



*A theatrical adaptation of New York City's
2021 Democratic Primary Debates*

Created by

theater 
IN ASYLUM

“[Theatre] is a necessity because in order to make democracy work the people must increasingly participate; they can't participate unless they understand; and the theatre is one of the great mediums of understanding.”

- Hallie Flanagan¹

“Voting will not save us from harm, but silence will surely damn us all.”

- Stacey Abrams²

¹ Flanagan, Hallie. *Arena: The Story of the Federal Theatre*. 1940. New York, Limelight Editions, 1985. (372)

² Abrams, Stacey. “Stacey Abrams: I Know Voting Feels Inadequate Right Now.” *The New York Times*. 4 Jun 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/04/opinion/stacey-abrams-voting-floyd-protests.html>. 13 Jun 2020.

OUR INTENTIONS

Created by Theater in Asylum (TIA), The Debates 2021 is a process of adapting political debates into theatrical performances. After watching a debate, we gather to analyze it, and create an original performance based on it. Throughout the process, participants speak lines from the debate, imitate candidates' gestures, create scenes that provide context or history, and analyze the candidates the way an actor would a character in a play. We believe that this is a way to “try on” the candidates, demystifying them and emboldening the voter. Behind the scenes, every word and assertion (whether from the debate transcript or generated by the participants) is rigorously fact checked. All sources are noted in our publicly available script. Ultimately, we hope the material on stage, and the voting materials offstage, will empower audiences to engage with the democratic process with knowledge and confidence.

OUR PROCESS

1. **Watch Party.** We watch the debates live on television. These parties can be at a bar, a home, or a community space.
2. **Political Analysis Meetings.** We go through the transcript and separate fact from fiction, highlighting moments that deserve more attention. Facilitators lead participants in research and discussion to better understand what occurred during the debate. By the end of these meetings, the transcript is parsed into what is most potent for our show (either politically or theatrically) and what is discardable (repetitive or unsubstantive).
3. **Scripting Meetings.** We devise scenes or lift dialogue from the transcripts and accompanying research. Here we make the original script.
4. **Rehearsals.** We stage and rehearse the original script. Directors and choreographers lead actors and designers to bring the script to life on stage.
5. **Performance.** We present the team’s work to the community.
6. **Follow Through.** At all our events, voter registration and materials are available. After the performance, we work to remind all participants and audience to vote.
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OUR DISCLAIMER

We are not lawyers, election officials, nor representatives of any campaign. We are theater makers. All expenditures for *The Debates* are paid for by Theater in Asylum. No actions, script lines, voting guide, or events are authorized by any candidate or candidate’s committee. Theater in Asylum never endorses candidates in a race. We simply want more people, people like you, to engage and participate. No copyright infringement, defamation, libel, or slander is intended. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to email us at info@theaterinasyllum.com. Please don’t sue us!

OUR TEAM

Project led by TIA's Artistic Directors Paul Bedard and Katie Palmer

Lead Dramaturgy by Ariella Axelbank

Community Engagement facilitated by Hilarie Spangler

Produced by Kathryn Appleton and Theater in Asylum

Original compositions and music directed by Ali Dineen

Lighting design and livestream production management by Dan Stearns

Video designed by Audrey Lorber

Co-created and Stage Managed by Jennifer Malbuisson

Co-created and performed by Alexis Atkinson, Malcolm Callender, Rachael Chau, Emily Johnson-Erday, Nadia Diamond, and Jesse B. Koehler

The Debates 2020 was performed live online on May 27 and 28, 2021.

Pre-show musical stylings by Emily Johnson-Erday, Ama Encore, and Ali Dineen.

SPECIAL THANKS TO

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- All the brave candidates who put themselves out there and expanded our imagination around what this city can be.

To our incredible donors who made our 2021 season possible. Thank you:

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Andrew Bedard

Joyce Bedard

Kelly & Mike Bedard

Sharlene Bedard

Kathleen Bemis

Judith C Berger

Sandra & Yoni Berkowitz

Donna Blackmond

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Kathryn Bowman	Ruth & Robert Keogh	Lauren Randall
The Boxcutter Collective	Samantha Keogh	Austin Regan
Fred Boyd	Esther Ko	Chip Rice
Renee Carroll	Martins Jukna-Parsons	Jacob Rice
Inés del Castillo	Marilyn Lawson	Dana Rich
Emily Conley	Julia Levine	Mandy Robbins
Katie Dagon	Camden Louie	Jonelle Robinson
Christopher DeSantis	Maggie Low	Jess & Bryan Rosenberg
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Lawrence Dreyfuss	Allen MacLeod	Alix Sobler
Lionel Dripps	Max Mondì	Jamie Soltis
Paul Feinberg	Alyssa Montalvo-Rios	Alyssa Stone
Martha Ferguson	Victor Milione	Lucinda Stone
Stephen Foglia	Justin Nichols	Justin Taylor
Julia Foster	Julia Nickerson	Kristina Tom
Richard Fudge	Torrie Ogilvie	Aria Umezawa
Kate Gazzaniga	Alicia Outing	Alison Walter
Amanda Ghosh	Julie Pedtke	Stephanie Warren
Eric Grunin	Alice Pencavel	Pandora & John Wohler
Sarah Habib	Maxine Phillips	Gennady Yusim
Cody Hom	Veronica Pickett	Diana Zuluaga
Benjamin Inbar	Sue Ramsay	

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Scene 1: Disclaimer Song³




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Please don't sue us!

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Scene 2: Anxiety Voter #1⁴

[This whole scene is voice-over. We see someone on their way to vote but they keep getting scared and turning around. Charlie Chaplin style intention. They are GOING THIS WAY or they are GOING THAT WAY. This scene is possibly set to "The Entertainer" rag piano song. Throughout the scene the voter is walking all over New York. Day and night pass. We see all the sights. Maybe they interact with other New Yorkers in a way that makes us love New York again (offering someone a swipe, someone warning about an invisible puddle, etc). The monologue need not align with what we actually see.]

ANXIETY VOTER: Ok. Saturday, June 12, 2021.⁵ First day of early voting. My favorite time to vote! I'm ready to do it. Do the thing. Vote. Hell yeah. Got my outfit ready. Post-vote selfie's gonna be dope.

Ok, got my list of candidates. City council, easy choice. Public Advocate, in the bag. Borough president. I think I picked a good one? Comptroller, good to go. Mayor.... Oy. Oh, and do I have judges? District attorney. Maybe.⁶ I should check my ballot one more time.

[Voter consults their phone.]

³ The text in this scene was written by members of Theater in Asylum.

⁴ The text in this scene was written by members of Theater in Asylum. Any opinions expressed are the opinions of the character in the scene.

⁵ Early voting for the 2021 New York City municipal primary elections runs from June 12th to June 20th. Election Day is on June 22nd. Find your early polling site and preview a sample ballot here: <https://findmypollsite.vote.nyc/>

⁶ Different boroughs and city council districts may have different candidates on the ballot. Preview your sample ballot here: <https://findmypollsite.vote.nyc/>

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Theater in asylum dot com slash vote.⁷

Jeez louise. Why doesn't the city have a voter guide this good? Why am I relying on *theater people*⁸ to help me vote? What do they know anyways? They're not lawyers. But damn, this voter guide is good. Theater in asylum dot com slash vote.⁹ Gold.

Ok, preview ballot¹⁰.... Ok, yeah, what I expected.

This election. This election!! Mayor, City Council, Comptroller, Public Advocate, and Borough Presidents. There's so much at stake this year. It's because of term limits.¹¹

And Ranked Choice voting is new this year. I know my rankings. For each race I can rank up to five candidates¹²... but I don't have to pick five. Are there really five comptrollers I like?

I don't know. I don't know. No! I do not. I'm a prepared voter. I know who I'm going to vote for.

Ok, the polling site's just around this next corner.... And there it is. Wow. Beautiful. Democracy!

I know who I'm voting for. I know who I'm voting for.

Ok, just walk inside. I know I'm who I'm voting for. I know who I'm voting for. I'm a responsible, prepared, voter. I know who I'm voting for. I—

[turns around and walks the other way, ambles and stall, walks away]

I don't know who I'm voting for! I don't know what order to put them in! This election is so important. How could I not be prepared?! City Hall is getting totally replaced this year!¹³

[They break into a run.]

What am I doing? I don't know who to vote for. Who likes elections anyways? Just those nerds at Theater in Asylum. *[Mocking]* Theater in asylum dot com slash vote.¹⁴ Ugh!

⁷ Permanent link: <https://www.theaterinasylum.com/voter-guide-2021.html>

⁸ Read about the team behind The Debates 2021 here: <https://www.theaterinasylum.com/the-debates-2021.html>

⁹ Permanent link: <https://www.theaterinasylum.com/voter-guide-2021.html>

¹⁰ Preview your sample ballot here: <https://findmypollsite.vote.nyc/>

¹¹ Smith, Rachel Holliday, and Allison Dikanovic. "Do You Know Who's Running for City Council in Your District?" *The City*, 9 Mar 2021, <https://www.thecity.nyc/2021/3/9/22321218/who-is-running-for-nyc-city-council-in-your-district>.

¹² Learn more about how ranked choice voting works in New York City here: <https://vote.nyc/page/ranked-choice-voting>

¹³ Smith, Rachel Holliday. "What to Know About the 2021 New York City Council Races." *The City*, 3 May 2021, <https://www.thecity.nyc/22233596/what-to-know-about-the-2021-new-york-city-council-races>.

¹⁴ Permanent link: <https://www.theaterinasylum.com/voter-guide-2021.html>

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I'm not ready! I hate elections! Didn't we just finish 2020? Wasn't taking a break from politics the whole point of electing Joe Biden? Sleepy Joe? I don't want to think about politics all the time!

But this is important. This is an important election for the city. There is so much that's wrong. We need to fix the city, make it more livable.. For everyone! And FIX THE SUBWAY!! Fix this whole crazy city! Fix this city... on the fritz!

Scene 3: City on the Fritz¹⁵



Have you seen the latest show
Politicians on the go
There's a vote this coming June¹⁶
So we sing this silly tune¹⁷

Mayor's race, city council
Comptroller, who will we choose?
They'll spend every dime
For a bit of your time!

Now, if you're blue
And you don't know where to go to
Why don't go where power sits
City on the fritz

It seems every year,
And each live long day there's
a new campaign to test our wits
This City on the fritz

This year really matters because we've got

¹⁵ The text in this scene was written by members of Theater in Asylum. Any opinions expressed are the opinions of the characters in the scene.

¹⁶ Election Day for the 2021 New York City municipal primary is June 22nd. Early voting runs from June 12th to June 20th. See New York's full 2021 elections calendar here: <https://www.elections.ny.gov/NYSBOE/law/2021PoliticalCalendar.pdf>

¹⁷ "City on the Fritz" is based on "Puttin' on the Ritz," written by Irving Berlin. Theater in Asylum's parody lyrics were written by Ali Dineen.

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All of City Hall on our ballot¹⁸

Oy vey!

With term limits, and resignations,¹⁹

June could mean revolution

so don't you quit

This city on the fritz

[Dance Break!]

2020 left this town a big mess²⁰

Here's a chance to put us back on the right track

spoken: TAX THE RICH!

Andrew Yang, Scott Stringer, and Eric Adams

Dianne Morales, Ray McGuire and Kathryn Garcia

Maya Wiley, Shaun Donovan, e Paperboy Prince²¹

City on the Fritz!

[Dance Break!]

If you care who works in there

Better vote

On June twenty-second²²

Choose your bliss

In our city on the fritz! 🎵

¹⁸ Smith, Rachel Holliday. "What to Know About the 2021 New York City Council Races." *The City*, 3 May 2021, <https://www.thecity.nyc/22233596/what-to-know-about-the-2021-new-york-city-council-races>.

¹⁹ Smith, Rachel Holiday, and Allison Dikanovic. "Do You Know Who's Running for City Council in Your District?" *The City*, 9 Mar 2021, <https://www.thecity.nyc/2021/3/9/22321218/who-is-running-for-nyc-city-council-in-your-district>.

²⁰ For example, according to *The City*, New York City lost 631,000 jobs to the pandemic in 2020. David, Greg. "NYC Lost a Record 631,000 Jobs to the Pandemic in 2020. So What's Next?" *The City*, 14 Mar 2021, <https://www.thecity.nyc/economy/2021/3/14/22326414/nyc-lost-record-jobs-to-pandemic-unemployment>.

²¹ For more information on the candidates who qualified for the 2021 mayoral primary, see "The Race for NYC Mayor: Who's Running to Run This Town in 2021," by Rachel Holliday Smith: <https://www.thecity.nyc/22233474/the-race-for-nyc-mayor-whos-running-to-run-this-town-in-2021>

²² Election Day for the 2021 New York City municipal primary is June 22nd. See New York's full 2021 elections calendar here: <https://www.elections.ny.gov/NYSBOE/law/2021PoliticalCalendar.pdf>

Scene 4: *NY Dawn*²³ *Live & Video*

DONNA: Hello and good morning! You're tuning into *New York Dawn with Donna*...

DAN: And *Dan*!

DONNA. That's right, "and Dan". We are no longer *New York Dawn with Donna and David* because sadly my co-host David has left us because he thought it was appropriate to sit out the 2020 election.²⁴

DAN: That's why he was fired?!

DONNA: Yes, Dan. So you better vote. *[Turning to camera]* Everyone, please welcome my new co-host all the way from the midwest, Dan! Say hi Dan!

DAN: Howdy! And yes, I *do* vote in every election. I've already changed my registration to New York. June 22. I'm ready!

DONNA: Oh, he's an excited one.

DAN: I am so happy to finally be in New York City. The big apple! Clean,²⁵ convenient,²⁶ and completely affordable!²⁷

DONNA: Well Dan, those aren't the first words that come to mind, but what do I know? I've only lived here for my whole life!

DAN: Ah! See, you need to look at this town with fresh eyes! And see the model of perfection that it is!

DONNA: Oooh Dan, you adorable little cinnamon roll. You see there's many important parts keeping our model of a city together that you may not know about.

DAN: Oh really?!

²³ The text in this scene was written by members of Theater in Asylum. Any opinions expressed are the opinions of the characters in the scene.

²⁴ This is illegal in the state of New York, where you cannot be fired for "Participation [or lack thereof], on your own time, in lawful political or recreational activities." Read more about wrongful termination in New York here: <https://ag.ny.gov/job-termination>

²⁵ Hogan, Bernadette, and Carl Campanile. "NYC streets and sidewalks are filthy, new state audit finds." *The New York Post*, 25 Sep 2020, <https://nypost.com/2020/09/25/nyc-streets-and-sidewalks-are-filthy-new-state-audit-finds/>.

²⁶ Manskar, Noah. "Here's Just How Long It Takes To Get To Work In NYC." *NY Patch*, 23 Apr 2019, <https://patch.com/new-york/new-york-city/heres-just-how-long-it-takes-get-work-nyc>.

²⁷ Pitofsky, Marina. "New York mayoral candidates go viral for vastly underestimating housing costs." *The Hill*, 11 May 2021, <https://thehill.com/homenews/campaign/552823-nyc-mayoral-candidates-go-viral-for-vastly-underestimating-housing-costs>.

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DONNA: Yes! And today we're going on tour of them, taking a look at all the important government positions that keep our city running.

DAN: A five-borough tour?! Oh, I love New York!

DONNA: Easy now. This city's bright lights don't run on dreams, you taut little rubber band!

DAN: Well, let's get to it. Who's first?

[Transition to LULU during line]

DONNA: Let's head over to our kitchen where Award Winning Chef and Culinary Icon Lula Perkins is whipping up something special to celebrate our city!

LULA: Hi there Dan! Hi there Donna!! So glad to be back! You know I love a themed dish so today we're gonna celebrate with a New York Mayor-ed Cake. A personal favorite around this time of year!

DAN: Wow that sounds incredible, Chef.

DONNA: So how do you make a Mayor-ed Cake, Chef Lula?!

LULA: Well it's pretty tricky given all the different ingredients that go into it. We of course know that our mayor signs or vetoes laws passed by City Council,²⁸ but keep in mind Donna that, just like our mayor in city government, you need to know your priorities when making a mayor-ed cake. It really sets the tone for life in the city.

DONNA: Can you speak more on that? What do you mean?

LULA: Well, the Mayor is really our Chief Executive, with the power to appoint and remove the commissioners of more than 40 city agencies including the police, fire, education, sanitation, health and more.²⁹ Mayors Giuliani³⁰ and Bloomberg,³¹ for example, believed in a controversial policy known as "stop-and-frisk," and appointed police commissioners who were willing to carry it out. Mayor de Blasio, on the other hand, sought to move away from stop-and-frisk toward "broken windows"³² policing so he appointed police commissioners who would follow his lead in moving forward.

²⁸ "Local Offices." *NYC Votes*, <https://www.voting.nyc/why-vote/local-offices/>. Accessed 18 May 2021.

²⁹ Bergen, Brigid. "What Does The Mayor of New York City Do?" *Gothamist*, 2 Feb 2021, <https://gothamist.com/news/what-does-mayor-new-york-city-do>.

³⁰ Lieberman, Donna. "Rudy Giuliani Was Never Really America's Mayor." *Gotham Gazette*, 04 Dec 2020, <https://www.gothamgazette.com/opinion/9960-rudy-giuliani-never-really-americas-mayor>.

