Performing Propaganda: The Congressladies and the Role of Dramaturgy in Political Theater

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PERFORMING PROPAGANDA:  
_The Congressladies and the Role of Dramaturgy in Political Theater_

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS  
in  
THEATRE ARTS  

by  

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ............................................................................................................................... iv

SECTION ONE: The Role of the Dramaturg ................................................................. 1

SECTION TWO: Political Theater, Then and Now .................................................. 6

SECTION THREE: The Congressladies as Hegemonic Political Theater .......... 11

SECTION FOUR: Personal Analysis, Propaganda, and its Limitations ................. 19

SECTION FIVE: Conclusion .............................................................................................. 25

APPENDIXES

Appendix A: Congressladies Actors Packet ................................................................. 30

Appendix B: Congressladies First Draft ................................................................. 103

Appendix C: Congressladies Final Draft ................................................................. 128

Appendix D: Actors Script Comparison ................................................................. 199

Appendix E: Lobby Display Poster & Transcript ........................................... 287

Appendix F: Designer Presentation Slides ............................................................ 295

Appendix G: Program Notes ..................................................................................... 306

Appendix H: Scene Breakdown ............................................................................... 308

BIBLIOGRAPHY .................................................................................................................. 310
ABSTRACT: Performing Propaganda: The Role of Dramaturgy in Political Theater

Richard Rossi

This thesis examines the practical contributions of the dramaturg during the collaborative process as well as the working relationships between the dramaturg and the other members of the cast and technical crew. A major aim of the work is to determine the role of a dramaturg in political drama, while also looking at the purpose of such theater in a politically hegemonic area.

Partially a reflection on personal practice and experience working on heavily politicized theater, it will also analyze the changing requirements of the dramaturg based on the aims of the theatrical piece. Additionally, this thesis will look at the use of historical research in political drama as a method of informing decisions and adaptations as well as enforcing or eliminating political bias.
SECTION ONE: The Role of the Dramaturg

What is a dramaturg, exactly? Compared to the well-known staples of the theater, the dramaturg appears to occupy a rather tenuous position. Praised widely in some theatrical circles and virtually unheard of in others, most people have a distinct lack of understanding about what it is a dramaturg does, or does not, do. This is in spite of the fact that dramaturgy, in one form or another, has existed since the second millennia BCE, informing some of the most well respected playwrights, philosophers, and historians known in theater.¹

I believe the inherent difficulty in defining the role of the dramaturg stems from the lack of a concrete understanding of the role of the modern dramaturg in the same way that directors, designers, and technicians have concrete definitions of their roles. Chemers asserts that:

A dramaturg is a member of the artistic team of a production who is a specialist in the transformation of a dramatic script into a meaningful living performance.²

While certainly true, this is not something anyone might call 'concrete', nor is that a job description that is wholly owned by the dramaturg. Once could say that the director holds a similar job description, yet there are few other satisfactory answers regarding the job description of a dramaturg. Chemers goes on to assert that the German model of dramaturgy, that of placing a work in a socio-political context, is the correct path to travel for the American dramaturg. Nevertheless, consensus among

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² Ibid. 5.
other professionals is not universal. The 2009 Australian Theatre Forum sparked a heated debate on the definition of dramaturgy and reached a rather dispiriting non-answer:

...people agreed that dramaturgy has been largely accepted as a methodology in contemporary practice. In fact, one got the sense that *we are all dramaturgs now* [sic]; what that means in practical terms, however, is still being resolved.³

The authors of the chapter go on to put forth a definition in much the same vein as Chemers:

A confluence of literary, spatial, kinaesthetic, and technical practices, worked and woven in the matrix of aesthetic and ideological forces.⁴

This sort of non-answer peppers the books and papers that attempt to address the role of the dramaturg in modern theater. However, dramaturgy in a more traditional role, namely that of dealing with Shakespeare and his contemporaries, has an easier time finding a defined place, mostly due to the “overwhelming cultural standing and the primacy of a historically defined language”⁵ that can place the dramaturg on solid ground in relation to the script. Hartley notes that a dramaturg must have a wide variety of skills with which to accomplish the numerous and often wildly disparate requirements for each production: he must be a textual and verbal specialist, a historian and a theorist, a critic and a sounding board, and frequently the main connection between the audience and the production itself. This goes much further in

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⁴ Ibid, 19.
defining the role of a dramaturg than the previous non-answers inasmuch as their duties are solidified as concrete tasks rather than abstract ideas.

Nevertheless, we are left with a fairly daunting list of responsibilities; does being a dramaturg simply mean being the theaters’ general jack-of-all-trades and master of none? How does a beginning dramaturg, or even an experienced dramaturg, balance such a disparate array of tasks in order to meet the requirements of the performance? The director or playwright, either of which may exercise ultimate control over the end product, may have very well-defined expectations for the dramaturg that limit their scope, but that focus is often a rarity. More often than not, the role of the dramaturg is not understood well enough to take advantage of his capabilities. This is especially true among college-level theater, which may not have specific classes for dramaturgy as it would for other positions. Without such guidelines, the role of the dramaturg is frequently self-defined, as it was for myself, with tasks assigned in order to take full advantage of personal intellectual strong points rather than weak points. The lack of integration, not to mention understanding, is one of the most unfortunate aspects of working as a dramaturg in college or community theater.

Is there an easy way to define the position of a dramaturg in theater? The answer for now appears to be no. When asked what a dramaturg is, which is a question that only very rarely follows the usual blank stares, I have begun to call myself a theatrical research historian. This is clearly not what any of the above definitions allude to, nor is it a complete listing of what a dramaturg does. However,
it is a perfectly suitable definition, not only for myself and my strengths, but for the layperson and their understanding of theater. Given that the position itself is still relatively unknown, there is no reason to complicate the issue with a confusing and overly pedantic definition. This short description hits the most salient points of being a dramaturg quite nicely; it emphasizes the intellectual nature of the work in a context that makes sense to everyone, namely that of a historian. While not always true, the majority of theatrical work is at least somewhat historical and can be informed by research in that area. And of course, it is simple; there is a tendency within theater to clutter thoughts and actions with post-modernist ideas on a multiplicity of labels and ‘what it means to be a _____.’ While not necessarily an inevitable response to post-modern thought, it is a reasonable progression within the theater community, but only within the theater community. As it was mentioned earlier, one purpose of the dramaturg is to be the link between the production and the audience/public, and I believe that job has to start with the dramaturg himself.

An individual of particular interest to me when trying to define my role as a dramaturg was the dramatist John Arden, who pioneered a method of dramaturgy based on ‘moral ambivalence’. While a strongly Marxist playwright, his dramaturgical approach allowed him to be “less influenced by moral preconception than any other writer in British theatre”. This type of dramaturgy, which grants no special bias to either side of the argument, seems to fit nicely with the idea of creating a dialectic. If it is true that a dramaturg must bring meaning to a script, to be one-

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sided is a failure to fully explore all the possible inherent meanings that reside within. Such an action is a deficiency on the part of the dramaturg and shows disregard for the socio-political contexts in which any show must be produced. Through clarity of communication, whatever the medium, a dramaturg may create understanding where there would not normally be any. In a way, simplicity can be the best method of making theater (normally so exclusionary through language, cost, and understanding), more inclusive for the general public. At the end of the day, a dramaturg must work for the production, in any capacity he is capable. To work for the betterment of theater, then, is to work toward the education of every party involved, from cast, to crew, to public. And what better educator than the one individual whose very job it is to bring meaning to theater?
SECTION TWO: Political Theater, Then and Now

The larger purpose of this work is an in-depth examination of The Congressladies as political theater from a dramaturgical viewpoint. The best place to start an examination of a politicized piece of theater, especially an adaptation, is with the original and the history that created it. Aristophanes’ Ecclesiazusae (392 BCE) was written at an interesting point in ancient Athens’ (or Athenian) history. The Spartan victory during the Peloponnesian War (431-404 BCE) cast Athens from its lofty perch as the most powerful Grecian city-state, leading to decades of political turmoil and corruption. Population loss, plague, financial catastrophe, and the aggravation of numerous social and political animosities only made the situation worse. The execution of Socrates in 399\(^7\) only further underlined the corruption in the Athenian political system. Even as Aristophanes wrote Ecclesiazusae, Athens had become embroiled in the Corinthian War (395-387 BCE), which created more political and social issues for the city.

Aristophanes was one of the last writers of Attic Old Comedy during this period; I say last because most of his contemporaries, such as Cratinus,\(^8\) Eupolis,\(^9\) and Euripides,\(^10\) did not live to see the end of the Peloponnesian War and subsequent decay of both Athens and Old Comedy. During the war his theatrical output was

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\(^7\) Accused of “impious acts”, it is considered more likely that he was executed in retribution. Critias, the leader of the Thirty Tyrants, had been a pupil of his.

\(^8\) 519 – 422 BCE. An Athenian comic poet of the Old Style, likened to Aeschylus.

\(^9\) 446 – 411 BCE. An Athenian comic poet, listed alongside Aristophanes and Cratinus as the most prominent of Old Comedy writers.

\(^10\) 480 – 406 BCE. Athenian tragedian, credited with introducing numerous theatrical innovations which have influenced theater to this day.
prodigious, but it dropped off significantly following the rise of the Thirty Tyrants\textsuperscript{11} in 404 BCE, who forbade the parabasis (an exclusive feature of the genre in which the chorus is left alone onstage to address the audience on irrelevant topics) and restricted the mention of real people. Four years later, Cinesias “chorus-killer”\textsuperscript{12} proposed and succeeded in abolishing the choregoi (the system in which a wealthy citizen funded all aspects of the chorus), ostensibly to relieve the poverty-stricken city of yet another expenditure.\textsuperscript{13} Athens’ (or Athenian) recovery over the next decade was slow and humiliating; politically corrupt, socially divisive, and financially polarized, the start of the Corinthian War (in addition to a healthy investment by the Persian Empire) began to revitalize the city and provide a more comfortable grounding for Aristophanes and his particular brand of comedy.\textsuperscript{14}

What was Aristophanes’ goal in writing this play, especially at such a volatile juncture in Athenian history? As MacDowell states:

The first half [of the play] is largely serious, it directs criticism at the Athenian people, and the criticism strongly resembles the parabasis of Frogs. We should therefore take it as expressing Aristophanes’ own view of Athenian politics in the late 390’s.\textsuperscript{15}

It should be fairly evident at this juncture that the Athens of 392 was completely different from Athens of any previous time. Aristophanes’ keen awareness of the

\textsuperscript{11} A pro-Spartan oligarchy installed after the defeat of Athens in the Peloponnesian War. They were despised for their cruel and oppressive reign, and were deposed after thirteen months.
\textsuperscript{12} 450 – 390 BCE. A dithyrambic poet in Athens who, after being ridiculed by a number of comic playwrights, managed to eliminate the chorus, which was the main method of ridicule.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid, 308.
political situation, made all the more topical by having lived through several
governmental changes, may have felt a certain desire to not only address the issues
but also attempt to correct them. Was he trying to affect change within the system,
or simply draw attention to the flaws which had become so endemic? Croiset asserts
that:

Schemes for constitutional reform [after 404 & 403] were devoid of all
practical influence, and had no place save in the discussions of
philosophers. On the stage they would have appeared ridiculous, or
would not have been listened to.\textsuperscript{17}

The play, and perhaps the ideas that drove it forward, sounded as ridiculous then as
they do now; Slater indicates that the state created by Praxagora\textsuperscript{18} in \textit{Ecclesiazusae}
was “a failure and perhaps morally repellent”;\textsuperscript{19} whose morality, theirs or ours?
Judging from this, our moralities may not be so different. It is almost too tempting to
make the comparison between ancient Athens and modern America, and in this
particular instance, it was indeed too tempting. Political drama in Athens served much
the same role as the 24-hour news cycle does today, namely influencing public
opinion through carefully constructed narratives.\textsuperscript{20}

This brings up a number of concerns regarding the role of political comedy in
a modern setting. Kelleher notes that “politics is the important, inescapable, and

\begin{footnotes}
\item[17] Ibid, 164.
\item[18] Ostensibly the protagonist of \textit{Ecclesiazusae}, though she disappears from the script during Act 3.
\end{footnotes}
difficult attempt to determine relations of power in a given space”\(^{21}\), something which
I’m certain Aristophanes understood quite well. He goes on to say that:

...theatre remains unpredictable in its effects, given that its effects
reside largely not in the theatrical spectacle itself but in the spectators
and what they are capable of making of it...there is no guarantee that
its theatrical effects will ‘work’ in the way they are supposed to or that
its carefully constructed political messages will be understood...\(^{22}\)

In 2005, Terry Teachout wrote an article\(^{23}\) in which this unpredictable nature is
underlined very heavily in relation to modern political theater. He notes that, among
the wide variety of politicized plays he saw as a columnist, most were “crude and
predictable”, saying that they lacked creativity and persuasiveness. And yet they were
all directed at hot-button political issues: Guantanamo, the Iraq War, “Republican
fascism”, and so on...all topics which should agitate the stereotypically progressive
theater-goer. So what went wrong? The problem, he asserts, lies with the prejudices
of the artistic community as a whole, who hold tight to the belief that:

...all conservatives (including conservative artists) are evil or stupid, or
both. [Jane] Smiley goes so far as to use the theological term
‘invincible ignorance,’ which implies that there’s no point in arguing
with such benighted folk, since their ignorance is invincible.

This belief influences the way some progressive artists write, so much so that their art
“is written not for a hypothetical mixed audience of red and blue Americans but for a
100 percent left-liberal audience whose 100 percent agreement is presupposed.” To

\(^{22}\) Ibid. 24.
write persuasive and effective political theater, as Aristophanes did, one must do away with the idea that there is a single correct side to the piece.

Then what is the role of modern political drama? Foremost, it must be entertaining, which Brecht calls “the noblest function that we have found for theater.”  

It must be persuasive, taking full advantage of its allegorical potential in order to tell an effective story. Most of all, it should be dialectic; Szanto identifies this type as “theater that attempts to demystify, by depicting separately, interactively, and always clearly, the basic elements which comprise a confused social or historical situation.” This seems to be the best possible role for modern political drama, not to cause a purposeless ruckus, but to enable the audience to think for themselves on the topic being presented.

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SECTION THREE: The Congressladies as Hegemonic Political Theater

During the final talkback, I was struck by a comment that one member of the audience made in relation to performing this show. The actors had been speaking about how they were pushing the boundaries and taking risks with the performance, and an older man responded; at this point I begin to paraphrase a bit, but he said that what they were doing wasn’t difficult or risky. His logic was that nobody in the audience, or indeed, the entire school, would disagree with a single word uttered during the performance because the views of the performance were hegemonic. In this instance, hegemony refers to the social, cultural, and ideological influence exerted by the dominant liberal political stance within UC Santa Cruz. Instead of trying to change the minds of its viewers, The Congressladies took their approval for granted, assuming that everyone in the audience was already opposed to right-wing politics. As the single politically dissenting voice during the whole process, I was interested to hear someone other than myself give voice to that idea, a salient point of contention when dealing with theater of this type. Does underlining the dominant sectarian viewpoint, rather than fighting against it, make for effective or interesting political drama?

The show was subtitled by the director, Danny Scheie, early in the process as “agit-prop”, an interesting peek into the original intent of the piece. Originating within the Soviet Union, modern agit-prop “seeks to deliberately change people’s beliefs through well-planned strategies of persuasion, transformations of spectators
into (spect)actors, and their subsequent mobilization into agitating communities.\textsuperscript{26}

The phrase has a generally negative connotation, especially when used in relation to theater as a method of political indoctrination, which begs the question: is \textit{The Congressladies} agit-prop? Does it in fact seek to deliberately change the beliefs of the audience?

Firstly, persuasion; we can establish that \textit{The Congressladies} is hegemonic due to its extensive use of progressive shibboleths,\textsuperscript{27} which underline its purpose as propaganda. A liberally slanted performance piece targeted at a liberally slanted audience accomplishes nothing further than affirming the beliefs of those that agree with it while simultaneously alienating any other group. This sense of alienation can be useful in radical political theater, creating a dialogue within the alienated group. This is, I think, the foremost and largest weakness of the performance. When speaking to other audience members following the performances, I was intrigued to discover that the show sparked no dialogue whatsoever: not within the group it was attempting to court, not within the group it should have alienated, and not with anyone sitting on the fence. What could have been changed in order to make this “subversive” theater communicate more effectively with these groups? In an ideal world, a debate in which logical points are followed down a logical path toward a logical conclusion would be the best and most effective method of changing a person’s mind; namely, creating a dialectic. For our purposes, dialectics refer to the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{27} A word or saying used by adherents of a party, sect, or belief and usually regarded by others as empty of real meaning
\end{itemize}
Hegelian\textsuperscript{28} method of ‘thesis versus antithesis equals synthesis’: a thesis, giving rise to its reaction, an antithesis, which contradicts or negates the thesis, and the tension between the two being resolved by means of a synthesis. How can a dramaturg help facilitate a dialogue among the dogmatic responses, generally unthinking doctrine, that inevitably appear when attempting to discuss politics? Such responses come almost exclusively from the 18-22 year-olds that populate the campus, but do they not make up the majority of the audience we are trying to reach? There is a great emphasis on teaching young people to think for themselves, and yet politics seems to be the one place in which that need not apply. Whatever the symptom, the result is often the same: political discussion devolves into polarized stereotypes which people hang onto as fiercely as a drowning man clings to a piece of driftwood. While there can be no simple solution, because one does not exist, the best first step is to not make the discussion an attack; as soon as the argument becomes ‘you vs me’ or ‘us vs them’, you have already failed; advancement of the political purpose comes through dialogue, which springs from a created dialectic. This is the single most important point as to why I believe \textit{The Congressladies} failed to provide convincing persuasive arguments, simply due to the fact that the entire performance was an attack on republican politics.

Secondly, there is the issue of transforming the spectators into “spect-actors.”

Coined by Augusto Boal, the term describes an audience that both observes and creates dramatic meaning in a performance. According to him, the “spect-actor” must

\textsuperscript{28}Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831), a German philosopher whose idealist accounts of reality served as a precursor to Marxism, among other philosophies.
be an actor on an equal level to those accepted as actors, who in turn become spectators, eliminating any notions of the ruling class.\footnote{“From Theatre of the Oppressed.” In \textit{The New Media Reader}, edited by Noah Wardrip-Fruin and Nick Montfort, by Augusto Boal. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003.} Possible inherent difficulties of such a transformation aside, this is not something that can happen with a traditional theater space, nor with a traditional theater piece. Despite its vaunted radicalness, \textit{The Congressladies} is very much a piece of traditional theater, possibly the most traditional given its ancient origins. The transformation assumed by Boal would be nearly impossible for this type of play, as the division between performer and audience is extremely well-defined, and much of the humor relies on breaking the fourth wall to a smarter ‘in-the-know’ audience. However, referring back to the hegemonic nature of the school, perhaps the possibility of creating “spect-actors” isn’t outside the realm of possibility, given a slightly modified performance space.

One of the major sources of inspiration for the musical interludes, the Kinsey Sicks, perform in more personal venues in order to bring the audience into their acts. A self-titled “dragapella” performance group, they use popular song parody in order to convey political ideology. Do they create “spect-actors” with their political dramas? I could not say for certain, having only seen recordings of a single show, but I would imagine that a closer, less formal environment than a theater would help facilitate the conversion from spectator to “spect-actor” much better. Theater has a set of social rules that, while fun to break for new forms of theater, are generally known and understood by the general populace. Take the performance out of the theater, and
many of those rules disappear; you get an audience that will heckle, talk, interact… all because the social structure of the theater has been stripped away.

This leads directly to the last point, the mobilization of said “spect-actors” into agitated communities. The term ‘agitated community’ itself is problematic; given the recent spate of racially-motivated protests around the country, which were perpetrated by true agitated communities, not to mention the rather revolutionary origins of agit-prop, it would be a difficult argument to say that anyone coming out of The Congressladies was part of, or in danger of becoming, an agitated group. There are a fair number of activist groups on-campus and off, surely, but the show sparked no movements from them: nothing happened as a result of this show being put on. As an amusing side anecdote, the production of Ramayana: Of Monkeys and Men during the fall quarter produced more outrage from the Indian Student Organization than The Congressladies managed to muster. There are a number of performances that very famously caused riots and civil disorder: The Rite of Spring, Playboy of the Western World, Ubu Roi, Corpus Christie, and Hernani, to name a few. While none of these were probably agit-prop, the results are undeniable; they turned a normally placid audience into a riot, a movement from spectator to agitated community. Of course, there haven’t been any riots caused by theater in quite a while, which in and of itself is an interesting observation: either we, as a culture, have become more jaded, and therefore less prone to being shocked out of our collective comfort zone, or theater is simply not that shocking anymore. However, along with the decrease of spectator
violence in theater, there has been an increase of violence in sports. The psychologist Peter March suggests that:

Recent developments have led to a decline in the opportunities for ‘socially constructive ritual violence’—what he calls ‘aggro’—with the consequence that uncontrolled and destructive violence has increased.\(^{30}\)

While the specific cases of soccer hooliganism may not be indicative of a wider trend, we can simply look at the numerous sporting riots that have occurred in North America in recent years, often with disastrous results: the 2014 San Francisco World Series Riot, the 2012 San Francisco World Series Riot, the 2011 Vancouver Stanley Cup Riot, and the 2004 Boston Red Sox victory, to name a few. The recent race riots in Baltimore and Ferguson have been especially helpful in a way, as they have forced secondary and tertiary dialogue on the media portrayal of riots in North America. In any case, the fact remains that *The Congressladies*, as with so many other political dramas, has utterly failed to provoke any meaningful reaction from the audience.

Looking at this breakdown, it is hard to imagine *The Congressladies* as agit-prop theater; instead, it behaves more like a piece of integration propaganda. George Szanto addressed the problems with this type of propaganda in theater as only capable of presenting half-truths in order to gain control over and manipulate their audience. He says that propaganda is “activated ideology”, specifically the manifestation of the ideology, in which “the audience’s perception of the artwork creates its importance.” Integration propaganda, he states:

...attempts to render its audience and society passive; its goal is for its audience to accept unquestioningly and uncomplainingly the social conundrums of the present and not challenge the authority of those who perpetuate the ongoing and dominant social institutions.\(^{31}\)

I mentioned before that the agit-prop label gave an interesting look at the driving ideology for the show. Certainly the goal was agitation, but a major point was missed, or ignored, while choosing that subtitle: the play cannot agitate a community using the dominant social institution. While it may be fashionable to belittle the conservative portions of the country, ostensibly the ruling power structure, UC Santa Cruz itself is a bastion of progressive values which hosts few conservative voices.

The issue here is a rather simple one, which can be illustrated quite well by the late Molly Ivins:

> Satire is traditionally the weapon of the powerless against the powerful… When satire is aimed at the powerless, it is not only cruel—it's vulgar.\(^{32}\)

This is where we begin to see the important differentiating point between the asserted agit-prop nature of the show and its more likely propagandized nature. One must remember that according to a 2012 City on a Hill article, the “powerless” progressives of this campus have stifled political discussion and forcefully muzzled their competition, driving the republican viewpoint off-campus and into silence.\(^{33}\)

These are not the actions of a put-upon minority; the progressive messages of the performance don't seek to change anyone's mind, but instead fully support the


dominant social institution of Santa Cruz. This is the very definition of integration propaganda, feeding a passively nodding audience its daily dose of political pap. Is unquestioning acceptance of these ideas, without challenging whether they are correct, the best use of our theater?
SECTION FOUR: Personal Analysis, Propaganda, and its Limitations

Now we get to the meat of the matter; after addressing what a dramaturg does and the possible type of political theater I was involved with, I get to address my work in the process itself. From the very beginning of my graduate year, I was heavily involved in research for the production, spending much of my time researching ancient Athens and Aristophanes. Ancient Greek theater is not my focus, so naturally my initial research was almost entirely on Aristophanes and his contemporaries. At this point the script was not yet finished, so my fall quarter directions from director Danny Scheie consisted of a number of simple tasks beyond the goals which I had set for myself. First, I had to find a “suitably boring” (Danny Scheie’s words) modern translation in order to create a side-by-side comparison to the new script, when it appeared. Next, I was to determine approximately how many translations of Ecclesiazusae had been made, how many were new (within the last 20 years) and what the first English translation was. Danny also wanted me to look at a number of politically-motivated musical artists as a source of inspiration for the choral portions of the show; only a few of the original songs are extant, so clearly there was some work to be done there. He was most interested in Tom Orr, The Capitol Steps, and the Kinsey Sicks, one of whom we were able to invite to rehearsal. Tom Orr and The Capitol Steps, in the same vein as The Kinsey Sicks, create political parodies; the former with Dirty Little Showtunes, and the latter with weekly satirical political shows in DC. Parallel with my own research, he wanted to know more about reviews and criticisms of the piece, both in the original and more modern contexts.
Finally, I needed to look into parallels to modern figures for the characters, since we needed new targets for the very period-specific jokes.

A research-heavy approach very similar to my previous shows, focused on fact-gathering and historical information that will inform the actors and the designers once the production and rehearsal dates came closer, was my initial approach. At the beginning of December I received a somewhat finished script, which I promptly began breaking down in order to create a script glossary and script comparison. However, the adapted script was heavy with political facts, references to people I knew nothing about, and numerous modernities which I had not covered in my initial research. Not only did this force me to essentially begin my research over, but the sheer volume of politically charged (and sometimes factually inaccurate) information in the script bloated the glossary enormously, far beyond any I had written before. As my last show had been *Saint Joan*, a three hour Shaw play, which was preceded by *Hamlet*, this came as quite a shock. Still, it was not much of an issue, at least until the rehearsal process started and a number of issues began to crop up. The most troublesome and certainly the longest lasting issue was the number of script changes, several times per week, of which I was rarely informed of before rehearsal. To that end, I was constantly playing catch-up, never knowing what, if any, questions would be asked of me by the director or the actors. My own ability as a dramaturg, of being able to assist those within the production and provide answers immediately when needed, was lessened by the high turnover rate of the scripts. These changes remained completely out of my hands for the entire process; while not a problem per se (it only
truly affected my ability to keep the script comparison up to date), I had thought that
the dramaturg should be involved in any changes, at the very least to keep abreast of
their developments and prepare accordingly. I had also been informed in late
December that Mary-Kay Gamel, the translator and playwright, had her own
dramaturg with whom I would be able to collaborate. This was not to be, as my
communications with her went unanswered and only very rarely did I see her at
rehearsal, far too late in the process to be of any help whatsoever. The script itself
remained largely unfinished until a few weeks before opening, which left a gap in the
glossary that remains unfilled even with the completed script. The choral additions,
created entirely by the actors, were rife with political propaganda, much of which was
either factually misleading or simply wrong. I remembered a portion of the Teachout
article that, despite being a decade old, seems just as true as ever:

The more specific [theater’s] political purpose, the greater the
temptations to dishonesty that are placed in the artist’s path... its effect
as art will dissipate if its claims to truthfulness can be significantly and
successfully challenged. This necessarily places a heavy burden on the
political artist, who must not only be a good artist but also a competent
reporter and researcher. Just as important, though, it may tempt him to
cut his factual coat to fit his persuasive cloth... Yet propagandists are
rarely prepared to tell the whole truth and nothing but. They alter
reality not in order to “make everything more beautiful” but to stack
the deck.  

While I understand the inherent need for a politically slanted piece of art to follow the
prescribed truth of whichever faction it is affiliated with, there was no chance for me
to critique or question anything about it. A dramaturg outside the dominant

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34 Teachout, Terry. "When Theater Becomes Propaganda: The Problem of Political Art." In Character,
progressive hegemony, whose very nature is to be the competent reporter and researcher Teachout calls for, would have been an extremely useful sounding board for trying to determine whether non-progressives would be willing to listen to the message. My role as reporter and researcher also caused me to challenge the plays’ claims of truthfulness. Operating as I was from a point of “moral ambivalence,” much of my research time was spent checking the credibility of the various political facts and statements taken at face value throughout the show. The end results were not encouraging, but one must remember that “political fact” is notoriously difficult to determine. Then there were the other regular requirements of my position, the program notes and lobby display. The notes were quite easy, as they were based directly on the bulk of the research I had done in the Fall regarding Aristophanes and Athens. A simple arrangement of the facts into an easy to read paragraph, something I have become quite good at in recent months, was all it required. The lobby display was quite a bit more difficult; communication with the designers, playwright, and director for snippets of information was very long in coming, nearly running over the deadline. Revisiting the historical information I had gathered and combining it with a meaningful analysis of the modern political period resulted in a rather lengthy poster. While I was quite happy with the overall professional look of the poster, as well as the information contained within, the major critique was that it was too wordy. As for the rehearsal process, I was mostly confined to the keyboard in a vain attempt to keep the glossary and other requirements on schedule. In addition to the constant desk work, I participated in one designer presentation, in which I included a great deal of
relevant information comparing Athens and Washington DC. This was also the one major chance to actively ask for questions from the cast, which I was hoping would foster a dialogue between myself and them. While it created an interesting and useful discussion for that evening, it did not succeed in forging any long term dialogue.

Nevertheless, looking back on these problems offers an excellent opportunity to examine my own process in order to improve it as well as look for possible future solutions. On the matter of the constant script changes, I doubt that there was anything I could have done to improve or streamline the process, nor would there have been an opportunity to create a more even-handed satire. On the matter of the script glossary and comparison, I have been told that I work too hard on those particular matters. While I definitely agree with that assessment, the paper materials I produce seemed to be the only way for me to communicate with otherwise taciturn cast and crew. To improve this in the future would require two things: even stronger efforts on my part to begin a dialogue with everyone involved, and a cast and crew who are interested in listening. This same approach might be helpful for improving my usefulness during rehearsal. Spending time waiting for others to approach with questions is a strategy that seems to work on shows during which actual questions regarding the script are raised. In other words, the dialogue between dramaturg, director, and cast needs to have already been established for that to be an effective strategy of communication. If there are no questions being asked, what can the dramaturg do to foster that dialogue? Is the production itself willing or capable of promoting a deep understanding of the material being presented? Perhaps the most
glaring issue isn't that the dramaturg needs to tailor their process to fit within the expectations of the cast and crew. Dramaturgy, despite being a rather venerable aspect of theater, is just recently coming to the popular fore in America. Dramaturgical work is a waste of both time and resources if none of the individuals involved are willing to incorporate the dramaturg into the process. The cast and crew should be educated on the abilities and usefulness of the dramaturg in order to take full advantage of his unique position, rather than disregarding him entirely. While it may be thought that the dramaturg is, in the end, responsible for teaching those around him, that places a specific burden on him that no other position in theater must carry. As people no longer need to be taught what a director does by the director, it should not be necessary for a dramaturg to teach people what a dramaturg does.

This begs a particular question: if the director has a specific vision, which has to be seen through despite any falsity or anachronism, what purpose does a dramaturg serve? If the purpose of the production is to be the mouthpiece of a particular political viewpoint, then a researcher has little need to be involved. The facts become secondary to the political truth of the message, and a dramaturg dedicated to doing factual research becomes a threat to that message, as Teachout asserted. Though I would wager that I was never a threat to The Congressladies, a distinct lack of interest, or perhaps need, for a dramaturg became more apparent as I worked on the production.

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SECTION FIVE: Conclusion

Political drama is a many-headed beast which, depending on the needs of the production, can have vastly different requirements for a dramaturg. While still something of a mystery to most theater practitioners, the use of dramaturgs is steadily on the rise, and while not strictly regarded as necessary, they are nevertheless becoming highly desirable, especially when dealing with the often touchy subject of politics. *The Congressladies*, while only a single point in the vast spectrum of political drama, has shown the issues, both good and bad, that come from being a dramaturg working with politics. Through the process, and through this document, I have been asking questions regarding my role, and therefore the dramaturg’s role, in politicized theater.

In Section One, I examined the role of the dramaturg in relation to theater as a whole, then narrowing it down to political theater. My research and observations on the subject led to the conclusion that the position has mutable requirements, yet are based around certain necessities:

1. A dramaturg must be able to place the work within a logical socio-political context.

2. A dramaturg must be the link between the production (specifically dealing with the ideas, processes, and research that cannot be conveyed through performance) and the audience/public.

3. A dramaturg should have a wide variety of skills with which to accomplish the numerous and often wildly disparate requirements for each production.

4. A dramaturg must have clear and understandable communication with minimal bias.
5. A productions culture must be willing to engage with the dramaturg.

Whatever role the dramaturg creates for himself in a production, I feel that these four points are essential, especially when dealing with political theater. I mention political theater specifically because it is extremely easy to polarize oneself as a dramaturg, either falling in with the dominant political viewpoint, or arguing vehemently against it. Maintaining a neutral or unbiased viewpoint is essential when working on, promoting, and communicating with politicized theater.

Section Two deals with the politics of Athens in relation to the modern day.

The most important point when dealing with these two disparate periods is realizing that the purpose of the theater has changed dramatically during the intervening centuries. Political drama in ancient Athens filled the role of the 24-hour news cycle, influencing voters and swaying public opinion within the relatively insular city-state. Political drama today no longer has the capability of working within the ideological solidarity of a city-state; the world has grown too large. It must also compete with a huge variety of other types of media: the internet, television, film, newspapers, and the dozens of permutations within each one. The question, then, is whether the political situation during the time of *Ecclesiazusae* is comparable to the political situation during *The Congressladies*. There are parallels, and many of them; if there were not, Aristophanes’ work would have been unworkable in a modern context. However, the veracity of those parallels is debatable. By transforming the old work into something new, many of the nuances, the comedy, and bite of the original have been lost. Yet the original play would almost certainly not translate well into a
modern context without adaptation. The loss, therefore, is necessary in order to make this play tenable today; making something old into something relevant to this time and this place must necessarily sacrifice what made it relevant to the time and place from which it originated.

The questions raised by Section Three are perhaps the most relevant in relation to the performance of *The Congressladies* in a politically hegemonic environment. Purportedly agit-prop, it instead behaves more like integration propaganda, which begs several questions. Why perform hegemonic theater? As stated earlier, there is little point in convincing the willing of the rightness of your viewpoint, so why dedicate an entire performance to politics and political issues with which no progressive on campus would argue? If the attempt is to convince the conservative block, then why make the show such a blatant attack? My thought is that the purpose of the performance was a reinforcement of existing social values rather than an attempt to reach out to any other groups. By that metric, the show was a rousing success, but by any of the other requirements enumerated earlier, it was a failure as a political piece. There is merit in performing theater that helps pacify, rather than agitate, the masses with its political message. For a place like Santa Cruz, it is an affirmation of the rightness of every politicized action that has taken place, a panacea for the politically motivated mind. Whether or not it is the most worthwhile use of theater remains to be seen.

The ultimate question I wish to answer with this thesis is what the role of the dramaturg is within political theater. In the context of UC Santa Cruz and *The
*Congressladies*, I am strongly inclined to think that integration propaganda, namely theater that appeals to and supports the dominant sectarian views of the school, is a worthless endeavor for a dramaturg. The problem is that no questions were ever asked by anyone, no thought given to the material beyond the satirization of popular politics and trying to make it offensive yet funny. In that respect, they succeeded; the performance was extremely funny, mildly offensive, and hit every popular piece of politics to make front-page news in the last decade. But if the purpose was, as the production stated, to create a piece of agit-prop, to push the boundaries and take risks, or to invite discussion among opposing ideological groups, then the performance was an abject failure.

Nevertheless, I remain hopeful; there are numerous well-documented instances in which a dramaturg has been enormously useful in the production of political theater. Political activists within theater often make the best dramaturgs, as their point of view is often heavily contested, if not downright outlawed. A dramaturg should be able to help any production, political or historical, become the best possible production that it can be. The onus for this, however, does not lie solely on the dramaturg himself. As I witnessed during *The Congressladies*, a production that does not wish to make use of their dramaturg may not be capable of reaching their original goals or of maximizing their potential. Holderness states that:

> Social criticism, if expressed within the framework of the traditional poetic truths...can have a weight and an impact derived from something more than the contemporary documentary facility.  

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Within the framework of *Ecclesiazusae* there lies the capability of expressing political truth that resonates with an audience. The dramaturg, in conjunction with the director, cast, and crew, is fundamental in helping express that truth, whatever it may be. As for the question of whether the dramaturg has a place in political theater, one need only look at the increasing desirability of the position. An article from Backstage notes:

"I can't see that a dramaturg can expect to be employed more regularly than any other theatre professional. How many members of Equity are employed at any given time?"…"But the profession is here to stay. The dramaturg has come about because of an urgent need in American theatre, the need to introduce a more expansive use of history and context, just as in our society as a whole there's increasing interest in history and context. Where there's a need there will be growth. There's been massive change for the better over the last five years. We're a very young profession and we're here to stay." 37

My hope is that not only will the dramaturg become a well-understood part of the theatrical family, but that the position will become invaluable in the production of political drama. It seems to me, and to many journalists like Teachout, that modern political theater lacks bite; perhaps a dramaturg working in tandem with the aims of the performance will help put some teeth back into drama.

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Appendix A: Congressladies Actors Packet
Scene 1
Page 1

Nancy: Nancy Pelosi. Democrat. Current House Minority Leader. Born in Maryland, 1940, she graduated from Trinity Washington University with a BA in political science. Most well-known for unilaterally supporting the Obama administration.

Page 3

Coach: A New York based luxury fashion company started in 1941 that originally manufactured leather accessories for men and women. Currently quite well regarded not only for their accessories, especially womens bags, but also for watches, jewelry, and shoes.

Page 4

Praxagora: (First Draft) Πραξαγόρα, attested from the 4th century BC, consists of two significant parts: πραξει- (PH. praxei), ‘to do business’, and -ἄγορα (PH. agora), ‘assembly’. A not uncommon name for the time, its meaning depends greatly on the interpretation of the second part; Kanavou suggests that it’s a synonym of Ἐκκλησία (PH. eklesia), to hold an assembly, from Aristophanes’ earlier play The Knights, thus giving a meaning of “active in the assembly” for Praxagora.38

Hermes: The youngest of the Greek gods, he is the son of Zeus and the Pleiad Maia (of the Pleiades constellation...that’s a Hercules myth). He is the god of transitions and boundaries, moving freely between the worlds of the mortal and divine, as well as a host of other functions as the messenger of the gods.

Athena: The goddess of wisdom, she was born fully formed from the head of her father, Zeus. Portrayed as a companion to heroes and a patron of heroic endeavor, she is also the patron of Athens (though there is some scholarly debate on which name is derived from the other…).

Total gridlock on important issues: Much of the Obama presidency is littered with accounts of Republican and Democrat actions stymying each other in congress. The most flagrant issue to underline their unwillingness to work together was the government shutdown of 2013. It was preceded by Ted Cruz’s filibuster speech and three attempts by the Republican House majority to delay/cease implementation

of Obamacare; all three bills were rejected outright by the Democratic Senate. However, news articles decry the congressional stalemate as far back as 2011...incidentally, the first year during the Obama presidency during which the House and Senate were not politically unified.

**Senate and House divided:** *(First Draft)* The Democratic party held the Senate majority from 2009-2015 (111th: 57D-41R, 112th: 51D-47R, 113th: 54D-45R) but only held the House majority from 2009-2011 (111th: 256D-178R, 112th: 193D-242R, 113th: 201D-234R). The 114th Congress currently has 44 Democrats vs 54 Republicans in the Senate, and 188 Democrats vs 246 Republicans in the House, the second time both Senate and House have been politically unified during the Obama presidency.\(^{41}\)

**Supreme court...:** *(First Draft)* Before 1940, fewer than 2% of all Supreme Court decisions were decided by a 5/4 majority. Since then, the extreme polarization of the two-party system has brought the 5/4 decision into the forefront. The Roberts Court (2005-present) has decided approximately 21.5% of their cases by a 5/4 majority, while the previous Rehnquist Court (1986-2005) decided 20.5% by this method.\(^{42}\)

However, this is a misleading percentage, as the Roberts Court has also shown a higher than average number of unanimous decisions: over 60% in 2013, and over 40% from 2009-2012.\(^{43}\) This also means that the number of odd-number decisions equal or exceed 5-4 decisions in many years.

![Vote Splits on the Supreme Court](image)


\(^{43}\) "Supreme Court Had Highest Percentage of Unanimous Decisions This Session." WTVR. July 1, 2014.

\(^{44}\) Posner, Eric. "Why Does the Supreme Court Decide Most Cases Either 9–0 or 5–4?" Slate. June 1, 2014.
There are simply too many 5-4 cases to fully analyze (98 since 2008), but it is worth noting that these cases are historically the most politically charged. It would be a fruitless partisan debate to try and determine which ones were preposterous or not, as it would, of course, hinge upon one's political ideology.

1% big bucks: The average household income required to break into the top 1% of earners in the nation is approximately $340,000/year. 1 out of 5 Americans will reach the top 2% ($200k-$250k/year), while 1 out of 8 will spend at least one year in the top 1%. 1 out of 100 Americans will reach the top 1% and stay there for a decade or more.46

The 1% earns 19% of all adjusted gross income, but pays 35% of all federal income taxes. Their average tax rate was 23.5%, well above the national average of 14% (compare to the UK average of 40% on income between £32k–£150k/year). The professions that make up this group are generally executives at non-financial companies, financial professionals, doctors, lawyers, and STEM jobs in non-financial companies, and most households are catapulted upward by one-time events.48

It should be noted, in relation to the 1% paying their fair share, the overall tax rates of the various income levels of the US. According to the IRS, the tax breakdown per income bracket is as follows:

Infrastructure: The “American Society of Civil Engineers 2013” report indicates an average D+ rating for American infrastructure, with an estimated $3.6 trillion

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45 "Supreme Court Cases." Oyez - Chicago Kent School of Law.
needed by 2020 to bring it up to par. However, this is akin to asking defense contractors how much we should be spending on the military…

The 2014-2015 “Global Competitiveness Report” ranks the United States as the 12th most extensive and efficient infrastructure in the world (ranked 3rd in overall competitiveness; compared to 5th overall and 14th in infrastructure the previous year), ranking ahead of most European nations.\(^5\) But don’t we spend less than those European nations? No, actually…we spend 3.3\% of our GDP on infrastructure vs 3.1\% of the EU GDP. The OECD “Economic Policy Reforms 2013” report indicates that the EU is overburdened with roads and rail, while the United States has an appropriate amount of infrastructure for its population. Developed nations spend between 2-3.5\% of their GDP on infrastructure, while countries that spend more are in a phase of catch-up growth.\(^5\)

According to the Federal Highway Administration “2013 Status of the Nation's Highways, Bridges, and Transit: Conditions & Performance” report, the number of passengers using transit systems (bus, train, trolley, etc) has experienced consistent growth since 1995. It also indicates that the overall quality of roads and highways in the nation have increased markedly (42.8\% to 50.6\%), while the number of “deficient” bridges has decreased from 23.7\% to 21.4\% since 2000. Overall, the transit infrastructure is seeing steady growth, higher income than expenditure, an overall decrease in fatalities, and a decreasing ‘improvement vs maintenance’ cost.\(^5\)

Just this last month, the Department of Transportation released a 316 page document that paints a decidedly dystopian view of our future by 2045: airports submerged by rising seas, trains filled to bursting, bridges and roads suffering catastrophic failure, and traffic as severe in the middle of nowhere as in Los Angeles.\(^5\) I don’t know that this is a strictly objective report though, as the end result is more government money for USDOT.

