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## Holy Wars

Robert Florence  
*University of New Orleans*

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Holy Wars

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
University of New Orleans  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts  
in  
Film, Theater, and Communication Arts  
Creative Writing

by

Rob Florence

B.A. New York University, 1989

May, 2008

# *HOLY WARS*

## SETTING:

New Orleans and Port Hudson, Louisiana, 1850's - 1870's

## CHARACTERS:

DR. CHARLES LOUIS ROUDANEZ - Free person of color, medical doctor, and civil rights publisher.

FATHER CLAUDE PASCAL MAISTRE - Enigmatic renegade priest; the only Catholic cleric in Antebellum / Civil War / Reconstruction era New Orleans who openly championed abolition and equal rights for blacks.

CAPTAIN ANDRE CAILLOUX - Former illiterate slave who became a prosperous business man, respected civic leader, and the nation's first black Civil War hero.

ARCHBISHOP JEAN-MARIE ODIN - Tireless Vincentian missionary sent to New Orleans to serve as archbishop.

MADAME FELICITE CAILLOUX - Wife of Andre Cailloux

MADEMOISELLE FELICIE CAILLAU - Literate, unmarried free person of color; Father Maistre's assistant

## WITNESS

## MAGISTRATE

HENRI REY - Free person of color; close friend of Cailloux; Spiritualist medium; Native Guard captain.

MR. POCHE - Customer in Cailloux's cigar shop.

GENERAL BENJAMIN BUTLER - First occupational governor of Union-defeated New Orleans; issued an order requesting enlistment of free people of color.

COLONEL SPENCER STAFFORD - Temporary commander of 1st Regiment of Native Guards; defender of black soldiers to racial harassment.

GENERAL NATHANIEL BANKS - Second occupational governor; opposed to blacks serving as officers.

CAPTAIN J.P. GARLAND - A problematic sentry.

GENERAL WILLIAM DWIGHT - Mean-spirited provisional commander of Native Guards during the siege of Port Hudson.

## MILITARY TRIBUNAL JUDGE

## COLOR SERGEANT ANSELMO PLANCIANIOS

## BLACK SPIRITUALIST

MONSIGNOR ROUSSELON - Mediator of Maistre's and Odin's conflict.

# HOLY WARS

## ACT ONE

*DARKNESS. In the BLACKOUT a live band begins to play ethereal, tempestuous MUSIC: "Spiritualist Suite" as moody LIGHTS rise on eight people, some black some white, eyes closed, formally-dressed, seated around a table Upstage Center with their hands palms-down on the table. In the middle of the group is HENRI REY, African-American, middle-aged, and intense. He writes while furiously while mumbling to himself. Lights fade out on them as MUSIC builds to a CRESCENDO and dark LIGHTING mixes with flashes of bright light . A single spotlight rises on CLAUDE PASCAL MAISTRE, a French priest in clerical clothing, lying in a bed Downstage Left. Then another single spotlight rises Upstage Right on ANDRE CAILLOUX, a black captain in a Union Army uniform . Both men possess an ageless, timeless quality. MAISTRE sits up in bed. MUSIC fades.*

I'm going to bury you.

MAISTRE

*CAILLOUX walks Downstage Right.*

You don't value your job?

CAILLOUX

*MAISTRE stands.*

My job *is* to bury you - my vocation.  
*(smiling)*

MAISTRE

But I question the logic of burying someone who will continue to live.

So what about the archbishop?

CAILLOUX

He doesn't understand. Odin thinks you no longer live. So, you pretend to no longer be alive and I'll *pretend* to bury you.

MAISTRE

*(shaking his head)*  
All the cooking pots are on the fire now, are they not?

CAILLOUX

LIGHTS CROSS FADE to DR. LOUIS CHARLES ROUDANEZ, sixty years old, well-dressed and dignified, who has stood up from the Spiritualist seance table and is crossing Downstage. MUSIC plays: "Dr. Roudanez's Theme." Power Point IMAGES above him of some of what he describes.

ROUDANEZ

I am Dr. Louis Charles Roudanez, son of a prosperous French planter and a free woman of color. While studying at the Faculte de Medecine de Paris I realized the ideals of French Republicanism in all its glory and my classmates and I would storm the barricades during the revolution of 1848. Returning to New Orleans I established a thriving medical practice but my most meaningful attempt to protect and preserve human life came in the form of my newspaper....

*(unfolding a copy of "L'Union")*

"L'Union," which fought to abolish slavery and to achieve equal rights for all - lofty principles, principles which I was not sure that man could live up to. Championing civil rights in the antebellum South, my newspaper placed me squarely in the crosshairs of conflict. And I had been involved in *initiating* the second French Revolution so it is fair to say that I could recognize hostility. However, I had never known a conflict quite like the battle between renegade priest Claude Pascal Maistre, the only abolitionist in the New Orleans archdiocese who championed this cause at great personal risk,

*MUSIC: "Cantique"*

and his newly-arrived archbishop, Jean-Marie Odin,....

LIGHTS CROSSFADE onto ARCHBISHOP ODIN and FATHER MAISTRE.

MAISTRE

Yes, yes, it is a great honor to finally meet you, archbishop. Your reputation precedes you.

ODIN

As does yours, Father Maistre.

*They shake hands.*

MAISTRE

So, a new broom sweeps clean.

ODIN

Yes, of course - a new broom is a clean broom.

*They share a laugh.*

MAISTRE

Anything that can be done to facilitate your transition, please call on me.

ODIN

Thank you,....

*(motioning with his hand)*

Sit down Father Maistre, please...

MAISTRE

Thank you.

*MAISTRE sits.*

ODIN

So, where are you from in France, Father Maistre?

*ODIN sits.*

MAISTRE

Laubressel. And you?

ODIN

Hauteville.

MAISTRE

And how do you find Louisiana, archbishop?

ODIN

It is God's will that I'm here.

MAISTRE

Certainly.

ODIN

But there are many challenges for me. For us.

MAISTRE

Challenges? No more challenging than single-handedly rebuilding the church in Texas?

ODIN

I sense things are different here. They say that Louisiana Catholics take a laissez-faire approach to their faith. Casual, right? Do you find that they only turn to us at important times - birth, marriage, death - but are otherwise indifferent to our moral demands?

MAISTRE

No, sir. Please do not rush to judgment. There are magnificent people here - very close to God. You will be pleasantly surprised.

ODIN

I take your word for it father and I look forward to my ministry. But there is much work to do...

*(picking up a book and lightly dropping it back down to his desk)*  
... reform

MAISTRE

Yes, very true. So, where do we start?

ODIN

*(standing)*

We need to establish an unambiguous distinction of parish boundaries and enforcement of church policy that limits a priest's ministrations to his own parishioners.

MAISTRE

That should be simple enough.

ODIN

I will impose a ban on grandiose evening weddings and we will -

MAISTRE

I beg your pardon but,... those weddings? They yield substantial revenue for the parish

ODIN

Ah-hah, so - church finances *also* need reform. I will establish strict codes for parish finances. Every parish will follow standard Church procedure by dispersing a percentage of its funds to the archbishop.

MAISTRE

*(meekly, after a brief pause of consideration)*

How much of a percentage?

ODIN

*(taken aback somewhat - staring Maistre down for a brief moment)*

That is yet to be determined. On that subject,...

*(reviewing the book)*

Father Maistre, I see that you own property.

MAISTRE

Yes sir.

ODIN

I must insist that you, like all other pastors, legally transfer parish property to me.

MAISTRE

Transfer the property?

ODIN

That is what I said.

MAISTRE

Sir, my congregants would not have a church nor the land for their church had I not the financial acumen to acquire it.

ODIN

*(sizing him up briefly)*

I thought you said "anything to assist me" in my challenging transition.

MAISTRE

Archbishop Odin I -

ODIN

And yet you challenge me?

MAISTRE

I'm not challenging you, archbishop, I'm simply -

ODIN

Then donate the property.

MAISTRE

Yes, sir. very good...

*(standing, uncomfortable)*

Just give me a little time get my books in order.

ODIN

There is only one book you should be concerned with....

*(opening a book and referring to it)*

Your former Bishop Anthony O'Regan of the Chicago diocese noted that you suffer from, quote, an "excessive love of money."

MAISTRE

Really?...

*(sitting, profoundly interested)*

What else does that book say?

ODIN

That you were transferred to Thuisy where you tested the letter of the law in a case involving money.

MAISTRE

And what are the specifics?

ODIN

There are none.

MAISTRE

So - there you have it.

ODIN

But then again, you resigned your post?

MAISTRE

*(politely emphatic)*

Yes, sir, and then I spent five months with the Redemptorist community where the superiors praised my piety and exemplary conduct.

ODIN

So, is it merely coincidence, Father Maistre, that your name has been linked with scandal more than once?

MAISTRE

Scandal lies in the eye of the beholder.

*(trying to hold back his indignation)*

I arrived here with a letter from my bishop certifying me as a priest in good standing. This letter asked the superiors to accept me favorably - it gives me permission to exercise my duties!

ODIN

St. Anne's Parish in Detroit - dismissed due to "accusations of sexual immorality" -

MAISTRE

*(he stands)*

"Accusations" -precisely!!!

*(slamming his hand down)*

Allegations which other bishops called "doubtful," and then so why would - subsequent to that accusation - Father Purcell in Cincinnati so enthusiastically recommend me to the archbishop here in New Orleans?

ODIN

I do not know. May I continue?



MAISTRE

Yes, sir.

*MAISTRE sits.*

ODIN

Holy Family Parish, French Village, Illinois - the parents of a young girl accuse you of "sexual improprieties."

MAISTRE

*(rapidly, right back at him)*

Bishop Van de Velde conducted an examination and found "nothing positive."

ODIN

But he transferred you *again*, did he not?

MAISTRE

Yes, sir.

ODIN

And his successor then sent you to St. Louis Parish where there were...

*(reading)*

allegations of misappropriating parish funds for personal benefit as well as baptizing and blessing the marriages of all who presented themselves regardless of denomination?

MAISTRE

So you are saying that our savior would not bless the marriage of a true disciple due to denomination?

ODIN

You are a *Catholic* priest, Father Maistre, also accused of blessing the burials of suicides and of Protestants *for a fee* and *charging* for the sacrament of Extreme Unction!

MAISTRE

You bishops are the ones who pressure us for this money!

ODIN

Alright then, let us talk about money, shall we?

*(reading)*

Fort Wayne - Bishop Benoit also accuses you of, quote, "an excessive love of money and a negligence of the functions of the ministry which made one suspect his faith." Was it not our savior who threw the money changers out of the temple?

MAISTRE

*(struggling to maintain decorum)*

It's the one who *holds* the skillet that knows the cost of lard.

**BLACK OUT. MUSIC: "Dr. Roudanez's Theme." LIGHTS UP on ROUDANEZ.**

ROUDANEZ

*(sighing)*

Maistre and Odin - for almost *ten years* these two butted heads. Their ongoing war culminated in a major skirmish over the funeral of one Captain Andre Cailloux, our nation's first black Civil War hero, whose rise to prominence started in much humbler beginnings....

*LIGHTS CROSSFADE onto FELICITE ENCALADA, future wife of Andre Cailloux, working as a washerwoman by an outbuilding. ANDRE CAILLOUX enters carrying a large bag of tobacco. He stops himself upon seeing her then unbeknownst to her, quietly watches her scrub laundry on a washboard. After a moment she notices that he is transfixed by her.*

Excuse me? FELICITE / MRS. CAILLOUX

Oh, I - ... CAILLOUX

You were? FELICITE / MRS. CAILLOUX

I was just... CAILLOUX

You were just?... What? FELICITE / MRS. CAILLOUX

Going to work. CAILLOUX

Oh. Then, go to work, then. FELICITE / MRS. CAILLOUX

Yes, of course. I will. I am. CAILLOUX

*ANDRE begins to exit.*

Excuse me? Sir? FELICITE / MRS. CAILLOUX

Yes? CAILLOUX

What kind of work is it that you do? FELICITE/ MRS. CAILLOUX

*(becoming flirtatious)*  
And why do you ask? CAILLOUX

*(nervously coy)*  
Because there may be some work which my master needs assistance with. So,...

CAILLOUX

So?

FELICITE / MRS. CAILLOUX

What kind of work is it that you do?

CAILLOUX

For myself or for my owner?

FELICITE / MRS. CAILLOUX

For *yourself*.

CAILLOUX

Well, I hire my own time out as a cigar maker.

FELICITE / MRS. CAILLOUX

That is not the kind of help we're looking for. What *else* can you do?

CAILLOUX

Carpentry, masonry.

FELICITE / MRS. CAILLOUX

Now that's more useful. Do you have much time? To hire your own time out?

CAILLOUX

Not exactly. But I could *make* time for you.

FELICITE / MRS. CAILLOUX

Not for me.

CAILLOUX

Oh yes. Of course.

*(sitting down as she continues to scrub laundry on the washboard)*

You know, I really like this city. It's so different from the plantation in Plaquemines. I have much *mobility* here.

FELICITE/ MRS. CAILLOUX

So you like New Orleans?

CAILLOUX

Yes, very much.

FELICITE/MRS. CAILLOUX

Do you live with your family members?

CAILLOUX

No.

*(pause)*

Not all of them. But I did live with my father, for quite a while.

FELICITE/ MRS. CAILLOUX

And your mother?

CAILLOUX

*(pause)*

She's up for sale.

FELICITE/ MRS. CAILLOUX

*(with irony)*  
And you say you *like* it here?

CAILLOUX

Well, where there is a sea there *are* pirates.

FELCITE/ MRS. CAILLOUX

So you like a place which disintegrated your family?

CAILLOUX

Our family was disintegrated long ago. And you know something, Miss...?

FELICITE / MRS. CAILLOUX

...Encalada.

CAILLOUX

Miss *Encalada* - it's for that very reason that I feel this would be a good place to build a family.

FELICITE/ MRS. CAILLOUX

Really?

CAILLOUX

Yes, really. And I've encountered *many* nice people here...

*MUSIC: "Dr. Roudanez's Theme."  
LIGHTS CROSS FADE onto  
ROUDANEZ .*

ROUDANEZ

Years before I started working to end slavery with my newspaper, the future captain Andre Cailloux and his future wife Felicite lived as slaves but would gain their freedom on their own.

*BLACKOUT followed by immediate flashing and ominous LIGHT.  
The following section is stylized.  
MUSIC: "Enslaved". They are at opposite ends of the stage looking across with their arms outstretched toward one another. MUSIC: "The Petition" as the LIGHTS creep back up to normal. A WITNESS and a JURIST enter.*

WITNESS

*(on top of the MUSIC; to audience, quickly)*

I certify that I have known the slave named Andre several years past by living in the same square with him and serving him daily and I do believe him to be an industrious, sober, and steady person who has knowledge sufficient to appreciate freedom, and a good trade by which he can maintain himself and raise to affluence in a few years should he persevere with the same industry he has used for a few years past.

JURIST

*(on top of the MUSIC; to audience, bureaucratically)*

Parish Court for the Parish and City of New Orleans: I do hereby certify that no opposition has been filed to the emancipation of the within mentioned slave. In testimony where of I have....

MRS. CAILLOUX

*(on top of the MUSIC; to audience)*

Orleans Parish Police Jury Records: Petition for the Emancipation of a slave, October 10, 1845: On the petition of him duly authorized praying that the consent of the police jury be granted to emancipate the slave named Andre aged about twenty-one years and native of this State, in order to recompense him for his good services and on the certificate annexed to the petition, the police jury unanimously declares that they consent to the emancipation of said slave Andre without being compelled to leave the State provided their consent be ratified by the jury of a subsequent meeting agreeably to law.

