

THE WINNER

Book and Lyrics by Joe Sutton

Music by Lewis Flinn

Current Revisions by
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Joe Sutton/Lewis Flinn
411 Highland Ave.
Montclair, NJ 07043
(973) 783-6521
Jsut@juno.com

The Susan Gurman Agency, LLC
865 West End Avenue
New York, NY 10025
Tel: (212) 749-4618
Fax: (212) 864-5055
Www.gurmanagency.com

A DISCLAIMER

In Tony Kushner's disclaimer about the character of Roy Cohn in *Angels in America*, he wrote that "liberties have been taken." So too with *The Winner*, a musical about the lives of Lyndon and Ladybird Johnson that also includes such historical figures as Coke Stevenson and John and Nellie Connally. As in *Angels*, most of the acts attributed to these figures can be found in the historical record. But these characters, like Cohn in *Angels*, are primarily works of dramatic fiction, and with them, as with Cohn, liberties have been taken.

CHARACTERS

Jimmy, the narrator, African-American, 20s

Lyndon Johnson, 40

John Connally, 30

Nellie Connally, 25

Ladybird "Bird" Johnson, 35

Herman Brown, 50s

Coke Stevenson, 60

George Parr, 50s

Harry Gates, 50s

Shook/Sonny Bailey 40s

Farmer/Frank Hamer/others, 50s

There is also a chorus of men and women (as few as two, as many as six) who take on a variety of roles.

PLACE: Texas

TIME: 1948

SETTING: The play requires a flexible staging area allowing for a wide variety of locations. Permanent scenic elements should be kept to a minimum, allowing for lightning quick scene shifts.

A slide projection system is used throughout.

ACT ONE

SLIDE: "TEXAS, 1948"

PROLOGUE

ENTER JIMMY, WHO FACES THE AUDIENCE,
GLIDING, MENACINGLY, TO THE FOOT OF THE
STAGE.

WE PLAY TO WIN

JIMMY

FROM THE MOUNTAINS
IN THE DISTANCE
SOMETHING'S COMING
IN A HAZE

CAN'T BE SEEN YET
YOU CAN HEAR IT
THROUGH A DUST CLOUD
A PARADE

DOWN THE VALLEY
UP THE MAIN ROAD
ON THE OUTSKIRTS
MUSIC PLAYS

AND THE FUTURE
OF THE COUNTRY
ENTERS PROUDLY
WITH A WAVE

WE PLAY TO WIN
OH, WE PLAY TO WIN

IN THE SMALL TOWNS
ALL THROUGH TEXAS
FOLKS ARE GATHERED
HOPE ARRIVES

AND THE FUTURE
OF THE COUNTRY
TELLS THEM HOW HE'LL
CHANGES THEIR LIVES

BUT THE DAY COMES
WHEN THE PEOPLE
START TO QUESTION
WHAT THEY'VE SEEN

JIMMY (CONT'D)

AND TO WONDER
WHAT ELECTIONS
AND THEIR SLOGANS
REALLY MEAN

WE PLAY TO WIN
OH, WE PLAY TO WIN

(BEHIND JIMMY THE LIGHTS COME UP ON A
DILAPIDATED TOWN SQUARE. UNPAINTED AND
BADLY IN NEED OF A WASH, THE WALLS OF THIS
SQUARE SUDDENLY EXPLODE WITH THE SOUND OF A
YOUNG LYNDON JOHNSON ENTERING THE SQUARE
WITH A BAND OF CAMPAIGN WORKERS. THEIR
ARMS OVERFLOWING WITH CAMPAIGN
PARAPHERNALIA, THEY IMMEDIATELY DESCEND ON
JIMMY.)

WORKER 1

Hey there, fella.

JOHNSON

Where is everyone?

JIMMY

(AT A LOSS) I...

JOHNSON

Bring 'em out, goddammit! I gotta shake some hands!

WORKER 1

I'll -

JOHNSON

Oh hell, I'll do it! You boys start singin'! (STRIDING OFF
LEFT) Come on out folks!

(AS JOHNSON TURNS OUT, PROWLING THE STAGE
LIKE A CARNIVAL BARKER, THE OTHERS START TO
SING.)

CHEER FOR LYNDON

CHORUS

AND GIVE A CHEER FOR LYNDON JOHNSON

JOHNSON

(OVER HIS SHOULDER) Louder, dammit!

CHORUS
(LOUDER) AND REST ASSURED HE'S ON YOUR SIDE

JOHNSON
(OVERLAPPING) That's it. Come on out folks. I'm Lyndon Johnson. The one and only. Right here.

CHORUS
HE'S NOT AFRAID OF SPECIAL INT'RESTS

JOHNSON
(OVERLAPPING) As pure a Texan as you could ask for...

CHORUS
HE WON'T BE COWED, HE'LL NEVER HIDE

JOHNSON
...and practically a son to FDR.

(AS JOHNSON CONTINUES TO CALL OUT, ONE OR TWO OF THE TOWNSPEOPLE BEGIN TO GATHER.)

CHORUS
LYNDON JOHNSON, LYNDON JOHNSON

JOHNSON
(OVERLAPPING) Come on out, folks.

CHORUS
HE GREW UP POOR LIKE ALL OF YOU

JOHNSON
That's it. Come on out. Don't be afraid.

CHORUS
HE KNOWS EXACTLY HOW YOU'RE HURTING

JOHNSON
I'll take care of you, I will. Look out for you.

CHORUS
THERE'S ALOT THAT HE CAN DO

JOHNSON
(TO TOWNSPEOPLE) And that ain't just talk neither. I mean it.
(TO CHORUS) Come on, boys. Let's set it up.

(WITH THAT, THE TEAM BEGIN SETTING UP STEP LADDERS AND SPREADING OUT POSTERS.)

CHORUS
NO MATTER WHAT YOUR OCCUPATION

JOHNSON

Don't give a damn.

CHORUS

NO MATTER IF YOU'RE RICH OR POOR

JOHNSON

Like it better if you're poor.

CHORUS

HE'LL ALWAYS HEAR YOU WHEN YOU'RE KNOCKIN'

(AND NOW JOHNSON JOINS IN THE SINGING.)

JOHNSON/ALL

AND I'LL/HE'LL OPEN UP MY/HIS DOOR

LYNDON JOHNSON, LYNDON JOHNSON
I/HE GREW UP POOR LIKE ALL OF YOU
I/HE KNOWS EXACTLY HOW YOU'RE HURTING
THERE'S ALOT THAT I/HE CAN DO

JOHNSON

Hold onto your hats, folks. We got a show for you!

(AS THE CROWD CONTINUES TO GATHER, THE
WORKERS AND JOHNSON BEGIN TO SLAP, HAMMER
AND GLUE UP THEIR POSTERS IN WHAT SEEMS
LIKE AN ORGANIZED, ALMOST CHOREOGRAPHED
ENTERTAINMENT.)

ALL

BLUE BLUE
IT'S THE COLOR OF THE MORNING
NEW DAY THAT'S
COMIN' THROUGH
TRUE BLUE
HE'S THE MAN WHEN YOU NEED HIM
OL' JOHNSON
HE'S FOR YOU

(THE ABOVE CHORUS REPEATS FOUR TIMES IN A
BUILD-UP OF EVER-QUICKENING SYNCOPATION,
UNTIL FINALLY, IN A FLURRY OF ARMS AND LEGS
THE WORKERS HAVE COMPLETELY COVERED THE
SQUARE WITH POSTERS -- THE CROWD WATCHING
IN STUNNED AMAZEMENT.)

(THEN SUDDENLY, JIMMY STEPS OUT FROM THE
CROWD, YELLING IN EXCITEMENT...)

JIMMY

You the man brung electric power?

(...ONLY TO HAVE THE REST OF THE CROWD READ
BACK IN HORROR, SCANDALIZED TO HEAR A BLACK
MAN SPEAKING IN PUBLIC.)

WORKER 2

(IMMEDIATELY, SHOOING HIM OFF) That's enough now.

JIMMY

Listen, I got a right to -

WORKER 2

(ANGRY) You don't got a right to nothin'.

JOHNSON

(INTERCEDING) You're damn right I am! It's cause of me that
people like you got electricity!

(WORKER 2 TRIES TO STEER JOHNSON AWAY.)

WORKER 2

Sir, just -

JOHNSON

(IGNORING HIM) And that ain't all either. I laid roads for you.
I built schools. When the depression was at its worst...(BY NOW
SHARING IT WITH THE ENTIRE CROWD)...when people all over this
country was looking for work, I ran the NYA, got young people
jobs.

YOUNG MAN

Well, that's all right then.

(THIS LAST COMES FROM A YOUNG MAN ACROSS
THE STAGE, AND JOHNSON, HAPPILY, GOES OVER
TO HIM.)

JOHNSON

(MOCKING, INCREDULOUS) That's all right then??? Hell, that's
alot better than all right, fella. That's great, ain't it?

YOUNG MAN

(OVERWHELMED) I...guess.

JOHNSON

Well, don't just say it, fella. Sing it! (HE VAMPS) Bum, bum,
bum, bum...

ALL

LYNDON JOHNSON, LYNDON JOHNSON

(AND ONCE AGAIN, JOHNSON IS GRINNING BROADLY, TURNING BACK TO THE CROWD AND SHAKING EVERY HAND IN SIGHT.)

JOHNSON

How are ya?

ALL

HE GREW UP POOR LIKE ALL OF YOU

(UNTIL SOON, JOHNSON IS FACING JIMMY, AND WITHOUT MISSING A BEAT, HE REACHES OUT FOR HIS HAND AS WELL.)

JOHNSON

What's your name, fella?

JIMMY

Jimmy Rodgers.

JOHNSON

(WITH A WINK) Lyndon Johnson.

ALL

HE KNOWS EXACTLY HOW YOU'RE HURTING

JOHNSON

(TO ANOTHER) How you doin'?

ALL

THERE'S ALOT THAT HE CAN DO

(SUDDENLY, THE ENTIRE STAGE FREEZES AS JIMMY ONCE AGAIN TURNS OUT TO THE AUDIENCE.)

WE PLAY TO WIN - REPRISE

JIMMY

AS A YOUNG MAN
BARELY THIRTY
LYNDON JOHNSON
LOST A RACE

AND HE LOST IT
AFTER MIDNIGHT
HAD IT STOLEN
FELT DISGRACED

NOW IT'S SEVEN
LONG YEARS LATER
THINGS ARE DIFF'RENT

FROM BACK THEN

AND HE'S VOWED THAT
UNLIKE LAST TIME
HE WILL NEVER
LOSE AGAIN

UNLIKE LAST TIME
HE WILL NEVER
LOSE AGAIN

(A SLIDE FLASHES ON A SCREEN BEHIND HIM...)

SLIDE: "JOHNSON TRAILING BADLY; RUN-OFF IN A MONTH"

(...AND JIMMY WHISPERS THE FINAL WORDS...)

JIMMY (CONT'D)

WE PLAY TO WIN
OH, WE PLAY TO WIN

SCENE ONE

A HOTEL SUITE. JOHN CONNALLY HANGS UP THE PHONE HAVING GOTTEN BAD NEWS. BIRD, NELLE CONNALLY AND HERMAN BROWN LOOK ON. JOHNSON IS FURIOUS.

JOHNSON
What do you mean I lost?

CONNALLY
You lost.

JOHNSON
Like hell I did!

CONNALLY
Lyndon, you're 85 thousand down.

JOHNSON
So what?

CONNALLY
So -

JOHNSON
So is there gonna be a run-off? Am I close enough for a run-off?

(THIS LAST HE PRACTICALLY SCREAMS.)

CONNALLY
I guess.

BIRD
(JUMPING IN) Well then, he didn't lose Johnny. He only loses when he lost!

JOHNSON
And I haven't lost, goddammit! And I don't care that Coke Stevenson ain't even lost once. This time he will!

(WITH THAT, IN A HUFF, HE TURNS AWAY FROM THE OTHERS -- AND ALL OF THEM, CONNALLY, BIRD, NELLE AND BROWN LOOK AT EACH OTHER WITH CONCERN. NO ONE KNOWS QUITE WHAT TO DO.)

BIRD
Lyndon -

CONNALLY
Lady...bird, just...give him a minute.

(THIS LAST CONNALLY SAY IMPULSIVELY, HIS HAND FLYING APOLOGETICALLY TO HIS MOUTH. AND AFTER A MOMENT, LADYBIRD NODS, LEANING BACK IN HER SEAT. AND THE GROUP RETURNS TO WATCHING JOHNSON, WHO IS STILL STARING OUT THE WINDOW, WHEN SUDDENLY HE STARTS TO SING, HIS VOICE WHEN HE DOES A NEAR WHISPER. HE HAS GOTTEN AN IDEA.)

I WANT THEIR LOVE

JOHNSON

IT AIN'T JUST VOTES I WANT
I WANT THEIR LOVE
NO PASSING INTEREST SHOWN
I WANT THEIR LOVE
I WANT THEM EACH TO KNOW
NO MATTER WHAT I SHOW
I WANT THEIR LOVE
I WANT THEIR LOVE
I WANT THEIR LOVE

CONNALLY

(BEAT, CONFUSED) You want...what?

JOHNSON

I want their love, Johnny!

(WITH THIS, JOHNSON SPINS BACK AT HIM, A DAWNING REALIZATION SPREADING ALL OVER HIS FACE.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

DON'T WANT TO ASK FOR JUST THEIR VOTES
LIKE I HAVE ALWAYS DONE
I WANT TO SHOW THEM MORE OF ME
JUST WHY IT IS I RUN
I WANT TO WIN THEIR HEARTS AND MINDS
SHOW THE MAN THAT LIES WITHIN
IF YOU CAN HELP ME SHOW THEM THAT
I'M CERTAIN I WILL WIN

CONNALLY

(CONFUSED) You're -

JOHNSON

Johnny, don't you see?

(AT THIS POINT HE STARTS ROAMING THE ROOM, PACING, HIS CONVICTION TURNING TO EXCITEMENT.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

DON'T WANT NO WRINKLED NOSE
 I WANT THEIR LOVE
 CAN'T BE NO SHOULDER SHRUG
 I WANT THEIR LOVE
 I WANT THE VOTE THAT'S CAST FOR ME
 TO BE CAST LOVINGLY
 I WANT THEIR LOVE
 I WANT THEIR LOVE
 I WANT THEIR LOVE

CONNALLY

Look, I -

JOHNSON

No "look", Johnny. This is how I'm gonna do it. Don't you see?

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

DON'T CARE THE MILES I HAVE TO WALK
 THE HATS I HAVE TO WEAR
 THE BABIES I AM ASKED TO KISS
 AT THE STATE AND COUNTY FAIR
 I LOVE THE TOWNS IN TEXAS SO
 THE BIG ONES AND THE SMALL
 A STOPLIGHT OR A COURTHOUSE SQUARE
 I'LL CAMPAIGN IN 'EM ALL

CAN'T BE NO AFTERTHOUGHT
 I WANT THEIR LOVE
 DON'T WANT A VOTE THAT'S BOUGHT
 I WANT THEIR LOVE
 THEY MUST BE MADE TO SEE
 HOW MUCH THEY MEAN TO ME
 I WANT THEIR LOVE
 I WANT THEIR LOVE
 I WANT THEIR LOVE

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

You understand what I'm sayin'?

CONNALLY

(AMAZED, JOYOUS) I do, yes.

JOHNSON

Well then, sing it, Johnny. Sing it!

CONNALLY

YOU WANT THEIR LOVE

JOHNSON

All of you!

ALL
YOU WANT THEIR LOVE

JOHNSON
Damn right I do. And as for my opponent...

JOHNSON (CONT'D)
OL' COKE BELIEVES THAT HE SHOULD BE APPOINTED
THAT PEOPLE ARE BENEATH HIM AND THEY'RE DUMB
CAN'T STAND THE WAY THEY LOOK OR WHAT THEY SMELL
LIKE
HE HATES THE FACT THAT HE'S BEEN FORCED TO RUN

BUT ME, I LOVE TO WALK AMONG THE PEOPLE
I KNOW THEIR VOTES ARE SOMETHING TO BE EARNED
AIN'T NEVER BEEN A MAN LIKE LYNDON JOHNSON
A LOVE LIKE MINE, IT AIN'T SOMETHIN' YOU CAN
SPURN

THIS AIN'T NO HIGH SCHOOL DANCE
I WANT THEIR LOVE
NO LITTLE GIRL ROMANCE
I WANT THEIR LOVE
THEY MUST BE MADE TO FEEL
THAT WHAT I FEEL IS REAL
I WANT THEIR LOVE
I WANT THEIR LOVE
I WANT THEIR LOVE
I WANT THEIR LOVE

JOHNSON (CONT'D)
So what do you say, dammit? Am I gonna get it?

(THEY MUMBLE "YES.")

JOHNSON (CONT'D)
I can't hear you, goddammit!

ALL
YES!

JOHNSON
Damn right, I will. And as for you Herman, you're gonna help me
get it. Do you know how?

BROWN
Well now -

JOHNSON

By givin' me money, Herman! By givin' me lots and lots of money. Hell, you're gonna give me more money than you ever give before. But I'm tellin' you right now, you give it, you're gonna get it back. You're gonna get it back in spades! So what do you say? Are you gonna give it?

BROWN

Well, now...(TEASING)...I think I will.

JOHNSON

Well, all right then. How 'bout that! I'm tellin' you right now folks, we're gonna win this thing. We're gonna win this thing big! But we gotta get on it. We gotta get on it right now! Johnny, you call San Antone. Ladybird, you come with me. And you...(TO NELLIE, IMPATIENT)...hell, you find somethin' to do.

(AND WITH THAT, JOHNSON EXITS. ONCE HE'S GONE, CONNALLY TURNS TO THE OTHERS.)

CONNALLY

Let's go!

(THEN)

COKE

(LOUD, OFFSTAGE) Goddammit, get out of my way! (BEAT) I said -

SCENE TWO

COKE STEVENSON AND A REPORTER NAMED SHOOK ARE FACING EACH OTHER. SHOOK IS BLOCKING COKE'S WAY.

SHOOK

You're not surprised, Governor?

COKE

(ANNOYED) Over what?

SHOOK

Johnson comin' close.

COKE

He didn't win, did he?

(WITH THIS, COKE TRIES TO PUSH PAST.)

SHOOK
So you'll campaign -

COKE
I'll campaign the way I always do.

SHOOK
From your porch.

COKE
From my heart.

(COKE NOW STOPS, FACING SHOOK. HE IS
ANGRY.)

COKE (CONT'D)
See, I'll tell you something, sonny. The people of this state
know me. They know what they got. And they ain't about to
change things. Now, step aside.

(AGAIN, COKE TRIES TO MOVE PAST.)

SHOOK
So then it wasn't a shock?

COKE
What wasn't?

SHOOK
Having a run-off. You've won straight off in the past. This
time you'll need a run-off.

COKE
Ask Mr. Johnson if it was a shock.

SHOOK
Mr. Johnson says that he's satisfied. That this is only his
second statewide race and that he didn't expect to do better.

(THE TWO MEN ARE NOW CLOSE TO EACH OTHER.)

SHOOK (CONT'D)
Did you?

(WITH THIS, COKE MOVES EVEN CLOSER. HIS
VOICE BECOMING MENACING AND LOW.)

COKE

I'll tell you what I expected. I expected people like you to treat me with some respect. But if you can't do that, if that's too much to ask, then you better stay out of my way. Because I tell you right now, if you do this again, I'll knock you right on your ass. (BEAT, HARD) Now, step aside.

(THERE IS A LONG PAUSE AS SHOOK FINALLY DECIDES TO DO AS HE'S TOLD.)

COKE (CONT'D)

Wise move.

(AND WITH THAT, COKE PUSHES PAST, MAKING SURE TO CLIP SHOOK ON THE SHOULDER AS HE LEAVES.)

SHOOK

(BEAT) Prick.

SCENE THREE

JOHNSON ENTERS FROM THE SIDE AND RUNS INTO JIMMY, THE NEWS VENDOR.

JIMMY

"Round One to Coke." Read all about it. "Round One to Coke."

JOHNSON

Hey there, Jimmy.

(JIMMY HANDS HIM A PAPER AS JOHNSON CONTINUES ACROSS.)

JIMMY

Don't worry, Mr. Johnson. You'll do it.

JOHNSON

You bet I will.

(JOHNSON THEN RUNS INTO THE HAT CHECK GIRL.)

HATCHECK GIRL

Congressman.

JOHNSON

Sherry, hi.

HATCHECK GIRL
May I take your coat?

JOHNSON
Give me a kiss first.

(HE SAYS THIS AS HE CONTINUES WALKING.)

HATCHECK GIRL
(FLUSTERED) What's that?

JOHNSON
A kiss. Gimme a kiss!

(QUICKLY SHE KISSES HIM, AS CONNALLY
APPEARS BEHIND THEM.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)
That a girl.

CONNALLY
Lyndon.

(AND IMMEDIATELY JOHNSON FALLS IN BESIDE
HIM.)

JOHNSON
Paperboy thinks I got a shot anyway.

(THE TWO ARE NOW WALKING TOGETHER.)

CONNALLY
Not to mention the hat check girl.

JOHNSON
What do you got?

CONNALLY
Someone to meet you.

JOHNSON
Who's that?

CONNALLY
George Parr.

JOHNSON
(QUICK) No.

CONNALLY
Lyndon -

JOHNSON

Johnny, we can do this without him. We don't need his kind.

CONNALLY

Just meet him, for God's sake. Will you just meet him? (THEN, AFTER A MOMENT) Lyndon, Herman wants us to do this. We owe this to Herman. (THEN) Now, come on.

(THEY ENTER THE HOTEL RESTAURANT, WITH THE GENTLE MUSIC OF A HARP IN THE BACKGROUND.)

CONNALLY (CONT'D)

(NODDING TOWARDS PARR) Over there.

(THEY WALK OVER TO A LARGE TABLE COVERED IN WHITE LINEN. THERE A SMALL MAN WITH ENORMOUS SHOULDERS STANDS TO GREET THEM.)

CONNALLY (CONT'D)

George Parr, Lyndon Johnson.

(THE TWO MEN SHAKE.)

PARR

(GESTURING, SMOOTHLY) Seat.

(AS JOHNSON SITS, THE LIGHTS COME UP ACROSS THE STAGE. THERE, BEHIND A DESK, THE REPORTER LOOKS UP TO SEE A MAN STANDING BEFORE HIM, HIS CAP PULLED LOW ON HIS BROW.)

SHOOK

Yes?

CAPPED MAN

You're a Johnson man, ain't you?

SHOOK

(CAUTIOUS) I could be.

CAPPED MAN

Then you'll wanna see this.

(THE MAN TOSSES AN ENVELOPE ACROSS THE DESK. MEANWHILE, ACROSS THE STAGE, PARR LEANS FORWARD IN HIS SEAT.)