**Education:** According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development “Education at a Glance: 2014” report, the United States spends the most amount of money per student among first-world nations (~$15,171, compared to the OECD average of $9,313), approximately 7.3\% of the gross GDP compared to a 6.3\% average among other countries. Teachers wages varied from approximately $49k-$53k (depending on the education level), higher than the OECD average (approximately $38k-$47) in 2012, the most recent report.\(^5\)

The Institute of Educational Sciences “Program for International Student Assessment 2012” report shows that, in spite of the above-average educational spending, the United States performs below average proficiency in math (481 vs 494),

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\(^{50}\) “2013 Report Card for America's Infrastructure." American Society of Civil Engineers. 2014.


about average in sciences (497 vs 501), about average in reading (498 vs 496), and have maintained these approximate positions in the rankings since 2000. However, the graduation rate among high-school students has improved by 8% between 2005-2012 (73% to 81%), so that’s good.56

Civil Rights: “A civil right is an enforceable right or privilege, which if interfered with by another gives rise to an action for injury. Example include freedom of speech, press, and assembly; the right to vote; freedom from involuntary servitude; equality in public spaces. Discrimination occurs when the civil rights of an individual are denied or interfered with because of their membership in a particular group or class.”57

Recently, the US has come under a great deal of scrutiny for civil rights violations, rightly so for some: Ferguson, Guantanamo, New York, so on and so forth. However, the key word in this issue is “enforceable”; for example, can the United States enforce civil rights laws extraterritorially? While the UN seems to think so, local/native populations often do not, leading to conflicting requirements for the “boots on the ground” in the area. Another issue with civil rights is that, while the laws themselves can be quite clear, the execution of those laws is often murky, and sometimes avoided completely through clever legal positioning. On the other side of the coin, sometimes the laws are taken advantage of, by which those whose rights are not being impinged upon can reap a reward through clever legal positioning. Example again, how does one protect the right to freedom of speech of two diametrically opposed groups without alienating either one?

Social Justice: An idea that reaches back to Plato and Socrates, with a long and interesting history. Essentially, the original ideas revolve around creating “a set of institutions which will enable people to lead a fulfilling life and be active contributors to their community.”58 However, we’re hardly talking about the lofty ideals of Thomas Aquinas or John Rawls, but rather the more modern stabs at the subject that have earned the phrase a pejorative meaning. The United Nations defined social justice as “…the fair and compassionate distribution of the fruits of economic growth.”59 While essentially good in theory, the modern movement itself is fraught with infighting, belligerents, and fire-starters among those that actually care and work toward the realization of the philosophy. Unfortunately, the idea itself is fundamentally flawed; without a baseline standard, how can one determine what is just or unjust? Ben O’Neill states that:

“It is merely an assertion of desire, and a declaration of intention to use the language of rights to acquire said desire. In fact, since the program of social justice inevitably involves claims for government provision of goods, paid for through the efforts of others, the term...
actually refers to an intention to use force to acquire one's desires. Not to earn desirable goods by rational thought and action, production and voluntary exchange, but to go in there and forcibly take goods from those who can supply them!"\textsuperscript{60}

**Attacks on contraception...**: Probably most widely reported upon recent event was *Burwell vs Hobby Lobby*, in which the Supreme Court ruled that closely-held for-profit religious corporations were protected by the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (1993). The result was that they are only required by law to offer the contraceptive choices that did not violate their religious beliefs. Their employees lost the benefit of getting IUD’s and emergency contraception, four of the 18 available options covered by PPACA.\textsuperscript{61}

There have also been a number of attempts to defund Planned Parenthood on a state-government level as well as a nationwide level: H.R.3\textsuperscript{62}, H.R.358\textsuperscript{63}, and H.R.217\textsuperscript{64} being the most notable.

January 22, 2015, congress passed H.R.7, which bans the use of any Federal funding for abortions. This includes Federally operated facilities and Federal employees, but does not restrict abortions related to health issues, rape, incest, or preserving the life of the mother. Because of this new law, the responsibility for abortion funding falls squarely on state and personal funding.\textsuperscript{65}

On the other hand, a fair number of Republicans have recently come out in favor of over-the-counter birth control, attempting a “common-sense call for reform that could yield a result everyone can embrace: the end of birth-control politics.”\textsuperscript{66} Ostensibly, this is to neutralize the Democratic demagoguery of the contraceptive issue by taking it out of the political arena.

**Closing of clinics: (First Draft)** Presumably talking about the Texas law closing abortion clinics throughout the state. It limits abortion to before 20 weeks, requires the clinics to meet basic health and safety standards of ambulatory surgery centers, the providers must meet requirements of the FDA for drug distribution, and they must provide names and phone numbers of the closest physician or health care personnel.\textsuperscript{67}

Virginia amended a law that required abortion clinics in which 5 or more first trimester abortions were performed per month to meet the minimum health and safety

\textsuperscript{62} "H.R.3 - No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act, 112th Congress (2011-2012)."
\textsuperscript{63} "Text of the Protect Life Act." GovTrack.us.
\textsuperscript{64} "H.R.217 - Title X Abortion Provider Prohibition Act, 113th Congress (2013-2014)."
\textsuperscript{65} "H.R.7 - No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion and Abortion Insurance Full Disclosure Act of 2014." Congress.gov.
\textsuperscript{67} "Texas Bill H.B. 2." Texas Legislature Online.
This amendment allowed a large number of clinics to stay in operation thanks to the lower requirements. Alabama has just had a similar law (admitting privileges law) ruled unconstitutional due to the possibility of it closing three of the state’s five abortion clinics.

Overall, there has been a wave of state-level laws requiring abortion clinics to meet the minimum health and safety standards of hospitals or ambulatory surgery centers; some have survived, some have not.

Anti-choice advocates: (First Draft) Centered around the ‘pro-life’ movement started in the 1960’s; there’s also a smaller group, ‘constant life ethic’, started in 1983 that opposes any form of euthanasia including abortion. They are allowed to picket abortion clinics because it’s their constitutional right to freedom of speech, supported by the Supreme Court reversal of McCullen v Coakley69, not because people are trying to take away their liberties. Additionally, a two-year study completed in 200070 (building off a similar study conducted in 1994 by the same researchers71), correlated in 2013 via another study72, show that:

“Although significant variation existed among the women we studied, on average, they seemed to find these encounters unpleasant, to be negatively affected by them in the short term, but not to suffer any significant long-term harm as a result of encountering picketers.”

(Cozzarelli & Major)

77 cents for every dollar: This is an idea that has been thrown around for the entirety of the Obama presidency, and it has been false the entire time. Well, not entirely false, as long as you incorrectly describe a solid statistic. The fact is, it’s a simple calculation from the Census Bureau of the ratio of the difference between men’s median full-time earnings and women’s median full-time earnings: 77 cents/dollar. The problem comes with the analysis itself; it makes no differentiation between occupations, job hours, and the gender representation therein. For example, trash collectors are very well paid and almost entirely men, while early-childhood educators are not well paid and are almost entirely women. Other factors, such as women consistently choosing jobs with lower pay but more flexible hours, women

69 “McCullen v. Coakley.” SCOTUSblog.
working fewer hours overall than men, and that women leave work to raise children, significantly skew the results. Then there’s the fact that the top 10 highest-grossing jobs are dominated by men while the top 10 lowest grossing jobs are dominated by women.\textsuperscript{73}

The Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that women that do not get married (that is, work a full-time position at the same hours as men) earn 96 cents/dollar and part-time female employees earn slightly more than men ($241 v $230/week),\textsuperscript{74} while a report prepared in 2009 breaks down the wage gap and concludes that:

> "Statistical analysis...has produced results that collectively account for between 65.1 and 76.4 percent of a raw gender wage gap of 20.4 percent, and thereby leave an adjusted gender wage gap that is between 4.8 and 7.1 percent."\textsuperscript{75}

\textbf{Inequalities in domestic life:} A comparison by Pew Research indicates that the supposed inequalities aren’t so pronounced as one might think:

> "Since 1965, mothers have almost tripled the amount of paid work they do each week, but they still lag fathers who work, on average, 37 hours a week. Meanwhile, fathers have increased their housework and childcare time, but still only do about half of what mothers do."\textsuperscript{76}

The report itself goes on to analyze a great deal of variables, too many to enumerate here, that point toward an overall increase in working hours per week (paid work, childcare, and housework), a trend since 1965 pointing toward male and female parity both at home and at work.\textsuperscript{77} There are still inequalities, but they are decreasing very quickly, perhaps reaching equality sometime in the next ten to fifteen years.

\textsuperscript{74} "Highlights of Women’s Earnings in 2013." BLS Reports. December 1, 2014.
**Barbara:** Barbara Boxer. Democrat. Current California senator. Born in New York, 1940, she graduated from Brooklyn College with a BA in economics. Known for being a proponent of lower corporate taxes and for creating ‘PAC for Change’.

**Susan:** Susan Davis. Democrat. Current member of the House of Representatives for California’s 53rd district. Born in Massachusetts, 1944, she earned a MA from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in social work. She isn’t really known for anything in particular; shes been a pretty low-key politician.
Diane: Dianne Feinstein. Democrat. Current California senator. Born in California, 1933, she graduated from Stanford with a BA in history. Most well known for her extensive examination of the CIA’s post-9/11 torture program.

Zoe: Zoe Lofgren. Democrat. Current member of the House of Representatives for California’s 19th district. Born in California, 1947, she earned a Juris Doctor at Santa Clara University School of Law. Most well known for working toward reforming immigration policy.

Loretta: Loretta Sanchez. Democrat. Current member of the House of Representatives for California’s 46th district. Born in California, 1960, she earned an MBA in economics from American University. Most well known for allegations of a scandal involving her former military escort, current homeland security and defense lobbyist.

Lucille: Lucille Roybal-Allard. Democrat. Current member of the House of Representatives for California’s 40th district. Born in California, 1941, she graduated
from CSU Los Angeles (degree unknown). Most well known for a scholarship, “Paying for College”.

**Founding Fathers: (First Draft)** A broad term used to refer to the individuals who led the revolution against the British Empire, coined during the 1920 Republican National Convention by Warren G. Harding. There are technically over 130 people that were instrumental in founding the country, but according to Richard B. Morris (possibly one of the greatest American Revolution historians) there are seven men of particular importance:

- Benjamin Franklin
- George Washington
- John Adams
- Thomas Jefferson
- John Jay
- James Madison
- Alexander Hamilton

**Founding Mothers: (First Draft)** There actually already are a number of founding mothers. Cokie Roberts takes an in-depth look at some of the famous and not-so-famous women of the Revolutionary period. A short list includes:

- Deborah Franklin
- Abigail Adams
- Peggy Shippen
- Mercy Otis Warren

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Merchant marine: A fleet of civilian-owned merchant vessels operated by the government or private sector. Normally involved in transporting cargo and passengers, during wartime it becomes an auxiliary to the U.S. Navy capable of delivering military personnel and material. They currently possess approximately 465 ships of 1000+ gross tons, which have recently operated in Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and humanitarian assistance after hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Despite being a civilian organization, they have a set of medals and awards that can be given to seamen that serve during conflict.

Most well known for a great number of things, depending on your placement on the political spectrum, not the least of which is being the president.

**Congress has refused..:** Article I, Section 8, of the Constitution enumerates all the given powers of congress:

- To lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts, and excises, pay debts...
- Borrow money on credit...
- Regulate commerce with foreign nations, states, and tribes...
- Rule of naturalization, laws of bankruptcy...
- To coin money...
- Punishment for counterfeiter...
- Establish post offices and post roads...
- Promote progress of science and useful arts...
- Constitute tribunals inferior to the Supreme Court...
- Define and punish piracy...
- Declare war, grant letters of marque...
- Raise and support armies...
- Provide and maintain a navy...
- Rules for the government and regulation of land and naval forces...
- Provide for calling forth the militia...
- Provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining the militia...
- Exercise exclusive legislation...over such district...which may become the seat of government...
- 13th, 14th, 15th amendments (black rights)
- Necessary and Proper Clause (implied powers)

The question at this point is, what part of this list of powers are the women referring to? Most likely it’s pointing to the Implied Powers, the Necessary and Proper Clause:

“The Congress shall have Power To ...make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.”

Essentially, this “...authorizes Congress to enact laws that are "appropriate" and plainly adapted for carrying into execution Congress's enumerated powers; it does not authorize Congress to enact any law that Congress thinks is "reasonable."

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80 1. To make a thing one’s own, properly used in this sense to denote the acquisition of property and a right of exclusive enjoyment in those things which before were without an owner or were publici juris.
2. To prescribe a particular use for particular moneys.
81 The term ‘reasonable’ is a generic and relative one and applies to that which is appropriate for a particular situation.
Where does this leave us in relation to Athenian democracy? There are two sources from which we can draw to make comparisons: Aristotle’s *The Athenian Constitution*[^83] and Hansen’s *The Athenian Assembly in the Age of Demosthenes*.[^84] Like our modern government, there were three main bodies in the Athenian democracy: the assembly (*ecclesia*), the council of 500 (*boule*), and the courts/popular tribunal (*heliaia*). That’s essentially where any similarity starts and stops. The courts and the assembly held the majority of the power, as they often required a minimum of 6,000 participants to function; unfortunately, as Aristophanes suggests and Henderson confirms[^85], the population was easily swayed by political satire and the comic poets. Could we make a comparison between the satirists and modern lobbyists? Perhaps, but we should be more interested in their governmental powers. According to Hansen, the responsibilities of the *ecclesia* were to vote on decrees and treaties, vote on law proposals submitted to the courts (specifically the *nomothetai*), and to elect certain magistrates. This is where the comparison between the modern and ancient congress fails somewhat, as their powers occupy different spheres. Article II, section 2, indicates that:

“The President...shall have Power, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, to make Treaties, provided two thirds of the Senators present concur…”

Magistrates, as we know them in the US, are appointed by the district judges, which are in turn appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate.[^86] Congress is involved completely in making and passing bills/laws, though the bill can be declined by any government branch; this is the only salient point of intersection between Athens and Washington.

**Executive actions:** It turns out that this phrase is a catch-all term with no real meaning behind it. According to the White House itself, “it just means something the executive branch does”.[^87] It’s essentially a non-binding wish list of policies the president wants enacted, used when an issue is controversial or sensitive.[^88]

The media, however, tends to use ‘executive action’ and ‘executive order’ interchangeably; they are not, and the difference is very important. As mentioned above, executive action means essentially nothing, but an executive order “is a

presidential directive with the force of law. It does not need congressional approval."\(^{89}\) They’re also legally binding and published in the Federal Register.

Also sometimes used interchangeably with executive action, but also very different, is ‘executive memorandum’. It has the same powers and effects as an executive order, but is typically not published in the Federal Register unless the president determines the rules have “general applicability and legal effect.”\(^{90}\)

If the president were to try to replace senators with an executive order, impeachment would certainly be the single correct recourse for vastly overstepping his powers [see Replace Key Senators, page 17].

**Recess:** The normal days off for Congress. Sessions are typically held on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, with a long weekend so legislators can visit their constituents. They also get a recess during the entire week of a federal holiday, and the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 stipulates a 30 day recess each August except in times of war.

During recess, the president can kill bills with a pocket veto (something that cannot be overridden by Congress), as well as making recess appointments. These appointments have to be confirmed by the Senate to remain beyond the current Congressional session.\(^{91}\)

**Replace key senators.:** The president has no power over the current members of Congress. During a recess he may fill vacant seats via the Recess Appointments Clause (Article II, Section 2, Clause 3),\(^{92}\) but he cannot use the Appointment Clause (Article II, Section 2, Clause 2) to appoint Senators or members of the House.\(^{93}\) There are only two methods of removing a congressperson from their office:

1. Voters refusing to re-elect them
2. The Expulsion Clause of the Constitution

Impeachment isn’t on the list because members of Congress are not defined as civil officers and are therefore exempt.\(^{94}\) The Expulsion Clause (Article I, Section 5, Clause 2) states:

> “Each House may determine the rules of its proceedings, punish its Members for disorderly behavior, and with the concurrence of two-thirds, expel a Member.”

This is the only reasonable method for quickly removing a member from the House or Senate, and it has been used 20 times in our history: 15 times in the Senate, 14 of

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\(^{89}\) “Executive Order.” C-SPAN Congressional Glossary.


\(^{94}\) “Judges.” Justia Law. Note 765.
which were for treason during the Civil War, and 5 times in the House, three of which were for treason during the Civil War and two for bribery (Ozzie Meyers, D-PA, 1980, and James Traficant, D-OH, 2002).95

Anna: Anna Eshoo. Democrat. Current member of the House of Representatives for California’s 18th district. Born in Connecticut, 1972, she earned an AA from Cañada College. Most well known for her ardent support of Net Neutrality.

John Boehner: Republican. 61st Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, from January 5, 2011. Born in Ohio, 1949, he earned a B.A. in business administration from Xavier University. Most well known for inviting the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, to speak to several joint meetings of congress. Also lampooned for having a bad tan.

Linda: Linda Sanchez. Democrat. Current member of the House of Representatives for California’s 38th district. Born in California, 1969, she earned a BA in Spanish from UC Berkeley and a Juris Doctor from UCLA School of Law. Most well known for being elected to lead the Congressional Hispanic Caucus.

Mitch McConnell: Republican. Current senate majority leader (since January 3, 2015), former senate minority leader. Born in Alabama, 1942, he earned a BA in political science from University of Louisville, then graduated from the University of Kentucky College of Law. Often satirized on The Daily Show and compared to a turtle.

Marco Rubio: Republican. Current US senator of Florida. Born in Florida, 1971, he earned a BS in political science from the University of Florida, then graduated *cum laude* with a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Miami. Most famous for fumbling after a tiny bottle of water during the Republican response to the State of the Union address in 2013.

Steve King: Republican. Current representative of Iowa’s 4th district in the House of Representatives. Born in Iowa, 1949, he left college before graduation and founded King Construction, the Kiron Business Association, and was heavily involved with the Iowa Land Improvement Contractors’ Association. Most famous for purposefully infuriating Democrats on a number of topics.


Julia: Julia Brownley. Democrat. Current member of the House of Representatives for California’s 26th district. Born in South Carolina, 1952, she earned a BS in political science from Mount Vernon College and a MA in business administration from American University. Most well known for sending a political mailer using a picture of a woman in fake military attire wearing a Bundeswehr Luftwaffe insignia.

Rick Scott: Republican. Current governor of Florida. Born in Illinois, 1952, he served in the Navy for 29 months (USS Glover), earned a BA in business administration from University of Missouri-Kansas City, and a law degree from Southern Methodist University. Most well known for “fangate” during the 2014 Florida gubernatorial debate.

Page 7
Jackie: Jackie Speier. Democrat. Current member of the House of Representatives for California’s 14th district. Born in California, 1959, she earned a Juris Doctor from UC Hastings College of Law. Most well known for suggesting that the CIA do some “soul searching” after learning of their post-9/11 interrogation techniques.

20 Female vs 80 Male...: True. There are currently 104 women in Congress and 20 women in the House of Representatives, approximately 20% for both cases.  

82 vs 353 male...: (Second Draft) Not true. As noted above, there are 104 women representatives now.

Doris: Doris Matsui. Democrat. Current member of the House of Representatives for California’s 6th district. Born in Poston Internment Camp, 1944, she earned a BA in psychology from UC Berkeley. Most well known for being the vice-chair of the Congressional Caucus for Women’s Issues and her support of VAWA.

Sue or impeach...: Impeachment is a legislative power that allows for formal charges against a civil officer or government for crimes committed in office. Impeachment proceedings are usually started by a member of the House, or it may be triggered by a non-member via suggestion. The entire process resembles a regular trial, but put through Congress rather than a court of law, requiring a ⅔ majority to pass.

So far there have been no attempts to impeach Obama. There have been a number of suggestions of impeachment put forth by:

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In December 2013, the House Judiciary committee held a hearing\(^{97}\) which has been connected to talk of impeachment, but this has been steadfastly denied by the entire committee.

In 2014, House Republicans officially gave the go-ahead to sue the president, the first time in history this has happened. Boehner says that he’s only going to target the one-year delay on Obamacare, yet Democrats have been portraying it as a precursor to impeachment despite adamant denial by Boehner.\(^{98}\)

**Maxine:** Maxine Waters. Democrat. Current member of the House of Representatives for California’s 43rd district. Born in Missouri, 1938, she earned a sociology degree from CSU Los Angeles. Most well known for using her position with the U.S. Treasury to secure bailout funds for OneUnited Bank, which her husband works for, as well as a “poverty pimp” poster campaign in Los Angeles.

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\(^{98}\) Kapur, Sahil. ”House Votes To Sue President For The First Time In History.” TPM. July 30, 2014.
Judy: Judy Chu. Democrat. Current member of the House of Representatives for California’s 27th district. Born in California, 1953, she earned a BA in mathematics from UCLA and a Ph.D. in psychology from California School of Professional Psychology. Most well known for a number of ethics violations, for which no serious punishment has been forthcoming.

Page 8

Mimi: Mimi Walters. Republican. Current member of the House of Representatives for California’s 45th district. Born in California, 1962, she earned a BA in political science from UCLA. Most well known for an ethics investigation after helping a firm her husband owned collect money from the state prison system.

Second-class Citizens: (First Draft) A second class citizen is a person who is systematically discriminated against despite nominal status as citizens. They have limited legal rights, civil rights, and socio-economic opportunities; they frequently deal with disenfranchisement, limits on civil or military service, as well as restrictions on religion, education, and freedom of movement.

The official Oxford English Dictionary definition is “a person assigned to an inferior class of citizenship; one deprived of normal civic and legal rights”.

While the term has no official usage, there are a number of places that have been described historically as having a second-class citizenry, most notably apartheid South Africa and the segregationist South. Currently, Latvian non-citizens (former citizens of the USSR) are considered second-class citizens, as well as women in most Islamic states.

There are currently no laws that suppress the rights of women to even a fraction of the degree of the historical or current precedents. It has, like so many other things, become a piece of political rhetoric without meaning.

Corporations are people: Corporate personhood has existed since 1819 from Trustees of Dartmouth College v Woodward99, as a matter of interpretation in the 14th Amendment since 1868, and from Santa Clara County v Southern Pacific Railroad in 1886.100

The gist is that, because a corporation is made of people, those people should not be deprived of their constitutional rights when they act collectively. As such, the corporation is subject to to both civil and criminal law as a ‘person’, which means that individual employees are not liable for the corporations actions.

Then there’s the issue of political spending by corporations. This was confirmed as a First Amendment right in Citizens United v Federal Election Commission (2010)101 and Buckley v Valeo (1976)102. However, neither of those decisions rely on the idea of “corporate personhood”, so it becomes a separate issue entirely.

Money is speech: Presumably talking about the issue with lobbying in Congress. It is, to put it mildly, endemic to modern American politics, with lobby groups pumping millions of dollars into the political system.

Sunlight Foundation tracks these expenses extensively and has done numerous analytical studies that show that investing in lobbying is an excellent idea. Between 2007 and 2012, a span of time that covers years before and after Citizens United v Federal Election Commission, the study showed that the 200 most politically active corporations invested $5.8 billion in federal lobbying and campaign contributions, around 26% of the total lobbyist spending. These same companies, around 1% of all

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lobby clients, support approximately 27% of Congress with contributions. However, they get something in return: around $4.4 trillion in Federal business and support.103

The Foundation also keeps track of the amount of spending from year-to-year by group. Industries, in all years covered, have contributed an approximately equal amount of money to Republicans and Democrats, with Democratic contributions exceeding Republican contributions in size but not quantity.104 Businesses & other organizations have also contributed an approximately equal amount to Republicans and Democrats, with contributions to ‘Other’ political parties exceeding both other groups in size but not quantity.105 Political groups contributed slightly more to Republican interests, with Republican donations exceeding others in size and quantity.106 Lobbying firms contributed significantly more to Democratic interests, with amounts exceeding others in size and quantity.107

Sell elections to the highest bidder: There is indeed some research to support this idea. Demonocracy has collated statistics from a number of different sources that point toward the largest donation recipient winning the election.108 Apparently it has gotten so bad that the IRS is arranging new rules for political donations, especially when dealing with ‘dark money’ and social welfare nonprofit organizations.109

Genital mutilation: A procedure that intentionally alters or causes injury to the female genitals for a non-medical reason, which carries a laundry list of health problems as a result. According to the WHO, more than 125 million women and girls in Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East have been cut, with more than 3 million at risk annually.110

In the United States, there are an estimated 228,000 women at risk due to religious and cultural norms, mostly among immigrant families. It has been illegal federally since 1996, and in 2013 it became federally illegal to knowingly transport women out of the country to be subjected to FGM.111

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104 “Industries.” Influence Explorer.
105 “Businesses & Other Organizations.” Influence Explorer.
106 “Political Groups.” Influence Explorer.
Disastrous wars Bush and Cheney...: The War on Terrorism, which consisted of two wars during the Bush administration: the Iraq War and the Afghanistan War. For both wars, over 2.5 million soldiers have deployed from all branches of the U.S. military; 6,748 were killed in action (less than 0.03%) and 52,176 were wounded in action (less than 0.02%). Compare to the Vietnam War (536,000 deployed, 58,303 KIA; ~1% casualty rate), WWII (16.1 million deployed, 292,000 KIA; ~2% casualty rate), and WWI (~4 million deployed, 116,708 KIA; ~3% casualty rate).

As far as objectives are concerned, the war in Afghanistan has suffered from a general lack of cohesion and agreement on purpose, which has contributed to its longevity. It should be noted that Obama has increased troop deployment in Afghanistan twice in 2009 and once in 2010, leading to the majority of war deaths occurring after he took office and escalated the conflict. The Iraq War, on the other hand, had clearly-stated goals.

1. End the Regime of Saddam Hussein
2. Identify, isolate, and eliminate Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction
3. To search for, to capture, and to drive out terrorists from that country
4. To collect such intelligence as we can relate to terrorist networks
5. To collect such intelligence as we can relate to the global network of illicit weapons of mass destruction
6. To end sanctions and to immediately deliver humanitarian support to the displaced and to many needy Iraqi citizens
7. To secure Iraq’s oil fields and resources, which belong to the Iraqi people
8. To help the Iraqi people create conditions for a transition to a representative self-government

The war officially ended in 2011 as a success, but the country has descended into chaos since then. In 2014, Obama announced a return of U.S. troops to Iraq in order to halt ISIS, as well as escalating military presence in the other parts of the War on Terror since taking office.

Top 0.01% and the 99%: There is no possible way to reasonably compare the 99% and the top 0.01%. The difference between an entry-level 1% and the top 0.01% is

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astronomically further than the difference between the 99% and the 1%. Consider this statistic for a moment: as noted earlier, the cutoff for the 1% is $340,000/year, but Warren Buffett, a member of the top 0.01%, earned $37 million per day in 2013. Which means that the lower-1% earns approximately two hundred-thousandths of a percent of the upper-1% per year. To put it in perspective, that would be the same as comparing our entry-level 1-percenter to a person that earns $7 a year; an impossible comparison.

**Buying elections:** Refer back to ‘sell elections to the highest bidder’ **[page 19]**. This one specifically refers to super-PAC’s, political action committees officially called “independent expenditure-only committees”. Created after *SpeechNow.org v. Federal Election Commission*, they have no legal limit on donation sizes, allowing them to dump astronomical amounts of money into politics, as long as they don’t go directly to candidates.

**Stifling competition:** Addressing the issue of our semi-free market, in which corporate lobby money can be used to shut down business competition.

Normally, companies compete on four major principles: price, product quality, promotion, and place (market access). Now, companies are being forced to compete via public policy; the issue has led to some major corporations paying more in lobbying fees than in taxes. This approach is known as “rent-seeking”, which has created an artificial barrier to entry into the business world through subsidies (to large corporations), tariffs (in this case, a fixed price for goods), and regulations (to hamper competitive growth in their sector). The solution, such as it can be imagined, is to elect officials that cannot be bought and to buy from decentralized markets.

There are more than a few examples of this in action. The telecom industry is currently lobbying to prevent the spread of business rivals, specifically direct service, public-private partnerships, and open access approaches. UPS and FedEx have been fighting for years over the issue of forcing unionization of air shipping workers. Walmart and Costco have lobbied to raise minimum wage standards; they can absorb the cost due to their large overhead, but smaller businesses cannot, essentially eliminating competing businesses.

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118 "Super PACs." Opensecrets.
Cheating on their taxes: Corporate tax law is extremely complicated, and much too long to go into great detail. However, there are a number of points that can be made which may elucidate the situation somewhat.

Cheating on your taxes is called tax fraud, punishable with prison time and/or fines. Tax avoidance, on the other hand, is an entirely legal (for now) method of reducing your tax rate via deferment, tax deductibles, tax breaks, and other legal loopholes. Corporations employ teams of lawyers and tax consultants in order to take advantage of these loopholes, to the tune of “one lawyer per $200-$300 million in corporate revenue”.

Some corporations are able to drop their federal tax rate, which is the highest in the world at 40%, close to or less than zero. The CTJ report, and the tax laws it ostensibly supports, have been called into question by the corporations themselves in addition to several domestic and foreign organizations such as Forbes, Reuters, the Cato Institute, American Accounting Association, and Leibniz Information Centre for Economics. It should be noted that, among economic analysts, the U.S. is considered one of the least attractive countries for businesses to start.

Obama is currently trying to begin talks over a corporate tax overhaul by proposing a flat 14% tax on overseas cash, a major source of avoiding domestic taxes, and linking it to highways and transit systems [if you’ll recall the earlier point regarding transit, there is little to suggest we need more money put into that system]. U.S. corporations that have a majority of overseas business, and therefore no reason to pay domestic taxes in addition to foreign taxes, will probably resist this move.

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126 "Corporate Tax Rates Table." KPMG. January 1, 2015.
Banks caused the 2008 meltdown: This is a criminal oversimplification of an extremely complicated event with no single root cause or perpetrator. Unfortunately, there is not a good or easy way to address the issue, so a simplified list must do. At this point, there are dozens of books, journals, and reports on the causes and effects of the crisis; I recommend reading them to gain a better perspective on the situation.\footnote{Crotty, James. "Structural Causes of the Global Financial Crisis: A Critical Assessment of the "New Financial Architecture"." Econstor - University of Massachusetts, Department of Economics. 2008.}\footnote{Weisberg, Jacob. "The 15 Most Persuasive Explanations for the Economic Crisis." Slate. January 1, 2010.}\footnote{Thomas, Bill. "What Caused the Financial Crisis?" Wall Street Journal. January 27, 2011.}\footnote{"What Caused the Financial Crisis & Recession?" Positive Money. 2013.}\footnote{Denning, Steve. "Lest We Forget: Why We Had A Financial Crisis." Forbes. November 22, 2011.}\footnote{"Crash Course." The Economist. September 7, 2013.}\footnote{Miller, Joe, and Brooks Jackson. "Who Caused the Economic Crisis?" FactCheck.org. October 1, 2008.}\footnote{According to FactCheck.org, these are some of the institutions that had a hand in causing the economic crash (quoted).}\footnote{135 136 137 138 139 140}

- The Federal Reserve, which slashed interest rates after the dot-com bubble burst, making credit cheap.
- Home buyers, who took advantage of easy credit to bid up the prices of homes excessively.
- Congress, which continues to support a mortgage tax deduction that gives consumers a tax incentive to buy more expensive houses.
- Real estate agents, most of whom work for the sellers rather than the buyers and who earned higher commissions from selling more expensive homes.
- The Clinton administration, which pushed for less stringent credit and downpayment requirements for working- and middle-class families.
- Mortgage brokers, who offered less-credit-worthy home buyers subprime, adjustable rate loans with low initial payments, but exploding interest rates.
- Former Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan, who in 2004, near the peak of the housing bubble, encouraged Americans to take out adjustable rate mortgages.
- Wall Street firms, who paid too little attention to the quality of the risky loans that they bundled into Mortgage Backed Securities (MBS), and issued bonds using those securities as collateral.
- The Bush administration, which failed to provide needed government oversight of the increasingly dicey mortgage-backed securities market.
• An obscure accounting rule called mark-to-market, which can have the paradoxical result of making assets be worth less on paper than they are in reality during times of panic.
• Collective delusion, or a belief on the part of all parties that home prices would keep rising forever, no matter how high or how fast they had already gone up.
**Tea Party:** The Tea Party Movement was started on or before the 234th anniversary of the Boston Tea Party (December 16, 2007),\(^{142}\) gaining traction following Ron Paul’s political defeat in 2008.\(^ {143}\) The movement itself, despite attracting a wide variety of people with differing ideologies, has a number of core principles that unite them.\(^ {144}\)

- A devotion to **subsidiarity**, which holds that power should rest as close to ordinary people as possible.\(^ {145}\)
- A more welcoming and easily accessible **immigration policy.**\(^ {146}\)
- The abandonment of “Blue Model” politics in favor of a more nimble and streamlined modern political system.\(^ {147}\)
- Shifting transportation over to **independent enterprises**, which would manage them based on consumer demand rather than political imperative.\(^ {148}\)
- **Social welfare** would be based on local needs rather than national needs.

The end goal is to have states offer different things based on what the local populace wants; in that way, it’s easier for people to relocate to somewhere in which the politics and policies align with their own views.

There isn’t any **statistically relevant** data to support any suggestions on whether people agree or disagree with the Tea Party ideologies. Pew Research found

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that the movement had fallen out of favor, but only sampled 1,504 adults (an astronomically small six millionths of a percent of the total U.S. population),\(^{149}\) while Gallup found that 25% of their surveyed population supported Tea Party ideology.\(^{150}\) Their sample size was 6,098 (again, an astronomically small two hundred-thousandths of a percent of the population). However, this numerically small political movement is having extremely large measurable results on national policy, which is causing candidates on both ends of the political spectrum to be extremely wary.

**Deficit:** The deficit for this fiscal year will be $468 billion, the lowest since 2007 but close to the 50-year average of 2.7% of our GDP. The deficit by 2025 is projected to reach 4% of our GDP. However, this is offset by the national debt, which has reached a historic high of 74% of our GDP, the highest it has been since 1950.\(^{151}\)

**MSNBC: (First Draft)** A basic cable channel that provides news and political opinion launched in 1996. An abbreviation of MicroSoft and National Broadcasting Company. It has caught a lot of flak recently for its left-leaning political stance, especially during the 2008\(^{152}\) \(^{153}\) and 2012\(^{154}\) presidential campaigns, in which its nighttime news broadcasts are considered “partisan”.\(^{155}\) There have also been the addition of several left-of-center voices to the organization, which has boosted loyalty among Democratic viewers.\(^{156}\) They have been biased in relation to their own financial well-being, staying silent on the Comcast/Time-Warner merger \([\text{MSNBC is owned by Comcast}]\) and attempts by Peacock Productions to unionize.\(^{157}\) It is frequently referred to as the Fox News of the Democrats.

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\(^{156}\)”Is Olbermann the Victim of His Own Success?” Salon. January 21, 2011.
**Fox News: (First Draft)** A basic cable channel that provides news, political opinions, and other programming, launched in 1996. It has long been accused of biased reporting, as well as a general conservative bias, especially during the 2008 and 2012 presidential campaigns. Democratic Party members have boycotted or quit events held by Fox, something which is unique among news organizations. The Obama administration has been criticized for several years over its apparent campaign to marginalize/discredit Fox News, which has led to some tensions; White House staff have also been told to avoid Fox as a “political opponent”. In short, it is the Conservative version of MSNBC, but with a very clear opponent in the current administration.

**Rachel Maddow: (Draft 1.5)** American tv host, political commentator, and author. Born in California, 1973, she earned a degree in public policy from Stanford and a Doctor of Philosophy from Oxford. She is a self-described liberal, “…which means that I’m in almost total agreement with the Eisenhower-era Republican party platform”. While she has been praised for delivering fair political commentary

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without getting hysterical,\textsuperscript{165} she has also been accused of tearing into her opponents so violently, especially Republicans, that she sounds “like another smug cable partisan” and a “lockstep party member”.\textsuperscript{166} New Republic also called her one of DC’s most overrated thinkers:

“Maddow is a textbook example of the intellectual limitations of a perfectly settled perspective...She seems utterly incapable of doubt or complication. Her show is a great tribute to Fox, because it copies the Fox style exactly.”\textsuperscript{167}

\textbf{Glenn Beck:} American television and radio host, political commentator, author, and network producer. Born in Washington, 1964, he began working in radio straight out of high school. A longtime alcoholic and substance abuser, he got clean in 1994. He is self-described as conservative with libertarian leanings,\textsuperscript{168} supports gay marriage,\textsuperscript{169} and despite opposing illegal immigration, has used his Mercury One organization to support immigrant relief efforts.\textsuperscript{170} He is also in opposition to “progressivism”, an analogue to communism in which “…individual liberties and personal property mean nothing if they conflict with the plans and goals of the State.”\textsuperscript{171}

\textsuperscript{165} Guthrie, Marisa. "Rachel Maddow: How This Wonky-Tonk Woman Won TV." The Hollywood Reporter. October 5, 2011
\textsuperscript{166} Kurtz, Howard. "Rachel Maddow Seizes Her Moment." Newsweek. February 27, 2011.
\textsuperscript{170} Ritz, Erica. "Glenn Beck Says This May Be the Hardest Thing He’s Ever Had to Ask of His Audience." The Blaze. June 23, 2014.
Rush Limbaugh: American radio host, writer, and political commentator. Born in Missouri, 1951, he started working in radio during high school and, after two failed semesters in college, began working in radio professionally. Self described as conservative, he’s critical of other broadcasters for claiming to be objective. He has been noted making controversial race-related statements while employed as an “insult-radio” DJ, and has asserted that African-Americans have been “left behind” socially because of ACORN and various related groups and policies.

He supports capital punishment, is critical of drug laws (specifically of non-minorities receiving leniencies), is critical of feminism and climate science, and has had multiple accusations of inaccuracy leveled at him. Additionally, he hosts annual charities for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society and Marine Corps-Law Enforcement Foundation.


Paul Ryan: Republican. Current member of the House of Representatives for Wisconsin’s 1st district. Born in Wisconsin, 1970, he earned two BA’s from Miami University in economics and political science. Most well known for being in favor of Ayn Rand’s political philosophy and hosting a 100th birthday party for her.

Ayn Rand: Russian-American novelist, philosopher, playwright, and screenwriter. Born 1905, died 1982. Most well known for her novels, Atlas Shrugged (1957) and The Fountainhead (1943), as well as for developing a philosophical system called Objectivism. Because of her experiences during the October Revolution and subsequent time living in the Soviet Union, she was very active among anti-communist groups in Hollywood, eventually testifying as a “friendly witness” in the House Un-American Activities Committee; she later described the process, and her involvement in it, as futile. One of her plays, Night of January 16th, was a critical and popular success, playing on Broadway for seven months in 1935.

What most people take issue with is her theory of Objectivism, which has been developed and expanded upon after her death by Leonard Peikoff (her intellectual heir) and a cadre of scholars focused on applying Objectivism to more specific topics. Her ideas have been consistently dismissed by academic philosophers, partly due to Rand’s intense criticism of contemporary intellectuals, partly due to the assertion that her work is more of an ideological movement than a well-grounded
philosophy. Nevertheless, Rand is starting to impact modern philosophers and political thinkers heavily, especially as her works are commonly found among college classrooms, with more and more intellectuals calling for serious study of the philosophy.

Rand Paul: Republican. Born in Pennsylvania, 1963, he graduated from Duke University with a M.D. as an ophthalmologist. He first gained political notoriety during the 2008 campaign after speaking on his fathers behalf. Most well known for suggesting that vaccines should be voluntary.

Page 13

Drones: Officially called Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, they are used extensively to fill a wide variety of combat and non-combat roles both in and out of militaries. They are used by over 70 countries currently and have been in use since the early 1970’s, in which they played quiet but pivotal roles for aerial surveillance in high-risk airspace.

In a civilian capacity, the FAA strictly regulates the use of UAVs in certain areas, specifically over high-density population centers. There are several thousand commercial drones working in the U.S. in such jobs as 3-D mapping, wildlife protection, farming, and search & rescue. While the number of permits for this work are fairly limited, the FAA is looking to expand Unmanned Aircraft Systems Section 333 to make it easier to use drones commercially in specific low-density areas.

But, civilian drones make boring plays. So, military UAVs...as of 2012, the U.S. military (all branches) operated nearly 7,500 drones, approximately 41% of the total aircraft used by the military. Each one is but a small part of something called an Unmanned Aerial System, which consists of one or more of each of the following: drone, control system, specialized control link, and support equipment. The UAS for

176 “Section 333.” Federal Aviation Administration. February 6, 2015.
the RQ-7 Shadow, a tactical UAV, consists of twelve parts, only four of which are the drones themselves.\textsuperscript{177} So let's look at some of the standard drones in military usage....

The RQ-11 Raven, one of the most common UAS with over 1,300 in use. It is a close-recon aircraft designed to provide live-feed video to ground troops within 10 miles or so.

The RQ-7 Shadow, a tactical UAS with over 900,000 hours of total flight time. Capable of both recon and limited combat, the United States currently flies over 500 of them, with five other countries operating 65 of them. It has a range of 68 miles.

The MQ-9 Reaper, big cousin of the Predator and part of a combined system. This UAV was specifically designed as a hunter-killer with surveillance capabilities. The combined Predator and Reaper systems reached 2 million hours of total flight time in 2013. As of 2011, the US Air Force was training more pilots to fly Reapers than any

other single weapon system. Their current build allows them to fly continuously for two days with a range of 1,151 miles.

The RQ-4 Global Hawk, a dedicated broad overview and systematic reconnaissance UAS. It is designed to survey large geographical areas in all weather conditions in real-time, capable of monitoring an area roughly the size of Illinois. We use 32 of the 42 Global Hawks worldwide with over 125,000 total flight hours.

The U.S. has launched approximately 1,568 drone attacks between 2008 and 2012 in six countries, with a death toll of 3,500 ± 500, with the U.K. being the only other country to use UAVs in combat. The exact number of combat UAV is unknown, but more than 70% of currently operational systems are non-combat.178

Dick Cheney: Republican. Former vice-president of the Bush administration. Born in Nebraska, 9141, he earned a BA and an MA in political science from University of Wyoming. Most well known for the 2006 hunting incident.

Legislative Body: A legal definition: persons who make or amend or repeal laws. In this instance a reference to Congress.

**Robin Hood:** A heroic outlaw from English folklore who, as we all know, robbed from the rich and gave to the poor. The myth itself is first referenced in the late 14th century from *Piers Plowman*, but is attested in ballads, stories, and festivals from 1262 through the 16th century. He is known for being a yeoman (a commoner with artisanship), Marianism (an “un-Christian” adoration or worship of Mary), anti-clericalism, and partisanship with the lower classes. However, it is very important to note that Robin was not a representative of the peasantry and should not be viewed as a figure of populist revolt. He was popular even among the gentry, and was commonly seen as a representation of societal standards with a populist bent: he’s generous, pious, courteous, and opposed to stingy, worldly, and churlish foes. To think of him strictly as a foe of the aristocracy is poor understanding of his origins and symbolism.

**Hera: (First Draft)** The goddess of women and marriage, she is the queen of the Greek pantheon. She’s well known for her jealous and vengeful nature, which some scholars suggest is a holdover from her pre-Hellenistic origin as a ‘great goddess’.

