

Fiasco: Bush v Gore
Sample: "Brooks Brothers Riot"

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Based on True Events

INT. MIAMI-DADE COUNTY POLLING HEADQUARTERS. DAVID LEAHY'S OFFICE, 18TH FLOOR. MORNING.

TEXT: November 22, 2000. Miami-Dade County Polling Headquarters. Floor 18. TIME

David Leahy, Supervisor of Elections for the County Canvassing Board, sits at on one side of a tiny desk stacked with papers. He scribbles notes as the rest of the canvassing board squeezes into the tiny office, as many as 15 staffers.

VOTE COUNTER 1

So what? You're saying we--let me get this straight--you're saying you want us to just give up?

Everyone in the room chatters as Leahy tries to wrangle their attention. He taps his pen impatiently on the table.

LEAHY

I'm not saying that. I'm not saying that.

VOTE COUNTER 1

Then what are you--

LEAHY

That's ONE option, and not an option I see the VP taking.

VOTE COUNTER 2

We can't--

LEAHY

Everyone QUIET. Harris has us by the balls so we've got four days to finish this count.

VOTE COUNTER

There's no way we can finish the count.

LEAHY

I know.

VOTE COUNTER 3

There's 650,000 ballots left.

LEAHY

I KNOW. That's option two. Option 3 is -- option 3 is: we only look at the undervotes.

(CONTINUED)

VOTE COUNTER 1
How many are there?

LEAHY
11,000. Give or take.

VOTE COUNTER 2
Or we go home.

LEAHY
Or we go home.

Beat.

VOTE COUNTER 4
If we're going for undervotes we
can us the tab room on 19. The
ballots, the machines--everything's
already set up for us.

Leahy smiles.

**INT. MIAMI-DADE COUNTY POLLING HEADQUARTERS. HALLWAY 18TH
FLOOR. MORNING.**

TEXT: Miami-Dade County Polling Headquarters. Floor 18. TIME

A group of vote counters rush down the hallway to the
elevator weighed down by white boxes full of undervotes.
They're flanked by the non-partisan observers and Leahy
himself.

REPORTER (OS)
It looks as though the counting
will continue far from prying eyes.
David Leahy has sealed his team off
from the public and any media
outlets. A group of concerned
citizens has begun to form outside.

The doors close.

**INT. MIAMI-DADE COUNTY POLLING HEADQUARTERS. TABULATION
ROOM, 19TH FLOOR. MORNING.**

Back to the counters in the Tabulation Room. Voting machines
line the room and the board discusses procedure in anxious
tones.

(CONTINUED)

VOTE COUNTER 4

Punch number seven, punch seven. No vote, no vote.

LEAHY

Jesus. How many is that? How did so many people vote for LITERALLY no one?

He gestures to the stacks of no-vote ballots.

VOTE COUNTER 4

Looks like--I don't know, look at the dimple. Looks like they meant to punch through six.

LEAHY

A vote for Gore.

VOTE COUNTER 2

There's no way that's admissible. They already punched the ticket.

VOTE COUNTER 1

So you're contesting it?

VOTE COUNTER 2

I'm contesting it.

VOTE COUNTER 1

Put it on the pile.

But Leahy isn't listening. He's already punching a number into his phone.

LEAHY

Geller. We think people are voting for Gore but punching out the chad right below his name.

GELLER

They punched seven?

LEAHY

They punched--yeah. How did you know?

GELLER

I'm a few blocks away. I'll bring a ballot with me. Sit tight till I get there. I have an idea.

Leahy looks out the window, down at the amassing crowd. We can barely hear the chants from below.

(CONTINUED)

LEAHY

I--Joe. Be careful out there.

GELLER

I think we might be past that.

Click.

RIOTERS (OS)

(muffled)

LET US IN! LET US IN!

VOTE COUNTER 2

What is going on out there?

Leahy pauses and takes a breath.

LEAHY

It looks like a riot.

EXT. MIAMI-DADE COUNTY POLLING HEADQUARTERS. MORNING.

A wave of angry Republicans bang on the glass doors of the building at street level. Behind them, the news media soaks it in: this is great TV.

Chants explode into the open air.

ALL

LET US IN! LET US IN! STOP THE
COUNT! STOP THE STEAL!

Joe Geller, the local Democratic Party Chairman, watches the rabid dogs from the sidewalk, summoning the courage to enter the crowd.

He steels himself, makes sure he has the sample ballot in his hand, then pushes toward the front door.

**INT. MIAMI-DADE COUNTY POLLING HEADQUARTERS. FLOOR 19.
HALLWAY.**

A slow push in on the elevator doors on 19. They seem to vibrate with an intense frequency.