CAILLOUX

*(on top of the MUSIC; to audience)*

I pray that the consent of the police jury be granted to emancipate the slave Felicite, that the resolution pass after deliberating thereon and the police jury unanimously declare that they ratify the consent granted by said meeting for this emancipation of said slave Felicite without being compelled to leave the State.

*MUSIC stops and they both sign a document with an 'X.' MUSIC: "Emancipated." They cross the stage and embrace each other. LIGHTS CROSS FADE onto ROUDANEZ. MUSIC: "Dr. Roudanez's Theme."*

ROUDANEZ

*(entering)*

Andre and Felicite Cailloux became one of New Orleans' many free people of color at a time when fewer and fewer were doing so. Our paper reported the way that the city's once relatively-relaxed slave-holding environment became legally more restrictive. Many in the French-speaking free black community felt persecuted by society's institutions, including our own Catholic Church. Many of us consequently resorted to Spiritualism, a practice based on egalitarian ideals, which believed that the living could communicate directly with the deceased. The Spiritualist mediums would commune with spirit guides from beyond the grave. Spiritualism was against slavery and very popular with black New Orleans. Many Creoles led as spiritualist mediums. One of the most reputed was Henri Rey, close friend of Andre Cailloux...

*MUSIC: "Spiritualist Suite." Seance LIGHTING rises on eight people, some black some white, eyes closed, formally-dressed, seated around a table Upstage Center, with their hands palms-down on the table. In the middle is HENRI REY. He writes while furiously while mumbling to himself. In all seances, DR. ROUDANEZ sits on one far end of the table with one leg under the table and the other leg not; one eye open and the other eye closed.*

REY

*(with building intensity)*

You who deny the Spirit's existence dare say that a corpse left to its decomposition will be all that's left? Will the poor orphan never know who was its mother?

*On another part of the stage, dressed in vestments, ARCHBISHOP ODIN leads a procession to an altar where the preparatory prayers are said. The altar is incensed and ODIN reads the Introit and Kyrie in Latin. A choir could also sing the Introit and Kyrie. ODIN intones the "Gloria in excelsis" which could be continued by the choir from backstage.*

REY

Will the slave who has been the toy of a brutal master, the victim who suffered from the executioner, will he not obtain any justice? Will the self-sacrifice of a mother have no reward? Will the unknown martyrs be without reward?!?

*His left hand goes into a spasm and his fingers begins to tap rapidly in the motion of a telegraph key as he writes.*

REY

That Creation which is admired by you demonstrates a Creator who has shown the Eternity what has come out of his Wisdom; your pulverized dead body shall by its dust be combined with the great Nature but will then your Intelligence, your Willpower, be of the ephemeral duration of a material existence?

*REY stands up, eyes closed, trembling. After the greeting "Dominus vobiscum" and its answer "Et cum spiritu tuo", ODIN chants the collect of the day.*

REY

Oh seek! Seek and you will find this Intelligence enlightened with the Spiritual Light, and this Will power will make itself Known! Leave the dead body on its dung. Seek for the spirit. Seek for us.....

*HENRI REY's eyes open wide and he falls back into his chair exhausted. MUSIC fades and LIGHTS CROSSFADE onto FATHER MAISTRE asleep on his desk tumultuously tossing and turning. FELICIE CAILLOUX enters and shakes him.*

FELICIE

Father? Father!

MAISTRE

*(stirring)*

Et cum spiritu tuo...

Father! Are you alright?	FELICIE
<i>(stirring)</i> Et cum spiritu tuo...	MAISTRE
Father Maistre!	FELICIE <i>MAISTRE stops stirring and sits straight up.</i>
<i>(after a moment of silence)</i> I, I,....	MAISTRE
You what?	FELICIE
<i>(sitting up)</i> Who?...	MAISTRE
Who what?	FELICIE <i>FELICIE examines MAISTRE's face as he looks off into the distance.</i>
I'm concerned about you, Father.	FELICIE <i>FELICIE places the back of her hand to MAISTRE's forehead to check his temperature.</i>
I'm all right, Felicie... <i>(pulling back from her)</i> Thank you. Look, we have much to do. <i>(checking his calendar)</i> You're scheduled to stand as sponsor at the Bienvenue baptism Saturday, four P.M. And, would you be able to witness the Delachaise wedding on Sunday?	MAISTRE <i>There is a KNOCK at the door.</i>
Come in, please.	MAISTRE <i>ARCHBISHP ODIN enters with a document and FATHER MAISTRE stands.</i>
Good morning Archbishop Odin.	FELICIE

ODIN  
Good morning Father Maistre, Felicie.

MAISTRE  
To you as well, Archbishop.

ODIN  
Father Maistre, you look tired. Are you not well?

MAISTRE  
I'm having trouble sleeping.

ODIN  
Well, you *could* lay down in a fireplace.

MAISTRE  
What?

ODIN  
And you will sleep like a log.

*FELICIE laughs and exits.  
MAISTRE realizes it was a joke  
and laughs as an afterthought.*

ODIN  
So, what is your response to my request?

MAISTRE  
I will transfer the property to you, sir.

ODIN  
I knew you were of good character!  
*(presenting Maistre with the paper work)*  
Take your time reviewing them, my friend.  
*(getting ready to leave, gathering the paper work)*  
I must go prepare for my first confirmation tour.

MAISTRE  
So you will honor us with your presence at St. Rose of Lima?

ODIN  
*(with charm and good humor)*  
Of course! It will be my honor.  
*(putting his coat on)*  
And of course you will consider your homilies.

MAISTRE  
My homilies?

ODIN  
Yes, as part of my reform efforts I'm instructing *all* priests to mind their homilies.

MAISTRE  
How, sir?



ODIN

To maintain a thematic link with the readings.

MAISTRE

That should not be difficult.

ODIN

Do not underestimate, Father. It is easy to stray if your mind is not disciplined.

MAISTRE

His teachings apply so readily to the problems at hand here that I don't think that I could *not* remain focused on them.

ODIN

*(walking back toward Maistre)*  
And what do you think the problems *here* are?

MAISTRE

The subjugation of God's children.

ODIN

Elaborate.

MAISTRE

The selling of human flesh.

ODIN

*(taking his coat off again and sitting)*  
Father Maistre, when I first arrived as a missionary in this country, the *practice* distressed me to no end. I remember writing my sister and telling her that they are treated as we would treat a beast of burden in France - that they live like *beasts* rather than people.

MAISTRE

Very true, Monsignor.

ODIN

As bishop of Galveston I wanted to end our connection with the practice. I pushed for divestiture.

MAISTRE

But not here?

ODIN

Things do not happen in a vacuum. They arise from a natural order of things. Our moral teachings find influences in many places - St. Thomas Aquinas, and Roman Law, and, and -

MAISTRE

But you view the *practice* as sound? Consistent with our -

ODIN

Not the *trade* of -

MAISTRE

But you own, buy and sell -

ODIN

*(explosive and rapidly)*

Don't you realize that a slave has both natural *and* supernatural rights that one is obliged to respect?!? The right to a lawful and valid marriage! The right to unbroken family life, to adequate food and clothing, to humane treatment! The right to knowledge and practice of religion - specifically Catholicism.

MAISTRE

So, please, help me to understand, sir: You appreciate the benefit *it* could possibly have but... disapprove of any... negative spiritual ramifications?

ODIN

I myself have demanded a code that would guarantee those protections.

MAISTRE

Do you support the Confederacy?

ODIN

*I always* caution that abuse will bring God's wrath down upon the South!

MAISTRE

So you *don't* support the Confederacy?

ODIN

What we're talking about here is the difference between a social ill and a *moral* sin.

MAISTRE

I don't follow.

ODIN

Listen, Father: it's like holding a wolf by the ears....

*(intensely quiet)*

You know it is not right but you're reluctant to let go.

MAISTRE

Let go Archbishop Odin...

*(brief pause during which they stare each other down)*

... or else that wolf could tear itself out from your hands, and take your hands along with it.

ODIN

*(standing)*

So you *will* sign after a cursory review?

MAISTRE

Oh no, I -

ODIN

*No?*

MAISTRE

No Monsignor. I will sign it right now.

ODIN

Now? Very good.

But first,...

MAISTRE

Yes?

ODIN

A little addendum.

MAISTRE

*MAISTRE writes something on the document and hands it back to Odin.*

ODIN

*(reading, then incredulous)*  
\$3287.25? You want me to *purchase* the lot? And the building?

MAISTRE

Yes, sir. Part of the purchase price in cash and three notes for the balance at six percent.

ODIN

*(struggling to maintain composure)*  
Father Maistre, *if* you don't mind me asking, where did you get the *capital* to make the initial purchases?

MAISTRE

Investments which yield returns.

ODIN

You used your parishioners money for the initial purchases, did you not?

MAISTRE

My books are open, Archbishop Odin.

ODIN

So you used your own capital?

MAISTRE

I have nothing to hide.

ODIN

The priesthood is a noble calling!

MAISTRE

I could not agree with you more.

*ODIN gathers the paper work and begins to exit.*

MAISTRE

So we shall see you at St. Rose of Lima on your confirmation tour?

ODIN

Perhaps....  
*(opening the door to exit)*  
... but don't hold your breath.

*LIGHTS CROSSFADE to Andre Cailloux's cigar shop Stage Left where CAILLOUX rolls cigars with HENRI REY while a reader reads from "Les Cenelles" aloud in French. MUSIC: "Dr. Roudanez's Theme" ROUDANEZ enters Stage Right smoking a cigar.*

ROUDANEZ

*(holding up the cigar)*

I bought my cigars from Andre Cailloux. Of the numerous free black cigar makers, his product was the finest.

*(smoking)*

The former slave was now a prosperous, respected artisan. He was also literate by this time, and a subscriber to my newspaper.

*CAILLOUX is writing in a ledger as ROUDANEZ exits smoking. MR. POCHE, a formally dressed white man, enters.*

POCHE

Good morning, Andre.

CAILLOUX

Good morning my friend.

*They shake hands. CAILLOUX offers the man his own lit cigar which the man inspects.*

POCHE

Perfect. I would like one hundred.

CAILLOUX

We can have them for you by Thursday.

POCHE

Good....

*(smoking)*

Tell me Andre, you own a parcel of land facing Bertrand Street?

CAILLOUX

Yes, I do.

POCHE

Where, precisely?

CAILLOUX

Poydras, Perdido, Bertrand, and Prieur.

CUSTOMER

Would you like to sell?

CAILLOUX

Perhaps. But only if I have somewhere else to invest. What are you asking for *your* lot on Coffee Street?

CUSTOMER

What can you offer?

CAILLOUX

*(writing in his ledger book)*

I could pay you...

*(calculating aloud)*

... seventy dollars in cash plus two notes for one hundred twenty-five dollars a piece - one payable at six months and the other at twelve, from the date of domicile.

POCHE

At what interest?

CAILLOUX

Six per cent the first year, and...

*(tabulating on the ledger book)*

... eight percent every year thereafter. How does that sound?

POCHE

I will consider your offer if you consider selling your Bertrand Street lot.

CAILLOUX

I will consider.

POCHE

*(standing)*

So, I will see you Thursday. Can you let me know by then?

*MRS. CAILLOUX enters.*

CAILLOUX

Yes, I think so.

POCHE

Good morning Mrs. Cailloux.

MRS. CAILLOUX

Good morning, Mr. Poche.

POCHE

Thank you Andre.

*POCHE exits.*

MRS. CAILLOUX

You could use a break, Andre

CAILLOUX

Ambition is a poor excuse for not having enough sense to be lazy. Come here, my love...

*(trying to hug his wife)*

You look beautiful.

MRS. CAILLOUX

*(pushing him away)*

That is funny because I feel rotten - nauseated! Did you see this?

*(opening a newspaper)*

The governor's calling for the defense of the "Native Land." Formed a regiment of free men of color, calling it the "Native Guards, Louisiana Militia, Confederate States of America"? Isn't that something?

*(disgusted, smacks the paper and reads)*

"Our free colored men are certainly as much attached to the land of their free birth as their white brethren..."

CAILLOUX

Yes, I am aware.

MRS. CAILLOUX

And you did not tell me? So what are you thinking? There's a meeting to show support. Will you attend?

CAILLOUX

Yes. I think I will.

MRS. CAILLOUX

What?!?

CAILLOUX

And why not?

MRS. CAILLOUX

You? You -

CAILLOUX

I didn't say I intend to fight but our *ancestors* fought for this state!

MRS. CAILLOUX

*(right back at him)*

Yes but they fought for France and Spain when when this was a colony and they fought for America against an invading foreign power. They didn't fight for the Confederacy!

CAILLOUX

Please, comparisons do not -

MRS. CAILLOUX

You can't be serious! Think of where you come from! You had to buy your own mother's freedom.

CAILLOUX

What's rightly done is never wrongly done.

MRS. CAILLOUX

What do you mean?

CAILLOUX

If I fight, there will be no regrets because it will be done for a good motive.

MRS. CAILLOUX

Motives? Do you not think that some free people sympathize with the Confederacy?

CAILLOUX

Perhaps, some, yes.

MRS. CAILLOUX

Well explain to me *your* motivation.

CAILLOUX

Our *position*, as free people, is in jeopardy to begin with. We can *protect* it - *improve* it - by remaining loyal to the state. We are becoming isolated - vulnerable.

MRS. CAILLOUX

But we could move to Haiti, or Mexico, like so many others.

CAILLOUX

No, our city is worth fighting for.

MRS. CAILLOUX

True, but not with the Confederacy.

CAILLOUX

Loyalty could bring us fair treatment - legally, politically, we could -

MRS. CAILLOUX

But loyal to *whom*? Think of what you're saying.

CAILLOUX

I have thought of it and it's not that cut and dry. Some are joining the Confederate forces because they fear for their *lives*.

MRS. CAILLOUX

If I had to choose a way to die, it would be fighting *against* them not with them.

CAILLOUX

Others fear they will lose their private property. There have been threats of confiscation. And bodily harm.

MRS. CAILLOUX

And you're afraid of that?

CAILLOUX

No. But others are.

*(holding her)*

If I enlist, it will mean nothing, for the Union will overtake New Orleans soon, I am certain.

MRS. CAILLOUX

You know what it is? This *identifying* with the South? It's all the European blood.

CAILLOUX

I wouldn't know. I'm the blackest man in New Orleans.

**BLACKOUT. MUSIC:**  
**"Dr. Roudanez's Theme"**  
**LIGHTS UP on Dr. Roudanez**  
**entering.**

ROUDANEZ

If any of the Native Guard soldiers were truly enthused for the Confederacy, it did not last very long. There was no support. Many never even received uniforms or equipment. As their enthusiasm waned, Father Maistre's support for equal rights and emancipation only grew.

*LIGHTS CROSS FADE onto  
ARCHBISHOP ODIN sitting  
behind a desk examining a book.  
FATHER MAISTRE enters.*

MAISTRE  
Good day, Archbishop.

ODIN  
Is it?

MAISTRE  
What?

ODIN  
A good day.

MAISTRE  
What, am I late? What time is it?

ODIN  
11:30 AM.

MAISTRE  
Good. You know sir, I've asked that question twelve times today and every time someone gives me a different answer.

ODIN  
So is it a "good day"?

MAISTRE  
*(confused)*  
I think every day is a good day when -

ODIN  
Is it a good day when a priest insists on defying diocesan regulation?  
*(opening the book)*  
This is your handwriting - the parish register?

MAISTRE  
Yes, sir.

ODIN  
"From this date on, baptisms and marriages for persons of color will be inscribed in the principal register, without discrimination, together with whites."

MAISTRE  
Are you aware that some of your clergy refuse them absolution and last rites?

ODIN  
The people they refuse are, are... they are in violation of the law.

