

WONK LOVE

**a play in one act
by Tom Baum**

Scene 1

(JONAH, *mid-30s, is at a restaurant table. CAMILLE, also in her 30s, African-American, enters.*)

CAMILLE: I'm looking for a Jonah. Would that be you?

JONAH: (*pause*) Yes. I'm Jonah. Are you Camille?

CAMILLE: I'm Camille. Are we OK here?

JONAH: Yes. Sit down. Please.

CAMILLE: Something wrong?

JONAH: No, nothing's wrong.

CAMILLE: Sorry I'm late. Been waiting long?

JONAH: About an hour. Well, I was early. But past my 20-minute limit.

CAMILLE: I'm glad you stayed.

JONAH: Hey, I was flattered to be asked. I've been getting way more hits lately, but the Governor? That came as a total shock.

CAMILLE: Just so you know...the Governor doesn't actually read your blog.

JONAH: Right. Why would he.

CAMILLE: But we've been briefing him.

JONAH: On what?

CAMILLE: The rumors you're spreading.

JONAH: Sorry, which rumors? I'm not aware of any rumors—

CAMILLE: Please. You've all but accused him of hypocrisy. For his stand against gay marriage.

JONAH: Right. So what's the problem with his wife?

CAMILLE: What do you mean, what's the problem?

JONAH: Come on. They have separate residences. They take separate vacations. No campaign appearances together. “We brief him,” what does that mean, what do you do for the Governor?

CAMILLE: According to you, I’m there to make white folks feel less guilty.

JONAH: That’s their problem, isn’t it. Whatever your job, I’m sure you’re eminently qualified.

CAMILLE: Right, I forgot. You have IQ-dar.

JONAH: Everybody has IQ-dar. That’s why brainy kids get picked on.

CAMILLE: What would you say my IQ is?

JONAH: I wouldn’t. I was addressing the problem of prejudice. How preferential hiring inflames it. The policy implications of a tilted playing field.

CAMILLE: You mean ‘cause black folks are dumber than Jews, we’re wasting our money trying to get them into college.

JONAH: That’s a total distortion. 135.

CAMILLE: You’re off by 15 points.

JONAH: In which direction?

CAMILLE: I think you know which direction.

JONAH: No, I really don’t.

CAMILLE: That would make me a genius. And according to you, we don’t exist.

JONAH: That’s ridiculous. Of course you exist.

CAMILLE: But we’re hard to find, right? Like Jewish morons. I’m a speechwriter.

JONAH: Wow.

CAMILLE: Wow what. Why is that so surprising?

JONAH: I’m not surprised. I’m...I’m sympathetic. That speech opposing quota admissions--did you write that?

CAMILLE: I think you know I didn't.

JONAH: Why not. It was really effective. The white money poured in. But then you lost ground with liberals. And blacks.

CAMILLE: Not because of that speech.

JONAH: Not just because, no.

CAMILLE: Jonah, please don't be coy. You know damn well why we're losing that support. Thanks to you, the liberals think he's a hypocrite—

JONAH: Thanks to me? I'm hardly the only one saying it—

CAMILLE: —and blacks think he's gay.

JONAH: You want what? A retraction?

CAMILLE: Yes.

JONAH: You want me to take your word for it he isn't gay.

CAMILLE: What else do you want? Nude pictures of him with his wife?

JONAH: That would help. Can we discuss this over dinner?

CAMILLE: (*pause*) Not tonight. I have to be back at the office, I'm already late.

JONAH: How about tomorrow night?

CAMILLE: You do know those tests are racially biased.

JONAH: Absolutely. But when they tried to correct for culture, black people did even worse.

CAMILLE: Yeah, 'cause they were laughing too hard at the questions.

JONAH: That could be a factor.

CAMILLE: When people feel they're being pandered to, they freeze up. You want to hear the real story on affirmative action?

JONAH: I'm all ears.

CAMILLE: It's basically for white people. Stupid rich white kids whose parents donate money to the college. That's the dirty little secret you didn't blog about.

JONAH: I will now.

