

Humana Festival 2008

The Complete Plays

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GREAT FALLS

A PLAY IN SEVERAL TOWNS

by Lee Blessing

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BIOGRAPHY

Lee Blessing's Actors Theatre of Louisville credits include *Down the Road*, *Riches*, *Independence*, *Nice People Dancing to Good Country Music*, and *Oldtimers Game*, plus various shorter pieces. Broadway: *A Walk in the Woods* (also performed in Moscow and London's West End). Off-Broadway: *A Body of Water*, *Going to St. Ives*, *Thief River*, *Chesapeake*, *Cobb*, *Down the Road*, and *Eleemosynary*; and *Fortinbras*, *Lake Street Extension*, *Two Rooms* and *Patient A* (Signature Theatre's 1992-93 season). Regional Theatre: World premieres of *Lonesome Hollow*, *The Scottish Play*, *Flag Day*, *Whores*, *Black Sheep*, and *The Winning Streak*. Current commissions include *Moderation* (Weissberger Group), *Perilous Night* (Denver Center Theatre) and Thornton Wilder's *Heaven's My Destination* (Cleveland Play House). Mr. Blessing heads the graduate playwriting program at Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Great Falls premiered at the Humana Festival of New American Plays in February 2008. It was directed by Lucie Tiberghien with the following cast:

MONKEY MAN Tom Nelis
BITCH Halley Wegryn Gross

and the following production staff:

Scenic Designer Paul Owen
Costume Designer Lorraine Venberg
Lighting Designer Brian J. Lilienthal
Sound Designer Matt Callahan
Properties Designer Doc Manning
Original Music Brian Callahan
Stage Manager Kathy Preher
Production Assistant Mary Spadoni
Dramaturg Amy Wegener
Assistant Dramaturg Devon LaBelle
Casting Zan Sawyer-Dailey
Directing Assistant Gaye Poole

Development support for *Great Falls* was provided by the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center during a residency at the National Playwrights Conference of 2005.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

MONKEY MAN, in the middle of his life

BITCH, at the start of hers

PLACE AND TIME

The Great Northwest. Now, more or less.

GREAT FALLS

WALL

MONKEY MAN *drives. BITCH, in the passenger seat, is rageful. A long beat before he speaks.*

MONKEY MAN. I love this whole part of the country. Not quite the table lands. Just before the table lands. The Great Plains. They're different up here. Hard to describe. Well, there's the Badlands. They have the Badlands up here.

(Pointing left out of the car.)

Just over there, in fact. One step and—boom! There you are: broken country. That's what they call it, broken country. Want to see the Badlands?

(As she continues to ignore him.)

Maybe on the way back. It's tremendous, though. I remember from when I was a kid. Like driving on the moon. Gorgeous, in its way.

BITCH. They're gonna rape you in prison.

MONKEY MAN. Hope you like this car. It's amazing you've never been in it before. Got it right after the...well, you know. At least we're roaming in style, eh? When I was a kid, ten or so, my folks took me on a trip out here. Did it all: Mt. Rushmore, Devil's Tower, Pompey's Pillar—you know what that is?

(No response.)

Little Bighorn. The Last Stand.

BITCH. Kidnappers get raped in prison. Especially if they kidnap children.

MONKEY MAN. You're not a child. And I didn't kidnap you. We're taking a drive, that's all. Spending time together. Having a talk. At least we would be, if you weren't taking the world's longest nap. Didn't you get any sleep last night?

BITCH. Sometimes they use objects. Various objects they carefully fashion in secret—or maybe right in your cell, right in front of you.

MONKEY MAN. I haven't committed a crime.

(After a beat.)

You'll like Wall Drug. My folks took me there. The Interstate wasn't finished yet. We went through Pierre, the old way. Wall Drug had signs like every two hundred feet for hundreds of miles in advance. "Wall Drug." "Visit Wall Drug."

(Pointing as they pass an actual sign.)

“Everything’s at Wall Drug.” Everything was, too. And it was all like wood, you know? Like it had been that way forever—ancient trading post. Bin after bin full of crap only kids and tourists could like. I didn’t care about the crap; it was the wooden bins I loved. They have this old, yellow, orangey-brown sort of sheen—or gray.... The wood feels like velvet, it’s been touched so much. Reshaped by all those fingers sliding over it for years.

BITCH. Spoons, sometimes. That’s a foreign object they use. They could rape you with spoons.

MONKEY MAN. No one is going to jail.

BITCH. Or sometimes they make spoons into knives. Maybe it’ll be knives.

MONKEY MAN. You’re not being abducted.

BITCH. I’m not?

MONKEY MAN. No. You’re not.

BITCH. You’re such a loser. I just wanted to see how far you’d go. I thought, “Twenty miles, he’ll turn around.” Then I thought thirty, fifty, a hundred, three hundred—

MONKEY MAN. Damn it, no one’s abducting you!

BITCH. (*Producing a cell phone.*) Then I can call Mom?

MONKEY MAN. Put that away! You said you wouldn’t. You promised.

BITCH. Like you promised to turn around?

MONKEY MAN. Give me that!

BITCH. No way! It’s mine!

MONKEY MAN. (*Grabbing for it.*) Give it! Right now!

BITCH. Watch where you’re going!

(They’re swerving. He jerks the wheel back from a close call, then drives on, chastened.)

MONKEY MAN. I do not want you to call her.

BITCH. Is that an order? ’Cause if it’s an order, then I’m being abducted, aren’t I?

MONKEY MAN. Please.

BITCH. Wish denied.

(Punching in a number.)

You could try overeating in prison, I suppose—get real fat. But some convicts like fat guys. Bigger the better. Wish I could be there to hear you scream.

(On phone.)

Hello, Mom—? Guess who I’m with. Monkey Man. Yeah! We’re in his car, driving west. He’s making off with me.

MONKEY MAN. Gimme that!

(*Grabbing the cell phone from her.*)

Hello? Yeah, it's me. I'm not doing anything with her. I'm not making off with anybody. She's being theatrical. We're just— What? We're taking a drive. So we can have a *talk*. What do you mean? There's plenty of things to talk about, there's— What's it matter where we are? We're in my car. On a road somewhere.

BITCH. In South Dakota!

MONKEY MAN. Shut up!

(*On the phone.*)

What? No. She's just being— We're not in South Dakota. We're nowhere near—

BITCH. (*Shouting at the phone.*) We're in South Dakota! We're right next to the Badlands, and Wall Drug is—

(*With a quick look out the window.*)

—twelve-point-three miles away—!!

MONKEY MAN. (*On the phone.*) Don't call the police! Don't call the police. Just listen, okay? Can you? Can you just *listen* to me?!

(*With a dirty look at the grinning BITCH.*)

First of all, she's not a child. She's eighteen. Okay, she's a *week* from being eighteen. If she wants to be with me, she has every right. We ran into each other this morning. At her work. I came over from Lincoln for an appointment; I stopped for a bagel. I have bagels sometimes. I have a human right to have a fucking bagel, okay?! I'm not swearing. Sorry, I'm— She was on her break, having a smoke in the parking lot. I was on that stoop thing—or, you know, the ramp for the disabled. Yeah, very funny. Anyhow, we realized we had a lot to talk about. So we took a drive—

BITCH. He said I'd be back in *five minutes*!! My job is *toast*!!

MONKEY MAN. (*Covering the phone.*) Shut up!

(*On the phone.*)

What—? Who cares? It's a summer job. The money doesn't matter. I'll give her the money, for Christ's— I don't know, a couple days?

BITCH. We're driving to Oregon! Like Lewis and Clark!

MONKEY MAN. *Will you—?!*

(*On the phone.*)

I know. I know. It's a long way from Omaha. But sometimes I can't think—you know, *think*—unless I'm driving, or walking, or...I have to be in motion of some kind, or the blood doesn't—you remember. So anyway, it was just this idea that developed. While we *talked*. Okay, yes—more than a couple days. For God's sake, in the great scheme of things...I know. I know. I've

just...lost a lot here—we all have—and talking this morning, we realized there may still be something to retrieve.

BITCH. Like my job.

MONKEY MAN. (*A harsh whisper.*) Your job is gone! I'll pay for your job!

(*On the phone.*)

So, look. Just...let us do this, okay? Just. Just relax, and we'll be home before you— Okay. Okay. Okay. Okay. I know what I did. You don't have to—

(*To BITCH.*)

She thinks I'm insane. She's angry. She never wanted to speak to me again, and suddenly here I am on the—

(*On the phone.*)

What? Okay. Okay. That does sound reasonable. I'll buy her things. Wall Drug's coming right up; we can— Sure, of course. I should have called right away. I'm sincerely sorry— No, you're completely...perfectly reasonable. You wouldn't be a responsible adult if you didn't.... No, no—go ahead, absolutely.

(*Handing her the phone.*)

She wants to know if you're being kidnapped.

(*As she stares at the phone, lights fade to black, then bounce up again. They're still driving. She now has a large, white plastic shopping bag on her lap. It's full of purchases and says, "Visit Wall Drug."*)

MONKEY MAN. That was fun, wasn't it?

BITCH. No.

MONKEY MAN. Don't know why they got rid of the wooden bins. I used to love those. So much plastic in there now. Didn't really feel like Wall Drug.

BITCH. It'll probably be a Wal-Mart next year. So what?

(*A beat. She fishes a pair of jeans from the shopping bag, starts removing tags.*)

MONKEY MAN. Did you get everything you needed?

BITCH. (*Pulling a stuffed rabbit with tiny antlers attached—a jackalope—from the bag.*) Pretty much.

(*Staring at the jackalope.*)

I need more toilet stuff.

MONKEY MAN. I'll get off at the next exit. It's been a long day. We can pick up whatever you need, find a motel—

BITCH. (*With sudden rage.*) You are not my FATHER, you fucking asshole!!!

MONKEY MAN. (*After a long beat.*) I never said I was.

BITCH. You're fucking Monkey Man! I know you read my diaries!

MONKEY MAN. I never did.

BITCH. I know you did.

MONKEY MAN. You can't "know" that, because I never did.

(A long silence. They drive.)

BITCH. I'm not staying in a motel with you.

MONKEY MAN. It doesn't have to be the same room. I was kind of hoping it could be—I mean, you know, twin beds—because after a few days it starts to add up. I'm still paying support for you and your brother, you know. Don't have to; it's my choice, but.... Plus I'll be paying you back for your job—

BITCH. You're so cheap. No wonder Mom left you.

MONKEY MAN. That's not why she left me.

BITCH. You had sexual fantasies about me.

MONKEY MAN. I did not.

BITCH. You're a man. You couldn't help yourself.

MONKEY MAN. I am a man. And I can help myself.

BITCH. You had sexual fantasies about everybody. That's what Mom says.

MONKEY MAN. Your mother is very angry.

BITCH. Someday they're going to make sexual fantasies a crime. People like you will go to prison for eternity and live them out with four hundred-pound serial killers who never shower.

MONKEY MAN. I'm very sorry for what your father—

BITCH. *Shut up!*

MONKEY MAN. *(After a beat.)* So where do you suggest we sleep tonight?

BITCH. In the car.

MONKEY MAN. In the *car?* I'm not going to—! We'll get arrested.

BITCH. Want me to call the cops right now? 'Cause if you're abducting me—

MONKEY MAN. Okay, okay—! I could...I could look for a side road, I guess. Somewhere they don't patrol. But you won't be comfortable. It'll be cold.

BITCH. I'm calling the cops.

MONKEY MAN. Stop. Just stop, okay? We don't have to call anybody. There's a blanket in the trunk—

BITCH. I'm not sharing—

MONKEY MAN. That you can have. Christ. Don't know why I thought this was a good idea.

BITCH. What makes you think you think?

(After a beat.)

I've named my jackalope. Wanna hear?

MONKEY MAN. It's just that a motel would—

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TONGUE, TIED

by M. Thomas Cooper

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BIOGRAPHY

M. Thomas Cooper has studied literature and theatre at Oregon State University, the University of Oregon, San Francisco State University and Portland State University. He's had a number of short plays presented in conjunction with the Ashland 10-Minute Play Festival, Theatre in the Grove and Portland State University. In 2005, his play *Rising* was a finalist for the Northwest Playwright Award. His first novel, *42*, was published in June 2008 by Ooligan Press.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Tongue, Tied premiered at the Humana Festival of New American Plays in March 2008. It was directed by Marc Masterson with the following cast:

TINA..... Emily Ackerman
TOM..... Stephen Plunkett

and the following production staff:

Scenic DesignerPaul Owen
Costume Designer..... Susan Neason
Lighting Designer..... Paul Werner
Sound DesignerBenjamin Marcum
Properties Designer Mark Walston
Stage Manager..... Debra Anne Gasper
Assistant Stage Manager..... Captain Kate Murphy
Dramaturg Adrien-Alice Hansel
Assistant Dramaturg..... Devon LaBelle

CAST OF CHARACTERS

TINA: A young woman with different colored socks on each hand.

Her socks are:

Jean-Claude	Left Hand
Latisha	Right Hand

TOM: A young man with different colored socks on each hand.

His socks are:

Mr. Chan	Left Hand
Sven	Right Hand

PLACE

A psychiatrist's waiting room.

TONGUE, TIED

A psychiatrist's waiting room. TINA sits, hands hidden behind her, waiting. After a moment her right hand jumps.

TINA. Stop it.

(Again her right hand jumps.)

I said, STOP IT!

(Again her right hand jumps.)

Latisha! Damn it! I said, STOP!

(TINA begins struggling to keep her right hand behind her.)

No...no...I said.... NO. No-no-no-no no-no. Latisha...!

(TINA's right hand—LATISHA—bolts out and looks around.)

LATISHA. Girl, how many times have I told you? You gotta stop keepin' us down like that. Look at this bright, crazy world you're trying to keep us from. Just look at it! Ain't it amazin'?!

TINA. Latisha, you know I'm not trying to keep you down. I'm attempting to live an ordinary and relatively content life.

LATISHA. Ain't we all, Sista. Ain't we all.

TINA. And having a black woman, who happens...

LATISHA. A proud, powerful woman of color. Thank you.

TINA. Exactly. A proud, powerful woman of color, who happens to be a sock, living on my hand...

LATISHA. Hey, you can't just blame me. I thought there was also some hot, little piece of French crème brûlée dancin' on your other mitten?

(A slight pause as TINA fights with her left hand.)

Ain't that right?

(More struggling and then TINA's left hand—JEAN-CLAUDE—bursts forth.)

