

**The Most Dangerous Woman In
America**

by

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The Most Dangerous Woman In America

DESCRIPTION

Using the format of a lecture, this play presents a one-woman rendition of Emma Goldman, focusing on both the life and the ideas that motivated it.

CHARACTERS

EMMA GOLDMAN: When the play opens, GOLDMAN is approximately in her early fifties, about the time of her exile from the U.S. in 1920: stout, near-sighted, plain. She will speak with a **slight** Slavic-Jewish accent, since GOLDMAN was born in what is now Lithuania and spoke Russian, German, Yiddish, and English. She is wearing a shapeless but comfort-able dress, with pockets from which she will pull items. She is wearing a pair of glasses, round lenses in a metal frame.

Settings and time periods will vary.

Note 1: This production of Most Dangerous is written for a space where the actress must be able to move among the audience easily and make direct contact with them. It should never be done in proscenium. The assumption is that it will be done in places with low or no technical theatre resources.

Note 2: The actress playing this role should have good improvisational skills because at times she will need to depart from the text in her interactions with the audience. In addition, she will play different ages and physical conditions, so she must be versatile enough to do this.

Note 3: Audience participation is an essential part of the performance. The best arrangement will be if the actress can meet the day before with several volunteers who will come into the piece at various times. If not, the actress will select people as she needs them from the audience. This script is written as if there has been time to meet beforehand for instruction.

Note 4: To get a sense GOLDMAN's style, here is an excerpt from Alice Wexler's Emma Goldman: An Intimate Life:

With her imperturbable self-assurance and blunt, earnest, "sledge-hammer" platform style, Goldman created a sensation. A short, sturdy

figure with a determined chin and firm mouth, she conveyed an impression of strength and energy...."She makes great use of sarcasm," noted another, "lashing most severely what she regards as the evils of modern life." Others applauded her "fire and force," her "humorsome [sic] satire," her "vigorous and determined manner."

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PROPS, SOUND, LIGHTING, AND STAGE REQUIREMENTS

Props will be placed either in the pockets of GOLDMAN's dress or hung on a coatrack. However, if the director and actress desire, they can be placed elsewhere if it improves the flow of the piece and do not hinder the sight lines of the audience or the free movement of the performer.

Prologue

- * An easel with a lecture announcement on it. Or, if desired, the announcement may be hung. If hung, it should be large and visible but not obstruct any action on stage.
- * A program handed out which will list the topics of EG's lecture, using scene titles as topics.
- * A desk/vanity with make-up, etc. on it.
- * Two sturdy wooden chairs
- * A live rose in a small vase on the desk
- * Tape of revolutionary songs, including the Internationale. (To be used only if being done in a theatre where the audience enters and has to wait for the performance to begin.)

Scene 1

- * Underscoring: any instrumental music which is soothing and unobtrusive

Scene 2

- * Two toy rifles
- * Black bandana (pulled from pocket)
- * Martial music -- suggested: J.P. Sousa, Mystic Chords

Scene 4

- * Sign with a large "8" and the slogan "Eight hours for work, eight hours for sleep, and eight hours for what we want to do."
- * Black shawl
- * Chime -- preferably one used for Zen meditation; if not available, anything which makes a clear, bell-like tone -- a gong or cymbal is not acceptable

Scene 5

- * One large book
- * Streets sound of New York in 1889: horse carriages, whistles, trains, bells, etc

Scene 7

- * Same underscoring as in Scene 2

Scene 8

- * Single red rose

LIGHTING

The assumption is that there will no little or lighting equipment used (e.g., as in a classroom) and that the lighting will be general. If lighting is available, the director is free to create effects as desired. There are suggestions where to do this in the script.

SOUND

There are suggested sound cues in the script, but these can be discarded if there is no way to use them in a way that enhances the performance (i.e., no tapes in a boombox).

The Most Dangerous Woman In America

Prologue

[Placed prominently is an easel with a notice announcing a lecture given by Emma Goldman, done in an old-fashioned typeface and style. Or the notice may be hung. Also on the stage is a simple desk/table/vanity with make-up, mirror, etc., and a wig stand, if the actress is wearing a wig. There is also a small rose in a vase on the desk, a coatrack or a stand of some sort with various clothes on it that GOLDMAN will use, and two chairs. EMMA GOLDMAN enters. (If pre-show music has been used, it fades out on her entrance.)]

Good [time period].

