The Bloodhound Law

Illinois Politics and Slavery

Written and adapted

by

Kristine Thatcher

Place

St. Louis, Missouri; Alton, Illinois; Chicago, Illinois; Washington DC; Toronto, Ontario

Time

1834 to 1851.

Characters:

Actor #1 – Elijah Parrish Lovejoy, Slave Catcher 1, Representative George W. Julian, Chicago Mayor James Curtiss, George Wicks.

Actor #2 – Male, white, thirties,
Young Man #2, Owen Lovejoy, Edwin Channing Larned, Bailiff.

Actor #3 – Male, white, thirties,
Young Man #1, John Lovejoy, Justice of the Peace, Slave Catcher 2, Stephen Douglas.

Actor #4 – Male, white, late thirties,
Tim Fitts, Judge Luke Edward Lawless, Jerry Mattson, Dr. Charles Dyer.

Actor #5 – Male, white, thirties,
Frank Tarry, Daniel Mooney, Deputy George Hammond, Usher Linder, John Collins.

Actor #6 – Male, white, early to late forties
Rev. Joseph Tuchinsky, 75-cent Man, Mayor John Krum, Matthew Blake, Henry Clay, A.G. Throop, Judge Lewis C. Kerchival.

Actor #7 – Male, white, late thirties, early forties,
Senator Thomas H. Benton, Deputy William Mull, Baptist Banner Editor, Andrew Butler, Deputy Sheriff Henry Rhines.

Actor #8 – Male, black, late twenties, early thirties,
Francis McIntosh, Robert Marion, William Johnson.

Actor #9 – Male, black, mid to late thirties,
Black Man at Fire, Voice of Slave, Paul Wright, John Jones.

Note regarding the actors: When the actors are narrating, they are simply referred to by the numbers listed above. A1 through A9.

ACT I

ANGEL OF FREEDOM

(At the top of the show we hear one of the actors singing solo the beginning of the first verse of *Down in the River to Pray.* As the actor makes his entrance a second off-stage voice joins in. As the second actor makes his entrance a third voice joins in, and so on, until all the actors are assembled on stage. It will likely take three verses for the entire cast to assemble. The singing stops and the recitation begins. As it does, one actor steps aside, removes his coat, revealing sleeve garters on his shirt. He unbuttons his vest. This is all that defines him as Elijah Lovejoy.)

A2. For sale at auction – Italian clock, breakfast and card tables, sterling silverware, china place-settings, Negro girl about 14 years of age, two oriental rugs, four-poster bed, and various other sundry items.

LOVEJOY. (Lovejoy steps forward.) At present, slavery, like an incubus, is paralyzing our energies, and like a cloud of evil portent, darkening all our prospects.

A4. For sale, a likely Negro woman with six children. The woman is between thirty and thirty-five years of age, and the two oldest children, twins, are between ten and eleven years old. Apply at this office. Cash only.

LOVEJOY. In every community where slavery exists, it presses like a nightmare on the body-politic.

A3. Notice is hereby given that we will expose to the highest bidder, on Monday, the 9th of May next, at the residence of Thomas South, a likely Negro boy, named Harrison, about seven or eight years old, and a native of Missouri.

LOVEJOY. Or like the vampire, it slowly and imperceptibly sucks away the life-blood of society, leaving it faint and disheartened to stagger along.

A5. A twenty-dollar reward for the capture and return of a runaway Negro boy named Bob, about fourteen years of age. Had on a fur cap, the fur much worn off; he has four double teeth, two in the upper and two in the lower jaw, a scar on his leg. When interrogated he speaks so fast as to almost stutter.

LOVEJOY. Let it be removed, and Missouri would at once start forward in the race of improvement.

A6. A thirty dollar reward for a runaway Negro named John. He is about five feet high, well-proportioned, and has a large dent across his nose. I will give, for apprehending the above Negro, $10.00 if taken in St. Louis, $20.00 if taken in the state of Missouri, and $40.00 if taken in the state of Illinois and delivered to Mr. L. Deaver, St. Louis, or secured in any jail . . . so I can get him.

LOVEJOY. A man purchased a Negro woman who was about 24 years old and of excellent character, and married to a husband of about 28 years of age. As soon as the bargain was closed, the driver told her to start, giving her only ten minutes to prepare. She was not allowed to see her husband. She did, however, send him word that she was gone and bade him good-bye. When the poor fellow, her husband, heard the message, he seemed absolutely stunned with the most unexpected blow. He followed his poor wife to town to take a last look, but the thought of parting with her was more than he could bear, and he tried to escape. When they caught him, they first flogged him severely, but finding the wretched man not sufficiently sensitive, they took him out into the woods, and, laying him across some rails, they inflicted blows with a saw on his bare back and shoulders. The poor man was then corded to a board for the night, and the next day chained.

(The actors playing Tuchinsky, Fitts, Tarry, and Benton may add a prop or simple costume piece, as they move into place, setting up chairs or a table as needed.)

LOVEJOY. I tell you, you may bind their bodies in whatever chains you please. They have souls as precious as their masters. Though their faces are not white, their blood is as red and warm as your own.

(Lights cross-fade to Tim Fitts.)

FITTS. (With newspaper open, reading along with Lovejoy.) . . . "their blood is as red and warm as your own."
(Lights out on Lovejoy, and he exits the light.)
That's the latest outrage. Did you ever hear the like?

TUCHINSKY. Settle yourself, Tim. It's important we keep level heads.

TARRY. Reverend Tuchinsky, I have a family to protect. Yesterday, I was accosted in broad daylight, accused of funding "that misguided fanatic", and told to keep off the streets if I knew what was good for me.

FITTS. They made the same threat to my wife. To my wife!

TARRY. I know we all have an investment here, but nothing is worth the risk that this kind of editorializing poses to all of us.

TUCHINSKY. I'm telling you I know the man! I brought him into the ministry. I married he and Celia, baptized little Edward. Elijah is a passionate fellow, but don't forget that he is also a highly intelligent one. He is reasonable. If we present the situation clearly, he'll see us through. Like you, he will put the well-being of his family first.

TARRY. And if he doesn't? Then what?

(Enter Lovejoy.)

LOVEJOY. I'm sorry – sorry, Joe.

TUCHINSKY. Elijah, thank you for coming.

LOVEJOY. Sorry to keep you all waiting.

TUCHINSKY. It's all right. Have a seat, will you?

LOVEJOY. Senator Benton.

BENTON. Elijah.

LOVEJOY. I just --.

TUCHINSKY. Sit down, Elijah. (Lovejoy does.) We know you've got a paper to put to bed, so we'll just –

LOVEJOY. Yes, well --

FITTS. So, we'll just come right to the point.

LOVEJOY. (Knows what is coming.) All right.

TUCHINSKY. We're all gravely concerned, Elijah.

LOVEJOY. (Beat) With what?

FITTS. "With what?" With this, Mr. Lovejoy!
(He thrusts the paper in Lovejoy's face.)
Now, we have cautioned you before, sir. But this time, this time you've exhausted our patience. It has to stop. The mob is forming, sir, and it's not just your hide they're after. You have put at grave risk every member of your editorial board and each investor.

TUCHINSKY. Elijah, if it was only us, it might be one thing, but our families have been threatened.

BENTON. Let me wade in here, gentlemen. Do you mind?

TUCHINSKY. Senator Benton, please.

BENTON. Well, it seems to me that we're missing the main point. It isn't only about our personal safety. It's about principle. Freedom of speech does not give us the right to freely discuss the question of slavery, either orally or through the medium of the press. The St. Louis Observer cannot be used to break the laws of the land.

LOVEJOY. Break the laws?

BENTON. Slavery is too critical to the vital interest of the State of Missouri and to all the slaveholding states to be publicly discussed. You need to understand this, Elijah.

FITTS. When these abolitionists talk about the doctrine of amalgamation, it's preposterous and repugnant to a civilized man.

TUCHINSKY. Who said anything about the union of black and white! Nobody's talking about marriage between the races, Tim. Elijah certainly hasn't supported anything of the kind. You know that as well as I do.

FITTS. Give him time! When I gave my support to the paper, I had no idea he'd go right off the deep end! Who knows what he's capable of writing next week, or even tomorrow!

LOVEJOY. What is this system, Tim?

FITTS. What system?

BENTON. Elijah, you purport to be a man of religion, but you have to admit yourself, what you write goes against the grain of everything we know about scripture!

LOVEJOY. Slavery is a system of buying and selling immortal beings for the sake of gain!

BENTON. The sacred writings furnish abundant evidence of the existence of slavery from the earliest periods. Even the Patriarchs and the Prophets held slaves. Even our Savior recognized the relations between master and slave, and said nothing to denigrate it. Even he recognized it was a boon to both master and slave. Let me ask you, what happens to a free white man who falls into poverty, or illness and old age? There is nothing for him but the poor house or the streets. But the same is not true for the Negro servant. After a life time of service, his master pledges to look after him in sickness and infirmity.
.
LOVEJOY. Yet he forbids to a man and a woman the rights of husband and wife, Senator, sanctioning the dissolution of this tie when it is convenient for him! It is a system which tolerates a class of men whose professed business it is to go about from house to house, tearing husband and wife, parent and child apart, chaining the victims together, and then driving them with a whip, like so many mules, to a distant market, there to be disposed of to the highest bidder.

FITTS. They're right. He is a fanatic.

TARRY. Elijah, stop. One more editorial as radical as this, and I, for one, will vote you be summarily dismissed as editor, and there's an end to it.

FITTS. As will I. Our investment in the paper be damned! You will be silenced one way or another, sir. One way or another, there will be an end to this.

TUCHINSKY. And I shudder to think of what that end may be if you do not alter your tone, Elijah. Think of Celia, and Edward.

LOVEJOY. Joe, do you honestly think they are not in my every waking thought?

TARRY. Then how can you continue to publish the very words that will lead to their destruction?

FITTS. Mr. Lovejoy, you need to step down from your post.

LOVEJOY. I will not step down. Do what you feel you have to do, gentlemen, but no.

TARRY. That says it all. I vote we turn the press over to that fellow who owns the mortgage on it. Just give it all back to him.

BENTON. Unfortunately, Frank, I have spoken to Mr. Simons. Like most money-lenders, he has no conscience or moral fiber. He has no use for any of the equipment and he wants payment to continue in a timely fashion. If we turn the press back to him, he claims that he will just put Elijah back in charge. And there's an end to it. We tried, gentlemen, we tried.

> (The lights zero in on Tuchinsky and Lovejoy, as the other actors prepare themselves with props and costume pieces for the next scene.)

LOVEJOY. I thank you for expressing your concerns, Joe. I can assure you they are very much my concerns as well. And now, if you'll excuse me, I need to go back to work.

TUCHINSKY. God protect you, Elijah, and have mercy on us all.

> (Francis McIntosh is brought before a judge's bench. The young man is flanked on either side by deputy sheriff George Hammond and deputy constable William Mull.)

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE. Order! I will have order in this court!
(Pounding his gavel.)
You've heard the charges, Mr. McIntosh. What do you have to say for yourself?

MCINTOSH. I was just walkin' the docks, sir. I was just mindin' my own affairs.

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE. What were you doing on the docks? Do you work there?

MCINTOSH. Sir, I work as a cook on the steamer *Flora*. I was given shore leave.

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE. Where were you going?

MCINTOSH. I knew that a friend of mine had also come to shore that day, sir. She works on the *Lady Jackson*.

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE. A female friend?

MCINTOSH. Yes, sir. Miss Emmaline Corey. She works as a chambermaid on the *Lady Jackson*.

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE. So you were going to pay her a visit. What happened next?

MCINTOSH. I saw a man break out the crowd, and he come rushin' toward me, stumblin' toward me. Two men were chasin' him, and they called out for me to stop him.

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE. That would be these two gentlemen here, Deputy Hammond and Deputy Mull?

MCINTOSH. Yes, sir.

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE. And did you try to stop the man after they called to you?

MCINTOSH. No sir. I didn't know him, and I didn't want no trouble, sir.

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE. I see.

MCINTOSH. I didn't know the two gentlemen who was chasin' him, neither, so I let him pass me by.

HAMMOND. Your honor, we shouted out to him that we were officers of the law.

