

JOE HILL  
(EXCERPT)

Written by

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LIGHTS UP.

We hear a lone woman humming the tune of "I Dreamed I Saw Joe Hill Last Night."

On stage sits an empty wooden chair bathed in a lone spotlight. A man enters dressed in a turn of the century three piece wool suit. It is defense attorney E.D. MCDOUGALL. A watch chain dangles from his vest pocket. Wire rimmed glasses are perched on the bridge of his nose. He carries a leather bound notebook. He looks at the chair, then looks out and addresses the audience as the singing fades.

MCDOUGALL

In the cold, grey dawn of the 19th of November, 1915, Joe Hill was executed in front of a firing squad on the grounds of the Utah State Prison in Salt Lake. Tried and convicted of the cold blooded murder of a local grocer and his son, Joe maintained his innocence to the end. A simple ending to a complicated series of trials and appeals...and to a very, very complex human being. He's crossed over into the land of myth now. His union songs sung over and over again at hundreds--thousands of strikes and protests around the world. His words painted on placards and banners in every conceivable language. But anything we knew about the man, the real Joe Hill, is all but gone. Not that there was much to know. Before his execution he was contacted by a writer about supplying information for his biography.

McDougall opens up the notebook and reads.

MCDOUGALL (CONT'D)

Hill wrote back saying, "No. Let's not spoil good writing paper with such nonsense--"

The light fades on McDougall. JOE HILL appears in a different pool of light. He continues the sentence in his own words. The strumming of a guitar is heard.

JOE HILL

--only the here and now is of concern to me.

(MORE)

JOE HILL (CONT'D)

The exact spot where I first saw the light of day is of such slight importance that it deserves no comment—I haven't much to say about myself. I will only say that I have done what little I could to bring the flag of freedom closer to it's goal.

The music dissipates. The light fades on Joe and back to McDougall.

MCDOUGALL

It seems Joe Hill's life was nothing but a series of secrets wrapped in secrets...wrapped in silence. But I was determined to find out everything I could in the time I had...My name's McDougall. E.D. McDougall. I'm a defense attorney. And judging by the evidence at hand, not a very good one. Well, be that as it may...I had a professor at law school who used to say, "Boys, when all else fails there's no place to start like the beginning."

The lights change. Appearing on stage is ESTER DAHL. She is a prim and proper woman wearing a simple dress of the period; black with a ruffled white collar. She sits in the chair.

MCDOUGALL (CONT'D)

Her name was Ester Dahl. She claimed to be Joe Hill's youngest sister, living in a small town in Sweden called Gävle. A few inquires to the local authorities and church parish confirmed this.

ESTER

(In a Swedish accent.)

Joe Hill? No...no, to you maybe, but he was no Joe Hill to us. Joel...Joel Hägglund, my family's name. My mother, Margareta Katarina. My father, Olof. Nine children...six of us survived; Ruben, Efraim, Paul, Judit, myself and Joel. Joel Emmanuel. My father worked as a conductor on the Gävle-Dala Railroad.

MCDUGALL

A hard life.

ESTER

Yes, yes...not easy...no.

MCDUGALL

Tell me, what was Joel like as a boy?

ESTER

Oh, very serious minded, Joel was. Very withdrawn. You never knew what he was thinking; like a book with a locked cover. But the music, oh, Joel loved his music.

A light appears with a YOUNG JOE sitting in a bench. He pantomimes playing a keyboard as organ music begins to play.

ESTER (CONT'D)

He got that love from my parents. We always had music in the house. My father even built a four octave organ with his own hands. We all learned to play, but Joel...Joel had that special gift. He didn't just play music, he made music.

The lights change. MARGARETA and OLOF enter. She looks tired and worn, and her dress is faded. He wears an old, frayed suit and a conductor's hat. He has a thick moustache and beard.

ESTER (CONT'D)

(More childlike and enthusiastic.)

Oh Joel, play " Värmland's Song ", that's my favorite.

MARGARETA

How about "The Madeline Waltz?" "Tip Top Mountain?" "The Hiking Song?"

ESTER

No, Mama, " Värmland's Song." " Värmland's Song." Please, Joel, please play it.

Olof holds up his hand.

OLOF

No...Joel Emmanuel, you know what to play.