³¹ Astor, Maggie. "When Did Bloomberg Turn Against Stop-and-Frisk? When He Ran for President." *The New York Times*, 19 Feb 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/19/us/politics/michael-bloomberg-stop-and-frisk.html>.

³² Sands, Darren. "De Blasio: Broken Windows Policing 'Got A Bad Name,' But It Had The Right Underlying Principle." *Buzzfeed News*, 8 Aug 2017, <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/darrensands/de-blasio-broken-windows-policing-got-a-bad-name-but-it-had>.

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DAN: Sounds terrifying.

LULA: Terrorizing³³ might be a better word, Dan. I'll also note, Dan, that as the one who directs city agencies, the mayor can sway how laws are enforced and even what policies are in place.³⁴

DONNA: Wow. Now Lula, doesn't the Mayor—or should I say the Mayored cake?— have something to do with your whole meal's budget?

LULA: That's right Donna. In our city the mayor proposes the budget to City Council who debate it and make changes. Once City Council passes it, the mayor signs off to keep our city running year after year.³⁵

DAN: Fingers crossed our next cake doesn't break the budget!

DONNA: So, Lula, how long will a mayored cake last once we make it?

LULA: Well, a Mayored Cake can last anywhere from 4-8 years. We have a two-term limit on four-year terms.³⁶ However, if you're feeling fancy, you can make a Bloomberg Mayored Cake.

DONNA: A Bloomberg Cake?

LULA: Yes, Bloomberg cakes last longer, 12 years in fact, because they're so rich.³⁷ Or you can make a Dinkins Mayored cake, which only lasts four years, because of structural racism!³⁸

DONNA: Wow. The mayored cake sounds like a very divisive dessert!

LULA: It is!

DAN: Now, Lula, you mentioned the Mayored Cake sets the tone for the whole meal. What about transportation? My subway ride this morning really set the tone for my day. *[Trying to be cheery, repressing the memory of a bad subway experience.]*

³³Report: NYPD Stop and Frisk Activity in 2011 (2012)." *NYCLU*, 9 May 2012, <https://www.nyclu.org/en/publications/report-nypd-stop-and-frisk-activity-2011-2012>.

³⁴ Bergen, "What Does The Mayor of New York City Do?"

³⁵ "Understanding New York City's Budget: A Guide." *New York City Independent Budget Office*, Jul 2017, <https://www.ibo.nyc.ny.us/iboreports/understandingthebudget.pdf>.

³⁶ "Local Offices."

³⁷ In 2008, then-Mayor Michael Bloomberg proposed -- and following two full days of debate in City Council and a 29-22 vote, signed into law -- a bill that granted a one-time suspension of term limits to give himself and everyone else running in 2009 a third term. Robbins, Christopher. "Bloomberg Can't Keep A Straight Face When Explaining How He Got A Third Term As NYC Mayor." *Gothamist*, 3 Mar 2020, <https://gothamist.com/news/bloomberg-third-term-mayor-nyc>.

³⁸ Mayor David Dinkins (in office 1900-1993) was New York City's first -- and only -- Black mayor. He lost his reelection campaign to Rudy Giuliani in 1993. Chung, Jen. "David Dinkins, NYC's First Black Mayor, Dies At 93." *Gothamist*, 24 Nov 2021, <https://gothamist.com/news/david-dinkins-nycs-first-black-mayor-dies-93..>

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LULA: Good question, you morning muffin! But I think you'll have to turn to our transit correspondent, Ally Roper, for more on that.

DONNA: Good idea! Thanks Lula! **[LULA waves goodbye and exits]** Ally, how're you doing out there? *[Continue riffing, calling for Ally until the recorded video begins.]*

[VIDEO Transition]

ALLY ROPER: Well Donna, I am not having a great day. You see, we are on a very crowded, very delayed train to get to work, and unfortunately it is just not going to happen for us today. And before you start asking who can fix the MTA, let me just remind you that it is in fact not the mayor who can do that. It is in fact the governor.³⁹ You see the governor appoints a plurality of votes to a board of the Metropolitan Transit Authority.⁴⁰

CROWD: Andrew Cuomo?

ALLY ROPER: So Andrew Cuomo is the one who can fix the MTA.⁴¹ It is not the mayor. It is not any of the mayoral candidates.

[The crowd starts getting angry.]

ALLY ROPER: So, we learned something new today. Back to you in the studio, Donna.

[Transition to LIVE]

DAN: Wow. The subway always seems so romantic on TV... and in the movies...

DONNA: Well, Dan, I think it's time we shake off those subway blues and blow off some steam with Otis in the Overtime Booth!!! How ya doing, Otis?!

[OTIS ENTERS w/a football and is stretching throughout. Everytime Otis speaks in caps, it's as if he's talking on a bullhorn on the field. Otherwise when he speaks with the speed and efficiency of someone calling plays in the endzone, words are allowed to run together.]

OTIS: Good morning, everyone! And Dan, let me say welcome to the *New York Dawn!*

³⁹ Santiago, Amanda Luz Henning. "How the MTA operates." *City & State*, 6 Jan 2021, <https://www.cityandstateny.com/articles/politics/excelsior-newsletter/how-mta-operates.html#:~:text=The%20MTA%20technically%20is%20a.up%20with%20new%20business%20strategies>.

⁴⁰ Santiago, How the MTA operates."

⁴¹ Witford, Emma. "Cuomo, Who Controls The MTA, After Denying He Controls It And Asking To Control It: 'Who Knows' Who Controls The MTA." *Gothamist*, 23 Jun 2017, <https://gothamist.com/news/cuomo-who-controls-the-mta-after-denying-he-controls-it-and-asking-to-control-it-who-knows-who-controls-the-mta>.

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DAN: Go Dodgers!⁴²

[Confused beat]

DONNA: Anyway, we're both excited to see what updates you have for us in the sports world this election season.

OTIS: Yes! As you know it is ELECTION MADNESS!!! And the biggest switch-up of the season is our 35 open seats in CITY COUNCIL!!!⁴³ Can you believe it? Out of the 51 seats in our City Council, 35 are on the ballot this year! And this is important stuff. Our City Council is responsible for writing and passing our city's laws, as well as for negotiating the budget with the mayor.⁴⁴

DAN: Oh! I love the budget!

OTIS: As you should, Dan. Each January, the mayor proposes the budget, City Council holds hearings and debates about it through the spring, until a compromise is reached.⁴⁵

DONNA: Hopefully.

OTIS: Exactly. The budget has to be passed in time for the new budget to go into effect at the start of the new fiscal year, at 12:01am on July 1st.⁴⁶

DONNA: And I bet they let it get down to those final minutes, just like Washington.

OTIS *[as if this is awesome]*: YOOOOOU KNOW IT!! Our City Council is just like the US Congress, but even *MORE ANNOYING*. While Congress has two legislative chambers--the House and the Senate--New York City only has ONE!!!!!!⁴⁷ There's no back and forth. No divided government. Just stalled legislation all in ONE SPOT!

DAN: And City Council is made up of members from all over the city.

OTIS: CORRECTAMUNDO! District 1: FiDi! District 10: Washington Heights! District 20? Flushing! 28? Jamaica! District 39? Park Slope, Windsor Terrace, Gowanus, even parts of Red Hook. District 51? HALF of STATEN ISLAND.⁴⁸

DAN: You get a district! You get a district!

⁴² The Dodgers left New York in 1957. "Almanac: The Dodgers leave Brooklyn." *CBS News*, 8 Oct 2017, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/almanac-the-dodgers-leave-brooklyn/>. Accessed 19 May 2021.

⁴³ Smith, Rachel Holliday. "What to Know About the 2021 New York City Council Races." *The City*, 3 May 2021, <https://www.thecity.nyc/22233596/what-to-know-about-the-2021-new-york-city-council-races>. Accessed 18 May 2021.

⁴⁴ Smith, "What to Know About the 2021 New York City Council Races."

⁴⁵ "Understanding New York City's Budget: A Guide."

⁴⁶ "The Budget Process." *New York City Council*, <https://council.nyc.gov/budget/process/>. Accessed 18 May 2021.

⁴⁷ "What We Do." *New York City Council*, <https://council.nyc.gov/about/>. Accessed 18 May 2021.

⁴⁸ "Council Members & Districts." *New York City Council*, <https://council.nyc.gov/districts/>. Accessed 18 May 2021.

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[Beat.]

OTIS: Man... that's my thing... don't do my thing.

DAN: Sorry.

OTIS: [*resumes spiel*] Now, while some issues feel like citywide issues, many issues feel super local, like down to the neighborhood level.

DONNA: Like Land Use and Zoning.

OTIS: Exactly! The City Council has a lot of say over these development projects.⁴⁹ Also, City Council has the power of agency oversight. While the Mayor *directs* the agencies, the Council's 38 committees *oversee* these agencies.⁵⁰ And some committees... even have subpoena power.⁵¹

DAN: Subpoena power?

OTIS: Yep! CITY COUNCIL POWER, BABY.

DAN: Ok, so, I have a question.

OTIS: Lay it on me, my man!

DAN: What about...? You compared City Council to Congress.

OTIS: Yep.

DAN: Ok, so... [*As if working this out in his own mind as he's talking*] when Congress was faced with a dangerous president, they started impeachment proceedings.

OTIS: Ya.

DAN: And recently, the New York State Legislature launched an impeachment investigation into sexual harassment allegations against the governor...⁵²

DONNA: Dan, what's your question?

⁴⁹ "What We Do."

⁵⁰ Rodriguez, Cindy. "What Does an NYC City Council Member Do?" *Gothamist*, 3 Feb 2021, <https://gothamist.com/news/what-does-nyc-city-council-member-do>. Accessed 18 May 2021.

⁵¹ Rodriguez, "What Does an NYC City Council Member Do?"

⁵² Michael R. Sisak and Marina Villeneuve. "How Cuomo investigation, possible impeachment could play out." *AP News*, 13 Mar 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/new-york-legislature-andrew-cuomo-coronavirus-pandemic-impeachments-6334301bd32f2040fabb235767c62343>. Accessed 18 May 2021.

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DAN: What if a *mayor* committed a high crime or misdemeanor?

DONNA: Like... ate a pizza with a fork—

OTIS: Gross!

DAN: No, I was thinking like— what if a mayor did something like, I dunno, institutes a citywide curfew to quell “violent protests,” all the while ignoring the fact that much of the violence was perpetrated AGAINST protestors by the city’s own police department?⁵³

DONNA: Didn’t you *just* move to New York?

DAN: I read the news. I am a journalist, after all. Can the City Council impeach a sitting mayor?

OTIS: No, Dan. It’s a little known fact that the City Council actually has no authority to impeach a mayor.⁵⁴ Supposedly the governor could *fire* the NYC mayor, but that’s never been tried.⁵⁵

DAN: So what can New Yorkers do if they don’t like the mayor?

OTIS: Wait until the next election! And actually vote in it! Our city’s turnout in local elections is abysmally low.⁵⁶

[DAN dejected. NYC isn’t all he thought it would be.]

DONNA: Well, thank you for the Overtime Otis.

OTIS: My pleasure!

[OTIS EXIT Transition]

DONNA: Well after that athletic recap, let’s put some spring in our step with this election season’s trends. Here with the scoop on all things fashion: stylist Tracy Styles!

[TRACY STYLES enters]

⁵³ Rubinstein, Dana, and Jeffery C. Mays. “De Blasio Denounced After Police Forcefully Clash With Protesters.” *The New York Times*, 17 Jun 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/04/nyregion/De-blasio-protests-curfew.html>. Accessed 18 May 2021.

⁵⁴ *New York City Charter*, § 9. View the original text <https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/newyorkcity/latest/NYCcharter/0-0-0-5717>

⁵⁵ Raymond, Adam K. “Cuomo Claims He Could Remove de Blasio — But We’re ‘Not at That Point.’” *Intelligencer*, 2 Jun 2020, <https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2020/06/cuomo-claims-he-could-remove-de-blasio-but-wont-for-now.html>. Accessed 16 May 2021.

⁵⁶ In the last election where a mayoral candidate was on the ballot, only 21.5% of eligible voters turned out. “7 Statistics about Voting and Voter Turnout in New York City’s 2017 Elections.” *New York City Campaign Finance Board*, 2 May 2018, <https://nyccfb.info/media/blog/7-statistics-about-voting-and-voter-turnout-in-new-york-city-s-2017-elections/>. Accessed 18 May 2021.

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DONNA: Now Tracy Styles, Dan and I were just having an animated discussion with Otis about how City Council is not able to impeach or remove a mayor. What do you have for us this season to keep our mayor in check?

STYLES: Well darlings, we may not be able to *impeach* our mayor, but we sure can pull the receipts on 'em.

DAN: How do we do that?

STYLES: With a comptroller report, of course. The comptroller's job is much like a personal stylist with someone's complicated outfit. The comptroller reviews city contracts, audits budget spending, oversees our public pensions, and acts as a check on the mayor's power.⁵⁷

DAN: But like, how?

STYLES: You might remember that De Blasio ran on dramatically expanding affordable housing.⁵⁸

DONNA: Sure do.

STYLES: Well, much like a celebrity client of mine who *claimed* to only shop vegan and eco-friendly, De Blasio made a lot of noise about affordable housing. But if you pull the receipts on my client, we find that he had a sizable collection of thigh-high *leather* boots. Pull the receipts on De Blasio? We find that our city owns lots of land that remains, to this day, vacant.

DAN: And the comptroller pulled those receipts?

STYLES: Precisely. The Comptroller's office recently released a report accusing the city of dawdling with land that *could* be used for affordable housing, but remains vacant.⁵⁹ The report exposed De Blasio's lack of action with the land and the continuing affordable housing crisis in this city. And *saying* you'll expand affordable housing is so last election cycle.⁶⁰ It's 2021. It's time⁶¹ to *get it done!* Make more affordable units, now! Yesterday! Obviously.

[DAN tries to get into it, mimicking Tracy Styles's effortless elegance.]

⁵⁷ Hogan, Gynne. "\$100 Million Dollar Budget And The Power of Oversight — What Is A Comptroller & Why Should You Care." *Gothamist*, 5 Feb 2021, <https://gothamist.com/news/100-million-dollar-budget-and-the-power-of-oversight-what-is-a-comptroller-why-should-you-care>.

⁵⁸ Barbanel, Josh. "De Blasio Unveils Affordable-Housing Plan." *The Wall Street Journal*, 31 Jul 2015, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/de-blasio-unveils-affordable-housing-plan-1438388938>.

⁵⁹ "Audit Report on the Development of City-Owned Vacant Lots by the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development." *New York City Comptroller Scott M. Stringer*, 8 Feb 2016, <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/audit-report-on-the-development-of-city-owned-vacant-lots-by-the-new-york-city-department-of-housing-preservation-and-development/>.

⁶⁰ Savitch-Lew, Abigail. "Where the Mayoral Candidates Stand on Housing." *City Limits*, 11 Sep 2017, <https://citylimits.org/2017/09/11/where-the-mayoral-candidates-stand-on-housing/>.

⁶¹ Greenberg, Michael. "Tenants Under Siege: Inside New York City's Housing Crisis." *The New York Review of Books*, 17 Aug 2017, <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2017/08/17/tenants-under-siege-inside-new-york-city-housing-crisis/>.

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DONNA: Now, Ms. Styles. Were there any repercussions for the Mayor when this was exposed? Or... your client for that matter?

STYLES: Ehm, my *former* client and I are no longer in touch. And to answer your question, yes. It's quite unseemly to break a campaign promise.⁶² And to wear leather while preaching veganism. Both the mayor and my former client had to deal with backlash.

DAN: But... how?

STYLES: Well it was embarrassing for them! I'm embarrassed for you for not understanding that. Besides, the Comptroller's office has an important oversight role that can put pressure on City Hall.⁶³ They may not be able to pass laws - you need city council for that - but they sure can use their bully pulpit to cause problems for the mayor... and the city council speaker.⁶⁴

DAN: City Council, to the rescue!

STYLE: Something like that. Now, if you're looking for more ways to keep the mayor accountable this season, you might familiarize yourself with the Public Advocate, whose whole function is to serve as the City's watchdog. The position is often seen as largely ceremonial,⁶⁵ but a lot of public advocates sure seem to find it useful as a launchpad to seek higher office.⁶⁶

DONNA: Ceremonial? Speak on that.

STYLES: Well, just as the Comptroller is in a position to *audit* city operations, the Public Advocate can investigate, and even file lawsuits on behalf of the City's residents.⁶⁷

DONNA: Tracy Styles, you know I always love having you, thank you for bringing us up to date on what's in style for keeping our city officials to task.

STYLES: Of course. Don't forget to keep your outfits—and your city—looking sharp. Vote on June 22nd, my Stylings!!!

⁶² Kully, Sadeq Ali. "De Blasio Housing Plan Created More Affordable Units, But Left Out City's Most Vulnerable: Report." *City Limits*, 5 Feb 2021,

<https://citylimits.org/2021/02/05/de-blasio-housing-plan-created-more-affordable-units-but-left-out-citys-most-vulnerable-report/>.

⁶³ Hogan, "\$100 Million Dollar Budget And The Power of Oversight — What Is A Comptroller & Why Should You Care."

⁶⁴ Goldenberg, Sally, and Joe Anuta. "Battered de Blasio finding friends after '#DefundNYPD' splits progressives." *Politico*, 10 Jun 2020,

<https://www.politico.com/states/new-york/albany/story/2020/06/10/among-nypd-critics-divide-emerges-over-movement-to-defund-agency-1292451>.

