

A number of locations are used for this production. Most can be suggested with simple props. Pre-show the three main characters, GROVER, OTTO, and PORTERHOUSE should mingle with the audience and try to get as much money out of them as possible. When the show begins, PORTERHOUSE makes his way to the stage and addresses the audience.

PORTERHOUSE

I've played in many theaters, in every blessed state. And I've seen shows that rode the line from terrible and great. But in all theaters great and small one adage still rings true. That we can only so far and the rest is up to you.

PORTERHOUSE (lyrics)

If you hear a line you think is funny, don't hold it in just laugh.
If it makes your disposition sunny, don't wait for it just laugh.
When captivated by romance feel free to sigh with awe.
But when your hit with humor face it down with a guffaw and laugh.

OTTO enters from audience and sing/shouts.

OTTO

Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha

OTTO exits back into the audience. GROVER enters from audience.

PORTERHOUSE

Say where have you been?

GROVER

I've been working the crowd, where have you been?

PORTERHOUSE

I've been starting the show.

GROVER

Did we really have to resort to that?

PORTERHOUSE

It was either this or get a job. What to take the second verse?

GROVER

Why not I've taking everything else.
If I shout a put that is witty, don't wait for it just laugh.

GROVER (cont.)

Don't try to dissect the nitty gritty, to late for it just laugh.
You've now got your ticket so sit back and down.
Take some time to live your life a little like a clown and laugh.

OTTO enters. Shout/Sings his part and remains on stage.

OTTO

Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha

GROVER

Finally the third tenor decided to join us.

PORTERHOUSE

Hey, you be nice to him, he's been working hard on this verse. Go ahead show them your stuff.

OTTO takes out something silly from his coat and bangs on it as his solo. Example, a cooking pot, or a fish bowl, or something more complicated and noisy. It should be rhythmic and entertaining.

PORTERHOUSE

If you hear a line you think is funny, don't wait for it just laugh.

GROVER

If it makes you disposition sunny, to late for it just laugh.

PORTERHOUSE and GROVER

We've been rehearsing for six weeks and darn it we are proud.
And if you think we're doing well feel free to laugh out loud
You're such a lovely crowd.
And deserve to be wowed.
Just roll with the punch lines and laugh.

blackout

scene 2 In Jail

A simple wall of jail cell bars is in the corner housing PORTERHOUSE and OTTO. A small table and chair are nearby outside of the cell.

NOTE: blackout gags are short joke scenes with little to no dialogue they should be separated by a black out and the same piece of short music PORTERHOUSE and OTTO are in jail.

blackout gag 1:

They get a cake, there is a grinder hidden inside. They dig with a spoon to get a power chord. The grinder is used on the bars, success is almost achieved, then the power goes out. blackout.

blackout gag 2:

GROVER enters dressed as a sleeping guard with keys on his belt. OTTO uses his spoon to dig in the wall and hits water that starts squirting out at him. There is a panic to hold the water. OTTO takes a fishbowl out of his coat and uses that to catch the water. blackout.

blackout gag 3:

PORTERHOUSE reaches through the bars to get at GROVER’s keys, nothing. OTTO tries, nothing. OTTO uses his spoon, nothing. OTTO extends his spoon. extends again and ends up tickling GROVER who wakes up enough to brush off the spoon. PORTERHOUSE and OTTO laugh and tickle him more. GROVER laughs, wakes up and takes the spoon away. blackout.

blackout gag 4:

OTTO pulls a bomb out of his pocket. It’s placed by the door and lit. boom. PORTERHOUSE opens the door and tip toes past the guard. OTTO squeezes through the bars and wakes up GROVER who wakes and stands up. GROVER rips his guard uniform off in one rip.

GROVER

Okay fellows, lets go home.

Prison siren sounds and search lights flash.

GROVER (cont.)

Doom! Doom!

OTTO, PORTERHOUSE, and GROVER run through the crowd causing pandemonium and hilarity while the onstage set is being changed.

scene 3 the hovel

The Hovel is an impossibly small shelter, especially for three grown men. The ceiling should be low enough that it causes everyone to stoop. There should be a table and three small chairs. It should still look like a house, but really really small, and falling apart.

GROVER

Ah, home sweet hovel.

PORTERHOUSE

You're telling me. I don't think I could have spent one more minute confined in that tiny cell. It's good to be out, able to stretch my arms.

GROVER

Well it's not bad considering the price. Still I sometimes wish we had plumbing or heat.

PORTERHOUSE

Or electricity.

OTTO

Or a forth wall. (goes off stage and into the house) Hello, how's the show going?

GROVER

Hey, get back in here.

OTTO

I got to go.

IRMA the landlady enters and knocks on the door.

GROVER

Who's there?

IRMA

Pizza delivery.

GROVER

I didn't order a pizza. Did you order a pizza?

PORTERHOUSE

I don't have any money, I wouldn't have ordered a pizza?

GROVER

I don't have a phone, I wouldn't have ordered a pizza?

OTTO

Somebody ordered a pizza?

GROVER

We didn't order a pizza.

IRMA

It's a free pizza, neighborhood welcoming committee.

PORTERHOUSE

Well that sounds nice.

GROVER

Don't do it man, it could be a trap.

PORTERHOUSE

Pish-aw it's a free pizza. (opens door and quickly closes it) It's our landlady.

GROVER

It's a trap.

OTTO

No pizza.

IRMA

No pizza. It's rent time.

GROVER

But, really Ms Terwilliger. We've only just gotten out of prison, it's our first day here.

IRMA

Welcome back. It's a shame I couldn't rent this place out while you were gone. You owe me six months back rent.

GROVER

Six months! Impossible! That's almost half a year.

IRMA

Four thousand dollars gentlemen.

OTTO goes into the house asking the audience for money

GROVER

Would you get back in here, we've got a situation that needs addressing.

OTTO moves to punch IRMA and is held back by PORTERHOUSE

PORTERHOUSE

Now, now, save it for later. When the man from the telephone company comes over, maybe.

GROVER

Boys! If I could have a private moment with the lovely Ms Terwilliger here please.

PORTERHOUSE

Certainly.

OTTO and PORTERHOUSE move to a corner of the hovel, meaning that they're really only inches away from IRMA and GROVER. They cover each others ears.

GROVER

Ms Terwilliger. Irma, may I call you Irma?

IRMA

No.

GROVER

Irma, my darling. There must be something we can do to resolve this little situation.

IRMA

There is one thing you can do.

GROVER

Really, name it.

IRMA

Pay the rent.

GROVER

I mean besides that.

IRMA

What were you in jail for?

PORTERHOUSE

Theft.

GROVER

Larceny.

OTTO

I just liked it there. (pause) Arson.

IRMA

And I know that you were only gone for six months. Even though I know you were suppose to get three to four years.

GROVER

Can you imagine three to four years of back rent?

PORTERHOUSE

You'd be rich.

GROVER

A moment, please.

PORTERHOUSE

Sorry.

GROVER

Irma, we'd love to pay this (doing finger quotations to over-make his point.) “rent” that we “owe” you. However at this time we seem to lack the sufficient “funds” to pay you “anything.”

IRMA

(grabbing GROVER by the face and squeezing it into hilarious contortions.) Listen up chicken lips. I know all about you and your cohorts criminal past, and if you think for one minute that I'm going to let some two-bit hustler cheat me out of my 6 months back rent, then you've got another thing coming. And no, I am not charmed by your verbal wit or handsome good looks. I'd rather have to swallow a turtle then even talk to you face to face again. So I say again to you, troll, get me the rent by tomorrow noon, or out on the street you go.

IRMA slaps GROVER and exits

GROVER

What a woman.

PORTERHOUSE

How'd it go.

GROVER

Great, well better than expected anyway. Four Thousand dollars. Gentlemen, I think we're getting ripped off here.

OTTO

But we can't move, I don't like change.

GROVER

Speaking of change, I don't have two nickels to rub together.

PORTERHOUSE

I've got a nickel.

OTTO

Me too.

GROVER

Here let me see them. Now I've got two nickels to rub together.

GROVER rubs the nickels

PORTERHOUSE

How's that doing it for you?

GROVER

Nothing yet.

PORTERHOUSE

All this rubbing is making me hungry

GROVER

All this rubbing is making me tired

OTTO

All this rubbing is giving me pink eye. (pause as the others stare at him.) What? I didn't want to be left out.

