

Political Graffiti or when ideology collides with reality

by Phillip W. Weiss

**Phil's Literary Works LLC
19 West 34th Street
Penthouse
New York, NY 10001
(212) 388-8690
pwnycny@aol.com
www.philsliteraryworks.com**

copyright © 2016 Phillip W. Weiss

Characters

Walter Frank – a Marxist

Four people, two males and two female, designated Man 1, Man 2, Woman 1, and Woman 2. They are anonymous. They can be anybody.

The entire play is set inside a room. Location: anywhere in the United States.

This play is a work of fiction. Any resemblances to any persons living or deceased is unintentional and entirely coincidental.

“Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class.”

“The working men have no country.”

“In depicting the most general phases of the development of the proletariat, we traced the more or less veiled civil war, raging within existing society, up to the point where that war breaks out into open revolution, and where the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie, lays the foundation for the sway of the proletariat.”

“The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling class tremble at the Communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.”

“Working men of all countries unite!”

**Karl Marx and Frederick Engels
Communist Manifesto, 1848**

Scene 1

Time: 1893

In the room are a group of people, mostly young adult, mostly men. They are seated. At stage right is a podium. A man is standing behind the podium delivering a speech. His name is Walter Frank.

FRANK

I tell you my brothers and sisters, the time to strike is now! The workers are on the march! Down with the capitalist exploiters! Up with the workers. Are you with me?

MAN 1

Wait a minute. What are you talking about? It's a labor management dispute. We want money. You want revolution.

FRANK

No, my good but deluded man. This is not just about dollars and cents. It's about social justice. Don't you understand? The bosses want to buy off the workers, to keep them quiet. But we can see through that. That's nothing but a smoke screen.

WOMAN 1

You're right. My sisters in the garment industry are working for practically nothing. Working conditions are deplorable. Yet nothing is done about it. That must stop, now.

MAN 2

(to woman 1)

Stop your yammering. When's the last time you ever set foot in a factory? It's easy for you to talk. You live with your rich parents, but for those women they need those jobs to live.

WOMAN 1

(to Man 2)

I've never been in a factory? It may interest you to know, sir, that when I was in high school I worked for an entire summer in my uncle's millenary store.

MAN 2

Some "experience." All you do-gooders are the same. Looking for a cause, trying to save the world. And what do you accomplish? Nothing except make trouble.

FRANK

My friend, you are so wrong. We have accomplished much already. Our voices are now being heard.

MAN 1

You mean your voice is now being heard. Do you think you speak for the unions?

FRANK

The unions are with us.

MAN 1

You mean they're striking to bring down the country?

FRANK

If need be, yes.

MAN 2

And replace it with what?

WOMAN 1

With something better, and where women have the right to vote.

MAN 2

No way! A woman's place is in the home. I can't have my wife running around, not with five kids at home. Who'll take care of them?

WOMAN 2

That's right, women weren't meant to do that.

WOMAN 1

So, you think it's good to have men do the thinking for us? They have a hard enough time thinking for themselves.

WOMAN 2

But they're the breadwinners.

WOMAN 1

And the drunks. Half the time my man is drinking at the bar.

MAN 2

With a nag like you I'm surprised he's home at all.

WOMAN 2

I'd hate to be your wife.

MAN 2

Here they go. Ganging up on men again.

MAN 1

That's what happens when women have too much free time.

WOMAN 1

And we don't work too?

MAN 2

You don't, that's for sure because if you had to work for a living you'd be singing a different tune.

WOMAN 1

I'd be singing the same tune. That you can be sure of.

MAN 1

All you girls are alike. Always complaining.

WOMAN 1

I'd appreciate it if you'd not call me a girl. I'm a woman.

MAN 1

How old are you? Eighteen? Nineteen? You ought to be married already.

WOMAN 1

I'll get married when I'm ready, thank you.

MAN 2
(to Man 1)

Maybe she's one of those "funny" dames that hates men.

WOMAN 1

How dare you suggest that? I'm not that at all and I'd thank you to watch your tongue.

MAN 1

Listen to that! A little joviality and she goes all to pieces.

WOMAN 2

You gentlemen should be ashamed of yourselves, speaking to this young lady like that.

MAN 1

And why should we be ashamed? We said nothing wrong. The young lady really has no business being here.

WOMAN 1

And why is that?

MAN 1

Because you're not part of the working class, that's why. Why don't you just run back home now and let the real workers manage their affairs.

FRANK

That's right, my good man. You are the real workers, and that is exactly why I called this meeting. We must organize and we must fight for what is right.

MAN 2

Fight? You mean with our fists?

FRANK

No, unless of course provoked.

MAN 1

Provoked by whom?

FRANK

The police and the ruffians hired by the bosses to beat us into submission.

MAN 2

You mean if we support the strike we have to fight the police?

FRANK

Don't be alarmed. The capitalists are trying to scare us. But we are backed by the people and they will join us.

MAN 1

You're talking some serious talk, young man. You sure you know what you're talking about?

FRANK

Of course I do. Karl Marx called on the all the workers of the world to unite. Our victory is inevitable. He wrote it all down in his manifesto.

MAN 2

What manifesto?

FRANK

The communist manifesto. Haven't you read it?

MAN 1

I never even heard of it. What's it about?

FRANK

Oh, my dear friends, my sisters and brothers. Haven't you heard? The word is out. It's just a matter of time before all the sweat shops and tenements and filth and crime and injustice are a thing of the past! Marx has discovered the pathway to a new society, a classless society, in which there is justice and equality for all.

WOMAN 1

Sounds like this fellow Marx knows what he's talking about.

MAN 2

I heard somewhere that he's nothing but a rabble rouser.

FRANK

No, that is wrong! He wrote a huge book which explains in the most minute detail how the workers are exploited and how the capitalist class is destined to disappear.

WOMAN 2

Sound like hogwash to me. How are you going to get rid of slums and factories?

FRANK

By the working class taking control of everything.

MAN 1

And there'd be no more bosses? No more landlords? No more police?

FRANK

Yes, that's right! Now you're beginning to understand.

MAN 2

Where do I sign?

FRANK

No, you don't sign anything. You just follow me. When we see the strikers, we tell them that we're with them, and then get them to follow us.

MAN 1

How do we do that?

FRANK

By chanting slogans and letting the whole world know what we stand for.

WOMAN 2

What about if the strikers don't want to listen?

FRANK

They will listen because our message is meant for them, the working class, who are destined to rule.

WOMAN 1

This sounds very exciting!

WOMAN 2

This sounds very reckless.

MAN 1

I got some bad feelings about this.

FRANK

Don't you understand? We are on the winning side of history. We are going to prevail. We are going to win!

MAN 1

But they're striking for higher wages.

FRANK

That's why we must get out there, to stop them from being hoodwinked by the union bosses who've been bought off.

MAN 2

You think so?

FRANK

It's a fact. The last thing they want is for the workers to know the truth. They are conspiring with management to keep the working class down, and we have to break their hold on them once and for all, even if it means taking our struggle to the streets!

WOMAN 1

It sounds like you're talking about going to war.

FRANK

That's right, sister. That's exactly what I'm talking about: class war, the proletariat rising up against the exploiters, just like Marx said.

WOMAN 1

Now you're scaring me.

WOMAN 2

I knew it. At the first mention of trouble, you'd be the first to run.

WOMAN 1

I want justice too, but I didn't know that would mean having to go to war.

MAN 1

This is serious business, missy.

WOMAN 1

I'd thank you not to call me missy.

MAN 1

If you sound like a child then you should be treated like a child.

WOMAN 2

Gentlemen, the sister is young but there is no need to humiliate her. After all, we are ladies.

MAN 2

You're a lady? Didn't I see you hanging out in front of one of those red light joints on the Bowery?

WOMAN 2

You have me mistaken for someone else.

MAN 2

I could swear it was you.

MAN 1

What were you doing down there?

MAN 2

I happen to work in the area.

WOMAN 1

What kind of work you do?

MAN 2

I'm a carpenter. Self-employed.

MAN 1

Who just happened to be on red light alley where you saw this lady. Seems fishy to me.

MAN 2

Hey, what are you suggesting? I'm a married man, not a sporting man. I have no time for frivolities.

MAN 1

Of course, you don't. What brings you to this meeting?

MAN 2

Two weeks ago my boss fired me after I asked for a raise. The boss said no, I made a fuss and he fired me, just like that. After having worked there for three years. That's injustice. What about you?

MAN 1

Me? I was in the army. One day my sergeant starts bawling me out in front of the troops. Accused me of stealing from the unit. I lost my temper and hauled off on him. Next thing I was court martialed, convicted and mustered out. So here I am. Nothing to lose, everything to gain.

FRANK

That's right. Everything to gain. So let's hit the streets! The future is ours!

End of scene 1

Scene 2

Time: 1917. World War One. The United States is still neutral, but there is talk about the US entering the war.

FRANK

I tell you, my friends, we must stop the war profiteers from getting us involved in the war. They use clever appeals to patriotism to keep the working class divided and seduce the workers into fighting. But we won't let them do that. Will we?

MAN 1

But the Germans keep sinking our ships. They sunk five already.

WOMAN 1

We can't let them get away with that!

WOMAN 2

Oh hush up, you war mongering hussy.

WOMAN 1

The nerve of you!

MAN 2

Ladies, please. Conduct yourselves in a more dignified manner.

WOMAN 1

She started it.

WOMAN 2

Oh, shut up! Men! Because of you men, we have wars.

MAN 1

That's right, blame the men.

WOMAN 2

That's right, I do. If we women had the right to vote, we'd wouldn't be in this fix.

WOMAN 1

That's telling him.

WOMAN 2

And as for you, young lady, you need to grow up.

WOMAN 1

I'm grown up enough, thank you.

MAN 1

I say you are. Maybe you'd like to join me for a sarsaparilla?

WOMAN 1

With you, not likely. You're really not my type.

MAN 2

She likes her men more refined, you know, so she can boss them around.

WOMAN 1

I really have no idea why this talk is focusing on me. I'm here to listen to the gentleman at the podium.

FRANK

My friends, this is the problem. We have to end all this petty bickering. In unity there is strength.

WOMAN 2

That's true.

FRANK

But we're not united.

MAN 2

Unite for what?

MAN 1

And with whom?

FRANK

My friends, you haven't been listening. There's a new world that's about to emerge. One in which there will be absolute equality for all.

MAN 1

Does that apply to women too?

FRANK

Of course, to women too.

MAN 2

Then I'm out! I can't imagine for the life of me my wife having the vote. That is what you're talking about, isn't it?

FRANK

That's bourgeois thinking. You have to go beyond that.

WOMAN 1

So you're saying that women shouldn't have the vote?

FRANK

It doesn't matter. While the capitalists are in power your vote counts for nothing. Elections are rigged to protect the interests of the moneyed class.

WOMAN 2

So you want for us to unite while not giving the women the right to vote. That don't make sense to me.

MAN 1

Of course it doesn't. That's because you're a woman.

WOMAN 1

You, sir, are a cad!

MAN 2

That's telling him.

WOMAN 1

And as for you, you must have a cabbage for a brain.

MAN 2

How dare you say that to me!

FRANK

We are straying away from the purpose of this meeting. Society is divided into two classes: the capitalists and the workers. We can gain power only by uniting into one mighty force that will overthrow a decadent and unjust system that mercilessly exploits the workers.

MAN 2

I'm exploited? I'm a metal worker making twenty-five dollars a week, which to me is damn good money. I bet I make more than everyone else in this room combined.

MAN 1

Stop your bragging. I'm ready to quit my job and go fight for my country.

WOMAN 1

Oh my, that's brave of you.

MAN 2

And stupid too. Why should we get involved in that war? What's in it for us?

WOMAN 1

You sir are a coward.

MAN 2

No need to call me names. I'm just being smart.