⁶⁵ Eama, Afia. "What Does A Public Advocate Do?" *Gothamist*, 10 Feb 2021,

<https://gothamist.com/news/what-does-public-advocate-do>.

⁶⁶ For example, Bill de Blasio was the Public Advocate immediately before he became mayor. His successor to the role, Leticia "Tish" James, ran for and won her election as 67th Attorney General of the State of New York. Mayor de Blasio is discussed at length elsewhere in this show, but you can read more about Tish James here: <https://ag.ny.gov/about-attorney-general>.

⁶⁷ Eama, "What Does A Public Advocate Do?"

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[Tracy Styles exits. Dan sits in silence, stunned by her glamorous-ness]

DONNA: Well, we now have a very special guest in our Around the Borough segment today. Talking Beauty this spring, and all things Borough President, please welcome Ms. 5 Boroughs 2020, PB Benson!

[applause applause applause; PB doing something fabulous & very unnecessary, selfies etc]

PB: Thanks, Dan! I'm so excited to be on *New York Dawn*!

DONNA: We are glad to have you!

PB: Of course, Donna! Well as Ms 5 Boroughs 2020 I'm happy to get close with my borough and local community. I work closely with each Borough President to show all they do for their constituents through their media presence--- @PBtheBP2021, follow, like, and subscribe to all socials.... As I'm sure all your viewers know, I came to fame through my appearances at your local library or at some night market or festival where I handed out buttons, maybe cut a ribbon or two! But I'm much more than your everyday viral sensation, and so is a Borough President!

DONNA: Well PB, tell us--what does a Borough President do that is so indispensable?

DAN: Yes, I heard you want to show us something special today?

PB: Yes! So today I brought a popular product from Beeps & Co called the BP Responsibilities. And BP, that's Borough President, of course. I'm gonna give you all a quick tutorial. It comes in five different palettes, just like there's one BP for each borough. *[opens box]* Love the pretty packaging! Just like a BP, I love it when they care about how they are seen. So, I tell my borough president clients to think of their makeup like they think of their jobs. You have to start with foundation, just like you need to start with a firm policy foundation from which to advise the mayor on budgets and policies that affect your public.⁶⁸ Then you want to blend it in, like you want your policies to blend really well with your neighborhood advocacy⁶⁹ in order to contour your borough. And if you ask about transparency, I tell them that just like I don't need concealer because I have phenomenal skin, you do NOT want or need to conceal anything from your constituents. Show your beautiful face!! But you DO want to draw attention to issues that are important to your borough,⁷⁰ just like a highlighter draws attention to your cheekbones. Why was I blessed with such an enviable bone structure? Anyway, just like I was blessed with a winning smile that got me my crown, Borough Presidents have to win over their community to be the face of their Borough!

DAN: So does a Borough President have any actual power?

⁶⁸ Cruz, David. "What Does A Borough President Actually Do?" *Gothamist*, 4 Feb 2021, <https://gothamist.com/news/what-does-borough-president-actually-do>.

⁶⁹ Cruz, "What Does A Borough President Actually Do?"

⁷⁰ Cruz, "What Does A Borough President Actually Do?"

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PB: Of course! BPs appoint members to various boards and panels, including HALF the members of each community board.⁷¹ BPs are really quite stunning. Legendary. They are...
[does latest internet dance craze or gesture]

DAN: I don't understand. What do Borough Presidents actually *do*?

PB: They lead the borough, of course!

DAN: But how exactly do they do that?

PB: They hold hearings!⁷²

DAN: On...?

PB: Whatever they want! They also issue reports!⁷³

DAN: On...?

PB: Whatever they want! Land use, district zoning⁷⁴.... And they...
Look okay, I'm gonna be honest, this is often used as a launchpad for higher office.⁷⁵ For Borough Presidents, for me, for all of us! I'm running for Ms Beep 2021 so vote for me like you vote June 22nd. I may be ceremonial but that doesn't mean I'm not serious!

DONNA: Of course not.

PB: All right. Stay Legendary, PB gang, BP thang, squad, squad, follow for follow, I'm out, Vote Early. #PBforever. Like and subscribe, SMASH THAT VOTE BUTTON. Turn on your notifications for early voting!

[PB Benson exits. DAN puts a hand over his face. Dejected and disappointed]

DONNA: PB Benson, everyone! Dan, I notice you look a little down.

DAN: It's just... Everything! New York City government's not what I thought it would be. And we need our city government. So much in the city is broken! Who can fix it? The mayor?

DONNA: Not on their own.

⁷¹ Cruz, "What Does A Borough President Actually Do?"

⁷² Cruz, "What Does A Borough President Actually Do?"

⁷³ Cruz, "What Does A Borough President Actually Do?"

⁷⁴ Cruz, "What Does A Borough President Actually Do?"

⁷⁵ For example, mayoral candidate Scott Stringer was the Manhattan borough president immediately before winning his current seat as comptroller. Current Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams is also running for mayor on the strength of his borough president record. Both are discussed at length elsewhere in this show.

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DAN: The city council?

DONNA: If they get along with the mayor.

DAN: When has that ever happened? *[getting emotional]*: It's terrible! All of it! You know, I got to New York, I made a beeline to Times Square, I had tickets to see that iconic musical about New York experience: *Chicago!*⁷⁶

DONNA: Broadway's still shut down.⁷⁷

DAN: But I thought the show must go on! So I went on. Ok, I'll do something else. What would a New Yorker do? I know. I'll go see the Statue of Liberty!

DONNA: No. New Yorkers don't do that.

DAN: Exactly! No one was there! *[getting more upset, similar to JACK and HAL]*: So I'm like, ok. I gotta do something. Something *really* New Yorky. I know. I'll take the subway!

DONNA: Yup, we do that.

DAN: I'll take the subway. I'll see the Pizza Rat!⁷⁸

DONNA: What?

DAN *[Quickly, full on ranting... kind of like a New Yorker]*: So I get to the station, I swipe my card like 300 times, I bang against the turnstile because it won't let me in, I talk to the lady in the booth, she's *SO* nice, she lets me go through the gate, I get to the platform, I look around for Pizza Rat. What do I see? No rats with pizza! Barely any rats at all!

DONNA: Wow, really?

DAN: So I ask some guy, "Where is Pizza Rat?!" He looks at me like I'm crazy, like why am I talking to him? But he's also *SO* nice. He says he doesn't know where Pizza Rat lives. So then I'm like, fine, I'll just *ride* the subway. I'll get on the train and like, riiiide the subway. But but but what do I see?! Not a train! What do I hear?

DONNA *[Impersonating the voice]*: Attention everyone. 3 trains are not running.

⁷⁶ *Chicago* describes itself as a "true New York City institution." Read more here: <https://chicagothemusical.com/about-us/>

⁷⁷ Paulson, Michael. "Broadway Is Reopening. But Not Until September." *The New York Times*, 5 May 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/05/theater/broadway-reopening-new-york.html>.

⁷⁸ Dewey, Caitlin. "The three stages of going viral in 2015, according to the Pizza Rat meme." *The Washington Post*, 22 Sep 2015, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2015/09/22/the-three-stages-of-going-viral-in-2015-according-to-the-pizza-rat-meme/>.

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DAN: Exactly! The trains aren't running!

DONNA: Welcome to New York!

DAN *[losing it]*: The MTA. The MTA! Ahhhhhh!!! *[he runs off the screen, is seen screaming the background]*

DONNA: Well, my friends. Thank you for joining us today as we celebrate New York City government.

[DAN runs by screaming]

DONNA: Before we go, let's check in on our transit correspondent, Ally Roper. Ally, you there?

[VIDEO Transition]

ALLY: Well Donna, we were moved off of our original train onto this one. We're not even really sure what direction we're going in at this point. I have to assume we're going to be here for a while. So I will simply leave you with this parting message.

CROWD: THE MTA!!!!!!!

[Transition to LIVE]

DAN *[explosive]*: WHO WILL FIX THE MTA?

DONNA *[looking seriously to the camera, speaking calmly]*: We're looking at you Governor Cuomo.⁷⁹

And that's all the time we have today. I'm Donna.

DAN *[running by]*: AND I'M DAN!

DONNA: We're two New Yorkers just trying to get to work, get home, and get on with our lives. This is NY Dawn with Donna *and Dan*. Goodbye now.

[DAN, HAL, JACK screaming as DONNA and ALLY calmly wave.]

⁷⁹ Witford, "Cuomo, Who Controls The MTA, After Denying He Controls It And Asking To Control It: 'Who Knows' Who Controls The MTA."

Scene 5: Anxiety Voter #2⁸⁰

ANXIETY VOTER: Ok. Ok. We're ok. I'm ok. It's just one vote. I'm just one voter? This is just one election? It's not like the first ranked choice vote⁸¹ with a crowded field⁸² in an election year where nearly all of City Hall is being replaced????⁸³

AHhhhhh!!

Ok. Mayor. Who's running? Everyone's running. But I'm a prepared voter. There were dozens of candidates but only 13 on the ballot.⁸⁴ I even know all their names. In alphabetical order. Why? Because I'm a prepared voter.... And a nerd. Ugh.

Ok, there's

Eric Adams, the current Brooklyn Borough President, formerly a cop;⁸⁵

Art Chang, small business owner and civil servant;⁸⁶

Shaun Donovan, Obama's secretary of Housing and Urban Development;⁸⁷

Aaron Foldenauer, a lawyer and advocate;⁸⁸

Kathryn Garcia, De Blasio's Sanitation commissioner;⁸⁹

Ray McGuire, Wall Street executive;⁹⁰

Dianne Morales, CEO of a social services non-profit;⁹¹

Paperboy Love Prince, rapper and activist;⁹²

Joycelyn Taylor, CEO of a contract firm;⁹³

Maya Wiley, professor and former NAACP and ACLU lawyer;⁹⁴

Isaac Wright Jr., a lawyer and businessman;⁹⁵

⁸⁰ The text in this scene was written by members of Theater in Asylum. Any opinions expressed are the opinions of the characters in the scene.

⁸¹ Almukhtar, Sarah, Jazmine Hughes and Eden Weingart. "How Does Ranked-Choice Voting Work in New York?" *The New York Times*, 22 Apr 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/nyregion/ranked-choice-voting-nyc.html>.

⁸² Spivack, Caroline. "Here's Everyone Running for New York City Mayor (So Far)." *Curbed*, 24 Mar 2021, <https://www.curbed.com/article/everyone-running-for-new-york-city-mayor.html>.

⁸³ Smith, Rachel Holliday. "What to Know About the 2021 New York City Council Races." *The City*, 3 May 2021, <https://www.thecity.nyc/22233596/what-to-know-about-the-2021-new-york-city-council-races>.

⁸⁴ Smith, Rachel Holiday, and Allison Dikanovic. "Here's the Ballot Lineup for June 22 New York City Primaries." *The City*, 4 May 2021, <https://www.thecity.nyc/civic-newsroom/2021/5/4/22419895/ballot-set-june-22-new-york-city-primaries..>

⁸⁵ "I Am YOU!!" *Eric Adams for Mayor*, <https://ericadams2021.com/about/>. Accessed 10 May 2021.

⁸⁶ "Who is Art Chang?" Art Chang for NYC, <https://www.chang.nyc/bio>. Accessed 9 May 2021.

⁸⁷ "Meet Shaun." *Shaun for NYC*, <https://shaunformyc.com/about/>. Accessed 9 May 2021.

⁸⁸ "Meet Aaron." *Aaron Foldenauer for Mayor of New York City*, <https://aaronformyc.com/meet-aaron/>. Accessed 9 May 2021.

⁸⁹ "About Kathryn." *Garcia for NYC Mayor*, <https://www.kgfornyc.com/about-us/>. Accessed 9 May 2021.

⁹⁰ "About Ray." *Ray for Mayor*, <https://www.rayformayor.com/about>. Accessed 10 May 2021.

⁹¹ "Meet Dianne." *Dianne Morales for NYC Mayor*, <https://www.dianne.nyc/about>. Accessed 10 May 2021.

⁹² "Meet Paperboy Love Prince." *Paperboy Prince for Mayor 2021*, <https://paperboy.nyc/>. Accessed 10 May 2021.

⁹³ "About Joycelyn." *Taylor for NYC Mayor 2021*, <https://taylorfor2021.com/joycelyns-story/>. Accessed 10 May 2021.

⁹⁴ "Meet Maya." *Maya for Mayor*, <https://mayawileyformayor.com/about-maya/>. Accessed 10 May 2021.

⁹⁵ "Meet Isaac." *Isaac Wright Jr.: The Wright Choice for New York City Mayor*, <https://wrightformyc2021.com/about/>. Accessed 10 May 2021.

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Scott Stringer, once the progressive frontrunner,⁹⁶ also current comptroller,⁹⁷ now... ugh⁹⁸
Oh, and Andrew Yang, tech entrepreneur and former presidential candidate.⁹⁹

Woo! Why do I know them all? Because I'm a prepared voter.

Eric, Art, Shaun, Aaron, Kathryn, Ray, Dianne, Paperboy, Joycelyn, Maya, Isaac, Scott, and Andrew.

Who are they? There's the progressive flank, the centrist flank, and... and.. So many more candidates. I need my computer.

[Sprints out of the frame. Transition to introducing the candidates scene.]

Scene 6: Zoom Bomb¹⁰⁰ (LIVE)

[TATE appears on Zoom. Waits for a moment anxiously.]

TATE: *[to themselves]* I think I have everything set up...

[JO appears]

JO: Hi!

TATE: Hi! Are you Jo?

JO: Uh, that depends. Are you Tate?

TATE: Yes! I am!

JO: Great! Sorry, I don't know how to Tinder.

TATE: That's okay! Me neither. And then you add zoom on top of that! *[Pause]*

JO: Totally. Well, cheers to first dates during the apocalypse. *[Virtual clink]*

⁹⁶ Miller, Justin, and Nia Prater. "Scott Stringer Hemorrhages Endorsements After Sexual Assault Allegation." *Intelligencer*, 3 May 2021, <https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2021/05/working-families-party-withdraws-scott-stringer-endorsement.html>.

⁹⁷ "Experience to Lead." *Stringer for Mayor*, <https://stringerformayor.com/experience/>. Accessed 10 May 2021.

⁹⁸ Miller, "Scott Stringer Hemorrhages Endorsements After Sexual Assault Allegation."

⁹⁹ "Why I'm Running for Mayor." *Yang for New York*, <https://www.yangfornyc.com/why/>. Accessed 10 May 2021.

¹⁰⁰ The text in this scene was written by members of Theater in Asylum. Any opinions expressed are the opinions of the characters in the scene.

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TATE: So how have you been spending your quarantine?

JO *[trying to sound cooler than she is]*: Oh you know. Trying to read and ending up on Netflix.

TATE: I get that, I've been trying to bike and drink more protein shakes. But somehow I just keep ending up making frozen margaritas!

JO: Party!

TATE: Haha, I wish. I live alone in a one bedroom so it's just me!

JO: Oh no way!

*[Pause. Then **MORALES** enters the Zoom screen.]*

MORALES: Solo Dwellers of NYC.¹⁰¹ Hello! I am so honored to be at the forum of such an important and unique community within our city. Thank you for having me! Dianne Morales here to encourage you to “choose the future.”¹⁰² “I’m ready to be your mayor.”¹⁰³

[TATE and JO are taken aback.]

JO: Excuse me?

MORALES: Yes, sorry I'm late. I was just at the League of Independent Theater forum.¹⁰⁴ These forums are relentless. Two happening simultaneously? What a concept! Ah!

TATE: This isn't a...

MORALES: Time for small ideas, small plans? I agree. "My platform centers three pillars: dignity, care, and solidarity. Together we can redefine safety, invest in housing for all, and finally treat all essential workers as essential. We can rebuild our small businesses, advance a green new deal, and make CUNY free."¹⁰⁵

TATE: Ms....

¹⁰¹ Although the 2021 mayoral election has already seen candidate forums centered on housing, and homelessness, education, tenants' rights, immigrant communities, poverty and economic mobility, budgeting, food insecurity, the city's relationship with Albany, health care, NYCHA, public safety, and *many* other issues, there was no forum specifically dedicated to the interests and rights of lonely New Yorkers who are single and ready to mingle in a pandemic-safe way.. Read more about the candidates' campaign activities -- as well as a variety of forum and debate recap articles -- at *Gotham Gazette*: <https://www.gothamgazette.com/component/tags/tag/mayor-2021>

¹⁰² *Dianne Morales for NYC Mayor*, <https://www.dianne.nyc/>. Accessed 19 May 2021.

¹⁰³ Quote: Dianne Morales. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor." Facebook, uploaded by Spectrum News NY1, 13 May 2021, <https://www.facebook.com/ny1news/videos/614175372854590>. Accessed 24 May 2021.

¹⁰⁴ The League of Independent Theaters hosted a "Meet the Candidates" forum on March 23, 2021. Dianne Morales did not attend. You can watch clips from the forum and read about the League's 2021 NYC endorsements: <https://www.litny.org/mtc2021>

¹⁰⁵ Quote: Dianne Morales. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

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MORALES: Morales. Dianne Morales. Now let me tell you about the public housing in Vienna,¹⁰⁶ where— *[Her phone buzzes]* Oh, sorry. Gotta get back to that other forum. Thank you so much and please, vote Dianne for NYC.

