

BACKBENCHER
EPISODE EIGHT - HOME TO ROOST

By Wendy Lill

FINAL polish – March 15, 2010

Cast (in order of appearance)

NELLIE Gordon

RAY Brady

CHARLIE Dunn, NDP Leader

HERB Proctor

EARL Higgins

RENEE LeBlanc

SEAN Higgins

BEN Gordon

CATHERINE Gordon

Voices: Scrum reporters, caucus members, Speaker, server, bartender

Settings: Ottawa:

NDP Caucus, House of Commons, coffee shop in Byward Market, Nellie's office, the Black Bear Pub, Ottawa River walkway, cat sanctuary, West block cafeteria. Press Conference

Scene 1 - Hallway outside Caucus Meeting

1. MUSIC: Series Music

2. SOUND: Chattering MPs walking along a marble hallway.

3. BRADY (falling in with Nellie) Ms Gordon? (Nellie speeds up) Can we talk a sec before caucus?

4. NELLIE Get your story somewhere else, Brady (Nellie speeds up)

5. BRADY (Brady speeds up) (light) I like it better from you –

6. NELLIE Too bad.

7. BRADY So what's with this special caucus meeting? Sounds like maybe a snap election. ^{Are you gonna run again?} Are you running again? You've had a rocky start. You didn't get the LNG plant. Maybe 'cause you're NDP.

8. NELLIE How 'bout weak markets and corporate greed –

9. BRADY Maybe so. But you'll still wear it. ^{And} What's Earl Higgins doing on the Hill? Big wheel from East Nova? ~~Eye of an election?~~

10. NELLIE How should I know?

11. BRADY Hear his son's working for you back home. The one who got his bare ~~are~~ on the evening news.

12. NELLIE ~~butt~~ Would you please –

13. BRADY The Tories want this seat back. Kenny MacNeil's nomination's tonight. And they'll be throwing a boat load of money at his campaign. You gonna run? Yes or no?

14. NELLIE Brady?

15. BRADY (hopeful) Yeah?

16. NELLIE Frig off -

17. SOUND: Door opens. Maybe a sound sting

Scene 2 - Special Caucus meeting

1.SOUND: Caucus meeting under way. Much coughing, and shuffling of papers. Door opens. Nellie enters

2.LEADER Thanks for coming on such short notice. It seems the government's been polling non stop since surviving the budget –

3.BIZ; NELLIE making her way around people

4.NELLIE (whispering) Excuse me. Sorry I'm late.

5.LEADER Sit down, Nellie. I want you all to hear this.

6.NELLIE What's going on?

7.LEADER Well, from reading the tea leaves, it looks like they're about to drop the writ.

8.SOUND: Caucus groans and grumbles "Oh No! Oh for the luva -

9.NELLIE What does that mean?

10.LEADER It means The PM visits the Governor General. And calls an election.

11.NELLIE I don't believe it.

12.LEADER Their polling must be telling them they're can get a majority.

13.NELLIE No Way.

14.LEADER Yesterday we heard they rented a plane. Today, that they're telling their MPs to get their nominations out of the way and line up campaign space.

15.NELLIE But we just had an election. I'm still in debt from -

16.LEADER None of us want an election. That's a given. But we've got to be ready for it.
No. We've got to be more than ready. We've got to be pumped, energized and champing at the bit to get our message out. And that message is - a vote for the NDP is a vote for strength, leadership and integrity.
So what do you say, team? Are we ready?

17.CAUCUS (somewhat lacklustre) Yes.

18.LEADER Oh come on. (louder) Are we ready?

19.CAUCUS (louder) Yes

20.LEADER Then bring it on!

18.SOUND: cheering, banging the table...

19.NARRATION Suddenly, this place has morphed overnight into a new level of hyper crazy. People talking about renting planes and campaign offices. Am I running again? *Again!* Are you kidding? I'm still just trying to get my head around being here the first time –

Scene 3. The House of Commons

1.SOUND: House of Commons Ambience, mid -Question Period, heightened rowdiness

4.SPEAKER The Honourable Member from Hamilton Centre –

5.NDP LEADER (to the House) Thank you Mr. Speaker.
As the Leader of the New Democratic Party, my question is to the Prime Minister and will be brief and to the point. Does his government have the courage to take its lacklustre record to the Canadian people?

6.SOUND: Huge ballyhoo. Opposition members cheer. Government members boo.

