

POLITICALLY ERECT

by Ryan Michael Dunn

Copyright 2023 by Ryan Michael Dunn

Politically Erect

CHARACTERS

ERIC - 20. A queer college student who has recently “discovered” himself.

JEN - 25, Eric’s older sister who’s been taking the scenic route through college.

JIM - Mid-50s. Eric’s and Jen’s dad. Watches Fox News like his life depends on it, which he probably thinks it does.

LORI - Mid-50s. Eric’s and Jen’s mom and Jim’s ex-wife. Burnt out from putting on the facade that their marriage is still going for Ida’s benefit. She cheated on Jim with David A.

IDA - 80+. Jim’s mom. So old Jurassic Park brings back memories. Could be played by a performer in drag.

DAVID A - Mid-50s. Partner at his law firm, David is the man who Lori had her affair with.

DAVID B - 28. The intern David A tricks into joining him at Thanksgiving.

(Additional characters’ voices appear on the radio and voicemail.)

SYNOPSIS

When queer college student Eric finds out his homophobic dad plans to participate in an attack on the White House, he must navigate a toxic Thanksgiving dinner to convince him not to. The problem? When politics comes up, Eric gets a raging hard-on. Can he stop his dad without outing himself?

SETTING

Mid-Eastern United States, within driving distance to The White House.

TIME

A not-so-distant future.

Scene 1

(ERIC listening to the radio, masturbating under a blanket in his college dorm room.)

VOICE OF TUCKER CARLSON

...in that now-famous speech in which Governor Carr refused to concede to supposed President-elect Rosa Anderson. But is that liberal telling all there is to the story? Please welcome, Democratic strategist Darlene Kelly.

ERIC

Oh God, yeah.

VOICE OF DARLENE

You're right about one thing, Tucker. It's an age-old story. And the problem lies in one party in particular.

ERIC

Are you gonna take that, T-Dog?

TUCKER CARLSON

Now, I know where you're going with this, and I think everyone at home knows too: everything is the conservative's fault. Every. Single. Time. But what about Al Gore? He did initially concede after the election, until he, of course, retracted.

DARLENE

Because there was still a mathematical path to the Presidency! Even reaching back to 1916, Republican Charles Evans Hughes refused to concede to Woodrow Wilson. Dewey and Nixon both followed a similar pattern. But the real problem is Republicans following in the path of Forty-Five. They/

TUCKER CARLSON

You can't even say his name, yet it always comes back to President Trump for you people!

ERIC

Come on, gimme a little policy.

TUCKER CARLSON

And if you focus on his policies instead of his tweets, you would conclude that he led this country just fine.

DARLENE

You're the one who always brings up his tweets. I'm concerned about January 6th.

TUCKER CARLSON

So, you're concerned about legitimate political discourse?

(Seems like ERIC's about to finish, but an alarm on his phone goes off.)

ERIC

Damn it.

(He shuts off the radio.)

ERIC

I'm not a pervert. You know when you have something big coming up, you do what you gotta do to release some tension? I was just taking care of business. Why Fox News? Well... okay. I have this secret.

I thought I was straight before I met Justin. House party. I was a total hypocrite because I hate when people focus on height, but shit, he was tall and handsome. He started telling me about his dream to have a threeway with Barack Obama and Mitch McConnell, one thing led to another, and... I felt a certain magic for the first time in my life. Somebody decided to capture the moment, been trying to get them to delete that picture... And I thought, oh shit, I'm gay? But then there was this girl who did a presentation on carbon taxes that rocked my goddamn world, man.

The first person I came out to was a lesbian friend of mine. Which seemed like a safe move, right? Who'd be more accepting of me than someone in a similar club? All she told me was, "Well you're just bi, it's not like you're gay." So I said no, I'm not bi, I'm poli. And she asked, do you mean pan? And I said, no, poli-sexual. She was like, well isn't that basically the same thing as pan? And I said no, not P-O-L-Y, P-O-L-I! Politically sexual. Any time someone talks politics I get hard. Is that so wrong?

How am I supposed to tell my family about this? I know my old man couldn't accept me this way. I don't want to ruin Thanksgiving. Every year Mom and Dad have a political dick-measuring contest, I don't need to make it literal.

(A knock at the door.)

And there they are.

(ERIC opens the door to reveal JEN.)

ERIC

Uh, hi? What are you doing here?

JEN

Hi? I'm here to pick you up.

ERIC

I thought Mom and Dad were picking me up.

JEN

Well it was never going to be both of them.

ERIC

Okay, I just didn't realize it would be you. You drove all the way from New York yesterday and then all the way here today?

JEN

I wanted some one-on-one time before things got crazy.

ERIC

We could've just "taken a walk" before dinner.

JEN

I don't want to get high in front of Grandma.

ERIC

Okay, so we'd actually take a walk.

JEN

There's something I need to tell you.

ERIC

Are you pregnant?

JEN

No! It's about Dad.

ERIC

Is he okay?

JEN

When has Dad ever been “okay?” I digress. You know what Richard Carr’s been talking about?

ERIC

Uh... no, I don’t really follow that stuff.

JEN

He’s asking his followers to storm the White House to demand the President appoints him as successor.

ERIC

That’s not how that works.

JEN

I know that. Everybody except Dad and his loony bunch knows that.

ERIC

He’s not...?

JEN

He’s not just planning to go, he’s an organizer. It’s tomorrow. They’re calling it the Red Friday March.

ERIC

Does he realize there are snipers on the fucking roof?

JEN

I told him that, but he won’t listen to me!

ERIC

Why not?

JEN

I’m a pink-haired liberal sheep, apparently. But you, Eric? You’re so apathetic, it’s perfect. You didn’t even vote!

ERIC

I don’t know if I can talk about this with you.

JEN

Why not? This is important.

ERIC

What am I supposed to say? The man won’t wear the color blue, Jen. I can’t convince him of shit.

JEN

Tell him what you think. Speak from the heart. You two have a special connection.

ERIC

I don't know enough about the situation.

JEN

I'll give you the run-down on the way home.

ERIC

No-no, I should, uh, do my own research.