[MORALES signs off. After a moment...]

JO: What was that?

TATE: I think... were we...just Zoom bombed?

JO: By a mayoral candidate.

TATE: Politics, they're inescapable! ! I mean really?

JO: That's crazy! Also crazy? Finding a one-bedroom in this city. I've been looking but SO EXPENSIVE!¹⁰⁷

TATE: I know...

JO: Where are you?

TATE: South Slope. It's cute with the kids running around everywhere, but it takes me 20 minutes to walk to the train and half the time, the train doesn't even stop there!

[DONOVAN enters the Zoom screen.]

DONOVAN: "Every New Yorker deserves a 15 minute neighborhood—where a great public school, fresh food, rapid transportation, a beautiful park, and a chance to get ahead can all be found within 15 minutes of one's front door."¹⁰⁸

TATE: And who are you?

DONOVAN: Shaun Donovan. And to the solo dwellers of NYC I say this, I am running for Mayor of New York City to repair, rebuild, and reimagine.¹⁰⁹ "This moment demands a leader with bold ideas and the track record to make those ideas real in the lives of every New Yorker."¹¹⁰

TATE: How did you get our Zoom address?

¹⁰⁶ Kim, ElizaJO. "The Big Idea: Mayoral Candidate Dianne Morales Wants To Bring Social Housing To NYC." *Gothamist*, 1 Apr 2021, <https://gothamist.com/news/big-idea-dianne-morales-wants-bring-social-housing-nyc>.

¹⁰⁷ Carmiel, Oshrat. "Far From Manhattan, New York City Home Prices Are Rising Fast." *Bloomberg*, 23 Apr 2021, <https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/property-prices/nyc/>.

¹⁰⁸ "The Plan for the City of New York." *Shaun for NYC*, <https://shaunfornyc.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/The-Plan-for-the-City-of-New-York.pdf>. Accessed 19 May 2021.

¹⁰⁹ *Shaun for NYC*, <https://shaunfornyc.com/>. Accessed 19 May 2021.

¹¹⁰ Quote: Shaun Donovan. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

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DONOVAN: My campaign manager, of course! Now, you may have heard that Barack, that's former President Barack Obama, tapped me first to be Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, and then to be director of the Office of Management and Budget. I have the experience needed to lead this great city.¹¹¹

[GARCIA enters the Zoom Screen.]

DONOVAN: Kathryn!

GARCIA: Hi Sean.

JO: Who are you?

GARCIA: Kathryn Garcia. Sorry I'm late Solos.

DONOVAN: I'm gonna bounce back over to the League of Independent Theater forum.¹¹²

GARCIA: Oh, I was just there.¹¹³ Lovely people.¹¹⁴

DONOVAN: They *are* lovely. They helped me write my arts and culture platform.¹¹⁵ Well, see you soon!

[DONOVAN exits signs off]

GARCIA: So I'm a lifelong New Yorker and a public servant. "I have been this city's crisis manager for the last fourteen years. I have managed billions of dollars of budgets, as well as tens of thousands of staff."¹¹⁶ During COVID-19, I've created an emergency food program that has delivered 200 million meals to New Yorkers in need. I know how to build a healthier, safer, more liveable New York. I've done it before and I'm ready to do it again.¹¹⁷

TATE: That all sounds—

¹¹¹ "Meet Shaun." *Shaun for NYC*, <https://shaunfornyc.com/about/>. Accessed 19 May 2021.

¹¹² Shaun Donovan *did* attend the League of Independent Theaters' "Meet the Candidates" forum.

¹¹³ Kathryn Garcia *did* attend the League of Independent Theaters' "Meet the Candidates" forum.

¹¹⁴ In the interest of full disclosure, one of Theater in Asylum's co-Artistic Directors is the Communications Director of the League of Independent Theaters.

¹¹⁵ "League of Independent Theaters Endorsed Candidates." *League of Independent Theaters*, https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rCAkkbcCXlqtbGv_bLORnRknFUmnq15g/view. Accessed 19 May 2021.

¹¹⁶ Quote: Kathryn Garcia. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

¹¹⁷ *Kathryn Garcia for NYC Mayor*, <https://www.kgfornyc.com/>. Accessed 19 May 2021.

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GARCIA: Impressive? It is! "I am proud to have gotten the endorsement of the New York Times¹¹⁸ because this IS the most consequential election of our generation, and I'm ready to execute on the vision on day one."¹¹⁹ I'll be back for that final round of questions! Vote KG for NYC!

[GARCIA exits signs off]

JO: I don't know what's happening.

TATE: I wonder if Zoom got wires crossed? They all seem to think this is a mayoral forum.

JO: There have been a lot...

[ADAMS enters the Zoom screen during...]

TATE: What - who's this now?? -

ADAMS: Hi! Sorry I'm—

TATE: Lemme stop you there. You're not late, this is—

ADAMS: Oh good. I'm Eric Adams, and "I'm running for mayor, for the city of New York, to reduce crime, grow our economy, address racial inequality, affordability, [and make a] prosperous city for all. And I will unite our city by turning our pain into purpose. This moment must turn into a movement."¹²⁰

JO: I've seen your ads. You're a cop right?

ADAMS: That's right. I served two decades with the NYPD¹²¹ and part of my platform is to secure the city. I want to reduce crime by having cops focus on police work. Police officers should be out in the streets, conducting investigations, and preventing crime, not just doing clerical work.¹²²

[WILEY enters the Zoom screen.]

ADAM: Oh! Hi Maya!

WILEY: Hi Eric.

[They give each other a look. ADAMS exits signs off]

¹¹⁸ The Editorial Board. "Kathryn Garcia for N.Y.C. Mayor. *The New York Times*, 10 May 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/10/opinion/kathryn-garcia-nyt-endorsement-nyc-mayor.html>.

¹¹⁹ Quote: Kathryn Garcia. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

¹²⁰ Quote: Eric Adams. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

¹²¹ "I Am YOU!!" *Eric Adams for Mayor*, <https://ericadams2021.com/about/>. Accessed 10 May 2021.

¹²² Meyer, David. "NYC mayoral hopeful Eric Adams says too many transit cops are doing desk work." *The New York Post*, 18 May 2021, <https://nypost.com/2021/05/18/nyc-mayoral-hopeful-eric-adams-says-too-many-transit-cops-are-doing-desk-work/>.

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JO: Lemme guess. You're running for mayor?

WILEY: Yes, I'm Maya Wiley. I have served as Counsel to the Mayor, I held police accountable as Chair of the Civilian Complaint Review Board. I am a veteran of both the NAACP and the ACLU, was a former Legal Analyst for NBC, and was the founder and president of the Center for Social Inclusion.¹²³

TATE: So you're mostly a lawyer, right?

WILEY: That's right. "I am a civil rights lawyer and a Mom. And look, with a different kind of leadership, we can have a city where we can all afford the rent."¹²⁴

TATE: We know all about that don't we Jo.

JO: We do?

TATE: Yes, Jo. Us solo dwellers!

JO: Right... us solo dwellers care about affordable rent for all. Alone or not, our city should be affordable.

WILEY: Exactly! "A city where we can be safe in our streets, and on our subways, and Black and Brown New Yorkers can be safe from police violence. This city must fix what's broken and that's why I'm running to be the first mom as mayor."¹²⁵

TATE: The first mom as mayor? Wow.¹²⁶

WILEY: Yes, wow, indeed. Now, I'm sorry to cut this short. I won't let Eric have the only word at the League of Independent Theatre forum.¹²⁷ See you later and thank you!

[WILEY exits signs off. Before JO and TATE can say anything, YANG enters the Zoom]

JO: See you later - what? *[brief pause]* Woah, Andrew Yang?!

YANG: Yes, I am. I moved to New York City 25 years ago. I came of age, fell in love, and became a father here. Seeing our City the way it is now breaks my heart. I am running for mayor because I see a crisis — and I believe I can help. We need to launch the largest basic income

¹²³ "Meet Maya." *Maya for Mayor*, <https://mayawileyformayor.com/about-maya/>. Accessed 10 May 2021.

¹²⁴ Quote: Maya Wiley. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

¹²⁵ Quote: Maya Wiley. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

¹²⁶ New York City has never had a female mayor, much less a mayor who is a mom. See a list of all 109 male mayors of NYC here: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/dcas/about/green-book-mayors-of-the-city-of-new-york.page>.

¹²⁷ Neither Maya Wiley nor Eric Adams attended the League of Independent Theaters' "Meet the Candidates" forum.

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program in history, invest in a human-centered economy, return to fact-based governance, and create an accessible healthcare system. We need to do all this while enacting accountable and smart policing, building affordable housing, closing our city's digital divide, modernizing transportation and city services, and more. We will move New York forward — together.¹²⁸

[YANG exits signs off.]

JO: That was abrupt.

TATE: Yeah, at least schmooze us a little.

JO: I know, right! Win us over!

[STRINGER enters on camera, jumps right in.]

TATE: Welcome!

STRINGER: Hi.

TATE: So who are you?

STRINGER: Scott Stringer.

JO: Hang on. Aren't you the one who was accused of sexual assault by one of your interns?¹²⁹

[STRINGER pulls up a notecard and reads. This is his official response.]

STRINGER: "It was a consensual relationship and we had a relationship for several months. I can only tell you that what she said today is simply not true and not accurate."¹³⁰

I'm also the current NYC Comptroller. Previously, I was the Manhattan Borough President, a NY State Assemblymember,¹³¹ and I was even appointed to my local community board at age 16!¹³² "I'll be ready on day one to use my experience and ideas to give the city the hope and opportunity to transform the next generation!"¹³³

[JO and TATE both give him a disgusted look.]

¹²⁸ Yang for New York, <https://www.yangfornyc.com/>. Accessed 24 May 2021.

¹²⁹ Kim, Elizabeth. "Former Campaign Intern Accuses Scott Stringer Of Sexual Abuse, Harassment." *Gothamist*, 28 Apr 2021, <https://gothamist.com/news/former-campaign-intern-accuses-scott-stringer-sexual-harassment>.

¹³⁰ Moses, Dean. "Stringer rebukes sexual assault allegations, says he's continuing mayoral bid." *AMNY*, 28 Apr 2021, <https://www.amny.com/news/stringer-rebukes-sexual-assault-allegations/>.

¹³¹ "Experience to Lead." *Stringer for Mayor*, <https://stringerformayor.com/experience/>. Accessed 24 May 2021.

¹³² Asbury, Edith Evans. "Sutton Names Two Teen-Agers To Community Planning Boards." *The New York Times*, 11 Jan 1977, <https://www.nytimes.com/1977/01/11/archives/sutton-names-two-teenagers-to-community-planning-boards.html>.

¹³³ Quote: Scott Stringer. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

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STRINGER: Well, ummm, gotta go.

[STRINGER exits signs off.]

JO: Ugh.

TATE: I was excited about his campaign before the allegations came out but now...

JO: Yeah. It's sad and complicated all the way around.

TATE: I mean, who is going to be the right person to lead our city?! There are too many candidates and I don't know what any of them stand for. What'll they actually do when they get there? I mean even now De Blasio proposed a WPA style program to directly pay our city's artists¹³⁴ and I'm like--

JO: Psh, I'll believe it when I see it.

TATE: YES!

JO: Arts funding is always glamorous to talk about and rarely ever to do.

TATE: Wait - you're an artist too?

JO: Yeah, some visual arts, some theater.

TATE: Very cool. I write, make music.

JO: That's great! I'd love to hear your music sometime.

TATE: For sure.

JO: And it'd be so great to have leaders who actually *cared* about the arts. They all say things about fixing the city, having a "bold vision" for New York, having all the right experience and--

[MCGUIRE enters the Zoom.]

MCGUIRE: Did I hear someone say experience? If you want to talk about experience--

TATE: Let's start with your name, sir.

JO: Please.

¹³⁴ "Recovery for All of Us: Mayor de Blasio Announces City Artist Corps." NYC, 6 May 2021, <https://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/337-21/recovery-all-us-mayor-de-blasio-city-artist-corps>.

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MCGUIRE: Ray McGuire. I'm one of the highest-ranking and longest-serving Black executives on Wall Street.¹³⁵ "As a political outsider, I will make decisions solely on the merits. I do not owe any political favors. Zero. Bupkis. New York needs a mayor who's a doer, not a talker."¹³⁶ Let's start with endorsements. NYC Icons are all in. Head to my website, RayforMayor.com, to learn why New York City hip hop legends Jay-Z, Diddy, Nas, and Steve Stoute all endorse me. Check out their conversation on why I'm the best candidate to lead NYC's comeback. Gotta run, see you later. Vote Ray!¹³⁷

[MCGUIRE exits signs off]

TATE: Wow. Are celebrity endorsements how we should pick our candidate, now?

JO: Ugh, I hope not. But also, maybe?

[The candidates reappear one by one. It's now a full Zoom.]

JO: Oh wow you're all back.

MORALES: We wouldn't miss the Solo Dwellers of New York City Q&A!

YANG: Of course not. How can we forget about our proud, independent neighbors?

GARCIA: You said *[current real time]* for the final questions, right?

JO: ...Yes, exactly.... We solo dwellers are an important constituency.

TATE: So true. Now, one of the most important issues to us who live alone is... dinner. *[hears herself, having revealed too much]* Yes. Eating. Fresh Air. The Open Streets thing. Allowing restaurants to put seating in the streets during the pandemic is very important to Solo New Yorkers that this program is expanded...

JO: –And before any of you give vague monologues on this, for these forum questions, please just raise your hand if you agree with a statement.

TATE: Yes! So, who would expand the Open Street program and add more streets?

[HANDS 1: EVERYONE]¹³⁸

¹³⁵ "About Ray." *Ray for Mayor*, <https://www.rayformayor.com/about>. Accessed 24 May 2021.

¹³⁶ Quote: Ray McGuire. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

¹³⁷ *Ray for Mayor*, <https://www.rayformayor.com/about>. Accessed 24 May 2021.

¹³⁸ Choi, Ann, and Mónica Cordero. "Meet Your Mayor: COVID Recovery." *The City*, 6 May 2021, <https://projects.thecity.nyc/meet-your-mayor/corona-recovery.html>.

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JO: Great! Another important issue... the minimum wage. If elected mayor, will you fight to raise it?

[HANDS 2: EVERYONE but McGuire - Actor Note: ALEXIS right hand up only [no hand because no comment from MCGUIRE]]¹³⁹

JO: Mr. McGuire?

MCGUIRE: I decline to answer.

JO: Okay... Let's shake things up a bit then—how many of you are currently facing publicity nightmares over campaign scandals?

[HANDS 3: ADAMS,¹⁴⁰ MORALES,¹⁴¹ STRINGER¹⁴² & YANG¹⁴³ slowly, tentatively raise hands]

TATE: Yikes. Stringer I'd heard about, but Yang, Adams, and Morales?!

JO: Well, Morales is dealing with a 17-year-old investigation about a scam she was the victim of, but paid a bribe she shouldn't have, and then lied about it. Some sources are saying she never worked in city government because the whole thing caused her to fail a background check,¹⁴⁴ but so far many of her endorsers are sticking by her.¹⁴⁵

TATE: WHAT?! What about Yang and Adams?

JO: Campaign finance stuff. Andrew Yang filed an ethics report accusing Eric Adams of illegally getting city matching funds based on donations from people with business before the city,¹⁴⁶ based on a big New York Times report.¹⁴⁷ Then Eric Adams filed his own ethics report accusing Andrew Yang of financial "irregularities" with his UBI nonprofit, his 2020 presidential campaign,

¹³⁹ Choi, Ann, and Mónica Cordero. "Meet Your Mayor: Labor." *The City*, 6 May 2021, <https://projects.thecity.nyc/meet-your-mayor/labor.html>.

¹⁴⁰ Sharigian, Shant. "Andrew Yang accuses rival NYC mayoral candidate Eric Adams of 'assault' on campaign finance system." *The New York Daily News*, 18 May 2021, <https://www.nydailynews.com/news/politics/nyc-elections-2021/ny-nyc-mayoral-race-andrew-yang-eric-adams-campaign-finance-system-20210518-sdjfp77ou5aa7ezrye5qs5fbny-story.html>.

¹⁴¹ Gonen, Yoav, and Greg B. Smith. "Mayoral Candidate Dianne Morales Water-Meter Bribe Probe Preceded 2004 Departure from Big City Schools Job." *The City*, 17 May 2021, <https://www.thecity.nyc/2021/5/16/22439168/dianne-morales-water-meter-bribe-probe>.

¹⁴² Kim, "Former Campaign Intern Accuses Scott Stringer Of Sexual Abuse, Harassment."

¹⁴³ Sharigian. "Andrew Yang accuses rival NYC mayoral candidate Eric Adams of 'assault' on campaign finance system."

¹⁴⁴ Gonen, Yoav, and Greg B. Smith. "Mayoral Candidate Dianne Morales Water-Meter Bribe Probe Preceded 2004 Departure from Big City Schools Job."

¹⁴⁵ Gartland, Michael. "NYC mayoral candidate Dianne Morales responds to bribe revelation; supporters hold firm, for now." *The New York Daily News*, 17 May 2021, <https://www.nydailynews.com/news/politics/nyc-elections-2021/ny-nyc-mayoral-candidate-dianne-morales-bribery-allegations-20210517-eozk6bbodnh3phq6xshuxya66y-story.html>.

