath, and circles and underlines it)* Excellent. Above all these other words, even if they are usually true, politicians are tools. Tools for us to use. Politicians are only as strong as the people who elect them. And when you've got a broken tool, you can either fix it – or replace it.

ABBY

How are we supposed to do that?

PAUL

Well, vote, obviously – but that's only the beginning. Before I came here, I spent a lot of time in the South – I saw the Civil Rights Movement firsthand, seen many of my beaten down or worse. But I've also seen how drastically 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 peoples' 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 streetlamp... Or something more personal, if you feel comfortable enough to share it. And then, come Wednesday, we'll talk about it, and go from there.

REN

Go from where?

PAUL

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.

ROGER

No one's “taken this county by storm” since Jesse James.

PAUL

Well, this town has yet to meet Paul Wellstone.

2. Keep the Dream Alive

I WON'T PRETEND THE WORLD IS PERFECT
I WON'T PRETEND IT'S EVEN FAIR
IT'S NOT THE WAY I WOULD PREFER IT
THAT DOESN'T MEAN WE SHOULDN'T CARE

'CAUSE YOU CAN CHANGE IT IF YOU WANT TO
THE QUESTION ISN'T IF, BUT HOW
THE POWER LIVES INSIDE ALL OF YOU
THE TIME TO STAKE YOUR CLAIM IS NOW

SO DON'T GIVE UP, DON'T GIVE IN
DON'T LET CYNICISM WIN
YOU'VE GOT A CHANCE TO MAKE A CHANGE
TO TAKE THE WORLD AND REARRANGE
ALL OF ITS PIECES
NOW HERE'S MY THESIS

WE HAVE GOT TO TRY
TO KEEP THE DREAM ALIVE
IT'S JUST ONE MORE WAY TO MAKE A BETTER DAY
PEOPLE LIVE AND DIE
BUT THEIR IDEAS SURVIVE
SO KEEP THE DREAM ALIVE
KEEP THE DREAM ALIVE

STUDENTS

WE'LL KEEP THE DREAM ALIVE, WE WILL
WE'LL KEEP THE DREAM ALIVE
WE'LL KEEP THE DREAM ALIVE, WE WILL
WE'LL KEEP THE DREAM ALIVE

(the classroom set dissolves, and STEPHEN steps out to narrate in spotlight)

STEPHEN

And so, Paul set out to work, enflaming the passions of every student who walked through his door, as he'd continue to do throughout his time at Carleton. His work became the stuff of legend, from joining in on the meatpacker's strike of '85, or his work with Organizing for a Better Rice County, a pet project of his and Sheila's. Not everyone approved of Paul's subversive teaching methods, of course, but what good is an activist who doesn't step on a few toes now and then?

(the classroom set has been converted into the office of Dean BRUCE MORGAN, sitting at his desk. PAUL enters)

PAUL

You asked to see me?

MORGAN

I did. (*PAUL motions to take a seat*) Don't worry, this will only take a minute.

PAUL

Am I in trouble?

MORGAN

That depends. You've been a professor for a few years now, haven't you?

PAUL

It'll be eight years, starting this semester.

MORGAN

Right, it seems like you've gotten to know your way around the campus. And your students *love* you, I've never seen a professor with such strong feedback.

PAUL

So what seems to be the problem?

MORGAN

Problem is, you've been teaching them a little too well. I've up been up to my ears in complaints ever since you set foot here. Faculty, councilmen, seems like your kids have been giving them quite a bit of trouble over the last few years.

PAUL

I'm helping them to be politically active.

MORGAN

We're paying you to teach political science, not turn every class into a racket of professional complainers.

PAUL

If everyone complained a bit more, and at the right people, we wouldn't have as many problems in the world.

MORGAN

Before you start changing the world, you might want to start changing the way you teach.

PAUL

We both know that's not going to happen.

MORGAN

Very well, then. You're fired.

PAUL

Fired? You can't, I've got a wife, and three kids –

MORGAN

Should have thought of that before you decided to be a hero. *(beat, and a sigh)* Look, this isn't my decision. My hands are tied, Wellstone.

PAUL

And who's going to take over my class?

MORGAN

There's always someone willing to work for less. Have your stuff cleared out of here by noon.

PAUL

But –

MORGAN

Out! And take some of those troublemakers with you, if you can.

(PAUL shakes his head, frustrated. Blackout/lights shift to the next scene.)

SCENE FOUR

(PAUL enters his living room, dejectedly carrying a box of things from his work. SHEILA is watching TV from the couch)

SHEILA

Well, you're home early. How was work?

PAUL

Sheila, I don't know how to tell you, but –

SHEILA

Let me guess. You were fired?

PAUL

How did you know?

SHEILA

I got a call from Roger Warren, he said he was an old student of yours? Anyway, you wouldn't believe it, it's all over the news – just watch.

(off to the side, the scene on the TV plays out as a small vignette – ROGER, leading a group of STUDENTS in protest, speaks to a NEWSCASTER)

ROGER

The firing of Professor Wellstone is inexcusable and wrong, and we, the students, faculty and alumni of Carleton College, will not rest until he is restored to his position with full benefits.

STUDENTS

(chanting) We want Paul! We want Paul! We want Paul!

NEWSCASTER

As you can see, I'm here with a lively gathering of Professor Paul Wellstone's current and former students outside the office of college Dean Bruce Morgan. Mr. Morgan was unavailable for comment at the time, but it seems safe to say – he's got a lot of explaining to do.

(the lights go out on this scene as just then, a phone rings in the Wellstone residence. SHEILA answers)

SHEILA

Hello, this is the Wellstone residence. *(beat)* Uh-huh. *(she hands the phone over to PAUL)* It's for you.

PAUL

Hello, this is Paul.

(MORGAN appears in his own light, looking flustered, talking on the phone)

MORGAN

Hey, Wellstone, how's my favorite professor?

PAUL

What now?

MORGAN

Listen, you gotta get these kids out of my hair, I can't handle a PR crisis like this. What do you say we pretend our conversation this morning never happened, eh?

PAUL

How do I know you won't just cut me loose again the next time you think you can get away with it?

MORGAN

I really can't take no for an answer, Paul.

PAUL

I know. So what can you do for me?

MORGAN

I'll increase your salary. Fifteen percent. And tenure! Yes, you'll be the youngest tenured professor in Carleton history.

PAUL

You drive a hard bargain, Bruce. It's a deal. *(MORGAN's spotlight fades)* I'll see you Monday. Yes, thank you, sir. *(he hangs up the phone and turns to SHEILA)*

SHEILA

Ooh, I knew you'd come through.

PAUL

It wasn't me. It was those kids. *(he looks back to the TV)* Guess they really were listening.

SHEILA

You've always had a knack for inspiration.

PAUL

I just wish there was something I could give back. *(looking back to SHEILA)* That we could give back.

SHEILA

Let's get to work.

(the lights dim, as JESSE appears in his own spotlight, giving his speech from the 1988 Democratic National Convention)

JESSE

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 there 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! I love you very much.

(the lights come up, and we're back in the WELLSTONES' living rooms. JESSE joins PAUL and SHEILA in the living room)

SHEILA

Thank you so much for stopping by, Reverend.

JESSE

The pleasure's all mine – I should be thanking you both for that wonderful meal.

PAUL

That's all Sheila, I'm hopeless in the kitchen.

SHEILA

We saw your speech at the Convention, Reverend, truly inspiring.

PAUL

Should have been you up there accepting the nomination.

JESSE

That's very kind of you to say.

SHEILA

It's still crazy to me, we'd see you on TV twenty years ago, and now Paul's chairing your presidential campaign.

PAUL

I only wish I could have done more.

JESSE

You did plenty, Paul. Running a campaign is no easy task. Running the campaign for the first black president in the Midwest? That's even harder. *(beat)* We'll get there someday. I just hope I'll live to see it.

PAUL

You will. I'm sure of it.

JESSE

(he chuckles to himself) Ever the optimist. So, what's next for you, then?

PAUL

For me? *(he looks at SHEILA, as if she has an answer)* I guess I haven't really thought about it. I kind of assumed I would just go back to teaching for a while.

JESSE

Really? Figured you'd have your sights set higher than that. You never thought about running for higher office yourself?

PAUL

Not really, no.

SHEILA

He's just being modest. He told me the day we met he wanted to be president.

JESSE

Is that right?

PAUL

I mean, something like that would be a long way's off, of course.

JESSE

You're right – better take it in steps. You need to run for Senate.

PAUL

That's not exactly what I had in mind –

JESSE

Isn't it?

PAUL

I'd be lying if I said I never thought about it, but – well, you know what it's like. All the wheeling and dealing, the selling out? That isn't me, I'd much rather work behind the scenes for the good candidates who come along.

JESSE

Good candidates are in short supply, Paul, which is exactly why we need you, Paul. The only folks who can fix the system are the ones who haven't been corrupted by the system. And with someone like you as a Senator? You'd do wonders for this country.

I'VE SEEN A LOT OF POLITICIANS
AND TRUST ME, THEY ALL ACT THE SAME
THEY WANT OUR VOTES WITHOUT CONDITIONS
THEY TREAT IT LIKE SOME KIND OF GAME

BUT I SEE SOMETHING SPECIAL IN YOU
A MAN WHO HELPED ME TO BEGIN
A MOVEMENT, ONE THAT WILL CONTINUE
I CAME UP SHORT, BUT YOU CAN WIN

SO TAKE A CHANCE, MAKE YOUR MARK
LEAD US OUT FROM IN THE DARK
YOU'VE GOT A CHANCE TO CHANGE THE GAME
YOUR KIDS, YOUR WIFE WOULD SAY THE SAME
NO HESITATING
DON'T KEEP US WAITING

PAUL

What do you think? *(he looks from JESSE to SHEILA, who nods enthusiastically)*

JESSE

I guess that settles it, then.