PORTERHOUSE

This is getting us nowhere.

GROVER

We may be getting nowhere but we sure are getting there fast. Gentlemen, I'm declaring our

GROVER (cont.)

situation desperate. I know you don't want to hear this, but we need to get jobs.

PORTERHOUSE

But we're not qualified to do anything.

GROVER pulls out a shovel

GROVER

There's always ditches to dig.

PORTERHOUSE

Not so fast. Otto has a financial plan.

GROVER

Otto?

PORTERHOUSE

Yes.

GROVER

That Otto.

PORTERHOUSE

Yes.

GROVER

Okay, I'll bite. What's Otto's brilliant financial plan?

PORTERHOUSE

This.

OTTO pulls out a lottery ticket

GROVER

Well that should solve all our problems.

PORTERHOUSE

Should and will.

GROVER

A lottery ticket eh? What numbers did you pick?

OTTO

One Two Three...

GROVER

Predictable, my briefcase has the same combination.

PORTERHOUSE

Noted.

OTTO

Four Five Six...

PORTERHOUSE

Those were my idea.

GROVER

Creative.

OTTO

Seven, Eight, Thirty-Seven.

GROVER

I love a surprise ending. What made you pick thirty-seven?

PORTERHOUSE

It's his favorite number.

OTTO

Second only to thirty-eight.

GROVER

Well good luck to both of you, I'm off to dig ditches.

PORTERHOUSE

Hey, don't you want to hear if we've won.

GROVER

I'm in no hurry, the ditches can wait.

PORTERHOUSE

They're drawing the numbers live on the radio.

GROVER

When?

They all look at their wrists and realize no one has a watch. OTTO goes into the house and checks somebody's watch.

OTTO

Right now.

GROVER

We don't have a radio.

PORTERHOUSE

But we do have Otto's fillings.

OTTO opens his mouth and static is heard then a radio signal comes through.

RADIO

President Cornwall Snodgrass has announced his plans for reelection and has been given his party's full support... (static) tonight's winning lottery numbers. one two three four five six seven eight nine.

GROVER

What do you know I picked those numbers.

DELIVER MAN JOE enters and knocks on the hovel door.

GROVER (cont.)

Who goes there friend or landlady

DELIVERY MAN JOE

It's not the landlady.

GROVER

I'm going to take his word for it.

DELIVERY MAN JOE

You Grover P. Mergatroide?

GROVER

Yes.

DELIVERY MAN JOE

What’s the “P” stand for?

GROVER

Purchase order. My mother wanted me to have your job.

DELIVERY MAN JOE

Sign here.

GROVER

What’s this?

DELIVERY MAN JOE

It’s the one million dollars you just won.

GROVER

Already? Conveniently implausible.

DELIVERY MAN JOE

Artistic license. (to the Audience) Audience, suspend your disbelief.

GROVER

(to the Audience) Well you heard him, it won’t be the last time. (back to JOE) Thank you, you can have this.

GROVER takes the money and gives JOE the shovel. JOE exits

GROVER (cont.)

Gentlemen, we’ve just won a million dollars. We can be sensible and invest in our future. Save our money and spend only wisely and prudently.

ALL

Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha.

GROVER

I’m glad we agree, here let me do the honors.

GROVER passes out cigars, they all pose

GROVER (cont.)

Gentlemen, might I suggest we go on a spending spree.

scene 4a. Song, “No Replacement For The Green” a montage of small scenes of OTTO spending money, with GROVER and PORTERHOUSE singing a song, using an ukeule.

PORTERHOUSE

(spoken in rhythm over music.) I used to have squat, but now I find I’ve got quite a lot, there’s just so many things I want to buy. Pinching pennies so always such a bore but now I’m rich and so much more I think it’s time we give this thing a try.

PORTERHOUSE and GROVER (singing)

You can keep your education and your majors
and your sheep skin diploma seldom seen.
Some people make an art of being very smart
but your smarts are no replacement for the green.

scene 4b

OTTO at a store

OTTO

Is that a crystal vase?

ANGELA

You’ve got an eye for refinement.

OTTO gives ANGELA money takes the vase and smashes it

OTTO

Do have any more?

PORTERHOUSE and GROVER

You can keep your tender kisses and your moonlight.
some girls still think that old stuffs mighty keen.
A practicing Don Juan can ramble on and on
but romance is no replacement for the green

scene 4c

OTTO at a restaurant

OTTO

Let’s see. I’ll take a number one meal, make that two number ones, a number three, four fries, twelve fruit pies, a number seven, with extra cheese and five large sodas, diet.

JOSHUA

Will that be for here or to go?

OTTO

Here of course, I can't possible carry all that food home by myself.

JOSHUA

All this food is just for you?

OTTO

Yeah, and could you put extra mayonnaise on everything?

JOSHUA

Everything?

OTTO

Yep.

JOSHUA

Even the sodas?

OTTO

Of course.

PORTERHOUSE and GROVER

You can keep all your culture and your drama
sobbing over somebody's sad scene.

We never take offense at plays that make no sense
cause the arts are no replacement for the green

scene 4d

OTTO at the bank

OTTO

I'd like change for a hundred.

BANK TELLER MICHAEL

How would you like that sir?

OTTO

Twenties

BANK TELLER MICHAEL

Here you are sir.

OTTO

I'd like change for these twenties.

BANK TELLER MICHAEL

Uh, how would you like that sir?

OTTO

Fives.

BANK TELLER MICHAEL

Here you are.

OTTO

Too kind, too kind.

BANK TELLER MICHAEL

Anything el...

OTTO

I'd like a hundred dollar bill for these fives.

BANK TELLER MICHAEL

Sir, I...

OTTO

Problem?

BANK TELLER MICHAEL

Are you going to do any actual banking here?

OTTO

I don't even think this is my bank.

BANK TELLER MICHAEL

You can't just...

OTTO

Here's twenty dollars for you troubles.

BANK TELLER MICHAEL

I, uh, we can't accept money.

OTTO

Really, I thought this was a bank.

BANK TELLER MICHAEL

It is but, we can't accept bribes.

OTTO

What's a bribe? It's a tip.

BANK TELLER MICHAEL

Oh, well thank you sir.

OTTO

Now lets get some pennies.

BANK TELLER MICHAEL

Really sir...

OTTO

Here, buy yourself a nice pair of pants or something.

BANK TELLER MICHAEL

Sir you already "tipped" me.

OTTO

And who couldn't use another pair of pants?

BANK TELLER MICHAEL

Of course.

CUSTOMER JOLENE

Are you going to be here all day?

OTTO

I might, I just might.

CUSTOMER JOLENE sighs

OTTO

Here, buy yourself a nice haircut or something.

CUSTOMER JOLENE sighs again

OTTO

Here, buy yourself a small township.

CUSTOMER JOLENE

Have you ever banked here before?

OTTO

Sort of.

CUSTOMER JOLENE

Sort of?

OTTO

We tried to knock this place off a few years ago.

BANK TELLER MICHAEL

I knew I recognized you from somewhere.

CUSTOMER JOLENE

You tried to rob this place?

OTTO

Yep.

CUSTOMER JOLENE

Didn't you wear a mask?

OTTO

Yeah, I mean no. But I did make a face, like this. (makes a hilarious face.)

BANK TELLER MICHAEL

That's him, Get him

OTTO runs through the house chased by the BANK TELLER and CUSTOMER.

PORTERHOUSE and GROVER

We've got more money than a king
riding in a golden limousine.
No more trouble, no more strive. We've got the easy life,
cause there's just no replacement for the green,
no replacement for the green.

scene 5 renovated hovel

Pretty much the same as it was, only the walls are spread out wider and the ceiling is
lifted or gone.

GROVER is shredding money with a hand held shredder.

OTTO enters still running from the bank teller

GROVER

What's with you?

OTTO

Oh, just doing some banking. Say, I like what you've done with the place.

GROVER

Thanks, you should see the bathroom, we've got one now.

PORTERHOUSE enters with an armload of groceries, and knocks on the door.

GROVER

Who goes there, friend or landlady?

PORTERHOUSE (from behind a door)

It's not the landlady.

GROVER

Watch out, it might be the landlady, she's tried this one before.

PORTERHOUSE pushes open the door and enters.

PORTERHOUSE

Fellas it's me. I've got the food.

GROVER

Food!

