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*American Whup-Ass*  
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*More Great Plays Available  
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**Blinders**

by Patrick Gabridge

3 Males, 1 Female, 4 Chorus Members

**Synopsis:** Scientists announce that they have found two people who are exactly alike. Not twins, but two identical human beings. Pulitzer Prize winning reporter, Karen Sayer can clearly see that the "duplicates," Chris and Alex, look absolutely nothing alike. No one else seems to notice, or care, and the media unleashes a feeding frenzy over the new scientific discovery. With modern science and the media behind them Chris and Alex are catapulted to instant celebrity. With the help of Karen's salesman fiancé Stack, the incredible identicals campaign for the Presidency under the slogan "Two Heads Are Better Than One." Knowing she must do something to awaken the world, Karen is suddenly thrust to the forefront of an assassination attempt. Will she have the courage to follow through? Will she succeed before it's too late? Only the outrageous conclusion holds the answers.

**Great Western Wanderlust**

by Eric Eberwein

7-9 Actors Play 9 Roles

**Synopsis:** A bored Midwestern couple boards a cross-country train for an impulsive romantic getaway into the American West ... but no matter how far they go, they can't seem to get away from the fantasies, fetishes and doubts below the surface of their marriage. *Great Western Wanderlust* comically chronicles the St. Louis-to-Los Angeles adventure of Greg and Kristi, two thirtysomethings hiding their true wants and needs beneath their stolid Midwestern upbringing. As their escape from suburbia turns into a vacation from hell, their trip west also changes their relationship – they feel the pull of freedom and adventure, and the classic American impulse to find their true selves on the open road.

# **AMERICAN WHUP-ASS**

**a play by  
Justin Warner**

AMERICAN WHUP-ASS was produced originally by the Alternative Theater Ensemble of San Rafael, California, on October 18, 2008. It was directed by Michael Ray Wisely, with the following cast:

Glenn Barr/Gordon Quigley/ Corporal X/Announcer/Ensemble	JACK POWELL*
Leslie Corliss/Ensemble	WILL MARCHETTI*
Senator Wayne Kight	MARTY PISTONE*
Terry Bowen/Ensemble	MICK MIZE
Valerie Kight/Ensemble	ZZ MOOR
General Mayhem/The Iron Buddha	PAUL SANTIAGO*

\*Members of Actors' Equity Association

Stage Manager:	Danielle Thomsen*
Space Designer:	Stanley Gibbs
Sound Designer:	David Hines
Costume Designer:	Jan Koprowski
Lighting Designer:	Selina G. Young
Fight Choreographer:	Dexter Fidler
Dramaturg:	Jayne Wenger
Audio Consultant:	Will McCandless
Assistant Electrician:	Josh Garcia-Cotter
Assistant Producer:	Juliet Heller Eichberg
Production Manager:	Brendan Kussman
Artistic Director:	Jeanette Harrison

AMERICAN WHUP-ASS was developed as part of the TRU Voices New Works Series, Theatre Resources Unlimited, New York City, 2008. The play also received developmental support from the Abingdon Theatre Company (NYC), Luna Stage (Montclair, NJ), the Aurora Theatre Company (Berkeley, CA), New Jersey Rep (Long Branch, NJ), and the Last Frontier Theatre Conference (Valdez, AK).

Winner of the Aurora Theatre's Global Age Project, 2007

# AMERICAN WHUP-ASS

By Justin Warner

The place: Nevada

The time: Sooner than you think

Cast size: 6 or 7 (with doubling; see below)

## Characters

WAYNE KIGHT, ex-football star, Senator from Nevada, 40's

VALERIE KIGHT, Wayne's daughter, a UNLV student, 18

TERRY BOWEN, Wayne's new campaign manager, 30's

LESLIE CORLISS, Wayne's opponent, an energy executive,  
50's-60's

GENERAL MAYHEM, a retired wrestler, 40's\*

FOOK YAO MA, THE IRON BUDDHA, another wrestler\*,  
similar age

GLENN BARR, an AM talk radio host\*\*, 30's-50's

GORDON QUIGLEY, public radio reporter\*\*, 30's-50's

An ANNOUNCER at Caesar's Palace \*\*

Numerous CALLERS to Glenn Barr's radio show\*\*\*

CORPORAL X, an anonymous whistleblower \*\*\*

A wrestling REFEREE (non-speaking)\*\*\*

### Doubling Options

Cast of seven (6M, 1W): One actor plays GENERAL MAYHEM/  
THE IRON BUDDHA (\*); one actor plays GLENN BARR/  
GORDON QUIGLEY/ANNOUNCER (\*\*); one actor plays all  
CALLERS, CORPORAL X, and the REFEREE. (\*\*\*)

Cast of six (5M, 1W): As above, except actor playing BARR/  
QUIGLEY/ANNOUNCER also plays CORPORAL X; actor play-  
ing CORLISS doubles as REFEREE; CALLERS are pre-recorded  
or voiced by offstage actors.

A cast of more than seven is not recommended.

### A Note on the Settings and Action

AMERICAN WHUP-ASS shuttles rapidly between various loca-  
tions. Sets should be minimally suggested, in order to allow seam-  
less transitions and continuous action throughout each act.

# AMERICAN WHUP-ASS

by  
Justin Warner

## ACT ONE

*(LIGHTS UP on a radio broadcasting studio. Behind the microphone is host GLENN BARR, an authoritative, psuedo-philosophical veteran of the AM talk format. His guest is energy executive and Nevada Senatorial candidate LESLIE CORLISS. Corliss speaks in an eminently reasonable, warm, almost grandfatherly tone.)*

BARR: ...We're back on KNVD. I'm Glenn Barr and we're Talking Nevada. My guest today is maverick Senatorial candidate Leslie Corliss, who's been scoring on incumbent Senator Wayne Kight like a randy G.I. in a Vietnamese brothel. The latest polls put Mr. Corliss ahead 51 to 41 percent. Tell me, sir, to what do you attribute your formidable challenge to our once-ballyhooded incumbent?

CORLISS: In a word, Glenn: Strength. The people of Nevada want a tough candidate who's going to fight for their interests, not the bizarre and twisted priorities of Washington bureaucrats.

*(Lights up on SENATOR WAYNE KIGHT, in his Las Vegas campaign office, on the phone with a colleague. Now in his forties, the Senator maintains the robust, blocky build and earthy demeanor of the football hero he once was.)*

KIGHT: (*on phone*) ... We're talking about cancer, Jim. Leukemia. Birth defects. We're talking about hundreds of tons of toxic waste leaking into the groundwater and poisoning children...

(*The conversation continues. Back to CORLISS and BARR.*)

BARR: "Bizarre and twisted priorities." Tough rhetoric indeed against Big Wayne, the Wall of Pain...

CORLISS: Hmph.

BARR: ...A man who sacked more quarterbacks than any defensive lineman in UNLV history; a man known for crushing his opponents...

CORLISS: Obviously, with all due respect to the Senator and his unfortunate situation, that image has changed dramatically...