WOMAN 2

You're just being selfish. Maybe we women need to do the fighting for you.

MAN 2

Be my guest.

WOMAN 1

Some man you are.

MAN 1

That's telling him.

WOMAN 1

And as for you, you're no Prince Charming either, although I do admire your gumption.

FRANK

My dear brothers and sisters, this is the problem: we must cast aside all that divides us and become one in the struggle for equality and justice.

MAN 2

How do we do that?

FRANK

By raising your political consciousness and gaining an understanding where your interests really lie.

MAN 1

Mine is with where I can hang my hat and get a good meal.

WOMAN 1

Mine is where I can meet a good man.

WOMAN 2

Mine is where I can raise my kids in peace.

MAN 2

Mine is where I can make as much money as I can. As for the political stuff, I'll leave that to the politicians. That's their job.

WOMAN 1

So where does that leave us?

FRANK

In a good place, that's where! We must organize! Now!

MAN 2

But for what?

FRANK

To bring down the system.

MAN 1

Yeah! Right! The system stinks!

WOMAN 1

Who needs the system?

MAN 2

Ah, that's all a bunch of hooley!

WOMAN 2

The system is rotten to the core (to *Man 2*) So, what are you doing here?

MAN 2

I thought I'd be hearing something smart.

FRANK

My friend, you are hearing something smart. You just don't know it yet. Your heart told you to come here. Now let your mind catch up with your heart.

WOMAN 2

That's if he has a heart. Maybe he's a spy for the police.

MAN 2

Me? A spy? Don't make me laugh.

WOMAN 2

What I said wasn't meant to provoke laughter. Listen, I don't want for us to be in a war. I got my kids to worry about.

MAN 2

Look, I don't want us to be in a war either. I could be drafted.

WOMAN 1

We wouldn't want that to happen.

MAN 1

Take one look at him. No doubt he'd be deferred.

MAN 2

I'm as much of a man as you are, pal.

WOMAN 1

I love it when men resort to fisticuffs.

MAN 1

You do? (to Man 2) Hey, pal, your wife is uglier than a mule.

MAN 2

Don't you see that she's trying to get us to fight?

MAN 1

Yeah, I do. So what about it? How about if we go a couple of rounds?

WOMAN 1

Excuse me for saying this, sir, but you don't seem to be the pugilistic type.

MAN 1

Hey, I'm no pugilist, whatever that means.

WOMAN 2

What she's trying to say is that you couldn't fight your way out of a paper bag.

FRANK

Can that talk, brothers. We're not here to fight each other. We are here to struggle against a system that pits man against man, woman against woman and worker against worker. Are you with me?

MAN 2

I'm not sure.

MAN 1

I am, just as long as mister coward over there keeps his mouth shut.

MAN 2

I will not stand for such talk. Perhaps it is time for me to teach you a lesson.

WOMAN 2

Hey, who cares about the war in Europe when we have one brewing here?

FRANK

I implore all you to end all this petty quarreling. We must unite even if requires some head bashing! The movement is bigger than any of us. Alone we are powerless but united we can move mountains. So what do you say? Are you with me?

MAN 1

Whatever you say, pal.

WOMAN 1

Just as long as I get the right to vote.

WOMAN 2

And just as long as my kids are safe.

MAN 2

And just as long as I can first clobber that goober on the noggin.

End of scene 2

Scene 3

Time: 1937. The United States is wallowing in the depths of the Great Depression.

FRANK

My dear brothers and sisters. Thank you for showing up tonight. The plutocrats and their political stooges are sucking our country dry. We must act now!

MAN 1

I agree with that. I've been out of work for two years and what has Roosevelt done? Nothing!

MAN 2

We went out on strike for more money and the boss locked us out and replaced us with scabs.

WOMAN 1

I finally got a job as a maid.

WOMAN 2

A maid? Where? On Eighth Avenue?

WOMAN 1

You should know. You've been there yourself.

WOMAN 2

Honey, you don't know where I've been.

MAN 1

And she don't want to know either.

WOMAN 1

Excuse me. I can speak for myself, thank you.

MAN 2

All you dames are the same. Complain about everything.

WOMAN 2

You're saying that because you've been told to skidoo by half the women in town while the other half won't even give you a look.

MAN 2

That's because you're all a bunch of stuck-up snobs.

FRANK

My friends, stop bickering over your petty concerns. They are nothing when compared to the problems that are affecting the entire world.

MAN 1

Speak for yourself, mac. Getting a job is important to me. I'm up to my gills in debt and my landlady is threatening to throw me out if I don't pay the rent and I'm already in deep arrears.

MAN 2

You think you got problems? Get this: I'm in the hole for a thousand bucks from my local bookie.

MAN 1

Serves you right for gambling.

WOMAN 1

You have to watch out who're your friends.

WOMAN 2

What friends? My husband is a dork. He hasn't held a steady job since he got out of the service after the war.

WOMAN 1

Is that his fault?

WOMAN 2

Yes, it is. But he keeps blaming it on the war.

MAN 1

Did he see action?

WOMAN 2

Oh, he saw action, all right. Hard labor in the stockade at Fort Dix, New Jersey.

MAN 1

But, what I mean: was he overseas?

WOMAN 2

He was, for a couple of months. But he never talks about it.

FRANK

You see, my good lady, your husband is one of the victims of a rotten system that used him and millions of other fine men like him as cannon fodder to gain control of markets around the world while others suffered.

MAN 1

I thought we fought the war to make the world safe for democracy. Anyway, that's what Wilson said.

MAN 2

Didn't quite work out that way.

WOMAN 1

Oh, yes it did. Right now there's no war going on.

FRANK

Tell that to the Ethiopians and the Chinese.

MAN 1

Those are local wars. They have nothing to do with us. I hate hearing people warning us about Hitler and Mussolini. I have no gripe with them. To me, it looks like they're doing a good job.

WOMAN 2

That Hitler really seems to have a way with the women. Yesterday I went to the movies and saw a newsreel showing Hitler giving a speech before this huge crowd, I think it was in Nuremberg. The women were hysterical.

WOMAN 1

Well, I like Mister Roosevelt. He's nice.

MAN 2

That phony? Who cares about him? So far he's accomplished nothing.

FRANK

And why would you expect anything different? Don't you understand that he is a tool of the plutocrats who are milking this country dry, at your expense? But there is a better way. Inside the Soviet Union the proletariat are creating a new society where everyone is happy and truly free.

MAN 2

Isn't Hitler doing the same thing in Germany?

WOMAN 1

I heard that since Hitler took power the Germans couldn't be happier.

MAN 1

Then what are we waiting for?

MAN 2

Wait a minute, friend. Do you know what you're saying?

MAN 1

Our system is failing. No matter what we do, we can't get anything done.

FRANK

Now you're talking, sir.

WOMAN 1

We have problems, but Hitler isn't the answer.

FRANK

The only answer is to establish a dictatorship of the proletariat.

WOMAN 2

You mean, go commie?

FRANK

It is only a matter of time.

WOMAN 1

Things can't be that bad.

MAN 2

But they are. I need a job!

MAN 1

Me too!

FRANK

Then we must unite!

WOMAN 1

What are you: Bolsheviks?

MAN 2

Hey, none of that name calling. You see what happens when you speak out? The next thing someone's sticking you with a label.

MAN 1

I know what you mean. I told someone that I loved The Good Earth and this guy overhears us and starts screaming that I'm a commie. Just because I liked a movie. Can you beat that?

WOMAN 2

I didn't think much of that movie. I mean Louise Rainer playing a Chinese girl?

MAN 1

I thought she was great.

MAN 2

Personally, I prefer cartoons. Or good gangster movie with Cagney or George Raft.

WOMAN 2

That doesn't surprise me.

MAN 2

What's wrong with Mickey Mouse and Popeye the Sailor?

WOMAN 1

They're for kids. But I love James Cagney. He's so great in those musicals.

MAN 2

And you're knocking me for liking cartoons?

FRANK

The mass media uses entertainment like a drug to lull the masses to distraction. Workers are taught to care more about fantasies on the screen than what is going on in real life. It's nothing but a tool to keep the working class stupid and sedated.

MAN 1

That reminds me: I was meaning to see the movie Dead End.

MAN 2

Don't bother. I saw it last week, part of a double feature with some Charlie Chan mystery movie. The movie put me to sleep. All talk, no action. That's why I prefer cartoons. No complicated plots and lots of laughs.

WOMAN 2

Did you actually go to school?

MAN 2

Yes, I did. All the way to the tenth grade.

WOMAN 1

I graduated high school.

MAN 2

Big deal. What did it do for you?

WOMAN 1

I got a diploma, that's what, and that gave me a real sense of accomplishment.

MAN 1

Well, good for you. But did it help you get a job?

MAN 2

That's the bottom line: does it help you make more money.

FRANK

The capitalist oligarchs maintain their power by throwing crumbs to the workers to keep them quiet. However, there are historical forces at work that no amount of money can alter or stop. The oligarchs and monopoly capitalists are doomed. It is just a matter of time.

WOMAN 2

Maybe they are doomed. But what will replace them?

MAN 2

Hitler is working miracles in Germany.

MAN 1

But at the expense of democracy.

WOMAN 1

That's true. I don't like that.

MAN 2

Meanwhile I read somewhere that Germany solved her unemployment problem.

WOMAN 2

At the expense of the Jews.

MAN 2

So what? They're just a bunch of commies anyway.

WOMAN 2

Every Jew is a commie?

MAN 2

Are you defending them?

WOMAN 1

She's just expressing an opinion.

MAN 1

Why is it that sooner or later the Jews always come up for discussion?

MAN 2

Because they're a bunch of troublemakers, that's why.

FRANK

Anti-Semitism is the poison spread by the power elites to sow hatred and keep workers disunited and fighting amongst themselves. Racial, religious and ethnic differences are inventions used by the bourgeoisie to turn worker against worker.

MAN 2

Meanwhile the Jews tried to bolshevize Germany after the war. That's a fact and it took Hitler to stop them. And if we're not careful, they'll try it here.

MAN 1

What are you saying? That all Jews are commies?

MAN 2

No. Not all. Just a lot. The rest are sympathizers.

WOMAN 1

A lot Jews I know own businesses.

MAN 2

That's nothing but a smoke screen.

MAN 1

I can't agree with you, pal.

MAN 2

You must be Jewish. Right?

MAN 1

What does that have to do with anything?

MAN 2

That says it all.

WOMAN 2

He didn't say anything.

WOMAN 1

Isn't Irving Berlin Jewish?

MAN 2

Who cares about Irving Berlin? All he does is write corny songs.

MAN 1

I'm an Al Jolson man myself.

WOMAN 1

He's a little bit too jazzy for me. But I just adore his wife, Louise Rainer.

MAN 1

I think you mean Ruby Keeler.

WOMAN 1

Whatever.

MAN 2

Look, I don't want what happened in Russia to happen here.

WOMAN 1

I heard about how those Bolsheviks operate. It's their way or else. But I do like Stalin's smile.

MAN 2

Stated like a true Bolshevik.

WOMAN 1

I'm a Red all because I like a man's smile?

MAN 2

No, not just because of that. You're talking about Joe Stalin, the head commissar. Why can't you say you like Clark Gable's smile instead?

WOMAN 1

I like his smile too. I hope that satisfies you.

MAN 2

You're just saying that because I brought up Gable's name.

WOMAN 2

You can afford to think about that stuff. You still live at home. Me? I have no time to deal with such nonsense.

WOMAN 1

Not anymore. Last week I moved in with a friend.

MAN 1

Man or woman?

WOMAN 1

A woman, of course, and very fine lady.

WOMAN 2

Oh, of course. For you only the best.

MAN 1

And why not? Expect the best and get the best. That's what I say.

WOMAN 2

He seems to like you.

WOMAN 1

(to woman 2)

He's not my type.

MAN 1

(to woman 1)

Excuse me. What did you say about me?

