

THE WEST WING

"I'm Just a Bill"

by

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podcasting at

www.SamandJimgotoHollywood.com

TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. CORRIDOR - MORNING

Donna updates Josh on his day as they walk toward his office.

DONNA
It's your birthday.

JOSH
Can we reschedule?

DONNA
Not the surprise party.

JOSH
Surprise party?

DONNA
In 5 minutes.

JOSH
Kind of stretches the meaning of
surprise.

DONNA
Technically, it's a surprise.

JOSH
And I'm pretty sure that stretches
the definition of "technically."

DONNA
Technically it's a surprise because
everyone's going to say surprise to
you.

JOSH
Do you work here, or is this, like,
a sideline for your party- planning
business?

Leo crosses their path at a doorway and stops them.

LEO
Josh, is the Harper Rider --

JOSH
It's done. They're announcing to
the press any minute.

LEO

Okay.

Leo moves off, Donna and Josh continue on.

JOSH

What else?

DONNA

My friend Dale is coming in today.

JOSH

Dale.

DONNA

He's really sweet and I told him he could see the Oval Office.

They arrive at Josh's office. The door is closed.

JOSH

So show him around, give him a mug and send him back to Wisconsin.

DONNA

Texas. And you have to set up an Oval Office tour.

JOSH

You can't do that?

DONNA

Technically.

JOSH

I'm going to my office now and do some, you know, work. Can we do this later?

Donna moves off, exasperated.

JOSH (CONT'D)

(continuing)

And don't give away my mug this time.

Josh enters his office to find

INT. JOSH'S OFFICE - CONTINUING

Sam, asleep at the desk. Josh sees him and turns on the TV. Sam wakes up, looking very tired.

JOSH
How long have you been asleep?

SAM
A few minutes.

JOSH
How long have you been awake?

SAM
37 hours.

JOSH
And how long you gonna be in my
chair?

Sam gets up and Josh claims his chair.

SAM
Sorry. I'm hiding from Toby.

TOBY (O.S.)
Sam!

SAM
Without much success. Did you fix
the Teacher Tax Bill?

JOSH
Yes. Yes I did. I personally
saved a Bill that eliminates
federal income taxes on
schoolteachers.

SAM
How?

JOSH
Through subtle yet powerful
negotiating.

SAM
Meaning?

JOSH
I asked the Harpers what they
wanted to remove the rider. And
then I gave it to them.

SAM
Shrewd.

Toby opens the door.

TOBY

(To Josh)

Is Sam --

(sees Sam)

The NEA speech is still not on my desk.

SAM

Why do you think I'm hiding in here?

TOBY

The President is going to the National Endowment for the Arts Gala tomorrow night. Do you know what a Gala is?

JOSH

It's a kind of apple, isn't it?

TOBY

(to Sam)

A Gala, in this case, is 1200 influential people who will be gathered -- in very expensive and, I'm just guessing, not very comfortable evening-wear -- to witness the President's unveiling of the most ambitious federal arts program since FDR.

SAM

Toby --

TOBY

And as these people are whisked away from the Gala --

JOSH

Not the apple.

TOBY

-- in limousines, they'll be contemplating ways to use their influence to promote the NEA, ensuring future opportunities to put on uncomfortable formal wear, take limo rides, and chat with the President.

SAM

Toby --

TOBY

Which is why, Samuel, all 1200 people in that ballroom will be desperately hoping that the President will arrive with SOMETHING to SAY.

SAM

I'm on it.

Sam crowds past Toby and exits. Toby turns to Josh.

TOBY

Are the Harpers --

JOSH

Don't worry about it. It's done.

TOBY

The Teacher Tax Bill is a very big deal, Josh, something that might call for just a smidgen of worrying --

JOSH

Observe the master's handiwork.

Josh picks up the remote and flicks his silent TV set over to C-SPAN, where a crowd mills near a microphone-laden podium.

On the TV, distinguished, 60-ish SENATOR KEN HARPER, and his son, CONGRESSMAN KENNY HARPER, JR., a determined-looking man in his late 30's, move behind the podium.

CONGRESSMAN KENNY

"Almighty God has given us the gift of children, and the responsibility to educate them as we think best--"

TOBY

Lest the world run short of overbearing zealots.

CONGRESSMAN KENNY

" -- would like to thank the White House --"

Josh leans back in his chair enjoying this.

JOSH

You're welcome. Now sing "Happy Birthday" to me.

CONGRESSMAN KENNY
 "-- tried to buy us off, but we
 have rejected the President's
 offers."

JOSH
 (sits bolt upright)
 WHAT?

Just then the door opens and Donna, carrying a cake blazing
 with candles, leads a crowd of office workers into the
 office. As Josh stares at the TV in shock and disbelief,

CROWD
 SURPRISE!

SMASH CUT TO:

MAIN TITLES

END OF TEASER

ACT I

INT. CORRIDOR - MORNING

Josh and Donna walk. Donna carries a piece of birthday cake
 with a burnt candle in it and a fork.

DONNA
 But you like Devil's Food --

JOSH
 Donna, not right now.

DONNA
 Will you see about getting Dale --

JOSH
 Donna! This isn't the time for
 cake and it isn't the time to set
 up your friend's sightseeing
 expedition.

Donna shoves the plate into Josh's hands and stalks off.
 Josh, contemplating the cake, enters

INT. LEO'S OUTER OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

and looks up at Leo's secretary, Margaret, who notes the
 cake.

MARGARET

If he doesn't throw it at you, can
I have it?

Josh braces himself, raps on the open door and enters

INT. LEO'S OFFICE - CONTINUING

holding the cake out like a gift. Leo is seated at his desk.

LEO

What's this?

JOSH

Cake. Do you want --

LEO

You know what I want, Josh? Right
now, I want to feel like the White
House plays a role in shaping
public policy.

JOSH

Leo --

LEO

Shut the door.

Josh shuts the door, sets the cake down on the desk and sits.

JOSH

They lied to me.

LEO

Yeah, I think I picked up on that.

JOSH

They aren't playing by the rules,
Leo, they lied to my face.

LEO

Yeah. Because you let them.

JOSH

I let them?

LEO

You think they decided to screw us
because they woke up feeling
frisky? You let them think they
could get more out of us.

JOSH
You know what I am, Leo? I'm an elk.

LEO
Excuse me?

JOSH
No, not an elk. I'm a gazelle.

LEO
Josh, I don't know what --

JOSH
We know Senator Harper is grooming his son for higher office. It's like on National Geographic, the momma cheetah wounds a gazelle so the baby cheetah can practice taking it down.

LEO
So? What are you going to do about it?

JOSH
They lied to me, Leo. They threw out the rules. How can I work with them?

LEO
Figure it out.
(turns to his work)
There's still one rule, Josh: don't let them eat you.

JOSH
Easy for you to say. You're not the gazelle.