CAMILLE: You promise?

JONAH: I promise.

CAMILLE: What about the smears?

JONAH: The "smears"? I'm not aware of any "smears."

CAMILLE: The gay hypocrisy rumors.

JONAH: That's negotiable. Can I call you?

CAMILLE: You don't have my phone number.

JONAH: Can I have it?

CAMILLE: Jonah, if you and I come to an understanding, can we count on you to lay off the rumors that he's gay?

JONAH: That depends on the understanding.

CAMILLE: You know how to reach me, Jonah.

(Blackout.)

Scene 2

(Three days later. CAMILLE's apartment is suggested by a chair, a desk, a laptop, and a door. Classical music is playing. CAMILLE is typing, a wine glass by her side. CAMILLE's cell rings. She checks the number. Hesitates. Answers.)

CAMILLE: *(into phone)* Yes, Jonah, what is it...Oh gosh, not tonight...Because I'm working, that's why....I'm in the middle of writing a speech....How did you get my number, did my assistant give it to you?...No, I'm not upset, I expected to hear from you....

(Doorbell rings.)

CAMILLE: (*into phone*) What do you mean, what's the Governor's favorite movie? Who wants to know? (*to door*) Who is it?

VOICE: (*off*) Universal Florist. I have a delivery.

CAMILLE: Leave it outside.

VOICE: (*off*) I need you to sign for it, ma'am.

CAMILLE: All right, I'm coming. (*into phone*) It's *The Godfather*, actually.

(*CAMILLE opens the door. On the other side is JONAH on a cell phone, carrying a gift basket of flowers.*)

JONAH: Read the card. Please.

CAMILLE: (*reads card*) "I'm sorry"?

JONAH: Can I come in?

CAMILLE: Yes, all right, come in. (*puts flowers away*) Sorry for what?

JONAH: That thing I wrote about the origin of "motherfucker"? In slave days? It occurred to me, all those slave-owners who had their way with slave women? They were the first motherfuckers. The ultimate enemy. The ultimate insult. I got a bunch of flak from black historians. But it made sense, right?

CAMILLE: An eerie kind of sense, yes.

JONAH: So you are still reading me?

CAMILLE: Oh, avidly.

JONAH: Then you noticed: I haven't mentioned his anti-gay marriage hypocrisy.

CAMILLE: You stopped short of a retraction.

JONAH: I was waiting for our "understanding." So what's his favorite movie really? *The Godfather*'s kinda obvious.

CAMILLE: How do you know they're going to ask him?

JONAH: The guy who's moderating the debate? I'm in his Thursday study group. That's his favorite icebreaker.

CAMILLE: Study group, uh-huh. Do you all wear bowties?

JONAH: Not me, but yeah, it's that kind of group.

CAMILLE: What else is the moderator going to ask?

JONAH: Off the record?

CAMILLE: Why, did your group take a blood oath?

JONAH: Kind of. Yeah. (*eyeing her computer screen*) What's his position on criminal background checks?

CAMILLE: It's never come up.

JONAH: Tell him to favor them.

CAMILLE: Why? That's profiling.

JONAH: No, but think about it. People assume black men have a criminal record. So they rule them out for jobs. You let employers check backgrounds, more black guys get hired.

CAMILLE: I'm curious, Jonah. Did you grow up around a lot of black people?

JONAH: Here and there. Why?

CAMILLE: Were you afraid of black people? Did you get beaten up by black kids?

JONAH: No, actually, by white kids. You want to know why I'm so obsessed. OK: I was watching *Jeopardy* with my dad, I was like eight years old? And they had a rabbi, a priest, and a minister, just like in the jokes? And the rabbi was trouncing them. And I'm like, "Are Jews smarter?" My dad goes, "They are, but you shouldn't ever say so."

CAMILLE: Don't call attention.

JONAH: That was Dad's mantra.

CAMILLE: Black people don't have that luxury.

JONAH: Right, but this is like seventy years after the Holocaust. Why not say Jews are smarter? If we are. Why are there so few Hispanics in nuclear physics? Don't look at me like that, I'm just giving you the data. Why are there no white primitives?