MAISTRE  
That law is now hanging by a very fine thread. *All* the cooking pots will soon be on the stove.  
*(sitting)*



Archbishop Odin, I have been told that you sir, have allowed, even *encouraged*, priests to tell slaves whose masters do not permit them church marriages, that they could marry secretly and still receive the sacraments.

ODIN

*(uneasy)*

You have no public record of that

MAISTRE

Did you not announce it openly from the pulpit? Encouraged slaves to marry secretly and still receive the sacrament? Correct me if I'm mistaken sir.

ODIN

There is no record!

*(slamming the book closed and sitting down; pause)*

What I have done, there is no record of....

MAISTRE

Archbishop, please, tell me - what is the conflict?

ODIN

Conflict?

MAISTRE

Yes, sir- *your* conflict, within yourself.

ODIN

The only conflict being discussed here is the conflict between *you* and your church! The *conflict* is with your incendiary homilies! The *conflict* is with your defiance of the rules! The conflict is within *you*! Even *between* you and your fellow clergy?

MAISTRE

How so?

ODIN

Some say you intentionally incite the black against the white.

MAISTRE

Is that so?

ODIN

Not my words. I am merely repeating. Father Maistre, you must curtail your provocative services and resume the separation of marriage and baptismal registers for the two races. I cant not fathom your defiance.

MAISTRE

I obey the laws of God.

ODIN

*(standing)*

You *interpret* the laws of God! Why must you fight something far greater than your willful self? I am warning you Father Maistre that if you persist I will be forced to take disciplinary action, much like that of a father with a wayward son.

MAISTRE

I understand, sir - play with the cat and I will get scratched.

*BLACKOUT. MUSIC: "Spiritualist Suite." Seance LIGHTING UP on a Spiritualist circle led by HENRI REY Upstage Center.*

REY

My children, receive the manifestations - weigh them with your reason. The superior state of your soul calls superior guides but beware of influences which might seize you. Your guides are there, watching over you, You have to prepare your soul for a happy state which is the right path by good deeds, reason, by knowledge and by the study of this work...

*LIGHTS UP on ODIN conducting mass on another part of the stage. At the altar he chants the Epistle and the choir sings the Gradual. ODIN blesses the incense and says the "Munda Cor meum" prayer.*

REY

*(getting the spirit)*

Ordinary spirits abound around you! Therefore watch with care - recognize them and maintain yourself by your thought free from will and bend toward good acts so as to guarantee the approach of your devoted and superior guides.

Establish your circles with devoted souls; unite through Confidence and Charity, one for the other; do not pay attention to those who are imbued with curiosity; keep them away. One who wants light will guide..

*LIGHTS CROSS FADE onto ROUDANEZ. MUSIC: "Dr. Roudanez's Theme."*

ROUDANEZ

As a newspaper man, I can tell you that free blacks fighting for Southern rights made great copy but in reality the Native Guards were only used for public display. The Confederate authorities never had any intention of deploying black troops for significant missions. But every thing changed after the occupation....

*MUSIC: "Farragut's Landing" and POWER POINT images of the naval occupation.*

ROUDANEZ

On April 18, 1862, every thing changed. After quickly securing the occupied city, General Benjamin Butler realized he would not be able to count on enough white Unionist recruits so the general considered enlisting free people of color. He was impressed by the Creole officers but at first could not overlook the fact that they had served in the Confederacy.

*LIGHTS CROSSFADE to a meeting between GENERAL BENJAMIN BUTLER in Union blue and ANDRE CAILLOUX and HENRI REY. CAILLOUX holds a grey Confederate officer's hat.*

BUTLER

Yes, we benefit from your service but I have strong reservations and have decided against it.

CAILLOUX

General Butler, all we ask is that you give us a chance to prove ourselves, sir.

BUTLER

And explain to me why I should do so.

CAILLOUX

My men *hunger* for combat, sir. They need to discredit the aspersions heaped on soldiers of our race.

REY

I'm not sure that we can put into words, General Butler, the personal significance - the *urgency* - to us of serving in your army, sir.

BUTLER

Well, maybe you can put into words why you have willingly served in the Confederate forces?

REY

*(after a pause during which Rey and Cailloux look to each other)*  
If we hadn't volunteered they would have accused us of sedition, sir.

CAILLOUX

And they could have forced us into the ranks regardless. General Butler, please consider - we own property. We have *rights* here. We need to take care of our *own*, sir.

BUTLER

This is a cause greater than one's self!

REY

Sir, if you are waiting for us to tell you that we harbor any loyalty to the Confederate government, then you will be waiting an extremely long time, sir.

CAILLOUX

There are not five men in the regiment fighting on the side of the Confederacy, sir. I do not know what more we can tell you, sir.

BUTLER

There is one more thing you can tell me. Consider this - the Confederate Congress has issued this proclamation,...

*(reading)*

"Any Negro taken in arms against the Confederacy will immediately be returned to a state of slavery. Any Negro taken in Federal uniform will be summarily put to death..."  
So *now*, can you tell me that you are willing to fight on the *correct* side?

CAILLOUX and REY

Yes sir!

BUTLER

This is very consequential. You men realize that if we reactivate you who have seen Confederate service, we could eliminate any reluctance which both the South *and* the North have to arming blacks against whites.

CAILLOUX and REY

Yes, sir.

BUTLER

Good. Can you promptly find your men?

CAILLOUX and REY

Yes, sir.

BUTLER

Good. Then organize the officers and report back to me within three days.

*MUSIC: "Jordan Noble's Roll"*

CAILLOUX and REY

Yes, sir!

*They salute and exit.*

BUTLER

*(writing)*  
I call on Africa...

*The MILITARY DRUMMING of "Jordan Noble's Roll" transitions into AFRICAN DRUMMING while POWER POINT PROJECTIONS of archival images of black Civil War soldiers appear. NATIVE GUARD SOLDIERS examine and put on blue Union uniforms. Under CAILLOUX's command, the Native Guard soldiers fall into formation while BUTLER reads his order to the audience.*  
*MUSIC: "I Call on Africa"*

BUTLER

I hereby announce plans to organize a force from Native Guard veterans who have served in the Louisiana militia, to take service in the volunteer forces of the United States and be organized in new regiments to defend their homes from ruthless invaders, to protect their wives and children and kindred from wrong, to shield their property from being seized by bad men, and to defend the flag of their native country as their fathers did under Jackson at Chalmette against Pakenham. I will rely upon their well-known loyalty and patriotism and direct all Native Guard veterans and all other free men of color who shall enlist to be organized by appointment of proper officers and accepted, paid, equipped, armed, and rationed as are other volunteer troops of the United States, subject to the approval of the President of the United States. Men desirous of enlisting are to report at the Touro Charity Building on Front Levee Street.

REY

*(to audience, while the Native Guard soldiers in blue uniforms line up)*  
Black soldiers, you are fighting for the glory of God and the salvation of your country and to avenge the blood that has flowed from the lacerated backs of yourselves, your mothers, wives, and sweethearts! Woe to any man who flinches! If one of you hesitates, I shall shoot him on the spot! Dismissed!

*“Dr. Roudanez’s Theme” plays as the African drumming continues under it.  
LIGHTS CROSSFADE onto  
DR.ROUDANEZ entering.*

ROUDANEZ

My newspaper ran a notice calling for more troops to complete the 3rd regiment; it read: “Ralliez vous sous the Drapeau de L’Union.” Volunteers were promised \$100 and 160 acres of land as a bonus for enlisting but only \$38 was promised up front; the rest was due “a la fin de la guerre.” The pay was \$13 a month plus an additional food allowance for soldier’s families. A special appeal was made for men who could speak both English and French to serve as noncommissioned officers. Andre Cailloux was one such man.

*LIGHTS CROSSFADE onto  
MRS. CAILLOUX.*

CAILLOUX

*(entering dressed in his blue captain’s uniform holding his commission)*  
General Butler has given Henri Rey and myself captain’s commissions.

MRS. CAILLOUX

That’s the least he could do - how quickly you raised a company for him.

CAILLOUX

For us. Besides, everyone’s doing the same. The general’s order closed almost every business in the community. There was practically a stampede to enlist - more than 2000 men so far!

MRS. CAILLOUX

*(hugging him)*  
The opportunity of a lifetime.

CAILLOUX

Yes. But I am still somewhat perplexed. Look, here....  
*(examining a muster sheet)*  
Seventy percent of the officers from the Louisiana militia regiment have opted not to enlist. Only five of the 1st regiment’s black officers served in the old Native Guards: Edgar Davis, Octave Foy, Alcide Lewis, and Charles Sentmanat.

MRS. CAILLOUX

That’s four.

CAILLOUX

And Andre Cailloux.  
*(sitting, sighing, perplexed)*  
Maybe there *is* loyalty to the Confederacy. Or maybe it’s that they don’t want to fight with the whites *here* if the war goes badly for us.

MRS. CAILLOUX

Banish the thought! Let me see that.  
*(reading the names)*  
It’s mostly the younger ones.

CAILLOUX

*(reading over her shoulder)*

You're right. You know, the older ones who enlisted in the Confederacy? They knew they wouldn't experience combat. But the younger ones *want* to fight and they will see action.

MRS. CAILLOUX

*(after a pause)*

You should be proud. You've raised a company of more than one hundred men!

CAILLOUX

Yes, and I must sign all *one hundred* of their enlistment papers

*He begins to sign the papers as she looks over his shoulder.*

MRS. CAILLOUX

"Andrew?"

CAILLOUX

Would you please let me -

MRS. CAILLOUX

Why?

CAILLOUX

Why what?

MRS. CAILLOUX

*Anglicize.*

CAILLOUX

So they can read it, understand?

MRS. CAILLOUX

No. Understand what?

CAILLOUX

What if...

MRS. CAILLOUX

What?

CAILLOUX

What if you need to access my military pension?

MRS. CAILLOUX

Don't speak of that! That won't be necessary!

CAILLOUX

Yes, you are right, my love.

MRS. CAILLOUX

*(reading over his shoulder as he continues to sign)*

"Andre!..."

*She leans over and hugs him.*  
*MUSIC: "Cantique"*  
*LIGHTS CROSS FADE onto*  
*FR. MAISTRE kneeling at the private*  
*altar in his office. There is a KNOCK at*  
*the door.*

Yes? MAISTRE  
*FELICIE CAILLOU enters. She is*  
*visibly upset.*

Come here... MAISTRE  
*(hugging her)*  
What is wrong? FELICIE  
The women of the Societe des Fleurs de Marie, we asked a parish priest to say a mass  
for our loved ones in the Native Guards...

And what did he say? MAISTRE

He said he would be happy to say the mass... FELICIE

And so? MAISTRE

Happy to say the mass *if* it were a funeral service. FELICIE

*(holding her by the shoulders)* MAISTRE  
I will sing the mass! Gladly! I will deliver a homily on the love of God and neighbor and  
the *advantages* of unity and peace!

Thank you, thank you! FELICIE

And at the end of the mass your society can take up a second collection. MAISTRE

*(slight pause)* FELICIE  
Father Maistre?

Yes? MAISTRE

Must you move so quickly from talk of consoling us to plans for second collections? FELICIE

A second collection for the orphans at the Institute Catholique! I thought your society  
always - MAISTRE

FELICIE

Yes, yes, but the point is that the archbishop is watching your every move for signs of, of...

MAISTRE

Of what?!?

FELICIE

Anything he *perceives* as wrong - perceived chicanery, indifferentism, malfeasance, greed - I don't know what!

MAISTRE

You think this is easy?

FELICIE

Wait wait -

MAISTRE

*(rapidly)*

It's not easy being a priest even if you *don't* serve an archbishop who suspects greed when you bless burials and marriages regardless of denomination! We, we, we are all too often solitary, overburdened, financially unstable, lonely -

FELICIE

Lonely?

MAISTRE

*(taking her hand, gently)*

No. I'm not.

*KNOCK on the door and he drops her hand. ARCHBISHOP ODIN enters.*

ODIN

What have you done?

MAISTRE

What have I done where? When?

ODIN

You have offended your parishioners at St. Rose of Lima!

FELICIE

Excuse me.

*FELICIE exits.*

ODIN

You are alienating parishioners.

MAISTRE

Certainly not all of them.

ODIN

What are you doing? You're isolating yourself! I don't want you isolated.



MAISTRE

So I read the Emancipation Proclamation and called for a day of fasting and prayer.

ODIN

You may *think* you're preaching a love of liberty and independence but you are in actuality inciting insurrection.

MAISTRE

I preach from the gospel.

ODIN

A good shepherd is supposed to *shear* his flock not *skin* it. You are driving the flock away.

MAISTRE

Some, perhaps, I will grant you. But I am bringing others in.

ODIN

You bring disorder which is at cross purposes with my mission here - *our* mission here. Father Maistre, my friend,...

*(sitting down, quietly)*

We are on the same team. We want the same thing, do we not? To spread the word, the *love* of Christ?

MAISTRE

Yes, yes. I am in complete agreement with you Archbishop Odin.

ODIN

Then you certainly must agree that the only way to achieve *our* ends is with a purposeful purpose - a methodical approach which involves principles and order.

MAISTRE

Well my purpose is certainly not to argue with you, sir. It is to spread the *good news*.

ODIN

Good. Then please be with me from here on as I implement more measures designed to bring about order by following Church law.

MAISTRE

Yes sir. Such as?

ODIN

To begin with, in conformity with canon law, church bells will only be rung for church services and for the interment of Catholics.

MAISTRE

*(after a slight pause of reflection)*

What about other *Christians*?

ODIN

Father Maistre,...

*(standing, looking off)*

It has been said that you conduct funeral masses for Spiritualist practitioners who also consider themselves Catholic.

MAISTRE

If someone says they're Catholic, how am I to know what they do when they are not at mass?

ODIN

Those who eat eggs don't know whether the chicken has suffered either. But it is said that you *consort* with the Spiritualists.

MAISTRE

And what if I do, sir?

ODIN

*What?*

MAISTRE

I'm not saying that I am but what if?

ODIN

What *if*?

MAISTRE

Our savior "consorted" with many who would be considered unsavory. You know, sir, the Holy See does not denounce this practice. *Our* church acknowledges the intervention of spirits at seances.

ODIN

You seem to know much about this subject.

MAISTRE

Archbishop Odin, you yourself well know that our faith recognizes the existence of -

ODIN

Your mouth *never* keeps Sunday.

MAISTRE

*(sober and steadfast)*

Our church's creed does not deny the possibility of spirit communion. It's -

ODIN

That, my friend, is not what I'm here to discuss. If I may continue?

MAISTRE

Yes, sir.

ODIN

We will discontinue the custom of ringing the church bells to announce cockfights, horse races, and yes, to announce burials of non-Catholics.

MAISTRE

But they are *Christians*.

ODIN

You, what? Write your own rules? I know full well that you have made your church a haven for contraband slaves who -

MAISTRE

Who what? What?!? Who escaped into Union lines? These people have suffered indignities from *priests*! Some of *your* clergy disparage their race to the children in catechism classes! And the black soldiers? The church doors are closed to them! They have been spat upon by parishioners! And some priests threaten to deny them the sacraments if they fight for the Union!

ODIN

Can you substantiate these claims?

MAISTRE

Archbishop Odin, were you not in any way effected by the *spirit* of the revolution in France?

ODIN

We can not judge as in France. It is not the same here. *Here* when clergy become abolitionists it can lead to distressing excesses such as violence which Christ would certainly not -

MAISTRE

So you are saying that two wrongs don't make a -

ODIN

I'm saying that *violence* is not -

MAISTRE

*Violence* is when a fellow priest stating that I should be *lynched* and that a rope would be too good for me but my priestly stole would suffice!

ODIN

*(pause as if surprised)*  
Where did you hear that?

MAISTRE

*(showing him a copy of 'L'Union')*  
Dr. Roudanez's paper.

