

# The Cowardly Lion

Written by  
C.L. Burke

(A one-man, three act, stage play based on the last day in  
the life of William Jennings Bryan)

"Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious  
triumphs, even though checkered by failure, than to take  
rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor  
suffer much, because they live in the gray twilight that  
knows not victory nor defeat." - Teddy Roosevelt

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ACT ONE

Scene One - THE BOY ORATOR OF THE PLATTE

TIME:

The morning of July 26th, 1925.

SET:

The room is modest in decor, but well-crafted. There is a shelf of books on the right rear stage and a medium-sized, gold-plated cross next to a framed newspaper, and large light switch on the left wall. A large, turn-of-the-century, hand-crafted, executive desk with a clear decanter full of water and one empty glass on it, along with a hand-crafted, wooden chair, are in the middle of the stage. A speaker's pulpit, also of expert craftsmanship, stands at the right side of the stage a few feet from the desk. The back of the stage is clear and well lit.

A single man; clean shaven, about 5 feet 10 inches in height, dark hair, dark eyes, with a square jaw and forehead, is straightening the gold cross on the wall as it is noticeably crooked. The room is the temporary Tennessee study of 65 year-old WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN. Though morning time, he is properly dressed.

SCENE:

(After straightening the cross he sits at the desk, pours himself a glass of water, pauses and contemplates. He then picks up and looks at a bunch of paper bound like a manuscript; then opens the bound work, takes his pen and begins to write feverishly. A very short time passes and Bryan stops writing, puts down pen and paper, opens a drawer and pulls out a Bible. After flipping to Proverbs and briefly reading, he looks up from the table and smiles.)

BRYAN

A liberal lawyer made a monkey out of me five days ago!

(opens the Bible and reads)

***"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction."***

(He sighs as he places the Bible down, then picks up his pen and paper again.)

BRYAN

I woke early this morning thinking, "That's how I should start my autobiography!" And now that self-righteous lawyer, who shall go by the stage name Mendacious Canard, and was a former friend and ally, has proven that correct. As lawyering goes, so he does not.

(looking at the papers)

So my life revisited is barely two-thirds done and I wonder, "Has it been so incomplete?" Maybe Mary can help. Autobiographies are so prideful, like self-anointing libraries or museums. Maybe I should start it like this, "Ohio republicans, disloyal friends, secular scientists, and of course, liberal attorneys, are the bane of any good man's existence." Now that would sell in progressive New York; ah, maybe without the words secular and liberal.

(He puts down the pen and paper.)

BRYAN

Was just reading a letter sent me years ago and thinking of adding it to my book. It might be good filler, as they say.

(He pulls a letter out of the left side desk drawer. The back of the stage shows a large picture of LEO TOLSTOY, but not his name, and the letter large enough for all in the audience to see.)

BRYAN

(ruffles the letter in his hand)

The great author wrote me this at height of my political career.

(looks at letter and reads)

"I had, in my Russian papers, read news about you. I wish with all my heart success in your endeavor to help the working people to enjoy the whole fruits of their toll, but I think this is not the most important thing in your life. The most important thing is to know the will of God concerning one's life, i.e., to know what he wishes us to do and fulfill it. I think that you are doing it and that is the thing in which I wish you the greatest success." Leo Tolstoy.

(He places the letter carefully back into the left side desk drawer, and Tolstoy and the letter's pictures disappears from the wall at the back of the stage.)

BRYAN

How did I go from the savior of the Democratic Party, farmers and labor, to a hated populist demagogue whose character was assassinated by those big business, Republicans and ultra-Progressive Journalists?

(MORE)

BRYAN(CONT'D)

From a man who ran for President three times, to being the quintessential evangelical Christian foil to some liberal, atheist, civil liberties lawyer in 20 years?

(smiles slyly)

Takes some work, huh? Or maybe the poison pen of progressive, eastern periodicals not seeing things as a progressive, Christian populist would. Yet you'll not find be despondent, for the secret to politics is not so much the winning or losing as seeing your policies; based on your core principles, promises, and beliefs, be implemented. And as I look back at the experience and why I remained active in political and public affairs, it is just for that reason.

(Bryan speaks as he writes.)

BRYAN

**"I always fought on principles rather than compromised or attack, by ad hominem digression, the character of an opponent."**

(looks up)

That is a good, round line. The experience of public life has confirmed in me the convictions of my early education.

(writes and speaks)

**"The more we conform our lives and actions, both in private and public relations, to demands of honor, truth, sincerity, justice and Christianity, the greater will be our happiness and prosperity at home and business, but alas the less will be our success in politics."**

(Reaches in his center desk drawer and pulls out pictures of his mother, father, and wife and kids, all of which appear on the big wall on the backstage. He talks as he writes.)

BRYAN

I became a Christian in 1874, at the tender age of 14 during a revival at a Presbyterian Church. Church has always provided a moral, metal base; and the best way to live one's life, for me ever since. We were of Irish extraction but my people have lived in America for more than 100 years. My father, Silas L. Bryan, was from Virginia. He was a well-respected lawyer and judge and a member of the Illinois legislature for eight years. He and mother, both devout Christians, brought me onto this earthly realm on March 19, 1860 on the eve of the Civil War, and it was my especially good fortune to have known my father for my first 20 years. The biblical truths he sought to impress upon me grew in value and I still read Proverbs often for their lucid, powerful wisdom on all moral questions.

(Bryan stands holding a Bible, and walks over next to the podium, but decides not to stand behind it. Instead, he stands next to the podium, opening his Bible.)

BRYAN

But now is not the time for religious oratory. I frequently mention this part of my life to advise all young men to read proverbs because of the accumulated wisdom found there. It was with such wisdom and education that my much lauded verbal eloquence was borne and enabled me to win numerous awards in college for debating. So much so that my reputation grew and I became known as "The Boy Orator of the Platte." I was studious as a youth, was valedictorian of my college class, and came within one vote of doing so in Law School. So it was natural that I should follow my dear father into law and in 1883, I received my law degree from Union College in Chicago.

(He sits down at the desk and resumes talking to the audience while writing.)

BRYAN

It was later that year that I married Miss Mary E. Baird, the only daughter of a prosperous merchant in Perry, Illinois. She was, and is, a pure and handsome woman of rare mental endowments. Her tastes are essentially literary, and over the years she has written for a variety of causes. After the birth of our first child, William, Jr., she began the study of law, with my tutorship, and was admitted to the bar in 1888 though she never practiced. She took the Bryan surname as hers, but still insisted on being called Mary Baird Bryan for some reason. Her only motive in life was to aid me in my life's work and she might safely be credited with at least half of all there is good, honest and successful in this Nebraska man. In our early years she had a great liking for politics and accompanied me on many Nebraska jaunts and has consistently provided me with proper advice as to points and methods.

(He stops and looks at Mary Baird Bryan's picture that now highlights the back wall. Bryan reaches into his right side desk drawers and pulls out a stack of letters.)

BRYAN

Last year Mary reread some of the letters I wrote her in our four year courtship.

(picks out a letter and smiles)

Here, she notes my time away from my studies was always spent in Sunday school, church, prayer meeting, and occasionally a circus, or evening at the theater.

(looks up and sneers)

Ah, the three ring circus, perfect training ground for anyone going into politics against the likes of Marcus Hanna.

(goes back to the letters)

(MORE)

BRYAN (CONT'D)

And here my dear wife reminds how on my 21st birthday I wrote her full of gratitude for my past, yet trembling in contemplation of my unknown future and its responsibilities, its possible successes, and its probable misfortunes. She reminds me of the dread I felt to be compelled to set forth on this sea with nothing but the light of reason to aid me. What a blessing it was that she and I had the ultimate guide, the Bible. The future looked bright. Early in our marriage she and I decided to spend our leisure hours in study, avoiding a young couples whirl into social circles of the wealthy. Instead, we read much on tariffs, railroad regulation, and political economy and government.

(The SOUND of woman's voice talks softly then fades. Bryan turns to it.)

BRYAN

Yes, dear, I understand and won't forget.

(turns back to audience a bit  
embarrassed)

Mary often helped me with my speeches while also caring for our three children, Ruth, William Jennings, Jr., and Grace.

(Pictures of Mary and the three children go on the wall.)

BRYAN

(pauses, nearly in tears as he  
reads a Proverb)

***"Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies."***

. . . And in this progressive day and age, such rubies are not so easily found. No man can truly succeed in politics, let alone life, without the Bible to guide him and a woman to support him; no man.

(He lays the Bible down and puts all the pictures back in the drawer.)

BRYAN

In 1887, we moved from Illinois to Lincoln, Nebraska, where I thought my law practice would be more successful. Again, with Mary's help, my oratorical skills were becoming well known, and I was often asked to speak at political or church functions. One evening in 1888, I came home from giving such a speech, awakened Mary and said, "I found the power over the audience. God grant that I may use it wisely.", and at that moment I sank to my knees in prayer. The Lord gave me eyes that now can see. Since Kansas had a populist tornado named Leslie Kelsey, so too would the innocent, rural farmer of Nebraska.

(Bryan takes a sip of water and begins writing again.)

BRYAN

Was thinking of titling the next chapter, "Populism, Politics, and Progressivism". One does stoop to alliteration in times of memory blocks; but also, one fears that they that talk the loudest have the hardest hearing.

(LIGHTS FADE. CURTAIN SLOWLY FALLS.)

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INTERVAL

Scene Two - POPULISM, POLITICS, and PROGRESSIVISM

TIME:

Same.

SET:

Same.

SCENE:

(The curtain rises slowly. Bryan is at the podium taking a sip of water. On the wall behind is a large picture of Bryan at the 1896 Democratic Convention. Offstage, canned SOUNDS of loud applause are heard by the audience and it dies down as Bryan speaks.)