BARR: But what of the sympathy vote? Is there not the possibility that some voters might be *more* inclined to vote for the Senator under these humiliating and frankly emasculating circumstances?

CORLISS: Well, Glenn, I think there will be some element of that. Any right-thinking American would pity a man in Senator Kight's position, as do I. To find his wife and his campaign manager fornicating like dogs in the back of his tour bus, Mrs. Kight offering up her

body in ways that the Senator himself had never dreamed of... I can barely imagine what that would do to a man. But at the end of the day, most people are going to cast aside their sentimentality and realize that Senator Kight is fresh out of ideas.

*(Meanwhile, TERRY BOWEN has arrived at Kight's office. He is in his 30's and well-caffeinated. KIGHT motions him in.)*

KIGHT: *(Finishing the call)* Read my abatement plan, Jim. Genetically engineered bacteria; they got great results at MIT... Stall all you want. I'm not going anywhere. *(He hangs up.)* Mr. Bowen. Welcome.

BOWEN: *(Shaking his hand)* Let me say first off that it's truly an honor to be considered for this job, despite the circumstances...

KIGHT: Save it. It happened, it's over; I'm fresh out of wives, so it's not gonna happen again. From here on out it's about issues.

BOWEN: As it should be. You have a stellar record and you should run on it.

KIGHT: And we're going to win on Buzzard Canyon. Nobody's going to turn this state into a radioactive cesspool. Especially not an empty suit like Leslie Corliss.

*(Back to BARR and CORLISS.)*

BARR: It should be noted that you have no previous political experience.

CORLISS: None whatsoever, Glenn. I have absolutely no idea how Washington works, and I promise that I'll never learn.

BARR: And yet the voters of Nevada have embraced your message.

CORLISS: Well, I think that's because I share their values. I'm not a glamour candidate. I'm not an ex-football player. I'm just a small-town kid from Greenwich, Connecticut who worked his way to the top of his family's little mom and pop industrial-solvent conglomerate. So I understand their day-to-day concerns.

BARR: Let's go to a caller. Mike in Reno, you're on the air.

*(We hear MIKE IN RENO's voice over a phone line.)*

MIKE IN RENO: (V.O.) Yeah. Mr. Corliss, Senator Kight says he's gonna keep that toxic waste from being dumped in Buzzard Canyon. Do you really think he shouldn't be doing that?

CORLISS: Well, Mike, that's a good question. The thing is, this isn't really about protecting a hole in the ground. It's about whether we're going to cave in to the culture of elitist Hollywood Ivy League enviro-hysteria that's cur-

rently strangling our government. Look at the radical fringe groups that support Senator Kight's efforts. The Association of Public Health Professionals, for example. Just last week their president said that cars were the biggest threat to people with asthma. It's there in black and white. He called *cars* a *threat*.

MIKE IN RENO: (V.O.) Hold up. You mean, like, *regular* cars?

CORLISS: He means *your* car, Mike. The same car you use to drive to work and to church and to Little League. Let me ask you this, Mike: do *you* feel threatened by your car?

MIKE IN RENO: (V.O.) No...

CORLISS: Well, apparently Senator Kight is pretty scared. Now, I'm not saying he wants a squad of jack-booted goons from the federal government to come to your house in the middle of the night and take your car away, but it's a slippery slope.

(*Back to KIGHT and BOWEN.*)

KIGHT: Just look at what he's been saying about me. (*He shows BOWEN a stack of newspapers.*) "Outside the mainstream." "Strange and alien values." "A perverse, sordid love affair with freakish worldviews." I'm trying to keep five hundred tons of radioactive sludge out of Nevada and he's turning it into a liability!

BOWEN: It's an abomination.

KIGHT: Are you kissing my ass?

BOWEN: Before he screwed your wife, Russell Graves completely screwed up your campaign. Your messaging is non-existent. You've barely held your base. Meanwhile you've let Leslie Corliss label you, distort your record, and drive the narrative, and as a result most independents are planning to vote for him in complete opposition to their own interests. Is that kissing your ass?

KIGHT: No.

BOWEN: Fortunately, I've dealt with his type before and I know exactly how to do it.

*(Back to BARR and CORLISS.)*

BARR: As for the Kight campaign, rumor has it that the Senator may be tapping Terry Bowen, the so-called Boy Wonder, to take over the helm.

CORLISS: Well, he's certainly got his work cut out for him.

BARR: I might add that no incumbent Senator who hired a new campaign manager after Labor Day has won in a state west of the Rockies since 1964.

CORLISS: (*Gently chuckling*) Let's just hope one campaign manager was enough for the missus.

BARR: (*Enjoying it.*) Ouch.

(*Back to KIGHT and BOWEN.*)

KIGHT: The thing is, no matter what he says, no matter how off-point or out of line or just plain obscene, we're not going to get down in the dirt with him.

BOWEN: Absolutely.

KIGHT: I'm serious. I don't want to wake up one morning and find out that somebody on my campaign says Leslie Corliss had an affair with a teenager, or a pony, or a teenaged pony. I want you to handle it the way you handled the McConnell junk bond scandal in the Skiff campaign...

BOWEN: Wouldn't touch it with a ten-foot pole.

KIGHT: ... And that other guy, Gorman's opponent, the one with the Girl Scouts and the PCP...

BOWEN: Something like that falls in your lap, it's the hardest thing in the world not to run with it.

KIGHT: But if you had —

BOWEN: — We'd be moving the bar —

KIGHT: Which gives them permission to get even dirtier.  
And I am *not* giving anyone permission to say anything more about my personal life.

BOWEN: You don't have to. Skiff and Gorman and I have proven that you can take the high road and win. That is what the Founding Fathers envisioned for this country from its inception, that is what the American people truly want today, and that is why I'm on the short list for the next presidential campaign of *both* major parties.

KIGHT: We've only got two months. I'm not changing horses again. You really think we can pull this off?

BOWEN: Senator, I guarantee it.

*(Crossfade to another radio studio, featuring the mellifluously sedate, GORDON QUIGLEY.)*

QUIGLEY: For Nevada Public Radio, I'm Gordon Quigley. Senator Wayne Kight's new campaign manager Terry Bowen announced today that one hundred Nobel laureates have jointly endorsed the Senator's toxic waste abatement plan. Meanwhile, the Corliss campaign said that voters should disregard a new report on CNN, which cites a Fox News feature on an American Spectator article based on a letter to the editor of the National Enquirer, suggesting that Senator Kight's wife left him because an undisclosed football injury had compromised his sexual potency. The Corliss team says it is not responsible for the rumor, but pledged to

discuss it in graphic detail to help voters understand just how wrong it is. Today is the birthday of jazz flugelhorn player Honk Mullaby; he's 56.

*(Lights shift to Kight's home, on the outskirts of Vegas. Kight's 18-year-old daughter VALERIE is breaking down the last of many cardboard boxes.)*

VAL: Hey, dad.

KIGHT: Valerie. What are you doing home?

VAL: Just thought I'd get some of those new mailers out to you.

KIGHT: Where are the rest? There were twenty boxes of them.