CAMILLE: Oh please.

JONAH: Well, except for that tribe of accountants in the Dolomites

CAMILLE: Any hillbilly hamlet is as primitive as rural India. Even if you could prove Jews are born smarter, which I seriously doubt—

JONAH: More Nobel Prizes.

CAMILLE: —why should inherited traits have anything to do with public policy? Why should we treat the races differently?

JONAH: Hey, I couldn't agree more. Why should we have to press *dos* for Espagnol? How about three for Russian and four for Chinese? Is catering to Hispanics good for business? Do businesses even know what they're doing? The government's been run like a business the last thirty years, and it's mostly a disaster. Here we go, check it out. Best overall study on background checks.

(CAMILLE leans over JONAH's shoulder as he Googles, brushing against him.)

CAMILLE: You're not much of a businessman, are you. Giving free advice to a political opponent.

JONAH: Who says I didn't vote for him?

CAMILLE: Did you vote for him?

JONAH: No. I sat the last one out.

CAMILLE: How would you like to meet him?

JONAH: Sure. Why not. You mean for an interview?

CAMILLE: What's the matter? Afraid what your "study group" might say?

JONAH: No. I'm a journalist. I'm entitled.

CAMILLE: You haven't told them about our date.

JONAH: I was sort of waiting till we had one.

CAMILLE: After the interview.

JONAH: Fine. I'm down with both. I'm excited.

CAMILLE: Call me at the office, OK? I'll set something up.

JONAH: OK. This is great. Thank you.

CAMILLE: And now I have to finish this speech.

JONAH: Sure. I'll get out of your way.

(CAMILLE goes back to her desk. JONAH starts out, turns.)

JONAH: Actually, you know, you can't call hillbillies primitive. They can read and write, most of them, they're not ahistorical, though yeah, what constitutes history is kind of a tricky question.

CAMILLE: I'll see you at my office, Jonah.

JONAH: I'll look forward to it, Camille.

(Blackout.)

Scene 3

(Several days later. CAMILLE's office is suggested by the desk and chair, repositioned from Scene 2. CAMILLE, seated at her laptop. JONAH, standing.)

CAMILLE: How long did he keep you waiting?

JONAH: About 45 minutes.

CAMILLE: Ask a lot of questions?

JONAH: Did I ask a lot of questions? No. He did.

CAMILLE: That's a very good sign. He'll do that sometimes, with journalists he likes. What did you two talk about?

JONAH: You know. Minority issues? The minority vote? The more ass you try to kiss, the less they trust you. The Pander Principle. I was sort of quoting you.

CAMILLE: What else did you tell him?

JONAH: I said he should make more appearances with his wife.

CAMILLE: And what did he say to that?

JONAH: He asked me why. I said she's beautiful, that's a plus. He's like, OK, but what about her wealth. I said, people like wealth, so long as it's made in America. Then he goes, well, I'm sorry, my wife has her own busy schedule. I have to say, I did get a gay vibe at that point.

CAMILLE: So how did you leave it?

JONAH: He said he enjoyed it. Would I like to come in again.
(*pause*) On a paying basis.

CAMILLE: Really. That's awesome.

JONAH: I was totally floored.

CAMILLE: Means we'd see a lot of each other.

JONAH: That's why I said yes.

CAMILLE: (*pause*) You know, we've all signed confidentiality agreements. That means you can't blog about us.

JONAH: Us. You mean the campaign. No, I know. So how about dinner tonight?

CAMILLE: Dinner's a problem.

JONAH: Why is it a problem?

CAMILLE: For us to be seen together.

JONAH: You mean, while the Governor's courting the right-wing vote?

CAMILLE: Aren't you afraid one of your think-tank buddies will see you?

JONAH: Yeah, OK, that's a point. How about we order in something? Your place, mine, wherever.

CAMILLE: (*pause*) I could meet you at the movies.

JONAH: Sure. We could do that.

