

# The Fifty-Fourth Step

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## CHARACTERS

STATE REPRESENTATIVE, AMANDA BECKER. Forties. Uses she/her pronouns.

MAC HERRON. Twenties. Intern to Senator Becker. Uses they/them pronouns.

STATE SENATE PRESIDENT, ADAM HUGHES. Forties/Fifties. Uses he/him pronouns.

STATE SENATOR, BENSON CHRISTENSEN. Seventies. Uses he/him pronouns.

STATE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE, ELIZABETH JENSEN. Forties/Fifties. Uses she/her pronouns.

MARK BECKER. Amanda's husband. Forties. Uses he/him pronouns.

## LOCATION

The offices, rooms, and hallways of a state capitol building in the western United States.

## TIME

Here and now.

Note - The action of the play is continuous. It essentially plays out in real time. As such, motion should be fluid and non-stop. Go minimalistic set-wise. There should be no black-outs (with the exception of the act break), no time to breathe.

These characters are good at what they do (mostly) - they think quickly, speak quickly, etc.

Time is an enemy here.

ACT ONE

Darkness.

A beam of light.

STATE REPRESENTATIVE AMANDA BECKER is illuminated inside the beam.

We are in a small bathroom. BECKER stares at her reflection in the mirror. She breathes hard.

Stares. Stares. Stares.

BECKER

One. Two. Three. Four. Five. Six. Seven. Eight. Nine. Ten.

(She does not move. Stares. Breathes hard)

BECKER

One. Two. Three. Four. Five. Six. Seven. Eight. Nine. Ten.

(She does not move)

(Stares. Breathes)

(She looks down to her hands. They are trembling) (She stares back into mirror)

(The count comes a little faster)

BECKER

One. Two. Three. Four. Five. Six. Seven. Eight. Nine. Ten.

(beat)

(Silence)

(A voice [MAC] from the darkness)

VOICE

You alright?

BECKER

I'm fine.

Everything is - everything's good.

(beat)

(BECKER stares at herself in the mirror)

BECKER

One-two-three-four-five-six-seven-eight-nine-ten.

(Her breathing intensifies as does the count)

BECKER

One-two-three-four-five-six-seven-eight-nine-ten.

One-two-three-four-five-six-seven-eight-nine-ten.

(The count intensifies)

BECKER

One-two-three-four-five-six-seven-eight-nine-ten!

One-two-three-four-five-six-seven-eight-nine-ten!

ONE-TWO-THREE-FOUR-FIVE-SIX-SEVEN-EIGHT-NINE-TEN!

(Breathes)

(Stares at herself)

(A knock on the bathroom door)

(A voice [MAC] from the darkness)

VOICE

You SURE you're alright?

BECKER

I'm fine.

I'm fine.

Fuck it.

Here we go.

(BECKER exits the bathroom)

(The beam of light ceases to be a beam of light and we are now inside of a room inside of a State Capitol Complex)

(MAC, Becker's intern, stands waiting for her)

MAC

You okay?

BECKER

I'm fine.

MAC  
You're fine?

BECKER  
I'm fine.

MAC  
You were counting.

BECKER  
I wasn't counting.

MAC  
You were counting.  
I know what counting is.

BECKER  
It's with numbers, right?

MAC  
Yes, it's with - - shut up. You were counting.

BECKER  
You were eavesdropping.

MAC  
I prefer calling it 'listening without consent'.

BECKER  
Spying.

MAC  
Amanda, you were yelling.

(beat)

BECKER  
(exhales)

MAC  
Don't be nervous.

BECKER  
I'm okay.

MAC

There's nothing to be nervous about.

BECKER

There's A LOT to be nervous about.

MAC

Okay, yes, there's a shitload to be nervous about, but - hey - don't be nervous.

BECKER

Thank you.

MAC

You seem nervous.

BECKER

I'm not nervous.

MAC

You were counting.

BECKER

I wasn't.

MAC

You were.

(beat)

BECKER

I'm sorry.

I didn't mean to.

I'm just -

- I'm just tired.

MAC

Okay.

BECKER

(Exhales)

(beat)

BECKER

There's a lot going on.

MAC

There's a lot going on.

BECKER

Yeah. There's a lot going on.

MAC

I know.

(beat)

BECKER

I want this.

MAC

Yes, you do.

BECKER

I'm not going to lose this time.

MAC

That's the plan.

BECKER

I'm ready.

MAC

Good.

BECKER

What time is it?

(MAC checks their phone)

MAC

Nine fifty.

BECKER

Ten minutes 'til we meet with Hughes.

MAC

Ten minutes.

(BECKER holds her hands out in front of her. They tremble)

(MAC sees this)

MAC  
You ARE nervous.

BECKER  
I'm tired, Mac. I haven't been sleeping well. And this is gonna be a long day.

MAC  
Yeah.

BECKER  
Yeah.

(beat)

MAC  
Mark's been calling me all morning.

BECKER  
Perfect.

MAC  
I assume your husband's been calling ME because you haven't been answering the phone when he's been calling YOU.

BECKER  
Right.

MAC  
Is there a reason for that?

BECKER  
Is there a reason for him calling or is there a reason I haven't been answering?

MAC  
Either.  
Both.

BECKER  
Yes.

(beat)

MAC  
Why's he been trying to get a hold of you all morning?



BECKER

I assume he wants to talk to me.

MAC

Helpful.

BECKER

I'm a giver.

MAC

Why haven't you been answering his calls?

BECKER

I don't want to talk to him.

MAC

I'll just let it keep going to voicemail then?

BECKER

You'll just let it keep going to voicemail then.

MAC

Got it.

BECKER

You're a very smart person.

MAC

I know.

Why were you counting?

BECKER

Smart AND nosy.

MAC

You can just tell me to shut up.

BECKER

Shut up, Mac.

MAC

'Shut up', got it.

(beat)

BECKER

I always feel like I'm twelve years old - right before we start a day like this. Before we start to have a series of conversations like we're going to have today. Some part of my head clicks back to school - me being a little girl standing nervous in front of the class.

We're going to have three very important legislative conversations in the next ninety minutes. And after those ninety minutes we'll know if our bill is dead. Hughes, Christensen, and Jensen. These will make or break us.

MAC

I know. This ain't my first rodeo.

BECKER

You ever been to a rodeo?

MAC

No.

BECKER

Really inspiring material there, bucko.

MAC

They have horses, I hear.

BECKER

You're really 'rough-and-tumble'..

MAC

It'll be fine.

BECKER

You don't know that.

MAC

No, you're right, I don't. It could all blow up in your face.

BECKER

I don't know why I keep you around.

MAC

My youthful vitality.

BECKER

Is that what it is?

MAC  
I have an energy.

BECKER  
Who told you that?

MAC  
People.

BECKER  
Not me.

MAC  
Other people.

BECKER  
Names, please.

MAC  
Stop. Don't be nervous.

BECKER  
Didn't I tell you to 'shut up' a minute ago?

MAC  
You did.

BECKER  
You didn't listen.

MAC  
I didn't listen.

BECKER  
Let's go to Hughes.

MAC  
Okay.

BECKER  
Here we go.

MAC  
Hold on.

BECKER  
Hold on?

MAC  
Hold on.

BECKER  
What?

MAC  
I'M nervous.

BECKER  
You're nervous?

MAC  
I'm nervous. Yes.

BECKER  
What was with all the confident banter?

MAC  
I was covering my nervousness.

(beat)

BECKER  
Well. He'll have croissants. Everyone loves croissants. Can't be nervous when there are croissants.

MAC  
That's not helping.

BECKER  
Do a mental trick.  
To calm yourself down.  
When we're in the meeting do a mental trick.

MAC  
Like picture Hughes in his underwear?

BECKER  
Christ. No. Don't do that. Hughes is fucking gross.

MAC  
I don't do mental tricks.

BECKER  
Count sheep.

MAC  
That's to help yourself fall asleep.

BECKER  
What?

MAC  
That's to help yourself fall asleep. That's not to help yourself calm down.

BECKER  
Really?

MAC  
Yes.

BECKER  
You're sure?

MAC  
Yes. Counting sheep is for sleeping.

BECKER  
See, **THIS** is why I keep you around.  
You know things.

MAC  
I thought you kept me around because an intern is free labor.

BECKER  
You know things - you do. Not counting sheep stuff - you know real things.  
You can see the playing field. Not everyone can do that.

MAC  
I **DO** see the playing field.

BECKER  
Yeah.  
That first day I met you when you walked into my office - that was something I  
could tell about you. You're sharp and you work hard to know your shit.

MAC  
Thank you.

(beat)

BECKER

You're gonna do this one day - hold office. Serve. You know that, right?

MAC

I don't know.

BECKER

That's cute - you 'don't know'.

You DO know. You're gonna do this one day. You're gonna run for something.

I can see it in your eyes. That flicker. Non-stop. You can't turn it off. I see it when we walk up and down these halls. There's this little spring your step. It's like electricity is shooting through you.

You want to get in the ring.

(beat)

MAC

Yeah.

BECKER

You will. And when you do, I'll vote for you.

MAC

That's very kind.

BECKER

I'm very kind.

MAC

You're not really though.

BECKER

No, I know. Not really. But I CAN be.  
Sometimes.

MAC

Sometimes.

BECKER

Sometimes, yeah.  
You still nervous?

(beat)

MAC  
No.

BECKER  
No?

MAC  
No.  
I'm good.

BECKER  
See? I did that. I fixed that.  
Kindness.

MAC  
Yeah, yeah.

BECKER  
You think we can do this?

MAC  
(Exhales)

BECKER (re: the exhale)  
That's about how I feel.

MAC  
Christensen's gonna be a problem.

BECKER  
Yeah.

MAC  
He's like a hundred years old.

BECKER  
Yeah.

MAC  
You gonna get rough?

BECKER  
That's not the approach to take with Christensen. He'll get defensive and go on the attack and it'll be over.

MAC

What's the approach to take?

BECKER

Well. Something else. Obviously.

MAC

Yeah.

BECKER

Yeah.

MAC

What something else?

BECKER

Something else like - I don't know yet.

MAC

You said you were ready.

BECKER

I did say that, yes.

MAC

- but?

BECKER

- but I'm not entirely ready, no.

(beat)

MAC

Well. Okay.

BECKER

I'll figure it out.

MAC

Okay.

BECKER

We have an hour.

MAC

Yeah.



BECKER (off MAC's tone)  
What?

MAC  
It's just - you have a plan for everything.

BECKER  
Yeah.  
In theory.

MAC  
That's -  
- are you sure you're okay?

BECKER  
I'm scared.  
I want this. I don't have a fully formulated plan. And I'm scared.

MAC  
That's not like you.

BECKER  
No. It's not like me.

(beat)

MAC  
Can I do anything?

BECKER  
No.  
Just your job.

MAC  
Yeah.

BECKER  
- and Mark's leaving me.

(beat)

MAC  
Oh.

BECKER

Yeah.

(beat)

MAC

Why?

BECKER

(A sharp look)

MAC

Okay. Maybe later.

BECKER

Maybe later.

MAC

We have to go to Hughes.

BECKER

Yeah.

(They begin to and then do leave the room they are in)

(Their conversation continues as they travel to Hughes' office)

MAC

Relationships are hard.

BECKER

Jesus!

MAC

I'm just saying!

BECKER

We said 'later'! This isn't later.

MAC

I'm trying to help.

BECKER

This is you trying to help?

MAC

This is me trying to help!

BECKER

Right.

MAC

I'm being understanding!  
Dani and I don't always get along.

BECKER

You and Dani are like the fucking model of relationship harmony.

MAC

That's not true.

BECKER

Weren't you on the cover of 'Perfect Relationship Monthly'?

MAC

That's not what it was called.  
And it was only a regional magazine.

BECKER

You're really terrible with personal boundaries.

MAC

You like it.

BECKER

I don't like it.