JEN

Like Dad? Come on.

(JEN rushes out. ERIC grabs his backpack and reluctantly follows.)

Scene 2

(LORI and JIM in the kitchen. She takes a long sip of her drink. It's not very tasty. JIM can't stand the otherwise silent room. He smacks his lips, drums on the table. LORI sips. JIM whistles quietly.)

LORI

Jesus, you even need to make silence about yourself?

JIM

What the hell are you talking about?

LORI

You can't handle it. Silence.

JIM

I don't like it very much, no. Thought you might understand that by now.

LORI

Well, silence is better than meaningless noise. Don't you think?

JIM

It's a moot point to fight about this now, isn't it?

LORI

I am just trying to enjoy my coffee.

(She sips. Silence. JIM clears his throat, maybe about to say something else, but LORI interrupts him.)

LORI

Listen, I need to be honest.

JIM

You of all people. You're going to be honest.

LORI

Jim.

JIM

Wonderful news, everyone, people can change!

LORI

I'm going to tell her if you won't.

JIM

Who, Jen? Tell her what?

LORI

Ida.

(JIM chokes. Maybe a spit-take.)

JIM

Excuse me?

LORI

I didn't say I want to tell her/

JIM

Then why would you?/

LORI

If you don't, I'll have to.

JIM

No.

LORI

If not today, when? When would you tell her?

JIM

She'd blow a gasket.

LORI

I think I'd like to see that.

JIM

You realize this means you won't see another penny from me.

LORI

From her, you mean?

JIM

I'm the one who signs the checks.

LORI

Whose checks are they, Jim?

JIM

So what, your little office himbo is gonna pay for college?

LORI

I've been saving. We'll be comfortable.

JIM

Why tonight, all of a sudden?

LORI

Because I'm sick of you, and I'm sick of your mother.

JIM

Likewise.

LORI

So we're in agreement.

JIM

That we hate each other?

LORI

That you're going to tell her. Tonight.

JIM

Why not Christmas?

LORI

You think— It would be better to tell your obsessively Catholic mother that you've been lying to her, for ten years, about your *divorce*, on / Christmas?

JIM

Is this a power thing for you?

LORI

I am trying to make the best decision for our family.

JIM

It's a power thing. Power move. Unbelievable.

LORI

Can you get it through your thick, fucking skull that / I am just trying to do what's best for all of us?

JIM

Can you get it through your thick fucking skull that maybe for once, you should be a little less selfish and not destroy a perfectly good family / dinner?

LORI

I'm getting married!

JIM

LORI

JIM

Wow.

LORI

He asked me last week. And I am not starting my next chapter in life without finishing this one. This has to be the end. You have to tell her. Tonight. Or I will do it for you.

And help me with the damn salad?

JIM

I will.

LORI

Okay. Great.

...help you with the salad.

JIM

Jim.

LORI

What?

JIM

I invited David.

LORI

Why the fuck?

JIM

To get me through another Thanksgiving filled with incoherent rambling about taxes.

LORI

Taxation is theft!

JIM

Exactly! Now I've got a man with a head on his shoulders.

LORI

Is that code for Democrat?

JIM

Yes, in fact it is. And you are going to let this be a nice thing for me, you are going to respect this, and you are not going to ruin this.

LORI

Me? You invite the two of us to the same meal? *You* do this. Purposefully. It's not a chance encounter, it's not an accident, it's, you invite us to the same meal, and it will now be my fault if things get heated?

JIM

Things will not get heated.

LORI

Things may very well get fucking heated, Lori!

JIM

IDA
(from off)

Hello?

Scene 3

(The DAVIDs walk together.)

DAVID B

Why did we park so far away?

DAVID A

Little walkin's good for your bones.

DAVID B

I guess. ...I recognize this street.

DAVID A

Beautiful this time of year.

DAVID B

And that house.

DAVID A

It's a puke-yellow colonial. Trust me, you've seen one before.

DAVID B

No, this exact house. Why am I feeling this negative- Oh my God.

DAVID A

What is it?

DAVID B

Sir, tell me that's not your house.

DAVID A

Uh... that's not my house.

DAVID B

Thank Christ. Which one's yours?

DAVID A

Mmmm none of them.

Where are we eating?
DAVID B

Lori's house.
DAVID A

That's her house?
DAVID B

That's right.
DAVID A

I'm sorry, I cannot go in there.
DAVID B

Why not?
DAVID A

It's not an appropriate story for, uh, our working relationship.
DAVID B

Speak freely, HR's understaffed.
DAVID A

Let's just say I've climbed out that window.
DAVID B

You do parkour?
DAVID A

I'm saying I had sex there. Oh my God, is her daughter Jen?
DAVID B

That's right.
DAVID A

Yeah, I'm out.
DAVID B

DAVID A

What happened?

DAVID B

We weren't right for each other.

DAVID A

Meaning?

DAVID B

You really need to know?

DAVID A

I need you at this dinner.

DAVID B

I woke up with an itch the next morning.

DAVID A

From Jen!?

DAVID B

She gave me crabs and got mad when I told people about it. So yeah, I'll walk home if I have to, but I'm not going in that house.

DAVID A

Well hold on, David, it's gonna be an awkward meal for me too.

DAVID B

Okay?

DAVID A

Lori's ex-husband will be there.

DAVID B

What are we still doing here? Let's get the hell out!

DAVID A

See the thing is, it'll go a lot smoother if you join us.

DAVID B

I highly doubt that.

DAVID A

Dropping the formalities, right? Without you, Jim's gonna kick my ass.

DAVID B

Because he's not over her?

DAVID A

My relationship with Lori didn't start, shall we say, above board. I get it, he's got a score to settle.

DAVID B

Yeah! I'm sure he does!

DAVID A

But if there was another David there...

DAVID B

For him to punch?

DAVID A

To act as a smokescreen.

DAVID B

So he won't know which David-? You think he's gonna check your license?

DAVID A

He's a nut.

DAVID B

Do I get something out of this?

DAVID A

It means a promotion if it needs to mean a promotion.

DAVID B

And if I refuse, what does it need to mean?

DAVID A

You want to go there?

