

SECOND EDITION

MEN



Edited by ROBERTA UNO

ROUTLEDGE



Monologues for Actors of Color

Men

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Roberta Uno is a theater director and dramaturg. She founded the New WORLD Theater and is the Director of Arts in a Changing America at the California Institute of the Arts.

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Edited by Roberta Uno
Assistant Editor Margaret Odette

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Dedicated to the legacy of New WORLD Theater
...and for Chinua and Andrew

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Preface

This new edition of *Monologues for Actors of Color: Men*, and a companion collection for women, places in your hands some of the most original, fierce, funny, provocative, and moving writing available to actors seeking to inhabit characters as diverse and fascinating as the United States of America in the twenty-first century.

Two decades have passed since I was prompted by a symposium entitled, "Training the Actor of Color," at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, to research and edit the original edition of this book. At that gathering in 1994, gifted acting students of color lamented their peripheral existence in major training programs, both as numerical minorities and as minor characters in the majority of works produced. Although they were enthusiastic about color-blind casting, they also passionately advocated for greater opportunities to speak through the lens of their racial, ethnic, and gender identities. While some drama programs continue to lag behind, forward-thinking institutions and arts organizations are forging a wider American theater. Margaret Odette, assistant editor of this volume and a graduate student in NYU's MFA Acting Program, notes change as a member of a class that is now comprised of 50 percent people of color, "This is an empowering time to be an actor of color—because more institutions are embracing us and promoting our success in equal measure with white artists, creating a more dynamic and enriching artistic experience for everyone. The American theater is finally starting to catch up with the world that we as artists are charged with the task of reflecting, and we all benefit as a result."

What was once a project of multicultural inclusion has now become a forecast of a new, polycultural America, one that has been artistically revitalized by a stunning array of voices, aesthetics and narratives. Beyond the walls of the theater, the country has changed in ways that challenge US theaters and training programs to find greater relevance to current and future audiences. The United States is experiencing unprecedented, dramatic demographic change. The US Census Bureau has projected that by the year 2042, for the first time, there will be no single racial or ethnic majority in a growing country of 439 million. And this change will occur much earlier, by 2023, for the nation's children under 18. The shift to an aggregated majority of people of color—African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and multi-racial Americans—has already occurred in many locations from major metros like New York City, to entire states including California, Hawai'i, New Mexico, and Texas.

The production and recognition of diverse playwrights has also greatly increased in the last two decades. For example, the decade prior to 1994 saw only two Pulitzer Prizes for Drama awarded to a sole playwright of color: August Wilson in 1987 and again in 1990. There were four such finalists: Wilson (twice), David Henry Hwang, María Irene Fornés, and Anna Deavere Smith. Since 1994, five playwrights of color have won the top prize for drama: Ayad Akhtar, Quiara Alegría Hudes, Lynn Nottage, Nilo Cruz, and Suzan-Lori Parks. In the same period, fourteen have been finalists: Stephen Karam, Kristoffer Diaz, Rajiv Joseph, Lin Manuel Miranda with Quiara Alegría Hudes, David Henry Hwang, Eisa Davis, Quiara Alegría Hudes, Dael Orlandersmith, August Wilson (twice), Suzan-Lori Parks, and Cornelius Eady with Deirdre Murray. This trickle of critical attention widening to a current of validation for diverse voices led to the watershed 2016 Pulitzer Prize going to Lin-Manuel Miranda for *Hamilton*. The hip-hop-infused smash Broadway musical and cultural phenomenon speaks to a demographically changed America, not only remixing the Founding Fathers, but remaking the American musical.

Of equal, if not greater importance than the validation of these writers through major award programs, is the work of leading theaters across the country that have created pathways of development and production. Among them are many whose artistic directors suggested playwrights for this book including André Bishop, Lincoln Center Theater; Peter Brosius,

Children's Theatre Company; Tisa Chang, Pan Asian Repertory Theatre; Tim Dang, East West Players; Oskar Eustis, The Public Theater; Kamillah Forbes, Hi-Arts; Michael John Garcés, Cornerstone Theater; James Houghton, Signature Theatre; Jamil Houry, Silk Road Rising; Dipankar Mukherjee, Pangea World Theater; Jim Nicola, the New York Theatre Workshop; Jose Ortolí and Ralph Peña of Ma-Yi Theater; Bill Rausch, Oregon Shakespeare Festival; Randy Reinholz, Native Voices; Rosalba Rolón, Pregones Theater; Abe Rybeck, Theater Offensive; and José Luis Valenzuela of the Los Angeles Theatre Center.

The leading practices of historic theaters of color, several in the aforementioned, cannot be overstated in nurturing and championing diverse playwrights, directors, designers, production staff, and administrators. These theaters have been the primary sites for culturally sensitive production, consistent and ongoing artist development, and a deep commitment to community building. Some have made critical transitions to new artistic leaders that are steeped in the theater's history, like Sade Lythcott and Jonathan McCrory at the National Black Theater, Kinan Vaidez at El Teatro Campesino, and Sarah Bellamy at Penumbra Theatre. These artists are bridging earlier cultural movements and activism with the contemporary moment. Others, like Mia Katigbak of the National Asian American Theatre Company have broadened their producing vision to embrace other writers of color, as well as the European and European American canon.

Innovative models of organizing are being led by playwrights such as Keith Josef Adkins co-founder of New Black Fest or Jorge Cortiñas co-founder of Fulcrum Theater. They are determining not just what to produce, but re-thinking how to produce. For example Adkins commissioned *Facing Our Truth*, a festival of 10-minute plays catalyzed by the death of Trayvon Martin; around the country it has created a focal point for organizing about violence against black men. Many theater artists of color, like Jenny Koons and Clinton Lowe of Artist 4 Change NYC, see social activism as intrinsic to their art; they are increasingly taking on hybrid roles as actors/writers/directors/producers/activist organizers. Unprecedented coalitions of theaters, arts organizations, and independent theater artists of color are being built through new national convenings and festivals. The HowlRound commons howlround.com provides critical access to significant national efforts underway like the Latina/o Theatre Encuentro, the

National Asian American Theater ConFest, and the Catalyst Convening of Black Theaters. Leading-edge producing, presenting and organizing models with diverse leadership and programs including the Network of Ensemble Theaters, the Brave New Voices Festival, the Hemi Encuentro, and the Under the Radar Festival are animating theater across borders of genre and geography.

The widening of the theatrical canon has created the possibility of greater opportunities for theater artists of color and the potential for building theater audiences that are reflective of the cities and nation in which the theaters reside. The twenty-first century conversation for artists of color in the theater is no longer about whether there is room for these extraordinary creative voices in the American theater, but how the American theater will change beyond the stage—from diverse artistic leadership, to inclusive boards and staff, equitable partnerships and engagement of community, and new models of making theater.

These monologues are markers on the roadmap of a country where the cultural terrain is radically reshaping. I hope they will lead actors to revelatory moments of performance—and theater makers and audiences to the longer works of extraordinary writers illuminating the way.

Roberta Uno
New York City

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Against My Heart

Robert Myers

Act I. Scene I. A meeting hall in Manchester, England, 1862.

Bill, a black man in his mid-twenties and former slave, is on a speaking tour of Britain shortly after Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. Elegantly dressed, he addresses a rally of textile workers, who are striking in sympathy with American slaves. He thanks them for remaining steadfast since he knows that many in Britain support the South. The tour has been organized by Elizabeth, a friend of Fanny Kemble, the British actress. As Bill speaks, Fanny, who is backstage before her presentation of *The Tempest* in a London theatre in 1862, imagines his talk as she reads a letter from Elizabeth. Fanny, who is contemplating publishing her diary describing the horrors she witnessed on a plantation while married to the owner, her former husband, is about to meet Bill. He will help her decide whether to publish the diary as a way to dissuade Britain from entering the War on the side of the Confederacy, although doing so may mean she will never see her daughter, who is pro-South, again.

BILL: My name is Andrew Jackson. William Andrew Jackson, but I go by Bill. I'm not a learned man like Dr. Martin Delany nor a polished orator like Mr. Frederick Douglass, though I did practice in front of the looking glass before I came out this evening. Those of you who came to hear the tale of my escape will no doubt be disappointed. My story is not dramatic like Mr. Henry Brown's. I won't bring out the cargo box I escaped in and climb inside or display a diorama with pictures of whipping posts and advertisements of auctions for field hands or show you the shackles I wore when I swam through a river brimming with alligators. I will simply relate my

story, which is neither hair-raising nor bone-chilling. And you, workers of Manchester, will decide if the sacrifices you are making on our behalf... living on relief, not receiving a penny in pay as the mills sit idle...are justified by our suffering. I've never picked any cotton or threshed any rice or banged any anvils in the burning sun. I was not whipped, and I wore no rags. In fact, I had a fine uniform with shiny brass buttons and leather boots and gold epaulets. I was a coachman, and not just any coachman. I worked for Mr. Jefferson Davis, the President of the Confederacy, and I was treated as well as any slave could be. He used to tell me, "You're like a member of the family, Bill," by which I suppose he meant the family dog. I was a prized ornament that held the door as he conferred with ministers and senators and other civilized gentlemen. But they forgot a dog has ears, too. I heard them describe how they punished recalcitrant...that's a word I learned from them...recalcitrant slaves and listened to their laughter when they spoke of men's faces chewed apart by bloodhounds. They talked about how to trick boys who owned no slaves at all into fighting their war for them, of burning their entire cotton crop to ruin your economy here in England, of sending spies to convince you this war is not about slavery so you would press your Parliament to recognize the Rebels. Their agents are spreading lies even as we speak. I beseech you: do not desert us now in our hour of greatest need, just when President Lincoln has promised us emancipation... As for the story of my own escape, I know it's an indispensable...that's another word I learned from them... indispensable part of my performance here this evening. But, as I said, I didn't stow away on a ship or run through the swamp or swim across any rivers. No. The way I escaped is Mr. Davis let me look at the books in his library, even though it's strictly forbidden. I suppose he found my curiosity amusing and harmless. So I learned to read. And then I taught myself to write. And one day I wrote myself a pass that said, "My coachman, William Andrew Jackson, has my permission to go wherever he wishes." Signed, "Jefferson Davis." I showed it to a sentry on the road north of Richmond, and he let me go on through. And I walked until I was out of sight, and then I took off running, and I didn't stop until I reached Philadelphia. From there I boarded a boat for Liverpool, which is how I'm addressing you here tonight in Manchester. On behalf of all present and former slaves, I would like to thank you, workers of Great Britain, whose support for our great cause has never wavered!

Ashes

Vickie Ramirez

Act I. Scene 3. A sports bar in the city around 40 miles away from the reservation. Late fall, 2010—Upstate New York.

Brewster White (32), a mixed blood Mohawk, has finally left the reservation for good. Ambivalent about his heritage and accused of a crime he did not commit, he finally decides to leave when everyone, even the woman he loves, judges him guilty. He moves to the city to find his absent father only to discover there's no place for him in this new family. This monologue occurs just after Connie, the woman he loves, lets him know she is marrying his nemesis "the perfect Clan Chief" Gary Smoke. She is washing her hands of him and his self-destructive habits. She has left when Brews feels the need to apologize to the Bartender.

BREWSTER: (*To Bartender*) Sorry about that—kinda embarrassing. Haudenosaunee women! Now you see why I'm in the city. Let me give you some wisdom. Let me share some ancient knowledge! You know the real reason the Indian—*sorry, Native American*—population is so tiny? They're the cruelest women alive. No, I'm serious. These women, sure they look great, that long silky hair, big dark eyes, and big smiles...all lies man. They're hard as granite. Shape up or ship out, that's their motto, you can dedicate yourself to their happiness, be a "great hunter" and they'll kick you to the curb as soon as they see one little flaw, one little weakness. There's no forgiveness, no room for error. As soon as you fuck up, they'll grab the next guy in line—especially if he's taller, got a better job, whatever. They won't be sentimental about it at all.

Because it's all about the big picture. They're not responsible for themselves; they're responsible for the next seven generations. Seriously, I'm not kidding—try to live with that. Every day. I'm an "Indian Man"—role model and representative, whether I want to be or not. I can't just be the guy who loves her.

I loved her since I was a kid—back then I tried to be her hero, tried to protect her, but she chased everything I tried to protect her from—and then—she started looking around at other guys who were serious about being Indian. I tried to step forward, but she wouldn't let up, man—wouldn't forgive me my one little flaw. Which is bullshit, because I forgive her all of hers and believe me, there's a lot. She says I'm a coward. She is too. Ms. Traditional Values doesn't want me because I drink, but the traditional folks on our Rez don't want her because she's Christian. They do want me, though. I come from a "good family." There's the irony. On the plus side, the whole thing is pretty fucking funny. "Tricksters" are my spirit guides. Cheers!

(He downs his shot)

Bird in the Hand

Jorge Ignacio Cortiñas

Act I. Scene I. Miami. The Present.

Felix, 30, is a Cuban-American living in Florida who has inherited his father's business, a tourist trap that exhibits tropical birds. This monologue is from the very beginning of the play and in it, Felix begins to recount events that transpired when he was eighteen years old—a time when he had a reputation for being a bit of a prankster. He speaks directly to the audience.

FELIX: I look back at my story the way a tourist studies a cheap map. I'm trying to remember how I got from Point A to the point called The-Man-I-Am-Today. You would think there would be a line I could draw. You would think I'd be able to retrace my steps.

Let me rewind.

Point A was the place I grew up: Florida. Maybe you don't care, but just so you know, people actually have to grow up in Florida.

So back at Point A, my father was this immigrant. Now thing about immigrants is they're prone to clichéd behavior. So it's like my father was compelled by evolution, you know, to set up a "small business." But instead of setting up something normal like a corner store or a shop that sold religious statues, I mean even a medical supply outlet would have been acceptable. But my father went and opened a theme park. For the tourists. Bird Land Family Theme Park. He even did these commercials

which everyone in my high school made fun of, where he'd use his thick accent and say, 'Come and see my tropical birds.'

I was so traumatized by this that I developed a mild case of Stockholm syndrome and so I ended up getting a job there. The tourists would waddle in with their lobster sunburns and their unflattering shorts and I'd tell them the story of how—better yet, let me show you.

The flamingos were the main attraction, i.e. they were over here.

And I'd walk in and I'd go, Welcome to the Flamingo exhibit. Just to be clear, I resent working here and I resent being your tour guide.

We've started now. This is me back at Point A. This was back when I was a bit of a smartass.

So, first thing: The Flamingos you see here today are so not native to Florida. They were brought here, just like everyone else was. Total fact. The dude who first brought these flamingos to Florida was this, you know, real estate developer. This was way back. Before there were shopping malls or toll booths.

See, this city used to be a swamp. The real estate developer dude, came and saw that this land was lonely and overgrown, so he sails to Cuba and buys a flock of flamingos. When he lets them out of their shipping crates, the flamingos start to squawk. I'm talking major honking. Then they take off, circle once in the sky—and fly themselves right back to Cuba.

Real estate developer goes back to Cuba. Buys another flock. But this time he clips their wings. Every six weeks he clipped their wings. When the flamingos laid eggs, he took the chicks away, raised them separately. Told them this was paradise.

That real estate developer is dead now, but the flamingos are still here. The animal rights petition people say we should send the birds back. And it makes you think: if bringing these birds to Miami was a mistake, then so is this job. If building a city on this swampland was a mistake, then so are our lives.

Any questions? (*A flamingo squawks.*) Then thanks very much. Come back and see us again.

The Colored Museum

George C. Wolfe

The Gospel According to Miss Roj

The Colored Museum is a series of exhibits in "a museum where the myths and madness of black/Negro/colored Americans are stored." Miss Roj is at a bar, dressed in bold women's attire. Although he appears ridiculous, she "carries himself with total elegance and absolute arrogance."

In this exhibit, Miss Roj expresses her life's joys and trials through the power of his snap.

MISS ROJ: God created black people and black people created style. The name's Miss Roj...that's R.O.J. thank you and you can find me every Wednesday, Friday and Saturday nights at "The Bottomless Pit," the watering hole for the wild and weary which asks the question, "is there life after Jherri-curl?"

(a waiter enters, hands Miss Roj a drink, and then exits)

Thanks, doll. Yes, if they be black and swish, the B.P. has seen them, which is not to suggest the Pit is lacking in cultural diversity. Oh no. There are your dinge queens, white men who like their chicken legs dark. (*He winks/flirts with a man in the audience.*) And let's not forget, "Los Muchachos de la Neighborhood." But the specialty of the house is The Snap Queens. (*He snaps his fingers.*) We are a rare breed.

For, you see, when something strikes our fancy, when the truth comes piercing through the dark, well you just can't let it pass unnoticed. No darling. You must pronounce it with a snap. *(He snaps.)*

Snapping comes from another galaxy, as do all snap queens. That's right. I ain't just your regular oppressed American Negro. No—no—no! I am an extra-terrestrial. And I ain't talkin' none of that shit you seen in the movies! I have real power.

(The waiter enters. Miss Roj stops him.)

Speaking of no power, will you please tell Miss Stingy-with-the-rum, that if Miss Roj had wanted to remain sober, she could have stayed home and drank Kool-aid. *(He snaps.)* Thank you.

Yes, I was placed here on Earth to study the life habits of a deteriorating society, and child when we talking New York City, we are discussing the Queen of Deterioration. Miss New York is doing a slow dance with death, and I am here to warn you all, but before I do, I must know...don't you just love my patio pants? Annette Funicello immortalized them in "Beach Blanket Bingo," and I have continued the legacy. And my go-gos? I realize white after Labor Day is very gauche, but as the saying goes, if you've got it flaunt it, if you don't, front it and snap to death any bastard who dares to defy you. *(Laughing)* Oh ho! My demons are showing. Yes, my demons live at the bottom of my Bacardi and Coke.

Let's just hope for all concerned I dance my demons out before I drink them out 'cause child, dancing demons take you on a ride, but those drinkin' demons just take you, and you find yourself doing the strangest things. Like the time I locked my father in the broom closet. Seems the liquor made his tongue real liberal and he decided he was gonna baptize me with the word "faggot" over and over. Well, he's just going on and on with "faggot this" and "faggot that," all while walking toward the broom closet to piss. Poor drunk bastard was just all turned around. So the demons just took hold of my wedges and forced me to kick the drunk son-of-a-bitch into the closet and lock the door. *(Laughter)* Three days later I remembered he was there. *(He snaps. The waiter enters. Miss Roj takes a drink and downs it.)*

Another!
(The waiter exits.)