PARR

See, that's what Coke don't understand. I don't care what you do in Washington...(LEANING IN, MAKING HIS POINT)...but down where I am, in the Valley, that I do care about. And if I say I got a man who can be district attorney or judge, why I expect you to smile favorably. (BEAT) You think you could do that?

(SLIGHT PAUSE.)

CONNALLY

I think -

PARR

I'm not talking to you! (HE SMILES, TURNING TO JOHNSON) I'm talking to you. (SLIGHT PAUSE) Do you think you could do that?

JOHNSON

(BEAT, UNSTEADY) Yeah.

(PARR BREAKS INTO A SMILE.)

PARR

(TO CONNALLY) I knew I liked this man.

(WITH THAT, PARR TURNS OUT, SINGING TO THE AUDIENCE AS JOHNSON AND CONNALLY FADE INTO DARKNESS.)

LET'S BE FRIENDS

PARR

IN THE JAIL HOUSE CELLS
COMES A MAN TO YOUR SIDE
A BIG MAN WITH A PAIR OF TINY EYES
I'M YOUR PAL, SAYS THE MAN
AS HE WHISPERS IN YOUR EAR
AND TELLS YOU WHAT YOU FEAR MAY BE A LIE

I'LL BE YOUR FRIEND
NO, DON'T YOU WORRY
A JAILHOUSE CAN IN FACT BE LOTS OF FUN
IN EXCHANGE FOR PROTECTION,
SHARIN' GOSSIP, AND A SMILE,
A FELLA SHARES HIMSELF WITH EVERYONE

SO LET'S BE FRIENDS
RAISE UP A TOAST
MAKE US A PLEDGE
LOVE YOU THE MOST

I'LL BE YOUR FRIEND
HOLD YOU QUITE DEAR

SING OUT YOUR NAME
NOT MUCH TO FEAR

(ON THE STAGE OPPOSITE, HERMAN BROWN
APPEARS. IN A BLUE LIGHT LIKE PARR, HE
JOINS IN THE SONG.)

PARR (CONT'D)
ON A SHIP GOING DOWN
THERE'S A FAT MAN AT THE RAIL
AND HE TURNS IN A PANIC WITH A WINK

BROWN
LITTLE GIRL

PARR
SAYS THE MAN
TO A TODDLER STANDING NEAR

BROWN
WILL YOU DO ME A BIG FAVOR DO YOU THINK?
SAY I'M YOUR DAD
I'LL GIVE YOU CANDY
JUST MAKE SURE THEY GET ME ON THAT BOAT
AND IF THEY ASK WHERE YOUR MOM IS
SHRUG YOUR SHOULDERS, START TO CRY
WE LOST HER WHEN SHE WENT TO GET HER COAT

BOTH
SO LET'S BE FRIENDS
RAISE UP A TOAST
MAKE US A PLEDGE
LOVE YOU THE MOST

I'LL BE YOUR FRIEND
HOLD YOU QUITE DEAR
SING OUT YOUR NAME
NOT MUCH TO FEAR

BROWN
IN A BAR ROOM AFTER HOURS
SOME RED LIPSTICK SMILES YOUR WAY
LICKS HER LIPS, GETS OFF HER STOOL, COMES TO YOU
AND SHE WHISPERS IN YOUR EAR

PARR
LET'S BE FRIENDS, PAL
THERE'S A LOT OF THINGS
THAT I KNOW HOW TO DO

BOTH

JUST DON'T ASK ME WHERE I LEARNED THEM
AND DON'T ASK ME IF IT'S FREE
AND REMEMBER AS WE DO IT
THAT IT'S YOU WHO LOOKED AT ME

AND WHEN OUR FUN IS OVER
AND IT'S TIME TO GO AWAY
DON'T FORGET THAT YOU MUST
ASK ME WHAT TO PAY

SO LET'S BE FRIENDS
RAISE UP A TOAST
MAKE US A PLEDGE
LOVE YOU THE MOST

I'LL BE YOUR FRIEND
HOLD YOU QUITE DEAR
SING OUT YOUR NAME
NOT MUCH TO FEAR

AND LET'S BE FRIENDS
LET'S BE FRIENDS
LET'S BE FRIENDS

(AS QUICKLY AS IT CAME UP, THE BLUE LIGHT
NOW GOES OUT -- AND PARR TURNS BACK TO
JOHNSON AND CONNALLY IN THE RESTAURANT.)

PARR

I'll be in touch.

(AND WITH THAT, HE EXITS, LEAVING JOHNSON
AND CONNALLY IN SILENCE.)

JOHNSON

Johnny, I don't like this.

CONNALLY

Lyndon, you wanna win...(MAKING HIS POINT)...this is what we
gotta do.

(SUDDENLY HE SLIDES BACK HIS CHAIR.)

CONNALLY (CONT'D)

Now, come on.

JOHNSON

What?

CONNALLY

We're going to Houston.

(CONNALLY STANDS.)

JOHNSON

What are you talking about?

CONNALLY

We'll be there in an hour.

JOHNSON

Like hell we will. It's a half a day away.

(BY NOW JOHNSON IS ALSO ON HIS FEET, AS
CONNALLY PULLS HIM ALONG.)

CONNALLY

By car.

JOHNSON

Or train.

CONNALLY

But not by helicopter.

(WITH THAT, CONNALLY SUDDENLY STOPS --
POINTING OUT INTO THE AUDIENCE, AND JOHNSON
SEES, FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE HELICOPTER
THAT WILL EVENTUALLY BECOME SO FAMOUS.)

JOHNSON

(DUMBSTRUCK) What the hell?

CONNALLY

On lease from Jack Bell. You can criss-cross the state five
times before Ol' Coke can drive up from La Plana.

(JOHNSON MOVES FORWARD, SLOWLY, IN AWE OF
WHAT HE SEES.)

CONNALLY (CONT'D)

And it'll draw crowds. We'll run the whole campaign around it.
We'll get people running and driving into town just to see this
thing, just to touch it. Hell, it'll be like bringing them the
World's Fair. People still driving a mule plow...able to see and
touch the future. (BEAT) What do you think?

JOHNSON

I love it. (BEAT, IN AWE) Goddammit, I love it.

MAN OF THE FUTURE

JOHNSON

I'LL BE THE MAN OF THE FUTURE
 RIDIN' A MACHINE
 A MAGIC MODERN HORSEMAN
 NOT THERE AND THEN I'M SEEN

I'LL BE THE MAN OF THE FUTURE
 WRAPPED UP IN GLASS AND STEEL
 A KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOR
 A FAIRY TALE THAT'S REAL

WHILE COKE WILL STILL BE RIDIN'
 HIS WORN OUT ROCKIN' CHAIR
 I'LL BE CRUISIN' IN THE WHIRLEYBIRD
 A-SWOOPIN' THROUGH THE AIR

CONNALLY

AND YOU'LL BE FLYING

JOHNSON

YES, I WILL FLY

CONNALLY

YOU'LL BE THE MAN OF THE FUTURE

JOHNSON

COKE'S THE MAN OF THE PAST

CONNALLY

HE'LL BE HUMPING OVER COUNTRY ROADS

JOHNSON

I'LL BE WHIZZIN' BY SO FAST

CONNALLY

THE MAN OF THE FUTURE

JOHNSON

HE'LL BE THE MAN OF THE PAST

CONNALLY

YOUR FINGER ON THE PUBLIC PULSE

JOHNSON

WHILE HIS FINGER'S UP HIS -

CONNALLY

Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa.

JOHNSON

Oh, no, Johnny, I'm not gonna say that. (THEN, AN AFTERTHOUGHT)
Be funny if I did though.

JOHNSON (cont'd) (CONT'D)

JOHNNY, NOW I SEE IT
JUST HOW IT'S GONNA BE
THE KIND OF CAMPAIGN I WILL TRY TO RUN

INSTEAD OF TINY COURTHOUSE SQUARES
I'LL MEET WITH EV'RYONE
TELL EV'RY MAN WHOSE HAND I SHAKE

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

WHAT CAN BE DONE

TELL THE FOLKS THE WORLD CAN CHANGE
BE MADE A BETTER PLACE
CONVINCE THEM I WILL FIGHT FOR THEM
AND I WILL WIN THIS RACE

BOTH

I'LL BE FLYING! I'M GONNA FLY!

JOHNSON

(WHISPERING, INTENSE) CAUSE I'M THE MAN OF THE
FUTURE
COKE'S THE MAN OF THE PAST
HE MAY HAVE GOT THE JUMP ON ME
BUT THE JUMP WON'T LAST

SLIDE: "JOHNSON CLOSES GAP. TRAILS BY 8 POINTS."

SCENE FOUR

COKE STEVENSON FLIES INTO HIS CAMPAIGN
HEADQUARTERS, IRATE. HE IS HOLDING A
NEWSPAPER. HARRY GATES, HIS CAMPAIGN
MANAGER, IS ON THE PHONE.

COKE

(YELLING) He's got a helicopter.

HARRY

Who does?

COKE

Johnson!

HARRY

(INTO PHONE) I'll call you back.

COKE

(OVERLAPPING) He flew a goddam helicopter into Amarillo, for Christ's sake. (CONTINUING WITHOUT PAUSE FROM THE PAPER) "The first of eleven stops Mr. Johnson made in his campaign for Senate."

HARRY

Let me see.

COKE

(CONTINUING READING) "In his speech, Mr. Johnson criticized Coke Stevenson as a do-nothing, pipe-smoking reactionary... (HIS EYES FLASHING ANGRILY)...who wouldn't know a piece of legislation if it rose up and bit him."

HARRY

Jesus.

COKE

(AGAIN READING) "He then invited his audience to come up and examine the machine, claiming the craft was capable of speeds in excess of 140 miles per hour."

HARRY

Can I see?

(COKE THROWS HIM THE PAPER.)

COKE

Sonuvabitch.

HARRY

(STARING AT THE PAGE) Wow. (HARRY LOOKS UP, WATCHING COKE CAREFULLY. FINALLY) So what are you gonna do?

COKE

(SNAPPING) What do you mean, what am I gonna do? I ain't gonna do nothing. What am I supposed to do?

HARRY

I don't know.

COKE

I ain't gonna be run by a sonuvabitch in a goddam helicopter, Harry! I just ain't gonna do that!

(AND WITH THAT, COKE STARTS OFF.)

HARRY
 (MUMBLES) Well then, you ain't gonna win.

(COKE WHEELS AROUND, FURIOUS.)

COKE
 What!

HARRY
 I said if you don't do something more than you're doing...you ain't gonna win.

(FOR A MOMENT, COKE STARES AT HARRY, HIS FURY AT HIS FRIEND PALPABLE. THEN SUDDENLY, HE STOMPS OUT.)

SCENE FIVE

ONCE AGAIN JOHNSON CROSSES THE STAGE ONLY TO BE INTERCEPTED BY JIMMY.

JOHNSON
 Hey there, Jimmy.

JIMMY
 (URGENT) Mr. Johnson, can I...talk to you for a second?

JOHNSON
 (CONTINUING ACROSS) Well, actually, I'm kinda -

JIMMY
 (INSISTENT) Just a second. Please.

(JOHNSON STOPS, CAUGHT BY THE TONE IN JIMMY'S VOICE.)

JOHNSON
 What's up?

JIMMY
 I need some help.

JOHNSON
 With what?

JIMMY
 (LAUGHING SELF-CONSCIOUSLY) Truthfully...I feel kinda stupid askin' you this -

JOHNSON
(IMPATIENT) Jimmy, look, I'm -

JIMMY
(BLURTING) I need your help making a call.

JOHNSON
What kind of call?

JIMMY
To help me vote.

(HE HANDS HIM A PIECE OF PAPER.)

JIMMY (CONT'D)
I wanna vote for you, sir. I just turned 21 and I want to vote for you. I want my first vote to be for you! But you know how it is. Black man can't vote 'cept a white man help him. You help me...I can vote. You don't...(HE SHRUGS)... (BEAT) Will you help me?

JOHNSON
(MOVED) Sure, Jimmy. (BEAT) Sure, I will.

JIMMY
(SMILING, RELIEVED) Thank you, sir.

(AND NOW IT'S JOHNSON WHO SMILES.)

JOHNSON
Say, you sellin' them papers?

JIMMY
What's that?

JOHNSON
I say you sellin' them papers you got?

JIMMY
Yes sir!

JOHNSON
Well, all right then. You keep sellin' them papers and I'm gonna win this thing. I promise you that. (THEN, SERIOUSLY) And I'll do what I can...as far as...

(WITH THAT, HE SUDDENLY TURNS OUT.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)
(CALLING) Johnny!

(ONLY TO HAVE JIMMY ALSO TURN -- HE FACING STRAIGHT TOWARD US -- HIS TONE AGAIN THAT OF THE NARRATOR.)

JIMMY
OH, HOW WE PLAY TO WIN

(THE FOCUS THEN RETURNS TO JOHNSON.)

JOHNSON
Johnny!!

(AND THE LIGHTS COME UP ON CONNALLY.)

CONNALLY
What?

JOHNSON
I need your help.

(BY NOW JOHNSON AND CONNALLY ARE ON THE MOVE.)

CONNALLY
With what?

JOHNSON
Man named Jimmy Rodgers.

CONNALLY
Jimm...(THEN, ANNOYED)...who???

JOHNSON
Colored fella in the lobby. Newspaper man. He needs our help voting.

CONNALLY
(PROTESTING) Lyndon -

JOHNSON
Johnny, I ain't arguin' here. I'm tellin' you something. Now, I want you to call up his precinct, it's on the West side I think, and make sure he's signed up. You got that? And then get back to me. Pronto!

(WITH THAT, THE LIGHTS QUICKLY CROSS-FADE TO THE HOTEL ROOM WHERE CONNALLY JOINS LADYBIRD, THE TWO OF THEM IN A ROOM FULL OF BOXES.)

BIRD
Who was that?

Who do you think?
 CONNALLY

What did he want?
 BIRD

(ALREADY ON TO SOMETHING ELSE) Who knows? (THEN, IMMEDIATELY, IMPATIENT) Say, listen, where's Nellie?
 CONNALLY

What?
 BIRD

My wife! Nellie!
 CONNALLY

I -
 BIRD

Pete's sake, Nellie, where are you?
 CONNALLY

(ENTERING, ANNOYED) I'm right here, Johnny. What's up?
 NELLE

(ALSO ANNOYED) Are you gonna help us with this?
 CONNALLY

Well, of course, I am, I -
 NELLE

Well, we need it out by noon. (THEN, AFTER A BEAT) I'll see you.
 CONNALLY

(AND WITH THAT, CONNALLY EXITS, AS NELLE TURNS TO BIRD.)

Did he say "us"?
 NELLE

(SMILING, ALMOST LAUGHING) Why, yes...I believe he did.
 BIRD

(NOW THEY'RE BOTH LAUGHING.)

Funny who "us" is.
 NELLE

(LAUGHING) Oh, isn't it though? (THEN) Isn't it?
 BIRD

SCENE SIX

A LONE FARMER LOOKS UP, STARTLED BY THE SOUND OF A HELICOPTER APPROACHING FROM THE DISTANCE. SHIELDING HIS EYES AGAINST THE SUN, HE CONTINUES TO WATCH UNTIL THE HELICOPTER IS DIRECTLY OVERHEAD, AT WHICH TIME A FLOOD OF BROCHURES RAINS DOWN ON HIM.

HELLO DOWN THERE

JOHNSON

HELLO, DOWN THERE, IT'S LYNDON JOHNSON
AND I'MA SETTIN' HERE, STARIN' DOWN AT YOU

(THE FARMER LOOKS AROUND, TERRIFIED.)

LONE FARMER

You talkin' to me?

JOHNSON

Of course, I am. What the hell you think?

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

YOU'RE A MAN, AIN'T YOU?
GOT A VOTE, DON'T YOU?
WELL, WHADDAYA SAY YOU GIVE THAT
VOTE TO ME?

(THE LIGHTS COME UP ON JOHNSON WHO LEANS
OUT ON THE SKID OF HIS HELICOPTER, BULLHORN
IN HAND.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

WOULD YOU DO THAT?
COULD YOU DO THAT?
WILL YOU DO THAT FOR ME?

LONE FARMER

(HUSHED) Yeah.

JOHNSON

(FORCEFUL) Yeah?

LONE FARMER

(LOUDER) Yeah.

JOHNSON

(BEAT) Well then, that's just fine.

(THE SPOTLIGHT NOW CATCHES A MAN WORKING A FENCE POST.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)
HELLO DOWN THERE, IT'S LYNDON JOHNSON
AND I'M SETTIN' HERE, STARIN' DOWN AT YOU!

FENCE MAN

My word.

JOHNSON
Come on over to Legion Field. I'll be speaking there at four.

(THE SPOTLIGHT NOW CATCHES A WOMAN AT A WASH LINE.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)
HELLO DOWN THERE, IT'S LYNDON JOHNSON
AND I'M HAPPY THAT YOU CAME INTO VIEW

JOHNSON (CONT'D)
Hey there sweetheart, I almost passed you by.

WASH WOMAN

Good lord.

JOHNSON
You know who I am?

(THE WASH WOMAN SHAKES HER HEAD,
TERRIFIED.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)
Lyndon Johnson! (THE WOMAN GULPS) Ain't that amazing? To be up
this near? The next senator from your state and I'm right here!
Well, I'll be over at the Legion Field in an hour.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)
SO COME ON OUT AND MEET ME
AND DON'T YOU BE SHY
JUST GET INTO YOUR CARS AND TRUCKS AND
LOOK INTO THE SKY
AND I'LL COME DOWN
AND SHARE SOME THOUGHTS AND SHAKE YOUR HAND
LET ME TELL YOU WHY IT'S FOLKS LIKE YOU
THAT MAKE THIS THE GREATEST LAND.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)
You're not scared of me, are you? Don't tell me you're scared.

WASH WOMAN

Uh-uh.

JOHNSON

WE'LL EAT SOME FOOD AND DRINK SOME BEER
 ENOUGH TO GO AROUND
 GOT A BAND TO PLAY AND SING ALL NIGHT
 THAT HON'RY TEXAS SOUND
 WHEN I DONE SPEAKIN'
 YOU'LL BE LEFT WITH THIS THOUGHT
 THE MAN NAMED LYNDON JOHNSON CAN BE SOLD
 BUT CAN'T BE BOUGHT

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Listen, I see you down there. I see all of you. And I need you
 to help me, you hear?

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

YOU'RE A MAN, AINCHA?
 GOT A VOTE, DONCHA?
 WELL, WHADDAYA SAY YOU GIVE THAT VOTE TO ME?

WOULD YOU DO THAT?
 COULD YOU DO THAT?
 WILL YOU DO THAT FOR ME?

AND WHEN ELECTION DAY HAS COME
 YOU'LL PASS THROUGH COURTHOUSE SQUARE
 YOU'LL WALK INTO THE POLLING ROOM

SIGN THE SIGN-UP BOOK RIGHT THERE
 THEN YOU'LL GO IN
 IN TO CAST YOUR VOTE
 AND YOU'LL CLOSE YOUR EYES
 WHEN YOU'RE ALL ALONE
 AND REMEMBER LYNDON JOHNSON
 REMEMBER LYNDON JOHNSON
 REMEMBER LYNDON JOHNSON

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

So come on out!

SCENE SEVEN

COKE PLANTS HIMSELF BY HARRY'S DESK.

COKE

Okay.

(AS ALWAYS, ON THE PHONE, HARRY COVERS THE
 RECEIVER.)

HARRY

Okay, what?

COKE

(DETERMINED) I'll do what you want.

(HARRY SMILES.)

HARRY

Okay.

SCENE EIGHT

LADYBIRD AND NELLE ARE LICKING ENVELOPES,
WHEN SUDDENLY NELLIE GIVES UP, CRYING OUT
IN EXHAUSTION...

NELLE

God, I hate this.

BIRD

(QUICK, AMUSED) I know what you mean.

NELLE

(EXASPERATED) How many more?

BIRD

A box. (THEN, CHECKING) No...less than a box.

(BIRD REACHES FOR ANOTHER.)

NELLE

The last time I did this I was 19. And I thought licking envelopes for Lyndon was the most wonderful thing in the world.

BIRD

And now?

NELLE

Now I don't care if I never see another one of these things again!

(BIRD LAUGHS.)

NELLE (CONT'D)

Don't misunderstand me. I still think Lyndon is the greatest man I've ever known. I really do. I just...well, I guess I just wish there was another way of showing that.

BIRD

(AMUSED) Well...we'll break soon.

(AGAIN SHE SMILES, REACHING FOR ANOTHER.
NELLE WATCHES HER, HER FACES SUDDENLY QUITE
EARNEST.)

NELLE

I'm really serious, you know. Johnny and I talk about that all the time. How lucky we feel. To be working this close to you and Lyndon. (CHOKING UP) It's an honor, Ladybird. An honor we'll never forget.

(BIRD HOLDS OUT HER HAND, GENUINELY MOVED.)

BIRD

And we feel the same way about you.

(NELLE TAKES BIRD'S HAND, WHEN SUDDENLY
THEIR MOMENT IS SHATTERED BY JOHNSON
CALLING FROM OFFSTAGE.)

JOHNSON

(OFFSTAGE) Goddammit, Ladybird, where's my shirt? I need my shirt.

BIRD

(CALLING) It's out here. (TO NELLE) Thank you.

(JOHNSON ENTERS IN A RUSH, STRIPPING OFF
HIS SWEATY SHIRT AS HE COMES.)

JOHNSON

Where?

BIRD

Lyndon!

(BIRD GESTURES TO NELLE.)

JOHNSON

(TO NELLE) Hey, Nellie.

BIRD

Will you cover yourself, please?

JOHNSON

Oh hell, Bird, she don't mind. Do you?

(NELLE SHAKES HER HEAD NERVOUSLY.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

See?

BIRD

It's over there.

(JOHNSON HEADS TO HIS SHIRT.)

JOHNSON

Listen, I need something to eat.

BIRD

Lyndon, slow down.

JOHNSON

Or else what?

BIRD

Or else, you're going to have a problem, that's what.

JOHNSON

What kind of problem?

BIRD

The same kind as you had before. A stomach problem. A spleen problem -

JOHNSON

Ladybird, I gotta campaign!

BIRD

And there's only one way to do that!

JOHNSON

There's only one way for me to do that, yeah! I ain't a natural like some of these boys. Hell, they just hop out of the car and smile and the papers cover it like it's a goddam frog fartin' music. Me, I gotta grab people and shake their hand. Let 'em know I'm thinking about 'em. (TO NELLE, EXUBERANT) Ain't that right?

(AGAIN NELLE NODS, AS JOHNSON GRABS A SANDWICH FROM A PLATE ON THE FLOOR.)

BIRD

Is that what Johnny says?

JOHNSON

Is what what Johnny says?

BIRD

That -

JOHNSON

Bird, Johnny says the same thing he always does. That we're doin' just fine.