On Josh's exit,

CUT TO:

INT. COMMUNICATIONS BULLPEN - MORNING

Sam, looking groggy, emerges from his office carrying a coffee mug. He wanders over to the coffee maker -- but the pots are all empty.

CATHY
They're empty.

SAM

Why?

CATHY

You need a nap.

SAM

I don't have time for a nap. I need coffee.

CATHY

You can't have any more coffee.

SAM

(to bullpen workers)

Is there possibly any building on earth where people are more entitled to have a cup of coffee than this one?

No one responds. Toby enters the bullpen.

CATHY

If you stay awake any longer nothing you get done is going to make sense to anyone. I command you to nap.

SAM

(cowed)

Okay.

TOBY

You don't have time for a nap.

SAM

(to Cathy)

See?

TOBY

How's the speech?

SAM

(to Toby)

I'm having problems. It isn't coming together right.

TOBY

You had five pages yesterday. Not that any of them --

SAM

-- made any sense, I know. That's the trouble. I just...I can't find the handle on this thing.

TOBY

It's a speech about the value of public art. How much handle do you need?

SAM

This is art, Toby, it isn't about the facts, it's --

TOBY

Just pretend it's some other policy and insert the word "art" in key places.

SAM

Who am I to talk about art? I'm a lawyer, I'm a speechwriter, but artists work in a very special --

TOBY

People buy art at Wal-Mart, for God's sake!

SAM

They do?

TOBY

Well, they think they do.

Toby pushes Sam into his office.

TOBY (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Now sit in this room, write me a speech, and then, if you give me something that has verbs, a few adjectives and a sprinkling of nouns that are even vaguely about the importance of publicly funding art, you can sleep.

SAM

(meekly)

Okay.

TOBY

Cathy, get him some coffee.

Cathy sighs and gets up.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

Josh, Toby, C.J. and Sam sit around a conference table, where Sam has nodded off. Leo walks in.

LEO
Let's talk about the Harper thing.
(notices)
Why is Sam asleep?

JOSH
He's really, really tired.

LEO
(annoyed)
And...

TOBY
And maybe a little sleep gets us an
NEA speech during this presidency.

LEO
Okay. Harper. Anyone?

TOBY
It's school vouchers on a massive
scale. It's unfunded. We can't
sign it.

JOSH
So we don't. We put this on the
Harpers in the media and kill their
provisions after it's passed.

LEO
And count on being able to unmake
the law later? No.

C.J.
It might be worth trying, Leo.
Vouchers lose big every time they
show up on a referendum.

TOBY
And we might kill Head Start in the
process.

C.J.
Wait a minute, why Head Start?

LEO
The rider's unfunded.

TOBY
To pay for it we'd have to raid
funds already committed to other
federal education programs, like
Head Start.

JOSH
And school lunch, vaccination
programs, half of everything.

C.J.
Leo, the President can't sign that.

TOBY
Thank you.

JOSH
Which is why he should pocket it.
We'll get the rest back later.

TOBY
Maybe. Maybe we won't.

JOSH
Ghengis Khan couldn't vote against
Head Start. We'll get it back.

TOBY
Maybe. Maybe we won't.

C.J.
Meanwhile, I need to get out a
response to that press conference,
or the Harpers run the weekend and
the NEA gets buried.

JOSH
(stressed-out)
Look. The day's not over. I'll
find a way to kill the rider.

LEO
Find it by 3. They're coming in.

Bartlet enters, very cheerful. They all rise, except for
Sam. C.J. reaches to wake him, but Bartlet waves her away.

BARTLET
Let him be. Good morning.

ALL
 (ad lib)
 Good morning, Mr. President.

BARTLET
 You're looking at the best
 politician in the world. Do you
 know how I know this fact to be
 true?

C.J.
 You got elected President?

Bartlet takes a seat. The others follow.

BARTLET
 A good answer, C.J., but not the
 one I'm looking for. No, after a
 20 year battle, I have finally
 persuaded my mother-in-law to see
 reason. After countless springs
 during which she has railed against
 the barren plot of soil which is
 her back yard, I have convinced her
 that the virtues of sod outweigh
 those of seeding. How, you ask? By
 pointing out that with seeding one
 must await -- what, Toby?

TOBY
 Rain?

BARTLET
 She's had running water for some
 time, Toby. No, one must await
 germination.

TOBY
 I sit corrected.

BARTLET
 Followed by weeks of intensive care
 and watering, all of which may or
 may not have to be repeated again.
 Points which she has, at last,
 conceded.

LEO
 I think I speak for all of us, Mr.
 President, when I extend my
 heartfelt congratulations on your
 tremendous accomplishment.

BARTLET

Mockery does not diminish the significance of this achievement. Great politicians overcome their doubters with time, Claudia Jean, which is precisely what I've just done. Now. What's up with our friends the Harpers?

JOSH

I would just like to say that I am nobody's gazelle, Mr. President.

LEO

It's being handled, Sir.

BARTLET

I'll pretend I haven't heard that before. Okay, when do I get the NEA speech?

TOBY

Sam's on it.

Bartlet looks at Sam.

BARTLET

Sam's asleep.

TOBY

Sam's finding art an excessively challenging topic.

Toby nudges Sam, who stirs, bleary.

BARTLET

Apparently.

TOBY

I suggested he try thinking of it like anything else you buy at Wal-Mart. It didn't help.

BARTLET

I wonder how much art Wal-Mart sells? It must be an awful lot.

C.J.

Wal-Mart art is hardly the in the same league as the NEA, sir.

SAM

Hmm --?

BARTLET
 (to Sam)
 Go back to sleep, Sam.

Sam drifts back to sleep.

BARTLET (CONT'D)
 (continuing)
 People vote with their wallets,
 C.J. And, considering how I got to
 sit in this chair, I treasure a
 certain fondness for the popular
 choice.

C.J.
 Well, apparently we've made an
 unpopular one. Carol took a call
 this morning; the NAACP might have
 a problem with a painting in the
 show.

LEO
 Which painting?

C.J.
 I don't know.

TOBY
 What's the problem?

C.J.
 I don't know that yet, either.

BARTLET
 Can I help? I'm hot today, Leo.

LEO
 Thank you, Mr. President, we'll
 take care of it.
 (to the staff)
 Now, people. We're done.

As everyone rises,

CUT TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

C.J. shakes Sam; he wakes, bumping his head into hers.

C.J.
 Ow! Sam!

C.J. rubs her head.

SAM
What happened?

C.J.
You bonked me in the head is what happened.

SAM
No, in the meeting. What happened in the meeting?

C.J.
We talked about the rider. And how sod is better than seed.

SAM
Maybe for lazy people.

C.J.
Yes, well I'm off to explain to the press how this rider ended up on our bill.

C.J. moves to the door.

SAM
(singing to himself)
"I'm just a Bill, and I'm sittin'
here on Capitol Hill."

