

# **POCS**

**Party for the Overthrow  
of the  
Capitalist System**

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*(Vera, daughter of a prominent capitalist, is searching for a new type of revolutionary organization that will have a chance to save the world from its march toward extinction. Act 1 opens with Justin, her liberal brother, trying to dissuade her from pursuing what he thinks is just a desire to embarrass their father. Ivanna and Jacquot, two of Vera's political associates are also present.)*

### Act 1

*(Vera and her brother Justin enter in conversation. Activity behind – preparations for the staging of something.)*

VERA:....but Rosa Luxemburg fucked Clara Zetkin's son!

JUSTIN: Really?.....Did she have a materialist conception?

VERA: Listen, I only mentioned it because thanks to Stalinism many think that Marxists are as prudish as Mrs Grundy. Making a revolution is stressful, and sex is a great release. Haven't you read *Man's Fate*?

JUSTIN: Our dear world is thoroughly fucked...yet tension is only rising along with the temperature.

VERA: That's the alienated masses striving to make themselves whole. When accomplished: fusion, release, explosion.

JUSTIN: *(Heavy sarcasm)* Becoming while coming!...Poor oppressed working class!... I suppose the great awakening will find us in a bed wetter's world.

VERA: *(With disgust)* Oh, aren't you the clever idiot! *(Giving instructions to others. To Justin.)* You're in the way! --- Why are you here?

JUSTIN: Dad is worried about you. He thinks what you're doing is a disguised attack against him. *(Gestures)* *Headline: Daughter wants to overthrow big capitalist father.*

VERA: If only Dad were the system!

JUSTIN: Can't you at least call your group something less sensational....like, *People United for a Better World? – Bringing Humanity Together – or All United for....*

VERA: ....*the Improvement of Insipid Political Party Names.* The world needs a revolution, not a unified hug.

JUSTIN: But your group doesn't even have a proper revolutionary name.

VERA: Oh like, *The Popular Front of the Unified Left* or, *League of the Revolutionary Proletariat* or, *The Marxist-Leninist Revolutionary Communist Party of the Universe.*

JUSTIN: Yeah!.....Like all those groups that hate each more than the ruling class!

VERA: We need clarity, not bombastic bullshit.

JUSTIN: I thought you gave up this stuff after the, *Women at War with Men*, fiasco.

VERA: I found the right war when I realized the main problem was not gender.

JUSTIN: But *Party for the Overthrow of the Capitalist System*.....It's right out of *Civilization and its Discontents* – *Robyn for the Overthrow of her Capitalist Father*.

VERA:....Followed by her proto-capitalist brother.... and it's Vera, remember?

JUSTIN: Oh yes, another example of your creative use of language. Why the disguise? Is it because you are *Robbing Dad* to overthrow his system?

VERA: Our group is self-sustaining.

JUSTIN: Rubbish! You are in charge only because of your cards. (*Comes upon some props*) What is all this junk, anyway?

VERA: Props for a modern revolution.

JUSTIN:(*Holding up a rubber chicken*) And it starts with a dead duck!

VERA:....Chicken...Right now we either have reformists trying to convert chicken shit into chicken salad or so-called hard revolutionaries scaring off everyone with sectarian slogans. We are different. Our party's name clearly states our aims. Our program and our actions will present the why and the how.

JUSTIN: Which is always recognized as the bleeding obvious, but impossible to achieve. When will you misfits ever learn that just because people don't like *something* it doesn't mean they want to throw out *everything*?

VERA: No problem...We don't want to throw out everything, just the capitalists so we can return most of the wealth to those that produced it. And we are not only going to talk revolution, we are going to show how to make one.

JUSTIN: *Chef Vera, AKA Robyn, Presents: Revolution; or, How to prepare the tastiest fusion-fission cuisine!* Not bad. It's a show and tell that could sell.

VERA: Maybe...like they say...capitalists will sell you the rope used to hang them

But I have in mind something more real, more dramatic.

JUSTIN: So the revolution may not be televised, but it will be dramatized?

VERA: Think of the revolutionary process as a dramatic production with heroes and villains, good and bad, love and hate....

JUSTIN:...Life and death...victims and those who done them in.

VERA: Everyone has a role...they will decide how it is played.

JUSTIN: *(Observing the arrival of Ivanna and Jacquot)* Well, here are your guards, the Red Punchinellos.

*(Enter Ivanna and Jacquot. They are wearing red robes which when removed reveal they have on tights or body makeup as they will illustrate through movement important political positions. Vera looks them over.)*

VERA: Good. *(To Justin)* If you're going to hang around you can be a stand-in for our subject matter. *(Pushing him)* Get on the floor.

JUSTIN: Wait a second!...What's this all about?!

VERA: You remember Abu Ghraib?...Now it's time for a naked America. Get on the floor. *(She pushes him down)* Now good American soldiers, show your pride.

IVANNA and JACQUOT: *(The two put a foot on Justin, bend a bit as if posing for a camera)* This is the Ludlow Massacre, Sand Creek, Wounded Knee, My Lai, the Malolo Massacre, that place in the Philippines, etc., etc.

VERA: *(Pulls Justin up)* Stand on this chair.

*(A noose and a bag are placed over him)*

JUSTIN: Hey!

JACQUOT and IVANNA: This is a lynching – one of the more than 3,000....*(Ivanna To Vera)* How do we chop off his nuts?

JUSTIN: *(Getting off chair and pulling the things off him)* The first thing that needs removal is that mush-brained bullshit!.....Like people need convincing that bad things were done.

VERA: Aren't they real crimes?

JUSTIN: Sure...Make your list a little longer. I was already beginning to doze – a few more and I'd be zonked out.

JACQUOT: *(thinking)* You know...it is preaching to the converted. We need to show

causes...discover truths.

IVANNA: No, uncover truths. Like where are the major sources of conflict in a capitalist society that are the basis for these social crimes?

VERA: It doesn't matter what we know them to be.

IVANNA: Most think them natural occurrences....like the weather.

JACQUOT: But that's out of fear. What's the point of affirming a truth when all it does it get you in trouble?

JUSTIN: Then why should anyone listen to you when they are not even listening to themselves?

VERA: Right...The truth doesn't become a force just because someone came up with a good argument for it. Truth, an effective truth, arises from actual conditions.

JUSTIN: Fine...all you have to do is to get a capitalist to open a factory here on stage...then your audience can observe real exploitation right before their eyes.

IVANNA: An interesting but impractical idea. Rather, we can separate the audience into classes. For the workers, on one side, for the capitalists, on the other.

JACQUOT: Yeah...we can educate our side by teaching them slogans to shout at the capitalists.

JUSTIN: Of course....and maybe even make a little money on the side by selling fake bombs to throw at them. Then you can enhance your class credentials by charging the capitalists much more for defensive shields.

VERA: *(To Ivanna and Jacquot)* I hope you two are jesting, unlike poor, dumb Justin.

JACQUOT: Something like it might really work.

VERA: No chance! Setting aside the stupidity of it, practically no one would sit on the capitalist side, least of all any real capitalists that might happen along. They'd be whooping it up on the side of the worker audience to disguise their fear and confuse the opposition....'How bad can we be if we laugh at ourselves?'

IVANNA: Still....even minor subversiveness can be the tipping point now that support for the system is as weak as belief in a hereafter.

JUSTIN: Which has been with us for thousands of years!

VERA: Yeah...But when they really believed it they lived it. Their entire existence

revolved around it. Note the vast majority of professed believers in the developed world today – they treat religion as a side issue...a kind of necessary embarrassment. Same with capitalism: An unfortunate part of our makeup.

JUSTIN: But plenty still do live their belief.

VERA: That's just a charming example of human diversity. There are always some loonies. You can measure the honesty of religious believers by the degree of their nuttiness. And as for ostensibly pro-capitalist workers...How often do they talk-up the system? Rarely, and never at the workplace unless the boss is within hearing.

JUSTIN: Speaking of loonies...What's the point?

VERA: Americans profess to believe that they live in a democracy – a free society – yet they oppose most of what their rulers want and can't even be bothered to vote for them.

JACQUOT: As dictators they claim to embrace the principles of freedom – And we pretend to have it.

VERA: Two thirds of Americans once believed their president was assassinated by their own government, yet if you asked them if they thought they lived in a free society they would declare it the best in the world.

IVANNA: And they would be right...It certainly is the best at getting away with murder.

VERA: Americans wander around in constant dread that they may be guilty of one of the myriad laws that have nothing to do with crimes against person or property. If a cop comes near them they are either nervously polite or avert their eyes hoping to escape his attention...and yet we live in the best and freest of all possible worlds!

JACQUOT: Then we have to stand up and say - 'The emperor has no clothes.'

IVANNA: No!....We have to show it!

JUSTIN: *(With a leer towards Ivanna)* Now that shows promise!

VERA: Back to reality.

JACQUOT:...And back to the original problem.

VERA: Back to the basics. No one has any difficulty recognizing slave and aristocratic societies as the dictatorship of parasites over the productive population. How do we convince them that capitalism is the same?

JUSTIN: I already told you; set up a business on stage. Put up a big sign: *Boyd, Dewey, Cheatam and Howe; Makers of the Finest Rope for the Hanging of Capitalists.*

VERA: *(To Jacquot and Ivanna)* Ignore him. Now...workers are both producers and consumers.

IVANNA: Don't speak....show. Me and Jacquot will be them.

VERA: We're still missing something

IVANNA: It's right in front of us. *(She grabs Justin)* Justin will be the capitalist.

*(She positions herself in front of Justin while Jacquot stands close behind him)*

VERA: Right...the exploitation process occurs between the exchange of production and consumption. Workers in the aggregate produce value in excess of what they receive in wages....

JACQUOT: *(Yawning)* Yeah...yeah, but we show, not tell. Watch.

*(Jacquot slams his body against the back of Justin while Ivanna does the same in front)*

JUSTIN: *(Pushes Jacquot away)* Hold off buddy....we're not compatible!

IVANNA: Alright....We'll switch.

*(She moves to Justin's back while Jacquot approaches him face-to-face)*

JUSTIN: Halt!.....I'm out of this sandwich.

VERA: Come on!...Stop being such a big baby!

JUSTIN: Ivanna!...To the front! *(To Jacquot)* What are you?

JACQUOT: The producer.

JUSTIN: No, you're the consumer. I don't want any producer climbing my back..and keep your hands off my shoulders.

*(Everybody positions themselves)*

IVANNA: Okay. So we see that producer makes enough for all. *(She slithers her way up Justin until she is looking down on him)* But the capitalist in the middle possesses the product and controls its sale...

VERA: Putting much of the surplus into his greedy pockets...

JACQUOT: So that the consumer can barely make ends meet.

*(He slithers down Justin's back until he is between his legs.)*

JUSTIN: *(Breaking up tableau)* And I assure you that will never happen!.

IVANNA: *(To Justin)* Now what!?

JUSTIN: Your supply was stimulating my demand.

IVANNA: *(Smiling to Vera)* This is all soooo dialectical!

VERA:....Who needs the capitalist? He is superseded.

*(Ivanna and Jacquot are together following the supersession)*

JUSTIN: You mean the revolution is heterosexual?

VERA: This is a clash of classes.....not bodies.

IVANNA: Besides....the dialectic is vertical, not horizontal, with each layer transcending the one above it. A seed planted beneath the soil will eventually rise to the blossoming sunlight.

JUSTIN: Oh....so it's evolution, not revolution.

JACQUOT: *(To Ivanna)* You described a purely external pseudo dialectical process.

VERA: Two unconscious objective relations. Transferred to people it is like selective affinities....corresponding relationships...reified life forms.

JUSTIN: How can a relationship between two...whatever, not be purely objective?

VERA: When at least some of the relationship is derived from the artificial world of our own making.

JUSTIN: Which is also objective.

VERA: And made of....?

JUSTIN: Us and other things.

VERA: Which means....

IVANNA: What?!

JACQUOT: It must be an open-ended asymmetrical subject/object dialectic.



IVANNA: Of course! And with the subjective also being objective in that its project is consciously being made by us within a delimited environment.

JACQUOT: That's it!

JUSTIN: (*Sarcastically, to no one in particular*) And they wonder why they never get anywhere!...What connects the subjective and the objective, whether natural or artificial?

VERA: The awareness of the conditional reality of their existence.

JUSTIN: Meaning: most humans are zombies because they lack such knowledge.

VERA: As a species, the capacity is there...The degree of utilization is quite another thing.

JACQUOT: That's our job...To jostle that capacity from its dormant state.

IVANNA: Let's show it!...From the animal to the human!

JUSTIN: Yes! – And then from Ivanna to Nirvana! But, unfortunately, lower life forms have a consciousness sufficient to evaluate and respond to their environment yet only manage to subsist and exist – much like us.

VERA: They only have an awareness that guides their ingrained actions. Consciousness is the capacity to *create* an artificial world...a society – They can only *react* to the demands of nature.

JACQUOT: They are processors of information which they then obey implicitly.

IVANNA: Consciousness is based on the ability to perceive that most interrelations include elements of our own making.

VERA: Now....How do we distinguish what we make from what has been made....?

JACQUOT: Which may have partly been made from what has been made...

IVANNA: Which then partly remakes what has been made...

JUSTIN: And nature?

VERA: All within the confines of the natural world.

IVANNA: Which we also transform...even as it constitutes part of us.

JUSTIN: Change with what? Only nature can change nature.

JACQUOT: What about the stuff we make?

JUSTIN: Made out of the natural.

VERA: By us....hence, artificial.

JUSTIN: Then the structure of human life is an endless cycle that rehashes only what is given us. No wonder I found structuralism so boring.

JACQUOT: Boring if we only rehash.

IVANNA: It's a trajectory, not a cycle. Okay....look..Jacquot, you be brain. I will be mind – a manifestation of subjectivity. And Justin will be the natural world. Let's take our positions.

JACQUOT: Right...so the brain is part of the natural world.

*(He slams himself against Justin)*

JUSTIN: *(Pushing him away)* How come I never have a say in this?

VERA: Because the natural world just is.

JUSTIN: Except when it chooses not to play. Ivanna....you are brain!