MCINTOSH. Sir, there was commotion. People shoutin' from all directions. I didn't hear these men say nothin' else, just yellin' "Stop the man." I told them so, after they arrest me

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE. Mr. McIntosh. The officers have both clearly stated that they called out to identify themselves, and that in spite of this, you aided the escape of a fugitive.

MCINTOSH. No, sir!

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE. You have been charged with a breach of the peace, and I hereby find you guilty. It is my order you that you be taken immediately to the city jail, to await a further ruling in this matter.

MCINTOSH. I am a free man, Judge. You have my papers before you. I am a free man!

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE. Not anymore, Mr. McIntosh. Take him away, gentleman.

(The Justice now exits to become one of the onlookers. Mull takes out a set of handcuffs.)

MULL. Give me your hands.

MCINTOSH. Mr. Hammond, sir. I'll lose my job if he locks me up. I'm a free man, sir.

HAMMOND. You heard the Justice, Mr. McIntosh. You're not free any more.

MCINTOSH. I need an attorney, sir.

HAMMOND. You're in the state of Missouri, Mr. McIntosh. I cannot help you with that.

MCINTOSH. But for a free man to be sent to jail in a slave state, it could mean a life sentence.

MULL. At least five years, I'm guessing. And, yes, after that, perhaps, enslavement. The state will deal with you as it sees fit when the time comes. There's nothing we can do about it, McIntosh. You should have thought of all that when officers of the law called out to you to stop that thieving sailor.

HAMMOND. (To Mull.) William, settle yourself and put him into the cuffs. Let's just get this done.

MCINTOSH. But, sirs, you look no more like officers of the law than I do. I just thought –

MULL. We identified ourselves, nigger. Now look, there's nothing to be done about it. (Ready with the cuffs.) Give me your hands.

(McIntosh grabs a knife that is strapped to Mull's side, and lashes out. A fight ensues before witnesses, and by its end, Hammond has been slashed. Mull wrestles the knife away from McIntosh, and onlookers help to quiet McIntosh while Mull cuffs him.)

LOVEJOY. My hand trembles as I write this. One of the most horrid, barbarous, brutal, inhuman, and outrageous deeds that ever occurred in this country took place last night in St. Louis.

(The mob drags him to a post, gather wood and strike a fire. They stand back and watch as the lights change to reflect a growing fire.)

MCINTOSH. Shoot me! Please, God, shoot me! I feel as much as any of you. Shoot me! … Someone.

(But the mob stands entranced before the fire. Mcintosh begins to sing, quietly at first. The song is *Trouble of the World*. His singing intensifies as the fires consume him, and soon he is gone.)

75 CENT MAN. Well, not much more to see. He got what was coming to him, and let it be a lesson.
(He reaches into his pocket and takes out seventy-five cents. He hands it to a young black man, who stares at him in astonishment.)
Here, boy. Seventy-five cents to keep that hell-fire going.

(The cast not involved in the following action, hum *Trouble of the World.* As the 75 cent Man turns away, the young black man, nonetheless does what he is told, adding more wood to the fire. Two young white men approach the fire.)

LOVEJOY. (Coming toward Mcintosh.) We visited the scene of the burning on the following day, about noon. We stood and gazed for a moment or two upon the blackened and mutilated trunk – for that was all that remained of McIntosh before us. Men who unchain a mob are like men who unchain the plague and pestilence. It may rid them of their enemies but it will also sweep them away in its poisonous career. And as we turned away, in bitterness of heart, praying that we might not live, two young boys approached the body.

YOUNG MAN #1. Did you ever see the like?

YOUNG MAN #2. My mama said I shouldn't be comin' down here.

YOUNG MAN #1. You always do what your mama tells you?

YOUNG MAN #2. No.

YOUNG MAN #1. Let's scrounge around for some rocks. I'll bet you I can be the first one to break open his skull.

YOUNG MAN #2. You've got yourself a bet.

(The lights go out on McIntosh. The humming stops.)

LOVEJOY. Much is said of Santa Anna's cruelty – much of the bloodthirstiness of the Russian Emperor. The Spaniards may have murdered monks by the score, the Mexicans may have shot prisoners by the dozen; but roasting alive before a slow fire is a practice nowhere except among the free, enlightened, high-minded Americans.

(Lights go out on Lovejoy, and come up on two young men, who are sweeping up broken glass in The Observer office. Paul Wright holds the dust pan, while Daniel Mooney sweeps the glass into it.)

MOONEY. First they steal the composing sticks for the press, and then they break in and scatter the type for yesterday's edition. Now, brickbats through the windows in broad daylight! What's next?

WRIGHT. I don't know. Let's just put things back together as best we can, and get back to work.

MOONEY. Paul, that brick could have hit either one of us.

WRIGHT. Elijah will be back from his retreat in Pittsburgh tomorrow. He'll know what is to be done. We just carry on the best way we can until then.

MOONEY. (Stops sweeping.) It's not worth it. I can't.

WRIGHT. Daniel, I know you're shaken. I'm shaken, too, but we just need to --

MOONEY. Are you serious? Elijah won't know "what's to be done!" He'll just put out another fiery blast of an editorial like he did with the McIntosh story. That's what started all this.

WRIGHT. And what would you have him do? Keep quiet when a St. Louis mob slowly roasts a man alive like a pig on a spit!

MOONEY. And what about that crazy Judge Lawless? That story you were working on this morning?

WRIGHT. There's a man who scrupulously lives up to his name.

MOONEY. He's made us a target, Paul!

WRIGHT. What did you expect? The man is a slaveholder.

MOONEY. I have a wife and a brand new baby daughter. Now, you've only got yourself to look out for, but I can't just stand by and –

WRIGHT. Daniel, please.

MOONEY. You're a free man, Paul. How can you, of all people, continue to place yourself in this kind of danger? Who knows what they might do to you? You might end up just like McIntosh. He was a free man, too.

WRIGHT. Let's just wait until Elijah gets home. It's one more day.

MOONEY. (Beat.) One more day, right.

WRIGHT. Please.

(Daniel considers this and then quietly nods his head, and starts to sweep.)

Now we've got a paper to press.

(Lights go out on the two young men. Lights come up on the courtroom of Judge Luke Edward Lawless,

A5. Order in the Court. All rise! The Honorable Judge Luke Edward Lawless is presiding.

LAWLESS. (Irish Brogue.) Be seated. I have given the matter of the Francis McIntosh incident my full attention, and I have reached my verdict. If the destruction of Francis McIntosh, the murderer of Deputy George Hammond, an officer of the law, whom, it has been testified here before us was an intelligent, upright man, and an excellent officer, was the act of congregated thousands, seized by an almost electric frenzy, which, in all ages and nations, has hurried on the infuriated multitude to deeds of death and destruction, then, I say, act not in the matter; the case is beyond the reach of human law.

(Lights go up in the Observer offices. Lovejoy has joined Paul and Daniel, and is quietly reading Paul's story about the judge.)

Furthermore, I have saved, thus far, Mr. Lovejoy and the Observer offices from destruction. Newspapers like the Observer fanaticize the Negro and excite him against the white man.

LOVEJOY. May I never be the master of a slave.

LAWLESS. It is all important that the Negro population should be saved from the corrupting influence to which I have called your attention. It will be asked, is there no remedy for Lovejoy's monstrous evil? I

am compelled to answer that I know of none. No law exists, that I know of, to punish the crime against the peace and rights of the people of Missouri. I am all for the freedom of the press, but I see no reason why the press should be a means of such mischief. Are we to be the victims of those sanctimonious madmen?

LOVEJOY. I had rather be chained to the same tree as McIntosh and share his fate than to accept the preposterous ideas set forth by this Judge Lawless.
WRIGHT. Judge Lawless argues for States Rights when they suit him. I always found it quite absurd that the South claims slaves as property, as in the case with a fugitive slave, but part of its human population when it comes to how many seats in Congress a slave state gets. The slave is no more than a dog in one instance, and a shining citizen in the other.

LOVEJOY. What have you got there, Daniel?

MOONEY. The Emancipator, sir.

LOVEJOY. What does it say?

MOONEY. They're in agreement with you. "So, if a few commit a crime, they can be found guilty, but if many are involved they cannot? If his doctrine is good for the criminal, why not for the judge? Why should not the "many" take the judge in hand, and "duck" or "slick" or "lynch *him*? Plainly they should."

LOVEJOY. Well, I wouldn't go that far. But it's a good thing for us that our colleagues agree with us. I know the good Judge only mentioned my name and the name of our paper, but maybe a few other editorials like this will take some of the pressure off, and they'll let us alone.

WRIGHT. That's what I'm hoping, sir.

LOVEJOY. Daniel, I've seen the concern in your face since I returned from my retreat.

MOONEY. It's not for myself, I assure you, Elijah.

LOVEJOY. Of course not. You have Mary and little Anna.

MOONEY. These people mean business, and they will do what they have in their power to silence you.

LOVEJOY. I have no power over what these men may do here. I only have the power of my own mind and convictions. And the same is true for you, Daniel. You have a decision to make, and I won't fault you, no matter what you decide.

MOONEY. For now, I'm here, sir. For now.

LOVEJOY. That's a good answer, Daniel. That's good enough for me.

(Lights go out on Lovejoy and his men, and go up Owen Lovejoy.)

OWEN LOVEJOY. Dear Brother Elijah, John and I read the news of your plight in St. Louis. We could hardly believe it! Is it true the mob was in excess of two hundred, and that they were actually beating drums when they broke down your doors? I read that they dragged as much printing equipment as they could carry to the banks of the Mississippi, and threw it in. Thank God, you and your men were not on site at the time. John and I are desperately worried about your safety, and that of Celia and Edward. We

urge you to flee Missouri in all haste. I understand you are a man of principal and courage, and that you would never back away from a fight. I well remember our childhood and how you saved me from that bullying McAvoy hulk at school. But John and I have been discussing the situation in great earnest, and we do not consider it a retreat if you simply abandon Missouri for Illinois. A free state! And only a short jaunt across the Mississippi! You may set up your presses here with us in Alton, and escape the mob violence which has befallen you there. It is such a short distance that we believe there is no chance of your losing your readership, and, in fact, we have no doubt that your base would double in no time at all among the burgeoning Whig party here in Illinois. John has worked hard for the Telegraph, and he has been assured by his employers that they will help you in every way to establish your press. They admire, as do we all, the principled intelligence and compassion, the all-out bravery with which you write. I must confess, too, Elijah, that I have a selfish motive for urging this move upon you. It would be pure delight to be able to see young Edward every day, and have him continually underfoot. As you know, I am his favorite uncle, much to John's consternation. We, John and I, anxiously await word from you. Your faithful brother, Owen.

LOVEJOY. Owen, I have shipped what remains of the press on the steamboat *Palmyra* to be warehoused until we can settle ourselves in Alton. We are ourselves set to sail on July 24th. And again, please thank John and the men at the Telegraph for all they are doing to transform The St. Louis Observer into The Alton Observer. I will be bringing my two apprentices with me, Paul Wright, a young freeman, whom I believe you met on your last visit a year ago. My other apprentice, Daniel Mooney, is new, but is willing to cross with us for the protection of his young family. Celia is aglow with anticipation of our family coming together, and little Edward chatters non-stop about Uncle Owen, the uncle who he knows will eat directly out of his hand, and spoil him shamelessly. Until then, God bless you, Owen. Elijah.

> (Lights crossfade to Owen, who is reading a draft of an editorial Elijah has written. Brother John enters.)

JOHN. Have Elijah and Celia gone to bed?

OWEN. They went up early to put Edward down, and when I hadn't heard from them for a while, I checked and Celia was asleep next to Edward, and Elijah was asleep in the arm chair next to the bed. Poor things. They're safe now, though.

JOHN. I don't know. I don't know.

OWEN. Why? What's the matter?

JOHN. I just came from the Telegraph office, and one of the reporters told me that around nine o'clock this evening a small group of men broke into the warehouse where Elijah has stored what remains of his press. They hauled it down to the river, and threw it in.

OWEN. Not again! John, this is fanatical!

JOHN. The fellow who told me suspects they were extremists who actually followed him from Missouri.

OWEN. Do you mean to say they were on the steamer with the family?

JOHN. I don't know. He only heard they were Missourians.

OWEN. One last parting shot, is that it?

