

A SNIPERS STORY

A Play in One Act by Cheryl Ann Costa

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Companion plays by order of performance:

A Sniper's Story

The Price of Potatoes in Spain

Morning Coffee with Friends

SYNOPSIS: An adventurous American on the run in mid 1937 Europe finds, himself in the middle of the Spanish Civil war. He's recruited to be a sniper for a communist loyalist Popular Army unit. Though

Qualified as a marksman, he has moral questions, but in the end tries out for the position. {Dedicated with fond admiration and love to Spanish Civil War Veterans}

CHARACTERS:

Scott Barrons, American Intl (30 something)

Scott is a smart guy, he travels a lot on business, and rumor has it that he's an American spy perhaps. Back home in Connecticut he used to be married but his wife was murdered. He is also rifle and pistol club state champion three years running. It's not really clear why he is in Europe and how he got to Spain, It really isn't his fight but he'll do what he has to get back to Germany to sneak his German girl friend out of the country. Scott knows Mitch from previous misadventures on Safari in Africa, he thinks of her like a sister.

Michele "Mitch" Louvier, American Intl (20 something)

Mitch is a 1930's feminist. The daughter of a New Orleans doctor and wife and a former debutante, she ran away for freedom of expression. For her parents did not deal well with her socialist leanings and her odd dress. Back in the states Mitch dressed in men's clothes and in most cases looked better men's suits than most men. She volunteered to serve in Spain after several trips from France running guns, she just decided to stay on and fight in Santini's nearly all female POUM unit. She thinks the world of Scott but not as a lover, she has other interests, male and female.

Claudette Santini, French Intl (30 something)

Claudette is the commanding officer of a POUM militia unit fighting for the freely elected communist government of Spain. She had a French mother and a Italian father both military doctors. Claudette grew up around the military and it was in her blood, learning to shoot a pistol at the age of 10. Long ago when her mother was severely injured and was going to linger, she secretly gave her mother the pistol that she took her life with. Claudette is a warrior and she believes in the socialist ideals, she's realistic and expects to be dead tomorrow. But she is also a French woman, wise in the ways of love and men's hearts.

Sgt Kent Maxwell, American Intl

Kent is an American, he was found floating on some debris in the English Channel by an Italian submarine leased by the Spanish. He spent many months recovering from his injuries in a Spanish military hospital in Barcelona. He suffers from amnesia. He was befriended but Claudette during her visits to her lover who was in the same hospital, her lover later died. When Kent was released from the hospital, Claudette offered him a Sergeants position in her unit. Since that time he has been a faithful friend, confidant and comrade in arms.

**Bit parts of dozen male and female soldiers in khakis and red berets.
Waitress, MPs, Male Soldier, Dr. Patterson**

AUTHORS NOTE: There is a language convention being employed in the play that deals with the multi-language environment. At times the characters may utter a few minor words of French or Spanish, this is done to suggest that they are speaking that language. There current characters might not understand or say he-she doesn't.

Special thanks to Adrienne Amerman & Gordon Olmstead-Dean who wrote the **1936:Horror Campaign** – A LARP Universe; that set the environment that inspired this play. To Rebecca Proch who played Mitch Louvier, Denis Roma who played Sgt. Maxwell, Adrienne Amerman who inspired Claudette Santini. Thanks for sharing your characters with me.

Scenes

(House lights are cycled to quiet the audiences)
(The set can be barrels for tables and chairs ---

Scene 1 -THE BROADCAST

(LIGHTS- Begin a slow fade to black lasting until the end of the Popular army story)
(SOUND- The light sound of interference and Morse code signals can be heard in the overhead, A sound of communist party songs la 'National is heard over a tinny sounding broadcast, As the music softens an accented announcer's voice, as tinny as the rest of the broadcast can be heard.)

ANNOUNCER

This is radio Barcelona with the evening news this day July 13th, 1937

The Peoples Socialist government of Spain announced today the formation of the Peoples Popular Army.

The Popular Army will be formed from new fresh troops, trained and equipped with the best to Spain as to offer in order to defeat General Franco and his fascist henchmen from Germany and Italy. The popular army will be joined by the party faction militia units of the CNT, The PUSC and the POUM. We will report more to you as the details are available.

(LIGHTS-Dark)

{Scott Barrons gets in position on stage

ANNOUNCER

The big news today from the front,
The Popular Army has also announced the emergence of a new champion Sniper code named; **The Red Scorpion**, this heroic sniper as of today has accumulated eighteen confirmed kills of Nationalist Army officers in the past five days.