IVANNA: But the minds of men are so inexpressive.

*(She does some blah movement)*

JACQUOT: Nonsense! *(Presenting a lively display)* But go ahead...take your smaller brain to him.

VERA: *(Taking in the arrangement)* Now the brain, along with the body, are part of the natural world. *(Ivanna spin's around Justin)*...but we also live in a world of our own making.

*(Jacquot moves in on the pair)*

JUSTIN: *(Pushing Jacquot away)* But the mind is incorporeal.....It's unable to make anything.

VERA: Right...The mind needs the body, which is part of the natural world.

*(Pushing Jacquot toward Justin)*

JUSTIN: *(Grabbing Ivanna who has stayed behind)* But the brain is closest to the natural world.

JACQUOT: Yes...but it is my active intelligence that governs the creation of the artificial world...

IVANNA: Which intelligence is seated in the brain...

JUSTIN: Which is part of our body, which is the handy dandy tool for everything.  
*(Grabs Ivanna)* We must never forget that the brain is firmly implanted in the natural world. *(She pushes him away)*

IVANNA: But many creatures have brains....only one has made an artificial world.

JACQUOT: Because of the brilliance of our minds!

IVANNA: A product of our well-developed brains.

JUSTIN: And nature.

JACQUOT: Thanks to this dialectical unity we have broken the mould.

VERA: No. Only re-shaped it....expanded its boundaries.

JACQUOT: So the mind develops the plan based on the possible....

IVANNA:...and the brain/body/natural world are the tools and resources that make the plan a reality...

VERA: If the plan exceeds what the tools can accomplish, the plan fails. Conversely, that portion of the natural world in direct relation to us has been partially transformed by us, meaning...

IVANNA:...if we don't come up with the right plan, it also fails.

JUSTIN: All you are saying is that part of our world is trapped in the natural world....and part of the natural world is trapped in our artificial world.

IVANNA: And very well summarized!

JUSTIN: But aren't you bothered that we are gradually becoming more unnatural?!!

JACQUOT: More human.

JUSTIN: More like a freak of nature.

VERA: We've become more homemade.

IVANNA: With all natural ingredients!

VERA: ...And the recipe starts with a good base. That's you Justin...*(Pointing)* On the floor. *(Justin does so)* Out of this natural world emanates an advanced human specimen. *(Ivanna lies on Justin and gracefully evolves her way from him and onto her feet)* Eventually developing a brain that has the capacity to pro-act instead of re-act to the demands of nature. *(This brings Jacquot and Ivanna together circling around Justin)* Creating a human society.

IVANNA: Our rules are sometimes in conflict with nature's laws. *(They both step on and kick Justin)*

JUSTIN: *(Justin kicks back and rises)* Until they understand that nature will only take so much shit.

VERA: And the same is happening *within* the artificial world. It can take only so much shit.

JUSTIN: Since it's artificial...just re-make it.

JACQUOT: That will take more than changing our minds.

IVANNA: Because our bodies are the tools with which we effect any change.

JACQUOT: The threat of scarcity compels the mind to rationalize any act that it thinks necessary for the defense of the body. *(Performs a defensive act)*

VERA: But none of the components are absolute determinants, thus making possible a liberating impetus.

JACQUOT: Our own homemade free will...carefully weighed according to the recipe.

IVANNA: Here we are!

JUSTIN: Where?! You mean all of this was prologue?...You've missed the point?

VERA: The point is us.

JUSTIN: That's obvious.

IVANNA: Not as a starting point.

JACQUOT: Now we know how to find it.

VERA: We've synthesized ourselves by way of analysis, now we must analyze ourselves via synthesis.

JUSTIN: To nowhere and then back to nothing!

VERA: Analysis is dead, synthesis is alive. Analysis is like the primordial slime from which life emerged. A pathologist may learn a great deal from a cadaver but know nothing of life.

JUSTIN: Know nothing!....That I understand!

VERA: We must now look at ourselves as living beings from the standpoint of the whole of society.

JUSTIN: As individuals, we always retain a standpoint of one.

IVANNA: Not when the individual freely joins a group united by a coherent set of concepts. Within the group the individual standpoint has become the policy of the group.

JUSTIN: You may want to change the world, alone or in a group, but first you have to ensure your personal continued existence.

JACQUOT: Which means most social acts are compromises.

VERA: Yes...how do we live within a system we seek to overthrow?

IVANNA: Very carefully!

VERA: It's either risk a real change or concoct a safe alternative.

JACQUOT: Like, I have a brilliant plan that will trick the world into revolutionary change while keeping me anonymous.....!

IVANNA:...And while subsisting on the bare minimum of food, clothing, house, spouse, children...and it would be unfair if the children suffered because of our ideals...and just allow me a few books, some films, a brief vacation now and then...some heat in the winter, AC in the summer, Oh...and plenty of hot water for showers....

JACQUOT:...And eventually an obituary that says: "Comrade Ivanna was one of our most dedicated revolutionaries."

JUSTIN: 'Here lies Ivanna the revolutionary....she thought she could change the world when she could not even change herself.'

IVANNA: Okay! Okay!....I'll just settle for plenty of hot water!

JUSTIN: So life is like entering a roomful of assholes and then seeing how long we can go without becoming one.

VERA: Seriously!...The interrelationships between the personal, social and natural weigh so heavily that people tend to confine themselves to their shielded tiny worlds where limited self-determination is permitted.

JUSTIN: They just go out to build pyramids.

JACQUOT: No telling what would happen if people were freed from those constraints.

JUSTIN: Probably be fewer portraits of the Holy Family.

IVANNA: There will still be limits.

VERA: But none within the range of the possible.

JUSTIN: You are still stuck with the same dilemma...The vast majority just want to find Mr. or Ms. Right and go on from there. That is *their* plan...and it has nothing to do with the larger world.

VERA: That's okay....these doings are not for everyone...but eventually it will take as much risk and energy to protect yourself *from* the system as it does to overthrow it.

JACQUOT: That's where our plan comes in...

IVANNA:...should we ever come up with one.

VERA: This is now the state of late capitalism. *(She raises her arm high and slowly moves it lower while rotating it in an elliptical motion)* Our business cycle changes but the overall trajectory goes in one direction. The current state of the system is like a heart after its fifth attack.

JACQUOT: . . . only since WW2.

IVANNA: They will pretend to protect our freedom while we ignore its disappearance.

VERA: And then finally....No pretense.

IVANNA:....*(The fascist salute)*....as death approaches.

JUSTIN: How serious the talk...yet how difficult it is to take you seriously!

VERA: That *is* a problem. Deviate far enough from the acceptable and you seem ridiculous.

IVANNA and JACQUOT: It's embarrassing!!

*(Looking ridiculous and embarrassed)*

VERA: Yet, all the same, we wouldn't want to deceive our fearful friends by appearing otherwise.

JACQUOT: And then there are the others.....

IVANNA: Presenting.....Mr. and Ms. Right! *(Turning to Jacquot)* How was your day, dear?

JACQUOT: Fabulous! Received an outstanding annual review. Soon we will be able to move into a larger condo.... And yours?

IVANNA: Made a generous plea bargain to get home in time to prepare dinner for my parents tonight.

JACQUOT: Great!...What are we having?

IVANNA: Squab...Actually, between ourselves, they are Cornish game hens.

JACQUOT: Should go perfectly with this wine, don't you think?

IVANNA: *(Ivanna looks at label)* Oh, yes...Quite up to Old Greenwich standards.

JACQUOT: Before long... that will be us!

IVANNA: I can already see us with our very own private beach enjoying the lovely view of the sun setting on the Sound!

*(Someone makes a doorbell sound --- Vera and Justin enter)*

IVANNA: Mother!...Father!...Right on time! Come in!

*(Ivanna and Vera hug while Jacquot and Justin shake hands. When they switch, Justin lays into Ivanna with hugs and kisses)*

JUSTIN: How's my favorite daughter?! It's been so long!

IVANNA: *(Pushes Justin away)* We lead such busy lives.

JUSTIN: Then we must catch up when the chance arises. *(And he grabs Ivanna again)*

IVANNA: *(To Vera after pushing Justin away again)* Maybe father should be dead and Justin be my brother.

VERA: Nonsense!...We are a whole, happy, upwardly mobile American family. *(Looking around)* What lovely wallpaper!

JACQUOT: Couldn't live without it...I wonder if people realize how much time they

spend looking at walls. One should always invest in what one looks at the most.

IVANNA: It enriches our lives.

VERA: From riches comes enrichment. Intelligence is nothing more than the capital of the mind.

JUSTIN: Do you mean our brains are in Langley?

JACQUOT: Dad, I think yours has been sold short.

IVANNA: Please....Let's be seated. *(They all sit at a table on which there are snacks to represent a meal)* I hope you like squab.

VERA: Scrumptious!

JACQUOT: And this wine should go well with it.

JUSTIN: *(Looking at the label)* Hmm.... Chateau Cornichon.

JACQUOT: Such a favorite in the White House you could call the place Chateau Cornichon....Blanc.

VERA: *(Presenting a toast)* Here's to our perpetual prosperity!

IVANNA: May we continue to work long and hard keeping the riff raff working long and hard!

JUSTIN: Yes my darling Ivanna...long and hard.

JACQUOT: And let us salute our brave soldiers fighting overseas to preserve our freedom to work the peoples of the world long and hard!

ALL: Amen!!

*(Everyone is now regularly sipping wine, nibbling things, and getting tipsy)*

JUSTIN: Yeah....and it's a crying shame that all these damn illegals are stealing those long and hard jobs from our loyal native born Americans.

IVANNA: Kick them out!

VERA: *(Deviating from role)* Or....we could make a trade. Since they want to work and their employers do not, we can make an even switch. Say 300 illegals are found working in a factory. For that we ship out company management, board of directors and top shareholders equaling 300 people. Problem solved!



IVANNA: Mother!.....Who's side are you on?! That could be us!

JACQUOT: Yeah....and wallpaper doesn't travel well...assuming we will have some walls. Wait a second. *(To Ivanna)* Maybe that was an official position.

VERA: No...merely a modest proposal. An official position is a formal declaration that is so abstractly precise that no one has a complete grasp of what it is or what it does. *(Following her own train of thought)* A prisoner is on a list to be shipped to Auschwitz the next morning. She must find a way to miss that train. She complains to a guard that she has a toothache. The prison authorities follow written instructions and transport her to a dentist, during which time she manages to escape. Now why in the world would they give dental aid to a person who is already on a death list?

JACQUOT: The guards received a kickback on the dental fee?

IVANNA: No....Too bourgeois.

JUSTIN: A guard wanted to make a move on the girl?

VERA: No...Too Justin. The guards were just following official instructions to the letter. Everyone in the chain...guards, soldiers, train drivers...followed those instructions precisely, but no one knew the entire message....least of all the prisoners; they convinced themselves there was no imminent danger because....well, why would they give us dental care?

IVANNA: But somebody at the top knew because he wrote it.

VERA: What the initiator intended in his order has little to do with it being obeyed.

IVANNA: *(Handing Jacquot a piece of paper)* Here is Reich Order #1149.

JACQUOT: *(Bowing while taking paper)* Danke. *(Ivanna turns and Jacquot hands paper to Justin)*

VERA: If word comes down from on high that you must murder someone, your first thought might be: Why should I be the one to stick my neck out for that asshole? One assumes a secret back story to go along with the command....that and the implicit threat gets it done.

JUSTIN: *(Becoming increasingly intoxicated)* Then let's drink to whole, clear, made and delivered on the scene, messages.....like.....like: Let's drink! *(And they all drink)*

JACQUOT: *(To Vera)* From opaque sobriety to transparent drunk...An apparent improvement.

VERA: Yes..transparency...a serious problem even among people of good will....You can

have a large mass working to implement a social program, but that large mass is made up of individuals....How much does each of them know? Do they know the plan? How do they interpret it? Don't they need to know if things are progressing according to the plan?

JUSTIN: You can bring a man an order, but you can't make him think.

JACQUOT: Surely they will know where they fit in the plan.

IVANNA: That's no good...It's like somebody on high saying, just do your bit and someday you will see what it's all about.

JUSTIN: What's with you people?! You make everything so difficult. Just gather everybody together and say: 'Okay, let's work out a plan...but remember, it's just a plan...changes surely will have to be made.' Like at this time we're sitting around a table discussing plans, but at any moment conditions may suddenly change... *(Swings arms around and falls off chair)*

VERA: *(Looking at Justin)* Living proof that good can come from bad...Everyone has a grasp of the fluid whole. Those best able to keep up with its requirements should be our elected leaders.

JACQUOT: In short...the antithesis of how capitalists deal with a crisis.

IVANNA: They're like the guy in one of those crappy adventure movies...the exploration party has found a mountain of gold, but volcanoes are spewing and the earth is quaking and the only chance of survival is to travel light and fast....but not this one jerk who is determined to lug half of Fort Knox with him.

JUSTIN: They are grasping assholes rather than wholes!

VERA: Their messages fade over time. Imagine a group of highwaymen meeting to socialize and discuss business. Business is good but some are getting too old for the chase, or would like to reduce their risk, so they decide to lend some of their loot to newcomers. That way they can buy better weapons, faster horses, or live off the interest.

IVANNA: I see a banking system.

VERA: Now this gets some of the more advanced highwaymen to thinking: Boy, this is a much better way to get rich. Sometimes there is a shortage of victims, or the weather is so bad nobody feels like going on the road. Occasionally they suffer an injury and can't work. Or if they are killed – Who takes care of their family? Fortunately, for a small share of the loot they will provide monetary guarantees should any of those misfortunes occur.

JACQUOT: I see an insurance system.

VERA: But those 'productive' highwaymen aren't stupid. They see that they risk getting shot or hanged while their lenders and insurers are safe at home counting their hard earned loot. So they decide to sell shares in their enterprises promising the buyer a quarterly portion of their loot. In no time the value of the shares outstanding is worth far more than all the valuables they are able to steal.

JUSTIN: I see *The Producers!*.....original film version.

VERA: Close...but no, it's the stock market.