WOMAN 1

Oh, nothing. Just mumbling.

MAN 2

Hey, mac, she said you're not her type.

MAN 1

Who said that I was even interested?

WOMAN 1

I'd prefer that we drop the subject.

FRANK

Let me be clear about one thing: you must stop all this bickering. We need to be united.

MAN 2

Sir, we came here to listen to what you have to say, and so far you've said nothing.

FRANK

The power of the working class is already making the plutocrats shake in their shoes. It's just a matter of time before the workers triumph. Then war, poverty and racism will end forever and from this mighty struggle for freedom will emerge a new society founded on the principles of peace, justice and equality.

MAN 1

We want action.

WOMAN 2

We want work.

WOMAN 1

I want a man.

FRANK

What you want lies within you. The system is failing and will soon collapse. It is only a matter of time. Sisters and brothers, by uniting, mobilizing for action, and taking to the street we can accelerate the process and achieve victory!

WOMAN 2

When you say take to the street, don't look at me, look at her. She's been there.

WOMAN 1

Why you keep insisting that I am some kind of trollop is beyond me.

MAN 1

Because that's what you are. A couple of days ago I saw you standing on the corner of forty-fifth and eighth.

WOMAN 1

I was waiting for a friend.

MAN 1

And I was looking for a friend.

MAN 2

Are we talking romance here?

WOMAN 2

Do you actually have a brain inside that skull of yours?

FRANK

We have much more important business to discuss.

WOMAN 2

Men have such dirty minds.

MAN 2

Oh can that talk, you sourpuss.

MAN 1

I saw her on the street. What's the big deal?

WOMAN 2

Admit it, you'd like to bang her.

WOMAN 1

I don't even know your name.

MAN 1

My name is ...

WOMAN 1

Don't tell me. You're coming on way too strong.

MAN 1

What are you talking about? I just wanted to tell you my name.

MAN 2

Talk about being fickle. Pal, you're barking up the wrong tree.

MAN 1

I just saw her on the street. That's all.

WOMAN 2

You expect us to believe that? I think you have the hots for her and followed her.

MAN 1

Why would I do that?

WOMAN 2

Because you're shifty eyed pervert.

FRANK

Enough already! We must unite! It's not about you, it's about us. It's about creating a new society. So, what do you say? Are you with me?

WOMAN 2

I'll let you know after talk with my husband.

MAN 1

I'm with you. That is after I go to this job interview I have lined up.
(to *Woman 1*) How about coming with me?

WOMAN 1

No, thank you. I may answer the gentleman's call for action. He seems like a very passionate fellow. I like that.

MAN 2

I'm in, provided you give me a square meal first.

End of scene 3

Scene 4

Time: 1947. The Red Scare is in full swing.

FRANK

Freedom of speech is under attack, and the people won't stand for it! Mark my words: The progressive peoples of the world will throw off the capitalist yoke, once and for all. It's just a matter of time. So, workers of the world: let us unite! Together we will achieve victory!

WOMAN 1

What's going on is terrible.

MAN 1

Yes, it is. How they're going around calling people reds.

WOMAN 2

They're looking out for us, making sure the commies don't gain power. You know how sneaky the reds are.

MAN 2

I didn't serve during the war to see my country go red.

FRANK

Now is time for us to join with organized labor and form a workers' front, with us leading the way!

MAN 2

Whoa! Hold on there, pal. I already served on the front, during the war. That was more than enough for me.

MAN 1

What's with you? We gotta do something, fast! The country's going to hell.

MAN 2

All the commies want to do is Sovietize my country.

FRANK

Oh brother, you are so wrong. We too are loyal Americans. What we advocate is peace, justice and fairness. You must understand that.

WOMAN 1

That's what I want too. Don't we all.

WOMAN 2

I've heard those words before. Just talk.

MAN 1

That's right, and coming from the people who brought us the non-aggression pact with Hitler.

MAN 2

That was Stalin's doing.

MAN 1

Well, now he's trying to destroy the US. Who needs that? Maybe we should have let Hitler win.

WOMAN 1

Ugh! Let Hitler win! How can you say such a horrible thing?

MAN 1

Stalin is worse than Hitler.

MAN 2

Yeah, maybe, but Stalin helped us win the war.

WOMAN 2

Stalin isn't such a bad guy. If he was he wouldn't be in power.

WOMAN 1

Stalin is awful. Look how he marched right in and took over all those countries in Eastern Europe.

MAN 1

What do I care about Eastern Europe? They supported Hitler, so they got what they deserved.

MAN 2

You think Poland deserves to be commie?

MAN 1

I didn't say that.

WOMAN 1

Well, you sure implied it. Poland is in eastern Europe.

MAN 2

I do not want the US to become another Poland.

FRANK

My dear friend, your fears are unfounded. What we advocate is a peoples' democracy, one that is truly progressive, not the sham that passes for democracy today.

MAN 2

So you think our system is a sham?

MAN 1

Some people aren't even allowed to vote. You know what I'm talking about.

MAN 2

I know where this is going.

WOMAN 1

I do too, and I support that.

WOMAN 2

Would somebody please tell me what we're talking about? All this talking is beginning to give me a headache.

MAN 2

He's talking about the coloreds, that's what.

FRANK

Yes, that is correct. The workers' movement welcomes the Negro with open arms. The Negro has been grievously exploited and victimized for centuries, but by joining with us, Jim Crow will be stamped out once and for all.

MAN 2

And what about me? I haven't gotten a raise in three years and if I, or my union, squawks, we're accused of being unpatriotic and acting like a bunch of ...

MAN 1

Nig ...

WOMAN 1

Don't you dare say that word. If you say it, I will slap you in your face.

MAN 1

Excuse me. I was about to say nincompoops.

WOMAN 2

I doubt that.

MAN 1

Believe what you want.

FRANK

To achieve victory, we must have racial justice. We must overcome the bigotry and bias that divides us. Together we will win!

MAN 2

You mean whites and blacks joining forces? What kind of stuff have you been smoking lately?

MAN 1

What's wrong with wanting racial justice? And besides: where would this country be without the Negro?

MAN 2

It would be a lot better off, that's where. I'd like to find the guys who brought them here in the first place. They made one huge mistake. It screwed the country forever.

WOMAN 2

We need them. They're here, and they're staying.

MAN 2

I don't need you to remind me of that.

WOMAN 1

I really don't know what all the fuss is about.

MAN 2

Well, I'll tell you: Their rotten, shiftless, loud, smelly, and above all violent. Plus they hate white people.

WOMAN 2

You don't smell too good either.

WOMAN 1

My girlfriend went out with a Negro.

MAN 2

What kind of friends do you have?

WOMAN 1

She's actually a very nice girl.

MAN 1

She couldn't find a white guy?

WOMAN 1

Well, actually she's Puerto Rican.

MAN 2

Oh brother, hearing you, it only gets worse. What are those people even doing here?

WOMAN 2

Working. Making a living.

MAN 2

You mean taking our jobs and sponging off the tax payers.

FRANK

My friends: the working class will achieve victory. It is just a matter of time. The differences that separate us are those which have been imposed on us by a corrupt political system that wants to keep the working class weak and divided.

WOMAN 1

I read somewhere about the colored airmen who flew fighters during the war.

MAN 1

That's news to me.

MAN 2

Coloreds flying fighter planes? No way.

MAN 1

Look, they're here. They've been here and they're here to stay. We have to accept it.

WOMAN 2

I accept it. Personally, I've never had any problems with Negroes. They don't bother me and I don't bother them. What's wrong with that?

MAN 2

You can afford to say that. You don't live with them. I do.

WOMAN 2

How do you know I don't live with them?

MAN 2

Because if you did, you'd be singing a much different song. You're like all the other do-gooders. Always wanting to show how superior you are, at somebody else's expense.

MAN 1

Hey, mac, all of us, black and white, happen to live in the same country. So we have to be able to get along.

MAN 2

That doesn't help me at all. All I know, and this is based on what I directly observe, is that when the blacks move in, they drive out white people and destroy neighborhoods. The neighborhood where I live used to be all white. Now the coloreds are moving in, fast, and taking over the place, and the place is becoming a slum. Soon I'm going to have to move. It's not fair.

WOMAN 2

Meanwhile I don't hear too many white people complaining about that black guy on the Dodgers.

WOMAN 1

You mean the baseball team?

WOMAN 2

Of course I mean the baseball team. Where have you been?

WOMAN 1

I don't follow sports, so this is news to me.

MAN 2

Big deal. That's a game. And besides, I'm a Yankees fan.

MAN 1

I can't stand the Yankees.

MAN 2

Watch your mouth, buster, or I may close it for you. That's my team you're talking about.

WOMAN 2

Men. Why do I even deal with them?

MAN 2

You mean guys like us. Right?

WOMAN 2

You and your sports. Just a reason to get drunk.

MAN 2

You mean to have some fun.

WOMAN 2

Then beat up on us.

MAN 2

Because you're a bunch of nags.

WOMAN 2

And you're a bunch of drunks.

WOMAN 1

I like my men sober.

MAN 2

So you can control them.

WOMAN 1

No. It's because I don't drink.

WOMAN 2

I bet that deep down you're nothing but a sissy.

MAN 2

Hey, lady, do you see me wearing a dress or prancing around in high heels?

MAN 1

I did that at a party when I was a five years old. It was fun.

FRANK

The people must mobilize for action. We must take to the streets. We must be the vanguard of a movement that will sweep away all traces of bourgeois corruption. Remember: the future belongs to the working class. The victory of labor over capital is inevitable. No more war! No more racism! No more injustice!

WOMAN 2

Everyone should be treated fairly.

MAN 2

Well I'm not being treated fairly. There's garbage in the street, the air stinks, my job pays me peanuts, and my kids keeping bugging me for money.

WOMAN 2

With you as their father, that doesn't surprise me.

MAN 2

I'm a great father. It's their mother that's ruined them.

WOMAN 1

Would you go out with a Negro?

WOMAN 2

Maybe I would.

MAN 2

That means yes, she has.

WOMAN 2

Now you're hearing things.

MAN 1

How was it?

WOMAN 2

I only said maybe.

MAN 2

But you didn't say no, so you're maybe really means yes.

WOMAN 1

Well I never have. I stay with my own kind.

WOMAN 2

That's because you're dumb. Negroes are no different than whites.

MAN 1

I must disagree with you on that.

WOMAN 2

I don't care if you agree with me or not. That's what I believe.

MAN 2

Well, you should know.

WOMAN 2

Ugh! Think what you want.

MAN 2

During the war, we had a few coloreds assigned to my unit. They were loud, obnoxious and couldn't keep their eyes off of the white women.

MAN 1

What were blacks doing in your unit?

MAN 2

We needed replacements and they were the only ones available. But they were kept separate.

MAN 1

Did you take orders from colored officers?

MAN 2

Are you joking? No way. We had our own officers.

WOMAN 1

Wait a minute. I thought we have one army. Or do we actually have two?

MAN 2

We have one army. It's just that it's divided into white units and black units. That's the way it has to be. Mix the two and they'll be fighting each other.

WOMAN 2

Seems stupid to me. They're Americans too.

MAN 2

Yeah, they're Americans but they were slaves first.

WOMAN 2

Where I work there's this Negro man. He's the janitor. During the war he served in France. Got shot in the butt.

MAN 2

Must have been running away.

WOMAN 1

How can you say that? The man was shot. He deserves our respect.

MAN 2

What about me? I was in combat too.

MAN 1
Yeah? Was it rough?

MAN 2
It was rough.

MAN 1
Where were you?

MAN 2
In Paris. I was part of a mopping up operation.

WOMAN 1
You mean, you had a mop?

MAN 2
Don't be funny.

WOMAN 1
You said you were mopping up.

MAN 1
In Paris? Wasn't Paris liberated by the French?

