

CONFIDENCE (AND THE SPEECH)

**A PLAY WITH HISTORY BY
SUSAN LAMBERT HATEM**

A DPS ACTING EDITION PUBLISHED BY

BROADWAY
LICENSING GLOBAL

All Rights Reserved

CONFIDENCE (and The Speech) is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, and of all countries covered by the International Copyright Union (including the Dominion of Canada and the rest of the British Commonwealth), and of all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention, the Berne Convention, and of all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise), or stored in any retrieval system in any way (electronic or mechanical) without written permission of the publisher.

The English language stock and amateur stage performance rights throughout the world for *CONFIDENCE (and The Speech)* are controlled exclusively by Broadway Licensing, www.BroadwayLicensing.com. **No professional or nonprofessional performance of the Play may be given without obtaining in advance the written permission of Broadway Licensing and paying the requisite fee.**

All other rights, including without limitation motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved.

Inquiries concerning all other rights should be addressed to the Author c/o Broadway Licensing.

NOTE ON BILLING

Anyone receiving permission to produce *CONFIDENCE (and The Speech)* is required to give credit to the Author as sole and exclusive Author of the Play on the title page of all programs distributed in connection with performances of the Play and in all instances in which the title of the Play appears, including printed or digital materials for advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the Play and/or a production thereof. Please see your production license for font size and typeface requirements.

Be advised that there may be additional credits required in all programs and promotional material. Such language will be listed under the "Additional Billing" section of production licenses. It is the licensee's responsibility to ensure any and all required billing is included in the requisite places, per the terms of the license.

SPECIAL NOTE ON VIDEO FOOTAGE

Footage of the "Crisis of Confidence" speech is available through the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum. If this footage is used, Licensees of the Play are required to give the following credit in all programs:

"Crisis of Confidence" speech video furnished courtesy of the
Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum

SPECIAL NOTE ON SONGS/RECORDINGS

Broadway Licensing neither holds the rights to nor grants permission to use any songs or recordings mentioned in the Play. Permission for performances of copyrighted songs, arrangements or recordings mentioned in this Play is not included in our license agreement. The permission of the copyright owner(s) must be obtained for any such use. For any songs and/or recordings mentioned in the Play, other songs, arrangements, or recordings may be substituted provided permission from the copyright owner(s) of such songs, arrangements or recordings is obtained; or songs, arrangements or recordings in the public domain may be substituted.

Thank you for sharing your play with me. I am intrigued and pleased to have a copy. Rosalynn joins me in sending you our best wishes for your continued success.

—President Jimmy Carter

CONFIDENCE (and The Speech) was produced Off-Broadway at Theatre Row on November 7, 2019. It was produced by Charlotte’s Off-Broadway, 134 West, Mary Ann Fair, Summerland Entertainment, and Victor A. Lambert. It was directed by Hannah Ryan, the scenic design was by Brittany Vasta, the costume design was by Vanessa Leuck, the lighting design was by Christine Watanabe, the sound design was by Emma Wilk, the projection design was by S. Katy Tucker, the props design was by Deb Gaouette, the stage manager was Becky Abramowitz, the assistant stage manager was Ellie Handel, the assistant director was Diane Phelan, and the movement director was Karla Puno Garcia. The cast was as follows:

PROFESSOR CYNTHIA COOPER
 and PRESIDENT CARTER April Armstrong
 JONATHAN ROLLINS and CYNTHIA COOPER Zach Fifer
 ROSALYNN CARTER Sarah Dacey-Charles
 PAT CADDELL Stephen Stout
 JODY POWELL James Penca
 HAMILTON JORDAN Ross Alden
 HENDRICK “RICK” HERTZBERG Imran Sheikh
 WALTER “FRITZ” MONDALE Mark Coffin
 SARAH WEDDINGTON Abigail Ludrof

The world premiere of *CONFIDENCE (and The Speech)* was produced by Charlotte’s Off-Broadway (Anne Lambert, Producer) and 134 West in North Carolina on September 6, 2018. It was directed by Anne Lambert, the set design and props were by Jackie Hohenstein, the costume design was by Ramsey Lyric, the lighting design was by Barbara Berry, the sound and projection design was by Rob Stephens, and the stage managers were Jessica Zingher and Brenna Skinnon.