DAVID B

I could be eating my Nana's pecan pie in under an hour. Sir, it's so good.

DAVID A

You walk out, you clean out your desk Monday.

DAVID B

You'd fire me from an unpaid internship?

DAVID A

Your payment is you get to graduate. If you still want that to happen, get in there and pretend maybe you fucked my fiancé.

DAVID B

Fine. But if this guy goes berserk, I'm not dying for 6 credits.

Scene 4

(ERIC and JEN in the car. ERIC sits doubled over with his backpack on his lap.)

JEN

So he clearly lost, not to mention the popular vote which I can't believe doesn't matter but here we are, and he's such a piss-poor-baby-loser that he's actually trying to overthrow the United States government/

ERIC

I think I get it!!!

JEN

Are you okay?

ERIC

I'm just stressed.

JEN

I know, but I don't want Dad to get shot on the White House lawn.

ERIC

Maybe he'd just get prison time. At least that would make Mom happy.

JEN

You're not even going to try?

ERIC

I can't. I don't even want to talk about this with you.

JEN

Because you don't give a shit about how our country is run?

ERIC

No, I'm- I'm too interested.

JEN

That doesn't make sense.

ERIC

It would if you knew who I really was.

JEN

What are you talking about?

ERIC

I can't tell you. Just trust me, okay? Whatever happens, Dad's bringing this on himself.

JEN

But Carr's the one lying to him. Yeah Dad's a fucking idiot for buying it, but he was an idiot for voting for him in the first place.

ERIC

There's nothing I can do about it. Let's just listen to some music.

(ERIC connects his phone to the car. Instead of music, a voicemail starts playing.)

VOICE

Hey cutie, it's Justin.

ERIC

Oh shit!

VOICE

Listen, I know there's a whole thing with your family, plus you don't want anything too serious, but I'm going to the counterprotest tomorrow, and I thought it'd be so funny if I painted two dudes kissing on my chest... Instead of like, appropriated tribal tattoos or whatever the MAGAs are doing? So I thought I'd use our picture. You'd like the way it beefs me up.

ERIC

It's a prank call, he's so funny.

JEN

Eric, who is this?

ERIC

It won't turn off/

(ERIC turns off the car's stereo. JEN smacks it back on.)

VOICE

So anyway, I'm gonna piss off the whole Red Friday March! Taking back this country one queer at a time! Haha. Okay. Call me. Peace.

JEN

Eric/

ERIC

He's painting the picture on his chest?!?

JEN

I- I think it's wonderful that you have a boyfriend/

ERIC

Hahahaha, good one, Jen!

JEN

It's okay/

ERIC

A boyfriend, as in, a male significant other! Hoo! Oh man, that's good.

JEN

Yeah, that's what a boyfriend is...

ERIC

Then I don't have one of those.

JEN

What are you so afraid of? If you're gay, you're gay, there's nothing wrong with that!

ERIC

You can't prove it.

JEN

There is literally a picture, apparently.

ERIC

Okay, okay. But I'm not gay, and he is not my boyfriend.

JEN

So then what's the picture?

ERIC

I'm polisexual.

JEN

What's the difference between that and gay?

ERIC

I'm gay in the sense that I'm not straight. But I'm into men, women and everyone else. So long as they're talking about immigration or something.

JEN

Ew, you're a foreign fetishizer?

ERIC

No! It doesn't have to be immigration. It could be inflation, gun control, free speech. Basically if Tucker Carlson bitches about it, it turns me on.

JEN

So... you're turned on by everything?

ERIC

Bad example. Look. I'm trying to say I'm politically sexual.

JEN

Oh. I've never heard of that.

ERIC

You can't tell anyone.

JEN

Of course not.

ERIC

I mean anyone. Especially Dad, okay?

JEN

Your secret is safe with me. I promise.

ERIC

Because if Dad finds out, I don't think he'll ever talk to me again!

(ERIC tries to get JEN to look at him.)

JEN

Careful, I'm driving!

ERIC

I don't know what I'll do, he can't know, it can't slip out! And, and, and-

JEN

I flunked out of school!

ERIC

What?

JEN

Now you know my secret too. My warning was last semester, and I did not improve during this one.

ERIC

But grades aren't even in yet.

JEN

It's less of a grade thing and more of a... consistent pattern of plagiarism... thing.

ERIC

No!

JEN

Yes! It's bad. Now you know.

ERIC

Grandma's gonna find out eventually.

JEN

Yeah, after the college fund is gone.

ERIC

Jen!

JEN

Now we're on a level playing field. You're polisexual, and I'm a cheater. Your secret's safe with me. Do you trust me?

ERIC

Yes. But not Justin. I have to stop Dad from going to the Red Friday March. Otherwise he'll die... or worse, find out I'm gay!

Scene 5

(LORI and JIM in the kitchen. They rush to an affectionate position, pretending to

prepare dinner together. IDA wanders in.)

LORI

Hand me that spoon, won't you honey?

IDA

Lori, are you sure you don't need any help?

LORI

No, Ida, we'll be fine! You go relax, do whatever.

IDA

Can't I at least help with the salad?

JIM

Don't think I can be trusted with putting together some lettuce and a few tomatoes, Mom?

IDA

It's just that last year it came out... well, fine, it turned out fine. Of course the cucumbers were... well, fine. Fine.

LORI

(trying desperately to be pleasant)

Good thing I've got Jim on the case this year.

IDA

What?

LORI

I said, good thing I've got Jim on the case.

IDA

Come again?

LORI

I said/

IDA

I don't have bling on my face. Well, these are new earrings.

LORI

That's great, Ida.

IDA

Yes, well. About the cranberry sauce/

LORI

We've got it covered.

IDA

Of course you need to be mothered! I always like to add a little extra sugar at Thanksgiving. Otherwise it tastes a little too raw. ...Are you paying attention, Lori?

LORI

Yes.

IDA

Just a little extra sugar. When you get to it!

LORI

IDA

LORI

IDA

Have you peeled the squash yet?

LORI

Y'know, Ida, Jim and I were just discussing a fascinating new revelation.

IDA

Oh, what's that?