(Dancing about) Oh yes—yes—yes! Miss Roj is quintessential style. I corn row the hairs on my legs so that they spell out M.I.S.S. R.O.J. And I dare any bastard to fuck with me because I will snap your ass into oblivion.

I have the power, you know. Everytime I snap, I steal one beat of your heart. So if you find yourself gasping for air in the middle of the night, chances are you fucked with Miss Roj and she didn't like it.

Like the time this asshole at Jones Beach decided to take issue with my coulotte-sailor ensemble. This child, this muscle-bound Brooklyn thug in a skin-tight bikini, very skin-tight so the whole world can see that instead of a brain, God gave him an extra thick piece of sausage. You know the kind who beat up on their wives for breakfast. Well, he decided to blurt out when I walked by, "Hey look at da monkey coon in da faggit suit." Well, I walked up to the poor dear, very calmly lifted my hand, and... *(He snaps in rapid succession.)* A heart attack, right there on the beach. *(He singles out someone in the audience.)* You don't believe it? Cross me! Come on! Come on! *(The waiter enters, hands Miss Roj a drink. Miss Roj downs it. The waiter exits)*

(looking around) If this place is the answer, we're asking all the wrong questions. The only reason I come here is to communicate with my origins. The flashing lights are signals from my planet way out there. Yes, girl, even further than Flatbush. We're talking another galaxy. The flashing lights tell me how much time is left before the end.

(Very drunk and loud now) I hate the people here. I hate the drinks. But most of all I hate this goddamn music. This ain't music. Give me Aretha Franklin any day. *(singing)* "Just a little respect. R.E.S.P.E.C.T." Yeah! Yeah!

Come on and dance your last dance with Miss Roj. Last call is but a drink away and each snap puts you one step closer to the end.

A high rise goes up. You can't get no job. Come on everybody and dance. A whole race of people gets trashed and debased. Snap those fingers

and dance. Some sick bitch throws her baby out the window 'cause she thinks it's the Devil. Everybody snap! *The New York Post*. Snap!

Snap for everytime you walk past someone lying in the street, smelling like frozen piss and shit and you don't see it. Snap for every crazed bastard who kills himself so as to get the jump on being killed. And snap for every sick muthafucker who, bored with carrying around his fear, takes to shooting up other people.

Yeah, snap your fingers and dance with Miss Roj. But don't be fooled by the banners and balloons 'cause, child, this ain't no party going on. Hell no! It's a wake. And the casket's made out of stone, steel, and glass and the people are racing all over the pavement like maggots on a dead piece of meat.

Yeah, dance! But don't be surprised if there ain't no beat holding you together 'cause we traded in our drums for respectability. So now it's just words. Words rappin'. Words screechin'. Words flowin' instead of blood 'cause you know that don't work. Words cracklin' instead of fire 'cause by the time a match is struck on 125th Street and you run to midtown, the flame has been blown away.

So come on and dance with Miss Roj and her demons. We don't ask for acceptance. We don't ask for approval. We know who we are and we move on it!

I guarantee you will never hear two fingers put together in a snap and not think of Miss Roj. That's power, baby. Patio pants and all. So let's dancel! And snap! And dance! And snap!

The Convert

Danai Gurira

Act 2. Scene 1. The late 1890s. The Lounge of Chilford Ndhlovu's home, in the Boomtown of Salisbury (Present day Harare, Zimbabwe).

"The room is modestly furnished, with great Victorian influence, though a very impoverished version." Jekesai-Ester, a Zimbabwean girl in her late teens with "an unavoidable keenness and resolve in her eye" has converted to Catholicism to escape an arranged marriage and she finds herself torn between the bloody cultural revolution of her people and her new found religious devotion. Jekesai-Ester and her cousin, Tamba, sit in the lounge, a large bible open before them on the coffee table. She eagerly tries to convert him to Christianity.

In this monologue, Tamba, who has secretly been involved in the revolutionary struggle for freedom, dismisses Jekesai-Ester's attempts at conversion and accuses her of becoming like the "whites" and abandoning her culture due to her recent decision to miss her father's traditional burial ceremony.

TAMBA: MARARA!!! At least then you would know who it is you are. Now you are lost. Forgetting the ways of your peopo. Loving on the whites. What good ara they doing eh? Bringing, this Jesas. You say he give and give till he die. What ara they giving eh? They ara teking end teking and you want to love them for that? I work in Beatrice mine, EVERY DAY they mek me work for little little money for what? Before they come, we neva work like this, for this thing, digging end digging rike our arms they are

not of our own. Onry digging for food for our families. Now we do what they say because we need these monies they bring to GIVE BEK TO THEM in the hut tex to live in a smar hut and they ara riving in the BIIIG houses they mek US buiud. Then they say—Oh—here is this God who is coming from they sky to mek you crean from a sin—you love on him end be heppy. Oh—and onry one wife for one men! End you love them? You ara a bafu end a fool cousin. This bafu and these whites; we ara not retting them to stay. End YOU, you must rememba who it is you are before too late. End I will NEVA want this (*picks up bible and throws it to the ground*) It is the poison of the white man. It kill the spirit of your forefather inside you. So now you ara empty and they can fir (*fill*) you with anything they want. NEVA. My name is Tambaoga Chiangawa Murumbira. CHETE. **[Only]**. That is my name. (*Turns to leave*) But you must watch yourself Jekesai—the people are not taking the white man's poison ENYMORE end you don't want to be with these ones when it come.

The Devil's Salt

France-Luce Benson

Act 2. Scene 3. Serge's home; a modest farm house in Borgne, Haiti. 1958

Serge Dechire, mid 30s, is a devoted husband and father struggling to support his family in the midst of political corruption and widespread poverty. When the play begins, Serge has given up his life's work and passion—working as a farmer—and accepted a position as a *Ton Ton Macoute* (President Duvalier's private Militia—eventually responsible for hundreds of human rights crimes). Serge accepted the job with high hopes, believing that this was his opportunity to climb up Haiti's socio-economic ladder and give his family a better life. However, he soon realizes that opportunity comes with a price. He grows increasingly uncomfortable with the things he is asked to do, and the guilt and pressure chip away at his sanity. But as a *Macoute*, he is sworn to secrecy and has no one to talk to about the inner turmoil he experiences.

In this scene, Serge has just returned home after participating in the torture of a prisoner. Worried about his mental health, his wife urges him to confide in her.

SERGE: We arrested a man in Port au Prince, several weeks ago, held him there in prison, until a few days ago, when we—we...

I do not even know what we were looking for, what they wanted from him. But he would not talk. He had no information. This was clear. They say he was planning a *coup d'etat*, but they had no evidence, en. He was a very

thin man, a small man, with gentle eyes, and a polite way of speaking. Even when they call him *gaga*, *makak*, piece of shit, devil—He never fight back. So a few days ago, I was asked to take him to a room. The stench was like the chicken coop after the rain. They tell me to close the door, then to tie his hands and his feet. One of the other officers had a bag, he turned it upside down and let the contents fall at his feet. At first, I did not realize what it was. But as I looked closer... They were decomposed, green, some still with fresh blood. I could see—a hand, a foot, an ear. The officer took his machete and chopped them up into smaller pieces. My job was to force and hold his mouth open as they stuffed it. They continued until he began to choke and vomit. Vomit and blood shot from his mouth, his nose. Finally they stopped. He was on the floor now, choking on human remains. And then the officer with the machete sliced his hand, spit, and casually walked out. The others followed. I had become sick, and I must have lost consciousness for a moment. When I opened my eyes again, everyone was gone, everyone but him. I can still hear him now. His last breath, begging, crying to be set free. I could not stand to watch him suffer like that, to hear the breath pushing to get out. So I took my knife and stab him in the chest. Just to set him free. I say a prayer for his soul, and I leave. I say to myself, *ce fini*. When I return home, I will burn my uniform and I will never return to Port Au Prince. *Fin!* But now, now they want me to... There is a man here, un *Agronome*, by the name of Edner Vil. *Un agronome, oui?* A man of the earth! What could he possibly? I have orders to *take care of him*. Un agronome! I can not take another life, en. I can still hear him. I can still smell his blood. I can't, but, but I was told that if I do not follow orders they will come here. They will hurt you, and the children. What must I do? En? Tell me, what I must do! Tell me!

Disgraced

Ayad Akhtar

Act I Scene I. Late Summer, 2011. A Spacious apartment on New York City's Upper East Side.

Disgraced is the story of Amir Kapoor, a successful Pakistani-American lawyer who is rapidly moving up the corporate ladder, while distancing himself from his cultural roots.

In this scene, Amir is being prodded by his nephew, Abe, and his Caucasian wife, Emily, to represent Imam Fareed, a Muslim man imprisoned under suspicion of collecting money through his Mosque to support Hamas. Imam Fareed is represented by two Jewish lawyers, but prefers a Muslim to be on his legal team. Amir thinks Imam Fareed is a bigot, and is not interested in representing him, particularly since Amir is himself not a practicing Muslim. When trying to explain to his nephew, Abe, why he strayed from the Islamic faith, Amir tells the story of his first crush from childhood, who happened to be Jewish.

AMIR: I was in sixth. Her name was Rivkah. ...Rivkah was the first girl I ever got up in the morning thinking about. One time she went away to Disney World for a week, and I was a *mess*. Didn't even want to go to school if I couldn't see her. She was a looker. Dark hair, dark eyes. Dimples. Perfect white skin... So Rivkah and I'd gotten to the point where we were trading notes. And one day, my mother found one of the notes. Of course, it was signed, Rivkah. *Rivkah?* my mom says. *That's a Jewish name.* (beat) I wasn't clear on what exactly a Jew was at the

time, other than they'd stolen land from the Palestinians, and something about how God hated them more than other people... I couldn't imagine God could have hated this little girl. So I tell my mom, *No, she's not Jewish*. But she knew she was Jewish. *If I ever hear that name in this house again, Amir, she said, I'll break your bones. You will end up with a Jew over my dead body.* Then she spat in my face... *That's so you don't ever forget*, she says. Next day? Rivkah comes up to me in the hall with a note. *Hi, Amir*, she says. Eyes sparkling. I look at her and say, *You've got the name of a Jew*. She smiles. *Yes, I'm Jewish*, she says. *(beat)* Then I spit in *her* face. ...So when my older sister goes on to you about *this way* and the *other way*, now you'll have a better idea of the *phase* I'm really going through... It's called *intelligence*.

The Doctor is Indian

Shane Sakhrani

Act 1. Scene 1. An upscale apartment in South Mumbai, India. Present day.

Anil Makhija, 27, has recently returned to India after a few years of working in the US to find his large, conservative joint family desperately needs to communicate with one another after suffering several setbacks. He wants to convince his family to go into an American style group therapy even though this completely goes against cultural norms.

In this opening monologue he addresses the audience to discuss the fundamental differences between American families (as he sees them on TV) and his own family.

ANIL: I am grateful for my life. I am grateful for my breath. I am grateful for my family. If your family is anything like mine, then television plays a very important role in your relationship with them. It's the only thing in the house that we all love unconditionally. In America, it's considered embarrassing to be living with your parents at the age of twenty-seven. I know this not only because I grew up watching 'Friends' and 'Seinfeld' but because I lived in America for two years. But here in India, not only do you never leave, you start bringing other people in with you. Your wife, your children. We call this tradition a joint family. Bollywood has always had two ways of portraying these families. *(A projection of a clip from 'Hum Saath Saath Hain.' A ridiculously happy family singing together on holiday.)* The first is of a family that has nothing but love and affection

for one another. Cheap sentiment. No drama, no conflict. These movies bore me to death. (*A projection of a TV serial where a character is being slapped to a triple zoom, with melodramatic music.*) The second is just as cringe worthy. This family has nothing but daggers drawn for each other. We don't have contrived story lines, ridiculous plot twists in real life. Real life is somewhere in the middle of cheap sentiment and cheap melodrama. My family is somewhere in the middle—too afraid to show love or hate for each other that we end up showing indifference. In the past few years, we all started eating at separate times and spending most of our nights in our rooms. If we do have something on our minds, we speak in Chinese whispers. For special events like the Royal Wedding or the cricket world cup, we gather in the living room to watch television. But even in those times, we're always silent. That's why I've come back from America. To break the silence.

The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity

Kristoffer Diaz

Early Act I. A wrestling ring. Present day.

Mace is a professional wrestler of Puerto Rican descent, born and raised in The Bronx, NY. His life dream has always been to be a professional wrestler. He's living that dream, though he knows that due to his relatively small size and less-than-movie-star looks, he'll never become a big star. In this monologue, Mace directly addresses the audience to explain exactly why he's okay with his place in the business.

MACE: And he's right. I am one of THE Wrestlers. I'm one of the really fucking good THE Wrestlers, and that means, unlike other jobs where when you get really good, you become a boss or a star or you get paid more, in wrestling being really fucking good—like really fucking better than like how good you think I'm gonna be from me telling you that I'm really fucking good—when you get really good at the wrestling part of the wrestling business, you're not rewarded. You're unrewarded. De-rewarded. De-warded?

Sorry.

Being really good at the wrestling part of the wrestling business means you make the other guy in the ring with you look better than he is, so you get in the ring with some guy who sucks, and he looks like he's kicking your ass, and the audience wants to see guys who can kick guys' asses, so that guy gets the applause, and then that guy gets the credit, and then the boss loves the job you did making that guy look like he

didn't suck, so you get to make the next guy who sucks look like he doesn't suck, because the more guys who don't suck the better for THE Wrestling because guys who don't suck sell t-shirts, but the problem with that is that while you're getting your ass kicked by guys who only look like they don't suck because you're making them look like they don't suck, the audience starts to think—guess what? *You're* the one who sucks. So then—and let's drop the metaphor cause I'm not really talking about you, but thank you for playing along—so then I go to the bottom in the minds of the boss because I'm losing so much, and as bad as I want to walk in to his corporate nightmare office and remind him that wrestling is *not a legitimate sporting event* and I am losing because *he is writing scripts that tell me to lose*, as bad as I want to tell my boss that, I don't tell him nothing.

Because it's actually a good job.

A dream job.

An Underoos-and-bootleg-Frosted-Flakes-on-the-floor daydream job.

And I'm happy to lose.

And I'm happy for the audience to tell me that I suck.

Because when I wake up in the morning, I don't even need an alarm clock.

And I don't mind that my knees hurt.

My hands hurt.

My everythings hurt.

I don't mind.

Because I'm one of THE Wrestlers.

And I'm in love with who I am.

Now I don't have no illusions about who I am though.

I am one of THE Wrestlers.

I am A THE Wrestler.

I am not THE THE Wrestler.

That's this guy.

El Nogalar

Tanya Saracho

Scene 9. Present Day. Northern Mexico.

El Nogalar (The Pecan Orchard) is a modern adaptation of Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* set on the regal but crumbling estate of Maite Galvan in the midst of the drug wars of Northern Mexico. Guillermo Lopez, once a servant in the estate's pecan orchard is now a wealthy entrepreneur and the estate's only hope for survival. He bears the burden of explaining the dire state of things to Maite upon her return to the family's home.

In this monologue Lopez is outside by a make-shift camp fire, out by the gate. He has just had a successful impromptu meeting with Maite and teacher-turned-drug lord, Pedro. There is a sea of bottles of Negra Modela and Pacifico and a barrel of tequila that the trio has consumed. He starts to put the bottles into a trashbag.

LOPEZ: See, this is good. (*Drinks from his beer*) This is progress. (*He waves away the smoke*) What is all they're burning over there? This is progress. We are not reduced to being fucking animals when we hold civilized, what, discourse. Civilized discourse. Maite has always been so civilized. (*Beat*) It's funny. When I was a kid, you wouldn't have dared to sit by a fire, out in the open criticizing the government. But now, nobody cares. What are they going to do to us? This government is a pack of toothless dogs now. Yeah, they can bark, but who are they going to bite? Those rabid wolves up on that mountain? I don't think so. (*Beat*)

"The world of men is a broken toy," like Pedro just said. Smart guy, that guy. I'm glad it's him they have on watch. It could have been anybody Chato put on Los Nogales. And in these times of the Four Horsemen. In these times, decent men turn into beasts. Beasts that have been watching you, waiting to descend to pillage and burn everything to ash. I've seen them do it. This place doesn't deserve that end. Am I the only one who still loves those trees? *(Beat)* My life is written out in the bark of those pecans. That orchard is the first thing I can remember. Me running around with no shoes, carrying those baskets of pecans back to the silos. *(Beat)*

Oh man, beer and tequila don't mix. *(a queasy moment)* When I was like, I don't know how old, old enough to feel like I was a full-grown man, my father gave me one of those beatings that break off a bit of your soul. The old man was taking out a whole day of frustrations on my back. Going at it hard as he could with that whip when out of no where Maite appears and pushes him off me. She gives him one hard slap on his leather face. She curses something at him and then drags me with her to the silos. She says "don't cry little man." I'm standing there in front of her, bleeding, shaking. And slowly, very slowly she takes off my shirt. Then she starts to hose me down. "Don't cry, little man," she says even when I had stop crying. *(Pause)* Shit, after that, I followed her like a puppy. Too old to be doing that and I know her parents had said something to her. Well, because she was just divorced and with a kid and well, it wasn't proper. But she didn't care and I didn't care. We went everywhere together. We... *(Beat)*

One day, I guess it was when her father found her the new husband. That day she took me from cracking pecans and... she just took me by the river to this little wall the bank makes. She'd been crying. She said "take off your clothes, little man." Oh man, I took off my pants so fast. Almost fell in the water. She starts laughing and takes off her dress. I have never... I have never seen something more beautiful in my whole life. With that light that day. With the sun on her. All of her just standing there. And me tangled on the ground with my fucking pants. She says "Stay there, little man. You can look at me, but you can't touch." So I freeze there. Looking.

For I don't know how long. Then she pulls her dress up and runs. She ran so fast, so fast that she left her sandals there. When I went up to the house to give them to her the next morning they said she was gone. That she'd gone off to live in Monterrey where she was going to be married. Just like that, they took her away from me. *(Pause)* Me and these trees, we're the only ones who remember. Right by that river there. Not far from the bank. "You can look, but you can't touch."

