Spring 5-13-2016

The Effects of Politics and Media on America: Creating the Role of Lainie Wells in Lee Blessing's Two Rooms

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The Effects of Politics and Media on America:
Creating the Role of Lainie Wells in Lee Blessing’s *Two Rooms*.

Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the University of New Orleans in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts in Performance (Film and Theatre Department)

By

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B.A. in Theatre, Jackson State University, 2012

May 2016
DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my mother, Gloria Brown, for her continuing support, parenting, and sacrifices she made to ensure that I would complete my education as a teen mother after graduating high school and to my intelligent, loving, and charismatic son, Ja’Corey, for being my motivation to not give up and for his unwavering, prevailing love. I thank my son for the love and light he gave me to be the best I can be. Having my son as an inspiration pushed me to not only beat statistics as a teen mother but shaped me in being the mother and woman I am today. I never knew love and perseverance until I became a mother at the age of sixteen. A recent study stated that fifty percent of teen mothers will not graduate high school, less than ten percent will receive their Bachelor’s Degree, and less than one percent will obtain a Master’s and/or Doctoral Degree. As a single mother pursuing a career as an actress, moving five hours away from my family and a support system with 400 dollars might have seemed absurd to many, but the God I serve told me otherwise. My child has truly been an inspiration for me to never be a statistic nor fall into a “stereotype”. When the world tells me I cannot, the light my son possesses shines so bright even during the darkest day; he reminds me of every reason I can. Lastly, I dedicate this to every young girl in America who was counted out based on statistics, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. I will never know what it feels like to be a “Traditional Student.” At times it was challenging; however, what a joy it has been sharing this experience with those family members and friends who supported me along the way.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to give honor to God who is the head of my life. Without his guidance, grace, and favor, completing a program such as this would never have been possible. I stand as a testament that God does not choose the qualified but always qualifies the chosen. To my loving mother, Gloria Brown; sister and best friend, Jessica Brown, thank you for being there during the toughest and greatest times of my life. To my father and stepmother, Jeffrey and Linda Callington; my sister, Kelly Williams; my cousins Julie Brown, Keita Loggins, Rieka Loggins, Christine Brown, Patricia Brown, Charleen Brown-Baxter, and a host of aunts, uncles, and cousins, thank you for your support and encouraging words along the way. I would like to send a special thanks to Mrs. Deborah Duplesis-Washington for your support and assistance with the care of my son during those late night rehearsals despite my faults and hardships.

To all my professors and family mentors who have bestowed upon me their support, wisdom, and knowledge, I am forever grateful to have you in my life while growing as a woman, mother, student, and working professional. Once again, I cannot name all of you but would like to list a few: My favorite teacher and mentor, Tarsha Manning “Ms.Bey”; Dr. Nadia Bodie-Smith, Dr. Mark G. Henderson, Reggie and Julie Clayton, Charlene Baxter, and Jennifer Brown, and again, most of all, my wonderful son, Ja’Corey Hughes.

Last, thank you to my family and friends in New Orleans who witnessed my matriculation in Graduate School. This has been a challenging yet wonderful, and memorable, three years spent with all of you. To my performance classmates, Tiffany, David, Sarah Beth, Meghan, and Vinnie, I shall always cherish our work and diversity to create and embrace this art we love.
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ABSTRACT

Two Rooms, by Lee Blessings, was selected for performance at the University of New Orleans during the fall of 2015. I studied and portrayed the role of Lainie Wells as my thesis project. The purpose of my thesis was to research a character physically, psychologically, and emotionally as an actress and create a character through the eyes of Lainie Wells.

The following is a brief breakdown of the structure of my written thesis: biography of Lee Blessing, hostage families and their mental state as it relates to the Iranian hostage crisis, mass media effects on Syria, The Hunt for Bin Laden, the rehearsal process, and a scored script including all actions and objectives; a review of my work, my own conclusions based on my process and character arc, photographs of my performance, a professional headshot along with my resume to highlight the significance to my work as an artist.

Keywords: Ivana Chubbuck, Two Rooms, Lee Blessing, Acting, Actress, Academy Award, Acting Process, American government, Media, and Arielle Brown.
**Introduction**

“Life beats down and crushes the soul and art reminds you that you have one.” - Stella Adler

Life makes you forget who and what you are but art helps you understand your purpose; it gives new meaning to life. My explorations of artistry began as a toddler drawing, which displayed my charismatic attitude. However, it was not until age nine that I grew a love for acting and the theatre. Auditioning for my very first theatre production, *Santa Sings the Blues*, was scary yet liberating. I was able to channel my energetic yet budding personality into something that was conducive to me as a performing artist. The theatre was the first and only place I was able to escape reality and explore the beauty of imagination; it gave me a new, invigorating outlook on life. Not knowing much about the performing arts nor the approach to acting, I had an innate ability during the audition and landed the main role of Mrs. Claus. I remember waiting for the cast list to be posted as if it was yesterday. A few days had passed due to a high number of auditioning participants of fourth and fifth graders. At the end of the week, announcements were made over the intercom informing the students that the cast had been selected. As soon as the bell rang, I ran down the hall to the auditorium, and there it was typed out: “Mrs. Claus-Bianca Brown.” I was so grateful for the opportunity, not realizing that at that very moment my life would change for the better. As any new performing artist does, I learned my lines and was eager to learn all about theatre. What started out as a new venture quickly became a passion and outlet for me to express myself. I went on to act in other musicals in elementary school.

Upon arriving at middle school, the arts were not as relevant and present as elementary school. However, I still needed a place to practice the craft of acting, which led me to pursue art
musically and vocally by entering the school choir and band. This gave me a new level of appreciation for the performing arts. The process was challenging yet it gave me a high level of satisfaction with life.

It was not until my sophomore year in undergraduate school that I realized theatre and acting were more than a childhood hobby. Initially majoring in social work and feeling a great deal of displeasure, I decided to change my major my junior year of college to theatre. This decision was one of the best choices of my life. Because I found art again, life became brighter and my purpose became clearer.

Although there are many forms of art, as a young child my true love for the arts was discovered in acting. I believe the art of acting allows one to explore the imagination and use both negative and positive factors in life in an advantageous manner that is both therapeutic and prolific for any actor. When you see art, one is reminded of the beauty of life. Art is 'soulful,' whereas life alone is soul sucking. Ivana Chubbuck states that “she teaches actors how to win because this is what people do in real life! They go after what they want. Interesting and dynamic people go after what they want in interesting and dynamic ways, creating greater emotion and intensity in realizing these goals” (Chubbuck 23). Acting is ultimately an art of being; one must understand the human body and mind to ensure that each deriving conflict is alleviated in a scene that is like reality.

Part of artistry for me is the journey of self-discovery. One must be inspired through observation to produce. Creating is recreating. The dictionary defines create as “to produce” or “generate something new”. Nowhere does it say it has to be original. You may find many things that are new; however, authenticity in its originality can be challenged, as we find many things recreated or stemmed from other sources in today's society. Another factor that sparked my
interest to master the art of acting in a way that was compelling and complex was by observing those who came before me. I have been inspired by those whom I deem as great: Angela Bassett, Loretta Devine, Meryl Streep, Denzel Washington, and Lupito Nyong’o. All of these artists, with the exception of Mr. Washington, have their Master of Fine Art degree in Performance.

There is always something as an artist that triggers your imagination and creativity to make it better. My goal was to be inspired from the best and master the art that I love. As a painter, you may view a painting and become motivated to recreate based on your perception. As a writer, you may read a book and decide it had great characters; however, the plot line was not sufficient, so you decide to recreate that story. Even as an actor, you may watch an actual being and become inspired to imitate that person within a character you have taken on. This mindset has always been my approach and my gift as an actress.

It was not until my collegiate years that I became confident enough to pursue acting as a young adult more seriously. Having obtained junior status in social work, I decided I would change my life and embark on a new milestone. I found my love again at the Rose E. McCoy auditorium at Jackson State University. After changing my major, I had to become acclimated in the Speech and Theatre Department. By then, their main actors were already predetermined and cast in the season productions, so that did not leave much room for main stage opportunities. This created a level of disappointment for me, because I knew it was vital for me to learn the craft while simultaneously gaining practical base experience on the stage before graduating. Although I entered the Speech and Theatre Department with no theatre credits, I was determined to graduate with the same prospective date prior to the change, which in return resulted in zero experience for me as an actor upon graduating. Fortunately, I gained experience afterwards on stage with the local community theatre, the Actor’s Playhouse, as well as some professional
work through my talent agent. Therefore, my undergraduate experience became the second reason for my pursuit of a master’s degree.

Upon entering graduate school at the University of New Orleans, I had three goals in mind: gain experience as an actress with a more diverse approach (Jackson State University is a historically black college university), increase my skills and experience as an actress, and learn as much as I could on a graduate level to later pursue professorship. I can honestly say I was able to do all of those things.

During my matriculation as a MFA Student, these have been three of the most intense years of my life. I never knew how much I love the art of acting and how strong I was until I was faced with the challenges presented at the University of New Orleans. Although my goals were met at the time, my experience fell short of my expectations. I expected to gain opportunities onstage in full length productions, resulting from nontraditional casting throughout my three years of graduate studies that would have given me a diverse level of experience. However, after only making one brief appearance on the main stage of the Nims Theatre, my expectations fell short to one cameo appearance along with a non-speaking role in a different production. In addition, I expected to work as an ensemble onstage and offstage with my fellow graduating class, have assistantship opportunities for experience needed for collegiate jobs, and gain more practical experience to become a better performing artist. Unfortunately, I was not afforded those opportunities.

My objective as an actress is to have a tridimensional character that is truthful, with an effective voice for my performances. Those dimensions consist of the physical, social, and psychological element of the character. Mastering the craft of acting has always been the reason for pursuing my studies on a graduate school level. During my undergraduate years, I was unable
to gain experience in any of the productions. I chose the University of New Orleans to seek diverse opportunities and experience on the stage to gain a level of mastery in the area of Performance. With this purpose and goal in mind, the opportunities were not present as expected, which altered my overall experience. This educational journey has been like emerging from a cocoon. Coming in as a caterpillar, I did not know much and was eager to learn all I could. Like the beginning stages of a butterfly, I experienced the pressures of adversity and challenge. Ultimately, pressing through those rough stages, I am evolving into something more beautiful than where I started entering the Master of Fine Arts Program. I am thankful for this experience, because it taught me humility and the true beauty of being an actress. I truly believed I went through the same stages of a caterpillar metaphorically evolving into a more competitive, experienced actress. Because of those experiences, I was able to grow and evolve into a well-rounded individual in life. This journey has been an opportunity for me to grow positively as a strong, determined artist.