JEAN-CLAUDE. *Bien sur!* Parceque we will revolt and lop your pretty bourgeois head off!

LATISHA. Jean-Claude, why do you always opt for overdramatic reactionism, when intelligent discourse can...

JEAN-CLAUDE. Latisha, you and your intelligent discourse can suck my left...

TINA. People, people, people...please! Can we not simply sit here and get along? Isn't that what I've been attempting? To coordinate vast and diametrically opposed perspectives since I acquired you two.

JEAN-CLAUDE. Acquired? More like forced encampment.

LATISHA. Yeah, acquired my big beautiful ass. If I remember right, some dude named Matt dumped your skinny rump and you were all...

JEAN-CLAUDE. ...Oh, boo-hoo. Oh, boo-hoo. Look at me I'm all alone.

LATISHA. No one loves me. I wish I weren't soooo forlorn. Soooo despondent, dejected and alone.

TINA. I didn't say...

JEAN-CLAUDE. *Mon cher*, I'm afraid you did. And *voilà*, we is *ici*.

LATISHA. That's right. We're here and there's no way you can blame us.

TINA. Yes, well... It might be different if you two didn't bicker and argue so much. I might be able to enjoy your company. However...

(TOM enters. His hands are thrust deep in his jacket pockets. TINA hides her hands behind her. TOM sits. A long, long uncomfortable silence. A few twitches from both their respective backs and pockets.)

Can you believe how hot it is?

TOM. I know. Why just the other day I could swear I saw a dog burst into flames. A dog didn't actually catch fire...

TINA. It seems like it's a million degrees out there. I don't really mean a million degrees...

TINA / TOM. That'd be crazy.

(TINA and TOM struggle to keep their hands hidden. However, to no avail. Simultaneously LATISHA, JEAN-CLAUDE, MR. CHAN, and SVEN leap out.)

SVEN. Tom, if I'm not mistaken, keeping any part of your consciousness purposefully in the dark, regardless how unwanted, is perhaps not the best coping mechanism.

MR. CHAN. I've no idea what he just said, but I will agree with it.

JEAN-CLAUDE. *Mademoiselle*, what'd I say about your bourgeois head?

LATISHA. Girl, are you not thinkin'? Keep this up I'll help the little Frenchie.

JEAN-CLAUDE. Little? Moi? I'll have you know my nickname is *Mont Blanc*.

SVEN. *Mont Blanc*?

LATISHA. And who is this cutie? Hello.

(TINA and TOM shove their hands away.)

TOM. My father was a magician in the Tibetan army during the occupation of New Zealand in 1972.

TINA. I'm an entertainer. My show is in Vegas.

TOM. Every night he would entertain the troops with magic and vaudeville.

TINA. I inherited my act from a crazy, one-legged aunt who raised me after my parents were devoured by bunnies on a Tuesday during a solar eclipse.

TOM. Then during the month the natives call Rama-rama a witch doctor cast a spell on his socks.

TINA. My one-legged aunt was very strict and hated fingerprints on anything, /thus I became conditioned to wear socks on my hands.

TOM. (*Overlapping at /*) The next morning Sven and Mr. Chan had arrived—invariably I have inherited the curse.

TINA / TOM. Honestly, I'm not crazy.

(*Beat. Gradually* LATISHA, JEAN-CLAUDE, SVEN, and MR. CHAN *slip out of the shadows.*)

TINA. I'm... I'm Tina.

TOM. Hello. I'm Tom.

JEAN-CLAUDE. And I'm a turtle dove.

MR. CHAN. Tom, if you want, I'll kick his ass. Now.

SVEN. Violence is the first choice of the ignorant.

MR. CHAN. And after French-frying Frenchie, I'll teach Sven about the philosophy of the fist.

JEAN-CLAUDE. From a hospital bed. Prepare to be Jean-Clobbered.

LATISHA. Is that Tom with one M, or two?

TOM. Just...just one.

LATISHA. Ain't goin'ta do. Don't you know the ladies like things double-sized?

TINA. Latisha! I thought we agreed you wouldn't...

TOM. Well, I... I guess I'm willing to add a letter...

JEAN-CLAUDE. Ah, what a pansy, he'll change anything—even his name—at the drop of a hat.

TOM. No, but for the right woman I'm willing to...

JEAN-CLAUDE. Boo! Now you can change your panties, too. Hahahahaha!

MR. CHAN. Let me kick his ass. Let me beat that French smirk off his...

TOM. Mr. Chan, no. No. Remember the song? The song Mr. Chan...the song... War?

MR. CHAN. War? (*Singing.*) What's it good for?

TOM. Absolutely nothing.

JEAN-CLAUDE. Singing, little pansy, I would make *pâté* out of you.

SVEN. Ignore him, Mr. Chan. His anger and frustration is from not having found love.

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The Civilians'
THIS BEAUTIFUL CITY

written by Steven Cosson and Jim Lewis
music and lyrics by Michael Friedman

From interviews conducted by Emily Ackerman,
Marsha Stephanie Blake, Brad Heberlee, Stephen Plunkett,
Alison Weller, and the authors

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BIOGRAPHIES

Steven Cosson founded The Civilians in 2001. With the company: co-writer and director of *Paris Commune*, which was recently produced at the Public Theater, and previously at La Jolla Playhouse; co-writer and director of *This Beautiful City* which premiered at the 2008 Humana Festival with productions at Studio Theatre, Center Theatre Group's Kirk Douglas Theatre and The Vineyard Theatre; writer/director of the long-running hit *Gone Missing* (*New York Times* critic Charles Isherwood's Best of 2007 list), published by Dramatists Play Service; *(I Am) Nobody's Lunch* (2006 Fringe First award at Edinburgh) published by Oberon Books in the UK; and director of the company-created *Canard, Canard, Goose?* The Civilians have also been produced at American Repertory Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville, HBO's Aspen Comedy Festival, London's Gate Theatre and Soho Theatre among many others. Mr. Cosson has directed and developed many new plays including Neal Bell's *Shadow of Himself*, Mat Smart's *13th of Paris*, Tommy Smith's *Air Conditioning*, Anne Washburn's *Communist Dracula Pageant*, the world premiere of Peter Morris' *Square Root of Minus One*, the U.S. premiere of Martin Crimp's *Attempts on Her Life*, the U.S. premiere of Sarah Kane's *Phaedra's Love*; also *The Time of Your Life*, *Serious Money*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and *Guys and Dolls*. Mr. Cosson has been a Fulbright Scholar in Colombia, a MacDowell Fellow, and Resident Director at New Dramatists. The Civilians won an Obie in 2004.

Michael Friedman. Composer/lyricist for The Civilians' *(I Am) Nobody's Lunch*, *Gone Missing* and *Canard, Canard, Goose?* Music/lyrics for *The Brand New Kid*, *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*, *God's Ear*, *In the Bubble*, and *Saved*. With Steven Cosson, he is the co-author of *Paris Commune*. Mr. Friedman's work has been seen at New York Shakespeare Festival/Public Theater, New York Theatre Workshop, Playwrights Horizons, The Roundabout Theatre Company, Second Stage, Soho Rep, Theater for a New Audience, Signature Theatre, The Acting Company, and regionally at The Kennedy Center, Huntington Theatre Company, La Jolla Playhouse, Hartford Stage, American Repertory Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Dallas Theatre Center and Williamstown Theatre Festival. Also London's Soho and Gate Theatres and the Edinburgh Festival. Film: *On Common Ground* and *Affair Game*. Artistic Associate, New York Theatre Workshop; Princeton University Hodder fellow; MacDowell Fellow and 2007 Obie Award for Sustained Excellence.

Jim Lewis won Tony and Drama Desk nominations for Best Book for a Musical for his adaptation of Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*. Also with Graciela Daniele, he wrote *Dangerous Games* and *Tango Apasionado*. Other credits include Ballet Hispanico's *Nightclub* (libretto);

Philip Glass’ *Les Enfants Terribles* (narration); and Paul Dresher’s *The Tyrant* (libretto) while his translations include Ionesco’s *The Chairs* and Ibsen’s *Lady From The Sea*. Mr. Lewis also served as production dramaturg for *PastFORWARD* (with Mikhail Baryshnikov); Anna Deavere Smith’s *House Arrest*; Lincoln Center’s WOZA AFRIKA Festival; *Waste* (Obie winner); *Cymbeline* (with Bartlett Sher); and *STILL/HERE* at BAM (2003) He was the program director at The American Center in Paris and a resident dramaturg for Guthrie Theater, Second Stage Theatre and INTAR Theatre. Mr. Lewis’ most recent show, *Fela!*, with Bill T. Jones, completed a sold-out run Off-Broadway at 37 Arts and moves to Broadway Spring 2009.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This Beautiful City premiered at the Humana Festival of New American Plays in March 2008. It was directed by Steven Cosson with the following cast:

YOUNG WOMAN “God’s Grace,”
 T-GIRL CHRISTIAN, othersEmily Ackerman
 EMMANUEL CHOIR MEMBER,
 BEN REYNOLDS, NEW PASTOR
 AT EMMANUEL, others Marsha Stephanie Blake
 NEW LIFE ASSOCIATE PASTOR,
 FAIRNESS AND EQUALITY
 WORKER, others..... Brad Heberlee
 FAIRNESS AND EQUALITY LEADER,
 RHOP MEMBER..... Dori Legg
 ALT WRITER,
 MILITARY RELIGIOUS FREEDOM
 ACTIVIST, RHOP LEADER, othersIan Brennan
 TAG PASTOR, PRIEST,
 MARCUS HAGGARD, others..... Stephen Plunkett
 ENSEMBLE..... Elizabeth Gilbert, Katie Gould,
 Andy Lutz, Bing Putney,
 Ashley Robinson, Matthew Sa

and the following production staff:

Scenic/Video Designer Debra Booth
 Costume Designer..... Lorraine Venberg
 Lighting Designer.....Deb Sullivan
 Sound DesignerMatt Callahan
 Properties Designer Adriane Binky Donley
 Video Coordinator..... Jason Czaja

TIME AND PLACE

Colorado Springs, Colorado. Leading up to, and after, the 2006 election.

“Work for the well-being of the city where I have sent you, and pray to the Lord for this. For if it is well with the city you live in, it will be well with you.”

—JEREMIAH 29:7 (NLV.)

THIS BEAUTIFUL CITY

ACT I

Scene 1: Cowboys

A member of the company enters and speaks to the audience.

EVANGELICAL WOMAN. (*Laughs.*) The reason why you've come to Colorado Springs? Well, if you if you want me to give you my initial you want me to give you my version? Ok here's my version. You are part of this...theater company from New York that produces plays to depict uh real-life real scenarios or real situations and you are looking to write a play from interviews with real people about the fundamentalist Christians in Colorado Springs and what that looks like to the outside world. Is that right? Pretty good, huh?

(Music starts.)

Ok, then, can I ask you a pretty forward question? Ok, um. Is there a particular slant that you would like to put on...the reason I ask is for example when I sit beside someone on an airplane you know, I try to avoid conversation because people have their ideas: "right wing fundamental evangelical" and I want to say if your whole belief of who we are is formed through the media then let me buy you lunch. Look, this isn't something you can just understand right off. Come spend some time with us and see some of the CRAZY things happening here like helping a lot of people and a lot of families in this city lead better lives and then we can talk.

(The rest of the company has entered. Three of them sing as a cowboy trio.)

SONG: COWBOYS

IT'S SO LONG DOWN THIS LONELY HIGHWAY
SUCH A LONG LONG WAY WE HAVE TO GO
AND WE SING OUR SONGS TO THOSE WHO LISTEN
AND TO THOSE WHO STRIVE TO KNOW

NEW LIFE YOUNG WOMAN. I was living in Nebraska, don't ask my why, and I heard about the school of worship at New Life. So I packed up my '84 Toyota Tercel, which should not have been driven for more than like an hour anywhere. And I got as far as Denver. I said I made it this far, I can tow it the rest of the way!

SAVED MAN. So I was visiting my cousin in Colorado Springs. And my cousin, she was so different, 'cause she used to be an acid freak back in the day. So I went to church with her and that was the first time I ever really prayed. I was all by myself. And I said, God, if you're real, prove it. And

someone put his hand on my shoulder and said “just believe I’m real.” The room was empty. But it was a hand. I felt it. Freaked me out. I kept a diary at the time and it said, I need to get out of Colorado before Jesus gets me! So I got on a bus and went to San Francisco. Because Jesus couldn’t possibly be in San Francisco.

HOW COULD WE STOP OUR VOICES?
 HOW COULD WE CHANGE OUR TUNE?
 IT’S SO LONG DOWN THIS LONELY HIGHWAY
 BUT WE WILL BE THERE SOON.

NEW LIFE YOUNG WOMAN. I think the feeling is that God is definitely doing something in this City. It may not be on the scale of... “This is the valley of Armageddon,” but God definitely has a plan. God led people to this city that was full of like satanic things and all this...junk...and they obeyed God’s voice and now we have a different Springs.

SAVED MAN. But then I told my cousin I wanted to get saved. I didn’t want to go down to the altar. I was still a little— (*Gesture meaning uncomfortable.*) So she got two friends and we went to Baskin Robbins—ordered ice cream and stood in a circle and prayed. And I asked Jesus Christ to come into my life. (*Pause.*) And then we ate ice cream.

NEW LIFE YOUNG WOMAN. For a lot of people it’s gonna start here, and it’s gonna take them on missions all around the world. So I guess this place is pretty much a Mecca, you know?

WHEN WE FOUND THAT WE WERE GETTING OLDER
 AND OUR MINDS WOULD WANDER IN THE NIGHT
 WELL WE FOUND OUR FAITH WAS GETTING BOLDER
 THAN SOME PEOPLE FELT WAS RIGHT.

ATHEIST ACTIVIST. Well I’ve pretty much lived here all my life.

(*She stops the music with a look.*)

We’re atheists, and my business is Evolve Fish. You know, the little Darwin fish that have legs? We’ve got a shop and we do mail order. And when we first started, we would get death threats, phone calls at two in the morning. When we bought our house we chose a high elevation so people just couldn’t come up and we thought about where the windows are. I’m ok with it. I’m up for the fight. But it’s hard on our daughter. She’s seven. And she’s afraid that if her friends find out we don’t believe that they won’t be her friends anymore. And what do I tell her?

(*Music starts back up.*)

Colorado Springs was always a conservative military town but back in the 80s it got more and more religious. And there is a *big* difference! But you know they’ve seeded the military here with born-again. Like with the cadets at the

Air Force Academy. You know, if someone wants to be an off-the-edge snake handler I don't care!

