

THE A-LIST

A Play in Two Acts

by

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Cast of Characters

<u>RUTH GILES:</u>	a millennial woman, 30
<u>COREY GILES:</u>	early 30s, Ruth's husband
<u>ABBI:</u>	early 30s, their friend
<u>CONGRESSMAN:</u>	voice of a man in his middle age or older

Scene

Ruth and Corey's apartment in the suburban Midwest

Time

Winter into the summer of 2017

Production Notes

THE VOICE OF THE NEWSCASTER should be white noise, static or a series of tonal repetitions, under no circumstances should the voice speak text.

This should be a play without black-outs. The recording should underscore Corey, Ruth and Abbi living their everyday lives.

Act IScene 1

SETTING: A living room of a moderately decorated middle class apartment in a suburb of Chicago.

AT RISE: RUTH GILES half-heartedly straightens the cookie cutter apartment, fanning magazines, fluffing the pillows on the couch, throwing out a bottle of beer. She's on her cell phone, speaking animatedly. The following text is projected onto the back wall of the apartment. "The following recording is a transcript of an interview conducted before the Select Committee of Abortion and Fetal Rights of the United States House of Representatives. The records of these interviews became records of the Select Committee pursuant H. R 314 of the 115th congress and are included in the publication of witness interviews conducted by the Select Committee for completeness of the record." A recording plays of a hearing happening in the near future.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

This hearing today will proceed like an interview, conducted by the Select Committee of Abortion and Fetal Rights. This interview was requested by myself, the Committee Chairman, Johnathan Danforth as a part of the Committee's investigation into the safety of the women of this county and the children that they conceive as well as the fetuses that are not granted the right to life as others are. Also, it is this committee's immediate intent to confirm where and how federal resources are being

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE (Cont.)

allocated and whether they represent our conscience as a nation. I would like to take a moment to reflect on religious freedom as it is stated in our constitution. The founders of this great country and the designers of our Constitution, therefore our law, believed our country would be a place that would house, protect and honor all religions. With that specified, it is imperative to note and respect that ultimately Mr. Jefferson, Mr. Washington, all the rest, used and were guided by their ethics, and morality creating what one might call their conscience, which was formed clearly by their religions conviction. Therefore, they made it quite clear that man's conscience was, and remains to be his religion. Now that that has been stated, we shall proceed with that understanding. We have interviewed many women and some other folks with medical professional credentials, but we want your personal perspective and your experience. Got it? Right. I need and expect candor. Before we continue could the witness please state your name for the record?

RUTH'S VOICE

Right...um Ruth Laurel Giles.

(The recording ends and the focus turns to present day RUTH on the phone in her apartment.)

RUTH (on the phone)

She said that?...Wow, a betrayal of modern feminism, huh?...I didn't know Mercy was so radical...Even I wore white...What is that supposed to me? It was white enough...I seriously considering wearing powder blue. I would have. Really I-

(COREY GILES enters, throws his bag on the ground and turns on the television.)

Corey, I'm on the phone.

COREY

I think you're going to want to get off that phone.

RUTH

It's my mom...about the wedding.

COREY

It's happening.

RUTH

You are right. It is happening so I need-
(into the phone)

No Mom. It's Corey. I know that the-

COREY

No. It's all happening. This is the first step. Ruth. I'm going to need you to hang up.

RUTH

Not now.

(back to the phone)

I'm not talking her out of it. It's her day. As the maid of honor, it's not my job to convince the bride of anything. Especially that bride.

(The television gets louder and we begin to hear THE VOICE OF THE NEWSCASTER under RUTH'S conversation)

Can you watch that in the other-?

COREY

No I can't. Hang up.

RUTH

Stop, I'm on the...no Mom everything's fine.

(COREY takes her phone.)

COREY

Hi Ann, Ruth will have to call you back. No everything's fine. The country as we know it is collapsing around us. I'm not. Love you, bye.

(COREY hangs up the phone.)

COREY

We can fight about that later. Listen.

(THE VOICE OF THE NEWSCASTER emanates from the television filling the room with

overwhelming sound. RUTH
turns it down.)

RUTH

That's it?

COREY

What do you mean that's it-? Are you listening? She has
devoted her career to-

RUTH

This isn't a surprise. She's been on the short list since
the inauguration. I thought something real was happening.

COREY

Something real *is* happening, Ruth. I feel that appointing a
judge who plans on re-defining the Constitution-

RUTH

I didn't realize the founding fathers drafted the Roe v.
Wade decision -

COREY

Semantics.

RUTH

It's one appointment.

COREY

One of possibly more.

RUTH

I'll join your freak out on the second one then.

COREY

For Christ sake, this should matter to you more than
anyone.

RUTH

What does that mean, Corey?

COREY

You know exactly what it means.
(RUTH's phone buzzes.)

RUTH

Hi Mom. No everything is fine. ...It's Corey. No, he
definitely hung up on you. Yep, your phone is fine.

RUTH (Cont.)

..Yep... I know...He sure is...Yeah, Mom, sure. I'll remind him.

COREY

Hey- we're not done here.

RUTH

(referring to her phone call)

Neither were we.

(speaking back into the phone.)

Give me three seconds, Mom. Three. Just stay on the line.

(holding her hand over the microphone)

This won't get through congress. There's no way in hell this backwater psycho will make it through confirmation.

(She removes her hand from the phone to grab onto one of his.)

Ok? We're fine.

COREY

I might be. I think you need to be-

(RUTH gestures to the phone and waves him off. She returns to her call.)

RUTH

Fine. Everything is fine...Yeah. Putnam. The supreme court nominee...Yeah. You're right...at least she's woman.

(RUTH starts to exit. COREY yells after her.)

COREY

Isn't that wedding in like August?

RUTH

Exactly.

(RUTH exits, talking to her mom)

COREY

Two words- CLARENCE FUCKING THOMAS.

RUTH

(Yelling from the other
room)

That was three.

(He gets extremely close
to the television like
toddler.)

COREY (under his breath)

I'm just pointing out that the improbable can happen. The
impossible happened.

(ABBI enters without
knocking.)

ABBI

Holy shit, where's Ruth?

COREY

Talking to Ann. About Mercy's wedding.

ABBI

Is that in like August?

COREY

Yes. Yes, it is.

ABBI

I don't remember her being this crazy about your wedding.

COREY

Mercy wasn't involved in my wedding.

ABBI

No one was involved in your wedding.

(ABBI takes out a
cigarette.)

COREY

You can't smoke in here.

ABBI

Yes you can, I smoke in my place all the time. Management doesn't say jack-shit.

COREY

And that's your choice, Abbi. But now you are in my apartment and-

ABBI

Your apartment?

COREY

Yes, well, ours, Tillistone management's, whatever.

ABBI

Whatever.

(She puts her cigarette behind her ear.)

I don't know how you quit smoking during all this mess.

COREY

I didn't realize you cared about all this mess.

ABBI

Of course, I care. I'm American. I'm female. I care.

(Seeing that he doesn't acknowledge her, she points the news.)

Turn it up.

(THE VOICE OF THE NEWSCASTER plays.)

ABBI

Fuck.

(She robotically removes the cigarette from her ear, she fiddles with it between her fingers a second. She's in a moment of shock and forgets about COREY and her reasons for coming to the apartment.)

COREY

Abbi? Abbi you can't-

(RUTH enters.)

RUTH
When did you get here?

COREY
A minute ago.

(RUTH sees the cigarette
between ABBI'S fingers.)

RUTH
Can I have one?

COREY
Seriously?

RUTH
What?

COREY
We can't smoke in here.

RUTH
We smoke in Abbi's place all the time.

COREY
Balcony then...please.

RUTH
I thought you wanted me to watch this.

(COREY points to the
balcony as ABBI starts
to light RUTH'S
cigarette. The women
exit to the tiny balcony
to enjoy their vice.
COREY yells after them.)

COREY
For the record, I quit two years ago.

(COREY watches the news.
Life continues in the
apartment as the
recording of the hearing

picks up where it left
off.)

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

We appreciate your appearance at the...uh...interview today. We understand the hardship to join us here.

RUTH'S VOICE

I wasn't aware that I had a choice.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Before we begin, I would like to go over the ground rules of how a hearing like ours, as I assume this is your first appearance before congress.

RUTH'S VOICE

Yes. That is a correct assumption. It's actually my first time in DC.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Oh, well welcome...um...here's how things will proceed. I will ask questions representing the majority and then our colleagues on the minority side will have a representative ask questions for a period. We will take a break and reconvene to guarantee that all the questions have been asked. You will get a chance to make a statement either at the beginning, middle or end of the hearing. Do you have a prepared statement?

RUTH'S VOICE

Yes.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

You do? Ok ... does the committee have a written copy of said statement?

RUTH'S VOICE

They do.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Of course. Right...you will answer the committee's questions to the best of your ability. If you'd like to take a break, you need to get water, step out for a few minutes to confer with counsel, you need let us know. We'd like to make this process as easy and comfortable as possible for everyone involved.

RUTH'S VOICE

Ok?

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

You understand how we will proceed?

RUTH'S VOICE

Yes. I think so.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Everything said here is public record and anytime you need to consult with your counsel do so. If you have chosen to have counsel with you today they are here for consultation only, they may not object or speak on your behalf. Do you understand that?

RUTH'S VOICE

Yes.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

You do have counsel present with you today?

RUTH'S VOICE

Yes.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Will your counsel please present themselves and state their name for the record?

SUSANNA'S VOICE

Hello again, Chairman.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Another one, Susanna?

SUSANNA'S VOICE

It seems that way.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Please present yourself for record...again.

SUSANNA'S VOICE

Susanna Lewis, counsel and staff member at the Center for Reproductive Rights.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Always got to get that in.

SUSANNA'S VOICE

Yes sir.

(Beat.)

Do you plan on swearing my client in?

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Oh right. It's been a long week.

SUSANNA'S VOICE

Yes, Chairman. It has.

(The recording ends.)

RUTH

(entering)

He hates her. You can tell by the way he doesn't even look into her eyes.

ABBI

If he hated her, he wouldn't be keeping her around.

RUTH

He's been on the show before.

ABBI

They've all been on the show before.

RUTH

The producers have him wrapped around their little finger.

ABBI

I bet he's sleeping with at least one of them.

RUTH

No.

ABBI

I'm in the industry. I know what happens behind closed doors.

COREY

Do you really call what you do being in the industry?

ABBI

Yes. You were to before you went corporate.

COREY

I work for city hall. That's not corporate. That is the complete, total and disparagingly opposite of opposites of

COREY (Cont.)

corporate. I would say working for ABC is much more corporate than working for the good city of Schaumburg, Illinois.

ABBI

It's a local affiliate.

COREY

You write tweets.

ABBI

I manage social media.

RUTH

It's always so nice when the three of us are together.

COREY

Sure.

(He is still glued.)

ABBI

It doesn't bother you that he didn't even look up from the news for a second.

COREY

Doesn't it bother you that the entire democratic system as we understand it is disintegrating?

