ACT ONE

Prologue

The stage is bare except for nine empty seats upstage for Supreme Court Justices. Lights come up on Sarah Weddington, early 70's.

SARAH

Good evening. My name is Sarah Weddington. I was the lawyer who argued Roe v Wade. And it is imperative that I speak with you this evening!

(with great passion)

Every day new abortion laws are written in our country. But all of these laws tell a woman the same thing: You have no right to control over your own body. We, the government, have that right. We have the right to cause you economic or psychological harm... We will incarcerate any doctor who seeks to help you... And we don't care if you were incested or raped.

(pained)

Texas, my home state, has a new law that makes abortion illegal after six weeks. If your mother drives you to get an abortion after that time? She will be breaking the law. And your neighbor can get a reward for turning her in.

(beat)

All of the new laws we will be seeing in the coming months share one aim: To overturn Roe v Wade.

(Note: Sarah will say “Good afternoon” for matinees. Sarah’s monologue will be updated by the playwright to reflect the situation “this evening”, the present, in which a particular production is taking place. Then, Sarah continues...)

Now, who here remembers what it was like before Roe?

(She waits for hands and ad libs “Yes. Thank you,” etc.)

Thank you.

(beat)

You know, I always wonder... We argue about Roe, some of us vote for a President solely on this issue... But how many of us even know what was said in the case?

(She waits for hands.)

Well, I’d like to tell you the story of Roe. And since history is the result of shared experience...

(The Ensemble, holding Supreme Court Justices’ robes, files in.)
SARAH (CONT’D)
And is a reflection of multiple points of view—that are affected by race, religion, gender, sexuality, and class...

(The Ensemble takes the Justices’ seats upstage.)

I think it’s essential that all persons involved in Roe be here to testify!

(One character in the Ensemble jumps in, as Justice Blackmun.)

BLACKMUN
(with great urgency)
Harry Blackmun. I was the Justice who delivered the opinion, and I’d like to say something about history--

(Others jump in, fast and furiously.)

LINDA
(passionately)
Linda Coffee for the plaintiff--the truth is, it’s about choice!

FLOWERS
(outraged)
Robert Flowers, representing the great State of Texas--it’s about murder pure and simple--

(The rest of the Ensemble start to speak, overlapping, vehemently, to the audience.)

FLIP
Flip Benham, head of Operation Rescue--the truth is it’s not your body, so it’s not your choice!

MARY
My daughter was a goddam whore.

AILEEN
They were sterilizing black women! Native women, Mexicans--!

CONNIE
They will never convince me that I’m evil. That my love is a sin--

RONDA
Can you see the little hands, the precious feet?
(It becomes a cacophony of opinions for a moment, everyone speaking at once. Suddenly, the one woman who has not spoken, lets out a whistle, and the others fall silent. Norma, 69, in a suit and grey wig, gets down from her chair and steps forward to the audience.)

NORMA
Hey, y’all, I’m Norma McCorvey. And I was the plaintiff in Roe v Wade. Hell, I Am Roe!
(adds)
Which happens to be the name of my first book.
(adds)
Which you can get on Amazon.

(Sarah had not expected this and is eager to move on.)

SARAH
Well, uh, thank you. Norma.

(She quickly continues to the audience.)

Now, I am also the author of a book called “A Question of Choice”--

(Norma interjects.)

SARAH AND NORMA
And in my book, I tell the story of Roe beginning in--

Dallas—

NORMA

Austin. 1969.

SARAH

1970.

(Norma looks at Norma. Norma looks at Sarah and smiles.)

Well, sugar, how ’bout this? How ’bout you tell your story, I tell mine?

(Norma starts to strip down to her twenties, taking off her suit, revealing bell bottoms and a t-shirt underneath.)
NORMA (CONT’D)

(laughs)
Cause mine starts at a bar called The Red Devil and I don’t think you want to go there...

(Norma takes off her wig and shakes out her long wild hair.)

SARAH

(after a beat; with dignity)
Norma? As long as we get to the truth?

(The Ensemble dons their Justices’ robes, ready.)

(reluctantly)
That would be fine.

(Sarah exits to a blast of Janis Joplin singing “TRY”, as Norma, full on hippy now, heads to The Red Devil.)
SCENE ONE

The Justices’ seats become bar stools and we are in a working class bar. Janis Joplin is singing “TRY.” Norma starts dancing to the music, singing along with Janis, God help us, loud. Four female Ensemble members strip off their Supreme Court robes, becoming a bartender, a couple, and Aileen, an African American nurse. The other four Ensemble members, three men and a woman, still in Supreme Court robes, remain in their seats US, observing.

NORMA
(singing with Joplin)
You got to try, just a little bit harder... So I can love, love, love you...

(She talks to the audience, loud, over the music.)

(dancing)

NORMA AND JOPLIN
(singing)
You got to try...!

NORMA
I was a bartender at The Red Devil--

(She notices Aileen who’s getting a beer.)

Hey, got one for me, girl? My shift is o-ver. Let’s get wrecked ‘fore the cops come back and shut us down.

(She goes to the bar and Aileen hands her a beer.)

AILEEN
Here you go, Pixie. How you doin’?

NORMA
Great! Better with a tequila chaser.

AILEEN
(laughs)
Right on...

(Aileen gets her a tequila.)
NORMA

Thanks, Aileen!

(Aileen turns and introduces herself to the audience.)

AILEEN

(smiles)
Aileen Jenks. According to my obituary, I was a nurse who would die in twenty years from cirrhosis of the liver.

(She toasts and turns to Norma.)

You staying with your mama?

NORMA

(laughs)
Hell no. That woman is mean when she’s drunk.

(adds)
And worse when she’s sober. I’m staying with my daddy. We’re cool. I don’t mess with his girlfriends, he don’t mess with mine.

(to audience; wry)
Oh--did I mention this was a Girls’ Bar?

(The music changes to a slower tune. Norma starts to dance with Aileen.)

(smiles)
‘Less you got room at your place...

You know I got a roommate.

AILEEN

And you know I don’t mind...

NORMA

(They dance, funky 70’s...)

You seen your doctor?

AILEEN

NORMA

Hell yeah! Know what that doctor told me? “See a lawyer.” Adoption lawyer. I’m going back to that doctor, give him a piece of my mind. I was workin’ the bar tonight, talkin’ to a customer, know what she told me?

AILEEN

Do I want to?
NORMA
Did you know there is a way for me to be not pregnant, Aileen?

AILEEN
Well, sure—

NORMA
No, I mean, there is something a doctor can—

AILEEN
(laughs)
You never heard of an abortion, Pixie? Come on, you shittin’ me?

NORMA
Where I come from? Louisiana? A voodoo woman gives you something to drink, says some mumbo jumbo... Didn’t work when my mom got knocked up with me, so how would I know?

(She dances closer.)
So can you give me the name of a doctor?

AILEEN
Not that kind of doctor. You don’t know it’s against the law?

NORMA
You’re a fucking nurse, Aileen--

(Aileen scowls at the white bartender.)

AILEEN
And I had to show three I.D.’s just to get into this damn bar. Girl, I could lose my license—

NORMA
All I’m askin’ for’s a name... Come on...

(They dance. Norma tries to get sexy. Aileen doesn’t mind.)
Come on, sugar...

AILEEN
Look. I heard of a place... I don’t know nothing about it. At least you wouldn’t have to go across the border. Maybe I can get you the address.
NORMA
You are a good friend, Aileen. And if it don’t work out with Lois—

AILEEN
Pam. And you didn’t hear about it from me, understand?

NORMA
Cross my heart and hope to die.

AILEEN
We’re having a barbecue Sunday, if you want to come around.

NORMA
What can I bring? You need an ounce? Couple of tabs?

AILEEN
You can bring the hot dog rolls.

NORMA
I’ll bring the dogs, too! Rurr, rurrr, rurr, rrrur!
(beat)
Just get me that address.

AILEEN
(laughs)
Girl, you are goin’ to hell on a scholarship.

NORMA
I’m tryin’!

(Music continues as they break apart, and Norma sets up the next scene, placing floor pillows in a semi-circle. The women at the bar change costume, facing upstage. Stagehands help as needed.)
SCENE TWO

The music changes to “We’ve Only Just Begun,” as the Lesbians from the bar, transformed by wig and costume—turn and smile, as middle class women in a Consciousness Raising group, Judy, Helen, Molly—and a guest, Barbara. They come downstage and sit on floor pillows in Molly’s suburban home. Aileen dons an afro wig, becoming Barbara. Sarah, 20’s, with long hair, but conservatively dressed, enters and joins them. The four Supreme Court justices remain upstage in their chairs, observing. As she exits, Norma tells us...

NORMA
And while I was raisin’ hell in Dallas...

SARAH
In Austin, young feminists were raising their consciousness by reading an early draft of what would become—

(Judy presents the thick book to the group.)

JUDY
(reverently)
OUR BODIES, OURSELVES.

(Judy opens the book and hands it to Sarah.)

Sarah, would you do the honors?

SARAH
(taken aback)
Oh, lord no!
(to audience)
I was not there to--! was there to consult on legal--

MOLLY
Sarah, please. As our esteemed guest.

SARAH
(reluctant)
Well. All right.

(Sarah clears her throat and proceeds.)

(reading)
If you want to see your cervix...
(Helen eagerly raises her hand.)

SARAH (CONT’D)
Find a private, comfortable place with good lighting. Sit back against a pillow, bend your knees, and keep your feet apart. Have the following supplies...

(Judy starts to hand Helen supplies.)

A flashlight...a lubricant such as Crisco...a hand mirror...and a speculum.

HELEN
(eagerly)
Alrightee...

(Helen sits apart, facing upstage, and goes in search of her cervix.)

MOLLY
Anybody else want to try? Because Judy brought a couple of speculums. Barbara?

(There is nothing Barbara wants to try less.)

BARBARA
Oh, I’m just visiting.

(Molly’s intent on proving her open mindedness.)

MOLLY
And we are thrilled to have you!
(to Judy)
Barbara’s a professor?
(to Barbara)
Do you prefer Barb? Babs?

BARBARA
Barbara.

MOLLY
Well, we are thrilled. Sarah...

SARAH
(continuing to read)
Speculums all have two bills and a lock. Make sure you learn how to release the lock before you insert it into the vagina. Put some lubricant on the speculum and your vulva, then insert. Breathe deeply while manipulating the speculum gently and looking into the mirror. You will be able to see the folds in the vaginal wall which may look pink, bulbous, and wet.
(Helen follows instructions.)

HELEN

(studiously)
Alrightee.

MOLLY
Now, I just wondered, has anybody actually found their cervix?

JUDY
Of course! Numerous times.

HELEN
Well, I started to find mine over the weekend, but then my husband and son came back early from Little League--

MOLLY
Heavens to Betsy!

JUDY
Why? What if you were in the middle of a pedicure? Why is it embarrassing to even say the word “vagina” in 1969?

MOLLY
Well, I just wasn’t raised to use that word. My mother always called it... (laughs) Oh Lord, I can’t say it.

JUDY
You can say it, Molly.

SARAH
Well, don’t force her, this isn’t the patriarchy--

JUDY
I’m just being supportive--

HELEN
Well, my mama called it a “tooty.”

SARAH
A--tooty?

(They all start to laugh.)

JUDY
My mom called it a “la la!”
MOLLY
(blurts)
Mine called it “lady bits”! Barb?

BARBARA
(despite herself)
All right... Fur patch.

HELEN
(suddenly)
Oh wow! I think I found it!

(She is still facing upstage.)

JUDY
Right on.

(Others ad lib congratulations.)

HELEN
(in wonder)
Wow...

MOLLY
Anything else before we have cake and coffee?

(calls offstage)
Ofelia!

(A Supreme Court Justice takes off the robe becoming Ofelia, Mexican, 40’s, who starts to serve cake and coffee. Helen finishes her expedition. Judy gets down to business.)

JUDY
Actually, there is something I’d like to talk about. Now, as you know, I’ve been part of an alternative newspaper at UT called--

JUDY AND SARAH
The Rag--

(Ofelia brings plates of cake.)

JUDY
And Sarah has been doing legal research for an underground referral service so women can get safe abortions and steer clear of the back alley guys.

(Ofelia stiffens.)
HELEN
(taken aback)
Abortions?
(This is what Sarah is here to discuss and she launches in.)

SARAH
Look, we’ve all heard the horror stories about illegal abortion. Five thousand women dying a year--

BARBARA
(interjects)
Most of them Black and Hispanic—

SARAH
Hundreds of thousands of women leaving their home states to go to Colorado or California where abortion’s legal---

BARBARA
If they can afford to, which most non-white women can’t—

JUDY
So we all agree the law has to change. And in order to do that in Texas, someone has to challenge the law that makes abortion illegal. Now I, and a number of other people at the referral service think that should be Sarah.

BARBARA
Right on.

(Sarah spits out her cake in shock.)

SARAH
(laughs)
What? What in the Sam Hill makes you think I can challenge the state of Texas?!

JUDY
You’re smart, hard working... It should be a woman... And you’re the only woman lawyer I know.
(smiles)
We also need someone to do it for free.

SARAH
Are you crazy? I’m only a couple years out of law school!

JUDY
(“casually”)
And how many women were there?
SARAH
I was one of forty--out of sixteen hundred students.

MOLLY
Goodness gracious--

SARAH
Judy--I’ve never tried a contested case!

JUDY
And why’s that?

SARAH
Because no law firm wants to hire me! The last firm that interviewed me said they didn’t want to invest in someone who’s going to, quote, “go out and get pregnant in a year!”

BARBARA
(egging her on)
They actually say that?

SARAH
Look, I know you’re right, Judy, someone should do this--

JUDY
You said yourself, hundreds of thousands of women have had to leave the state—

SARAH
I know--

HELEN
Has anybody here ever had--?

MOLLY
Helen!

HELEN
Well, this is a consciousness raising group. I found my cervix...

SARAH
(with increasing emotion)
Look. I met a girl last week. Willa. Fifteen. She took a bus to Dallas where she was met by a guy who blindfolded her and drove her to a man who did abortions in his basement. This man charged her eight hundred dollars at the door. Then he ordered her to take off all her clothes and lie down on a table… And the next thing she hears is the sound of a zipper. He raped her.
(Everyone stops eating their cake.)

SARAH (CONT’D)
And she felt that, if she wanted the abortion, she’d better just lie there and let him. Because she was fifteen! No anaesthesia was used—so he could get her out of there fast—

MOLLY
(hoping it’s over)
Well thank you, Sarah—

SARAH
He pushed her legs apart, inserted a pair of tongs, then a pencil to dilate her cervix—then a coat hanger, jabbing it around till he pierced the fetal sac. Then he inserted some sort of homemade suction device, and, when that didn’t do it, he scraped out the remaining tissue with a knife, yelling at her to keep her screams down.

MOLLY
(deciding it’s over)
Well, thanks for sharing—

SARAH
(overlaps with great passion)
Some hospitals have entire wards for botched abortions! And some women just do it themselves! They take Lysol, turpentine—they use telephone wire, curtain rods, chopsticks, broken coke bottles, a vacuum cleaner... No woman should have to go through these things! It has to change!

(The women look at Sarah, overwhelmed. After a beat...)  

JUDY
You’re a pretty good lawyer, Sarah. You just argued yourself into taking the case.

(Sarah looks like a deer caught in headlights.)

MOLLY
Shall we?

(The others nod their support, take their plates, and leave, ad libbing.)

HELEN
Next time you should find your cervix.

MOLLY
I’m sure my cervix is exactly where it’s supposed to be.
(They’re gone. Ofelia, extremely upset, cleans up the scene, as Sarah sits there, thinking. Norma, in the same faded bell bottoms, enters and waits, as Ofelia comes for Sarah’s plate.)

