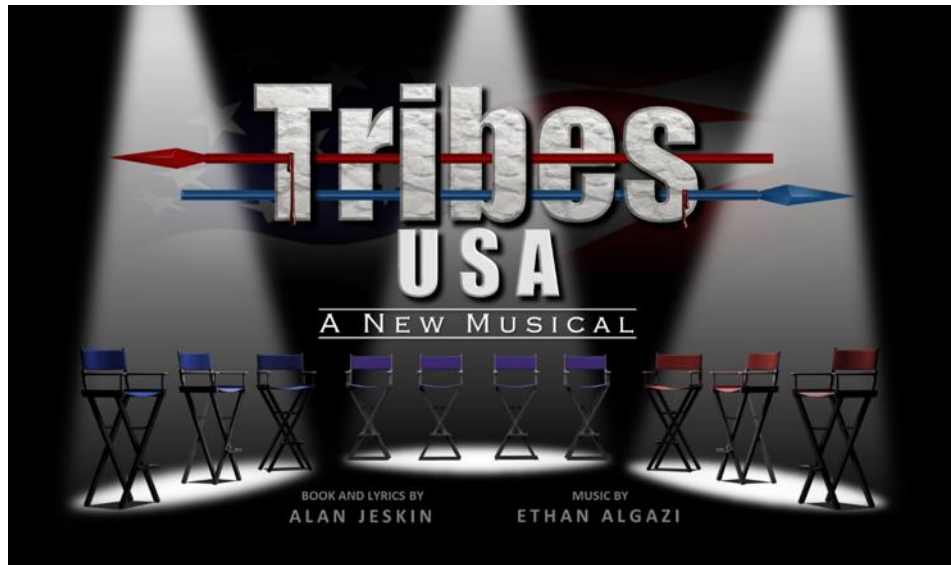




TRIBES USA

A New Musical

Book and Lyrics by Alan Jeskin

Music by Ethan Algazi, Elizabeth Vainstein, and Tom Maor

Alan Jeskin

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Version 60

October 9, 2026

SYNOPSIS

On Election Day 2024, a live television debate gathers ten Americans, from the extreme left to the extreme right, before a charming, snarky host whose contract depends on conflict and ratings. As they spar over hot-button issues like immigration, abortion, race, and faith, the show interrogates the machinery that profits from division: the algorithms of outrage, the spectacle of certainty, the tribal pull that turns neighbors into enemies. Humor disarms; sobriety lands; escalation reveals the human cost when ideology outpaces empathy. Yet beneath the noise, the piece insists on a stubborn, hopeful question: what do we still share? An indictment of polarization and a love letter to the messy American family, Tribes USA invites every audience to choose civility — and family — over tribe.

TIME: November 5, 2024

PLACE: A television studio.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

JASON PROCTOR — *Male, 30s. Tenor. Caucasian.*

Host of the nationally televised debate show Tribes. Charismatic, witty, ambitious, and addicted to ratings, Jason turns political conflict into entertainment. Engaged to Clara, he believes tonight's broadcast will secure their future. Instead, his pursuit of success forces him to confront the human cost of the spectacle he created.

ELAINE — *Extreme Left, Panelist #1. Female, 20s. Mezzo. Bi-racial (Black + other).*

A recent college graduate whose fierce progressive activism is fueled by personal tragedy. Intelligent, outspoken, and quick to anger, Elaine has little patience for compromise. Beneath her confidence lies unresolved grief that shapes both her politics and her most important relationships.

FLORENCE — *Far Left, Panelist #2. Female, late 30s–50s. Soprano. Caucasian.*

A Women's Studies professor and passionate social activist. Articulate, intellectually confident, and morally driven, Florence serves as mentor and ally to Elaine. Though often uncompromising in debate, she gradually discovers that meaningful dialogue may require listening as much as persuading.

LAMAR — *Left, Panelist #3. Male, 40s. Baritone/Bass. Black.*

A devoted husband, father, football fan, and longtime DMV employee. Thoughtful and good-natured, Lamar brings warmth and perspective to a room filled with conflict. More interested in people than ideology, he often provides the show's emotional balance.

CLARA — *Center Left, Panelist #4. Female, early 30s. Alto/Mezzo. Latina.*

Associate producer of Tribes and Jason's fiancée. When a panelist withdraws minutes before airtime, Clara unexpectedly joins the debate herself. Smart, compassionate, and ambitious, she becomes the show's conscience while pursuing long-deferred dreams of being seen and heard.

CLAYTON — *Center Left, Panelist #5. Male, 20s–30s. Tenor. Caucasian.*

A cheerful software engineer who approaches politics the same way he approaches coding: logically and collaboratively. Clayton believes most problems can be solved through compromise and good faith. His growing attraction to Cristy offers a hopeful counterpoint to the show's increasing polarization.

CRISTY — *Center Right, Panelist #6. Female, 20s–30s. Soprano. Asian or bi-racial (Asian + other).*

A resident physician whose political views are guided by evidence, practicality, and empathy. Calm under pressure and intellectually disciplined, Cristy often serves as the voice of reason. Her developing relationship with Clayton reveals the possibility of connection across differences.

CRAIG — *Center Right, Panelist #7. Male, 30s–40s. Baritone. Caucasian.*

A veteran police officer who believes the need for police reform is overstated. Reserved, thoughtful, and steady, Craig avoids ideological extremes while remaining deeply committed to service. His judgment, restraint, and sense of duty become increasingly important as tensions escalate.

RACHEL — *Right, Panelist #8. Female, late 50s to 60s. Alto. Caucasian.*

A conservative Christian grandmother whose politics are rooted in faith, family, and lived experience. Warm, emotional, and outspoken, Rachel often brings humor and heart to the discussion. Her love for her family reminds the audience that political beliefs rarely tell the whole story.

FRANK — *Far Right, Panelist #9. Male, 40s–60s. Bass/Baritone. Caucasian.*

Host of a conservative podcast and a committed culture warrior. Sharp, combative, and deeply ideological, Frank relishes political debate. Yet beneath his certainty lies a father struggling to reconcile his convictions with the changing realities of his own family.

ERIC — *Extreme Right, Panelist #10. Male, 20s. Tenor. Caucasian.*

A young mechanic who feels abandoned by the institutions and culture around him. Angry, defensive, and eager to prove himself, Eric masks insecurity with bravado. His inability to process rejection, loss, and resentment ultimately drives the musical toward its tragic conclusion.

MOM'S VOICE — **Female, 50s–60s. Non-singing. Pre-recorded; never seen.**

Clara's mother. Warm, effusive, and proud. Heard only through the speaker of Clara's phone and never seen onstage. All of her lines are pre-recorded.

SCENES AND MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT ONE	1-1-1
<i>Scene 1 — Before air</i>	<i>1-1-1</i>
<i>Scene 2 — The broadcast.....</i>	<i>1-2-1</i>
1. “Turn It Up”	1-2-1
<i>Jason, Company</i>	
2. “Meet the Tribes”	1-2-4
<i>Jason, Company</i>	
3. “Go Tribal”	1-2-11
<i>Company</i>	
4. “Falling Into Place”	1-2-16
<i>Clara</i>	
5. “The Flow”	1-2-19
<i>Company</i>	
6. “22 Weeks”	1-2-24
<i>Rachel, Frank, Florence, Cristy</i>	
7. “Not Enough”	1-2-30
<i>Frank, Florence, Clayton, Cristy, Center</i>	
8. “Madness”	1-2-35
<i>Elaine, Florence, Lamar, Clara, Frank, Eric, Craig, Ensemble</i>	
9. “No Apologies”	1-2-44
<i>Elaine, Eric</i>	
 ACT TWO	 2-1-1
<i>Scene 1 — The broadcast resumes.....</i>	<i>2-1-1</i>
10. “What’s Wrong with You?”	2-1-4
<i>Florence, Elaine, Frank, Eric</i>	
11. “Just Comply”	2-1-9
<i>Craig, Center & Right</i>	
12. “Tribal Truth”	2-1-12
<i>Jason, Company</i>	
13. “At What Cost?”	2-1-18
<i>Clara, Jason</i>	
14. “You’re Gone”	2-1-22
<i>Florence, Elaine, Frank, Eric</i>	
15. “At What Cost (Reprise)”	2-1-28
<i>Clayton, Cristy, Jason</i>	
<i>Scene 2 — After.....</i>	<i>2-2-1</i>
<i>Scene 3 — Finale</i>	<i>2-3-1</i>
16. “Turn It Down”	2-3-1
<i>Company</i>	

ACT ONE - SCENE 1

INT. TV studio

Lights up. Ten director chairs span the stage in a wide arc. From left to right — chairs 1–3 are blue, 4–7 purple, 8–10 red. A podium is left of Chair 1. A large monitor behind the chairs displays a digital viewer counter currently reading zero. CLARA, headset on, clipboard in hand, inspects and tweaks the chair positioning. JASON, coffee mug in hand, strides confidently from stage left past Clara to the podium.

JASON

(To the audience)

Hey, [city name]! How are you doing tonight?

(He looks warily at Clara, retrieves a flask from a shelf in the back of the podium and spikes his coffee. CLARA shakes her head. He smiles sheepishly at her, then replaces the flask and walks downstage. He shields his eyes from the spotlight to see the crowd and smiles broadly.)

Thanks for coming out! You ready to be entertained?

(audience response)

Good, 'cause we broadcast LIVE on national TV, starting in-

(checks watch)

-fifteen minutes. And you all get to be a part of it.

(He hoists the mug in a toast and takes a long swig. He suppresses a cough and opens his eyes wide.)

Ooo. Irish coffee. Heavy on the Irish.

(CLARA raises an eyebrow and shakes her head without looking up)

Anyway, here's the situation tonight [city name]. See that monitor right there?

(points to the digital counter at zero)

That's our real-time viewer tracker. If we hit ONE MILLION viewers by the end of the show... my contract gets renewed. We hit TWO million and I get a big fat bonus.

That would be a good thing because I'm getting married next week - and it turns out wives and good liquor are CRRAAAZY expensive these days.

(CLARA shoots him a look. He blows her a kiss and takes another sip from the mug.)

And, speaking of wives, THAT beautiful creature is my fiancée and love of my life, Clara.

(He gestures grandly. CLARA waves to the audience — polite, professional — then summons Jason with her index finger.)

Uh oh. She's also our associate producer, and she's got that 'oh shit' look on her face. So, chances are we got some kind of crisis brewing with just...

(checks watch)

FOURTEEN minutes before we go live. Perfect! 'Scuse me.

(JASON walks to Clara at Chair Four)

CLARA

(low to Jason, but audience can still hear)

Panelist Four just pulled out. Family emergency. She's already in an Uber to the airport.

JASON

Oh, shit. She was perfect too. Center-left Latina, twenty-five to thirty-five, middle-class, heterosexual. Can we get a replacement?

CLARA

Not in fourteen minutes.

JASON

Dammit! What are we gonna do?

CLARA

Don't sweat it. We can run with nine panelists instead of ten. I'll cut her parts, redo the rundown, push the first commercial earlier. It'll be tight, but I'll make it work.

JASON

(beat, starting to panic)

Crap! The show's not gonna work with nine. The demographics are off. You take out the center-left Latina and women are underrepresented - the centrist tribe is underrepresented - and the immigration segment falls flat.

CLARA

Jason.

JASON

My last chance to hit a home run and like clockwork — something screws it up. If we don't hit a million, we go home. The network already gave me the speech. They're looking for an excuse to —

CLARA

Jason.

JASON

— and we are LIVE in

(checks watch)

thirteen minutes —

CLARA

I'll do it!

(Beat. JASON stares at her.)

JASON

What?

CLARA

I'll do it. I'm Latina. I'm thirty-three. Middle-class, center-left, and heterosexual.

JASON

Honey, no — you can't —

CLARA

Why not?

JASON

Because — because you're producing. Because you don't do on-camera. Because you've never wanted —

CLARA

(gently cutting him off)

Babe. I wanted to be on camera since I was eight years old. I just never pushed it, because every time I brought it up you said it was too political for our relationship and I let it go.

(Beat. Jason looks at her differently now.)

Tonight, this crazy opportunity just opened up and I'm pushing it.

JASON

(quietly)

You're serious.

CLARA

I match the demo. I know the format. I know you. If nine panelists freaks you out, I'll make it ten. You hit your million — you keep your job. We hit two million — we get the bonus.

AND my mother gets something else to brag about besides our wedding. It's the best option we have, and it's staring you in the face.

(Beat. Jason exhales, half-laughing.)

JASON

Did you plan this?

CLARA

(small smile)

Nope. Just been ready for it for years.

(JASON takes her hand, kisses the back of it.)

JASON

Okay. You're on, Panelist Four! Better hurry to make-up.

CLARA

One more thing.

JASON

What.

CLARA

Tonight, be as charming, snarky, and edgy as possible. Give 'em the extreme version of Jason and you'll get your million viewers. You got this.

JASON

(smiles pensively)

Thanks for believing in me.

(CLARA touches Jason's cheek briefly, smiles and walks toward the wings, pulling her phone from her hip pocket.)

(JASON watches her go, then turns back to the audience.)

[City name] — that's the woman I'm marrying. Makes a decision in one minute that would have paralyzed me for days. Way out of my league.

(takes a sip)

And now she's on national TV with me tonight. Either the best thing that's ever happened to us... or the worst idea we've ever had.

(Lights shift to Clara in the wings, phone to her ear. JASON is dimly visible at the podium reviewing his notes.)

CLARA

Mami? Mami, listen — turn on Channel Six. No, RIGHT NOW. No, I'm fine, everything is fine but listen. I'm going to be ON the show tonight.

(She listens, laughs, wipes at the corner of her eye.)

Yes. ON the panel. I know. I know!

(beat)

Mami, can you call Tía Lupe and the cousins and Padrino — call EVERYONE. Tell them their Clara is on TV tonight.

(beat)

Yes. Yes, I know. Te amo, mama.

(She hangs up and looks at the phone for a moment. She looks toward the chairs, toward Jason, then up at the counter at zero. She smiles, takes a deep breath, squares her shoulders, and exits stage left.)

(Go dark.)

ACT ONE - SCENE 2

Lights up. Cue music. Spotlight on Jason downstage center. PANELISTS are standing behind their chairs. Counter races quickly to 85K then slowly ticks up.

VOICE FROM P.A.

Places, people! Cameras up! We go live in five, four, three —

JASON

(to audience)

It's November fifth, twenty twenty-four. Election Day. You are watching Tribes USA. So, if you're sick and tired of politics, I've got some really bad news for you. You're in the wrong place.

NO. 1 — “TURN IT UP”

(Verse 1)

JASON

IN A WORLD FILLED WITH THE ROUTINE,
WE SLEEPWALK THROUGH LIFE LIKE IT'S A DREAM.
IT'S MINDLESS AND OH, SO MUNDANE.
WE GO THROUGH EACH DAY AND THE NEXT IS THE SAME.

WE ALL NEED A TIME TO ESCAPE
FROM THE TEDIOUS AND INANE.
WE NEED TO FIND THE MOMENTS THAT MAKE
THE DOPAMINE RUSH TO THE BRAIN.

LIFE'S MONOTONOUS AND BORING.
YOU'RE NODDING OFF AND YOU'RE SNORING.
IT'S MORE THAN ENOUGH TO DRIVE YOU INSANE, TO DRIVE YOU
INSANE.
WE NEED TO BE MORE EXCITED,
MORE INTRIGUED, MORE DELIGHTED.
WE'RE DOWNRIGHT DESPERATE TO BE ENTERTAINED, TO BE
ENTERTAINED.

(Lights up on panelists standing behind their respective chairs.)

COMPANY

TURN IT UP!
TURN IT UP!
TURN IT UP!

(Verse 2)

JASON

WE'RE HERE ON ELECTION DAY.
THE CONDITIONS ARE JUST RIGHT.
WE'VE PREPARED THIS STAGE IN SUCH A WAY
TO PROMOTE A PARTISAN FIGHT.

BLUE CHAIRS FOR THE LEFT, RED FOR THE RIGHT,
PURPLE FOR THE FOLKS IN BETWEEN.
SOME FOLKS ARE BRILLIANT, SOME NOT SO BRIGHT
SOME POLITE, AND SOME DOWNRIGHT MEAN.

SOCIALISTS AND THE SUPER WOKE
FIGHT NEOCON AND ALT RIGHT FOLKS.
WE'RE GONNA SET OFF FIREWORKS TONIGHT!

(Chorus)

CUE THE MUSIC, THE LIGHTS AND THE VIBES.
(COMPANY) TURN IT UP.
BRING THE PASSION, THE HEAT FROM THE TRIBES.
(COMPANY) TURN IT UP.
BRING THE RHYTHMS, THE BEATS, AND THEN
HOLD ONTO YOUR SEATS, MY FRIENDS.
WE'LL TAKE YOU ON THE RIDE OF YOUR LIVES.
(COMPANY) TURN IT UP.
(COMPANY) TURN IT UP.

(Bridge)

TEN PANELISTS, EACH ONE A SMALL SLICE,
NUMBERED ONE THROUGH TEN MOVING LEFT TO RIGHT.
IT'S OUR POLITICAL SPECTRUM.
NOW IT'S TIME TO SELECT SOME
FOLKS TO AIR THEIR AFFAIRS,
LET'S GET SOME BUTTS IN CHAIRS!