[She waits for a response from the audience. She should encourage the audience until she gets a response she likes, that acknowledges her presence on the stage.]

Good response. Good to see that you're awake. I'm awake, too, and today we're going to learn a lot about being awake and staying awake, so I need your full attention. I am very excited about being here, so let's get to work. First, I need my trusty assistant to help me out.

[The volunteer helps GOLDMAN get ready. They both sit, and she begins applying her make-up, asking the volunteer to hand her various things.]

My name is _____.

(to the volunteer)

And you are?

(volunteer gives name)

Thank you for giving helping me.

(to the audience)

A hand for _____. Today I get to do something I like to do a lot: pretend I'm Emma Goldman, which is why I need all this stuff. And why do I like to pretend I'm Emma Goldman, especially since she's dead and hasn't had a hit CD for a long time (unlike Elvis)? Because Emma was a pain in the butt, pure and simple, and I liked her style. She held some radical ideas that made a lot of people very nervous, and she

didn't take any crap from anybody who tried to put people down and take away their freedom and their dignity. Wherever there was a fight to be fought for freedom, she went to fight it. I really admire someone as tough as she was, and I think you will, too.

But, as I said, this made a lot of people nervous, and they worked very hard to shut her down by killing her friends, stealing her belongings, throwing her in jail, and when she got out, throwing her in jail again. J. Edgar Hoover -- anyone ever heard about him? the guy that ran the FBI forever? -- J. Edgar Hoover once called her "the most dangerous woman in America" just before he kicked her tail out of the country for twenty years.

I have another reason to like her. Emma believed that young people like you were only ones who could fix the world that the adults had screwed up -- if you had the right ideas in your heads -- not the old ideas but new ideas about how to make this world more fair and beautiful. She believed that you are the backbone of the future, our best chance, and I believe that, too.

So, what are you going to get today in my lecture? Well, a little history -- it won't hurt! -- and a good story about an amazing woman. But most important? You'll learn from Emma that the most powerful weapon you possess is your mind! All the zzt, zzt, zzt that goes up here when you think deeply and strongly about something. Emma believed that an idea had more kick than cash, more bang than any bomb. So I'm going to put you in contact with some new ideas, some of her radical ideas -- ideas you have to handle very carefully because they could change you and the world. But we'll take our time getting to know them, and getting to know Emma.

There. Done.

(to the volunteer)

Now, if you'd just give me hand moving these things out of the way.

(moves desk, chairs, and rack to one side)

Thank you, _____. Don't go anywhere -- I'm going to need your help later.

(volunteer sits; to the audience)

I give you Emma Goldman.

[She is now speaking as EMMA GOLDMAN.]

Good [time of day].

[She waits for a response from the audience.]

Thank you and welcome. Let us go for a ride.

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Scene 1: A New Idea

First, you need to know this about me: I am an Anarchist. Can anyone here tell me what "Anarchist" means?

[Takes definitions from the audience, if any -- improves responses.]

Yes, it's a slippery word to get a grip on: [add, if no responses:"lots of people have thought that Anarchism means"] no rules, disorder, chaos, a bunch of dirty, smelly loonies throwing bombs [other things the audience has mentioned] -- but it's none of those things.

[If music is used, it should begin here. Lighting change.]

I'll explain what the word means -- but I need your help. I need you to focus for a moment because I'm going to hand you an idea, and I need your minds open and ready to handle it. Relax for a moment. Close your eyes, if you want, but I want you to listen closely to my voice. Breathe slowly. Relax. Listen.

[GOLDMAN should move among the audience here and, if appropriate, make physical contact with them, as if she were handing them something.]

Begin by bringing up a picture in your mind of the most satisfying thing you have ever made in your life. A school project, winning a game, building something, helping someone out -- you fill it in. Something you did, not because someone told you that you had to do it, but something you did simply because you loved doing it. Remember how good it made you feel to do this "labor of love."

Now add this to that picture, to that feeling: teamwork, when you worked really close with your teammates or people at church or family or friends to get something done. Think about how satisfying it felt to share the work -- all the jokes, the sweat, the complaining -- and then share the happiness when it was done (especially if there was good food!). How great it felt to forget your problems for a little while and feel supported and loved by everyone around you.

Tie those two feelings together: doing something out of the goodness of your heart, and doing it with people you love and who love you. This is Anarchism. Come back to me now. This is Anarchism. This is what the most dangerous woman in America believed: that people like you should be free and not be slaves, that your individual face is more precious than all the businesses and governments and churches put together.