BRYAN

(this oratory is spoken with  
great conviction)

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen of the Convention: I would be presumptuous, indeed, to present myself against the distinguished gentlemen to whom you have listened if this were a mere measuring of abilities; but this is not a contest between person. The humblest citizen in all the land, when clad in the armor of a righteous cause, is stronger than all the hosts of error. I came to speak to you in defense of a cause as holy as the cause of liberty--the cause of humanity.  
. . . Never before in the history of American politics has a great issue been fought out as this issue has been, by the voter of a great party.  
. . . The gentleman who preceded me, ex-Governor Russell who spoke of the State of Massachusetts;

(MORE)

BRYAN (CONT'D)

let me assure him that not one present in all this convention entertains the least hostility to the people of the State of Massachusetts, but we stand here representing people who are equals, before the law, of the greatest citizens in the State of Massachusetts. When you gold delegate come before us and tell us that we are about to disturb your business interest, we reply that you have disturbed our business interests by your course.

(with emphasis)

The farmer who goes forth in the morning and toils all day--who begins in the spring and toils all summer--and who by application of brain and muscle to the natural resources of the country creates wealth is no brainless scarecrow as the eastern jingoists would state, but his reward, like that of the common laborer is to have it robbed by the deflating aspects of dropping free silver and bowing to the Gold Standard. If the gold standard is a good thing, why is it not the standard for all of civilization? More than that; we can tell them that if they search the pages of history in vain to find a single instance where the innocent, common people of any midland have ever declared themselves in favor of the gold standard over free silver they will find only those entrenched in wealth, and who are holders of fixed investment are in favor of the gold standard.

. . . The gentleman from Wisconsin, Senator Vilas, has said that he fears a Robespierre. My friends, in this land of the free you need not fear that a tyrant will spring up from among the people. What we need is an Andrew Jackson to stand, as Jackson stood, against the encroachments of the organized wealth of the heartless eastern industrialists.

. . . They tell us that this platform was made to catch votes. We reply that changing conditions make new issues; that the principles upon which Democracy rests are as everlasting as the hills, but that they must be applied to new conditions as they arise. Conditions have arisen, and we are here to meet those conditions. They tell us that the income tax ought not to be brought here; that is a new idea. They criticize us for our criticism of the Supreme Court of the United States. My friends, we have not criticized; we have simply called attention to what you already know.

. . . If you want criticism read the dissenting opinion of the court. There you will find just criticisms. They say we passed an unconstitutional law; we deny it. The income tax law was not unconstitutional when it was passed; it was not unconstitutional when it went before the Supreme Court the first time; it did not become unconstitutional until one of the judges changed his mind, and we cannot be expected to know a judge will change his mind.

Let the people decide what is unconstitutional.

(MORE)

BRYAN (CONT'D)  
 (with greater emphasis)

You come to us and tell us that the great cities are in favor of the gold standard; we reply that the great cities rest upon the broad and fertile prairies. Burn down your cities and leave our farms and your cities will spring up again as if by magic; but destroy our farms and the grass will grow in the streets of every city in the country. Having behind us the producing masses of this nation and the world, supported by the commercial interests, the laboring interests, and the toilers everywhere, we will answer their demand for a gold standard by saying to them: You shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns, you shall not crucify mankind upon a CROSS OF GOLD.

(The **SOUNDS** of **LOUD APPLAUSE** are played as Bryan leaves the podium and sits again at his desk and reads his manuscript. The applause dies as he takes a sip of water and picks up his pen.)

BRYAN

That speech is said to be my finest hour, though one would hope for a political magnum opera.

(reflective voice)

It was at Mary's subtle prodding that I embarked on my runs for elected office and in 1891 and 1893 was elected to the U.S. Congress by the denizens of the great and sovereign state of Nebraska. In fact, my first victory in Congress was by 6,700 votes in a district that had given the Republicans a 3,500 vote majority just two years earlier! My tactic was to challenge my opponent to a series of joint debates and made so brilliant a showing as to upset him. This is easy to do against a republican and never fails if one truly has God in his heart.

. . . It was through my Congressional speeches, such as on free wool, that I was able to represent and protect the interest of the farmer and common laborer with free-silver and I was appointed to the House Ways and Means Committee by the Speaker; an unheard of honor for a congressional freshman. Though I was defeated for Senator in 1894, I did earn a modest living lecturing on financial topics in all parts of the country.

. . . So it was that in 1896, with the aid of my "Cross of Gold" speech, and Grover Cleveland's incompetence, I became both the Democratic, and Populists Party candidate for President against the Republican William McKinley. It was an uphill battle to say the least since Cleveland's Democrats had sent the country into severe economic depression in 1893 and Cleveland himself showed a loser's disloyalty by splitting up the party and forming the Gold Democrats.

. . . Much energy did I employ, becoming the first candidate ever to bring his message directly to the people. Instead of staying home in my rose garden and letting others speak for him, I traveled over 18,000 miles; speaking often from the back of railroad cars, and making over 600 speeches in 27 states during the '96 campaign.

(MORE)

BRYAN(CONT'D)

This tactic did not please the eastern press. They were already resentful for not being the Political Town Criers of '96, and bitterly attacked me with exaggerated caricatures in biased editorials.

. . . I lost to McKinley, a man reported to be of good Christian convictions, though disdain of usury seems not his strong suit; but after all, he was a republican. And a man who proves that Republican masters can really make mountains out of the smallest molehills. Funny too how political convictions and religious convictions merge around election time given the maxim that religion is the last refuge of a scoundrel.

(A picture of William McKinley is projected on the wall. Bryan is agitated, moves to the podium and reads notes.)

BRYAN

Ohio Republicans are such a diverse group. That famous speech of mine at the convention in 1896 was merely one part of my platform. I not only stood for bimetallism and the free coinage of silver at the ratio of 16 ounces to 1 ounce of gold, but also for women's suffrage, anti-imperialism, eight hour work days for laborers, a tax on high incomes, and the regulation of these Trusts that made men like Flagler, Gould, Rockefeller, Heinz, and Forbes, modern Feudal Lords who not only should be incarcerated for showing more indifference to human and property rights than any criminal currently jailed, but also for allowing the eastern banks to make easy prey of the back bone of America: The family farmer, who must be saved over all.

. . . And what did the Republicans stand for? The Gold Standard. How proud they must be to side with Creditors, Foreign Bondholders, Wall Street, big Cities, Big business, deflation, and of course, . . . eastern power Financiers. Any president is their agent.

. . . Though I lost by a substantial margin, I did receive more votes than Cleveland did in '92 and most of my votes were from the agrarian south, the mid-western farmer and the northern laborer. The aforementioned evil that is the Ohio Republican machine elected McKinley in what was called the most important election since 1860. Even so-called eastern progressives labeled me in print forever as a dangerous, populist demagogue. All at the behest of the Great Washington Wizard.

(A picture of Marcus Hanna is projected on the wall. Bryan leaves the podium and stands next to the large picture and shakes his head.)

BRYAN

Marcus Alonzo Hanna, the caricature of the American Robber Baron, born in the Gilded age of businesses that profited from slavery, imperial wars and insurrection; who feared the rise of populism and progressives;

(MORE)

BRYAN(CONT'D)

ran the Ohio Republican party with an iron, ruthless hand by 1890, and was instrumental in having McKinley elected Governor of Ohio in 1891 and again in 1893.

. . . Hanna saved McKinley's--another lousy republican businessman--reputation when his financial ruin threatened, groomed him for the presidency in 1895, and was responsible for his nomination by the Republicans in 1896. As chairman of the Republican National Committee Hanna boldly made that campaign based on defense of business and property against the populist doctrines of the Democrats enunciated by me. He took political fund raising to new levels and bought his way into the Senate in 1897.

. . . Mercifully, he left us in 1904, but Hanna was proof that the more things change, the more they stay the same.

(LIGHTS FADE.)

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INTERVAL

Scene Three - A REPUBLIC NOT AN EMPIRE

TIME:

Same.

SET:

Same.

SCENE:

(A picture of an American Naval Admiral and a large map of the world in 1900 are shown. Bryan is reciting a Proverb and writing.)

BRYAN

***"Every purpose is established by counsel and with good advices make war"***

. . . . What would prompt the greatest and most isolated republic in history to abandon such for goals better suited to a European empire? Wealth, minerals, land? Of course, but 1890 saw the vade mecum of its day, Admiral Alfred T. Mahan's "*The influence of Sea Powers upon History, 1660-1783.*" It was "Leviathan" on the ocean.

. . . In its premise was Mahan's third and last "natural condition" affecting the development of a nation as a sea power, its "extent of territory," that may have single-handedly changed the world.

(MORE)

BRYAN (CONT'D)

Mahan did not mean "extent of territory" as total number of square miles which a country commands, but the length of its coastline and characters of its harbors. He then used the antebellum South as example, and even stressed that a relentless sea blockade has always proved more decisive than an supposedly invincible land army.

. . . Yet despite Mahan's best academic observations and intentions; somehow, the military establishment of America and Europe saw it to mean his teaching, "was as oil to the flame" of neo--and conservative--colonial expansion everywhere leaping to life. Such folly led to war after war, and colony after colony. And these imperialists had the nerve to call them protectorates, as if after reading Thorstein Veblen's vade mecum, "The Theory of the Leisure Class" these same new international conservatives would be content with sloth as a measure of true wealth.

(with emphasis)

*An American republic, isolated, full of work ethic, with disdain of moral turpitude and free of the bonds of colonial influence and ownership, is one that the entire world would seek out and beg for its guiding principles and leadership, and not weapons of war.*

(Mahan's picture dissolves. Bryan stands and walks next to the podium.)

BRYAN

So it was 1900, and again it behooved me to seek and receive the nomination of my party. My dislike of the Republican Party's stance on money was tempered by their rush to judgement for war whose only sake was the appeasement of the Captains of Industry and Robber Barons. It was here where the world would find out about the evils of imperialism.

(Behind him a picture of the 1900 Democratic Convention is shown. Then moderate applause follows Bryan as he steps behind the podium. The *SOUND* of a *BANGING GAVEL*, and the applause dies down.)

BRYAN

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Notification Committee: I shall, at an early day, and in a more formal manner, accept the nomination you tender, and shall at that time discuss the various questions covered by the Democratic platform. It may not be out of place; a few observations at this time upon the general character of the contest before us and upon the question which is declared to be of paramount importance in this campaign.

When I say that the contest of 1900 is a contest between Democracy on the one hand and plutocracy on the other I do not mean to say that all our opponents have deliberately chosen to give to organized wealth a predominating influence in the affairs of the Government.