*(PANELISTS go downstage as they are introduced then return to their
seats)*

SEATS FOUR THROUGH SEVEN – ARE MILD MANNERED CENTRISTS,
THE ENGINEERS, TEACHERS, THE SOCCER MOMS, AND DENTISTS.
SMART AND TOLERANT, EVEN-TEMPERED AS WELL
IN OTHER WORDS, THEY'RE BORING AS HELL!

SEAT THREE ON THE LEFT, SEAT EIGHT ON THE RIGHT
ARE PARTISANS, BUT NOT BATTLE-SCARRED.
THEY'RE CALM, BUT PASSIONATE AND WILLING TO FIGHT

BUT THAT'S ONLY IF THEIR BUTTONS ARE PUSHED REAL HARD.

SEAT TWO ON THE LEFT AND NINE ON THE RIGHT,
ARE PURE HARDLINERS, BOTH CUT AND DRIED.

(FRANK offers his hand to shake. Florence shuns it.)

FOR THESE TWO TRIBAL ZEALOTS, THE GREATEST DELIGHT
IS ENGAGING THE OTHER SIDE.

SEAT ONE AND SEAT TEN, THE FEISTY EXTREMES,
VITRIOLIC, IF A TAD SLOW.
THESE LOW BROW FIREBRAND MISFITS ON BOTH TEAMS
WILL TURN THIS SET INTO A SHOW!

(Chorus)

CUE THE MUSIC, THE LIGHTS AND THE VIBES.
(COMPANY) TURN IT UP, TURN IT UP, TURN IT UP, TURN IT!
BRING THE PASSION, THE HEAT FROM THE TRIBES.
(COMPANY) TURN IT UP, TURN IT UP, TURN IT UP, TURN IT!
BRING THE RHYTHMS, THE BEATS, AND THEN
HOLD ONTO YOUR SEATS, MY FRIENDS
WE'LL TAKE YOU ON THE RIDE OF YOUR LIVES
(COMPANY) TURN IT UP.

(End of song)

*(JASON walks to the podium, gets his coffee mug and takes a sip.
Counter shows 210K viewers and rising.)*

JASON

(with gameshow host level of enthusiasm)

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Jason Proctor and I'm your host for this one-of-a-kind conversation. The ten voters to my left were carefully selected from thousands of candidates to represent the political spectrum of the American electorate with views from the extreme left in chair number one, to the extreme right in chair number ten, and eight points in-between.

As they debate the most controversial issues of the day, MY job as host and referee is to maximize the entertainment value but also minimize the number of chairs that get thrown around the stage.

(smiles wryly and takes a drink)

With that, let's meet the tribes. Starting on the left.

(Cue music. Spotlight on Blue Tribe)

NO. 2 — “MEET THE TRIBES”

(Part 1 – The Blue Intro)

JASON

THEY'RE THE PROGRESSIVES, AGGRESSIVELY CHALLENGING OLD
TRADITIONS
FIGHTING INJUSTICE, EXPLICITLY EXPOSING ITS CONTRADICTIONS
THEY'RE THE CHAMPIONS, IMPRESSIVELY IMPROVING SOCIAL
CONDITIONS
IT'S THE BLUE TRIBE

BLUE TRIBE

IT'S THE LEFT.
THE JUST.
THE BLUE.
LEFT / JUST / BLUE.

(Part 1 – Verse 1)

JASON

CHAIR ONE, EXTREME LEFT — LET'S START WITH YOU
WHO ARE YOU AND WHAT DO YOU DO?

ELAINE

I'M ELAINE
RECENT GRADUATE OF CENTRAL UNIVERSITY.
BACHELORS IN POLI SCI, AND US HISTORY.
NO FULL-TIME JOB JUST YET —
BUT I'M BUSY, DON'T YOU FRET —
FIGHTING FOR JUSTICE, EQUITY, INTERSECTIONALITY.

JASON

I'M GUESSING — BUT DO YOU STILL LIVE WITH MOM AND DAD?

ELAINE

I DO, BUT WHY DOES THAT MATTER TO YOU?

JASON

IT DOESN'T, JUST IDLE SPECULATION, MY BAD.
LET'S MOVE ON AND GO TO CHAIR NUMBER TWO.

(Part 1 – Verse 2)

JASON

THE FAR LEFT, YOU'RE NEXT. SPOTLIGHT'S ON YOU.
TELL US WHO YOU ARE AND DO TELL US WHAT YOU DO.

FLORENCE

I'M FLORENCE
PROFESSOR AT CENTRAL UNIVERSITY
TEACH WOMEN'S STUDIES AND DIVERSITY
I OPEN MINDS, SHARPEN BRAINS
TEACHING STUDENTS LIKE ELAINE
TO CHALLENGE POWER AND REWRITE REALITY

JASON

MENTOR AND STUDENT — HOW SWEET
CHAIR THREE, KEEP THE BEAT—

(Part 1 – Verse 3)

LAMAR

I'M LAMAR, JUST A WORKING MAN
HUSBAND, DAD, AND FOOTBALL FAN
TRY TO DO THE BEST I CAN
NEVER GOT A P-H-D
PROVIDE FOR MY FAMILY
WORKING AT THE DMV.

JASON

WHOA, DID YOU SAY DMV?

LAMAR

YEAH, BEEN THERE EIGHT YEARS OR SO.

JASON

OOO, YOU'RE A BETTER MAN THAN ME.
DMV? DAMN, HANG IN THERE, BRO.

(Part 1 – Outro)

JASON

IT'S THE BLUE

BLUE TRIBE

IT'S THE LEFT. THE JUST. THE BLUE.

JASON

THE BLUE TRIBE.

(Part 2 – The Purple Intro)

JASON

THEY'RE THE CENTRISTS, PERSISTENTLY BALANCING BOTH
POSITIONS

HEARING ALL SIDES, DELIBERATELY WEIGHING ALL THE
CONDITIONS
THEY'RE THE MODERATES, CONTEMPLATING BEFORE MAKING
THEIR DECISIONS
IT'S THE PURPLE TRIBE

PURPLE TRIBE

IT'S THE CENTER
THE SANE
THE PURPLE
CENTER / SANE / PURPLE

(Part 2 - Verse 1)

JASON

CHAIR FOUR, CENTER LEFT, YOUR NAME AND OCCUPATION.

CLARA

I'M CLARA, WORK IN PRODUCTION AT A TV STATION.

JASON

WHOA, I BET YOU WORK WITH SOME GREAT PEOPLE OVER THERE.

CLARA

YOU MEAN SMART, ENGAGING, FUNNY, AND DEBONAIR?

JASON

YES!

CLARA

YOU MEAN CHARMING, WITTY, SEXY, FINE, AND TALL?

JASON

EXACTLY!

CLARA

NOPE, THERE'S NOBODY LIKE THAT AT MY JOB AT ALL.

JASON

NO?

CLARA

WELL, THERE IS THIS ONE GUY I GUESS HE'S OK
HE'S GOT A TOUCH OF CLASS, AND A FAIR SHARE OF BRASS.
HE CAN BE SWEET TO BE AROUND ON ANY GIVEN DAY.
BUT THE NEXT? HE'S A REAL PAIN IN THE ASS.

JASON

(cutting her off)

THANK YOU, CLARA. LET'S MOVE ON...

(Part 2 - Verse 2)

JASON

CHAIR FIVE, CENTER LEFT, YOUR NAME AND YOUR CAREER?

CLAYTON

(excitedly)

NAME'S CLAYTON. I'M A COMPUTER ENGINEER!

JASON

OOO, WE GOT A BIG BRAIN, OVER HERE.

CLAYTON

(looks bashfully at Cristy)

YEAH, AND I'M SINGLE YOU KNOW

JASON

OK, ROMEO, YOU GOT THE WRONG SHOW

(Part 2 - Verse 3)

JASON

CHAIR SIX, SITTING CENTER RIGHT,
YOUR NAME AND WHAT YOU DO?

CRISTY

CRISTY – DOCTOR – E.R. NIGHTS.

JASON

OOO, EVEN BIGGER BRAIN ON YOU.

CRISTY

(looks bashfully at Clayton)

THANKS, AND UM, I'M SINGLE AS WELL

JASON

DO YOU TWO NEED A ROOM? WHAT THE HELL?

(Part 2 - Verse 4)

JASON

CHAIR SEVEN, CENTER RIGHT, NAME AND WHAT YOU DO.

CRAIG

HEY, MY NAME IS CRAIG, I'M A COP.

JASON

AWW - THOUGHT YOU'D HAVE A BIG BRAIN TOO
BUT YOU'RE A COP SO JUST AN AVERAGE BRAIN FOR YOU.

(CRAIG gives Jason a look)

WOAH, THERE OFFICER, HANDS UP, DON'T SHOOT!
JUST KIDDING. PROTECT AND SERVE. BACK THE BLUE!

(Part 2 - Outro)

JASON

IT'S THE PURPLE.

PURPLE TRIBE

IT'S THE CENTER. THE SANE. THE PURPLE.

JASON

THE PURPLE TRIBE

PURPLE TRIBE

THE PURPLE TRIBE

(Part 3 – The Red Intro)

JASON

THEY'RE THE CONSERVATIVES, RESOLUTELY GUARDING
TRADITION
PRAISING FREE MARKETS, DEVOUTLY DEFENDING FAITH AND
RELIGION
THEY'RE THE FAITHFUL, UNWAVERINGLY CHEERING THEIR
POLITICIAN
IT'S THE RED TRIBE

RED TRIBE

IT'S THE RIGHT
THE BEST
THE RED
RIGHT / BEST / RED

(Part 3 - Verse 1)

JASON

CHAIR EIGHT, ON THE RIGHT, WHO ARE YOU?

RACHEL

I'M RACHEL, PROUD GRANDMOTHER OF TWO
THE CUTEST LITTLE GIRLS THE WORLD EVER KNEW

JASON

EVERY GRANDMA SAYS THAT — IT'S WHAT THEY DO
"THE CUTEST IN THE WORLD," YEAH, THAT'S JUST YOUR VIEW

RACHEL

NO, THE CUTEST IN THE WORLD, ALRIGHT
THEIR DADDY'S BLACK, THEIR MAMA'S WHITE
BOTH PARENTS ARE GOOD-LOOKING TOO
BUT THOSE BABIES? HERE, I'LL SHOW YOU
(pushes her cell phone in Jason's face)
MY CARAMEL-COLORED ANGEL DELIGHTS.

JASON

CARAMEL-COLORED ANGELS — WELL THAT'S NEW
ADORABLE, YES... AND A LITTLE AWKWARD TOO
SO, LET'S KEEP THIS MOVING - AS HOSTS MUST DO

(Part 3 – Verse 2)

JASON

CHAIR NINE, FAR RIGHT. YOU GOT THE SPOTLIGHT.

FRANK

I'M FRANK AND I PODCAST EVERY NIGHT
HOST A SHOW CALLED 'EXIT STAGE RIGHT'
IF YOU'RE CONSERVATIVE — SUBSCRIBE, SIT TIGHT
WE'RE TELLING THE TRUTH AND WE'RE DOING IT RIGHT

JASON

RUSH LIMBAUGH JR., I SEE THE LIGHT
SAME FIRE, SMALLER CROWD, SAME FIGHT

(Part 3 – Verse 3)

JASON

CHAIR TEN, EXTREME RIGHT. TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF.

ERIC

NAME'S ERIC, A MECHANIC — THAT'S MY TRADE
FIX ENGINES - MY HANDS DEEP IN THE GRIME AND GRADE
(points to MAGA hat)
AND I'M A PATRIOT — PROUD AND UNAFRAID

JASON

A MECHANIC AND PATRIOT, THAT'S QUITE A RESUME

(ERIC smiles and offers his hand to Jason for a shake. JASON smiles at Eric, ignores the offer and heads for downstage center)

(Part 3 – Outro)

JASON

IT'S THE RED

RED TRIBE

IT'S THE RIGHT. THE BEST. THE RED

JASON

THE RED TRIBE.

(Part 4)

JASON

THESE ARE THE TRIBES, COLLECTIVELY FUELING DIVISION
FRAMING THEIR VIEWS WITH RHETORICALLY SHARPENED
PRECISION

THEY'RE THE FIGHTERS, AGGRESSIVELY SEEKING SUBMISSION
IT'S THE TRIBES

TRIBES

IT'S THE LEFT. THE JUST. THE BLUE
THE CENTER. THE SANE. THE PURPLE.
THE RIGHT, THE BEST. THE RED.
IT'S THE TRIBES!
IT'S THE TRIBES!

(End of song)

(JASON walks to the podium. Counter shows 450K viewers and rising.)

JASON

Thank you, panelists. Now let's jump right to our first hot-button issue. The partisan divide in this country seems to be getting wider by the day. Is this level of partisanship necessary? Anyone.

(Clayton raises his hand)

Clayton, with the big brain.

CLAYTON

I don't think so. There's a benefit to SOME degree of partisanship, but I think we are well beyond that now, and it's tearing the country apart.

CRISTY

Yeah, it's getting out of hand.

CRAIG

I agree.

(FRANK shakes his head adamantly)

JASON

Looks like Frank disagrees.

FRANK

Stakes are too high to be a centrist, man. You gotta pick a side and go tribal.

(CLAYTON opens his mouth to respond, but is cut off)

FLORENCE

I concur. This election is a fight to preserve our democracy or to lose it. To win that fight, sometimes partisanship is necessary.

JASON

Do all the Blues and Reds feel that way?

(BLUES and REDS nod and approve verbally)

RACHEL

This country is going down a dark path. Those of us with good Christian values need to work together as a team.

(Cue music)

(RACHEL walks to downstage center as she sings.)

NO. 3 — “GO TRIBAL”

(Verse 1)

RACHEL

TODAY WE FIGHT
TO MAINTAIN OUR TRADITIONS,
DEFEND WHAT'S RIGHT,
OUR VALUES AND RELIGION.
WE FIGHT FOR FAMILY, FOR GOD AND COUNTRY,
FOR JESUS AND RIGHT TO LIFE.

FLORENCE

(Approaching Rachel.)

Not quite.

TODAY WE FIGHT
TO MAKE REAL AND LASTING CHANGE,
DEFEND WHAT'S RIGHT,
AND KEEP FREEDOM WITHIN RANGE
FOR WOMEN, BLACK, AND BROWN FOLKS TOO
FOR L-G-B-T AND Q.

(Chorus)

RACHEL & FLORENCE

OH, WHEN THE STAKES ARE RUNNIN' HIGH
EVERY VOTE IS DO OR DIE.

(BLUE AND RED) YOU GO TRIBAL

YOU STAND UP TALL AND PICK A SIDE
FOR YOUR COUNTRY TO SURVIVE

(BLUE AND RED) YOU GO TRIBAL

(Verse 2)

FRANK

(Walks to downstage center as he sings.)

TODAY WE FIGHT
TO RESTORE THE DAYS OF OLD.
TO MAKE THINGS RIGHT.
FOR THE FREE, THE BRAVE, AND THE BOLD.
RECLAIM THIS LAND OF OURS FROM SEA TO SEA
THIS IS GOD'S GIFT TO YOU AND TO ME

LAMAR

(Approaches Frank.)

Nah.

TODAY WE FIGHT
TO KEEP ON MAKING PROGRESS,
TO REIGNITE
THE FIGHT FOR EQUAL JUSTICE
TODAY WE RIGHT THE TRANSGRESSIONS OF THE PAST
SO WE CAN ALL BE FREE AT LAST

(Chorus)

LAMAR & FRANK

OH WHEN THE STAKES ARE RUNNIN' HIGH

EVERY VOTE IS DO OR DIE.
(BLUE AND RED) YOU GO TRIBAL
YOU STAND UP TALL AND PICK A SIDE
FOR YOUR COUNTRY TO SURVIVE
(BLUE AND RED) YOU GO TRIBAL

(Bridge)

CLAYTON

(Walks to downstage center as he sings.)

GOING TRIBAL MAY GET BATTLES WON
BUT GO TOO FAR, IT'S ALL UNDONE
WHEN RIVALRY TURNS TO HATE FOR SOME,
ONLY HATE SURVIVES.
(PURPLE: ONLY HATE SURVIVES)

CRISTY

(Walks to downstage center as she sings.)

WHAT WE SHOULD KNOW IS EVERYONE
WANTS FREEDOM, LOVE, AND TIME IN THE SUN.
WE'RE ALL JUST HUMAN WHEN THE DAY IS DONE,
MEMBERS OF A SINGLE TRIBE.

(Verse 3)

ERIC

(Approaches Clayton and Cristy)

Nope!

TODAY WE FIGHT
TO REINSTATE OUR NATION.
OUR FOUNDERS WERE WHITE.
(Looks over at Elaine)
YOU'RE NOT IN THE DECLARATION.
IT'S OUR BIRTHRIGHT, AND OUR DESTINY
FOR OUR WHITE CHRISTIAN PROGENY

ELAINE

(Approaches Eric)

Nah!

TODAY WE FIGHT
THE NEO NAZIS SCUMBAGS
THE PRIVILEGED RIGHT
THAT WAVE THEIR THIN-BLUE-LINE FLAGS

FIGHT THE BIBLE THUMPING, OIL PUMPING, RIFLE HUMPING,
DONALD TRUMPING
FOLKS JUST SO DAMN OUT OF TOUCH
(Points to Centrists.)
AND THESE CENTRISTS WHO SMILE WAY TOO MUCH!