¹⁴⁶ Campanile, Carl, and Julia Marsh. "NYC mayoral hopefuls Andrew Yang, Eric Adams file dueling ethics complaints." *The New York Post*, 18 May 2021, <https://nypost.com/2021/05/18/andrew-yang-eric-adams-file-ethics-complaints/>.

¹⁴⁷ Rothfeld, Michael. "How Eric Adams, Mayoral Candidate, Mixed Money and Political Ambition." *The New York Times*, 24 May 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/16/nyregion/eric-adams-fund-raising.html>.

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and his 2021 mayoral campaign.¹⁴⁸ It's kind of confusing. But... Maybe we could look into it together later?

TATE: I'd love that. Now, before any of you try to respond with legalese that deflects all responsibility, let's get to another important issue: reforming, or defunding, the police. Who believes the NYPD should be downsized beyond currently planned levels?

[HANDS 4: WILEY, STRINGER, DONOVAN & MORALES]¹⁴⁹

TATE: The rest of you?

YANG: Yang here. "My message to the NYPD is this: New York needs you. Your city needs you. We need you to do your jobs professionally, responsibly, and justly. And as you do these things, the people of New York will have your backs. I will have your back. Defund the Police is wrong for New York City."¹⁵⁰

TATE: Ok then. What about adding more cops in the subway system?

**[HANDS 5: DONOVAN, McGUIRE, ADAMS, GARCIA & YANG
not STRINGER, WILEY, MORALES]¹⁵¹**

TATE: I see. All of you but Stringer, Morales, oh yes, and Maya Wiley.

WILEY: "A big part of our safety problem in the subways is a mental health and homelessness problem, where we have the tools and resources to ensure that we have the proper outreach workers, helping get folks who are mentally ill or, and or, substance addicted help."¹⁵²

JO: Amen. Ok, how about a crowd please. Something I'm sure you'll all agree on. Composting! Will you commit to making the composting program city-wide?

[HANDS 6: EVERYONE but YANG raise their hands.]¹⁵³

JO: Oh wow. I guess all but Andrew Yang...

¹⁴⁸ Campanile, "NYC mayoral hopefuls Andrew Yang, Eric Adams file dueling ethics complaints."

¹⁴⁹ Choi, Ann, and Mónica Cordero. "Meet Your Mayor: NYPD." *The City*, 14 May 2021, <https://projects.thecity.nyc/meet-your-mayor/nypd.html>.

¹⁵⁰ Fenton, Reuven, and David Meyer. "Andrew Yang lays into 'defund the police' after Times Square shooting." *The New York Post*, 9 May 2021, <https://nypost.com/2021/05/09/andrew-yang-lays-into-defund-the-police-after-nyc-shooting/>.

¹⁵¹ This question was asked and answered during a hand-raising segment of the May 13 debate. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

¹⁵² Quote: Maya Wiley. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

¹⁵³ This question was asked and answered during a hand-raising segment of the May 13 debate. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

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YANG: "I love composting, just not... I wanted to roll it out in parts of the city first. That's all. I love composting."¹⁵⁴

[WILEY, MCGUIRE, DONAVON laugh]

DONOVAN: "Just not enough I guess."¹⁵⁵

YANG: "Just not city-wide, like you have to roll it out in certain parts where you have the the resources."¹⁵⁶

TATE: Ok. Let's try again. Something fun to finish up. And why don't we moderators join in!

JO: Oh?! Sure, okay.

TATE: What is the first cultural event, whether it's Broadway or sports or otherwise, that you plan to attend when the city reopens? Jo?

JO: Hmm. Well, I—

DONOVAN *[interrupting]*: "Well, I've already been doing that, I went to see Jewel Box on **Schermerhorn** the other day, Brooklyn ballet, amazing performances—"¹⁵⁷

TATE: What about you, Jo?

MCGUIRE: "Museum."¹⁵⁸ Ray McGuire here. Museum.

JO: Oh! Ok. What about... Maya Wiley?

WILEY: "Well I'm actually doing it virtually already with The Strokes on Saturday who are supporting me in this race -"¹⁵⁹

JO: Woah, really?

WILEY: "But Broadway Broadway Broadway"¹⁶⁰

TATE: What show?

¹⁵⁴ Quote: Andrew Yang. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

¹⁵⁵ Quote: Shaun Donovan. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

¹⁵⁶ Quote: Andrew Yang. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

¹⁵⁷ Quote: Shaun Donovan. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

¹⁵⁸ Quote: Ray McGuire. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor." Yes, this was his entire line.

¹⁵⁹ Quote: Maya Wiley. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

¹⁶⁰ Quote: Maya Wiley. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

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ADAMS: *[Interrupting]* Eric Adams here. "Everyone is talking about the big places, but you know what the small places matter, as well. Sister's Place off of, downtown off of, Fulton street."¹⁶¹

[MORALES Snaps when ADAMS says Sister's Place]

GARCIA: Garcia here. "I want to go to a Brooklyn Cyclones game and throw out another first pitch."¹⁶²

STRINGER: Stringer. "After this campaign, wherever my wife wants to go on Broadway, we're going -"¹⁶³

TATE: Mr. Yang?

YANG: "Let's go METS! I agree the city's already opened for a lot of these events, but we're looking forward to Broadway being back hopefully this fall."¹⁶⁴

JO: Dianne Morales.

MORALES: "I'm going to take my daughter, who was a musical theater major in high school here at Talent Unlimited, I'm going to take her back to a Broadway show."¹⁶⁵

TATE: And Jo what about you?

JO: I honestly don't know. Maybe the Rose Room in the Bryant Park library, read those books...

[An awkward pause.]

TATE: Maybe I come with...?

JO: Like a second date?

[The candidates are confused.]

DONOVAN: Are the moderators supposed to do this?

ADAMS: I'm confused.

JO: Ummm... only if you bring those margaritas...

¹⁶¹ Quote: Eric Adams. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

¹⁶² Quote: Kathryn Garcia. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

¹⁶³ Quote: Scott Stringer. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

¹⁶⁴ Quote: Andrew Yang. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

¹⁶⁵ Quote: Dianne Morales. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

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STRINGER: To the Rose Room?!¹⁶⁶

TATE: Sounds like a plan.

[The room cheers. TATE does a victory dance.]

YANG: I'm lost. Is this over?

TATE: Yes I think we're done, for now.

JO: Yes. Say goodbye candidates!

[All the candidates leave in a cacophony of Thanks Yous and Goodbyes, all trying to shout their names over each other. The candidates flicker off one by one, leaving JO and ALAN to share a conspiratory giggle.]

TATE: Wow. That was wild.

JO: Yeah. So... see you in Rose Room?

JO: Sounds great. I'll text you.

TATE: Amazing. And maybe this time the candidates won't find us.

JO: Perfect. See you then!

TATE: Bye!

Scene 7: Anxiety Voter #3 (RCV)¹⁶⁷

ANXIETY VOTER: Ok, ok, ranked choice voting. I know how that works.¹⁶⁸

We all rank up to five candidates.

Everyone's first choice is counted.

¹⁶⁶ The New York Public Library prohibits "eating or drinking, except in designated areas." The Rose Reading Room is definitely not one such designated area. Theater in Asylum does not endorse smuggling margaritas into the library. "The New York Public Library General Policies and Rules." *New York Public Library*, <https://www.nypl.org/help/about-nypl/legal-notice/rules-and-regulations>. Accessed 25 May 2021.

¹⁶⁷ The text in this scene was written by members of Theater in Asylum. Any opinions expressed are the opinions of the character in the scene.

¹⁶⁸ "Ranked Choice Voting." *New York City Campaign Finance Board*, <https://www.nycfb.info/nyc-votes/ranked-choice-voting/>. Accessed 10 May 2021. Unless otherwise noted, all ranked choice voting process explanations were taken from this source.

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If someone gets more than 50% of the vote, we're done. That person is crowned queen. Or... I guess, wins the Democratic nomination for mayor. This is a democracy! Not a monarchy.

Yeah, if someone gets 50% on the first round of voting, which counts everyone's first choice, we're done. They win.

If no one gets 50% on the first round... which is I think is likely with such a crowded field... then the last place person is eliminated and those votes get converted to those peoples' second choice. Yeah. If my first choice comes in last place before someone else gets 50% of the vote, my vote goes to my second choice. If no one gets 50% in that second round and my second choice is again in last place, the process repeats and converts my vote to my third choice, fourth choice, maybe even fifth choice... until someone has 50% of the vote.

Sounds complicated, but it's great. More choices! Like, say, I'm flying into New York, CLEARLY I want to land at JFK. But if there's not a flight available, OBVIOUSLY my second choice is LaGuardia. And *[takes a deep breath]* I guess Newark is my third choice. Fourth choice, if none of those are available... I don't know. I guess Stewart? Fifth? Yikes. I would never want to fly into NYC but have to land at an airport really far away, like in Connecticut or something. So yeah, I would rank JFK, LaGuardia, Newark, Stewart, then.... I should probably find another. Ranked choice is good. We get more choice.

Wait. Mayoral candidates. We're not talking about airports. How are people ranking the candidates?

Progressives¹⁶⁹ are probably putting Dianne Morales first, she's the farthest left,¹⁷⁰ and Maya Wiley second, she's got all the progressive priorities.¹⁷¹ There's Scott Stringer but... Oh I don't know.¹⁷²

If someone is prioritizing experience in city government there's Eric Adams.¹⁷³ He even claims he's been sleeping in his office as Brooklyn Borough President¹⁷⁴ cause he's such a hard worker, he doesn't have time to go home. And he's been around city government forever. As has Scott Stringer¹⁷⁵... There's also Kathryn Garcia, she's been around city government for a long time.¹⁷⁶ Shaun Donovan has worked in the federal government.¹⁷⁷ So maybe Eric, Kathryn,

¹⁶⁹ Maldonado, Samantha. "Wiley and Morales Could Attract Stringer Defectors in NYC Mayoral Race." *The City*, 29 Apr 2021, <https://www.thecity.nyc/2021/4/29/22411059/wiley-morales-could-get-stringer-supporters-nyc-mayoral>.

¹⁷⁰ Getman, Grace. "Dianne Morales Lays Out Initial Policy Vision for Progressive Mayoral Campaign." *Gotham Gazette*, 5 Apr 2021, <https://www.gothamgazette.com/city/10286-dianne-morales-policy-vision-progressive-campaign-nyc-mayor>.

¹⁷¹ "Plans." *Maya for Mayor*, <https://mayawileyformayor.com/plans/>. Accessed 24 May 2021.

¹⁷² Miller, Justin, and Nia Prater. "Scott Stringer Hemorrhages Endorsements After Sexual Assault Allegation." *Intelligencer*, 3 May 2021, <https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2021/05/working-families-party-withdraws-scott-stringer-endorsement.html>.

¹⁷³ "I Am YOU!!" *Eric Adams for Mayor*, <https://ericadams2021.com/about/>. Accessed 10 May 2021.

¹⁷⁴ Ramirez, Jeanine. "Amid Coronavirus Pandemic, the Brooklyn Borough President Turns Borough Hall Into a Residence." *Spectrum News NY1*, 19 May 2020, <https://www.ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs/coronavirus-blog/2020/05/20/borough-president-turns-borough-hall-into-a-residence>.

¹⁷⁵ "Experience to Lead." *Stringer for Mayor*, <https://stringerformayor.com/experience/>. Accessed 10 May 2021.

¹⁷⁶ "About Kathryn." *Garcia for NYC Mayor*, <https://www.kgfornyc.com/about-us/>. Accessed 9 May 2021.

¹⁷⁷ "Meet Shaun." *Shaun for NYC*, <https://shaunfornyc.com/about/>. Accessed 9 May 2021.

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Shaun, Scott? Their policies are so different though! How would someone prioritizing government experience order them?

If someone is prioritizing business experience, which, you know, we'll probably need with this COVID recovery,¹⁷⁸ maybe they're ranking Ray McGuire¹⁷⁹ first. He's a successful Wall Street executive. Andrew Yang also campaigns as a businessman, a job-creator... with mixed success.¹⁸⁰

What to do????

There are also candidates who aren't polling high or fundraising a lot. Art Chang, I love him. Paperboy Prince, yes! There's also Aaron Foldenauer, Isaac Wright, and Joycelyn Taylor. None of them are frontrunners. If I vote for them, will I spoil the vote? Is that like voting for Jill Stein in 2016? No. Ranked choice voting solves that. I could vote for Art Chang, and if he gets eliminated before someone has 50% of the vote, my vote will be converted to my second choice.

Ok, ok, ok. I have a favorite. Should I put them first? But what if they don't win *BUT* they also don't come in last... What if someone gets 50% of the vote before my first choice is eliminated and my vote never gets converted to my second choice? I think my second choice person has more popular support. So maybe I should put my second choice first...

No. This is crazy. I'm going to rank my first choice first and my second choice second. And my third? Ugh, to even include them? And what about fourth and fifth? What to do???? What if we just end up with some corporate puppet in City Hall? Or... or....

[Transition to Punch and Judy scene]

Scene 8: Cuomo Punch and De Blasio Judy¹⁸¹

[Throughout the scene, CUOMO and DE BLASIO use ridiculous, ugly voices. Everyone else is more human.]

¹⁷⁸ Iverac, Mirela. "Economic Impact Of Coronavirus Shutdown On NYC." *NPR*, 10 Sep 2020, <https://www.npr.org/2020/09/10/911592347/economic-impact-of-coronavirus-shutdown-on-nyc>.

¹⁷⁹ "About Ray." *Ray for Mayor*, <https://www.rayformayor.com/about>. Accessed 10 May 2021.

¹⁸⁰ Rosenthal, Brian M., and Katie Glueck. "Andrew Yang Promised to Create 100,000 Jobs. He Ended Up With 150." *The New York Times*, 10 May 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/01/nyregion/andrew-yang-venture-for-america-jobs.html>.

¹⁸¹ The text in this scene was written by members of Theater in Asylum, except where indicated. Any opinions expressed are the opinions of the characters in the scene.

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DEER: Ladies, gentlemen, boys and girls, those above and beyond, welcome to...The Tale of Hizzoner (His Honor) and The Love Gov,¹⁸² the two star-crossed frenemies who you may know as..... Andrew Cuomo [*thunder sound effect*] and Bill de Blasio [*thunder sound effect*].

New Yorkers in the house will surely recognize their reviled Governor and Mayor, but what they may not know is the storied past, the intrigue, and the—dare I mentioned it?— friendship, between these two political creatures wreaking havoc on our great city.

It all started one remarkably average, if slightly windy night¹⁸³ in 1957.¹⁸⁴ That same night the United States' first attempt to launch a satellite into space FAILED when the satellite exploded on the launchpad.¹⁸⁵ Coincidence? I think not.

[Transition]

MAMA CUOMO: Oh Mario,¹⁸⁶ isn't he adorable?

MARIO CUOMO: Yes dear. A born governor.

BABY CUOMO: Wahhh! Waaah!!!

MAMA CUOMO: Shh, hush now, Andrew.

BABY CUOMO: Wahhh! I will not “[bow] to cancel culture!”¹⁸⁷ Wahhhh!!!

[MAMA CUOMO offers BABY CUOMO a rattle]

BABY CUOMO: Gimme that!

[BABY CUOMO grabs rattle. Whacks mom with it.]

MARIO CUOMO: That's my boy.

¹⁸² Chon, Monica. “The Cuomo Brothers' Latest Comedic Exchange Involved a New Nickname: ‘Love Gov.’” *Oprah Daily*, 9 Apr 2020, <https://www.oprahdaily.com/entertainment/tv-movies/a32095770/andrew-chris-cuomo-nickname-love-gov-interview/>.

¹⁸³ “New York City, NY Weather History.” *Weather Underground*, <https://www.wunderground.com/history/daily/us/ny/new-york-city/KLGA/date/1957-12-6>. Accessed 16 May 2021.

¹⁸⁴ Andrew Cuomo's birthday is December 6, 1957. “Andrew Cuomo.” *Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Andrew-Cuomo>. Accessed 16 May 2021.

¹⁸⁵ “Vanguard TV3.” *NASA Space Science Data Coordinated Archive*, <https://nssdc.gsfc.nasa.gov/nmc/spacecraft/display.action?id=VAGT3>. Accessed 16 May 2021.

¹⁸⁶ “Andrew Cuomo”

¹⁸⁷ Callahan, Maureen. “Andrew Cuomo's hilarious ‘cancel culture’ excuse,” 12 Mar 2021, <https://nypost.com/2021/03/12/andrew-cuomos-hilarious-cancel-culture-excuse/>.

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DEER: Ah yes. Andrew went on to many great things, including serving as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development under President Clinton and New York's 64th Attorney General before being elected governor in 2010.¹⁸⁸

BABY CUOMO: That's right!

DEER: Now let's take a look at another villain's origin story. Before he was Hizzoner, he was Bill De Blasio. And actually before that he was Warren De Blasio-Wilhelm.¹⁸⁹ And before that he was Warren Wilhelm Jr.¹⁹⁰ And before that, a fetus!

[Thunder! Transition to the De Blasios in a car]

DEER: It was a dark and exceedingly unremarkable night for two Connecticut residents in 1961.¹⁹¹

MAMA DE BLASIO *[pregnant and in labor]*: Honey, can't we just stop at a Connecticut hospital?

