

POSSIBLE STORY for EPISODE TWENTY
TOBY and WILL LOCK HORNS OVER THE VP'S GRIDIRON SPEECH

BEAT ONE: TOBY's furious at WILL 'cause RUSSELL upstaged BARTLET at the Gridiron with a joke-free speech. It's after the Gridiron, at which both BARTLET and RUSSELL spoke. WILL's been called to come see TOBY would have an issue with what happened at the Gridiron. WILL suspects he's upset that the VP didn't use any of TOBY's jokes. It was good material, TOBY says, but he's over it. WILL muses about some of the other speakers that night, in particular, a joke Senator TRIPLEHORN told about the VP kinda bugged WILL... and TOBY cuts him off to tell him what his issue was: the VP didn't tell any jokes at all. At the Gridiron, Washington's excuse for the Improv. He gave a sober, elegaic speech about how these are serious times – and made the President look like a buffoon, like Schecky BARTLET. WILL defends the speech, their argument gets heated, it's a stand-off, and as WILL's about to leave, the crash begins; they're stuck together.

BEAT TWO: TOBY thinks WILL is propping up a political non-entity, playing Dr. Frankenstein. WILL gingerly addresses TOBY's hostility toward RUSSELL. Let's face it, he's the heir apparent, whether TOBY likes it or not, isn't that why TOBY pitched him two pages of jokes in the first place? No, TOBY says, he's a featherweight who only looks like a middleweight because he has WILL working for him, planning out craven moves like the humorless sermon RUSSELL gave at the Gridiron – and TOBY only pitched him those jokes 'cause they'd been rejected by the President. (If WILL responds badly to the fact that they were cast-offs, TOBY hastens to add that the President's sense of humor is trapped in a bad Trollope novel, those were A-list jokes; maybe they argue over one or two...) The heart of this argument: TOBY thinks WILL is making RUSSELL *look* like a contender, he's skewing the field, hurting the party, building up a nothing, a nobody, as some kind of Frankenstein vanity exercise. WILL defends not just RUSSELL, but TOBY's arrogance; he alone gets to decide who's a contender? Sitting VP's are almost always nominated (though they almost always lose, TOBY can add). Plus when's the last time TOBY missed a meeting with RUSSELL when he's been invited to one? TOBY replies that he's never been invited to one. Which is WILL's point; TOBY's just mad 'cause RUSSELL rejected his rejects... but suddenly, the idea of rejected jokes rings a bell with WILL – and at this point, TOBY might try to leave the secured room, only to be forced back in by a Secret Service agent.

BEAT THREE: WILL accuses TOBY of aiding one of RUSSELL's Democratic rivals. WILL knows what bugged him about TRIPLEHORN's joke about RUSSELL. *It was written by TOBY, BARTLET rejected it last year, when TOBY pitched it for the last Gridiron as a joke about HOYNES.* It was a good joke, TOBY begins—but WILL's point is that TOBY's helping a RUSSELL rival. In fact, TOBY insists, this White House is neutral, everyone in town's running for President, it'll be a wide open race next time. To WILL, it's a direct and hostile gesture, fratricide if not suicide for the party. To TOBY, it was helping a Democrat with a pulse and a sense of humor – two for two over RUSSELL. WILL offers to bring TOBY more into RUSSELL's loop, into some strategy meetings. Why, TOBY asks, so I can help you find more ways to upstage the President?

BEAT FOUR: **TOBY's real problem – BARTLET should have done what RUSSELL did tonight.** WILL thinks TOBY can't stand to see that there's a political horizon post-BARTLET, that there's a Democratic future that may not have TOBY in it. Maybe that's true, TOBY says. But there's a Democratic present, too, and WILL should be in it. He shouldn't have left BARTLET, and it's not too late to come back. It is for WILL, though; he runs his own operation, it'd be like going back to high school. WILL's sorry about the rejected jokes. No, TOBY confesses, you shouldn't be; RUSSELL gave the speech BARTLET should've given tonight. He was right, it's a serious world, how can we sit around in tuxedos and tell a bunch of lame jokes about a bunch of aging committee chairmen and long-in-the-tooth reporters... As the crash is lifted, WILL has a confession, too: the serious speech was RUSSELL's idea. RUSSELL didn't just reject TOBY's two pages of jokes (which WILL fought for, by the way); he rejected four pages of WILL's...