

In Tolerance  
By Dave McClain

In the not-too-distant future, certain well-intentioned political trends have taken root and, instead of creating a kinder, gentler America, have just the opposite effect.

FADE IN:

INT. HOTEL MEZZANINE - EVENING

HAROLD SIMPSON, 50, and his son, REED, 10, wait in line at the metal detectors set up outside a large hotel ballroom. Harold wears a tailored suit. Reed is dressed like his dad.

Reed's eyes fall on a TV screen showing a man speaking - and crying. The words on the TV say "Tomorrow/Tech CEO Resigns".

REED

Parent, why is that man crying?

Harold follows his son's gaze to the TV and watches briefly.

HAROLD

He called a female employee "whiny".  
People protested, so he had to quit.

REED

"Whiny"? That doesn't sound so bad.

HAROLD

There's no room for that kind of talk  
from people with power over others.

Harold places his hand on his son's back to guide him toward the metal detector. After also passing through, Harold leads Reed into the ballroom. They walk to a table up front.

NANCY PINKERTON, 35, dressed in business attire, attractive, friendly, but professional, nurses a martini at her seat at that front table. She sees Harold, stands and calls to him.

NANCY

Congressman! You're early!

Harold stops in front of Nancy. They both extend their right hands. After one pump of their arms, their hands part.

HAROLD

For once, but not as early as you.

NANCY

A campaign manager has to stay on  
her... Campaign managers have to stay  
on their toes - and one step ahead.

With a smile, Harold takes a seat to Nancy's left. Reed sits to Harold's left. Nancy sits, leans in and lowers her voice.

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NANCY (cont'd)

Senator Hastings will call you up at the end. Be brief. Just thank her for endorsing you to fill her seat.

HAROLD

Just another dog and pony show.

Nancy leans in further, almost spilling her martini.

NANCY

Don't even joke like that, Harry! Someone might overhear and think you don't support the cause, or worse, that you're calling Senator Hastings a dog! That'd be it for you. Done.

HAROLD

You're right, as always. Thanks.

Bored of looking around the room, Reed speaks to Harold.

REED

Parent, tell me again why we're here.

HAROLD

Well, child, since your other parent isn't feeling well, I wanted you to come see all this. All these people have paid a lot of money to be here and support a very important cause.

REED

What cause?

HAROLD

We have to raise money to help cities across our state rename more roads, schools and government buildings.

REED

But why?

HAROLD

Years ago, communities across the US renamed public facilities named after men who fought the Civil War to keep slavery going. Then, we changed names of places and things named after people who had once held slaves.

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HAROLD (cont'd)

Now we're taking down the names of people who ever opposed Special Populations rights or Gender Equity or Autonomous Lifestyle rights.

REED

Sounds like a lot of places! Isn't it expensive to change all those signs?

HAROLD

Very. But people give money, the government gives, it borrows... It's worth it so no one has to be offended or feel bad about themselves.

REED

Like with that baseball team's name?

HAROLD

You mean the Cleveland Native Americans? Yeah, well, that name is going to be changed again soon too.

REED

Yes, I heard. But aren't people getting really mad about that?

HAROLD

Some are, Reed, but they'll get over it. Remember the other teams we talked about? The Atlanta Braves, the Kansas City Chiefs? The Washington Reds? Their fans are doing just fine.

REED

Washington Reds?

HAROLD

Oops. Forgot. That's their old name, when our capital used to be called Washington D.C., a name which honored the slave holder George Washington and Christopher Columbus, who helped destroy our indigenous cultures. That's why our nation's capital is now named "Tolerance". And since I work in the government, WE get to live in Tolerance.

SENATOR HASTINGS, a tall, thin, distinguished black woman, appears next to Harold's chair. He stands up as she speaks.

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SENATOR HASTINGS

Some event, right Harold?

HAROLD

Yes, Senator. You people sure know...

SENATOR HASTINGS

"You people?!?"

Harold's eyes grow wide and he starts to stammer.

HAROLD

Er, ah, I mean YOUR people. Your  
STAFF. They sure know how to...

SENATOR HASTINGS

I heard what you said, Harold. Wow.  
And I almost gave you my endorsement!

As Senator Hastings turns and walks away, Nancy looks at Harold in stunned silence, her mouth agape. Harold looks down, slowly shaking his head as a tear begins to form.

FADE TO BLACK