OFELIA
You finished?

SARAH
(startled)
What? Oh. Thanks.

(Ofelia takes the plate and leaves. Norma goes to Sarah. She needs the space where Sarah’s sitting.)

NORMA
And I got an appointment, so...

SARAH
Of course.

(Sarah rises and exits.)
SCENE THREE

An examining table comes on, Norma sits, and we’re in a doctor’s office. A Supreme Court Justice takes off his robe, becoming her doctor. He enters, surprised to see her.

DOCTOR

(patiently)
Norma, I believe I told you no on the telephone.

NORMA

And that’s why I came. You delivered both my babies, you had plenty of business offa me. If you can’t do it, just gimme the name of someone who can.

DOCTOR

(looks at his chart)
Did you have an appointment? Because I don’t see your--

NORMA

Look. I been to…a place. In Oak Cliff. Looked like a ghost town, like somebody’d moved out of there real fast. Blood all over the floor, roaches, sheets like filthy rags… And the smell--!

DOCTOR

(as if to a child)
I do understand your predicament, Norma. But maybe you should have thought about consequences before you got pregnant for a third time? I’m sorry.

NORMA

(tries charm)
Aw, don’t be sorry. Why be sorry when you can—

DOCTOR

Because I am not in the business of killing babies! My job is to bring life into this world, young lady! Shame on you for even--do you understand that any doctor who would do such a thing would go to jail? Now, did you see that lawyer I told you about? McCluskey?

NORMA

I don’t like lawyers. Lawyer never got me out of trouble yet. I thought doctors were nicer...
DOCTOR
Well, you can either raise this baby yourself—
(with disdain)
as an unmarried woman... Or let McCluskey find your child some decent parents.

(Norma rips the paper off the examining table in anger. A Supreme Court Justice takes off his robe, becoming a lawyer. The doctor leaves, thrusting his clipboard into the lawyer’s hands, and we go right into the next scene.)
SCENE FOUR

A lawyer's office. The examining table becomes a desk. We see a projection of bookshelves and law degrees. Henry McCluskey offers Norma his hand.

MCCLUSKEY
Hello, Miss McCorvey. Henry McCluskey.

NORMA
(wary)
Hi.

(McCluskey introduces himself to the audience.)

MCCLUSKEY
I was a lawyer who specialized in adoptions, and, like Norma, also gay. We didn’t know we had this in common, because people like us generally hid their sexual orientation in those days. One had to work—
(to Norma)
Have a seat.
(continuing to audience)
And, in any event, I would be murdered in another three years by a former boyfriend.
(with sudden emotion)
Though my father would make sure the press didn’t know we were lovers.

(He turns to Norma.)
I understand you’re interested in placing a child for adoption?

NORMA
Not interested, just don’t have a damn choice.
(wry)
Did you know abortion was illegal in the state of Texas?

MCCLUSKEY
That’s a tough position to be in. I’m sorry.

NORMA
Yeah, we’re all sorry. Let’s just get it over with, okay?

(He takes out a pen and starts to ask questions.)
Your age, Miss McCorvey?

Twenty-two.

Married or single?

(She looks at him and decides not to confide.)

Free as a breeze.

Any other children?

Two.

Living with you?

(with difficulty)
Adopted out. Well, my mother’s got my first child, Melissa...

And the second child?

Nurses never let me see it.

Religion?

I was raised Jehovah’s Witness, but... Just put down Jehovah’s Witness ‘cause I don’t want to have to explain Wicca to you.

Race of this baby’s father?

Okay, this ain’t my first rodeo, that is nobody’s business.
MCCLUSKEY
Miss McCorvey, if you relinquished your other two children, you understand that most adoptive parents will not consider a mixed race—

NORMA
I don’t understand nothin’. My mother got me to sign my baby Melissa over to her, and some goddam lawyer helped her do it. Then she put a doll in the crib, told me, “That’s your baby, Norma”—thought I’d be too drunk to tell.

(fighting tears)
Well, I didn’t have no damn doll. I love that child—and I can’t go through this shit again!

(He hands her a handkerchief, a real one.)
I’m supposed to blow my nose on this?

MCCLUSKEY
Go right ahead.

(She blows her nose but doesn’t know what to do with the handkerchief.)
Just...
(looks around)
Keep it.
(beat; carefully)
Miss McCorvey... I, uh... I have an associate... Linda Coffee. She and another lawyer, Sarah Weddington, are looking for a woman who is pregnant and seeking an abortion.

NORMA
Whoa, hold on--

MCCLUSKEY
But I don’t really know if--

NORMA
(laughs)
Did you just say you know someone who’s looking for someone who’s looking for an abortion?

MCCLUSKEY
I suppose it couldn’t hurt to just talk to them...

NORMA
Great!

MCCLUSKEY
I’ll give you Linda Coffee’s card.
(He gives her the card and starts to leave. Then he lingers to watch the beginning of the next scene.)
SCENE FIVE

A pizza parlor. Norma paces. Linda Coffee comes on and sits at a table with a checkered cloth. Sarah’s on the sidelines, waiting. Linda looks at the menu, nervous, glancing at her watch.

SARAH
(to audience)
Linda Coffee was in my class at law school, and I knew that if I was going to put together a case I’d need a huge amount of help.

LINDA
(confides; to audience)
I was also Henry McCluskey’s “beard”--

MCCLUSKEY
The woman I went out with to appear straight--

LINDA
(quietly)
And he was mine.

(McCluskey exits.)

SARAH
(continues to audience)
Actually...my husband was also a lawyer...

(The last Supreme Court Justice takes off his robe, becoming...)

RON
Ron Weddington.

SARAH
And he would prove invaluable—

(Ron puts an arm around Sarah.)

RON
(optimistic)
With the arguments, the endless research, the briefs—
SARAH
(to Ron; feels terrible)
But I needed someone familiar with federal lawsuits to assist me and Judy and I both thought it should be a woman, so…

RON
(stunned)
I... I uh...
(to audience)
We will be divorced soon after the case.

(Ron leaves. Norma is tired of waiting and charges over.)

NORMA
Linda?

LINDA
Norma?

NORMA AND SARAH
(to audience)
And the first meeting on Roe v Wade took place in Columbo’s pizza parlor on Mockingbird Lane—

NORMA
In Dallas.

(Norma sits with Linda. It’s awkward for both. An older man sits at a nearby table and reads the paper.)

LINDA
Gee... Weather’s been kind of chilly...

NORMA
Cold enough to freeze the balls off a pool table!

LINDA
Yes, indeed. Well, Sarah should be here any minute...

(She looks over at Sarah and gestures, “Come on already!” Sarah enters the scene.)

SARAH
Hi! You must be Norma! I’m Sarah Weddington. I’m so glad to meet you!

NORMA
(surprised by her enthusiasm)
Thanks!
(Sarah sits.)

SARAH
So how are you feeling, Norma? Feeling kind of nauseous?

NORMA
Like a fish on an escalator.

SARAH
I’ll bet!

NORMA
(warming up)
You been there, huh?

(Sarah takes the slightest of beats.)

SARAH
(smiles)
Uh no, I don’t have kids.

(The waitress comes over.)

WAITRESS
Can I get y’all something to drink? Beer?

NORMA
My usual.

LINDA
I’ll have one too, please.

SARAH
Why don’t you bring a pitcher.

LINDA
(to audience)
There was zero awareness of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome back then.

SARAH
And we’ll have a pizza—
(for Norma’s benefit)
Plain.

WAITRESS
You got it.
(Norma’s leg is restless, shaking, and Sarah notices the bandana wrapped above one of her knees.)

SARAH
Gee, I like your bandana, I don’t think I’ve ever seen one worn like that before.

NORMA
Oh, that just means I don’t have a girlfriend.

LINDA
(compassionate)
You have no girlfriends?

NORMA
No girlfriend.

(Sarah and Linda look at each other.)

SARAH
Oh--girlfriend!

LINDA
(nods)
Girlfriend...

NORMA
(享受着这个)
I’m a lesbian?

LINDA AND SARAH
Of course.

(Linda and Sarah look at each other wondering what the hell kind of case they’ve got here.)

SARAH
So, Norma... Would you feel comfortable telling us a little about your, uh, situation?

NORMA
I guess...

(Linda and Sarah simultaneously slap briefcases on the table and open them up. Linda takes notes.)
SARAH
(casually)
How many months pregnant are you, Norma?

NORMA
Uh, ‘bout two and a half?

(Linda and Sarah exchange a look as Norma looks more like five. Linda rises and informs the audience...)

LINDA
I’d just like to say something about “history” here. One historian, in recounting this meeting in her book, describes Norma as having “a stingy mouth”, “pug nose”, “mischievous eyes”, and “few social graces that would not have helped her anyway”.

NORMA
Jesus fucking Christ—

LINDA
She describes Sarah as having a “prim mouth”, “flawless complexion,” “clear blue eyes,” and hair that was her “crowning glory.”

SARAH
I am a lawyer. And people were always going on about my hair.

NORMA
What’d she say ‘bout you?

LINDA
She said I was awkward in social situations. Now, we want to give a fair account of what happened here, but if a historian calls one mouth “stingy” and another “prim”... Then, when Norma, in her book, says she was two and a half months pregnant...
(to Sarah)
And you, in your book, say it was more like four... Well, how pregnant was she?

(Norma and Sarah start to argue about it in the present.)

SARAH
You were at least four months--

NORMA
Two months!
(to audience)
Alternative facts.
LINDA
(cuts them off )
My point is that it's really hard to talk objectively about history, about the "truth". Which is why I never wrote a book. But let's continue.

(She sits. The waitress brings pizza and beer. Sarah continues to Norma.)

SARAH
So you don't feel you're in a position to have this baby?

NORMA
(laughs)
Ladies, I am so poor I can't afford to pay attention!

SARAH
Goodness. Where are you living?

NORMA
At a friend's. I was with my dad for a while, but fathers and daughters, you know how that is...

SARAH
Of course.

NORMA
Your daddy drink?

SARAH
My father is a minister.

NORMA
(laughs)
When he's sober...

SARAH
And do you have other family?

(Norma pours another beer.)

NORMA
Got a mother! Comes with the deal. But we never been close.

(Mary, her mother, walks through the scene, DS, drunk, in Norma's mind.)
MARY
Amen to that!

NORMA
(laughs)
Hell, I thought my name was “Ugly Stupid” ’fore I knew what the words meant. I still can’t do nothin’ right for that woman. And I tried ‘cause she’s got my daughter—

SARAH
You have--a daughter?

LINDA
Your daughter?

(Note’s case is getting more complicated than they’d expected.)

NORMA
Melissa, she’s five. She’s a great kid.

SARAH
I’ll bet! And her father... Are you still...?

NORMA
Hell no. Sugar, I married Woody McCorvey when I was sixteen—

SARAH
So young!

(Note is awfully encouraged by her interest.)

NORMA
Well, see I got out of reform school when I was fifteen... And my mother sent me to live with an uncle--and let’s just say the rent was not exactly free--so I got a job as a carhop and met Woody--man, did he have a nice car!--and we went to L.A. But he beat the shit out of me when he found out I was pregnant so I came back here to have Melissa.

SARAH
I see. And you say your mother has custody?

(Mary interjects from DS.)

MARY
You think I’d let that lesbian whore raise a baby?

NORMA
I say my mother stole Melissa. Told me she was gonna put my baby on her boyfriend’s health insurance, so I sign some papers, and next thing I know--

NORMA AND MARY
“You got five minutes to pack up your shit ‘cause you just gave up your daughter.”
MARY
I’m her mother now!

(Norma suddenly starts to cry. Sarah gives her her napkin.)

SARAH
I’m so sorry. She just—?

NORMA
Took my baby to Louisiana.
(looks at Mary)
Hell, all I ever wanted was for that bitch to like me.

(Mary smirks and leaves. Linda gets to the matter at hand.)

LINDA
And, uh…this baby?

NORMA
Well, there was a carnival, and they were looking for people to work with the animals, and I love animals--

SARAH
Oh, me too.

NORMA
You got a dog or somethin’?

SARAH
Well, no, my husband and I are working all the time--

LINDA
(jumps in)
I have cats.

(Norma is not impressed. Sarah adds…)

SARAH
And I grew up on horses. You know what they say about us Texas gals... Only time we feel in control is in the saddle!

(Norma gives her arm a little punch in agreement. Which takes Sarah aback.)

But you were saying, about the Carnival?
NORMA
Man, I was a natural. “Hurry, hurry, hurry! See the five legged pony! See the snake with two heads!” Course the shrunken baby in the jar of formaldehyde kinda wigged me out...

(Linda and Sarah exchange a worried look. Norma notices.)

But when the Carnival was over... Well, one night I was walking home... This was in Georgia now... And...I got raped. Which is how I got pregnant with this baby.

(Sara and Linda look shocked—and also concerned because the case is getting more complicated.)

SARAH
Oh no! Did you report the man to the police?

NORMA
Actually, it was three men.

LINDA
Three?

NORMA
One white, one black, one Mexican.

SARAH
And the police have a record of--?

NORMA
Well, my experience with the police has never been too positive. Is that a problem?

SARAH
What do you mean?

NORMA
Does it hurt my chances of getting the abortion?

LINDA
Well, no, but--

(Linda and Sarah exchange a look.)

SARAH
Norma, I’m afraid the current law in Texas only allows for an abortion if the woman’s life is in danger.
(Norma turns to the audience in the present.)

NORMA
Okay, she did not say that.

SARAH
In my book, I clearly state that, whether or not Norma was raped, was not an issue for us in building the case. Linda and I discussed it—

LINDA
A white, a black, and a Mexican together—in Georgia? Please.

SARAH
Norma, we do not want the Court to make an exception in the case of rape. You see, we’re trying to change the law to make abortion available to all women for whatever reason they feel they need one. If a woman can’t decide this—for herself--well, she can never have control over the rest of her life!

(The older man at the next table leaves, disgusted.)

LINDA
We think you have the right to make a choice about your own body.

SARAH
Do you want safe, legal, abortion Norma?

NORMA
Well, yeah! I’m not here for the pizza! So what do I gotta do?

SARAH
We need a pregnant woman who wants an abortion to challenge the Texas Law.

LINDA
That woman is called the Plaintiff.

SARAH
You wouldn’t even have to use your own name.

LINDA
We’d use a pseudonym so your privacy would be completely protected.

SARAH
Usually, people use “Jane Doe” but since there’s a Mary Doe in a related case, we could use, say... Jane Roe?
NORMA
(laughs)
So I’m Jane Roe?

SARAH
The point is, you wouldn’t even have to appear in Court--

NORMA
And then I could get my abortion?

SARAH
(beat; carefully)
Norma. The law takes time. I cannot predict how long this case will take. I can only promise you that we will do our very best. Do you want to do this, Norma?

(A beat.)

NORMA
Hell, I never said no to a fight yet... Like you said, things gotta change!

LINDA
Thank you, Norma.

SARAH
Thank you so much!

(They shake hands.)
SCENE SIX

A Dallas park. Aileen helps Norma with padding, so she is now extremely pregnant.

AILEEN
You really got to take care of yourself, Pixie.

NORMA
I know, Aileen. I’m eating breakfast every day.

AILEEN
You mean drinking it. Or smoking it...

SARAH
(to audience; excited)
Three months later, we met again.

(Linda and Sarah hurry to Norma, who’s high as a kite. Aileen watches from the sidelines, suspicious.)

LINDA
Norma, we’ve been looking everywhere for you--for weeks!
(to audience)
She was staying in the park where the hippies hung out. She was selling LSD and pot--

NORMA
Duh, it was the seventies.