Young Joe nods and begins playing "Amazing Grace." Olof puts his hand on Young Joe's shoulder and begins to sing in Swedish. His voice is rich and lilting. Margareta and Ester join him and begin singing along. They harmonize beautifully. The verse ends. Margareta exits. Ester sits back in the chair.

ESTER

Joel could play anything you asked, as if he knew every song ever written. And not just the organ; the piano, the accordion, the guitar...and the violin. He loved the violin the best, I think.

Young Joe begins pantomiming playing the violin. A forlorn melody begins.

ESTER (CONT'D)

When he'd practice, late at night, I would lie awake and listen. It was like the sound of a beautiful, lone wolf howling...crying. This mournful tune echoing through the pines and cedars. It almost broke my heart.

Young Joe stops playing.

ESTER (CONT'D)

When he was eight my father was killed in a railroad accident.

Olof exits slowly off stage as his light fades.

ESTER (CONT'D)

It was hard on all of us. But on Joel, especially. All of my brothers had to go to work. Joel in a rope factory, then as a fireman on a steam crane. Hard...very hard. Then, in his teens, Joel got very sick. He had, uhhh, tuber-- tuber--

MCDUGALL

Tuberculosis?

ESTER

Yes, yes. In his skin and his joints. Very painful.

(MORE)

ESTER (CONT'D)

He went on his own to Stockholm for treatment. X-ray treatment. Almost seven months he is gone. When he returned I didn't recognize him. His nose was thin, and there were scars on his face and his neck. I was frightened at first, but then I looked into his eyes. I knew he was still there, that sad book with the locked cover. I had to tape the bow of the violin to the bandages on his hand so he could still play--

She stops abruptly, crying. She pulls a handkerchief from her pocket and holds it to her mouth.

ESTER (CONT'D)

I'm sorry...

MCDUGALL

No, no, it's all right. We can stop now if you--

ESTER

(Composing herself.)

No...No, I'm fine. Fine.

She takes a deep breath, wiping away the tears.

ESTER (CONT'D)

In 1902, Joel was...twenty-three? My mother passed away. The family just dissolved after that. We all moved out to different cities. But Joel and my other brother, Paul, they weren't satisfied with a life in Sweden. They decided there were bigger things waiting for them across the sea.

The lights change quickly. A grown JOE and his brother PAUL run on excitedly. Joe picks up Ester from her chair and begins dancing with her. She shrieks and laughs.

JOE HILL

America, Ester! The land of plenty!

Paul cuts in and dances with Ester.

PAUL

The land of milk and honey!

ESTER  
 (laughing.)  
 Stop!

Joe cuts in again.

JOE HILL  
 All you have to do is bend over and  
 scrape the gold off the ground!

PAUL  
 Or pick the money off the trees!

ESTER  
 Stop! Joel, stop!

Joe swings her around and dips her back into the chair. They  
 all laugh.

ESTER (CONT'D)  
 Oh...I won't miss this madness when  
 you're gone.

PAUL  
 Sure, an hour after we're on the  
 boat you'll be swimming after us.

JOE HILL  
 (Mocking Ester's voice.)  
 "Joel! Paul! Come back! Don't leave  
 me!"

PAUL  
 (Joining in.)  
 "Fix my dolly, Paul! Fix my dolly!"

JOE & PAUL  
 "Fix it! Fix it! Waaaa!"

She laughs and chases after them, swatting at them with her  
 handbag. They dodge each other for a moment or two, then  
 stop, out of breath. Paul pulls a watch from his vest pocket  
 and checks it.

PAUL  
 Uh-oh, Joel. We got half an hour to  
 board.

JOE HILL  
 All right.

PAUL  
 I still got those bags to load.

Paul faces Ester and holds her by the shoulders.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Well...this is it, little sister.

ESTER  
Paul.

PAUL  
You take care, now.

They embrace, then pull away.

ESTER  
You write me.

PAUL  
I will, sister. I promise.

Paul starts to exit.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Joel...?

JOE HILL  
I'll be along, Paul.

Paul nods, then glances at Ester.

PAUL  
Bye, sister.

Paul exits. Joe faces Ester. There is a pause, both searching for something to say.

JOE HILL  
Come with us, Ester.

ESTER  
Oh, Joel...

JOE HILL  
We can all share the wealth.

ESTER  
Sure.

JOE HILL  
I'll play the violin in all the  
finest music halls...