**Scene 2**

Page 15

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Squint: Originally Βλέπυρος (PH. Vlepyros), from the 5th century BC and derived from βλέπω (PH. vlepo), ‘seeing’. Praxagoras husband, his name reflects his character as a watcher, in direct opposition to Praxagora, who is a do-er.\textsuperscript{182}

Stinge: Originally Χρέμης (PH. Kre-mees), it is similar to Chremylos in Wealth, which has a semantic root as “grumbler”. It is thought that names with this root had become popular for comic old men that complained a lot.\textsuperscript{183}

Rancho Cucamonga: A suburban city east of Los Angeles, it was a popular point of directional reference for Bugs Bunny.


Wendy Davis: Democrat. Former member of the Texas senate. Born in Rhode Island, 1963, she graduated from Tarrant County College with a BA in english, then graduated *cum laude* from Harvard Law. Most well known for her 11 hour filibuster speech to block Senate Bill 5.

Sarah Palin: Republican. Former governor of Alaska. Born in Idaho, 1964, she earned a BA in communications (emphasis journalism) from University of Idaho. Most well known for her support of aerial wolf hunting.

Michele Bachmann: Republican. Current member of the House of Representatives for Minnesota. Born in Iowa, 1956, she earned a Juris Doctorate from Oral Roberts...
University, followed by a Master of Laws in tax law from William & Mary. Most well as the “queen of the Tea Party.”

**The Second Sex:** Simone de Beauvoir’s 1949 book on the treatment of women through history. It is widely regarded as a cornerstone of modern feminist theory and the origin point of second-wave feminism. However, it has also been criticized as exaggerating Simone’s own issues as the issues of all women, as well as many different accusations of “unconscious misogyny”.

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**De Beauvoir: (First Draft)** Simone de Beauvoir, a French writer, existentialist philosopher, activist, and feminist & social theorist. Born in 1908, died 1986. Most well known for her feminist text *The Second Sex*, her books *She Came to Stay* and *The Mandarins*, and her relationship with Jean-Paul Sartre. She has had a very strong influence on feminist existentialism and theory, focusing on the Hegelian theory of the ‘Other’ which has become a foundational idea of modern feminism.

During her life she had her teaching license permanently revoked in France for seducing/abducting minors and passing them on to Sartre.

**Immigration:** The initiative spoken of in the script is an executive order in which Obama plans to give amnesty to nearly 5 million illegal immigrants, offering a permanent reprieve on deportation and an expansion on the DACA program.

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Additionally, the plan is to facilitate the acquisition of visas, change detention procedures, and strengthen border security.\(^{185}\)

However, the action has been widely criticised from multiple directions as ‘government by executive fiat’, especially in light of documents unveiled by the Freedom of Information Act, which show that 5.5 million extra work permits were issued between 2009-2014 by executive order above and beyond the limits set by Congress.\(^{186}\) The opposition is so widespread that 26 states have prepared a lawsuit accusing Obama of overstepping his constitutional authority in this matter.\(^{187}\) There have also been numerous accusations of the legality of this move, as Obama has previously acknowledged his inability to unilaterally pass laws, yet did so anyway.\(^{188}\)

Give me your tired...: A fragment from Emma Lazarus’ (1849-1887) sonnet *The New Colossus*, written in 1883. It was originally submitted as a donation to an auction to help purchase the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty; it was read at the opening of the exhibit, then forgotten, playing no part in the opening in 1886. In 1901, Georgina Schuyler began working toward memorializing Lazarus and her poem, succeeding in 1903 when the sonnet was mounted on the inner wall of the pedestal. While the statue itself had been originally conceived as a monument to international republicanism, the poem irreversibly changed it into a symbol of hope for immigrants.

*Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,*  
*With conquering limbs astride from land to land;*  
*Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand*  
*A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame*  
*Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name*

Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.

"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

American Dream: A set of ideals, deeply root ed in the American consciousness, that promote the idea that anyone can advance themselves through hard work. It has gone through several iterations since its inception.

During the early days of the country, it dealt primarily with the mystique of the frontier, while during the 1800’s dealt with the ability of people to have the political and societal freedoms to advance themselves without worrying about a system taking advantage of them. During the California Gold Rush, the dream changed dramatically into one focused on “...instant wealth, won in a twinkling by audacity and good luck.”

The modern idea of the American Dream originated in the 1930’s from James Truslow Adams’ book Epic of America:

“The American dream...has not been a dream of merely material plenty, though that has doubtlessly counted heavily. It has been much more than that. It has been a dream of being able to grow to fullest development as man and woman, unhampered by the barriers which had slowly been erected in the older civilizations, unrepressed by social orders which had developed for the benefit of classes rather than for the simple human being of any and every class.”

Minimum wage: Currently $7.25/hour, Obama urged Congress to raise the national minimum wage to $10.10, then shortly afterward signed an executive order to do just that for workers on new federal service contracts. While the proponents of the increase cite an increase in spending, better bottom line, and an overall boost in economic growth, economists cite numerous problems with this rose worldview. Paul Krugman refutes the idea of a minimum wage increase in his review of The Living Wage by stating:

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“Surely the benefits of low turnover and high morale in your work force come not from paying a high wage, but from paying a high wage 'compared with other companies'—and that is precisely what mandating an increase in the minimum wage for all companies cannot accomplish.”

Other refutation comes in an analysis by Hanson and Hawley that shows that, by applying the formula for wage increase: job loss, simply raising the minimum wage to $10.10/hour will cause the loss of between 550,000 and 1.5 million jobs nationally. The Cato Institute suggests that imposing a federal minimum wage is counterproductive to economic growth, citing Hanson and Hawley, and that a state-set minimum wage is a much better and more flexible choice. Joseph Sabia of UCSD asserts that raising the minimum wage:

“...fails to reduce net poverty because of its adverse effects on employment and poor ability to target workers living in households below the poverty threshold. Worse, focusing on minimum wage increases to alleviate poverty diverts attention from public policies that promote employment and incentivize human capital investment that are far more effective ways to raise incomes and alleviate poverty.”

Another refutation comes from an analysis by Clemens and Wither of the actual wage increase from $5.15 to $7.25 (2007-2009). They found that the wage increase caused a decrease in upward mobility, a negative growth in employment and income, and that it caused a 14% decline in the employment-to-population ratio over that time. These appeared after the Congressional Budget Office issued a similar report on job loss related to minimum wage increase.

Special joint session: A session of congress held after adjournment sine die, the end of a legislative year. Directly referencing Article II, Section 3, of the Constitution:

“[The President] may, on extraordinary Occasions, convene both Houses, or either of them, and in Case of Disagreement between them,
with Respect to the Time of Adjournment, he may adjourn them to such Time as he shall think proper...”

This power has been used only 27 times to convene both parts of Congress, normally for war crises, economic emergencies, and critical legislation. With the ratification of the 20th Amendment (1933), and the practice of Congress to remain in session all year, there is no reason to call special sessions anymore. The last occurrence was in 1948, called by Harry Truman.

**Women are more honest**: This topic seems to be mostly one of opinion. There are a great number of non-scientific studies, which use statistically irrelevant sampling sizes, that point toward women being more trustworthy. The best of these, a “moral DNA test” developed by Roger Steare, sampled 60,000 participants from 200 countries to determine that women over 30 were the most honest, and women overall were seen as more honest than men.

Some poll groups also have done this sort of survey, the best of which was done by Pew Research, which sampled 2,250 adults in the continental U.S. They found that women were overwhelmingly preferred to men in honesty, creativity, perceived intelligence, and compassion.

Among more scientific circles, there have been a handful of peer-reviewed studies on the subject. The Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization collated data from various sources from 1980 to 1999 and came to the conclusion that women have higher standards of ethical behavior and that “higher rates of female participation in government are associated with lower levels of corruption.” The Journal of Business Ethics published findings that showed that college-aged men and women were “ethically equivalent”, but with significantly different moral values.

### Scene 3

**Manifest Destiny**: An attitude prevalent in 19th century America that it was our destiny to expand from coast to coast, involving not only territory, but liberty and economic opportunity. It is currently used unofficially in reference to the belief that America must promote and defend democracy throughout the world.

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Page 24

**Inequality of income:** A trend since the 1990’s that has shifted sharply upward in disparity since the beginning of the Obama administration (in which 93% of all income growth had been captured by the top 1%, versus 63% during the Bush administration), a fact most Republican pundits have been quick to notice. It has also become a major talking point among Republicans recently, which has been met with derision by Democrats.

**Illegal foreclosure:** Without a little more context, it’s impossible to determine what segment of the housing or business market this might be referring to. In relation to housing, the collapse of the housing market in 2007 caused hundreds of thousands of people who could not afford their homes to fall into foreclosure; much of the work regarding aforementioned illegal foreclosure relies upon unsubstantiated accusations (perpetuated by Salon, Huffington Post, NPR, and other similar news sources) and the work of foreclosure defense lawyers (whose job relies on people being foreclosed illegally).

**Racial discrimination:** Yes, it’s still a problem. No, it’s not as bad as it was ten years ago, and it’s certainly not getting worse. The 2000 Hate Crime Statistics Report, involving 11,690 agencies, indicated that there were 4,337 incidents of race-related crime, of which 2,884 were anti-black, followed by 875 anti-white. The 2013 Report, involving 15,016 agencies, indicated that there were 2,871 incidents of race-related crime, of which 1,856 were anti-black, followed by 653 anti-white.

This shows a clear reduction in hate crimes even with an increase in involved police agencies; an overall decrease of 33.8%; a 35.64% reduction in anti-black crime; a 25.37% reduction in anti-white crime.

**Tax evasion..:** Addressed previously with ‘Cheating on their Taxes’ [page 30].

**Police brutality:** One of the issues catapulted into public focus thanks to extremely poor handling by law enforcement and media. According to Journalist’s Resource, people consistently give police low marks for accountability, which shows a distinct lack of trust. It goes on to say that statistical analysis cannot definitively draw a link between race and an increased use of force; instead, it reports that police are more likely to use higher levels of force when encountering suspects in high-crime areas. The 2010 National Institute of Justice report indicates that “non-white suspects were less likely to be injured than white suspects … where suspect race was available as a

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variable for analysis.” JR also indicates that mass media has consistently distorted the view of police violence, framing them as systemic issues rather than individual issues. 

[I highly recommend reading the sources in this analysis for a more objective and accurate view of the current issue]

Because we all love solid numbers, let's get some of those. In 2010, there were 4,861 reports of police misconduct with 6,826 alleged victims. Of those, 1,575 were excessive force complaints with 127 fatalities. Compare this to the FBI statistics for law enforcement, in which 53,597 officers were assaulted, resulting in 128 fatalities.

**Petty theft:** Theft in which the property stolen totals less than $500. According to NASP, approximately 73% of petty theft is not premeditated and 97% of thieves are “non-professionals” who steal due to social and personal pressure. The act itself causes a “rush” which makes it difficult to stop stealing; 57% of adults say that it’s extremely difficult to stop stealing.

**Nobody going hungry:** Hunger is primarily caused by poverty, unsurprisingly. 14.5% of households (17.6 million, approximately 1:7) were “food insecure” in 2012, while an additional 5.7% (7 million) had “very low food security”.

**Violence against women:** According to the ‘Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women’ (1993)... 

“Article 1

For the purposes of this Declaration, the term "violence against women" means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.

Article 2

Violence against women shall be understood to encompass, but not be limited to, the following:

Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and

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211 "Shoplifting Statistics." NASP.
other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation;
Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution;
Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs.”

In 2000, there were 2,710,340 recorded instances of violence against women in the U.S., a rate of 23.2 victimizations per thousand. The total breaks down as follows:

- 1,850,500 simple assaults : 15.8/thousand
  - 425,430 by intimate partners
- 376,540 aggravated assaults : 3.2/“
  - 47,970 “
- 237,130 robberies : 2.0/“
  - 38,000 “
- 246,180 sexual assaults : 2.1/“
  - 45,100 “

In 2010, there were 1,854,980 recorded instances of violence against women, a rate of 14.2 victimizations per thousand. The total number breaks down as follows:

- 1,204,620 simple assaults : 9.2/thousand
  - 270,510 by intimate partners
- 304,720 aggravated assaults : 2.3/“
  - 71,640 “
- 176,270 robberies : 1.4/“
  - 36,540 “
- 169,370 sexual assaults : 1.3/“
  - 29,010 “

The number of instances of violence against women is clearly decreasing, some faster than others. The total number of violence against women decreased by 31.56%; simple assault decreased by 34.9%; aggravated assault decreased by 19.07%; robberies decreased by 25.67%; sexual assault decreased by 31.2%.

**Discrimination against gay people:** Referring back to the Hate Crime Statistics Report (which has its own issues with accuracy), 2000 indicated 1,299 incidents of sexually-related crime, with 896 anti-gay, and 179 anti-lesbian, and 182 anti-

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homosexual. The 2013 report indicated 1,233 incidents of sexually related crime, with 750 anti-gay, 160 anti-lesbian, and 277 anti-homosexual.

This shows a general maintenance of the percentages despite the addition of more participating police agencies. It shows an overall decrease of 5.08%; anti-gay decrease of 16.29%; anti-lesbian decrease of 10.61%; anti-homosexual increase of 52.2%.

Page 25

Rich people paying lower taxes..: Right off the top, this is completely false. If we were to look at state and local taxes only, then it would be partially true, depending on the state and city. ITEP published a report that indicates that states with low income taxes have high sales and excise taxes to compensate, which hit lower income families disproportionately [which says something about the spending habits of the various income brackets]. On average, the bottom 20% paid 10.9% in state taxes, while the top 1% paid 5.4%.

This is a skewed survey, as it does not take federal tax into account. The Tax Policy Center paints a very different picture. According to their research, the bottom quintile pay 3.4% in federal taxes, while the top 1% pay 30.4%. Taking both research documents into account, we get this spread of tax rates:

- Lowest 20% : 3.4 + 10.9 = 14.3% effective tax rate
- Second 20% : 7.3 + 9.9 = 17.2%
- Middle 20% : 14.4 + 9.4 = 23.8%
- Fourth 20% : 18.8 + 8.7 = 27.5%
- Top 20% : 25.9 + 6.7 = 32.6%
- Top 1% : 30.4 + 5.4 = 35.8%

After taking the average state tax rate in addition to the average federal tax rate, there is an unsurprising result that the wealthy pay more than the poor overall, with some variations on a state-to-state basis.

1 percenters buying yachts..: Is it illegal for people to spend their money the way they see fit? Is anyone obligated to help anyone else? No, and no. That’s why we have social welfare programs, so people who feel morally obligated to help others can do so. It’s why we have taxes to support federal programs. It’s why we have charities, so those with money can choose to do something “socially acceptable” with it. To condemn someone for choosing to live their life the best way they can just because someone else is worse off is the height of hypocrisy.

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Rent-controlled apartments: Rent control refers to a system of laws or ordinances that set price controls on the renting of residential housing, functioning as a price ceiling. The practice is generally considered harmful, but having rent control means that rent increases are controlled and tenants have eviction protection. However, in the context of the script we’re most interested in reasons for eviction.

While tenants are protected from unlawful eviction, there are ‘just cause’ eviction clauses which vary slightly from city to city. San Francisco has 16, D.C. has 10, which include:

- Nonpayment of Rent
- Violation of Lease Obligations
- Illegal Act
- Landlord or Owner’s Personal Use
- Sale of the Apartment
- Unsafe Renovations
- Demolitions
- Substantial Rehabilitation
- Discontinued House Use
- Conversion to a Cooperative or Condominium

Other than these, landlords have no legal recourse to evict a tenant. The gentrification of San Francisco, implied in the script with “techies”, is an issue unique to California due to the Ellis Act (in which a landlord is allowed to evict his tenants in order to go out of business) and not to DC.

Gated communities: A form of residential community that is contained within a strictly controlled perimeter, sometimes with shared amenities. Most gated communities in the U.S. are unincorporated and privately developed, making it difficult to estimate the number of residents, but most guesses range from 4-8 million. These kinds of communities are most popular in California, but most other metropolitan areas have a decent number. Washington DC doesn’t have as many as other major cities, but there are certainly enough to be attractive, and most have 100+ year histories. However, some anthropologists have argued that, because they’re a type of enclave, they have a net negative effect on the social capital of the surrounding area.

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221 The 16 “Just Causes” For Eviction Under Rent Control. San Francisco Tenants Union.
223 "GATED COMMUNITY HOMES IN WASHINGTON DC METRO AREA." DC Sales.
Private planes: These are pretty much exactly what they sound like, though why private planes are targeted as sources of pollution rather than “public” planes is odd. By definition, ‘private aviation’ excludes flying for hire, meaning that no commercial endeavor can be completed with a private plane. ‘General aviation’ covers private flights that are commercial in nature (crop-dusting, skywriting), as well as ‘private aviation’.

More likely, this ties into a series of recent fights between Obama and the private jet industry, in which the president wants to close tax loopholes for private jet owners. In his words, “I think it’s only fair to ask an oil company or a corporate jet owner that’s doing so well to give up that tax break. I don’t think that’s real radical.”

This, of course, has sparked widespread opposition among jet owners, labor unions, and manufacturers, especially since it has recently come to light that the Export-Import Bank of the United States has subsidized over $1 billion in private jet sales to overseas customers, specifically ICBC Financial Leasing and Minsheng Financial Leasing, of China.

Secret Swiss bank accounts: Well, not anymore. As we all know from spy and crime dramas, the Swiss bank account was the perfect foolproof way to hide money, and the banks there have done a fantastic job since 1934. That was the year they passed the ‘Federal Acts on Banks and Savings Banks’, which made it a criminal offense to reveal the name of an account holder.

However, they have recently been brought to task in the wake of the UBS Tax Evasion Scandal in 2009, which has since caused the U.S. to bring charges against the banking groups in order to reveal the names of American citizens who have accounts. The charges of tax evasion have essentially ended the reign of the Swiss bank as a haven for those hoping to hide their money, but in their wake there are several new contenders. Singapore, Hong Kong, Uruguay, and the Cayman Islands are considered the new tax havens, with privacy nearly equal to the old Swiss system.

Corporations which claim: Referring back to ‘Cheating on their Taxes’ [page 22], there are a number of methods for circumventing the federal tax system. Some

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economists support the idea of lower or no corporate taxes, as there is a correlation between higher taxes and lower wages, in which 1% increased corporate tax lead to a 0.8% reduction in workers wages. Corporate taxes have also been found to be “...the most harmful for [economic] growth”. At any rate, the argument for corporate taxation is a purely academic one at this point; it would take a small miracle to overhaul our tax system.

Page 26

**State beverage:** California doesn’t officially have a state beverage, even though wine is a very important and highly regarded agricultural product.

Page 27

**Ryan Gosling:** (Born 1980) Canadian actor, famous for a number of high profile roles in recent years, such as *Drive* and *Gangster Squad*. Generally considered pretty damn attractive.

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236 "Official State Beverages." NetState.
Henry Kissinger: (Born 1923) Former Secretary of State under Nixon and Ford, he pioneered the détente policy with the Soviet Union as well as the 1972 summit with Mao Zedong. He was instrumental in negotiating the ceasefire during the Vietnam War and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for it, though it was also the first time members left in protest at the award. Extremely active in American foreign policy during his tenure, there have been some recent efforts to hold him responsible for “crimes against humanity” [Merely the latest in a string of such attacks]. 237

Savile Row: (Second Draft) A famous street in London known for its bespoke tailoring for men. Originally inhabited by military personnel, tailors began congregating around 1800 and are still in residence with 44 tailors currently. An average suit from Savile Row begins at £3000 and often exceeds £10,000

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Armani: An Italian fashion house founded by Giorgio Armani in 1975, with a wide variety of haute couture, ready-to-wear, accessories, cosmetics, and more. There are currently ten brands associated with the Armani name, ranging from runway fashions to jeans to hotels. An average ready-to-wear suit costs between $1000-2000, with tailored suits starting around $3000.


Citizenship: The road to citizenship for immigrants is a fairly short process called “naturalization”. One must have been a permanent resident with a green card for five or more years; be able to read, write, and speak English, and have an understanding of U.S. history and civics; submit the N-400 Application for Naturalization.  

Twenty-five years of hard labor, on the other hand, is the maximum sentence one could receive after being sentenced to the gulags, the Soviet system of prisoner heavy-labor camps... 239

Nora’s: Opened in 1979 in the Dupont Circle neighborhood. It represents the vision of Nora Pouillon as a proponent of sustainable lifestyle. In 1999 it was certified as the nation’s first organic restaurant, requiring that at least 95% of its ingredients must be produced by organic farmers, growers, and suppliers. Their main dinner courses run between $30-40, with small plates starting at $15.


The Four Seasons: Historic restaurant opened in 1959 on 52nd street, Manhattan. Credited with introducing seasonally-changing menus, it became a popular haunt for the rich and famous and is known for creating the power lunch. Their dinner courses run between $50-75, with appetizers starting at $20.

The French Laundry: Opened in 1978 in Yountville, Napa Valley. Specializing in French cuisine with American influences, it serves two different nine-course tasting menus which don’t use the same ingredient twice. Winner of multiple awards and accolades, both domestically and abroad. The meal course costs $295.

Ristorante Avanti: Opened in 1987, it’s an Italian-American fusion restaurant in Santa Cruz focusing on organic and local foods. Their dinner courses run between $15-20.
Bill Clinton: Democrat. Former 42nd president. Born in Arkansas, 1946, he earned a BS in foreign service from Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service and a Juris Doctor from Yale Law. Most well known for the Monica Lewinsky scandal and subsequent impeachment.

Hillary: Hillary Clinton. Democrat. Current Secretary of State. Born in Illinois, 1947, she earned a BA in political science from Wellesley College and a Juris Doctor from Yale Law. Most well known for always being on her cell phone.
Scene 4

**IBM Selectric:** An extremely successful and popular line of electric typewriters introduced in 1961. It introduced a number of revolutionary features to the typewriter market which marked the beginning of desktop publishing: multiple typefaces, correcting tape, interchangeable typeballs, and a variety of formatting features we take for granted today. It was also capable of connecting to a computer as the typing terminal.

**Chromecast:** A digital media player developed by Google in 2013. Capable of streaming content on any display via wi-fi, it’s the most popular streaming device in the U.S. according to NPD Group.

**Scrooge:** An unnamed citizen in the original script. Most likely a mouthpiece for the common man as perceived by Aristophanes.

**Socialism:** The social and economic doctrine characterised by public control of property and natural resources, where individuals do not live or work in isolation. There have been controversial by W.D. Ross and A.E. Taylor claims that Socialist

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240 Selectric I
241 Selectric II
242 Selectric III
ideas existed in the writings of Plato and Aristotle. The modern ideas of Socialism started after the French Revolution with Babeuf, Morelly, and Fourier; in England, thinkers such as Paine and Spence helped advance ideas of a meritocratic or technocratic society based on individual talent. This general idea changed over the course of the 19th century into the modern Socialist movements that exploded into a variety of revolutions during and following The Great War. During the rest of the 20th century Socialism gained ground among third-world countries and in parts of Europe, and was applied as a theory to many cultural and social movements. Today it’s often used in relation to social movements and when referencing the remnant countries of the Soviet Bloc.

**Communism:** The socio-economic doctrine that purported to replace private property and profit-based economy with public ownership and communal control of the means of production and natural resources of the society.

Communism is a form of Socialism, but focused on adherence to the revolutionary socialism of Karl Marx. He predicted that the adoption following the overthrow of capitalism would come in two phases: the first, a transitional system in which the working class controlled the government but still paid according to the capitalist system; the second, in which society would no longer have divisions and production/distribution would be based upon the idea of “from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.”

A popular form of government in the 20th century which was opposed vehemently by the United States following the conclusion of World War II

**Soviet Union:** 1922-1991. The Union of Soviet Socialists Republic was formed during October Revolution in 1917 and was united in 1922. That same year, Stalin was named the General Secretary of the Communist Party, and by 1927 had risen to totalitarianism. After the war, the USSR and the U.S. became embroiled in the Cold War, which led to the eventual dissolution of the Soviet Bloc and end of the Soviet

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Union in 1991. The specific events which took place during the Soviet Era, such as military involvements, anti-Americanism, and the Gulag Archipelago, are a little beyond the scope of this glossary.

**Capitalists:** A proponent or practitioner of Capitalism, the system in which trade, industry, and the means of production are privately owned and run for-profit. It is the dominant global system, with a mixed economy as the dominant form.  

![Image of a political meeting](image1.jpg)

**China:** 1949-present. The Peoples Republic of China was formed after the Chinese Civil War with Mao Zedong as chairman. After his death in 1976, Deng Xiaoping took over and began major reforms, adopting its modern constitution in 1982 and moving toward a mixed market economy. Within the last few years, China has begun numerous reforms under Xi Jinping, most notably with the one-child policy.

![Image of military vehicles](image2.jpg)

**North Korea:** 1948-present. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea was formed during the Korean War with Kim Il-sung as the leader. During his life he created a cult of personality around himself, which has persisted strongly since his death in 1994. Kim Jong-il took over the country until his death in 2011, at which point Kim Jong-un took over. We’ve had a rocky relationship with them in the last few years after their military actions against South Korean vessels and territories, as well as their development and threat-of-use of nuclear ICBMs.

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Nevada rancher: Cliven Bundy. Commonly known as the Bundy standoff, the event with the federal agents in 2014 was the culmination of a 20 year land dispute over grazing rights. While they have never been codified, ranchers have typically applied the ‘rule of capture’ to grazing land, a holdover from the early 1800’s which has since transformed into ‘public domain grazing’. Bundy’s case played out from 1998 to 2012 in United States v Bundy, with BLM agents rounding up cattle between 2012 and 2014, which culminated at the standoff as armed ranchers convinced the federal agents to release some of the impounded cattle. Reactions after the fact mostly condemned the BLM for overreaching their authority, but there were enough mixed opinions regarding Bundy and his actions that no uniform consensus was reached. Following some racist commentary shortly after the standoff, many of his supporters withdrew, but the topic of western land management remains a hot issue among certain segments of the political community.

Michael Brown...Ferguson: In reference to the ongoing civil unrest following the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, in August 2014. The incident was followed by more than three months of rioting and looting in parallel to peaceful protests; the disparity between the consistent destruction, theft, and peaceful protests has left many uninvolved people with confusion regarding the end results of these actions. As there is no overriding control body, every issue related to this incident must be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. As for who was right or wrong, I will not address that matter; the incident has been legally closed, even if people refuse to let it go.

Donald Trump: Republican. Chairman and president of The Trump Organization. Born in New York, 1946, he earned a BS in economics from University of Pennsylvania. While he has had an active hand in politics, including a role in the release of Obama’s long-form birth certificate, he has no aims on political office. Most well known for being filthy rich and as a popular media personality.

Warren Buffett: Probably Democrat. Chairman and CEO of Berkshire Hathaway. Born in Nebraska, 1930, he earned a BS in business administration from University of Nebraska-Lincoln as well as a MS in economics from Columbia Business School. He has backed and endorse Obama on multiple occasions and was the financial advisor to Arnold Schwarzenegger during his 2003 campaign. Most well known for being the fourth wealthiest individual on the planet.
**Gordon Gekko:** A fictional character from the movie *Wall Street*, he has become associated with unrestrained greed. More recently, the strategies he used as a financier in the film have become popular written material for businessmen looking to put an edge on their tactics.

**Page 33**

**Cabernet:** Specifically Cabernet Sauvignon, created from a red grape that originated from a cross between the Cabernet franc and Sauvignon blanc varieties in the 17th century. It is capable of producing a wide variety of flavors and aromas, ranging from tobacco and cedar to vanilla and plum. It is currently the most popular red wine and the most important grape in Bordeaux.\(^\text{249}\)

\(^{249}\) “Guide to Cabernet Sauvignon Wine.” Total Wine.
**Chardonnay:** Created from a white grape that originated from the Gouais blanc variety brought to France by the Romans. It is a dry wine that produces many fruit flavors, ranging from crisp and fresh to smooth and complex. It has become the most popular white wine over the last 30 years, with Sonoma and Burgundy producing the best varieties.250

**Foie gras:** A French delicacy made from the fattened liver of a goose or Moulard duck which has been fed using a method called Gavage, a type of force-feeding. When a duck stores weight for the winter, it is primarily stored in the liver rather than in deposits under the skin; giving them rich feed increases that to the point where the foie can be harvested. However, unlike what PETA might tell you, the lives of the ducks in the three U.S. farms are rather idyllic and as close to free-range as one can get in an antibiotics-free farm. And of course, the entire duck is butchered and sold, resulting in very little waste251

Foie gras can be served cold (as a terrine or pâté) or hot (roasted, seared, or grilled). The flavor is described as rich and buttery, with an umami quality reminiscent of the “perfect bit of crispy fat on the edge of a grilled steak”.252

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**Potato chips:** Thin cut and fried potatoes. Thought to have originated in Saratoga Springs, New York, in 1853 when George Crum was trying to satisfy a customer unhappy with his fried potatoes.

While extremely popular around the world, they’ve been linked to a number of health concerns, notably the amount of sodium and the frying fat. Most manufacturers have moved away from lard to more healthy alternatives, and some manufacturers have put research into “designer salt” to reduce sodium intake.253 However, a study in the UK showed that a single-serving bag of chips had half as much salt as a single serving of breakfast cereal.254

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**A female judge:** Unless the president issued a whole other set of executive orders overstepping his bounds as a member of the executive branch, there’s no way that every judge and every jury would consist of all women. Currently, one-third of all judges are women,255 which gives anyone a fairly reasonable chance to be tried by a female judge, but to have a jury consist entirely of women would be a gross violation of the *voir dire*256 jury selection system we use.

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**Larry Summers:** Democrat. Former director of the National Economic Council. Born in Connecticut, 1954, he earned a BS in economics from MIT and a Ph.D. in economics from Harvard. Most well known from *The Social Network* and *Inside Job*, but also as an award-winning economist.

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256 “...to determine if any juror has a personal interest in the case or a prejudice or bias that may wrongly influence his or her role as a juror.”
Tim Geithner: Independent. Current Secretary of the Treasury. Born in New York, 1961, he earned a BA in Asian studies from Dartmouth College, as well as an MA in international economics and East Asian studies from Johns Hopkins University. Most well known for his bank bailout plan in 2008.

Ben Bernanke: Republican. Current Chairman of the Federal Reserve. Born in Georgia, 1953, he earned a BA and an MA *summa cum laude* in economics from Harvard, then earned a Ph.D. in economics from MIT. Most well known for his involvement in the Merrill Lynch merger and the AIG bailout.

Scene 5

Page 37
Nancy Reagan: Republican. Former First Lady of the Reagan administration. Born in New York, 1921, she had a good career in film from 1949 to 1962. Most well known, in the post-Reagan years, as a big political proponent of stem cell research.
Barbara: Barbara Bush. Republican. Former First Lady of the Bush Sr. Administration. Born in New York, 1925, she became involved in political interests while her husband was building his oil business and campaigning for offices. Most well known, in the Post-Bush years, as the possible daughter of Aleister Crowley.
Appendix B: Congressladies First Draft
CONGRESSLADIES
an adaptation of Aristophanes’ EKKLESIAZOUSAI
by Mary-Kay Gamel

Praxagora, a female activist
Chorus of her female followers: Ariane, Bernice, Crepa, Delia, Elda, Georgia, Hermione, Senilia
Squint, Praxagora’s husband
Stinge, a citizen
Television Reporter
Scrooge, a citizen

Setting: A hall in Washington, D.C.

Scene 1. Stage and house dark. Praxi enters down aisle stage left, carrying an iPhone which she uses to light her way. She is wearing men’s clothing.

Praxi: Thank Hermes for my iPhone! Useful in so many ways—I could never do without you. Send a tweet to my friends coming to join me that I’m almost there—done! And just now you lit my way out of our hotel room without my husband suspecting a thing—just as he doesn’t when I take a few bucks out of his wallet. Or when you tell my lover I’m on my way. Or even when Studly and I are having sex at his place and there you are on the nightstand looking on. Or—never mind.

Where’s the hall where we’re going to have our meeting—come on, phone, give me the directions! Oh, this way?—ok! She goes onto the stage, which is barely lit.

What? Nobody here? Where are they? I’ve come all the way from California and I’m on time. yells Dammit!

House and stage lights instantly full; Praxi becomes very focused and professional.

Praxi: Oh, good evening/afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to a very special political event. My name is Praxagora, Praxi for short. Praxagora means “accomplished speaker”—Yeah, I know, sounds weird, but soon you’ll see how I’ve earned that name.

I’ve called this meeting here, in the national’s capital, to put into action a really important plan. Thanks for coming! But before we proceed, I need to ask you to take a pledge of silence. What I’m going to reveal is ground-breaking, absolutely revolutionary, and for that reason it has to remain secret! Don’t worry—no violence, no crime, just political action that will have incredible impact. You’ll soon see why confidentiality is crucial to our project.
Will you all please repeat after me: “I pledge/ not to reveal/the plans being discussed here/this ___ day of ___ 2015/so help me Athena!” Thank you. And now to business!

We all know what a farce the United States government has become—Democrats and Republicans at each others’ throats, unable to agree on anything, the Senate and House divided, the Supreme Court making preposterous rulings by 5/4 majorities, and average citizens’ wishes trampled by the 1 per cent’s big bucks. Infrastructure, education, civil rights and social justice are ignored while the rich get richer and the poor get poorer.

All Americans have a stake in this country, and all of us are affected by this dreadful situation. But women have special reasons to get involved. A war on women is being waged by the crazies; look at the attacks on contraception, the closing of clinics, anti-choice activists allowed to harass women contemplating abortion! Gender discrimination starts early—in the cradle! Parents, teachers and peers all treat males and females differently. Women doing the same job as males earn 77 cents for every dollar males earn. And then there are the inequalities in domestic life—women are expected to bear and raise children, run the household, and also work full-time, with very little help from their husbands, and of course no pay!

But we are not crazy feminists trying to put women in charge to dominate males. No, we’re aiming for a more equal and just society for all Americans—male and female, rich and poor, young and old, all races and religions! We’re doing what the Founding Fathers were trying to do, only this time some Founding Mothers are involved!

My pals and I have figured out a way to get beyond this mess and move the country forward. Now let me introduce my allies in this amazing enterprise. Ladies? She looks at the wings, but no one appears; louder Ladies? Women start coming onstage, wearing or carrying various articles of male clothing, wigs, beards, etc.

Ariane: Hurry up, girls! Praxi’s started already.

Praxi (sarcastically): Oh, don’t rush, girls! There’s only a whole audience waiting.

Bernice: So sorry, Praxi--it’s all my husband’s fault. He’s in the merchant marine, and when he gets back from a trip he wants to row me all night. I’m exhausted!

Ariane. Remember our deal?—the last one to arrive has to buy a round for everybody!
Praxi (to #3 arriving, who is wearing men's shoes): No wonder you're slow!

Delia: I have to practice wearing these, don't I?

Hermione. And my husband ate two plates of Cajun beans and rice and had to keep getting up to shit.

Praxi: All right, all right, you're finally here. Have you done everything we agreed on?

Bernice: I have! My armpits are shaggier than a cocker spaniel!

Delia: And I've been exercising daily to build up my biceps!

Praxi: What about your costumes? They all show her the items of male clothing they've brought. And you've cut your hair, and gotten mustaches and beards to hide your delicate feminine features? They demonstrate.

Praxi: All right, now it's time to tell our audience what's up. Friends, our goal is nothing less than to save the United States! To do that I knew I had to go straight to the top, and I did. President Obama couldn't have been more gracious—he brought me into the Oval Office, he heard me out, and he agreed our idea could work. As you know, since Congress has refused to fulfill its constitutional role of governing, the President has started using executive actions to get things done. Congress is currently in recess, but about to reconvene. So the President is going to use his power to replace key senators and representatives. With these—gentlemen!

Ariane: What politician am I replacing?

Praxi: John Boehner!

Ariane: Whoa! Do I have to paint my face orange?

Georgia: How about me?


Delia: Too bad we can't replace some of those rightwing governors too! Goodbye Chris Christie! Scott Walker! Rick Scott!
Praxi’s cell phone rings; she answers. “Oh yes, Mr. President, everything is going fabulously. The new Senators and Representatives are here, getting ready to report for work. . . . You’re going to hold a press conference to announce your decision? Thank you for your support, sir, and we’ll keep you posted of all developments.”

Hermione interrupts: Praxi, I’m in, but I don’t understand why we have to be in drag. There are women in Congress!

Praxi: Yes, of course there are! Indeed, more than at any time in history—but still only 20 female vs. 80 male Senators, and 82 vs. 353 male Representatives in the House. As men, working together and engaging male allies, you’ll be able to accomplish things women can’t.

Now of course, as soon as these appointments are announced there’ll be a firestorm of criticism and no doubt yet another attempt to impeach the President. And everyone will try to figure out who you are and what you stand for, but there won’t be any information available. Meanwhile you’ll be carrying out our plan. I’ve already contacted female senators and congresswomen and they’re enthusiastic and ready to help. Nancy, Dianne, and Barbara can’t wait to meet you!

Georgia: Praxi, you know I trust you. But this is really scary. How do we know it can work?

Praxi: Because the American people want justice! Let’s ask this audience! Ladies and gentlemen, do you want to continue business as usual here in Washington, or shall we try to shake things up and inject some new ideas? What do you say?

Roar of approval, provoked of course. All right! So, ladies, get into your costumes and let’s get to work.

Delia: One question, Praxi. Can I do my knitting while listening to those boring speeches?

Praxi: Knitting? Of course not! Men don’t knit!

Bernice: Oh, I know some who do!

Praxi: You mustn’t do anything to draw attention to yourselves until it’s time to act! Except, of course, by speaking up.

Ariane: How are we supposed to know how to give public speeches?
Praxi: We’ve all gotten a lot of practice, haven’t we, convincing our husbands and boyfriends to buy us things, and not to be suspicious when we stay out late at night, or when strange charges appear on the credit card? Because we’re second-class citizens, we have to work for everything we get, and that’s why we’re good at winning arguments. earnestly And the stakes couldn’t be higher—remember that we’re trying to save the United States! If we can’t get this country on the right track there’s no hope at all. beat All right, who’d like to try giving a speech? You can address this whole audience!

Georgia comes forward: I’ll go! looks around But where’s my drink?

Praxi: Drink? What drink?

Georgia: Don’t they drink in Congress?

Praxi: During legislative sessions? Of course not! Do you think those are ladies’ luncheons?

Georgia: Well, look at the crazy policies they support! Corporations are people? Money is speech? Sell elections to the highest bidder? They had to be drunk when they came up with that bullshit!

Praxi: Dismissed! Who’s next?

Hermione: Me!

Praxi: All right, but be sure to speak like a man, and convince your listeners.

Hermione: Greetings, fellow legislators. I wish that someone else, a more accomplished speaker than I, had come forward, but as things stand, insofar as I am able, I will speak. So, in my opinion, ladies—

Praxi: STOP!!! “Ladies?”! Is that how you speak to Congress?

Hermione: Oops! I was looking at this real poofy guy out there and spaced!

Praxi: Shut up and sit down! All right, colleagues, I guess I have to give a speech and show you how to do it—gods help me!

Ariane: What a smart man the speaker is!

Praxi addresses the audience as well as the women onstage: You got it right that time! Now, citizens, we need to understand that we’re all affected by the mess our
government is in. How about those disastrous wars Bush and Cheney got us into, killing more than 5000 of our young people? Were the results worth the sacrifice? Now we’ve got a good President, but also a bunch of Repugnicans who constantly thwart him. We all know about the increasing inequality between the top .01 per cent and the 99 percent, but what are we doing about it? We all know that corporations are buying elections, stifling competition, cheating on their taxes, but what are we doing about it? Banks caused the 2008 meltdown, but have they been punished? No, they’re bigger then ever! You can’t depend on any male politician to maintain his campaign promises, if someone offers him big bucks. We’ve got to get involved and make change happen!

Delia: Tell us—what should we do?

Praxi: My answer is—put women in charge! babble of amazement and uncertainty I know—it’s a BIG change. But who runs the households all over this country?

Women: Women do!

Praxi: And they don’t just run our households, they run them well! They seek the well-being of every member of the household, and balance resources and needs to keep the household going strong. They’re REAL conservatives, not like those Tea Party wackos. They know how to do their job and they don’t get distracted by newfangled ideas. They cook and clean and raise the children, just like they always have. They nag their husbands, just like they always have. They like good wine and a good fuck, just like they always have. They keep their lovers secret, just like they always have. They always look out for the general good. We can count on them not to pull any fast ones!

Women: Yes! Right on! You said it! Good—man! Keep it up!

Praxi: So I say, let’s not keep on blabbing, let’s not demand a detailed plan, let’s ask the women to govern. If we’re worried about getting involved in another useless, endless war, are women going to send their sons and daughters into harm’s way? If we’re worried about the deficit, who’s better than women at finding ways to make ends meet? And women in charge will never be deceived by lies because they’re such good liars themselves. If you support my proposal, you will live happily ever after.

Ariane: How did you get so smart, Praxi?

Praxi: By listening and comparing MSNBC with Fox News every day!
Bernice: Everyone, if Praxi’s plan succeeds, let’s elect her our commander-in-chief!

Delia: What if Glenn Beck starts calling you names?

Praxi: I’ll say he’s an idiot.

Georgia: But everyone knows that!

Hermione: What if Rush Limbaugh rakes you over the coals?

Praxi: I’ll say he’s even stupider!

Ariane: But everyone knows that!

Praxi: If they know it, why don’t they do anything about those guys??? Tell you what, if Paul Ryan starts spouting his Ayn Rand fantasies I’ll suggest that he and Rand Paul get together and make a Randy Dandy Paul duo!

Bernice: What if they try to thrust you out of the meeting?

Praxi (suggestively, demonstrating): I’m used to thrusts; I’ll thrust right back!

Women: And we’ll accuse them of excessive force!

Praxi: All right! Let’s go! Audience, please stay right here. We’ll come back and report how things go in the new Congress! to the women Now let’s sing our anthem—Hit it, Phil! Band starts the prelude to a triumphal song. Women divide into two choruses.

**FEMINIST ANTHEM.**

A: What do we want and when do we want it?
B: We know that we will run this state best!
A: If we’re proud women why can’t we flaunt it?
B: We will deceive them with exquisite zest!
A: Now, have you all got your costumes on straight?
B: Straight? We’re not straight, we’re crooked, and should be!
A: But from our goals we cannot deviate!
B: We’ll be as macho as any man could be!
All: Now come on, comrades, march into Congress!
We’ve got to clean up that disgusting mess!
They’ve put this country through so much duress
Everyone knows it’s past time for redress!
If they resist and think they can suppress
We will outwit them with our great finesse!
We’ll counter, dodge, circumvent, and outguess,
Play tricks, entrance, lure, seduce, effervesce,
But if they suspect we’ll never confess!
We ask Athena and Hera to bless
Our mission, since it deserves nothing less,
And we won’t give up till we get success!  

exeunt

omnes

Scene 2. Squint enters awkwardly, wearing women’s clothes and shoes, finally tripping and falling. Band improvises some raunchy stripper music and a final crash.