(JESSE gets up to exit, and shakes hands with PAUL and SHEILA on his way out – as this transpires, the lights shift, the living room disappears and a small crowd of Wellstone supporters congregates, with one NEWSCASTER stepping forward)

NEWSCASTER

It's a longshot, but liberal college professor Paul Wellstone has just announced his underdog candidacy against incumbent Senator Rudy Boschwitz. Does he have what it takes to pull off the upset? Our political analysts suggest it's unlikely, but you can certainly feel the energy in the air at Mr. Wellstone's kick-off event.

(our attention shifts to PAUL, who's wrapping up a speech)

PAUL

Thank you, everyone, for coming out in support of me and Sheila. We truly appreciate it. Together we'll show Washington how we get things done in Minnesota. It's about time we had less representatives worrying about the Rockefellers, and more about the little fellers. *(the crowd and SHEILA indulge him in this cheesy joke)* I promise I will fight for better jobs, better wages, and better healthcare for everyone. And should we win this November, I promise I will only seek two terms in the Senate. Twelve years is enough for any politician.

IF WE WIN I KNOW

WE'LL KEEP THE DREAM ALIVE
AND I'M NOT AFRAID TO KEEP THE VOWS I'VE MADE
LEADERS COME AND GO
SO THAT THEIR NATION CAN THRIVE
SO KEEP THE DREAM ALIVE
KEEP THE DREAM ALIVE

PAUL'S SUPPORTERS

WE'LL KEEP THE DREAM ALIVE, WE WILL
WE'LL KEEP THE DREAM ALIVE

ROGER

(approaching PAUL) Paul, you taught us how to organize – it's our pleasure to put it into practice for you. *(some murmurs of agreement from the nearby STUDENTS, including the four from Paul's original class)*

PAUL

Thank you, that means a lot. With your guys' help, there's no way we'll lose.

(the crowd disperses, leaving PAUL, SHEILA and ROGER behind)

SHEILA

Not a bad kick-off, huh?

PAUL

Yeah, but we gotta figure out a way to keep the momentum going. We're gonna need to hit up every corner of the state if we want to put a dent in Boschwitz's support.

SHEILA

How do you plan on getting around? We can't afford having you chartered around by plane.

ROGER

How about a bus?

(some version of the famous Wellstone bus – probably in the form of a cardboard cutout, comes out onstage and accompanies PAUL, SHEILA and ROGER as they travel the stage. A NEWSCASTER steps out and pipes in)

NEWSCASTER

The maverick candidate, Paul Wellstone, making waves lately with an unusual campaign strategy – actually talking to the voters, standing in stark contrast to the incumbent Rudy Boschwitz, who has scarcely made public appearances and demurred on participating in any kind of debate between the candidates, a theme Wellstone emphasized in his first campaign ad.

(several of the STUDENTS – a part of Paul's campaign ad – take various positions on the stage, as the bus rolls along, making various stops)

ABBY

Well, I'd expect there'd be some kind of debate.

PAUL

Is Rudy Boschwitz here?

JAMIE

I'd love to see Paul debate with Rudy.

SHEILA

We're looking for Rudy Boschwitz, has anyone seen him?

REN

I think there should be debates – why shouldn't there be?

ROGER

Seriously, has anyone seen Rudy Boschwitz?

MATT

Some people have more money than others to play with, and if you debate, you're standing there without money.

PAUL

Rest assured, there will be debates on the key issues in this campaign. Look for upcoming dates and places, and in the meantime, if you see a silver-haired gentleman in a plaid shirt, will you mention I'm looking for him?

NEWSCASTER

The latest opinion polling confirms the Senate race as a toss-up, with Democrat Paul Wellstone gaining on the incumbent Republican in recent weeks, and Boschwitz is certainly feeling the burn, making a rare public appearance today to denounce Wellstone's candidacy.

(RUDY BOSCHWITZ enters – well-groomed and well-dressed, but with a brash and blustering manner about him, the air of someone who's gotten too high off their own supply)

RUDY

You want a debate, Professor? Here's your debate.

SO THIS PAUL IS QUITE THE UPSTART
WITH A USELESS BLEEDING HEART
IT'S A WONDER THAT HE EVER GOT THIS FAR
HE'S A LIBERAL, HE'S A PHONY
HE'S A DEMOCRATIC CRONY
HE IS ALL THE THINGS THESE WINGNUTS SAY THEY ARE

IT'S TRUE, HE EVEN LEFT HIS FAITH BEHIND
THOUGH I HATE TO SAY IT, LET ME JUST REMIND
A JEW MAKES A MOCKERY OF HIS LIFE

WHEN HE TAKES A GENTILE WOMAN FOR HIS WIFE

(everyone drops what they're doing – SHEILA looks particularly stung. All eyes are on PAUL.)

PAUL

(barely containing fury) I guess Rudy has a problem with Christians, then.

(The mood lightens around PAUL, although RUDY looks devastated. SHEILA goes to stand next to PAUL, who's still seething)

REPORTER

The results are in – it's a squeaker, but it would appear that Minnesota's next senator will be the Democrat, Paul Wellstone!

(RUDY, flustered, goes over to PAUL to offer his handshake, who only returns it curtly)

RUDY

Good job, Wellstone. The kids won it for you.

(RUDY exits, leaving PAUL with his supporters)

ALL (except PAUL)

NOW IT'S UP TO YOU
TO KEEP THE DREAM ALIVE
SHOW US YOU CAN BE THE CHANGE YOU WISH TO SEE
IF WHAT YOU SAID IS TRUE
THEN YOUR SUPPORTERS WILL THRIVE
AND KEEP THE DREAM ALIVE
WE'LL KEEP THE DREAM ALIVE, WE WILL
WE'LL KEEP THE DREAM ALIVE
WE'LL KEEP THE DREAM ALIVE, WE WILL
KEEP THE DREAM ALIVE

(the crowd disperses. ROGER slaps PAUL on the back)

ROGER

Way to go, Paul – you're the first person I've voted for in years who won!

PAUL

(he forces a smile) I'm the first person I've voted for in years who won!

(ROGER laughs and exits, leaving PAUL and SHEILA to their own, the smile leaving PAUL's face.)

SHEILA

Oh, congratulations, Paul – I knew we could do it. *(she rubs PAUL on the back)* Paul? You okay?

PAUL

Yeah... I'm fine. Just still smarting over the "bad Jew" thing, I guess.

SHEILA

Don't let it get to you. Boschwitz is just bitter –

PAUL

I know. I shouldn't. It's just... Who the hell gets to decide that, anyway? *(beat)* Why does it have to get so nasty?

SHEILA

It doesn't. You were elected to change all that. No one knows you better than you. And whatever happens, I'll be right here, all the way. *(she grasps PAUL's hand, who grabs it back and gives her a reluctant smile. The two kiss)* We better turn in for the night. Got a busy few weeks ahead of us... *(SHE moves to exit, leaving PAUL behind)* You coming?

PAUL

In a minute. I'll catch up. *(SHEILA exits, leaving PAUL to bask in his moment – until a sudden jolt of pain in his knee compels him to sit. HE finds a nearby chair and massages his knee, letting out a groan in pain, and then one in relief)* Huh. *(beat)* Probably nothing.

(blackout)

SCENE FIVE

(The floor of the U.S. Senate, populated by a handful of mingling SENATORS – including JESSE – appears around PAUL. STEPHEN steps out to narrate.)

STEPHEN

The United States Senate – the halls where history was made. There's a certain level of prestige and importance that comes with being a Senator, though as Paul would soon discover, it had about the same level of class as a high school cafeteria.

(One Senator – FRITZ HOLLINGS – walks up to PAUL)

HOLLINGS

Wellstone, is it?

PAUL

That's right.

HOLLINGS

Senator Hollings. *(HE moves to shake PAUL's hand, which PAUL accepts)* South Carolina. Say, has anyone ever told you you remind them of Hubert Humphrey?

PAUL

No, but it's certainly an honor –

HOLLINGS

Yeah. You talk too much. *(he and a few other SENATORS chuckle and walk away, as JESSE approaches PAUL)*

JESSE

Don't worry. First day is always rough.

PAUL

Reverend?

JESSE

No need for fancy titles, Professor, we're colleagues now.

PAUL

Jesse – what are you doing here?

JESSE

Well, I accepted the distinguished office of Washington, D.C.'s "shadow senator."

PAUL

Huh. I didn't even know that was a thing.

JESSE

Barely. No salary, no vote – at least I get free parking. Mostly I'm here to just try and sell the other Senators on statehood for the District. Can I count on your support?

PAUL

Of course – I always felt representation for our nation's capitol was long overdue.

JESSE

Well, of all the Senators I've talked to this morning, you're the first I haven't had to work to convince. I suppose we'll be seeing each other from time to time, though.

PAUL

Looking forward to working with you. *(he shakes JESSE's hand, who departs. PAUL goes to mingle with the other SENATORS, as STEPHEN enters into spotlight)*

STEPHEN

Paul's first few years in the Senate whizzed by to little fanfare – turns out there are limits to what a junior Senator in the opposition party can do. It wouldn't be long, however, before a certain election turned Washington upside-down.

(BILL CLINTON, accompanied by HILLARY, enters into his own spotlight)

BILL

Now we are in a time of profound change and opportunity. The end of the cold war, the information age, the global economy have brought us both opportunity and hope and strife and uncertainty. Our purpose in this dynamic age must be to change, to make change our friend and not our enemy. This health care system of ours is badly broken and it is time to fix it. After decades of false starts, we must make this our most urgent priority: giving every American health security, health care that can never be taken away, health care that is always there. That is what we must do tonight.

(the spotlight dims out on the CLINTONS, shifting attention back over to STEPHEN)

STEPHEN

But Clinton miscalculated – the healthcare bill he'd end up pitching to the nation was a nonstarter, and Paul began to chafe up against the unspoken status quo of Washington.

