

**THE PLAYWRIGHT'S GUILD PRESENTS:  
TROUPE!  
FINAL DRAFT**

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*SCENES*

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## CHARACTERS

### *U.S. News*

Jennifer Parker - The lead anchor for the U.S. News and World Report. Polished and put-together, with high aspirations for a future career with a much bigger news organization.

Kevin - The painfully stupid secondary anchor. Princeton graduate.

Producer - Older, irascible executive for the newsroom. Pretty misogynistic.

### *Murder Most Fowl*

Felicity Babbington - Our intrepid protagonist and England's premier investigator.

Nigel Unwin - Miss Babbington's assistant. Just doing his best.

Lady Lola Luckinbill - A recent widow.

Sam Smithfield - The American heir to the illustrious Smithfield Ham inheritance.

Lord Montague Montague - A guest.

Lady Ellen Bickford - A guest.

Clive Pickering / Officer - The gamekeeper / a police officer. (Double Cast)

Amelia Popplewell - A maid.

### *Karaoke and Anarchy*

Fiasco - A REAL anarchist; leather jacket wearing, cigarette smoking, poetry reciting.

Frank - A high ranking corporate executive who also wants to overthrow the oppressive capitalist regime on the side.

Finn - A young, clever, upstart anarchist who wants to see lots of community bonding!

### *Lake Carnegie*

Andrew Carnegie - Wealthy alpha male, played by a woman.

Woodrow Wilson - Nervous beta male, played by a woman.

Grover Cleveland - Lackadaisical non-Greek male, played by a woman.

### *Home*

Adelaide - A young Confederate nurse.

Thomas - A young Union soldier.

### *To All the Women Watching*

Cassandra - A silenced prophetess.

Helenus - The man who speaks for Cassandra.

Rosalind Franklin-Assertive, determined

Fanny Mendelssohn-A bit quiet, empathetic, but ambitious

Camille Claudel-Brutally honest, not afraid to give her take

**SCENE 0**  
**U.S. NEWS - PRE-BROADCAST**

*Lights up on a busy news set. There's a general hubbub on stage, as everyone ad-libs various conversations. JENNIFER and KEVIN are sitting behind the news desk at their respective chairs, having their makeup touched up by various extras. JENNIFER is reviewing her notes, mouthing words as her eyes scan the pages in her hand. KEVIN is talking to his makeup artist about what he had for breakfast, an untied tie hung loosely around his neck. (The actor playing KEVIN can ad-lib this part—the louder and more unusual, the better.) He's probably moving so much that the makeup artist is having a hard time doing his makeup. After a moment, the PRODUCER walks in and claps his hands together.*

**PRODUCER**

Let's move it, everybody! The show is starting in three minutes! Kevin, get your tie on—this isn't Good Morning America!

**KEVIN** [salutes]

Right away, sir!

*The makeup artists step away from the anchors. KEVIN ties his tie—or tries to, anyway. He looks confused as he starts wrapping the ends around each other like a botched fishtail braid.*

**PRODUCER**

Jasmine! Did you get the second draft of your story script to me yet?

**JENNIFER**

It's Jennifer. And yes, I emailed it to you a week ago.

*Beat.*

**PRODUCER**

Well, let's hope it's not as dramatic as your last one. I could barely get through it without wanting to claw my eyes out.

**JENNIFER** [under her breath]

How flattering.

**PRODUCER**

I don't know why you don't write comedy like Kevin. His script was brilliant!

**KEVIN** [concerned]

Uhh... Jenny? Could you give me a hand?

*KEVIN has somehow managed to handcuff his wrists together with his tie. JENNIFER sighs and unties/reties it for him as she talks.*

**JENNIFER**

I don't know about Kevin, but I want the viewers to be given at least some respect. We are distinguished journalists, after all.

**PRODUCER**

Distinguished journalists who need to get their ratings up.

**JENNIFER**

Well -

*The "Breaking News" jingle for the U.S. News and World Report begins to play.*

**PRODUCER**

Hold that thought, Judy.

**JENNIFER**

Jennifer.

**PRODUCER**

We're on in ten seconds - places people!

*The PRODUCER starts to walk offstage as the makeup artists clear out, lights dimming to black as he counts down.*

**PRODUCER**

Everyone ready? We're on in five, four, three, two...