SARAH
Well, we have great news, Norma. We won our case against the state of Texas!

NORMA
Holy crap! I won?

(The three of them hug.)

So now I can get my abortion?

(A beat. Linda stares at Norma, incredulous.)

LINDA
Well, Norma...

SARAH
The Court assumed that Henry Wade, the Dallas District Attorney, would abide by its decision...
LINDA
But Wade said he’d still throw any doctor performing an abortion in jail...

SARAH
Which is completely outrageous, but—

I can still get my abortion--

NORMA
Well, no--

SARAH
Because the doctor would go to jail!

(He spits tobacco and leaves.)

Besides... Norma...

LINDA
(blurts; incredulous)
You’re over twenty-four weeks! You couldn’t get an abortion anyway!

(Norma looks at Sarah, stunned.)

What?!

SARAH
(pained)
I’m so sorry. I thought you understood when we met. I said that the law takes time—

LINDA
(to audience)
But Norma will later claim in her book—

NORMA
She let me believe I could get my abortion.

LINDA
(to audience)
While Sarah will later claim in her book...

SARAH
(to audience)
Norma McCorvey was in her second trimester when we met. She became a Plaintiff in the case so that future generations of women would have the right she was denied.
LINDA
But getting back to the matter at hand...

SARAH
Norma, because Wade is defying the Texas decision, this may actually help us get our appeal to the Supreme Court. And then abortion could become legal for the whole country!

NORMA
(laughs)
The Supreme Court? You must think I’m about as confused as a fart in a fan factory. They don’t have time to listen to some little ole Texas girl!

LINDA
We think they will.

SARAH
And Norma...a lot of lawyers are going to be very interested in arguing this case before the Supreme Court. Most of them are men. We think it should be a woman.

LINDA
No one believes a woman can do this!

SARAH
But since you are the Plaintiff, you get to choose.

(They give her a paper to sign.)

LINDA
It’s your choice.

(Linda gives her a pen.)

NORMA
Well... I guess I want y’all...

(Norma signs.)

SARAH
Thank you so much, Norma!

LINDA
Thank you!

(Sarah and Linda go to a table USL and work on the case. Aileen jumps in.)
AILEEN
But why? Why'd you do that, Pixie, if you felt betrayed?

NORMA
I thought she liked me, asking me all those questions in that pizza parlor? She dressed so nice, spoked so sophisticated... Besides--me talkin' to the Supreme Court? I'd never done one single good thing in my life and here was my chance.

LINDA
That is what Norma said in her first book, I AM ROE. She would later say, in her second book...

NORMA
I was stoned.

(Norma starts to pound her stomach, hard. Aileen watches. McCluskey enters with a nurse and addresses the audience.)

MCCLUSKEY
Despite her efforts to self-abort, Norma gave birth that summer. I went to the hospital.

(Aileen leads Norma to a table USR where she lays down, and the nurse goes to Norma and takes the swaddled baby.)

AILEEN
(incensed)
Well, I worked in that hospital, so let me tell you what else was going on.

(The nurse throws a warning look at Aileen. But Aileen continues, addressing the audience, McCluskey, and Linda and Sarah.)

(looks at Sarah and Linda)
Since we're talking about "history", about "truth." You couldn't get an abortion, no... But doctors were getting black women to "consent" to sterilization--

(The nurse gestures "Stop!" But Aileen continues.)

Or they'd lose their damn welfare. I saw 'em do hysterectomies on black women—just so the young doctors could practice the operation. They were experimenting with their new, "long term birth control" on black women—on Native women and Mexicans--

(to Linda and Sarah)
Where's that in their books?

(Aileen exits.)
NORMA
(deadened; to no one)
They gave me a shot to dry up my milk.
(The nurse brings the baby back.)
But the nurse fucked up and brought it to me at feeding time.
(Norma, pained, quickly turns away. The nurse is mortified and rushes the baby to McCluskey.)

MCCLUSKEY
I arranged the adoption. And since it was a closed adoption, no one’s heard anything about the child known as The Roe Baby since. Oh—it was a girl.
(to audience)
Lucky kid. Would you want me for a mother?

MCCLUSKEY
A few weeks later, Norma tried to commit suicide on a combination of LSD, seconal, Wild Turkey, etcetera, but...

NORMA
Hell, I couldn’t do nothin’ right.

(McCluskey exits. Chavela Vargas start to sing on a radio, as Aileen helps Norma into an old army jacket and a backpack, and Norma heads to the next scene.)
SCENE SEVEN

A small grocery store is minimally set up and projected SR. Sarah and Linda continue to work SL, where their office is projected. Chavela Vargas sings on a transistor radio in the grocery throughout the scene. Her voice is raspy, deep, and no stranger to pain. Connie Gonzalez is on the phone with her father. Connie’s look is butch, and her manner is easy going, her humor dry.

CONNIE

Y como te sientes?... Y la tos?

(laughs)

Bueno, no fumes entonces!

(Norma enters, having cruised the aisles, a can of soup up her sleeve, a coke in her backpack, etc.)

(into phone)

Okay... Adiós, papá, te quiero.

(She hangs up, just as Norma is about to sneak out.)

Hey, girl, sure you don’t want a beer with that?

NORMA

What? What’re you talking about?

CONNIE

I’m talking about my food in your bag and that can of soup up your sleeve. Chicken noodle?

NORMA

You’re out of your fuckin’ mind. You’re talking on the phone ‘stead of working and accusing me? Got eyes in back of your head?

CONNIE

(points)

Better. Got a mirror.

Look—

NORMA

CONNIE

I’m lookin’...

(Norma goes and dumps a bunch of food on the counter.)
Fucking. I was hungry, okay?

CONNIE

(after a beat)
No. Ain’t okay to be hungry. So take that food and put it back in your bag.

(Norma takes one thing. Then one or two more.)

Take it all. Maybe you got kids to feed.

CONNIE

Maybe you got to mind your own damn business.

Norma

(laughs)
Oh you’re a real smart lady, ain’t you? Real smart.

Well, that’s one thing I ain’t been called.

(softens)
Hey, I’m gonna come back sometime and work to pay you back. I mean it.

(She puts the food back in her pack.)

CONNIE

Arright. You can start after lunch.

Huh?

CONNIE

You like bologna?

(CONNIE gives her the sandwich she was making.)

Norma

I don’t think anybody likes bologna. But I’ll eat it...

(CONNIE gives condiments.)


Norma

Sure. And a pickle if you got it. Man, what is that on the radio? Sounds like she got it worse than I do.
CONNIE
Chavela Vargas? She can handle it. What’s your name?

NORMA
Norma McCorvey.

(CONnie extends her hand.)

CONNNIE
Connie Gonzalez.

NORMA
Mexican, huh?

CONNIE
Hell, yeah. Want that beer?

NORMA
If it ain’t too much trouble...

(She hands Norma the sandwich which Norma eats ravenously. Connie gets a beer.)

CONNIE
Guess you were hungry...

NORMA
Yeah. Been awhile.

(Then, suddenly, she starts to cry.)

(CONnie tenderly)
Hey... Hey, girl...

(CONnie lets her cry.)

NORMA
I don’t know why you’re bein’ so nice to me. (looks around) You got a broom I could use? Mop?

CONNIE
Sure. Drink your beer.
(She opens a beer and hands it to Norma. The stage starts to transform to the Supreme Court, as Linda and Sarah exit.)
SCENE EIGHT

The Supreme Court is projected. Sarah appears on the steps and addresses the audience. Norma watches with her beer.

SARAH
On December 13, 1971, the Supreme Court heard the case.

(She heads for the Court.)

(thrilled and daunted)
I remember... I got up really early and headed over there, to the lawyer’s lounge, to put the last touches on my argument. There was a sense of majesty, walking up those stairs, my steps echoing on the marble... I wanted to make a last stop, but there was no ladies room in the lawyer’s lounge!

(Linda rushes in.)

LINDA
I think they put one in—in the nineties.

(Linda sits at a lawyers’ table SR. Jay Floyd and Robert Flowers enter and sit at a lawyers’ table SL. There is a podium CS.)

SARAH
Now, when you get to your seat in this beautiful courtroom, there is a handmade goose quill pen waiting for you. Then the clerk comes out and announces the Justices who will come in through a velvet curtain. Red.

(We will not see the Justices, but, rather hear their actual voices from the case, a tape of which is available from Dramatists Play Service.)

The courtroom was packed. The pressroom was packed. Every seat was filled.

(vulnerable)
I was twenty-six years old. It was my first contested case.

(Norma reacts from the sidelines, shocked.)

NORMA
Your first case? Gee, no one bothered to tell me!

(heads over)
Well, I’d like to hear it.
But you weren’t present—

Wasn’t invited—

To protect your anonymity, so—

Whatever.

(to audience)

I wasn’t there.

(Norma exits, pissed. Sarah is at her table.)

MARSHAL’S VOICE

Oyez, oyez, oyez! All persons having business before the Honorable, the Supreme court of the United States, are admonished to draw near and give their attention for the Court is now sitting. God save the United States and this Honorable Court.

(The Chief Justice bangs his gavel.)

LINDA

Hold on.

(to audience; quickly)

There were only seven Justices present, not nine. Two had recently retired, so there were seven Justices.

(adds)

And not one of them had ever been pregnant.

CHIEF JUSTICE BURGER

We will hear arguments in number 18, uh, Roe against, uh, Wade. Mrs. Weddington, you may proceed whenever you are ready.

(Sarah rises and goes to the podium. She speaks out and up, to the unseen Justices, whose voices come to us from different places across the fourth wall.)

SARAH

(nervous but with conviction)

Thank you. Mr. Chief Justice and may it please the Court. Legal abortion now, for a woman, is safer than childbirth. In the absence of legal, medically safe abortions, women often resort to illegal abortions, which carry risks of death, severe infections, and permanent sterility. I think it is without question that pregnancy can completely disrupt a woman’s life. For example, in our state, if a woman becomes pregnant, and is in high school, she must drop out of the regular education process.
SARAH (CONT’D)
In the matter of employment, she is forced to quit at an early point in her pregnancy. And it’s so often the poor and the disadvantaged in Texas who are not able to escape the effect of the law.

JUSTICE STEWART
Mrs. Weddington, I trust you are going to get to what provisions of the Constitution you rely on?

SARAH
The lower court held that the right whether or not to continue a pregnancy rested upon the Ninth Amendment, which reserves those rights not specifically enumerated to the Government, to the People.

LINDA
(sotto; to audience)
The Ninth Amendment implies a right to privacy. In case you slept through class.

SARAH
(continues to Court)
I think the Fourteenth Amendment is equally appropriate—as it prohibits states from depriving any “person” of “life, liberty, or property, without due process of law.” I think that “liberty” to these women would mean liberty from being forced to continue the unwanted pregnancy.

(She takes a sip of water. Her hand is shaking.)

(forces on)
Now, the Constitution as I read it attaches protection to the person at time of birth. Those persons who are born are citizens.

JUSTICE STEWART
And does the Texas law, give rights to unborn children in the areas of trusts and estates and wills and--?

SARAH
No, Your Honor, only if they are born alive.

CHIEF JUSTICE BURGER
Thank you, Mrs. Weddington. Mr. Floyd?

(Floyd rises and introduces himself to the audience.)

FLOYD
(affable)
Jay Floyd.
FLOYD (CONT'D)
I was the Assistant Attorney General in Wade’s office who represented Texas in Roe v. Wade.

(to Court)
Mr. Chief Justice, may it please the Court. It’s an old joke, but when a man argues against two beautiful ladies, they are going to have the last word.

(He laughs. The Justices do not laugh. Floyd ad lib: “Uh oh”.)

(smiles proudly; to audience)
According to my obituary, I am credited with one of the eight worst courtroom jokes of all time!

(proceeds to Court)
Your Honors... As to the unmarried pregnant female, Jane Roe, a unique situation arises. Is her action now moot because she’s no longer pregnant? It would appear that, for a class action to continue, one plaintiff must remain to be a representative of the class.

JUSTICE WHITE
So what procedure would you suggest for any pregnant female in the State of Texas ever to get judicial consideration of this constitutional claim?

FLOYD
I do not believe it can be done. I think she makes her choice prior to the time she becomes pregnant. That is the time of her choice.

JUSTICE WHITE
Maybe she makes her choice when she decides to live in Texas?

(A few Judges laugh.)

FLOYD
(smiles)
Well, there is no restriction on moving...

(Again, the Judges do not laugh. Floyd ad lib: “Arright...” to get the egg off his face.)

(proceeds)
Your Honors, in the recent case of Thompson versus Texas, the State Court held that the State had a compelling interest because of the necessity of protection of fetal life. They recognized the humanness of the fetus.

JUSTICE STEWART
Yet Texas does not attempt to punish a woman who herself performs an abortion on herself?
FLOYD
That is correct. Texas does not punish the woman. And the matter has been brought to my attention... Why not punish for murder, since you are destroying a human being?

JUSTICE STEWART
There’s no, no state, is there, that equates abortion with murder?

FLOYD
I don’t think the courts have come to the conclusion that the unborn has full juristic rights. Not yet. Maybe they will.

JUSTICE MARSHALL
In the first few weeks of pregnancy?

FLOYD
At any time. We say there is life from the moment of impregnation. We begin, in our brief, with the development of the human embryo, from about seven to nine days after conception.

JUSTICE MARSHALL
(sarcastic)
Well, what about six days?

FLOYD
(offended)
Justice Marshall, there are unanswerable questions in this field.

JUSTICE MARSHALL
I withdraw the question.

FLOYD
Thank you. When does the soul come into the unborn...
(looks at Sarah)
If a person believes in the soul... I don’t know. We think that a consideration should be given to the unborn--

CHIEF JUSTICE BURGER
Mr. Floyd, your time is consumed. Thank you, Mrs. Weddington. Thank you, Mr. Floyd. The case is submitted. We will hear arguments next in number--

(Floyd turns to Sarah, surprised and pissed. Linda leaves.)

FLOYD
That’s it?

SARAH
Sorry we couldn’t hear the whole case tonight--
(Sarah will say “this afternoon” at matinees.)

SARAH (CONT’D)
(to audience)
Who has the attention span?

FLOYD
So that’s all the time you’re going to give to ole Jay Floyd?

SARAH
That’s pretty much what history gave you.

FLOYD
Well, history ain’t over yet, is it?

(He smiles and goes back to the lawyers’ table. Linda hurries back to Sarah with a brief.)

LINDA
(incredulous)
Sarah, we have to reargue the case in the next session!

SARAH
(stunned)
But why?

(Justice Blackmun enters in his robe and starts to write his opinion.)

LINDA
Well, some say because Justice Blackmun wants more time in writing the opinion...

BLACKMUN
(looks up)
This is an extremely controversial case!

LINDA
But rumor has it, that, since only seven Justices were present, the Court wants to wait till two new Justices are appointed--

BLACKMUN
(looks up)
Nixon nominees—
LINDA

(panicking)
Conservatives! Which could cause us to lose, Sarah--

(Sarah looks worried and frightened.)

MARSHAL'S VOICE

Oyez, oyez, oyez!

SARAH

(to audience)
Finally, almost a year later, on October 11, 1972--

LINDA

With all nine Justices present--

SARAH

The Court heard the case again.

(Norma returns with her beer.)

NORMA

Oh good. I wasn’t there, but I’m gonna stick around this time, drink my beer.

SARAH

Fine.

(Robert Flowers rises from the lawyers’ table and offers Sarah his hand.)

FLOWERS

Robert Flowers. This time, I’ll be representing Texas.
(to audience)
In fact, I was a fifth generation Texan, who, according to my obituary, spent many happy hours chasing white tail deer and blue quail in the brush country--

(Justice Burger bangs the gavel.)