My greatest strength as an actress is my ability to take on dramatic roles that are multifaceted and being able to perform them realistically. Although many stray away from techniques that force one to be vulnerable emotionally, I choose to use the style that forces me to be in the moment and feel real emotion. I always try to refrain from being a “mechanical actress”. As Ivana Chubbuck states in her book Chubbuck Technique: The Power of the Actor, “The difference between the Chubbuck Technique and those developed in the past is that I teach actors how to use their emotions not as an end result, but as a way to empower a goal. My technique teaches actors how to win. I teach actors how to win because this is what people do in real life” (Chubbuck 224). This approach to acting allowed me to make discoveries for both my
character and myself as an actress. My goal has been to abstain from playing a victim under victimizing circumstances.

The Chubbuck technique was the technique I used during my performance. It is designed to take me from the script to a living, breathing, and dynamic character. Although the Chubbuck Technique is closely related to key principles of Stanislavski’s System, I used the magic “if”, Super Objective, Emotional Recall to seek more discoveries as needed based on the text and the scoring of the script, both as the character as well as the actress.

Ivana Chubbuck states that her “technique will teach you how to use your traumas, emotional pains, obsessions, travesties, needs, desires and dreams to fuel and drive your character’s achievement of a goal. You’ll learn that the obstacles of your character’s life are not meant to be accepted but to be overcome, in heroic proportions. In other words, my technique teaches actors how to win. Aristotle defined the struggle of the individual to win as the essence of all drama more than two thousand years ago” (http://www.ivanachubbuck.com). A Practical Handbook for the Actor explains that a good action must be physically capable of being done, fun to do, specific, have its test in the other person, and be in line with the intentions of the playwright (Bruder 14). Stanislavski studied how people acted in everyday life and then found a way to bring this genuineness onstage through his acting technique which is the foundation for many acting styles today. I collectively utilized the techniques I listed and formulated my own personal style of acting that was the most effective for me in ensuring a believable, tri-dimensional character that was reproduced for every performance.

I articulated my work, in reference to my voice and diction, through continuing vocal exercises from Kristin Linklater. An effective, expressive voice will be a very significant element that is required for a role like Lainie Wells due to the emotional stakes she endures.
Throughout the play, Lainie goes through a plethora of psychological and emotional battles that affect her vocally, both privately as well as in her conversations with the other characters. I recorded these discoveries in my journal throughout the process. In the play, Lainie Wells is on the verge of hitting her breaking point. She has been waiting for the arrival of her husband for the past year and is at the point where she begins to clear out his office. This is a metaphor for clearing her mind, which seems to be filled with chaos. Lainie Wells is not a victim by any means.

Although I had many reservations on not being able to choose my thesis role along with the production not being on the thrust stage and unequal investments, as any professional actress, I redirected my focus to my thesis assignment. The thesis will include the biography of Lee Blessing, the acting process using The Ivana Chubbuck Technique, The Actor’s Handbook, and Stanislavski’s System. During my research, I approached the character through the eyes of a woman who wants to win; she hurts but robustly presses through. The conclusion reflects the progression I made based on my journal entries. I reverted back to A Practical Handbook for the Actor, advised by Professor Hoover, to facilitate actions/tactics.

Nevertheless, I would not trade this experiences for anything in the world. Because of adversity, I was able to grow as an actress in ways I could have never imagined. Am I the same actress who auditioned four years ago? Would I have become a better actor by not entering this program? Have I grown as an actress since leaving undergraduate school? Could I deal with the challenges and rejection of the professional world if I had not entered graduate school? What opportunities has fate positioned me for upon completion of my degree? These are all the questions I asked myself as I entered my final year in preparation for my thesis. All the experiences within the Film and Theatre Department have facilitated me in becoming the actress
I am today. Therefore, I am forever in debt to this institution and truly grateful for the opportunity. It is here that I begin my discussion of how I was able to approach and make a connection with a character like Lainie Wells in the production of *Two Rooms.*
**Biography of Playwright**

One of the unique elements of the University of New Orleans’ production of *Two Rooms* is that the director planned to change the time period from the 1980s to the present day, almost thirty years later. Unfortunately, this is a reflection of the ongoing, unresolved issues in our government. This concept inspired my efforts of wanting to compare and contrast the government during the 1980s both in America and the Middle East to our current situation. I believe this approach gave me a better understanding and appreciation of the script and what is going on in the world today. Prior to rehearsal, I planned to research and analyze the differences and similarities between the American Government of the 1980s and today. I researched Lee Blessing’s background to get an understanding from his perspective.

Lee Blessing, also known as Lee Knowlton Blessing, is an American playwright born on October 4th, 1949 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Mr. Blessing grew up in a theatrical community in Minneapolis until he reached adulthood. He studied at the University of Minnesota and later transferred to Reed College in Portland, Oregon, to complete his Bachelor’s in English in 1971. In 1974, he began pursuing his Master of Fine Arts Degree in English at the University of Iowa. It was not until his matriculation in graduate school, that he would find his passion for playwriting. Due to his newfound love and success in playwriting, Mr. Blessing received his second MFA from the University of Iowa in Speech and Theater. While studying at the University of Iowa, he wrote his first published work, *The Authentic Life of Billy the Kid*. This play is inspired by a historical story. It is about a man named Sheriff Garrett, who killed the outlaw Billy the Kid by accident. As the play evolves, we see the Billy who was allegedly killed may have been someone else, and the real Billy emerges years later. Playwright Lee Blessing stirred up the facts surrounding the death of the famed outlaw, who was supposedly shot by
Sheriff Pat Garrett, and followed them up with his own scenario, provoking questions surrounding the incident. His first success, staged originally as a student production at Iowa, went on to win the American College Theater Festival’s National Playwriting Award in 1979 and was performed at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. The Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival is a festival held annually in the United States. Blessing’s original title for this production was “The Real Billy the Kid”. “The Authentic Life of Billy the Kid” is actually a revised version of the award-winning play.

Even from his earliest success, Blessing depicts a certain style of writing that suggests his creative and skillful blend of fact and fiction. Pat F. Garrett, Ashmon Upson, Billy, and Jim P. Miller all put on tough fronts but still reveal vulnerability in this production. We see similar features in his work Two Rooms. Though it would be eight years before his Broadway success with A Walk in the Woods, Blessing was quite productive in the years following his graduation from Iowa. Between the years of 1982 and 1985, he formed two of his most prominent professional relationships of his career, that being with the Actors Theatre of Louisville and the O’Neill Theater Center. The Actors Theatre premiered his first four professional productions, and six of his plays have gone through workshop readings at the O’Neill Theater Center.

Playwright Lee Blessing delivered the keynote address at the celebration of the Eugene O’Neill’s 115th birthday. He claimed, cleverly and humorously, that “prizes are the shorthand of esteem.” Speaking directly to the students of the National Theater Institute and their parents in attendance; as well as a large public gathering of O’Neill fans and scholars, Blessing listed his real awards for writing for the theater: the respect from excellent directors, exciting working relationships, the good opinions of friends, the discovery of his own voice, and individual feedback from the audience.
Eugene O’Neill would have definitely supported the works of Lee Blessing based on reviews listed as well as his ironic approach to public recognition. Much like O’Neill, Mr. Blessing did not write for awards but to provide a reflection of society. Dodging the reputation of awards, Lee Blessing encouraged prospective playwrights to write in response to society; we see much of this in his work with Two Rooms.

*Two Rooms* centers on the American government and media as well as the Middle East hostage crisis. Mr. Blessing’s writing speaks for America, both past and present. Although this particular play was written during the 1980’s, his style of writing is timeless due to its relevance in relation to current society. In *Two Rooms*, a man is kidnapped and held hostage for three years. How does he survive? How does his wife respond? How much does his government care? How does the media cover the facts? These are the questions asked by Lee Blessing. Based on my observation, Blessing is the type of playwright who likes vast issues that are still present, relevant, and controversial. Lee Blessing’s style of writing provokes critical thinking. What is really going on in America and International Affairs?
The Ivana Chubbuck Technique

“Acting is a complex and elusive art to define. Every actor knows that discovering and understanding your personal pain is an inherent part of the acting process. This has been true since Stanislavski. The difference between the Chubbuck Technique and those developed in the past is that I teach actors how to use their emotions not as an end result, but as a way to empower a goal. My technique teaches actors how to win” (Chubbuck 84).

The Chubbuck Technique is an acting style I have been studying for three and a half years. It was introduced to me by one of my private acting coaches. Before the Chubbuck Technique, a lot of my approach to acting stemmed from the Meissner Technique, Uta Hagen, and the Stanislavski System. Although there are many techniques out there that meet a variety of needs for the actor, I gravitated and found satisfaction through the Chubbuck Technique. As life becomes more complex, there are more methods of acting being created. I found the Chubbuck Technique to be the most beneficial. I believe acting comes from a place of liberty and vulnerability. Being able to free one’s self and open up to the world, while allowing them to have an aesthetic experience simultaneously, is art.

The Chubbuck Technique is an acting process of ten steps. While researching the character of Lainie Wells, I wanted to use my own personal experiences and place myself in the mindset of someone with such a contradictory personality. In addition, I referred back to the Practical Handbook for the Actor for guidance in discovering clear actions for the character I would be portraying. I wanted to make sure my actions were strong and clear. More importantly, I wanted those actions to be motivated by truth and purpose. What is my goal? What are my obstacles? What are my tactics? What are my expectations? These are the questions I ask myself during the initial phase when approaching a role as an actress.
The first step of Ivana Chubbuck’s Technique is the Overall Objective. The Overall Objective was a term I learned using the Stanislavski System. It is the ultimate goal of the character and what they want the most in life. The Overall Objective drives the smaller Scene Objective and helps fuel the through line of actions. Lainie Wells wanted to be reunited with her husband, who has been taken hostage in the Middle East. She wants him alive and back in the United States as a freed man. As an actress, it was my job to understand the exposition of the story. I knew in order to truly make the connection needed for such a strong objective, it would require me to understand the relationship between her and Michael, her husband, along with knowing the stakes. As Chubbuck says, “The Overall Objective is the tool that gives the script a beginning, middle, and end. It defines the journey for the actor as well as for the audience.” (Chubbuck 7) This discovery gave me a level of purpose that drove my emotion to a state of power. While establishing my Super Objective, I wanted to be cautious of not falling into a victimizing position based on the goal I sought throughout the scene. I ultimately wanted to win.

