

25. The Speech

(In a hotel room. #1 and #2 are aides to a senator. They are helping to set up for a speech the next day. #1 and #2 are both on the phone.)

- #1: No, the Senator cannot be there at that time. (Pause) He can make it after his speech tomorrow, but only for a few minutes. (Pause) Why? Because he's having dinner with the Governor later that night. (Pause) I'm glad we could clear that up.
- #2: Yes the Senator does stand by that policy. (Pause) No, he doesn't stand by that policy. (Pause) Why? He made that quite clear during his policy standing speech in Washington during free speech week, last week. (Pause) I'm glad we could clear that up.

(#1 and #2 both hang up.)

- #1: I hate these campaign trips.
- #2: They're not that bad.
- #1: Oh, you're so politically young. This is your first campaign. Trust me, by election time, you won't even want to vote for this guy.
- #2: Well, I don't care. I've wanted to get into the game for a long time. Besides, why are you complaining? Everything seems to be going just...
- #1: STOP! Don't even think that. Don't you know about the campaign jinx?
- #2: What campaign jinx?
- #1: You never say things are going well.
- #2: Why not?

- #1: Because the minute you do... (The phone rings.) See.
- #2: How do you know it's bad news?
- #1: Because you said things are going well. (Picks up the phone.) Yes. (Pause) No, I'm sorry, the Senator's very busy. (Pause) When did you talk to him? (Pause) Yes, I know, but that's not on the agenda. (Pause) Who authorized it? (Pause) But... (Pause) I know it's a very important organization, but... (Pause) but... (Pause) I see. Fine. (Hangs up.)
- #2: Is there a problem?
- #1: Yes, thanks to you.
- #2: I didn't do anything. All I said was things were going well.
- #1: That was enough.
- #2: What's the problem?
- #1: It appears that there's a OMWAM convention in town and they want the Senator to give a little speech.
- #2: OMWAM?
- #1: Organization of Mid-West American Mothers. They're a very important group that we need to have backing us.
- #2: So what's the problem? When do they want the speech?
- #1: In an hour. Apparently the Senator said he'd be glad to do it.
- #2: So, let's talk to the Senator and have him postpone it a couple of hours.
- #1: A couple of problems with that. First: OMWAM's luncheon is in an hour and secondly: the Senator's wife just got into town.
- #2: So?
- #1: He hasn't seen her in weeks.
- #2: Again, so?
- #1: They're saying hello...privately.
- #2: (Thinks and then finally gets it.) Oh!
- #1: Now, to top it off, OMWAM wants a crime speech.

- They're big on that "keeping our streets safe for children" stuff.
- #2: So, give him his crime speech.
- #1: We don't have a current one and the speech for tomorrow is on health care.
- #2: Where's his speech writer?
- #1: On a plane. She's not due here for couple of hours.
- #2: Can't he just wing it?
- #1: Are you kidding?! Our boy's smart, but he couldn't ad-lib "you're welcome" after someone said, "thank you." We're gonna have to write one.
- #2: I'm not a speech writer. I'm a press coordinator.
- #1: Congratulations. You've just been promoted. *(Pause)* OK, look through all those papers and see if you can find our position paper on crime.
(#1 and #2 start looking through all the papers on the coffee table. #2 finds one.)
- #2: I think this is it.
- #1: Great! What's it say about the Senator's position on crime?
- #2: He doesn't like it.
- #1: "He doesn't like it?" Don't you think that'll come off as a bit anemic?
- #2: Well, here's another one that says he really doesn't like it.
- #1: Great. Well, I guess we'll have to go to the book.
- #2: What book?
- #1: *(Pulls a book out of his briefcase.)* This one. It's a book of great American speeches. We keep it around for emergencies like this.
- #2: You use other people's speeches? That's terrible!
- #1: Why? No one listens to them anyway. You remember that great speech the Senator gave at the convention?
- #2: Yeah.
- #1: John Kennedy's "Ask not what your country can do for

- you..." speech. *(Starts flipping through the book, finally stopping.)* Found it. *(Hand the book to #2.)*
- #2: *(Reads the speech.)* This is the Gettysburg Address.
- #1: Not by the time we're done with it. Get a pencil and sit down. *(#2 grabs a pad and pencil and sits on the couch.)* *(Starts dictating the speech.)* OK, let's see. "Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." OK that becomes, "87 years ago our ancestors formed this great and powerful nation where everyone should be safe on our streets."
- #2: Wow, that's good, but it was 87 years ago when Lincoln wrote this. Now it would be 218 years.
- #1: Good point! See, you're a natural. Going on..."Now we are engaged in a great civil war..." yeah, yeah, yeah...let's say, "Now we're engaged in a great war on crime, testing whether our nation is strong enough to survive."
- #2: You are good. Can I have a whack at it?
- #1: Sure. We're right here. *(Shows #2 the book.)* The part about meeting on the battle field and dedicating it.
- #2: *(Thinks.)* OK, how's this? "Today we meet here and in towns and cities all over this great country to dedicate the streets to those innocents who have fallen there."
- #1: I am impressed! Keep going.
- #2: "But we cannot dedicate these streets. Those who have lost their lives on American streets have dedicated them for themselves. Most of the world will not know or remember the thousands who have died, so it is up to us, the living, to make sure that this wave of violence ends. That is the task we are charged with. When it is finished those who have perished will not have died in vain. This is the only way we can make sure that this government of the people, by the people, and for the

- people, will not perish from the Earth!"
- #1:** *(Stands and applauds.)* What can I say? You're a master. Trust me, you're going a long way in politics. Type that up. *(#2 goes to the typewriter and starts to type. The phone rings. #1 Gets the phone.)* Yeah. *(Pause)* Uh-huh. *(Pause)* Uh-huh. *(Pause)* When. *(Pause)* Yeah, I should've figured. *(Hangs up.)*
- #2:** What now?
- #1:** OMWAM also wants our boy to talk about women's rights, too.
(#1 and #2 think. Then look at each other.)
- #1/#2:** The Declaration of Independence.
(They both dive for the book.)

26. The Tabloid

(In an office. #1 is an editor for a not-too-reputable tabloid magazine. #1 is on the phone.)

- #1:** Whoa, you wanna lower your voice. *(Pause)* Yes, I know you're a big star. Everyone knows you're a big star, but it's not my fault that you dated a chimpanzee. *(Pulls the phone away from his/her ear.)* You're yelling again. *(Pause)* It's not a lie. Do you remember that actress...uh...Marsha you dated in 1979? *(Pause)* Well, trust me, you did. Anyway, I checked and she was one of the chimps in the movie, "Murder on the Planet of the Chimpanzees." *(Pause)* So, she played a chimp, you dated her, you do the math. *(Pause)* If that's the way you feel, you know the number of our legal department. *(Pause)* Yeah, always nice to hear from you, Mr. Vontoken. *(Hangs up then dials an extension.)* Joe, expect a call from Vontoken. *(Pause)* Yeah, Mr. Vontoken said "He'd be back" *(Pause)* Anyway, handle it in the usual manner. *(Hangs up.)*
- #2:** *(Knocks at the door.)* You wanted to see me?
- #1:** Yeah, come on in. Have a seat. *(#2 enters and sits in the chair in front of #1's desk.)* So, how do you like working with us?
- #2:** Fine. I'm learning a lot. It's very different from what I expected.
- #1:** I know. They don't teach you this stuff in journalism school, huh?
- #2:** Uh...no, that's true.
- #1:** And just how long have you been with us?
- #2:** About six weeks.
- #1:** That long?
- #2:** Why? Is something wrong?
- #1:** No, no, I wouldn't say...wrong. Just...