LORI

Yes, what was it, Jim?

JIM

Mom, ha ha, why don't you go relax on the couch?

IDA

Doesn't sound as interesting as what's going on in here!

LORI

Oh, it's spicy.

JIM

Really, Mom. Put your feet up.

IDA

What were you discussing?

LORI

Tell her, *sweetie*.

JIM

Uh, we were talking about the election.

IDA

Excuse me?

JIM

What?

IDA

Don't be disgusting.

JIM

(putting emphasis on the "L")

The election, Mom!

IDA

Oh. What about it?

JIM

It was stolen.

IDA

And?

JIM

Uh, you know what, I think it would be better to share over dinner. To get everyone's take on it.

IDA

Sounds serious! Did they finally release the evidence?

JIM

You'll have to wait 'til dinner to find out. Well! Back to the salad.

IDA

Lori, what dressing are you pairing with the raisins?

LORI

Actually, I think we should have this particular conversation right now.

JIM

No no, dinner is best! I'm sure Eric and Jen will have plenty to say about it.

IDA

Did something new happen?

LORI

Actually, it's a new revelation about something that happened some time ago.

IDA

Oh-ho! I haven't heard anything about this.

LORI

No, you haven't.

IDA

Well what happened?

JIM

Nothing that important.

LORI

I can tell it if you want!

IDA

Please! What's the news?

JIM

The news is that we got a brand-new couch, and I would love for you to test it for us.

IDA

But that doesn't have anything to do with the election?

LORI

The truth is, Ida, that we're no longer married.

(IDA is stunned and confused.)

IDA

What?

LORI

I'm so sorry you had to find out this way. I wanted your son to be the one to tell you, but he refused. We're no longer married.

JIM

Mom, I/

IDA

I'm so confused.

You never looked particularly hairy to me, dear. Have you been using a new razor?

LORI

What?

JIM

Yes! Yes! And it has been doing wonders for us!

LORI

No, Ida, I said we split up.

IDA

Sit ups? How many?

LORI

What?

JIM

25 a day, usually! Gotta start somewhere!

IDA

That is wonderful for your health! Your father still worked his core far into his 80s.

LORI

No, Ida, we got a divorce!

IDA

Well now you're just being silly.

LORI

No, it's true. Ten years ago. We got a divorce!

IDA

Lori. Where would you keep it?

LORI

Aghhhh!

IDA

You're a hoot, Lori. Since when were you funny?

JIM

Mom. I love you. Please sit on the couch.

IDA

Okay, okay. You let me know if I can be of any help. I'm not as old as I look, you know!

JIM

You look fantastic, Mom.

IDA

(laughing as she leaves)

What is a giraffe stick?

JIM

Nice.

LORI

Thanks.

JIM

For the record, I am definitely going to kick David's ass now.

LORI

You will not! Things will not get awkward, things will not get heated, you will not so much as take a drumstick without asking if he's had enough first/

JIM

What are you gonna do, kick me out of the house?

LORI

Jim, come on, think about the kids.

(The doorbell rings. The two rush to the door.)

JIM

There he is.

LORI

David!?

(JIM beats LORI to the door. Panting, he rips it open.)

JIM

You son of a bitch!

(It's ERIC and JEN.)

ERIC

Hi... Dad...

JIM

Hi. I thought you were someone else. Although in a different way, you are the son of a/

JEN

Okayyy, we don't need to go there.

LORI

It's okay, Jen. It's our last holiday together; he should get it all out.

JEN

You're finally telling Grandma!?

LORI

Yes.

JIM

We'll see.

IDA

I thought I heard little bundles of joy!

JEN

Grandma!

IDA

My sweetpeas.

LORI

Oh, that reminds me, Ida! Could you look over my shopping list?

IDA

Dear, haven't you finished your shopping for today?

LORI

Maybe I missed a few things.

IDA

Well happy to help, dear!

JIM

Everything's closed.

LORI

It's a mom and pop shop in town.

JIM

Not one I know of.

LORI

Well, you never did the shopping, now did you?

IDA

Did?

JIM

Do! As in the present. Let's be together in the moment. Why don't we all stay in the same room?

LORI

Good idea, sugarbear. I'll just get the shopping list and bring it in here.

(LORI exits.)

JIM

Why are you so concerned with this, porkchop?

LORI

(returning, writing on a notepad)

I just think it's something Ida needs to... see!

IDA

(eyes on the notepad)

How can this be?

LORI

Because your son's a coward and wouldn't tell you. Ten years of lies. Now you finally know.

IDA

What a horrid pattern for a scratchpad! But what does it say? I can't read it without my glasses.

LORI

You're wearing your glasses.

IDA

Oh, am I? My eyesight's not what it used to be. I'd be lucky to see a tree in the forest!

LORI

Didn't you drive here?

IDA

Such a bumpy trip through the city.

ERIC

Dad, can I talk to you in the living room for a second?

JIM

And leave everyone else alone?

They're three people. **ERIC**

Can't it wait? **JIM**

No. **ERIC**

What is it about? **JIM**

It's private, hence the living room. **ERIC**

Why don't you go with him, poopsie? **LORI**

Yes, we'll be right here when you get back. **IDA**

Can you do it in 30 seconds? **JIM**

I don't think so. **ERIC**

Well that's all I can give you. Come on. **JIM**

(They move to the living room.)

What the hell is it?

Uh, are you busy tomorrow? **ERIC**

Yes. **JIM**

I was hoping you'd take me on that father-son fishing trip you wanted to go on. **ERIC**

Why did that need to be private? **JIM**

Uh, because Mom won't know you're buying me beer? **ERIC**

JIM
I'm not. Also Eric, the lake is frozen over.

ERIC
Can't we go ice fishing?

(Ding dong! It's the DAVIDs!)

JIM
There he is!

ERIC
Okay, I lied! It's not about the fishing trip.

JIM
What is it?

ERIC
Uh, uh...

JIM
Spit it out!

(Meanwhile, at the door:)

LORI
Oh, thank God you're here!

JEN
David?

DAVID A
Good afternoon, everyone. Happy Thanksgiving.

IDA
Ah, who might this be?

