



Who is Esther

Book and Music by Randall Craig

January 2024

Manuscript v4.5

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Who is Esther: Synopsis



A story about finding the courage to speak truth to power.

Principal Characters

- **Mr. Verious** (Tenor): 60-year-old CEO of a major corporation. A caricature: caucasian, heavier build, not so smart, and easily influenced by others.
- **Esther** (Mezzo): 30-year-old African American woman from the 'hood who rises to be a VP. She's educated, street-smart, and is just looking for her shot.
- **Uncle Mo** (Bass): 50-year-old African American man. Esther's uncle, mentor, confidante, and wise elder statesman.
- **Ham** (Tenor): 45-year-old self-important, self-serving (and slimy) caucasian man. His toxic beliefs eventually lead to his downfall.

Other Roles / Chorus

- **Ham's wife** (Mezzo): Casting: 35-50 year old, not a person of color. In a smaller cast, she can also play contestant one.
- **Vashti** (Mezzo): a VP who is fired, 35-45 year old not a person of color. In smaller casts, Vashti can also play Contestant two.
- **Two schemers** (Bari, Tenor): Casting: age 25-45, no other restrictions. In smaller casts, there need only be one schemer (Bari).
- **Aide** (Tenor): Casting: 35-55, skewing older.
- **[Larger casts] Contestant one** (Mezzo): Casting: very shapely body, likely blond, caucasian, age 25-35
- **[Larger casts] Contestant two** (Mezzo): Casting: matronly and middle-aged. Heavier body shape, not a person of color; age 40-45.

Set in the present day, everything was going well for CEO Mr. Verious ... until his female VP quits due to his sexual advances. To recruit a replacement, he decides to hold a singing contest. Esther, a street-wise young woman from the 'hood, is encouraged by her Uncle Mo to compete. To the surprise of all (except her), she wins and is appointed as the new VP.

Ham, Verious' racist advisor, doesn't like Esther or people like her, and slyly plots their demise. Esther finds the courage to speak truth to power: she turns the tables on Ham, and holds Mr. Verious to account. Esther is a believer in change, and by the end of the play, the audience realizes that they can be, too.

The musical can be performed with 4 lead roles and a chorus of at least 4 people. Either a pre-recorded track can be used, or a pit band with a minimum of Drums, Bass, two digital pianos (guitar and percussion optional).

Thank you to all who have provided input and feedback during the development of the project. This includes Bernie Abrams, Dayna Albert, Barbara Back, Nigel Blumenthal, Louisa Burgess, Jeremy Burko, Robby Burko, Carole Cantor, Alan Cohen, Rob Corbett, Kelly Craig, Linda Craig, Aubrey Dan, Aline Emsalem, Judy Gershon, Stephen Glass, Eddy Goldberg, Barry Goldman, Alison Grant, Ilene Hyman, Loretta Levenson, Jackie Lukawitz, Mathew Mac Lean, Linda Mancini, Mallory McGrath, Michel Neray, Paul Niedziela, Susan Richman, Jon Jon Rivero, Bunny and Ken Saul, Jennifer Schembri, Shirley Schildkraut, R. Jesse Shore, Berlayne Smith, Kinsey Smith, Paul Sveda, Justin Welsh, Dr. Mary Anne White, Dave Wiener, Luke Witt, Sol Zeifman, Mark Zimmerman, and many others.

Act I, Scene 1

Setting: Esther walking down the street in her low-income, gritty neighborhood. Her mentor, Uncle Mo, observes.

Song: Corner Block

UNCLE MO

What do I see?

ESTHER

My corner block
The one I know
The people I love
The people I know

PEOPLE ON THE STREET (*friendly*)

Hi Esther!
Yo!
Hey!

UNCLE MO

What do I see?

ESTHER

Good thinking, good beliefs
But limited by what people see
We may be diff'rent, there's nothing wrong
But no priv'lege, we scrape along...

UNCLE MO

What do I see?

ESTHER

We go along to get along
No jobs mean no more hope
No justice means no confidence
We're strong so we just cope

UNCLE MO

What do I see?

ESTHER

My corner block
The one I know
The people I love
The people I know

PEOPLE ON THE STREET (*unfriendly*)

Hey!
That's my seat!
You the maid?

What can I do?
I'm just one person,
The system's broke,
I'm so uncertain!

You work here?
Too much, for you!

UNCLE MO

What do I see?

You're just one person
Yet strength within you
You got what it takes
Your future you'll work through.

ESTHER

What do I see?

UNCLE MO

I'll find a way
To bring you in
To where I work
A good position

ESTHER

If I had pow'r
I'm just one person
To fix the system
A heavy burden

What could I see?

MALE CHORUS

YES -
YES -
YES -
YES -

HAM

Exploitation
Separation
Resignation
Incarceration

FEMALE CHORUS

NO -
NO -
NO -
NO -

ESTHER

Emancipation
Participation
Determination
Liberation... for me!