(STEPHEN's spotlight fades, as SHEILA enters into her own, speaking on a telephone – as is PAUL)

SHEILA

Hey there, Mr. Big Shot Senator. How's your day been?

PAUL

Not great, if I'm being honest. I just caught wind that the Clintons are abandoning their healthcare bill, for now.

SHEILA

Really? Wasn't that his big thing when he was running?

PAUL

Yeah, well it's hard to sell a bill when even you can barely explain it. They weren't very receptive to my Canadian-style healthcare plan, either, barely even let me in the room. I'm telling you, even when we're in the majority it still feels like the Democrats can't win.

SHEILA

It'll get better soon, I'm sure.

PAUL

Hope you're right. It's just – I'm already brushing up against my re-election here, and I have no idea what I can even run on.

SHEILA

You'll think of something.

PAUL

(beat) I wish you were here with me. I could use a friend around here.

SHEILA

Still no luck getting through to anyone?

PAUL

Not really. Turns out some people find my style abrasive and off-putting.

SHEILA

I can't imagine why.

PAUL

Enough of my pity party, though. How've you been?

SHEILA

Can't complain, I guess. I stopped into the Victim's Crisis Center the other day. In Austin.

PAUL

Is that right?

SHEILA

They're doing amazing work, but you know... It's one thing to see all this stuff in the paper, or on TV, but it's a totally different thing to see it all firsthand.

PAUL

I know what you mean. *(beat, as he looks around)* Maybe we could do something about it.

SHEILA

You think so?

PAUL

Definitely. We have to at least try, right? If I could just find one person in Washington who cared enough, and who had enough clout... I mean, Jesse's great, but he has even less support than I do.

SHEILA

I might know someone.

PAUL

Are you thinking what I'm thinking?

SHEILA

Partners?

PAUL

You know it.

(PAUL hangs up and exits, as the scene changes over to a small meeting room – SHEILA is waiting patiently. HILLARY CLINTON enters)

HILLARY

Sheila! It's good to see you.

SHEILA

Good to see you too, Madame Clinton.

HILLARY

It's "Hillary" here, don't worry, we're friends.

SHEILA

I'm really glad you were able to fit me in.

HILLARY

It's no problem, I'm always happy to make time for politicians' wives. You'd be surprised at how few of us try to leverage our husbands to get anything done.

SHEILA

I don't think I would be, that's the sad part. Hillary, did anyone tell you what we're meeting about?

HILLARY

Sure did – you wanted to talk domestic violence?

SHEILA

I do. Did you know that every twelve seconds –

HILLARY

A woman is beaten by her partner or husband? Or that every year, four thousand women are killed? I do my homework. Trust me, 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, don't you think?

SHEILA

(smiling) That's right.

HILLARY

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.

SHEILA

Me? I can give you his number, if you want –

HILLARY

Please, I have everyone's number in this town. Your husband's a good man – but I want *you* to make it clear to him how important this is. I know my reputation better than I know your Paul. 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?

SHEILA

Absolutely.

HILLARY

Thank you, Sheila. I'm really looking forward to this.

SHEILA

Likewise. *(the two shake hands, and the lights dim, as STEPHEN enters once more)*

STEPHEN

And so it became known around Washington, as it had in Minnesota – the best way to Paul was through Sheila. And the best way to Sheila was through Paul. They were as inseparable in public life as they were in private, a two-for-one package deal Senator.

(PAUL enters and meets with SHEILA – they briefly hug and kiss before SHEILA moves to exit)

SHEILA

You got the bill text Mrs. Clinton's office sent me?

PAUL

Yeah, I've already got a meeting on the docket with Biden and Hatch, I have a few ideas of my own.

SHEILA

You're gonna get this done, Paul.

PAUL

We're gonna get this done. (SHEILA exits, and as PAUL sings, the scene changes over to the U.S. Senate, which is filled in by SENATORS)

3. A Year of Change

ANOTHER YEAR HAS COME AND GONE
IT FEELS SO DIFFERENT FROM THE LAST
SUDDENLY IT ALL GOES BY SO FAST
I SAID I'D CHANGE A THING OR TWO
SHAKE THIS TOWN UP, NOW IT'S ALMOST TRUE
AND IT'S ALL THANKS TO YOU

THINK BACK TO THE TIME THIS ALL BEGAN
THINK BACK TO THE REASONS WHY YOU RAN
THINK BACK, LOOK BACK, BUT NEVER TURN BACK
WHAT'S WRONG, WHAT'S RIGHT, WHAT'S LEFT IS ONLY

CHORUS (PLUS PAUL)

A YEAR OF CHANGE

PAUL

TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

CHORUS (PLUS PAUL)

A YEAR OF CHANGE

PAUL

TO MAKE MY PREFERENCE KNOWN
I CAN'T DO THIS ON MY OWN
MY WORK HAS JUST BEGUN
NO, I'M STILL NOT DONE

(PAUL takes to the floor, as SHEILA observes from the gallery with some of PAUL's students)

PAUL

Mr. President, if we pass the Violence Against Women Act provisions that Senator Biden has done such a great job for years and years in speaking about, whether it be safe visitation centers, whether it be getting the guns out of the hands of those people who have committed an act of violence against a spouse or a child, we will be sending a very, very powerful and positive message to women in this country: the violence is not your fault. There will be support for you in your community, and perpetrators will be held accountable.

STUDENTS

HE GAVE US HOPE WHEN THERE WAS NONE
AND PROMISED SOON THAT CHANGE WOULD COME

ROGER

A PART OF ME STILL CAN'T BELIEVE HE WON

ABBY & JAMIE

HE REALLY CAN PUT UP A FIGHT

MATT & REN

AN ALLY WHO'S THERE FOR US DAY AND NIGHT

HOLLINGS

(observing the crowd) WELL, I GUESS HE'S ALRIGHT

SHEILA

HE'S IN HIS GROOVE, I KNOW IT WELL
HE'S RABBLEROUSING, RAISING HELL
HOW PROUD I AM TO STAND BY HIM
AND SHAPE THE WORLD TO BE MORE WHOLESOME

CHORUS (PLUS SHEILA)

A YEAR OF CHANGE

SHEILA

OUR HOPE IS STRONGER

CHORUS (PLUS SHEILA)

A YEAR OF CHANGE

SHEILA

THE LONGER THAT HE GOES
WHERE WE END UP, NO ONE KNOWS
BUT THIS ARMY OF ONE
HAS LAID THE FOUNDATION

(HILLARY enters the Senate floor and goes up to greet PAUL)

HILLARY

Paul, thank you so much for helping pass the Violence Against Women Act, truly. We couldn't have done it without you.

PAUL

I should be thanking you – and Sheila too, of course. *(as SHEILA approaches, and PAUL puts an arm around her)* It's a nice feeling, getting stuff done, isn't it?

HILLARY

It's why we're here.

PAUL

It would be nice to get a healthcare bill moving again, though.

HILLARY

Bill and I would really appreciate your help on that. Maybe the time isn't right for something more drastic, but we were thinking we could take a more piecemeal approach. We're calling it the State Children's Healthcare Insurance Program – "S-CHIP" for short. It would ensure healthcare for every child in the country. Can we count on your support?

PAUL

Send what you have to our office. Sheila and I will be happy to help.

HILLARY

Glad to hear it. *(SHE exits)*

SHEILA

(to PAUL) See? Stick to it and things can get better.

PAUL

I should never have doubted you.

SHEILA

Just remember – we're a team.

PAUL

Let's go home, celebrate. Get some rest. Tomorrow – children's healthcare.

SHEILA

And then – *the world.*

PAUL

One step at a time, dear.

(the lights dim, and a spotlight raises on STEPHEN)

STEPHEN

Paul was finally feeling a sense of momentum in his otherwise stalled Senate career – and with his re-election looming, it couldn't have come sooner. Unfortunately, Paul's renewed optimism would soon have the brakes slammed on it, as Republicans capitalized on the angst and unrest under the Clinton presidency to capture the House and Senate for the first time in decades, and some of Paul's best ideas... would have to wait.

STEPHEN

AND WHEN YOU THINK IT'S OVER, THE HARD PART CAN BEGIN
YOU'LL END UP LOSING MORE THAN YOU WILL WIN
BUT TAP INTO THAT FIRE THAT INSPIRES OLD AND NEW
IT ALL STARTED WITH YOU... AND NOW IT'S MORE THAN YOU
WE'VE ALL GOT MORE WORK TO DO

ALL (BUT PAUL)

A YEAR OF CHANGE

STEPHEN & SHEILA

TO SEIZE THE MOMENT

ALL (BUT PAUL)

A YEAR OF CHANGE

PAUL

DON'T LET THE MOVEMENT DIE
AND DON'T LET US PASS IT BY

ALL (BUT PAUL)

HERE'S TO OUR ARMY OF ONE
BUT STILL, HIS WORK'S NOT DONE

ALL

A YEAR OF CHANGE

(blackout)

SCENE SIX

(stage is partly lit on a small office – NORM COLEMAN is manning the phones. He dials a number, lets it ring, and holds for a moment)

NORM

Hello, Frank? Yes, it's Mr. Coleman. Listen, I'm reaching out to some of our best supporters on behalf of Paul Wellstone. *(beat)* Yes, Senator Wellstone. Paul is in a tough re-election bid against Rudy Boschwitz, and – *(beat)* Yes. Yes, I'm aware Paul voted No on the welfare reform bill, but that doesn't mean – *(beat)* No, Paul is not a communist. *(beat)* Okay. Well, I'm very sorry to hear that. You know where to reach me if you change your mind. *(beat)* Yes. Goodbye, then. *(he hangs up the phone, frustrated, as PAUL enters)* Jesus, could you be any more difficult to raise money for?

PAUL

Hey, if the Richie Rich-types don't like me, I must be doing something right, right?

NORM

That might work for you, but it makes my job a lot harder.

PAUL

Well, keep it up, all the same. I do appreciate having someone else to talk to the donors for once.

