

Ain't Ethiopia:
Version for a Staged Reading

by
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The "stage" version of this script has detailed information about movement, lighting, sound design, etc. which, if read as part of a reading, would slow down the momentum of the play.

Therefore, I have edited the script into a "staged reading" version that turns stage directions into lines for the actors in order to keep the dramatic action flowing.

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION

After local whites lynch his wife as a suspected Communist, African-American Jesse Colton travels to Spain in 1937 to fight Franco. But there he finds that his real battle is with the fascists in the small Mississippi town from which he escaped and that he must return to face them down if his life, and his wife's death, is to have any meaning.

PRIMARY MAJOR CHARACTERS

- JESSE COLTON, 21, African-American
- OLIVER LUMET, 36, African-American
- LUZ BAROJA Y NESSI, 20s, Spanish

SECONDARY MAJOR CHARACTERS

Below are listed the roles for the UTILITY CHARACTERS. In addition to these roles are the following:

- UTILITY 1 -- AWAGU, anarchist from Ethiopia fighting in Spain
- UTILITY 2 -- JAMES, anarchist from Northern Ireland fighting in Spain
- UTILITY 3 -- DEWEY MARLOWE, journalist, Ernest Hemingway and Robert Capa wanna-be

UTILITY CHARACTERS -- The UTILITY CHARACTERS play the roles listed below, along with act:scene designation.

UTILITY CHARACTER 1 (female, African American)

- o Harlem Speaker -- 1:1
- o Marley Colton (JESSE's wife) -- 1:3, 1:13, 2:16
- o Woman In Church -- 1:7, 1:8
- o Nurse -- 1:14, 1:15

UTILITY CHARACTER 2 (male, Caucasian)

- o Policeman 1 -- 1:1
- o Red Neck -- 1:3, 2:16
- o Police Sergeant -- 1:7
- o Soldier -- 1:9, 1:10
- o Orderly -- 1:11
- o Blind Poet -- 1:13
- o Nationalist Soldier 1 -- 2:2
- o Hobo -- 2:9

UTILITY CHARACTER 3 (male, Caucasian)

- o Tom Milocz -- 1:4, 1:8
- o Policeman 1 -- 1:7
- o Captain Merriman -- 1:9, 1:14
- o Soldier -- 1:15

UTILITY CHARACTER 4 (male, between light- and dark-skinned)

- o Man On Street -- 1:6
- o Harlem Minister -- 1:7, 1:8
- o Man Handing Out Rifles -- 1:9, 1:10
- o Soldier -- 1:14, 1:15
- o Sniper -- 1:15, 2:1
- o Mayor -- 2:4
- o Republican Soldier -- 2:7
- o Young Boy -- 2:12
- o Bum -- 2:17

UTILITY 5 (female, Caucasian)

- o Nurse -- 1:11, 1:14, 1:15
- o Doña Ibárruri -- 1:12
- o Isabel -- 2:4
- o Mrs. Swanson -- 2:11

UTILITY 6 (male, Caucasian)

- o Policeman 2 -- 1:1
- o Jose Luis Alonso -- 1:7
- o Soldier -- 1:9, 1:10
- o Doctor -- 1:11
- o Nationalist Soldier 2 -- 2:2
- o Largo -- 2:6
- o Colonel -- 2:7
- o Mayor -- 2:15, 2:16

UTILITY 7 (male, Caucasian)

- o Policeman 3 -- 1:1
- o Policeman 2 -- 1:7
- o Soldier -- 1:9, 1:10
- o Orderly -- 1:11
- o Waiter -- 1:12, 1:13
- o Nationalist Soldier 3 -- 2:2
- o Bellarmino -- 2:6
- o Colonel's Aide -- 2:7
- o Sheriff -- 2:15, 2:16
- o Editor -- 2:17

TIME/PLACE

- Mississippi, New York, Republican Spain, 1936 and 1937

NOTE FOR THE ACTORS

Actors must be dialectically versatile, especially in being able to speak Spanish (or fake it well) and speak a Spanish-accented English. Also, UTILITY 2 will need to do a northern Ireland Irish accent (from near Belfast).

Ain't Ethiopia

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UTILITY 3: STAGE DIRECTIONS
Harlem, 1936. A rally with black folks
surrounded by white policemen.

UTILITY 1: SPEAKER
Brothers and sisters, we stand in Harlem, in
1936, in the modern age, but in democratic Spain
the fascists under Franco want to slide back into
the middle ages!

UTILITY 3: STAGE DIRECTIONS
Jesse Colton appears, a man at the end of his
tether. He prepares to pick the pocket of Oliver
Lumet. He reaches, he reaches for that pocket --

UTILITY 1: SPEAKER
Mussolini, who raped our people in Ethiopia --
and Hitler, with his cock-eyed ideas about the
supremacy of white people -- If we don't stop the
fascists in Spain -- brothers, sisters -- please
listen --

UTILITY 3: STAGE DIRECTIONS
Jesse's hand is almost there --

UTILITY 1: SPEAKER
We need to fight the fascists, not among
ourselves --

OLIVER
But I grab Jesse's hand and shake it hard.
(to POLICEMEN)
Just an old friend playing a joke, officers.

UTILITY 1: SPEAKER
We need to go to Spain --

OLIVER
How are you doing, my man?

UTILITY 1: SPEAKER
-- because we could not go to Ethiopia to help
our brothers and sisters --

OLIVER
How's tricks?

UTILITY 1: SPEAKER
-- fight the Italian fascist barbarians --

OLIVER
My man, you a cat that's been gone too long!

UTILITY 1: SPEAKER
As my good friend said, "Spain ain't Ethiopia,
but it'll do."

UTILITY 2: POLICEMAN 1
All right, let's move your raggedy black asses
outta here.

UTILITY 1: SPEAKER
Watch your backs, my friends --

UTILITY 6: POLICEMAN 2
Come on, come on --

UTILITY 1: SPEAKER
-- we got our own fascists coming in --

UTILITY 7: POLICEMAN 3
Move it now!

UTILITY 1: SPEAKER
-- to take away our First Amendment.

OLIVER
(to JESSE)
Let us move on out.

UTILITY 3: STAGE DIRECTIONS
The Policemen come to the Speaker.

UTILITY 5: STAGE DIRECTIONS
The Speaker hands each of them a pamphlet.

UTILITY 1: SPEAKER
Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

UTILITY 4: STAGE DIRECTIONS
The Speaker jumps off the soap box and melts into
the crowd.

UTILITY 1: SPEAKER
Now come and get me, little piggies!

OLIVER
Let's get you to some food and a safe harbor, my
friend.

* * * * *

Act I, Scene 1

UTILITY 4: STAGE DIRECTIONS

A diner, a greasy spoon with red-and-white checked table cloths and wooden chairs.

UTILITY 5: STAGE DIRECTIONS

Jesse tears into the breakfast Oliver has bought him.

JESSE

Thanks. Thanks. This is great -- this is -- great -- okay, gotta go.

OLIVER

I lied.

JESSE

What?

OLIVER

You are gonna have to pay me something.

JESSE

I got no money. I got nothing.

OLIVER

You have a name.

JESSE

Everyone's got a name -- look, go -- I gotta [go]
--

OLIVER

So tell me your name.

JESSE

Man --

OLIVER

And I'll tell you who just fed a brother.

JESSE

A brother -- that's what I got to pay?

OLIVER

Sit down. Right there. Will not kill you. Now, one more time: what is your name?

JESSE

Jesse. Colton.

OLIVER

I reach into my back pocket. I can see that Jesse winces at the movement. Slowly, I pull out a small blue booklet and slide it across the table.

JESSE

I pick it up, but, man, I can't handle something like that!

(to OLIVER)

That -- that --

OLIVER

What?

JESSE

It says Communist Party!

OLIVER

Harlem Division.

JESSE

Shit shit shit shit shit shit shit --

OLIVER

Mississippi in your voice -- right? Am I right?

JESSE

Maybe -- maybe --

OLIVER

Texas myself.

JESSE

So what?

OLIVER

Jesse Colton from Mississippi, how'd you end up trashed in New York City ready to steal from a brother?

* * * * *

Act I, Scene 2

UTILITY 1: MARLEY COLTON

Jesse sees me in his mind as he last saw me -- a noose around my neck --

JESSE

Her dress torn, her body drilled by bullets --
"Cut that nigger Communist down! Cut her down!"
That's one of the nicer things they screamed at
my wife. At Marley Colton.

UTILITY 2: RED NECK

"Better dead than Red" --

JESSE

-- they screamed.

UTILITY 2: RED NECK

I spit on that lump of meat when we were done
with it.

JESSE

They burned the house. They burned Marley,
dragged her body through the dust tied to some
cracker's truck bumper. I hid -- in the kudzu,
in the shit, watching, not being able to -- not
being able to --

UTILITY 1: MARLEY COLTON

In his mind I reach out to him -- it calms him,
it brings him back --

JESSE

Not being able to do nothing for my Marley.
"Better dead than Red," they screamed. "Cut that
nigger Communist down!" they barked.

(JESSE howls)

Because she wanted people to get work relief.
Because she wanted to help niggers not be
niggers.

UTILITY 1: MARLEY COLTON

Goodbye Jesse.

OLIVER

I sit in silence with the diner swirling around
us.

(to JESSE)

I am sorry for your loss, Jesse. If you're
interested -- hey --

JESSE

Yeah.

OLIVER

If you're interested -- I can give you a chance
to fight those bastards, that did that to your

wife. I can. But first things first. You need a place to stay. Let's go.

JESSE

They said she was a Communist just 'cause she asked for some work relief. I didn't do nothing to stop 'em. I just ran. I just ran and ran and ran till I ended up here and --

OLIVER

At some point, first-name Jesse, last-name Colton, whether you gotta piss or they shut the door on you, you are going to have to get up from this table and do the rest of your life.

(to audience)

I take the salt shaker, put some salt in my hand, and throw it over his left shoulder.

(to JESSE)

Now you're protected. Come on.

* * * * *

Act I, Scene 3

UTILITY 7: STAGE DIRECTIONS

A street in Harlem Oliver knocks in a secret code on a metal door.

UTILITY 3: TOM MILOCSZ

I, Tom Milocsz, the three-headed dog, sit on the other side of that door.

UTILITY 7: STAGE DIRECTIONS

Tom buzzes them in to a dimly lit flophouse.

UTILITY 3: TOM MILOCSZ

The young buck that Oliver's got in tow looks at me like I'm missing something.

OLIVER

Which he is.

UTILITY 3: TOM MILOCSZ

Which I am -- my left eye -- the eye-patch over it's painted with a red hammer-and-sickle. Really classy.

OLIVER

Jesse, this is Tom.

UTILITY 3: TOM MILOCSZ

I'm the three-headed dog around here.

JESSE

What? What's he mean?

UTILITY 3: TOM MILOCSZ

Another bright fish, eh?

OLIVER

Easy on him. What do we have?

UTILITY 3: TOM MILOCSZ

I could put him in the closet --

OLIVER

Tom --

UTILITY 3: TOM MILOCSZ

Fifth row, ninth cot in -- 'sgot your name on it, chum-boy.