IVANNA: Wait a second....They've lost sight of the message.

JACQUOT: Yeah....like what's the source of it all?

JUSTIN: You mean....they've forgotten that somebody still has to produce?

VERA: *(To Ivanna and Jacquot)* How does he keep doing it!?

JUSTIN: Thanks...but no thanks! You people talk like all capitalists are the same. Look how benign they are in Norway, and how vicious they are in Russia.

IVANNA: Of course the capitalists are vicious in Russia; they trained under Stalin.

JUSTIN: Trained?

JACQUOT: Sure...with honors...graduates of the Sloan School of Stalinism. *(Brief pause)*

IVANNA: So where are we now?

JUSTIN: *(Holding up a bottle)* Sitting around a table with a bunch of cornichons!

JACQUOT: We know that during a revolution the best leaders are those who can stay at the head of it...but first it has to begin.

VERA: That's where a clear-sighted revolutionary movement comes in. Look....this degenerating system has crises and rebellions galore, yet none erupts into a social revolution because there is nothing to convert class war into revolutionary war. We need to be the trigger that trips the hammer; the fuse that ignites the explosive....

JUSTIN:.....the drunk who pukes on your shoes...

JACQUOT:...We must do more than make a big mess.

VERA: The explosive material is the proletariat....

JUSTIN:.....do people still use that term?

VERA:.....the working class....Okay, they are exploding...

JUSTIN: Question – Why are there so many Marxists, yet so few Communists?

*(continuing)*

IVANNA:....which means our little fuses are obliterated.

JUSTIN:.....you really are, too, too, sexy.

VERA: No....we are flung out there with the exploding masses. Our job is to stay at the head of it and channel the force toward our revolutionary objective.

JUSTIN: *(Holding up bottle)* In Vera, Vino et Veritas.

IVANNA: But what do we do now?

JUSTIN: *(Gives Boy Scout salute)*....be prepared.

VERA: And work to convince the most advanced elements of the working class of the soundness of our program.

IVANNA: Finally...capitalism becomes just a word. But what happened to Mr. & Mrs. Right?

JACQUOT: Divorced. He moved out with the wallpaper.

*(pause)*

JUSTIN: Do you realize that if people move into a cave; the cave becomes a home, not just a natural object; but if apes live in it, it's still just a cave?

IVANNA: It's like a chimp daubing paint on a canvas. To the chimp, that's all it is, but if a human presents that canvas to a gallery as art, then it becomes a work of art, good or bad.

JACQUOT: Or if a bank goes out of business, the building that housed it might still have the word 'bank' on it, but it's no longer a bank....just a building with a word attached to it.

VERA: And if the Pentagon is still called the Pentagon even though it's been converted into an orphanage; it's just an orphanage called the Pentagon.

JUSTIN: Be prepared to move if you call people names!

JACQUOT: Or move before even bothering to name anything.

IVANNA: Are we moving enough to give our names a meaning?

JUSTIN: Sure.....you have to crawl when you can't walk....

VERA: Yes!....This was a delicious meal!

JUSTIN:...and then....when we can stand....we'll all recite Vera's favorite poem: Dine on squab!....Drink your wine!....It's all up with you!...Bourgeois slime!

VERA: Not slime!

JUSTIN: Crime?

VERA: No!

JUSTIN: I know!....Dine on squab you bourgeois slob!

VERA: It's Swine!.....Bourgeois swine!

JUSTIN: Swine?

IVANNA: Yes! *(She rises for a toast)* Let's be upstanding!.....Prost!

ALL: Dine on squab!...Drink your wine!...It's all up with you!...Bourgeois swine!

JUSTIN: Prost!.....X! *(And they all down their drink)*

[End Act 1]

## **ACT 2**

*(Executive offices of Vera's father, Hardy. Marketing people, Esme and Fulvio, are in the office proposing and brainstorming new projects. Justin enters carrying a small paper bag while this is going on)*

HARDY: A visit during a working session?

JUSTIN: We need to talk about Vera.

HARDY: Robyn? Fine....*(Looking more closely at Justin)* Have you been drinking?

JUSTIN: Just a little wine....we were celebrating the demise of capitalism.

HARDY: (*Distractedly*) Oh, fine.

JUSTIN: Are you listening!

HARDY: Certainly. You said something about the rise of capitalism.

JUSTIN: Not *rise*.....*demise*...as in overthrow...kaput!

HARDY: Oh, is she still going through that phase?

JUSTIN: Oh, she's done with that one...She has gone from wanting playthings and a room of her own, to demanding a new and improved political and economic system for everyone.

HARDY: Okay...let's talk about it between presentations. Your input may help. Right now we're looking at an advanced dish washing detergent.

JUSTIN: You mean beyond soapy water?

FULVIO: (*In charge of this project*) It's much more than that. Not just any water but germ-free distilled water. And not just soapy, but with a new concentrated surfactant to lower the surface tension of water. Making it wetter increases its cleansing capacity.

HARDY: 'Water that's wetter is better.' Can we use it?!

BOTH PROJECT MANAGERS: Fantastic! Brilliant!

JUSTIN: Who the hell is going to want to carry home gallons of soapy water?

ESME: It's concentrated.

JUSTIN: We already have that.

ESME: This is a two part process. A quart or so of the special water and a small container of soap with a surfactant. Mix a little of each and...voila!

JUSTIN: What?! That means washing dirty dishes with a few drops of dirty water.

(*Brief pause*)

HARDY: Esme, the boy is right. It does seem kind of icky.

ESME: That's all been carefully thought out. A couple of ounces of the special water with a tiny bit of the soap mix will generate a sink-full of extraordinarily dense bubbles. All the water is transferred to the cleansing bubbles.

FULVIO: Our market research determined the most critical element in the cleansing

process is the disappearance of the object to be cleansed.

ESME: Yes, the homemaker lowers the object into the suds...

FULVIO: We will emphasize the positive effect our product has on hands...

ESME: Contains "Hydrolyzing Factor X" --- 'Conditions your hands while washing dishes and pans.'

HARDY: No more dish pan hands! No more suffocating latex gloves! Our ads should include something about latex allergy.

ESME: We can point to the crisis in our hospitals because of the allergy.

JUSTIN: (*Sarcasm, here and elsewhere*) Yes, that close relationship between surgery and washing dishes.

HARDY: (*Not taking in the sarcasm*) In our democracy, all hands are equal!

ESME: A couple of swipes with a sponge and the cleansed object is ready to be rinsed with tap water.

FULVIO: No need for an expensive, cumbersome and ecologically wasteful dishwasher.

JUSTIN: Which I'll wager happens to be a product that you don't sell.

HARDY: This could be the next big thing!

JUSTIN: Are you out of your frigging minds?! Do you actually believe that the world needs such a product?!

HARDY: The world needs whatever we can get it to buy.

JUSTIN: And that's why your daughter would like to see you and your kind hanging from the nearest lamp-posts.

HARDY: Is she throwing another tantrum?

JUSTIN: She wants to throw more than that. You've got to have it out with her before things go too far.

HARDY: Alright! Alright! We'll go see her together right after I view a few more projects. I think you'll find the next one more to your liking. (*Esme returns now casually attired in sweatpants outfit with flip-flops*) Well, what do you think?

JUSTIN: Very attractive, but I can't detect a new product.

HARDY: What about her toes?

JUSTIN: Yes, beautiful toes, nicely painted.

HARDY: They are not painted!!!

JUSTIN: Really?....Did you stomp on them?

HARDY: It's High Tech, my boy. It's...(To Esme) Explain.

ESME: For many years women have consumed various substances to strengthen their nails. Using the latest nano technology we have developed a way to deliver color with a strengthening agent. Perfectly applied lustrous color. Chip-proof and permanent as long as our product is purchased and consumed.

HARDY: Outstanding! Now fat women can have pretty toes even if they can't get to them.

JUSTIN: What about fingernails?

FULVIO: A separate product. We've decoded DNA that can direct pigmentation to any point on the body.

JUSTIN: And some doubted the benefits of the Human Genome Project! Toenails today....Malaria tomorrow! Who cares if decorating your nails can kill you?

FULVIO: Nonsense! It's perfectly safe! We use double-walled nano tubules!

HARDY: (To Justin) I'm sorry that we can't solve all the problems of the world at this time. But at least we are doing something to improve the quality of life for everyone.

JUSTIN: By painting toenails?!

HARDY: By building relationships. Are not our interrelations, especially with the opposite sex, an essential component of our lives?

JUSTIN: I guess that's why those relationships are as tacky as the crap that you sell.

HARDY: Enough! What else do you see in this outfit?

JUSTIN: Blouse, pants --- Did you nano tubule and body part that I can't see?

HARDY: Those aren't just any soft-textured pants. They are a special.....(To Esme) How's that again?



ESME: They are made with specially looped fibers that provide an extraordinarily pleasurable sensation.

JUSTIN: *(With a smirk)* I sense another extraordinarily big thing here!

HARDY: Have the legal people approved this?

ESME: It's just a pure, 100% cotton/silk mix.

FULVIO: Besides, it has no effect if she's wearing an undergarment.

ESME: It will all be strictly word-of-mouth.

JUSTIN: What is this....a woven aphrodisiac?!

HARDY: Our unofficial marketing has begun!

FULVIO: We'll call it the Kirriemuir Effect.

HARDY: *(To Justin)* Some Scottish thing.

FULVIO: Caused by a part of the stamen of rose hips.

JUSTIN: Wouldn't warm oatmeal serve as a cheaper alternative?

HARDY: *(Ignoring Justin)* We can infer that it was inspired by Bobby Burns...but no Kirriemuir. How about 'The Kirriehome Effect'?

FULVIO: Perfect!

ESME: Just drop 'Effect.'

HARDY: And we've already sent out the promotional jingle to our Kirriehome Couturiers: *They were dancing in the barn, they were dancing in the ricks, you couldn't hear the music for the shaking of their hips..... Very sexy!*

ESME: That's not part of the ballad.

HARDY: Of course it isn't! We could never use the real thing!

ESME: But you said to get something from the ballad.

HARDY: I said "derive something from the ballad"....but it's okay if you found a part that we could use. What did you send?

ESME: *(Deadpan)* *They were fucking in the barn. They were fucking in the ricks. You*

*couldn't hear the music for the swishing of their pricks.*

JUSTIN: *(Laughing uproariously)* Finally!...Something really big!

HARDY: What the hell!!!!

FULVIO: Not to worry.

HARDY: What do you mean, “not to worry?!” We'll be ripped!

FULVIO: Remember...we're incognito in all of this. We're just selling some nice clothing. If anyone claims us as the source we'll charge them with malicious slander.

ESME: It's actually sensational publicity....Should get people wondering about the product.

HARDY: *(Taking it all in)* Brilliant!!!!

JUSTIN: Have any of you brilliant people thought about why on earth a woman would buy an article of clothing to turn herself on? And a man couldn't very well give it as a gift without being charged with date rape.

HARDY: You know, sometimes I wonder if this boy can possibly be my son. Didn't you hear Esme say it was a pure cotton/silk mix?

JUSTIN: You mean it has no stamen bits?

ESME: She would be signaling to everyone that she's hot...even though she's not.

HARDY: We are merely suggesting or hinting that it contains something magical.

JUSTIN: In other words, lying.

HARDY: Nonsense!

FULVIO: Though he does raise a profound philosophical question. When Sunkist plasters its name on a can of orange soda, are they lying because it contains no orange juice?

ESME: Or Coke because its product contains no coke?

FULVIO: It's like gestalt....people naturally fill in the rest.

HARDY: And besides, people have heard stories that Coke once really had some coke in it, so maybe there still is a trace of it in the product....and Sunkist really does sell orange juice, so maybe a few drops managed to get into the soda. If you send out enough hints

that it might, people will begin to believe that it does.

JUSTIN: I think I get it now. It's kind of like the way people believe we have constitutional rights though they really exist only in homeopathic amounts...if that.

HARDY: Must you politicize everything? This is not only the way our system works, it's the way our life is organized. Humans have evolved to the point that looking truth in the eye would drive them mad.

JUSTIN: What a lame excuse for lying.

FULVIO: Not at all. Look at religion. Nobody really believes its fairytale explanation of everything, but they are afraid if they don't keep up the pretense everyone will come to know that they are just very advanced animals....

HARDY:...And go hog wild! We capitalists are really nothing more than secular priests because we help our customers maintain both inner and outer peace.

JUSTIN: Riiiiight. The clerics do it by killing off the human spirit. And the capitalists by keeping everyone perpetually confused consumers as they drift through life.

FULVIO: You've heard of the Placebo Effect. It's the best all-purpose drug on the market.

HARDY: Example.....You know that two consecutive negative or positive quarters indicates a recession or expansion. Now what does this mean. *(Hardy starts with his hand held up level and gradually rising. Then there is a steep, short decline. This is repeated several times so that it looks like steps with his hand moving downward)* Well?

JUSTIN: Obviously a downward trajectory....Your daughter would love to demonstrate a different version of that.

HARDY: Wrong! Each of those downward spikes only lasted a quarter. Thus it is an expanding economy.

FULVIO: If we counted the beginning of an expansion from the point that it passed the contraction, recessions would last for years, not months.

HARDY: And people would be as depressed as the actual contraction, thus making their lives even more miserable, and making that misery last even longer. Instead, we convert it into a fleeting blip on the radar. People retain a hopeful and optimistic attitude, and that helps to raise everyone's boat.

JUSTIN: Prozacanomics!

FULVIO: When unemployment got too high we invented something called the

“discouraged worker” and removed him from the ranks of unemployed.

HARDY: Have you ever wondered how that worker can be discouraged if he's not in some sense still in the market? What's keeping him discouraged?

JUSTIN: (*Staring at his father*) I'm looking at one cause right now.

ESME: We not only 'solve' the problem...we shift responsibility to others.

FULVIO: Comparing monthly or quarterly economic reports against real past reports can be risky, so we instead have 'expert' consensus estimates prepared by our hacks and skills, and it's their concocted number that is announced. That means the concerned citizen will never know that their IRA is about to go bust until it happens!

