

# THE TRIAL OF AYN RAND

—————*A play*—————

William Missouri Downs

[Downs@me.com](mailto:Downs@me.com)

Agent:  
Patricia McLaughlin  
Beacon Artists Agency  
57 West 57th Street  
NYC 10019212-736-6630  
[BeaconAgency@hotmail.com](mailto:BeaconAgency@hotmail.com)

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

### **AYN RAND**

(Fiftyish)

*Author of The Fountainhead and Atlas Shrugged*

### **THE PROSECUTOR**

(Twentyish)

*A young, handsome man who will play several roles including:*

*Frank - Ayn's husband*

*Nathaniel - Ayn's young lover*

*Alan Greenspan – The Chairman of the Federal Reserve*

## TIME & PLACE

Today, a stage and theatre

## SETTING

There are lecterns on each side of the stage. Between them hangs a towering golden dollar sign, which lights up. In front of the dollar sign is a playing space.

This play should not be confined to the stage. The Prosecutor should use the entire theatre and walk amongst the audience. The lights in the auditorium should be slightly dimmed so that the audience can be included, referred to, and questioned.

## PLEASE NOTE

This would be a perfect play to use projections of Ayn's books, the real life characters in the play and locations.

### PRE SHOW - SELECTING THE JURY

In the audience, or perhaps on stage, there is a jury box or area – Eleven members of the audience will be selected before the play begins to act as a jury. Each jury member should be given voting cards for “Guilty” or “Not-Guilty.”

This play does not have a prearranged verdict and therefore there are two endings - which ending is played depends on how the jury votes (this is similar to Ayn Rand’s play *The Night of January 16<sup>th</sup>*.)

OR - If the theatre has the technology, the entire audience can serve as the jury and can text message their verdicts.

### READER’S THEATRE

This play can be staged as a play but it also lends itself well to reader’s theatre (like the play *The Exonerated*.) Perhaps the best way to stage it is half and half - the debates can be staged with lecterns and the scenes as mini-plays.

### AUDIENCE TALKBACK

This play has been deliberately kept short so that the audience has time to stay after and debate the issues.

# THE TRIAL OF AYN RAND

(Act One)

(The overture to Richard Strauss' *Thus Spake Zarathustra* rains down on the theatre. As it reaches a climax, a glimmering, floor-to-ceiling dollar sign appears.)

(Lights up on AYN RAND – She is a product of the 1980s. She has a gold dollar sign brooch pinned to her black cape and sports an out of date 1920's flapper haircut. Her eyes are like laser beams.)

(She holds up a single dollar.)

AYN

(*Russian accent - To the audience*)

I have here the most beautiful innovation the human mind has ever fashioned - A dollar bill. (*To an audience member*) Would you like to hold it?

(During the following she enters the audience and distributes dollar bills to the front row.)

AYN

The tale of Acme Birdseed Company! On the package you'll find this warning. I quote, "Use this birdseed for two months then stop for one month." Why? So the birds will learn to find food for themselves - In other words, to work towards their own *rational* self-interest. Your Government - You think they care enough to stop feeding you? No, they'll feed you until they go bust. Then what're you going to do? You'll be forced to join the big wide world without the slightest clue on how to earn your own birdseed.

(Finished handing out dollars she walks back up on stage.)

AYN

Now please hold that dollar up. Hold it high. And anyone who'd like to join us, please take a dollar out of your wallet or purse. Go ahead. Hold it up high. High above your head - like this. (*Beat*) Now repeat after me - Keep your hands up please and repeat after me: I pledge allegiance to the dollar. Everyone please. I pledge allegiance to the dollar.

AUDIENCE

I pledge allegiance to the dollar.

Of the United States of America. AYN

Of the United States of America. AUDIENCE

And to the pure, unregulated capitalism for which it stands. AYN

And to the pure, unregulated capitalism for which it stands. AUDIENCE

I am an individual. AYN

I am an individual. AUDIENCE

Free to think for myself. AYN

Free to think for myself. AUDIENCE

With reason, self-esteem, and the right to earn my own birdseed. AYN

With reason, self-esteem, and the right to earn my own birdseed. AUDIENCE

That was beautiful. Give yourself a round of applause. AYN

(The audience applauds.)

Now you didn't earn them, give my dollars back. AYN

(She rushes back into the audience and takes her money. The PROSECUTOR enters.)

Ladies and gentlemen. I'm so sorry, I was going to introduce Ms. Rand but she's started the play without me. PROSECUTOR

I was tired of waiting in your green room. They left me only stale pretzels, flat soda pop, and something called Fox News. Who is this person? Sarah Palin. AYN

She's a popular spokesperson for right wing conservative ideas. PROSECUTOR

Has she read my books? AYN

PROSECUTOR

I... sincerely doubt it.

AYN

Some moderator said she and I have a lot in common. Is that true?

PROSECUTOR

I suppose, ah, you were born in Russia, she saw it once. On that note shall we?

(They step up to their lecterns.)

AYN

Yes. May I introduce my adversary - The Prosecutor – This gentleman will be playing numerous roles tonight. What you need to know right now is that this entire evening is taking place within *his* imagination – In fact he is a recently divorced stock consultant who is currently standing in a long unemployment line in Cleveland, Ohio. Do I have that correct?

PROSECUTOR

Yes. But I'd like to add that I've never applied for unemployment in my life. This is my first time. I've always been a hard working American, with a gap-free resume until I was downsized. Although my boss didn't call it downsizing, he called it, "De-layering."

AYN

He will explain more about this later. Now you go.

PROSECUTOR

And I would like to introduce my opponent - A woman who has been called, "the high priestess of capitalism." The author of such books as The Fountainhead, The Virtue of Selfishness and one of the best selling novels of all time - Atlas Shrugged. May I have a round of applause for essayist, novelist and philosopher Ayn Rand.

(Applause.)

AYN

You're welcome.

PROSECUTOR

Ms. Rand, are you comfortable?

AYN

(*Holding up her long cigarette holder*)

May the lady have a light?

PROSECUTOR

I'm sorry, smoking is not allowed in the building.

AYN

Then I'm not comfortable.

PROSECUTOR

Ladies and gentlemen, tonight I will, through debate and a series of played out scenes, place Ms. Rand on trial--.

Who says I can't smoke?  
AYN

It's a local regulation.  
PROSECUTOR

The government has no right to limit freedoms! Including smoking.  
AYN

Ms. Rand, I have three charges against you. If the audience finds you *not* guilty on at least *two* of the three charges then you'll win the evening. If they find you guilty on at least *two* of three, then I win. Are we clear?  
PROSECUTOR

And what's at stake?  
AYN

If the audience finds you guilty I will accept my unemployment check without guilt or reservation.  
PROSECUTOR

And if I win?  
AYN

I'll step out of line. I will turn down all public assistance.  
PROSECUTOR

Not good enough. What's in it for me?  
AYN

If you win...  
PROSECUTOR

Yes?  
AYN

You can smoke.  
PROSECUTOR

Deal!  
AYN

Charge number one: Your thoughts on laissez-faire capitalism contributed to our current situation.  
PROSECUTOR

Not guilty! The only way we can promote individual freedom is to push for a system in which personal profit is glorified and unregulated.  
AYN

One of Ayn's closest friends and earliest devotees was Alan Greenspan, who served as Chairman of the Federal Reserve for nearly twenty years.  
PROSECUTOR  
(*To the audience*)

AYN

I'm proud to call Alan my friend and disciple.

PROSECUTOR

Two: That you had many interesting philosophies but that your thoughts on selfishness have been taken too far and have led to Social Darwinism.

AYN

Not guilty! You cannot take my philosophies too far.

PROSECUTOR

Three: That you failed to practice in your own personal life the philosophies you preach. And that made you a... a... How do I say this?

AYN

Are you calling me a hypocrite?

PROSECUTOR

...I guess I am.

AYN

And so my love life is to be put on trial?

PROSECUTOR

In your novels you did freely mix philosophy, economics, and sex.

AYN

A formula that works, I've sold over 40 million books.

PROSECUTOR

And you're still popular today. Recently Rush Limbaugh called Ayn Rand a "brilliant writer--."

AYN

I like him already.

PROSECUTOR

Another of the many conservative talk show hosts who praise your work is Glenn Beck. But to be honest I have a sneaking suspicion that he's never read you.

AYN

How's that?

PROSECUTOR

He's Mormon.

AYN

You're right, he couldn't have read my books.



PROSECUTOR

*(To the audience)*

Today there are millions of people, from Representative Ron Paul, to vice presidential candidate Paul Ryan, to Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas all cite Atlas Shrugged as crucial to their success. Ms. Rand's philosophies are to Fortune 500 CEO's and Wall Street warriors what Scientology is to movies stars. In addition her books helped launch the modern libertarian movement, which gave birth to everything from right wing think tanks like the Cato Institute to the Tea Party.

AYN

If you lock a dozen Tea Partiers in a room for an hour you will end up with four factions, three conspiracies, five newsletters and six splinter groups. That's a joke. *(She laughs)*

PROSECUTOR

Ms. Rand, the economic changes we are witnessing today are unprecedented. Selfishness and deregulation in the form of Reaganomics and Thatcherism has left us with a world filled with huge-multi national corporations that often pull more political power than most governments - Where laws are written to help corporations, not the shrinking unions, or the uninsured consumer. Where we've reduced government spending on education, and healthcare.

AYN

If you are given free healthcare, who pays for it? If your college degree has no cost to you, whom did it cost? Free handouts are not free and make for a weak-minded society.

PROSECUTOR

A time when real wages for the middle class, adjusted for inflation, have decreased - Where bankruptcies are up - Where fifty percent of those bankruptcies are caused because of medical bills - Where over half the students who drop out of college say they must do it because they are out of money.

AYN

I can solve all these problems – Just read my books!

PROSECUTOR

Ms. Rand, some members of the audience may not have read your books.

AYN

Then why are they here? Go, go home, read!

PROSECUTOR

For their benefit, I would like to give a quick brush up lesson on your philosophies.

AYN

I shall do it in the form of a parable. Imagine that you are an astronaut who crash-lands on a strange planet-- As I have done here. As you look out at the mysterious world that surrounds you, what questions would you ask?

PROSECUTOR

You're asking me or the audience?

AYN

You.

PROSECUTOR

Ah. Where am I?

AYN

Exactly! Second you would ask, can you understand the world in which you're trapped?

PROSECUTOR

Okay, I'll accept that.

AYN

And third?

PROSECUTOR

I might ask if there were a God.

AYN

Wrong! You would ask - *What should I do?* Audience, these three questions are the main branches of my philosophy - If you haven't considered them you're living an unexamined life. Or worse, you're a plagiarist who is living a second hand life. Many of you make the mistake of answering the first question, which was...?

