



The West Wing

17 People

Episode Eighteen

THE WEST WING

"17 People"

CAST LIST

PRESIDENT JOSIAH BARTLET
LEO MCGARRY
JOSH LYMAN
SAM SEABORN
TOBY ZIEGLER
C.J. CREGG
CHARLIE YOUNG
DONNA MOSS

AINSLEY
ED
LARRY

THE WEST WING

"17 People"

SET LIST

INTERIORS

WHITE HOUSE

Toby's Office
Leo's Office
Margaret's Office
Oval Office
Sam's Office
Communications Bullpen
Corridors
Lobby
Josh's Bullpen
Mrs. Landingham's Office
Ainsley's Office
Roosevelt Room
Stairwell
Mess

EXTERIORS

WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT (EST.)

PORTICO - NIGHT

WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT (EST.)

"17 People"

TEASER

We end "Previously on *The West Wing*" with the shot from "The Stackhouse Filibuster" of Toby alone in his office, bouncing the ball against the wall.

We FADE TO BLACK for the title card, and

From the BLACK we HEAR--

--the ball bouncing against the wall.

And again.

FADE IN:

1 INT. TOBY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

1

TITLE:

The Same Night

TOBY'S working on something in his head as he methodically bounces the ball against the wall.

Two bounces.

Three.

Then he catches the ball and holds it for a long moment...

Then he bounces it again and we

FADE OUT.

TITLE:

Two Nights Later

FADE IN:

2 INT. TOBY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

2

A crumpled piece of paper banks into a small trash can. Then another one.

FADE OUT.

TITLE:

Two Nights After That

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

2

FADE IN:

3 INT. TOBY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

3

TOBY's typing away at his computer, working off some reference material on his desk. But then a nagging thought distracts him and he stops. He looks out his window, across the darkened and unpopulated bullpen and Roosevelt Room and sees that a light is on in Leo's office. What the hell. He gets up and we--

CUT TO:

4 INT. LEO'S OFFICE - NIGHT

4

LEO's working at his desk as TOBY appears in the doorway.

TOBY

Leo?

LEO

Hey, I didn't know you were still here.

TOBY

Yeah.

LEO

What's goin' on?

TOBY

I've been thinking about why Hoynes volunteered to slap down big oil.

LEO

It was his polling information.

TOBY

Yeah, but why did he put the poll in the field at all is what I'm saying.

LEO

John Hoynes is an egomaniac who needs to be told what people think of him.

TOBY

Well that's pretty unusual for Washington.

LEO

Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

LEO
Scared the hell outa me.

TOBY
The poll that Hoynes put in the field--

LEO
Hoynes is gonna run for President one day, why shouldn't he do his own polling?

TOBY
He's gonna run for President six years from now, what good does last week's do?

LEO
I really don't know.

TOBY
Okay.

FADE OUT.

TITLE:

That Night

From the BLACK we HEAR

TOBY
It's never happened before, right?

FADE IN:

7 **INT. LEO'S OFFICE - NIGHT**

7

TOBY stands in his overcoat, ready to go home.

LEO
No.

TOBY
A Vice President would never challenge a sitting President for the nomination.

LEO
Of course not.

TOBY
You see his itinerary for the weekend?

LEO
Who?

(CONTINUED)

TOBY
The Vice President.

LEO
I don't keep tabs on--

TOBY
He's giving a speech at a semi-conductor plant. The title of the speech is "Clean Air Industry in the High Tech Corridor of the Industrial Northeast."

LEO
Where?

TOBY
Nashua, New Hampshire.

And TOBY's got LEO's attention...

LEO
(pause)
Toby, nobody, and particularly not Hoynes, would be naive enough...What I mean to say is if he's going to New Hampshire for the reason you're thinking, he would mask it with something, it wouldn't be an official trip, he'd make up a benign excuse to be up there.

TOBY
I know.

LEO
So why are you concerned about the speech?

TOBY
Because it comes in the middle of a three day camping trip to Killington.

TOBY's staring straight at LEO...

TOBY
(pause)
Why does Hoynes think the President isn't gonna run again?

TOBY has him in check...

TOBY
(pause)
What's going on, Leo?

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED: (2)

6.
7

The two of them keep staring at each other...
and staring...
and staring...
...and we

SMASH CUT TO:

MAIN TITLES

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

8 EXT./EST. THE WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT 8

TITLE:

The West Wing
11:35 PM

CUT TO:

9 INT. THE OVAL OFFICE - NIGHT 9

BARTLET's at his desk reading a briefing book. LEO comes in from his office.

LEO

Excuse me, Mr. President.

BARTLET

I closed the embassies in Tanzania and Brussels.

LEO

What about domestic?

BARTLET

I don't have to make that call yet.

LEO

How much time do you have?

BARTLET

About an hour.

LEO

Mr. President, I've got Toby waiting in his office right now.

BARTLET

Why?

LEO

We've gotta tell him.

BARTLET

Tell him what?

LEO doesn't say anything, and now, for the first time, BARTLET lifts his head up from his briefing book...

(CONTINUED)

LEO
We've gotta tell him.

BARTLET
What happened?

LEO
He got curious when Hoynes volunteered to step in for Bill Trotter, and then more curious when he found out it was 'cause Hoynes put a poll in the field.

BARTLET
Yeah.

LEO
Now he's camping in Killington, Vermont with a quick stop in--

BARTLET
Come on--

LEO
--New Hampshire and Toby's not an idiot.

BARTLET
He--

LEO
None of them are.

BARTLET and LEO are looking at each other...

BARTLET
(pause)
He scheduled a trip to New Hampshire?

LEO
High Tech corridor of the Northeast.

BARTLET
Yeah, thanks to who?

LEO
What does that matter right now?

BARTLET closes the briefing book...thinks...then picks up the briefing book and slams it down on his desk...

LEO
I think you gotta see this as an opportunity.

(CONTINUED)

BARTLET
To do what?

LEO
To gauge reaction.

BARTLET
You think Toby's reaction is gonna be the same as the public's?

LEO
I meant the staff.

BARTLET
Which will be?

LEO
I'm sorry, sir?