Lopez throws the trashbag down, which he's been holding. He fumbles for his keys and presses the keyless start. He stumbles off.

Fetch Clay, Make Man

Will Power

Act I. Scene 6. A stuffy, jam packed press conference on the eve of the big rematch between Muhammad Ali and Sonny Liston. Lewiston, Maine, 1965.

Lincoln Perry, the universally reviled actor who made famous the stereotypical “lazy black man” character known as Stepin Fetchit, is mysteriously summoned to the training camp of newly minted heavyweight champ Muhammad Ali. No one in the Champ’s entourage, including Perry himself, can imagine why the great and proud Ali would summon “Stepin Fetchit” to his side. Perry arrives to the training camp an old man, with his glory day behind him and his health fading fast. He longs for one last shot at redemption. Through a series of surprising turns, Perry finds himself at a press conference with the champ, and to his surprise Ali tells a room of reporters and TV cameras “I got the one and only Stepin Fetchit, here with me.” The reporters begin to laugh at Perry, and mockingly imitate his character’s minstrel antics. With his legacy on the line, The old comic actor gingerly steps to the microphone and addresses the hostile reporters.

STEPIN FETCHIT: You see me on the screen, but you don't understand what I was doin'. Now you go back, and look at them films, go look at 'em, go see how I made somethin' from nothin'. You wanna talk about Malcolm X? You wanna talk about Dr. King? I was the first Negro militant (*The press laughs at the suggestion*). No, no don't you...listen to me! I defied

white supremacy. There was no white man's idea a' making a Negro picture star. I was the first of my race to receive a screen credit. In Hollywood we were seen but never heard, faces with no names. I fought hard to get us a name, and in doin' so proved that Negroes were equal. And I made some sacrifices but...but let me say this right now. I'm more than Stepin Fetchit. My name is Lincoln. Lincoln Perry. And you wanna call me an Uncle Tom? Well if I am, then that's a great compliment. 'Cause Tom was a good man, and the world's first integrationist. So go 'head call me an Uncle Tom, it don't do nothin' to me, it makes me proud. See now the one you talkin' about who really sold us out, that would be little black Sambo. With his eyes popped out, forever scared, forever a boy. Well I ain't no boy. And I ain't never been no Sambo.

Fires in the Mirror

Anna Deavere Smith

"101 Dalmations" George C. Wolfe

Anna Deavere Smith's one-woman play *Fires in the Mirror* is one of a series of works from her *On the Road* project, which utilizes interview theater techniques to probe conflicts or themes within a specific community. *Fires in the Mirror* examines the controversy surrounding the 1991 Crown Heights riots in Brooklyn, New York, between blacks and Hasidic Jews. In the first section of the play, entitled "Identity," she prefaces the riots with perspectives of a number of people, famous and unknown, black and white, Jewish and gentile, who engage the issue of racial and cultural identity.

The setting for this interview with director/playwright George C. Wolfe was "The Mondrian Hotel in Los Angeles. Morning. Sunny. A very nice room. George is wearing denim jeans, a light blue denim shirt and white leather tennis shoes. His hair is in a ponytail. He wears tortoise/wire spectacles. He is drinking tea with milk. The tea is served on a tray, the cups and teapot are delicate porcelain. George is sitting on a sofa, with his feet up on the coffee table."

GEORGE C. WOLFE: I mean I grew up on a black—
a one-block street—
that was black.
My grandmother lived on that street
my cousins lived around the corner.

I went to this
Black—Black—
private Black grade school
where
I was extraordinary.
Everybody there was extraordinary.
You were told you were extraordinary.
It was very clear
that I could not go to see *101 Dalmations* at the Capital
Theatre
because it was segregated.
And at the same time
I was treated like I was the most extraordinary creature
that had
been born.
So I'm on my street in my house,
at my school—
and I was very spoiled too—
so I was treated like I was this special special creature.
And then I would go beyond a certain point
I was treated like I was insignificant.
Nobody was
hosing me down or calling me nigger.
It was just that I was insignificant.
(Slight pause)
You know what I mean so it was very clear of
(Teacup on saucer strike twice on "very clear")
where my extraordinariness lived.
You know what I mean.
That I was extraordinary as long as I was Black.
But I am—not—going—to place myself
(Pause)
in relationship to your whiteness.
I will talk about your whiteness if we want to talk about that.
But I,
but what,

that which,
what I—
what am I saying?
My blackness does not resist—ex—re—
exist in relationship to your whiteness.

(Pause)

You know

(Not really a question, more like a hum)

(Slight pause)

it does not exist in relationship to—

it exists

it exists.

I come—

you know what I mean—

like I said, I, I, I,

I come from—

it's a very complex,

confused,

neurotic,

at times destructive

reality, but it is completely

and totally a reality

contained and, and,

and full unto itself.

It's complex.

It's demonic.

It's ridiculous.

It's absurd.

It's evolved.

It's all the stuff.

That's the way I grew up.

(Slight pause)

So that therefore—

and then you're White—

(Quick beat)

And then there's a point when,

and then these two things come into contact.

Godiva Dates and One Night Stands

Regie Cabico

Act 3. Scene 4. A Gay Bar in Dupont Circle, Washington, DC. July.
Present. A Gay Male of Color, preferably Filipino-American

In this autobiographical solo play, the narrator chronicles various dating encounters. In this scene, he has told the audience of a flirtatious man he met at a poetry open mic. He is "a white lawyer from New Orleans, who reads poetry, gardens and kite surfs. He can carry me in a thunderstorm like Batman." After admitting his shyness in asking men out, the narrator makes a brazen move to tell him of his affection at a bar when the white guy's former lover, who is Puerto Rican, interrupts the seduction and steals the lawyer. In this soliloquy, the narrator tries to regain his composure and his dignity after feeling cheated of a summer romance and possibly a potential husband.

REGIE: He's gonna fuck him.
I can taste it. Why did we meet
at a bar? And why am I
one of two Brown guys
in competition for a White guy
Oh yeah, they fucked
a year ago. My fingers
unfurl to Wolverine claws.
Another Oriental diva
stabs herself in the breast.
I'm a brown fucking swan

& my understudy
 is another colonized
 US territory. May there be
 fireworks & fury to be
 celebrated in their
 tongues. An atomic beehive
 fills my head. If I grabbed
 his crotch this would be
 over. Puerto Rican guy
 did Not. Just. Grab. His.
 Crotch. My body eats
 the audacity. I reach for
 my Captain Morgan
 & Orange Juice & slam it
 down on the bar like a shard
 of sunrise. Maybe he's
 in love with him. Maybe
 he's not. And when he's
 done studying for his law
 exam he will flash
 his gumbo smile. He'll bury
 his Cajun eyes in my skin.
 All his tricks drift
 down a bayou. Orpheus rises
 & can't believe this shit.
 He plays *Send In The Clowns*
 on his lyre. He really is gonna
 fuck him. Puerto Rican
 lives in Logan Circle. I hope
 his air conditioning breaks
 in the storm. May
 the electricity be damned
 in Logan Circle. Everybody's
 lived through what I'm going
 through. I'm not afraid
 of comparisons. I know

who I am. I'm kind,
 I'm smart & I'm important.
 I did not just quote
 Viola Davis from *The Help*.
 Oh army of black women
 inside me give me the power
 to be fierce: Nina Simone,
 belt me a new dawn,
 Tina Turner give me the legs
 to strut Proud Mary
 on the cruisey asphalt,
 & this is for asian guyz
 who have considered suicide
 when the guy you thought
 would be your summer
 romance leaves you
 for another brown guy
 like a bag of hot skittles
 on the dance floor. We were
 gonna have jumbalaya
 & chicken adobo, bring back
 Little Manila from
 the wreckage. This love affair
 was gonna be a miraculous
 loving that would hold the levees
 & take back the oil spills. But no,
 he picked the crotch grabbing
 slut he fucked last year. Mermaids
 sing Hans Christian
 Andersen sea chanteys
 in my tears. & day is rising
 like a shroud around
 a death-stricken heart.

The Gospel of Lovingkindness

Marcus Gardley

Present Day, Chicago, IL.

Emmanuel, 17, African American.

The Gospel of Lovingkindness is a play that examines the role of grief, hope and activism in the aftermath of a homicide in the South Side of Chicago. The 90-minute drama details the journey of two mothers (one who is the parent of the slain, and the other, who is the mother of the assailant.) What dream for the future can be realized when they come together in the end, or does the future look as bleak as the number of deaths?

In this monologue, Emmanuel sports the brand new "bright red, Nike Varsity Air Jordan high tops with the ankle straps and signature on the back heel" that he begged his mother for. He will later be shot and killed over these shoes. He speaks to his ma.

EMMANUEL: Check me out now, ma? I'm fly ain't I? I got a shine like mop and glow. Don't shake your head. You know I know you know. Let me back up. Let me get on the flo. Show you what these shoes can do.

(He slides like James Brown.)

Yeah, I can't take credit though. It's the shoes. They make me dance; they make my legs move. These Air Jordans got me walkin on clouds, livin high as the sky is blue.

(He looks in the mirror.)

Oh, shit. See the way it brings out my skin tone. How it arches my back, puffs up my chest, lifts my chin. I was fine before but now I'm refined, I'm distinguished. If these shoes are wrong I don't want to be righteous. Ma, I think I'm in love. With myself. Look at that way I sit.

(He sits in mid air, crosses one leg.)

I don't even need a seat. These shoes give me assets. I don't need nowhere for my ass to sit, I can do anything on my feet. I can moonwalk, I can electric slide, I can sweep. Hip and Hop. I can break dance without a beat. Shiiiiiiiiit. I'm so clean, I'm getting ready to clean up the streets. Move over Denzel. Your act is up. I'm getting ready to cut up.

(He takes off a shoe, holds it like an award.)

First of all I want to thank God above. For blessing me with a momma who bends over backwards to get her son some shoes. I don't know what you did ma. But whatever you did, I know it wasn't easy. You always seein about me and I'm a do you proud now. I'm make these shoes last. I won't get em dirty, wear em out, or let nobody step on them. I promise you that. In fact, I'm not going to ask you for no new shoes for at least another year or...let's say a half. And at the risk of making you pissed or rockin the boat. Can I interest you in buying me a new coat?

Gun Club (excerpt from the play Ameriville written by Universes)

William Ruiz aka Ninja

This monologue is a parody of a Public Service Announcement featuring multiple characters played by one actor: Pito is mid-20s Latino; Mac 10 is African American; Announcer mid 40s White; and Baby Momma, unspecified.

A modern day variety show, *Ameriville* branches out from stories of post-Katrina New Orleans to the rest of the United States, giving voice to disenfranchised groups and articulating not just the difficulties, but also the underlying strength within America.

ANNOUNCER: For a limited time only,
Your Friendly Neighborhood Gun Club has got an exclusive offer.
NRA approved firearms licenses for you, and your family.
No gun necessary.
Just come on down to the *Hood Gat Society*
on the corner of Smith & Wesson.
Inquire within.
We have a large selection of Kalashnikov,
Remington 870's, Colt, Beretta, Desert Eagle.
AND THAT'S NOT ALL!
Given the nation's growing crime rate
NOW! is the time to defend your home
MAC 10: Picture yourself and your family chillin' 20 deep,
with 9's and AK's,

Just sittin' in the living room
watching America's funniest Home Videos
When suddenly who kicks down yo mama's front door?
ANNOUNCER: Burglars, rapists, DEBT COLLECTORS
MAC 10: See how many buckshots you could bust off
when it's time to duck.
ANNOUNCER: The buck stops here!
PITO: My name's Pito.
I've been busting caps for a minute now,
you know,
tryin' to get good with the gat.
I figure, if crazy looking rednecks with green teeth
are allowed to own guns, why can't we?
At least I got my G.E.D.
ANNOUNCER: No more burglars breaking and entering.
No more pesky bullies beating your children in school.
No baby momma screaming...
BABY MOMMA: Get yo' sorry ass back in the house, right now!
ANNOUNCER: Just you, and your boys,
In the hood,
WITH GUNS!
No bank, no credit, no problem.
Apply today
MAC 10: Cause when you're armed to the teeth in your sleep,
your target's guaranteed to become Swiss cheese.
ANNOUNCER: Having problems with your math teacher?
Tired of mom's new boyfriend touching your stuff?
Tired of Muslims, Christians, Eskimos?
Done with teenagers running up in your school
shooting up the place, and you without a gun?
Arm yourself today!
PITO: It ain't right man.
These hooligans are running around, burg-a-larizing my shit.
Well that's shit's over!
I'm taking full advantage of my American rights
by defending my home.

ANNOUNCER: It's better to have a gun and not need it,
than to need a gun and not have it.

MAC 10: It's time to exercise your constitutional right to bare arms,
and flare arms whenever you fear harm.
(Gunshots ring out)

PITO: Yo, you saw that?
That dude was trying to steal my mail!
Ah, he's the mail man?

ANNOUNCER: Never be caught off guard.
Call 1.800.jushoot.
That's 800.587.4668.
Arm yourself today!

PITO: Yeah. Be a patriot.

MAC 10: Come down to the Hood Gat Society 1st precinct.
Together we'll decide which murder weapon's right for you.
Ask for me, Mac 10.
I'm not only a client,
I'm the buckin' president.

ANNOUNCER: Friendly Neighborhood Gun Club is not a licensed dealer
or manufacturer.
Background check required. Some restrictions apply. See
local advertising. (Sung) "We just want you to shoot!"

Hold These Truths

Jeanne Sakata

The University of Washington Campus in Seattle, Washington.
March, 1942.

In March of 1942 in Seattle, a few months after the sudden bombing of Pearl Harbor and the subsequent declaration of war by the United States on Japan, Gordon Hirabayashi, a idealistic and adventurous Japanese American Quaker Nisei student at the University of Washington, hears the announcement of government orders for a curfew which is aimed exclusively at the Japanese American community. Gordon, deeply proud of his American citizenship, privately objects to the curfew as unjust, "embarrassing" and "offensive." Nevertheless, he initially feels he has no choice but to comply with the orders.

In this monologue, Gordon hurriedly leaves his friends every night, dashing back from the library or coffee shop to his YMCA dormitory to make the 8:00 pm curfew, nevertheless struggling mightily with his decision.

GORDON: In March: an announcement from General John DeWitt, head of the Western Defense Command.

"There will be a curfew. All enemy aliens, or German, Italian and Japanese nationals, will remain inside their homes between 8:00 pm and 6:00 am, and are forbidden to travel outside of a five-mile radius..."

"..and this curfew will *also* apply to 'non-aliens of Japanese ancestry.'"

"What the heck...who?"

(Gordon anxiously scans a notice.)

"Non-aliens...Non-aliens of Japanese ancestry." Someone who *isn't* an alien, someone who was born *here*, but *is* of Japanese ancestry...

The Nisei. *Us.Me.*

It's... embarrassing. *Offensive.* The President, now totally consumed with the war effort, is giving the War Department more authority over our future. And they're singling us out. German and Italian Americans aren't subject to the curfew...only us. And rather than the government admitting that, they're hiding behind this... this stupid...

(Gordon picks up his books, then sits down to study.)

But when the curfew is announced, I never think to question it. And all my dormmates from the Y become my volunteer timekeepers.

We're studying at the coffeeshop and all of a sudden José yells out,

"Hey, Gordie. Five to eight."

"Five to eight? *Heck.*"

(He picks up his books and dashes a lap around the stage.)

And I grab my books, throw on my coat, papers spilling over my arm, and hurry back to Eagleson Hall, waving to other Nisei who were scurrying like ants to make it back. And every night is more of the same, till one night in the library...

"Oh, Gordie... *five to eiiigghht...*"

"Five to eight...shoot."

(Gordon repeats the lap. Sound cue: rain falling.)

I dash out into the pouring rain. Down the stairs, the courtyard. If I run, I'll just make it. Past the fountain and the flagpole, with the flag drooping in the fog.

The flag.

(Gordon slows to a stop. He takes a long beat, staring up at the flag.)

And then this question hits me.

Why the hell am I running back?

(A swift head turn to look back at the library.)

I was born here. *Raised* here. I'm an American *citizen.* And some of my dormmates... *(Increasingly agitated.)*

I mean, Jose is from the *Philippines.* And Frank is *British* and Wang *Chinese.* But *they're* still at the library. And here *I* am, scrambling like the dickens, just to get back to the...

"Goooordie!"

I turn around. Some guys from Phi Kappa Phi.

"Hey! Gordie! Eight o'clock! Time to go *BEDDIE-BYYYYYE!*"

(They howl. Sound cue: bell tower chimes. Bong, bong, bong...)

"Hey Gord. Snap out of it. Criminy, you *DEAF?!'*"

"See you later, fellas."

My friends stare as I turn around and head back to the library. Across the courtyard, up the stairs, down the corridor to the left...

I open the door.

"Hey fellas. I'm back."

Eleven heads pop up.

"Gord!" "Gordie!" "What the hell are you doing?"

"What are *YOU* doing, Howie? Here. Now. What are all of you doing?"

"We're...we're studying."

(Gordie sits with determination.)

"Yeah...? Well I am too."

How the World Became Small

Harrison David Rivers

"and he was there, across from me..." is from a collection of monologues that explore love, lust, relationships and public transportation in urban environments. It is the final monologue in the cycle.

MAN can be of almost any age, but it is perhaps best if he is 18–36. He can be of any cultural background. The character is gay.

In the monologue, MAN addresses the audience, relaying the story of an intimate evening that has its start in a subway car.

MAN: And he was there, across from me on the train, this guy

And he smiled at me

Like...

(he demonstrates)

And he was hot, like incredibly hot... so I smiled back

And we rode uptown that way, smiling at each other from across the aisle, around the various commuting bodies, over the tops of our respective reading materials

And it was nice

It felt really nice

And we got to my stop, and I stood up to get off the train

And he looked at me like

Don't go

Like

Don't leave me alone here on the train with all these people

And I wouldn't have normally, you know... I don't normally... I'm not that kind of person usually... but... there was something about his face... his eyes... his mouth...

And I didn't have plans that night so... I sat back down
And the doors opened and they closed
And I stayed on the train until he got off, way uptown
And I followed him out of the station and down the street to his apartment where he put

on "Into the Woods"

My favorite Sondheim musical

And undressed me while Bernadette Peters sang

"Yr not good, yr not bad, yr just nice"

My favorite Sondheim lyric

And then he undressed himself

And he touched my face, my cheek, here

(he touches his cheek)

And he said, kiss me

And I did

And he kissed me back and we kissed... each other

And...