ESTHER

I'm just one person
What do I see?
We're different - we're strong
A change you'll see
A change you'll see
Believe!

Scene 2

Setting: In Mr. Verious' oversized office, busy-body clerks aggrandize Mr. Verious... even though the sly Ham seems to be the one really in charge.

Song: Behind every great man

CHORUS

(Dressed as corporate clerks)

Mister Verious, oh so serious - He's our CEO
A great man - He's always right!

Mister Verious, oh so serious - He's our CEO
He works all night - and tweets his might
And thinks his rep will grow

HAM

Behind every great man, there is a clever man,
I work to make things right - for me, that is... I am Ham

CHORUS *(simultaneously)*

Ham!

Ham

(To the various flunkies around him)

Not him, her!
Not her, him!
Get me my numbers!
Get me my hat! My phone! My lunch!
Get out of my sight!

CHORUS (*simultaneously*)

Sight!

HAM

Behind every great man, there is a clever man,
I work to make things right - for me, that is... I am Ham

CHORUS (*simultaneously*)

Ham!

MR. VERIOUS

I worked hard at my job

HAM

He worked hard at his job

MR. VERIOUS

I rose up through the ranks

HAM

He rose up through the ranks

HAM

I told him who to blame

MR. VERIOUS

He told me who to blame

HAM

I am a trusty aide

MR. VERIOUS

He is my trusty aide

HAM

I do his dirty deeds

MR. VERIOUS

He does my dirty deeds

HAM

He's not so smart a guy

MR. VERIOUS

Hey! Who you talking about?

CHORUS AND HAM

(*Begin walking off the stage*)

Mister Verious, oh so serious - he's our CEO
He works all night - and tweets his might
And thinks his rep will grow!

Scene 3

Setting: In a large auditorium, the staff sits waiting for the corporate kick-off event to begin. Meanwhile, in Mr. Verious' ostentatious hotel bedroom, Vashti is sitting on the bed after having sex with him.

Song: Thanks for your service to date

MR. VERIOUS

Vashti thank you for your service to date.
You have great potential, just reciprocate
You know the deal, and you know what I like
Just do it and smile, it's all business-like.
Thanks for your service tonight.

(Verious leaves the hotel bedroom.)

VASHTI

I don't like my job, and don't want his affection,
He's slimy, and MARRIED! Don't want his attention.
I got my promotions, but the cost was too much.
I have to move on, I can't stand his touch
No thanks for my service to date.

(On the auditorium stage at the corporate kick-off)

MR. VERIOUS

Come to thank Vashti for her service to date.
She is talented, smart, and can always relate
She'll win us the prize of our big acquisition
I see profits and money and stronger divisions
Vashti thanks for your service to date.

Team listen up, now watch for her entrance
Here's Vashti your leader - to all in attendance
Follow her lead and you'll surely do well
We will be admired, by our clientele
Vashti thanks for your Service to date!

(spoken)

Vashti? Vashti? Vashti???

VASHTI

(To the audience)

I'm not here for him and I'm not on display
Enough is enough and I'd rather not stay

(Turns towards Mr. Verious)

Not sticking around as there's nothing for me
Goodbye Mister Verious - and iniquity
No thanks for my service to date

MR. VERIOUS

You think you're smart and you think there is closure,
We had an arrangement, but that is now over
You can't call it quits 'cause you need to know:
... You're Fired!
No thanks for your service to date!

(Vashti is hauled off the stage by Ham's thugs)

MR. VERIOUS

Now that she's out, what will we do?
A talented VP - we need to pursue.

HAM

Why don't we just look, we'll put out a call.
We'll find the most talented VP of all

MR. VERIOUS

I know!
Why don't we just look, we'll put out a call.
We'll find the most talented VP of all.

UNCLE MO

I'm glad to be here, and I know in advance,
I'll fix it so Esther at least has a chance.

Scene 4

*Setting: Joining the audience in the gaudy "Talent stadium", the contestants compete for attention in the singing contest; Mr. Verious is head judge.
Song compilation: Look at my smile / I'll tell you what to do / Sometimes*

NARRATOR

(Spoken)

Each contestant has gone through months of tryouts, coaching, and rehearsals. From 127 contestants, we now have our three finalists. Each one will demonstrate her talent, and our esteemed judging panel will select the winner.

Without further ado, contestant number one:

CONTESTANT ONE

(to the tune of "Look at my smile")

Marketing, HR, and sales and deliv'ry
I've heard the words,
But don't ask me more...
Just look at my smile
(spoken)
Nice numbers
Is there a sale on?
Does that look good on me?

NARRATOR

Now let us welcome contestant number two!

CONTESTANT TWO

(to the tune of "I'll tell you what to do")

Oh Mr. Verious, I see what must be done
Oh Mr. Verious, I know we can have fun
With me in your corner
I'll tell you what to do!
With me in your corner
You'll know just what to do!
- What to do!