JOHN. I hope so.

OWEN. Your friends at The Telegraph aren't thinking of backing out of their pledge to Elijah.

JOHN. No. They will publish until Elijah can raise the money he'll need for a new press. At least they will if they want me to continue to work for them.

OWEN. It'll be winter before that can happen, likely.

JOHN. The Telegraph will publish him until then.

OWEN. Have you seen this?

JOHN. No, what is it?

OWEN. Our dear brother dashed it off onboard ship. His first Alton editorial. Apparently he spoke in great detail with a slave in Missouri. He puts the words of the slave into a very simple context. Well here, read it for yourself.

(The slave steps forward into a light and speaks, as John reads silently.)

A9. Slavery is to have my back subjected to the cowhide or cart-whip, at the will or caprice of my master or any of his family. Every child has the right to curse or kick or cuff me. Not one cent of what I earn is or can be my own. Slavery is to depart my hut every morning, with the sickening fear that before I return at night, it will be visited by the slave-driving fiend. It is to return at night and have my worst fears realized – my first-born son, denied even the poor privilege of bidding his father farewell, is on his way, a chained and manacled victim to a distant market, where human flesh is bought and sold. Slavery is to enter my cabin and see my wife or my daughter struggling in the lustful embraces of my master, or some of his friends, without daring to attempt their rescue. . . . Should I open my lips to protest, one hundred lashes would be the consequence; and should I raise my hand to hit the brutal wretch, death would be the price.

(The light fades out on the slave.)

JOHN. God bless him, Owen. Let's hope he's safe here. Let's hope that the incident at the warehouse tonight was, as you said, a parting shot from the fine folks of Missouri.

OWEN. Illinois is a free state, and two of his kid brothers have his back now.

JOHN. Yes, they do. He does have that.

(Lights crossfade to Lovejoy on one side of the stage, and the Editor of the Baptist Banner of Louisville on the other.)

LOVEJOY. I read with interest what the editors of the Baptist Banner of Louisville, put forth from their press this past week.

EDITOR. (Southern drawl) The Abolitionists are beginning everywhere to throw off the mask, and boldly to advocate the intermarriage of whites and blacks! The union of persons that God has put asunder, as much as He has separated midnight from noonday.

LOVEJOY. (Aside.) I couldn't help myself.

(In his writing mode.)
We read most of the Abolition publications in the land, and we have never seen any such position taken by any one of them.
(Aside)
And then I couldn't stop myself.
(In his writing mode.)
But if God *has* put the black and white so far asunder, how does it happen so readily that they come together in the state where you live? Go into the streets of Louisville, where there are no Abolitionists, and tell me how many individuals among all the colored population that throng your streets you can find, whose faces shine with the pure gloss of an African complexion. Such persons are about as scarce in Alton as black swans are to the Mississippi, and we suspect the case is pretty similar in Louisville.

(Lights cross-fade to three men walking down the street plotting.)

LINDER. Lovejoy's gotten a lot of attention from the newspapers across the country.

MATTSON. And it makes the citizens of Alton look none too good, now that they've tossed out his newly-delivered third press. We have to seriously consider what we're going to do to put him to bed for good.

LINDER. As candidate for mayor, John, it is time to take a stand. Your opponent has denounced him. I suggest we get a leg up, not only on Lovejoy, but on that hornswoggler you're running against.

KRUM. And how, Usher, how do we do that?

LINDER. (Indicating Mattson) Jerry and I have been talking it through.

MATTSON. You won't have to dirty your hands, sir.

LINDER. We recruit a few of our buddies from the Gull Tavern. We've already sketched it out for them. They are willing to a man. We take Lovejoy at dusk. We tar and feather the man, and carry him through town on a rail.

MATTSON. We make him look as helpless as we can, as ludicrous as we can. He might just take off on his own after that. But if he doesn't, we have a few men with a boat ready down at the river, see, and we load that bastard, tar, feathers and all, hands and feet tied, don't you see, into the boat and just push him out into the middle of the river late at night. Who knows? Maybe a steamer will take him down in the dark.

KRUM. Good God, man. That's a rather brutal way to solve this problem. He has a wife and a child, does he not, Usher? Two brothers here in Alton. Another in Massachusetts? Doesn't one of his brothers work for the Telegraph? Surely he wouldn't abandon his family.

LINDER. Even if he does make it to shore, and if he does dare to show his face in Alton again, which I sincerely doubt, the paper will remain unpublished, maybe for days, weeks! It'll bankrupt him.

(Linder suddenly stops, for coming toward him is Elijah Lovejoy, on his way home, in a bit of a hurry, with a small package under his arm. He nods to the four men, and passes by. Linder and Mattson swing out around him and stop him in his tracks.)

LOVEJOY. Good evening, gentlemen.

KRUM. Good evening, Mr. Lovejoy. Do you by any chance remember me?

LOVEJOY. Yes, sir. I spoke to you a few weeks ago, Mr. Krum.

KRUM. Indeed. You're out late.

LOVEJOY. Yes, sir. I have just come back from conducting a marriage ceremony.

KRUM. Yes, I forget that you are also a minister. I am taken up so much by what you write in The Observer, that I forget entirely that you are also a man of God. Presbyterian, isn't it?

LOVEJOY. Yes, Mr. Krum.

KRUM. Of course.

LINDER. (Aside to Mattson and Krum.) No time like the present, is there, gentlemen?

MATTSON. I agree.

LOVEJOY. (Slightly confused, but he bids them farewell.) I wish you well in your campaign, sir, and hope our coverage of it in The Observer has been fair.

KRUM. I have no complaints thus far.

MATTSON. (Hoping for the go-ahead.) Mr. Krum, just say the word.

KRUM. Step aside, gentlemen. Let the man pass.

LINDER. (Turning casually to Krum.) This would be our chance with him, sir.

LOVEJOY. I have one request to make of you, and then you may do with me what you please. Might I ask one of your men, Mr. Krum, to take this package to my wife? I have just been to the Apothecary and this is medicine which she needs.

KRUM. No harm will come to you, Mr. Lovejoy. Not while I'm standing here. I understand you have a fourth press on its way, Mr. Lovejoy.

LOVEJOY. Delivery on the 21st of September, sir.

KRUM. I can assure you that if I am elected mayor, I will guarantee you its protection. No need to put your brothers or your friends on guard this time. I will do all in my power to protect freedom of the press. (Beat. He offers his hand.) You have my word as a gentleman.

LOVEJOY. (Taking his hand.) Thank you, sir.

KRUM. Jerry, Usher. Let the gentleman pass.
(They do. Lovejoy moves on. Krum tips his hat to Mattson and Linder.)
We will continue our conversation at a more opportune time. Good evening.
(He exits.)

MATTSON. We had the perfect opportunity. No one would have been the wiser.

LINDER. Don't underestimate Mr. Krum. He's sure to be elected mayor, and when he is, he'll take down that appalling excuse for a man, and he'll do it clean and official.

(Lights cross-fade to a town meeting.*)*

MAYOR KRUM. Mr. Lovejoy, God knows I have done all I can to help you, but, finally, it seems to me, to many of us, that you hold in contempt the feeling and sentiments of this community. Your radical public musings stir up not only the most conservative members of our community, but also its most radical. You invite the mob to our peaceful, law-abiding town.

LOVEJOY. (A young man of thirty-five, speaking passionately to his brothers and appealing to them with all honesty.) Mayor Krum, I respect and appreciate the feelings and opinions of my fellow-citizens, and it is one of the most painful and unpleasant duties of my life, that I am called upon to act in opposition to them.

MATTSON. Am I hearing correctly? You call it a "duty?"

OWEN LOVEJOY. Hear him out!

JOHN LOVEJOY. Just give him the opportunity to put his case before you.

MATTSON. I intend to hear him out, but there must be some clarification on this point. You believe, sir, it is your "duty" to create chaos? May I ask the gentleman who charged him with this "duty?"

LOVEJOY. I am governed by higher considerations than either the favor or the fear of man. I am impelled to the course I have taken, because I fear God.

(Laughter from some in the Court. Silence from others.)

MATTSON. Now, I've heard it all. Mr. Mayor, I have it on good authority that during his stint in St. Louis, a group of citizens, including the honorable Senator Thomas Benton, tried to reason with this man to no avail. The very idea that he claims to have the word of God in his ear is sacrilegious, and shows him as a most dangerous zealot. He awaits the delivery of his fourth press, when all of those around him, the community he supposedly serves, are ---

LINDER. The fact is, he's taken *delivery* of a fourth press, and it's housed at Winthrop Gilman's warehouse down by the docks. Another press, a press brought here to teach the slave rebellion, to excite the slaves to war, to preach murder in the name of religion. Society honors good order more than such a press. It sets higher value upon the lives of its citizens than upon a thousand of such presses.

MAYOR KRUM. The issue before us is simple, and it truly is this: will we allow this man to continue his publication?

LOVEJOY. It is not! You have made up a false issue, sir; it is not the business of this assembly to decide whether I shall or shall not publish a newspaper in this city. I plant myself, sir, down on my rights, and the question to be decided is, whether I shall be protected in the exercise and enjoyment of those rights; whether my property shall be protected; whether I shall be allowed to go home to my family at night without being assailed, and threatened with tar and feathers, and assassination; whether my wife, whose

life has been in jeopardy, from continued alarm and excitement, shall, night after night, be driven from a sick-bed into the garret, to save her life from the brick-brats and violence of the mobs. We have been beset night and day at Alton. I have no more claim upon the protection of any other community than I have upon this. I have If I leave here and go elsewhere, violence may overtake me in my retreat, and I have no more claim upon the protection of any other community than I have upon this. I have decided to remain here in Alton, and to insist on protection in the exercise of my rights. If you, the civil authorities refuse to protect me, I must look to God; and if I die, I have determined to make my grave in Alton.

(Lights fade on the court. Mooney and Wright are gathered around a window of the warehouse in which is housed the fourth press. Wright and Mooney are armed with pistols.

MOONEY. What did the mayor say to them? They seem to be dispersing.

WRIGHT. Not all of them. Look over by the stone fence. And there are others still in the yard beside the shoe shop.

MOONEY. I would have given odds that Mayor Krum would have gone back on his word to protect the press. I never thought he would intervene. But there he stands.

(Owen Lovejoy comes running into the room.)

OWEN. Where's Elijah?

MOONEY. He's with the others on the west side. That's where the last barrage happened. They're stacking sugar barrels in front of the doors, but the windows are all broken out, so that side is pretty vulnerable.

LOVEJOY. (Entering, he sees Owen.) Owen, what are you doing here? You should be with Celia and the children.

OWEN. John is with them, and all is quiet.

MOONEY. What's happening out there, Owen? What is the mayor saying?

OWEN. He's urging them to go home. He wants the pubs closed for the night. But he's up against that lout William Carr, who is down at the Tontine Tavern, buying rounds for anyone who will take up the fight against the Lovejoy press. Young Lyman Bishop has been shot, and nobody seems to know if it was a shot from the warehouse or if he got caught in their own cross-fire. If he dies, Elijah, the crowd will come howling back and you won't be able to stop them. Elijah, it's time to surrender the press. Your life, and the lives of these men depend on it. You know as well as I do that when the mayor departs, they will be back. You and your men don't stand a chance.

LOVEJOY. We've got the higher ground, John. I think if we can hold out until morning, things will –

OWEN. Until morning, Elijah? You think the light of day will make any difference to this mob? I saw Winthrop Gilman and Henry Tanner as I came in through the back doors. How many men do you actually have guarding the building? Five, ten?

WRIGHT. Almost thirty, sir.

MOONEY. But look out there now. They're back. They're coming back and they have reinforcements.

OWEN. Thirty against three or four hundred, Elijah? Think, brother! You haven't a chance. Give them what they want. Let me go out and speak to them, tell them they can have the press if they will allow us to leave peacefully.

LOVEJOY. I can't do that, Owen. These men have chosen to stay, but they know that they are free to go at any time, and can do so without a word from me. For myself, I will be here with my last breath if that's what it takes.

WRIGHT. They've got a ladder, Elijah. They're taking it around to the windowless side.

(Elijah disengages from John and goes to the window.)

MOONEY. What are they up to?

WRIGHT. They've got a torch, Elijah! They're going to light the roof!