PAPA DE BLASIO: No! My son will be born in New York City!¹⁹²

[MAMA DE BLASIO groans]

PAPA DE BLASIO: He'll be a great man. A king. A CEO. Maybe even... mayor!

[MAMA DE BLASIO groans more, reacting to the idea]

PAPA DE BLASIO: Oh, quiet now.

MAMA DE BLASIO: Then you better drive faster!

[MAMA DE BLASIO whacks PAPA. A fight ensues. The scene transitions as they whack each other with increasing fury. We see New York City. Another crack of thunder, then a baby's cry.]

DEER: And Bill de Blasio was indeed born in Manhattan. He went on to serve as a City Councilmember, as Public Advocate, and finally in 2014, as New York City Mayor.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁸ "Andrew Cuomo."

¹⁸⁹ "Bill de Blasio." *Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Bill-de-Blasio>. Accessed 16 May 2021.

¹⁹⁰ "Bill de Blasio."

¹⁹¹ "Bill de Blasio."

¹⁹² De Blasio's parents drove from their home in Connecticut to a New York City hospital for his birth due to concerns about birth complications. Hernández, Javier C. "From His Father's Decline, de Blasio 'Learned What Not to Do.'" *The New York Times*, 13 Oct 2013, <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/14/nyregion/from-his-fathers-decline-de-blasio-learned-what-not-to-do.html>.

¹⁹³ "Bill de Blasio."

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Now here's where our story truly begins. While we don't know what originated the bad blood between these two petty men, we do know that one of their earliest scuffles was in January of 2015.

[Image of snow over NYC. CUOMO watching the TV.]

REPORTER: Heavy snow is about to fall over New York City. We're talking 18 inches, 2 feet, maybe more.¹⁹⁴ The subway has never shut down due to snow in its entire 110-year history,¹⁹⁵ but some riders are beginning to wonder, will this storm be too much? Riders look with worry to Mayor De Blasio.

DE BLASIO *[on the TV]*: "Get off the roads, get off the streets, get off the sidewalks. This will most likely be one of the largest blizzards in the history of New York City."¹⁹⁶ As for the MTA—

CUOMO: I know this buster isn't talking about the MTA! Because news flash! I control the MTA!¹⁹⁷

[Picks up phone]

CUOMO: Melissa! Get me a TV. And put me on it! In Fact! Put me on every TV in New York City!

[Transition to DE BLASIO watching TV]

CUOMO: To keep New Yorkers safe, the subway system will... SHUT DOWN! Tonight at 11pm!¹⁹⁸

DE BLASIO: What?!

[Picks up phone]

DE BLASIO: Phillip! Get me on TV. PHILLIP! It's TV TIME!

[Dueling news conferences]

¹⁹⁴ Durkin, Erin, Chelsea Rose Marcus, Sasha Goldstein, and Corky Siemaszko. "Monster blizzard slams NYC: MTA subways, commuter trains to shut down as city prepares for the worst." *The New York Daily News*, 26 Jan 2015, <https://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/winter-weather-bringing-nyc-state-halt-article-1.2092345>.

¹⁹⁵ Flegenheimer, Matt. "Leaders in New York and New Jersey Defend Shutdown for a Blizzard That Wasn't." *The New York Times*, 27 Jan 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/28/nyregion/new-york-blizzard.html>.

¹⁹⁶ Durkin, "Monster blizzard slams NYC: MTA subways, commuter trains to shut down as city prepares for the worst."

¹⁹⁷ Penner, Larry. "Who really controls the New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority?" *Mass Transit*, 12 Jun 2020, <https://www.masstransitmag.com/management/blog/21141947/who-really-controls-the-new-york-metropolitan-transportation-authority>.

¹⁹⁸ Gonen, Yoav, Carl Campanile, Jamie Schram and Kate Sheehy. "De Blasio: I was frozen out of decision to shut down subways." *The New York Post*, 27 Jan 2015, <https://nypost.com/2015/01/27/de-blasio-i-learned-subways-were-closing-when-you-did/>.

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DEER: It was a confusing series of events, with the Mayor seemingly caught off guard about the governor's decision.

DE BLASIO: "We found out just as it was being announced . . . We did not get a lot of advance notice."¹⁹⁹ "I think it was a very big move and, certainly, something we would have liked to have more dialogue on."²⁰⁰

[CUOMO turns from his conference to DE BLASIO. Maybe they step out of the frame?]

CUOMO: I gave you notice! My office told yours at 4:30!²⁰¹

DE BLASIO: Before you announced it on TV at 4:45!²⁰²

CUOMO: Sorry if I interrupted one of your naps²⁰³ Buddy-O, but that's plenty of time!

DE BLASIO: No it's not!

CUOMO: Yes it is!

DE BLASIO: No!

CUOMO: Yes!

DE BLASIO: No!

CUOMO: Yes!

[A puppet fight ensues. After, they separate]

DEER: In the end, only 10 inches of snow fell that night, leading many to call the subway shutdown a huge -- and costly -- mistake.²⁰⁴ But in the aftermath, the two actually conducted themselves in a surprisingly dignified and reserved manner.

DE BLASIO: "These situations, to be fair, people are trying to make decisions in real time with constantly changing information. You do the best you can."²⁰⁵

¹⁹⁹ Gonen, "De Blasio: I was frozen out of decision to shut down subways."

²⁰⁰ Gonen, "De Blasio: I was frozen out of decision to shut down subways."

²⁰¹ Gonen, "De Blasio: I was frozen out of decision to shut down subways."

²⁰² Gonen, "De Blasio: I was frozen out of decision to shut down subways."

²⁰³ Jorgensen, Jillian, and Dan Rivoli. "Gov. Cuomo says he doesn't nap on the job in swipe at Mayor de Blasio." *The New York Daily News*, 9 Aug 2017, <https://www.nydailynews.com/news/politics/cuomo-doesn-ntp-job-swipe-de-blasio-article-1.3398215>.

²⁰⁴ Flegenheimer, "Leaders in New York and New Jersey Defend Shutdown for a Blizzard That Wasn't."

²⁰⁵ Yakas, Ben. "Cuomo Kept De Blasio In The Dark On Blizzard Subway Shutdown." *Gothamist*, 28 Jan 2015, <https://gothamist.com/news/cuomo-kept-de-blasio-in-the-dark-on-blizzard-subway-shutdown>.

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CUOMO: “You make big decisions based on the best information you have...”²⁰⁶

DEER: But, the tenuous peace was not to last....

DE BLASIO: “There are some politicians who suddenly believe it is stylish to visit NYCHA”²⁰⁷

DEER: I wonder who he’s talking...

DE BLASIO: *[Cutting off the DEER]* “I’m talking about the governor, let’s be real.”²⁰⁸

CUOMO: “The job of government is to get things done for people. Not to issue press releases saying ‘I propose doing this.’”²⁰⁹

DE BLASIO: “The bullying is nothing new. That’s classic Andrew Cuomo.”²¹⁰

DEER: But it wasn’t just our two big boys throwing insults, it was practically a job requirement if you worked for them!

BILL HYERS: I’m Bill Hyers, I managed Mr. De Blasio’s campaign in 2013 and Tweet Tweet *[typing on phone]* “Andrew Cuomo is an idiot.”²¹¹

CUOMO: I am not an idiot!

CUOMO OFFICIAL: Well! I’m an official for Mr. Cuomo and I think “What we’re dealing with is a mayor who is universally acknowledged to be bumbling and incompetent.”²¹²

DE BLASIO: I am not bumbling or incompetent!

CUOMO: Hey! I’ve tried to be his friend, in fact! *[becoming “professional”]* “We use the word ‘friend’ in politics often and sometimes casually. But the new mayor of New York truly is a friend in the deepest sense of the word.”²¹³

DEER: So... what happened?

²⁰⁶ Yakas, “Cuomo Kept De Blasio In The Dark On Blizzard Subway Shutdown.”

²⁰⁷ Goldmacher, Shane, and J. David Goodman. “Inside One of America’s Ugliest Political Feuds: Cuomo vs. de Blasio.” *The New York Times*, 22 Apr 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/22/nyregion/cuomo-deblasio-feud-nyc.html>.

²⁰⁸ Goldmacher, “Inside One of America’s Ugliest Political Feuds: Cuomo vs. de Blasio.”

²⁰⁹ Goldmacher, “Inside One of America’s Ugliest Political Feuds: Cuomo vs. de Blasio.”

²¹⁰ Ngo, Emily. “De Blasio Says Cuomo Bullying ‘Is Nothing New’ Following Ron Kim Call.” *Spectrum News NY1*, 18 Feb 2021, <https://www.ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs/politics/2021/02/19/de-blasio-says-cuomo--bullying-is-nothing-new--following-ron-kim-call>.

²¹¹ Newman, Andy. “Harlem Deer Caught in City-State Tussle Has Died.” *The New York Times*, 16 Dec 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/16/nyregion/harlem-deer.html>.

²¹² Orden, Erica. “Spat over NYC protests reignites long running feud between Cuomo and de Blasio.” *CNN*, 3 Jun 2020, <https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/03/politics/new-york-city-protests-cuomo-de-blasio/index.html>.

²¹³ Orden, “Spat over NYC protests reignites long running feud between Cuomo and de Blasio.”

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CUOMO: Well I continued to look deep, deep down, and I realized how profoundly, and deeply better at my job I am than him.

DE BLASIO: No!

CUOMO: Yes!

DEER: Okay. It's March 2020, with COVID cases rising in NYC, what will you do?

DE BLASIO: "New Yorkers should be prepared right now for the possibility of a shelter-in-place order."²¹⁴

CUOMO: What? No. "There's not going to be any 'you must stay in your house,' because, again, that will just cause people to go somewhere else, and that will be counterproductive. There is not going to be any quarantine, no one is going to lock you in your home. No one is going to tell you you can't leave the city. That is not going to happen."²¹⁵

DE BLASIO: "For anyone who wants to get educated: It's quite a clear model. I want to be explicit. I'm talking about the San Francisco model. It is not the same thing as closing the bridges, closing the borders."²¹⁶

CUOMO: Today I am signing the "New York State on PAUSE" executive order directing that as of "8PM on Sunday, March 22, all non-essential businesses statewide will be closed" and all "non-essential gatherings of individuals of any size for any reason... are canceled or postponed at this time."²¹⁷

DE BLASIO: That's a shelter-in-place!

CUOMO: No it's not! It's a pause!

DE BLASIO: It's a shelter! And it's mine!

CUOMO: No you don't! You get your paws off my pause!

DEER: OKAAAAAAY! LET'S ALL PAUSE!

DEER: It doesn't have to be this way. If the mayor and the governor got along, we could get so much done for the city. Mayor David Dinkins and Governor Mario Cuomo worked together to

²¹⁴ Hill, Michael, and Jennifer Peltz. "Shelter in place? NYC braces but governor knocks idea down." *AP News*, 17 Mar 2020, <https://apnews.com/article/1b7833798b91b505c5dedf03eada148c>.

²¹⁵ Hill, "Shelter in place? NYC braces but governor knocks idea down."

²¹⁶ Eisenberg, Amanda. "De Blasio aims to clarify 'shelter-in-place' scenario." *Politico*, 18 Mar 2020, <https://www.politico.com/states/new-york/city-hall/story/2020/03/18/de-blasio-aims-to-clarify-shelter-in-place-scenario-9422018>.

²¹⁷ "Governor Cuomo Signs the 'New York State on PAUSE' Executive Order." *New York State: Governor Andrew M. Cuomo*, 20 Mar 2020, <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-signs-new-york-state-pause-executive-order>.

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fund assisted housing for the mentally ill and homeless during their tenure.²¹⁸ Mayor Mike Bloomberg and Governor George Pataki worked together to revitalize the financial district in the wake of 9/11.²¹⁹ And Mayor Rudy Giuliani...

GIULIANI: Fake news!

DEER: I didn't even say anything.

GIULIANI: Well it's still fake!

DEER: Oh brother.

DEER: Sure, some friction between mayors and governors is inevitable. But they don't have to be at each other's throats over every little thing. If they get along, they *could* do so much... fixing the subway for example.

[CUOMO and DE BLASIO fly by in a brawl]

But that'll never happen with those two. Both of them seem to despise each other even more than they're each despised by their constituents. Governor Cuomo went from celebrated heir of the Cuomo political dynasty, complete with self-described Cuomo-sexuals²²⁰ at the height of the pandemic, to a whining, blanket-wrapped baby, complaining about cancel culture.

CUOMO: "I have not had a sexual relationship that was inappropriate. Period," "I never harassed anyone. I never abused anyone. I never assaulted anyone. And I never would." "People know the difference between playing to politics, and bowing to cancel culture and the truth."²²¹

DE BLASIO *[Giving an interview on TV, trying to ignore CUOMO]*: "He should resign, I've been saying this for months."²²²

CUOMO: Are you crazy?!

DE BLASIO: "He can't continue to lead —"²²³

²¹⁸ Powell, Mike. "Another Look at the Dinkins Administration, and Not by Giuliani." *The New York Times*, 29 Oct 2009, <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/26/nyregion/26dinkins.html>.

²¹⁹ Smith, Chris. "The Mayor and His Money." *New York Magazine*, 23 Sep 2005, <https://nymag.com/nymetro/news/people/features/14573/index1.html>.

²²⁰ Rainbow, Randy. "ANDY! - A Randy Rainbow Song Parody," uploaded by Randy Rainbow, 6 Apr 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Kydr2a7Uy4>. Accessed 16 May 2021.

²²¹ Hogan, Bernadette, and Lia Eustachewich. "Gov. Cuomo refuses to resign, blames 'cancel culture' for sex-harass scandal." *The New York Post*, 12 Mar 2021, <https://nypost.com/2021/03/12/gov-cuomo-refuses-to-resign-over-sexual-harassment-scandal/>.

²²² Singman, Brooke. "De Blasio repeats call for Cuomo to resign amid scandals: 'He just has to go.'" *Fox News*, 29 Apr 2021, <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/de-blasio-repeats-call-cuomo-resign-scandals>.

²²³ Singman, "De Blasio repeats call for Cuomo to resign amid scandals: 'He just has to go.'"

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CUOMO: Yes I can!

DE BLASIO: “–the nursing home scandal, sexual harassment and assault scandal, using his staff to write his book.”²²⁴

CUOMO: I WROTE IT!

DE BLASIO: “I mean, it just, it doesn't end.”²²⁵

CUOMO: For the love of Mario Cuomo!

DE BLASIO: "He just has to go.”²²⁶

CUOMO: No!

[CUOMO butts into the interview]

CUOMO: "I believe in action. I believe in results. I believe in making a difference in people's lives. I don't believe it's about giving speeches about values.”²²⁷

DE BLASIO: Come on. Let's be real.

CUOMO: Oh, like you're a paragon of accountability. What about July 13th, 2019 when there was a massive power failure and you were 1,000 miles away?²²⁸

DE BLASIO: I was a little busy.

CUOMO: Busy doing what? Where were you when New York needed a mayor?

DE BLASIO: Iowa.²²⁹

CUOMO: Where in Iowa?

DE BLASIO: Waterloo.²³⁰

CUOMO: And what were you doing in Waterloo, Iowa?

²²⁴ Singman, “De Blasio repeats call for Cuomo to resign amid scandals: 'He just has to go.'”

²²⁵ Singman, “De Blasio repeats call for Cuomo to resign amid scandals: 'He just has to go.'”

²²⁶ Singman, “De Blasio repeats call for Cuomo to resign amid scandals: 'He just has to go.'”

²²⁷ Goldmacher, “Inside One of America's Ugliest Political Feuds: Cuomo vs. de Blasio.”

²²⁸ Mays, Jeffrey C. “The Power Went Out. Where Was de Blasio?” *The New York Times*, 14 Jul 2014, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/14/nyregion/bill-de-blasio-nyc-blackout.html>.

²²⁹ Mays, “The Power Went Out. Where Was de Blasio?”

²³⁰ Mays, “The Power Went Out. Where Was de Blasio?”

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DE BLASIO: Running for president.

CUOMO: *[Turns to the TV camera]* "Mayors are important. Situations like this come up and you have to be on site, I believe that... I'm governor of New York, I have been for eight years. I can count the number of times I leave the state, basically on my fingers."²³¹

DE BLASIO: You know? Maybe our state would be better if you did leave!

CUOMO: Excuse me?

DE BLASIO: You heard me, "resign right now!" "[You are] literally in the way of us saving lives!"²³²

CUOMO: ME resign? Take a look in the mirror yourself buddy-boy!

DE BLASIO: What?! No! New Yorkers need me.

CUOMO: For what?!

DE BLASIO: I ran a progressive campaign. Tale of two cities.²³³ I'm fixing New York!

CUOMO: But you didn't do it! You were elected partly because of your promise to make changes to NYPD practices and oversight. But after Eric Gardner's murder, your relationship with the police really started to change. Efforts to reform the criminal justice system, such as firing the police officer who choked Garner to death and ending solitary confinement in the city's jails, totally stalled. And then when the Uprising for Black Lives Matter ricocheted throughout NYC, you said the cops who drove their police cruisers into a crowd of protesters had "acted appropriately".²³⁴

DE BLASIO: I walked that comment back!²³⁵

CUOMO: Hmmm. Maybe I'll fire you.

DE BLASIO: Fire me?! You can't fire me!

²³¹ Mays, "The Power Went Out. Where Was de Blasio?"