MAN 2
It was, but we were there too.

WOMAN 1
So did you actually fight the Germans?

MAN 2
Like I said, I was part of a mopping up operation.

WOMAN 2
Some war story.

MAN 2

Hey, don't be cute. The war was going on and I was in a combat zone.

WOMAN 2

Okay, hero. I bet they even gave you a medal.

MAN 2

They certainly did, and I earned it. After Paris we chased the Krauts out of France and sent them packing to Germany.

MAN 1

Thank you for your service.

WOMAN 2

You probably had some desk job.

MAN 2

You know, lady, I did my duty and did it without expecting any special consideration, which is more than I can say for certain other people.

WOMAN 2

You mean the Negroes. Right?

MAN 2

That's exactly who I mean. For them, it's okay to have an attitude, while me, I have to keep my mouth shut. I have cause to complain too. They're not the only ones with gripes.

FRANK

My good man, you have every right to feel indignant. It is awful to feel unappreciated. But what do you expect from a political and economic system that exploits the people? We want to bring people together and make them soldiers for a greater cause, the cause of freedom.

MAN 2

Fighting for freedom. That's why we fought World War Two.

WOMAN 1

It was? Before the war, when I was a little kid, I never heard anybody complain about the Germans.

MAN 1

A lot of people were opposed to going to war.

FRANK

That is correct. They understood that we would be fighting the war to promote the interests of monopoly capitalism.

MAN 1

Wasn't it Pearl Harbor that got us into the war?

MAN 2

I remember that day like it was yesterday.

WOMAN 2

Me too. The next day my husband enlisted in the navy, leaving me with two young kids. And he didn't come back.

WOMAN 1

Oh my! You mean he got killed?

WOMAN 2

No. Nothing as dramatic as that. That stuff is for the movies. While stationed in San Diego, he met a floozy and dumped me for her. He still owes me child support, the bum. That's why I have to work two jobs.

MAN 2

Maybe you ought to meet another man.

WOMAN 2

You know someone interested in taking on a single woman with two kids? I don't.

MAN 2

Maybe you're looking for love in all the wrong places.

WOMAN 2

Maybe I should try a black man. I heard they know how to treat women special.

MAN 2

I thought you tried them already. You know, lady, you're really confusing me.

MAN 1

What are you talking about?

WOMAN 2

I've been with enough white guys and all of them are bums. So let me try something different.

MAN 1

What about me?

WOMAN 2

Not you, sonny boy. It's people like you that keep me looking.

MAN 1

Hey, you're turning down a good thing.

WOMAN 1

I doubt that.

MAN 1

Hey, smarty pants! Who's talking to you?

FRANK

Like I have said, we must unite. That means sweeping away sexism and all forms of gender discrimination. The interests we have in common far exceed the differences that keep us apart.

WOMAN 2

And that's the way I want it. Apart.

WOMAN 1

Well I don't. He's talking about equality.

MAN 2

You already have the right to vote. What more do you want?

WOMAN 2

To be treated with respect. I heard that in Russia men and women are treated equally. They have divorce on demand, and if they don't want to have a baby, they can go and have that taken care of, no questions asked.

MAN 2

Can that Bolshevik propaganda!

WOMAN 1

She has right to express her opinion.

MAN 2

And I have right to tell her to shut up.

WOMAN 2

You're such a dolt.

MAN 2

This is why we got to root out the reds. Because if we don't they'll bring this country down.

MAN 1

You really believe that?

MAN 2

You're damn right I do. They've got spies and agents looking to steal our secrets. You want Stalin to get the A bomb?

MAN 1

No, of course not. But maybe we don't need the A bomb either, unless we're planning to use it again.

MAN 2

Get rid of the A bomb? Are you nuts? You must be some kind of closet red.

MAN 1

Hey, I'm no red. Okay? I'm just expressing an opinion. So cool it.

MAN 2

You cool it! What's next? Joe Stalin for president?

FRANK

My friends, there is no need for alarmist talk. Comrade Stalin is not our enemy. He cares about the working class. It is the politicians who have sold us out, by placing their own narrow class interests ahead of the people's. Don't you see? They want to keep us divided, keep us bickering, keep us gnawing at each other. That's how they keep their power. They try to make us believe that they really care about us, when they really don't. All they care about is profit, earned from the sweat of the workers who are forced to toil for peanuts while they live in mansions and roll in money. Do you think that's fair? Do you?

WOMAN 2

Rolling in money? That doesn't sound bad to me.

MAN 1

Except they're the ones doing the rolling.

MAN 2

I'm getting by, and that's good enough for me.

FRANK

But life is more than just getting by. That how the bosses want you to think. It is time to smarten up.

MAN 2

Oh, what's the use? People are rotten.

FRANK

No. You're wrong. It's the system that's rotten, and it's about time we changed it.

MAN 1

I'm interested. What do I need to do?

FRANK

Hit the street. Spread the word. Get others to listen to you.

MAN 2

Damn Bolshevik.

End of scene 4

Scene 5

Time: 1967. The Vietnam War. Racial tensions are high.

FRANK

The capitalist system is rotten to the core. We are fighting an unjust war and the working class is paying the price with their blood. All working people of the world must unite now to overthrow the system.

WOMAN 1

My brother was drafted and sent to Vietnam.

MAN 2

You should be proud of him. He's serving his country.

WOMAN 1

I'm more worried than proud.

MAN 1

I think the war is unjust.

WOMAN 2

I got a fifteen year old son. I don't want him to die in Vietnam.

MAN 2

I can't believe what I'm hearing. When I was your age we were expected to serve. It was our patriotic duty.

MAN 1

Where did you serve?

MAN 2

I was in Korea.

MAN 1

Must have been rough.

MAN 2

Yes, it was, but you didn't hear me complain.

WOMAN 2

Maybe you didn't know any better.

MAN 1

What was the point of the Korean War anyway?

MAN 2

To stop the commies, goof ball!

WOMAN 1

In Korea?

MAN 2

That's right. In Korea. And now we got to stop them in Vietnam before they take over the entire country and then all of Asia.

MAN 1

Whoa! Aren't you being bit alarmist?

MAN 2

No, I'm not. In fact, I think MacArthur was right when he said he wanted to nuke China.

WOMAN 1

You mean drop the A bomb on the Chinese like we did with the Japs?

WOMAN 2

Now that's going a bit too far.

MAN 1

I'd say way too far.

MAN 2

Listen, bub, you have no right to talk. You never served.

MAN 1

I'm in school.

MAN 2

Ha! I knew it. You're nothing but a draft dodger.

MAN 1

You're wrong. I got a student deferment.

MAN 2

Like I said. You're a draft dodger.

MAN 1

Get off my case, you damn war monger.

MAN 2

Coward! Traitor!

FRANK

The victory of the working class is a historical inevitability. United, nothing can stop the workers from seizing power. When that happens, war will be a thing of the past. So quit your bickering. Open your minds. Don't you see that you are being manipulated by a government that is brainwashing you into believing that Vietnam is a threat to us?

MAN 1

I see through it.

MAN 2

But it is! We have to stop the commies before they come here.

FRANK

The commies, as you put it, are not the enemy. Just the opposite. They are part of the progressive vanguard of workers who are struggling to obliterate the vestiges of Western Imperialism that continue to oppress all peace loving peoples.

MAN 1

I'm in favor of that.

WOMAN 2

What do you know? You're a school boy.

MAN 1

I am not. I happen to be a third year graduate student majoring in political science.

WOMAN 1

Oh. You're one of those high-brow know-it-alls. Me? I graduated from high school and went right to work making money.

WOMAN 2

Doing what, may I ask?

MAN 2

You look like a broad a met years ago in San Diego before I shipped out to Korea. She was quite a babe.

WOMAN 2

No wonder you liked being in the service.

MAN 2

Hey, none of that talk. I was in combat. That's more than any of you can say.

WOMAN 1

Or want to say. Were you a hero?

MAN 2

No. I just did my duty and kept my mouth shut.

MAN 1

So you had to keep your mouth shut. That's why I don't want to be in the military.

WOMAN 2

Some man you are.

MAN 1

That's how you judge a man, by whether he serves in the military?

WOMAN 1

I'll tell you the truth, you are sounding like a wimp.

MAN 1

Believe what you want. I have no intention of joining the military.

MAN 2

It's guys like you that really push my buttons.

WOMAN 1

What are you talking about? I don't see anyone pushing your buttons.

MAN 2

Just hearing this guy talk puts me on edge.

WOMAN 1

But what does that have to do with your buttons?

WOMAN 2

Where did you pick up that term anyway? From a comic book?

MAN 1

You still read comic books? What are you? A kid?

MAN 2

You people are really beginning to upset me.

WOMAN 1

How? All we're doing is talking. Don't be so serious.

FRANK

Gentlemen, and ladies too, your expressions of righteous indignation is like music to my ears. Now let me help you channel all this outpouring of anger so that we can achieve victory.

MAN 2

Let me tell you something, mac, I love my country and I was willing to die for it.

MAN 1

Meanwhile the war is a waste. We have no business being there.

MAN 2

There you go again, pushing my buttons.

WOMAN 1

There YOU go again. Do you have some kind of problem with buttons? Or are you speaking in some kind of code?

WOMAN 2

I know this woman, she's black, who lost a son in Vietnam. I don't want that to happen to me or to my kid.

MAN 2

Now you're bringing up race.

MAN 1

You think that it's right that Negroes are being sent to Vietnam when they're being treated so unjustly here at home?

MAN 2

Hey, if they live in this country, they have to serve too.

MAN 1

It just isn't right.

MAN 2

Ah, blow it through your kazoo. You don't know what you're talking about.

MAN 1

I'm talking about injustice.

MAN 2

Look, the Negroes are perfectly capable of taking care of themselves. They don't need the likes of you to help them.

WOMAN 1

That's true. Especially when they start rioting.

MAN 1

There are reasons why they riot.

MAN 2

And none of them good. You know, mac, you should join the army. It'll help you grow up.

WOMAN 2

A sissy like him in the army? Don't make me laugh.

MAN 1

I'm no sissy, you hear?

MAN 2

All you do is talk while other people act. That's why you're in school.

WOMAN 1

Hey, I think you're being a little hard on the guy.

MAN 2

Sister, you don't know what hard is, or maybe you do. What do you do for a living?

WOMAN 1

I'm a hostess at a night club.

WOMAN 2

And I'm an airline stewardess.

MAN 2

Airline stewardess? You can pass for that. Actually you don't look so bad for a worn out dame.

WOMAN 2

Yes, I'm worn out, worn out from listening to you.

MAN 2

Very funny.

WOMAN 1

What I do takes a lot of skill.

MAN 1

Could I watch you work?

WOMAN 1

They wouldn't let you in without permission from your mother.

MAN 2

Students. Just a bunch of pampered wussies who think they know everything.

FRANK

It is time for all students to form an alliance with the working class, and together engage in the struggle against tyranny and injustice.

WOMAN 1

College students and construction workers have something in common?

MAN 2

Now I would say that's stretching things a bit far.

WOMAN 2

I wouldn't mind my kid going to college.

MAN 2

So he could be a whiner and complainer. Like you.

MAN 1

You got the student movement all wrong.

MAN 2

Are you part of that movement?

MAN 1

No, but I know friends of mine who are.

WOMAN 1

You are such a momma's boy, but you know, I like you.

MAN 1

And I like you too.

WOMAN 2

What's next? The two of you get married?

MAN 2

What do you see in him?

WOMAN 1

He's such a little boy. So innocent.

MAN 1

Wait a minute. I'm not that innocent.

MAN 2

You're probably a fruit cake.

MAN 1

Listen, dope. Stop mocking me.

MAN 2

I'm just telling the truth.

WOMAN 2

You're just jealous.

MAN 2

Of him? Don't make me laugh.

WOMAN 1

Are you ... fruity?

