



Teaching Guide

SEGMENT 6, WEBISODE 15

Please note: Each segment in this Webisode has its own Teaching Guide



Segment Overview



Let's Discuss

The deep unrest over America's involvement in Vietnam ignited riots in the nation's cities and protests on college campuses. The civil rights movement began to change direction. The more militant voices of Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael, and the Black Panthers challenged Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, call to nonviolence.

In August 1965, the National Guard quelled six days of rioting in the Watts section of Los Angeles. A state commission appointed to investigate the cause of the riots reported that hatred and resentment of the police, the absence of jobs and the lack of good schooling for African Americans were the root causes of the civil unrest. In 1967, over one hundred cities erupted, with the largest riots in Newark and Detroit. The Kerner Commission Report announced that the United States was becoming two nations, one black and one white. In 1968, Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated, spawning another wave of riots. That same year, Robert Kennedy died at the hands of an assassin. Violence against those who called for peace and justice seemed the order of the day.

Teacher Directions

1. Display the following quotation on the chalkboard, chart paper, or a transparency.

Change is the law of life, and those who look only to the past or to the present are certain to miss the future.

~~ John F. Kennedy

2. Ask the students the following questions.
 - Who is the speaker?
 - Put the first clause, "Change is the law of life," into your own words.
 - Do you agree or disagree with this part of the quotation. Defend your opinion.
 - Put the second clause, "...those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future." into your own words.
 - Do you agree with this part of the quotation? Defend your opinion.
 - How does this compare with the saying that if we do not learn from history, we are doomed to repeat it?
3. Tell students that they will read a play in which historic characters have the

advantage of knowing not only what happened in their lifetimes, but also of watching what happens in the future.

Teacher Directions

1. Distribute copies of the play “A Party on Potus.” Read the introductory material and discuss the cast. Ask students to call on their knowledge of history to identify all characters, who they were, when they lived, and what role they played in history. Use Brief Bios to fill in gaps in students’ information.

Note to Teacher: Students may present this play with the performers seated on three sides of a long table with props such as a Texas hat for Johnson, a tray for Peter, and dining items on the table. Each character wears a nametag. In a simpler presentation, students may read the play in the manner of a readers’ theater.

2. Allow time for all students to read the play silently; assign roles to students and present the play.
3. After the presentation, distribute one copy of the Student Sheet: *Pinpointing the Primary Points of the Potus Play*. Working in teams, students discuss the questions and record their answers.
4. Students share their answers in a class discussion. Make sure that the discussion includes the following understandings.

The play takes place on an imaginary planet called POTUS, which is an acronym for **P**resident **O**f **T**he **U**nited **S**tates. The letter P is prominent in the Potus alphabet.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s primary concern is women’s rights. Henry David Thoreau’s main concern is civil disobedience – the obligation of citizens to protest unjust laws by not obeying them. Both Stanton and Thoreau hated slavery and believed that African Americans should have equal rights. Both turned to writing to protest injustice, but Stanton, while she flew in the face of the conventional restrictions on women, never actually broke the laws as Thoreau did. Thoreau was a man of his times, and as such, probably would not have agreed with Stanton’s opinions, but if he carried through his thoughts about a just society, he might see her point.

Johnson defended himself against Stanton’s charge that his legislative program ignored women by claiming that helping men also benefitted women. He also claimed that he had too much on his agenda, which echoes the defense of legislators who passed the Fifteenth Amendment without including women. They said that passage of the amendment to give voting rights to all men regardless of race would be difficult enough without including women.





What do you
Think?



Moving Toward
Freedom



Connections

Every character claims the statement, “Every American ought to have the right to be treated as he would wish to be treated, as one would wish his children to be treated.” Although their individual issues differed, this statement contains the essence of what they all believed and wanted to accomplish.

Teacher Directions

1. Display a transparency of the Student Sheet: *Pronouncements from Potus*. Help students identify each speaker and interpret his/her words.
2. Ask students how the quotations apply to issues that our country continues to face today.

Teacher Directions

1. Write the words from Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s journal on the chalkboard, chart paper, or a transparency. Students write a journal entry describing how someone who lived by these words would move our country towards freedom. What can you do to live by these words in your school and community?

I live

For the cause that lacks assistance

For the wrong that needs resistance

For the future in the distance

And the good that I can do...