CAMILLE: Arrive separately. Buy our own tickets. Sit in back.

JONAH: But together.

CAMILLE: Of course together.

JONAH: What about afterwards?

(CAMILLE *is silent.*)

JONAH: There doesn't have to be an afterwards.

CAMILLE: Why not?

(CAMILLE *checks her calendar.*)

CAMILLE: I'm actually free this Thursday.

JONAH: Thursday works.

CAMILLE: It's your think-tank night.

JONAH: I can miss a session.

CAMILLE: You pick the movie, I'll meet you there.

JONAH: OK.

CAMILLE: Was there anything else?

JONAH: I think we've covered everything. (*then*) So how's my gaydar? Not as good as my IQ-dar?

CAMILLE: I'll see you Thursday, Jonah.

(*Blackout.*)

Scene 4

(*Three days later. CAMILLE enters her apartment, followed by JONAH. His lip is bleeding.*)

CAMILLE: He didn't follow you? You're sure?

JONAH: I don't think so. I saw him go back in the theater.

CAMILLE: Yikes, it's still bleeding. You might be better off with stitches.

JONAH: Nah, I hate the E.R. My blood pressure goes through the roof.

CAMILLE: Sit down, hero. (*going*) I'll get you a Band-Aid.

JONAH: Stupid of me, wasn't it.

CAMILLE: (*off*) Stupid of those girls.

JONAH: What has happened to the women of America. Those voices, they've been driving me nuts the last ten years. They could be from anywhere, Budapest, Sheboygan, physicists, porn stars, every woman under 40 sounds alike. With the rising inflections, and that scratchy thing they do in their throats, are they trying to macho up or what?

(*CAMILLE has returned with a Band-Aid and a spray can of germicide.*)

CAMILLE: You think you have trouble telling them apart. Close your eyes.

JONAH: Every white woman, I meant.

(*CAMILLE sprays the cut.*)

CAMILLE: I was like, why is that guy taking off his shoe.

JONAH: Usually when I slam the seat they move away. I was out of my weight class with that guy.

CAMILLE: I didn't see him or I would've warned you.

JONAH: Yeah, you saw him. You said, "Asshole."

CAMILLE: I said, "Assholes." To the girls.

JONAH: Obviously he answers to the name. Did you see his Iron Cross?

CAMILLE: Yes, I saw. What did he say in the lobby?
When he grabbed you.

JONAH: He called me a coon-loving kike.

CAMILLE: It's alliterative, anyway. Hold still. (*applies Band-Aid*)
There's a staff meeting next Friday, did you hear?

JONAH: No, am I supposed to be there?

CAMILLE: He'd like you to be. He's addressing a bunch of rich
Jewish people.

JONAH: Jews.

CAMILLE: Uh-huh. He wants to clarify his stand on Israel.

JONAH: No, I mean it's OK to say Jews. You don't have to say
"Jewish people."

CAMILLE: Jews say "Jewish people."

JONAH: Yeah, well, then they're pussies.

CAMILLE: So what should the Governor's position be?

JONAH: The default position. "I support Israel in its struggle
against Islamic fascism." Be sure to say "fascism." Aren't there
any other Jews on staff?

CAMILLE: No, only Jewish people.

JONAH: He's so Wonder Bread. I look at this billionaire *goy*, I'm
like, who is he? What is he? How long since he had to change a
lightbulb? Or swat a fly? Or duck out of the shower to unwrap a
bar of soap? We're smarter than him, how come we're not running things?

CAMILLE: You just answered your own question.

JONAH: Yeah, brains have nothing to do with it. These
guys, they're different from you and me. I wonder what his dreams
are like.

CAMILLE: He doesn't dream. He takes sleeping pills.

JONAH: How do you know that?

CAMILLE: (*hint of evasion*) Office gossip. You feeling OK now?
I'm sorry you had to go through that.

JONAH: It was worth it. Here I am.

CAMILLE: Here you are.

JONAH: (*pause*) You know that thing? You're in your car....you pull up at a stoplight....look over at the person next to you. You don't like the looks of them, they don't like the looks of you. You could be two different species. Cats and dogs.