OLIVER

The name is Jesse Colton.

UTILITY 3: TOM MILOCSZ

Chum-boy Jesse Colton, then.

UTILITY 7: STAGE DIRECTIONS

Oliver moves to the door.

JESSE

When am I gonna see you --

OLIVER

Tomorrow, 10 AM, if you want.

(to TOM)

You can tell him where.

JESSE

Wait! Wait! None of you knows me from Adam's off ox.

OLIVER

We already know you, Jesse.

JESSE

No you don't.

UTILITY 3: TOM MILOCSZ

Know all about you and your kind.

OLIVER

Besides, why do we have to know you to do something for you?

JESSE

I wouldn't. I never did.

UTILITY 3: TOM MILOCSZ

Don't'cha just love 'em when they're raw and fresh?

OLIVER

I take my leave.

UTILITY 3: TOM MILOCSZ

He looks at me, pole-axed. I take a stab, hold up the book I'm reading.

(to JESSE)

Ever read this? You can read, can't you?

JESSE

I can read! What is that, and I'll tell you.

UTILITY 3: TOM MILOCSZ

The Communist Manifesto.

JESSE

No, I never --

UTILITY 3: TOM MILOCSZ

Know what "manifesto" means?

JESSE

No.

UTILITY 3: TOM MILOCSZ

You can read, right?

JESSE

Yeah.

UTILITY 3: TOM MILOCSZ

Siddown.

(to audience)

I point to my missing eye.

(to JESSE)

This is what reading the Manifesto got me.

JESSE

Why would I read it, then?

TOM

What's an eye for the truth? I keep reading it to keep reminding me. Fifth row, ninth one in. Take this with you.

JESSE

He hands me a copy of the book.

UTILITY 3: TOM MILOCSZ

Now leave me alone. Wait. Might as well clue you in: you stink. Peel the coat you got off on your carcass and toss it over there.

JESSE

Which I do.

UTILITY 3: TOM MILOCSZ

JESSE

I move into the flophouse, find my cot.

UTILITY 7: STAGE DIRECTIONS

And he's asleep before he knows what hits him.

* * * * *

Act I, Scene 4

UTILITY 6: STAGE DIRECTIONS

The next morning, at Oliver's office.

JESSE

I walk up the stairs -- boy, it is noisy!

UTILITY 6: STAGE DIRECTIONS

Shouts --

JESSE

Radios --

UTILITY 6: STAGE DIRECTIONS

Crockery breaking --

JESSE

A heavy thud, a slap --

UTILITY 6: STAGE DIRECTIONS

A full human symphony.

JESSE

I find the door.

UTILITY 6: STAGE DIRECTIONS

He knocks on it using the code he heard Oliver use the night before.

JESSE

And it opens.

OLIVER

He hath arrived. Welcome to the Harlem Division of the Communist Party. Grab a chair. Coffee? All we got is black.

JESSE

All right.

OLIVER

Doughnuts are a day old, but I think you can still chew 'em.

JESSE

Yeah -- sure. Thanks.

(to audience)

I try not to wolf it down, I'm so hungry, but --

OLIVER

Another? Ahh -- slower. Better. That demonstration yesterday -- remember that? Know what it was about?

JESSE

Couldn't hardly hear my own breathing yesterday. Couldn't hardly see my own hands.

OLIVER

See these posters?

JESSE

Yeah, of course --

OLIVER

Read me what they say.

JESSE

Spain. Lots of something called Spain. Espana [said without the "ñ"]. Where's Spain?

OLIVER

You are a delta boy.

JESSE

You don't have to rag on me.

OLIVER

You're no different than most these days.

JESSE

You still don't have to rag on me --

OLIVER

Spain could be a canned meat, for what most people know.

JESSE

Look, I never left Mississippi till now, never had to.

OLIVER

And the Mississippi's never left you, either, huh?

JESSE

And why don't you just quit --

OLIVER

And you're showing a little more kick today than you kicked yesterday.

JESSE

Got fuel in the tank -- makes a difference --

OLIVER

And I don't really care if you're full delta boy or not. Just listen. Yesterday, at the park, we were talking about Spain. We -- the "Communists" -- we organized that meeting, to raise support. That word still bother you?

JESSE

Which one?

OLIVER

Communist.

JESSE

You guys've been nice.

OLIVER

I get out of my chair and start pacing.

(to JESSE)

The democratic government in Spain -- that place, there -- a government elected by the people, has been attacked by an army general named Franco.

JESSE

Can I have another doughnut?

OLIVER

Third one you get on your own.

JESSE

Which I do.

OLIVER

Franco's connected to the church and the big landowners, who want it the way it was in the middle ages. These "middle ages" 've got everything to do with you.

JESSE

Don't know "middle ages." And I told you I don't know what Spain is, where Spain is.

OLIVER

Yes you do.

JESSE

No I don't. And anyway why would I care --

OLIVER

Franco is the "massah" -- you know that word?

JESSE

Course.

OLIVER

Franco and his fellow "massahs" want to keep the plantation just the way it's always been -- that sound familiar?

JESSE

As common as a cat.

OLIVER

And what have you ever done about "massah"?

JESSE

Cain't do nothing about "massah."

OLIVER

You do, they hang you, right?

JESSE

Beat you, burn you, cut your balls off -- kill your wife --

OLIVER

Make you less than a man.

JESSE

To them, you less than a man before you're born.

OLIVER

You're not stupid.

JESSE

I wasn't always like this.

OLIVER

If you could fight back -- you'd fight back?

JESSE

Like to think I would.

OLIVER

Me, too. That's why I went in the Army for six years -- thought I could fight my way up and out that way. But black buck private in comes a black buck private out. In my dream, Jesse, I take all the motherfuckin' "massahs" in the world, man and woman and even child, and wipe the place clean of 'em. Give the rest of us a goddamn break. You want to know me in a nutshell? -- why "Communist"? -- that's what I want. You up for some honest work today, now that you've had three of my doughnuts and coffee furnished by the common people?

JESSE

I guess.

OLIVER

Put the coffee cup down. Finish the doughnut.

JESSE

Both of which I do.

OLIVER

And I toss him a bundle of pamphlets.

JESSE

What's "fask" -- "faskism" --

OLIVER

Fascism.

JESSE

Fascism.

OLIVER

Just a fancy word for what happened to your wife. You got any lungs on you?

JESSE

For what?

OLIVER

For hog yelling. For field hollering.

JESSE

Course I got lungs.

OLIVER

Then let me hear 'em loud.

JESSE

You crazy?

OLIVER

Don't work with light-weights out there, Jesse.
Yell it. Last chance.

JESSE

Fascism.

OLIVER

Cat makes more spitting up a hairball.

JESSE

(a little louder)

Fascism.

OLIVER

Guy downstairs beats up his wife with more style.
"Like to think I'd fight back," I heard you say.
Then say the fucking word, delta boy.

JESSE

(booming)

Fascism! Fascism fascism fascism fascism fascism
fascism fascism fascism fascism --

(to audience)

-- until I am suddenly in tears.

OLIVER

Good. All right.

* * * * *

Act I, Scene 5

UTILITY 5: STAGE DIRECTIONS

A busy Harlem street with a busy Harlem crowd.

OLIVER
Fight against fascism! Couldn't do it in
Ethiopia -- thank you ma'am -- but we can do it
in Spain -- thank you sir. Join us in our fight.

UTILITY 5: STAGE DIRECTIONS
Jesse hangs back.

OLIVER
Just jump, man!

JESSE
Fight against fascism! Fight against fascism!

OLIVER
(laughing)
Just don't break their ears off!

JESSE
Thank you, ma'am -- thank you -- thank you --

UTILITY 5: STAGE DIRECTIONS
One man takes the pamphlet and just tosses it
away.

JESSE
You dropped this.

UTILITY 4: MAN
Get that trash away from me.

JESSE
It's really important --

UTILITY 4: MAN
Get that trash away me, you fucking --

JESSE
Look, man, this is all about the plantation --
see, fascism, that's what it's all about -- all
about the "massah" -- we know all about this, you
and me --

UTILITY 4: MAN
Without giving him a heads-up, I roundhouse him
to the pavement.

(to JESSE)
Don't be calling me a nigger!

JESSE
I am in pain when I peel myself off the sidewalk,
but I talk to him easy --

(to MAN)

Mister, I been told -- and I'm telling you -- we'll all stay niggers if these guys win.

UTILITY 4: MAN

I give him a shove back. He hands me another pamphlet! I'm considering decking him again --

JESSE

But he takes the pamphlet instead as he walks away.

(to audience)

Help us fight fascism, folks, just like that man's going to do. Get the "massah" off the plantation.

(to OLIVER)

I'm okay.

OLIVER

I can see you are.

(to audience)

Join the fight against fascism!

JESSE

Let's take the massah off the plantation!

* * * * *

Act I, Scene 6

UTILITY 5: STAGE DIRECTIONS

A church basement in Harlem.

ALL ACTORS

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen."

UTILITY 5: STAGE DIRECTIONS

In front of the congregation stands Jose Luis Alonso from Spain.

UTILITY 4: MINISTER

This man has come a long way to tell us his story. Let's give him the respect he deserves.

UTILITY 5: STAGE DIRECTIONS

Tom Milocsz turns off the lights and begins the movie -- the congregation is bathed in flickering light.

UTILITY 1: WOMAN IN THE CHURCH

Oh my. Oh my God.

UTILITY 6: JOSE LUIS

Francisco Franco rapes our country -- has taken away our government, elected by the people. People like you. Adolph Hitler has sent in bombers and weapons. And Benito Mussolini is now doing in Spain what he did to your people in Ethiopia.

UTILITY 1: WOMAN IN THE CHURCH

Oh look at that, look at that -- they using black people!

UTILITY 6: JOSE LUIS

Yes, Franco uses Africans to kill our people, to kill freedom -- the Army of Africa, it is called.

UTILITY 1: WOMAN IN THE CHURCH

My God, my God, oh my God --

UTILITY 5: STAGE DIRECTIONS

Everyone watches in horrified silence.

OLIVER

Tom turns off the projector, flips on the lights.

UTILITY 1: WOMAN IN THE CHURCH

Amen, brother.

OLIVER

That's a good thing.

UTILITY 6: JOSE LUIS

Ah. Amen, comrade, to you, too. I am touched you listen to what is happening to my country. We need people who love freedom to fight for us, with us.

OLIVER

Hundreds of volunteers, folks, from the world over, have been coming to Spain to fight the plantation mentality.

UTILITY 4: JOSE LUIS

Your government will not help us --

OLIVER

Our government actually supports Hitler and Mussolini --

JOSE LUIS

But we know the people are not the same as the government. I know your hearts love freedom -- that is why I am here -- to ask you to stand shoulder to shoulder with us.

UTILITY 1: WOMAN IN THE CHURCH

Brother Oliver?

OLIVER

Sister Vernon?

UTILITY 1: WOMAN IN THE CHURCH

He means -- don't get me wrong about this -- but he means fight for white people, right?

