

= Valerie Solanas =

Valerie Jean Solanas (April 9 , 1936 ? April 25 , 1988) was an American radical feminist , best known for writing the SCUM Manifesto and attempting to murder artist Andy Warhol in the late 1960s .

She was born in New Jersey and as a teenager had a volatile relationship with her mother and stepfather after her parents ' divorce . As a consequence , she was sent to live with her grandparents . Her alcoholic grandfather physically abused her and Solanas ran away and became homeless . She came out as a lesbian in the 1950s . She graduated with a degree in psychology from the University of Maryland , College Park . Solanas relocated to Berkeley , California . There , she began writing her most notable work , the SCUM Manifesto , which urged women to " overthrow the government , eliminate the money system , institute complete automation and eliminate the male sex . "

Solanas moved to New York City in the mid @-@ 1960s , working as a writer . She met pop artist Andy Warhol and asked him to produce her play , Up Your Ass . She gave him her script , which she later accused him of losing and / or stealing , followed by Warhol expressing additional indifference to her play . After Solanas demanded financial compensation for the lost script , Warhol hired her to perform in his film , I , a Man , paying her \$ 25 . In 1967 , Solanas began self @-@ publishing the SCUM Manifesto . Olympia Press owner Maurice Girodias offered to publish Solanas 's future writings , and she understood the contract to mean that Girodias would own her writing . Convinced that Girodias and Warhol were conspiring to steal her work , Solanas purchased a gun in the spring of 1968 .

On June 3 , 1968 , she went to The Factory , where she found Warhol . She shot at Warhol three times , with the first two shots missing and the final wounding Warhol . She also shot art critic Mario Amaya , and attempted to shoot Warhol 's manager , Fred Hughes , point blank , but the gun jammed . Solanas then turned herself in to the police . She was charged with attempted murder , assault , and illegal possession of a gun . She was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia and pleaded guilty to " reckless assault with intent to harm " , serving a three @-@ year prison sentence , including treatment in a mental hospital . After her release , she continued to promote the SCUM Manifesto . She died in 1988 of pneumonia , in San Francisco .

= = Early life = =

Solanas was born in Ventnor City , New Jersey , to Louis Solanas and Dorothy Marie Biondo in 1936 . Her father was a bartender and her mother , a dental assistant . She had a younger sister , Judith Arlene Solanas Martinez . Her father 's parents were immigrants from Spain and her mother was Italian @-@ American .

Solanas said that she regularly suffered sexual abuse at the hands of her father . Her parents divorced when she was young , and her mother remarried shortly afterwards . Solanas disliked her stepfather and began rebelling against her mother , becoming a truant . As a child , she wrote insults for children to use on one another , for the cost of a dime . She beat up a boy in high school who was bothering a younger girl , and also hit a nun . Because of her rebellious behavior , her mother sent her to be raised by her grandparents in 1949 . Solanas said that her grandfather was a violent alcoholic who often beat her . When she was 15 , she left her grandparents and became homeless . In 1953 , she gave birth to a son , fathered by a married sailor . The child , named David (later David Blackwell by adoption) , was taken away from Solanas and she never saw him again .

Despite this , she graduated from high school on time and earned a degree in psychology from the University of Maryland , College Park , where she was in the Psi Chi Honor Society . While at the University of Maryland , she hosted a call @-@ in radio show where she gave advice on how to combat men . She was also an open lesbian , despite the conservative cultural climate of the 1950s .

She attended the University of Minnesota 's Graduate School of Psychology , where she worked in the psychology department 's animal research laboratory , before dropping out and moving to attend

Berkeley for a few courses , when she began writing the SCUM Manifesto .

= = New York City and the Factory = =

In the mid @-@ 1960s Solanas moved to New York City where she supported herself through begging and prostitution . In 1965 she wrote two works : an autobiographical short story called " A Young Girl 's Primer on How to Attain the Leisure Class " and a play titled Up Your Ass , about a young prostitute . According to James Martin Harding , the play is " based on a plot about a woman who ' is a man @-@ hating hustler and panhandler ' and who ... ends up killing a man " and is more a " provocation than ... a work of dramatic literature " and " rather adolescent and contrived . " The short story was published in Cavalier magazine in July 1966 . Up Your Ass remains unpublished . Harding described her as " an avant @-@ gardist " .