LORI
Ida, meet my fiancé.

IDA
Can't say I've heard much of her music.

(LORI goes to close the door. DAVID B catches it with his foot.)

Huh?

IDA

Hi Lori, so good to see you.

DAVID B

Another surprise!

IDA

Gregory?

JEN

What? Noo, my name's David. You must be thinking of / someone else.

DAVID B

You gave me a fake name!?

JEN

You know each other? From what?

LORI

DAVID B	JEN
Baseball.	College.
Biology.	Intramural.
Practice?	Homework? How do you know this asshole?

Language!

IDA

He's our intern. I mean, our Junior Associate.

LORI

And what is he doing at Thanksgiving?

JEN

I don't know. What is he doing here, David?

LORI

Poor lad has no family.

DAVID A

What?

DAVID B

(DAVID A elbows DAVID B with a heavy

cough).

DAVID B

Yeah, I'm a fucking orphan.

DAVID A

He doesn't like to talk about it.

DAVID B

Brings back traumatic memories of polishing shoes or something. Is there wine?

DAVID A

Can't wait til dinner, Oliver Twist?

LORI

Yes, there's- wine sounds great right now.

(In the living room:)

JIM

There's two of 'em.

ERIC

There's three of them.

JIM

No, there's- she invited two guys here.

ERIC

Whaaat? That's crazy. Come on, Dad, let's go do our own Thanksgiving, we'll get so drunk we'll sleep through tomorrow!

JIM

The hell is with you and drinking all of a sudden? Shh. One of them sounds... younger. Does your mother like them younger?

ERIC

I am so glad I don't know the answer to that question.

JIM

Eric, come on. Help your old man out. What's your mother into?

ERIC

You should definitely know that better than me.

JIM

A lot's changed over the years. He sounds, thirty-ish? So she would've fucked him when he was twenty... heh heh, one man's chain is another man's cougar, am I right?

ERIC

(collapsing, grabbing his abdomen)

Oh! My kidney! Ohhh, it's my kidney... I need the ER...

JIM

Your kidney's in back, kid. Get- Eric, get off the floor. Tell you what. You've been on outings with this David. You point him out to me, I'll buy whatever bullshit you're trying to sell.

ERIC

Father-son fishing trip?

JIM

Sure, whatever. It just can't be tomorrow.

ERIC

Oh, but... the ice will be so... clear? Tomorrow.

JIM

Would you tell me what this is about?

(At the door:)

DAVID A

I just think on the off-chance we had to, say, run a couple miles, it'd be better if you weren't drunk.

DAVID B

Probably should've parked in the driveway then, don't you think?

DAVID A

I didn't want / him to

JEN

Mom, can I speak with you in the kitchen?

JIM

(from the living room)

Grabbing my leg does not make me want to go ice fishing any more!

LORI

I just want to be here to make introductions.

JEN

It's rather important.

LORI

A first impression? Totally agree.

JEN

I would like your intern to leave.

DAVID B

Oh gosh, I mean if Jen thinks I should leave, then I should probably leave, thanks for everything!

JIM

(from the living room)

What do you mean she hid my guns? Where?

DAVID A

Come on, Jen. Have a heart.

IDA

Yes, dear. Poor Mavis here deserves a place to rest on Thanksgiving.

JEN

Trust me, kicking him to the curb is the merciful course of action.

IDA

Well what did he do, sweetie?

LORI

Yeah, what's going on?

DAVID B

I ate the other orphans. Monstrous, I know, you don't want me here.

DAVID A

Such a funny guy. We love his pep around the water cooler!

DAVID B

I'm too busy buying you coffee to hang out around the water cooler.

DAVID A

Well, must feel good to know if you lose your day job you can always be a comedian.

(In the living room:)

ERIC

I'm gonna talk in code, okay? Remember Santa Claus?

JIM

No, son, I forgot all about Santa Claus. Is that the code? "Ho, ho, ho," I get it!

ERIC

What if me and my friends believed we needed a new Santa Claus, and we decided to run around on the highway until we got the one we wanted?

JIM

I'd say get a job.

ERIC

Sounds like a pretty stupid idea, right?

JIM

Are you saying we run him over? It's brilliant! First I'll ask him to help me "fix the transmission..."

ERIC

No, Dad, wouldn't you try to stop me from getting arrested or killed?

JIM

You're right. Lori will be on defense so we have to be slick. Ready? Here we go.

ERIC

Dad/

(JIM races in, tension's idea of casual. ERIC hurries after.)

JIM

He-e-eyyyy! Happy Thanksgiving!

ERIC

Justin!?

DAVID B

Eric!?

JIM

If your name's Justin...

(JIM starts to approach DAVID A.)

DAVID A

Actually, w-we're both named David!

IDA

Oh, isn't that fun!

JIM

What's your real name?

DAVID B

I usually go by Gregory- I mean Justin.

JEN

Nope, that's David all right.

JIM

Eric?

ERIC

I'm not gonna tell you until you promise to stay home!

IDA

I haven't the slightest clue why we're picking our favorite David. I need my hearing aids.

LORI

Great idea, Ida! Let's find your hearing aids!

JIM

No! No! Mom, isn't ignorance bliss?

(JIM and LORI sprint upstairs while IDA dawdles after them.)

ERIC

What the hell are you doing here?

DAVID B

I could ask you the same thing!

ERIC

I live here, Just- David, whatever your name is!

DAVID B

You're siblings!?! Nice.

ERIC

And you?

DAVID A

He's supporting your mom.

ERIC

Are you messing with me?

DAVID B

No, Eric, he- my internship's with them. I thought I was invited because of his famous sweet potato casserole, not for Unfaithful meets The Parent Trap.

ERIC

Why are *you* here?

DAVID A

Lori wanted me here when your grandma learns the truth.

ERIC

Tonight? Why tonight?

DAVID A

I've asked Lori to marry me. You're, uh, invited to the wedding.

ERIC

Oh well that's very thoughtful of you. Can't this wait til Saturday? If dinner's a disaster he'll hop on the goddamn bus tonight!

DAVID B

It could be a phone call. We could both leave, right now!