VAL: They're all mailed. Also, I uploaded the Carson City health care speech to the website — don't worry, I remixed the part where you were off mic, it sounds fine — and I ordered you a pastrami and Swiss on rye from Rosa's.

KIGHT: Slow down...

VAL: Don't worry, lunch is on me. I made crazy tips at the strip club this week. *(Beat.)* Ha! Kidding. By the way, I changed the sidebar font on your site from Geneva to Copperplate Gothic; I think it pops more —

KIGHT: Don't you have Anthropology on Thursdays? It's going to take you an hour to get back to campus in this traffic.

VAL: Change of plans. I got you a present.

*(She hands him a wrapped gift. He opens it. There are three calendar pages.)*

KIGHT: I don't get it.

VAL: It's my time. September, October, November: it's all for you. I deferred school! For the rest of the campaign I'm your intern.

KIGHT: What? I can't let you do that. You just started.

VAL: I'm 18, I can do what I want. I've got the rest of my life to go to college.

KIGHT: Not if I'm paying.

VAL: Relax. It's one semester. I can make it up in the summer. Somebody's got to pick up after the Traitor Formerly Known as Mom...

KIGHT: Don't call her that.

VAL: Don't call her "Mom?"

KIGHT: You know what I mean.

VAL: I'm pissed off at her. You can be pissed off, too, you know. You have a right.

KIGHT: I'd rather focus on the future.

VAL: That's why I'm here. I've got your back now. Whatever you need, just name it.

KIGHT: Look, Valerie, this is really sweet of you, but Terry's got everything under control. He's the best.

VAL: Yeah, but he's known you for what, four days?

KIGHT: Five.

VAL: Well, he's going to need an insider to get him up to speed. I emailed him some proofs of the new bumper stickers yesterday; do you know if he got them? I haven't heard back.

KIGHT: He's pretty busy right now...

VAL: Well, you'd think he'd return an email, or a phone call, or a fax or a text message or something. It takes forty-eight hours to get those stickers printed. Here, let me show you what I'm thinking —

*(Kight's cell phone rings. He checks the number.)*

KIGHT: Hold on a second, honey. *(He answers.)* Hey, Terry, speak of the devil ... What? *(To VAL.)* Turn on the Glenn Barr show.

VAL: Dad, we agreed not to listen to that guy anymore.

KIGHT: Just for a minute. Terry says it's important.

VAL: Fine, but I'm doing it under protest.

*(She finds the station.)*

*(Lights up on BARR's studio. He is joined by GENERAL MAYHEM, a burly fellow in military regalia and mirrored aviator sunglasses.)*

BARR: My friends, I am joined by a truly electrifying eleventh-hour candidate for Senate. General?

MAYHEM: Thanks, Glenn. My name's General Mayhem. I'm an American, I'm a veteran, and I'm gonna fight for this job like I fought for the World Heavyweight Title against Fook Yao Ma, the Iron Buddha. And I've got a message for Leslie Corliss: You run a nasty attack ad against me, and I'll toast your ass so bad you're gonna get grill marks on your boxers.

KIGHT: Is this a joke?

VAL: *(Listening closely)* Shh!

BARR: General Mayhem is a five time American Wrestling Federation heavyweight champion. Impressive. He runs the Body Slam Extreme Fitness Camp in the Black Rock Desert. Also impressive. And is a veteran of the wildly successful Allied liberation of Dominica.

MAYHEM: Semper fi, Glenn. Semper fi.

BARR: We'll hear more from the General, after these words from Death by Pizza, home of the Pepperoni Cluster Bomb.

VAL: (*Turning off the radio*) Okay, don't panic; let's stop and talk about this for a minute...

KIGHT: (*Already on his cell phone*) Terry, it's Wayne. How soon can you get here?

(*A knock on the door. KIGHT answers. BOWEN enters. VAL turns off the radio.*)

BOWEN: How about now?

KIGHT: Now is good.

BOWEN: I was just coming up the driveway. Did you hear the show? Somebody up there likes you, Wayne.

VAL: So you're Terry. I was starting to think you didn't exist.

BOWEN: You must be Valerie. Let me say how much I admire the way you've stuck by your father in this difficult time...

KIGHT: (*Jumping in*) Who the hell is General Mayhem?

BOWEN: He's your new best friend.

KIGHT: That's funny, because it kinda sounds like he's trying to take my job.

BOWEN: No, he's trying to take Leslie Corliss' job.

VAL: I don't get it.

BOWEN: The job of the insurgent, the challenger. Elections are a referendum on the incumbent. It's a simple yes or no. Now Corliss needs to fight Mayhem for the "no" votes, and you don't need to lift a finger.

VAL: But what if Mayhem ends up beating them both?

BOWEN: That won't happen. Trust me, this guy makes Schwarzenegger look like Winston Churchill. Plus, he's washed up, his fitness camp is practically bankrupt, and without major-party backing he'll barely be able to afford gas. If anything we've got to make sure he doesn't flame out too early. Which is why you're going to invite him to the next debate.

KIGHT: What?

VAL: You can't. He's crazy.

BOWEN: Yes, he is. If you want him to take votes from Corliss you've got to give him a soapbox.

KIGHT: A soapbox for what? You think this "General Mayhem" wants to talk about Head Start and ethanol subsidies?

BOWEN: Come on, Wayne, look at what you've had to put up with. The schoolyard name-calling. The insinuations about your marriage - God, your manhood! The fact is, neither one of these jerks deserves to share the stage with you. What they deserve is each other!

KIGHT: Seems like a bad reason to invite someone to a debate.

BOWEN: There is no bad reason to invite someone to a debate. An individual - a veteran, no less - has asked for a platform to discuss public policy and you are going to give him a place at the table. You wanted the high road? This is the high road.

VAL: Mr. Bowen, no offense, because I know you're good at your job and all, but this is an unbelievably stupid idea. (*To KIGHT*) Dad, if people really listen to you, they'll vote for you. They have to. You're just plain better.

BOWEN: You've got two people in this room, Wayne. One loves you very much. The other has won elections.

*(KIGHT puts his arm around VAL.)*

KIGHT: (*To BOWEN*) One debate. That's all he gets.

*(Transition to the debate. From a sound booth, GORDON QUIGLEY introduces the candidates.)*

QUIGLEY : (V.O.) Good evening, and welcome to the first Senatorial debate, brought to you by Splurb Cola: For pure refreshment, there's nothing like a Splurb. I'm Gordon Quigley, from Nevada Public Radio, and we are live from the University of Nevada at Las Vegas.

*(Onstage are KIGHT, in a sport jacket and open-collar shirt; LESLIE CORLISS, in a suit and power tie; and GENERAL MAYHEM, decked out like a Green Beret. Each has a fishbowl full of index cards on his podium.)*

QUIGLEY : (V.O.) *(continuing)* In tonight's forum, the candidates will respond to questions submitted by the studio audience. We begin with an opening statement from Senator Kight.