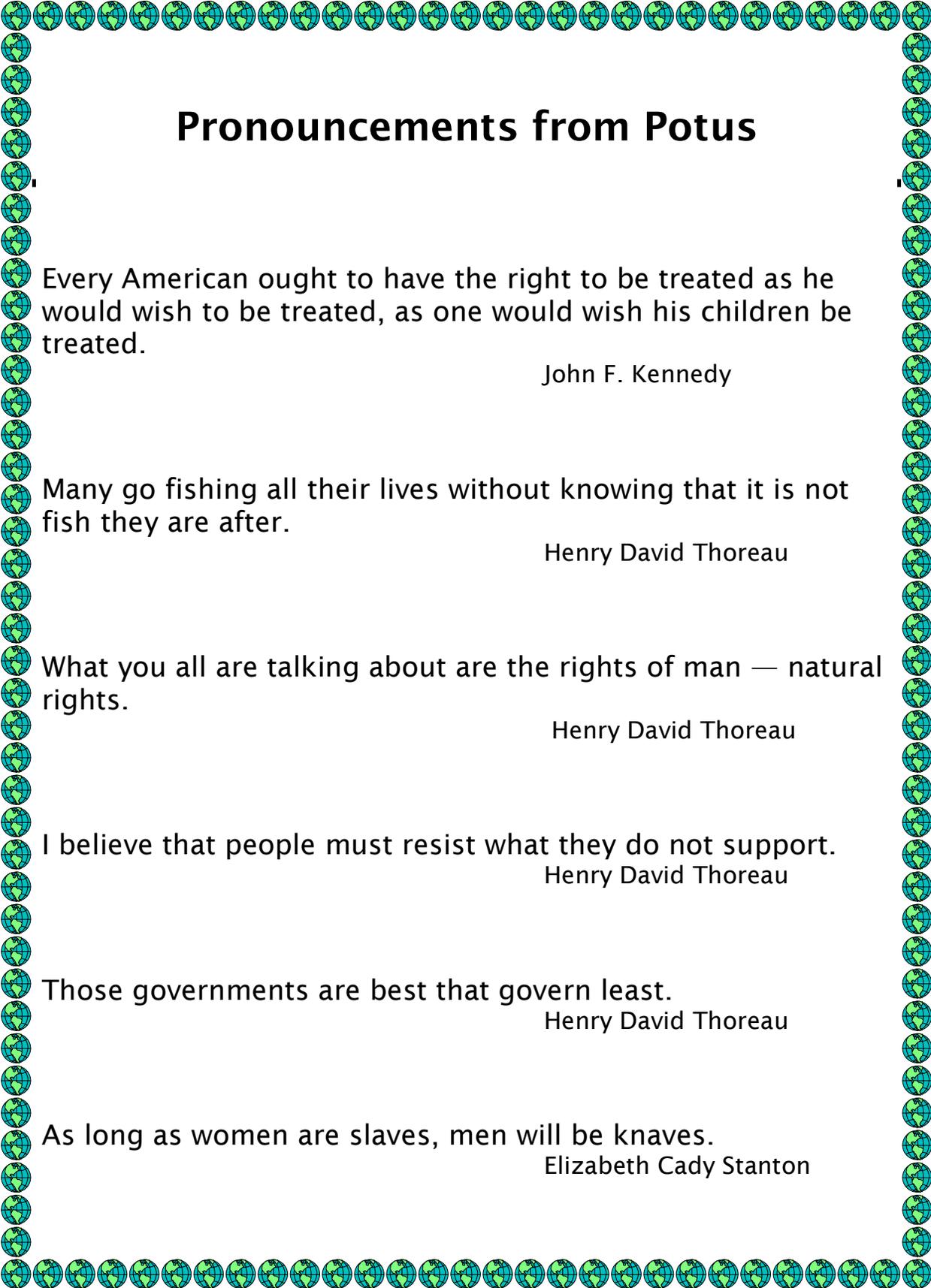
Teacher Directions

Use the following activities with your students.

Civics/Government — Students research the activities of the United States Secret Service using library resources and the Internet.

Music — Find and play a recording of Louis Armstrong’s, “What a Wonderful World.” Students discuss and the meaning and spirit of the lyrics. How does the song express the goals of the characters in the play? Of an ideal society?

Art — Students draw or create an art item that illustrates “What a Wonderful World.”