PROSECUTOR

Ah... Where am I?

AYN

By saying that the world is incomprehensible. Or that it's just an illusion.

PROSECUTOR

So you disagree with Plato.

AYN

Plato was the father of Communism!

PROSECUTOR

For those in the audience who may not know Plato--.

AYN

Audience, all you need to know is that Plato caused the greatest intellectual harm that's ever been done to mankind. He said that the observable world is a mere shadow of ideal forms – which is the first step in the retardation of the mind. Reality *is* reality! This lectern exists. Say it -Your lectern exists.

PROSECUTOR

Ah...

AYN

Say it. Your lectern exists!

PROSECUTOR

My lectern exists.

AYN

Congratulations! You have taken the first step towards being a logical human being. Audience, existence exists! The next question was...?

PROSECUTOR

Ah, can I understand the world in which I'm trapped?

AYN

To this question many of you assume that the human mind is too puny to comprehend things. You're wrong. And your incorrect answer leads to a third mistake: there is nothing you can do. The correct answers are...

PROSECUTOR

Where am I?

AYN

You are in a world that exists and is governed by natural universal laws. Two:

PROSECUTOR

Can I understand this world?

AYN

Yes! Because the world follows laws, it can be rationally understood – for that you'll need reason and your power of observation. Three:

PROSECUTOR

What should I do?

AYN

The correct answer is: I must take action. And those actions must work towards my own *rational* self-interest. The result is Capitalism! I will now give the audience a moment so that they can think and see the unquestionable logic of my arguments.

PROSECUTOR

Unregulated capitalism, don't you mean? Unrestricted, laissez-faire --.

AYN

Capitalism is the only economic system that relies on reason.

PROSECUTOR

Is it reasonable to help the poor?

AYN

Not if you are forced to help. Robin Hood was the father of Communism!

PROSECUTOR

I thought Plato was.

AYN

Photo finish.

PROSECUTOR

You were an avid fighter against Communism.

AYN

Yes.

PROSECUTOR

Even supported the work of Senator Joseph McCarthy.

AYN

He was an idiot, but yes, I supported his *intentions*.

PROSECUTOR

And his assistant, Roy Cohn?

AYN

Bigger idiot.

PROSECUTOR

You attended a fundraiser to help his defense fund.

AYN

The food was terrible. You'd think an anti-communist homosexual would have better food.

PROSECUTOR

When you were called before the House Committee on Un-American Activities.

AYN

As a friendly witness!

PROSECUTOR

And yet you were born in communist Russia.

AYN

I was born Alissa Zinovievna Rosebaum. I attended Petrograd State University. When I was twelve, armed Bolsheviks raided my father's business - Seized his property

PROSECUTOR

How did you escape to the West?

AYN

I told the soviet government that I needed to go to Hollywood in order to help launch the Russian film Industry. Communists are so thickheaded they believed me.

PROSECUTOR

And Hollywood embraced you?

AYN

Are you joking? I succeed because I *selfishly* worked every day of my life for my own benefit. You and the rest of this audience have grown up in a country where things are handed to you by the welfare state. Where you think you *deserve* things. This is the problem with modern Americans - You're weak. And your children are becoming weaker!

PROSECUTOR

I've worked just as hard as you and I'm standing in an unemployment line--.

AYN

No you haven't - When I left Leningrad in 1926, I was twenty-one years old - I had nothing but a tattered suitcase and seventeen silent film scripts. Twenty years later, I was a novelist and Hollywood screenwriter living in Marlene Dietrich's former home - A beautiful glass and steel estate, with thirteen acres for Frank to raise his flowers and peacocks.

PROSECUTOR

*(To the audience)*

"Frank" is Frank O'Conner, Ayn's handsome actor husband, whom she married *shortly before her visa expired*.

AYN

*(To the audience)*

*We fell in love* when we were both low level extras in Cecil B. DeMille's silent film *The King of Kings*.

PROSECUTOR

And what is love?

AYN

Love is inspired by a deep recognition of shared values.

PROSECUTOR

You make it sound so logical.

AYN

It is.

PROSECUTOR

Is that how you captured Frank's heart - Through your shared values?

AYN

No, I tripped him.

PROSECUTOR

Excuse me.

AYN

On the set of *King of Kings*, during a crowd scene, I positioned myself precisely where I knew he'd walk past. And then I stuck my foot out.

PROSECUTOR

And that was logical?

AYN

Unquestionably logical! *(To the audience)* How many people here wish they had used an ounce of logic when they fell in love? May I see a show of hands - hands up please if you would like your son, or daughter or parents or yourself to use a tad of logic about with whom they fall in love with - hands up. *(Improvisation to prod the audience - after audience response)* Mr. Prosecutor, I rest my case.

PROSECUTOR

And so love is unemotional?

AYN

Of course there are emotions involved. Rational people always feel emotions. Perhaps even greater emotions than your lovesick romantics. I was a rational woman who was worthy of the love of a handsome actor like John Galt!

PROSECUTOR

You mean Frank O'Conner.

AYN

Excuse me?

PROSECUTOR

You said John Galt - The protagonist in your novel *Atlas Shrugged*.

AYN

Oh. Yes. I meant my husband, Frank O'Conner.

PROSECUTOR

And sex?

AYN

I'm in favor of it.

PROSECUTOR

But... How do I say this... delicately... Frank was...

AYN

A towering handsome protagonist worthy of adoration. If he had worked harder he could have been the next Gary Cooper.

PROSECUTOR

And you were... Well...

AYN

What? Say it! Less attractive? Maybe it would've been a lot easier if I were beautiful. I could have gone to Hollywood and just sat at the counter of Schwab's pharmacy on Sunset Boulevard until some infatuated producer promised me the world. No. I had to be the one. I had to trip Frank up and promise him the world. My world. The world I had to carry on my shoulders!

PROSECUTOR

So sex has nothing to do with physical attraction?

AYN

Gentlemen out there in the audience, which would you rather have, passionate sex with a dazzling gorgeous woman who is a total incompetent idiot, or passionate love-making with a... less than gorgeous woman who is competent, self-made, and not only willing to fulfill your every desire but also fully capable of dissecting Nietzsche while smoking a post-coital cigarette?

PROSECUTOR

You want a show of hands?

AYN

Yes. Those men who would rather sleep with a stunning moronic imbecilic, hands up!

(The PROSECUTOR counts.)

AYN

And those who would rather sleep with a witty woman who could light up your mind as well as your privates?

AYN

*(If the count is for intelligence)*

You are losing your case, Mr. Prosecutor.

AYN

*(If the count is for beauty)*

Quite sad. The men out there - I do not have time to tutor your ignorance.

PROSECUTOR

What about the women? Shall we poll them?

AYN

I already know the answer! *(To the audience)* Don't I ladies. Intelligence always wins with the ladies.

PROSECUTOR

That may be true of your fictional characters; I'm not so sure it's true in real life.

AYN

Who wants to read about men and women that you cannot admire. You want characters that you can look up to. We must always look up.

PROSECUTOR

But you did not just call for people to look up to your characters, but to emulate them, and condemned the readers as parasites, brutes, and looters if they didn't.

AYN

When Michelangelo was carving David he included a muscle that does not exist on the human body. A young assistant asked him why. He answered, "Nature should have included it!" The Howard Roarks, Dagny Taggart, John Galts in this world - if they do not exist then we must create them!

PROSECUTOR

*(To the audience)*

Ms. Rand is of course referring to her own characters. Howard Roark the uncompromising architect who is kicked out of design school for "drawing outside of the lines" in her novel The Fountainhead; Dagny Taggart the brilliant and I might add beautiful Vice-President of Taggart Transcontinental Railroad in Atlas Shrugged; And of course her ultimate hero John Galt, the philosopher and inventor who goes on strike in Atlas Shrugged. Ms. Rand, aren't these perfect Randian heroes rather destructive to the common person's self-esteem?

AYN

If ever there was such a thing as a common person, who would take the time to care about him?

PROSECUTOR

I don't know, other common people?

AYN

*(To the audience)*

Shortly after I arrived in Hollywood I was working in the costume department of RKO pictures, when I asked one of my *common* co-workers what she wanted from life. She told me if some people did not own an automobile but others did, she would want an automobile. If everyone had one automobile, but some had two, she would want two. And so on. I was flabbergasted by this response. She did not exist except in how others saw her. How many of you out there are just as common.

PROSECUTOR

That's why you wrote *The Fountainhead*.

AYN

My theme is implicit in the title – that man is the source of every great achievement. Note I said, “Man” not “Men” not society - Not civilization. All bright ideas in economics, science and philosophy were originally conceived by a single solitary human beings - The primary cause - The fountainhead.

PROSECUTOR

Ms. Rand, we're not all fountainheads and yet you demand that we live up to your expectations. Did you?

AYN

I practice what I preach. I'm not like one of those soap opera stars who endorses a brand of cigarettes but in real life doesn't smoke. I smoke! And so should you!

PROSECUTOR

*(To the audience)*

Audience, it is my intention to show that Ms. Rand did not live up to her characters, far from it. I would like to take you to 1951. You're living in Marlene Dietrich's former mansion in the Valley and working as a screenwriter and novelist. Your husband has stopped acting.

AYN

He's a gentleman farmer.

PROSECUTOR

Some jokingly called him Mr. Ayn Rand because he cleaned the house and cooked.

AYN

Objection! That's a lie! I insisted on making Frank dinner every night. I was a good wife.

PROSECUTOR

But you began losing faith in your handsome husband--. You even thought about divorcing him because he could not keep up with your intellect.

AYN

Nonsense! He just... sometimes... went on strike...



PROSECUTOR

It was around this time that you met a young U.C.L.A. student. He told you he had read *The Fountainhead* dozens of times. He could quote whole sections verbatim. You invited him to your home.

AYN

I invited many people to my home. All were welcome, all except those who claimed to be communists, communist sympathizers and pinkos – they were quickly shown the door.

PROSECUTOR

That first night you and the young man talked for nine and a half hours.

AYN

So what?

PROSECUTOR

He would become your lover.

AYN

Not right off the bat. First he needed to be prepped.

PROSECUTOR

How old were you?

AYN

Objection! Irrelevant!

PROSECUTOR

Ms. Rand, how old were you?

AYN

I was forty-five.

PROSECUTOR

And he?

AYN

...Nineteen.

PROSECUTOR

Over the next few years he and his girlfriend, later his wife, spent hundreds of hours talking with you.

AYN

He was the second-most intelligent human being I'd ever met.

PROSECUTOR

And the first?

AYN

Myself.

PROSECUTOR

His name was Nathan Blumenthal.

AYN

My heroes are born with down to earth names like Howard, Hank or John. Not something silly like *(spits out)* Nathan Blumenthal. No, that's not a name that's an abomination.

PROSECUTOR

He changed it for you.