ALL three make sloppy sandwiches, eat bananas and fight over peanuts

GROVER

You know what fellas, I’m going to go out on a limb and say I like being rich.

PORTERHOUSE

The food’s better anyway.

GROVER

Too bad it can’t last forever.

PORTERHOUSE

What do you mean?

OTTO

We won the big one.

PORTERHOUSE

We’re set for life.

GROVER

Are we? I know we’ve got a lot of money, but do we really have enough for all three of us for the rest of our lives? Especially if we keep spending money this way. Porterhouse, didn’t you just buy a solid gold yard rake?

PORTERHOUSE

I certainly did not, it was only gold plated.

GROVER

But you haven’t even used it.

PORTERHOUSE

Well it’s heavy and we don’t have a yard. What about you. How much did your last cigar cost?

GROVER

I only spent two dollars on my last cigar.

PORTERHOUSE

But what did you light it with?

GROVER

A five thousand dollar bill, the government issued them just for us, but enough about me. The point is fellas we need to do something smart with this money before it's all gone.

PORTERHOUSE

What can we do with our money to make sure we have more money in the future.

GROVER

Stockbrokers have lots of money, we could invest it in wall street.

OTTO

The president has lots of money too.

PORTERHOUSE

Don't you need to be smart to invest in wall street?

GROVER

He's right, I'll have to become president. But I'm afraid we don't have enough money.

PORTERHOUSE

What are you talking about, we just won a million dollars.

GROVER

I know it seems like a lot but you need a lot more if your going to run for political office. That's what separates the men from the beasts and the politicians from the rest of us.

PORTERHOUSE

So, we need a lot more money?

GROVER

A lot.

PORTERHOUSE

A lot, lot?

GROVER

A lot, lot.

PORTERHOUSE

A...

GROVER

Stop, I know what you're going to say. A lot, lot, lot.

PORTERHOUSE

I was going to say a bunch.

GROVER

Oh, that too.

OTTO

Why don't we just win the lottery again?

GROVER

Again? Are you nuts, we just won it. It was a million in one shot.

OTTO

It should be a million in one shot to win again right?

PORTERHOUSE

And we just won a million dollars. Lets go buy a million more lottery tickets and this time we'll win the big one.

GROVER

You know that's not altogether stupid.

PORTERHOUSE

Thank you, I'm glad we agree.

GROVER

Yes sir, I got to hand it to you, that's pretty smart.

OTTO

Why do you got to hand it to me?

GROVER

What?

OTTO

Why do you got to hand it to me, can't I just get it myself?

GROVER

No, no, it's just a figure of speech.

OTTO

Finger of speech?

GROVER

Figure.

OTTO

You can't fool me there isn't a finger of speech.

GROVER

No you misunderstand me.

OTTO

There's the thumb and he isn't really a finger at all, but you can't leave him out because he's good for giving the thumbs up or the thumbs down. Then there's the pointer and he's helpful, look over there, over there, over there. He's a bright one, he's going to tell you where to go. Then there's the middle finger and he doesn't get along well with others. When he stands up by himself he doesn't make any friends at all, but you need him if you don't want any friends. Then of course the ring finger, he's a good one if you want to get married, I don't want to get married but still you have to have cause sometimes you got to get married even if you don't too. Then there's the pinkie, he's a good one for when you want to be in polite society. Like this.

OTTO pulls out a cup of tea and sips. He hands cup to GROVER

OTTO

Here you try it. (They drink for a moment.) Now what were we talking about?

GROVER

I have no idea, but I certainly feel elegant about it.

PORTERHOUSE

We were talking about winning the lottery again.

GROVER

Right, right.

OTTO

One thing I should have told you sooner, I spent all our money already.

GROVER

All our money?

PORTERHOUSE

One million dollars?

OTTO

But who’s counting?

GROVER

In three hours?

OTTO

But who’s counting?

GROVER and PORTERHOUSE

We are!

IRMA knocks on the door.

IRMA

Oh, millionaires. Rent’s due!

GROVER

Doom! Doom!

OTTO

I forgot to tell you what I spent the last dollar on.

GROVER

It wasn’t rent by any chance?

OTTO

No, this. Another lottery ticket.

GROVER

I will murder you.

OTTO

And I won.

PORTERHOUSE

How much?

OTTO

Three billion dollars.

GROVER

What?

OTTO

Three billion dollars.

GROVER

Before or after taxes?

PORTERHOUSE

(looking at the ticket.) After taxes.

OTTO

What are taxes?

IRMA knocks again.

GROVER

Just a moment Ms. Terwilliger.

PORTERHOUSE

Do you think three billion dollars would enough to run for office?

GROVER

It's enough, it's certainly enough to cover rent. (to OTTO) Open that door.

OTTO shakes his head

GROVER

Still scares you, huh?

OTTO nods his head

GROVER

Nevermind, I'll get it.

GROVER opens door and walks IRMA around the room throughout the following.

GROVER

Ms. Terwilliger, welcome. On behalf of all of us I would like to say how distressed we are at the current rent situation. When this was brought to my attention I was appalled and I want to assure you that this will not stand and we are currently instituting a plan to resolve this immediately. In the meantime I want to tell you how lovely you look today, why I don't think you have ever looked so radiant. You have a wonderful day, thank you for stopping by and here take a cigar.

GROVER gives IRMA a cigar and shuts the door on her

PORTERHOUSE

That's good boss, but we got enough money now. Why didn't you just pay her off?

GROVER

Huh, that never occurred to me.

There's a knock at the door.

GROVER (cont.)

She must want another cigar. Now, now Ms Terwilliger only one cigar...

GROVER opens door and SNODGRASS enters with CROWLEY

GROVER

Ms Terwilliger, you have let yourself go.

SNODGRASS

Gentlemen.

PORTERHOUSE

Where?

SNODGRASS

I am President Cornwall Snodgrass.

GROVER

President Snodgrass?

PORTERHOUSE

The, President Snodgrass?

GROVER

Of the United States of America, President Snodgrass?

SNODGRASS

Yes, and I found out you boys recently came into some money.

PORTERHOUSE

I like him already.

SNODGRASS

The election is approaching but I didn't come for your vote because I can win without it.

GROVER

What a nice little man.

SNODGRASS

I came to give you the opportunity to donate to my campaign. What better way to spend your money than helping shape the future of our country?

GROVER

I have a feeling he's going to tell us.

CROWLEY

Quiet, you. President Snodgrass is talking.

SNODGRASS

Gentlemen, this country is in a sorry shape. Why I was only able to make to four hundred thousand dollars last year. Four hundred thousand dollars! Isn't it outrageous?

PORTERHOUSE

I could call it a few things.

SNODGRASS

Once reelected I intend to help the most unfortunate and put upon people in this country.

PORTERHOUSE

Being?

SNODGRASS

The wealthy.

GROVER

What about the un-wealthy?

SNODGRASS is confused

PORTERHOUSE

The destitute.

GROVER

The downtrodden.

OTTO

The financially challenged.

CROWLEY

The poor, sir.

SNODGRASS

What! A poor person! Where? Ack! Keep it away from me! Step on it! Get rid of it! Burn my clothes, Crowley, lest the stench clings to my waistcoat!

GROVER

You know Snodgrass, I think you're on to something.

SNODGRASS

Thank you very much Mr. Mergatroid. How much would you like to give me?

GROVER

Absolutely nothing.

SNODGRASS

You're too kind, Mr. Merg... . Come again?

GROVER

Not one red cent. We're going to need it all, you see I've decided to run for political office myself.

SNODGRASS

You?!

SNODGRASS and CROWLEY burst into laughter

SNODGRASS

Be serious, you don't have a chance.

GROVER

I have no choice, I am simply answering the will of the people.

SNODGRASS

The people? Don't be an idiot. To run for president you need Ivy League training, military experience, the right kind of breeding and years of leadership experience. Things I possess in abundance.

GROVER

I've got 3 billion dollars.

SNODGRASS

My God, he's got a chance.

blackout

scene 6 Campaign Headquarters. The Hovel now has American flags all around, and campaign posters. “Mergatroide He's Your Guy”. “Vote Mergatroide.... Really, why not?”. “3 Billion Dollars Can't Be Wrong”. GROVER is pacing and OTTO is working on a poster.

GROVER

Otto, take a note.