LOVEJOY. We've got to get that ladder down. Stay here, Owen. Fire at their approach, boys.

(Elijah quickly exits.)

OWEN. What are you doing? Where are you going?

(Owen follows quickly after Elijah. Wright and Mooney remain at their posts watching the crowd outside the window.)

WRIGHT. Oh my God!

MOONEY. He's going to try to get around the building. He's going to try to topple the ladder!

(Wright is confused for an instant, but then chooses to follow the Lovejoys out.)

MOONEY. Paul!

(A volley of shots.)

Please, no. Please! Please, God.

(More wild shots. There are cries of exultation from the mob.)

Elijah!

(Owen and Wright return, with the wounded Lovejoy's arms around their shoulders. Wright has been hit in the leg. As the firing continues, they lay the mortally wounded, bleeding Elijah Lovejoy on the floor. The three gather around him checking his wounds, loosening his collar, whispering to him.)

(The lights shift, and the actors freeze in a tableu around Lovejoy. The other actors sing a verse of *Keep Your Hand on that Plow.* They hum it under John's speech.)

JOHN LOVEJOY. Dearest Mother, it is with a heavy heart that I write to inform you of the death of your beloved Elijah. I fear, by now, news of his demise has reached you through the press, and I so wish I could be there with you now to comfort you in your grief. It may bring solace to you to know that Elijah did not waiver in the convictions which you and father have so carefully instilled in all of us. He stood his ground over the newly-arrived fourth – yes – fourth press, mother! He had five wounds, it is true, mother, but I can tell you that that his face was in such repose that I believe that God Almighty interceded at the last. We buried him today, on this ninth of November, the day we should have celebrated his thirty-fifth birthday. Owen, Celia, Edward, the baby, and I will make our way to you in Maine as soon as Celia is recovered enough to travel. Until then, mother, hold onto this, the tribute that Mr. Beecher has said about your precious son, and my beloved brother: "His enemies have failed in their purpose and he has triumphed in his fall."

A8. Those among the murdering mob were ministers of the gospel, doctors of medicine, and many prominent businessmen of Alton. The mob leaders went to trial. It was noted, somewhat ironically, that the jury foreman had been among the crowd of murderers, and a verdict of not-guilty was delivered. All went free. No one was ever convicted.

A4. The Newark Daily Advisor. The innocent blood shed at Alton, unavenged, must remain an indelible national stain.

A6. The Philadelphia Observer. Lovejoy's death has called forth from every part of the land a burst of indignation which has not had its parallel in this country since the battle of Lexington in 1775.

A7. The New York Journal of Commerce.
The enemies of Abolition must be very stupid indeed if they expect to put down Abolition in this free country by mob violence.

A5. The Cincinnati Journal. (The humming stops.) Alton! Alton! Mobs have now made thee a by-word in the land. Thou art a polluted thing – blood is on thy garments. Liberty has found a grave in thy bosom. But hush – speak not – a mob is on the throne.

(Silence. The lights go to black. End of Act I.)

ACT II

The Bloodhound Law

(Actors gather on stage while they sing *My Immortal Home*. The actors playing John Jones, James H. Collins, Dr. Charles Dyer, Robert Marion, and Captain Matthew Blake come together. Marion carries a knife made from a scythe and a rough-looking shotgun.)

COLLINS. Charles, thank you for taking the time to see us. May I present Mr. Robert Marion. This is the young fellow I told you about.

DYER. (Taking his hand, he surprises Marion.) It's a pleasure, Robert.

COLLINS. Robert, when we heard the news of the murder of Elijah Lovejoy, Dr. Dyer here assembled several meetings of like-minded people, and created the Chicago Chapter of the Anti-Slavery Society. You could say he is the undisputed station master of the Chicago underground railroad.

(He then indicates John Jones.)

And this is one of his right-hand men, the chief conductor, you might say, John Jones.

DYER. John, I don't believe you've met Matthew Blake. He's the captain of the steamer the S.S. Illinois. Matthew, John Collins.

(They shake hands.)

BLAKE. It's a pleasure.

COLLINS. A farmer friend of Zeb Eastman's told him he first spotted this young man down by the river. This young fellow pointed that gun in his direction and scared Eastman's friend off. But the more he thought about it, the more Eastman became convinced the fellow had to be a fugitive. So he told his friend to go back down to the banks and if he could spot the young man again, to tell him he was among friends. He convinced Robert here to come along with him. They brought him to me, and I thought the wisest thing to do would be to bring him here to you.

JONES. You needn't be afraid, Robert. As you have trusted Mr. Collins here, and Mr. Eastman, you can trust in us.

MARION. Forgive me, but I've never seen a colored dressed so fine.

(Jones chuckles.)

DYER. Mr. Jones is a tailor, Robert. It's his business to look fine and dandy. What's *your* trade?

MARION. Back in Alabama, I was a blacksmith.

JONES. Good Lord! Alabama!

MARION. Yes, sir. Sweet Water.

JONES. You've come a long way, Robert. How long have you been on the road?

MARION. I'm guessing a year, most like. The hardest part was the first few days when they set the hounds on me, but I managed to outsmart 'em.

COLLINS. How on earth do you outsmart a bloodhound?

MARION. My mammy once told me a trick about putting pepper in your shoes, so's to confuse 'em, and it worked. The winter near killed me, though. Layed low durin' the day. Followed the North Star at night. Caught what game I could. Stole light bread and tarts cooling on window sills. Maybe took a jacket or two hanging on wash lines. Kept to myself and off the beaten track. Then, like Mr. Collins says, his friends come callin' for me, tellin' me to come out, not to be afraid, that I had friends. I thought I might have made it to Canada, but when I found out I hadn't, I was sure that was the end of me, once they found out I 'scaped my master. I've seen my share of runaways captured and returned to the plantation. Once you get that whip crost' your back, you're branded a troublemaker. And if they sell you off, it's always to

a devil that takes to the whip for no reason at all. Just cause he likes it. My own master was somethin' like that.

JONES. How so?

MARION. The master took a dislike to my brother, Ever. Ever wasn't afraid of nothin', and he was big and strong and handsome as you please, but the master, he took to wearin' him out with the whip. It made sense to none of us. Ever was his most valuable piece of property, but the master, he always have to have a scapegoat. I don't think the master liked the way the women-folk took to Ever, but that's just my own puzzlin'. Ever begged me to go. He tells me one night that he's lying on his death bed, and that when he does pass, the master will look to me to be the goat. I didn't want to go, but Ever and my Mammy are beggin' and pleadin'. I tell 'em no, and that's an end to it. Well, sirs, one day, in the field, after another whippin', Ever fell down and didn't get up. Master orders the rest of the hands to carry him to our hut. They did, and laid him on his bed. I come runnin' in time to see my mammy fall on him wailin'. He raises a hand and touches her face, and then he looks at me, and he doesn't say nothin', but I can see in his eyes, he's telling me to run. His prediction has come true: he's lying on his death bed. My mammy, she's not right after that. She has this faraway look, and it's like she can't hear nothin' nobody says no more. No matter what I try to do to ease her mind, all she whispers is, "Run." The mistress says my mammy is gone soft in the head, she's useless, and tells the master to trade her off for somebody who can drudge a kitchen. And sure enough, when he gets the chance, that's what the master does. Slaver passes through town, and my mammy is gone, disappeared just like that. I was in the shop when word came to me. Next thing I know master is eyeing me, pushin' me around, tellin' me my work is slapdash. First time I feel the whip, I think of how Ever took it over and over. I can't believe Ever didn't run. How could a person take the whip like that and not run? But then, deep down, I knew why he stayed. For Mammy. For me. But, see? I found myself in a more favorable position when I become the goat: I got nobody no more. So, one fine, dark night, I just . . . do what Mammy and Ever always be tellin' me to do . . . I run.

(Pause as Collins, Dyer and Jones exchange looks.)

I don't mean to trouble you, sirs. I want to thank you for bringin' me this far. I can walk to Canada for sure now, if you set me on the right path.

DYER. I have no intention of letting you walk another mile, Robert. (Turning to Blake) Canada. That's where you're headed on Thursday morning, Matt. What a coincidence.

COLLINS. Captain Blake commands a steamer called the Illinois, Ever, that runs from Chicago to Detroit. We're hoping he might take you along with him, drop you off on the Canadian side of the lake. What do you say, Captain?

BLAKE. My crew is willin' to risk it.

COLLINS. All of them?

BLAKE. I thought it would end with them, but to a man they're willin'. But it's one thing to think about doin' it, Charles, and another to actually do. I don't know how you roped me into this.

DYER. It's that flaw in your character, Matt.

BLAKE. Which flaw would that be? There are so many.

DYER. That stubborn streak of decency.

BLAKE. Yes, I must watch that. We can get him on board. I think that will be easy enough to accomplish in the dark. We make him comfortable in the hold, and that's that. But how do we justify making an unscheduled stop?

COLLINS. Engine trouble.

BLAKE. It's not just makin' the stop. We'll be hitting the Canadian side in broad daylight. How do we get him off without folks seein'?

DYER. Good question.

BLAKE. The closest we'll get to the Canadian side if we don't stray is Sarnia at the mouth of the St. Clair River. That's the place to put him down, but I don't see how to do it in broad daylight in front of fifty passengers strollin' the decks. I know, Dr. Dyer, you're accustomed to smugglin' young fellows like Robert, and I know you've got a system of hidin' 'em that works, but this is my first go and if the law catches up to me, that's time in prison.

JONES. Captain Blake, Charles doesn't have a system.

BLAKE. What do you mean?

JONES. I mean, he doesn't hide the people who come to him. They come and go from his home whenever they please and walk the streets in broad daylight.

BLAKE. (Surprised, to Dyer) That can't be.

DYER. (With a bit of a twinkle) Well, the courts say it's illegal to conceal runaways, Matt, so I don't. I pride myself on being a law-abiding, upright citizen.

JONES. People just make the assumption, I guess, that they're free men and somehow working for Dr. Dyer.

DYER. What's your point, John? You think the Captain should let Robert have the run of the boat?

JONES. Not quite. But when it's time to bring him up from the hold, you parade him in front of all your passengers.

COLLINS. John, that's not –

JONES. Hear me out. You put him on display in front of the passengers, and you proclaim him a stowaway that you've discovered in the hold. Then you curse those damned abolitionists to the high heavens. You tell them nothing makes your blood boil more than a fugitive slave sneaking aboard and putting everyone at such a terrible risk.

COLLINS. Genius.

JONES. After the show, you order your men to put him off immediately. And your men just happen to pick the Canadian side of the river to do it.

DYER. (To Blake) What do you say, Matt?

(There is a silence as they watch Blake make up his mind.)

BLAKE. What do *you* say, Mr. Marion?

MARION. (Grinning from ear to ear) I'm for it! I have never met with such kindness, sirs. Never in my life!

BLAKE. What was it you said to me Charles? When you first proposed this ridiculous idea?

DYER. I don't recall.

BLAKE. One man at a time. One at a time.

DYER. Yes, well.

BLAKE. Mr. Marion, we have a deal. Meet me on the docks, next Wednesday night. Ten o'clock.

COLLINS. Thank you, Matt.

JONES. God bless you, Matt.

DYER. We'll have him there at ten o'clock sharp, Captain.

BLAKE. I don't know how in the hell I let you talk to me into this!

MARION. (Kindly) It's that stubborn streak of decency, sir.

BLAKE. Right. Yes. I'll work on that, Mr. Marion.

(Jones turns to the audience.)

JONES. Three days before Robert Marion was to set sail with Captain Blake, Dr. Dyer sent him on an errand. He paid his guests to do such things, so that once they were safely in Canada, they'd have some money with which to make a start.

(At this point in the narration two of the actors proceed to tie up Marion.)

JONES. Word came to him that a couple of slave-catchers from Kentucky had taken Marion captive and had him tied up in Room 2 of the Mansion House Hotel over on Lake Street, just a few blocks away. There the slavers were waiting for a blacksmith to come and fit him with chains.

(The humming stops.)

Dr. Dyer set out grim-faced and resolute. He entered the hotel through the kitchen, and grabbed a butcher knife from the cook and proceeded to their quarters.

(Dyer strides to Marion and without a word quickly begins to cut the ropes.)