Pronouncements from Potus

Every American ought to have the right to be treated as he would wish to be treated, as one would wish his children be treated.

John F. Kennedy

Many go fishing all their lives without knowing that it is not fish they are after.

Henry David Thoreau

What you all are talking about are the rights of man — natural rights.

Henry David Thoreau

I believe that people must resist what they do not support.

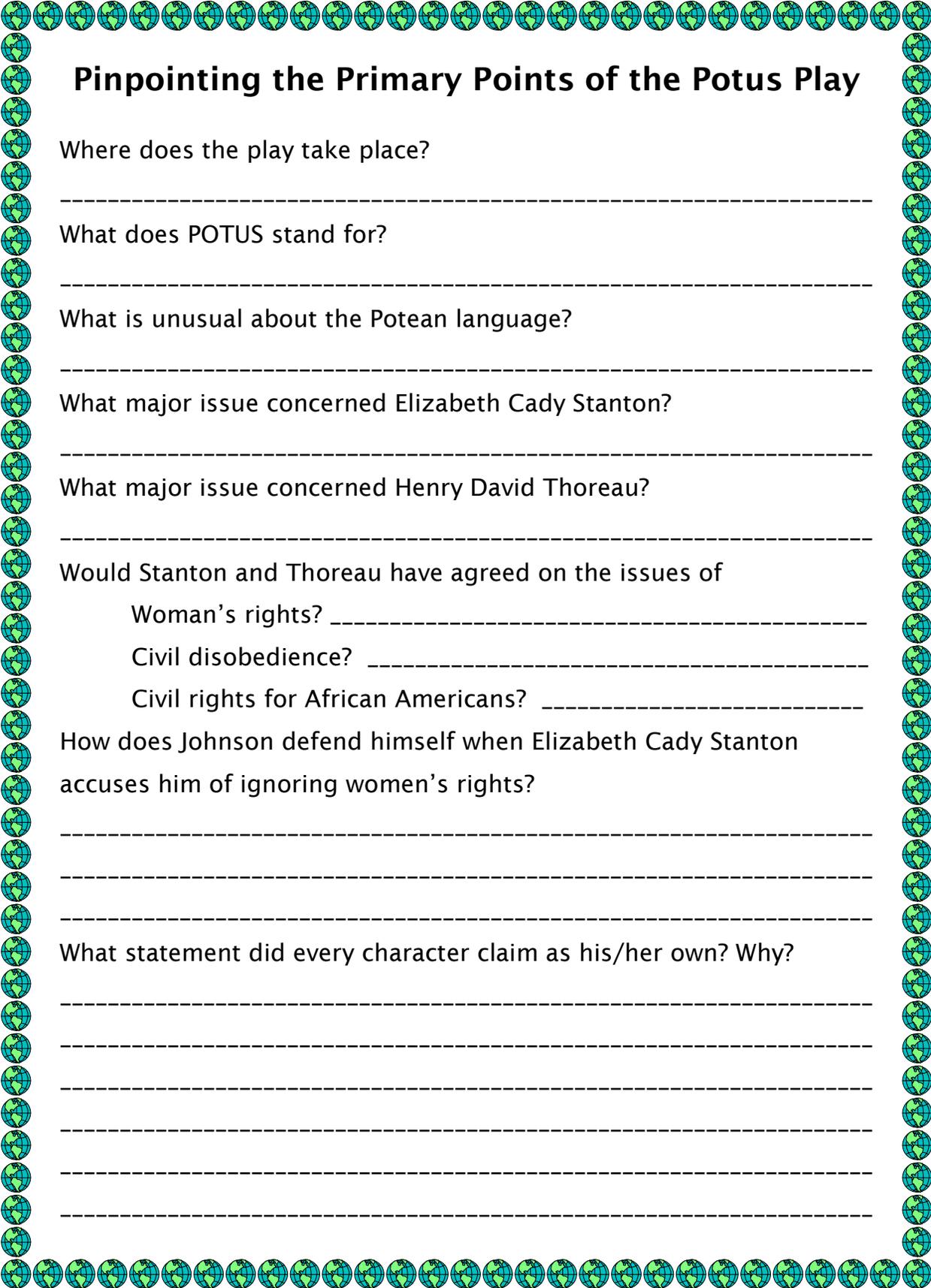
Henry David Thoreau

Those governments are best that govern least.