OTTO takes a piece of paper and leaves with it

GROVER

That's okay, I'll take it myself. “To whom it may concern,” No change “whom” to “whomever” and “concern” to “pertain to.” “It has come to my attention,” No change “it has come to” to “it has been brought to.” etc. etc. etc. There read that back to me. (pause) I've got to get a new secretary, I'm terrible.

PORTERHOUSE enters

PORTERHOUSE

I'll take care of that boss.

GROVER

Good, “Dear Electoral College. I would like to be president. I know I'm a little late in the race,

GROVER (cont.)

but I've got a lot of money. Please consider my application. Sincerely, Grover P. Mergatroid esquire. Enclosures.

GROVER hands PORTERHOUSE some bills which he stuffs in the envelope. OTTO enters with a car battery, alligator clips and a necktie.

PORTERHOUSE

You're back. Just in time. We were about to pick the Vice-Presidential candidate.

GROVER and PORTERHOUSE point at OTTO.

OTTO

Sure, why not.

GROVER

What's that?

OTTO

It's a power tie. You've got to look presidential.

OTTO straps the batter and tie to GROVER who is hilariously encumbered by the weight.

PORTERHOUSE

More important you've got to sound presidential.

GROVER

I'm way ahead of you.

GROVER pulls out a dollar bill and reads

GROVER

Friends, Romans, Americans.

PORTERHOUSE

Probably not Romans.

GROVER

Right. Friends, probably not Romans, Americans.

PORTERHOUSE

Perfect.

GROVER

My fellow Americans.

PORTERHOUSE

That too. This guy really speaks to you.

OTTO nods his head

GROVER

I haven't said anything yet.

OTTO shakes his head

GROVER

We stand here at the footsteps of tomorrow. Today is the farthest into the future that we have ever been so far. Say this stuff is good. When our forefathers where just three, our country knew it had a purpose, a dream, a reason...

OTTO shoots a rubber band

GROVER

What was that?

PORTERHOUSE

Presidents get shot at all the time. You've got to be in practice.

GROVER

Practice getting shot at?

PORTERHOUSE

No. Practice dodging.

GROVER

Oh, well that's different. Go right ahead then, shoot away.

OTTO shoots more rubber bands

GROVER

Hey, that was close, and this is heavy.

PORTERHOUSE

They're only going to get closer. And just think of that battery as the weight of responsibility.

GROVER

You know, maybe I don't want to be president

PORTERHOUSE

You're not president yet. This is just the primary.

GROVER

I suppose the guns get bigger.

PORTERHOUSE

No, just more of them.

GROVER

It occurs to me that I might need a bodyguard. I can't trust either of you to take a bullet for me.

PORTERHOUSE

No way, those things sting.

GROVER

I thought so. What about you? Would you take a bullet for me?

OTTO nods, frisks GROVER and pulls a bullet out of his pocket

GROVER

Not from me, for me. Give me that, I'm going fox hunting later today, darned foxes. Where was I? Oh yeah, you two cowards. I need someone big, strong and stupid.

IRMA knocks at the door.

IRMA

Rent!

GROVER

A gentle knock on the door me thinks might be the answer.

PORTERHOUSE moves to open door OTTO stops him

PORTERHOUSE

What’s your problem, we’ve got plenty of money now.

OTTO

She scares me.

PORTERHOUSE

Nonsense

GROVER

No, he’s right she scares everyone.

PORTERHOUSE and OTTO struggle for the door

PORTERHOUSE

Let me at that door.

OTTO

Never.

PORTERHOUSE

Let me at that door.

OTTO

Never.

PORTERHOUSE

Let me at that door.

OTTO

Never!

OTTO rips the door off the hinges runs to the side with it

OTTO

I won’t let you open this door!

GROVER

Ah, Ms. Terwilliger, what an unpleasant surprise.

IRMA

Speak for yourself.

GROVER

I do, I will, I did.

IRMA

Sorry about the door.

GROVER

Don't worry about that, we replace that door everyday for a new one, just like our socks.

PORTERHOUSE picks up the door and carries it away. OTTO pulls his socks off without taking off his shoes and carries them away.

GROVER

We don't even need a door. I just like to keep one around for formality reasons.

IRMA (reading from a newspaper clipping)

“Wanted, security guard, big, strong and stupid. Possibly to take a bullet.”

GROVER

We made the papers already?

OTTO taps GROVER on the shoulder

GROVER

Oh, you did this.

OTTO nods

GROVER

Knew we needed a bodyguard, did you? Well, things certainly work fast around here. You're hired.

IRMA

I didn't come for the bodyguard job. I came because it looks like you're serious about running for president.

GROVER

As seriously as I take anything.

IRMA

You're not married, you're going to need a first lady.

GROVER

I don't believe it's a prerequisite. Is it?

PORTERHOUSE enters

PORTERHOUSE

James Buchanan was never married.

GROVER

There you go, James Buchan...

IRMA pulls GROVER in for a big kiss

GROVER

I take it your interested in the job.

IRMA

Grover, this is a great idea. There are lots of things I can offer the team.

GROVER

Well, I can think of one thing.

PORTERHOUSE

Hey boss, think about this a second.

GROVER

Are you kidding, I think about this every eight seconds.

PORTERHOUSE

Are you really ready to settle down and get mmm... married?

GROVER

Porterhouse you're right, I'm much to happy in my current state of unmarriedness to consider such a drastic measure. Besides now that I have my senses back, I'm even sure the presidency is worth this.

PORTERHOUSE

That's right, after all the presidency only lasts four years and you'd be stuck with her 'till doomsday.

GROVER

Which could be just around the corner, and still might be. (to IRMA) I’m sorry my dear lady but I couldn’t possibly consider this until some more wild oats have been sown.

IRMA

I’m sorry to hear that Grover. If you change your mind you know where to find me, and I think you might.

GROVER

Thanks Porterhouse, that was a close one.

PORTERHOUSE

I hate to say it boss but her idea wasn’t all that bad.

GROVER

You just told me not to get married.

PORTERHOUSE

Oh, you don’t need to be in a real relationship; just someone to have around to show your sensitive side; show that you’re a real family man. A lady to make you look good.

GROVER

Ridiculous! Where am I going to find a woman ugly enough to make me look good?

GROVER and OTTO do a slow burn to PORTERHOUSE

PORTERHOUSE

Oh no... No you don’t! I would make a horrible woman!

OTTO

Exactly! That’s why you’re perfect.

GROVER

He’s right. Otto can’t pull it off and no one else likes me enough. You’re the only one.

PORTERHOUSE

I refuse!

GROVER

It’s just a few photos, a public appearance here and there. Come on, do it for me! Do it for your country! Do it for the sanctity of the office.

PORTERHOUSE

Well okay, but I want to be secretary of something when this is all over.

GROVER

Of course, my first order of business will be to establish the new Department of Something and make you chief over Someone. Otto, get the first lady supplies.

OTTO pulls out a bra

GROVER

Here, you'll have to put this on.

PORTERHOUSE

I don't need a bra.

GROVER

No wife of mine will be running around the city without proper undergarments.

PORTERHOUSE

Running around the city? I'm not running anywhere.

GROVER

Not dressed like that you aren't.

PORTERHOUSE

Do you think I could just stay at home?

GROVER

Nonsense. You're running for office just as much as I am. You've got to show your support, present a unified front, a happy, humble, God loving, God fearing family. Now man up put that bra on and let's get this campaign on the road.

GROVER and OTTO exit singing “Battle Hymn of the Republic.”

PORTERHOUSE struggles to get the bra on. It is hilarious. Two large lemons roll onto stage. He stuffs them into the bra.

OTTO enters with a dress. PORTERHOUSE puts it on

OTTO

He told me to come in here.

PORTERHOUSE

What for?

OTTO

To teach you to walk like a woman.

PORTERHOUSE

What do you know about it?

OTTO

More than you, apparently.

PORTERHOUSE

Well then maestro teach me.

OTTO leads PORTERHOUSE through walking steps which become more and more of a tango. PORTERHOUSE is a slow learner but starts to enjoy it. They dance together, hilariously.

OTTO

By George, I think she's got it.

PORTERHOUSE

Really?

OTTO

I'd date you.

PORTERHOUSE

Really?

OTTO

Heck no, you're the boss's wife.

GROVER enters

GROVER

Ah, there she is. Let's have a look.

PORTERHOUSE turns for GROVER

GROVER

Perfect, (to OTTO) get the camera.