(Music gets louder.)

But when they endanger my life, and they endanger the lives of my children and my country because they let this insanity take hold, then I'm scared!

HOW COULD WE STOP OUR VOICES?
 HOW COULD WE CHANGE OUR TUNE?
 IT'S SO LONG DOWN THIS LONELY HIGHWAY
 BUT WE WILL BE THERE SOON.

COLORADO WRANGLER. Well, we're the Colorado Wranglers. We used to be a five-piece cowboy band and we worked at the Flying W Chuck Wagon Dinner. But then... You know we're Christians, right? We got the call from God, and we had to leave there, so now there are three of us. I'm not blaming anybody, but as we got older and older we got bolder and bolder in our faith. The Flying W is a secular place, and we started pushing the envelope and talking about the Lord, and the people there started saying, y'all are doin' too much, and they told us to pray about it. And we prayed about it, and God told us to leave. It wasn't a hard decision, when God tells you to do something, you do it.

TAG PASTOR. Well I came here from Washington right after college, and well...

(Sings.)

IN COLLEGE I PARTIED ALL OF THE TIME.
 GIRLS GIRLS JUST CONSTANTLY
 THINKING LOTS OF MONEY A NICE HOUSE
 I USED TO WANT A BIG BIG BOAT.
 EVERYTHING WAS GREAT.
 JUST WHAT YOU'D WANT
 EXCEPT I STARTED THINKING ABOUT DEATH
 YOU KNOW YOU LIVE FOR SIXTY, SEVENTY YEARS
 MAYBE EIGHTY, NINETY IF YOU'RE LUCKY
 AND THEN WHAT?
 WHAT WAS IT FOR?
 THINKIN' BOUT MONEY
 GETTING A NICE HOUSE?
 AND A BIG BIG BOAT?
 I WAS LYING IN BED ONE MORNING WITH MY GIRL-
 FRIEND.
 SHE WAS HOT.
 SHE WANTED TO GET MARRIED.
 AND SHE TURNED TO ME AND SAID
 IS THIS GOING ANYWHERE

AND I FELT GOD PULLING ON MY HEART.
 AND I SAID NO. NO
 AND I LEFT
 MAN SHE WAS GORGEOUS.

WHAT WAS I THINKING?!
 THEN I STOPPED DRINKING

GROUP A

WHEN THE SPIRIT COMES FOR YOU A'CALLING
 AND YOU HEAR THAT VOICE FROM UP ABOVE
 WELL YOU CAN'T JUST GO ON WITH YOUR BUSINESS
 NO YOU HAVE TO GO WITH LOVE
 DON'T LET THEM STOP YOUR SINGING
 WHEREVER YOU MAY ROAM
 IT'S SO LONG DOWN THIS LONELY HIGHWAY
 TIL YOU HAVE REACHED YOUR HOME.

TAG PASTOR (*Simultaneous.*)

AND I WENT HOME AND I STARTED TO PRAY.
 I CLOSED MY EYES AND I STARTED TO SAY.
 GOD IF YOU ARE THERE YOU KNOW SAY SOMETHING
 PLEASE SAY SOMETHING.
 AND FOR A MOMENT I FELT NOT A THING.
 BUT THEN I HEARD IT THE VOICE OF THE LORD.
 I FOUND THE ANSWER
 IF YOU LEARN TO LISTEN GOD WILL SPEAK TO YOU.
 I LIVE THE WAY I LIVE BECAUSE I
 I WANT TO BE CLOSE TO MY GOD AND
 I AM A CHRISTIAN BECAUSE I LOVE GOD.
 I LOVE TO SPEND EVERY MINUTE WITH HIM.
 I LOVE TO SPEND TIME ALONE WITH HIM.
 I DON'T NEED MONEY SUCCESS OR A BIG BOAT
 OR A BIG BOAT. YOU KNOW?

Scene 2: Two Coffee Shops

One of the actors, wearing a Ranger costume, displays the book A Trails Guide to Pikes Peak Country.

TRAILS GUIDE. *A Trails Guide to Pikes Peak Country.* This comprehensive guide is designed to answer all your questions, and more. But if you want to know why Colorado Springs has become so famous for its scenic beauty and outdoor recreation, you'll just have to get out and experience it firsthand. So use this guidebook as you would a walking, talking human one—to help orient you during your stay in the Colorado Rockies.

(ASSOCIATE PASTOR *in a coffee shop at New Life Church.*)

ASSOCIATE PASTOR. Did you have a hard time finding me here? Yeah if it's your first time you can get lost at New Life. Yeah, this coffee shop is inside the World Prayer Center. Next door is New Life's main worship center, and the building past that is the Theater which is mostly used by the twentysomething ministry. (*Question.*) Well sure I guess New Life is a megachurch. But it doesn't feel big. It feels like you know everybody. So what are you guys doing exactly? Huh. No that doesn't sound too weird. Seriously, at New Life we've got an open-door policy. That's always been a big thing for Pastor Ted. So what do you want to know? (*Question.*) Well New Life started about twenty-five years ago. Yeah well when Ted Haggard first came to Colorado, he went on a prayer fasting retreat. Just to spend some time alone with God up in the mountains. He pitched his tent and prayed and fasted. And he had a vision for a church, a big church impacting the community. So then Ted and Gayle started New Life in their basement yeah with like lawn chairs and people sitting on buckets. Or at least so goes the story. Maybe one guy sat on a bucket once. I don't know. But then it moved to a Holiday Inn or something and then over the years, more and more Evangelicals were moving to the Springs and New Life kept growing and now it's yeah, the congregation is 14,000. It's pretty amazing.

(*ALT WRITER at a different coffee shop in downtown Colorado Springs.*)

ALT WRITER. It was like a zombie movie or something. To me. Right after I went to college, the Evangelicals just sorta invaded. Though you wouldn't necessarily notice it here in downtown, the Christians tend to live out there in the sprawl.

(*Downtown coffee shop is set up.*)

Yeah isn't this place great? Thank god there's still a few places that aren't a Starbucks or a Borders. So what do you want to know? ...Well, I grew up in Colorado Springs. I left, but then my wife and I moved back with our son to be near my mom. And my stepdad, who's my dad's lover. No, my dad's dead. And my mom's a lesbian. Yeah. *Yeah.* (*Laughs.*) So, I came home in 2001 and around that time New Life was getting huge—Ted Haggard—and, you know, they built that monstrosity of a building out there. (*Clarifying.*) In the north. (*Pointing.*) This way. No, that's.... Look, let me help you, it's easy. You've got the Rockies and Pikes Peak in the west, right, so that'll always be there to orient you, you'll see them wherever you are. And then in the northeast in the middle of nothing, there's New Life and Focus on the Family—Focus on the Family? James Dobson? It's like the biggest conservative Christian media empire in the world. Yeah. Did you like, read anything before you came here? Ok, so also up north on the other side of the highway you've got the Air Force Academy. And south is Fort Carson. Ent Air Force Base is due east and inside the mountain is NORAD. Right NORAD! Yeah, yeah *War Games*. Totally. And then here in downtown you've got the hippy

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BECKY SHAW

by Gina Gionfriddo

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BIOGRAPHY

Gina Gionfriddo's play, *After Ashley*, premiered in the 2004 Humana Festival. It was subsequently produced by The Vineyard Theatre in New York and by regional theatres throughout the country. Ms. Gionfriddo has received an Obie Award, a Guggenheim Fellowship and The Susan Smith Blackburn Prize. Her play *U.S. Drag* was presented Off-Broadway by The Stagefarm in February, 2008. She is currently at work on a new play commissioned by Playwrights Horizons. Ms. Gionfriddo is a writer/producer for the NBC series *Law & Order*. She has contributed essays on rock music to the literary journal *The Believer* and short fiction to *Canteen*. A graduate of the M.F.A. playwriting program at Brown University, she has taught writing at Brown, Providence College and Rhode Island College.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Becky Shaw premiered at the Humana Festival of New American Plays in February 2008. It was directed by Peter DuBois with the following cast:

SUZANNA SLATER Mia Barron
MAX GARRETT.....David Wilson Barnes
SUSAN SLATER.....Janis Dardaris
ANDREW PORTER..... Davis Duffield
BECKY SHAW..... Annie Parisse

and the following production staff:

Scenic DesignerPaul Owen
Costume Designer.....Jessica Ford
Lighting Designer..... Brian J. Lilienthal
Sound DesignerBenjamin Marcum
Properties Designer Mark Walston
Festival Fight Supervisor.....Lee Look
Stage Manager Michael D. Domue
Production Assistant..... Mary Spadoni
Dramaturg Adrien-Alice Hansel
Assistant Dramaturg..... Charles Haugland
Casting..... Zan Sawyer-Dailey
Directing Assistant.....Dav Yendler

Commissioned by Actors Theatre of Louisville with the support of the Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

SUZANNA SLATER

MAX GARRETT

SUSAN SLATER

ANDREW PORTER

BECKY SHAW

TIME AND PLACE

Present day.

BECKY SHAW

ACT I

Scene 1

A room at a mid-range hotel in New York City. SUZANNA, 34, on the made bed, watching TV. She looks tranced out, exhausted. She's wearing a black dress (plain and casual; nothing sexy or formal or funereal) and no makeup or jewelry. She's not putting any effort into her appearance these days and it shows. MAX, 35, lets himself into the room. Man on a mission, he's energized.

MAX. All right. It took me fifty fucking minutes, but your mother has agreed to walk ten paces from her room to your room to negotiate. *(He turns the TV off.)*

SUZANNA. I won't see her.

MAX. Excuse me?

SUZANNA. I won't see her.

MAX. You won't see her. So you're not just depressed, you're delusional. You think you're the Queen of England, I'm your manservant—

SUZANNA. No—

MAX. You're the fucking Wizard of Oz now; I prep your audience, you turn them away on some...wizardsly whim—

SUZANNA. Why do you have a key to my room?

MAX. Because I paid for it.

SUZANNA. Did you pay for my mom's room, too?

MAX. Yes.

SUZANNA. Because we're poor now?

MAX. That's...what we're all gonna talk about. After you pull yourself together.

SUZANNA. I can't.

MAX. You have to. Negotiations are all about who has the biggest dick in the room. If you don't have a big dick, you gotta bluff. *(Pointing at her.)* Big dick, no tears.

SUZANNA. She's my mother. She knows I have no dick. And I'm grieving, Max. Neither of you appreciate that.

MAX. I appreciate it, but right now you gotta stop it.

SUZANNA. Max, she brought a...man with her. That is so insulting to my father.

MAX. Your father is dead, his feelings don't matter.

SUZANNA. Max!

MAX. Suzanna, you gotta pull it together. Clock strikes midnight you can regress. Light your vanilla candle and write in your dream journal. Until then, you're a soldier. Comb your hair. Fix yourself up.

SUZANNA. (*As she tries...*) In one of my textbooks for school, I read about these families.... Craziest thing, Max. When someone in the family is down or weak, the other family members do this thing called nurturing. Have you ever heard of that?

MAX. No.

(*There's a knock on the door. MAX springs to answer it.*)

No crying. Big dick.

(*MAX answers the door and escorts SUSAN SLATER, 60, into the room. She has MS and may use a cane. She's attractive, but there's a heaviness to her: the fatigue of endless fatigue. Her mind is sharp and she's cultivated a forceful manner to compensate for her physical disability.*)

MAX. OK. So. Clean slate. Last few hours never happened. I'd like to welcome my two favorite ladies to New York City. We're all so glad we're here because we love each other so much, etc. etc. Now. I'm gonna suggest that we stick to the original plan.

SUSAN. I never suggested otherwise.

SUZANNA. You brought Lester! The plan did not include Lester!

SUSAN. Suzanna, I am disabled. I can't travel alone.

SUZANNA. I offered to drive to Richmond and pick you up—

SUSAN. I don't feel safe in a car with you. I'm sorry if that hurts your feelings, but—

MAX. It hurts my feelings, Susan. I taught her to drive.

SUSAN. I'm not blaming you. Suzanna has assumed a somber attitude since her father died.

SUZANNA. So I can't drive?

SUSAN. You're sluggish. If a drunk driver is careening into my path, I don't want my life in your hands. I'm sorry.

MAX. Suzanna's attitude is not the point. Lester is not the point.

SUZANNA. Lester is the point! I am not going to discuss my father's estate with your...whatever he is to you in addition to being your house painter, I don't really want to know.

SUSAN. He's my lover.

SUZANNA. Oh, my God. How could you?

SUSAN. (*Anger brewing.*) Listen to me. Your father died six months...

SUZANNA. It was three months!

MAX. Four. It was four months; you're both liars.

SUSAN. You didn't lose a child or even a breast. Your father died of natural causes after a life well lived. That's not loss, it's transition.

SUZANNA. How can you.... It's a huge loss.

SUSAN. No. It's an old man dying peacefully. It's not tragic—

SUZANNA. He was my dad.

SUSAN. And you're an adult. This.... This is a costume.

SUZANNA. What—my clothes?

SUSAN. The black dress. You're infatuated with your grief. You think you've finally found something that will distinguish you.

MAX. OK, that's enough.

SUSAN. It's not a distinction, Suzanna. A parent's death.... It is the most common of milestones—

MAX. My proposal is that we keep to the plan. We go downstairs and have dinner. We talk facts and figures. Lester can join us for dessert.

SUSAN. No. I won't leave him sitting in the room while we have our nice dinner.

MAX. See.... *This* is the point. It's not going to be a nice dinner, Susan. We're here to talk about your finances—

SUSAN. I don't discuss money at the dinner table. You grew up in my household; you should know that.

MAX. Oh, no. No. You agreed to this!

SUSAN. I agreed to hear your opinions—

MAX. They're not opinions.

SUSAN. I'm perfectly willing to have a conversation about the estate, but not over dinner. (*To SUZANNA.*) Some women—Marilyn Monroe, Princess Diana—are sensual in their grief. You are not.

SUZANNA. Max!

MAX. Susan, please—

SUSAN. Do you disagree? Look at her.

MAX. Let me tell you something. Suzanna can be fixed. I'm not worried about Suzanna. Your financial health on the other hand—

SUSAN. Lester and I will meet you downstairs. We'll share a meal and some good wine. We'll talk business in the morning.

MAX. No! I don't have time in the morning, Susan! And you can't afford good wine.

SUSAN. (*After a beat.*) Are you enjoying this drama you've created?

MAX. I didn't create it; your husband created it. I am just the messenger.