CHIEF JUSTICE BURGER

Mrs. Weddington, you may proceed whenever you’re ready.

(Sarah goes to the podium, Flowers to the lawyer’s table. Norma gets comfortable on the floor.)
SARAH
Mr. Chief Justice and may it please the Court. It’s been almost three years since we instituted the original action, and yet, the inability to get an abortion is a continuing problem to Texas women! Now, the State has alleged its only interest in the statute is in protecting the life of the unborn--

JUSTICE STEWART
And you would agree, I suppose, that one of the important factors that has to be considered in this case is what rights, if any, does the unborn fetus have?

SARAH
That is correct.

(Norma leans in, listening.)

JUSTICE WHITE
Well, what if--would you lose your case if the fetus was a person?

SARAH
Then you would have a balancing of interests.

JUSTICE STEWART
If it were established that an unborn fetus is a person within the protection of the Fourteenth Amendment, you would have almost an impossible case here, isn’t that correct?

SARAH
I would have a very difficult case.

(The Judges laugh. Burger bangs his gavel.)

CHIEF JUSTICE BURGER
Mr. Flowers.

FLOWERS
(rises; assured)
Mr. Chief Justice, the position of the State of Texas is that upon conception we have a human being, a person within the concept of the Constitution.

JUSTICE STEWART
How should we—how should that question be decided? Is it a legal question, a constitutional question, a medical question, a philosophical question, a religious question, or what is it?
NORMA

(laughs)
Good question.

FLOWERS
I think it’s squarely before this court! On the seventh day, I think that the heart, in some form, starts beating. On the twentieth day, practically all the faculties that you and I have, Your Honor, are there. This court has been diligent in protecting the rights of the minorities, and, Gentlemen, we say that this is a minority, a silent minority, the true silent minority.
(with passion)
Who is speaking for these children?

(Norma suddenly rises.)

NORMA
Excuse me…

(Norma gets up and leaves, uneasy.)

JUSTICE MARSHALL
I want you to give me a medical, a recognizable medical writing of any kind, that says that at the time of conception that the fetus is a person.

FLOWERS
I’m not sure I can give it to you--

CHIEF JUSTICE BURGER
Thank you, Mr. Flowers. Mrs. Weddington--

(Flowers explodes--in the present.)

FLOWERS
I should have just said--back in 1972--it’s murder! I should have said, missus--
(turns to Sarah)
You people, with your Black Power, your Feminist This And That Power--you mean to tell me that an unborn child in this country has no power? You’re trying to make it legal to sanction murder! That’s what it comes down to--

SARAH
What it comes down to is choice. Choice!

(Burger bangs his gavel.)

CHIEF JUSTICE BURGER
Sarah Weddington, you have four minutes left.
SARAH
(in the present; shaken)
Four minutes... And if I failed, it could take years before they'd hear another case... I'd be setting us back years--letting down hundreds of thousands of women!

(She turns to the Court, filled with passion and conviction.)

Your Honors. No one is more keenly aware of the gravity of the issues, of the moral implications of this case. But it is a case that must be decided in terms of the Constitution. We are not here to advocate abortion! We do not ask this Court to rule that abortion is good or desirable in any particular situation! We are here to advocate that the decision to carry or to terminate a pregnancy...is a decision that the woman has a constitutional right to make for herself!

CHIEF JUSTICE BURGER
Thank you, Mrs. Weddington. Thank you Mr. Flowers. The case is submitted.

(Sarah takes a breath. Chavela Vargas starts to sing hauntingly again, as the lawyers rise and leave.)
SCENE NINE
Norma and Connie’s home in Dallas. One of lawyers’ tables becomes their kitchen table, SL. They’re having dinner with Mary, Norma’s mother, tawdrily dressed, and already pretty drunk. Sarah works in her office, which is projected SR.

NORMA
(laughs; to Mary)
Oh man, first day we met? Know what Connie did? Gave me her Plymouth Fury, told me to get it washed and bring it back.

I sure did.

CONNIE
And you know what? I washed that car myself and brought it back.

(laughs)
Two weeks later!

(Norma and Connie high five.)

MARY
(dryly)
Well, that’s a miracle.
(to Connie)
Did you know she stole money from a gas station when she was ten years old and ran away to Oklahoma City with another little girl? Stayed in a hotel? Manager caught ‘em in bed together, and the Judge sent Norma to reform school.

NORMA
Well, it was Catholic school first.
(laughs; to Connie)
Nun got me under the bed with her and--

CONNIE
How’s the mole, Mary?

MARY
(this is about Connie; mean)
Spicy.

CONNIE
Uh-huh.
MARY
She was born bad and I couldn’t beat it out of her. That girl’s always been a liar and a thief... And a queer. That’s why I got her daughter Melissa and that’s why I’m gonna keep her.

(A little girl, Melissa, runs on in half light, DS, in Norma’s mind.)

CONNIE
(evenly)
Don’t say.

(Norma looks at Melissa with longing. She smiles and the child smiles back. Melissa fiddles with a Stewardess Barbie.)

NORMA
Well, all that’s gonna change, mama. At least the liar and the thief part. Connie’s quit her job, we’re starting our own business cleaning apartments, and we’re gonna paint houses too. We’re livin’ here, in this house that she owns, away from the bars--
(looks towards Melissa)
So Melissa can come visit now. She can even stay over.

MARY
(smirks)
With y’all?

CONNIE
She’s gonna have her own room. We’re fixin’ it real pretty. Yellow with a green trim.

Wow.

NORMA
Want to see it, mama?
(to Melissa)
Might even get a dog! See, mama... Sometimes you just get lucky.

MARY
Yeah, what’s luck?

NORMA
That’s when somebody loves you even if you couldn’t deserve it less. Didn’t nobody ever love you like that?

MARY
Girl, I don’t like the sound of the word “love” in your mouth.

(Melissa stops playing and sits, lonely, bored. Norma rises.)
NORMA
Okay, look. I want to see my daughter. So what do I gotta do? Cause I know, from personal experience, ain’t healthy for a kid to think her mama just don’t care. You gonna lock her in the closet “to teach her manners?”

MARY
Melissa is very well behaved.

NORMA
Ain’t healthy for a child to think her mama just up and left--
(to Connie)
Every night, I’d go lookin’ in the bar, and guess what? “Oh Norma, honey, she just left!” For another lousy excuse for a man.

(Mary gets up from the table and gets in Norma’s face.)

MARY
(re: Connie)
Oh and you think you done better? With that? Another month you’ll be back on the street.

(Connie rises and gets in between them.)

CONNIE
(simply; strong)
No she won’t. Cause I’m gonna take care of her. And I will promise you one thing.

MARY
Yeah? What’s that?

CONNIE
Norma has lots of feeling. Lots of feeling. And I will never let nobody hurt her again.

MARY
Norma’s a piece of shit who’s going downhill from zero and she’s gonna take you down with her. Adios and thanks for the mole.

(She starts to leave. So does Melissa.)

NORMA
(beside herself)
Fuck you. I want to see my daughter! I’m her mother! I want to see my kid!
(She looks over at where Melissa was playing but Melissa has disappeared. Connie puts an arm around Norma and leads her offstage.)
SCENE TEN

Blackmun enters at a podium, CS. He begins speaking his momentous decision to the audience, the weight of history on his shoulders. Sarah is reading it from a sheath of papers in her office, SR.

JUSTICE BLACKMUN
We acknowledge the emotional nature of the abortion controversy and of the deep and seemingly absolute convictions the subject inspires.

(Sarah scans the decision, as Blackmun speaks it.)

SARAH
Linda--Linda, the Court sent the decision!

LINDA
Well, what did Blackmun say?!

(Sarah scans the decision, as Blackmun speaks it.)

JUSTICE BLACKMUN
One’s moral and religious training, one’s attitudes towards life and family, are all likely to influence one’s conclusions about abortion.

LINDA
(urgently)
So...?

(Sarah keeps scanning.)

SARAH
Well, he agreed with us that—

BLACKMUN
Maternity may force upon the woman a distressful life and future.

(Mary takes a drunken walk, DS, across the stage.)

MARY
Man, you got no idea.
BLACKMUN

(looking at Mary)
There is also the problem of bringing a child into a family unable, psychologically and otherwise, to care for it.

(Mary exits. Sarah flips pages, scanning.)

SARAH

So...?

BLACKMUN

These are factors the woman and her responsible physician necessarily will consider.

SARAH

(distressed)
He’s saying a woman will have to decide about abortion with her doctor?

LINDA

But why?

BLACKMUN

(to Sarah and Linda)
Because I’d worked at the Mayo Clinic and had great respect for doctors.

LINDA

Or he doesn’t trust a woman to decide for herself.

SARAH

(reading; worried)
And he said--

BLACKMUN

(to audience; extra clearly)
Each State may also properly assert important interests in maintaining medical standards and protecting potential life.

LINDA

Well, that could be a problem.

(CONNIE enters and goes to her kitchen table, SL, with coffee and the newspaper. Connie follows. Both are in bathrobes.)

CONNIE

Better get your shower, babe. We got two apartments to clean and there was a murder in one of ‘em so could be a mess.
NORMA
Arright...

SARAH
(to Blackmun)
But to be clear...the fetus is “potential” life?

(Connie clears dinner dishes from the previous scene, as Norma looks at the paper.)

BLACKMUN
The compelling point is viability. When the fetus has the capability of life outside the mother’s womb.

(Norma sees the small headline about Roe v Wade.)

NORMA
Oh--shit!

SARAH
(to Linda; frightened now)
But listen to this—

BLACKMUN
If the State is interested in protecting fetal life, it may go so far as to proscribe—

NORMA
(to herself)
What’s “proscribe”?

(Blackmun looks at her.)

BLACKMUN
The State may prohibit abortion, from the second trimester on--

NORMA
(reading carefully)
Except when it is necessary...

SARAH
(reading)
“To preserve the life or health of the mother.”
(to Blackmun)
Damn! State regulation could really come back to bite us.

BLACKMUN
But.

SARAH, LINDA & NORMA
What?
BLACKMUN

(to audience)
The Court has recognized that a right of privacy does exist under the Constitution. And this right of privacy is broad enough to encompass a woman’s decision whether or not to terminate her pregnancy.

SARAH

Yes!

BLACKMUN

(adds)
And I said that the word “person”, as used in the Fourteenth Amendment, does not include the unborn.

LINDA

So despite the limitations...

SARAH

We won! Linda--we won! Seven to two!

NORMA

(stunned)
Connie...?

CONNIE

What’s wrong, Pixie?

(Norma speaks it to herself, Sarah aloud...)

SARAH AND NORMA

The right to choose is the law of the land!

(Linda and Sarah hug. Blackmun nods, feeling neither elation nor regret, just the weight of it, as he and his podium recede upstage.)

JUSTICE BLACKMUN

Justice Harry Blackmun. According to my obituary, I would receive hate mail for the rest of my life, and, in 1989, a bullet would come through my window barely missing me.

(He starts to leave, then stops.)

JUSTICE BLACKMUN

(moved)
I’d like to add that my wife and daughter were a profound influence on my thinking.
(He exits.)

NORMA
(with wonder)
They passed that law, Connie, that Roe versus Wade?

CONNIE
Yeah? Well, good. Woman can make up her own damn mind!

LINDA
(to audience; emotional)
Well, I’ll leave now, as this will be the high point of my life.
(beat)
According to Wikipedia.

(Linda exits. Sarah addresses the audience, thinking the story’s over.)

SARAH
(to audience; triumphant)
And that was the case. Now let’s talk about what’s happened to the law since--

NORMA
Whoa! Hold on, sugar, your story may be over, but I’m just gettin’ started.

What?

(Norma goes right back to the scene.)

NORMA
Connie, how’d you like to meet Jane Roe?

CONNIE
(laughs)
Come on, Pixie, we don’t know nobody like that.

(Connie starts to leave.)

NORMA
(softly)
Hey...

(Connie turns. Norma nods. Connie looks stunned. Norma turns to Sarah, in the present.)
NORMA (CONT'D)
And I had to find out from the fuckin’ paper.

SARAH
I tried to contact you, you never had a forwarding--

NORMA
Well, I never heard nothin’. Not till the damn eighties. So let’s go!

(She signals to the booth and we hear a blast of music from the eighties, “Girls Just Wanna Have Fun”, as Norma starts to change. Sarah is blindsided--but takes the challenge. She starts to change too, and it becomes a breathless race to see who can get to the eighties--and their late thirties--faster. Projections give us the best and worst of the decade, as the women slap on more weight, add padded shoulders, and shorter, if bigger, hair. Whoever wins gets to ring a bell.)

Ha! 1983.
SCENE ELEVEN

Norma and Connie’s kitchen and Sarah’s office. The eighties. Connie goes to Norma with a letter.

CONNIE
You got a letter, babe, from Sarah Weddington?

NORMA
Well, butter my butt and call me a biscuit.

(Norma reads the letter, as Sarah speaks it.)

SARAH
(urgently)
Dear Norma, a reporter from Channel 8 is asking whether you would be willing to go public--

(Norma reads the letter, as Sarah speaks it.)

NORMA
(incredulous)
Now?

(A smiling Ron and Nancy Reagan might be projected.)

SARAH
(to Norma)
I’m afraid it’s urgent. With Reagan in the White House--thanks to the Christian Right--he says he wants to “rectify the tragedy of Roe v Wade.” He says that, over his dead body will a pro-choice Judge ever be appointed to the Supreme Court--

NORMA
(smiles)
So you need my help?

SARAH
(pleasantly; reading her letter)
I am contacting you because the reporter asked if I would do so. Hope all is well. Best, Sarah.

(Sarah waits. Norma turns to Connie.)

NORMA
(She does a line of coke.)

NORMA (CONT’D)
I see all them college girl feminists on the TV going on about Roe? I mean, I’m the one that did it, Connie, shit, I am Roe—and I never got nothin’ out of it, not an abortion, nothin’!

CONNIE
Well, maybe it’s time to take some damn credit.

NORMA
(to Sarah)
Okay.

SARAH
Good.

(Sarah leaves. Norma does a line of coke.)

NORMA
(to audience)
Don’t judge, it was the eighties.
(to Connie)
Wonder how much they pay you to go on the TV...

(Uma comes on with her camera man. The rest of the scene is on cocaine—fast.)

UMA
Norma? I’m Uma from Channel 8. You just relax and be yourself and I’m just going to ask you a few questions. Ready?

(Norma takes pills from her pocket or does another line of coke.)

Norma, tell us how you got involved in Roe v. Wade.

NORMA
(awkward in front of camera)
Well, Uma, I was a single pregnant woman down on my luck and I needed an abortion...’cause I’d been raped. And it makes me so mad to see these anti-abortion people trying to turn back my law.

UMA
Thank you, Norma.
(Uma exits, and a TV Newsman rushes in and takes her place. The Camera Man changes the channel logo on his camera. This is faster.)

TV NEWSMAN
Norma, I’m--

NORMA
(dazzled)
I know who you are!

(Norma takes pills.)

TV NEWSMAN
Norma, let’s talk about the rape.

NORMA
(beat; slurry)
Oh, gee...
(to audience)
Well, I was raped, I mean, I’d been raped in my life--many times--but--what’d he want me to say?
(to reporter)
I wasn’t raped. I lied. Cause I thought it would help the case.

(Sarah has been watching from her office.)

SARAH
What!

TV NEWSMAN
Cut!
(to Norma)
Are you sure you want to say this on national television?

NORMA
Yes I am. I wasn’t raised to lie, and it’s just killin’ me.

Mrs. Weddington? Comment?

TV NEWSMAN

SARAH
(incredulous)
I told Norma when we first met that whether or not she was raped had no relevance. Rape was never even mentioned in the Supreme Court case!

