

Church and State Analysis

A. Environmental Facts:

1. Geographic Location: This play takes place in Raleigh, North Carolina at North Carolina State. Most of the show takes place in the green room of the Stewart Theatre. There is a split scene where it is between the green room and the funeral home. Another scene takes place in the senate. Another one takes place in the actual Stewart Theatre.
2. Date: The majority of this play takes place on the Saturday night before elections, November 3rd. The funeral scene takes place earlier that morning. Then The second half of the show takes place on the sixth. And the part where the story progresses with news reports takes place over several weeks and/or months. And then the vote is TBD as there is no set amount of time that those things take.
3. Economic Environment: Charlie's father was the governor of North Carolina and both of his brothers are also politicians. Money has never been an issue. We see this by his hiring of Alex, who is a big up and comer in the industry. Charlie and Sara are both well dressed, but Sara comes from a slightly less wealthy family. She never had to worry about money, but also works for what she wants. We cannot tell that they come from money. Both Sara and Charlie are salt of the Earth people who like "American" things.
4. Political Environment: There are two sides of the political environment in the show. There is the actual politics side, which is right wing, left wing setup. There's a lot of conflict between what Charlie represents/ what his constituents expect him to be and what Charlie feels in his heart is the right thing to do. The other side of the political side is religion. Religion plays a HUGE role in this show. All the characters have a different view/ take. Alex is Jewish. Sara is a devout Christian. Tom feels like it's all the same to him and it doesn't really matter as long as it "quenches your thirst." Charlie is confused about God and is very unsure of God's place in politics.

B. Previous Action: Charlie was raised in politics. His father was governor of NC for many years. He died when Charlie was six years old. His father's funeral was where he first learned about God. It was a way of helping him cope. After that, his mother took him and his two older brothers every week to church. It is unclear as to if his mother is still alive. Charlie and Sara have been married for around ten years. Sara helped run Charlie's campaign into State senate. He was in the state senate for 2 years. He ran for the actual senate and won. And now, he's running for reelection. Alex is a Jewish woman from New York who tends to lean onto the left in politics. This world runs parallel with ours, in the way that all the world events/ problems are all the same. So, for years and years now, mass shootings have become more and more prevalent in people's lives. Most recently, in the week before the show opens, there is a shooting at the school Charlie's kids go to. Two of his kid's friends die. There is a funeral the morning of the 3rd.

C. Characters:

- 1 From Beginning to End

- a. Charlie: Charlie begins the show a nervous wreck. He knows he must do something, but he worries about its effects on his career and family. He is very hesitant to clue in Alex and Sara on what he has said in the interview. Towards the middle of the play (and the last scene that is his speech from the middle) we see him controlling that anxiety and rallying people into his cause. At the end of the play, He is regretful of his speaking out. He is worried that he cannot make the change he promised. In the moments before walking out on stage and getting assassinated, there is a moment of acceptance in him. He accepts his responsibility to this cause.
- b. Sara: Sara's life revolves around Charlie. She even says in the script that she'd much rather watch Real Housewives, but no she must be "supportive." She loves him, but she doesn't have her own life in this world. She finds her solace and purpose in life through God. She has dedicated her life to being a good Christian woman. She memorizes verses and goes to bible study. God and her kids are what motivates her. After Charlie gets reelected, she is relieved. Campaigning is the worst part for her. Charlie then gets assassinated and she steps up to temporarily replace him. Then she runs and gets elected. She fights for what Charlie wants. And for maybe the first time in a long time, she can be smart and opinionated and fun.
- c. Alex: Alex at the top of the show is also very on edge. This is her biggest campaign yet and she is mostly nerves. Charlie drops this huge bomb on her that should have killed his campaign and Alex is desperately trying to fix it. She has dreams. She wants to run a presidential campaign. There is so much riding on this election. Her dreams are what push her and her dreams only. When Charlie is giving his speech, we see something change in her. She realizes that what she does could make a difference. After Charlie is killed, she runs Sara's campaign and sticks with her. She feels as though the responsibility has been passed down to her.
- d. Tom: Tom is an excitable human. He has been with the senator for quite some time, but still wants a picture at every venue they go. He is a politically active conservative young man. He sees Charlie as this above everything person. But after Charlie's speech, we see Tom regard him more as a man. When asked for his opinion, Tom says that religion is like bottled water. If you peel off the label, it's all the same inside. This ultimately convinces Charlie to take responsibility for the movement he has made.

2. Desires:

- a. Charlie wants change. He feels personally responsible for the shooting. He doesn't know if he can make change, but he cannot let himself sit idly by anymore.
- b. Sara wants normalcy. This desire has been present for a good minute before the action of this play starts. Her husband hardly shows her affection anymore. He's

ditching church. And now, he decides he doesn't believe in God. She wants everything to return to normal and this silly problem to be dropped.

c. Alex wants victory. Winning the election is the only thing in her mind. She has to. Everything she does (at least for the first half of the play) is pushed by her need to win. I do feel like her desire changes into something different. Perhaps still victory, but in that way, it would be a victory in passing the bill or getting Sara into office.

3. Adjectives describing the characters:

- a. Charlie: unsure, honest, charming, responsible, "can turn it on"
- b. Sara: charming, funny, sassy, opinionated, prideful, smart, enjoyer of life
- c. Alex: professional, dry, snappy, smart, hopeful
- d. Tom: excitable, stupid, naïve, wise
- e. Marshall: pompous, sure of himself

D. Predominant Elements in order:

- 1. Theme
- 2. Character
- 3. Plot
- 4. Spectacle
- 5. Language

E Idea

- 1. Meaning of Title: Church and State. This play is about the separation of the two and how muddled that idea has really become. In voting, you want to vote for someone like you. This includes people within your religion. The people who voted for Charlie in the last election did so because they saw themselves in him: a good ole Christian American. Politicians pander to these ideas a lot. Charlie uses "Jesus as my running mate" as his song even though that's not what he stands for. When the voters find out that he doesn't believe in god anymore, he would surely lose his campaign. I think in a more realistic sense, this play deals with both politics and religion and it might be as simple as it sounded good as a title.
- 2. Quotes in the play:
 - a. "What if this is it? Dust to dust, nothing waiting for us on the other side. Would that be any crazier than some man in the clouds 'listening to our prayers?' What if God, the concept of God, was just created by us to cope with the pain and randomness and heartache of this miracle we call life?"
 - b. "I sorta thought God...? Was kinda like bottled water. Everyone's tryin' to sell you their brand and tell you theirs is the best and the only one you should have, but. When you peel off the label, it's all the same inside. You can even

get it for free in rivers and streams and stuff. And they all quench your thirst, so. In the end, who cares which kind you drink...ya know?"

- c. "I suddenly saw what my purpose was: not to sit at home or in church and quietly pray for things to change. But to actually do something to stop other families from having to suffer the same tragedy."
- d. "Every soul can make a difference"