BIRD

And?

JOHNSON

And that's not enough, Ladybird. Just fine is not enough. We gotta do better.

(HE GIVES BIRD A QUICK KISS.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

And we will.

(HE THEN WINKS AT NELLE, AND EXITS.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

See you.

(SILENCE.)

NELLE

He's somethin', isn't he?

BIRD

Oh, he's something, all right.

SCENE NINE

JIMMY, THE NEWS SELLER, IS SPEAKING INTO A PAY PHONE -- VERY WORKED UP.

JIMMY

(INTO PHONE, ANNOYED) Because I don't need you sayin' this to me. (BEAT) Because he said he would, that's why. He... (SUDDENLY, LOOKING UP)...there he is now. (CALLING OUT) Mr. Johnson!

(THIS LAST HE SAYS JUST AS JOHNSON IS ENTERING FROM THE SIDE.)

JOHNSON

Jimmy!

JIMMY

(INTO PHONE) Hang on.

(QUICKLY, HE GOES TO JOHNSON, HANDING HIM A PAPER.)

JIMMY (cont'd) (CONT'D)

Hey there, Mr. Johnson.

JOHNSON

How you doin', Jimmy?

JIMMY

Listen, did you -

JOHNSON

(AS HE WALKS) I got someone workin' on it, Jimmy. They're getting' right back to me.

(AND WITH THAT, JOHNSON STARTS QUICKLY AWAY.)

JIMMY

(CALLING AFTER HIM) Thank you, Mr. Johnson

JOHNSON

You keep sellin' them papers, you hear?

(THEN, ONCE JOHNSON IS GONE, JIMMY RETURNS TO THE PHONE.)

JIMMY

(INTO PHONE, EXCITED) Did you hear that? (THEN) Because I want to, that's why. That man is gonna make a difference and I'm gonna help him, I tell you! Now, look, don't...please don't keep sayin' that. Whether it's "crazy" or not, I'm gonna help him. And I'd like you to help me! (HE THEN SLAMS DOWN THE PHONE) Pete's sake!

SCENE TEN

CONNALLY AND BROWN FACE OUT AS IF TALKING BY PHONE.

BROWN

(ANGRY) Johnny, don't give me an argument. Just do it!

CONNALLY

Do what?

BROWN

Take him the goddam money!

CONNALLY

(HESITANT) I -

BROWN
 (SHARP) Johnny, I don't want to argue about this. Just do it!

CONNALLY
 (QUEASY) Herman -

BROWN
 Johnny, listen to me -

CONNALLY
 (EXPLODING) Herman, I could go to jail for this!

BROWN
 So?

CONNALLY
 So??? My God -

BROWN
 Johnny, listen to me. (LOUDER) Listen! To me! (THIS LAST HE HAS SHOUTED) George Parr is a friend of ours. He can help us win this thing. Now, I don't give a good goddam about jail. What I care about is winning. What do you care about?

CONNALLY
 (BEAT, SOFTLY) Winning.

BROWN
 Good. Then take him the money.

(THE LIGHTS GO OUT ON BROWN LEAVING
 CONNALLY ALONE.)

MAN OF THE FUTURE - REPRISE

CONNALLY
 CAUSE I'M A MAN OF THE FUTURE
 NOT A MAN OF THE PAST
 I TAKE THE ORDERS GIVEN
 I DO AS I AM AS'ED

AND NOW I SEE IT CLEARLY
 SEE JUST HOW IT WILL BE
 THE WAY A MODERN DAY CAMPAIGN
 WILL RUN

IT WON'T BE 'BOUT THE CANDIDATE
 OR WHAT HE'S GOT TO SAY
 BUT HOW MUCH CASH HE'S GOT ON HAND
 AND WHO HE'S GOT TO PAY

AND FOLKS LIKE ME AND LYNDON
 WE CAN'T LIVE IN THE PAST
 WE'VE GOT TO RUN A TOUGHER RACE
 OR THIS WILL BE OUR LAST

SLIDE: "GAP NARROWS FURTHER. JOHNSON TRAILS BY 3."

SCENE ELEVEN

COKE RUSHES INTO AN EMPTY TOWN SQUARE. HE
 IS FOLLOWED BY HARRY.

COKE

(SHARP) Where are they?

HARRY

Who's that?

COKE

The people. You wanted me to meet the people, where are they?

(HARRY LOOKS AROUND ANXIOUSLY.)

HARRY

Over here.

(HARRY QUICKLY GUIDES COKE OVER TO A MAN ON
 A BENCH.)

HARRY (CONT'D)

Excuse me, sir, I'd like you to meet Coke Stevenson.

WORKING MAN

(STANDING, EXCITED) Well, I'll be. How you doin'?

COKE

(BRUSQUE) Fine. I'm fine.

WORKING MAN

Listen Governor, about that pension thing -

COKE

(ABRUPT) I ain't decided yet.

(THE MAN LAUGHS, UNCOMFORTABLY.)

WORKING MAN

Well...can I just...ask you?

HARRY
(STEPPING IN, DESPERATE) Sure.

WORKING MAN
The way I see it, if we pay part, and the government pays part-

COKE
That's socialism. What you're describing there is socialism and I ain't for it.

WORKING MAN
Well -

COKE
See, I'll tell you something...actually, this is something I want to tell everyone. Harry, help me here, will you?

(SUDDENLY EXCITED, COKE STANDS ON THE BENCH.)

COKE (CONT'D)
Gather round, everyone!

(AND AMAZINGLY, PEOPLE APPEAR, STARTING TO GATHER.)

HARRY
It's Coke Stevenson.

COKE
(OVERLAPPING, EXUBERANT) I'm Coke Stevenson!

(MORE PEOPLE ARRIVE.)

COKE (CONT'D)
That's it. Gather round.

(HE WAITS FOR THE CROWD TO QUIET.)

COKE (CONT'D)
This here fella just asked about government pensions and you know what I told him? I'm against 'em!

(THE CROWD GROANS, AND COKE IMMEDIATELY GOES ON THE ATTACK, REVELING IN THE OPPORTUNITY TO CONVERT THEM.)

PROUD OF BEIN' TEXAN

COKE
OH, I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKIN'
HOW COULD I BE SO DUMB

WORKING MAN

(OVERLAPPING) Right.

COKE

WHEN GOVERNMENT IS WRITING CHECKS
DON'T ASK 'EM WHERE THEY'RE FROM

WORKING MAN

(OVERLAPPING) You got that.

COKE

BUT THAT AIN'T WHAT THE STORY IS
THAT AIN'T THE WAY IT GOES
THEM BOYS YOU TRUST IN WASHINGTON
THEY GOT YOU BY THE NOSE

(COKE CONTINUES, ROAMING BACK AND FORTH ON
THE BENCH.)

COKE (CONT'D)

THEY WILL TAKE AWAY YOUR MANHOOD
THEY WILL STRIP YOU OF YOUR PRIDE
THEY WILL TREAT YOU LIKE YOU'RE CHILDREN
TELL YOU WHEN TO GO INSIDE
THEY WILL TAKE YOUR EV'RY DOLLAR

THEY WILL PUSH YOUR CARES ASIDE
THEY WILL ROB YOU OF YOUR FREEDOM
UNLESS YOU FOLKS DECIDE

(SUDDENLY COKE IS JOINED BY HARRY, THE TWO
OF THEM SINGING OUT FORCEFULLY...)

COKE/HARRY

THAT YOU'RE PROUD OF BEIN' TEXAN
THAT YOU'LL FIGHT YOUR FIGHTS ALONE
THAT YOU'RE PROUD OF BEIN' TEXAN
PROUD TO STAND UP ON YOUR OWN

COKE

Are you?
What do you say?
Come on now!

(COKE CONTINUES, PRACTICALLY EXPLODING WITH
CONFIDENCE.)

COKE (CONT'D)

SEE, I'LL TELL YOU WHAT MY PLANNIN' IS
WHAT I WILL TRY TO DO
MAKE SURE THE GOVERNMENT'S OFF YOUR BACK
THAT YOU CAN WORK FOR YOU
CAUSE FELLAS, THAT'S WHY WE JUST FOUGHT A WAR
THAT'S WHY WE STILL ARE FREE
WE TOLD THEM NAA-ZEE BASTARDS
THIS IS HOW WE WANT TO BE

MAN 2
(OVERLAPPING) That's right.

(AGAIN COKE IS JOINED BY HARRY, AND NOW
SOME OF THE CHORUS JOIN IN AS WELL.)

COKE/HARRY/CHORUS	COKE
CAUSE WE'RE PROUD OF BEIN' TEXAN	Ain't that right!
CAUSE WE'RE PROUD TO WEAR THE STAR	You there, tell me!
YES, WE'RE PROUD OF BEIN' TEXAN	I am anyway
PROUD TO KNOW JUST WHO WE ARE	

COKE
(AGGRESSIVE, POINTING) You there, man. You want to be a Texan,
or you want to be on the dole?

MAN 2
Be a Texan.

COKE
(TO WORKING MAN, WITHERING) How 'bout you, fella? Why should I
pay for your mama? Why don't you pay for your mama, and I'll pay
for mine, and we'll let him pay for his?

(COKE WHIPS AROUND TO THE OTHERS, CLINCHING
HIS ARGUMENT.)

COKE (CONT'D)
CAUSE THAT'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN ARGUIN'
THE KIND OF LAND WE'LL BE
WE'RE EITHER SAD AND SMALL AND WEAK
OR PROUD AND BRAVE AND FREE
AND I KNOW WHICH MY TEXAS IS
THE ONE I'D LIKE TO FIND
A COUNTRY FILLED WITH SPECIAL MEN
WITH SPECIAL MEN
WITH SPECIAL MEN
MADE OF A SPECIAL KIND

(SUDDENLY, COKE POINTS TO EACH GROUP, HIS
CHANTING LOUD AND INFECTIOUS...)

COKE (CONT'D)
Who are proud and free! Proud and free! Proud and free!

(AND SURE ENOUGH, THE CROWD SOON JOINS IN.)

COKE/CHORUS
Proud and free! Proud and free! Proud and free!

(UNTIL, WORKED INTO A FRENZY, THEY ARE
READY AND WILLING TO ANSWER COKE'S CALL.)

COKE CHORUS
 WHO ARE PROUD OF BEIN' TEXAN YES, WE'RE PROUD OF BEIN' TEXAN
 WHO ARE PROUD TO STAND ALONE WHO ARE PROUD TO STAND ALONE
 WHO ARE PROUD OF BEIN' TEXAN YES, WE'RE PROUD OF BEIN' TEXAN

COKE
 PROUD TO STAND UP ON YOUR OWN

CHORUS
 PROUD TO STAND UP ON OUR OWN

ALL
 YES, WE'RE PROUD OF BEIN' TEXAN
 WE'RE PROUD TO STAND ALONE
 WE'RE PROUD OF BEIN' TEXAN
 PROUD TO STAND UP ON OUR OWN

ALL (CONT'D)
 YES, WE'RE PROUD OF BEIN' TEXAN
 WE'RE PROUD TO WEAR THE STAR
 WE'RE PROUD OF BEIN' TEXAN
 PROUD TO KNOW JUST WHO WE ARE

COKE
 (VINDICATED) Remember that now!

(HARRY SHOUTS OVER AT COKE AS HE CLIMBS
 DOWN FROM THE BENCH, THE CROWD CHEERING
 BEHIND HIM.)

HARRY
 Now, that's more like it!

(JUST THEN, JIMMY STEPS OUT FROM THE CROWD,
 CALLING TO COKE IN A VOICE DRIPPING WITH
 CONTEMPT.)

JIMMY
 (LOUD) How 'bout me, Coke? Am I a Texan, too?

(AND COKE SPINS AROUND ON HIM, HIS TONE
 WHEN HE RESPONDS COLD AND UNYIELDING.)

COKE
 No, boy, you ain't!

JIMMY
 (BITTER) I didn't think so.

COKE
 You're a negro!

(WITH THAT HE TURNS BACK TO HARRY, ADDING PEREMPTORILY...)

COKE (CONT'D)

Let's go.

SLIDE: "COKE BOUNCES BACK. LEAD BACK TO 8."

SCENE TWELVE

JOHNSON RUSHES ON STAGE, PLAYFULLY EXUBERANT, NEARLY BULLDOZING THE YOUNG MAN WHO AWAITS HIM.

JOHNSON

Where are the girls at? I need a girl!

(THE YOUNG MAN SHAKES HIS HEAD, AS JOHNSON CONTINUES...)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

No, I'm just kidding. I'm here to campaign. Where's Johnny?

YOUNG MAN

(NERVOUS) Johnny...?

JOHNSON

(IMPATIENT) Connally. John Connally. Where is he?

YOUNG MAN

I -

JOHNSON

Goddammit, Johnny, where are you?

(JOHNSON SAYS THIS LAST TURNING IN A CIRCLE.)

CONNALLY

In Austin, Lyndon!

(THE LIGHTS COME UP ON CONNALLY.)

JOHNSON

What the hell you doin' down there?

CONNALLY

Holdin' down the fort.

JOHNSON

Well listen, I got an idea. (OFFHAND, TO THE YOUNG MAN) Get me a drink, will you? (THEN, BACK TO CONNALLY) I got an idea.

CONNALLY

What?

JOHNSON

Put it on the radio.

CONNALLY

What?

JOHNSON

Put it on the radio! (THEN) Thanks.

(THIS LAST HE SAYS TO THE YOUNG MAN, TAKING HIS DRINK.)

CONNALLY

(WITHOUT PAUSE) Put what on the radio?

JOHNSON

That song, dammit. That goddam song. I want it on the radio every hour of the day and night. I want people all over this state humming that thing. I want to set that chopper down...

(BY NOW THE LIGHTS HAVE COME UP ON A RADIO STATION WHERE A TRIO OF SINGERS ARE LINED UP AT A MIKE.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

(CONTINUING WITHOUT PAUSE)...in the middle of the town square, open the door and hear --

(THE TRIO SINGS.)

TRIO

LYNDON JOHNSON, LYNDON JOHNSON

JOHNSON

(EXCITED) Like that!

(JOHNSON STEPS INTO A CROWD THAT FORMS ALL AROUND HIM.)

TRIO

HE GREW UP POOR LIKE ALL OF YOU

JOHNSON

Damn right I did.

TRIO

HE KNOWS EXACTLY HOW YOU'RE HURTIN'

JOHNSON

Hi there.

(JOHNSON IS SHAKING HANDS WITH EVERYONE.)

TRIO

THERE'S ALOT THAT HE CAN DO

CONNALLY

(IN LIGHT AGAIN, EXCITED) Like that???

JOHNSON

(ON FIRE, EXUBERANT) Exactly like that.

(BY NOW THE LIGHTS HAVE GONE OUT ON THE
STUDIO ALTHOUGH WE CONTINUE TO HEAR THE
TRIO.)

TRIO

NO MATTER WHAT YOUR OCCUPATION

JOHNSON

It don't matter.

TRIO

NO MATTER IF YOU'RE RICH OR PO'R

JOHNSON

Hell, I love the poor.

TRIO

HE'LL ALWAYS HEAR YOU WHEN YOU'RE KNOCKIN'

JOHNSON

Knock loud though. Knock loud!

TRIO

AND HE'LL OPEN UP HIS DOOR

JOHNSON

Hey there, honey!

(AND WITH THAT, HE SLAPS A YOUNG GIRL ON
THE REAR, AS THE MUSIC SUDDENLY SLOWS AND
BECOMES STRANGE.)

TRIO
 LYNDON JOHNSON, LYNDON JOHNSON

JOHNSON
 (TO THE GIRL) Now, don't look at me like that.

TRIO
 HE GREW UP POOR LIKE ALL OF YOU

JOHNSON
 I'm gonna be your next Senator, darlin'.

TRIO
 HE KNOWS EXACTLY HOW YOU'RE HURTIN'

JOHNSON
 Don't you wanna help my campaign?

TRIO
 THERE'S ALOT THAT HE CAN

(SUDDENLY, SHE RUSHES TO HIM, THROWING HER
 ARM AROUND HIS NECK.)

JOHNSON
 That a girl.

TRIO
 DO

(WITH THAT, THERE BEGINS A MONTAGE OF
 CAMPAIGN STOPS THROUGH A SERIES OF TOWNS,
 AS JOHNSON CONTINUES TO BOTH CAMPAIGN AND
 FORNICATE HIS WAY ACROSS TEXAS.)

(DURING THIS DANCE SEQUENCE, WE WATCH
 JOHNSON MAKING SPEECHES, AND MEETING
 PEOPLE, TAKING OFF AND COMING DOWN IN HIS
 HELICOPTER, WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY CAVORTING
 WITH A SERIES OF WOMEN, EVENTUALLY BOTH
 CAMPAIGNING AND LOVEMAKING AT THE VERY SAME
 TIME. AND ALL THE WHILE, BEHIND HIM, A
 SERIES OF SLIDES SHOWS THE SUCCESS HE IS
 HAVING, AS HIS POLL NUMBERS BEGIN TO CLIMB,
 AND THE NEWSPAPER, WITH HEADLINES LIKE
 "JOHNSON CATCHES FIRE!", BEGIN TO NOTICE
 HIS MOMENTUM. SUDDENLY, UNABLE TO CONTAIN
 HIS EXCITEMENT, JOHNSON TURNS TO THE
 AUDIENCE, CALLING OUT...)

JOHNSON
 What do you say, Texas?

(...AND THE ENTIRE STAGE, BOTH STUDIO SINGERS AND POLITICAL CROWDS ALIKE, ANSWERS BACK...)

ALL
LYNDON JOHNSON, LYNDON JOHNSON

(AS JOHNSON SPOTS YET ANOTHER GIRL...)

ALL (CONT'D)
HE GREW UP POOR LIKE ALL OF YOU

(...AND CALLS OUT...)

JOHNSON
Gimme a kiss, honey.

ALL
HE KNOWS EXACTLY

JOHNSON
(TO ANOTHER GIRL) Hey, you, gimme a kiss.

ALL
HOW YOU'RE HURTIN'

JOHNSON
(TO ANOTHER GIRL) How 'bout a kiss?

ALL
THERE'S ALOT THAT HE CAN DO

(THEN SUDDENLY, THE MUSIC STOPS AND JOHNSON FINDS HIMSELF FACING NELLE, WHATEVER BOUNDARIES HE'D EVER OBSERVED NOW COMPLETELY SHOT.)

JOHNSON
(IMMEDIATE) Give me a kiss.

NELLE
(TAKEN ABACK) What?

JOHNSON
Dammit, Nelle, I said gimme a kiss! Now are you gonna give me one or not?

NELLE
(PETRIFIED) Not.

(JOHNSON STARES AT HER.)

JOHNSON

(THEN, EVENLY) Okay.

(AND WITH THAT, HE SMILES.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Say, you know what happened tonight? I flew that damn helicopter straight into the middle of Coke Country. Set it down on the Main Street of Marshall and waited for the people to come. And they did, Nellie. By the hundreds. People who've never even heard of Lyndon Johnson and voted for Coke a half a dozen times -- they lined up all around -- each one wanting to shake my hand. (HE COMES CLOSE TO HER) I'm gonna win this, Nellie. I'm telling you, I'm gonna win this.

(BY NOW VERY CLOSE, HE LEANS IN STILL CLOSER.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

(LOW) Come on. Just one.

NELLE

(PROTESTING) Lyndon, no -

JOHNSON

Dammit, Nellie, I need you to kiss me. Now, give me a kiss!

(AND WITH THAT, HE REACHES FOR NELLIE, ROUGHLY PULLING HER TOWARD HIM -- KISSING HER, WHEN SUDDENLY, AND NEARLY AS POWERFULLY, SHE PUSHES HIM BACK. THE TWO THEN STARE AT EACH OTHER, NELLIE SHAKING WITH FEAR -- WHILE JOHNSON IS IN SHOCK THAT SHE RESISTED HIM.)

NELLE

Lyndon, I said "no!" Now, please, don't...(SHE FIXES HIM WITH A STARE, PLEADING) NO!

JOHNSON

(AGGRIEVED, WHINING, A LITTLE BOY) Christ, honey. I just wanted a kiss.

NELLE

Yes, well, I said...and I said it several times, "no". Now, please, don't...don't do any more.

JOHNSON

(BEAT, CHASTENED) I won't.

(AGAIN SHE FIXES HIM WITH A LOOK -- WHEN SUDDENLY THE LIGHTS CROSS FADE TO CONNALLY, WHO LOOKS UP FROM HIS DESK.)

CONNALLY

Who is it?

(AND SHOOK APPEARS FROM THE SHADOWS HOLDING THE ENVELOPE.)

SHOOK

A friend.

CONNALLY

With what?

SHOOK

Something you'll like.

(HE TOSSES THE ENVELOPE ONTO THE DESK.)

CONNALLY

What is it?

(CONNALLY REACHES FOR IT.)

SHOOK

Read it.

(CONNALLY LOOKS UP IN AWE AFTER READING IT.)

CONNALLY

Why are you givin' me this?

SHOOK

Like I say...I'm a friend.

(WITH THIS, THE LIGHTS ONCE AGAIN COME UP ON JOHNSON JUST AS HE'S TURNING BACK TO NELLIE. HE LOOKS AT HER WORRIEDLY, HIS HANDS HELD OUT IN FRONT OF HIM.)

JOHNSON

(ANNOYED, A BIT ANGRY, ALSO DESPERATE) Look, nothin' happened, right? You don't gotta be so...all upset. Cause nothin' happened, right?

(NELLIE STARES BACK AT HIM, A TRACE OF BITTERNESS IN HER VOICE.)

NELLE

Right.

(AT THIS, JOHNSON NODS HIS HEAD -- THEN HEADS TO THE DOOR.)

JOHNSON

Listen, tell Johnny I want to talk to him when he gets back, will you?

(HE IS NOW AT THE DOOR.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

And you and me, we're square, right?

(A MOMENT PASSES -- AND FINALLY NELLIE NODS.)

NELLE

We're square.

(ONCE SHE SAYS THIS, JOHNSON NODS BACK...)

JOHNSON

Good.

(...AND EXITS WITH A WINK.)

NELLE

(SUDDENLY THEN, NEAR TEARS) God, who is that man! Who...(THEN, AFTER A MOMENT, UPSET)...

THIS ISN'T WHAT WE WANTED

NELLE

THIS ISN'T WHAT WE WANTED
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT IS
THIS ISN'T HOW WE PLANNED IT
IT'S NOT MY WAY, AND IT'S NOT HIS

THIS ISN'T WHAT WE WANTED
NOT WHAT JOHNNY SAID WE'D FIND
I CAN'T BELIEVE HE'D WANT THIS
I CAN'T BELIEVE HE WOULDN'T MIND

THIS ISN'T WHAT WE WANTED
THIS ISN'T WHAT WE WANTED

(SUDDENLY NELLIE IS INTERRUPTED BY CONNALLY, WHO ENTERS IN A RUSH, NOT NOTICING HOW UPSET SHE IS.)