DAVID A

I'm not abandoning my fiance because of her ex-husband.

DAVID B

You can't get married if you're dead.

ERIC

Nobody is dying this weekend. We can all walk out of here okay.

JEN

Except this prick, I want to see him crawl.

DAVID B

At least I get to leave.

DAVID A

What are you suggesting?

ERIC

You help me convince Dad not to storm the White House tomorrow, I'll keep your identity a secret.

DAVID A

You want me to stop your idiot dad from erasing himself from my life forever? I'm gonna make sure of it.

ERIC

Fine. Then I'll just tell him I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus.

(IDA slowly brings herself down the stairs, hearing aids in. LORI blocks JIM's attempts to take them out.)

IDA

Honestly Jim, no wet willies!

LORI

You hearing all right, Ida?

IDA

Crystal clear!

LORI

Great. So if I said "divorce," you'd know I said, "divorce," right? As in, two people separated forever? A sin under God?

IDA

You could work for a Catholic dictionary!

(ERIC snatches the hearing aids out of IDA's ears.)

LORI

Well here's the truth: I fucking haaate your son, and we haven't been married for ten. Years.

IDA

Ten beers? That sounds like too many for my taste! Wine on the other hand...

(DAVID A tries to wrestle the hearing aids

from ERIC.)

ERIC

You're pushing your luck!

LORI

Eric, what are you doing!?

(ERIC wins the struggle and crunches the hearing aids under his feet.)

LORI

Nooo!!!

JIM

That's my boy. That's my fucking boy!

ERIC

You know what else? Wait. Grandma, can you hear me?

IDA

My favorite of the Great Lakes.

ERIC

Okay, awesome.

(pointing at DAVID A)

Have a holly jolly Christmas, Dad.

IDA

I must've forgotten to buy presents!

(JIM starts for DAVID A.)

JEN

Why kick his ass?

(pointing to DAVID B)

He's the one you want.

DAVID B

Do I look that old? No offense, Lori.

JIM

Maybe. Maybe she's a cradle robber.

DAVID B

Tell you what. You want me apart from Lori? You got it, I'm out. Fuck a law office, fuck

you David, and by the way, I'm the one who photocopied my ass.

JIM

You're not going anywhere until I've figured this out.

DAVID B

What is there to figure out? One of us won't leave for shit, the other doesn't want to be here. Are we really missing all the clues?

JIM

I trust my daughter's word.

ERIC

What about mine?

JIM

Of course. It's both of you. She's fucking the whole office.

LORI

You're sick.

DAVID B

Impossible. I'm completely gay.

JEN

Not true!

DAVID A

Honestly, don't pretend you're gay... like me...

JIM

No one in this house is gay!

(ERIC is entering freak out mode.)

JEN

I've walked in on them! I've seen it with my own two eyes!

ERIC

We didn't do that here!

JIM

You?

ERIC

I said, he didn't do that here!

JIM

At the house? Come on. I doubt they kept it contained to his.

JEN

He's got a secret birthmark. How would I know about that?

DAVID B

Same reason I caught crabs from you.

JEN

You gave *me* crabs! ...in this hypothetical.

IDA

How fun, gifting pets! I got a dog that way once.

ERIC

Do I have crabs? Hypothetically?

JEN

I'll show you. On his chest.

(JEN tries to pull DAVID B's shirt off. ERIC fights her efforts.)

ERIC

Pshhhhhh, a secret birthmark? Sounds like something pulled from a movie.

JEN

And?

ERIC

Maybe you copied it, say, without permission from its original author?

IDA

Is Jen writing her little stories again?

ERIC

Something like that, Grandma. Gotta be careful with a habit like that.

JEN

Well since we've been discussing sexuality, why don't we have an open conversation?

ERIC

You wouldn't.

Mutually assured destruction. **JEN**

What are you kids talking about? **JIM**

Nothing. **ERIC** Nada. **JEN**

Okay. Well... **JIM**

I just think it's funny how / **JEN**

(These seven erupt into a cacophony of ad-libbed arguing. The sound rises as bodies get more animated, passionate – building, building – until an obnoxiously loud DING! Silence.)

Ooh, let's eat! **IDA**

(The group shuffles into the dining room without a sound, awkward and tense. DAVID B makes a lunge for the door, but JIM grabs his arm one-handed and tugs him toward the table. Then, LORI and JIM bring in the food.)

Smells delicious, honey. **JIM**

Thanks sweetie. **LORI**

(Awkward silence as everyone piles food onto their plates.)

Alright Jen, I'll start my interrogation with you. How's school? **IDA**

It's... good! Really good! **JEN**

Classes are going well? **IDA**

They're great. **JEN**

What's your favorite one? **IDA**

I... love, I love all of them. **JEN**

I love that. What's your best grade in, you think? **IDA**

Oh, uh, all of them! **JEN**

My granddaughter, such a star student. So you're all set to graduate on time? **IDA**

Huh, Grandma, let me eat something. **JEN** *(stuffing her mouth with food)*

(JEN finishes chewing.)

So all set to graduate? **IDA**

(JEN shoves more food in her mouth.)

Mmhmm! **JEN** *(mouth full)*

What? **IDA**

Mmmmmm. **JEN**

Ginger snap, I'm having trouble hearing you. **IDA**

JEN

Mmhmm, hmm hmmm mhmmm.

IDA

Wonderful! I can't wait to see you march up that stage!

DAVID A

You know Jim, for what it's worth, I think it's a great thing you plan to do tomorrow.

JIM

You do?

DAVID A

Somebody's gotta stop these goddamn Democrats. There, I said it.

(With this, ERIC lets out a moan and clasps his hand over his mouth. As the conversation turns political, he groans, twists, and turns.)

LORI

Oh, yes honey, you should definitely go.

DAVID A

I know Thanksgiving's not supposed to get political, but come on, the way things are?

JIM

The way things are.

ERIC

I think things are pretty good, actually! Not even political. Just. Things!

JIM

Pffft. There's someone who doesn't pay for gas.

(DAVID A fakes laughter. JIM's not cluing in on the ruse here.)

JIM

Payin' for voting blue, that's what he's payin for!