OTTO exits

PORTERHOUSE

This is not going to work.

GROVER

My dear, you are radiant.

PORTERHOUSE

This thing is drafty.

GROVER

You know I never noticed but your eyes are brown.

PORTERHOUSE

Can we just take the pictures already?

OTTO enters with a camera and tripod which proves to be very difficult for him to set up. He fumbles with it throughout the scene.

OTTO

Of course, you two stand over there.

GROVER

You smell wonderful.

PORTERHOUSE

Thank you.

OTTO

Can you two get closer?

GROVER

You're skin is just a delight to touch.

PORTERHOUSE

Well I started moisturizing.

GROVER

I can tell, you have a glow about you.

PORTERHOUSE

I did just trim my nails.

OTTO

Can you get closer?

GROVER

Seeing you in that dress just does something to me.

PORTERHOUSE

I have been using a new razor too.

OTTO

Closer!

GROVER

It's been a long time since I've been with a woman like you.

PORTERHOUSE

Oh, Grover.

GROVER

Oh, you.

They are about to kiss.

OTTO

Hold it! Perfect.

They freeze in a awkward pose. OTTO finally has his camera set up as low as the tripod can go and gets ready to take a picture

OTTO

1... 2... 3...

OTTO takes a picture with a huge flash powder boom.

OTTO

It's an assassination attempt! Grover, get down!

PORTERHOUSE and OTTO throw GROVER to the ground and fall on him.

blackout

Scene 7: Press Conference Luncheon.

During the scene change a clip of this radio interview can be heard:

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)

Presidential hopeful, Grover P. Mergatroide has announced a press conference luncheon for this afternoon.

GROVER (V.O.)

I would like to call a press conference to talk about issues, hard issues and stuff. So come to the press conference and bring your microphones as they will not be provided.

Lights up on a podium and a table with drinks. GROVER is behind a podium. OTTO is by his side. PORTERHOUSE is on the other side in drag. Members of the press are also present.

GROVER

Here we are, now what?

PRESSMAN JOE

You called this press conference. You tell us.

GROVER

Very well, let us talk about the issues of the day. Wait, better yet let my opponent talk about the issues of the day and I shall refute them. Refute them one by one, or all together if you like.

PRESSMAN JOE

Perhaps Mr. Mergatroide--

GROVER

Please, please, call me Grover.

PRESSMAN JOE

Perhaps, Grover, an opening statement of some sort. For example, we'd like you to clarify which party you're running under.

GROVER

(to PORTERHOUSE) Running under?

PORTERHOUSE

The Republican/Democratic thing.

GROVER

Oooh. Ah-hem. People often ask me, am I a Republican or a Democrat? And I say I’m an independent. Independently wealthy that is.

GROVER, PORTERHOUSE and OTTO all laugh and stop together suddenly and return to a very serious tone.

GROVER

Yes it takes money to make money they say and I’ve got a lot of money and I plan on making a lot more.

PRESSMAN JOE

So... an Independent?

GROVER

Does it matter? Who am I running against?

PRESSMAN JOE

A Republican.

GROVER

Then I’m a Democrat.

PRESSMAN JOE

But the Democratic Party won’t have you.

GROVER

Then I’m an Independent. Yes, an Independent full of new fresh ideas, so new they haven’t even been taken out the package yet. Some of these ideas are good.

OTTO smiles.

GROVER

Some of these ideas are bad.

OTTO frowns.

GROVER

Some are shocking.

OTTO acts shocked.

GROVER

Some, disgusting

OTTO acts disgusted.

GROVER

Some, confusing.

OTTO acts confused.

GROVER

Some,.... trepidatious.

OTTO has no response

GROVER

Ha! Gotcha. But all these ideas of mine have one thing in common. They are ideas, and that's what's sorely lacking in our two party system. A two party system! Who wants that? Only two party options for a Saturday night? Who wants that? Certainly not I. What if you came late to the party, as I have, or weren't invited, as we weren't, or aren't dressed right? Uh!

PRESSMAN JOE

Mr. Mergatroide, how do you answer the charges of infidelity?

PORTERHOUSE gasps

GROVER

Now darling, clam yourself. It's worse then it sounds. I know, I looked it up. Ladies and Gentlemen of the press I would like to state for the record that in thirteen years of marriage nothing has come between me and my wife. And that includes me. Now if there is nothing further...

PRESSMAN JOE

Just one more thing, Mister Mergatroide, this morning two of your three opponents withdrew from the race completely stating and I quote. (GROVER and PORTERHOUSE mouth the words with him.) “There is no greater man for this country then Grover P Mergatroide.”

GROVER

I couldn't have put that better myself.

PRESSMAN JOE

Are there any truth to the rumors that you, sir, bribed your opponents into endorsing you?

GROVER

No. And now, if there are no more questions...

PRESSMAN JOE

Just one more question Mister Merg... But I'm sure it can wait.

GROVER slips money to the press

GROVER

Thank you. Now, if there is nothing further my wife will escort you to the buffet, darling.

PORTERHOUSE chases off the members of the press.

OTTO

How did you do that?

GROVER

Do what?

OTTO

Make him stop talking without... you know.

OTTO pulls out a blackjack

GROVER

It's a skill that's fundamentally required in politics.

OTTO

What?

GROVER

How to bribe somebody.

OTTO

Why?

GROVER

Oh there's lot of reasons. Let's say you want to put up a highway over here.

OTTO

That’s a highway?

GROVER

That’s a highway.

OTTO

Where’s the McDonald’s?

GROVER

Don’t worry, if you put up the highway and they’ll find it, and they’ll probably bring Starbucks with them. So you want to put up a highway here but a little old lady lives over there and she doesn’t want to move. What are you going to do?

OTTO pulls out a blackjack and lunges at the old lady. GROVER holds him back

GROVER

Hey, you want to beat up on old ladies?

OTTO nods

GROVER

No, no can’t do that. You got to find another way.

OTTO pulls out a gun and shoots it.

GROVER

You’re not listening, you got to use money.

OTTO

I don’t think I can kill her with money.

GROVER

You don’t want to kill her...

OTTO

How do you know?

GROVER

You just need to get her to move, and you do that by bribing her, just like this. You put money in your hand. You look them straight in the eye. You shake hands with them and then you tell

GROVER (cont.)
them exactly what you want. You understand?

OTTO nods

GROVER
Try it on me. I'll be the little old lady and you get me to move.

OTTO
Okay.

GROVER
(as an old lady.) But I don't want to move.

OTTO starts a routine of taking out his wallet, getting a bill, putting his wallet back, folding the bill, placing it in his hand, looking GROVER in the eye, extending his hand for the shake.

OTTO
I want you to move.

GROVER
That's good. Now you...

They break the hand shake and OTTO kept the money.

GROVER
Otto, you're suppose to give me the money.

OTTO gives GROVER the money

GROVER
It's okay you'll get it. Listen, I'll go get Porterhouse and just for practice you bribe him into doing something. (to off stage) Porterhouse darling.

PORTERHOUSE enters. OTTO starts his bribing routine

OTTO
I want you to get me a bucket of chicken.

OTTO keeps the money from PORTERHOUSE and gives it to GROVER.

GROVER

You're supposed to give him the money.

OTTO

You said to give it to you.

PORTERHOUSE

It's okay, he bought the pastrami last Tuesday. I'll get the chicken.

SNODGRASS and CROWLEY enter being chased by VERONICA the lobbyist

VERONICA

Sir, if you would just listen, my cause is worthy and I represent a large voting base of minority groups that you have been unable to secure in the past.

SNODGRASS

I care, I really do. But there is only so much I can do. You see the causes I support are already opposed to your movement.

VERONICA

Please sir, I have much to offer.

SNODGRASS

Perhaps I can be persuaded. You have five seconds.

SNODGRASS and CROWLEY stare at her intimidatingly.

VERONICA

Our group... our special inter-- that is, our lobby--- we're---- the environment, uh--- we don't have a large amount of money like some---

SNODGRASS

Oh, I'm sorry you are out of time. You see I did not need your help in my past elections and I will not need your help this time either. You and the people you represent are pretty much... oh, ... useless politically. The people I represent are more powerful and wealthier than you will ever be. But believe me I care, I really do. It's not personal, it's politics. Now if you will excuse me I have some more important matters to take care of.

CROWLEY scares away VERONICA with a stare.

GROVER

You're a hard man, Snodgrass.