ESTER  
...and I'll dance along side you as  
a high class chorus girl..

JOE HILL  
 ...and Paul will be our manager,  
 counting piles money and stashing  
 it in huge trunks!

They laugh a moment. More silence. Joel takes her hand and looks into her eyes. This is a moment deeply shared.

JOE HILL (CONT'D)  
 (Fighting tears.)  
 I have to go, sister.

ESTER  
 (Crying.)  
 I know...

JOE HILL  
 I've been sweating and lifting and aching since Papa died. And still I have nothing. Nothing but scars and callouses. There has to be something better than this for a man.

ESTER  
 There is...

JOE HILL  
 You could still come.

ESTER  
 No...No, I'll stay here...Get a job...Marry. It's my place.

Joe nods, then kisses her cheek. She turns away from him. He takes a few steps back and starts singing. It is "Värmland's Song", a sad, lilting tune. He backs away as he sings. She cries, not looking back.

JOE HILL  
 Ack, Värmland, du sköna, du härliga  
 land, du krona bland Svea rikes  
 länder!  
 Och komme jag än mitt i det  
 förlovade land, till Värmland jag  
 ändå återvänder. Ja, där vill jag  
 leva, ja, där vill jag dö. Om en  
 gång ifrån Värmland jag tager mig  
 en mö, så vet jag att aldrig jag  
 mig ångrar.

He looks at her a moment as the song echoes away.

JOE HILL (CONT'D)  
Bye, little sister.

Joe runs off. Ester touches her cheek where she was kissed as she sits back into the chair. The lights change.

ESTER  
And that was the last time I saw  
his face. Thirteen years ago.  
Thirteen years...three months.

She sobs lightly. The lights fade on her. She exits.

MCDUGALL  
(To audience.)  
And so it goes. Joe Hill joins the  
throng of millions searching for a  
better life in the promised land.  
"Oh, but be very careful what you  
want, young man..."  
(To himself.)  
Be very, very careful.

The lights change. Sitting in the chair is JOHN HOLLAND, a scruffy looking man in his forties. His clothes are disheveled and he appears to be slightly drunk.

MCDUGALL (CONT'D)  
John Holland claimed to have been  
Joe Hill's cousin, although several  
things led me to distrust his  
story, the foremost being that he  
was drunk for most of his  
interview. But he did substantiate  
a few facts...which, at this point,  
was all I really had.

HOLLAND  
(A drunken Swedish  
accent.)  
We sailed over together, Paul and  
Joel and me. We arrived in New York  
City, 1902.

MCDUGALL  
Where did you live?

HOLLAND  
Bowery somewhere...hard to tell,  
they's all looked alike.  
(MORE)

HOLLAND (CONT'D)

Thousands of people all barkin' in different tongues, Swedes, Finns, Dutch, Slavs...they stunk the worst, you know. The Slavs and the Italians. All that garlic, you know.

MCDUGALL

What did you do for work?

HOLLAND

Well...I got work on a road crew, you know, diggin' up dirt for roads, loadin' up wagons. Five cents a day. Paul, I think, was haulin' scrap at a mill. Yeah, that's right...

Paul enters and sits wearily on the floor.

HOLLAND (CONT'D)

...and Joel...

He starts to chuckle.

HOLLAND (CONT'D)

Joel worked for a year as a porter in a saloon. Don't know why they called it a "porter", though, all he did was--

Joe enters, agitated.

JOE HILL

--Clean spittoons! What kind of work is that for a man?!

Holland and Paul start to laugh.

JOE HILL (CONT'D)

We travel 3000 miles so I can scrape the spit and snot and phlegm of fat businessmen from a brass bucket!

Holland and Paul laugh more.

JOE HILL (CONT'D)

Without gloves! Without even a rag! I muck out that brown slime with my bare hands, then have to clean the toilets in my spare time!

They laugh again.

JOE HILL (CONT'D)  
STOP LAUGHING, DAMN YOU!

Paul and Holland go silent.

HOLLAND  
Come on, Joel. Calm down now...

JOE HILL  
You calm down!

PAUL  
Joel, you know, like it or not a man's got to make a living.