ODIN

*(grabbing the paper and briefly perusing)*  
Shingles cover every thing.

MAISTRE

Yes, but the stick is not stronger than the sabre.

ODIN

My patience is wearing thin. You have been warned more than once Father.

*BLACKOUT. MUSIC:  
"Dr.Roudanez's Theme."  
LIGHTS CROSS FADE  
onto DR. ROUDANEZ entering.*

ROUDANEZ

I attended mass today at St. Augustine's and yes, a priest did withhold communion from a black man who had enlisted. Meanwhile Father Maistre ministered in another world....

*On another part of the stage FR.  
MAISTRE ministers to Native Guard  
soldiers.*

ROUDANEZ

The Native Guards revered him. Their camp was close to his church and he visited them regularly and focused with great fervor on the sick. At this volatile time, he quite often brought tears to peoples' eyes.

MAISTRE

God watches and His justice finally prevails. Men might perish in their struggle toward freedom but a principle is a faith set loose. It spreads and bears fruit...  
In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit...

*MAISTRE makes the sign of the  
cross followed by the soldiers.  
As they begin to disperse, some  
shake hands with or embrace  
FR. MAISTRE. ANDRE  
CAILLOUX remains.*

CAILLOUX

Thank you very much Father Maistre.

MAISTRE

Thank *you* Captain Cailloux.

CAILLOUX

One day they will send us to fight. We will need you to pray for us.

MAISTRE

Yes, of course. And on that day you will be missed.

CAILLOUX

But we will return.

MAISTRE

I have no doubt. But Captain Cailloux, there are already parishioners I notice missing - not the soldiers either.

CAILLOUX

Where have they gone?

MAISTRE

That's what I'm trying to determine. Let me ask you, are we losing brethren to Spiritualism?

CAILLOUX

I don't know. I've never participated. I've never been.

MAISTRE

Nor have I captain. But, if I may ask, what do you think about the practice?

CAILLOUX

Every road has two directions and all sins cast long shadows.

MAISTRE

Yes, certainly, but *what* do you think is present when they -

CAILLOUX

God will be present whether asked or not. It is a bad *joke* father. But why do you ask?

MAISTRE

I'm concerned about the participants, about the direction they're heading.

CAILLOUX

They know what they're playing with and this is no time for people to lose their way.

MAISTRE

So, how do you feel about *your* direction?

CAILLOUX

*(looking off into the distance, exhaling, and making the sign of the cross)*  
As you spread your mat so must you lie?

MAISTRE

Here....

*MAISTRE takes the rosary from around his neck and puts it around CAILLOUX's neck. CAILLOUX then takes a Confederate battle flag patch from his pocket and hands it to MAISTRE.*

CAILLOUX

From my old uniform....

*MUSIC: "Spiritualist Suite. LIGHTS quickly CROSS FADE onto a the Spiritualist circle Upstage Center.*

HENRI REY

*(in a mesmeric state)*  
The Spiritualist has come nearer to God! It is why he recognizes the *truth* of what makes you smile. The Materialist believes the work of God incomplete but the Spiritualist sees it and comprehends it as complete!

*BLACKOUT. MUSIC: "Dr. Roudanez's Theme." LIGHTS UP on DR. ROUDANEZ.*

ROUDANEZ

After a month of training the 1st Regiment set out from Camp Strong and they were exhilarated....

*Upstage the Native Guard regiment marches in formation.*

...only to be frustrated by their fatigue duty assignments: cleaning, digging, draining - anything but combat. Eventually their commanding officer Colonel Spencer Stafford appealed to General Butler.

*MUSIC: **Stafford's Lament.**" LIGHTS  
CROSS FADE onto COL.  
STAFFORD and CAPT. CAILLOUX  
standing across from GEN. BUTLER  
seated behind a desk.*

STAFFORD

Yes, morale is horrible, sir. Grievances are piling up. These soldiers *and* their families have been harassed by white civilians; the army has provided no decent uniforms, equipment, supplies, transportation, or building material. The government hasn't delivered the rations they promised to the families and there has been no advance pay *or* regular pay! All the while these men must live with the notion that they are inferior and could not possibly be good soldiers? But worst of all, General Butler, is the fact that all my companies are dispersed only along the rail lines. You will never know what these men can do if they continue to serve only in their present capacity, sir

BUTLER

And what is your opinion Captain Cailloux?

CAILLOUX

Sir, I am in agreement with Colonel Stafford. I would like to see my regiment transferred from current duty, brigaded with other black units, and actively placed it into field service. And the sooner this order is executed, the sooner our mobility and effectiveness will be secured, sir.

BUTLER

You realize that there is skepticism about the combat readiness of such inexperienced troops.

STAFFORD

I am very familiar with the attributes of these men and you can rest assured that when put to the test, they will not be found wanting. Please, General Butler, give my men the opportunity to prove their valor and to end their defamation, sir.

BUTLER

Duly noted - thank you, Colonel. I will give this matter my undivided attention.

*STAFFORD salutes and seems ready  
to exit but CAPT. CAILLOUX stands  
his ground and clears his throat.*

STAFFORD

And yes, also, General Butler, my men have not received their promised bounty and advance pay.

CAILLOUX

Or even our regular pay through October 31st, General Butler, sir.

BUTLER

Where is it?

STAFFORD

In the hands of the pay master who refuses to disburse it, sir.

CAILLOUX

It is causing great hardship on the troops' families, sir.

BUTLER

I will look into this.

STAFFORD

I also urge an investigation into the committee responsible for food distribution. The quantities are worse than substandard.

CAILLOUX

And at times non-existent, sir.

BUTLER

Yes, it would be hard to wage war on an empty stomach.

STAFFORD

General Butler, sir, if the Union expects the full performance from these soldiers, it must live up to its contract, sir

BUTLER

Yes, men, I understand your concerns and I will take this into serious consideration but...

STAFFORD

Yes, sir?

BUTLER

I am soon to be replaced, and I'm not sure how my successor will respond to these requests.

*BLACKOUT. MUSIC: "Cantique"  
LIGHTS UP on the interior of the  
ARCHEVEQUE, Odin's residence.  
There is forceful KNOCKING on the  
door.*

ODIN

What? What?  
*(opening the door)*  
Wait...

MAISTRE

*(entering)*  
Why?

ODIN

Father Maistre...

MAISTRE

Dismissed?

ODIN

Father Maistre, wait -

MAISTRE

Suspended? Banished?!?

ODIN

*Quiet!...*

*(quiet tense pause)*

You had been amply warned. Now sit and listen.

*ODIN points to a chair and*

*MAISTRE sits.*

ODIN

Providence has furnished me with a favorable occasion to treat you as a parent should their own offspring.

MAISTRE

*Providence?*

ODIN

At the last monthly gathering of clergy, you left the assembly, did you not?

MAISTRE

Yes sir. When a fellow priest stands and announces that he can't sit in a gathering with a priest convicted of a crime, I can not dignify such slander by staying there for further unholy distortion.

ODIN

Your fellow priest claimed -

MAISTRE

*(standing)*

He prevaricates!

ODIN

Do you want to hear my explanation or not?

MAISTRE

Yes, sir.

ODIN

That is what you have come here for, correct?

MAISTRE

*(sitting)*

Yes, please, continue, sir.

ODIN

After you left the gathering I asked your colleague for an explanation and he said he felt bound by conscience to reveal your earlier greed and depravity in France. He pointed out that French authorities came after you when you broke both civil and canon law. You fled the country!

MAISTRE

Archbishop Odin, consider this for a moment: Why would he express his concerns in an open meeting rather than in private with you?

ODIN

You would have to ask *him* that question.



MAISTRE

And how would he have access to such dated allegations to begin with?

ODIN

What does that have to do with -

MAISTRE

This incident was obviously staged and -

ODIN

You can not make that claim!

MAISTRE

... *staged* and now, conveniently, you are able to move against me with the Vatican!

ODIN

But did you not have some trouble in France?

MAISTRE

My history in France is not germane to my vocation today.

ODIN

But what *may* be germane to your vocation here is the fact that you have never been formally incardinated into the clergy of *this* diocese - ...

MAISTRE

*(standing)*  
Archbish -

ODIN

... and *now* that you *do* have a blemish on your record I consequently believe in my heart of hearts that you can no longer conduct your ministry without scandal and I therefore strongly urge you to retire to a monastery to do penance!

*MAISTRE sits and exhales.*

MAISTRE

Archbishop Odin, I am familiar with the senior Protestant chaplain of the Union forces. As a matter of fact I have spoken with him just today and he claims that he can secure a directive for me to continue my ministry at St. Rose of Lima.

ODIN

*(outraged)*  
Father Maistre -

MAISTRE

Please, sir, let me finish - I need to speak the truth. The chaplain also assured me that I can have you called to appear before Captain Killborn in order to determine whether you are dismissing me due to political views.

ODIN

Father Maistre!

MAISTRE

Therefore Archbishop Odin, I respectfully request that you rescind my suspension and I will not denounce you to the provost marshal.

ODIN

This conversation is finished! I'm now denying you your canonical faculties and placing you under interdict. You are thereby forbidden to perform sacraments meaning - and you listen closely Father Maistre - that no Catholic rites may be performed at St. Rose of Lima and no *Catholic* can worship there!

MAISTRE

*(quiet, after a pause)*

I assume that I do have the right to appeal your censure to Rome.

ODIN

Yes, by all means, but please be sure you realize that anyone attending your masses is partaking in *your* schism and sacrilege and that whoever confesses to you - except for a dying person unable to find another priest - is participating in *your* crime. I am now going to call for atonement services in all city churches for the desecration that has occurred at *your former* church!

MAISTRE

Will that be all Archbishop?

ODIN

Yes, that is all.

*MAISTRE begins to leave.*

ODIN

But wait - one more thing

MAISTRE

Yes?

ODIN

The keys, if you please. Give me the keys to St. Rose of Lima.

*MAISTRE looks around.*

MAISTRE

*(slightly panicky, as if he can not find the keys)*

I will need to find them.

ODIN

Find them, then.

MAISTRE

I will find them. May I be excused.

ODIN

You already have been.

*BLACKOUT. MUSIC:  
"Dr. Roudanez's Theme"  
LIGHTS UP on Dr. Roudanez.*

ROUDANEZ

Father Maistre disregarded the archbishop's order and continued to celebrate mass at St. Rose of Lima - a sacrilege by canon law. Meanwhile Captain Cailloux's first regiment of the Native Guard entered Federal Service and our editorial read:

“From the day that bayonets were placed in the hands of blacks, the Negro became a citizen of the United States.” By this time General Butler had been replaced by Nathaniel Banks....

*LIGHTS CROSS FADE onto COL. STAFFORD with GEN. BANKS behind GEN. BUTLER's former desk. MUSIC: "Jordan Noble's Roll." The NATIVE GUARDS drill on another part of the stage*

STAFFORD

So you will not reconsider?

BANKS

No, I am removing the black officers from the regiments.

STAFFORD

But why?

BANKS

Because the 'appointment of colored officers is detrimental to the service.

STAFFORD

General Banks, I must confess that I myself had an aversion to commanding black troops but -

BANKS

The situation here is demoralizing to both black and white troops.

STAFFORD

But, sir, I followed orders and my views changed - my old attitudes, prejudices, political convictions....

BANKS

Colonel Stafford, next week my board of examination will judge the qualifications of the black officers.

STAFFORD

Your board, sir, is comprised of some lower-ranking white officers. Many of them will consider it a dishonor and probably resign.

BANKS

Colonel Stafford,..

*(sitting back, thinking)*

please consider: their defects come from some of their misguided notions on dogmas of equality. This is the reason some regiments have poor discipline and unsatisfactory conduct. I want to keep this situation positive, so, here's a plan - a *solution*: a new army corps - the Corps of Africa. We will terminate the detached status of the black regiments. This will eliminate the unnecessary and detrimental controversy between the black and white troops

STAFFORD

Sir, I do not believe that would be a positive step. Is it a step *forward* to further segregate blacks into their own corps?

BANKS

I have a war to win, colonel - battles to wage.

STAFFORD

Precisely General Banks and you have the best forces in the state with which to do that right out *there*.

*MUSIC: "Stafford's Lament," quietly STAFFORD points as if out the window toward the drilling NATIVE GUARDS and walks toward the "window." GEN. BANKS joins him.*

STAFFORD

*(pointing)*

Please General, look sharply down that line and allow me to tell you something you may not have thought of: Sir, the best blood of Louisiana is in this regiment! Do you see that tall, slim fellow, third file from the right of the second company? One of the State's ex-governors is his father. That orderly sergeant in the next company is the son of a man who has spent six years in the United States Senate. Just beyond him is the grandson of a judge from one of the river parishes and all through the ranks you will find the same state of facts. Deplorable, you may say, but nevertheless true. Their fathers are disloyal but these black Ishmaels will more than compensate for their treason by fighting in the field.

*MUSIC fades.*

BANKS

I see your point, Colonel, but all the same these are peculiar times. These men are going through a transition that there is government policy for. I am trying to compensate for that.

STAFFORD

Sir, the issue is that people say they won't be able to fight but just you watch them.

BANKS

*(after watching for a moment)*

I understood that all your line officers were colored men but there goes one who is white.

STAFFORD

Do you really think he's white?

BANKS

Light blue eyes, ruddy complexion, silky hair, and great mustache of a sandy color, nearly approaching red? I'd say he's white

STAFFORD

Well, you may, sir, but that man is a Negro, for he carries the so-called curse of African blood in his veins.

BANKS

I don't care what he is - nobody wants to take the chance of them flying at the first fire.

STAFFORD

There is no chance of that whatsoever, sir. I'll be leading the charge.

BANKS

We shall see.  
*(returning to his desk)*  
You're dismissed Colonel Stafford.

*STAFFORD salutes and exits. He crosses to the drilling ground where CAILLOUX approaches him.*

CAILLOUX

Sir, what did he say?

STAFFORD

*(thinks for a moment)*  
You will remain captain of this regiment. I'll be damned if you do not.

*BLACKOUT. MUSIC: "Cantique"  
LIGHTS RISE on FR. MAISTRE kneeling at his altar. FELICIE enters running.*

FELICIE

Father Maistre!

MAISTRE

Yes Felicie?

FELICIE

He's coming for you, now! And he has troops with him! Do what he says!

ODIN

*(from outside, knocking on door)*  
You can not stonewall wall us any longer! Now open the door and give me the keys!

*MAISTRE stands and holds the keys.*

FELICIE

Give him the keys...

ODIN

*(knocking)*  
Father Maistre, open the door!  
*(after a pause, pounding on the door)*  
I have just spoken with the provost marshal. You have misrepresented him! He never gave you the *authority* to occupy St. Rose of Lima!

MAISTRE

That is not true!

ODIN

You will now answer to *my* authority which comes directly from Rome!

MAISTRE

By the letter of canon law your censure has been invalid because it jeopardizes pastoral care for those who -

ODIN

Law? *You* are defying ecclesiastical law!

MAISTRE

I am obeying divine law!

ODIN

Father Maistre, your time has come! Open the door!

*ODIN signals with his hands and armed Federal troops fall in behind him.*

FELICIE

Open the door and give him the keys!

*MAISTRE opens the door.*

ODIN

*(quietly)*  
Don't be a martyr, although that is obviously how you view yourself.

FELICIE

Give him the keys.

*FELICIE gently pushes MAISTRE toward ODIN and he holds out the keys.*

MAISTRE

Wait, please...  
*(withdrawing the keys)*  
... one thing - you still owe \$1120. on the promissory note. Pay the note off and I'll give you the keys.

ODIN

Give me the keys and I'll pay the note off!

MAISTRE

You give me your word?

ODIN

Yes I do.

FELICIE

For God's sake give him the keys father!