Squint: Shit! What the fuck is going on? I wake up in our hotel room and my wife’s nowhere to be seen! What can she be up to? And my clothes are gone too, and my shoes, and then the toilet’s not working, so I go outside to find one, and lose my way, and now I don’t even know where I am, and I’ve gotta take a shit! suddenly notices the audience

Oops! Pardon me, folks, but Nature calls!

he weaves his way just offstage whence a loud sound of shitting is heard. Meanwhile Stinge appears, also in women’s clothes. When Squint reappears they do a doubletake at each other.

Stinge: What is this, a cross-dresser convention? They both look out at the audience and then at each other. Who knows?

Squint: Where are you from?

Stinge: Chicago. You?

Squint: California. You with your wife?

Stinge: Do I look like I’m with her? We came here together, sure. But when I woke up she was gone, no note, nothing. And my clothes were gone, so . . .

Squint: Same with me. They must be up to something.

Stinge: Cut the crap! My wife’s no whore.

Squint: I didn’t mean that. Something political. Together. Is your wife into politics?
Stinge: Oh yeah! She’s always going on about what a mess Washington is, and what assholes male politicians are, and why don’t more women like Wendy Davis go into politics . . .

Squint: Yeah, that sounds just like my wife. But they don’t want more women like Sarah Palin and Michele Bachmann, do they?

Stinge: Course not! Whose idea was this trip to Washington?

Squint: My wife’s, of course. I’d rather stay home and play golf.

Stinge: Me too. But she said we had to be here today. And what she says has to happen always does happen.

Squint. Yeah, in my house too. Sucks, but that’s how it is.

They look at each other with compassion. Band plays the introduction to **Feminist Husband Blues**.

**Squint:** When we got married my wife was cute and nice
When we got married my wife was cute and nice
But she became a feminist and turned as cold as ice

**Stinge:** When we got married we saw eye to eye
When we got married we saw eye to eye
Then she read de Beauvoir, who taught her to defy

**Squint:** Then it just got worse—she focused more and more
**Stinge:** Then it just got worse—she studied more and more
**Both:** And our happy household became a civil war

**Both:** Yeah, we’ve got the feminist husband blues
Yeah, we’ve got the feminist husband blues
We know a lot of you guys are walking in our shoes

**Both:** Moral of our song: don’t get near a feminist
Moral of our song: don’t get near a feminist
Every one of those gals should be on your shit list

Squint. OK, back to reality. Maybe they’re pulling some kind of protest?

Stinge: You think so? Let’s turn on the TV—maybe we can find out something.
TV announcer: Breaking news! President Obama has taken executive action no other President has ever dared to take! You all know that Congress is currently in recess. Well, declaring he is tired of the gridlock, the President has replaced leading Senators and Representatives with new, unknown figures! Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell and House Majority Leader John Boehner are out, along with Ted Cruz, Rand Paul, Marco Rubio, and others! The Republicans are furious, and insist they will start impeachment proceedings immediately! But the Supreme Court has ruled—5 to 4—that the President was within his rights. The new Senators and Representatives are in their seats now, and they’re taking an active part in the debate. Listen to this! camera shifts to the Senate chamber

Ariane: My fellow Senators, it’s essential that we provide shelter and food to those poor Central American children who are coming to us for help! They are fleeing from terrible violence and likely death. Remember what the Statue of Liberty proclaims:

“Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door.”

Are we going to abandon our tradition of welcoming those in need, especially innocent children? We can afford it, fellow citizens! All we need is to ask those whom the American Dream has favored the most to do their part!

Announcer: And he convinced them! The Senators voted unanimously to welcome the refugee children, and agreed to raise taxes on the 1% to pay for their support! Who would ever have believed it? And look what happened in the House!

Bernice: My fellow Representatives, I hereby propose that we increase the minimum wage to $25 an hour all across this country! We all know deep down that it’s the right thing to do, to make workers’ lives better, and it’s also the smart thing to do! Workers who have more income will spend more, and the whole economy, which is still bogged down from the 2008 recession, will flourish! Come on, let’s do it!

Announcer: Here too this brand new member nobody knows convinced them all! It’s a miracle!

Stinge: I know that guy . . . What’s his name? . . . He’s so familiar . . .
Announcer: And then a really amazing thing happened. A special joint session of the Congress was held—very unusual—and one of those presidential replacements spoke to the whole throng. Here’s what he said.

Praxi: Fellow Congressmen, extraordinary times call for extraordinary actions, and this is such a moment. We all know that these august legislative bodies are in total gridlock, unable to agree on any action, even though the problems facing us are tremendous! I propose to you that we must learn how to take a completely different approach to politics: we must turn over the entire government to women! Huge uproar Now, colleagues, don’t overreact before you hear me out. This isn’t as radical a change as it may seem. Statistics show clearly that women are more honest than men, more law-abiding, more trustworthy. Women loan each other things—dresses, jewelry, cash—with no lawyers involved and never a hint of fraud. Does any man do that?

Squint. Of course not, you idiot!

Praxi: And women don’t betray each other, don’t sue each other, and don’t subvert democracy. And let’s face it, colleagues—this is the only remedy for our problems that has never been tried. Give women a chance to prove what they can do!

Squint: There’s something about that fellow ... his voice ... his gestures ... where have I seen him before?

Announcer: Well, the Tea Partiers didn’t go for this idea at all, but the other Senators and Representatives thought that they had nothing to lose but their gridlock, and if the women didn’t succeed in improving things then people could blame them instead of the male Congressmen. The measure passed by a strong majority!

Stinge. So what does this mean? That we don’t have to be responsible for our households? So I don’t have to go to work any more, my wife does?

Squint. Why not? If they’re in control of the government, shouldn’t they be in charge of the household income? Just think—no more setting the alarm to get to the office on time, just roll over and go back to sleep.

Stinge. But if women are in charge of everything, they might force us to screw them when we’re not, er, up to it. And if we couldn’t satisfy them they might stop feeding us—yikes!
Squint. Damn, if only we could give ourselves blow jobs we could screw and eat at the same time! Yum yum! He tries to demonstrate; Stinge looks disgusted. Oh never mind!

Stinge. It’s no fun doing it under duress!

Squint. Oh come on, doing it under a dress can be great!

Stinge. Ha ha. Oh yeah, fucking for the good of the country is noble.

Squint. And that’s really no bull! You know what our forefathers say, no matter how stupid our decisions are they turn out all right in the end! pointing to his ass

Stinge. Goodbye, pal; good luck finding your clothes—and your wife.

Squint. Likewise—asshole. they leave

**Scene 3.** The women return from Congress, still fearful they may be discovered.

**sing MANLY MARCH**

That’s it, men!
Keep marching very straight!
No one slouch!
Maintain a martial gait!
No swishing your hips,
or loosing your lips,
or our glorious victory will deflate!

Heads up high!
Keep crunching with your feet!
On your guard!
Who knows who we might meet!
We’ve got to make tracks
and we can’t relax
till we’re sure our mastery is complete!

Praxagora enters, in female dress, carrying her husband’s clothes on a hanger.

Women: Prax! You’ve changed your outfit! Is it ok for us to change ours?

Praxi: Yes, of course! And hurry! We don’t want anyone to find out who those substitute Congressmen really were. And besides, now that they’ve voted for women to have the power, we have no reason to masquerade as the lesser gender!
Women: Right! Rah rah rah! Praxi for President!

Praxi: No, Obama is still President, and we’ll work closely with him. But because at the moment of crisis you showed yourselves fearless, YOU all are going to be my cabinet!

Women: Praxi, you're our Commander in Chief! They quickly change into female dress and stow the male costumes away. Squint suddenly appears, still in female clothes.

Squint. Praxi, where have you been?

Praxi: What business is that of yours, husband?

Squint. It’s a husband's business to make sure his wife is behaving herself!

Praxi: Do you see any signs that I’ve been misbehaving? Squint comes closer and examines her suspiciously. Smell any perfume?

Squint. No. So what? You could be screwing around without perfume.

Praxi: Not my style, as you ought to know. And darling, look at what you're wearing. Have you been behaving yourself, or—???

Squint: This is because you disappeared from our hotel room with my clothes! Where are they, dammit?

Praxi: Right here, sweetie—see? I took them to the cleaners—I knew you’d want to look your best when we visit the Capitol and the White House! I had your shoes polished too.

Squint: Awww, honey, you’re so good to me. Thank you! Beat Say, did you hear what happened in Congress?

Praxi: No. I thought they were in recess.

Squint: Just got back in session. And guess what they decided? It’s wild and crazy, but you’re going to love it. They decided to put the women in charge of the whole country!!!

Praxi: Really! That’s wonderful! But which women? The women already in Congress? Her iPhone rings. Hello? Mr. President! How great to hear—she listens. Really? Are you sure? What about Dianne, and Nancy, Barbara, Elizabeth, and—
breaks off and listens I understand, sir. Thank you for your confidence—I’m so honored!

Squint: The President called you? What about?

Praxi: About the improvement of this whole country!

Stinge has heard the ruckus and appears.

Squint: Yeah? And who’s going to make that happen?

Praxi: I am! We are! All the women here—and more all over the land! Everything’s going to be different! The United States is going to live up to its reputation as a GREAT Society! No more inequality of income! No more illegal foreclosures! No more racial discrimination! No more corrupt politicians! No more tax evasion by rich corporations! No more unwinnable wars! No more lies from public officials! No more police brutality! No more—

Squint interrupts What bullshit! Who can believe such crap?

Stinge: Squint, your wife’s ideas are great! Unless they turn out to be impossible . . .

Praxi: No more petty theft, nobody going hungry, no violence against women, no discrimination against gay people—

Squint: Too much negativity! What’s going to improve?

Praxi: Everything! Just let me lay it out for you!

Squint: Yeah, go ahead and lay—you know how to do that, all right!

Stinge: Back off, Squint! I want to hear what Praxi proposes.

Women sing and dance GO PRAXI GO

Go ahead, our Praxi, speak!
Go ahead, our Praxi, shriek!
Smash this guy who wants to critique
Make him be so meek!

Come on, girl, and stand your ground
You are great when you expound
When you find opinions hidebound
Contradict, confound!

Since our country’s such a mess
No one’s going to second-guess
And you know just how to impress
Make them all say yes!

OK now, this is your cue
Listen to your faithful crew
No one’s going to bellow or boo
If your theory’s new!

Praxi: I feel confident my ideas are valid, but is the audience ready to accept radical change, or will they stick with what they know? That’s what I’m afraid of.

Ariane: Let’s ask em. Hey, all of you out there, do you want more of what we’ve got now?
   
   Audience roars “Hell no!”

Praxi: Very well, I’ll explain, but please don’t interrupt or object until you understand clearly what I’m proposing. Here goes: everyone in this country should own everything jointly! No more rich people paying lower taxes than their secretaries! No more 1 percenters buying yachts while the 99 percent can’t afford decent food! No more corporations kicking people out of rent-controlled apartments in order to house techies! No more gated communities! No more private planes polluting the atmosphere!

Squint: So how is that going to come about? Who’s going to wave the magic wand?

Praxi (furious): I just said I’m going to spell everything out. You’re so obnoxious that if I were planning to eat shit you’d insist on taking the first bite! calmer First, every single thing will be the common property of all—land, money, housing, food, everything! From this stock we women will distribute everything to people as they need it.

Squint: How about those who hide their wealth in secret Swiss bank accounts? What about U.S. corporations which claim they’re not obliged to pay U.S. taxes?

Praxi: We’ll ferret every one of them out! They will all have to pay their fair share! And besides, having extra money won’t do anyone any good anyway,
because everyone will have everything they need—nutritious food (no more junk fastfood), warm clothes, decent housing—

Georgia: What about wine?

Praxi: smiles My dear, I'm from California. It's a patriotic duty to drink our state beverage!

Squint: Wait a minute! Those who have what they need are bigger thieves than those who don't!

Stinge: You're right, pal, about how things are now, but forgetting that we are going to live under brand new laws. Now that we're living communally, sharing everything, no one gains anything by not sharing their stuff!

Squint: Oh, yeah? What if a guy sees a girl and wants to screw her? Won't he need some of his own money to give her, in order to commune with her—in bed?

Praxi: He won't have to pay her—he'll sleep with her for free! If she likes him, that is. Women will be able to be with any man (or woman!) they like, whenever they like, for as long as they both like.

Women: Really? What happens if a woman gets pregnant?

Praxi: No problem! All children will be legitimate, welcomed and supported by the state! And abortion will always be an option if the woman isn't ready for motherhood.

Squint: But the most attractive women will be the ones everyone wants to screw!

Praxi: Your thinking is so out of date! You think only men have the right to choose who they want to have sex with? Well, under our new laws, if a woman considered less desirable wants a man, he'll have to fuck her before he can get the babe he wants into bed.

Squint: What?! What about us old guys? If we have to screw an ugly woman our cocks won't have anything left for—later.

Praxi: Don't worry, darling. The ladies won't fight over you.

Squint: Huh?

Praxi: The ones you don't want to fuck—they won't care.
Squint: *snarls* Just like you don’t, you mean. So—you women have fixed it so none of you will have an empty hole, but what are we men going to do? You’ll avoid older men and go for the young studs.

Praxi: But the duds will stick close to the studs, and women won’t be allowed to fuck the latter until they’ve satisfied the former.

Squint: So if you had a chance to screw, say, Ryan Gosling, first you’d have to service Henry Kissinger? Hoo hah!

Praxi: *not thrilled but faithful to her creed* Yes, that’s—right.

Stinge: Now that’s a really democratic idea! When the guy in a Saville Row suit and gold cufflinks is about to score, a scruffy old dude in sneakers steps in and says “Wait till I’m finished with her and then you can take your turn!”

Squint: But how will any man know who his children are?

Praxi: Why should they care? Children will look at all men of the right age as their fathers.

Squint: That’s dangerous. Kids these days have little enough respect for their fathers as it is. If they think any old guy might be their dad they’ll think nothing of stealing his money and beating him up if he catches them.

Praxi: Oh no, that will NOT happen. Anyone who sees a senior citizen being done wrong will step in and help because he might be *their* father!

Squint: But suppose some juvenile delinquent calls me Father—yuck!

Stinge: Or maybe Ru Paul will come up, scream “Daddy darling!” and give you a big wet kiss—what fun!

Squint: But who’s going to do all the work and produce the goods?

Praxi: The immigrants. Everyone we let in will be required to put in twenty-five years of hard labor and then they’ll have earned their citizenship.

Squint: So we citizens will just lounge around the pool and then have a barbecue? Great!
Stinge. But what if someone gets sued and loses his case? How will he be able to pay the fine?

Praxi: There won’t be any lawsuits! Why should there be?

Stinge. Suppose I lend someone money and he refuses to pay it back?

Praxi: How could you do that, when everything is owned in common? You’d have to have stolen the money in the first place! But why should anyone steal anything when he’s already part-owner of it? And suppose someone does grab something of yours, like your watch—you just go to the communal store and get another one! Here’s another step: cities are going to become one big household! We’ll break down the walls between houses and share everything with each other.

Squint: Where will we all eat?

Praxi: All the best restaurants will open their doors to all comers! No more waiting for reservations at Nora’s and Riz here in D.C. (each with a talented female chef), The Four Seasons in New York, The French Laundry in the wine country, Ristorante Avanti in Santa Cruz, and many more! Glorious food, cocktails and vintage wine will be provided to all, free!

Squint and Stinge: Now this is really incredible! How could that happen? What bullshit!

Praxi and chorus sing NEW WORLD seductively

We see that you’ve got it all wrong
You’ve been disappointed so long
You think it’s a blue world
But this is a new world
And that’s why we’re singing this song

The system has totally changed
Its purpose has been rearranged
It will not oppress you
Instead it will bless you
We know that this all seems so strange

All citizens get a good break
The state will now give, not just take
It won’t try to fine you
Instead wine and dine you
You’ll literally take the cake

And then after dinner no checks!
And then after dinner what’s next?
You’ll walk down the alley
And you’ll have to dally
To hear all the offers of sex

“Come over here, handsome, and see
what I’ve got to offer, for free”
Squint intervenes as an old woman
“Just hold on, Sonny,
She’ll be your honey
But not until you have fucked me!”

Praxi and chorus continue
You’re wrong; that restriction applies
only to gorgeous young guys
a woman imitates an old man
“Come here, young beauty
You know it’s your duty
To screw first us ugly old guys!”

Praxi: All right, husband, I must be off. Got to get the pooling of assets going, and make sure the restaurants are all ready for the communal meals, and tell the prostitutes to quit soliciting.

Squint. What, no whores? Why not?

Praxi: Because they would upset the communal sex system we’ve so carefully arranged untainted by money.

Stinge. I see what you mean: think these dames could compete with professional sex workers?
Chorus respond vociferously

Squint. Dearest wife, let me go with you. Everyone will look at me and say “That’s the Commander in Chief’s husband”—just like Bill Clinton with Hillary! he leaves following Praxi; the Chorus laugh and sing SO FAR SO GOOD

So far so good! Our plot’s going so well
Who knew what a cinch it would be to rebel?
The only hard part is hiding our smirks
When we see so clearly that men are all jerks

Who can say which is the biggest asshole?
How did they ever get into control?
Well, we’re in now and we’ll rule as we should
And in both senses we’re in charge for good!

Scene 4. Stinge comes out carrying various items and shows them to the Chorus.

Stinge: OK, I’m complying with the mandate, hard as it is, and turning in my property to the common store. Look, here’s my laptop, a MacBook Air 802.11, complete with iPhoto, iMovie, GarageBand, and Keynote! he kisses it, tearing up I hope the gradeschool kid who gets you appreciates you, darling! At least I still have my—what did they call it? a “type writer”? I remember vaguely . . . IBM Selectric, cute little ball that went tictictictictictictictictic . . . sighs . . . OK, and now my Chromecast . . . No more Netflix? No more YouTube? I guess I still have some VHS tapes around somewhere . . . and now—oh no! bursts into tears my iPhone 5s! This is the hardest of all! I’ll be so alone, so all alone! And this is just now . . . when I get home, having to share my house with who knows who . . . and my stocks and bonds . . . how am I going to be able to pay for college for my kids? . . . Well, I guess if everybody is sharing they’ll be ok . . .

Scrooge stands up in the audience and yells as he walks towards the stage: You’ve got to be kidding! Give up all your possessions because some crazy women tell you to do it? Don’t you understand that this is worse than the socialism of that asshole FDR? It’s COMMUNISM!—a social experiment that was tried in the last century and totally failed! Look at the Soviet Union—are they still doing it? Hell no, they’re becoming capitalists as fast as they can! Ditto China! The only country that’s still communist is North Korea, and their people are miserable, starving, desperate! by now he’s onstage

Stinge: I know what you mean. It’s scary, but if our legislators have voted for this I guess we have to trust them and see how it goes.

Scrooge: You’re an idiot! Just because some laws have been passed, we have to obey them? Just hire a smart lawyer and you can always do what you want.

Stinge: Not always. What if they sic the police on you?

Scrooge: Oh, yeah? How about that Nevada rancher who was told to pay for grazing his cattle on government land? He said hell no!, and they sent enforcers, and his neighbors drew their guns and made them back down!
Stinge: But sometimes it goes the other way—look what happened to Michael Brown in Ferguson when he tussled with the cops.

Scrooge: Because he didn’t have a gun. Open carry and stand your ground—it’s the American Way.

Stinge: So you’re not going to put your property into the common pool?

Scrooge: Not until I see how things pan out.

Stinge: You think we shouldn’t give, just take?

Scrooge: Of course. What do the rich folks do? They take and take and take. Does Donald Trump give? He pays lower taxes than his secretary does.

Stinge: Warren Buffett is rich, and he thinks he should pay more taxes than his secretary.

Scrooge: Let him! He can send a check straight to the White House and I’m sure they’ll cash it! But I’ll imitate Donald Trump.

Stinge: Because you’re a greedy bastard just like him.

Scrooge: Haven’t you heard? Gordon Gekko was right. Greed is good. Greed works! Greed separates the stupid from the smart! Greed rewards advanced thinking. Greed leads to progress! Don’t you believe in meritocracy? Haven’t you read Ayn Rand?

Stinge: I’m going to be a good citizen, obey the law, do the right thing, and share!

Scrooge: You’re an idiot. At least stall for a while to see what others do—

Stinge: And then what?

Scrooge: Keep delaying, till there’s a new election, or the President gets impeached, or there’s an earthquake, or a terrorist attack— he looks at the audience You know the American people, they’ll change their minds in a minute. No sense of history at all, ha ha!

they sing FIGHT SONG

Stinge: So you wanta have it all?
You ride high, all the rest crawl?
Scrooge: The law of the jungle: strong rule the weak
If you aren’t tough, you gotta be meek

Stinge: How about living in civilization?
You prefer constant confrontation/altercation?

Scrooge: Civilization? That’s slavery!
I want to be free to take care of me!

Stinge: Haven’t you heard? It takes a village!
You’re promoting rape and pillage!

Scrooge: Rape? There’s nothing not to like
Specially if she’s a dyke

Stinge: You’re disgusting! Shame on you!
Scrooge: Bleeding heart liberal—boo hoo hoo!

Stinge: Watch out, or you’re gonna regret it!
Scrooge: I guess you’re finally startin to get it!

Stinge: Keep it up and I’m gonna slug you
Scrooge: Wow, it sure is easy to bug you

Stinge: I’m getting ready to clean your clock
Scrooge: mockingly Nooo! I’m going into shock

Stinge: furious I’m really going to bust your balls
Scrooge: haughty Such vulgarity truly appalls

Stinge: getting ready to fight All right, asshole, put up or shut up!
Scrooge: You think that’ll show me up?
Jerk, this battle’s been completed
You’re the one who’s been defeated
It was so easy to get you glaring
Now where’s all that giving and sharing?
When the bad comes to the worst
Every human says “Me first!”

They move in to start slugging when Ariane appears and addresses the audience.

Ariane: All American citizens listen up! Male, female, young, old, to all of you our wonderful leader Praxagora brings good news, and the news is FOOD! FREE
food! And WINE, FREE wine! Head for your favorite restaurant. Wherever you go, there’ll be plenty for all, served by gorgeous waitresses and waiters! The wine will flow freely, whether you prefer cabernet or chardonnay! And the food—juicy steaks, the best fish filets sizzling on the grill, delicious sauces, fresh vegetables, the sweetest desserts you can imagine.

There are a few changes, of course. A wonderful meal has been prepared for ALL—no individual ordering. Healthy, nutritious food, nothing decadent like foie gras or potato chips. The tables are communal, so you can meet new people of all colors and classes. There’ll be no wasting food; if you don’t eat what you order you’ll spend some time washing dishes to make up. No taking extra food or wine home. All right, get going—the hot rolls are already on the tables! All you have to do is sit down and stuff your faces.

Scrooge: Let’s go! If this is what the lawmakers have decided, we have to go along with it, don’t we?

Stinge: Who’s “we,” Mr. Me First? Now all of a sudden you’re into sharing? And you haven’t turned your property in to the common store! If you don’t do that you have NO RIGHT to a free dinner!

Scrooge: I’ll do it soon. After we eat. There are undoubtedly others who will be even later than me in getting their stuff together.

Stinge: So you’ll claim your food regardless?

Scrooge: I’m magnanimously putting aside my personal feelings. It’s my patriotic duty as a loyal citizen to aid the community in this bold social experiment!

Stinge: What if they won’t admit you?

Scrooge: I’ll ram my way in!

Stinge: What if they beat you up?

Scrooge: I’ll beat them—in court!

Stinge: I don’t think courts are going to be quite the same as they were. A female judge, and a female jury—they’ll laugh at you.

Scrooge: Then I’ll take a stand!

Stinge: On what?
Scrooge: Near the door to the restaurant kitchen, and steal the food as they bring it in!

Stinge: Yeah, right. sarcastically Good luck! So long—I’m taking my stuff to the common store.

Scrooge: Oh, please let me help you carry it.

Stinge: Not a chance! You might claim it was your own property you’re donating. Fuck off! exit

Scrooge: Now what am I going to do? I never anticipated this horrible turn of events. How can this disaster have happened? How can we turn things around? I can only pray to my gods. Larry Summers! Tim Geithner! Ben Bernanke! I’ve always believed in you. Help me! Save me! receiving no answer, he slumps, weeps, and makes his way offstage

Chorus sing to the tune of SO FAR SO GOOD

So far so good! It’s all going just fine
The men are so pleased they’re going to dine
and won’t have to pay a single red cent
and not only that, there’ll be no more rent!

They’re not rebelling, they think it’s all right
They got with the program, they’re seeing the light
Let’s see what they think about what’s coming next:
the new regulations we passed about sex!

Scene 5. Elda appears and looks around. She is not ugly, and carefully dressed and made up, but definitely older.

Elda: Where are the men? They must have finished dinner. I’ve gotten myself all dolled up she looks at herself in a mirror Makeup, sexy dress—check! But no one’s coming by for me to beguile. Maybe I should sing a little song . . .
Appendix C: *Congressladies* Final Draft
Scene 1.

"Ladies"

Nancy:
I look in your eyes, if I am so bold
You look in my eyes, and stories unfold
Now these eyes, more mystique than we told
Can change shape
Demonstrate
For the play you behold!

Dianne:
Welcome to the UCSC main stage
Please remember which exit you came
In case you have to answer a page
Zoe: Understand
That our plan
Will make sure you stay safe

Judy:
Cue!

Bobbi:
Congress Ladies:
The Music-al
Lots of beautiful girls*! *wink ;)
Loretta: It’s got roots in Greek lore
So please try not to snore
Jackie: You can sing-along or
We all can shout it!

Nancy:
Take a look right here!

All:
Congress Ladies!
We’ve got cue cards,
Words starred for you to read!
We say
Thanks to you, funders of the artists!

Norma:
Topical farce from now ‘til you part us!

Loretta/Lois/Linda:
Enjoy the show
It’s very punny
Julia:
That’s not so, it’s not even funny

All:
We’re Congress Ladies!

Mimi:
Wow Nancy, I never noticed
how talking to the audience directly
could distance the subject matter
from our message so well.

Nancy:
Few do.

Linda:
There are words
To help you sing along
Maxine: Lucille has
Cards with the words to the songs
Lucille: Maxine knows
Greek that show it belongs

Norma:
No smoking
Or toking
Please don’t light up your bongs

Mimi:
No food or drink, keep our theatre pristine
Julia: Turn off your cells phones, don’t light up your screens
Doris: A ringing phone during the show is mean
Barbara:
So it goes
Here’s our show
And you’ll know when we sing:

Anna:
Of!

Susan: Doris/Diane/Mary/Judy: (over chorus)
If there’s fire Draaaaaaaaag
Then it’s dire La, la
That you aren’t all in throngs La, la, ladies! That’s a man!

Lois:
Take a look at the doors
1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 4
Janice: Know the exit that’s yours
Don’t forget about it

Lynne:
But don’t you go leave now!

Jane:
Congress Ladies!
We’re ungodly
Gaudy, in skirts and tights!

Anna:
We are governmental, yet
Quite infectious!

Karen:
Equal rights for all of the sexes!

Grace:
Sit back, relax, until intermission

Mary:
Might as well, you’ve paid for admission.

All:
We’re congress, the congress-
Lynne/Zoe:
Ladies!

All: (overlapping)
Ladies!

Maxine:
Ὦ λαμπρὸν ὄμμα τοῦ τροχηλάτου λύχνου
cάλλιστ᾽ ἐν εὐστόχοισιν ἐζητημένον:
gονὰς τε γὰρ σάς καὶ τύχας δηλώσομεν:
tροχῷ γὰρ ἐλαθείς κεραμικῆς ῥύμης ὑπὸ
5μυκτῆρσι λαμπρὰς ἡλίου τιμὰς ἔχεις:
ὀρμα φλογὸς σημεῖα τὰ ξυγκείμενα.
σοὶ γὰρ μόνω δηλοῦμεν εἰκότως, ἔπει
κάν τοῖς δωματίοισιν Ἀφροδίτης τρόπων
πειρωμέναισι πλησίον παραστατέις,
10λορδουμένων τε σωμάτων ἐπιστάτην
ὄφθαλμον ὑπὸ τὸ ἄγαλμα τὸν σὸν ἔξειργει δόμων.
μόνος δὲ μηρῶν εἰς ἀπορρήτους μυχούς
λάμπεις ἀφεύων τὴν ἐπανθοῦσαν τρίχα:
στοάς τε καρποῦ Βακχίου τε νάματος
15πλήρεις ὑποιγνύσαισι συμπαραστατεῖς:
καὶ ταῦτα συνδρών ὑμᾶς γίνεται πλΗσιόν.
ἀνθ᾽ ὧν συνείς καὶ τὰ νῦν βουλεύματα
10πλήρεις ὑποιγνύσαισι συμπαραστατεῖς:
καὶ ταῦτα συνδρών ὑμᾶς γίνεται πλησιόν.
αὐτίκας μάλ᾽ ἐσται: καταλαβεῖν δ᾽ ἡμᾶς φίλαις.
ἀλλ᾽ οὐδεμία πάρεστιν ἃς ἥκειν ἐχρῆν.
20καίτοι πρὸς ὄρθρον γ᾽ ἐστίν: ἡ δ᾽ ἐκκλησία
αὐτίκα μάλ᾽ ἐσται: καταλαβεῖν δ᾽ ἡμᾶς ἔδρας,
ὡς Φυρόμαχος ποτ᾽ εἶπεν, εἰ μέμνησθ᾽ ἔτι,
δὲ ὑμᾶς ἐτέρας πως κἀκεχειξομένας λαθείν.
τί δῆτ᾽ ἂν εἴποι πότερον ὑπὸ ἔρραμμένος
25ἐχουσι τοὺς πώγωνας, οὓς εἴρητ᾽ ἔχειν;
ἡ θαιματία ταῦτα πῶλον κλεφῆς λαθείν
ἡχαλεπὸν αὐταῖς ἄλλ᾽ ὁ τοντιλόγχων
προσιόντα. φέρε νυν ἐπαναχωρήσω πάλιν,
μή καὶ τις ὃν ἀνήρ ὁ προσιών τυγχάνη.

Lynne:
O glowing visage of the earthen lamp
Oin this conspicuous eminence well-hung
Updated 2.19.15

(For through thy fates and lineage will we go,
Thou, who, by whirling wheel of potter moulded
Dost with thy nozzle do the sun’s bright duty)—
Awake the appointed signal of the flame!
Thou only knowest it, and rightly thou,
For thou alone, within our chamber standing,
Watchest unblamed th mysteries of love.
Thine eye, inspector of our amouous sports.
Beholdeth all, and no one saith “Begone!”
Thou comest singeng purifying all
The dim recesses which none else may see;
And when the garnes, stored with corn and wine,
By stealth we open, thou dost stand beside us.
And though thou knowest all this, thou dost not peach,
Therefore our plans will we confide to thee,
What at the Scira we resolved to do,
Ah, but there’s no one her who should be here
Yet doth it draw towards daybreak; and the Assembly
Full soon will meet; and we frail womankind
Must take the seats Phyromachus assigned us
(You don’t forget?) and not attract attention.
What can the matter be? Perchance the beards
Are not stiched on, as our decree commanded,
Perchance they found it difficult to steal
Their husbands garments. Stay! I see a lamp
Moving this way. I will retire and watch
Lest it should haply be some man approaching!

(Stage and house dark. Nancy enters down aisle stage left, carrying an iPhone
which she uses to light her way. She is wearing men’s clothing.)

Nancy:
Thank Hermes for my iPhone! Useful in so many ways—I could never do without you. Send
a tweet to my friends that I’m almost there—done! And just now you lit my way out of our
hotel room without my husband suspecting a thing—just as he doesn’t when I take a few bucks out of his wallet. Or when you tell my lover I’m on my way. Or even when Father Salvatore and I are having sex at his place and there you are on the nightstand looking on. Or—never mind. Where’s the hall where we’re going to have our meeting—come on, phone, give me the directions! Oh, this way?—ok! (She goes onto the stage, which is barely lit.)
What? Nobody here? Where are they? I’ve come all the way from California and I’m on time.
(Yells) Dammit!

(House and stage lights instantly full; Nancy becomes very focused and professional.)

Nancy:
Oh, good evening/afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to a very special political event. My name is Nancy, but everyone calls me Madam Speaker. Soon you'll see how I’ve earned that name.

I’ve called this meeting here, in the nation’s capital, to put into action a really important plan. But before we proceed, I need to ask you to take a pledge of silence. What I’m going to reveal is ground-breaking, absolutely revolutionary, and for that reason it has to remain secret! Don’t worry—no violence, no crime, just political action that will have incredible impact. You’ll see.

We all know what a farce the United States government has become—Democrats and Republicans at each others’ throats, unable to agree on anything, total gridlock on important issues, and average citizens’ wishes trampled by the 1 percent’s big bucks. Infrastructure, education, civil rights and social justice are ignored while the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. All Americans have a stake in this country, and all of us are affected by this dreadful situation. But women have special reasons to get involved. A war on women is being waged by the crazies; look at the attacks on contraception and abortion. Women doing the same job as males earn 77 cents for every dollar males earn. And then there are the inequalities in domestic life.

My pals and I have figured out a way to get beyond this mess and move the country forward. Now let me introduce my allies in this amazing enterprise. Ladies? (She looks at the wings, but no one appears; louder) Ladies? (Women start coming onstage, wearing or carrying various articles of male clothing, wigs, beards, etc.)

Barbara:
Hurry up, girls! Nancy’s started already.

Nancy (sarcastically):
Oh, don’t rush, girls! There’s only a whole audience waiting.

Susan:
So sorry, Nancy—it’s all my husband’s fault. He’s in the merchant marine, and when he gets back from a trip he wants to row me all night. I’m exhausted!
Barbara:
Remember our deal?—the last one to arrive has to buy a round for everybody!

Nancy (to Lynne arriving, who is wearing men's shoes):
No wonder you're slow!

**Janice:**
I have to practice wearing these, don't I?

Dianne:
And my husband ate two plates of Cajun beans and rice and had to keep getting up to shit.

Nancy:
All right, all right, you're finally here. Have you done everything we agreed on?

Zoe:
I've been exercising daily to build up my biceps!

Loretta:
And we've stopped shaving! My armpits are shaggier than a cocker spaniel!

Lucille:
No more bikini waxes.

Susan:
And I've stopped bleaching my asshole.

Nancy:
What about your costumes? (They all show her the items of male clothing they've brought.) And you've cut your hair, and gotten mustaches and beards to hide your delicate feminine features? (They demonstrate.)

“Let it Grow”

It's just not right, why are folks so uptight?
Why must people be so mean?
‘Bout their silly fixations,
Such as looks, style of hygiene.
My stomach's growling, there's a swirling storm inside
Couldn't keep it in, but that's an aside.
Just keep it trim, don't let them see.
Be the clean cut girl they want of me
Conceal don't reveal, don't let it show
Well now they know.

Let it grow, let it grow!
Can't hold it back anymore
Let it grow. Let it grow
From my back to my backdoor
Here's my hair and its going to stay
Beauty norms be gone
Hey cold sores are harder to see this way

Now even at a distance
I can't shield my shag at all
Seems the crew of the space shuttle
Thought that it was urban sprawl

I go through barrels of shampoo
Even Houdini can't break through
But no more power tools for me
I'm razor-free!

Let it grow, let it grow.
Till I can't zip up my fly
Let it grow. Let it grow
You'll never see my thighs
Here I've planned eco tours for pay
I was born unshorn!

I am so furry that my hair grows to the ground
Paleontologists say pterodactyls can be found
Weapons of mass destruction can be found at last
There's so much in my crack, my gas stays in my ass!

Let it grow, let it grow.
Like an endless unmowed lawn
Let it grow, let it grow
I'll farm my underarms
I cheer each strand: black, brown, red, or grey
Let my fronds be blonde
My hole doesn't look so hot anyway.
Nancy:
All right, now it’s time to tell our audience what’s up. Friends, our goal is to save the United States! To do that I knew I had to go straight to the top, and I did. President Obama couldn’t have been more gracious—he brought me into the Oval Office, he heard me out, and he agreed our idea could work. As you know, since Congress has refused to fulfill its constitutional role of governing, the President has started using executive actions to get things done. Congress is currently in recess, but about to reconvene. So the President is going to use his power to replace key senators and representatives. With these—gentlemen! (Women make angry Viking noises, which deteriorates into giggles)

All:
Us?

Anna:
What politician am I replacing?

Nancy:
John Boehner!

Anna:
Whoa! Do I have to paint my face orange?

Linda:
How about me?

Nancy:
Mitch McConnell! You—Ted Cruz! You—Marco Rubio! You—Steve King! (excitement mounts)

Janice:
Too bad we can’t replace some of those rightwing governors too!

Zoe:
Goodbye Chris Christie!

Loretta:
So long Scott Walker!

Julia:
Adios Rick Scott!
Jackie:
Nancy, I’m in, but I don’t understand why we have to be in drag. There are women in Congress!

Dianne:
Yes, of course there are!

Nancy:
Indeed, more than at any time in history.

Barbara: But still only 20 female vs. 80 male Senators, and 104 Congresswomen vs. 331 male Representatives in the House.

Nancy:
As men, working together and engaging male allies, we’ll be able to accomplish things women can’t.

Doris:
But as soon as these appointments are announced there’ll be a firestorm of criticism!

Susan:
And probably an attempt to impeach the President!

Nancy:
Let them storm. Meanwhile you’ll be carrying out our plan.

Maxine:
Nancy, you know we trust you. But this is really scary. How do we know it can work?

Nancy: Because the American people want justice! Ladies and gentlemen, do you want to continue business as usual here in Washington, or shall we try to shake things up? What do you say? (Roar of approval, provoked of course.) All right! So, what’s the name of the show? Congressladies! Ladies, get into your costumes and let’s get to work.

Judy:
One question, Nancy. Can I do my knitting while listening to those boring speeches?

Nancy:
Knitting? Of course not! Men don’t knit!
Dianne:
Oh, I know some who do!

Nancy:
You mustn’t do anything to draw attention to yourselves until it’s time to act! Except, of course, by speaking up.

Julia:
How are we supposed to know how to give public speeches?

Nancy:
Haven’t we all gotten a lot of practice convincing our husbands and boyfriends to buy us things, and not to be suspicious when we stay out late at night, or when strange charges appear on the credit card?

Barbara:
You’re right! Because we have to work for everything we get, and that’s why we’re good at winning arguments. (earnestly)

Nancy:
All right, who’d like to try giving a speech? You can address this whole audience!

Mary:
(comes forward): I’ll go! (looks around) But where’s my drink?

Nancy:
Drink? What drink?

Mary:
Don’t they drink in Congress?

Nancy:
During legislative sessions? Of course not!

Mimi:
Do you think those are ladies’ luncheons?

Loretta:
Well, look at the crazy policies they support!

Norma:
Corporations are people? Money is speech?
Zoe:
Sell elections to the highest bidder?

Mimi:
You're right. They had to be drunk when they came up with that bullshit!

Nancy:
Dismissed! Who's next?

Linda:
Me!

Nancy: All right, but be sure to speak like a man, and convince your listeners.

“Mammaries”
Mammaries
Turn your tits to the moonlight
Let your estrogen lead you
Open up, enter in
If you find there
You understand what unhappiness is
Then a new life will begin

Mammaries
All alone in the moonlight
I can scoff at the old way
About my rights
Can't remember
A time that old white men didn't have laws
Over me and my ovaries

I should get some sort of say
In how often I'm scoring
Contraception lies
Gential mutilation
Abortion should be my choice

Fuck me
It's so easy to thieve me
Of sexual agency
Might as well be a nun
If you shame me
You’ll understand what unhappiness is
When I decide to castrate you

Nancy:
STOP!!! Is that how you speak to Congress?

Linda:
Oops! I was looking at this real poofy guy out there and spaced!

Mimi:
Shut up and sit down!

Nancy:
All right, colleagues, I guess I have to give a speech and show you how to do it—
gods help me!

Jackie:
What a smart man the speaker is!

Nancy:
(addresses the audience as well as the women onstage) You got it right that time! Now,
citizens, we need to understand that we’re all affected by the mess our
government is in.

Dianne:
Yeah! How about those disastrous wars Bush and Cheney got us into, killing
more than 5000 of our young people?

Barbara:
Were the results worth the sacrifice?

Barbara:
Now we’ve got a good President, but also a bunch of Repugnicans who
constantly thwart him.

Mary and Maxine:
But what are we doing about it?

Dianne:
We all know about the increasing inequality between the top .01 percent and the
99 percent.
Mary, Maxine, and Norma:
But what are we doing about it?

Nancy:
We all know that corporations are buying elections, stifling competition, cheating on their taxes.

Mary, Maxine, Norma, Julia, Judy, and Doris:
But what are we doing about it?

Barbara:
Banks caused the 2008 meltdown, but have they been punished? No, they’re bigger then ever!

Loretta:
**We’ve got to get involved and make change happen!**

Doris:
Tell us, Nancy—what should we do about it?

Nancy:
Put women in charge! *(babble of amazement and uncertainty)* I know—it’s a BIG change. But who runs the households all over this country?

All:
Women do!

Nancy:
And we don’t just run our households, we run them **well**!

Anna:
We seek the well-being of every member of the household

Lucille:
And balance resources and needs to keep the household going strong.

Mimi:
We’re REAL conservatives, not like those Tea Party wackos.

Julia:
We don’t get distracted by newfangled ideas.
Jackie:
We cook and clean and raise the children, just like we always have.

Zoe:
We nag our husbands, just like we always have.

Janice:
We keep our lovers secret, just like we always have.

Loretta:
We like good wine and a good fuck, just like we always have.

Women:
Yes! Right on! You said it! Good—man! Keep it up!

Nancy:
So I say, let’s not demand a detailed plan, let’s put the government in women’s hands.

Barbara:
Yes! If we’re worried about getting involved in another useless, endless war, are women going to send their sons and daughters into harm’s way?

Dianne:
If we’re worried about the deficit, who’s better than women at finding ways to make ends meet?

Mimi:
And women in charge will never be deceived by lies because we’re such good liars ourselves.

Maxine:
How did you get so smart, Nancy?

Nancy:
By listening to FOX News.

All:
What?

Nancy:
And doing the opposite of what they say.
Dianne:
Everyone, if Nancy’s plan succeeds, let’s elect her our commander-in-chief!

Judy:
What if Glenn Beck starts calling us names?

Barbara:
We’ll say he’s an idiot.

Lucille:
But everyone knows that!

Lynne:
What if Rush Limbaugh rakes us over the coals?

Dianne:
We’ll say he’s even stupider!

Karen:
But everyone knows that!

Nancy:
If they know it, why don’t they do anything about those guys???

Dianne:
If Paul Ryan starts spouting his Ayn Rand fantasies I’ll suggest that he and Rand Paul get together and make a Randy Dandy Paul-duo!

Susan:
What if they try to thrust us out of the meeting?

Dianne: *(suggestively, demonstrating)*: I’m used to thrusts; I’ll thrust right back!

Linda:
And we’ll accuse them of excessive force!

Nancy:
All right! Let’s go! Audience, please stay right here. We’ll come back and report how things go in the new Congress! Hit it, Peaches!

