

LOIS/MRS. HERROLD

(MRS. HERROLD has set up a small table with a sign that says "Protect our children." She walks around with a clipboard.

MRS. HERROLD

I love your shoes.

LOIS

Thank you.

MRS. HERROLD

I don't want to sound superficial, but I just love shoes. It's my only vice. Really. We haven't met. I'm Inez Herrold.

LOIS

Lois Patterson.

MRS. HERROLD

Alex's mother. We love her.

LOIS

Oh, is she friends with your kid?

MRS. HERROLD

No, Mr. Herrold and I have not yet been blessed with children. Not for lack of a whole lot of praying and a whole lot of trying. Sorry, that was crass.

LOIS

Not at all. So how do you know Alex?

MRS. HERROLD

She volunteers with us sometimes.

LOIS

Oh.

(takes in the sign, the clipboard, etc.) Protect our children. What from?

MRS. HERROLD

Well, I am sure you heard about what's going on at the high school.

LOIS

Oh God, are people protesting it? Please, let me sign your petition. We can't let these fundamentalists screw up our kids' education.

MRS. HERROLD

Oh. No, dear. I think you misunderstand.

LOIS

Have a... nice day.

MRS. HERROLD

We do things different here than y'all do in New York.

LOIS

Clearly. I should go inside and shop.

MRS. HERROLD

God be with you.

(LOIS walks away, by LARRY, who
is straightening up the store.)

LOIS

Hi. Mr. Ames, right?

LARRY

That's my Dad. You can call me Larry.

LOIS

That woman over there - can you please ask her to move?

LARRY

Free country, ma'am. Last I checked, there was a first amendment.

LOIS

You're right.

(At the table, MRS. HERROLD tries to
get MAN #1 to sign the petition.)

MRS. HERROLD

If we let this show go on, who knows what darkness our
children will fall into?

(LOIS takes a breath, then turns to
MRS. HERROLD.)

LOIS

Tell me, what exactly is in store for our children because of
this show?

MRS. HERROLD

Some of them might choose a lifestyle that -

LOIS

This show celebrates.

MRS. HERROLD

Exactly. Thank you for making my argument for me. If they are
exposed the unsavory elements in this show, they are just
catering to Mr. Powell's agenda.

LOIS

Mr. Powell is just trying to enlighten our kids with some topics
that hopefully will make them think about their choices.

MRS. HERROLD

So he DOES have an agenda.

LOIS

You're spreading hate, lady.

MRS. HERROLD

There is not one ounce of hate in my body. I love these children, this town, our way of life. Why can't you?

DAVE

All right, ladies, ladies. Gosh, uh - the gorgeous ladies of wresting videos are in the store, not here. Let's just all get along.

MRS. HERROLD

Dave, you're president of the school board, what do you think?

DAVE

Oh, I'm just a figurehead with a gavel.

LOIS

So you don't have any authority.

DAVE

I have a gavel and I'm not afraid to use it. Just joshin' ya. But seriously, this conversation of yours has to stop.

LOIS

Look, I'm not trying to foment anything here

MRS. HERROLD

What kind of word is that?

LOIS

Apparently a New York one, not a Texas one.

MRS. HERROLD

Dear, you have the right to believe what you believe, but I do, too. If you want to make up a petition that says the show is all good and rosy to do, I encourage you. But, Mrs. Patterson, and I mean this with not a drip of contention, there will not be many people in this town who would sign that petition.

LOIS

Are people that afraid of a show?

MRS. HERROLD

We love music, heaven knows I love me a good rock beat, but there are other shows.

LOIS

Well, if I have my way, it's gonna be this one.

MAN #1 OR WOMAN #1

Note: PRINCIPAL NELSON is played by one actor and all of the other characters are played by another actor. Please be prepared to read for both the PRINCIPAL NELSON track as well as the MULTIPLE CHARACTER track (being conscious of the contrast between each character).

PRINCIPAL NELSON

Being a principal is like being a juggler, a therapist and a roller derby player all in one. It is my life's work to solve problems, and I get it done, and no one knows how I do it. Heck, I don't even know how, but each night, I know I've made the world a better place than it was in the morning. I make people happy, even if they don't get what they want. I pride myself on my tact and live by a code: You can tell someone to go to hell, but if you do it the right way, they'll look forward to the trip. I can't imagine any other life than this. Being a principal has been a dream come true. I know retirement approaches, but I got a few good years left in me. I can solve any prob -

(the phone rings) Jackie Nelson here.

ANGRY MAN

You know you're going to hell.

(CLICK dial tone)

PRINCIPAL NELSON

Parents often call with their concerns and needs. Because he got off the phone so quickly, I wasn't able to really know what his were and hence he did not let me do my work. I can only imagine why I'm going to hell. Perhaps it's the library carrying Huck Finn. We get that alot.

(The phone rings)

TIMID WOMAN

Principal Nelson, this is Margaret Downing. My son Sean is in the tenth grade and he is auditioning for the school musical.

PRINCIPAL NELSON

Congratulations. I encourage all the students to audition.

TIMID WOMAN

You need to choose another show. That show's all about hookers.

PRINCIPAL NELSON

I will take that under advisement. Thank you, Ms.

Downing. (hangs up, then)

Parents have the right to express their concern, and the parents entrust me to set a tone. Hookers? Hmmm, I don't recall that in the script.

(Phone rings)

Each day I come to my office, the phone rings, and like a fireman, I get to put out the fire, but lately, the alarms are ringing more frequently and well, with raised volumes. (ring)

ANGRY MOTHER

This show says that it's okay to knock off an ATM instead of getting a real job.

(ring)

ANGRY FATHER

This show says that there's no consequences of doing drugs and having sex.

(ring)

ANGRY MOTHER

This show tells you that performance art is an accepted form of expressing yourself.

(ring)

SNOOTY OLD MAN

I'm just not a fan. All the music sounds the same. Give me a good Jerry Herman showtune.

CALM FATHER

It just sends the wrong message. Look, as much as I don't wanna admit it, I know my daughter is well-aware that there are gays out there and that folks her age do drugs, but this show glorifies some very dangerous behavior.

PRINCIPAL NELSON

When Mr. Powell told me he wanted to do this show, he told me that this show is bigger than the songs and the story and the characters, that when he saw it, there was a feeling of community on stage so big it spread over the 1200 or so people in the audience. The show is about friendship and love and hope and

PARENT 1

Sex.

PARENT 2

Drugs.

PARENT 3

Homosexuality

PARENT 4

Lying.

PARENT 5

Stealing.

PARENT 6

Hating your parents

PARENT 7

It's anti-family

PARENT 8

It's anti-American.

PRINCIPAL

NELSON (losing it)

Thank you for your concern! Please let me get back to
you! (calming down, then:)

Like I said, being a principal is like being a juggler, a
therapist and a roller derby player all in one. And a
punching bag.

(presses a button on her desk)

Mr. Powell, will you please come to my office? Thank you.