SUSAN. This is terribly exhilarating for you. I can see it.

SUZANNA. Mom.

MAX. How can you.... You and Richard raised me, Susan. For all practical purposes, you're my parents.

SUSAN. And that only makes it crueler.

MAX. You think I take pleasure in this? I would be a monster—

SUSAN. Not a monster, a power monger. I know that look.

MAX. What look? This look?

SUSAN. That is the look you get when my family's stupidity offers you a foothold to gain power.

MAX. Anytime I can clean up after your family's stupidity, I am more than happy to do it.

SUZANNA. Stop it. What is this "your family," "my family." We're.... This is our family.

(A difficult silence that SUZANNA rushes to fill....)

How broke are we?

MAX. I think we should drink some alcohol.

SUSAN. Lester is hungry. And I won't talk about money over dinner. Whatever you want to say, you may say now or in the morning.

MAX. I have a full day tomorrow—

SUSAN. Then say it now. Cogently, please. Do not savor.

MAX. *(After a beat.)* The business hasn't turned a profit in nearly a decade. Richard burned through a lot of your savings patching holes, keeping it afloat. I think it was largely...sentimental on his part. It's an old family business. Understandably, he hoped the tide would turn...

SUZANNA. Are we broke?

MAX. No. But your savings are...thin. I have a plan I would like to propose—

SUSAN. I have a very hard time believing this, Max. Yoshi would certainly have told me if—

MAX. Yoshi lost his objectivity. He'll be the first to admit that...

SUSAN. Nonsense. He's a Japanese businessman. His objectivity is all he has.

SUZANNA. Mom, that's racist.

SUSAN. Send me the figures, I will show them to my financial advisor.

MAX. Your financial advisor is Yoshi.

SUSAN. Correct.

MAX. Yoshi no longer wishes to be involved.

SUSAN. Because you bullied him in your zeal to seize power. I'll bring him back.

MAX. There's no power to seize, Susan! (*Pause.*) Look. Yoshi asked me.... There was a loss of objectivity.

SUSAN. In your opinion...

MAX. In reality on planet Earth. Your husband was stupid about his money and his financial advisor was.... There was a romantic situation and I'm sorry.

SUSAN. (*After a beat.*) Oh, you are devious.

SUZANNA. Romantic?

SUSAN. He means homosexual.

MAX. I don't think we need to get into labels.

SUZANNA. Gay?

MAX. Bi. Let's say he was bi.

SUZANNA. You don't believe in bisexuality.

SUSAN. I'm very upset with you, Max.

MAX. Me?

SUSAN. (*Rising to leave.*) Lester and I will be having dinner privately and returning to Richmond.

MAX. Susan, you gotta face this.

SUSAN. (*To MAX.*) I hope you enjoyed yourself. You could have done this in an email as I begged you to do. (*To SUZANNA.*) You're welcome to join us for dinner if you're prepared to apologize to Lester for your dramatics earlier this evening.

SUZANNA. Mom, you need to stay with me and deal with this.

(*SUSAN looks back and forth...at MAX, at SUZANNA. Her gaze lands on MAX.*)

SUSAN. (*To MAX.*) No good deed goes unpunished. You...were a good deed.

MAX. I know that.

SUSAN. I took you into my home...

SUZANNA. Mom. Stop.

MAX. You did. I owe your family a debt and I'm ready to start repaying it tonight. Let me help you—

(*SUSAN makes a dismissive swipe at the air and starts walking to the door...*)

MAX. I manage money for a living, Susan. I make people rich. You could do worse than having me—

SUSAN. You.... You are a rich man...who puts his family in a two-star hotel. That's what you are.

(*SUSAN leaves, closing the door hard behind her.*)

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NEIGHBORHOOD 3: REQUISITION OF DOOM

by Jennifer Haley

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BIOGRAPHY

Jennifer Haley is a Los Angeles-based playwright whose plays include *Gingerbread House*, *Dreampuffs of War*, and *The Butcher's Daughter*. Her work has been presented and developed at Actors Theatre of Louisville (Humana Festival of New American Plays), Brown/Trinity Playwrights Repertory Theatre in Providence, PlayPenn in Philadelphia, and Refraction Arts at the Blue Theatre in Austin. Ms. Haley holds an M.F.A. in Playwriting from Brown University, where she was awarded the Joelson Prize in Creative Writing the Weston Award for Drama. She was a 2008 resident of the MacDowell Colony and Millay Colony for the Arts.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Neighborhood 3: Requisition of Doom premiered at the Humana Festival of New American Plays in March 2008. It was directed by Kip Fagan with the following cast:

father type: steve, doug, tobias.....John Leonard Thompson
mother type: leslie, vicki, barbara, joy.....Kate Hampton
son type: trevor, ryan, jared,
zombiekllr14, blakeRobin Lord Taylor
daughter type: makaela, kaitlyn,
madison, chelsea..... Reyna de Courcy
walkthroughs.....William McNulty
and the following production staff:

Scenic DesignerMichael B. Raiford
Costume Designer.....Jessica Ford
Lighting Designer..... Brian J. Lilienthal
Sound DesignerBenjamin Marcum
Properties DesignerDoc Manning
Fight SupervisorLee Look
Stage Manager Bethany Ford
Production Assistant..... Sara Kmack
Dramaturg Amy Wegener
Assistant Dramaturg..... Charles Haugland
Casting..... Cindi Rush Casting
Directing Assistant.....Dav Yendler

Neighborhood 3: Requisition of Doom was developed with the assistance of New York University's hotINK International Festival of New Play Readings; Seven Devils Playwrights Conference, a project of id Theatre Company at

the Alpine Playhouse in McCall, Idaho; and the Brown/Trinity Playwrights Repertory Theatre in Providence, Rhode Island.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Most of the play should be staged abstractly, in the netherworld of a video game or modern-day suburbia. Realistic elements may be added to Scene 9, so that we feel we are somewhere recognizable, comfortable, and may imagine, for a little while, that none of what's happened previously in the play is real. However, the violence should be dramatic, unbelievable, and loud—perhaps with stupidly spurting blood, like a video game.

A knowledge of MMORPGs, or Massive(ly) Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games, such as *World of Warcraft*, is helpful in understanding this play.

The language should be spoken as it appears on the page. However, the line breaks represent the briefest of pauses, should be emotionally motivated (not robotic), and sound almost natural. The walkthroughs may be voiceovers or spoken by the actors.

For a look at production photos, or more information about online role-playing, avatars, and gamers gone wrong, visit <http://www.jenniferbaley.com/neighborhood.html>.

PLAYERS

father type	steve, doug, tobias
mother type	leslie, vicki, barbara, joy
son type	trevor, ryan, jared, zombiekllr14, blake
daughter type	makaela, kaitlyn, madison, chelsea

One need not be a chamber to be haunted,
One need not be a house;
The brain has corridors surpassing
Material place.

—Emily Dickinson

NEIGHBORHOOD 3: REQUISITION OF DOOM

1 walkthrough

the house you want is third from the left
as you face the cul de sac
all the houses look the same
be careful

move toward the house slowly
you will hear the sound of your
footsteps
in the street
do not walk too fast

as you approach the house
you will see on the sidewalk
a Claw Hammer

pick this up
you will need it later

like all other houses
this house will have a
flesh colored brick façade
and a welcome mat in front of the door

hint: if you kneel down and
take a closer look at this mat
you will see the word
'welcome' becomes
'help me'

enter the house
on your right is a set of
saloon doors
push through these
and enter
the kitchen

1 kitchen

- makaela.** you want a coke
- trevor.** okay
- makaela.** shit
we don't have any
my brother
inhaled them
- trevor.** that's okay
- makaela.** so then i just have stupid stuff
like grape juice
want some
grape juice
- trevor.** okay
- makaela.** only
he left like an inch
in the bottle
- trevor.** that's okay
- makaela.** no it's not
i'm going to rip his balls off
- trevor.** i mean
i don't need grape juice
- makaela.** well nobody needs grape juice
it'd just be nice
otherwise we've got milk
you want some
milk
- trevor.** no thanks
- makaela.** it's Chocolate Milk
- trevor.** okay
- makaela.** it's like we're
eleven
again
- trevor.** that's the last time i had it
when i was over here
my mom doesn't buy
Chocolate Milk

makaela. your mom

trevor. what

makaela. doesn't she sell
makeup
or something

trevor. vitamin shakes

makaela. what are those

trevor. shakes with vitamins

makaela. can you e lab or ate

trevor. it's like powder
you add water
you make a shake
you drink it two times a day

makaela. does it taste good

trevor. no

makaela. why do you take it

trevor. my mom says it gives you
everything you need

makaela. does it work
are you getting
everything you need

trevor.

makaela. i always see
a bunch of cars
in front of your place

trevor. she has meetings
at the house
she gives
demonstrations

makaela. isn't it like a
pyramid scheme

trevor. what's that

makaela. you know
you get a bunch of people
there are all these levels

everyone tries to get to the next
level
tries to get to the
top
like scientology
or the mafia

trevor. my mom
is not
in the mafia

makaela. she doesn't know
you're here

trevor. she's gone
this afternoon

makaela. it's the first time i've seen you
on the bus

trevor. she drives me

makaela. i'm getting a car soon

trevor. what kind

makaela. the brand new kind

trevor. but what make and model

makaela. i don't know
tyler
my brother
just got a hummer
it's actually his second
hummer
he totaled the first one
almost killed someone
so my dad got him another
i want something that costs the same price
as two fucking hummers
like maybe a jag

trevor. you think your dad
will get you a jag

makaela. maybe
if i act like a giant jerk
who's totally circling the drain
he'll buy one to try to

save me
otherwise
it'll probably be
a toyota

trevor.

makaela.

trevor. still

makaela. yeah
then i could drive you to school

trevor. my mom
drives me

makaela. wouldn't you rather
i mean
it's high school

trevor. you don't have the car yet
so you can't drive me
so there's no point in discussing it

makaela. no point in discussing it
okay dad

trevor. just
didn't you say your brother has an xbox

makaela.

trevor.

makaela. do you want a vicodin

my brother's a candy man
i know where he
keeps his stash

trevor. won't that
slow my reflexes

makaela. haven't you
done it before

trevor. no

makaela. you should ask mummy
for a sip of her
special shake

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DEAD RIGHT

by Elaine Jarvik

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BIOGRAPHY

Elaine Jarvik is a reporter for the *Deseret News* in Salt Lake City, and the winner of numerous journalism awards including Best of the West, the American Association of Sunday and Feature Editors and a national award for feature writing from the Society of Professional Journalists. She is also co-founder of the Senior Theatre Project, a non-profit group that takes original plays on tour to senior centers in Utah. She used to play the drums in the band *Elaine and the Elaines* and now plays conga in church. Because this play is about vanity and the futile desire to be “somebody,” she finds it ironic to be mentioning any of these accomplishments.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Dead Right premiered at the Humana Festival of New American Plays in March 2008. It was directed by Marc Masterson with the following cast:

PENNY Dori Legg
BILL William McNulty

and the following production staff:

Scenic Designer Paul Owen
Costume Designer..... Susan Neason
Lighting Designer..... Paul Werner
Sound Designer Benjamin Marcum
Properties Designer Mark Walston
Stage Manager Debra Anne Gasper
Assistant Stage Manager..... Captain Kate Murphy
Dramaturg Adrien-Alice Hansel
Assistant Dramaturg..... Devon LaBelle

Special thanks to the Senior Theatre Project, Salt Lake City, Utah.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

PENNY

BILL

PLACE

In their kitchen.

TIME

The present.

DEAD RIGHT

*Lights up on BILL and PENNY, each reading a section of the newspaper.
Silence at first, turning of pages.*

BILL. Hey, isn't this that woman?

PENNY. What woman?

BILL. The one you knew from your writing group. From a while back.
(Reading.) Francine Louise Schmidt.

PENNY. What about her?

BILL. She died.

PENNY. Where?

BILL. At home.

PENNY. *(Grabbing the paper.)* Not *where*. Let me see that. Oh. It *is* Francie. "Francine Louise Schmidt died peacefully at home Saturday surrounded by her family." Ohhh. I didn't even know she was sick. *(Reads to herself, interjecting a "huh" and a "hmm" every so often, then throws down the paper.)* That is so tragic.

BILL. Cancer?

PENNY. Her obituary. It's so dull.

BILL. That's no way to talk about the dead.

PENNY. I'm talking about the living. How could they do that? She has no chance to do a rewrite. And this photo.

BILL. That looks like how I remember her.

PENNY. Not at her *best*. She fixed up much better than that. This photo was taken in direct sunlight. In the middle of the day. Look at her wrinkles.

BILL. Hmmmm.

PENNY. There must have been other pictures. Look. You can see someone else's shoulder.

BILL. Her husband I bet. Maybe it's the only one he could find on the spur of the moment.

PENNY. "She died peacefully at home surrounded by her family." While she was lingering he couldn't look around for a better picture?

BILL. Maybe he was tending to her.

PENNY. A hundred thousand people will see this obituary and think "Francine Louise Schmidt. That's what she looked like."

BILL. She did look like that. It's a *photograph*. Anyway, the people who know her will think, well, that's not Francine at her best. And the people who don't know her won't care.

PENNY. She once wrote a short story in which every sentence began with a different letter, in alphabetical order. Do you know how hard that is? Now she's frozen forever as a woman with bad skin and a dull life. She doesn't want to be remembered that way.

BILL. She's dead.

PENNY. She was a vibrant woman. Sexy. This doesn't do her justice (*Reading.*) "Francie loved reading and hiking and was a deacon in her church." Please.

BILL. What's wrong with that?

PENNY. Everybody loves reading. That's like saying "Francie loved sitting." At least they could have mentioned what kind of books. Specificity! Every writer knows that. Francie liked both Sylvia Plath *and* New Age self-help. She once had a correspondence with Deepak Chopra. They could have mentioned that at least.

BILL. A correspondence?

PENNY. She sent him a letter and he wrote back.

BILL. That's not a correspondence.

PENNY. My point is, there were things about Francie that were a lot more complex and interesting than what they've written here. I bet she had a rich fantasy life.

BILL. You can't write about somebody's fantasy life in an obituary.

PENNY. (*Looking at the obit again.*) Oh no! I didn't even notice this before. "Francie had less faults than anyone we knew."

BILL. It's okay to exaggerate a little.

PENNY. *Less* faults? "Never use 'less' when referring to more than one item." They've put a grammatical error in her obituary!

BILL. Give them a break, Penny. They were grieving.