In 1967 , Solanas encountered Andy Warhol outside his studio , The Factory , and asked him to produce her play . He accepted the script for review and told Solanas that it was " well typed " and promised to read it . According to Factory lore , Warhol , whose films were often shut down by the police for obscenity , thought the script was so pornographic that it must have been a police trap . Solanas contacted Warhol about the script , and was told that he had lost it . He also jokingly offered her a job at the Factory as a typist . Insulted , Solanas demanded money for the lost manuscript . Instead , Warhol paid her \$ 25 to appear in his film , I , a Man .

In her role in I , a Man , she leaves the film 's title character (played by Tom Baker) to fend for himself , explaining " I gotta go beat my meat " as she exits the scene . Solanas was satisfied with her experience working with Warhol and her performance in the film , and brought Maurice Girodias to see the film . Girodias described her as being " very relaxed and friendly with Warhol . " Solanas also had a nonspeaking role in Warhol 's film Bikeboy , in 1967 .

= = = SCUM Manifesto = = =

In 1967 , Solanas self @-@ published her best @-@ known work , the SCUM Manifesto , a scathing critique of patriarchal culture . The manifesto 's opening words are :

" Life " in this " society " being , at best , an utter bore and no aspect of " society " being at all relevant to women , there remains to civic @-@ minded , responsible , thrill @-@ seeking females only to overthrow the government , eliminate the money system , institute complete automation and eliminate the male sex .

Some authors have argued that the Manifesto is a parody of patriarchy and a satirical work and , according to Harding , Solanas described herself as " a social propagandist " , but Solanas denied that the work was " a put on " and insisted that her intent was " dead serious . " The Manifesto has been translated into over a dozen languages and is excerpted in several feminist anthologies .

While living at the Chelsea Hotel , Solanas introduced herself to Maurice Girodias , the founder of Olympia Press and a fellow resident of the hotel . In August 1967 , Girodias and Solanas signed an informal contract stating that she would give Girodias her " next writing , and other writings . " In exchange , Girodias paid her \$ 500 . She took this to mean that Girodias would own her work . She told Paul Morrissey that " everything I write will be his . He 's done this to me ... He 's screwed me ! " Solanas intended to write a novel based around the SCUM Manifesto , and believed that a conspiracy was behind Warhol 's failure to return the Up Your Ass script . She suspected that he was coordinating with Girodias to steal her work .

= = = Shooting = = =

In early 1968 , Solanas went to writer Paul Krassner to ask him for \$ 50 . In a 2009 written account , Krassner rejected part of Morrissey 's account and maintained that Solanas asked him for the money for food and he loaned it to her . Krassner later speculated that Solanas could have used the money to buy the gun as the shooting was a few days later . According to Freddie Baer , when Solanas asked Krassner for money in 1968 , she told him she wanted to shoot Maurice Girodias and

she used the \$ 50 Krassner gave her to buy a .32 automatic pistol . In any event , Krassner denied that he knew that Solanas intended to kill Warhol when she asked to borrow money from him .

According to an unquoted source in The Outlaw Bible of American Literature , on June 3 , 1968 , at 9 : 00 am , Solanas arrived at the Chelsea Hotel , where Girodias lived . She asked for him at the desk but was told he was gone for the weekend . She remained for three hours before heading to the Grove Press , where she asked for Barney Rosset , who was also not available .

In her 2014 biography , Valerie Solanas , Breanne Fahs argues that it is unlikely that Solanas appeared at the Chelsea Hotel looking for Girodias . Fahs states that Girodias may have fabricated the account in order to boost sales of the SCUM Manifesto , which he had published . Fahs states that " the more likely story ... places Valerie at the Actor 's Studio at 432 West Forty @-@ Fourth Street early that morning . " Actress Sylvia Miles states that Solanas appeared at the Actor 's Studio looking for Lee Strasberg , asking to leave her play for him . Miles said that Solanas " had a different look , a bit tousled , like somebody whose appearance is the last thing on her mind . " Miles told Solanas that Strasberg would not be in until the afternoon . Miles said that she accepted a copy of the play from Solanas and then " ... shut the door because I knew she was trouble . I didn 't know what sort of trouble , but I knew she was trouble . "

Fahs records that Solanas then traveled to producer Margo Feiden 's (then Margo Eden) residence in Crown Heights , Brooklyn , as Solanas believed that Feiden would be willing to produce her play . As related to Fahs , Solanas talked to Feiden for almost four hours , trying to convince her to produce the play and discussing her vision for a world without men . Throughout this time , Feiden repeatedly refused to produce Solanas 's play . According to Feiden , Solanas then pulled out her gun , and when Feiden again refused to commit to producing the play , Solanas responded , " Yes , you will produce the play because I 'll shoot Andy Warhol and that will make me famous and the play famous , and then you 'll produce it . " As she was leaving Feiden 's residence , Solanas handed Feiden a copy of her play and other personal papers .