NARRATOR

Contestant one!

CONTESTANT ONE

*(to the tune of "Look at my smile")
(Shoves herself into the spotlight)*

I spend time shopping to look my best
I have blouses, pantsuits and dress
I'm like a trophy you show your friends
Just look at my smile

I'm no accountant, I have no degree
Boy can I sing, and dance, and... mmm-hmmm
Just look at my smile

NARRATOR

Contestant two!

CONTESTANT TWO

*(to the tune of "I'll tell you what to do")
(elbows her way to center stage)*

Oh Mr. Verious, I see what must be done
Oh Mr. Verious, I know we can have fun
With me in your corner
I'll tell you what to do!
With me in your corner
You'll know just what to do!
- What to do!

Next let's change your office
It looks so drab and cold
New décor and new big chair
Folks want new - not old
- New not old!

CONTESTANT ONE

(Bursts back into the spotlight, speaking nonsense to audience)

Buy low - sell high!
Blue sky at night, sailor's delight!
One-two, buckle my shoe!
Actionable targets!
Eenie meeney, miney, mo - oh, Mo!
For all intensive purposes!
Nucular power!
Row, row, row your boat!
I like that lipstick!
Bob's your uncle!
Onwards and Upwards!

HAM

(to the tune of "Look at my smile")

Maybe you need, some
coaching from me.
I'm very helpful,
Here is my room key.
Just look at my smile!

NARRATOR

Let's welcome our final contestant!

ESTHER

(to the tune of "Sometimes")

I didn't always look this way...
I started in a diff'rent place
I've always worked hard to do my best
No matter the place, or request

Sometimes you find yourself as a child you'll outgrow.
Sometimes you find yourself with no friends you know
Sometimes you find yourself when you hit that plateau
I've got ideas for the world to know.

NARRATOR

Contestant one!

CONTESTANT ONE

(to the tune of "Look at my smile")

Marketing, HR, and sales and deliv'ry
I've heard the words,
But don't ask me more...
Just look at my smile

NARRATOR

Contestant three!

ESTHER

(to the tune of "Sometimes")

Sometimes you find yourself in a strange new place
Sometimes you find yourself in a three-horse race
Sometimes you find yourself when times are tough
I've got ideas for the world to know

NARRATOR

Contestant two!

CONTESTANT TWO

(to the tune of "I'll tell you what to do")

Oh Mr. Verious, I see what must be done
Oh Mr. Verious, I know we can have fun
With me in your corner
I'll tell you what to do!
With me in your corner
You'll know just what to do!
- What to do!

ESTHER

(to the tune of "Sometimes")

What do I see, but change for the better
We may be different, but we're stronger together
The people I love, the people I know

Give me the tools, and I will surpass,
If I had the budget, and I had the cash.
Give me a chance, I'm no mismatch

Sometimes you find yourself in a place you don't know.
Sometimes you find yourself with ideas to sow
Sometimes you find yourself and you do what you must
I've got ideas for the world to know.

UNCLE MO

She didn't always look this way..
She started in a diff'rent place.

Scene 5

Setting: Talent Stadium; focus on the judges as they choose the winner.

Song: Best of the Three

MR. VERIOUS

The first of the candidates, not sure of her skills
She may have the smile but she's Beverly Hills
A little too flashy
Not very smart

HAM

She really won't make it - she's more of a tart.

MR. VERIOUS

The second of them, what a beautiful voice
She has strong ideas, might she be my choice?
But she's old as my mother
And nags like no other

HAM

She really is not - right for you but another.

ESTHER

(To audience)

So many contenders, so many rehearsals
For many of us it was fraught with reversals
What am I doing?
Why do I care?
For all who are diff'rent, to make life more fair.

MR. VERIOUS

Of all of the candidates, of all of the three
There's one who is best, according to me
She has strength this Esther

HAM

She's different - undress her!

MR. VERIOUS

She's different respect her, and bring her to me!
"Esther, tomorrow, you start!"

ESTHER

I am responsible, I always have been,
I'm the VP, and will always be seen,
I'll figure it out,
I'll give it a go,
Yes Mr. Verious, Let's make it so.

Scene 6

Setting: A networking event / after-party, taking place on the gaudy stage of Talent Stadium. Attending are a number busy-body clerks, all who are genuinely surprised that a "nobody" won the contest and is the new VP.

Song: Who is Esther?

MEZZO SOLO

She has come from far away
She seems very different
Is she smart?
Does she know her part?

CHORUS

Who is Esther, what can she do today?

TENOR SOLO

Yet, it looks like she's won the prize
She has her own ways
She's highly educated
Watch what you say

CHORUS

Who is Esther, what will she do today?

ESTHER

I know I am new
I'm not the same as you
I do represent
A very different view.