RUTH

Do you know what's disintegrating?

ABBI

(mockingly)

Conversation? Debate?

RUTH

Yes. In fact-

ABBI

Corey, promise to cut her off from TED talks.

COREY

It's really just that one. Over and over and over.

RUTH

It's illuminating.

(COREY gestures to the
TV)

COREY

Do you know what else is illuminating?

ABBI

So is The Bachelor you know? It's totally reflective of the world. It's like a microcosm of-

COREY

I'm going to stop you there. That's what you and other college educated women like you and my wife tell themselves so they don't feel guilty for watching it three hours a week.

ABBI

Not all weeks are three hour weeks.

COREY

I'm moving my meltdown to the bedroom.

RUTH

Great.

(She swiftly grabs the remote, turns the noise off before COREY can even get up.)

ABBI

Ok. I am ready to hear all about it. Since I was shut out of your wedding-

RUTH

You weren't shut-out.

ABBI

I was, it's fine. I'm over it. But since I was completely shut out from your wedding, I am using Mercy as a surrogate.

RUTH

What?

ABBI

She's my surrogate bride. And you are my source.

RUTH

She is the worst bride for that you know.

ABBI

I know, that almost makes it more fun.

RUTH

You're insane.

ABBI

Has she picked a dress? I saw on Facebook-

RUTH

You would start with the dress.

ABBI

What does that mean?

(As she talks, ABBI
crosses over to the wine
rack, chooses a bottle
of wine, opens it, pours
herself a glass as if
she were in her own
home.)

RUTH

I just got off of an exhausting call with my mom about the color. Apparently she doesn't want to wear white.

ABBI

Stop!

RUTH

Yeah. And it's my job to convince her that it's the only day that she would get to wear white and she would look at her pictures for the rest of her life and regret it.

ABBI

Is Corey going? Can Corey go? I really should be your plus one. Like really.

RUTH

Yes, Corey can go.

ABBI

Maybe I'm on the B list.

RUTH

The what?

ABBI

The B list. People who have real weddings make two, sometimes even three guest lists. The B listers are the people that you invite after you start to get "I can't come with regrets" cards back.

(RUTH sees ABBI's glass of wine.)

RUTH

What time is it?

ABBI

Two.

(RUTH crosses over to the wine and pours a glass. Beat.)

So?

RUTH

So what?

ABBI

Was I on yours?

RUTH

Mine?

ABBI

Your B list.

RUTH

You don't need a B-list for a family only affair.

ABBI

I know but-

RUTH

You don't.

(Beat.)

And I really don't think Mercy has one either.

ABBI

You'd be surprised. I think Mercy may be more traditional than we all realize.

RUTH

Perhaps.

ABBI

I mean, she's getting married at the Arboretum. That's traditional. So one check.

(ABBI makes a check mark
in the air.)

RUTH

Hmmm.

ABBI

And you saw those engagement photos! And what about that ring?! Check! Check. She's marrying a man so that's a big check.

RUTH

Excuse me?

ABBI

I always thought Mercy was well...you know?

RUTH

Do I?

ABBI

(whispers)

Gay. Like a lesbian.

RUTH

Is that what they are called?

ABBI

I'm serious. I mean she's so like...you know.

RUTH

Go ahead, elaborate.

ABBI

There's just a "ness" about her.

RUTH

A what?

ABBI

A "ness." Like she's got something else...like happening.
Like extra. Like an extra-

RUTH

Ness.

ABBI

Right. I mean, seriously Ruth. The Birkenstocks.

RUTH

I wear Birkenstocks.

ABBI

In public?

RUTH

Sometimes.

ABBI

Clearly nowhere we've gone together.

RUTH

What else about Mercy makes you think she's gay?

ABBI

You are giving me a hard time, aren't you?

RUTH

Yeah.

ABBI

Why?

RUTH

Come on, Abbi. You are from the fucking dark ages.

ABBI

What do you mean?

RUTH

Listening to you try and explain why you assumed Mercy is a lesbian is the most ridiculous thing I've heard today. And in the end, it comes down to her footwear.

ABBI

Shoes can say a lot about a person. Take yours for example.

RUTH
Let's not.

ABBI
Are you mad?

RUTH
Honestly, I'm just a little surprised.

ABBI
Let it go.

RUTH
I just thought you were more sensitive.

ABBI
Don't give me a PC bullshit lecture, please.

RUTH
Don't reveal yourself to be a person that can't be respectful of political correctness.

ABBI
I am the most respectful. The most. Do you know what I do?

RUTH
What does your job have to do with your general attitudes toward humanity

ABBI
Alright. Now you are being ridiculous. And you know what, my thumbs, my fucking thumbs are on the pulse of this city. I know what people say and think-

RUTH
Tweet and comment-

ABBI
Don't belittle the power of the internet.

RUTH
I work for the internet too, you know?

ABBI
What is with you today?

RUTH
Nothing. I just feel like fighting back for once.

ABBI

I am not your enemy, Ruth. They might be your enemy but trust me when I say I'm on your side. I'm on everyone's side.

RUTH

They who?

ABBI

All the theys. But not the me-s. Now finish your wine. Have another glass and leave me out of your "fight."

(The recording begins again. ABBI watches RUTH. RUTH doesn't look at her. ABBI gathers her purse and starts to walk towards the door.)

ANOTHER MALE VOICE

Stand and be sworn, if you will: Ruth, are you prepared to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth so help you God.

RUTH'S VOICE

I do.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Will you please state your name?

RUTH'S VOICE

Didn't I-

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Again, just to be safe, now that we are all sworn in.

RUTH'S VOICE

Ruth.

(Beat.)

Ruth Laurel Giles.

(Recording ends.)

ABBI

You're acting weird.

RUTH
What do you mean?

ABBI
I mean...are you ok, Ruth?

RUTH
Why wouldn't I be?

ABBI
That's what I'm trying to figure out.
(RUTH doesn't look up.)
Oh god, don't tell me you're letting your husband's
paranoia get to you?

RUTH
No of course not. But-

ABBI
But what?

RUTH
It starts to get to you. To me, I mean. All of the fears.
His fears-

ABBI
Of?

RUTH
The current political climate. Jesus, I hate saying those
words all together.

ABBI
Yeah.

RUTH
It sounds stupid. It's not like war or anything.

ABBI
Exactly.

RUTH
He would say not yet. It's not like wartime...yet. You
don't believe that do you, Abbi?

ABBI
Fuck no. I mean not a war against me anyway. Or you.

RUTH

If Corey asks though, not that he will, but if, I'm great. Because in reality, all of this doesn't actually affect us, right? I mean not really, not the us-es.

ABBI

My point exactly, Ruth. We've never done anything wrong. Or anything really. We're not like Mercy.

RUTH

Maybe.

ABBI

Definitely.

(Beat)

Just don't have any abortions in the near future.

(Beat.)

That was a joke.

RUTH

Right.

ABBI

Do you need another one?

RUTH

Another one?

ABBI

Cigarette, Ruth.

RUTH

Yeah. Right. But let's go down to your place. It's fucking freezing out.

ABBI

Ok. Good. Let's go through Mercy's wedding Pinterest. I am dying.

RUTH

Just let me just grab my Birks.

ABBI

Shut up.

RUTH

Corey! Going down to Abbi's.

(They exit. COREY runs in and turns on the TV. THE VOICE OF THE NEWSCASTER blares from the set. With his phone in hand, he tweets and watches the news. Eventually THE VOICE OF THE NEWSCASTER fades into the recording. As it does, life continues in the apartment. Eventually, RUTH and COREY transition into the next scene.)

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICEVOICE

Let's start off with your background. When and where were you born?

RUTH'S VOICE

Ann Arbor, Michigan.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Please answer the full question. When and where?

RUTH'S VOICE

Right. August 29, 1986. Ann Arbor, Michigan.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Are your parents married to each other?

RUTH'S VOICE

Yes. My parents have been married for thirty years.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Was your mother present in your life?

RUTH'S VOICE

My parents are real estate agents together. Both my mother and father had pretty flexible schedules and were both very present in my childhood and throughout my adolescence.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

How would you describe your current relationship with your parents?

RUTH'S VOICE

Fractured.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Can you please be more specific?

RUTH'S VOICE

Sure. Um, we haven't had any contact or communication in about six, maybe seven weeks.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Do you know why that might be?

RUTH'S VOICE

They have never really given me an "on the record" worthy reason.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

When was the last time you spoke to your mom? Do you remember the date?

RUTH'S VOICE

March fifth.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

What was the manner of that communication?

RUTH'S VOICE

Phone calls and texts about my cousin Mercy's wedding mainly.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Are your parents' or extended family religious in anyway?

RUTH'S VOICE

No. I think my grandma went to church on Easter and Christmas most years. We spent most Sundays at our lake house. If fishing can be defined as a religion, then that would be it.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Were you a good student, Ruth?

RUTH'S VOICE

Um... I think so. I got mostly A's through high school. Only one detention.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

For?

RUTH'S VOICE

Is that relevant?

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

It is not up to you to determine what is and isn't relevant to our investigation, do you understand?

RUTH'S VOICE

Yes. My friends and I went to a rally for Al Gore. I got a detention for skipping school, truancy is the official word I think.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Have you always been radically political?

RUTH'S VOICE

Honestly, I wouldn't really call myself political at all. So radically political? No, I have never been that. That's really the only time I ever did anything and I only went because my friends went. I vote for the most part.

(The recording ends.)

Act IScene 2

AFTER TRANSITION:

It's been three months. COREY is sitting on the couch with a beer and a modest dinner resting on his lap in front of the television. THE VOICE OF THE NEWSCASTER is heard faintly. RUTH enters, sets her glass of wine on the coffee table, rests her laptop on her lap, places phone next to her. Her dinner is precariously sitting on the arm of the couch.

RUTH

Anything else. Anything.

COREY

Aren't you on your computer?

RUTH

Yeah, but I can't deal with this shit anymore.

COREY

You're an ostrich.

RUTH

Excuse me?

COREY

Head in the sand.

RUTH

Three months. Three months of the same.

COREY

That's because you aren't paying attention.

RUTH

It's all talk and conjecture. Talk and then talk ABOUT the talk. It's literal noise. And there's been no action. Wake me up when action is connected to the talk. In the meantime, I'm going to make sense of this invitation.

COREY

How did you get talked into that?

RUTH

I did go to school for graphic design.

COREY

You're right. You *did* go to school for that.

(RUTH goes back to the computer and COREY flips the channels not finding anything he cares for, he lands back on the news. He looks at RUTH sees that she's in her computer and not paying attention. They sit for a moment. He cautiously turns the volume up.)

RUTH

Talk about the talk!

COREY

Isn't that how all things start? Talk?

RUTH

Yeah, I guess. But do I have to hear it all the time?

COREY

I mean, at least I'll see it coming.

RUTH

Whatever.

COREY

It's CNN it's not like real-

RUTH

Don't finish that sentence. I won't laugh.