(Chorus)

ELAINE & ERIC

OH WHEN THE STAKES ARE RUNNIN' HIGH
EVERY VOTE IS DO OR DIE.
(BLUE AND RED: YOU GO TRIBAL)
YOU STAND UP TALL AND PICK A SIDE
FOR YOUR COUNTRY TO SURVIVE
(BLUE AND RED: YOU GO TRIBAL)
FOR YOUR COUNTRY TO SURVIVE
(BLUE AND RED: YOU GO TRIBAL)
FOR YOUR COUNTRY TO SURVIVE

BLUE AND RED TRIBES

YOU GO TRIBAL!
YOU GO TRIBAL!

(End of song)

*(ELAINE and ERIC stand a foot apart eyeing one another for a beat
before walking back to their seats.)*

*(Counter reads 570K viewers and rising. JASON walks to downstage
center and addresses the audience.)*

JASON

OK! Looks like things are heating up and viewers are tuning in. That ends the first segment of our show. We're going to take a quick break. Don't go anywhere, we'll be right back with more Tribes, USA.

VOICE FROM P.A.

And we're clear! We're back in three minutes. Panelists, back in your seats in two.

*(PANELISTS leave their seats and mingle. CLAYTON and CRISTY
flirt awkwardly with one another.)*

(CLARA walks to Jason downstage center.)

JASON

(noticing Clara approach)

There she is – Panelist number four! You were awesome.

CLARA

Yeah, I know.

(THEY laugh. CLARA checks the counter.)

Five hundred and seventy thousand. We're getting there.

JASON

(turning pensive)

Yeah, but we're not there yet. You still think I can pull this off?

CLARA

Are you kidding? Of course you can. Keep bringing the charm, the snark, and the edge and I bet we cross a million by the end of next segment.

JASON

I sure hope so.

(Phone vibration noise. CLARA retrieves and looks at her phone.)

CLARA

It's my mom. I need to take this.

JASON

(reaching for the phone)

Ooo, let me say hi real quick.

(CLARA hands him the phone. HE puts it on speaker.)

Hola, Suegra!

(SOUND: MOM'S VOICE, pre-recorded, through the phone speaker.)

MOM'S VOICE

(warmly)

Mijo! Qué pasó?

JASON

Nada, nada, I'm just saying hi.

MOM'S VOICE

Ay, qué lindo. Take care of my girl tonight.

JASON

Always. Here she is.

CLARA

(takes phone off speaker)

Mami? — Hey so you saw me, huh? — YES, I know it was a lot. I know.

(JASON touches Clara's shoulder gently and heads back to the podium.)

Are you kidding? Of course I'm happy. It finally happened for me. — Thank you. —
Tell Tía Lupe I'll call her tomorrow. Tell Padrino I love him. Tell everybody. — Yes,
after the show. — Te amo, mama.

(She hangs up. She holds the phone for a moment in both hands. She looks back at Jason, then looks toward the audience as if catching her own reflection.)

(Light shift. Upstage fades visually as Clara steps into a soft pool downstage.)

(Cue music.)

NO. 4 — “FALLING INTO PLACE”

(Verse 1)

CLARA

FOR YEARS I KEPT A LIST OF EVERY MAN I'D NEVER DATE —
THE PRETTY PLAYBOY HUNTING THE NEXT POOR HEART TO BREAK.
THE SEXY SHOWMAN LOST IN LOVE WITH THE LENS.
THE DREAMY DREAMER CHASING FAME OVER FRIENDS.
(beat, wry smile)
BUT THEN I MET JASON.
HE'S A MESS. DRINKS TOO MUCH.
HE'D SELL HIS SOUL FOR ONE MORE VIEW.
HE WAS THE WRONG MAN ON EVERY LIST I DREW —
BUT WHEN HE OFFERED ME HIS HEART, I LET HIM THROUGH.
AND HE BECAME THE HOME I NEVER KNEW

(Chorus)

AFTER ALL THIS TIME,
AFTER ALL THIS TIME,
I'M FINALLY FALLING
FINALLY FALLING - INTO PLACE.

(Verse 2)

FOR YEARS I HELD MY CLIPBOARD — WORE MY HEADSET WITH A
SMILE,
RUNNING RUNDOWNS, PREPPING TALENT, HOLDING CUE CARDS IN
THE AISLE.
I PITCHED MY SHOW. THEY PASSED.
PITCHED ANOTHER. THEY PASSED ON THAT TOO.

"YOU'RE THE BEST BEHIND THE CAMERA, HON" — GOD, I'VE HEARD
THAT ONE ON CUE.

(she looks and points at the empty Chair Four)

THEN TONIGHT — THAT EMPTY CHAIR.
I COULD'VE FOUND A TEMP LIKE I ALWAYS DO.
INSTEAD, I SAT DOWN TO CLAIM A SPOTLIGHT TOO —
AND MAMA CALLED EVERYONE SHE EVER KNEW.
A MILLION PEOPLE WATCHING, AND MAMÁ SAYING, "MIJA, ERES
TÚ"

(Chorus)

AFTER ALL THIS TIME,
AFTER ALL THIS TIME —
I'M FINALLY FALLING
FINALLY FALLING —

(Bridge)

AFTER ALL THE ALMOSTS,
ALL THE NO'S,
ALL THE NIGHTS I SAT AND CRIED,
AFTER ALL THE PRETTY BOYS WITH PRETTY LIES
AND PRETTY ALIBIS,
AFTER ALL THE BOSSES SAID "NEXT YEAR", THEN THE NEXT YEAR
JUST SLID BY —
TONIGHT, A MILLION STRANGERS MET THE WOMAN I'D KEPT
INSIDE.
TONIGHT MY MOTHER'S CALLING, CRYING TEARS OF JOY AND
PRIDE —
TONIGHT THE MAN WHO'S MY FOREVER WANTS ME AS HIS BRIDE.

(Chorus)

AND AFTER ALL THIS TIME,
AFTER ALL THIS TIME,
I'M FINALLY FALLING
FINALLY FALLING - INTO PLACE.

(End of song)

(CLARA walks upstage to join the other panelists.)

VOICE FROM P.A.

Places people! Thirty seconds.

(PANELISTS take their seats)

Cameras up! We go live in five, four, three...

JASON

(from podium)

Welcome back to Tribes USA. I'm Jason Proctor here with our voter panel and we are going to dive right into the next topic. Let's talk about one of the defining issues of this election... immigration!

Let's add a personal dimension to this. Panelists, raise your hand if you are a US citizen.

(ALL PANELISTS raise their hands)

Keep your hand up if you were born in the US.

(All panelists keep their hands up)

Keep your hand up if BOTH of your parents were born in the US. If either of your parents was born OUTSIDE the US, put your hand down.

(CRISTY AND CLARA lower their hands and smile at one another.)

Keep your hand up if ALL FOUR of your grandparents were born in the US. If any of your grandparents was born OUTSIDE the US, put your hand down.

(CLAYTON AND ERIC lower their hands.)

Ok, you can all put your hands down. So, we got Clara, Cristy, Clayton, and Eric with at least one immigrant parent or grandparent, and the rest of you with no immigrants within the last three generations. I don't know how that impacts your views on immigration, but let's find out.

So, when you hear the word immigration - new people coming to America from around the world – what pops into your mind. Anyone?

(FRANK and ERIC raise their hands enthusiastically. RACHEL raises hers reluctantly.)

Ooo! Lots of enthusiasm from the Red Tribe on this one. We'll kick things off with Nana Rachel.

RACHEL

Are we talking about legal or illegal immigration?

JASON

Whichever one gets you fired up.

RACHEL

OK then, let's talk ILLEGAL immigration.

(Cue music)

JASON

Great. Go for it.

LAMAR

(sarcastically)

Here we go.

NO. 5 — “THE FLOW”

(Verse 1)

RACHEL

IT’S THE FLOW
POURING THROUGH THE SOUTHERN BORDER
BY THE THOUSANDS THEY’RE DESTROYING OUR LAW AND ORDER.

(The LEFT groans)

FRANK

SLOW THE FLOW.
BRINGING DRUGS AND PROBLEMS,
THEN THEY CRY AND EXPECT US TO SOLVE ’EM.

RACHEL

IT’S THE FLOW.

FRANK

THEY COME HERE AND THEY GO ON WELFARE
FORCING US TO FUND THEIR HOUSING AND PAY FOR HEALTHCARE.

ERIC

STOP THE FLOW.
CHEAPER LABOR WILL SUPPRESS OUR WAGES.
ENOUGH! PUT THEIR CHILDREN IN CAGES.

FRANK

IT’S THE FLOW.
INDIAN AND ASIAN FACES

TAKING OVER ALL THE TECH
JOBS AND COLLEGE SPACES

ERIC

SLOW THE FLOW
LATINOS WITH THEIR AWFUL
HABITS
NO ENGLISH AND THEY BREED
LIKE RABBITS

ERIC

STOP THE FLOW
OF AFRICANS, AND HAITIANS
FROM SHITHOLE COUNTRIES AND THIRD WORLD NATIONS

(Right chorus)

RACHEL

IT'S THE FLOW – THEY'RE FLOODING IN DROVES THROUGH THE
GATE.

FRANK

SLOW THE FLOW – OR THE PROBLEM WILL GROW.

ERIC

STOP THE FLOW – BUILD THE WALL BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.

RACHEL / FRANK / ERIC

IT'S THE FLOW, SLOW THE FLOW, STOP THE FLOW.

(Verse 2)

LAMAR

IT'S THE FLOW
THAT BUILT THIS GREAT COUNTRY OF OURS.
ENHANCING ITS CULTURE, WEALTH, AND POWERS.

FLORENCE

SPEED THE FLOW-
BRINGING THOSE WHO ARE WILLING
TO STAFF ALL OF THE JOBS THAT NEED FILLING.

LAMAR

IT'S THE FLOW-

FLORENCE

IMMIGRANTS WHO BUILT THIS NATION
WHO WORK HARD AND THEN FLY HIGH ABOVE THEIR STATIONS

ELAINE

MAX THE FLOW-
THEY'LL BRING MORE OF THEIR ENERGY AND ZEAL
INSTEAD OF JUST GUNS, GERMS, AND STEEL.

LAMAR

IT'S THE FLOW
OF IMMIGRANTS THAT MAKE US
STRONGER.
THEY PAY TAXES, WORK HARDER
AND EVEN LONGER.

FLORENCE

SPEED THE FLOW-
THEY DON'T NEED CHARITY OR
FAVORS,
FINE CITIZENS AND GOOD
NEIGHBORS.

ELAINE

MAX THE FLOW-
BRING THE TIRED THE POOR AND HUDDLED MASSES,
AS WELL AS THE RICH UPPER CLASSES.

(Left Chorus)

LAMAR

IT'S THE FLOW – A PLUS SO OPEN THE DOOR.

FLORENCE

SPEED THE FLOW – SO WE PROSPER AND GROW.

ELAINE

MAX THE FLOW – THEY NEED US, BUT WE NEED THEM MORE.

LAMAR / FLORENCE / ELAINE

IT'S THE FLOW, SPEED THE FLOW, MAX THE FLOW.

(Bridge)

CLARA

IF YOU GO BACK FAR ENOUGH IN EVERY FAMILY TREE
YOU WOULD SEE
THROUGH DESIRE, FATE, DESPERATION, OR FEAR,
OUR ANCESTORS FLOWED TO THESE SHORES EVERY YEAR.

CRISTY

WE DESCEND FROM CENTURIES OF FOLKS FROM EVERYWHERE
ACROSS THE WORLD
WE ARE ALL A PART OF THE FLOW THAT CREATED SOMETHING
GREAT.

CLAYTON

BUT HOW MUCH FLOW DO WE NEED TO ENSURE
OUR TOMORROWS WILL BE JUST AS BRIGHT?
TODAY IT'S A MILLION A YEAR.
THAT NUMBER IS JUST ABOUT RIGHT.

(Verse 3)

CLARA

IT'S THE FLOW-
A MILLION VIBRANT SOULS COMING YEARLY.
A MILLION HOPES AND DREAMS THAT THEY HOLD SO DEARLY.

CLAYTON

KEEP THE FLOW-

A MILLION NEW PAIRS OF HANDS TO START ROWING
TO PROPEL THIS BOAT THAT KEEPS GROWING.

CRISTY

IT'S THE FLOW-
A MILLION PEOPLE WAITING AT THE GATE
THEY SHOULDN'T HAVE TO JUST LEAVE IT ALL UP TO FATE

CRAIG

IN CONTROL-
LEGAL ENTRY IS THE ONLY WAY,
AND LEGAL PATHWAYS IF YOU'RE GONNA STAY.

(Center Chorus)

CLAYTON

IT'S THE FLOW – ESSENTIAL JUST DO THE MATH.

CRISTY

KEEP THE FLOW – AT ONE MILLION OR SO.

CRAIG

IN CONTROL – LEGAL ENTRY, THE ONLY PATH.

CLARA / CLAYTON / CRISTY / CRAIG

IT'S THE FLOW, KEEP THE FLOW, IN CONTROL.

(Cascading and overlapping chorus)

RACHEL / FRANK / ERIC

**LAMAR / FLORENCE /
ELAINE**

**CLARA / CLAYTON /
CRISTY / CRAIG**

IT'S THE FLOW –
THEY'RE FLOODING IN
DROVES THROUGH THE
GATE.

SLOW THE FLOW –
OR THE PROBLEM WILL
GROW.

STOP THE FLOW –
BUILD THE WALL
BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.

IT'S THE FLOW –
THEY'RE A PLUS SO OPEN
THE DOOR.

SPEED THE FLOW –
SO WE PROSPER AND
GROW.

MAX THE FLOW –
THEY NEED US BUT WE
NEED THEM MORE.

IT'S THE FLOW –
ESSENTIAL JUST DO THE
MATH.

KEEP THE FLOW –
AT ONE MILLION OR SO.

IN CONTROL –
LEGAL ENTRY, THE ONLY
PATH

(All three groups, simultaneously:)

RACHEL / FRANK / ERIC

**LAMAR / FLORENCE /
ELAINE**

**CLARA / CLAYTON /
CRISTY / CRAIG**

IT'S THE FLOW, SLOW
THE FLOW, STOP THE
FLOW!

IT'S THE FLOW, SPEED
THE FLOW, MAX THE
FLOW.

IT'S THE FLOW, KEEP THE
FLOW, IN CONTROL!

(End of song)

ERIC

(to Clayton)

A million immigrants a year? That's insane.

CLAYTON

No. Actually, it's sound economics. You should look it up.

ELAINE

(to Eric)

Actually, for somebody whose granddad just came over here on a boat, what you should do is be thankful, take a seat, and be quiet.

ERIC

First of all. It was my grandmother. Second of all, she came in an airplane, and third of all, she did it legally.

(PANELISTS begin talking over one another. JASON and CLARA look at the counter rising past 650K viewers and smile at one another. CLARA signals Jason to get control of the panelists.)

JASON

Alright, panelists, now that we've got you guys all revved up, let's slow things down a bit. Let's move to an issue that evokes only a MILD emotional response on both sides. A topic that lends itself to cordial, civil discourse.

(looks at his cue cards, smiles mischievously and takes a sip from his mug)

Let's talk abortion!

(PANELISTS groan and roll their eyes)

At what stage of pregnancy should the government restrict a woman's right to choose an abortion; At conception? Never? Or somewhere in-between? Anyone.

FRANK

At conception!

LAMAR

Oh, come on. That's crazy.

CLAYTON

Yeah, that's pretty unreasonable.

(FRANK, LAMAR and CLAYTON talk over one another)

RACHEL

(to the three men)

Hey, that's enough! Since none of you men have ever actually been pregnant, you might want to do less talking and more listening. I gave birth to a beautiful daughter. Her name is Linda. When she and her husband first started dating, she got pregnant, and the two of them thought it was not a good time to have a baby. They talked about having an abortion.

(She falters slightly, takes a deep breath, and steadies herself.)

I told them, you created a life, and you're not allowed to destroy it just because it's inconvenient.

(LAMAR lowers and shakes his head solemnly)

Thank God they listened to me. I can't imagine a world in which my precious little Kayla didn't exist. And... I am just so tired of all this bickering.

(Cue music)

NO. 6 — “22 WEEKS”

(Verse 1)

RACHEL

FRANK

FROM THE MOMENT OF
CONCEPTION
A NEW LIFE IS FORMED
THAT'S WORTHY OF PROTECTION
EVEN THOUGH IT'S NOT YET BORN.
UNLESS IT WAS CONCEIVED IN
VIOLENCE
DOOMED TO UNTOLD PAIN AND
STRIFE
OR PUTS ITS MOTHER'S LIFE AT
STAKE,
WE HAVE NO RIGHT TO END ITS
LIFE

A LIFE IS STILL A LIFE

NONE OF THIS MATTERS

REGARDLESS OF CIRCUMSTANCE

RACHEL & FRANK

WE HAVE NO RIGHT TO END ITS LIFE

(Chorus)

RACHEL

UNBORN BABIES ARE PEOPLE TOO.
WE MUST PROTECT THEIR RIGHT TO LIFE.
ENDING ABORTIONS FROM CONCEPTION.