PROFESSOR CYNTHIA COOPER
 and PRESIDENT CARTER Josephine Hall
 JONATHAN ROLLINS
 and CYNTHIA COOPER Jonathan Hoskins
 ROSALYNN CARTER Lane Morris

PAT CADDELL Nathaniel Gillespie
JODY POWELL Berry Newkirk
HAMILTON JORDAN Paul Gibson
HENDRICK “RICK” HERTZBERG Greg Paroff
WALTER “FRITZ” MONDALE Josh Logsdon
SARAH WEDDINGTON Lauren Duckworth

A Los Angeles reading was produced at Boston Court in Pasadena, California, in July 2019. It was directed by Alyssa Escalante.

The key art for *CONFIDENCE (and The Speech)* is by Chad Calvert.

CHARACTERS

PROFESSOR CYNTHIA COOPER, PhD, 59, BIPOC—Professor of History, Baynard University. Accomplished professor and historian. A little beaten down. Sharp wit. Insightful.

JONATHAN ROLLINS, 21, BIPOC—Recent University of Texas graduate. An ambitious young man, with a sincere streak and a curious nature.

PRESIDENT CARTER, 55—President of the United States. Charismatic and intelligent. Played by the same actress who plays Professor Cooper. A full partner to his wife.

CYNTHIA COOPER, 19—Passionate, but shy. Played by the same actor who plays Jonathan Rollins.

ROSALYNN CARTER, 52—First Lady from Plains. The president's closest advisor and champion of women's rights, human rights, and mental health awareness. A full partner to her husband.

PAT CADDELL, 29—Carter's pollster. Young and super ambitious. Likes to be right. Disheveled and sloppy. Sets his watch 15 minutes ahead and is still late. Also plays TODD, a charming student.

JODY POWELL, 36—White House Press Secretary, Part of Carter's "Georgia Mafia." Charming. Cool and not cool. Mooches cigarettes. Also plays GOVERNOR (offstage voice).

HAMILTON JORDAN, 34—Key advisor to the president and political strategist, "Georgia Mafia." Funny and clever. Committed to Jimmy Carter and to doing a good job.

HENDRICK (RICK) HERTZBERG, 35—Speechwriter. A New Yorker.

WALTER (FRITZ) MONDALE, 51—Vice President of the United States. A good guy. True confidant to the president. Also is REPORTER (offstage voice).

SARAH WEDDINGTON, 34—Assistant to the president. Lawyer who argued *Roe v. Wade*. Efficient. Confident. Good sense of humor. Also plays MELISSA, an eager student.

Casting is flexible. Professor Cooper/President Carter are ideally played by a BIPOC actress, and Jonathan Rollins/Cynthia Cooper should be cast equivalently.

PLACE

Baynard University, the White House, and Camp David.

TIME

July, “present day” and July, 1979

A FEW NOTES

The play runs 95 minutes, no intermission.

CONFIDENCE (and The Speech) is the first of a four-play cycle.

Though this story and subject is serious, this play is written to be fast-paced, witty, and energetic. Think '70s *West Wing*.

There is a dramaturgical study guide available through Broadway Licensing Global, which can help with the historical and political references.

The climate memos in the play are from real documents.

It may seem counterintuitive, but audiences do not need to be familiar with the '70s, the Carter administration, or the speech to enjoy the play. This is a play for right now.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Before the show, THREE WILLING PEOPLE are preselected from the audience entering the theatre.

It might go something like this (but is up to the director/creative team's discretion): "Hello! I'm _____. There is an audience participation element to this play. Would you be interested in being part of it? You will have an opportunity to speak with the president during the show. (If interested.) The participation element will come about two-thirds of the way into the play. It will be fairly obvious, as Jody Powell, press secretary to President Carter will speak directly to the audience in preparation. Hamilton Jordan will introduce you. The president will ask you his question. He is looking for your heartfelt and thoughtful answers. You may answer as if it is 1979, or you may answer from now/present day. He wants to hear your honest thoughts, but please be respectful and use no offensive language."