JOE HILL  
This is not a living, Paul! It's not a life! We work like slaves, fourteen, sixteen hours a day...for what? Pennies. We got no heat. John, you stealing scraps of bread from the old baker's cart every Tuesday. And still I go back, shoveling out the tobacco on my hands and knees while all the rich, fat men of leisure drink their whiskey and spit down their noses at me. Calling me "Sven" or "Olie". With their silk ties and their wool vests and their diamond studded watch fobs. We sweat and scrape and die while they all get fatter and fatter. It's not fair.

PAUL  
What would you suggest, brother?

JOE HILL  
There's thousands, millions of us out there making a few rich. They need us. We've got to group together, to organize--

Paul jumps up next to Joe and takes his arm. Holland gets up quickly and checks a "door" stage right. He looks around cautiously.

PAUL  
Hey! Shhh! I warned you about that, brother. None of that talk 'round here. There's ears everywhere, you know that.

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

They catch wind of any union talk  
and you'll find yourself laying in  
a back alley tomorrow morning with  
your head caved in.

Holland pulls a small bottle from his back pocket and hands  
it to Joe.

HOLLAND

Have a drink, Joel. Take a breath.

Joe takes the bottle and drinks. Holland also hands Joe a  
battered guitar he retrieved from offstage.

HOLLAND (CONT'D)

Here, now. Play us a tune, cousin.  
That'll calm you down. You may have  
to muck the spit tomorrow, but  
let's not dwell on it tonight.

Joe thinks a moment, then takes the guitar and sits in the  
chair. He stares straight ahead, trying to think of a tune.  
He begins strumming. He begins singing "The Preacher And The  
Slave", sung to the tune of "In The Sweet By And By."

JOE HILL

(Singing.)

"Long haired preachers come out  
every night.  
Try to tell you what's wrong and  
what's right.  
But when asked how 'bout something  
to eat.  
They will answer with voices so  
sweet.  
You will eat, by and by,  
In that glorious land above the  
sky.  
Work and pray, live on hay,  
You'll get pie in the sky when you  
die."

The lights change. Joe and Paul exit. Holland sits slowly  
back in the chair.

HOLLAND

He left town not long after that.  
Chicago...Philadelphia...Ester got  
a Christmas card from him from  
Cleveland. Got in some trouble with  
all his union talk so he changed  
his name from Joel Hägglund to Joe  
Hillstrom so's he wouldn't get  
blacklisted...or worse.

(MORE)

HOLLAND (CONT'D)  
 Ended up out west, I think.  
 California. You know he survived  
 the great earthquake in San  
 Francisco, 1906.

McDougall stops writing in his notebook and puts his pen in  
 his pocket, suspiciously.

MCDUGALL  
 Yes. Yes, I'm sure he did.

HOLLAND  
 It's true.

Holland pulls a folded, yellowed newspaper clipping from his  
 shirt pocket and begins unfolding it.

HOLLAND (CONT'D)  
 He wrote about it to our hometown  
 newspaper, the *Gelfe Dägblad*, back  
 in Sweden, you know. They printed  
 it up.

He begins reading in Swedish, then catches himself.

HOLLAND (CONT'D)  
 Oh...sorry.  
 (Starting again.)  
 "From a former resident of Gävle,  
 Joel Hägglund, who was present at  
 the terrible catastrophe in San  
 Francisco, we received this letter  
 dated the twenty-fourth. He writes  
 among other things..."

The lights change. Joe appears on stage wearing dirty, torn  
 clothes. His face is blackened with mud and soot. He  
 continues the story.

JOE HILL  
 ...I woke up on the morning of  
 Wednesday the 18th at 5:13 by being  
 thrown out of bed. How I managed to  
 get down the stairs I really can't  
 tell, but I went fast. Suddenly the  
 stairway fell in and I fell  
 straight through the floor and into  
 the basement. I thought my last  
 moment had come, so I tried to  
 recite an old hymn I had learned  
 from Sunday School in Gävle. Then I  
 closed my eyes and waited for my  
 fate.

(MORE)

## JOE HILL (CONT'D)

I was pinned between some boards but, with the exception of some bruises on my right side, I was completely unhurt. I went up to an opening where I had a good view of the city. It was a terrible sight to see; large houses in ruin, the ground full of cracks nearly three feet wide. Half-naked women carrying small children were driven from their homes. It didn't take long before red flames were seen in several places. With terrible speed they were changed, within a few hours, to one single lake of fire. Two soldiers came and gave me an axe and put a large steel hat on me. I was suddenly employed as a member of The San Francisco Fire Department. My work consisted of helping old people from the fire, carrying sick people out of hospitals, saving valuables and the like. I worked thirty-six hours straight without food or drink before I was released. The officer who released me first wrote down my name, then looked in my pockets for loot. If he had found any I would have received an extra buttonhole in the vest for all of my work, and would probably have never written this letter. The fire is not out everywhere, and the formerly rich San Francisco is now only a smoking ruin. About a hundred frame houses are all that is left of the "Proud Queen on the Shores of the Pacific Ocean."