(JIM is killing this standup for one.)

DAVID A

Then they go and steal our election, and expect us to just let it happen!

JIM

You're damn right we're marching tomorrow!

DAVID A

Oh... I'll be there!

DAVID B

Is that so, David?

DAVID A

Oh, yeah.

DAVID B

Got your bus tickets all set?

DAVID A

Think I'll drive in.

DAVID B

You've never expressed views like this to me.

DAVID A

Well I'm censored at the office, you know that.

DAVID B

Really? You're censored at the law firm you're a partner at?

DAVID A

That's how far wokeism has gotten us.

JIM

Here, here! You can't be the man I'm looking for, you're a patriot.

DAVID B

This guy? I'm more of a patriot than Nancy Pelosi over here.

ERIC

Grandma, how did you meet Grandpa again?

IDA

Oh-ho-ho-ho, it's quite the long story...

DAVID A

If I'm a Nancy, I'm Nancy Reagan! He might as well be a commie.

IDA

We met on the beach some fifty years ago.

DAVID B

The only thing I'm liberal with is raisins in potato salad!

IDA

It was... Babson beach?

DAVID A

I'm so Republican I say climate change is when management tells me I can't make racist jokes anymore.

IDA

Bowers Beach? Bethany Beach? I think it started with a B...

ERIC

Wow Grandma, that's really interesting! Is everyone hearing this?

IDA

Oh, he was wearing the most handsome swimsuit. People had modesty back then.

DAVID B

I'm so conservative, I leave my hummer running when I'm buying groceries.

DAVID A

So?

DAVID B

At Whole Foods.

JIM

That must give 'em a hernia!

IDA

Now, back then you could walk to the county store and buy brand-new shoes for a shiny nickel.

DAVID A

I think a pronoun is a substantive really good at its job! ...What, too grammatical?

DAVID B

I can't even read!

IDA

These days you can't buy a gumdrop with two smackers.

DAVID A

I once drove a girl across state borders so she couldn't get an abortion.

JIM

Who'd you vote for in the primary?

DAVID A

Carr, of course! Our allies will finally respect us with such a strong leader at the helm!
Who cares who's good with words when you have a big stick?

IDA

I used to ride my bike to the beach and stop for ice cream. Oh, in my day they made it just right with a little bit of swirl!

ERIC

Wow Grandma, that's super interesting! What kind of ice cream?

IDA

What, dear?

ERIC

What kind of ice cream?

IDA

My word! What do you mean you're going to slice me?

ERIC

No, Grandma/

DAVID B

Same here, Jimbo. Love a maverick! Says just what he means!

ERIC

Grandma, *ice cream!*

IDA

What?

JIM

What is it about his policies that so engaged you?

DAVID A

I don't like Mexicans. That's pretty much it.

DAVID B

I'm racist towards everyone.

JIM

Me too! But one of you is lying.

DAVID A

I'm so old-fashioned, I believe in trial by combat!

DAVID B

Oh, you wanna go? You I can take.

*(DAVID A takes off his shirt, ready to fight.
DAVID B starts to take off his shirt, when:)*

ERIC

Jen got kicked out of school for plagiarism!/
/

DAVID B

Jen, damn.

IDA

Faked-her-written... exam!? You mean she cheated!/?

JEN

Eric!

LORI

What? Is that true?

JEN

No!

LORI

Is that true?

JEN

... Yes.

IDA

Sweet Lord have mercy!

JEN

Thank you, Eric. Thank you for that. Not like I wanted to tell them on my own time.

LORI

Honey, how did this happen? If you write a letter of apology-?

JEN

My warning was last semester. The dean said I can't come back in the spring. And I was hoping to find a better way to share this, but I guess Eric decided he needed to do it for me. Are you happy? Want me to share your secret with the whole family?

ERIC

I'm sorry. They, they wouldn't stop!

JIM

Well what's your secret?

JEN

Tell them, Eric.

ERIC

LORI

Are you going to graduate?

ERIC

Yes.

IDA

Oh, you're going to look so good marching up those steps!

JIM

Runs in the family.

ERIC

Oh, for fuck's sake, don't go to the stupid fucking march, Dad. It's a terrible idea, and I care about you! Despite the sludge in your brain!

JIM

This from the people who think M&Ms should be "asexual," whatever the hell that means.

ERIC

You are the one who cares about M&Ms! I don't give a fuck about M&Ms! Why would M&Ms be sexual!??

LORI

Of course.

(LORI takes off for the kitchen.)

ERIC

You're not scared they'll shoot you?

JIM

Can't say it troubles me.

ERIC

Why, because you're white?

JIM

We've got men on the inside.

ERIC

You mean... you could actually pull it off?

JIM

You can do incredible things when you fight like hell. Gonna eliminate all these liberal queers!

ERIC

But Dad, you're talking about killing innocent people.

JIM

Well, Gitmo would be strike one.

(LORI, manic, returns with a huge bag of M&Ms and a magnifying glass. She hands the magnifying glass to IDA.)

LORI

Kids, help me spell "divorce," and I'll give you \$1,000.

(A fight over the M&Ms bag. LORI rips the tablecloth off, sending everything flying. ERIC is stunned. Everyone else grabs a handful of candy. During the following, LORI, JEN, and DAVID A try to spell out the word; JIM tosses M&Ms to distort their efforts. Ad-libbed yelling back and forth. IDA snacks on the M&Ms.)

DAVID A

We could probably take him together.

DAVID B

Yeah, you throw the first punch, loverboy.

JIM

Think I'm scared of a little violence? Just watch me tomorrow.

ERIC

That march isn't going to happen.

JIM

And why's that?

ERIC

Politics.

JIM

What?

ERIC

I don't pay attention to the details. But there's a word for what you've become, and that word is, the bad guy.

JEN

Fascist!

ERIC

That too! They're lying to you. Always have been, but it just keeps getting worse. That's a bitter pill to swallow, but you're gonna have to swallow it sometime.

DAVID A

Down, boy.

ERIC

Shut up, David, we get it, you fuck my mom! Dad, it's about politics. Which is about sex. Which is about politics.

