

The Baltimore Bank Riot

By Sara Sligar

Another U.S. History paper! This was about the Baltimore Bank Riot, and whether justice sided with equality or wealth in this case. We were supposed to use examples from current events, too. Anyway, I wrote this after we Student Production directors were casting for three hours, so plays were on my mind.

ANNOUNCER: Good evening, folks! Great to see such a turnout! Did the riot go well? No, no, don't tell me—I can see Samuel Baker's liver through his shot hip! Well, as you all may know, we're here tonight to settle an age-old issue once and for all.

BANK RIOT rises.

BANK RIOT: I HAVE SOMETHIING TO SAY! I HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY!!!

ANNOUNCER (placatingly): Well, all right. No need to get defensive.

BANK RIOT: I have to talk to Justice.

ANNOUNCER: All right... uh, crew, will you send Justice out?

Enter JUSTICE demurely.

JUSTICE: Hello. *(gives a beauty pageant wave at the audience)*

BANK RIOT: HELLO? HELLO! Justice, it's me.

JUSTICE: *(looking around, pretending not to see BANK RIOT)* Who? Where?

BANK RIOT: ME. RIGHT HERE.

JUSTICE (fake-surprised): Why, hello. Didn't, ah, didn't see you there.

BANK RIOT: I would just like to say that you have been conspicuously absent these past few weeks.

JUSTICE: Oh, that. I was... well... my grandmother was dying.

ANNOUNCER: You said you went to the Bahamas.

JUSTICE (shiftyly): Yes, right. She was dying in the Bahamas. But she's all better now!

BANK RIOT: That's no excuse! You ruined everything when you sided with those no-good dirty bankers. We tried to get Moral Economy on our side but they said our Crowd was too unruly, and look where that got us.

JUSTICE: Hey, don't blame me for your *accidental* shooting of bullets into a crowd, or your *accidental* looting of that house, or your *accidental* uproar...

BANK RIOT: If you hadn't been siding with Wealth in the first place it would all be perfectly fine right now! You turned a blind eye to it when the bank directors took all that power and decided it was perfectly fine to issue all those notes they couldn't back up and screwed the whole economy over. And then you decided that maybe some people could criticize a little bit but that's where we got created and you just ignored us! You are a neglectful parent, you—

JUSTICE: Announcer? I am feeling a bit faint in the face of these terrible lies.

ANNOUNCER: I guess we better get to the questions, then. Wealth, would you come on out?

(WEALTH enters sullenly.)

Tonight we have here questions from the audience to each of you. This first one is addressed to Justice: Justice, do you think you take into account wealth and privilege?

JUSTICE (affronted): Of course not! I would never associate with such baseness.

WEALTH: If I may, Announcer...

ANNOUNCER: You may not.

WEALTH: Thank you. As I was saying, Justice keeps on insisting that she would never even think of associating with me, but it's obvious that she does that very thing constantly! How else would she know to be here?

JUSTICE: My manager told me!

WEALTH: I for one am appalled at the two-faced nature of what is supposed to be such a one-sided idea.

JUSTICE: Excuse me? Me, two-faced? You don't even know who you belong to with all this crazy stock market stuff and paper currency.

ANNOUNCER: Settle down, settle down. Justice, he does have a legitimate point. Why do you think you seem so influenced by Wealth if you claim not to be?

JUSTICE: Well, I guess... I guess... Oh, no, you don't! I am not spilling my private thoughts on national TV.

ANNOUNCER: As if anyone is even watching this when the Super Bowl is on ESPN.

JUSTICE: In that case... well, you see, I think that Wealth is a very domineering type of guy, you know? The thing is, people who have Wealth wield a lot of power because there's so much stuff that money can buy. And even if that wasn't the case, the culture

we're raised in places a huge emphasis on getting rich and how wonderful it is—and I guess... well, I guess I sometimes feel neglected because not very many people get famous by being really fair. And then when everyone wants Wealth, he gets a really big ego—

WEALTH: Hey!

JUSTICE: It's true! And it's really hard to deal with that, you know? Sometimes I can't help but cave in... there's just so much more appreciation for him than me. I wish sometimes he would lighten up a little, and people with him would think a little more about what's fair, and that would make everything better, I think. But really, unless they do that, I don't know what other people can do since it's all just a question of personal motivation.

ANNOUNCER: Hmm, good point. Wealth, do you have anything to add?

WEALTH: Justice, I had no idea you felt that way!

JUSTICE: Oh, save it. I'm not in the mood for your lies.

WEALTH: You sound like you're in a bad romantic comedy.

JUSTICE: At least my face doesn't look like a bad comedy.

ANNOUNCER: Moving on...

UNI STUDENT: If I could, Announcer... I'd like to point out the stunning similarities between this situation and some of the homework demands that have been popping up lately.

ANNOUNCER (intrigued): Really? Go on.

UNI STUDENT: Well, all this stuff with the bankers issuing more notes than their specie reserves made possible... that kind of reminded me of the 30 minute homework rule. The thing is, some teachers say that the 30 minutes is averaged out over the week, so they can give you an hour two nights a week and nothing the other nights and that's fine. And I guess that makes sense, but then the teachers forget about what averages to 30 and start giving homework for three hours two nights a week and nothing the rest—which is totally more than their specie reserves justify or whatever. And then there are the teachers who give three hours of homework every night... anyway, it just doesn't make sense.

ANNOUNCER: That's a legitimate and incredibly boring point.

UNI STUDENT: See? How would you feel if you had to sit through that for thirty minutes a night? BORED TO TEARS. I totally sympathize.

WEALTH: If you guys don't mind... could we cut this short? Justice and I are going to go debate this point further in a cozy little Italian restaurant down the road.

ANNOUNCER: NO, the whole point of this is that you guys **SHOULDN'T** be associated with one another!

WEALTH: I can't help animal magnetism...

ANNOUNCER: You're not animals! You're **CONCEPTS!** (*But WEALTH and JUSTICE are already gone.*) **HEY! COME BACK! COME BACK!** Uh, that's all we have time for now, folks... buh-bye! ... **GET BACK HERE YOU TWO...**