The Chubbuck Technique teaches you how to win both in life and as the character. The Overall Objective was my first step toward realizing the character of Lainie Wells. “An actor must learn to use emotions, not as an end result, but as a tool to provide the passion to overcome the conflict of the script” (Chubbuck 7). The urgency derived from my need to reach my objective, ultimately gave me a solid foundation to work on. Even in today’s society, human nature tells us to think with our emotions and not logically during intense situations. There is a reason why attorneys never represent themselves in court. Therefore, I knew my Overall Objective had to be personalized; it was not over-intellectualized, however, it possessed the basic human need that drove the scenes forward.
The Second Step in the Chubbuck process is Scene Objective. The Scene Objective has a smaller purpose. Its goal is to find what the character wants over the course of the entire scene. During the process of scoring my script, I found many Scene Objectives for Lainie Wells. In the first scene, the conflict was clear: man vs. man. Lainie challenged herself several times within the scene. The Scene Objective was to find peace with the absence of Michael Wells. In the scene, I talked to myself as well as went to a place of delusional imagery to cope with the pain and have a means of talking to Michael spiritually. “The Overall Objective is the broad strokes of what your character seeks throughout the whole script. The Scene Objective is the precise way that you’re going to achieve the Overall Objective; it fulfills it” (Chubbuck 19).

Does the objective serve my overall goal and how? Do my scene objectives provoke a response from the other character/characters? Each of these questions initiated the process of discovering my Scene Objectives. It was important for me to choose objectives that would affect the other characters throughout each scene. In class, Professor Hoover refers to clear, strong actions landing on the other character as a tennis match. The Practical Handbook for the Actor states, “The test of the action should be in the other person. The action is the physical pursuance of a specific goal, and that specific goal must have to do with the other person” (Bruder 15).

“Winning is only satisfying when there is a possibility of failure. The possibility of failure emanates from obstacles” (Chubbuck 41). The third step is Obstacles. Obstacles give passion and power to one’s objective making the goal harder to achieve. As I analyzed the obstacles, I realized there were many obstacles that Lainie was facing. I structured these obstacles with identifying them within the constraints of Man vs. Man, Man vs. Self, and Man vs. Nature.

Man vs. Self: Lainie Wells was in denial about everything that had transpired after her husband went missing. As Lainie, I had many challenges of whether I wanted to blame myself or blame
those who took him. As much as Lainie loved her husband, she questions herself on handling things more differently. What if Lainie and Michael had just left sooner? Could Lainie have done more? Can Lainie do more now? Is Michael alive? Is Michael dead? Who can Lainie trust? Can Lainie even trust herself? These were the questions I asked myself as I made new discoveries of obstacles that seemed to spiral out of control. Man vs. Man: Walker, the reporter, was an obstacle in many occurrences. I felt as though, as Lainie Wells, he was only there to help me for the benefit of obtaining a great, headlining story. Is this journalist a truth-seeker or a sensationalist? Is he after the real facts or only those that fit his expectations? However, out of desperation this was an obstacle/risk I was willing to accept.

Ellen, on the other hand, was a government official. She became an obstacle from the moment I met her due to her affiliation with the government and their many secrets. As each scene progressed, I continued to overcome the obstacles due to the conflict that each of the characters presented. As an actress, I identified my physical, emotional, and mental obstacles and assessed them in the eyes of Lainie Wells. I believe acting is a reflection of life. The only way to truly learn and connect to the opposition in the storyline, is to live through it as Lainie Wells with every opportunity that is presented. For example, many times my obstacles were not found within the scene or lines themselves, but as the result of the actions and words of the other characters.

In the next step of my research and process, I had to look at how those obstacles related to my life. If I was going to take on the challenges as if they were my own, I needed to personalize them. “It’s important to use real people in your acting work because you do not know how you will really behave in front of a person when there is a lot at risk. You think you do, but you do not” (Chubbuck 54). After first reading the script, I knew there would be several times of rereading that would be required in order for me to truly get a clear, descriptive image of the scenes
developing psychologically. The fourth step in Ivana Chubbuck’s technique is Substitution. She states, “Substitution is endowing the other actor in the scene with characteristics of a person from your real life who best represents the need expressed in your scene objective.” It was my job as an actress, to personalize the obstacles I identified in the script to make sense of my substitution choice. My substitution gave me immediate history with the other characters and the emotional elements needed to portray Lainie Wells as a tri-dimensional character. Life is complex and so are people. I wanted to create a world within Two Rooms that would have many layers depicting life truthfully and those involved within it. Two Rooms was inspired by factual evidence we see in American history. Therefore, as an actress, I did not take this process lightly. The questions I ask myself came from tool four in the Chubbuck Technique. Who do I most need to get my Scene Objective from? Who is most unlikely to give it to me?

Using this technique brought the possibility of failure into the equation, which created impulsiveness. As an actor, I did not want to look rehearsed nor did I want to appear predictable. Although, I am not married nor have I experienced a family member being held hostage in another country, it was vital for me to have emotional desires that were parallel and reflected those of Lainie. “The Substitution you choose colors and changes what choices you make for all the inner work, including the mental images that are created by what it is you are talking about and what it is you are hearing. These are your Inner Objects” (Chubbuck 74).

Inner Objects are the fifth step in this process. Inner objects are the images and pictures one sees when hearing or speaking of a particular person, place, or thing. Inner images creates specificity for me as an actress. The play Two Rooms, opens up with a monologue given by me as Lainie Wells talking to Michael, of who is not physically there, and to myself. The monologue states, “I was talking to myself. All last night, taking the furniture out of this room, I was talking
to myself. It’s not the worst habit; besides what else have I been doing? Talking to everyone in power which is of course the definition of talking to yourself.” The monologue goes on but there is a clear connection of imagery as she talks to herself as if she sees her husband on the mat as well as the experiences she encountered the previous nights. Inner objects helped me make the playwright’s words my own. It was my job to personalize the words of Lee Blessing by making them my own. “Inner Objects are enormously effective when working with material that is rich in jargon, be it political-speak, financial lingo, psychobabble, science or techno-gibberish.” (Chubbuck 81) Lainie Wells studied warblers as her profession, it was important for me to understand and visualize all she made reference to when communicating to those around her.

The next step in the Chubbuck Technique are Beats and Actions. “A beat is a thought change. Actions are mini-objectives attached to each beat. Beats and actions are the various approaches one takes to achieve the scene objective” (Chubbuck 93). Beats and Actions allow the actor to work moment to moment; a direct correlation in identifying tactics. Tactics are those strategies and actions one uses to get what they want from the other person/character in order to achieve their goal. If you do not require a response from the other person, it weakens the goal and one’s ability to win in the scene. The Chubbuck Technique is all about the actor having power. Beats are an indication of new thoughts. Actions can alter the meaning and intentions behind the delivery of words which may affect the other character/person. Beats and Actions give the character power to manipulate the other character to get closer to what he/she desires. It was my aim to identify as Lainie Wells, a plethora of tactics, so I would be one step closer to getting my husband (Michael Wells).

The seventh step in the acting process is the Moment Before. The Moment Before is important because it gives the character purpose and reasoning. “The Moment Before is the event
that happens before you begin the scene and gives you a place to come from, both physically and emotionally” (Chubbuck 107). The most honest way of approaching a character and entering a scene is to emerge yourself in the life of the character. As Lainie, it was important for me to embody the character based on the given circumstances that transpired prior to what the text indicated.

Based on this technique, I had to ask myself three questions in order to establish my Moment Before for Lainie Wells.

A. What do I want?

B. Why do I want it so badly? At this point, I was able to access everything leading up to this in reference to the obstacles, inner objects, and my substitutions I used.

C. Why do I want it so badly, right now? This gave me an immediacy and an urgency to reach my objective.

This technique allowed me to be motivated in the scenes based on my Moment Before. In Two Rooms, my initial Moment Before was that I had lost my child in a custody battle and I needed to get him back. This for me was pretty intense and powerful. I knew I had to make my moment before event choice come from a relatively sensitive point of view with an emotional attachment that could be imaginable. Although this has not happened, the thought of it happening was intense enough for me to want to get him back; and in the eyes of Lainie Wells, get my husband back.

The next step was the eighth tool in Ivana Chubbuck’s Technique called Place and Fourth Wall. “Endowing your character’s physical reality with attributes from a place and fourth wall from your real life” (Chubbuck 124). Approaching this step was not as simple as it appeared. Although Lainie Wells was in her home, I knew based on this process it had to be a specific place from my “real life”. “Every place from your life has an emotional base. It does not matter how
innocuous a place seems to be, an event has occurred there that has some form of an emotional attachment. You must choose place that has the most powerful emotional connections to produce the highest dramatic intent” (Chubbuck 133). The place I had to find from my life would not be the one that most replicates the actual place indicated by the script. Instead, I would have to think of the place from my life that invites the obstacles and works with my substitution for the character of Michael Wells. Placing Michael in a place that felt like home and peace gave my performance truth. “Though the power of Place and Fourth Wall is less obvious, it is essential for maintaining and intensifying the emotions that the other tools induce” (Chubbuck 141). This step forces one to stay present, blocking out all external factors like the audience and sometimes even yourself as “the actor”. In many instances, as an actor, I may find myself judging my performance briefly taking me out of the scene. Ultimately, establishing Place and Fourth Wall strengthens the emotional reality and gives an actor a place to be vulnerable within those barriers eliminating inner judgments and spectators; it gives you privacy that brings the focus one needs to deliver the script in a way that is honest and compelling.

The ninth step is Doings. Doings are the managements of props to harvest a behavior. “All the things that people do in life are doing—brushing your hair while speaking, washing the dishes, getting ready for bed, setting the table for company, cooking, primping and cleaning” (Chubbuck 150). Actions speak louder than words is a phrase that is very common to many. Body language has and always will be the universal language in the world, but more importantly exposes what one is feeling. Words can lie, however, behavior always tells the truth. One’s behavior is reflected in his/her body language that ultimately expresses your mood, objective, and /or physical ailment.

As an actor, my focus while creating the physicality of the character was to have a connection between my mind and body that gave me honest reactions so that I could express the
‘who am I’ of the character. Knowing the ‘who am I’ allows me to understand what motivates and stimulates Lainie Wells to respond the way she does. I believe that it is important to have a strong stage presence as it relates to the character, while allowing the audience to witness compelling performances that are initiated from within. Doing tells one who they are. When the stakes are high, we do a lot. It is the idiosyncrasies that tells a captivating story of an individual. This statement is reflected in scene one as Lainie is moving the carpet to different areas of the room as she talks to herself. This specific doing also altered my delivery because it brought a sense of unpredictability to the scene based on what I was dealing with internally. Ivana Chubbuck states that, “Doings reveal your character’s modus operandi” (Chubbuck 288). Part of the discovery of creating a character is finding how you operate in certain situations. This personalizes the scene and brings depth to a tri-dimensional character.

The tenth step is the Inner Monologue. The inner monologue are those thoughts that you think but never state. While inner objects are pictures in one’s mind that allows the actor to connect to the text, inner monologue is the actual dialogue in one’s mind. The inner monologue creates complexity for a character. In real life, what we are thinking may not be what is being stated. Inner monologue gives an individual something to say when there is no dialogue. “Inner monologue can give purpose and magnitude to scripted moments that seem mundane or insignificant” (Chubbuck 181). Realistically, an individual’s mind will continue to think even when one is not talking. The art of acting is living truthfully under imaginary circumstances. The inner monologue for me is vital because it will display more than what the text has allowed me to say.