*(Applause.)*

KIGHT: Thanks, Gordon. First of all, I want to thank my alma mater for hosting this event... *(Wild applause.)* Yes, yes, I know. Thank you. Those were good times. But I'm here to talk about the future. Ladies and gentlemen, for the past six years I've been fighting for your interests. But there's more work to be done. As you know, right now there's an initiative in the Senate to dump the entire country's nuclear waste into Buzzard Canyon, and seal it off with an untested polymer that itself contains suspected carcinogens. My plan, which uses genetically engineered bacteria developed at MIT, would break down the waste right at the site with no environmental impact. That's just the sort of thing you can expect if I'm re-elected: Innovative solutions that transcend party lines and benefit everyone.

QUIGLEY : (V.O.) Thank you, Senator. Mr. Corliss, you have the floor.

CORLISS: Thank you, Gordon. My opponent's plan sounds perfectly reasonable. And that's exactly why it's so dangerous. If you listen to the words he uses — loaded, petty, scatological words like "dump" and "toxic" and "waste" — you get the impression that our country's nuclear surplus material is somehow dirty, poisonous, or offensive. It's a transparent attempt to demonize the very industries that supply power to millions of Americans like you and me. If he succeeds, next thing you know, the government sweeps in with crippling regulations. Nuclear plants go bankrupt, forcing an energy crisis. Small businesses and family farms shut down. Senior citizens die of heat stroke for lack of air conditioning. All because Senator Kight let his hysterical, pseudo-scientific fantasies about magic bacteria destabilize our economy.

*(Applause, cheers.)*

QUIGLEY: (V.O.) Thank you, Mr. Corliss. General Mayhem?

MAYHEM: Thanks, Gordon. I'd like to start by posing a question to the public. I want you to look in your heart and ask yourself: are you really going to vote for a man named Leslie?

*(Confused silence.)*

MAYHEM: (*continuing*) Because that has to be the fruitiest name for a man I've ever heard in my life.

CORLISS: Excuse me...

MAYHEM: (*to Corliss*) I mean, how did you get through grade school in one piece? And what the hell were your parents thinking? You got brothers named Suzy and Fifi?

(*Delayed laughter; some applause*)

QUIGLEY : (V.O.) Thank you, General; I'd like to remind the candidates to refrain from addressing each other directly. Mr. Corliss, you may draw the first question from the audience.

CORLISS: Thanks, Gordon. (*He shoots MAYHEM a nasty look, then draws a card and reads:*) This is from Ann Garland in Beatty. She says "My husband was recently laid off from his truck route. What will you do to protect jobs in Nevada?" Well, Ann, I'm glad you asked. Because Senator Kight's trying to eliminate hundreds of trucking jobs right now. I'm talking about thousands of men and women all over the country who would transport our nuclear surplus material to Buzzard Canyon. These are union jobs, they're high-paying jobs, and those jobs are in danger — unless you let me stop the Senator's brutal and senseless assault on the working class.

(*He sits.*)

QUIGLEY: (V.O.) You still have ten seconds, Mr. Corliss.

CORLISS: Well then! I'd like to add that all this nuclear surplus comes from the military bases and defense facilities that keep America strong.

*(Applause.)*

QUIGLEY: (V.O.) General Mayhem, your comment?

MAYHEM: Well, you gotta love how *Leslie* over here plays the military card. Because while *Leslie* here was lounging around Harvard Business School, I was fighting Communism in Dominica. When *Leslie* was munching on strawberries and cream watching the boat races, I was crawling face down in the mud, Charlie shooting at me from all directions, dragging a nineteen-year old private on my back to some spider-infested cave, so I could amputate his leg with a pocket knife and tie off the stump with a couple of dirty socks. Now which one of us do you trust to fight for the American military?

*(Applause.)*

CORLISS: Can I just say, for the record, that I went to Yale and never once watched a boat race...

QUIGLEY : (V.O.) Gentlemen, we need to move on. Senator Kight, any comment on this issue?

KIGHT: Um... No. I think we've covered it.

QUIGLEY: (V.O.) Then you may draw the next question.

*(Kight draws a card. He frowns.)*

KIGHT: I need to pick a new card.

QUIGLEY : (V.O.) You can't do that, Senator.

KIGHT: But this isn't...

QUIGLEY : (V.O.) *(Gently but firmly)* Senator, please answer the question.

KIGHT: Okay, fine. *(Reads.)* "Were your wife and your old campaign manager involved in any backdoor negotiations?" Backdoor is underlined and in quotes, with a smiley face at the end... there's a pretty graphic illustration... look, do I need to go on? It's obviously an inappropriate and childish question so let's not waste any time on it. I yield the floor.

QUIGLEY: (V.O.) Mr. Corliss, any comment?

CORLISS: Well, it seems like Senator Kight likes to enforce his opinions about which questions are appropriate and which are not. Hitler did that; so did Chairman Mao and Jimmy Carter, so I suppose he's in good company. And I suppose it's not politically correct of me to say so, but I believe there is a legitimate question as to whether he can really satisfy his constituents' needs...

KIGHT: (*Cutting him off*) That is not a legitimate question —

QUIGLEY: (V.O.) Gentlemen, please. General Mayhem, you have thirty seconds.

MAYHEM: Well, I also think it's fair to raise legitimate questions. So here's a legitimate question for you: Does Leslie Corliss sanction bestiality?

(*A beat.*)

CORLISS: What the hell are you talking about?

QUIGLEY: (V.O.) Mr. Corliss, please refrain from addressing...

MAYHEM: (*Cutting him off*) Because I have here a canceled check for five hundred dollars, made out to Leslie's campaign, from the AARP.

CORLISS: (*Baffled*) I'm proud to support our senior citizens in their struggle against onerous regulations...

MAYHEM: I'm talking about the other AARP, Leslie! The Alliance for Animal Romantic Partners! Now, I'm as open-minded as the next guy, but I don't think I'd be comfortable voting for a man who's taking checks from this sort of organization!

CORLISS: What? ... That can't be right! Show me that check!

MAYHEM: Why don't you come over here and take it!

QUIGLEY: (V.O.) General Mayhem, please refrain from addressing...

MAYHEM: (*Threateningly, to booth*) DON'T MAKE ME COME UP THERE!

(*All freeze. Momentary silence.*)

QUIGLEY: (V.O.) Sorry.

MAYHEM: Tell you what, Leslie. If you're absolutely sure you didn't take this check, I'll hang onto it and release it to our friends in the news media at the end of the night. But if you're not sure — if, in other words, you need to *verify* whether or not your campaign is being bankrolled by a bunch of hound-humpers, come on over here and take a look-see.

(*CORLISS agonizes, but does not move.*)

MAYHEM: It's your funeral. And I guess it's my turn to pick, huh? Okay, let's see what we've got here. (*He draws several cards in rapid succession.*) "What's your policy on terrorism?" Don't like it. "How do you feel about gay marriage?" Never tried it... Oh, here's a good one. "Dear nut-job: What the hell makes you think you deserve to be a Senator?" (*A slight pause. He takes the question seriously.*) Well, let me tell you this... (*checking the card*) ... Mr. Ed Abernathy from Winnemucca... it's a ballsy question, and I'm gonna

give you a ballsy answer. I don't know if I deserve to be Senator. That's up to you. But I'll tell you this: With me, what you see is what you get. I'm not gonna tell you I'm a man of the people and then drive away in a limo. I'm not gonna tell you I'm fighting for your interests and then sell you out to my rich friends in the nuclear power industry. And I'll tell you one thing: I know exactly where my money is coming from, and it's not from a bunch of sickos who think *Lassie* is a porno movie!