7.BIZ; NELLIE arrives, plunks piles of stuff down on desk.

8.NELLIE Hey, Herb, what's with this election crap –

9.PROCTOR Why are you asking me?

10.NELLIE Well, there's gotta be some advantage to having a government seatmate. Like inside info?

11.PROCTOR Maybe I don't have any -

12.NELLIE Yeah. Sure. Have you ordered your brochures yet?

13.PROCTOR Lay off. I'm not in the mood.

14.NELLIE (teasing) Are you getting a new picture taken? Maybe you should cover up some of those gray –

13.PROCTOR Take a hike –

14.NELLIE I was kidding! Herb! I like your hair. It's distinguished -
I was just teasing –

15.PROCTOR Leave me alone.

16.NELLIE All right!

17.SOUND: Rowdiness of House of Commons seques into the Byward Market

18.NARRATION What's with Herb Proctor this morning? What's with this whole place? But right now, the big question is - ^{why is} why is my old boss Earl Higgins in Ottawa and what does he want from me?

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Scene 4: Coffee bar. Byward Market

1.SOUND; coffee house ambience, Espresso machines hissing

1a.NELLIE (cool) Hello Earl

1b.EARL Nellie!

2.SERVER (arriving) Hi folks. What can I get you?

3.EARL What'll you have? My treat.

4.NELLIE Nothing, thanks. I've just got a minute -

5.EARL What? No time for a prominent constituent? With an election in the air? (to SERVER) Bring us two coffees

6.NELLIE (protests) Ah -

7.EARL And two of those gooey almond croissants. I'll twist her arm -

8.SERVER O-kay. (Server leaves)

9.EARL Come on. Siddown.

10..BIZ; Nellie pulls out chair, sits down.

11.EARL You look hot in that suit -

12.NELLIE (warning) Earl -

13.EARL You don't like compliments?

14.NELLIE (resigned) What are you doing here?

15.EARL Just one of my regular smooze fests. Catch up with the news. Visit my MP.

16.NELLIE Is that right.

17.EARL I'm glad you got the tap turned back on for the summer jobs program. Just in the nick of time. I need to staff up.

18.NELLIE What do you mean?

19.EARL Coastal Playland. My entertainment park down the shore. I've been getting hammered last coupla years. Dollar's up. Tourism's down. If I didn't have to pay salaries, I can put in a beer garden. That's where the money is. Ten jobs will do just fine -

20.NELLIE Pardon?

21.EARL If you could slide ten jobs my way -

22.NELLIE Earl, you can't just snap your fingers and say slide ten jobs my way. There's a process. Everyone else followed it. Why shouldn't you. You had to get your application in over two months ago -

23.EARL I'm applying now -

24.NELLIE Well, it's too late. All the money's been allocated. And it's against the rules -

- 25.EARL I know the drill.
- 26.NELLIE Earl –
- 27.EARL I've been around this with the last MP. You've got some discretion – move a job from here, one from there
- 28.NELLIE Not if you haven't even applied –
- 29.EARL There's always a way around things. Have you even been to Coastal Playland.
- 29a.NELLIE No.
- 29b.EARL Bring your son out for the day. Soon as we open. We got some great rides that'll scare the bejeezus out of him. It'll be on me. Hell, I'll give you a season's pass – you want to keep your politicians happy –
- 30.NELLIE I don't want a season's pass. And I'm not 'sliding you a few jobs.'
- 31.EARL Wait a minute. This isn't a big ask. What's the big deal?
- 32.NELLIE The way you do business. The way you treat people – that's the big deal You're a sleaze, Earl. You think you can buy me with a season's pass to your crummy little theme park? I wouldn't take my son there if it were the last place on earth.
- 33.SOUND: Nellie gets up to leave.
- 34.EARL (grabs her wrist, threateningly) Sit down. (Nellie sits) You got pretty upscale all of a sudden. But I remember when you were a crummy low rent gambling addict, stealing money from me. And I got a video tape to prove it -
- 35.NELLIE Let go of my arm –
- 37.EARL You think you're too important to bother with me now? Well think again. Cause I can always put your videotape of shame on You Tube
- 38.NELLIE (astounded) What?
- 39.EARL You think old Earl's not hip enough to know about such things. Wrong o. I've got someone converting the old beta tape right now. It'll be transferred to my computer tomorrow.
- 40.NELLIE You wouldn't.
- 41.EARL All I gotta do is press "send" and pling - it's out there. People love watching others dirty little secrets. The scrummier the better. In fact, I bet your hoity doity upscale son Ben logs on as soon as he gets home from school -
- 42.NELLIE You're the scum, Earl.
- 43.EARL Ten jobs, Nellie. Let's meet again tomorrow at West Block cafeteria. 11:00 o'clock. See what progress you've made –

Scene 5 Parliament Hill

1.SOUND: Peace tower bells. NELLIE walking.