AYN

Nathaniel Brandon, a hero's name.

PROSECUTOR

Just as you were falling for him, he left Hollywood. He moved to New York City to work on his master's degree in psychology at N.Y.U.

AYN

Your point?

PROSECUTOR

As he drove down your long driveway for the last time you wept. You acted like a fourteen-year-old girl.

AYN

*(Angered)*

I... *(Beat - calming)* I was in love.

PROSECUTOR

I want to take you there, to your long drive way the day Nathan--.

AYN

Nathaniel!

*(During the following the PROSECUTOR dons an apron and picks up a rose.)*

PROSECUTOR

The day that Nathaniel drove away. Your husband, Frank, tried to comfort you.

AYN

*(Agitated)*

Perhaps, I don't remember.

*(The PROSECUTOR becomes FRANK. He puts his arm around AYN. They wave goodbye to Nathaniel. A distant car horn honks goodbye. The scene becomes Ayn's driveway.)*

PROSECUTOR *(FRANK)*

Sure is a nice young man. A really, really, nice young man.

He's a genius.

AYN

I suppose.

PROSECUTOR (*FRANK*)

He accepts reason as the only guide to his actions...

AYN

Good kid. I'm gonna miss him--. Hey, did you see my roses? I got rid of the greenfly.

PROSECUTOR (*FRANK*)

(AYN tries to act interested in the rose but can't.)

Would it be too much to ask that you not just sit there when we have company. Is it possible that you might, just once in a while, attempt to match me intellectually! To be more than Mr. Ayn Rand! To use your goddamn brain! Can you take a moment away from your painting, and gardening and your stupid peacocks to say something more than, "I suppose?"

AYN

I suppo--. I'm just trying to--.

PROSECUTOR (*FRANK*)

You could've been someone. You could've been the next Gary Cooper! Had your own star on the Hollywood walk of fame. Instead you walk around this place like a ghost!

AYN

I don't want to bug you when you're writing, Ayn.

PROSECUTOR (*FRANK*)

It freaks me out. You need to wear bells or something so I can hear you coming. Can you do that for me?

AYN

You want me to wear bells?

PROSECUTOR (*FRANK*)

Tiny bells on your shoes, or wrist, something.

AYN

I suppose I could...

PROSECUTOR (*FRANK*)

(FRANKS starts away.)

I'm sorry... I didn't mean to snap.

AYN

(He gives her a little kiss on the forehead.)

FRANK

It's going to be okay--. Oh. I darn forgot to water the daisies. If I'm gonna win 'best garden' trophy, I better...

AYN

Sure.

FRANK

Love you, Kittenfluff.

AYN

Love you, Cubbyhole.

(FRANKS starts away.)

AYN

Frank... Cubbyhole... *(Beat)* I need to move to New York City, I can't finish *Atlas Shrugged* here.

PROSECUTOR *(FRANK)*

Ayn... I love this house.

AYN

You'll find a new life, away from this disgusting California sunshine. Put the house up for rent. Frank, will you do that for me?

PROSECUTOR *(FRANK)*

I suppose--. Sure, Kittenfluff.

*(Beat. The PROSECUTOR takes off Frank's apron.)*

PROSECUTOR

So you got Frank to leave his sweet peas and petunias and drive you to New York City.

*(Beat. She is alone with her thoughts for a moment.)*

PROSECUTOR

Ayn? Are you with us?

*(She pops a cigarette into her cigarette holder.)*

AYN

Light?

PROSECUTOR

So sorry but smoking is still not allowed.

AYN

All my characters smoke – at least two packs a day.

PROSECUTOR

Yes, your characters smoke like chimneys yet strangely never get cancer.

AYN

True, there is no cancer in my world, no tragic childhood memories, no venereal disease, no--.

PROSECUTOR

Alzheimer's?

AYN

Nothing to corrupt the body.

(She flicks her lighter – It doesn't work.)

PROSECUTOR

I'm sorry, Ms. Rand, but in reality it is considered impolite to smoke in public places. There are laws.

AYN

My god what has happened to you people. Audience, do you accept this? How many people would mind if I smoke. Hands please--.

PROSECUTOR

It doesn't matter how they vote.

AYN

Oh god no, don't tell me that the environmentalists have taken over.

PROSECUTOR

It's been a struggle but--. I take it you are against the environmental movement.

AYN

It is anti-industrial! They will drag us back to the Stone Age.

PROSECUTOR

You're not in favor of clean air?

AYN

The sight of a smokestack or cigarette should thrill us for they symbolize human achievement. I look forward to the day when we will be smoking on the moon!

PROSECUTOR

When you arrived in New York you formed a group of followers called "The Collective" - A close-knit band of intellectuals who built upon your philosophies.

AYN

And all of them smoked. And if they didn't I asked them to pick up the habit, for smoking symbolizes the fire of the human mind.

PROSECUTOR

Did they have to smoke? Couldn't they just light matches?

AYN

That hardly has the same effect.

PROSECUTOR

One of the members of your Collective was a young Alan Greenspan who would later become the Chairman of the Federal Reserve.

AYN

Correct.

PROSECUTOR

He became a regular. Stayed with you for over a decade.

AYN

He had a brilliant mind for economics.

PROSECUTOR

Nathaniel and his wife Barbara were also members.

AYN

They are the disciples of The Fountainhead.

PROSECUTOR

Which one of them brought you your drugs?

AYN

What are you insinuating?!

PROSECUTOR

You took amphetamines while you were writing Atlas Shrugged, am I right?

AYN

To drag the Collective into this is a crime - I got my drugs through legal means!

PROSECUTOR

How's that?

AYN

How does anyone get drugs legally - I went to my doctor.

PROSECUTOR

While on these drugs you could sometimes write days on end with little sleep.

AYN

The pressure was... Unbearable.

PROSECUTOR

That's when you began openly flirting with Nathaniel. Holding his hand - Even in front of his wife - In front of your husband.

AYN

I was highly logical about my affair.

PROSECUTOR

How's that?

I got my husband's permission. AYN

Frank gave you permission to--? PROSECUTOR

Yes. AYN

But your lover was also married. PROSECUTOR

Because of my superior power of reasoning, his wife also gave us permission. AYN

Let me get this straight, Brandon's wife gave you permission to have sex with her husband? PROSECUTOR

When the ideas were logically presented, she saw that me sleeping with her husband was perfectly rational. AYN

And in *her* self-interest? PROSECUTOR

The keystone of a Capitalist free market system is rational self-interest--. AYN

And that goes for sex too? PROSECUTOR

There are no paradoxes here, no contradictions. Everything I did was rational! AYN

Nathaniel's wife began having night sweats and panic attacks. PROSECUTOR

Objection! She understood that our love was only a natural expression of admiration. AYN

Nathaniel's master's thesis at N.Y.U. was on anxiety as a crisis of self-esteem. What do you suppose he based that on? PROSECUTOR

I'd found my soul mate! My values were Nathaniel's values! AYN

What would happen when your lover, old enough to be your son, came over? PROSECUTOR

Stimulating conversation... mostly. AYN

(Fade up on the theme music to the soap opera “Days of Our Lives.” The PROSECUTOR clips on a thin 50’s tie to play NATHANIEL. The scene is Ayn’s New York Apartment.)

TV ANNOUNCER

“Like sands through the hour glass, so are the days of our lives... This is Macdonald Carey and these are the days of our lives.”

(A doorbell.)

AYN

Who is it?

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

Nathaniel.

AYN

Wait.

(Ayn lipsticks.)

AYN

Come in.

(NATHANIEL enters. Using a 1950’s style channel changer, AYN turns down the TV.)

AYN

Hello, Nathaniel. Enter.

(He steps over and watches the hushed TV with her for a moment.)

AYN

(*Referring to soap stars on the TV*)

Her boss seduced her mother, now he wants to seduce her, even though she is pregnant with the tennis coach’s child, only the tennis coach doesn’t know yet.

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

You watch...

AYN

It amuses me to work out the plotlines before the writer’s do. Soon she will have to be killed off.

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

How could you possibly know--?

AYN

I know because she’s a terrible actress, she has to go.

(AYN turns off the television.)



PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

Who would think – The great Ayn Rand watches soap operas.

AYN

You know when we were shooting the movie version of The Fountainhead, actresses fought each other to play the part, Barbara Stanwyck, Lauren Bacall--. I wanted Greta Garbo, but she was nearly fifty and the studio said she was too old. She wasn't was she? She wasn't too old to be a lover. Right?

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

No, not at all.

AYN

In the end they gave the part to a new comer - Patricia Neal.

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

You didn't like her?

AYN

I learned to love her. But not at first, no.

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

Why not?

AYN

She had a Kentucky accent. I don't care for people with accents. (*Snuggling up to him*) You know Gary Cooper and Miss Neal took their parts into real life. Had a fling. You know you've written good stuff when the actors can't keep their paws off each other. It was more than just acting that was going on during the rape scene.

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

Rape?

AYN

Howard Roark rapes Dominique in The Fountainhead does he not?

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

I wouldn't call it rape.

AYN

(*Putting on lip stick*)

You're right, it's rape by engraved invitation! Using non-verbal techniques, she asks for it, he knows she wants it, and he gives it to her. I'm so tired of these sentimental, tepid love stories in modern movies. I want sex. Unrestricted, unregulated sex between a real man - A man who possesses a reckless fearlessness. And a woman who will fight and scratch like a cat - but when you finally possess her, there will be no one better. How sexy is that?

(Ayn crosses her legs; an attempt to look seductive. Nathan cannot quite jump to it.)

AYN

I told Frank not to come back until six. Said I'd have his dinner ready. (*Uneasy beat.*) Pot roast. (*Sexy.*) It's in the slow cooker.

(NATHANIEL looks like maybe he will make a move, but Ayn is sitting so straight in her chair he doesn't know how to begin. He looks at his sweaty palms.)

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

It's hard for me, Ayn... Even though I can rationalize it. I mean Barbara--.

AYN

You're with me, let's not think of her.

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

It's not just her - I passed Frank in the hall. The look on his--.

AYN

He always has that look. It's his 'I need a whiskey sour look' especially at 3:30 in the afternoon. It used to be around 5 but I think the long winter days...

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

Ayn, you've given me so much. You've been like a father to me.

AYN

Father?

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

I meant, Mother.

AYN

I'm not sure that's better.

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

I mean... You've... given me--.

AYN

Do you know your own nature? Do you know, Nathaniel?

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

Of course, but, perhaps I've never known love up to now - only infatuation.

AYN

(*Playing with his hair*)

Love is a conscious marriage between emotion and reason, when our premises merge with our values then, and only then, can we take the highest reward that is offered to man. Sex.

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

Mrs. Rand, you're trying to seduce me.