C.J. stops at the door.

C.J.
That's a funny song.

SAM
I always loved that song.

C.J.
That's a real song?

SAM
Yes, it's a real song. It's Schoolhouse Rock, everybody knows the song.

C.J.
Not everybody.

SAM
Well everyone in this building
knows it.

C.J.
Except, apparently, me.

SAM
Did I hear the President say
something about the NEA speech?

C.J.
Yeah, he wanted to know how much
art Wal-Mart sells --

SAM
Really?

C.J.
Apparently he thinks art is like
politicians -- popular is good.

Sam gets a look of odd inspiration.

SAM
Really.

C.J.
Yeah. Listen, how does the song
go? Could you --

But Sam is already hurrying out as we,

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - MORNING

Josh approaches his office. Donna chats with a man in his
late 30's, wearing casual-nice clothes and dress cowboy
boots.

DONNA
Josh! Josh, this is Dale --

Josh gives Dale's hand a perfunctory shake.

JOSH
(unenthusiastically)
All the way from Wisconsin.

DALE
Dallas.

JOSH
Right. Donna, I need you to get
Kenny Harper on the phone for me.

DALE
Is his rider really going through?

JOSH
What?

DALE
I've been following the Teacher Tax
Bill, and --

JOSH
No, it's not. At least I think
it's not. Donna --

DONNA
Did you find out about the Oval
Office?

DALE
See, I know Kenny from way back and
that bill is --

JOSH
(exasperated)
Dale. Donna. I don't want to be
rude, but -- I just don't have the
time. Donna, get on the phone.

DONNA
Josh --

JOSH
Now, Donna.

Donna turns away and Josh walks into his office --

INT. JOSH'S OFFICE - CONTINUING

-- and takes a deep, frustrated breath at the window. He
turns to see Dale step into his office and close the door.

JOSH
Man, are you persistent. I'll get
you into the Oval Office. So
just...get along, or whatever you
people in Texas do, okay?

DALE
That's not why I'm here.

JOSH
You can't have my mug.

DALE
(soberly)
I slept with Kenny Harper.

On Josh's reaction,

FADE TO BLACK

END OF ACT I

ACT II

INT. CORRIDOR - LATER

Toby catches up to C.J.

TOBY
Did you find out about the
painting?

C.J.
I'm on my way to brief Leo, come
with me. Listen, Sam mentioned
this song about a bill --

TOBY
"I'm Just a Bill?"

C.J.
That one. You know it?

TOBY
Not too many songs about
legislation.

C.J.
Well, I don't. My parents weren't
real big on TV. So, how does it
go?

TOBY
How can you not know the Bill song
and have your job?

C.J. gives Toby a look as they enter Leo's office.

INT. LEO'S OFFICE - CONTINUING

Leo rises.

LEO
You talked to the NAACP?

C.J.
Yep.

LEO
So who's got the problem?

C.J.
Kwame Simms.

TOBY
The President of the NAACP doesn't
like art?

C.J.
Not when it contains, and I quote,
"a gratuitous portrayal of violent
and insidious racial stereotypes."

TOBY
What's the painting?

C.J.
From what I gather, it depicts 5
black men raping a white woman.

LEO
Gee, I wonder what his problem is.

C.J.
In a shopping mall.

LEO
That's horrible. And a little
weird.

C.J.
I don't think you'll hear a lot of
argument on that point.

TOBY
It must have some merit, it got
past the selection committee.

LEO
That doesn't mean this
administration has to sponsor it.

TOBY

Maybe it's a moving indictment of, I don't know, the isolation of black youth from mainstream culture. Their anger at exclusion from our orgy of middle-class consumerism. Or something.

C.J.

Where were you when I was getting a B in Art appreciation?

TOBY

You got B in Art appreciation?

C.J.

I don't like to talk about it.

LEO

Simms wants it gone?

C.J.

Simms is up for re-election. Right now, he wants anything that raises his profile.

LEO

Okay. I'll call the Director of the Endowment and make it go away.

C.J.

There's a censorship issue here.

Leo picks up the phone.

LEO

Yeah. Miranda won't like it, but she's an old friend. She'll understand.

(pushes intercom)

Margaret, get me Miranda Durham at the NEA.

C.J. and Toby begin to exit.

LEO (CONT'D)

(continuing)

C.J., what's the name of this piece of...art.

C.J.

"Soccer Mom."

LEO
Of course it is.

CUT TO:

INT. JOSH'S OFFICE - LATER

Josh listens intently as Dale paces.

DALE
Texans like us have a choice. You graduate college, you just go away. If you want to go back to your hometown...you get married. Start a family. Keep your mouth shut.

JOSH
I know Texas isn't exactly the Castro, but --

DALE
You know that kid they tied to a rail fence in Wyoming? That was 2 years ago, Mr. Lyman. This was almost 20.

JOSH
Yeah.

DALE
And I wanted to go home.

JOSH
And if you want to go to Congress like your daddy someday...

DALE
Yes.

JOSH
So, I don't get it. Why now?

DALE
I could live with most of it. Voting against gay marriage -- hell, I'm not sure I like that idea myself. And his votes against Medicare reforms, and welfare, and -
- all that stuff.

JOSH
But...?

Dale sits down.

DALE
My wife's a teacher, we've got
three kids, and --

JOSH
(realizing)
You want the money.

DALE
It's a tax credit, and we deserve
it.

JOSH
Wow.
(thinks)
So you're ready to go public?

DALE
(startled)
Good Lord, no!

JOSH
But you just said--

Dale rises and paces again.

DALE
I said I'm trying to do better by
my family. I can't put them
through that. No, sir.

JOSH
Then what --

DALE
You're a smart man, Mr. Lyman.
(smiles)
I just thought you'd like to know.

Josh is interrupted by a knock, followed immediately by
Donna's entrance.

DONNA
Have you seen --
(to Dale)
Oh, you're in here. What have you
guys been doing?

JOSH
(quickly)
Talking about Texas. Your aunt's --

DALE
Cousin's.

JOSH
Farm.

DONNA
Ranch.

JOSH
Yeah. Donna, listen. Why don't
you take Dale here on the tour,
maybe get some lunch, okay?

DONNA
Okay. What about the --

JOSH
The Oval Office, yeah.
(rises, looks at Dale)
Y'know, Dale...it might take awhile
to arrange, but if you don't mind
sticking around, I'll see what we
can do with you.

Josh squeezes past a pleased Donna.

DONNA
(to Josh)
I told you he was sweet.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - LATER

Danny Concannon spots C.J.

DANNY
C.J.! Wait up. I've gotta ask you
something.

C.J. stops. Danny catches up to her.

C.J.
Did you watch TV?

DANNY
Today?

They start walking.

C.J.
Growing up.

DANNY
Religiously. Listen, C.J. --

C.J.
I didn't feel like I was missing anything, you know?