WITH ONLY THE RAREST OF EXCEPTIONS,

FRANK

NO, ZERO EXCEPTIONS

RACHEL & FRANK

CHOOSING LIFE IS GODLY AND RIGHT.

FLORENCE

(speaking to Frank)

Alright, sit down, Frank.

(Verse 2)

FLORENCE

WOMEN SHOULD HAVE THEIR OWN VOICES,
THEIR OWN BODIES, MINDS, AND HEARTS,
THEIR OWN SOULS AND THEIR OWN CHOICES.
AND THEIR OWN DAMNED REPRODUCTIVE PARTS.

WE GET PREGNANT AND GIVE BIRTH.
YIELDING TO MEN IS JUST ABSURD.
OH, WE'LL LET YOU CHIME IN FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH,
BUT WOMEN MUST HAVE THE FINAL WORD.
WOMEN HAVE THE FINAL WORD

CRISTY

(Verse 3)

WE SHOULD START FIRST BY DEFINING
JUST WHAT A PERSON IS
BEFORE WE GO ASSIGNING
RIGHT TO CHOOSE OR RIGHT TO LIVE.
A PERSON IS A BODY AND A MIND
IN A SENTIENT BLEND
WITH A CONSCIOUSNESS AND WILL COMBINED,
AND INTENT TO LIVE AND TRANSCEND.
INTENT TO LIVE AND TRANSCEND.

(Chorus)

WOMEN'S LIVES MATTER, THAT'S FOR SURE,
AWARE, DRIVEN, AND MORE.
WHILE WE ALL HAVE AGENCY, INTENT, AND THOUGHT,
A FETUS, OBJECTIVELY, DOES NOT
THROUGH TWENTY-TWO WEEKS, AND NOT BEFORE.

(FRANK stands and interrupts)

(Stop music)

FRANK

So, it's OK to murder a baby because it's too young to know what's going on?

FLORENCE

Aborting an embryo or fetus is not murdering a baby.

FRANK

Sure it is. Terminating God's intent for human life is murder.

FLORENCE

Oh, yeah? So, I guess every time you jerk five million of your God-given sperm cells into the shower drain, you're committing genocide?

FRANK

You're one obscene woman, you know that?

FLORENCE

No, Frank. I'm just a woman... ..and for this debate, since you're NOT a woman.. for God's sake, SIT DOWN!

CRISTY

(stepping between Frank and Florence)

Look, I know this is an emotionally charged subject, but the science is pretty clear.

FRANK

Not as clear as the Word of God. When it comes to human life, science has no say in it.

RACHEL

Frank, SIT DOWN!

(FRANK sheepishly walks back to take his seat.)

CRISTY

(to Frank)

Actually, science has a say in just about everything.

CLAYTON

A-men!

(PANELISTS look at Clayton quizzically. Clayton shrugs sheepishly. CRISTY smiles at him.)

CRISTY

(Turns sympathetically to Rachel.)

Now when I get pregnant someday,

(smiles wistfully and touches her own belly tenderly)
I know I'll fall in love with my baby from the very first day I find out.

CLAYTON

(to Lamar as he looks admiringly at Cristy)
Such a big warm heart.

CRISTY

(turns emotionally neutral and continues with Rachel)
But, that does not change the scientific fact that my fetus will be completely non-sentient inside of twenty-two weeks.

CLAYTON

(to Lamar)
And a stone-cold analytical brain... I'm in love.

(continue music)

ELAINE / FLORENCE / CLARA
THROUGH TWENTY-TWO WEEKS.

(Bridge)

CRISTY

MEDICAL SCIENCE HAS SHOWN
THAT UP UNTIL THE TWENTY-
TWO-WEEK MILESTONE,
A FETUS'S BRAIN
CANNOT CONCEIVE PAIN,
AND IT CAN'T SURVIVE ON ITS
OWN.

IT ISN'T YET CONSCIOUS OR SELF-
AWARE.
IT HAS NO MIND, NO WILL, NO
CARE,

NO CONSTRUCT FOR STRIFE,
NO CONCEPT OF LIFE,
NOT A THOUGHT, NOT A WANT TO
SHARE.

RACHEL

SO PRECIOUS, SO BLESSED

A CHILD OF GOD WE MUST
PROTECT

SO PRECIOUS, SO BLESSED
A CHILD OF GOD WE MUST
PROTECT

(Verse 4)

CRISTY

DESPITE PRIMAL INTUITIONS
THAT DRIVE FOLKS TO VIEW
ABORTION AS A CRUEL DECISION
TO REJECT AND MAKE TABOO,

CRISTY

FOR SCIENCE AND FOR FREEDOM'S
SAKE,
LET WOMEN DECIDE WHAT TO DO,
A CHOICE THAT MUST BE OURS TO
MAKE
UNRESTRICTED THROUGH WEEK
TWENTY-TWO.

RACHEL

FOR LOVE, AND FOR JESUS'S SAKE
LET HIS WILL DECIDE WHAT TO DO

A CHILD OF GOD WE MUST
PROTECT

THEN REQUIRE A GOOD EXCUSE

(End of song)

FRANK

There's never a good excuse to murder a baby.

FLORENCE

Why are you still talking? Look, until you grow a uterus, we're not interested.

(LEFT and CENTER PANELISTS laugh.)

RACHEL

(annoyed by the laughter)

Hey, Frank might be way too opinionated on this for a man – AND he's off-base with the no-exceptions thing, but he's not entirely wrong. Like I said, my granddaughter Kayla was close to being aborted by her parents because she was inconvenient. That should not be legal.

And Lamar, you, of all people, should agree with that.

(LAMAR closes his eyes and shakes his head slowly. All other PANELISTS and JASON look at one another in complete befuddlement.)

JASON

Uuuummmm. Lamar, why should you agree with that?

(LAMAR continues shaking his head and sighs audibly.)

LAMAR

Because Kayla's my daughter.

(Set goes silent for a beat.)

JASON

Wait, what?

(LAMAR sighs again)

LAMAR

Rachel is my mother-in-law. I married her daughter, Linda, and our two kids, Kayla and Karlle, are Rachel's granddaughters.

JASON

No way! So, YOU'RE the good-looking black man with the caramel-colored angels?

CRAIG

Whoa. You can't make this stuff up.

(PANELISTS express their surprise to one another about the new revelation in simultaneous, unstructured conversations.)

(The counter is racing past 870K. JASON smiles, takes a sip from his mug, and allows the messy banter to continue a few seconds before quieting them.)

JASON

OK, so, Lamar and Nana Rachel are kin folk. No one saw THAT coming. But let's file that away for now. It's time to move on to the next topic.

(looking at his cue cards)

Ooo, you're going to love this one. Let's talk LGBTQ rights. - Is anyone on the panel a member of the LGBTQ community?

(ELAINE raises her hand)

ELAINE

I'm bisexual.

ERIC

(smirking)

Whoa. So, you like hotdogs AND tacos?

(PANELISTS stifle impulses to laugh at the crass but undeniable humor.)

All fun parts welcome - no discrimination. Equal opportunity - max participation.

ELAINE

(glowering at Eric)

Damn, you're stupid.

(ERIC, instantly deflated, stares back menacingly)

JASON

Alright, let's keep it civil. The question is – should there be limits to sex and gender expression? Who wants to go first?

(FRANK raises his hand)

Rush! I mean Frank, you got some skin in this game?

FRANK

As a matter of fact, I got a lot of skin in this game. Because of all the glorification of sexual permissiveness, my daughter is now insisting she's my son-

ELAINE

He.

FRANK

What?

ELAINE

HE'S now insisting HE'S your son. In fact, HE'S ALWAYS been your son. You just didn't know it.

FRANK

And what could you possibly know about my daughter?

ELAINE

You mean your SON? Apparently more than you do.

(FRANK shakes his head in frustration)

(Cue music)

NO. 7 — “NOT ENOUGH”

(Verse 1)

FRANK

YOU'RE BORN EITHER A GIRL OR BOY,
JUST AS THE LORD ENDOWED.
NO DO OVERS, BUYER'S REMORSE,
OR EXCHANGES ALLOWED.
GENDER'S NOT FLUID, IT'S SET AT BIRTH
AND IT REFLECTS YOUR SEX.

BOYS MUST BE BOYS, AND GIRLS THEY MUST BE GIRLS
JUST AS THE LORD EXPECTS.

BOYS WEAR PANTS, PLAY VIOLENT GAMES,
AND HANG OUT WITH THEIR CREW,
WHILE GIRLS WEAR SKIRTS, PLAY DOLLS, BAKE CAKES,
AND DO WHATEVER ELSE GIRLS DO.
BOYS DATE GIRLS AND WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT,
GET MARRIED, HAVE KIDS, AND THRIVE,
A FAMILY UNIT LED BY A MAN AND HIS WIFE,
KEEPING TRADITION ALIVE.

(Chorus 1)

FRANK

THAT'S GOD'S PLAN,
HE KNOWS WHAT'S BEST,
BUT THEY WANT THE OPTION TO CHANGE THEIR SEX.
THEY WANT THE FREEDOM TO BE CROSS-DRESSED.
THEY WANT THE RIGHT TO GO MARRY SAME SEX,
BUT THAT'S JUST NOT ENOUGH.

(RIGHT) THAT'S NOT ENOUGH.

THEY WANT TRANS WOMEN TO GO COMPETE
AGAINST NATURAL BORN WOMEN ATHLETES.
SO FORMER MEN, WITH THEIR JACKED PHYSIQUES
CAN GO GLOAT OVER ALL THE WOMEN THEY BEAT.

(RIGHT) BUT THAT'S NOT ENOUGH.

THEY WANT TO PUSH FOR LAWS TO DECREE
THAT ANYONE CAN BE A HE OR SHE,
AND ALL THE GOOD GOD-FEARING PEOPLE LIKE ME
MUST ACCEPT THIS IS HOW IT SHOULD BE.
BUT THAT'S NOT ENOUGH.

(FLORENCE: THAT'S NOT ENOUGH)

IT'S NEVER ENOUGH FOR THEM.

(FLORENCE: IT'S NOT ENOUGH FOR US)

(Verse 2)

FLORENCE

FIRST OFF, ALL THESE SELF-RIGHTEOUS BIGOTS
DON'T KNOW GOD, AND DON'T KNOW GOD'S PLAN
THEY BLOVIATE AND BULLSHIT ABOUT
THINGS THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND
THEY TRY TO DICTATE THE RULES OF LOVE
SAY WHO, WHAT, HOW, AND WHEN.

THEY THINK THAT FREEDOM ONLY MEANS FREEDOM
FOR THE PEOPLE JUST LIKE THEM.

SEXUAL EXPRESSION AND GENDER ROLES
ARE NOT ONE SIZE FITS ALL.
WHAT MIX IS DEEMED ACCEPTABLE
CAN NEVER BE THEIR CALL.
EACH ONE OF US HAS THE RIGHT TO DEFINE
WHO WE ARE MEANT TO BE
WHO, WHAT, WHERE, AND WHEN, AND HOW TO LOVE,
THIS IS OUR OWN DESTINY.

(Chorus 2)

FLORENCE

THAT'S OUR PLAN,
WE KNOW WHAT'S BEST.
WE ALL DESERVE THE BASIC RESPECT
AND FREEDOM TO EMBRACE AND EXPRESS
OUR CHOICES OF PARTNER, GENDER AND DRESS,
BUT THAT'S JUST NOT ENOUGH.

(ELAINE: BUT THAT'S NOT ENOUGH)

WE'LL PUSH HARD FOR LAWS THAT DECREE
THAT WHETHER YOU'RE L, G, B OR T,
YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO LIVE, TO BE FREE,
AND BE WHO YOU WANT TO BE.

(ELAINE: BUT THAT'S NOT ENOUGH)

FLORENCE

WE WANT EVERY WOMAN TO BE FREE,
WHETHER TRANS OR CIS-GENDER LIKE ME
TO PARTICIPATE AND TO COMPETE
SIMPLY AS A WOMAN ATHLETE.
THAT'S NOT ENOUGH

(ELAINE: IT'S NOT ENOUGH.)

IT'S NOT ENOUGH

(ELAINE: IT'S NOT FOR US.)

IT'S NOT ENOUGH

(ELAINE: IT'S NOT ENOUGH FOR US.)

(Verse 3)

CLAYTON

FOR TRANS GIRLS PLAYING WOMEN'S SPORTS
AS KIDS, WE SHOULDN'T CARE.
THEN PUBERTY STARTS TO STACK THE DECK.

THAT'S WHEN THE GAME STARTS TO GET UNFAIR.

TRANS WOMEN GET A GENETIC EDGE
IN SPORTS, THIS MEANS A LOT.

CLAYTON & CRISTY

THEY GROW TO BE STRONG, AND FAST IN WAYS
CISGENDER WOMEN JUST DO NOT.

CLAYTON

OUTSIDE THIS TINY EXCEPTION,
IN EACH AND EVERY WAY,
LGBT AND Q SHOULD BE FREE
TO LIVE AND LOVE AS THEY MAY

CLAYTON & CRISTY

AND IF WE STRAIGHT FOLKS HAVE A PROBLEM
WITH LGBTQ AFFAIRS,
THE CHANGE REQUIRED TO MAKE THINGS RIGHT
IS OURS TO MAKE, NOT THEIRS.

(Chorus 3)

CENTER

THAT'S THE PLAN,
WE THINK IS BEST.
WE ALL DESERVE THE BASIC RESPECT
AND FREEDOM TO EMBRACE AND EXPRESS
OUR CHOICES FOR SEX GENDER AND DRESS
AND THAT SHOULD BE ENOUGH.
SHOULD BE ENOUGH.
SHOULD BE ENOUGH.
SHOULD BE ENOUGH – FOR US

(End of song)

FRANK

(to Elaine)

My daughter is only fourteen for crying out loud.

ELAINE

You mean your son, right?

(ELAINE, FLORENCE, FRANK, and ERIC bicker and talk over each other.)

(JASON checks the counter rising past 930K and looks at Clara who is not smiling. SHE points at the bickering panelists and signals 'cut' to Jason to regain control.)

JASON

OK everyone, let's settle down!

(PANELISTS stop bickering and return to their seats.)

Thank you. Let's move on to our next topic... gun control.

Let's start the conversation with the man in the AR-15 t-shirt, Eric, the patriot, in Chair Ten.

(JASON pauses to read Eric's shirt)

Your shirt says, "Come and take it." What does that mean?

ERIC

It means as an American citizen, I got a right to own firearms, and if somebody wants to take mine away from me – well – they're welcome to try.

JASON

That's um... interesting.

ELAINE

No, that's sick.

ERIC

No, that's the Second Amendment.

ELAINE

Second Amendment doesn't apply to sickos.

(She takes a deep breath, clearly wrestling with something, and rubs a bracelet on her left wrist.)

When I was in high school a sicko JUST like you walked in and killed six people, including my best friend.

(She continues rubbing the bracelet as she fights back tears. ERIC is initially overcome with sympathy and starts to lower his head. He shrugs off the emotion and takes a deep breath.)

ERIC

(sheepishly)

Well, that wasn't the gun's fault. Guns don't kill people...

(ELAINE jumps to her feet angrily and cuts him off)

ELAINE

No, but sickos WITH GUNS kill people!

(Cue music)

(ELAINE paces around the stage)

NO. 8 — “MADNESS”

(Verse 1)

ELAINE

WHAT DO YOU CALL THE SLAUGHTER OF BABIES
BY GUN TOTING MASS-MURDERING CRAZIES-
VIRGINIA TECH AND COLUMBINE, THEN
SANDY HOOK, PARKLAND, AGAIN AND AGAIN?

ALL LEFT + CENTER

MADNESS!

FLORENCE

WHAT DO YOU CALL THE FACT THAT GUNFIRE RINGS
IN A BAPTIST CHURCH OUT IN SUTHERLAND SPRINGS-
A NIGHTCLUB IN ORLANDO ON ORANGE AVENUE,
AND A CONCERT ON THE STRIP IN LAS VEGAS TOO?

ALL LEFT + CENTER

MADNESS!

(Verse 2)

LAMAR

WHAT DO YOU CALL A HUNDRED DEATHS A DAY
FROM THESE BULLETS CAUSING FLESH TO RIP AND BLOOD TO
SPRAY-
STAINING MEAN STREETS, SAD HOMES, AND CHURCH HOUSE
WALLS
SPREADING PANIC AND PAIN IN SCHOOLHOUSE HALLS?

ALL LEFT + CENTER

MADNESS!

(Verse 3)

CLARA

WHAT DO YOU CALL THE FLOOD OF GRIEVOUS HARMS
FLOWING FORTH FROM FOUR HUNDRED MILLION ARMS
IN THE HANDS OF THUGS, ABUSERS, AND VENGEFUL TEENS

AND MONSTERS WITH HATE-FILLED, MURDEROUS SCHEMES?

(Left and Center Chorus)

ALL LEFT + CENTER

WE KEEP DISAVOWING IT
WHILE THOUSANDS KEEP ON DYING.
WE KEEP ON ALLOWING IT
AND MOTHERS KEEP ON CRYING.

FLORENCE

WE KNOW WE SHOULD STOP IT.
BUT WHAT'S SO DAMNED ABSURD,
THE GUN DEALERS' PROFITS
ALWAYS GET THE LAST WORD.