Step eleven in the Chubbuck Technique is Previous Circumstances. Previous Circumstances are the character’s history that makes them who they are. As one will find in my
research, it was imperative that I understood the dilemmas of which I was undergoing as Lainie Wells. What happens in your life affects your way of thinking and shapes who you are. Applying Previous Circumstances are a necessity when approaching any character. It gives you meaning and reasoning as to why you must fulfill your goal. Moreover, it becomes a way to heal the past so that one can cultivate an opportunity for catharsis.

Researching the history of the American Government as it relates to International Affairs, the Media, and American Hostages helped me connect to my purpose and understanding of the guilt, abandonment, and hurt of Lainie Wells. Who a person is today is shaped by their past experiences. “Previous Circumstances will stop the playacting and help you become the character from within by supplying you with the why your character is who they are and behaves the way they do” (Chubbuck 143). Previous Circumstances for me is the step that is very intricate. I make conscious efforts not to dismiss myself and my own personal choices when creating a character. What would you do if you were in this situation? This is the question that I ask myself when approaching a character, because I know that my responses will be shaped by my histories.

The last step of the Chubbuck Technique is to ‘Let It Go’. At this point, you have to trust that your previous work with the other steps is sufficient to portray a living, breathing character. Although this step should be a given, sometimes as actors are confined by their cognizance which is a hindrance. My goal was to perform freely and trust that my preparation was enough. It is here I began the journey and life of Lainie Wells with no boundaries. At this step, I relied on impulsivity, trusting that all the preparation done will come out naturally.

Although the Chubbuck Technique was my primary reference when embodying the character, I found myself reverting back to The Practical Handbook for the Actor when searching for strong, clear actions as well as Kristin Linklater’s principles to warm up my body and voice.
After researching the character from a mental and emotional standpoint, I focused a lot of time physicalizing the character. I wanted to know how Lainie walked, how Lainie sat, and how she moved throughout each scene. Physical acting is very vital in the acting process. “Acting is an art form and art is infinite. There is always something more to learn, another risk to explore, another facet to discover. Edison said the equation for success is ninety-nine percent perspiration and one percent inspiration. Only one percent is talent, the rest is hard work. Taking what you have learned, don’t cut corners and get lazy. The more work you do, following the steps, the more satisfying the result will be for you” (Chubbuck 388).

In Our Man in Tehran documentary begins with: “In 1979, we watched helplessly as the US Embassy in Tehran was seized and, American diplomats held hostage. The world was in shock. It should not have been. This was a culmination of events that had been happening for years.” (Weistein, 2015) Why did they choose to hold Michael and the others hostage? Was it the Government’s fault that Michael had been taken? Could the government help free Michael? Could the media help Lainie get Michael Wells back to the United States safely? What happens when Americans are held hostage? How much of an impact does the media have on Americans? How are other countries political systems? Does the American government have secrets? Was the hunt for Bin Laden the same as for Michael Wells? What is the mental state and approach of a person who cries out for help to America? These are all the questions I posed as I begin my research to connect and understand the experiences of Lainie Wells so that the physicality and emotions would come from a place of authenticity based on real given circumstances in the society in which we live.

Theatre is a replication of life. It is where the audience can go and learn. During my readings, Schiller defines the theatre as a mirror for society, suggesting that his concept of mimesis involves exact representation. Just as with mirrors, the stage is simply showing a reflection of society, and it is in this reflection that the stage becomes a great institute of practical insight, a leader to domestic life, and bases to the cognizance. Since the stage is reflecting society, as Schiller states, “the audience is able to see the private lives of characters and from these visions learn to be more considerate to the unfortunate, and to judge gently” (Schiller 252). Schiller is suggesting that what the members of society see in the real world is only part of the truth. Much like my performance in Two Rooms, the stage showed well-rounded reflections of
the operation of America’s government, America’s media, and those who suffer from the Middle East hostage situations, allowing the audience to evaluate them and ultimately learn from them. Examining six documentaries, I was able to look through the lens of many experiences displayed throughout the text. I wanted to retrieve more insight in the world that I would be depicting.

In *Our Man in Tehran*, a documentary adapted from the 2010 book *Our Man in Tehran* recaps the Iranian revolution and the fall of the U.S. Embassy in the late 70’s and early 80’s. During this catastrophe, six Americans fled and were on safe grounds, whereas, other Americans were held hostage being tortured. The United States was under the leadership of President Carter. During one of America’s darkest times, President Jimmy Carter stated, “We found ourselves in an impossible situation. We had three CIA operatives in Tehran and all of them had been taken hostage in the American Embassy with the others. In those troubled days, we reached out to the Canadians. Ambassador Ken Taylor became our biggest asset. He was our man in Tehran” (Weistein 2015).

*Our Man in Tehran* highlights the American government in a way that shows the people what really happened during President Carter’s term and the Iran Revolution. During this time, the American Embassy in Tehran had been seized by militants of the Iranian army. Although the media did some coverage on the issue, many details were not shared until the production of the documentary and book. At that time, six Americans fled the embassy and are hiding in desperation to save their lives. Not all the staff were able to flee, three CIA operatives from America were held hostage. It was stated that President Carter’s decision to allow the Shah of Iran invitation into America for medical treatment was the catalyst that provoked this invasion. Iran and America’s business relationship was growing profitably at the time of the incident, in which I believe was the real reason behind the president’s decision.
Based on the interviews of the hostages who were staffed by the government, the decision to house such a controversial leader for treatment was a risk that would put the American people’s lives in danger. Eventually, America’s worst fear happened on February 14, 1980.

Six Americans hid in the home of a Canadian Ambassador for months before they were able to sneak out of the country of Iran. During this time, the interviews of the victims highlighted their fears and hopes to be brought back home. One victim stated, “Every time I would hear a car outside, I thought to myself, they have found us and our lives are over.”

The agony, pain, hurt, and fear that these individuals experienced was unprecedented. Not knowing if today would be your last day is something that is unimaginable. Not only were these people in danger, they had no help from America for quite some time. Furthermore, while the six Americans hid in the home of the Ambassador, three CIA hostages were being tortured and beaten. One CIA stated, “I remember them tying my hands with nylon until they became numb. They knew my hands would be more sensitive to the pain at this state and beat them. After two back surgeries, that was the most excruciating pain I have ever experienced.” At this point, the government did not rely on military warfare. Instead, President Carter decided to send a message to Iran threatening to end any communications between them and other countries cutting off all access to the world, if they continued to endanger the hostages. Iran had heard the American government loud and clear; therefore, the beatings on the hostages eventually stopped.

In the meantime, Canada’s Ambassador Kennedy continued to work on an operation to get the six Americans out of the country. Although the Press covered the story throughout, everything was not publicized. As seen in the documentary, the government did not share all that Canada had done in making the mission successful. For example, Canada’s Ambassador helped with
getting the Americans Canadian passports signed by their Minister with the assistance of the CIA. This assignment was successful and risky as each hiding American pretended to work as part of a Hollywood film crew who were preparing to film a movie in the country in efforts to escape. The six disguised themselves so well; they were able to enter the Iranian airport successfully landing in Canada. This was a great success and caused a positive uproar for America. However, the media did not cover all of the influential impact Canada had on this success; risking their own lives and integrity. It was also stated that the Ambassador was secretly sending updated information to the CIA in America. Nevertheless, it was not until the day Ronald Reagan became president that the three hostages were granted their freedom. Many believe that it was Iran’s way of sabotaging President Carter’s reelection.

*Our Man in Tehran* documents much of the same experiences shared by Lainie and Michael Wells in *Two Rooms*. Lainie had to deal with Ellen who represented the government. In doing that, you saw her evolution of weakness and defeat to power and strength. At the beginning, Lainie relied a lot on the government for answers on the return of her husband. However, like we see in *Our Man of Tehran*, the government did not share vital details that would help Lainie Wells. In fact, Michael’s life became the pawn in the government’s way of proving a point. The media’s role in *Two Rooms* is much like the documentary also. Having to read *Two Rooms* several times, it was apparent the media were at odds with the government as well.

Much like today’s society, the media in *Two Rooms* had a major influence on, not only America, but other countries as well. After Lainie’s interview, one of the hostages was freed. In the documentary, after the Americans escaped, the press covered the story and the Iranian government was outraged closing down the Canadian embassy. One common thread that *Two
Rooms share with Our Man in Tehran is in dealing with the operation of their country, it is their way or the highway. Both the media and government played a vital role in the Iranian Hostage Crisis. The government failed to get those hostages back and it was not until the press coverage of President’s Reagan’s inauguration that those hostages would be freed instantly. Therefore, I believe the outcome could have been different for Michael not resulting in death after all, if they handled things differently.

“They're coming home, and they're coming home with honor and pride”. Associated Press, Dorothea Morefield, wife of a hostage, quoted in "444-Day Ordeal Ends in Tears of Family Joy"

The information studied and researched during this time was beneficial for me taking on a role like Lainie Wells. It gave me a better understanding to support my choice on deciding if Ellen, representing the government, was trying to help me or if Walker, representing the media as an ally. Due to my findings, I was able to create a more complex character psychologically. The intricacies of life are captivating and being able to understand the motives behind them are fulfilling as an artist.

My next studies and observation came from the documentary, Hunt for Bin Laden. I believed understanding the government actions on international affairs when the American people were in danger would be key to my development as Lainie Wells. Not only would I understand the intelligence of America in foreign affairs, I could observe the way of life in the Middle East as well as the impact the media would have on those issues. After viewing the documentary, Hunt for Bin Laden, I was more abreast in knowing the operations of the FBI, CIA, Al Quada, and various Presidents who sought after the most wanted man in the world.
Many questions were answered after a careful observation of the footage provided that was never shared through the media. One event that stood out in the documentary was the secrecy between the CIA and FBI. It enforced heavily that the CIA could not share information with the FBI. Because of this rule, two suicide bombers who had been in the United States a few years prior to 9/11, were not shared with the FBI. This crucial information could have been used to prevent the twin towers from ever being bombed. Were there things the government knew that could have prevented Michael Wells from being kidnapped? Although it took nearly ten years to kill Bin Laden, the American government has proven its strength, power, and persistence to the world when it comes to protecting this country. Based on my research, I learned and was able to view the deadly suicide bombings and how it was a normality for countries in the Middle East. This information gave me more insight to Michael and Lainie’s way of life as they lived in an unsafe country filled with violence, disorder, sorrow, and vengeance. I was able to put actual images from the footage to the text that was being analyzed. In the first act, Lainie states to Walker viewing a slideshow,

“This is a hotel in Beirut, near where we lived. It was destroyed in some shelling a few months before…..before he was taken. A car bombing. Michael used to take pictures as he walked along. He never was looking for these things. You just couldn’t avoid them. He did stop a few months before. Michael heard people had been fishing with grenades. They’d just toss a grenade in the water and fished that way. Michael said he could have taken this picture a hundred times. I’m not sure what it was about her. He didn’t know her. Maybe it was something different as he passed. Maybe it’s the sun shining on her in a different way. Maybe it is the way she’s standing or whatever it is….all the values just seem to hold you.”
The images and understanding brought a clear connection to all those things that had taken place in Beirut as I presented them to Walker within my monologue. Each bombing, the images of the dead bodies, and the government responses to those situations all replayed in my head as I shared the experiences of my husband Michael as I personified Lainie Wells.