MAC

You DO like it.  
You don't have any friends.

(BECKER stops)

(MAC looks at her expectantly)

BECKER

That's not -

MAC

What?

BECKER

You can't just -

MAC (simply)

You don't have any friends.

BECKER

You don't know that.

MAC

Amanda. The legislative session is forty-five days out of a three hundred and sixty-five day year. That's about twelve percent of the total days of the year. Twelve percent. And how much time - how many days - do we spend planning for that twelve percent? Five times that? Six? How many times have you not taken my phone calls?

(beat)

BECKER

Zero times.

MAC

Zero times.

And this isn't a full time job. You make twelve thousand dollars a year from being a state representative. That's an eighth of your yearly income and yet you let it take up close to two thirds of your time.

BECKER

Yeah.

MAC

And your husband is leaving you.

That's not a portrait of a woman that has a lot of time left over for friends.

(beat)

BECKER

No.

MAC

No.

And I'm not saying that's bad. I'm not. I get it. You believe in something. Something you're willing to give your time and energy and passion to. Something you think is greater than basically anything else in your life. Service to your community. Service to those that you live with. Service to your home. You don't have friends. And that's sad. But it's also kind of fucking noble.

BECKER  
Aren't WE friends?

MAC  
When's my birthday?

(No response from BECKER)

MAC  
I work for you.  
We want the same things but I work for you.  
Our relationship centers around this building. It's our gravity.  
And that's fine. That works for both of us. That's good enough.  
Friendships just get in the way of what we want to do.

(beat)

BECKER  
Okay.

MAC  
Okay?

BECKER  
Okay.

MAC  
Good.

BECKER  
Go ahead without me.

MAC  
Go ahead - ?

BECKER  
I just - I just want a second. This is a big day - it's important.  
I want to - I just want to collect my thoughts. Breathe for a second. Go ahead  
without me. I'll be there. Just give me sixty seconds.

MAC  
Okay.

BECKER  
Okay.

MAC

You're going to be fine.

BECKER

Yeah.

(MAC continues onward to Senate President Hughes's office)

(BECKER is alone)

(BECKER breathes in, breathes out. Breathes in, breathes out)

(Lifts her hands out in front of her. They are shaking)

(BECKER throws a few glances around. She is indeed alone)

(BECKER opens up the jacket of her business suit - pulls out a small bottle of alcohol)

(Another quick glance around, opens it, drinks quickly, puts the small bottle back into her jacket pocket)

(beat)

(BECKER looks down to her hands. They are trembling)

BECKER

Fuck.

(She breathes)

One-two-three-four-five-six-seven-eight-nine-ten. One-two-three-four-five-six-seven-eight-nine-ten. One-two-three-four-five-six-seven-eight-nine-ten.

Fuck it.

Here we go.

(BECKER continues walking. She catches up to MAC who is waiting outside the office of STATE SENATE PRESIDENT, ADAM HUGHES)

MAC

Let's do it.

BECKER

I'm gonna eat this bitch for breakfast.

(BECKER and MAC walk into his office)

HUGHES  
Representative Becker.

BECKER  
Adam.

HUGHES  
You never call me Mr. Senate President.

BECKER  
Does that hurt your feelings?

HUGHES  
It's an important position.

BECKER (To MAC)  
You should write that down so we can study later.

(HUGHES laughs)

BECKER  
- And I use your title when I'm in the Senate chamber, so shut up.

HUGHES  
Fine.  
How're things?

BECKER  
They're great. The sun is shining, the birds are birding, la-dee-fucking-da.

HUGHES  
Very lady-like.

BECKER  
I try to set a good example for the intern.

HUGHES (To MAC)  
And does she?

MAC  
Does she what?

HUGHES  
Does she set a good example for you?

MAC

She steals sandwiches from the cafeteria sometimes.

HUGHES

(A sharp and tired look to BECKER)

BECKER

That can't be confirmed.

HUGHES

You have a per diem for food during the legislative session.

BECKER

The per diem doesn't buy you the thrill.

HUGHES

Anything else you'd like to confess?

BECKER

You'd like to know, perv.

HUGHES

Amanda. Believe it or not -

BECKER

- not.

HUGHES

- Believe it or not I actually have things to do.  
So. What do you want?

BECKER

A favor.

HUGHES

A favor.

BECKER

A favor.  
Bring SB217 to a vote in the Senate.

HUGHES

I thought that's what this was about.

BECKER

That's what this is about. Bring it to a vote.



HUGHES

No.

No, it's dead.

MAC

It's not dead.

HUGHES

It's SO dead.

We tabled it.

BECKER

YOU tabled it.

HUGHES

Yes.

BECKER

At the third reading, YOU tabled it. You. Not we.

HUGHES

The debate was contentious.

BECKER

It was not contentious. Christensen was contentious.

HUGHES

He had concerns. He still has concerns.

MAC

He's a nutjob.

HUGHES (To MAC - re: Christensen)

He's been doing this a long time. He deserves respect.

BECKER

Yes, Mac. Respect the nutjob.

HUGHES

Cute.

BECKER

Everyone thinks so.

HUGHES

Hardly anyone thinks so.

BECKER

Bring it to a vote.

HUGHES

It barely got out of committee.

MAC

But it got out.

HUGHES

After six years.

BECKER

Sixth time's a charm.

HUGHES

That's not - - - no one says that. That's not something people say. 'Sixth times's a charm' is not a thing.

BECKER

It's a thing when a bill gets out of committee on its sixth try.

HUGHES

It's dead -

MAC

- It's not dead -

HUGHES

- It's dead.

BECKER

It got out of committee. It was debated on the floor. Then you tabled it without bringing it to a vote.

HUGHES

We weren't alone. They tabled it in the House!

BECKER

Yes, thank you, I'm aware they also tabled it in the House.

I'm aware the leadership of both chambers of the legislature lack spines.

(beat)

HUGHES  
Easy.

BECKER  
Bring it to a vote.

HUGHES  
You're six votes short.

BECKER  
I'm three votes short.

(a beat)

HUGHES  
Three.

BECKER  
Three.

(beat)

HUGHES  
Who'd you get?

BECKER  
Wouldn't you rather call a vote and be surprised who I got?

HUGHES  
No.  
Who'd you get?

(beat)

BECKER  
Kinderhook. Leavitt. Rasmussen.

HUGHES  
Leavitt? How'd you square that?

BECKER  
I appealed to his good sense of character.

HUGHES  
Leavitt doesn't have a good sense of character.

BECKER  
I offered him a trade.

HUGHES  
You offered him a trade?

BECKER  
I offered him a trade.

HUGHES  
What'd you offer to trade?

BECKER  
A vote.

HUGHES  
A vote.

BECKER  
Yep. Scratch my back, I scratch yours.

(beat)

HUGHES  
That's - ! That's totally unethical, Amanda!

BECKER  
It's not unethical. It's a trade.

HUGHES  
- that's SO unethical.

BECKER  
- trading like baseball cards.

HUGHES  
That's unethical AS FUCK.

BECKER  
It's not.

HUGHES  
IT. IS.

BECKER

Are you just mad because I'm closer to getting it done?

HUGHES

I'm mad because you're selling votes!

BECKER

Not selling - trading. You're not listening.

HUGHES

- Unethical bullshit!

BECKER

- Okay, so it's a little unethical, yes.

MAC

- It's a smidgen unethical.

HUGHES

YEAH.

BECKER

Should I not have told you that part?

HUGHES

I'm President of the Senate!

BECKER

Yeah, but just for the state. Not for, like, the whole world.

HUGHES

I'm President of the Senate. I take that - it's a serious responsibility. It's my responsibility.

(to MAC) Did YOU know anything about this?

MAC

I don't know anything.

BECKER

They don't know anything.

HUGHES (to MAC)

Then why are you here?

MAC

She told me there'd be croissants.

HUGHES

You'd still need three more. You got three but you'd still need to get three more.

BECKER

Yep. I'd still need three more.

HUGHES

What about the House? You're down there too.

BECKER

I've got it.

HUGHES

You've got 'what'?

BECKER

It'll pass the House. I've got it.

HUGHES

You've 'got it'.

BECKER

I've got it.

(beat)

HUGHES

- How?

BECKER

I just do.

HUGHES

Tell me how.

BECKER

You don't need to know how.

HUGHES

You want me to bring SB217 to a vote here in the Senate then you tell me how you've got it passing in the House. There's no way I'm bringing this thing to a vote unless it passes both chambers. I'm not leaving myself sitting wide open for blowback.

(Pause)

BECKER  
(Exhales)  
Mac. Step outside for a minute.

MAC  
Look, are there croissants or not?

BECKER  
Out, please.

(MAC steps out of the room. They close the door behind them)

(beat)

BECKER  
They're disparate worlds.  
Here? A couple of days ago I was down by as many as nine. Yesterday I was down six. Today I'm down three.  
But in the House? - I was only really ever down two.  
And those two I can conquer.

HUGHES  
How?

BECKER  
The Governor.  
I call the Governor. He calls the two.

HUGHES  
The Governor wouldn't do that.

BECKER  
The Governor WOULD do that. The Governor and I have known each other for over twenty years. Come on, you know this.

HUGHES  
They wouldn't listen to him. Anyone in the House that's dug in against a bill as simple as this - they wouldn't listen to the Governor. They wouldn't listen to GOD.

BECKER  
Under normal circumstances, sure. But the Governor's gonna offer them quid pro quo.

HUGHES  
He doesn't have anything they want.

BECKER

He's the Governor, he's got lots of somethings they want.

HUGHES

He won't give it to them.

BECKER

Of course he won't give it to them. He'll just SAY he's gonna give it to them.

HUGHES

That'll kill him in the next session. They'll ram bills he doesn't like up his ass all day long.

BECKER

In theory.

HUGHES

- He'd be opening himself up to attack and getting nothing in return.

BECKER

Do I sound like I don't know what I'm talking about?

HUGHES

What?

BECKER

Do I sound like I don't know what I'm talking about?

HUGHES

You DO sound like you know what you're talking about.

BECKER

Right.

HUGHES

Okay.

BECKER

Do I sound like I haven't put any thought into the things I'm saying right now?  
Do I sound like I just showed up to your office to bullshit?

HUGHES

No. You don't sound like that.



BECKER  
I don't sound like that.

HUGHES  
No.

BECKER  
No.

HUGHES  
What do you know?

(beat)

BECKER  
So - there's a thing.

HUGHES  
There's a 'thing'?

BECKER  
There's a thing.

HUGHES  
What's the thing?

BECKER  
The Governor's not running for re-election.

HUGHES  
He's not running for re-election -

BECKER  
No.

(beat)

HUGHES  
He's willing to screw over the party like that?

BECKER  
He's TOTALLY willing to screw over the party like that.  
He's over it.  
He's tired and he's over it.  
His own party - your party under your leadership here in the Senate - challenged him last year on SB78 and SB424. Twice they tried to kick him right in the balls.

Publicly. Twice.  
And for no other reason than they just wanted to.

HUGHES  
We had serious concerns with 78 and 424.

BECKER  
You were on television a lot last session. Like, A LOT.

HUGHES  
78 and 424 had flaws we hoped we could overcome but that's just not how it played out.

BECKER  
You've been upping your media time.  
Don't think it hasn't been noticed. People have been talking. You're playing the long game.

HUGHES  
The Governor's already registered for the next campaign cycle.

BECKER  
It's a feint.

HUGHES  
It's a feint.

BECKER  
It's a feint.  
He's going out swinging.  
I told you - he's fucking over it.  
He wants to watch all of you burn.

HUGHES  
That wouldn't give anyone else time to suit up for a proper campaign.

BECKER  
That's the plan.

(beat)

HUGHES  
But you're telling ME.

BECKER

Yes.

I'm telling you.

(HUGHES gives a hard look to BECKER)

HUGHES

If what you're saying about the Governor is true -

BECKER

- it is -

HUGHES

- then why do I have to do anything? I mean, you just gave me the key piece of information. I can just take it and not do a damn thing for you.