(Verse 4)

FRANK

WHAT DO YOU CALL THE HYSTERICAL CLAIM
THAT GUNS, NOT PEOPLE, SHOULD BEAR THE BLAME,
NOT THE THUGS, OR THE NUT JOBS, THE LOSERS, OR THE FOOLS.
YOU THINK THEY'RE GONNA LISTEN TO YOUR HALF-BAKED RULES?

ERIC & FRANK

MADNESS!

FRANK

WHAT DO YOU CALL YOUR FAILURE TO SEE
THAT FORCING ALL YOUR DAMNED GUN RESTRICTIONS ON ME
WON'T SOLVE ALL THE PROBLEMS THAT YOU'RE POINTING OUT
OR REDUCE THE VIOLENCE THAT YOU WHINE ABOUT?

ERIC & FRANK

MADNESS!

(Verse 5)

ERIC

HALF OF ALL GUN DEATHS ARE SUICIDAL ACTS
HALF OF THE REST, I CAN ATTEST,
ARE JUST BLACKS KILLING BLACKS-
GUNS PASSING FROM ONE THUG TO THE NEXT.
YOU THINK THEY'RE GONNA CARE ABOUT BACKGROUND CHECKS?

ERIC & FRANK

MADNESS!

ERIC

YOU FIXATE ON ASSAULT WEAPONS BANS.
INSTEAD, PUSH FOR BETTER MENTAL HEALTH PLANS,
MORE COPS, MORE JAILS, LONGER SENTENCING TIME,
IT'S PEOPLE, NOT GUNS, COMMITTING THE CRIME.

(Right Chorus)

FRANK

WE'RE MISDIAGNOSING IT
THOUGH THOUSANDS KEEP ON DYING.
WE'RE OVEREXPOSING IT
AND LEFTIES KEEP ON CRYING.

ERIC

BUT THEY KNOW THEY SHOULD STOP IT
BUT WHAT'S SO DAMNED ABSURD-
ALL THESE FAKE LEFT-WING PROPHETS
TRYING TO HAVE THE LAST WORD.

(Bridge)

CRAIG

AS A COP I HAVE TO DEAL WITH GUNS ALL THE TIME
SO I KNOW WHAT IT TAKES TO REDUCE VIOLENCE AND CRIME
IS NOT A SINGLE SOLUTION THAT FITS LIKE A GLOVE
WE NEED COMPROMISES THAT INCLUDE ALL OF THE ABOVE.

RIGHT & LEFT

MADNESS!

CRAIG

WE CLEARLY NEED A BETTER MENTAL HEALTH PLAN
OF COURSE, HIRE AS MANY COPS AS YOU CAN
AND PLEASE, BLACK PEOPLE, USE YOUR POWER TO STOP BLACK ON
BLACK CRIME,
AND FOR GUN VIOLENCE GIVE PEOPLE MORE JAIL TIME.

LEFT

MADNESS!

CRAIG

I'LL ALWAYS SUPPORT THE RIGHT TO BEAR ARMS
BUT WE HAVE TO BALANCE THE BENEFITS AND THE HARMS.
THIS CLAIM THAT WE CAN'T PUT SIMPLE GUN LIMITS IN PLACE
IS JUST UNTRUE AND ABSURD ON ITS FACE.

ERIC & FRANK

MADNESS!

CRAIG

FOR PUBLIC SAFETY, WE CAN NEVER LET SOMEONE
ACQUIRE ENOUGH FIRE POWER TO OUT GUN
LOCAL COPS, BECAUSE IT WOULD BE A FATAL FLAW
ALLOWING A PERSON TO RISE ABOVE THE LAW.

ERIC & FRANK

MADNESS!

CRAIG

TO ENSURE GUN OWNERS ARE SANE, LAW ABIDING, AND SAFE.
WE NEED UNIVERSAL BACKGROUND CHECKS IN PLACE
REGULATIONS AND PERMITS FOR EVERY USER,
RED FLAG LAWS FOR HOT HEADS AND ABUSERS

ERIC & FRANK

MADNESS!

CRAIG

ALLOW COPS TO TAKE AWAY THE GUNS,
OF PEOPLE POSING A THREAT TO ANYONE
INCREASE THE AGE TO OWN TO TWENTY-ONE.
DO WHAT IT TAKES TO SAVE OUR DAUGHTERS AND SONS.

(Outro)

CRAIG

THOUSANDS KEEP ON DYING.
MOTHERS KEEP ON CRYING.
IT SHOULDN'T BE THIS HARD.
THERE'S GOT TO BE A BETTER WAY

ENSEMBLE

MADNESS!

(End of song)

(PANELISTS, now out of their seats, bicker and talk over one another.)

JASON

OK, let's settle down.

(All PANELISTS move toward their seats except Elaine and Eric who continue arguing downstage with just six feet of separation.)

ERIC

What makes you think you can take away my rights?

ELAINE

My best friend is dead!

(outburst makes the other panelists go silent)

ERIC

So? I didn't shoot her.

(CRAIG steps between them.)

CRAIG

OK, that's enough.

(CLARA walks up to Elaine and gently coaxes her back to her seat. CLARA looks at Jason and waves her index finger in a 'wrap it up' signal.)

(JASON checks the counter rising past 1.1M viewers. He smiles, walks to downstage center, and addresses the audience.)

JASON

That concludes the second segment of our show. Don't go anywhere, we'll be right back with more Tribes, USA.

VOICE FROM P.A.

And we are CLEAR. We're back in five minutes. Panelists, be back in your seats in three.

(PANELISTS leave their seats. ELAINE and FLORENCE converse quietly. LAMAR and RACHEL have a mildly spirited conversation. CLAYTON and CRISTY flirt with one another. FRANK and ERIC share a laugh. CRAIG observes passively while scrolling his phone.)

(CLARA checks the counter showing 1.1M viewers then, beaming, walks straight to Jason downstage center.)

JASON

(noticing Clara approach)

There she is – Panelist number four! Can I get your autograph?

CLARA

ONE point ONE million. You did it!

JASON

(grinning)

WE did it, babe. WE.

(They embrace warmly. JASON pulls back, holding her shoulders.)

We can hit two million, no problem.

CLARA

Babe. We hit one million. That's the most important number. You get to keep your job. Take a breath.

JASON

Nah, one million to survive, two million to thrive. Plus, the bonus will set us up for a year. AND I can afford to give you the honeymoon you deserve.

CLARA

I don't need a fancy honeymoon. I'm happy. You got nothing to prove to me. Besides, you're already pushing the tension level on the set pretty high. You might wanna dial back.

JASON

Wait, you're the one who told me to be charming, snarky, and edgy.

CLARA

I did say that, didn't I?

JASON

You sure did... and it's WORKING.

CLARA

I said charming, snarky, and edgy.. but NOT dangerous.

JASON

(taking her hand)

Charming, snarky, edgy - not dangerous. I got you.

(He kisses the back of her hand and walks to the podium. He retrieves his flask from the shelf and recharges his mug. CLARA walks over to him.)

CLARA

Hey, you need to go easy on the Irish for the rest of the show.

JASON

(holds up the mug and in his best Irish accent)

Not to worry, lassie, I've got it all under control.

(HE takes a sip. SHE rolls her eyes playfully, shakes her head, and exits stage right.)

(FLORENCE and ELAINE walk slowly downstage. ELAINE rubs her bracelet.)

FLORENCE

(quietly, to Elaine)

How long has it been since she died?

ELAINE

It'll be six years tomorrow.

FLORENCE

(softly)

You sure you're up for the rest of the show?

ELAINE

(steady)

Hell yeah. I'm gonna make 'em hear her tonight.

FLORENCE

(touches her shoulder)

Make 'em hear her, kid.

(THEY exit stage left.)

(CRAIG strolls downstage center as he checks his phone. ERIC trots to him and taps him on his shoulder.)

ERIC

Hey — how long you been a cop?

CRAIG

About ten years.

ERIC

You ever shoot anybody?

CRAIG

No.

ERIC

Hmm.

Do you guys carry when you're off duty?

CRAIG

Sometimes.

ERIC

Cool, cool. Hey — can I ask you a favor?

CRAIG

Shoot.

ERIC

(Grins at the word, then takes a breath)
So, I applied to the police academy last year.

CRAIG

(genuinely surprised)
You did?

ERIC

Yup. Aced the written test. Aced the physical. Background check came back clean.

CRAIG

And?

ERIC

Failed the damn psych eval.

CRAIG

Ah.

ERIC

They said I have

(using air quotes)
“an authoritarian personality profile”, a pattern of “dehumanizing language toward specific demographic groups”, and I’m an “elevated risk for excessive force.”

(beat, hands up)
That’s crap, but I get it. Gotta be politically correct. You can’t call a dirtbag a dirtbag anymore.

CRAIG

Hmm.

ERIC

Anyway. I'm applying again this year. I just need a letter of recommendation from somebody already on the force.

(beat, hopeful)
You think you can write me one?

(CRAIG looks at Eric for a long moment.)

CRAIG

Sorry, but no.

ERIC

What? Why not?

CRAIG

The eval did its job, man. I can't write a letter that argues with it. Sorry.

(CRAIG claps Eric on the shoulder and walks upstage.)

ERIC

(watching him go)

Wait — so you agree with them?

(CRAIG is already gone. ERIC stands alone for a long beat, processing. He puts his hands in his pockets and stares blankly in Craig's direction.)

(ELAINE walks in from the wings crossing from stage left to stage right. She slows to look at Eric as she crosses the line of sight of his vacant gaze. ERIC snaps out of his blank stare and looks at her sheepishly.)

ERIC

(to Elaine, earnestly)

Hey, um, sorry about your friend who got killed.

(ELAINE looks at Eric dubiously and reflexively rubs the bracelet on her left hand.)

ELAINE

(Rolls her eyes dismissively)

Yeah, whatever.

(ELAINE continues walking to downstage right. ERIC, deflated, then angry, shakes his head.)

ERIC

(to himself, out loud)

I was trying to be nice... but screw that.

(HE walks slowly to downstage left, placing his right hand above his right hip and adjusting something concealed under his shirt. Is it a gun?)

(Spotlights on ELAINE and ERIC as the rest of the stage dims.)

(ELAINE, alone at downstage right, exhales heavily — the armor cracking as she continues rubbing the bracelet.)

ELAINE

(quietly to herself)

Sorry my ass.

(Cue music)

NO. 9 — “NO APOLOGIES”

(Verse 1)

(ELAINE and ERIC sing simultaneously from opposite ends of the stage, wistful, remembering. They do not look at one another.)

ELAINE & ERIC

BACK WHEN I WAS JUST A KID,
WITHOUT A CARE AND RUNNING FREE.
I MADE FRIENDS WITH ANYONE —
WHO WOULD PLAY AND LAUGH WITH ME.
BUT SOMEWHERE ALONG THE WAY,
THE WORLD IMPOSED IDENTITY —

ERIC

A WHITE BOY.

ELAINE

A BLACK GIRL.

ELAINE & ERIC

AND FROM THAT DAY FORWARD, THAT WAS ME.
THE INNOCENCE BEGAN TO FADE.

(Verse 2)

(ERIC turns to face the audience.)

ERIC

THEY WANTED ME TO PAY FOR CRIMES I DIDN'T DO —
FOR THE HISTORY AND SINS OF FOLKS I NEVER KNEW.
EVERY BREATH I TOOK, SOMEBODY SAID I WAS WRONG —
I'M SORRY WAS MY ANSWER, AND THE NAME OF MY SONG.
SORRY FOR MALE. SORRY FOR WHITE, SORRY FOR STRAIGHT.
BUT ALL OTHER IDENTITIES—PLEASE CELEBRATE.

(ELAINE turns to face the audience)

ELAINE

SOME TOLD ME I WAS LESS THAN. WEAKER THAN A BOY.
LESS PRETTY THAN A WHITE GIRL. UNWORTHY OF JOY.
OTHERS SAID: "STAND UP, YOU'RE A BEAUTIFUL BLACK QUEEN.
THE BEST AND THE BRIGHTEST, THE WORLD HAS EVER SEEN."
LESS THAN. MORE THAN. VOICES TELLING ME WHAT TO BE.
AND UNDERNEATH THE NOISE, I JUST WANTED TO BE ME.

(Chorus)

(ELAINE and ERIC sing together. As they sing, they begin to walk slowly toward center stage, closing the distance between them.)

ELAINE & ERIC

BUT THAT WAS BACK WHEN I CARED WHAT OTHER PEOPLE
THOUGHT OF ME.
BACK WHEN I DIDN'T KNOW THE PERSON I WAS MEANT TO BE.
TODAY, I DEFINE WHO I AM.
NO SHAME. NO REGRETS. NO APOLOGIES.

(Verse 3)

(ELAINE has reached center-left, ERIC center-right. They face the audience, still not looking at one another.)

ELAINE

THAT CONFUSED LITTLE GIRL GREW UP — SHE'S THAT QUEEN
TONIGHT.
PROUD. UNBOWED. LOUD. AND READY TO FIGHT.
A STRONG BLACK WOMAN STANDING IN MY TRUTH —
UNAFRAID TO ENGAGE IF YOU WANNA SEE MY PROOF.

ERIC

(Pointing at Elaine)
FOR YEARS THEY CELEBRATED THEIRS — THEIR GENDER AND
THEIR RACE.
WHILE TELLING ME I'M JUST THE VILLAIN IN THEIR SPACE.
I REJECT ALL THE LIES, DROP THE WEIGHT, DROP THE SHAME.
I TAKE PRIDE IN MY WHITENESS, MY MANHOOD, AND MY NAME.

(ELAINE) NO MORE SILENCE.
(ERIC) NO MORE SORRY.
(ELAINE) NO MORE HEAD BOWED LOW.
(ERIC) I TAKE MY PLACE.
(ELAINE) I TAKE MY SPACE.
(ERIC) I TAKE WHAT I AM OWED.

(Bridge)

(ELAINE and ERIC now stand side by side at center stage. For the first time, they turn and face each other.)

ELAINE

WAIT, 'WHAT YOU ARE OWED'? HAVE YOU LOST YOUR MIND?
ARE YOU SO PRIVILEGED YOU'RE DEAF AND BLIND?

(ERIC, incredulous, moves into Elaine's personal space)

ERIC

PRIVILEGED? I LEFT HOME AT SEVENTEEN.
I'M THE MECHANIC, YOU'RE THE QUEEN
YOU WENT TO COLLEGE, STILL LIVE AT HOME TOO
WHO'S THE PRIVILEGED ONE HERE — ME OR YOU?

(ELAINE, unintimidated, puts her hand on Eric's chest and pushes him back)

ELAINE

YOU'RE TRIGGERING ME. BACK UP! GIVE ME SOME ROOM.

ERIC

(Using his hand to symbolically fire a pistol up in the air)
WE BOTH GOT TRIGGERS, SISTER — BUT MINE GO BOOM.

(Final Chorus)

(ELAINE and ERIC turn back toward the audience. They sing together — but the unison now reads as collision, not communion. They are not allies. They are two people who share the same refusal pointed in opposite directions.)

ELAINE & ERIC

(soaring)
I REMEMBER WHEN I CARED WHAT OTHER PEOPLE THOUGHT OF
ME.
BACK WHEN I DIDN'T KNOW THE PERSON I WAS MEANT TO BE.
TODAY I DEFINE WHO I AM.
NO SHAME. NO REGRETS. NO APOLOGIES.

NO SHAME. NO REGRETS. NO APOLOGIES.

(End of song)

(ELAINE and ERIC stare at one another for a beat and then head for their seats. ELAINE rubs her bracelet.)

(Go dark.)

(Curtains)

ACT TWO - SCENE 1

INT. TV studio

Lights up. No change to set. Show still on second break. Viewer counter steady at 1.1M. PANELISTS are huddled in light conversation. ELAINE, CLAYTON, and CRISTY are in front of the blue chairs, LAMAR, CRAIG, and RACHEL in front of the purple chairs, and FRANK and ERIC in front of the red chairs. JASON and CLARA are at the podium reviewing cue cards. FLORENCE is downstage center scrolling through her phone.

(FRANK walks downstage to Florence. JASON notices and nudges CLARA to watch.)

FRANK

Hey.

FLORENCE

(beat, skeptical)

Yes?

FRANK

Would you consider being a guest on my podcast?

FLORENCE

(puzzled)

Why in the world would I do that? You know I disagree with you on just about everything, right?

FRANK

Of course. That's exactly why I want you on. It'll be ratings gold. Plus, talking through differences is always better than going to war over 'em, right?

FLORENCE

Yes, but sometimes the WAY we talk can lead to war.

FRANK

True, but how 'bout this. You do my show and I'll commit to keeping the conversation civil and constructive.

FLORENCE

Yeah? Constructive like 'Indian and Asian faces, taking up all the tech jobs' or 'abortion is murdering a baby'?

(FRANK chuckles)

FRANK

Oh, c'mon, I'm just going with the flow of THIS show.

RACHEL

Really? And what's the flow of this show?

FRANK

You know... go tribal... express yourself without filter.

(FLORENCE stares blankly)

um... unleash your inner asshole.

(Beat. FLORENCE chuckles and shakes her head. FRANK smiles.)

Seriously though, if you do my show, I'll keep it civil. I promise.

FLORENCE

(Searching his face for sincerity and finding it.)

I'll think about it.

(FRANK nods once)

FRANK

Fair enough. I'll reach out again, soon. For now though... back to our inner assholes.