This is what I dedicated my life to teaching people: freedom through coöperation, power through sharing. And J. Edgar Hoover, and all of them, kept throwing me and a lot of other people in jail for teaching this.

[Music stops, lights change.]

What do you think made them all so afraid?

* * * * *

Scene 2: Some History Perhaps Not Well Known

I'll tell you why they were afraid: rebellion. More specifically, your rebellion. They were afraid -- they still are afraid -- that all of you will actually feel what you just felt about love and sharing and demand some changes in the world. They -- the politicians and generals and corporation owners and police and everyone else who wants to control your life -- they are afraid that you will see that this world is not set up to give people that feeling of love and accomplishment. They are afraid that, once you see how unfair the world is, you will take control and kick them out of a job! And they're right -- you could do that! You should do that! Remember, you are the future! It belongs to you!

[Rolls up her sleeves and pulls a black bandana out of her pocket and ties it around her head, letting the ends of it trail over her

shoulder. Also during her lines she picks up two guns, something ridiculous like a Super Soaker and a toy rifle.]

All right, time for a little history to prove to you just how dangerous this idea called Anarchism is. A little history about me and America. See this?

(indicates the bandana)

Black is the color of the Anarchists -- not red, which is the color of the socialists and the communists, who we don't like. Come back with me to 1917 -- there's a war on, the First World War, in Europe, and the United States is thinking about jumping into it. Some of us Anarchists -- and a lot of people just like yourselves, people of good heart and mind -- don't think this is such a good idea. We figure that if the politicians, the old men, want to declare a war, then they should go and fight it and let all the young men stay at home to enjoy life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Needless to say, the old men disagree.

I need two young men from the audience to help me out.

[EMMA either waits for or selects them. She hands them the two "guns" and tells them to stand on either side of her, at attention.]

It's a time of war, so I need some warriors up here, right?. What do you think of our warriors?

[Gets response, if possible. To them.]

It's tough being an actor, isn't it?

[Or something like this. GOLDMAN positions them.]

Just follow what I say. Okay, back to the story.

President Woodrow Wilson, who was a liar, no matter what your history books say, gets up in front of Congress on April 2, 1917, and says, "The world must be made safe for democracy. The day has come when America is privileged to spend her blood and might." Listen to those words: To spend her blood -- as if young men like these --

(indicating the volunteers)

-- were just like dollar bills. They soon began drafting these young men into the army -- basically telling them that if they didn't put on a uniform and kill the enemy, they'd go to jail. We said, "No way!" We held meetings in New York City where thousands of people came to hear us say, over and over again, "The government has no right to draft young men, to steal them off the street and kill them!" Well, stupid us! The government showed us who really had the right to speak.

[GOLDMAN gets a chair.]

The police came and got me.

(to the volunteers)

Stand on either side of me and point your guns at me. Follow me wherever I go.

(to the audience)

This is the kind of thing they did when they questioned us and gave us "the third degree."

[GOLDMAN sits in the chair as if she has been roughly placed there by a guard. She takes off the bandana and puts it away. In the next lines she speaks as if spoken to while the guards "guard" her; GOLDMAN should consider the audience as the interrogator.]

I never said that! And I never said that, either! Well, you shouldn't hire stupid spies, or at least you should clean the wax out of their ears. I would never say, "We support violence, and we will use violence." I would never say that. The point is to stop the violence, not feed it.

They also didn't mind using a little violence themselves.

[GOLDMAN reacts as if she's been knocked out of the chair onto her knees; the volunteers should follow her with their rifles.]

I hope that made you feel better. It certainly cleared my head.

[GOLDMAN stands.]

Next time, be sure to smack the other side so I can balance out the bruises. Don't be so stupid. Are all policemen as stupid as you? I never said

that. We just told people how the government -- your boss -- was going to send young men to the slaughterhouse. I thought that a man going off to Europe to be turned into ground beef should examine the meat grinder. I told them they had to follow their own consciences.

(to each of the guards)

I can say whatever I want.

(to the audience, as she sits)

Do these words ring a bell: First Amendment? Oh -- it doesn't apply to Jews and foreigners. Can you show me where that's written down?

[GOLDMAN reacts as if a truncheon is placed across her throat and she is pulled back against the chair: a chokehold.]

Repeat after you? I don't think so. Let me go.

[She physically reacts as if released from the chokehold.]

There is never too much free speech.