CAMILLE: And then there's the other possibility.

JONAH: Yeah.

CAMILLE: You smile at them. You wave.

JONAH: OK.

CAMILLE: The light changes. You peel out. He peels out after you. Chases you onto the highway. You exit. He follows. You pull up at a house.

JONAH: I like where this is going.

CAMILLE: There's a bunch of girls there.

JONAH: OK.

CAMILLE: Delta Gammas. It's a scavenger hunt. Every girl bring a strange man. Weirdest guy, the girl wins the pot.

JONAH: And who was that?

CAMILLE: Guy in a chicken suit. She donated her winnings to kidney research.

JONAH: What happened to your guy?

CAMILLE: He stuck around.

JONAH: What, helped you clean up?

CAMILLE: He was very helpful.

JONAH: And then what happened?

(*Pause. They kiss. Blackout.*)

Scene 5

(The next morning. CAMILLE'S apartment. JONAH is at CAMILLE's desk, typing. CAMILLE enters, tucking a T-SHIRT into her jeans.)

CAMILLE: How long have you been up?

JONAH: A while.

CAMILLE: Get any breakfast?

JONAH: Yeah, thanks, I helped myself to cereal.

CAMILLE: What are you doing?

JONAH: Just tweaking what you did.

(CAMILLE peers over his shoulder.)

CAMILLE: *(reading)* This is really good. Thank you, I'll take it from here.

JONAH: You're not kicking me out.

CAMILLE: I wish I didn't have to. We could spend the whole day together.

JONAH: What's stopping us?

CAMILLE: Don't you have a blog to write?

JONAH: I could go get my computer. And my toothbrush while I'm at it.

CAMILLE: I'm tempted.

JONAH: What if the sex was the best you ever had?

CAMILLE: That might tip it.

JONAH: So it wasn't.

CAMILLE: Don't be such a dweeb. I'm kidding. It was great. Great Jewish sex.

JONAH: Great Jewish sex.

CAMILLE: Attentive.

JONAH: Attentive.

CAMILLE: Sensitive. Creative.

JONAH: Is that the voice of experience?

CAMILLE: My experience with you.

JONAH: So what's the problem?

CAMILLE: The problem is, what are we going to do about these gay rumors?

JONAH: Yeah, those.

CAMILLE: Will you give it some thought?

JONAH: When I return.

CAMILLE: No, seriously. I can't write with people around.

JONAH: Can I ask you something? Would your parents freak if they found me here?

CAMILLE: There's just my mom, and yes, she might.

JONAH: She anti-Semitic?

CAMILLE: Not especially. She was active in the Black Power movement.

JONAH: Nation of Islam?

CAMILLE: No, not Nation of Islam. So don't forget the Israel meeting, OK? And the gay hypocrisy issue?

JONAH: Right. I'll get on it.

(JONAH *starts out, stops.*)

CAMILLE: What?

JONAH: I just want to say....you pass the Goethe test.

CAMILLE: The what?

JONAH: G, o, e, t, h, e. German Renaissance Man—

CAMILLE: I know who Goethe is. What's the test?

JONAH: "When you find something better than you are, you have no choice but to love it."

CAMILLE: That's sweet.

JONAH: I hate that word.

CAMILLE: So do I. *(then)* Don't go.

JONAH: What's the matter?

CAMILLE: Nothing.

JONAH: You looked pained.

CAMILLE: No. It's OK. Come here.

(She kisses him passionately. Blackout.)

Scene 6

(Several days later. JONAH is pacing in CAMILLE's office. CAMILLE enters.)

JONAH: What took you so long? Another five minutes I would have bailed.

CAMILLE: We had other things to discuss.

JONAH: Stuff about me?

CAMILLE: Your name came up.

JONAH: I went over the top, didn't I.

CAMILLE: No, he liked your presentation. Most of it.

JONAH: What didn't he like?

CAMILLE: "Let the anti-Semites kill each other"?"

JONAH: I saw him nod.