And then we fucked on the couch, him, then me, then him again...

And it was good

It was really good

And when we were done he held me

And he asked me to stay

And I said, I can't, I have a cat and she hasn't eaten all day

And he said, it's just one night, feed her in the morning

And that...

(beat)

That's when I knew that we would probably never fuck again

And he said, don't go

And I think he probably meant it

I think he probably really did want me to stay

Which is... well, it was nice

But I didn't
Stay, I mean
I got dressed
And I left
I hopped the train back downtown to my stop
Singing my second favorite Sondheim lyric to myself
"Sometimes the things you most wish for are not to be touched"
(Amazing how relevant musical theater can sometimes be)
I walked home
I fed Eunice, who was really happy to see me
And then I went to bed
I fed Eunice and I went to bed.

I am a Man

Marcus Gardley

Spit One. Yesterday, Anywhere, USA.

Black Youth, 16. Character speaks to anyone who will listen.

I am a Man is a three-spit triptych written originally for Center Stage's *My America* series in which playwrights were asked to write short pieces that expressed their thoughts about life in the United States. This first spit is a final will and testament that a young person gives after he is murdered. It is a eulogy of sorts and/or a plea.

BLACK YOUTH: Soon and very soon I will be dead. A second ago, I was shot in the back by a police officer or a rival gang member or a stray bullet or a trigger-happy neighbor on neighborhood watch. In the end, it doesn't matter what or who killed me because their race or verdict won't bring me back to life. I just want you to know before I bleed to death, that I don't want to be your victim. I want my death to save a life. So don't be sad, don't simply give my momma money to feed your bleeding heart, instead... please... I beg you... get angry. Get angry enough to act. Harass and make demands from your mayor, your congressperson—your president until they feel the weight of your rage. March for me in streets stained with my blood and let pyres of guns and bullets burn on corners to light my vigil. Then, if you have some faith left, scream my name to a loving God until the earth trembles, until your voice box cracks inside your throat or at least until one night goes by in this country where another black youth

does not become a casualty on the evening news. Look at me. I am worth a million stars. I am not a face hidden in a hoodie, a ruffian with a rebellious past, a rap lyric, a hustler hanging with the wrong crowd, a hoodlum with his pants down to his knees, a crack head or a felon. Look deeper. I am NOT your greatest fear. Look me in the eyes. I am a Man.

Icarus

Edwin Sánchez

Act I. Evening.

A beach in a very posh section of the coast. There is a deserted mansion behind them and a few occupied ones in the distant.

Beau, a young man in a ski mask, has been crashing with Altagracia, a horribly disfigured young woman and her brother, Primitivo, who even though disabled Altagracia has convinced is destined for glory. She gets Primitivo to swim everyday by convincing him that someday he will reach out and touch the sun and become a star. Beau, at first ridicules them but slowly finds himself falling in love with Altagracia. Once Beau removes his mask Altagracia sees that he is actually heartbreakingly beautiful. While she and her brother both want Beau to leave, he wants to stay with them.

In this monologue, Beau finally reveals to Altagracia why he is unworthy of his own beauty.

BEAU: I had this plan of going to Hollywood to be discovered. So me and my brother stole the family car and took off. Hey, with my looks how could I miss? We were driving on some back road in Texas and I'm massaging Phillip's neck when this jeep pulls up alongside us and I hear someone yell "Faggot!" and this beer bottle comes flying at us. Phillip floors it, turns off the lights and tries to lose them. All the time I'm thinking, "Wait a second, we're not gay. We're brothers. This is a mistake." They force us off

the road and drag us out of the car. They shine a flashlight in Phillip's face, then mine. And like an idiot I smile. Hey, my smile was always my secret weapon. Somebody punches me in the stomach and Phillip screams to leave me alone. So they hold me down and beat him. Take out a baseball bat and beat him. They make me kiss the bat with my brother's blood. And I do. 'Cause I was afraid. 'Cause I was...am a coward. See, that's something you would never have done. You would have let them kill you. You would have found a way to save your brother. I see Phillip die and when they're done with him the gang leader takes my face in his hands. So gently. "Don't cry, you can do better, you're so beautiful," then he spits in my face and they scatter leaving me to me. My brother lies dead, while you promise yours the sun. See how your eyes fooled you? See how I'm even less than you thought I was?

I Land

Keo Woolford

Schoolyard. Honolulu, Hawaii. Last day of school as a high school senior.

In this monologue, the actor gives a "play-by-play" account of an incident that happened during his days as a troubled youth and sports jock. Hawaii in the 70s/80s was on a wave of a new Hawaiian renaissance, cultural pride and protestation against colonization. To some, the last day of school was considered a day when that anger and aggression was taken out on Caucasian students, also known as "Kill Haole Day." The act itself, like any hate crime, tells more about the character than anything else. After this dark moment in the play, the actor receives severe consequences, but also a realization that helps him find himself and his identity as a young man growing up in modern Hawaii.

KEO: Students come flooding out of the halls, ripping up their school uniforms, throwing books in the air. But no haoles. The white kids all know better. But then, as if manna from heaven, Billy McFairlane, the one haole kid who didn't get the memo not to come to school that day, walks out of the doors and "onto the playing field." We kick off and Billy receives the ball. The announcer's voice blares through the speakers. "And Billy takes off down the stairs and through the parking lot. Samson charges in from the left. Kolo from the right. Billy fades away and zig-zags through two cars. What a move! Bruddah and Keo hang in the backfield. Moku sneaks up the center. And there he goes! Billy makes his move and out dashes Moku. Man, that Billy has never looked better. He actually looks like he's running for his life! He fakes left, right, spins and

out-maneuvers Samson and Kolo, leaving them dazed and confused. But he hasn't seen Bruddah and Keo yet. Oh no. Look out, Billy. Keo has him trapped behind a tree!" I can feel his breath on my face as I push him up against the tree. "I got you now, you fuckin' haole. You piece of shit." He's terrified like he's being held at gunpoint. And then I stop. I stop and think, "What has this guy done? What has poor Billy McFairlane ever done to deserve this? He's just a student trying to graduate like the rest of us. Tennis player, swimmer, honor roll. And here we are hunting him down like we're sharks and he's crying. Wishing he was safe at home with his mom and dad." And then I grab his shirt...and I blast him. And again, and again and again. He's not even moving. Bruddah catches up to me. He pushes me and says, "Ho, you frickah. I wanted fo' bless 'em. Why you nevah let me do 'em?" I hear police sirens getting closer as we all truck it out of there. Moku, Kolo, Samson and Bruddah are all slapping high fives, yelling as they sprint down the gully behind the school. After our close call with the police, we all get piss drunk at Bruddah's house. When I finally drive home, I can't get out of the car. I can't even move because I keep seeing the look in Billy's eyes right before he goes down.

In Bloom

Gabriel Jason Dean

In 2006, Aaron, an American documentary filmmaker, goes to the Hindu Kush in Afghanistan where he plans to make a film about the sudden rise of the opium trade post-Taliban. During the shoot, Aaron encounters bacha bazi (literally translated "boy play")—an ancient Afghan tradition in which young boys dress in women's clothing and dance for wealthy warlords at parties. Afterwards, the boys are prostituted to the highest bidder. When Aaron meets Hafiz, a young and beautiful bacha bi reesh (beardless boy), he buys him, hoping to protect him. But Aaron's good intentions become personal and the lines of east and west begin to blur.

This monologue occurs not long after Aaron purchases Hafiz. As Aaron tries to interview him, Hafiz plays a sensual game of cat and mouse, which annoys Aaron who simply wants information. When Aaron blurts out, "You're a victim, Hafiz. You do know that, don't you?" Hafiz responds with this monologue.

HAFIZ: Turn off the lights.
I teach you the dance.
It is best in the dark.
You will not be shy.
Trust me.
I am a good teacher.
(Hafiz begins to clap out a ¾ beat.)
Stand up straight.
This is rhythm.

One two three. One two three.

Clap it.

Yes. Hear the rhythm—one, two, three—in your head.

Begin in the chest.

Most think the hips. No.

The burden of the dance lives in the chest.

The heart's cage.

Move the chest from side to side. Straight.

Now you.

Dancing means moving.

Close your eyes. Now in your mind, see a line... and on this line, this thin string, your heart walks dangerously above the crowd.

Good. This is good.

Now move the head. The brain.

Opposite the heart—like so.

(Hafiz demonstrates. It's beautiful.)

This takes...more than you have.

But practice and maybe.

Hear the rhythm. One, two, three.

Feel the pull between heart and brain—heart...open like the flower in bloom speaking yes yes yes—and brain...a heavy diamond, balancing on the tip, ready to fall, saying no no no, and you catch it just as...you see?

(Hafiz claps.)

Do not listen to brain—no no no. Hear the heart—yes yes yes.

Keep going! Balance the flower and the diamond.

(As Aaron mucks it up, Hafiz comes behind him, takes Aaron's hands, lifts them. Aaron is frozen, whispering into his ear)

Now lift the hands.

Hands are ears for Allah.

Raise them and turn them at the wrist, turn like a question to your maker... you ask... am I worthy? Am I worthy?

And God whispers golden—yes yes yes.

(Aaron breaks away.)

You will stop so soon?

The dance is a quest to unfold yourself.

The opposite of prayer—when we fold our bodies.

(dancing)

And last, the feet.

The columns to hold the head and heart.

They spin, left over right. Slow, but then they spin into the ground, harder and harder, knocking dust off, clanging bells, saying I am here, you *will* see me, you *must* see me.

And then they get lost in the spin—over and over—while the hands listen for answers and the heart walks on the line and the brain tries not to fall.

(Hafiz dances fully. Aaron is transfixed. Hafiz finishes with a flourish, his beating heart close to Aaron. For a moment, they are suspended and something uncoils.)

I am a good teacher, yes?

Now you understand the dance, brother Aaron.

Now you understand its power. Do not tell me I am a victim.

In the Continuum

Nikkole Salter

Scene 9. A popular restaurant in Los Angeles, CA, 2004.

In the Continuum is a play of parallel stories that follows two women—Nia in Los Angeles, CA, USA, and Abigail in Harare, Zimbabwe—over the course of one weekend from the moment they receive news of their pregnancy and HIV+ status, to their first moment of attempted disclosure. In this monologue Miss Keysha (aka Keyshawn)—a transgender African American male in his early twenties—responds to his younger cousin Nia's request for advice with respect to her new pregnancy.

MISS KEYSHA: *(to the waiter)* No, the water is fine. But could you bring some lemon. And sugar. No, I don't want lemonade. Did I ask for lemonade? If I wanted lemonade I would order lemonade. Thank you.

(to Nia) Okay. So, should you have his baby? Should you have his baby? Should a dope fiend in a crack house run from the police? Hell yeah, you should have his baby.

(to himself) What's takin' him so long. *(to the waiter)* Waiter!

(to Nia) No, I don't, Nia. I really don't see what the dilemma is. It's not like you got pregnant by some ole, dirty, jerry curl juicy, gold-tooth pimp. It ain't like you don't know who the daddy is. We talkin' Darnell Smith. Darnell Smith. The crem de la crem. Do you know how many girls pokin' needles in condoms tryin'ta have his baby. And here you sit, on the come-up like Mary pregnant with Jesus, talkin' 'bout should you have his baby. Have Miss Keysha taught you nothin'? What else you gonna do? That's Darnell

Smith's baby and everybody know Darnell Smith. And these recruiters is lickin' his anus tryin' to get him to go to they school. I'm talking UCLA, Notre Damé. Indian-I-A, all of 'em. And you know what's gonna happen when he get outta school. He goin' straight to the NBA. Do you know what that mean? Do you know what that mean? That mean you... we about to be set for life. For LIFE. I'm talkin' Malibu mansion. Mercedes Benz. SL class on Sprewells! I'm talkin' Louis Vetton luggage...no, no, no. Real Louis Vetton luggage. VIP parties, backstage passes...hold on. *(he has an orgasm)* Ooooo! I can't believe I gave him to you. He was right on the line, he coulda went either way, either way. I was the one introduced ya'll when you was eight cuz I was tired of you followin' me around. Uhh huh. Those were my dark days of darkness—before I became the fine specimen you see before you. We was all stayin' wit Auntie Gina—all of us up in that one room; and her makin' me take you with me when I went out, knowin' you would tell if I did somethin' wrong. Why you think I'd have you to go play with Darnell? To get yo' nosey ass out my business. Who knew Darnell would end up a damn star? He about to be so rich. I shoulda went ahead and did him then, with his little eight year old pee pee. *(acting out what that might look and sound like)* Speakin' of pee-pee. I gotta go tinkle.

(to himself) Where is my water and lemons. Where is the damn complimentary bread? I tell you, that waiter got three mo' minutes—

(to Nia) Stop lookin' so sad. You not dyin', the world ain't over. You ain't the first one to end up pregnant. You should be happy! 'Cuz, you rollin' in the game with the big dogs now WOOF, WOOF! But let me warn you: this is not high school—these girls will be after Darnell and these bitches is ruthless. Don't trust none of 'em. They would fuck yo' man and yo' daddy in the same day. I've seen it happen: sports will turn these men into fools, but it'll turn women into...—Halle Berry in 'Jungle Fever': *(mocking)* "Can I suck yo' dick? No? Uh, can I suck yo' dick? Anybody dick? Everybody dick?" Just wait 'til he get a little money, a little more fame—I already see that nigga every weekend with his hand indiscriminately placed between somebody's legs. And them girls! Please! They love it. Well, they may cum, but they will go cuz they ain't shit to him. You got his baby. You stayin'. But it won't be easy. 'Cuz he'll be out with two, three of 'em at the same time every night and won't think nothin' of it. Then he'll bring

you back some nastiness, his PR person will get involved and the next thing you know, you readin' about how you tried to give it to him to bribe him outta some money or somethin'. Hell yeah, we want to be paid and pampered, but not enough to be catchin' no STD. You remember my roommate Monica?

Monica. You know, (*imitates Monica sucking her thumb*)
Yeah her.

(*with discretion*) She had Chlamydia. Girl, yes! Walkin' around with it, thought it was a damn yeast infection. By the time she asked me to help her to the clinic, she couldn't even walk. And when she got there they said she had waited so long it turned into P-I-D—Pussy in Distress, yes. She got that shit from Jerry—that muthafucka didn't even know he had it. He coulda been walkin' around with herpes, shit, AIDS and not even know it. Of course she was afraid to tell him! I had to confront his punk ass and you know what he said? He said, "I don't know whatchu talkin' 'bout. That's on her," like she gave it to herself. That nigga was on the DL, had Chla-my-di-a and he was still tryin' to make it seem like it was all on her. Like she did it like all by herself. How you even do that? What, you be like (*she imitates what giving herself a sexually transmitted disease would look like*)—Okay, okay, okay. The point is this: These men don't give a fuck about you. All you are to them is a piece of ass. And I'ma be damned if I'ma let my cousin get used up and then end up with nothin'. If you're givin' it up, then you best believe he givin' it up too. And you sho' ain't havin' no babies for free. That is not prostitution, that's called takin' care-a you. I mean, look-atcha mama! She dated some first class Negroes, had they baby, but still couldn't pay her rent. The last thing you wanna be is some hood-rat, baby-mama, walkin' around with cold sores and house shoes; buyin' government cheese with food stamps when yo' baby daddy in the N-B fuckin' A, and playin' husband to some other bitch and her kids. Then who the one lookin' stupid? Now, at least if you his wife, you get half, even if he divorce your ass; even if you do get Chlamydia. Then, whatever way it go, you won't never have to worry about money, and can do whatever the fuck you wanna do. Write your poetry, be Maya Angelou, whatever.

Listen to me: Don't let that boy out your sight. Remind him that you was the one at his games before anybody knew his name. Tell his mama you carrying his baby. Mmm-hum. Naw, go 'head, make it a family affair. Didn't you say you met her at they family picnic?

See! She probably already like you! And once you have her, it don't matter what he say. Don't stop 'til you get keys to the crib and a ring on that finger! Should you have his baby...how else you gon' pay me back for all the shit I did for you? Nia, havin' a baby is a blessing. I mean, think about it. I look better than all ya'll heifers put together, but I cannot have a baby out my ding-a-ling.

Whatever you do, I'ma always be your cousin, but remember, we already live in hell. Don't do nothin' so you have to spend eternity there too. God gave you that baby. That baby is yo' ticket out. (*she exits*)

Jesus Hopped the A-Train

Stephen Adly Guirgis

Act 2 Scene 2. Visitation Area: Rikers Island.

Angel Cruz, 30s, is a bike messenger from NYC who lost his best friend, Joey, to a religious cult. The play begins with his second night in jail, awaiting trial for shooting the cult leader. Mary Jane Hanrahan is Angel's weary but tenacious public defender.

In the scene leading up to this monologue, Mary Jane prepares Angel for his day in court. They debate on if a conviction would be God's plan for Angel's life and he shares this story.

ANGEL: We useta, me and Joey, we useta sneak out our house on Sunday nights, jump the turnstiles. And we would hop down onto the subway tracks, walk through the tunnels, lookin' for shit, makin' adventures, playin' like we was G. I. Joes... Pick up a empty can a Hawaiian Punch or some ol' beer bottle for fake walkie-talkies, and we'd have our snow boots on so we could be astronauts. And we would pretend we were the last two survivors on earth and that we came from the future... stupid... the future... like in that Planet of the Apes movie with the two guys? Only we had no weapons, juss chocolate milk. And we'd get so lost in our games and our discoveries and our made-up stories... so many stories: lookin' for ghosts, lookin' for apes, lookin' for fortunes, runnin' from rats, talkin' 'bout girls, talkin' 'bout Thelma from Good Times, talkin' 'bout day-dreams, talkin' 'bout Bruce Lee versus Evel Knievel, talkin' in words that wasn't even words... and... and it would always surprise us when we saw

the lights... even though we could feel the train coming, but it was the lights. The closer those lights came, rumble of the tracks, sound a the conductor's horn blarin' at us, we'd get so excited we'd freeze—two seconds of freezin' cold... hypnotized... holdin' hands, waitin', waitin', then: Bang! We'd jump off the rails, hug the wall, climb back up the platform, start runnin'—runnin'—tearin' ass clear across town back to Riverside or Cherry Park. One time... one particular time, when we was holdin' hands right before we jumped off the rails, somethin' happened, and we couldn't let go, couldn't untangle ourself from each other, and we were inside that light, and... we both saw skeletons and radiation, and we was paralyzed in a way that I juss can't explain, till somethin' blew us apart, juss blew us, and we landed safe. We didn't move for a long time. We was cryin', and Joey ripped his brother's coat... We wasn't speakin' till we got to our block and Joey said that it was the light that ripped us apart and saved our lives... Joey said, "Jesus hopped the A train to see us safe to bed."