(MORE)

BRYAN (CONT'D)

But I do assert that on the important issues of the day the Republican party is dominated by those influences which constantly tend to substitute the worship of mammon for the protection of the rights of man.

. . . In 1859, Lincoln said that the Republican Party believed in the man and the dollar, but that in the case of conflict it believed in the man before the dollar. This is the proper relation which should exist between the two. Man, The handiwork of God, come first; money, the handiwork of man, is of inferior importance. Man is the master, money the servant, but upon all important questions today Republican legislation tends to make money the master and man the servant.

. . . The maxim of Jefferson, "equal rights to all and special privileges to none," and the doctrines of Lincoln that this should be government "of the people, by the people and for the people," are being disregarded and the instrumentalities of government are being used to advance the interests of only those who are in a position to secure favors from the Government.

. . . Against us are arrayed a comparatively small but politically and financially powerful number who really profit by Republican policies; but with them are associated a large number who, because of their attachment to their party name, are giving their support to doctrines antagonistic to the former teachings of their own party.

(with emphasis)

*Republicans who used to advocate bimetalism now try to convince themselves that the gold standard is good; Republicans who were formerly attached to the greenback are now seeking an excuse for giving national banks control of the nation's paper money; Republicans who used to boast that the Republican party was paying off the national debt are now looking for reasons to support a perpetual and increasing debt; Republicans who formerly abhorred a trust now beguile themselves with the delusion that there are good trusts and bad trusts, while in their minds, the line between the two is becoming more and more obscure; Republicans who, in times past, congratulated the country upon the small expense of our standing army, are now making light of the objections which are urges against a large increase in the permanent military establishment; Republicans who glorified in our independence when the nation was less powerful now look with favor upon a foreign alliance; Republicans who once condemned "forcible annexation" as immoral and even criminal are now sure that it is both immoral, and criminal to oppose forcible annexation. That partisanship has already blinded many to present dangers is certain; how large a portion of the Republican party can be drawn over to the new policies remains to be seen.*

. . . Someone once said that a truth once spoken can never be recalled.

(MORE)

BRYAN (CONT'D)

It goes on and on and no one can set a limit to its ever widening influence. But if it were possible to obliterate every word written or spoken in defense of the principles set forth in the Declaration of Independence, a war of conquest would leave its legacy of perpetual hatred, for it was God Himself who placed in every human heart the love of liberty. He never made a race of people so low in the scale of civilization or intelligence that it would welcome a foreign master.

(with emphasis)

Imperialism means that we shall send a few traders, a few taskmasters, a few office holders and an army large enough to support the authority of a small fraction of the people while they rule the natives. Imperialism would be profitable to the Army contractors; it would be profitable to the shipowners who would carry the live soldiers to war and bring dead soldiers back; it would be profitable to those who would seize upon the franchises, and it would be profitable to the officials whose salaries would be fixed here and paid over there; but to the farmer, to the laboring man, and to the vast majority of those engaged in other occupations, militarism and imperialism bring expenditures without return and risk without reward.

. . . Added to this insult would be the greatest betrayal of all as American capital will leave our shores to employ cheap foreign labor slaving over the blood of our dead at the expense of grieving families at home.

. . . The destiny of this republic is not to have it own people last, to have America last, but it is in the hands of its own people, and upon the success of the experiment rests the hope of humanity.

(with greater emphasis)

Behold a republic in which civil and religious liberty stimulate all to earnest endeavour. Behold a republic in which every citizen is a sovereign, but in which no man wears a crown. Behold a republic, resting securely upon the foundation stones quarried by revolutionary patriots from the mountain of eternal truths. Behold a republic standing erect while empires all around are bowed beneath the weight of their own armaments. Behold a republic whose flag is loved while other flags are fear, a republic whose history, like the path of the just, "is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

(A **LOUD GUNSHOT**, then a picture of Teddy Roosevelt is displayed. Bryan stops speaking, goes to sit at his desk, reflects for a moment, grabs his pen, then looks up.)

BRYAN

I lost the election of 1900 to McKinley and Hanna too.

. . .

(MORE)

BRYAN (CONT'D)

McKinley, or course, was assassinated soon after his victory by a lone nut conveniently wrapped up as an anarchist, and his vice president, a so-called reform-minded Teddy Roosevelt, used the back door to horn his way into office.

. . . This Roosevelt, a jingo-made war hero, was the new symbol of the Progressive Republican and the shifting national reform climate. Though earlier in life he favored lining Populists like me up against a wall and shooting them, by the election of 1904 he campaigned as a Progressive reformer and co-opted half my ideas into his program called the "Square Deal." A program that called for: (1) an attack on the "serious social problems" facing the nation; (2) legislation to allow the regulation of big business; (3) broader control of the railroads; and (4) conservation of natural resources.

(smiles and jokes)

Good politician. He surely must of had a subscription to the Commoner.

. . . It was easy to sacrifice Judge Parker in 1904 since maybe the political pendulum would swing my way for 1908, but there was one very divisive party issue, one that many think would forever haunt me, that must be bridged. But the University of Chicago economic elitists easily rationalize it since worldwide inflation in gold had been consistent for the last 20 years.

. . . However, history doesn't attend eastern schools, only those sophists who write about it do.

(Picture of Old Madison Square Garden. The **LOUD APPLAUSE** as Bryan goes to the podium won't die down until Bryan motions for it.)

BRYAN

(fighting back tears)

Gentlemen. I thank you for your wonderful reception here in New York City following my world tour of 1905. The greatest and most important political contest of our lives in history will be waged in 1908. President Roosevelt has proven himself a man who lacks the true courage to be a reformer.

. . . For there is a demon so hideous, so destructive, that it threatens so great a power as to threaten us with national alarm: The Trust. Politico-business corruption of corporations and banker power money has made a travesty of the Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890 and is the overshadowing evil of the day as the nation is drifting into the hands of the rich, vulgarizing social life, devastating rural American farmers, and making a mockery of morals. Americans in small towns everywhere are feeling the ill effects of having private corporations and the Trusts they form provide such needed utilities as electricity and water and transportation.

(MORE)

BRYAN(CONT'D)

To fight such evil we must put aside our differences and present a unified on issues such as a graduated income tax that would apportioned the costs of government in an equitable way; with the direct election of senators, thereby making Congress less a "bulwork of predatory wealth" and "millionaires club;" and federal control of the railroads, except for local lines, which would be the jurisdictions of the state governments.

(with emphasis)

It is for this reason, and not because the cause has been wrong, but because it is no longer necessary because of the increase in production of gold the metal has achieved, albeit belatedly, a consistent inflation and an expanded currency supply, that we Democrats now put the divisive money debated aside not include bimetallism and the minting of silver into the political platform.

(The **SOUNDS** of an **AUDIENCE GASPING** and scattered **BOOS** and **HISSES** are heard.)

(LIGHTS FADE. . . . THE CURTAIN FALLS)

END ACT ONE

INTERMISSION

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ACT TWO

Scene One - THE GREAT COMMONER

TIME:

The afternoon of July 26th, 1925.

SET:

Same.

SCENE:

(The curtain rises and Bryan is at the wall, looking at the copy of his weekly newspaper, The Commoner. A picture of a massive, well furnished farm house is shown behind.)

BRYAN

There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches.

. . . There's an old saying that politicians, wine, and whores become refined with age. One would think such comparisons would upset a whore, but following my two presidential failures to that rich snob McKinley and being branded as "dead and buried beyond the hopes of resurrection," it challenged me to prove them wrong; to keep the party from going back to the odious and odorous days of 1892-1896; and to prove the Democratic Party's "habitual righteousness!"

(he sits)

After my second defeat in 1900, the family and I moved to a small five acre farm we had purchased outside of Lincoln some ten years before. We made some minor additions while still maintaining the quaint, colloquial, common-core, quality of a home perched on a knoll that provided a pleasant view of the area.

. . . However, we drew some criticism for having added thirty more acres, planting numerous orchard and shade trees; and building a four-story brick house, completed by the end of 1902, that featured cornices, gables, stained-glass windows, electricity and running water uncommon for most houses, and nice imported furnishings to keep Mary and children comfortable.

. . . But I did pay my hired hands well, more than a Republican would, and disdained using illegal immigrants, modern slaves one and all, for they ruin America strictly for the sake of commerce as surely as exporting our jobs to colonies does.

(coughs as if masking what he  
is about to say)

Eventually our estate grew to a mere 160 acres.

(A picture of a copy of a "Commoner" is shown and Bryan quickly changes subjects.)

BRYAN

In January of 1901, to prove myself still a man of the people, I started publishing a Lincoln weekly newspaper as a mouthpiece for "Jeffersonian Democracy" titled, "The Commoner," and went on to become the editor.

. . . "The Commoner" was my vehicle to aid the little people in the protection of their rights, and advance their interest and the realization of their aspirations. Here big business, bankers, Wall Street speculators, and anti-reformers of the Democratic Party were put on notice about the Commoners' political orientation. I was able to give my ideas wide circulation, proving to all that read it that I more than anyone spoke for the hopes and aspirations of the common people, and added greatly to all my travels in campaign and as a paid speaker.

(MORE)

BRYAN (CONT'D)

Though I was out of the office most of the time at paid speaking engagements, it reflected my thinking and within a year subscriptions were up to one hundred forty thousand and while we took a few advertisements from patented medicines, save those that contained nothing more than alcohol, and we disdained money from any liquor and tobacco interests. Of course, after the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1916 required all the addictive narcotics like morphine, and other opiates of patented medicines be listed on the bottle the advertisement revenue source slowed greatly as Americans woke up.

(Picture of Chautauqua Lake and a small town Chautauqua are shown.)

BRYAN

By the early 1900s, the Chautauquau was one to the most familiar forms of popular culture in small towns across this great nation. Its intellectual ancestry went back to the organized public lectures and debates during the several decades before the Civil War, and came to be institutionalized in the 1870s when summer religious gathers in Chautauquau Lake in western New York had been transformed into permanent recreational and educational meetings. It is important here not to confuse Chautauquau with that last bastion of godless, recalcitrant, modern, progressive, activist liberalism of Chapaqua, New York.