DANNY
You weren't.

C.J.
I was. It's the water-cooler thing.

DANNY
You mean, topical, inane chatter?

C.J.
Yeah.

DANNY
Trust me, you're doing fine.
(stops her)
Is the White House launching an investigation of a major U.S. Company?

C.J.
Why would you think that?

DANNY
There's a rumor going around.

C.J.
Uh-huh.
(thinks))
Okay. I'll give you an answer if you give me an answer.

DANNY
I won't tell you who said it.

C.J.
You sing me the "Bill" song. Then I'll answer your question.

DANNY
You want me to sing.

C.J.
Yes.

DANNY

I'm not...wait, this is because you don't know it. You don't know the "Bill" song?

C.J.

I was underprivileged.

DANNY

C.J., there are 3 things everyone in Washington knows. I don't know what the first 2 are, but I'm pretty sure "I'm Just a Bill" is the third.

C.J.

How badly do you want an answer?

Danny looks around; no one is too near.

DANNY

Alright. But I have to warn you, I'm pretty cute when I sing.

C.J.

(turning away)

Oh, never mind --

Danny, trying to be inconspicuous, starts singing. C.J. turns again to watch him with a mixture of amusement and close attention.

DANNY

I'm just a bill / yes, I'm only a bill / and I'm sitting here on Capitol Hill / Well, it's a long, long journey to the Capitol City / It's a long, long wait while I'm sitting in committee / But I know I'll be a law someday / At least I hope and pray that I will / But today I'm still only a bill.

Josh, on his way by, pauses.

JOSH

That last line there; it's "still just a bill."

DANNY

Really?

JOSH

Yep. Moving rendition, by the way.

Josh slaps Danny on the back and continues on. Danny looks expectantly at C.J., who is beaming at him.

C.J.

Wow. That was... Wow.

DANNY

So?

C.J.

There's no investigation.

DANNY

(put out)

Then what'd you make me do this for?

C.J.

To see if you're cute when you sing.

DANNY

And?

C.J. walks off, smiling.

DANNY (CONT'D)

(continuing)

There's two more verses, you know.

C.J. pauses, then keeps walking. On Danny's smile,

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Josh sees a commotion. Sam is directing two office workers who carry huge file boxes into Sam's office.

JOSH

Sam, the last line in the Bill song is "still just a bill," right? Not "only".

SAM

(to workers)

On the chair.

(to Josh)

First verse?

JOSH
Yeah.

SAM
Yeah.

JOSH
(re: boxes)
What's that?

SAM
Research. Hey, can I ask you
something?

JOSH
Sure, I wanna talk to you about
something, too.

SAM
Are plastic mugs aesthetically
valuable? You know, pleasing to
the eye?

JOSH
(turns around)
Gotta go.

SAM
Is that a no?

INT. TOBY'S OFFICE - LATER

Toby is reading. Josh enters and shuts the door.

JOSH
(gleeful)
I got him.

TOBY
Got who?

JOSH
That sanctimonious, self-
righteous, lying little son of a
Senator.

TOBY
What do you have?

JOSH
He's gay.

TOBY
 (surprised)
 He is?

JOSH
 Or he was. In college, anyway, at
 least part-time, or -- look, it
 doesn't matter, I got him!

Toby is unmoved by Josh's enthusiasm.

JOSH (CONT'D)
 (continuing)
 This is political death for him,
 Toby. That's it, the end, no more
 Kenny Jr. I just need help
 figuring out how to use...

Toby is still regarding Josh somberly.

TOBY
 You can't use it.

JOSH
 Against that homophobic son-of-a-
 bitch? Yes, I can.

TOBY
 It's wrong and you can't use it.

JOSH
 Toby, I didn't throw out the rules.
 He did when he lied to me and
 screwed us on national television.
 Not only can I use it, it's my job.

TOBY
 And, what? You're just doing it?
 That excuse is a little tired.

JOSH
 You know they wouldn't hesitate for
 a moment.

TOBY
 That's why we're better people.

JOSH
 That's why they control Congress.

Toby stands, upset.

TOBY

Josh! You cannot use this man's sexual orientation against him! You do that, you play on exactly the same blind, reactionary prejudices that get people like him elected to begin with.

JOSH

Why not? He's not a gay man trying to live his life privately. He's a homophobic congressman who signs anti-gay legislation whenever he can.

Josh sits down.

TOBY

That doesn't give you the right --

JOSH

No, it doesn't. 5 million kids getting vaccinations and breakfast give me the right. Public schools not becoming a dumping ground for the worst of the worst, that gives me the right. Up against that, worrying about the moral dimension of making Kenny Harper uncomfortable with who he really is just doesn't bother me a lot.

TOBY

It should. Conscience is not a luxury, Josh.

Josh stands up.

JOSH

If Leo signs off on this, will you be okay?

Toby rises to go.

TOBY

He won't.

JOSH

I'll bet you 5 million kids he does.

On their exit,

CUT TO:

INT. LEO'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Margaret ushers in MIRANDA DURHAM, director of the NEA. An energetic woman in her mid-50's, Miranda exudes a centered, untroubled demeanor. Leo rises with genuine pleasure to see her.

LEO
Miranda.

Leo reaches out for a handshake, which Miranda effortlessly transforms into a hug.

MIRANDA
Leo, how are you?

Leo steps away.

LEO
If every appointment we confirmed was as easy as yours I'd be a lot better.

MIRANDA
Funny, it didn't seem so easy at the time.

LEO
Only because we didn't have much to compare it to back then. Have a seat.

They settle in.

MIRANDA
So, we have a problem?

LEO
The NAACP is having some problems with the message conveyed by this painting...

MIRANDA
"Soccer Mom." Disturbing picture.

LEO
Kwame Simms finds it pretty offensive.

MIRANDA

Funny, we've managed to outrage our side for once.

LEO

Miranda, I don't want to outlaw the painting or make some kind of big deal about this.

MIRANDA

You just want it pulled from the show at the Gala. I guess even liberals aren't above a little censorship now and then, hmm?

LEO

I don't have to tell you what a fight it's been to position us for this thing. We're looking at the first increase in public funding for the NEA in a decade. The Gala's a big event, we've got lots of famous people coming. I don't want to blow all that goodwill -- and good press -- on a public fight over one piece.

MIRANDA

So not really censorship...just kind of tucking it away for awhile.

LEO

Exactly. I --

The door from the Oval Office swings open and Bartlet enters, interrupting Leo.

BARTLET

Miranda! A work of art in human form, as always.

Miranda gets up and shares a hug with the President.

MIRANDA

And you're still a nimble-tongued politician, Jed.

BARTLET

Well, that's why they hired me.

They separate.

BARTLET (CONT'D)
 (continuing)
 I was going to have some coffee.
 Why don't we all talk in my office?