²³² Quinn, Melissa. "De Blasio says Cuomo is "literally in the way of us saving lives" by refusing to resign." *CBS News*, 14 Mar 2021, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/bill-de-blasio-andrew-cuomo-resign-face-the-nation/>.

²³³ Karnie, Annie. "How Bill de Blasio's nimble 2013 mayoral election campaign got Democratic Party back into Gracie Mansion." *The New York Daily News*, 5 Nov 2013, <https://www.nydailynews.com/news/election/bill-de-blasio-nimble-campaign-made-mayor-article-1.1507754>.

²³⁴ Berman, Russell. "How the Mayor of New York Lost His City." *The Atlantic*, 20 Jun 2020, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2020/06/how-bill-de-blasio-failed/612916/>.

²³⁵ Berman, "How the Mayor of New York Lost His City."

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CUOMO: Yes! “A mayor can be removed. It has not happened. I cannot find a precedent. But theoretically it is legally possible.”²³⁶

[DE BLASIO lunges at CUOMO. They fight.]

DEER: And there you have it folks. Two angry, petulant men, both hypocrites and menaces to our city in every way.

CUOMO: Hey!

DE BLASIO: Yeah! Who are you anyways?!

DEER: Me?

CUOMO: Yeah! I’ve had it with you badmouthing us!

DEER: Well you can call me J.R. for Jackie Robinson or Lefty for my, uh, antler here. *[indicates the crumpled left antler]* I was picked up in Jackie Robinson Park on December 15, 2016, and was kept in an East Harlem animal shelter for two days waiting for you both to figure out what to do with me.²³⁷

DE BLASIO: Well what happened to you little deary? I’m sure Mr. Love Gov finally gave into reason, and listened to my far superior plan.

DEER: Well your plan was to uh, sorry kids, euthanize me. But old Guv here wanted to take me up to Inwood Hill Park.²³⁸

CUOMO: So what happened?

DEER: The governor won.²³⁹

CUOMO: *[To DE BLASIO]* HA! In your face!

DEER: But a Harlem Animal Shelter isn’t the most soothing place for a deer like me, so before they could take me to a Park uptown, I... I...

DE BLASIO: What, Lefty?

²³⁶ Raymond, Adam K. “Cuomo Claims He Could Remove de Blasio — But We’re ‘Not at That Point.’” *Intelligencer*, 2 Jun 2020, <https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2020/06/cuomo-claims-he-could-remove-de-blasio-but-wont-for-now.html>.

²³⁷ Newman, “Harlem Deer Caught in City-State Tussle Has Died.”

²³⁸ Newman, Andy. “Captured Harlem Deer Gets a Reprieve, but Faces Death Hours Later.” *The New York Times*, 15 Dec 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/15/nyregion/harlem-deer-is-captured.html>.

²³⁹ Newman, “Harlem Deer Caught in City-State Tussle Has Died.”

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DEER: I died.²⁴⁰

CUOMO: Died? You killed Lefty?

DE BLASIO: No! You took too long moving Lefty to Inwood Hill Park!

CUOMO: No.... This is your fault!

DE BLASIO: No, it's your fault!

[They repeat this over and over ("Your fault!"), as it escalates into a fight.]

DEER *[Now with a halo, clouds in background]*: And there you have it: our star-crossed frenemies, both Democratic leaders in a blue state, are fighting still to this day. I'm Lefty! And I was a real white-tailed deer! Google me! Goodbye now!

[DE BLASIO and CUOMO are still fighting when the lights fade.]

Scene 9: Anxiety Voter #4²⁴¹

ANXIETY VOTER: De Blasio and Cuomo are the worst. I DO NOT want a repeat of that. But also, like, De Blasio has been annoying all on his own. Why do so many mayors go on to wreak havoc on so many people? I mean, come on. RUDY GIULIANI? Jeez.²⁴² Bloomberg too.²⁴³ It should be illegal for New York mayors to run for president.²⁴⁴ Or work for foreign governments.²⁴⁵ Or... I don't know, do anything. Why would anyone want to be mayor anyway? I guess they want to fix the city. There's so much that's wrong.

Policing... where to begin?²⁴⁶ Close Rikers. More mental health services.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁰ Newman, "Harlem Deer Caught in City-State Tussle Has Died."

²⁴¹ The text in this scene was written by members of Theater in Asylum. Any opinions expressed are the opinions of the character in the scene.

²⁴² Lieberman, Donna. "Rudy Giuliani Was Never Really America's Mayor." *Gotham Gazette*, 04 Dec 2020, <https://www.gothamgazette.com/opinion/9960-rudy-giuliani-never-really-americas-mayor>.

²⁴³ Astor, Maggie. "When Did Bloomberg Turn Against Stop-and-Frisk? When He Ran for President." *The New York Times*, 19 Feb 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/19/us/politics/michael-bloomberg-stop-and-frisk.html>.

²⁴⁴ Bump, Philip. "Presidential runs by New York City mayors, ranked." *The Washington Post*, 20 Sep 2019, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/09/20/presidential-runs-by-new-york-city-mayors-ranked/>.

²⁴⁵ "EXPLAINER: What to know about the Giuliani investigation." *AP News*, 29 Apr 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/us-news-europe-business-government-and-politics-d9235a7410d4a814ca9951dff8251155>.

²⁴⁶ Learn more about and compare the 2021 mayoral candidates' stances on policing here: <https://projects.thecity.nyc/meet-your-mayor/nypd.html>

²⁴⁷ Learn more about and compare the 2021 mayoral candidates' stances on criminal justice here: <https://projects.thecity.nyc/meet-your-mayor/criminal-justice.html>

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Housing! Gentrification! The rent is too damn high,²⁴⁸ and we need a living wage in this city.²⁴⁹ Healthcare. And like, public health. How will our city handle Covid long term?²⁵⁰ The subway... that's a hot mess,²⁵¹ but the mayor can't fix that. How will our city prepare for climate change?²⁵²

How will the next mayor make our city more livable? And safe. Safe for everything. There's so much anti blackness,²⁵³ anti semitism,²⁵⁴ and violence against people of Asian descent.²⁵⁵ It's horrible!

This city should be for everyone. Everyone should be safe.

Housed. Fed. Educated. Vaccinated. And forced to see more theater!

I know, I know, all the candidates want to make things better. But how?!

[Transition to The First Debate]

Scene 10: The First Debate²⁵⁶

MODERATOR: Welcome to a magically-abridged version of the first Mayoral Democratic Mayoral Debate. This debate aired on May 13th and took a whopping two hours, but tonight, we're going to do this in 10 minutes. Everything in this scene, errr, debate, is verbatim quote from the candidate, just abridged by Theater in Asylum. Me, on the other hand... I'm a complete work of, might I say, excellent fiction and character development.

So let's begin. First, opening statements.

²⁴⁸ Learn more about and compare the 2021 mayoral candidates' stances on housing here: <https://projects.thecity.nyc/meet-your-mayor/housing.html>

²⁴⁹ Learn more about and compare the 2021 mayoral candidates' stances on labor here: <https://projects.thecity.nyc/meet-your-mayor/labor.html>

²⁵⁰ Learn more about and compare the 2021 mayoral candidates' stances on COVID recovery here: <https://projects.thecity.nyc/meet-your-mayor/corona-recovery.html>

²⁵¹ Learn more about and compare the 2021 mayoral candidates' stances on transportation here: <https://projects.thecity.nyc/meet-your-mayor/transportation.html>

²⁵² At the time of this writing, *The City* has not prepared a "Meet Your Mayor" guide focused on climate change. However, you can read about several of the candidates' climate plans here: <https://www.thecity.nyc/2021/4/13/22382815/new-york-city-climate-resilience-plans-mayoral-race-sandy>

²⁵³ Feuer, Alan. "Black New Yorkers Are Twice as Likely to Be Stopped by the Police, Data Shows." *The New York Times*, 30 Nov 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/23/nyregion/nypd-arrests-race.html>.

²⁵⁴ "NY Leads Nation in Antisemitic Attacks, Despite Sharp Decline in 2020, ADL Says." *NBC New York*, 27 Apr 2021, <https://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local/ny-leads-nation-in-antisemitic-attacks-despite-sharp-decline-in-2020-adl-says/3021419/>.

²⁵⁵ Chao, Eveline. "Mapping a Year of Anti-Asian Violence in New York City." *Curbed*, 17 May 2021, <https://www.curbed.com/2021/05/mapping-year-anti-asian-violence-new-york-city.html>.

²⁵⁶ The majority in text in this scene was taken from the Democratic mayoral primary debate on May 13, 2021. Unless otherwise noted, all candidate lines are direct quotes from the debate, with internal cuts noted in the text. Unless otherwise noted, all moderator text was written by members of Theater in Asylum.

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*[The candidates all enter and wave. There is a chorus of "Hello's".]*²⁵⁷

MODERATOR: *[flourished wave]* That's enough!

Next, let's turn to education. We'll start with Shaun Donovan.

DONOVAN: "Well [...] first of all, we can't end segregation in our schools without ending segregation in our housing, and I led the fight to give real meaning to the Fair Housing Act. When I was housing secretary for President Obama, we, in fact, when Donald Trump still had a Twitter account, he was lobbing racist attacks at my work to make sure people could live, wherever they choose in this city, in this country, and that has to be a key part of achieving real equality in our communities."²⁵⁸

MODERATOR: *[Flourish]* Mr Yang.

YANG: "Just today, I stood with state senator Toby Stavisky and declared that we're going to have an Education Opportunity Fund. [...] I remember when we received my son's autism diagnosis and for us at least it was a relief because we were struggling so much as first time parents, uh and we had the resources to be able to help our son get some of the extra help, that he needed, but so many families in New York City do not, many of them are immigrant, black and brown families."²⁵⁹

MODERATOR: *[Flourish]* Ms. Garcia.

GARCIA: "We need to stop talking about education as a scarcity. My plan to expand the number of high schools and use the University of Texas model, which means taking the top 10% from any middle school based on grade point average has seen real results, not only about racial integration but also economic integration..."²⁶⁰

MODERATOR: *[Flourish]* And we're going to go next to Ms. Wiley.

WILEY: "I have a plan, but I'm going to start with hiring two-thousand-five-hundred new teachers, because our most overcrowded schools, six hundred and eighteen of them are usually also our segregated black and Latino schools. [...] I'm also the first candidate to put out a gun violence prevention plan. And in that plan, I talked about putting trauma informed care in our schools, because our kids are traumatized, and that impacts their learning. And we're going to ensure they have all the supports and services to succeed."²⁶¹

MODERATOR: *[Flourish]* Thank you Ms. Wiley. Ms. Morales, to you.

²⁵⁷ These lines were improvised by members of Theater in Asylum.

²⁵⁸ Quote: Shaun Donovan. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor." Facebook, uploaded by Spectrum News NY1, 13 May 2021, <https://www.facebook.com/ny1news/videos/614175372854590>. Accessed 21 May 2021.

²⁵⁹ Quote: Andrew Yang. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

²⁶⁰ Quote: Kathryn Garcia. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

²⁶¹ Quote: Maya Wiley. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

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MORALES: “Yes. So the first thing I'm gonna say is that we can't wait to desegregate housing in order to desegregate our schools. [...] I am committing to an education executive order that will immediately begin to desegregate our schools. That means removing all barriers to access, [...] it means including redrawing boundaries of our school districts to make sure that there's increased access across the board, [...] and removing police from our schools, and instead replacing them with supportive services that we know our students need.”²⁶²

MODERATOR: “Thank you Ms. Morales. Mr Stringer.”²⁶³

DONOVAN: “Brian, I just want to be clear. I didn't say that we should wait to desegregate our schools. We have to do both at the same time and Dianne, you know that.”²⁶⁴

MORALES: “That is what you said though.”²⁶⁵

[ADAMS laughs]

MORALES: “You can play back the tape.”²⁶⁶

DONOVAN: “I-”²⁶⁷

ADAMS: “Oo, they feisty.”²⁶⁸

[MCGUIRE laughs]

DONOVAN: “I said we need to do both, and I have the most comprehensive—”²⁶⁹

MORALES: “You said that now, you said that now, and (you do) —”²⁷⁰

DONOVAN: “—plan in the race.”²⁷¹

STRINGER: *[Raises his hand]* “My turn.”²⁷²

[Most of the candidates including MORALES laughs]

²⁶² Quote: Dianne Morales. Spectrum News NY1. “Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor.”

²⁶³ Quote: Brian Lehrer. Spectrum News NY1. “Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor.”

²⁶⁴ Quote: Shaun Donovan. Spectrum News NY1. “Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor.”

²⁶⁵ Quote: Dianne Morales. Spectrum News NY1. “Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor.”

²⁶⁶ Quote: Dianne Morales. Spectrum News NY1. “Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor.”

²⁶⁷ Quote: Shaun Donovan. Spectrum News NY1. “Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor.”

²⁶⁸ Quote: Eric Adams. Spectrum News NY1. “Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor.”

²⁶⁹ Quote: Shaun Donovan. Spectrum News NY1. “Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor.”

²⁷⁰ Quote: Dianne Morales. Spectrum News NY1. “Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor.”

²⁷¹ Quote: Shaun Donovan. Spectrum News NY1. “Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor.”

²⁷² Quote: Scott Stringer. Spectrum News NY1. “Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor.”

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MODERATOR: "All right, Mr. Stringer, yes it is your turn."²⁷³

DONOVAN: "We need to do both."²⁷⁴

STRINGER: *[Raises hand again]* "My turn."²⁷⁵

[Light chuckles from the candidates]

MODERATOR: "Go ahead."²⁷⁶

STRINGER: "Look [...] we gotta have a real plan on day one. [...] First, triple the number of kids in NYC Under Three so we get childcare to send parents back to the workforce. Second, we gotta do what the private and the charters are doing, and the wealthy parents are doing, we need 2 teachers K-to-5 in every classroom because we need to focus our kids and give them every resource. Three, [...] we need to have after school that's equal around the city and I'm going to put \$200 million to do that."²⁷⁷

MODERATOR: *[Flourish]* Mr. Adams?

ADAMS: "I know that if you don't educate you will incarcerate. [...] We must have universal testing for dyslexia. One study shows that 30% of the prison population, they are dyslexic. We must look at the fair student funding to not only look at inside the schools but whatever conditions around the schools, and then we must ensure that our individual children, not only how they - what they learned but how they learn, and I'm going to focus on that."²⁷⁸

MODERATOR: *[Acknowledges no flourish necessary]* "Thank you very much."²⁷⁹

MCGUIRE: "Thank you. Listen there's nothing, there's very few things, more fundamental than education [...] If I randomly take 10 black and brown fourth graders, two maybe three can read, so the system needs to go from being this random pre-K to 12 to something that completely transforms. My plan is called "Cradle to Career". You can see it at rayformayor.com. The signature component of this is going to be making sure that no child leaves the third grade without the ability to read and do math. [...] And then we're going to go forward to make sure that in the eighth grade our children get exposed to summer jobs, career opportunities including vocational careers."²⁸⁰

²⁷³ Quote: Brian Lehrer. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

²⁷⁴ Quote: Shaun Donovan. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

²⁷⁵ Quote: Scott Stringer. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

²⁷⁶ Quote: Brian Lehrer. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

²⁷⁷ Quote: Scott Stringer. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

²⁷⁸ Quote: Eric Adams. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

²⁷⁹ Quote: Brian Lehrer. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

²⁸⁰ Quote: Ray McGuire. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

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MODERATOR: Thank you.

MODERATOR: Well, I really did love hearing about all your education priorities. I assume you all have fuller, more-detailed plans for education, including how to pay for it all?

[The candidates nod.]

MODERATOR: And I assume our audience can find all these plans on your websites?

[The candidates nod.]

MODERATOR: And I assume there are no over-promising, vague statements, no misdirection or un-paid-for initiatives there?

[The candidates shake their heads no, a little intimidated by the MODERATOR.]

All right. Now, I'd like to turn to some spicy moments. We've already seen one between Morales and Donovan.

STRINGER: My turn.²⁸¹

MODERATOR: Yes, Mr. Stringer, you were there too. But what about the rest of you? What will voters remember from your debate performance? Let's start with Mr. Yang.

*[YANG tries to speak. He is on mute.]*²⁸²

MODERATOR: I'm sorry Mr. Yang, you're on mute.

*[YANG getting more and more upset, trying to figure out how to unmute himself.]*²⁸³

MODERATOR: Aren't you a self-described tech guy?

[YANG nods aggressively, still trying to unmute.]

MODERATOR: Moving on. "Mr. Donovan, New York has spent a generation implementing various campaign finance reforms, [...] You are accepting [...] matching funds [this election cycle], but your father has spent millions of dollars to finance a supposedly independent outside group created to promote *your* candidacy with television ads. A preliminary look at this by the Campaign Finance Board says that the arrangement does not *appear* to break its rules, but

²⁸¹ This line was written by members of Theater in Asylum.

²⁸² Yes, this actually happened. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

²⁸³ This did not actually happen.