*MAISTRE hands ODIN the keys.*

ODIN

There is plenty of sugar in the canes but unfortunately you are not the boiler.

*FELICIE glares at ODIN.*

ODIN

I have curial support to do this.

*ODIN exits and the troops follow.*

MAISTRE

*(to Felicie)*  
I'll appeal *my* case to Rome.  
*(directed toward Odin)*  
Wait until night before saying it has been a good day.

*BLACKOUT. MUSIC: "Stafford's Lament" LIGHTS UP on CAPT. and MRS. CAILLOUX.*

MRS. CAILLOUX

This is not going how I expected it.

CAILLOUX

No one said it would be easy.

MRS. CAILLOUX

Yes but no one said it would be this difficult. No pay? And the rations are a cruel joke! And now your soldiers' families are being evicted by their landlords!

CAILLOUX

I know, I know....  
*(holding her hands)*  
Felicite, we need to sell our property on Baronne Street.

MRS. CAILLOUX

Andre!

CAILLOUX

The blockade has destroyed the economy.

MRS. CAILLOUX

*(devastated)*  
That's our security!

CAILLOUX

There's no such thing as -

MRS. CAILLOUX

I don't like this - *any* of it any longer.

CAILLOUX

You encouraged me to -

MRS. CAILLOUX

Yes, but things have changed.

CAILLOUX

You don't need to explain the hardship to me! I haven't been paid! We're not supplied! Union troops are hostile to *us*! Absenteeism is high! Yes, all true, but reason enough to turn around? Consider what there is to turn around to!

MRS. CAILLOUX

Oh yes - "let's fight!" But with bad morale and not enough men?

CAILLOUX

Once we get new uniforms and guns the morale will change.

MRS. CAILLOUX

Nothing's going to change and you'll get nothing new, don't you understand? You're just there for show, not to fight, so why continue to take part in a charade? Is our life worth this charade? While you're drilling at Camp Strong your soldiers' families are vulnerable! Even in our churches!

CAILLOUX

Not in the Camp Strong chapel with Father Maistre. When people want to worship, they should join us at the camp.

MRS. CAILLOUX

Oh, since the house is on fire let's warm ourselves, right?

*BLACKOUT. MUSIC:  
"Dr. Roudanez's Theme."  
LIGHTS UP on ROUDANEZ.  
The TROOPS drill on another  
part of the stage while singing  
"En Avant Grenadiers."*

ROUDANEZ

People did flock to Camp Strong not only to worship but to see the 1st Regiment of the Louisiana Native Guards.

*FR. MAISTRE is seen serving  
communion to the troops.*

ROUDANEZ

The archdiocese did reclaim Father Maistre's St Rose of Lima church but when they reopened it, attendance was sparse because most of its black parishioners had followed Father Maistre who was busy appealing his case to Rome.

*LIGHTS CROSS FADE onto  
FELICIE addressing FR. MAISTRE.*

FELICIE

Call it off, Father. This appeal is a waste of your energy.

MAISTRE

I disagree. But then again, I agree

FELICIE

What do you mean?

MAISTRE

I have an idea...

*(thinking)*

... a very good idea. The *perfect* idea.

FELICIE

What now?

MAISTRE

I'm starting my own church.

FELICIE

What?!?



You heard me. MAISTRE

You can't do that! FELICIE

Why not? MAISTRE

You're under interdict. MAISTRE

Tell that to the parishioners. They don't seem to notice. MAISTRE

I can explain it to the parishioners but you'll never be able to explain it to the bishop. The Holy See is behind him and now he's supported by Union Troops? Why must you trouble with trouble? FELICIE

Trouble *has* troubled me. Look,... MAISTRE  
*(getting excited)*  
 ...when General Banks arrived, I saw the writing on the wall. I knew my days were numbered at St. Rose so I started quietly making plans to build my own church.  
*(unrolling the plans)*  
 Come see,...

You don't know when to stop, do you? FELICIE

Why should I stop? MAISTRE

Why should you *start* ? FELICIE

I have the resources. MAISTRE

But they just took your salary from you - \$1200 a year! FELICIE

I am independent. Come see... MAISTRE  
*(placing the plans on his desk; Felicie watching scared and excited)*  
 I put down two thousand five hundred in cash on this site at Ursulines and Claiborne Avenue and agreed to pay the rest in four yearly installments of a thousand dollars each at six percent for the first three years and eight percent for the last.

You need to go gently about this. FELICIE

*(shrugging his shoulders)* MAISTRE  
 Going gently about a thing won't prevent its being done.

*MUSIC: "The Petition"*  
*LIGHTS CROSSFADE onto*  
*CAILLOUX in full uniform with rifle,*  
*knapsack and blanket roll. He and his*  
*wife are kissing with urgency. They*  
*stop kissing and she is in tears*  
*clutching onto him. He pushes her*  
*away and exits across the stage as*  
*she watches him leave with dread on*  
*her despondent face.*  
*MUSIC: "Dr. Roudanez's Theme."*  
*LIGHTS CROSSFADE onto*  
*ROUDANEZ.*

ROUDANEZ

After one month of training the 1st Regiment received their orders and left Camp Strong for Port Hudson, Louisiana.

*The TROOPS march as*  
*CAILLOUX sits at a*  
*table writing a letter.*

CAILLOUX

To my dear wife....

*MUSIC: "Jordan Noble's Role"*  
*MRS. CAILLOUX opens and*  
*reads the letter on the other side of the*  
*stage as he writes and recites.*

CAILLOUX

I can at last send you money. We have received our first pay, although it's still not completely equitable. The enlisted men received ten dollars from which three was deducted for uniform, compared to the thirteen dollars pay - not counting uniform - that went to white soldiers. It's been particularly hard for noncommissioned black officers who, unlike the white officers, receive no additional pay for their duties. I and my fellow officers am faring better, receiving sixty dollars a month, the same pay as white officers. It eases my mind to know that you will be receiving this money. We have received our orders. Tomorrow we march out of Baton Rouge. Keep me in your prayers.

Your loving husband,

Andre....

*LIGHTS CROSS FADE onto*  
*DR. ROUDANEZ.*

ROUDANEZ

So under Captain Cailloux's command the First Regiment marched out from Baton Rouge destined for Port Hudson, Louisiana. They did so however without Colonel Stafford who had been placed under arrest four days earlier for his reaction to yet another incident of bias against his men. This time the frustrated colonel reached the limits of his tolerance.

*A sentry, CAPT. J.P. GARLAND,*  
*stands blocking the First Regiment*  
*from passing.*

CAILLOUX

The sentry wants to see your pass, Colonel, before we may continue.

STAFFORD

Is that right?

*STAFFORD takes out his pass and shoves it into his pocket.*

STAFFORD

These are same people who have been calling you names all week!

CAILLOUX

They are merely names, Colonel.

GARLAND

Captain J. P. Garland, sir! Request to see your pass.

STAFFORD

My pass?

GARLAND

Yes sir!

STAFFORD

Don't you know to salute an officer of superior rank?

GARLAND

*(saluting)*  
Yes sir!

STAFFORD

What in the hell did you stop my teams for?

GARLAND

To determine your status, sir!

STAFFORD

*(very emphatically, trying stay composed)*  
I'm Colonel Spencer H. Stafford and I have a detached detail including wagon teams on a work detail collecting wood for fuel. My team is returning to camp loaded with wood if you are too blind to see this for your own dim-witted self. They are attempting to exit the line in order to collect *another* load, for all of us. What, I repeat, did you stop our teams for?

GARLAND

Following orders, sir!

STAFFORD

Whose orders?

GARLAND

I need to see your pass, sir.

STAFFORD

You do not seem to know what you need! You sent my detail back to me to get another pass? Was that really necessary captain? They're fatigued enough!

GARLAND

I do what I'm told, sir.

STAFFORD

One of my teamsters said he was called a "damned black son-of-a-bitch nigger" by one of your sentries and your sentries have been harassing our other teams all week! So do you understand me captain - let us through!

GARLAND

I must refuse passage Colonel Stafford.

STAFFORD

On whose orders? You must be joking - my men are simply gathering wood you craven jackass!

CAILLOUX

Colonel Stafford, sir...

GARLAND

I will need to see your pass Colonel.

STAFFORD

My pass? My pass?!? Are you insane???  
*(shaking his fist in the captain's face)*  
You God damned pusillanimous, stinking, white-livered coward!

CAILLOUX

*(stepping forward)*  
Colonel Stafford -

STAFFORD

You stopped my men so that your regiment could steal my wood and you know it!

GARLAND

*(pointing)*  
Get those wagons back!

STAFFORD

So what in the hell did you stop my team for you God-damned gutless, stinking village idiot? Your brigade is nothing but a set of God-damn thieves stealing my wood!

*GARLAND takes out a notepad  
and pen.*

CAILLOUX

Colonel Stafford -

STAFFORD

It's enough to make a minister swear, even Jesus Christ himself to curse to heaven!. Listen to me you filthy dog - if you stop one of my men again I'll put you into the guard house with my damn black son-of-a-bitch *niggers* to watch over you! Rot in hell you cow-hearted serpent!!!

*GARLAND is writing all this down.*

GARLAND

*(clearing his throat)*  
My orders come from Colonel Edward Chapin, brigade commander.

STAFFORD

Yes I've heard of your brigade before - all a pernicious set of God damn thieves, you -

CAILLOUX

Colonel Stafford, sir!!!

*STAFFORD finally realizes that GARLAND is taking notes and he stops talking. GARLAND walks off.*

CAILLOUX

Colonel -

STAFFORD

Yes,...

*(a moment of tense silence)*

Yes Captain, I acted intemperately.

CAILLOUX

Colonel you -

STAFFORD

Yes, I was excessive. I regret my remarks

CAILLOUX

Colonel, you -

STAFFORD

Yes?

CAILLOUX

You cursed a subordinate.

STAFFORD

Yes,... all that *other* harassment, you know?

*LIGHTS RISE on a military tribunal  
JUDGE facing the house.*

STAFFORD

*(out to the house)*

Yes your honor, this excited my indignation unduly I confess and I used expressions which I regretted as soon as I had time to reflect.

JUDGE

*(out to the house)*

You are charged with conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline; conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman; and disrespectful or contemptuous words against the President of the United States.

STAFFORD

Your honor I said nothing about President Lincoln!

JUDGE

Silence else you will be held in contempt! You are hereby dismissed from the military service of your country and placed under arrest.

MUSIC: "*Stafford's Lament.*" STAFFORD is taken away by MILITARY POLICE as LIGHTS FADE off the JUDGE and rise on CAILLOUX who stares at STAFFORD in a state of stunned disbelief.

You can't be serious!  
CAILLOUX

The First Regiment marches to Port Hudson in two days...  
STAFFORD

Without you?  
CAILLOUX

I'm afraid so....  
STAFFORD

"*Stafford's Lament*" grows louder for a moment. BLACKOUT. MUSIC: "*Cantique*" LIGHTS RISE on FELICIE and FR. MAISTRE.

But you are Catholic. Protestants protest.  
FELICIE

It depends...  
MAISTRE

Father, you must stop.  
FELICIE

I must persist.  
MAISTRE

Father please - stop.  
FELICIE

Why *surrender* now?  
MAISTRE

Because they will send you away!  
*(slight pause, then quietly)*  
And then what good will you be? To anybody?  
FELICIE

Felicie,...  
*(taking her by the hand)*  
I am tired of officiating every Sunday in a rented room.  
*(letting her hand go)*  
Besides, the Holy Name of Jesus Church is almost completed.  
MAISTRE

You can not afford this.  
FELICIE

MAISTRE

Of course I can. I'm eleven hundred dollars richer since the archbishop's recent payment and I've sold the lot abutting this property for \$3280. - eight hundred in cash and four notes of five hundred at six percent. This will give me a steady income for years to come and I've retired my mortgage to Fernandez.

FELICIE

That is not prudent. It is still far less than the priest's salary you were receiving.

MAISTRE

Our savior never received a salary but income and revenues are not the numbers which matter. Look - baptisms and marriages are significantly up from last year. These numbers don't lie.

FELICIE

The archbishop will still tell Rome that your parishioners have abandoned you.

MAISTRE

Let those who want to hatch hatch their own eggs.

FELICIE

But you know, Father, many Creoles will stay with their Catholicism regardless of the works of men.

MAISTRE

Which is why you *sneak* around this schism?

FELICIE

*(looking at him as if offended)*  
Your schism.

MAISTRE

*(looking back at her as if she had just spit on him)*  
Stay with me on this Felicie and I will do my best not to get reassigned.  
*(taking her hand)*  
.... if you please...

*MUSIC: "Dr. Roudanez's Theme."  
LIGHTS CROSS FADE onto  
DR. ROUDANEZ.*

ROUDANEZ

*(POWER POINT projections illustrate the following)*  
While Maistre continued his battle with Odin, Captain Cailloux and the Native Guards prepared for their opportunity to strike a blow for freedom. General Banks was hell bent on taking Port Hudson by force to improve up his tarnished military reputation. However, the problematic reality was that the main Confederate line was a 6000-man garrison creating a four and a half mile semicircle of land defenses on a high bluff that dropped off abruptly to a flood plain from where they aimed their massive guns toward the river. Jutting out from the main position was a jagged finger of land on top of which the Confederate forces had dug series of rifle pits. The position was about 400 yards in length. The overland route to Port Hudson was a maze of creeks, marshes, canebrakes, ravines, and forest beside the high water of the Mississippi which inundated the flood plain. And if the Native Guards were to attempt to traverse this treacherous terrain, they would be exposed to fire from *three* sides.

When Banks ordered the attack, he did not plan simultaneous action from supporting regiments nor did he seem to consider that the units could not communicate nor even see each other. And last but not least, the general incorrectly informed the regiment that they would have reconnaissance during the bombardment and before the attack. If these circumstances were not challenging enough, the First Regiment's biggest obstacle was their newly-assigned provisional commander, Brigadier General William Dwight Jr....

*LIGHTS CROSSFADE onto DWIGHT who is seated writing a letter and frequently drinking from a flask*

DWIGHT

*(slurring his words)*  
Dear Mother,

My assignment at Port Hudson on the far right of the Union position is inconsequential given the plan of attack but I see in General Bank's order an opportunity to test the Negro question. I have had the Negro Regiments longest in the service assigned to me and I am going to storm a detached work with them. You may look for hard fighting or for a complete run away. This will be the first time black troops are used in combat during the war so the garrison will of course be incensed and fight defiantly.

*CAPT. CAILLOUX enters.*

The Negro will have the fate of his race on his conduct. I shall compromise nothing in making this attack for I regard it as an experiment...

*DWIGHT notices CAILLOUX who salutes him.*

DWIGHT

At ease Captain.

*DWIGHT indicates a seat and CAILLOUX sits.*

DWIGHT

We are about to undertake a monumental action.

CAILLOUX

Yes sir, my men are well aware. It is an opportunity to advance our nation.

DWIGHT

Captain Cailloux, as leader of the color company, you will man the right center of the regimental line with the color bearers posted on the left. Your company will lead the charge and you will lead your company.

CAILLOUX

Yes sir.

DWIGHT

This command is a tribute to your discipline and leadership and the obvious pride you have given to your men.

CAILLOUX

Thank you, sir



DWIGHT offers CAILLOUX a drink.

CAILLOUX

No thank you, sir.

DWIGHT

What can I help you with Captain?

CAILLOUX

Sir, I'd like know of all reconnaissance you have conducted. We need to study your maps.

DWIGHT

Captain Cailloux, that intelligence is not available at this time.

CAILLOUX

*(after a slight pause)*

So what can you tell me about the terrain we're passing over? What will the ground be like, sir?

DWIGHT

It is the easiest route into Port Hudson.