OLIVER

He means fight for freedom -- bigger than any one of us, white or black. Thank you, Jose Luis. This man's come a long stretch to talk -- and his cause is good. I love his cause. I truly do. But what you say is true, Sister. Spain's a long way from 125th Street. Why fight there when we got our own battle out there?

UTILITY 1: WOMAN IN THE CHURCH

That's what I was meaning, Brother Oliver.

OLIVER

Reverend, if you don't mind, I have one more to testify. Jesse Colton.

UTILITY 5: STAGE DIRECTIONS

Outside the church, police gather on the sidewalk.

UTILITY 2: POLICE SERGEANT

We've gotten word, and we always act upon the word.

UTILITY 3: POLICEMAN 1

Whenever you say the word --

UTILITY 7: POLICEMAN 2

We do what the word says.

JESSE

When Oliver called my name, I was ready.

OLIVER

This is Jesse Colton, newly come to us.

UTILITY 1: WOMAN IN THE CHURCH
Welcome, Brother Jesse.

(to OLIVER)
He's a good-looking young brother.

OLIVER
Could always trust your eye, Sister Vernon.

UTILITY 4: MINISTER
Just make sure it don't wander from the page,
Sister Vernon.

UTILITY 1: WOMAN IN THE CHURCH
Reverend, you want to let Brother Oliver finish
with his business and get off of my business?
Amen.

OLIVER
Brother Jesse has a story to tell you. About his
former life in Mississippi.
(to JESSE)
You got the lungs for this?

JESSE
You got day-old doughnuts?

OLIVER
Any of you here from Mississippi? Alabama? From
the dark hold of the South? Thought so. Then
you'll know his story.

UTILITY 5: STAGE DIRECTIONS
The Police Sergeant and the two Policemen pivot,
face the church, pull out their batons.

UTILITY 4: MINISTER
Give him an amen.

UTILITY 1: WOMAN IN THE CHURCH
Amen.

JESSE
My name is Jesse Colton. My story, plain and
simple. They hung my wife from a streetlamp in
front of the town hall. They shot her, dragged
her behind a truck, threw her body into a fire --
a fire made from our house.

UTILITY 1: WOMAN IN THE CHURCH
I know what Brother Jesse speaks of.

JESSE

Not much different than the pictures our friend
Jose Luis brought us.

UTILITY 4: MINISTER

Amen.

UTILITY 1: WOMAN IN THE CHURCH

Amen.

UTILITY 5: STAGE DIRECTIONS

The Police Sergeant raises his baton.

JESSE

Just like the way Mussolini lynched Ethiopia.
Just like this Franco -- "Il Duce" and the
"Generalissimo" -- they ain't nothing but the
masters on the plantation -- ain't they? They
ain't nothing but "the boss."

UTILITY 1: WOMAN IN THE CHURCH

Say it!

JESSE

My old thinking? The white people killed my
wife. White killed my wife. But here's my new
thinking. I don't think it's white or black,
white against black. I think it's about those
that got wanting those who ain't got to never get
anything. And how's that gonna stop? Because
it's gotta stop. It's gonna stop when we say
it's gonna stop. When "we" say it --

UTILITY 1: WOMAN IN THE CHURCH

Say it!

UTILITY 5: STAGE DIRECTIONS

The Police Sergeant bangs his baton on the church
door.

UTILITY 2: POLICE SERGEANT

I make it sound like --

UTILITY 3: POLICEMAN 1

-- the crash of doom --

UTILITY 7: POLICEMAN 2

-- twice over --

UTILITY 4: MINISTER

Jesse, Oliver, get Jose Luis in the back room!
Tear down the sheet. Get the projector in there
with him. And the two of you stay with him.

JESSE

I'm not sitting it out for no one.

OLIVER

Gotta protect my witness.

UTILITY 2: POLICE SERGEANT

We all start banging on the door.

UTILITY 4: MINISTER

(to JESSE)

Then you're my deacon. Shut up and look holy.

(to OLIVER)

Get 'em singing. "Down By The Riverside."

OLIVER

(singing)

"Gonna lay down my sword and shield"

UTILITY 1: WOMAN IN THE CHURCH & JESSE

(joining in)

"Down by the riverside"

ALL EXCEPT POLICE

"Down by the riverside, down by the riverside"

OLIVER

"Gonna lay down my sword and shield"

UTILITY 3: POLICEMAN 1

Everyone shut up!

ALL EXCEPT POLICE

"Down by the riverside"

UTILITY 3: POLICEMAN 1

I said shut up!

ALL EXCEPT POLICE

"Ain't gonna study war no more."

UTILITY 4: MINISTER

I hold up my hand, and we all fall silent.

(to audience)

Amen.

ALL EXCEPT POLICE

Amen.

UTILITY 4: MINISTER

Sergeant?

UTILITY 2: POLICE SERGEANT

(tired)

Tell me where they are. The reds. The Communists. We know you got 'em here.

UTILITY 4: MINISTER

In the Lord's house, nothing is hidden.

UTILITY 1: WOMAN IN THE CHURCH

Let's offer up Psalm 90.

ALL EXCEPT POLICE

Who considers the power of your anger?

UTILITY 2: POLICE SERGEANT

(to MINISTER)

Tell 'em to be quiet.

ALL EXCEPT POLICE

So teach us to count our days --

UTILITY 2: POLICE SERGEANT

(with low menace)

Tell them to shut up.

ALL EXCEPT POLICE

-- that we may gain a wise heart.

JESSE

They just want to pray.

UTILITY 4: MINISTER

Deacon --

ALL EXCEPT POLICE

Turn, O LORD!

UTILITY 7: POLICEMAN 2

(to JESSE)

Button it!

ALL EXCEPT POLICE

How long?

JESSE

We're just praying for you!

UTILITY 4: MINISTER

I put a hand on him, but --

ALL EXCEPT POLICE
Have compassion on your servants!

UTILITY 7: POLICEMAN 2
Back off!

JESSE
Prayer's just wasted on you, though --

UTILITY 7: POLICEMAN 2
I don't hesitate: I crack him a hard one and drop
him like a stone.

UTILITY 5: STAGE DIRECTIONS
Everyone goes still and silent.

UTILITY 2: Police Sergeant
(sotto voce)
Shit!
(to POLICEMAN 1 and POLICEMAN 2)
Go -- just go.
(to audience)
I give 'em one last staredown, but I know it's
worth crap. I hoof it out of there.

UTILITY 4: MINISTER
Let Jose Luis out.
(to OLIVER)
How is he?

UTILITY 6: JOSE LUIS
How is he?

UTILITY 1: WOMAN IN CHURCH
Welcome to America.

UTILITY 6: JOSE LUIS
Welcome to Spain.
(to OLIVER)
El toro, eh?

OLIVER
Yeah -- always leading with his head. C'mon,
fella -- it's time to get you home.

UTILITY 1: WOMAN IN CHURCH
Amen.

UTILITY 6: JOSE LUIS
Amen.

* * * * *

Act I, Scene 7

UTILITY 7: STAGE DIRECTIONS

Through the pain in his head, Jesse hears voices raised in argument -- and he wishes they would just pipe down.

UTILITY 3: TOM

Oliver --

OLIVER

Tom --

UTILITY 3: TOM

Handing out the pamphlets is bullshit.

OLIVER

You have an army you aren't telling us about? Because if you do --

UTILITY 1: WOMAN IN CHURCH

Just get so gosh-darn tired of --

OLIVER

We have got to keep the work going --

JESSE

I stand up, as much as I don't want to stand up -
-

UTILITY 4: MINISTER

But you cannot meet anger with anger --

UTILITY 7: STAGE DIRECTIONS

He fights down the nausea, he opens the door --

JESSE

Where did he go?

OLIVER

We took him back to his group. He gave you an amen.

UTILITY 1: WOMAN IN CHURCH

He called you "el toro."

UTILITY 3: TOM

Yeah, the bull in the goddamn china shop -- leading with his head.

OLIVER

The part of him least likely to get hurt.

JESSE

(to OLIVER)

You told me -- you told me once I had to figure out something good to do with my life. Jose Luis -- "el toro" -- Spain ain't Ethiopia -- but it'll do. Can you get me there?

OLIVER

Can't let you do that, Jesse.

JESSE

Why not?

OLIVER

Because with you gone I'd be stuck with the one-eyed jack over there.

UTILITY 3: TOM

I think I like that -- I think I'm preferring being called the "one-eyed jack."

OLIVER

You've wanted to run the show, right?

UTILITY 3: TOM

Yeah.

OLIVER

Yours now to run. We'll get the Committee to turn it over to you.

(to JESSE)

It ain't Ethiopia, like the young bull says -- but it'll do.

UTILITY 4: MINISTER

You two are crazy --

OLIVER

That a benediction, Reverend, right? "Crazy" may not disadvantage us where we're [going] --

UTILITY 4: MINISTER

You two are still crazy --

UTILITY 1: WOMAN IN CHURCH

Reverend --

UTILITY 4: MINISTER

I'm getting to it, I'm coming around to it. So go crazy -- with my blessing.

* * * * *

Act I, Scene 8

UTILITY 5: STAGE DIRECTIONS

Spain, January 1937.

UTILITY 2

We're in a troop transport.

UTILITY 7

Trucks that rattle so hard they'll break your kidneys.

UTILITY 6

And here we are, ready to fight fascism and freezing our balls off.

UTILITY 2

Where the fuck are we again?

OLIVER

Jarama.

UTILITY 2

Jarama? [pronounced in English, with a "J" sound]

OLIVER

Jarama. [pronounced in Spanish] The valley of Jarama.

UTILITY 6

That's in Spain?

OLIVER

Just outside Madrid.

UTILITY 7

Because it still feels like we're on the fucking transport ship.

JESSE

'Cept I'm not throwing up.

UTILITY 2

Barely had time to piss. What about you?

JESSE

Pissing your pants count?

UTILITY 6

Counts for something.

JESSE

Then I had time.

UTILITY 7

Don't know what's worse -- peeing yourself or puking yourself.

OLIVER

There's four hundred of us all in the same boat -
- so to speak.

UTILITY 2

Friend's a wise-ass.

OLIVER

As long as I ain't a dumb-ass.

UTILITY 5: STAGE DIRECTIONS

The convoy comes to a halt. It is late at night
and completely silent.

OLIVER

And now, compadres, the fun begins. Let me
check.

JESSE

Wait --

OLIVER

It's fine -- Franco ain't in the neighborhood.

JESSE

(sotto voce)

Jarama, Jarama, Jarama --

UTILITY 2

That's the only way I can remember things, too.

UTILITY 7

Christ, who'd've thought Spain'd be this fucking
cold!

OLIVER

Afuera! Afuera! That means "Out! Out!" in
Mississippian! And it means now!

(to MERRIMAN)
Yes, Captain Merriman?

UTILITY 3: MERRIMAN
Bring 'em to the supply trucks. Make it quick --
keep 'em warm.

(to the group)
Stay quiet.

UTILITY 2
Who's that?

UTILITY 6
What's that? Looks like a college boy.

OLIVER
Captain Merriman -- brigade commander, for the
Americans over here. And our boss. Come on,
folks -- come on!