MAN 1

I like fruit, if that what you mean.

MAN 2

Come on. You know what she means.

WOMAN 2

How do you know he knows that?

MAN 2

Listen, you b ...

FRANK

Stop! Don't say it. Remember why we're here. To unite and become a mighty engine of change that will sweep aside injustice and inaugurate a new world.

WOMAN 1

Inaugurate. Such a fancy word. It sounds so presidential.

WOMAN 2

Only "college boy" over here would appreciate it that.

MAN 1

I didn't know that going a college was such a crime.

WOMAN 2

I'm not talking about you. I'm talking about the genius next to you..

MAN 2

Having a college degree don't mean nothing. What do they teach you in college that's so useful?

MAN 1

All kinds of subjects.

MAN 2

Like what?

MAN 1

History, English literature, anthropology, sociology.

MAN 2

I can learn that stuff on my own.

WOMAN 2

But when you graduate what exactly do you plan to do?

MAN 2

Stay in school. That way he won't lose his student deferment.

MAN 1

No. I'd get a job.

MAN 2

Doing what, smart guy?

MAN 1

I'm not sure, but I'm sure something will come up.

MAN 2

That's the best you can do? Pathetic.

WOMAN 1

I still think that going to college is a good thing.

MAN 2

It's a luxury that a lot of people, including me, could not afford. I went to work.

MAN 1

That's too bad for you. You probably have a lot of untapped potential.

MAN 2

I don't need you talking down to me. That's the problem with all you college kids. You think you're so superior. Bunch of know-it-alls.

WOMAN 2

I have potential too.

WOMAN 1

Me too.

MAN 1

Potential for what?

MAN 2

To become smart asses and make trouble, like all you college kids do.

FRANK

Students, workers, veterans, house-wives, all of us are part of the exploited and oppressed class. United, nothing can stop us.

WOMAN 2

I certainly feel exploited but certainly not oppressed. That's a bit extreme for me.

MAN 1

I believe just the opposite: that we're oppressed but not exploited.

MAN 2

You wouldn't know what real oppression is if it were staring at you straight in the face.

WOMAN 1

I could use a pay raise.

WOMAN 2

Or do you mean bigger tips?

MAN 1

I really have to check out where you work.

MAN 2
So you are a man.

MAN 1
Who said I'm not?

WOMAN 2
Maybe we've misjudged you.

WOMAN 1
You just seem so innocent looking.

MAN 2
Don't let his looks fool you. He's probably a perv.

FRANK
The gender challenged are part of the exploited and oppressed class too.

MAN 2
I want nothing to do with homos.

WOMAN 1
Some of my best friends are gay.

WOMAN 2
I think they're kind of creepy.

MAN 2
There's something wrong with being queer.

MAN 1
No, there isn't!

MAN 2
What is it with you anyway, sticking up for the coloreds and queers.

MAN 1

I'm not sticking up for anyone. I just think it's wrong to attack people for being who they are.

WOMAN 2

Of course you do because you're one of them. You just don't want to admit it.

FRANK

The progressive forces of the world want to bring everyone under one umbrella, the umbrella of the working class in which all people will be united as one in the struggle to achieve equality and justice.

MAN 2

I'm okay with that just as long as I don't have to sleep with any of them.

WOMAN 1

And I'm okay with that just as long as lover boy behaves himself.

WOMAN 2

Deal me in, too, just as long as my kid doesn't get drafted. Otherwise, go take a hike.

End of scene 5

Scene 6

Time: 1987. Ronald Reagan is President.

FRANK

My friends, the rich are getting richer, at the worker's expense. Let's bring the system down, now.

MAN 1

Wait a while. I got five job interviews lined up.

WOMAN 1

You do? Who do you know that I don't?

MAN 2

You're wasting your time. You're just a loser.

MAN 1

Are you referring to me?

MAN 2

Certainly not to her. All she needs to do is find herself a good man and she'll be set.

WOMAN 2

You sexist pig.

MAN 2

What?

WOMAN 2

You heard me, buster.

MAN 1

My, you are hostile.

WOMAN 2

What's it to you? I've had enough of all the sexist crap. You men think you run the world, but you don't.

That's telling them!

WOMAN 1

What did I do?

MAN 1

You were born a man.

WOMAN 2

Hey, that's not fair.

MAN 1

Now you know how we feel.

WOMAN 1

Speak for yourself, honey.

WOMAN 2

So bossy. That's why I go overseas to meet women. To get away from the likes of you.

MAN 2

Like all the other losers.

WOMAN 2

Over there women know how to treat men right.

MAN 2

And we don't?

WOMAN 1

I'm afraid not. It's your attitudes. All it does is drive us away.

MAN 1

And you're a bargain?

WOMAN 2

MAN 2

Bunch of prima donnas.

FRANK

Friends! Brothers! Listen to me! We have to get beyond the barriers that separate us. We have so much in common. The enemy is not us. It is the system that deliberately divides us along racial and gender lines.

MAN 2

I bet you voted for Mondale.

WOMAN 2

And if I did, what of it?

MAN 1

Mondale wasn't such a bad guy.

WOMAN 2

But he was boring.

WOMAN 1

But he had a nice smile.

MAN 1

He seemed like a friendly guy.

MAN 2

Who cares about Walter Mondale's smile?

WOMAN 2

I found his smile to be rather phony. That annoyed me.

MAN 1

You mean you judged Mr. Mondale by his smile?

WOMAN 2

I guess so.

MAN 2

Wow, that is being superficial.

WOMAN 2

Watch it with those big words, buster. You may strain your brain.

MAN 2

Like you have one?

WOMAN 2

Wow, that hurt. Such a wit.

WOMAN 1

Why are the two of you fighting?

MAN 1

That's because they're really attracted to each other.

WOMAN 1

So, is that why me and my mother argue all the time?

MAN 2

No, that's because you're a spoiled little brat.

WOMAN 1

That remark was uncalled for.

MAN 1

You sure know how to talk with women.

WOMAN 2

Dummies.

MAN 2

You know, it's sour pussers like you that are driving this country into the ground.

MAN 1

Just because I said that Mondale wasn't a bad guy?

MAN 2

I wasn't talking to you, mac. I was talking to prima donna over here.

MAN 1

Okay, okay. Don't get so hot under the collar.

MAN 2

Next thing you'll be telling me is that Jimmy Carter was a great president.

WOMAN 2

He had a nice wife.

MAN 2

Who care about his wife? The man was a complete wuss. It took Reagan to clean up the hostage mess.

MAN 1

By buying off the Iranians.

WOMAN 1

Reagan was a good actor. I've seen a couple of his movies.

WOMAN 2

The guy was a clod. You know, Jane Wyman threw him out.

WOMAN 1

Really? I didn't know that.

MAN 2

She must have been an idiot.

WOMAN 2

She had her reasons, and after seven years of Reagan, I can kind of figure out why.

MAN 1

You shouldn't speak so disrespectfully about our commander in chief.

WOMAN 2

I'll say whatever I please. He's no king.

MAN 1

But he's strong. He's not letting the Russians get away with anything.

MAN 2

That's right, pal. Maybe you've got some gonads after all.

WOMAN 2

The guy is all fluff.

MAN 2

He's made us proud to be Americans again.

WOMAN 1

I've always been proud of being an American.

MAN 2

He doesn't take guff from anybody. That's the kind of man we need as president.

FRANK

Ronald Reagan is a sham and a fraud. He is part of system that promotes war for profit. He cares only for the rich and is their tool. Only by forming a united front representing all segments of the working class can Reagan and his gang of swindlers will be defeated.

MAN 1

Regan a tool of the rich? I'm not too sure about that. After all, he was elected into office.

FRANK

Elections are bogus. Politicians represent only their own interests. They're in office to make money. They don't care about you. They just care about themselves and the greedy plutocrats and economic plunderers.

MAN 2

Meanwhile he almost died for us in 1981.

MAN 1

Oh my, that was so awful. I was really afraid he would die.

WOMAN 1

Look how strong he was! Laughing and joking, like nothing could hurt him.

WOMAN 2

I don't know what he found so funny. If it were me, I would have been damned pissed off.

MAN 1

Maybe he was. Maybe all his bravado was an act. You know he's an actor.

WOMAN 1

How an actor could become president is beyond me.

MAN 2

He's a lot better than the guy he beat.

WOMAN 2

Carter wasn't so bad. He got the Egyptians and Israelis to stop fighting.

MAN 2

That's because Israel beat Egypt's butt four times. I guess those Arabs are slow learners.

WOMAN 1
I had an Israeli boyfriend.

MAN 1
What happened to him?

WOMAN 1
He dumped me.

WOMAN 2
That's too bad.

WOMAN 1
Not really. I found out he was gay.

MAN 2
I thought Israeli men were supposed to be so tough.

WOMAN 2
You don't have to be straight to be tough.

MAN 2
How would you know?

WOMAN 2
Because it's common sense, something that you don't have.

MAN 2
Why do you always mock me? I'm not such a bad guy once you get to know me.

WOMAN 2
I go by first impressions. And my first impression of you is not good.

WOMAN 1

I always like to give a guy a second chance.

MAN 1

That is, when they don't dump you first.

WOMAN 1

Most men find me attractive.

MAN 1

Actually, you're not that bad looking.

MAN 2

Hey, bub, you're no great shakes either.

MAN 1

Do you need to embarrass me like that in front of these ladies?

WOMAN 1

Is there something going on between you two guys?

MAN 2

Nothing at all. I just know a loser when I see one.

MAN 1

Now you're seeing things.

WOMAN 2

You two guys are pathetic. No wonder I'm so disgusted with men.

MAN 2

Lady, I wouldn't go out with you if you paid me. And besides, I'm married.

WOMAN 2

I bet your wife's a real beauty.

MAN 2

She is. A lot prettier than you, that's for sure.

WOMAN 2

I'm not looking to impress you.

FRANK

This talk is defeating the purpose of this meeting, which is to bring us together and form bonds of friendship that will transcend all the petty differences that keep us weak and disunited.

WOMAN 1

Yes, I agree. We should be forming bonds, but guys keep getting the wrong ideas.

WOMAN 2

I'm already bonded in a trap called marriage.

MAN 2

As a member of the working class, I am completely disgusted with the system.

FRANK

Now you're talking.

MAN 1

And I'm still looking for a good job.

MAN 2

It's not enough just to have a good job. No matter how much you get paid, it never keeps up with inflation.

WOMAN 1

What do you do for a living?

MAN 2

I work with my hands.

That sounds pretty dull.

WOMAN 2

It pays the bills.

MAN 2

So why complain?

WOMAN 1

Because I'm living from check to check and I'm way up over my head in debt.

MAN 2

Whose fault is that?

MAN 1

I'll tell you, my friend: the system is at fault. It forces all workers into debt.

FRANK

I don't owe anyone anything,

WOMAN 1

You must still be living with your parents.

WOMAN 2

At least you get a pay check. Maybe I should apply for your job.

MAN 1

Watch it, bub. You're about to cross that line. And besides, you're too puny to do my kind of work.

MAN 2

You're a real cave man.

WOMAN 2

Actually, I find you kind of attractive, in a beastly sort of way.

WOMAN 1

MAN 2

Thanks, honey. Too bad I didn't meet you ten years earlier.

WOMAN 1

I was just a teenage kid.

WOMAN 2

That wouldn't have stopped him. That never stops any man, if he thinks he can get away with it.

MAN 2

You have such a filthy mind.

MAN 1

When I was a teenager, one of my teachers asked to meet me outside of school. I've never told anyone about it.

WOMAN 2

Please don't start now.

MAN 2

I knew you were ... you know.

MAN 1

My teacher was woman.

WOMAN 1

So what happened?