I stand for what's right
Not might but the light
There're many like me
No longer out of sight.

I stand for what's right
Not might but the light
There're many like me
No longer out of sight.

MEZZO SOLO

She has won the big contest
She has her own ways
She's highly educated
Watch what she says

ESTHER

Oh yeah!
Mm hmmm!
Educated!
You got it!

CHORUS

This is Esther, what's up with her today?

(Two schemers are stage right, plotting. Uncle Mo watches on.)

SCHEMER ONE (Tenor)

It's Verious we hate

SCHEMER TWO (Baritone)

He's a fool who can't relate

SCHEMER ONE (Tenor)

No connection to our fate

SCHEMER TWO (Baritone)

A buffoon who really likes to dominate

SCHEMER ONE (Tenor)

It's time to force a change

SCHEMER TWO (Baritone)

We should quickly sell our shares

SCHEMER ONE (Tenor)

A poison pill and maybe more

SCHEMER TWO (Baritone)

Mr. V will be in our cross-hairs

SCHEMER ONE

Replace him
Depose him
Remove him

SCHEMER TWO

Negate him
Foreclose him
Exclude him,

Goodbye! *(together)*

UNCLE MO

(to audience)

What did I hear
These schemes and plots
If Verious is gone
Will Esther be dropped?

(to Verious)

There is a plot
To get rid of you
I clearly heard..
Say goodbye you're through!

(Mr. Verious gets rid of his enemies, then looks at Esther.)

MEZZO SOLO

She has come from far away
She seems very different
She is smart
Yes, she knows her part

ESTHER

I'm not from away
I've always been here
It's not a surprise
I choose to be here

I know who I am
Where I'm from, where I stand!
And that's why I am
Who I am - give a damn!

CHORUS

This is Esther,
This is Esther today

(Shouted) Who I am - give a damn!

Scene 7

*Setting: Ham's Office. Verious and Ham are talking in his office; Ham walks around the office as people are bowing down to him... except Mo.
Song: Perversity*

MR. VERIOUS

How lucky I am
VP's in place
What a great plan
Yes - thank you Ham

He deals with details
So much easier
I can be me
And not appear sleazier

So Ham you're now
My chief of staff
With authority to lead
On my behalf

The keys to the building
I'll do my thinking
My drinking. My slinking.
And my winking.

HAM*(To the audience)*

While I'm not Verious
I'm serious and clever
Chief of Staff - wow
Power forever

I'll do my best - for me, that is, I'm Ham

CHORUS *(Simultaneously)*

Ham

HAM

Stand up!

TENOR

Yes Sir!

HAM

Sit Down!

MEZZO 1

Yes Sir!

HAM

Get my hat!

MEZZO 2

Yes Sir!

HAM

Shut Your Trap!

BARITONE

Yes...

HAM

I'm master of all
Chief of staff wo
The world bows down
But not that Mo!

Who's he kidding
Sticks out like a thumb
He thinks he's special
I know he's scum

UNCLE MO

Ham thinks he is clever
He's nasty and small
He only likes family
And those who will bow

HAM

The problem with Mo
Is not just him
It's everyone like him
Who's different like him

They look different
Think different smell different too
They think they are chosen
To be in charge too

They're arrogant, embarrassment
Non-resonant to me
They're not deferential
I'll fire them you'll see

(Ham turns to Verious)

Oh Mr. Verious
It's time to be imperious
There are a group of people
Who are doing very little
To move our mission forward
Subhuman subcommittal!

UNCLE MO

(A devastated Uncle Mo faces the audience.)

We don't fit his mold
Are we slaves to be sold?
We must stand up
To this brave new world.

Learn from diversity
Give others courtesy
Ham's absurdity
Don't bow to perversity

HAM

(To Verious)

Oh Mr. Verious
These folks are mysterious
We don't like their attitude
Their platitudes their latitude
It's time to say goodbye to them

MR. VERIOUS

It's time to say goodbye to them.

Ham do what you think
Is best for us
I trust you'll do right
And not be unjust

HAM

(To the audience)

I know what we'll do
A very big cut
We'll say our goodbyes
to those little peanuts

I'll send out a memo
To all our divisions
Fire all who're different
From their positions

If they're not like me
They're no longer welcome
The first of the month
If they're different they'll go!

I'll hire my lieutenants
And people I like
People just like me
Not those I dislike

I'll tell them quite clearly
Fire all who're different
Fill their positions
It shouldn't be difficult

UNCLE MO

A shot against diversity
Perversity - adversity
The crime of being different
The height of all absurdity

Scene 8

Setting: Outside
Song: Mo's Lament

UNCLE MO

I don't know why there are those people
I don't know why they are so mean
Was hatred molded from their childhood?
They seem to think their priv'lege is OK.

I think it's cause we're not the same
We seem so different.
I think it's cause we're not the same
We think for our-selves

It isn't just about employment
It's what we strive for each and every day
Why is respect a precious gem?
One that we never get to call our own.