MIRANDA
 Oh, Jed, that's not necessary. Leo
 explained everything to me.

BARTLET
 Oh, so it's settled then?

MIRANDA
 It certainly is. I resign.

On Leo and Bartlet's reaction,

FADE TO BLACK

END OF ACT II

ACT III

FADE IN:

EXT./EST. THE WHITE HOUSE - AFTERNOON

INT. C.J.'S OFFICE - DAY

C.J. is quizzing Carol. The TV, sound off, shows CNN in the
 background.

C.J.
 And? What's the 3rd verse?

CAROL
 (embarrassed)
 I...
 (sings to herself,
 quickly)
 "And when they vote for me on
 Capitol Hill-- "

A "Breaking News" card flashes on the screen.

C.J.
 Wait.

C.J. Turns up the volume with her remote.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 -- market by surprise. Wal-Mart
 stock is off an astounding 9% on
 rumors of a high level government
 investigation --

C.J. slaps a hand to her mouth.

C.J.
 Omigod.

On Carol's puzzled reaction,

CUT TO:

INT. OVAL OFFICE - SAME TIME

Leo, Miranda and Bartlet are seated around the coffee table.
 Charlie finishes re-filling Bartlet's cup and steps away.

MIRANDA
 We can talk all day, fellas, but it
 doesn't change by repetition.

BARTLET
 Miranda --

MIRANDA
 Mr. President, I'm sorry to
 interrupt you -- and I'm even more
 sorry if I disappoint you. But it
 simply makes no difference who
 raises the objection, or why. If we
 get into the business of stifling
 art there's no reason for the
 Endowment to exist.

BARTLET
 So this picture...it's awful.

MIRANDA
 I cringed.

BARTLET
 Easily seen as offensive by any
 number of people.

MIRANDA
 God, yes.

BARTLET
 It's just full of nasty,
 horrible...stuff.

MIRANDA

Yes.

BARTLET

But you think it's important and deserving of taxpayer support.

MIRANDA

Mr. President, until about 1800, the poor quality of green pigments available meant that paintings were usually done in browns and golds.

LEO

Rembrandt.

MIRANDA

Yes. In some ways, those paintings were utterly unrealistic. But people were used to them. When better pigments came along and artists began to show the world canvases full of light and bright colors, the established art world was outraged. Painters were snubbed from shows and their patrons cut off their stipends. Not because the art was bad, but because the artists were forcing people to see the world as it really was, not the way they liked to see it.

BARTLET

We don't know what's important until people see it.

MIRANDA

Not with art.

BARTLET

And even though you know this picture will cause me great political pain, you insist it has to be in the show?

MIRANDA

Of course.

Bartlet sips his coffee.

BARTLET

I don't have a problem with that.

MIRANDA

(relieved)

Oh good. Then I'd like to withdraw my resignation.

BARTLET

I never considered accepting it.

MIRANDA

Then, if I may, I'll be off about the public business.

They all stand and exchange brief hugs as they reach the door.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Thank you for hearing me out.

LEO

Yeah, well, now I understand why they put up such a fight over you.

BARTLET

Goodbye, Miranda.

Miranda exits. Bartlet closes the door.

LEO

Simms is going to eat our lunch over this. He's been demanding a meeting all day. I'll have to give him one.

Bartlet waves him off.

BARTLET

Kwame just has to understand that he isn't wrong about this, he's just less right. Schedule the meeting, I'll be there.

LEO

Sir, not a good --

BARTLET

Leo, not only am I the president of a sovereign nation, I'm hot today. I'm throwing the good stuff. Have no fear.

LEO
 Of confronting a pissed off civil-
 rights leader about an arguably
 racist painting when he's up for re-
 election? Nothing to fear at all,
 sir.

BARTLET
 I knew you'd understand.

On Leo's resigned exit,

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - SAME TIME

Toby walks with his assistant, Ginger.

TOBY
 And check by the coffee machines!

Ginger heads off. Toby reaches Sam's office,

INT. SAM'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

and sees an immense towers of file boxes and folders filing
 the room and steps back into the corridor where

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

he spots Cathy returning to her desk.

TOBY
 Cathy!

CATHY
 (focused on her work)
 He's still not here.

TOBY
 (restraining himself)
 Do you have an idea where he might
 be? And would he, just possibly,
 have the speech I've been waiting
 two days for?

CATHY
 He's doing research. He's been
 working his butt off all morning.
 Leave him alone.

LEO
Yeah. She's staying.

JOSH
And so's the painting.

LEO
Yeah. What's the plan for Harper?

Josh notices the cake still sitting on Leo's desk.

JOSH
You don't like Devil's Food?

LEO
Josh...

Toby and Josh exchange a look. Josh sighs & stands up.

JOSH
Okay. Say, just for the sake of
argument --

LEO
'Cause I really need another
argument today.

JOSH
Hypothetically. You find out
something about, I dunno, Attila
the Hun --

TOBY
Not Hitler?

JOSH
You've got information about
certain actions by this person that
will humiliate him, damage his
credibility among his fellow...

TOBY
(smiles)
Huns?

JOSH
And it wouldn't necessarily take a
public disclosure to --

LEO
(impatient)
Cut the crap. You found some
leverage on Harper.

JOSH

Yeah.

LEO

And maybe it's not so ethical to use it.

TOBY

Not much of a maybe.

LEO

It's a simple question, fellas. Is the stuff personal or public?

TOBY

Personal.

JOSH

Yeah, in a sense --

TOBY

It's intensely personal.

LEO

Then you can't use it.

Josh starts to protest, but Leo cuts him off.

LEO (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Josh. Do you think you're going to get me, of all people, to give you a license to expose somebody's personal business for political gain?

Josh hasn't seen this angle. He drops into a chair.

LEO (CONT'D)

(continuing)

What's plan B?

JOSH

Plan B sucks. I go in and hear them out. I try to find out what didn't work in the last trade-off, and hope they aren't lying through their teeth again.

LEO

(shakes his head)

It's too late to screw around. Give 'em sex ed.

Toby and Josh are both surprised and start to protest.

TOBY

Leo --

JOSH

We can't just --

LEO

That's the offer. What difference does a sex ed class make if we can't hire decent teachers? We don't have any more time on this one. Josh, get it done.

Leo turns to his work. Toby and Josh crowd through the door.

JOSH

(sour)

That went well.

TOBY

(brightly)

I thought so.

CUT TO:

INT. PRESS OFFICE - SAME TIME

Danny is working at his desk as C.J. enters, harried. Danny doesn't even look up.

DANNY

Here to make me sing again?

C.J.

What company were you talking about before? The investigation.

Danny looks up.

DANNY

You tell me.

C.J.

Danny, this is important --

DANNY

Maybe I need to hear you sing "The Sound Of Music" first.

C.J.
You want me to play guess the
company?

DANNY
(holding out)
Why not?