(*AYN kisses him.*)

AYN

I want to turn you into an animal--. (*More kissing*) Wait. My music. I must play my music.

(AYN runs over to her record player and puts on her tiddlywink music.<sup>1</sup>)

Shall we dance?  
AYN

Ah. Sure.  
PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

(They slow dance. After a moment.)  
PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

Ayn...  
AYN

Yes, my darling.  
PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

You're leading.  
AYN

Oh. Sorry.  
(AYN lets NATHANIEL lead.)

AYN  
(*Dancing in each other's arms*)  
With you I am a fourteen-year-old girl, just like I see you as my fourteen-year-old boy.  
Can you see me that way?

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)  
I'm trying.

AYN  
Dare to Cha cha?

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)  
I don't know how to--.

AYN  
Lately I've been entranced by the Cha Cha - I find it the most rational of music.

(She changes the music and takes him in her arms. He jumps.)

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)  
Ouch!

AYN  
I'm so sorry, my darling, I stuck you with my needle.

---

<sup>1</sup> Ayn enjoyed playing what she called her "tiddlywink music." Simple fun music like "The Drinking Song" from Verdi's *La Traviata*.

Needle?

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

(During the following she takes a bit of tape off her finger.)

AYN

Yes, sometimes I tape a needle to my finger so that if I lose concentration when I'm writing I can stick myself. It wakes my thoughts up. Reminds me that I'm alive. I forgot to take it off.

(She disposes of the needle.)

AYN

Enough games. Time for noisy sex.

(She leads him towards the bedroom.)

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)  
(*Reluctant*)

Ayn...

AYN

I'm going to dedicate Atlas Shrugged to you when it's published.

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)  
(*Stunned*)

Me? ...Ayn the idea of the greatest literary masterpiece ever written being... But what about Frank?

AYN

Oh. I haven't forgotten Frank, him too, but I'm declaring you my intellectual heir.

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

This is an honor - I don't know what to say.

AYN

Shhh...action, not words. Come.

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

Where?

AYN

To the bedroom - I'll kick the cats off the bed, or would you prefer to do it on my writing desk? Shall we anoint Chapter 26!

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

Ayn...

AYN

What do you need, an engraved invitation?

(THE PROSECUTOR steps away. The scene ends.)

PROSECUTOR

I think we took that far enough... Ayn... Don't you think it's rather ironic that a man who has an affair for fourteen years, whose marriage fell apart because of it, would become a marriage therapist?

AYN

His marriage had numerous problems, I had nothing to do with its demise.

PROSECUTOR

During this time your New York Collective began to take on new members. How did they feel about your affair?

AYN

No one knew about it. I swore Nathaniel, Frank, and Barbara to secrecy.

PROSECUTOR

Not even members of your inner circle.

AYN

Did you really think I was going to tell Alan Greenspan, Mr. Personality, that I was having an affair? Two thoughts that don't go together: sex and Alan Greenspan.

PROSECUTOR

It must have been an exciting time in your life. You had a kind husband to wait on your every need, and a lover half your age to take care of everything else. You were nearly finished with Atlas Shrugged and every week your hand-selected Collective came to your apartment to talk about your ideas and only your ideas.

AYN

They were nights filled with meaningful dialogue. No small talk allowed!

PROSECUTOR

Tonight's topic?

(The playing area becomes her New York City Apartment - The sound of traffic and a party. AYN sits at the center of attention. The audience becomes members of The Collective.)

AYN

Tonight dear Collective we'll be talking about the biggest mistake the Republican Party ever made!

PROSECUTOR

And what is that?

AYN

Aligning itself with religion after World War Two. By associating Christianity with the Republican Party conservatives removed the few remaining independent thinkers from their ranks. Nathaniel, your thoughts?

(The PROSECUTOR slips on Nathaniel's thin black tie.)

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIAL*)

Ayn is right. Read the constitution - Religion is a private matter. Once you associate god with a political party the end of personal freedom cannot be far away.

AYN

Bravo, Mr. Brandon! But we always seem to hear from the same people. Let's hear from some of our new members. Young man, your name?

(The PROSECUTOR slips on a bow tie and glasses and becomes a young ALAN GREENSPAN.)

PROSECUTOR (*YOUNG GREENSPAN*)

Me?

AYN

Yes, you.

PROSECUTOR (*YOUNG GREENSPAN*)

Alan Greenspan.

AYN

And what do you do Mr. Greenspan?

PROSECUTOR (*YOUNG GREENSPAN*)

I play the clarinet in a Big Band. I'm also working on a degree in economics at Columbia.

AYN

Your thoughts on the subject?

PROSECUTOR (*YOUNG GREENSPAN*)

I'm not sure--.

AYN

Then you have no right to be in my living room. State your rational opinion. (*She snaps her fingers*)

PROSECUTOR (*YOUNG GREENSPAN*)

Well, it would seem that capitalism demands factual evidence and logical proof to flourish.

AYN

And so any man who substitutes supernatural revelation for logical proof is unworthy of being a Republican. Or a Capitalist! Am I right?

PROSECUTOR (*YOUNG GREENSPAN*)

It would appear to be so.

AYN

You know who is responsible for this corruptible link between the Republican Party and Christianity? William F. Buckley and his *National Review*. Unlike him, I became an atheist when I was thirteen and I never looked back. Frank, what do you think?

(The PROSECUTOR dons an apron and Frank's wristband of bells - he enters with a small silver tray filled with cookies.)

PROSECUTOR (*FRANK*)

More cookies?

AYN

Yes, my dear husband, more cookies at this time is entirely logical. Let's all have cookies!

(During this FRANK acts as a maid offering cookies to perhaps even the audience.)

AYN

(*To the collective – the audience*)

Religion gives man permission, yes, permission to function in an irrational manner. It gives him permission to be a slave. You have one life - One short life. You want to fill it with worn out irrational thoughts so that you don't have to face choices in your life - then go ahead. But that's not living, never growing up, never experiencing the true nature of man - responsible, enlightened and in charge! That's what it means to be a man! Frank, don't forget your little Kittenfluff.

(The PROSECUTOR puts the tray down and takes off the apron. The sounds of the party fade. The PROSECUTOR becomes himself. )

AYN

What? Why're you looking at me like that? I want a cookie.

PROSECUTOR

William F. Buckley's National Review panned Atlas Shrugged when it was finally published.

AYN

He sicced one of his editorial henchmen on me.

PROSECUTOR

The reviews for Atlas Shrugged were generally...

AYN

Awful. Say it!

PROSECUTOR

You upped your dose – Dexedrine - Five milligrams now. Was that logical or emotional?

AYN

I've never had an emotion that I could not logically account for.

PROSECUTOR

During this period of your life you wept everyday - to the point that some worried about your mental health.

AYN

When you are famous there are hoards of second-raters who wish to undermine your success!

(AYN sits and plays solitaire. Soap opera music comes from the TV. The PROSECUTOR clips on a thin 50's tie to play NATHANIEL. He holds a box of fan mail and a New York Times. He knocks.)

AYN

Go away!

(He enters.)

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

Hello, Ayn.

AYN

Nathaniel, not this afternoon. I have a headache.

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

Your agent sent over another box of fan mail. The Collective answers as many as we can but...

(He puts the box of fan mail down next to her.)

AYN

Please take them and go.

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

Ayn, you haven't been out of your apartment in weeks.

AYN

I have no need for people.

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

(*Trying to cheer her up*)

You're an important American thinker - an intellectual that's recognized around the world--.

AYN

No. I am trapped in a world of mediocrity full of malice, stupidity and conspiracies against intelligence! (*Beat*) Damn I hate people who feel sorry for themselves. If they saw me like this, that would be a victory for them. God damn William F. Buckley and bring me my pills.

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

Oh, I almost forgot. There's a letter-to-the-editor in today's New York Times defending Atlas Shrugged.

AYN

Read.



PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)  
(*Reading the New York Times*)

“Atlas Shrugged is a celebration of life and happiness. Its justice is unrelenting. Creative individuals and undeviating purpose and rationality achieve joy and fulfillment. Parasites who persistently avoid either purpose or reason perish as they should.” Signed, Alan Greenspan.

An intelligent man. AYN

You’re just going to play solitaire? PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

Cancel the Collective tonight. AYN

Would sex help? PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

Not today. AYN

(*NATHANIEL starts to leave.*)

I cannot help but think... John Galt would never feel this way. AYN

You’re not one of your supermen, devoid of inner conflicts. PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

Yes I am! I am the arch-priestess of self-interest. I am immune to self-doubt. (*To herself*) At times like this I cannot help but think of my mother back in Russia. Always floating around in a communist daze, wanting, yearning, unsatisfied - and always - always – disappointed – disappointed in her ugly duckling daughter - The one that never managed to quite turn into a swan – like my sister. (*Beat.*) I wonder where they are today? Probably dead... Killed by some Nazi bomb...

Oh, that’s right. Mixed in with the fan mail is a letter from Frank’s niece – She’d like to have twenty-five dollars to buy a dress for her graduation prom. PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

Have? Did she write, “have?” AYN

Yes, “have.” PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

Give. AYN

(*NATHANIEL hands the letter to AYN – she scans it.*)

Take a memo.

AYN

(NATHANIEL pulls out a note pad and takes dictation.)

AYN

(*Dictating*)

Dear Connie, do you realize the grave seriousness of your request? Anyone who asks for money rather than earning it is a parasite and looter!

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

She's pretty young, Ayn.

AYN

(*Gaining energy*)

Take it down word for word. You must learn, *even at your tender age*, that no self-respecting, responsible person can *have* anything. Are getting it?

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

Yes.

AYN

Nor as your aunt am I obliged to *give* you anything. You need a dress for graduation. Who cares? You do. That's right. If you need it, then you must selfishly set out to do what's best for you; get a job, sell your talents, be creative, and *earn* the money!

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

Sincerely, your Aunt, Ayn Rand?

AYN

New paragraph. You do this by using your reasoning power. Your instincts can help you find a cave and huddle in it for warmth, but to do anything else mankind must use his power of reason. In order to create the wheel, perform a tonsillectomy, or procure a new dress you must use your mind! Everything must be earned! Everything!

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

Sincerely, your Aunt, Ayn Rand?

AYN

New paragraph. Those in our society who are mooching off the government, or their friends, or relatives are scum that must be defeated! This includes the college students who beg professors for a higher grade than want they earned, the elderly who want someone else to pay for their pills, the poor who have populated their ghettos with children they cannot afford to provide for! And high school seniors who want their aunt to pay for prom dress rather than earning it for themselves. Selfishness is the greatest notion humans have ever devised! It's time you become selfish! Sincerely, your Aunt, Ayn Rand.

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

Ayn, this might be a little too much--.

(She reconsiders.)