[She stands and composes herself, then gets up on the chair. To the volunteers.]

Stand at attention again. We're in a courtroom.

(to the audience)

Oyez, oyez, oyez -- all rise for the honorable judge. Emma "The Mouthy Jew" Goldman is about to get her bloomers blown open.

[She stamps three times to mimic the judge's gavel, then speaks in an exaggeratedly gruff voice, imitating/mocking the judge. Clearing her throat.]

Hmm, hmm. Yes. I'm Judge Thumb Up My Butt (if laughter, add "Silence in the court!" and stamp on the chair), and I sentence you to two years in the federal penitentiary for conspiracy.

(her own voice)

Conspiracy? I've been doing my work out in the open for the last 30 years! Where have you been?

(gruff voice)

And a \$10,000 fine.

(GOLDMAN slaps her pockets)

I got some nickels.

(gruff voice)

And we're kicking you out of the country after that.

(her own voice)

When you clean house, your honor, you clean house. Thank you for applying the even hand of justice, your honor -- across my face.

[She stamps three more times; she gets off the chair. She tells the volunteers to put the guns back and sit down.] Let's thank them for being such good soldiers.

So, for speaking my mind, for believing in the First Amendment, I spent two years in the women's prison at Jefferson City, Missouri. Then, in 1920, the government kicked me out and sent me into exile, to Soviet Russia, where I lived for two more years. In the meantime, while I was on my vacation --

[If music, martial music begins playing, gradually getting louder so that GOLDMAN has to shout, but never so loud that she can't be heard. If not music, then GOLDMAN will say the lines directly to individual members of the audience, moving close to them at their eye-level.]

There were two fearless pit bulls of liberty: Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer and his sidekick J. Edgar Hoover. They planned to drop-kick "60,000 Reds" into the ocean (well, one less, now that I was booted). They turned Ellis Island in New York into a jail where they crushed families, stole property, and ruined reputations. And all this pain was supposed to make democracy safe. For whom? You cannot know, cannot feel, how terrified we felt for the simple act of putting our thoughts into words.

[If music, she claps her hands, and music out. If not music, she simply stands.]

Thus endeth the history lesson -- for the moment. Not too painful, huh?

[She bows, and, if she can do it, encourages applause for herself and the volunteers.]

* * * * *

Scene 3: Who Is Emma Goldman? Part 2

[Lights change.]

So now you know something about how I work:
Anarchist, rebel, big mouth, a pain in the --

(points to her butt)

A little bit of shameful history, and how that
history and I banged together, like atoms in an
atom smasher: high energy sparks everywhere.

So --

(slyly)

-- how did such a nice Jewish girl learn to be so
dangerous?

[GOLDMAN puts on something over her dress to indicate a younger age -- something with a bib or a pinafore, perhaps -- and a kerchief on her head. Anything else to indicate a change of age.]

Family, of course, taught me something. I was
born in Russia, to middle-class Jewish parents.
My sisters Helena and Lena and I came to America
because we got tired of being bashed around by a
Jewish father who hated women and a Russia that
loved butchering Jews as a sport. The lesson? I
learned early on to hate men with lots of power.

Part of the lesson comes from place. Before I
came to America, I lived in St. Petersburg -- a
city full of crazy writers, like Dostoevsky, and
revolutionaries who didn't mind killing off a
czar or two. The lesson? I learned early on
that a person didn't have to sit still when bad
things were being done.

But the biggest lesson of all came from this
wonderful, terrible country called America, where
two American Beauty roses cost more than my
week's salary at my first job. And I can date
the time and place of that lesson, my turning
point: Haymarket, Chicago, Illinois, 1886, when I

was seventeen years old. A lot of very strange things can happen to you when you're seventeen.

* * * * *

Scene 4: Haymarket

Helena and I came to Rochester, New York, in 1885, where my sister Lena and her family lived - - talk about crammed in! Then my parents came over -- even more crammed in! And suddenly all these men in my life wanted to control me: my father, my factory bosses -- and a husband, Jacob Kersner, who I married for escape. But he just became another man: jealous and dull and full of stupid opinions, with hair sprouting out of his ears.

Like you, like most adolescents, I felt confused and angry a lot of the time. And it seemed that America felt confused and angry, too: workers and bosses at each other's throats, the rich and the poor at war with each other. And nowhere did it heat up more quickly than in Chicago, and in Chicago, no place was hotter than Haymarket Square.