HARDY: And accounting!! Both in government and business. When I die and am at the pearly gates, I can honestly give a full accounting of my life.

FULVIO: Pro forma, of course!! (*Everybody laughs except Justin*)

ESME: Yes....and when you enter the first saint to greet you will be Mark-To-Make-Believe! (*Everyone laughs – Justin frowns*)

HARDY: Why the frown, son? Bringing heaven down to earth should suit your agnosticism. Okay folks, let's see the next pro...(*Sneezes*) Excuse me...Can't wait until the allergy season is over.

ESME: Why not just make a *seasonal adjustment*? (*Again everyone laughs except Justin*)

JUSTIN: Hmmmm.....It's like our whole society is a Ship of Theseus. When a part of it becomes old and rotten, it's replaced with something new and rotten.

HARDY: One of those planks is called the Dow Jones Industrial Average. Note: it says "Industrial." It's supposed to include those bedrock industries which serve as a base for all others.

FULVIO: The sort that will be ramped up should we be at war.

HARDY: But most of them do no such thing. I mean, how is Coke and McDonald's going to help us in a war?

JUSTIN: Easy....just get the enemy to consume them.

HARDY: Now you're being silly.

FULVIO: Wait a moment. Your son showed more insight than you realize. Might we be softening up our potential enemies in advance by spreading this stuff around the world

and wrecking their health?

JUSTIN: They freely buy their poison --- and eat it.

HARDY: Later we douse them with Heinz and gobble them up!.....or they stagger toward Home Depot where we Pfizer them off! It's in your genes, my boy! No use denying it. My overall point is that we capitalists are addicted to winning, and everything we do is marshaled toward that end.

JUSTIN: Like the famous criminologist said: The capitalist mind is the same as that of the common criminal.

HARDY: What do you mean, "common?"

JUSTIN: *Survival of the shittiest*.... at least that should make you ready for the Vera challenge.

HARDY: Right after I deal with a final project we'll see Robyn --- and why this *Vera*? What's wrong with her given name?

JUSTIN: She probably thinks you named her after your favorite activity. But she still sings a version of that song you taught her when she was a little girl...only it now goes: (*singing*) "When the red, red revolution brings its solution along, along. There'll be no more lootin' when we start shootin' that Wall Street gang..." (*At this point everyone but Hardy joins in*) "Wake up, wake up you proletarians, don't act like seminarians, build the...."

HARDY: Alright! Alright! That's enough! I think everyone is getting a bit overtired. Bring in that last project.

FULVIO: What about the hot dog bun with the closed end and flap-over?

HARDY: It needs work. Surveys show that people want to see it sticking out both ends. And we need to figure out how to toast the damned thing.

FULVIO: The auto-insemination kits?

HARDY: We need more vertical integration.

FULVIO: The campus jizz-mobiles?

HARDY: Precisely.

FULVIO: The kiwi lavender shampoo?

JUSTIN: I know!...You haven't found a way to squeeze in real New Zealanders!!

HARDY: *(Clearing throat. To Fulvio)* We'll discuss the others tomorrow. *(Enter Esme wearing loose jeans and cut-off tee-shirt)* This one has me worried. We're a mega-billion dollar company....not some guy running a business out of an apartment with small ads in the back pages of obscene magazines.

ESME: This is the future. Risk taking entrepreneurs profit the most.

HARDY: Not if their customers are arrested.

ESME: Our creative destruction of outmoded forms of dress and behavior, and their replacement with something new and fun has astronomical potential.

FULVIO: And legal says we are on solid ground because the courts have already ruled that if men can show it, so can women.

ESME: Haven't you seen all those boys with baggy pants practically falling off?

HARDY: Okay! Okay! Let's see what you have.

*(Esme places her hands in the pockets of the rather loose-fitting jeans and slowly pushes the front down revealing a patch of dyed pubic hair)*

VOICES: Wow! A winner! This truly breaks the frame!

JUSTIN: This is legal?! Multi-colored pussies in public?

ESME: No part of a sexual organ is being displayed. And men show pubic hair in public all the time.

JUSTIN: Nonsense! They do no such thing.

ESME: Sure they do...they are just coy about it.

JUSTIN: What rubbish!

ESME: It's easy to prove. *(To Hardy)* May I use your son as proof?

HARDY: Be my guest.

*(Esme pulls up Justin's shirt revealing chest hair and everyone moves closer to him)*

ESME: This is chest hair. *(She slowly runs her finger down his abdomen until its at the top of his pants)* This is pubic hair.

JUSTIN: Bullshit! That's all chest and abdominal hair!

ESME: So you need more proof! *(She yanks down his pants enough to reveal definite pubic hair)* You see *(dragging her finger)*....right here the archipelago from north to south meets the south to north hair line. At that point is pubic hair...seen on every beach and construction site during the summer months.

HARDY: She's right! *(Meanwhile Esme has begun applying the dye to Justin's pubic hair)*. Hey, hold on! I hope to get an heir someday from beneath that hair. How about safety?

ESME: If it's perfectly safe to apply dye within an inch of the brain, there certainly isn't a problem doing the same to the nether regions. But for those who have any qualms..... *(Here she pulls off her dyed pubic hair which turns out to be a hairpiece)*.....we have created natural, dyed pubic hair pieces designed to adhere easily near the real thing... *(Looking at Justin)*...and they are unisex.

HARDY: Excellent! This has been a very fruitful meeting. *(Esme and Fulvio begin to leave)*

JUSTIN: *(To Hardy)* What about that antiperspirant for ass sweat you were telling me about?

ESME and FULVIO: Ass sweat?!...You never told us....

HARDY: *(Scowling)*.....He's joking!!

*(Room empties except for Hardy and Justin who is reassembling himself from a very disheveled state)*

JUSTIN: What a damn mess!...Can we go now?!

HARDY: Yes, but I'm famished. Let's stop along the way for a meal.

JUSTIN: No need. I picked up something on my way over. Here, have some while I put myself together. *(And he hands his father a bag with fast food logo on it. Father looks at it and then glares at son. Justin looks back at him)* It's BK!

[End – Act 2.]

### **Act 3**

*(Vera asleep foreground. Scene opens with Lenin, Trotsky, Rosa Luxemburg and Stalin rushing on stage. Lenin is strangling Stalin. Trotsky and Rosa intervene.)*

LENIN: *(Hands on Stalin's neck)* Malinovsky!

STALIN: I am not Malinovsky! I am Stalin, your most devoted comrade.

LENIN: Traitor!....Spy!....Common criminal!

STALIN: Those expropriations were to fund the party.

LENIN:....And for you to insinuate yourself into the party and the revolution. You gambled that there was more future in us than Tsarism.

STALIN: I admit to starting badly, but you won me over to Marxism. *(Quoting Lenin)* "Class political consciousness must be brought to the proletariat from the outside." You brought it to me, and I helped bring it to them under your leadership.

ROSA: *(To Lenin)* Hoist by your own Blanqui-ism!

TROTSKY: I despised the fellow, but never could believe that he worked for the Okhrana.

LENIN: *(To Rosa)* How else could a small ignorant and illiterate proletariat learn of revolutionary Marxism?

ROSA: From the reality that is class conflict and struggle, and the leadership of the best elements of the working class and their supporters. Your Russian exceptionalism distorted the fundamentals of Marxism and embedded that corruption in the CP's of the world.

TROTSKY: It was imperative that we carry the revolution to advanced capitalist countries...

*(Brief pause)*

LENIN: It's not as if I didn't have my suspicions. Didn't I propose in my Testament that he be removed as General Secretary? But you and the rest had it read privately to each delegation as they arrived rather than the entire party congress.

TROTSKY: All within standard party protocol.

LENIN: *(Pointing to Stalin)* After being proposed by this asshole!

ROSA: The revolution according to Joe Stalin's Rules of Bolshevik Bullshit! *(To Stalin)* How about the Civil War?....Were you Red, or a White like your Caucasian heritage?

STALIN: I was in the field fighting the counter-revolution!

LENIN: *(To Rosa)* Didn't you read that piece in *La Stampa*?

ROSA: Something about him?



TROTSKY: Aren't you online? Around April 1991. It wasn't conclusive.

LENIN: They dug up some old records which said he was in contact with the Whites.

TROTSKY: Without party approval of course, just like his meetings with the tsarist secret police. Come on Comrade *Shalin*....what does it matter now? Do we move you over to the capitalist side of the ledger?

STALIN: Lies, all lies. Paper will accept anything that is written on it. The *meetings*, as you call them, were interrogations following my arrests.

TROTSKY:...and suspiciously quick releases.

LENIN: Circumstantial evidence...but still..everything he did in the Civil War helped the Whites and the imperialist invaders more than it did our side....

TROTSKY:...Tsaritsyn!...

LENIN: Yes...And his refusal to release his army so that Tukhachevsky could take Warsaw.

STALIN: I release them and then they retake Minsk and Kiev!

TROTSKY: The master strategist!...The Poles will risk Warsaw for Minsk and Kiev!

LENIN: (*To Stalin*) The fact is, my dear pseudo-comrade, you ignored the command of the head of the Red Army and myself!

ROSA: Didn't matter....the revolution was fucked because you surrendered to Germany just before it surrendered to the allies.

TROTSKY: I was against the surrender!

LENIN: The proletariat and poor peasantry were demanding peace. We needed time to organize a chaotic rabble into a force that could stand its ground.

ROSA: So you had to surrender to a Germany in the final throes of collapse, yet only a few months later that *rabble* was able to withstand the invasion of a dozen imperialist armies, including a contribution from the defeated Germans, and a massive White force newly equipped with the latest weaponry by the invaders.

LENIN: And you?...Buried in the Independents while the German proletariat was in desperate need of a revolutionary leadership! We had enough to overthrow capitalism, but not enough to build communism.

ROSA: I was mainly buried in prison – We wanted to take as much of the working class

with us as possible.

TROTSKY: You must work with what you have when you see that the dam is about to burst.

ROSA: Well, thank you for that helpful advice, Mr. Menshivik!

TROTSKY: (*Peevishly*) I was never a Menshivik....I merely served as a link between the two factions.

ROSA: (*To Lenin*) You knew the revolution had to spread to an advanced capitalist country if it was to succeed. State and Revolution in 1917...Infantile bourgeois revolutionary diplomacy thereafter!

LENIN: How about your 1918? Tens of thousands of armed proletarians in the streets of Berlin. The government flees. Where were our German comrades?

TROTSKY: Like Noske said....if they had one determined leader rather than a bunch of windbags, they could have seized the state.

ROSA: In Berlin and a few other places. Then what? We had little or no presence in most of Germany. We were organizing for a revolution....you surrendered the revolution in order to organize.

LENIN: How much presence do you think *we* had in Russia? You held back for the same reason but without having an independent communist organization to lead the most class conscious of the proletariat.

STALIN: You see how it is, Ilyich?!....They called me a traitor and a fool for the pact with Hitler....even though you authorized Radek's alliance with the proto-Nazi Reventlow in 1923. They don't understand the need to split the imperialists and buy time to strengthen one's position.

ROSA: How the devil did that come about?...The bringing together of the leading Bolshevik in Germany and a Nazi publisher...under the auspices of Hitler himself!

*(Pause – Lenin and Trotsky show some embarrassment)*

TROTSKY: Radek received numerous visits by German luminaries during his imprisonment in 1919...It all went to his head...He thought he had exceptional influence with German leaders.

LENIN: (*They look to Lenin*) I was out of contact with such actions as I was still recovering from a stroke.

STALIN: But, Ilyich...you were highly functional the last 6 months of 1923.

LENIN: (*Annoyed*) You should know my condition since your operatives were doing their best to do me in...But I can say in general that we thought the pre-revolutionary situation in Germany had passed and we were trying to safeguard what we had.

STALIN: Yes...And distasteful actions are sometimes required...For example, Comrade Lenin's transport to the Finland Station enabled the revolution. The treaty with Germany was a small price to pay.

LENIN: (*Angrily*) Are you suggesting that was part of a secret arrangement with Germany?! What incredible rubbish! There were dozens of leaders from the entire political spectrum on that train. The surrender...the peace!...I wish everyone would stop calling it a surrender...was tactically necessary in order to solidify the revolution.

TROTSKY: You have to admit it did seem suspect...and we surrendered...that is, lost, forty percent of our territory, much of our heavy industry...and then they took the Ukraine, our breadbasket. – The Germans never had any intention to comply with their side of the treaty.

ROSA: And all to a country about to lose the war.

LENIN: Hindsight...who could be certain of that in March?

ROSA: America joined the Allies the previous April....And what about the August 27 supplement to the surrender treaty?...just weeks before the final phase of the German collapse began. We begged you to at least not comply with the reparations provision....yet you sent them the 90 tons of gold anyway.

LENIN: We thought it would keep Joffe in Berlin...and contact with our German comrades.

ROSA: Which it didn't....Like taking candy from a baby....Why such naive trust?...Is social change driven by class struggle or diplomacy?

STALIN: Class struggle!...Ha!...Tell them, Ilyich!...No amount of class struggle in backward Russia could make communism. A worthy leader chooses objective reality over the view through rose-colored glasses. Sometimes you have to shake hands with the devil in order to buy time and prevent a defeat.

TROTSKY: The devil?!...Yes, I can verify that certain people can make that a repulsive experience..but Joey, try to remember that our concern about spreading the revolution, especially to Germany, is recognition of that objective reality.

LENIN: Agreed...but we had one Latvian division...that was our professional armed forces in defense of the revolution! Who is to spread the revolution?.....poor peasants and a handful of proletarians?! At that moment we needed defense and organization.

ROSA: The Americans had joined the forces of the Entente!

LENIN: Sure...but with no army!

TROTSKY: We knew that Germany had switched most of its forces to the Western Front!

LENIN: Weren't they still capturing Russian territory?

TROTSKY: They would put a few troops on a train, stop at one of our stations, and declare the area captured and occupied. Why do you think I was dragging out negotiations on the surrender?.....The Kaiser was cooked!

ROSA: Many in Germany, including most of the bourgeois leaders, knew the war was lost when the Americans entered...

LENIN: Stop!.....Stop with the Americans! Sure, they declared war in April, but with no army!