The lights fade on Joe. Holland exits. McDougall addresses the audience again.

## MCDOUGALL

So now we hit the fork in the road. What changes Joel Hägglund, young, frustrated and idealistic immigrant into Joe Hill, the voice and martyr for the great labor movement of the world? Joe was closely tied with the I.W.W., The Industrial Workers of the World.

(MORE)

MCDUGALL (CONT'D)

A labor union nicknamed The Wobblys, it was a conglomerate of radical, militant trade unions brought together in 1904 to form, what they called, The One Big Union. They represented all labor, from agriculture to mining to ship building to furniture making. They believed, and perhaps rightfully so, in the rights of human life and happiness over a capitalist system's rights of profit and property. To a hopeful idealist like Joe Hill, the preamble to the I.W.W. Constitution must have seemed like words brought down from on high.

McDougall opens his notebook and reads.

MCDUGALL (CONT'D)

"The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of working people, and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things in life."

He closes the notebook. The lights change. MAC McCLINTOCK enters and sits in the chair. He is a stern looking man in his forties. He wears a faded suit, a scarf around his neck and a tattered cap.

MCDUGALL (CONT'D)

Not a whole lot is known about Joe Hill between the years 1906 up to his arrest for murder in 1914. We do know he hooked up with the local I.W.W. Group in San Pedro, California around 1910. Harry "Mac" McClintock was a Wobbly worker who was friends with Joe around that time.

McDougall addresses McClintock.

MCDUGALL (CONT'D)

So what kind of fella was he?

MCCLINTOCK

Oh, I don't know. Like most workin' fellas, I guess. Clean living.

(MORE)

MCCLINTOCK (CONT'D)

Kept himself as neat as he could.  
Didn't smoke. Didn't drink. Quiet,  
kind of. Kept to himself a lot.

MCDOUGALL

Was he the violent type?

MCCLINTOCK

Meaning what?

MCDOUGALL

Well, you know, the I.W.W. doesn't  
exactly have the same reputation as  
the Boy Scouts, now do they?  
Clashes with the police in  
Philadelphia, New York and Chicago.  
Riots in Kansas City. Reports of  
widespread violence, sabotage to  
large factories, the bombing of The  
San Francisco Chronicle--

MCCLINTOCK

--That's not proven.

MCDOUGALL

The investigation's still ongoing.

MCCLINTOCK

It's a means to an end! You  
lawyers, you all--

MCDOUGALL

--Look, I don't want to get into  
politics with you, Mr. McClintock.  
My only concern here is Joe Hill.

MCCLINTOCK

(Reluctantly.)

He was working at the wharfs with  
some other Wobbllys and started to  
take an interest in the union. So  
he invites himself down.

The lights change. Joe Hill enters with his hat in his hand.

MCCLINTOCK (CONT'D)

So, what brings you in from the  
rain, brother?

JOE HILL

Been talking to some of your boys  
at the wharf about the union. It  
all sounded real good to me.  
Figured I'd like to sign up.

MCCLINTOCK

Why?

JOE HILL

Pardon?

MCCLINTOCK

Why?...You seem like a nice enough fella, uh...

JOE HILL

Joe.

MCCLINTOCK

Joe...You're hard working, diligent, I'm sure. But this is a war, brother. The I.W.W. is at war with the world of big business. The battle lines are drawn all over this country. We need men with commitment.

JOE HILL

Yes sir.

MCCLINTOCK

We get all kinds of hobos and vagrants signing up 'cause it all sounds, I don't know, adventurous. Then, at the first sign of a little heat, they high tail it into the hills, leaving us short. So you talked to a few of the guys, that's all well and good. But what I really want to know is...why?

JOE HILL

(Thinking a moment.)