(FLORENCE laughs. FRANK turns and heads back toward the red chairs. FLORENCE watches him go.)

CLARA

(to Jason)

Wow. If those two can get along, there's still hope for the world.

JASON

Well, they can get along all they want AFTER the show. For the next thirty minutes, I need to keep 'em hating each other.

CLARA

Oh, lighten up. We got a million views already.

JASON

A million to survive, two million to thrive.

VOICE FROM P.A.

Live in one minute. Places, please!

CLARA

...OK, you ready to go?

JASON

(with exaggerated southern twang)
Hell, little lady, I was born ready.

CLARA

God, you need help.

Anyhow, remember, keep it lively, but keep it civil. Oh, and use this if you need to.

(She hands him a small, flat remote and heads for her seat.)

VOICE FROM P.A.

Fifteen seconds!

(PANELISTS settle into their seats.)

Cameras up! We go live in five, four, three...

JASON

(To camera from the podium)

Welcome back to Tribes, USA. I'm Jason Proctor here with our voter panel, discussing the hot-button issues on this historic day.

Speaking of hot button, check this out.

(holds up the small remote)

I've got my very own mic kill switch this segment. So, no more runaway conversations.

Now, let's get back into it, and take it up a few notches!

(JASON notices Clara throw a scowl his way)

- But in a CONTROLLED and CIVIL way.

- Blue Tribe, who did you all vote for today?

BLUE TRIBE

Kamala.

JASON

Shocker! And Red Tribe?

RED TRIBE

Trump.

JASON

Ya don't say.

Lamar and Nana Rachel. You're not gonna let this Kamala – Trump thing ruin Thanksgiving dinner later this month, are you?

(LAMAR shakes his head in exasperation)

RACHEL

Oh, absolutely not. We know better than to talk politics at the table.

JASON

Anyhoo, let's try a little experiment. Reds and Blues, close your eyes.

(RED and BLUE TRIBES look at Jason and one another incredulously)

Oh, come on, humor me, people.

(RED and BLUE TRIBES close their eyes reluctantly)

Thank you.

Now, imagine your candidate LOSES this election tonight, and the OPPOSITION candidate becomes President of the United States... for the next four years.

(RED and BLUE TRIBES grimace)

Now, imagine what happens to all the things you care about in those four years.

What happens with abortion, immigration, DEI, income inequality, corruption, election integrity, and international relationships.

If the opposition candidate wins, imagine what the country looks like after those four years.

OK, with that vision of America in your head, open your eyes.

Look over at the opposing team that is voting for that opposition candidate.

What do you want to say to the opposition about their vote?

(cue music)

(FLORENCE stands up)

NO. 10 — “WHAT’S WRONG WITH YOU?”

FLORENCE

WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?

WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?

ARE YOU NUTS? ARE YOU INSANE?

WHAT’S GOING ON INSIDE YOUR BRAIN?

WHAT, WHAT, WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?

(Verse 1)

FLORENCE

YOU MUST BE CONFUSED, IT'S HARD TO EXCUSE
A VOTE FOR A DEADBEAT WHO NEVER PAYS HIS DUES
A DRAFT-DODGING, SELF-SERVING RECKLESS DUDE
WHO'S CRUDE AND RUDE, LACKING HONOR AND RECTITUDE
CONTRACTORS, BANKERS, AND LAWYERS ACCUSE
HIM OF INCOMPETENCE AND CAPITAL MISUSE
HE CHEATS ON HIS WIVES LIKE THERE'S NOTHING TO LOSE
WITH OVER 25 WOMEN CLAIMING SEXUAL ABUSE

ELAINE

OH FLO FOR SHO' YOU RIGHT, YOU GOT TO KNOW IT'S LIKE
THE FAT MAN'S 'BOUT TO GET COOKED IN MY FLOW TONIGHT
DONALD TRUMP IS EVIL, CORRUPT, ROTTEN THROUGH AND
THROUGH
EVERY MOVE HE MAKES IS JUST A CON OR A RUSE
TO FEED HIS GREED FOR MORE MONEY TO MISUSE
THE KING OF SCOUNDRELS FROM HIS HAIR TO HIS SHOES

A MALIGNANT CLOWN WE NEED TO REFUSE
AND FLUSH BACK DOWN THE HOLE FROM WHICH HE OOZED
LIKE A THICK STICKY, ORANGE, CON MAN'S BREW
INTOXICATING ALL OF HIS DEPLORABLE CREWS
WHO SWALLOW EVERY DROP OF THE BULLSHIT TRUMP SPEWS
WHILE SUCKING ON THE PROPAGANDA HOSE FROM FOX NEWS

(Verse 2)

FRANK

NOPE, WE DON'T SUCK AND NO, WE'RE NOT NUTS
THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH US, NO IF ANDS OR BUTS
YOU JUST GAVE US A LONG DISSERTATION
TO EXPRESS YOUR DISTRESS AND CONSTERNATION,
WITH LEFT WING LIES AND DISINFORMATION
TO DECEIVE, MISLEAD AND HOODWINK THE NATION
SO NOW PREPARE FOR YOUR HUMILIATION
ERIC, COMMENCE THE ANNIHILATION

ERIC

OH, FRANK FA SHO, I'M 'BOUT TA THROW,
DOWN ON THESE CLOWNS, AND IF THEY DON'T KNOW
HOW THE HEAT FROM MY FLOW MAKES
PUDDLES OUT OF SNOW FLAKES
THEN - THEY BETTER AX SOMEBODY, YO.
YEP, MOST OF THAT SHIT WAS JUST FAKE-ASS NEWS

JUST WHINY DISHONEST LIBTARD BLUES
BUT EVEN IF HALF OF THAT SHIT WAS TRUE
WE'D STILL LOVE TRUMP - 'CAUSE WE DON'T LIKE YOU

TRUMP IS EVERYTHING WE WANT HIM TO BE
HE'S THE BALL SACK WE'RE DIPPING IN YOUR CUP OF TEA
THE GRINCH WHO STEALS YOUR CHRISTMAS ON A DAILY BASIS
THE FIST WE USE TO PUNCH YOU IN YOUR SMUG-ASS FACES
TRUMP'S MY FRUSTRATION, OUR LIBERATION
FROM SUBJUGATION BY YOUR MUTATION,
SICK INFESTATION OF OUR NATION
IT'S TIME FOR A LEFT-WING AMPUTATION

(Chorus)

ELAINE FLORENCE FRANK ERIC

WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?
ARE YOU NUTS? ARE YOU INSANE?
WHAT'S GOING ON INSIDE YOUR BRAIN?
WHAT, WHAT, WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?

(Verse 3)

FLORENCE

NOW LET'S GET BACK TO TRUMP'S CHARACTERISTICS
HOW HE'S REVERED BY WHITE NATIONALISTIC
RACISTS HE DEFENDS ON A ROUTINE BASIS
KLAN MEMBERS, SKIN-HEADS, THUGS AND NUTCASES

ELAINE

NOW LET'S START LISTING THIS MAN'S CORRUPTION
FIFTY YEARS GRIFTING, NO INTERRUPTION
STIFFING HIS CONTRACTORS DURING CONSTRUCTION
BUILT A FAKE-ASS UNIVERSITY WITH FAKE-ASS INSTRUCTION
HE MADE HIS BILLIONS BY LYING, CHEATING, ALL FOR PERSONAL
GAIN

FLORENCE

LEFT A GREASY, UNAPPEALING, INTERNATIONAL STAIN
ON THE STERLING REPUTATION THAT OUR COUNTRY MAINTAINED

ELAINE

FOR TWO HUNDRED AND FORTY YEARS BEFORE HIS ASS CAME
YOU ELECTED HIM THE FIRST TIME, SO YOU GET THE BLAME
BUT IF YOU VOTE FOR HIM AGAIN, IT'S A GODDAMN SHAME
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?

(Verse 4)

FRANK & ERIC

(FRANK) ALRIGHT, ENOUGH, LET'S TALK ABOUT HARRIS
IF SHE'S YOUR BEST OPTION, YOU SHOULD BE EMBARRASSED
(ERIC) A D-E-I TOKEN BIMBO
(FRANK) CHOSEN 'CAUSE SLEEPY JOE'S LOST IN LIMBO
(ERIC) YEAH, BUT SHE'S SO MUCH WORSE THAN HIM THOUGH
LEFT WING, WOKE HO, DOESN'T KNOW A THING, YO
TALKS A LOT BUT SHE GOT NO INFO
UNQUALIFIED, IT'S PLAIN AND SIMPLE
WE NEED HER LIKE A BAD CASE OF SHINGLES

(ERIC) IF WE WANNA GO DOLLA FOR DOLLA -
THEN RECOGNIZE THIS ONE THING BRO -,
COMPARING TRUMP TO YOUR GIRL KAMALA -
IS LIKE A C-NOTE TO A SINGLE

(Chorus)

ELAINE FLORENCE FRANK AND ERIC

WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?
ARE YOU NUTS? ARE YOU INSANE?
WHAT'S GOING ON INSIDE YOUR BRAIN?
WHAT, WHAT, WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?

(End of song)

*(ELAINE, FLORENCE, FRANK AND ERIC converge centerstage to
bicker. JASON checks the counter rising past 1.3M viewers, sips from
his mug, and smiles.)*

ELAINE

(to Eric)

I don't know who's worse, Trump or you being stupid enough to vote for him twice.

ERIC

That's the second time you called me stupid. Don't make it a third.

*(CLARA gestures to Jason with outstretched arms in a what-the-heck
pose.)*

JASON

OK let's settle down people.

*(ELAINE, FLORENCE, FRANK AND ERIC continue bickering.
JASON holds up the mic kill switch and activates it, muting the*

bickering. He addresses the four panelists who continue bickering unamplified.)

Hey guys. No one can hear you. Save your breath for the next topic.

(The FOUR PANELISTS stop bickering and sheepishly return to their seats. JASON smirks.)

Thank you. Let's get back to it. Next topic is police reform.

Considering all the high-profile police killings of unarmed black men and women over the past few years, some think significant police reform across the board is desperately needed. Any thoughts?

(CRAIG raises his hand)

Ho, the one cop on the panel has something to say. Craig, go ahead.

CRAIG

I think the more important issue than POLICE reform is the need for what I call the three percent MISFIT reform.

JASON

The three percent misfit reform. OK, what's that?

CRAIG

Well, only THREE percent of police interactions with civilians require us to use force. That three percent of civilians are, for the most part, misfits. Now, if these misfits just do THE ONE THING that the other ninety-seven percent of the population does, there would be no problems. And that ONE THING works no matter what kind of police you're dealing with.

JASON

And what's the one thing?

CRAIG

Comply.

LAMAR

Say what?

(cue music)

CRAIG

Just comply.

LAMAR

Just comply? What, we just forfeit all our rights and do whatever you tell us to do?

CRAIG

Nope. You keep your rights – AND your responsibility to obey a lawful order from a cop.

NO. 11 — “JUST COMPLY”

(Verse 1)

CRAIG

SOME FOLKS THINK THAT ALL POLICE
ARE MALCONTENTS WHO MISBEHAVE,
MOTIVATED BY THE FOLKS WE HATE
AND THE POWER WE SEEM TO CRAVE.

I’M CONVINCED THAT MOST POLICE
ARE DISCIPLINED, FORTHRIGHT, AND BRAVE,
MOTIVATED BY THE FOLKS WE SERVE
AND THE LIVES WE HELP TO SAVE.

BUT WHETHER COPS ARE GOOD OR NOT,
OR WHETHER THEY’RE POLITE OR RUDE,
IF YOU FIND YOURSELF ENGAGED WITH US
THERE’S ONE THING YOU HAVE TO DO.
IT REQUIRES NO FEAT OF STRENGTH,
NO CONCEPT THAT’S TOUGH THINKING THROUGH.
IT’S SIMPLE, EASY, EFFORTLESS,
AND IT PRECLUDES US FROM HURTING YOU.

(Chorus 1)

JUST COMPLY.
IF MY LIGHTS ARE FLASHING BEHIND YOU,
DON’T JUST KEEP DRIVING LIKE NOTHING IS WRONG.
JUST COMPLY.
IF I ASK FOR DOCUMENTATION,
DON’T PLAY DUMB GAMES, OBFUSCATE OR PROLONG.
IF I TELL YOU TO EXIT THE CAR,
YOU MAY ASK WHY, AND I’LL PLAY ALONG.
I WILL TELL YOU, BUT IF I REPEAT
MY COMMAND TO STEP OUT BY AND BY,
DON’T DEBATE. DON’T RETREAT.
JUST COMPLY.

(Verse 2)

SOME FOLKS THINK THAT MOST POLICE
ARE MEMBERS OF THE KU KLUX KLAN
TRYING TO ARREST, LOCK UP, AND KILL

ALL THE BLACK PEOPLE THAT WE CAN.

ELAINE

(interrupting)

You got that right.

CRAIG

I'M CONVINCED THAT MOST POLICE
ARE FAIR AND WE DON'T GIVE A DAMN
WHAT RACE YOU ARE WHEN WE LOOK AT YOU,
WE JUDGE YOUR NATURE AS YOU STAND.

BUT WHETHER YOU THINK ALL POLICE
ARE KLAN MEMBERS OR COLOR BLIND,
ALL OF US ENFORCE THE LAWS AND KEEP THE PEACE
ON THAT POINT, WE ARE ALIGNED.

WHEN COPS GIVE YOU COMMANDS,
DON'T OVERTHINK OR LOSE YOUR MIND.
DON'T GET BEAT DOWN AND CONFINED.

(Chorus 2)

JUST COMPLY.
IF I TELL YOU TO SHOW ME YOUR HANDS,
DON'T DISOBEY AND ASK ME WHAT FOR.
IF I TELL YOU, NOT TO MOVE, AND TO KEEP STILL OR TO CALM
DOWN,
DON'T PLAY THE FOOL, PULL AWAY, AND IGNORE.

IF I SAY THAT YOU'RE UNDER ARREST,
DON'T RESIST AND THEN MAKE IT A WAR.
THAT JUST OPENS THE DOOR TO A PLACE
MACE IS SPRAYED, TASERS TASE, BULLETS FLY
THEN YOUR BLOOD IS ON THE FLOOR.
JUST COMPLY.

LAMAR

(to Craig)

Do you hear yourself right now?

CRAIG

(Bridge)

WE'RE NOT PERFECT, THAT'S FOR SURE
BUT PUBLIC SERVICE IS OUR GOAL
SOMETIMES WE FALL SHORT, WE LEARN, AND MOVE ON
WE IMPROVE AND GROW AS A WHOLE.

AS WE ALL DO OUR PART
WE ASK THAT YOU DO YOUR PART TOO

CENTER & RIGHT
JUST COMPLY

(Outro)

CRAIG
JUST COMPLY.
IF MY LIGHTS ARE FLASHING BEHIND YOU,
DON'T JUST KEEP DRIVING LIKE NOTHING IS WRONG.

CENTER & RIGHT
JUST COMPLY.

(End of song)

ELAINE
(standing up from her seat)
Well, that's some bullshit right there.

CRAIG
(sternly)
No, if we want to live in a civil society, that's some REAL shit.

(JASON looks at the counter rising past 1.4M viewers, then at the bickering panelists with smug bemusement. HE sips from his mug, then exits stage right. CLARA watches him leave in disbelief.)

FLORENCE
Do you mean a civil society like the one George Floyd and Eric Garner were suffocated in... ...or the one Michael Brown was shot in?

FRANK
You do realize all three of those guys would be alive today if they had complied, right?

FLORENCE
(standing from her seat)
Oh, really? According to who? Fox News, Ben Shapiro, and whatever your own rinky-dink podcast is called?

FRANK
(standing from his seat)
Hey, I got fifty thousand subscribers. And where do you get your information? NPR? MSNBC? The Young Turks? Gimme a break.

ERIC

(standing from his seat)

Yep, they like that fake libtard news from Rachel Maddow.

ELAINE

Boy, do you even listen to news?

ERIC

Alex Jones, Infowars, baby!

(ALL PANELISTS rise and begin converging to either continue or defuse the bickering.)

(JASON pushes a keyboard from stage right to downstage center.)

(Lights dim. Spotlight on Jason)

(JASON brandishes and activates the mic mute switch. PANELISTS continue arguing unamplified. JASON, showing slight signs of intoxication, dons a fedora and begins to play the keyboard)

(Cue music)

NO. 12 — “TRIBAL TRUTH”

(Intro)

JASON

THERE WAS A TIME WE ALL GOT FACTS
FROM JUST THREE CHANNELS ON TV
WHEN INFORMATION, DATA, STATS
WERE TRUTHS ON WHICH WE'D ALL AGREE

BUT NOW WHEN WE ALL GET OUR NEWS
A THOUSAND DIFFERENT WAYS.
SOME MAY BE VETTED, TRIED AND TRUE,
BUT SOME ARE TRULY BATSHIT CRAY-CRAY.

WE CHOOSE THE DATA THAT WE TRACK,
NOT BASED ON SCRUTINY OR FACT,
NOT BASED ON WHAT'S TRUE OR REAL,
BUT RATHER HOW IT MAKES US FEEL.