Fahs describes how Feiden then " frantically called her local police precinct , Andy Warhol 's precinct , police headquarters in Lower Manhattan , and the offices of Mayor John Lindsay and Governor Nelson Rockefeller to report what happened and inform them that Solanas was on her way at that very moment to shoot Andy Warhol . " In some instances , the police responded that " You can 't arrest someone because you believe she is going to kill Andy Warhol , " and even asked Feiden " Listen lady , how would you know what a real gun looked like ? " In a 2009 interview with James Barron of The New York Times , Feiden said that she did know that Solanas intended to kill Warhol , but could not prevent it . (A New York Times assistant Metro editor responded to an online comment regarding the story , saying that the Times " does not present the account as definitive . ")

Fahs additionally cites Assistant District Attorney Roderick Lankler 's handwritten notes on the case , written on June 4 , 1968 , which begin with Margo Feiden 's stage name , " Margo Eden " , address , and telephone numbers at the top of the page .

Later that day , Solanas arrived at the Factory and waited outside . Morrissey arrived and asked her what she was doing there , and she replied " I 'm waiting for Andy to get money " . Morrissey tried to get rid of her by telling her that Warhol was not coming in that day , but she told him she would wait . At 2 : 00 pm she went up into the studio . Morrissey told her again that Warhol was not coming in and that she had to leave . She left but rode the elevator up and down until Warhol finally boarded it .

She entered The Factory with Warhol , who complimented her on her appearance as she was uncharacteristically wearing makeup . Morrissey told her to leave , threatening to " beat the hell " out of her and throw her out otherwise . The phone rang and Warhol answered while Morrissey went to the bathroom . While Warhol was on the phone , Solanas fired at him three times . Her first two shots missed , but the third went through both lungs , his spleen , stomach , liver , and esophagus . She then shot art critic Mario Amaya in the hip . She tried to shoot Fred Hughes , Warhol 's manager , in the head but her gun jammed . Hughes asked her to leave , which she did , leaving behind a paper bag with her address book on a table . Warhol was taken to Columbus ? Mother Cabrini Hospital , where he underwent a five @-@ hour , successful operation .

Later that day , Solanas turned herself in , gave up her gun , and confessed to the shooting , telling a police officer that Warhol " had too much control in my life . " She was fingerprinted and charged with felonious assault and possession of a deadly weapon . The next morning , the New York Daily News ran a front page headline stating : " Actress Shoots Andy Warhol . " Solanas demanded a retraction of the statement that she was an actress . The Daily News changed the headline in its later edition and added a quote from Solanas stating " I 'm a writer , not an actress . " At her arraignment in Manhattan Criminal Court she denied shooting Warhol because he wouldn 't produce her play but said " it was for the opposite reason " , that " he has a legal claim on my works . " Solanas told the judge that " it 's not often that I shoot somebody . I didn 't do it for nothing . Warhol had tied me up , lock , stock , and barrel . He was going to do something to me which would have ruined me . " She told the judge she wanted to represent herself and she declared that she " was right in what I did ! I have nothing to regret ! " " The judge struck her comments from the court record " and had her admitted to Bellevue Hospital for psychiatric observation .

= = = Trial = = =

After a cursory evaluation , Solanas was declared mentally unstable and transferred to the prison ward of Elmhurst Hospital . Solanas appeared at the New York Supreme Court on June 13 , 1968 . Florynce Kennedy represented her and asked for a writ of habeas corpus , arguing that Solanas was being held inappropriately at Elmhurst . The judge denied the motion and Solanas returned to Elmhurst . On June 28 , Solanas was indicted on charges of attempted murder , assault , and illegal possession of a gun . She was declared " incompetent " in August and sent to Matteawan State Hospital for the Criminally Insane . That same month , Olympia Press published the SCUM Manifesto with essays by Girodias and Krassner .

In January , 1969 , Solanas underwent psychiatric evaluation and was diagnosed with chronic paranoid schizophrenia . In June , she was finally deemed fit to stand trial . She represented herself without an attorney and pleaded guilty to " reckless assault with intent to harm " . She was sentenced to three years in prison , with one year of time served .