Once they are selected, they are each given TWO identical cards to fill out.

Each set of cards has a different question on it, which each AUDIENCE MEMBER *will answer*. During the show, they will be asked to participate from the audience. They should be prepared to speak up as themselves and answer a question from the president. (Kind of like *25th Annual Putnum County Spelling Bee*.)

They fill out and **keep** the first CARD: They may use it as needed when the president asks them their question. They may write down their answer and read from it or speak extemporaneously.

They fill out and return the second CARD: Second cards identifying each person (this can also identify what each person plans to talk about—i.e. healthcare, housing, bipartisanship, education, etc.) are given to Hamilton Jordan at the beginning of the play. They will be used in Scene 14, page 51.

THERE ARE THREE SETS OF CARDS. EACH SET IS LABELED #1 (Question 1), #2 (Question 2), and #3 (Question 3) in order of the questions the president will ask of the audience member in Scene 14, pages 51–53. EACH SET OF CARDS HAS THE FOLLOWING:

Please print your name:

Please print where you are from (city, state, country as needed):

Please be prepared to answer this question as honestly as you can.

(Note: Each set of cards has only one of these questions.)

- 1)How can we work together to rebuild confidence in ourselves and our nation?
- 2)What can we do to solve the problems eroding our nation?
- 3)What should we do to develop a national agenda to approach our deep problems?

CONFIDENCE (AND THE SPEECH)

Scene 1

*Baynard University classroom—July 3, present day—daytime.
Professor Cynthia Cooper leans against a desk, speaking to
her class.*

Written on the board:

*CAN MISSED OPPORTUNITIES IN HISTORY DEFINE
FUTURE PROBLEMS?*

PAPERS DUE: August 4—Next Month!

*COMPARE AND CONTRAST TWO TRANSFORMA-
TIONAL MOMENTS in American politics.*

PROFESSOR COOPER. Unfortunately, that's our time today.

Two students in the audience react—they're bummed.

...Please read chapter twenty-five. And yes, it will all be on the test. And oh yes, your topics are due next week. And no—your papers cannot be late. Happy America's birthday everybody!

*The two students from the audience—Melissa and Todd—
come up to her. Another young man is behind them. Professor
Cooper nods to Melissa.*

Yes, Melissa.

MELISSA. So Professor Cooper, I have a question about my paper. Which you know is about the Equal Rights Amendment, which simply states "equality of rights under the law shall not be abridged by the United States, or any State on account of sex..."

TODD. (*Aside.*) We know. We all know. You say it every time. Why do you need to say it every time?

MELISSA. Because it's important to speak it out loud. (*Back to Cooper.*) ...and is clearly now, about to be TWO missed opportunities. I was confused about the lawsuit filed by the states...

PROFESSOR COOPER. Yes, the book, *Why We Lost the ERA*, can help you with that. If you don't find what you need, come by next week.

MELISSA. It's exciting, isn't it? The ERA could finally become an amendment once...

TODD. That ship has sailed. It needed three states by 1982 and it didn't get them...

MELISSA. It's got them now. Thirty-eight states have ratified it. Nevada ratified in 2017. Illinois, 2018. Virginia, 2019!

TODD. And Congress is just gonna retroactively extend ratification? Back to 1982? How ya gonna get that through? THAT they will not do.

He smiles to the young man, maybe high-fives him.

I'm a poet. And I know it.

MELISSA. North Carolina and Arizona are also gonna ratify the ERA this year. And then Congress is going to have to deal with it.

TODD. You're already equal. Slauson said the fourteenth amendment protects all citizens, including women. Professor Cooper, I just have a question about *my* paper...

MELISSA. (*Remembering.*) Justice Scalia said it did not. (*Getting mad.*) Todd, you're just being an ass...

PROFESSOR COOPER. (*Interrupting.*) I love the passion. Truly. But we have to pick up this discussion after the holiday.

TODD. It's just...I have the away game on August third and my sister's getting married...

He grins at her.