FRANK

My friends, enough of the small talk. We need to mobilize for action now. Remember: the ruling class wants to keep us distracted, and as long as they succeed in accomplishing that, they will stay in power. To break their grip over us, workers must unite. That means putting the "we" before the "me" which is the true test of political consciousness. No more injustice! No more war! No more racism! The triumph of the working class is just a matter of time.

MAN 2

That's the problem. I have too much consciousness. If I was more oblivious of what's going on around me, maybe I'd be a lot better off.

WOMAN 2

You could have fooled me.

MAN 1

I follow politics all the time on the news. That is, after I first read the arts and leisure section.

WOMAN 1

If I bring up politics my parents start yelling at me. They scream at me to can it. So I can it.

WOMAN 2

That's because they're too busy trying to make a living.

MAN 2

Maybe they're part of that silent majority that's actually silent.

WOMAN 2

And who got Reagan elected, so they can't be that silent.

MAN 1

I prefer the term cynical majority.

WOMAN 2

Cynicism requires a certain degree of intelligence and insight.

MAN 2

That leaves you out.

WOMAN 2

Oh my, such a sharp wit.

WOMAN 1

I thought it was funny.

MAN 2

Thank you, missy.

WOMAN 2

Missy? He must have the hots for you.

FRANK

The propertied class has created a market system that perpetuates gender stereotypes. Hence we have a gender divide between women and men. This is not merely coincidental. It is part of a deliberate strategy to keep people divided. But we shall overcome these differences, just as we will overcome all our differences – racial, ethnic, religious, and economic – to create a new society based on equality and justice.

MAN 2

They tried that in the Soviet Union. Now the country's a basket case.

MAN 1

They took a beating in World War Two.

MAN 2

They deserved it.

WOMAN 2

But they won. So their system couldn't have been that much of a wash out.

MAN 2

That was then, and this is now.

WOMAN 1

Who cares about what happens to the Soviet Union?

MAN 1

You are aware that they have about ten thousand nuclear missiles aimed at us.

WOMAN 1

So what? They haven't used them.

WOMAN 2

Yet.

End of scene 6

Scene 7

Time: 2007. George W. Bush is president. The US is fighting wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

FRANK

My dear brothers and sisters. The struggle for peace and justice continues. Israeli oppression of our Palestinian brothers must end now! The imperialist wars against Iraq and Afghanistan must stop now! The US is the real terrorist. We must unite with our Islamic brothers and sisters to defeat the forces of plutocracy and hypocrisy that are sucking the world dry.

MAN 1

I'm in the reserves and I just got called up again for the third time.

MAN 2

You're serving your country. That's what counts.

MAN 1

But it's destroying my life. I can't plan anything.

WOMAN 2

Why did you join anyway?

MAN 1

I needed a job.

WOMAN 1

What about love for your country?

MAN 1

That too, but first because I couldn't find a job after I graduated college. I saw a commercial on tv urging people to join the reserves, so I joined. That was two deployments ago. Meanwhile I still can't find a regular job.

MAN 2

I served in Vietnam.

WOMAN 2

That's ancient history.

MAN 1

Then you understand what I'm going through.

MAN 2

I wasn't in the reserves. I served my hitch and then got out.

MAN 1

Maybe I should go straight active duty.

WOMAN 1

But what will you do after you leave the service?

WOMAN 2

Frankly, young man, as much as I'd like to listen to your concerns, I have my own issues to deal with.

MAN 2

Listen to you. Such a selfish attitude. No wonder I don't like you.

WOMAN 2

I couldn't care less what you think of me.

MAN 2

So self-centered. You know, lady, you're nothing but an ingrate.

WOMAN 2

Nobody's ever thanked me for anything. Even while I was married. I was completely taken for granted. My in-laws hated me, my kids wouldn't listen to me and as for my husband: I won't even go into that.

FRANK

My friends: Understand petty recriminations for what they are: conditioned responses to unstable social situations created to drive people apart. Single, married, widowed, divorced. Labels that mean nothing. We must unite and form an unbreakable chain that will choke the enemies of the working class. We have the power. So let's organize and use it!

MAN 1

Does that unbreakable chain include our enemies in Iraq?

FRANK

Wars are driven by the insatiable craving for profit. The government says that we have enemies. That is pure propagandistic garbage spewed out by the plutocrats and fascists who control the government. They want to keep the working class divided, but we're on to them. What is needed now is collective action to drive the plutocrats and their lackeys out. Then wars will stop and people throughout the world will live in peace and harmony.

WOMAN 1

No more wars. I'm good with that.

MAN 2

I'll believe it when I see it.

MAN 1

So my service overseas is nothing but a waste?

WOMAN 2

Nobody told you to volunteer.

MAN 1

Now you're making me sound like a fool.

WOMAN 1

You are no fool! You are a hero!

MAN 2

That's what they told us when we got back from 'Nam. That we were fools, and worse.

WOMAN 1

But that was different. It was an unjust war.

WOMAN 2

What war is just?

MAN 1

My unit took some pretty heavy casualties. Don't tell me it's been all in vain.

MAN 2

Don't listen to her. She's just a cranky broad. She's probably hasn't gotten any in years.

WOMAN 2

You should be so lucky.

MAN 2

You're the last broad I'd do it with.

WOMAN 1

What are they talking about?

MAN 1

It's so petty that it's not worth discussing.

WOMAN 1

I wish everyone would speak plainly.

MAN 2

We are speaking plainly, dolly. You're just not getting it.

MAN 1

Sir. That statement could be taken in different ways.

WOMAN 1

Not getting what?

WOMAN 2

Young lady, he's talking about something he couldn't deliver if he tried.

MAN 2

Care to test me out?

WOMAN 1

Test out what?

MAN 1

How is all of this bringing us together?

MAN 2

She started it.

WOMAN 2

Wrong.

FRANK

Understand that in unity there is power.

MAN 1

Meanwhile I've been deployed twice to Iraq.

WOMAN 2

I commiserate with you. Didn't Bush say that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction?

MAN 2

And that's why we went in. To prevent him from using them.

WOMAN 1

But none were found. I heard that on the news.

MAN 1

You're right. We never found any. But we're working to build a new Iraq.

WOMAN 1

Why do we need to rebuild Iraq?

MAN 2

Well, my hat's off to you, young man. You're my kind of guy.

MAN 1

Hey, I'm doing my duty. That's all.

WOMAN 1

Such modesty. I'm beginning to like you.

WOMAN 2

Women are such suckers for men in uniforms.

MAN 1

A lot of people serving are women.

MAN 2

Can they do the job?

MAN 1

Not only can they do the job, they're often do them better than the men.

MAN 2

I just can't accept the idea of men and women serving together in the same units.

WOMAN 2

Didn't they say the same thing when it came to desegregating the military? That blacks and whites serving together couldn't work?

MAN 1

It's not a problem, at least not for me.

MAN 2

What about all that hazing that we hear about in the news?

MAN 1

I never seen any of that stuff. With me my relations with women is strictly business.

WOMAN 2

That's the way it should be.

FRANK

Down with war! Down with injustice! Down with profiteering! Soldiers and workers around the world unite! We demand peace, equality and justice!

MAN 1

Iraq is a basket case. It's a broken country. The problem is: how to put it back together again.

WOMAN 2

Weren't we the ones who broke it?

WOMAN 1

I don't like that we're spending so much money trying to rebuild Iraq when we have so many problems here at home.

MAN 2

It's all about fighting terrorism. Don't forget September 11th.

WOMAN 2

I know I never will. I was two blocks away from the first tower when it collapsed, or should I say disintegrated. It was awful. If I had been any closer I would have been buried alive. The way it was, I was covered from head to toe with this horrible sticky dust. It took me weeks to get rid of the smell.

MAN 2

Yet you question why our brave soldier serves. Shame on you.

WOMAN 1

I watched it all on television. It was so sad.

MAN 2

Damn Arabs. We should have nuked them.

MAN 1

Nuke who? We're still not sure who attacked us.

MAN 2

Hey, the gobs were Saudi Arabians. That's all I need to know.

WOMAN 1

But that doesn't mean they represented every Saudi.

MAN 2

Those people hate us. They call us infidels. And the Iranians, they're even worse.

WOMAN 2

The problem is, do we want to fight a billion and half Muslims.

WOMAN 1

I don't.

MAN 2

But if we do nothing, then they'll win and Western civilization will be history.

MAN 1

That's not likely to happen.

FRANK

We must unite with our Muslim brothers in their just struggle to resist Western domination.

MAN 2

Like I said, I want nothing to do with anything or anybody Muslim. To me, they want to force their way of life on us, and I won't have that.

WOMAN 1

I saw this movie about a Muslim family going on a pilgrimage to Mecca. They seemed very nice. Maybe it would be better if we respected their religion.

MAN 1

I agree with you.

MAN 2

How can you say that? You're over there fighting them.

MAN 1

Personally, I have no gripe with the Arab people. Not all of them hate us.

WOMAN 1

I'd be so scared if I was there. How do you deal with it?

MAN 1

The best I can.

WOMAN 2

There is no way I'm letting my kid go into the military.

MAN 2

Said like a true patriot.

WOMAN 2

Let your kid go in. Okay? I don't believe we should be over there in the first place.

WOMAN 1

But we were attacked.

MAN 1

That's true.

WOMAN 2

Then why no declaration of war?

MAN 2

Because the president doesn't need one. If he thinks we got to fight there, then we fight there.

WOMAN 2

That's dumb. He was already wrong about the weapons of mass destruction.

MAN 2

So what? We need the oil.

WOMAN 1

So we went war to steal oil? Wouldn't it be easier just to buy it?

WOMAN 2

That's right. It would be easier. But that kind of thinking requires common sense, something which is in short supply.

MAN 2

We're there already. Let's just take it!

MAN 1

We're there to bring democracy to the region, not rip it off.

MAN 2

Does that include Afghanistan too?

MAN 1

I guess so. I haven't been there, yet.

FRANK

The bosses reap huge profits while the working class suffers.

WOMAN 1

Meanwhile I'm still looking for a job.

WOMAN 2

So how are you supporting yourself?

WOMAN 1

Student loans.

MAN 2

So I'm subsidizing your college education?

WOMAN 1

My financing is completely private, so you have nothing to worry about.

MAN 2

How'd you manage that? I thought you don't work.

WOMAN 1

The government guaranteed my loan. They thought I was a good investment.

MAN 2

How could that be? You have no income.

MAN 1

How much you owe?

WOMAN 1

One hundred twenty five thousand dollars. That's why I really need to get a job.

WOMAN 2

Or find a rich husband.

MAN 1

Or hit the lottery.

WOMAN 1

I played the lottery, and lost.

MAN 1

Then, like the lady said, go find yourself a rich husband. That shouldn't be a problem for classy-looking lady like you.

MAN 2

You looking to get it on with her?

MAN 1

Come on! We're just talking.

WOMAN 2

Nothing wrong with that.

MAN 2

I watched the two of you making eyes at each other.

WOMAN 1

He's really not my type.

MAN 2

The man is in the service fighting for his country and you're giving him the brush off. That's the problem with all you women: you're all a bunch of prima donnas and princesses.

MAN 1

That's okay. I'm really not all that interested in her. A hundred twenty five thousand dollar debt. I'll stay away from that.

WOMAN 2

You see what you've done? All because of you, now they want nothing to do with each other.

MAN 2

What did I do?

WOMAN 2

Are you really married? What woman would have you?

MAN 2

You're no bargain either, sister.

WOMAN 1

Now I feel like a jerk.

MAN 1

Don't feel that way, sister. Besides, I really can't get involved with anybody now. I'll be shipping out any day now. If I could help, I would. But I can't. At least not right now.

WOMAN 1

In a way I already miss you.

MAN 2

Now that sounds kind of mushy.

WOMAN 2

Can't you shut your mouth?

MAN 1

How about if I email you?

MAN 2

Come on, mac. You can do better than that.

MAN 1

Cool it, will you? I know what I'm doing.