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doesn't it violate the spirit of the reforms that New York has spent a generation putting in place?"²⁸⁴

DONOVAN: "Well [...], let's be clear, there are dozens of these groups supporting almost every candidate. It's in this race, and in fact-"²⁸⁵

MORALES: "Not every candidate. Not every candidate."²⁸⁶

DONOVAN: "-Scott Stringer had 17 of these groups when he ran for Comptroller in 2013."²⁸⁷

STRINGER: "Don't get me involved in your daddy problems. / Nope. N-not me. Not me. No way. No way. I'm not getting involved in that."²⁸⁸

DONOVAN: / "I wanna be-I wanna be clear-"²⁸⁹

[Everyone laughs, but MCGUIRE the most]

MODERATOR: That's enough of that. Ms. Garcia, let's turn to you. Many of the candidates were recently embarrassed in a series of New York Times interviews in which they could not, even by a long-shot, say the median sales price for homes in Brooklyn. Affordable housing is a perennial issue in New York elections. How would you approach this issue?

GARCIA: "We have to fundamentally change our approach. [...] We have to put housing first, because you know what, housing heals. It makes it so you can keep a job, it makes it so your kids can get a better education, and it actually physically keeps you healthier. That is why my plan includes increasing the voucher amount to something you might actually be able to rent in the City of New York, for *those of us who knew the answer* to that question."²⁹⁰

[The candidates are scandalized by her shade. Especially DONOVAN. The MODERATOR comes on, sipping tea. Slurps loudly.]

MODERATOR: Delicious. Lets carry on with some candidate-on-candidate questions. We turn now, to Maya Wiley.

WILEY: "My question is to Eric Adams, Eric: 685,000 people. 85% black, 88% innocent—that's what Stop and Frisk was at its height that my former organization the ACLU proclaimed a racist practice and won a court case on, and just a year ago, you called it a great tool, uh, and have said that you used it. And I just want to know, because as a civil rights lawyer, all I can say is,

²⁸⁴ Quote: Errol Lewis. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

²⁸⁵ Quote: Shaun Donovan. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

²⁸⁶ Quote: Dianne Morales. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

²⁸⁷ Quote: Shaun Donovan. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

²⁸⁸ Quote: Scott Stringer. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

²⁸⁹ Quote: Shaun Donovan. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

²⁹⁰ Quote: Kathryn Garcia. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

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there was nothing okay about it, and it certainly was nothing more than lazy policing, certainly kept people's constitutional rights violated. How can New Yorkers trust *you* to protect *us* and to keep us safe from police misconduct?"²⁹¹

ADAMS: "You know thank—thank you so much, Maya, and uh every time you raise that question, it really just shows your failure of understanding of law enforcement. So let me give you, um, some—" ²⁹²

WILEY: "Well having chaired the New York City civilian complaint review board I certainly understand misconduct." ²⁹³

ADAMS: "And just as you sh—you chaired that and we both know that um, how much it was a failure under you, but th/-then y-you—" ²⁹⁴

WILEY: *[laughs]* "Getting Daniel Panteleo off the force was..." ²⁹⁵

ADAMS: "I told everyone at the beginning of the race: once candidates start getting desperate it's going to get really nasty, you know?" ²⁹⁶

[ADAMS and WILEY laugh]

ADAMS: "So, Maya, let me share this with you. Uh, let me give you some facts. I was the *leading* voice against the abuse of Stop and Frisk. Everyone knows that, I was the *leading* voice. I testified in federal court, the federal judge used my testimony to make her decision. [...] I *partnered* with Hakeem Jeffries, who's now the Congressman and introduced a bill in Albany, that talked about number one: the illegal use of quotas, and number two: keeping the database with Stop and Frisk. When you use Stop & Frisk—" ²⁹⁷

WILEY: "Database. A database!" ²⁹⁸

ADAMS: "When you use stop and frisk, if someone is hiding in a—an alleyway, four o'clock in the morning, and the police officers stop him, question him on what he's doing there, that is a legal stop. That is how you supposed to use—" ²⁹⁹

WILEY: "You and I both know that the reason that 88% of people were innocent, who were stopped and frisked is because it wasn't actually about anybody who was doing anything/ wrong

²⁹¹ Quote: Maya Wiley. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

²⁹² Quote: Eric Adams. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

²⁹³ Quote: Maya Wiley. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

²⁹⁴ Quote: Eric Adams. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

²⁹⁵ Quote: Maya Wiley. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

²⁹⁶ Quote: Eric Adams. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

²⁹⁷ Quote: Eric Adams. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

²⁹⁸ Quote: Maya Wiley. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

²⁹⁹ Quote: Eric Adams. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

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in the first place. In fact, the biggest excuse/was about the way people looked. I've seen the cases, I've watched them. That's why we got down-"³⁰⁰

ADAMS: "Maya, tell me something— Maya. Maya, did you speak up on this issue at all. Is there any place I can look?"³⁰¹

WILEY: "Yes actually, because I spent my whole life as a racial justice advocate/ including creating a criminal justice initiative."³⁰²

ADAMS: "That's not what I'm talking about."³⁰³

MODERATOR: Candidates, candidates. Woo! I think that's enough. The next question comes from Ray McGuire.

MCGUIRE: "Andrew Yang-- you have talked about technology being part of your platform going forward. At Venture for America, your mission was to help participants succeed in the tech sector, but you said the following: The program might simply not be the best fit for black applicants. How can New Yorkers trust you with creating and managing a budget that will equitably benefit *every single neighborhood in every single borough*, if your program was not fit for black applicants?"³⁰⁴

YANG: [*awkwardly*] "Thanks Ray... We have to do more, a, for the communities that are going to hurt the most right now in my administration would reflect the incredible diversity of our city. I'm so proud of the work that Venture for America did. [...] but I completely agree with you that we have to do much, much more to try and balance it out because if you look at the tech sector right now with does not represent New York City very well [...] because we all know what these tech companies look like."³⁰⁵

MCGUIRE: "Do you regret saying that?"³⁰⁶

YANG: "Oh, Ray it was, it was like a hypothetical where I was posing it to my team in order to challenge our thinking. But if you look at the numbers, we were working in Detroit, New Orleans, Cleveland-- cities our majority black, and our fellow representation actually ended up increasing the diversity in the firms we work with."³⁰⁷

MCGUIRE: "No. My question is simple: Do you regret saying that?"³⁰⁸

³⁰⁰ Quote: Maya Wiley. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

³⁰¹ Quote: Eric Adams. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

³⁰² Quote: Maya Wiley. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

³⁰³ Quote: Eric Adams. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

³⁰⁴ Quote: Ray McGuire. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

³⁰⁵ Quote: Eric Adams. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

³⁰⁶ Quote: Ray McGuire. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

³⁰⁷ Quote: Andrew Yang. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

³⁰⁸ Quote: Ray McGuire. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

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YANG: "I, I actually don't even remember saying that, but, I, like, if you say that you know it's documented somewhere I didn't want to come and say hey, didn't say that. But I genuinely don't remember making that statement."³⁰⁹

MODERATOR: Let's leave it at that. Let's leave it at that. For our closing, why don't we build some bridges. Make nice! Perhaps each of you can name a rival here tonight who you would like voters to rank as a number two choice. Mr Donovan.

DONOVAN: "Well I've said a number of times that I have deep respect for the civil rights work that Maya's done. I've been engaged in that civil rights work myself for decades and would support her as second."³¹⁰

MODERATOR: Hey now. This isn't the time to toot your own horn, Mr. Donovan. Ok, next is Mr. McGuire.

MCGUIRE: "You know that's a tough one, but I'd like to think that what Kathryn Garcia has done here is, uh, is uh respectable."³¹¹

MODERATOR: There you go. Ms. Wiley.

WILEY: "I've said for a long time it's Diane Morales. She's a long-time justice advocate and activist."³¹²

MODERATOR: Mr Adams.

ADAMS: "Still looking. I think all the candidates bring a special quality and I'm still looking at who would be our ask to do the number two."³¹³

MODERATOR: No answer? Okay. Come on now. *[ADAMS won't budge.]* All right... Miss Garcia.

GARCIA: "Well you know I haven't answered this question. You've asked me a couple of times. I, I feel like I, I don't have a number two now and I'll let you know as soon as I, as soon as I decide."³¹⁴

MODERATOR: Okay, Mr Stringer.

STRINGER: "No number two yet. Still trying to get to number one."³¹⁵

³⁰⁹ Quote: Andrew Yang. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

³¹⁰ Quote: Shaun Donovan. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

³¹¹ Quote: Ray McGuire. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

³¹² Quote: Maya Wiley. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

³¹³ Quote: Eric Adams. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

³¹⁴ Quote: Kathryn Garcia. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

³¹⁵ Quote: Scott Stringer. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

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MODERATOR: Aren't you all. Mr. Yang.

YANG: "Kathryn Garcia has delivered a ton of value for the people of New York City. She'd be my number two."³¹⁶

MODERATOR: Now that's more like it! Was that so hard? No. Okay, we'll finish with Miss Morales.

[MAYA WILEY beams, expecting to be named.]

MORALES: "You know, I've said this too. It's been fun to watch folks come a little bit closer to both my platform and using my language, and so I'm looking forward to waiting to see how close we can get people and that's how I'll decide my number two."³¹⁷

MODERATOR: Well that's all we have time for tonight. I'll remind our audiences that there are two more debates on June 2nd and 16th.³¹⁸ Theater in Asylum will of course be there with an online debate watch party.³¹⁹

Now all of you. Sashay. Away.

*[Each candidate slowly blinks off zoom. YANG is struggling.]*³²⁰

MODERATOR: Really Andrew?

[MODERATOR waves hand and they both disappear.]

Scene 11: Anxiety Voter #5³²¹

ANXIETY VOTER: All right, all right. I've got to do this.

What's on that ballot: mayor, city council, comptroller, public advocate, borough presidents.

³¹⁶ Quote: Andrew Yang. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

³¹⁷ Quote: Dianne Morales. Spectrum News NY1. "Democratic Primary Debate for Mayor."

³¹⁸ See the official city-sponsored debate schedule here:

<https://www.nycfb.info/media/press-releases/abc-nbc-and-spectrum-news-ny1-to-host-live-televised-debates-for-new-york-citys-2021-elections/>

³¹⁹ Read more about Theater in Asylum's upcoming events for the New York City 2021 Democratic Primary here:

<https://www.theaterinasyllum.com/the-debates-2021.html>.

³²⁰ This did not happen.

³²¹ The text in this scene was written by members of Theater in Asylum. Any opinions expressed are the opinions of the character in the scene.

THE DEBATES 2021

How do we vote? Ranked choice. We can rank up to five. If no one gets 50%, the last place candidate is eliminated and the people who voted for that candidate have their ballots converted to the second choice. This repeats until someone gets 50%.³²²

Who's running for mayor? Hahah, can I do it in alphabetical order? Or even, REVERSE alphabetical order? Andrew Yang, Maya Wiley, Scott Stringer, Dianne Morales, Ray McGuire, Kathryn Garcia, Shaun Donovan, Eric Adams.³²³ And many others. It's not just the frontrunners. Art Chang. I love him. Paper Boy Prince, too. And Aaron Foldenauer, Joycelyn Taylor, and Isaac Wright.³²⁴ Great! And with ranked choice voting, anything could happen!

Ok. I know what's on the ballot. I know how to rank my vote. I know where to vote. I found that on Theater in Asylum's voter guide. Theater in asylum dot com slash vote.³²⁵

I know when to vote. Early voting starts June 12.³²⁶ Anyone can request an absentee ballot.³²⁷ But I want to vote in person. I've got my vaccine. I want my sticker. Gotta take that dope selfie. And we can vote as late as Election Day, Tuesday, June 22, 2021. And I've got plenty of time. It's...

[Checks phone]

OH MY GOD. It's election day!!

[Turns, sprints comically through New York back to poll site.]

No no no! I've missed early voting! I wish I could fly! I wish the subways were reliable! I wish the bicycle taxis weren't a million dollars!

I am not missing this vote. I am *NOT* throwing away my shot. I wonder who Lin Manuel's voting for? No! Focus. Gotta vote gotta vote. Do I have my ID? No! Don't need one. This is New York.³²⁸ I'm already registered, some kind soul will greet me at the desk, I'm gonna sign the book, get the ballot, go to that weird booth cart thing, and I'm gonna DO THIS. Ok ok ok ok I'm HERE!

[They accidentally cut the line to vote, an angry person in line tells him to get to the back.]

³²² "Ranked Choice Voting." *New York City Campaign Finance Board*, <https://www.nycffb.info/nyc-votes/ranked-choice-voting/>. Accessed 10 May 2021. Unless otherwise noted, all ranked choice voting process explanations were taken from this source.

³²³ Spivack, Caroline. "Here's Everyone Running for New York City Mayor (So Far)." *Curbed*, 24 Mar 2021, <https://www.curbed.com/article/everyone-running-for-new-york-city-mayor.html>.

³²⁴ Smith, Rachel Holiday, and Allison Dikanovic. "Here's the Ballot Lineup for June 22 New York City Primaries." *The City*, 4 May 2021, <https://www.thecity.nyc/civic-newsroom/2021/5/4/22419895/ballot-set-june-22-new-york-city-primaries>.

³²⁵ Permanent link: <https://www.theaterinasyllum.com/voter-guide-2021.html>

³²⁶ "2021 Political Calendar." *New York State Board of Elections*, 16 Apr 2021, <https://www.elections.ny.gov/NYSBOE/law/2021PoliticalCalendar.pdf>.

³²⁷ The deadline to request an absentee ballot is June 15th (<https://www.elections.ny.gov/VotingDeadlines.html>). You can request an absentee ballot online here: <https://vote.nyc/page/absentee-voting-0>

³²⁸ You are not required to provide ID to vote in New York City. You can read about NYC's voter ID policy here: <https://vote.nyc/page/voter-id>

Scene 12: Finale Song

🎵 City mayor³²⁹ and comptroller³³⁰
And public advocate for sure³³¹
Borough presidents (five of them)³³²
City council (35 seats!!)³³³

Depending on where you call home
You might vote for more than those
Like Judges and District attorneys³³⁴
We'll decide who'll run this city!!

This election is a big one
Transformation's in the air
Ranked choice voting³³⁵ means your vote will
Count so make sure you are there

Early voting starts June 12 so
You can skip the crazy lines
Or if you're too busy then
Election day will be just fine! PAUSE: "June 22!!!!"³³⁶

We are here to make sure that you have everything you should know!
Theater in asylum dot com slash vote³³⁷ is where you should go!

And if you forget who's running in these races
Here's a little recap for ya just in case

City council (two thirds of it!)
Comptroller public advocate
Borough presidents and yes

³²⁹ Read more about the candidates running for mayor here:

<https://www.thecity.nyc/22233474/the-race-for-nyc-mayor-whos-running-to-run-this-town-in-2021>

³³⁰ Read more about the comptroller race here:

<https://www.thecity.nyc/22233698/what-to-know-about-the-2021-city-comptrollers-race-in-new-york>

³³¹ Read more about the public advocate election here:

<https://www.thecity.nyc/22233762/what-you-need-to-know-about-the-public-advocate-race-in-2021>

³³² Read more about the five borough president races here:

<https://www.thecity.nyc/22233782/what-you-need-to-know-about-the-borough-president-races>

³³³ Read more about the city council races here:

<https://www.thecity.nyc/22233596/what-to-know-about-the-2021-new-york-city-council-races>

³³⁴ Different boroughs and city council districts may have different candidates on the ballot. Preview your sample ballot here:

<https://findmypollsite.vote.nyc/>

³³⁵ Learn more about ranked choice voting in NYC here: <https://www.voting.nyc/how-to-vote/ranked-choice-voting/>

³³⁶ Election Day for the 2021 New York City municipal primary is June 22nd. Early voting runs from June 12th to June 20th. See New York's full 2021 elections calendar here: <https://www.elections.ny.gov/NYSBOE/law/2021PoliticalCalendar.pdf>

³³⁷ Permanent link: <https://www.theaterinasyllum.com/voter-guide-2021.html>

THE DEBATES 2021

The mayoral race is imminent!!

2020 was a shitshow
Cuomo versus Bill De Blasio³³⁸
I can't take it anymore
Let's vote these old guys out the door

Yang's the frontrunner for this one³³⁹
Universal basic income
Plus there's Stringer and Morales
Ray McGuire and Eric Adams

Garcia and Donovan and
Plenty more I can't begin to
List them all I don't have time
But Don't forget Paperboy Prince³⁴⁰

If you're not sure who to choose
Or you don't care who'll win or lose
Remember this could mean big changes
For NY for a whole decade

Voters get your registration
Up to date for this election
Mark your calendars and planners
Clear your schedules pause your Tinders

Everything is up for grabs
It's time to get up off your (ass) and
Find your closest polling station
Don't forget June twenty-second
Don't wait till gen'ral election
This could be the biggest vote
That New York City's ever seen!

So PLEASE ! GO! VOTE! 🎵

[End of play. Please vote!]

³³⁸ Goldmacher, Shane, and J. David Goodman. "Inside One of America's Ugliest Political Feuds: Cuomo vs. de Blasio." *The New York Times*, 22 Apr 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/22/nyregion/cuomo-deblasio-feud-nyc.html>.

³³⁹ Malone, Clare. "Andrew Yang's Insider Campaign." *Intelligencer*, 10 May 2021, <https://nymag.com/intelligencer/article/andrew-yang-nyc-mayor-race.html>.

³⁴⁰ For more information on the candidates who qualified for the 2021 mayoral primary, see "The Race for NYC Mayor: Who's Running to Run This Town in 2021," by Rachel Holliday Smith: <https://www.thecity.nyc/22233474/the-race-for-nyc-mayor-whos-running-to-run-this-town-in-2021>