PROFESSOR COOPER. Then you may definitely turn your paper in early.

He grins more. Trying to charm his way.

No late papers, Todd.

TODD. I thought you said every moment was an opportunity to speak up.

PROFESSOR COOPER. And you did. And your paper still has to be turned in on time. (*To the young man.*) And your question?

YOUNG MAN. (*Caught off guard.*) Oh, I just had a, um, question about Carter's 1979 malaise speech?

PROFESSOR COOPER. (*Beat.*) The crisis of confidence speech? It is an interesting moment...except that he never said malaise.

YOUNG MAN. He warned us of things that came to pass, particularly our dependence on oil. If people had listened, if we had been able to act in the '80s, do you think we might not be in a climate crisis now? Could we have avoided disaster?

PROFESSOR COOPER. Isn't the more pertinent question, can we avoid it now? (*Beat.*) If you want to do your paper on it, make sure your research is properly cited.

YOUNG MAN. But I'd love to hear your thoughts about the speech.

PROFESSOR COOPER. Other than pushing for coal and shale, some say it was a very forward-thinking speech. Some called it too preachy. Others might say it didn't go far enough in explaining the energy crisis. (*Beat.*) There are great resources to use...and I'd, ah, be interested to see what you have to say about it. But shoo! Go. Have a great long weekend!

Melissa and Todd leave. The young man doesn't.

YOUNG MAN. I just had a few more questions. I mean, you were there, right?

PROFESSOR COOPER. (*Really looks at him.*) Are you in my class?

YOUNG MAN. I'm ah, ...no. I was just sitting in.

PROFESSOR COOPER. Are you a journalist?

YOUNG MAN. No. I'm a, curious.

PROFESSOR COOPER. Well, a-curious. There's plenty of research out there. That speech has been written about a lot.

YOUNG MAN. I know. And it was initially successful. Like huge. The best response to a speech the White House had EVER seen.

Letters. Phone calls. People loved it. Then things changed. Do you think it cost him the election?

PROFESSOR COOPER. There was a lot going on. 1979 was a very strange country. Much like now.

YOUNG MAN. But you were there? You're listed as White House personnel that went to Camp David for those ten days. Right?

He shows her a piece of paper.

That is unusual. She looks at the paper. Surprised. Impressed?

PROFESSOR COOPER. I don't know where you got that, but there are way more important people than me on that list. You talk to them. I'm happy to make an email introduction to Pat Caddell. He's not a friend, but oddly, we're still in touch. Sort of. He wrote a memo, which inspired the speech. And he'll talk to you. He loves to talk.

YOUNG MAN. I'd like get your story, Doctor Cooper.

PROFESSOR COOPER. Who are you?

YOUNG MAN. Jonathan Rollins, ma'am.

He holds out his hand. She doesn't take it.

I'm interested in your perspective on that speech. On those days. You were in the room where it happened.

PROFESSOR COOPER. Ha! At most, I was two cabins away from the room where it happened. I wasn't really, even supposed to be there. It was, *(Remembering.)* I was uncomfortable.

JONATHAN ROLLINS. Really?

PROFESSOR COOPER. Yes. Kind of like now.

JONATHAN ROLLINS. Please. I'd really like to hear your story.

PROFESSOR COOPER. It was a long time ago. *(Pause.)* I have the right to review your article before you publish it. Direct quotes must be approved by me.

JONATHAN ROLLINS. I'm not writing an article. I'm really not... *(Off her look.)* But okay.

PROFESSOR COOPER. I was turning twenty that fall. How old are you?

JONATHAN ROLLINS. Twenty-one. Ma'am.

PROFESSOR COOPER. Twenty. One. Graduated?

JONATHAN ROLLINS. Last month. University of Texas, Austin.

PROFESSOR COOPER. Ah. Texas is a conundrum.

JONATHAN ROLLINS. I'm from Brooklyn.

PROFESSOR COOPER. That makes more sense. New York by way of Texas. And now you're here. You're far-flung.

JONATHAN ROLLINS. So are you. Your story of the speech?