ROSA: There were hundreds of thousands on the Western Front by the following March!

LENIN: But doing nothing!...How much time do you think we had?!

*(The sleeping Vera shows increasing disturbance as the discussions progresses. Finally, she gets up and joins the group)*

VERA: Time for what?

*(Brief pause)*

LENIN: Where did this girl come from?

TROTSKY: I don't know, but she's very welcome.

ROSA: Volodia, she asked you a question.

VERA: Yes....Time for what? You overthrew capitalism in Russia. You certainly knew that the most powerful capitalist countries would soon unite for your destruction. Communism scares them much more than each other.

TROTSKY: Like they did to suppress rebellious workers in 1848.

VERA: Wasn't that a time for action...when the enemy was at its weakest?

LENIN: Weak!?.....With millions of men still on the battlefield....yet I'm supposed to know that they were doomed!

VERA: Why was Marx convinced the South would lose at the inception of the American Civil War despite having won the early battles?

ROSA: The North's superior industrial base and population meant certain victory barring a miraculous intervention. Had you forgotten that we are materialists?

VERA: The Western Front was at a stalemate when the world's foremost industrial and agricultural power with 20 million conscriptable men joined the allies. Which side do you think was bound to win?

TROTSKY: I said all that and more in my Feb. 27 address to the CEC.

VERA: Yes you did. You had it exactly right. We mustn't sign because of the damage it would do to the German revolution. The Central Powers were done. If the Germans resumed the attack our Red Guards would stop them. Then a few days later you merely abstained from the abject surrender.....Why?

TROTSKY: *(With some hesitation)* Party matters....I didn't want to weaken the leadership.

VERA: Not a very successful party that surrenders Marxism to party politics.

TROTSKY: What would you have me do....split the party or resign?!

VERA: *(To Lenin)* You were the one who threatened to resign had the vote gone against you. Would you have done it?

LENIN: Who can say? I felt the revolution would not survive much more such foolishness...That was the only thing we had in abundance.

VERA: Was there any other communist leader as necessary to its success as you and Lev?

LENIN: No...that's why I gave him so much time.

ROSA: And no doubt should have given him more. Instead you surrendered to German imperialism!

STALIN: The Brest peace put an end to the chaos and enthusiasm of the immediate post-revolutionary days and gave us time to give it a solid footing.

LENIN: Our revolution succeeded largely because proletarians and poor peasants refused to serve as cannon fodder for the Tsar and Kerensky. They demanded peace and we gave it to them!

TROTSKY: But we had already done that unilaterally. We renounced any part of the

imperialist war and ordered our troops to stand down. Had the enemy continued the attack, we would fight them as counterrevolutionaries, not in support of the Entente.

ROSA: They certainly weren't pacifists when a dozen armies and the Whites tried to destroy the revolution.

VERA: They didn't want peace....they fully accepted a war.....but only one in defense of worker power. Your focus was on the strength of Bolshevism in Russia, not on a communist Russia, Germany and beyond!

LENIN: Look...had I known the status of forces arraigned against us I would have done differently, but we had virtually no communications outside of our own narrow world. Do you think I was looking forward to being shot by a Left SR? As soon as I observed the pre-revolutionary situation arising in Germany I ordered a maximum effort to assist our German comrades.

VERA: While also giving assistance to the class they were to overthrow...

ROSA:....Then there were the invasions, civil war, more misery, increased dissension, Kronstadt, and the CHEKA with its secret trials and executions.

LENIN: I never lost sight of our aim...It would take a very dishonest critic to say that it was easy to determine a successful course of action in the midst of the chaos of revolution.

VERA: Since you missed the target, just what did you accomplish?

LENIN: Well...First we had a revolution that overthrew capitalism and began the process of developing a Marxist communist society...which then regressed to him. *(nodding toward Stalin)*

TROTSKY: It goes like this. *(He places a piece of paper on the floor)* This is capitalism. *(Puts down another one)* This is communism. *(Grabs Stalin)* In between, Stalinism.

LENIN: Right...we took two steps forward and then one back. *(Makes attempt to step. Trotsky stops him)*

TROTSKY: Joe...get down.

STALIN: I'm not lying down for the likes of you!

LENIN: Down! *(Stalin lies down between the two pieces of paper. Lenin steps on Stalin and then one more step. Then one back stepping on Stalin again)*

ROSA: But there weren't two steps forward!

LENIN: Sure there were...the February and the October revolutions.

ROSA: But your first step was on Stalin, not the bourgeois Revolution.

VERA: So it was just one step toward communism.

TROTSKY: He may be a traitor to Marxism...but that step back was not a reversion to capitalism.

LENIN: Of course not!...The New Economic Policy was to get us through the famine and the massive destruction and disorder.

VERA:...Which was continued in altered form by Stalin and his cronies and went like this. (*Vera steps over Stalin...Then brings her right foot back and slowly drags her left foot over Stalin*) It took seventy years to complete the counterrevolution because it was a real communist revolution that had to be reversed.

LENIN: (*Taking it in and then looking at Stalin*) Party leader and counter-revolutionary! (*He then sits in a chair looking distraught*)

STALIN: (*To Lenin*) It was you who created the NEPmen! You knew what you were getting – *radishes* you called them – it would be state capitalism run by communists.

ROSA: (*To Lenin*) Socialism in one country....State capitalism run by communists...Those were your words. (*To Stalin*) Does it please you that a form of your heritage still runs Russia? Now it is real capitalism run by ex-Stalinists.

LENIN: I meant that a socialist revolution may occur in one country or a few rather than sweeping across Europe, not that you can have socialism in one backward country!

STALIN: But how was Russia to become communist?...Pushing through Brest-Litovsk indicated a lack of urgency in the need for outside assistance.

TROTSKY: And I was at least trying to preserve proletarian power by keeping internal development in the hands of the workers when along came NEP and state capitalism run by communists.

LENIN: I fully expected the revolution to spread in due time.

ROSA: Like an idealist, you expected the *spirit* of the Bolshevik success to carry the revolution abroad, but Marxism is a materialist science, change is a product of physical action!

VERA: (*Sitting on the lap of a very dejected Lenin*) And then as Marx said, under a situation of scarcity the old shit will return. Sometimes doing what must be done is more important than survival at any cost.

LENIN: Of course!....(*Expressing discomfort*) Scoot over a bit, you're crushing my principals...It's just that when you are in it, it's difficult to see it.

VERA: Can't see what needs to be done when you place yourself above it.

STALIN: And please allow me to point out that, since you admit my communism regressed to capitalism, then I cannot be a counter-revolutionary.

TROTSKY: Only from the standpoint of capitalism....from Marxism, you certainly are.

STALIN: My standpoint was Marxism! It's not as if all Marxists have identical positions.

LENIN: Yes, but your position was a sham.

STALIN: How could such a *sham* raise the standard of living of workers by so much so quickly?

VERA: So did Hitler's version of capitalism...not to deny that your version of Leninism was a better planned economy and a more egalitarian society.

STALIN: But I was at war with the capitalists!

VERA: Only when accommodation couldn't be achieved.

ROSA: Then after the long and thorough wrecking job on Marxism your heirs made the transition from de facto to de jure parasitism.

TROTSKY: So you invented Stalinism. We don't call the progeny of a horse and a donkey a horse or a donkey.

ROSA: And both issues are sterile!

VERA: If a rocket needs a certain amount of thrust to launch an object into orbit, and fails to achieve that thrust, it is not a surprise when it falls back to earth.

LENIN: Well, one thing is certain; our forces were weak and isolated, an attempt to advance prior to a regroupment would have been very difficult.

ROSA: It was more than that. Forgive me Ilyich, but at a crucial historical moment the only difference between the Mensheviks and some Bolsheviks (*Looking at Stalin*) and you is that you wanted the insurrection and they thought the time was not ripe. After the success of the revolution, you took up the former's two-stage position.

LENIN: Me?....A remnant of the Second International...!



STALIN: They already called you a centrist!

ROSA: Ebert may have used your actions as a model in his appeal for peace. He succeeded in keeping a large segment of the working class from joining the revolution by asserting that worker militancy would cause the allies to resume their attack...likewise, your peace surrender also stressed a resumed attack and prevented the working class from advancing the revolution.

VERA: He misled it...you stood in for it...Stalinism filling in for the bourgeois democratic phase.

ROSA: A force to be manipulated into social change...Like in that 'Infantile' pamphlet of yours.... You know...the one you dedicated to a British Prime Minister...

STALIN:...She's saying that Lloyd George was your mentor...!

LENIN:...That was a spoof...tongue-in-cheek...

ROSA:...Able serving as a symbol for your turn toward diplomacy.... Calling for worker critical electoral support for bourgeois socialist parties in Britain and Germany!... When we were trying to drive workers away from the Ebert-Scheidemann counter-revolution!... Thanks to you, your worker-pupils had to learn by trial and error!

VERA: Your error....their trial.

STALIN: Disgusting!..Don't listen to them, Comrade Lenin, Left-Wing Communism is one of your greatest achievements. It was my bible. You brilliantly moved us out of the dream world of State and Revolution to the realities of a period in which we were hemmed in by those seeking our destruction.

LENIN: There was barely an apparatus in place to keep the workers republic intact. We had to compromise.

ROSA: Indeed!....An avalanche of compromise from the original surrender...Like the 1922 Treaty of Rapallo with Germany which was used by them to hide military manufacturing and training from the victorious allies...Imagine!...German troops secretly training in communist Russia with the Red Army the year before German workers had their best chance to overthrow capitalism! The Soviet Star aloft with the Swastika!

LENIN: The German revolution appeared to have failed long before Rapallo.

ROSA: The diplomatic frenzy began before Rapallo, the movement toward an alliance with Germany began in February 1919 under the guise of a prisoner exchange program.

VERA: *Bourgeois Bolsheviks*, according to Steffens, doing business with German capitalists by 1920...and it wasn't only Germany. Britain led the foreign invasion during

the Civil War, but that didn't stop you from signing an agreement with them right after their counter-revolutionary efforts were defeated...And worse yet..forcing the KPD to discuss an alliance with the SPD in 1921...in a Reichstag meeting room no less!...just two years after they engineered the murder of Karl and Rosa...Marking time in the midst of a revolution....And there was Stalin, absorbing every mistake for future enhancement and implementation! Didn't you know that capitalist enemies will unite in a flash when threatened by worker revolution?

TROTSKY: First as tragedy...Then as farce!...but I was still calling for an all-out effort to spread the revolution.

VERA: Which was condemned by the now right-leaning Bukharin and the famous Leninist Gramsci who called your demand “old mechanicalism” and “anachronistic Napoleonism.”

LENIN: And me recovering from a stroke and unable to get things back on track. That's why I wanted Lev to take my place and remove Stalin!

VERA: *(To Trotsky)* Yet you stood aside. Why?

STALIN: *(After Trotsky hesitates to answer)* Well? Why don't you answer her question?

TROTSKY: I had little support in the party leadership.

STALIN: Yes...How many years were you a Bolshevik?...or would it be easier to count the days?

LENIN: But you had *my* support!

VERA: The leadership gathers at its mountain top retreat to contemplate what is best for the world revolution....

ROSA: Then, when you botched the job, instead of admitting it and changing course, you went into a defensive shell with all your *Infantile* clap-trap!

LENIN: That pamphlet wasn't written to defend what failed, but to preserve what we had until we could reverse the reversal, but then....

VERA: Well...the shit *did* return. You prevented the workers, with the support of the poor peasantry, from controlling the revolution. Then you surrendered to a country that was going down in defeat...Just the country that had to have a socialist revolution if the Russian Revolution were to succeed. And after that disaster you had no choice but to revert to the Menshivik two stage process with the NEP. And then....

*(The following sung to the tune 'Drunken Sailor')*

ROSA:...Yes! Yes!...But the point *now* is....What do we do with this fuckin' system....?!

TROTSKY: Yes...What do we do with this fuckin' system....?

LENIN: Well, what do we do with this fuckin' system now that it's at death's door?

ALL: (*Except Stalin who moves a bit to the rhythm*) Heigh Ho and out it goes. Heigh Ho and out it goes. Heigh Ho and out it goes. Now that it's at death's door!

LENIN: Then what do we do with com-yune-ism? What do we do with com-yune-ism? What do we do with com-yune-ism. After the rev-o-lu-tion?

ALL: (*After a thoughtful pause*) Carry it to the four corners. Carry it to the four corners. Carry it to the four corners. After the re-vo-lu-tion.

ALL: Heigh Ho the revolution is on. Heigh Ho the revolution is on. Heigh Ho.....

(*There is loud banging on the door*)

[Blackout. End Act 3 Scene 1]

### **Act 3 Scene 2**

(*Only Vera. She goes to the door and checks who it is and then opens for her brother and father*)

JUSTIN: Where's the party?

HARDY: Yeah...we heard music and singing....I love that tune. (*He hums it and dances a bit*)

VERA: I suppose you would...you've both had a few?

JUSTIN: Dad insisted on dining before we came here.

HARDY:....I couldn't argue with my darling daughter on an empty stomach. We brought you some....(*placing a bag on the table*)....don't worry, it's not fast food. So....Justin tells me you'd like to have me hanged.

VERA: Why bother when you're already hung over?

(*Brief pause*)

JUSTIN: How did I ever become associated with this lunatic pair?! A sister who wants to overthrow the world, and a father who thinks marketing fake pubic hair is a valued service to humanity.

HARDY: It's because you never could dream. I admire your sister because at least she has ambition, however screwed up. You, on the other hand, are the family stick-in-the mud: 'We can't do this, we can't do that.' Why? Because you can't do anything.

JUSTIN: Me?...The Problem?...The family peacemaker?...You call keeping a family together doing nothing?

VERA: It is when all it does is prevent people from doing something worthwhile.

JUSTIN: Keeping two people from inflicting their damn foolishness on the world certainly qualifies as a public service.

HARDY: We're fools!?

JUSTIN: Yes, fools!...You, enthusiastically concocting one hare-brained scheme after another as long as it's profitable, while the world is crumbling around him....and your "darling daughter"...well, she wants to make overthrowing your beloved system a new entertainment medium.