This spring I'm walking through the yards in Oregon, up near Pendleton. I saw a fellow sitting on a tie pile. He had his left hand all bandaged up and hanging useless by his side. The look on his face was the most hopeless I ever saw. He'd come up from Roseville Junction. He had a few cents and didn't have to beg, but I guess the cops of that worthy town didn't like the way he parted his hair, so they told him to make himself scarce. He tried to follow orders and hop a train, but that upholder of justice took a shot at him anyway.

(MORE)

JOE HILL (CONT'D)

Being a poor shot he only succeeded in crushing the man's hand. Not being satisfied with disabling the man for life, they struck him several blows on the head with a sapper and threw him in the tank without any medical aid, though he was bleeding badly. Five a.m. he gets a couple kicks in the gut for breakfast and is told that if he ever showed his face in that town again it would be the graveyard for him. He told me he didn't sleep much 'cause his hand is aching all the time, and he wished he could cut it off since it ain't no good anyway. I'm tired, brother. I'm tired of seeing these hired murderers slaughter and maim our class. We're men. There needs to be some fairness put back in the world.

McClintock stands and eyes Joe up and down. He offers his hand.

MCCLINTOCK

We could use a secretary for the local. My last just quit. Can you write?

JOE HILL

(Smiling and shaking his hand.)

Yes sir.

MCCLINTOCK

Come in tomorrow around nine.

JOE HILL

Yes sir.

Joe exits, happily. The lights change. McClintock sits.

MCCLINTOCK

He was a fine secretary. Put in long hours. Worked hard. We went to Hawaii in 1911; me, Joe and Pat Kelly, another member. Worked hauling raw sugar into the holds of American/Hawaiian sugar boats. Trying to get the men there organized.

MCDOUGALL

Nice place.

MCCLINTOCK

Not bad. Lived in a shack on the beach. Warm. Fresh fruit every day. Pretty native girls.

MCDOUGALL

Was Joe a womanizer?

MCCLINTOCK

Joe? No. Didn't need to be. Women always came after him. He had that sad, kicked dog look in his eyes. Women were a push over for him, and he frequently made use of them.

MCDOUGALL

So...back to Hawaii.

MCCLINTOCK

After three months or so, Joe couldn't take it. He kept getting letters, news about riots, protests going bad in Los Angeles and San Diego. I guess his "Viking Spirit" couldn't take it any more, so he hopped a freighter back to LA. Had to get back into the fray, I suppose.

MCDOUGALL

A good union man.

(Checking his notebook.)

There are reports that Joe helped with an attempted government takeover in Mexico. Local workers in the Baja arming themselves, overthrowing villages. They had the Mexican army at bay for weeks.

MCCLINTOCK

Our struggles are global, brother.

MCDOUGALL

He was lucky to get out of there in one piece.

(Checking his notes.)

It says here Joe was arrested in San Pedro in 1913. They claim he held up a streetcar.

(MORE)

MCDOUGALL (CONT'D)

They couldn't get a solid eye witness so they dismissed him. You believe he did it?

MCCLINTOCK

(After a hard thought.)

I believe that he was a crook and he made a lot of scores.

MCDOUGALL

Really?

MCCLINTOCK

He had his own code about such matters; the old Robin Hood stuff. He wouldn't have stuck up a streetcar conductor for his own personal dough, but it was okay to snag the company's coin. He'd probably shoot the conductor, too. If the poor sap wanted to be heroic in defending his master's property he'd only have himself to blame if he got killed.

MCDOUGALL

Interesting rationale.

MCCLINTOCK

Joe Hill, in my book, was only half Wobbly. Half of him had all the ideals of economic justice and social struggle. The other half was plain crook. "Take what you can when you can."

MCDOUGALL

That's high praise.

MCCLINTOCK

Don't get me wrong. Joe was valuable. Hell, he probably helped the cause more than anyone we've ever had. It wasn't his organizing or protesting, it was that damned guitar of his.

McClintock takes a small red book from his pocket and tosses it to McDougall. McDougall examines the cover.

MCDOUGALL

"I.W.W. Songs..."

MCCLINTOCK

That Joe could sure come up with  
some catchy tunes.

MCDOUGALL

"...To Fan The Flames Of  
Discontent."

MCCLINTOCK

His songs are world famous; "The  
Preacher and the Slave", "Casey  
Jones-The Union Scab", "John Golden  
and the Lawrence Strike", "What We  
Want", "There Is Power in a Union",  
"Rebel Girl", and on, and on, and  
on.