PROFESSOR COOPER. My story. Okay. *(Pause.)* So you'll be me. *(Pause.)* I'll be President Carter.

Music begins. As the music plays and they talk, Professor Cooper changes her outfit and hair to become President Carter. Jonathan Rollins changes his outfit to become a young Cynthia Cooper.

JONATHAN ROLLINS. Excuse me?

Two cast members (Melissa and Todd?) enter and help Rollins and Cooper change.

PROFESSOR COOPER. It's my version of the story. I wanna be president.

JONATHAN ROLLINS. And I'm gonna be...you? I'm not sure that's gonna work. How's that gonna work, exactly?

PROFESSOR COOPER. It won't be that hard. They didn't let us speak too much in those days.

JONATHAN ROLLINS. Not many lines for ambitious young women in 1979?

PROFESSOR COOPER. But a lot more coffee and cigarettes. And pantyhose.

Jonathan struggles with the pantyhose.

Pantyhose were the worst. I hated pantyhose. *(Watching him struggle with the pantyhose.)* And I hated skirts. It's literally a big reason I didn't stay in D.C. Did you know women were not allowed to wear pants on the Senate floor until 1993? Nineteen ninety-three. Think about that one for a minute. Professors don't wear pantyhose. Unless they want to.

JONATHAN ROLLINS. *(He tries different blouses.)* Why else

didn't you stay in D.C.? Your article on ERA ratification and how it could have been achieved through intersectional environmentalist action was pretty brilliant. (*To dresser, re blouse or bra.*) No. Not a pink one.

PROFESSOR COOPER. Theorizing is easy. But this is not about me...right? This is about President Carter and that speech. July, 1979. We were, as usual, a country in crisis. It was a super hot summer. Gas lines, trucker strikes, riots and...disco.

JONATHAN ROLLINS. (*As the dresser hands him a pair of shoes.*) Wait, heels? Really?

PROFESSOR COOPER. A little heel won't hurt...much.

Back to painting the picture.

Three Mile Island had melted down, the Middle East was heating up, and Skylab was falling.

JONATHAN ROLLINS. Skylab?

PROFESSOR COOPER. (*Quickly.*) Oh, a large NASA space station that dropped out of orbit and people were terrified it was going to smash on their heads.

Jonathan is still confused.

Like Y2K.

JONATHAN ROLLINS. I don't know what that is.

PROFESSOR COOPER. Never mind. Just know the whole world was in a panic about...everything. (*Beat.*) Meanwhile, we thought civil rights and women's lib had really opened doors. I wanted to be a part of it. But I was pretty shy, really... (*Remembering.*) I had come to D.C. to work on the Equal Rights Amendment, but Bella Abzug, cochair of Carter's National Advisory Committee on Women, had just been fired.

JONATHAN ROLLINS. How do I look?

PROFESSOR COOPER. It'll have to do. (*Beat.*) She left, saying the only way to win true women's rights was from outside the system. Most of the committee walked out in support. And there went my internship. Carter had campaigned on involving more women. He did. But the execution was challenging. It was such a boys' club. Even the outsiders, Carter's own people...

JONATHAN ROLLINS. The “Georgia Mafia”...

Rollins’ transformation into a young Cynthia Cooper is complete.

Upstage, deep in conversation, two men walk across the stage: Hamilton Jordan and Jody Powell, laughing and talking.

PROFESSOR COOPER. Yeah, Carter’s Georgia Mafia were exciting. But they were still these... (*Searching.*) guys. Bold. Cocky. But also jaded, defensive, and Southern. The new Southern—led by Hamilton Jordan and...Jody. When I first heard the name Jody Powell, I was so excited that Carter had a female press secretary.

Scene 2

Interior, White House—July 2, 1979—daytime.

A young Cynthia Cooper (played by Jonathan Rollins) sits down across from Sarah Weddington, assistant to the president. Cynthia admits a secret.

CYNTHIA COOPER. (*Jonathan Rollins.*) I thought Jody Powell was a woman... It was one of the reasons I campaigned for the president.

Professor Cooper, almost transformed into President Carter, looks back at her memory.