Thanks.
(The Newsman and Cameraman leave. Fred Friendly comes on.)

FRED FRIENDLY

(fast)
Norma, I’m Fred Friendly. I used to run CBS and I’d like to interview you for a book I’m writing called THE CONSTITUTION and I’ll fly you to New York for the first time in your life all expenses paid.

NORMA

(tentative)
Uh… Okay...

(Michael Manheim runs in and takes Fred’s place. Fred leaves.)

MANHEIM

Norma, I’m Michael Manheim. I’d like to make a TV movie called ROE V. WADE with Holly Hunter playing you, and I’ll pay you fifty thousand dollars.

NORMA

(into it)
Okay...

(Holly Hunter sweeps in, in a gown, hiding an Emmy.)

HOLLY

Norma, I’m Holly Hunter. I just want to hang out with you and find out how you talk and what you wear and how you feel deep down about everything, you know, like girlfriends.

NORMA

Okay!

HOLLY

(waves her Emmy)
Thank you!

NORMA

(to audience)
‘Bout the only people who didn’t want to be girlfriends were the feminists. I went to Washington to be on this panel?

(Sarah interrupts, trying to get the story back on track.)

SARAH

If I may. We were there to protest Webster, a new law that would completely undermine everything that Roe--
NORMA
Finally, I got to eat with them sorority girls and Eleanor Smeal told me—

(Eleanor Smeal comes on.)

ELEANOR
Take your elbows off the table, Norma, that’s not ladylike.

NORMA
(laughs)
And I said, “Ladylike? Take my fork and comb your legs!”

(Eleanor goes off in a huff, and Sarah throws up her hands, as Norma continues...)

Only one of ‘em was ever nice to me--

(Gloria Allred enters.)

GLORIA
Hi, Norma, I’m Gloria Allred.

(Gloria smiles at the audience before continuing at the same quick pace.)

(to Norma)
I am so thrilled to meet you. I don’t think the Women’s Movement has realized what a tremendous asset you are. I’m your Yiddisha Mama and I want to invite you to California to stay with me as my guest for a few years.

NORMA
You shittin’ me?

GLORIA
I wouldn’t dare.

NORMA
Just a sec.

(Connie is setting plates at the kitchen table, as Norma runs over. Connie keeps her own steady pace.)

What do you think, Connie?
CONNIE
I think they’re using you, Pixie. All of ‘em. Ready to eat? I’m makin’ chili--

NORMA
(with sudden fury)
Oh, ‘cause you can’t imagine people like that wanting to be my friend? Just cause you think I’m trash?

CONNIE
(shocked; stung)
I love you, Norma!

NORMA
You’re fuckin’ jealous is what you are. Gloria happens to be a lawyer who has devoted her life to women’s issues and to helping the—

GLORIA
Marginalized—

NORMA
Whole damn country’s gonna know my name.

(Connie doesn’t respond.)

You think I can’t make it out there in California? Just fuckin’ say it!

(Connie is silent. Norma changes on a dime.)

(lovingly)
Connie, I know you and me ain’t been getting along so good, what with all these reporters and movie people runnin’ around…

CONNIE
I can handle the bullshit, Pixie.

NORMA
I know I’m not easy…

CONNIE
I don’t need easy.

NORMA
Well, you shouldn’t have to deal with my drinking and drugging and my lousy temper… So maybe a little separation might not be so bad?

(Connie looks at her, pained. After a long beat…)
CONNIE

(hurt)
Okay, Pixie.

(Norma kisses her and goes back to Gloria.)

NORMA

Okay!

(The fast pace resumes.)

GLORIA

Norma, I’d like you to meet Beau and Mariah who’ll help with wardrobe, Davina will be your speech writer, and Mary and Fred Gilmour will coach you on--

(The helpers surround Norma.)

FRED AND MARY

The rain in Spain stays mainly in the plain.

NORMA

The rain in Spain--

GLORIA

I think she’s got it.

(She starts to sing Ethel Merman’s famous song from GYPSY. Others join in.)

(sings)
You’ll be swell--

GLORIA, BEAU, MARIAH

You’ll be great!

GLORIA AND HELPERS

Gonna have the whole world on a plate—

(Sarah interrupts.)

SARAH

Excuse me--

GLORIA AND HELPERS

(keep singing)
Starting here, starting now, honey, everything’s coming up Roe--
(Sarah cannot take another note of this.)

SARAH
Sorry to interrupt, but--really? If we’re trying to tell the story of Roe at that time? At least let me discuss Webster. Who here knows what the case was about?

(waits; then)
Webster versus Reproductive Health Services was a law before the Supreme Court that said that life begins at conception. Webster would stop State hospitals from doing abortions--and was as close to a ban on abortion as so-called “Pro Lifers” could get! Now, I know the bad girl is always more fun than the good girl--

GLORIA
(smiles; to audience)
Oh, we’re all on the same side here, this is the Women’s Movement after all...

(Gloria leads Norma to the podium and a microphone.)

(to audience )
And so, ladies and gentlemen, it is my great honor to present to you today, Ms. Norma McCorvey. The real Jane Roe!

(to Sarah)
Thanks, Gloria.

(Sound of applause. Norma takes the speech from her pocket. She is transformed. Well-spoken, intelligent, and clear.)

Hello, I’m here today to tell you about the path that I, as Jane Roe, have travelled. I was unaware of my pregnancy when I joined a carnival in August of 1969. At the end of September, I began to feel some strange symptoms. I talked to several women, and they told me that the way to get an abortion was to say that I had been raped. After speaking with Sarah Weddington and Linda Coffee, I agreed to be the Plaintiff they needed to challenge the Texas abortion law.

(Applause.)

(with great conviction)
Here’s what I feel. If anti-choice forces are allowed to impose moral agendas on our society, we will lose the right to accept the responsibility for ourselves and our children. Let the United States Supreme Court hear our voices: SILENCE NO MORE! WE WILL NOT GO BACK!

(Tremendous applause from the crowd. Norma turns to Sarah, in the present.),
NORMA (CONT’D)

(smiles)
I got this now, sugar, you can take a load off.

(Sarah stares, incredulous.)

SARAH
Norma? You have your fifteen minutes of fame.

(Sarah leaves.)

NORMA
(to audience)
And y'all take fifteen too--

(But before anyone can move, Flip Benham suddenly appears at a door in the audience.)

FLIP
(booming)
Norma McCorvey, you are responsible for the death of twenty million babies, and God has sent me to stop the genocide!

(to audience)
Reverend Flip Benham. Minister of the Free Methodist Church...and future head of Operation Rescue.

(Blackout.)

(END OF ACT ONE)
ACT TWO

SCENE ONE

1992. Rollicking Christian rock as the audience re-enters. Connie is eating dinner USR and watching Flip Benham on TV. Flip’s in front of a Dallas abortion clinic and speaks to our audience members as fellow Operation Rescue protesters.

FLIP
Good to see you! Thanks for showing up again! Welcome! Welcome!

(The Aware Woman Clinic is projected behind him.)

Welcome to the gates of hell. You know, just this morning we showed up at this abortion mill and already two precious babies are saved, and I had the privilege of going to breakfast at the IHOP with one couple who chose life. And how did this happen? Because you showed up at the gates of hell. Well, there is only one answer to the abortion holocaust. And that is Jesus Christ. Friends, it is only as we lay our lives down for the weak, the poor, the defenseless, that we find true meaning in life. And you did that this morning! Folks in back, can you hear?

(Connie shakes more sauce on her food.)

You know, after our service here in Dallas on Sunday, a reporter asked me, “But Flip, if you really believe that abortion is a Gospel issue, why do you encourage your people to become involved in politics?” Well, I have a quote for you, young lady. “Our laws and institutions must be based on the teachings of the Redeemer of Mankind.” Now, did I decree that? No sir, I am not that smart. The Supreme Court of the United States decreed that, in 1892! But now it’s 1992 and look around.

(He looks at the clinic.)
The foundations of our nation have been stolen from us! There is a battle raging between two worldviews and child killing is the flash point of the battle--

(Connie’s phone rings.)

CONNIE
Shit.

FLIP
But we will lay down our lives and by our actions say that we will save them all!
(Connie finds the phone.)

CONNIE

Hold on.

FLIP

You don’t have to read our lips. Read our lives! Read our--

(Connie mutes the TV with the remote, causing Flip to mouth a few words, then she turns the TV off, causing him to quickly exit.)

CONNIE

(into phone)
Hello?
SCENE TWO

Norma enters, on the phone, by a pool in Los Angeles, which is projected SL. Connie’s on her phone at home in Dallas, which is projected SR.

   (on phone)
Connie?

     (on phone; evenly)
How you doin’, Norma? Been a while.

Connie—oh, babe, I miss you so much!

     (vulnerable but wary)
Yeah?

Listen, sugar... Gloria’s all right, but I’m sick of being paraded around like the five legged pony in some freak show. And if that wasn’t bad enough?

What happened, Pixie?

Sarah Weddington. Wrote a damn book.

She talk some shit about you? What’d she say?

   (Sarah enters. In her mid-forties now, she has put on weight, like armor, as people do. Her hair is shorter and more tightly coiffed.)

I said that when Jane Roe agreed to be a plaintiff, I was very grateful. I found her street-smart and likable and her hard-luck stories touched a sympathetic chord.

Yeah, and what else did you say?
SARAH

(proudly)
I talked about my work as an advisor to President Carter on Women’s Issues...my time as President of the Board of NARAL...

And on a personal note?

(Sarah takes this opportunity to relate to the audience and speaks mostly to them.)

SARAH
Well... I mentioned my love of barbecue...country music... You know, when I was in the Texas legislature we used to have these Tuesday evening dances, and I got to dance every dance!

(She smiles, does a step or two. Norma is not smiling.)

NORMA
And on a personal—?

SARAH
(to audience)
Oh—funny story. My friend, Ann Richards, Governor of Texas, once told the journalist Molly Ivins... “It’s not that Sarah doesn’t have a sense of humor. You just have to tell her it’s a joke and then she’ll laugh!”

(laughing; to audience member)
That was good, wasn’t it?

(Norma takes the book from her purse and waves it at Sarah.)

NORMA
Page one! ‘Case you forgot. Like you forgot to mention in that pizza parlor! ‘Less you got a problem talkin’ about—

(This is a shock and terribly awkward for Sarah.)

SARAH
No... No, I do not. I...
(to audience; with difficulty)
I was in my third year of law school in Austin. And my, uh...well, my period was late...

Uh-huh...
SARAH
Ron and I... We were already in a serious relationship. We were planning on getting married... But we hadn’t--I mean, we’d been...celibate...till... Well, we were planning on marriage--
(to Norma)
I really don’t think it’s necessary to go into all the details, not everyone relishes talking about their private life in front of several hundred--

NORMA
Get to the good part.

SARAH
Well, I had worked so hard just to get into law school—and to stay there. At that time? Some professors wouldn’t even call on a woman in class! And I had to have a job—I wanted to—we were both supporting us! It wasn’t that I didn’t want children—it just wasn’t the right time... And if I dropped out of school?
(deeply pained)
My parents would be so disappointed in me...

NORMA
So...

SARAH
(after a beat)
Ron heard about a doctor in Piedras Negras, Mexico, across the Texas border, who did abortions. He charged four hundred dollars—cash. That was it, that was our life savings. I remember us following a man in brown pants and a white guayabera shirt down a dirt alley... But the doctor seemed...
(convincing herself)
Competent. I was a good girl and did exactly as I was told. When I felt the anesthesia... I remember my last thoughts were: I hope I don’t die and I hope no one ever finds out about this.

NORMA
(challenging)
How come you didn’t want anybody to find out?

SARAH
Because it was personal.

NORMA
You sound ashamed.

SARAH
Certainly not!
NORMA
You sound it.

SARAH
(admits)
Back then—when it was illegal... Yes, tragically, there was shame!
(smiles; to audience)
But I was one of the lucky ones.

NORMA
(vulnerable)
Then why didn’t you tell me in that pizza parlor?

SARAH
(taken aback)
You were a prospective client, it wasn’t relevant!

NORMA
No? If you wanted to help me get an abortion—why didn’t you just tell me where you got yours?

SARAH
Norma, it was an entirely different--

NORMA
You had the money, I didn’t— that’s the difference.

SARAH
I was building a case to help all women.

NORMA
Yeah, you didn’t give a damn about Roe the person, all you cared about was Roe the case!
(to audience)
Getting back to my story--
(into phone)
Connie?

SARAH
(to Norma)
Look. I’ll bear witness to your story, in the interest of history--

(Sarah sits, purposefully, on the sidelines.)
SARAH (CONT’D)

In the interest of truth!

(Norma waves her away.)

NORMA

(into phone)
You’re the only one ever gave a damn, Connie.

CONNIE

(moved)
Well... Your room’s still the same... Your crystals, your dream catchers, your voodoo
doodads... Ain’t touched a thing.
(jokes)
Too scared! Ain’t touched Melissa’s room neither. Maybe now she’s grown, she’ll
come visit.

NORMA
Yeah, now I’m somebody, maybe she’ll even bring her kid. Oh, I love you so much,
Connie, I just want to come home!

(Norma rushes to Connie who puts her arms around her.)

(to audience)
Back in Dallas, Connie and me started working full time in abortion clinics.

(A desk and chairs are set.)

(to Sarah)
They all wanted Jane Roe for Marketing Director.

SARAH
I’ll bet.

NORMA
We helped hundreds of women.

CONNIE
Sure did, babe.

NORMA
And after a while... Well, some of them just about broke my heart.

(A strip mall abortion clinic is projected SR. Muzak. Connie goes
offstage to a back room. Norma sits at her desk and does a line
of coke.)

What? It was the nineties.
(A woman enters. Sarah watches.)

NORMA (CONT'D)
Good morning, welcome to A Choice For Women, I’m Norma.

(tense)
Hi.

(She takes a clipboard to fill out her information. As she opens her coat, we see she’s six months pregnant.)

NORMA
Oh, sugar--you’re in the wrong place. The OB-GYN is right upstairs.

(pained)
I know where I am.

NORMA
But—you’re showing... You gotta be six months...

(Norma tries to take back the clipboard. The woman resists.)

I know. But I have to do this.

NORMA
Well, it’s too late!

(Sarah jumps up, shocked.)

SARAH
What are you saying?

(to Norma)

PREGNANT WOMAN 1
Please. This baby will never--you’re not a doctor—

NORMA
Girl, get the fuck out of here!

(An Abortion Doctor comes on and leads the patient off.)
ABORTION DOCTOR

Norma! Please! We’re here to help these women!

SARAH

(outraged; to Norma)
Do you understand that women who seek second term abortions may be dealing with fetal deformities so severe that their child would not survive a pregnancy anyway?

NORMA

(“Leave!”)
Do you mind?

(Sarah sighs and sits. Pregnant Woman 2 comes on. She is clear and sure. Norma smiles.)

Hi there.

PREGNANT WOMAN 2

Oh! You’re Norma, right? I saw you on TV! I just want to thank you so much for Roe v. Wade.

(The woman hugs Norma. Sarah watches.)

NORMA

(touched)
That’s okay, sugar.

PREGNANT WOMAN 2

I could never have gotten my abortions without you.

NORMA

(taken aback)
Sugar, how many have you had?

PREGNANT WOMAN 2

Two.

(Norma doesn’t know what to make of her calm.)

NORMA

So this’ll be three? And you don’t feel...?

PREGNANT WOMAN 2

(thoughtful)
Guilty? I’ve asked myself because that’s what you’re supposed to feel... But no.
And I certainly don’t feel I have to justify my life choices to people who don’t even know me-

NORMA

(troubled)
Okay, but...three--?