Landless Tribes

Larissa FastHorse

Scene 20. A nearly empty store on Main Street, USA, present day.

Josiah is a mixed race man in his late twenties. Most people assume he is Hispanic, but he was brought up believing he is Native American, a member of a tribe the government classified as extinct. Ever since the tribe won federal recognition a year ago, the local community has fought hard to stop them from building a casino. The community had the genealogy of Josiah's family professionally traced and discovered that they are Native American by marriage, not blood. So Josiah's entire family has been disenrolled from the tribe.

This monologue is given during a final auction of fixtures in the store that has been Josiah's work and home since he was a boy. He had hoped the casino would save the store. Josiah addresses the audience of "bidders" as the story of the demise of the store and his own identity are revealed.

JOSIAH: Lot number twenty. Honestly, this is a box of old stuff. I don't know what else to say. I don't have an emotional story to go with any of it. I guess hating vacuuming is an emotion, but I don't think it will sell you on this box. I don't know why I'm bothering anymore. It's been a long night. A long week. A long year. Why should you bid on this box? I suppose there is some value in the individual components. Maybe you have a 1985 cash register that is missing a part to make it run, and this is your chance. You can sit around your house and ring up your life.

I don't even know why we have this stuff. I guess we make believe that it has value simply through the fact of us owning it and incorporating it in our lives. Somehow its usefulness at one time instills it with an expectation of respect, even after its death. This box is a cemetery for things. With all the false sense of importance and preservation that cemeteries imply. When really, a headstone means nothing. It's a rock in a sea of rocks. An anchor that we believe holds our vessel on this earth when the truth is the ship sank long ago. Wait, let me add one more broken thing to the box. *(pulls out his tribal ID)*

For just over one year I was a card-carrying Indian. I always thought of myself as Indian, without the card. And yes, the only reason we pushed for the card was because of the casino. I'm not ashamed of that. I've never gotten one dime of benefits. Imagine if you could suddenly inherit millions of dollars just by filling out some paperwork. You'd do it, right? *(drops his card in the box)* But now I'm...I don't know what I am. A lie. A failure. A fool. Alone.

Do you know what it's like to have people? To belong to something bigger than yourself just by being born? It's like being born royalty, but without all the money and stuff. I had that. I was special. I was Indian. We were a "landless tribe." Romantic. Cool. Now...I don't know what I am.

Manahatta

Mary Kathryn Nagle

Anadarko, Oklahoma. September 2008. The final scene of the play.

Robert is a Lenape elder in the Delaware Nation of Oklahoma. Following the death of his wife, Hazel, the tribe's only other fluent speaker of Lenape, Robert initiates efforts to locate funding for a Lenape language program with the assistance of his daughter, Debra. However, the potential for failure and the pain becomes too much, and Robert quits the language program.

In this scene, Debra confronts her father for the first time, accusing him of quitting her, the Lenape language, and her mom (Robert's wife). Until this moment, Debra had no idea or understanding that her father's loss of language is the result of his having been forced to go to a boarding school where—like so many other American Indian children in the United States—he had his indigenous language beat out of him.

In this monologue, Robert offers an apology, in the form of an explanation, for having failed to pass the language on to her.

ROBERT: *I was a kid, about six or seven, when the BIA showed up. They walked inside the front door, this front door, grabbed me outta my parents' arms and took me away. 'Course my parents didn't speak a word a English. Neither did I, at the time. I had no idea where I was goin', why they were takin' me, or if I would ever see my parents again. Took me a couple miles down river, to Riverside. Kept me there for eight years. Made me speak English. Always. Anyone caught speakin' Lenape got a*

beatin'. One day my mom figured out where I'd been sent. Mom made her way down river to that school to find me, the whole way carryin' a basket of food. And when she got there, well somehow she got word inside to me that she was waitin' outside. I snuck outta that school, crawled under the barbed wire fence, and ran half a mile to meet my mom out in a field somewhere. There we shared the first meal we'd had together in years. When I made it back to the school. . . they nearly beat me unconscious. They had to make an example of me, ya know, so that none of the other kids would try to escape to see their parents. But I never regretted runnin' away like that. It was worth every snap of that whip just to see my mom. . . No matter how much Indian ya had in you, they wanted to whip it out.

My biggest regret is that I didn't speak Lenape with you girls. I couldn't. They beat it outta me. I was ashamed to speak it. So I just shut up. Back then, you learned not to speak. Every ounce of your being was spent just tryin' to blend in. Be somethin' you ain't.

And then one day you wake up and you've buried yer wife of sixty years and ya listen—but ya don't hear it no more. And then ya realize ain't no one speakin' it. That's 'cause you buried it. And now it's six feet under.

Momma's Boyz

Cándido Tirado

Act I. Scene 5. An empty theater. A spot light blinds him at first until he adjusts.

Mimic is a 19-year-old Puerto Rican, who grew up in the projects. He's wearing some nice "gear," hip-hop style clothes. He's also a bit discombobulated. Before going to the audition Mimic saw his best friend Shine shot and killed. The shooter happened to be Mimic's other friend, Thug. Mimic feels somewhat responsible because he wasn't able to stop the fight that escalated into the shooting. The three of them sold drugs, but Mimic's heart wasn't in it. He has dreams of becoming an actor and has enrolled in acting class. Mimic has never auditioned and isn't aware of its protocol. He argues with the writer that "This line don't make no sense. He don't sound like no drug dealer I know, and I know a lot." He's dumbfounded when he sees his hero Robert De Niro but that doesn't stop him from addressing him.

In this monologue Mimic addresses awkwardly then confidently the director, the writer of the movie and later Robert De Niro.

MIMIC: I'm here to read for drug dealer number one... Headshot?... Ahhh, ha-ha, my bad, my bad. You mean a picture... Eight by ten? No, I don't got a picture, headshot, with me... My girlfriend told me about the audition. She works for you... Rain! Yeah, she's the one in charge of the sign-in sheet in the waiting room. She's a great actress, yo. I called her from the hospital and she told me she could sneak me in... What?... No,

no, I'm not sick... Contagious? Funny. None of that... My boy got shot... No, he didn't make it... It was just a stupid misunderstanding... The show must go on? That's clever... My name? Mimic... No, just Mimic. Like Usher... Tupac! Prince... Like that. Mimic! Yeah, I'm ready... The sides?...

(He looks to the side of the stage.)

Oh, the script. I didn't know you called them sides. My bad. Got it right here.

(Takes out a sheet of paper from his back pocket.)

You want me to read it? But I got it memorized... It's only one line... Yeah, this is my first audition... Read... Yeah, I'm ready. Who do I talk to?... To her? But she's all the way down there... Read! Okay.

(Screaming out.)

HEY, WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE?... That's it?

(Starts to walk off but returns more determined.)

Can I do it again?... I know you got mad people waiting, but... This line don't make no sense... No, I ain't a writer—but—is this a drug dealer from Harvard? I mean this drug dealer must have a P.H.D. because he don't sound like no drug dealer I know and I know a lot. Could I do it more realistic?... Oh, you're the writer?... No offense... You went to writing school in Jail?... Oh, Yale. I hear it's nice out there... I'd fix it this way. First drop the "hey." "Hey" is like "Hey, could please pass the mustard." I'd do it like this. "Yo, what you want, yo?"

(He flashes a big smile.)

Do you want me to do it with a Spanish accent?... No problem. I'm just trying to help. Okay, don't forget to call... Excuse me. Is that Robert De Niro out there? Oh, shit, oh shit, yo, I love you, man. Seen all your movies. Even the sucky ones. Bob, Bobby, Bobby, remember this? You fucked my wife? Joey, you fucked my wife? What about this one? You talking to me? You talking to me?... Oh, you are talking to me?... You want me to go? No problem. Bobby, you and me got to talk, kid!

Mr. Joy

Daniel Beaty

One Act Solo Play. A therapist office in NYC. 2014.

Ashes is a post-op male to female transsexual in her early 30s. She is estranged from her father who does not accept her. In this monologue, Ashes is speaking to her therapist who we later discover is also her father's therapist. At first, Ashes uses her humor to cover her pain, but ultimately reveals her vulnerability, humanity, and strength. She confides in this therapist as a way to be close to her father.

ASHES: So how this supposed to go?

I'm just supposed to talk to you about my life?

Okay. Well, I loves being a flight attendant because I gets to fly all over the world

And nobody, and I mean nobody, knows my secret—

Oh, yes, baby, I keeps it flawless with mines.

And these cakes...

(She poses showing off her buttocks, her "cakes.")

Honey, these cakes—"chocolatey" and full of calories—

Taste it, slice it, eat it, don't choke.

But baby, we flight attendants, we don't make that much money,

So recently, I been having to cut back.

I called the cable company and I told them,

"Girl, I don't need all these damn channels.

What I look like watching golf?

Tiger don't like black girl no way—

Baby, all I need is Oxygen—

'Cause honey that's the kill a nigga channel.

Oooh, them women be carrying on, baby,

Killing they husbands, boyfriends, everybody,

And rich white womens too.

That's why I can't stand that Becky my father is dating.

She look like just the type of white woman that will snap and kill a nigga,

Especially since he don't want to give her no baby.

And she probably blame it all on me—I know she do,

And she probably right too—

I was born Ashton, but now my name is Ashes,

'Cause just like the phoenix I've been reborn from the Ashes of my former self—

I was born a man but now I have the body of the woman I always felt like inside,

And baby, I did everything from the lips to the hips—

And my Republican daddy, he paid for it, at least, technically he did—

And now I'm paying for it.

He refuses to see me

And I spent almost my entire inheritance in the process

And I struggle sometimes to make ends meet,

But my daddy, he gave me, me, and for that I am forever grateful.

Yeah, but you, know, being a flight attendant has its perks.

I take some of the peanuts, cookies, and small bottles of liquor

And give them to this homeless man James who stay here in Harlem—

It's sad what happened to James—he ain't been the same ever since.

Yeah, a broken heart can change you forever.

I almost killed the man who broke my heart.

I mean he really broke it, honey,

Trampled it like...like a fat bitch at a buffet,

See, he's a Pastor of this church all the way in Brooklyn,

I meet him on the subway doing "outreach."

I got to know him and saw that he gave so much to so many people,

So when he was with me, I wanted him to rest, to kick back.

I used to go out of my way to do nice things for him—

And baby, I keeps it creative with mines...

So I was getting my weave done and the African woman braiding it into my hair,
 She was being all nosey and looking up in my bag.
 And she ask my why I need red hair dye when I'm getting red weave put in my hair.
 I said, "If you must know, that's for my other hair."
 Um hmm—I be surprising my man, dying it different colors.
 You just got to put something there so the dye don't go in the wrong place,
 Then you take a toothbrush and you can dye it whatever color you want—
 And if you really want to freak it, get you some kool aide,
 You know, lime green, red, blue flavor, whatever flavor he like,
 And then you take the toothbrush and mix it in.
 Last Pastor anniversary, I dyed it church colors.
 Let the church say, "Amen!" Happy Anniversary!
 That's when it all went down,
 Not the church anniversary but *our* anniversary.
 We been together for three years and I just knew he was planning something special.
 The whole morning goes by, and I ain't hear from him—
 Afternoon, still ain't hear from him.
 So, I'm starting to feel like bacon grease—salty, used, and hot.
 So, I heads over to the church right before Bible Study
 And I knocks on the door to his office.
 And he's all smiles like nothing's wrong.
 And I'm like, I know this fool ain't forget.
 It's about to be the Oxygen channel up in this piece.
 We already done been through this the last two years.
 And then out of the corner of my eye I see the bag,
 You know *the* bag, the one the Manolo Blahnik shoes be coming in,
 And I'm like alright, alright,
 And he see me staring and he like,
 "Oh, I got those for my wife for her birthday,
 She's been 'hinting' for weeks about those shoes."
 And I'm thinking, "Aw hell naw!

Those should be *my* shoes to celebrate our anniversary."
 I was so hot kool aide started running down my leg.
 But I ain't say a word, I just smiled
 But ooh, baby, my heart was breaking.
 So you know what I do?
 I wait until he heads into the sanctuary for Bible Study
 And then I sneak into his office and I steal those shoes.
 And I take them to Mr. Joy's Shoe Shop:
 "Mr. Joy, I need you to stretch these shoes to fit my feet."
 Mr. Joy, he looks at the shoes
 And then he stepped from behind the counter and he looks and my feet.
 And his eyes get real big, honey—I didn't know a Chinese man's eyes could get that big,
 And he starts shaking his head "No!"
 I say, "Please, Mr. Joy, I'll pay you whatever you want."
 But he just shakes his head "No,"
 And hands me back the shoes and goes back to working.
 And, baby, I start crying.
 And I don't mean one of them cute little diva cries,
 I mean one of them messy Viola Davis cries—
 And what makes it worse, I look over
 And I see that little black girl who works in his shop, Clarissa, and she staring at me—
 And it's like I'm looking at myself,
 Looking at the little black girl I always felt like inside—
 And honey, it is Hurricane Ashes up in that piece.
 Tears coming out my nose, ears everything.
 And Mr. Joy, he stops his work and he comes over to me.
 He places his hand on my shoulder to try and calm me down,
 But, of course, that just makes things worse,
 So you know what he do, he takes me in his arms and he holds me,
 And that Clarissa she comes over and she hugs me too.
 And when I'm finally able to calm down,
 He takes those shoes and he stretches them.
 And so you know what I do?

Next Sunday morning, I put on those shoes and my brightest, tightest red dress.

I take that train all the way to Brooklyn,

And I walked into Sunday Morning Service right towards the front,

The usher tries to stop me, but I kept walking,

I can feel all the judgmental eyes of the self-righteous, holier than thou staring at me,

But I just kept walking to the front like the guest of honor,

And I sit right down next to the Pastor's wife—the first lady.

You should see the look of horror on the Pastor's face.

But the first lady, she's so nice, so beautiful and I feel bad,

And the Pastor's wife, she says, "I love your shoes, where did you get them?"

And I say, "Your husband gave them to me for our anniversary.

Taste it, slice it, eat it, don't choke."

Newsbreak (excerpt from County of Kings)

Lemon Andersen

In his autobiographical solo show, Lemon Andersen paints a picture of life growing up tough in Brooklyn. *County of Kings* follows Lemon on his incredible journey from a childhood with parents who would both succumb to AIDS, and two prison sentences by his 21st birthday, all the way to his Tony Award winning career.

In this monologue, Lemon transforms from a matter-of-fact news reporter into a broken hearted 5th grader as he recounts how he learned his parents were sick.

LEMON: This just in.

There is a new killer in America, 'AIDS'

A ferocious, ferocious, ferocious disease that attacks the immune system is sweeping the country and the world mainline infecting heroine addicts, homo-sexual men, Harry and the Hendersons, Miss September 1986, studio 54 owner, captain Kirk's son, Norman Bates, HIV is not luck, it's Magic Johnson, Freddie Mercury Temperature Low so don't swim in the Rock Hudson River everything that glitters is not gold Liberace and if you create a Rap group and call it N.W.A then all of the F the Polices won't save you and if your parent play scrabble with Needles and belts then prepare for their wealth in weight loss, their dimples to look like pool table side pockets I am Sue Simmons Eyewitness News.

Me, and my cousin Joey are sitting in the living room watching Animaniacs. While the show's ending and the credits are rolling. A newscaster pops up on the screen to give an Emergency News brief.

Like a kid with no sense Joey turns to me and says, "Your mother got that." I want to just deck him.

I feel like the thing I dread the most,
"A victim."

That night at home I sit down on my parents' bed and I ask them "do you guys have AIDS?" Chado looks at me, turns his head to the window and stares out blank towards the streetlights. Millie puts her hand on my head and says, "Si, Trucutu..."

Mira papi no suffer por mi
You got to be strong mi ijo
La familia
Your family is going back to Puerto Rico
Eyo cren que La Sida
E un demonio
They think that what I have is a demon
That's why cuando yo me muerdo
I don't want you to live with them
Oye me truci
No suffer por mi
No cry
Be strong papi
Los dia van asen malo
When those days son mucho para ti
Y mi enfermeda te cay mal
Papi awantate
Hold strong to yourself
Lucha para tu paz
Fight for your peace
Because I know tu eres un nene bueno
Pero being a good kid
Los gente they think you stupid and weak
ok...

"ok"

y algo mas, no vas a la funeraria miyo...

don't come to my funeral cause I don't want you to see me like that...
me intiende...

Next day I go to school and during our lunch break, some of the students in my class get into a rank off. A kid named Vasco stops the dozens to tell us a joke.

"Hey, what do you call a guy in a wheelchair who has H.I.V.?" Quickly and Shamefully I say "what?"

"Roll-Aids."

All the kids laugh and I fake my laugh along with them.

Millie starts becoming more outspoken about being sick to our neighbors [in the courtyard] and of course they tell their kids who happen to be students at my school. So once they find out, the whole P.S. 172 finds out. In the 5th grade my last year there, most kids avoid me. Their parents warn them not to sit next to me, share their lunch or even shake my hand.

An Octoroon

Branden Jacobs-Jenkins

Prologue. The present.

An Octoroon is an adaptation of Dion Boucicault's *The Octoroon*, a play from the 1850s that, in its time, was second in popularity only to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

BJJ enters in his underwear, carrying a plastic bag full of stuff from a nearby pharmacy and a remote control. He is the playwright, and lead actor of the adaptation that ensues after this prologue—an antebellum melodrama set on Louisiana plantation of Terrebonne, with the male actors performing in black, white, or red-faced makeup. Addressing the audience directly, BJJ recounts the conversations he had with his “therapist” that lead him to write his adaptation of Boucicault’s play.