PROFESSOR COOPER. I was wrong.

She exits.

SARAH WEDDINGTON. I know. Me, too. Well, not because I thought Jody Powell was a woman, because that would be ridiculous. I had met the man. But because of what Carter said when he was running for office.

Flashback: Campaign 1976.

Transformation complete, President Carter (played by Professor Cooper) enters.

PRESIDENT CARTER. I am fully committed to equality between

men and women in every area of government and in every aspect of life.

Back to: July 2, 1979.

SARAH WEDDINGTON. He said it. I'm holding him to it. Listen, Jody Powell is alright. They're the good ones, ya know? Everybody works hard here. Now. (*Checks her notes.*) Cynthia Cooper. You're here for another five weeks before you're back to Smith?

Cynthia nods.

Excellent. I'm Sarah Weddington.

CYNTHIA COOPER. So nice to meet you. I've been...

SARAH WEDDINGTON. Yes. Now I'm in charge of the president's special task force on women, publishing the *White House News For Women*, making sure qualified women are considered for judgeships. We publish a directory of women's organizations, Black women resources, a directory of female appointees, and of Hispanic female appointees. Then, of course, the Registry of Top Women in Government. Plus, the Domestic Violence Bill.

CYNTHIA COOPER. That sounds like a lot.

SARAH WEDDINGTON. The Office of the President, after all. Some say the only way to achieve women's goals is to work outside the system. I believe you can do it inside the system. However, to be effective requires skills of negotiation and compromise, as well as steadfast loyalty to principle.

CYNTHIA COOPER. Yes, ma'am.

SARAH WEDDINGTON. Mostly you'll be getting coffee, typing up and delivering memos.

CYNTHIA COOPER. Yes, ma'am.

SARAH WEDDINGTON. Please call me Sarah. I'm not that much older than you.

CYNTHIA COOPER. Yes...Sarah. (*Smiles.*) Can I just say it is an honor to meet you? Thank you. For *Roe v. Wade*.

SARAH WEDDINGTON. You're welcome. You know, you sort of remind me of my partner in that, Linda Coffee. (*Beat.*) The president is a person who likes to work by memo: "Mr. President, here is the problem. Here is what I suggest. Do you agree or disagree? Do you

have other ideas?" He's a big reader. Oh, and we also look over the speeches from the point of view of women. Make sure they're...um...

CYNTHIA COOPER. Woman-ized?

SARAH WEDDINGTON. Ha! Well, that they represent the woman's point of view, if there is room for that.

CYNTHIA COOPER. Shouldn't there always be room for that?

SARAH WEDDINGTON. Ha! (*Getting up to exit. Cynthia follows.*) You'll be at the desk there. Anne Wexler, Special Assistant to the President is down that hall. Anne and I meet every Wednesday. The president and First Lady are currently in Hawaii. Taking a few needed days before the July fourth weekend. He's been traveling. But there's an important energy speech on Friday, so they'll be back. You'll help with the speech.

CYNTHIA COOPER. To woman-ize it?

SARAH WEDDINGTON. (*Beat.*) We're responsible for setting up the desk before the speech. On rare occasions, it's typos and fact-checking. But only in an emergency.

Scene 3

Hawaii—July 2, 1979—daytime.

Carter is tying his tie. The tie is being stubborn. He's tired.

Rosalynn enters, reading some papers.

Young Cynthia watches from the wing.

ROSALYNN CARTER. Jimmy. (*Still reading.*) Jimmy.

PRESIDENT CARTER. I'm busy...tying my tie. Do you like this one? I don't like this tie.

ROSALYNN CARTER. It's Hawaii. Why wear a tie at all? I love this place. Really, the beginning of everything. Little baby Chip. Jack was so cute. And I was finally feeling like I was... (*Re the papers.*) Have you read this?

PRESIDENT CARTER. The energy speech? Of course I did. Last night.

Rosalynn stares at him.

I know. It's terrible. I can't give that speech.

ROSALYNN CARTER. I agree. (*Suddenly.*) Why are you wearing a tie? (*Back to the point.*) The policy section is too complex and confusing. Did Jody even read Pat's memo? Shouldn't that be part of this new speech?

