

ALTERNATE HISTORY

Written by

Spike

Based on characters created by Aaron Sorkin.

INT: WYATT HOME - DAY

Toby exits an upstairs bathroom. A door is open and something catches his eye. He steps in and is amused:

In the room, a large plain desk. On the side walls bookcases, densely and neatly packed. On the desk a keyboard, a monitor, and a stack of typed pages.

On the wall behind, tacked up for inspiration, photographs: Arthur Miller, Salmon Rushdie. Beside them, tacked up for inspiration, more photos: Marilyn Monroe, Padma Lakshmi.

Toby, unthinking, goes to the desk. A quick glance around and then:

He shouldn't, but he does. He riffs a few pages of the stack and starts to read.

Huck enters and Toby, guiltily, releases the pages. Huck laughs.

HUCK

Don't worry. If I was afraid, or if I cared, I would have hidden it. Or burned it. Or not printed in the first place. I like a hard copy. I'm not sure why.

TOBY

That's a lot of pages.

HUCK

Four hundred something.

TOBY

If there's anything you want me to read...

Huck shakes his head.

HUCK

Dad, I could do another six hundred in my sleep. But it's not good. How could it be? When it comes so...easily.

TOBY

Easily? Huck. What...?

HUCK

It's noise. It's just noise.

TOBY

You can't know that, son.

HUCK

Sure I can. It's what I'm good at.
And so could you.

(pause)

Do you remember when they killed
Bobby Kennedy?

Toby, for a moment, can't quite register the non sequitur.

TOBY

What?...Huck...

(a little concerned)

There was no they. It was...him.
Sirhan. What are you...? Yes, I
remember. I was watching TV. Like
Robert, his son. We were the same
age. We were fourteen.

HUCK

Do you remember the election?

TOBY

I remember every one that I
possibly could. Nineteen-sixty, I
would have been six. First grade.
Nixon-Kennedy. Even then I knew
enough to dislike Nixon. Then, in
sixty-three, I remember the teacher
wheeling a TV in front of the
class. To watch JFK's funeral
procession. Twenty or so solemn
eight year olds. It
was...something. Then sixty-four,
Johnson-Goldwater. I don't know if
I knew exactly what we didn't like
about Goldwater, but my mother was
adamant. Something about Goldwater
was anathema, on the wrong side.
Then sixty-eight. It was the first
election I was really immersed in.
After Bobby...we liked McCarthy,
but it was pretty clear we would
have to settle for Humphrey, and
that it was a lost cause. Nixon.

(pause)

We thought he was so bad. Who could
have imagined that it could get
so...

HUCK

Worse.

Huck's opens a deep drawer, gathers the stack of pages.

HUCK (CONT'D)

What I've been putzing around with.

He drops the stack into the drawer with an impressive thunk.

HUCK (CONT'D)

An alternate history. Freeze the moment when Bobby was shot. Then play it again, but this time, something boils over in the kitchen. Sirhan is distracted. He steps into the hall a moment later, and this time he is off, he misses, by a fraction, by enough. Bobby Kennedy survives, recovers, gets the nomination, beats Nixon.

TOBY

Nixon verses Kennedy again. Yea, Bobby could easily have won, but it would have been close. And then...

HUCK

We're out of Viet Nam years before. No Watergate. The counter-culture...

TOBY

It gets very complicated very fast. The counter-culture that I matured into just...disappeared. Became absorbed. Hippies on the Beverly Hillbillies. Rowan and Martin. Then...Regan.

HUCK

The triumph of the counter counter-culture. I imagine they were so sour, the Regan gang, because they didn't get in on any of the fun: the sex, the drugs, the rock and roll. Ya know, you guys were really on to something there.

TOBY

Talk to your Aunt about that.

HUCK

Did you know Hunter Thompson?

TOBY

Our paths crossed. But no.

HUCK

There's that famous bit, in Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas, where he talks about the forces of Old and Evil, and about a wave, high and beautiful, coming from the West, of newness, of hope. He sees a high-water mark where the wave breaks and recedes. It's not hard to pick the death of RFK, on the heels of MLK, as that moment. What I'm trying to imagine is that wave breaking over the Rockies, flowing east, somehow lasting...a river, a...Walden Pond.

Molly enters the room. Stands and listens.

HUCK (CONT'D)

The fight against the forces of Old and Evil. It's one that can be fought. And the other side--they're not all wrong. A healthy conservative intellectual presence is valuable, even necessary. To keep, you know, you--you people--in check. But this other fight. Against random stupid luck. Against the stunning stupid fact that one single human is somehow allowed to so adversely affect the fortunes, the happiness and misery, the lives and the deaths, of the millions of everyone else. With nothing to carry through. Nothing constant. Just idiocy, mindless randomness. What *chance* is there...against the Old. The Evil. The laissez-faire capitalists, the social darwinists, the same old feudal theft, and greed, and barbarism. The propagandists, given unimaginable power by the simple-minded propagandized-- Why?...How?...do they just keep...winning?

MOLLY

(gently)

Huck...

HUCK

Here's a question, Mr. Ziegler. You had *eight years*. How could it, ultimately, have made so little...*difference*?

TOBY

The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice.

HUCK

Sure. Dr. King. Here's another: Justice too long delayed is justice denied.

Pause.

MOLLY

Guys. Come join the party.

END OF ACT 2