MCDOUGALL

(Still examining the  
book.)

I know them all.

MCCLINTOCK

Joe knew most of the workers we  
needed to reach were immigrants  
like himself. Most can't barely  
speak English. They can't  
understand our speeches or read our  
flyers...but they do know music.  
The universal language, he called  
it. The year that book was printed  
our membership went through the  
roof. Whatever you might think  
about Joe, you gotta hand it to  
him. He sure knew how to write a  
song.

The lights change. McClintock exits. Joe enters carrying a  
guitar. He begins playing and singing "We Will Sing One  
Song." (To the tune of "My Old Kentucky Home.")

JOE HILL

"We will sing one song to the meek  
and humble slave,  
The horn-handed son of the soil.  
He's toiling hard from the cradle  
to the grave,  
But his master reaps profits from  
his toil.  
Then we'll sing one song of the  
greedy master class,  
They're vagrants in broadcloth,  
indeed,

(MORE)

JOE HILL (CONT'D)

They live by robbing the ever-  
toiling mass,  
Human blood they spill to satisfy  
their greed.  
Organize! Oh toilers, come organize  
your might;  
Then we'll sing one song of the  
worker's commonwealth,  
Full of beauty, full of love and  
health."

The lights fade. The song ends. McDougall stands center stage in a pool of light. A scrim curtain drops behind him.

MCDUGALL

Well...Now we come to the fulcrum on which our story rests. On Saturday night, January 10th, 1914, shortly before 10:14 p.m., John G. Morrison and his son, Arling, were in the process of closing up the Morrison Grocery Store located on West Temple and Eighth South Streets in Salt Lake City.

Lights up behind the scrim to reveal a live diorama of the scene McDougall describes. MR. MORRISON is pulling a sack of potatoes by the top seam. ARLING is sweeping with a push broom. They are frozen like statues, as are all characters in the upcoming montage.

MCDUGALL (CONT'D)

Mr. Morrison was pulling a sack of potatoes across the store. Arling, a youth in his late teens, was sweeping up.

The scrim lights fade to black.

MCDUGALL (CONT'D)

It was then that two men wearing red bandanas over their faces and soft felt hats entered the store.

Scrim lights up. Mr. Morrison is standing, looking at the TWO MEN with the potato sack at his feet. Arling has stopped sweeping and also faces the men. The men stand menacingly, holding pistols at their sides.

MCDUGALL (CONT'D)

One was tall, the other short, and each carried a pistol.

Scrim lights out.

MCDUGALL (CONT'D)  
As they entered they shouted "We  
have got you now!"

Scrim lights up to reveal the two men pointing their pistols at Mr. Morrison, who recoils in fear. Arling is reaching behind a counter.

MCDUGALL (CONT'D)  
As the men advanced toward Morrison  
a shot rang out.

The lights go out quickly as a gun shot is heard.

MCDUGALL (CONT'D)  
Then another.

Another gun shot.

MCDUGALL (CONT'D)  
Then several more.

More shots. The scrim lights up to reveal Mr. Morrison and Arling both lying still in pools of blood. Near Arling's hand, on the floor, sits a revolver.

MCDUGALL (CONT'D)  
Mr. Morrison was alive, but unable  
to speak. Arling was dead, his hand  
outstretched near a pistol that was  
loaded and hidden in the store ice-  
box moments earlier.

The scrim lights fade slowly.

MCDUGALL (CONT'D)  
We know all of these facts because,  
unbeknownst to the killers, there  
was an eyewitness to the scene.  
Merlin Morrison, the youngest son,  
had witnessed the attack from the  
confines of the storeroom where he  
was hiding. In a few, brief seconds  
he had watched his older brother  
die and his father become mortally  
wounded. Thirteen...Thirteen years  
old. By the time police arrived,  
many spectators had gathered at the  
store.

Enter the neighbors: MR. HOLT, an old man in a housecoat. His gray hair is messy and he wears glasses. MRS. HANSEN, a woman in her fifties. She also wears a housecoat.

A scarf is tied around her head. NELLIE MAHAN, a younger woman wearing a print dress and an overcoat. She shivers from the cold.

MR. HOLT

I heard the shots and ran right out. I saw two men running out of the store. I noticed one of them moved more slowly than the other, and he held his hands to his chest like this.