2.NARRATION ~~So now what am I going to do?~~ Thanks to the miracles of the internet, my deep dark secret will be out there for all the world to see. ~~For the love of my life,~~ my son Ben ^{to see}. I can't let that happen. But what can I do? I gotta think –

3.SOUND: Nellie's cell phone rings.

4.NELLIE (through phone) (distracted) Nellie here.

5.SEAN Boss, it's Sean. Can we talk?

6.NELLIE (impatient) Not now, Sean. I'm walking to –

7.SEAN (a torrent) Boss, I can't handle all this election crap. Renee's calling every minute with things to do and some asshole from a place called Federal "party" calling to say I need to get an election readiness team!

8.NELLIE Sean –

9.SEAN Boss I don't know how to do any of this stuff –

10.NELLIE Sean, chill out.

11.SEAN I know you just hired me to do my dad a favour. You know how useless I am ...and now I'm afraid I'm going to seriously wreck everything for you –

12.NELLIE Shut up!

13.SEAN (surprised) Boss?

14.NELLIE Sean, I can't deal with this now -

15.SOUND: Nellie ends call Sound sting

Scene 6 - Nellie's office

1.SOUND: Nellie enters. Very stressed. Office ambience. Renee working

- 2.RENEE (exasperated) Nellie! Finally! I was expecting you right after QP
There's some much to do. Where have you been?
- 3.NELLIE The Byward Market.
- 4.RENEE The market?
- 5.NELLIE Having coffee.
- 6.RENEE (surprised) (A francophone exclamation like...Mon Dieu!)
There's time for coffee? While the whole place has gone election
mad?
- 7.NELLIE (snaps) (totally uncharacteristic) Will you back off?
I had a meeting. With a constituent.
- 10.RENEE Sorry. It's just that... Are you all right?
- 11.NELLIE (abrupt) Just tell me what has to be done?
- 12.RENEE (uneasy) Well, I've got a list.
- 13.NELLIE Okay. What's on it?
- 14.RENEE Well... fundraising – there's no money for a campaign – the riding
association has to start working on it.
- 15.NELLIE Fine. What else?
- 16.RENEE You need a campaign manager. MPs usually use their riding staff
but Sean is already way over his head –
- 17.NELLIE Will you stop dissing Sean!
- 18.RENEE Ah – I'm sorry.
- 19.NELLIE What else?
- 20.RENEE (the big one) You have to get nominated.
- 21.NELLIE I just did. Four months ago...
- 22.RENEE It has to happen again. There's a process. All MPs have to get
nominated before each election. Those are the rules –
- 23.NELLIE Okay, fine.
- 24.RENEE Except, you still haven't completed the process from the last time.
The disclosure form -
- 25.NELLIE I know that. You know that.
- 26.RENEE (miserable) But now the Federal Party knows too –
- 27.NELLIE What?

- 28.RENEE (upset) I was hoping it would be years before anyone noticed and this would all just go away. But they've brought in some super keen organizer to get all the ducks in a row - and she just called to say she noticed it's missing.
- 29.NELLIE What did you say?
- 30.RENEE That it must have got lost.
- 31.NELLIE Good.
- 32.RENEE Non. Not good. Cause Ms Efficient is sending over another form and wants it back right away –
- 33.NELLIE Fine. We'll just keep throwing it out – like before.
- 34.RENEE No! We won't. And don't say *WE*. *YOU* have to do something! I can't keep lying about this. I can't cover for you anymore. I tried but it didn't work and now you've got to fill it out or ... Where are you going?
- 35.NELLIE AWOL
- 36.RENEE But you've got to –
- 37.SOUND: Nellie leaves and slams the door.

Scene 7. Black Bear Pub, Albert and Bay Hotel; late afternoon

1.SOUND: Hotel bar ambience

2..BIZ: Bottle being poured, into glass.