(STEPHEN enters again in spotlight, as NORM resumes his phone calls in silence, and PAUL takes a look at some paperwork)

STEPHEN

Paul's re-election effort was in full swing. My brother never had much patience for the fundraising circuit – for that he turned to an up-and-comer in Minnesota politics, Norm Coleman, who'd recently been elected Mayor of St. Paul, to chair his campaign.

(NORM slams down the phone again in frustration)

PAUL

Another satisfied customer?

NORM

I know you've got the whole happy warrior schtick going for you, and that's great, but would it kill you to bend the rules just a little? It'd make the donors a lot more receptive.

PAUL

Politics isn't just about pleasing donors, Norm. It's not a schtick. I'm just trying to do what's right, here.

NORM

So what do you need a guy like me for?

PAUL

Doing the right thing doesn't pay the bills. Look, I know I can be a bit divisive.

NORM

"A bit."

PAUL

But you've seen the latest polls – we're cruising. Not that we should take it easy, of course, but my approach is working, Norm. I think it's really resonating with people.

NORM

I guess. *(HE looks at the list again, picks up the phone, and hesitates before setting it back down)* I don't know how many more of these I can do today.

PAUL

Hey, I have an idea. I'm supposed to take a tour of this correctional facility in Tallulah tomorrow. Why don't you come with me?

NORM

Gee, an offer that tempting? You better buy me dinner, first.

PAUL

Come on, it'll be good for you. Stretch your legs, get out of this office for once. I doubt it'll go worse than any fundraising pitch.

NORM

With the way these have been going, I guess I can't disagree.

PAUL

Great. Meet you at 6am, bright and early. *(HE slaps NORM on the back as HE steps away into the unlit stage area. NORM puts on his coat, which was hanging from the chair, and steps away from the office – opening up the scene to the correctional facility. STEPHEN remains where he is, observant, as an OFFICER approaches PAUL and NORM, shaking hands with each of them, making a show of her pep)*

OFFICER

Hello, welcome, we were expecting the two of you. You are – ?

NORM

(he returns her handshake warmly) Norm Coleman, finance director.

PAUL

(less enthused) Senator Wellstone.

OFFICER

Excellent, well, come this way. I'd be more than happy to give you a tour of the facility.

PAUL

Actually, I was wondering if we might have some time to speak to the kids.

OFFICER

Oh, I don't know about that. It's their free period, I think they'd rather –

PAUL

Or perhaps on your tour you would consider showing us to the solitary confinement cells?

OFFICER

Are you sure? It isn't terribly interesting.

PAUL

Forgive me, but I already find it terrible – and interesting – that these boys are subject to solitary confinement at all. I insist we be allowed to check out their quarters.

OFFICER

(dropping the act) I would need proper clearance first. Don't think about starting any trouble.

PAUL

I wouldn't dream of it. *(the OFFICER shoots PAUL a nasty look, and exits. PAUL approaches a couple of boys – one nibbling on a sandwich. STEPHEN steps forward as well)* How are you doing?

BOY #1 AND STEPHEN

Not so good.

PAUL

What do you mean?

BOY #2

(indicating the sandwich) This food. They never serve this kind of food. They just did this for today. These clothes, we never had these clothes. Every day it's the same clothes. It's hot. There's no air-conditioning. These shoes, we never had shoes like these. Smell the paint on the table. These tables have all been freshly painted. This is just a show for you, Senator.

BOY #1 AND STEPHEN

This is a show.

BOY #1

And we're all going to get beaten up when you leave. We get beaten up all the time.

PAUL

(trying his best to maintain his cool) I see. Is there anyone you can talk to about this?

BOY #2

They let us see the doctor sometimes.

PAUL

How often?

BOY #2

Saw one four months ago. And then two months before that. I've been here eight months.

BOY #1 AND STEPHEN

They just give us pills –

BOY #1

...and hope we shut up. No time for doctors.

PAUL

You're not going to get in any trouble for telling me this, are you?

BOY #1

(a sad smile) Either way, we still get beaten up. That's just how it is here.

PAUL

That's just how it is here.

(the OFFICER returns with an intimidating GUARD)

OFFICER

We're all ready for your tour, Senator.

PAUL

That's alright. I've seen what I need to. *(he begins to exit with NORM, then turns to the BOYS)* It'll be okay. I promise.

(STEPHEN holds out his hand to PAUL as he passes by, though it's not returned. He follows the SENATORS out, as the lights shift as a smaller scene plays out in its own light.)

NORM

Why did you take me there?

PAUL

I had to show you.

NORM

Show me what?

PAUL

Why I'm here. Why I'm doing this. All of this.

NORM

I never realized how bad it was for some of these boys.

PAUL

I did. *(a heavy beat)* My brother, Stephen. He went to one of these kinds of facilities when he was a teenager, too. Suffered from mental breakdowns – the weight of the world was just too much for him. I didn't really understand it, back then. I don't know if I do now, either. But I knew back then I had to do something about it. I would look into that window and see my brother, stone-faced, the sadness hiding behind his eyes. I told myself I would never let anyone else feel that alone ever again. That's why I got into politics.

NORM

I had no idea.

PAUL

I never told anyone that before. Not even Sheila. *(a beat. He begins singing to himself, softly.)* "Oseh shalom bimromav... Hu ya'aseh shalom aleinu... V'al kol Yisrael. V'imru amen..."

NORM

Prayer of peace.

PAUL

You recognize it?

NORM

Of course, what Jewish kid didn't learn that one?

PAUL

We knew the words. I just wish more would take it to heart. *(beat)* You're a good man, Norm. But there's more to politics than rubbing elbows and greasing palms. I know you've got your sights set higher than where you are now, but if you ever want to be something more... You need to be true to yourself. You owe nothing to anyone else. Whatever your reasons are... Don't forget that. *(PAUL exits, leaving NORM behind)*

NORM

"True to myself." *(HE looks back to where they left the facility, and then back in the direction of PAUL, before exiting after him. The lights shift back to the small office the two were in earlier – STEPHEN has moved into the chair, waiting, as PAUL enters.)*

PAUL

Stephen? Is that you?

STEPHEN

Sheila let me in. I hope that's alright.

PAUL

It feels like I haven't heard from you in –

STEPHEN

Too long. Years, even. *(beat)* I heard about your visit to Tallulah.

PAUL

You did?

STEPHEN

How could I not? It's all over the news. The way you blew the lid off that facility. We do have the news out in Virginia, Paul.

PAUL

Is that where you are now?

STEPHEN

Sure is. Schoolteacher. Not married, but... I've carved a nice little life out there for myself.

PAUL

So why am I only seeing you now?

STEPHEN

I was worried politics might have changed you, Paul. *(he chuckles to himself)* I shouldn't have worried.

PAUL

What makes you say that?

STEPHEN

I was just thinking... What would have happened if someone like you had been around when I was those boys' age? Politics didn't change you, Paul. You changed politics.

PAUL

Stephen.

(the two brothers embrace – blackout)

SCENE SEVEN

(the Wellstone residence. SHEILA, PAUL, STEPHEN and ROGER hover over the dining room table, with SHEILA reading from a newspaper)

SHEILA

"Wellstone Wins Re-Election Over Ex-Senator Boschwitz." And by nine points, too! About as much as Clinton won by.

PAUL

Yeah. It was a pretty good win.

STEPHEN

Ever the modest little brother.

ROGER

Yeah, give yourself a little credit, Professor.

PAUL

Thanks, guys. *(beat)* Still...

SHEILA

You're not still thinking about Norm, are you?

ROGER

You're better off without him.

PAUL

I know. I'm just surprised is all.

SHEILA

(she flips through the pages of the paper) Just listen to this. "Coleman to leave DFL: Kemp, Carlson to welcome St. Paul mayor."

(NORM steps out in his own spotlight to deliver his announcement, flanked by several politicians)

NORM

While the political party I belong to changes, nothing about how I govern or what I believe changes at all. *(he shakes hands with the politicians accompanying him and waves to supporters and cameras as the lights go out on his scene)*

SHEILA

Buddying up with all those Republicans, you know he's just loving the spotlight. *(she grabs PAUL's hand)* Come on. You just had a big win. You've got other things to think about than Norm Coleman.

PAUL

You're right.

ROGER

Well, I better turn in, teach.

PAUL

Early day tomorrow?

ROGER

Finals. I'd say Carleton isn't the same without you, but with every student of mine doing a project on Paul Wellstone... it's like you never left.

PAUL

Wish them luck from me. *(he pats ROGER on the shoulder as he exits)*

STEPHEN

I better get going too – got a flight to catch.

SHEILA

You sure you don't want to spend an extra night?

STEPHEN

Nah, I'd better stay out of your hair. Thank you both, though. *(a beat)* I'll be fine. Don't worry.

PAUL

I know. Take care of yourself, Stephen.

SHEILA

Don't be a stranger.

STEPHEN

Of course. *(HE hugs SHEILA, and then moves to hug PAUL – the two hold hands for a moment. STEPHEN, between the past and present, struggles to let go – eventually doing so reluctantly, and lets go)*

PAUL

Heard something interesting through the grapevine.

SHEILA

What's that?

PAUL

Apparently some people are under the impression I'm planning on running for President.

SHEILA

What makes them think that?

PAUL

Beats me. Apparently a guy can't start making appearances all around the country without speculation running rampant.

SHEILA

I mean... That's kind of what I figured was the next step, if I'm being honest.

PAUL

I'm not saying it wasn't in the back of my mind.

SHEILA

So... are you running for President?

PAUL

(beat) I haven't decided yet.

SHEILA

So you've been thinking about it.

PAUL

I haven't decided yet.

SHEILA

When were you planning on talking to me about it?

PAUL

When I decided.

SHEILA

I could help make that decision for you.

PAUL

I know. But I also know if anyone would be able to change my mind, it'd be you.

SHEILA

So... do you wanna talk about it?

PAUL

I suppose I've got nothing better to do. How should we do this?