DYER. (To Marion) Quiet now. We're fine.

SLAVE-CATCHER 1.You can't just come in here! What in the hell do you think you're doing?

SLAVE-CATCHER 2. That's our property, Mister. We're totally within our rights to take him into our custody. We have the papers from a Kentucky magistrate to prove it.

DYER. (Brandishing the knife) You better stay back, gentlemen, I warn you. (To Marion) Are you all right?

MARION. Yes, sir. I think so.

DYER. You know where to go. I'll find you.

MARION. Yes, sir. (Marion exits. Dyer drops the knife and makes to leave, but one of the men snatches up the knife and comes at him.)

DYER. (Turning coolly to face his would-be attacker.) What's his name?

CATCHER 2. (Stopping in his tracks) What?

DYER. What is the name of the fellow who just declined your good graces? His name.

CATCHER 1. It's on the papers.

DYER. You don't know his name.

CATCHER 2. It's on the blasted papers.

CATCHER 1. His name is Lear Capps. It says so on these papers.

DYER. I am well acquainted with the young man, and that is not his name, nor is he from Kentucky. Let me see if I understand this. You came north from Kentucky searching for one Lear Capps, and when you couldn't find him, you just snatched this young boy off the street to take his place?

CATCHER 1. We got these here papers from the Kentucky magistrate that are lawful!

DYER. They're insufficient.

CATCHER 1. We've got his description right here. One of these papers here.

DYER. I don't think that will do.

CATCHER 2. We got a bill of sale!

DYER. That's not good enough.

CATCHER 1. Well, just what, if you don't mind my asking, would be good enough for you?

DYER. I would require a bill of sale from the Almighty. I don't suppose you have one of those.

> (Catcher 1 comes at him with the knife. Dyer smacks him with his hickory cane across the arm holding the knife. The cane breaks. The catcher cries out, dropping the knife and falling to the ground. Dyer snatches up the knife easily. The hurt man gawks up at Dyer but makes no further move. His partner, too, is immobilized)

DYER. (To both, tipping his hat.) Good day to you, gentlemen. Have a very pleasant trip back to Kentucky.

(He exits the light and sits on one of the bleachers. Jones steps forward.)

JONES. Word of the incident spread throughout the city. The Negro population of Chicago, as you might imagine, felt beholden to the man who risked his life to save one of our own. We decided that Dr. Dyer was lacking in only one thing.

(Robert Marion comes forward proudly, and hands Jones a brand-new gold tipped cane. They turn to Dyer, who rises.)

Dr. Dyer, on behalf of the members of the African Methodist Church, and the Negro citizens of Chicago, we are pleased to present you with this gold-tipped hickory cane for the bravery you've shown in the matter of Robert Marion.

DYER. It's beautiful, Mr. Jones. I am beholden to you and your contingent.

MARION. It's engraved, Dr. Dyer.

DYER. So, it is. So, it is. *Sic Semper Tyrranis*. "Thus to all tyrants" or as some would have it, "death to all tyrants." Isn't that what Brutus cried out as he assassinated Caesar?

JONES. It is. It's also on the Virginia Seal of the Commonwealth.

DYER. So it is! There's a picture of the goddess Virtue, spear in hand, with her foot on the throat of the tyrant, whose crown sits nearby.

JONES. Yes, sir. You may, however, be disappointed in the absolute literal translation of the phrase.

DYER. Which is?

JONES. "Get your foot off my neck."

(Dyer laughs, and claps Jones on the back. Lights shift to the office of Senator Henry Clay. Stephen A. Douglas and Andrew Butler are present with Clay. The discussion is heated.)

CLAY. It is a compromise, Andrew.

BUTLER. That's what you call it.

DOUGLAS. Certainly, an agreement in which there are mutual concessions, and a measure of mutual sacrifice for the betterment of --

BUTLER. I know what a compromise is, Senator, or what it is supposed to be! Henry, Senator Calhoun has very articulately laid down the gauntlet. What you propose here certainly doesn't take into consideration Article 4, Section 2 of the Constitution, or is it your desire to throw that out the window as well? Any person held to service or labor in one state, escaping into another shall --

DOUGLAS. Nor do you, Senator, need to explain Constitutional law to me!

BUTLER. As I look at this so-called compromise, I can't help wonder if it isn't designed simply to put even more money in northern pockets as the territories expand.

DOUGLAS. Nor is it your mission to divine our motives, Mr. Butler, and assign to us sentiments and opinions which we have never expressed, much less entertained. We indulge in no crusades against the South. Our aim is to do justice to all, to all men, to every section.

CLAY. We are prepared to fulfill all our obligations under the Constitution as it is, Andrew! Just as it is!

BUTLER. Henry, I see no evidence in this so-called "compromise" to check the growing power of the North at the expense of the South. We want our share of the territories.

DOUGLAS. What share has the South in the Territories? Or the North? None! Each state, as a member of the Union, has a right to a voice in forming the rules and regulations for the government of the territories; but the different sections – North, South, East, and West – have no such right.

BUTLER. So you say, but California shall come in free. Utah and New Mexico shall come in free. With the Missouri Compromise, it came to be a considered practice in the admission of new States, that one was admitted free, the next slave. In other words, it established a proper regard to the equilibrium of the two sections of the Senate.

DOUGLAS. I know of no such practice—no such usage.

CLAY. Andrew, it has so happened that once in a while a slave state and a free State have come into the Union at the same time; but it was the result of accident, and not to preserve equilibrium between free and slaveholding States.

DOUGLAS. The idea behind this new legislation that we propose, Mr. Butler, is "popular sovereignty." Let each new state decide for itself which domestic institutions shall be put into place. Let the people of the new States choose for themselves. You must admit that it's a far more acceptable provision than the one Mr. Wilmot has proposed, which is to ban slavery altogether in the new States.

BUTLER. The Wilmot Proviso will never pass, certainly not in the South.

CLAY. And those who understand the ramifications in the North will never let it pass either, I assure you, Andrew.

BUTLER. The "ramifications" being?

CLAY. Why, the dissolution of the Union, of course. Isn't that what Senator Calhoun continues to threaten? It's high time to forget our fears, from whatever quarter they may spring. The result of fragmenting the Union will result in hostility, and sooner or later we shall all fall victim to military despotism or foreign domination. We must hold to the Union

BUTLER. "Popular sovereignty," eh? We may consider it, Senator. But
first . . .

CLAY. Yes?

BUTLER. Article 4, Section 2. The Constitution asserts our right to our property, but its enforcement measures are undefined. Every year the South loses thousands of dollars' worth of property due to the

fanatical rants of your abolitionists, Mr. Douglas. The papers of the North openly advertise the Underground Railroad, and the lawmen of the North do nothing to stop it. Finally put some teeth in the Fugitive Slave law, and perhaps we will look with more interest on your notion of "popular sovereignty." That may, at least, put us both, North and South on level footing.

(Beat. He looks evenly at Clay.)

Henry, I can assure you that I fear as much as you do, what may result as a consequence of a split in the Union, and the creation of rival Republics. But you speak of a true compromise, and I see nothing at all in what you have proposed that benefits the South. And Mr. Douglas, you may claim all you like that neither the South nor the North can lay claim to the territories. But look to your own actions in that regard, look to the bill you have proposed, and you tell me which of us benefits more. And, with that, gentlemen, I bid you farewell.

(He starts to leave, but changes his mind. He leans across the table to Senator Douglas.)

By the way, Stephen, it has come to my attention that in private circles you are much more loquacious about the subject of slavery than you are in public.

DOUGLAS. I'm not sure what you are trying to say, Andrew.

BUTLER. It is my understanding that you confide to your inner circles that slavery is the greatest curse of our time.

DOUGLAS. Andrew, what I –

BUTLER. Very well, think so; but keep your thoughts to yourselves. If it be an evil, it is our evil; if it be a curse, it is our curse. We are not seeking to force it upon you. We intend to keep it to ourselves. If you do not want to come in contact with it, stay where you are. It will never pursue you. For myself, I regard slavery as a great moral, social, political and religious blessing – a blessing to the slave and a blessing to the master. This, too, is my opinion and, like you, I do not seek to propagate it.

(He exits. Both Clay and Douglas have been startled by this last exchange. There is silence.)

DOUGLAS. (Bursting out of his chair) It is as impossible to get a Carolinian to comprehend and appreciate the character and people and institutions of the North, as it is for an Abolitionist to understand the true condition of things in the South.

CLAY. (Thoughtfully) Stephen, at the time of the adoption of the Constitution, there were twelve slaveholding States, and only one free state. Correct?

DOUGLAS. Yes.

CLAY. As a result, one can understand the tolerance of the slave-holding states in the writing of the Constitution.

DOUGLAS. What are you driving at, Henry?

CLAY. Of those twelve states, six of them have since abolished slavery. This proves, I think, that the cause of freedom has steadily advanced, while slavery has receded in the same ratio. Now, we have a vast territory stretching from the Mississippi to the Pacific, large enough to form at least seventeen new States. More than anything we agree together that secession would mean devastation for one and all, is that right?

DOUGLAS. But if we do as he asks, how do we squelch the voices of Northern radicals? When we offered the first version of this bill, I was denounced at home in Illinois as a slavery-extensionist – a

doughface. Henry, my name was published in certain newspapers with black marks around it. But at the same time, the very measure which draws all these Northern denunciations on my head, are seen by the senators from the South as a measure of deadly hostility to southern interests.

CLAY. (Chuckling) It's a thankless pursuit, isn't it, Stephen, this politicking? But what the detractors on both sides fail to see is the future. Slavery itself is a dying industry. It's inevitable. They don't see it. Secession is the worst of all possible consequences for the Republic, and if it happens, it will lead to a civil war of unthinkable brutality. They don't see that either. But you understand both to be true. How do we hold fast to our principles and weather the storm?

DOUGLAS. Compromise.

CLAY. Precisely. . . Stephen?

DOUGLAS. Yes, sir?

CLAY. I'm sorry to trouble you, son, but it is my duty to inform you that I will not be long in the Senate.

DOUGLAS. Sir?

CLAY. Don't be coy with me, young man. You know I have been unwell for some time.

DOUGLAS, Henry, I had hoped – I mean, you seem much improved from your condition last winter.

CLAY. That is the nature of this disease of the lung. I have learned that it ebbs and flows, yet proceeds quietly and meticulously, and it ultimately prevails.

DOUGLAS. What can I do for you, Henry? Name it.

CLAY. If I am not here to help, I will need you to carry on alone, with your Illinois doughface and all. The survival of the Union depends on it. Let's take another look at the bill, and whatever we decide, you will need to take the measures of the bill apart, and introduce them, pass them, one by one, through the Senate with all the fire you can muster.

DOUGLAS. You can rely on me.

CLAY. We'll concentrate on Section 4 and the fugitive slave. Let's make sure we give Calhoun and Butler something to smile about when they face their folks back home. But let's do it without giving away the whole farm.

DOUGLAS. Yes, sir.

(Clay rises. Representative George W. Julian now stands over Douglas.)

JULIAN. Stephen, this proposed new compromise is outrageous --

CLAY. I think I'll retire now, if you don't mind.

JULIAN. We have already given up our soil as a hunting ground for the slave holders!

CLAY. We'll go at it again in the morning.

DOUGLAS. Good night, Henry.

(Clay exits. Douglas turns to Julian.)

JULIAN. It will never pass in the House. It's also not something I would expect from you –

DOUGLAS. Settle down, Mr. Julian.

JULIAN. And most especially not from Senator Clay!

DOUGLAS. Give me a chance to explain it to you.

JULIAN. No need to explain it to me. The proposal makes itself perfectly clear. The South holds three millions of its fellow beings as chattel. They deny them that principle of eternal justice – a fair day's wages for a fair day's work.

DOUGLAS. We're talking about Constitutional law, George. Article 4, Section 2.
We are talking about the 1793 Fugitive Slave Act already on the books!

JULIAN. But this – this new amendment is preposterous!
(He refers to a copy of the law that he has in his hands.)
All that is needed to make a case against the alleged fugitive is a signed affidavit stating ownership? You deny here a fugitive's right to a trial by jury, the right of Habeus Corpus, and the right to testify in his or her own defense.