3.BARTENDER Here you are, Madame, our finest dark ale. Enjoy.

4.NELLIE Don't worry. I will.

5.SOUND; Nellie drinks. Proctor arrives, sits down on the stool beside her.

6.PROCTOR A bit early for that, isn't it?

7.NELLIE Proctor, what are you doing here?

8.PROCTOR On my way back from a meeting. This is a shortcut –

9.NELLIE Right.

11.BARTENDER And sir, you'll be having...

12.PROCTOR (quickly) Tomato juice please

13.NELLIE You and your tomato juice.

14.PROCTOR So how's Earl Higgins doing?

15.NELLIE Pardon?

16.PROCTOR Someone saw the two of you having coffee in the Market. I told you. There are no secrets in this town.

17.NELLIE How do you know Earl Higgins?

18.PROCTOR Word gets around. Entrepreneur, bagman –

19.NELLIE Bagman for who?

20.PROCTOR Whoever he thinks will get in. He's a hustler. He knows every department and every way to squeeze money out of them. Your predecessor, Kenny MacNeil was always dodging him. You should do the same. He's a master at getting his hooks into people

21.NELLIE Tell me about it.

22.PROCTOR You mean he already....? (beat) How bad is it?

23.NELLIE (considers this) I don't want to talk about it.

24.PROCTOR So you're just going to drink. That's constructive

24a. BIZ: Nellie takes a drink

25.NELLIE What about you? You almost bit my head off today.

26.PROCTOR I hate election hoopla – It's a waste of time.

27.NELLIE Then why are we having one?

28.PROCTOR In search of the illusive majority –

- 29.NELLIE What about the cost to the taxpayers?
- 30.PROCTOR When there's a majority in sight, no one cares about that anymore
- 31.NELLIE Whoah! Where did that come from?
- 32.PROCTOR I'm off work. I can say what I like.
- 33.NELLIE It's just I've never heard you talk like that.
- 34.PROCTOR It's a big muddy river that keeps on flowing –
- 35.NELLIE What is?
- 36.PROCTOR This place. Jump in for a while, try to keep your head above water....and then bang - you hit a rock.
- 37.NELLIE Herb, what's going on with you?
- 38.PROCTOR It's my turn.
- 39.NELLIE Meaning?
- 40.PROCTOR I don't wanna talk about it.
- 41.SOUND: Proctor throw money on counter, gets up to leave
- 42.PROCTOR Bartender? This is for the juice and the young lady's beer.
- 43.BARTENDER Change coming right up.
- 44.PROCTOR (to bartender) It's okay. Keep it
- 45.BARTENDER Thanks.
- 46.PROCTOR (to Nellie) My advice. Whatever it is, fess up. Or it'll just get worse. It always does. You just dig the hole deeper and drag others down with you. Better to climb out now. Take your lumps.
- 47.NELLIE Thanks a pile.
- 48.PROCTOR You're welcome. See you tomorrow.
- 49.NELLIE Bye Herb.
- 50.SOUND: Herb leaves.
- 51.BARTENDER Madam? Would you like another?
- 52.NELLIE Oh yeah.
- 53.SOUND: Lounge music up

Scene 8: Nellie's office. The next morning

1. SOUND: Office ambience. Nellie enters.

- 2.NELLIE Good morning, Renee.
- 3.RENEE Bonjour (beat) (cautious concern) How are you?
- 4.NELLIE Could be better. I took a major detour to the hotel bar last night.
- 5.RENEE I see.
- 6.NELLIE I had a lot of thinking to do. I'm sorry about what happened yesterday.
- 9.RENEE It's okay –
- 10.NELLIE No. It's not. You've been a friend. You've stuck by me. And 'cause I haven't had the courage to face up to something, I made you compromise your ethics. I'm sorry.
- 11.RENEE Thanks.
- 12.NELLIE And I'm sorry for dragging Sean into this.
- 13.RENEE Sean?
- 14.NELLIE He's an innocent bystander too.
- 15.RENEE I don't follow
- 16.NELLIE Earl Higgins is the constituent I had coffee with yesterday .
- 17.RENEE Earl Higgins?
- 18.NELLIE He persuaded me to hire his son for the riding office job. Even though Sean didn't really want it –
- 19.RENEE Nellie –
- 20.NELLIE Earl Higgins knows some nasty things from my past. In fact he's got them on videotape and now he's trying to blackmail me –
- 21.RENEE Nellie, wait -.
- 22.NELLIE What?
- 23.RENEE This isn't an office matter. I don't think I can help. You need to talk to Charlie Dunn.