[GOLDMAN holds up a sign with a big "8" on it and the phrase "Eight hours for work, eight hours for sleep, and eight hours for what we want to do."]

I told you that what happened at Haymarket Square changed my life, and here's why. It's 1886. Workers around the country were on strike to get their bosses to agree to an 8-hour working day -- the usual day went for 10 or 12 hours or more. Chicago was the nerve-center for this fight.

(she chants)

"Eight hours for work, eight hours for sleep, and eight hours for what we want to do." That was the simple argument, and isn't it amazing that people died (and many did) for something we now think is as natural as breathing?

(GOLDMAN puts the sign away)

Here we go: In February, at the McCormick Harvester Company, a labor disagreement leads to a strike. The bosses bring in scabs to break the strike, but things stay calm -- for the moment.

(By the way, "scabs" are workers hired by the bosses to break the back of a strike.)

[GOLDMAN takes up the black shawl, draping it over her head as if in mourning. GOLDMAN will use the shawl in a variety of ways.]

But on the evening of May 4, in a light drizzle, 180 police come into Haymarket Square to break up a peaceful protest meeting. Someone -- to this day, no one knows who -- someone heaves a bomb into the ranks of the police. Seven officers die, with almost 70 wounded. In a panic, the police --

(miming shooting four people in the audience)

-- open fire and kill four people in the crowd -- blood for blood. Chicago's bosses and politicians have no doubt who did it -- obviously, the Anarchists threw the bomb and the Anarchists must pay the price. "It's obvious," they say. "We'll just find the evidence later." The police round up eight Anarchists and charge them with a conspiracy to murder.

[Lights change.]

Final act.

[She takes the shawl off her head but still wears it as a shawl.]

My sister Helena and I, like the whole country, follow the trial. I read all about the eight men, and I find their anarchist beliefs and visions about brotherhood and justice and peace very beautiful. I am seventeen years old, remember -- confused, excited, admiring -- and very, very scared for them. My young heart races.

I had every right to be scared because faster than an eye-blink, seven of the eight are sentenced to hang, even though there isn't a lick of proof to link them to the bomb. But it isn't about proof. The prosecutor, outright, tells the jury:

(in the voice of the prosecutor)

"Convict these men, make examples of them, hang them, and you save our institutions." It is about killing their ideas. Killing their ideas. Think about that for a moment; think about why a

government would want to do that to its own people.

The governor of Illinois changes two sentences to life imprisonment. One of the remaining five commits suicide in prison. The other four -- Albert Parsons, Adolph Fischer, August Spies, George Engel -- have their necks snapped on November 11, 1887. Black Friday.

[She holds the shawl as if it were a rope around her neck.]

On that day, my heart breaks.

At my father's house that evening it's big news, and people argue about the hangings. Suddenly, this woman's annoying voice drowns out everybody.

(as WOMAN)

"Why all these sad faces? The men were murderers. They should be hanged!"

I'm on her in a heartbeat, and people have to drag me off.

(falls to her knees)

I pass out, and they have to carry me to bed; Helena soothes me, as always, and I fall into a deep sleep, almost like a death.

[If pre-planned, GOLDMAN takes the chime and hands it to the volunteer, who can remain seated. If not, GOLDMAN does it herself.]

I have slept many nights in many strange places, but never a sleep like this.

(strikes the chime)

Dreams, lots of dreams: about the ignorant men in my life who make me feel small.

(chime)

About the women who have been abused by these men.

(chime)

About other women, their minds full of fire and purpose.

(chime)

About Jewish prophets and Russian czars with
cruel faces.

(chime)

About freedom drowned in blood.

(chime)

All this and more.

When I wake up, I don't just wake up -- I feel
re-born. For almost eighteen years I had put up
with the insults and shame thrown at young girls
with a strong mind and an open heart. Haymarket
showed me that the most important thing in life
was to find something worth living for -- and
dying for -- and not care what anybody else
thought.

Two years later, in 1889, I divorced Mr. Jacob
Kersner and ran to New York City to live my life.
I was twenty years old. My real life --

(chime)

-- was about --

(chime)

-- to begin.

[Chime. Takes the chimes from the volunteer, if one is used.]

* * * * *

Scene 5: Sasha

[Lights change. If sound, sounds of city life in 1889: horse
carriages, whistles, trains, bells. Played very loud -- GOLDMAN will
speak over it. GOLDMAN puts the chime away and takes off the
overdress and shawl. After putting them away, she picks up a large
book.]