DOUGLAS. The right to trial by jury can only be granted in the state from which the fugitive slave has fled. You know that, as well as I do.

JULIAN. Cases will be handled by special commissioners who will be paid five dollars if an alleged fugitive is released, and ten dollars if the fugitive is sent away with the claimant! Am I the only reasonable man left in both of the venerable houses of government?

DOUGLAS. The idea behind the compromise is to preserve the Union, which is something I believe you have said on several occasions --

JULIAN. Any citizen can be deputized on the spot to aid in the capture and arrest of an alleged fugitive slave. If said citizen refuses, he or she will be subject to a fine of five hundred dollars, and six months in prison. Any law officer caught in the act of harboring or aiding in the escape of a fugitive slave will be subject to a fine of one thousand dollars, and one year in prison! Do you seriously believe that we in the north will take this betrayal of our forefathers in the spirit of compromise?

DOUGLAS. Our forefathers guaranteed that the slave-states in this Union have the Constitutional right to hold on to their property. We are doing all we can to preserve the Union!

JULIAN. You say you want to help preserve the Union, but you may as well pour kerosene on the fires of Northern Abolitionism with this proposal, because I can tell you now that they will not, neither the radical Abolitionist, nor any Northern moderate, none will actively cooperate against the unhappy victims of your tyranny! And if Southern gentlemen mean to insist upon the passage of this law as a condition of their continuing in the Union, they may as well, in my opinion, begin to look for some way of getting out of the Union on the best terms they can! And there's an end to it!

DOUGLAS. (To the audience.) After the bills passed – oh yes, the bills passed -- I started for Chicago, and my path was lit the entire way by burning effigies, of yours truly. I had heard that the colored population of the city would be coming together to form a kind of vigilante force, and the Chicago Common Council was going to discuss the idea of nullifying the law. It was time to address their concerns head on.

(Julian exits. John Jones and Dr. Dyer come together in a back room of Quinn Chapel in Chicago.)

DYER John, listen to me. All that people seem to be able to talk about is whether or not they should flee to Canada. These are free men and women of color, John, not fugitive slaves. Scores have already simply abandoned their homes and fled.

JONES. What's your point, Charles?

(William Johnson enters.)

JOHNSON. There are more than one hundred and fifty gathered in the chapel, and the streets are thronging with more. I've got the --

DYER. I appeal to you to flee with them, John. Take Mary and the children and go. Captain Blake is prepared to --

JONES. Charles, you amaze me.

DYER. These are amazing times, John.

JONES. I thank you for your concern, but no, Charles, I won't leave now.
(Turning to Johnson.)
Let's go over the agenda one more time, William. Let's begin with you and the Correspondence Committee.

JOHNSON. The posters have been printed, and we can ask for volunteers for their distribution at the meeting tonight.

(He hands Jones and Dyer each a copy of the poster, and reads from a copy of his own.)

"Caution!! Colored people of Chicago, one and all, you are hereby respectfully advised to avoid conversing with the Police Officers of Chicago, for since a recent bill has been passed into law by the United States Congress, they are empowered to act as Kidnappers and Slave Catchers. If you value your liberty shun them in every possible manner as so many hounds on the track of the most unfortunate of your race."

JONES. It's brutal, William, but it gets to the heart of the matter. Now, I've given further thought to this Committee. It needs to reinforce the principles of freedom. We agree that a man is regarded as a man whether his face be black or white. We maintain, as did the Declaration of Independence, that *all men are created equal* in the face of the law.

DYER. We understand the principles, John, but this law clearly demonstrates our elected officials do not. The implication of this bill is to enslave every colored man in the United States, because there is nothing

in it – absolutely nothing – to protect you from a false claim. A white can take a black man –even a free black man - into custody simply by staking a claim. That is why I implore you to take Mary and --

JOHN. Charles, I know how deeply troubled you are about the new law and its possible consequences for me and my family, but I have faith that my city will not let me down.

DYER. There are many white men who speak against the new law, it's true. There are many who will even aid in the escape of the fugitive, like Mr. Collins, Captain Matthews, like you and I have done. But what white man will go to prison, what white man will lay down his life for your protection?

JONES. Charles, as long as Elijah Lovejoy lies dead in Alton, I will believe there are many others who will do just that. And if it came to that, my friend, I have a sneaking suspicion you wouldn't hesitate for an instant on my behalf.

DYER. But this law, John, this law is –

JONES. However, I realize we cannot rely solely on our white brethren. We must be active in our own defense. That is why we have formed the Vigilance Committee. We've taken into consideration the specifics of each neighborhood, and I will propose tonight that we solicit volunteers to make up a regiment of seven divisions of six men each to patrol the streets at night to keep an eye out for intruders.

DYER. Let me understand if I am hearing you correctly. You have just printed posters advising people to stay off the streets, and yet you are about to – what? – create a black regiment to patrol –

JONES. A black police force if, you will, made up of volunteers. Strictly volunteers.

(Dyer takes him in, and sinks wearily into a chair.)

DYER. We may as well burn the Declaration of Independence for all the good it's done you.

JOHNSON. Sir!

DYER. What good has it ever done for you? You are free men, William, without the right to vote, the right to bear arms, to bring suit or testify against whites, without even the right to be on the streets without written proof that you are free men. Why, even the meeting you are holding tonight puts you at risk of being beaten and jailed. If those are the restrictions of a free man of color, what chance has any poor fugitive under this outrageous new law?

JOHNSON. What has that got to do with the burning of the Declaration of Independence?

DYER. What do you mean?

JOHNSON. May I ask you a question, sir?

DYER. By all means.

JOHNSON. Let's say that some millionaire has died and afterwards it was found in his Last Will and Testament that he had bequeathed to you a legacy. And let's say the administrators of his affairs dishonored his will, and withheld the legacy from you. Now the question is this: would you, because you failed to get your rightful bequest, despair of getting it, abuse the dead man, and burn the will? No, no,

you would never do such a silly thing. You would keep the matter before the proper tribunal. You would urge your honest claim, and you would prosecute it to the last moment of your existence.

JONES. (Laughing, he puts an arm around Johnson.) William Johnson! My new right hand man, Charles.

DYER. And I can see why.

JONES. (Approaching Dyer, in a jovial mood, grabbing his shoulders.) Do not despair, Dr. Dyer, my old friend. We are ready to exclaim with Patrick Henry, "Give us liberty or give us death," and in the language of George Washington. "Resistance to tyrants is obedience to God."

DYER. Oh, I see. That's all you're going to do. Wonderful.

JONES. And we shall extend the hand of kindness and hospitality in all things necessary to every fugitive running from the Southern Prison House who may come within our reach. How does that sound to you, my friend?

DYER. I believe you have overwhelmed my argument, gentleman. And quite ably, I must say.
(He rises, resolved with them.)
I can take some of those posters, if you like.

JOHNSON. Thank you, sir. We have them at the entrance to the chapel, and you can sign up for the area in which you will distribute them.

JONES. But stay for the meeting, Charles. I think you'll find we are not the only ones who are so resolved.

DYER. I will indeed.

JONES. And you'll be at the Common Council meeting tomorrow night?

DYER. I was hoping that I would be sending you and Mary off with Captain Blake tomorrow night, but since that plan is blown to smithereens, I will be there.

JONES. It ought to be a barn-burner, Charles. And we'll see once and for all what Mayor Curtiss, and our aldermen are made of.

(Lights cross-fade to the vehement October 21st meeting of the Chicago Common Council.)

CURTISS. (Pounding his gavel) I beg the gentlemen of the Chicago Common Council to respect the order of this chamber, and refrain from anymore interruptions. Alderman Throop still has the floor.

THROOP. Thank you, sir. As I was saying, Damnation eternal to those who voted for or dodged the vote on the infamous slave bill. The men who voted for the bill are bad; the men who sneaked away to avoid the responsibility of representing their constituents are both bad and base, and are to be ranked with the traitors Benedict Arnold and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed his Lord and master for thirty pieces of silver.

If I might add a resolution, it would be this: that the Chicago Common Council recognize the portion of our citizens who have escaped from bondage, that they do become free men, and that all laws seeking to hold them in chains are founded in force and in contempt of natural rights!

(Cheers.)

CURTISS. Gentlemen, I caution against hasty action. Before we pass any sort of resolution. I think it only fair that we give a thorough hearing to our United States senator, who has only just arrived. It was you and I who sent him to Washington to represent us. We must earnestly hear him out, and therefore, I would ask that we do not stand upon the order of speakers, and immediately give the floor to the honorable Senator Stephen A. Douglas. Are there any objections?

(There are none.)

Upon hearing none, I invite Mr. Douglas to the podium.

(Douglas makes his way to the podium.)

DOUGLAS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Congress, after a protracted session of nearly two months, succeeded in passing a system of measures, which are believed to be just to all parts of the republic, and ought to be satisfactory to the people. But now, in this chamber, the people in both sections of the Union are called upon to resist the laws of the land and the authority of the Federal Government even unto death and disunion. From where did the Common Council of Chicago derive this authority? I have found no such provision in the city charter, nor am I aware that the Legislature of the Illinois is vested with the power to confer such authority. I have yet to learn that a subordinate municipal corporation is licensed to raise the standard of rebellion, and throw off the authority of the Federal Government!

I make no criticism upon the language in which you have expressed your resolutions: that is a matter of taste, and in everything of that kind I defer to the superior refinement of our City Fathers.

(He nods facetiously toward Throop.)

But it cannot be disguised that the polite epithets of traitors Benedict Arnold and Judas Iscariot, made by Mr. Throop, will be understood abroad as having direct personal application to my esteemed colleague, Senator Clay, and to me. But, the personal bearing of the resolutions is unimportant.

What is important is that the members of The Common Council of Chicago declare that a law passed by Congress ought not to be respected by any intelligent community and have called upon the citizens, officers, and police of the city to abstain from upholding it. What is this but naked, unmitigated nullification?

The law declares, and always has, that the runaway slave is a fugitive from justice. The new act neither takes away nor confers the right of trial by jury. That right exists in this country for all men, black and white, bond or free, guilty or innocent. The only question is when shall this jury trial take place? The jury trial is always had in the State from which the fugitive fled.

Please understand me: I am not speaking of the guilt or innocence of slavery. I am discussing our obligations under the Constitution of the United States. The real objection is not to the new law, nor to the old one, but to the Constitution itself. You would not care a farthing about the new law, the old law, or any other law, if there was a hole in it big enough for the fugitive to slip through and escape. The whole catalogue of objections would be moonshine if the Negro was not required to go back to his master. Frankly, is not this the true character of your objections?

(There is a general answer in the affirmative.)

We must stand by the Constitution with all its compromises, or we must abolish it and resolve each State back into its original elements. It is therefore a question of union or disunion. Are we prepared to execute honestly the compact our fathers have made for us? For my part, I am prepared to preserve inviolate the Constitution as it is with all its compromises; to stand or fall by the American Union, clinging with tenacity to all its glorious memories of the past and precious hopes for the future.

Now, if you don't mind, Mr. Curtiss, I have a series of resolutions of my own that I would like to put before you, that have more to do with our promises to and obligations under Constitutional Law, than with the specifics of the current Fugitive Slave Act.

CURTISS. Proceed, sir. We shall vote.

(Lights crossfade to Dr. Dyer, who stands holding a newspaper in his hands. Jones and Collins join Dyer in the light.)

DYER. Did you see this morning's edition of the Journal? "Last night a majority of the Chicago Common Council attempted to nullify the fugitive slave law. Then Senator Stephen Douglas arose and took the podium. He proposed his own set of resolutions. There was silence after he spoke. Each one of the Senator's proposed resolutions were quietly passed. Last night, Senator Douglas demolished the Common Council."

JONES. I knew the man could talk, but I had never seen him up close and personal. Not a single soul answered him.

COLLINS. Yes, there's no one like him, but it's not over yet. Mayor Curtiss is in the hot seat, and has asked me, through certain channels, to look into the specific legalities of the Senator's claims regarding the law.

JONES. "Certain channels." What does that mean? He didn't ask you directly to do this?

COLLINS. Certainly not. This is far too controversial for the Mayor. When the dust settles, he wants to make sure he's come down on the winning side. He's holding off until he knows for certain which side that is.

JONES. His office will be inundated today by some very important members of the community.