Scene 9: The Ottawa River walkway below Parliament Hill

1.SOUND: River sounds, trees rustling. Nellie and Charlie Dunn making way down stone path, with difficulty

- 2.LEADER Come this way. We can get right down to the river from here.
- 2a.NELLIE Thanks for seeing me on such short notice –
- 3.LEADER No problem. (they reach the path) Here we are. It's a good place to walk.
- 4.NELLIE I gotta problem.
- 5.LEADER Let's hear it.
- 6.NELLIE When I was in twenties, I was working in a sports bar in East Nova. When I wasn't slinging beer, I got into using the video lottery machines in the back room. Just to 'pass the time.' Except it got to be way more than 'passing the time.' Pretty soon I was feeding the machines every spare second I had, and running through all my tips.
- 9.LEADER I don't like where this is going.
- 10.NELLIE It gets worse. After I ran out of tips, I started taking ten, twenty, fifty dollar bills out of the cash register. It was like a sickness, I couldn't stop. I had to feed the machines.
- 11.LEADER What happened?
- 12.NELLIE One night, the owner, Earl Higgins, called me into his office. To show me something. He had been taping me for months on closed circuit tv. Stealing money.
- 13.LEADER Shit.
- 14.NELLIE He said he wouldn't tell the police. If I paid it back. And I did.
- 15.LEADER That's good.
- 16.NELLIE I joined Gamblers Anonymous and I got myself clean. And I put it all behind me.
- 17.LEADER But Earl Higgins didn't
18. NELLIE No. He filed the tape way. And when I got elected, he started blackmailing me. He said if I didn't hire his son Sean, he'd expose the tapes.
- 19.LEADER And you did.
- 20.NELLIE I hoped that would end it. But he's back with another demand. I've got to put an end to this.
- 23.LEADER Dammit. The timing couldn't be worse.
- 24.NELLIE I know. I'm sorry.

- 25.LEADER Can we wait and deal with this AFTER the election? I don't want to lose you. Or East Nova –
- 26.NELLIE That would just keep the lie going. I don't want to do that anymore.

Beside, Higgins says if I don't find him jobs for his theme park he'll put the tape up on You Tube.
- 27.LEADER What a bastard. So what do you want to do?
- 28.NELLIE I want to hold a press conference and confess to what I did. And resign.
- 29.LEADER Whoah. Nellie.
- 30.NELLIE The people of East Nova didn't vote for a liar and a thief. They deserve a lot better.
- 33.LEADER They've had a lot worse.
- 34.NELLIE That's what I've decided to do. I've made up my mind. I wanted to tell you that.
- 35.LEADER (sighs) Are you sure about this?
- 36.NELLIE Yes. And I want to do it today. After school.
- 37.LEADER Pardon?
- 39.NELLIE After Ben gets home from school. So he can watch it. I want him to hear it from my mouth. Not some one elses.
- 40.LEADER This doesn't get any easier, does it?
- 41.NELLIE No.
- 42.LEADER You're sure about this?
- 43.NELLIE I'm sure.
- 44.LEADER Okay. I'll come with you.
- 45.NELLIE You will?
- 46.LEADER Of course. We're a team.
- 47.NELLIE Thanks. (beat) Can I ask you something?
- 48.LEADER Shoot.
- 49.NELLIE How do you this? Year after year?
- 50.LEADER What?
51. NELLIE All the campaigning and the endless battles? Nothing ever seems to change –
- 52.LEADER No true. Change happens. Just very slowly
- 53.NELLIE But why do you do it?

- 54.LEADER 'Cause I believe in it. I think you do too. (beat) And because once in a while, you catch a break. (beat) Do you wanna walk back to the House?
- 55.NELLIE No. I've got some calls to make. And I've got to see someone.
- 56.LEADER Okay. I'll get Renee to set this up. I'll meet you in the Centre Block Lobby at 4'oclock.
- 57.NELLIE I'll be there.
- 58.LEADER Nellie?
- 59.NELLIE Yeah?
- 60.LEADER You got guts.

Sc. 10. Parliament Hill

1.SOUND: The Peace tower bell ringing on the hour. NELLIE walking

3.SOUND: Nellie punches in a phone number.