UTILITY 7
I'm trying to remember that song when we got off
the train --

UTILITY 6
He's having a moment of mental bupkis. Come on -
- my balls are churning to ice cubes.

UTILITY 7
(in very bad Spanish)
Llegó con tres heridas:...

UTILITY 2
Oh Christ!

UTILITY 7
...la del amor,
la de la muerte,
la de la vida.
Don't know what it means, but, man, it stuck in
my ears.

UTILITY 6
And you're making my ears fall off.

UTILITY 2
Let's go.

OLIVER

(nudging UTILITY 7)
Let's go -- it's time to meet your date. You can speak Spanish to her.

UTILITY 5: STAGE DIRECTIONS
The men walk down the line to receive their "girlfriend": a Mexican-made rifle, still covered in oil.

UTILITY 4
Aquí -- aquí -- aquí -- aquí --

JESSE
Ain't ever held a gun really.

OLIVER
Most here haven't. Grip it -- here, take this! -
- like it's a very dangerous woman.

JESSE
That's crazy.

OLIVER
"Crazy's" what we need, remember?
(to everyone)
Listen to Captain Merriman. Listen up.

UTILITY 3: MERRIMAN
Here's how it lays out. Franco's troops -- about five to six miles that way. If they move forward, they cut the Madrid-Valencia road -- and Madrid's gone. Your job? Stop Franco. That's it. That's why we're here -- as Americans, as human beings. I have permission from General Gal to test your guns -- five shots a man. No brave words. Just this: I am proud of you, very proud of this Abraham Lincoln Battalion -- I couldn't think of a better name for it.
(seems lost for words)
Group leaders -- organize your ranks.

UTILITY 5: STAGE DIRECTIONS
Everyone raises a gun and fires.

JESSE
I raise it, fire --

OLIVER
And the recoil almost levels him.

JESSE
I fire again.

OLIVER

Not so sharp this time.

JESSE

By the fifth shot -- I understand my woman.

UTILITY 5: STAGE DIRECTIONS

They come to the valley of Jarama. Into the valley go the 400.

ALL ACTORS

And all hell waits for them with open arms.

OLIVER

(on a field telephone)

Captain Merriman, the 24th hasn't moved a fucking inch! I don't care what General Gal said, Captain, the 24th ain't moving up! What about our artillery? And what about our planes? All right, Captain -- yes. Understood. Out.

(pointing)

That's where we're headed. Pingarrón Hill. Say the word -- Pingarrón. Pingarrón -- get it in your mouth, guys. Pingarrón.

ALL ACTORS

Pingarrón. Pingarrón. Pingarrón. Pingarrón.

OLIVER

We command that, we control the road. It's that simple. That's the job we Americans got to do.

(shouting)

Let's go!

UTILITY 5: STAGE DIRECTIONS

With a ragged shout, these untrained men rise rise rise out of their trenches. And hell waits for them with open arms.

* * * * *

Act I, Scene 9

JESSE

"Elsewhere on the rolling hills of the battlefield, in the dips of earth and through groves of trees, the men of the Lincoln Battalion slowly and painfully move upon Pingarron. They go forward into a curtain of steel as the blue sky of Spain sings with death."

OLIVER

(pointing)
We can't bunch up. Jesse, over there. You
three, over there. Move it, move it, move it,
move it!

JESSE
"As they went, hidden machine guns high on the
right opened with a deadly crossfire."

UTILITY 2
(pounding it)
Fucking thing's jammed, fucking thing's --

OLIVER
Let me help --

UTILITY 2
Mine! Mine!

OLIVER
Gonna help you --

UTILITY 2
Keep away from me, nigger!
(to audience)
I realize what I have just said and hand him my
rifle.

OLIVER
I knock the bolt loose and dig out the jammed
shell.
(to UTILITY 2)
There you go, cracker. Gotta go.

UTILITY 2
Yeah, yeah --

JESSE
"Still they blundered on, the enemy's guns piling
up a heavy toll as man after man slumped to
earth, some dead before they hit the ground, some
almost sliced in two by the intense fire." I
drop to the ground, terrified, and the strangest
of things get noticed. Screams. The air
cracking. My face ground into the dirt. And
this small, withered, yet definitely yellow
flower, no larger than a dime, swims into my eye.
And crawling up its stem is an ant calmly going
about its business.

(to ant and flower)
Gotta go. Sorry. Gotta go. "The bravest and
luckiest of them even reach the naked approaches

to the crest of Pingarron." But we never take the hill. It begins to rain. The rain turns everything to mud. I can see the retreat. I can see Oliver leading his men back through the olive trees. So I make my way back to the trench.

* * * * *

UTILITY 4: STAGE DIRECTIONS

Jesse walks up to Captain Merriman, whose left arm has been shattered by a sniper's bullet.

JESSE

Sir? Sir?

MERRIMAN

Sorry, I don't know your --

JESSE

Colton. Jesse. From Mississippi.

MERRIMAN

Mississippi to Madrid.

JESSE

Yes sir. Your arm --

MERRIMAN

Bullet in the left shoulder -- bone just pfft.
You?

JESSE

Still one piece. Sir -- yes or no?

MERRIMAN

It's still our road, Jesse.

OLIVER

Let him go in the ambulance, Jesse.

UTILITY 4: STAGE DIRECTIONS

And away went Merriman.

OLIVER

Let's get you something to eat.

JESSE

How many dead?

OLIVER
Almost everybody's dead, Jesse. They almost
cleaned our entire clock. Come on.

JESSE
I just stand there and cry.

OLIVER
I just let him cry.

UTILITY 4: STAGE DIRECTIONS
The rain falls.

* * * * *

Act I, Scene 10

UTILITY 1: STAGE DIRECTIONS
Jesse on R&R in a small Spanish city.

UTILITY 2: STAGE DIRECTIONS
Jesse wanders the city, and finds himself drawn
towards a concert hall filled with shouts and
whistles and stomping.

UTILITY 4: STAGE DIRECTIONS
He enters the hall.

UTILITY 5: DOÑA IBÁRRURI
Doña Ibárruri, speaking from the stage, sees him
enter and motions for everyone to be quiet.

[NOTE: When characters speak in Spanish, they speak accented English.]

UTILITY 5: DOÑA IBÁRRURI
Come, friend. Come here.

LUZ
At that moment, Luz Baroja y Nessi walks up to
him and puts her arm through his arm.
(to JESSE)
Do you know what Doña Ibárruri is saying?

JESSE
No.

LUZ
Then I will translate for you.

JESSE
Am I gonna have to say her name?

LUZ

Can you roll your "r's"?

JESSE

Never rolled an "r" in my life.

LUZ

Then just hang on -- I'll roll them for you.
Let's go.

(to audience)

I walk him to the stage, where Doña Ibárruri takes his other arm. As she speaks, I whisper her words into the young black man's ear.

UTILITY 5: DOÑA IBÁRRURI

Mothers! Women! Men! Children! When we have once again a present of freedom, love and well-being, felt equally by all Spaniards, then give thanks to him.

JESSE

The crowd went wild. For me! And they started singing a song about "libertad, libertad, libertad" and just going crazy. For me!

UTILITY 5: DOÑA IBÁRRURI

I raise my hand, and everyone quiets down.

(to JESSE)

Gracias por todo.

ALL ACTORS

Gracias por todo.

LUZ

Thank you for everything.

(to audience)

We leave the theatre, arm in arm, while they go on with their political speeches and loud singing -- my over-heated countrymen.

(to JESSE)

Would you like some coffee?

JESSE

You can get us coffee?

* * * * *

Act I, Scene 11

UTILITY 5: STAGE DIRECTIONS

Luz brings him to a small café.

JESSE

You found us coffee!

LUZ

I said I would.

JESSE

That song they were singing?
(trying to pronounce)
"Libertad, libertad" --

LUZ

"Liberty, liberty, liberty."

JESSE

I got that much -- I mean, about the other words
-- they seemed to like the song a lot --

LUZ

Something stupid about priests and shitting in
someone's manzanilla and sons of bitches in the
church -- it's a great song if you like words
like "I shit on the kingdom of Juan Carlos be
Borbón, on the dissipated Church and the one
hundred thousand sons of bitches that adore
religion" --

JESSE

Wow, I didn't know --

LUZ

Ah, my countrymen -- the songs they like to sing
--

JESSE

Well, thank you -- that was nice -- what they did
-- what you did --

LUZ

(sharp)

What are you doing here?

JESSE

(keeping it light)

Having cof[fee] --

LUZ

What are you doing here? Here! In God-forsaken
[España] --

JESSE

I'm fighting to keep your government [alive] --

LUZ

As bad as all the others. Come on. Next you will say "fascism." Come on.

JESSE

I am fighting against fascism --

LUZ

See -- I told you. Fascism -- a noun. A word. A gobble-gobble-gobble like a turkey. And this "word" -- this is why you were put on this earth? To come save a government full of tired depressed old men, like my father, the diplomat extraordinaire -- you will go off and be killed for old bones and rusted nails --

JESSE

I dig out my Communist Party card and show it to her.

(to LUZ)

Not just your "government," Luz Baroja y Nessi -- bigger than just "government" --

LUZ

El comunista --

JESSE

It's about a whole world -- it's about --

UTILITY 5: STAGE DIRECTIONS

Marley Colton appears, noose around her neck, a bloody dress.

JESSE

That is -- was -- my wife, Marley --

LUZ

I'm sorry.

JESSE

Murdered -- hanged --

LUZ

Jesse --

JESSE

By people where I come from -- who don't have a dime's worth of difference between themselves and this Hitler or Mussolini --

LUZ
I caress her face. I kiss her cheek. She
leaves.

JESSE
Not a dime's worth of --

LUZ
Sssh.

JESSE
So I don't forget.

LUZ
Sssh. Sssh.

JESSE
Maybe why I'm on this earth is to ask you why
you're on this earth.

LUZ
You know what we say about Communists?
(to audience)
I hawk up a gob of spit and lob it expertly.

JESSE
This takes me completely by surprise.

LUZ
Spit anywhere around here, you hit a Communist.

JESSE
Glad it went over there --

LUZ
Only the anarchists ever really know what's what.
I have many other such anarchist skills.

JESSE
And as "comunista" I'm supposed to hate
anarchists.

LUZ
All?

JESSE
Maybe it's not a good idea to hate anarchists at
all.

LUZ
Come here.

UTILITY 5: STAGE DIRECTIONS

JESSE leans toward her. LUZ touches his hair.

LUZ

Hair -- the mind underneath it -- it's so --

JESSE

Nappy -- it's called nappy --

LUZ

Nappy!

(softer)

Nappy.

JESSE

She touches my cheek.

LUZ

Not only about ideals, Jesse Colton.

(to audience)

He pulls away.

JESSE

Maybe the ideals come out as stupid to you --

LUZ

No --

JESSE

But in the time I been here -- I felt more like a man than ever. That, Luz Baroja y Nessi -- from where I come from, that is not nothing.

LUZ

When do you have to leave?

JESSE

Soon -- we start our training --

LUZ

Can I show you something?

(playfully)

It's not that! Come with me.

UTILITY 5: STAGE DIRECTIONS

Again she takes his arm --

UTILITY 2: BLIND OLD POET

And she brings him to see me, the blind old poet.
The fever has come upon me.