= = After murder attempt = =

The shooting of Warhol propelled Solanas into the public spotlight , prompting a flurry of commentary and opinions in the media . Robert Marmorstein , writing in The Village Voice , declared that Solanas " has dedicated the remainder of her life to the avowed purpose of eliminating every single male from the face of the earth . " Norman Mailer called her the " Robespierre of feminism . "

Ti @-@ Grace Atkinson , the New York chapter president of the National Organization for Women (NOW) , described Solanas as " the first outstanding champion of women 's rights " and as " a ' heroine ' of the feminist movement " , and " smuggled [her manifesto] ... out of the mental hospital where Solanas was confined . " According to Betty Friedan , the NOW board repudiated Atkinson . Atkinson left NOW and started another feminist organization . According to Friedan , " the media continued to treat Ti @-@ Grace as a leader of the women 's movement , despite its repudiation of her . "

Another NOW member , Florynce Kennedy , called her " one of the most important spokeswomen of the feminist movement . "

English professor Dana Heller argued that Solanas was " very much aware of feminist organizations and activism " , but that she " had no interest in participating in what she often described as ' a civil disobedience luncheon club . ' " Heller also stated that Solanas could " reject mainstream liberal feminism for its blind adherence to cultural codes of feminine politeness and decorum which the SCUM Manifesto identifies as the source of women 's debased social status . "

= = = Solanas and Warhol = = =

After Solanas was released from the New York State Prison for Women in 1971 , she stalked

Warhol and others over the telephone and was arrested again in November 1971 . She was subsequently institutionalized several times and then drifted into obscurity .

The attack had a profound impact on Warhol and his art , and security at the Factory scene became much stronger afterward . For the rest of his life , Warhol lived in fear that Solanas would attack him again . " It was the Cardboard Andy , not the Andy I could love and play with , " said close friend and collaborator Billy Name . " He was so sensitized you couldn 't put your hand on him without him jumping . I couldn 't even love him anymore , because it hurt him to touch him . "

= = Later life = =

Solanas may have intended to write an eponymous autobiography . In a 1977 Village Voice interview , she announced a book with her name as the title . The book , possibly intended as a parody , was supposed to deal with the conspiracy which led to her imprisonment . In a corrective 1977 Village Voice interview , Solanas said the book would not be autobiographical other than a small portion and that it would be about many things , include proof of statements in the manifesto , and " deal very intensively with the subject of bullshit " , but she said nothing about parody .

In the mid @-@ 1970s , in New York City , according to Heller , Solanas was " apparently homeless " , " continued to defend her political beliefs and the SCUM Manifesto " , and " actively promoted " her own new Manifesto revision .

Ultra Violet , according to her somewhat unreliable report , interviewed her . Solanas was then known as Onz Loh . Solanas stated that the August 1968 version of the manifesto had many errors , unlike her own printed version of October 1967 , and that the book had not sold well . She also said that , until told by Violet , she was unaware of Andy Warhol 's death .

= = = Death and after = = =

On April 25 , 1988 , at the age of 52 , Solanas died of pneumonia at the Bristol Hotel in the Tenderloin district of San Francisco . A building superintendent at the hotel , not on duty that night , had a vague memory of Solanas : " Once , he had to enter her room , and he saw her typing at her desk . There was a pile of typewritten pages beside her . What she was writing and what happened to the manuscript remain a mystery . " Her mother burned all her belongings posthumously .

= = Legacy = =

= = = Popular culture = = =

Solanas 's life has been the focus of numerous performances , films , musical compositions , and publications .

In 1996 , actress Lili Taylor played Solanas in the film I Shot Andy Warhol , which focused on Solanas 's assassination attempt on Warhol . Taylor won Special Recognition for Outstanding Performance at the Sundance Film Festival for her role . The film 's director , Mary Harron , requested permission to use songs by The Velvet Underground , but was denied by Lou Reed , who feared that Solanas would be glorified in the film . Six years before the film 's release , Reed and John Cale included a song about Solanas , " I Believe , " on their concept album about Warhol , Songs for Drella (1990) . In " I Believe " , Reed sings , " I believe life 's serious enough for retribution ... I believe being sick is no excuse . And I believe I would 've pulled the switch on her myself . " Reed believed Solanas was to blame for Warhol 's death from a gallbladder infection 20 years after she shot him .

Three plays have been based around Solanas 's life . Valerie Shoots Andy , by Carson Kreitzer , from 2001 , which starred two actresses playing a younger (Heather Grayson) and an older (Lynne McCollough) Solanas . Tragedy in Nine Lives , by Karen Houppert , in 2003 , examined the encounter between Solanas and Warhol as a Greek tragedy and starred Juliana Francis as Solanas

. Most recently , in 2011 , was Pop ! , a musical by Maggie @-@ Kate Coleman and Anna K. Jacobs . Pop ! focused mainly on Andy Warhol , with Rachel Zampelli playing Solanas and singing the song " Big Gun " , which was described as the " evening 's strongest number " by The Washington Post .