SNODGRASS

Politics is a rough business, Mergatroide. You’ve got to steer every conversation with a firm hand. I mean, can you imagine if I took the time to listen to every Tom, Dick and Harry who wanted me to hear his opinion. What would we have?

PORTERHOUSE

The democratic process?

SNODGRASS

Wouldn’t that be depressing? Come Crowley, to the buffet.

SNODGRASS and CROWLEY exit. VERONICA enters

VERONICA

Pardon me, may I have a moment of your time?

GROVER

Ah! Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Grover P. Mergatroide.

VERONICA

What does the “P” stand for?

GROVER

Professor, my parents had very high aspirations for me. And who are you, my lovely little flower?

VERONICA

Veronica Peabody, lobbyist for the National Tree Foundation.

OTTO

That’s the N.T.F., boss.

GROVER

Thanks for breaking it down for me Otto.

VERONICA

Tell me, Grover...

GROVER

Please, call me Grover.

VERONICA

Grover, ahem--- Are you for or against trees?

GROVER

Well I do lean against trees, so I'd say... against them. I am against trees, that's my stance always has been.

OTTO

Very decisive boss.

GROVER

Thank you. If nothing else, I am decisive.

VERONICA

Perhaps I could influence you to see things more in line with the N.T.F.

OTTO

That's the National Tree Foundation, boss.

GROVER

What would I do without you?

OTTO

I don't know?

GROVER

I could think of one thing. (to VERONICA) Now, let's get down to brass tacks Miss Peabody.

VERONICA

Please, Veronica.

GROVER

Otto, take a note.

OTTO grabs a piece of paper and exits

GROVER

Great, Porterhouse darling, take a note. Veronica is not miss Peabody, she's Veronica.

PORTERHOUSE

“Veronica is not Miss Peabody,” check.

VERONICA takes out a stack of bills

VERONICA

It's not much, but perhaps this will change your stance on trees.

GROVER takes the money and tosses it to PORTERHOUSE

GROVER

Oh, we've got plenty of that.

VERONICA

I see you can't be bought.

GROVER

I can't. I can't? Certainly I can. Why you've got plenty to offer beyond money, your looks, your charms, or large bosoms.

PORTERHOUSE smacks GROVER

GROVER

What, too far?

PORTERHOUSE

With your wife standing so close, yes too far. Try keeping descriptions above the neck.

GROVER

I'll try. It'll be hard but I'll give it a try. Your hair, your eyes, your lips, your chin, your breasts--

PORTERHOUSE smacks GROVER

GROVER

Oops, I did it again didn't I? (to VERONICA) I'm sorry but I ran out of things to list, maybe I should start from the feet and work my way up.

VERONICA

Mr. Mergatroide, please if you're going to seduce me with words let's start by keeping our eyes on each other's eyes.

GROVER takes VERONICA in a close embrace

GROVER

Certainly, Sweetheart.

VERONICA

Veronica.

GROVER

Let me call you Sweetheart.

VERONICA

I prefer Veronica.

GROVER

So do I, but I keep saying Sweetheart.

VERONICA

Try your best Mr. Mergatroide.

GROVER

Please, call me Darling. Sweetheart and Darling, we'll make a fine pair. (looking at her chest)
Another fine pair.

VERONICA

Aren't you afraid I'm just using you for your money?

GROVER

Well I should hope you are. I certainly don't have anything else to offer. Say! I'll give you a dollar for a kiss.

VERONICA

You'd better be careful. I might just take you up on that.

GROVER

You'd better be careful. I've got three billion dollars, do you have three billion places for me to kiss?

GROVER and VERONICA kiss. OTTO enters with a member of the press who quickly pulls out a camera and takes blackmail photos.

OTTO is stunned. PORTERHOUSE hands bills to OTTO to bribe the cameraman
OTTO goes through his bribing routine. The cameraman doesn't let go of the bills and he and OTTO end up in a tug of war the cameraman wins and has the bills. OTTO takes out

his blackjack and hits the cameraman who falls to his knees. OTTO takes the money and shoves it, unnoticed, into GROVER’s pocket. OTTO then takes the camera. He hits the cameraman again and he falls to the floor. PORTERHOUSE and OTTO drag the cameraman off stage. GROVER and VERONICA who are too busy kissing miss the whole scene, they break off their embrace

GROVER

Miss Peabody, you can be sure that the trees have my firm support. Now if you don’t mind I’m going to support myself with a stiff drink.

VERONICA

Thank you Grover. I look forward to your presidency.

GROVER

If you’re lucky, maybe you can be my first scandal.

VERONICA exits. OTTO and PORTERHOUSE enter with drinks.

GROVER

Have I ever told you you’re the perfect wife?

PORTERHOUSE

We’ve got to do something about our opponent.

GROVER

We’ve got an opponent?

PORTERHOUSE

Just one.

OTTO

The rest we bought off.

GROVER

This is news to me. I thought this was a one horse race.

PORTERHOUSE

Snodgrass won’t be bought at any price.

GROVER

He won’t huh? Well, this calls for “Little Benny.”

PORTERHOUSE

What’s a “Little Benny?”

GROVER

Otto, tongs.

OTTO pulls out tongs and gives them to GROVER. He uses tongs to get a piece of paper from his pocket

GROVER

“Little Benny” is an invention of mine. After three bottles of gin I created the perfect sympathy tale. So powerful, so emotionally crippling, I haven’t even read it myself since first conceived. It’s been scientifically tested. No one has yet to make it past the first paragraph without breaking down.

PORTERHOUSE

Really?

GROVER

We’re going to use “Little Benny” as our center piece to gain sympathy and win votes. I’m going to promise to save “Little Benny.” Trust me. Otto! As you know Otto has little care for his fellow man.

OTTO nods

GROVER

If there is any single person who cares more himself above anything or anyone else it’s Otto. There’s is no other man who takes more joy in the pain and suffering of others then Otto.

OTTO nods and stomps on PORTERHOUSE’S foot then hits him with a blackjack.

GROVER

I think we can agree, if there is one man who entirely lacks empathy it’s Otto.

PORTERHOUSE

I agree, it’s almost as if he isn’t human.

GROVER

Agreed, a demonstration, Otto please read this.

GROVER hands OTTO the paper. OTTO begins reading. OTTO smiles, even chuckles to himself. Then slowly turns to distress, and ultimately to crying uncontrollably.

GROVER

Make it past the first paragraph?

OTTO

No.

GROVER

No, I didn't think so. Did you at least make it to the part about the...

OTTO stops GROVER from talking, then cries in the corner.

PORTERHOUSE

Genius.

blackout

scene 8 The Debate

Two podiums (one collapsable) and a moderator desk between them. SNODGRASS is pacing as CROWLEY enters.

CROWLEY

You sent for me?

SNODGRASS

Ah, Crowley. Thank you for coming. Tonight's debate is very important to our mutual interests. In the past two elections you have served me well and I must call upon you again.

CROWLEY

How can I help?

SNODGRASS

I want to make sure this debate goes as smoothly as possible.

CROWLEY

Yes sir.

SNODGRASS

And to ensure this I've decided the best way of doing this is to allow only one person's opinion to be heard and that opinion is my own.

CROWLEY

What about Mergatroid?

SNODGRASS

I will leave him and his men to you. If he doesn't show up at the debate it's not like anyone is going to notice. Do we have an understanding?

CROWLEY

Of course.

SNODGRASS

Excellent, here comes Otto, you can start with him.

SNODGRASS exits. OTTO is playing frisbee golf. A frisbee flies on stage from the back of the house. OTTO follows it looking for his disc. CROWLEY grabs him.

CROWLEY

Now you listen to me and you listen good. President Snodgrass is done playing games. The end has come for you and Mergatroid and no amount of money can save any of you.

OTTO gives CROWLEY a prolonged raspberry

CROWLEY

I am going to break every bone in your body.

OTTO sprays Binaca at CROWLEY'S face. CROWLEY starts throwing punches OTTO dodges. PORTERHOUSE enters and grabs CROWLEY. OTTO pulls out an eggbeater and uses it on CROWLEY. OTTO and PORTERHOUSE stuff a stunned CROWLEY in a garbage can in the corner. OTTO picks up his frisbee throws it off stage. OTTO and PORTERHOUSE chase the frisbee and exits. SNODGRASS enters and pulls out CROWLEY.

SNODGRASS

What happened?