Maybe it's easier to blame,
the other
The scapegoat has to pay the price,
our brothers

I knew my path was always mine
We have to stand up we know our lives matter
I think that I should speak to Esther
She must be strong for she may be the answer

She has the ear of Mister V
She is his V-P
Can she reset the baseless hate
That is my heart's plea.

She is the only one who can help
She is the only one who can help me

(Esther enters the scene)

ESTHER

Uncle Mo why are you unhappy?
What is it that makes you look so forlorn?
I've never seen you so saddened,
Did something happen, should I now be warned?

UNCLE MO

Esther you need to speak to Verious
You must tell him what's really going down
It is your place and your vocation
To save your people who will surely drown

If you don't do this now
We'll never be safe;
First it is our jobs,
Then our rights erased.

I lobbied for you to be V-P
It may be just for this you have the role
You really need to use your power
The evil Ham is really uncontrolled

With just a simple word
You can change it
From disaster you can grasp
A win a forfeit

(Uncle Mo leaves the stage as he sings; an uncertain Esther is left alone.)

I don't know why there are those people
I don't know why they are so mean
What have we done, but be ourselves?
We try to do our best, we are believers.

Scene 9

Song: Privileged world
Setting: Outside

ESTHER

It's a privileged world.

CHORUS

Privileged world!

ESTHER

You get good grades get a job get some food get ahead
It's tough today when you're often misled

It's a privileged world.

CHORUS

Privileged world!

ESTHER

It's tough today when you can't get grades and there are no jobs so there
ain't no food
You live day-to-day with the stress it's no good.

It's a privileged world.

CHORUS

Privileged world!

ESTHER

I don't have the money, I don't have the look.
You find yourself in your picture book.

I got good grades got a job got ahead.
If I'm VP of anything,
It's for others in their stead.

I'll stand for those different, the tired and the poor
I'll stand for the masses who teem on our shore.

I'll stand for believers and stand for my faith
I'll stand for my difference and I will be brave

UNCLE MO

(Uncle Mo returns to the stage.)

It's a privileged world.

Scene 10

Setting: Outside
Song: We are Believers

ESTHER

I don't know why there are those people
I don't know why they are so mean
What have we done, but be ourselves?
We always try to do our best,

We are believers. We are
Believers... We are
Believers... We are
Believers
We are believers

Now I will speak to Mr. V
Will he respond just to me
If I go to see him now
Will he right the wrongs for me?

We are believers. We are
Believers... We are
Believers... We are
Believers
We are believers

UNCLE MO

A few choice words, the words are yours,
Speak your truth that underscores
our place our space you give us face,
Replace Ham's words it is your place

You're one person
With strength in you
Ham must be stopped
He can't continue
owe - owe

UNCLE MO AND CHORUS

We are
Believers... We are
Believers... We are
Believers
We are believers

ESTHER

I'll raise my voice I will not fail
Perish not I'll spin a tale
Ham's awful plan I will derail
Oh yes I will, I will prevail

We are believers. We are
Believers... We are
Believers... We are
Believers
We are believers

(Esther moves in front of Mr. V's office door)

Let me speak to Mr V
I wish to share I need to see
I do not wish to make a scene
I have a message and a need.

We are believers. We are
Believers... We are
Believers... We are
Believers
We are believers

Scene 11

Setting: The door to Mr Verious' office, and then inside the office, where Esther finds herself in front of Mr. Verious and Ham.

Song: The Invitation

MR. VERIOUS

Esther Esther what d'you need
I see you standing I'm listening indeed
If half the budget and half the cash
Just let me know - I'll help with that!

ESTHER

Mr. V, I am your VP
I have a request, please listen to me
Join me tomorrow - a private event
Just you - and Ham. No lieutenants

HAM

(Singing to the audience)

Lucky I am - I'm part of this
Me chief of staff for Verious
There is no harm - It sounds like fun
No worries I am - the prodigal son

(Singing to Esther)

It will be our honour and pleasure
To come to your event tomorrow
Thank you for this pleasant surprise
To honour us in everyone's eyes

MR. VERIOUS

It will be our honour and pleasure
To come to your event tomorrow
Thank you for this pleasant surprise
To honor me in everyone's eyes

ESTHER

Everything's done I'm hardly ready
Feeling nervous and quite unsteady

Don't know if I'm strong enough
To stand up for our rights, it's tough

What if he decides to show
His power and he just says no
So many people will be hurt
Would Vashti's fate be mine to know?