*(The following sequence overlaps at a furious pace.)*

CORLISS: I do NOT take money from those people!

MAYHEM: Don't you EVER cut me off while I'm orating!

CORLISS: I've got no choice! You're completely out of order!

MAYHEM: Life is out of order, Leslie! Life is war! Get that through your pointy little Harvard head!

CORLISS: I went to Yale and my head is not pointy!

MAYHEM: Well, maybe we ought to take this issue to the American people! *(To the crowd)* It's pointy, right? I mean you could spin a plate on that thing, am I right? Everyone who thinks it's pointy, make some noise!

*(Applause.)*

CORLISS: *(To the booth)* Mr. Quigley! Please! You're the moderator, do something!

QUIGLEY: (V.O.) I'd rather not get involved...

KIGHT: *(To QUIGLEY)* You know, I do want to leave some time at the end to talk about Social Security...

CORLISS: *(Overlapping, to MAYHEM)* What are you doing in this race? Who the hell are you?

MAYHEM: I'm your worst nightmare, Leslie!

CORLISS: You're a lunatic!

KIGHT: Guys! Come on!

MAYHEM: I might be a lunatic but at least I'm not taking money from a gang of degenerate horse-whisperers!

CORLISS: GIVE ME THAT GODDAMNED CHECK!!!! *(He storms over and tears the check out of Mayhem's hands. He reads it.)* This is a five-dollar rebate from Wal-Mart.

MAYHEM: *(Slamming the podium for emphasis)* BOO-YAH!!!! And you fell for it! How do you like me now, America? HOW DO YOU LIKE ME NOW?

*(Crossfade to BARR in the studio. TONY IN DUCKWATER is on the line.)*

TONY IN DUCKWATER : (V.O.) ... I mean, the guy absolutely *destroyed* Corliss. Destroyed him.

BARR: There was Awe in the audience last night, Tony in Duckwater — a kind of Awe you feel only in the presence of a staggering political talent, like Christ or Ronald Reagan. Perhaps the crowning achievement was the controversial and dare I say brilliant AARP gambit.

TONY IN DUCKWATER: (V.O.) I got no sympathy for Corliss there. You gotta know where your money's coming from. I mean, he actually believed he took a check from people who have sex with animals!

BARR: *Organized* sex with animals, Tony in Duckwater. The word "association" spelled it out. He wasn't talking about one down-and-out-farmer who had a bad night...

TONY IN DUCKWATER: (V.O.) "Don't make me come up there!" I mean, that was frickin' awesome! And the stuff about the pointy head... I never noticed it before, but it's true!

BARR: I've been saying it all along, and America is finally coming around. Watch out, Leslie Corliss, there's a new sheriff in town, and his name is Sheriff General Mayhem!

*(Crossfade to GENERAL MAYHEM's Spartan, hastily assembled campaign office.)*

MAYHEM: *(on phone)* You know, the whole next couple weeks are pretty much full up... I can maybe get there on the 26th...

*(A MAN enters, wearing baggy clothes, sunglasses, and an ill-fitting cap over his eyes. He is agitated. MAYHEM motions him in.)*

MAYHEM: *(on phone)* Excellent. And tell Dave I have to go on before the Top Ten List. *(Hangs up.)* Sit down, Mr. Bowen.

*(TERRY BOWEN takes off the hat and glasses.)*

BOWEN: What the hell do you think you're doing?

MAYHEM: I'm running for Senate.

BOWEN: You know exactly what I'm talking about. Last night. The debate.

MAYHEM: I thought my performance was spectacular. So do 27 percent of the voters.

BOWEN: I mean the check. All that stuff about bestiality.

MAYHEM: That was a last-minute inspiration. Seemed like a page out of your playbook.

BOWEN: My playbook?

MAYHEM: The junk bond scandal; the Girl Scouts and the PCP...

BOWEN: First of all, those were *true*. Not completely pulled out of my ass. And second, if I wanted to drop another bombshell like that I could have gone out and found one myself. *You* were supposed to be *different*.

MAYHEM: This wasn't different enough for you?

BOWEN: I expected a certain level of extreme behavior, but this was way out of line. That being said, you did your job. You sunk Corliss, and I appreciate it. So all you need to do is lay low for a week or two, let all this media interest peter out, then make your announcement and we can all walk away happy.

MAYHEM: Actually, I'm having a good time. I think I'm going to stick around.

*(A brief silence as BOWEN processes this.)*

BOWEN: If it's about money...

MAYHEM: It's not about money. In fact, I wanted to give you this.

*(He hands BOWEN a briefcase full of cash.)*

MAYHEM: That's everything you gave me up front, plus interest. You can slip it all back in your budget, and I swear I'll never tell anyone we even met before.

BOWEN: What? ... You can't be... This can't be all of it...

*(He flips through the money quickly. It appears to be enough.)*

MAYHEM: I don't need it. I got so many donations last night I can barely keep track. The Internet is a wonderful tool.

BOWEN: No! No! I paid you for a service, Stuart! You are my employee! You are not a real candidate!

MAYHEM: Touch me, baby: I'm all real.

*(BOWEN pushes the briefcase back to MAYHEM.)*

BOWEN: What do you want? Honestly. You don't want to be a Senator. It never occurred to you to be a Senator until Thursday.

MAYHEM: I had no idea I had such a talent for it.

BOWEN: You of all people should be getting behind Senator Kight. Your fitness camp is two miles from Buzzard Canyon. One crack in one barrel and your entire property turns into Chernobyl. Wayne Kight is the only thing standing between you and bankruptcy.

MAYHEM: And frankly, Terry, that makes me a little nervous. You saw the debate. All he did was stand there.

BOWEN: I TOLD him not to get involved! That was part of the plan!

MAYHEM: Even so. Something I learned in the jungle, Terry: if I want someone looking out for me I want somebody who's gonna whup some ass. And that's something I know I can do. Why should I count on Kight to write my laws when I can write my own and get results?

BOWEN: That is not going to happen.

MAYHEM: So what are you going to do, tell the truth?

BOWEN: Don't you try to take the moral high ground from me, you arrogant prick. I got two of the most ethical people in the House of Representatives sworn into office and they have no idea what I did to get them there. Their minds, their hands, their consciences are completely clean, and their scumbag opponents got what they deserved. And Senator Kight is next in line. That is what I paid you for. To put that decent, hard-working man back in office. We had an *understanding*, Stuart.

MAYHEM: You better start calling me General. Now take back your money. I'm running a principled campaign.

*(He pushes the briefcase at BOWEN.)*

BOWEN: I can raise this much and more with ten phone calls! You need all the help you can get!