In 1999 Up Your Ass was re @-@ discovered and produced in 2000 by George Coates Performance Works in San Francisco . Coates turned the piece into a musical , starring an all @-@ female cast . Coates learned about Up Your Ass while at an exhibition at The Andy Warhol Museum , which marked the 30th anniversary of the shooting . The copy that Warhol had lost was discovered buried in a trunk of lighting equipment that was owned by Billy Name . Coates would consult with Solanas 's sister , Judith , while writing the piece , and sought to create a " very funny satirist " out of Solanas , not just showing her as the attempted assassin of Warhol .

Swedish author Sara Stridsberg wrote a semi @-@ fictional novel about Valerie Solanas , called Drömfakulteten (English : The Dream Faculty) . In the book , the narrator visits Solanas towards the end of her life at the Bristol Hotel . Stridsberg was awarded the Nordic Council 's Literature Prize for the book .

Composer Pauline Oliveros released a piece titled " To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe in Recognition of Their Desperation " in 1970 . Through the work , Oliveros sought to explore how " Both women seemed to be desperate and caught in the traps of inequality : Monroe needed to be recognized for her talent as an actress . Solanas wished to be supported for her own creative work . " There is a music group from Belgium called The Valerie Solanas .

= = = Influence and analysis = = =

Solanas 's role as a cult figure was solidified with the publication of the SCUM Manifesto and her shooting of Andy Warhol . Harding explained that , by declaring herself independent from Andy Warhol , after her arrest she " aligned herself with the historical avant @-@ garde 's rejection of the traditional structures of bourgeois theater " , and Harding explained that her anti @-@ patriarchal " militant hostility ... pushed the avant @-@ garde in radically new directions . " Harding believed that Solanas 's assassination attempt on Warhol was its own theatrical performance . At the shooting , she left on a table at the Factory a paper bag in which she carried a gun , her address book , and a sanitary napkin . Harding stated that leaving behind the sanitary napkin was part of the performance , and called " attention to basic feminine experiences that were publically [sic] taboo and tacitly elided within avant @-@ garde circles . "

Feminist philosopher Avital Ronell compared Solanas to an array of people : Lorena Bobbitt , a " girl Nietzsche " , Medusa , the Unabomber , and Medea . Ronell believed that Solanas was threatened by the hyper @-@ feminine women of the Factory that Warhol liked and felt lonely because of the rejection she felt due to her own butch androgyny . She believed that Solanas was ahead of her time , living in a period before feminist and lesbian revolutionaries such as the Guerrilla Girls and the Lesbian Avengers .

Solanas has also been credited with instigating radical feminism . Catherine Lord wrote that " the feminist movement would not have happened without Valerie Solanas . " Lord believed that the reissuing of the SCUM Manifesto and the disowning of Solanas by " women 's liberation politicians " triggered a wave of radical feminist publications . According to Vivian Gornick , many of the women 's liberation activists who initially distanced themselves from Solanas changed their minds a year later , developing the first wave of radical feminism . At the same time , perceptions of Warhol were transformed from largely nonpolitical into political martyrdom because the motive for the shooting was political , according to Harding and Victor Bockris .

However , writer Breanne Fahs describes Solanas as a contradiction which " alienates her from the feminist movement . " Fahs argues that Solanas never wanted to be " in movement " but she nevertheless fractured the feminist movement by provoking N.O.W. members to disagree about her case . Many contradictions are seen in her lifestyle (a lesbian who sexually serviced men , claim of being asexual , confusion) , a rejection of queer culture , and a non @-@ interest in working with others despite a co @-@ dependency on others . Fahs also brings into question the contradictory stories of Solanas 's life . Solanas 's life is described as one of a victim , a rebel , a desperate loner ,

yet Solanas 's cousin says she worked as a waitress in her late 20s and 30s , not primarily as a prostitute , and friend Geoffrey LaGear said she had a " groovy childhood . " Solanas also kept in touch with her father throughout her life , which makes one question and complicate the notion that Solanas hated her father and acted out this hatred in the shooting / manifesto . Fahs believes that Solanas embraced these contradictions as a key part of her identity .

= = Works = =

Up Your Ass (1965)

" A Young Girl 's Primer on How to Attain the Leisure Class " , Cavalier (1966)

SCUM Manifesto (1967)