New York in 1889: full of horseshit and freedom.
And such freedom! It didn't take me long to hook
up with people on the Lower East Side, where all
the Jewish immigrants crammed themselves in. No
men in my life, a little money in my pocket, and
my mind free -- alive, at last!

Ideas poured in on me. I read books. I attended lectures. I sucked down strong coffee and argued and argued until I was blind. A famous man gave me a chance to lecture, and people began to know my name. My mind became large as I turned twenty-three. Things were adding up.

[Lights change.]

And I had love. One lover especially, named Alexander Berkman. My Sasha. I met him my first day in New York: twenty-one years old, strong, handsome, brutally honest, soaked in radicalism -- and pigheaded and cock-sure and always hungry for life. I had two reactions to him: I thought he was obnoxious, and I couldn't keep my mind or my hands off him.

He believed completely in The Cause -- which meant, to him, the cause of fighting for justice and freedom. And, if you had to, you died for The Cause, pure and simple. I couldn't deny that -- for all my sadness, I felt proud when my Haymarket Anarchists died for their beliefs. So we connected like two comets smashing together -- lots of light, heat, and fireworks.

And for The Cause, we plotted to kill a man. We planned to assassinate Henry Clay Frick --

[GOLDMAN opens and snaps closed the large book, making a big sound.]

-- manager of a steel factory in Pennsylvania, who was using troops and thugs to put down a strike of steel workers. Sasha planned to get into his office and shoot him, and if that didn't work, stab him. I argued that I should go with him, but he said he was going to do it himself, to sacrifice himself for the good of The Cause.

(puts the book away)

We argued and argued about it. My beliefs went bare knuckles with my heart -- I either wanted to die with him or have neither of us die. But he wouldn't give in -- he believed the assassination would ignite the Revolution. So, what could I do? What would you do if you loved someone as much as I loved Sasha? Of course: I gave him my heart and my support completely. There was no other choice. We were very young.

[GOLDMAN gets the chair and sits. She holds up her hands.]

You can't see it -- but there is blood on these hands. Sasha failed. He shot Frick, he stabbed Frick, but Frick survived, and the court buried Sasha away for twenty-two years -- more than the twenty-one years he'd been alive. He was ready to suffer unbearable pain for The Cause. But I wasn't. I betrayed him because I found out that I wasn't ready to go the same distance.

I had my chances to follow him. When Sasha was brought to prison, the police in New York City started looking for me. I could have given myself up. I could have proudly stood with Sasha at the trial and sacrificed myself for what I said I believed with all my heart.

I could have -- but I didn't. I hid until the police stopped looking for me, and when I resurfaced, I made my choice. I chose to breathe free air -- with no intention of giving it up. I gave Sasha the Judas kiss and went on to live my own life.

Do you understand what I'm telling you? Sasha loved the ideal, the perfect, and so he believed he could give up ordinary life. Me? I loved ordinary life too much -- and that made me a coward. A coward.

(stands)

In 1906, after fourteen years, they released him; they cut eight years cut off his sentence after cutting fourteen years off his life. For a long time he had horrible nightmares and came close to committing suicide.

For me, over those same fourteen years: I became "the most dangerous woman in America." If ambition was like alcohol, I became something of a drunkard. Emma Goldman, whom everyone admired for her courage and strength -- I was nothing compared to my Sasha. Yet everyone remembers my name and not his. I, who fought against injustice -- I am guilty of the greatest injustice of all: betraying a friend. I betrayed Sasha. And that betrayal made this Emma Goldman possible. It's a terrible thing to betray a friend, isn't it? What can you do to make it up to the person? Can you ever make things right? Does the betrayal make everything else you've

done with your life worthless, a lie? These are not easy questions to face.

* * * * *

Scene 6: Who Is Emma Goldman? Part 3

But if Sasha ever had any doubts about what I did, he never let me know them, and we continued our fight together for the next thirty years until he died in 1936. By his own hand, I have to tell you. Sick, without any money, feeling useless, this man, who had shot Frick three times up close and still couldn't kill him, decided to shoot himself, and he didn't have any better luck: the bullet split his lungs and stomach and lodged in his spine. It took him sixteen hours to die. His "estate" was only worth eighty dollars.

[Takes a letter from her pocket, does not open it.]