COREY

It was worth a shot.

RUTH

Please put on something else.

COREY

I hate it when you do this.

RUTH

What?

COREY

Use me for background noise.

RUTH

Corey, can we fight tomorrow?

COREY

Yeah.

(Beat.)

I'm just saying it's a small apartment and you aren't even watching and at least-

RUTH

Fine. Watch the news. But I don't want to discuss it. Now or after.

COREY

Ostrich.

(RUTH gives COREY the finger and returns to her computer. Their dinner scene continues as the recording starts.)

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

And your higher educational and professional background?

RUTH'S VOICE

Ok. Sure. I attended Columbia University of Chicago and received my bachelor's degree in Graphic Design with a minor in business administration. Then, um I got an internship at a company in human resources and have been there ever since.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Did you go straight from undergrad to your stated internship?

RUTH'S VOICE

No...I took a gap year and traveled a bit.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

For an entire year.

RUTH'S VOICE

Maybe closer to nine months. Like September to May.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Eight months.

RUTH'S VOICE

Sure.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Where did you travel for so long?

RUTH'S VOICE

Mostly Europe. Parts of the Middle East.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

And why did you take up an interest in the middle east?
That seems like an odd place to spend so much time,
especially when said person defines themselves as hardly
political.

RUTH'S VOICE

Um...may I confer with counsel?

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Yes. Of course.

(Long beat.)

RUTH'S VOICE

I'm ready.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Then please proceed.

RUTH'S VOICE

A friend of mine, she was writing for a magazine, more like
an online publication at the time. She was interviewing
women mainly in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, parts of Turkey
too...who, um were having trouble...struggling to receive
...reproductive healthcare.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Do you care to be more specific?

RUTH'S VOICE

No.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Why?

RUTH'S VOICE

I wasn't really a part of the process. I was playing, she was working.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

And upon your return from your great adventure, you continued in your profession?

RUTH'S VOICE

Yes. More like started it. I began my internship.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICEAN

What is your profession?

RUTH'S VOICE

I am a human resources representative at an internet company.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

And upon your return from your great adventure, you continued in your profession?

RUTH'S VOICE

Yes. More like started it. I began my internship.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICEAN

What is your profession?

RUTH'S VOICE

I am a human resources representative at an internet company.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

And is that when you met your partner?

RUTH'S VOICE

My husband?

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

The father of your unborn child?

RUTH'S VOICE

One could call him that but no we didn't meet then. We began seeing each other again. We were on and off for most of college.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

And what does your husband do?

RUTH'S VOICE

He works in communications for City Hall in Schaumburg.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Oh really?

RUTH'S VOICE

I am confident that you know that.

(The recording ends.)

COREY

I have to say one more thing.

RUTH

Ok.

COREY

I feel like you are ignoring my feelings and my real legitimate fears.

(RUTH closes her laptop.)

RUTH

Ok.

(Beat)

What are you afraid of?

COREY

No.

RUTH

What? I am listening to your legitimate fears.

COREY

I am serious about this Ruth.

RUTH

I know.

(Beat.)

Corey, what are you afraid of?

COREY

You aren't scared of anything, Ruth. Not once in all this insanity has a pang of fear risen in your chest.

RUTH

(Beat.)

No.

COREY

You are very strong then.

RUTH

Always have been. Glad you noticed.

COREY

I'm afraid that our lives will change.

RUTH

How?

COREY

I'm afraid that all those things that I'm afraid of are going to come true.

RUTH

But us? I mean, sorry, but two middle class professional people living in the suburbs; how will our lives change Corey?

COREY

Did you just say that?

RUTH

Yes, Corey. Accept your privilege, babe. And don't be afraid to enjoy it a minute.

COREY

I can't believe you right now.

RUTH

Why?

COREY

Ruth, I'm afraid that we will be outed.

RUTH

As liberals? I think your Twitter has already taken care of that.

COREY

Don't make a joke.

RUTH

I'm not. I'm not, but I think that you are being a little crazy. Just like the other side last time.

COREY

This is different, Ruth. We do have ...um ... past... transgressions.

RUTH

Transgressions? What the actual fuck, Corey?

COREY

You had an abortion, Ruth.

RUTH

That? You're still thinking about that?

COREY

Yeah.

RUTH

Jesus. I never do.

COREY

I know.

(They look at each other a long time. RUTH breaks the moment, slowly opens her laptop. COREY goes back to the television and his dinner. He stops and looks at RUTH.)

I think about it a lot.

COREY

What?

RUTH

Our baby.

COREY

(not looking up)
There was no baby, Corey.

RUTH

There was.

COREY

You sound like one of them.

RUTH

I'm not trying to; I am trying to talk to you.

COREY

I'm not interested.

RUTH

Why?

COREY

Because it's over.

RUTH

I know.

COREY

(Long beat.)

Corey. What's really going on?

RUTH

I'm really scared Ruth. I'm scared for you. I'm scared for my career. Our lives. The things that we love. I'm scared that this, all of this, is going to come to fruition. That a mistake we made as kids will fuck us over forever.

COREY

(RUTH puts down her
laptop and stands up.
She paces a little,

grabs her wine and
stands above her husband
and evenly speaks.)

RUTH

We weren't kids. I was twenty-three.

COREY

Twenty-three feels like a lifetime ago.

RUTH

It wasn't.

COREY

Ok.

RUTH

I made a decision then that-

COREY

Yes, you did.

RUTH

We did.

COREY

I know.

RUTH

Do you know what I think about?

COREY

I thought you didn't.

RUTH

I think about how I don't cry. How I've never cried about this...that. How difficult and uncomfortable the process was. How I went alone, left alone. How I was spit on, heckled. How the security guard looked when they checked my I.D. How I drove myself home and went to work the next day and how not once did I cry. For a long time, I thought, shit I must not be allowing myself to feel this. So I would try other things. I would think about meeting my parents at the lake. The last weekend we would spend there that season. I think about my mom saying that if I were ever pregnant, she would raise it no matter what I wanted. My dad agreeing, saying that he believes in the right for every woman in the world to have the right to choose except

me. I think about your face as they say that, I think about your hand grabbing mine under the table. And as they are sitting there, saying these things, I am bleeding from the abortion I had only days ago. I think about the lies we told that weekend about why I wouldn't drink my mom's famous sangria because of the antibiotics I was on, not to prevent possible infection, but the fake UTI and how even that was scoffed at. And then I think, I must be broken. Callous and unfeeling. I'm still not crying. So I try to picture its face. It's green eyes and curly hair. It's super hipster name that we would fight over. I try to think about the baby shower, the nursery. I try to picture it at Christmas in a reindeer onesie or on the lake for the first time. I try to picture it riding a bike or you taking it on a run in one of those crazy strollers. And I can't. I see nothing. Not even a blurry face or pigtails. I can't imagine if it's a happy baby or a moody toddler. I can't see it. Because "its" not and it was never supposed to be. I think about all those things. I squeeze my eyes, I tighten my chest, I try to breath like I'm crying. Because if I cry then I'm a good woman. And I don't. I never have. That's where my guilt lies. In my inability to doubt the decision I made... and you know what? You're right, Corey. I did make it. It was seven years ago. And we were just dating again. You were in grad school and I was starting my first real job. So I guess, no, I know, that you're right. You didn't get to be a part of that decision. You weren't ready to make that decision. So I did. You didn't have much to say that night. Other than, "I had a feeling that you were" and "do what you think is best." And then you took a walk. A two-hour walk. And I was alone. So I made my decision about my life. And Corey, I'm not sorry for that.

COREY

I know.

RUTH

Then why are we talking about this again?

COREY

Because we should. Because we don't.

RUTH

I just don't know what else there is to say.

COREY

I think this is the beginning of us talking about it for a long time. And not just to each other.

RUTH

Why?

COREY

Ruth, I need you to be ready for what's coming.

RUTH

Corey, I don't think anything is coming.

COREY

I know you don't.

RUTH

Then what are you really afraid of?

COREY

It's hard to know. But I mean what if we are sitting here one night minding our business, smoking a bowl-

RUTH

I thought we didn't do that in this apartment.

COREY

Drinking a beer...wine and there's a knock at the door. No, not a knock, a bang.

RUTH

And the men in black run in and grab me and throw me in a cell to rot for my past "transgressions."

COREY

Yeah.

RUTH

I would continue to wait for the director to call cut.

COREY

I'm serious.

(There is a knock at the door. Beat. Another more aggressive knock.)

RUTH

Oh my God, it's them!

COREY
I'm serious. Take me seriously.

RUTH
Trust me I try!

COREY
Abbi, hi. I'm actually really glad it's you.

(ABBI blows past him
straight for RUTH.)

RUTH
You knocked.

ABBI
Yeah.

RUTH
You never knock.

ABBI
The door was locked.

RUTH
You have a key-

ABBI
I need you to tell me something. Corey, I need you to
leave.

COREY
Why?

ABBI
Unless it was yours and you knew about it, I need you to
leave.

COREY
What's happening?

RUTH
Abbi. Knew about what?

ABBI
Ok. Then here we go and he...he doesn't get to...he...

RUTH
What are you saying?

ABBI
This is you. Right? On this list?

RUTH
What list?

ABBI
This is you. You. In two thousand nine, and I didn't know.
Was it his?

RUTH
Whose?

COREY
Were you listening through the door?

RUTH
(to COREY)
You know what's going on?

COREY
Abbi, I'm going to need you to start from the beginning.

(ABBI throws her phone
in his face.)

ABBI
This was leaked tonight. It's going to hit the major
outlets in the ten o'clock.

(Corey takes the phone
from Abbi and starts
scrolling, quickly
reading.)

It came through as internet news but it's more than that.
Chicago is making us...never mind. This list. This is the
list of-

COREY
Oh my god. Ruth. Ruth. I didn't mean today. When I said
soon I didn't think-

(He is lost for words.
He hands RUTH the
phone.)

RUTH

What is this?

ABBI

It's a list of everyone that has terminated or attempted to terminate a pregnancy through suction aspiration abortion at a Planned Parenthood in the last ten years.

RUTH

How?

ABBI

Someone hacked into Planned Parenthood's records.

RUTH

But how?

ABBI

Hacking, Ruth.

RUTH

What do you mean?

COREY

This isn't just hacking, Abbi. This is someone who is calculating, you know? Wants some kind of outcome. I mean this "someone" sifted through millions of private medical records, compiled a list and-

ABBI

I am aware.

RUTH

What if I told you it was a lie?

ABBI

I might have believed you five minutes ago.

RUTH

They can't do this.

ABBI

Well, "they" did.

RUTH

I can deny it. They can't prove anything, right? Right, Corey?

COREY

I don't know.

RUTH

Corey. Corey? They can't publish this. Isn't there a law? Patient protective services-?

COREY

HIPAA.

RUTH

Right, we always sign that paper. Right? That's says they can't share anything. Right?

COREY

I-

RUTH

They'll stop it before it goes to press because of hippo.