BARTLET
The staff's reaction will be what?

LEO
I don't know. Shock. Betrayal, confusion, concern about our future. I don't know.

BARTLET
What do I tell him?

LEO
Everything.

BARTLET
(pause)
Go get him.

LEO
Yes sir.

LEO exits.

BARTLET's left alone...

BARTLET
Now it starts.

CUT TO:

10 INT. SAM'S OFFICE - NIGHT

10

SAM and JOSH are both sitting and reading copies of a brief speech.

(CONTINUED)

SAM
Hm.

JOSH
Yes.

SAM finishes first and puts the speech down.

SAM
Well.

Then JOSH finishes...

JOSH
You know what the problem with this is?

SAM
Yes.

JOSH
It's supposed to be funny.

SAM
And yet?

JOSH
It's not.

SAM
No.

JOSH
Who worked on this?

SAM
Jay Breech, Janet Lippman, Andy Kyle
worked on it a little.

JOSH
You know what they did?

SAM
Yeah.

JOSH
They forgot to bring the funny.

SAM
Yeah.

JOSH
How much time do we have?

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED: (2)

10

SAM

I want to show it to him within the hour.

JOSH gets up, opens the door and walks out into--

11 INT. COMMUNICATIONS BULLPEN - CONTINUOUS

11

--where he stands in TOBY's open doorway. TOBY's sitting at his desk.

JOSH

Toby.

TOBY

Yeah.

JOSH

Sam and I are gonna stay and punch up some of the jokes for the Correspondents' Dinner.

TOBY

Yeah, I read it.

JOSH

They forgot the funny.

TOBY

Yeah.

JOSH

You want to stay?

TOBY

Where are you gonna be?

JOSH

We'll find a place.

TOBY

I'll hook up with you in a little bit.

JOSH

What's goin' on?

LEO comes by--

LEO

Toby?

TOBY

Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

TOBY gets up from his desk and follows LEO out of the bullpen.
 JOSH watches them go as DONNA comes through.

DONNA

Hello.

JOSH falls in step with her.

JOSH

How you doin'?

They walk out into--

12 INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

12

DONNA

I'm doing fine.

JOSH

Did you get the flowers?

DONNA

Yes I did.

JOSH

Did you like them?

DONNA

They were very pretty.

JOSH

Do you know why I sent them?

DONNA

I know why you think you sent them.

JOSH

It's our anniversary.

They walk into--

13 INT. LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

13

The place is empty except for the SECURITY GUARD at the desk
 and maybe one at the door.

DONNA

No it's not.

JOSH

I'm the sorta guy who remembers those
 things.

(CONTINUED)

DONNA

No, you're the sorta guy who sends a woman flowers to be mean. You're really the only person I've ever met who can do that.

JOSH

I'm quite something.

DONNA

Yes.

JOSH

I sent them to mark an occasion.

DONNA

And what occasion would that be?

They walk into--

14 INT. JOSH'S BULLPEN - CONTINUOUS

14

Also fairly deserted. Maybe one or two people working late with desk lamps on.

JOSH

Our anniversary.

DONNA

I started working for you in February, this is April and you're an idiot.

JOSH

Well you started working for me once in February, then you stopped for a while.

DONNA

Yes.

JOSH

Then you started working for me again in April. That's the one I choose to celebrate, 'cause that's the only one where you started working for me and it wasn't followed by your not working but rather going back to your boyfriend. And how, in comparison to that and him you can call me mean is simply another in a long series of examples of how you--

DONNA

Oh shut up. Honest to God, do you ever get tired of the sound of your own voice?

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

JOSH

Noooo, no, no, no.

DONNA

What are you doing now?

JOSH

Sam and I are gonna punch up the thing for tomorrow. Hey, we need funny people.

DONNA

Yeah?

JOSH

You know any? See, right there was a joke. The oldest joke in the book.

DONNA

I'll say.

JOSH

Hey, you know what, Ado Annie? I sent you flowers. I think what you're trying to say is, Thank you, Josh, they're beautiful, how very thoughtful of you. Not many bosses would've been that thoughtful.

DONNA

Really? 'Cause I think what I was trying to say was shove it.

JOSH

Okay, well then I guessed wrong.

DONNA

You want me to help with the thing?

JOSH

Yes I do, because you are such an hysterically funny person, did you notice how I used "an" there properly?

DONNA

Yes I did.

JOSH

You crack me up.

DONNA

There are times?

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: (2)

JOSH
Yeah?

DONNA
When, to put it quite simply, I hate your
breathing guts.

JOSH
So the flowers really did the trick.

DONNA
Oh yeah.

And they walk out as we

CUT TO:

15 INT. MRS. LANDINGHAM'S OFFICE - NIGHT

15

TOBY and LEO sit and wait. After a moment...

LEO
(pause)
Did you see the draft for the
Correspondents' Dinner?

TOBY
Yeah.

LEO
It's not funny.

TOBY
Sam's gonna work on it.

LEO
(pause)
Toby, take it easy in there, okay?

And before TOBY can respond, the Oval Office door opens from
the inside and CHARLIE steps out.

CHARLIE
You can go in.

TOBY and LEO get up and walk into--

16 INT. THE OVAL OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

16

--where BARTLET is making himself a drink.

TOBY
Good evening, Mr. President.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

BARTLET

Hey, Toby, you want a drink?

TOBY

No thank you, sir, I'm fine.

BARTLET

Have a drink with me.

TOBY

Sure.

BARTLET

Bourbon, no ice?

TOBY

Thank you.

BARTLET

You know what I just found out recently?
To be called bourbon it has to come from
Kentucky. Otherwise it's called sour
mash.

TOBY

Yeah.

BARTLET puts TOBY's drink on the table as well as a club soda
for LEO. At some point he'll go back and get his own drink.

BARTLET

An Algerian-born terrorist named Reda
Nessam was arrested at the Canadian
border yesterday with a U-Haul containing
10 two-ounce jars full of nitroglycerine
and a 9-volt detonating device.

TOBY

And they don't allow that kind of thing
at Yosemite?