(ERIC moves around the table, revealing his raging erection. Everyone gasps, even IDA.)

See, the Republicans want to fuck you. And the Democrats do too. They're both corrupted by the same court thingy, Citizens Together. But at least the Democrats will wine and dine you first, give you healthcare or whatever that old guy's always yelling about. Only one party cares if you get your rocks off. The Republicans just want to put on a circus act, and goddamn it- Uuuunngghh!!

(ERIC leaps across the table and rips

DAVID B's shirt off, revealing a stunningly accurate painting of ERIC and "JUSTIN" kissing. JIM grimaces with confusion. Then ERIC pounces, canoodling DAVID B.)

JIM

That's disgusting.

ERIC

After listening to your bullshit today? I don't care what you think.

JIM

You clearly need some time to figure yourself out.

ERIC

I need to figure myself out? Yeah, okay.

JIM

Tired of you people acting smug when you live in an alternate reality!

ERIC

The election wasn't stolen! You're beating a stupid dead horse.

JIM

I'll never stop. I'm doubling our headcount. You're the one beating the horse!

IDA

Di... vorce?

(All turn to IDA.)

JIM

N-n-no, Mom, what? You must have misheard!

LORI

That's right, Ida!

IDA

Who's divorced?

JIM

No one! Brady and Giselle!

IDA

Your lady and yourself? For how long?

JIM

Hehe, I think someone needs to take a look at them ears, Mom.

IDA

Ten!! Years!! I can't believe this. You've been lying to me for a decade? Putting on a charade for the old woman, eh? You are not my son!

LORI

YESSS!!!

JEN

You tell him, Grandma!

IDA

And you are not my grandchildren!

JEN

What?

ERIC

Grandma.

IDA

You lied to me too! Taking my money and cheating your way through school, it's disgraceful.

(to ERIC)

And you, courting Satan's pickle! I have no grandchildren, no family at all!

JIM

Sounds like something my mother would say!

(IDA slaps JIM. Then she slaps LORI.

DAVID A slaps IDA.

JIM slaps DAVID A. DAVID A slaps ERIC.

ERIC flails and accidentally slaps JEN. JEN

slaps DAVID B. DAVID B books it out of the

house, taking ERIC by the hand. IDA leaves

right after.)

DAVID A

Sweetness.

LORI

Darling.

(LORI and DAVID A kiss like a weird nightmare. JIM runs out the door.)

JIM

Mom! Mom! Mooom!!

(JEN tries to eat an M&M, ignoring the increasing passion next to her. She spits it out and bails. Lights fade.)

Scene 6

(Back in ERIC's dorm. There is a huge poster of what must be "The Picture" – ERIC necking with DAVID B at a ridiculous party. Meanwhile, ERIC and DAVID B are in bed. ERIC rolls out of bed in his underwear.)

ERIC

Oh, hey. Didn't see you there.

(Oh, yes he did.)

Well, I guess you could say everything turned out all right.

(DAVID B rolls out from under the covers, also in his underwear.)

DAVID B

But didn't that evening rip your family apart?

ERIC

Oh no, not at all. It took a little soul-searching, but Grandma was ultimately able to forgive Dad after all those years of lying.

DAVID B

Oh, really? I thought you said she cut him out of her will and disowned him forever.

ERIC

Well, yeah, but. She put him in her church's prayer requests. At least once. I think.

DAVID B

Oh. Well. That's good.

ERIC

Jen found an internship with a civil rights firm, no degree needed. She performed crucial work on high-profile cases, and she's even considering running for office one day.

DAVID B

That's right! But... wasn't the president of the firm indicted on embezzlement charges?

ERIC

David, I'm...

(taking him aside and whispering)

I'm trying to end things on a happy note.

DAVID B

(whispering)

But didn't everything go to shit?

ERIC

Yes! Everything went straight to shit! But I don't want them to know that.

DAVID B

Okay, okay.

ERIC

Ahem. Mom and David were married on a beautiful farm on a stunning afternoon in late June.

DAVID B

But didn't-?

(ERIC glares at him.)

ERIC

A stunning afternoon in late June.

DAVID B

(whispering to the audience)

Lori tripped on her wedding dress and landed in cow shit.

ERIC

David!

DAVID B

Sorry, sorry.

ERIC

Anyway. After the wedding, they enjoyed a romantic honeymoon in a place where Mom always dreamed of vacationing, the awe-inspiring islands of Hawaii.

DAVID B

She got food poisoning and threw up on a class of second graders/

ERIC

David!

DAVID B

What? I'm just telling the truth!

ERIC

Yes! Okay, fine, everything went to shit. The family fell apart. Mom fell in cowshit. Jen started dating a soundcloud rapper named "Tevin" who texts me twice a week asking if I've listened to his mixtape yet.

DAVID B

And your dad?

ERIC

He organized the buses to go to White House Deli by accident. The feds had an inside man too, and now dad has a cool set of prison tattoos. But you know what? I fell in love.

DAVID B

You did?

ERIC

I did!

DAVID B

Aww, I love you too.

ERIC

By the way, the crabs thing?

DAVID B

Oh, all taken care of.

(They hug. DAVID B flashes a worried grimace.)

ERIC

I was afraid to say it! I didn't want you to think we're moving too fast.

DAVID B

After our wild night? But, before we take the next step, there's something I need to tell you.

ERIC

What is it?

DAVID B

Well, I'm... and this is hard to say. Come on, David, you can do this. I'm... Polly-sexual.

ERIC

You are?

DAVID B

Yes! I've known my entire life!

ERIC

David, that's wonderful! So am I!

DAVID B

No, I, I don't think you're understanding me. Not polysexual, like, I'm attracted to men and women.

ERIC

No, I know, poli-sexual, like, you're attracted to people talking about politics!

DAVID B

No, no, Eric, Polly-sexual, like, I can only get off when I'm listening to... You know what, maybe a demonstration would be better. Polly?

(The sound of a parrot. "SQUAWK! USA! USA! USA!")

Both ERIC and DAVID B let out a moan.

JAZZ MUSIC.)

BLACKOUT.

END OF PLAY.