What do we want and when do we want it?
We know that we will run this state best!
If we’re proud women, why can’t we flaunt it?
We will deceive them with exquisite zest!
A: Now, have you all got your costumes on straight?
B: Straight? We’re not straight, we’re crooked and should be!
A: But from our goals we cannot deviate!
B: We’ll be as macho as any man could be!
Now come on comrades, march into Congress!
We’ve got to clean up that disgusting mess!
They’ve put this country through so much duress
Everyone knows it’s past time for redress!
If they resist and think they can suppress
We will outwit them with our great finesse!
We’ll counter, dodge, circumvent, and outguess,
Play tricks. Entrance, lure, seduce, effervesce,
But if they suspect, we’ll never confess!
We ask Athena and Hera to bless
Our mission since it deserves nothing less,
And we won’t give up till we get success!

“Into the House”

All:
Into The House
It’s time to go,
We have to change,
The status quo.
Into the House
To run the show
We have to save the country.

Loretta Sanchez:
Into the House
We’re marching straight,
I know it well,
We’re raising hell...

Linda Sanchez:
Into the House to fight for rights

Loretta Sanchez:
Into the House to kick out Boehner
Mimi Walters:
Into the House to ban the guns-

Ken Colvert:
To stop the drones-

Loretta Sanchez:
To do something ethical

Mimi and Ken
Into the House
To pass the laws
To help the Prez,
To end the fraud

Into the House
But don't forget
To pray
that we start winning.

(Nancy Pelosi appears)
Nancy:
Into the House
To help the kids,
To end the wars,
To right the wrong,
Into the House-

Linda: To smoke this bong

Ken: Into the house to spread the wealth

Mimi: Into the House to foster health

Linda: To make a commotion

Loretta: To make it accessible

Nan:
Into the House to send the men home
Into the House to make it out own.
All:
The way is clear
Our-choice is good
We have no fear
The right wing should.
We made it so far,
We knew that we could.

Nancy:
These men are all too pervy
We’ll make the congress curvy.

(Stop)
Ken: Into the House
The senate too-

Nancy: To save the states-
Ken and Mimi: To follow Nancy
Linda: To fight-
Ken: To free-
Mimi: To gain-
Linda: To break-
Nancy: To save-
Linda: To kill-
Loretta: To cut off their testicles

ALL:
Into the House!
Into of the House!
Into the House!
And stay in the House
And happy ever after

Scene 2. Squint enters awkwardly, wearing women’s clothes and shoes.

Squint:
Shit! What the fuck is going on? I wake up in our hotel room and my wife’s
nowhere to be seen! What can Nancy be up to? And I have to take a shit, and the
toilet’s not working, but my clothes are gone, and my shoes too, so I had to put
on her clothes, and I go outside and lose my way, and now I don’t even know
where I am, and now I’ve REALLY gotta take a shit! Thank god, a portapotty!
(ejects guy in portapotty, jumps in, loud shitting sounds.)

(Stinge appears, also in women’s clothes. When Squint reappears they do a doubletake at each other.)

Stinge:
What is this, a cross-dresser convention? (They both look out at the audience and then at each other.) Who knows?

Squint:
Where are you from?

Scrooge:
Bonny Doon

Lois:
Atascadero

Stinge:
Rancho Cucamonga. You?

Squint:
Pinole, California. You with your wife?

Stinge:
Do I look like I’m with her? We came here together, sure. But when I woke up she was gone, no note, nothing. And my clothes were gone, so...

Squint:
Same with me. They must be up to something. I smell a rat!

Lois:
Shut up!

**Squint:**
Something’s fishy around here.

Stinge:
Cut the crap!

Lois:
I can’t!
Stinge:
Barbara's no whore.

Squint:
I didn’t mean that. Something political. Is your wife into politics?

Stinge:
Oh yeah! She’s always going on about what a mess Washington is, and what assholes male politicians are, and why don't more women like Wendy Davis go into politics . . .

Squint:
Yeah, that sounds just like my wife. But they don't want more women like Sarah Palin and Michele Bachmann, do they?

Stinge:
Course not! Whose idea was your trip to Washington?

Squint:
My wife’s, of course. I’d rather stay home and play golf.

Stinge:
Me too. But she said we had to be here today. And what she says has to happen always does happen.

Squint:
Yeah, in my house too. Sucks, but that's how it is.

Both:
Hit it, Peaches!

(They look at each other with compassion. Band plays the introduction to FEMINIST HUSBAND BLUES)

Squint:____ When we first met my wife was cute and nice
Stinge:____ When I proposed my wife was cute and nice
Both:____ But she became a feminist she turned as cold as ice

Stinge:____ When we were dating we saw eye to eye
Squint:____ When we got married we saw eye to eye
Stinge:____ Then she read The Second Sex and learned how to defy
Squint: Then it got worse—she studied more and more
Stinge: Then it got worse—we argued more and more
Both: And our happy household became a civil war

“In the Still of the Night”

Used to see eye to eye
Then she learned to defy
Now she acts cold and trite
And we fight every night
And I’m still never right
And I’m still never right

I remember our wedding day
We talked and stayed up late
New she never wants to play
She wants to legislate

Used to love my life
When we laughed and fucked and kissed
Oh what’s happened to my wife
She’s become a feminist
And now I’m never right
And now I’m never right

I just don’t understand
All I am is a man
And I’m still never right
And I’m still never right

“Act Like a Man”

oo woooo-oo woooo-oo
(Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck)
OO woooo-oo oo woooo-oo

We saw eye to eye
Books taught her to defy-eye,
By being cute and nih-ice to my friends
But like my father
Decided not to bother
Let her get those thuh-oughts in her head

She said act like a man
Help when you can
You’re not the man that I married (egalitarian)
Make a new day
Give us equal pay
In conclusion: (beat) women are equal to men

(falsetto imitating) blah, blah, blah, blah
(bass) fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck (nag, nag, nag, nag)

There’s no-oh maybe
You only make the babies
And cook me dinner when I co-ome home
Oh, stop your crying
You’re noh-oht even trying
I hate it that you always bitch and moan

Squint:
OK, ok. Maybe they’re pulling some kind of protest?

Stinge:
You think so? Let’s turn on the TV—maybe we can find out something.

TV announcer:
Breaking news! President Obama has just taken executive action no other President has ever dared to take! Congress is currently in recess, so the President has replaced leading Senators and Representatives with new, unknown figures! Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and House Majority Leader John Boehner are out, along with Ted Cruz, Rand Paul, Marco Rubio, and others! The Republicans say they’ll start impeachment proceedings immediately! The new Senators and Representatives are in their seats now, and they’re taking an active part in the debate. Listen to this! (camera shifts to the Senate chamber)

Maxine:
My fellow Representatives, it’s essential that we support the President’s initiative on immigration!

Anna:
She’s right, fellow Senators!

Linda:
Remember what the Statue of Liberty proclaims:
Loretta: “Give me your tired, your poor,
Janice: Your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free,
Zoe: The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,
Mary: Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,
Judy: I lift my lamp beside the golden door.”
Lucille: Are we going to abandon our tradition of welcoming those in need?

Susan: We can afford it, fellow citizens! We just need to ask those whom the American Dream has favored the most to do their part!

Announcer:
And they convinced them! Both houses voted unanimously to open immigration! And they agreed to raise taxes on the 1% to pay for their support! And it didn’t stop there!

Norma:
I hereby propose that we increase the minimum wage to $25 an hour all across this country!

Lynne:
This will make workers’ lives better, and those who have more income will spend more, and the whole economy will flourish!

Nancy:
Come on, let’s do it!

Announcer:
These brand new members nobody knows convinced them all! It’s a miracle!

Squint:
I know that guy . . . What’s his name? . . . He’s so familiar . . .

Announcer:
And it didn’t stop there! A special joint session of the Congress was held and one of those presidential replacements spoke to the whole throng. Here’s what he said.

Nancy:
Fellow Americans, extraordinary times call for extraordinary actions! Our august legislative bodies are in total gridlock, unable to agree on any action.
"The Gridlock Tango"

[Slow, in a whisper]
ALL: Block! Sex! Switch! Ve-to, Whistleblow, Bullshit

Announcer:
And now the 6 stubborn congresswomen of the California House of Representatives: In their rendition of 'The Gridlock Tango'!

ALL:
Block! Sex! Switch! Ve-to, Whistleblow, Bullshit
Block! Sex! Switch! Ve-to, Whistleblow, Bullshit
Block! Sex! Switch! Ve-to, Whistleblow, Bullshit
Block! Sex! Switch! Ve-to, Whistleblow, Bullshit
Block! Sex! Switch! Ve-to, Whistleblow, Bullshit

ALL:
They had it coming! Bi party shunning!
We let Obama take the blame
We won't surrender, for if we pass it

DEMS: (Right-wing-ers) win the game!

REP: We let those (Lib-er-als) win the game!

ALL:
Block! Sex! Switch! Ve-to, Whistleblow, Bullshit
Block! Sex! Switch! Ve-to, Whistleblow, Bullshit

BLOCK:
You know how corporations have these little habits that get you down? Like Monsanto!
Monsanto likes to screw over the farmers of America.
No not screw, block!
So, Congress goes into session one day
And I'm really irritated, and looking for a little sympathy, and there's another former Monsanto representative
Bitchin' about a regulation to print accurate information on the inseams of the box.
You know, screwin'. No, not screwin', blockin'! So, I said to him, I said, "You block that bill one more time." and he did.
So I took the gavel off the stand And I beat down two warning blows... into his head.
REPS: They had it coming, I ain’t succumin’
   I’ll let the House go up in flames
   If there’s a notion, to pass this motion
   I’ll Arab Spring up on all these dames!

SEX:
I met this young republican from San Francisco about two years ago
And he told me he was a big ol bread winner, we hit it off right away,
So, we formed a super pac. whisper aside: Naturally
He’d go off to work, Rake in the funds quid pro quo,
I’d schmooze all day with the public,
and reconvene at his place for dinner
Then he came out. “Right wing.” He told me
Right wing my ass.
Not only was he a homo disguised as a republican major domo,
he was also in support of same-Sex Marriage...
So that night, I log onto his twitter
You know, some politicians just can’t survive their dick-pics!

Reps: He had it coming, Plucked from the runnin’
His sexy scandals in headlines,
Cuz if you flub it, the public loves it!
Meanwhile my ratings rise to the skies...

SWITCH: (MIMI WALTERS?) (Republican switching on an issue because Obama supports it)
Now, we’re voting on healthcare reform
I’m seconds away from casting my “Yes” just to move the meeting forward
When in pops Obama in a zealous rage
“You be backin’ my plan?” He says
He was muggin and his ears were steaming
“You be backin’ my plan!”

(The floor breaks into a murmur, music stops)

Aside: We’re all a bit startled to discover that the Affordable Care
Act...apparently...is the same thing as...look around whisper Obama Care. wince!

OTHER CONGRESSLADY:
But we’ve voted on that bill!

ALL:
We’ve voted on that bill 54 times!
SWITCH:
They had it coming! They—

DEM:
Wait wait wait. You mean to tell me you all switched your votes because Barrak supported it?

Doris: No comment.

Ve-to: [Democrat. Sanchez? Immigration policy. In Spanish.]

Sanchez:
El GOP
Intendan....
Para empujar las leyes de inmigracon....
Atraves del Congreso
Este sistema de Jim Crow!
Supremacia Masulina Blanca!!!!
Parulla Fronteriza Mierda!!!!!!!
ME CAGO EN TU MADRE!!!
BESA MI CULO, PENDEJO!!!!!

OTHER CONGRESSLADY: Yeah, but will it pass?
Sanchez: (over pronouncing) VE-TO! Executive Authority!.... PUTA!

All: whisper They had it coming They had it coming

WHISTLEBLOW (DEM)
Our comrades at N.S.A. relied on this secret act
But their contractor, Edward Snowden struggled with surveillance taps
With the last data he accessed
He hid 3billion bits in a row
Emails, powerpoints, usernames, passwords, text messages, phone calls, private records, One right after another
Well, out of spite, or perhaps just for show, Snowden stuns the nation with a loud Whistleblow.
The media erupts, musin’ and fussin over the cyber attacks, while the Agency denies. So I go in to see for myself.
I crack the code, find a folder called “Reasonable Suspicion”,
And there’s data from target two billion and three, your private records!
Well, I was in such a state of shock, I completely blacked out I can’t remember a thing, it wasn’t until later When I had spilled the beans to the press I even knew what I had said—

[resume music]

ALL:

The truth was coming! Now Snowden’s running, The feds were spying all along,

WHISTLEBLOW:

I didn’t blow it, but if I blew it, How could you tell me that I was wrong?

ALL:

Here’s to the heroes—who—stood up for something, be bold & rally behind this song!

______________________________

BULLSHIT (DEMOCRAT):

They love bullshiting the budget, more than you could possibly know. They like a budget that supports the military and such, you know

Yes, there is always money for weaponry

Your tax dollars hard at work funding weaponry

And on the way, they cut healthcare, welfare, pensions, and education!

I guess you could say it’s a matter of perspective...

They see it as “Bullshit” and I see it as..... THE most important thing we can offer our young people to ensure we build a better more educated America!

( Beginning a rant as the music fades out)

Take education for example. You know, I sent my daughter to a public institution. The kind that claims its been questioning authority since 1965. An independent, revolutionary, progressive school for the students. A school just. Like. This.

Well tuition crept up to the budget which trickled down from the state and somewhere along the way got lost in the pockets of Napolitano, Gould, Varner and all the other UC regents, sittin’ cozy in their chairs.  Poof!

–Well you know what, I think that’s Bullshit.
I guess you can say it’s a matter of ethical differences. They saw education as a privilege reserved for the few, and I saw it as a universal right extended to everyone instead.

(music starts again)

The dirty bums, bums, bums, bums, bums
They had it comin’, they had it comin’
They had it comin’ all along
We’ll never discuss or reach consensus (No!)
Deadlock and let this stale-mate drag on!

TO EACHOTHER (Reps echo Dems)
You had it coming! (You had it coming)
Bi party shunning! (I ain’t succumin’)
We let Obama take the blame
We won’t surrender, for if we pass it

DEMS: We let those Right-wing-ers win the game!

REP: We let those Lib-er-als win the game!

(EACH SIMULTANEOUSLY)
You BLOCK that bill one more time.
Right Wing my ass!
54 times!
Este sistema de JIM CROW
Two billion and three, your private records!
Ethical Differences.

Block! Sex! Switch! Ve-to, Whistleblow, Bullshit

**Announcer:** But they didn’t just layout the problems, they offered a solution.

Nancy:
We must learn how to take a completely different approach to politics, and here’s my suggestion: turn over the entire government to women! *(Huge uproar)*

Zoe:
Now colleagues, don’t overreact!

Karen:
This isn’t as radical a change as it may seem. Statistics show clearly that women
are more honest than men. **Janice:** more law-abiding. **Loretta:** more trustworthy.

**Susan:**
Women loan each other things—dresses, jewelry, cash—with no lawyers involved and never a hint of fraud.

**Mary:**
Does any man do that?

**Squint:**
Of course not, you idiot!

**Norma:**
And women don’t betray each other!

**Jackie:**
don’t sue each other,

**Anna:**
and don’t subvert democracy.

**Julia:**
And this is the only remedy for our problems that has never been tried.

**Barbara:**
Give women a chance to prove what they can do!

**Stinge:**
There’s something about that fellow . . . his voice . . . his gestures . . . where have I seen him before?

**Announcer:**
Well, the Tea Partiers didn't go for this at all, but the other Senators and Representatives thought that they had nothing to lose but their gridlock, and if the women didn’t succeed in improving things then people could blame **them** instead of the male Congressmen. The measure passed by a strong majority!

**Stinge:**
So what does this mean? We don’t have to be responsible for our households? So I don’t have to go to work any more, my wife does?

**Squint:**
Why not? If they’re in control of the government, shouldn’t they be in charge of
the household income? Just think—no more setting the alarm to get to the office on time, just roll over, far as much as we want, and go back to sleep. **Scrooge:** and I can roll over and fart in bed as much as I want!

Stinge:
But if women are in charge of everything, they might force us to screw them when we’re not, er, up to it. And if we couldn’t satisfy them they might stop feeding us—yikes!

Squint:
Damn, if only we could give ourselves blow jobs we could screw and eat at the same time! Yum yum! (*he tries to demonstrate; Stinge looks disgusted*) Oh never mind!

Stinge:
It’s no fun doing it under duress!

Squint:
Oh come on, doing it under a dress can be great!

Stinge:
Ha ha. Oh yeah, fucking for the good of the country is noble.

Squint:
And that’s really no bull! You know what our forefathers say, no matter how stupid our decisions are they turn out all right in the end! (*pointing to his ass*)

Stinge:
Goodbye, pal; good luck finding your clothes—and your wife.

Squint:
Likewise—asshole. (*they leave*)

**“The Fate of My Phallus”**

It's a very nice gown
It's a gown with a draft
I can feel the wind flowing through
From my fore to my aft
But I look rather daft
And my neighbors, they laughed
Oh, I feel so embarrassed
Now I think that I know
What it's like for a girl
On the street to be harrassed
Oh, I can't find my pants
I don’t know where they’ve gone to
And out here there’s a chance
Of exposing my lance
If I should get aroused
It would clearly protrude
As if I were quite nude
Without pants
where its usually housed

But I shan’t have to fear
A protuberant boner
It’s so cold on the street
Anyone I should meet
Would have trouble to pick
Out my poor shriveled prick
So it’s safe out of sight
But I can’t stand this cold very long
I should go back inside
For the sake of my sad freezing dong

I should get out of here
Disappear
For I’m starting to fear
For the fate of my phallus

Scene 3. The women return from Congress, still fearful they may be discovered.

“Congressladies”
All my Congress ladies
(All the Congress ladies)
All my Congress ladies
(All the Congress ladies)
All my Congress ladies
(All the Congress ladies)
All the Congress ladies
Now pull your pants up!

Up in the house, Just snuck out
Our husbands, they don’t know a thing
They’re nasty old beards, we’ve gotta change gears
Cause no one’s representing me
All the women, we need attention
Need equal representation
You've had you're turn, and now you gon learn
What the world is really like when women lead

We don't like it so we're gonna pass a bill on it
We don't like it so we're gonna pass a bill on it
All the old guys took America and shit on it
We don't that it so we're gonna pass a bill on it
Wuh uh oh uh oh oh uh oh uh oh
Wuh uh oh uh oh oh uh oh uh oh

We don't like it so we're gonna pass a bill on it
We don't like it if it doesn't have a clit on it
We don't like it so we're gonna pass a bill on it
Wuh uh oh uh oh oh uh oh uh oh
Wuh uh oh uh oh oh uh oh oh

Oh! The patriarchal bullshit in this world
For every single girl
Control is what we prefer, it's what we deserve
Not a man to speak for me, make laws for me
Fulfill manifest destiny, starting wars and dropping bombs
And the right to bear arms
Do whatever they want
Well we won't just go along
With your old white man hard on

All my Congress ladies
(All the Congress ladies)
All my Congress ladies
(All the Congress ladies)
All my Congress ladies
(All the Congress ladies)
All the Congress ladies
Now pull your pants up!

Wuh uh oh uh oh oh uh oh uh uh oh
Wuh uh oh uh oh oh uh oh uh uh oh

Mimi:
Nancy! You've changed your outfit! Is it ok that we've changed ours?
Nancy:
Yes, of course! We don't want anyone to find out who those substitute Congressmen really were.

Barbara:
And besides, now that they've voted for women to have the power, we have no reason to masquerade as the lesser gender!

Women:
Right! Rah rah rah! Nancy for President!

Nancy:
No, Obama is still President, and we'll work closely with him. But because at the moment of crisis you showed yourselves fearless, YOU all are going to be my cabinet!

Women:
Nancy, you're our Commander in Chief! (They quickly change into female dress and stow the male costumes away. Squint suddenly appears, still in female clothes.)

Squint:
Nancy, where have you been?

Nancy:
What business is that of yours, husband?

Squint:
It's a husband's business to make sure his wife is behaving herself!

Nancy:
Do you see any signs that I've been misbehaving? (Squint comes closer and examines her suspiciously) Smell any perfume?

Squint:
No. So what? You could be screwing around without perfume.

Nancy:
Not my style, as you ought to know. And darling, look at what you're wearing. Have you been behaving yourself, or—???

Squint:
This is because you disappeared from our hotel room with my clothes! Where are they, dammit?
Nancy:
Right here, sweetie—see? I took them to the cleaners—I knew you’d want to look your best when we visit the Capitol and the White House! I had your shoes polished too.

Squint:
Awww, honey, you’re so good to me. Thank you!

Stinge:
Say, did you hear what happened in Congress?

Barbara:
No. I thought they were in recess.

Stinge:
Just got back in session. And guess what they decided? It’s wild and crazy, but you’re going to love it. They decided to put the women in charge of the whole country!!!

Barbara:
Really! That’s wonderful! But which women? The women already in Congress?

(Nancy’s iPhone rings)

Nancy:
Hello? Mr. President! How great to hear—(she listens) Really? Are you sure? I understand, sir. Thank you for your confidence—I’m so honored!

Squint:
The President called you? What about?

Nancy:
About the improvement of this whole country!

(Stinge has heard the ruckus and appears.)

Squint:
Yeah? And who’s going to make that happen?

Mimi: I am!
Jackie: We are!
Anna: All the women here—
Linda: and more all over the land!
Loretta: Everything’s going to be different!
Maxine: The United States is going to live up to its reputation as a GREAT Society!
Judy: No more inequality of income!
Doris: No more illegal foreclosures!
Susan: No more racial discrimination!
Zoe: No more corrupt politicians!
Lynne: No more tax evasion by rich corporations!
Janice: No more unwinnable wars!
Julia: No more lies from public officials!
Norma: No more police brutality!
Karen: No more—

Squint:  
(interrupts) What bullshit! Who can believe such crap?

Stinge:  
Squint, these ideas are great! Unless they turn out to be impossible …

Diane:  
No more petty theft, nobody going hungry, no violence against women, no discrimination against gay people—

Stinge:  
Come on, the United States isn’t such a bad place. We do some really good stuff! We invented democracy. We put a man on the moon. We have liberty and justice for all! Plus, it was an American that created the Oreo Pizza….

Barbara:  
(sarcastic as fuck) Oh sure. The US is GREAT.

Diane:  
(sarcastic as fuck) We have the freedom to exploit workers in developing countries so we Americans never need lift a finger.

Nancy:  
(sarcastic as fuck) We spend billions of taxpayer dollars to provide our military with the finest tools of destruction money can buy.

Barbara:  
(sarcastic as fuck) We wage wars over seas, drop bombs in the name of democracy. What we really need is more of that!
Squint:
Yeah! It’s great!

Stinge:
What’s the problem?

Barbara:
(sarcastic as fuuuuck) Oh no problem! You’re so RIGHT honey. Just think of all the wonderful ways our troops are helping the citizens of the world!

“Drone Strikes”

War was fun with attacks by land and sea
Everyday was a Saudi killing spree
But gone the days of knocking down their door
Cause now we can just kill them from offshore

Drone Strikes, raining on me
Nothing but Drone Strikes, do I see
Deathbirds, flying along
Nothing but deathbirds
Dropping bombs

Never saw the house leaning far right
Never said it would be a fair fight
Flying a drone is easy as pie
Blowing up towns takes only one guy

Air raids, all of them gone
Nothing but Drone Strikes from now on

Barbara:
So lets let drones destroy entire towns and murder innocent people while we sit back at watch! That’s what you want more of?!

Stinge:
….. Yes?

Nancy, Barbara and Diane:
NO!
Nancy:
Can't you see? We can't let things go on like this!

Squint:
So much negativity! What's going to improve?

Nancy:
Everything. Just let me lay it out for you.

Squint:
Yeah go ahead and lay—you know how to do that alright!

Stinge:
Back off Squint, I wanna hear what they propose.

Barbara:
I feel confident my ideas are valid, but is the audience ready to accept radical change? Or will they stick with what they know? That's what I'm afraid of.

Nancy:
Let's ask em. Barbara: Hey, all of you out there, do you want more of what we've got now?

(Audience roars) "Hell no!"

Barbara:
Very well, we'll explain, but please don't interrupt or object until you understand clearly what we're proposing. Here goes.

Karen:
Everyone in this country will own everything communally!

Loretta:
No more rich people paying lower taxes than their secretaries!

Susan;
No more 1 percenters buying yachts while the 99 percent can’t afford decent food!

Lynne:
No more corporations kicking people out of rent-controlled apartments for the techies!
Mary:
No more gated communities!

Mimi:
No more private planes polluting the atmosphere!

Squint:
So how is that going to come about? Who’s going to wave the magic wand?

Nancy (furious): You’re so obnoxious that if I were planning to eat shit you’d insist on taking the first bite! Let me spell it out for you. We’re making new laws.

Nancy:
First, every single thing will be the common property of all—land, money, housing, food, everything! From this stock we women will distribute everything to people as they need it.

Squint:
How about those who hide their wealth in secret Swiss bank accounts? Stinge: And U.S. corporations which don’t pay U.S. taxes?

Barbara:
We’ll ferret every one of them out! They will all have to pay their fair share! And besides, having extra money won’t do anyone any good anyway, because everyone will have everything they need—nutritious food (no more junk fastfood), warm clothes, decent housing—

Zoe:
What about wine?

Nancy:
(smiles) My dear, I’m from California. It’s a patriotic duty to drink our state beverage!

Squint:
Wait a minute! Those who have what they need are bigger thieves than those who don’t!

Stinge:
Oh, I get it. We are going to live under brand new laws. Now that we’re living
communally, sharing everything, no one gains anything by not sharing their stuff!

Squint:
Oh, yeah? What if a guy sees a girl and wants to screw her? Won’t he need some of his own money to give her, in order to commune with her—in bed?

Nancy:
He won’t have to pay her— he’ll sleep with her for free! If she likes him, that is.

Barbara:
Women will be able to be with any man (or woman!) they like, whenever they like, for as long as they both like.

Squint:
Really? What happens if a woman gets pregnant?

Barbara:
No problem! All children will be legitimate, welcomed and supported by the state! And abortion will always be an option if the woman isn’t ready for motherhood.

“More Abortion Controls”

I admit I’ve got a lot of strong opinions
And most people seem to think that
I’m a bitch
But the world’s really fucked
And with any kind of luck
We can change this country even just a smitch
(Or break it!)
And if one thing really sets my blood to boiling
It’s an issue we should long have put to rest
Congressladies, listen well
I’m telling you, to hell
With these tyrannous, archaic, and regressed
(Oppressive)

More abortion controls
They think we need
Probes jammed up in your vagina
Gotta hear the ultrasound
And does this help us?
Fucking NO!

Hardcore abortion controls
Writ by old men
If they haven’t the equipment
Then why should they make the rules?
Does it hurt them?
What a joke!

Now the oldest fart you know
Thinks abortion’s a no-go
And feels similarly of condoms and the pill
He goes home and fucks his whore
Then comes here and takes the floor
To write more abortion controls!

“Think of Me”

Think of me, Please don’t abort me
Let me have my birth
I know I’m just a cluster of issue
But my life has worth

I’m in your womb, Don’t put me in a tomb
Think of the tax breaks you shall see
Just please promise to keep that coat hanger far from me

Think about our lord and savior Christ
Tell me what would jesus do?
do you want to go to hell like
homos and the jews

Think of mobs of
Christian protesters
think about my life
and forget yours

Think of me, think of my future
nobel prize winner
I may find the cure to aids,
ebola, and cancer

Yes I may be a lowly crack baby
But my nail growth is bound to start
So please promise me that you won’t vaginal…
Vaaaaaj. Vaaaaaj. Vaaaaaginal… Probe me!

Stinge:
I still don’t understand how these news laws are fair. The attractive women will be the ones everyone wants to screw!

Barbara:
Your thinking is so out of date! You think only men have the right to choose who they want to have sex with? Well, under our new laws, if a woman considered less desirable wants a man, he’ll have to fuck her before he can get the babe he wants into bed.

Stinge:
What?! What about us old guys? If we have to screw an ugly woman our cocks won’t have anything left for—later.

Barbara:
Don’t worry, darling. The ladies won’t fight over you.

Stinge:
Huh?

Barbara:
The ones you don’t want to fuck—they won’t care.

Squint:
So—you women have fixed it so none of you will have an empty hole, but what are we men going to do? You’ll avoid older men and go for the young studs.

Nancy:
But the duds will stick close to the studs, and women won’t be allowed to fuck the studs until they’ve satisfied the duds.

Squint:
So if you had a chance to screw, say, Ryan Gosling, first you’d have to service Newt Gingrich? Hoo hah!

Nancy:
(not thrilled but faithful to her creed) Yes, that’s—right.
Stinge:
Now that’s a really democratic idea! When the guy in an Armani suit and gold cufflinks is about to score, a scruffy old dude in sneakers steps in and says “Wait till I’m finished with her and then you can take your turn!”

Squint:
But how will any man know who his children are?

Nancy:
Why should they care? Children will look at all men of the right age as their fathers.

Squint:
That’s dangerous. Kids these days have little enough respect for their fathers as it is. If they think any old guy might be their dad they’ll think nothing of stealing his money and beating him up if he catches them.

Nancy:
Oh no, that will NOT happen. Anyone who sees a senior citizen being done wrong will step in and help because he might be their father!

Squint:
But suppose some juvenile delinquent calls me Father—yuck!

Stinge:
Or maybe Perez Hilton will come up, scream “Daddy darling!” and give you a big wet kiss—what fun!

Squint:
But who’s going to do all the work and produce the goods?

Mimi:
The immigrants. Everyone we let in will be required to put in twenty-five years of hard labor and then they’ll have earned their citizenship.

Squint:
So we citizens will just lounge around the pool and then have a barbecue? Great!

Stinge:
But what if someone gets sued and loses his case? How will he be able to pay the fine?

Nancy:
There won’t be any lawsuits! Why should there be?

Stinge:
Suppose I lend someone money and he refuses to pay it back?

Barbara:
How could you do that, when everything is owned in common? You’d have to have stolen the money in the first place! But why should anyone steal anything when he’s already part-owner of it?

Barbara:
And suppose someone does grab something of yours, like your watch—you just go to the communal store and get another one!

Nancy:
Here’s another step: cities are going to become one big household! We’ll break down the walls between houses and share everything with each other.

Squint:
**But where** will we all eat?

Dianne:
All the best restaurants will open their doors to all comers! No more waiting for reservations at Nora’s and Riz here in D.C. (each with a talented female chef), The Four Seasons in New York, The French Laundry in the wine country, Ristorante Avanti in Santa Cruz, and many more! Glorious food, cocktails and vintage wine will be provided to all, free!

Stinge:
Now this is really incredible! How could that happen?

Squint:
What bullshit!

*(Nancy and chorus sing *NEW WORLD* seductively)*

It’s time now to let yourself go
Just come on and go with the flow
You think it’s a blue world
But this is a new world
That’s why this song’s so a propos

The system has totally changed
Its purpose has been rearranged
It will not oppress you
Instead it will bless you
We know that this all seems so strange

All citizens get a good break
The state will now give, not just take
It won't try to fine you
Instead wine and dine you
You'll literally take the cake

And then after dinner no checks!
And then after dinner what's next?
You'll walk down the alley
And you'll have to dally
To hear all the offers of sex

“Come over here, handsome, and see
what I've got to offer, for free”
(Squint intervenes as an old woman)
“Just hold on, Sonny,
She'll be your honey
But not until you have fucked me!”

(Nancy and chorus continue)
You're wrong; that restriction applies
only to gorgeous young guys
(A woman imitates an old man)
“Come here, young beauty.
You know it's your duty
To screw first us ugly old guys!”

Nancy:
All right, husband, I must be off. Got to get the pooling of assets going, and make sure the restaurants are all ready for the communal meals, and tell the prostitutes to quit soliciting.

Scrooge:
What, no whores? Why not?

Barbara:
Because they would upset the communal sex system we've so carefully arranged untainted by money.
Stinge:
I see what you mean: think these dames could compete with professional sex
workers? (Chorus respond vociferously)

Squint:
Dearest wife, let me go with you. Everyone will look at me and say “That’s the
Commander in Chief’s husband”—just like Bill Clinton with Hillary! (he leaves
following Nancy)

Stinge:
How am I ever going to get laid with these new sex laws?

“I Like it Both Ways”

The need is dire, I think I’ll try her
But dick is okay, I like it both ways
When she pulls two legs apart
And he makes me hard
Night and day, ’cause I like it both ways

(You can ride!) You can go ahead and ride me
(Get inside!) Come on big guy get inside me
(So you’re bi?) I’m not straight and I am not gay
I like it both ways

This guy’s on fire, she will perspire
Yes I know it’s not God’s way
But I like it both ways

(You can ride!) You can go ahead and ride me
(Get inside!) Come on big guy get inside me
(So you’re bi?) I’m not straight and I am not gay

Now you can see why I’m getting so hard
Me inside her, him inside me, yeah
Vagina or penis, I want you to go
So deep down inside of me

Girls I admire
And boys are drier
What else can I say?
I like it both ways
Yes, I like it both ways

Scene 4. (Stinge comes out carrying various items and shows them to the Chorus.)

Stinge:
OK, I’m complying with the mandate, hard as it is, and turning in my property to the common store. Look, here’s my laptop, a 13” Macbook Air 512gb Solid State Drive with 32gb of RAM, Retina Display, Thunderbolt, Full Office Suite, Adobe Photoshop, and Matlab 2k15. (he kisses it, tearing up) I hope the gradeschool kid who gets you appreciates you, darling! At least I still have my—a “type writer”? I remember vaguely . . . IBM Selectric, cute little ball that went tictic tictic tictic tictic tictic tictic tictic tictic tictic tictic tictic tictic tictic tictic tictic tictic tictic tictic tictic tictic tictic tictic tictic tictic tictic . . . (sighs) . . . OK, and now my Chromecast . . . No more Netflix? No more YouTube? I guess I still have some VHS tapes around somewhere . . . and now—oh no! (bursts into tears) my iPhone 6Plus! This is the hardest of all! I’ll be so alone, so all alone! And this is just now . . . when I get home, having to share my house with who knows who . . . and my stocks and bonds . . . how am I going to be able to pay for college for my kids? . . . Well, I guess if everybody is sharing we’ll all be ok...

Scrooge:
(stands up in the audience and yells as he walks towards the stage) You’ve got to be kidding! Give up all your possessions because some crazy women tell you to do it? Don’t you understand that this is worse than the socialism of that asshole FDR? It’s COMMUNISM!—a social experiment that was tried in the last century and totally failed! Look at the Soviet Union—are they still doing it? Hell no, they’re becoming capitalists as fast as they can! Ditto China! The only country that’s still communist is North Korea, and their people are miserable, starving, desperate! (by now he’s onstage)

Stinge:
I know what you mean. It’s scary, but if our legislators have voted for this I guess we have to trust them and see how it goes.

Scrooge:
You’re an idiot! Just because women have passed some laws, we have to obey them? Just hire a smart lawyer and you can always do what you want.

Stinge:
But sometimes it goes the other way—look what happened to Michael Brown in Ferguson when he tussled with the cops.
Scrooge:  
Because he didn't have a gun. Open carry and stand your ground—it's the American Way. Hit it, Peaches!

“An Assault Rifle Shooter”

If you are gonna get things done,  
A person first must have a gun.  
You load the gun and click!  
Now you can aim.  
We’re patriots for heaven’s sake  
Our guns you shall not take,  
A shooting spree! It’s very dear to me...  
An assault rifle shooter takes our enemies all down.  
The radicals all down  
The liberals all down  
An assault rifle shooter takes the Democrats all down  
In the most gun-rightful way

Stinge:  
So you’re not going to put your property into the communal pool?

Scrooge:  
Not until I see how things pan out.

Stinge:  
You think we shouldn’t give, just take?

Scrooge:  
Of course. What do the rich folks do? They take and take and take. Does Donald Trump give? He pays lower taxes than his secretary does.

Stinge:  
Warren Buffett is rich, and he thinks he should pay more taxes than his secretary.

Scrooge:  
Let him! He can send a check straight to the White House and I’m sure they’ll cash it! But I’ll imitate Donald Trump.

Stinge:  
Because you’re a greedy bastard just like him.
Scrooge:
Haven't you heard? Gordon Gekko was right. Greed is good. Greed works! Greed separates the stupid from the smart! Greed rewards advanced thinking. Greed leads to progress! Don't you believe in meritocracy? Haven't you read Ayn Rand?

Stinge:
I'm going to be a good citizen, obey the law, do the right thing, and share!

Scrooge:
You're an idiot. At least stall for a while to see what others do—

Stinge:
And then what?

Scrooge:
Keep delaying, till there's a new election, or the President gets impeached, or whatever. There's an earthquake, or a terrorist attack—{(he looks at the audience)}
You know the American people, they'll change their minds in a minute. No sense of history at all, ha ha!

Linda:
All American citizens listen up! Male, female, young, old, to all of you. Our wonderful leader Nancy brings good news, and the news is FOOD! FREE food!
Lynne: And WINE, FREE wine!
Norma: Head for your favorite restaurant. Wherever you go, there'll be plenty for all, served by gorgeous waitresses and waiters!
Doris: All the wine you want, whether you prefer cabernet or chardonnay!

Janice:
And the food—juicy steaks, the best fish filets sizzling on the grill, delicious sauces, fresh vegetables, the sweetest desserts you can imagine.
Anna: There are a few changes, of course. Wonderful meals prepared for ALL—no individual ordering. Healthy, nutritious food.
Maxine: Nothing decadent like foie gras or potato chips.
Susan: Communal tables, so you can meet new people of all colors and classes.
Jackie: There'll be No wasting food; if you don't eat what you order you'll spend some time wash dishes to make up.
Zoe: No taking extra food or wine home.
Julia: All right, get going—the hot rolls are already on the tables!
Judy: All you have to do is sit down and stuff your faces.
Scrooge:
Let’s go! If this is what the lawmakers have decided, we have to go along with it, don’t we?

Stinge:
Who’s “we,” Mr. Me First? Now all of a sudden you’re into sharing? And you haven’t turned your property in to the communal store! If you don’t do that you have NO RIGHT to a free dinner!

Scrooge: I’ll do it soon. After we eat. There are undoubtedly others who will be even later than me in getting their stuff together.

Stinge:
So you’ll claim your food regardless?

Scrooge:
I’m magnanimously putting aside my personal feelings. It’s my patriotic duty as a loyal citizen to aid the community in this bold social experiment!

Stinge:
What if they won’t admit you?

Scrooge:
I’ll ram my way in!

Stinge:
What if they beat you up?

Scrooge:
I’ll beat them—in court!

Stinge:
I don’t think courts are going to be quite the same as they were. A female judge, and a female jury—they’ll laugh at you.

Scrooge:
Then I’ll take a stand!
Stinge:
On what?

Scrooge:
Near the door to the restaurant kitchen, and steal the food as they bring it in!

Stinge:
Yeah, right. (sarcastically) Good luck! I'm taking my stuff to the communal store. So long.

Scrooge:
Oh, please let me help you carry it.

Stinge:
Not a chance! You might claim it was your own property you're donating. Fuck off! (exit)

Scrooge:
Now what am I going to do? I never anticipated this horrible turn of events. How can this disaster have happened? How can we turn things around? I can only pray to my gods. Larry Summers! Tim Geithner! Ben Bernanke! The brothers Koch! I've always believed in you. Help me! Save me! (receiving no answer, he slumps, weeps, and makes his way offstage)

"Part of His World"

Look at us girls
Doesn't it suck?
To live in a world where people care who you fuck?
Wouldn't you think the government
Has better things to do?

Look at this tramp
Huge fucking slut
How many boners can fit in her butt?
Looking at her you might think
Damn, what an uptight bitch?
I've had pregnancy scares a plenty
I've had street harassers galore
You want angry texts from guys who didn't reciprocate my feelings?
I've got twenty! (Girls say “what?”) This week! ("ohhh")
But who cares?
No big deal
I’m a whore
I own a skirt that’s above my knees
I got too drunk at all those frat parties
Walking downtown without – what’s that word?
Oh – mace!

I’m glad I’m the star of your sex fantasies
All I can offer is a raunchy strip tease
What’s a thigh gap and why does it, umm-
Exist?

Up where we cook, up where we clean
Up where there’s no reason for a degree
Under his lead – I’m lucky to be
Part of his world

What would I give if I could rid the world of slut shaming?
What would I pay to live a day free of molests?
Bet’cha someday, we’ll get to slay
All the misogynistic theories
We’re bright young women – wait are you listenin’?
Or hooked on my breasts?
Yeah, I own a skirt that’s above my knees
And I got turned up at all those frat parties
Walking downtown without – what’s the word?
Concern?

Now it’s my turn
Have sex when you yearn
And don’t be afraid to take a queer turn!
Out of men’s lead
No longer I’ll be
Part of his world!

**Scene 5.**

Girl:
I’ve been waiting for 2 hours. Why hasn’t he texted me back?

Youth:
*(enters from vom)* Hey babe. I was just finishing my extra credit physics homework
for Ms. Thompson. What r u up 2?
Girl:
Oh cool. U r so smart. R u still coming over TONIGHT?

Youth:
I want 2. Are your parents home TONIGHT?

Girl:
They won’t be back till tomorrow night. Hehe.

Youth:
Oh cool.... So ....... what r we gonna do.... tonight?

Girl:
Hehe...IDK... u tell me ... winky face

(Girl and Youth break from texting and look out imaginary windows. They begin to sing Tonight)

Youth:
Tonight...

Girl:
Tonight...

Youth:
Won’t be just any night...

Girl:
Tonight there will be no morning star!

Both:
Tonight, tonight, I’ll see my love tonight
And for us, stars will stop where they are!

Youth:
(says to himself) Oh man oh man. I’m gonna get things started. (angles body to take dick pic) Send!

Girl:
(opens text and sees dick pic, giggles, turns head and phone to see picture) OOOOH!

Barbara Bush:
(enters and peeks over girls shoulder) Wowee. Look at the size of that ding a ling!
Girl:
Excuse you. This is a private conversation, Hag.

Barbara Bush:
Excuse me? Excuse you. Don’t you know who you’re talking to? Bow down to the Bush. Barbara Bush that is.

Girl:
Uhh. Who?

Barbara Bush:
Google me later. First Lady 1989. Now move over and let me see that ding a ling.

Girl:
It’s… It’s….None of your business, Babs!

Barbara Bush:
Please, refer to me as the Fat Silver Fox. You know the rules, sweet stuff. If you’re banging some dong tonight, I legally get to get in on the action. Or things are gonna get ugly.

Girl:
It can’t get any uglier than you.

Barbara Bush:
(to the audience) You think that now.

(girl leaves)

Barbara Bush:
(watching girl run off, groans) I remember when my ass looked like that.

(Nancy Reagan enters from the port-a-potty)

Nancy Reagan:
You know very well that your ass never looked like that, Barbara.

Barbara Bush:
Oh God, Nancy Reagan? Who told you there was gonna be a burgeoning young hunk here?

Nancy Reagan:
Oh, looking to get laid tonight? Good luck., have you whacked your bush since ’93?

Barbara Bush:
Of course not, men like a little bit of foliage... But you wouldn't know that.

Nancy Reagan:
Oh, I know what men like... Just ask 1950's Hollywood.

Barbara Bush:
Give it up, Nancy. No one at UCSC even knows you were ever an actress.

Nancy Reagan:
(short, desperate look to the audience) Well I was. Anyway, do you actually think you’re screwing this fresh young buck?

Barbara Bush:
That doesn’t concern you.

Nancy Reagan:
What? Afraid I’ll get to him first? Just like I was first lady before you?

Barbara Bush:
Suck my ass.