BECKER

Yes. I know that. I considered that.

(beat)

I guess - really what it comes down to is that - no bullshit - you won't do that. I've watched how you run things.

We've disagreed in the past. We'll disagree in the future. You're kind of stupid sometimes. But you're fair.

I gave you something - information you wanted to know. Something valuable to you. And in return you're going to bring SB217 to a vote. Today. Because that's the right thing to do.

It's the last day of the session. They'll listen to you.

HUGHES

I don't know.

BECKER

You DO know. It's a good bill. It'll be a good law. It'll help people.

HUGHES

It's expensive.

BECKER

It's not that expensive.

HUGHES

It's more expensive than I'd like.

BECKER

So are water subsidies in Kane County - but we push that through year after year.

(beat)

HUGHES  
I don't know.

BECKER  
Adam.  
What are we doing here?

HUGHES  
You're being a pain in the ass and I'm listening to you be a pain in the ass is what we're doing here.

BECKER  
I mean here. In this building. In these positions.  
True or untrue? - we're here because we want to be here. Because we're doing what we believe is right. True or untrue?

HUGHES  
True.

BECKER  
So bring 217 to a vote, Adam. It's a bill for the creation and maintenance of a state-wide anti-bullying program to be implemented in grades K-12.

HUGHES  
I know what it is.

BECKER  
Basically every single private citizen in this state is for the thing. It's a walk in the park.  
It's also the right thing to do.

HUGHES  
Every single private citizen in this state is NOT for the thing. You know that.

BECKER  
The sane ones are for it.

HUGHES  
You get yourself into trouble when you say things like that.

BECKER  
Yes. I know.

HUGHES

The church doesn't really enjoy it when you call it and it's members crazy.

BECKER

The church hasn't taken an official position.

HUGHES

The church doesn't have to take an 'official' position. They just have to whisper about it in hallways and backrooms.

BECKER

A bill like this shouldn't be killed because of whispers in a hallway.

HUGHES

It shouldn't.  
But it might be.

BECKER

Yeah.

HUGHES

Yeah.

BECKER

You know why the church hasn't taken an official position on this? Because they can't - not publicly. Because the optics would be a PR nightmare.

HUGHES

Amanda -

BECKER

They can't 'officially' say they're against it because then they'd have to say WHY they're officially against it.

HUGHES

- Okay.

BECKER

I'm so tired of this, Adam. I'm so fucking tired of this.  
Kids are DYING.

HUGHES

I know.

BECKER

They are literally DYING.

HUGHES

I know - but this is about the one kid.

Jacob Beecher.

This is about him. We all know it is.

And that was a tragedy. Everyone knows that was a tragedy.

But you've made it personal.

BECKER

He was fourteen years old.

And they beat him to death.

That's pretty fucking personal.

We should all be taking that pretty personally.

(beat)

HUGHES

Yeah.

BECKER

I don't want what happened to Jacob Beecher to happen to some other kid.

That shouldn't be a controversial idea.

(beat)

HUGHES

No. It shouldn't be.

BECKER

No.

(beat)

HUGHES

Remember though - that's my church too.

BECKER (not malicious)

I know.

HUGHES

- And I don't love being called crazy either.

BECKER

I didn't mean -

- I don't think you're crazy. That's why I'm here talking to you.

HUGHES

You're here talking to me because I have the power to bring your bill to a vote.

BECKER

You know what I mean. You're not crazy. You're for the bill. I know that. You support it, even if your church doesn't.

(beat)

HUGHES

If this passes you're going to take some serious heat.

BECKER

I told you - everyone is for it.

HUGHES

No.

Certain members of my party are not 'for it'. Certain members of these halls. People like Christensen haven't taken you shoving this bill in their face lightly.

BECKER

Well, Christensen can die and rot.

HUGHES

That's not the most airtight argument.

BECKER

He's practically dead.

HUGHES

'Practically dead' isn't 'actually dead'.

BECKER

He still uses a pager.

HUGHES

Unfortunately for you he holds an enormous amount of moral power over the legislature. People listen to him. He has power. And he'll be re-elected until he's 'actually dead'.

BECKER

By backwards hillbillies.

HUGHES

Stop. That.

Just because they aren't like you doesn't make them backwards hillbillies.

You know, you've won five elections, Amanda. The last three by smaller and smaller margins. Your district is competitive. We'll flip it within six years. Guaranteed. But if this bill passes, Christensen and others like him will make sure we flip your district this year. He'll make it a crusade. You'll be done. You won't live to fight another day. You'll be done and your party will have one less person to shout for those that need shouting for.

BECKER

It's an anti-bullying program.

HUGHES

Protecting who?

(beat)

BECKER (steel)

Children.

HUGHES

(A hard look at BECKER)

(She knows what he's getting at)

(He knows she knows)

(beat)

HUGHES

I like your bill, Amanda. I like it this year, I liked it last year, I liked it the first time you introduced it.

BECKER

You want to be the next Governor. I just gave you a leg up.

All you have to do in return is bring 217 to a vote. It'll pass.

What are you worried about? It's not going to hurt you politically. It's a small bill. No one will care. I mean, come on, half the people have short attention spans and the other half aren't even paying attention. A few people'll be angry today but - tomorrow? Tomorrow no one will give a shit. Tomorrow everyone will be up in arms about the next thing in their news feed.

Mr. Senate President, tomorrow no one will even remember what we did the day before.



HUGHES  
We'll see.

BECKER  
'We'll see'?

HUGHES  
Yes. We'll see. It'll get a vote.

(beat)

BECKER  
(Some kind of pretty strange outburst of joy)

HUGHES  
Ohh-kaaay.

BECKER  
I'm sorry. Was that weird?

HUGHES  
It was kind of weird.

BECKER  
Should we just have, liked, hugged?

HUGHES  
God. No.

BECKER  
Got it.  
So. I'll see you on the floor.

HUGHES  
See you on the floor.

BECKER  
Adam. Thank you.

HUGHES  
(Some kind of physical acknowledgement of what she just said)

(BECKER starts to leave the room - then rushes and grabs SENATE PRESIDENT HUGHES in a hug. Squeezes him tight. After a moment she breaks the hug)

BECKER  
Thank you.

(BECKER leaves HUGHES' office)  
(MAC is waiting outside the door)

MAC  
Good news or bad news?

(beat)

BECKER  
He's actually going to do it.

MAC  
FUCKING A! MOTHER. FUCKING. A.

BECKER  
Yeah.

MAC  
You're a fucking goddess!

BECKER  
Turns out I kinda am, yeah.

MAC  
Did he buy the bit about having everything locked up?

BECKER  
I think so.

MAC  
Sucker.

BECKER  
Yeah.  
Now I guess we should work on actually getting it locked up.

MAC  
That would be a solid next step.

BECKER  
Yeah.

MAC  
Yeah.

(MAC'S phone goes off in their pocket. They take it out)

MAC  
Shit.  
It's Mark.

BECKER  
Don't answer it.

MAC  
I feel bad.

BECKER  
Why?

MAC  
I don't know - I just do.

BECKER  
Don't answer it. I order you not to answer it.

MAC  
That's not really how an internship works.

BECKER  
That's how a good internship works.

MAC  
Well, we never agreed this was a GOOD internship.

BECKER  
Don't answer it.

MAC  
I'm gonna answer it.

BECKER  
I'm an elected official!

MAC  
My fucking phone didn't elect you! You have no authority over my phone!

BECKER

I will hit that phone with a hammer!

MAC

No one carries a hammer around with them, you lunatic!

BECKER

Jesus did! He was a carpenter!

MAC

We're gonna talk about Jesus now?

BECKER

I'm just saying - Jesus carried hammers.

MAC

'Jesus carried hammers'.

BECKER

It's in the bible.

MAC

Where?

BECKER

Somewhere in the back.

MAC

I'm answering the phone.

BECKER

No!

MAC

You're being insane.

BECKER

Let it ring!

(The phone stops ringing)

(They look at it)

(Silence)

(A few moments pass in silence)

(BECKER settles a little)

(The phone begins ringing again)

MAC                      BECKER  
Fuck!                      Oh, come on!

MAC  
This is ridiculous. I'm answering it.

BECKER  
- no! -

MAC  
- I'm gonna make up some excuse, don't worry - Jesus! -

(MAC answers the phone. BECKER watches them silently)

MAC  
Hi, Mark. Sorry I haven't -

- okay. Yeah.

- uhm. Yeah. Almost. We're heading back there now.

- Okay. Bye.

So. He's here. In the building.

(beat)

BECKER  
Okay.  
So.  
This is a fucking disaster.

(BECKER and MAC begin to travel back towards Becker's office)

MAC  
It'll be fine.

BECKER  
Where is he?

MAC  
Walking to your office.

BECKER  
Of course he is.  
What time is it?

MAC  
Ten fifteen.

BECKER  
Call Christensen. Call Jensen. In that order. See if they can each bump up their meetings with me by ten minutes. We have a momentum. I don't want to lose it.

MAC  
Got it.  
Do you need anything?

BECKER  
Meetings with Christensen and Jensen bumped up ten minutes.

MAC  
No - like, to eat or something.

BECKER  
I'm good.

MAC  
Have you eaten anything today?

BECKER  
I'm good.

MAC  
Okay.  
Maybe's he coming to say he changed his mind.

BECKER  
I don't think so.

MAC  
When did he tell you?

BECKER  
That he was leaving? A month ago.

(beat)

MAC  
Have you told anyone?

BECKER  
I told YOU.

MAC  
Besides me.

BECKER  
No.

MAC  
Oh. - don't you think you should?

BECKER  
I don't have any friends, Mac. You're right. I don't have anyone to tell.

MAC  
Amanda -

BECKER  
- what?

MAC  
I don't know. I'm sorry. That's hard.

BECKER  
It's fine.

MAC  
It's probably not.

BECKER  
Yeah.

MAC  
Yeah.

(beat)

BECKER  
I cry a lot.  
He's been staying with a friend and -  
At night. When I'm alone. I cry a lot.

(MAC reaches out and grabs BECKER's hand - gives it a little squeeze)  
(It's a tiny moment. It passes)

BECKER

Push up the meetings.

MAC

I will. I'll get on it right now.

(BECKER and MAC round a final corner and there's MARK, standing outside of Becker's office)

MARK (a nod)

Mac.

MAC

Mark.

MARK (to BECKER)

You haven't been answering my calls.

BECKER

That's possible.

(a beat. BECKER and MARK stare at each other for a moment. It's slightly awkward and intense)

MAC

So. I'm gonna go get a croissant.

BECKER (to MAC)

I want the next meeting ASAP.

MAC

I got it, I got it.

MARK

Bye, Mac.

MAC

Nice to see you.

(MAC walks off down the hall, exits)

(BECKER and MARK step inside of Becker's office)

MARK

So.



BECKER

So.

MARK

How's it going?

BECKER

Lot to do.

MARK

Yeah.

BECKER

Yeah.

MARK

Busy day. Always a busy day.

BECKER

I don't have a lot of time.

MARK

You aren't answering my calls.

BECKER

I know.

MARK

I want to come by. Get the rest of my things.

BECKER

I'll look at my schedule. See what works.

(beat)

MARK

I want to come by. Get the rest of my things.

BECKER

I said I'll look at -

MARK

- Sorry. I wasn't being clear.

I'm coming by. I'm getting the rest of my things.

Tonight works for me. So I'll come by tonight.

You don't have to be there.

(beat)

BECKER  
Fine.

MARK  
I'm not trying to be rude.

BECKER  
I'm working.

MARK  
I know. I'm not trying to be rude.  
You aren't answering my calls.  
I didn't want to just show up here like this. But you aren't answering the phone.  
I just want to come and get my things.

BECKER  
Just want your things.

MARK  
Don't.

BECKER  
- just want your fucking things.