CROWLEY is dazed.

SNODGRASS

What did they do to you?

CROWLEY

They had an eggbeater.

SNODGRASS

You have disappointed me. Nevermind, I have prepared all the answers to the standard questions. My secret weapon is my “underprivileged minority school enhancement program.”

CROWLEY

What is it?

SNODGRASS

It’s a great name I just made up. It doesn’t matter the sheep will go ga ga for it. Now this won’t come up in regular debate so I need you to go out there and when they say, “Are there any questions from the audience?” You stand up and say, “I have a question. What’s being done for our schools?”

CROWLEY

“I have a question.”

SNODGRASS

Right, when you hear the word ‘audience,’ you go. Got it?

CROWLEY

Got it.

SNODGRASS

Good, now get out of here before somebody sees you.

CROWLEY exits and sits with the audience. OTTO enters

SNODGRASS

You don’t say much do you? What’s the matter kid? You dumb? You simple?

OTTO

No I can talk just fine, I...

SNODGRASS

Shut it kid, I’m trying to make a point here. I’ve seen the fear in your eyes. You don’t belong here, do you? Why you’re afraid to talk.

OTTO

It’s not that I’m afraid to talk...

SNODGRASS

No, of course not. You're running for a very public office. Not the sort of thing for anyone who has any sort of stage fright.

OTTO

Right, that's what I was going to say.

SNODGRASS

I like you Otto. You're a smart boy. You realize the importance of this. The magnitude of an event like this.

OTTO

Magnitude.

SNODGRASS

Why, this event is going to be televised.

OTTO

Televised.

SNODGRASS

You know what that means, right?

OTTO

Dozens of people will see this.

SNODGRASS

Oh, more than that, millions.

OTTO

Millions?

SNODGRASS

Millions and millions, tens of millions, why more people than you have money I'd wager.

OTTO checks his wallet

OTTO

That's a lot of people.

SNODGRASS

It certainly is. And they'll all be watching you. Listening to you. Hanging on your every word.

OTTO gulps.

SNODGRASS

I just hope you don't say anything stupid.

SNODGRASS turns to exit.

SNODGRASS

Oh, one more thing!

OTTO is startled by SNODGRASS's sudden loudness and gets scared. SNODGRASS turns comforting.

SNODGRASS

My dear boy, I've frightened you. I'm sorry. Come here. Come here. Who's my big brave boy? Who's my big brave boy? You are, aren't you?

OTTO nods. SNODGRASS puts his arm around him.

SNODGRASS

That's right you are. Say you want a public speaking tip?

OTTO

Uh-huh.

SNODGRASS

Just picture your audience naked, that's what I do.

OTTO

Oh.

OTTO starts to smile as he pictures the audience naked.

SNODGRASS

Just remember, they're picturing you naked too.

OTTO

Oh!

OTTO pretends he's naked and poses for the audience.

SNODGRASS

My work here is done. You’re going to be a brilliant public speaker, dear boy, brilliant.

SNODGRASS exits. PORTERHOUSE enters and checks the scene getting it ready for the debate. PORTERHOUSE salutes a flagpole and moves it to position A. OTTO salutes the same flagpole and moves it to position B. PORTERHOUSE salutes and moves it back OTTO salutes and puts it where he wants it. PORTERHOUSE grabs it and OTTO pulls for it. A tug-of-war results in the flagpole breaking after failed attempts to reassemble OTTO pulls gum off his shoe and uses it. The flagpole gets put where PORTERHOUSE wanted it. OTTO pulls a flagpole out of his pants and sets it where he wants it. OTTO and PORTERHOUSE stand behind podiums and pretend to be Presidents.

OTTO

(as JFK) My fellow Americans, blah, blah, blah.

(as Nixon) Me and my little dog Checkers, blah, blah, blah.

(as Clinton) I did not have sexual relations with that blah, blah, blah.

(as Taylor) The idea of a national bank is dead and will not be revived in my time, blah, blah, blah.

PORTERHOUSE

Who was that last one?

OTTO

Zachary Taylor.

PORTERHOUSE

Really?

OTTO nods.

PORTERHOUSE

My fellow Americans.

He slams his hand down on the podium for emphasis. It collapses. PORTERHOUSE attempts to put it back together. Ultimately he puts OTTO underneath a cloth holding the top of the podium over his head.

PORTERHOUSE

Stay right there. I’ll be back with a new podium.

PORTERHOUSE exits. SNODGRASS enters and checks his suit. GROVER enters.

GROVER

What’s up Snodgrass, you got a date tonight?

SNODGRASS

I’m getting ready for our debate, of course I don’t have a date.

GROVER

I’m not surprised with that suit.

SNODGRASS

You have problem with my suit?

GROVER

Whatever takes the focus off your head.

SNODGRASS

Are you trying to insult me?

GROVER

Trying? (to audience) He’s thicker then I thought.

SNODGRASS gets more and more in GROVER’S face.

SNODGRASS

Listen here Mr. Mergatroid. I’ve been preparing for this race my whole life. The best schools, the best coaches, the best jobs, I have worked my way to the top. It’s my turn and I’m not going to let some low-class nobody take it from me.

GROVER

Did you have tuna for lunch?

WALTER the debate mediator enters.

WALTER

Alright everyone if you will find your places we can get this debate underway.

GROVER and SNODGRASS stand behind opposite podiums. SNODGRASS is behind the podium that OTTO is under.

WALTER

Welcome everyone who is joining us for this very special debate between incumbent Cornwall

WALTER (cont.)

Snodgrass and challenger Grover Mergatroid.

GROVER

President Grover Mergatroid.

SNODGRASS

You're not President yet.

GROVER

Get used to it.

WALTER

Thank you both for being here today.

SNODGRASS

Thanks for having me.

GROVER

I couldn't find any refreshments in the dressing room. Did I just miss them or...

WALTER

No, Mr. Mergatroid. We didn't offer any.

GROVER

Oh, it's one of those debates. To begin, I would like to thank all of you for coming today. A great debate such as this would not be possible if it were not for you, the audience.

CROWLEY stands, still in the audience

CROWLEY

I have a question...

WALTER

Sir, the candidates are still making their opening remarks.

SNODGRASS

(muttering) Not now, you idiot.

WALTER

Let's jump right in. President Snodgrass, you have been accused of using campaign donations to fund your private businesses. How do you respond?

SNODGRASS

They have no case at all. My lawyers assure me there is no evidence linking me to this. These accusations are probably coming from people trying to undermine my campaign.

WALTER

Actually they came from people funding your campaign, whose money you used to...

GROVER

Oh! Oh! Ask me about food stamps.

WALTER

Okay, what about your food stamps?

GROVER

They're delicious.

WALTER

Moving right along, unemployment and the welfare state are in disarray. Mr. Mergatroid, how do you feel about this?

GROVER pulls out a buzzer and puts it on his podium and hits it. BEEP!

GROVER

It's not very good.

WALTER

You don't need the buzzer we're right here. We know the education system is not good. What should be done about it.

BEEP!

GROVER

You should make it better.

WALTER

We know it should be made better but do you have any ideas how?

GROVER appears to think a looong time, almost answer, then think some more.
BEEP!

WALTER

Mr. Mergatriod, do you have anything to say?

GROVER

No, I just wanted to make sure it was still working.

WALTER

Do you have an answer to the question?

GROVER

Not at all. Why don't we open this question up to the audience?

CROWLEY

I have a question.

GROVER

This guy is more reliable than my watch.

SNODGRASS

I believe I could provide some insight.

GROVER

And that's another thing. He keeps interrupting me!

WALTER

But, it's his turn to talk.

GROVER

Oh, well then I keep interrupting him.

WALTER

Yes, you do.

GROVER

I know, I was just bringing it to their attention.

WALTER

Mr. Mergatriod, I don't mind you dragging me into all this, but must you bother the audience as well?

CROWLEY

I have a question...

OTTO reaches up and takes SNODGRASS’S microphone. He replaces it with a lemon.

GROVER

Who wants to lay odds that this will go on all night? You should really do something about people like us.

SNODGRASS notices the lemon and gives out an “AAHHHHH!”

WALTER

President Snodgrass, why are you shouting?

SNODGRASS looks away. OTTO puts the microphone back

SNODGRASS

Because my microphone has turned into a lemon.

SNODGRASS looks down and sees his microphone.

SNODGRASS

But, it was a lemon.