SHEILA

Pros and cons?

PAUL

Ah, yes. Practical and traditional. Let's get to it.

SHEILA

Pro: could do a lot more as President than Senator.

PAUL

Con: would put myself in a position of having to compromise more frequently.

SHEILA

Moreso than now?

PAUL

I won't lie, being one in one hundred gives me a lot more freedom to vote my conscience. I may not always be Bill's biggest fan, but at the end of the day, still gotta get a bill on your desk.

SHEILA

Pro: would be a clean break from the Clinton years.

PAUL

Con: would run directly up against the Vice President, and the whole Clinton machine.

SHEILA

You think Gore could beat you?

PAUL

I think it's a strong possibility.

SHEILA

Well, it isn't like you've never been the underdog.

PAUL

True enough.

SHEILA

Pro: would be fulfilling your lifelong dream.

PAUL

Con: *(beat)* would have to spend less time with you.

SHEILA

I suppose that is worth thinking about.

PAUL

You know I'm only okay with anything that you'd also be okay with.

SHEILA

I know... But I don't want to stand in the way of your dreams, either.

PAUL

You are far more important to me than some teenage flight-of-fancy.

SHEILA

So what do you want to do?

PAUL

I... I don't know. It's a big decision.

SHEILA

(chuckles) Guess I wasn't such a help after all.

PAUL

No, you did fine. *(beat)* What do you think I should do?

SHEILA

It's not my decision.

PAUL

But if it was. What would you do?

SHEILA

What would you say I should do?

PAUL

I would tell you to run.

SHEILA

That's the answer then, isn't it?

PAUL

And you're okay with it?

SHEILA

Of course I am.

(PAUL takes SHEILA's hands together and kisses them)

PAUL

Thank you, Sheila.

(a NEWSCASTER enters to narrate, as the set clears out behind PAUL and SHEILA)

NEWSCASTER

Recent moves by liberal U.S. Senator Paul Wellstone has got everyone in Washington asking the same question – will he make a run for President? While he would start out as a sure underdog to Vice President Al Gore, sources say Wellstone is hoping to tap into disillusionment with the Clinton administration and his credentials among liberal supporters to carry him to an upset victory, with a formal announcement imminent any day now.

(a spotlight appears on JESSE JACKSON, speaking into a telephone)

JESSE

Paul? It's Jesse. I heard about your presidential run. Well... Maybe. Whatever you decide, you have my support. For everything you've done for me, for our community... I want to return the favor. The Rainbow Coalition will shine again.

(the spotlight disappears, and appears elsewhere on HILLARY, likewise speaking on the phone)

HILLARY

Sheila – it's Hillary. Listen, I'll just cut right to it – the White House wants Gore. But if Paul's got his heart set on running... Don't make it too easy for him. If Al loses, it's his own fault. I've always admired Paul, and I think he'd make a great president one day. And if that's how the chips fall, Bill and I will have his back, all the way to the general.

(the spotlight disappears on HILLARY. The stage, now mostly bare set-wise, is populated by PAUL, SHEILA, flanked by ROGER and STEPHEN as PAUL steps in front of a podium)

PAUL

People of the United States... On this day, I would like to announce that I...

(the lights shift. A DOCTOR enters, clipboard in hand, as ROGER and STEPHEN clear out)

SHEILA

Multiple sclerosis?

DOCTOR

That's what the tests are saying. Would certainly explain the aches and pains you've been feeling.

PAUL

I honestly thought it was just the stress of the campaign.

DOCTOR

It certainly isn't making things any better.

SHEILA

Forgive me, Doctor, but what exactly does this mean?

DOCTOR

Well, basically it's a disease that causes communication problems between your brain and the rest of your body. Your immune system attacks your nerve fibers, and eventually the nerve damage could become permanent.

PAUL

Is it curable?

DOCTOR

It's *treatable*. You should be able to live a normal life... As long as you take care of yourself, anyway. That pamphlet should help clarify a few things. It may take a few years off your life expectancy. But no, as of yet, there is no cure.

PAUL

I understand.

DOCTOR

I heard you were thinking of running for president.

PAUL

Patient-doctor confidentiality, right? *(the DOCTOR makes a "zip my lips" gesture)* Yes, it's true.

DOCTOR

You may want to reconsider. You're hardly the first politician I've treated, not even the first one to run for president. I've seen the years come off men much healthier than you. I know I'm not supposed to be partial, but you're one of the best we've got. I don't want you to do anything to endanger yourself.

SHEILA

Thank you, Doctor.

PAUL

We'll... think about it.

(SHEILA looks at him, concerned. There is a definite tension in the air)

DOCTOR

I know this is a big shock. I'll give the two of you some space. I'll file away these test results for you. Just holler if there's anything else I can do for you.

(the DOCTOR exits. After a long pause)

SHEILA

So... What are you thinking?

PAUL

Just one more thing to add to the plate, I guess.

You don't mean –

SHEILA

I still need to keep running, Sheila.

PAUL

Paul, you can't.

SHEILA

What other choice do I have?

PAUL

I don't know, what was your plan in case you didn't run? Stick to the Senate, help Gore get elected?

SHEILA

Sheila, this could be my only chance.

PAUL

Paul, you heard what the doctor said. Your work-life balance, that's one thing, you can't start jeopardizing your health just for the sake of maybe becoming President.

SHEILA

You don't think I can do it.

PAUL

That's not what I said.

SHEILA

I've been up against worse my whole life, and I've always powered through.

PAUL

Yes, and I've always been there for you. But this, Paul... I can't stand by you on this.

SHEILA

This is my dream.

PAUL

I know.

SHEILA

I'm the only one who can help people, who can get it all done.

PAUL

You don't need to be the President to help people, Paul.

SHEILA

Well look where it's gotten me so far!

PAUL

SHEILA

Yes, just look! You've had a great career, you've done great things. You've given the world so much, no one will judge you for standing down.

PAUL

You will.

SHEILA

No I won't, Paul – I'm telling you it's okay.

PAUL

(beat – heavy) Stephen will.

SHEILA

What does Stephen have to do with any of this?

PAUL

I don't... I don't know. You wouldn't understand.

SHEILA

I would if you just opened up.

PAUL

(beat) Forget it.

SHEILA

Paul, talk to me. Please. *(beat – PAUL doesn't respond)* Don't shut down on me like your brother did. I'm here for you. I want to understand you.

4. Let Me In

I'VE SPENT MY LIFE TRYING TO KNOW YOU
AND JUST WHEN I THINK I DO
YOU TURN ME AWAY
DON'T TURN ME AWAY
JUST LIKE THE DAY WHEN I FIRST MET YOU
YOU OPENED MY HEART AND I LET YOU
I LET YOU IN
I LET THIS BEGIN

STAY WITH ME
DON'T WALK AWAY FROM ME
OPEN YOUR EYES
DON'T SETTLE FOR LIES
NO MORE GOODBYES

LET ME IN
LET ME UNDERSTAND

LET ME IN
LET ME TAKE YOUR HAND
YOU DON'T HAVE TO FIGHT THIS BATTLE ON YOUR OWN
YOU'RE NOT ALONE

THIS SICKNESS THAT'S SWELLED UP INSIDE YOU
I CAN'T LET YOU LET IT DEFINE YOU
YOU LET IT IN
DON'T LET IT WIN

HOLD ME CLOSE
THIS IS THE LIFE WE CHOSE
DON'T SETTLE FOR FEAR
SHED YOUR LAST TEAR
WE'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE

LET ME IN
LET ME IN YOUR HEART
LET ME IN
SO THAT WE CAN START
HEALING ALL THE HURT THAT WE CAN UNDO
I'M HERE FOR YOU

PAUL

I GAVE YOU EVERYTHING I EVER THOUGHT I COULD AND MORE
BUT WHEN I'M GETTING CLOSE LIFE CLOSES ANOTHER DOOR

SHEILA

YOU CAN'T STOP THE WAY THE WORLD IS CHANGING
THAT DOESN'T MEAN THAT YOU SHOULD STOP ENGAGING
WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE
YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE

(the scene changes back to the rally, where PAUL finishes addressing his would-be constituents)

PAUL

I... will not be a candidate in this upcoming presidential election. I'm afraid an old wound from my college wrestling days has come back to haunt me, and I simply wouldn't have the endurance for a presidential run at this time. *(beat.)* I'm sorry. I know that may be disappointing to some. But don't give up hope. Vice President Gore has my full support in the election. And I believe he'll carry us to victory, not just with the presidency, but with majorities in the House and Senate as well. I will do my best to be a part of that movement, starting with our own Senate election in Minnesota. Thank you, everyone.

(the crowd clears, leaving just PAUL and SHEILA behind)

SHEILA

You did the right thing, Paul.

PAUL

I know. I'm sorry.

SHEILA

For what?

PAUL

For not being enough.

SHEILA

LET ME IN (**PAUL: LET ME IN**)

LET ME UNDERSTAND (**PAUL: IS IT TOO LATE?**)

LET ME IN

LET ME TAKE YOUR HAND (**PAUL: I JUST DON'T KNOW**)

LIKE YOU LET ME IN SO MANY YEARS AGO

THE YOU I USED TO KNOW

I KNOW YOU

SHEILA & PAUL

I KNOW YOU

(blackout)

SCENE EIGHT

(STEPHEN enters onto a smaller, lit area of the stage)

STEPHEN

It was the dawn of a new millennium. The Y2K craze came and went, and all eyes were on the 2000 presidential election. I sometimes still think of Paul's decision not to run. Had he gone for it, maybe he would have... *(beat)* Well, anyway. After a long and protracted battle, one settled by the Supreme Court, by the slimmest of margins, the beginning of the 21st century also marked the beginning of a new era of politics.