BJJ: Hi, everyone. I’m a “black playwright.”

I don’t know exactly what that means,

but I’m here to tell you a story:

“Let’s find a way to help you deal with your low-grade depression,”
my therapist recently said to me.

“Okay...”

“What makes you happy?”

“I don’t know.”

“Really? Nothing makes you happy?”

“Not really.”

“What about work?”

“I mean... I guess.”

“Doesn’t the theater make you happy?”

“I mean... I guess. Some of it. Not all of it.”

“So you’re not excited about your work?”

“I mean I’m not-not excited.”

“Do you have any career goals?”

“No...”

“Anyone’s career you admire? Do you have any role models?”

“In the theater?”

“Yeah—are there any playwrights who you admire?”

“I don’t know. Dion Boucicault?”

“Who is that?”

“He’s a playwright. He’s dead.”

“I’ve never heard of him.”

“Yeah—no one cares about him anymore. He’s dead.

He wrote in the nineteenth century.”

“So your role model is someone no one cares about?”

“I mean, people cared about him when he was alive.”

“Oh, okay. And what did he write?”

“Um, well, he wrote this play called *The Octoroon*?”

“*The Octoroon*? What’s an *Octoroon*?”

“It’s a person who is one-eighth black.”

“Ah. And you like this play?”

“Yes.”

“Why don’t you try adapting *The Octoroon* then, for fun.”

So I did. Or I tried to.

But then all the white guys quit.

And then I couldn’t find any more white males

to play any of the white male parts,

because they felt it was too “melodramatic.”

I went back to my therapist.

She was like,

“Do you think that maybe you’re angry at white people?”

“What?”

I said, “Do you think that maybe you’re angry at white people?”

And I was like, “Uh, I don’t think—”

"—Like subconsciously?"

"Um. No. Like most of my best friends are white."

Then my therapist was like, "Are you sure?"

"Yeah. I think I would know."

I am literally surrounded by white people all the time."

"Are you really, really sure though? Like 100% positive?"

I looked at my therapist, who was white.

"Well, who needs them?" She said. "Do you really need them?"

Why can't you do it by yourself? Why don't you just play the parts?"

"Me? But I haven't been on stage in years."

"Well isn't that how the theater started for you?"

As an actor? Let's go back to the source."

"Okay..."

"So why don't you try playing the parts?"

Maybe you'll learn to be more sympathetic.

Maybe even... understand them."

(BJJ presses a button on his remote and loud, urban music plays. He remembers something, then pauses the music)

Just kidding. I don't have a therapist.

I can't afford one.

(unpauses the music, remembers something, then repauses it)

You people are my therapy.

Paper Armor

Eisa Davis

A boarding house in Westfield, NJ, 1930.

Langston Hughes is 28 years old. A writer of stature but not yet Harlem's poet laureate, he is a discreet man with strong convictions who mystifies all entrants into his personal life. He is in the process of writing a new play, *Mule Bone*, in collaboration with his close friend Zora Neale Hurston. Her boldness and blunt questions, as well as the romantic connection they feel, sets off his alarm bells. At this point in his life, his sexuality is a fluid thing, something he doesn't want to solidify with a relationship with a woman or a man. Due to race relations and his private nature, he is extremely self-conscious about maintaining a reputation that will allow him as a black writer to flourish to his fullest. But Zora's presence forces him to confront his desires.

In this monologue, he addresses the audience, a confidante to whom he can tell his truth.

LANGSTON: You have to be careful about what you do, especially in Harlem, because everyone will be hanging your business out on the line to dry the next morning. I don't like queens in dresses, I mean they look fine at those Rockland Palace costume balls, but I don't like them. I've worn a dress once. With heels. My ankles finally looked logical. It was crazy: one afternoon I snuck into the dorm room of my girlfriend of one month, and we ate sweets, chocolates mainly—and she was wearing a calf length skirt that revealed her slightly hairy legs through her stockings

and I had on my usual long dungarees and oxfords. She was so beautiful to me that fall, Laudee, a pretty young brownskin I met in Richmond. I thought I was in love with her. And I was. For a month. I had escorted her to a dance and we had exchanged little rings the weekend before, and I had come to visit her again. She had such a sweet smell. I think it was her soap—I love cleanliness—but it might have been her sweat too. At any rate, she told me how she always wanted to wear trousers because they're so much more comfortable. I told her, teasing more than anything, that I always wanted to wear dresses because they're so much cooler. We actually switched clothing and I stuffed my feet into her pumps. It was so much fun. She was laughing and trying to muffle it with the sleeve of my jacket. She used to call me her 'Prince of Fairies' in letters and when I had the dress on she said it aloud. All I wanted to do was to get out of that room and on the train back to my dorm at Lincoln. She kept writing me after that but I didn't respond. *(pause)* It's not whether it's a man or a woman, it's about sharing myself with someone else. I can't do that. How do you do that? So I write. That's one of the few things I know how to do.

/peh-LO-tah/

Marc Bamuthi Joseph

Act 2. Scene 2. South Africa/Queens, NY. Present/past/future.

/peh-LO-tah/ is a series of ruminations on the fanaticism and democracy of the global game against the landscape of global economic inequity. The players spend Act 1 re-counting a creation myth about oceans, money, and sport in the midst of the 2014 FIFA World Cup. Act 2, subtitled "Mandela the Christ," mines the parallel journey of Nelson Mandela's waning years and the aftermath of the 2010 World Cup on South African culture. In this monologue the Poet, speaking as much with his body as he does with his spoken words, is recalling a time before he knew what apartheid meant, responding to the sobriety of South African gospel arrangements by recalling the feelgood soul of a George Benson classic. Against the complexity of colonial subjugation, an American reaches toward the joy of liberation...

In this monologue, Poet uses his body in order to leave it. He remembers what it feels like to fly.

POET: I learned the game by listening to it...

We moved out of the studio apartment in Rego Park before I turned three, which means my memory of dad listening to soccer on the radio is some relatively primordial epoch origin shit. It's 1978, he's smoking a square on the fire escape and the New York Cosmos is beating somebody. A radio play without commercial break, Beckenbauer, Carlos Alberto and Pele all on the same squad. Some people remember lullaby music from their

infancy, I remember the music of AM hiss being broken by fan screams when Pele scored...

At 5, I am a player...

I'm wearing brown sneakers either because my parents couldn't afford cleats or because it seemed ridiculous to them for me to have special shoes to play a game that they used to rock in Haiti literally uphill on limestone in bare feet.

My afro in 1981 is halo-rific like the Commodores' afros had a baby with all the ballers on the White Shadow's afros and laid it in angelic askance on my crown...

At 5, I am king of a rubble and dirt soccer field in Queens, wearing a round number on my back, and I've just struck this rolling thing with sweet fetished anger and innocence.

The only place I feel raceless is the moment after the ball hits the back of the net...

I am weightless. Running fearless. I am one month shy of six. I've just struck this thing hard, focused, sweet...when I am older this is how I'll prefer to make love, this is how I learn about electricity in the body, when catholic mass started to lose me...

When the ball hits the back of the net I achieve gravitational singularity, I am prepared to be the Dalai Lama. When the ball hits the back of the net I am one with everything...

Then I see my *mommy*...

And that gets me **REALLY** hype(!)...

Dizzy with joy and focused only on the sensation of gravity cowering in confusion around me, I run toward my mom, oblivious of my teammates who are wanting to join in the celebration, I belt out the George Benson tune that's hot on the radio...

YOU GOT THE LOVE YOU GOT THE POWER...

BUT YOU JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND

I am not a child of immigrants

This is not hip hop under the watch of Ed Koch

I am current, my blood is goal scorer cold, like New York autumns used to be

The hum of my own breathing in the wind is Hendrix ghost
ridin symphony

In my afro-haloed bliss, running full speed toward my mom, SINGING so
damn loud, like only a six year old goal scorer can...

TURN YOUR LOVE AROUND
DON'T YOU TURN ME DOWN

I CAN SHOW YOU HOW
TURN YOUR LOVE A-ROOO-OUND...

PLACAS: The Most Dangerous Tattoo

Paul S. Flores

Act 2. Scene 12. Community health clinic, tattoo removal room, aka "Laser Room," Mission District, San Francisco, California. Present day.

Fausto "Placas" Carbajal, age 41, is a Salvadoran immigrant, and former member of La Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13), recently released from prison after nine years. As a condition of his parole, he must remove the tattoos, or "placas," that mark him as a member of his gang. Fausto grew up in San Francisco after arriving as a child refugee of the civil war in El Salvador. Fausto was deported in the mid 1990s and brought US gang culture like MS-13 to El Salvador, where he started another clika with his younger brother Douglas, who was killed by a rival gang member. Fausto returned to San Francisco illegally and was then arrested. Since his release from prison, he has committed himself to redeeming his relationships with his sixteen-year old son Edgar, and his ex-wife Claudia. When Edgar rejects his intentions to be a father, Fausto sees many disturbing traits of himself in his son, and vows to change the outcome.

In this monologue Placas directly addresses the audience from the laser room to describe the tattoo dedicated to his brother Douglas.

PLACAS: *(takes his shirt off. Tattoos fully visible. At the center of his body an izote and flower emerging between the letters M S.)*

I dedicated this placa on my stomach to my brother Douglas. It's a flor de izote, the national flower of El Salvador. We came from the campo

and we bloom like the izote flower coming out of razor sharp leaves. Like smiles rising from cries. Those tears made the smiles grow.

Some people eat the flor de izote. I don't know why someone would want to eat a flower. I've never tasted one. But I've seen many flowers get eaten. Caval. Pero losing a brother is the hardest thing to swallow.

When I got deported, I didn't know shit about El Salvador. I was twenty-one, hadn't been home in almost fourteen years. I was totally sold out on la clika. Shit, I thought I would be going on vacation. Spend time with Mama, hit the beach, eat some food, be a tourist, n'shit. I knew I wouldn't be sticking around. Nel. My real life was la clika in San Pancho. Plus my ol'lady just had a baby. La verdad es que I was lost en mi propio país.

What freaked me out was when my brother Douglas showed up to the party with thirty chavalitos from the neighborhood. All of them mean mugging me when they saw my placazos. So I found an old a machete and started sharpening it. But when they heard I was Mara Salvatrucha, they wanted me to jump them all in so they could say a ranflero from Califas recognized their clika.

So I did it. I jumped in thirty mocosos. At first I did it by myself, one by one. Then each of the guys I fought helped me jump in the others. It took three days. My hands were all fucked up. My body ached. But me and Douglas started that clika in our colonia in El Salvador. I jumped my own brother in.

This placa is really about love. We tattoo our dead homeboys' names to remember them always. That's Respect. This homeboy happened to be my brother who got left behind in the civil war while my other brother and I escaped to California. What the fuck did we escape to?

It might seem fun and exciting to be part of the hood in the beginning. A gangster's life looks like an adventure from the outside. Pero el camino es largo y duro. Yeah, there's love. Gangster love. A mangled love. In the end we have the names of our dead tattooed on our bodies. And the living...y nosotros, que? What about us?

Ramble-Ations: A One D'Lo Show

D'Lo

"Brotherhood"

Nic(ole) is a 15 to 30 yr old masculine-of-center/transmasculine person who cleans the particular theater in which the performance is taking place. Right before his appearance, a slew of characters (immigrant and/or heterosexual) have been offering up their opinions about queerness/transness. Nic is the last character of the play, coming to spiritually and physically clean the stage/space; the sacred clown who, in contrast to the other characters, has a strong and rooted understanding of the society in which he lives.

Nic is an avid listener to all things RnB and HipHop from the 80s and 90s. He is a meticulous neat-freak. In order to be on time to the pool-hall to be with his "brothers," he is cleaning as quickly as he possibly can, while also sharing his love for his boys with you.

Contrary to the hetero/cis-normative pathologizing assertion that queer people of color are somehow lacking/incomplete, Nic demonstrates a solid and grounded understanding of self. Nic speaks to the holiness of his brotherhood in a world that criminalizes young masculine people of color, whether queer or not.

NIC: What the FACK?!? Man, this place is a mess. How my supposed...?
(Phone rings, he picks up)

What up, D. Man, I'm getting there as fast as I can, just that these dumb actors left me a fucking mess to clean up.

OK OK! Yeah! (Hangs Up)

(Says to audience) We gonna shoot pool. It'll be cool if I'm a little late. I win more when they drink more.
Love my boyz, man.

Sometimes I hold back from sheddin a tear
It's not like I'm some cry baby, just that,
what we got is beautiful...they the only family I got.
I moved out when 5 years ago,

It was time, some minds you can't change.
I don't know what I'd do without them (smiles)
Sometimes, I wonder why studs/ag's/butches/transguys be grilling one another in the club.

I mean, in my mind, I'm like
Why would you hate someone who look like you,
act like you, go through the same shit you go through on the daily?
It's so stupid...so heterosexual machismo male.

"I'm a stud, you a stud...we can't be friends...grrrrr"
I mean, I think when other studs, ags and transguys see us rolling 5 deep?

They get a little bit jealous...and they should cuz nothing beats kickin it with the boys
nothing feels more safe.

Sometimes I just wanna tell the guys how proud I am of them
Of being their friend, of being in the crew
because, damn, we are so dope, y'know.
Though, sometimes I feel like a girl for wanting to do so
And then I thank myself, for not selling myself out every time I want to but I know better not to do so.

I know! It may seem a little schizo,
but you gotta understand that instead of battling personalities,
I'm battling here, I'm battling both my sexual energies.
Masculinity and Femininity.

Like, I feel that those sometimes,
it's the feminine side that wants to come out and get all
(valleygirl)"Oh my god, you're amazing, I love you!"

but then masculine side is telling my feminine side,
(deeper tone) "yo, that's some girl shit I just ain't down with"
 and then it's my feminist/womanist side that come out and be like, "isn't
 that a bit misogynist?"

(yell of faux frustration)

Whatever...

It's too much to think about and I'm not that strong to balance it out,
 so I just end up handling it like a dude, and leaving the girlie aspect out
 of it.

Am I denying my feminine side?

Probably.

But, freedom from all that battling comes in the bedroom.

The bedroom where a stud is a stud

but peels off clothes to reveal my woman-ness.

The bedroom where sheets fly off as climax starts

Where glory is given to all my body parts

Where my clothes don't define me

Where my steez ain't overpowering

Where I'm naked and still

Then shaken and chilled

Where I'm taken and spill

Where I've satisfied her fill

Where I'm connected until

I've put back on them clothes again.

Making love to a woman?

Is being allowed to spread my legs

Is feeling the most comfortable in my skin

Is letting her in on the skin I was born in

Is loving myself enough to give in

And yo, I take care of my *(motions to his netherland regions)* shit.

Make sure she's kept clean and neatly trimmed *(fingers scissors around
 area)* and packaged up in some nice victoria secret panties.

Yeah, I said Victoria Secret Panties!

I ain't got no shame in my shit.

Don't get me wrong, I can put it down just like any other stud or ag do, but
 my speciality is in my female body flow.

(Sings Ciara and Dances Provocatively) What you wanna do do do...

Anyway, that's just me in my entirety.

Got no shame to my game, cuz all of this *(flicks his/her v.c. panties)* is me.

And as long as the boys accept me?

Shoo, I'm coooooool, b.

And they do.

And I love em for that.

I guess it comes with the territory.

When you're constantly being judged or looked at weird,

It forces you to have an open mind, makes you more compassionate and
 understanding.

That's why you find all the queers working in non-profits for under-privileged
 people or in battered women's shelters or orphanages, or running commu-
 nity organizations.

That's my opinion.

Come to think about it,

It's not like we talk about each time we ever been stared at with hatred.

It's not like we tally up every time someone has yelled

or done something derogatory or transphobic or homophobic.

We just continue.

We know that the way we are is natural to us, but foreign to most
 everybody else.

We know that it will always be hard to just walk down the street.

Always checking in with ourselves

Having conversations with ourselves

"Are you ok, Nic? Do we need to leave? Should we stay?"

And it's because of all this that

SOMETIMES?

Without saying a word—

I wanna hold onto them a minute, a second longer than a pound and
 dap allow.

I wanna tell them without words that I know that it was a hard day

Cuz I had the *same* day

I wanna show them how I love that they're my reflection
I wanna let them know, soul to soul,
that they are an inspiration to everyone who wants to be free,
straight, cis or not,
because it takes courage to be who you are.
It takes courage to break out
It takes courage to come out
And my boys?
We're walking examples of this.
Sometimes I wanna tell them that they're my inspiration
For continuing to be myself.

Repairing a Nation

Nikkole Salter

Act I. Scene I. Christmas holiday season. The suburban home of Chuck and Anna Davis, Tulsa, Oklahoma. USA. 2001, B.O. (Before Obama).

Charles 'Chuck' Davis, Jr. is a black man, 63 years old, the patriarch of the Davis family and the inherited CEO of the family business Davis Janitorial. Throughout the play Lois is trying to get the family to agree to entering a class action lawsuit for reparations, as their now deceased family members were victims of the infamous Tulsa Race Riot. But as she digs up information to prove their claim to restitution, she unearths a family secret that brings the ownership of the family business into question.

In this monologue, Chuck discourages Seth from being recruited by his mother Lois (Chuck's first cousin) into the class action lawsuit.