**SCENE 5**  
**U.S. NEWS - FIASCO INTERVIEW**

**JENNIFER**

I don't know about you, but I have a lot of questions about what I just saw. Lucky for us, we-

*KEVIN sprints into the newsroom and jumps back into his chair.*

**KEVIN** [panting]

Sorry. I got locked in the bathroom.

**JENNIFER**

But the lock is inside.

**KEVIN**

I forgot which way to turn the doorknob.

*Beat.*

**JENNIFER**

As I was saying, we have the privilege of talking to one of those anarchy-loving people right now. Please welcome Fiasco!

*JENNIFER and KEVIN start clapping to encourage the audience to applaud as well. FIASCO rolls onto the set--literally rolls in on a rolly chair. Her arms are crossed, and her head is down, a beanie hung low over her face.*

**JENNIFER**

Welcome, Fiasco. How are you doing tonight?

**FIASCO** [overdramatic]

“The ocean envelops my soul and chokes it. It fills my soul-lungs with dark, briny water. My soul is drowning. And it’s especially bad because my soul has... *soul asthma*.”

*Beat.*

**JENNIFER**

So, you’re feeling sad?

**FIASCO**

My feelings can’t be named with words. Words constrict the full range of human emotion. No one is ever merely “sad.” The truest expression of my feelings is through poetry.

**KEVIN**

But don’t you need words to make poetry?

*FIASCO is stupefied by KEVIN's question. She does not respond.*

**JENNIFER**

"Fiasco" is certainly an interesting name. How did your parents come up with that?

**FIASCO**

I renounced my parents as soon as I was old enough to print my own emancipation papers.

**JENNIFER**

I see. When was this?

**FIASCO**

I was eight. Parental Controls were still activated on the computer. But all restrictions bend to the will of a young, fire-hearted anarchist.

*JENNIFER raises an eyebrow.*

**FIASCO**

The password was my birthday.

**JENNIFER**

I see. So, where did the name "Fiasco" come from, then?

**FIASCO**

When I was deciding on my new name, I knew I couldn't have it assigned to me by some authority figure. Names are a societal construct designed to turn us from people into objects. As soon as you name something, you own it - and a REAL anarchist belongs to nobody, not even themselves. Which is why I used a random name generator on Google.

**KEVIN**

But doesn't that mean Google owns you?

*FIASCO is stupefied again. JENNIFER comes to the rescue.*

**JENNIFER**

Fascinating. In the segment we just watched, you expressed...displeasure at the concept of anarchists doing karaoke. However, let's say you HAD to participate in-

**FIASCO**

I knew you were going to ask this, you sick servants of the state. First choice would be a recording of a cat screaming. Second would be the Pitch of the Universe, which is a slightly flat A extended for all eternity. Third would be "Photograph" by Nickelback.

**KEVIN** [genuinely confused]

But isn't Nickelback one of the most commercially successful rock bands of all time, making it deeply ironic for you, an anarchist who claims to hate mainstream music, to like them?

*Long beat.*

**FIASCO**

YOU LEAVE CHAD KROEGER OUT OF THIS, PUNK!

*FIASCO may start going to try to beat KEVIN up as KEVIN yelps in protest. JENNIFER has to contain the situation, and KEVIN cowers behind the desk.*

**JENNIFER**

Fiasco! Fiasco! Please, calm down!! Kevin, say you're sorry to Fiasco.

*KEVIN pokes his head above the table. He's been crying.*

**KEVIN** [sniffling, whimpering]

I'm sorry. Geez!

**JENNIFER**

Now, Fiasco - I just have one more question for you. Your dispute with Frank started over the Anarchist Club Potluck - specifically, over the fact that he told Denise to bring wienerschnitzel.

**FIASCO**

Well, it STARTED because Frank doesn't know the difference between anarchy and authoritarianism, like the corporate freak that he is.

**JENNIFER**

Okay. Well, I'm sure all our dedicated viewers were curious: what did *you* bring to the potluck?

**FIASCO**

Oh, that was easy. I brought twelve packs of cigs, a leather jacket, and an apple pie.

**JENNIFER**

An apple pie?

**FIASCO**

Well, I didn't *want* to bring the apple pie. I wanted to bring a tuna casserole.

**JENNIFER**

Why didn't you?

**FIASCO**

Monique was already bringing one and I don't like tuna casserole enough to eat it twice.

**JENNIFER**

Give it up for Fiasco, everybody!