. . . Though my magazine was still my forum for Populism, my effectiveness as a speaker was my long suit. No lecturer was of greater demand than me and even on the Chautauqua circuit my name could summon audiences from hundreds of miles away. "Chautauqua Weeks" were popping up in small towns, usually an average population of 5,000 or less across America, and soon became a large business with organized tours of orators, musicians, singers and other "entertainers" who took eastern culture to the poor agrarian peasant to educate and uplift. For the locals, Chautauquas offered the chance to meet and hear nationally known people, including former presidents, popular writers and other celebrities.

. . . Despite "The Nation" magazine referring to small towns as "obscure hamlets" it is in these setting that you can speak to people who were "plain people of the broad, flat midlands, the far-west cattle ranges and the poor southern cotton fields" who have been scorned by the sophisticated east; and incorporate and articulate their thoughts into your own separate from the radicalism of the eastern elites, and the plutocratic, business-oriented wing of the Democratic Party who considered me a two-time loser. Even the Brits laughed at me for these political talks in these little hamlets, but I was not swayed.

(Bryan smiles and writes as he speaks, looks up tips his hat and winks.)

BRYAN

For you can know a cause as you know an individual, by the company he keeps. Here, among the poor, the oppressed, the aged, and the infirm, you can reach out to them, touch them as if you were their promised redeemer from bondage, and they were able to see the man they were asked to vote for. My that is good phrase, I shall include it. Also, you can develop, practice, and implement a litmus test for your new platform. That phrase, I shall not include.

(Bryan rises to the podium as the applause increases. He holds his right hand up as if to ask for the applause to stop, but lowers his left hand by his side and motions his fingers as if to ask for the applause to continue. It slowly dies down.)

BRYAN

My friends, while I prefer not to argue the matter, I must express reservations about the evolutionary theory of creation; at least insofar as it applies to humans. My worry mainly is that it would cause people to lose a sense of God's presence and would provide the rationale "by which the strong crowd out and kill off the weak."

. . . This false rationale, already invoked by John D. Rockefeller and the other Robber Barons, each defenders of Spencer's related Social Darwinism, and whereby the new corporate order is applying Darwin and Spencer's survival-of-the-fittest ideas to society. I fear the brutalizing effects of Darwinism on political democracy and social justice. My reservations have been hardened by seeing the rise of Colonialism here and abroad; German militarism, nationalism, Nietzsche's fatalism; and the resulting "doctrine of the fittest."

. . . What springs from Darwin and Spencer is the major threats to social reform; it justifies an economic "Jungle" at home, where the likes of Rockefeller could demonstrate their "fitness" by driving out competition and controlling an industry here at home, and abroad where nations engage in deadly struggles struggle as Darwinist ruthlessly try to impose their wills on others.

(with emphasis)

This "doctrine of the fittest," encourages exploitation, war and imperialism; evils against which we should never tire of battling. If Nietzsche is correct, then Darwinism will be the basis of the world's most brutal wars as well as the growing class conflict within industry and society and your children will have it drilled into them instead of the virtues of Lord Jesus Christ. Christianity and Americanism are jeopardized as the "menace of Darwinism" substitutes unbridled individualism for service, charity, and love; and paralyzes the hope of reform for those who labor for the improvement of man's condition.

(MORE)

BRYAN (CONT'D)

Darwinism will soon be largely responsible for reactionary politics, threaten true progressivism, and soon will cause a steep decline in the morality of this great nation.

. . . Of special concern is a report that young people in High School and Colleges across this nation are losing their faith; often entering believing with a personal God, but upon graduation, almost 45 percent of them deny or doubt the fundamental dogmas of the Christian religion.

. . . If one looks at our history without the influence of the anointed one, we European-Americans would still be worshipping Venus, Mercury and Apollo; Odin, Thor, and Wotan.; or even the Thule mysticism that has taken root in post-war Germany. I just don't believe our currency would instill the same unquestionable faith and credit if it read "In Zeus We Trust" on the dollar bill.

(the crowd yells approval and  
Bryan's voice gives emphasis)

While I am a firm believer in the separation of Church and State our souls should arise in righteous indignation that public schools were smothering our Children's religious values, for this means the state was in fact teaching against religion, and that public sector atheists social engineers, and evolutionists are enjoying something which democratic reformers had long battled: special privileges. They have taken my Lord, while demanding high pay from the taxpayer for teaching our children what we do not want taught. The hand that writes the paycheck rules the school public or private. As Thomas Jefferson warned, "To compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves is sinful and tyrannical!"

(the crowd bursts into wild  
applause)

Thank you and god bless.

(Bryan sits after soaking up the applause, he sips his water then takes up pen and paper.)

BRYAN

(slight depressed tone)

I lost the 1908 election too. This time to another Ohio Republican, the ultra-conservative William Howard Taft. Nice man with an infectious laugh and humor, a good dancer and conversationalist, smart as a whip and fat as Zeppelin. He was Teddy's hand-picked choice.

. . . As for me, many of the ruling media elitists gloated that this election showed that with the advancement in print and radio, events like the Chautauqua, and the likes of me, were a dying event. Not so fast.

(He puts on a Doughboy helmet, and returns to the podium.)

BRYAN

Rumors of my demise consistently lend to my resurrection and Woodrow Wilson was my salvation. I used my influence; along with those third party Teddy Roosevelt progressives who felt betrayed by Taft's indifference and formed the Bull Moose Party, to help Wilson get elected in 1912. This time against Taft, whose party was left without a Wizard to control them, and split between liberal and conservative.

. . . And with my help Wilson was able to push his "New Freedom" legislation through that changed America. We got the income tax enacted and graduated instead of flat; created the Federal Trade Commission to watch over unfair business practices; passed the Clayton Anti-Trust Act that legitimized labor strikes and made farm and labor exempt from prosecution for restraint of trade; and most importantly, in 1914, came my crowning achievement, we created The Federal Reserve Act that would finally take money out of private bank control and put it in the people's control with gold backing and issuance!

. . . For our successes I gladly accepted the position of Secretary of State. Shame, shame was the label of "eminent fathead" and the assertion that my appointees to the State Department brought little more to their jobs than political loyalty to me. In the end isn't that all we are judged for?

. . . And yes, my disdain for alcohol brought on calls of "grape-juice" diplomacy at State dinners, but if one does not use it, why should one have to serve it? We got our Christian temperance with the 18th Amendment, despite Wilson's veto, and it has saved this nation and does make it amusing to see wets like Mendacious Canard sweat.

. . . Wilson was our savior who would allow the republic to stand alone, free of imperialistic interventionism and war. No more would we acquire land by force as we did in wars with Mexico, Spain, in Cuba and the Philippines but by purchase as we did with Louisiana, Florida, and Alaska. In fact, Wilson, mimicking what Roosevelt did with my progressivism, paraphrased my very words concerning who fights war and why. Only Wilson had to drag his southern roots into it for show.

. . . Action, not words, they say, and as a man who also prided himself on safeguarding America, the best way was to negotiate treaties. This I did with over 30 nations and represented over three fourths of the world's population; binding the signers to submit all disputes to arbitration for at least a year before going to war.

. . . In addition, I advocated strict neutrality when war broke out in Europe in 1912, including restricting travel on belligerent vessels and prohibition of loans to Britain and France. All this placed me squarely at odds with conservatives like Roosevelt and Lodge, and an administration that became bend on war.

(MORE)

BRYAN (CONT'D)

My position became tenuous and it was whispered in the halls of government that should Wilson be re-elected in 1916, my time was over. The same has always been true for men of passive virtue in administrations hell-bent on war.

(with emphasis)

Knowing this emboldened me to speak increasingly for a referendum on war or peace. I insisted that the masses are never consulted by the special interests since the people who do the dying are not the people doing the deciding! Journalist John Reed agreed that indeed if the majority wanted war, those voting for it should enlist first, along side the sons of jingoistic, muckraking, yellow journalists and pols who propagate war. The real question you see is "whether, under the guise of preparing for war," we shall load ourselves down with unnecessary taxes and debt, stir up a war in a peaceful nation, create a military class among us, injure a generation for life, and depart from traditional family values.

. . . Of course, the New York Times asserted that my referendum proposal on war was silly and that my mind is a "Happy Valley, the fortunate isles." Can it ever be said a New York Times' editorial ever took "the side of the people?" What corrective guilt will one day befall them all at that biased rag that still allows the use of NINA in its employment section!

. . . As Wilson buckled to pressure and began moving America down the primrose path towards war, I resigned in 1915 following the Lusitania crisis off Ireland; seeing in it the same jingoistic nationalism that followed the sinking of the Maine.

(yells)

"Remember the Maine, and to hell with Spain!"

(the crowd applauds and he speaks softer)

No, no, No! That was the old jingo and they needed a new "causa sine qua non" for America's newest intervention, its newest "guerre du jour." Had they listened to me no Americans would have been on board the Lusitania, but that was the point really as 124 innocent Americans had to die to swing public opinion; to sacrifice scores of thousands of our best and brightest.

(with emphasis)

And for what? By 1917, Wilson, Lodge, Roosevelt, and the jingoists had their way and the government spent more on WWI than all the cost of government from 1791 till 1914. War is for the sake of economy boom and profit, national debt, friendless alliances, saving the world of democratic governments from a government merely thought a threat, and of course, imperialism.

(MORE)

BRYAN (CONT'D)

Though once entered and receiving popular support, I again changed my mind, and like all politicians, turned coward and supported it for the sake of Black Jack Pershing's AEF troops. Oh well, "c'est la guerre."

(puts the helmet away)

(The stage darkens as a single light shines in the corner where Bryan sits alone at a desk with pen and paper in hand.)

BRYAN

(aloud while writing)

The war to end all wars! That was the motto. By 1920, Wilson most surely has laid the foundation for disaster with his foreign policy that forces independent America into entangled alliances and servitude to Old World European Empires. And the whimsical, purely symbolic League of Nations. I too reluctantly changed my mind and supported it for party unity in 1919 only because it slightly resembled my conciliation agreements I made as Secretary of State.