CAILLOUX

Is that a fact? Sir?

DWIGHT

Captain Cailloux?

CAILLOUX

General Dwight, sir, in all due respect, a soldier who is very familiar with this region says the terrain is rough and the vegetation is almost impenetrable. He believes the Confederate position is very strong.

DWIGHT

Is that what you *think*?

CAILLOUX

That's what *he* thinks.

DWIGHT

Who reported this?

CAILLOUX

*(slight pause)*

I did not get his name, sir.

DWIGHT

So what do *you* think Captain?

CAILLOUX

*(pause)*

I follow orders, sir

DWIGHT

I see. Then understand, that if you are *thinking*, that *my* thinking, and General Banks' thinking, outranks your thinking. Understood?

Yes sir. CAILLOUX

Dismissed. DWIGHT

*They salute. LIGHTS DOWN on DWIGHT and CAILLOUX exits. He is alone on the stage. MUSIC: "Jordan Noble's Role." CAILLOUX take out the rosary which MAISTRE gave him makes the sign of the cross, then kneels and starts to pray. HENRI REY enters a moment later.*

What?.... REY

*CAILLOUX looks up at him and says nothing. REY grabs him by the shoulder and pulls him up off his knees.*

Stand firm!  
(to the house)  
Roll call! REY

*MUSIC: "Jordan Noble's Roll" continues. The Native Guard soldiers of the First Regiment enter. REY gives CAILLOUX the colors then reads the roll; the men respond "Ici!"*

REY  
Louis Levellier!... Athanase Ulgere!... Hyppolite St. Pierre!... Paul Poiree!... Francois Dedee!... Noel Bacchus!... Victor Urquhart!... Anselmo Plancianos!...

CAILLOUX  
(presenting the colors to Plancianos)  
Color Seargant Anselmo Plancianos, do you accept the regimental standards?

Yes sir! PLANCIANOS

CAILLOUX  
Are you aware that you have the most dangerous job in the infantry?

Yes sir! PLANCIANOS

CAILLOUX  
The rank and file will align on *your* colors in battle. They will look for *your* banners as a rallying point. You could attract heavy enemy fire. Are you prepared, willing, and able to protect, defend, and die for but *not* surrender these flags?!?

PLANCIANOS

I will bring these colors in honor or report to God the reason why, sir!

*The TROOPS cheer his response.*

CAILLOUX

Form companies!

REY

We will commence with forming companies!

PLANCIANOS

Company in a line!

*The TROOPS fall into formation.*

CAILLOUX

Company officers take charge!

REY

Present arms!

*MUSIC: "Jordan Noble's Roll"  
The regiment advances as  
CAILLOUX orders the men into  
skirmish formation and moving among  
them shouting encouragement in both  
English and French while they move  
downstage as dense and tangled  
woods are projected on POWER  
POINT screen. They approach the  
front of stage. LIGHTS UP on  
ROUDANEZ on another part of the  
stage.*

ROUDANEZ

At 10 AM, the 1st Regiment emerges from the willow forest in good order and form a long line two ranks deep. The men advance first at quick and then double-quick time toward the bluff. A party of skirmishes fires on them....

*SOUND: On top of "Jordan Noble's  
Roll," blaring NOISE of ARTILLERY  
FIRE.*

CAILLOUX

Company halt!

*MUSIC: "The Bluffs." The FIRST  
REGIMENT stops and their faces  
register terror. POWER POINT image  
of the steep rugged 1200 foot bluff  
occupied by 6 companies. The  
SOLDIERS appear to realize for the  
first time that there's a strong possibility  
that this will be their last moment on  
earth. MUSIC: "The Siege of Port  
Hudson"*

ROUDANEZ

They face a volley from the rifle pits and simultaneous discharge of artillery. The barrage throws the men into disarray and they break and run for cover in the willows...

*LIGHTS RISE Downstage Right on MRS CAILLOUX kneeling in prayer. Brandishing his sword, CAILLOUX rallies the men using threats, curses, and words of encouragement. POWER POINT images of Civil War combat. LIGHTS RISE Downstage Left on FR. MAISTRE kneeling in prayer.*

CAILLOUX

Ready on the colors men! Forward on my command! Ready!... Charge! Forward! Charge!!!

*The following is done with stylized movement, sound, power point, and music. CAPT. CAILLOUX leads a charge of screaming, shouting men which breaks and reforms again.*

CAILLOUX

En avant, mes enfants! Once more my children! Follow me!!!

*"The Seige of Port Hudson" plays with near-deafening SOUND effects of nightmarish combat. LIGHTING is chaotic and shadowy with flashes of red. All motion and SOUND stop for a moment as the currently projected POWER POINT image of battlefield dead goes from sepia tone to blood red. The soldiers all end up lying on the stage. MRS. CAILLOUX stands and screams with blood-curdling grief and rage as FR. MAISTRE, still kneeling, looks up from his prayer across the stage.*

MRS. CAILLOUX

NOOOOOOO!!!!

*MUSIC (instantly): "Dirge." MRS. CAILLOUX exits hysterical. FR. MAISTRE resumes prayer. HENRI REY makes his way to and cradles Cailloux's dead body.*

REY

*(holding up Cailloux's lifeless head, as if speaking to him)*  
We have absolved ourselves, and proudly may every colored man hold up his head hereafter....

*IMAGES and LIGHTING change.  
MUSIC: "He Lay Where He Fell."  
FR. MAISTRE looks up from his  
prayer as REY kisses CAILLOUX on  
his forehead, stands and crosses  
Upstage to the seance table which has  
been set. REY sits and appears to go  
into mesmeric state seen in the earlier  
seances while FR. MAISTRE resumes  
prayer and begins to weep.*

## REY

You weep before a dead and insensible body, when the spirit is there, and in your weakness of conception you mistake his positive word for your mind's effects.

Erroneous tradition, blindly accepted, is a barrier which prevents you from seeing the rays of light.....

Free from matter and having no obstructions, the Spirit is more developed, and unfolds also his faculties.

Leave the dead body on its dung.

Seek for the spirit!

*MUSIC grows louder.*

## CAILLOUX

*(sitting up)*

I have left your world a lover of liberty, fighting for my brothers; I have won the same liberty in the spirit world, for God has rewarded me.....

*(standing)*

I will be with you, dear friends, in the battles, my spirit will be among you to inspire indomitable courage . I will be your torch bearer! I will be among those who receive you into our world if you should succumb in the struggle. Fight! God demands liberty, our brothers will have it, equality will follow but you must continue the fight!

*FR. MAISTRE makes the sign of the cross, kisses his fingers, and looks up.*

## BLACKOUT

## END OF ACT ONE

## ACT TWO

*In the BLACKOUT, MUSIC: "Spiritualist Suite." Lights up on Spiritualist circle around table Upstage Center wherein Henri Rey is the medium surrounded by six or seven participants. REY writes frenetically as he recites. MAISTRE sleeps on a bed Downstage Left in the dark.*

REY

I have come back to let you know my impressions on leaving the Earth for the Spirited Spheres; here they are:...

*CAILLOUX enters a different part of the stage and MAISTRE wakes up. LIGHTS UP on another part of the stage where ARCHBISHOP ODIN in vestments is in the process of the Latin Mass's Presentation of the Gifts / Preparation of the Altar during the following speech. He places a chalice on the altar and receives the gifts from a eucharistic minister. He places a ciboria with unconsecrated hosts on the credence table on the altar. The eucharistic minister brings the cruet of wine to Odin, handle facing him. Odin washes his fingers in the wash bowl as the eucharistic minister kneels on the pillow and rings the bells. Odin places his hands over the gifts, elevates the host then elevates the chalice.*

CAILLOUX and REY

*(simultaneously)*

Having had but a short time to recognize my position before I died, I expected at my awakening a severe sentence pronounced against me. Great was my astonishment, great was my joy, in seeing myself surrounded by angels, by beautiful, graceful and smiling spirits whose thoughts were known to me by a sort of magnetic intuition and to which I answered by the same language!

*LIGHTS DOWN on ODIN and LIGHTS RISE on MAISTRE who sits up.*

MAISTRE

Who are you?

*BLACKOUT. LIGHTS UP on DR. ROUDANEZ entering Downstage Right to MUSIC: "Dr. Roudanez's Theme."*

ROUDANEZ

Captain Cailloux and the Native Guards had endured a daylong artillery barrage after an assault on an impregnable defensive position over almost impassable terrain with no artillery support but the indignity did not end there.

*MUSIC: "He Lay Where He Fell"  
POWER POINT images of battlefield  
carnage.*

ROUDANEZ

The New York Times wrote:...

*(holding up a newspaper)*

"In the midst of the carnage, when men in every form of horrible mutilation were being sent to the rear, after fighting as few white men would have fought, not a single ambulance or stretcher was there to gather their torn and incapacitated bodies."

*(lowering the newspaper)*

Nor was a priest furnished for them...

*LIGHTS rise on FATHER  
MAISTRE praying over a wounded  
Union soldier in a hospital bed.*

ROUDANEZ

During a four hour truce the day after the assault, the Union details retrieved and buried the remains of all the white soldiers. Cailloux and the other Native Guards, however, were left to lie where they had fallen, to melt in their own blood and to be made prey of both birds and beasts. Captain Cailloux's bloated body and those of his comrades lay amidst corruption and exposed to the rain, flies, rodents, and broiling sun until *forty days* after the surrender of Port Hudson. After those forty days, Andre Cailloux could only be identified by the ring on his finger.

*POWER POINT images of Civil War  
dead on battlefield.*

ROUDANEZ

But this tragedy brought with it a measure of redemption. After death, Captain Cailloux became an even more powerful source of inspiration. He grew into a heroic role model for abolitionists and black soldiers nationwide as well as for the Spiritualist circles in New Orleans who effectively utilized his memory as a rallying symbol to bolster their campaign for equal citizenship.

*LIGHTS RISE on the Spiritualist  
circle Upstage Center. MUSIC:  
"Spiritualist Suite."*

ROUDANEZ

Captain Cailloux became the preeminent *spirit guide*.

*LIGHTS DOWN on ROUDANEZ.  
HENRI REY is reciting while  
automatic writing . CAILLOUX  
enters Downstage Right.  
MUSIC: "He Lay Where He Fell"  
fades in.*

CAILLOUX

They thought they had killed me but they made me live! I will be the torch that will guide you. It will be I who receive you into our world if you die in struggle so fight! God desires liberty! Our brothers have it - equality will come later, it is true, but in all structures there must be a first stone!...

REY and CAILLOUX

*(simultaneously)*

...There must be victims to serve as stepping stones on the path to liberty!

BLACK SPIRITUALIST

We fought for nothing!

CAILLOUX

*(snapping back)*

No! We fought for something!

REY

*(fiery)*

Our leader has not died in vain!

CAILLOUX

Let my blood wash out the prejudices so long existing against our oppressed race and vindicate the right of all of us to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness! Continue the fight! Never surrender!

*MUSIC: "He Lay Where He Fell" abruptly stops when LIGHTS BLACKOUT on Spiritualist circle; MAISTRE abruptly sits up in the bed. CAILLOUX then steps Downstage Right. MUSIC: "The Captain Returns."*

MAISTRE

What are you doing here?

CAILLOUX

You know what I'm doing here.

MAISTRE

*(pause during which they stare each other down)*

So - the same number of days and nights that our savior fasted in the desert before beginning his public ministry?

CAILLOUX

I suppose.

MAISTRE

And didn't it rain for forty days?

CAILLOUX

I suppose it did. And forty nights, but I never thought of it that way.

MAISTRE

*(standing)*

What are you doing appearing to the beseechers? You confuse them!



I'm *appearing* to you, am I not? CAILLOUX

Yes, but you are not confusing me. MAISTRE

I'm not? CAILLOUX

No. I know a dream when I'm in one, and dreams are more realistic to me than many of my waking hours. So, tell me, Captain Cailloux,... MAISTRE

Yes, Father?... CAILLOUX

You *mocked* all this, did you not? MAISTRE

I suppose... CAILLOUX

You mocked it to me, did you not? MAISTRE

Condemnation doesn't cure the bump. CAILLOUX

Andre, is this not,... *divination*? The law of Moses would punish it by death. MAISTRE

(quickly)  
But I *am* dead and our savior moved us beyond the law of Moses whereas St. Paul said that the dead *will* rise, that even Moses made this known in the passage about the bush when he called out "Lord!" - the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob! He is *not* the God of the dead but of the living for to Him all are alive! Yes I have died but I am alive! CAILLOUX

And in communication with the living who have not yet died? MAISTRE

Yes. CAILLOUX

Our church - the *saints* - condemn this. MAISTRE

But saints are not only those canonized, true? CAILLOUX

Yes, that is true. MAISTRE

Then who better to know what a saint believes than a - CAILLOUX

MAISTRE

- than a saint? The afterlife suits you Andre Cailloux.

CAILLOUX

I can have more of an impact from here than -

MAISTRE

You seem very *at ease* - there.

CAILLOUX

When I arrived, I was surrounded by angels, by -

MAISTRE

- by beautiful, graceful and smiling spirits?

*(pause during which they look at each other)*

You're comfortable with what people *here* have done to you. Have you heard?...

*(picking up a newspaper and reading)*

"They fought like very devils with superhuman exertion - crossing the wide ditch, scaling the abatis and once inside the fortifications proceeding to bayonet the Confederate gunners. Overcome by martial frenzy, they threw away their guns, seized their hated foes with their hands and tore their quivering flesh from their faces before being overwhelmed by superior numbers and compelled to retreat...."

*(smiling)*

You like the sound of that.

CAILLOUX

No, the plain and hideous truth would suffice. But such reports do not hurt the cause.

MAISTRE

As long as they don't have you walking on water.

CAILLOUX

There was a lot of water, but nobody walked *on* it.

MAISTRE

I commend you Captain Cailloux and your men. You answered the question of how black men would fight. Even General Banks has called you "heroic." You have done more than a million men could do to advance the cause *but* what concerns me now is spiritual welfare. Your *correspondence* is swelling the Spiritualist ranks. Is this congruent with our -

CAILLOUX

Yes it is! And the most appropriate way to answer that question is for you to join a circle and see for yourself. I have not left our church Father Maistre, but this is the most immediate way to advance our cause. These are *new* times, Father, and we must employ *new* methods, along with the old. They are meeting soon - come see.

MAISTRE

No. I will not. I am to meet with your wife. Your widow. She is very bereaved....

*MUSIC: "Spiritualist Suite." seance  
LIGHTING CROSS FADES onto  
Spiritualist circle led by HENRI REY.*

REY

I have left your world a lover of liberty, fighting for my brothers; I have won the same liberty in the spirit world, for God has rewarded me.

*CAILLOUX emerges.*

CAILLOUX and REY

I will be with you, dear friends, in the battles, my spirit will be among you to inspire indomitable courage . I will be your torch bearer! I will be among those who receive you into our world if you should succumb in the struggle. Fight! God demands liberty, our brothers will have it, equality will follow!

*BLACKOUT. LIGHTS UP on MRS. CAILLOUX dressed in mourning and FR. MAISTRE.*

MRS. CAILLOUX

Forty days. Forty days and forty nights.

*She is despondent and FR. MAISTRE consoles her.*

MAISTRE

Yes - reprehensible.

FELICIE

And things are hard - too hard. The government owes us my husband's back pay. My husband died fighting like he did and now I am needy?

MAISTRE

They are indifferent, *callous*, but I will continue to fight them. For you.

MRS. CAILLOUX

I know. Thank you. Father Maistre, there is something else you can do for me.

MAISTRE

Yes?

MRS. CAILLOUX

Preside.

MAISTRE

Over?

MRS. CAILLOUX

His funeral.

MAISTRE

*(laughs)*  
You realize I'm under -

MRS. CAILLOUX

Yes I realize.