CONNALLY
 (ANNOYED) Hey! (THEN) I need my suit.

NELLE
 (BEAT, HALF-TURNING, LOST) I'm...I'm just going.

CONNALLY
 (ANGRY) You didn't get it yet!

NELLE
 No. I've -

CONNALLY
 Nellie, I told you I needed it when I got back!

NELLE
 Johnny, I'm sorry!

(CONNALLY STARES AT HER FOR A LONG MOMENT,
 SUDDENLY CONCERNED.)

CONNALLY
 What's the matter?

NELLE
 Nothing, I'm...(SUDDENLY TRYING TO CALM HERSELF)...nothing.

(STILL STARING FOR A MOMENT, CONNALLY MOVES
 CLOSER, CONCERNED.)

CONNALLY
 Say, listen, there's gonna be some barbecue. You wanna come over later on?

NELLE
 No. I....no. (THEN, AFTER A MOMENT) I'll go get your suit.

CONNALLY
 Look, why -

NELLE
 (BLURTING) Because I don't want to, that's why! (THEN) I'll have it later.

CONNALLY
 (STARING AT HER, NOW VERY WORRIED) Okay. (THEN, GESTURING OFFSTAGE)...I'll see you.

(AND WITH THAT, HE EXITS -- LEAVING NELLE
 ALONE.)

NELLE

THIS ISN'T WHAT I WANTED
THIS ISN'T WHAT I WANTED
THIS ISN'T WHAT I WANTED

SCENE THIRTEEN

JOHNSON PASSES THROUGH A CROWD OF FARMERS,
SHAKING HANDS WITH EACH OF THEM.

JOHNSON

How you doin'?

(JOHNSON SHAKES A MAN'S HAND.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Hey there...(HE GRABS ANOTHER MAN'S HAND)...how you doin'?

(A FARMER TURNS AROUND AND CALLS OUT TO HIS
FRIENDS.)

FARMER

(EXCITED) It's Lyndon Johnson. Over here! (HE TURNS BACK TO
JOHNSON) Mr. Johnson? Mr. Johnson!

(THE FARMER STRUGGLES TO CATCH JOHNSON'S
EYE. BUT JOHNSON CONTINUES DOWN THE LINE.)

JOHNSON

Hey there.

FARMER

Mr. Johnson!

(AND FINALLY THE TWO MEN ARE FACE TO FACE.
THE FARMER IS ECSTATIC.)

FARMER (CONT'D)

Mr. Johnson.

JOHNSON

Hey there.

(BY NOW THE FARMER IS PUMPING JOHNSON'S
HAND.)

FARMER

I just want to tell you, Mr. Johnson...I just...

(BUT HE IS SO OVERWHELMED, HE IS UNABLE TO CONTINUE. ALL HE CAN DO IS KEEP SHAKING HIS HAND.)

JOHNSON

I know.

(THE FARMER SMILES.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Now listen, you bring out your friends, hear?

(THE FARMER NODS.)

FARMER

I will.

(JOHNSON MOVES PAST AND THE FARMER WATCHES HIM GO, TALKING WISTFULLY TO HIMSELF AS HE DOES. BUT THEN HE STARTS TO SING, AND WHEN HE DOES, AS IF BY MAGIC, JOHNSON TURNS BACK TO HIM, THE TWO MEN DEEPLY CONNECTED.)

FARMER (CONT'D)

(TO HIMSELF, QUIET) God, I wish I told you. I wish I could have told you.

(AND WITH THAT, HE TURNS OUT TO THE AUDIENCE, BURSTING WITH ENERGY.)

THANK YOU

FARMER

WE COOKED ON A CAST IRON WOODSTOVE
HAULED IN THE WOOD ON THE BACK OF MY HORSE
OUR WIVES DID THE WASHIN' IN A HUGE IRON POT
USED LONG, SKINNY POLES TO STIR IT ALL UP

FARMER (CONT'D)

That lye soap could really give ya' a burn.

FARMER (CONT'D)

WE WOKE EV'RY MORNIN' WITH THE LIGHT OF THE SUN
AND WE WORKED IN THE FIELD WHERE THE WORK WAS NO
FUN
AND WE HOPED AND WE PRAYED AT THE END OF THE DAY
THAT THE DAY WAS NOT YET DONE

CAUSE WE'D HUDDLE ROUND THE WINDOW WITH THE LAST
RAY OF LIGHT
WITH A KEROSENE LAMP, AND OUR EYES BUNCHED UP
TIGHT

WE PUSHED ASIDE OUR DINNER, AND LET OUR BABIES
CRY

(FRUSTRATED) BUT IT'D GET DARK SO EARLY
NEAR IMPOSSIBLE TO SEE
IT WOULD GET DARK SO EARLY
I NEVER LEARNED TO READ
AND SO IT'S BEEN FOR ALL OUR LIVES

SEEMED THE DARKNESS, IT ALWAYS COME TOO SOON
TILL ONE MAN CAME AND CHANGED OUR LIVES AROUND
WE THANK YOU, WE THANK YOU

FARMER (CONT'D)

You fought them boys in Washington, and brung us electricity, Mr.
Johnson. For the first time in our lives, electricity!

FARMER (CONT'D)

WE STILL COOK ON THE SAME IRON WOODSTOVE
HAUL IN THE WOOD ON THE SAME TIRED HORSE
MY WIFE STILL WASHES IN THE HUGE IRON POT
STILL STIRS IT UP WITH THEM LONG, SKINNY POLES

(JOYOUS) BUT NOW WE HAVE AN ELECTRIC LINE!
COMIN' THROUGH THE COUNTY TO THE HOUSE THAT'S
MINE
CONNECTS US ALL UP TO THE WORLD FAR BEYOND
ANYTHING I THOUGHT I'D EVER SEE

WE GOT LAMPS STRONG AS SUNLIGHT
AND FANS THAT TURN ALL DAY
AND A RADIO THAT TELLS US
IF THE STORM WILL STAY AWAY

AND MY SON HAS LEARNED TO READ!
AND MY SON HAS LEARNED TO READ!
STAYS UP NIGHTS AND READS!

FARMER (CONT'D)

Said to me yesterday that he would like to be something else.
Something else but a farmer. Oh, my.

FARMER (CONT'D)

AND SO IT IS, THE LIFE YOU GIVE US

(HE TURNS TO JOHNSON, THE TWO MEN LOCKING
EYES IN MUTUAL, DEEPLY FELT COMPASSION.)

FARMER (CONT'D)

I NEVER DREAMED IT COULD BE
A LIFE MUCH BETTER BECAUSE YOU CARE FOR ME
I THANK YOU, I THANK YOU

(SUDDENLY JIMMY APPEARS BEHIND JOHNSON,
CALLING OUT TO HIM...)

JIMMY

Mr. Johnson?

(...AND JOHNSON BREAKS OFF HIS GAZE FROM
THE FARMER.)

JOHNSON

Not yet, Jimmy. Not yet.

(THEN, BEFORE HE CAN CONTINUE, CONNALLY
ALSO APPEARS, GRABBING AT HIS SLEEVE.)

CONNALLY

You're eight points down.

JOHNSON

(IMMEDIATELY CONCERNED) What?

CONNALLY

Houston Chronicle. Latest poll.

(THE LIGHTS CROSS-FADE TO THE HOTEL SUITE,
WHICH THE TWO ENTER IN A RUSH.)

JOHNSON

I thought we were closing.

CONNALLY

We were. And now we're not. Which is why we need this.

(WITH THAT, CONNALLY HANDS HIM THE
ENVELOPE.)

JOHNSON

What's this?

CONNALLY

Read it.

(AS JOHNSON OPENS THE ENVELOPE, LADYBIRD
APPEARS IN THE DOORWAY.)

BIRD

What is it?

(CONNALLY GLARES AT BIRD, THEN LOOKS AWAY.)

BIRD (CONT'D)

Lyndon, what is it?

(SLIGHT PAUSE.)

JOHNSON

A meeting in Dallas. Some kind of minutes.

CONNALLY

Labor council of Texas. Where they decided on Coke.

BIRD

And?

CONNALLY

And we can call him a Communist.

BIRD

What!

JOHNSON

Ladybird, let him talk!

CONNALLY

Or a stooge of labor, at least.

BIRD

How do you figure that?

CONNALLY

He took their endorsement.

BIRD

So?

CONNALLY

So he must have cut a deal.

BIRD

You've got to be kidding.

JOHNSON

Ladybird -

BIRD

Coke Stevenson is not a Communist, John. He's the opposite, for God's sake.

JOHNSON

So then -

BIRD

So how can we call him something if we know he's not?

CONNALLY

(SUDDENLY VICIOUS) Because we'll lie, Ladybird. We'll get up like they all do and lie!

BIRD

I -

CONNALLY

(ANGRY) Do you honestly think everything said about Lyndon is true?

BIRD

No.

JOHNSON

So then, why should I be penalized?

CONNALLY

That's what's happened before, Bird.

JOHNSON

We been playing by one set of rules and they been playing by another.

CONNALLY

We gotta play by one set of rules.

BIRD

Lyndon, it's wrong.

JOHNSON

(EXPLODING) No, it's not wrong! Not if you want me teaching folks how to read. Not if you want me to help the poor. Getting old people pensions. Do you want that?

BIRD

(BEAT, SMALL) Yeah.

JOHNSON

Well then, this is what I gotta do. This is what I gotta do to help the people you want me to help. That I want me to help.

(BEAT) This is what I gotta do. (BEAT) It's just politics.

(WITH THAT, JOHNSON TURNS AND EXITS WITH
CONNALLY FOLLOWING AFTER HIM. AND BIRD IS
LEFT ALONE, CLEARLY TROUBLED.)

SCENE FOURTEEN

JOHNSON STANDS IN FRONT OF A GROUP OF REPORTERS. OFF TO THE SIDE, CONNALLY HUDDLES WITH BROWN. BOTH OF THEM WATCHING THE NEWS CONFERENCE.

BROWN

He didn't give you any guff??

CONNALLY

Hell, he practically tore off my arm getting it out of my hand.

(BROWN SHAKES HIS HEAD, LAUGHING, AS THE REPORTERS HANDS SHOOT UP.)

THAT AIN'T FOR AMERICA

SHOOK

SO WHAT YOU'RE SAYING -

JOHNSON

I'M SAYING IT'S STRANGE

SHOOK

THAT HE TOOK THEIR ENDORSEMENT?

JOHNSON

THAT HE'D SUDDENLY CHANGE

SHOOK

WELL, THAT AIN'T SO UNUSUAL

REPORTER 1

HIS FINGER'S IN THE WIND

JOHNSON

BUT THIS AIN'T JUST A PARTY VOTE

SHOOK

IT TELLS US HOW HE'S SINNED

(REPORTER 1 STARTS TO UNDERSTAND.)

JOHNSON

HERE THIS MAN WHO'S HATED UNIONS HAS NOW TURNED AROUND TO FEEL

SHOOK

THAT INSTEAD OF FIGHTING LABOR

REPORTER 1
HE WOULD TRY AND CUT A DEAL

JOHNSON
Your words, not mine.

REPORTER 1
But that's what you're saying, ain't it?

REPORTER 1 (CONT'D)
THAT COKE AND THESE NEW FRIENDS OF HIS
IS SUDDENLY QUITE THICK

SHOOK
AND WHERE THERE'S SMOKE THERE'S FIRE BOYS
LET'S CRUCIFY THE PRICK

(JIMMY ENTERS HAWKING PAPERS.)

JIMMY
Coke's a Red. Read all about it!

(WHILE A COUPLE AT THEIR BREAKFAST TABLE
READ THE NEWS.)

MAN IN COUPLE
(IN OUTRAGE, CONCERNED) Honey, take a look at this!

JIMMY
Coke's a Red. Read all about it!

(THE WOMAN IS NOW DRAPED OVER THE MAN,
READING OVER HIS SHOULDER.)

MAN IN COUPLE
SAYS COKE AND THESE NEW FRIENDS OF HIS
THESE EASTERN UNION BOSSES

(REPORTER 1 IS NOW STANDING AT A RADIO
MIKE.)

REPORTER 1
ARE MAKIN' DEALS IN SECRET, FOLKS
DON'T CARE WHO SUFFERS LOSSES

MAN IN COUPLE
AND NOW HE SAYS HE'LL BACK THEIR PLAN

JIMMY
HE'LL CLOSE THE OPEN SHOP

REPORTER 1
SO IF A BUSINESS DISOBEYS

(SHOOK IS NOW SITTING AT HIS TYPEWRITER.)

SHOOK
THEY BRING IT TO A STOP

(THE MAN AND THE WOMAN LOOK UP AT EACH
OTHER IN HORROR.)

WOMAN IN COUPLE
AND THAT AIN'T FOR AMERICA

MAN IN COUPLE
NO, THAT AIN'T FOR AMERICA

JIMMY
AND THAT AIN'T FOR AMERICA

SHOOK
NO WAY

REPORTER 1
NOT HERE

JIMMY
NO SIR

MAN IN COUPLE
NO

(ONCE AGAIN JIMMY HOLDS UP A NEWSPAPER,
THIS TIME THE HEADLINE READING...)

JIMMY
"Orders come from Moscow! Coke's orders come from Moscow!"

SHOOK
THOUGHTS LIKE THESE ARE FOREIGN
THEY COME FROM OVER THERE

REPORTER 1
FROM EUROPEAN SOCIALISTS
WHO DON'T BELIEVE IN PRAYER

JIMMY
THEY'LL TAKE AWAY OUR FREEDOM
TILL WE DON'T KNOW WHO WE ARE

(ONCE AGAIN, THE MAN AND THE WOMAN SEEM TO
BE ARRIVING AT A HORRIBLE UNDERSTANDING.)

WOMAN IN COUPLE
WHAT STARTS A UNION BOSS

MAN IN COUPLE
ENDS UP A COMMISSAR

REPORTER 1
AIN'T GONNA BUDGE
AIN'T GONNA BLINK
YOU BE THE JUDGE
WE'RE AT THE BRINK

WOMAN IN COUPLE
AND THAT AIN'T FOR AMERICA

SHOOK
DO WHAT IS RIGHT
FIGHT EV'RY DAY
CALL OUT THEIR NAME
SEND THEM AWAY

MAN IN COUPLE
NOT HERE
OUR LAND
NAH-UH
NO WAY

(THE ABOVE BRIDGE REPEATS FOUR TIMES,
UNTIL, BY THE END, THE SMALL CHORUS IS
JOINED BY OTHERS, THE ENTIRE GROUP FACING
THE AUDIENCE AND SINGING EXUBERANTLY.)

ALL
AND THAT AIN'T FOR AMERICA
WE WON'T ACCEPT THEIR LINE
WHAT THEY WANT IS TOTAL POWER
TAKE YOURS AND THEN TAKE MINE

BUT WE AIN'T GONNA LET 'EM
TAKE OVER THIS FAIR LAND
WHEREEVER UNIONS TRY TO GROW
IT'S THERE WE'LL MAKE OUR STAND

JIMMY
AND THAT AIN'T FOR AMERICA!

(THE SPOTLIGHT PICKS OUT BROWN, WHO TURNS
TO CONNALLY, BEAMING.)

BROWN
Perfect.

(SUDDENLY, ONE OF THE REPORTERS TURNS OUT
FROM THE PACK.)

REPORTER 1
Hey, look over there. It's Coke.

(AND WITH THAT, THE PACK OF REPORTERS RACE
ACROSS STAGE AS COKE AND HARRY ENTER.)

REPORTER 1 (CONT'D)

Coke Stevenson, do you have a response?

COKE

(OFF-GUARD) To what?

SHOOK

Johnson's charge. He says you and the unions cooked up a deal.

(WITH THIS, THE CROWD FREEZES AS THE LIGHTS
FOCUS IN ON JOHNSON AND HARRY.)

HARRY

We expected more from you.

JOHNSON

(QUICK) You talking for Coke?

HARRY

I'm talking for me.

JOHNSON

Well then, don't say "we."

HARRY

Lyndon, I'll be frank with you. Coke and I don't see eye to eye on this. He thinks we should ignore you. I don't. And I tell you right now, if you do this again, I'll make you regret it.

JOHNSON

You threatening me there, Harry boy!

HARRY

I'm just stating a fact.

JOHNSON

(SUDDENLY HOT) Yeah, well, you listen to me, you little sonuvabitch. I got more where that comes from. You understand? And if you push me, I'll use it.

(WITH THAT, THE LIGHTS GO OUT ON HARRY,
COMING UP ON BIRD.)

BIRD

What's wrong?

JOHNSON

(STARTLED, ANGRY) Nothing! (BEAT, SOFTER) Nothing, I'm fine. I'll see you tonight.

(AND WITH THAT, JOHNSON TAKES OFF, ONLY TO
RUN INTO JIMMY.)

JIMMY
Mr. Johnson?

JOHNSON
(SHARP) Not now, Jimmy!

SLIDE: "COKE CRIES FOUL! JOHNSON TRAILS BY 4."

SCENE FIFTEEN

BROWN THROWS DOWN A BRIEFCASE IN FRONT OF
CONNALLY.

CONNALLY
What's this for?

BROWN
What do you think?

CONNALLY
Jesus, Herman.

BROWN
John, don't give me trouble. Just deliver it.

(CONNALLY LIFTS IT UP.)

CONNALLY
How much?

BROWN
Two hundred thousand.

(AS BROWN EXITS, CONNALLY RETURNS TO HIS
HOTEL ROOM ONLY TO FIND NELLE WAITING FOR
HIM.)

ANNOUNCER
(INTO MICROPHONE) Ladies and gentlemen...Mr. Lyndon Baines
Johnson!

(WHILE ACROSS THE STAGE, AN ENORMOUS CHEER
GOES UP AS JOHNSON ENTERS A CAMPAIGN RALLY
WAVING HIS HAT. IN THE SEQUENCE THAT
FOLLOWS, WE SEE CONNALLY AND NELLE IN
AUSTIN HAVING AN ARGUMENT, WHILE THE
ANNOUNCER AND A GIRL BACK-UP SINGER SING
THEIR SONG.)

ANNOUNCER/SINGER
 SO GIVE A CHEER FOR LYNDON JOHNSON
 AND REST ASSURED HE'S ON YOUR SIDE
 HE'S NOT AFRAID OF SPECIAL INT'RESTS
 HE WON'T BE COWED, HE'LL NEVER HIDE

(SUDDENLY, THE CAMPAIGN RALLY FREEZES AND
 THE FIGHT WE'VE BEEN WATCHING IN AUSTIN
 BECOMES AUDIBLE.)

NELLE

He kissed me.

CONNALLY

He...what!

NELLE

(FALTERING) Lyndon, he...kissed me. Or tried to anyway.

(THEN IT'S CONNALLY AND NELLE WHO FREEZE,
 AS THE CAMPAIGN ONCE AGAIN COMES TO LIFE.)

CHEER FOR LYNDON - REPRISE

ANNOUNCER/SINGER
 LYNDON JOHNSON, LYNDON JOHNSON

(THEN AGAIN, WE'RE BACK IN AUSTIN.)

CONNALLY

Well, which is it? Did he kiss you or not?

NELLE

He tried to.

CONNALLY

Kiss you?

NELLE

Yes. (IMPASSIONED) On the mouth, John!

ANNOUNCER/SINGER
 HE GREW UP POOR LIKE ALL OF YOU

(WHILE CONNALLY IS STARING AT NELLE IN
 SHOCK.)

CONNALLY

Nellie, look, why are you telling me this? He was making a joke!

NELLE

It wasn't a joke.

CONNALLY
 (ANGRY) Well, it wasn't the end of the world, either.

NELLE
 (EQUALLY ANGRY) John, I -

CONNALLY
 Nelle -

NELLE
 It wasn't just a kiss, John! It was more than that.

CONNALLY
 (BEAT, CONFUSED, HORRIFIED) Meaning what?

(SUDDENLY THE ENTIRE CROWD JOINS IN, THEY,
 JOHNSON, AND THE SINGERS ALL SINGING WITH
 ABANDON.)

ALL
 HE KNOWS EXACTLY

NELLE
 He wanted... He...(CONFUSED, WORKED UP)...it...

ALL
 HOW YOU'RE HURTIN'

NELLE
 (CONTINUING, NEAR TEARS) He was lookin' for more. (STARTING TO
 CRY) And I got scared.

ALL
 THERE'S A LOT THAT HE CAN DO

NELLE
 (BEAT) So I can't stay here anymore. (BEAT) Will you come home
 with me?

CONNALLY
 (DESTROYED) Not right now, no. I... Maybe in a couple of days.

NELLE
 Ok. (BEAT) I'll see you.

(SUDDENLY THE CROWD BREAKS INTO A CHANT AS
 THE LIGHTS GO OUT ON CONNALLY AND NELLE.)

CROWD
 HEY, HEY LBJ
 WHAT WILL YOU DO
 FOR US TODAY?

JOHNSON
(OVERLAPPING) I can't hear you!

CROWD
HEY, HEY LBJ

(AND THEN SUDDENLY, THE LIGHTS GO OUT ON THE CROWD AS WELL, ISOLATING JOHNSON AND THE GIRL SINGER HE HAS JUST OBVIOUSLY GOOSED.)

SINGER
Congressman!

(AND BIRD, WHO HAS BEEN LOOKING ON FROM THE SIDE, NOW TURNS AWAY.)

JOHNSON
Oh, hell, girl. You got Lyndon Johnson here. Loosen up!

(THE LIGHTS THEN COME UP AGAIN ON THE CROWD, WHO NOW FINISH THEIR CHANT.)

CROWD
WHAT WILL YOU DO
FOR US TODAY?

JOHNSON
Everything, that's what!

(AGAIN, THE CROWD CHEERS, ONLY TO QUIET IMMEDIATELY WHEN JOHNSON RAISES HIS HAND.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)
Listen, I want to thank y'all for coming out and meeting us today. And before we go, I want to introduce you to someone who isn't often on the campaign trail, but is today -- my number one fan and greatest partner...Mrs. Lyndon Baines Johnson!

(AT THIS, HE TURNS BACK TO LADYBIRD WHO DUCKS HER HEAD SHYLY.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)
(INTO MIKE) Honey, come on over and say something, will you?

(BIRD SHAKES HER HEAD, TERRIBLY FRIGHTENED -
- AS JOHNSON'S AMPLIFIED VOICE GOES ON.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)
Oh, honey, come on! The people want to hear you! Don't you folks?

(WITH THAT JOHNSON TURNS TO THE CROWD,
WHICH LETS OUT AN ENORMOUS CHEER.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

(MOCK PLEADING) Come on.

(BIRD FINALLY GOES TO THE MIKE, TAKING A
MOMENT BEFORE SHE SPEAKS.)

BIRD

(WHISPERED) Thank you for coming here today. I...(SHE
FALTERS)...I really appreciate it.