. . . Though it is supposed to be investigative and deliberative, the League is like a war crime trial in that it is nothing more than the winning side trying the losing for crimes when it has itself been so corrupt, so guilty. Germany has suffered much since 1920 and its people are turning to the occult for guidance. This was helped in part by Wilson writing of the League of Nations into the Covenant of the Treaty of Versailles in his failed 14 Point Peace plan. Conservatives wisely rejected entry and many nations are already withdrawing while old hatreds are rising.

. . . Failure follows fantasy for the likes of Wilson, a college professor at eastern, elitist Princeton. In hindsight, it is obvious he developed his political priorities and beliefs not steeped in Southern traditionalism, but in the northern classroom that is nothing more than an ivory covered vacuum. The old adage, "a drunk liberal will blow up the world, but be very sorry he did it when he sobers up" could not apply to Wilson more. So again, after only eight years in the White House, my party has again been removed. When will they learn they don't need an army to fight a war? Just more Greenbackers, Jacob Coxey's and me.

(Bryan sits and pictures of Warren G. Harding, Jess Smith, Harry Daugherty, and Albert Fall are shown. He laughs and shakes his head.)

BRYAN

America, grown tired of Wilsonianism, elected another Ohio Republican, Warren G. Harding, on a platform of "Back to Normalcy." Harding, as have most corrupt men, rode to fame by marrying and riding the back of rich women.

(MORE)

BRYAN (CONT'D)

Harry Daugherty was the heir apparent to Hanna and return to normalcy for a Ohio republican is getting their good-looking idiot elected president; control of the President by secrets known such as failed business ventures and other unpaid "loans," and his sorted affairs and illegitimate children with high school girls.

(with emphasis)

***That done it was easy persuading Harding to appoint his Ohio Gang cronies to office. They immediately set up a secret, alternate government; engaged in crooked private and public business practices that bilked the taxpayers out of as much oil reserve money as possible; spend their entire time drinking, playing poker, and smoking cigars; and worse, book deals for everyone involved made them more rich!***

. . . Luckily for the gang, Harding died, ostensibly said, from pneumonia in August 1923. Those tour ships are a haven for germs, never order the salmon! His loving wife amazingly died one year later. By the end of Harding's short life, and term as President, the Ohio Gang had looted the Government for \$300,000,000 and but for the convenient suicides and pressured resignations of guilt-ridden aides and appointees; the only one convicted was the original fall-guy, Albert Fall.

. . . Former New Mexico senator Albert Fall was the Ohio Gang's Secretary of Interior who saw the Teapot Dome Naval Oil Reserves, created by Wilson, for the money-maker they were. And with the help of the likes of Sinclair and Forbes, they sold the rights to their cronies in big oil for little or nothing; making hundred of millions in graft in the process. Fall's penalty? One year in prison and a fine of only \$100,000. Luckily for corrupt politicians, Congress usually passes a resolution and presidents either pardon or appoint a special prosecutor to investigate. Sacco and Vanzetti should be so lucky! A sidebar of humorous note is that the odds of a republican president from Ohio surviving in office are one in three! Really corrupt ones zero for two!

(LIGHTS FADE.)

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INTERVAL

Scene Two - UNDER PENALTY OF DEATH

TIME:

Same.

SET:

Same.

SCENE:

(Paperback money covers the back wall. He is writing anew, but puts down pen and paper, picks up the Bible and reads.)

BRYAN

Lord, let them receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold.

(lays Bible gently down)

Should title this section "Under Penalty of Death" and it should be my most didactic, save Darwinism of course.

. . . By the turn of the Century, political parties were trying to make, by one means or another, the total money supply rise with inflation or fall by deflation. Some parties favored the issue of paper money, as was the case just before the Civil War when Americans used dollar bills that had been issued by banks. The government didn't make any money except coins.

(Picture of Civil War is shown. Bryan moves to the rostrum and speaks with surety.)

BRYAN

Ladies and Gentlemen, when Civil War hostilities broke out, the U.S. Government, like all governments at war, needed a great deal of money fast. President Lincoln decided to violate the Coinage Act of 1792 and print money just as the banks did. Only these were not backed by any metal. This early government note was called the "greenback" and, as expected, printing these greenbacks, without metal basing, led to rampant uncontrollable inflation. Lincoln, not only delighted in denying writ of habeas corpus in violation of the Bill of rights, but in violation of federal law and "under penalty of death," created a monetary fiat frenzy! He was killed in office by a lone nut too.

. . . Eventually, about 15 years after the war was over, people who held Federal notes, these greenbacks, could redeem them for gold coin. Few people bothered to make this trade because the war was long over, gold reserves were healthy again, and people had faith in the government, Money was once again backed by real gold, but this created a new problem. The government could not print any more money that was not backed by gold, and that constricted the money supply.

. . . People who already had money, they being the rich people, didn't want any more money added to the supply because an inflated money supply devalues savings. Inflation is always bad for people with money because their money becomes less valuable.

(MORE)

BRYAN (CONT'D)

But people without money, especially poor farmers, already facing deflation and their crops devastated in drought-ridden Kansas since 1887, were clamoring for the government to print more. Inflation always helps the indebted poor's debts be repaid in cheaper dollars and money becomes more available for loans and investments. In Kansas alone three of four farms were mortgaged in some areas due to the only bad double Ds: drought and deflation. Water, real or allegorical in higher crop prices brought on by inflation, was needed to save them. Deny water, you deny God.

. . . That is why after the "Crime of 1873" the Greenback Party, with strong backing from poor farmers, was formed in 1874 and demanded the government mint unlimited amounts of coin, print more paper money, and give \$50 to every U.S. Citizen. The Greenback Party, derided as radicals, dissolved in about 10 years.

. . . In 1894 came the people's march, Coxey's Army, a large group of unemployed men led by Jacob Coxey, who marched upon Washington and demanded a public issue of 500 million greenbacks for the common, little people. Of course, the simpleminded didn't understand how the levers of government operated and they too were squelched.

. . . Luckily, in 1891 a new party emerged and took up the inflationary issue. They were known as the Populist Party and legions of Midwest and Southern farmers joined. In 1892, the Populist candidate for President, James B. Weaver of Iowa got over a million votes and won 22 electoral votes and several Populist candidates won seats in Congress in 1892 and 1894. Third Parties are good for America, both Democrats and Republicans alike fear them for they truly are democratic.

. . . The Populists eventually supported the Democrats because both parties were part of the Free Silver Movement. Remember that sticky problem with a Gold Standard: The government couldn't print any more money without discovering gold to back it up. The Free Silver Movement wanted the add silver as yet another standard in addition to gold. Having two standards would allow the government to inflate and control the money supply and provide relief to farmers as crop prices had plummeted, but whose debts had to be repaid in gold backed currency.

. . . Some progressive democrats like me, and not the traditionalist democrats like Grover Cleveland or republicans in general, wanted the return to the bimetallic standard which was stolen by the Crime of 1873. The problem is that the gold standard was favored by wicked eastern and western bankers and became know as "hard money policy" while our bimetallic policy became lampooned as "easy money."

. . . Oh how history repeats. The basic law of governing money is that if too much money is circulating, in relation to the work it has to do, its value will decline. Too little currency to do the work and those who have money will grow wealthier and debtors more impoverished.

(MORE)

BRYAN (CONT'D)

As Adam Smith said, "only gold and silver are real money" and paper money is only sound when based on gold and silver. False demand for lesser metals or items such as diamonds is merely for greed and vanity. . . . In 1792, the U.S. Coinage Act was passed by Congress, It invoked the death penalty for anyone debasing money and provided for a U.S. Mint where silver dollars were coined along with gold coins in 1794. Section 19 of the Coinage Act of 1792 is rather patent in demonstrating the Founding Fathers' Original Intent with respect to basing money on metal, especially gold and silver.

(Bryan picks up and reads from a copy the Coinage Act itself with emphasis.)

BRYAN

"And it be further enacted, That if any gold or silver coins which shall be struck or coined at the said mint shall be debased or made worse as to the proportion of fine gold or fine silver therein contained, or shall be of less weight or value than the same ought to be pursuant to the direction, through the default or with the connivance of any of the officers or persons who shall be employed at the said mint, for the purpose of profit of gain, or otherwise with a fraudulent intent. And if any of the said officers or persons shall embezzle any of the metals which shall at any time be committed to their charge for the purpose of being coined, or any person who shall commit any or either of the said offences, shall be deemed guilty of felony, and shall suffer death."

. . . Yes, the law did say "suffer death" for anyone that sought to remove gold and silver metal from backing our currency!

. . . It seems the east coast bankers who now control the Federal Reserve Bank of New York City, under their penalty of death, would assassinate in short order; either the character, as they did me in their press; or the physical life of any man running for or serving as President of the United States should they ever attempt, by Executive Order, to mint silver again on the Federal level.

(The **SOUND of THREE GUNSHOTS** ring out and echo in the theater. Bryan drops his notes, ducks then slowly gets up.)

BRYAN

(looking behind him briefly)

Ah, ladies and gentlemen, do not fear this privately-owned, banker-controlled, central bank called the Federal Reserve for it will be the savior and not cause the National Debt to skyrocket by unfettered fiat loaning, and control of the treasury, of unlimited amounts of debased money to the Federal Government at interest only.

(fidgety voice)

(MORE)

BRYAN (CONT'D)

An interest on a growing debt that could be creatively, ahhh, legally accounted for as percentile of the annual budget. Cynics might say that this central bank is now the vehicle that pays national militarism, lawyers, Captains of Industry, Wall Street, civil sloth, pagan art, and corruption; automatically funding any Federal Debt when it should be denying it! Fear not, for the progressives will come in and levy taxes on all, ostensibly to pay off the debt, but in reality to create even bigger government while conservatives rail about lowering the debt.

. . . Again, the cynical find it a remarkable coincidence that the Federal Reserve Act was created in 1914 following the passage of the 16th Amendment in 1913, and together gave congress fiat spending rights and the power to raise and collect income tax!

. . . So in a nutshell, it works like this: The Federal Government granted its power to create money to the Federal Reserve Bank. They create the money, then loan it back, debased but bonded to foreign owners, to the Federal Government. The Federal Government levies taxes wherever it can to pay the interest on the debt.