MARK  
Don't get pissy.

BECKER  
'Don't get pissy'?

MARK  
I don't want to fight.

BECKER  
I think I might wanna fight.

MARK  
Eight-thirty work for you?

BECKER  
Fuck off. Fuck you.

(beat)

MARK (not malicious)

It's ten fifteen.

How many drinks in are you?

Three?

I know it's a stressful time - last day of the session.

Four?

(beat)

BECKER

Three.

MARK

Can anyone tell?

BECKER

Mac keeps asking me if I'm okay.

MARK

Yeah. They're smart.

-

BECKER

They ARE smart.

(beat)

MARK

I just want to get my things.

BECKER

Go get your things then.

It's still technically your house.

MARK

Yeah. I tried.

BECKER

You tried?

- you tried to get your things?

MARK

I tried.

I mean, I still have keys.

BECKER  
This morning?

MARK  
This morning. Yeah.

Some kid was there.

(beat)

BECKER  
He was still there?

MARK  
He was still there.

BECKER  
He's not a kid.

MARK  
Sorry. I'm - I just mean - he's young.

BECKER  
He's twenty-four.

MARK  
Twenty-four?

BECKER  
'ish'.

MARK  
What - did you just meet him last night?

BECKER  
(Gives him a look)

MARK  
You just met him last night.

BECKER  
It's not your business.

MARK  
No.  
It's not my business.

And -

It's not my business.

I'm not trying to start a fight.

I just want my things.

(a silence)

(They look at each other)

(They both exhale)

(A few moments shift)

MARK

How are you?

BECKER

Not great.

MARK

You look tired.

BECKER

I am tired.

MARK

Yeah.

BECKER

Yeah.

MARK

Life - is tiring.

BECKER

Yeah. Pretty fucking tiring.

(beat)

BECKER

You wanna sit down?

(beat)

MARK

Okay.

(MARK sits)

(BECKER sits)

(beat)

BECKER

(Exhales)

MARK (re: her exhale)

Yeah?

BECKER

Yeah.

(MARK instinctually reaches his hand out. Rubs BECKER's back. She instinctually lets him. They've done this a thousand times)

(He rubs her back wordlessly. This goes on for a few moments)

MARK

Today, huh?

BECKER

Today.

MARK

Last day of the session.

BECKER

Last day.

MARK

Yeah. Came up fast.

BECKER

It always does.

MARK

I remember always being surprised when it was over.

Seemed like all of you should be working more.

Lazy bastards.

(BECKER laughs)

BECKER  
Yeah. Yeah.

MARK  
Eating up our taxpayer dollars to be lazy bastards.

BECKER  
Yeah. We're the worst.

MARK  
That's certainly what everyone says.

BECKER  
Sounds about right.

(beat)

BECKER  
I got an e-mail two days ago.  
This guy. This asshole douchebag.  
He does NOT like me.  
This session he's sent me e-mails at least once a week.  
Same stuff every time -  
- I'm 'ruining this city'.  
I 'need to shut my fucking mouth'.  
Maybe 'holding [me] down and giving [me] what I deserve would teach [me] a lesson'.  
Lovely constituent.

MARK  
Jesus.

BECKER  
Yeah.  
A fine citizen.  
And he's not the only one like that. He's just the most - colourful.

(beat)

MARK  
If you're upsetting that guy - good. He's the type of person that deserves to be upset.

BECKER  
Yeah.

MARK

You're doing good things here, Amanda.

BECKER

I'm not doing anything here. I've been here ten years and what the fuck have I done?

MARK

Well. You're here.

You cared enough to be here in the first place. You're still here.

You're still here. You still care.

Most people never even get into the ring.

You not only got in, but you've been knocked down more times than I can count.

And you've always gotten back up.

That's means something.

BECKER

It doesn't feel like it means a damn thing.

MARK

No?

BECKER

No.

MARK

Well. It DOES.

I swear to God - it really does.

(beat)

BECKER

That's a nice thing to say.

MARK

I have my moments.

BECKER

You do.

(beat)

MARK

It wasn't great. When I walked into the bedroom this morning and that kid was there.



BECKER

I'm sorry. I didn't know you'd be dropping by -

MARK

Yeah.

BECKER

- but you've made it clear that this is over.

MARK

I know. I'm not trying to -

- you have every right to do whatever you want -

- it was just hard. That's all. It was just hard.

BECKER

Yeah.

MARK

Was that the first time? Since I left - was that the first time?

BECKER

Why would you ask that?

MARK

Because I'm stupid, I guess.

BECKER

No.

It wasn't the first time.

MARK

I see.

BECKER

Yeah.

MARK

Well - this is, like, the BEST day.

BECKER

Yeah.

(beat)

MARK

He was very muscle-y.  
The twenty-four year old. Lots of muscles.

BECKER

Yeah.

MARK

I used to have muscles like that.

BECKER

No. You never did.

MARK

I never did?

BECKER

You've always been kind of dough-y.

MARK

I work out.

BECKER

Since when?

MARK

- I'm thinking about starting to work out.

BECKER

Ah.

MARK

I could take him.

BECKER

Take who?

MARK

Mr. Twenty-Four.

BECKER

What - like, in a fight?

MARK

Like in a fight.

BECKER

Oh.

No.

MARK

No?

BECKER

No.

MARK

Well.

Okay, then.

BECKER

Yeah.

MARK

I'm kind of handsome though, right?

BECKER

Kind of.

MARK

Excellent.

(beat)

MARK

I'm worried about you.

BECKER

I'm fine.

MARK

That's what you always say.

BECKER

I say that because I'm usually fine.

MARK

You say that because you're good at lying to yourself.

BECKER

- For fuck's sake.

MARK

You are.

BECKER

Fuck, Mark. Can you just stop?

Today is not the day. I mean, do you know what I'm trying to do?

MARK

I know what you're trying to do.

BECKER

Then shut up. Just shut up and offer me your support.

I know our marriage is over. I know I have to deal with that rationally - like an adult - at some point in time. I KNOW THAT. But today is not that day, Mark.

Today is not about us. Today is not about you. Today is about trying with everything I have to get this fucking bill passed. That's what today is about. So - this? We can do all of this later. But what I'm doing today can only be done today. Okay?

MARK

Okay.

BECKER

Okay.

(beat)

MARK

What are the chances you slip up? Because of -

BECKER

I don't slip up because of it.

(beat)

MARK

And you think it's out of the realm of possibility that you won't?

BECKER

It's not out of the realm of possibility.

It just won't happen.

I don't let it. I won't let it.

MARK

You can't keep this up. You can't keep running your days like this.

BECKER

I can.

MARK

No.

BECKER

I'm doing it, aren't I?

MARK

You can't. Not forever.

(beat)

BECKER

I like it.

MARK

The drinking?

BECKER

Yes.

I like it.

More than almost anything. I like it more than you.

MARK

I know that.

Obviously.

BECKER

- I like it - more than you. And I LOVE you.

But I don't like it more than this. More than all of this. More than what I'm trying to do when I'm in this building. Within these walls. The way I feel when I'm here - when I'm HERE - doing this work - that feeling. Touching that feeling, tapping into that thing, that understanding that things can change and you can be a part of that change, a part of that changing of your home for the better.

THAT I wouldn't fuck up.

MARK

I was your home.

BECKER

That wasn't good enough.

MARK

(A moment behind his eyes)

BECKER

You never made me feel like I feel when I'm here. If I'm being honest, you never did.

So. That's the ranking.  
The work. Alcohol. You.

(beat)

MARK

Yeah.

BECKER

I'm sorry.

MARK

Yeah.

I should go.

BECKER

Yeah. Me too.

(beat)

MARK

I love you.

I know this is fucked. We're done and -

This job - and the drinking - these things are consuming you. And if that's what you want - then that's what it is. But I can't be there for you as you give more and more of yourself to those things and you give less and less of yourself to me.

I love you but I can't be there for that.

(beat)

BECKER

I love you.

MARK

Third best.

(beat)

BECKER

- yeah.

- third best.

(beat)

MARK  
Eight thirty?

BECKER  
Okay.

MARK  
Okay.  
You gonna get it done today?

BECKER  
You bet your ass.

(A sad, tired smile transfers from one to the other)  
(There's a moment that passes between them - an appreciation)

MARK (leaving)  
I know you will.

(MARK exits)

(He's gone)

(BECKER is there)  
(Alone)

(BECKER'S eyes are frozen for a few moments on where MARK has left from)

(Her eyes shift)

(She's gone - inside of herself for just a moment or three)

(She breaks)

(She erupts in a loud sob. Catches it. Then another sob. Catches it) (Another sob - a series of sobs - but she lets them out in silence)

(The feelings come out of her in silence)

(MAC enters)

(MAC sees BECKER in the middle of this)

(MAC goes to BECKER - holds her as she spasms)

(Holds her)

(Holds her)

(Holds her)

(BECKER subsides)

MAC

You're okay. You're okay.

BECKER

I'm sorry.

MAC

Don't be sorry.

BECKER

We don't have time for this.

MAC

It's okay.

BECKER

We don't have time for this. I need to be better than this.

(beat)

MAC

Hey -

BECKER

- what?

MAC

However much it was last night - it was too much.

(beat)

BECKER

Can you smell it?

MAC

A little.

- when I'm right next to you.



BECKER  
It's fine. I've got it.

(beat)

MAC  
Should I be concerned?

BECKER  
No.

MAC  
(a look)

BECKER  
Everything is fine. Is it affecting the work?

MAC  
No.

BECKER  
Is it affecting the work?

MAC  
No.

BECKER  
No.

MAC  
No.

BECKER  
Everything's fine.

MAC  
You're just - you were pretty loose with Hughes. You're kind of loose.

BECKER  
I NEED to be loose.

(beat)

MAC  
I shouldn't be concerned?

BECKER

You shouldn't be concerned.

(beat)

MAC (doesn't quite believe it)

Okay.

BECKER

Did you get the meetings pushed up?

MAC

I got the meetings pushed up.

BECKER

Who's first?

MAC

Christensen.

BECKER

No time like the present.

- And you got it pushed up ten minutes?

MAC

I got it pushed up to now, actually.

BECKER

'Now' now?

MAC

Yeah.

BECKER

Okay. Now is soon. Now is now. But now is okay - now is good.

MAC

Yes.

BECKER

Where are we going?

MAC

He's coming here, actually. (Checks their phone)

Any minute now.

(beat)

BECKER

You don't have to stay. For the meeting - you don't have to stay.

MAC

Why would I not stay?

BECKER

Mac.

MAC

Amanda.

BECKER

It's Christensen.

MAC

Yes. This is true.

BECKER

He's probably going to say some things that'll upset you.

MAC

He often does that, yes.

BECKER

This isn't a meeting where you can get upset.

MAC

I'm not eight years old. I can hold myself in check when people say dumb shit. If I got upset every time an old, white dude said something dumb I wouldn't ever be able to leave the house.

BECKER

I just -

If he sees an opening he'll dig into you. Just for fun.

MAC

It's fine. I'll be fine.

BECKER

I just want you to understand -

MAC

- I'm not leaving. I'm gonna be in this meeting.

I need to be there. He needs to see me there. Someone like Christensen needs to see me in that room, staring at him, needs to see me unafraid.

He needs to see ME.

BECKER

- Okay -

MAC

I'm gonna be in that meeting. There's nowhere else I'd be.

I'm not going anywhere.

(MAC'S phone rings. They take it out of their pocket. Answer it)

MAC

Hello?

(They listen for a few seconds)

- Uh-huh -

- Okay.

(MAC hangs up the phone)

MAC

I have to go.

BECKER

What's happening?

MAC

That was the desk.

Jacob Beecher's mother is here.

(beat)

BECKER

She's early.

(beat)

MAC

- 'she's early'?

BECKER

She wasn't supposed to be here until eleven.

She's early.

MAC (a little lost)  
What's she doing here?