Nancy Reagan:
You’re just jealous George kissed Ronny’s ass more than he ever kissed yours.
(Cougars stride in)

Cougar 1:
Did someone say ass kissing?

Cougar 3:
I will fuck anything right now!

Cougar 2:
I am literally so fucking horny.

Cougar 3:
My vagina is ready for a hot dog eating competition.

Cougar 2:
Well, my vagina is like a magnet...for dicks.
Cougar 1:
My vagina is a BLACK HOLE that will suck up all phallic shaped objects in this great nation.

Cougar 3:
God bless America.

Barbara Bush:
(to Nancy Reagan, panicked) If those horny congressladies sink their claws into that dong, neither of us stand a chance! (to cougars) This is strictly First Lady business, girls.

Nancy Reagan:
Yes, run along back to the house.

Cougar 2:
Sounds like you’ve got something to hide. Why else would you want us to leave?

Cougar 3:
You looking for some trouble tonight?

Barbara Bush:
Trouble is my middle name

Cougar 1:
You know very well that if there is some young dick out there, we’ll find it first. We always get-

Cougar 2:
that-

Cougars 3:
dong

(Cougars high five each other, snicker and leave)

Barbara Bush:
(with urgency) We have to get to the boy before they do!

Nancy Reagan:
But how?
Barbara Bush:
You look down there. I’ll check in here. (*Nancy Reagan goes into port-a-potty.*)

(*Phone notification*)
(*Youth enters panicked*)

Youth:
(*Texting*) Was the picture too much? Oh god. It was too much wasn’t it. It was an accident, I’m sorry I don’t know what came over me. You probably never want to see me again.

Barbara Bush:
(*sees phone*) That girl left her beeping contraption on the ground. (*picks up phone*)
Well well well, what do we have here? (*sees text thread*) ooooh!! Barbara like.
(*texting boy*) Thanks for the pic hottie.

Youth: Oh, you liked it?


“I WILL SURVIVE”

At first I was ashamed
I was horrified
George knew he was lame
and I never glorified

But then I gathered all my strength
fixing every single wrong
and I hit the bong
and I learned how to please that dong

And now Bab’s back
This deathly face
If I catch you talking shit
I’ll have you buried without a trace

I should have dropped that AIDS baby
I should have locked my son away
If I had known for just one second
He’d embarrass this count-ray

Go on now go! Bush wants some more!
I’ll turn around now
So you can play with my back door

Weren’t you the one who said you’d never be my guy
Did you think I’d crumble
or that George could make me cry?

Oh no not I
I’ll suck it dry
as long as I know you’ve got dick
You’ll always be my guy

I’ve got plump lips I could give
an acid wit you must forgive
and I don’t tell lies!
I’ll suck it dry

(Song broken by Youth’s entrance)

Youth:
Hey! Hey? What’s Barbara Bush doing sitting on Peaches’ Piano?

Barbara Bush:
Got a date tonight?

Youth:
Yeah I do! I just don’t know where I’m supposed to meet her. Excuse me for a second. (Youth calls his girl’s phone and it rings but in Hag’s hand) Whaa—

Barbara Bush:
(answers on girl’s phone) Hello Hottie. (hangs up phone and walks closer to youth, stroking his chest) I’ve seen the picture. Now let me see the real ding a ling.

(Girl enters)

Girl:
What the hell?! You have my phone? I’ve been looking for it forever. (sees boy) I’ve been looking for you too. (they start to embrace)

Barbara Bush:
ah ah ah, don’t you remember THE LAW? His firm booty is mine first. You can have sloppy seconds tight puss.
Youth:
How am I supposed to get hard looking at you?

Barbara Bush:
A tunnel is still a tunnel.

Girl:
Ewww! You’re crazy if you think he’ll choose you over me.

Barbara Bush:
He doesn’t have a choice. (hands Youth a scroll) Don’t you remember? (turns to youth)
Our congressladies have hereby declared that if you want to do ... (referring to the girl) that... You have to do this first.
Youth:
(to girl, referring to hag) Damn law. She’s right. (to hag) But, I love her, doesn’t that count for anything?

Girl:
Babe, there’s no use trying to fight it. A law is a law. It says here: “An attractive young man must first service an uglier women before he can be with the women he actually desires. xoxo congress-girl.”

Youth:
(turning to Girl) I’ll only be thinking of you the whole time.

Barbara Bush:
Whatever gets you there, boy!
(BB shoo’s Girl off stage, Girl exits)
(Barbara Bush and Youth walk down alley)

Barbara Bush:
I’m going to take you somewhere real special...

(Barbara Bush opens port-a-potty)

(Nancy Reagan in port-a-potty, she grabs the Youth)

Barbara B: Nancy Reagan, why am I not surprised to find you in a port-a-potty? Snorting lines?

Nancy R: Through the course of my career, I’ve learned that whenever questioned about my drug use, always Just. Say. NO.
Nancy Reagan:
I thought I smelled some young prostate to tickle. *(With the disgust and envy only attainable by being the first lady and then giving up your house to another first lady.*) You got him?

Barbara Bush:
*(Greedily and hungry; sniffs youth a little)* I sure did!

Nancy Reagan:
This isn’t over yet, **Fat Silver Fox**! This play still has like 10 more pages.

Barbara Bush:
Well, if you think the rest involves you, you’re crazy. Your acting career is over.

Nancy Reagan:
**Dream on, Fat Silver Fox was it? I clearly have the most experience winning over the hearts and cocks of young men.**

Barbara Bush:
Quality not quantity, you cheap date!

Nancy Reagan:
Well the demand is always high! I feel like this new communal sex system is just what my Reag-y wanted. All the good dick allocated to the top earners and one by one it is trickled down to the saddest... I mean neediest.

Barbara Bush:
Well you can savor the trickle down my thighs. For now, this youth is mine *(stares and thinks about how grotesque coked-out Nancy Reagan is)* It’s clear you and Ronald had such a special bond, sharing all that dick over the years...

“*Quando Men Vo / Ron was a Ho*”

Ron was a ho...
And just said no whenever I had needs
But that did not disdain me
For it’s not for no reason...
Not for no reason they
Called me the blow job queen.
My glory days are gone,
The days when any man would bow
to Queen Nancy
And when the head I gave
Could land me any part in any B-List movie
And most impressive of them all
My crowning jewel
Sinatra, Old Blue Eyes
He gave me some blue thighs.

Now I want you-woo
And though I've one tit
I sure know how to use it.
You know what dear old Babs
has never known
I'll try to make it clear
You must suck cock
For your career.

(Enter Cougars 1, 2, and 3)

Cougar 1:
Did someone say blowjob?

Cougar 2:
I knew I smelled pre-ejaculate

Cougar 1: Skeet
Cougar 2: Skeet
Cougar 3: Skeet

Nancy Reagan & Barbara Bush:
Motherfucker!

Cougar 3:
Hand him over ladies!

Barbara Bush:
Who do you think you are? Remember the ugliest hag gets first dibs on that ding-a-ling, and I'm obviously the ugliest. I mean, you can snorkel in my cellulite.
Nancy Reagan:
Are you kidding? My face is pulled so tight I have to draw on every feature. *(points)* this? this? this isn’t even my skin!

Youth:
But you’re all… so… beautiful! I couldn’t possibly choose the ugliest.

Cougar 2:
Shut up and let us sit on your face.

Cougar 3:
Hey lil piggy.

All Cougars:
Let’s make him squeal.

“Tonight”

*Cougars:*
*So tight, so tight*  
*I wish my vag was tight*  
*At least I have a mouth, it’s alright*  
*Oh moon*  
*So bright*  
*Please hide this furry pie*  
*In the night*  
*Tonight*

Cougar 1:
What’s the matter?

Youth:
I’m not experienced with the older ladies.

Cougar 2:
Don’t you know that older ladies can…  
**Cougar 1:**  
**And we can….**

*(Cougar 1 and 2 whisper in his ear. He gets more noticeably turned on. Cougar 3 rubs his head.)*

Youth:
Oh... Oh? ... Oh! Wait, REALLY?!
Barbara Bush:
Make room for this BUSH!

(*Barbara B. joins in. Hags and cougars start to go at him.*)

Youth:
*(stepping the orgy)* Whoa whoa whoa! Wait a minute! If I remember correctly, the law states that I only have to service one ugly woman, not an orgy of ugly women! So which one of you will it be?

**TONIGHT reprise**

Nancy Reagan and Barbara Bush:
We’re gonna screw him tonight
Cougars:
We’re gonna get it tonight

(*Girl and Youth singing simultaneously with Cougars and Hags*)

Girl and Youth:
Today, the minutes seem like hours,
The hours go so slowly,
And still the sky is light...
Oh moon, grow bright,
And make this endless day endless night!

Nancy Reagan and Barbara Bush:
They began it — they began it — they began it
And we’re the ones
To fuck him once and for all!
The Hags are gonna have their way,
The Hags are gonna have their day,
We’re gonna fuck him tonight—

Cougars:
--- They began it --- They began it
We’ll fuck him once and for all
The Cougs are gonna have their day,
The Cougs are gonna have their way,
We’re gonna fuck him tonight---

(*Spoken*)
Youth: *(interjects. fascinated)* Your eagerness is starting to turn me on. Fuck it. Sure!
I’ve got to put this massive yet unexpected boner somewhere! Let’s do it! *(Hags and cougars look at each other with extreme joy, like this is the best thing they’ve heard in years. like wow so happy. everyone is so happy. but wait the play isn’t over yet.)*

*All (resuming song):*

**Tonight!**

*(All carry youth off stage)*

**“Over 40 Girls”**

Well I’d like to get between those hips
And nestle in her hair
Oh I love the way her supple breasts
Bounce around when I’m down there

But now the times are changing
And I’ve got to fuck around
I curse every girl, before ’64
For forcing me to get down

I wish they all could be over-forty girls
I wish they all could be over-forty girls

Sleeping with older women’s hard,
It’s emptying my tank
I think its due time that I should make a withdrawal
From my account at the sperm bank

*(Intern enters with Barbara, Dianne, and Nancy)*

**Judy:**

Look at all the change we have been able to make in the last few days! The whole nation is sharing their wealth, and people have access to resources they never could have imagined. For example, I got this wine for free! And I just fucked Newt Gingrich, so here I come Ryan Gosling!! I can’t wait until I’m in the house and I can make a difference!

**Nancy:**

My dear, just by being here you’ve made a difference.

**Dianne:**

But just know, the fight is not over.
Nancy:
There’s still so much work to be done.

Judy:
Really? How long do you think it'll take?

“ONE AGED WHORE”
Nancy, Dianne, Barbara:
Eight Years More

Barbara:
Another bill, another policy.
Dianne: Forever fighting for equality;
Nancy:
To be a woman’s not a crime
Cause this is now Pelosi’s time
Squint:
One aged whore

Anna:
It was ten years ago today
Since the last time my legs were parted

Maxine:
Give us more

Youth:
Have to admit it feels okay [three way between youth, girl, and hag]
Girl: But kind of smells like she just farted

Scrooge:
Last day with the stuff I own

Nancy:
We’re on even ground with men

Stinge:
One last day without the sharing

Youth:
Should I cum inside of you?

Dianne:
And this House is now our home

Men:
Now this countries torn in two

Barbara:
Offer everyone health care!!!!

Congresslady Group A:
Our new country will be born

Congresslady Group B:
We should follow where she goes.

Congresslady Group A:
A nation of sexual freedom

Men:
Really this is just unfair.

Congresslady Group B:
We’ve succeeded in reform

Men:
(to men) We should really start to care

Barbara:
Will you take your place with me?

All:
The time is now, the day is here

Nancy:
One thing more

Men:
This defies the constitution
I deserve to keep my gun
This is not the real solution
You vaginas have not won

Dianne:
One thing more
Hags:
Watch us run amuck
Catch 'em as they crawl
Gonna make em fuck
And it's a free for all
Here's a little tit
There's a little ball
Lots of little boners
That I'm dying to maul

Congresslady Groups A&B:
A: Today Marxist bells are ringing
B: I just wanna go get high
A: Every woman will be king
B: Every man will be a queen
A: Can't believe that we're still singing
B: Is this damn song almost done

All:
Do you hear the women sing?

Squint:
Where is the can, I have to poo

Nancy:
One thing more

Hags:
I did not come until today

Stinge:
One more day without my phone

Hags:
You can't be finished you just started

Nancy:
One verse more

Youth:
Have to admit it feels okay
Congressladies:
And this House is now our home

Youth:
But kind of smells like she just farted

All:
Tomorrow you’ll discover
What these leading ladies have in store
One more law
One more lay
One day moooooooooore

Men:
Women think they’re superheroes
It’s our job to tell them no
Yeah, they put the cunt in country
Think that they can run the show

Men:
This defies the constitution
I deserve to keep my gun
This is not the real solution
You vaginas have not won

All:
Tomorrow you’ll discover
What these leading ladies have in store
One more law
One more lay
One day moooooooooore

Hags:
Watch us run amuck
Catch ‘em as they crawl
Gonna make em fuck
And it’s a free for all

All:
Tomorrow you’ll discover
What these leading ladies have in store
One more law
One more lay
One day mooooooooooore

A Few
Congressladies:
Tomorrow there’ll be no dismay
Tomorrow no one has to pay

All:
Tomorrow you’ll discover
What these leading ladies have in store
One more law
One more lay
One day mooooooooooore

Scene 6. During audience applause armed FBI agents storm onto the stage dressed in suits with badges hanging from front suit pocket.

J. Edgar:
No! Not one day more! Not even one more minute of this illegal operation!

Nancy:
**Who are you, Peaches?** Who says it’s illegal?

J. Edgar:
The Supreme Court! They found out about you bitches dressing in drag and that Arab President substituting you for our legally elected representatives! Since Obama is obviously insane, they ordered us into action. We’re the FBI, fighting with Fidelity, Bravery and Integrity!

Dianne:
I can’t believe the Supreme Court did this—what was the vote?

J. Edgar:
Six to three, of course—your fellow whores Ginsberg, Kagan and Sotomayor objected, but the men’s good sense prevailed. So all of you are under arrest for subverting the Constitution! Another group of our agents is at the White House right now arresting that criminal-in-charge!

**Barbara:**
No way! You’ve got to be crazy! The American people are delighted with how we’ve changed things for the better!

J. Edgar:
Yeah, the sluts, maybe, not the real men!
Squint:
You’re wrong, asshole!

Stinge:
We’re completely behind what these brave women have done!

Scrooge:
Yeah, even I agree with that!

J. Edgar:
Who cares what you pussy-whipped jerks think?

**Nancy:**
Ask our audience! You’ll see that they’re all on our side!

J. Edgar:
(to audience) Anyone who causes us any trouble is going to get the same as you!
(to the women) All right, hands up! The prisoner wagons are waiting.

Nancy:
We’re not moving!

J. Edgar:
(draws gun) Oh yes you are!

[—]:
Hey, this isn’t Ferguson!

(J. Edgar and men approach threateningly)
Appendix D: Actors Script Comparison
Ecclesia\textit{zusae} Script Comparisons

Richard Rossi

I’ll be making notes on Mary-Kay’s translation in reference to the Halliwell translation.

Updated January 2015

As per the latest information, the final two scenes will be built during rehearsal.

Characters:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Praxi</td>
<td>Praxagora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squint</td>
<td>Blepyros</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stinge</td>
<td>Neighbor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scrooge</td>
<td>Neighbor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elda</td>
<td>Hag A (Old Woman)</td>
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<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>Young Woman</td>
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<td>?</td>
<td>Hag B</td>
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<td>Hag C</td>
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<td>Youth</td>
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<td>Servant</td>
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<td>?</td>
<td>Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Named Women</td>
<td>Chorus</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Cogressladies; Mary-Kay Gamel translation 2014

Scene 1. Stage and house dark. Praxi enters down aisle stage left, carrying an iPhone which she uses to light her way. She is wearing men’s clothing.

Praxi: Thank Hermes for my iPhone! Useful in so many ways—I could never do without you. Send a tweet to my friends coming to join me that I’m almost there—done! And just now you lit my way out of our hotel room without my husband suspecting a thing—just as he doesn’t when I take a few bucks out of his wallet. Or when you tell my lover I’m on my way. Or even when Studly and I are having sex at his place and there you are on the nightstand looking on. Or—never mind.

Where’s the hall where we’re going to have our meeting—come on, phone, give me the directions!

Oh, this way?—ok! She goes onto the stage, which is barely lit.

What? Nobody here? Where are they? I’ve come all the way from California and I’m on time. yells Dammit!

Assembly-Women; Stephen Halliwell translation 1997

An Athenian street shortly before dawn; the scene building contains at least two doors. From one of them enters a woman dressed in a man’s cloak and shoes, carrying a lamp, walking stick, and some arlands. After looking round impatiently, she starts to address the lamp in an exaggeratedly solemn, prayer-like manner,

Praxagora: Bright eye of light that issues from my lamp, most beautiful design of clever minds! Your birth, just like a god’s, I celebrate, since born upon a potter’s turning wheel your nostrils shed a light fit for the sun. Waves the lamp. Send out the signs of fire that we agreed! Ye, you alone are privy to our deeds, when in our bedrooms all we women move in Aphrodite’s twists, and you stand near, as bodies writhe and bend, your eye is there to look on all; you never get removed. You alone see what lies hidden between our thighs, when shining there to singe our bushy hair. Or when for food and juice of grape we steal into the larder, you assist us well, yet never blab out secrets to the neighbours. So in return for this I’ll let you share the plans my friends decided at the Skira.

She looks around, and her tone now becomes much plainer. Yet not a single woman’s here on time. It’s getting close to dawn, an very soon the Assembly starts: we need to find good seats (to use a phrase Pyromachos made famous) and settle down without attracting notice. What’s held them up? Perhaps they can’t get hold of the woolen beards they were told to bring along. Or maybe creeping out in their husbands’ cloaks proved
House and stage lights instantly full; Praxi becomes very focused and professional.

Praxi: Oh, good evening/afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to a very special political event. My name is Praxagora, Praxi for short. Praxagora means “accomplished speaker”—Yeah, I know, sounds weird, but soon you’ll see how I’ve earned that name.

I’ve called this meeting here, in the national’s capital, to put into action a really important plan. Thanks for coming! But before we proceed, I need to ask you to take a pledge of silence. What I’m going to reveal is ground-breaking, absolutely revolutionary, and for that reason it has to remain secret! Don’t worry—no violence, no crime, just political action that will have incredible impact. You’ll soon see why confidentiality is crucial to our project.

Will you all please repeat after me: “I pledge/ not to reveal/the plans being discussed here/this ___ day of ____ 2015/so help me Athena!” Thank you. And now to business!

We all know what a farce the United States government has become—Democrats and Republicans at each others’ throats, unable to agree on anything, the Senate and House divided, the Supreme Court making preposterous rulings by 5/4 majorities, and average citizens’ wishes trampled by the
1 percent's big bucks. Infrastructure, education, civil rights and social justice are ignored while the rich get richer and the poor get poorer.

All Americans have a stake in this country, and all of us are affected by this dreadful situation. But women have special reasons to get involved. A war on women is being waged by the crazies; look at the attacks on contraception, the closing of clinics, anti-choice activists allowed to harass women contemplating abortion! Gender discrimination starts early—in the cradle! Parents, teachers and peers all treat males and females differently. Women doing the same job as males earn 77 cents for every dollar males earn. And then there are the inequalities in domestic life—women are expected to bear and raise children, run the household, and also work full-time, with very little help from their husbands, and of course no pay!

But we are not crazy feminists trying to put women in charge to dominate males. No, we’re aiming for a more equal and just society for all Americans—male and female, rich and poor, young and old, all races and religions! We’re doing what the Founding Fathers were trying to do, only this time some Founding Mothers are involved!

My pals and I have figured out a way to get beyond this mess and move the country forward. Now let me introduce my allies in this amazing enterprise. Ladies? She looks at the wings, but no one appears; louder Ladies? Women start coming onstage, wearing or carrying various articles of
male clothing, wigs, beards, etc.

Ariane: Hurry up, girls! Praxi’s started already.

Praxi (sarcastically): Oh, don’t rush, girls! There’s only a whole audience waiting.

Bernice: So sorry, Praxi— it’s all my husband’s fault. He’s in the merchant marine, and when he gets back from a trip he wants to row me all night. I’m exhausted!

Ariane. Remember our deal?—the last one to arrive has to buy a round for everybody!

Praxi (to #3 arriving, who is wearing men’s shoes): No wonder you’re slow!

Delia: I have to practice wearing these, don’t I?

Woman A: We’d better get along: just now I heard the herald’s voice crow out a second time.

Praxigora: I’ve been out of bed and waiting for you to come right through the night! well, now’s the time for me to call my neighbour here with a tap on the door.

She scratches on one of the doors
Her husband mustn’t be disturbed.

Woman B: Emerging on tiptoe. I heard your fingers scratch as I fastened on my shoes. I wasn’t asleep, my dear, because my husband - He comes, this man of mine, from Salamis- was rowing me all night on top of the bed. I’ve only managed to get his cloak just now.

Praxigora: Look, here come other women along the street: they’re friends of ours; I recognize their faces.

Various women arrive from both side entrances, either alone or in small groups, all of the at least partially disguised as men.

Woman A: Well hurry up there! You know an oath was sworn, the last of us to arrive would pay a fine - nine litres of wine, and a bag of chickpeas too!

Woman B: D’you see that woman thee old thingummy’s wife? She’s running in her husband’s shoes.
Hermione. And my husband ate two plates of Cajun beans and rice and had to keep getting up to shit.

Praxi: All right, all right, you’re finally here. Have you done everything we agreed on?

Bernice: I have! My armpits are shaggier than a cocker spaniel!

Delia: And I’ve been exercising daily to build up my biceps!

Praxi: What about your costumes? They all show her the

Woman A: Bitchily. But surely with a husband like him, she can’t be bus at night!

Woman B: Can you see the publican’s wife, that thirsty girl? Is that a torch she’s waving in her hand?

Woman A: And I can see two other familiar faces, and lots of other women approaching here: it looks as though we’re turning out in force.

Woman C: Entering, to Praxagora. My dear, I had a simply dreadful time slipping out of the house. My husband coughed all night - he’d had too many anchovies for supper.

Praxagora: Right, all sit down. I’ll start by asking you, now that I see that everyone’s arrived: have you done what we decided at the Skira?

Woman A: Showing off. I certainly have! I’ve let my armpits grow far shaggier than a bush, as we agreed. And whenever my husband went to the Agora, I covered my body in oil and spent the day standing in the sun, trying to get a tan.

Woman B: Me too. I actually threw my razor out, to guarantee I’d grow hirsute all over and lose all trace of femininity!

Praxagora: And have you got the beards which we agreed
items of male clothing they’ve brought. And you’ve cut your hair, and gotten mustaches and beards to hide your delicate feminine features? They demonstrate.

you’d all bring with you to the meeting here?

Woman A: Not half, by Hekat! Look at this beauty here.

Woan B: And mine’s a better beard than Epikrates’!

Praxagora: And the rest of you?

Woman A: They’ve got them: look, they’re nodding.

Praxagora: I can see you’ve made the other preparations: you’ve all obtained your husbands’ shoes and sticks as well as their cloaks, exactly as agreed.

Woman A: Producing a large stick. Yes, this is Lamios’ stick I’ve brought along. I smuggled it out while he was fast asleep.

Woman B: Are you sure it’s Lamios stick - not farting Lamia’s?

Praxagora: With a stick that size, he only needs a jerkin like that of Argos, hundred eyes and all, to make himself a terrifying cowherd! But now we must proceed with preparations, before the stars have vanished from the sky. The Assembly which we’re ready to attend will start its meeting once the dawn’s arrived.

Praxi: All right, now it’s time to tell our audience what’s up. Friends, our goal is nothing less than to save the United
States! To do that I knew I had to go straight to the top, and I did. President Obama couldn’t have been more gracious—he brought me into the Oval Office, he heard me out, and he agreed our idea could work. As you know, since Congress has refused to fulfill its constitutional role of governing, the President has started using executive actions to get things done. Congress is currently in recess, but about to reconvene. So the President is going to use his power to replace key senators and representatives. With these—gentlemen!

Ariane: What politician am I replacing?

Praxi: John Boehner!

Ariane: Whoa! Do I have to paint my face orange?

Georgia: How about me?

Praxi: Mitch McConnell! You—Ted Cruz! You—Marco Rubio! You—Steve King! excitement mounts

Delia: Too bad we can’t replace some of those right wing governors too! Goodbye Chris Christie! Scott Walker! Rick Scott!

Praxi’s cell phone rings; she answers. “Oh yes, Mr. President, everything is going fabulously. The new Senators and Representatives are here, getting ready to report for
work. . . . You’re going to hold a press conference to announce your decision? Thank you for your support, sir, and we’ll keep you posted of all developments.”

Hermione interrupts: Praxi, I’m in, but I don’t understand why we have to be in drag. There are women in Congress!

Praxi: Yes, of course there are! Indeed, more than at any time in history—but still only 20 female vs. 80 male Senators, and 82 vs. 353 male Representatives in the House. As men, working together and engaging male allies, you’ll be able to accomplish things women can’t. Now of course, as soon as these appointments are announced there’ll be a firestorm of criticism and no doubt yet another attempt to impeach the President. And everyone will try to figure out who you are and what you stand for, but there won’t be any information available. Meanwhile you’ll be carrying out our plan. I’ve already contacted female senators and congresswomen and they’re enthusiastic and ready to help. Nancy, Dianne, and Barbara can’t wait to meet you!

Georgia: Praxi, you know I trust you. But this is really scary. How do we know it can work?

Praxi: Because the American people want justice! Let’s ask this audience! Ladies and gentlemen, do you want to continue business as usual here in Washington, or shall we try to shake things up and inject some new ideas? What do you say? Roar of approval, provoked of course. All right!
So, ladies, get into your costumes and let’s get to work.

Delia: One question, Praxi. Can I do my knitting while listening to those boring speeches?

Praxi: Knitting? Of course not! Men don’t knit!

Bernice: Oh, I know some who do!

Praxi: You mustn’t do anything to draw attention to yourselves until it’s time to act! Except, of course, by speaking up.

Woman B: Producing wool. I thought I’d bring these things along with me. I’ll comb the wool while the meetings filling up.

Praxagora: Filling up, you silly thing!

Woman A: Of course, why not? I’d still be able to listen while combing wool. My children haven’t a stitch of clothing to wear.

Praxagora: You’d sit there combing wool? You’re not supposed to give the men a glimpse of a woman’s body! What a pretty mess we’d face if the meeting were full and we stepped in with our clothing hitched up, revealing a large and hairy Phormisios! But if we’re the first to occupy our seats, we won’t be noticed wrapped up in our cloaks. And once we’ve got our long beards fastened on, no one will doubt our male identity! Agyrrios borrows his beard from Pronomos, so people forget that he used to be a woman! And now he dominates political life. Well, he’s the reason why, this very day, we’ve got to execute our darling dedd, in the hope that we can seize the city’s affairs and manage to change its fortunes for the better. As things stand now, ‘we’ve neither sails nor oars’.

Ariane: How are we supposed to know how to give public speeches?

Woman A: Mock gravely. ‘But how could female minds in congregation’ make public speakers?
Praxi: We’ve all gotten a lot of practice, haven’t we, convincing our husbands and boyfriends to buy us things, and not to be suspicious when we stay out late at night, or when strange charges appear on the credit card? Because we’re second-class citizens, we have to work for everything we get, and that’s why we’re good at winning arguments. earnestly And the stakes couldn’t be higher—remember that we’re trying to save the United States! If we can’t get this country on the right track there’s no hope at all. beat All right, who’d like to try giving a speech? You can address this whole audience!

Praxagora: Perfectly, you’ll see! It’s said the young men who get knocked the most grow up to make outstanding politicians. Well, we possess this qualification too!

Woman A: I’m not so sure. We badly lack experience.

Praxagora: But that’s precisely why we’ve gathered here, to rehearse our lines before the meeting starts. So get your beard attached without delay, and likewise anyone else who’s practiced speaking.

Woman A: Aren’t all we women experts with our tongues?

Praxagora: Then fasten your beard, and turn into a man. I’ll put these garlands aside, and fasten on my own beard too, in case I decide to speak. 
All the women start to attach false bears

Woman B: Oh, look at us all, Praxagora darling, here! We really are a terribly funny sight.

Praxagora: Why ‘funny’?

Woman B: It’s just as though you fastened beards on cuttlefish that had a light brown grilling!

Praxagora: Playing the herald. Official purifier, carry the - cat! Stand forward, people. Aripherades, stop talking! You, come to
Georgia comes forward: I’ll go! looks around But where’s my drink?

Prax: Drink? What drink?

Georgia: Don’t they drink in Congress?

Prax: During legislative sessions? Of course not! Do you think those are ladies’ luncheons?

Georgia: Well, look at the crazy policies they support! Corporations are people? Money is speech? Sell elections to the highest bidder? They had to be drunk when they came up with that bullshit!

Praxagora: Then wear this garland for good luck.

Woman A: Alright.

Praxagora: Now speak.

Woman A: Before I’ve had drink?

Praxagora: A drink!

Woman A: That’s why I put the garland on!

Praxagora: Away with you! You would have made this gaffe in the real assembly.

Woman A: But surely they drink there too?

Praxagora: Just listen to her!

Woman A: I swear they really do, and it’s unmixed too! Well, think of their decisions, the kind of things they bring themselves to do. Their craziness suggests inebriation! What’s more, they’re always pouring out libations - why else, if not to help themselves to wine? And then they swap abuse, just like
Praxi: Dismissed! Who’s next?

Hermione: Me!

Praxi: All right, but be sure to speak like a man, and convince your listeners.

Hermione: Greetings, fellow legislators. I wish that someone else, a more accomplished speaker than I, had come forward, but as things stand, insofar as I am able, I will speak. So, in my opinion, ladies—

Praxi: STOP!!! “Ladies?”! Is that how you speak to Congress?

real drunks, and the archers have to carry the worst ones out.

Praxagora: Well, you can sit back down! You’re simply useless.

Woman A: My god, I wish I’d never worn that beard! I feel so warm I’m going to die of thirst.

Praxagora: Does another woman wish to speak.

Woman B: I do.

Praxagora: Then put on a garland. We need to press ahead. Make sure you speak in a good deep masculine voice, while leaning stylishly upon your stick.

Woman B: Like a male speaker. I would have preferred one of the usual speakers should put the case, while I stayed in my seat. As it is, I need to put my own proposal - that taverns mustn’t fill their vats with water. That’s my suggestion, by the two goddesses!

Praxagora: The two goddesses! Are you mad, you silly woman?

Woman B: What’s wrong? At least I didn’t request a drink.

Praxagora: That’s true, but you swore an oath no man would use, though the rest of your speech was quite a skillful piece.
Hermione: Oops! I was looking at this real poofy guy out there and spaced!

Praxi: Shut up and sit down! Alright, colleagues, I guess I have to give a speech and show you how to do it—gods help me!

Ariane: What a smart man the speaker is!

**Praxi addresses the audience as well as the women onstage:** You got it right that time! Now, citizens, we need to understand that we’re all affected by the mess our government is in. How about those disastrous wars Bush and Cheney got us into, killing more than 5000 of our young people? Were the results worth the sacrifice? Now we’ve got a good President, but also a bunch of Repugnicans who constantly thwart him. We all know about the increasing

**Woman B:** Adjusting. By Apollo, so I did!

Praxagora: Taking the garland. That’s quite enough! I won’t advance one step toward the assembly, unless e get our speeches polished up first.

**Woman B:** Give me back the garland, then; I’ll try again. I think I understand what’s needed now.

**In a mans voice.** I wish to state my view, assembled women -

**Praxagora:** You addressed the men as ‘women’, you imbecile?

**Woman B:** Pointing to audience. It’s because of Epigonos: I glanced across and thought I was speaking just to women.

Praxagora: I’ve had enough of you as well: sit down! You’ve left me with no choice. I’ll take this garland d speak myself. I call upon the gods to send success and fortune to my plans.

**Like a politician.** This land belongs to me as well as you, my citizens. I’m vexed and grieved to see the poor condition the city’s affair are in. I notice how she always has as leaders the rotten types. If one of them is decent for one whole day, he’s rotten then for ten! If you switch to another, he’ll only make things worse. Now it’s had to give advice; you’re easily piqued. But you shy away from those that wish you well and keep on turning to those who wish you ill. There was a time when
inequality between the top .01 percent and the 99 percent, but what are we doing about it? We all know that corporations are buying elections, stifling competition, cheating on their taxes, but what are we doing about it? Banks caused the 2008 meltdown, but have they been punished? No, they’re bigger than ever! You can’t depend on any male politician to maintain his campaign promises, if someone offers him big bucks. We’ve got to get involved and make change happen!

Delia: Tell us—what should we do?

Praxi: My answer is—put women in charge! babble of amazement and uncertainty I know—it’s a BIG change. But who runs the households all over this country?

Women: Women do!

Praxi: And they don’t just run our households, they run them well! They seek the well-being of every member of the household, and balance resources and needs to keep the household going strong. They’re REAL conservatives, not like those Tea Party wackos. They know how to do their job and they don’t get distracted by newfangled ideas. They cook and clean and raise the children, just like they always have. They nag their husbands, just like they always have. They like good wine and a good fuck, just like they always have. They keep their lovers secret, just like they always

Assemblies hardly mattered, and everyone was sure Agyrrhios was a rotten man. But now the Assembly counts; those who draw pay adore Agyrrhios; while those that don’t regard the rest as frauds for living on their payment from the assembly.

Woman A: You’re absolutely right, by Aphrodite!
have. They always look out for the general good. We can count on them not to pull any fast ones!

Women: Yes! Right on! You said it! Good—man! Keep it up!

Praxi: So I say, let’s not keep on blabbing, let’s not demand a detailed plan, let’s ask the women to govern. If we’re worried about getting involved in another useless, endless war, are women going to send their sons and daughters into harm’s way? If we’re worried about the deficit, who’s better than women at finding ways to make ends meet? And women in charge will never be deceived by lies because they’re such good liars themselves. If you support my proposal, you will live happily ever after.

Praxagora: An oath by Aphrodite, you silly thing? How fine that would have sounded in the assembly!

Woman A: I wouldn’t have said it there.

Praxagora: Then don’t do now! Continuing. And just remember how the people though the city would never survive without this league. But when it happened, they hated it so much the one who proposed it disappeared for good. Suppose we need to launch a fleet the poor will vote for that, but not the rich or farmers. At one time Korinth an you feel mutual spite; but soon you’re back in one another’s credit. ‘Argives are stupid’: ‘Hieronymos is shrewd’. We caught a
glimpse of peace, but Tharsyboulos is angry that his services aren’t required.

Woman A: This man’s astute!

Praxagora: Now that’s the way to praise. Continuing her speech.
The blame for all of these is yours, the people’s. You’re happy to draw your pay from public funds, yet each one thinks in terms of private gain while the common good just reels - like Aisimos. Well, if you heed my words, there’s still some hope: I propose we hand the city’s business over to women. After all, inside our homes they hold the purse strings tight and run our affairs.

Woman A: Applauding. Quite wonderful!

Woman B: Lets hear some more, good chap!

Praxagora: Their traits are quite superior to ours, and I’ll explain. For one thing, all of them maintain traditional ways of dying wool; you’ll never find them trying to innovate. Contrast that point with what the city does: if something old seems fine, it won’t be kept but has to be replaced by novel schemes! The women sit and cook - they always have. They carry things on their heads - they always have. They hold the Thesmophoria - always have. They bake their pastry cakes - they always have. They grind their husbands down - they always have. They keep adulterers hidden - they always have. They keep their secret
Ariane: How did you get so smart, Praxi?

Praxi: By listening and comparing MSNBC with Fox News every day!

Bernice: Everyone, if Praxi’s plan succeeds, let’s elect her our commander-in-chief!

Delia: What if Glenn Beck starts calling you names?

Praxi: I’ll say he’s an idiot.

Woman A: In her normal voice. O darling Praxagora, what amazing speech! Where on earth, my dear, did you learn rhetorical skills?

Praxagora: In the war I lived with my husband on the Pnyx: I used to listen to speakers and learn their words.

Woman A: That explains how you made such a terribly clever speech. We women will now elect you on the spot to be our general and carry out your plans. Thinking.

But what if confounded Kephalos shouts abuse? What kind of response will you give him in the meeting?

Praxagora: I’ll tell him his mind’s all muddled.

rations - they always have. They like to drink pure wine - they always have. They really love being fucked - they always have. So let us, men of Athens, halt debate and hand the city over to the women. No need to ask what policies they’ll have; let’s simply give them power, remembering his: as mothers of our sons they’ll want to save the soldiers lives, but also send them food to boost their rations when they’re on campaign. A woman’s good at finding new resources, and once in power could never be deceived: they’re too familiar with deceit themselves! I’ll say no more. If my proposal’s followed, the future holds prosperity for all.
Georgia: But everyone knows that!

Woman A: But everyone know what already.

Hermione: What if Rush Limbaugh rakes you over the coals?

Praxi: I’ll say he’s even stupider!

Woman A: They know that too.

Ariane: But everyone knows that!

Praxi: If they know it, why don’t they do anything about those guys??? Tell you what, if Paul Ryan starts spouting his Ayn Rand fantasies I’ll suggest that he and Rand Paul get together and make a Randy Dandy Paul duo!

Praxagora: I’ll say that he’s demented!

Bernice: What if they try to thrust you out of the meeting?

Praxagora: The I’ll say his pottery is dreadful stuff, and his politics are potty!

Praxi (suggestively, demonstrating): I’m used to thrusts; I’ll thrust right back!

Woman B: What if Bleary Neokleides abuses you?

Praxagora: I’ll say to him: he should squint up a dogs backside!

Women: And we’ll accuse them of excessive force!

Praxi: All right! Let’s go! Audience, please stay right here.

Praxagora: I’ll love every minute - I’m used to being knocked!
We’ll come back and report how things go in the new Congress! *to the women* Now let’s sing our anthem—Hit it, Phil! *Band starts the prelude to a triumphal song. Women divide into two choruses.*

Woman A: But there’s one more thing: supposing that the archers try to drag you off, what then?

Praxagora: *Like a wrestler.* I’ll use my elbows, like this: they’ll never grab me around the waist!

Leader: And if they lift you up, we’ll shout ‘lay off’!

Woman A: I think we’ve planned for all the contingencies. The only thing we haven’t discussed is how we mustn’t forget to vote by raising hands. We’re all so used to lifting up our legs!

Praxagora: That might prove problematic; we’d better vote by keeping one arm free outside our cloaks. *To all.* Well, now we must be moving: hitch up your tunics, and don’t delay in putting on your shoes just like you’ve often seen your husbands do when going off to the Assembly or to town. Then, after taking care of all these things, tie on the beards you’ve brought and when that’s done, and you’ve adjusted them to fit you well, it’s time to fasten up your husbands’ cloaks which you smuggled from the ouse. Then take your sticks and lean on them while walking down the road, while singing an old mens song, just like the ones the country people sing.
FEMINIST ANTHEM.
A: What do we want and when do we want it?
B: We know that we will run this state best!
A: If we’re proud women why can’t we flaunt it?
B: We will deceive them with exquisite zest!
A: Now, have you all got your costumes on straight?
B: Straight? We’re not straight, we’re crooked, and should be!
A: But from our goals we cannot deviate!
B: We’ll be as macho as any man could be!
All: Now come on, comrades, march into Congress!
We’ve got to clean up that disgusting mess!
They’ve put this country through so much duress
Everyone knows it’s past time for redress!
If they resist and think they can suppress

Leader: A good idea!

Woman A: The rest of us should go ahead of them, to meet the country women who’ve gone straight there to the Pnyx.

Praxagora: Yes, hurry along! You know that those who don’t turn up at the Pnyx at the crack of dawn must slink back home with nothing at all to show.

*Praxagora, Woman A, Woman B, make their way off y a side entrance. The remaining women, now fully costumed in false beards and their husbands’ clothes, take up formation as the chorus.*

**Parodos**
Leader: The time has come, my fellow men, for us to be proceeding. Yes, men’s the word, we must remember, despite our female nature. The danger that we face is great: suppose we were detected while in the act of secretly embarking on this venture!

_They start to mimic, in movements and singing, a group of old county men on their way to the assembly._

Chorus: Lets get to the assembly, fellow men.
The Archon has made a threat:
Unless you’re there at dawn,
And can show the dust on your feet,
With a breakfast of garlic inside you
and a sour old look on your face,
you won’t get your three obols’ pay.
So come on now, old graybeards!
We will outwit them with our great finesse!
We’ll counter, dodge, circumvent, and outguess,
Play tricks, entrance, lure, seduce, effervesce,
But if they suspect we’ll never confess!
We ask Athena and Hera to bless
Our mission, since it deserves nothing less,
And we won’t give up till we get success! *exeunt omnes*

We really must rattle along.
Be sure keep pace with me.
You must be on your guard:
We can’t afford wrong notes.
You must maintain the show.
And when we’ve got our tickets,
ensure we sit together,
to vote en masse for measure
proposed by fellow women -
oh dear, what am I saying?
I meant our fellow men!

Be sure to push aside these urban folk.
Before, when he pay was low,
just a single Obel, in fact,
they’d sit there in the market,
by the garland-makers’ stalls,
to gossip the whole day long.
But now they come crowding in here!
It was different in the old days.
Myronides was general,
a man of finest stock.
Then no-one got a payment
for running the city’s affairs.
No, people would come along
with a flask of wine and some bread,
two onions and maybe three olives,
these days they come for the money:
three Obels is all they want.
Scene 2. Squint enters awkwardly, wearing women’s clothes and shoes, finally tripping and falling. Band improvises some raunchy stripper music and a final crash.

Squint: Shit! What the fuck is going on? I wake up in our hotel room and my wife’s nowhere to be seen! What can she be up to? And my clothes are gone too, and my shoes, and then the toilet’s not working, so I go outside to find one, and lose my way, and now I don’t even know where I am, and I’ve gotta take a shit! suddenly notices the audience Oops! Pardon me, folks, but Nature calls!

As the song ends, the chorus exits by a side entrance. From a door in the stage building emerges, sheepishly, a man wearing a woman’s yellow dress and shoes.

They’ve turned this public service into a laborers job!

Blepyros: What’s going on here? And where on earth’s my wife? No sign of her - and yet it’s nearly dawn! I’ve been lying awake for ages, needing a shit, and trying to find my shoes and cloak in the dark. I felt all over the bed without success, while he dung collector kept knocking at my door. That’s why I grabbed this dress, which belongs to my wife, as well as pulling on these boots of hers. Looking around. But where, oh where, can I find a spot to shit? Perhaps it doesn’t matter during the night, no one will see me shitting as early as this. What a wretched fool I was to take a wife at my great age. I deserve to be flogged as an ass! My wife has surely left the house to do some mischief. Anyhow, time to ease myself.

He squats; another door opens and a neighbor, also dressed in women’s clothes, emerges with a lamp.

Neighbor: Who’s over there? Blepyros from next door?

Stinge: What is this, a cross-dresser convention? They both look out at the audience and then at each other. Who

he weaves his way just offstage whence a loud sound of shitting is heard. Meanwhile Stinge appears, also in women’s clothes. When Squint reappears they do a double take at each other.
knows?

Squint: Where are you from?