The problem really isn't him
It's Ham's bad whispers that's the sin
Can I really win this challenge
Need strength to put Ham off-balance

(Ham and Verious enter the room)

HAM

(Singing to Esther)

Okay we'll come - Only us
Time with you - To discuss

MR. VERIOUS

Okay we'll come - Only us
Time with you - To discuss

ESTHER

See you tomorrow
Appreciate your time
To plan our next steps
Our future defined

ACT TWO, SCENE 12

*Setting: Outside. Ham is strutting, feeling very full of his self-importance.
Song: Wonderful Day*

HAM

Oh what a wonderful day
I'm in charge it's good to say - "GIT!"
Oh what a wonderful day
People do what I convey

Oh, Oh what a wonderful day!

Oh what a wonderful day
I'm in charge it'll stay that way - "MOVE!"
Oh what a wonderful day
A clever man who works to stay

Oh, Oh what a wonderful day!

(Chorus members enter the scene.)

HAM

(Spoken)

Get my hat! *(To a chorus member)*
Wash my face! *(To a chorus member)*
Peel my grapes! *(To a chorus member)*
Know your place! *(To a chorus member)*

Grab me a chair! *(To a chorus member)*
Don't be uppity! *(to a chorus member)*
Stifle yourself! *(To a chorus member)*
Kiss my butt! *(To Uncle Mo)*

(Stand-off with Uncle Mo as Uncle Mo refuses to do Ham's command.)

What is it with that man
No respect he misunderstands
My family's name is Ham
I'm chief of staff, the right-hand man

Oh, Oh what a terrible day!

It was a wonderful day
Before I saw that arrogant man
Oh, it was a wonderful day
Mocking, Insulting, Impudent, Rude...

Oh, what a terrible day!

SCENE 13

Setting: at the Ham family home as an agitated Ham walks in. Meanwhile, Esther is outside, thinking through her plans.

Song: Investigate! Interrogate!

HAM'S WIFE

My dear what really is wrong?
You look like you are upset,
Were you not with Mr. V,
Lucky he is to have you.

ESTHER *(counterpoint)*

...There's plenty wrong here
Can't see you're the fool
I need to act
I know just what to do

HAM

Yes things were going my way
All who saw that I was great
When it was done I relate
And walked right back here to you.

...Been going my way
From the hood to my role
There's very few
Who really feel in control

Then I saw Mo standing there
Arrogant he didn't care
Me chief of staff I declare
All that Mo did was stare

... I know what he plans
It's really not good
He thinks he's right
All that Ham did was glare

(In the background, a "gallows" is built)

CHORUS

Forge some records, Investigate!
Build a gallows, Interrogate!

Show my strength, participate!
Take a stand, anticipate!

HAM'S WIFE

What the gall that strange man has
If he knew the strength that you have
We need to plot his demise
Let's frame him with a surprise

... I'll use what I've learned
With Verious concerned
Ham's demise
Dignity for us returned

CHORUS

Forge some records, Investigate!
Build a gallows, Interrogate!

Show my strength, participate!
Take a stand, anticipate!

HAM'S WIFE

We'll hang that man out to dry
He won't see much nor say goodbye
Mo is different, but no more
The Ham family, he won't ignore

Hang Ham out to dry
He won't see say goodbye
Ham's a fool
Mo and I, he won't ignore

CHORUS

Forge some records, Investigate!
Build a gallows, Interrogate!

Show my strength, participate!
Take a stand, anticipate!

Scene 14

Setting: Mr. Verious' Office.

Song: Turnabout

ESTHER

(Sung to the tune of "Behind Every Great Man")

Mr. Verious
Oh so serious
You're our CEO
I thought you'd like,
Business-like,
The paper that you know!

(Esther gives Verious a newspaper)

MR. VERIOUS

(Sung to the tune of "Turnabout")

Look at the post
I see what they have written
I remember those bad people
Who hated my ambition

ESTHER

(To the audience)

You're our CEO!

MR. VERIOUS

(Sung to the tune of "Turnabout")

The paper talks about Mo
He identified those people
I should reward his efforts
What could I give this season?

ESTHER

(Sung to the tune of "Behind Every Great Man" as Esther leaves the stage)

Mr. Verious
Oh so serious
He's our CEO
Forgot Mo's plight,
An oversight,
He'll take care of it pronto!

(As Esther leaves the stage, Ham enters from the other side.)

MR. VERIOUS

(To Ham - Sung to the tune of "Turnabout")

Ham if there was a man
Whose deeds went unrecorded
A humble clever man
Who now should be rewarded

HAM

(To the audience)

Behind every great man...
There is a clever man ...
I work hard to make things right
- for me, that is... I'm Ham

CHORUS *(Simultaneously)*

Ham!

HAM

(To Mr. Verious)

A truly exceptional man.
A humble principled person.
With wisdom of the ages,
And praises and graces

I know!