ABBI

Ah. HIP-Ah, you idiot.

RUTH

I need this to stop. You can stop this. Call someone. Can't either of you call someone. You know people.

COREY

I think it's too late sweetheart.

ABBI

I think you are the one who needs to call someone. Lots of someones.

RUTH

What?

COREY

Abbi, I think I need you to go.

ABBI

Why? Don't you want this?

COREY

If Local- if- if you guys fucking have it, it's everywhere. Or somewhere.

(He takes RUTH'S
computer.)

COREY (Cont.)

Holy fuck. Reddit. They posted it on Reddit. So no one is publishing the list, they are reporting on its existence. That's how... they aren't...holy shit.

(Grabs the remote)

What time is it?

ABBI

Five to ten.

RUTH

That's good right. Who's going to go on Reddit and look right? Mom won't. She can't. She doesn't even know what Reddit is.

ABBI

That doesn't stop it.

RUTH

Reddit will remove it right? They have to, right? Hippo?

ABBI

HIPAA!

RUTH

Whatever.

COREY

I wouldn't whatever that, Ruth. I think that's going to be something you are going to want to understand.

RUTH

Ruth is a super popular name.

COREY

Dates.

RUTH

What?

COREY

They published exact dates.

RUTH

So?

ABBI

You're the only Ruth I know.

I can't be...

RUTH

Even if they take it down-

ABBI

Which they will.

COREY

Even *if*- screenshots. It's out there. You can't delete things from the internet. Trust me I know. I've tried.

ABBI

But we can sue them, right?

RUTH

Who?

ABBI

WikiLeaks? They are Reddit, aren't they?

RUTH

No, honey.

COREY

Are you kidding me?

ABBI

I'm not into the internet.

RUTH

You work for an internet company.

ABBI

In HR!

RUTH

Stop. Everybody shhh.

COREY

(He turns up the news.
The three friends watch.
THE VOICE OF THE
NEWSCASTER overpowers
the space. ABBI takes
out a cigarette and
lights it. Hands one to

RUTH; COREY doesn't stop them. He takes it from RUTH. They share, watch, listen. Stoic.)

RUTH
So this really is happening then?

COREY
It seems that way.

RUTH
Nothing has ever really happened to me.

ABBI
Me neither.

RUTH
Nothing huge has happened. You know I've never even seen a gun or a dead body.

ABBI
More's happened to you than me.

COREY
What happened to us?

ABBI
Ruth had an abortion and lied about it for like eleven years.

RUTH
I never lied.

COREY
She really didn't tell you, huh?

ABBI
She really didn't.

RUTH
It wasn't that hard either.

ABBI
Good to know I'm easy to keep things from.

RUTH
It's not like that.

ABBI

Isn't it though? We have officially established that this is the most major thing to ever happen to either of you and neither of you thought to tell me...your best friend.

RUTH

This is happening to me. That...I chose to do. And I chose how to handle it. And I chose not to tell.

ABBI

It's not the first thing, you know?

RUTH

Not now.

COREY

I didn't even go with her.

ABBI

Who did then-

RUTH

No one. No one knows.

ABBI

Really?

RUTH

Yeah. It was the only thing that we had that was just ours.

COREY

The only thing?

RUTH

It was our secret.

ABBI

Not anymore.

RUTH

No, not anymore.

COREY

(to ABBI)

When do you think it will happen?

ABBI

Soon. I wouldn't be surprised if there wasn't at least one reporter outside now.

RUTH

Why?

ABBI

You're about to be a celebrity, sweetheart.

COREY

Like Monica Lewinski was a celebrity.

RUTH

No way. There are hundreds of thousands, millions on that list. There's no way.

ABBI

I don't know I haven't read the entire list.

RUTH

Then how do you know I'm on it.

ABBI

I copy pasted it into word and did a control find for everyone in our graduating class. Well everyone I'm friends on Facebook with in our graduating class.

RUTH

How many of us are on the list?

ABBI

Well, I don't know. I started with you and...

RUTH

So you didn't-

ABBI

It was my plan.

RUTH

But you saw me and had to come yell at me.

ABBI

Warn you, I'm a good fucking friend.

RUTH

I guess you are.

(End of Act 1.)

Act II

Scene 1

SETTING: COREY and RUTH'S apartment.
It's been two days.

AT RISE: RUTH and COREY are folding laundry. The noise of the TV plays lightly in the background, a distinctly different sound than of THE VOICE OF THE NEWSCASTER. They work for a few minutes as the recording of the hearing fades in.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Are you familiar with the Planned Parenthood facility in Aurora, Illinois?

RUTH'S VOICE

Yes.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

What is your association with that facility?

RUTH'S VOICE

I was a patient.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

How many years were you a patient of this clinic?

RUTH'S VOICE

Six, seven maybe.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Why were you a patient of this clinic when there was a much more convenient facility in the heart of Chicago only minutes away from your home?

RUTH'S VOICE

It was hard to get an appointment there. Probably because of that convenience. And, honestly, there were more protestors at the facilities closer to the city. Aurora

RUTH'S VOICE (Cont.)

only ever has a couple and not every day. They kind of stressed me out.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

How did you do today? With the protestors?

RUTH'S VOICE

Fine. I've been getting more acquainted with mobs as this process has gone on.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

What brought you to the Planned Parenthood clinic?

RUTH'S VOICE

As I said, I was a regular patient. I went there for my yearly exams.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

What types of exams?

RUTH'S VOICE

Seriously?

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Answer the question fully.

RUTH'S VOICE

Pap smears mainly. You know, women get those every single year.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Do you know what types of procedures that facility performed on Wednesdays before this year?

RUTH'S VOICE

I can assume.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

I direct you to answer the question.

RUTH'S VOICE

Pregnancy termination.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

That's right Miss Giles.

RUTH'S VOICE

Missus.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Is that a necessary distinction for this hearing?

RUTH'S VOICE

Yes, I feel it is.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Please let the record show that Mrs. Giles, is in fact a married woman.

RUTH'S VOICE

Thank you.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Now that the record is straight, may we proceed?

RUTH'S VOICE

Yes.

(The recording ends.)

RUTH

I'm going to call her.

COREY

Ok.

RUTH

She won't answer.

COREY

That hasn't stopped you in the past.

RUTH

She saw it right?

COREY

Probably.

RUTH

She definitely saw it.

COREY

Most likely.

RUTH

This is like the longest we've gone without talking. Did you know that? Even when I ran away from home, at sixteen, I called her and we talked for like fifteen minutes. Even on our honeymoon. We always talk, sometimes only for a minute or whatever but we talk.

COREY

What about your dad?

RUTH

We don't talk.

COREY

Then just call her and pretend like, like nothing happened.

RUTH

That's the right approach? Like I don't know that she read the list? I don't know if anyone read the list... What should I say?

COREY

You can start with hello.

RUTH

I'm serious.

COREY

So am I.

(He hands RUTH her phone.)

RUTH

It's voicemail. Do I...should I- Hey mom. It's Ruth. Call me back, been a few days. Would love to hear from you. Miss you. Two days. Two day is how long...

(COREY takes the phone away and hangs it up.)

Do you think she's screening?

COREY

I don't know.

RUTH

So she saw it. She definitely saw it. And more than saw it. She read it. Carefully. I mean it's like really long. She saw it and she read it. And probably told my dad. Or maybe

RUTH (Cont.)

Dad read it. It's more likely that Dad read it, isn't it?
And told Mom.

COREY

Yeah. Ruth. I think there's a good chance of that.

(Beat.)

RUTH

There have to be other Ruth Laurels in the world, you know?
Do they assume it's me?

COREY

There's only one on the list.

RUTH

Right...and my last name is Giles now.

COREY

It wasn't in two thousand nine.

RUTH

No, I know that but-

COREY

Ruth.

RUTH

Yeah?

COREY

You were on your parent's insurance at the time.

RUTH

I know but I paid for that out of pocket. I was really
careful. Cash. Not even a check. I was really careful.

COREY

I know that, but they know that that's where you went for
things.

RUTH

Right. I think I'm going to drive up there. I have a couple
of personal days saved up. I think I need to drive up
there.

(She grabs a bag and
starts stuffing the

newly folded laundry
into it not even looking
at what she's grabbing.)

Alone?

COREY

It's only four hours.

RUTH

Yeah, I know.

COREY

I've done it a million times. It's only four hours, Corey.

RUTH

I've been there. I am just not sure it's the right step. To leave now? What does that say? What impression does that send off?

COREY

What?

RUTH

I just think it's time to be careful. Not break our routines. Just keep on steady.

COREY

Because?

RUTH

Because we don't know who's watching.

COREY

Watching me go to my parent's house.

RUTH

Watching you leave the state a couple of days after this has hit.

COREY

Really? You are really worried about that?

RUTH

Maybe it can wait a few days...when I can go with you?

You shouldn't come. RUTH

Why? COREY

Because. RUTH

Why? COREY

(RUTH'S phone buzzes)

Mercy, hi. RUTH
(The couple share a
look.)
I have all the time you need.

We aren't done. COREY

I can't hear...hold on I'm going to step on the balcony. RUTH

(COREY continues with
the laundry, makes the
decision not to unpack
the hastily packed
duffle. RUTH is outside
on the phone. The
hearing recording
starts.)

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE
What was the nature of the procedure you received on August
fifteenth of two thousand and nine?

RUTH'S VOICE
I am not going to answer that.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE
What reason would you have to avoid that question? We have
determined the types of procedures that occurred on

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE (Cont.)

Wednesdays, I will confirm that August fifteenth was a Wednesday. Furthermore, you are more than aware why you were called here today. You know that this committee has obtained information that you did in fact receive an abortion at the facility administered by Dr. Tabitha Francis by way vacuum aspiration. This procedure took place on August twenty-fifth, two thousand and nine.

RUTH'S VOICE

Fifteenth. August fifteenth of two thousand nine.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Right. It's been-

RUTH'S VOICE

A long week, you've mentioned that.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Can you please provide a detailed description of the events leading up to that appointment where you did receive an abortion on Wednesday, August fifteenth two thousand nine?

RUTH'S VOICE

How far would you like me to go back? Conception?

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Yes.

RUTH'S VOICE

May I-

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Yes, consult your counsel. But I would like to get out of here today, Mrs. Giles. Be prepared for me to interrupt with questions Ruth. Be prepared.

RUTH'S VOICE

Okay

(The recording pauses.)

COREY

What's wrong?

RUTH

I...I... she doesn't want me in the wedding. At the wedding. She thinks it's better for the family if...if I stay home.

COREY

Mercy?

RUTH

Yeah. Apparently.

(Long beat)

Well. They've read it. And worse they trust it.

COREY

Your whole family? Your mom? Grams? Everyone?

RUTH

I don't know. She didn't say.

COREY

What exactly did she say?

RUTH

That she loved me. And always will but right now, she feels that with, and I quote, "everything going on," she and John thought maybe it was best for me not to come around until things blow over. And I said I don't foresee this blowing over anytime soon. And she said "my point exactly." And then she said she was worried about me and did I need a lawyer because she knew a really good one from her time in DC.