BECKER  
I asked her to come.

MAC  
You asked her to come.

BECKER  
I asked her to come.

MAC  
- Why?

BECKER  
Mac.

MAC  
What.

(beat)

BECKER  
I want them to see her.

MAC  
- are you insane?

BECKER  
We don't need to have this conversation now.

MAC  
We do. We do actually, because Jacob Beecher's mother is downstairs.

BECKER  
It can wait.

MAC  
It CAN'T wait.

BECKER  
It can wait until after the meeting with Christensen.

MAC

You 'want them to see her'?

BECKER

You know why she's here.

MAC

You want them to fucking 'see her'?

BECKER

Lower your voice.

(beat)

MAC

It's manipulative.

BECKER

Yes. It is.

MAC

You're using her. Like a prop.

BECKER

Yes.

MAC

You're using a person - a mother whose child was murdered - you're using her as a decoration.

BECKER

I am.

Because it'll help us get it done.

(a beat)

(This washes over MAC. It doesn't sit well)

MAC

I'm not comfortable with that.

BECKER

You're 'not comfortable with that'.

MAC

I'm not comfortable with that. No.

BECKER

Well - who cares?

MAC

Excuse me?

BECKER

Who the fuck is 'comfortable'?

It's not about 'comfortable' - it's about getting it done.

How do you think these things happen? - We lay out our case, they lay out theirs, and the best idea wins? The thing that makes the most sense - the thing that's fucking MORALLY RIGHT - just passes out of the 'goodness of everyone's heart'? You're 'not eight years old'? - Are you sure?

You think what we do here isn't fucking disgusting sometimes? You think it's not beneath us?

It doesn't matter! It doesn't matter if something is beneath you.

If it's beneath you then you climb down the goddamn ladder into the dirt and you get it done.

I'm sick of these old men telling us what's right and wrong.

I'm sick of these old men getting to decide who's worth helping. Because they get it wrong. Year after year I watch them get it wrong. I watch them get it wrong and I watch good people suffer.

So I'm not here to be Miss Fucking Perfect. I'm not here to win the crown.  
- I'm here to get shit done.

(beat)

MAC

That's nice.

That's certainly the 'right' answer. But she lost her son.

BECKER

It'd be nice if she didn't lose him for nothing, wouldn't it?

I've had it with this shit. This thing has been kicking around for six years. The first four years it didn't even make it out of committee. We're not - this shouldn't be a hard thing to get. It shouldn't be controversial. It should be a no brainer.

MAC

What are you going to do - drag her into meetings?

BECKER

If I have to, yes!

If I have to, yes, I will drag her into meetings!

If I think having the mother of a child that was beaten to death and thrown into a ravine solely because he happened to be gay - if I think having her in the room will help us, then yes, I'll abso-fucking-lutely drag her into meetings.

If I have to take the police file photos and throw them in front of these jackals' faces while she's in the goddamn room because that's what it takes to make this happen - then that's exactly what I'll do!

MAC

You're exploiting her.

BECKER

This isn't 'Government Camp'!

This isn't a rehearsal!

This is IT - this is real life.

This is how the good things happen - by people like you and me getting dirty.

So tighten your belt, shut the fuck up, and help me GET IT DONE.

(long pause)

MAC

Okay.

BECKER

Okay?

MAC

Okay.

BECKER

Okay.

You want a drink?

MAC

Is that a joke?

BECKER

Is it funny?

MAC

No.

BECKER

Then it's not a joke. I guess it's just an offer.



MAC

With all due respect -  
- shut the fuck up.

(beat)

BECKER

Yeah.

MAC

I'm going downstairs. I'm going to talk to Mrs. Beecher for a minute. I'll be back.

BECKER

Okay.

MAC

Don't get into the meat of it with Christensen until I get back.

BECKER

Okay.

MAC

You hear me?

BECKER

Yes. Okay. I hear you.

MAC

I wish you hadn't asked her here.

BECKER

I know.

MAC

Yeah.

(MAC goes, disappearing down a hallway)

(BECKER is alone)

(She opens her jacket, takes out the small bottle of alcohol, takes a sizable drink,  
put the bottle back in her pocket)

(BECKER looks down at her hands. They are trembling)

BECKER  
Oh. Fuck. You.

(BECKER's breathing has become a bit intense. She notices this)

BECKER  
Shit.

(She breathes in. Out. In. Out)  
(She closes her eyes)

BECKER  
One-two-three-four-five-six-seven-eight-nine-ten.

One-two-three-four-five-six-seven-eight-nine-ten.

(Her breathing intensifies as does the count)

BECKER  
One-two-three-four-five-six-seven-eight-nine-ten.  
One-two-three-four-five-six-seven-eight-nine-ten.

One-two-three-four-five-six-seven-eight-nine-ten!  
One-two-three-four-five-six-seven-eight-nine-ten!

(Her breathing slows and calms)

(She opens her eyes)

(She looks down at her hands. They are tumbling - but less so)

BECKER  
Better.

(She opens her jacket, takes out the small bottle of alcohol, takes a sizable drink, put the bottle back in her pocket)

(She breathes in. Out. In. Out)

(Suddenly there is a knock at the door of BECKER's office. CHRISTENSEN has arrived)

BECKER  
Fuck it. Here we go.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

We pick up immediately where we left off. No time has elapsed.  
We dive right back in.

CHRISTENSEN knocks on BECKER's office door.

BECKER  
Fuck it. Here we go.

(CHRISTENSEN enters BECKER's office. He does not wait for her to come to the door)

(CHRISTENSEN is a bit charged up)

BECKER  
Senator Christensen.

CHRISTENSEN  
Howdy.

BECKER  
You didn't have to come all the way over here, you know. I would have come to you.

CHRISTENSEN  
Wanted to get my steps in. My great-grandson got me this watch, keeps track of my steps. I'm supposed to get a certain amount in per day. Keeps me healthy - all that. Supposed to avoid sitting on my butt all day. Gotta be careful at my age.

BECKER  
Sure. That's good.

CHRISTENSEN  
You got one?

BECKER  
A step counter?

CHRISTENSEN  
Yeah.

BECKER  
My phone keeps track of it. Steps. Flights of stairs climbed. Things like that.

CHRISTENSEN

Yeah. Don't wanna die too soon. It's important to avoid unhealthy behaviors. It's important to take care of yourself.

BECKER

Right.

CHRISTENSEN

How 'bout you - taking care of yourself?

BECKER

Fit as a fiddle.

CHRISTENSEN

How's your family?

BECKER

My husband?

CHRISTENSEN

Yeah. How's he?

BECKER

He's good. Busy. Work keeps him pretty busy.

CHRISTENSEN

That's good. Work is good.

What's his name again?

BECKER

Mark.

CHRISTENSEN

'Mark'. Yeah.

Still no 'Junior Representatives' running around?

BECKER

Still no children, no.

CHRISTENSEN

You should probably get on that.

Having children is a good thing. Pass things on.

BECKER

Yeah.

CHRISTENSEN

So - all is well. I'm glad.

BECKER

Thanks.

CHRISTENSEN

Hughes is bringing your bill to a vote today.

(beat)

BECKER

Yes.

CHRISTENSEN

Yep.

BECKER

How did you know?

CHRISTENSEN

Hughes told me.

Called me about fifteen minutes ago.

BECKER

Of course he did.

CHRISTENSEN

Ambitious, that one.

BECKER

Yeah.

CHRISTENSEN

Got him to bring it to a vote. Good for you. Showing some muscle.

BECKER

Something like that.

CHRISTENSEN

It won't pass.

BECKER

You don't know that.

CHRISTENSEN

I DO know that. Of course I know that.

BECKER

Things aren't as locked up as they seem.

CHRISTENSEN

Things are exactly as locked up as they seem.

BECKER

If things are so locked up then why are you here?

CHRISTENSEN

I needed to get some steps in.

BECKER

You nervous?

CHRISTENSEN

Never.

BECKER

I think you might be nervous.

CHRISTENSEN

I can see the future.

BECKER

You're smart. You've been a member of this legislature for a long time. You talk to people, they talk to you.

CHRISTENSEN

I'm a popular fella.

BECKER

You know I've rallied support. You know I was down by a lot a couple of days ago but you also know that now that's changed.

CHRISTENSEN

Down to it right away - I like that. That's my style. Waste no time.

BECKER

And you know if this vote was being held a week ago I would go down in flames, but you know that today it'll pass.

CHRISTENSEN

We might disagree there.

BECKER

We might, huh?

CHRISTENSEN

We might. Yep.

BECKER

I don't think you do. I think you know it's going to pass the Senate. And that makes you nervous. And that's why you're here.

CHRISTENSEN

The thing about the Senate is that I live there. In the Senate, it's dead.

BECKER

What's the count? Twenty-nine senators - what's the count?

CHRISTENSEN

Thirteen up. Sixteen down.

BECKER

Sixteen?

CHRISTENSEN

Sixteen against. Yes. You turned three more. But you still **NEED** three more.

BECKER (bomb-throwing)

You sure?

(slight beat)

CHRISTENSEN

Yep.

I'm sure.

BECKER

Then what are you worried about?

CHRISTENSEN

Nothing.

BECKER

You came all the way over here.

CHRISTENSEN

We work in the same building, honey. It wasn't exactly a pilgrimage.

BECKER

You just needed to get your steps in.

(beat)

CHRISTENSEN

You aren't intimidating. You don't rattle me.

BECKER

Okay.

CHRISTENSEN

I've done this much longer than you have.

BECKER

I know. You have. I can see that. You look very tired.

(beat)

CHRISTENSEN

That's funny.

BECKER

I wasn't trying to be funny.

CHRISTENSEN

Of course not.

BECKER

Nope.

CHRISTENSEN

Sixteen against.

(beat)

BECKER

No.

Yesterday, yes. But now - no.

I've been working the phones and the halls all last night and all morning.

Thirteen for. Thirteen against. Three on the fence.



CHRISTENSEN  
You're an idiot.

BECKER  
Maybe - but I'm not wrong.

(MAC enters)

BECKER  
Everything alright downstairs?

MAC  
'Alright' isn't the term I would use.

CHRISTENSEN (to BECKER)  
You're an idiot. And you ARE wrong.

MAC  
So this meeting is going well?

(BECKER shoots MAC a look)

BECKER (to CHRISTENSEN)  
What's the problem?

CHRISTENSEN  
I don't have a problem.

BECKER  
With the bill - what's your problem with the bill?

CHRISTENSEN  
It's too expensive.

BECKER  
It's NOT too expensive. I know it's not too expensive. YOU know it's not too expensive. I could stand here for the next hour and tell you why it's not too expensive but all the reasons would be things you already know. So - come on - what's the problem?

CHRISTENSEN  
I just told you the problem.

BECKER  
That's cover.

CHRISTENSEN  
That's cover?

MAC  
That's cover.

(CHRISTENSEN shoots MAC a look. It is not kind)

BECKER  
Benson. Talk to me. What's the problem?

CHRISTENSEN  
I don't agree with it.

MAC  
You don't agree that kids should be taught to stop bullying each other?

CHRISTENSEN  
No one's talking to you.

BECKER  
This isn't a gulag. They're allowed to speak.

CHRISTENSEN (to MAC)  
What's your name?

MAC  
We've met. Several times.

CHRISTENSEN  
And yet I don't remember your name. Funny.

MAC  
Mac.

CHRISTENSEN  
'Mac'. How cute.  
(measured and controlled to MAC)  
Mac. No one. Is talking. To you.

BECKER  
You know the majority of the citizens of this state are for this bill.

CHRISTENSEN  
The citizens don't vote on bills. We do.

BECKER

So you're just going rogue?

CHRISTENSEN

My constituents don't support this bill. Some of yours do, fine, but mine do not.

BECKER

Most of them do actually.

CHRISTENSEN

Because that poll in the paper last Wednesday told you so?