(The PRESIDENT enters. Previously portraying Bill Clinton, he swaps out his blue tie for a red one, indicating he is now GEORGE W. BUSH. He moves to address the audience)

GEORGE

I can't claim to have won the support of the majority of the people, or even a plurality of the people – but I promise that as your President, I will serve as the President for everybody, not just those who voted for me. *(GEORGE waves farewell and exits)*

STEPHEN

Republicans held the trifecta – full control of the presidency, House and Senate – for the first time in nearly fifty years, though it wouldn't be for long. Thanks to one convenient party-switching Republican Senator, Democrats achieved the barest 51-49 majority, leaving Paul and his colleagues to try and make the best of things, Paul fast approaching the end of his two-term promise. But no one could imagine what was yet to come... *(GEORGE returns once again, to address the nation)*

GEORGE

On September the 11th, enemies of freedom committed an act of war against our country. Americans have many questions tonight. Americans are asking: Who attacked our country? The evidence we have gathered all points to a collection of loosely affiliated terrorist organizations known as al Qaeda. Americans are asking, why do they hate us? They hate our freedoms -- our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other. Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists. From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime. *(GEORGE and STEPHEN exit, and the scene opens up to HILLARY's office. HILLARY sits at her desk, which is covered in small scraps of paper that she is sifting through, focused. There is a knock at the door)*

HILLARY

(to the door, without moving or withdrawing her attention) Come in. *(PAUL opens the door and enters somewhat sheepishly)*

PAUL

Sorry, am I interrupting something?

HILLARY

(finally looking up) Paul! No, not at all, not at all. Come in, have a seat. *(PAUL sits himself down into an empty chair across HILLARY's desk as she has returned to her business)*

PAUL

Madame – err, sorry. Senator Clinton.

HILLARY

Hillary, Paul. How many times? I had to tell Sheila the same thing when we first met. First-name basis.

PAUL

Uh, right. Hillary. *(HE looks around)* Little late for spring cleaning, don't you think?

HILLARY

This? Just a habit I've picked up over the years – you get so many calls with constituents, lobbyists, activists, I just write down the details on any scrap of paper I can find and sift through it whenever I have a moment. I've built up a bit of a queue this summer, as you can see.

PAUL

Sounds chaotic.

HILLARY

It's messy, but it works. So, to what do I owe the pleasure?

PAUL

Before anything else, I wanted to know how you were holding up.

HILLARY

It's been... interesting. My poor interns, the phones have been ringing off the hooks. Missing relatives, insurance claims not going through... So many desperate people, just looking for answers.

PAUL

I can only imagine. My office has been a madhouse too. Something like this happens more than a thousand miles away, and people act like Minnesota's next. It'd almost be funny if... *(beat)* Did you know anyone?

HILLARY

(an uncomfortable sigh) A few.

PAUL

I'm so sorry.

HILLARY

It's alright. Well, I shouldn't say "alright." But I just think of all the mothers and fathers out there, sons and daughters, and how blessed I am that it wasn't Bill, or Chelsea, or... *(beat)* Is it okay if we talk about something else?

PAUL

Of course.

HILLARY

So, now that we've addressed the elephant in the room, what did you want to talk about?

PAUL

I wanted to get your opinion about running for another term.

HILLARY

You mean you weren't already?

PAUL

Well, I made a promise at the beginning of my career that I'd only give it two terms.

HILLARY

If I tried to count every politician who broke a term limits pledge, I'd run out of fingers faster than you can say "Orrin Hatch."

PAUL

I know, but you know my brand of politics. It isn't me to go back on a promise.

HILLARY

What changed your mind?

PAUL

You've seen what's been going on. Bush, the Republicans running rampant over everything we got accomplished when Bill was president, and now with this tragedy on their hands? You know they're gonna milk it for all it's worth.

HILLARY

So you're deciding to stay in the fight.

PAUL

I can't just leave it like this.

HILLARY

And Sheila's okay with it?

PAUL

(beat) I haven't really talked with her about it yet.

HILLARY

Maybe talking with her about it should be your first move.

PAUL

I know. I will.

HILLARY

So what are you telling me all this for?

PAUL

If I'm gonna be running another campaign, I figured I could use some outside help this time.

HILLARY

I thought you leftist types weren't a big fan of outside spending.

PAUL

I'm hoping McCain and Feingold's bill will help level the playing field a bit. That and I've just got a feeling this is going to be my hardest election yet. I'll need all the help I can get.

HILLARY

A little bit of pragmatism never hurt anyone.

PAUL

I dunno if I'd go that far. I don't want to totally upend the way I do things in Minnesota, I mean it's gotten me this far, I just want to make sure I could count on your support. The rank and file back home love you, you know.

HILLARY

(smiles) You had me at "sorry," Minnesota Nice.

PAUL

That's good to hear. I got some word about who the Republicans were thinking of running. St. Paul's mayor, Norm Coleman.

HILLARY

St. Paul has a Republican mayor?

PAUL

Not always. He got booed off the stage at the '96 DNC and switched parties a few weeks later.

HILLARY

Was that the one where we all got up there and did the Macarena?

PAUL

I try not to remember.

HILLARY

I see. A former Democrat, probably going on about how extreme we've gotten – that kind of thing is always catnip for the swing voters. Nothing to worry about, though, the good thing is we know what we're up against.

PAUL

So what do we do from here?

HILLARY

We do what it takes.

5. Do What It Takes

LET ME TELL YOU WHAT MY FATHER ALWAYS TOLD ME
NEVER TRY TOO HARD TO STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD
NOW IN RETROSPECT, HE MIGHT'VE UNDERSOLD ME
'CAUSE I'VE MADE MY LIVING MAKING MYSELF LOUD
OH WOULDN'T HE BE PROUD?

SO YOU TOLD THE WORLD YOU PROMISED YOU'D RETIRE
BUT I WILL ADMIT, I'M GLAD THAT IT WAS A LIE
'CAUSE WE NEED YOU AND THE SITUATION'S DIRE
AND THE ANSWER'S LOOKING ME STRAIGHT IN THE EYE

WHOA-OH-OH THERE'S SO MUCH RIDING ON THE LINE
BUT DON'T FEAR, WE'LL SEE THIS THING THROUGH
THOUGH I KNOW IF THIS ELECTION WERE ALL MINE
I CAN SAFELY SAY THAT I'D BE WILLING TO

DO WHAT IT TAKES TO WIN
MAKE THE ENDS JUSTIFY THE MEANS
DO WHAT IT TAKES TO WIN
NO MATTER WHICH WAY YOUR STATE LEANS
UNLESS YOU FIGHT, WELL THEN
COUNT YOUR SEAT AS GOOD AS LOST
DO WHAT IT TAKES TO WIN
NO MATTER WHAT THE COST

(the lights fade as a spotlight comes on to NORM, meeting with GEORGE on another part of the stage)

GEORGE

Well, if it isn't my favorite – wait, who are you again?

NORM

Norm Coleman, Mr. President – I wanted to talk with you about my run for Senate?

GEORGE

Coleman, Coleman... Are you the one who ran against that Jesse Ventura guy?

NORM

That's me.

GEORGE

How did that go for you?

NORM

I'd rather not talk about it.

GEORGE

And who'd you be up against this time?

NORM

Technically the seat is supposed to be open, but I've got a hunch Paul Wellstone will be running again.

GEORGE

Wellstone. I'd love to see someone take that guy down a notch. Now, you've got yourself a dilly of a pickle, there, Norm – a Republican in a blue state? You gotta set yourself apart. I'm not one to hold a grudge. If you gotta run against me to get ahead, you just do what it takes.

NORM

You got it.

I GREW UP IN BROOKLYN TOE-TO-TOE WITH THE TOUGHEST
ON THE STREETS OF GOLD I TAUGHT MYSELF TO SURVIVE
ROUGH AND TUMBLING WITH THE RIFF-RAFF AND THE ROUGHEST
AND THERE'S JUST ONE WAY TO MAKE IT OUT ALIVE

WHOA-OH-OH, I'VE SEEN THE WORLD FROM EITHER SIDE
NOTHING CHANGED EXCEPT FOR THE VIEW
TO MYSELF ALONE I SOLEMNLY CONFIDE
THAT I'M NOT SO DIFFERENT FROM THE LIKES OF YOU

DO WHAT IT TAKES TO WIN
ALWAYS FIGHT FOR THE UPPER HAND
DO WHAT IT TAKES TO WIN
THEN YOU'LL UNDERSTAND
ALL OF MY LIFE HAS BEEN
ME LOOKING OUT FOR NUMBER ONE

DO WHAT IT TAKES TO WIN
THIS GAME HAS JUST BEGUN

(NORM firmly shakes hands with BUSH, and their spotlight goes out as BUSH exits. The lights shift back to HILLARY and PAUL)

HILLARY

Well?

PAUL

I SEE MY FUTURE CLOSING IN
I GET A FEELING THAT I'M DEALING WITH A FOE WHO WILL DO
WHATEVER HE THINKS HELPS HIM WIN
I'VE GOT TO START THINKING LIKE YOU
IS IT SO WRONG TO BRING A GUN TO A KNIFE FIGHT
THIS QUESTION'S LONG SINCE MOVED PAST WHAT'S WRONG AND WHAT'S RIGHT?
THE WORLD IS BURNING, I MUST DO NOW WHAT I MUST DO
TURNING TO A FRIEND WHO'LL HELP ME TO

DO WHAT IT TAKES TO WIN
WHAT'S BEGUN NO ONE CAN STOP
DO WHAT IT TAKES TO WIN
TAKE ME TO THE TOP

HILLARY

SO TELL YOUR NEXT OF KIN
YOUR CAMPAIGN'S ON THE UP AND UP
DO WHAT IT TAKES TO WIN
THIS COLEMAN'S JUST A PUP

(NORM comes back into focus and sings alongside the other two)

PAUL & HILLARY

DO WHAT IT TAKES TO WIN
GIVE IT EVERYTHING YOU'VE GOT
DO WHAT IT TAKES TO WIN
SHOW THE WORLD WHAT I AM (**HILLARY: YOU**
ARE) NOT
ONE LAST CAMPAIGN AGAIN
TO PAY A POLITICIAN'S DUES
DO WHAT IT TAKES TO WIN

NORM

I TRUST NO ONE BUT MYSELF
I DON'T RELY ON OTHERS
IT'S JUST ONE GOOD REASON WHY
I CAN'T BE THE WAY YOU ARE
THE WAY YOU WANT THE WORLD TO BE
THIS IS NOT THE END
THIS IS NOT GOODBYE

PAUL

I'm ready.