(LIGHTS – start a slow fade up – full level at end of the broadcast)

(As the fade up we see a set that suggests elements of an army camp, on the set is a single person, going thru the motions of cleaning his rifle.)

The valiant efforts of this dedicated new hero is said to have caused great havoc and demoralization among the troops of the fascists.

We are told that **The Red Scorpion** is a militia volunteer from America. Now a Hero of the People, his courage and skill has earned him the Popular Army's Red Star for valor in the termination of Franco's fascist officers.

In recognition of his accomplishment using the most primitive of equipment, The Red Scorpion was also awarded his new snipers rifle with its 5.5 power PU telescope, a product Soviet engineering and production!

This brave hero stalks the front lines while his fame spreads throughout the Popular Army and Spain. None of the fascist Nationalist Aggressors can match his skill or bravery. Not even the best that Germany and Italy can train can defeat our stealthy defender nor lessen the terror that he wreaks in the minds of the soulless invaders from east of Spain.

Scene 2 - THE ADDRESS

(He becomes aware of the audience and stands and comes forward to greet and address them.)

SCOTT

I'm the one they're talking about,
I am the "Red Scorpion,"
I'm a sniper!
---and according to the Spanish Popular Army press
and the Party's propaganda,--- I'm a damn good sniper!
A regular ---hero---of—the--people!

(he looks at someone in the audience)

SCOTT

People often ask me where I learned to shoot so well,
(He smirks)
I tell them the Boy Scouts---
You see I'm from Groton, Connecticut,
I'm a Connecticut Yankee in a freely elected Communist Country.

There I was in scenic Spain caught between a
rock and a hard place and they offered me a job.
And suddenly I'm the fair-haired boy of the party,
It wasn't what I planned or desired.

It's not a tough job if you're patient and good shot,
especially after your First Blood.
(He gets reflective)
As daylight broke, I could see first see the
outline of the enemy tents,
then gradually the troops themselves.
Looking around the camp with
my scope I could see lots of non-commissioned
officers but no officers. The non-coms were
drilling the troops and doing some early morning
exercise with them, finally they broke formation
and gathered at what must have been a mess tent.
But where were the officers?

(SOUND: Sound of a propeller driven aircraft, Scott glances up to see, then looks back at the camp.)

SCOTT

A German ME-109 buzzed the Nationalist camp,
on his way to strafe the Popular Army units.
As He buzzed the camp,
the Nationalist troops rally and cheer the
Bastard on. What's that coming from that medium
Tent?
ah ha five officers, they were whooping and
howling and cheering the plane on as well.

(chambering a round, take aim)

If there was ever going to be a time to do this,
it was then, I'll choose one of the officers in
the rear first;

squeezing off a round- "POW"

the tall one in the rear, his head explodes,

SCOTT

chamber a round, take aim
now the smaller one,

squeezing off a round- "POW"

the top of head his comes off.

chamber a round, take aim

now that the fat one in the front,

squeezing off a round- "POW"

he spins around in a macabre dance for a second and falls,

chamber a round, take aim

Now that last one in the front,
oh oh he's realized that his associates have fallen,
he looks around wildly in stunned amazement,
the fool is looking in my direction with his mouth
gaping open,

SCOTT

(squeezing off a round) POW

Got him,
The round penetrating his forehead as the rear of
his head explodes.

Hmmmm, Scarcely anyone has
noticed that four officers are laying dead;
most of the troops are still cheering the ME-109.

AH Ha the last of the officers is running
over in a near panic to see the dead officers,

chamber a round, take aim

Idiot! Instead of getting his butt down, the fool
stands there looking around in all directions as
if he thinks he can see me,

HA!

There you go turn in my direction,

squeezing off a round- POW

Good, the slug found it's mark just above his
left ear, boom !

It takes the top of his head off,
he falls in a crumpled mass along side his fellow officers,
five for five!

(he returns to the moment and addresses the audience again)

SCOTT

People think that being a sniper is a lonely job,
Because we sit around all day in trees and wait for targets.
But from my view it's anything but lonely especially after your **FIRST BLOOD**
After your first kill, you always have the faces of those you've killed in cold
blood. Just a few feet in front of you all thru your waking day.
They're always there to remind you that you ended their lives.
Constant reminders of how you got to be a
"Hero of the People!"

(As he slowly he wanders off stage into the house and out of sight)

I was once an innocent like most of you, just an unwitting traveler in
Europe in 1937, who stumbled into Spain during their little Civil war----

SOUND: Lively communist party music plays during the stage transition

Scene 3 - THE CHASE

LIGHTS: Transition the lights in some fashion to accommodate a minor set evolution.