CAMILLE: It wasn't a good nod. It was an I-understand-how-a-Jew-might-feel nod.

JONAH: He kept looking over at you, I noticed.

CAMILLE: He's still concerned about the gay hypocrisy thing.

JONAH: So how come we can't talk about his wife? It's like you're all waiting for me to come up with a solution, and the minute I mention the separation the whole room freezes over. Meanwhile, that video of his hairstyles went viral.

CAMILLE: He knows you're concerned about it.

JONAH: Yeah, well, it's time you and I put our heads together. Let's get some dinner. I'm tired of meeting in secret.

CAMILLE: If only we could.

JONAH: Oh God, still?

CAMILLE: He's afraid we'll end up on YouTube.

JONAH: That's preposterous. Two staffers. We're nobodies. He's out of his mind.

CAMILLE: (*pause*) Anyway, I have this thing.

JONAH: What kind of thing?

CAMILLE: I have to go back there. He...he's got a project for me.

JONAH: What kind of project.

CAMILLE: He...he wants me to help him write a book.

JONAH: What kind of book?

CAMILLE: He didn't say.

JONAH: Help him write it or write it all?

CAMILLE: Jonah, I don't know. He mentioned it as I was leaving.

JONAH: Just happened to mention it. A dinner meeting?

CAMILLE: He didn't specify. Yes, probably.

JONAH: (*pause*) The marriage is a sham, isn't it.

CAMILLE: Can we not discuss this now?

JONAH: First he orders you not to date me. Then he asks you to dinner.

CAMILLE: I don't think you figured in this calculation.

JONAH: Not important enough.

CAMILLE: I didn't say that.

JONAH: But you meant it.

CAMILLE: He may be jealous of your freedom.

JONAH: What freedom. Freedom to do what? Never mind, I get it. No, I don't get it. You'd rather have a book deal than a boyfriend? So what does that make me? A starter white guy? Who else has the Governor hit on?

CAMILLE: (*pause*) He hasn't hit on me.

JONAH: Emphasis on "me"?

CAMILLE: (*pause*) Yes.

JONAH: Wow. Other staffers?

(CAMILLE *says nothing.*)

JONAH: You think it's racial? Or he's just biding his time.

CAMILLE: I don't know.

JONAH: Do you want him to?

CAMILLE: I want him to win the election.

JONAH: That's a great non-answer. What would your mom say to all this?

CAMILLE: Say to what. Nothing's happened.

JONAH: Yet.

CAMILLE: It doesn't matter.

JONAH: What do you mean, it doesn't matter? It matters to me.

CAMILLE: I mean about my mom. My mom lived with a white man.

JONAH: First I've heard of it. Who was he?

CAMILLE: Her lawyer.

JONAH: A Jew?

CAMILLE: Yes, a Jew. She was framed for gun possession and he got her off. They were together for twelve years.

JONAH: Wow. OK. Were they happy?

CAMILLE: Very happy.

JONAH: Well...Jews make the best husbands.

CAMILLE: They weren't married.

JONAH: Whatever.

CAMILLE: You're shocked.

JONAH: I'm not shocked. Why would I be shocked. I'm encouraged.

CAMILLE: You're lying. It's OK for you but not for other people.
Typical authoritarian position.

JONAH: Oh here we go.

CAMILLE: You've got nothing to show but your false superiority.
That's why you're walling off immigrants and gunning down Arabs.

JONAH: Not because Arabs have vowed to kill us.

CAMILLE: No, that's just your latest excuse.

JONAH: Does the Governor know you feel like this?

CAMILLE: No, because he's not a racist.

JONAH: Yes he is. Everybody's racist. History is racist. Natural selection is racist. It destroyed the Neanderthals and created the Cro-Magnons.

CAMILLE: The white Cro-Magnons.

JONAH: I didn't say they were white. They were pre-white.

CAMILLE: What about protecting the planet?

JONAH: "Protecting the planet"? What's that got to do with anything?

CAMILLE: Against predatory white men. Through interbreeding. Is that a natural process?