(looking around again)

Traditionalists whin that the Federal Reserve Board is now one of the most corrupt institutions the world has ever known and has cheated the Federal Government and the people of the United States out of enough money to pay the national debt. That this board is now a private credit monopoly, each of its 12 branches locally-controlled by commercial banks! And who prey upon the good people of the United States for the benefit of only themselves and their foreign customers; foreign and domestic speculators and swindlers; and the rich and predatory money-changers.

(The *LOUD SOUND of a GUN COCKING*, and Bryan winces)

BRYAN

Reintroducing silver certificates against any silver bullion, silver, or standard silver dollars; Gresham's Law notwithstanding, would eliminate the Federal Reserve and demand for the Federal Reserve Note which is backed by nothing, allow the Federal government to pay off its National Debt without raising taxes, make funding for unnecessary wars more difficult, force rampant socialistic entitlement growth to slow, create inflation, allow for public choice in deciding Constitutional Economics instead of Keynesian state capitalism, and eventually make the dollar more powerful than any currency in the world.

(with a nervous voice)

*Excuse me for a minute!*

(Bryan ducks behind the podium again as the *SOUND of THREE MORE*

**GUNSHOTS** ring out. He rises and dusts himself off, puts his finger in his ear as if to say, "**that was loud,**" then looks up.

BRYAN

Though that might not be practical as many historical figures have found out.

(A picture of Alexander Hamilton is shown to Bryan's relief.)

BRYAN

Alexander Hamilton, himself a mono metallist, thought that gold was more viable and desired than silver and the latter couldn't stand the test of time respective to changing states. But it is exactly that sentiment that made the best rationale for bimetallism, as it "afforded a moral certainty" for "abridging the quantity of the circulating medium" as the U.S. Government was in exactly the same state then, as the farmer is today and will be in the future. Then, the scarcity of metallic money was the fact which influenced Hamilton to recommend a bi-metal standard-a national scarcity too, for the country yet felt the effects of the havoc caused by the worthless continental paper, like a farmer of limited means.

. . . The Gold Standard can't last. The great untold truth is that inflation hurts the rich; you see, that is why it is so important to them to keep it low, if not deflated, so as to ruin the hardest hit: The farmer, whose crops, profits and debts are, by positive correlation tied directly to inflation, and the skilled laborer, whose work becomes more valuable in inflationary times.

. . . The 1873 Coinage Act, listing all coins to be minted, omitted the silver dollar. This removed de jure the country from the bimetallic regimen it was on thus far. There was no effect on the money stock at that moment because silver was still more valuable in the market than at the mint. but soon after many nations shifted from bimetals to the gold standard and increased the demand for gold. Thus silver went from 16:1 oh zees to 40:1 oh zees for gold. All roads lead to the ounce, even Hamilton missed this difficulty.

(Bryan sips his water and reads a Proverb from the Bible.)

BRYAN

*"So are the ways of every one that is greedy to gain; which taketh away the life of the owners thereof."*

(MORE)

BRYAN(CONT'D)

Bimetallism was abandoned in America by the Crime of 1873 and replaced by the Bland-Allison Act of 1878, which limited the amount of silver dollars coined, creating the systematic term "limping bimetallism," a monetary system partially dependent on the use of silver but primarily dependent on gold. The more of our currency that is debased of metal the worse the depressions that follow. My nomination in 1896 can attest to that folly of 1873. The policy of limping bimetallism was ended by the Gold Standard Act of 1900.

(Bryan stops and thinks, goes to the back of the stage and locks the door, walks in front and gazes about the audience.)

BRYAN

(wiping his brow with his handkerchief)

Got hot in here. Say, are there anymore out-of-work, anarchist, communistic, anti-government, thespian, lone nuts, extremists here?

(again wipes his sweaty face)

Good. Whew. Then lets have a private chat.

(He goes to his desk, grabs some notes and steps back to the podium with the notes.)

BRYAN

(true concern in his oratory)

In the future, when America is faced with tough economic times, a time when gold is in real need to be used for survival, there will come tyrannical, autocratic Presidents. These despots will, by Executive Order and under guise of National Emergency, steal your gold to create false shortages instead of increasing or reintroducing silver production to back any greenback issuance or government growth. They will have a wise market know this and further the economic trough into depression for an extended time.

. . . Yes, the price of gold will eventually rise as supply is stolen by government and not the market, but those forced to sell their gold to this monster will not see the profit of increase, only the eastern bankers who hoard it will. This economic anti-Christ will steal gold to pay for false imperial wars that engross us in a national debt no metal can secure and force a levy of taxes on all instead of the Robber Barons only. The only thing to fear is true, progressive, stupidity itself. These progressives will have to cover this up by indoctrinating children in government approved schools about secularism, hedonism and the failure of free enterprise.

(MORE)

BRYAN (CONT'D)

Then end any metallic basing of our currency, and kill those the  
heartless eastern unionists and industrialists deem as enemies of the  
state with the very silver and gold axe handle taken from them by the  
likes of Hanna. And slowly but surely this will cause Americans to  
abandon that which has separated them from all others for 150 years:  
Charity.

(Bryan pauses, takes a sip of water, wipes his eyes, glances down, then up.)

BRYAN

The ancient Spartans once conquered their neighbors the Messenians for  
their fertile lands. They turned the conquered Messenians into  
agricultural slaves called helots. You might describe the helots'  
lives as the life of a "serf," for they worked small plots of land on  
estates owned by Spartans; part of their produce went to the master of  
the estate, and the remainder went to the helot farmer and his family.  
There's no question that the life of the helots was a miserable life.  
Labor was long and hard and the helots always lived right on the  
border of subsistence farmer. Like the American Farmer of today.

. . . The ideology of Sparta was oriented around the state. The  
individual lived (and died) for the state. Their lives were designed to  
serve the state from their beginning to the age of sixty. The  
combination of this ideology, the education of Spartan males, and the  
disciplined maintenance of a standing army gave the Spartans the  
stability that had been threatened so dramatically in the Messenean  
revolt.

. . . But it was actually Spartan society itself that changed. The  
military and the city-state became the center of Spartan existence.

. . . The state determined whether children, both male and female, were  
strong when they were born; weakling infants were left in the hills to  
die of exposure. To starve to death without food and water. Exposing  
the weak or sickly children was a common practice in the Greek world,  
but Sparta institutionalized it as a state activity rather than a  
domestic activity. They were renowned for using their sick and elderly  
as human target practices.

. . . At the age of seven, every male Spartan was sent to military and  
athletic school. These schools taught toughness, discipline, endurance  
of pain (often severe pain), and survival skills. They indoctrinated  
them into the city-state wishes. At twenty, after thirteen years of  
training, the Spartan became a soldier. The Spartan soldier spent his  
life with his fellow soldiers; he lived in barracks and ate all his  
meals with his fellow soldiers.

. . . He also married, but he didn't live with his wife;

(MORE)

BRYAN (CONT'D)

one Athenian once joked that Spartans had children before they even saw the face of their wives. The marriage ceremony had an unusual ritual involved: at the end of the ceremony, the man carried his wife off as if he were taking her by force (this did not mean, however, that the status of women was bad in Sparta, as we shall see later).

. . . Only at the age of thirty, did the Spartan man become an "equal," and was allowed to live in his own house with his own family—although he continued to serve in the military. Military service ended at the age of sixty. How did the soldier survive? How did Sparta afford to feed young men who did nothing but soldier in their twenties? Each soldier was granted a piece of land, which he probably never saw; this land was farmed, of course, by the helots, the poorest farmer.

. . . Helots were ruthlessly controlled, primarily through the secret police or Krypteria.

. . . Yet women were freer than in other Greek societies; they negotiated with their husbands to bring their lovers into their homes.

. . . There was emphasis on fighting fears and superstition by state-controlled education called the Agoge.

. . . The Agoge was a rigorous education and training regime undergone by every Spartan male except for the heirs to the kingships. Supposedly introduced by the semi-mythical Spartan law-giver Lycurgus it trained boys from the age of 7 to 18. It involved education, military training, hunting, dance and social preparation. Boys were taken from the family home and from then on lived in groups and encouraged to owe their loyalty to their communal mess hall rather than their families. A form of institutionalised pederasty was practised whereby older warriors would be paired with a teenage student. This bond was considered important in passing on knowledge and in maintaining loyalty on the battlefield. The agoge focused exclusively on producing new generations of soldiers.

. . . Girls also apparently had a form of state education involving dance and sport amongst other subjects.

. . . Spartan nurses were prized in Greece. From that age, their training was undertaken by the state in the Agoge system and supervised by the paidonomos, an official appointed for that purpose. This training consisted for the most part in physical exercises, such as dancing, gymnastics, ball games, etc., with music and literature occupying a subordinate position.

. . . Spartans had a reputation of being "laconic", short in words. Dumb. Yet education was also extended to girls and both sexes exercised naked. Women however could not compete by the Olympic rules, while Spartan men were very successful. There were also contests to see who could take the most severe beating just for sport.

(MORE)

BRYAN (CONT'D)

From the twentieth year began the Spartan's liability to military service and his membership of one of the dining messes or clubs, composed of about fifteen members each, to one of which every citizen must belong and contribute, and where all meals must be taken.

. . . At thirty began the full citizen rights and duties. For the exercise of these three conditions were requisite: Spartiate birth, the training prescribed by law, and participation in and contribution to one of the dining clubs. Those who fulfilled these conditions were the peers, citizens in the fullest sense of the word, while those who failed were called routtoves (lesser men), and retained only the civil rights of citizenship.

. . . Spartiates, also known as homoioi (the "Similar"), were absolutely debarred by law from trade or manufacture, which consequently rested in the hands of the perioeci (former slaves), and were forbidden (in theory) to possess either gold or silver, the currency consisting of bars of iron, thus making thievery and foreign commerce very difficult and discouraging the accumulation of riches.

. . . Wealth was, in theory at least, derived entirely from landed property, and consisted in the annual return made by the Helots who cultivated the plots of ground allotted to the Spartiates. But this attempt to equalize property proved a failure: from early times there were marked differences of wealth within the state, and these became even more serious after the law of Epiteadeus, passed at some time after the Peloponnesian War, removed the legal prohibition of the gift or bequest of land.

. . . Later, a greater concentration of land was in the hands of large landholders and by the middle of the 3rd century s.c. nearly two fifths of Laconia belonged to women.