(Stagehands dressed with khaki clothes and berets re-arrange a couple of set barrels into a café table. A woman and a man both in khaki and wearing red berets come out carrying tea cups and sit at the Café table.)

SOUND: a commotion is heard the sound of running boots, men yelling, blowing a classic European police whistle. The woman on stage is chatting in a quiet manner and giggling with the man she's having tea with.

Mitch

(low chatter between them and snickering about nothing)

MEN

ALTO! ALTO!

SOUND: Followed by a woman's scream followed by the mixed sound of lots of squealing pigs and some men yelling in disgust, it's chase gone wrong.

MEN

Mierda ---- oh mierda --- ALTO!

SOUND: Followed by more crashing sounds and more pig squealing.

(A Scott runs through the house, dressed with a civilian sport jacket, Looking winded he slips behind a structure on the stage, and peeks out into the house to see if he's being followed, simulates a café and a few tables, and there is a handful of popular army male and female soldiers in khakis, sporting their black and red berets. Scott goes through the motions to suggest that he's looking outside to see if anybody is following him. As he starts catch his breath, and starts to relax just a bit. A waitress woman enters quietly walks up from behind him and while approaching him says.)

WAITRESS

Welcome to our cafe senior, what can I get you?

(Still breathing heavy but relaxing }

SCOTT

tea please - te por favor

(She nods and leaves, Scott closes his eyes for a moment and tried to use a meditation technique a deep breath to relax himself, the woman at the table woman dressed a Spanish khakis wearing a red scarf and a red beret, gets up from the table creeps up behind him and says in a slow relaxed manner.

MITCH

Well well if it isn't Scott Barrons!

(The words, land on him like a hammer, he starts to raise his hands like someone has a gun at his back.)

SCOTT

Now what?

MITCH

Being chased by the forces of darkness again, Scott?

(Scott cops a look like what the heck, 'They got me')

SCOTT

OK, ya got me!

(He slowly turns to see the smiling face of Mitch Louvier the gal from New Orleans dressed in khakis wearing the red beret of a militiaman. Scott is shocked and pleasantly surprised.)

SCOTT

Michele Louvier aren't you a sight for sore eyes.

(He rushes over to her and give her a big hug, which the other Spanish soldiers just grin and exchange glances. }

MITCH

I prefer Mitch remember, Great to see you too Scott!

SCOTT

What in the hell are you doing in Spain
(stepping back and looking at her)
And why are you dressed that way and who are your
friends?

MITCH

I'm in the popular army fighting with the Spanish Loyalist's!

SCOTT

You're fighting in a communist unit?

MITCH

Ya a the PARTIDO OBRERO DE UNIFICACIÓN MARXISTA or
POUM unit attached to the Popular army 32nd battalion,
(motion to the soldier(s) standing around
her)

This/these are my comrade(s) in arms.
(she motions to them they all smile they
are obviously not following a word that
she is saying.)

So, Scott what are you doing here?

SCOTT

Isn't the POUM followers of Trotsky?

MITCH

Yep! Most of us can't stand Stalin, he's is the
worse thing to ever happen to socialism.
So what are you doing here?

SCOTT

It all started when I got to Spain, I was under
contract to do something for the republican
government in Barcelona. There was some confusion
regarding my identity and a passport I lost in
Cairo and the next thing I knew that I was being
chased through the streets by Republican MPs.

(Mitch being a street wise gal and she immediately catches the drift and
turns and begins telling her comrade(s) in Spanish, about.)

MITCH

Amigo 's, This is my friend 'Scott Barrons' from America,

(Mitch turns back to Scott

MITCH

I get the picture Scott. So do you need a place
to cool your heels?

SCOTT

You bet I do, if those MP's catch me, they be
tossing me in jail or fitting me for a wooden Kimono,
if you know what I mean.
(looking uncomfortable)
Mitch is there a rest room around here?

MITCH

Sure it's out back, you go and
I'll ask my friends what they think.

(Scott exits and Mitch turns to her friends.)

MITCH

My friend Scott Barrons, He's the best long
range shot I've ever seen, once in Kenya I watched
him bag a full grown lion from 80 yards. I think he
might be a good candidate for a sharp shooter that
Lt. Santini has been talking about.

A SOLDIER

Is a good idea, go ahead and invite him.

(Scott returns looking refreshed.)

SCOTT

Gee whiz Mitch, when you said out back you mean out back!