“In order to get away from the auditorium you must be interested in something on the stage.” – Constantin Stanislavski

Act Two opens up with a long monologue of Ellen informing the people about the operations in Beirut. She makes factual, historical references of American hostages. Because of the direction of the director placing the actors on the side of the stage, I had to figure out how I could be present as Lainie without zoning out. I used Ellen’s monologue as a means for me to escape into a state of day dream. A day dream of images and words told by the government for years about martyrs and hostages; this began to cultivate a sense of frustration which fueled my need to do more on my own in getting him back. Analyzing this situation and my through line of action gave me awareness that the government was not doing enough and I had to do more. My husband’s life would be the expense for the American government.

My goal was to learn how to access the information in a way that would be applied to my acting style efficiently. Using the Chubbuck Technique, I wanted to take my power back. Therefore, playing the victim was not a choice. As the play moved forward, Lainie’s character moved simultaneously. Lainie’s first dialogue in Act Two is with Michael, asking him a plethora of questions, she becomes unsatisfied quickly. She states, “I wish they kidnapped women but they let them go.” What does this really mean? How are women viewed in the
Middle East? How are women viewed in America? Lainie went through many struggles mentally as she questioned everything that was left unanswered. However, through the method of the Chubbuck Technique, I wanted to represent/embody the shared human connection between what was written in the script and the histories of America and the happenings with the Middle East.

“This room. You put this room in a newspaper!” Media has made its impact on the world, both negatively and positively. My approach in creating my character’s position on the media was to weigh the pros and cons of using the media. Using the tools from the Chubbuck Technique, I gathered my previous circumstances from the footage I studied based on the documentary Chicago Girl.

Chicago Girl was about a Syrian-American college student who helped organized protest in Syria to take down the regime. In Syria, the president has been brutally attacking all of their citizens who do no support their stand on their current policies. Car bombings and snipers are killing people daily on the streets of Damascus among other cities as viewed in Chicago Girl. The Syrian girl communicated with hundreds of protesters 6,000 miles away in efforts to take down their dictatorship. She started with social media and live footage uploaded to YouTube eventually reaching the United Nations and the American Government. For this circumstance, the media played a vital, yet positive role in seeking attention from the world as the Syrians cried out for help. This caused a major uproar from the Syrian President and regime as death threats were later sent out to the Chicago girl along with others who were street journalist and organizers of the protests. Based on this information, it gave me awareness to the temperament of the leadership in a country such as the one in Two Rooms. How would I address the government now that the article has been put out? Was it really about the room? Or was I at fear for my
husband’s life? These were all the questions that created urgency and motivation for me during Act Two. At this point, I had to creatively feel my way through each scene discovering opportunities for empowerment.

In Two Rooms, “I am going to give you an exclusive interview. Because now that you have written what you’ve written talking to someone is inevitable. Unless I want to be thought of as odd, I’ll have to speak out. Other writers would work, I suppose but with you there’s a special advantage. I know how far I can trust you.” This statement was a clear strategy for playing the character. However, the circumstances of knowing what I would be faced with, in reference to the Syrian government and/or the negative effects of the media, influenced the choices I made for the character. To ultimately win, one has to be willing to fail. As an actress, it was important for my choices to provoke change within the character and to take risk.

The mass media’s ultimate purpose is to educate and inform as well as to entertain. What was Walker’s agenda? Did he really want to help Lainie Wells? In an article, M. A. Mughal stated, “The media has a huge impact on society in shaping the public opinion of the masses. They can form or modify the public opinion in different ways depending what is the objective. For example, Pakistani media influenced the public opinion against the Taliban in Swat by repeated telecast of a video clip showing whipping of a woman by a Taliban. Before that, the public opinion over the military action against the Taliban in Swat was divided, but repeated telecast of this short video clip changed the public opinion overnight in the favor of the government to take action.”

The power of the media is so heavy, it can ultimately determine the fate for a person such as Lainie Wells. The development of creating a character like Lainie Wells was organic. Using the Chubbuck Techniques primarily along with logical reasoning and factual research supported
my studies on the American Government, Iran Hostage Crisis, and the Mass Media, I was able to exist as Lainie Wells.

Stanislavski stated, “Search out beauty and its opposite. The ultimate attention/observation is to see a person's soul. To know why they do something, to understand what they are thinking. This cannot be practiced intellectually.” Although I have researched extensively in preparation for the character, it is not complete until the work is expressed through performance and I “Let it Go”.
Tomorrow night is our first read-through. I am very excited to read with my cast mates. My objective for our rehearsal is to gain a better understanding of the text after hearing the other characters. I have read this play four times. However, I am certain that my interpretation may change based on each actor’s approach and delivery. My goal tomorrow night is to simply understand the script in a way that allows me to connect and build chemistry with my other cast mates.
9/28/2015

The Director Notes that were given last night were geared towards provoking action and thought as it relates to the society and our actual text. The following topics were things I needed to research for homework.

- Ronald Reagan
- American Hostages
- Bin Laden
- Isis
- Iran Central Affair
- 80’s era
- Shi-ites
- CNN was not global-news very centralized

Act One Read-Through:

Voice and Diction is something I have to work on. Lainie is very complex. My goal is to “understand”. My goal is to “find”.

Find your musical voice

Who is she?

How does she feel about Michael?

How does she feel about Ellen?

How does she feel about Walker?
I am super excited after our read-through. The cast is great and there was an instant connection with everyone’s characters as we read aloud. I am looking forward to the intense schedule that will facilitate in creating the character of Lainie Wells.

Prior to our first read-through, I am not happy. I believe everyone should be afforded the same opportunity in performing their thesis assignment on the mainstage of the Robert E. Nims Theatre. I was not happy about the selection of Two Rooms. I felt as though, it was not chosen based on my strengths as an actress, but more about what plays could be done inside the Lab Theatre (black box style/small theatre) in rotation with another production. Due to others being able to perform their thesis inside the Nims Theatre, I am frustrated and disappointed because I do not believe this is fair. Also, I do not agree with Erick Wolfe, another graduate student, directing my thesis assignment for his own thesis assignment. As an actress in an academic setting, I wanted a quality experience and education that reflected in my overall thesis experience. Lastly, I am going to take my lemons and make lemonade. Our first two read-throughs were great, despite the comments made by the director not liking the choice of play. Although I agreed based on my own reasons, I am looking forward to his comment on placing the play in today’s time. There is no doubt this will be an awesome production and a learning experience for me! I plan to make every challenging situation an opportunity for growth. I am looking forward to making the best of this situation so I may grow as an actress and as a person.
The second read-through went well. I am so happy because I started off with reservations. Reading the text with the cast for the second time brought clarity to the words. My goal last night was to understand and relate to the text on a personal level. I would like for the language to become a part of me.

The Director posed a lot of questions that required me to think about the character of Lainie in regards to the situations that were transpiring, as a result of her husband being abducted for a year. One thing that stood out to this rehearsal was my ability to correlate the actions of Lainie moving out her furniture with the act of removing hurt, clutter, and frustrations out of her head metaphorically.
10/4/2015

Many of my lines refer to birds. I need to Research Warblers and the African hornbill. My
diction is kicking my butt. I need to continue working on my voice and diction. Cuckoo is
pronounced “Coo-Coo”. I found myself struggling with the pronunciation a lot. Memorization is
getting better. However, there are lines that I stumbled over in rehearsal.

“Do YOU think they STILL blindfold….”

“When NOTHING is…..”

“I can’t explain. The moment I COME IN….”

“Why do you care ABOUT this….”

“The world is full of terrible outcomes….”

The lines stated above were the lines that were highlighted during rehearsal. I will continue
striving to make efforts in learning them so that rehearsals are not stopped due to a dropped line.
It really discourages me and I feel ineffective for my scene partners as well as for myself.
Today’s rehearsal went well. Many of my rehearsals have been with Ellen and Walker. The chemistry is really good thus far. Blocking has been great. However, I am concerned with my blocking with Walker. I know it is still early but I am looking at the rehearsal schedule and I haven’t had many opportunities to work all my scenes with Walker. Walker and I have decided to work those scenes that are being left out together on our own.
Today’s rehearsal was great. Tiffany, Nathan, and I were able to have a private rehearsal on our own at Starbuck’s. We were able to discover a stronger connection in many of our scenes together. Our chemistry and rehearsal of lines were our main focus. We are now at a better place of comfort so our rehearsals are more productive and effective with the director. I had many concerns with not practicing on Wednesdays and Thursdays to accommodate the schedule of the director, however, everything is falling into place. This rehearsal process has not been perfect but we have made the best of it. I do believe I could have gained more knowledge and education having a seasoned director like David Hoover verses a student director.
I am struggling learning the 2nd Act. I have been spending a lot of time analyzing my character. However, learning lines has become a stress factor. In rehearsals, I am trying to discover my relationship with Ellen and Walker. Voice has been a factor also. The director has pointed out several instances where I have mispronounced words due to my southern dialect. If I can get off book completely, I believe my rehearsal would be more productive. My opening monologue has been a challenge for me also. I am struggling with the delivery and distention being clear between my communication to Michael, who isn’t really there and to myself while moving this mat around to different corners. As simple as it sounds, it has been a struggle for me. My chemistry with my scene partners are there. However, I cannot witness my fullest potential until I get this script out of my hand.
10/22/2015