. . . Hand in hand with this process went a serious diminution in the number of full citizens, who had numbered 8,000 at the beginning of the 5th century, but had sunk by Aristotle's day to less than 1,000, and had further decreased to 700 at the accession of Agis IV in 244 BC.

. . . The Spartans did what they could to remedy this by law: certain penalties were imposed upon those who remained unmarried or who married too late in life. The decay of a culture of death, however, was too deeply rooted to be eradicated by such means and at too late a period in Sparta's history for pro-natalism to save.

(pause, then with the greatest emphasis)

*A nation is judged most atrocious by how it treats its very weakest. America is becoming more Spartan by the hour.*

(Bryan sits, contemplates for a minute then stands and paces about.)

BRYAN

Yes, with any political success comes avarice and betrayal.

. . . Mary has given me good council, an indiscriminate eye if you will, and much concern began for me in 1913 even with a gold standard in place. For it was that year that the aforementioned 16th Amendment that I supported was amazed passed.

(stops, looks behind him,  
listens for a beat)

Yes dear, I understand, and you were right.

(looks back at the audience)

But Mary wondered why in breezed through the Solid South by Democrats who mistrusted the Federal north. "Why, they must've looked upon it to soak the rich, northeastern, industrialist, republican Robber Barons," I retorted.

. . . Mary thought that a bit odd since none of the voting in most of the 2/3rds of the states required is able to be found; especially in the South still reeling from Federal Reconstruction.

. . . She also noted, in concert with the 17th Amendment that I also supported, that one has to wonder sometimes why southern State legislatures would vote to tax themselves federally with one amendment and remove their power to pick senators to fight this with another. Somehow those voting records were lost too.

. . . "Oh to be Wilsonian," I told here. But Mary senses a foreboding of our future. She thinks that this income tax amendment, even graduated, is appealing to the sins of the envy and covetousness, and will doubtless break the American politicians and bureaucrats promise that the tax would be levied only on the rich and that it would never exceed a very small percentage of income. That flat progression will not last as we have ignored our ancestors, the American people rendered unto Caesar the omnipotent power to control the fruits of their earnings.

. . . Mary also fears these amendments; and acts like the Federal Trade Commission and Federal Reserve; all ultimately based on political appointments, will by human nature fall into the hands of the very people we wanted them to protect us from.

. . . The destructive power of the income tax has already been documented so far during the mid-20's; and the Federal Reserve Board, exercising its power to expand the money supply without proper metal base caused an inflationary binge. But without being monitored by proper bimetallic policies, it has created a false aura of prosperity and monetary expansion. This Federal Reserve Board and Chairman have become the modern version of Marcus Hanna.

. . . Now, when faced with this inflationary threat and restrained by the gold standard, instead of expanding, Presidents will contract, fueling even worse conditions. The rich have used the Federal Reserve to politically manipulate money and credit to circumvent even

(MORE)

BRYAN(CONT'D)

mono-metal basing.

. . . From this day forth Presidents and the eastern billionaires will be able to plunder; by government intervention and the political manipulation of power money, not only from the rich but from everyone in all walks of life, including farmers and laborers, and for this I am sorry. But they need our gold to get away with it. They our ignorance, our contentment, our submission to the will of man.

(A picture of Sir Thomas Gresham is shown.)

BRYAN

(snidely)

That is the basis of Gresham's Law; often used by liberal economists as an excuse against bimetallism, where in economics the principle that depreciated or debased currency is in circulation along with metal coins that have full value in terms of precious metal, the latter tends to disappear. This is folly since fixed ratios prevents nearly all value fluctuations. According to Gresham's law, the good coins, those of full metal base and value are either exported or melted down in order to realize their higher market value in foreign exchange or as bullion.

. . . In other words, as Gresham said, and as you see our coins slowly lose their gold and silver content and replaced by metals of no base value, "Bad money drives out good".

. . . That was the reason for the Free Silver Movement and the Populist Party; unfortunately overshadowed and somewhat coopted by the "gold bug" democrats of Grover Cleveland. Free silver would have allowed for unlimited coinage of silver and issuance of paper money would inflate and hopefully ease the financial burdens of the debt-ridden farmers and abolish the national banking system. The Crime of 1873 dropped silver coinage in favor of Gold Standard, but Free Silver still symbolizes economic justice. Unfortunately, the silver slipper didn't fit and we had to settle for pyrite.

. . . Now, any president attempting silver minting now would end the Federal Reserve, low inflation and power money. He would be assassinated by power money eastern bankers for following the very law that originally threatened "under penalty of death" for anyone, a President include, for violating.

(a beat as he looks behind him  
then speaks softly)

***Mary is very intelligent.***

(Bryan begins to write and speaks in a deep, concerned voice.)

BRYAN

***And worse, usury laws will soon be abandoned and America's national identity will be sold to the highest foreign bidder.***

(LIGHTS FADE.)

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INTERVAL

Scene Three - THE COWARDLY LION

TIME:

Same.

SET:

Same.

SCENE:

(Bryan is writing as a picture of Miami, Florida is shown.)

BRYAN

***"Wealth maketh many friends; but the poor is separated from his neighbor."***

. . . After my resignation from the Wilson cabinet, and because of Nebraska's cold affecting Mary's arthritis, we moved to Miami, Florida where we devoted ourselves more than ever to Christian work. The move hurt my political base, and in April of 1923, the last issue of the Commoner appeared. However, my syndicated Bible column did pay me \$20,000 a year and reached many so I find the maxim "there's money in the calling" somewhat offensive.

. . . Quite honestly, I am now seen as being more concerned with appearances, an emeritus statesman turned old, fat and seedy. Don't all good Evangelical Christians move to Miami when they grow old? Is it my fault that when I retired from politics that I received fees from none other than Standard Oil for helping that company secure compensation for damages suffered during the Mexican Revolution?

. . . It did seem a bit of a conflict of interest since Wilson's incursion into Mexico in 1914 was the only one I approved of but that's politics.

. . . Before my move to Florida I commented once that no one could honestly earn a million dollars, but now, having some success juggling public service and profit I must amend that to say it is possible "to amass five hundred million in a lifetime" and still serve society.

. . . Having been attacked by both the Nation and the New Republic for seemingly having more style than substance we progressive, populist, pre-war, reform radicals were quite literally a dying breed; Roosevelt died in 1919 and Wilson last year;

(MORE)

BRYAN(CONT'D)

others had basically given up or felt unobligated to movements or to reforms of the obstacles to social justice. Progressives had fallen victim to cynicism, profit or fear of being labeled extreme or radical.

(**BOOING** from the side of the theater)

Anyhow, most of the progressives were making a killing in real estate in the Magic City of Miami during the Coolidge prosperity of the early and mid-20's. We could get \$250 a speech fees for pool-side, Shimy Girl lectures where we could really be concerned with issues that mattered to us. One of which is not the driving profiteers out of some businesses.

(Picture of the 1924 Democratic Convention is shown. Bryan gets up and walks to the podium, papers in hand, as if to deliver a speech. From offstage are the **SOUNDS** of a Convention and delegates who are now loudly **BOOING, HISSING and SCREAMING** barbed comments like "**Tea Toddler!**" "**Hypocrite!**" and "**Who's paying you?**" forces Bryan to stop until they do.)

BRYAN

(loudly)

As I was trying to say, by the Convention debacle last year I still bear the scares of Prohibition and the label "**the Beerless Leader**" and couldn't mend the split between reform-minded Progressives and Populists within the Democratic Party with regards to immigration, Prohibition, the KKK, Republican Tax Reform, and Darwinism. Alas, I went from the Savior to Party foil in less than a progressive wail.

(The **BOOING and HISSING GROWS LOUDER**. Bryan screams back.)

BRYAN

Why is it these Catholic and Jewish immigrants of the big cities find Prohibition not in keeping with their traditional religious practices? I've never subscribed to, or condoned, anti-Catholicism, anti-Semitism, or the racist practices of any group, but it just doesn't make good politics to scream about it! We reformers should fight racial and social injustice with an army instead of being a lonely scout!

(Again, Convention delegates are loudly **BOOING**, and **HISSING** forces Bryan to stop, momentarily think, then sit at his desk to polite applause and comments like "**Finally, he shut up!**" and "**Does anyone recognize that man?**".

BRYAN

(sadly with a sigh)

**Most men stay in politics one Convention too long.**

(After a pause, a picture of the University of Florida is shown in two parts-the land and the buildings.)

BRYAN

It was during these salad days in Florida that Mary and I raised money to save a Men's Academy in the backwoods of North Florida from dissolution. We feel good about this and think the University of Florida offers much more than mere accreditation ruined by money. Though they did vehemently rejected making their mascot the "Prohibitionist" in favor of a reptile for some reason. They seem incline more towards beer than the Bible.

. . . In Miami, my Sunday School class in the Presbyterian Church nearby became so large that it encompassed the nearby park and from the bandstand I spoke to thousands, many not normally church-goers or born-again. Though no reluctant Messiah who bears false illusions, it felt good to have affect, especially with the YMCA, where I worked actively helping young men battle the religious skepticism that has become so popular, going so far as to author legislation in 1924 to ban the teaching of evolution in Florida.

. . . It was concerning this that I thought to defend creationism nationally since they insisted of teaching of evolution as fact instead of theory; which it still is since any link is merely missing, has caused many students to lose their faith in the Bible. From the pulpit I sought Constitutional Amendments supporting direct election of Senators, taxation, women's suffrage, prohibition of liquor, and beginning to think, banning the teaching of evolution as fact. And with Gold backing, I thought, this private Federal Reserve Act should benefit the common man by keeping currency based on the Gold Standard as well as keeping inflation high enough for laborers and farmers to earn a profit. Again, in politics as in life, failure on the outside, can be only be tempered with small victories along the way.

(Picture of Scopes is shown. Bryan is writing near the end of the manuscript. He stands and walks to the cross on the wall, touches it, then to the podium with his Bible.)

BRYAN

(with fire in voice)

But of all my memories, the one most troubling and probably the one that will remember me when I am gone, is my acting as the prosecuting attorney in the Scopes Trial five days ago. This misguided man, John Scopes, a teacher, deliberately taught evolution as fact, in a Tennessee school in violation of Tennessee law, and was defended by my former political ally Clarence Darrow, Mendacious Canard himself, who I think was more motivated by his inability to get beer than true caring for man, God, and science. I even volunteered to pay Scopes' fine!