MITCH

Scott, my comrades and I think you would be very
welcome at our Popular army unit.

SCOTT

I'm not sure if I want to sign up with your
communist friends and get involved with their civil war.

MITCH

Look those republican MP's are still looking for
you and the last place they'll look is our unit.

SCOTT

Ok Ok, I guess anything is better that hanging
out in Barcelona and getting grabbed by those
MP's goons, it would be nice to sleep in safe secure surroundings.

As Mitch talks to her comrades, two big MPs who were
chasing Scott and enter the Café, the militiamen all stand up, quickly and one
of the militiamen grabs Scott by the shoulders pulls him to the rear of the
group. The Republican MP corporal, who's uniform, was badly messed up
with dirt, pig crap and blood from his bleeding from his nose, most
likely from the fall with the pigs, demanded that they turn Scott over
to them,

MP
Where is he?

MITCH
Where is who comrade?

MP
The American spy, where is he?

MALE SOLDIER
Comrade, There's no American spy here comrade, just
Comrade Meetch's friend who's volunteered to be a
sharp shooter for the Popular Army.

SCOTT
Mitch what's he saying his Spanish is too fast
for me.

MP
Ahora, NOW!

(Speaking to Scott)

MITCH
Oh oh I think this is going to get ugly

MP
hand him over or I'll.....

MALE SOLDIER 1
....Or you'll what?

(The MP throws the first punch at the lead militiaman knocking him into next week the group behind him catch him. With that the café brakes out out into an all out knockdown drag-out brawl with the red bereted militiamen and militia-women diving into it with the MP's. At the leading edge of the women is Mitch with a rather large wooden chair, which she promptly busts over one of the MP's head, knocking him sense less. From there her two gal friends lit into him with punches in the face and a knee in the crotch! ouch! One of the MP's struggles to the edge of the stage and blows his police whistle, a moment later the sound of police whistles are heard off stage.)

(Mitch grabs Scott's arm; she propelled him away from the chaos, and hisses in his ear)

MITCH

We'll go out the back way!

(Mitch, Scott and two militia women run off the stage as the fighters here more police whistle and run leaving the MP's on the floor)

(LIGHTS: Fade the to black.)

Scene 4

(LIGHTS: after the MPs are off the stage, cross fade to a normal lighting, with special lighting, project poum flags on the set and draped on curtains, this is safe POUM territory.)

(The actors of the militia unit finish their run around the house and arrive back on at the edge of stage. The women stop running and as they catch their breaths, they start laughing wildly. Mitch a bit out of breath grins at Scott and says.)

MITCH

We'll be safe here.

SCOTT

Earlier you said that I'd be safe with your unit, are you sure it ok to stay with them.

MITCH

Sure it is Scott but there's something you need to know.....

SCOTT

Like what.

MITCH

Scott we're at the front, right on the battle lines with the fascisti. People get shot and die every day there, but you'll be safe from the MP's.

SCOTT

Look if I get caught by the MP's I'll be tossed in a prison to rot or worse I'll be shot as a spy.

(Scott looking like he doesn't have a choice, Mitch reassure him.)

MITCH

Scott, You'll be as safe as we are but understand we're at the front.

SCOTT

Delightful! (not happy about either alternative)

(Mitch grins devilish grin and said)

MITCH

We already have a job for you if everything works out with the commander.

SCOTT

What does that mean?

(Mitch gets one of those looks on her face and changes the subject.)

MITCH

So hon the last time I saw you was three months ago in Kenya, what have you been doing with yourself since the safari?

SCOTT

I went to Greece for thing related to my work.

(Mitch decides to press a point and see if she can settle one of curiosities.)

MITCH

I haven't exactly been clear on what type of work you do Scott?

(Looking uncomfortable, changes the topic himself.)

SCOTT

Oh, humm, Playing cat and mouse with the forces of darkness.

(Mitch shakes her head)

MITCH

Scott! If I didn't know better I would swear you are mixed up with gangsters.

SCOTT

Mitch what would you know about gangsters?

MITCH
More than you might think my friend!

(transitional lighting)

Scene 5- THE 2ND COMPANY OF THE 32ND BATTALION (P.O.U.M.)

(SET CHANGE - Morph to the army camp set)

(LIGHTS - suggest

(After Sun down, Upon entering camp blue lit stage Mitch and Scott see a table made from a barrel with a square top upon it, Around the table are two mature women both with cigars, drinking coffee, . The table area lit with a soft amber glow to suggest an oil lamp.)