4.SEAN (through phone) Yo! Nellie Gordon's Riding Office. The MP that rocks –

5.NELLIE Sean. It's Nellie.

6.SEAN (caught out) Geez, boss. Sorry, I know I'm not supposed to say that –

7.NELLIE It's okay. Look, I need to tell you a coupla of things –

10.SEAN I'll get a pen –

11.NELLIE You won't need it.

12.SEAN Okay.

13.NELLIE First thing. I did some really dumb stuff that's about to catch up with me. And after today, we're both gonna be out of a job

14.SEAN Ah –

15.NELLIE Second, you're not useless. Don't let anyone *ever* tell you that. You're unique. You've got style and energy and your own kind of smarts. You're the one who's made this office rock!

16.SEAN Gee –

17.NELLIE So whatever you do, stand your ground. And don't let anyone push you around. Not me, not "Federal Office"...not your dad, not anyone. That' all –

18.SEAN Gee thanks –

19. NELLIE I gotta go. Wish me luck.

20.SEAN Okay, boss. Luck

21.NELLIE Bye.

22.SOUND: Music bridge

Scene 11: West Block Cafeteria

1.SOUND: Cafeteria ambience.

2.NELLIE Hello Earl

3.EARL Nellie. Right on time. Have a seat –

BIZ: NELLIE sits.

EARL You want a coffee or something?

4.NELLIE No, I'm good. Thanks. Earl, I've been thinking about what you said yesterday. And you're right –

5.EARL Now you're talking –

6.NELLIE I do owe you. You did help me back then. You forced me to see where I was heading....like jail if I didn't smarten up. You gave me jolt. And it worked. So thanks

7.EARL Huh. Okay. All good. (beat) So... I guess we should talk some business.

8.NELLIE No more business, Earl.

EARL Come again?

NELLIE I'm having a press conference today and I'm going to resign

9.EARL You're what?

10.NELLIE I've decided to come clean. Fess up. Admit to what I did thirteen years ago. I'm not going to hide the past anymore -

11.EARL Oh come on.

12.NELLIE Three thirty....you can watch it on the parliamentary channel –

13.EARL This is a joke, right?

14.NELLIE No joke –

15.EARL You're gonna throw this all away. This place, geez all those nice duds –

16.NELLIE I am.

17.EARL Hey, this is way over the top. Let's talk –

18.NELLIE I don't want to –

19.EARL Nellie, Nellie, we can help each other. We can work together –

20.NELLIE I don't want to work together, Earl. I want you permanently out of my life.

21.EARL You're serious.

22.NELLIE Yes.

23.EARL Okay. Sorry you feel that way.

24.NELLIE Well I do. And once I confess, your tape has no power anymore –

25.EARL Don't be so sure of that – *On how close... another does*

26.NELLIE (dread) What do you mean? *?*

27.EARL I can ~~run~~ the tape on You Tube at the same time. Liven up the show.

~~28.NELLIE~~ *No* (stunned) No!

~~29.EARL~~ *That will* Oh yeah. Take it to a whole new level..

30.NELLIE Why would you do that? Why hurt a bunch of people?

31.EARL Cause you gotta think ahead to get ahead.

32.NELLIE What?

33.EARL Election coming. You do the big “mea culpa” played side by side by the sleazy crime tape. The other guy gets back in. I get credit for serving it up on a plate. And guess who's beholden to me?

9 34.NELLIE *as a* You're a bastard –

35.SOUND: EARL gets up to leave.

36.EARL See you around Nellie. Sorry we couldn't do business –

Scene 12 - Telephone home

2.SOUND: Nellie punches number on cell phone. It rings.

- 3.BEN (through phone) Hello?
- 4..NELLIE Hi Ben.
- 5.BEN (high spirits) Hi mom.
- 6.NELLIE So what did you have for lunch?
- 7.BEN Grilled cheese sandwiches.
- 8.NELLIE You got a game tonight?
- 9.BEN Yeah. Memorial Junior High And we're gonna whip them. We are so gonna blow them out of the water –
- 10.NELLIE Ben -
- 11.BEN Yeah mom?
- 14.NELLIE I need to...(loses courage) talk to your grandma –
- 15.BEN Hold on –
- 16.NELLIE Ben –
- 17.BEN Yeah?
- 18.NELLIE (pause) I love you.
- 19.BEN I know. I gotta get back to school. Bye (off) Hey Grandma! Mom's on the phone –

20..BIZ: Phone handed over to Catherine.