(AGAIN THE CROWD CHEERS, THIS TIME EVEN
MORE EXUBERANTLY THAN BEFORE. AS THEY DO,
LADYBIRD STEPS BACK AND JOHNSON AGAIN TAKES
THE MIKE.)

JOHNSON

Ain't she somethin'? Well, listen, folks, we gotta get out of
here. But before we do, I wanna come down and shake a couple
hands. Maybe I can even get Ladybird to come down and shake
hands with me.

(AT THIS, HE AGAIN TURNS TO BIRD, WHO
SHAKES HER HEAD NERVOUSLY NO.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

No?

(JOHNSON TURNS BACK WITH A LAUGH.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

In the meantime, make sure you stock up at the refreshment stand -
- and remember me on Tuesday, will you! That's when I need you.

(JOHNSON THEN NODS TO THE ANNOUNCER WHO
STARTS UP THE MUSIC, AS JOHNSON JUMPS DOWN
INTO THE CROWD, SHAKING HANDS WITH
EVERYONE.)

ANNOUNCER/CROWD

LYNDON JOHNSON, LYNDON JOHNSON
HE GREW UP POOR LIKE ALL OF YOU
HE KNOWS EXACTLY HOW YOU'RE HURTING
THERE'S A LOT THAT HE CAN DO

JOHNSON

Tuesday, now!

SCENE SIXTEEN

CONNALLY BARGES INTO JOHNSON'S SUITE.

CONNALLY

Lyndon!

(STRIDING ACROSS THE ROOM, HE RUNS INTO LADYBIRD WHO EMERGES FROM THE BEDROOM IN HER NIGHTGOWN.)

CONNALLY (CONT'D)

Where's Lyndon?

BIRD

Asleep.

CONNALLY

I need to talk to him.

BIRD

It's two in the morning.

CONNALLY

It's about Nellie.

(AS SOON AS IT'S OUT OF HIS MOUTH, CONNALLY REGRETS WHAT HE'S SAID.)

BIRD

What about her?

(SUDDENLY, CONNALLY AVERTS HIS EYES.)

CONNALLY

Nothing.

BIRD

Don't tell me it's nothing when you come bursting in like this. What about her?

(SLIGHT PAUSE. CONNALLY STARES AT HER.)

CONNALLY

Nothing. It can wait till the morning.

(WITH THAT, CONNALLY EXITS, AND BIRD RETURNS TO THE BEDROOM WHERE JOHNSON IS SOAKING HIS HANDS IN A DISH. LIKE BIRD, HE IS IN A ROBE AND PAJAMAS.)

Who was it? JOHNSON

Johnny. BIRD

What did he want? JOHNSON

Something about Nellie. (JOHNSON LOOKS UP, STARTLED) He wouldn't say what.

(THE TWO LOCK EYES, BEFORE JOHNSON LOOKS AWAY.)

Is there something I should know? BIRD (CONT'D)

No. JOHNSON

You sure? BIRD

Yeah. JOHNSON

(EXPLODES) Lyndon, why is John coming here at two in the morning! BIRD

I - JOHNSON

What is going on with you and Nellie? BIRD

Nothing. JOHNSON

Then why is he - BIRD

Bird, for God's sake, will you let me alone on this? I mean, for God's sake, have some pity, will you? JOHNSON

(AT THIS, JOHNSON LIFTS UP HIS DAMAGED, BLEEDING HANDS.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Please! (BEAT) Sweetie, there is nothing going on with Nellie. I promise you that.

(AFTER A MOMENT, BIRD NODS. SHE THEN LOOKS AT HIS HANDS.)

BIRD

How they feel?

JOHNSON

Better.

(WITH A SMALL LAUGH, SHE LIFTS A HAND FROM THE DISH.)

BIRD

I still can't believe it.

JOHNSON

What's that?

BIRD

That you got this shaking hands.

JOHNSON

That's cause you got the wrong hands in your head. It's not city hands I'm shaking. It's country hands. Farm hands. Hands as hard as the work they do. And every one of 'em's connected to a man who thinks I'm gonna make a difference. That if he can just shake my hand long enough it's gonna make his life better. And so he sits there for minutes, pumping away, looking me in the eye, not letting go...(PAUSE, HIS EYES TEARING UP)...praying for magic.

(SLIGHT PAUSE.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

That happens a hundred times a day.

(LADYBIRD LOOKS AT HIM LOVINGLY.)

BIRD

Well, maybe you can ease up a little.

JOHNSON

It's what I live for, Ladybird. That moment. If my hands gotta bleed a little...that's a small price to pay.

(BIRD TAKES JOHNSON'S HEAD IN HER HANDS, GAZING AT HIM FOR A LONG MOMENT.)

BIRD

I wish the people saw this.

JOHNSON

What's that?

HOW MUCH IT IS YOU LOVE THEM

BIRD

HOW MUCH IT IS YOU LOVE THEM
 HOW MUCH YOU WANT TO CARE
 HOW DEEP AND STRONG YOUR NEED TO HELP
 FEELINGS YOU DON'T ALWAYS SHARE

I WISH YOU NEVER FALTERED
 FORGETTING WHO YOU ARE
 WITH MIDNIGHT DEALS IN SECRET SPOTS
 FROM THE BACK SEAT OF A CAR

'CAUSE THAT IS NOT THE MAN
 THAT IS NOT THE REAL MAN
 THAT IS NOT THE MAN
 I KNOW -- AND LOVE

THE MAN I LOVE LOVES CHILDREN
 AND TEACHES THEM TO READ
 CHILDREN WITH SO LITTLE HELP
 THEY HAVE NOTHING ELSE BUT NEED

THE MAN I LOVE LOVES FARMERS
 AND KNOWS JUST HOW THEY FEEL
 AND LOOKS FOR WAYS TO HELP THEM OUT
 WAYS IMPOSSIBLE BUT REAL

THE MAN I LOVE LOVES BEAUTY
 SPENDS AN HOUR BY A STREAM
 AS SHAFTS OF SUNLIGHT SPARKLE PAST
 HE TAKES THE TIME TO DREAM

HOW MUCH IT IS HE LOVES THEM
 HOW MUCH HE WANTS TO CARE
 HOW DEEP AND STRONG HIS NEED TO HELP
 WHEN HIS PEOPLE NEED HIM THERE

JOHNSON

Ladybird, I need you to help me. I'm still a point or two down,
 and I need your help.

BIRD

How?

JOHNSON

Talk to 'em. Tell the people what you just said.

BIRD

(TERRIFIED) Oh no. I can't.

JOHNSON

Why can't you?

BIRD

It's the one thing I just -

JOHNSON

Honey, they love you. The people out there love you. Hell, that's all I'm hearing anymore. How they love Mrs. Johnson. Well, honey, I need the people to love me. (BEAT) And the only way they're gonna do that is if you tell them how. (SLIGHT PAUSE) Honey, you tell them how to love Lyndon Johnson and they'll love me, too. But you gotta tell 'em, Ladybird. You gotta tell 'em.

(JOHNSON SINGS, ALMOST PLAYFULLY.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

HOW MUCH IT IS I LOVE THEM
HOW MUCH I REALLY CARE

(AND FINALLY, BIRD RELENTS.)

BIRD

All right.

JOHNSON

(EXCITED) Yeah?

BIRD

Yeah.

JOHNSON

(SUDDENLY) Here, wait a minute.

(GETTING UP PAINFULLY, JOHNSON CROSSES THE ROOM.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Something I been saving.

(HE COMES BACK WITH A GARMENT BAG.)

BIRD

What is it?

JOHNSON

Take a look.

(BIRD OPENS THE BAG AND REMOVES A BLAZING
RED DRESS.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

I bought it for swearing in. But what the hell. Why not use it
tomorrow? At the rally.

BIRD

(LOOKING UP, STARTLED) At...?

JOHNSON

What do you think?

BIRD

(STAMMERING) I...

JOHNSON

Oh, Bird, you're gonna look beautiful. You're gonna look so
goddam beautiful. And I'm gonna be so damn proud of you. (BEAT,
TAKING HER IN) Thank you, baby. Thank you for this. (THEN)
Tomorrow!

(WITH THAT, HE EXITS. ONCE HE DOES, WE
INSTANTLY HEAR THE SOUND OF THE CROWD -- AS
BIRD STARTS TO GET INTO HER DRESS. THEN
ABOVE THE CROWD, THE ANNOUNCER'S VOICE IS
HEARD.)

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Well, isn't this something? Look at you out there -- a sea of
faces! I've been told there's near 20,000 of you. And that
ain't even counting the literally tens of thousands, maybe
hundreds of thousand who are listening this very second of Texas-
wide radio. And what are we here for? Why to show support for
our next senator, that's why! And tonight, at this last rally of
the campaign, we got a special treat for you. A special speaker.
Ladies and gentlemen, the yellowest rose in all of Texas...Mrs.
Lyndon Baines Johnson!

(AT THIS THE LIGHTS COME UP FULL ON
LADYBIRD, WHO STEPS NERVOUSLY FORWARD TO A
PODIUM. THEN, AS SHE SINGS, THE LIGHTS
COME UP ON JOHNSON AND CONNALLY WHO STAND
BEHIND HER.)

HOW MUCH IT IS YOU LOVE THEM -
REPRISE

BIRD

THE MAN I LOVE LOVES CHILDREN
AND TEACHES THEM TO READ
CHILDREN WITH SO LITTLE HELP
THEY HAVE NOTHING ELSE BUT NEED

THE MAN I LOVE LOVES FARMERS
AND KNOWS JUST HOW THEY FEEL
AND LOOKS FOR WAYS TO HELP THEM OUT
WAYS IMPOSSIBLE BUT REAL

THE MAN I LOVE LOVES BEAUTY
SPENDS AN HOUR BY A STREAM
AS SHAFTS OF SUNLIGHT SPARKLE PAST
HE TAKES THE TIME TO DREAM

HOW MUCH IT IS HE LOVES THEM
HOW MUCH HE'S MOVED TO CARE
HOW DEEP AND STRONG HIS NEED TO HELP
WHEN HIS PEOPLE NEED HIM THERE

(AT THIS, LADYBIRD FREEZES, AND CONNALLY
SPEAKS TO JOHNSON, BOTH MEN CONTINUING TO
STARE STRAIGHT OUT.)

CONNALLY

We need to talk.

JOHNSON

Not now.

CONNALLY

Lyndon -

JOHNSON

John, look -

CONNALLY

I know about Nellie, Lyndon. I know what you did.

JOHNSON

(BEAT, COOL) What?

CONNALLY

(OUTRAGED) You put the move on her, Lyndon. (BEAT) You put the damn move on her!

JOHNSON

(DEFLECTING) Johnny, hell, it was just fun. I wasn't tryin' to do nothin'. (BEAT, GUILTY) It was just fun.

CONNALLY

(LONG BEAT) Yeah? (MURDEROUS) Well, don't do it again.

(JOHNSON BREAKS INTO A CAMPAIGN SMILE AS BIRD RESUMES HER SONG.)

BIRD

HOW MUCH IT IS HE LOVES YOU
HOW MUCH HE'S MOVED TO CARE
HOW DEEP AND STRONG HIS NEED TO HELP
WHEN HIS PEOPLE NEED HIM THERE

(AS BIRD BACKS AWAY, WE HEAR A TREMENDOUS OVATION -- AT WHICH POINT A SPOTLIGHT FALLS ON JOHNSON.)

JOHNSON

AND THIS ONE I CAN WIN
SOMETHING TELLS ME I CAN WIN

SLIDE: "ELECTION DAY! RACE TOO CLOSE TO CALL!"

SCENE SEVENTEEN

A COLLECTION OF OVERLAPPING MINI-SCENES PLAYS OUT AGAINST A HUGE MAP OF TEXAS. IN THE FIRST, A VOTE COUNTER RACES THROUGH THE NEWS ROOM AND REPORTER 1 CALLS OUT TO HIM.

REPORTER 1

What have you got?

VOTE COUNTER

Not much.

REPORTER 1

No idea?

VOTE COUNTER

Not yet.

(AS OUR FOCUS SHIFTS, WE BECOME AWARE OF A CHANT WE WILL HEAR THROUGHOUT. "VOTE, VOTE, VOTES COMING IN" "TICK, TICK, TICK, TICKERTAPE" "TAKE, TAKE, TAKE, TAKE A

LOOK." LOW LEVEL AND PERCUSSIVE, THESE
 CHANTS UNDERSCORE THE ENTIRE SCENE, RISING
 AND FALLING AS THE ACTION, NOW LOCATED AT A
 POLLING PLACE, INTENSIFIES.)

PRECINCT CAPTAIN

But you need a card.

(JIMMY LEANS OVER THE TABLE POINTING TO HIS
 NAME ON A LIST.)

JIMMY

But there's my name!

PRECINCT CAPTAIN

(RAISING HIS VOICE, STANDING) But you need...a card!

(THE SCENE NOW SHIFTS TO COKE HEADQUARTERS,
 BECOMING TENSER STILL.)

HARRY

(COVERING THE PHONE) They're setting up tents.

COKE

Where?

HARRY

Down South. They got fieldworkers carryin' marked ballots.

COKE

So let's stop 'em, for God's sake!

HARRY

We can't. What can we do???

(NOW BACK TO THE POLLING PLACE.)

PRECINCT CAPTAIN

Boy, you lookin' to get strung up?

JIMMY

(FRIGHTENED) I'm -

PRECINCT CAPTAIN

(LOUD, ANGRY) It looks to me like you're lookin' to get strung
 up!

JIMMY

I'm lookin' to vote!

PRECINCT CAPTAIN

Well, like I say...you need a card.

(THE SCENE NOW SHIFTS TO JOHNSON HEADQUARTERS, WHERE WE FIND CONNALLY YELLING INTO HIS PHONE.)

CONNALLY

Don't report the tally! You understand? Not till I tell you.

(WITH THAT, CONNALLY SLAMS DOWN THE TELEPHONE AND LOOKS OVER AT JOHNSON.)

CONNALLY (CONT'D)

Looks good.

JOHNSON

Who was it?

CONNALLY

San Antone.

JOHNSON

And?

CONNALLY

We've picked up the 10,000. With more coming in.

JOHNSON

Call Lubbock. Let's get the panhandle.

(AGAIN WE RETURN TO THE VOTING PLACE.)

JIMMY

(PROTESTING) Mr. Johnson called in!

PRECINCT CAPTAIN

He did, huh?

JIMMY

That's right! He did! And there ain't 'sposed to be no problem.

PRECINCT CAPTAIN

But there is, sonny. Cause I ain't got no call!

(AGAIN WE RETURN TO THE NEWS ROOM, WHICH IS NOW PACKED WITH POLITICAL HACKS, ONE OF WHOM IS PERCHED ON A LADDER IN FRONT OF THE MAP READY TO WRITE VOTE TOTALS ON A CHALK BOARD.)

VOTE COUNTER

Johnson's up!

REPORTER 1

Where?

VOTE COUNTER

Austin and the panhandle. He's getting hurt on the coast.

(RACING THROUGH, THE VOTE COUNTER IS NEARLY
OUT THE DOOR.)

REPORTER 1

And?

VOTE COUNTER

That's it.

(ONCE AGAIN THE LIGHTS GO UP ON CONNALLY
SCREAMING INTO THE PHONE.)

CONNALLY

I told you, don't call in the tally! (LISTENING A MOMENT, HE
RESPONDS IN FURY) No, no, listen to me! Don't -- call in -- the
tally!

(WHILE BACK AT COKE HQ...)

HARRY

(PANICKED) They're holding back the Valley.

COKE

So we'll hold back the East.

HARRY

It's not the same.

COKE

I got as many counties as he has.

HARRY

But you don't got George Parr.

(THE VOTE COUNTER REAPPEARS IN THE NEWS
ROOM.)

VOTE COUNTER

George Parr's doing something strange.

REPORTER 1

What do you mean?

MAN ON LADDER

He's holding back votes, that's what.

(A SECOND MAN PULLS A LEADER OF TICKERTAPE OFF THE MACHINE.)

SECOND MAN

Till now. Take a look at this.

(HE GOES TO REPORTER 1, WHO GRABS THE TAPE.)

REPORTER 1

Hogg County, Johnson 723, Stevenson 198...(EYES WIDENING) ...Webb County, Johnson 5,054, Stevenson 1,079.

(AT COKE HEADQUARTERS, HARRY READS FROM THE SAME TICKERTAPE.)

HARRY

...and Duval County, home of George Parr himself, Lyndon Johnson 4,095, Coke Stevenson 8.

(COKE IS STUNNED. A SILENCE. THE LIGHTS COME UP ON THE POLLING PLACE.)

PRECINCT CAPTAIN

(MURDEROUS) I'm telling you, boy. If you push this, you're gonna get hurt. Bad hurt.

(WE THEN RETURN TO COKE, STILL STUNNED, THE CHANTING HAVING STOPPED.)

COKE

(STUNNED) Call our friends in Shelby. They'll make it up.

HARRY

Not this, they won't.

COKE

(SHARP) So what do you suggest?

HARRY

Bob Petty.

COKE

No.

HARRY

Coke, he controls four counties on the border. If you give him the road commission, he gives you the border.

(COKE STARES AT HARRY, REALIZING THE ENTIRE ELECTION MAY HANG IN THE BALANCE. BY NOW,

THE CHANT HAS RESUMED, ONCE AGAIN AS QUIET AS BEFORE.)

COKE

(RELUCTANT) All right.

(IN THE NEWS ROOM, THE MAN AT THE TICKER-TAPE TEARS OFF ANOTHER STORY.)

SECOND MAN

(SURPRISED) Take a look at this.

REPORTER 1

What?

SECOND MAN

The coast is coming in for Coke. He's got the lead.

(CONNALLY AND BROWN FACE OUT, BOTH MEN FRANTIC WITH WORRY.)

BROWN

By how much?

CONNALLY

119.

(SLIGHT PAUSE.)

BROWN

Call up Parr.

CONNALLY

(ANGRY) And say what?

BROWN

Tell him that.

CONNALLY

Herman, he's in. His votes are in!

BROWN

Just tell him, Johnny!

(A SPOTLIGHT COMES UP ON PARR.)

PARR

What do you need?

CONNALLY

(SARCASTIC, HOPELESS) 200 more. If you give us 200 more we win.

(PARR GLANCES OVER AT HIS HENCHMEN WHO SURROUND A LARGE NUMBER OF BLACK BOXES. WHEN PARR NODS, ONE OF THEM GRABS A BOX MARKED "13" AND RIPS IT OPEN.)

PARR

(SMUG) You got 'em.

(IMMEDIATELY, THE LIGHTS COME BACK ON COKE.)

COKE

He what!

HARRY

He found 200 votes. Johnson leads by 87.

COKE

The hell he does. (SCREAMING) The hell he does!

(CONNALLY PUTS DOWN THE PHONE, HIS VOICE GROWING IN EXCITEMENT AS HE TALKS.)

CONNALLY

You won. They're saying you won. The Herald is calling you "Landslide Lyndon." (HE PULLS BACK, AMAZED.) You won.

(LIGHTS UP ON HARRY AND COKE.)

COKE

We'll take 'em to court. We'll sue the bastard in every county in the state! He will not do this to me!

(CONNALLY AND JOHNSON STARE AT EACH OTHER, BOTH MEN IN SHOCK.)

CONNALLY

(WHISPERED) You won.

(WE NOW RETURN TO THE POLLING PLACE WHERE JIMMY HAS BEEN BEATEN AND IS LYING ON THE GROUND. THE PRECINCT CAPTAIN, BREATHING HEAVILY, STANDS OVER HIM.)

PRECINCT CAPTAIN

I told you, boy. You push a white man, you're gonna get hurt. Bad hurt. (BEAT) Now, don't make me do anything more.

JIMMY

(BEAT, PATHETIC) I won't.

PRECINCT CAPTAIN

(BEAT) Good.

(AND WITH THAT, THE PRECINCT CAPTAIN STARTS OFF -- ONLY TO SUDDENLY FREEZE, THE SOUND OF THE OPENING ONCE AGAIN STARTING TO BE HEARD. AS IT IS, JIMMY TURNS FROM WHERE HE WAS LYING, LOOKING OUT AT THE AUDIENCE DIRECTLY, COOLLY, ANGRILY -- BEFORE SUDDENLY JUMPING TO HIS FEET. WITH A BRIEF, IRONIC SMILE, HE THEN GLIDES TO THE FOOT OF THE STAGE, ONCE AGAIN AS COOL AND DETACHED AS HE WAS EARLIER.)

WE LOVE TO WIN - REPRISE

JIMMY

IN THE BACK ROOM
WHERE THE SMOKE IS
VOTES ARE COUNTED
SOME ARE LOST

AND THE DANGER
WHEN THAT HAPPENS
IS RESULTS CAN
THEN BE TOSSED

WHEN ELECTIONS
ARE DECIDED
BY A MARGIN
PAPER THIN

POLITICIANS
GROW EXCITED
LOSERS THINK THAT
THEY CAN WIN

WE PLAY TO WIN
OH...WE PLAY TO WIN

(THE LIGHTS THEN FADE OUT ON THE TWO MEN --
AND COME UP ON A SERIES OF SLIDES.)

SLIDE: "FOLLOWING THIS ELECTION, THE COUNTY LEADERS FROM
THROUGHOUT TEXAS WERE SCHEDULED TO MEET THE FOLLOWING WEEK IN
DALLAS."

SLIDE: "THERE THEY COULD EITHER RUBBER-STAMP THE
ELECTION..."

SLIDE: "...AS THEY NORMALLY WOULD..."

SLIDE: "...OR THEY COULD VOTE TO OVERTURN THE RESULTS."

SLIDE: "AND COKE STEVENSON WOULD WIN."

(NOTE: SOME OR ALL OF THE ABOVE SLIDES
SHOULD REMAIN PROJECTED THROUGHOUT THE
INTERMISSION.)

END ACT ONE.

INTERMISSION.

ACT TWO

SLIDE: "DALLAS"

SCENE ONE

ONCE AGAIN WE HEAR THE SOUND OF A
HELICOPTER'S APPROACH, BUT THIS TIME WHEN
JOHNSON LEANS OUT, BULLHORN IN HAND, AND
SHOUTS DOWN...

HELLO DOWN THERE - REPRISE

JOHNSON

HELLO DOWN THERE, IT'S LYNDON JOHNSON
AND I'M A-SETTIN' HERE, STARING DOWN AT YOU!

(...THE MAN WHO LOOKS UP SHAKES HIS FIST AT
HIM.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Whoa! What do we got here? You mad?

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

I SAY HELLO DOWN THERE, IT'S LYNDON JOHNSON
AND I'M HAPPY YOU CAME INTO VIEW

(THE LIGHTS NOW COME UP ON ANOTHER FARMER,
THIS ONE CARRYING A SIGN READING "NUTS TO
JOHNSON!")