PENNY. Promise me when you write my obituary you won't make any grammatical or syntactical errors.

BILL. I can't promise that.

PENNY. Have Rachel proofread it. (*Beat.*) Promise me you'll have Rachel proofread it.

BILL. Jeez, Penny.

PENNY. (*Long beat.*) What will you say about me?

BILL. I'm sure I'll die before you.

PENNY. But if you don't.

BILL. I plan to die before you.

PENNY. Don't say "Penny loved reading." Say "Penny loved social commentary and the works of Thomas Pynchon." Say "Penny played the cello."

BILL. But that's not true.

PENNY. Yes it is.

BILL. You haven't touched the cello since we got married. It's been sitting in the basement for 15 years.

PENNY. "*PlayED* the cello." (*Beat.*) Where did I graduate from college?

BILL. Purdue.

PENNY. And?

BILL. What do you mean?

PENNY. My master's.

BILL. Oh. Right.

PENNY. You would have forgotten to mention my master's?!

BILL. It was before we got married.

PENNY. This is exactly what I'm afraid of. How could you forget my master's?

BILL. You were married to James then. I can't remember everything.

PENNY. It's my master's! People will read my obituary and think I only got an undergraduate degree!

BILL. So what? You'll be dead.

PENNY. James would remember to include the master's.

BILL. Ask James to write your obituary then.

PENNY. Maybe I will.

BILL. Fine.

PENNY. He probably knew me better anyway.

(*Silence. BILL goes back to reading the paper. PENNY stews.*)

And that poem I had published in *Modern Haiku*.

BILL. What about it?

PENNY. You should mention it.

BILL. I'll make a list. (*Begins writing.*) Cello. Poem. Thomas Pynchon. Master's. Anything else?

PENNY. You're not taking me seriously.

BILL. I'm making a list.

PENNY. You're writing it on the newspaper.

BILL. I'll clip it out and save it.

PENNY. It'll turn yellow and disintegrate.

BILL. So will your obituary.

(*PENNY picks up the newspaper and begins reading. So does BILL. They sit in silence.*)

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the break/s

...a travel diary recorded as dream
...lewis and clark at hip hop's Mason-Dixon line
...one last look at Africa
...a decision to love, but not live...

written and performed by
Marc Bamuthi Joseph

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BIOGRAPHY

Marc Bamuthi Joseph is an educator, performer, and the artistic director of The Living Word Project, a theatre company dedicated to the aesthetics of post-hip hop performance. In the Fall of 2007, Bamuthi graced the cover of *Smithsonian* magazine after being named one of America's Top Young Innovators in the Arts and Sciences. He is a National Poetry Slam champion, Broadway veteran, GOLDIE award winner, featured artist on *Russell Simmons' Def Poetry* on HBO and inaugural recipient of the United States Artists Rockefeller Fellowship. He has entered the world of literary performance after crossing the sands of "traditional" theatre, most notably on Broadway in the Tony Award-winning *The Tap Dance Kid* and *Stand-Up Tragedy*. His evening-length works have been presented throughout the United States and Europe and include *Word Becomes Flesh*, *Scourge*, *De/Cipher* and *No Man's Land*. His work has been enabled by several prestigious foundation awards including grants from the Ford Foundation, the Center for Cultural Innovation, Creative Capital, the National Performance Network Creation Fund, the Wallace A. Gerbode Foundation, the Creative Work Fund, the Rockefeller MAP Fund, the NEA, the Hewlett Foundation, and a Dance Advance award from the PEW Foundation. A gifted and nationally acclaimed educator and essayist, he has lectured at more than 100 colleges and universities, has been a popular commentator on National Public Radio, and has carried adjunct professorships at Stanford University, Mills College, and the University of Wisconsin. A resident at ODC Theater, YBCA, and Intersection for the Arts in San Francisco, Bamuthi's proudest work has been with Youth Speaks where he mentors 13- to 19-year-old writers and curates the Living Word Festival for Literary Arts. He is currently an Artistic Consultant for the HBO series *Brave New Voices* and is developing *red black and green: a blues*, which performatively documents the eco-equity movement towards green-collar jobs in Black neighborhoods.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

the break/s premiered at the Humana Festival of New American Plays in March 2008. It was directed by Michael John Garcés with the following performers:

Marc Bamuthi Joseph
DJ Excess
Tommy Shepherd aka Soulati

and the following production staff:

Scenic Designer Michael B. Raiford
Costume Designer..... Jessica Ford
Lighting Designer..... Brian J. Lilienthal
Sound Coordinator Paul Doyle
Properties Designer Doc Manning
Video Designer..... David Szlasa
Documentary Filmographer..... Eli Jacobs-Fantauzzi
Original Music Ajayi Jackson
Choreographer..... Stacey Printz
Arranging and Mixing..... DJ Excess,
Tommy Shepherd aka Soulati
Stage Manager..... Lori M. Doyle
Dramaturgs..... Brian Freeman, Julie Felise Dubiner
Assistant Dramaturg..... Charles Haugland
Executive Producer..... MAPP International Productions
Directing Assistant..... Zoe Aja Moore

the break/s was produced in association with Living Word Project.

It received world premieres at the Humana Festival of New American Plays at Actors Theatre of Louisville (March 8-29, 2008) and the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis (April 10-12, 2008).

Lead commissioning and development support: the Walker Art Center with support from the Joyce Foundation. Additional support provided by The Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation Emerging Playwrights 2006 Initiative, The National Endowment for the Arts, Zellerbach Family Foundation, Creative Capital, The James Irvine Foundation, Rockefeller MAP Fund, Association of Performing Arts Presenters, Youth Speaks, East Bay Fund, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts and Z Space. Artistic Consultation by Jeff Chang and James Clotfelter and production consultation by KelVin Productions, LLC.

MOTIFS

FALLING... “I was in Haiti once at a vodun ceremony and I passed out. I personally think that I just turned chicken shit at the sight of blood and fainted like a little beyoncé, but my whole crew believed I’d been possessed.”

The action in this piece sometimes mirrors this line. This falling, not knowing what hit you...I want this piece to have a sense of narcolepsy, and I want to create signatures in the physical environment (light, sound, blocking, gesture) that reflect the sensation of falling over into dark space, thought, or sleep...most of the choreography plays with this idea, but not too literally.

DREAMING...mostly journal entries taken from planet hip hop. That sounds so big *planet hip hop*...really what I mean is my world. Black artist being seen. Whenever I’m feeling too self-conscious I drop into a dream. Race matters less here. I feel safe to laugh at it. There should be a music signature, think music for a dream deferred...super African American “Langston-Spike-Duke Ellington-Dr. Dre”...this basic score takes on the reflection and resonance and character of each international venue we visit in the dream state.

CROSSING...code switching...timetwist as shapeshift...using anything that’s happened before in the action and sampling it into the present to compound the metaphor in the present moment. Any one of the four agents on stage can “cross”...mostly scripted, but when we get good at this thing, we can have a little jazz during the last few loops...

There are three folks on stage. One plays words and body. One plays images and recorded music. One makes the music live. They all play time. There are two cameras on stage as well, used by the DJ/VJ to capture the moment and project the feed onto two screens, placed in accordance with the director and set designer’s shared vision. One camera is downstage right. The other is directly overhead the action.

KASÉ is a Dance Sequence.

Because negroes can’t have success without feelin like they’re sellin
SOMEBODY out.

Because I want a lexus AND justice

Because I’m teaching hip hop in Madison Wisconsin

And *she’s* sitting with the dalai lama in India

Because of jeff chang.

the break/s

LOOP 1.

*If jazz is the broom Africans jump over to become Americans
Then what is hip hop...?*

KASÉ with Text.

KASÉ is a series of “clock walks,” quarter-turn rotations performed while a dancer is on his back. Upon completion of the turns, the imprint of MBJ dragging his feet around in a circle “draws” record grooves on the stage surface.

MBJ. Cycles to break

No more lying

Much less flying

Call your grandma

Practice faith.

Don't confuse your art with your life
embody what you write.

Stop contradicting.

Slipped in the groove of institution and reparations

Funk and function equally separating to reveal me in the break

Psychically cycling

I got patterns to shake

Music to make

Culture to love

Guilt to feel

Prayers to say

OVERTURE: MBJ-EXCESS-SOULATI.

(OVERTURE is staged like RUN DMC would do modern dance.

All three characters are “introduced” in the span of an eight-bar sequence

A chance to scratch in our tools...

An exhibition of drums, scratch, dance, poetry, vocal percussion, and lights.)

(MBJ sets metronome, a sound like the wind inhaling and exhaling, then eventually becomes the break from “South Bronx” by BDP which SOULATI performs vocally. Closes with the tone that MBJ started with, this time with SOULATI assuming the metronome as MBJ begins to spit.)

MBJ. This is what it looks like right before I fall

(Three-beat pause as EXCESS slowly spins a record backwards, then everyone comes back in on the one...)

(MUSIC: "South Bronx.")

Jackie Robinson swinging under the color line

Jesse Owens hoverin over the hand of the heil

J-Hova

The brown bomber

Obama

Crossover

(MUSIC: Traditional folkloric rhythm.)

Legba bring the drama with the lesson

I am an American at the edge

More than less

I keep tryin to push this blackface

In urban high schools

More and more it matters less

I'm straddling the line

Don't push me

cuz I'm close...

I'm trying not to...

FALL

I am trying to believe that loving you

Doesn't mean I'm crossing over

Trying to accept a self-concept that includes being your partner

But every time I think the question of commitment

I fall sleep

A not quite coma

Anxiety driven neuroses

that feels like spending the entire day in a dream

DREAM #1

I was in Haiti once at a vodun ceremony and I passed out. I personally think that I just turned chicken shit at the sight of blood and fainted like a little beyoncé, but my whole crew, all people who honor and respect Haitian culture, believed I'd been possessed. They said I fell like this

(EXCESS backspins a record bella slowly. MBJ performs "suspended possession" [SP] gesture, the animation of a fall in arrested development.)

A feeble pawn or a priest...either is possible...who knows where the body goes when the consciousness flies away...when you lose your mind who

jumps in to take its place...the Haitians started callin me *neg ginen*...*ginen* is the tunnel that connects Haiti to Africa, so when a Haitian calls you *neg ginen*, that's real respect the really real black shit...that's a stripe...

I wonder what they'd say if they knew my kid was half Chinese and my girl was white...

(FILM #1... *If jazz*... Interview [series #1].)

(MUSIC: SOULATI and EXCESS re-create "Bonita Applebum" by A Tribe Called Quest.)

(KASÉ: Hip hop based phrase.)

LOOP 2.

MBJ. This story begins in the middle

Halfway across the planet

I think...

That I'm awake

Last night at dusk I

Took a red eye across the Atlantic

Landed on the first morning of summer in Europe

For the last 40 sumthin hours it's been day

I think

I might be dreamin

But I'm not sure

I'm in Paris for a festival of

young contemporary choreographers from Africa

By the grace of god, I get to watch

It's one of the perks. I've managed to convince the performing arts machine that I am high art AND hip hop...

FALL

sshh don't tell em I've gotten stuck I'm in between

Back row of the audience

Falling up

Waking dream

In Paris I

Represent my country in the flesh

The surrogate for Allen Iverson and 50 cent

But What good is a black man in America if stripped of his right to threat?

How hip hop can I be if they let me onto their set?

RETURN

Anyway as a guest of the institution

I'm at this dance festival and on the first night

This South African soloist does this joint where she wears a tutu and a big easter bunny costume head-thing and contorts herself into a big plastic bag for like 30 minutes...and then she walks through the audience putting saran wrap over people's mouths and kissing them on their plastic dental dammed lips...and then it ends...that's it.

In my head

DREAM #2

(MUSIC: *Dream sig equally touched by kwaito/sarafina and ladysmith mam-bazo.*)

the image of South Africa is fixed on apartheid, Steven Biko, Robben Island. In my head it is always the late 80s and Mandela is the first person I ever truly truly wanted to be free. The first major metaphor for liberating me...

The triangle of perspective is crazy...

I'm lookin at this African woman for some sense of root

She's lookin at European performance art trading in amandla for a frayed pink tutu

And Europeans ALWAYS been lookin at me...

KASÉ WITH TEXT

Ever since my name was satchmo Langston josephine

Since the days when they bred me

I am the descendant of an experiment (*Begin gesture phrase.*) in psyche and body

A fetish taking my place in line

Fractured

wondering when this woman's history stopped being mine

I've been flying for the last forty hours I have no sense of time

I wonder which one of us is sleep, and which one is just tired

and then

Exactly right then

I fall

(FILM #2—*Title: White people in hip hop.*)

(MUSIC: SOULATI and EXCESS re-create the break of Aerosmith's "Walk This Way.")

(KASÉ: *A wild abstraction of the "electric slide" social line dance.*)

FALL

Real late at night

just the two of us

in the dark

when my own snoring wakes me up

in the dark

when my history is irrelevant and I am a soul to be touched
 when all falls away but words on the page
 she is perfect

the woman I want to come home to,
 but not always who I want to leave the house with
 my perfect match in love
 a plague upon my self-perception and politics
 she's turning 30
 childless
 she wants to get married
 I present her every day with a ring of silence
 And a fat rock of maybe
 Cuz MAYBE I can choose love over identity
 But maybe...

(Gesture phrase.)

LOOP 3.

*MUSIC: Dream music sig with a touch of crump...maybe chopped and screwed
 as a breakdown.*

DREAM #3

MBJ. My cousins are WILDIN OUT!!!
 You get PAID to teach hip hop...
 Oh hell NO

(MUSIC out.)