- 21.CATHERINE Hello.
- 22.NELLIE Mom, I'm having a press conference this aft –
- 23.CATHERINE (impressed, teasing) Press conference? Well aren't you the smart –
- 24.NELLIE Mom, I'm resigning today.
- 25.CATHERINE (disbelief) You're...what?
- 26.NELLIE It has to do with stuff that happened a long time ago. I can't turn this around. I tried, but there's nothing I can do. It's just gonna...unfold –
- 29.CATHERINE But –
- 30.NELLIE Mom, could you make sure you and Ben are watching CPAC ^{the afternoon} ~~at 3:30~~ today. Just be there with him. Please.
- 31.CATHERINE (after a pause) I will.
- 32.NELLIE Thanks. *mm*

33.CATHERINE Nellie?

34.NELLIE Yeah?

35.CATHERINE This is a shock.

36.NELLIE Yeah.

37.CATHERINE Whatever it is, we'll pick up the pieces when you get home.

38.NELLIE (emotional) Okay. Thanks.

SOUND: Music segue into end of Question Period in House of Commons?

39.NARRATION There's just one other person I need to tell. Herb Proctor. But I ~~just~~ ~~left Question Period and he wasn't there.~~ But I think I know where I can find him –

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Scene 13: The Cat Sanctuary

2. SOUND: Cats meowing, wind blowing in the trees

- 3.NELLIE Proctor, why weren't you in QP?
- 4.PROCTOR (inebriated) Didn't feel like it. Who do ya think you are? My mother?
- 5.NELLIE (amazed) Herb, you're drunk.
- 6.PROCTOR Am not. Just...tired and emotional.
- 7.NELLIE What's going on? What happened to tomato juice?
- 8.PROCTOR I hear you're 'meeting the press'. Don't like the sound a that –
- 9.NELLIE Yeah well, I'm fessing up – like you said. And then....anyway, I came here to say goodbye.
- 10.PROCTOR You're the last person who should be leaving. You're an asset to this place
- 11.NELLIE Well thanks. So why are you drinking? (no answer) Talk to me.
- 12.PROCTOR (finally) They've asked me to take a hike -
- 13.NELLIE Who has?
- 14.PROCTOR The party. They've asked me to step aside.
15. NELLIE Why?
- 16.PROCTOR The riding's changing. The Liberals are coming on strong. They want me to quietly exit stage right - let a young 'woman of colour' take the nomination –
- 17.NELLIE Can they do that?
- 18.PROCTOR Not officially.
- 19.NELLIE But you've given twenty years to this place – that's just not fair –
- 20.PROCTOR What's the last thing you saw that was fair? Anyway, no one deserves a seat for life –
21. NELLIE But still –
- 22.PROCTOR Ah, that's enough of my grousing. What time's your press conference?
- 23.NELLIE I'm meeting the Leader in ten minutes -
- 24.PROCTOR You better go.
- 25.NELLIE Are you going to be all right?

- 26.PROCTOR Go! Get out of here. But remember, when you're standing up there in front of those parasites from the press - Everyone in that House has made mistakes. I sure as hell made a lot of 'em.
- 27.NELLIE Herb –
- 28.PROCTOR It's not the mistakes that define ya. It's what you learn from them. Member that.
- 29.NELLIE Okay.
- 30.PROCTOR Good luck.
- 31.NELLIE You too.

Scene 14/15/16 Hallway outside Press Conference Room

1.SOUND: Noisy hallway, much coming and going. NELLIE and LEADER arrive

2.LEADER This is it. Room 130S. I'll go in and see what press is there. You wait here.

3.NELLIE Okay.

4.SOUND: Door opening. Renee comes out.

5.RENEE Come in, Mr. Dunn. Hi Nellie.

6.NELLIE Hey Renee.

7.RENEE We'll just wait here another minute and then go in.

8.NELLIE Okay.

9.RENEE How are you?

10.NELLIE How about terrified?

11.RENEE You don't have to do this. You don't have to let some two bit thug destroy your –

12.NELLIE Renee, it's all going to come out on You Tube
I have to deal with this.

26.RENEE But –

27.NELLIE I've made up my mind.