Tonight’s rehearsal was better. We have been running the whole play in its entirety. The only problem I have with this is that I can focus on mastering a couple of scenes at a time because we are running the whole show. The directors I have worked with in the past, rehearse one scene at a time and progresses forward each night. The last two scenes in Act I still needs more work. I have to be completely off book next week. My goal was to be off book before rehearsals started so I could focus on the process and development of my character. However, that did not happen. I worked really hard in efforts to learn my lines each night. Unfortunately, I believe the stress of being a mother, working full time, learning lines for class assignments, and preparing for a state pageant played a factor. I did not expect the pageant to be so demanding. I believe if I would have learned my lines during the summer, it would have eliminated those challenging factors I was dealing with simultaneously. Learning lines can be very difficult for me as an actress when my stress levels are high. Nevertheless, I also am working a lot with voice exercises. Today I warmed my voice and body using the Linklater method. My goal is to have a standard American accent. It has been a struggle at times with certain words.
It’s the weekend and yes I am practicing. Both days mostly. This has been hard mentally as it feels like I get no days off. However, I am determined to master my warbler scene at the end of Act I. My assignment from the director has been to understand the life cycle of warblers. I struggled in the last few rehearsals with this scene. I honestly do not understand what I am talking about nor do I see a visual image of what I am communicating. The text and I have not connected.
Today’s rehearsal was better. My lines are becoming more and more comfortable which allows me to explore my tactics and focus on my objectives in each scene. Although I am struggling with memorization being perfect, I am very proud of myself. My goal at this point is to work more with my voice and emotional connection with my scene partner who is portraying my husband. It has been a bit frustrating receiving line reads at the end of each run instead of the end of rehearsal. It has taken me out of character many times.
These are the lines you had some trouble with

Normal is completely dropped line

**Bold** is part of the sentence that was skipped or changed

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<td>I watch the warblers <strong>there, nesting</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>A <strong>much</strong> larger bird</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td>And there he is – <strong>nearly</strong> as big</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td>Immense volume of food, <strong>and</strong> waiting</td>
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<td>Cuckoo chick is blind – <strong>in the nest</strong></td>
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<td>(because) after they mate</td>
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<td>48</td>
<td>He flies off and finds food</td>
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<td>48</td>
<td>Through a little hole in the wall he’s built</td>
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</table>
10/28/2015

Today I was able to practice privately with my scene partners without the director and stage manager. My goal this week is to make sure I am saying the lines the way they are written in the script. I have managed to correct many of them. I received my notes last night from the stage manager. Our stage manager is great. Every night he highlights and makes notes of each actor’s mistakes and emails them to us late at night. Milan, our stage manager, is a full time student. His dedication to this production inspires me to work even harder because I feel bad for the work load that he has been given.
Today is one of our last rehearsals. I am beyond excited about opening week. This process has been long and hard. I have tried my best to focus on my scene objects, my research for the character, Lainie Wells, and making a strong, believable connection with my scene partners. I have made an effort to address the director’s note given in regards to dropped lines as well as the opening monologue. We all verbalized our struggles with accepting the production at first due to the cast feeling like we were just giving a random play along with having limited resources (there was poor efforts in costuming, staging, lighting, sound design and at times unjustified blocking). We all realized early on that we would have to rely on one another to make this production come alive. However, we pulled it together as a cast and made it great. Many times simply felt our way through the scene organically. Nevertheless, the director has gotten better with taking our discoveries to the next level with specific physical choices and I can appreciate that as an actress.

Many of our rehearsals were designated to help me learn lines which was great also. Today we were able to run the rehearsal at ease. It was so good we could have invited the public. I am so glad our day to be off book was so early in the beginning. I have truly came a long way from the first day of rehearsal to now. I thank God and the patience and hard work of my cast mates because we have all done an amazing job!
10/30/2015

I am trying to fix my mistakes. Today after observing my notes, I will make a better effort to address these issues for next rehearsal. The lines below have been a minor issue. I do feel as though I am not projecting, which may cause some of the lines I am stating to be missed. Voice is getting better but I need to keep my energy up along with volume.

Arielle

These are the lines you had some trouble with

Normal is completely dropped line

**Bold** is part of the sentence that was skipped or changed

(Parentheses) is words you added

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<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>Undersecretary of state … this doesn’t work at all</td>
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<td>I scrubbed and painted <strong>all the walls</strong></td>
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<td><strong>In</strong> the basement</td>
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<td></td>
<td>But you should do it all over your face <strong>evenly</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>No.</strong> I’m working on a project. <strong>It’s something</strong> I couldn’t do in Beirut</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<td><strong>And</strong> Warblers mostly <strong>I’m working on them</strong></td>
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Can we get them not to print

I watch the warblers there, nesting

And there he is – nearly as big

Cuckoo chick is blind – in the nest

With food. But as they do, one by one

Push (and push) against anything that touches its back. Push and push

This blind, newborn, totally innocent bird murders each of the blind, newborn, totally innocent warblers

The indentation in the (baby) cuckoos back

People call me

I’ve had friends take advantage of me before. I’ve had them hurt me, betray me. I know what it is like

You think that just because you’ve been in this room

It’s the one place I can go

If I can have Michael

People are calling me

Unless I just want to be thought of

A lot of reporters would work

Grabbing the whole nation by the elbow

Because he wasn’t lucky enough to be abducted in airport? (or) with a bunch of other people

But this is (just) a picture

They could get nervous. Someone could make a mistake

And from the families of the other hostages

No, thanks, this’ll be fine

When did you first decide I had this quality

You’ll write a lot of articles now won’t you? No matter how it comes out

Because for all I know. I haven’t done anything more than risk the lives of innocent people tonight

Who makes friends just so he can push

We could.. we could shape it to our lives

Reporters call

He may as well has disappeared into the earth

About the same. it’s been a long time

I’ve just gone back to work

Last month. I’m teaching again

What are you saying?

So somebody at state said

If you started you’d never been able to stop

We should obliterate the city

Swap I want to be like you. Tell me how to be like you

I want to be able to lock them in whatever room you have for that
Ellen I think you and the government did your best. I think everyone did his best. Michael did his best, walker did his best, you did. The Shi’ites – even the ones that killed Michael. Probably everyone has done his best. That’s what frightens me. That’s why I don’t know if I’ll ever be able to walk of this room anymore. Into what?

Not right now. Not for a while

(because) after they mate

He flies off and finds food

Through a little hole in the wall he’s built

After the eggs are hatched, he breaks down the wall again

My objective is to continue taking the necessary steps to perfect my lines.
11/1/2015

Arielle

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<td>Dropped</td>
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<td>48</td>
<td>Review the whole bird thing</td>
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My objective is to make the necessary objections.
11/2/2015

Arielle

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<td>The whole ‘it’s back … eaten by rats or snakes’ was out of order and <strong>messy</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>That’s for me to decide, that’s my choice, you took my choice.</td>
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<td>I know how long it has been</td>
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<td>I won’t be able to look at it</td>
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</table>

My objective tonight was to make the necessary corrections and this has been a struggle. However,

I will get it done!
It is opening week and we have already run many rehearsals in advance as if they were tech and dress rehearsals. At this point, I think I have my lines down! Thank you Jesus! We are in a great place as a cast and my goal this week is to be honest and trust all my work will be true on stage. This week I am resting my voice as much as possible. Today I worked on tongue twisters to increase my verbal agility and articulation skills.
Today was great. We had a quick line run. Our runs have been really good thus far. My focus in today’s rehearsal was to make sure that I knew all of my lines and with the same energy as opening night. I am so excited. I have worked really hard and I am so proud of myself. I have come so far from the first day of rehearsal.

Overall, this experience was better than I expected initially. I worked diligently and invested long hours in preparation of creating the role of Lainie Wells. There were many nights we ended rehearsals two hours early, however, I use the time as an opportunity to learn lines and work on character development. As I reflect, some days I agreed to rehearse at 5pm during the week and even on Sundays to accommodate the schedule of the director and other actors who were working; this was challenging due to me going to church, having to pick up my son from school, and leaving work myself. Some days, prior to rehearsals, were a struggle. Nevertheless, I got it done because I am committed to the craft and used those challenges as a way to immerse in the process more as an actress.

This week’s performance will display strength, courage, and commitment. This process for me has been a learning experience as well as something I will cherish for the rest of my life as I pursue a career in acting. I am very proud of my performances and the work I have done in developing the character of Lainie Wells.
**CONCLUSION**

“The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance.”

–Aristotle

The beauty of art is it inspires the soul. Choosing art as a profession goes beyond any monetary value, it is in fact priceless. My plans have always been to choose a job that I am passionate about. Educating and helping others creatively has always been my deepest desire. Barbara Streisand once stated, “Art does not only exist to entertain, but also to challenge one to think, to provoke, even disturb, in a constant search for truth”. Part of artistry is the journey of self-discovery.

Because of my studies at the University of New Orleans, I was able to meet opportunities I could have never imagined. During the last three years, I have been cast in a National Pepsi Commercial, Popeye’s Commercial, Local Community Theatre in New Orleans, Alicia Keys Music Video, Productions in the Robert E. Nims Theatre, and perform and was taught in the classrooms of New York City’s School of Julliard all while being a Graduate Student at the University of New Orleans. I was afforded the opportunity to work as a Louisiana Certified High School Talented Theatre Teacher and represent the city of New Orleans and Louisiana as Miss Black Louisiana USA 2016. I would have never received these opportunities if I was not a Graduate Student at the University of New Orleans. I came here for a purpose! Although it was not what I expected, I gained priceless experiences I know will take me to the next level. Creating the role of Lainie Wells, was the perfect conclusion to my experience and matriculation at the University of New Orleans by allowing me to apply the teachings and techniques that reflect my skill set.
The Master of Fine Arts Program at the University of New Orleans has been a plethora of self-discoversies. My opportunities are limitless. I am not the same person coming in this program as I will be leaving. I have grown the most as an actress which affects my overall approach to acting. Upon graduating, I plan to continue working as a Certified High School Theatre Teacher. My short term goal is to apply my education from the University of New Orleans in becoming an Adjunct Professor in the areas of Performance and as a competitive, working actress in the areas of television, stage, and film. The peak of my career and long term goal, is to utilize my schooling, in becoming an Academy Award winning actress and a Theatre Department Chair.