My uncle's 60th birthday has brought us all to South Florida
 five boys
 one a computer guy
 every day shirt and tie
 one a senior in high school
 one did a bid
 one has a kid out of wedlock
 the fifth don't really get off the block
 it's starting to be NOT cool
 between my dad and his three siblings
 five boys
 one generation is all it took for my West Indian fam to resemble the African
 American statistics book
 we shaped bell like hooks
 one in five
 statistically, one of us ain't supposed to be alive past 25 the fourth boy just
 turned 26
 I am the absentee godfather of the fifth

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IN PARIS YOU WILL FIND MANY BAGUETTES BUT ONLY ONE TRUE LOVE

by Michael Lew

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BIOGRAPHY

Michael Lew's plays, *Tenure* (American Airlines Theatre on Broadway) and *Keep Truckin'* (Atlantic Theatre), were recently produced by the 24 Hour Plays. His one-woman play *Yit, Ngay (One, Two)* is published in *Plays and Playwrights 2006* and excerpted in *The Best Women's Monologues for the 21st Century* (Applause). Other publications include *The Roosevelt Cousins*, *Thoroughly Sourced* (2007 Samuel French Festival winner) and *Magician Ben vs. The Wizard Merlin* (Smith & Kraus). Mr. Lew received a Sloan commission from Ensemble Studio Theatre and works for New Dramatists. His play *A Better Babylon* was workshopped at Victory Gardens in Chicago. Writing residencies include Ensemble Studio Theatre's Youngblood, Ma-Yi Writers' Lab and Old Vic New Voices. Mr. Lew was a Westinghouse finalist for his work on homeobox genes and graduated from Yale College in 2003.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In Paris You Will Find Many Baguettes but Only One True Love premiered at the Humana Festival of New American Plays in March 2008, and won the Actors Theatre of Louisville's Heideman Award. It was directed by Sean Daniels with the following cast:

LINDY.....Brandie Moore
LIZ..... Jessica Lauren Howell
RYAN Christopher Scheer

and the following production staff:

Scenic Designers..... Brenda Ellis & Paul Owen
Costume Designer..... Emily Ganfield
Lighting Designer..... Paul Werner
Sound DesignerBenjamin Marcum
Properties Designer Mark Walston
Stage Manager..... Debra Anne Gasper
Assistant Stage Manager.....Captain Kate Murphy
Dramaturg Adrien-Alice Hansel
Assistant Dramaturg.....Charles Haugland

This play was originally developed in New York City with Ensemble Studio Theatre's Youngblood Playwrights Group (Graeme Gillis and R.J. Tolan, artistic directors).

CAST OF CHARACTERS

LINDY, an American tourist

LIZ, her best friend

RYAN, a Parisian street mime

PLACE

Paris.

TIME

The present.

NOTE ON THE TEXT

A slash (/) in the dialogue indicates that the next line interrupts at the slash point.

IN PARIS YOU WILL FIND MANY BAGUETTES BUT ONLY ONE TRUE LOVE

LINDY *sits apart from LIZ and RYAN, who are snuggling. RYAN is a mime. LIZ has a black beret and rosy circles painted on her cheeks.*

LINDY. (*Loud, ostentatious sigh.*) *Ennui.*

(*Pause. Looks at LIZ and RYAN, who ignore her. Sighs.*)

Malaise.

(*Pause. Looks at LIZ and RYAN, who ignore her. Sighs.*)

Chagrin! Tristesse! Les Misérables!

LIZ. What the hell, Lindy?

LINDY. I know! I'm sorry.

LIZ. If you keep *tristessing* all over the place, you can spend the rest of the trip alone. (*She goes back to snuggling.*)

LINDY. (*Incredibly self-pitying.*) I'm already alone. *Isolement...*

LIZ. Lindy?

LINDY. Yeah?

LIZ. You don't speak French, so shut your baguette hole. You're ruining the trip.

(*To RYAN, as though he is deaf.*)

She feels lonely.

(*LINDY nods slowly. RYAN nods quickly.*)

Her boyfriend left her.

(*LINDY nods slowly and RYAN quickly.*)

Her boyfriend said, "I like you but I'm not *in like* with you." Do you understand?

(*RYAN nods. Mimes tears.*)

Yes! Yes, that's it exactly. Oh my God we have so much in common!

(*They lean in to kiss but....*)

LINDY. Liz?

LIZ. (*Holding in just-about-to-kiss position.*) Yeah Lindy.

LINDY. I don't mean to ruin the trip.

LIZ. (*Pulls away from RYAN.*) For shit's sake. This is PARIS! Grab someone! That's what I did. (*To RYAN.*) Didn't I grab you?

(LIZ mimes casting a reel to RYAN, and RYAN mimes being hooked.)

LINDY. I'd like to. Grab someone. But...it's so hard. You know...love?

LIZ. (*Extremely tender.*) I know sweetie. (*Thumps her forehead.*)

LINDY. HEY!!

LIZ. Look. We came here. What did we say?

LINDY. You...you thumped me!

LIZ. That's right now pay attention. We came here. What did we say?

LINDY. In Paris we'll find the men / of our dreams.

LIZ. We'll find the men of our.... No, dammit. You said it too fast. Do it like we practiced on the plane! We came here. What did we say?

LINDY. In Paris / we'll find the men of our dreams.

LIZ. We'll find the men of our dreams! (*Extremely tender.*) Yeaaaaaaahhhh. Well I did it! I said...what did I say to you?

LINDY. You said, "I've always wanted to bag a traditional French street performer."

LIZ. That's right. And what the fuck did I bag?

LINDY. A traditional French mime.

LIZ. That's right and we love each other. (*To RYAN as though he is deaf.*) Don't we? Love each other?

(RYAN mimes tying a string to her heart and tying a string to his heart. With one hand on her chest and one hand on his, he pulls back and forth on their heartstrings. They move in rhythm. LIZ laughs while moving with the heartstrings.)

See? I said to myself, "In Paris I'll find the man of my dreams. I'll have a bite to eat and I'll find him." So I went to the café and I had a *baguette*. I had a *ficelle*. (*To RYAN.*) Is that how you pronounce it? *Ficelle*?

(RYAN mimes "I don't know, I can't talk.")

I had a...*ficelle*.

(RYAN starts miming being in a bakery.)

I had a *croissant*. I had a *palmer*. I had a *brioche*. I had a *batard*. Then I...I had another *baguette*. And damned if the man of my dreams didn't walk right up to me. Trapped in an invisible box!

(RYAN is in an invisible box and LIZ unlocks it. He emerges, triumphant. They hold each other.)

I slapped on a *béret* and some *rouge* and I haven't looked back. And that joy could be yours, Lindy. But get this: you have to find it.

LINDY. I know. But I still miss him. Look, I made a locket out of that bottle of *cologne* he left in my room.

LIZ. Jesus put that away—you've been showing me that all week. Lindy, do you know that in French they spell "bread" the same way we spell "pain"?

LINDY. I don't see what that has to do with...

LIZ. Pain, Lindy. Pain. And I think that means you have to go through a lot of pain...or in my case (*In French.*) *pain*...until you find true love. Speaking of which, it's breakfast time. You think about that while I buy us some breakfast. (*To RYAN.*) I'm going to buy us some breakfast! Breakfast!

(*RYAN mimes being a fat man.*)

Exactly! We have so much in common!

(*They kiss. LINDY sprays some cologne on her hand and kinda sniffs her own hand.*)

Did I get mime face on me?

(*She wipes her face. RYAN tries to get up.*)

No, no. You stay there. Lindy stop sniffing your hand it's weird.

LINDY. But it smells like him!

LIZ. (*To RYAN.*) Cheer her up for me, will you? I'm getting some breakfast.

(*LIZ exits. RYAN mimes picking a bouquet and gives it to LINDY, who doesn't take it. Beats. Lindy stares into space. Mime and Lindy. Lindy and Mime. Beats.*)

LINDY. (*To nobody, really.*) We should start making out or something. That would really freak her out. (*Silence.*) She'd come back and I'd have all this mime face on my crotch. Our clothes spread out across the floor. She'd gasp and you'd make a face like...

(*Put her hands to her cheeks and makes a surprised face. Beat.*)

Not that I'd do that. She's my best friend.... (*Silence.*) But wouldn't it be funny? (*Beat, mumbly.*) If we made out...

RYAN. (*Canadian accent.*) I'm not about to make out with you Lindy.

LINDY. Holy shit!

RYAN. But I am about to tell you something unexpected.

LINDY. Holy shit you're not a mime at all!

RYAN. I am so a mime.

LINDY. But you can talk!

RYAN. (*Firm.*) Mimes talk, *Lindy!* It's not like we go home to our mime houses, kiss our mime wives and eat silently at the dinner table. It's not like we have noiseless joyless pantomiming mime sex. We *talk*, ok?

LINDY. Ok.

RYAN. But I do have a confession.

(*Sits her down.*)

I'm not French.

LINDY. Well, obviously. Listen to you! You sound like some backwater hick from Saskatchewan!

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ALL HAIL HURRICANE GORDO

by Carly Mensch

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BIOGRAPHY

Carly Mensch is currently in her second year at The Juilliard School's Lila Acheson Wallace Playwrights Program and is the playwright-in-residence at Ars Nova. *All Hail Hurricane Gordo* was developed at Ars Nova's Out Loud Series, the Kennedy Center's University Playwrights Festival and the Marin Theatre Company. Her play *Len, Asleep in Vinyl* received its premiere in the summer of 2008 at Second Stage Theatre Uptown.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

All Hail Hurricane Gordo premiered at the Humana Festival of New American Plays in March 2008. It was directed by Sean Daniels with the following cast:

CHAZMatthew Dellapina
GORDO..... Patrick James Lynch
INDIA Tracee Chimo
OSCAR..... William McNulty

and the following production staff:

Scenic DesignerPaul Owen
Costume Designer.....Lorraine Venberg
Lighting Designer.....Deb Sullivan
Sound DesignerMatt Callahan
Properties Designer Mark Walston
Properties AssistantJoe Cunningham
Fight SupervisorLee Look
Stage Manager.....Paul Mills Holmes
Assistant Stage Manager.....Captain Kate Murphy
Dramaturg Julie Felise Dubiner
Assistant Dramaturg.....Devon LaBelle
Casting.....Emily Ruddock
Directing Assistant.....Michael K. Brooks

All Hail Hurricane Gordo was produced in association with The Cleveland Play House.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

CHAZ, late 20s

GORDO, mid 20s

INDIA, 18

OSCAR, late 50s

SETTING

A ranch-style house in a waning suburb of New York. The living room has been converted into a makeshift office.

ALL HAIL HURRICANE GORDO

ACT I

1.

A living room turned makeshift office. Two desks, one neat and organized with a typewriter and carefully arranged stacks of paper and the other a total wreck, purgatory-like, where things half-eaten and half-assed take up residence—opened bags of chips, abandoned Tinker Toy projects, wrinkled WrestleMania magazines, parts of an old Bingo set, a bug collection in a recycled yogurt container, swimming goggles, etc. There is a worn-out couch dead center, covered with piles and piles of phone books and a lone wooden chair in the corner.

CHAZ, late 20s, sits at the neat desk. Shirt and tie. Typing. Enter GORDO, mid 20s. In boxers and a little boy's pajama top. CHAZ continues typing. GORDO watches for a moment.

GORDO. Hey.

(Type type. Type type.)

Hey Chaz.

(CHAZ doesn't respond. GORDO patiently repeats himself.)

Chaz. Chaz. Chaz.

CHAZ. I hear you.

GORDO. You want breakfast?

CHAZ. Already ate.

GORDO. Alright.

(GORDO exits. CHAZ pulls out the sheet of paper from the typewriter and puts it into an envelope. He finds the appropriate address in one of the phone books open on his desk.)

(GORDO returns with some old mush in Tupperware. He loiters around CHAZ's desk while he eats.)

GORDO. Mmm.

CHAZ. What is that?

GORDO. Stir-fry.

CHAZ. From last week?

GORDO. I guess.

CHAZ. You didn't see any cereal?

(GORDO shrugs.)

I bought some yesterday.

GORDO. You bought the bad kind.

CHAZ. I bought Cheerios.

GORDO. You bought Shit-e-os. The kind in the plastic bag. The kind you have to crawl on the floor of the supermarket to get. They look like Cheerios but surprise—they're really Shit-e-os. Simple mistake. How long you been working?

CHAZ. Little over an hour.

GORDO. Jeez. That's discipline.

CHAZ. Just finished the fourth one this morning. Oh. And we need to pick up more stamps. We're running low.

GORDO. Look at you. You're like this self-guided missile. Like your brain is on autopilot.

CHAZ. It's after ten by the way.

GORDO. See? You've even got an internal clock.

CHAZ. We start at nine-thirty.

GORDO. *We?*

CHAZ. The household.

GORDO. Yeah...I can't get up then. Sorry.

CHAZ. Why not?

GORDO. Because. You got rid of the TV. That's how I used to tell time—the channel guide. I used to watch the channel guide every morning until breakfast. Do you know you can basically schedule your entire life just by watching the channel guide? It tells you what's on and when and how long, and there's even a little ticking clock in the upper hand corner. But now it's just...nothing. I'm a little ship, lost at sea, all floating around. Where's my compass? Where's my best friend? Oh yeah, Chaz sold it on eBay.

CHAZ. I didn't sell it on eBay. I sold it to Kip Bearman.

GORDO. The guy from the Y?

CHAZ. Yeah.

GORDO. Now what's he gonna do with a TV? Smoke it?

CHAZ. (*Amused.*) Please tell me how you smoke a television set.

GORDO. Oh he'll figure out a way. He'll probably pull out all the wires and try to snort the electricity out of them.

CHAZ. What makes you think he does drugs? We see him at the pool, that's it.

GORDO. And on the bench outside, waiting for the bus. Smoking Lucky Strikes. Every Wednesday, just sitting on the bench. Smoking.

CHAZ. Cigarettes.

GORDO. Cigarettes are a drug, man. They've got nicotine. You smoke one and Bang! your brain is a plate of scrambled eggs. Haven't you seen the commercials? Don't ever smoke Chaz. Promise me you'll never smoke.

CHAZ. It's a little late for me to take up smoking, don't you think?

GORDO. *Promise* me Chaz.

CHAZ. Fine. I promise.

GORDO. Promise.

CHAZ. I said I promise.

GORDO. You can't die on me.

CHAZ. I'm not dying.

GORDO. I'm just saying, you better not.

(A moment.)

I'm thinking of writing a letter. To Child Protective Services. With a note that says, "Dear Protective Services. Question: Do you really protect every child in America? Answer: No. You don't. Love, Gordon. P.S. Can you please get me a new TV?"

(CHAZ just stares at him.)

CHAZ. Why don't you go get dressed. Your leg hair—it's blinding me.

GORDO. You don't think that's funny? Writing a letter to Child Protective Services?

CHAZ. It's not that funny anymore.

GORDO. You write letters.

CHAZ. That's different.

GORDO. You write like ten a day.

CHAZ. I write inquiries. It's a different thing.

GORDO. I can sign both our names. They might like that—a two for one deal.

(Noticing.)

What's up with the tie?

CHAZ. Oh. Right.

GORDO. You look good. You look like you're going to court.

CHAZ. I've...got a meeting today. We both do, actually.

GORDO. Ah...we're auctioning off the couch. First the TV, now the couch. Everything must go!