AYN

P.S. Having said this I will endeavor to send you a check for twenty-five dollars. This is not welfare – it's a loan! And you will make monthly payments until it is repaid. *(Beat)*  
P.P.S. I hope this is the beginning of a meaningful friendship between us.

PROSECUTOR *(NATHANIEL)*

We're feeling better.

AYN

My husband is out for the day. Which would you prefer the bedroom or the desk?

*(THE PROSECUTOR takes off his thin 1950's tie. The scene ends.)*

PROSECUTOR

Ayn...

AYN

Oh god, not you again.

PROSECUTOR

I want to take you to another scene.

AYN

What great humiliation do you have planned for me?

PROSECUTOR

I'd like to take you to the present. I want you to join me in Cleveland, Ohio.

AYN

In an unemployment line? With people asking for welfare! You want me to stand in line with a bunch of lazy-ass, parasitic looters like yourself! Never!

PROSECUTOR

I am hardly a looter. I was the American capitalist dream. I was the guy with the toothbrush and spare shirt in my desk ready to spend the night if necessary. I was the guy who sat next to you on the plane reading Who Moved My Cheese! To my family I was the father they never saw but still a hero because there was a flat screen T.V. in every room and a chocolate fountain at every catered birthday party. And I was laid off even though my greedy company was making a profit. I'm hardly a looter!

AYN

The last person to know that they're a looter, is a looter.

PROSECUTOR

*(Stung)*

Audience, Ms. Rand has forced me to introduce into evidence Ms. Rand's most ardent disciple - a member of her Collective's inner circle... a man who wrote, "It is precisely the 'greed' of the businessman... which is the unexcelled protector of the consumer..." A man who was the Chairman of the Federal Reserve during our great downfall – Mr. Alan Greenspan.

AYN

Give it your best shot.

PROSECUTOR  
*(To the audience)*

I will - After this brief ten-minute intermission.

*(The dollar sign fades.)*

*End of Act One*

*(Please note with cutting of a few lines this play can also be staged without an intermission.)*

## THE TRIAL OF AYN RAND

*(Act Two)*

(The dollar sign lights up like it's on the Las Vegas strip – Upbeat game show music blares. Applause.)

RECORDED ANNOUNCEMENT

It's time to play "The All-New You Bet Your Life, with Alan Greenspan." And now here is the star of the show, Alan Greenspannnnnn!

(THE PROSECUTOR enters wearing a bow tie and glasses and plays an older Alan Greenspan. He speaks into a hand held microphone.)

PROSECUTOR (*GREENSPAN*)  
*(To the audience)*

Welcome everybody! Thank you for your irrational exuberance! It's time to play "You Bet Your Life With..." with me Alan Greenspan.

(Recorded applause.)

PROSECUTOR (*GREENSPAN*)  
Here's how your game works. I will read one of my now famous economic predictions and then you must guess whether I was right or wrong. Each contestant will have five points added to their credit score for every correct answer. May I have our first contestant from the audience? Please anyone (*adlibs to get someone to stand*) Do you understand how the game works?

AUDIENCE MEMBER  
(Sure.)

PROSECUTOR (*GREENSPAN*)  
Here goes. This first quote comes from 1973. I was referring to the future of the stock market when I said (*reading off a 3x5 card*), "It's very rare that you can be as unqualified bullish as you can be right now." A prediction of a rising market in 1973 - Was I right or wrong?

AUDIENCE MEMBER  
(Right.) (Wrong.)

(Ding ding ding – game show bells ring. The dollar sign lights up.)

PROSECUTOR (*GREENSPAN*)

That is correct, I was wrong! (That is incorrect, I was wrong!) In the next two years the stock market plunged over forty percent. Next question. In 1975 I said (*reading off a 3x5 card*), “The recession is not over – the worst is yet to come.” Was I right or wrong?

AUDIENCE MEMBER

(Right.) (Wrong.)

(Ding ding ding.)

PROSECUTOR (*GREENSPAN*)

That is correct, I was wrong! (That is incorrect, I was wrong!) Following my remarks the economy quickly recovered. Here is an easy one, in the mid-nineteen nineties, I said (*reading off a 3x5 card*), “Lincoln Savings and Loan has developed a series of carefully planned, highly promising and widely diversified projects. At present there is no foreseeable risk.” Was I right or wrong?

AUDIENCE MEMBER

(Right.) (Wrong.)

(Ding ding ding.)

PROSECUTOR (*GREENSPAN*)

That is correct, I was wrong! (That is incorrect, I was wrong!) Lincoln Savings and Loan went belly up just a few months later costing American taxpayers billions. Let skip forward to the dot-com bubble of the late nineties. I said (*reading off a 3x5 card*), “There is no bubble under way because technology stock prices aren’t nearly as high as they seemed.” Right or wrong?

AUDIENCE MEMBER

(Right.) (Wrong.)

(AYN appears in the background and watches.)

(Ding ding ding.)

PROSECUTOR (*GREENSPAN*)

That is correct, I was wrong! (That is incorrect, I was wrong!) A few months later the bubble burst and the tech heavy NASDAQ lost billions. How about this one in 2004 - I confidently announced that (*reading off a 3x5 card*), “Many homeowners might save tens of thousands of dollars had they held adjustable-rate mortgages.” Hundreds of thousands of homeowners took my advice. Was I right or wrong?

AUDIENCE MEMBER

(Right.) (Wrong.)

(Ding ding ding.)

PROSECUTOR (*GREENSPAN*)

I'm seeing a pattern here. Yes, once again I blew it. As a matter of fact a few months later I began raising interest rates. I put forward seventeen interest rate hikes in the next two years, which ended up screwing everyone who had adjustable-rate mortgages.

(Bong Bong Bong! The sign lights up.)

PROSECUTOR (*GREENSPAN*)

That signal tells us that it's time for double or nothing. Here goes, in 2008 I told Congress that the risks involved in the derivative market were (*reading off a 3x5 card*), "Negligible." Think carefully. Was I right or wrong?

AUDIENCE MEMBER

(Right.) (Wrong.)

(Ding ding ding.)

PROSECUTOR (*GREENSPAN*)

That's right I was totally wrong! Congress took my advice and kept the derivative market unregulated (as it is today), which helped to cause one of the biggest economic down turns in US history. You're all winners! What has our audience won?

RECORDED ANNOUNCEMENT

Everyone wins a free Alan Greenspan app on their I-phone, courtesy of AT&T, Goldman Saks, AIG, Enron, BP, Texaco and our long-term favorite sponsor – the Federal Reserve.

PROSECUTOR (*GREENSPAN*)

Thank you for your irrational exuberance. Give yourselves a round of applause!

(Applause.)

(The show music winds down like a broken record. The lights on the dollar sign burnout.)

AYN

Are we having fun?

PROSECUTOR

(*Removing his Greenspan bow tie, and glasses*)

You okay?

AYN

No. I'm not.

PROSECUTOR

Something wrong?

AYN

During the intermission I was again backstage in your green room watching TV--.

PROSECUTOR

I'm not sure that's a good idea.

What is American Idol?  
AYN

It's a popular TV show.  
PROSECUTOR

These slack jawed, untalented shrieking contestants... I think they thought they had talent.  
AYN

Some do.  
PROSECUTOR

Not the ones I saw. *(To the audience)* What the hell is wrong with you Americans today? Are you advocating personal equality to such a level that the losers in the talent wars are not shown the door but allowed to make fools of themselves on national television?  
AYN

It's just light entertainment.  
PROSECUTOR

No, I think it is a sign of rising American mediocrity.  
AYN

*(The PROSECUTOR steps over to his lectern.)*

PROSECUTOR  
If I may remind the audience there are three charges against Ms. Rand. One: that her thoughts on laissez-faire capitalism contributed to our current economic situation. Two: that her philosophical ideas about selfishness have lead to social Darwinism. And finally that she is a hypocrite because she demanded that we live up to her ideals, but failed to do so in her own life. If the audience finds her guilty on two or more charges, I win. If she's found not guilty on two or more charges, Ms. Rand wins. Shall we continue? Our subject is Mr. Greenspan.

AYN  
He was just a social climber. He liked to be around famous people - He dated Barbara Walters for god sake!

PROSECUTOR  
He certainly borrowed your fame and economic opinions. And through him, many of your philosophies have become the unquestioned law of the land - affecting everything from the world wide economic downturn to the obesity epidemic.

Obesity?  
AYN

PROSECUTOR  
One dollar's worth of carrots contain 250 kilocalories of energy - Enough to bike roughly 5 miles.

AYN  
*(To the audience )*  
What the hell is he talking about?



PROSECUTOR

For those with money its not an issue but if you're on a budget, that same dollar, if spent on cookies instead of carrots, would give you 1200 kilocalories of energy, enough to bike nearly twenty miles.

AYN

Fat people would not be fat if they biked twenty miles!

PROSECUTOR

The point is that poor Americans can only afford junk food – food that's in abundant supply thanks to unregulated capitalism.

AYN

Ladies and gentlemen, do you want your government regulating your daily cookie intake! A show of hands please!

PROSECUTOR

*(To the audience)*

Hold on! Shouldn't the government be interested in the health of its citizens? Just because you're born into a low-income family why should you be damned to a life of ill health? Ayn, without some form of regulation there can only be a limited number of winners. What do we do with the losers?

AYN

They can choke on their goddamn cookies as far as I'm concerned. They've sinned because they have not selfishly thought of their own wellbeing.

PROSECUTOR

*(To the audience)*

Ladies and Gentlemen it isn't just obesity that's a problem. It's also our mental health. In the United States, since Atlas Shrugged was published, the rates of depression have risen sharply – much faster than in less capitalistic societies.

AYN

*(To the audience)*

The source of your distress is not Alan Greenspan, or Capitalism, or me, it's that you've allowed yourselves to become obese slaves, fulfilling someone else's dreams, not your own. Change your life!

PROSECUTOR

Most of us would like to be in charge of our lives. Most of us save for retirement and then the stock market crashes or our pension is stolen. We have the brains and talent to go to college but student loans sink us before we even start our productive lives. Unregulated capitalism is taking our power, not empowering us! And survival of the fittest guarantees that some will not survive and that greed shall inherit the earth!

AYN

What are you now, a socialist?

PROSECUTOR

I am not a socialist.

AYN

You are a cookie socialist!

PROSECUTOR

I just think that without a tad of regulation the twisted greed of Wall Street and banks will make our lives nasty, brutish, and fat!

AYN

Show of hands – How many think my opponent is a socialist? Hands please.

(She counts.)

AYN

*(If the count is that he is a socialist)*  
Comrade Prosecutor, once again  
you are losing your case.

AYN

*(If the count is that he is not socialist)*  
Quite sad. Socialism is only a dream.  
Sooner or later you will have to wake  
up to reality.