28. SOUND: Renee sighs in frustration

29.RENEE Let me fix your collar. And your hair's a bit - (Renee smooths her hair)

30.NELLIE What'll I do without you fussing over me?

34.RENEE I don't know. Let's go.

35..SOUND: RENEE opens door into press conference

Scene 17: Press Conference Room

1.SOUND: murmuring voices.

2.RENEE (whispers) Just stand right here until the Leader is ready to introduce you –

2a.NELLIE Okay.

3.SOUND: Nellie's cell phone rings

3a.RENEE Don't answer it.

4.NELLIE It's Sean.

5.RENEE (urgent) You don't have time.

6.NELLIE Just one sec.

7.SOUND: NELLIE answers cell phone

8.NELLIE Sean. I can't talk now. I'm about to have –

9.SEAN I know, boss... but -

10.NELLIE (impatient) But what?

11.SEAN I was thinking about what you said. About standing my ground. Taking charge of my life.

12.NELLIE Well good. But I can't talk about it now –

13.SEAN That was cool. No one's ever kind of talked like that to me before

13a.NELLIE I'm glad Sean, but I've got –

13b.SEAN So the thing is, my dad gave me this old crap beta tape to convert. Something about wanting to put in on the internet –

14.SOUND: NELLIE gasps.

15.NELLIE He gave it to you?

16.SEAN I thought I should take a look at it first - for quality - to see if it was worth saving. (beat) I decided it wasn't.

17.NELLIE Sean –

18.SEAN Then, wouldn't ya know? I spilled my milkshake all over it. It's gone for good now, boss. Thought you'd like to know. You still there?

19.NELLIE Yeah. Thanks Sean.

20.SEAN Yo. Word -

21. SOUND: Sean rings off.

22.NARRATION; / ^{Wow?} Now what do I do? Sean's destroyed the tape. The problem ^{'s solved} has ~~been miraculously solved.~~ Or ^{is} has it? ~~Has anything really changed?~~ ←
I'm still in the hole. I still haven't climbed out. It doesn't change the stuff I'm carrying around inside

23.RENEE (whispers, urgent) Nellie! Come on! The Leader's waiting.

24..SOUND: Nellie steps up on the podium

25.LEADER Everything okay?

26.NELLIE I think so.

27.LEADER Then we'll start.
(into mike) Good afternoon. Ladies and gentlemen of the Press. Thank you for coming today. Thank you for waiting for Ms.Gordon. One thing you need know about her – she is late for everything. Including her own press conference.

28.SOUND: Laughter

29.LEADER Nellie Gordon joined our caucus three months ago. Ever since she arrived, she has been learning, questioning and challenging everything that goes on here – and it’s been good for all of us. There is something very real about Nellie Gordon. I want to say here and now – whatever the future holds, it’s been an honour to get to know her and work with her. And now without further ado, here’s Nellie –

30. NELLIE (into mike) Thank you, Charlie. And thanks for putting up with me. And thank you all for coming today. I’ve got this statement here – but it’s already – out of date – so I’ll just wing it.

31.BIZ: Nellie crumples up paper

(takes a deep breath) When I came to work yesterday, it looked like there was an election five minutes away and people were asking – are you running again? And I guess, after much drama and soul searching, I’ve decided the answer is - yes.

32.BIZ: surprised applause from Renee, some others more subdued support

33.RENEE Yippee (en francais) (then maybe an) Oops. Pardon.

34.NELLIE Thanks Renee.
(back to media) I’ve decided this is an important place to be. And it’s an important job to do. And I’ve got an awesome team supporting me.
But before anyone decides whether to vote for me - or not, I want to tell the people of East Nova about some serious mistakes I made in the past. Things I neglected to mention the first time round.
(fade under) When I was 23 years old, I developed a serious addiction to video lottery terminals.

35.SOUND: The murmuring starts up again, camera flashes start going off.

36.NARRATION And so the feeding frenzy begins. ~~And as Herb Procter would say, the big muddy river just keeps on flowing.~~ Welcome to the Hill. In all its glories, I don’t know what the future holds either – but one thing I do know. Win or lose, this smart-mouthed rookie from the end of the earth is finally moving full speed ahead – not back

37.BRADY Ms. Gordon? Did your family know what was going on?

38.REPORTER 2 Do you think the public will give you another chance?

39.REPORTER 3 Was your party aware of your addiction?

40.REPORTER 2. Ms. Gordon?

END OF SERIES