CHAZ. We're not selling anything. It's—an interview.

GORDO. What kind of interview?

CHAZ. You know, an interview.

GORDO. Okay. But what kind?

CHAZ. You can't get upset.

GORDO. What? Are you getting another job?

CHAZ. Not me. Someone else. Coming here.

GORDO. Someone who?

CHAZ. Someone who's coming here to interview with us.

GORDO. Why would they do that?

CHAZ. Go get dressed and we'll talk all about it. And put on a nice shirt—you can borrow one of mine if you want. With a collar.

GORDO. No. Tell me now Chaz.

CHAZ. It's no big deal. It's just a meeting.

GORDO. Tell me what's going on.

CHAZ. Not if you're going to freak out.

GORDO. I'M NOT GOING TO FREAK OUT. Just tell me already.

(CHAZ composes himself.)

CHAZ. A potential tenant. She's coming in at eleven.

GORDO. Today?

CHAZ. Yeah.

(GORDO processes all this.)

GORDO. Okay.

CHAZ. Yeah?

GORDO. Uh huh.

(Beat. GORDO exits to his room. CHAZ watches the door warily. A few seconds later, GORDO re-enters wearing a football helmet. CHAZ stares at him for a moment.)

CHAZ. Gordon.

(GORDO stares back.)

Gordo.

(GORDO lowers his head like a bull.)

Don't do this.

(GORDO kicks invisible dirt as if preparing to charge.)

I said don't.

(GORDO charges. Rams CHAZ in the stomach. CHAZ falls down.)

OFF! Off. Get OFF!

GORDO. AAGGHHH!!!!

CHAZ. Jesus.

(CHAZ tries to wiggle out from beneath GORDO.)

I said off.

GORDO. I'M GOING TO BREAK YOUR ARM.

CHAZ. I need my arm.

GORDO. NO YOU DON'T.

CHAZ. Please. I do.

GORDO. NO. NO MORE ARM.

CHAZ. You know what time it is? I think you know what time it is.

GORDO. TIME TO DIE?

CHAZ. What?

GORDO. TIME TO EAT MY FACE!

(CHAZ manages to break free. Stands up.)

CHAZ. I think it's time for a time out.

GORDO. No.

CHAZ. Yes. Time out. Go sit in the chair.

GORDO. I don't want to sit in the chair.

CHAZ. You just head-butted me in the goddamn stomach. I've probably got internal bleeding. Go have time out.

GORDO. Fine.

(GORDO goes to the lone wooden chair and takes a seat.)

How long?

CHAZ. Two minutes.

GORDO. One.

CHAZ. Fine.

(GORDO sits in the chair. Counts quietly to himself. CHAZ brings GORDO's empty container into the kitchen.)

CHAZ. *(From the kitchen.)* I think you actually ruptured my spleen this time.

(When he returns, CHAZ looks at his watch.)

58...59...60.

(GORDO stands up.)

Are you ready to talk about this like a grown-up?

GORDO. Uh huh.

CHAZ. Are you sure?

GORDO. I'm calm now. See?

CHAZ. Why don't you take off the helmet?

GORDO. It's the San Diego Chargers.

CHAZ. I know.

GORDO. Okay.

(GORDO takes off the helmet.)

I don't know why I get so angry.

CHAZ. You've got stuff you're dealing with.

GORDO. But we've both got the same stuff.

CHAZ. I think you've also got some kind of anger management problem, maybe.

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ONE SHORT SLEEPE

by Naomi Wallace

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BIOGRAPHY

Naomi Wallace’s work has been produced in the United Kingdom, Europe and the United States. Her major plays include *One Flea Spare*, *In the Heart of America*, *Slaughter City*, *The Trestle at Pope Lick Creek*, *Things of Dry Hours* and *The Fever Chart: Three Short Visions of the Middle East*. Her work has received the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize, Kesselring Prize, Fellowship of Southern Writers Drama Award and an Obie. She is also a recipient of the MacArthur “Genius” Fellowship. Ms. Wallace’s award-winning film *Lawn Dogs* is available on DVD and her new film, *The War Boys* (co-written with Bruce Mcleod) will be released in 2009.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

One Short Sleeper premiered at the Humana Festival of New American Plays in 2008. It was directed by Marc Masterson with the following cast:

BASHEERRamiz Monsef

and the following production staff:

Scenic DesignerPaul Owen

Costume Designer..... Susan Neason

Lighting Designer..... Paul Werner

Sound DesignerBenjamin Marcum

Properties Designer Mark Walston

Stage Manager..... Debra Anne Gasper

Assistant Stage Manager.....Captain Kate Murphy

Dramaturg Adrien-Alice Hansel

Assistant Dramaturg Charles Haugland

Written for the Global Play Project, University of Iowa.

CHARACTER

Basheer, a young Lebanese man in his early twenties.

SETTING

Lebanon, Then and Now.

ONE SHORT SLEEPE

A young Lebanese man, BASHEER, early twenties, dressed casually, is digging a hole in the ground with a shovel. He digs at different times during the scene but often breaks for periods while speaking to the public.

BASHEER. At the end of her body. Yes. At the end of her. Body. There are six spinning fingers, called “spinnerets,” which make a spinning machine so intricate nothing can match it. These fingers, or spinning tubes, have tiny holes at the end of each one through which spills the thread. Spills. I like that word. And I say spills as the spider’s web is actually liquid until it comes into. Contact. Into contact with the air. On the feet are tiny claws to guide the thread, three different kinds. And the pilots. Let me tell you about the pilots: when they are very young they climb to the highest points they can find and then turn to face the wind. And there are various kinds of wind. Today, for instance, is the kind of wind the shapes of jets leave behind. When the jets disappear, their silver hangs in the air, their cold fuel floats like blue threads over the city. Nothing to do with beauty, everything to do with precision. For the spider then stands on tip-toe, raises its *opisthosoma*, its abdomen or end, as high as it can in the air and sends out a stream of silk from its youthful spinnerets. The air takes up the thread and the spinner pays out its line until it is long enough to tug the spider, and hold its weight. Then the spider lets go—and pilots the craft through the breeze. And the spider is not at the mercy of the wind but can haul in its thread or lengthen it to rise and fall in the air.

(He lets out a celebratory call.)

This tiny, perfect aircraft may travel long distances, even out to sea, perhaps to end up on foreign soil. Or if unlucky, to spin its thread on a wave. A wave. That’s how they came for us.

Wave after wave, the pilots, covering the ground. Covering the ground with four. Covering the ground with four million. Covering the ground with four million cluster munitions. Covering our streets, our roofs. The bomblets lay their hard fruit in the broken road. And they were made not by God, as the spiders are, but by hands: soldering, cutting, screwing, polishing, testing. And I studied. I studied. Up until the moment of spinnerets, the spiders and their wonders. Of all the studies I could have chosen at Beirut University, I chose entomology because spiders have eight eyes, arranged in two rows on the front of their heads. Eight eyes, imagine it. Eight opportunities to witness an event at a different angle.

It was summer. In the year 2006. The jets took off just outside Tel Aviv and Haifa, perhaps even Jerusalem. And my enemy, my brother the pilot pulled

the night smooth and tight across our garden while my sister Ghada examined an ant on her finger. She held the creature up to my face. 'Get lost!' I said.

(He holds up the blade of the shovel and talks to it as though it were his sister.)

"Get lost, Ghada! I'm reading. I have exams tomorrow little girl! You know nothing about spiders and soon I will know everything!" We were cruel to each other, my eight-year-old sister and I, because we loved each other absolutely. I was turning the page of my book on spiders. The sirens were sounding. The leaflets were dropping. The kindness of warnings: "You are ordered to evacuate your villages immediately." We had no weapons in our home. But ah the wonder, the wonder of those tiny spinning tubes, of the liquid, of contact with the air.

It was the second raid. My mother couldn't get back home. She was with her mother, safe, across town. My dear father was on our roof. His legs were at the bottom of the stairs. And Ghada had an ant at the end of her body. At the end of her body, on the end of her finger. And she was singing or weeping, singing or weeping and I told her to stop but she just kept on:

(He sings, first in Arabic, then in English.)

Little Ant, little Ant

God lives in you.

Take me to your home,

The sky's no longer blue.

I said:

(He speaks to the shovel-blade again.)

"Shut up. Sing about spiders, you stupid girl! Not ants. Not ants. Ants can't be pilots."

The noise of jets is silence. Until they are done. And when they are done, grace closes its door.

(He has finished digging.)

I was going to be an expert on insects. I read all the books in English. I knew the Latin names for silence, for silly girls, for the numbers that surround the number eight.

The bomb that was falling towards our house, the bomb that was fabricated in Nevada or Wisconsin or Indiana, was dreamt into being through a good day's labor and a good day's work.

And then we were hit.

I wish I had been born a spider. *Chelicera. Epigastric furrow. Spigots.* Such eloquent names for small pieces of the body. And to have eight eyes. Eight eyes to see the world from different vantage points in that half second before death when the sky is clear as cold weather, when the sun is tiny in our

**PAGES HAVE BEEN CUT
FROM THIS SCENE.
THE PLAY CONTINUES ON
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GAME ON

by Zakiyyah Alexander, Rolin Jones,
Jon Spurney, Alice Tuan, Daryl Watson,
Marisa Wegrzyn, and Ken Weitzman

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For Ken Weitzman: Carl Mulert, The Gersh Agency, 41 Madison Avenue, 33rd Floor, New York, NY 10010.

BIOGRAPHIES

Zakiyyah Alexander's plays include *Sick?* (Summer Play Festival); *The Etymology of Bird* (Hip Hop Theater Festival); *Blurring Shine* (Market Theater, Johannesburg); *Sweet Maladies* (Rucker Theatre); *After the Show: A Play in Mask, Pralya, Elected* and *ghost* (Keilworks Theater); and *(900)*. She has received developmental support from The Bay Area Playwrights Festival, Rattlestick Playwrights Theater, Hartford Stage, The Providence Black Repertory Company, 24/7 Theater Company, Hip Hop Theater Festival, Vineyard Theatre, Women's Project & Productions, Gale Gates et. al, La Mama E.T.C., and Greenwich Street Theatre. She's a resident member of New Dramatists, the Dramatists Guild and Partial Comfort Productions. A graduate of the Yale School of Drama (M.F.A. in playwriting), Ms. Alexander is a native New Yorker and was raised in Brooklyn.

Rolin Jones' play *The Intelligent Design of Jenny Chow* was a finalist for the 2006 Pulitzer Prize in Drama. It received the 2006 Obie Award for Excellence in Playwriting and the Elizabeth Osborne Award for an Emerging Artist (American Theatre Critics Association). His full-length play, *The Jammer*, received a Fringe First Award for Best New Writing at 2004's Edinburgh Fringe Festival. His short plays, *Sovereignty*, *The Mercury and the Magic* and *Ron Bobbie Had Too Big a Heart* were produced at previous Actors Theatre Humana Festivals. He currently writes and produces for Showtime's award-winning original series *Weeds*. Mr. Jones is a Yale School of Drama alumnus, class of 2004.

Jon Spurney was co-musical director for the new musical *Passing Strange*, which opened on Broadway in February 2008. At Actors: *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*. Regional Theatre: *Passing Strange* (Berkeley Repertory Theatre). Off-Broadway: *Passing Strange* (The Public Theater), *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (Jane Street Theater). He has performed/recorded with David Byrne, Lou Reed, They Might Be Giants, Laurie Anderson, John Cale, Natalie Merchant and Jewel. He composed incidental music for *The Colbert Report* and *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* and a feature film score for *Where in the World is Osama Bin Laden?* (The Weinstein Company) which premieres at the Sundance Film Festival and opened nationally in April 2009. Mr. Spurney was awarded a Bronze Lion at Cannes Film Festival.

Alice Tuan was seen in the 2007 Humana Festival with her collaboration on *Batch* with New Paradise Laboratories. She also authored *Last of the Suns* (MaYi Theater Company, Berkeley Repertory Theatre), *Ikebana* (East West Players/Taper, Too), *Some Asians* (Perishable Theatre, University of Massachusetts at Amherst), *The Roaring Girl* (Foundry Theatre) and the hypertext play

Coastline (Serious Play! Ensemble, Edinburgh Fringe). *Ajax (por nobody)*, presented by New York's Flea Theater, performed at Melbourne Fringe in 2001, and is archived in the Billy Rose Collection at Lincoln Center. *F.E.T.C.H.* and *Coco Puffs* were seen at previous Humana Festivals. She received emerging artist notice from the Colbert Award for Excellence for as well as the Richard E. Sherwood Award. Ms. Tuan holds an M.F.A. in creative writing from Brown University.

Daryl Watson graduated with honors from New York University in 2002 with a B.F.A. in drama and a second major in English and American Literature. His other plays include *Prime Time* (co-produced by Real TheatreWorks and PSNBC at the Abingdon Theatre in 2003; read at Lincoln Center Theater in 2005), *The Blueberry Hill Accord* (performed at Stella Adler Studios and published in the Vintage play anthology *Laugh Lines: Short Comic Plays*) and *Snap* (published by Playscripts, Inc. in *Great Short Comedies: Vol. 1* and winner of the Celebrity Judge Panel Award and the Audience Favorite Award at the 2005 *Battle of the Bards*). Mr. Watson also co-created and wrote for the Disney show *Johnny and the Sprites*, starring Tony Award nominee John Tartaglia.

Marisa Wegrzyn's recent productions include *Psalms of a Questionable Nature* with Lucid by Proxy in Los Angeles, *Hickorydickory* at Washington University in St Louis, *Killing Women* and *Diversey Harbor* at Theatre Seven of Chicago and *The Butcher of Baraboo* at Steppenwolf Theatre Company and off-Broadway at Second Stage. Other theatres that have presented her work include Geva Theatre Center, Magic Theatre, CenterStage, Available Light Theatre, Nice People Theatre Company, Hourglass Group, and Rivendell Theatre Ensemble. She is working on commissions from Steppenwolf Theatre Company and Yale Repertory Theatre. Ms. Wegrzyn is a resident playwright at Chicago Dramatists and is a founding member of Theatre Seven of Chicago.