You live down there in Kane County? You recently moved to Iron County and I don't know about it? You suddenly an expert on my district? You go door to door down there?

BECKER

No.

CHRISTENSEN

Did you sit in church with these people - my people - did you personally talk to them about it?

BECKER

No.

CHRISTENSEN

No. I didn't think so.

MAC

It's just an anti-bullying program.

CHRISTENSEN

- I hear some kind of buzzing. 'Buzz buzz buzz'.

MAC

You like little kids getting beat up? That do it for you?

BECKER

Mac.

(short beat)

CHRISTENSEN

Who's getting beat up?

BECKER

Children are being bullied in our state. That's fact.

CHRISTENSEN

That's fact in every state.

BECKER

Yes. But we're not talking about legislating every state. That's not our job. Our job is to legislate THIS state.

CHRISTENSEN

'Children are being bullied'.

BECKER

Yes.

CHRISTENSEN

What children? Who are you talking about - specifically?

BECKER

It's not just one group - there are kids being bullied for being different. Race, religion, sexuality -

CHRISTENSEN

- There it is -

BECKER

- mental ability, body type -

CHRISTENSEN

- No. No. It's the one - the one you slip into the middle there, the one you slip into the middle every time. Sexuality. That's what we're talking about here. That's what you're really getting at with this bill. That's what you've always been getting at with it.

BECKER

It's not just sexuality.

CHRISTENSEN

- But that's the one you're really talking about. Sexuality.

BECKER

- Kids are getting bullied for reasons other than sexuality.

CHRISTENSEN

When was the last time a Jewish kid in this state was murdered for being a Jew?

BECKER

No one's talking about murder -

CHRISTENSEN

You're talking about a murder.

Why are you lying? You're wasting my time.

You're talking about a murder.

BECKER

You can't sit there and tell me kids in this state aren't getting bullied, in some cases to death.

Last year we became one of about twenty states to pass a bill banning trans kids from playing sports - hell, us here at the legislature are basically the biggest bullies of them all.

CHRISTENSEN

This is the new war you've chosen to fight. This is your new frontier. Sexuality.

Your bill isn't about saving the children, not all the children, not really - it's about saving the gay kids. Or the boys that want to be girls, girls that want to be boys.

'Cause saving those types of kids is 'in' now. It's fashionable.

Six years ago. You first proposed this bill six years ago, a few months after that kid was killed. That's what this bill is about. That kid. Not 'all' the kids - that kid. The gay kid.

(beat)

BECKER

Do you know his name?

The kid.

Do you know his name?

(beat)

CHRISTENSEN (not vindictive)

I don't remember.

I'm sorry - it's been six years.

I honestly don't remember.

BECKER

You should.

CHRISTENSEN  
I suppose I should.

BECKER  
Jacob Beecher.

CHRISTENSEN  
(Nods)

BECKER  
Do you know what happened to him?

CHRISTENSEN  
Yes.

BECKER  
DO you?

CHRISTENSEN  
Of course I do.  
They beat him death. They threw him down a hill.  
Horrible.

(beat)

BECKER  
They followed him.  
They followed him as he walked home from school.  
You know what they called him? - 'Fag'. 'Faggot'.  
Said 'Everyone hates fags'. 'God hates fucking faggots'.

They were all fourteen years old.

They started throwing rocks at him.  
- as they followed him as he walked home from school.  
they started throwing rocks.

One of the rocks hit him in the back of the head. - and he fell. He went to the ground.

It's in the police report. This is direct from the interviews with the kids.

He fell down and they were on him.  
They were kicking him. Punching. Spitting. Screaming at him - 'Fucking faggot'.

it went on.

for a while.

and when it stopped he was still.  
they all noticed he was very still.

his chest was still moving up and down. but it was slow.  
and they started to get scared.  
he was barely breathing. and they were pretty sure the breath was going to stop.

so they dragged him to the edge of the ravine and they let him go over.

they were scared. they were kids. they were trying to hide a mistake.

they took him to the edge and they let him go.

It's about eighty feet from the top to the bottom. It's not a sheer drop - but it's steep. and rocky.

I know because I went there.  
I went there to see it for myself.

I went there because he deserved my time. and my attention. What happened to him deserved my attention.  
And it deserves yours.

He deserved better.  
He deserved better than what happened to him. And he deserves better than what we've been doing.

(beat)

CHRISTENSEN  
Jacob.

BECKER  
Yeah.  
Jacob. Jacob Beecher.

CHRISTENSEN  
Jacob Beecher.  
Jacob Beecher.  
I'll remember it.

BECKER  
Thank you.

CHRISTENSEN  
- But it won't pass. You don't have three on the fence.

BECKER  
I do. I'm telling you I do.

CHRISTENSEN  
You can tell me whatever you want but that doesn't make it so.  
I run that room. It does what I tell it to do.

MAC  
Not according to the sixteen senators that are gonna vote to pass this thing.

CHRISTENSEN  
Little girl -

MAC  
- 'little girl' ? -

CHRISTENSEN  
- You should watch yourself.

MAC  
You wear diapers yet?

BECKER  
Mac! Enough.

MAC  
So what if this is about saving gay kids? Or trans kids? So fucking what?

CHRISTENSEN  
Has it ever occurred to you that a large number of people in this state don't necessarily think that those people can be saved? Not the way they are.

MAC  
It occurs to me that a large number of people in this state are backwards hill people.

BECKER  
Mac, shut up!



CHRISTENSEN

That's good. 'Backwards hill people'. Now we're talking. Now you're saying what you want to say.

BECKER

Ignore them.

CHRISTENSEN

I do.

You think we don't know that you hold us in contempt? You think we're just ignorant country idiots, down there on the farm. You think we're stupid. You think our faith in God is silly. You hold us in contempt for not believing the same things you believe.

The people I represent don't want this bill to pass. And neither do I.

BECKER

How does it hurt you? How does helping to protect them hurt you?

CHRISTENSEN

There are laws more important than the ones we make here in this building. There are God's laws.

BECKER

Which of God's laws says it's okay for a child to be beaten and thrown down a ravine?

CHRISTENSEN

I'm sorry for that boy's death. That wasn't right. But I'm not going to get into a debate about sexuality with you.

MAC

Yeah, because you'd lose.

BECKER

Benson. I don't want what happened to Jacob Beecher to happen to any other kid.

CHRISTENSEN

I will not vote for a bill that helps promote deviant behavior.

BECKER

Come on, Benson, this bill doesn't do that. It doesn't promote any kind of behavior!

CHRISTENSEN

These things are sins, Amanda. These behaviors, these ways of being. At some point people started being afraid of saying that out loud. Well - I'm not afraid. I'm not afraid of saying the truth - even if the truth is no longer popular. Your bill says certain behavior isn't sinful. That it shouldn't be punished. By refusing to condemn certain behavior you're saying it's okay. If you can't see that's promoting and condoning certain behavior then I have to think it's either because you just don't want to see it or you just don't care. I don't think we should be offering protections to people whose behaviors shouldn't be protected. That's what the problem is.

BECKER

They're children.

CHRISTENSEN

Are we about done?

MAC

I think you don't like it just because you think we're gross.

BECKER

What I'm trying to do -

CHRISTENSEN

- You don't want some kid to call another kid a fag -  
- even if the kid getting called a fag IS a fag.

BECKER

I don't want any child to be bullied or harassed or murdered because they happen to be different.

CHRISTENSEN

You're trying to legislate human behavior -

BECKER

- That's all laws are! Legislating behavior.

CHRISTENSEN

You don't need a million laws.  
You only need ten.

BECKER

That's cute. Quippy.

CHRISTENSEN

Part of your problem is you think that's cute.

I don't think it's cute. My constituents don't think it's cute. We think it's the word of God.

(beat)

BECKER

Okay.

CHRISTENSEN

Okay?

BECKER

Okay.

You're right.

CHRISTENSEN

I know I'm right!

- but which part are you saying I'm right about?

BECKER

You're right. In what I think about you. In what Mac thinks about you - about you and the people you represent.

We think you're backwards. We think you're completely bugfuck crazy. We think you're holding us back.

I can admit that. You're right - that's what we think of you.

But this conversation isn't about any of that.

This conversation is about keeping children safe.

This conversation is about keeping children from being abused.

This conversation is about keeping children from being beaten to death.

And we're far apart on a lot of things but I don't think we're far apart on that.

(beat)

CHRISTENSEN

Look - no, you're right.

We aren't far apart on that.

But I won't lie to you.

These things are sins.

And that's where I stand.

That's what I believe.

A man and a woman. A man and a woman loving each other.

That's what it is. That's what it's supposed to be. How it's supposed to be.

Two people able to make children. To love and be able to pass on that love in the form of a child. That's what it's all about.  
That's what God wants. That's what I want.  
You can call me old fashioned. You can call me worse. So be it.

BECKER  
Senator Christensen. Benson.  
Your great-grandson - how old is he?

CHRISTENSEN  
He's twelve.

BECKER  
And what if in a year or two he comes to you and tells you he's gay?  
Or bi? Or trans?

(beat)

CHRISTENSEN  
Careful, Amanda.

BECKER  
I'm just asking a question. Honestly. What if he comes to you and says, "I'm gay"?  
What are you going to do?

(beat)

BECKER  
Benson. We're not that far apart on this. I know it. They're kids.

CHRISTENSEN  
I know.

BECKER  
He'd be in danger - your great-grandson. Living where he lives - and I'm not trying to be demeaning here, Benson, I swear to God, I'm not - but you know the attitude down there. . . You know what I'm talking about. 'Your' attitude or not - you know what I'm talking about.

CHRISTENSEN  
Yes. I know what you're talking about.

BECKER  
So what would you do, Benson? He comes to you, he says, "I'm gay". He says, "This is who I am". What would you say to him?

(beat)

CHRISTENSEN

I'd say, "I love you".

And then I'd say, "But as long as you make that choice I want no part of you".

BECKER

Come on, Benson -

CHRISTENSEN

That's what I would say.

BECKER

- You wouldn't turn your back -

CHRISTENSEN

- That's what I would say -

BECKER

- Attitudes are changing -

CHRISTENSEN

- and have we even stopped for a moment to think if that's a good thing?

MAC

This is bullshit.

BECKER

(To MAC) Stop. (To CHRISTENSEN) Attitudes are changing - for the better. I mean, clearly you have to -

MAC

- This is fucking bullshit -

BECKER

- Mac, let it go -

MAC (to CHRISTENSEN)

You're garbage.

BECKER

MAC.

CHRISTENSEN

Watch your mouth.

MAC

'Watch my mouth'? Fuck you.  
Watch my mouth say 'fuck you'.  
(Mouths the words) Fuck. You.

CHRISTENSEN

Remember who you're talking to.

MAC

A pile of garbage?

BECKER

Mac - shut up!

MAC

He's a pile of garbage.

BECKER

Stop it! What's wrong with you?

MAC (to CHRISTENSEN)

This is fucking bullshit. It's bullshit.  
You think you're - what? What is it you think you're doing?

This is a victory to you? This is what a victory looks like? You're a cancer.  
You've already lost.  
You've already lost - you just don't see it.

Know why you've lost?

'Cause you'll be dead soon.

You're old and you'll be dead soon and the tide will continue to turn - and all of  
this bullshit - all of your backwards fucking beliefs will die with you.  
They'll die. - and you know what'll be left?  
Me.

Me and all the people like me.  
And we'll fucking dance on your grave.

CHRISTENSEN

Girl, if you know what's -

MAC

- dance on your fucking grave ! -

BECKER  
Mac! Jesus Christ!

CHRISTENSEN  
Control this little bitch, Becker!

(beat)

(Stillness)

(BECKER and MAC burst out laughing)

BECKER  
That's funny.

MAC  
I'm not a little bitch - I'm a big bitch.  
I'M MONSTER BITCH.

CHRISTENSEN  
Your bill is dead.