COLLINS. He's aware of that. He's thinking of holding an emergency meeting on Friday night at the Market House on State Street. He will entertain all comers to express opinions concerning the fugitive slave law and to hear arguments in opposition to those expressed by Senator Douglas.

JONES. Bending over backwards to make sure he has been seen to listen patiently to all sides.

DYER. You mention the senator's skills as an orator, John.

COLLINS. They are substantial.

DYER. I think I know just the man who can present the best on the other side of the question, on our side.

JONES. Who?

DYER. He's a lawyer friend of mine, Edwin Channing Larned. He serves on the board at St. Luke's.

COLLINS. I know him, too, Charles. I've seen him work his magic in the courtroom. For such a young fellow he's quite the orator. He was at the meeting last night. I saw him in the back. If we could convince him to speak at the meeting on Friday, we may just stand a chance against Senator Douglas.

DYER. I don't think it will take much. He is very much an anti-slavery advocate, and has great sympathy toward the poor. He is determined to spread his wealth around where it will do the most good.

JONES. It couldn't hurt, could it, if we paid a visit to Mr. Larned?

DYER. Not at all.

COLLINS. What are we waiting for?

(Lights fade on Collins, Jones and Dyer, and come up on Mayor Curtiss as he calls the Friday night meeting to order.)

CURTISS. The chair recognizes James H. Collins. Mr. Collins, it is my understanding you have been called upon, in your capacity as an attorney, to examine the law in questions.

COLLINS. Yes, sir. By this law the person claiming the fugitive cannot be molested by any process. The bill provides for a summary trial, and a summary trial always means a trial without jury. The commissioner is the sole judge in the case, and from his decision, however corrupt it may be, or however based on false affidavits, there is no appeal. The proceedings under the new law are also unconstitutional because the accused fugitive is not required to be present. Mr. Douglas is disingenuous, to say the least, when he expects us to believe that a slave will have any right to a jury trial when he is returned to the State from which he has escaped. A southern slave has no rights! He is chattel. Mere property! It is my opinion that Senator Douglas has done more to deaden the moral sense of the community than any one thing that has occurred within my memory. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

(Cheers, and foot-pounding from most.)

CURTISS. Thank you, Mr. Collins. I see our next speaker listed as Mr. Edwin Channing Larned. The chair recognizes Mr. Larned. Will Mr. Larned kindly step forward?

LARNED. I stand here not as a partisan or a politician, but as an American citizen speaking to an assembly of his fellow citizens to give the reasons why I condemn this law and refuse to give any aid to its enforcement. I am no friend of violence. I am no disorganizer or advocate of mob law.

Whenever a proper and constitutional law shall be passed by Congress, I shall be obliged, much as I deplore slavery in our midst, to give such a law my unequivocal support. I am not contending against the Constitution. I am contending against this law! Senator Douglas compared the runaway slave to any other fugitive from justice. A fugitive from justice is arrested and delivered up to whom? A hungry creditor, a vindicative foe, or an interested slave holder? No. Into the hands of the law. Into the keeping of the officers of the law until he is presented to the grand jury, indicted, arraigned, and tried according to the law of the land. Are there any such proceedings under this law?

No. The action of the commissioner is final: he adjudges the accused to be a slave, pronounces the sentence, inflicts the doom, turns him over to his master, and the matter is ended finally and forever. Is this the law? Is this justice? Is this the Constitution?

Mr. Douglas said that this law is no more than the law of 1793. He tells you that this bill is better than the law of 1793. Why, gentlemen, when the honorable Senator was upon this part of the argument I began to doubt if I should not go home and thank God for the great blessing vouchsafed us in this new fugitive slave law.

Yet in the sixty years in which this law has been in force our free colored brethren have been pursuing their vocations in tranquility and contentment. Now they are fleeing to Canada as fast as wind and steam can carry them. From East to West there has come one indignant burst of feeling.

Now, did you ever see such stupid people, such a nation of fools and blockheads? Why did the South want a new fugitive slave bill? Because the old law was defective, that's why!

Why should we be asked to give the institution of slavery peculiar privileges? Let the proper law be passed, giving the alleged fugitive all the safeguards and immunities provided by the common law, and I, for one, will give it my honest support. Mr. Dodge, Mr. Throop, and Mr. Collins have worked diligently in committee to amend the resolutions recently passed, and I beseech the Council to hear them, and without further ado, pass them. Mr. Collins, if you please.

CURTISS. The chair recognizes Mr. Collins.

COLLINS. (He reads.) Whereas, the fugitive slave law recently passed by Congress is revolting to our moral sense and an outrage upon our feelings of justice and humanity because it disregards all the securities which the Constitution has thrown around personal liberty. Therefore, be it resolved, that as the Supreme Court of the United States has solemnly adjudged that State officers are under no obligations to fulfil duties imposed upon them by an act of Congress, we do not, therefore, consider it our duty to counsel the city officers of the city of Chicago, to aid or assist in the arrest of fugitives from oppression, and by withholding such aid or assistance we do not believe that treason is being committed against the Government."

(Cheers! Amidst the celebration Throop rises.)

THROOP. I call for a vote on the proposed resolution, Mr. Mayor!

(Throop rises.)

DYER. I second the call.

CURTISS. May I see a show of hands? All those in favor of repealing the vote of last Wednesday, and adapting the resolution put forth by Mr. Collins and Mr. Throop, raise your hands. . . . The latest resolution passes, eleven to two.

(There are cheers, as Curtiss pounds his gavel. Lights shift to a Chicago courtroom. Present are Judge Lewis C. Kerchival, Deputy Sherriff Henry Rhines, a Southern gentleman named Gordon Wicks, William Johnson, and Kerchival's bailiff. Johnson's hands are bound behind his back.)

BAILIFF. Your honor, this case is brought forth by one George Wicks, authorized by John Medill, to retrieve and deliver up to him his fugitive slave Marcus Medill.

KERCHIVAL. Thank you, bailiff. Why are hands of the defendant bound?

BAILIFF. I thought it best for your safety, sir. The defendant has been boisterous and uncooperative.

KERCHIVAL. Indeed. Mr. Wicks, please step forward.

WICKS. Yes, sir, your honor, Judge Kerchival.

KERCHIVAL. Mr. Wicks, may I see some identification?

WICKS. Yes, sir. These are my personal papers, and this is my authorization from Mr. Medill, which includes a full and accurate description of the fugitive in question, Marcus Medill.

(He hands the documents to the judge.)

KERCHIVAL. They appear to be in order.
(He looks over at Johnson.)
Six feet tall with a protruding chin . . . scarred on the forehead, speaks in a distinctly low and measured manner.
(The description may vary depending on the actor playing Johnson.)
Mr. Medill, approach the bench.
(Johnson remains where he is.)
Bailiff, if you would?

(The bailiff brings Johnson forward.)

KERCHIVAL. Tell me your name.

JOHNSON. William Johnson. I am a free man.

KERCHIVAL. I only asked for your name. Look at me, sir. You will speak only when spoken to, and you will answer the questions I ask you with one simple answer. Is that understood?

(Johnson doesn't move or respond.)

KERCHIVAL. What is your name?

JOHNSON. William Johnson.

KERCHIVAL. Where do you live?

JOHNSON. I live here in Chicago.

KERCHIVAL. Is that so? For how long?

JOHNSON. All my life, sir. I was born here.

KERCHIVAL. Show me your papers.

JOHNSON. I cannot.

KERCHIVAL. Your freedom papers.

JOHNSON. I cannot, sir.

KERCHIVAL. Why not?

JOHNSON. Because Deputy Sherriff Rhines took them from me after I was arrested.

KERCHIVAL. Deputy Rhines? Approach.

RHINES. Yes, sir.

KERCHIVAL. Do you have the papers belonging to this man? Is he William Johnson, as he claims to be? Or is he Marcus Medill, as Mr. Wicks claims?

RHINES. I know nothing of his freedom papers. I took nothing from him. I was aiding Mr. Wicks, as the current law obliges me to do, in the capture of a fugitive slave.

JOHNSON. That's a lie!

KERCHIVAL. One of you is lying, that's for certain.

JOHNSON. Sir, I am a free man. I live at 18 West Dearborn. I am a member of the African Methodist Church. I have close friends there, including Mr. John Jones and his wife Mary, who will --

KERCHIVAL. Young man, did I ask you a question? All I said is that one of you is lying.

JOHNSON. If you will, your honor, simply give me leave to contact Mr. John Jones or Dr. Charles Dyer, I can assure you . . .

KERCHIVAL. Dr. Charles Dyer, did you say?

JOHNSON. Yes, sir! He will vouch for me. He certainly will.

RHINES. Your honor?

KERCHIVAL. Deputy Rhines?

RHINES. When Mr. Wicks and I approached the fugitive, he was in possession of a number of pamphlets. I have a copy here to present to the Court.

KERCHIVAL. Let me see it.
(Rhines brings it to the judge. Kerchival reads.)
"Caution! Colored people of Chicago, you are hereby respectfully cautioned to . . . . avoid conversing with the Police Officers of Chicago who are. . . empowered to . . . empowered to act as Kidnappers and Slave-Catchers." I see. Yes. I see. Dr. Charles Dyer, is it?

RHINES. I'm afraid so, sir.

KERCHIVAL. Engaging every fugitive he can find on the street now, is he? To defy the laws of the land. . . . I will ask you again, young man, where are your freedom papers?

JOHNSON. They are in Deputy Rhine's coat pocket, your honor. His left breast pocket!

KERCHIVAL. Deputy Rhines. Take off your coat, and turn it inside out.

RHINES. Happy to do so, Judge Kerchival.
(He does. There are no papers in his pocket.)

JOHNSON. That's where he put them, your honor. But I've been in custody for hours now. He could have done anything – anything with them. I beg you, sir, just allow me to bring witnesses, my friends, my family, my colleagues to –

KERCHIVAL. Bailiff?

(Kerchival crumbles up the flyer, and tosses it to the floor. The bailiff pulls Johnson back and forces him to sit.)

Mr. Wicks, approach the bench.

WICKS. Yes, sir.

KERCHIVAL. This Court rules that Marcus Medill the fugitive slave of John Medill, shall be given into the custody of one George Wicks, to be returned to the state of . . . Kentucky, on this day, November 14, 1850.

JOHNSON. I'm a free man! I am free!

KERCHIVAL. Bailiff, take him.

(The bailiff does.)

Mr. Wicks, you may collect him at the front desk. Thank you, Mr. Wicks. Thank you, Deputy Sherriff Rhines. You are free to go.

(Lights out on the judge, but remain on Wicks and Rhines.)

RHINES. There you have it, George. I dare say we've killed two birds with one stone. I have rid myself of one more of Dr. Dyer's agitating niggers, and you have obtained for yourself a fine specimen for your trip back to Kentucky.

WICKS. I knew I wouldn't leave here empty-handed. I always get my man, one way or another.

RHINES. It was damned lucky the physical description of the fugitive you were looking for fit this fellow so completely.

WICKS. Luck had nothing to do with it. I write up the description myself to fit the nigger I'm going to take. That's what I'm paid to do. I go among the niggers, find their marks and scars, send off my descriptions, and my southern friends have no problem finding owners. I've been tailing that boy for quite a spell. Free or fugitive, makes no difference to me or the fellows that pay me. As I like to say, the right nigger if you can catch him, but any nigger will do. But I thank you for your kind cooperation. Your authority made my job a hell of a lot easier with Judge Kerchival.

RHINES. No doubt Kerchival would have ruled in your favor without my presence, George. He's had a few run-ins with Charles Dyer, as have I.

(He chuckles.)

I couldn't believe it when the nigger brought Dyer's name up as a friend who could vouch for him. It was perfect. Did you see the look on the judge's face? That black boy sealed his own fate. Yes, sir, that's exactly what he did!

(Lights shift to Dr. Dyer and Stephen Douglas.)

DOUGLAS. I've done everything in my power to track him down, Charles. I've used every resource I have to find out where he was taken. The court records state the man who claimed him was one John

Medill of Louisville, Kentucky. He was released to one Gordon Wicks who claimed to be Medill's representative.

DYER. And?