HARDY: Now *that* is interesting.

JUSTIN:...And revolutionary in ways you both use the term. When militants go underground it will be to a subversive comedy club. Their secret cells will text you the hottest raves. Capitalism will disappear in a storm of furious laughter.

VERA: (*To father...mocking*) Wouldn't you prefer to die laughing?.....The point of Justin's dopey examples is that it is much more effective to show things that are very difficult to describe in words.

HARDY: (*Looking at Vera with evident affection*) Robyn!...Robyn...!

VERA: It's Vera...Aren't I allowed to have a name of my own?

HARDY: Of course! Of course!...Now I see that your conduct is all part of a grand plan...And it fills me with pride to see that someone has inherited old dad's marketing skills...Your brother is clearly a lost cause...

JUSTIN: What?!...You agree with her?!

HARDY: Certainly not! But it's a brilliant marketing scheme. Nobody wants to listen to boring philosophical lectures, or be told that capitalist goons will mow us down but our blood will nourish a new generation of revolutionaries. They want to see fields of wheat ripening in the sunlight, and feel good knowing that it will provide bread for a starving humanity...

JUSTIN: You've conjured up one of your allergy ads.

VERA: Except there will be no buyers once we rid ourselves of the allergen.

HARDY: Normally I would say your behavior is just a passing phase...

VERA:.....Except that the world is going through a phase that stays.

HARDY: Except that you can't replace something with nothing. It's like life...nobody can be certain how it began...but it's here...so we live it. Same with this system.

VERA: Except that we're not living it...we're living with it...like a disease. We will be free and alive when we rid ourselves of it.

HARDY: Live?....With nothing?

JUSTIN: This is when the show starts. *(Loud banging on the door)* See?!

*(Brief pause. Vera opens the door and Jacquot and Ivanna enter – door remains open)*

VERA: *(flustered)* Jacquot..Ivanna...What a surprise!

JACQUOT: Surprise?!...Didn't we have a brainstorming session scheduled?

VERA: Oh?....Of course!

IVANNA: But it looks like you've already been storming away....We met them out in the hallway.

VERA: Them?...In the hallway?

IVANNA: Brilliant idea having them speak for themselves.

*(Lenin, Rosa, Trotsky and Stalin file in. Everyone but Vera assumes they are playing roles)*

VERA: Oh...there you are! *(Getting over her confusion)* I assume you all know Ivanna and Jacquot. This is my father and my brother.

HARDY: *(Rushing over to greet Lenin)* Pleased to meet you, Nikolai.

LENIN: It's Vladimir.

HARDY: Oh...Sorry. I'm Hardy. *(They shake hands)* You're just the man to put some sense into the mind of my daughter.

LENIN: My expertise relates solely to the overthrow of the capitalist system...I know

nothing about settling family quarrels.

ROSA: But wouldn't the revolution also mean the overthrow of patriarchy?

TROTSKY: It's all tied to the preservation of private property.

LENIN: (*Angrily*) Do you think I've never read Engels? It obviously cannot be applied to this immediate local problem.

VERA: Didn't you forget world revolution in order to deal with an immediate local problem?

LENIN: Now see here....right or wrong, those decisions were made in the context of solidifying and advancing the revolution. I have nothing to tell you with respect to getting along with your capitalist father.

STALIN: And that's just how my every day practical sense was able to take command. (*Looking at Vera*) Listen, young lady....you have this grandiose notion of overthrowing the system even though the masses lack the capability, let alone the inclination, in taking charge themselves. Those with hearts of dogs must be led. Gradually the skills and spirit required to run things will be transferred to the working class, while at the same time the inherent socialism of proletarian production will infuse the consciousness of the capitalist. Only then can your dream become a reality.

TROTSKY: So that's where Mao picked up that crap.

STALIN: One of my best pupils....and purely dialectical.

ROSA: More like a phenomenological reversal.

LENIN: More puerile than pure!

JUSTIN: Papa Stalin...Family Counselor!

HARDY: Wait a second...I agree with some of that...like having people with know-how deal with the ills of capitalism. Vera, you should listen and learn....the state intervenes and after a few generations people will know enough to make a better world!

VERA: The capitalist state is the major evil....it can help solve nothing.

IVANNA: It's that sort of confusion our performances will clarify. The truth is out there. It's obvious. It is constantly hitting everyone in the face. The ruling class has to obscure it in some way.

JACQUOT: Replace truth with the merely plausible....the sacred mission of the bourgeois intelligentsia.

IVANNA: Like this....Justin, come here...we need you. *(Justin hesitates)* Come on! You're just going to represent the truth. You can't object to that.

JUSTIN: You mean the way truth is trampled?...No thanks!

JACQUOT: Come...you won't even be touched.

*(Justin joins them after more hesitation)*

IVANNA: Good. All you have to do is face front and try to make truth visible to all as we counter with lies. *(Ivanna and Jacquot place themselves in front of Justin, as he bobs and weaves they continue to quickly block him from view)* Notice the plausible lie obscuring the truth.

VERA: Yeah...but modern democratic dictatorships are far more sophisticated.

JACQUOT: The plausible lie can handle anything the truth throws at it. We can sandwich it so nothing more than a sliver appears. *(Turns Justin sideways while they move in on either side)*

JUSTIN: No more sandwiches!

HARDY: The kid is so stuffed he's liable to vomit.

TROTSKY: When the truth pukes...the revolution is surely at hand!

ROSA: *(To Justin)* I hope you are vegetarian.

JUSTIN: I'm not throwing up for anybody!

IVANNA: Come on Justin....I know my position! *(She grabs Justin presses against him face-to-face)*

JACQUOT: *(Coming up behind him)* And I know where to put my hands. *(Jacquot and Ivanna then move about forcefully dragging Justin around sideways)*

VERA: No wonder the truth often seems a bit dodgy.

LENIN: They get away with far more than that. No need to dance around when you can just stand truth on its head.

IVANNA: That's easiest of all. *(Before Justin can react Ivanna and Jacquot flip him over, each holding a leg)*

HARDY: Better get a mop and bucket. A big mess is about to decorate your floor.

VERA: Why bother with plausibility when you can display a fucked-up real truth?

STALIN: Now that's more to my liking.

LENIN: But it's still not the real truth.

HARDY: That's because it hasn't hit the floor. Just wait.

JUSTIN: *(Breaking free and getting on his feet)* Dammit!...I'm sick of being fucked-over!  
*(Said as if 'truth' is speaking)*

IVANNA: Finally....The real truth emerges! *(Hugs Justin)*

JUSTIN: And it says: Let me out of this fucking madhouse!

ROSA: Even if it means the end of philosophizing?

JUSTIN: Fuck philosophy!

ROSA: And the state!

LENIN: Now it's the administration of things!

ROSA: Imagine...A society that will support the full development of the individual!

STALIN: Your imagination is already remarkably well developed.

HARDY: I'm all for pursuing one's dreams, but...

STALIN:...you know that nothing can be accomplished without one's feet firmly planted on the ground.

IVANNA: We see the contradiction resolving itself right before our eyes.

*(Ivanna and Jacquot push Stalin and Hardy closer together)*

JACQUOT: Stalinism made its transition to capitalism just when capitalism entered its sickness unto death.

STALIN: Ah, but note the prescience of my nominal communists. When they got fed up with lazy workers they transitioned to a state-managed capitalism. Now other capitalist states are doing much the same because of the failings of their stupidly greedy capitalists. The beauty of dialectical materialism!

VERA:....The world on crutches?!



LENIN: The dialectics of failure!

ROSA: Face it, Joey boy, your gang just crossed over!

HARDY: We'll, I'm crossing nothing!....I'm a free enter-priser all the way...I'll never exit this prize.

VERA: As a new social capitalist you will still have license to freely abuse the masses.

JUSTIN: Get out before the shit hits the bed.

VERA: You will still be in the game....

HARDY:....While being part of someone else's.

JUSTIN: How much longer do you think they can keep the plates spinning?

HARDY: What!.....Now you agree with your sister?

JUSTIN: Not at all. Your future is doomed...hers is futile. There's got to be some sort of common ground between the doomed and the futile.

IVANNA: Doomed!

JACQUOT: Futile!

*(They both move toward Justin)*

IVANNA and JACQUOT:  
Common Ground!

JUSTIN: *(Moving away)* Stay away from me!

STALIN: Seriously, Hardy, even rats know when it's time to leave the sinking ship.

HARDY: Like they left yours?!

STALIN: Ten years after the reestablishment of capitalism the majority say life was better with me! Some say historical necessity is fatalism, but I say it's naturalism, and I accept it.

VERA: In lieu of going down with the ship, you just reorient yourself in line with historical necessity.

HARDY: You people think that you know the mind of the capitalist...that all it cares

about is power and privilege. Sure, that's part of it, but we see that as a reward for getting things done. Do you think everyone dreams of becoming a capitalist? No sir!....Most people just want to do things while leaving the responsibility for getting it done to others.

ROSA: Aren't you about done with something that is done for?

HARDY: The system is not failing...It's simply going through a normal process of resetting.

VERA: It needs to be booted, not rebooted.

ROSA: You won't be able to whistle passed this graveyard.

HARDY: We capitalists aren't afraid of a fight...Don't sell this system short.

JUSTIN: That's just what you should do. Imagine that you manage a gigantic hedge fund. You see that the system is failing so you adopt a strong short position...

HARDY: With what?!....How do I buy a put on a dying system?...Where?

JUSTIN:....In house, like Goldman Sachs.

HARDY: Fine...and then the system dies...where's the profit?

VERA: When other capitalists are jailed or marched to the nearest wall, you are saved because you bet on the system's downfall.

LENIN: Don't all good capitalists cash-out in times of stress?

JUSTIN: *(To Hardy)* What they're trying to say is that the system is now like that furniture you hate.

HARDY: What?

JUSTIN: You know...those clunky tables and chairs.

HARDY: Oh...that Stickle/Wright stuff....Ten times more wood holding up the working part of the thing!

JUSTIN: It's like they didn't know what the hell they were doing so they just kept throwing wood at it.

HARDY: Say no more...The more wood, the more certainty of collapse. I have to take an anti-nausea pill every time I think of it.

IVANNA: The same happens to me when I see a guy wearing a belt *and* suspenders.

VERA: The more medicine a body requires, the nearer it is to death.

HARDY: Enough with the metaphors!...Social systems are not bodies...They don't die!  
Capitalism is resilient...It falls and then keeps getting up.

JACQUOT: Like a car that breaks down every 50 miles!

IVANNA: Are we there yet?!

VERA: Junk it!

JUSTIN: *(To Vera)* Remember your cyclical imagery? *(Moves his arm from high to low as it circles up and down)* This is what actually happens. *(As his arm moves downward in the circle pattern it stops in the middle and moves slowly in a horizontal direction)*

HARDY: Aha!...Saved by stagnation!

JUSTIN: The life force between boom and bust.

ROSA: But you can't fool enervating entropy.

VERA: Humpty Dumpty!

IVANNA: *(Sung to Lullaby)* Let it die....

JACQUOT:....We won't cry.

VERA: We'll just say: *Goodbye!*

HARDY: But isn't the system recovering?

STALIN: Yes...There is light at the end of the funnel.

LENIN: If a person is rushed to the hospital with kidney failure and they place him on dialysis to keep him alive, would you say the person is recovering?

VERA: Trillions of devices....

IVANNA:....and counting...

VERA:....coursing through the veins of this dying system....It's like somebody dropping dead on a sidewalk. Two people pick him up and drag him along on his feet and the news outlets scream....

JACQUOT:....miraculous recovery!

VERA: The next burst bubble will take us from blood-sucking vampirism to flesh-eating zombification!

IVANNA: Except when a social system kills most of the people under it....Then it also kills itself!

JACQUOT: *(To Ivanna)* Might that be a positive thing?

IVANNA: *(To Jacquot)* It depends...How long is your telomere?

VERA: Think of it as a natural selection for the ruling class.

JUSTIN: Dad, what they're telling you is: Give it a try...or die.

VERA: No!...You are saying: Let's make concessions to fix up this criminal system. We are saying: No form of capitalism is acceptable. The future is either capitalism in its fascist form or a socialist democracy.

JUSTIN: What I'm saying is that what you people would find acceptable is unachievable, therefore, let's try to improve what we've got. Like the wise man said...*If you don't get what you want, then you must want what you've got!*

HARDY: Oh! *(Holding throat)* Justin!!!...

JUSTIN: *(Putting arm around Hardy's shoulder)* Dad!...What's wrong?!

HARDY: You're like the clunky furniture!...*You* are making me sick!

JUSTIN: Me?!!!

HARDY: Your ideas are like throwing extra chunks of wood at the problem. It doesn't solve it or strengthen it. It's all just a lie to help you get through the life you have chosen.

JUSTIN: As if you, of all people, can justify being opposed to lying!

HARDY: Not to oneself!...Why that's....that's pure cowardice! I know that I can get through the remainder of my life as happy as a clam, but to dupe myself into believing that this mess can be propped up indefinitely...why I'd rather see the damned thing collapse!

JUSTIN: So what are you going to do?...Join them!

HARDY: I don't know...There is Vera...and even you to think about.

VERA: And maybe, after us, you can give a few seconds thought to the human race?

STALIN: You see! (*Pointing to Hardy*) Evidence of the dialectical transformation of the bourgeoisie!

ROSA: You mean evidence of class collaboration if we merge with the bourgeoisie qua bourgeoisie.

HARDY: I'm not merging with anyone. If the capitalist vehicle is sputtering your socialist ideals only seem so fine by comparison because you can't even get your proletarian bus out of the garage...

JUSTIN:...and the one time you did you ended up with him! (*Pointing to Stalin*)

VERA: We know precisely why that happened and how to avoid a recurrence.

JUSTIN: Then start your damn engine and let's see if it moves!

(*Brief pause*)

JACQUOT: Right.....We know how to do that....Let's....Start!!

IVANNA: Engine...Energy!!...The proletariat..Let's rise them up!

JACQUOT: You mean like an evangelical movement?

