

It is fascinating to discover what is actually said at the moment of death, or uttered unknowingly as a final word before the great reaper appears.

Consider some we recently found:

Ethan Allen (1738-1789)

Ethan Allen was a U.S. patriot and leader of the Green Mountain Boys during the American Revolution. Allen's last words were a deathbed response to an attending doctor who attempted to comfort him by saying, "General, I fear the angels are waiting for you" to which the general replied: "Waiting are they, waiting are they? Well...let them wait!"

P.T. Barnum (1819-1901)

P.T. Barnum was the most famous American showman of all time.

He began his career in 1835 when he purchased a very old hymn-singing slave named Joice Heth and exhibited her as the 161 year old nurse of George Washington. As an additional attraction, he added the preserved body of a FeeJee Mermaid--in reality the top half of a monkey sewn to the tail of a fish.

By 1841, Barnum had earned enough money to open the American Museum in New York City where his attractions included General Tom Thumb and--for a short time--Jenny Lind in addition to a host of animals and sideshow attractions.

In 1871, he took his "circus" on the road and, ten years later, merged his operation with James A. Bailey's. After taking his "Barnum and Bailey's Greatest Show on Earth" on a triumphant tour of London during the winter of 1889-1890, Barnum returned to New York City.

A true showman to the end, and on his death bed he asked:
"How were the circus receipts tonight at Madison Square Garden?"

Francis (Two Gun) Crowley (d 1931)

The bank robber and murderer said to those strapping him into the electric chair:
"You sons of bitches. Give my love to mother."

General John Sedwick (1813-1864)

Fighting in the American Civil War, the Union General was re-assuring his troops who were questioning the general about his exposure to enemy fire:

"They couldn't hit an elephant at this dis..." as a rebel bullet ended his life.

Charlie Chaplin (1889-1977)

Charlie Chaplin was a British actor who became a Hollywood star after joining with Max Sennet during a music hall tour of the United States in 1913.

He is usually remembered for his silent picture roles as a little man with a mustache wearing a baggy suit and derby. Many consider Chaplin to be cinema's greatest comedian.

When the priest, who was attending him on his deathbed, said 'May the Lord have mercy on your soul,' Chaplin quickly replied, "Why not? After all, it belongs to him."

James W. Rodgers (1911-1960)

When this Utah murderer was brought before the firing squad he was asked if he had any last request and answered:

"Yes – a bulletproof vest."

Ramon Maria Narvaez (1800-1868)

When a priest asked this Spanish statesman if he had forgiven all his enemies, he replied:
"No need to forgive them – I have had them all shot."

W. C. Fields (1879-1946)

Friends were surprised to discover Fields on his deathbed searching through the Bible. He explained:
"I'm looking for a loophole."

Neville Heath (d 1946)

As he was about to be hanged for murder he requested a whiskey as a last wish and when he had almost drunk it, added:
"You might make that a double."

Karl Marx (1818-1883)

When his housekeeper asked if he had any last message for the world, he told her:
"Go on, get out! Last words are for fools who haven't said enough."

W. Somerset Maugham (1874-1965)

When he was asked for some final words of wisdom, the author offered these:
"Dying is a very dull, dreary affair. And my advice to you is to have nothing whatever to do with it."

John Philpot Curran (1750-1817)

The Irish writer and socialite, told by his doctor that he seemed to be coughing with more difficulty, answered:
"That's surprising, since I have been practicing all night."