BECKER  
Oh, I really don't think it is.

CHRISTENSEN  
It's dead. Know why? 'Cause this - all of this - is about power.  
It's about power and those that have it.

Support your bill? Why? I don't want to - but the fun part is I don't have to.  
Because I have the power here and you have nothing.  
Call me names. Call me bigot. Call me homophobe. 'Backwards hill people', right?

BECKER  
- I haven't called you any of those things -

CHRISTENSEN  
I have the power here. - In this room. - In the chamber down the hall.  
So call me names. Call all of the people like me names. Go ahead.  
Go right ahead - because I'm HERE.  
I get the votes. I'm here again and again and again. Thirty-six years.  
And when I die someone else just like me will be here in my place. Like a line. One  
after the other. Because there are a great many of us - more of us than you. I'm  
here. We're here. We get the votes.  
Our side fights on one front. God's front. We speak for Him, he speaks for us. Our  
word. His word. We're united.

You're a damn mess. We're running this state.  
And you're in here wasting my time with a pissant little 'bully bill'.  
And pardon me, I don't usually speak this way - but cram it up your ass.

Three on the fence? Wrong.  
Epson? Voting no. Bingham? Voting no. Hill? Voting no.  
Thirteen for. Sixteen against.

Your bill is already dead. Because I want it so.

Power.  
I have it. You don't.  
Thus endeth the lesson.

BECKER  
We're done.

CHRISTENSEN  
Yeah. We're done.  
(As he leaves) Ladies.

(CHRISTENSEN leaves)

(beat)  
(beat)  
(beat)

(BECKER slaps MAC across the face. Hard)

BECKER  
Idiot.  
You child.  
You fucking idiotic child.

MAC  
I didn't mean -

BECKER  
SHUT THE FUCK UP.

Shut the fuck up.

(pause)

MAC  
I didn't think that -



BECKER

You didn't think. That's right. You didn't think.

MAC

I wasn't wrong.

BECKER

Shut up!

'I wasn't wrong'? What is that? 'I wasn't wrong'? Idiot.

MAC

I wasn't wrong!

BECKER

You WERE wrong.

You were fucking wrong.

Do you have any idea how fragile all of this is?

A man like that - an old white man - do you know how fragile that shit is? That's more fragile than a fucking bonsai tree. The ego on a man like that is more fragile than a house of cards.

And you ran your mouth. You just ran your fucking mouth.

You ran your mouth while I was working.

While I was WORKING.

The world isn't fair. It is not a fair fucking place.

Is he an idiot? Yes.

Which is why you shut up. Which is why you shut up when he says egregious bullshit. Because it doesn't matter. He doesn't matter in ten years. He'll be in the ground.

He'll be in the ground THEN. But we have to deal with him NOW.

So if you can't hold your tongue for five years now in the hope for a better FOREVER then GET. THE FUCK. OUT.

You sloppy, undisciplined child.

(beat)

MAC

I'm sorry -

BECKER  
SHUT. UP.

(long silence)

(MAC is crying slightly)

BECKER  
Stop. That.

(MAC nods)

(beat)

(beat)

(beat)

BECKER  
So - what are the options?

MAC  
The options -

BECKER  
What are the options?

MAC  
I don't know.

BECKER  
Work the problem, Mac.  
He knows about Epson. He knows about Bingham. He knows about Hill.  
They told him 'no'. They told us something different.

MAC  
Yeah.

BECKER  
Yeah.

MAC  
His information is more current than ours.

BECKER  
Maybe.

MAC  
Yeah.

BECKER  
But that doesn't mean the three of them are telling Christensen the truth.

MAC  
They're scared (?) .

BECKER  
I would be. If they're on the wrong side of the vote they're screwed. Their districts are rural. The only way they'd be getting back into this building is as visitors.

MAC  
So what do we do?

BECKER  
(Inhales) (Exhales)  
(Inhales) (Exhales)  
We carry out the plan. We change nothing. Either we're right about those three or Christensen is right. We don't have any more time to change their minds - especially if they've flipped again this late in the game. We don't have time. We can only move forward.

MAC  
Jensen?

BECKER  
Jensen.

(They begin to walk to Jensen's office)

BECKER  
How are we doing on time?

MAC (looking at their phone)  
Close enough.

BECKER  
So we're late?

MAC  
We're late.

BECKER  
By how much?

MAC  
It's fine.

BECKER  
It's fine?

MAC  
It's fine.

BECKER  
Okay.

(BECKER suddenly trips or stumbles. Was it an accident or the alcohol?)

(BECKER and MAC stop)

BECKER  
SHIT!

(BECKER is very angry)

BECKER  
SHIT! SHIT! SHIT!

(BECKER collects herself)

BECKER  
I'm sorry.

MAC  
I'M sorry. I screwed up in there.

BECKER  
We'll talk about it later.

MAC  
Yeah.

(beat)

BECKER  
She's just waiting downstairs? Jacob's mom?

MAC

Yeah. I told her to just hang tight. I didn't know where to send her.

(beat)

BECKER

I'm an idiot.

MAC

Why?

BECKER

I'm such an idiot.

You've never spoken to her. Jacob's mom. You've never spoken to her before today.

MAC

No.

BECKER

They beat her son to death for being different than they were, you went downstairs to talk to her, and then I put you into a meeting with Christensen. I'm sorry.

MAC

It's okay.

BECKER

I'm sorry. I wasn't thinking.

MAC

Amanda.

It's okay.

(beat)

BECKER

Do you really believe that about Christensen and all the people down there - you really believe they're 'backwards hill people'?

MAC

Removed from the moment I would choose different words -

BECKER

- but - ?

MAC

Yes.

BECKER

They're not all like him, you know.

MAC

I know.

But you have a luxury I don't.

You're a cis woman that likes men.

People might be trying to eradicate your rights but they aren't trying to wipe you off the map.

Still. After all this progress. They're still trying to erase people like me. Still.

BECKER

Yeah.

MAC

I don't have time to care about subtlety or nuance. They're still killing us.

All of us not like you, not like your husband, not like Hughes, Christensen . . .

There are going to be more Jacob Beechers.

BECKER

Yeah.

(beat)

BECKER

Do you believe in God, Mac?

MAC

What's it matter?

BECKER

I don't know. Just all of this - Hughes, Christensen - everyone in this damn place.

It makes a difference in this place. It makes a difference in how things turn out.

MAC

'Separation of church and state', my ass.

BECKER

Right.

(beat)

MAC

Do YOU?

BECKER

Maybe. Kind of.

I don't really know anymore. I was raised in it. So maybe it's just left over - lessons from my youth, you know?

I don't think there's a magic man in the sky.

But do I think there's something out there - something out there on some plane of existence that's maybe more than we are? I don't know. It's possible.

Maybe God is some aspect of the universe that science hasn't figured out yet.

Maybe God's something that makes perfect sense - and we just haven't figured it out yet.

Maybe we're all just looking at the same mountain from different sides.

MAC

Maybe.

Would that make you feel like you could understand people like Christensen?

BECKER

No.

And I don't want to understand people like Christensen.

I shouldn't say that but there it is.

(beat)

So what about you?

MAC

I do, yeah.

BECKER

That's surprising.

MAC

Why? Because I'm a tranny heathen?

BECKER

No. Just - I don't know. I didn't think you'd say 'yes'.

MAC

I'm multifaceted.

BECKER

Yes. You are.

But Christensen -

MAC

People like Christensen don't believe in God. They only believe in themselves. They say God created us in his image.

But people like Christensen don't believe God created us in his image - Christensen created his own god in HIS image. His god is spiteful and childish and cruel. That's not my god.

My god loves me for all the same reasons that Christensen's god hates me for.

BECKER

Yeah.

Yeah.

I'm sorry I hit you. Before.

I'm sorry I hit you.

MAC

I'm sorry I couldn't keep my mouth shut.

(BECKER reaches out her hand. MAC takes it)

(They stand there silently, unmoving. In the battle together)

(BECKER breaks the moment)

BECKER

Come on.

(They continue towards Jensen's office. They've almost arrived)

BECKER

Last one.

MAC

Last one.

BECKER

Hughes tabled it. Jensen tabled it.

MAC

You got Hughes to bring it to a vote. You'll get Jensen to bring it to a vote.

BECKER (Not sure)

Yeah.

(They have arrived at the office of STATE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE, ELIZABETH JENSEN)

MAC

Ready?



(BECKER puts her hands in front of herself, stares at them. They are shaking)

(MAC sees this)

(BECKER sees MAC see this)

(MAC and BECKER exchange a look)

MAC

What's wrong?

BECKER

Nothing.

MAC

Your hands are shaking.

BECKER ('I know')

Thank you.

(beat)

(beat)

(beat)

BECKER

(Inhales)

(Exhales)

I need a favor.

MAC

Okay.

BECKER

Go downstairs. Get Mrs. Beecher, bring her up to my office. Just stay there with her. Keep her busy for thirty minutes. Talk to her.

MAC

Talk to her?

BECKER

Yeah - just - .

I don't want her sitting downstairs all by herself. Doesn't feel right.

MAC (re: The Jensen meeting)

You got this?

BECKER

I got it. I'm fine. I'm fucking great.

MAC

What am I supposed to talk to her about?

(beat)

BECKER

Jacob had - on his walls of the room he had - he made these collages (?). He would take photos from places, clip them out, put them together. He would make something new with them. He would take all of these old photos and make something new. All over the walls. He would surround himself with these things he had made.

It was like the world he saw around him wasn't right. He saw the right pieces were there, they just weren't in the right order - weren't arranged the right way. He was taking what he had and was trying to make something better.

(MAC is looking hard at BECKER. MAC knows something is off)

(BECKER sees MAC'S look, clocks the meaning)

(BECKER reigns it in - she got lost for a moment)

BECKER

Just go sit with her in my office. Thirty minutes tops. I don't want her to be alone.

MAC

Are you sure you're okay?

(beat)

BECKER

You ever feel like you're inside of a dream?

MAC

I don't -

- I don't know what you mean.

BECKER

i feel like I'm losing.

i feel like there are things I lost.

in my dreams I'm always losing things.

(beat)

(beat)

(beat)

BECKER

Jacob's mom - a couple of years after . . .

She decided to pack up his things - in his bedroom, you know?

'Cause she had left it how it was.

But time went by and she decided. it was time. was time to pack up his things.  
So she got boxes, took them up to Jacob's room, started to fill them up.

and she found these journals. Jacob's journals.  
just pages and pages.

I know this because she told me.  
And she showed me.

And she said she came to this one page.  
(and it was written in that teenager scrawl),

"I tried on one of mom's dresses today and I don't know why.  
I just did it.  
I felt it deep down.  
And I felt weird and dumb.  
But then I saw myself in the mirror

and I looked beautiful".

I committed that to memory.

I don't know who Jacob Beecher was going to grow up to be. At fourteen years  
old, Jacob Beecher didn't know who Jacob Beecher was going to be.  
'Cause he was just a kid.

He was a little different. He noticed that. Others noticed that.  
Those kids that followed him home that day - THEY noticed it.  
They could see it. Sense it.

And what do we do to things that are different?

We try to destroy them.

fourteen years old .

didn't know who he was.

but, for a moment, he felt beautiful.

In a world full of all this ugliness  
he felt beautiful.

and we took that away from him.

we took that away.

(beat)

(beat)

(beat)

MAC

Don't stand too close to her. When you get in there.  
She'll be able to smell it.

(BECKER looks at MAC. She gives MAC a slight nod)

BECKER

Yeah.

Thanks.

(MAC turns and goes)

(BECKER is alone)

(She opens her jacket, takes out the small bottle of alcohol, takes a drink, puts  
the bottle back in her pocket)

(BECKER walks into JENSEN's office. JENSEN is there, just getting off the  
phone)

JENSEN (into the phone)

- Yes. Understood.

Thank you.

(JENSEN hangs up the phone, gives her attention to BECKER)

BECKER

Madame Speaker.