BARTLET

No. Anyway, on advice from State and
Intelligence, I closed the embassies in
Tanzania and Brussels.

TOBY

What about the FAA?

BARTLET

They want me to order the airports to
heightened security.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BARTLET (cont'd)
I don't know, it's a holiday weekend,
Toby I've gotta tell you something.

TOBY
Does the FAA have to present evidence of
a credible threat?

BARTLET
Yeah.

TOBY
How do they do that?

BARTLET
I don't know, they do it. Look--

TOBY
Is there--Excuse me, sir--is there a time
frame?

BARTLET
About an hour. Toby, around ten years
ago, for a period of a few months, I was
feeling run down and had a pain in my
leg, and both eventually subsided. But
then eight years ago the pain came back.
As well as numbness. My vision would be
blurry sometimes and I'd get dizzy.
During an eye exam, the doctor detected
abnormal pupil responses and ordered an
MRI. The radiologist found plaques on my
brain and spine. I have a relapsing/
remitting course of MS.

TOBY looks at BARTLET for the longest time...BARTLET's hanging
in there...

TOBY
(pause)
I'm sorry, sir?

BARTLET
I have Multiple Sclerosis, Toby.

And with this, BARTLET has come back to the chair and set the
bourbon bottle on the table as we

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

17 INT. THE OVAL OFFICE - NIGHT

17

BARTLET, LEO and TOBY are exactly where they were. They're giving TOBY a moment to digest this.

It's gonna take more than a moment.

There's a long, tense silence before...

TOBY

(pause)

What does relapsing/remitting mean?

BARTLET

I'm sorry?

TOBY

What does relapsing/remitting mean?

BARTLET

It's--

(beat)

I don't know how--It's the good kind of MS.

TOBY

It's the good kind.

BARTLET

Yeah. As opposed to secondary progressive.

TOBY

Which is the bad kind.

BARTLET

Yeah. I don't know how much you--Let me talk to you like you're stupid for a second.

TOBY

Yeah.

BARTLET

MS is a chronic disease of the central nervous system. Symptoms can be as mild as numbness or as severe as paralysis.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

TOBY
And loss of vision.

BARTLET
Yeah.

TOBY
And cognitive function.

BARTLET
Yeah.

TOBY
Is it--I'm sorry--is it fatal?

BARTLET
No. That's the good news. The bad news is
there's no cure.

TOBY
Yeah, that I knew. Does
relapsing/remitting--

BARTLET
--ever turn into secondary progressive?

TOBY
Yeah.

BARTLET
Sure.

TOBY
Is there any way of telling if it's going
to?

BARTLET
No.

TOBY
Okay.
(pause)
I'd like to stand up, can I stand?

BARTLET
Yeah.

TOBY gets out of his chair...no one says anything for a
moment. Then--

TOBY
'Scuse me.

(CONTINUED)

And TOBY hustles for the portico door. He steps out on the portico, falls to his knees at the hedges and throws up.

BARTLET and LEO know that this isn't the moment to be patronizing and so neither of them move to help.

After a moment, CHARLIE enters...

CHARLIE
Mr. President?

BARTLET
Yeah.

CHARLIE
You wanted the call from Mr. Garreth at the FAA.

LEO
Charlie, can you put it through to my office.

CHARLIE
Yes sir.

CHARLIE exits.

LEO
(to BARTLET)
Go take it in my office.

BARTLET waits a moment, then gets up and goes into Leo's office. LEO's alone, looks out the window at TOBY, and we

CUT TO:

18 INT. AINSLEY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

18

AINSLEY's working at her desk in relaxed clothes. Sweatshirt, jeans, maybe a baseball cap turned backwards.

There's a shout from upstairs in the hallway--

SAM (OS)
Ainsley?!

AINSLEY doesn't even look up...

The shout comes from a little closer--

SAM (OS)
Ainsley?!

(CONTINUED)

AINSLEY ignores it...

Finally SAM has made his way down to her office...

SAM
Ainsley?

AINSLEY
Hello, Sam.

SAM
Didn't you hear me shouting?

AINSLEY
Yes I did.

SAM
And?

AINSLEY
I chose to ignore it.

SAM
Because?

AINSLEY
You were shouting.

SAM
You're adorable.

AINSLEY
Yet ill-adored.

SAM
Go figure.

AINSLEY
Yeah.

SAM
What are you doing?

AINSLEY
I'm going up to Smith College tomorrow.

SAM
Why?

AINSLEY
It's my alma mater.

(CONTINUED)

SAM
Reunion?

AINSLEY
No, the Women's Studies Department is
having a panel on resurrecting the E.R.A.

SAM
Who else is on the panel?

AINSLEY
Rebecca Walker, Gloria Steinem, Ann
Coulter, Naomi Wolf--

SAM
You know something like 40 percent of all
women opposed the E.R.A. and in my entire
life I've never met one of them.

AINSLEY looks at SAM a moment, then extends her hand--

AINSLEY
Ainsley Hayes, how ya doin'.

SAM
You're not.

AINSLEY
Yes.

SAM
You're not.

AINSLEY
Yes.

SAM
You're not, you're not, you're not one of
those people.

AINSLEY
Sam, if by those people you're referring
to Episcopalians--

SAM
You're going back to Smith College, the
cradle of feminism, to argue in
opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment?

AINSLEY
And get some decent pizza, yeah.

(CONTINUED)

SAM

They're gonna hate you.

AINSLEY

Sam, I'm a straight Republican from North Carolina, you don't think they hated me the first time around?

SAM

Yeah.

AINSLEY

What are you doing?

SAM

I want to punch up some of the jokes for the Correspondents' Dinner and I'm looking for people left in the building who are funny. I couldn't find any so I came to you.

AINSLEY

I would think, Sam, with your infectious sense of humor, that you would have no trouble--

SAM

You want to help out or not.

AINSLEY

I need to do this.

SAM

We ordered Chinese food.

AINSLEY

Okay.

AINSLEY gets up and we

CUT TO:

19 INT. ROOSEVELT ROOM - NIGHT

19

Chinese food cartons are spread around the table, as well as beer and soft drinks. JOSH, LARRY and ED are reading copies of the speech. DONNA's making notes on a legal pad.