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Whoa! Another one, huh? What is this, Coke Country here?

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

WHAT, AIN'T YOU GLAD TO SEE ME?
WAY UP HERE IN THE SKY
BRINGIN' ALL THESE GOODS AND SERVICES
THERE AIN'T NOTHIN' I WON'T TRY
TILL I MAKE YOU SEE
HOW I'M ON YOUR SIDE
AND WHEN I'M SENT TO WASHINGTON
I SURELY WILL PROVIDE

(THE LIGHTS NOW COME UP ON A THIRD FARMER,
THIS ONE'S SIGN READING "GO BACK WHERE YOU
COME FROM!")

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

(OUTRAGED) Go back...? Hell, I come from here! (ADDING THEN,
CONFUSED) What the heck?

JOHNSON (CONT'D)
 NOW I AIN'T GOT THE ANSWERS
 TO EVERYTHING, IT'S TRUE
 BUT THAT DON'T MEAN THAT I WON'T FIGHT
 MAKE SURE YOU GET YOUR DUE
 AND I'LL TELL YOU THIS
 WHEN IT'S ALL SAID AND DONE
 THEM RICH BOYS DRIVIN' CADILLACS
 WHY THEY'LL BE ON THE RUN

(ANOTHER FARMER, THIS ONE A WOMAN, APPEARS -
 - HANDS ON HER HIPS.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)
 Hey there, sweetheart. How you doin'?

(ANOTHER FARMER APPEARS -- HOLDING A
 PITCHFORK.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)
 (UNEASY) Hey there. How...

(AND NOW ANOTHER. HE WITH A SIGN.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)
 (PANICKING) Hey, what's goin' on here!

JOHNSON (CONT'D)
 HELLO DOWN THERE, IT'S LYNDON JOHNSON

(SUDDENLY, THE FARMERS, WHO'VE GATHERED
 TOGETHER, CROUCH DOWN -- ONE FARMER, A MAN
 WITH A RIFLE, STANDING IN THEIR MIDST.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)
 I SAY, HELLO DOWN THERE, IT'S -

(THE MAN NOW RAISES HIS RIFLE, SIGHTING IT
 ON JOHNSON'S HELICOPTER.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)
 I SAY, HELLO -

(AND NOW THE MAN SHOOTS -- A BURST OF
 ORANGE GUNFIRE COMING OUT FROM THE BARREL.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)
 (CONFUSED) What the...? (LEANING OUT, ANGRY) Goddam you, I'm
 Lyndon Johnson, goddammit. I'm here to help you! I'm -

(BUT BEFORE JOHNSON CAN CONTINUE, A BURST
 OF ORANGE AND RED GUNFIRE BELCHES OUT FROM

JOHNSON'S HELICOPTER -- ITS VIOLENT FLASHES
MATCHED BY A TERRIFYING SOUND. AND
INSTANTLY, VIOLENTLY, THE FARMERS ARE
SCATTERED ABOUT -- FALLEN TO THE GROUND,
DEAD. AND JOHNSON CAN ONLY LOOK DOWN ON
THEM -- IN HORROR.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

My God, what...what happened? What the hell...(ABOUT TO SCREAM
"HAPPENED", HE INSTEAD SCREAMS...) BIRD!!! BIRD!!!!

(WITH THAT, THE LIGHTS BLACK OUT ON
JOHNSON, COMING UP ON LADYBIRD AT THE VERY
MOMENT THAT CONNALLY BURSTS INTO HER ROOM.
SHE LOOKS UP FROM THE PHONE.)

CONNALLY

(PANICKED) Ladybird! It's Lyndon.

BIRD

(INTO PHONE) I'll call you back.

(SHE HANGS UP, IMMEDIATELY CONCERNED, AND
IMMEDIATELY MOVING.)

BIRD (CONT'D)

What is it?

CONNALLY

He needs you.

(BY NOW PAST CONNALLY, SHE CALLS OVER HER
SHOULDER.)

BIRD

What happened?

CONNALLY

(FOLLOWING AFTER HER) I don't know.

(QUICKLY, LADYBIRD ENTERS JOHNSON'S ROOM,
ONLY TO FIND HER HUSBAND SITTING STRAIGHT
UP IN BED, A LOOK OF UTTER TERROR ON HIS
FACE.)

BIRD

Call the doctor.

(SHE SAYS THIS TO CONNALLY AS SHE CROSSES
TO JOHNSON.)

JOHNSON

(DISJOINTED, LOW) Don't need one.

BIRD

Lyndon -

JOHNSON

(PANICKING) I don't need a doctor, Ladybird! I need to get out of here.

BIRD

What are you talking about?

JOHNSON

I can't do it. I can't go through with it.

BIRD

(FORCEFUL) Lyndon, listen to me. You had a dream. That's all. A bad dream. (PAUSE) Everything is fine.

(SLIGHT PAUSE.)

BIRD (CONT'D)

Tell him, John.

(CONNALLY COMES IN FROM THE DOOR.)

CONNALLY

She's right, chief. We got two more leaders votin' our way. Right now the count is 19 to 12.

BIRD

You've won, Lyndon. You've won.

CONNALLY

She's right, chief.

BIRD

By eight o'clock tonight you'll be the Senator from Texas. You've won!

(JOHNSON LOOKS AT HER, STILL SHAKEN.)

JOHNSON

(WHISPERS) I was up in the air, flying in, just like I always do -- only this time I didn't recognize the folks looking up. (SUDDENLY NEAR TEARS) All I know is they hated me. Like I never been hated before.

(SLIGHT PAUSE.)

BIRD

Johnny, get us a car.

CONNALLY

Ladybird, no -

BIRD

Get us a car, John!

(SUDDENLY, SHE CROSSES TO CONNALLY, HER
WHISPER INTENSE.)

BIRD (CONT'D)

Look, you said yourself there's nothing happening before noon.
Let me take him out. It'll help!

CONNALLY

(BEAT, ALSO WHISPERED) All right. But just for an hour. I need
him back before lunch.

(CONNALLY GOES TO THE DOOR.)

CONNALLY (CONT'D)

(TOO LOUD) Everything's all right, Lyndon. Really. We're fine.

(CONNALLY EXITS.)

BIRD

(KIND) Let's get you dressed.

(SHE PULLS JOHNSON OUT OF THE BED, LEADING
HIM OFF.)

SCENE TWO

COKE AND FRANK HAMER ENTER IN A RUSH,
FOLLOWED SOON BY HARRY, COKE'S CAMPAIGN
MANAGER, WHO IS BOTH ANGRY AND FRUSTRATED.

HARRY

Frank, what are you doing here?

COKE

(TO HAMER) Here, toss me that bag.

(HAMER TOSSES COKE A SACHEL.)

HARRY

(WITHOUT PAUSE) Frank, I asked you. What -

COKE

(SNAPPING, IMPATIENT) I called him, Harry. That's what he's
doing here.

(HAMER SHRUGS.)

HAMER

Thought maybe I could help.

HARRY

I don't believe this.

COKE

(SHORT) Harry, look, why don't you just go home?

HARRY

Coke, just explain this to me -

COKE

Harry, I told you, I got something took. And in this country when you got somethin' took, you go to the courthouse to get it back.

HARRY

Coke, the county leaders are meeting in Dallas tonight!

COKE

Screw the county leaders. I'm goin' down South. I'm goin' down to Alice.

HARRY

Down... Oh, for God's sake. (BEAT) Coke, you got lawyers for that. They've been down there.

COKE

And they've done nothing.

HARRY

So -

COKE

Say, you wanna see my lawyer? I'll show you my lawyer! This is my lawyer.

(HE HOLDS UP HIS GUN.)

HARRY

Oh, my God.

SMITH AND WESSON

COKE

SMITH AND WESSON, THEY GET ATTENTION QUICK
SMITH AND WESSON, THEIR RULINGS ALWAYS STICK
WON'T BE NO ARGUMENT, WON'T BE NO LONG DELAY
SMITH AND WESSON SEEM TO ALWAYS GET THEIR WAY

SMITH AND WESSON, A LAW FIRM YOU CAN TRUST
 SMITH AND WESSON, RETAIN 'EM IF YOU MUST
 THEY'RE KNOW BOTH FAR AND WIDE, THEIR NAME
 INSPIRES FEAR
 SMITH AND WESSON MAKE THE COMPLICATED CLEAR

HARRY

You're not serious.

COKE

As a thumbtack, Harry.

COKE (CONT'D)

I WILL NOT PLAY THEIR PATSY, NO
 I WILL NOT PLAY THEIR FOOL
 THEM SNOTTY NO GOOD BASTARDS
 GONNA LEARN THE GOLDEN RULE

HARRY

Coke, please -

COKE

Harry, I'm telling you, I'm not rolling over.

HAMER

Don't worry, Harry. It ain't gonna take much.

COKE

SMITH AND WESSON, A LOSS BECOMES A WIN

HAMER

SMITH AND WESSON, NO MATTER WHAT THE SIN

COKE

JUST PULL THE HAMMER BACK

HAMER

LINE UP THE FIRING PIN

COKE

SMITH AND WESSON, IT'S THE WAY IT'S ALWAYS BEEN

HAMER

SMITH AND WESSON, IT'S HOW THIS LAND WAS WON

COKE

SMITH AND WESSON, WHAT A FATHER TELLS HIS SON

HAMER

DON'T MATTER WHERE YOU ARE

COKE
DON'T NEED NO OTHER FRIEND

HAMER
SMITH AND WESSON BRING YOUR TROUBLES TO AN END

(PRACTICALLY FROTHING, COKE CONTINUES IN A RAGE.)

COKE
IT AIN'T JUST ME I'M WORRIED 'BOUT
I ALSO LOVE THIS STATE
AND I'VE HAD IT WITH THIS THIEVIN' PRICK
WHO DOESN'T HESITATE
TO TRAMPLE ON OUR SACRED RIGHTS
THE ONES THAT SET US FREE
HE MUSTN'T WIN, NO MATTER WHAT
I WILL NOT LET HIM BE
I WILL NOT LET HIM BE
I WILL NOT LET HIM BE

COKE (CONT'D)
Harry, I'm tellin' you, I'm goin' down there. Now, you can stay here if you want, I'm going down!

COKE/HAMER
SMITH AND WESSON, THEY GET THE FINAL WORD
SMITH AND WESSON, INSIST ON BEIN' HEARD
DON'T WASTE A LOT OF TALK, NOT THERE UNTIL
THEY'RE SEEN
SMITH AND WESSON SAY EXACTLY WHAT THEY MEAN

(WITH THAT, COKE TURNS TO HAMER.)

COKE
Come on, Frank. Let's get out of here.

(AND THE TWO OF THEM EXIT, AS HARRY, IN FRUSTRATION, LOOKS AFTER THEM.)

SCENE THREE

BROWN AND CONNALLY FACE OUT, AS IF BY PHONE.

BROWN
(IRATE) What the hell you talking about, Johnny? Where is he???

CONNALLY

I guess he's -

BROWN

Got night sweats! Is that what you're saying? We're about to close in on the political prize of his life and his pecker's gettin' short.

CONNALLY

He's nervous, that's all.

BROWN

Yeah, well, let me tell you something. I'm down here busting my ass for that man -- suborning goddam witnesses, paying for false testimony -- and I'm not doing that, I'm not risking a ten-year stretch in the federal pen so that you can tell me he's getting nervous.

CONNALLY

Look, I'm sure that -

BROWN

John, I don't care what you're sure of. What I care about is Lyndon Johnson. And I want you to have him, not you, him call me when he comes back from this joyride of his. You got that?

CONNALLY

Yeah.

BROWN

I'm at the Alice County courthouse.

CONNALLY

(QUICK) Herman! (BEAT, UNEASY) How are things going down there?

BROWN

Not good.

CONNALLY

What do you mean?

BROWN

Coke's comin' down.

CONNALLY

Coke...what!

BROWN

And that ain't all either. Guess who he's bringing along?

CONNALLY

Who?

BROWN

Frank Hamer.

CONNALLY

Frank...(REMEMBERING WHO HE IS)...oh, my God.

BROWN

So don't tell me how Lyndon Johnson is getting nervous, okay. Not when I got the man who killed Bonnie and Clyde starin' me in the back all afternoon. (BEAT) Have him call me, John.

(WITH THAT THE LIGHTS GO OUT ON BROWN,
REMAINING UP ON CONNALLY.)

JIMMY

Mr. Johnson.

CONNALLY

He ain't here!

(THIS LAST CONNALLY SAYS ANGRILY, SPINNING
AROUND TO FIND HIMSELF FACING JIMMY, HIS
ARM IN A SLING, HIS FACE BADLY BRUISED.)

JIMMY

(AFTER A PAUSE, QUIET) You know when he'll be back?

CONNALLY

What do you want?

JIMMY

I want to talk to him.

CONNALLY

(SHARP) About what?

(JIMMY LOOKS AT HIM FOR A BRIEF MOMENT
BEFORE LOWERING HIS HEAD, REALIZING HE'S
TALKING TO THE WRONG MAN.)

JIMMY

Nothing. I'm...nothing.

(AND WITH THAT, HE EXITS.)

SCENE FOUR

LADYBIRD ENTERS PULLING JOHNSON BEHIND HER.
EYES CLOSED, HIS FACE AGAIN RELAXED,
JOHNSON WALKS LIKE FRANKENSTEIN'S MONSTER,
HIS ARMS EXTENDED.

JOHNSON

Where we going?

BIRD

Keep your eyes closed.

JOHNSON

(IMPATIENT, CHILDISH) Just tell me. Are we almost there?

BIRD

Almost.

(SHE PULLS HIM FORWARD A FEW STEPS MORE
THEN STOPS, TURNING BACK TO HIM WITH A LOOK
OF BREATHLESS ANTICIPATION.)

BIRD (CONT'D)

All right.

(WITH THAT, JOHNSON OPENS HIS EYES AND
FALLS BACK, NEARLY COLLAPSING IN AMAZEMENT.
HE THEN LETS OUT AN EXPLOSIVE LAUGH.)

JOHNSON

I don't believe it.

BIRD

You wondered why it took so long.

JOHNSON

I haven't been here...since...

BIRD

The first time you ran for Congress. The day you decided to run,
we came here for luck.

JOHNSON

And it hasn't changed a bit, has it?

BIRD

Nope. Still the same scrawny, no-good piece of hill country you
call your own.

JOHNSON

But not just any piece. (HE POINTS) A piece with an oil derrick.

BIRD

A dry hole if ever I've seen one.

JOHNSON

It doesn't look too promising, does it? (HE SHIFTS HIS GAZE TO HER) Come here.

(BIRD GOES OVER CLOSE, AND JOHNSON GATHERS HER INTO HIM. FOR A MOMENT THE TWO SWAY TOGETHER, LOCKED IN AN EASY IF EMOTIONAL EMBRACE.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

I'm forty, Ladybird. Forty years old. If I don't do this...

(SLIGHT PAUSE.)

BIRD

Lyndon -

JOHNSON

(INTERRUPTING) I remember...I'm sorry...but I remember that day, how I felt then. How I knew I was going to win. Hell, there wasn't anything to it. And I knew...I knew I was startin' out on something that was goin' to take me a long way away from here. All the way to the White House maybe. That's how I felt then. (BEAT, DARK) But then, somewhere along the line, everything changed. Maybe it's when I lost the first time. Or when FDR died. Or when I realized, really realized, just how improbable that was -- that a Southerner, a half-literate, shit-kicking Southerner, would ever be President. So then, I scaled back. I thought instead of becoming President, I'll become head of the Senate. Majority Leader. Enjoy power that way. (LONG PAUSE, VERY SAD) And now, today, I realize even that might not happen.

BIRD

(BEAT) Lyndon -

JOHNSON

And maybe it shouldn't. Maybe I don't deserve it. Maybe -

BIRD

Lyndon, you've won. You're acting like the election hasn't occurred yet, and it has! You've won! And all that committee is doing is confirming that fact. (EARNEST) You've won.

JOHNSON

Ladybird, I haven't won anything. Not with Coke Stevenson sitting in a courtroom saying I stole it. But I'll tell you what. Even if I do win. Even if those boys in Dallas vote to confirm me, and the judge ends the court case...I'll always be "Landslide Lyndon," the man who won under a cloud. (BEAT, MOURNFUL) And I'll never go further.

(BIRD LOOKS AT HIM.)

BIRD

Lyndon, come here. Come here. Put your head down.

(JOHNSON LIES DOWN IN HER LAP.)

BIRD (CONT'D)

And look out. Look out at the land.

HILL COUNTRY

BIRD

BLUEBONNETS, BUTTERCUPS
WILD FLOWERS IN THE SPRING
TALL OAKS AND HONEY BEES
AND PAINTBRUSH BURGUNDY

OH, THE AIR IS COOL AND DRY AND CLEAR
THE SKY A SAPPHIRE BLUE
THE HILLSIDES COVERED DENSE WITH TREES
LEAVES DARKENED BY THE DEW

DON'T BE AFRAID
YOU'RE NOT ALONE
LAY YOUR HEAD DOWN
WE'VE COME BACK HOME

TALL GRASSLANDS EVERYWHERE
FIRE CLEARED OF UNDERBRUSH
STREAMS STOCKED WITH RAINBOW TROUT
WIND RIPPLES IN A HUSH

OH, THE LAND IS SPARKLING FRESH AND BRIGHT
WHERE TEXAS MEETS THE SKY
AS EV'RYONE WHO'S LIVED HERE
REMEMBERS WITH A SIGH

DON'T BE AFRAID
YOU'RE NOT ALONE
LAY YOUR HEAD DOWN
WE'VE COME BACK HOME

DON'T BE AFRAID
 YOU'RE NOT ALONE
 LAY YOUR HEAD DOWN
 WE'VE COME BACK HOME

JOHNSON

I've done things I'm not proud of. Things I've never done before. And when we go back, I'm gonna have to do more. (WITH DIFFICULTY) Don't think less of me.

BOTH

WE'VE COME BACK HOME

SCENE FIVE

CONNALLY AND NELLE ARE ON OPPOSITE SIDES OF THE STAGE.

CONNALLY

Nellie, for God's sake, come up.

(HE WAITS FOR A RESPONSE.)

CONNALLY (CONT'D)

Nellie, please. Don't do this anymore. Don't -

NELLE

Don't what?

CONNALLY

Don't punish me for something I didn't do! (BEAT) Nellie, you did it. But I forgive you. And I want you back.

NELLE

No.

CONNALLY

What do you mean, "no?"

NELLE

I mean I'm afraid, Johnny!

CONNALLY

Honey -

NELLE

And besides, I didn't do anything. I was done to.

CONNALLY

Yeah, well...(BEAT, UNSURE)...that won't happen again.

NELLE

How do you know that?

(SLIGHT PAUSE.)

CONNALLY

I talked to him. And I told him if he did it again I would walk out on him.

NELLE

(BEAT, MOVED) You said that?

CONNALLY

Yes.

(ANOTHER MOMENT PASSES.)

CONNALLY (CONT'D)

Nelle, please.

NELLE

John, it's not just that.

CONNALLY

What else then?

NELLE

Everything. It's everything.

CONNALLY

Meaning...what?

NELLE

Meaning I'm tired of having you chase after him, Johnny! I'm tired of having Lyndon Johnson be the first words out of your mouth every morning.

CONNALLY

Nelle -

NELLE

IT MEANS NO MATTER WHAT OUR FEELINGS ARE
NO MATTER WHAT IS RIGHT
YOUR FOCUS STANDS ON LYNDON
AND I STAY OUT OF SIGHT

CONNALLY

So you're jealous, in other words.

NELLE

I SHOULDN'T HAVE TO FIGHT THIS HARD
IT SHOULDN'T TAKE A WEEK
TO HAVE YOU FINALLY CALL ME UP
THE FIRST TIME THAT WE SPEAK

CONNALLY

Nellie, we're in the middle of a campaign! What the hell do you want from me?!

NELLE

John, I'm your wife, for God's sake.

CONNALLY

And he's my friend, Nelle!

NELLE

So?

HEAR THE MUSIC

CONNALLY

LISTEN CLOSE, HEAR THE MUSIC
A PARADE HEADS OUT OUR WAY
IF WE HURRY FAST, WE'LL GET THERE
IT'S STILL A DAY AWAY

ONCE WE'RE THERE IN THE LEAD CAR
CHEERIN' CROWDS AS WE PASS BY
WITH LYNDON WAVING FROM THE BACK SEAT
HIS HAT RAISED TO THE SKY

WHY CAN'T YOU HEAR THAT MUSIC
WHY CAN'T YOU GO ALONG
WHY CAN'T YOU SIT BESIDE ME
THE PLACE WHERE YOU BELONG

YEARS FROM NOW WHEN IT'S MY TURN
WHEN IT'S MY HAT IN THE RING
OL' LYNDON, HE'LL BE HELPING
TEACHIN' ME THE WORDS TO SING

I'LL LEARN HIS SPECIAL MAGIC
AS FOLKS CALL OUT MY NAME
AND THE MAN THAT YOU ONCE MARRIED
WILL NO LONGER BE THE SAME

WHY CAN'T YOU HEAR THAT MUSIC
WHY CAN'T YOU GO ALONG
WHY CAN'T YOU SIT BESIDE ME
THE PLACE WHERE YOU BELONG

DON'T YOU MAKE ME CHOOSE BETWEEN YOU
 DON'T YOU TAKE THAT DREAM AWAY
 DON'T YOU TELL ME I SHOULD MIND YOU
 IF YOU DO I WON'T OBEY

DON'T YOU MAKE ME TURN AGAINST HIM
 DON'T YOU TELL ME WHAT HE'S DONE
 DON'T YOU MAKE THIS YOU OR LYNDON
 IF YOU DO, LYNDON'S WON

WHY CAN'T YOU HEAR THAT MUSIC
 WHY CAN'T YOU GO ALONG
 WHY CAN'T YOU SIT BESIDE ME
 THE PLACE WHERE YOU BELONG

NELLE

(AFTER A MOMENT, RESIGNED) I'll be up tonight.

CONNALLY

I'll see you then.

(THE LIGHTS THEN GO OUT ON CONNALLY,
 STAYING UP ON NELLE.)

NELLE

I'LL TRY TO HEAR THAT MUSIC
 I'LL TRY TO GO ALONG
 I'LL TRY TO SIT BESIDE YOU
 THE PLACE WHERE I BELONG

SLIDE: "ALICE, TEXAS"

SCENE SIX

COKE, HARRY AND HAMER ARE WALKING DOWN MAIN
 STREET HEADING TOWARD THE COURTHOUSE. ON
 THE STAGE OPPOSITE A PAIR OF GUNMEN ARE
 WAITING FOR THEM WITH RIFLES.

HARRY

Coke, listen to me -

COKE

(SOTTO VOCE) Harry, I don't want to talk about it anymore.

(HAMER GESTURES TOWARD THE ENTRANCE.)

HAMER

Over there.