C.J.
Does...Is this a company that has
stores in every state?

DANNY
Move your token 5 spaces.

C.J.
Can you buy school supplies and
guns there?

DANNY
Yep.

C.J.
Damn. Does the rumor claim it's
White House, or Justice?

DANNY
I'll tell you if you swear to
confirm if it is the White House.

C.J.
(instantly)
You're on.

DANNY
White House.

C.J.
Dammit!

DANNY
I knew it!

C.J.
There's no investigation.

C.J. whirls and exits.

DANNY
(calling after her)
C.J.!

On Danny's exasperation,

CUT TO:

INT. LEO'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Leo's reading in a chair when C.J. hurries in.

C.J.

Leo?

LEO

This needs to be important.

C.J.

It is. This morning -- at the staff meeting -- well, Sam was asleep, I think you caught that -- and...well, afterward, I sort of brought him up to speed on the meeting, the NAACP thing, and the president asking about Wal-Mart, and -- see, Sam and I --

LEO

Is this about the conspiracy?

C.J.

(startled)

Excuse me?

LEO

The conspiracy. Between you, Toby, Josh to see who can waste the most of my time today.

C.J.

(takes a breath)

The press is convinced the White House is investigating Wal-Mart.

LEO

And?

C.J.

Their stock is plummeting.

Leo immediately rises and heads for the door.

LEO

Follow me.

They leave the office and move --

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

into the hallway, heading for Communications. Leo spots Toby.

LEO
Toby! Now.

C.J.
Nothing's been confirmed, but
somebody at CNN picked it up --

Toby hurries to catch up as Leo storms along.

LEO
(to C.J.)
How bad is it?

C.J.
The stock's down 9%.

TOBY
Whose stock?

LEO
Wal-Mart. What's that in dollars?

C.J.
About 5 billion.

Leo stops dead near a corner and turns to C.J.

LEO
You're telling me a major U.S.
corporation lost 5 billion dollars
today because of something you said
to Sam?

C.J.
Yes, sir.

Leo takes the corner, to see Sam direct a cart of boxes into his office. Sam looks at Leo's scowl with complete innocence.

SAM
What?

FADE TO BLACK

END OF ACT III

ACT IV

INT. OVAL OFFICE - SAME TIME

Bartlet is reading through some papers on the sofa as Charlie pours more coffee.

CHARLIE

The First Lady isn't going to like you drinking so much coffee, sir.

BARTLET

Charlie, it takes an exceptional amount of energy to be the best politician in the world.

CHARLIE

Yes, sir. And an equal number of mints.

BARTLET

Point taken. Find me one, would you?

Bartlet reaches for his cup.

CHARLIE

Yes, sir. Also, you're meeting Mr. Simms in 5 minutes in the Mural Room.

BARTLET

Better hurry on the mints.

CHARLIE

Yes, sir.

Charlie heads for the door, but Bartlet stops him.

BARTLET

Charlie.

CHARLIE

Mr. President?

BARTLET

Charlie, you know about this thing with the painting, don't you?

CHARLIE

I caught a little bit of it, yes, sir.

BARTLET

Does it bother you?

CHARLIE

Sir?

BARTLET

This painting. Some people shot at you because of the kinds of stereotypes it plays upon.

CHARLIE

No, sir, the painting doesn't bother me.

BARTLET

But something does.

CHARLIE

Well...in a way, yes, sir. It's the time, sir.

BARTLET

I don't follow.

CHARLIE

People I grew up with don't give a damn about paintings and don't go to see them.

BARTLET

Not their cup of tea.

CHARLIE

That's right, sir. They're too busy worrying about their jobs and people getting shot in their own neighborhoods by gangs. Gangs of black people, not racists. And despite all that, the President and the NAACP are going get together and waste their time fighting over some painting? THAT bothers me. Sir.

Bartlet regards Charlie soberly.

BARTLET

It bothers me, too. Find me that mint, would you, Charlie?

CHARLIE

Yes, sir.

On Bartlet's thoughtful expression,

CUT TO:

INT. SAM'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Leo, Toby and C.J. stand surrounded by boxes of files. Sam sits at his desk, stunned.

TOBY

You can't find time to actually WRITE the speech, but you can somehow squeeze in time to wreak havoc on Wall Street?

C.J.

It wasn't intentional --

TOBY

Intentional? I'm still trying to visualize some bizarre, parallel universe where any of this is even RELEVANT, let alone intentional!

SAM

If I understood correctly --

LEO

(frustrated)

ENOUGH. I'm out of time for this kind of crap today, people. You've used me up. Toby. You WILL have a speech for me to review by 6 o'clock.

TOBY

Yes.

LEO

C.J., you're going to fix this mess with the press. Now.

C.J. exits quickly. Leo turns to Sam.

LEO (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Sam, you're going to get some sleep. Then we're going to talk.

SAM

Yes. Sir.

Leo storms out of the room.

TOBY
(to Sam)
Give me your notes.

Sam points to the stacks of research.

SAM
Actually, I haven't made any notes
yet.

TOBY
No. Of course you haven't.

Toby exits, furious. Sam rises and reaches for his jacket.
Bartlet raps on the door and enters.

BARTLET
Sam, did you ever find out how much
art Wal-Mart sells in a year?

SAM
In the U.S.?

BARTLET
Sure.

SAM
782.6 million dollars.

Bartlet nods.

BARTLET
Exactly what I needed. Thanks,
Sam.

Bartlet exits.

SAM
(quietly)
You're welcome, Mr. President.

CUT TO:

INT. MURAL ROOM - SAME TIME

Leo enters to find KWAME SIMMS, the polished President of the
NAACP, looking at the murals.

LEO
Kwame. Sorry to keep you waiting.
The President will be along in a
moment.

As they shake hands, Leo gestures Kwame to a seat.

KWAME

It's alright, Leo. I was just admiring the art.

LEO

Thankfully, landscapes don't cause a lot of controversy.

KWAME

No, it's usually figures that cause problems. People. The things they embody and carry into the public mind.

LEO

Real people do that much more effectively than painted ones.

KWAME

Just my point. That this President should choose to deliver his words - - his powerful, powerful words -- in front of such a heinous, defamatory painting can only paint one picture in the minds of all the people of color who have, until now, supported him with such enthusiasm.

LEO

Kwame, I don't think we need to let something this small get between the White House and the African-American community. I don't think that serves anybody.

KWAME

I don't see how flaunting an atrocity of stereotyping advances anyone, colored or otherwise.

LEO

Kwame, let's cut the sound-bite crap. 30% of Black Americans are thinking twice about affirmative action. Welfare reforms and job-training have put more blacks into the labor force at better wages and despite all that your membership is dropping and so are your funds.

KWAME

Do you think those statistics are any good? If you think I'm irrelevant, I'll have to see what the Times and the Post have to say.