PREGNANT WOMAN 2

(shocked)
Excuse me?

(Sarah jumps up.)

SARAH
Are you judging her? By a number? Two’s okay, but three--?

NORMA
Well, I--

(loses it; to the woman)
This ain’t birth control!

PREGNANT WOMAN 2

Whoa--

(The woman turns and quickly leaves. Norma turns to Sarah.)

NORMA
Nobody likes abortion, right Sarah? Ain’t that what you said in your book?

SARAH
Yes, and nobody “likes” divorce either, but my point was that—

SARAH AND NORMA
I still believed in a woman’s right to get one!

(Norma sits at her desk.)
SCENE THREE

A third pregnant woman enters Norma’s office and sits.

NORMA

Good morning.

(The woman hands Norma her clipboard.)

PREGNANT WOMAN 3

(frightened)
Here. I already filled it out. I just wanna know... Is it a real doctor?

NORMA

Our doctor is one of the very best.

And the place...?

PREGNANT WOMAN 3

NORMA

As you can see, it’s clean as a whistle. Look, I know how you feel... I was just like you.
(takes her hand)
But everything is going to be just fine.

PREGNANT WOMAN 3

(fighting tears)
Listen, I don’t have anybody to... My husband doesn’t know. He’d kill me. And I know people say that, but...

NORMA

Sugar, I’m gonna stay with you, okay? Through the whole thing. Now we’ll see you on Friday, and if any questions come up, you give me a call. Norma.

PREGNANT WOMAN 3

Thank you, Norma.

(The woman leaves. The same Abortion Doctor, but with a thick indeterminate foreign accent now, approaches.)

ABORTION DOCTOR

(thick accent)
Norma, how many weeks is she?
NORMA
(looks at clipboard)
Ten.

(He continues with the accent, except where indicated.)

ABORTION DOCTOR
When she comes back, tell her she’s twelve.

NORMA
To charge an extra hundred? Like hell I will.

(Sarah, offended, jumps up again.)

SARAH
Objection! I mean—I just have a quick question. Now, is this the same doctor who worked here previously? Because to my ear he suddenly has an awfully thick accent. I don’t know what it is, but it’s awfully thick…

NORMA
Yeah, I forgot that before.

ABORTION DOCTOR
And in your first book, you said I was a really good guy, but in your second book, I’m this money grubbing immigrant with an accent...

SARAH
(lawyerly; to audience)
Well, I think the difference in her two books speaks to credibility.
(under her breath)
Not to mention the egregiously anti-immigrant and downright Trumpean--

NORMA
(shrugs)
Yeah, well, sometimes your perspective changes with age. A lot of these abortion docs had accents. It was an easy way for a foreign doctor to make money.

SARAH
Objection! Lack of foundation!

ABORTION DOCTOR
(no accent now)
And I feel like a real asshole with that accent—

NORMA
Then go away, both of you, I’m busy.
SARAH
(fed up)
Fine. I have a television interview to prepare for.

(She leaves. The doctor continues to Norma...)

ABORTION DOCTOR
(thick accent again)
And I need you to collect the tissue.

(Connie hurries in, disturbed.)

CONNIE
Norma? We gotta talk--

(Norma continues to the doctor.)

NORMA
Look, I am the Marketing Director and I make six bucks an hour. I won’t handle the tissue.
(to audience; upset)
The body parts. We kept them in plastic bags in the fridge and they got picked up end of the week. They looked like cut up chicken parts swimming in blood--

ABORTION DOCTOR
Okay, I’ll have Connie collect the tissue.

CONNIE
Do I look like your maid?

ABORTION DOCTOR
Nobody listens to me with this accent!

(The doctor goes off, mumbling about having to clean up and do the accent.)

CONNIE
Babe... You sure you want to keep doin’ this? Maybe you could use a little break.

NORMA
Oh, I’m doin’ this, Connie, I did the Tarot, I asked the Ouija... Sure as hell ain’t goin’ back to painting houses.
CONNIE

All right, Pixie.

(to audience)

Hell, I didn’t know ‘bout no Ouija... But I knew a curandera, my mom used to see her, what you’d call a medicine lady, healer? And she told me the Mayans believe the center of a woman is right here.

(She touches her own womb.)

That’s where her power comes from.

(touches her heart)

Not the heart.

(touches her womb)

Here.

(beat)

That’s why I stayed at the clinic.

(She looks at Norma and proceeds carefully.)

Now, I hate to tell you this... But guess who’s moving in next door?

NORMA

Robert Redford?

CONNIE

Operation Rescue.

NORMA

(laughs)
Connie, I am not near stoned enough--

CONNIE

A reporter called asking for a statement. Their new head honcho’s right out there in the parking lot.

NORMA


(Flip comes on, with boxes. Operation Rescue is set up on the opposite side of the stage from the clinic, SL)

FLIP

(the preacher)
Norma McCorvey? How does it make you feel that thirty-five million babies have died because of you?

(Norma looks stricken for a moment, then gives it right back.)
NORMA
Well, gee, Flip, we’re just about through killing little baby boys and girls today, but if you want to stick around we’re thinkin’ of having a barbecue with ‘em…

FLIP
I have a pretty busy day, Miss Norma, but we’ll be seeing each other plenty. Our new offices are right on the other side of your wall.

NORMA
Oh yeah? That Jesus must be one hell of a real estate agent.

FLIP
He certainly is. Only sin prevents us from entering The Kingdom of God, Miss Norma.

NORMA
That what you Rescuers told that abortion doctor in Florida ‘fore you put a bullet in his head? Listen, Flip Venom, you can thump that bible of yours till it’s a limp noodle. But you try to stop one woman from entering my clinic... You will feel the Wrath of Norma so hard, ain’t no operation in this world gonna rescue your sorry flat ass. So you can just kiss my go-to-hell.

FLIP
(smiles)
Miss Norma, you got a way with words, you could preach the gospel! I sure look forward to speaking again. Cause we ain’t just month to month with Jesus here… Our lease is a year and a half.

(Flip leaves to get more cartons.)

CONNIE
I made some calls. Turns out the landlord leased ‘em the place for free.

(Flip returns with another carton and adds…)

FLIP
Amen...

CONNIE
They already been talkin’ to women in the parking lot.

NORMA
They can’t do that!

CONNIE
Cops say it’s legal if it’s their parking lot too. You just got to stay calm, babe--
NORMA
I’m gonna need a six pack for that.

(She leaves.)

CONNIE
(to audience; shrugs)
It gets worse.

(Connie exits.)
SCENE FOUR

A bright sunshiny day. Jimmy Cliff might sing a few bars of “I Can See Clearly Now,” as Pregnant Woman 3 arrives in the parking lot on the day of her abortion. Ronda comes on. She is intelligent, calm, sincere.

RONDA
Hi! Good morning! Are you looking for the Pregnancy Crisis Center?

PREGNANT WOMAN 3
(confused by the name)
I’m, uh, I’m headed to the clinic...?

RONDA
Well, bless your heart, I’ll walk you over. I’m Ronda. How are you feeling today?

(Ronda steers her in the direction of Operation Rescue. Sarah enters, on her way to her interview, and watches from the sidelines.)

PREGNANT WOMAN 3
Okay, I guess. Isn’t A Choice For Women that way?

(Ronda takes photos from her bag.)

RONDA
Oh, hon, you don’t want to go there... This is the most important decision you’ll ever make. Let me show you something that might help.

PREGNANT WOMAN 3
Well—

(Ronda shows her the photo.)

RONDA
This is an eight week old baby. See the precious little hands and feet?

(She shows another photo.)

And this is a nine week old baby. He’s smiling, can you see that?

PREGNANT WOMAN 3
Please—just let me--
RONDA
You’re scared. I know. I was just like you. Can I tell you something? When I got pregnant? I was engaged. My fiancé, Levi... Even my own parents wanted me to get an abortion. Well, I was in my doctor’s office, and I happened to see a picture in one of those pamphlets they give you? I saw the precious little hands and feet... And no, I may not be a scientist or a medical person, but I have eyes, just like you do, and no one—  
(vehemently)
no one could tell me that this was a “fetus” and not a human being. Hon, are you a Christian?

PREGNANT WOMAN 3
Look, I don’t--

RONDA
Because you don’t have to be a Christian to be unable to end a life. But you know, I believe that, with time, you will see that this child--  
.touches the woman’s stomach
your child--is a gift that has been put in your path. Sometimes we just don’t know the path till it’s revealed to us--  
(Norma starts to enter.)

Why don’t you come inside, have a cup of coffee—

PREGNANT WOMAN 3
(see Norma; torn)
I can’t—  
(to Ronda)
I—  
(to Norma; in tears)
I can’t!

(She runs off. Norma rushes Ronda.)

NORMA
What the hell do you think you’re doing?

RONDA
Miss Norma, we just had our first save here! That woman chose life for her child!  
(offers her hand)
I’m Ronda.

NORMA
You fucking bitch! That woman was my client. This is my job you are messing with!
RONDA
I believe Jesus has a better job for you.

NORMA
Get outta my face and take Jesus with you. Fuckin’ dumbass cunt Christian!

(beat; calmly)
Miss Norma, just because you know where I stand on an issue...doesn’t mean you know me.

(Norma spits in her face. Ronda...smiles.)

NORMA
How dare you smile at me? How dare you?

RONDA
(unwaveringly kind)
Miss Norma... You have a nice day. Oh--
(introduces herself to audience)
Ronda Mackey. Operation Rescue volunteer.

(Ronda exits. Norma is dumbfounded. Sarah gets a glass of water from a stage hand and goes to Norma. For a moment, they’re on the same side.)

SARAH
Well. Least she wasn’t carrying one of those signs with a dismembered fetus. (despite herself)
But I can understand how you might...feel. Would you like a moment? Some water?

NORMA
Thanks.

(Norma takes the water and heads for her office.)

SARAH
(to audience)
Perhaps I can give some context.

(Sarah cues the booth to start TV music.)
SCENE FIVE

Sarah is at an interview with a Male TV news reporter. Connie and Norma watch on TV at home with beers.

TELEVISION NEWS REPORTER
Good evening. We are fortunate to have with us tonight Sarah Weddington, attorney and professor at the University of Texas, best known as the lawyer who successfully argued Roe v Wade.

(smiles; to Sarah)
Professor Weddington, how are you feeling tonight on the twenty-first anniversary of the case?

SARAH
(laughs)
Why, just terrible!

TELEVISION NEWS REPORTER
I beg your pardon?

SARAH
If you had told me twenty-one years ago that I’d still be arguing this case in 1994, I’d have said you were crazy. Two decades ago, the Supreme Court gave American women the legal right to choose. But the fate of Roe depends on who is on the Supreme Court at the time! And in recent years, well, with appointees like Clarence Thomas... There have been so many decisions that have had the opposite effect of what Roe intended—severely limiting access to abortions.

TELEVISION NEWS REPORTER
Can you give us an example?

SARAH
Why, I can give you ten—

TELEVISION NEWS REPORTER
Well, just one would be--

SARAH
In one case, the Supreme Court upheld a gag rule which forbids doctors in government funded clinics from even speaking about abortion to clients. Another law prohibits the use of Medicaid for abortions, so poor women simply can’t get one. In fact, black women—who have the highest rates of abortion, have the least access to reproductive information and contraception--
TELEVISION NEWS REPORTER
Well, hold on a minute. Should government money be used when so many Americans are against abortion?

SARAH
Where would you have a woman go? The back alleys again? Mexico?

TELEVISION NEWS REPORTER
Well--why don’t we move to questions from--

(He heads for his studio audience.)

SARAH
Other laws require doctors to inform women about the fetus from a decidedly pro-life point of view--

TELEVISION NEWS REPORTER
But since the Roe decision allowed that “Each State may assert interests in protecting potential life”...shouldn’t the law require a woman to look at pictures of the fetus before getting an abortion?

SARAH
Gee... Does the law require a man to look at pictures of dead children before buying a gun?

TELEVISION NEWS REPORTER
(laughs)
I don’t quite see--

SARAH
What is the point of having a law that makes abortion legal if a woman has no access to actually get one?

(Norma’s had enough.)

NORMA
(sarcastic)
Really? I did not know that!

SARAH
Because another law—

(Norma turns off the TV. The Reporter leaves. Norma goes to Sarah.)
NORMA

(laughs)
You’re gonna tell me about “access”? I’m out there with those loony tunes Rescuers every day! Do they talk to me on the anniversary of Roe v Wade?

SARAH

(loses it)
This isn’t about you!

(quickly; to audience)
I’m so sorry. But, really, should a public figure be driven by personal slights?

NORMA

I’m goin’ to get dinner, Connie. I don’t need her in my face. Thank you.

CONNIE

(calmingly)
Okay, babe.

(Norma goes to get beer. Sarah starts to leave.)

Look--

(Connie looks at Sarah... But decides to explain to the audience instead. Sarah listens.)

(to audience)
Norma was drinkin’ a lot back then. And she was doin’ some cocaine too. Doctor said she was depressed--

NORMA

He’s an asshole.

CONNIE

Lookin’ back, I didn’t see it comin’... But she was always kind of a spiritual person, bein’ part Cajun and all... And she had her sage and her dreamcatchers, bein’ part Cherokee... But what really blew her mind wasn’t the Rescuers, or the drugs, or the doodads...

(Norma goes and sits outside the clinic and lights a cigarette.)

NORMA

It was Emily.

(Sarah looks curious.)
SCENE SIX

It’s slightly surreal. The Texas sunshine outside the clinic is, perhaps, a little too bright. Norma is having a cigarette, as Emily, 7, appears.

EMILY
Hello. I’m Emily.

NORMA
Well, hi there, sugar. I’m Norma.

(Norma is immediately enchanted.)

I like your dress, Emily, it’s real pretty.

EMILY
My mom made it!

NORMA
Well, your mom’s real talented, and you are a very lucky girl.

EMILY
Your top is pretty too.

NORMA
This ole thing?

(Sarah, watching, can’t bear this.)

SARAH
(to audience)
You’ll have to excuse me a moment.

(Sarah leaves the stage. Norma continues to Emily.)

NORMA
Oh, don’t mind her, she don’t know kids.

(Norma realizes she’s holding a cigarette and quickly puts it out.)

Who does your hair like that Emily, you or your mom?
EMILY
Oh, my mom does it.
(laughs)
I can’t do my own braid.

NORMA
Right. You’d have to have some looooon arms! Like a monkey! You got any pets, Emily?

EMILY
I got a dog. I’m going to be a vegetarian—a veterinarian.

(Flip enters Operation Rescue with chairs and continues to set up the office. He sees Emily and Norma talking and watches, surprised.)

NORMA
That so? Man, I always wanted a dog. But my mom didn’t care for animals. I don’t understand that. I mean, all a dog wants is to love you. All kids should have a dog. Should be a law, right?

EMILY
Right! What kind of dog do your kids have?

NORMA
Well, my daughter, Melissa... She’s grown now... But she had...
(improvises)
A dachshund. Just loved her to bits. Followed her everywhere. Like a little sausage on legs.

(Emily laughs.)

She loved that dog and that precious dog loved her.

(Norma suddenly starts to cry.)

EMILY
Why are you crying? He died?

NORMA
Yeah.

EMILY
Oh, don’t cry, Miss Norma. Don’t be sad. He’s with Jesus now.

(Emily puts her arms around Norma. Ronda calls from offstage.)
EMILY
Out here, mom.

(Ronda enters. Flip exits.)

Mom, this is Miss Norma!

RONDA
Yes, sweetheart, I know who she is.

(Norma collects herself and rises.)

NORMA
Well, I better get back to...work.

RONDA
I hope Emily wasn’t bothering you, Miss Norma.