EXT. MIAMI-DADE COUNTY POLLING HEADQUARTERS. MORNING.

Back to Geller. The crowd surrounds him, buffeting him in the storm.

RIOTERS
Cheaters! Cheaters!

GELLER
Look, can you just--excuse me.

A well dressed woman with a clipboard locks eyes with the Geller and wails.

WOMAN
HE'S STEALING A BALLOT!

The mob pushes Geller through the lobby. He makes it to the elevator, but the rioters are right on him. They pack into the elevator until they hit the weight limit.

INT. MIAMI-DADE COUNTY POLLING HEADQUARTERS. ELEVATOR. CONTINUOUS.

Geller and his sample ballot barely survive the scrum inside the elevator.

RIOTER 1
You're not going anywhere. Me and the colonel won't let you.

GELLER
What colonel?

RIOTER 2
You're a lawyer, you're going to get disbarred.

GELLER
How do you--

A protesters shoves his chest into Geller

RIOTER 2
If you touch me again I'll defend myself.

**INT. MIAMI-DADE COUNTY POLLING HEADQUARTERS. FLOOR 19.
HALLWAY.**

Back to the elevator. We know what's coming.

Ding.

The rioters almost pry the elevator doors open as they flood into the 19th floor hallway, running and screaming. Rioters taking off their shirts and wrapping ties around their foreheads.

RIOTERS

Where is he?

RIOTERS (cont'd)

Let us in!

RIOTERS (cont'd)

Stop the fraud! Stop the steal!

They run down the hallway in a frenzy, Geller still caught in the undertow.

But at least he's on his way to the Tabulation Room.

**INT. MIAMI-DADE COUNTY POLLING HEADQUARTERS. FLOOR 19.
TABULATION ROOM.**

The counters on 19 try to concentrate as angry protesters beat the glass partition, screaming.

VOTE COUNTER 1

(re: stacks of ballots)

Were these contested? This pile?

Anyone?

VOTE COUNTER 2

We're just gonna have to count them again.

VOTE COUNTER 1

There's no time--

VOTE COUNTER 2

How many are there?

COUNTER 1

The ballots? Or them?

She points to the rioters through the flimsy glass.

**INT. MIAMI-DADE COUNTY POLLING HEADQUARTERS. FLOOR 19.
HALLWAY. CONTINUOUS.**

Right outside the Tabulation Room. A weird sense of calm has come over Geller as he watches the riot churn all around him, almost in slow motion. They've momentarily forgotten about him.

He looks at a man on the ground a few yards behind him. He's being beaten savagely by two Republicans in baggy suits, the victim trying and failing to protect his head with his hands.

The elevator opens again. *Ding.*

The next batch of rioters bleed into the hallway. Camera crews follow close behind.

That puts Geller in motion.

He elbows his way through, until he's pressed up against the locked glass door of the Tabulation Room.

**INT. MIAMI-DADE COUNTY POLLING HEADQUARTERS. FLOOR 19.
TABULATION ROOM.**

A counter inside spots Geller.

LEAHY

We need to count faster.

VOTE COUNTER 1

Mr. Leahy.

LEAHY

Somebody get them out of here--

VOTE COUNTER 1

Mr. LEAHY.

LEAHY

What?

COUNTER 1

Sir--

She points to Geller on the other side of the glass door.

Geller slams the sample ballot against the glass.

(CONTINUED)

LEAHY
Jesus--Somebody let him in.

As a few volunteers race to the door:

LEAHY (cont'd)
And ONLY him!

The door opens and Geller slips in, hands trailing behind him through the doorway, the rabid Republicans trying to make their way in by force.

RIOTERS
STOP THE FRAUD! LET US IN!

Geller drops the ballot on the floor as he and a few others push the door shut. The lock engages with a loud click. He takes a breath (he only has time for one) before he swipes the sample ballot off the ground and rushes past Leahy.

LEAHY
Geller, what's happening?

Geller sprints towards the nearest counting machine.

LEAHY (cont'd)
Geller!

GELLER
Look.

Geller slots the ballot into the machine.

GELLER
Ok, see?

LEAHY
See what?

Geller points.

GELLER
Here. Punch six is a vote for Gore.

LEAHY
I know how to vote, Joe.

GELLER
Leahy, just--

Geller takes out the ballot and slots it in again, this time one slot higher.

(CONTINUED)

GELLER (cont'd)
LOOK. Punch seven for Gore.

LEAHY
But six is for Gore.

GELLER
I KNOW.

LEAHY
Jesus fuck--how many people fucked
this up?

GELLER
It's a pretty easy mistake. There's
no way to tell--

LEAHY
How many, Joe.

Geller looks at Leahy, stone cold.

GELLER
Thousands.