After a moment...

JOSH

See?

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED:

ED
Yeah.

JOSH
Larry?

LARRY
Yeah.

JOSH
You see the problem?

LARRY
Well they didn't bring the funny, Josh.

JOSH
No they didn't.
(to DONNA)
What are you doing?

DONNA
I'm jotting down some go-to's in case a joke doesn't work. "I haven't seen an audience this dead since--" that kinda thing.

JOSH
You think the President's gonna get heckled?

DONNA
No, but I've read the speech, and I think you'd be wise to have some dead audience metaphors in your pocket.

JOSH
Okay, here we go.
(reading)
"Ladies and Gentlemen, I'm very happy to be here and I want to thank the White House Correspondents' Association for inviting me. I expect I'll be stuck here tonight with my fair share of verbal harpoons, I don't mind, just don't stick me with the dinner check." Wow.

DONNA
And then it says here *Allow for laughter.*

JOSH
Yeah, well unless we give that instruction to the audience, I don't think it's gonna be a problem.

(CONTINUED)

SAM and AINSLEY enter--

SAM

Hey.

JOSH

I don't mind, just don't stick me with the dinner check?

SAM

I know, it's like he's playin' Grossingers.

DONNA

(reading)

"I know some of you are troubled by my frequent use of Latin references, well all I can say is, 'No te preocupas.'"

ED

And the joke there is that it's in Spanish.

LARRY

It's that kind of Latin.

DONNA

My point is that this is probably where you'll want your first dead audience joke.

JOSH

We're not gonna need a dead audience joke, Ainsley what are you--

SAM

She's looking for Kung Pao Chicken.

AINSLEY

Found it.

SAM

That's a load off our minds.

AINSLEY

Donna, who gave you those beautiful flowers on your desk?

JOSH

I did. Me. Those are from me.

AINSLEY

What's the occasion?

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED: (3)

DONNA

Nothing.

JOSH

Our anniversary.

DONNA

Our not anniversary.

JOSH

Donna doesn't like to talk about it.

DONNA

I really don't.

AINSLEY

Okay.

SAM

A few years ago, Donna's boyfriend broke up with her and so she started working for Josh, but then the boyfriend told her to come back and she did, and predictably they broke up again and she came back to work, so there's some dispute over the date.

SAM looks over to DONNA, who puts her hands out and shakes her head as if to say "Did you hear what I just said?"

SAM

(beat)

I thought you meant you didn't want to talk about it.

(beat)

I'm a spokesman, Donna, it's in my blood.

AINSLEY

Well they're nice flowers.

LARRY

"I'd also like to thank our host, Jay Leno, who--"

SAM

We're not making fun of the host.

AINSLEY

Who are we making fun of?

LARRY/ED/SAM/JOSH

Republicans.

(CONTINUED)

SAM

I only wish the Speaker were here tonight, but he's held up in negotiations on the Hill. He's demanding his latest pre-nup include a line item veto.

JOSH

There it is.

SAM

All right, two groups. You guys over there, we'll be over here.

AINSLEY

I want to be in the other group.

SAM

Why?

AINSLEY

The Kung--

SAM

Get the Kung Pao Chicken and bring it over here. Let's go, in a half-hour, I want to make Toby laugh.

CUT TO:

20 EXT. PORTICO - NIGHT

20

TOBY's sitting on the bench with a wet towel to his face. LEO steps out with a fresh drink and hands it to TOBY, who drinks it and puts the glass down next to him...

LEO

So I found out about a year ago. Two nights before the State of the Union he had an attack.

TOBY

(pause)
He did?

LEO

When he passed out in the Oval Office?

TOBY

That was an attack.

LEO

Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED:

TOBY
I thought it was the flu.

LEO
The flu brought on the attack.

TOBY waits a moment, then gets up and walks inside. LEO follows him into--

21 INT. THE OVAL OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

21

TOBY doesn't really know what to do with himself for a moment...

TOBY
How is it poss--
(beat)
How is it possible that this was kept a secret. First of all, who else knows?

LEO
You're the 16th person.

TOBY
Who else?

LEO
I'll tell you some of them, I won't tell you all of them.

TOBY
Why not?

LEO
'Cause it's not entirely my business, I'm not sure of my footing here, the President'll be off the phone in a minute and in the meantime you'll take what I give you.

TOBY
It's not entirely your business?

LEO
The First Lady. The doctor, the radiologist, the specialist, the kids--

TOBY
Who else?

LEO
That's it for now.

(CONTINUED)

TOBY

He took a physical. Those doctors were from eight years--he took a physical when he ran and disclosed the--

LEO

It's in remission, it doesn't show up during a physical--

TOBY

Leo--

LEO

It's in remission, nobody lied.

TOBY

Nobody lied?

LEO

Nobody--

TOBY

Nobody lied? Is that what you've been saying to yourself over and over again for a year?

LEO

Look--

TOBY

Leo, a deception of massive propor-- I can't even--he gets a physical twice a year at Bethesda, his doctors are Naval officers, are you telling me officers are involved with--

LEO

Toby--

TOBY

These guys are gonna be court-martialed!

LEO

Nobody was--listen to me--nobody lied, nobody was asked to lie.

TOBY

Coercion--

BARTLET steps in from LEO's office.

LEO

Nobody was asked to lie.

(CONTINUED)

TOBY

Officers, the First Lady, surgeons,
Surgeon Generals for all I know--

BARTLET

The plural of Surgeon General isn't
Surgeon Generals, it's Surgeons General.
Like Attorneys General. Or Courts
Martial.

(beat)

Nobody was asked to lie.

(pause)

That was Garreth from the FAA. Upon
interrogating Reda Nessam, they believe
it's possible another rental car crossed
the border yesterday. They believe it's
heading to a safe house in Paterson, New
Jersey and the FBI thinks they can
apprehend him in 24 hours. Of course the
only way all that will happen is if Reda
Nessam is telling the truth, so who wants
odds? Anyway, they're still looking at
forensic evidence and we'll talk again in
a few minutes to decide if there's a
credible threat.