*FIASCO exits scowling.*

**JENNIFER**

We have a special treat up next. We'll be hosting an up-and-coming singer to perform for us on the show! Who is this person, you might ask? I'll give you a hint: she's a pop queen with a penchant for high ponytails; she just released a smash hit single; and she recently announced that she is *not*, in fact, engaged to Pete Davidson.

**KEVIN**

Wait, stop. We got ARIANA GRANDE to be on the show?

**JENNIFER** *[glances at notes]*

Um, no. Tonight, Misty Dreamz will be making her cable television debut. *[Noticing Kevin, who's crushed]* I mean, technically, she *isn't* engaged to Pete Davidson.

**KEVIN**

I have no tears left to cry.

**JENNIFER** *[ignores him]*

Please welcome to the studio Misty Dreamz!

*MISTY enters amid canned applause, waving and blowing kisses to the audience.*

**MISTY**

Omigosh, thanks so much for having me! So happy to be here.

**KEVIN** *[whispered, to JENNIFER]*

Wait, isn't that the producer's niece??

**JENNIFER** *[ignoring]*

So, Misty, can you tell us a little about your new single?

**MISTY**

Of course! As any of my diehard stans, the Dreamerz -

*Two or three "Dreamerz" in the audience scream their lungs out.*

**MISTY**

OMIGOSH, LOVE YOU GUYS! Well, I was diagnosed with a serious health condition last month: tonsillitis. It was a really scary time, but thanks to all of the Dreamerz's thoughts, prayers, and Facebook posts, I survived. They even created a GoFundMe to cover my medical costs. Isn't the internet a great place? I mean, who needs universal healthcare when you can just



rely on the kindness of strangers online?!

*Beat.*

**MISTY**

Anyway, when I was about to go under for surgery, the craziest thing happened: I met the love of my life. So cute, right?! The only problem was, I didn't learn his name - and then, he disappeared! So, I wrote this song to try to find him. Internet, do your thing!

**JENNIFER**

Wow, what a story. Ladies and gentlemen, we present: Misty Dreamz!

**SCENE 7**  
**U.S. NEWS - THE PRODUCER**

**JENNIFER**

And that was Misty Dreamz with the smash hit “The Anesthesiologist That Got Away!”

*JENNIFER forces a smile as she and KEVIN clap.*

**JENNIFER**

If you liked what you saw here tonight, make sure to check out Misty’s other songs on Soundcloud and Youtube, including the smash hits: “I’ll Let You Wash My Dishes, Dishwasher Dude,” “Taking My iHeart To The Genius Bar”, and “Mechanic, You’re Under My Car, But I Want To Be Under You.”

When we come back, we’ll finally answer the question you’ve been asking for years: how to keep your ‘chill girl’ aesthetic this winter without actually freezing. We’ll be right back.

*Camera clicks off. JENNIFER visibly relaxes and her made-for-camera smile slips off. KEVIN remains smiling vapidly at the audience. JENNIFER grabs a bottle of water and leans back in her chair.*

**JENNIFER**

Ugh.

*Suddenly, THE PRODUCER is heard shouting offstage.*

**PRODUCER** [off, angry]

Where is... what’s her name- Jessica? Jocelyn? Where is she?

*The PRODUCER storms onstage, catches sight of and walks to Jennifer, and slams a script down on her desk.*

JULIA! What the hell is this?

**JENNIFER**

My name is Jennifer. And what is “this?”

**PRODUCER**

*THIS* is something I didn’t think was possible - a script even MORE damn depressing than your first!

**JENNIFER**

Didn’t we just report on a *murder*?

**PRODUCER**

Everyone loves a good murder. It's entertaining! *This* is just sad.

**JENNIFER**

Who says the story has to entertain? We're a news show, not Saturday Night Live!

**KEVIN**

Yeah! It's Friday, silly!

**JENNIFER**

I know the story is sad, but it's important enough to be told.

**PRODUCER**

We'll tell it somewhere else, because right now you are reporting *this*.

*The PRODUCER shoves a different script at her. JENNIFER skims it.*

**JENNIFER**

"Move over, margarine: There's a new non-dairy spread in town - and this time, it's vegan!"  
What is this? You want me to present a cooking segment?!

**PRODUCER**

Apparently the piece we ran on homemade fruit roll ups had our highest ratings this quarter. The people want more food reporting!

**JENNIFER**

This isn't even *news*! I didn't get a master's in journalism to become Martha Stewart!