NORMA
No.

EMILY
Can she come to church with us tonight, mama? Please?

RONDA
If she wants to... Anytime.

EMILY
Will you come with us, Miss Norma? Please? Please?

NORMA
I don’t think so, sugar. But thanks.

(Ronda and Emily leave. The light becomes normal. Norma goes to Connie in the clinic.)

(INCREDOUS)
Did you see that?

CONNIE
Uh-huh.
NORMA
Just like a precious angel, wasn’t she? I think she really liked me.

CONNIE

(after a beat)
Yep.

(to audience)
Coupla weeks later, I smelled pizza.
SCENE SEVEN

Flip enters with a box of pizza. He sits on some steps outside of Operation Rescue. Connie and Norma watch from their office.

NORMA
Oh man? He’s got some nerve. He’s been eatin’ his damn lunch out there for weeks.

CONNIE
And I got to smell that pizza.

NORMA
Well, I’m goin’ over to McDonald’s.

CONNIE
Get me some fries.

(Connie watches as Norma starts to walk right by Flip.)

FLIP
Hey, Miss Norma, have a slice of pizza with me.

NORMA
Sorry, Flip, you know I gotta whole shitload of babies to—

FLIP
(smiles)
Oh, no you don’t! It’s your lunch hour. I watch you drink your lunch this time every day. What say we call a truce for the time it takes to eat one slice?

NORMA
Nah, that dog won’t hunt. You got to be one fry short of a Happy Meal if you think--

FLIP
(laughs)
Man, you got a way with words, don’t you? That is the sign of an intelligent person.

NORMA
Smart enough to know if your lips are movin’, you’re lyin’. But you know what, Flip Venom? You have cost me so much work, I guess you owe me a slice.
(Norma sits. He says Grace over the pizza box.)

FLIP
Bless us, oh Lord, and these thy gifts which we are about to receive.

NORMA
(laughs)
Jesus Christ!

FLIP
Uh-huh.

(He gives her a slice. They start to eat.)

Napkin?

NORMA
(wry)
Thank you kindly.

(He gives her two napkins.)

FLIP
So where you from, Miss Norma, your people from Texas?

NORMA
Louisiana. My grandma was a fortune teller.
(adds)
And a prostitute.

FLIP
Don’t say? Well, I’m from Florida myself. Used to own a bar in Kissimmee—

NORMA
(laughs)
Kissimmee? You gettin’ fresh? ‘Cause I got a girlfriend. And you owned a bar?

(Flip begins his testimony.)

FLIP
The Mad Hatter. Did pretty good too. Considering I drank up half the place.

NORMA
Gimme a break. Shot for you, shot for Jesus?
FLIP
Well, I didn’t know Jesus back then. I was all into--
(sings)
“Fun, fun, fun till your daddy takes that T Bird away.”

NORMA
(laughs)
You were a Beach Boy, right. And I’m Dolly Parton.

FLIP
Man, if it felt good, I did it. I was a liar, a womanizer...

NORMA
Sound like my kinda guy. What happened?

FLIP
Well... A fellow who sold coffeemakers came into my bar on a sales call one day, asked if I was a Christian. I thought, I’m not a Hindu or a Muslim, I’m American--what else could I be? Well, we made some coffee, started talking, and this guy asks me to go to church with him.

NORMA
On a first date?

FLIP
(laughs)
Oh, Miss Norma. And I tell you, once I started feeling the good vibrations of Jesus, man, I was just...hooked. Like, I used to have this terrible fear...about death? But this guy shared the most wonderful news--that God had provided eternal life for me. We’ve all lost someone, Miss Norma. A mother...

NORMA
I wish!

FLIP
Even if a person has lost a child... To death—or circumstance...

(Norma flinches.)
What peace to know that someday you will be reunited.

(Norma takes a bite of pizza. Flip does too.)

FLIP
I started reading in the Bible about how Jesus loved the very least among us...the prostitute, the leper, the thief? And I’d just burst into tears.
FLIP (CONT’D)
I knew I didn’t deserve that kind of love.
(with true self loathing)
Man, I did some things… DUI, jail…
(stops himself)
I am no different than you.

NORMA
(blurts)
Yeah, you were so drunk, you signed away your own daughter?

FLIP
Worse.
(with difficulty)
My wife Fay got pregnant early on in our marriage. And, you know, I actually wanted
er her to get an abortion? I just didn’t have room in my heart for anyone else. But once I
made room for Jesus… I looked at my kids, my beautiful twins...
(crying)
And I thought, I could have killed those boys? I’d never have heard their voices, never seen ’em throw a baseball…look up at the Milky Way?

(She gives him back one of the napkins and he wipes his eyes.)

Thank you. Luckily, Fay said to me--she is one strong woman--she said, “It’s my
body and I will do as I please!” That was her choice.
(beat)
Couple of years after I became a pastor, I was protesting at the Democratic
National Convention and I saw an old lady handcuffed and thrown into a police
truck for lying down in front of an abortion clinic. And I realized--that little old
lady has the guts to live her convictions and not me? I joined Operation Rescue
the next day.
(pause)
I look at my boys… I look at little Emily… I look at you, Miss Norma, and you know
what I see?

NORMA
(pained)
A “murderer”?

FLIP
I don’t see a murderer. And I ask your forgiveness for having said that to you.

(After a beat, Norma shrugs.)
FLIP (CONT’D)

I don’t see a drunk or a blasphemer. I see a good person. A loving human being. Maybe somebody forgot to tell you that early on, and your soul got lost along the way. But I know who you are. I see how you are with Emily.

(Norma looks at Flip, moved despite herself.)

I know that Jesus loves you. And I don’t blame him a bit.

(After a beat, Norma gets up and leaves. Flip exits.)
SCENE EIGHT

Norma goes to Connie in the clinic.

CONNIE

How was lunch?

NORMA

(laughs; incredulous)
Connie, I’m tellin’ you that man was almost...human. He listens to the Beach Boys for chrissakes.

CONNIE

Oh yeah? You bring back fries?

(Light comes up on Operation Rescue’s office, where Ronda is working and Emily drawing, and Norma looks over, distracted.)

Pixie?

(Norma is drawn next door...)

NORMA

(to audience)
I’d pass by their office, maybe I’d be having a rough day?
(to Ronda and Emily)
Hey, y’all!

(Emily goes to Norma.)

EMILY

Hi, Miss Norma! I made you a picture. See? It’s a dachshund. A little sausage on legs!

RONDA

How about some coffee, Miss Norma? How do you take it?

EMILY

Can you come to church with us Saturday night? And could you come to dinner with my mom and me? It’d be sooooo cool.

NORMA

Oh, I don’t know, sugar. May-be...
RONDA
Let Miss Norma think about it, Emily, it’s her choice.

EMILY
I’ve been praying for you. Please?

(Emily hugs Norma, right through the next beat. Part of a church is projected. A group of Christians enter singing “The Blood of The Lamb” which is uplifting and upbeat.)

THE CHRISTIANS
(Singing)
Are you washed in the blood - in the soul cleansing blood of the lamb?
Are your garments spotless? Are they white as snow?
Are you washed in the blood of the lamb?

NORMA
(overlapping; to audience; smiles)
Well, I finally went to church with them just to make that child happy. You know kids...

(Flip enters.)

FLIP
Hallelujah!

CHRISTIAN WOMAN 1
Welcome! So glad to meet you, Norma.

CHRISTIAN MAN
Ronda’s told us so much about you.

NORMA
She did?

CHRISTIAN WOMAN 2
Can you stay for Bible Study?

NORMA
Well--

CHRISTIAN WOMAN 2
Don’t forget the potluck!

RONDA
And could you help me pick out some furniture for the new office, Miss Norma?
EMILY
I made you another picture—

(She hands her the picture and Norma reads the caption.)

NORMA

(smiles; reads)
“Help Miss Norma to come to Jesus...and to quit smoking...”

FLIP
Brothers and sisters...

(The Christians remain in a prayer circle with Flip)

NORMA
(stops smiling)
“...and stop killing babies.”

(she goes to Connie DS with the picture.)
Do you believe this?
(sits; with wonder)
It’s like...they don’t even care ‘bout Jane Roe. They care about Norma McCorvey. You know I always been a spiritual person, Connie... But I was in church last night? And I felt something swooshy inside, like something flew right through me. I felt the Holy Spirit and I started crying like a baby.

(Connie is shocked but tries to find the good in this.)

CONNIE
Well... I’m glad for you, Pixie.

(Norma takes Connie’s hands.)

NORMA
Sugar, I been looking for this my whole life. Someone to love me. Someone to take care of me. Someone to wipe out all the awful shit I’ve done and the shit that’s been done to me.

CONNIE
Well, Pixie, I try to—

NORMA
And I realize now--Jesus Christ is the only one who could do that.

(The Christians start humming “I’ll Fly Away”.)
I’m gonna get baptized, Connie. I’m gonna accept Jesus Christ as my savior.
CONNIE
(stunned)
Well...
(beat)
Well, if that’s what feels right in your heart...

NORMA
Come to church with me?

FLIP
Amen.

(After a beat, Connie gets up and goes to the church with her. Flip remains in the background, observing.)

NORMA
(to the Christians)
Y’all, this is my—

RONDA
Norma’s good friend—

NORMA
Connie Gonzalez.

EMILY
Hi!

(The Christians look at Connie, in her men’s clothes.)

CHRISTIAN WOMAN 1
(trying hard)
Welcome!

(Others ad lib their welcome and shake Connie’s hand.)

CONNIE
Thanks.

(Flip approaches.)

NORMA
Flip, this is—
FLIP
(warmly)
Welcome, Miss Connie!

NORMA
And of course she’s coming to my Baptism.

RONDA
(sotto)
Oh—make sure you wear a bra, Miss Norma—

NORMA
Girl, I haven’t worn a bra in thirty years!

RONDA
(laughs)
Well, a t-shirt then, you’re going to get wet!

CONNIE
Pixie, I got dinner waitin’…

(Flip puts an arm around Norma.)

FLIP
Miss Norma? I’d like to get you a drink.

NORMA
(laughs)
Say what?

(He leads her DS, to a table in a family style restaurant. Country music plays. Connie watches Flip hold Norma’s chair for her, then she exits. A waiter brings cokes.)

FLIP
(smiles)
Two ex-drunks having a coke together. “All things are possible to him that believes.”

NORMA
It’s a miracle all right.

FLIP
(with wonder)
And now Miss Connie’s coming to your baptism? That is somethin’.
Well, she’s Catholic you know.

FLIP (warmly)
I didn’t know that. And like I always tell young people who come to me for counselling, homosexuality is a choice. You know, so many’ll tell you, “You can’t understand me ’cause I was born that way.” And I say, “Course I understand!”

Okay...

FLIP
We’re all born with a sinful nature. I have lust—

NORMA (smiles)
Oh yeah?

FLIP
Miss Norma, I have been married since 1971. Believe me, I have had lustful feelings. But do I say, “Well, that’s ‘cause I was born an adulterer?”

(laughs)
What if I said, “Man, I sure feel adulterous tonight—’cause that’s how God made me—so I’m just going to go out and commit adultery!” When I married Fay, I made a promise. A covenant.

(beat)
And it’s the same with baptism.

(Norma rises.)

NORMA
Look—Connie’s my best friend in this world. And that ain’t gonna change. That’s twenty-four years. She’s stuck with me through everything. Maybe we’re more roommates than anything else at this point... But we share a life, a home...

FLIP
And now she’s going to watch you get saved? Well, I call that a miracle.

(kindly but firmly)
Two friends putting the love of Christ before all else. Right?

(Norma sits back down.)

NORMA
I guess you could say...
FLIP
Cool. Now, there’s something else, and I sure am sorry to trouble you with it... But seems the press has gotten wind of your baptism and we’re getting calls.

NORMA
Shit!
(quickly)
Sorry. Well--we should do a pre-emptive strike. There’s a reporter at ABC, Peggy somethin’--Christian--she kept calling for a statement when y’all moved in. We should let her do an exclusive.

FLIP
Good thinking. Otherwise we’re going to be just crawling with press. And I don’t want them using you.

NORMA
Not this time. This is about Norma McCorvey. Not Jane Roe. This is my day.
SCENE NINE

The patio and swimming pool of a suburban ranch style home. The Christians, including Ronda and Emily, come on, singing a hymn. One plays a guitar. Connie joins them. So does Peggy and her ABC Cameraman. The light on the pool is awfully bright. Like heaven. Flip leads Norma into the pool.

THE CHRISTIANS

(singing)
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long.
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long.

FLIP

(ecstatic)
In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit... Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved.

(Norma is baptized by Flip, as the Cameraman films. Connie watches, with difficulty.)

Halleluliah! Here she is! The old is gone and the new has come. Miss Norma Leah McCorvey—born again Christian!
(hugs Norma)
Miss Norma, it’s all forgiven! You’re brand new!

(The Cameraman keeps filming. Ronda and Emily hug Norma. Connie watches.)

RONDA

Oh, hon, I am so happy for you!

CHRISTIAN MAN

Congratulations, Norma.

CHRISTIAN WOMAN 1

We’re so proud.

NORMA

Thank you! Thank you so much!

(Connie goes over and hugs Norma now, holding tight. Then Norma turns to Emily, beside her.)
NORMA (CONT’D)
Oh—Emily, you remember my...aunt, Connie Gonzalez...

EMILY
Hi, Miss Connie!

RONDA
(means it)
Glad to have you with us.

(Ad libbed greetings from the others, though one is put off.)

CHRISTIAN WOMAN 1
(grudgingly)
Miss Connie...

CONNIE
(evenly)
Hey.

PEGGY
Norma, would you like to make a statement about your conversion?

NORMA
Well, guess I could--

(Connie suddenly starts to cry and moves away.)

Excuse me a moment. I’m sorry... Would y’all just...

(Norma goes to Connie. The Cameraman starts to follow.)

RONDA
(stopping him)
Just--leave her be!

(The others retreat for refreshments. Connie and Norma are alone.)

NORMA
Connie, sugar, you never cry... Connie...

CONNIE
(crying)
They will never convince me that I’m evil. That my love is a sin. There’s one person for every person in this world, Norma, and nobody’s ever going to change what I feel.
NORMA

(trying to lighten her up)
Aw, come on, babe, I just been saved...

CONNIE

You are a Lesbian, Norma. You gonna let them save you from that?

NORMA

(shaken)
I had to choose... I chose Jesus.

Not my Jesus!

NORMA

(carefully; pained)
Connie... Darlin’... You’re gettin’ older. We’re more friends than anything else anyways... And we’re still gonna live together... C’mon, sugar, does it really matter?

(Connie stops crying and looks at her.)

CONNIE

Norma.

(strong)
It really matters.

(Sarah enters from the sidelines, moved.)

SARAH

(to audience)
I didn’t know about her conversion at the time. I was busy fighting for a woman’s right...

(She looks at Connie, struck by the irony.)

To choose.

(Connie starts to leave the stage and they suddenly come face to face.)

CONNIE

Let me ask you something. Since we never met and we’re never goin’ to. You can make a law... You think a law can change people’s hearts?

SARAH

No... Of course not.

(beat; compassionate)
I think it’s a start.
(Connie nods, then exits. Ronda and Flip go to Operation Rescue, USL, and start to look through a pile of placards. Sarah and Norma remain DSR. Sarah looks at Norma.)

NORMA
What? You got something to say about my personal life? You even got a personal life? Husband--kids--family?

SARAH
My personal life is not the subject of this evening.

(sarcastic)
Well, ‘least you got your “cause.”

SARAH
You think a cause is not a life?