(Chorus)

WE WANT OUR FACTS WITH THAT FLAVOR
THAT TRIBE MEMBERS CRAVE—
A BITTER TASTE TO OUR RIVALS
SO SKEWED AND SO TRIBAL

GIMME THAT— THAT PARTISAN KOOL-AID
THAT— THAT GROUPTHINK VODKA-LEMONADE
THAT FULLY BIASED GIN AND JUICE
YOU GOTTA GIMME THAT GOOD OL' TRIBAL TRUTH

(JASON takes a sip from the mug.)

THAT GOOD OL' TRIBAL TRUTH.

OK let's try this out. Red Team – gimme some good ol' tribal truth about whether the twenty-twenty election was fair or rigged. Hit me!

(Verse 1)

FRANK

GOOD GOD, THE TRUTH IS JUST CLEAR AS DAY.
THAT LAST ELECTION WAS A SHAM IN EVERY WAY.
IT WAS RIGGED, THEN HIJACKED AND STOLEN AWAY
BY FORCES BOTH AT HOME AND ABROAD.

YOU GOT BIG CITY FOLKS WHO LIKE TO CHEAT,
WHEN THERE'S NO ONE ELSE WATCHING IN THE COUNTING SUITE.
STUFFING BALLOTS, MORE LIES AND DECEIT.
THIS SLEEPY JOE BIDEN, IS SUCH A FRAUD.

(Verse 2)

ERIC

YOU GOT DEEP STATE ACTORS WITH FOREIGN TIES.
YOU GOT BILLIONAIRE BACKERS AND CYBER SPIES.
AND THEY ALL WORK TOGETHER WITH THE CASH AND THE MEANS,
TO SWITCH TRUMP VOTES TO BIDEN IN THE VOTING MACHINES.

YOU GOT MILLIONS OF FRAUDULENT VOTES MAILED IN
BY ILLEGALS CASTING BALLOTS THE CHINESE SAILED-IN
STACKED TO THE RAFTERS IN SHIPS SMUGGLED THROUGH
FULL OF PAPER THAT WAS MADE OF BAMBOO

JASON

Now that's what I'm talking about! OK, Blue Team – Give me some good ol' Tribal Truth on the twenty-twenty election. Hit me!

(Verse 3)

FLORENCE

GOOD GOD, THE TRUTH IS NOT TRIBAL ON THIS,
YOU'RE JUST INFECTED WITH THE MAGA VIRUS.
SO, THE TRUTH CAN'T SURVIVE INSIDE YOUR BRAIN.
ALL THE SAME, I'LL EXPLAIN IT AS IF YOU'RE SANE.

BIDEN BEAT TRUMP, THE ELECTION WAS FAIR.
SO SAID TRUMP’S VP AND HIS CAMPAIGN CHAIR.
EVEN HIS FAMILY, HIS OWN FAVORITE DAUGHTER,
HIS STAFFERS AND HIS WHITE HOUSE LAWYERS.

(Verse 4)

FLORENCE & LAMAR

SO SAID D-O-J, SO SAID THE FBI
SO SAID THAT ELECTION CYBERSECURITY GUY
WHO CALLED IT MORE SECURE THAN ANY HE’D EVER SEEN
EVEN BILL BARR WAS FORCED TO ADMIT IT WAS CLEAN.

TRUMP CHALLENGED THE RESULTS IN COURT AND TRIED
OVER SIXTY TIMES BUT HE WAS DENIED,
WHEN JUDGES SAID IN EVERY SINGLE CASE,
“GET THIS RIGGED ELECTION BULLSHIT OUTTA MY FACE.”

(Chorus)

ENSEMBLE

WE WANT OUR FACTS WITH THAT FLAVOR
THAT TRIBE MEMBERS CRAVE—
A BITTER TASTE TO OUR RIVALS
SO SKEWED AND SO TRIBAL

GIMME THAT— THAT PARTISAN KOOL-AID
THAT— THAT GROUPTHINK VODKA-LEMONADE
THAT FULLY BIASED GIN AND JUICE
YOU GOTTA GIMME THAT GOOD OL’ TRIBAL TRUTH
THAT GOOD OL’ TRIBAL TRUTH!

JASON

Okay Red Team. How ‘bout some Tribal Truth on the January sixth Capitol incident?
Give it to me!

(Verse 5)

ERIC

JANUARY SIXTH IS PATRIOTS’ DAY
WHEN WE FOUGHT THE DEEP STATE PLOT TO TAKE AWAY
OUR VOTES, OUR FREEDOMS, OUR RIGHTS, OUR LIVES.
WE FOUGHT SO OUR WAY OF LIFE SURVIVES.

FRANK

IT WAS PEACEFUL PROTEST
THAT’S OF COURSE UNTIL THE FBI
INCITED A RIOT AND THEN THEY STOOD BY

AFTER UNLEASHING THEIR CRUEL SUBVERSIVE PLAN
AND WATCHED THE PROTEST GET OUT OF HAND

JASON

Yeah baby. That was some grain alcohol-grade tribal truth. That'll put some hair on your chest. Blue team – January six – Come on!

(Verse 6)

LEFT, CLARA AND CLAYTON

JANUARY SIX WAS A CLEAR COUP ATTEMPT
AN ATTACK ON DEMOCRACY IN PURE CONTEMPT
BY A DESPERATE MAGA MOB THAT WAS SENT OUT
TO DESTROY WHAT THIS COUNTRY IS ALL ABOUT

FROM THE DAY VOTERS EXPRESSED THEIR WILL
TRUMP AND HIS ENABLERS CONSPIRED TO KILL
THE DEMOCRACY THAT TOLD HIM TO STEP ASIDE
AND WOUNDED HIS EGO AND HURT HIS PRIDE.

JASON

Alright, let's do a lightning round of shots of single-verse tribal truth before I close the bar for good.

Describe President Joe Biden, the man. Blue team – Hit me!

(Verse 7)

ELAINE

TOO OLD

FLORENCE

TOO CENTRIST

LAMAR

BUT STILL A GOOD MAN.

FLORENCE

TOO MUCH OF A BIG TECH, BIG BUSINESS FAN,

ELAINE

HE'S WAYYYY TOO CHUMMY WITH THE OTHER SIDE.

LAMAR

BUT WILLING TO FIND A COMPROMISE.

JASON

Red Team.

(Verse 8)

ERIC

MORALLY BANKRUPT CORRUPT AS HELL.

FRANK

HE'S A PUPPET OF THE RADICAL LEFT AS WELL.

RACHEL

SO OLD, HE'S GOT JUST A FEW YEARS LEFT,

ERIC

SIX MORE MONTHS TO LIVE.

FRANK

A YEAR AT BEST!

JASON

(speaking)

Purple Team – Let's go!

(Verse 9)

CLARA

HE'S OLD BUT BASICALLY A DECENT GUY.

CLAYTON

HE'S OLD BUT EFFECTIVELY GETTING BY.

CRISTY

HE'S OLD BUT HE SEEMS TO GET THINGS DONE.

CRAIG

HE'S WAY OLD –DUDE IS EIGHTY-ONE!

(Chorus)

ENSEMBLE

GIMME THAT— THAT PARTISAN KOOL-AID,
THAT— THAT GROUPTHINK VODKA-LEMONADE.
THAT FULLY BIASED GIN AND JUICE.
YOU GOTTA GIMME THAT GOOD OL' TRIBAL TRUTH.

(End of song)

(JASON wheels the keyboard away.)

(PANELISTS bicker and talk over one another centerstage.)

LAMAR

(to Frank)

January six was Patriot's Day? C'mon man. You're just trolling, right?

FRANK

No, it's true. Your problem is you live in the lamestream media bubble.

FLORENCE

(to Frank)

No. His problem is he lives on Earth, and you live on Planet Trump.

(JASON strolls leisurely to downstage center, watching the viewer counter continue to rise past 1.7M. He faces the audience, raises the mic kill switch and dramatically activates it. The panelists' mics go dead, and they continue bickering unamplified. He smiles mischievously.)

JASON

And that wraps up this segment of the show. As you can see, things are really heating up, so stay tuned. We will be back with more Tribes, USA after this break.

VOICE FROM P.A.

And we are CLEAR. We're back in five minutes. Panelists, be back in your seats in three.

(CLARA, heated, makes a bee line to Jason as other PANELISTS slowly disengage and migrate to the wings.)

CLARA

OK, so THAT was unacceptable. Next segment, we need to dial it back.

JASON

(pointing to the counter)

Babe, we just cleared one point seven million. We're SO close. I'm on a roll, let me cook.

CLARA

Jason, we're not gonna turn this last segment into the Jerry Springer Show chasing two million viewers.

JASON

OK, but you know Jerry Springer averaged eight million viewers a day, right? Soooo, what if we don't go FULL Springer, but just keep it at HALF Springer?

(CLARA, unamused, stares at him blankly)

One third Springer?

CLARA

Dude. Who are you right now?

(JASON gently places his hand on her shoulder)

JASON

I'm the guy who wants to give you the world. If we hit two million viewers in the next fifteen minutes, we can afford to go anywhere you want for our honeymoon, our social media profiles are gonna blow up, and so many doors will open for us.

(Cue music)

CLARA

That all sounds nice, but at what cost?

JASON

At what cost? Babe, I've tried for years to prove to myself that I deserve you. And I always fall short. This show is another chance, and I'd give anything to win just this once.

NO. 13 — “AT WHAT COST?”

(Verse 1)

CLARA

SO, YOU WANT MORE VIEWERS, MORE CLICKS, MORE LIKES

CLARA & JASON

WANT MORE CELEBRITY, BIG CITY, BRIGHT LIGHTS

CLARA

MORE FANS, MORE FOLLOWERS, MORE ADULATION

CLARA & JASON

MORE HYPE, MORE EXCITEMENT, MORE STIMULATION

(Verse 2)

CLARA

SO, YOU WANT MORE COMMENTS, MORE HITS, MORE HEADLINES,

JASON

WANT MORE INFLUENCE, MORE REPOSTS AND MORE AIR-TIME

CLARA

MORE ENDORSEMENTS MORE CONTRACTS FLOWIN' IN

CLARA & JASON

MORE SPONSORSHIPS MORE COLD CASH ROLLIN IN

(Chorus)

CLARA

BEFORE YOU GO ALL IN TO GET IT
CONSIDER THIS - DON'T YOU FORGET IT
WHEN YOU'RE CHASING WHAT LITTLE IS LEFT TO GAIN
THE LIMELIGHT, THE GLORY, THE FORTUNE AND FAME
IGNORING THE RISK THAT ALL MAY BE LOST
PLEASE ASK YOURSELF THIS - AT WHAT COST?

(Verse 3)

JASON

WHAT I WANT MORE DESPERATELY THAN YOU CAN KNOW
IS TO SUCCEED TONIGHT SO I CAN SHOW
I'M WORTHY OF YOUR TRUST, YOUR VALIDATION
YOUR HOPE, YOUR LOVE, YOUR ADMIRATION

(Bridge)

CLARA

BUT EVERYTHING YOU MENTION IS ALREADY YOURS
TOO MANY RICHES TO STILL WANT MORE
YOU GOT FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND YOU'VE GOT ME
YOU GOT SELF-RESPECT AND INTEGRITY,
YOU GOT THAT KIND SOUL I ADORE
AND THAT HEART OF GOLD I LOVE YOU FOR

(Chorus)

CLARA

BEFORE YOU GO ALL IN TO GET IT
CONSIDER THIS - DON'T YOU FORGET IT
WHEN YOU'RE CHASING WHAT LITTLE IS LEFT TO GAIN

CLARA & JASON

THE LIMELIGHT, THE GLORY, THE FORTUNE AND FAME

CLARA

IGNORING THE RISK THAT ALL MAY BE LOST
PLEASE ASK YOURSELF THIS –

CLARA & JASON

AT WHAT COST?
AT WHAT COST?

AT WHAT COST?

(End of song)

JASON

OK, so I'll tell you what. This last segment – ONE QUARTER Springer, MAX. I promise.

CLARA

Jason, this is not a joke. What happens on this set has real consequences for real people.

JASON

I'm not joking. I'll keep it civil enough. Right now, I gotta hit the restroom to get rid of some of this coffee.

(JASON turns and quickly exits stage right. CLARA watches him leave and shakes her head slowly. She pulls out her phone, looks at it, and answers the incoming call.)

CLARA

Hi Mami. – Yes, it's getting crazy, but I'm doing fine. -

What? You LIKE all the fighting? –

(incredulously as she exits stage right)

Reminds you of the Jerry Springer Show? And you think that's a GOOD thing?

(PANELISTS migrate from the wings toward their chairs.)

VOICE FROM P.A.

Live in one minute. Places!

(PANELISTS settle into their seats. JASON and CLARA enter from stage right. JASON stops at the podium and charges his mug. CLARA stares disapprovingly. JASON hoists his mug in a toast.)

JASON

Here's to us and two million views.

CLARA

Don't push it, Jason. It's not that important.

(SHE heads for her seat.)

VOICE FROM P.A.

Fifteen seconds! Cameras up! We go live in five, four, three...

JASON

(To camera from the podium)

Welcome back to Tribes, USA. What a night it's been so far. Our panelists are in rare form and holding nothing back. We're in the final stretch, so let's go out with a bang. Our final topic of the evening will be player's choice.

(takes a long drink and looks at panelists)

Who wants to pick?

(ELAINE, FLORENCE, FRANK and ERIC raise their hands)

Yup. Usual suspects. OK, Eric, what cha got?

ERIC

Let's talk about why black people make up thirteen percent of the country but commit more than half the murders and robberies.

(All other panelists and JASON take a deep breath, raise their eyebrows and look at one another in silence. ERIC chuckles.)

What, facts got your tongues?

(Viewer counter accelerates during 5 seconds of awkward silence)

LAMAR

Let's talk about how a small-minded person with big mouth can get himself in trouble.

CLAYTON

Um, Let's talk about how we can improve the tone of our conversation. Maybe pick a topic we can all agree on?

(CLARA, CRISTY, and CRAIG nod approvingly)

FLORENCE

(looking at Frank and Eric with icy condescension)

No, let's talk about how the MAGA Trump cult wants to turn this country into a racist, fascist, kleptocracy.

FRANK

No, let's talk about how the Left is destroying the country with woke DEI nonsense and open borders.

ERIC

Yeah, and how they're trying to take away our Second Amendment rights!

ELAINE

(to Eric)

Damn, you're stupid.

ERIC

Hey, Beyonce! - That's the third time you called me stupid. You're done.

ELAINE

Nope, I'm just getting started. And Beyonce? Seriously?

FLORENCE

(to Elaine)

Save your energy. He's not worth it.

FRANK

Right there. THAT'S the condescending liberal attitude that real Americans won't tolerate anymore.

FLORENCE

Real Americans? You mean real DUMB Americans?

(ELAINE, FLORENCE, FRANK and ERIC continue to bicker. The viewer counter accelerates further.)

JASON

(to the panelists)

Hey!

(PANELISTS startle and stop bickering)

I love the energy, but you can't all talk at the same time.

(drains his mug)

So... ..let's dig deep and tell the other side how you REALLY feel, but one at a time. Florence, you first.

(cue music)

NO. 14 — "YOU'RE GONE"

(Verse 1)

FLORENCE

I NEVER LIKED WHAT YOU PEOPLE STOOD FOR,
AT LEAST YOU USED TO TALK A GOOD GAME
ON RULE OF LAW, FAMILY VALUES, AND MORE,
BUT NOW THAT CHARADE IS GONE UP IN FLAMES.

WHATEVER PRINCIPLES YOU USE TO CLAIM
HAVE BEEN REPLACED AND WHAT IS CLEAR.
IT'S NOT MORALITY, NOT EVEN SHAME
YOU'RE DRIVEN BY ANGER AND FEAR.

(Verse 2)

ELAINE

YOU'RE JUST MAD THE NEW AMERICAN DREAM
IS MORE INCLUSIVE THAN WHEN IT BEGAN
NOW BEING MULTICULTURAL, PROGRESSIVE, AND GREEN,
MEANS FAR MORE THAN BEING A STRAIGHT WHITE MAN

YOU FEAR THAT YOU'RE LOSING YOUR RIGHT TO RETAIN
THE POWER AND THE REINS OF CONTROL.
YOU FEAR THAT DEMOCRACY'S A LOSING GAME,
SO, YOU'RE GIVING UP AND LETTING IT GO.

(Chorus)

FLORENCE & ELAINE

YOU'RE GONE.
YOU'RE TOO MUCH, YOU'RE JUST UNSOUND,
YOU'RE GONE,
OUT OF TOUCH AND OUT OF BOUNDS,
YOU'RE GONE.
YOU'RE SO FAR OUT OF LINE.
YOU'RE GONE, YOU'RE GONE, YOU'RE GONE
YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR MIND!
YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR MIND!

(Verse 3)

FRANK

WE'RE NOT CRAZY, WE'RE NOT OUT OF TOUCH.
WE KNOW WHAT OUR COUNTRY IS ALL ABOUT
WE'VE JUST PUT UP WITH YOU FOR LONG ENOUGH.
SO, PACK UP YOUR CRAP AND GET THE HELL OUT.

ERIC

GO FIND A PLACE WHERE PEDOS AND GAYS
CAN ACT FREAKY WITH NOTHING TO FEAR
FLY RAINBOW FLAGS AND MARCH IN PRIDE PARADES
EVERY GOD DAMNED DAY OF THE YEAR!