I find it amazing that one can come into an environment of a melting pot, with classmates from different social and economic backgrounds. All our differences makes us who we are and what we have become on Graduation Day. I would like to thank the University of New Orleans. I would also like to give a special thanks to the toughest educator I have experience in my twenty years of schooling, Professor David Hoover. While our differences are apparent, our love and respect for people and the art of theatre has led us to develop a mutual respect as student and teacher; despite our variances of rearing.
Works Cited


Appendix A: Scored Script and Photographs

UNIT 1: top of Michael
UNIT 2: bottom of X Lane
UNIT 3: Page 9
UNIT 4: Page 10
UNIT 5: Page 11
UNIT 6: Bottom of 15 page
UNIT 7: Here!
UNIT 8: Walker, what's wrong
UNIT 9: Michael was
UNIT 10: Page 34 Scene 3 - I say "child"

To Jeanne, and to the memory of Jo.
UNIT 11: Page 24 Michael-Francis
UNIT 12: Same H
UNIT 13: Page 27 Someone is Jo (Michael)
So: Super objective: Lanie Wells’ SO is to find peace and get her husband Michael Wells back alive.

you. I wish this was a real letter. (A beat) What Mathison forget was three people have been taking hostages for thousands of years. They know how to do it. He yelled, “I’m armed!” I remember, and that same instant one of them shot it out of his hand, along with some of his fingers, and they slammed us into the car, did the old Kalashnikov-on-the-forehead routine, wrapped Mathison’s hand up with his own shirt. Mindfolded us and drove us... wherever this is. No one spoke. The only sound was Mathison weeping. I wasn’t paying that much attention. I was busy counting my own fingers. And toes. (A beat.) OK, this is a digression, but I’m suddenly thinking of you two. Really, I’m remembering them on the beach at the ocean. One first few dates... somewhere in there. You had a bathing suit on — which could have been the first time I saw you in one—and we were lying on towels and you dug your toes down in the wet sand. You dug them around very slowly, and suddenly felt overwhelmed by this powerful image of... a sea turtle, coming ashore, digging in the sand and laying its millions, or hundreds— you’d say — of eggs. And it’s passed, but it made me feel connected to a way I’d never felt before, to amphibians. I mean, they are — forever faced with the choice: go on land and risk their life to lay eggs, or stay in the sea where it’s warm and safe and eventually die out. And it occurred to me in that moment that marriage is exactly the same proposition. And I looked at your toes in the sand once more, and... married you anyway. (A beat.) I wear a blindfold. I can take it off, but if I do they beat me. Or if they come in and it looks weird, they beat me. Sometimes it doesn’t look like I’ve taken it off, but since I’m an American they’re sure I must have, and they beat me anyway. Their voices are same young. I’m sure it’s a delusion, but sometimes I think I’ve had one or two of them in my class. (A beat.) Now I’m in theirs. (The lights fade quickly to black. When they rise again, Lainie is alone in the room. She stands staring at the empty mat. The room is much brighter—light from an unseen window surrounds her. When she speaks, she addresses the mat at first, then moves around the room. She does not address the audience.)

LAINIE. I’m talking to myself. All last night, taking the
furniture out of this room, I was talking to myself. It's not the worst habit. Besides, for the last year, what else have I been doing? So, regard the mat critically, slide it toward one corner of the room, silently apprise it of its new position. Talking to everyone in power— which is, of course, the definition of talking to yourself. I don't know about it here. It'd probably be in a corner, but this one. Which one? Sealing it to another corner of the room? It's hard to know which was worse: talking to Muslims or talking to Christians. Talking to Lebanese or talking to Syrians. Going across the Green Line to beg or to Damascus—or Washington. (Suddenly nods his head decisively.) Washington. Definitely Washington. The Arabs wouldn't help me, but at least they'd drive the pain. In Washington, I was the pain. (Of the position of the mat.) It's absolutely wrong. (She moves it to another corner; stared at it.) The head of the university said they'd do everything humanly possible to get you back. So did the head of Aman. So did the Lebanese President. So did the Syrian Foreign Minister, our embassy in Beirut, our embassy in Damascus, the Undersecretary of State, the President, and everyone running for President. This doesn't work at all. (She moves the mat to the center of the room again.) This is just going to have to stand for all the corners of the room. Why not? It's not an exact science. (She stares at the mat.) You'll be here. (She moves towards the source of light from outside, name pulling down a shade and lights dim. She goes to the mat, lays on the side of it, lays on it, allowing space as though another person were lying on it with her. Tentatively, she reaches out as though striking the back of her companion.) From now on, it's only talking to you. (Light falls as black. When they rise again, Lainie sits on the floor a few feet from the mat, staring at it. Walker stands staring at her.)

WALKER. How long has this room been like this? (A beat.) Do you decorate often? (A beat.) Best of the house looks real nice. Very normal. (A beat.) This room, though. This room you seem to have done something to. (A beat.) Lainie? Can I call you Lainie? (A beat.) I want to thank you for letting me come. I know a lot of other reporters would like to be here. I'm glad you chose to talk to me. (A beat.) Lainie? (A beat.)
So — what is it you'd say you've done to this room?

LAINIE: I cleaned it.


It's hard to ask the right questions if you won't —

LAINIE: I scrubbed and painted all the walls. I took all his things out.

WALKER: Was this his room? I mean — is it?

LAINIE: His office. His things were here.

WALKER: Where are they now?

LAINIE: In the basement.


LAINIE: I painted everything. Walls, ceiling.

WALKER: A lot of consistency. What's the matter?

LAINIE: I want to talk.

WALKER: Why? (A beat.) Do you mind if I open the shade? (A beat.) Lainie? (Without attempting to open the shade.) So — does the government keep in contact with you?

LAINIE: She's coming today.

WALKER: She?

LAINIE: The government. Her name is Ellen. She's been attached to me. (Laughter)

WALKER: Ellen. What time is she coming?

LAINIE: I liked your voice.

WALKER: What?

LAINIE: Your voice on the phone. I liked it.

WALKER: Why?

LAINIE: It took its time. (She moves stealthily at the net)

WALKER: When is Ellen coming? (A beat.) Did you want me to meet her? Is that why I'm here? (A beat.) The government hasn't always told the truth on this issue. You do know that. (A beat.) I could write about this right now. With what I've got— just having been here. I could write about this room. What you're saying, what you're not saying. But I won't — if you'll just look at me. (Again, no response.) What is it you're saying at?

LAINIE: His hands. (Lights fade to black. Quickly they fade up again. Ellen now stands where Walker did. Lainie remains in her
ELLEN: We think they've moved him. Not far. A different section of town, perhaps. Or even just across the street. We're reasonably certain it's no further than that. It's good strategy for them to move him from time to time. It enhances their power. (A beat.) Still, they may have moved him all the way to the Bekaa Valley. That is possible. (A beat.) They may not have moved him at all. They may only be pretending to move him. As you know, our intelligence in Beirut isn't the best. Even pretending to move him could enhance their power. (Sighs.) Frankly, almost everything enhances their power. It would be hard for Michael's captors to make a mistake, at the moment. Lainie, are you listening to me? (Walker enter with a small officer.)

WALKER: Here you go.

ELLEN: Thank you.

WALKER: (Setting it down for her) I'm getting your tea. Lainie?

LAINIE: Nothing. (Walker exit L.)

ELLEN: Why is he here?

LAINIE: Shouldn't he be here?

ELLEN: He's from a newspaper. What have we been talking about for the last year, Lainie?

LAINIE: It's better to be quiet.

ELLEN: We have no way of knowing what public statements by hostage relatives may do. No way at all. It could make it even harder for us to secure a safe return. I'm disappointed that you called him.

LAINIE: He called me.

ELLEN: I'm disappointed he's here. It's absurd for you to talk to newspapers. Besides, one doesn't talk to newspapers in any case. One lights their fuse. Please, get rid of him.

LAINIE: I can't do that.

ELLEN: (Starting to go.) Then I'll go.

LAINIE: No.

ELLEN: I won't be able to be free with information.

LAINIE: When is there ever any information?

ELLEN: (Sighs, sits.) When are you going to do something about this room? (A beat.) Where were we?
LAINIE. You said they were moving him. Or maybe they weren't.
ELLEN. The most important thing to remember is that we're not speaking of a country of terrorists here. We're speaking of a country at all. We're speaking of factions. Some friendly to Iran, some to Syria, some to Israel, some -

They're all fighting for power. For all we know your husband —

LAINIE. Michael.
ELLEN. Michael may be liberated by a faction that finds something like that could happen at any time.
LAINIE. What are the chances?
ELLEN. The important thing is to maintain concentration. Advised, hope, I call it. We're hopeful, brave we're trained. We're not unintelligent. We recognize the reality of situation, then we inject hope into that reality. Because without hope there can be no foreign policy. (Walker removes small tray table. On it is a tea set. He sets it all down next to Ellen and gone.)
WALKER. I let it steep in the kitchen.
ELLEN. Thank you. (A shot.) I'm so odd. Everyone in Washington pumps down coffee all day as fast as they can. And then there's mine — with my little cup of tea. I feel like a foreigner. (She studies the tea a moment.) The main thing — the crucial thing — is knowing that hope is a real and palpable possibility. Men have disappeared in Beirut, men have appeared.
WALKER. So when's Michael Wells going to reappear?
ELLEN. Well — that is what I mean by hope. (A shot)
WALKER. Sorry?
ELLEN. I mean, for example, there are pictures. Were pictures of Michael. Taken just a month ago. Pictures of him alive.
WALKER. He had the shit beat out of him. He wasn't recognizable.
ELLEN. The point is, he's alive.
WALKER. He was alive then.
ELLEN. And hope keeps him alive, right up to the present.
moment. That’s why we use hope. Hope enhances our power.
ELLEN: When will my husband be released?
WALKER: What do you mean, you can’t say?
ELLEN: I really should go. I didn’t come here for a news conference. (Ellen moves to desk.)
LAINE: Ellen. (Ellen stops.)
WALKER: It’s our Middle-East policy that’s keeping your husband hostage. Nothing else.
ELLEN: That’s ridiculous.
WALKER: In terms of priorities, Michael comes below oil, below U.S.-Soviet relations.
ELLEN: He’s totally uninformed.
WALKER: Below U.S.-Israeli relations, U.S.-Syrian relations.
ELLEN: Lainie.
WALKER: U.S.-Iranian relations.
ELLEN: (To Lainie.) You’d be well-advised to reflect on your relations with the press.
WALKER: Can I quote you? (To Lainie.) Have you ever wondered why other governments can get their hostages out and we can’t?
ELLEN: They pay ransom.
WALKER: And it works.
ELLEN: This government is using every ethical means to bring your husband back to you.
WALKER: This government wouldn’t care if your husband died.
ELLEN: Mr. Harris!
WALKER: Because then he’s not a problem anymore.
ELLEN: Either he goes — right now — or I do.
WALKER: (To Ellen.) How does she get you to come out here, anyway? It’s a thirty-minute drive.
ELLEN: Lainie.
LAINE: I won’t talk to her on the phone.
WALKER: Really?
LAINE: I hang up the minute I hear her voice.
WALKER: How come?
ELLEN: Lainie.
LAINIE: I don't want to be alone when I hear about Michael. I want to hear it from her face to face.

ELLEN: I came out here because I wish to!

LAINIE: I told them I'd fast. I'd chain myself to a building.

ELLEN: We have never taken her seriously.

WALKER: You're here.

ELLEN: The Department feels that since Lainie does live close by, and is only asking for one personal visit per week —

LAINIE: I want two next week. To demand.

ELLEN: One or two visits per week, it's a small price to pay for keeping her —

WALKER: Quiet?

ELLEN: From embarrassing herself. You're a newsman, Mr. Harris. Certainly you understand the degree to which media can adversely affect a sensitive situation.

WALKER: Sure. That's why I investigate every goddamn story I can. (A beat.)