(He demonstrates.)

My bet is he got shot.

MRS. HANSEN

I live right directly across the street, 773 South West Temple. I heard the shots, too, so I looked out the front door. I saw the two of them not more than twenty-five feet over on the sidewalk. It was bright, what with the moon and the arc light on the corner. I heard the one man say "Oh Bob", like he was in pain or something. He went down the sidewalk where two other fellas were waiting for him, then they disappeared behind the Mahan house.

NELLIE MAHAN

After I heard the shots I went to the front room. I saw a man in a dark coat running from the store. He said something I didn't understand, but then he said "I'm shot." Clear as day, "I'm shot." Then he ran in the alley back behind my house. I heard voices coming from back there but I couldn't make any of it out.

MCDUGALL

The first policeman to arrive on the scene took Mr. Morrison to the station hospital where he died a short time later without making a statement about his killers.

The lights change as the neighbors wander off. DR. FRANK MCHUGH enters and sits in the chair. He is an older gentleman with a receding hairline. He wears slacks, shirt and tie covered by a white lab coat

MCDUGALL (CONT'D)

Dr. Frank McHugh was a physician who maintained an office in his home at Fourteenth South and State streets in Salt Lake City.

MCHUGH

Well, like I told the police, it was about 11:30 on Saturday night the tenth. I was in bed at the time when I heard a loud pounding at the office door. I got up and asked who it was, and a husky voice said...

We hear Joe's voice from offstage.

JOE HILL

I've been injured! Please, help me!

MCHUGH

I switched on the lights and opened the door.

(He does so.)

And this man walked in I recognized as Joe Hill.

Joe Walks in. He is bent in pain. His shirt is soaked with blood and he wears an overcoat.

MCHUGH (CONT'D)

I remembered he was staying with the Eselius brothers. I was treating one of them for pneumonia. Then he said--

JOE HILL

Doc, I've been shot.

Dr. McHugh helps Joe to sit in the chair.

MCHUGH

What happened, son?

JOE HILL

I got into a stew with a friend of mine. He thought I'd insulted his wife.

Dr. McHugh helps take off Joe's coat. He begins unbuttoning Joe's shirt an examining the wound.

JOE HILL (CONT'D)

I told him he'd drunk too much. He got all the more angry, we argued.

(MORE)

JOE HILL (CONT'D)  
I knocked him down. He got up,  
pulled out a gun and shot me.

The Doctor checks Joe's back.

MCHUGH  
Looks like it when clean through.  
Can you breathe all right, son?

Joe takes a breath as the Doctor listens with his stethoscope. Joe winces slightly, and nods. The doctor begins applying disinfectant to the wound.

JOE HILL  
I have walked a ways up here, so I  
guess it's not too serious.

He begins bandaging Joe around the chest with gauze.

MCHUGH  
You call the police?

JOE HILL  
No. No, no. No police. This fellow  
that shot me, he was out of his  
head...didn't know what he was  
doing. He's my friend, I don't want  
nothing said about it.

The Doctor tapes the gauze with adhesive tape.

MCHUGH  
Fine, son, fine...

JOE HILL  
If there's any chance to get over  
it, it'll be okay with my friend.

The Doctor helps Joe on with his shirt.

MCHUGH  
Well, you're a lucky boy, son. The  
bullet went in just outside your  
nipple and came out just below the  
scapula...

Joe looks at him, confused.

MCHUGH (CONT'D)  
Your shoulder blade. Now I don't  
think it hit your lung, but there's  
always a chance it got nicked, so  
keep an eye open for coughed up  
blood.

The Doctor hands Joe a brown glass bottle.

MCHUGH (CONT'D)

You take three of these a day for infection. You cough up any blood or have trouble breathing, you get back up here, you understand?

Joe nods and stands. The Doctor helps him put on his overcoat. As he does, a pistol in a holster falls from the coat pocket and on to the floor. They both look down at it. The Doctor looks at Joe, then picks up the pistol and hands it to him. Joe puts it back into his pocket.

MCHUGH (CONT'D)

(Warily.)

Well...You going to make it back home all right?

Joe nods and exits. The lights change.

MCHUGH (CONT'D)

(To McDougall.)

I noticed the overcoat didn't have a bullet hole, so he must have been shot in his shirt sleeves. That's about all I can tell you.