In a letter to me, meant to be read only when he died: "I consider our life of work and comradeship and friendship...one of the most beautiful and rarest things in the world....I have lived my life and I am really of the opinion that when one has neither health nor means and cannot work for his ideas, it is time to clear out." Sasha, my sweet prince.

But his death didn't shut my mouth -- my mouth had been jabbering on for so long it had taken on a life of its own! I kept right on saying what I'd always been saying, and, man, I had something to say about everything -- you couldn't shut me up or shut me down!

[Gets up on the chair.]

Here are a few of my ideas.

Marriage: don't do it! When they call it the bonds of matrimony, when they call it wedlock or the ties that bind, they aren't kidding! Marriage is just another kind of slavery for women -- and for men, too, if you think about it.

I never had children, but I made that choice. A woman must control her body, and no man has the right to say anything about it.

Why do we have a society that builds more jail cells than houses and schools? That spends more on pet food than child care? Where you can't get enough money to [some problem in the school itself] but there's enough money for fancy weapons to destroy people? Who gets to decide all this stuff? Did anyone ask you? And what are you going to do about it?

Which reminds me: I hate the military. What good is a democracy defended by people you hire to beat up and kill other people?

And religion -- and I apologize if I offend you, but this is the truth about me. I was an atheist all my life because I felt that there was about as much proof for God and Jesus as for leprechauns and Tinkerbell. Life is hard enough with-out having to carry gods and goddesses on your backs, especially ones that seem to get a lot of pleasure out of human suffering. You are all divine enough -- you don't need to believe in anything but the power of your own, sweet selves.

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Scene 7: Peroration

[Gets down.]

See, a big mouth. But enough, because I'm sure at this point you're asking, "Doesn't she believe in anything positive?"

[GOLDMAN gets them to repeat this.]

Repeat after me: "Doesn't she believe in anything positive?" And I do, I do believe in something positive, as I told you at the beginning. I call it Anarchism, but I also call it by another name: love. Anarchism is love: does that sound odd to you? It shouldn't.

[Lights change. Musical underscoring, if music is used. GOLDMAN asks the first volunteer to return. She helps GOLDMAN bring the desk and coatrack to its opening position. GOLDMAN takes off her make-up.]

What they all couldn't understand is that everything we Anarchists believe comes out of love; Anarchism is love made into politics. Follow me in this thinking; I know you can. In real love, two people honor each other's freedom -- yes? They may fight and spit and complain,

but in the end, if they really love each other, neither of them gets to have power over the other. Once one person gets to call the shots and say this is this and that is that, you have slavery. In real love, there is no slavery, only equals.

The next step -- the next thousand or million steps -- is what Anarchism is all about: how to take that real love, that equality, and build a society where everyone gets a fair deal. That's where the politics comes in: who gets to decide the answers to basic questions like who can eat, who has a place to live, who gets an education, who can see the doctor, and so on. Anarchism has some ideas about how to make those decisions, but the ideas are all based on one basic idea: equality among people, fairness to one another, comes out of love and respect. Anything else leads to unfairness.

When I say "real love," I am not talking about sinking ships or [some reference to a current movie] or [some reference to a current magazine]. Real love is not that easy, and it can take a lot of pain to make it work. But if we ignore or disrespect this love, if we say, "That ain't for me," then we are nothing but fools, no matter how much money or power we have. In the end, the only test result that matters is this: how well we have loved ourselves, our friends and family, and even strangers. If you don't love life and people with this real kind of love, then, as far as I'm concerned, your life hasn't been very meaningful. And, really, in the end, do you want to lie on your deathbed and think about all the good things you should have done and didn't when there's no time left to make things right? Life is too short to waste it on regret or selfishness.

[GOLDMAN is in her street clothes. Volunteer sits.]

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Scene 8: Envoi

[GOLDMAN takes the rose from the desk.]

So, here I am, back to being _____.
But Emma is never very far from me; she's become part of me.

[Holds up the rose.]

You all may think you know what this is, but I want you to look at it with some different eyes. This rose is Anarchism. This flower already has all the information it needs to grow. You are no different than this flower; you have all the knowledge you need to build a world of justice and love, if you can just free yourself from a lot of myths and superstitions and just plain bad information.

Remember: Emma believed that you will make a future that's better than what we have now.

[GOLDMAN hands the rose to the volunteer and has the volunteer stand next to her.]

Be like this rose: Rise up to the sun, hook your roots into the earth, and make a world that smells sweeter than this one.

Thank you for giving me honor of being with you today.

Blackout