HILLARY

To your third term.

(the two cheers their drinks as the lights black out on their scene. The spotlight refocuses on NORM, on the campaign trail with GEORGE at his side)

NORM

Now, some people have been asking “Who is Norm Coleman?” And I believe I owe you an answer. Some have called me a Republican in name only, others have called me a pawn of the current Republican administration. Well folks, when I switched parties, I didn’t switch my position on a single issue. I take pride in having earned President Bush’s early support in this race. If you want a voice against the system, that fights where we’re going, that’s fighting the president, then by all means, vote for Paul Wellstone.

(blackout)

SCENE NINE

(PAUL’s campaign office. SHEILA is already present, watching the news on a small TV. PAUL enters.)

SHEILA

Paul, you’re back! I didn’t know if you were going to make it home this week.

PAUL

Sheila? What are you doing here?

SHEILA

Haven’t you heard? Your old buddy Norm is taking a crack at your Senate seat. And he’s going in hard on you, your office is getting swamped with calls. Thought I’d come in and lend a hand –

PAUL

Actually, that’s what I wanted to discuss with you. I –

SHEILA

You want to run for another term?

PAUL

How did you guess?

SHEILA

Paul, we’ve been married for almost forty years now. I know you better than you think.

PAUL

And you’re okay with it?

SHEILA

I won’t pretend that I don’t have my concerns, but...

PAUL

Let’s play the old pros-and-cons again, then.

SHEILA

Pro: you're an extremely beloved institution around here.

PAUL

I don't know if I'd call myself an "institution."

SHEILA

I would.

PAUL

Con: I promised I wouldn't run again.

SHEILA

Pro: You are exactly the person we need to run for this seat. Without you, we probably lose.

PAUL

Con: I don't want to wear myself out. M.S. is no walk in the park.

SHEILA

We can manage. It's not like being a Senator is as demanding as being President.

PAUL

I suppose.

SHEILA

Pro: You want to.

PAUL

I do. But...

SHEILA

Pro: I want you to.

PAUL

That's all I needed to hear.

SHEILA

Let's give Norm the fight of his life.

(The lights fade out on the two, as GEORGE steps out into the spotlight, giving a speech)

GEORGE

Tonight I want to take a few minutes to discuss a grave threat to peace, and America's determination to lead the world in confronting that threat. The threat comes from Iraq. It arises directly from the Iraqi regime's own actions – its history of aggression, and its drive towards an arsenal of terror. It possesses and produces chemical and biological weapons. It is seeking nuclear weapons. It has given shelter and support to terrorism, and practices terror against its own people. The entire world has witnessed Iraq's eleven-year history of defiance, deception and bad faith. Later this week, the United States Congress will

vote on this matter. I have asked Congress to authorize the use of America's military, if it proves necessary, to enforce U.N. Security Council demands. Approving this resolution does not mean that military action is imminent or unavoidable. The resolution will tell the United Nations, and all nations, that America speaks with one voice and is determined to make the demands of the civilized world mean something. Congress will also be sending a message to the dictator in Iraq: that his only chance – his only choice is full compliance, and the time remaining for that choice is limited. *(as he speaks this next part, the lights return on the office, where PAUL, SHEILA and now HILLARY are watching a televised broadcast of the speech)* Members of Congress are nearing a historic vote. I'm confident they will fully consider the facts and their duties. *(PAUL grabs a remote and turns the TV off, as the lights fade and the GEORGE exits)*

HILLARY

I never thought they'd come dumber than Quayle. I hoped they wouldn't, anyway.

PAUL

So what, the strikes weren't enough, now he wants a ground war?

HILLARY

Seems so.

SHEILA

He did say there wouldn't necessarily be a war.

HILLARY

No, but let's not kid ourselves, that's exactly where this is heading. Added bonus is now the Republicans get to put every Democrat up against the wall.

SHEILA

So what should we do, then?

HILLARY

There's only one thing to do.

PAUL

I agree. Vote against it.

HILLARY

(overlapping with the last part of PAUL's line) Vote for it.

PAUL

Are you serious?

HILLARY

Don't be ridiculous, Paul. Anyone who votes against this is going to be crucified.

PAUL

It's a bluff. We might as well call it for what it is. If the Republicans want to get themselves down in the mud, the last thing we need to do is let them drag us into it.

HILLARY

And how do you plan on selling that to your constituents?

PAUL

Same way I always have, by being honest with them.

HILLARY

That's easy for you to say, all the way out in the middle of the country. You think I don't have hundreds of New Yorkers hounding my offices every day, calling for blood?

PAUL

I know what this means. We lost people in those towers, friends, relatives.

HILLARY

But not constituents. Not people who may have voted for you less than a year prior. They're scared, desperate. They want action. They want someone to pay.

PAUL

Then we owe it to them not to let our government go on a wild goose chase. What does Saddam have to do with any of this?

HILLARY

Who knows? But you heard Colin Powell. If Iraq is building nukes –

PAUL

Then we need to negotiate with them. We are not past the point of diplomacy.

HILLARY

How much do you think that's going to help your campaign? What good are you if that Coleman creep beats you because of this?

PAUL

Senator, if we don't fight hard enough for the things we stand for, at some point we have to recognize that we don't really stand for them.

HILLARY

Who said that?

PAUL

I did.

HILLARY

Well when you're done talking like you're on the set of West Wing, maybe you can join the rest of us in the real world.

PAUL

I've lived in the real world, Hillary, and I've put myself on the line many times before. I'll do it again if I must, and I am not going to budge on this.

HILLARY

Fine, lose. But don't say I didn't warn you.

PAUL

I won't. *(he exits, huffily)*

SHEILA

Was that really necessary?

HILLARY

What?

SHEILA

That "West Wing" crack. You shouldn't knock someone for saying what they believe.

HILLARY

He's not the only one making hard decisions. You think I support this war? It's a load of crap, if you ask me. They've been pushing for invading the Middle East ever since Bill was president. Just another avenue to funnel tax dollars to their industry buddies. But what we're dealing with here is unprecedented.

SHEILA

I'm not saying you don't have a point. But you know Paul. He's always marched to his own beat.

HILLARY

And that's what I love about him. But I'm not gonna lie, it does get pretty aggravating sometimes.

SHEILA

You don't have to tell me twice. *(she gets up to exit)*

HILLARY

You think he can still win? Even if he does vote no? The polls are neck and neck –

SHEILA

Yes, I do.

HILLARY

Why?

SHEILA

Because I have to. *(blackout)*

SCENE ELEVEN

(the stage is set for a debate between PAUL and NORM, with a moderator between them)

MODERATOR

We're in the final stretch of a brutal campaign. One of these two men will serve as your U.S. Senator for the next six years. The incumbent, Paul Wellstone, or the challenger, Norm Coleman. We'll begin with opening statements, and then we'll dive into the issues. I want this clean and fair. The incumbent will have the first word. Begin.

6. The Debate Song (War of the Words)

PAUL

WITH DUE RESPECT TO MY OPPONENT
HE'S A PROVEN PROPONENT
OF WHATEVER HE THINKS HELPS HIM GET AHEAD
HE HAS NOT ONE HONEST POSITION
TO HELP THE RICH, HIS ONLY MISSION
YOU CAN NEVER TRUST A SINGLE WORD HE'S SAID

OH NORM, IF I COULD ONLY BE LIKE YOU
NEVER HAVING TO OWN UP OR GET A CLUE
OH NORM, IF I COULD ONLY MAKE YOU SEE
WHAT YOU'RE IN FOR WHEN YOU TRIED TO TAKE ON ME

IT'S A BATTLE OF IDEAS
IT'S A WAR BETWEEN THE WORDS
WHEN A MILLION PEOPLE MAKE THEIR VOICES HEARD
THEY SAY IT ALL ENDS IN NOVEMBER
BUT I'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER
WHAT IT'S LIKE TO COME TWO SPOTS AHEAD OF THIRD

MODERATOR

Looks like the gloves are off already. Mayor Coleman, your response.

NORM

HOW CAN I SAY THIS AND BE RESPECTFUL?
YOU'VE GOT A TRACK RECORD THAT'S DREADFUL
YOU'LL DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO GET AHEAD
THE WORLD'S AT WAR NOW, TIME TO MAN UP
WE NEED SOMEONE WHO CAN STAND UP
TIME TO PUT THE LIBERALS BACK IN THEIR BED

OH PAUL, HERE'S THE BEST LESSON THAT I LEARNED
FLYING CLOSE TO THE SUN'S GONNA GET YOU BURNED
OH PAUL, YOU WILL REGRET RUNNING AGAIN
WHEN YOUR PACIFISTIC NONSENSE LETS ME WIN

IT'S A BATTLE OF IDEAS, IT'S A WAR BETWEEN THE WORDS
WHEN A MILLION PEOPLE MAKE THEIR VOICES HEARD
THEY SAY THIS ALL ENDS IN NOVEMBER
BUT I'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER

WHAT IT'S LIKE TO COME TWO SPOTS AHEAD OF THIRD

MODERATOR

Now for some specifics.

YOUR POSITION ON ABORTION?

PAUL

FOR IT.

NORM

AGAINST IT.

MODERATOR

IS THE ESTATE TAX AN EXTORTION?

PAUL

DISAGREE.

NORM

AGREE.

MODERATOR

ON THE TOPIC OF GAY MARRIAGE –

PAUL

I'M FOR IT.