JONAH: Yeah, what about predatory black men?

CAMILLE: What about them. Who.

JONAH: Ike Turner.

CAMILLE: Are we really doing this? Jeffrey Dahmer.

JONAH: O.J. Simpson.

CAMILLE: OK, name one black serial killer.

JONAH: That sniper guy. John Mohammed.

CAMILLE: Ted Bundy.

JONAH: Mike Tyson.

CAMILLE: Adolf Hitler.

JONAH: Hitler, ha, you lose.

CAMILLE: God, you are such a geek.

JONAH: You left out a white predator.

CAMILLE: Who.

JONAH: Who. Your guy. Really, I don't understand. Why would you lend yourself?

CAMILLE: "Lend myself"? What do you mean, "lend myself"?

JONAH: Is it his power? What power? The power to say the same stupid platitudes 50 times a day? Guy doesn't know what to think, until you and I put words in his mouth.

CAMILLE: And then he gets things done.

JONAH: Gets what done. He's the reason government doesn't work. You think you're gonna learn something from his pillow talk? I guarantee, he's gonna be even more boring in bed.

CAMILLE: Oh you've got us in bed already.

JONAH: Isn't that where it's heading?

CAMILLE: Does it excite you to think of us together?

JONAH: Masochism, that's what it really is—that's Massa, M, A, S, S, A—

CAMILLE: You don't have to spell it. Just go on and call me the n-word.

JONAH: No, I'm calling you the slut-word.

(CAMILLE slaps JONAH. He grabs her and kisses her. They get into it heavily. CAMILLE stops.)

CAMILLE: This is sick. I can't do this anymore.

(CAMILLE sits. JONAH doesn't move. Silence. JONAH exits. The door slams. Blackout.)

Scene 7

(Several days later. JONAH's apartment is suggested by a chair, a desk, and a computer. JONAH is typing, listening to blues. Doorbell. JONAH opens the door. CAMILLE hangs back.)

CAMILLE: Can I come in?

(JONAH lets her in. Exits the screen he's on.)

CAMILLE: You're busy?

JONAH: I am, actually.

CAMILLE: We missed you.

JONAH: Who's we?

CAMILLE: You skipped a bunch of meetings.

JONAH: I know I did. How did your book meeting go?

CAMILLE: It went OK.

JONAH: Did you and the Gov have dinner?

CAMILLE: It was just a meeting.

JONAH: Yeah, sure. What's the book about?

CAMILLE: The Evolution of Community.

JONAH: Oh just what we need, another cure for insomnia. What if he loses the election?

CAMILLE: They have an out clause.

JONAH: Is there a non-disclosure clause?

CAMILLE: Every leak they can trace to me, I get fined \$10,000. Why?

JONAH: Well, don't worry. I've got plenty already without dragging you into it.

CAMILLE: (*pause*) You signed an agreement, Jonah.

JONAH: I'm part of the blogosphere. Nobody's found a way to sue us yet.

CAMILLE: Then why did you ask me here?

JONAH: It's only fair. You should have time to prepare a response.

CAMILLE: What are you going to write?

JONAH: You know what they say. Write what you know.

CAMILLE: That he hits on staffers?

JONAH: That's part of it.

CAMILLE: You really think this'll get attention.

JONAH: I got your attention, didn't I? With my so-called "smears"?

CAMILLE: You had no evidence then.

JONAH: But I'm right now.

(Pause.)

CAMILLE: OK. Thanks for the heads-up.

(CAMILLE starts for the door.)

JONAH: You can stop me, you know.

(Pause.)

CAMILLE: How?

JONAH: Move in with me.

CAMILLE: I'm not going to do that, Jonah.

JONAH: Of course not.

CAMILLE: It's not an option.

JONAH: It was never an option. I understand.

CAMILLE: No. You don't understand.

(CAMILLE exits. JONAH returns to his computer. Starts typing. Hesitates. Resumes. Blackout.)

Scene 8

(Six weeks later. In darkness, sound of typing. A doorbell rings. When the lights come up, CAMILLE is reseating herself at her desk, and JONAH is at the door.)