MAN 2

I'm just trying to help, man.

WOMAN 2

You can't even help yourself.

FRANK

All freedom loving people must unite and defeat the moneyed classes who care only about one thing: profit.

MAN 2

You got to strike while the iron's hot. That's what I say.

WOMAN 1

I really need the money. Can't you help me, sir? I promise to pay you back when I get a job. I don't want to land in the street.

MAN 2

Don't look at me. I'm all tapped out.

WOMAN 1

What about you?

WOMAN 2

Sorry, honey. I have my own problems.

WOMAN 1

What am I going to do?

MAN 1

Didn't you say that your loan was guaranteed?

WOMAN 1

It was, but I never graduated.

MAN 2

Well, you should have stayed in school.

WOMAN 1

They flunked me out.

WOMAN 2

Then, get a job.

WOMAN 1

I can't. Ever since nine eleven this country has never been the same. It's screwed up the economy something awful.

MAN 2

That's why we need to grab the oil.

WOMAN 2

That's the solution, right? Just take the oil and everything will be fine.

MAN 2

Yeah. Exactly.

MAN 1

I can't say that I agree with you.

MAN 2

I won't argue with you. You have enough to deal with.

WOMAN 1

Compared to you, my concerns are so petty. I feel so ashamed.

MAN 1

Don't say that, friend. We all have issues. I volunteered for this duty, so I can't complain.

FRANK

Soldiers of the world: throw down your guns and join the cause for world peace. No more borders! No more nations! Victory to the working class!

MAN 2

My hat's off to you, friend. Those who serve truly are the finest.

MAN 1

I've heard that slogan a million times. Empty words.

MAN 2

Hey, mac, I mean it.

MAN 1

Okay. Thanks.

WOMAN 2

But I have to wonder if the war is worth it. I mean, with all the casualties and the costs. It bothers me.

MAN 2

Of course, it's worth it. The A-rabs hit us so we have to hit them back. Simple as that. It's a matter of self-defense.

WOMAN 2

We invade them and now you're telling me it's a matter of self-defense. That's ridiculous.

MAN 2

Now what?

WOMAN 2

If my kid has to go and fight a war, at least I want to know that it's for a legitimate reason, and not a lie.

MAN 2

You know, lady, if everyone thought like you, we wouldn't have a country. There'd be nobody out there to protect us.

WOMAN 1

People have a right to their opinions.

MAN 2

Just as long as they don't talk nonsense.

WOMAN 2

I guess that leaves you out.

MAN 2

Lady, you're really beginning to get on my nerves.

MAN 1

This is what I'm fighting for?

End of scene 7

Scene 8

Time: 2016. Donald J. Trump has been elected to be the next President of the United States.

FRANK

Down with Donald Trump! He is a direct threat to all working peoples, not only in the United States but around the world. We must mobilize for action! Take to the streets! Warn the people! Our future is at stake!

WOMAN 1

Trump won?

WOMAN 2

Yes, he did.

MAN 1

I thought he was supposed to lose.

MAN 2

How could you be so gullible?

MAN 1

I wasn't being gullible. For a year and half every newspaper, every poll, every pundit was saying that Trump had no chance of winning.

WOMAN 1

I heard the same stuff too. I guess it was all junk.

MAN 1

You think so?

WOMAN 2

I tuned out on the whole thing. I was too busy dealing with my kids.

MAN 2

I love it when people say they weren't really following what was happening.

WOMAN 2

Believe what you want. I really didn't care who won.

MAN 2

Spoken like a true Hillary supporter. I bet that inside you're burning up that Trump won.

WOMAN 2

Stop trying to get into head. Okay?

MAN 2

Lady, I wouldn't want to get into any part of your body.

MAN 1

Now you're sounding like Mister Trump.

WOMAN 1

Did you vote for Trump?

MAN 2

Yes, I did. What of it?

MAN 1

Hey, man, no need to get so defensive. She was just asking.

WOMAN 1

I can speak for myself, thank you.

WOMAN 2

That's telling him, sister. Why do men always have to be so pushy?

MAN 1

I wasn't trying to be pushy.

MAN 2

Mac, now you know why I voted for Trump.

WOMAN 2

Said that like a real male chauvinist.

MAN 2

And you called him pushy?

WOMAN 2

Mister, if you don't watch it, I'll be calling you a lot worse.

MAN 1

I hate name-calling. It's so childish.

WOMAN 1

I've been called plenty of names.

MAN 2

Probably by your gentlemen friends after they come on to you and you tell them to get lost.

WOMAN 1

Sir, you do have a dirty mind.

MAN 2

That's what makes life interesting.

WOMAN 2

No. That's what makes life seedy, like you.

MAN 2

We're just having some innocent chatter. What's the big deal?

WOMAN 2

It's not innocent.

Oh, grow up.

MAN 2

Such a nasty man.

WOMAN 2

You have no right to judge me. You don't even know me.

MAN 2

And I want to keep it that way.

WOMAN 2

FRANK
Peoples of the world: we are in crisis. The forces of reaction are on the march. Workers of the world: unite! Down with racism! Down with sexism! Down with war! We demand justice! To the streets! We will be heard!

You are such a sourpuss.

MAN 2

Stop attacking her.

WOMAN 1

Stop your arguing. The election's over. Let's move on.

MAN 1

Tell that to her.

MAN 2

You're so repulsive.

WOMAN 2

And you're grotesque.

MAN 2

MAN 1

Look, she doesn't like you. Move on.

MAN 2

Why are you defending her? She hates men, just like they all do.

WOMAN 2

You used the word hate, not me.

WOMAN 1

I don't hate men.

MAN 2

There's always a few smart ones, like you.

WOMAN 1

But I don't like you, either.

MAN 2

See what I mean?

MAN 1

Come on.

MAN 2

Don't tell me, come on. We men got to stick together.

MAN 1

I just can't buy into what you're saying.

MAN 2

Hey, pal, don't tell me you're going over to their side. That's like being a traitor.

MAN 1

You know, you're beginning to get on my nerves.

WOMAN 2

Welcome to the club.

MAN 1

Lady, I'm not part of your club. I don't like you either.

WOMAN 2

What did I do to you?

MAN 1

Nothing. I just don't like your attitude and your bickering. It's really annoying, in fact demoralizing.

WOMAN 2

You men are horrible.

MAN 2

I'd rather be disliked than disrespected.

WOMAN 1

You can't be serious. I always want to be liked.

MAN 2

But you don't like me, so why should I like you?

WOMAN 1

Maybe I would like you if you were a little less abrasive. Maybe that would help.

MAN 2

You want less abrasive? How about if I tell you a couple of jokes?

WOMAN 2

All of a sudden you're a comedian?

MAN 2

I'll ignore that.

MAN 1

Let's hear your jokes.

MAN 2

What do you call a man wearing a dress? Anyone know the answer?

WOMAN 1

A fool?

MAN 2

Good guess, but no cigar. (*Silence*) Anyone care to guess? (*silence*) Come on. You're all smart people.

WOMAN 2

Okay, joker, what's the answer?

MAN 2

I'll tell you. (*pause*) Get ready. (*pause*) A well-dressed man.

(*Silence*)

MAN 2

What? No laughs? Okay, then I'll tell you another one.

WOMAN 1

Sure. Let's hear it.

MAN 2

What do you call a man running around in a circle?

MAN 1

Stupid? Like you?

MAN 2

No. Not even close. And watch it with the wise cracks or I may forget that I'm trying to be nice.

(Silence)

WOMAN 2

Okay, smart guy, what's the answer?

MAN 2

A well-rounded man.

(groaning)

WOMAN 2

Some comedian.

WOMAN 1

Where'd you pick up these corny jokes?

MAN 2

I made them up. If you want I'll tell you one more.

MAN 1

Okay, but make this the last one.

MAN 2

When's the best time to screw in a light bulb?

WOMAN 1

I never replace light bulbs. I get someone else to do it for me.

MAN 1

Why?

WOMAN 1

I guess I'm something of a klutz. I'm just not good with my hands.

MAN 1

Well, I am.

WOMAN 2

Watch it, buster. She's a nice girl.

MAN 1

I know she is. That's why I like her.

WOMAN 2

But maybe she doesn't like you.

MAN 1

You really don't like me?

MAN 2

People! What about my joke? Who knows the answer to my joke?

WOMAN 1

Oh ... the joke. Sorry. I guess we got sidetracked.

MAN 1

Could you tell it again?

MAN 2

Forget about it. I'm just wasting my time.

FRANK

My comrades. This is no time for jokes. We must achieve solidarity. We must unite. We must become one mighty army fighting to rid the world of injustice, racism and oppression. We can do it! We must do it! We will do it! Peace! Freedom! Justice! Now!

WOMAN 2

Does that mighty army include gays, atheists, and foreigners?

MAN 1

They're people too.

MAN 2

Sometimes I wonder about that.

WOMAN 2

Oh, they're people. Just not my kind of people.

MAN 2

You know, maybe you and I have a lot more in common than you think.

WOMAN 2

I doubt that. For one thing, I'm smart while you're dumb.

WOMAN 1

I heard somewhere that women are naturally more intelligent than men.

MAN 1

You hear things?

WOMAN 1

All the time.

MAN 1

Are you hearing things now?

WOMAN 2

Yes, she is: the sound of a man with a very irritating voice.

MAN 1

I resent that!

WOMAN 2

But it's the truth. Your voice sounds like a cross between a jigsaw and foghorn.

MAN 1

I'm sorry if you find my voice so irritating. Some people have called my voice melodious.

WOMAN 1

Maybe they were just trying to be polite, though why anyone would want to waste such formalities on you is beyond me.

WOMAN 2

I told you she doesn't like you. Now do you believe me?

MAN 2

I've had it with your man-hating insults.

WOMAN 2

Lower your sword, Lancelot. I was talking to him, not you.

MAN 2

I can't help it. You hate men. Admit it.

WOMAN 2

No. You're wrong. I hate jerks. Can I help it if the jerks I meet all happen to be men?

MAN 1

Oh. That explains everything.

MAN 2

I didn't know I was around so many wise-guys.

WOMAN 1

Meanwhile my health insurance premiums are skyrocketing. I'm afraid to go to a doctor.

MAN 1

You need medical care?

WOMAN 1

No, not right now. But if I did I wouldn't be able to afford it.

WOMAN 2

Mr. Trump said he'll fix that.

MAN 1

Yes, but can you believe him?

WOMAN 2

Can you believe any politician?

MAN 1

Apparently a lot of people believe him. He got elected.

MAN 2

That's right. Deal with it. The man is going to save the country.

MAN 1

He's not gonna save anything. The guy's a windbag.

MAN 2

You better watch your mouth.

MAN 1

I'll say whatever I want.

MAN 2

Hey, you can say whatever you want about me, but once you start mouthing off about my man Trump, you're stepping over the line. Get it?

WOMAN 2

Cool down. We're just talking.

MAN 2

Talk is talk. Just watch what you say about my man Trump. Okay?

WOMAN 1

Can he get me my health insurance?

MAN 2

He can do anything. He proved that by winning when all the pompous pontificators had all but written him off.

MAN 1

He still lost the popular vote.

MAN 2

There you go again. Ragging my man. I'm warning you. Don't test me. You hear?

WOMAN 1

I hope he produces.

MAN 1

We'll see.

WOMAN 2

Let's give the guy a chance.

MAN 2

Give him a chance? He won the election. He's gonna get that chance.

WOMAN 1

How about somebody giving me a chance?

MAN 2

Who's stopping you?

WOMAN 2

Listen, honey. There are some things that you just got to deal with yourself.

WOMAN 1

I am dealing with it. It's just that I'm such a failure. Help me!

MAN 2

Oh, stop your whining. It's pathetic. That's what wrong with this country today. We've lost our gumption.

WOMAN 2

I thought what's wrong are all the illegals pouring into the country.