MITCH
There's the Lt and the doctor.

(Mitch leads Scott to the command area and the two women at the barrel table. Mitch pops a rather smart Fist to the right temple style salute.)

MITCH
Bonjour comrade commander and comrade doctor

(The salute is returned by Lt. Santini)

LT. SANTINI
Bonjour comrade Meetch who do you have with you?

(During this exchange Scott who does really speak French fairly well looks around disinterested?)

MITCH
This is my friend from America Scott Barrons.

LT. SANTINI
...and why have you brought him here?

MITCH
First he's on the run from the Republican MP's.

(Lt. Santini and Dr. Patterson give each other curious looks.)

MITCH
....you see the MP's think he's a spy.

(This statement raises eye browses with Patterson and Santini who are amused but trying to contain their laughter.)

LT. SANTINI

So Meetch is your friend a spy, no?

MITCH

Ma'am I don't he's a spy I think perhaps he's a gangster.

(Santini and Patterson bust out laughing; all of this is making Scott very uncomfortable.)

SCOTT

Mitch what the hell are you women jabbering about in French?

(She shushes Scott on the side and answers Santini)

MITCH

Ma'am, when I was in Kenya on Safari a few months ago, Scott shot and killed a two full grown lions from 100 yards with a rifle.

(This statement sobers up Santini, surprised but has an impressed look on her face and looks at Scott with a devilish smile)

LT. SANTINI

Meetch are you suggesting, your gangster to be tested as our new sharp shooter?

MITCH

Qui, comrade Lt. , I think he would be perfect.

(The Lt. gets up and walks over and around them looking Scott over like a used car. The Lt. walks over to her table, picks up her cigar and takes a puff, obviously thinking deeply and considerately. Then nodding her head says.)

LT.SANTINI

Oui

(She motions to her sergeant assistant
she says speaking French)

We will test the American gangster in the morning
for sniper duty, have him rest now!

(Sergeant Maxwell leads Mitch and Scott way, as they leave the
Commander's table. Lt. Santini calls out.

LT. SANTINI

Good night Monsieur Sniper.

(Scott not quite hearing what she said exactly but reacting to Mitch.)

SCOTT

Did that French broad really say good night Mr.
Snipper? What the heck is that suppose to mean?
Perhaps I'm going to be a gardener.

Scene 6 - WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT

(Mitch and Scott are taken to the side of the stage where a army style
cot is set up and a stool. The sergeant not speaking reaches onto the
cot and grabs a towel and blanket and hands them to Scott.)

SGT MAXWELL

Get some sleep, you'll need to be sharp in the
morning.

(The sergeant Maxwell stomps away, Scott sits down on the stool.)

SCOTT

Alright Mitch what the hell is going on?

MITCH

You're going to be tested for the job of being
our battalion sniper in the morning.

SCOTT

SNIPER ! I can't be a sniper

(Mitch looks upset)

MITCH
...and WHY NOT?

SCOTT
Putting it simply, but that would be killing!

(Mitch totally perturbed walks over to Scott puts her hands on his shoulders and looks him dead in the eyes.)

MITCH
That's the fucking idea Scott!
(Shaking her head in a perturbed fashion)
You shoot the gun and you put the lead in
the other guy before he does it to you! .

SCOTT
God you're hot when you swear.

MITCH
Look I told the commander that you bagged a
couple of lions from 100 yards in
Africa....right!

SCOTT
It was 60 yards

(Scott ponders the idea for a few moments, standing up.)

SCOTT
Mitch That doesn't make me a trained sniper!

(Mitch pushes Scott down on to a three-legged stool and looked him dead in the eyes.)

MITCH
Look Scott the Nationalists are hurting us bad
out here, our casualties are high.
(Backing off and slowly pacing around a
bit, Mitch explained the situation
further)
The nationalist's are like we are, they have a
lot of untrained troops directed by well trained
volunteer international fascist officers or worse
volunteer Nazi officers.

SCOTT

(Nazis - That gets Scott's attention.)
Nazis??? I hate those guys; they kidnapped me in
Cairo; beat the hell out of me.

MITCH

If you could start picking off their officers, it
would demoralize them and perhaps really confuse
things for them.

(Mitch took a few steps and faced the outward to the camp looking at the
audience)

Look over there Scott wounded being brought in,
some of my friends are most likely among the
wounded.

(Turning and looking at Scott)

For someone with your talent, it would be like
shooting fish in a barrel, it might just give
these people and us a half a chance. Besides
perhaps you might settle your own score with the
Nazis!