**PRODUCER**

That doesn't matter. We need a story, and it won't be yours.

*JENNIFER is about to protest, but she scowls and takes the papers.*

**JENNIFER**

You know what? Fine.

**PRODUCER**

Thank you. Kevin, your segment is fantastic. Great television. Joanna, take notes. Look alive Kevin - we're back on air in 15 seconds!

**KEVIN**

Are you talking to me?

**PRODUCER**

No, I'm talking to the other Kevin.

*Kevin genuinely looks around for the other Kevin.*

Yes, you, idiot!

*The PRODUCER exits. JENNIFER collects herself and gets ready to be back on air. Kevin is scribbling his notes with crayons.*

**JENNIFER**

Welcome back to the U.S. News and World Report of the News of the U.S. and World, Reported. Tonight, we have a special treat for our viewers. Our producers have given us, the anchors, the opportunity to present stories written by us on the show. So, without further ado, our very own Kevin will be presenting our next segment, which he has written all by himself. Why don't you tell us a little bit about it, Kevin?

*JENNIFER turns to KEVIN, but KEVIN is not paying attention, as he is making a paper hat out of his notes. A moment passes before JENNIFER nudges KEVIN with her elbow, startling him.*

**KEVIN**

AAH!

**JENNIFER** [*whispering through her teeth*]

You're on.

**KEVIN**

Huh? ... Oh, right! Uhh...

*KEVIN takes off his hat and turns it several times, trying to read his notes.*

**KEVIN**

This first piece... I wrote all by myself! I'm really proud of it. It's about my alma mater...

*KEVIN rotates the hat many times, then opens a flap.*

**KEVIN**

Princeton!

**JENNIFER**

You went to Princeton?

**KEVIN**

Yup!

**JENNIFER**

How did you get in?

**KEVIN**

I dunno, my dad always said I was really smart!

**JENNIFER**

And what's your dad's name?

**KEVIN**

Peter Lewis!

**JENNIFER**

Of course. Now, let's see "Lake Carnegie" by Kevin.

**SCENE 8**  
**“LAKE CARNEGIE”**

By Monique Legaspi & Juan J. Lopez Haddad

*Lights go up on a deteriorated library/office. WOODROW WILSON and GROVER CLEVELAND are pacing around the stage as if in quiet, nervous conversation, they continue pacing and start speaking openly, so that the audience may hear.*

**WILSON** [*Nervously*]

Oh God, he will be coming in at any minute! I hope he liked his tour. He has been outside for too damn long!

**CLEVELAND**

By God, just calm down!

**WILSON**

I am calm, Grover! I just have to get this donation and every single one of our problems will be solved.

**CLEVELAND**

This is always your way Woodrow, isn't it? Every time we have a problem you have to ask for a trust fund!

**WILSON**

Everybody does it! What do you expect me to do? Make smart investment choices?

**CLEVELAND**

I mean...

**STUDENT 1** [*Off-stage, in acclaim*]

Oh my God, it's Andrew Carnegie!

**STUDENT 2** [*Off-stage, in acclaim*]

What is *he* doing here?

**STUDENT 3** [*Off-stage, in acclaim*]

Mister Carnegie, please sign my JP!

*CLEVELAND and WILSON are visibly shaken and start pacing around more rapidly.*

**WILSON** [*Panicking*]

Dear Lord, he's coming! What do we do? We have to get this donation!

**CLEVELAND** [*Composed*]

Let me do the talking. I can talk my way through a tough situation.

**WILSON**

No, let me. There's a reason why you weren't re-elected.

**CLEVELAND** [*Annoyed*]

I was! I served two terms!

**WILSON**

Two *non-consecutive* terms, that doesn't count!

*ANDREW CARNEGIE loudly bursts through the door, kicking it down, and walks swiftly towards WILSON and CLEVELAND.*

**CARNEGIE** [*Boastfully*]

Woodrow Wilson! Woody! Woody Woody Wooooo! It's so good to see you and your little glasses. My dear boy Grover Cleveland, Andrew Carnegie at your service! It's been so long - I haven't seen you since that time I campaigned against your bid for reelection... And you lost! Hah! Good times.

**CLEVELAND** [*Awkwardly and annoyed*]

Yes... Good times...

**WILSON**

Please, sit down. I trust the tour you took of our beautiful campus was pleasant.

**CARNEGIE**

Meh. It's no Harvard.