Stinge: Chicago. You?

Squint: California. You with your wife?

Stinge: Do I look like I’m with her? We came here together, sure. But when I woke up she was gone, no note, nothing. And my clothes were gone, so . . .

Blepyros: I’m afraid it’s me alright.

Neighbor: What’s going on here? You look all yellow; there must be something wrong. *Facetiously.* Don’t say Kineslas has crapped on you?

Blepyros: *Embarrassed.* He certainly hasn’t. I’ve had to come outside just wearing this yellow dress which belongs to my wife.

Neighbor: But where’s your cloak?

Blepyros: I haven’t the faintest idea. I looked but couldn’t find it on the bed.

Neighbor: Then didn’t you tell your wife to find it for you?

Blepyros: Some hope! She isn’t inside the house at all. She’s managed to slip outside without my knowledge: I’m afraid she
Stinge: Cut the crap! My wife’s no whore.

Squint: I didn’t mean that. Something political. Together. Is your wife into politics?

Stinge: Oh yeah! She’s always going on about what a mess must be up to some scheme or other.

Neighbor: Well I’ll be blowed! Your experience matches mine precisely. My wife too has left the house and taken with her the cloak I was wearing. I wouldn’t mind, but she’s taken my shoes as well. At least, I couldn’t locate them, search high or low.

Blepyros: By Dionysis! I had that problem too. I couldn’t find my shoes, but needed to shit, so I had to shove my feet inside these boots, otherwise I would have soiled my nice clean blanket. What’s it all about? Don’t tell me one of her friends has invited her to breakfast.

Neighbor: That’s what I think; I can’t believe she’s doing anything worse. Turning away. That must be a rope you’re excreting; I’ve got to go. It’s time to be off to attend the Assembly meeting - that’s if I can find my one and only cloak!

Blepyros: I’ll do the same, once I’ve managed to ease myself. At the moment there must be something causing a block.

Neighbor: As he goes in. Surely not the blockade Thrasyboulos mentioned!

Blepyros: By Dionysis! It’s certainly clogging me up. Well, what am I going to do? It isn’t just my present discomfort. But when I eat again, I don’t know how my shit will find an exit. This door of mine’s been well and truly bolted. It’s the work of some anonymous constipator! To audience. Could someone fetch a doctor? But which of them? I need someone who’s
Washington is, and what assholes male politicians are, and why don’t more women like Wendy Davis go into politics.

Squint: Yeah, that sounds just like my wife. But they don’t want more women like Sarah Palin and Michele Bachmann, do they?

Stinge: Course not! Whose idea was this trip to Washington?

Squint: My wife’s, of course. I’d rather stay home and play golf.

Stinge: Me too. But she said we had to be here today. And what she says has to happen always does happen.

Squint. Yeah, in my house too. Sucks, but that’s how it is.

They look at each other with compassion. Band plays the introduction to FEMINIST HUSBAND BLUES.

Squint: When we got married my wife was cute and nice
When we got married my wife was cute and nice
But she became a feminist and turned as cold as ice

Stinge: When we got married we saw eye to eye
When we got married we saw eye to eye
Then she read de Beauvoir, who taught her to defy trained in anal matters. What about Amynon? Wait: he might deny it. Let someone hurry and fetch Antisthenes. To judge by all the groans he makes, he knows the meaning of an arse that needs to shit. Melodramatically. Oh goddess of childbirth, Eileithya! Please don’t let me burst, don’t keep me bolted up! I don’t want to be a comic chamberpot.
Squint: Then it just got worse—she focused more and more

Stinge: Then it just got worse—she studied more and more

Both: And our happy household became a civil war

Both: Yeah, we’ve got the feminist husband blues
Yeah, we’ve got the feminist husband blues
We know a lot of you guys are walking in our shoes

Both: Moral of our song: don’t get near a feminist
Moral of our song: don’t get near a feminist
Every one of those gals should be on your shit list

Enter an elderly man along the street.

Chremes: ‘Ey you! What’s up? Surely you’re not shitting?

Blepyros: Rising. What, me! I’m certainly not: I can’t, I’m just getting up.

Chremes: Is that your wife’s little dress I see you wearing?

Blepyros: It’s all I could lay my hands on in the dark. But where have you been?

Chremes: The Assembly meeting.
Blepyros: Is it over already?

Chremes: It finished after dawn! And Zeus above, you should have seen the mirth at the number of people smeared by the crimson rope.

Blepyros: Did you manage to get three Obols?

Chremes: If only I had! I arrived too late, which makes me feel ashamed.

Blepyros: No need to feel that way - though you’ll probably starve! But what was the problem?

Chremes: A massive crowd of people, unprecedented hordes that filled the Pnyx. In fact, we started comparing them all to cobbler’s when we looked at them: it really beggared belief to see so many white face in the assembly. That’s why there were plenty of us who missed the pay.

Blepyros: So if I turned up now, I’d get no pay?

Chremes: You wouldn’t have got the pay if you’d even arrived at second cocks crow!

Blepyros: Like a tragic actor. Oh alack alas! ‘Antilochos, lament your fill for me and not for my - three Obols. The loss is mine.’ Normally. But what was happening there, to make this
Squint. OK, back to reality. Maybe they’re pulling some kind of protest?

Stinge: You think so? Let’s turn on the TV—maybe we can find out something.

TV announcer: Breaking news! President Obama has taken executive action no other President has ever dared to take! You all know that Congress is currently in recess. Well, declaring he is tired of the gridlock, the President has replaced leading Senators and Representatives with new, unknown figures! Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell and House Majority Leader John Boehner are out, along with Ted Cruz, Rand Paul, Marco Rubio, and others! The Republicans are furious, and insist they will start

Chremes: The reason was the Prytaneis had put down on the agenda the city’s preservation. And straight away bleary-eyed Neokleides sidled to the rostrum. You can just imagine the way the people shrieked ‘it’s scandalous that he should dare to speak, when the subject is the city’s preservation. He doesn’t know how to preserve his own eyesight! He looked around and shouted back to them: ‘well, what else can I do?’

Blepyros: *Like a heckler.* ‘Just take some garlic, mix it with fig juice, add the bitertest spurge, then smear it on your eyelids in the evening.’ That’s what I would have said if I’d been there.

Chremes: Euaion, brilliant fellow, came up next, without a cloak - or so it seemed to us, but he himself insisted that he had one on. His speech was full of populist arguments: ‘you see that I am in need of preservation; I need some decent clothes. But nonetheless I’ll tell you how to save the whole of Athens. If all the needy folk were given cloaks by tailors every winter, then we’d find no one ever suffered from pleurisy and those that have no bed or blankets either, should wash and then go off to sleep the night in the tanners’ shops: any tanner who refuses, in wintertime, should pay a three cloak fine.’

Blepyros: What excellent proposals! He would have found
impeachment proceedings immediately! But the Supreme Court has ruled—5 to 4—that the President was within his rights. The new Senators and Representatives are in their seats now, and they’re taking an active part in the debate. Listen to this! camera shifts to the Senate chamber

Ariane: My fellow Senators, it’s essential that we provide shelter and food to those poor Central American children who are coming to us for help! They are fleeing from terrible violence and likely death. Remember what the Statue of Liberty proclaims: “Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free, The wretched refuse of your teeming shore, Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door.” Are we going to abandon our tradition of welcoming those in need, especially innocent children? We can afford it, fellow citizens! All we need is to ask those whom the American Dream has favored the most to do their part!

Announcer: And he convinced them! The Senators voted unanimously to welcome the refugee children, and agreed to raise taxes on the 1% to pay for their support! Who would ever have believed it? And look what happened in the House!

Bernice: My fellow Representatives, I hereby propose that we increase the minimum wage to $25 an hour all across this country! We all know deep down that it’s the right thing to do, to make workers’ lives better, and it’s also the smart unanimous support if he’d also said the grain retailers ought to supply the poor with enough for everyone’s dinner, or else be thrashed. In either case, Nausikydes would have payed!

Chremes: The next to speak was a young and handsome man. His face was white; he looked like Nikias. He lept to the rostrum to speak, and started to say that we ought to hand the city over to women! Applause broke out at once, and cries of approval - from the horde of cobblers, that is; the country folk just rumbled dissent.

Blepyros: And quite right too, by Zeus!

Chremes: But they lacked the numbers. The speaker shouted on, with nothing but praise for women, but calling you abusive names.

Blepyros: Like what?

Chremes: He said, to start with, that you’re a rogue -

Blepyros: And you?

Chremes: Please let me finish. And also a thief.

Blepyros: Just me?
thing to do! Workers who have more income will spend more, and the whole economy, which is still bogged down from the 2008 recession, will flourish! Come on, let’s do it!

Announcer: Here too this brand new member nobody knows convinced them all! It’s a miracle!

Stinge: I know that guy . . . What’s his name? . . . He’s so familiar . . .

Announcer: And then a really amazing thing happened. A special joint session of the Congress was held—very unusual—and one of those presidential replacements spoke to the whole throng. Here’s what he said.

Praxi: Fellow Congressmen, extraordinary times call for extraordinary actions, and this is such a moment. We all know that these august legislative bodies are in total gridlock, unable to agree on any action, even though the problems facing us are tremendous! I propose to you that we must learn how to take a completely different approach to politics: we must turn over the entire government to women! Huge uproar Now, colleagues, don’t overreact before you hear me out. This isn’t as radical a change as it may seem. Statistics show clearly that women are more honest than men, more law-abiding, more trustworthy. Women loan each other things—dresses, jewelry, cash—with no lawyers involved and never a hint of fraud. Does any man do that?

Chremes: And furthermore, an informer.

Blepys: Just me?

Chremes: Gesturing to the audience. And all of them as well, yes, every man jack.

Blepys: Who disagrees with that?

Chremes: A woman’s head, he said, is packed with sense and ideas for making money. He said they never divulged their secrets from the Thesmophoria, while you and I keep leading Council business.

Blepys: I swear by Hermes, that’s absolutely true!
Squint. Of course not, you idiot!

Praxi: And women don’t betray each other, don’t sue each other, and don’t subvert democracy. And let’s face it, colleagues—this is the only remedy for our problems that has never been tried. Give women a chance to prove what they can do!

Squint: There’s something about that fellow . . . his voice . . . his gestures . . . where have I seen him before?

Announcer: Well, the Tea Partiers didn’t go for this idea at all, but the other Senators and Representatives thought that they had nothing to lose but their gridlock, and if the women didn’t succeed in improving things then people could blame them instead of the male Congressmen. The measure passed by a strong majority!

Chremes: He said our women lend each other things - like clothes and precious jewels and drinking cups - informally, no witnesses involved, yet always give them back and never steal, while most of us just can’t be trusted at all.

Blepyros: We even cheat in front of witnesses!

Chremes: There are many other things he praised in women: they never inform, bring prosecutions, or try to destroy democracy. And much besides.

Blepyros: Well what was decided?
Stinge. So what does this mean? That we don’t have to be responsible for our households? So I don’t have to go to work any more, my wife does?

Squint. Why not? If they’re in control of the government, shouldn’t they be in charge of the household income? Just think—no more setting the alarm to get to the office on time, just roll over and go back to sleep.

Stinge. But if women are in charge of everything, they might force us to screw them when we’re not, er, up to it. And if we couldn’t satisfy them they might stop feeding us—yikes!

Squint. Damn, if only we could give ourselves blow jobs we could screw and eat at the same time! Yum yum! he tries to demonstrate; Stinge looks disgusted Oh never mind!

Chremes: To give the women power. The Assembly thought that this was the only thing still left untried!

Blepyros: Amazed. It’s been agreed?

Chremes: Indeed.

Blepyros: You mean that everything we males controlled is now entrusted to women?

Chremes: Precisely so.

Blepyros: So it won’t be me, but my wife, who goes to court?

Chremes: And it won’t be you, but your wife, who keeps the family.

Blepyros: So I won’t have to get out of bed with a groan at dawn?

Chremes: No, all these things are now the task of women, and you can stay in bed and fart at ease.
Stinge. It’s no fun doing it under duress!

Squint. Oh come on, doing it under a dress can be great!

Stinge. Ha ha. Oh yeah, fucking for the good of the country is noble.

Squint. And that’s really no bull! You know what our forefathers say, no matter how stupid our decisions are they turn out alright in the end! *pointing to his ass*

Stinge. Goodbye, pal; good luck finding your clothes—and

Blepyros: But I’ve got one fear for men as old as us: suppose that when they hold the reins of power, the women resort to force to -

Chremes: Make us what?

Blepyros: To give them sex.

Chremes: And if we can’t manage?

Blepyros: They won’t allow us breakfast.

Chremes: Then better comply, to guarantee we get both sex and breakfast!

Blepyros: Compulsory sex is a horrible thing!

Chremes: *Grimly.* But surely, if it serves the city, each man must do his duty.

Blepyros: It goes to show there’s truth in that old saying: no matter what foolish plans we make in Athens, it all turns out eventually for the best.

Chremes: I pray to Athena and all the gods it does! I must be
your wife.

Squint. Likewise—asshole. they leave

Scene 3. The women return from Congress, still fearful they may be discovered.

Sing MANLY MARCH

That’s it, men!
Keep marching very straight!
No one slouch!
Maintain a martial gait!
No swishing your hips,
or loosing your lips,
or our glorious victory will deflate!
Heads up high!
Keep crunching with your feet!
On your guard!
Who knows who we might meet?
We’ve got to make tracks
and we can’t relax
till we’re sure our mastery is complete!

off. Keep well!

Blepyros: You too, Chremes.

Blepyros goes into his house and Chremes off down the street.

From the opposite direction the Chorus returns from the Assembly.

Chorus: March on! Proceed!
Let’s check to see if any man is following in our tracks. Turn around and look!
Pay close attention all the time; the rogues are everywhere.
Beare in case someone should creep behind and see we’re women.

While walking on, be sure to stamp the ground with both your feet.
What shame we all would have to face
If ever our design should be exposed among our husbands.
So stick together in close ranks,
And keep your eyes peeled all around,
This way and that, to left and right:
We can’t afford to see our plan collapse into disaster.
Let’s hurry on, there isn’t far to go to reach the spot
From which we first set out to make our way to the assembly.
Not far ahead you see the house belonging to our general,
The woman who devised this plan that’s won the citizens’ votes.
Praxagora enters, in female dress, carrying her husband’s clothes on a hanger.

Women: Praxi! You’ve changed your outfit! Is it ok for us to change ours?

Praxi: Yes, of course! And hurry! We don’t want anyone to find out who those substitute Congressmen really were. And besides, now that they’ve voted for women to have the power, we have no reason to masquerade as the lesser gender!

Women: Right! Rah rah rah! Praxi for President!

We’ve every reason, then, to start removing our disguise:
We mustn’t tarry, wearing beards,
In case we’re seen in full daylight and soon informed against.
So move across into the shade
Provided by this nearby wall,
And while still glancing round about
Convert yourselves, each one of you, into your female state.
Act quickly now! I see our general coming down the street.
She’s on her way back home, of course, returning from the Assembly.
Each one of us must hastily remove her shaggy beard:
These cheeks of ours have long been chafing under this disguise.

The chorus member start to remove their beards and male clothes. Enter Praxagora, still dressed as a man.

Praxagora: Well, women, what success we’ve had today!
Things have turned out exactly as we planned. But now we must be quick, before we’re seen: discard our cloaks, get rid of all men’s shoes - unloose the leather reins that draw so tight.
And lastly, throw away your sticks. To leader. But you, keep all these women in order, while I slip inside the house before my husband sees me, and put his cloak back where I took it from, as well as all the other things I borrowed.
Praxi: No, Obama is still President, and we’ll work closely with him. But because at the moment of crisis you showed yourselves fearless, YOU all are going to be my cabinet!

Women: Praxi, you’re our Commander in Chief! They quickly change into female dress and stow the male costumes away. Squint suddenly appears, still in female clothes.

Squint. Praxi, where have you been?

Praxi: What business is that of yours, husband?

Squint. It’s a husband’s business to make sure his wife is behaving herself!

Leader: Pointing to beards. There! Everything is off. It’s up to you to tell us how to implement your plans. I know I’ve never met a shrewder woman.

Praxagora: Don’t leave; I’ll need advice in carrying out the office to which I’ve found myself elected. In the Assembly’s noise and fury you proved your mettle

Praxagora approaches her house, but the door opens and Blepyros emerges. Soon afterward, Chremes reappears down the street and starts to listen.

Blepyros: Just where d’you think you’ve been, Praxagora?

Praxagora: What’s that to you?

Blepyros: What’s that to me? How cool!

Praxagora: You surely won’t accuse me of having a lover.

Blepyros: Not one, perhaps.
Praxi: Do you see any signs that I’ve been misbehaving? *Squint comes closer and examines her suspiciously* Smell any perfume?

Squint: No. So what? You could be screwing around without perfume.

Praxi: Not my style, as you ought to know. And darling, look at what you’re wearing. Have you been behaving yourself, or—???

Squint: This is because you disappeared from our hotel room with my clothes! Where are they, dammit?

Praxi: Right here, sweetie—see? I took them to the cleaners—I knew you’d want to look your best when we visit the Capitol and the White House! I had your shoes polished too.

Praxagora: All right, you’re free to check.

Blepyros: But how?

Praxagora: Why, smell my hair for a trace of scent.

Blepyros: What? Can’t a woman be fucked without some scent?

Praxagora: No, I can’t - more’s the pity.

Blepyros: What made you, then, slip out at dawn, and take my cloak with you?

Praxagora: I was sent for, in the night, by a friend of mine who was giving birth.

Blepyros: Then why not tell me first, before you left?

Praxagora: Instead of showing concern for the suffering mother?

Blepyros: But after informing me. There’s something suspicious here.
Praxagora: I swear there isn’t. I left without ado: the woman’s message requested me to go without delay.

Blepyros: Then why not simply wear your very own cloak? You stripped off mine instead, left yours behind, and abandoned me to lie there like a corpse - you only forgot the wreath and funeral flask!

Praxagora: The air was chilly; you know I’m small and weak: I wrapped myself inside your cloak for warmth. But you, my husband, were lying all warm and snug when I left the house.

Blepyros: And why did you need to take my shoes with you? And what about my stick?

Praxagora: I thought I’d scare off muggers who’d steal the cloak. I wanted to imitate you by stamping my feet and striking the ground with the stick as I walked along.

Blepyros: I suppose you know you’ve lost a bag of wheat which I could have bought with my pay for Assembly attendance?

Praxagora: Never mind! The news is good - a baby boy!

Blepyros: Obtusely. The Assembly’s had a baby?

Praxagora: The woman, of course. Casually. But has there been an Assembly?
Squint: Awww, honey, you’re so good to me. Thank you! beat Say, did you hear what happened in Congress?

Praxi: No. I thought they were in recess.

Squint: Just got back in session. And guess what they decided? It’s wild and crazy, but you’re going to love it. They decided to put the women in charge of the whole country!!!

Praxi: Really! That’s wonderful! But which women? The women already in Congress? her iPhone rings Hello? Mr. President! How great to hear— she listens Really? Are you sure? What about Dianne, and Nancy, Barbara, Elizabeth, and— breaks off and listens I understand, sir. Thank you for your confidence—I’m so honored!

Squint: The President called you? What about?

Praxi: About the improvement of this whole country!

Blepyros: There certainly as: I mentioned yesterday.

Praxagora: Oh, now I remember.

Blepyros: So you haven’t heard the decision?

Praxagora: No, certainly not.

Blepyros: Prepare yourself to hear some special news: they say the city’s been handed over to women!

Praxagora: To weave its clothes?

Blepyros: To be in charge!

Praxagora: Of what?

Blepyros: Of every single part of the city’s existence.

Praxagora: By Aphrodite! That means the city’s future is a happy one.

Blepyros: Why’s that?

Praxagora: For many reasons. No longer will people be free to
"Stinge has heard the ruckus and appears."

Squint: Yeah? And who’s going to make that happen?

Praxi: I am! We are! All the women here—and more all over the land! Everything’s going to be different! The United States is going to live up to its reputation as a GREAT Society! No more inequality of income! No more illegal foreclosures! No more racial discrimination! No more corrupt politicians! No more tax evasion by rich corporations! No more unwinnable wars! No more lies from public officials! No more police brutality! No more—

Squint interrupts What bullshit! Who can believe such crap?

Stinge: Squint, your wife’s ideas are great! Unless they turn out to be impossible . . .

Praxi: No more petty theft, nobody going hungry, no violence against women, no discrimination against gay people—

Squint: Too much negativity! What’s going to improve?

Praxi: Everything! Just let me lay it out for you!

Squint: Yeah, go ahead and lay—you know how to do that,

harm the city. We’ll put a stop to bribing of witnesses, as well as to informing -

Blepyros: In heaven’s name, don’t do this: don’t deprive me of my living!

Chremes: *Intervening.* You really should allow your wife to speak,

Praxagora: There’ll be an end to mugging; an end to envy; an end to paupers walking around half naked; an end to abuse; an end to harrying debtors.

Chremes: Immense improvements, surely - if she’s right!

Praxagora: *To Chremes.* I’ll give you proof. You’ll soon be on my side. *Pointing to Blepyros.* And even he won’t contradict my claim.
alright!

Stinge: Back off, Squint! I want to hear what Praxi proposes.

*Women sing and dance*

GO PRAXI GO
Go ahead, our Praxi, speak!
Go ahead, our Praxi, shriek!
Smash this guy who wants to critique
Make him be so meek!
Come on, girl, and stand your ground
You are great when you expound
When you find opinions hidebound
Contradict, confound!
Since our country’s such a mess
No one’s going to second-guess
And you know just how to impress
Make them all say yes!
OK now, this is your cue
Listen to your faithful crew
No one’s going to bellow or boo
If your theory’s new!

Praxi: I feel confident my ideas are valid, but is the audience ready to accept radical change, or will they stick with what they know? That’s what I’m afraid of.

Chorus: Now concentrate your mind! Rouse philosophical thoughts!
Your female friends depend on your intelligence.
Amid prosperity that’s shared by all
Your eloquent tongue will glorify
The citizens to whom you bring such countless benefits.
It’s now or never - show your worth!
The city needs a brilliant new invention.
Make sure your plans
Are quite original in word and deed.
(This audience hates to see old stuff served up again!)

Leader: Proceed at once, and get to grips explaining your intentions: to keep things moving quickly always pleases these spectators.

Praxagora: Well now, I have no doubts about the merits of my case. But will the audience, that’s my fear, accept my innovations, instead of sticking with the old, familiar
Ariane: Let’s ask em. Hey, all of you out there, do you want more of what we’ve got now?

*Audience roars “Hell no!”*

Praxi: Very well, I’ll explain, but please don’t interrupt or object until you understand clearly what I’m proposing. Here goes: everyone in this country should own everything jointly! No more rich people paying lower taxes than their secretaries! No more 1 percenters buying yachts while the 99 percent can’t afford decent food! No more corporations kicking people out of rent-controlled apartments in order to house techies! No more gated communities! No more private planes polluting the atmosphere!

Squint: So how is that going to come about? Who’s going to wave the magic wand?

Praxi (furious): I just said I’m going to spell everything out. You’re so obnoxious that if I were planning to eat shit you’d insist on taking the first bite! *calmer* First, every single thing will be the common property of all—land, money, housing, food, everything! From this stock we women will distribute

Blepyros: *Butting in.* But how to be ‘shared’?

Praxagora: Exasperated. You’d even be the first to eat the dung!

Blepyros: Well, isn’t dung a thing we share?
everything to people as they need it.

Squint: How about those who hide their wealth in secret Swiss bank accounts? What about U.S. corporations which claim they’re not obliged to pay U.S. taxes?

Praxi: We’ll ferret every one of them out! They will all have to pay their fair share! And besides, having extra money won’t do anyone any good anyway, because everyone will have everything they need—nutritious food (no more junk fast food), warm clothes, decent housing—

Georgia: What about wine?

Praxi: *smiles* My dear, I’m from California. It’s a patriotic duty to drink our state beverage!

Praxagora: So what? Don’t interrupt! I was just about to tell you that the city’s land and silver, as well as private property, will now belong to all. We women will use these common goods to feed the population: for we’ll control expenditure, and budget circumspectly.

Chremes: Suppose that someone has no land, but hidden property - say, gold and silver coins?

Praxagora: He’ll need to add them to the pool. He won’t escape, unless he lies

Blepyros: But that’s what makes him wealthy!

Praxagora: But even if he does, he’ll be no better off.

Chremes: Why not?

Praxagora: No one will suffer poverty. They’ll all have quite
Squint: Wait a minute! Those who have what they need are bigger thieves than those who don’t!

Stinge: You’re right, pal, about how things are now, but forgetting that we are going to live under brand new laws. Now that we’re living communally, sharing everything, no one gains anything by not sharing their stuff!

Squint: Oh, yeah? What if a guy sees a girl and wants to screw her? Won’t he need some of his own money to give her, in order to commune with her—in bed?

Praxi: He won’t have to pay her—he’ll sleep with her for free! If she likes him, that is. Women will be able to be with any man (or woman!) they like, whenever they like, for as long as they both like.

Women: Really? What happens if a woman gets pregnant?

Praxi: No problem! All children will be legitimate, welcomed and supported by the state! And abortion will always be an option if the woman isn’t ready for motherhood.

enough of bread and fish and cakes and clothes and wine and wreaths and chickpeas. So, what’s the use of hoarding wealth? That’s what I’d like to know.

Chremes: But as things stand it’s wealthy folk who steal to boost their riches.

Praxagora: That used to be the case, my friend, when previous laws applied. But once our lives are communist, withholding wealth won’t pay.

Blepyros: Suppose that someone sees a girl, and wants to poke her fire: he’d pay for her from private wealth, then once he’s slept with her he’d still enjoy the common goods.

Praxagora: But sex will now be free! For women too will all be shared—yes, both for making love, and also bearing anyone’s child.
Squint: But the most attractive women will be the ones everyone wants to screw!

Praxi: Your thinking is so out of date! You think only men have the right to choose who they want to have sex with? Well, under our new laws, if a woman considered less desirable wants a man, he’ll have to fuck her before he can get the babe he wants into bed.

Squint: What?! What about us old guys? If we have to screw an ugly woman our cocks won’t have anything left for—later.

Praxi: Don’t worry, darling. The ladies won’t fight over you.

Squint: Huh?

Praxi: The ones you don’t want to fuck—they won’t care.

Squint: *snarls* Just like you don’t, you mean. So—you women have fixed it so none of you will have an empty hole, but what are we men going to do? You’ll avoid older men and go for the young studs.

Praxi: But the duds will stick close to the studs, and women won’t be allowed to fuck the latter until they’ve satisfied the former.

Blepyros: But surely men will turn exclusively to the prettiest ones; it’s those they’ll want to bang?

Praxagora: But all the less attractive ones will sit beside the beauties. Before a man can take his pick, he’ll lay a vile one first.

Blepyros: But once we older men have had it off with ugly women, our cocks will surely start to droop before we reach the others?

Praxagora: I don’t suppose they’ll fight for you; don’t worry yourself at all.

Blepyros: Why not?

Praxagora: Because such impotence is just your normal state!

Blepyros: Your law makes sense on women’s side. You’ve made entirely sure there won’t be any holes unfulfilled. But what about the men? Won’t women shun the hideous ones, and go for the handsome types?

Praxagora: The lousy men will have to track the handsome ones each evening; they’ll watch their movements everywhere and keep them in their sights. The women won’t have access to the
Squint: So if you had a chance to screw, say, Ryan Gosling, first you’d have to service Henry Kissinger? Hoo hah!

Praxi: *not thrilled but faithful to her creed* Yes, that’s—right.

Stinge: Now that’s a really democratic idea! When the guy in a Savile Row suit and gold cufflinks is about to score, a scruffy old dude in sneakers steps in and says “Wait till I’m finished with her and then you can take your turn!”

Squint: But how will any man know who his children are?

Praxi: Why should they care? Children will look at all men of the right age as their fathers.

Squint: That’s dangerous. Kids these days have little enough respect for their fathers as it is. If they think any old guy might be their dad they’ll think nothing of stealing his money and beating him up if he catches them.

Blepyros: Lysikrates’ revolting nose will start to look quite pleased then!

Praxagora: That’s right. What’s more, my plans are meant to favour common people. They’ll have a chance to cock a snook at swanks with signet-rings, by getting in first and telling them, ‘please step aside and wait there: I’ll let you have your turn when I’ve completed all my business.’

Chremes: But once we live as you describe, how ever will each person know who his children are?

Praxagora: Why care? The children will consider all men who’ve reached a certain age as being their own fathers.

Blepyros: That means that when they don’t know who their father is, they’ll throttle not one but all old men. As now they throttle their actual fathers! If parentage becomes unknown, they’ll shit on all old men!
Praxi: Oh no, that will NOT happen. Anyone who sees a senior citizen being done wrong will step in and help because he might be their father!

Squint. But suppose some juvenile delinquent calls me Father—yuck!

Stinge. Or maybe Ru Paul will come up, scream “Daddy darling!” and give you a big wet kiss—what fun!

Praxi: The immigrants. Everyone we let in will be required to put in twenty-five years of hard labor and then they’ll

Praxagora: But witnesses won’t let it pass. Before, they didn’t bother when seeing others beaten up; but now, each time it happens, they’ll intervene in case it proves the victim’s their own father.

Blepyros: The general plan is fine, no doubt. But what if Epikouros or Leukolophos should come to me and call me ‘dad’? How dreadful!

Praxagora: I can think of something worse than that.

Blepyros: Well tell me what it is.

Praxagora: If Aristyllos kisses you and claims you as his father.

Blepyros: He’d get a thrashing, if he tried!

Praxagora: And you would stink of something! But he was born before our new decree came into force; you needn’t fear his kiss at all

Blepyros: That’s just as well for him!

Chremes: Intervening. Now, who will work the land?

Praxagora: The slaves. And your concern will be to wait for evening shadows to fall, and then slip off to dinner.
have earned their citizenship.

Squint. So we citizens will just lounge around the pool and then have a barbecue? Great!

Stinge. But what if someone gets sued and loses his case? How will he be able to pay the fine?

Praxi: There won’t be any lawsuits! Why should there be?

Praxagora: You’ll keep the ones you’ve got for now; we women will weave you more.

Chremes: And what about acquiring clothes? Another urgent question.

Stinge. Suppose I lend someone money and he refuses to pay it back?

Praxagora: There won’t be any need for courts.

Praxi: How could you do that, when everything is owned in common? You’d have to have stolen the money in the first

Chremes: I’ve one more question. What’s the rule for fines incurred in law courts? How will they pay? It can’t be right to use the common funds.

Blepyros: You’ll soon regret that statement!

Chremes: That’s my view too.

Praxagora: To Blepyros. Then tell me why the courts will still be needed.

Praxagora: And how will anyone lend, when all belongs to a common fund? It’s clear he’d be a thief.
place! But why should anyone steal anything when he’s already part-owner of it? And suppose someone does grab something of yours, like your watch—you just go to the communal store and get another one! Here’s another step: cities are going to become one big household! We’ll break down the walls between houses and share everything with each other.

Chremes: An excellent response!

Blepyros: But something else I’d like to know: what penalty will be imposed in cases of assault, when after-dinner brawls occur. Let’s hear you answer that.

Praxagora: They’ll forfeit some of the food they eat. When punished in this way, the price their belly pays will make them act with more restraint.

Blepyros: Will no one ever turn to theft?

Praxagora: What for, when all is shared?

Blepyros: Won’t muggers still steal cloaks by night?

Praxagora: Not if you sleep at home! Such crimes will vanish from our streets, since none will suffer want. And if a mugging does occur, what reason for resistance? The common fund will soon provide another, better cloak.
Squint: Where will we all eat?

Praxi: All the best restaurants will open their doors to all comers! No more waiting for reservations at Nora’s and Riz here in D.C. (each with a talented female chef), The Four Seasons in New York, The French Laundry in the wine country, Ristorante Avanti in Santa Cruz, and many more! Glorious food, cocktails and vintage wine will be provided to all, free!

Blepyros: Won’t people gamble still with dice?

Praxagora: What stake would be involved?

Blepyros: What style of life will you offer us?

Praxagora: A life that’s shared by all. I’ll turn the city into one great dwelling-house for all; you’ll come and go just as you please.

Blepyros: And here will dinner be served?

Praxagora: I’ll soon convert the law courts and the stoas to this purpose.

Blepyros: But what will you use the podium for?

Praxagora: For bowls of wine and water. I’ll also make the boys stand there for poetry recitals. They’ll sing the praises of the brave, and mention and cowards. The cowards then will feel such shame that they’ll never dine.

Blepyros: How splendid! But where will you put the allotment racks?

Praxagora: Where else? In the Agora. They’ll stand beside Harmodios, dispensing supper tickets, till everyone is satisfied and knows his place for dinner. The herald’s voice will tell them which locations match their letters: for some the Royal
Squint and Stinge: Now this is really incredible! How could that happen? What bullshit!

*Praxi and chorus sing NEW WORLD seductively*
We see that you’ve got it all wrong

Portico, the one next door for others; and others still will find themselves in the Barley-Market stoa.

Blepyros: It sounds as though they’ll hardly starve!

Praxagora: They’ll all receive their dinner.

Blepyros: But anyone who draws a blank will surely be ejected.

Praxagora: Such things will not occur with us. We’ll guarantee rich fare for all, so everyone, once nicely drunk, will leave in a mood of revelry. And as they walk along the streets, the women will solicit them and call, ‘come here, inside this house. We’ve got a ripe young girl in here.’ ‘No, here instead!’ another shouts, as she leans her head from a window above. ‘I’ve a girl up here who’s gorgeous and white; but before you can have her you’ve got to sleep in my bed first!’ Meanwhile all handsome adolescents will be observed by ugly men who’ll say to them: ‘just hold on there! You’re wasting your time if you rush ahead. The law now states explicitly it’s the ugly ones who get first fuck. You’ll have to stand outside and wait: perhaps you ought to pass the time with a double-handed wank.’

So, are you both quite satisfied?

Blepyros: Not half!
You’ve been disappointed so long
You think it’s a blue world
But this is a new world
And that’s why we’re singing this song
The system has totally changed
Its purpose has been rearranged
It will not oppress you
Instead it will bless you
We know that this all seems so strange
All citizens get a good break
The state will now give, not just take
It won’t try to fine you
Instead wine and dine you
You’ll literally take the cake
And then after dinner no checks!
And then after dinner what’s next?
You’ll walk down the alley
And you’ll have to dally
To hear all the offers of sex
“Come over here, handsome, and see
what I’ve got to offer, for free”
Squint intervenes as an old woman
“Just hold on, Sonny,
She’ll be your honey
But not until you have fucked me!”
Praxi and chorus continue
You’re wrong; that restriction applies
only to gorgeous young guys
a woman imitates an old man
“Come here, young beauty
You know it’s your duty
To screw first us ugly old guys!”

Praxi: All right, husband, I must be off. Got to get the pooling of assets going, and make sure the restaurants are all ready for the communal meals, and tell the prostitutes to quit soliciting.

Squint. What, no whores? Why not?

Praxi: Because they would upset the communal sex system we’ve so carefully arranged untainted by money.

Stinge. I see what you mean: think these dames could compete with professional sex workers?

Chorus respond vociferously

Praxagora: Well, I’m now needed in the Agora, to retrieve all property that’s brought along; I’ll take a fine-voiced heraldess with me. I hold elected office, so that’s my task; and I’ve got to organize communal meals, so you can have your first grand feast today.

Blepyros: Incredulous. The feasts will start immediately?

Praxagora: Of course! My second task is to ban slave prostitutes, yes, all of them.

Blepyros: What for?

Praxagora: It’s surely clear. Pointing to Chorus. So they can have the best young men themselves. We don’t want slave-girls looking beautiful and stealing sex away from free-born women, They’re allowed to sleep with only fellow-slaves, and must let
Squint. Dearest wife, let me go with you. Everyone will look at me and say “That’s the Commander in Chief’s husband”—just like Bill Clinton with Hillary!

he leaves following Praxi; the Chorus laugh and sing SO FAR SO GOOD
So far so good! Our plot’s going so well
Who knew what a cinch it would be to rebel?
The only hard part is hiding our smirks
When we see so clearly that men are all jerks
Who can say which is the biggest asshole?
How did they ever get into control?
Well, we’re in now and we’ll rule as we should
And in both senses we’re in charge for good!

Scene 4. Stinge comes out carrying various items and shows them to the Chorus.

Stinge: OK, I’m complying with the mandate, hard as it is, and turning in my property to the common store. Look, their pussies keep their shaggy state.
Starts to leave.

Blepyros: I think I ought to come along with you. I’d like to attract attention and hear men say: ‘look, there’s our lady-general’s splendid husband.’
Follows off Praxagora by a side entrance.

Chremes: And I’ll prepare my goods for the Agora: I need to check what property I’ve got.
Into house.

Choral Interlude.

Chremes reappears from his house: helped by slaves, he brings out objects which he arranges like members of a ritual procession at the Panathenaic festival.

Chremes: Come out here, sieve, and see you look your best;
I’ve picked you out from all of my belongings as basket-carrier,
here’s my laptop, a MacBook Air 802.11, complete with iPhoto, iMovie, GarageBand, and Keynote! he kisses it, tearing up I hope the grade school kid who gets you appreciates you, darling! At least I still have my—what did they call it? a “type writer”? I remember vaguely . . . IBM Selectric, cute little ball that went tic-tic-tic-tic-tic . . . sighs . . . OK, and now my Chromecast . . . No more Netflix? No more YouTube? I guess I still have some VHS tapes around somewhere . . . and now—oh no! bursts into tears my iPhone 5s! This is the hardest of all! I’ll be so alone, so all alone! And this is just now . . . when I get home, having to share my house with who knows who . . . and my stocks and bonds . . . how am I going to be able to pay for college for my kids? . . . Well, I guess if everybody is sharing they’ll be ok . . .

Scrooge stands up in the audience and yells as he walks towards the stage:

You’ve got to be kidding! Give up all your possessions because some crazy women tell you to do it? Don’t you understand that this is worse than the socialism of that asshole FDR? It’s COMMUNISM!—a social experiment that was tried in the last century and totally failed! Look at the Soviet Union—are they still doing it? Hell no, they’re becoming capitalists as fast as they can! Ditto China! The only country that’s still communist is North Korea, and their people are miserable, starving, desperate! by now he’s

since your face is powdered by all those bags of flour you’ve polished off. Where’s my girl who’ll carry the stool? You, cooking-pot, come out. My word, you’re black! You must have boiled the stuff with which Lysikrates dyes his hair. Putting the pot behind the sieve. Stand next to her. And you come here, young maid. Now, you there, water-carrier, bring that pitcher; stand over here. And you, young girl musician, come out: your singing’s often woken me up to send me out at dawn to Assembly meetings. Come forward next, the one who carries the bowl. Bring honeycombs, but olive branches there. Bring out the tripods too and flask of oil. You can let the riff-raff come and join us now.

Slaves bring out further miscellaneous pots and pans. As Chremes organizes everything, the Neighbour reappears along the street.

Neighbour: Musing to himself. To think of handing in my own belongings! It would ruin me! What an idiot I would be! It’s out of the question until I’ve found out more and watched the situation very closely. I’ve sweated and stinted to get my livelihood: I don’t intend to lose it, like a fool, before I learn precisely what’s afoot. Notices Chremes. You there! What’s all this household stuff you’ve got? Have you brought it out because you’re moving house, or to pledge against a loan?
Stinge: I know what you mean. It’s scary, but if our legislators have voted for this I guess we have to trust them and see how it goes.

Scrooge: You’re an idiot! Just because some laws have been passed, we have to obey them? Just hire a smart lawyer and you can always do what you want.

Stinge: Not always. What if they sic the police on you?

Scrooge: Oh, yeah? How about that Nevada rancher who was told to pay for grazing his cattle on government land? He said hell no!, and they sent enforcers, and his neighbors drew their guns and made them back down!

Stinge: But sometimes it goes the other way—look what happened to Michael Brown in Ferguson when he tussled with the cops.

Scrooge: Because he didn’t have a gun. Open carry and stand your ground—it’s the American Way.

Chremes: No, certainly not.

Neighbour: Then why’s it all lined neatly up like this? Don’t tell me you’re sending it off to the public auction?

Chremes: I’m about to carry it off to the Agora and hand it in to the city. That’s now the law.
Stinge: So you’re not going to put your property into the common pool?

Neighbour: You’ve sealed your fate! You’ll ruin yourself.

Chremes: How come?

Neighbour: How come? It’s clear!

Chremes: You mean I shouldn’t carry out the law?

Neighbour: What law, you fool?

Chremes: The one that’s just been passed.

Neighbour: That’s just been passed! You really are quite crazy.

Chremes: I’m crazy?

Neighbour: Of course. There can’t be anyone else who’s so naive.

Chremes: For doing what I’m told?

Neighbour: You think that sensible people do what they’re told?

Chremes: I certainly do.

Neighbour: No, only imbeciles!
Scrooge: Not until I see how things pan out.

Stinge: You think we shouldn’t give, just take?

Scrooge: Of course. What do the rich folks do? They take and take and take. Does Donald Trump give? He pays lower taxes than his secretary does.

Stinge: Warren Buffett is rich, and he thinks he should pay more taxes than his secretary.

Scrooge: Let him! He can send a check straight to the White House and I’m sure they’ll cash it! But I’ll imitate Donald Trump.

Stinge: Because you’re a greedy bastard just like him.

Scrooge: Haven’t you heard? Gordon Gekko was right. Greed is good. Greed works! Greed separates the stupid from the smart! Greed rewards advanced thinking. Greed leads to progress! Don’t you believe in meritocracy? Haven’t you read Ayn Rand?

Stinge: I’m going to be a good citizen, obey the law, do the right thing, and share!

Chremes: You mean you won’t give in your things?

Neighbour: I’ll wait, until I see just what the majority do.

Chremes: They’re surely getting ready to take their goods and give them in.
Scrooge: You’re an idiot. At least stall for a while to see what others do—

Stinge: And then what?

Scrooge: Keep delaying, till there’s a new election, or the President gets impeached, or there’s an earthquake, or a terrorist attack—*he looks at the audience* You know the American people, they’ll change their minds in a minute. No sense of history at all, ha ha!

*They sing FIGHT SONG*

Stinge: So you wanna have it all? You ride high, all the rest crawl?

Neighbour: I’ll believe it when I see it!

Chremes: You can hear them saying so in the streets.

Neighbour: *Ironically.* No doubt!

Chremes: They’re vowing they’ll take it all along.

Neighbour: No doubt!

Chremes: I hate your sceptical tone of voice.

Neighbour: No doubt!

Chremes: I’d like to see you blasted then!

Neighbour: No doubt! D’you think that anyone sane will bring his good? That’s not the Athenian way. We only like to take, not give. In fact, we’re like the gods. You only need to look at the statues’ hands: for while we’re praying they’ll give us favourable gifts, they stand there stretching out an upturned hand and wait to receive a gift, not give us one.
Scrooge: The law of the jungle: strong rule the weak
Stinge: How about living in civilization?
Scrooge: Civilization? That’s slavery!
Stinge: Haven’t you heard? It takes a village!
Scrooge: Rape? There’s nothing not to like
Stinge: You’re disgusting! Shame on you!
Scrooge: Bleeding heart liberal—boo hoo hoo!
Stinge: Watch out, or you’re gonna regret it!
Scrooge: I guess you’re finally startin to get it!
Stinge: Keep it up and I’m gonna slug you
Scrooge: Wow, it sure is easy to bug you
Stinge: I’m getting ready to clean your clock
Scrooge: *mockingly* Nooo! I’m going into shock
Stinge: *furious* I’m really going to bust your balls
Scrooge: *haughty* Such vulgarity truly appalls

Chremes: *Turning away.* Look, fellow, please leave me alone; I’ve lots to do. I’ve got to fasten these things. *To slave.* Now where’s my strap?
Stinge: getting ready to fight All right, asshole, put up or shut up!