*(He throws the briefcase at MAYHEM.)*

MAYHEM: At least give the money back to your candidate, you cheap crook!

*(He takes out some money and throws it at BOWEN. This escalates into an all-out money fight.)*

BOWEN: I don't take orders from fake generals!

MAYHEM: I was in Dominica! What have you done to save the world from Communism?

BOWEN: I'll tell you what I haven't done! I haven't gone on cable TV in Spandex fatigues to wrestle some fat guy dressed up like a stalk of broccoli!

MAYHEM: His name was the Green Giant! He was my best friend and he just died of prostate cancer!

BOWEN: I guess he should have spent less time DRESSING like broccoli and more time EATING it!

MAYHEM: TAKE BACK YOUR GODDAMN MONEY! *(He tackles BOWEN and pins him to the ground.)* Here! Take it! Take all of it! Eat it! *(He stuffs the money into Bowen's mouth.)* Go on! EAT your goddamn money! EAT IT!!!!!!!!!!!! *(The phone rings. He answers it pleasantly.)* Mayhem for Senate; good morning... Well, yes, I do prefer the taste of Splurb Cola...

*(BOWEN gets up and stuffs as much money as he can back into his briefcase.)*

BOWEN: This isn't over, Stu. You want somebody who can whup ass? You're looking at him. I am on the short list for the presidential campaigns of *both* major parties. I can win this with or without you.

MAYHEM: I look forward to a spirited debate. Now get out.

*(Kight's home, the next day. KIGHT is on the phone with another Senator. VAL works on a computer)*

KIGHT: *(on phone)* ... You don't know what it means to have your support, Fred. Thanks again. *(Hangs up.)* Woo-hoo! Seven down, three to go. I'm almost there on Buzzard Canyon, Val! We're gonna beat this thing.

VAL: *(Preoccupied)* That's great, Dad.

KIGHT: That's it? How about a little enthusiasm for your old man? Seeing as how I'm saving the state from nuclear devastation and all...

VAL: Sorry, I'm kinda buried here. Do you know how many people have emailed your website asking for a one-on-one debate with General Mayhem?

KIGHT: I dunno, thirty?

VAL: Fourteen hundred and fifty-three. *(A small beep. She checks the screen.)* Fifty-four.

KIGHT: So that's what, a tenth of a percent of the state's eligible voters? Just ignore them; they'll forget about it by the weekend.

VAL: Okay, but if they don't, we need to figure out how you're going to run against General Mayhem through November...

KIGHT: Can you please let me enjoy this? I'm in first place. Corliss is off my back. I haven't heard boo about your mother in the media since who-knows-when and goddamnit, I deserve it! I compromised *nothing* in that debate. The universe owes me big-time, Val; don't second guess now that it's finally paying me back!

VAL: I'm sorry. I'm happy that you're winning. Really. I'm just worried that you've kind of created a monster.

KIGHT: Don't worry, Val. Mayhem's fifteen minutes are almost over. Terry was right: he's the best thing that could have ever happened to me.

*(BOWEN enters, looking rather sleep-deprived. He carries a dossier.)*

KIGHT: There's the man! You look like hell. Are you sick?

BOWEN: No, I was just up all night working...

KIGHT: Well, your work's practically done. Buzzard Mountain's three votes away, and I'm up to 46 percent on Gallup, 49 on Zogby. Corliss is falling off the charts. Why don't you take a nap and start working on my victory speech?

*(BOWEN hands him the dossier.)*

KIGHT: What's this?

BOWEN: Oh, nothing really, just a little opposition research —

KIGHT: Whoa, whoa, whoa! I thought we agreed: no dirt...

BOWEN: It's not dirt. It's just basic, politically relevant, publicly available background information...

KIGHT: For Corliss? We've been through all that.

BOWEN: *(Almost inaudibly)* Actually it's for General Mayhem.

KIGHT: General Mayhem? *(Beep. Another message.)*

VAL: Fourteen hundred and fifty-five, fifty-six —  
*(Noticing a particular message:)* Hold on...

*(She reads the email with growing alarm.)*

KIGHT: You said not to worry about him.

BOWEN: Yes I did, and you should not. But I would be remiss if I didn't take this opportunity, while you're ahead, to do some due diligence that may help you in the event of any unpleasant surprises, which almost certainly will not happen.

VAL: Turn on the Glenn Barr show.

KIGHT: I thought you said...

VAL: Just do it. *(They turn on the radio. Lights up on BARR and MAYHEM in the studio.)*

BARR: Hand to hand combat. It is the oldest and noblest of competitions. The ancient Sumerians used it to determine the number of wives a man could have, and to settle disputes over property and the allocation of goats. Is it indeed high time to bring this venerated institution back to the world's greatest democracy? One man is on a quest to do so, and his name is General Mayhem.

MAYHEM: That's right, Glenn. I think the American people are tired of talk. So I'm challenging him to a wrestling match! No more pansy-ass debates: we're talking hard-core, full-contact, legislator-on-legislator wrestling action! I'll be waiting in the ring at Caesar's Palace, on Election Eve: Monday, November 3rd, 7 p.m. Mountain time, 6 pm Pacific! We'll see which of us is man enough to lead this state into greatness! And I promise the people of Nevada that I will kick some serious butt! Because NOBODY MESSES WITH THE GENERAL, BABY! NOOOOOBOODY!!!!

BARR: We'll be back after these words from Tsunami Brothers Car Wash. Tsunami Brothers: If you've got a big car, they've got a lot of water.

*(Back to the Kight house.)*

BOWEN: *(Under his breath)* That bastard.

KIGHT: He can't be serious.

VAL: Tell him no. Tell him he's insulting our intelligence.

KIGHT: I don't need to. It doesn't even deserve a response.  
Right, Terry?

BOWEN: Take him up on it.

KIGHT: *(Laughs)* Yeah, that's right! I'll take him up on it!  
Just give me a minute to change into my Spandex body-suit and oil up my pecs...

*(BOWEN waits, deadly serious, as KIGHT's laugh peters out.)*

VAL: Um, Dad? He's not laughing.

KIGHT: Oh, come on!

BOWEN: Hear me out. He's bluffing. He's bluffing just like he did with the AARP. Leslie Corliss was intimidated by the bluff, and the voters lost respect for him. You are not going to be intimidated.

VAL: Right, so he should just say no.

BOWEN: No! That's exactly what Mayhem expects. I guarantee you he's got some great big plan all built around you saying no. But you're going to pull a little jujitsu on him. You're going to say yes, and stare him down til he topples like a house of cards. This is the Cuban Missile Crisis, Wayne: it's all about who blinks first.

KIGHT: But what if he's not bluffing? You want me to actually wrestle this guy?

BOWEN: If that happened, which it won't, you wouldn't have to last very long. A couple rounds, tops.

KIGHT: Well, I think I'd last longer than that... Why are we even talking about this! It's absurd on its face!

VAL: (*To BOWEN*) Is this the best plan you can come up with? Didn't the New Republic call you a genius?