Henry David Thoreau

As long as women are slaves, men will be knaves.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton



Pinpointing the Primary Points of the Potus Play

Where does the play take place?

What does POTUS stand for?

What is unusual about the Potean language?

What major issue concerned Elizabeth Cady Stanton?

What major issue concerned Henry David Thoreau?

Would Stanton and Thoreau have agreed on the issues of

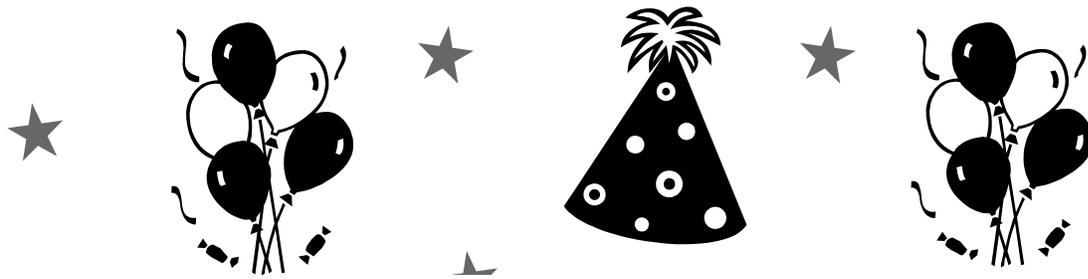
Woman's rights? -----

Civil disobedience? -----

Civil rights for African Americans? -----

How does Johnson defend himself when Elizabeth Cady Stanton accuses him of ignoring women's rights?

What statement did every character claim as his/her own? Why?



A Party On Potus

Potus, an imaginary planet, is located in a galaxy far, far away. A great sun-sized star called Sphinx warms Potus. On this planet, where former presidents of the United States meet to discuss present, past, and future problems affecting the country. They often invite other guests who arrive by space taxis.

The Cast

President Lyndon B. Johnson (**LBJ**)
President John F. Kennedy (**JFK**)
Henry David Thoreau (**HDT**)
Dr. Martin Luther King (**MLK**)

Malcolm X (**MX**)
Elizabeth Cady Stanton (**ECS**)
Peter—a Potean waiter

LBJ: Welcome to Potus, the planet for former presidents. Y'all probably know that Potus stands for President Of The United States. This party opens our semi-annual meeting.

JFK: Lyndon, you and I are the only presidents here. Where are the others?

LBJ: Quite a few of our group are missing, like Harry and Ike and FDR. Abe drops in once in awhile when his wife lets him, and so does Teddy Roosevelt.

JFK: Maybe you better explain a little bit about Potus to our guests.

LBJ: We're mighty glad to have all you here. Pretty soon, Peter, our Potean waiter, will take your orders. Let me tell you right off that most Potean words start with "p", so pay attention. All those "p's" can pose a problem. Now! John! What's our topic tonight?

JFK: Civil Rights, the war against poverty, and the 1960s. I once said, many years ago, that change is the law of life, and those who look only to the past or to the present are certain to miss the future. But I think today, we need to look to the past to get some answers for the future of the United States. Whenever I drop in on the present Congress, I remember that song, "The Times They Are A-Changin'." Remember the lines: "Come senators, congressmen — Please heed the call. Don't stand in the doorway; don't block up the hall." There is still a lot of work to be done on Earth.

LBJ: How'd you do that? How'd you just "drop in" on the present Congress? How'd you just sneak into the White House and the Capitol?

JFK: Peter provides me with a special Potean parka, Lyndon. I attended my own funeral in 1963. Pretty impressive. I was even standing right next to you on the plane when you took the oath of office on Air Force One. You held up pretty well, Lyndon. And I kept a close eye on you. That was me pushing you to push through all that legislation.

LBJ: How do I get one of those parkas?

JFK: Ask Peter. I guess you want to check on President Bush.

LBJ: Actually , I just want to go to his ranch and eat some good ol' Texas barbecue.

HDT: Gentlemen. I have said that time is but the stream I go a-fishing in. I have lots of time on my hands now—but could we get back to the discussion?

JFK: In 1963, I made a very strong statement to the American people. I said that it ought to be possible for every American to enjoy the privileges of being American without regard to his race or color. In short, every American ought to have the right to be treated as he would wish to be treated, as one would wish his children be treated.

LBJ: I thought I said that.

MLK: No. I said that.