JENSEN  
So formal.

BECKER  
What can I say - I'm a stickler for formality.

JENSEN  
Yep. That's you. Very straight and narrow.

BECKER  
How're you?

JENSEN  
Great. Last day of the session and then we all get to go home.

BECKER  
So eager to get back to Mount Pleasant, huh?

JENSEN  
Wide open spaces. Air you don't have to chew. You should try it.

BECKER  
Farm life and I wouldn't get along.

JENSEN  
Ephraim has a Walmart.

BECKER (with a twang)  
Whoo, like a regular New York City.

JENSEN  
You should come down. Next couple of weeks. Take a few days off, come down, make fun of all of these dummies up here.

BECKER  
I make fun of all the dummies up here while I'm up here.

(JENSEN laughs)

JENSEN  
Yes. You do.  
They make it so easy.

BECKER  
They really, really do.

JENSEN

So -

BECKER

Hughes call you?

JENSEN

Of course he did.

BECKER

Of course.

JENSEN

He's like a pre-teen gossip queen, that one. The second anyone says anything to anyone he's on the damn phone letting everyone else know about it.

BECKER

I don't think his parents hugged him enough.

JENSEN

I wouldn't hug that guy either. He's not winning any beauty pageants.

(BECKER laughs)

BECKER

We should do this more often.

JENSEN

Call Hughes ugly?

BECKER

Yeah, call Hughes ugly.

JENSEN

It's fun, isn't it?

BECKER

This is the best meeting I've had all day.

JENSEN

My meetings are always the best. They made me Speaker for a reason.

BECKER

He's bringing 217 to a vote.

JENSEN  
Yes, he is.

BECKER  
I got him to do that.

JENSEN  
Yes, you did - which is pretty impressive considering that Hughes is -

BECKER  
- a coward?

JENSEN  
- so cautious.

BECKER  
I like the way I said it better.

JENSEN  
And now you're here in my office to get me to do the same - to bring 217 to a vote.  
Today. In the House.

BECKER  
Yes.

JENSEN  
Well. Okay.

BECKER  
'Okay' what - ?

JENSEN  
- I'll bring it to a vote.

(beat)

BECKER  
Okay.

JENSEN  
Yeah.

BECKER  
That was easy.

JENSEN

I'm pretty reasonable.

But it won't pass.

(beat)

BECKER

It's not too expensive.

JENSEN

It's four point eight million dollars. To start.

BECKER

Yeah.

SENATOR JENSEN

That's more funding than we appropriated for Highway Safety in the last fiscal year. I'm pretty sure bullying didn't kill more people than car accidents on the highway.

BECKER

It's not too expensive.

JENSEN

It's four point eight million dollars - to start - but you're right. I agree with you. It's not too expensive. I think the money's worth it. I think 217's a great bill. And I think in the long run it would save lives. But it won't pass. It won't get out of the Senate. You don't have the votes.

BECKER

I DO have the votes. I've been busting my ass to get -

JENSEN

Epson. Bingham. Hill.

BECKER

I HAVE them. I flipped them.

JENSEN

You did.

BECKER

I did.



JENSEN

Yes. And then Christensen flipped them back.

BECKER

We don't know that -

JENSEN

I know that.

(beat)

JENSEN

I called them, Amanda. I called all three of them. And then I called Christensen - who you REALLY pissed off, by the way. They're all voting no. 217 won't pass the Senate. You don't have the votes. It's dead.

(Pause)

(This is reality and it's slowly hitting BECKER)

JENSEN

Do you want to sit down?

BECKER

Yes.

(A moment or two goes by in silence)

JENSEN

It's a good bill. You tried.

BECKER

Yeah.

JENSEN

Maybe next year.

BECKER

Yeah.

JENSEN

You want a drink? - Water?

BECKER

No.

JENSEN  
Try not to take it too hard.  
I know you will - but try not to.

(beat)

BECKER  
Why does it happen like this?

JENSEN  
- Happen like what?

BECKER  
It will save lives.

JENSEN  
Yeah.

BECKER  
It will save lives - kid's lives.

JENSEN  
Yeah.

BECKER  
And it's not gonna pass because - what - your club doesn't like gay people?

JENSEN  
I think gay people are great. They're always the most entertaining ones on TV.

BECKER  
I'm serious.

JENSEN  
I know you are.

BECKER  
Your church is telling all of you how to vote.

JENSEN  
Don't do that. You're not simplistic.  
And I'm not my church.

(beat)

JENSEN

People like Christensen exist. Obviously. They're here, they're out there - you can't escape them. You don't have to be a member of a religion to be a misguided asshole - Christensen just happens to be.

BECKER

And you're not?

JENSEN

I'm not.

BECKER

I find that hard to believe. Especially in this building. I haven't seen a lot of examples that make that not hard to believe.

JENSEN

Then you find that hard to believe.

BECKER

Why even bring 217 to a vote in the House if you know it won't pass the Senate?

JENSEN

I told you. It's a good bill. I believe in it. I think the people of this state would be better off if your bill was made law. And I want that on the record.

In my chamber - where I hold the authority - I want it on the record that we stood up and said, "Yes. This is good. Yes. This is right".

BECKER

And you're safe in your district. You're running unopposed. Bringing it to a vote won't hurt you.

JENSEN

Yes. And that.

BECKER

Especially if it doesn't end up passing the Senate. Then it'll look like you really took a stand. 'For the children'.

JENSEN

It'll play that way, yes.

BECKER

You'll make sure it plays that way.

JENSEN

We ARE in politics.

BECKER  
Yeah.

(beat)

BECKER  
This is backwards. This is all backwards.

JENSEN  
You know just as well as I do that's how it goes sometimes.

BECKER  
When do we get to do the right things? When do the right things win out?

JENSEN  
It's not about 'right'. It's about who can play the game better.  
Christensen outplayed you.

BECKER  
Mac called him a pile of garbage. To his face.

JENSEN  
An entire pile. I like it.

BECKER  
They were right.

JENSEN  
And yet he walked off with exactly what he wanted.

BECKER  
Yeah.

(beat)

JENSEN  
I really do believe in 217, Amanda.

BECKER  
That's nice but that won't bring back Jacob Beecher.

JENSEN  
Nothing will bring back Jacob Beecher.

(beat)

BECKER

Yeah.

(beat)

JENSEN

Christensen will probably try to get Mac fired.

BECKER

They fucking let Christensen have it.

JENSEN

That must have been nice to see.

BECKER

It was. The timing was shit - but it was.

JENSEN

Tell them they'll be fine.

BECKER

Yeah.

JENSEN

Is it hard for you - not being a member of the club?

BECKER

The God club?

JENSEN

Yes.

BECKER

It makes it hard to get shit done.

I get written off - sometimes it's like people don't even see me.

Try getting a bill passed when people don't even see you. Tricky.

JENSEN

Yeah.

BECKER

And the ones that DO see me don't like me.

They're mad I'm even here - that I even had the audacity to run a campaign and

then actually get elected. They hold me in contempt just because they have to deal with my existence in this building.

JENSEN

Some of them are like that. Even when they think they're not - some of them are like that.

BECKER

Some of them hate me. They fucking hate me.

JENSEN

Some of them do, yes.

BECKER

I can feel it.

JENSEN

Yeah.

But what did you expect?

BECKER

Fairness. Respect.

JENSEN

'Cause that's the way the world is'?

BECKER

Stupid.

JENSEN

Pretty much.

BECKER

And let's not even talk about how much it bugs them that I don't have a dick.

JENSEN

Yeah. They REALLY hate that.

BECKER

Cowards.

JENSEN

Strength and a vagina. That combo has them shaking in their boots, doesn't it?

BECKER

Yeah.

JENSEN

Which I'm fine with, actually. I want them scared.

BECKER

They SHOULD be scared.

JENSEN

I like the ones that are too dumb to be scared. There are more of them than you would think.

BECKER

What - dumb men? No, I think there are probably exactly as many dumb men as I think.

JENSEN

Probably.

My first year in office - my first year in these halls. There were odds - they made bets on which one of them would be the first to get me into bed.

BECKER

Charming.

JENSEN

God-fearing men. Married men. Family men.

BECKER

Of course.

How do you handle it? The bullshit?

JENSEN

I've gotten better at it.

(beat)

JENSEN

I have to get down to the floor soon. The session isn't going to run itself.

BECKER

Yeah.

(JENSEN begins to get her things together)

(BECKER absent-mindedly gravitates towards a window, looks out of it)

BECKER

Better view than my office.

JENSEN

Being Speaker of the House comes with some perks.

BECKER

That's the way I come into the building down there. Up the front steps. I've always done that. I never use the side entrances closer to the lots. Always up the front steps.

(JENSEN joins BECKER at the window)

BECKER

I fucking love this place.

JENSEN

Me too.

BECKER

You can see everything from the top of the front steps - all the way to the other side of the valley. To the south. To the west. I've always loved that. Good spot - this building. Top of the hill. Sitting up here. An example.

View hasn't changed for over a hundred years. Downtown's taller now, but they finished this building in 1916. They finished it, looked out, this is what they saw. This place. Our home.

1916. View hasn't changed for over a hundred years.

Every day of the session for twelve years I've walked up those steps. Every day. Fifty-three steps. Fifty-three steps and then I turn around and look out at our home. Breathe it in. And then I turn back around and I take that fifty-fourth step through the front door and into the building.

The first fifty-three steps - those are mine.

After that - the fifty-fourth step - walking into this building - that's about getting it right. Doing the work - getting it right. Not for me - for all of us.

1916. View hasn't changed for over a hundred years.

The view.

Needs.

To change.

(beat)

JENSEN

You'll get 'em next year.



BECKER

Yeah.

(JENSEN gathers some final things)

JENSEN

They're gonna need you downstairs. If you aren't down there telling everyone how they're screwing everything up, things will fall apart.

(beat)

BECKER

You mind if I stay here another minute? Look at the place we're doing all this for?

JENSEN

No.

Go ahead.

(BECKER nods - a 'thank you')

(a beat)

(JENSEN begins to go - then stops)

JENSEN

Amanda -

BECKER

- yeah?

(beat)

JENSEN

Nothing.

Nevermind.

You're not less than anybody.

Don't take the loss too hard.

(JENSEN leaves)

(BECKER stands motionless for a few moments - staring out of the window)

(Stares)

(Stares)

(Stares)

(Eventually, she slowly makes her way over to JENSEN'S desk)  
 (She pulls out her bottle of liquor, puts it down on the desk, dead center)

(BECKER puts her hands in front of her. They are shaking)

(She closes her eyes tight)  
 (Opens them)

(Her hands shake)

(BECKER looks to the bottle of liquor, looks back to her hands) (They shake)

(She is breathing hard)

BECKER

One. Two. Three. Four. Five. Six. Seven. Eight. Nine. Ten.

One. Two. Three. Four. Five. Six. Seven. Eight. Nine. Ten.

(Breathes)

(The count comes a little faster)

One. Two. Three. Four. Five. Six. Seven. Eight. Nine. Ten.

(beat)

One-two-three-four-five-six-seven-eight-nine-ten.

(Her breathing intensifies as does the count)

One-two-three-four-five-six-seven-eight-nine-ten.

One-two-three-four-five-six-seven-eight-nine-ten.

(The count intensifies)

One-two-three-four-five-six-seven-eight-nine-ten!

One-two-three-four-five-six-seven-eight-nine-ten!

ONE-TWO-THREE-FOUR-FIVE-SIX-SEVEN-EIGHT-NINE-TEN!

ONE-TWO-THREE-FOUR-FIVE-SIX-SEVEN-EIGHT-NINE-TEN!

(Breathes)

(She stares down at her hands)

(They are steel)

Fuck it. Here we go.

(BECKER exits - leaving the bottle on the desk behind her as she goes)

/  
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(Lights out)

(Darkness)

END PLAY