GROVER

Of course it was a lemon. Just watch out that it doesn’t sneak up on you again. Your honor, I hate to be a bother, much less a bore, but this debate has gone on almost twice as long as boring.

SNODGRASS

Your honor I would like to get this debate back on track. Perhaps we could take a question from the audience.

Pause. SNODGRASS clears his throat

CROWLEY

I have a question.

GROVER

Hands up, who didn’t see that one coming?

CROWLEY

What is being done for our skulls?

SNODGRASS

Schools!

CROWLEY

Schools!

SNODGRASS

I have revolutionary new program called...

OTTO starts pulling SNODGRASS’S microphone down slowly. He struggles with it and the podium, trying to pull it back up.

GROVER

If he’s just going to fiddle about can I take this one?

SNODGRASS

(still struggling with the microphone.) No! My question!

GROVER

My team and I have prepared a new project to tackle this very issue. We could have given it a big fancy name but we didn’t. In fact, we didn’t name it at all. So we’re just calling it, “The Plan.”. And what inspired us to create “the plan?” One brave young man, a boy, whose story my Vice President would like to share with you tonight. Otto, tongs.

OTTO stops struggling with SNODGRASS and the podium. OTTO gives tongs to GROVER who gets a piece of paper from his pocket. OTTO takes the paper and prepares to speak. OTTO poses as if he’s naked and then reads, slowly emotionally falling apart as he reads.

OTTO

“Little Benny, a story of courage, strength and bravery in the face of adversity. Poor little Benny, born an orphan, raised an orphan, orphaned so often it’s hard to keep track. By the age of 10 he was adopted, then quickly orphaned again from a tragic accidental collision between a train and a boat. The fact that little Benny’s parents were the pilots of both makes it all the more tragic. Poor little Benny. At the age of 11 he lost his toes to frostbite and rabies and his pinky to feline leukemia. But still he persevered, when his orphanage burned down leaving him the only survivor, an orphan among orphans.” No more!

OTTO is sobbing along with everyone else.

GROVER

Your honor, with your permission, I’d like to bring this debate to a close.

GROVER bribes WALTER.

WALTER
You’re probably right. This debate is closed.

GROVER
God bless America.

SNODGRASS
Let me see those bills.

GROVER
Why certainly Snodgrass. I’m glad you’ve seen the light of reason.

GROVER bribes SNODGRASS

SNODGRASS
Ah-hah! Just as I thought. Counterfeit!

PORTERHOUSE
Counterfeit?

GROVER
Counterfeit?

OTTO
Counterfeit?

CROWLEY
Counterfeit?

SNODGRASS
Yes, counterfeit. I’ve had my suspicions for some time. Nobody could be lucky enough to win the lottery twice in one week.

PORTERHOUSE
That accusation is as hollow as half your campaign promises.

SNODGRASS
Really? Well then, tell me whose face is on the hundred dollar bill?

GROVER takes a bill and examines it.

GROVER

Why, anybody knows that Benjamin Franklin’s face is on the hundred... dollar... bill... Otto are you any relation to Benjamin Franklin?

OTTO

Why certainly, don’t you see the family resemblance?

GROVER

Come to think of it, I do.

SNODGRASS

This is outrageous!

GROVER

Oh, what’s so outrageous about looking like Benjamin Franklin? Why he looks a little like Benjamin Franklin. I look a little like Benjamin Franklin and you! You look like a little like Benjamin Franklin. I wouldn’t be surprised if you and I were as close as brothers. Now go be nice and shake hands with your brother.

SNODGRASS

Shake hands?

GROVER

Shake hands or I’ll tell mother you hurt his feelings.

SNODGRASS

Fine. Put ‘er there.

OTTO and SNODGRASS shake hands. Sheets of preprinted and uncut bills fall from OTTO’s coat as his hand is shaken. SNODGRASS opens OTTO’S coat to reveal a small printing press strapped to his chest.

SNODGRASS

Ah-hah! Just as I thought. Officer arrest these men for the crime of counterfeiting United States currency.

GROVER

Doom! Doom!

Prison siren sounds. The three run around trying to escape.

scene 9 In Jail, Again. All three are in jail. OTTO has again used his fillings to listen to the radio.

RADIO

...fortunes fell nine points and once again United Pants Trimmers came up short by a leg. Turning to the world of politics, independent candidate Grover P. Mergatroid was arrested today on charges of funding his presidential campaign with counterfeit funds.

GROVER

Of all the slanderous accusations...

RADIO

Fellow Mergatroid staffers Percival Porterhouse and Otto have also been detained on secondary charges of assault, battery and public indecency.

PORTERHOUSE

I told you I'd make a lousy wife.

GROVER

Quiet darling the man on the radio is speaking.

RADIO

With the polls almost minutes away from closing this means an assured victory for incumbent Cornwall Snodgrass.

GROVER

Turn that thing off.

OTTO closes his mouth.

GROVER

You just had to put your picture on those bills, didn't you?

OTTO

I couldn't find a picture of Benjamin Franklin.

PORTERHOUSE

Well, that's it, they'll throw the book at us.

GROVER

Relax, the most we can get is life. What's on my schedule for tomorrow?

PORTERHOUSE

A nine a.m. rock-breaking until noon, then a society luncheon in the dining hall with the park avenue strangler, followed by a vigorous rubber hose massage at three.

GROVER

Well, best get some shut eye.

GROVER and PORTERHOUSE huddle in the corner to sleep. OTTO takes a cigar and turns on his fillings soft music plays and is interrupted

RADIO

This just in; all the polls have closed and incumbent Cornwall Snodgrass has lost to Mergatroid by a twenty five percent margin. Congratulations to Grover Mergatroid, our newly elected President of the United States.

PORTERHOUSE

Wait a minute, we won?

GROVER

We won!

OTTO

My cigar!

PORTERHOUSE and GROVER

We won!

GROVER

Guard! Guard, get in here.

PRISON GUARD JOE enters.

PRISON GUARD JOE

What's all the racket?

GROVER

You'll see. Otto take a note.

OTTO takes a piece of paper and tries to leave but is still in jail.

GROVER

Ha, gotcha. Porterhouse, I... Grover P. Mergatroid...

PRISON GUARD JOE

What's the P stand for?

GROVER

President that's what. I, Grover P. Mergatroid President of the United States hereby pardon myself of any and all crimes committed prior to my election.

PORTERHOUSE

Don't forget about us, Mr. President.

GROVER

Some days I wish I could. I also pardon Percival Porterhouse and Otto for any and all crimes committed prior to my election.

OTTO whispers to GROVER.

GROVER

As well as any committed forthwith. Sincerely Grover P. Mergatroid Esquire, President Esquire, enclosures.

GROVER hands bills to PORTERHOUSE. PORTERHOUSE hands the note and money to PRISON GUARD JOE.

GROVER

There take that to the warden immediately.

PRISON GUARD JOE

Yes, sir Mr. President.

PRISON GUARD JOE exits.

GROVER

Now to get out of this cell

GROVER opens the cell door.

GROVER

Excuse me, pardon me.

PORTERHOUSE

No, pardon me sir.

GROVER

Why of course you're pardoned, I'm pardoned, everybody's pardoned.

closing song

GROVER

I must admit I love the sound of pardons passed out all around
instead of severing life.

PORTERHOUSE

As prisoner and wife.

GROVER

And propose this second chance inspires us to take a stance of nation reform.

OTTO

What a switch from the norm.

ALL

Whatever action great or small we three resolve to do it all, if you think the country's in a pit
wait till we get our hands on it.

GROVER

My first act is a simple plan to aid the poor down trodden man
out of his wretched lot.

PORTERHOUSE

Cause a lot's not what he's got.

GROVER

And if you address any jerk who'd tell you our plan doesn't work
blame the old administration.

SNODGRASS

(entering with a bottle of booze.) I resent that implication.

ALL

Whatever action great or small we three resolve to do it all, if you think the country's in a pit
wait till we get our hands on it.

GROVER

Drafting laws and signing bills and bending to the country's wills
my decisions will be firm.

PORTERHOUSE

We'll seek no second term.

GROVER

My power's I will not abuse the people's trust I'll never lose
No graft and no more scheming.

OTTO

Pinch me I must be dreaming.

ALL

Whatever action great or small we three resolve to do it all, if you think the country's in a pit
wait till we get our hands on it.

the end