BARTLET's got his back to TOBY.

TOBY

I'm sorry, sir, I didn't hear that.

BARTLET

I said we're gonna decide if there's a
credible threat.

(smiles)

Why, what are you guys talking about?

FADE TO BLACK

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

22 INT. MRS. LANDINGHAM'S OFFICE - NIGHT

22

CHARLIE's at his desk. JOSH comes in from the corridor.

JOSH

Hey.

CHARLIE

How you doin'.

JOSH

You have any idea how much longer Toby's gonna be?

CHARLIE

I don't.

JOSH

Lemme ask you, you think this joke is funny? "I'm sorry the Speaker isn't here, he's up on the Hill in last minute negotiations. He's going over his pre-nup and he wants a line item veto."

CHARLIE

Well I think it's pretty funny, but--

JOSH

What?

CHARLIE

I wouldn't do it.

JOSH

Why?

CHARLIE

I think it's gonna call attention to the First Lady not being there.

JOSH

Where's Mrs. Bartlet gonna be?

CHARLIE

She went back up to Manchester.

JOSH

She's not coming to the Correspondents' Dinner?

(CONTINUED)

CHARLIE
Probably not.

JOSH
Charlie, what's goin' on?

CHARLIE gives him a little look that says, "You know better than to ask me stuff I'm not gonna tell you."

JOSH
(beat)
Sorry.
(beat)
All right. You don't know when Toby's out?

CHARLIE
No.

JOSH
Okay.

JOSH starts back--

CHARLIE
It was a good joke.

JOSH
It wasn't mine.

JOSH opens the door and goes into--

23 INT. ROOSEVELT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

23

--where DONNA, AINSLEY, ED and LARRY are in joke-writing mode. They're scribbling on pads in various places and positions around the room.

JOSH
Okay, here we go.

SAM comes in from the corridor with a piece of paper--

SAM
(reading)
"Equality of Rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any state on account of sex."

JOSH
What's the joke?

(CONTINUED)

SAM
It's not a joke.

AINSLEY
It's the Equal Rights Amendment.

JOSH
When did that come back?

DONNA
(re: ED and LARRY)
Read what these guys have.

JOSH takes the pad--

SAM
(to AINSLEY)
Shall not be abridged or denied on
account of sex. Very dangerous language.
This must be stopped.

AINSLEY
Ed and Larry have written some funny
jokes, Sam, wouldn't you care to eat the
legal pad they've written them on?

SAM
What could possibly be your problem with
the ERA?

AINSLEY
It's redundant.

JOSH
Why are we talking about the ERA?

SAM
She's doing a thing.

JOSH
The ERA's not back or anything, though,
is it?

SAM
Certainly not if Phyllis Schlafly over
here has her way.

AINSLEY
Look--

SAM
It's redundant?

AINSLEY

I'm a low-maintenance lady, I got the 14th Amendment, I'm fine.

SAM

How 'bout--

AINSLEY

The 14th Amendment which says that a citizen of the United States is anyone who was born here, that's me, and that no citizen can be denied due process. I'm covered. Make a law for somebody else.

JOSH

Okay, here is a joke based on the premise that the party afterward is hard to get into...and, that the President is the Commander in Chief. "I hear the Bloomberg party's gonna be hard to get into this year. But I'm not worried. I'm going to the party with the 82nd Airborne."

DONNA

(pause)

And then the President says, "Wow, I haven't heard a room this quiet since we lost the signal on Galileo."

JOSH

(pause)

Or, "Wow, I haven't seen my staff update their resumes this quickly since *the last time I tanked at the Correspondents' Dinner!*"

DONNA

Josh?

JOSH

Yeah.

DONNA

When you yell, you make it harder for people to find the funny.

JOSH

Hey, who gave you those flowers on your desk?

DONNA

A mean man who can't read a calendar.

(CONTINUED)

JOSH

Sam.

JOSH calls SAM over to a private spot--

SAM

We're doing fine, Toby's gonna come in and nail it, this is his thing.

JOSH

Yeah, cut the Speaker joke, okay, Mrs. Bartlet might not be there.

SAM

(beat)

Okay.

JOSH

All right, so we're gonna be fine here, right?

SAM

Yeah, we're doin' great.

(to the GROUP)

We're doin' great, everybody, right?

ED

Sam, we've got one here, but it involves a John Wayne impersonation and a sock puppet.

SAM

Yeah, we're eating it. Okay, everybody get up and move to a different chair.

JOSH

(to SAM)

That helps get the creativity going?

SAM

Nah, but it gives you something to do.

CUT TO:

24 INT. THE OVAL OFFICE - NIGHT

24

BARTLET and TOBY. LEO's gone for the moment.

TOBY

Leo said you had an attack last year.

BARTLET

Hm?

(CONTINUED)

TOBY

Leo said you had an attack last year.

BARTLET

Yeah.

TOBY

A couple of nights before the State of the Union.

BARTLET

Yeah.

TOBY

Wasn't that also the night you saw satellite pictures of India moving on Kashmir?

BARTLET

Yeah.

TOBY

India and Pakistan were staring each other down, control of some nuclear weapons had been put in the field.

BARTLET

Yeah.

TOBY

So in the middle of a...I don't know what you call it--

BARTLET

An episode.

TOBY

In the middle of an episode, you were in the Situation Room as Commander in Chief.

BARTLET

I know, I can't believe we're all still here.

TOBY is staring at BARTLET. "How the fuck can you make a joke about that?" BARTLET's staring right back at TOBY. "Yeah, I made the fuckin' joke, you got a problem I can help you with?"

TOBY

(pause)

Mr. President--

(CONTINUED)

BARTLET

The episode was over. Leo was with me, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs was with me, as were the Secretaries of State and Defense.

TOBY

Do you receive medication?

BARTLET

I'm sorry?

TOBY

Do you receive--

BARTLET

I get injections of Betaseron.

TOBY

From whom?

BARTLET

From a doctor.

TOBY

None of your current doctors are aware of your condition. Mr. President, is your wife medicating you?

BARTLET

Toby, I think that while temperatures are running a little high, it'd be best if you referred to my wife as Mrs. Bartlet or the First Lady.