*(CLARA leaves her seat, walks rapidly over to Jason at the podium
and admonishes him to calm things down. JASON points to the counter
rising past 1.9M viewers.)*

FRANK

FIND A PLACE WHERE THE LOWLIFE THUGS AND ZEROS
LIVING LIVES AS FAILURES AND FLOPS
ARE WORSHIPPED AS MARTYRED SAINTS AND HEROES

‘CAUSE THEY WERE BLACK AND KILLED BY COPS.

(Chorus)

FRANK / ERIC / FLORENCE / ELAINE

YOU'RE GONE.
YOU'RE TOO MUCH, YOU'RE JUST UNSOUND,
YOU'RE GONE,
OUT OF TOUCH AND OUT OF BOUNDS,
YOU'RE GONE.
YOU'RE SO FAR OUT OF LINE.
YOU'RE GONE, YOU'RE GONE, YOU'RE GONE
YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR MIND!
YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR MIND!

(Bridge)

ERIC

GO FIND A PLACE THAT'S NOT A SHITHOLE NATION
WHERE ALL BLACK PEOPLE GET AN INVITATION
TO DO POORLY IN SCHOOL,
AND BREAK ALL THE RULES,
THEN BLAME IT ON DISCRIMINATION.

(Verse 4)

ELAINE

(walks to within four feet of Eric)
WE'RE NOT LEAVING, NO MATTER WHAT YOU SAY.
A NATION BUILT BY THE BLOOD AND SWEAT OF SLAVES.
CAN'T BE BUILT JUST FOR FOOLS LIKE YOU
IT BELONGS TO BLACK PEOPLE TOO!

ERIC

IF IT BELONGS TO YOU, THEN ACT LIKE IT.
YOU CAN'T HAVE IT BOTH WAYS, EITHER YOU OWN IT, OR YOU
DON'T.
REAL OWNERS TAKE PRIDE IN THEIR OWNERSHIP.
YOU BLACKS SHOULD DO THAT, BUT YOU WON'T.

*(CLARA walks over and places herself between Elaine and Eric.
CLARA, facing Elaine, pushes Elaine back away from Eric. ELAINE
and ERIC continue jousting.)*

(Verse 5)

ELAINE

DON'T TALK ABOUT PRIDE
OR WHAT BLACK PEOPLE NEED.
IT'S NOT YOUR PLACE TO MAKE
THAT CALL.
YOU'RE NOT PROUD OF THIS
COUNTRY OR ITS CREED.

YOU'RE ON MY LAST NERVE.

KEEP ON TESTIN' ME!

YOU'RE A WEAK RACIST SOLDIER
WANNABE!

YOU'RE AN INBRED!
SISTER FUCKING!

ERIC

YOU PEOPLE MISBEHAVE.

COMMIT VIOLENT ACTS.

KILL TWICE AS MANY WHITES
AS WHITES KILL BLACKS.

CAN'T STAND AN HONEST
CRITIQUE!

YOU'RE A LOW LIFE SEXUAL
FREAK!

SOCIALIST BITCH!

BEIGE-COLORED
HALF-BREED CUNT!

(End of song)

*(PANELISTS gasp and freeze in shock. Silence. Counter is
accelerating past 2.1M viewers)*

*(ELAINE brushes past a frozen Clara and walks menacingly within
one foot of Eric.)*

ELAINE

What did you call me?

ERIC

(swallows hard)

You heard me the first time.

ELAINE

I did, but I want you to say it again.

ERIC

Half breed...

*(ELAINE slaps Eric. He holds his face and backs away slowly.
CLARA, FRANK and CRAIG step in to separate Elaine and Eric.
Counter is racing past 2.2M viewers.)*

ELAINE

(being restrained by Clara)

That's what I thought. You're a punk!

You're weak. You're a weak-ass, insecure, white boy!

(ERIC, being restrained by Frank, is seething, and pulls his pistol. HE, holds it by his thigh, and scowls at Frank. FRANK backs away.)

(CRAIG, reacting swiftly, pulls his own pistol and points it at Eric.)

CRAIG

Hey! Drop the gun! Now!

(JASON, rushes over to Clara and pulls her away from the line of Eric's fire. OTHER PANELISTS back away as well. ELAINE stands alone and defiant.)

ELAINE

(to Eric)

What? You gonna shoot me? Boy please. Nobody's scared of your sick, greasy, incel, no-girlfriend-havin' ass.

(ERIC scowls at Elaine, then looks down the barrel of Craig's gun and decides to lower his. ELAINE, not ready for the fight to end, delivers her coup de grace.)

AND... you're stupid!

(Beat. Silence. ERIC scowls and raises his gun toward Elaine. CLARA jumps in front of Elaine.)

CRAIG

No!

(CRAIG shoots Eric three times in rapid succession)

(ERIC shoots toward Elaine as he falls.)

(EVERYONE gasps and freezes for three seconds, marinating in the tension.)

(CLARA stumbles)

JASON

Clara!

(CLARA falls back into Jason's arms. He gently lowers her to the floor. She is motionless. Counter is racing past 2.3M viewers.)

CRAIG

Somebody call nine-one-one!

(FRANK dials 9-1-1 and speaks to the operator.)

(JASON takes off his sports coat, kneels next to Clara and places his coat under her head. CRISTY runs over to Clara and administers CPR while JASON holds Clara's hand.)

(CRAIG keeps gun trained on Eric's body as he approaches it. He pushes Eric's gun aside with his foot and checks Eric's neck for a pulse. Finding none, he holsters his gun and administers CPR)

(RACHEL, CLAYTON, FLORENCE and LAMAR, huddle, comfort one another, and watch the commotion around Clara. ELAINE stands alone, shaken, and nervously rubbing her bracelet.)

(CRISTY checks Clara's neck for a pulse. SHE looks at Jason and shakes her head slowly. JASON looks blankly at Cristy then down at Clara.)

JASON

(to Clara)

Clara? Clara?

(HE places her hand on his cheek. Beat. HE grimaces.)

No. No. What did I doooo?

(CRISTY and CRAIG look at one another across the stage. CRAIG shakes his head slowly and abandons his CPR efforts on Eric. HE stands, pulls out his cell phone, thumbs it, and holds it to his head.)

(Cue music.)

CRAIG

Dispatch. This is four-eight-six-five, off duty. Shots fired - six twenty-four Johnson Street. Two down, send EMS times two. Ten-fifty.

(CRAIG walks over to his chair and sits. HE looks at Eric's body, then at Clara's. HE pounds the armrest of his chair once and grimaces with emotion.)

God dammit.

(Dim lights. JASON stands and walks slowly to downstage center into a single pool of light. HE looks back at the counter highlighted in the darkness and frozen at 2.5M. HE slowly bows his head. Beat. HE looks out blankly at the audience.)

NO. 15 — “AT WHAT COST (REPRISE)”

JASON

(mournfully)

CUE THE MUSIC, THE LIGHTS AND
THE VIBES.

BRING THE PASSION, THE HEAT
FROM THE TRIBES.

BRING THE RHYTHMS, THE BEATS,
AND THEN

HOLD ONTO YOUR SEATS, MY
FRIENDS

I’LL TAKE YOU ON THE RIDE OF
YOUR LIVES

CLAYTON & CRISTY

(Hum in harmony)

BEFORE YOU GO ALL IN TO GET IT.

CONSIDER THIS, DON’T YOU
FORGET IT

(JASON walks slowly back to Clara and sits on the floor next to her.)

CLAYTON & CRISTY

WHEN YOU’RE CHASING WHAT LITTLE IS LEFT TO GAIN
THE LIMELIGHT, THE GLORY, THE FORTUNE AND FAME
IGNORING THE RISK THAT ALL MAY BE LOST
PLEASE ASK YOURSELF THIS
AT WHAT COST?

JASON, CLAYTON & CRISTY

AT WHAT COST?
AT WHAT COST?

(End of song)

*(Phone buzzing. JASON looks at the phone in Clara’s pocket. Beat.
HE reaches for it, pulls it out slowly, and looks at it. HE grimaces and
puts it on speaker.)*

JASON

(voice cracking)

Suegra?

(SOUND: MOM’S VOICE, pre-recorded, through the phone speaker.)

MOM’S VOICE

(gravely)

Mijo! Qué pasó? — Qué pasó?

(JASON bows his head in pain.)

(Go dark. Counter visible at 2.5M)

ACT TWO - SCENE 2

Lights up. Cue solemn underscore. Police tape is strung from the podium to Chair 10. FRANK is standing downstage in front of the tape looking down at where the bodies of Clara and Eric were. He shakes his head slowly. CLAYTON and CRISTY are standing together six feet to the right of Frank and having a quiet conversation. FLORENCE enters from right wing, walks over and stands beside Frank. She looks down at the scene as well. FLORENCE and FRANK look sympathetically at one another.

FRANK

Two people killed with so much to live for. Over what? - Debate? - How the hell did we end up here?

FLORENCE

Well, let's see. There's lack of empathy. Lack of respect. Lack of perspective. Hyper focus on our differences, and the terrible way we talk to one another.

FRANK

(nodding slowly and looking intently at Florence)

Hmm. Unleashing our inner assholes. We screwed this up, pretty bad, didn't we?

FLORENCE

We did. And we need to do better.

(beat)

I'll do your podcast.

(FLORENCE extends her hand. FRANK shakes it gently. FLORENCE walks away solemnly and exits stage right. FRANK does the same, stage left.)

(CLAYTON and CRISTY console one another with an embrace and walk hand-in-hand to exit stage right.)

(ELAINE, rubbing her bracelet, distraught and lost in her own thoughts, enters from stage right and walks toward downstage left.)

(CLAYTON and CRISTY look warily at Elaine as they pass her. ELAINE walks past not even noticing them. They turn momentarily to watch her walk away and turn back and continue to exit stage right.)

(RACHEL enters from stage left. LAMAR enters from stage right. They walk quickly to embrace one another at downstage center.)

LAMAR

Are you OK?

RACHEL

I don't know. I don't know what to think.

LAMAR

What the hell is happening right now... Hold on...

(LAMAR reaches for his phone and looks at it)

It's Linda.

(LAMAR answers the phone)

Hey hun. I'm right here with your mom...

No, no, we're both OK.

(A pause. LAMAR grimaces. He covers the microphone)

(To Rachel)

The kids were watching the broadcast too.

(into the phone)

Are-are they ok? Do you want to put 'em on?

(Beat. He smiles slightly, shaking his head)

They want to talk to Grandma... Of course they want to talk to Grandma, who cares about dad, anyway?

(Beat)

Alright, put 'em on. Love you. See you at home.

(LAMAR hands RACHEL the PHONE)

RACHEL

(Into the phone, her expression lightening immediately)

Hey there. How are my sweetie pies?

(Beat, she smiles)

Oh, don't you worry, nana's just fine...

(RACHEL and LAMAR exit stage right.)

(Go dark.)

ACT TWO - SCENE 3

Lights up. Cue music. Stage is clear of chairs and podium. ACTORS stand upstage side-by-side in same order as their character's chairs. JASON is at the left end of the line. They sing to the audience as their authentic selves. ACTORS walk downstage in pairs to sing their respective verses, then return to the line when done. Entire line comes forward for final verse with JASON ACTOR.

(CRISTY and CLAYTON ACTORS walk downstage.)

NO. 16 — “TURN IT DOWN”

(Verse 1)

CRISTY ACTOR

WHEN CONVERSATIONS TURN
AND ANGRY VOICES RISE
WHEN PASSIONS START TO BURN
AND CIVIL DISCOURSE DIES

OPINIONS GIVE WAY TO BLOWS
AND WE CHOOSE VIOLENCE OVER PROSE
IT MIGHT BE TIME TO STOP
AND LOOK WITHIN

WHEN THE TRIBES GO TRIBAL
WITH A LUST FOR STRIFE AND WAR
WHEN DIATRIBES AND RIVALRIES
DEVOLVE INTO SLURS AND GORE

WE TURN FROM CORDIAL TO PROFANE
ALL THAT FOLLOWS IS GRIEF AND PAIN
WHEN THERE'S NOTHING LEFT TO LOSE OR GAIN
IT'S UP TO US TO CHOOSE TO...

CLAYTON ACTOR

TURN IT DOWN.

TURN IT DOWN.

TURN IT DOWN.

TURN IT DOWN.

TURN IT DOWN.

CRISTY ACTOR

TURN DOWN THE STATIC, THE TENSION, THE
STRESS.

TURN DOWN THE ANGER THAT MAKES US
REGRESS.

TURN DOWN THE CLAMOR AND THE STRIFE.
HEAR THE SWEETER SOUNDS OF LIFE.

CLAYTON & CRISTY ACTORS

WON'T YOU PLEASE TURN IT DOWN.

(Verse 2)

CLAYTON ACTOR

WHEN WE'RE COMPELLED TO FIGHT
BECAUSE IT'S LIFE OR DEATH,
IT'S YOUR DUTY AND YOUR RIGHT
UNTIL YOUR DYING BREATH,

TO FIGHT FOR PEOPLE'S LIVES THAT WAY
GO AS HARD AND LOUD AS YOU MAY,
BUT IF IT'S JUST DEBATE,
IT'S JUST DEBATE.

DEBATE WITH HEARTFELT GIVE AND TAKE
WHERE NO ONE'S LIFE'S AT STAKE.
THERE'S NO IMPENDING DOOM IN STORE,
IT SHOULDN'T BE WORTH BLEEDING FOR, SO...

(Chorus)

CRISTY ACTOR

TURN IT DOWN.

TURN IT DOWN.

TURN IT DOWN.

TURN IT DOWN.

TURN IT DOWN.

CLAYTON ACTOR

TURN DOWN THE STATIC, THE TENSION, THE
STRESS.

TURN DOWN THE ANGER THAT MAKES US
REGRESS.

TURN DOWN THE CLAMOR AND THE STRIFE.
HEAR THE SWEETER SOUNDS OF LIFE.

CLAYTON & CRISTY ACTORS

WON'T YOU PLEASE TURN IT DOWN.

(Bridge Part 1)

(CLARA and CRAIG ACTORS walk downstage.)

CLARA ACTOR

WE HAVE SO MUCH MORE IN COMMON
THAN THINGS THAT TEAR US APART.
THE TIES THAT BIND US ALL TOGETHER
CONNECT US EACH FROM HEART TO HEART.

CRAIG ACTOR

WE ALL SHARE A COMMON COUNTRY,
COMMON LANGUAGE, COMMON CREED,

COMMON PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS,
AND COMMON DESIRE TO SUCCEED.

*(LAMAR, FLORENCE, RACHEL and FRANK ACTORS walk
downstage.)*

(Bridge Part 2)

LAMAR ACTOR

WE ALL SUPPORT THE FOLKS WHO SERVE
WITH HONOR IN HARM'S WAY,
SO WE CAN LIVE SECURE IN PEACE
AND PROSPER EVERY DAY.

FLORENCE ACTOR

WE'VE SEEN OURSELVES AS A NATION
DO GREAT THINGS AND SWELL WITH PRIDE
AS TEARS WELL UP WHEN RAY CHARLES SINGS
OH, BEAUTIFUL FOR SPACIOUS SKIES.

(Bridge Part 3)

RACHEL ACTOR

WE ALL LIVE TO SEE OUR CHILDREN
START AS BABIES WITH EAGER EYES,
GROW IN SAFETY, JOY, AND LAUGHTER,
THEN MOVE OUT ON THEIR OWN AND THRIVE.

FRANK ACTOR

WE ALL SHARE THE FORTUNE TO LIVE
AT A TIME AND IN A PLACE
WHERE WE'RE BOUND MORE BY IDEAS
THAN BY ETHNICITY OR RACE.

(ERIC and ELAINE ACTORS walk downstage.)

(Verse 3)

ERIC ACTOR

YET, WE IGNORE THE COMMON GROUND
FORGO A FUTURE, BRIGHT
PROMOTE THE HALF-TRUTHS AND CONFOUND
WHAT'S EASY WITH WHAT'S RIGHT

WE GO TRIBAL OVER TRIFLING THINGS
IGNORING THAT THE CONFLICT BRINGS
MORE MISERY THAN ANYTHING
IT'S ENOUGH TO LOSE YOUR MIND.

ELAINE ACTOR

IF WE MUST BE TRIBAL
THEN CAN WE AT LEAST AGREE
THAT FOR OUR OWN SURVIVAL,
IT'S IMPERATIVE FOR US ALL TO BE

WHETHER WHITE OR BLACK OR BROWN
OR BI OR STRAIGHT, OR GAY,
MEMBERS OF ONE SINGLE TRIBE,
TRIBE USA.

*(JASON ACTOR walks downstage. PANELIST ACTORS follow just
behind him.)*

(Chorus)

PANELIST ACTORS

TURN IT DOWN.
TURN IT DOWN.
TURN IT DOWN.
TURN IT DOWN.
TURN IT DOWN.

JASON ACTOR

TURN DOWN THE STATIC, THE TENSION, THE
STRESS.
TURN DOWN THE ANGER THAT MAKES US
REGRESS.
TURN DOWN THE CLAMOR AND THE STRIFE.
HEAR THE SWEETER SOUNDS OF LIFE.

COMPANY ACTORS

WON'T YOU PLEASE TURN IT DOWN.
WON'T YOU PLEASE TURN IT DOWN.

(End of song)

(Go dark.)

THE END