BOWEN: That was Newsweek, and that's beside the point. We are talking about a fundamental political principle here and that is peace through strength. See, Mayhem is like some loony banana republic dictator threatening to build nuclear bombs. Fortunately, America does, in fact, build nuclear bombs, not because we use them, because we have not used them — a third time — instead, what we do is flex our nuclear muscle and the dictator crawls back into his hole and goes back to entertaining himself with military parades or ethnic cleansing or what have you. And I know this is a sensitive subject, Wayne, but I

came into this campaign to solve the perception of your masculinity, and I wish it were different but this is a very basic thing ingrained into human DNA and we ignore it at our peril. So I'm asking you to flex a little muscle. Do you understand?

KIGHT: They really think I'm not masculine?

VAL: Dad!

KIGHT: I'm just trying to understand my image.

VAL: You think it'll look masculine when you're spread-eagled in a thong with a sweaty, three hundred pound man pulling your hair?

BOWEN: He wouldn't have to wear a thong...

KIGHT: THAT'S ENOUGH! (*A beat.*) I can't believe we're even having this conversation. I'm going with my gut and saying nothing. (*BOWEN and VAL open their mouths to protest.*) Nothing! You hear? End of story.

(*He gives the dossier back to BOWEN. Lights switch to GLENN BARR.*)

BARR: The silence from the Kight camp is deafening, my friends, as deafening as the silence of one hand clapping clamorously in the forest with no one there to hear it. Greg in Cherry Creek, what say you?

GREG IN CHERRY CREEK: (V.O.) I say, if Kight doesn't have the balls to get in the ring with Mayhem, then he doesn't have the balls to represent Nevada. Let him go to a pussy state like Massachusetts.

BARR: That's exactly what Michael Dukakis was told by his gym teacher as a young lad, and that's exactly where he went. That led directly to the furlough of Willie Horton and gay weddings in front of the Liberty Bell at Boston Common!

*(Lights switch to KIGHT and BOWEN.)*

BOWEN: This silence is killing you, Wayne. You're coming off as cold and aloof. Sixty-five percent of the voters say they'd rather have a beer with General Mayhem than with you.

KIGHT: So let 'em! I'll reserve the back room at Hooters with an open bar! Just as long as they don't *vote* for him!

BOWEN: Well, they're going to. You're down six points in the past three days, Mayhem's up nine. And that's not all...

*(Back to BARR, now interviewing CORLISS.)*

BARR: ... Your surprising bounce in the polls is perhaps the most surprising development of the last seventy-two surprising hours. Though not at all surprising to me.

CORLISS: It's not surprising to me either, Glenn. People are looking for leadership. Mayhem's clearly a nut, and as for Senator Kight, he doesn't seem to know how to handle a bully who's essentially calling him out for a fight. We had names for those children in the schoolyard, Glenn — names like "wuss" and "wimp" and "sissy boy" — and call me old-fashioned or politically incorrect but I think these simpering little nancies do exist, and that the world is a dangerous place when all that stands between you and a menace like General Mayhem is a jilted, pants-wetting fraidy-cat masquerading as a man. And I think the voters understand that. Which is why they've come back to my positive message of inclusion.

BARR: It certainly begs the question: How would an ordinary man like Senator Kight even begin to prepare for such a contest?

*(Back to BOWEN and KIGHT. BOWEN introduces FOOK YAO MA, the IRON BUDDHA, a hulking, egregiously non-Asian wrestler in high-school-King-And-I eye makeup. He speaks in a put-on Chinese accent and carries a large bucket of fried chicken.)*

BOWEN: Senator Kight, this is Fook Yao Ma, the Iron Buddha.

THE BUDDHA: The journey begins now.

KIGHT: Look, I don't know what Terry told you, but I'm not planning on wrestling...

THE BUDDHA: We are born wrestling. He who does not recognize that he is wrestling has already lost the match.

KIGHT: (*To BOWEN*) Where did you find this lunatic?

BOWEN: This *legendary athlete* is the former heavy-weight wrestling champion of the world. He teaches a class at the Learning Annex called Transcendental Domination.

KIGHT: Well, I don't need his class.

BOWEN: Look, I know how you feel about the wrestling match and I am right there with you. Peace through strength, remember? All I'm saying is, you'll have more strength — and therefore more peace — if you know you could wrestle him if somehow you had to.

KIGHT: This is insane.

BOWEN: It's just like football: the best offense is a good defense. If you train with the Buddha until you know you can hold your own in the ring, that's going to change your whole state of mind, which in turn will affect your posture, your body language, your tone of voice, all kinds of subtle cues that convey social dominance and can dramatically influence public opinion. This is state of the art; there's reams and reams of research to back me up...

KIGHT: But I'm not a wrestler.

THE BUDDHA: Listen to your Ben Zhi, Senator. We are not always who we think we are.

KIGHT: Ben Zhi?

THE BUDDHA: Our true nature. Some call it the soul. Others call it destiny. *(He holds up a chicken leg.)* Do you see this? This was the leg of a weaker opponent. The chicken thought its leg was made to help it run. The chicken was wrong. Its leg was made to feed the Iron Buddha. *(He bites the chicken.)* It is the destiny of the weak to feed the strong. Your recent marital dishonor has depleted your masculine energy. The choice is yours, Senator: Will you remain weak, or will you become strong again?

KIGHT: What can you possibly teach me about being strong? Everybody knows pro wrestling is fake!

*(THE BUDDHA flips Kight flat onto his back. He places a business card on Kight's chest.)*

THE BUDDHA: When you are ready to banish your enemy to the land of wind and ghosts, call my secretary.

*(Back to BARR, with a caller.)*

JEB IN ELY : (V.O.) I'll tell you this. If there's anybody who can beat General Mayhem in the ring, it's the Iron Buddha. They say he eats his own children for strength.

BARR: And that just might be the kind of strength Senator Kight is looking for. Because we all have to eat our own children, Jeb in Ely, every once in a while — even though we may love them dearly, we must be willing to devour them whole, like the mighty eagle, in order to protect them from themselves. This isn't coming from me; Alexander Hamilton said as much in the Federalist Papers...

*(Lights switch to the Kight home. VAL waves a business card at her father.)*

VAL: The Iron Buddha?

KIGHT: Where did you get that?

VAL: It was in the glove compartment of the Prius. *(Reading card)* "Wrestling Coach, Zen Master, Voice-over Talent?"

KIGHT: He's just some kook I met through Terry.

VAL: So I guess I can throw his number away.

KIGHT: No! *(He reaches for the card. VAL withholds it.)* I mean, you never know when you're gonna need voiceover talent.

VAL: You're actually thinking about wrestling him.

KIGHT: No, no. I'm just taking stock of my options.

VAL: Wrestling Mayhem is not an option!

KIGHT: You know what's not an option? Handing a seat in the United States government to either one of these guys. Are you willing to risk that?

VAL: You want to talk about risk, Dad? You could get hurt. Seriously, quadriplegic, talking through a computer kind of hurt. You're not a wrestler. You never even go to the gym anymore!