HARRY

Let me and Frank stay. You go up to Dallas, and Frank and I will stay here.

(COKE STARES TOWARD GUNMEN, IGNORING HARRY'S PLEA.)

COKE

(QUIET, TO HAMER) What do you think?

HAMER

We're all right. They won't do nothin'.

(COKE WATCHES FOR A MOMENT, THEN TURNS TO HARRY.)

COKE

Harry, listen to me. I'll say it one more time. I'm goin' in that courthouse. Now if you want to come with me, fine. If you want to go back to Dallas, fine. But don't talk no more about me leavin' without justice, because I'm not gonna do it. (THEN, TO HAMER) You ready?

(HAMER NODS.)

COKE (CONT'D)

Lead the way.

(THE THREE MEN THEN CROSS THE STAGE TO THE STEPS OF THE COURTHOUSE.)

HARRY

(MUMBLING, AS HE GOES, FRIGHTENED) I don't see why we have to do this. I really don't.

(FINALLY, THEY ARRIVE AT THE FOOT OF THE STAIRS -- AND COKE LOOKS UP AT THE GUNMEN.)

COKE

Boys...step aside. (THEN, HIS VOICE RAISED) God-damn you, I said step aside!

(WITH THAT, THE TWO GUN THUGS -- ALMOST AS ONE -- GLANCES NERVOUSLY AT EACH OTHER -- THEN DO INDEED STEP ASIDE. WHEN THEY DO, COKE MOUNTS THE STEPS, TURNING BACK OVER HIS SHOULDER TO CALL TO THE OTHERS.)

COKE (CONT'D)

C'mon Frank. Harry.

SCENE SEVEN

CONNALLY ENTERTAINS SONNY BAILEY IN
JOHNSON'S SUITE.

CONNALLY

Here, let me freshen your drink.

BAILEY

Explain something to me -

CONNALLY

(BRIGHT, FORCEFUL) I told you, he's on his way. His meeting just ended.

BAILEY

(SHARP) What meeting?

CONNALLY

(BEAT, OFF GUARD) He was having a meeting. He's -

BAILEY

Who with?

CONNALLY

(UNEASY) I...

BAILEY

See, I'll tell you why I ask. I have a feeling he's meeting maybe with people I don't like. Jews, maybe. Negroes. And I wonder why I should be sitting here waiting for him to get back from them.

CONNALLY

Look...I -

(THE DOOR OPENS AND JOHNSON ENTERS.
FOLLOWED CLOSELY BY LADYBIRD.)

CONNALLY (CONT'D)

Here he is now. Lyndon, I got Sonny Bailey here to see you. He headin' the Election Committee.

(JOHNSON COMES OVER, SMILING BROADLY.)

JOHNSON

Sonny.

BAILEY

Do you know who I am?

JOHNSON

Well, yeah. I -

BAILEY

No. (PORTENTOUS) Do you know who I am?

JOHNSON

County Chairman, Port Arthur.

BAILEY

Grand Kleagle, East Texas.

(SLIGHT PAUSE.)

BAILEY (CONT'D)

Now that's not a fact I share with just everyone. That's a fact I share with the next senator from this state. Cause I want him to know what's important to me.

BIRD

I -

JOHNSON

Ladybird! (SMILING, EMBARRASSED) Well, I don't think we have to get into that here.

BAILEY

Oh, but we do. We absolutely do. I wouldn't feel right if we didn't.

JOHNSON

Look -

BAILEY

I understand you got friends in the union. Mr. Johnson. Is that true?

JOHNSON

Not...near so many as Coke.

BAILEY

Oh, Coke don't have friends in the union. (BEAT) And he sure as hell don't have friends with the colored.

(PAUSE.)

JOHNSON

Sonny, listen to me. I am a Southerner. Just like you. I got the same ideas as you. Now I might not say 'em as loud. I might not get up and shout. But when it comes to defending this state, to defending the rights of this state...there won't be anyone working harder or shouting louder than Lyndon Johnson. I promise you that.

BAILEY

Harry Truman's talking about bringing colored into the army. Are you gonna let him?

JOHNSON

Well...

BAILEY

(QUICK) There's no middle ground, Lyndon. It's yes or no.

JOHNSON

No.

(THE TWO MEN LOCK EYES IN A MEANINGFUL GAZE.)

BAILEY

Let's shake on it.

BIRD

(SOTTO VOCE) Oh, my God.

CONNALLY

(IRKED) Ladybird, will you...

(CONNALLY STEPS IN FRONT OF LADYBIRD, BLOCKING HER VIEW AS THE TWO MEN SHAKE HANDS. SUDDENLY BAILEY LETS OUT A LAUGH.)

BAILEY

My Lord, where are my manners? Mrs. Johnson, we haven't met. (HE GETS UP AND GOES TO HER) I'm Sonny Bailey.

(HIS HAND EXTENDED, BAILEY WAITS FOR LADYBIRD TO TAKE IT. SHE DOESN'T.)

CONNALLY

(NERVOUSLY) This is Sonny Bailey, Ladybird.

(BUT STILL SHE DOESN'T MOVE.)

BIRD

I know exactly who he is.

(SLIGHT PAUSE.)

JOHNSON

(ABRUPTLY) Listen, I'm sorry to end this, but I just realized I have a speech to write...and I better get to it. Will you excuse me?

BAILEY

(LOOKING HARD AT BIRD) Certainly.

(BAILEY HEADS FOR THE DOOR.)

BAILEY (CONT'D)

Listen, I'm glad to have met you all. (TO JOHNSON, QUIETLY) And don't worry about that courthouse nonsense. We'll have the vote by two and they won't be able to do a thing.

(AND WITH THAT, HE EXITS.)

JOHNSON

What was that?

BIRD

Exactly.

JOHNSON

What is wrong with you?

BIRD

The man is a Klansman.

JOHNSON

He's the head of the committee, Ladybird! He's the head of the goddam committee!

CONNALLY

And he's also a vote.

BIRD

Which we don't need.

JOHNSON

According to whom?

BIRD

According to John. Who says we're over the top.

JOHNSON

Who says we're nearly over the top. And who doesn't know that, he thinks that. He won't know that until 29 county chairman, out of 57, stand up in public and say that Lyndon Johnson was in fact elected. And they're not going to say that till Sonny Bailey tells them to.

BIRD

Lyndon, he's a racist! He's a cross-burning, tree-lynching racist!

JOHNSON

So what!

BIRD

So how can you stay in the same room with him? Let alone ask for his vote.

JOHNSON

The same way FDR did. The same way Huey Long did. The same way every politician south of the Mason-Dixon does who wants to be elected! Now, I'm not saying I agree with him -

BIRD

That's exactly what you did.

JOHNSON

I did not. I -

BIRD

Yes! You did! He asked you a question about integrating the army and you answered the way he wanted. You agreed with him.

JOHNSON

Well, in that case, I did, yes. Because I do agree with him on that. White boys in this country are not going to join an army that's filled with colored boys, honey. They're just not going to do that. Now, that doesn't mean I agree with him on everything. That's just one thing!

(BIRD HEADS FOR THE DOOR.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

BIRD

Out.

JOHNSON

Goddammit, Ladybird! What do you want!

(JOHNSON RACES TO THE DOOR.)

THAT'S WHO YOU ARE

JOHNSON

WHAT DO YOU WANT
 WHAT MUST I BE
 TO SATISFY
 YOUR NEEDS OF ME

WHAT DO YOU WANT
 WHAT KIND OF MAN
 RISKS WHAT HE'S GOT
 DOES WHAT HE CAN

DOES WHAT HE CAN
 DOES WHAT HE CAN

WHAT DO YOU WANT
 TEAR ME IN TWO
 BEAT MYSELF DOWN
 ALL BLACKENED AND BLUE

WHAT DO YOU WANT
 WHEN DOES IT STOP
 DO THE RIGHT THING
 WORK TILL I DROP

WHAT DO YOU WANT

(BIRD AND JOHNSON ARE BY NOW SQUARED OFF,
 NOSE TO NOSE.)

BIRD

I CAN'T KEEP LYING TO MYSELF
 I CAN'T KEEP PRETENDING WHO YOU ARE
 I CAN'T KEEP ON SAYING WHAT I KNOW ISN'T TRUE

I WON'T KEEP BELIEVING THAT IT'S NOTHING
 JUST THE POLITICS YOU PLAY
 THAT YOU DON'T REALLY MEAN WHAT YOU SAY

CAUSE JUST MAYBE YOU DO

YES, YOU MEAN IT WHEN YOU SAY IT
 CALIBRATE EACH MOVE YOU MAKE
 A MASTER OF EMOTIONS YOU DON'T FEEL

SO IF THERE AMONG YOUR FRIENDS
 I FIND A MONSTER AND A FAKE
 I START TO WONDER IF THE MAN I LOVE IS REAL

AND IF HE'S NOT
AND I'VE BEEN FOOLED
I WON'T STAY ON
I WON'T BE RULED

BY FEELINGS FOR
A MAN I KNEW
WHO ISN'T HERE
WHO ONCE WAS YOU

THAT'S WHAT YOU ARE
A MAN WHO'S GONE
WITH HATEFUL FRIENDS
BECOME THEIR PAWN

THAT'S WHO YOU ARE
YOU'RE BAILEY'S NOW
A CHOICE YOU'VE MADE
I HOPE YOU'RE PROUD

(BIRD EXITS IN TEARS AND CONNALLY
IMMEDIATELY TURNS ON JOHNSON, WORRIED HOW
HE'LL REACT.)

CONNALLY

Lyndon, you did what you had to. You can't...you can't let this bother you.

(CONNALLY CONTINUES TO STARE AT HIM,
BECOMING ANGRY.)

CONNALLY (CONT'D)

Lyndon, you listenin' to me!

JOHNSON

(QUIET) Yeah.

(PAUSE. CONNALLY FEARS HE MAY HAVE BEEN
TOO HARSH.)

CONNALLY

Come on, let's -

JIMMY

Mr. Johnson?

(SUDDENLY JIMMY APPEARS IN THE DOORWAY AND
CONNALLY TURNS ON HIM FURIOUSLY.)

CONNALLY

Not now!

I - JIMMY

I said, not now! CONNALLY

Johnny! JOHNSON

(THIS LAST HE SAYS SHARPLY CAUSING CONNALLY TO TURN BACK TO HIM.)

Let me talk to him. JOHNSON (CONT'D)

(AND WITH THAT, HE TURNS TO JIMMY, FOR THE FIRST TIME TAKING IN HIS INJURIES.)

Jesus, Jimmy. What happened to you? JOHNSON (CONT'D)

(AND JIMMY SIMPLY STARES BACK AT HIM.)

Remember I told you I was gonna try and vote? (HIS EYES BEGIN FILLING WITH TEARS) Well, I did. JIMMY

(SILENCE.)

Look now - CONNALLY

(BLURTING, LOUD) You said you would help me, Mr. Johnson! JIMMY

Goddammit, boy, who the hell do you think you're talking to! CONNALLY

(SHOUTING) A man who made me a promise! JIMMY

Yeah, well you - CONNALLY

Johnny! (THEN, QUIETLY) Just...quiet. JOHNSON

(ALL THREE HAVING SHOUTED, JOHNSON NOW TAKES A MOMENT BEFORE CONTINUING. WHEN HE DOES, SPEAKING TO JIMMY, HIS VOICE IS FILLED WITH EMOTION.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Jimmy, I'm sorry. (THEN) I'm real, real sorry. (ANOTHER PAUSE)
I'll make it up to you.

(AND WITH THAT, HE THEN EXITS, LEAVING
CONNALLY BEHIND HIM. AND CONNALLY THEN
RAISES HIS FOREFINGER TO JIMMY.)

CONNALLY

Don't you ever...do that again.

(AND THEN HE TOO EXITS.)

SCENE EIGHT

HAMER ENTERS QUICKLY. HARRY IS LEANING
AGAINST THE WALL WRITING IN A NOTEBOOK.

HAMER

I found something.

(HAMER CONTINUES WALKING.)

HARRY

What?

HAMER

How they did it.

HARRY

(ALARMED) What!

(IMMEDIATELY HARRY FALLS IN WITH HIM.)

HAMER

Let's find Coke.

(AND THE TWO EXIT.)

SCENE NINE

BY NOW HIGHLY AGITATED, JOHNSON CROSSES THE STAGE WITH CONNALLY AT HIS SIDE.

CONNALLY

Lyndon, come on, you can't -

JOHNSON

Johnny, I let him down.

CONNALLY

Lyndon, don't be ridiculous. You're in the middle of a campaign. You can't be doing favors!

(WITH THAT, HE GRABS JOHNSON'S SLEEVE, TOTALLY EXASPERATED.)

CONNALLY (CONT'D)

Now, come on!

SLIDE: "FRAUD CHARGE CENTERS ON WELLS COUNTY"

SCENE TEN

THE COURTROOM. PARR AND BROWN SIT AT ONE TABLE. COKE, HAMER AND HARRY SIT AT THE OTHER. BROWN LEANS OVER TO PARR, BOTH OF THEM STARING STRAIGHT AHEAD.

BROWN

(WHISPERED) George, help me here. What are we worried about?

PARR

Nothin'.

BROWN

(SMALL CHUCKLE) Oh, I know that. I know...that whatever comes up, we're going to handle it, but...what exactly is going to come up?

PARR

I wouldn't know.

(THE BAILIFF STANDS AS THE JUDGE ENTERS.)

BAILIFF

All rise for Judge Harold T. Clarke.

(BOTH TABLES RISE.)

BROWN

(CONTINUING, SOTTO VOCE) George, we're in a delicate position here. We gotta get through this hearing. If we get through this hearing, my boy's election counts and it doesn't matter what follows. But we gotta get through this hearing.

(AFTER THE JUDGE IS SEATED...)

JUDGE

Take your seats.

(THE TWO TABLES SIT.)

BROWN

What's in the box?

PARR

Voting lists.

BROWN

And?

PARR

Tally sheets.

BROWN

And what's the problem?

PARR

They don't add up.

JUDGE

Bailiff. Over here.

(THE BAILIFF GOES OVER TO THE JUDGE.)

PARR

(CONTINUING) Not to mention the fact that the votes you wanted, the two hundred names, are written in blue.

BROWN

Meaning what?

PARR

Meaning the boy I had working that day wasn't too smart. He added the 200 names you wanted, the votes you called in for, in blue ink. The 700 names before that, the ones who really voted, are in black. It's a might obvious.

Shit. BROWN

Exactly. PARR

(THE BAILIFF RETURNS TO HIS TABLE.)

And they know this? BROWN

Hamer does. He found his way into the vault. PARR

JUDGE
(TO COKE'S TEAM) Plaintiff may begin.

(SUDDENLY THE LIGHTS CHANGE, AND BROWN
TURNS DOWNSTAGE IN HIS CHAIR. AS HE DOES,
THE LIGHTS COME UP ON CONNALLY ON THE STAGE
OPPOSITE.)

BROWN
(URGENT) Johnny, what's going on? Why hasn't Lyndon called me?

CONNALLY
We just met Sonny Bailey.

BROWN
(EXCITED) And what did he say?

CONNALLY
He guaranteed it.

BROWN
You got his word?

CONNALLY
We made a deal.

(QUICKLY, THE LIGHTS CHANGE BACK TO THE
COURTROOM.)

JUDGE
Mr. Brown?

BROWN
Yes sir?

JUDGE
Do you have this item? This box 13?

HARRY
(STANDING, FORCEFUL) Your honor, I object.

(AGAIN THE LIGHTS CHANGE BACK TO CONNALLY
AND BROWN.)

BROWN
Johnny, I can't hold out down here. You gotta have that vote.

CONNALLY
The meeting's in an hour.

(AGAIN THE LIGHTS CHANGE.)

BROWN
Your honor, I move we adjourn till after lunch. At that point, I am assured we will have the box.

(AGAIN HARRY STANDS.)

HARRY
Your honor!

(BUT BEFORE HE CAN CONTINUE, THE GAVEL
SLAMS DOWN.)

JUDGE
Court is adjourned. We'll meet back here at 2.

SCENE ELEVEN

JOHNSON RACES ON STAGE, FOLLOWED BY
CONNALLY.

CONNALLY
Lyndon, slow down! I'm -

JOHNSON
John, I can't do it.

CONNALLY
What are you talking about?

JOHNSON
I'm talking to Bailey.

CONNALLY
And saying what?

JOHNSON

That I support Truman.

CONNALLY

What!

JOHNSON

Or at least that I don't oppose him.

CONNALLY

Lyndon, you said it yourself. White boys are not going to fight with blacks.

(HAVING STOPPED MOMENTARILY, JOHNSON IS AGAIN ON THE MOVE WITH CONNALLY TRAILING AFTER HIM.)

JOHNSON

So that doesn't mean we shouldn't ask 'em to. And I'm not sure I'm right about that. They did in the Civil War. On both sides. And if it means enough now, they will again. We just gotta ask 'em to.

(SUDDENLY, CONNALLY GRABS JOHNSON BY THE SHIRT, SPINNING HIM AROUND.)

CONNALLY

So let me get this straight. You're telling Sonny Bailey that you're fighting for the negro? Is that what you're telling him?

JOHNSON

If black boys want to give their lives for this country, John -- if that's what they want to do -- then I think we should feel honored. And maybe just a little bit ashamed.

CONNALLY

(BEAT, HOT) Well, it's not your decision.

JOHNSON

What!

CONNALLY

You can't make this choice alone!

JOHNSON

The hell, I can't!

CONNALLY

Lyndon, there's a limit to what I'll do!

JOHNSON

(BEAT, OFF-GUARD) What are you talking about?

(SLIGHT PAUSE.)

CONNALLY

I told my wife...she's comin' back up -- I told my wife she had to forgive you for what you did. That it was over, and past. Now, you owe me for that.

JOHNSON

I don't owe you this, John. I don't...I don't owe you this.

CONNALLY

Lyndon, you owe me. And you owe Herman. And you owe...hell, there's a lot of people you owe. A lot more than you owe that boy Jimmy. Now, you better think about us, Lyndon. Cause we're all you got.

(SUDDENLY, THE LIGHTS SHIFT TO BLUE AS CONNALLY TURNS OUT TO THE AUDIENCE, HIS TONE WHEN HE SINGS FILLED WITH FURIOUS CONTEMPT.)

THE SONG OF LOYALTY

CONNALLY

A MAN ONCE ASKED A FAVOR
HIS FRIEND TO LEND A HAND

(AND SUDDENLY BAILEY AND JIMMY APPEAR ON EITHER SIDE OF CONNALLY.)

BAILEY

THE FRIEND SAID YES, THE MAN WAS GLAD
BUT DID NOT UNDERSTAND

JIMMY

HIS FRIEND WAS NOW HIS MASTER
AS HE'D BE QUICKLY SHOWN

(THEY ARE THEN JOINED BY BIRD, ALL FOUR OF THEM TURNED OUT AND SINGING AS JOHNSON, IN SILENCE, SITS DOWN.)

BIRD

HIS LIFE BELONGED TO OTHERS
IT NO LONGER WAS HIS OWN

CONNALLY

FOR HE HAD MADE A BARGAIN
HE'D REDEFINED HIS FATE

JIMMY

HE HAD NO CHOICE, HE COULD NOT SHRINK
HE MUST NOT HESITATE

BIRD

A MAN WHO ASKS A FAVOR
INVITES A QUID PRO QUO

BAILEY

AND OFTENTIMES YOU PAY IT
TO A FELLA YOU DON'T KNOW

ALL

WE SING THE SONG OF LOYALTY
THE PRICE THAT YOU WILL PAY
IF YOU IGNORE THE DEBT YOU OWE
TO FOLKS THAT PAVED YOUR WAY

YOU BETTER NOT DENY THEM, OR
PRETEND THAT YOU FORGOT
FOR THOSE WHO TRY TO DO SO
WILL WISH THAT THEY HAD NOT

(JOHNSON PUTS HIS HEAD TO HIS FACE SHAKING
HIS HEAD.)

JOHNSON

Jesus, John.

(AND CONNALLY LOOKS OVER.)

CONNALLY

We worked too hard, Lyndon.

(WITH THAT, NELLE APPEARS.)

NELLE

A YOUNG MAN ASKED HIS GIRLFRIEND
IF SHE'D GIVE HIM HER HAND

(AS BAILEY STEPS BACK INTO THE DARKNESS.)

CONNALLY

THE GIRL SAID YES, THE BOY WAS GLAD
BUT DID NOT UNDERSTAND

BIRD

THAT SHE WAS NOW HIS MASTER
AS HE'D BE QUICKLY SHOWN

JIMMY
 HIS LIFE BELONGED TO HER NOW
 IT NO LONGER WAS HIS OWN

NELLE
 FOR HE HAD MADE COMMITMENTS
 HE'D REDEFINED HIS FATE

CONNALLY
 HE HAD NO CHOICE, HE COULD NOT SHRINK
 HE MUST NOT HESITATE

BIRD
 A MAN WHO WANTS TO MARRY
 INVITES A QUID PRO QUO

JIMMY
 NO MORE OF CHASING OTHER GIRLS
 THAT'S ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

ALL
 WE SING THE SONG OF LOYALTY
 THE PRICE THAT YOU WILL PAY
 IF YOU IGNORE THE DEBT YOU OWE
 TO FOLKS THAT PAVED YOUR WAY

YOU BETTER NOT DENY THEM, OR
 PRETEND THAT YOU FORGOT
 FOR THOSE WHO TRY TO DO SO
 WILL WISH THAT THEY HAD NOT

(AGAIN, JOHNSON HOLDS HIS HEAD IN HIS
 HAND.)

JOHNSON

Jesus.

(AS NELLE LOOKS OVER AT BIRD, DEEPLY
 SADDENED.)

NELLE
 Ladybird, I'm sorry. He... It wasn't... (THEN, SIMPLY) I'm
 sorry.

(SUDDENLY THE STAGE IS THEN FILLED WITH THE
 REST OF THE COMPANY, THE MEN PUSHING PAST
 THE WOMEN.)

PARR
 POLITICAL ARRANGEMENTS
 WHEN MADE INSIDE A ROOM

BROWN
 CAN CAUSE THE MEN WHO MAKE THEM
 TO FEEL A SENSE OF GLOOM

BAILEY
 FOR THEY'RE EACH OTHER'S MASTERS
 AS THEY'LL BE QUICKLY SHOWN

JIMMY
 THEIR LIVES BELONG TO OTHERS
 THEY NO LONGER ARE THEIR OWN

HARRY
 FOR THEY HAVE MADE ARRANGEMENTS
 THEY'VE REDEFINED THEIR FATE

COKE
 THEY HAVE NO CHOICE, THEY CANNOT SHRINK
 THEY MUST NOT HESITATE

HAMER
 WHICH BRINGS UP WHAT CAN HAPPEN
 WHEN MEN OF HONOR LIE

PARR
 THE FRIENDS THEY ONCE WERE FRIENDLY WITH
 CAN MAKE THE LIARS DIE

ALL
 AND THAT'S THE SONG OF LOYALTY
 THE PRICE THAT YOU WILL PAY
 IF YOU IGNORE THE DEBT YOU OWE
 TO FOLKS THAT PAVED YOUR WAY

 YOU BETTER NOT DENY THEM, OR
 PRETEND THAT YOU FORGOT
 FOR THOSE WHO TRY TO DO SO -- CAN

WIND UP BY GETTING SHOT
 BE VICTIMS OF A PLOT
 ARE MOURNED AND LEFT TO ROT -- IN

A WRETCHED, DARKENED SPOT

BAILEY
 And deserve just what they got.