ROSA: No...but a movement!....A secular movement!....A political mass movement!

LENIN: Yes, something that will break down the political machinery that keeps people supporting what they are against.

TROTSKY: A movement transitioning to a revolutionary political party.

ROSA: No...First we must have a revolutionary mass movement out of which a political organization will develop that can demolish the old order and create a new one.

VERA: Trouble is...Most people think political action is just voting.

IVANNA: (*she and Jacquot act out this exchange*) The party in power is against everything that we are for...

JACQUOT: Then let's vote for the out party which is also against everything we are for but because we voted against the party that is most *actively* against what we are for....

IVANNA:....We'll imagine that they've just experienced a severe slap in the face...

(*Each swings one hand toward the others...and misses*)...

JUSTIN:....And that's why nothing changes...Most people are just plain stupid.

LENIN: It's false consciousness....What people think no longer reflects reality due to the relentless propagandizing of the ruling class.

VERA: False consciousness is a more or less consciously applied shield....A mask for legitimate fear and despair. We are materialists...Consciousness derives from something real...not ideas.

TROTSKY: The court jester knew that....and was the person most likely to survive.

ROSA: Then so-called brainwashing is like hypnotism, it can't work unless fully accepted by the subject.

LENIN: Hmm...That would mean revolutionary energy is maintained just below the surface.

ROSA: Yes!...The energy released by this entropic system is ready to explode into the building of a new one!

TROTSKY: It's like punctuated equilibrium!

ROSA: Nothing hardens the working masses for the battle to come than a mass strike and the actions taken by the ruling class to suppress it.

VERA: Please, everyone, do curb your enthusiasm! We still have a way to go to get there from here...

HARDY:...Aha!..Robyn....or Vera.....You can see their problem. These people have no understanding of popular culture let alone any knowledge of how to connect with it. That's where the most advanced marketing methods....

JUSTIN: *(To Hardy)*...What do you think you are doing? This is not national take your daughter to a revolution day. They are trying to work out ways to destroy your system! Let us leave them to their pipe dreams.

HARDY: Now hold on, boy! Son or not you have very little understanding of where I'm coming from. Like many of the ruling set I've always dreamed of leaving a legacy. Right now all I can visualize is my name listed on a monument dedicated to the rottenest bastards of the old order. Capitalism is clearly finished as a dynamic system, and I have no desire to live under capitalism in its fascist form. My area of expertise is mass marketing on the basis of creative destruction, and now I discern that my daughter is something of a chip off the old block...Can't you see what's coming together here?...

JUSTIN: Only a perfect storm of stupidity! What are you going to do – Teach them a modernized version of that hippy, dippy, yippy political shit?

VERA: No...and we don't want any normal politicking either.

JUSTIN: Then dad should settle on the 'none of the above' movement and take an early retirement.

VERA: No, because...

HARDY: (*As if quizzing her*) Why?...

VERA:...the system's survival depends on people walking away from it...even disenchanting bosses.

HARDY: Exactly. And the solution is contained within the framework of creative destruction...a positive confronts and destroys a negative...it neither seeks to form itself apart from the negative or interact with it.

ROSA: Hey, wait a second! That's sort of Marxistic – the negation of the negation is the absolute positive.

LENIN: What do you expect?....They're capitalists...all they know and possess is appropriated from others.

TROTSKY: Yeah, like their *paradigm shift*.

ROSA: But not "walking away" may just mean something as useless as voting. The entrenched security state will never allow a revolutionary outcome.

JACQUOT: So we say: *To hell with voting*.

VERA: On the contrary...

HARDY:...That's it...(*Clearly offering encouragement*)

VERA: We'll have an open vote that negates the phony process. A location in every city and town where people can go on election days and declare, *to hell with your bogus electoral system*.

IVANNA: We can have schoolkids publicly count the ballots...Make it a festive occasion...

JACQUOT:...It will be a real party atmosphere.

JUSTIN: Nobody will believe the count.

VERA: Masses of people visibly rejecting the official process will be a sure sign of honesty!

JUSTIN: Those in power could care less....They are just wasting their votes.

VERA: Oh...? Barely half the electorate now votes in national election and even fewer at the local level. Imagine if they called an election and no one came. But let 's give them a break and say that maybe 12% of the electorate votes for the two parties. The political system is de-legitimized. They might be forced to get rid of the House of Lords....Establish a parliamentary system with proportional representation.... Anything to get a validating number to sanction their rule. Whatever the response weakens them.

IVANNA: Should they dare to make the vote compulsory, we will encourage an invalid ballot and still hold our vote.

TROTSKY: A parliamentary system with its tiny bits of political representation may be enough to satisfy the opposition.

LENIN: Not for long..The experience of forcing concessions of the ruling class will lead to more demands....That negative ballot may be an opening, but then you must develop a political program that keeps the demands in line with actions that undermine capitalist state power.

HARDY: *(Relishing how this scheme may be sold to the public)* Then stay with the negative...we don't want them to do anything for us...we will force them to stop doing things against us!

ROSA: All well and good, but it's not the political machinery that ultimately preserves capitalist rule.

VERA: It's the armed forces of the capitalist state!

IVANNA: *(Approaching Jacquot as soldier)* Oh!!!...My Hero!!!!

JACQUOT: Yes, darlin'...Back from Afghanistan, Iraq, Haiti, El Salvador, Panama, Grenada, Libya, and god knows where else...Spreading democracy by making every nation a shithole version of ourselves.

IVANNA: And you did all that just to PROTECT US!!!

JACQUOT: Certainly!...Now, are you the one handing out paychecks?! *(Brief pause)*

VERA: Mercenary scabs!....Traitors to the peoples of the world!

HARDY: Even so...They will be a tough nut to crack.

VERA: Beneath all the heroic bullshit there is reality...They know what they've done. That's why they require a steady drumbeat of hero talk, parades, salutes at sporting events...even school children...

*(Ivanna as a worshipful schoolgirl hands a card to soldier Jacquot. He opens it and is*



*overwhelmed with emotion)*

...The truly innocent being made to use that innocence in support of killers of children like them! *(To Hardy)* This fuckin' system has got to go!

HARDY: But preaching the truth will get us nowhere.

JACQUOT: Reveal it...

IVANNA:....Show it...not talk it!

JACQUOT: SHOW!...There is a reason why talk is cheap!

IVANNA: We need to steal something from the thieves. Turn one of their icons against them.

*(pause while all think)*

VERA: LINCOLN!.... *(brief pause)*

ROSA:...Their greatest and most admired political leader!...

LENIN:...The man who led America's only real revolution!...

TROTSKY:...Who happened to be a friend of Karl Marx....."Labor is prior to, and superior to, capital"....

VERA: – "This country belongs to the people that inhabit it....Whenever they grow weary of their existing government, they can exercise their constitutional right to amend it, or their revolutionary right to overthrow it."

HARDY: A nice quote, but you have to connect the words to the product you are selling by an appropriate action.

IVANNA: We have to make the point with an act.

JACQUOT: How about raiding Harper's Ferry?...John Brown is even better.

VERA: No, even though I love the guy, John Brown is too polarizing. We must derive a reasonable solution from the problem itself.

*(Brief pause)*

LENIN: Haven't American soldiers shot down Americans even after the Civil War?

TROTSKY: And you now have an all-volunteer force.

ROSA: But we can't preach.

IVANNA: (*Approaching soldier Jacquot*) Oh!..Please!...Please!..Be a good, decent and loyal American soldier and don't shoot us down when we exercise our Lincolnian natural rights!

(*Brief pause*)

HARDY: LOYALTY!...That's it!...Throw loyalty back into the faces of the militarists and right-wingers!

JUSTIN: But, Dad...*You* are a right-winger!...Now you want them to tear down the house that you live in?!

HARDY: I have no interest in living in a house that can only be kept standing via a police state.

VERA: Leave it to the liberal to remind the right-winger about his class duties!

HARDY: (*To Justin*) There's something you liberals never understood about us. Conservatives accept the lie that their supposedly superior qualities earned them a life of privilege, while at the same time being totally indifferent about the veracity of such a claim. But you liberals really think you *are* superior, even if nowhere near the top of the heap, and it is the shamefulness of that thought that makes you what you are.

IVANNA: (*Approaching Justin*) So all this time you've had shameful thoughts?

JACQUOT: (*Also approaching*) Liberally dispersed.

JUSTIN: I've neither thought nor said anything that I would consider shameful.

JACQUOT: (*To Ivanna*) Notice the sense of superiority.

IVANNA: (*Checking her watch*) Isn't it about time for your Nation magazine reader's group meeting? (*She gives him a shove*)

JUSTIN: No need of that...I'll leave on my own...You kiddies can continue with your playtime...I need some adult refreshment...(As he begins to go offstage turns and shouts to the others) A POX ON YOU ALL!

HARDY: A POCS?!...P-O-C-S...Well done, Justin! Still a trace of the old man in you! We'll give you an honorable mention if we use it in our spread.

(*They all watch Justin depart*)

TROTSKY: (*To Hardy*) You see...the working class has only its labor power to sell...their mind remains open although often ignorant. But the petty bourgeois

intellectual sells his mind, his person. That not only enslaves him to the system but makes him a highly developed stupid person.

HARDY: And me?

TROTSKY: You have the product of your exploitation to sell...You can do what you like with your self.

HARDY: And right now it's working on the sale of the millennium.

*(Brief pause)*

VERA: *(Thinking)* How about a petition drive asking all military personnel to sign a pledge based on Lincoln's first inauguration statement? Something like: 'Since Lincoln declared that Americans have the right to throw out the system, you will have no hesitation in signing this pledge to never use arms against the American people.'

IVANNA: *(Handing soldier Jacquot a paper...He looks stunned as he reads it)* But, boy!...will they in fact hesitate big time! *(To Jacquot. Pointing to paper)* It's Lincoln!

JACQUOT: *(Recovering from the shock)* And that will be writing on the wall to the American public: They won't pledge not to shoot us, therefore, they will shoot us if ordered to...and paid.

LENIN: But in that vast military machine some certainly will sign the pledge...and many more will do so mentally...thus splitting the armed forces of the ruling class....a necessary prerequisite to revolution.

TROTSKY: Finally...We arrive at the revolutionary act itself! 1905...1917...My area of expertise.

LENIN: An organized structure, a political party, is needed for those dedicated to revolutionary social change. Otherwise you will have nothing but an unfocused mess.

ROSA: Organized and focused action: Yes. But that must happen in the revolution, not before.

VERA: Haven't you placed the chicken before the egg...the cart before the horse?

ROSA: A revolutionary party formed before the revolution is necessarily a party of ideas. As a propaganda vehicle it is fine, but if situated at the head of a revolutionary action it will serve as fetter on that action once it explodes into revolution.

TROTSKY: So we sit back and wait for a spontaneous uprising?

ROSA: What were you doing in 1905?...And 1917 came about after many months of raw class conflict. There was nothing spontaneous about them!

LENIN: But on October 25 a well-defined and executed action overthrew the capitalist state.

ROSA: Better to say that it completed that phase of the revolution, and it could easily have been a disaster had the enemy read and acted upon what a Stalin-edited paper told them in advance – The exact date of the uprising!

STALIN: I was just printing Kamenev and Zinoviev's statement.

ROSA: And *they* were real Marxists! We must not be dominated by theory. We have an active causation...Class conflict...which creates friction...which creates a spark...which causes an uprising.

LENIN: ISKRA!...I know it well.

VERA: Yes...We've discussed that.

IVANNA: We'll be the little fuses.

JACQUOT: AKA: Agitators.

VERA: The vote and petition drives set the stage.

ROSA: Ingredients: Angry workers and revolutionary agitators among them. The situation advances to the point where there is a strike, an occupation or something similar. What is crucial is that whatever the demands, there will be no compromise. The vote and petition drives will have clearly revealed the enemy. Those in rebellion seek to expand their actions by forming ties with those who have similar grievances. Unity means that all demands must be met before anyone halts their struggle. And then finally...

HARDY:...Before scarcely any of that happens the authorities will have stormed the place, or arrested the pickets, or whatever...

ROSA:...And FINALLY...we arrive at the most critical part: Attacks by the bosses' goons are not just resisted, but are resisted by every means possible. Every confrontation is open-ended; either the enemy capitulates or it becomes a life or death struggle. It's at this point that some in the forces of order decide to change sides. The key to a successful revolution is not to restrain and closely guide the working class but to lead them to situations where they must fight.

TROTSKY: Reverse the momentum of fear.

LENIN: With each confrontation the forces of order will wonder if the big one, the one that will overwhelm them, is next.

HARDY: So there is strength even in defeat?

ROSA: Only surrender or compromise is a defeat. The capitalists have often justified wars as an important strengthening of the citizenry. There is an element of truth in the assertion. An all-out fight against the boss will be a peak life experience for those that participated. They will become the natural leaders of future struggles. Word of their valiant deeds will inspire other workers and the youth. Finally....a chance to fight for themselves and not as cannon fodder for the bosses.

HARDY: A mountain of meat to the marketing man!...if you will excuse the expression.

VERA: However stated, it was their armed goons that attacked the workers...

JACQUOT: On orders of a capitalist state that received the approval of only 12% of the people...

IVANNA:...By forces that refused to sign a pledge not to gun down Americans.

VERA: Yes...But while we are advancing toward system change the reformists, in a desperate last-ditch campaign to promote a peaceful alternative, will redouble their begging efforts.

JACQUOT: Please!...Please!....Contribute and Save Yourself!....For the cost of a month's worth of Starbucks you can save from destruction for a year 100 square meters of Amazon rainforest!

IVANNA: Please!...Show Americans that you are human!...Any amount will help us get little Joey the life-saving transplant that the office manager of his health insurance provider determined had not been proven effective by the American Society of Office Managers.

JACQUOT: Yes!...Make America a just society!...Please send letters and e-mails to the attorney general for the release of Hakim who was arrested on terrorism charges because he overheard a government provocateur call for the destruction of the U.S. and didn't immediately report him to the authorities.