(reciting quietly)

...así, que casi me es forzoso seguir por su camino, y por él tengo de ir a pesar de todo el mundo...

LUZ

(whispering)

They call him El Caballero -- the Knight, the Gentleman.

POET

(reciting quietly)

... , y será en balde cansaros en persuadirme a que no quiera yo lo que los cielos quieren, la fortuna ordena y la razón pide, y, sobre todo, mi voluntad desea; pues con saber, como sé, los innumerables trabajos que son anejos a la andante caballería, sé también los infinitos bienes que se alcanzan con ella...

LUZ

(whispering)

He's reciting Don Quijote de la Mancha. Our Bible. By heart. When the fever comes upon him, he just has to speak it out to us -- Look around you -- isn't this beautiful? All at once listening to this beautiful old man -- all at peace -- soldiers -- peasants -- the butcher --

(whispering)

This is why I was put on this earth. This is why.

JESSE

And it was as if everything I wanted to hold back I couldn't hold back any more -- again I cry -- emptying out --

(to LUZ)

I'm sorry.

LUZ

Sssh. Sssh. Sssh. Porque el del vicio de la virtud, angosto y trabajoso, acaba en vida, y no en vida que se acaba, sino en la que no tendrá fin. For the narrow and exhausting road of virtue, Jesse Colton, ends in life, and not momentary life, but in life which has no end... Sssh, El Caballero.

OLIVER

But even as she spoke to him, Jesse could hear the trucks. He knew -- she knew -- he had to leave.

LUZ

Is he your brother?

JESSE

(sheepish)

Oliver, Luz Baroja y Nessi.

OLIVER

His Spanish is better already. But I have to steal him from you.

LUZ

Adios, Caballero.

UTILITY 5: STAGE DIRECTIONS

Luz hands him a book and leaves.

OLIVER

What's the book?

JESSE

Don Quijote [pronounced "quih-hoat"].

OLIVER

(correctly)

Quijote. Wait till you get to the part about Dulcinea.

* * * * *

Act I, Scene 12

JESSE

On the eve of the battle of Brunete, July 1937.
The Battalion at dinner in a barn.

UTILITY 3: MERRIMAN

Pardon my broken wing here. And thank you very much for laughing at it. First -- and always -- I am proud of you and the Abraham Lincoln Battalion. No deep speeches -- you each know your own private devils. I am just glad I'm with you. Oliver --

OLIVER

I step forward.

MERRIMAN

Tonight I'm making official what most of you already know -- I'm getting kicked upstairs as chief of staff. It bothers me to leave you, but you're going to be in good hands. Oliver, the

command of the Abraham Lincoln Battalion is now yours.

JESSE

Hold up! Hold up! Grab sumpin, y'all, and give up an "amen."

ALL ACTORS

Amen.

JESSE

To Oliver Lumet -- not just because he's a goddamn good solider who's saved our asses, which needed a lot of saving.

UTILITY 7: SOLDIER

The fucking truth.

JESSE

Do y'all realize what is happening here? Captain Merriman, do you know? Oliver Lumet, you are the first black man in our country's history who gets to tell white soldiers what to do -- and they gotta do it. We all gotta do it. We -- we -- are the real American army. As mongrel as mongrel can get. To Oliver. Because of you, Franco is gonna kiss our saved asses and whatever else he finds down there.

UTILITY 6: STAGE DIRECTIONS

Their cheers are drowned by a hellish storm of artillery.

* * * * *

Act I, Scene 13

UTILITY 6: STAGE DIRECTIONS

The battle of Brunete begins.

OLIVER

When I move, everyone moves! We do that, Brunete will be ours!

(to audience)

I check my watch. I give the signal. I make my move. We all move forward.

JESSE

And the bullet slams into Oliver's chest like lightning.

UTILITY 6: STAGE DIRECTIONS
He falls.

UTILITY 7: STAGE DIRECTIONS
He falls.

JESSE
He falls.

UTILITY 3: STAGE DIRECTIONS
We drag him back for medical help --

UTILITY 5: STAGE DIRECTIONS
And a sniper dogs our steps --

JESSE
You coward! You bastard! Show yourself!

UTILITY 1: STAGE DIRECTIONS
But the sniper remains a ghost --

UTILITY 5: STAGE DIRECTIONS
They get Oliver to the aid station --

JESSE
(indicating stretcher)
Nurse, it's the battalion commander. Do something --

UTILITY 5: NURSE
It doesn't matter who is -- he's gone --
(to audience)
He reaches --

JESSE
Inside Oliver's shirt --

UTILITY 5: NURSE
Smears his hand with Oliver's blood --

UTILITY 2: STAGE DIRECTIONS
Grabs his gun --

UTILITY 1: STAGE DIRECTIONS
And slides into the woods to find the sniper.

JESSE
I know the direction. I can estimate the range.
I can barely hear, I can barely see --

UTILITY 4: SNIPER
But he finds me anyways. Our eyes lock.

JESSE

We aim at each other.

UTILITY 1: STAGE DIRECTIONS

Intermission.

Intermission
Act II, Scene 1

OLIVER: STAGE DIRECTIONS

Insects buzzsaw through a hot afternoon.

UTILITY 4: SNIPER

The American wins the match -- I am on the ground, broken --

JESSE

He is a Moor, from the Army of Africa.

UTILITY 4: SNIPER

My head is cocked at grotesque angle --

JESSE

His legs twisted underneath him. I pull a knife from his gear belt.

UTILITY 4: SNIPER

(hoarsely)

No, no -- mi cuello -- está roto.

(straining)

My neck. It broke. Broke.

JESSE

I press the knifepoint into his palms -- no response.

UTILITY 4: SNIPER

No, no -- por favor, no --

JESSE

I touch the knife to his neck --

UTILITY 4: SNIPER

Negro. Black.

JESSE

I place the knife tip against Franco's red and yellow pinned over his heart --

UTILITY 4: SNIPER

Black. Brother. Hermano. No, no, no, no --

JESSE

I ram the knife through his heart.

UTILITY 4: SNIPER

[Lets out a long sharp exhale.]

JESSE

I stare at the deadening light in his eyes.

UTILITY 5: STAGE DIRECTIONS

The woods erupt with buzzing and chirping and sawing, louder and louder and louder and louder.

JESSE

"Marley Marley Marley Marley Marley" I say and say and say until my breathing slows down, my hands stop shaking.

UTILITY 5: STAGE DIRECTIONS

The high-pitched sizzling fades away to the silence of the hot windless woods.

JESSE

I hook the knife to my belt, stumble off into the woods -- and before I take a hundred steps --

ALL ACTORS

Ka-boom --

JESSE

And I am ass-flat and shrapneled in my right side --

UTILITY 5: STAGE DIRECTIONS

And he hears the footsteps --

OLIVER: STAGE DIRECTIONS

And hears the voices --

JESSE

And see three of Franco's soldiers pointing their guns at me --

UTILITY 1: STAGE DIRECTIONS

And laugh.

JESSE

At my black face.

UTILITY 2: SOLDIER 1

A fucking Moor.

UTILITY 6: SOLDIER 2

The fighting's that way, cobarte.

JESSE

I grin stupidly, show them my bloody side.

UTILITY 7: SOLDIER 3

I didn't know monkeys could bleed. Let's see what the fuck he's got.

(to audience)

I can see the shrapnel -- I have pliers in my bag -- simple -- I squeeze and pull --

JESSE

Aaaaahhhhhh!

UTILITY 2: SOLDIER 1

He puts the metal in the dumb fuck's hand.

UTILITY 7: SOLDIER 3

There, monkey, take it back to your filthy little village. Come on.

THREE SOLDIERS

We leave.

JESSE

I am such pain. I get up, I stumble, where I don't know, just on, just on, just on --

UTILITY 5: STAGE DIRECTIONS

Until -- until --

JESSE

I hear water.

OLIVER: STAGE DIRECTIONS

He finds the water, scoops some into his mouth --

UTILITY 5: STAGE DIRECTIONS

-- then falls backward, overcome.

UTILITY 5: STAGE DIRECTIONS

Shadows move in closer, hover over him.

JESSE

I reach out to them --

(to shadows)

Quijote?

* * * * *

Act II, Scene 2

LUZ

Jesse is rescued by the anarchists.

JESSE

I swear I'm back in Harlem with the headache --
and I hear voices.

OLIVER: STAGE DIRECTIONS

Jesse finds himself inside a tent, crawls to the
entrance.

UTILITY 2: JAMES

(in his Irish accent)

Like a babe from his mama's twat.

LUZ

A niño, yes -- he wants to fight to protect the
government.

UTILITY 2: JAMES

You know him?

LUZ

From Albacete.

(to JESSE)

Hey, nappy. I told you it was a new world.

(to the others)

He's American.

UTILITY 1: AWAGU

(spits)

Another American?

UTILITY 2: JAMES

Where is our baby Hemingway?

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

I shout. Hey! Hey!!

LUZ

We all grab our guns.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

But it's a waste of time -- just me --

UTILITY 2: JAMES

A dead rabbit in each mitt.

JESSE

He looks completely happy.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

Two Bugs Bunnies -- anybody for lunch?

UTILITY 2: JAMES

You're a bloody idiot.

UTILITY 1: AWAGU

Give me those.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

But undeniably handsome.

UTILITY 1: AWAGU

I agree with James.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

But you'll eat my rabbits.

UTILITY 1: AWAGU

We will eat your rabbits.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

Then handsome is as handsome does.

(to LUZ)

And what is your opinion, "luz" of my life?

LUZ

I think it's nice we have a mascot.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

I pull my perpetual pencil and perpetual notebook from my bag.

(to LUZ)

He's awake, it looks like.

UTILITY 2: JAMES

Oop, here goes Hemingway again.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

Do not use that infidel's name in my presence -- holed up in Madrid --

(to JESSE)

Now, tell me what happened at Brunete --

JESSE

Who are you?

(to LUZ)

Who is he?

(to DEWEY)
And why are you asking me questions?

UTILITY 3: DEWEY
You're American, Luz told me --

LUZ
Jesse Colton, for better or for worse, meet Dewey Marlowe.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY
But an American from where? Inquiring minds want to [know] --

JESSE
Mississippi. And why are you fucking asking me questions?

UTILITY 3: DEWEY
You kill -- I preserve. Now --

UTILITY 1: AWAGU
Just like I put salt on the rabbits --

UTILITY 3: DEWEY
Awagu --

UTILITY 1: AWAGU
-- our dewy American here --

UTILITY 3: DEWEY
Awagu --

UTILITY 1: AWAGU
-- saves the carcasses. Ain't that right, querido?

UTILITY 3: DEWEY
I get no respect. Now --

JESSE
Awagu?

UTILITY 1: AWAGU
Ethiopian.

JESSE
(to LUZ)
You I know.

JESSE

(to JAMES)

Can't hear where you're from --

UTILITY 2: JAMES

Bangor, outside of Belfast, Ireland -- and a Catholic, which makes me a nigger in the Emerald Isle.