SCOTT

(thinks for a moment)
OK, What do I have to do?

(Mitch looks at Scott with a satisfied and happy look on her face)

MITCH

I simply suggested that you might make a good
'tireur isolé' a sniper.

(She further explained)

The Lt. has agreed to test you first thing in the
morning after you've rested.

(Scott just smiled at her.)

SCOTT

I'll give it my 'best shot.

(Mitch giggles at the pun, she walks over and kisses Scott on the
forehead.)

MITCH

Sleep well, chere.

(With that she turns and leave for the other side of the camp across
stage. Scott watches with an amused look on his face.)

SCOTT

Yes indeed little lady, I'm safe on the front lines of the Spanish Civil war.

(Scott gets up, walks over to the army cot and lays down and covers up.)

(Fade to Black)

Scene 7 - WAKE UP CALL

(Blue tablo lights, Mitch enters and shakes Scott)

MITCH

Hey the comrade time to get up, the lieutenant wishes to see you now.

SCOTT

Oh groan, what time is it?

MITCH

Just before sunrise.

(As Scott washes his face in water from a small bowl)

SCOTT

You know Mitch I've got this language thing worked out, are we speaking Spanish or French today.

MITCH

The LT. and Dr. speak French, Spanish and English, but mostly French and Spanish, don't be timid about asking them to slow down for you. What's the big deal?

SCOTT

It's about making good first impressions. When I was in naval prep school, as a young cadet I screwed up the first day and I lived with reminders and remarks from the instructors for nearly two years.

MITCH

Scott Barrons, a gangster like you went to Naval Prep school? You've got to tell me about that sometime.

SCOTT

Gangster??? Huh, yah sure some other time, lets get over to Lt. Santini's tent.

(They transition walk to the other side of the stage.)

Scene 8 - THE TALE OF TWO MELONS

(Upon arriving at the Lt's tent they are greeted by Lt. Santini, and her 2nd in command Sgt Kent Maxwell and Dr. Patterson.)

LT. SANTINI

Bonjour comrade

SCOTT

Bonjour

(The Lt. picks up a melon from her field table and holds it up)

LT.SANTINI

Voyez, ce melon?

SCOTT

les anglais - English please

LT.SANTINI

Of course, See, this melon,
(gesturing out towards the house)
It's has a brother out there about 200 yards
away.
(then with a stern face)
The brother of this melon is a traitor and a
fascist, I want you to shoot him for me, please.

(With that statement a Sgt Maxwell hands Scott a rifle, Scott looks at it for a moment.)

SCOTT

A Remington - Mosin-Nagant Rifle 7.62x54R with a mounted 2X sight. The rifle is a bolt-action single shot; I've read about these; it's a workhorse of a Russian military rifle, relatively accurate, lots of factories making ammo for it, but a single shot. If memory serves correctly it was intended to be a sports rifle.

SGT MAXWELL

(Looking at the ammo)

It looks to be about .310

SCOTT

Heck I'm got something like this in storage back at the Mystic, CT rod and gun club.)

(Scott gestures to Sgt Maxwell for a handful of ammo of shells had different colored tips, some with no color, some red, purple, green, black and yellow. Scott looks at Maxwell.)

SCOTT

Which is the heavy ball?

SGT MAXWELL

(Maxwell smiles)

Yellow with lead core, Yellow and silver are a steel core.

SCOTT

I prefer soft lead for this sort of thing.

(The Lt. rattled at him)

LT.SANTINI

Why do you want soft lead?

(Scott took a breath and explained;)

SCOTT

If this melon is the head of our fascist enemy,
then I want a soft lead round.

(Santini looked at Scott intently)

The lead ball will flatten upon impact and
tumble, in effect tearing a big hole in the
fascist's head. A steel round could go through
clean and perhaps not kill him.

(Thinking for a moment, glancing a look
to Mitch quotes her.)

That's the idea isn't it, to kill him,

(Scott said smiling. The Lt. just smirked and nodded, Mitch caught the
drift and contained her laughter. He looks at Sgt Maxwell

SCOTT

Do I get a couple sighting in rounds?

(The Lt. and Sgt Maxwell nod in the affirmative.)

SGT MAXWELL

I took the liberty of placing an empty food can
on a fence post about 50 yards away.

(Maxwell points, Scott chambers a round and takes aim thru the sight and
Gently squeezes. The Lt was watching threw her field binoculars.)

LT.SANTINI

Vous missed!

SCOTT

Not exactly, Sgt Maxwell could someone check how
far down the post that the bullet hit.

