

= Ways and Means (The West Wing) =

" Ways and Means " is the 47th The West Wing episode and 3rd of the third season . It originally aired on NBC October 24 , 2001 . The episode sees the beginnings of President Bartlet 's Congressional hearings , as well as negotiations over the estate tax . Written by Aaron Sorkin , Eli Attie and Gene Sperling , and directed by Alex Graves , the episode contains the first appearances by Mark Feuerstein as Clifford " Cliff " Calley . There are also guest appearances by Thom Barry , Nicholas Pryor and Miguel Sandoval .

= = Plot = =

The subpoenas are handed out in the hearing over Bartlet 's concealment of his multiple sclerosis . The special prosecutor , Clement Rollins (Pryor) , appears to be both fair and responsible , but C.J. believes the White House will be better served in the public eye if investigated by a partisan agent . She therefore decides ? against the strong objections of White House counsel Oliver Babish ? to present Rollins as an ally of the administration , thereby forcing Congress to take control over the investigation . Meanwhile Donna , unwittingly , becomes entangled in potential problems over the hearings . Ainsley Hayes sets her up on a date with the Republican House Government Oversight Committee counsel Clifford Calley , but even though the date seems to go well , Calley then leaves her quite abruptly in the middle of the street . Donna later realizes the reason : his congressional committee is the one that will be in charge of the investigation , and a relationship between the two could constitute a conflict of interest .

While Sam and Bruno are concerned about the loyalty of a powerful California union official (Sandoval) , Toby and Josh are preparing for a meeting with the congressional opposition to re @-@ negotiate the estate tax ? or the " death tax " as the Republicans have labeled it ? but are then surprised by a last @-@ minute cancellation . It soon becomes clear that the Republicans are planning to repeal the estate tax altogether , and might have the votes to do so . An attempt to win over the black caucus , led by Congressman Mark Richardson (Barry) , fails . At a loss over what to do , an initiative comes from unexpected quarters . The previously over @-@ cautious political strategist , Doug Wegland , suggests the president responds by doing something he has never done before : veto the bill .

President Bartlet himself is confronted with a forest fire in Wyoming , and decides to follow the counter @-@ intuitive advice of his experts , and let the fire burn . Meanwhile he is still struggling to deal with the death of his perennial personal secretary , Mrs. Landingham . Charlie insists that it is necessary to appoint a new person to fill the position , but the president is reluctant to take the step . As the episode ends , Bartlet is searching for a good pen , and realizes the full depth of his dependence on Mrs. Landingham .

= = Production = =

According to Sorkin , the episode benefited greatly from input by two former White House employees . The scene where Donna stays up all night sorting through documents in cartons was the idea of Eli Attie , Al Gore 's chief speechwriter . Meanwhile Gene Sperling , Bill Clinton 's chief economic adviser , came up with the sub @-@ plot involving the estate tax . Sorkin , however , had certain misgivings about the estate tax story 's appeal , considering the prevalent bipartisan spirit of the time , in the aftermath of the 9 / 11 attacks .

In one scene Sam Seaborn speaks to a Latino labor leader , and as the discussion heats up he switches into Spanish . The lobbyist , Victor Campos , claims that he has been used for public relations purposes , something Sam denies . Rob Lowe , who plays Seaborn , had to learn to speak the language convincingly especially for this episode . Sorkin commented , " I tend to torture Rob a little . "

= = Cultural references = =

In one scene , C.J. says that special prosecutor Rollins was the editor of the Yale Law Review . There is no such thing as the Yale Law Review , though the journal of legal scholarship affiliated with the Yale Law School is called the Yale Law Journal .