COREY

So that's it? Just like that? No discussion.

RUTH

Well, quite a bit about me needing a lawyer.

COREY

I meant about your family and the wedding.

RUTH

No. Not really. Just that they need space to breathe.

COREY

Like forever?

(RUTH picks up the bag)

RUTH

I don't know.

COREY

Maybe you should go up there.

RUTH

Why?

COREY

They won't be able to reject-

RUTH

Reject?

COREY

-you face to face. And if Mercy has connections, and advice. I mean maybe you should go up there.

RUTH

I was the opposite of invited.

COREY

That hasn't stopped you before.

RUTH

This is different.

COREY

Isn't this the kind of time when blood is thicker than water? When family is supposed to be there for you no matter what?

RUTH

They think I murdered a member of that family.

COREY

Don't be extreme Ruth.

RUTH

I'm not, Corey. I'm really not.

(RUTH takes everything out of the bag, refolding it carefully.)

RUTH

It's...it's just happening really fast, you know? Like really fucking fast. But also really slow at the same time. Like no police are here or anything. No media but I just lost my entire family.

Not your entire family.
COREY

In a snap. In a vibration, a phone call it's over. All over.
RUTH

Yeah.
COREY

I never-I couldn't have...
RUTH

It's not over.
COREY

That's the scary part.
RUTH

Let's go. Come on. Stop that. Let's see them.
COREY

I can't.
RUTH

I can take days off? Right? Of course I can.
COREY

I don't want to.
RUTH

(Long beat.)

It was too easy.
(Beat.)

It was so easy. To stop answering calls. To cut me out-

They haven't cut you out of the family.
COREY

Just like that. I didn't think it would happen and be easy. I'm the Band-Aid. In the ripping off the Band-Aid metaphor. I'm the metaphorical Band-Aid. They ripped me off and trashed me. And I didn't even have a chance to resist or pull the little hairs from their arms off. Or anything. I'm done.
RUTH

You aren't. It's been a few days. People need time.
COREY

RUTH

All the people? All the people need time. Mercy is the first person, other than Abbi of course to even acknowledge any of this. And I was hoping it was because they hadn't read it. Or they didn't even know about. It seems to have slipped under the radar. Rachel Maddow didn't even mention it yet. That's weird, right? She loves abortion. That's like her beat or whatever. But Mercy proves all that wrong. They are scared of it. Sitting on it sending Mercy as the messenger. Even with that...this I am waiting. I have been waiting for the shoes to drop.

COREY

The other-

RUTH

No, Corey. All the shoes. I am waiting for the shoes to come fucking raining down.

COREY

You are extraordinarily symbolic today. Band aid, now shoes-

RUTH

I've been waiting for someone to say something at work. Zip nothing. Every time I open my email-personal or professional- I am expecting a deluge of hate or even a simple line, the subject stating something like "I know who you are." or "I read the whole list." or "fucking die baby killer" maybe even "I'm with you, sister" but nothing. Don't you think it's weird, Corey? Like truly bizarre. Like the world unplugged from anything and everything Ruth Laurel Giles. Like world doesn't care about a list of millions of women.

COREY

Maybe the story isn't as big as we initially anticipated.

RUTH

I have never spent more time on Facebook before. Pulling down my thumb obsessively refreshing. Because I know, I can feel that one of these times it won't say one or two, that little red bubble won't be able to fit all the little white numbers inside. I know that very soon every way of communicating with me will explode Corey. Because they say it.

COREY

Who?

RUTH

Everyone. I mean those girls on the Bachelor.

COREY

Stop.

RUTH

I'm serious, Corey. Their shit actually blows up the second they get an iota of screen time. And this. This thing, this is bigger than an ABC reality show, right? It has to be. I mean. You printed it, right? You printed it? The whole thing? Where? You did, right? Where is it?

COREY

Why?

RUTH

I want to find them.

COREY

Who?

RUTH

The other women. I want to find them.

COREY

Bad idea. Very bad idea.

RUTH

Corey. They are sitting in their apartments in bum fuck- where is it, Corey- thinking the same things. Playing the same waiting games. Or maybe they're not. Maybe they are in trouble.

COREY

And since we are safely out of trouble for the meantime don't you think, we should remain that way?

RUTH

No.

COREY

Why?

RUTH

I don't want to be alone anymore.

COREY

It's been days. A few days-

RUTH

Of an alternate reality. Of a - you printed it, right- a bizarre sort of floating through space. Where is the damn thing Corey? I saw you with it. You were highlighting it; you thought that I didn't see you but I did. Now where is it. I want it. I need it. I have to find them.

COREY

How are you going to find these "them", Ruth?

RUTH

I don't know. Google. Facebook. Really Corey the possibilities are endless.

COREY

The first thing you thought Ruth, the very first thing you said was "there have to be other Ruth Laurel's in the world" so don't you think searching people through varying degrees of the world-wide web is-

RUTH

Don't Corey. Don't you think-

COREY

I think Mercy was right. I think we focus on ourselves right now. I think we get a lawyer.

RUTH

Why?

COREY

It's smart. It's pre-emptive. It's good to have a large net to catch all the shoes, you know and without other...support I think a lawyer is the best idea.

RUTH

I don't know Corey.

COREY

What don't you know? That's usually the first step isn't it? Like the step we should have thought of two days ago.

COREY (Cont.)

Like the first thing we should have done was call a lawyer. Why didn't I think of that?

RUTH

I think you are beginning to lose it a little.

COREY

I'm losing it. Ruth. Please. You are running around the house, packing and unpacking and looking for this phantom list-

RUTH

It's not phantom Corey. I saw you highlighting it. Why were you highlighting it?

COREY

I wanted to...

RUTH

You wanted to what?

COREY

See if we knew anyone else.

RUTH

Fuck you Corey. Fuck. You.

(RUTH grabs her purse and leaves. The recording begins again and as it plays RUTH re-enters, hugs COREY for a whole minute; she doesn't say anything. She leaves again. COREY sinks to the couch, puts his head in his hands. He sends a text, turns on the TV and waits.)

RUTH'S VOICE

Here goes. Corey and I started dating again while I was in Europe. Flirty notes and stuff. We fell in love again over email. And when I got back, he picked me up from the airport. We went to a bar. I drank too much and we slept together. We've been together ever since.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Do you feel you had an adequate education about contraceptives?

RUTH'S VOICE

If you are asking if we wore a condom that night, yes, we did. But we put it on too late and my birth control prescription had lapsed while I was away. Like eight weeks later, I noticed that I had a real sensitivity to smell. I was barfing every time I took out the trash. We had these Febreze scented bags and-

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Please continue to the point.

RUTH'S VOICE

Ok. Basically, I suddenly had a sensitive stomach, I was kind of gaining weight but I attributed that to be being back in the states. It's true what they say about American food it really-

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Relevance, Mrs. Giles.

RUTH'S VOICE

Even with all of those things, I didn't get a test until a few weeks later.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Did you not notice the absence of menstruation?

RUTH'S VOICE

I don't really get my period regularly and with the irregularity of my pills those last months of my trip I wasn't worried. We used a condom for the most part, like I said. Once I thought I might be, I took care of things pretty quickly. Got a pregnancy test on a Friday morning, an appointment at my Planned Parenthood on Monday, and an abortion on the Wednesday and was back at work by the next day. I only missed the one day.

(The recording stops.
There's a knock at the door. He sits up, mutes the TV and shakes off. COREY crosses to the door.)

COREY
Hello. Come in... please. Sit.

ABBI
I've been here before Corey.

COREY
Yep.

ABBI
I'll just sit then.

COREY
Cool.

ABBI
Yeah.

(Beat.)

COREY
Thank you for coming up so quickly. It's like...great that you...

ABBI
I wasn't doing anything.

COREY
Right.

(Beat.)
Can I get something, to, uh drink or something?

ABBI
I think a drink would be essential. It's kind of late, Corey.

COREY
Is it? Is 9:30 late now?

ABBI
Drink, please.

COREY
You like rosé, right?

ABBI
I'll take a scotch.

COREY

Oh, right...well...let me...hold on.

ABBI

I'll wait.

COREY

I think we may have a gift box of Four Roses left over from Christmas in the bedroom.

ABBI

That's bourbon.

COREY

Oh. Sure, it is. Um...I could go get it.

ABBI

Whatever.

COREY

More like find it, I guess.

ABBI

I'll be here.

COREY

Great.

(ABBI scrolls through her phone and waits. It seems to be taking longer than she expects and as she scrolls, she begins to change her mind.)

COREY

Got it! One of those old-school gift boxes that comes with the glass. Ruth's mom got it for us. For Christmas or something. Ice?

ABBI

I am not staying.

COREY

You just got here.

ABBI

Yeah. I know but-

COREY

I found it. I found dark liquor.

ABBI

Corey. I'm sorry. I can't handle this.

COREY

A drink? You're great at drinking.

ABBI

You didn't ask me to come over for a drink, Corey.

COREY

A drink and a chat?

ABBI

What the fuck does that mean? Who talks like that? A drink and a fucking chat? Be real Corey. I know what you want and I'm not interested.

COREY

I just...I thought-

ABBI

You want me back. For Ruth. You want me back around here. For Ruth. I understand. I get it but Corey, come on. Let me set you straight. I was betrayed and I'm not really cut out for this kind...this level of support right now. Or ever really.

ABBI

Don't be delusional. It will and when it does...I mean...Fuck, this is out of my realm, Corey. I'm a good friend, I know that like I'm a super great friend. But this is next level shit. And next level friendship requires trust like, you know major trust. And right now, well let's face it Corey. You betrayed me. You both did. You didn't tell me. You didn't warn me. You have excluded me from it. From everything. Ever since you got together. Back together or whatever, I'm out.

COREY

Abbi-

ABBI

Don't-

COREY

Abbi, I didn't know who else to...She left.

ABBI

Hold up. Ruth left you.

COREY

No...I mean yes, she left for right this second...like the apartment.

ABBI

Jesus, Corey. Where did she go?

COREY
(starting to cry)

I don't know. Out. She needed air maybe.

ABBI

Why?

COREY

Because I think we need a lawyer?

ABBI

Duh.

COREY

That's why I need you Abbi. She won't listen to me and the truth is this next level...I wasn't prepared...
(ABBI goes to him and holds him while he cries)

There is a delayed reaction Abbi. Like the universe has hit pause and...we are waiting here. For the world's reaction. And the jeopardy theme song is playing and we are...

ABBI

Corey.

COREY

I can't deal... I can't -
(breathing heavily and begins cry again)

COREY (Cont.)

I'm sorry. I am fine. I am totally fine. Ruth is fine, a little manic but ok and you have to come back.

ABBI

Ok. So, what do I get out of it?

COREY

Excuse me?

ABBI

What do I get out of this relationship?

COREY

You're kidding.

ABBI

No, I'm really not.

COREY

What do you want?