(Maxwell, motioned to Mitch to go and check. She runs off stage)

LT.SANTINI

You think you hit ze post?

SCOTT

Lt. I was just sighting on the post.
This time I'll be sighting in on the can.

(Mitch she returns.)

MITCH

The slug hit the post about a hand width down.

(Scott nods, chambers another round. He takes aim again. SOUND: POW
Mitch retrieves the can somewhere out in the house.)

SCOTT

That time I was aiming at the center of the can.

(Mitch returns a few moments later.)

MITCH

Wow Scott you nailed it dead center.

(The Lt. smiles and asks.)

LT.SANTINI

What about my fascist melon?

(Scott graciously smiles at the Lt. And nods, Scott positions himself
down on one knee, scanned the countryside peering thru the 2x sight.)

SCOTT

There, he is about 200 yards away, dead west of
us resting on a sand bag. Ok your fascist
Melon, here's a yellow round for you.

(The Lt was watching threw her field binoculars as Scott squeezes off the round)

LT.SANTINI

Mon dieu, ze melon exploded!

(Lt. Santini sort of does sort a little girl skip for joy, with a broad smile and then settles
herself.)

LT.SANTINI

That was very good Monsieur Scott.

SCOTT

My name is Barrons, Scott Barrons.

LT.SANTINI

Monsieur Barrons, your name, my friend it sounds too bourgeoisie for the
POUM. (pauses corrects herself)

I'm sorry the Peoples Popular Army.

What we need is a code name.

(Santini thinks for a moment and sort of talking to herself.)

LT.SANTINI

You are going to strike out from nowhere and sting the officers of our enemy, like a Scorpion.

(She slowly walked about the tent pondering, with her hand she grasp the fabric of red POUM flag, and smiling said simply)
hmmmm roooouge.

(She does an about face and looks at the Scott.)

LT.SANTINI

While you are with us you will be called Comrade Scorpion.

(She walked over to the chair behind her table and continued in sort of a pronouncement)

You will be our sniper and reign terror upon the our fascist enemies and you will be known through out the Popular Army as Rouge Le Scorpion (Looking over to her Spanish militiamen she went through the motions of introducing Scott to them in Spanish)

Comrades, meet ze Red Scorpion, soon to be the most dreaded sniper in all Spain.

(Looked at Sgt Maxwell, and simply said)

Outfit Him.

(Sgt. Maxwell nodded his head and lead Scott and Mitch away from command area, while walking back towards Scott's cot, Maxwell looks off stage and snaps his fingers as if to signal someone.)

MITCH

Scott that was certainly some great shooting!

SCOTT

Thanks

(In moments a militia person appears holding stack of things, The militia person hands the stack to Maxwell, who one by one hands them to Scott)

SGT MAXWELL
OK One blanket
(holds it up and sniffs it)
hmmm moth balls, it must be new, you're lucky,
(continuing)
a shirt, one pair of pants and a black beret,
(all of which he hands to Scott as they
arrive at Scotts cot.)
Welcome to the Spanish Popular Army, comrade.

(Scott sets everything down on the cot, picking up the black beret from
the pile asks)

SCOTT
If I'm was supposed to be the dreaded red
scorpion, shouldn't I have a red beret?

SGT MAXWELL
We are out of red berets comrade
We will get some more soon enough.
(Then after a moment he mused)
Are you sure you want to wear a red hat while
hiding in a tree on sniper duty?

(Scott gets all wide eyed and give I gave him a look that confirmed
that he caught Maxwell's drift.)

SCOTT
Is this unit is disproportionately more women
than men? Walking around here feel like I'm in
the Girl Scouts.

SGT MAXWELL
You'll get used to it.
(he leaves)

MITCH
A penny for your thoughts?

SCOTT
Regarding this sniper work, It makes me uneasy.
For the 2nd time in barely a two months I'm
finding my Zen Buddhist training confronted and
challenged with a survival situation. Here I am being
forced to not think like a monk but rather a warrior
again, like in Kenya. I don't like this.

MITCH

Scott what do you mean monk? Monks live in monasteries?

SCOTT

I used to live in a Zen monastery in Northern Japan.

MITCH

....And all this time I thought you were a gangster?

SCOTT

Me??? A gangster, honey I'm a lot of things, fallen angel perhaps, but I'm not a gangster. Look I'm going to hit the cot early, This is going to be a bit like deer hunting. I must get up early and go wait in a tree some place near the front to spot my targets,
(pauses sort of looks at the ground like he has a bad taste in his mouth!)
NO!!!, human beings!!, I'm going to have to shoot human beings tomorrow.
(He starts to spread the army blanket out over the cot, muttering.)
I hate this idea!