CHORUS

He Knows

HAM

Appoint him chair of the board
Have him set the agenda
Give him media profile
Approach him and promote him

MR. VERIOUS

Appoint him chair of the board
Have him set the agenda
Give him media profile
That Mo is no pretender

HAM

Mo? (*Spoken*)

MR. VERIOUS

Bring Mo to our divisions
His wishes become our tradition
Ensure a quick transition
Refreshing, for one who's different

Scene 15

Setting: Ham's house

Song: Ham's Disgrace

HAM

Domination
Isolation
Intimidation
Subjugation

I have been asked to be in charge here
I do my part, I'm always sincere
Why has Verious not discussed
A key appointment - why doesn't he give me trust

Humiliation
Degradation
Defamation
Contamination

I've never been insulted like that
Mo is the chair of the board is fact
I thought Mr. V was speaking of me
For a job well done and my loyalty

Devastation
Aggravation
Manipulation
Suffocation

With Mo as the chair, I know what to do
I'm chief of staff I gave orders to
Get rid of these others they're just not like us
They're different from me, they're not people I can trust

Detestation
Confrontation
Altercation
Decimation

HAM'S WIFE

You don't sound well, but don't think you're beaten
Don't think you lost, to Mo and his legions
Ham you know that you're chief of staff
So show them who's boss on our family's behalf

(A haughty aide appears.)

AIDE

Adoration
Admiration
Inspiration
Celebration
...Mmmmm

Announcing Ham the event will soon start,
You're kindly being asked to leave to depart...

HAM

I hear you clear the event will soon start,
I'm leaving now I am ready to depart...

Scene 16

*Setting: Esther standing by herself at a busy banquet.
Song: The Event*

ESTHER

I've just arrived, I'm hardly ready
I am quite nervous and unsteady
Will he be here to heed my ask
To save my people that's my task

What if Mr. V says no
He comes to me and says no-go
So many people will be cut
Would Vashti's fate be mine to know?

It's not just me who's at the test
My people I must represent
I can't back down for if I do
I can't back down now, it is not fair to!

(Mr. Verious and Ham enter the scene)

HAM

We are here

MR. VERIOUS

We are here

HAM

I wonder why

MR. VERIOUS

Wonder why

HAM

I wonder why

MR. VERIOUS

She asked me here

HAM

She asked me - you - here

MR. VERIOUS

We'll have to see

(To Esther)

Esther Esther what d'you need
You're good to ask - I'm listening indeed
If half the budget and half the cash
Just let me know - I'll help with that

*(Dancing and movement, food served)
(The meal ends.)*

ESTHER

Mr. V, I am your VP
I'm distraught, please listen to me
My people are about to be cut
Because they're different in their thought

There will be a terrible memo
Sent to all of our divisions:
"Fire all those who seem so different"
From all of their long-held positions

MR. VERIOUS

Who will send this shocking order!
To cut all my loyal people!
It's quite nasty - done with spite!
To me it just does not sound right!

Who will send this terrible order!
To cut all my loyal people!
It's quite nasty - they'll be damned!

CHORUS

He's a clever man... His name is Ham!

(Mr. Verious walks away.)

HAM

(Moves toward Esther)

Oh please Esther Esther please
Did I offend let me appease
I really am your best best friend
I'm with you now right to the end

Come now right into my arms
You'll see I'm good don't be alarmed
I've always known just what you need
Give me some love and you'll succeed

ESTHER

I'm not your bitch, I'm not your whore!
Your evil ways hold sway no more!
I'm not a pet for your sex tricks!
You are disgusting you are such a prick!

Alternative "PG" lyrics:

I'm not your friend, I'm not your wife!
Look somewhere else and get a life!
I'm not a flower you can pick!
You are disgusting you are really sick!

(Mr. Verious walks back into the scene, even more furious when he sees Ham taking advantage of Esther.)

MR. VERIOUS

What is going on right here
I see but can't really imagine
Ham can't you contain your passion?
Look somewhere else for your night action!

First it is those spiteful cuts
To different people I do trust
Now it's our V-P Esther
Whose body really you seem to lust for

MR. VERIOUS

What should I do?

HAM

What should I do?

MR. VERIOUS

I trusted you

HAM

You trusted me

MR. VERIOUS

Ham you're done...
What should I do?

CHORUS

A gallows was recently built
Just down the street convenient
Built for Mo by that man Ham
It's turnabout say bye-bye to that Ham

MR. VERIOUS

(Spoken)

Ham - you're fired!

Scene 17

Setting: An unrepentant Ham paces outside, an ominous "gallows" behind him.

Song: The Gallows

TENOR

His whispers were his downfall

MEZZO 1

He thought he's always right

BARITONE

Ham didn't like those different

MEZZO 2

Believers out of sight

TENOR

So first they'd come for others

MEZZO 1

Then Esther and then Mo

BARITONE

They always start with others

MEZZO 2

We didn't speak out - no

TENOR

His attitudes were sick'ning

MEZZO 1

He wanted all the same

BARITONE

Ham only saw the downside

MEZZO 2

Now turnabout's the game

HAM

Behind every great empire...
There is my kind of thought ...
I work hard to make things right
- for me, that is... I'm taught

CHORUS

Ham, to the gallows - you're fired!