ABBI

An interview.

COREY

A what?

ABBI

I want an interview for the blog.

COREY

No way.

ABBI

I want you to talk to me about Ruth's abortion and your fears for the future. I want something back for the years of abuse and neglect that you two have inflicted on me. You want Ruth to get her friend back, I'm right here. But this time. I'm taking something from you.

COREY

Abbi, I...

ABBI

Call me when you are ready to talk.

COREY

Abbi, you can't be serious.

ABBI

I am.

COREY

You understand the consequences of that, don't you?

ABBI

And I understand the rewards. For you. You would get a platform to express... a reporter to hear you out before-

COREY

You aren't a reporter, Abbi.

ABBI

Anyone can be a reporter Corey.

COREY

I thought we were friends.

ABBI

I did too.

COREY

Abbi, no one has come forward yet. No one has broken that barrier. I don't know that Ruth and I should be the first.

ABBI

What would you have named it?

COREY

What? Abbi I-

ABBI

The baby. What would you have named it?

COREY

I don't know.

ABBI

Come on. Admit that you've thought about it.

COREY

My thoughts are different than hers on the matter.

ABBI

I want your thoughts Corey. There's a lot of interest in your thoughts. Think how you could effect change by stepping into the light and telling people your thoughts.

COREY

Abbi, this is crazy.

ABBI

Talk to me, see how good it feels. And then we'll move forward. Ruth will get her best friend back and you will get that much-needed relief.

COREY

You saying it out loud makes it sound really gross.

ABBI

Do you think it was a mistake?

COREY

Abbi-

ABBI

Think about it Corey. But don't take your time. Someone is going to come out soon and I want to be first.

(She gets up, downs the drink, empowered. She starts to exit.)

Don't think too long Corey. You know where I'll be.

(She exits with a bang. COREY immediately dials his phone.)

COREY

Hi Mercy, it's Corey. Can you send me the information for that woman's lawyer?

(The recording begins. Corey realizes he doesn't have a pen or paper. He runs over to a drawer, starts going through it; finally finding a pen and paper.)

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Can you provide a detailed timeline of your experience at the Planned Parenthood clinic in reference to the procedure on August fifteenth, two thousand nine?

COREY

Thank you Mercy. I really...yeah. I- sure...

(He writes down the phone number. Hangs up. Looks at the pad of paper for a long beat.)

RUTH'S VOICE

Sure. It was pretty much by the book. I went in at my scheduled time. Luckily I was only working half days then. They gave me an ultrasound, even though I didn't want one. The doctor read something to me. Asked me if I wanted the picture. I declined.

COREY

My name is Corey Giles. Can I speak to Miss...yeah I'll hold.

RUTH'S VOICE

Asked if I wanted to discuss other options. I again declined. I went out to the front, talked to the front desk person about how I was going to pay. She was wearing Tweety Bird scrubs. I told them it was going to be cash, I wouldn't be using my insurance because I was still on my parents' plan. Initially I wanted the pill but was informed that the surgical option was cheaper and safer so I did that. In hindsight, I wish I had done the pill.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Why?

RUTH'S VOICE

Because people who used the pill weren't on the list and I most likely would not be appearing before you here today.

COREY

Right. Of course. Give one second. Please don't take another- Ok, one second.

(Corey crosses to the drawer under the oven, removes some cookies

sheets and a large stack
of paper full of tabs
and multiple highlighter
colors.)

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

That is not true. That list that you continue to refer to
has no stakes in this hearing.

RUTH'S VOICE

I respectfully disagree with you.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

That is not true. That list that you continue to refer to
has no stakes in this hearing.

RUTH'S VOICE

I respectfully disagree with you.

COREY

Page seventy-two on mine...Right under- Yeah. R-U-T-H-L-A-
U-R-E-L. Are you there? Yeah. Um...I'm her husband.
Corey...You're right I did say- did I? Ok? Because I am.
Well, she's scared. If I'm honest. I pretty scared too.
Terrified really. Thanks, Miss - Susanna. Thank you,
Susanna. We'll be there.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

You aren't at liberty to do so considering you did not call
this hearing.

RUTH'S VOICE

If I weren't on that list, my life would have continued-

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

I implore you to not bring up that list again. It was
obtained using illegal measures and-

RUTH'S VOICE

I am very aware of that Mr. Chairman. Very aware.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

That list will not be mentioned again, Mrs. Giles. I
reiterate it has no, absolutely no bearings on this hearing
or any other hearing held by myself in representation of my
committee. Do you understand?

RUTH'S VOICE

Yes sir. I understand.

(Beat.)

May I get some water?

(The recording ends.
COREY precariously
returns the list to the
oven drawer. He crosses
to the door, opens it,
looks around for Ruth.
He closes the door but
doesn't lock it. He
enters into the bedroom,
returns in his pajama
bottoms and with a
pillow. He turns on the
tv and falls asleep on
the couch.)

ACT II

SCENE 2

AFTER TRANSITION:

RUTH and COREY transition into a new morning in Corey and Ruth's apartment, it's been about a week. It's a Wednesday morning. COREY and RUTH are getting ready for work. RUTH is making coffee and COREY puts a Pop-tart in the toaster.)

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Are you ready to proceed now?

RUTH'S VOICE

Yes. Thank you.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Alright. How did you...your decision to end your child's life effect your relationship with Mr. Giles?

RUTH'S VOICE

Excuse me?

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

I'll repeat the question. How did your decision to end your child's life effect your relationship-

(THE VOICE OF THE NEWSCASTER comes over the recording. Ruth stops what she's doing and crosses over to the TV, coffee pot still in hand. Corey notices her, crosses to her and turns up the volume. They stand, stare, and listen. THE VOICE OF THE NEWSCASTER plays.)

RUTH

Oh. Oh...oh my god.

COREY

Don't talk yet, just listen.

(THE VOICE OF THE
NEWSCASTER plays.)

RUTH

I can't catch my breath. I can't...Corey.

COREY

I know.

(He takes the coffee pot
from her and crosses to
his bag to take out his
phone. THE VOICE OF THE
NEWSCASTER intensifies.)

RUTH

I thought we were...I thought it was...

COREY

We were waiting.

RUTH

Not for this.

COREY

I know.

RUTH

This is real reporting, right? Real actual reporting?

COREY

It is. It's hard to fake congressional reporting.

RUTH

What time is it?

COREY

Eight o' three.

RUTH

Does news usually break at eight o' three on a fucking
Wednesday morning?

COREY

I don't think there are rules about news breaking.

RUTH

Well it's inappropriate and it's really fucking fast right?
Really fast.

COREY

Yeah.

RUTH

I mean...she was just sworn in.

COREY

I am not sure that these two things are related.

RUTH

I know. Like at all. They aren't really related at all, are they? Fuck.

COREY

Well, not technically.

RUTH

But it's fast. It's fast. Really fast.

COREY

Sure, the conversation around the issue has accelerated.

RUTH

Yeah.

COREY

(reading from his phone)

The Select Committee on Abortion and Fetal Rights. It's
select, that's good.

RUTH

It's not very catchy, is it?

COREY

Catchy?

RUTH

Un-American Activities, that was catchy.

COREY

Is it?

RUTH

Yes. They even got an acronym. HUAC.

COREY

Did anyone actually call them that?

RUTH

What's this, SCAFR. What is fuck SCAFR? FUCK!

COREY

I've never heard you say the "f" word this much before 5:00 pm.

RUTH

Take out the fetal and its SCAR. SCAR is catchy. I can't breathe. Omigod. This is...this...

COREY

Slow breaths, Ruth. In and out. Big ones.

RUTH

It's fast.

COREY

It's investigative.

RUTH

That's good, right?

COREY

Probably.

RUTH

It's not prosecutorial or whatever.

COREY

Congressional committees can't prosecute.

RUTH

Is that true?

COREY

Now do you think it's a good idea to call a lawyer?

RUTH

We don't know that I'll be called to do anything. You don't think they'll subpoena me? Or the other girls...I mean

RUTH (Cont.)

women, people. They can't call all the women from the list. That's crazy. I mean can they even...can they use the list?

COREY

I am not sure.

(typing into his phone
as he says it)

Does HIPAA apply to congress?

RUTH

I have never hated the sound of a word so much in my entire life.

COREY

What, congress?

RUTH

HIPAA! Since the fucking list happened, all I hear are those four letters over and over.

COREY

Five.

RUTH

Four. Four, two p's.

COREY

It's two a's. And an i.

RUTH

Stop.

COREY

Do you know what it stands-

RUTH

Stop Corey. Stop.

COREY

My point was I think we should assume that you or at least some of the others will be called from the list.

RUTH

How? It's too many. Way too many.

COREY
Maybe everyone.

RUTH
That's impossible.

COREY
It's not.
(He begins to dial.)

RUTH
Who are you calling?

COREY
Susanna.

RUTH
Why?

COREY
I'm being proactive.

RUTH
No. That woman...she wasn't a lawyer. She was a fucking activist.

COREY
No, she just sees this as a moment for her cause. And her cause and her career happen to be closely related.

RUTH
Because she is a fucking activist.
(RUTH takes the phone away.)

No. We don't anything yet. We don't. I'm not ready, Corey. I'm not ready. I never thought I would have to face this and now its thing after thing after thing. Am I going to get arrested?

COREY
No. I can safely say that you most likely won't get arrested.

RUTH
Most likely? That's not very assuring. What about today. Can girls get abortions today? Can-

COREY

Nothing has changed. Legally.

RUTH

Right...legally.

(RUTH'S phone starts to
ring.)

Fuck, it's her. Corey. She's a vulture. It's her. Fuck,
it's her. How did she know we were talking about her?

COREY

(He takes her phone.)

Hi, Susanna. It's Corey on Ruth's phone...Yeah. We are
watching right now...I think that's a good idea too. Can
you do tomorrow? ... Now. You're here in town?...Oh. Ok...
Um now, sure we can do now. Do you- Starbucks on- Great.
Just got to put our shoes- Oh. Sure. No if that's- Ok. I'll
drop- She'll meet you there in ten. Thanks Susanna.

(He hangs up and hands
the phone back to RUTH.)

RUTH

Corey. I'm not going to meet her.

COREY

Yes. You are.

RUTH

I have work.

COREY

Call in.

RUTH

Why?

COREY

Because she doesn't want to meet with me.

RUTH

Why?

COREY

Probably because I am not the one that had an abortion.

RUTH

Corey. You can't make me talk to this woman.

COREY

You're right, Ruth. I can't make you do anything. But I can tell you that I have let you make most of the decisions about our relationship on your own. I have supported you-

(RUTH goes to object)

NO. I have, in my way, supported us through it all. But this is not one I am going to let you make without me. And if you don't go talk to her-

RUTH

Corey, she works for the Center of Reproductive Rights.

COREY

Many lawyers do. And I can't think of anyone better to represent us right now.

RUTH

Me.

COREY

Anyone that is representing you in this case is representing us. Please get your shoes on, get a notebook and get in the car.