DOUGLAS. Not only can I not find a John Medill in Kentucky, but we cannot locate a Gordon Wicks, either. He was no doubt using a false name, as so many of these slave-catcher's do. Judge Kerchival told me the young man couldn't produce his papers, and fit the description on the affidavit perfectly. He said he had no choice but to rule as he did.

DYER. And Deputy Sherriff Rhines? What does he know?

DOUGLAS. He claims to know nothing. He said the fugitive was released into the custody of a Mr. Wicks. It was all legal and proper.

DYER. Legal and proper indeed!

DOUGLAS. How are John and Mary?

DYER. They're grieving as if they lost a brother. They're inconsolable.

DOUGLAS. I'm sorry I can't do more, Charles, but I've hit a dead end with every inquiry. He's simply vanished.

DYER. This Fugitive Slave Act of yours, this Bloodhound Law –

DOUGLAS. I know what you're going to say! I've heard the arguments against this law before, but I believe it is part of a compromise that will hold this union of states together. However, no law can withstand the corruption of individuals who set out to use it to further their own ends. I am well aware of the shady reputations of both Judge Kerchival and Deputy Sherriff Henry Rhines, but I cannot prove that in this instance they used it for their own gain.

DYER. Are you that naïve, Stephen?

DOUGLAS. The fact is that William Johnson is gone. I cannot retrieve him. I have tried. This law was never meant to put free men and women at risk.

DYER. On the contrary, this law has made it doubly easy for just such a consequence to occur. Do not say, as you have done in the past, do not ever say that the City of Chicago is with you when it comes to this unconstitutional travesty. It may not have been your intention to have a free man kidnapped into slavery, but that is exactly what has happened thanks to your compromise. If you surround yourself with your usual band of Irish rowdies, and attempt to send forth their approbation as "the voice of the people of Chicago," it will not be our fault when you arouse a furious lion that cannot be tamed. And now, I will leave you to your thoughts.

> (The lights shift, and we discover Elijah Lovejoy's typesetter, Paul Wright, propped up in a chair with blankets around him. Thirteen years have passed since we last saw him. He is subject to coughing fits during the course of the following scene. Robert Marion enters.)

MARION. (Placing a hand on his should.) Mr. Wright?

(Wright rouses himself. He looks up at the younger man.)

MARION. Mr. Wright, my name is Robert Marion. Reverend Doctor Willis asked me to come and see you. How are you feeling? Are you up to conversing', because I can come back later if you're not.

WRIGHT. I'm sorry? Tell me your name again. I'm afraid I'm still in a bit of a daze.
(Wright has a coughing fit.)

MARION. I am so sorry. I can come back tomorrow, Mr. Wright.

WRIGHT. No, no please. I'll be all right. Tell me your name.

MARION. Robert Marion. The society has appointed me as your Canadian welcoming committee. I'm going to be bringin' you new clothes, and I'm gonna find you a place to stay when you're finally up and around. I heard about what happened on board the steamer. The captain ought to have known better'n to stow you next to a shipment of spirits of turpentine. I'm surprised you made it here alive.

WRIGHT. I'm much better than I was. I was bleeding from every pore.

MARION. I was told.

WRIGHT. The fresh air is doing me good, though. I'll be up and around soon, I expect.
(Coughing fit.)
Sorry. Sorry.

MARION. No need to be sorry. I don't understand why you were put in the hold. You had every right to walk among the passengers.

WRIGHT. Why is that?

MARION. Reverend Doctor Willis told me you were born a free man.

WRIGHT. I was a free man years ago in Alton, Illinois, but I was taken by a crowd of men from my place of work across the river to Missouri, where I was put on a block and sold to one Judge Luke Edward Lawless. It was his way of making all right in the eyes of God.

MARION. I don't understand. Makin' all right in the eyes of God?

WRIGHT. Judge Lawless had, what you might call, a bone to pick with my employer. It's a long story.

MARION. Who was your employer?

WRIGHT. His name was Elijah Lovejoy. He owned the Alton Observer, and I set type for him.

MARION. Elijah Lovejoy? You knew and worked for Elijah Lovejoy?

WRIGHT. Do you know of him?

MARION. You worked for the martyr Elijah Lovejoy?

WRIGHT. Side by side. Day by day, until he passed. His brother John took me over to the Alton Telegraph after that. But I had been harassed since Elijah's death for my connection to him, more than others who had a connection to him, because of my black skin. I was considered what you might call an uppity-nigger by some members of the community.

MARION. His name is one of the most revered in the Society. His brother Owen is a member of the underground. Dear God. Mr. Wright, this is truly an honor.

WRIGHT. Well, I don't know. What about you? Where did you come from?

MARION. Ran away from my master in Alabama. Made it to Chicago where I found myself face to face with Dandy John Johns and Dr. Charles Dyer, if you can believe it. They sent me up by steamer.

WRIGHT. How long have you been here?

MARION. Goin' on two years now, I reckon. Set up shop as a blacksmith, and joined the Toronto Anti-Slave Society as soon as it was formed. Figured I owed it to Dr. Dyer and Mr. Jones, and I told them so. "You carefully do the sendin' from Chicago, and I will proudly do the receivin' in Ontario."

WRIGHT. May I ask you something, Robert?

MARION. Whatever you want.

WRIGHT. How did you adjust yourself to this new country, so far away from family and friends?

MARION. I don't have family no more, so I wouldn't know about that. But I can tell you that on the day I arrived and walked about a free man, well, I don't have no words for it, but Frederick Douglass just come through here, and I heard him speak. He said something like, "I lived more in that first day of freedom than in a year of my slave life." Mr. Douglas sort of said it for me. This new country is just fine, particularly when you stop to think that the country you came from didn't want nothin' to do with who you really are. I was considered a slave, a piece of property, with no more smarts and no more rights than a pig or a mule. Just a piece of damn property. And that ain't never gonna' change in that supposed land of the free.

WRIGHT. It will. It has to. The Lovejoys, your Dr. Dyer, and Mr. Jones will change it. You heard about what the Chicago Common Council just did to the law. They turned their backs on it. Others are likely to follow.

MARION. I'm not so sure of that. What'd they go and do to your Mr. Elijah when he spoke the plain truth? No, Mr. Wright, I guarantee you that a hundred years from now, no matter how many new laws get passed, even if the slaves do get theirselves free, there's gonna be a - - what's the word for when something gets passed down from one family member to another?

WRIGHT. Legacy? A legacy?

MARION. There you go, a legacy. I'm stayin' in this here place for sure.

WRIGHT. I don't know if place has much to do with it, Robert. I don't know. Alabama, where you're from is a place, Alton, Illinois, where I'm from, just a place. Chicago, a place. And here we are in Toronto. Just a place. But slave-holding is a state of mind. It's about how people think about one another,

not where they live. You can change the setting, the place, but it's that state of mind: that's what has to change.

(Wright goes into another coughing fit. Marion puts a hand on his shoulder.)

I'm sorry, Robert, I'm sorry.

MARION. You need your rest now. We'll talk more in a while. Close your eyes, my friend, and if you don't mind, I'll sit here beside you until you sleep. Is that all right?

WRIGHT. I don't want to trouble you.

MARION. No trouble. Ain't no trouble at all. Tomorrow I'm goin' to bring you some fine new clothes, and when you're up and around, I'm going to find you a sweet, sweet place to live. You can count on it.

WRIGHT. (Closing his eyes.) Thank you, Robert.

(Marion quietly sings *I'll Fly Away.)*

(Black out. End of show.)

Down in the River to Pray

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zSif77IVQdY

As I went down to the river to pray,
Studying about that good old way
And who shall wear that starry crown,
Good Lord, show me the way.

Chorus:
Oh, brothers, let's go down, let's go down, come on down.
Oh, brothers, let's go down, down in the river to pray.

As I went down in the river to pray,
Studying about that good old way,
And who shall wear that robe and crown,
Good Lord, show me the way.

(Depending on the number of verses sung, the word "sisters" in the chorus can be substituted, with "sisters" ,"fathers", "mothers", and "sinners.")

Trouble of the World

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gNoxoUX2vqQ

Soon I will be done trouble in the world,
Trouble of the world, trouble of the world.
I soon will be done trouble of the world.
I'm going home to live with God.

No more weeping and wailing.
No more weeping and wailing.
No more weeping and wailing.
I'm going home to live with my Lord.

Wade in the Water
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W4etFQIOUpI

Chorus:
Wade in the water. Wade in the water, children.
Wade in the water. God's gonna trouble the water.

See that host all dressed in white?
God's gonna trouble the water.
The leader looks like the Israelite.
God's gonna trouble the water.

Chorus.

See that band all dressed in red?
God's gonna trouble the water.
Looks like the Band that Moses led.
God's gonna trouble the water.

Chorus.

I've you don't believe that I've been redeemed
God's gonna trouble the water.
Just follow me down to Jordan's stream.
God's gonna trouble the water.

Chorus.

Hold On (Keep Your Hand on that Plow)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TfvLZjofEXA

Oh my Lord, let me come in.
Doors are fastened and the windows pinned.
Keep your hand on that plow, and hold on.
Noah said you done lost your track,
Can't plow straight and keep loin' back.
Keep your hand on that plow and hold on.

Chorus:
Hold on. Hold on.
Keep your hand on that plow, and hold on.
Hold on. Hold on.
Keep your hand on that plow, and hold on.

Mary had a golden chain.
Every link spelled with Jesus' name.
Keep your hand on that plow, and hold on.
Hold that chain and never tire.
Every round goes higher and higher.
Keep your hand on that plow, and hold on.

Chorus.

If you wanna get to heaven, I'll tell you how.
Keep your hands on that gospel plow.
Keep your hand on that plow, and hold on.
Oh, that chain, it never tired.
Every round goes higher and higher.
Keep your hand on that plow, and hold on.

Chorus.

My Immortal Home
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l_M65lcDk6o

My latest sun is sinkin' fast.
My race is nearly run.
My strongest trials now are past.
My triumph has begun.

Chorus:
Oh, come, angel band.
Come and, around me stand.
Oh, bear me away on snow white wings
To my immortal home.
Oh, bear me away on snow white wings
To my immortal home.

Oh, bear my longin' heart to Him
Who bled and died for me,
Whose blood now cleanses from all sins,
And gives me victory.

Chorus.

I'll Fly Away
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1BPoMIQHwpo

Some bright morning when this life is over,
I'll fly away
To that home on God's celestial shore
I'll fly away.

Chorus:
I'll fly away, oh glory
I'll fly away, in the morning.
When I die, halleluiah, by and by,
I'll fly away.

When the shadows of this life have passed,
I'll fly away.

Like a bird, from these prison walls I'll fly.
I'll fly away

Chorus.

Oh, how glad and happy when we meet.
I'll fly away.
No more cold iron shackles on my feet.
I'll fly away.

Chorus.

Just a few more weary days and then,
I'll fly away.
To a land where joys will never end.
I'll fly away.

Chorus.

Turn Me Around
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n8A60qmJ8Cc
or
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uJ6mhRZ8LjM

Ain't gonna let nobody turn me around
Turn me around, turn me around.
Ain't gonna let nobody turn me around.
I'm gonna keep on walkin', keep on talkin',
Marchin' to the freedom land.

(Depending on how many verses of this song are needed or wanted, the above is pretty much it. The word "nobody" is replaced with other words in every round, and I've heard many different replacements. My favorites are "sheriff", " jailhouse", and one I made up: "bloodhound", which I think is appropriate for the play.

There's a Meeting Here Tonight
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MMoPZd-4Fq8
or
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WBo-SSVNw-g&list=RDHCzwPOx8glDtc

Chorus:
There's a meetin' here tonight.
There's a meetin' here tonight.
I can tell by your pretty little face,
There's a meetin' here tonight

I went down to the valley one day.
I went down to the valley one day.
Met old Satan on the way.
Met old Satan on the way.

What do ‘ya reckon old Satan did say?
What do ‘ya reckon old Satan did say?
He said “Turn back young man, you’re too young to pray,
To young to pray, too young to pray.

Chorus.

Satan got mad and I am glad.
Satan got mad and I am glad.
Lost a soul he thought he had.
Lost a soul he thought he had.
Satan is a liar and a conjure, too.
Satan is a liar and a conjure, too.
Better watch out brother, he’ll conjure you,
Conjure you, conjure you.

Chorus.

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