CAMILLE: Don't just stand there. Come in.

(JONAH enters. Watches CAMILLE type.)

JONAH: I went to campaign headquarters.

CAMILLE: Did they have you thrown out?

JONAH: They didn't have to. I left.

CAMILLE: Why?

JONAH: You weren't there.

CAMILLE: I was there earlier. I can't write with people around.

JONAH: The victory speech?

CAMILLE: That's right.

JONAH: Am I going to be thanked?

CAMILLE: No, you're not going to be thanked.

JONAH: He did better with minorities.

CAMILLE: Much better.

JONAH: The gay-bashers...they mostly voted for the adulterer.

CAMILLE: Not very Biblical of them.

JONAH: Especially black people. The red counties too. I think I'm owed a mention.

CAMILLE: I wouldn't take all the credit. Are your think-tank friends disappointed?

JONAH: Disappointed? They've blackballed me. They think I'm a traitor. No, that's not true. They think I'm insane. I passed along the adultery rumor in a lovesick fog, knowing it would help your cause.

CAMILLE: Would it help you if I explained?

JONAH: Explained what?

CAMILLE: Where the adultery rumor came from.

JONAH: What do you mean. It came from you.

CAMILLE: No, Jonah. It came from you. *(pause)* You understand?

JONAH: No. What are you saying. He never made a move on you?

CAMILLE: Never.

JONAH: On any of the staff?

CAMILLE: No.

JONAH: You said—

CAMILLE: No, you said.

JONAH: Jesus.

(Pause.)

CAMILLE: I was so sure you'd catch on. He said no way.

JONAH: It was his idea?

CAMILLE: No, Jonah, it was mine.

JONAH: Wow.

CAMILLE: That's right.

JONAH: Jealousy is blind.

CAMILLE: So blind.

JONAH: There's no book deal, is there.

CAMILLE: No book deal.

JONAH: *(pause)* He is gay?

CAMILLE: *(pause)* Yes. He's gay.

JONAH: Wow. Well done. I've been used!

CAMILLE: Weren't you using me, Jonah?

JONAH: To do what? Sabotage my whole career?

CAMILLE: Come on, weren't you hoping for a scoop? Isn't that why you signed on with the enemy?

JONAH: I didn't know you were the enemy. Right, which made me the perfect mark. You set me up, you sucked me in, and then at the perfect moment you picked a fight.

CAMILLE: I didn't have to pick a fight. You're always fighting.

JONAH: Yeah. I've been thoroughly outsmarted, haven't I? I turned out to be an idiot and you're a genius.

CAMILLE: IQ notwithstanding.

JONAH: Please, you're off the charts. You ace every test—the Goethe test, the Machiavelli test, everything. You should probably run for office.

CAMILLE: I plan to. But first I have to finish this speech.

(JONAH *peers at CAMILLE's computer screen.*)

JONAH: "I couldn't have done it without the amazing support," etc etc. "Reach out...open the doors....stop the paralyzing partisanship..." Needs something, doesn't it. A little more soul. (*pretends to ponder*) OK, got it. "This campaign has taught me many valuable lessons. I've learned about love and loyalty, and their proper place when power is the prize. I've learned that politics makes strange bedfellows, and till we can trust the stranger in our bed, humanity is doomed. Camille? Jonah? Come on up here. This victory belongs to you as well. In the words of the prophet Isaiah, the wolf will lie down with the lamb, the leopard with the goat, the wingnut Jew with the liberal black woman, and harmony will reign in the halls of government. God bless you, Camille and Jonah, and God bless America." How's that sound?

CAMILLE: Sounds amazing.

JONAH: But we'll never get there, will we.

CAMILLE: We're in politics, Jonah. We'll always be behind the curve.

(JONAH kisses her.)

JONAH: If you ever need a speechwriter...call me.

(JONAH exits.)

CAMILLE: Goodbye, Jonah.

(He's gone. CAMILLE returns to her desk. Blackout. Sound of typing. END OF PLAY.)