Ken Weitzman's plays have been presented and developed at Actors Theatre of Louisville (2007 Humana Festival), Atlantic Theater Company, Alliance Theatre, Dad's Garage, Arena Stage, New York Stage and Film, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Playwrights Horizons, The Mark Taper Forum, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Bay Area Playwrights Festival and the Summer Play Festival. He has received commissions from Alliance Theatre, Arena Stage and South Coast Repertory. Prizes include the 2003 L. Arnold Weissberger Award for his play *Arrangements*. Mr. Weitzman received his M.F.A. from University of California, San Diego. He has taught playwriting at UCSD, Emory University, and currently at Indiana University. Prior to writing for the theatre, Mr. Weitzman wrote and produced sports documentaries and narratives for television.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Game On premiered at the Humana Festival of New American Plays in March 2008. It was directed by Will MacAdams with the following cast:

The Majesty of Sport (pt. 1), Jon Spurney

SPORTSCASTERS Jesimiel Jenkins,
Andy Lutz, Emily Scott

CHEERLEADERS AND LOUTS Ensemble

Multiball: Por que no hay 'cheerleaders' en futbol, Alice Tuan

CHEERLEADERS Cheyenne Christian,
Nicholas Combs, Bing Putney,
Ashley Robinson, Sarah Sexton,
Yuko Takeda, Dara Jade Tiller

Welcome to the Life, Ken Weitzman

JOY Brandie Moore

KATIE Theresa Wentzell

SAM Genesis Doyle

ROWDY WOMEN Yuko Takeda, Cheyenne Christian

LEE Christopher Scheer

TODD Nicholas Combs

Hey Batter Batter, Marisa Wegrzyn

THE UMPIRE Jay J. Lee

THE CATCHER Jessica Lauren Howell

THE BATTER Nicholas Combs

SPECTATORS Ensemble

Eat This, Zakiyyah Alexander

MA Dara Jade Tiller

PA Nathan Gregory

BABE Katie Gould

EATERS Jessica Lauren Howell, José Urbino

The Best, Daryl Watson

CHRISTINE Ashley Robinson

ANGELA Emily Scott

TOM Jay J. Lee

ERIC José Urbino

The Majesty of Sport (pt. 2), Jon Spurney

Land of the Underdog, Marisa Wegrzyn

MISS BARKER..... Sarah Sexton

I Hate Lacrosse, Ken Weitzman

JACK..... Bing Putney

RANDY..... Matthew Sa

STACY..... Elizabeth Gilbert

RICK..... Jay J. Lee

Extremely, Rolin Jones

JOHNNY..... Andy Lutz

JOSH..... Christopher Scheer

JUMP CAPTAIN..... Nicholas Combs

Half-Time Show

Performed by the Ensemble

Signature, Daryl Watson

BRANDON..... Genesis Doyle

JIMMY..... Nicholas Combs

Multiball: The Birth of Rugby, Alice Tuan

THOMAS..... Dara Jade Tiller

WILLIAM..... Jesimiel Jenkins

FIELDSWORTH..... José Urbino

BOLLINGER..... Nathan Gregory

BLAXON..... Thomas Jerome Ferguson

TODD..... Nicholas Combs

CHEATERS..... Bing Putney, Katie Gould,
Jessica Lauren Howell

SQUARES..... Cheyenne Christian, Christopher Scheer

I'm Just a Cubs Fan, Jon Spurney

SINGERS..... Matthew Sa, Yuko Takeda, Theresa Wentzell

The Ultimate, Zakiyyah Alexander

MORGAN..... Brandie Moore

DAR..... Yuko Takeda

LEWIS..... Nathan Gregory

TARA..... Cheyenne Christian

LIPPY..... Dara Jade Tiller

GREGORY Thomas Jerome Ferguson
DANIEL Jay J. Lee
LINDA Sarah Sexton

Superfecta, Marisa Wegrzyn

ROSIE ROCKET Jessica Lauren Howell
STING LIKE A BEE Thomas Jerome Ferguson
SOLID TRIP (#2) Jay J. Lee
WAYLAY (#5) Cheyenne Christian
TACTICAL JANE (#8) Sarah Sexton
JOCKEY DAVE STUPINSKI Bing Putney
VOICE Genesis Doyle

Multibalk: Inside Federer's Head (right now), Alice Tuan

FEDERER José Urbino

Chronicles Simpkins Will Cut Your Ass, Rolin Jones

CHRONICLES SIMPKINS Elizabeth Gilbert
RACHEL MELENDEZ Katie Gould
JESSICA Jessica Lauren Howell
BILLY CONN Thomas Jerome Ferguson
MR. FINKEL Jesimiel Jenkins

The Majesty of Sport (pt. 3), Jon Spurney

Robot Sports Song, Jon Spurney

Performed by the Ensemble

and the following production staff:

Scenic Designer Paul Owen
Costume Designer Susan Neason
Lighting Designer Nick Dent
Sound Designer Matt Callahan
Properties Designer Adriane Binky Donley
Musical Director Scott Anthony
Movement Coordinator Nicole Marquez
Stage Managers Mary Spadoni, Silka Phyllis Werness
Dramaturg Julie Felise Dubiner
Assistant Dramaturgs Charles Haugland,
Devon LaBelle
Directing Assistant Wendell Summers

Game On was commissioned by Actors Theatre of Louisville.

GAME ON

THE MAJESTY OF SPORT, *PART 1*

by Jon Spurney

SPORTSCASTERS.

SOMEWHERE IN DEEPEST AFRICA, ABOUT TEN THOUSAND YEARS AGO

AN ANCIENT MAN PROPOSED A CONTEST
WHO THE FARTHEST A ROCK COULD THROW,
AND THAT AUSPICIOUS OCCASION, I AM HAPPY TO
REPORT,

MARKED THE END OF OUR ANIMAL NATURE
FOR ON THAT DAY WE GAVE BIRTH TO SPORT.

SPORT ALLOWS US AN ARENA TO RELEASE OUR ANIMAL
WAYS,

TO RITUALIZE OUR AGGRESSION AND AVOID UN-
COUTH DISPLAYS.

AS WE WITNESS ATHLETIC ENDEAVOR ON THE COURT,
THE RINK, OR FIELD,

WHERE GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP IS PRACTICED, OUR
HIGHER NATURE IS REVEALED.

CHEERLEADERS. YOU SUCK, YOU SUCK, YOU SUCK!

LOUTS. HEY REF, GO BACK TO FOOTLOCKER

AND AS FOR YOU, UMPIRE:

I WOULDN'T EVEN PISS ON YOU IF YOUR HAIR WAS ON
FIRE.

YOUR TEAM'S A BUNCH OF PANSIES, YOU COULD BE
THE WORST EVER,

AND SPEAKING OF YOUR COACH'S MOM,
SHE SHOULDA KEPT HER LEGS TOGETHER.

End of Scene

MULTIBALL: *Por qué no hay estan 'cheerleaders' en futbol.*

by Alice Tuan

CHEER CAPTAIN. READY: OK!

CHEERLEADERS. OFFENSE, GET FIRED UP,
HEY HEY GET FIRED UP!

CHEER CAPTAIN. Two more!

CHEERLEADERS. OFFENSE, GET FIRED UP,
HEY HEY GET FIRED UP!

CHEER CAPTAIN. Last time!

CHEERLEADERS. OFFENSE, GET FIRED UP,
HEY HEY GET—

(Sound of a kicked ball.)

CHEER CAPTAIN. DEFENSE!—

CHEERLEADERS. —DEFENSE, WHAT MAKES THE GRASS
GROW?

DEFENSE DEFENSE, WHAT MAKES THE
GRASS GROW?

DEFENSE DEFENSE

(Sound of a kicked gut.)

CHEER CAPTAIN. OFFENSE GET FIRED UP!

CHEERLEADERS. HEY HEY—GET FIRED UP!

CHEER CAPTAIN. 2 more!

CHEERLEADERS. OFFENSE, GET FIRED UP, HEY HEY GET
FIRED UP

CHEER CAPTAIN. Last time!

CHEERLEADERS. OFFENSE GET FIRED UP HEY HEY GET
FIRED UP!

WOO HOO YEAH

(They do their spirit jumps, when they are suddenly interrupted by

A huge HUGE, amplified mega-sound of a kicked ball.

A couple of 'em [SURVIVALISTS] wanna get the hell out.)

CHEER CAPTAIN. DEFENSE!—

LOYALISTS. —DEFENSE WHAT MAKES THE GRASS—

*(And then another huge, amplified mega-sound of a kicked ball, possible
bomb—)*

CHEER CAPTAIN. OFFENSE!

LOYALISTS. GET FIRED UP HEY HEY GET—

(Boom.)

SURVIVALIST CHEER CAPTAIN. OFF!

*(More SURVIVALISTS wanna leave the field, and urge the LOYALISTS
off.)*

LOYALISTS. FIRED UP!

SURVIVALIST CHEER CAPTAIN. GET OFF
SURVIVALISTS. THE GRASS!
SURVIVALIST CHEER CAPTAIN. GET OFF!
LOYALISTS. FIRED UP!
SURVIVALIST CHEER CAPTAIN. GET OFF
SURVIVALISTS. THE GRASS!
SURVIVALIST CHEER CAPTAIN. GET OFF!
LOYALISTS. FIRED UP!
SURVIVALIST CHEER CAPTAIN. GET OFF!
LOYALISTS. FIRED UP!
SURVIVALIST CHEER CAPTAIN. GET OFF!

(The SURVIVALISTS have left the stage.

The remaining LOYALISTS climb atop each other's shoulders.)

LOYALISTS. FIRED UP!
 FIRED UP!
 FIRED UP!
 FIRED UP!
 FIRED UP!
 FIRED UP!

(They hold up a huge Butcher Paper Cheerposter:

HEY HEY GET FIRED UP! [on one side.]

WHAT MAKES THE GRASS GROW? [on the other:]

End of Scene

WELCOME TO THE LIFE

by Ken Weitzman

A man and woman seated at a baseball stadium. KATIE bites her fingernails.

SAM. He's up this inning.

KATIE. I know, I know.

SAM. You have the camera? (KATIE *nods*.) I got the scorecard.

KATIE. Oh good. (KATIE *gnaws. Nervous*.) He hits lefties well.

SAM. He does.

KATIE. .332 against them last season. Of course that was triple-A this is not triple-A of course it's not triple-A this is the show.

(She gnaws.)

SAM. I'm getting you a hot dog.

KATIE. I'm not hungry.

SAM. You're nervous. And before you stuff your whole hand in your mouth I'm getting you food. Food calms you. So give it up. Hot dog and what else.

KATIE. Giant-sized cracker jacks.

SAM. There we go.

(He starts off.)

KATIE. And nachos with cheese. (SAM goes up the stairs.) And a soft pretzel! (To herself.) Thanks Sam.

(As the between-inning music plays, KATIE watches a player enter the on-deck circle. She refers to her scorecard.)

KATIE. Todd Curtis.

(A ROWDY WOMAN in a very tight-fitting jersey jumps up.)

ROWDY WOMAN. Todd! Todd Curtis! Up here. I love you Todd!

(A WOMAN moves over a couple of seats to sit next to KATIE who watches the ROWDY WOMAN, transfixed.)

Sign my jersey Todd! Sign it right here, *(Indicating/ specifying each breast.)* left to right!

WOMAN. Joy.

KATIE. Looks like it.

WOMAN. No, that's my name. Joy. Curtis. As in the wife of Todd Curtis, the man that bimbo wants to autograph her boobs.

KATIE. Oh. Sorry.

JOY CURTIS. I'm cool. You the new guy's wife?

KATIE. Yes, hi, I'm Katie. Fields. My husband, he got called up Wednesday.

JOY CURTIS. Well it's nice to meet you. Welcome to The Life.

PA ANNOUNCER. Now batting number 23, Todd Curtis, number 23.

(As TODD crosses to home plate [which is offstage], the ROWDY WOMAN lifts her jersey revealing her phone number written across her midriff.)

ROWDY WOMAN. Todd, call me! Call me Todd!

KATIE. *(To her feet, exploding.)* HE'S MARRIED YOU TAWDRY BIM-BETTE!!!

(JOY gently guides KATIE back down to her seat.)

JOY CURTIS. Easy girl, easy.

KATIE. Sorry, I'm a little...on edge. I drove seven hours to get here. And I find out the wives can't stay with their husbands on the road, team rules, so now we'll be driving seven hours back, and that's fine, that's fine, he's here, in the majors, I mean it's amazing, but everything's so different and—

(The ROWDY WOMAN has a big foam #1 finger.)

ROWDY WOMAN. You're my number one Todd. Let's go all the way.

KATIE. —how in the world does that not bother you?

JOY CURTIS. You stick around a while, you learn some coping mechanisms. Tricks of the trade. Don't worry, you'll get it. You're off to a good start.

KATIE. I am?

JOY CURTIS. You're not alone. You're here with a friend, right? The guy you're sitting with?

KATIE. Sam, yes, he's terrific. Drove with me, keeps me calm.

JOY CURTIS. There you go. You see? That's important. To have a friend. A friend of your own. My husband, he has his friends, that's unavoidable. So it helps for me to have one or two of my own.

KATIE. (*Not at all getting it.*) Oh well Sam's my husband's friend too. He's a best friend to both of us really.

JOY CURTIS. That's often the case. Familiarity, proximity, convenience. Those are all compelling forces. (*Spelling it out for KATIE.*) Someone you like. Who cares how you're doing. You're not following are you? (*KATIE's not.*) Okay. Look over there. Dawn Allensworth? The guy she's with, that's her husband's college roommate. And over there—Cassie Davis, with her husband's lawyer. Celia Fernandez, she's with her husband's second cousin. And over here, with me, my husband's sister. I switch hit.

KATIE. Are you...are you saying that the entire team, that all of the wives are...

JOY CURTIS. Not all. Just the happy ones.

KATIE. My husband and I...we're monogamous.

JOY CURTIS. Sweetheart, we all start off that way.

KATIE. No. I would never.

JOY CURTIS. Of course you wouldn't. You love your husband. You drove seven hours to get here. And you'll be driving seven hours back home. While your husband goes on another road trip. But you'll watch every game on TV of course. And so will your friend Sam. You'll watch together, curse the umps together, analyze the minutiae of your husband's swing together. And in between those moments, and my god in baseball there's lots of in-between moments, you and Sam will have a few beers and talk about life, how you're both doing, then bam!, your husband hits a triple and you're both on your feet, celebrating, whooping it up, you hug, the hug lingers, you feel a little buzzed, a little lonely and...it just happens.

(*The crack of the bat, a cheer.*)

JOY CURTIS and ROWDY GIRL. That's my man!

(*KATIE remains seated, dazed, utterly overwhelmed.*)

JOY CURTIS. Get your camera.

**THIS PLAY IS
NOT OVER!**

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