(MORE)

BRYAN (CONT'D)

For Canard, like Walter Lippmann and others in this small band of arrogant intellectuals; full of foreign ideas, and un-American ideals are themselves now the ultimate Trust: The most tyrannical Oligarchy ever of Scientists, Academics, Jurists and Social Engineers bent on encouraging moral softness, social permissiveness and intellectual flapperism and instilling in all Americans that your illusions of life and God are only a dream, and using God's name like a traditional boy whistling while passing the graveyard to keep up his courage. For these eastern liberals the adage "everyone is equal, but some are more equal than others" seems fit.

. . . Of special note are the scientists. More interested in forwarding a secular, unproven theory, than using the scientific method to solve pandemic diseases like the Spanish A-class Flu of 1918 that killed 20 million worldwide, nearly 12.5 million more than World War One and certain to crop up one upon another. More interested in preaching against war than finding the agronomy, animal husbandry, and useful application of Frederick W. Taylor's scientific management methods to produce more food to feed the world instead of making the northeastern, industrial, robber baron's richer. More interested in screaming that our Constitution and its evangelical supporters are mired in a medieval, pedantic notions of vitalism, and spontaneous generation while engaging in antiquated religious practices than helping Americans in their pursuit of happiness. More interested in screaming against nationalism, and for heterogeneous societies in an age in which unfettered immigration is for America what the Plague was to Europe from its African colonies and the Conquistadors were to Indians with measles and smallpox; both were epidemiological disaster in waiting.

. . . Against these forces I struck first and volunteered to pay Scopes' fine! But this farce of a trial that is a tactic as old as the Constitution; try to change the Constitution without properly amending it by having like-minded judicial activists violate Natural Law in favor of Legal Positivism; thus falsely creating Stare Decisis for the sake of social engineering.

. . . Had Chief Justice Taney been a proponent of Natural Law instead of Legal Positivism Dred Scott would have been freed, a Civil War prevented, slavery dissolved by time, 40 acres and a mule paid to as reparation to the wronged, 600,000 male adult lives saved, immigration halted, a New Brazil borne in the shamed South, and we could have volksmarched a legion into the Kaiser Wilhelm's Weimar Republic. But no, war is always chosen for the sake of commerce.

. . . The future holds more conflict I fear as these activist attacks shift to Christian virtues and traditions.

(MORE)

BRYAN (CONT'D)

As Erasmus once wrote and post-reconstruction Southerners can attest, "Take away a man's symbols and you sew the seeds of discontent." To the eastern secularists I say, "Consider them sewn deeply in the South." . . . Though I took the stand in defense of the Bible and Creationism and we won, a liberal appeals court overturned it. Scopes was at least convicted and fined \$100 for his actions, but the Evangelical Christianity for which I stood lost much in the court of public opinion as we were vilified as obstructionist, narrow-minded, and bigoted by that aforementioned God-less, liberal, drunken, disloyal pettifogger; who like other civil liberties lawyers, and academicians, hope to subvert Christian values through the aforementioned, judicially-activated, false Stare Decisis.

. . . Most academics, lawyers, scientists, and other secular, socialist radicals usually have no quarrel with democracy, except for being appalled at the suggestion that taxpayers should actually dictate the subject matter of their classroom. This horrid thought could actually reduce fact to the whim of the "dogma of majority rule". Unless of course, they are the 51 percent! Maybe we should apprise them that having 90% of votes in big cities that account for 10% of all the land, and all that festers from them, means that they have 10% of the rest of rural America! It's that 90% of the nation that Federalism must protect.

. . . Even northeastern, big City journalist like H. L. Mencken of the Baltimore Sun lampoon the "booboise" and the "yokels" of agrarian America. Often rural-baiting like the elitist eastern periodicals by calling us "morons," "hillbillies," "gaping primates of the upland valleys," "evangelical Christians," "ride over states" and "one-horse, village hick" who enjoy "the tune of cocks crowing in the dunghills."

. . . Besides, what rural American would read Mencken or Lippman's bile when this young Ogden Nash has arrived at the New Yorker Magazine to entertain us with his highly original and humorous rhymes purposefully full of mispronounced, misspelled, and coined words!

. . . Elitists like Mencken, Canard, and Lippmann must enjoy the demise of the family farmer. God help us beware and fight off these handful of Democrats that would rob your children of religion and turn them out atheists and God help the Democratic Party from going the way of the Whig if Darrow, Lippmann, Mencken and their ilk succeed.

. . . For between Progressivism, unfettered immigration and the Urban Political Machines it spawns, centralized business-oriented Government, the ignorance of traditional democrats and Federalism, and forcing Darwinism as fact instead of theory, the world is being pulled down into an well-defined, deviant, amoral abyss.

(MORE)

BRYAN (CONT'D)

The Democrats are the party of the Andrew Jackson no more, and Republicans are punctuated by Harding's moral and financial scandals that led to his most untimely, yet timely death two years ago. It is no wonder our convention of last year was stalemated between my traditional Byranite-southern groups and the minority urban-ethnic wing of the progressives that booed me so. And for our shame we got Coolidge and a coverup of the Teapot Dome Scandal by his "special prosecutors."

(Bryan pause, then opens the Bible at the podium and waves it as he is about to speak, then changes his mind and thoughtfully places it back in the top with care.)

BRYAN

(with penetrating and provocative voice)

In regards to this law in Tennessee, upon which Scopes is being adjudged, it need hardly be said that this law did not have its origin in bigotry. It is not trying to force any form of religion on anybody. The majority is not trying to, as the Establishment Clause prohibits, establish a religion or to teach it; it is trying to protect itself from the effort of an insolent minority to force irreligion upon the children under the guise of teaching science. What right has a little irresponsible oligarchy of self-styled, elitist, "intellectuals" to demand control of the schools of the United States, in which 25 million children are being educated at the annual expense of nearly two billion dollars of our tax payer money? Christians must, in every State of the Union, rally to the polls, and build their own colleges in which to teach Christianity; it is only simple justice that atheists, agnostics and other unbelievers should build their own colleges if they want to teach their own religious views or attack the religious views of others.

(Noticeably upset, he slams the Bible upon the podium and returns to the table and tries to resume his autobiography but stops.)

BRYAN

*Forgive me, but sometimes I am not sorry I lost my temper, but I am glad I found it.*

(looking at the unfinished work)

If I could write about myself as well as I speak on the issue this thing would resemble Homer instead of a partially completed yelp. Lord, I look forward to returning to Miami with Mary soon.

(Bryan then sets pen and paper aside, stands and walks about the room.)

BRYAN

Yes, my treacherous former ally Clarence Darrow made a monkey of me five days ago, but one should consider the source and forgive him since he is the man who saved 50 murderers especially two rich, recalcitrant, murdering, pederasts named Leopold and Lowe from the gallows.

. . . A man, like many for whom deviancy is defined down to the baleful moaning of the wretched men being somehow more deserving than the rest. But God's punishment shall befall them all.

. . . Mary warned me of this at trials end; that the narrow margin separating a legitimate defense of religion, as well as the people's right to govern was ripe for encroachment into an individual's core religious beliefs.

. . . **"ANTIESTABLISHMENTARIANISM: Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, id est, The Establishment Clause. Nor shall Congress purge religion from public life. Religious conscience must lie outside the reach of the state and should have a greater claim upon an individual than does the state or any established religion."**

(with emphasis)

***I am confident that Christians respect that thin red line, liberals don't, and we must keep up the fight until hell freezes over and then give them around of ice to boot!***

. . . And how will I finish this work is how my life will be remembered. Mary says it's as a political evangelist, often ahead of his time as a spokesman for liberal causes, but who was also closely identified with traditionalism of fundamentalist Christianity.

. . . But this new economy, created by secular Darwinist, with its large scale corporate commercialism, and consumer-oriented ethic worries me and reminds me more of habits of industry than habits of God-fearing men, and fits nicely into the scheme of the plutocracy of the privilege that constitutes our ruling elite.

. . . Wait, possibly I am personification of argumentum ad populum? The greatest Commoner ever, or the worst Mass Hypnotist? Time will tell. Don't think me the last here too, especially in the yellow dog, solid south or farmer-laden west.

(Bryan pauses and takes a sip of water.)

BRYAN

No, hopefully time will treat me as a man who used his oratorical gifts to establish popular government, safeguard society, advance the causes of the poor and downtrodden, and spread the Christian faith. But history makes for bad novels as history is written by man and men lie and omit. So let's hope my history is written as novel, sonnet, psalm, proverb or play. Since eastern periodicals, Ivy League academics, and the likes Canard and Mencken will judge me I shall fall somewhere forgotten in the popular ether;

(MORE)

BRYAN(CONT'D)

classed faux by historical histrionics as a religious conservative, political failure, economic radical, or populist demagogue.

. . . Certainly, it will be said I saved the Democratic Party from going the way of the Whig, but at what cost if the party's platform is hijacked by extreme, revisionist, secular-humanists bent on destroying the Constitution and the Christian faith from which it sprang? Then watch as most men of good faith will abandon the Democratic Party for it has abandoned them. And God do I fear this. The Republican Party will surely control Congress as they are close to doing even now by these puppets of the Ohio machine Hanna has built. Oh Lord, the more things change the more they stay the same.

. . . Well at least I have my ruby, my Mary, and will tell her so after my afternoon nap as the day is slipping away as I write. Let's see if Mary can help tonight.

(Bryan goes over and cleans his desk while standing.)

BRYAN

(with sarcasm)

*Who knows, maybe I am really a Cowardly Lion. One never to be forgiven for turning his back on the common folk, forsaking his core principles and campaign promises, and accepting a platform for the sake of political expediency, party harmony and marginal votes.*

(Bryan pauses for a second, walks over to the left stage wall, pauses again, then looks up smiling to the audience.)

BRYAN

(punchline)

*Meeeow . . . I'll show them . . . I'll get my own radio show.*

(Bryan turns off the switch lighting the room and exits stage left.)

THE LIGHTS DIM