CHUCK: Wanna know what one of my first memories of life was? I remember being at my granddaddy's house. It was when he had just been made head janitor, before he went and got his own thing, and for some holiday he was invited to the white folks ranch to rub elbows. So we was all going, my mom and dad, lil' cousin Lois and her father, my uncle Rufus, wives, everybody. We get there and this man has everything on his ranch—horses and even some bulls for riding later on. I remember everything being so sunny and so hot I could feel the heat from the ground through my sandals. To keep us cool the white man had the best lemonade I ever tasted and he had made a sprinkler system for his

kids that rained down into a big chili bowl lookin' thing, so that when the sprinklers needed to get cut off, when the water ran out, we could still play in the pool of accumulated water. That white man was real nice, I remember him smiling at me, laughing with my granddaddy, talking to him like a man, like a friend. But nice as that man was, he had some devil off-spring. They made it known that they knew we was black and that black was the worse thing a person could be. And they made it real clear that they didn't want us to be in the water with them. One of 'em even tried to wash the black off my cousin Curtis, so that well into high school Curtis still wouldn't stand in the sun too long for fear of getting blacker. But as long as they daddy was 'round, they couldn't kick us out. They had to deal with it, and we could stay cool while the adults was elbow rubbin'. And then Lois, I'll never forget this, Lois got real still in the pool. Everybody was splashing and laughing, and she just stood there real still, and a band of yellow started to grow around her while she sat there in the middle of the bowl. And that little devil white boy started yellin', "The nigger gal peed in the pool! The nigger gal peed in the pool!!" Everybody run over to see 'bout the commotion, and they pull us out, the white ladies lookin' mortified that they little boys, the next big oil tycoons, was sittin' in the pool of nigger pee. And my granddaddy looks to my uncle Rufus, to say something, to apologize, and he say that she just a little girl and don't know no better, but he don't say sorry. He don't say nothin'. I remember that white man loosen his smile, so that he look just like the older version of his Satan kids. He looked at me, right at me, like I was just like Lois! Like I had done the peeing! My granddaddy rounded us all up and we left. We had to leave 'cause we was all associated to the piss! Everything yo' mama touch go to hell in a wastebasket. Don't let her pull you into this reparations non-sense, 'cause... Mark my words, you keep her 'round you long enough, she'll pee in your pool too.

Repairing a Nation

Nikkole Salter

Act 2. Scene 3. Christmas holiday season. The suburban home of Chuck and Anna Davis, Tulsa, Oklahoma. USA. 2001, B.O. (Before Obama).

Seth Sanders, 23, is a black man, the baby of the Davis family. A recent University of Oklahoma graduate and first year NYU law school student, he longs to shake off the inherited burdens of being a part of the family. Throughout the play Lois, Seth's distant mother, is trying to get the family to agree to entering a class action lawsuit for reparations, as their now deceased family members were victims of the infamous Tulsa Race Riot. But as she digs up information to prove their claim to restitution, she unearths a family secret that brings the ownership of the family business into question.

In this monologue, Seth confesses his true feelings about his mother to his girlfriend Debbie.

SETH: I'm just remembering ... *(beat)* When I... When I was a kid I used to make believe my mom was secretly rich. I used to pretend that secretly she was super duper rich, and that she had such a hard time getting people to love her for her and not for her money that she pretended to be loud, and rude and uncouth and broke down and poor. To test people's intentions. But secretly she was like Clair Huxtable, right? And I pretended I was pretending to be a poor kid with rags for clothes, but underneath, I was really just like Theo. And our life was really like one of those episodes of the Cosby Show where everybody pretended to be all hard-core to teach Theo—to teach me—a lesson. So, she raised me

poor to make sure I was a man of character, you know, that I would have morals. That I would be a good person. That I knew the value of a dollar. And she could've paid for all my schools—for Briarwood Academy, U of O—for all of 'em, upfront if she needed to. But she wanted me to appreciate my education, so she made me work hard to earn scholarships. And she sent me away to live here... she sent me away to stay with Anna and Chuck so that I'd learn independence. She didn't want me to be like those snot-nosed, mama's boys with silver-spoons in their mouths that thought the world was made for them. So I thought that, once I proved that I wasn't like them, that I was a good person—I made good grades and really turned out to be someone, she would shed her skin or something and finally reveal that she was filthy rich and bestow upon me this enormous inheritance. 'Cause I had proved I was worthy. I passed the test. And we'd live happily ever after. *(beat)* And, silly as it may sound, the day after graduation day, she slept on the couch. And this part of me still expected the metamorphosis to occur. For her to morph into Glinda the good witch and sing a song or something and finally release me from... But I sat there watching her sleep. I just watched her. She was snoring. Loud. She had always snored, but she was particularly loud. And I looked at her. Her mouth all wide open. Her chest working real hard to get air—and I realized that when she woke up... *(Lois wakes up)* I realized there wasn't going to be any transformation. She would never change. No matter how hard I worked. Nothing I did would... If anything, I'd wake up 25 years from now still in Tulsa watching her snore on the couch in cousin Chuck's living room. And I finally said to myself—I think I even said it out loud—I gave myself like this intervention looking in the bathroom mirror and I said, "**There is. No. Inheritance.**" *(beat)* It was just a dream I held onto to help me... An irrational... hallucination I held on to for much too long. I have lived for 22 years on that dream. Hoping she was... Hoping I could push her, pull us... *(beat)* But I can't. She doesn't want to go. And I don't wanna stay. I want my life to be... In New York, nobody even knows what the Tulsa Race Riot was or that it ever existed. They don't know where Tulsa is. They don't know where Greenwood is or what it means. And they don't care. I am whoever I say I am. And I can be whatever I want to be. I don't represent anything. I don't have to stand up for anything. I'm not associated with anyone. I can just be. Me.

The Sarimanok Travels

Francis Tanglao-Aguas

Come Forth We Men. Second Movement of this Journey of the Filipino Spirit.

Present day in the backyard garden of a dilapidated home in Mountain View, California.

Filipino grandmothers, or Lolas, are the bedrock of the family. Thus, when Lola Amonita Balajadja told the world how she was terrorized as a comfort woman sex slave in World War II, Tanglao-Aguas felt it was his duty for her story to be seen like the star of the world: Estrella del Mundo. Lola Estrella may be too young to be a grandmother because her rape began when she was 12 years old, but make no mistake, she does not dwell on this, because she survived through her wit and sense of humor. In her old age she is remanded to all the housework and childcare, as her family works multiple jobs, causing them to neglect Lola Estrella.

In this monologue, Lola Estrella teaches her granddaughter, Juana, how to gain a sense of strength, pride, resilience, and indomitability. The character is female, but can be played by a woman or man.

LOLA ESTRELLA: Ampalaya* is a green and bitter fruit that looks like the face of a two hundred year old woman.

*(She subtly feels her way around the garden, making sure we do not notice that she is blind.) (*bitter melon)*

Ampalaya is so bitter that my mother had to slice it so thin
 so she could squeeze the bitterness away.
 Yet it remained the most bitter vegetable I ever ate and I liked it.
 Vitamin A for clear eyes.
 Vitamin E for beautiful skin.
 Vitamin C for strength against the flu.
 Ampalaya is good for living.
 I have not had ampalaya for twenty years or more.
 I really don't know because I don't have the vitamin to remember.
 I can not eat ampalaya because my granddaughter
 Juana refuses to drive me to the Oriental Store in Daly City.
 She is a lazy girl!
 She is so lazy that once I slipped while mopping the kitchen floor
 And she was on her way out the door
 Why she did not even stop to help me!
 She felt bad when she came home
 And the neighbors were helping me
 Because you see, I broke something.
 She wanted to make it up to me
 So I told her she knows what to do.
 I was so helpful that she did know
 Because she smiled at me when she left.
 She came back with zucchini!
 That only has Vitamin A!
 It is a wimpy vegetable!
 It has no power in it, only volume:
 Very bland volume to use up space in your stomach.
 Even a newborn infant can eat a whole zucchini!
 Where I come from we don't have zucchini.
 So I cooked the zucchini
 With tomatoes and onions
 And all the vegetables I could find.
 Funny thing, this granddaughter of mine cannot eat meat.
 That's why she's so weak and lazy.
 That's what I'm telling you!
 She ate the whole zucchini and she's still so lazy!

She cannot even help me in my garden a little bit,
 Even just to talk to the vegetables.
 Look at them, they are so pale and lifeless.
 There are so many of them.
 I cannot tell stories to all of them at the same time!
 And this Juana!
 Listen to her singing inside.
 I tell her all the time, why not sing out here
 So the vegetables can hear you?
 She pretends she cannot understand Ilocano.
 I don't know much English but I understand
 When someone refuses to learn how to understand me.
 You're listening alright,
 You just don't like what you hear.
 Look
 Here,
 This is the ampalaya plant.
 It is so shameful for me to look at it.
 I am so ashamed.
 I am fortunate my mother is not here anymore.
 What kind of woman can not grow ampalaya?
 Only a lifeless woman.
 (*She hears something.*)
 Juana?
 Juana, is that you Apo*? (**grandchild*)
 If you are going to sing, Apo, sing out here.
 Otherwise don't sing at all.
 You are teasing my vegetables.
 They will magtatampo* to your Lola. (**begrudge*)
 That's why they're not growing.
 How would you like it if I cooked lumpiang Shanghai
 And gave them all to the Bushes next door without leaving some for you,
 Ha Apo?
 Apo?
 Juana, my Apo, why won't you try to hear me?
 I am an old woman who has no home.

Juana, can you hear me?

(*BEAT. Then...*)

What follows are still English words but spelled phonetically to simulate Ilocano accented English. The "Translations" are here to guide the performer, and are NOT to be performed. There are only five vowel sounds in the Filipino languages akin to the Spanish and Japanese open vowel sounds.)

Leysee gurrl, (*Lazy girl,*)

Yu gud por nateeng gurrl. (*You good for nothing girl.*)

Elp me plunt eer! (*Help me plant here!*)

Wanna B. Amerika, yu sun up a bits... (*Juana B. Amerika, you son of a bitch...*)

Dar, wutar yurr imti ed! (*There, water your empty head!*)

(*She throws the water gourd towards the house.*)

Ay madre de puta yu leysee gurrl (*Ay! [son of a bitch] you lazy girl!*)

Sun up yurr stowpeed payrents. (*Son of your stupid parents.*)

Deed nut tits yu der on tung. (*Did not teach you their own tongue.*)

Shur is isi pur yu n pur dem (*Sure it's easy for you and for them*)

Naw dat yu tok layk gaddam Ungkool Sam. (*Now that you talk like goddamn Uncle Sam*)

Bat luk wat apend mai dotir Clarita (*But look what happened my daughter Clarita*)

Naw dat yu meyreed dat Juanito... (*Now that you married that Juanito [Hwanito]...*)

Ay told yu anak, (*I told you anak [child/daughter]*)

No kulids digri, (*No college degree,*)

No marids digri. (*No marriage degree.*)

Ay sint yu to kulids Clarita (*I sent you to college Clarita*)

Bat yu mirid dis parmer up poteyto n korn. (*But you married this farmer of potato and corn.*)

Ay don iban pid yu nating ils bat bist rays, d milagrosa. (*I don't even feed you nothing but best rice, the "miracle rice."*)

Bat istil, yu disubayd mi n mirid a parmer. (*But still, you disobeyed me and married a farmer.*)

N su yu prub mi rong jus bikos yu win ir tu Amirrika, (*And so you proved me wrong just because you went here to America.*)

Bat pur wat? Pur wat Clarita? (*But for what? For What, Clarita?*)

Yu kim ir to Amirrika to plunt d litas (*You came here to America to plant the lettuce*)

N d arteechok n d istruberri n Wutsunbil? (*And the artichoke and the strawberry in Watsonville?*)

Di n nayt, di n nayt, yu plunt. (*Day and night, day and night, you plant.*)

N su luk wat apind tu yur dotir—(*And so look what happened to your daughter—*)

Ay kin nut plunt initing in her. (*I can not plant anything in her.*)

Dyas layk Ay kud nut in yu. (*Just like I could not in you.*)

Bat naw yu r gun (*But now you are gone*)

Wid yu asban bisayd yu (*With your husband beside you*)

Een d lan yu tild (*In the land you tilled*)

Dat olweys ridyakted yu. (*That always rejected you.*)

Haw ken yu lai dawn dir (*How can you lie down there*)

Win dis lan bamited yu in yur layp? (*When this land vomited you in your life?*)

Naw dis dotir up yurs ees bamiting mi. (*Now this daughter of yours is vomiting me.*)

Anak [*Child/Daughter*]

My anak.

I know you can hear me.

I am an old woman who has no home.

Smart People

Lydia R. Diamond

Act I. Scene 10. Pre-Obama era. Cambridge, MA. Jackson Moore's living room.

Jackson, (African American, anywhere between 28–34), is doing his surgical residency at Harvard University's teaching hospital, Mass General. Valerie (African American, somewhere between 24–28) is an actress who has recently graduated from the MFA program at the American Repertory Theater. They're at the end of a first date that is going badly. After an unexpected sexual encounter both have bumped up against socio-economic and personal landmines. After a heated argument Valerie has excused herself to the bathroom and returns to a silently enraged Jackson.

JACKSON: So here's what I do. I'm a surgeon. I've been studying to be a surgeon for the last eight years. That's not including all of the pre-meds in college. And I did well. Straight As. It seems I have a natural proclivity for just about anything I do. You know a residency is a hazing, an endurance test. They put us on these crazy hours in emergency. It's just barfing, blood, crying babies, and boys trying to kill themselves via one another... We're supposed to pay our dues for a couple of years and then follow around a real surgeon. Who's supposed to teach me. Except they don't like me. We don't need to waste time deconstructing why the black guy can't get a decent mentor in Boston... Yeah, o.k. So, every now and then I don't feel like being treated like Sambo that day, and I push back, just a little. So today I say... "no...when I wrote that about that patient

on that chart there that you're holding... it's because I knew what I was doing... and when that nurse came up behind me and called Doctor whoever-the-fuck to come in and second guess me, and he decided that I'm stucky and so arbitrarily prescribed some kind of bullshit course of action... And now the patient's worse, and you will not pin that on me..." It doesn't matter how I say it... I'm "angry" and "volatile" and "not good at working with others", so I get written up and have to do the whole fucking bedpan thing again. (beat) So today, I went to work, to the emergency room and I worked for ten straight hours, then I went to my clinic and worked another six... Because someone has to take care of those people... And then I made your ass dinner. And you're trippin' because I tease you about hot sauce. I don't have time for that.

Standoff at Hwy#37

Vickie Ramirez

Act 2. Scene 4

A Native American National Guardsman is dispatched with his unit to quell a land claim protest on contested Haudenosaunee Reservation lands. The protest takes a drastic turn when Thomas (Tuscarora, 23) feels compelled to choose between his past—his loyalty to the Haudenosaunee people—and a promising future in the military. In this monologue Thomas confronts his mentor for his treatment of Aunt Bev, the elder at the protest. He also finally chooses his allegiance.

THOMAS: Hey, Captain.

(He salutes. HEWITT doesn't react.)

No, Huh? Okay—I guess I lost that honor when my gun was in your face.

(Beat.)

Sir, I—I just want to apologize. You've been good to me. It shouldn't have gone down the way it did. I know you would've shot anyone else who did that to you. I just want you to know—you weren't wrong. I loved the job, you know I did—and I am grateful for all the opportunities you gave me. I would've been a good leader. I would've gone all the way. You weren't wrong.

It was just today.

Today, I know you counted on me to have your back—no matter what—not just because of the training but because I know you'd have mine.

You and Baldwin. Because that is honor. A warrior's honor is everything—that's one of the first things my Dad taught me. I told you that story. Like I told you the others because I thought you'd understand. That's why I told you. I let you know who we are—not so you'd have the edge today, but so you'd learn a little bit about us—about me. I wanted you to understand, but instead you used it. You used it to try and win against my people, as though me telling you about it all gave you the right. I didn't—You took the right, do you get that?

Even then, I could've stepped back—but—why'd you have to go and put your hands on her? After I told you? I WARNED you. You brought me here because I know Indian people, well did you forget I was one? Shit Captain—do you even know what you did? We've been pushed and grabbed and so much has been taken, people helping themselves for years and then you were gonna grab her too—like she was nothing. An ELDER. Right in front of me. Like it didn't matter. Like she was a sack of garbage that got in the way and I realized you'd heard nothing but what you could take and I wasn't gonna stand by and let you.

A Sucker Emcee

Craig 'muMs' Grant

Act 3. The Bronx, NY. The present.

Craig is a 45-year-old African-American, hip hop New Yorker. *A Sucker Emcee*, generally performed as a solo piece, is the exploration of the events in an autobiographical coming of age story. Throughout the play, Craig explores the experience of discovering hip hop in his youth and how it shaped his expression in all facets of life and led to a celebrated acting career in Los Angeles.

In this monologue, Craig deals with his new life since returning home to the Bronx to care for his mother who is suffering from Alzheimer's disease.

CRAIG: My mother has Alzheimer's disease.

She also has a Master's degree in early childhood education.

You should see her face when I mention

I remember her walking for her diploma, her pride she can't contain.

I was towed along to watch as she obtained her GED, her associate's degree, she got her bachelor's, then her master's.

On a doctorate path but how much schooling do you need to feed a family of four?

I thought we were the Jeffersons, thought we were rich. knew we had more than what we had when I was small.

today my mother put her clothes on backwards. her bra on the outside of a blouse.

She routinely tells me this isn't her house

the one my father bought for her

she routinely yells at me, distraught from the doubt

further down the line a fractured memory has wrought on her.

ma you want some ginger beer? you need to take your pills.

I'm now used to the tears. the apologies for years of her regrets.

it baffles me to watch the mood change on her face,

to actually watch her brain forget.

I mention her cap and gown again. She smiles and calms down again.

She says,

you remember that huh?

yes I do. you're a smart lady.

yes I am. you better not forget.

I don't. I really don't.

But I know at some point we all hit our end.

You either accept it or you don't.

but to accept it you have to...

be okay with who you've been up until this point.

the decisions you've made to follow your heart

to find where you are supposed to be.

My mother is a reminder that I can do anything I want

even if the things I want to do are not of her liking.

my father always said put yourself in a position.

not something moms understood when I was off open-micing.

today mom put the newspaper in the refrigerator,

knows she's not to go near the stove and forgot how to use the microwave.

there are days I feel overwhelmed

a lot of my relationships have faltered and I suffer in a lot of ways.

On my father's deathbed he pulled me close and said,

take care of your mother.