PRESIDENT CARTER. Jody scoffed at the title: "Of Crisis and Opportunity." I told him "You read Pat Caddell's memo before you try to talk to me about anything else." It's brilliant. One of the best analyses of sociological and political interrelationships I've ever read. He's right. We can't just keep doing the same thing, give the same speeches.

ROSALYNN CARTER. Well certainly this speech is terrible...

PRESIDENT CARTER. Yes. We all agree about that, dear.

He finishes his tie. Looks pointedly at Rosalynn.

ROSALYNN CARTER. (*Realizing.*) Oh. No.

PRESIDENT CARTER. We can't stay in Hawaii. Skylab. The speech...

ROSALYNN CARTER. Well, we wouldn't want to take a break for the holiday. That would be un-American. (*Pause.*) Hawaii was nice for sixteen hours. Back to D.C. tonight?

On the edge of the stage, Jonathan (breaking out of young Cynthia) starts to look confused. He raises his hand, as if he's in class.

PRESIDENT CARTER. Yes. But I can't think in D. C. This has to be about something bigger. The nation needs help. I'm gonna bring everybody up to Camp David and pound out a new speech.

He sees Jonathan/Young Cynthia, gets distracted. Finally breaks out of character.

PROFESSOR COOPER. What is it?!

JONATHAN ROLLINS. It's just...well, how do you know this part? I'm not, I mean, you weren't there for this part?

PROFESSOR COOPER. It's my story. I will tell it any way I want. Just, hold your questions until the end.

She shoos him offstage. Drops back into President Carter.

PRESIDENT CARTER. We need this speech to reinvigorate our faith in the government's ability to solve national problems.

ROSALYNN CARTER. That's a lot to put on one speech. But I love the idea. Because we do seem to be in just one crisis after another. Just one big pile of crises-es. I hope Pat's right about his theory.

PRESIDENT CARTER. That a big crisis is "just a moment of opportunity." Of course, he's not the one riding on top of all those massive crises.

ROSALYNN CARTER. Crisis? Or crises-es?

PRESIDENT CARTER. *(Thinks for a moment, nods.)* Crises. With an e.

ROSALYNN CARTER. At least we know how to spell them. *(Beat, starts to cross.)* Have you told the boys? What are you going to say?

PRESIDENT CARTER. I don't know yet.

They exit.

Scene 4

White House helicopter pad—July 4—evening.

Jody Powell and Hamilton Jordan wait for the helicopter that will take them to Camp David. It's raining.

JODY POWELL. He said, "Jody, this is one of the worst speeches I have ever seen. After the first five minutes, only the Mobil PR guy will be awake."

HAMILTON JORDAN. It was a first draft.

JODY POWELL. We don't need to go to Camp David. We can rewrite it here. Why are we going to Camp David?

HAMILTON JORDAN. He's canceled the speech.

JODY POWELL. What do you mean? It's tomorrow! I lined up networks. It's an evening slot. Prime time. They're bumping *The Waltons*! He can't just cancel the speech!

HAMILTON JORDAN. Boss says it's canceled. It's canceled. He wants us at Camp David. We go to Camp David.

JODY POWELL. Where the hell is Rick? And what am I supposed to tell the press? What the hell?

HAMILTON JORDAN. Cancel the speech, Jody. Tell them, "The president is assessing major domestic policy issues that go beyond the question of energy."

JODY POWELL. What the hell does that mean? And seriously, where's Rick?

HAMILTON JORDAN. Doesn't matter what it means, the press will chew on it because it sounds important. Rick's on his way. And he wants Caddell there, too.

Audio: helicopter approaching.

JODY POWELL. You're fucking kidding me, Pat's coming, too?

HAMILTON JORDAN. It's that damn five-hundred-page memo. That thing is ridiculous. A pollster with a gold Mercedes who's too damn big for his own britches...

Pat Caddell walks up, grocery bag of hastily packed clothes in hand.

PAT CADDELL. Nice to see you, Jordan. Happy America's birthday everyone. Where's Rick?