LEO comes in from his office...

TOBY

(pause)

Yes sir.

BARTLET

Whatchya got, Leo?

LEO

They'd like a few more minutes.

BARTLET

The FAA?

LEO

Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

BARTLET

Talk me through what heightened security means.

LEO

Well they deploy more uniformed police and the dogs. They hand-search luggage--

BARTLET

Discontinue--

LEO

--curbside check-in, yeah, eliminate the first two rows of short term parking--

BARTLET

Okay, they want a few minutes?

LEO

Yeah.

BARTLET

Toby's concerned that the peaceful solution I brokered in Kashmir last year was the result of a drug-induced haze.

LEO

I was there with him. So was Fitz. So was Cashman, Hutchinson, Berryhill--

TOBY

Well that's *fantastic!*

LEO

Toby--

TOBY

None of you were elected!

BARTLET

I was elected, they were appointed. The Vice President was elected, and has the Constitutional authority to assume my--

TOBY

Not last May he didn't. He didn't last May when you were under general anesthesia.

BARTLET

That's 'cause I never signed the letter and I don't think I got shot 'cause I've got MS.

(CONTINUED)

TOBY

No, I don't think you did either, sir. I meant that during a night of extreme chaos and fear, when we didn't yet know if we'd been the victims of domestic or foreign terrorism, or even an act of war, there was uncertainty as to who was giving the national security orders, and it was because you never signed a letter. So I'm led to wonder, given your condition and its lack of predictability, why there isn't simply a signed letter sitting in a file someplace. And the answer of course is: Because if there was a signed letter sitting in a file someplace, somebody would ask why.

(pause)

The Commander in Chief had just been attacked, he was under a general anesthetic. A fugitive was at large, the manhunt included every Federal, state and local law enforcement agency. The Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware National Guard units were federalized. The KH-10s showed Republican Guard movement in Southern Iraq and twelve hours earlier an F-117 was shot down in the no-fly. And the Vice President's authority was murky at best. The National Security Advisor and the Secretary of State didn't know who they were taking their orders from. I wasn't in the Situation Room that night, but I'll bet all the money in my pockets against all the money in your pockets it was Leo.

(beat)

Who no one elected.

(beat)

For ninety minutes that night there was a coup d'etat in this country.

BARTLET's silent for a moment. It's scary, until he busts into--

BARTLET

(singing)

"--and the walls came tumblin' down."

(pause)

I feel fine, by the way, thanks for asking.

(CONTINUED)

LEO

Sir--

BARTLET

No, Leo, Toby's concern for my health is moving me in ways I don't even know what to do.

TOBY

Mr. President--

BARTLET

Shut up.

(beat)

You know your indignation would be a lot more interesting to me if it weren't quite so covered in crap.

CHARLIE steps in--

CHARLIE

Sir?

BARTLET

Yeah.

CHARLIE

Mr. Garreth.

BARTLET

Thanks.

CHARLIE exits.

BARTLET

(to TOBY)

Are you pissed 'cause I didn't say anything or are you pissed 'cause there were 15 people who knew before you did?

(pause)

Anyway, I feel fine and I appreciate your asking.

LEO

Take the call in here, we'll step outside for a minute.

TOBY and LEO exit onto the Portico.

BARTLET's left alone. He walks over to the desk, but then kind of walks past it to try and shake all this off somehow.

(CONTINUED)

He comes back to the desk, sits down, picks up the phone, hits a button and says--

BARTLET
(into phone)
Yeah this is the President.

FADE TO BLACK

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

25 EXT./EST. THE WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT 25

SAM (VO)
Self-deprecation.

ED (VO)
Yes.

CUT TO:

26 INT. THE ROOSEVELT ROOM - NIGHT 26

SAM
Self-deprecation is what we need.

LARRY
Yes.

SAM
Self-deprecation is the appetizer of
charm.

ED
We need jokes about the staff.

SAM
We need jokes about the staff.

AINSLEY
Let's start with you.

SAM
Problem is there aren't many jokes you
can make about me.

DONNA
How 'bout this. Um. "Knock-Knock," "Who's
there," "Sam and his prostitute friend."

SAM
(beat)
See, I think that was a bit of
misdirected anger there.

DONNA
I'm okay with that.

(CONTINUED)

SAM

Well in that case--Ainsley, the reason I gave you flowers in April instead of February is that you ditched me the first time around to go back to the guy who ditched you the first time around, only to have him ditch you the second time around.

DONNA thinks a moment...then smacks JOSH in the back of the head--

JOSH

What the hell--that was him.

DONNA

He was being you.

JOSH

Well I think in fairness everybody should get a turn. Sam, is there anything we can pull, anything funny we can recycle?

SAM

Yeah, pull something I wrote from October called Government-wide Accountability for Merit System Principles.

JOSH

(pause)

That one was a barn burner was it?

SAM

Just get it.

JOSH exits.

SAM

Is there coffee left?

ED

In the mess.

SAM

Anybody want anything?

AINSLEY

You think they have cheesecake down there?

26 CONTINUED: (2)

SAM

Well it's half-past midnight and the
pastry chef usually stays on until dawn,
so--

AINSLEY

I'll go see what there is.

SAM and AINSLEY exit into--

27 INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

27

--where they'll be making their way down to the mess. The
corridors are unusually unpopulated.

SAM

You know we should do a joke about women,
'cause there's no law against that, or
paying them less money than men.

AINSLEY

As a matter of fact the Pay Equity Act
was passed in 1964 when women were making
59 cents to the dollar.

SAM

What are you making now?

AINSLEY

79 cents.

SAM

So everything's fine.

They walk into--

28 INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

28

AINSLEY

No, there are still some problems, but
I'm not worried, 'cause the Federal
Government's coming to the rescue.

SAM

Look--

AINSLEY

You think pay disparity is 'cause some
sexist in human resources hired two
people for equal positions and paid the
man more.

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED:

SAM
Oftentimes women--

AINSLEY
And oftentimes women make less money over
the course of their life because they
choose to.

SAM
Oh good night nurse, they do not choose
to make less money, they are financially
punished for having kids.