LEO

First of all, I think the statistics are bullshit. I think there's a race war going on in the criminal justice system and I think, Kwame, that Jed Bartlet is the best friend you've ever had in this building. I also think you're up for re-election and you could desperately use a little media attention for yourself and your organization. But I gotta tell you, Kwame, if you want to advance anything or anybody, including yourself, dragging this administration through the media briar patch is not the way to do it.

KWAME

What do you propose?

LEO

Drop this crap with the painting, Kwame. Give me a couple days, I'll find something a little more proactive to make headlines about.

Kwame thinks about it for a second.

KWAME

You're a good man, Leo.

LEO

If you read my divorce papers, you might not think so, but thanks.

Kwame and Leo smile and shake hands. Just then, Bartlet sweeps into the room.

BARTLET

Kwame!

KWAME

Mr. President, good to see you, sir.

BARTLET
And you. Sit, sit.

They all take seats again.

BARTLET (CONT'D)
(continuing)
Kwame, tell me, what are we doing
here? Really, what's going on?

Kwame glances at Leo before answering.

KWAME
Sir, I --

BARTLET
Nobody gives a damn about the NEA,
Kwame, in your community or anyone
else's. Hell, in one year Wal-
Mart sells five times the NEA
budget in "Hang in there Kitty"
posters, or whatever it is they
market as art.

KWAME
Yes, sir, but --

BARTLET
Kwame, hear me out. The President
of the NAACP and the President of
the United States carve a hole in
their schedules to sit down and
talk about the problems facing
people of color in this nation, and
some crappy painting is the most
important thing we can come up
with? I don't think that's right,
do you?

KWAME
Actually, sir...no.

BARTLET
What I'm saying is this. I think
we should sit down and talk, but
let's do it right, with some real
solutions to some real problems in
mind.

LEO

I think the President means this could be a nice opportunity to put something constructive about race relations into the media.

BARTLET

Exactly. Do we have to have this fight, Kwame?

Kwame looks at them both.

KWAME

No sir, I don't believe we do.

BARTLET

(standing)

That's excellent. I'm serious about this, Kwame. Maybe we can do something at Camp David.

The three men walk to the door and shake hands.

KWAME

Thank you, Mr. President.

LEO

Call me.

KWAME

You know I will. And Mr. President?

BARTLET

Yes?

KWAME

Can they hang it in a side gallery somewhere?

BARTLET

I'll see if they have a basement.

Kwame laughs and exits. Bartlet is very pleased.

BARTLET (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Red hot, today Leo, white hot. Are the Harpers here yet?

LEO

They're about due.

BARTLET

You want me to straighten them out?
Got to ride the train when it's in
the station, Leo.

LEO

(smiles)

That's all right sir, I'm sure Josh
is handling it.

CUT TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - SAME TIME

Senator Harper and his son, Congressman Kenny Harper, are both seated at the conference table as Josh enters. They pointedly do not rise to greet him. Josh gets the vibe, but tries to be civil.

JOSH

Senator, Congressman, thanks for
coming.

CONGRESSMAN KENNY

Where we come from, Josh, if the
President calls, you come.
Inconvenient as it may be.

JOSH

(a little hot)

Where I come from people keep their
word and this meeting wouldn't be
needed at all.

CONGRESSMAN KENNY

Values are more important than
politics.

JOSH

Funny, I thought honesty was a
value.

SENATOR HARPER

Is this really what we're here to
talk about?

JOSH

We're here because --

Josh takes a moment to collect himself.

JOSH (CONT'D)
(continuing)
We'd still like you to pull the rider.

CONGRESSMAN KENNY
I'm sure you would.

JOSH
We're willing to put Sex Ed on the table.

CONGRESSMAN KENNY
How much of it?

JOSH
All of it.

CONGRESSMAN KENNY
And I expect we'll have the chance to discuss this with the President shortly?

JOSH
Why?

CONGRESSMAN KENNY
We'd both feel more...confident handling this directly. Not at staff level.

JOSH
I'm not the one who went back on the deal, Kenny.

CONGRESSMAN KENNY
Congressman Kenny. Make the appointment, Josh. I have my reasons.

Josh fumes for a moment then turns to Senator Harper.

JOSH
What about your reasons? Don't you have anything to say here?

SENATOR HARPER
I think my boy's doing just fine on his own.
(wintry smile)
Would you kindly run along and tell the President we're waiting for him?

The insults clearly infuriate Josh, but he contains himself.

JOSH
Fine.

Josh rises to exit.

JOSH (CONT'D)
(continuing; to himself)
I'm a goddamned gazelle.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Leo walks the hallway and sees Josh standing outside the conference room, apparently lost in thought.

LEO
So? Is the Rider on or off?

Josh just looks at Leo for a moment.

LEO (CONT'D)
(continuing)
Josh. Did they bite or not?

Josh takes a breath before answering.

JOSH
I need to get them 10 minutes with the president.

Leo turns away, clearly disappointed.

JOSH (CONT'D)
(continuing)
Just...I need the meeting, Leo. 10 minutes. I'll get it done.

Leo looks at Josh for a moment and then nods.

LEO
Okay. I'll get you 10 minutes. We'll put 'em in the Oval, see if it makes 'em sit up straight. And I'm gonna sit in. I want Toby there too.

JOSH
(thoughtfully)
Okay.

Leo walks away, leaving Josh alone in the corridor, upset. Josh peers through the glass into the conference room, where the Harpers sit talking together, looking smug and contented.

Josh looks away as Leo's retreating back, deliberating.

Josh makes his choice. He turns and hurries away, calling out:

JOSH (CONT'D)
(continuing)
Donna!

As Josh ducks through a group of office workers,

CUT TO:

INT. OVAL OFFICE - LATER

Josh opens the door for the Harpers. They enter to find Toby, Leo and a cheerful Bartlet rising to greet them.

BARTLET
Senator, Congressman.

The two Harpers shake hands with Bartlet.

SENATOR HARPER
Mr. President.

CONGRESSMAN KENNY
Good to meet you, sir.

BARTLET
Likewise. Have a seat, gentlemen.
You know Leo and Toby Ziegler,
don't you?

The group sits with a polite exchange of nods.

BARTLET (CONT'D)
(continuing)
Now, what got bollixed?

CONGRESSMAN KENNY
Sir?

BARTLET
The misunderstanding. I was told
we'd already reached a deal on this
thing.

(MORE)

BARTLET(CONT'D)

And since I'm sure we're all men of our word, ipso facto something has been misunderstood. Bollixed.

CONGRESSMAN KENNY

(suspicious)

Mr. President --

BARTLET

Not to worry, Congressman, we'll work this out.

SENATOR HARPER

Oh, yes, I'm sure we will, sir.

BARTLET

Good. Then tell me, what's the problem?

CONGRESSMAN KENNY

Mr. President --

Donna and Dale enter through the staff doorway.