(Scott quickly jumps into cot and covers, Mitch exits stage- Fade to black)

Scene 9 - FIRST BLOOD

(Soft Blue Tablo light fades up.)

Scott is snorting in his cot, a 'MITCH' comes for Scott and shakes him to wake him.

MITCH

Comrade Scorpion? Wake up, it's time to go.

SCOTT

I'm awake, what time is it.

MITCH

Oh' five thirty, the early bird gets the worm yes?

SCOTT

Ya something like that!

MITCH

I have come to take you to the front.

SCOTT

Great a war with free escort service.

MITCH

I have water, rations, and ammo for you in my pouch.

(Sarcastically Scott quips)

SCOTT

Sounds like picnic lunch.

(Cross fade to climb-able platform)

MITCH

Scott, do you know who to shoot this Morning?

SCOTT

Sgt Maxwell gave me a crash course in what the Nationalist rankings look like. It shouldn't be too hard, as they said in Prep school, if it looks like a doorman, salute it, in this case shoot it!

(As Sgt Mitch finishes handing the food, water and rifle to Scott.)

MITCH

I'll be down on the ground forward of you to watch for patrols, you concentrate on the fasisti camp, good hunting comrade.

(Sgt Mitch he waves a thumbs up and wanders out into the woods-house -)

(Scott looks from his perch out into the theater house,)

SCOTT

(as he settles himself)

If the rod and Gun club could only see me now.

(He looks thru his telescopic sight)

Ah damn, it's still too dark to see anything,

I guess I'll have to just wait for sunrise

and I guess, I'll just have to be patient.

LIGHTS : Fade to Black

(SOUND-Immediately on cue play an a cappella chorus vocal Rendition of Le'National through curtain calls.)

(Curtain)

(The End)

Analysis of "A Sniper's Story"

Intro

I've had several offline emails from people trying to understand why in heck a Buddhist nun would be writing about something as violent as a sniper and curious why the play is set in a communist military unit in the Spanish Civil war (1936-1938).

First off the setting theme for the story was inspired by the Horror: 1936 LARP campaign written by Gordon Olmstead-Dean and Adrienne Amerman, two super writers and game masters. The characters were inspired by the characterizations of several very talented LARPer's and were used by their permission.

What's what

The core of the story was to explore the literal disintegration of a man's conscience. I used the communist setting to get away from the holy war mentality that many morality pieces get mired into. I didn't want this play set in an American war for fear of dealing with the whole God and Country theme. In my humble opinion too many people wage too much war and killing in the name of God.

The protagonist Scott Barrons is an American of mysterious background. Mitch Louvier, the idealist rich kid thinks Scott is a gangster for some unknown reason. But Scott tells us that he is loosely a Buddhist, perhaps has lived in a Zen monastery in Japan and a moral man.

Some might ask, an American Buddhist in 1937? Actually yes, an initial interest started in a spiritual convention in 1894 in Chicago. By the 1920's when a character like Scott was in college, there was a huge Zen Buddhist craze in full swing, of course the craze pretty was petering out by 1925 and died completely at the onset of the Great Depression.

So here we have Scott faced with being stranded in a foreign land and his safety at risk. When the young attractive and persuasive Michelle “Mitch” Louvier tells him that his skills could make the difference for her and the Leftist unit. Scott reluctantly agrees.

Politics aside, Scott has been granted asylum and safety by these people, they are asking for his help. So he offers to help, he doesn't like the idea but he tries to help.

In the end Scott keeps his word and does his duty. Ethically it will be his downfall.

Cheryl Ann Costa - (American playwright, April 23, 1952-)

The 50 word Bio

Cheryl Ann Costa is in a word, unique! Cheryl has been an airman, a submarine sailor and a talk radio host. Professionally, she is a security engineer for a top Fortune 500 company, vocationally she's an ordained Tibetan tradition Buddhist nun and avocation ally she's a playwright.

The 100 word Bio

Cheryl Ann Costa's theater experience started when she was 15 years old –1967–, and mostly on the technical side of stagecraft for nearly 22 years. Then in 1992 she started concentrating on character acting, directing and most of all being a playwright. Since 1993, she has authored over fifteen plays, debuting many of them in the Washington, DC metropolitan and suburban Maryland. Some plays have been produced internationally and translated into other languages. The unique topic matters of her work have been the basis for many high school and college level term papers internationally.