They start heading down--

29 INT. STAIRWAY - NIGHT

29

AINSLEY
They made a choice to have kids.

SAM
Not necessarily if you guys have your
way, but that's a different can a tuna. I
flat out guarantee you that if men were
biologically responsible for procreation,
there would be paid family leave at every
Fortune 500.

They walk into--

30 INT. MESS - NIGHT

30

It's empty and dimly lit. SAM grabs a tray, some mugs and goes
to the coffee urn.

AINSLEY
Sam, if men were biologically responsible
for procreation they'd fall down and die
at the first sonogram.

SAM
If the Amendment is redundant then what's
your problem if it's passed or not?

AINSLEY
Because I'm a Republican, have we met? I
believe every time the Federal Government
hands down a new law, it leaves, for the
rest of us, a little less freedom. So I
say let's just stick to the ones we
absolutely need in order to have water
come out of the faucet and our cars not
stolen.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED:

AINSLEY (cont'd)
That is my problem with passing a
redundant law.
(pause)
Sam?

SAM
Yeah.

AINSLEY
The all-night pastry chef, you were just
kidding about that, right?

SAM
(pause)
Yeah.

SAM, AINSLEY and the coffee start upstairs as we

CUT TO:

31 EXT. PORTICO - NIGHT

31

LEO's sitting on the bench. TOBY's leaning against a pillar.

TOBY
Hoynes knows?

LEO
Yeah.

TOBY
And he thinks the President won't run
again.

LEO
He thinks there's a chance.

TOBY
Will he?

LEO
He'll run.

TOBY
Yeah, we stood in that office a couple
months ago, you and I, and you said,
"Take my hand. We just--" never mind.

LEO
He'll run.

TOBY
Hoynes was 14, who was 15?

(CONTINUED)

LEO

Dr. David Lee, the anesthesiologist at G.W., he had to know about the Betaseron. Getting back to Hoynes--

TOBY

I'm sorry, Leo, but I need you to look at me right now and tell me the doctor's not under any kind of surveillance.

LEO

The doctor's free to talk to whomever he likes.

TOBY

Well I'm sure we're gonna find that out soon enough.

LEO

He's not gonna leak it.

TOBY

Someone will.

LEO

Toby--

TOBY

Leo, Hoynes left breadcrumbs, he wanted me to find out. A camping trip to Killington?

LEO

That was a jackass move.

TOBY

I don't think it was, I think he may be the only person around here acting responsibly.

LEO

To who?

TOBY

The Democratic Party. It's seven and a half months till the Iowa caucus and no one's been told the President might not be the nominee?

LEO

He's gonna run.

TOBY

He may not have that option, Leo.

LEO

When the story breaks it'll be because we broke it. And we'll control it and the public will accept it. It's not like it's unprecedented that a President conceal health issues, what do you think is gonna happen?

(pause)

I mean it, what do you think is gonna happen?

TOBY

(pause)

Well...Only one of five things. The President can decide not to run. He can run and not win. He can run and win--

LEO

And what are the other two?

TOBY

Leo--

LEO

You think he's gonna need to resign?

TOBY

There's gonna be hearing upon hearing upon hearing--

LEO

He hasn't broken a law.

CHARLIE steps out on the portico--

CHARLIE

The President stepped over to the residence for just a moment, but he's off the phone if you want to come back in.

LEO

Thanks.

CHARLIE goes back inside.

TOBY

(quietly)

Says you. And you don't have to break the law to get served with Articles of Impeachment.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED: (3)

LEO

Toby...it is never going to get that far.

TOBY looks down, smiles, shakes his head...

TOBY

Write down the exact date and time you said that.

TOBY heads inside and we

CUT TO:

32 INT. ROOSEVELT ROOM - NIGHT

32

DONNA's got her legs up on a chair...

DONNA

See the thing about me, is that mine is a dry wit.

(beat)

And a dry wit...like a fine martini, is best enjoyed...

LARRY and ED are waiting for it...

LARRY

Uh-oh.

DONNA

Yeah, nowhere to go there.

SAM and AINSLEY come in with the coffee--

ED

What the hell took so long?

SAM

We got the coffee, but then I spilled it going up the stairs, you know, the first couple of times. Where's Josh?

DONNA

You sent him to get the thing?

SAM

For how long? I've had to spill coffee, you know, a lot.

DONNA

I'll find him.

DONNA exits.

(CONTINUED)

SAM

So. Guys.

ED

Yeah.

SAM

While I was downstairs I made a decision. I'm going to register with the Republican Party, and I'll tell you why if you're curious, it's because they are a freedom loving people.

AINSLEY

We also like beef.

SAM

You insist the Government is depraved for not legislating against what we can see on a newsstand, what we can see in an art gallery, what we can burn in protest, which sex we're allowed to have sex with and a woman's right to choose, but don't you dare try and regulate this deadly weapon I have concealed on me, for that would encroach against my freedom.

AINSLEY

Yeah and Democrats believe in free speech as long as it isn't a prayer while you're standing in a school. You believe in the Freedom of Information Act except if you want to find out if your 14 year old daughter had an abortion.

SAM

We believe in the ERA.

AINSLEY

Well go get 'em.

SAM

How can you have an objection to something that says--

AINSLEY

Because it's humiliating. A new Amendment we vote on declaring that I'm equal under the law to a man? I mortified to discover there's reason to believe I wasn't before.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED: (2)

AINSLEY (cont'd)

I'm a citizen of this country, I'm not a special sub-set in need of your protection, I don't have to have my rights handed down to me by a bunch of old, white, men.

(beat)

The same Article 14 that protects you protects me. And I went to law school just to make sure. And with that, I am going back down to the mess, because I thought I may have seen there, a peach.

AINSLEY turns and exits.

SAM

(pause)

I could've countered that, but I'd already moved on to other things in my head.

CUT TO:

33 INT. TOBY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

33

JOSH is standing on a step-ladder, trying to reach a binder that's on top of a pile of binders on the top of the shelf. He's trying to leverage it with a pencil as DONNA walks in--

DONNA

Josh--

And the sound startles JOSH who makes a sudden movement which sends piles and piles of folders and binders cascading and crashing to the floor.