LUZ

There are others -- around -- keeping watch.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

Could we, please -- I'm working -- now, we saved your bacon from the --

UTILITY 2: JAMES

This white man just called the black man a pig part.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

Did not.

LUZ

(to JESSE)

We took you from the Local Falange -- the Carlistos --

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

(writing)

Falange -- right --

LUZ

Not soldiers, really -- just people who wait for Franco their Savior.

UTILITY 2: JAMES

Franco the snake.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

(finishing writing)

Carlistos -- great. Now, Brunete --

JESSE

Brunete.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

Yeah.

JESSE

My best friend Oliver -- Lumet -- L-U-M-E-T --

UTILITY 3: marlow

(overlapping)

M-E-T -- okay --

JESSE

Had his heart blown open running up Mosquito Hill
-- a stupid name for a --

LUZ

The one I met.

JESSE

The one you met. For your government.

(to DEWEY)

A sniper pinned us down when we took Oliver for
medical help.

OLIVER: STAGE DIRECTIONS

The air suddenly fills with the sound of ravens.

LUZ

We wait, tense.

UTILITY 5: STAGE DIRECTIONS

But nothing.

JESSE

I went back for him. The sniper. I shot him, he
fell -- broke his neck. No danger to anyone.
But I took a knife -- where's my knife?

LUZ

It's still on your belt.

JESSE

Where is it?

LUZ

It's there.

JESSE

And I shoved this through a defenseless man's
heart.

UTILITY 2: JAMES

He was the enemy -- the one you came to fight.

UTILITY 1: AWAGU

The thing that was the right thing to do.

JESSE

(looking at LUZ)

Then why do I feel like --

UTILITY 1: AWAGU
I hold up my hand.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY
Everyone goes silent.

UTILITY 1: AWAGU
I listen, sniff the wind.
(to the others)
The dead are on the march.

LUZ
Come on, comrades, let's move it.

UTILITY 2: JAMES
Plan B, as you Yanks say.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY
I got a million questions.

JESSE
Shut the fuck up.
(gasping)
I don't have to give you nothing.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY
Who said anything about "have to," man? Come on,
at least give me your arm. There, across my
shoulder. We're all about anarchist liberty
around here -- even if it kills us. Come on.

UTILITY 6: STAGE DIRECTIONS
And they move off in the direction of --

* * * * *

Act II, Scene 3

UTILITY 6: STAGE DIRECTIONS
-- a nearby village where the mayor, el alcalde,
stops them.

UTILITY 4: MAYOR
Don't take another step!

UTILITY 5: STAGE DIRECTIONS
Everyone can hear sniper fire.

UTILITY 4: MAYOR
Anarquista, comunista, o socialista?

LUZ

(gives anarchist salute)
Somos anarquistas.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY
(whispering)
And the dice are rolled.

UTILITY 4: MAYOR
Good answer. We need your help.

LUZ
You have it, señor.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY
I take a Leica camera out of my bag.
(to JESSE)
I'm gunning for Robert Capa, too.

UTILITY 2: JAMES
His huevos are bigger than his brain -- which
wouldn't be hard.

UTILITY 4: MAYOR
Sniper up in the church tower.

UTILITY 5: ISABEL
Soldiers in the oligarch's house --
(spits)
-- like they're Don Valera's fucking personal
bodyguards.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY
(whispering to JESSE)
Sniper up there -- and she hates the landowner.

UTILITY 4: MAYOR
I think it is time for a housecleaning.

UTILITY 1: AWAGU
The soldiers must've got cut off.

UTILITY 2: JAMES
And so nothing to lose. All right. Awagu, the
landowner or the sniper?

JESSE
I'll get the sniper.

UTILITY 4: MAYOR
What did he say?

JESSE

I look at the Mayor, point to myself, point to the tower.

LUZ

This doesn't have to be your fight.

JESSE

Right, Dulcinea -- that's where you're wrong.

UTILITY 4: MAYOR

(to JESSE)

¿Sí o no?

JESSE

Yes. Sí.

UTILITY 4: MAYOR

That is a word I like.

UTILITY 2: JAMES

Awagu, I guess we're stuck lugging back the filthy rich. See you for dinner.

(to audience)

And off we go.

UTILITY 4: MAYOR

We have to go.

(to JESSE)

There's a door at the back, and windows.

JESSE

Una puerta -- door, right? Ventanas?

LUZ

Windows. At the back of the church.

UTILITY 4: MAYOR

I embrace the black man.

UTILITY 5: ISABEL

So do I. Then we leave.

JESSE

I'll have to get inside.

LUZ

A door and windows. So you've been reading my book.

JESSE

Yes. And why am I gonna do this?

LUZ

(whispering)

You have been re-born --

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

Ah, come on, speak up so I can hear!

LUZ

(whispering)

You have been re-born -- you have found me again
-- you're fighting for something real now --
don't let Oliver die for nothing -- your Marley -
- how much better do you want life to be?

JESSE

I'm ready.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

I want in on this.

JESSE

You have a gun?

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

I hold up my camera.

JESSE

That's it?

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

I have to go with you.

JESSE

Is that all you got?

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

Pistol in the bag.

JESSE

Then put the fucking pistol in your belt. Know
the difference between the two if you have to
save my ass. Any dead bodies in the camera?

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

Not up close.

JESSE

Christ.

(to LUZ)

Tell the Mayor -- on my signal, have everyone
pour fire up there for cover.

LUZ

I touch his cheek, then leave.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

Man, you are so lucky.

JESSE

Get in my way, I will shoot you.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

Get in my way, and I'll shoot you, too.

JESSE

I met Hemingway -- he's no great shakes.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

My thoughts exactly.

JESSE

And neither are you.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

You don't know about my "shakes" -- you don't know this yet, but you need me. You don't know it yet, but you will.

JESSE

Just stay out of my way, white boy.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

You're so full of shit.

JESSE

I raise my hand, then drop it.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

The air is crammed with gunfire poured up at the sniper.

* * * * *

Act II, Scene 4

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

And just like that, we are in the tower. Jesse points his gun at the sniper.

JESSE

(to SNIPER)

No.

(to DEWEY)

Tell him to put the gun down.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

Deja esa arma -- bajála.

JESSE

Good. Tell him to raise his hands.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

Levanta los brazos.

JESSE

Good. Bueno.

UTILITY 7: STAGE DIRECTIONS

Without hesitation, Jesse shoots the sniper.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

No!

UTILITY 7: STAGE DIRECTIONS

A frozen moment between the two of them, their eyes locked.

JESSE

I nod towards the corpse.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

I lift my camera, take four shots, each from a different angle. Even before I'm done --

JESSE

I take the sniper by the lapels of his uniform, and slide him onto the parapet.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

What're you doing? You can't just dump him --

(to audience)

The look in his eyes -- the dead look in his eyes

--

(to JESSE)

Give him to me.

(to audience)

I heave the body over my shoulder.

(to JESSE)

He was somebody's son, still goddamn it a human being -- you fucking guys and your fucking ideals

--

UTILITY 7: STAGE DIRECTIONS

The Mayor and Isabel appear, with Luz.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

I dump the body on the ground --

OLIVER: STAGE DIRECTIONS

And the Mayor and Isabel methodically pulp the corpse with their rifle butts.

LUZ

James and Awagu extracted the patrón and his family -- it took the people all of five minutes to put them against the wall and shoot them. Several times. Along with the priest.

JESSE

Where are you going?

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

Got space for more bodies.

JESSE

Now what?

LUZ

As usual -- after a cleansing slaughter, being the anarchists they are, they'll have a meeting about it.

* * * * *

Act II, Scene 5

OLIVER: STAGE DIRECTIONS

Luz is right. The villagers set up chairs and a table.

(points to audience)

All of you are the rest of the village. And, yes, you're hearing the words in English, but pretend they're speaking in Spanish and Luz, through her magic, is translating it for you instantly, just as she is for Jesse and Dewey.

UTILITY 4: MAYOR

All right -- I'm banging my hand, so listen up. Here are my words. The priest is gone, Don Valera is gone, but the land is still here. What do we do?

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

(exaggerated drawl)

They're breakin' up the plantation, boy.

UTILITY 4: MAYOR

Largo, don't hold your tongue.

UTILITY 6: LARGO

The patrón's land -- we could divide it up --

OLIVER: STAGE DIRECTIONS

Murmurs of agreement from everyone.

UTILITY 6: LARGO

(encouraged)

And give a piece to Francisco over there, and
Juan --

UTILITY 7: BELARMINO

Shit!

UTILITY 6: LARGO

What?

UTILITY 7: BELARMINO

I lost this eye in Asturias, in 1934, and it
gives me the right to call you a shit!

OLIVER: STAGE DIRECTIONS

Satisfied murmurs of shock and pleasure.

UTILITY 4: MAYOR

Everyone be quiet.

UTILITY 6: LARGO

(appealing to MAYOR)

Alcalde --

UTILITY 7: BELARMINO

(appealing to audience)

Of course Largo wants to chop it up and give it
out to everyone who's already got land because he
really wants to be Don Valera himself. Always
with his airs --

UTILITY 5: ISABEL

And always a goddamn pissing contest between you
two.

UTILITY 6: LARGO

I have the right to keep my land and get more if
I can!

UTILITY 5: ISABEL

Not any more.

(to audience)

And you all know it, too. Not going to do it
that way any more.

OLIVER: STAGE DIRECTIONS
Even more murmuring of shock and pleasure.

UTILITY 5: ISABEL
The choice is as plain as the hairs in your nose.

UTILITY 6: LARGO
What choice?

UTILITY 5: ISABEL
We either do it the old way or we don't.

UTILITY 6: LARGO
I don't disagree -- new ways are good.

UTILITY 5: ISABEL
Wipe it all away.

UTILITY 6: LARGO
But people like me, owning what we own, we can be more efficient --

UTILITY 5: ISABEL
And make more money -- that's all you and Francisco and Juan --

UTILITY 6: LARGO
What's wrong with --

UTILITY 5: ISABEL
-- and the ones like you want --

UTILITY 6: LARGO
What's wrong with making --

UTILITY 5: ISABEL
"Making more money" -- there are better things in life. There is working together for the greater [good] --

UTILITY 6: LARGO
Oop, now she's in her pulpit!

UTILITY 5: ISABEL
A nasty thing to say to an atheist!

UTILITY 7: BELARMINO
Pay attention! You think Franco's shits care about fine points? They want the old ways, and they'll kill us to bring them back. I say this: the patrón's land belongs to all of us. It has

always belonged to all of us because it was our
sweat that made it rich. And I say this, too --
(pointing to LARGO)
-- your land now belongs to us.
(to JUAN and FRANCISCO)
And yours, too. No more private property --
collectivize!

UTILITY 6: LARGO
That's not right!
(appealing to MAYOR)
That's not right!

OLIVER
Everyone -- and I mean everyone -- talks at once.

UTILITY 7: BELARMINO
Collectivize or die -- that's it, that's all of
it --

UTILITY 5: ISABEL
No more making some pig fatter --

UTILITY 6: LARGO
I am not a pig, and I will not put up with --

UTILITY 4: MAYOR
(to audience)
I pound the table to get their attention. I get
it. I point to the black man.
(points to JESSE)
This man was a slave in his own country and he
comes to fight for us. What you do think we
should do?