(The theme music from Johnny Carson blares.  
We are backstage at the *Tonight Show*. Ayn sits  
in front of a mirror.)

ED MCMAHON

*(V.O.)*

Live from New York, it's the Tonight Show with Johnny Carson. Tonight Johnny's  
guests are Ella Fitzgerald and Ayn Rand. And now, Heeeeerrre's Johnny!"

(During the following the muffled sounds of  
Carson doing his opening monologue is piped  
into the dressing room.)

(THE PROSECUTOR clips on his thin tie and  
becomes Nathaniel. A knock.)

AYN

Enter.

(Nathaniel enters.)

PROSECUTOR *(NATHANIEL)*

Ayn.

AYN

I hate this.

PROSECUTOR *(NATHANIEL)*

What?

AYN

Having to make an entrance.

PROSECUTOR *(NATHANIEL)*

They're going to love you.

AYN

No, they won't. I heard a recording of my voice the other day. I have a pronounced Russian accent. Why didn't you tell me I had an accent? I hate people with accents.

(She tries to comb her hair.)

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

Here, let me.

(He gently adjusts her hair. Beat.)

AYN

...I'm sorry about your divorce.

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

Me too.

AYN

She was having an affair?

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

I gave her permission. It was totally logical.

AYN

Would you like to come over tonight? Mr. Ayn Rand is now working at a little flower shop round the corner. (*To herself*) I'm going to be seen by fifty million people tonight and his only ambition is to arrange flowers...

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

Ayn... I've got something tonight.

AYN

What?

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

Something's come up.

AYN

No no no, I need you tonight. I have some new thoughts on communist propaganda. It's even coming now from Kennedy, "Ask not what your country can do for you--ask what you can do for your country." Joseph Stalin couldn't have penned a better catchphrase! (*Beat*) Then I thought we could screw.

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

Ayn--.

AYN

Isn't that what the over-sexed teenagers are calling it now, "screwing." A rather industrial word for such a non-industrial action. These hippies want the same sexual freedom as dogs.

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

Ayn, I think I've got a problem... I'm just not much in the mood of late...

AYN

...Is it my... my...

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

Age? Oh god no. Not at all. You have no equal, no matter what your age, no equal.

AYN

I was going to say my hair... But since you brought it up age...

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

Ayn, you know intellect is the greatest aphrodisiac.

AYN

True.

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

It's just that I think I might be having some sort of, I don't know... sexual freeze. Or sexual self-esteem problem. Or perhaps what I need is a woman my own age... just for a short time to... sort of... unfreeze me.

AYN

That makes no sense whatsoever. A woman closer to your age would naturally be intellectually mediocre compared to me and would, as a result, harm your mind. No, that wouldn't work at all. Am I right?

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

...You're right.

(AYN goes back to the mirror and lipsticks.)

AYN

Your friend, the part-time actress, did my makeup. What's her name?

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

She's a member of the Junior Collective - You know her name, Ayn.

AYN

Can't quite place it.

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

Patrecia.

AYN

She's a young thing.

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

Yes.

AYN

And pretty.

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

Sure, I guess.

AYN

You could never have sex with an inferior woman, could you.

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

It's just a casual friendship, Ayn...

(AYN coughs and clears her throat.)

AYN

I'm thinking about writing a movie version of Atlas Shrugged. Would you like to help?

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

I'd be honored.

AYN

Let me know what the psychologist says about your "sexual freeze." And what I can do to help.

(AYN walks into a pool of light as The Tonight Show theme blares and fades. The PROSECUTOR takes off his thin tie.)

PROSECUTOR

The Tonight Show in those days was live from New York and ninety minutes long - That night Carson cancelled the other guests and spent a full hour talking only to you.

AYN

He had me back twice more that year.

PROSECUTOR

Tom Snyder, Mike Wallace, and Phil Donahue also interviewed you. You also gave speeches at colleges and universities all over America – Even West Point. You were famous Ayn. A star.

AYN

I earned it.

PROSECUTOR

What type of questions did they ask?

(She steps up to the lectern and quickly answers his questions as if they came from a college crowd after one of her speeches.)

AYN

I was open to all questions.

PROSECUTOR

How do you feel about the Vietnam War?

AYN

It's not in line with America's rational self-interest.

The military draft? PROSECUTOR

It's a form of slavery. AYN

Labor unions? PROSECUTOR

It's criminal for anyone to be forced to join a group. AYN

Homosexuality? PROSECUTOR

Homosexuals are not rational, nor moral. AYN

Abortion? PROSECUTOR

Potential life has no right over actual life. AYN

(During the following the PROSECUTOR places a letter on a stool in front of AYN - she slowly walks up to it.)

Taxes? PROSECUTOR

No one should be forced to pay taxes. No one! Not ever! AYN

God? PROSECUTOR

Was created by humans, not the other way around. AYN

(AYN opens the letter and reads. Beat. It's a devastating letter.)

...Get him down here. Get his ass down here or I will drag him down the stairs myself! AYN  
(Beat)

(The PROSECUTOR puts on his thin tie and enters as Nathaniel. Beat.)

I have read your goddamn letter! AYN

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

I'm sorry, Ayn.

AYN

You are a filthy vagabond who has forsaken my values for those of a chorus girl!

(She slaps him.)

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

Ayn.

(Slaps him twice more.)

AYN

You're a liar! Everything you have told me is a lie! You're a bastard low life and thief! A looter! (*Reading the letter*) Four and a half years! You have been sleeping with that floozy for four and a half years! (*Holding back tears*) I am the woman of your dreams! The fact that I am sixty-three years old has nothing to do with this! Sexually frozen! (*Stopping*) Oh god, oh my god - I dedicated *Atlas Shrugged* to you - A million copies with your name in it. I will ruin you. What's that book--? That book you're writing!

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

(*Sans self-esteem*)

The Psychology of Self-Esteem--.

AYN

It was *my* recommendation that got you the publisher! You will call them first thing in the morning and tell them that you are a low life thief and cancel the contract. And if you don't I'll call them in the afternoon and tell them that you're a drug addict, a child molester, and a plagiarist. You'll become nothing more than a footnote in my life! Do you understand me, a fucking footnote! (*Beat*) Oh my god--. William F. Buckley is going to have a field day... Frank! Frank...

(THE PROSECUTOR removes the thin black tie.)

PROSECUTOR

You okay? Need a moment?

AYN

(*Calming*)

Just keep still.

PROSECUTOR

Ayn, it's only logical that he would fall for and marry a beautiful actress like Patrecia.

AYN

He's dead to me.

PROSECUTOR

You never spoke to Nathaniel again?

Never. AYN

Are you sure? PROSECUTOR

Never! AYN

(AYN sits alone.)

PROSECUTOR  
You began requiring members of your Collective to sign loyalty oaths. If they didn't spout accolades to your all-encompassing greatness they were charged with heresy and excommunicated. If they dated the wrong person they were forced to attend a kangaroo court in your living room. You even held psychotherapy sessions for those who were losing faith in your logic--.

AYN  
If my followers were going to be illogical they could not stay in a group that was dedicated to logic, that's only logical.

PROSECUTOR  
Admit it, Ayn, you demanded blind devotion. No one was allowed to think for themselves.

(During the following the PROSECUTOR puts on Frank's apron and bells.)

AYN  
There is only one loyalty oath people should take and that's to John Galt. Everyday, in every situation you ask yourself, "What would John Galt do?"

(The PROSECUTOR enters as Frank. He is an older, drained man. He wears a little bell on his wrist.)

More fan mail. PROSECUTOR (*FRANK*)

(He places a box of mail beside her.)

Will you be painting today? AYN

PROSECUTOR (*FRANK*)  
My hands hurt too much. Coffee? Or pills?

Both. AYN

(FRANK starts to leave.)



Frank... AYN

Yes, Kittenfluff. PROSECUTOR (*FRANK*)

I just want you to know that... You're my rock... You've always been there for me...  
And I appreciate it. AYN

I know. PROSECUTOR (*FRANK*)

What I'm trying to say is... I know I've disappointed you... on rare occasion...  
(But that's all she can say. She kisses his hands.  
FRANK gives a faded smile and starts to leave.)

Here, kitty, kitty. PROSECUTOR (*FRANK*)  
(*Looking around for the cat*)

I thought you were going to make me coffee. AYN

Oh, right. PROSECUTOR (*FRANK*)

The kitchen is the other way. AYN

I was just... (*Confused.*) I was... Wait, you got this too. PROSECUTOR (*FRANK*)

Not another letter from Nathaniel. AYN

No, it's from your sister. PROSECUTOR (*FRANK*)  
(Stunned, AYN grabs the letter and reads.  
FRANK exits, the PROSECUTOR takes off the  
apron and bells.)

She's alive! I thought for sure she hadn't survived the war – She was in Leningrad for  
god sake! I hadn't heard from her in almost 30 years... And she has received permission  
to come out from behind the iron curtain to visit America. Can you believe it! AYN  
(*Speed reading the letter*)

But the moment she stepped off the boat you knew something was wrong. PROSECUTOR

AYN  
(*Lying*)

No. Everything was fine.

PROSECUTOR

You tried to impress her by taking her to The Statue of Liberty, and the Empire State Building.

AYN  
(*Breaking in to honesty*)

I even took her to the Russian Tea Room... Did I really think 53 different flavors of vodka was going to change her mind about capitalism. She had that look, the same disdainful look of my mother had when she saw something too grand.... Now it was on my poor little sister's face... And then she committed the greatest sin of all.

PROSECUTOR

She defined communism?

AYN

She criticized my books. We quarreled. On the last day, before sailing back to Russia, I helped her pack her tattered suitcase. I could see, in one corner, beneath her drab communist dress, she tried to hide it, but I saw, she had lifted a packet of Frank's Tootsie Pop Drops and a jar of my Maxwell House coffee... And then she went back to her dreary homeland. (*Beat*) I will never stop wondering why people are so willing to escape from freedom.

(Lost in her world she pops a cigarette into her long holder and flips her zippo lighter. She watches the flame for a moment.)

PROSECUTOR

Ayn...

AYN  
(*Pissed*)

Give me one rational reason why I shouldn't smoke!

PROSECUTOR

A week after your sister sailed... Doctors told you that had a lesion on your lung.

AYN

There's no proof that lung cancer is caused by smoking.

PROSECUTOR

They're going to remove one of your lungs, Ayn. And I think the audience needs to know that, in order to help pay for the operation - Ayn Rand accepted Medicare.

AYN

How dare you! Get out!

PROSECUTOR

Ayn--.

AYN  
(*Pissed*)

You are just like the other men in my life! Do you realize what hell it is to be in a world where so few can match you intellectually! From Mr. Greenspan who took my ideas, to my husband who is no smarter than his award winning vegetables, to my lover who had no morals. And now you who have brought me here *not* for a fair trial, but to assassinate my character!