NORM

WELL I ABHOR IT.

MODERATOR

DO YOU SUPPORT THE IRAQ WAR?

PAUL

I HOLD SEVERAL RESERVATIONS
I DON'T BELIEVE THIS ADMINISTRATION
IF THERE'S PROOF OF WMDS
IT'S SOMETHING WE HAVE YET TO SEE
AND IF THERE ARE THEN WE SHOULD FIGHT IT

MODERATOR

MR. COLEMAN?

NORM

(beat) UNDECIDED.

MODERATOR

Well, that just about wraps things up between these two. In our continuing interest of reaching out to the common voter, we'd like to hear now from our panel of undecided voters who've been watching on with great interest. Voters, what are your thoughts? *(the lights shift over to a panel of three undecided voters, all average schlubs)*

UNDECIDED VOTER #1

They're like two sides of the same coin.

UNDECIDED VOTER #2

I like that Coleman guy, I feel like I could have a beer with him.

UNDECIDED VOTER #3

There's an election this year?

MODERATOR

And there you have it. Stay tuned for our continuing live coverage on the resolution to authorize military force in Iraq. *(the music continues through the scene, which shifts from the debate stage to the floor of the Senate, with HILLARY presiding. NORM and SHEILA watch from the gallery)*

NORM

HOW DO I PLAY THIS WITHOUT MALICE?
I CAN NOT COME OFF AS CALLOUS
HOWEVER HE VOTES, I'LL DO WHATEVER IT TAKES

HILLARY

Senator Wellstone, on Resolution 114, authorization of the use of force in Iraq – how do you vote?

PAUL

(softly) OSEH SHALOM BIMROMAV
HU YA'ASEH SHALOM ALEINU
V'AL KOL YISRAEL
V'IMRU AMEN...

(PAUL steps forward and dramatically puts his thumb down. HILLARY, a tad disappointed, records his vote, while SHEILA and NORM are elated by the vote, but for entirely different reasons)

A YEAR OF CHANGE
IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE
A YEAR OF CHANGE
BUT LET THE RECORD SHOW
THAT PAUL WELLSTONE VOTED "NO"
BECAUSE IT'S 2002
AND I'M STILL NOT THROUGH

HILLARY

The motion carries, 77-23. *(she gavels the session to a close)*

PAUL

A YEAR OF CHANGE...

(NORM walks by PAUL and pulls a gloating face at him, which PAUL returns with a satisfied smile as NORM exits. HILLARY moves to PAUL)

HILLARY

Well, Paul. Let it never be said you don't have a certain flair for the theatrics.

PAUL

I try.

HILLARY

If this is what it takes for you, then who am I to say otherwise? *(she offers her hand for a handshake, which PAUL graciously accepts)* I hope you win. Truly. *(HILLARY exits. SHEILA approaches PAUL)*

SHEILA

I saw him again.

PAUL

Who?

SHEILA

That boy I met on the beach all those years ago.

PAUL

The boy who probably just blew his re-election bid, you mean.

SHEILA

Don't be so sure. People like an underdog, you know.

PAUL

I hope you're right. *(beat)* So what now?

SHEILA

What do you mean?

PAUL

We lost the vote. Twelve years in and I still can't help but feel we're worse off than ever.

SHEILA

Well... In some ways. Maybe not in others. But either way. Only thing we can do is the only thing we've always done.

PAUL

What's that?

SHEILA

We keep on fighting.

7. We Will Rise

LIFT UP YOUR HEAD AND SMILE
PUT ALL YOUR DOUBTS AT EASE
FEELS LIKE IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE WE COULD BREATHE
NOTHING LEFT TO FORGET
NOTHING LEFT TO FORGIVE
JUST TRY TO MAKE THE BEST AND TRY TO LIVE

'CAUSE I KNOW OUR BEST DAYS ARE AHEAD
THOUGH PEOPLE SAY WE'VE LEFT THEM BEHIND
LISTEN TO WHAT'S INSIDE YOU INSTEAD
JUST LOOK UP AND YOU WILL FIND

WE WILL RISE TO FACE TOMORROW
WE WILL RISE THROUGH PAIN AND SORROW
WE'LL DO WHAT WE CAN AND THEN A LITTLE MORE
WE WILL RISE TO SEE THE DAYLIGHT
IF TOGETHER WE UNITE
WE'LL BE STRONGER THAN WE'VE EVER BEEN BEFORE
WHEN THE SUN COMES UP TO MEET THE MORNING SKIES
WE WILL RISE

(The stage resets to a neutral setting – a small staircase comes out, which PAUL and SHEILA begin to climb. STEPHEN steps out)

STEPHEN

That was the last big vote my brother ever took. The rest... Well. Most of you know the rest. *(the whirring of a plane about to take flight can be heard as PAUL and SHEILA board)*

PAUL

Sheila, look.

SHEILA

What?

PAUL

Our state, Sheila.

SHEILA

What about it?

PAUL

It's beautiful.

SHEILA

It's not the coasts.

PAUL

But it's home – wherever you are. That's where home is.

PAUL AND STEPHEN

I could stay in this moment forever. *(a beat, as STEPHEN stares at PAUL, who continues gazing out)*

SHEILA

It's time to go, Paul.

PAUL

Right. Onward.

STEPHEN

Wait. *(as he says this, PAUL and SHEILA are holding hands – the action freezes momentarily)* Just one more second. That's all I need. One more... *(a long pause)* Okay. Okay. Let's go, then. *(PAUL and SHEILA exit together. A NEWSCASTER appears)*

REPORTER

Tragedy strikes in the Land of Ten Thousand Lakes. Senator Paul Wellstone, his wife and daughter have perished in a plane crash along with four others. Wellstone was in the middle of a tough re-election campaign against Republican Norm Coleman, who our political analysts believe... *(they trail off)*

(the full ensemble – minus PAUL and SHEILA – re-enters in the background)

STEPHEN

So that's it, then. The story of Paul Wellstone. A life dedicated to serving the people, working to make the world a better place... And just like that, he's gone. Gone, but not forgotten. And where does that leave us? *(beat)* It's why I brought you all here tonight. To let you know that the struggle is not over.

ROGER

After Paul's death, a group of Paul's supporters formed what became known as "Wellstone Action," now "re:Power," dedicated to carrying out his progressive ideals. Their candidate training program has recruited countless progressives to run for office the way Paul did, successfully electing politicians such as former Secretary of State Mark Ritchie, and Governor Tim Walz.

ABBY

The Violence Against Women Act continued to enjoy bipartisan support for years to come, although has currently expired due to conservative obstruction in the Senate. Women in Congress continue to fight tooth and nail to reinstate the law held near and dear to Paul and Sheila's hearts.

MATT

The Affordable Care Act passed by President Barack Obama saw the implementation of many of Paul's ambitions for healthcare in the United States, expanding coverage to millions and ensuring critical protections for those with pre-existing conditions.

JAMIE

The Bipartisan Campaign Finance Reform Act, one of Paul's proudest achievements, was compromised by the Supreme Court in 2010. Congressional Democrats are working to reimplement its policies by way the For the People Act, passed by the House in 2019.

REN

The Paul Wellstone Mental Health Parity Act was signed into law in 2008, ensuring that healthcare providers and insurance companies could no longer discriminate against those with mental illnesses.

STEPHEN

So long as millions of us carry on the ideals of Paul and Sheila Wellstone, they are alive. This isn't just Paul's story – it's *our* story. We can fight. We can rally. We can vote. We can make a difference. All of us. Together.

AS THE SEASONS GO BY
FEELS LIKE WE'RE LOSING TIME
TRYING TO FIND A RHYTHM IN EACH RHYME

JESSE

NOTHING CAN CHANGE THE PAST

NORM

NOTHING CAN STOP THINGS FROM MOVING ON

HILLARY

THE GOOD AND THE BAD DON'T LAST AND WHEN WE'RE GONE

STEPHEN

I CAN HEAR MY BROTHER SAY
THERE IS STILL MORE TO BE DONE
MAKE TOMORROW A BRIGHTER DAY
AND WE'LL RISE TO SEE THE SUN

COMPANY

WE WILL RISE TO FACE TOMORROW
WE WILL RISE THROUGH PAIN AND SORROW
WE'LL DO WHAT WE CAN, AS FAR AS WE CAN GO
WE WILL RISE TO SEE THE DAYLIGHT
IF TOGETHER WE UNITE
WE ARE STRONGER NOW THAN WE COULD EVER KNOW

STEPHEN

WHEN THE SUN COMES UP TO MEET THE MORNING SKIES

COMPANY

WE'LL KEEP THE DREAM ALIVE, WE WILL
WE'LL KEEP THE DREAM ALIVE
WE'LL KEEP THE DREAM ALIVE, WE WILL

STEPHEN

THERE'S A PLACE I KNOW
WHERE WE CAN BOTH BE FREE
WHERE THE SKY IS CLEAR

WE'LL KEEP THE DREAM ALIVE
WE'LL KEEP THE DREAM ALIVE, WE WILL
WE'LL KEEP THE DREAM ALIVE
WE'LL KEEP THE DREAM ALIVE, WE WILL

AND YOU CAN TASTE THE SEA
IF YOU WANT TO FIND IT, THEN JUST FOLLOW
ME
I'LL BE THERE

ALL

A YEAR OF CHANGE

WE WILL RISE TO FACE TOMORROW
WE WILL RISE THROUGH PAIN AND SORROW
WE'LL DO WHAT WE CAN AND THEN A LITTLE MORE
WE WILL RISE TO SEE THE DAYLIGHT
IF TOGETHER WE UNITE
WE'LL BE STRONGER THAN WE'VE EVER BEEN BEFORE

(PAUL and SHEILA enter, hand-in-hand, and PAUL joins hands with STEPHEN)

WHEN THE SUN COMES UP TO MEET THE MORNING SKIES
WE WILL RISE
WE WILL RISE

PAUL

WE WILL

(blackout)