JESSE
I don't think I have the right to say anything
here.

LUZ
No creo tener derecho a decir nada en este
asunto.

UTILITY 4: MAYOR
(to LUZ)
He defended us -- that makes him one of us.

LUZ
(to JESSE)
You fight -- you get to talk.

JESSE

A story, then -- un cuento. You can do what you want with it.

(to LUZ)

Tell them as I tell it. Once I had four uncles -
- cuatro tios --

LUZ

And I tell them all Jesse's story.

JESSE

With my father they owned land together. They shared everything -- good, bad, money, sorrow -- everything. All I can tell you is that it was the happiest time of my life. Not easy. They fought like dogs about everything. But nobody was at the mercy. Nobody was alone. Nobody went hungry.

UTILITY 7: BELARMINO

¿Qué les sucedió?

LUZ

What happened to them?

JESSE

Our own fascists took the land from them. It's an old story in my country.

UTILITY 4: MAYOR

I speak to the rest of the crew.

LUZ

He wants to know what they rest of you think.

UTILITY 2: JAMES

(laughing)

I give him the fucking anarchist salute.

UTILITY 1: AWAGU

So do I.

JESSE AND LUZ

So do we.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

Ah, why the fuck not?

UTILITY 4: MAYOR

I slam the table again.

(to audience)
All right -- the time has come. We vote, eh?
Land and freedom, or land and money.

UTILITY 6: LARGO
That's not fair!

UTILITY 4: MAYOR
Land and freedom?

OLIVER: STAGE DIRECTIONS
It's everybody but Largo.

UTILITY 4: MAYOR
Land and money?

OLIVER: STAGE DIRECTIONS
Poor Largo by himself.

UTILITY 4: MAYOR
We collectivize!

OLIVER: STAGE DIRECTIONS
Applause, shouts of approval.

LUZ
I look at Jesse --

JESSE
And she smiles as if completely satisfied.

LUZ
And I am.

* * * * *

Act II, Scene 6

OLIVER: STAGE DIRECTIONS
The anarchists' camp outside the village. They
all stare into the fire. Overhead, at a great
height, they hear planes.

UTILITY 2: JAMES
Heinkels. German bombers. Not good.
(to JESSE)
So that's what your fellow communists, your
comrade Stalinists, are doing.

LUZ
James -- let's let today --

JESSE

That's not true.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

Yes it is.

UTILITY 2: JAMES

The man does not even know himself.

LUZ

Leave him alone.

UTILITY 2: JAMES

They're killing off the anarchists, chum --

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

It's true.

UTILITY 2: JAMES

They're cutting the balls off the socialists, and even cannibalizing themselves --

JESSE

You're wrong.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

It's true.

UTILITY 2: JAMES

And they're killing off the revolution.

JESSE

That can't be true.

UTILITY 2: JAMES

Then let it not be true for you. Hey, Hemingway --

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

Marlowe --

UTILITY 2: JAMES

Who in the land of pig-faced capitalism is gonna want to read about a bunch of anarchists? They shoot anarchists there, too! Sorry -- I got the wine in my tongue --

UTILITY 1: AWAGU

And your head.

UTILITY 2: JAMES

-- but it's still true. You watch -- you know we're on the chopping block. We are all alone out here. It's hard when you love something so much -- an idea you'll die for -- then to have these fucking "comrades" --

UTILITY 1: AWAGU

I just want to kill Italians for Ethiopia.

UTILITY 2: JAMES

For me -- they're all Brit wankers from northern Ireland!

(to JESSE)

And you? Who are these fuckers to you?

JESSE

White people hung my wife from a tree and burned her to ashes.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

And that's why they're not going to want to know about any of you suckers. A Negro whose wife was lynched fighting for freedom in a foreign land against white folks -- that is primo stuff.

OLIVER: STAGE DIRECTIONS

Jesse gets up and walks off into the darkness.

UTILITY 2: JAMES

Your bedside manner's a fucking marvel to behold.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

I learned everything from you.

LUZ

I follow Jesse away from the others.

JESSE

Is James telling the truth?

LUZ

Yes. Jailing and killing all the anarchists they can get their hands on -- orders from Stalin -- militia units like ours either have to join the army or we get no weapons, ammunition, supplies -- I'm not supposed to even be carrying a gun -- yes, me! -- women are being turned back into maids --

JESSE

I am so far from home.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

Mind if I join you?

LUZ

You're already here.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

The world out there thinks "the war for ideals."
"The war of poets." There's no revolution here -
- the Communists have choked that off.

LUZ

Not all of it.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

That village? How long do you think they'll
last, Luz? Franco could spit on us, he's so
close. And the Communists? From Valencia soon
enough.

JESSE

Enough!

LUZ

I think I'll go back.

(to audience)

And I do.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

I wrote about a lynching once -- I am really
sorry about your wife, Jesse. What a country,
huh? Today -- up in the tower --

JESSE

But I don't hear him because, again, I'm crying -
- again, I am crying --

(to DEWEY)

You write all this down. Everything. All of it.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

I'm gonna write the truths that people tell me.
I'm hoping that covers it. Comfort the afflicted
and afflict the comfortable -- that's me -- I
hope. That's my civil war.

OLIVER: STAGE DIRECTIONS

As they walk back to the fire, they hear a convoy
of trucks pulling into the village.

UTILITY 2: JAMES

The fascists have arrived.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY
But they're coming from Valencia.

UTILITY 2: JAMES
You're right.

UTILITY 1: AWAGU
Shit.

UTILITY 2: JAMES
Say hello to Stalin. Say goodbye too.

OLIVER: STAGE DIRECTIONS
None of them can mistake the gunfire and screams
coming from the village.

LUZ
We can't stay here.

UTILITY 1: AWAGU
There is not any place we can stay.

LUZ
But --

UTILITY 3: DEWEY
Just when you're ready to hightail it --

OLIVER: STAGE DIRECTIONS
A flashlight catches them all in its beam.

UTILITY 4: SOLDIER
And in I walk, gun in hand.
(to them all)
El que se mueve, muere.

UTILITY 2: JAMES
He's got the universal translator in his hands,
chums.
(to audience)
And we all raise our hands.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY
A truck pulls up --

UTILITY 1: AWAGU
And floods us in its headlights.

JESSE
Up steps a man with braid on his shoulders, a red
star on his cap --

UTILITY 4: SOLDIER

Colonel --

JESSE

And he spits.

UTILITY 6: COLONEL

Anarquistas.

LUZ

Dewey, say something or you'll die with us.

UTILITY 6: COLONEL

(to LUZ)

¡Cállete, puta!

OLIVER: STAGE DIRECTIONS

Luz steps up to the Colonel.

LUZ

¿Qué piensas hacer con nosotros?

OLIVER: STAGE DIRECTIONS

Without hesitation, the Colonel pulls out his pistol and shoots Luz through the left eye.

LUZ

I drop like a stone.

UTILITY 6: COLONEL

Mátalos a todos. Todos.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

(shouting)

I'm a journalist! Periodisto! I'm a journalist!
From the United States! ¡Los Estados Unidos!

UTILITY 6: COLONEL

(in English)

You know -- you know Paul Robeson?

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

Not personally, but I've heard him sing, I have
heard him sing, yes --

UTILITY 6: COLONEL

He sang to us -- he's a good Communist. You
American, too?

JESSE

Yes.

UTILITY 6: COLONEL

You look just like Jesse Owen -- a very fast man
-- I love jazz. Harlem. Jazz!

(snaps his fingers)

Put them in the truck.

OLIVER: STAGE DIRECTIONS

The first soldiers starts frog-marching them
towards the back of the truck.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

(shouting)

Colonel, Colonel, all of them, they all work with
me -- they're my assistants --

OLIVER: STAGE DIRECTIONS

But before Dewey's words die on the air, James
and Awagu have been shot through the head.

JESSE

We stare at the corpses.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

We stare at our friends.

UTILITY 6: COLONEL

The base for the International Brigades -- we'll
drop you off on the road that goes there. You
should reach it without much trouble. When you
get there, say hello to Paul Robeson for me. Put
them in the truck. Before I change my mind. Ah
-- it has been a good night after all.

(sings badly)

"Old Man River, that old -- " How does he get it
so low?!

* * * * *

Act II, Scene 7

OLIVER: STAGE DIRECTIONS

Jesse and Dewey have shipped passage back to the
United State -- Spain is behind them.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

All we could afford? A steerage cabin, lit by a
single bulb. Jesse lies on the bottom bunk of
the bunkbeds.

JESSE

The new Hemingway is trying to write.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

Emphasis on "trying."

(to JESSE)

I can't get it to work! Notes, impressions, but it's like -- like -- shit, Hemingway's just churning it out --

JESSE

You want a real story about Spain?

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

He finally speaks!

JESSE

I asked you a question.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

I've got real stories -- I just can't --

JESSE

I asked you a question.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

What do you have that I don't already have?

JESSE

You don't have this: I'm going back.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

To Spain?

JESSE

To Mississippi.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

No you're not. No you're not!

JESSE

You know what I've been realizing, just staring out, the way I've been doing?

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

That you're crazy?

JESSE

That I went all the way to Spain just to fight the people who live in my town.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

No you didn't! That's crazy! What -- bang bang? They ain't like the guy in the tower!

JESSE

No -- no bang bang --

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

Then what?

JESSE

Think, my ace reporter -- think about what would be the only way I could fight those motherfuckers back --

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

(to audience)

And it came to me.

(to JESSE)

No you're not. You can't.

JESSE

I'll need a friendly witness.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

You need a shrink!

JESSE

I'll need a smuggler to get the story out -- I know you can do it.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

Shit!

JESSE

Think about it --

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

You just want to use me!

JESSE

-- front page -- all American --

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

Just use me --

JESSE

-- yet strange, too, you know -- love and death -
- you got it all --

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

You can't -- you can't -- it'd be like a --

JESSE

It would be like that -- it would be exactly that
--

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

(to audience)

After that, the silence hung heavy between us.

JESSE

They've killed, and I've killed, and it ain't done anything for either of us.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

You could go anywhere -- Paris -- the women'll love your ass to death there. Africa -- South America -- Caribbean --

JESSE

All true -- but I want to go home. I want to go home to Marley. You said, afflict the comfortable, comfort the afflicted, not me --

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

I didn't say yes. I didn't say yes!

(to audience)

I try to write, but I can't --

JESSE

I know you're thinking about it.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

Fuck you!

(to audience)

But I know he's right because he knows me. And so --

* * * * *

Act II, Scene 8

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

We find ourselves accommodations on a freight train to Mississippi.

JESSE

"Bulls been here?" I ask a hobo.

UTILITY 2: HOBO

Just kicked a nigger off.

JESSE

I'm his replacement.

UTILITY 2: HOBO

Dining car's closed for the night.

OLIVER: STAGE DIRECTIONS
They both sit down. Jesse watches them all pitch
back and forth as the train plows through the
night.