IVANNA: And don't forget...We are a land of plenty!...A measly one dollar and ninety-two cents can buy a hungry person a delicious Thanksgiving Dinner – So while you are feasting on turkey and all the trimmings with your family you will be comforted in knowing that at the local armory 500 people are seated at long plywood tables enjoying just the sort of meal you would have had in school if you hadn't brought your lunch instead.

VERA: Practically all of those social improvement outfits are funded by those doing the damage they purport to want to fix. Specialized telethons raising real money and false hopes.

TROTSKY: They will be like Father Gapon....creating more rage than peace.

HARDY: Hmm...Imagine all of that being acted out...Very effective...though limited! Not to brag, but we capitalists have brilliantly (and insidiously) tied the middle class and much of the working class to the system by compelling them to invest in it through government created retirement schemes, profit sharing, worker-management cooperation, etc....Kind of like what Murder Inc. did with new recruits.

VERA: Then there are the involuntary self-employed; either because there are no jobs, or because they have one that doesn't pay a living wage.

HARDY: Yes, but that's a natural systemic adjustment...nothing insidious about it.

ROSA: We don't care about the real middle class...

TROTSKY:...The capitalists are so fearful of the working class that they've defined them out of existence!

LENIN: Workers need to know that investment income is part of the surplus value created by, but not paid to, them and their fellow workers.

HARDY: Remember when we still had a shred of honesty and called it “unearned income?”

JACQUOT: *(He gives Ivanna a product. She hands him a small sum of money. He looks at it)* But this is just enough to buy the bare necessities!

IVANNA: Too bad for you! *(She turns and sells the product to Vera for a bundle of cash)*

VERA: Imagine this: We see a mass of rats scurrying about in a granary, and then these words: ‘The capitalist is as necessary to production as are the vermin that consumes one third of our grain are necessary for its distribution!’

HARDY: The rat image is good...but we need something simple, direct, and American...

JACQUOT:...Hmm...something simple, direct, and American....Then it would have to be a cartoon...with rats!...And not Mickey!...

IVANNA:...Tom and Jerry?....

JACQUOT:....No....There's no substance....

HARDY: Mighty Mouse!...Is he still around?....There you had mice stealing from people you never saw. The resident cat tried to stop them, and just as he was about to dispatch the mini thieves Mighty Mouse would swoop in to the rescue and beat the cat to a pulp. In our presentation the mice are capitalists stealing that which rightfully belongs to the working class. The cat representing the most advanced elements of the working class

moves to defend his or her class against this exploitation. The ruling class counters by sending in its biggest goon rat...This creature should be personified as someone most in the public eye for making the rich richer and the poor poorer....

VERA: Ben Bernanke!...or now Yellen.

HARDY:...Very well...Bernanke as Mighty Mouse and Yellen as his consort swoop in and pummel our proletarian cat, and just when defeat seems certain, there is a mass cat attack in response.

IVANNA: Maybe we should have dogs teaming up with the cats...kind of a demonstration of class solidarity.

JACQUOT: And thus uniting to two major classes of animal lovers.

HARDY: Okay....The capitalist system is circling the drain. Problem: Most people are more comfortable living in an established order than in OJT to create a new one.

ROSA: Production has already been socialized within modern capitalism...They know how to work together.

TROTSKY: That's how they were able to create the most perfect form of government, a soviet, or council system....a transparent workers democracy. No one taught them.

HARDY: All well and good, but when you start talking Marxism and communism...most people will think of him. (*Looking toward Stalin*)

LENIN: And he can straighten them out. (*To Stalin*) Tell them what I learned only too late.

STALIN: (*Room darkens. Stalin seated with third-degree light on him. Said in sob-story manner*) My assumed father was often absent. My mother was an extremely religious person. The local priest was frequently in the house, at times probably fucking my mother....

ROSA: (*Unseen*)...Don't blame your mother for that!

STALIN:...Many people believed that the priest was my real father...

VERA: (*Unseen*)....And to think, some people are still against abortion rights!

STALIN:...I received an ecclesiastical education. That included a seminary where I was taught to squeal on my friends and anyone who trusted me if doing so served the interests of the institution and myself – I added that last bit. The religious life turned me against any real work. I no longer wanted to be a cobbler like my nominal father. Instead I'd put in practice what religion taught me – develop a scheme that convinces people to work

toward my interests....

VERA: (*Unseen*)...And kill them if they had other ideas..

HARDY: (*Unseen*)...So far it's the morality of any good business school...

STALIN:.....If you are powerful enough whatever you do is just.

VERA: That *just* is *just* only if you do not get caught.

STALIN: Correct...But I did get caught, so I became a spy for the Okhrana to make myself good again, this time with a can't lose plan. The rotten system of autocratic Tsarism was doomed, but there was no telling how long its demise would take. Since the Bolsheviks were the wave of the future, I decided to join them while informing for Tsarism. I used my Okhrana connections to move up the Bolshevik hierarchy by dispatching competitors. The plan was working perfectly when along came that damn Malinovsky!

LENIN: To think I was pleased as punch to finally have two real workers at high level positions in the party....And they both turned out to be lumpenproletarian Tsarist spies!

STALIN: You've got to be a worker to know one.

ROSA: Ilyich...You made a mistake thinking that robbing banks was work.

HARDY: That would make your average banker a worker!...That's just it...You make too much of the crimes of Mr. Stalin. We will make a series of short presentations equating Stalinism with modern corporate business practices. A corporation can borrow money, buy materials on credit, make products, sell them even if they make people sick, go out of business, and never pay back anyone as long as earnings have been transferred to the people that own and control the corporation. A perfectly legal act of theft.

STALIN: I almost got killed doing the same thing!

LENIN: HONESTY!!

STALIN: Well...I was usually the lookout peeking around the corner as they did the job.

HARDY: So you see, corporations, like Stalinism, have committed every crime imaginable – Both are disembodied doctrines serving as vehicles for the criminal activity of those that control them.

VERA: But they'll still say that Stalin's Stalinism was derived from Marx's communism.

HARDY: Ha!...Vera...You should have taken more history and fewer theater arts courses. Official approval of corporate criminality came from the 14th Amendment which was



enacted to protect the newly freed slave from having that freedom reversed. The creation of an entity that permits people to get away with theft and murder was dishonestly derived from one of the most humane of constitutional acts. Just as the 14th Amendment cannot be made responsible for corporate crime, Marxism is not responsible for deviants using its name. And now with Stalinism becoming incorporated, the argument is a moot one.

LENIN: Stalinism self-destructed as an ostensible version of communism but it had a natural replacement – capitalism. Might Hardy be an avatar of things to come among the capitalists?

VERA: Impossible. Stalinism was counter-revolutionary from its inception...It never had to make a complete reversal as capitalists as a class must do in order to accept a communist revolution.

TROTSKY: Yet humans as individuals are amazingly diverse and changeable.... Engels was an outright industrialist, managing a factory and ‘exploiting’ workers while at the same time a communist working to overthrow the system.

LENIN: Can that surplus value be said to be exploited when used to help finance the communist movement?

ROSA: Not any more than Marx's stock market earnings. But early capitalists differed greatly from those that followed. Many honestly believed that modern mass production would solve all the material needs of humanity. When it didn't, they soured on the system.

VERA: Sometimes I wonder if the worst of them are just begging to be overthrown....egging on workers and the poor by undermining basic entitlements and accusing them of being moochers.

ROSA: It's built into their system. They must always be right at the edge. When they supply the least input expense in order to maximize the output value of a product or service, it means that what is produced tends to barely cross the line between crap and a product with reliable use value.

TROTSKY: Marx in his early unpublished writings might say something like – *The more the capitalist makes nice to the worker, the more he senses a weakening in the secure barrier between them.* It's like playing the hard-cop soft-cop game. It can be worthwhile at times to assume the soft-cop role, but the real capitalist is always the hard cop.

ROSA: Even the softest cop is armed!

VERA: *No matter what they say or do, the bottom line is to create fear in you.*

HARDY: And there is the basis for your most important marketing campaign – Being in any way a supporter of your oppressor makes no sense. It can only be explained as a fear induced face-saving gesture.

IVANNA: *(As a TV interviewer – Jacquot a worker supporter of capitalism)* I understand that you are the campaign manager in this district for Mr. Charles A. Capitalist...as a member of the working class is it a cause of concern that Mr. Capitalist wants to eliminate unemployment compensation.

JACQUOT: Not at all. I can tell you many stories of workers using unemployment as a long paid holiday. Our society is built upon an honest days work for an honest days pay...it's..

IVANNA:...So you have never had the need for unemployment pay?...

JACQUOT:...No...well, I did need it right after I completed military service...How was I going to live while looking for a job?...

IVANNA:...Then you agree that unemployment benefits are a good thing for people looking for work?

JACQUOT: *(Long pause...and hesitating)* Gee...I guess...sometimes...

IVANNA: At this point we'll have a large structure labeled capitalism begin to collapse...

HARDY: Hey!....You've stolen the *Monty Python* sketch!...

IVANNA: Fuck them!...Let them sue us, it'd be good publicity....But just before the structure makes it to earth....

*(continuing)*

JACQUOT: No....No....I was just your typical greedy worker back then...I didn't really need that free money....Why, I could have easily lived out of my car until I found work...

IVANNA: Then we do it with everything...universal health care, paid sick days, paid maternity leave, raising the minimum wage...social security, medicare and medicaid, etc. And then good things that we've never had.

JACQUOT: And each time a little enlightenment enters my mind the edifice will begin its collapse...until eventually I'm unable to set it upright.

VERA: Good. But we also need something with broader appeal. *(Brief pause)*

HARDY: What's more talked about than climate change? That's a concern of every thinking person.

VERA: Including all liberals and many conservatives. We'll note the utter absurdity of thinking that capitalism with its profit first and *externalities* dead last can ever be part of the solution. And how annoyed liberals get when capitalists continue to behave like capitalists. It's like being angry with your pet dog because he hasn't yet learned to have dinner ready when you arrive home from work.

IVANNA: *(Arrives home. Looks in microwave. Stares at Jacquot as dog who does nothing but look at Ivanna in an uncomprehending manner)* Nothing!...You've done nothing! How many times have I showed you how to open the fridge, grab the container, carry it to the microwave, put it inside and press the button?! *(Looks around apartment)* You do nothing but make a mess! And you still shit all over the place! *(Grabs Jacquot by the neck and pushes his face into the shit)* That's shit!...It stinks and is unpleasant. I'm going to keep pushing your ugly mug into it until you learn to shit on the *New York Times*.

VERA: And then we have the intelligentsia....As Mr. Trotsky said...The house slaves of the ruling class...The people that make their living by selling their reasoning power to the bosses.

HARDY: Personhood was conferred upon an abstract entity called the corporation, and then real human beings sell their personhood to the corporate cipher!

VERA: And that corrupts the intellect...trashes intelligence.

JACQUOT: *(Handing papers to Ivanna)* Here, you should buy these.

IVANNA: *(Looking at papers)* What are these....pollution warrants?

JACQUOT: Yeah...They're designed to cut down on pollution.

IVANNA: How...By allowing me to pollute more?

JACQUOT: But don't you see...it will cost you more to pollute more?

IVANNA: Then why the hell should I buy them?

JACQUOT: Because it makes it easier to pass on the cost to your customers, besides, some day they may try to stop you from polluting.

IVANNA: Who's going to stop me?

JACQUOT: Why...maybe congress....the president...the courts...

IVANNA: *(Handing back papers)* I've already bought those warrants.

*(brief pause)*

VERA: Even the common sense of the uneducated is superior to that rubbish!

HARDY: Then it's agreed?

VERA: Yes...Direct democracy in the form of a transparent and interconnected council system; The state abolished by placing police and military duties directly in the hands of the productive class....

ROSA:....as a short-term public duty...

LENIN:...Let us begin....*Party for the Overthrow of the Capitalist System!*

ROSA: Wait a second!...I've stated very sound objections to the use of that term, *party.*'

VERA: But we want to keep it POCS.

LENIN: You aren't thinking of substituting *People!*

VERA: Certainly not!

TROTSKY: How about *Proletarians?*

IVANNA: It's such a dated term – although not it's definition.

JACQUOT: Too often used in a derogatory way...

HARDY: How so?

JACQUOT: It's demeaning to call someone a prole...it's like saying someone is ordinary, common, nothing special...*you are nothing but a plebeian – a prole.*

HARDY: Then that is just the term to use! Remember...You are fighting against those who not only oppress and exploit, but also give thanks with insults.

*(Brief pause)*

VERA: Hmmm...*Proles for the Overthrow of the Capitalist System!* I like it.

LENIN: We old-timers certainly won't object.

ROSA: Make sure you include a definition: the class that does not own or control the means of production, communication and distribution...

TROTSKY: ...and is not part of the security apparatus that keeps those that do in power.  
*(Brief pause..then to his comrades)* Shall we leave them?

ROSA: Yes, but not before reminding them of their two enemies: one the ruling capitalist class; the other a mishmash of supposed allies who will promote various forms of compromise that would contaminate the revolutionary spirit. Defeat is preferable. The errors in their positions must be exposed through rigorous analysis.

LENIN: Yes, but not the sort of sarcastic, pedantic hair-splitting that is designed to mask the whole of the opposing viewpoint being criticized behind a mass of distorted particulars.

TROTSKY: Where each phrase of an opposing statement is analyzed so that false deductions can be generalized.

VERA: The revolutionary act must be in the form of an undifferentiated process that can't be interpreted or equivocated into anything but the goal which it contains or it will dissipate into reformism.

LENIN: That way contradictions retain their meaning without the necessity of being pointed to.

IVANNA: *(To Jacquot)* Got that?

JACQUOT: Of course!!!

ROSA: Then we're off!

*(The comrades walk toward a door and turn. The two groups wave goodbye to each other. The door is opened and they depart single file – Rosa, Trotsky, Lenin and Stalin trailing)*

TROTSKY: *(To Lenin while pointing to Stalin)* Do we have to take him?

LENIN: We can't leave him behind...Besides he's our mistake. *(To Stalin)* Come on, Joe! *(Stalin is last out and all are unseen)* Close the door!!! *(Stalin returns and closes the door)*

[End - Revised edition 2017]

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