HAMILTON JORDAN. Oh, look. Pat's here. *(To Pat.)* Rick's on his way. He'll be here.

PAT CADDELL. He hated the speech, didn't he?

HAMILTON JORDAN. Rick said it was just a draft to get us started.

JODY POWELL. Everybody knew it needed work.

PAT CADDELL. It was shit.

JODY POWELL. Thanks for your input, Pat. Where is he, Ham? What's the president's mood?

HAMILTON JORDAN. He's tired. He's pissed. And the sky is fucking falling. How do you think he is?

PAT CADDELL. What do you mean the sky is falling?

HAMILTON JORDAN. Heard of Skylab? It's supposed to come down this week and NASA—NASA!—doesn't know where it will land. All they can say is "Somewhere over the Indian Ocean."

PAT CADDELL. An ocean is good.

HAMILTON JORDAN. You know how many islands there are in the Indian Ocean? Like Australia, for instance?

PAT CADDELL. That's a continent.

JODY POWELL. Not helpful, Pat.

PAT CADDELL. My memo is good. And for the record, it's seventy-five pages. The "first draft" was the same old shit. We have to address the crisis at hand.

HAMILTON JORDAN. Which one, Pat? Which one?

The helicopter starts to land, creating noise and wind. The boys have to speak louder to be heard.

PAT CADDELL. The only one that really matters. The president's polling numbers. The American people have lost faith in the future of our country. It's now time to give it back. We need a moonshot to reorient them. Capture their hearts!

JODY POWELL. With a speech? How about we not have Five Mile Island or falling space stations hitting them in the heads...

HAMILTON JORDAN. Or gas lines around the block, truckers striking, and riots in the streets? It's not about their hearts. It's their pocketbooks. And it's *Three Mile Island*.

JODY POWELL. He's gonna fire one of us. He's gotta fire somebody. I mean, doesn't he? He's taking us up to Camp David to fire us. (*To Hamilton Jordan.*) Is he firing someone? (*To himself.*) I should resign.

HAMILTON JORDAN. Stop it. We get the speech in good shape, like tomorrow. And get through July fourth with some good damn news for a change. Let's stay focused.

PAT CADDELL. (*Relishing it.*) How much exactly did he hate the speech?

Rick Hertzberg enters quickly, head down against the approaching copter, bag in hand.

JODY POWELL. Rick! Finally. You're late!

RICK HERTZBERG. I was told to get all hands on deck. And Nesmith's girl can't make it. So I had to arrange for an extra typist. What did I miss? What's happening?

HAMILTON JORDAN. He hated the speech. Let's go.

Facing the wind of the helicopter, the "boys" hold their hats, lower their heads, and exit.

Scene 5

Camp David—July 5—early afternoon.

Camp David is beautiful, but rustic. Cynthia Cooper and Sarah Weddington enter. Cynthia carries a small suitcase.

CYNTHIA COOPER. Oh, wow. This is...where...I mean, the peace talks. The actual peace accords took place here. And F.D.R. And everything. (*Awed.*) Cheese sauce.

SARAH WEDDINGTON. We made good time. It usually takes two hours. Listen, pushing back the speech has thrown everything in a mess. I'm glad you can do this. Rick wanted an extra researcher and typist.

CYNTHIA COOPER. I can do that.

SARAH WEDDINGTON. And here he is.

Rick Hertzberg enters.

RICK HERTZBERG. Hey Sarah. Thanks for bringing me an extra hand. (*Extends a hand.*) I'm Hendrick Hertzberg. You can call me Rick.

SARAH WEDDINGTON. This is Cynthia Cooper. She's fantastic.

CYNTHIA COOPER. Nice to meet you. I'm Cynthia. She already said that. Sorry. I'm thrilled to be here and eager to help.

The play doesn't end here...

To purchase this play and thousands
of others, visit www.dramatists.com.

DPS
DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE

LEGENDARY HOME OF BOLD NEW VOICES,
TIMELESS CLASSICS,
AND OVER 80 TONY AWARDS AND PULITZER PRIZES

EST. 1936

www.broadwaylicensing.com