MAISTRE

Look, Madame Cailloux - I don't care, for me. Odin despises me - there will be no love lost. But you? You could be stirring up trouble for yourself. There are certainly easier ways to do this than participating in a schism. You realize that you would be defying the archbishop?

MRS. CAILLOUX

Do you realize that you just said you would fight for me?

MAISTRE

Do you know who continues to fight for you?

MRS. CAILLOUX

Who?

MAISTRE

Your husband - from beyond the grave.

MRS. CAILLOUX

*(slightly alarmed)*

What do you mean?

MAISTRE

He has become something bigger in death - the first *national* publicized black warrior hero of this war. He's in publications far and wide...

*(picking up a newspaper)*

These editors were reluctant to support black troops until Port Hudson...

*(handing 'The New York Times' to her)*

*MUSIC: "Jordan Noble's Role"  
fades in, quietly.*

MRS. CAILLOUX

*(reading)*

"Port Hudson settles the question that the Negro race can fight with great prowess. Those black soldiers had never before been in any severe engagement. They were comparatively raw troops and yet were subjected to the most awful ordeal that even veterans had to experience: the charging upon fortifications through the crash of belching batteries. The men, white or black, who will not flinch from that, will flinch from nothing. It is no longer possible to doubt the bravery and steadiness of the colored race when rightly led...."

*MUSIC has faded.*

MAISTRE

So his funeral, it must rise to this level.

MRS. CAILLOUX

Yes, certainly.

MAISTRE

Then It *must* be good.

MRS. CAILLOUX

Yes - *very* good.

MAISTRE

Better than good.

MRS. CAILLOUX

*Great.*

MAISTRE

Yes - monumental!

MRS. CAILLOUX

So Father Maistre, will you?

MAISTRE

Will I wave a red flag in front of a bull?

MRS. CAILLOUX

What is one more? You ministered to them while they were alive.

MAISTRE

Mrs. Cailloux, where would this funeral be held, because St. Rose of Lima is off limits to me and you will need a sizable place.

MRS. CAILLOUX

*(she thinks)*

The Friends of Order benevolent society hall - *his* hall.

MAISTRE

OK...

*(thinking)*

This funeral must pay profound homage. It has to remedy the *disgrace* visited on his body at Port Hudson and it must celebrate the Native Guards' combat. *And* it should inspire support for abolition!

MRS. CAILLOUX

And show the archbishop the influence *you* have, and that you're not a person to be disrespected. So Father Maistre, would you please wave the red flag in front of that bull? One more time?

MAISTRE

Yes, of course.

MRS. CAILLOUX

Thank you...

*(she hugs him)*

You're perfect for this!

MAISTRE

We shall see.

MRS. CAILLOUX

Many thanks. We will start planning immediately.

*MRS. CAILLOUX exits. MUSIC:  
"The Captain Returns"*

MAISTRE

Perfect?....

*CAILLOUX emerges from the other side of the stage. MAISTRE notices him and is startled.*

CAILLOUX

So - you *are* going to bury me.

MAISTRE  
Yes, I am. For your wife, for you. But only if you do one thing. For me.

CAILLOUX  
Yes, Father?

MAISTRE  
Stop appearing, to me.

CAILLOUX  
Then you must stop thinking of me.

MAISTRE  
And *how* should I do that?

CAILLOUX  
I do not know...  
(*pause with tension*)  
But she's right - you're perfect for this.

MAISTRE  
Oh no - I'm not perfect.

CAILLOUX  
We shall see...

MAISTRE  
Please, go...

*CAILLOUX exits. MUSIC fades.*

MAISTRE  
Far from perfect. Just, perhaps, the *only* priest in this city willing to.

*BLACKOUT. LIGHTS RISE on  
ROUDANEZ. MUSIC: "Dirge."  
with POWER POINT  
projections of a massive 19th century  
New Orleans funeral. PALL  
BEARERS carry a flag-draped,  
flower-strewn casket around the  
stage in cadence to the music.*

ROUDANEZ  
(*much of this indicated with POWER POINT*)  
Our paper covered the historic event. Cailloux's fraternal society the Friends of Order received the coffin and laid him out in state. After religious services, eight soldiers bore Cailloux's body through the huge immense of mourners outside. The funeral procession included 42nd Massachusetts regimental band, two companies of black soldiers from the sixth Louisiana regiment, many Native Guard officers, about 100 wounded black soldiers, carriages carrying the Cailloux family and several officers, and representatives of 37 black benevolent societies. As they escorted the hearse on the way to St. Louis Cemetery where the body was interred with military honors, the procession passed through a sea of mourners stretching for more than *mile* down Esplanade Avenue.

*FR. MAISTRE performs  
traditional Catholic rites at the grave.*

MAISTRE

*(finishing a glowing eulogy)*

I therefore call upon all of you to find inspiration in the faithful courage of Captain Cailloux who now that he has achieved eternal life, serves as a role model for us all. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Amen.

*The immense crowd gathered for the  
service and lining the funeral  
procession route paying respects in  
defiance of Odin's proscription begins  
to disperse. ODIN appears and  
approaches MAISTRE.*

ODIN

You may have just buried the captain but you actually could be digging your own grave.

MAISTRE

*(startled at first)*

Can you really censure...

*(waving his arms to indicate)*

what? ... five thousand people?

ODIN

That is a question for Rome. But I have a question for you, Father Maistre. What is your most important purpose?

MAISTRE

To spread the good news of the Lord, Our Savior.

ODIN

To spread it among people of African descent?

MAISTRE

Everyone, Archbishop Odin.

ODIN

But you do feel particularly engaged with -

MAISTRE

Yes of course. I have taken it upon myself to -

ODIN

Then consider one thing. I agree the peculiar institution which you decry as "evil" is unacceptable and its days are numbered but, on some level, it may have served God's will.

MAISTRE

*What?*

ODIN

In that it has brought these people closer to people like you and me so that we can expose them to the Word.

MAISTRE

Is that what you really think?

ODIN

I do not know. But if you, in your moments of harsh judgment of me, roil from the fact that *it* does not *appear* to rankle me as much as you, then just you -

MAISTRE

There is nothing you can say, Archbishop, that could bridge *that* divide between us.

ODIN

I understand. So, are you still appealing your case to Rome?

MAISTRE

Yes, sir.

ODIN

Well, If a man is destined to drown, Father Maistre, he will drown even in a spoonful of water. Watch yourself, my friend.

*ODIN walks off. BLACKOUT.  
LIGHTS RISE on  
MONSIGNOR ROUSSELON who  
sits behind a desk examining  
a document.*

ROUSSELON

Good afternoon, Father Maistre. Please, sit down.

*MAISTRE sits.*

ROUSSELON

We just received word from Rome that you have reported your situation - your *version* of the situation - to the Holy See. This is unfamiliar terrain for me; I've never been asked to mediate a schism before. You realize that the Archbishop has the backing of Rome to ask you to submit to him?

MAISTRE

He claims that he has that authority?

ROUSSELON

He *has* that authority and for the sake of peace I'm asking that you cooperate, Father Maistre. You're fighting battles in a war which I can not pinpoint. What are you trying to achieve - entering into your own dialogue with Rome?

*A LOUD KNOCK at the door and  
ARCHBISHOP ODIN enters holding  
a document.*

ODIN

*(seething)*

So, over my head you report to Rome that we -

ROUSSELON

Good afternoon Archbishop Odin, please have a seat - make yourself comfortable.

ODIN

... you report to Rome that we are "overtly pro-Confederate" and  
*(reading)*

"... that blacks emancipated by the war and by the proclamation of the President of the United States were the innocent but direct cause of *our* conflict"? Do you not even mention *your* role in any of this? *You* are the one sowing discord!



MAISTRE

Archbishop Odin, may I respectfully add that this is bigger than the two of us.

ODIN

Your intentional distortions to the Holy See are out of order!

ROUSSELON

Please, Archbishop Odin, sit down, relax, collect your thoughts, and explain, please...

ODIN

*(pleading his case, referring to the document)*

I never "punished" Father Maistre for "ministering to blacks in distress." My priests have never refused absolution and the last rites to blacks unless they, quote, "consented to return to their former masters." There is *no* proof that any local clergy has withheld sacraments but what I *can* prove is that you, Father Maistre, have tried to manipulate the military.

ROUSSELON

Explain.

ODIN

Father Maistre has reported to Rome that he *had* attempted to comply with my order to leave the archdiocese but that military authorities prevented him from doing so.

ROUSSELON

Is that true, Father?

MAISTRE

*(rapid and passionate)*

The key point here is that I asked the Archbishop to delay my suspension but he would not consider it. I maintain that his interdict is invalid because it does not specify cause nor does it reproach me for the administration of my parish.

ODIN

*(shuffling the papers)*

This is what you told Rome?!? They do not inform me of this!

MAISTRE

Monsignor Rousselon, the way I see it, the archbishop's political motivation behind his actions render my suspension and interdiction null and void. I have constantly desired peace and and have always been ready to submit. I stayed at my post in order to sustain the Catholicism of many black people whom the archbishop scandalizes by *his* behavior - parishioners who threatened to join Protestant churches!

ODIN

Is that the way you see it, Father Maistre?

MAISTRE

Yes, sir.

ODIN

Well, you see, regardless of how *you* see it, Rome can *see* the falsehoods in your argument: military authorities refused to let you leave?

*(referring to the document)*

... and "the *faithful*" bought the land and built Holy Name Church whose capacity could *still* "not accommodate the large numbers who attend"? *You* bought that land Father Maistre!

MAISTRE

And *you* are the one who has forced me into a clerical conspiracy intended to discredit me and destroy my reputation!

ODIN

You have put yourself where you are!

MAISTRE

Monsignor, I am simply pleading with Rome that Archbishop Odin avail his heart to his children of African descent.

ODIN

*My heart?!?*

MAISTRE

*(rapid)*  
And my argument includes a note of support from Father Josaphat stating that I have acted without guile and administered the sacraments to blacks at a time when other priests abandoned them.

ODIN

And how can that be true when most of your followers have deserted you and returned to the *true* church.

MAISTRE

*That* is not true!

ODIN

Greed has always been your true motivation Father Maistre! Shall we discuss your *real estate* bargaining with me? What about the accusations from your earlier parishes? Such as the *extortion* of money for administering sacraments?!?

MAISTRE

All hearsay and red herrings! Please return to the issue - *your* children of African descent!

ODIN

Our churches have always remained open to blacks! More are receiving communion now than ever!

MAISTRE

*That* is not true Monsignor!

ODIN

You do not need to take my word for it, Monsignor Rousselon. Rome knows the truth which is why they are -

*(reading)*  
urging Father Maistre to submit to *me* "with complete docility of spirit."

ROUSSELON

End this Father Maistre.

MAISTRE

But Monsignor Rous -

ROUSSELON

Father Maistre, this has gone on far too long. You will receive mercy, so please, submit to the archbishop on both knees and prostrate and he will end the interdict and offer his grace to you and your parishioners.

MAISTRE

*(pause)*  
Really?

ROUSSELON

Yes...

*MAISTRE exhales and sits down, clearly exhausted.*

ROUSSELON

Request his pardon for the pain that you have caused and promise to obey his orders and to defer to his advice.

*After a moment during which MAISTRE is obviously troubled, he kneels down and ODIN smiles. MAISTRE is about to speak when he suddenly lifts one knee and places that foot on the ground.*

MAISTRE

I will comply, but only on the condition that -

ODIN

*Condition!?!*

ROUSSELON

Please - let him speak.

MAISTRE

On the condition that the archbishop lets me stay in the archdiocese.

ODIN

Conditions?!? There are no *conditions!* DOWN ON YOUR KNEES!!!

*MAISTRE peers at ODIN and stands up.*

ODIN

Yours is a wretched soul, Father Maistre! Just because I didn't stop that funeral doesn't mean that I won't stop you! You are now ordered to close your renegade church, leave the city, and commit yourself to a monastery where you *will* make a long penance! Rome will decide what will be done with you next!

*ODIN storms out.*

MAISTRE

*(after a moment)*  
I'm sorry. *But* he can be a tyrant - a *despot.*  
*(exhaling)*  
But you are right, Monsignor. It can't go on like this.

ROUSSELON

It won't.

MAISTRE

How so?

ROUSSELON

The word will get out. For instance, Angelle Levallier, the young black woman who regularly confessed to you? Who you administered last rites to? Some tried to deny her consecrated burial because of her association with you but I'm permitting the priests at St. Augustine's to officiate at her burial. Do you see?

MAISTRE

*(grasping Rousselon's meaning)*

Thank you, thank you, thank you.

*(shaking Rousselon's hands)*

Excellent! I have never doubted the validity of my sacraments but I am overjoyed to see that you share the same conviction. I can not thank you enough!

*BLACKOUT. MUSIC: "The Captain Returns". LIGHTS RISE on the Spiritualist circle Upstage Center with REY in the middle as the medium in the process of automatic writing. CAILLOUX enters Downstage Right. LIGHTS up on MAISTRE sleeping Downstage Left. LIGHTS fade out on seance and MUSIC fades.*

CAILLOUX

Tired?

*MAISTRE sits up.*

MAISTRE

*(groggy)*

What?

CAILLOUX

You are tired Father?

MAISTRE

What?... What, what are you -

CAILLOUX

You seem tired.

MAISTRE

I am sleeping,.. or I was....

*(realizing, lucid)*

No. Stop. Be gone!

CAILLOUX

Do you *feel* tired Father Maistre?

MAISTRE

Must you attempt this? I'll continue to advance the cause to the best of my abilities but I will not participate in such *communication* in order to do so.

CAILLOUX

The Holy See does not condemn it.

MAISTRE

But church leaders do.

CAILLOUX

Since when have you cared about that?

MAISTRE

*(rapidly)*

I realize you are upset about your people gravitating back to their mother church but I am proving ineffective at keeping them away whether you involve me in this perilous communication or not so *stop*.

CAILLOUX

Then you must banish these dire issues from your consciousness - even in your sleep - which will be impossible for you Father Maistre as long as our church continues to be an unfaithful servant in furthering freedom.

MAISTRE

I don't know if I have the mettle to continue this feud. They're wearing me down.

CAILLOUX

What you do here has great impact! Reverence of our savior is crucial but we must realize that erroneous tradition, blindly accepted, is a barrier which obscures the light!

MAISTRE

Captain Cailloux, please, I am tired. I need to rest for my meeting tomorrow with the Monsignor and Archbishop.

CAILLOUX

Do what you must Father, but in all due respect, my personal opinion is that after so many years of fighting this man who stands for all that hinders, to submit to him would betray our cause. Apology would be tantamount to surrender. So ask yourself - if you divert from the high road, which way will you go?

*LIGHTS fade down on CAILLOUX. MAISTRE anguishes for a moment then falls back in his bed. LIGHTS CROSSFADE onto seance area Upstage Center and ODIN holding communion host on another part of the stage; LIGHTS down on Maistre. MUSIC: "Spiritualist Suite" as CAILLOUX crosses Upstage.*

ODIN

*(in Latin)*

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: grant us peace.

REY

*(leading seance)*

You have made with my body a sign to show how far the barbarity of absolutism could push the fanaticism of despotism to avenge itself of the generous ideas of a man devoted to Good -

ODIN

*(in Latin)*

This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Happy are those who are called to his supper.

CAILLOUX and REY

- for I really was so. I was battling against an evil, an infamy which made me blush. Human beings were being put to the level of brutes!

ODIN

*(in Latin)*

Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed.

EVERYONE AT TABLE

Equality for All!