DONNA

-- and it's a lot smaller than it looks on TV. The glass is almost 3 inches --

Donna stops dead, appalled, to find the room occupied. Kenny sees Dale. Their eyes meet, and they begin sharing the longest few seconds of their lives.

DONNA (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Omigod! Josh, I thought you said --

LEO

Donna.

Kenny looks away. Donna grabs Dale's arm and with a puzzled glance at Josh begins hustling him out, closing the door pointedly behind her.

Toby looks sharply at Josh, but Josh is watching Kenny. Bartlet is looking at Leo as he speaks.

BARTLET

My apologies, apparently we're part of the tour schedule today.

(looks at Kenny)

You were saying, Congressman?

Kenny looks at the President, then Josh. Josh meets his look.

CONGRESSMAN KENNY

I thought about it, and I want to accept the sex education offer.

SENATOR HARPER

Kenny?

Josh holds Kenny's gaze.

JOSH

Well, we found one misunderstanding. That's not actually on the table.

LEO

Josh?

Senator Harper sits up a bit, surprised.

SENATOR HARPER

I don't believe I heard that correctly, Josh, we discussed --

Kenny puts a hand on his father's arm, and leans in to whisper to him.

Senator Harper's eyes slide to the doorway through which Donna and Dale exited.

BARTLET

See? I knew something had gotten bollixed.

Kenny turns to the President. Senator Harper sits stone-faced.

CONGRESSMAN KENNY

Yes, Mr. President, that's obvious. Sex Ed wasn't in the deal. And with that point of confusion out of the way --

(looks at Josh)

-- I think we have a deal. Don't we?

Josh nods to Kenny as Bartlet rises. They others rise also.

BARTLET

Of course we do.

Bartlet shakes hands with the Harpers.

SENATOR HARPER
Thank you, Mr. President.

BARTLET
Thank you, Senator. Congressman.

CONGRESSMAN KENNY
Thank you, sir.

Leo leads them to the door and closes it behind them.

LEO
What was that?

BARTLET
That, Leo, was the best politician
in the world demonstrating his
prowess.

Toby just looks at Josh. Josh is not ashamed. Bartlet moves
behind his desk, animated.

BARTLET (CONT'D)
(continuing)
It's all about bringing the right
people together so they can find
their own answers.

Josh smiles to himself.

BARTLET (CONT'D)
(continuing)
Really, you could train chimps to
do it.

LEO
Well, that would certainly cut down
on staffing costs, sir.

Bartlet becomes more serious.

BARTLET
Yeah, I know you guys have a little
something to do with it. And I do
appreciate it.

They all begin to head out.

BARTLET (CONT'D)
 (continuing)
 But the thing with my mother-in-law? That was all me.

On the meeting dispersing,

CUT TO:

INT. BRIEFING ROOM - LATER

C.J. stands at the podium, facing the press corps.

C.J.
 Before anything else, I want to clear up this rumor about an alleged investigation of Wal-Mart.

The Press erupts with questions, but C.J. holds them down.

C.J. (CONT'D)
 There is NO White House investigation of Wal-Mart underway. And nothing at Justice, either.

The press rumbles again, but C.J. presses on.

C.J. (CONT'D)
 We were doing some fact finding for a speech, that's it. There's no story here.

REPORTER #1
 C.J., they're off 9 percent today, all because --

C.J.
 Which brings me precisely to my next point. This company took an unjust beating today is because some members of the press chose to run with an unconfirmed story.

The crowd quiets.

C.J. (CONT'D)
 They lost 9% because you didn't accept my answer to a simple question. I'm here 14 hours a day, people, when I'm lucky. All you have to do is ask. That's my job. I'm the Answer Lady. That's what I'm here for.

Danny raises his hand.

DANNY
Answer Lady?

C.J.
Yes.

DANNY
You'll answer anything you know
about?

C.J.
Within the limits of national
security, yes.

DANNY
What's the last verse to "I'm Just
a Bill?"

C.J. gives Danny a look.

DANNY (CONT'D)
(continuing)
I'm doing a sidebar piece on how
everyone in politics shares this
little musical connection, but I
need the last verse. If you know
it.

C.J.
That's not a serious question.

REPORTER #1
So -- you don't know?

C.J.
I didn't say I didn't know it, I
said it wasn't a serious question.

REPORTER #2
(incredulous)
You really don't know?

C.J.
(surrendering)
No. I do not.

REPORTER #3
Isn't it "I'm just a bill, yes I'm
only a bill --

REPORTER #1

(singing)

"-- and I'm sittin' here on Capitol Hill --"

They whole Press Corps joins in, enjoying themselves immensely, as C.J. watches, both chagrined and amused.

PRESS CORPS

"-- and if they vote for me on Capitol Hill / Well then I'm off to the White House / Where I'll wait in a line / With a lot of other bills for the president to sign. / And if he signs me then I'll be a law. / How I hope and pray that he will / But today I am still just a bill."

Danny stands.

DANNY

(spoken)

"He signed you Bill! Now you're a law!"

Everyone laughs a bit and applauds themselves. C.J. gives Danny a look.

C.J.

And you're a royal pain in my ass.

Danny bows, grandly.

DANNY

That's what the Press Corps is here for, C.J.

On the press corps' agreement,

CUT TO:

INT. JOSH'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The room is dim. Toby enters as Josh sits at his desk, looking out the window at the city, where the lights are coming on. Josh doesn't turn.

JOSH

5 million kids, Toby.

TOBY

I know.

JOSH
 Billions of dollars in
 vaccinations, breakfast and lunch
 subsidies --

TOBY
 I know.

JOSH
 Not to mention who knows how many
 girls who don't get pregnant
 because somebody bothers to tell
 them that yes, they CAN get
 pregnant the first time --

TOBY
 Josh.

Josh turns to face Toby.

JOSH
 I had to do it Toby.

TOBY
 I won't judge you Josh.
 (turning to go)
 I'll leave that to you.

Before Toby can exit, Leo enters, carrying the piece of cake
 Josh had brought him, the candle lit.

LEO
 Nice work today, Josh.
 (sets the cake down)
 Happy Birthday.

JOSH
 (quiet)
 Thanks.

LEO
 (to Toby)
 I want to go over the arts speech.

TOBY
 Sure.

Toby exits, but Josh stops Leo before he gets out.

JOSH
 Leo?

LEO
Yeah, Josh?

JOSH
What if you can't tell anymore?

LEO
Excuse me?

JOSH
Where's the line? How do you know
if it's personal or professional?

Leo regards him for a moment from the doorway.

LEO
Kid, if you're still asking that
question, you're probably okay.

Leo exits. Josh looks at the piece of cake and takes the lit
candle from the frosting.

JOSH
(singing quietly)
"Happy Birthday to me..."

As Josh blows out the candle,

FADE TO BLACK