(laughs; ironic)
I assure you, it has the same passion, the same betrayals...the same boredom as a marriage. As for “kids”? No, I have students, that’s bad enough. All these young women who grew up with Roe, who don’t remember what it was like before? It’s 1996--“so why the hell should they care?” I’m scared to death for them!

NORMA
(horribly uncomfortable)
Yeah, well, I got a cause too.

(beat)
I got to get to my new job.

(She heads to Operation Rescue. Flip and Ronda look over.)

FLIP AND RONDA
(smile)
Miss Norma...

SARAH
-warning-
Norma--

FLIP
We were just choosing some placards for a march.

SARAH
Can’t you see they’re using you?!
(Norma looks at her, pityingly.)

NORMA
Kinda sad you can’t imagine people really caring.

(Norma goes into Operation Rescue, as Ronda reaches for another placard.)

FLIP
And we still go with Baby Malachi?

(Norma sees the picture of a horrifically mutilated fetus, parts of a fetus, actually, reassembled...which we will not see.)

NORMA
Oh shit! Shit!

RONDA
Hon, this little boy was found frozen in a jar, horribly mutilated, at an abortion mill right here in Dallas. We brought him to Dr. McCarty, a wonderful Ob-Gyn who put the pieces of this baby boy back together--

(Norma bursts into tears)

NORMA
I knew! They kept the body parts in the fridge! I don’t think I’ll ever forgive myself--

(Flip puts an arm around Norma.)

FLIP
You don’t have to. You are forgiven. And you have the choice now to save millions of babies.

(it occurs)

Miss Norma--how would you like to speak at the National Memorial For Unborn Children in Chattanooga, Tennessee, in their name?

SARAH
Oh Jesus.

FLIP
They’re calling you, Miss Norma. Can you hear them?

NORMA
I hear them. Yeah.
SCENE TEN

Flip keeps an arm around Norma for courage. A huge crowd is projected. People are carrying pro-life signs, including Baby Malachi. Flip steps himself and Norma into a special light, much like Gloria Allred did. Ronda watches. Connie watches. Sarah watches too.

FLIP
Brothers and sisters, it is with a grateful heart that I give you the news... Jane Roe is dead. And Norma McCorvey lives!

(Flip kisses the top of her head. Norma’s in the same spot, at a podium, as she was for her pro-choice speech. She takes her new speech from her pocket and reads with the piety of someone truly reborn.)

NORMA
Good morning. I’d like to talk to you today about Roe v Wade. The affidavit did not happen the way I said it did, pure and simple. I lied. I was just a poor white woman trying to get by... And Sarah Weddington and Linda Coffee needed an extreme case to make their client look pitiable. They got me drunk. And they advised me to lie and say I was raped.

SARAH
(outraged; to audience)
“Alternative facts?” “Post truth”?

NORMA
(continuing; to crowd)
And what would make rape even worse? A gang rape. Three men. Roe v Wade is based on a lie.

SARAH
Good God.

NORMA
So the entire abortion industry is based on a lie. And for this I will forever be ashamed.

(Sound of the crowd cheering. Ronda goes to Norma.)

RONDA
You’re doing great.
(The Television News Reporter who interviewed Sarah before rushes over to her.)

MALE TV REPORTER
Sarah, can we get a comment on Norma’s conversation?

SARAH
(with enormous restraint)
I don’t know why the Press continues to give attention to a woman whose contribution to history was no more than a name on a piece of paper.

(Norma’s mouth falls open. The Reporter rushes to Norma.)

TELEVISION NEWS REPORTER
Norma, can we get a comment on Sarah’s comment?

NORMA
(smiles)
As a Christian, I have no comment on her comment.

(We hear a cacophony of reactions. The reporter seizes the opportunity and turns to the audience, almost giddy.)

TELEVISION NEWS REPORTER
Well, why don’t we hear from the American People? A Town Hall! Welcome! Welcome to a Town Hall on Roe v Wade.

SARAH
(ready for a fight)
Fine.

(An American flag is projected. Stools roll on aggressively for Norma and Sarah, and mikes are thrust into their hands. Flip and Ronda stand by Norma. Microphones are staked on the sidelines. A Pro Choice Woman goes to a mike. And it’s on!)

PRO CHOICE WOMAN 1
Ms. McCorvey, I am a devout Christian and pro choice, and I’d like to know, do you support the tactics of Operation Rescue? Do you support killing doctors? Burning clinics?

NORMA
Well, I think it is the abortion clinic people who are committing the violence on themselves so they can collect on their insurance and go out and build bigger killing centers.
FLIP

Amen!

(A Pro Life Woman is at the opposite mike. Or, if there’s a balcony, she’s there.)

PRO LIFE WOMAN

(sugary)
Mrs. Weddington. You admit to having an abortion. You were also divorced and had breast cancer. When you look back, do you see some connection?

SARAH

I am not going to deign to answer such a ridiculous--

(PRO LIFE MAN)

(to Pro Life Woman)
I don’t trust her. And why the heck don’t she smile more?

SARAH

(after a quick beat)
That, I’ll answer. And thank you, sir, for your question.

(She rises and talks to our audience. A light change tells us this is in the present.)

(with faux “repentance”)
You know, I should smile more. I should share more personal moments. I shoulda been open with you about my divorce and admit that I was just so focused on work, so driven...that I allowed my subscription to Good Housekeeping to lapse.

(“crying”)
I shoulda let you see me cry! Heck, I should just break down right now...

(“torn”)
But if I do, I’ll be dismissed as “an emotional woman”...

(“worried”)
And if I don’t cry, I’m just a “cold bitch”...

(She sits back down.)

So I just sat there, unsmiling, unrepentant, menopausal, and I said--

(to Pro Life Man; on fire)
Please! Do not confuse how much I care about peoples’ rights with how little I care about People Magazine. I am not the issue. Jane Roe is not the issue. And I don’t know why the press and the politicians continue to state the issue as “are you for or against abortion?” The issue is who should have power over a woman’s body? The government, the doctor, or the woman herself?
PRO CHOICE WOMEN
The woman herself!

NORMA
Well, I think she’s leaving someone out.

RONDA
Tell it, Norma!

NORMA
God?

SARAH
Norma? If abortion goes against your beliefs, don’t have one. Just don’t try to force your beliefs—and your choice!—on everyone else. Especially since, once the precious fetus is an actual child, you people are the last to vote any kind of funding to care for them.

NORMA
“You people”?

SARAH
Unless building more prisons is an example of caring? Really, are you pro-life or just pro-birth?

NORMA
(under her breath)
Elitist bitch--

TELEVISION NEWS REPORTER
(overlapping; cheery)
Okay! Why don’t we--

SARAH
(mutters)
I don’t know why I’m even sharing the damn stage with her!

NORMA
(mutters)
People like you don’t wanna share the damn country with people like me, but we’re here!

TELEVISION NEWS REPORTER
(cheery)
So why don’t we take a few more questions from our--
PRO CHOICE WOMAN 2
I have a question! For Reverend Benham?

(The Reporter throws Flip a mike.)

FLIP
Ma’am?

PRO CHOICE WOMAN 2
Why are you so passionate about forcing women to go through with every pregnancy? If a woman has been sexual, is that her punishment?

FLIP
(smiles)
Gee, I don’t see a child as a punishment. I have five kids and I see family as a blessing. Maybe Miss Sarah would see it that way too if she’d had one.

SARAH
A family where the man works and the woman’s back in the kitchen?

FLIP
(laughs)
If she can cook!

PRO LIFE MAN
Tell ‘em Flipper!

SARAH
(at wits end)
Shall we go back then? If medical science keeps lowering the age of viability—and you people prohibit sex ed and contraception—what do we do? Punish women for feticide?

PRO LIFE MAN
Lock ‘em up!

SARAH
(to Flip)
Do you call that progress?

(Flip loses it—and goes to the audience in the present.)

FLIP
(the preacher)
I call it a Christian America!
FLIP (CONT’D)
I said it at that town hall in ‘96 and I’ll say it to you right here and right now. I call it an end to Roe.
(to audience)
I call it an end to the fornicating and the drug taking and the homosexualizing and the LGBT-izing, and the mongrelizing of this great nation. Our forefathers declared a Christian nation and we shall make this a great Christian nation again! The Bible says, “Not my will but Thine be done.” It’s not your body, so it’s not your choice!

(It gets out of hand, with both sides shouting...)

PRO CHOICE WOMAN  2
Keep your rosaries off my ovaries!

PRO CHOICE WOMAN  1
My body, my choice!

PRO LIFE WOMAN
A child not a choice!

PRO LIFE MAN
Adoption not abortion!

(Others join in and it becomes a cacophony. Finally, a voice cries out from our audience over the commotion.)

ROXY
I have a question!
(repeats over the din)
I have a question!
SCENE ELEVEN

Roxy, Afro Latina, 20, starts to speak. Her raw emotion and vulnerability is in contrast to the anger and arguing of the last scene. The town hall disappears. Sarah and Norma are alone on stage.

ROXY

(about to burst)
My name is Roxy—Roxanne Miller-Rodriguez. I’m a student minoring in Women’s Studies--
(to Sarah)
And much as I understand the perspective of second wave white feminists, much as I get what you’re saying about the law--
(to Norma)
And what you’re saying about God and sin... We just keep yelling and arguing, “You people”-- “No, you people”--”That’s the issue”--”No that’s the issue--”
(bursts)
Well--I’m pregnant! And I don’t know what to do!

NORMA

Hon...

SARAH

Can someone get her a microphone?
(caring)
You’ve been to a doctor?

(Roxy starts to spill her story in a rush of words.)

ROXY

(vulnerable, scared)
Yeah. They shut down the Planned Parenthood near my school--
(this was hard)
So I went home and found a clinic where my mom lives.

SARAH

You were lucky.

ROXY

Yeah. But there was a twenty-four hour waiting period—and I’d already driven a day to get there... I mean, I had to get back my job—I mean, I can’t afford to do this and lose the pay--

(Sarah nods. Norma sighs.)
ROXY (CONT'D)
Then they said I had to get counselling. But the counselor was like—

(cheery)
“Well, I’ll have to inform your parents—”

(laughs)
And I tell her, “Look, my mom’s from Puerto Rico”—and she’s like, “Hablamos español!” And I want to say, “Bitch, are you kidding me?”

(incensed)
My mom worked in the factories in Puerto Rico. They had medical clinics inside the factories, sterilizing women—so they wouldn’t miss work! My mom thinks abortion is sterilization. And then I realize—“You don’t need parental consent, I’m over eighteen!” And she’s like—

(“sweetly”)
“Well, you’ll still have to listen to the baby’s heartbeat...” So I left.

NORMA
Well, good.

ROXY
I drove to the next state, to where my brother lives. The doctor was cool, but the clinic was shutting down.

(Sarah sighs.)
He wasn’t able to get admitting privileges at the local hospital, and the law still says that a clinic has to be within fifteen minutes of a local hospital—and has to meet the same requirements--

(Sarah chimes in.)
ROXY AND SARAH
As a hospital surgical center--

ROXY
And I’m like, “But abortion’s still legal here—” And he’s like, “Well, it’s not that it’s illegal”—

(laughs; incredulous)
And I’m like, “I just can’t get one?” And he tells me, “Maybe if you can afford to get to one of the big cities...” So I drove to the city where a clinic was still operating. But they couldn’t do it for a week.

(takes a breath)
I’m thinking, maybe it’s a sign. Maybe I shouldn’t do this. My mom had five kids, worked every day.

(laughs/cries)
So it takes six years to graduate... I am a strong black woman, I can do anything! So I miss some big grad school...big job...big life...

(panicking)
I’m just not ready, okay?! I made the appointment.
(This is very hard. Roxy slows down a bit.)

ROXY (CONT'D)

(frightened)
But the law requires a transvaginal ultra sound... And that the doctor describe the results.

(Roxy tries to get through this.)

She said... “Well, the fetus looks fine... You can see the heartbeat now... The tail is gone, and you can make out just a bit of the arms and legs...”

(can’t bear it)
That’s all I remember--

NORMA
Sugar, what about the father?

ROXY
That is no one’s damn business.

NORMA
Is he Christian? Then he’ll do the right thing.

SARAH
Or you can go back to that clinic. It’s a miracle you found one. They’d never help you in Texas!

ROXY
(breaking)
Is that what you would do, Sarah? I mean, looking back? Cause I--I have a brother, my best friend in the world... Adopted... But his birthmom had thought about abortion—and I know there would be a hole in my life... There would be a hole in the universe... Sarah, do you ever regret--?

SARAH
(adamantly)
No! I do not regret my abortion and I do not feel shame!

(with enormous compassion)
But I can’t tell you what to do, Roxanne--

NORMA
Well, I can--

SARAH
The law cannot and should not help you make your decision. The law is there to, allow you to make one! This is about your body--

NORMA
Sugar, fifty-eight million babies—
ROXY
(vulnerable, at wits end)
Just tell me this. Is it a baby? Is it--a life?

SARAH
It is “potential life” according to the Constitution.

ROXY
Don’t give me the law! Give me the truth!

SARAH
The “truth”?
(laughs)
Whose? My truth is you have the right to do this, her truth is it’s murder!
(after a beat)
We give you the choice, Roxanne... So that you can choose!

(After a beat, Roxy nods and starts to go.)

NORMA
Hon--
The Ensemble, holding Justices’ robes, files in, dressed as their key characters in the story—Blackmun, Connie, Mary, McCluskey, Ronda, Flip, Linda, Aileen. They take the original Justices’ seats upstage. Roxy joins them, part of the story now. Sarah and Norma will don grey wigs, and the suit jackets they wore in the Prologue, as they speak to the audience.

SARAH
In 2010, Good Housekeeping named me one of A Hundred and Twenty-Five Women Who Changed The World.
(donning her suit jacket)
In 2020, a president who vowed to overturn Roe made his third appointment to the Supreme Court. And now that Court is considering a case from Mississippi that is the strongest challenge yet to Roe v. Wade.

(Sarah buttons her suit jacket.)

Vanity Fair tried to interview me on the fortieth anniversary of Roe--

NORMA
Well, me too, but they wouldn’t pay my thousand dollar fee--

SARAH
And I declined to comment on Norma McCorvey.

FLIP
I told ‘em Miss Norma and I have parted ways.

(The Ensemble, one by one, will don their Justices’ robes through the rest of the scene.)

CONNIE
(pained; blurs)
And I told ‘em Norma wasn’t pro choice or pro life! She was just pro Norma!

NORMA
(with sudden fury)
And what if I was?
(to Sarah)
Y’all thought you could use me?
(laughs; to Flip)
Buy me? How dumb do you think I am?
(to all of them)
I’m an American, I’m a survivor. Y’all used me and I used you too.
(Connie takes a breath and looks at Norma with compassion.)

CONNIE
Well, you rest in peace now, Pixie.

NORMA
(llosing it)
Well, I don’t, I don’t rest in fuckin’ peace!
(to audience)
Cause according to my obituary?
(incredulous)
I died of--get this? A heart failure. I died of a broke heart!

(After a beat, Sarah concludes her story.)

SARAH
According to my recent obituary, I died at home--in Austin--on December 26, 2021, of health problems. And, you know, no matter what else I have been... Legislator, professor, activist...

(Norma joins in, pissed. Sarah continues, proud.)

SARAH AND NORMA
No matter what else I have done with my life... My obituary will always read--

SARAH
(proud)
She was the lawyer who argued Roe v Wade!

NORMA
(ironic)
She was Jane Roe.

SARAH
As for the law itself? Its obituary has not been written.

(The Justices rise in unison.)

(urgently)
And as of this moment...

SARAH
(with indomitable conviction)
Roe still stands!

NORMA
(“go figure”)
Roe still stands.

(The two women look out, as the lights fade...)
THE END