PROSECUTOR

Ayn, it's time you know the truth about me.

AYN

An assassin and looter!

PROSECUTOR

Ayn... For much of my life... I was your biggest fan.

AYN

What is this, a joke?

PROSECUTOR

When I was nineteen, I read The Fountainhead. Read it three times. I could quote it chapter and verse. You got me through college.

AYN

As if I haven't heard that from college students ten thousand times before.

PROSECUTOR

Then I read Atlas Shrugged in one week. One thousand-one-hundred-and-sixty-eight pages in seven days. I sat so long my mother worried that I'd develop blood clots.

(AYN coughs.)

PROSECUTOR

You okay?

AYN

Don't worry about me.

(For the rest of the play AYN has a little trouble breathing and occasionally coughs.)

PROSECUTOR

Within a week of finishing, I said to my high school sweetheart, her religious upbringing was simply out of line with my new found logic.

AYN

Good for you.

PROSECUTOR

I founded an Ayn Rand club at my university.

Better. AYN

I idolized you. PROSECUTOR

Idolize yourself! AYN

PROSECUTOR  
And then one afternoon I was taking the bus home. A bag lady wandered in - her eyes yellow with jaundice. She asked if I could spare a dollar - but I detected in her the sense that she thought she deserved a free lunch. I found myself calling her a “looter.” I raised my voice at a frightened old lady, looking for nothing more than a bit of bread.

And your rudeness is somehow my fault? AYN

PROSECUTOR  
After graduation I was exactly what the business world was looking for: I was punctual, I was disciplined, I was not a human being but the job description. With every breath I lived the ideas you put forth in Virtue of Selfishness. Then, this current economic downturn hit and I found my job gone, my health insurance cancelled, my 401K depleted and my house underwater. And now here I stand in this unemployment line thinking of my family. And of you... Ayn, unrestricted, unregulated, laissez-faire Capitalism doesn't work.

Why not? AYN

PROSECUTOR  
Because the rational self-interest of one man is the greedy, brutish egotism of another! The heart of the word “morality” is the idea that you might act against your own self-interests!

Then it isn't moral! AYN

PROSECUTOR  
Racism, imperialism, fascism, Nazism all began with the seemingly benign seed of “rational self interest.”

AYN  
Who are the real greedy in our society? The person who earns his way – the person through hard work and reliance on their intellect makes a living for himself and family, or the person who says I need so you must give of yourself. I was too shortsighted to save for my own retirement, so your grandchildren must pay my bills. I need to save my corporation so you must give me bailouts. Aren't these *needy* ones the true *greedy* ones?

PROSECUTOR  
What about the people who say, I need you not to rip me off. I need you not to con me out of my retirement. I need you not to jack up prices through artificial speculation? I want the rewards of capitalism to be distributed justly and not rigged so it benefits a select few!

AYN

That's why we must have morals! Not the morals of the church that tell us we are evil. Nor the morals of the con men that tell us to resign to the status quo. Not those of the looters and moochers.

PROSECUTOR

And what happens if the looters and moochers control the government?

AYN

Then let the people know so they can throw the bums out!

PROSECUTOR

And what if the looters and moochers control the media?

AYN

Stop watching!

PROSECUTOR

And what if the looters and moochers control the Wall Street?

AYN

My god, aren't you listening? I've already answered this!

PROSECUTOR

Remind me, I forgot!

AYN

Go on strike!

(Beat.)

PROSECUTOR

But if we require everyone to give just a little time and money--.

AYN

In other words everyone must make a sacrifice.

PROSECUTOR

I was thinking more along the lines of pooling our resources--.

AYN

Everyone!

PROSECUTOR

Yes, if we *all* put in a little time at a soup kitchen the problem will be solved.

AYN

(*Angered*)

Do you really think that type of mind that can create Wall Street, the type of man who has the brains to become a astronaut would find satisfaction handing out bread in a soup kitchen and teaching ABCs to the mentally retarded?!

PROSECUTOR

Ms. Rand, before this moment I don't think I fully understood the depth of your callousness. *(To the audience)* Audience, I'm willing to concede that Ms. Rand's philosophies might, and I repeat *might*, work in a perfect utopian world - In one of her imaginary thousand-page-epics. But in the real world, the world that Ms. Rand says we all must occupy, looters and moochers are using Ms. Rand's words to justify a level of selfishness that has never been known.

(AYN has a little coughing fit.)

PROSECUTOR

Perhaps you should write sequels to your novels in which your Randian super heroes must deal with the realities of the world. None of your heroes know the crippling pain of unemployment; none of them know how hard it is to live with cancer. None of them know the slow terror of losing a loved one to Alzheimer's! Frank has Alzheimer's--.

AYN

No! The doctors told me it something called Dupuytren's Syndrome--!

PROSECUTOR

Which is associated with alcoholism and cirrhosis of the liver!

AYN

He's simply suffering from Psycho-epistemological episodes!

PROSECUTOR

He's wearing diapers, you're taking antidepressants, and you're sleeping on rubber sheets because he can no longer control his bladder! That's reality, Ayn! Reality is reality!

AYN

*(Beat, sadly to herself)*

Frank is my rock... My whole reason for...

*(She sits. Beat. She clicks the channel changer. The theme music from the 1968 television show *Rat Patrol* plays. THE PROSECUTOR puts on his bow tie and glasses to play an older Greenspan. A knock.)*

AYN

Go away!

*(He enters.)*

PROSECUTOR *(GREENSPAN)*

Ayn.

*(She is mesmerized by the television.)*

AYN

Oh. Mr. Greenspan, come in. How's my little undertaker?

PROSECUTOR *(GREENSPAN)*

What're you...?

Rerun. AYN

PROSECUTOR (*GREENSPAN*)  
(*Off the screen*)  
Rat Patrol?

AYN  
It's about allied soldiers on desert patrol in North Africa during World War Two. I like the actor Hans Gudesgast--. (*Off the screen*) There he is. Handsome man, no? But I've heard he's grown a moustache of late. I abhor men with facial hair almost as much as I hate people with accents.

PROSECUTOR (*GREENSPAN*)  
Ayn, I thought we should talk.

AYN  
*Charlie's Angels* is on next. Care to join me?

PROSECUTOR (*GREENSPAN*)  
Ayn, now that Frank is... no longer with us.

AYN  
I... I miss him... I so miss him.

PROSECUTOR (*GREENSPAN*)  
Ayn...

AYN  
(*Pulling her self together*)  
I've been working on a movie version of Atlas Shrugged... I think Farrah Fawcett would be perfect as Dagny Taggart.

PROSECUTOR (*GREENSPAN*)  
I've been going over your monetary situation.

AYN  
And I want Clint Eastwood to play Hank Reardon. But will Hollywood listen? You know they tried to make me edit Howard Roark's final speech in the movie version of The Fountainhead. Only in Hollywood would they compromise a speech about not compromising.

PROSECUTOR (*GREENSPAN*)  
Ayn, we should talk money.

AYN  
That's all you ever talk.

PROSECUTOR (*GREENSPAN*)  
What I'm trying to say is that prices have increased slowly over the last six months and although this could mean a weakened competitive position it could also feasibly indicate an increasingly intricate financial linkage in which debt leverage and a liquid market of broad-based inflation might ease deflationary pressures and gain us flexibility.

AYN  
(Beat)

...What the hell are you talking about?

PROSECUTOR (GREENSPAN)

Your money...

AYN

Yes, I have lots.

PROSECUTOR (GREENSPAN)

It's just languishing in low yield accounts. There are opportunities: hedge funds, even macroeconomic variables that could--.

AYN

Why do I have this feeling that if I, for once, truly understood what you were talking about it probably means that I've misunderstood you.

PROSECUTOR (GREENSPAN)

You should invest. I can help.

AYN

My money, it's safe is it not?

PROSECUTOR (GREENSPAN)

Yes but, Ayn--.

AYN

You never got it did you Alan. It was never about money. Money is simply a means to an end. Money itself is unimportant.

(She clicks the channel changer. The theme from *Charlie's Angels* comes from the television.)

AYN

Is it true? Is Ronald Reagan president now?

PROSECUTOR (GREENSPAN)

Yes. He won last night.

AYN

Reagan is the beginning of the end for conservatives. He calls for less government but wants more government intervention when it comes to abortion. He promotes self-determination but muddles it with the self-denial of religion. He jumbles the logical ideas of capitalism with the irrational demands of altruism. He's a massive contradiction.

PROSECUTOR (GREENSPAN)

...I'm going to work for him tomorrow.

AYN

You poor thing, Allen... Poor thing... (She trails off and becomes engrossed in *Charlie's Angels*)



(The PROSECUTOR takes off his bow tie.  
AYN raps a blanket around herself. Beat.)

PROSECUTOR

Do you fear death, Ayn?

(She turns off the television but is still in her  
own world.)

AYN

When I die the world will no longer exist. It concerns me not.

PROSECUTOR

But what if there is something?

AYN

If there were... I'd kill myself tomorrow just to be with my husband.

PROSECUTOR

You went out in the rain without a coat or umbrella. Why? You knew you weren't well.

AYN

I needed his picture enlarged.

PROSECUTOR

Frank's?

AYN

No.

PROSECUTOR

Nathaniel's?

AYN

No. Hans Gudesgast. Rat Patrol.

PROSECUTOR

You mean Eric Braeden?

AYN

Yes, he changed his name - Too German. Got rid of his accent also.

PROSECUTOR

(To the audience)

Ayn is referring to the actor who later played the role of John Astor in the movie *Titanic*. Today, you might also know him as Victor Newman on the soap opera *The Young and The Restless*. He got his start on *Rat Patrol*.

AYN

Found a photo of him without a moustache... I went out to make copies.

PROSECUTOR

And caught a cold.

Yes. AYN

PROSECUTOR  
It's not easy to survive pneumonia with only one lung.

AYN  
I've always been in search of handsome heroes...

(The lights begin to fade to a pool around Ayn.)

PROSECUTOR  
Not many of them out there are there.

AYN  
I've met a few. A few...

PROSECUTOR  
Ayn... I'm sorry I didn't live up to your standards. But... No one can. And that's reality.

AYN  
Leave me alone.

PROSECUTOR  
Ever since I first read you, I've always asked myself, "What would Ayn Rand do? Not until today did I ask – Was Ayn Rand right?"

AYN  
You're just one of the many millions who has failed me.

PROSECUTOR  
Did you ever talk to Nathaniel Brandon again?

AYN  
(Alone)  
Never...

(AYN sits, off in her own little world. The PROSECUTOR steps away. He clicks on Nathaniel's thin tie. He steps up to a pay phone and dials. AYN'S phone rings. The sounds of New York City.)