*BLACKOUT. MUSIC FADES and LIGHTS RISE on meeting between ROUSSELON and MAISTRE, both seated.*

ROUSSELON

The archbishop has decided that you may rejoin the diocese and that he would like you to participate in a new initiative. This is your last chance, Father Maistre. Rome has dismissed your appeal and has acceded to the archbishop. They will no longer tolerate priestly defiance of episcopal authority so be reasonable if you want to rejoin this diocese.

MAISTRE

I will embody *sweet reasonableness*.

*A KNOCK at the door.*

ROUSSELON

Come in.

*ODIN enters.*

ODIN

Good morning, Monsignor, good morning Father.

ROUSSELON and MAISTRE

Good morning.

ODIN

Father Maistre, I would like you back in the archdiocese. We have clashed but we have more in common than not. I feel a bond with you, although strained, as a father would to a son. We need to focus on our common purpose so I am here to present a plan which will be of overall great value and could benefit from your involvement. I have invited the Oblate Sisters of Providence, a black congregation from Baltimore, to establish an orphanage and school particularly for the children of black Civil War soldiers. Does this plan interest you Father Maistre?

MAISTRE

*(very slight pause)*

Yes, of course. I have always emphasized the need for more schools and orphanages, for the people.

ODIN

I thought you would agree. Now what you need to do to involve yourself in this holy effort, Father Maistre, is to close down your parish and submit an *unconditional* apology.

*(placing his hand on Maistre's shoulder)*

And I hope that we can resolve our differences and come together on this soon, because I will soon be leaving.

MAISTRE

What?

ODIN

Yes. Of all the frustrations being archbishop here, what has worn me down most has been *our* impasse. Our lack of resolution is something that has been driving me away from this distinctive place. I hope we can achieve some kind of resolution, but if not, you must know, as I leave, that you and I, we want the same thing.

*ODIN embraces MAISTRE.  
BLACKOUT. LIGHTS instantly  
up on seance table where  
CAILLOUX stands up.*

CAILLOUX

Apology is tantamount to surrender!

*BLACKOUT. MUSIC:  
"Dr. Roudanez's Theme." LIGHTS  
UP as ROUDANEZ enters.*

ROUDANEZ

I supported Archbishop's school. For years I had been an outspoken critic of Odin but why fight a plan with such obvious benefits? What does it matter if I questioned the motives? So, we championed the Archbishop's plan in the pages of *L'Union*...

*LIGHTS CROSS FADE onto  
MAISTRE and FELICIE.*

MAISTRE

*(holding up a copy of "L'Union")*

Even Dr. Roudanez is supporting him.

FELICIE

And why shouldn't he?

MAISTRE

This is not pure. This is *expedient* for Odin. He's not responding to requests from the community. Why hasn't he answered the call for a black priest or parish? You see, for months he tried to establish a white school but this this is the only way he could do it.

FELICIE

Well, there will be a school there that was not there before, will there not?

MAISTRE

But *he's* more concerned about numbers - about losing free black parishioners to Protestant churches through *their* schools, than he is about actually educating. He's not capable of it to begin with, which is why he has called on me.

FELICIE

Whatever it takes to open this school and to get you back in the archdiocese I say is a positive solution.

MAISTRE

But to *apologize* to him?

FELICIE

For the love of God why not? This is bigger than the two of you.

MAISTRE

That man is nostalgic for the days when masters educated slaves! I'm having a hard time hitching my wagon to that.

FELICIE

What's your choice? Sit back and watch him commandeer your priorities? You do not *own* this issue!

MAISTRE

*(slight pause)*

True, but if he's at the helm I don't trust it to function correctly.

*(thinking deeply)*

So clever, so *shrewd* - to box me in like this.

*(exhaling, tired)*

God often gives nuts to people who have no teeth.

FELICIE

God gives the nuts but He does not crack them.

MAISTRE

*(sitting down, after a pause)*

Odin is leaving New Orleans, finally.

FELICIE

Excellent! Then you can return to your -

MAISTRE

No, I'm still under interdict.

FELICIE

Then just apologize and get it over with! Every thing you have done here? It has made the city a better place. There comes a time when you *can* stop fighting. The Creoles appreciate your hard-fought efforts but my people never stray very far from their mother church.

MAISTRE

So, your religious life doesn't reconcile with your politics?

FELICIE

What do you expect from us? We participated in your schism!



*MAISTRE turns and begins to walk away and FELICIE grabs hold of him.*

MAISTRE

They are returning to a flawed institution!

FELICIE

True but what is *not* flawed? And it is what we *know*! The priest can be flawed but the sacrament still has meaning. If those people stay with you then they can not receive sacraments in our live's most meaningful times!

*(turning Maistre around to face her)*

I am thinking of *you*. Come back to the church with us. We all want to return, so it seems? And if you insist on perpetuating this schism with less and less parishioners you will be hard pressed for income.

MAISTRE

Yes..

*(sitting, exhaling, fatigued)*

The truth is that I never did intend to separate from the institution.

FELICIE

*(looking deeply into his face, disturbed)*

You do not look right.

MAISTRE

*(looking deeply into her face)*

Well,... if I reveal something, will you promise not to judge?

FELICIE

Yes, of course.

*(sitting down next to him)*

MAISTRE

Captain Cailloux's spirit visits me.

FELICIE

*(quietly astonished)*

He does?

MAISTRE

Yes, he does. He wants me to *not* surrender to Odin. But the fight is leaving me.

FELICIE

I understand.

MAISTRE

*(distraught)*

What vexes me most is that I am even capable of receiving these visitations. I want them to stop, and I believe if I apologize to Odin, that Andre Cailloux will leave me alone, because then I'll be able to banish him from my mind, and he will think me a coward and consequently wash his hands of me.

FELICIE

What reason more do you need to apologize?

*FELICIE places her hand on his shoulder. MUSIC: "Spiritualist Suite."  
LIGHTS CROSS FADE onto a seance Upstage Center. CAILLOUX is Downstage left while MAISTRE sleeps Downstage Right.*

CAILLOUX and REY

I have fallen but my principle, does it not live? Don't you see the realization of my dreams today?...

*MAISTRE sits up.*

CAILLOUX

*(crossing toward Maistre)*  
You see in your dreams do you not?

MAISTRE

If you would let me sleep then perhaps I could see what I *should* see in my dreams.

CAILLOUX

There is no time for perhaps - only to be decisive! To push for schools, the ballot, juries, conveyances -

MAISTRE

I *am* pushing for those things, and there are positive developments around us, such as the new state constitution and the fact that -

CAILLOUX

A piece of paper worth only as much as those elected to uphold it.

MAISTRE

... *and* the fact that Odin is leaving New Orleans.

CAILLOUX

Then nothing remains in your way.

MAISTRE

Except that I'm still censured and I want back in.

CAILLOUX

In?

MAISTRE

I can't reach people from out here! Look, if I submit, I won't be bowing down to that jackass because he is no longer here.

CAILLOUX

So that's what this entire morass has been about?

MAISTRE

What?

CAILLOUX

A contest of willpower?

MAISTRE

No, *principles*.

CAILLOUX

I don't understand you. The Archbishop finally leaves and *then* you capitulate?

MAISTRE

It's not giving in - it's getting *back* in.

CAILLOUX

But to be back "in," as you say, is to succumb. Inequity and iniquity can only be fought from the outside by *charging* the fortifications.

MAISTRE

*(ironic)*  
Such as at Port Hudson?

CAILLOUX

*(emphatic)*  
We fought for something there and the memory of that day pushes us forward.

MAISTRE

Yes but -

CAILLOUX

If you rattle the walls from inside, Father Maistre, they will fall in on you.

MAISTRE

But consider the progress made so far. It can only be protected from within.

*MAISTRE sits on the bed, distressed.*

CAILLOUX

From within a system that swings like a pendulum. Just don't let the motion swing you to sleep, as fatigued as you are.

MAISTRE

You have nothing to fear Captain Cailloux....

*MAISTRE lies back. MUSIC grows louder. Unseen by Maistre, CAILLOUX has disappeared.*

MAISTRE

Captain Cailloux?... Captain Cailloux?...

*(sitting up abruptly)*  
Who's relaxing? I'm not relaxing... Captain Cailloux?

*LIGHTS CROSS FADE onto an empty chair, formerly the office of Archbishop Odin. MUSIC: "The Acquiescence." FR. MAISTRE enters. On another part of the stage, ODIN serves communion.*

MAISTRE

*(kneels before the empty chair)*

I submit this sincere statement of regret and repentance. I disavow all that has been condemnable in the exercise of my ministry while under ecclesiastical censure. I admit to having caused evil by my defiance of episcopal authority and agree to submit to conditions for my rehabilitation as prescribed by canon law....

*LIGHTS CROSS FADE onto  
ROUDANEZ. MUSIC:  
"Dr. Roudanez's Theme."*

ROUDANEZ

Things were looking up. Odin left New Orleans for France, the church started to do more for blacks, the party of Lincoln was winning major victories nationwide while the U.S. and Louisiana State Constitutions recognized African American men as free and able to vote. At the time no one had any idea of the backlash the future held in store. Antislavery societies throughout the North disbanded believing that their work was completed. In New Orleans we activists felt a similar sense of encouraging accomplishment and went back to our original professions. I, for one, became a full-time doctor again. Likewise Father Maistre returned to his vocation of practicing Catholic priest....

*ROUDANEZ exits. MUSIC:  
"Spiritualist Suite." On one side of  
the stage a spiritualist circle takes place  
with 3 or 4 people as opposed to  
7 or 8, around which CAILLOUX  
hovers. On the other side of the stage  
FR. MAISTRE finishes hearing a  
confession and starts to exit.  
MUSIC: "Cantique." CAILLOUX  
crosses from the seance and  
addresses MAISTRE who has  
kneeled to pray.*

CAILLOUX

So, you publicly prostrated yourself?

MAISTRE

Or, you could say, I ended my exile from the priesthood.

CAILLOUX

Why did you state that you "strayed from the fold"? Whose fold? What fold?  
*They're* the ones who have strayed.

MAISTRE

It's a victory that I never gave him the satisfaction of apologizing to his face.

CAILLOUX

But you claimed that you set a "bad example"?

MAISTRE

The only *example* I have followed is that of the black Creoles who are reverting to the church in droves.

CAILLOUX

And you let them publish your apology in the Catholic papers? Is this a disposition brought on by age?

MAISTRE

Perhaps. Growing old is not something you will ever have the experience to speak from. Captain Cailloux, throughout the years of schism, in my heart of hearts I had never left my church. It was just my way of fighting that unholy man.

CAILLOUX

But your way to return was *through* that unholy man whether you faced him or not.

MAISTRE

Was there any other way?

*(crossing to Cailloux)*

Captain Cailloux, I do not yet have the benefit of your perspective. All I can say is that while you were here, among us, you stayed within your parish...

*(sitting on his bed)*

- like a good soldier.

CAILLOUX

*(He paces, thinking, then stops.)*

Yes. You are correct....

*(paces in a circle then sits on bed with Maistre)*

So, my wife has joined me. Thank you for watching over her.

MAISTRE

They wronged her - *still* owed your widow's pension.

CAILLOUX

Thank you for conducting her last rites

MAISTRE

*(smiling)*

A lot easier than doing yours. But now,...

*(coughing)*

... some day soon someone will conduct mine.

CAILLOUX

*(looking at Maistre with great understanding)*

I appreciate all your efforts.

MAISTRE

It isn't ugly to run when when there's not strength enough to stay.

CAILLOUX

*(placing his hand on Cailloux's shoulder)*

What you lose in the fire you will find in the ashes.

*CAILLOUX hands MAISTRE a container of ashes and exits. LIGHTS CROSS FADE to another part of the stage where parishioners are lined up. FR. MAISTRE crosses to face the head of the line and begins making a cross of ash of their foreheads. ROUDANEZ joins the line.*

ROUDANEZ

Although Father Maistre was allowed back into the diocese, he was allowed to continue his ministry at his formerly-renegade Holy Name of Jesus Parish, which was seen as a validation of all his efforts. Eventually all its members would return to their parishes and Holy Name ceased to exist.

*ROUDANEZ is the last person to MAISTRE and then makes the sign receive ashes from FR. of the cross. LIGHTS CROSS MUSIC: "Spiritualist Suite." LIGHTS CROSS FADE onto the small Spiritualist circle and LIGHTS UP on MAISTRE lying in his bed Downstage Left. LIGHTS up on ODIN on another part of the stage.*

REY

... Beloved, I am already poured out like a libation and the time of my departure is at hand. I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith...

*MUSIC: "Cantique". FELICIE enters and looks at MAISTRE in the bed, speaks to him (unheard by audience), then touches him and takes his pulse. ODIN gives the blessing of the conclusion of the mass. MUSIC stops and LIGHTS abruptly down on seance and ODIN and they rise brighter on MAISTRE and FELICIE who screams.*

FELICIE

NNNOOOOOOOO!!!!!!!

*LIGHTS DOWN. MUSIC: "Dr. Roudanez's Theme" ROUDANEZ enters.*

ROUDANEZ

Father Maistre died in 1875, at a time when the situation began to deteriorate backward from the progress of Reconstruction. I don't know if he left this world feeling accomplished, but he had been a champion. At that time my curiosity with Spiritualism diminished and I once again began to attend no services other than the Catholic mass.  
*(sitting at the seance table)*

*MUSIC: "Spiritualist Suite."*

... I did however take in one last seance where the medium once again looked to the spirit guide Cailloux, a name which in French means "rock"...

REY

Man falls! Principles persist!!!  
*(standing)*

Our fallen leader exhorts us to remain steadfast! To fearlessly march forward as he himself did that ferocious day on the banks of the Mississippi! To march forward to defy injustice and to deliver the truth, to forward the cause of liberty, which will ultimately prevail!!!

*(falling back in his chair exhausted)*

*The action at the table freezes and ROUDANEZ stands and crosses Downstage. MUSIC: "Dr. Roudanez's Theme."*

ROUDANEZ

"Man falls, principles persist..." Where had I heard those words before? I went back and perused back issues and -

*(unfolding a newspaper)*

- I was dumbfounded. There it was - from the mouth of *Father Claude Pascal Maistre* twelve years ago - his sermon in praise of the Emancipation Proclamation....

*ROUDANEZ looks perplexed. BLACKOUT. LIGHTS RISE dimly on Downstage Right and Left. MUSIC: "Spiritualist Suite." CAILLOUX and MAISTRE enter Downstage from opposite sides.*

CAILLOUX

*(to audience)*

Man falls...

MAISTRE

*(to audience)*

Principles persist!

*CAILLOUX and MAISTRE look across the stage at each other. BLACKOUT. MUSIC: "He Lay Where He Fell."*

**END OF ACT TWO**

## Vita

Rob Florence's play, "Katrina's Path," received staged readings at the University of New Orleans in November, 2006, and during the Association for Theatre in Higher Education national conference in July, 2007. The script was taught by Dr. Melinda Wilson, University of California, Sacramento, Fall semester, 2007. The show received full productions at the University of New Orleans in October, 2007 and February, 2008, as well as at the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival Region VI, March, 2008. "Katrina's Path" is included in dissertations by Edith Kreutner, University of Innsbruck, Austria, and Anne-Liese Juge Fox, Louisiana State University.

Rob Florence's play "Fleeing Katrina" was performed at the Midtown International Theatre Festival, New York, NY, in August, 2006, and at the Jefferson Performing Arts Theatre, Westwego, Louisiana, August - September, 2007.

Rob Florence has written other New Orleans-themed plays, including works on singer Ernie K-Doe and William Faulkner's experience as a French Quarter resident.

As an actor Rob Florence has performed the roles of Stanley Kowalski and Brick Pollitt at the Tennessee Williams / New Orleans Literary Festival and shared a scene with Sean Penn in the film, "All the Kings Men."

He is the author of two books on New Orleans cemeteries and a member of the Dramatists Guild.