He knew something. He's always known something.

leave your mother alone she don't feel well

the smallest argument'll turn into a bout from hell

sometimes polars go undiagnosed...

today she raised a knife at me and threw a glass across the room.

sometimes I can make an audition or two a reading but gotta get back

uptown as soon
 as I can
 a lot of times I need to go outside just for air
 We make too much money to receive medicaid
 but not nearly enough to pay for private care.
 So I take the newspaper out of the refrigerator
 make sure she had her meals
 take her for walks, sit with her, have tea and talk at 3am
 because I know the loneliness she feels.
 and my reward is my art, for following my heart.
 for falling for a culture I couldn't help but gravitate to.
 This power to express, gave me the strength to confess
 and make clear
 this need to overcome my fear and guide me to
 right where I am supposed to be
 So I can hold my own in the cypher
 stand on my own two based on what I decipher about this world.
 The lessons for a little black boy in the Bronx kept a black man from the
 pitfalls shooting guns outside his dorm room could have caused.
 even if my arm had to come out its socket to learn
 Your heart will keep you on the path
 even if the path is subtle, barely seen in the grass.
 Even if in the substance, uncontrolled
 Our destiny is aligned with our soul
 maybe the goal in life is to spin cold crush in the baby powder alone
 somewhere before we all turn to dust
 maybe just to be proud of oneself is plenty enough.
 for me.
 I am an EMCEE
 Right where I'm supposed to be
 in the place to be where God has placed me
 6 years working in a hospital prepared me
 For what pops impressed on me
 I gotta lock the door, hold the keys or else she'll wander
 Barefoot in the street, in the cold in the snow
 I hold fast to my knowledge here

this process, through and through, I know.
 and a private 16 bars to myself, un-dough related,
 keeps me motivated
 towards my genuine glow.
 I want you to have what I have
 So, I implore you to hold onto your authenticity
 don't ever let fear make you a sucker emcee
 A sad face clown
 wearing fear like pasty make up
 Dancing off beat to life's break beat
 not really hearing a sound.
 In the deep trenches of life
 get you a good grip on the mic
 and make sure everything you say hits the back of the room
 stay on track of the tune
 you hear in your head
 fear is a warning to go full steam ahead
 Life should be a constant expansion of your comfort zone.
 stand up straight, breathe deep and be prepared for when the beat
 comes on.

Sunset Baby

Dominique Morisseau

Scene 7. An apartment in East New York. Present.

Damon and Nina have been living together as a modern day “Bonnie and Clyde. Ice Cube and Yo-Yo. Trena and Trick Daddy.” Both are drug dealers and robbers with the brilliance and capacity for much more. Nina is grappling with an estranged relationship with her father—a former Black revolutionary and political prisoner who has just resurfaced in her life. She is constantly frustrated by her boyfriend, Damon, and the parenting of his son DJ—his child from another relationship (Rene). They often differ and argue about Damon’s parenting style, and his seemingly hands-off approach to DJ. Throughout the play, Damon has defended himself as the best father he knows how to be. “I’m a man with a lotta errors, but I corrected over half of ’em just by havin’ him.” But in this moment, Damon has committed a fatherly sin that even he can’t forgive. He enters the apartment not in his normal bravado and confidence, but devastatingly aware that he isn’t who he thought he was.

DAMON: Eight years old. Eight years since I helped the doctor cut his cord. Eight birthdays and eight Chucky Cheese parties and eight candles on a fuckin’ cake. Seven times I remembered. The eighth one... I fuckin’ forgot.

(Nina looks at Damon. Says nothing. Puts on the red lipstick.)

I could say Rene set me up with that one but fuck it. Does it matter? I could say she usually calls to tell me the plan... usually asks me to buy the cake or book the arcade or foot the bill. This time she let me bake.

Planned everything behind my back. Didn’t ask me for shit. Knew I’d forget. Had too much on my mind this time. She was countin’ on that. Knew I was plannin’ to move away with you. Started arguing with me again. Been broke up over two years and she still on that jealous shit. Wouldn’t let me speak to DJ no time this whole week. Everyday I call, she got it so he’s too busy. “In the bath” “Doin’ his homework” “Visiting his cousins” “Asleep in the bed.” I let the shit roll off. Know we working these last few deals. Figure I can focus and then holler at my son when I’m outta this shit for good. See him with a clean conscious for once. And what the fuck I do? I forget his eighth birthday. Day he ain’t never gettin’ back. Not neither one of us. And I showed up to his party late. Shit was over. No present. No nothin’. And still he came and hugged me. Like I was the gift. I was the muhfuckin’ gift. *(pause)* I ain’t never felt so unworthy. But that’s my mans, right? Devoted son regardless of my bullshit. *(pause)* I wonder when he playin’ this shit back later in life, will he remember I was late. Will he remember I forgot and showed up empty-handed. Or will he just remember I was there.

Taking Over

Danny Hoch

A residential street in Brooklyn, New York in the 2000s.

A man, KIKO, 30s–40s, could be Black or Latino, stands watching the buzzing action of a film crew on his block. He gets the attention of a young production assistant named Chet and starts up a conversation, but Chet is busy and doesn't have the authority to oblige what Kiko is asking for; yet he gets caught in Kiko's friendly/intimidating conversational web.

KIKO: What's this? It's for a movie, or for TV? Like a movie, gonna be in the movie theaters? Yeah? It's somebody famous that's in it? Oh, low budget. Right. But still, it's gonna be in the movies though right? That's wild. Nah, I'm sayin', it's buggin' me out, cause they never shot a movie here before. I mean, the stuff that was going on here before, trust me, you coulda shot a million movies here. But nobody ever really came here to shoot nothing. I mean don't get me wrong, people shot things everyday, like people. But not movies.

Yeah man, I lived here my whole life. Yeah well, mostly. You see that old lady in the window right there? Yeah, that's my mother right there. Yeah, she buggin' out cause she don't believe it's a real movie shooting here, but I told her, nah it's real. It's real right? Aight. Nah, she don't wanna come down and check it out, but thank you for asking. She's scared to go outside still. From the 80s. So yeah, what's your name? Chet? "Chet." That's your name? Okay. Chet. Yeah, they call me Kiko. Kiko. Nice to meet you. It's a honor to meet a real movie person, you know. I never

met nobody that worked in a movie before. Are you the director? Oh, you a "PA." But what, that's like codename for the director though, right? You tryin' to keep it on the downlow, don't want nobody to know you the director? Oh, nah?... Oh... What?... I don't understand what you're sayin' right now. Ohhh, you talkin' on your little thing right there. My bad, sorry.

So Chet, how you got into something like this? Like, it's you got connections or whatever? Oh, you graduated film school? That's cool. Yo where you from? You not from around here right? Connecticut? Yo I got cousins in Connecticut! Where you from, like Hartford? I got cousins that's in Hartford! Oh, Middelbury. That's probably right next to Hartford. I mean, Connecticut ain't that big. Yo it's wild seeing people like you around here. I mean, not to disrespect, not like you look funny or nothin'. You look, you know, regular, like a person or whatever. But if you would have been here before—like when I was growing up. Forget it Chet. Like... you woulda been the movie man. Nah, but seriously, Chet. Lemme ask you a question. You don't need nobody to work on the movie or nothing? I mean, not as a actor. I'm not a actor. My sister's a actor. I mean, not professionally, but she be acting out all the time. But I mean you don't need somebody to carry some heavy equipment, or move something. I could lift heavy stuff. Or like, if you need security, I could be your security, cause I know a lot of people that's in the neighborhood. Or like carpet cutting? Like if you need someone to cut carpet? Cause, well, I was in upstate locked up for a little while, I just came home recently. And they taught us carpet-cutting. Like, you know, how to cut carpet. I mean, don't get me wrong I'm not a criminal or a bad person or anything. I ain't gonna lie to you, like back in the days I sold a little drugs or whatever, but the thing they bagged me for, I ain't even do. They had just rounded people up one day, and that was 15 years mandatory on that Rockefeller Law. That's not Rockefeller Ice-Skating, that's Rockefeller Laws, baby. But, I guess your past catch up with you or whatever.

But, so yeah, they taught me carpet-cutting in prison, as like a skill. But, it's a little hard to find a job right now as a carpet-cutter, so like, you don't need any carpet cut for any particular purpose? Like maybe you got a scene in the movie, and like there's some carpeting. I could cut it for you. You sure? All right. Or anything really. Like I see you got some peanuts and candy bars, soda whatever over here. That's for the actors, right?

So maybe I could take it to their trailers or whatever. Cause I seen you got those trailers parked around the corner. They don't need that? Or I see you got all those bottles of water right there. I could hand them out. Or carry them to where you might need them. I mean, Chet, don't get me wrong. It's water, people gonna drink it at some point. It's not gonna stay there wrapped in plastic on the ground forever. I could carry it for you.

You know what, you don't even gotta pay me. I'll do it for free. Cause you see, my mother's watching right now, and I just wanna show her I'm trying to do right in my life now, you know. Just let me move some stuff around. Like, just to move the waters from there to there. I can't even do that? Just from there to there? Come on Chet. From there to there. I can't touch nothing? Not even a bottle of water? Just so I could tell my mother I was working on the movie. Come on Chet. Hey yo Chet. Hey yo Chet... Hey yo, I'm talking to you man. I said, I'm TALKIN' TO YOU. I don't CARE you talkin' on your headphones or whatever, I'm standin' here havin' a CONVERSATION with you man. You don't look away from me man. Hey yo I live here man. You understand what I'm saying to you? You LOOK. AT ME.

...Hey, you know what. I'm sorry man. Chet. I'm sorry, I apologize, man. I just got angry a little man. Excuse me, Chet. Yo Chet. Excuse me, sir. Sir... Sir... that's my fault man. I'm bein' disrespectful, man. It's cool. I understand, you busy, talkin to the director probably. Hey no hard feelings, sir. All right? Please. For real, it's a honor to meet you. It's a honor to meet a real movie person, seriously. What's the name of the movie? I'ma look out for it. I'ma look for you in the movies. I'ma tell my mother I know that guy. Or in the credits, whatever. I'ma tell all my friends to go see it man, for real. You do your thing man. Good luck to you Chet. I know you gonna make it big one day. I'ma say I knew you when, right? Yeah...

Hey yo, that's my man Chet right there. Hey yo! They shootin' a movie yo! Right on our block.

The Tiger Among Us

Lauren Yee

Act I, Scene I. A middle school classroom in rural Minnesota.

Pao, a Hmong American guy in his 20s, speaks to a seventh grade class for Asian Heritage Month for the first time. As one of the few Asian-American people living in outstate Minnesota, Pao feels at odds with the Minnesota wilderness he grew up in and yearns for life in the big city, any city. At the same time, Pao feels a connection and responsibility to his younger sister Lia, a star volleyball player, and his troubled immigrant father Thao, who works as a school janitor. Today is day one of Pao's community service stint, talking to a surly group of middle school students.

PAO: Okay.

So

My name's Pao.

You can call me Mr. P.

That's cool, too, if you want.

And I know that Ms. G's out moving her car, but she said I should probably get started

...

Okay. So. Hmong.

Everyone, they wanna know what Hmong is,

Everyone around here, they like, what the fuck

—'scuse my mouth—

But they like, fuck, it's cold up in here and we're freezing our asses off
and there're all these tropical Asians showing up, I thought we were all
blonde up in here.

So I can tell you what Hmong is

But it's like real secret.

Like Imma kill you secret,

No shit.

Okay, so Hmong, we come from a bunch of different countries

We ain't got no, like, Hmong country,

Guess 'cause nobody likes us

Which I get

—I don't like me either, story of my life—

And we're from all over.

We're in China

And then fucking Chinese

—no offense, nobody's Chinese?—

Fucking Chinese, they're like fuck you.

So we go down to Laos

And fucking Laos

—or Laotians—

They're also like fuck you and they try to kill us

BUT THEY CAN'T!

'Cause we're **TROPICAL SURVIVORS!**

With the **TIGERS** and **LIONS** and flesh-eating **MONKEYS!**

We hunt those dudes for breakfast.

We eat tiger for breakfast!

Tony the Tiger kind!

'Cause we're CIA motherfuckers!

You ever hear this shit? About how the American government recruited

Hmong guys to fight the

Viet Kong for them,

'Cause I guess Asian-on-Asian violence is cheaper.

OH! And we eat snake. For the protein.

We bite the shit out of them headfirst and swallow the whole thing up.

They're like noodles to us:

Snake ramen.

That's our Thanksgiving dinner.

People're like, "oh, yeah, turkey,"

And we're like "oh, yeah, snake."

(PAO makes a snake-eating/slurping gesture/noise. Thao enters the room, wheels in his garbage bin unit. He shuffles towards the garbage can to empty the trash)

Naw, I'm just playing!

We don't really eat snake.

(Thao noisily empties the trash can. This disrupts PAO. He tries not to look at Thao. Thao finishes, wheels his garbage unit out of the room)

We have big families

And we eat a lot.

I figure that's like everyone else, but what I know.

Truth Serum Blues

Ismail Khalidi

Act 1. Scene 2. A cell in Guantanamo Bay, sometime between 2003 and 2009.

Kareem is an Arab American man in his twenties who has been physically and psychologically tortured. He speaks to the audience, as well as other real and imagined observers, from his cell in Guantanamo Bay. Throughout the play Kareem pieces together his experiences and hallucinations, taking us from the U.S., where he grew up, to the Middle East, and back to Cuba. Through patchwork memories induced by torture and truth serum (sodium pentothal), we ultimately discover, along with Kareem, how exactly it is he came to be a prisoner in Guantanamo.

This is the end of his first monologue, right before he is taken off by an interrogator. He is explaining how neither he nor the other prisoners know Bin Laden, and wondering how he ended up in this predicament.

KAREEM: Perhaps it is worth mentioning that I have yet to talk to anyone here who has ever met him, all of us just seen pictures of him on CNN and Al-jazeera. Some cats insist they've seen his tracks and others have found his droppings, but nothing more than the shit myths are made of.

(Here he kneels down and runs his fingers over the ground as if tracking an animal)

... Except one man... One man. Hadj Malik, Sector C. While herding his flock of sheep in the hills of Eastern Afghanistan, swears he saw Bin Laden's silhouette:

"clear as a clip from the T.V., tall and slender, rising above the horizon, speaking on a big cell phone from the eighties"... he said the towering Bin Laden "scare the sheep away"... of course, they—the interrogators—misunderstood him. Thought he said Bin Laden scared the JEEP away, which lead to some questions like: "Who exactly was inside that Jeep you smelly fuck!?!?!?" Malik, taken aback, could only reply that: "No one entered the sheep sir, man, it is haram to fornicate with Sheep in Islam"...(beat)...lost in translation I guess. Happens all the time here.

(Kareem 'irons' and 'inspects' his jumpsuit, now spread on the floor, while talking...)

My father used to give us lectures on Arab history, about Salah al-Din freeing Jerusalem from the invading crusading barbarians...I listened as he talked between innings. See, Pops taught us about baseball and Holy Wars, but never taught us kids to be religious...just history, politics and baseball, stats and dates, the recitations and repetitions of invasions and uprisings, '48, '67, '82, '87, '91, '96, '2000, '2002, '03, '06, '08, What's next?

Can't say. But like clockwork, it's about that time to take my orange ass to the high priest for confession...

(He starts to put on the orange jumpsuit)

You know, they say we're in a slump! They say the Arabs are in a slump, prompting questions like: "What went wrong? Why do they hate us???" And on paper the slump theory holds some water. I mean Crusade after crusade and a lot of bad decisions and backstabbing thrown in over the centuries has left us with slumped shoulders to say the least... But I don't speak for the Arab mind.

Nope, can't speak for the Arab mind any more than the African mind or the white European mind... But, I think I know what you're thinking.

(He is now fully dressed, buttoning up the final buttons of the orange suit)

Your thinking: "My, he speaks so well. His English really is so good for one of...*them!*"

So how did I end up here? I whose mechanics with a bat and a ball far outshine my mechanics for submission to a higher power or ignition of soaring towers?

I don't know. Maybe it's my name. Or my beard. Or perhaps in the end the answer can only be that sometimes terrorism is just...a state...of mind...a state of guilt we cant escape.

The Whipping Man

Matthew Lopez

Act I. Scene 3. Richmond, VA. April 14, 1865. The ruins of a once-grand home in Richmond, VA, a few days after the end of the Civil War.

John, a recently-freed slave in his early 20s, is holed up in the ruins of the once-grand home he spent his life enslaved in. With him are Simon, an older former house slave, and Caleb, the son of their former master. Caleb, recently returned home from the war, is recuperating from a leg amputation administered by Simon a few nights before. As the men hide from the chaos of a war-torn Richmond and wait for news of their families, they begin to wrestle with their shared history as master and slaves. Caleb is unrepentant about his family's history of slave-owning, claiming (with no small amount of support by Simon) that things could have been quite worse for them had they been enslaved by a different, less beneficent family.

In this speech, John recalls the first time he was sent to see The Whipping Man, a man whose vocation it was to punish and discipline recalcitrant slaves, in an attempt to put the lie to Caleb and Simon's assertion that Caleb's family were "good slave owners" or that they were treated "like part of the family."

JOHN: Lizbeth used to say to Sarah and me: "you listen to Mr. DeLeon. You do as you told. Or they gonna send you to the Whipping Man. The Whipping Man gonna take all the skin off your back." He was like the devil, the Whipping Man. Smelled of whiskey, sweat and shit, like

he hadn't bathed in years. Probably hadn't. He'd pick up the slaves and put them in chains and take them to his shop. There were blood stains on the walls. And a large collection of bullwhips, too. He used them depending on his mood. First time I was sent there, he used a pearl-handled bullwhip.

Didn't he, Caleb?

Caleb and his father came with me the first time I was sent. Did you know that, Simon? Mr. DeLeon felt things were getting too chummy around here between me and Caleb. Between us and the DeLeons. Felt Caleb didn't fully appreciate the true relationship between a master and his slave. So off we all went. To learn.

What happened first, Caleb? You remember?

Caleb and his father stood in the corner and watched as the Whipping Man put me on my knees. Didn't you, Caleb? The Whipping Man took off my shirt. He attached my hands to two leather straps. And I was whipped.

(On "whipped," John stomps the floor with his foot then claps his hands together. The sound he makes is a rhythmic "boom-smack.")

And whipped.

(Boom-smack!)

And whipped.

(Boom-smack!)

And whipped.

(Boom-smack!)

Wasn't I, Caleb?

Then in the middle of the whipping, I heard Caleb's voice.

"Stop!" he yelled. "Stop!"

I thought to myself, "Caleb is saving me. Caleb is rescuing me. Caleb cares about me."

And then I heard Caleb say to his father, "I want to do it myself."

The Whipping Man handed Caleb the pearl-handled bullwhip. And Caleb whipped me.

Didn't you, Caleb? You whipped me.

(Boom-SMACK!)

And whipped me.

(Boom-SMACK!)

And whipped me.

(Boom-SMACK!)

(Boom-SMACK!)

(Boom-SMACK!)

That's when we stopped being as close as you remember, Simon.