HAM

I really do not get it
Why can't they be like us
Their difference is their weakness
Uncleanly they disgust

CHORUS

Ham, to the gallows - you're fired!

HAM

I may soon be long gone
But I've planted the seed
Of my clever approach
To righteous purity

CHORUS

Ham, to the gallows - you're fired!

Scene 18

Setting: Mr. Verious' Office

Song: We Can Fix This

MR. VERIOUS

Let all Ham's authority
Majority priority
Be given to Mo
Now let him have seniority

ESTHER

That's all well and good
You should have understood
Ham cuts all those people
And takes all that's good!

All our divisions
Now with their plans
To take away their dignity
That's his command!

Reverse his evil
It's more than I can do
We need those who're different
Their strength - and point of view!

MR. VERIOUS

OK we can fix this
Mo write in my name
That difference is powerful
No reason for shame

Speak to the company
Clients and suppliers
That those who are different
Should never be silenced

UNCLE MO

Let all who believe
And all who are here
Stand up for their rights
Their right to be here

MR. VERIOUS

I'm glad that it's settled
I'd like now to know
How you know each other
Thanks Esther thanks Mo

Scene 19

Setting: Main Stage, with video backdrop. The scene starts with only Esther, Uncle Mo, and Verious, but quickly builds to include the entire cast. It juxtaposes Esther's good message with Ham's evil one, and highlights the world's changemakers...

Song: Finale

ESTHER

(To the tune of Mo's Lament)

Mo has always been my mentor
My moral compass and my ethics center
He challenged me to think quite different
And who knows where I would be without him

UNCLE MO

Esther learnt from her many peers
She looked beyond their words and their ideas
She's open to the world around her
She's open to the world a real believer

ESTHER

With just a simple word
We now can change it
From disaster we can grasp
A win a forfeit

UNCLE MO

(To the tune of We are Believers)

Esther with just a simple word
What strength you really have within
You have changed Ham's awful whim
You have argued now we win

We are believers. We are
Believers... We are
Believers... We are
Believers...
We are believers

ESTHER

I spoke the truth I did not fail
Perish not this is my tale
Ham's awful plan I have derailed
Oh yes I have worked to prevail

We are believers. We are
Believers... We are
Believers... We are
Believers...
We are believers

ESTHER

(To the tune of Sometimes)

Sometimes you find yourself in a place you don't know.
Sometimes you find yourself with ideas to sow
Sometimes you find yourself and you do what you must
I've got ideas for the world to know.

CHORUS

We are believers. We are
Believers... We are
Believers... We are
Believers
We are believers

ESTHER

(To the tune of Who is Esther)

I know I am new
I'm not the same as you
I do represent
A very different view.

I stand for what's right
Not might but the light
There're many like me
No longer out of sight!

I stand for what's right
Not might but the light
There're many like me
No longer out of sight!

CHORUS

We are believers. We are
Believers... We are
Believers... We are
Believers
We are believers

HAM

(To the tune of Ham's Disgrace)

Domination!
Isolation!
Intimidation!
Subjugation!

I have been asked to be in charge here.
I do my part, I'm always sincere.
Why has Verious not discussed
A key appointment, why doesn't he give me trust!

CHORUS

We are believers. We are
Believers... We are
Believers... We are
Believers. We are believers

HAM

(To the tune of Ham's Disgrace)

Humiliation!
Degradation!
Defamation!
Contamination!

I've never been insulted like that!
Mo is chair of the board is fact!
I thought Mr. V was speaking of me,
For a job well done and my loyalty!

CHORUS

We are believers. We are
Believers... We are
Believers... We are
Believers
We are believers

CHORUS

*(Pictures of civil rights protests are projected on a screen behind the stage.)
(A capella)*

Da da da da da da da da da...
Da da da da da da da da da...

(Pictures of the world's change-makers projected on the screen, ending with house lights on and a live video feed showing the audience.)

CHORUS

We are believers. We are
Believers... We are
Believers... We are
Believers
We are believers

We are believers. We are
Believers... We are
Believers... We are
Believers...
We are believers

We are believers. We are
Believers... We are
Believers... We are
Believers...
We are believers

We are believers. We are
Believers... We are
Believers... We are
Believers...
We do believe!

Yes, we believe!

HAM

Adoration!
Admiration!
Inspiration!
Celebration!
I've never been insulted like that!

May have been beaten by Esther and Mo,
People like them, I'm telling you so.
They think they're right
they think they are chosen,
I'm one of many - you'll always be opposed.

Humiliation!
Degradation!
Defamation!
Contamination!
I've never been insulted like that!

I may soon be gone but I
Planted the seed for my ideas on purity
You may believe but others don't
Their difference is their weakness
I don't believe.

I don't believe!

END