KIGHT: I don't like the new elliptical machines! (*VAL glares at him.*) Look. Honey. Trust me: I am not going to end this campaign in a wrestling ring. But I'm in uncharted waters here, and nothing seems to be working — so if Terry's got a strategy I owe it to myself to at least *think* about it!

VAL: So what do you owe to me?

KIGHT: This isn't about you!

VAL: I deferred school for you.

KIGHT: I didn't ask you to!

VAL: So what do you want me to do? Just stand by you and smile and wave for the cameras? I did that when Russell and Mom embarrassed our family in front of the whole freaking planet. I kept doing it when their sex tape turned up on YouTube. But I can't just smile

and wave now while you make a fool of yourself of your own free will. Because it's not just yourself you're making a fool of. Don't you get that?

*(KIGHT puts his arm around her.)*

KIGHT: I'm sorry, honey. Believe me, I don't like this any more than you do.

VAL: Please, Dad. Tell him you won't do it.

*(Lights switch to BARR.)*

BARR: ... Vegas is currently putting 12 to 1 odds on the Senator; the Hong Kong bookies say 9 to 1, but with the Iron Buddha's training those numbers cut in half. Of course there's talk of a tag-team match, in which case General Mayhem would tap either Captain Fabulous or Senate Minority Whip Chris Hatchadoorian. Cathy in Tuscarora, who do you think should go head to head with a Kight- Buddha alliance?

CATHY IN TUSCARORA : (V.O.) I don't know, Glenn... don't you think this whole thing is getting a little out of hand?

*(BARR cuts her off. Dial tone.)*

BARR: Sorry there, Cathy in Tuscarora, we seem to have been cut off. Maybe Cathy should have been using Global Net Wireless. Global Net: When you can talk this much, why bother listening?

*(A campaign rally. VAL steps up to a mic and surveys what appears to be a very large crowd. Applause.)*

VAL: Thank you! Wow. It's great to see so many people here on such short notice. Way to go, Twitter!

*(Applause.)*

VAL: As most of you know by now, I'm Valerie Kight, and I'm here to introduce a man who's survived a lot of tough blows in this campaign with grace, integrity, and strength. Please welcome your Senator, my dad, Wayne Kight!

*(Applause.)*

KIGHT: Thanks, honey. *(To the audience.)* I know why you're all here so let's cut to the chase. It's clear that the dialogue in this campaign has not been as serious as you deserve. But that's gonna end right now, because I'm here to say that I will not now or at any time engage in any physical confrontation with any of my political opponents.

*(Mild applause, some disappointment. Suddenly GENERAL MAYHEM appears in the back of the house with a bullhorn.)*

MAYHEM: Coward!

*(Murmurs of confusion and excitement.)*

KIGHT: What are you doing here?

MAYHEM: Admit it, Kight. You won't get in the ring with me because you're afraid!

*(More murmuring, some applause.)*

VAL: Listen, you...

KIGHT: *(To VAL)* I've got it, honey. *(To MAYHEM)* You're the one who's afraid, General. You're afraid to talk about the issues! What are you actually going to do in the Senate?

MAYHEM: I'm glad you asked. *(To the crowd)* Because I came here to unveil my ULTIMATE, HARD-ROCKIN' SERIOUSLY BAD ASS LEGISLATIVE AGENDA!!!

*(Fervent applause, cheers.)*

KIGHT: What are you doing? This is my rally!

MAYHEM: You wanted a serious debate, baby — you've got one! Let's start with Buzzard Canyon. We've heard a lot of talk about this toxic waste. But that's not the real problem. The problem is that these other yahoos in Congress are raping Nevada just because they can!

*(Crowd anger.)*

MAYHEM: And why is that? Well, for one thing, we've got a small delegation in the House — smaller than Connecticut's! And then in the Senate, they only give us two Senators — the *same* as Connecticut! Is that fair?

*(Crowd: No! Etc.)*

MAYHEM: You bet it ain't! So here's what I'm gonna do: We're going tricameral, baby! I'm gonna create a third chamber of the legislature, where you get one representative for every hundred square miles of land! That'll give us 109 delegates: more than almost any other state in the Union!

*(Big cheers.)*

KIGHT: What about Alaska? You'd have to give Alaska over five hundred representatives!

MAYHEM: Not if we trade them back to the Russians!

KIGHT: You can't do that!

MAYHEM: Who's going to do stop me? Hey, you, with the camera! Zoom in on me for a minute, if you haven't already!

*(A spotlight zooms in on MAYHEM.)*

MAYHEM: (*With focused intensity*) I've got a message for all you other Senators. You better not even THINK about blocking my legislation. I've got friends from Special Ops all over the country and our bond is thicker than blood. All I have to do is say the word and next thing you know, you're sharing a shit sandwich in Hell with Mussolini!

(*HUGE cheers.*)

KIGHT: (*Shouting over the crowd*) Excuse me! Excuse me! I'd like to say something! Would everybody just SHUT UP!

(*A curious hush.*)

KIGHT: Thank you. I'd just like to take a moment, if I may, to review my opponent's position. He's promised to create a third branch of the legislature with thousands of representatives, to cede a sovereign U.S. State to the Russians, and if I understand him correctly, to use an elite anonymous strike force to cause bodily harm to his political opponents.

(*Applause and cheers from the crowd.*)

KIGHT: No, no, no — I wasn't saying that to get approval! What's wrong with you people! Wake up!

MAYHEM: You're the one who needs to wake up, Senator! The people of Nevada dream big! We don't go in

for your petty inside-the-Beltway negativity! We want somebody who's gonna put everything on the line!

*(Applause, support.)*

KIGHT: *(To Mayhem)* You're not putting anything on the line! You're just... making shit up!

MAYHEM: I put my *life* on the line, Senator! While you were off playing football on television, I was fighting in Dominica!

*(KIGHT steps down and approaches MAYHEM)*

KIGHT: NOBODY FOUGHT IN DOMINICA! You had no casualties! You faced a standing army of a hundred and fifty people! The whole operation was over in two hours!

MAYHEM: If you want to denigrate the men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces, Senator Kight, the people will hold you accountable!

*(They are now almost toe to toe, but VAL steps in and stares MAYHEM down.)*

VAL: And who the hell holds you accountable? You're not a real general! You don't know jack about government! You're just some pathetic loser on an ego trip playing dress-up!

KIGHT: Valerie, I can handle this!

MAYHEM: No you can't, Kight! You need your little girl to fight your battles for you? You're pathetic. You try to defend everybody else with all your stupid laws, but the truth is you can't defend yourself. Not from me, not from Corliss, not even from your own campaign manager banging your wife in the back of a tour bus!

KIGHT: *(Exploding.) YOU WANT A FIGHT? I'LL GIVE YOU A FIGHT! I'M GONNA GET IN THAT RING AND I'M GOING TO KICK YOUR ASS IN FRONT OF THE WHOLE GODDAMN COUNTRY!*

*(In a single move, MAYHEM whips KIGHT around into a painful headlock.)*

MAYHEM: I can't wait.

*(Blackout. End of Act One.)*