They look at the damage for a moment...

JOSH

Well that was predictable.

DONNA

Yes.

JOSH

I'm looking for that speech Sam said.

DONNA

You know we keep them on computer.

JOSH

Yeah, sure, I suppose, but--

DONNA

You don't know how to use a computer.

(CONTINUED)

JOSH

Right.

DONNA

Josh, Josh, Josh...

JOSH

Yes.

DONNA

Josh, Josh, Puddin' 'n Pie...

JOSH

What the hell's happening now.

DONNA

You feel, I believe, because you're quite
adle-minded, that this job was my second
choice.

JOSH

Hey I'm just grateful we were your last
choice.

DONNA

When I came back, you remember I had a
bandage on my ankle?

JOSH

Yeah.

DONNA

I told you I slipped on the ice on the
front walk?

JOSH

Yeah.

DONNA

I was actually in a little car accident.

JOSH

You were in an accident?

DONNA

It was no big deal.

JOSH

You told me it was a late thaw.

DONNA smiles for a moment at the sweetness of Josh having
bought that.

(CONTINUED)

DONNA

(beat)

Yes I did. Anyway, they took me to the hospital and I called him and he came down to get me, but on the way, he stopped and met some friends of his for a beer.

JOSH

(pause)

He stopped on the way to hospital for a beer?

DONNA

Yes. And so I left him. Which was the point of my telling you this. I left him.

(beat)

So stop remembering that. What I remember is that you took me back when you had absolutely no reason to trust me again.

JOSH

(pause)

Donna--

DONNA

You're gonna make fun of him now, right?

JOSH

No.

DONNA

'Cause that's why I didn't tell you in the first place.

JOSH

I'm not gonna make fun of him.

DONNA

Good.

JOSH

But just what kind of a dumpkiss were you--

DONNA

He was supposed to meet his friends, he stopped on the way to tell them that he couldn't.

JOSH

And he had a beer.

(CONTINUED)

DONNA

Does this make you feel superior? Yes, you're better than my old boyfriend.

JOSH

I'm just saying if you were in an accident I wouldn't stop for a beer.

And JOSH is on his way out when he's stopped by--

DONNA

If you were in an accident I wouldn't stop for red lights.

JOSH looks at her...and as DONNA passes him on her way out--

DONNA

Thanks for taking me back. And the flowers are beautiful.

DONNA exits as we

CUT TO:

34 INT. THE OVAL OFFICE - NIGHT

34

TOBY and LEO.

There's a long, long silence before...

TOBY

Why not heighten security?

LEO

Hm?

TOBY

At the airports, why not heighten security, what's the downside?

BARTLET comes in from Landingham's office as LEO and TOBY stand.

BARTLET

Sorry about that.

LEO

What's goin' on?

BARTLET

(calling)
Charlie?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BARTLET (cont'd)
(to LEO)
I gotta make the call.

CHARLIE
(entering)
Yes sir.

BARTLET
Let's get Garreth back.

LEO
Toby was just asking what the downside of going to a security condition was.

BARTLET
The scanner they use takes an hour to search the luggage of 250 passengers. The condition requires two photo-I.D.s, most people only have one.
(beat)
Delays. Delays are the downside.

TOBY
Aren't delays a small price to pay for safety?

BARTLET
Yes, but it's a high price if all you're getting is the illusion of it. You want to see airport security, by a ticket on El Al, JFK to Tel Aviv. But you better get there a few days early 'cause you're gonna be put through a security gauntlet considerably tougher than "Has anyone unknown to you packed your bags." It's done to make the public feel better.

TOBY
And what's wrong with that?

BARTLET
Nothing, but I have to consider that giving an Executive order to heighten airport security might make the public feel worse.

TOBY
So what do you do, Mr. President?

CHARLIE steps in--

CHARLIE
Mr. Garreth.

BARTLET

That timed out well.

(punches a button and picks up
the phone)

Hal, let's do it, okay. I'm ordering the
airports to a 2-condition, you'll get it
in writing in about five minutes.

(beat)

Thanks.

BARTLET hangs up...

BARTLET

I didn't know enough.

TOBY

I know the feeling.

BARTLET

I don't have any intention of apologizing
to you, Toby.

TOBY

Would you mind if I ask why not?

BARTLET

'Cause you're not the one with MS, a
wife, three kids and airports to close.
Not every part of me belongs to you. This
was personal. I'm not willing to
relinquish that right.

TOBY

(pause)

It will appear to many, if not most, as
fraud: It will appear as if you denied
the voters an opportunity to decide for
themselves. They're generally not willing
to relinquish that right, either.

BARTLET

(pause)

Yeah.

TOBY

It's 17 people by the way.

BARTLET

I'm sorry?

TOBY

You were the first, we weren't counting
you. It's 17 people.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED: (3)

TOBY (cont'd)

(pause)

Mr. President, at some point in the near future we're gonna have to speak to some lawyers.

BARTLET

(pause)

Well that's what usually brings on the episodes, but if you say so.

And after a beat, TOBY and BARTLET crack up laughing...LEO joins in...the laughing subsides...

BARTLET

I don't know, it may have been unbelievably stupid.

(beat)

It may have been unthinkable stupid, I don't know. I'm sorry, I really am.

And TOBY's struck by the simple honesty of the apology...

TOBY

I've gotta go in the other room and--

BARTLET

Yeah, I'll see you tomorrow, thanks.

TOBY

Thank you, Mr. President.

TOBY exits out into--

35 INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

35

--and walks into--

36 INT. ROOSEVELT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

36

--where he opens the door to shouting and laughing and cheers of "Toby!," "Now we're in business," "Here we go," etc. TOBY's making a brave attempt to cover that he's off-balance and has just been shot from one world to another. The Oval Office door is still open behind him.

SAM

All right, all right, Toby's gonna be the judge. Toby, listen to this.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED:

TOBY

Okay.

JOSH

All right, you have to imagine the
President saying it. Tell me if you
think this is funny:

BLACKOUT

END OF SHOW