RUTH

Why won't you be with me?

COREY

Because I have work.

RUTH

If I'm calling in-

COREY

Because she wants to talk with you alone this time and I am ready to accept her advice just like I want you to.

RUTH

Fine.

COREY

Take good notes, or better yet record everything she says on your phone. No, that's a terrible idea. But take good notes. Really good notes.

RUTH

Corey-

COREY

I love you a lot, Ruth. And...I love you a lot, ok. And we are doing this thing right, ok?

RUTH

Corey, I don't even understand what this thing is.

COREY

I don't either, babe.

(She goes to him.)

RUTH

Ok. Ok. Where's my good pen?

(The recording starts.
They kiss. RUTH exits.
After a breath, COREY
finishes his morning
routine. RUTH and COREY
being their transition
into the next scene.)

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Is your husband here with you today? Would you like to introduce him?

RUTH'S VOICE

No.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

No, he's not here or no, you would like to not introduce him?

RUTH'S VOICE

No, Corey is not here therefore I cannot introduce him.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

That's surprising.

RUTH'S VOICE

What is? That two millennials drowning in student loan debt couldn't both drop their lives and a thousand dollars for a last-minute trip to this nation's fine capitol city.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Did the Center for Reproductive Rights not offer any assistance in your travel expenses?

RUTH'S VOICE

You called a lot of people, Chairman Danforth.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Hmmmm. It seems that was necessary. Many of their spouses made the trip.

RUTH'S VOICE

I am choosing to not make a comment.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

And how would you say terminating this pregnancy affected Mr. Giles?

RUTH'S VOICE

If you wanted to know that, sir, you should have called him to appear. If you honestly wanted to hear from the other victims, the childless fathers, why didn't you call a single one?

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Look, Ruth...Mrs. Giles. I think you mistake your duties here. I ask you a question. You answer a question. It doesn't matter what opinions you may or may not have about how the committee conducts these proceedings. Do you need to consult your counsel to better-

RUTH'S VOICE

No. I'm good.

ACT II

SCENE 3

AFTER TRANSITION:

RUTH and COREY are on the floor. A few dozen letters of all shapes and sizes litter the apartment floor. They are drinking and reading the letters. They made a drinking game from RUTH's hate mail.

RUTH

Red ink! DRINK!

(COREY and RUTH both take big swigs from their drinks.)

COREY

Fuck. I am surprised at the amount of red ink. Refill?

RUTH

Please.

(COREY pours more into her glass.)

Also, I think we will require pizza. Or tacos. Fries.

COREY

Later.

RUTH

Gyros.

COREY

So, we're back on red meat.

RUTH

Are gyros meats red?

COREY

Yeah.

RUTH

Then yes, we are on red meat. Because apparently red meat can make me happy.

COREY

Should we stop this?

RUTH

No! This one is really good. Are you ready?

COREY

Sure.

RUTH

Remember red ink.

COREY

I already drank for that.

RUTH

I know, but remember it. It adds to the drama.

COREY

I doubt I need the added drama.

RUTH

Listen. "Dear baby killer,"

COREY

Drinking!

RUTH

"Dear baby killer, did you know you have a biblical name?"
I think we should've added biblical name to this list.

COREY

No adding rules. I can't take anymore.

RUTH

I am surprised how many people are pointing out the origins
of my name.

COREY

You have an entire book of the Bible.

RUTH

Really?

COREY

You're kidding.

RUTH

No. I didn't know. We weren't religious or anything growing up.

(COREY pulls out his phone to Google the Book of Ruth.)

No phones! We said no phones tonight!

COREY

I was just looking up-

RUTH

No phones.

COREY

Ok. Ok. It's going away.

(COREY puts his phone in his pocket and hold out his drink.)

Read on.

RUTH

"Dear baby killer,

(She drinks, wipes her mouth and continues)

Did you know you have a biblical name? A precious biblical name? You don't deserve that name." I don't disagree.

COREY

I am quite fond of your name.

RUTH

You're an idiot.

COREY

Please continue. Clearly I am not on your level.

RUTH

"The amount of pain you have caused my family by your actions is inexcusable. Your lack of understanding our situation is what hurts the most..."

(She trails off but continues reading to herself. It's long. As

she reads, the recording
plays.)

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Did you receive accurate information about your alternative
options to killing your child?

RUTH'S VOICE

I did not kill my child.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

That does not answer my question. Were you offered
alternative options, Mrs. Giles?

RUTH'S VOICE

What other options, sir?

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Answer the question.

RUTH'S VOICE

There was a display in the waiting room and the exam room.
It was titled "Your options." Under the title were many
pamphlets. I didn't take any so the nurse made me a stack.
I threw them away on my way out the door. Mind you, I
wasn't the only one. That was all that was in that
trashcan.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Then how were you able to make an educated decision about
the destruction of your family, specifically with life-
altering risks like infertility and breast cancer? Were you
informed many studies prove having an abortion increases
your susceptibility to breast cancer and directly causes
infertility?

(The recording ends.)

COREY

Ruth?

(Beat.)

Ruth? Are you ok?

(Beat.)

RUTH

Yeah. Um...there's nothing good in there is all. No other
rules.

(Beat.)

Let's move on.

COREY

Are you-

RUTH

Yeah. I need a super violent, uterus ripping, bloody one.

COREY

Sure. Red inked.

RUTH

Red ink.

(She drinks as COREY sifts through the letters. He is wary and isn't sure if he should continue the game. RUTH grabs the thickest envelope.)

COREY

I was avoiding that one.

RUTH

Pussy?

COREY

No. Maybe a little. I don't think there's enough alcohol in this house for that one.

RUTH

I'm opening.

(COREY grabs the letter from her.)

COREY

No! Um...it's my turn.

RUTH

You don't trust me? You don't think I can handle the game anymore.

COREY

That's not it. It's my turn. Really.

RUTH

Fine. But no skimming. No pre-reading. I got my eyes on you.

COREY

I know.

(COREY carefully opens
the envelope.)

There's no letter.

RUTH

Give me that.

(She turns the envelope
upside down and pictures
fall out, lots of wallet
size images of babies
fall out.)

That's disappointing.

COREY

You could say that.

RUTH

It's a good thing we aren't doing this with my Facebook messages. Those are fucking brutal. I mean brutal. We'd be in the hospital right now.

COREY

And you read them all?

RUTH

I've never been a celebrity before.

COREY

What?

RUTH

I'm a motherfucking icon now. People know me.

COREY

I guess.

RUTH

Jealous?

COREY

No.

Abbi is. RUTH

Abbi isn't jealous. COREY

Oh yeah, she is. RUTH

Abbi is doing just fine. COREY

What do you mean? RUTH

That's all I mean. COREY

When I did it, I thought I was going to do great things, you know? My teachers my whole life always told me I was amazing. RUTH

You are amazing. COREY

I was supposed to do like big things. Like Presidential level things. RUTH

You were planning on being a Presidential graphic designer? COREY

No. But work on campaigns like the "hope" one. RUTH

I've never heard you say before. COREY

I thought you and I were like a fucking power couple or something. Like a couple that was going to take over the world. RUTH

And we aren't now? COREY

RUTH
No.

COREY
That's news to me.

RUTH
Is it really, Corey? What have you done?

COREY
I have a Master's degree. That's pretty great. I have a cool job and a wife... a pretty kick ass wife.

RUTH
Just like everyone else in our graduating class. Corey. I gave up having a little Corey to do the biggest things.

COREY
No, you didn't.

RUTH
Yes I did.

COREY
That's not why you did it.

RUTH
I certainly didn't do it to work in human resources at a mid-level corporation.

COREY
Ruth, now isn't the time for regrets.

RUTH
I don't have regrets. I have fans.

COREY
Sure.

RUTH
I really like the ones where they say they are praying for me. They are taking time to pray for me. I'm not sure people have ever like prayed for me before. Why me?

COREY
You know why.

RUTH

Yeah, but of all the millions on the list, why me? Why Ruth Laurel?

COREY

I have this vision of youth groups and Sunday schools pouring over the list and dividing the names with colored highlighters. Like you find Eliza, and I'll do Carol and Lisa and June.

(RUTH begins to laugh and she stops suddenly and is silent.)

Ruth?

(Beat.)

Honey?

(Beat.)

RUTH

I forget about them. The other's. I forget that they are out there. And I-

(There's a knock at the door.)

Who is that? Did you Ubereats?? Please tell me you Ubereats-ted!

COREY

You made me put my phone away.

RUTH

I hate everything.

(RUTH crosses toward to door. The recording begins.)

RUTH'S VOICE

I don't believe that those risks are as prevalent as you want me to believe.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

What do you believe Mrs. Giles? Not in a god? Not science?

COREY

Let me.

RUTH

Stop. It's probably Abbi.

COREY

My point exactly.

RUTH

Don't be stupid.

COREY

That's the fourth time you've called me stupid tonight.

RUTH

That's it? Wow.

(RUTH opens the front
door.)

RUTH'S VOICE

I believe in my science and I guess you believe yours.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Isn't science, just science?

RUTH'S VOICE

Mr. Chairman, those studies that your people cite have been trumped up and manipulated. They are propaganda.

RUTH

Yes. I'm Ruth Laurel Giles.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

You are on thin ice-

RUTH'S VOICE

To answer your question *fully*- since I didn't believe that my abortion or any abortion will lead to infertility or breast cancer, the risks, which I am sure were listed in those dumpster pamphlets, had zero effect on my decision to remove the glorified sandwich of cells in my uterus.

COREY

What is it?

RUTH

I've been served.

COREY

At this hour?

RUTH

(opening the envelope)

You are hereby commanded to be and appear before the Select Committee on Abortion and Fetal Rights of the House of Representative of the United States and the place, date and time specified below.

(RUTH begins to laugh again.)

I've been served. I've never been served anything other than a pizza.

COREY

Give me your phone.

RUTH

No phones!

COREY

Jesus Ruth, give me your fucking phone.

(RUTH hands COREY her phone.)

RUTH

Here.

(He turns on the phone. It takes longer than he wants. RUTH is still laughing.)

RUTH

I think this means there's going to be a lot more letters.

COREY

Yeah, that's a good bet.

RUTH

(Her laughter starts to transition into heaves and she sinks. She is dry sobbing.)

Corey, it won't...I can't...I can't.

COREY

What can't you do?

(He sits on the floor next to her.)

RUTH

I can't imagine us getting on a plane. Spending more time with... and getting on a plane and going to DC. Going to be before Congress and not going to see the giant squid.

COREY

The giant squid?

RUTH

Yeah. I've always wanted to see the giant squid. At the Museums of Nature History.

COREY

Natural History.

RUTH

That one. And the diamonds. They have diamonds.

COREY

I think you can still see the squid.

RUTH

I need to call Susanna.

COREY

Right, of course you do.

(COREY scrolls and calls. He hands her the phone.)

RUTH

Thanks.

COREY

Yeah.

RUTH

She's not answering.

COREY

Well, you aren't her only client in all of this.