MX: I said that, too.

ECS: So did I.

HDT: I think I said it first. I also said, "Many go fishing all their lives without knowing that it is not fish they are after." What did the people really want in the 1960s?

MX: Freedom from white oppression.

ECS: Freedom from male oppression.

MLK: The right to vote and to peaceably protest injustices.

HDT: What you all are talking about are the rights of man— natural rights — and the rights of man include creating a society and a government that commands his respect.

ECS: The rights of man, Henry? Of man? What about the rights of women? As all of you know, in the 1840s, I fought very hard for the rights of women — not just to vote— but to be as free as man is free. And, Lyndon! You even passed the Manpower Act? How dare you call it that? Why didn't you call it the Person Power Act?

LBJ: Excuse me, little lady, but I had a few other things on my mind in the 1960s — like the war on poverty, civil rights issues, and the war in Vietnam. And, the Manpower Act did a lot to help people get back to work. It helped families. That means that the Manpower Act helped women, too.

ECS: Lyndon — do not call me a little lady. Haven't you learned anything about women's issues?

JFK: Martin. You gave your "I Have a Dream" speech in 1963. Before you were assassinated in 1968, did any of your dreams come true?

MLK: The Voting Rights Act of 1965. Lyndon signed it. During that speech, I said that we cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote, and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing to vote for.

Peter: Pardon me. I am Peter from Potus, proud to provide pervice por you. Your porder, please?

LBJ: I told you he speaks in "p's". He wants your order.

JFK: I'll have the pickled pippas with piftie sauce, and a glass of iced pinda.

MLK: The same.

MX: I have become a vegetarian.

Peter: Perhaps the pusca punga, perfectly prepared with a pepper sauce.

MX: Why do you Poteans speak in "p's"?

Peter: P is the post important, because it stands for peace. Pardon my pronunciation of Penglish.

LBJ: Got any Texas barbecue, Peter?

Peter: Only prilled prisca.

LBJ: That again? Isn't there a McDonald's anywhere near here?

ECS: I'll have the pish dish.

HDT: Me, too.

Peter: Pumm Pumm.

ECS: Lyndon, what does that mean?

LBJ: It means, "Coming up!"

MX: Let's discuss some real issues here. Martin said that he and Lyndon got the Voting Rights Act passed, but that took a long, long time. The Emancipation Proclamation and the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment didn't work.

ECS: They did work, but not fast enough to suit you men. Look at how long we women had to wait to accomplish our goal, and we never used violence.

MX: I don't advocate violence, but at the same time, I am not against using violence in self-defense. I don't call it violence when it's self-defense. I call it intelligence. We have to stand up against tyranny and oppression, Martin, not just sit down in the streets or ride buses or march on Washington and give speeches.

HDT: I certainly fought for your rights although I wouldn't use the term fought. Malcolm, if you and Martin had just worked together, think what you both might have accomplished! You divided the civil rights movement. You both believed in the same principles. In fact, all of you worked to eliminate poverty and racism and bigotry. What if all four of you had worked together?

MLK: You might be right, Henry. Malcolm and I had the same goals, but our ideas about how to make civil rights happen were very different.

HDT: What if you had read what Elizabeth wrote about women's rights — and included women in the struggle?

ECS: I certainly agree with that.

HDT: Lyndon, What if you had used the powers of speech to negotiate the problems in Vietnam? Perhaps we would not have lost 58,000 young men in a violent and unproductive war. Why can't people talk to one another to resolve problems? Why must we resort to violence? Even today? Communication counts.

MX: Sometimes the only answer is violence.

MLK: And it was violence that got both of us killed— as well as John and his brother Robert. Henry is right. Think what might have happened if all of us survived to see our dreams realized. Lyndon, what was it you once said?

LBJ: I said that there is no Negro problem. There is no Southern problem. There is no Northern problem. There is only an American problem.

MLK: We made some mistakes. We should have worked together.

LBJ: Violence strikes from our hands the very thing that we seek — progress.

MLK: I am still dreaming of a better world. One nation, and liberty and justice for all.

JFK: In the final analysis, our basic common link is that we all inhabited that small planet called Earth. We were all mortal. Now we must work to help those who have followed us learn how to live in peace.

Peter: Potus provendor

LBJ: Dinner is served. (All turn over their scripts and lower their heads in unison.)

The End