* * * * *

Act II, Scene 9

OLIVER: STAGE DIRECTIONS
Mississippi.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY
We stand outside the town, the insects buzzing
like mad.

JESSE
There's a boarding house near the town hall --
you can get a room there. Woman named Swanson
runs it -- her son is the Mayor.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY
And I'm just a young writer on a journey through
the South.

JESSE
Wouldn't want to lie, would you? And here, take
this.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY
And he gives me a leather pouch full of papers
and clippings and Luz's copy of Don Quixote. I
put them away.

JESSE
I keep one thing for myself -- a bandana full of
dirt from Spain. I stuff it in my knapsack.

JESSE
Make sure, all right -- ten o'clock.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY
And I don't know who you are.

JESSE
Okay.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY
We stand and look at each other.
(to JESSE)
This man of words ain't got any words.

(to audience)
We shake hands, and Jesse walks away.

* * * * *

Act II, Scene 10

OLIVER: STAGE DIRECTIONS
Dewey stands on the porch of the boarding house.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY
(with great charm)
Good day.

UTILITY 5: SWANSON
Yeah?

UTILITY 3: DEWEY
Mrs. Swanson?

UTILITY 5: SWANSON
You ain't got a voice from around here.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY
Which is why I need a room. I was told you have
the nicest rooms in town.

UTILITY 5: SWANSON
That may be true.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY
I'd like a chance to find out.

UTILITY 5: SWANSON
Northern?

UTILITY 3: DEWEY
North of here, anyway.

SWANSON
You a communist? You a "nigger-ist"?

UTILITY 3: DEWEY
I'm not any kind of "ist." Just a writer.
Working on a book. A "writer-ist," I guess.

UTILITY 5: SWANSON
I got a nice room for a writer.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY
And off we go.

* * * * *

Act II, Scene 11

OLIVER: STAGE DIRECTIONS

Evening falls at Jesse's camp outside town, at the ruins of his burned house. He sits by a small fire. A young boy comes up to him.

JESSE

You have a name?

UTILITY 4: BOY

I shake my head no, then yes.

JESSE

I know your name -- you're Miz Riley's "slow" boy, ain't ya?

(to audience)

I pull the bandana from my knapsack and open it, pick a rock from the dirt.

(to BOY)

But I am going to call you a special name. I am going to call you Oliver.

(to audience)

I hand him the rock.

(to BOY)

And this is a magic rock. It's got a name, too -
- Spain. Can you say Spain?

UTILITY 4: BOY

Spain.

JESSE

Good. Good. Go home now.

(to audience)

I add a handful of Mississippi dirt to the Spanish dirt and put it back in my knapsack. And before long, as I knew it would happen, they arrive to see the ghost returned.

UTILITY 1

Really you, Jesse Colton?

UTILITY 2

You really back?

UTILITY 6

Where you been?

OLIVER

You been a dead man, we heard.

JESSE

Miz Riley's boy comes to sit next to me.

(to them)

I been dead, yeah. I also come a long way back
to being alive.

LUZ

But you a dead man here again if they see you.

JESSE

You all think that's so?

UTILITY 5

Yeah.

SEVERAL VOICES

Yeah.

UTILITY 6

They got a hate longer than God's tapeworm.

JESSE

Where is my Marley?

UTILITY 7

We don't know.

OLIVER

No one knows.

JESSE

Doesn't matter.

LUZ

Jesse, we couldn't've --

JESSE

Doesn't matter, I said. I want to tell you a
story about "stopping."

UTILITY 5

Nothing's stopped --

JESSE

Anybody know where Spain is?

UTILITY 7

Near Biloxi, maybe?

OLIVER

Ain't no Spain near Biloxi, knucklehead.

JESSE

Not so hard -- he ain't that far off. It's a country, not a county -- let me tell you all a story -- Spain --

(to audience)

And that's how we pass the night away.

* * * * *

Act II, Scene 12

OLIVER: STAGE DIRECTIONS

Until morning. Jesse stands at the foot of the town hall steps, keeping vigil.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

And I am there to watch him -- to bear what witness I can.

UTILITY 5: SWANSON

You gonna need the room another night?

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

I don't know just yet. Who's that?

UTILITY 5: SWANSON

He's supposed to be a dead man.

OLIVER: STAGE DIRECTIONS

Finally, Jesse gets what he wants. The Mayor and Sheriff appear on the top steps.

UTILITY 6: MAYOR

What the f[uck] -- What are you doing here?

JESSE

I live here.

UTILITY 6: MAYOR

You lived here. Now get the f[uck] --

(catches himself again)

Just get out of here.

JESSE

I come to see my wife's grave. Where'd you bury her, Mayor? Sheriff? That's all right -- I'll save you the trouble of lying. I'll bet her bones've been buried by every dog in town. That's okay, too -- don't blame dogs for being dogs. But I won't be leaving until I find every bone. One more thing.

UTILITY 7: SHERIFF

What are you reaching for?

JESSE

This.

(to DEWEY)

Sir -- help me out? Would you take this card up so as the Mayor can read it?

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

I hand the card off to the Mayor.

UTILITY 6: MAYOR

I read the card first. His Communist Party card.

UTILITY 7: SHERIFF

He hands the card to me. I just toss like trash.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

And I make sure to pick it up -- keep all evidence, bear all witness.

JESSE

Just so the two of you know you have a real commie this time.

(to audience)

And with that I turn and start cakewalking down the steps --

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

Singing the words from the Internationale.

JESSE

(to audience)

I am going to do the Communist nigger for them to the hilt!

(singing or reciting)

Arise ye workers from your slumbers

Arise ye prisoners of want --

And yowser, yowser, yowser, yowser!

* * * * *

Act II, Scene 13

OLIVER: STAGE DIRECTIONS

Jesse's camp.

JESSE

As I knew they would.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

Trucks. Headlights. And me bearing witness.

UTILITY 2: RED NECK

A lasso snaps out of the darkness, tightens around Jesse's throat, pulling him to his knees.

JESSE

I get my hands around it just before it pulls tight enough to choke me.

UTILITY 6: MAYOR

A man behind Jesse plants a foot on his back and jams Jesse forward.

UTILITY 7: SHERIFF

And I rip his hands away from the rope around his neck and pull 'em behind his back.

UTILITY 2: RED NECK

(to DEWEY)

Here.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

He hands me a short length of rope --
(to RED NECK)

What?

UTILITY 2: RED NECK

For hog-tying. Loop the hogtie around his wrists -- s'gonna be good for that book of yours.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

But my hands are shaking so bad --

UTILITY 2: RED NECK

Look at him! Look at the writer! Gimme that --
(to others)

S'got the twitches! Watch how I do this. See -- quick figure-eight. Proper way to tie a hog. You write that down.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

I manage to sneak out my camera.

UTILITY 7: SHERIFF

All right -- everyone ready?

ALL ACTORS

Yeah!

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

Jesse was dead by the time they hung him because they had dragged him a mile along the dirt road from the rope they lasso'd around his neck. I took their pictures.

UTILITY 6: MAYOR

Smile!

ALL ACTORS

Snap.

OLIVER: STAGE DIRECTIONS

And that night, an enormous storm washed the earth.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

(to audience)

Lashed the earth. And I sat in Mrs. Swanson's boarding house sweating, sick with visions, feeling utterly unwashed -- and knowing exactly -- exactly -- what I had to do. I was certain and sickened at the same time.

* * * * *

Act II, Scene 14

OLIVER: STAGE DIRECTIONS

An office -- table, two chairs. The Editor leafs through Dewey's manuscript, with pictures.

UTILITY 7: EDITOR

And you took these yourself?

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

And developed them myself. It's been rejected by some of the best. Polite, you know, but --

UTILIY 7: EDITOR

Because you're pissing uphill on this one. Gavagan's anti-lynching bill's going nowhere -- Roosevelt needs the Southern Senators for his Court scheme, so --

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

So?

UTILITY 7: EDITORS

So -- I guess I don't mind a piss or two uphill.
It's what we do around here -- our --

(wryly)

raison d'être -- the reasoning behind our piss-soaked shoes. It's well written, and God knows it happens. I can't pay you -- much at least.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

Doesn't matter.

UTILITY 7: EDITOR

Words my bookkeeper loves. And we ain't among "some of the best."

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

Doesn't matter.

UTILITY 7: EDITOR

Then we have a deal.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

Great.

(to audience)

I start to get out of the chair.

UTILITY 7: EDITOR

You mind if I ask you something?

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

Ask me anything you want.

UTILITY 7: EDITOR

The man in the photos --

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

Yeah?

UTILITY 7: EDITOR

Did you know him well?

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

(to himself)

Did I know him well?

UTILITY 7: EDITOR

Look, I'm sorry -- you don't [have to] --

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

I can say this: Jesse Colton and I had -- no, made -- a -- pact -- a covenant -- better word --

a better word -- a covenant about that -- about what happened --

UTILITY 7: EDITOR

God, that must've not been easy --

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

It was the easiest and the hardest thing I've ever done -- can you understand that? I can't understand that -- yet -- but it's true --

UTILITY 7: EDITOR

And you agreed -- God, to watch and not --

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

The kind of thing you do for a friend --

UTILITY 7: EDITOR

You have your work cut out for you.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

I can say this: we both held up our ends of the bargain. It's made a difference.

UTILITY 7: EDITOR

We'll see what we can do.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

(to audience)

I shake his hand -- gotta keep up the civilities -- and I take my knapsack and head for the park - - it's about all the triumph I can stand for a day. Any bench will do.

UTILITY 4: BUM

I'm a bum in 1937, so I got all day to spend in the park. I watch him sit down, and he does something that gets my attention.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

I take Jesse's bandana out of my knapsack and empty out the dirt, watch it blow away in the breeze.

UTILITY 4: BUM

Gonna use that? You gonna use that?

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

This bum is trying to be best-dressed -- he's got a sport jacket, shirt, tie --

UTILITY 4: BUM

It's all dirty as hell, but I got style.

(to DEWEY)

Could use a handkerchief to complete my ensemble.
What say?

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

You take this, you're going to have to fight for
justice, you know.

BUM

Mister, just as soon as I get a meal I'll fight
for justice.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

I give him the bandana, which he does fold neatly
and slip into his jacket breast pocket. He
starts to walk away.

(to BUM)

Hey!

(to audience)

I hold up two one-dollar bills, one in each hand.

UTILITY 4: BUM

I see two dollars, I pay attention.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

One of these is your next meal.

UTILITY 4: BUM

I go to take it -- best to be quick about these
things -- but he pulls it back and shows me the
other one.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

But only if you go find someone as bad off or
worse than you.

BUM

I gotta give that one away in order to get that
one?

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

Give it away. Free and clear. Both or none.

UTILITY 4: BUM

I hold out my hand.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

I hand them over.

(to BUM)

Don't mess with your promise.

UTILITY 4: BUM

I wasn't always like this, mister. I was not
always like this.

(to audience)

I slip one bill in my right pocket and one into
my left. And off I go to do what I'd promised to
do.

UTILITY 3: DEWEY

I put one arm going north on the back of the
bench and one arm going south. I lean back. I
watch him go, disappear. I wait. I wait.

Blackout