**WILSON**

W- Well, here at Princeton University, we are proud to have students that *thrive* against all *issues* and *challenges* that they may encounter at college, but the buildings in which they learn are becoming quite old and decrepit. Wallpaper is peeling, rooms are improperly lit--

**CLEVELAND**

Desks practically fall apart in the middle of exams!

**CARNEGIE**

Much like the students do, I wager.

**WILSON**

Yes, it's all very tragic. And while our students and faculty are very bright and resilient, all it would take is one *very generous* donation from a *very generous* benefactor--[CLEVELAND nudges CARNEGIE]--to make our institution the very best it can be.

**CARNEGIE**

I see. This is a very pitiful campus, almost as pitiful as your campaign, Grover!

**CLEVELAND**

Yes, we know! That's why we need your money.

*WILSON looks at CLEVELAND in reprimand.*

**CARNEGIE**

But out of the goodness of my own heart, I have come here to save you! I am prepared to make a donation, and a substantial one at that.

*WILSON and CLEVELAND silently celebrate (fist-bump, air guitar, etc.).*

**CARNEGIE**

However! This donation needs to be used for a *very specific purpose*. You have to spend the money exactly as I say, or you'll end up worse off than Harvard, Yale or even... Cornell!

*CLEVELAND and WILSON become more excited with each new guess, voices growing louder until they are practically shouting.*

**WILSON**

Oh yes, whatever you think best must be great!

**CLEVELAND**

Is it more classrooms?

**WILSON**

More dormitories?

**CLEVELAND**

A vast and endless library?

**WILSON**

[*Sweeps his hand in front of him*] State of the art laboratories?

**CLEVELAND**

Four buildings named after Peter Lewis?!

**WILSON**

A Wawa with a skylight?!

**CARNEGIE**

No, better!



**WILSON**

What is it?!

**CARNEGIE**

A LAKE!

**WILSON & CLEVELAND**

YES! WAIT. WHAT?

**CARNEGIE**

Oh yes, my good sirs! A large, beautiful and scenic lake on campus!

**WILSON**

What on Earth?!

**CLEVELAND**

A Lake?!

**CARNEGIE**

Yes, of course gentlemen! The most brilliant idea since steel. Which I invented, of course.

**WILSON**

But why a lake?

**CARNEGIE**

Well, it's a lake. And it will have my name on it. What more is there to say?

**WILSON**

A lot more. You could say a lot more.

**CARNEGIE**

What else? Lakes are pretty! And it will have an unnecessarily elaborate boathouse! And a cemetery of bikes stolen by the crew team! And it will be so hard to reach that most of the students won't even know it exists!

**WILSON**

Mr. Carnegie, with all due respect, we can't squander thousands of dollars on *aesthetics*! This is a university, not a country club!

**CARNEGIE**

To be fair, you do have an enormous golf course right by.

**CLEVELAND**

And squash courts...

**CARNEGIE**

And you have waiters in the dining halls!

**WILSON**

Well, how on earth do you think you will get a lake on a campus that has no bodies of water whatsoever?

**CARNEGIE**

Oh please, I'm Andrew Carnegie, if I want a lake in the middle of campus I'll just throw some money at it until it happens. I always know what everyone needs. This country needs a steel industry? BOOM, I did it. New York needs an elitist concert hall? DONE. Pittsburgh needs a university with my name? Carnegie Mellon, baby! And Princeton? Princeton needs LAKE CARNEGIE!

*WILSON and CLEVELAND speak the following lines at once until they are cut off by Carnegie.*

**WILSON**

This is ridiculous! I still can't see -

**CLEVELAND**

Just how long would this project take to be completed?

**CARNEGIE**

I guess we have a *deal*, gentlemen?

**WILSON & CLEVELAND**

Uhh...

**CARNEGIE**

Tremendous! [vigorously shakes the hands of WILSON and CLEVELAND] I'll have my men called right away. Now, if you'll excuse me, I have to run off to get more things named after me! Good day gentlemen! I'll be back when Lake Carnegie is completed!

*CARNEGIE exits, kicking the door down once more.*

**WILSON**

Lake Carnegie! According to whom?

**CLEVELAND** [*Sighing*]

Well, I guess we'll have to keep looking for donors.

**WILSON**

Anyone in mind?

**CLEVELAND**

Well, Rockefeller owes me a favor. Maybe I'll send him a telegram.

**WILSON**

Rockefeller! That has a nice ring to it...

*Blackout.*