Scrooge: You think that’ll show me up?
If you aren’t tough, you gotta be meek
You prefer constant confrontation/altercation?
I want to be free to take care of me!
You’re promoting rape and pillage!
Specially if she’s a dyke
Jerk, this battle’s been completed
You’re the one who’s been defeated
It was so easy to get you glaring
Now where’s all that giving and sharing?
When the bad comes to the worst
Every human says “Me first!”

They move in to start slugging when Ariane appears and addresses the audience.

Neighbour: Incredulous. You’re actually going to take them?

Chremes: Of course I am! I’m tying these tripods, look.

Neighbour: Such lunacy! Instead of holding back and waiting to see what others do, and only then -

Chremes: Do what?
Neighbour: Wait a little longer still, and play for time.
Chremes: But what’s the point?

Neighbour: Suppose an earthquake happened, or a lightning flash, or a cat went rushing past: they’d soon stop handing things in, you dunderhead!

Chremes: *Unmoved.* A fine old mess I’d be in, if I couldn’t find any space to put my things!

Neighbour: Is that your worry? There’ll still be space in two days time.

Chremes: Why’s that?

Neighbour: I know the Athenians’ ways: they’re quick to vote, but they soon go back on all their resolution.

Chremes: I tell you, they’ll bring their goods.

Neighbour: But what if they don’t?

Chremes: It’s certain, they’re bound to do it.

Neighbour: But what if they don’t?

Chremes: The rest of us will force them.

Neighbour: What if they’re stronger?
Chremes *shrugging*. I’ll leave them to it.

Neighbour: But what if they sell your goods?

Chremes: Damnation on your head!

Neighbour: But what if I’m damned?

Chremes: I’ll celebrate!

Neighbour: *Incredulous*. Do you want to take your goods?

Chremes: I do, because I see my neighbors too are taking theirs.

Neighbour: *Ironically*. I’m sure Antisthenes will hand in his! I think he’d rather spend a whole month shedding a different load - his shit!

Chremes: Get lost!

Neighbour: But will Kallimachos, chorus-trainer, have something to give?

Chremes: Well, more than Kallias will!

Neighbour: *Exasperated*. This fellow will let his property go to ruin!

Chremes: What tosh!
Neighbour: What tosh? You seem to be forgetting the Assembly’s always voting for such decrees. Don’t you know the one we passed on the price of salt?

Chremes: Of course I do.

Neighbour: Or when we voted to use bronze coinage - don’t you recall?

Chremes: Not half! Those coins were almost the death of me. Reminiscing. I sold some grapes and made my way, bronze coinage in my mouth, to go and buy some grain in the Agora. Then just as I opened my sack, to have it filled, the herald shouted that henceforth no bronze coins were legal tender: ‘the currency’s silver now.’

Neighbour: And didn’t we, only the other day, all swear we’d raise five hundred talents from the tax Euripides proposed as state-accountant? At first we showered Euripides with praise. But when we thought again, it started to seem the same old story - another nasty tax. So then we all reviled Euripides!

Chremes: But things are changing, friend. It used to be us, but now it’s the women in charge.

Neighbour: Which makes me wait in case they plan to piss all over me!

Chremes: Enough of your nonsense! Turning. Slave, my
Ariane: All American citizens listen up! Male, female, young, old, to all of you our wonderful leader Praxagora brings good news, and the news is FOOD! FREE food! And WINE, FREE wine! Head for your favorite restaurant. Wherever you go, there’ll be plenty for all, served by gorgeous waitresses and waiters! The wine will flow freely, whether you prefer cabernet or chardonnay! And the food—juicy steaks, the best fish filets sizzling on the grill, delicious sauces, fresh vegetables, the sweetest desserts you can imagine.

There are a few changes, of course. A wonderful meal has been prepared for ALL—no individual ordering. Healthy, nutritious food, nothing decadent like foie gras or potato chips. The tables are communal, so you can meet new people of all colors and classes. There’ll be no wasting food; if you don’t eat what you order you’ll spend some time washing dishes to make up. No taking extra food or wine home.

All right, get going—the hot rolls are already on the tables! All you have to do is sit down and stuff your faces.

Scrooge: Let’s go! If this is what the lawmakers have decided, we have to go along with it, don’t we?

Stinge: Who’s “we,” Mr. Me First? Now all of a sudden you’re into sharing? And you haven’t turned your property baggage-pole.

As Chremes watches his slave pick up his belongings, a female Herald enters from a side entrance.

Herald: All citizens of Athens, attend this! Come, hurry along to see our lady-general and find out how the lot has fallen out in assigning each of you to a dining hall. The tables have been set up; they’re standing laden with all the finest foods you could ever imagine. The couches are draped with rugs and coverlets. The wine is being mixed; the perfume-girls are standing waiting. The fish is being grilled, the hares are on the spits, the cakes are baking, the garlands are being made, the nuts are roasting. The youngest women are boiling pots of soup. Suggestively. Among them, Smoios, garbed in riding gear, is cleaning the women’s dishes—with his lips. Geron has turned up there in his dandy’s clothes: he’s cracking jokes with another ‘young’ companion, and has thrown aside his usual shoes and cloak. So come along! The slaves are waiting ready to serve you bread: make sure your mouths are open!

Neighbour: I’ll get along straight away. Why loiter here, now that the city’s established this new regime?

Chremes: But where are you off? You’ve not surrendered your goods.
into the common store! If you don’t do that you have NO RIGHT to a free dinner!

Scrooge: I’ll do it soon. After we eat. There are undoubtedly others who will be even later than

Neighbour: To dinner.
Chremes: The women won’t let you, if they’re wise, till you’ve turned in your goods.

Neighbour: I will.
Chremes: But when?
Neighbour: Nonchalantly. I don’t intend to make a fuss.
Chremes: You what?
Neighbour: I’m sure I won’t be the last to hand things in.
Chremes: You’re really going to dine?
Neighbour: I can’t avoid it: we’ve got to give the city all possible help, if we’ve got good sense.
Chremes: But what if the women exclude you?
Neighbour: I’ll charge right in, head-first.
Stinge: What if they beat you up?
Scrooge: I’ll beat them—in court!
Stinge: I don’t think courts are going to be quite the same as they were. A female judge, and a female jury—they’ll laugh at you.
Scrooge: Then I’ll take a stand!
Stinge: On what?
Scrooge: Near the door to the restaurant kitchen, and steal the food as they bring it in!
Stinge: Yeah, right. sarcastically Good luck! So long—I’m taking my stuff to the common
Scrooge: Oh, please let me help you carry it.
Stinge: Not a chance! You might claim it was your own property you’re donating. Fuck off!
exit
Scrooge: Now what am I going to do? I never anticipated this horrible turn of events. How can this disaster have happened? How can we turn things around? I can only pray

Chremes: But what if they whip you?
Neighbour: I’ll take them to court.
Chremes: But what if they laugh you down?
Neighbour: I’ll stand by the door -
Chremes: And after that, what then?
Neighbour: I’ll snatch the food from people who carry it in.
Chremes: Dismissively. Make sure you turn up after me! To his slaves. Sikon and Parmenon, pick up my worldly goods.
Neighbour: Now let me give you a hand.
Chremes: That won’t be needed: I’m worried that when we reach the lady-general to deposit these things, you’ll claim that some are yours.
Exit Chremes with his slaves.
Neighbour: Well blast! I’m going to have to find a ply to guarantee my property stays my own yet I get my share of the common meals as well. Ponders. Yes, surely that will work! I
to gods. Larry Summers! Tim Geithner! Ben Bernanke! I’ve always believed in you. Help me! Save me! receiving no answer, he slumps, weeps, and makes his way offstage

*Chorus sing to the tune of SO FAR SO GOOD*
So far so good! It’s all going just fine
The men are so pleased they’re going to dine
and won’t have to pay a single red cent
and not only that, there’ll be no more rent!

They’re not rebelling, they think it’s all right
They got with the program, they’re seeing the light
Let’s see what they think about what’s coming next:
the new regulations we passed about sex!

*Scene 5. Elda appears and looks around. She is not ugly, and carefully dressed and made up, but definitely older.*

Elda: Where are the men? They must have finished dinner.
I’ve gotten myself all dolled up *she looks at herself in a mirror* Makeup, sexy dress—check! But no one’s coming by for me to beguile. Maybe I should sing a little song . . .

. . .

As per the most recent information, the final two scenes will be built during the rehearsal process.

must be off to claim my dinner at once without delay.

*Exits*

*Choral Interlude*

An aging woman, hideously made up in anticipation of the new sexual communism, appears at one of the doors.

Hag A: What’s keeping the men? They should have come long ago. And here I am, my face all plastered white, standing by my door in this yellow chiffon dress. I’ve nothing to do but hum myself a tune in the hope of having some fun by catching a man as he passes by. *Airily.* Oh Muses, come to my lips, and help me find a sexy Ionian song.

*She starts to hum, as the Girl sticks her head out of a window next door.*

Girl: So you managed to slip out before me, then, you crone?
You thought that while I wasn’t around you might pick all the
grapes for yourself, and lure a man by singing. Well I shall sing a rival song! *Ironically*. I don’t suppose it’s what the audience wants: but you never know, it might prove quite amusing.

Hag A: *Gesturing obscenely.* That’s what I think of you. Just disappear! *To the piper.* Now, piper darling, take your instrument and play a tune that suits both you and me. *The piper obliges with a sensual melody.*

**Singing**

Anyone who wants a good time
Ought to come and sleep with me.
Young girls lack sophistication;
Riper women know the tricks.
If a man becomes my partner,
True love will be his, forever and a day:
I’ll not run off to another!

Girl: *Singing at the window.* Young girls shouldn’t be derided.
We have soft eroticism
All around our tender thighs
And upon our lovely breasts.
You, old depilated crock with painted face,
only death could fancy!

Hag A: May your orifice prove quite useless!
May you find you’ve got no fanny,
When you’re ready to be laid!
When you’re lying waiting to embrace your love,
May you find you’ve caught a snake!
Girl: *To a different melody.* Oh dear! Whatever will happen to me?
There’s no sign of my boyfriend
Though I’m waiting all alone
(My mother’s left the house):
What need is there to tell you any more?
*To hag.* I beg you, granny, go and fetch
A leather companion for yourself,
To give you solitary pleasure.

Hag A: Corrupted by Ionian lust,
You’ve got the itch, poor thing!
I think you’d use your tongue in Lesbian style.
You needn’t think you’ll poach
My fun from me; you can’t
deprive me of my prime!

*Music finishes.*

Girl: You can sing what you like, and slink out like a cat.

Hag A: I’m making sure it’s me they’ll come to first.

Girl: To attend your funeral! There’s a new one, crone!

Hag A: A new one!

Girl: Well, old hags have heard them all.
Hag A: It’s not my age that will cause you pain.

Girl: What then? I suppose it’ll be the look of your cosmetics?

Hag A: Stop talking to me!

Girl: And you stop lurking around!

Hag A: Why should I? I’m singing a song for my lover’s sake.

Girl: A ‘lover’ of yours? He must be geriatric!

Hag A: You’ll find out soon, when he comes to pay a visit.

Girl: Suddenly. Well, here he comes at last!

Hag A: But not for you, you shrew!

Girl: Oh yes he is, you rotten cow! He’ll show you soon enough. I’m going inside.
Leaves the window.

Hag A: I’ll go in too: my pride is greater than yours!

She steps back into the house. Enter a Youth, intoxicated, garlanded, and carrying a torch. He starts to sing in the style of a drinking-song.
Youth: I long to sleep in my girlfriend’s arms.  
If only I didn’t have to bang  
An ugly harridan first!  
It’s just too much, for a free-born man.

Hag A: Reappearing, picking up the tune. You’ll soon regret, if you bang your girl!  
Old women are now a la mode.  
The law says come to me!  
It’s only right, in democracy.  
I’m going to watch precisely what you do. Steps back inside.

Youth: If only, gods, I found my girl alone! I’ve had some wine; my lust’s now running strong.

Girl: Reappearing at window. I’ve managed to trick that infernal little hag! She’s gone away, believing I wouldn’t come back. But here’s the man we were talking about before.  
She sings. Come here to me, come here to me,  
Oh love of mine, come here to me!  
Come close to me, and in my bed  
Resolve to spend the night with me.  
I feel a dizzy passion for  
The locks of hair upon your head.  
The pressure of a strange desire  
Is wasting all my life away.  
Release me, Eros, from this pain!  
Make sure this man  
Comes to my bed!
Youth: *Answering.* Come here to me, come here to me,
Oh love of mine, come down to me!
Rush down and open up the door,
Or I’ll collapse and pine away.
I long to lie in your embrace
And wrestle with your buttocks.
Oh Aphrodite, I’m mad about her!
Release me, Eros, from this pain!
Make sure this girl
Comes to my bed!

These words of mine can hardly show the force of love I feel.
Oh darling, please, I beg you now and plead with all my heart:
Unlock the door and hold me tight!
It’s for you I suffer so much!

Oh sweetheart dear, my golden treasure, Aphrodite’s flower,
My honey-bee, my lovely Grace, oh face of tenderness,
Unlock the door and hold me tight!
It’s for you I suffer so much!

*He starts to knock on the Girl’s door, as she leaves the window to come down. But Hag emerges first.*

Hag A: You there! You must be knocking for me.

Youth: Not likely!
Hag A: You’re battering on my door.
Youth: I’m damned if I was!
Hag A: Well who’ve you come to find with that torch of yours?
Youth: Evasively. A chap who knocks around a lot.
Hag A: Who’s that?
Youth: Well it isn’t the fucker you require, I’m sure!
Hag A: I swear by Aphrodite you’ve got no choice.
Youth: Ironically. This isn’t the over-60’s day, you know; we’ve put your cases off ‘til another time. It’s the under-20 girls I’m dealing with.
Hag A: But, sweetie, that’s how things once used to be. They’ve changed; it’s us you’ve got to satisfy first.
Youth: I can choose the piece I like - that’s the rule of the game.
Hag A: You’ve had a free meal: we’re playing a different game.
Youth: Turning. You’re talking nonsense: I’m knocking on this door here.
Hag A: But not until you’ve knocked on my door first.

Youth: It’s not your crumbling entry I’m looking for.

Hag A: I know you love me: you’re just surprised to find I’m waiting at the door. So give me a kiss.

Youth: *Ironically.* But I’m terrified of your lover, my dear.

Hag A: Who’s that?

Youth: That brilliant artist.

Hag A: I don’t know who you mean.

Youth: The one who paints white oil-flasks for the dead! You’d better go before he sees you here.

Hag A: I see your aim.

Youth: And I see yours, alright!

Hag A: By Aphrodite, who picked me out at birth, I’ll never let you go.

Youth: You’re mad, old crock!

Hag A: *Pulling.* Just stop this twaddle! I’ll get you into bed.
Youth: To audience. Why bother to buy those hooks we use in wells, when a bent old crone could be lowered down instead to lift the buckets of water up to the top?

Hag A: Stop mocking me, cruel thing! You'll follow me.

Youth: You can’t compel me - you haven’t paid the city the tax that has to be paid on property transfers.

Hag A: By Aphrodite! You’ve got to come with me: it’s men of your age I like to take to bed.

Youth: But women as old as you I find repulsive! You haven’t a hope of persuading me.

Hag A: Producing a document. But this will leave you no choice.

Youth: What’s that supposed to be?

Hag A: A decree that says you’re obliged to pay me a visit.

Youth: Well read out what it actually says.

Hag A: I shall. ‘The women hereby decree that should a young man desire a young girl, he may not bang with her until he knocks an older woman first. But if he refuses, and still desires the girl, the law entitles all the older women to drag him where
they want - and by the knob!’

Youth: Oh no! It sounds exactly like Prokroustes!

Hag A: We’ve now got womens laws to be obeyed!

Youth: But what if one of my demesmen or my friends should come and bail me out?

Hag A: No man’s allowed to handle large sums of money any longer.

Youth: Does the law permit excuses?

Hag A: No dodgings allowed.

Youth: I’ll claim I’m a merchant: they get exemption.

Hag A: Like hell!

Youth: So what must I do?

Hag A: Just follow me here inside.

Youth: Do I have no choice?

Hag A: The compulsion’s absolute!

Youth: *Melodramatically.* In that case, lay a funeral bier for
me:
Throw down the herbs and spread the broken twigs;
Prepare the ribbons, and fetch the flasks of oil;
And place the water-jug outside my door.

Hag A: You’ve also got to buy a garland for me.

Youth: Provided it’s made of wax - to put on your tomb. I expect you to crumble to pieces before my eyes.

_Hag starts to pull him into the house, just as the Girl appears at the next door._

Girl: And where are you dragging him off?

Hag A: In here: he’s mine.

Girl: You won’t if you’ve got any sense. He’s far too young to go and sleep with you: you’re old enough to be his mother, instead of a wife for him. If you older women should implement this law, you’ll make the city swarm with Oedipus’s!

_She snatches the Youth._

Hag A: You loathsome creature! You’ve made up this excuse from envy. I’ll soon revenge myself on you. _Rushes into house._

Youth: By Zeus the Savior! I owe my life to you, my darling, for getting me out of that old crone’s clutches. I’ll pay you back
tonight for this piece of help: lewdly. your reward will be something rather long and thick.

As the Girl takes the Youth toward her house, the even more hideous Hag, with a large ruddy face, appears from another door.

Hag B: To girl. Hey you! I’ll have you know you’re breaking the law by dragging him off: it says in black and white he must come to my bed first.

Youth: Oh what a fate! What hole did you crawl out of, foul-faced bag? This monster’s more appalling than the last!

Hag B: Grabbing Youth. You’ll come with me!

Youth: To Girl. You’ve got to intervene: she’s dragging me off.

Hag B: But you’re being dragged away by the law, not me.

Youth: It’s a spook who’s tugging me off! She looks like a large, inflamed, and bloody blister.

Hag B: Just follow me, you coward, and stop your drivel.

Youth: Desperately. Please give me a chance to go and relieve myself: I need to try and recover my self-composure. Otherwise you’ll see my fear will soon produce a yellow substance.
Hag B: Don’t worry! You’ll shit indoors.

Youth: Not half! I fear I’ll never be able to stop. *Changing tack.* Please let me go: I’ll provide two sureties to cover my bail.

Hag B: *Dragging him.* Don’t bother.

Hag C, with a face of death-like whiteness, bursts from another door and grabs the Youth, who does not at first see her face.

Hag C: And where d’you think you’re going with her?

Youth: Me, ‘going’? I’m being abducted! Whoever you are, I wish you all the best: you’ve saved my from disaster. *Sees Hag C’s face.* Oh Herakles! Oh Pan! Oh Korybantics! Oh Dioskouroi! This monster’s more grotesque than the one before. Please tell me just what kind of thing you are. Perhaps a monkey plastered with white cosmetics? Or a crone who’s come back up from the land of the dead?

Hag C: *Tugging.* Enough of your gibes! Now follow me in.

Hag B: *Likewise.* No, me!

Hag C: I’ll never release my grip.

Hag B: But nor will I.

Youth: You’ll tear me down the middle, you hideous sluts!
Hag B: It’s me the law requires you come to first.

Hag C: Proudly. No, not if an uglier woman presents a claim.

Youth: But once I’ve been destroyed by you two women, how will I ever reach that lovely girl?

Hag C: That’s your affair: this takes priority.

Youth: But which one gets laid first, if I want to escape?

Hag B: Once more, it’s me.

Youth: Pointing to Hag C. Then she should let me go.

Hag C: Still tugging. It’s me you come to first.

Youth: Pointing to Hag B. If she lets go.

Hag B: I’m damned if I’ll let you go!

Hag C: And so am I!

Youth: Thank goodness you don’t run ferry boats.

Hag B: Why’s that?

Youth: You’d sever your passengers’ bodies right down the
Hag B: Shut up and come in here.

Hag C: No, into here.

Youth: It’s clear Kannonos’ law is still in force: I’m going to have to fuck ‘while held in fetters’. How on earth can I row with both my oars at once?

Hag B: You’ll manage all right, once you’ve eaten a dish of onions.

Youth: Destruction’s close! She’s dragged me to the door and almost in!

Hag C: To Hag B. It won’t make any difference, you’ll pull me in as well.

Youth: No, anything else! One monster’s bad enough: I can’t face two.

Hag C: I’m clinging, whether you want me to or not!

Youth: Calamitous plight! To have to fuck this cow right through the night, and through the day as well, and then, once free of her, to have to deal with a toad whose cheeks are white as a funeral urn! What a ghastly life - a god-forsaken life! Preserve me, Zeus! I face annihilation if I’m going to be
penned in with beasts like these.

To audience.

There’s one thing, though; if my ship should founder here, while being piloted by this pair of tarts, you can place my grave right by the harbor mouth... Points to Hag C. And stick this hag on top of the monument: just coat her in pitch, and fasten down her feet by pouring molten lead around her ankles; then put her on top of the tomb - instead of an urn!

Hag B pulls him indoors, with Hag C continuing to hold on. Along the street, in a very tipsy condition, comes a female Servant belonging to Praxagora.

Servant: How happy the people the people of Athens! How lucky am I! And happiness sublime is Praxagora’s. To chorus. The same is true of you women there round the door, and all your neighbors as well as the locals here, and finally me myself, a slave attendant, whose head is drenched in lovely fragrances. They smell so fine! But a better bouquet still is the one that comes from jars of Thasian wine: it fills your head long after you’ve drunk the wine, while other bouquets quickly fade away. Yes, Thasian wine’s the best, the very best. Pour it me neat! It’ll keep us happy all night, if we choose the jar that has the best bouquet. Come, tell me, women, I need to find the master - or rather, the husband of my mistress!

Leader: If you stay where you are, I think you’ll soon find out.

Blepyros himself comes along the street, carrying a torch and
escorted by dancing girls.
Servant: You’re right, he’s here; and on his way to dinner. Oh master, what felicity is yours!

Blepyros: What, me?

Servant: Yes, you: there isn’t a happier man. For how could anyone know superior fortune? Of thirty thousand citizens, maybe more, you’re the only one who’s still got dinner to come.

Leader: You’ve certainly made him sound a happy man!

Servant: But where are you heading for now?

Blepyros: I’m off to dinner.

Servant: You’re going to be the very last of all. Your wife had already told me to come and find you, and take you along in company with these girls. There’s Chian wine still left for you to drink, with other good things too. So hurry along, and if there are any spectators who like the play, or any judges who don’t feel ill-disposed, they should go with you. The entertainment’s free!

Blepyros: But why not issues a generous invitation to everyone? Show hospitality rich to old men and young, and even to little boys. The dinner’s prepared and waiting on the table for one and all - at least, back in their homes! It’s time for
me to hurry to dinner myself. I’ve got my torch here, ready to light the way.

Leader: What’s keeping you? You should be getting along, and taking these girls. But while you’re making your way, I’ll sing a little song for dinner-time. I want to give the judges some advice. 
Declaiming. Clever judges ought to vote for me - because I’m clever too! Those who like a hearty laugh should vote for me - I give them laughs. On reflection, I suggest that every judge should vote for me! Don’t allow the order of the plays to shape your attitudes. I’ve been first, but just remember, when you come to place your votes,
Not to break the oath you took, but judge us all impartially. Don’t behave like courtesans - you know the lousy type I mean: Those whose memories don’t extend beyond the last affair they had.

Chorus: Starting to dance. Oh! Oh! Now’s the time, let’s begin to kick our legs and start to dance along the street. Dinner waits, my women dear. To Blepyros. And you too, friend, should join the dance in the Cretan style we set.

Blepyros: Yes, absolutely, here I go!

Chorus: Singing. Lithe and agile, stamp the rhythm with your legs.
Think of what’s coming:

*Singing the following sentence without drawing breath.*

Slices of salt-fish and shark-fish and dog-fish and
pieces of mullet with pickled accompaniments,
dripping with silphium, honey, and olive oil,
Thrushes and blackbirds and pigeons and ringdoves and
Chicken and roast lark and sumptuous wagtail and
filets of hare-meat in alcohol sauces.
Now you’ve heard the list of dishes,
run along swiftly and pick up your plate.
When you’ve got it, don’t delay,
Find some - porridge to fill you up!

*Exit Blepyros with dancing girls, followed by the frolics of the celebrating Chorus.*

Guzzling’s under way by now!
Lift your legs up! Shout for joy!
Off to dinner! Shout for joy!
Hurray, hurrah! We’ll win the prize!
Hurray, hurrah! Hurray, hurrah!

*End*
Appendix E: Lobby Display Poster & Transcript
A NOTE FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

CONGRESSLADIES: EXODUS IYESAE

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

POLITICS AND SATIRE THEN AND NOW...

THE SCENE DESIGNERS

AN EMBASSY AT THE END OF EMPIRE

THE MUSICAL DIRECTOR

THE SET DESIGNERS
A Note from the Playwright [Written by Mary-Kay Gamel]

I love Aristophanes' plays, and it's too bad that almost none of them is regularly staged except Lysistrata. The reason is obvious: the war between the sexes is timeless, while the topics of the other plays are very connected to ancient Athens' particular history and mores. The obvious answer is to create adaptations which change the elements unfamiliar to contemporary audiences into something they can understand.

Aristophanes' funniest play, in my opinion, is Thesmophoriazousai (Women at the Thesmophoria Festival). In it Euripides is worried because the women of Athens are annoyed at him for creating negative portrayals of women. Hearing that the women are going to put him on trial during a women-only religious festival he recruits a relative of his to dress in drag, infiltrate the festival, and find out what they women are up to. He is of course unmasked and Euripides has to figure out how to rescue him. In 2000, inspired by undergraduate Ali El-Gasseir's brilliant idea of changing the festival into a women-only daytime TV talk show, I created The Julie Thesmo Show and Ali and I co-directed it on Second Stage and toured it down to a conference in L.A.

In 2006 Chris Grabowski (UCSC Theater Arts 1985, Yale MFA, Professor of Drama at Vassar College) and I decided to adapt Aristophanes' Wasps, about Athenian politics, into The Buzzzz!!!!, which was set at UCSC and staged on the back lawn of the Cowell Provost House. The central character was a History of Consciousness professor whose right-wing mother was giving him problems; this gave us a lot of chances to poke fun at UCSC foibles. Again, the point was to find a locale and situation which our actual audiences could understand (and laugh at).

Ekklesiazousai seemed a perfect choice at a historical moment in which the U.S. Congress is gridlocked with no end in sight. Imagining a solution has been both satisfying and laughter-producing. In particular, Danny's brilliant idea of using song parodies, the incredible Ben Schatz teaching everyone how to create them, and the
extraordinary results the student performers have come up with has all been a revelation and a joy.

**Athens and the End of an Empire**

Aristophanes (450 - 386 BCE) wrote extensively during a time of great power for ancient Athens, which held sway over the Delian League, a vast coastal empire which covered the whole Aegean Sea as far as modern Constantinople. However, their heavy-handed use of the League and its resources caused the Peloponnesian War to erupt in 431; the next 27 years of the war marked a time of great output for Aristophanes, but a period of great decline for Athens. While the first portion of the conflict (431 - 421) showed great promise for the city, the defection of Alcibiades following the Peace of Nicias (421 - 414) caused a dramatic turn of fortune.

In 411, dissatisfaction with the lower-class democracy of Athens and the intense financial burdens of the war sparked a revolt in which the government was replaced with an oligarchy of the elite known as ‘The 400’. It fractured almost immediately upon taking power, broadening to ‘The 5000’, then replaced entirely by a restored democracy following a dramatic, yet ultimately ineffectual, Athenian victory at Cyzicus in 410.

Sparta and her allies finally crushed the Athenian fleet and blockaded the city in 405. Starving, diseased, and desperate, Athens surrendered in 404, losing its ships, its walls, and all its overseas territory. Only through the intervention of Sparta was the city saved from utter annihilation; Xenophon states that the Spartans refused to destroy a city that had done such good at a time of greatest danger to Greece.

After the war, Sparta installed the ‘Thirty Tyrants’; known for their corruption and brutality, they were overthrown by 403 and replaced with democracy yet again, though there was a pervading feeling that the failings of the democratic government had led Athens to its unstable socio-political climate. The city began a slow recovery over the next decade, one of the hardest and most humiliating in its history. In 399, in an attempt to hold someone responsible for the Tyrants, the city condemned and executed Socrates, whose pupil Critias had led the group. Rather than having the
intended cathartic effect, Athens reeled under the blow of killing its most upright citizen and greatest philosopher.

In 395, Athens entered a new war against Sparta with a number of its former allies. Lasting until 387, the Corinthian War was halted by the Persian Empire, solidifying Spartan hegemony and setting a precedent for Persian involvement in Greek politics. It was during this war that Ecclesiazusae was written, a reflection of popular political speculation, various social reforms, and the newfound independence of an Athens free from Spartan tyranny.

**A Note from the Director** [Written by Danny Scheie]

This production springs from a deep personal belief of mine that Aristophanes is almost impossible for us to recover; its as if a videotape of Saturday Night Live were to surface 2500 years from now. How much would the audience of 4515 appreciate? I have a hunch Aristophanes did what we did; ask a bunch of passionate, politicized young performers what pissed them off, and then made them write lyric parodies and sketch comedy to house their anger. So much of what is on the stage in this production of Congressladies has been created by the students in the show during the last two months. Although I have been heavily influenced by the Kinsey Sicks, the Capitol Steps, and *The Book of Mormon*, this show belongs almost entirely to this group of performers.

**Notes from the Designers** [Written by Joseph Hultquist]

The scenic design is intended to symbolize both the decline of Athens that was occurring when the Greek original was written, as well as the current decline of Washington DC where this adaptation is staged. The design is additionally influenced by the political cabarets of 1920's Berlin and the modern political "drag-apella" group The Kinsey Sicks.

While the issues raised in this play are serious, the format of satire takes these issues and makes them, or their solutions, absurd. In Latin: *Reductio ad absurdum*, originally from the Greek "*eis atopen apagoge,*" is the reduction of an argument until
it become absurd. This reduction of nuanced issues is key to satire and to the scenic design. The set is not supposed to show reality, but a caricature of it: a simplistic set where the absurdity of the action can exist.

**Politics and Satire, Then and Now**

When we talk about Ecclesiazusae, we are talking about two different plays, one set in ancient Athens as itself, the other set in modern Washington D.C. as The Congressladies. The differences between the two, as well as the similarities, help us understand what the focus of this particular satire happens to be. And make no mistake, this is satire; Aristophanes specialized in Attic Old Comedy, perhaps the last playwright to focus on that “exuberant and high-spirited satire of public persons and affairs.” I say the last because most of his contemporaries, such as Cratinus, Eupolis, and Euripides, did not live to see the end of the Peloponnesian War and subsequent decay of both Athens and Old Comedy. Aristophanes alone was left to carry their art form into a rationalist and anti-Dionysian 4th century, but perhaps I’m getting ahead of myself. What were the political and social issues that defined Ecclesiazusae and the start of the new century?

The 5th century was a true golden age for Athens and Greece, with the time after Aristophanes’ birth having special significance. There was peace between the numerous city-states as well as with their former enemy, the Persian Empire. The Acropolis was under construction while Socrates wandered the agora. Aeschylus’ Oresteia had just recently premiered, Sophocles was at the height of his tragic prowess, and Euripides was just starting to show his innovative new works. Even Herodotus had come to roost in the city, along with a veritable who’s-who of poets, sculptors, philosophers, and sophists. And yet, we know that nothing lasts forever...once-proud Athens was reduced to nothing by the end of that shining century.

While Aristophanes’ output during the war had been prodigious, it dropped away entirely following the rise of the Thirty Tyrants in 404. They struck the first blow against Old Comedy by forbidding the parabasis (an exclusive feature of the
genre in which the chorus is left alone onstage to address the audience on irrelevant topics) and restricting the mention of real people. Four years later, Cinesias proposed and succeeded in abolishing the choregoi (the system in which a wealthy citizen funded all aspects of the chorus), ostensibly to relieve the poverty-stricken city of yet another expenditure; some scholars think that it was an attempt to silence his critics, of which there were many. Even without these active elements working against Aristophanes, a dispirited and disillusioned Athens had become more politically corrupt, more socially divisive, and financially polarized than at any time before. Not fertile ground for a comedic playwright, if only for the fact that he could so easily become the target of frustration rather than the source of relief. Only the rekindling of the old conflict with Sparta, as well as a healthy injection of capital from the Persian Empire, began to revitalize the Athenian economy and give Aristophanes more stable and familiar footing for his satire.

This whole situation is starting to sound quite familiar, isn’t it? Here we are, at the dawn of a new century ourselves, plagued with many of the same issues that Aristophanes and the Athenians were dealing with. We are a truly apathetic voter base for a democratic system, though not more so than ancient Athens, whose populace had to be tempted into the ecclesia through the promise of payment. Our government corruption is perhaps equal to that of the Athenians, if we choose to believe one news source over any other. We are as easily influenced by our own news media as the Athenians were by the satirists and political playwrights, with just as much truth to be found in each. We find ourselves in a lengthy overseas war, and though the stakes and toll aren’t nearly equivalent to the conflicts Athens was involved in, there is a similar war-weariness between us. Even our financial situations mirror each other; the United States is still recovering from one of the worst recessions in its history, just as Athens had to recover from their military defeat, while the middle class suffers many of the negative effects of that recovery. And, just as Athens was defined through 392 by their crushing defeat in 404, we are still being defined by 9/11 more than a decade after the fact.
Call this show a parody then, not only of our own time but of Aristophanes’
time. We have done exactly as A. W. Schlegel thought Aristophanes had done:
musical scores as “travesties” of well-known songs with ridiculous dances and
performances mocking popular subjects. Have we successfully made the parallels
between Athens and Washington, between the Athenians and us?
Appendix F: Designer Presentation Slides
Alright, most of you know me. I’m Richard Rossi, and this presentation will be a cursory look at governmental structure and, as the title suggests, parallels that may be useful to you. If you’ve got question while I’m talking, feel free to get my attention.
As you probably know, the government is broken into three parts; the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. The judicial branch, in broad terms, deals with cases and controversies, can declare executive or legislative action at any level of the government unconstitutional, creating precedent for future law decisions. Interesting, but not what we'll be focusing on.

The executive branch includes the president, vice president, and cabinet; their charge is to "take care that the laws be faithfully executed" and "preserve, protect and defend the Constitution". The president signs legislation into law or vetoes it, enacts executive orders, appoints supreme court justices and other such actions. This is an important bit of information, as you'll see once we move on to Athenian government.

The legislative branch is what we're most interested in. Congressional powers are listed in Article I, section 8, of the Constitution. The cliff notes version includes:

To lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts and excises, to pay the debts and provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States;

To borrow money on the credit of the United States;

To regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes;
To establish a uniform rule of naturalization, and uniform laws on the subject of bankruptcies throughout the United States;

To coin money, regulate the value thereof, and of foreign coin, and fix the standard of weights and measures;

To provide for the punishment of counterfeiting the securities and current coin of the United States;

To establish post offices and post roads;

To promote the progress of science and useful arts,

To constitute tribunals inferior to the Supreme Court;

To define and punish piracies and felonies committed on the high seas, and offenses against the law of nations;

To declare war, grant letters of marque and reprisal, and make rules concerning captures on land and water;

To raise and support armies;

To provide and maintain a navy;

To make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces;

To provide for calling forth the militia to execute the laws of the union, suppress insurrections and repel invasions;

To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining, the militia;

To exercise exclusive legislation in all cases whatsoever, over such District...as may...become the seat of the government of the United States

The Thirteenth (1865), Fourteenth (1868), and Fifteenth Amendments (1870) gave Congress authority to enact legislation to enforce rights of African Americans

The Necessary and Proper clause, after a great deal of abuse, has just recently been redefined in NFIB v Sebelius to match its original intent of "exercising powers which are merely 'incidental' to Congress's enumerated powers." (incidental = Contingent upon or pertaining to something that is more important; that which is necessary, appertaining to, or depending upon another known as the principal)
A Tale of Two Congresses

This is the current makeup of 114th Congress, and while some of you may not like the fact that the house and senate are both Republican, this will go a long way toward moving things forward out of the stalemate they've been in since 2009, which was the last time Congress was unified. Women currently hold 104 seats in the House, and 20 seats in the Senate.

[111th & 114th, only unified congresses during Obama presidency]
A quick look at who's running the place. A whip is supposed to ensure party discipline during legislation.

Athenian Government
or, why we don’t do it like this anymore

And now, a nice flowchart to help simplify the Athenian Constitution...

We already know that slaves, women, foreigners, and non-citizens weren’t allowed to vote. That left a block of people approximately equal to the population of Santa Cruz that needed to pony up once in a while to participate in direct democracy. We use representative democracy within the framework of a constitutional republic.

At any rate, you can see that the powers were split up quite a bit among the various pieces of the Athenian government, which means that the only points of intersection between the Ecclesia and our Congress are those first two points: voting on decrees and treaties, which our Congress has to ratify from the president with a 2/3 majority, and making and passing laws. The other portion of the Ecclesia’s power has since been given to the president, which means that two of the three powers of the Ecclesia are exercised from the Executive branch rather than the Legislative branch.

One bit of interesting information is that the voting populace of Athens was easily swayed by political satire and the comic poets. (Jeffrey Henderson’s Comic Hero versus Political Elite)
This is the Pnyx [puh-nix], the meeting place for the Ecclesia. The second one, modified from the original by the Thirty Tyrants, would have been the one in use during the writing of the play in 392. According to Plutarch, they changed the direction so that it pointed toward the sea because the Tyrants thought naval supremacy was the origin of democracy. It should also be noted that in 400 the Athenians began paying people two obols to attend the Ecclesia, approximately $15. It doesn't sound like a lot, but Xenophon indicates that the wage would have been enough for the daily subsistence of a family of three.

http://www.agathe.gr/democracy/the_ekklesia.html
This is what it looks like today. You can see the Bema (stand for the speaker) center right.

http://www.agathe.gr/democracy/the_ekklesia.html
Greek History!

Now for some factoids to help put the two periods in a better frame for you.

The big political and societal event during that period was the Peloponnesian War, which lasted from 431-404 BC. Aristophanes’ writing was heavily influenced by it, along with nearly every other dramatic and satirical playwright of the period, because the war completely destroyed Athens. It went from the largest power in Greece to just barely avoiding being razed to the ground; only its reputation as a place of higher learning saved Athens from the torch.

Once they were defeated, Sparta installed the Thirty Tyrants, infamously known for their corruption and brutality. They were overthrown after 13 months for killing 5% of the Athenian population, confiscation of property, and exile of key political figures. There are certainly parallels between Praxagora’s desire to communize property and the Tyrant’s actions which would resonate strongly with most citizens.

In 399, Athens suffered another major blow when they chose to execute Socrates. While there were official reasons for his execution, the fact that one of the tyrants was his student was not seen as a coincidence. Afterwards, the action was widely regarded as a black mark on the city itself, even by those who had voted in favor.

The end of the war would have been a sore spot many years afterwards, which contributed to Athens getting involved in another war in 395. Still hurting from their defeat, Athens jumped at the chance to back an ally against Sparta during the Corinthian War, which eventually involved every polis in Greece. Interestingly enough,
the Persian Empire backed Athens, and by 387 had basically forced Sparta and the Athenian allies to sign a treaty. No real gains were made by either side, but there can be no mistake that when Aristophanes talks about soldiers, he's talking about the Corinthian War.

### American History!

- Operation Enduring Freedom
  - Afghanistan (2001-present)
  - Philippines (2002-present)
  - Horn of Africa (2002-present)
  - Trans Sahara (2007-present)
  - Caribbean and Central America (2008)
- Yemen Insurgency (1998-present)
- Iraq War (2003-2011)
- War in Northwest Pakistan (2004-present)
- International Campaign against ISIL (2014-present)

Now on to us. The big event that lurks in our social consciousness is 9/11, our defeat at the hands of an enemy we hardly knew was gunning for us. That one event has shaped America in innumerable ways, the most obvious of which would be the continuing Global War on Terror.

There are several wars going on, all somewhat connected, that fall under this umbrella, too many for me to talk about. Despite this, we live in the most peaceful era ever; there were fewer war death from 2000-2010 than in any other decade in the last century (55k vs 100k in the 90's vs 180k during the cold war vs 5.5mil during WW2). Fewer civilians are killed during operations, there are fewer civil wars, and overall military presence around the world is decreasing.

The most obvious correlation between Athens and the US is warfare, but Greece suffered numerous bloody wars one after another after another; what sorts of comparisons can we draw between then and now other than through a media network designed to keep us fearful?

(US Collective Defense Arrangements have us covering the military actions and consequences of 54 countries worldwide)

http://foreignpolicy.com/2011/08/15/think-again-war/
Appendix G: Program Notes
Notes on *Ecclesiazusae*

...Comedy too can sometimes discern what is right. I shall not please, but I shall say what is true.

— Dicaeopolis, *Acharnians.*

Aristophanes (446-386 BCE) lived and worked during a period of vast change within ancient Athens. The Spartan victory during the Peloponnesian War (431-404 BCE) cast Athens from its lofty perch as the most powerful Grecian city-state, leading to decades of political turmoil and corruption. Population loss, plague, financial catastrophe, and the aggravation of numerous social and political animosities only made the situation worse. The execution of Socrates in 399 only further underlined the corruption in the Athenian political system. Even as Aristophanes wrote *Ecclesiazusae,* Athens had become embroiled in the Corinthian War (395-387 BCE), which created more political and social issues for the city.

That is the background upon which *Ecclesiazusae* is placed, the fears and political issues of ancient Athens reflected in the satire of the play. Lack of knowledge of the political process, admitting corruption, deception in government, references to the wars, and a veritable laundry list of other grievances are all spoken of in course. We too exist in such a place, where an apathetic public has a voter turnout of just over 35%; where daily scandals from all corners of the government show us that not all of our representatives have our best interests at heart; where those that reveal deceptions by the government become criminals; where a tragedy on American soil has defined safety, security, and freedom for over a decade; and where mass media is more interested in their bottom line than in objective reporting. Aristophanes’ words resonate with us precisely because his world was so similar to our own. The parallels we draw from the suffering city-state of Aristophanes’ day to our own shows that some things have remained too much the same, and that Congress, both then and now, could probably use a few new ideas.
Appendix H: Scene Breakdown
## Scene Breakdown

Based on *The Congressladies* First Draft
Current January 10, 2015

*Richard Rossi, 1/10/2015*

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### The Chorus:

- **Praxagora**
- **Squint**
- **Stinge**
- **Reporter**
- **Scrooge**
- **Ariane**
- **Bernice**
- **Crepa**
- **Elda**
- **Georgia**
- **Hermoine**
- **Senilia**

*No named presence in the script, but is part of the chorus.*

*No named presence until Scene 5, but is part of the chorus.*
BIBLIOGRAPHY