RUTH

Shit, how many of us did they call?

COREY

Do you want to turn-

RUTH
No. Not tonight. We said no TVs, phones, none of it
tonight, remember?

COREY
That was before.

RUTH
I can't know.

COREY
Should we just keep calling?

RUTH
No.

COREY
She might have tried to call us.

RUTH
Then she'll try again...back to the letters?

COREY
I don't know.

RUTH
But we were having fun, yeah? It was fun and stupid. It-

COREY
Can I see the subpoena?

RUTH
I don't think there's anything on that we can drink to.

COREY
No. Probably not.

(RUTH hands him the
document.)

Wow. I've never seen a federal subpoena before. It's kind
of cool.

RUTH
You have got to be kidding me?!

COREY
What?

RUTH

You are having a moment with a federal document. You look like you might cum all over my subpoena. And you know, your cum is what got us into this mess to begin with.

COREY

Please don't say cum.

(The recording plays.
The couple transition
into the next scene.
After a passing of time,
we see RUTH leave with a
suitcase to D.C. and
COREY does not go with
her.)

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

What was the primary reason you decided to end your pregnancy?

RUTH'S VOICE

There were many factors that contributed to my decision.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Your decision? Did you deny the father's input?

RUTH'S VOICE

Again. I cannot speak for my *husband*, but he left the decision to me. He said that he believed I would do what was right for us and that we weren't in a place in our relationship where it needed to be a two-person thing.

CONGRESSMAN VOICE

I am going to re-ask my previous question. What was the primary reason you decided to end your pregnancy so abruptly?

RUTH'S VOICE

Money. Time. Life potential.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Life potential?

RUTH'S VOICE

Yes. I am a career focused woman, or at least I was at the time. Many studies show that having a child can stunt

RUTH'S VOICE (Cont.)

career. I wasn't ready to have that happen just as I was getting started.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

How has your career progressed?

RUTH'S VOICE

If you are asking if all my hopes and dreams have come true career wise. No. They haven't.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

And what would you say to all those successful career driven mothers, many of whom are with us today, the woman that raised you-

RUTH'S VOICE

Thank you for you sacrifices. I know it's not easy and I hope they felt the same freedom I felt to make that decision and raise their children.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

What sacrifices are you referring to?

RUTH'S VOICE

I am not equipped to answer that question as I am not in fact a mother.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Trips to the middle east perhaps?

RUTH'S VOICE

Again, I do not think it's fair for a childless person to speak on the sacrifices of parenthood.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

And what was your annual household income at the time you decided to-

RUTH'S VOICE

My taxes that year stated I made fifteen thousand dollars.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

And the father's?

RUTH'S VOICE

We didn't live together at the time, so his income wasn't a part of my annual household income.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

But what did he make that year, Ruth? Do you know? If money was a primary factor in the decision-making process, I believe that we have the right to know what both of your finances looked like at the time of the abortion?

RUTH'S VOICE

Negative twenty-five thousand dollars.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Excuse me?

RUTH'S VOICE

Corey was in graduate school. He didn't get any subsidies. He worked at Starbucks for extra cash but he took out thirty thousand dollars that year for his grad program.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

You said twenty-five?

RUTH'S VOICE

I subtracted the five he made at Starbucks.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Are you aware of government programs such as WIC? SNAP?

RUTH'S VOICE

Yes. Those are all programs for after the baby is born. What about all the costs leading up to that, Chairman Danforth? And I'm not just talking about diapers, clothes and that stuff. I mean who was going to pay for the doctor's visits and the delivery. The delivery alone can cost thirty-five hundred dollars, and that's with health insurance which I didn't qualify for at the time. And what if there is a complication?

CONGRESSMAN

Did you consider asking your family for help? Your parents-

RUTH'S VOICE

No.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Why did you rule out adoption as a viable option?

RUTH'S VOICE

I did not want to be pregnant.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Would you say that's the actual reason you chose to terminate your pregnancy?

RUTH'S VOICE

No. I would not.

Act II

Scene 4

AFTER TRANSITION:

COREY is on the couch. He has set up camp. He hasn't left the couch since the hearings started so the apartment is a mess. Coffee cups, beers cans, gummy worm bags, take out containers and a pizza box litter the area along with multiple blankets and pillows brought in from the bedroom. He wears sweat pants and no shirt. He hears keys in the front door, and it opens. ABBI enters.

Holy shit! Abbi!

COREY

Hi, Corey.

ABBI

COREY
(putting on the closest
shirt.)
Shouldn't you be at work?

COREY

Shouldn't you be in DC?

ABBI

We couldn't afford for both of us to go.

COREY

Damn.

ABBI

Yeah. Turns out lawyers and plane tickets and hotels costs a lot of money.

COREY

Regretting that honeymoon.

ABBI

COREY
Every fucking minute.

(Beat.)
What are you doing here exactly?

ABBI
I don't have tv.

COREY
You have a phone-

ABBI
Corey.

COREY
You were planning on breaking in-

ABBI
I wasn't breaking in. I have key.

COREY
We haven't seen you in-

ABBI
Corey. Please. Can I stay and watch. I won't say a word; I swear.

COREY
Yeah, Abbi. I would actually really like it if you stayed.

ABBI
Ok.

(Long beat.)
Is anyone there?

COREY
Yeah, Susanna.

ABBI
Who is Susanna?

COREY
Our...um...Ruth's lawyer.

ABBI
Oh sure.

COREY

Yeah. She's good. I mean like really good. She's pretty great. She's representing quite a few of them.

ABBI

That's good.

COREY

Yeah.

(Beat.)

Things are ok considering since Ruth...I mean... but Ruth is great. She's gonna be great, right? I mean she's prepared. Really prepared and shit.

ABBI

Of course, she is. It's Ruth.

COREY

And Susanna is really great.

ABBI

You said that.

COREY

Who would have imagined I would thank god for Mercy every day?

ABBI

Mercy?

COREY

Yeah, she um, Susanna was like her mentor or something. She told me about her.

ABBI

Does Ruth know that?

COREY

Sort of. I'm glad we have her. Got a lawyer and have her. Ruth didn't like her at first. But it was a good move, I think.

ABBI

I told you that. But I guess it doesn't count until Mercy-

COREY

Not today Abbi. Please.

Fine. ABBI

(Beat.)

And you were right. COREY

I am most of the time. ABBI

(Long beat)

Did you watch yesterday? COREY

A little at work. That was terrible. Truly terrible. She wasn't ready. ABBI

Which one? COREY

Elizabeth. The older woman from Albuquerque. ABBI

Yeah it was brutal. The others did better. COREY

I would hope so. I wanted to watch more but work has been...hectic. ABBI

Yeah? COREY

It's been a whirlwind but it's been...uh. I'm sorry but this has all been...I mean I am in a really special moment of my career. ABBI

I saw. COREY

It was a good article, wasn't it? ABBI

COREY

I said I saw it. I didn't read it. I see it a lot. It shows up a lot.

ABBI

I know. We hit three million shares yesterday.

COREY

Great.

ABBI

Yeah, it is great. I am glad you said no. I wouldn't have been able to write like that about you and Austin was beautiful, I knew it would be. It's one of those places people always say you should go to. Have you been there?

COREY

No.

ABBI

They were a lovely couple. You should call John. You really should, he knows what you are going through.

COREY

I don't think he does.

ABBI

Of course he does.

COREY

It wasn't his.

ABBI

How do you know? I thought you didn't read it.

COREY

Ruth.

ABBI

She read it?

COREY

Of course she did. She's proud of you.

ABBI

That's nice.

COREY

She is your best friend.

ABBI

I guess so.

(Beat.)

Do you want me to hook you up with John? He and I are still in touch.

COREY

I don't think so.

ABBI

Why?

COREY

It wasn't his.

ABBI

Other than that, you had a similar experience-

COREY

There is no other than that Abbi. This is all happening because me. I didn't tell her no.

ABBI

Could you really have told Ruth no?

COREY

No. I don't know, but John. Fucking John, he didn't even know his wife at the time. He doesn't have to think thoughts like that. John doesn't carry around this guilt that I do. Fucking John gets to support his wife blindly. John works for a tech company in Austin. John got to sit on his mustard yellow couch surrounded by designer throw pillows in his fucking boat shoes, arm around whatever her name calling himself a motherfucking feminist. While Corey, me. Corey, is sitting here with you and your complete emotional and situational ignorance. Corey, still doesn't know if his wife did the right thing. Corey let Ruth go to that clinic alone. I sent my wife to DC to be interrogated by men who are old enough to be her grandfather, alone. Again. Do you know what she said to me last night, before she got on the plane? That she was glad I wasn't coming. She does better when I'm not there. That she is more confident when she only has to represent herself. Having me there would be an added pressure. To

COREY (Cont.)

make me...make me...fuck. And that guy in the magazine, website whatever. That guy John's wife wouldn't say that to her husband. That woman needs him to be next to her like that. Ruth, my Ruth doesn't even want me there like that. So please don't tell me that John can help me through anything? Corey and John aren't even in the same fucking hemisphere of experience, Abbi. Ok?

ABBI

Ok.

(Beat)

COREY

And if you tweet, blog, tumble anything I have said or will say in the next few hours I will...I will-

ABBI

Trust me, Corey.

COREY

Swear it Abbi.

ABBI

We've been friends a long time.

COREY

Exactly.

ABBI

I swear it Corey.

(ABBI takes out her
phone.)

I'm turning it off. It's just you and me, ok?

COREY

Ok.

ABBI

You want a drink?

COREY

No but I'll take a smoke.

ABBI

Really?

Yeah. COREY

Ok. Can I have a drink? ABBI

Why are you asking? COREY

I'm trying to...I- ABBI

Fine. COREY

(Beat. ABBI gets up and gets herself a beer.)

Do you have a cigarette?

Yeah. I do. ABBI

(She hands him the pack. He takes out three and lines them up on the coffee table. He lights one and smokes. ABBI watches.)

What time?

Soon. COREY

So you think it was a mistake? ABBI

No. Yes. I think at this point it's hard to separate the act from all the other events around it. COREY

Yeah. ABBI

I know that if this had been the climate we- COREY

You don't know that Corey. ABBI

COREY

I guess I don't. It's easy to say.

ABBI

But does it make you feel any better?

COREY

No. Not really.

ABBI

Does anything?

COREY

No. Not really.

(The recording starts.)

RUTH'S VOICE

I was under the impression I would get to read my prepared statement.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Can you please bring a copy of it to the committee? We will decide-

RUTH'S VOICE

You've had a copy since last week.

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Can you not present the written statement here today?

RUTH'S VOICE

Yes, I can sir.

(The sound of footsteps.
Long pause.)

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

The committee has ruled the statement is irrelevant to this hearing.

RUTH'S VOICE

Mr. Chairman, I-

CONGRESSMAN'S VOICE

Are you ready for the minority representation to ask you questions?

RUTH'S VOICE

Yes sir. I am very ready.

(END PLAY.)