(SUDDENLY, BAILEY RAISES HIS GAVEL...)

BAILEY (CONT'D)
 Let's come to order here.

(...AND BANGS IT DOWN, TRYING TO BRING
QUIET TO THE CAUCUS.)

BAILEY (CONT'D)

Fellas. Fellas!

(BY NOW, THE WOMEN HAVE VANISHED AND THE
MEN ARE GATHERED IN A CIRCLE WHEN JOHNSON
SUDDENLY STANDS UP AND SHOUTS...)

JOHNSON

Mr. Bailey!

(CONNALLY REACHES OVER, PULLING HIS
SLEEVE.)

CONNALLY

Lyndon.

BAILEY

(LOOKING UP, SURPRISED) Lyndon, what are you doing here?

JOHNSON

I'd like a word with you.

CONNALLY

Lyndon.

BAILEY

Well Lyndon, we're about to begin. We're gonna take the vote.

JOHNSON

Just a word.

(IN CONFUSION, BAILEY TURNS TO THE OTHERS.)

BAILEY

Excuse me, fellas.

(HE THEN JOINS JOHNSON WHO HAS MOVED AWAY
FROM CONNALLY. THE TWO MEN ARE ALONE.)

BAILEY (CONT'D)

Lyndon, this is highly unusual.

JOHNSON

I've changed my mind.

BAILEY

About?

CONNALLY

Lyndon, what did you do?

JOHNSON

What I had to.

(AS BAILEY THEN TURNS TO THE MEN LEFT
BEHIND.)

BAILEY

Fellas. We got some rethinking to do.

SCENE TWELVE

BROWN AND CONNALLY ARE AGAIN ON THE PHONE.

BROWN

(EXPLODING) He what!!!

CONNALLY

I couldn't help it. He just...it's what he wanted to do.

BROWN

All right, look, you just...stay near him, ok. Make sure he doesn't do anything else. (THEN) I'll see what I can do.

CONNALLY

(SHOUTING, IMPULSIVE) Herman!

BROWN

What?

CONNALLY

We still got a chance?

BROWN

I don't know.

SCENE THIRTEEN

COKE, HAMER AND HARRY IN A SIDE ROOM.

COKE

(ENRAGED) Harry, goddammit, will you shut your trap?

HARRY

Coke -

COKE

Harry, do you understand what is happening out there? They are robbing me!

HARRY

I understand.

COKE

Oh, but I'm 'sposed to just what? Let it happen???

HARRY

When court is back in session -

COKE

Harry, court is back in session in ten minutes. And when it is they're gonna stall us again!

HARRY

That's why -

COKE

(CUTTING HIM OFF, FURIOUS) Harry, what do you want me to do? Huh? What do you want me to do!!!

(THIS LAST HE PRACTICALLY SCREAMS AT HARRY,
WHO HOLDS UP HIS HANDS TRYING TO CALM HIM.)

HARRY

Take off your guns. Both of you. And leave them in this room.

(BUT IMMEDIATELY HAMER SHAKES HIS HEAD.)

HAMER

Harry, I don't take my gun off for no one. And certainly not you.

HARRY

Governor, please.

(HARRY IMPLORES HIM.)

COKE

(STEELY) Harry, I'm walking in there armed. It's up to them to decide what I do about it.

SCENE FOURTEEN

JOHNSON IS OUTSIDE THE CAUCUS ROOM. JIMMY APPROACHES.

JOHNSON
Jimmy, hey.

JIMMY
Congressman.

JOHNSON
Listen -

JIMMY
Before you say somethin'...can I?

(JOHNSON LOOKS AT HIM FOR A MINUTE, UNSURE OF WHAT'S COMING.)

JOHNSON
(THEN) Sure.

JIMMY
I'm sorry for -

JOHNSON
No, Jimmy, don't -

JIMMY
(BLURTING, EMOTIONAL) I gotta say this, Mr. Johnson. You done so much. You done so very, very much! And I shouldn't have said what I did to you.

JOHNSON
Yes, you should have. You damn well should have. (THEN) And I'm glad you did.

(THE TWO MEN STARE AT EACH OTHER.)

JIMMY
That the committee in there?

JOHNSON
What's that?

JIMMY
The committee in there? Is that where they're meetin'?

JOHNSON

Yeah.

(SLIGHT PAUSE.)

JIMMY

Can...you mind if I wait with you?

JOHNSON

(SMILING) Not at all.

(JOHNSON SCOOTs OVER AND JIMMY SITS DOWN.
A MOMENT PASSES IN SILENCE. THEN...)

JIMMY

Mr. Johnson?

JOHNSON

Yes?

(JIMMY TURNS TO HIM.)

JIMMY

You done something, ain't you? Since I saw you.

JOHNSON

Yeah.

(BEAT.)

JIMMY

Thanks.

(BUT THEN, BEFORE HE CAN SAY MORE CONNALLY
SUDDENLY ENTERS, HIS VOICE DRIPPING WITH
ANGER.)

CONNALLY

Well, now you done it.

JOHNSON

Done what?

CONNALLY

They're killin' the vote.

JOHNSON

Who says?

CONNALLY

Ross Parker come out and told Timmy Sheppard. They're waitin'
for the judge's ruling.

(SUDDENLY, LADYBIRD APPEARS IN THE ARCHWAY.)

BIRD

What judge's ruling?

(AND CONNALLY WHIRLS ON HER, HIS TONE DEEPLY INCENSED.)

CONNALLY

Down South, Ladybird. You just cost Lyndon his seat.

JIMMY

(WHISPERED) Shoot.

(WITHOUT WAITING FOR A RESPONSE, CONNALLY QUICKLY PUSHES PAST HER AND EXITS -- AND JIMMY FOLLOWS AFTER HIM. LADYBIRD THEN TURNS ON JOHNSON, THE SCOLDING SHE HAD PLANNED ON GIVING HIM REPLACED BY CONCERN.)

BIRD

Is that true?

JOHNSON

(BEAT) Could be.

BIRD

How so?

JOHNSON

I took back what I said to Bailey. (BEAT, SARDONIC) I guess he got mad.

(LADYBIRD STARES AT JOHNSON, WHO IS CLEARLY UPSET.)

BIRD

(AMUSED, PROUD) Well, I'll be.

JOHNSON

(TRYING TO LAUGH) Yeah.

(BIRD STARES. JOHNSON IS CLEARLY UPSET.)

BIRD

I'm sorry.

JOHNSON

About? (THEN, REALIZING) Aw, don't... I'm just sorry it took me so long.

(SHE CONTINUES TO LOOK AT HIM. SHE IS TRYING TO MAKE UP.)

BIRD
Lyndon, I'm sorry about yelling earlier.

JOHNSON
(SOBER) No. Don't be sorry about that either.

(SLIGHT PAUSE.)

BIRD
Lyndon.

JOHNSON
Yeah?

(SLIGHT PAUSE.)

BIRD
Never mind.

JOHNSON
What?

(HE TURNS TO HER. SHE CONSIDERS WHETHER TO SAY.)

BIRD
(THEN, BLURTING) I know about Nellie; what you did.

JOHNSON
(ANNOYED) What?

BIRD
What you did; she told me.

JOHNSON
Oh, God, Bird -

BIRD
Lyndon, she's my friend.

JOHNSON
Bird, nothing happened!

BIRD
She's my friend, Lyndon.

JOHNSON

Bird, look, I told you I haven't been good and I haven't! I'm doin' the best I can. I'm sorry!

BIRD

(WOUNDED, INCREDULOUS) I'm sorry? (THEN, ANGRIER) I'm sorry???

(SHE STARES AT HIM A MOMENT.)

DO YOU REALLY LOVE ME

BIRD

YOUR HANDS TO BLEED, I KNOW
I KNOW YOU HAVE A HEART
YOU ONLY WANT THE BEST, I KNOW
LET EVERYONE TAKE PART
BUT DO YOU REALLY LOVE ME?
DO YOU STILL REALLY LOVE ME?

JOHNSON

(BRUSQUE) Of course.

BIRD

YOU'VE GOT A LITTLE VOICE, I KNOW
THAT TELLS YOU WHEN YOU'RE WRONG
THAT TELLS YOU WHEN YOU'RE SINGING
A MEAN AND NASTY SONG
BUT DO YOU REALLY LOVE ME?
DO YOU STILL REALLY LOVE ME?

AND IF YOU DO, WHY MUST I CRY
WHY MUST YOU TELL ANOTHER LIE
THE WAY YOU TELL THEM EV'RY DAY
TILL YOU'RE NOT YOU
AND I MUST ASK IF I SHOULD STAY
I WANT YOUR WORD, PLEASE TELL ME TRUE
WOULD I STILL WANT TO MARRY YOU

JOHNSON

(WOUNDED, A TRACE RESENTFUL) Well, Jesus, Bird, I'd hope so.
(THEN, AFTER A BEAT, SMILING) Come on.

BIRD

YOU HAVE A GENTLE SMILE, I KNOW
THAT TELLS ME YOU MEAN WELL
IT'S FOOLED ME IN THE PAST, I KNOW
SO MUCH THAT I CAN'T TELL
NOW IF YOU REALLY LOVE ME

DO YOU STILL REALLY LOVE ME?

DO YOU STILL REALLY LOVE ME?

JOHNSON

(MOVED) Very much, Ladybird. Very much.

BIRD

In that case, I want you to make me a promise. Don't lie to me again. Don't ever lie to me again.

JOHNSON

I won't.

(THE TWO LOOK AT EACH OTHER FOR A LONG MOMENT WHEN SUDDENLY CONNALLY APPEARS IN THE DOORWAY, PANTING WITH EXCITEMENT.)

CONNALLY

Coke pulled a gun.

JOHNSON

What!

(JOHNSON STANDS, RUSHING FORWARD.)

CONNALLY

In court, he pulled a gun. When Herman started stalling, he pulled a goddamed gun!

(THE LIGHTS COME UP ON COURT -- WITH JOHNSON STANDING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ACTION, INVISIBLE TO THE OTHERS. COKE STANDS NEAR JOHNSON, HIS GUN DRAWN.)

JUDGE

(LOUD) Mr. Stevenson, sit down!

COKE

(IRATE) I've had enough of this stonewalling horsepiss. I want some action!

JUDGE

(LOUDER) Mr. Stevenson, I must ask that you take your seat.

COKE

Not until I see inside that box. (TO BROWN) Now, open it!

BROWN

(SMUG) Which one?

COKE

You know exactly which one.

BROWN

(STEELY) Well see, that's the problem though. I don't.

COKE

Well, guess.

(WITH THAT, HE COCKS HIS GUN, AIMING IT AT HERMAN BROWN'S HEAD.)

JUDGE

Mr. Stevenson!

HARRY

Coke, please!

COKE

(IGNORING THEM) Mr. Brown, I want you to understand something. My wife of thirty-six years died less than two years ago. There's not much in this world that matters to me anymore. But there is one thing that does matter, that matters a great deal and that's my pride. And you and your boys have wounded that. Don't do it again. Open the box.

(SLIGHT PAUSE. AND BROWN STARTS FOR THE BOX -- AT WHICH POINT, PARR STOPS HIM.)

PARR

Hold it. (SLIGHT PAUSE.) We're not doing a thing.

(PARR STANDS.)

PARR (CONT'D)

Now, I don't know where you come from, friend. But down here we follow the law. And the law comes from him...(HE POINTS TO THE JUDGE)...not you. (COLD) Take your seat.

(PAUSE.)

JUDGE

Mr. Stevenson, I ask you again. Please. Take your seat.

HARRY

Governor.

COKE

(EXPLODING) That box is fraudulent. There are lies in that box!

JUDGE

(BEAT) Please.

(AGAIN CONNALLY APPEARS IN THE DOORWAY, AS THE ACTION IN COURT FREEZES.)

CONNALLY

Bailey pushed it through.

(JOHNSON SPINS AROUND.)

JOHNSON

Pushed what through?

CONNALLY

The election. When he heard Coke pulled a gun, he flipped like a penny and ratified the election. You're the new Senator.

(THE ACTION IN THE COURT RESUMES AS A
REPORTER HANDS THE JUDGE A WIRE STORY.)

REPORTER

(SOTTO VOCE) Johnson's elected.

(BROWN SPINS AROUND IN HIS SEAT.)

BROWN

What's that?

(THE REPORTER TURNS AROUND FROM THE BENCH,
SHOUTING EXCITEDLY...)

REPORTER

The committee has voted! Johnson's elected!

(BUT NO SOONER HAS THE REPORTER REPEATED
THIS THAN COKE IS ONCE AGAIN OUT OF HIS
CHAIR.)

COKE

Open the box.

PARR

Look now -

(AND THIS TIME, COKE FIRES HIS GUN -- AND
THE COURTROOM INSTANTLY QUIETS.)

COKE

(OMINOUS) I'm not playing this time. Open the box.

(IN A FLASH, A PAIR OF PARR'S MEN LIFT
THEIR WINCHESTERS, ONLY TO BE MATCHED BY
HAMER, WHO HAS HIS PISTOLS TRAINED ON THEM
AND COCKED BEFORE THEY CAN DO THE SAME.
SLOWLY BROWN LIFTS THE BOX TO THE TABLE,
AND UNLOCKS IT.)

COKE (CONT'D)

Now, take out the tally sheet.

(BROWN DOES THIS AS WELL.)

COKE (CONT'D)

And look at the back. What do you see?

BROWN

See alot.

COKE

Middle of the page. Under the name Montez.

BROWN

Other names.

COKE

What's the first?

BROWN

Rojas.

COKE

Dead. Manuel Rojas is dead. What's the next?

BROWN

Cardonez.

COKE

Maria Cardonez lives in Chihuahua.

BROWN

Look -

COKE

What's the next!

BROWN

Sandoval.

COKE

Hector Sandoval has never voted in this country. We have an affidavit to that effect. We also have an affidavit from Cecilia Montez, a woman who voted at 7:57, three minutes before the polls closed that night. And yet if you believe this list, you have to believe that two hundred other people, all of them supporters of my opponent voted in precisely those very same minutes. Well, I don't believe that, your honor. I don't think anyone does. And so I move that we strike these votes and declare this election invalid.

JUDGE

I can't do that.

COKE

(EXPLODING) Why can't you?

JUDGE

Because this election is over, Mr. Stevenson. (BEAT) According to this wire story, this election is over. (BEAT) The decision's been reached.

COKE

Well, you can reverse it.

JUDGE

No. I can't. Even if I wanted to, I can't. I'm sorry.

(THE JUDGE BANGS DOWN THE GAVEL.)

JUDGE (CONT'D)

Court is adjourned.

(INSTANTLY THE LIGHTS GO OUT ON EVERYONE EXCEPT JOHNSON, WHO STANDS ALONE, IN SHOCK, HIS VOICE WHEN HE SINGS QUIET AND DEEPLY MOVED, FRIGHTENED ALMOST.)

HOW'S IT FEEL

JOHNSON

HOW'S IT FEEL, MR. JOHNSON

HOW'S IT FEEL

DO YOU THINK THAT IT'S REAL, MR. JOHNSON

IS IT REAL

IS LIFE FOREVER CHANGED NOW

ARE YOU AWARE OF JUST HOW

YOU FEEL, MR. JOHNSON

HOW YOU FEEL

ARE YOU WISE, MR. JOHNSON

ARE YOU WISE

(SUDDENLY, ACROSS THE STAGE, THE LIGHTS COME UP ON JIMMY -- HE, UNLIKE JOHNSON, FACING THE AUDIENCE DIRECTLY, A WRY LOOK ON HIS FACE, EVEN AS HIS VOICE TAKES ON THE EARNESTNESS OF JOHNSON'S.)

JOHNSON AND JIMMY

WILL YOU HEAR YOUR PEOPLE'S VOICES

AND THEIR CRIES

WILL YOU ANSWER WHEN THEY CALL YOU

OR INSTEAD DO WHAT THEY ALL DO

ARE YOU WISE, MR. JOHNSON

ARE YOU WISE

(THEN, AGAIN, JOHNSON SINGS ALONE.)

JOHNSON

PLEASE GOD, DON'T LET ME FALTER
PLEASE HELP ME DO WHAT'S RIGHT
DON'T LET ME BE MISGUIDED
CRY OUT IF I LOSE SIGHT
REMEMBER WHAT I'VE SAID I'D DO
AND WHAT I'VE SAID I'D SAY
I WANT TO BE THE BEST I CAN
PLEASE HELP ME GOD, I PRAY

(AND ONCE AGAIN JIMMY JOINS IN, AND AFTER A
MOMENT IS JOINED BY STILL OTHERS, AN ENTIRE
CROWD OF PEOPLE.)

JOHNSON, JIMMY, OTHERS

HAVE YOU LEARNED, MR. JOHNSON
HAVE YOU LEARNED
DO YOU SEE THE WAY THE LIFE YOU CHOSE
HAS TURNED
WILL YOU DO YOUR VERY BEST NOW
MAKE SURE YOU DON'T FORGET HOW
YOU'VE LEARNED, MR. JOHNSON
WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED
WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED

(AT THIS, JIMMY AND JOHNSON LOOK AT EACH
OTHER -- FOR THE FIRST TIME REALLY TAKING
EACH OTHER IN -- WHEN SUDDENLY THE LIGHTS
RETURN TO NORMAL, AND AS THEY DO A CROWD OF
REPORTERS SQUEEZE IN AROUND JOHNSON.)

REPORTER 1

Mr. Johnson, how's it feel?

REPORTER 2

(OVERLAPPING) Anything you'd like to say?

(BUT BEFORE JOHNSON CAN ANSWER, BAILEY
BREAKS THROUGH FROM THE BACK.)

BAILEY

Before he does, I'd like to congratulate our newest Senator --

REPORTER 1

Mr. Bailey!

BAILEY

(CONTINUING THEN)...and say just how proud we are...that he'll be
our man in Congress.

(JUST THEN, LADYBIRD RUSHES UP.)

BIRD

Lyndon!

(AND BAILEY TURNS TO HER, TIPPING HIS HAT.)

BAILEY

Ma'am.

(WITH THAT, THE REPORTERS TURN BACK TO JOHNSON AS CONNALLY PUSHES THEM AWAY.)

CONNALLY

Come on, boys. Let's break it up. Show's over.

(LADYBIRD PRESSES JOHNSON AGGRESSIVELY.)

BIRD

(OVERLAPPING) What was that?

JOHNSON

(SUDDENLY ANGRY) Nothing, Ladybird! Goddammit, will you...nothing!

(CONNALLY TURNS TO NELLIE.)

CONNALLY

Nellie, come on.

(CONNALLY AND NELLIE EXIT. AS THEY DO, JOHNSON TURNS BACK TO LADYBIRD.)

JOHNSON

Look, I'm sorry...I'm... It's just you don't gotta watch me so close. I'm different now. OK? I've turned a new leaf. (THEN, EBULLIENTLY) Now, come on, let's go! I'm gonna be Senator! (HE GRABS BIRD) Come on, dammit! Let's go to the rally!

(SUDDENLY WE HEAR THE CROWD CHANT OF "LBJ, LBJ, LBJ" AS THE STAGE SHIFTS TO THE VICTORY RALLY, AND THE ANNOUNCER ONCE AGAIN APPEARS.)

ANNOUNCER

Ladies and Gentlemen, our newest senator...Mr. Lyndon Baines Johnson!

(WITH THAT, JOHNSON AND LADYBIRD BOUND ONTO THE STAGE, THE CROWD CHANT CONTINUING...)

JOHNSON
(CALLING OUT, JOYOUS) What's that?

(THE CROWD CHANT BECOMES EVEN LOUDER AS
JOHNSON NOW APPROEACHES THE MICROPHONE.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)
(SHOUTING) Well, all right! (HE THEN QUIETS THE CROWD) And thank you folks, thank you so much. But now, listen here, even though I don't want to go into a big speech -- we've had enough of those -- I do want to say a few words to a few people. First of all, thank you. Thank you to my family...(HE TURNS TO BIRD)...to my friends Nellie and John (THEY NOD TO JOHNSON, WHO THEN TURNS BACK TO THE CROWD)...and thanks also to the literally hundreds of people, little people...(AT THIS, THE LIGHTS COME UP ON PARR, BROWN, THE JUDGE, AND BAILEY)...all over the state...who did their parts.

(HE WAVES TO FOURSOME, WHO IN TURN WAVE
BACK AT HIM.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)
I couldn't have done it without you.

(HE THEN TURNS BACK TO THE CROWD.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)
And finally, I'd like to say a word about my opponent.

(THE LIGHTS COME UP ON COKE.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)
Coke...

(HE PAUSES, HIS VOICE FILLED WITH FEIGNED
EMOTION WHEN HE RESUMES.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)
...wherever you are, thank you for keeping this race on the up and up. You're a good man.

(WITH THAT, THE BAND AGAIN STRIKES UP THE
MUSIC -- AND JOHNSON TAKES HIS CUE.)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)
Listen, everybody, I want you to all come see me in Washington, you hear? Till then, why don't we sing it again...

ALL
 LYNDON JOHNSON, LYNDON JOHNSON
 HE GREW UP POOR LIKE ALL OF YOU
 HE KNOWS EXACTLY HOW YOU'RE HURTING
 THERE'S A LOT THAT -

(SUDDENLY THE MUSIC STOPS, AS EVERYONE ON
 STAGE FREEZES -- AND OUT OF THIS FREEZE
 COMES JIMMY.)

WE PLAY TO WIN - REPRISE

JIMMY
 IN THE FIRST DAYS
 OF A NATION
 A DECISION
 MUST BE MADE

'BOUT THE WAY THAT
 MEN ARE GOVERNED
 WHO ARE RULERS
 WHO'S AFRAID

LYNDON JOHNSON
 WON ELECTION
 NINETEEN HUNDRED
 FORTY-EIGHT

AND HE TOLD US
 WHEN HE WON IT
 HE WAS READY
 IT WAS FATE

(WHEN AGAIN THE LIGHTS DROP OUT ON
 EVERYBODY EXCEPT JIMMY.)

JIMMY (CONT'D)
 WE PLAY TO WIN
 OH...WE PLAY TO WIN

(AND THEN THE LIGHTS FADE ON HIM AS WELL.)

END PLAY.