MAN 2

Don't get me started on that.

MAN 1

And the teachers and unions and environmentalists. They're the problem.

MAN 2

Now you're talking. You must have voted for Trump.

MAN 1

Sorry to disappoint you.

MAN 2

Just when I thought that you and I had an understanding.

WOMAN 2

I love watching two male's try to bond. It's so ... ridiculous.

MAN 1

Hey, lady, don't look at me. I'm just minding my own business. He's the one who used the word understanding, not me.

MAN 2

Hey, pal! Don't you worry! I'm not planning to kiss you.

WOMAN 1

Already you're bickering. Just like two lovers.

MAN 2

Hold on, sister! You're way off course.

WOMAN 2

I think not. Love can happen at any time, even to men.

MAN 2

Lady, you better can that talk, right now. I'm no pansy.

WOMAN 2

You know, you're a real gem.

MAN 2

I wish I could say the same about you.

FRANK

Workers of the world, unite! Throw off your chains! The time to fight is now! To the barricades!

WOMAN 1

What barricades?

MAN 1

It's enough for me just to get up in the morning.

WOMAN 2

My kids take up all of my time. Otherwise, I'd be out there telling the world where to get off.

MAN 2

That's why you should have voted for Trump.

WOMAN 2

What makes you think I didn't?

WOMAN 1

I didn't vote for him, either. In fact, I didn't vote at all.

MAN 1

I did. Now I feel I threw my vote away.

MAN 2

Damn sore loser.

WOMAN 1

What do you do for a living?

MAN 2

I'm a small businessman.

WOMAN 2

With the emphasis on "small."

MAN 2

Hey, lady, one more crack out of you and ...

MAN 1

Don't say it, pal. It's not nice to threaten a lady.

WOMAN 2

Oh my, you are a Prince Valiant.

MAN 2

All talk, no action.

MAN 1

Don't test me, pal. Let me warn you: I've taken karate lessons.

MAN 2

So you know how to break a piece of wood. So what?

MAN 1

I can break other things too.

MAN 2

And you have the nerve to tell me to stop being threatening?

WOMAN 1

He's just trying to be protective.

WOMAN 2

I don't need any man to protect me.

FRANK

We are one people united in the struggle against oppression. Men and women bonded together marching as one! Soon the propertied class will feel the strength of our resolve. Karl Marx showed us the way. Now it is up to us to make Marx's vision a reality!

MAN 2

What man would even think of protecting you?

WOMAN 2

You're so mean.

MAN 2

After being married three times, I now have a healthy distrust for women.

WOMAN 1

But you can't be that bad of a guy.

MAN 2

I'm not, once you get to know me.

WOMAN 2

I go by first impressions. That's why I don't like you. If I got to get to know someone, then they are not worth getting to know.

WOMAN 1

I like to give people a chance.

MAN 1

I do too.

WOMAN 1

It's nice when someone agrees with you.

MAN 1

Which isn't very often.

MAN 2

It's not what you say, it's how you say it.

WOMAN 2

So if I tell you, "Mac, you're a schmuck," but say it with a smile, then it's okay?

WOMAN 1

He might take that as a compliment.

MAN 1

Some compliment.

MAN 2

We're back to the name-calling. I just can't get through to you people.

WOMAN 2

You haven't said anything worth hearing.

MAN 1

I think we're being a bit harsh on this guy.

MAN 2

If I need your help I'll ask for it, okay?

MAN 1

I was just trying to be nice.

MAN 2

You mean condescending.

WOMAN 2

Now look who's using big words.

MAN 2

Sorry for being educated. Sue me.

WOMAN 2

I was trying to pay you a compliment.

MAN 2

Stop trying to suck up to me.

WOMAN 1

That word suck gives me the heebie-jeebies.

MAN 1

Brings back bad memories?

WOMAN 1

No, it's not that. I used to smoke three packs of cigarettes a day.

MAN 1

Wow. That's a lot. When did you stop?

WOMAN 1

About six years ago.

MAN 2

What made you stop?

WOMAN 1

Well, it's like this: I was smoking for ten years and ...

MAN 1

Wait a minute! You were smoking for ten years?

WOMAN 1

Yes, ten years.

MAN 1

That means that if you were smoking three packs a day then you were smoking twenty-one packs a week. That means that you smoked over a thousand packs a year, which comes out to twenty-thousand cigarettes per year, or two-hundred thousand cigarettes over a ten year period. That must have cost you a ton of money. How could you even afford it?

WOMAN 1

Please don't remind me. It's enough that I stopped.

MAN 2

I used to smoke a ton of cigarettes too. But I cut down after I started spitting up blood.

WOMAN 2

Why not just stop altogether?

MAN 2

Easier said than done.

WOMAN 2

Okay. They're your lungs. But I'll tell: smoking has a lot to do with sex appeal. Men like women who smoke.

WOMAN 1

It's true. When I was smoking my social life was terrific. I had lots of boyfriends. One guy I knew even wanted me to ...

FRANK

Down with sexism! Men and women must unite in bonds of solidarity! The working class will triumph! The struggle must continue and will continue to final victory! Then exploitation will cease, wars will end, and national borders will disappear. Peace and harmony will prevail throughout the world, and injustice will be a relic of the past.

WOMAN 1

Such a beautiful vision.

WOMAN 2

I wish we had that now.

MAN 2

Pure fantasy. Such wishful thinking is a waste of time.

MAN 1

I don't know. We need to think in terms of the future.

MAN 2

We don't know what the future will bring.

WOMAN 2

Some people think they know.

MAN 2

Don't promise what you can't produce.

WOMAN 1

But we got to live for something.

MAN 2

For the here and now, that's what.

WOMAN 2

For a guy who uses big words, your intellect seems rather narrow.

MAN 2

Not narrow, realistic. She's the one with the vision issue, not me.

WOMAN 1

What vision issue?

MAN 2

You said such a beautiful vision.

WOMAN 1

I was just commenting on what Mr. Frank up there said.

MAN 2

Oh, he has a vision issue too. Maybe the both of you need to get your eyes checked.

WOMAN 2

Oh, so now you're an eye doctor.

MAN 2

By that you mean an ophthalmologist?

WOMAN 2

Don't put words in my mouth.

MAN 2

Lady, if I put something in your mouth, it won't be words.

WOMAN 1

What would you put in her mouth?

MAN 1

Now we're talking about mouths?

WOMAN 2

No. We're talking about ... well ... to tell you the truth, I have no idea what we're talking about.

MAN 1

Then let's drop the subject, whatever it is.

(pause)

WOMAN 1

There's so much in this world that's rotten.

WOMAN 2

You just discovered that?

MAN 2

I'm sorry you feel that way, doll. You seem like a nice girl. It must be rough being you.

WOMAN 2

My, you are full of surprises. Not only do you have a sense of humor, you're compassionate too. Maybe I've been wrong about you.

MAN 2

Years ago when I was in the service, I had a buddy, a real tough guy, tough as nails. The guy served three tours in 'Nam, was awarded two Silver Stars for valor and had three Purple Hearts. There was no one tougher than him. One day his cat was killed in an accident. My buddy broke down and cried like baby. He was so distraught that I actually had to cradle him in my arms.

WOMAN 1

Oh, that's so sad.

MAN 1

It just goes to show how attached we get to our pets.

WOMAN 2

I think our friend here was trying to make another point.

WOMAN 1

That there are cry-babies in the service?

WOMAN 2

Not even close.

MAN 2

I'm sorry I brought it up. Just forget it.

WOMAN 2

Don't give up, just yet, pal. I understood what you were trying to say.

MAN 2

Okay, then explain what I was trying to say.

WOMAN 2

That you can't judge a book by its cover, and that goes for people too.

MAN 2

For a gal with an attitude, you sure know how to turn on the charm.

Man 2 and Woman 2 stare at each other.

WOMAN 2

Come over here, you big lug.

Man 2 walks to Woman 2 and they hug.

WOMAN 2

Oh, don't get mushy on me now.

MAN 2

Hey, I'm just trying to be ... a gentleman.

WOMAN 1

Look! They're becoming friends.

MAN 1

I wish I had a good friend.

WOMAN 2

Stop your hinting and take care of business.

Man 1 tentatively approaches Woman 1 and takes her hand.

MAN 1

Will you be my special lady?

WOMAN 1

Of course I will.

All four hold hands and face the audience.

MAN 1, MAN 2, WOMAN 1, WOMAN 2
(in cadence)

We talk a lot and jabber
And make a lot of noise,
We posture and we blabber
And sometimes lose our poise.

We make fun of each other
And even say cruel things
That often are real thoughtless
And full of barbs and stings.

But don't think for a moment
That we are human trash
Who prattle on like dummies
And say things that are rash.

Because we are the people
Who make this country great;
We live and work together
And try to pull our weight.

And we don't need no phonies
With slick talk and ideas
Who make a lot of statements
that play on our fears.

For we are a great nation,
We're strong because we're free
And so far it's been working
And freedom is the key.

FRANK

We must unite, take to the streets, and joined together as one, fight the forces of oppression. Don't be afraid! Victory will be ours! It's just a matter of time. Power to the people!

MAN 1

Yeah. Power to the people!

WOMAN 1

That's right! More power! Electric power! Yeah!

MAN 2

I can't afford any more power. My electric bill is already sky high.

WOMAN 2

Mine too. (*to Man 2*) Hey, from one comrade to another, could you help me pay my electric bill?

MAN 2

What?

WOMAN 2

Just joking, bro!

All laugh.

MAN 2

You had me going there for a while.

MAN 1

Nothing wrong with a little levity between us. After all, what are comrades for?

WOMAN 1

We are comrades, right?

WOMAN 2

Of course we are, sister. We just rub each other wrong now and then.
That's only natural. But some people just don't seem to understand that.
(*in cadence*)

There are some crafty people
Who come off like they care,
They pester us with slogans
And drive us to despair.

They never stop complaining,
They go on day and night,
They never stop protesting,
They want to push and fight.

It's either do it their way
Or suffer hits and slights,
They want to grab all power
And crush the peoples' rights.

But we will never cave in,
To all their raucous noise,
Because we are the people
With common sense and poise.

It's true we do spend money
On many silly things,
We often act so foolish
When acting out our flings.

Some take that as real weakness
A sign that we are mad,
They think that we are open
To acting mean and bad.

But no one has the power
To sway us to their way,
Because the game is ours
For all of us to play.

WOMAN 2

Anyone care to play?

MAN 1

Play what?

WOMAN 2

The game. Mister Frank: Are you up to playing the game?

FRANK

(laughs)

Not only am I up to playing the game, I'm the game master. You just don't know it, yet. But that's okay. You've heard my words and you'll come around, and together we will win! We just need to give it a little more time.

WOMAN 2

Which reminds me: I have to get on home.

MAN 2

Me too. It's getting kind of late.

WOMAN 1

Good bye, Mister Frank. It's been a real pleasure.

MAN 1

We have to do this again sometime.

FRANK

And we will.

All four exit. Frank is alone on the stage. He speaks to the audience.

Fools, all fools. These people with their humdrum lives, their petty cares, their silly squabbles. It's all part of something bigger, a struggle for justice. The truth is on our side. Power to the people! Peace! Land! Bread! Victory to the laboring masses! Down with the capitalists, up with the proletariat! No more oppression! No more wars! No more racism! No more nations! No more bosses! One world, one ruling class! One way! The only way! Our way! Believe in us! Believe in me! Join the cause! Join the fight! We will prevail!

MAN 1 enters.

MAN 1

Mister Frank, I just couldn't leave you here all alone without at least telling you that I think you're a good guy and that we care about you, at least I do. You want to create a beautiful world and I'm with you on that. In the meantime, why don't you come by to my place? We can have a couple of beers, kick back and relax, watch some television, swap stories, chew the fat and maybe really get to know each other not just as comrades but as brothers and friends.

The end