PROSECUTOR (NATHANIEL)  
(To himself while he waits)  
Hello. Ayn. It's Nathaniel. Please don't hang up. No... (He tries again) Hello. This is Nathaniel. I'm sorry... I'm sorry I fell in love with Patrecia... I'm human... No. (He tries again) Ayn, please don't hang up...

(AYN picks up and hears Nathaniel.)

AYN  
Who is this?

...Ayn.

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

Who is this?!

AYN

(Beat.)

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)  
(*Tentative*)

It's Nathan Blumenth--.

AYN

Who?

PROSECUTOR (*NATHANIEL*)

I mean Nathaniel Brandon. I live in L.A. now... Please don't hang up... (*Beat - tears*) Patrecia... Patrecia's dead... She died in a swimming pool accident--. Ayn... Please don't hang up... (*Beat*) I'm human... Ayn... I'm human...

(Beat. AYN slowly hangs up. A dial tone.)

(The lights on her fade.)

(THE PROSECUTOR takes off his tie and addresses the audience.)

PROSECUTOR  
(*To the audience*)

Ladies and gentlemen, closing arguments. (*He steps up to the lectern*) One of the charges that I leveled against Ms. Rand is that she failed to live up to her own philosophical standards. All writers blur the lines between fact and fiction, but Ms. Rand stands apart because she, unlike other novelists, stipulated that her readers use her romantic heroes as templates and condemned as looters those who did not. When Dagny Taggart leaves Hank Reardon for John Galt in *Atlas Shrugged*. Reardon understands that he must step aside because Galt is the ideal man. But that's not how things are in real life. In reality, a husband whose wife betrays him doesn't step aside; he just gets drunk, and in the case of Ayn's husband Frank, stays drunk.

The second charge is that Ayn's thoughts on selfishness have led us to Social Darwinism. People who are driven by greed are not hard to find - Nor do they need encouragement. I know Ayn speaks of *rational* self-interest and many philosophers agree with her - that true happiness comes when you can benefit yourself without hurting others - but this part of her message was thin, and poorly written.

These first two charges would've been of little consequence if it were not for the most important charge; that her thoughts on laissez-faire capitalism have contributed to our current economic crisis. The result is that the United States no longer exists. We have instead the Corporate States of America, an exclusive cult of multinational tycoons that've wrestled power from the people and abridged our constitution. These tycoons are the living embodiment of John Galt today.

Fed by Ms. Rand's ideas, unfettered greed has turned the rivers of Nigeria into oily cesspools; it has made the once pristine Shenzhen valley in China into one of the most

polluted places on earth. It has turned our universities in to trade schools where students can think of little more than getting the right answer so they can earn enough money to pay back their massive student loans. It has made art into little more than an agreeable leisurely activity full of mindless musicals, and pleasurable plays that marginalize serious political statements. While our television, which I might add is controlled by corporations, has left us with the delusion that we might someday become billionaire bosses ourselves, so we spend our lives parroting their myths about the advantages of unregulated capitalism – all the while they take home obscene bonuses while our co-payments skyrocket.

Karl Marx famously predicted that capitalism would destroy it self - he was wrong. It is *unregulated* capitalism, the type hyped by Ayn Rand and student Allen Greenspan, that will destroy itself, but not before it feeds on everything in its path, including unions, Social Security, public health, collective bargaining, free speech, and our environment.

In *Atlas Shrugged*, Ayn has the creative and talented people of the world go on strike against what she called the looters. Today, perhaps it is the free thinkers who are on strike. Tired of fighting against the John Galts of the world, they have withdrawn into their own valley waiting for Wall Street to implode. When it does, the free thinkers will come out of hiding and create a world where it is not evil, or unpatriotic, to think of humankind as a whole - Where it will be in our own *rational self-interest*, as a society, to show compassion to those in need.

If you agree with me - That everything does not have a price, that the selfish of the world need little encouragement, and the free market is not the best arbiter of the human heart – then you must vote guilty on at least two of the three charges. Thank you.

(AYN steps up to her lectern.)

AYN

Let me make this clear: You have no right to a job or a welfare check, you have no right to adequate food, no right to medical care or good health, no right to a roof over your head, no right to be heard, no right to a fair wage or a fair price, no right to a good education... And no right to love or happiness. But to this we must add, your business has no right to be bailed out! Your farm has no right to be subsidized! Your war no right to an army!

You do have the right to *selfishly* and *rationally* pursue a job, food, a home, health, education and happiness. Your goal is to achieve happiness. But you cannot achieve it if you sacrifice yourself to others or expect others to sacrifice themselves to you. Stealing a dime from a poor man is wrong. Passing a law that requires that a wealthy man give a poor man a dime is equally wrong.

I endorse no one. Liberals have no right to claim me for they talk about general prosperity and brotherhood, but in fact see society as half sacrificial animals and half victims. Conservatives have no right to me for they have committed some of the greatest crimes this country has ever known - they preach individual responsibility and keeping government out of our lives, when in fact they have placed tradition, faith, authority, god and country over individual rights. As for libertarians, they're just nuts.

Many years ago, I was invited to attend the launch of Apollo 11, the moon mission. As I watched the massive rocket roar up in to the sky I was overwhelmed by the strength of the human mind. We are the only animal on earth that has the power to destroy ourselves. And yet we are only animal with reason enough to build a new life for ourselves. But we cannot do it if we sacrifice ourselves.

It is time to look up. Not to god. But to that rocket. The rocket of human ability, reason and achievement. *(Beat)* As I stood there, on that clear sunny day in Florida - for a moment, I saw the future of humankind. It was only the ocean, and the sky, and a world where each unique individual sets out to pursue self-ownership; a free, rational, productive life, and the self-esteem, self-confidence and pride that results.

(She holds up a dollar bill.)

If you agree with me, that capitalism is the only way to save ourselves from ourselves then you must vote not guilty on at least two of the three charges. Thank you.

PROSECUTOR

The jury (audience) will now vote. Guilty or not guilty: It was Ayn Rand's thoughts on laissez-faire capitalism that contributed to our current economic situation - Please take a moment to vote.

(Pause.)

PROSECUTOR

Two. Guilty or not guilty: It was Ayn Rand's philosophies on selfishness that have lead to social Darwinism in the United States and much of the industrialized world today. Please vote.

(Pause.)

PROSECUTOR

Three. Guilty or not guilty: Ayn Rand is a hypocrite. She demanded that we live up to her high ideals, but failed to live up to them in her own life. We will take a brief pause to calculate the data.

(A brief musical interlude. Please, whatever you do, don't use the music from Jeopardy.)

PROSECUTOR

The jury (audience) has come to a decision. To the first charge: It was Ayn Rand's thoughts on laissez-faire capitalism that were the fountainhead, which led us to our current economic situation. The jury has found Ayn Rand (Guilty) (Not-Guilty). To the second charge that Ayn Rand's ideas on selfishness have lead to social Darwinism. The jury has found Ayn Rand (Guilty) (Not-Guilty). And to the last charge, that Ayn Rand is a hypocrite. The jury has found Ayn Rand (Guilty) (Not-Guilty).

**ENDING ONE**

(If the vote is against Ms. Rand)

**PROSECUTOR**

Ayn Rand, the jury has found you guilty (Two out of three charges.) (On all three charges.) It was a good debate, but I will remain in this unemployment line and collect the money. I invite the audience to stay after to discuss the issues put forth in the play. But for now we must say goodnight.

(The lights fade.)

**ENDING TWO**

(If the vote is for Ms. Rand)

**PROSECUTOR**

Ayn Rand, the jury has found you not guilty. (Two out of three charges.) (On all three charges.) It was a good debate, I will now step out of this unemployment line and you... You may smoke. I invite the audience to stay after to discuss the issues put forth in the play. But for now we must say goodnight.

(Ayn steps forward, and as she lights up - Black out.)

*The End*

“Let us consider the way in which we spend our lives. This world is a place of business. What an infinite bustle! I am awaked almost every night by the panting of the locomotive. It interrupts my dreams. There is no Sabbath. It would be glorious to see mankind at leisure for once. It is nothing but work, work, work. I cannot easily buy a blankbook to write thoughts in; they are commonly ruled for dollars and cents. An Irishman, seeing me making a minute in the field, took it for granted that I was calculating my wages... I think that there is nothing, not even crime, more opposed to poetry, to philosophy, ay, to life itself, than this incessant business...”

- Thoreau *“Life without Principle”*

The economic value of a man's work is determined, on a free market, by a single principle: by the voluntary consent of those who are willing to trade him their work or products in return. This is the moral meaning of the law of supply and demand; . . . It represents the recognition of the fact that man is not the property nor the servant of the tribe, that *a man works in order to support his own life* — as, by his nature, he must — that he has to be guided by his own rational self-interest, and if he wants to trade with others, he cannot expect sacrificial victims, *i.e.*, he cannot expect to receive values without trading commensurate values in return. The sole criterion of what is commensurate, in this context, is the free, voluntary, uncoerced judgment of the traders.

- Rand *“Capitalism: The Unknown Idea”*

## Note about Copyright

In order to get around copyright laws this play does not contain a single phrase Ayn Rand ever wrote. Instead I have carefully taken her ideas and created new dialogue that expresses her philosophies and the story of her life.

Here are a few of the books that were used as sources:

- Anthem by Ayn Rand
- Atlas Shrugged by Ayn Rand
- Ayn Rand and the World She Made by Anne C. Heller
- Ayn Rand Answers edited by Robert Mayhew
- Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal by Ayn Rand
- Death of the Liberal Class by Chris Hedges
- For the New Intellectual by Ayn Rand
- Goddess of the Market Ayn Rand and the American Right by Jennifer Burns
- Greenspan's Bubbles by William Fleckenstein
- Griftopia by Matt Taibbi
- Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology by Ayn Rand
- Journals of Ayn Rand edited by David Harriman
- Letters of Ayn Rand edited by Michael S. Berliner
- My Years with Ayn Rand by Nathaniel Branden
- Night of January 16th by Ayn Rand
- Screen Guide for Americans by Ayn Rand
- The Age of Turbulence: Adventures in a New World by Alan Greenspan
- The Ayn Rand Cult by Jeff Walker
- The Ayn Rand Lexicon edited by Harry Binswanger
- The Ayn Rand Reader edited by Gary Hull and Leonard Peikoff
- The Fountainhead by Ayn Rand
- The New Left: The Anti-Industrial Revolution by Ayn Rand
- The Romantic Manifesto by Ayn Rand
- The Virtue of Selfishness by Ayn Rand
- We the Living by Ayn Rand
- What Art Is, The Esthetic Theory of Ayn Rand by Louis Torres and Michelle Kamhi
- Why Businessmen Need Philosophy Edited by Debi Ghate and Richard Ralston
- 100 Voices: An Oral History of Ayn Rand edited by Scott McConell