ELLEN: We encounter all sorts of emotional reactions in these situations. This we are prepared for. My job is to help victims learn which responses are appropriate, and which are not. The response of running to the press, in the vain belief that they are somehow the repository of virtue and kindness, is woefully inappropriate. I urge you to ask yourself what's in it for them. (Starting out, then stopping.) The government is doing all it can along every avenue. There are however acts of God, for example, over which no government has power.

LAINIE: You think this is an act of God?

WALKER: To the best.

ELLEN: No. But it is... as remote. (Starting out again.) I'll be back next Wednesday.

LAINIE: Monday. (A glimpse of irritation crossing her face.) Monday. (She exits L.)

WALKER: (Once she is gone.) You wonder why the government can't do anything. Right there — that attitude. That's the reason.

LAINIE: Walker, goodbye.

WALKER: Goodbye! What do you mean?

LAINIE: Goodbye. To brush off.
WALKER. We've just gotten started.
LAINIE. Goodbye. (A beat.)
WALKER. When can I come back? (No response.)
LAINIE. You know, I've got better things to do than chase down stories of uncooperative people. (A beat. He starts to go, stops.) Do you want me to leave? I'll do what you want me to do. (A beat.) Lainie?
WALKER. What is it you want me to do?
LAINIE. Bring back my husband. (He stares at her, then leaves."
Lights quickly fade to black."
When they rise again, Michael is alone on stage, head in hand at the beginning.)

MICHAEL. I have new guards now. It's been more than a year. I want to tell you what I've discovered. It's not that they're in handcuffs or dead. It's that they've been in handcuffs or dead. You remember the day I came home, after walking past a car bombing? I didn't tell you at the time, but I saw it. Just a hard, long time, unclaimed. It's not even terrible, but... terribly lonely. (A beat.) I ask myself all the time, "Why did we stay here? Why did we stay here? Why?" (A beat.) I look back now and can't believe we stayed. Can you imagine what the University and said, "One last term. Then we'll leave." One last term. I wonder if we'd have left then, if we hadn't, some part of us even liked the danger. Or was in love with what we were witnessing. I mean, why do anyone stay? This city's in the hands of boys. Teenage dreamers carrying AK-47's and somebody says, "I don't know if there's ever been a city that has for so long been such a horror. That comes to people's minds that they're part of it. It's like a world of its own."

LAINIE. Michael! This bothers me. Here on this side, just below.
Scene Two

A side appears on the left. It’s a picture of a heavily-damaged building on Barzani. We see Laura and Walter isolated in the frame, looking up at it.

[Laughter]

This is a house in Barzani near where we lived. It was destroyed during shelling a couple of months before. Before the explosion, it was the sound of a little projector. The picture shows the result of the bomb explosion. A fire burned. Michael could not give his name because of the commando. He wasn’t looking for these kinds of people. People at the University were quite determined. They made people notice him. Even more people and his updatedAt few weeks before. (Another dive a situation, perhaps.) Is there an accidental array? There was a commando with his list. He asked Michael, “What? Another note, the last? A few estimated figures at the side.” What happened next? It started falling with grenades. The ground was a complete no man’s land, and... Fire that way. (Another dive a Lieutenant on a rock, tasting blood.) Michael said he could tell them about the story and even that these were the same stories. Maybe it's different.
about the way she's standing, or—whatever it is, all the values just
saw first. (Suddenly the projector shuts off. The image
disappears; Blackout.)
WALKER: What's wrong?
LAINIE: I want to stop now. What happens?
WALKER: We just started.
LAINIE: This story.
WALKER: I'll get the lights.
LAINIE: Don't.
WALKER: You want to sit in the dark?
LAINIE: Do you think they still blindfold him?
WALKER: They might. Who can know?
LAINIE: Do they chain him?
WALKER: They might. (Valler ficks the lights. He stands at the
left wall. Lainie sits on the floor.) Those are good pictures. He's
a good photographer.
LAINIE: He's a good teacher, too. I'm sorry. These pictures were
more zed than I thought. I shouldn't have agreed to show them to
you.
WALKER: It's a shame. They'd go well with an interview.
If you'd ever give me an interview.
LAINIE: I can't decide.
WALKER: It's been two months. (A beat.)
LAINIE: Why haven't you written anything up to now? You have
more than enough without me telling.
WALKER: I guess I'd like to have your permission. (With a self-
degenerating laugh.) My editors think I'm crazy, of course. But that's
why. (A beat.) I won't write anything if you don't want me to. That's
a promise.
LAINIE: What's a promise?
WALKER: You were teaching, weren't you? After you got back
here? (Leaves now.) But recently you took a leave of absence?
LAINIE: You've been asking about me?
WALKER: Why'd you leave?
LAINIE: It's hard to teach natural sciences when... (She trails off.)
WALKER: When what?
LAINIE: When nothing's moving. (A beat.)
WALKER: So... Do you sit in here all day?
LAINIE: I'm working on a project. It's something I couldn't do in Berea.
WALKER: What is it?
LAINIE: White birds. I go down to the marsh a couple times, and I watch, mostly. I'm working on them.
WALKER: Does it relax you?
LAINIE: It reaches me.
WALKER: And the rest of the time you're in here? Not much of a life. (A bit.)
LAINIE: Michael's here. I can't explain it, but for me he's like a little room. The moment I come in, I feel...the warmth of his touch. The rest of the house — everywhere else — is cold.
WALKER: You need to talk to people. Away from here. At work, or —
LAINIE: I work in a marsh.
WALKER: You should talk to friends. How about the other hostage families?
LAINIE: It's like looking in a mirror.
WALKER: Then talk to the public. That really hasn't been said enough. We could start with an interview. In depth, about —
LAINIE: My pain?
WALKER: Among other things. We could run it in the paper.
Two, three installments. Maybe more.
LAINIE: We could run my pain, installments?
WALKER: It's better than nothing. A marsh. (A bit.)
LAINIE: Ellen says that won't help anyone but the kidnapper.
WALKER: Someone knows what will help. That's the first thing. No one knows what we've done, and what hasn't worked. Keeping silent hasn't worked.
LAINIE: Why do you care about this? You don't have anyone there.
WALKER: I care about people who are going through what you're going through.
The world is full of terrible outcomes. Why did you choose mine? Is it because you can win an award?
WALKER: An award? What are we talking about?
LAINIE: Intense suffering. Along with — lots of installments. A
Pulitzer prize.

WALKER. Is that what you think I'm here for? I've been waiting for months! You think that's how I'd go after a Pulitzer prize? You think I'd wait for you to ask me here? I'd be on your doorstep every day. I'd be out in the marsh with you.

LAINIE. I'm sorry. To e poligay.

WALKER. It's a lot more than that. He's the last one to speak about — of people who've been told, "Your husband is dead. He's dead."

LAINIE. I'm sorry. I'm not saying——

WALKER. What I'm saying is——

LAINIE. What's really going on?

WALKER. What's really going on is that they'll let him die. They've already made the decision to use him as a scapegoat. To this administration, it's more effective to use his death — and even his death — to push a bunch of policy points, than it is to use every means to get him back.

LAINIE. You really think that?

WALKER. I know it. So do you. The day he's reported dead, do you think they'll be taking any responsible? They'll be allowing TV, painting the fingers at every corner in the Middle East and saying, "These are barbarians. Don't try to understand them. Just let us do what we must do." And we'll let them.

LAINIE. What do you think I should do?

WALKER. I've said. Speak out. Do interviews. Go on TV if you have to. (She considers this.)

LAINIE. No.

WALKER. Why not?

LAINIE. I'm sorry, but it's too public for me. It's too... public.


LAINIE. That's not fair.

WALKER. Oh, I'm not being fair. Sorry. You're right. Loud noises can be pretty rough. (Suddenly, she reaches for the marsh.)

LAINIE. Stop that!

WALKER. That's probably going to be the last thing Michael ever hears. Only it won't be two hands clapping, it'll be a gun.
global politics, how all this affects the balance of power. Do you
know what a twenty-year-old Brit thinks of the balance of power?
(Lights fade to black.)

Scene Three

Lights fade up to reveal Ellen sitting in a chair. Lainie sits on the
floor facing her.

ELLEN: I got a call today.
LAINIE: About Michael?
ELLEN: Not exactly. About Walker. He's been visiting you now
and then, hasn't he?
LAINIE: What's wrong with that?
ELLEN: Nothing. He was here about a week ago. You looked at
slides, believe.
LAINIE: How do you know that? Did he tell you?
ELLEN: Walker? Oh, no. (Laughs slightly.) No, no. No. Sometimes
we watch your house.
LAINIE: You do?
ELLEN: Of course. You're on the list.
LAINIE: What list?
ELLEN: The Watch Your House list. You've made threats. You're
a potential embarrassment. In the realm of international politics,
that can be serious. Terrorists can use what you do. What Walker
does, too. Americans are often naive in their efforts to affect things
like the media, public opinion. They can end up helping this
country's enemies far more than themselves. In a situation like this,
where so little can be done, the temptation must be irresistible to
do something irrational, counterproductive. That's the only way I
really understand what Walker's done.
LAINIE: What's he done?
ELLEN: Oh, that's right. You don't know yet. That call I got? It
was from one of his editors. Walker's written a story. About you.
I'll be out tomorrow. Not an interview. He doesn't quote you
directly. But he details the kidnapping and all your various
meetings with people during the early months, and... I'm afraid
also this room.

LAINIE: He'd never do that without telling me.

ELLEN: That's what I thought. That's why I'm here, Ells. To find out if he really has done this behind your back. (A beat.) Is that the case?

LAINIE: Can we get them not to print the story?

ELLEN: No. But I'd like to make a suggestion or two, Ells.

LAINIE: What?

ELLEN: If you were to make a public statement disavowing the article, that might help. Perhaps having a different report from a newspaper we could recommend, come in and see this run in a more normal state —

LAINIE: No.

ELLEN: Whatever you like. Perhaps only a press call, just a picture of you sitting in this room with furniture, the windows open — (Lainie is silent.) Well. Let's see what damage is done before we look for solutions. (A beat. Ellens sits.) I probably should beging back to the office. (She moves to leave. Lainie is muttering.) Later. I'll see you all right.

LAINIE: Are you pretending to care?

ELLEN: I care very much. I think you know that.

LAINIE: If you did, you'd do something.

ELLEN: I told you, there's nothing we can do about Walter—

LAINIE: Not about Walter, about Michael.

ELLEN: We do things all the same. Every day. We just cared about them—

LAINIE: Nothing happens.

ELLEN: Sometimes something happens. People do get friend.

LAINIE: That happened to anything you do.

ELLEN: You can't know that.

LAINIE: I can't know much, given how little you tell me.

ELLEN: A government must have secrets.

LAINIE: Why?

ELLEN: I'm not conducting a course for children. (A beat.) We need silence. From you, from all the handsome families. To willingness to let us do our job. It's not easy for you, we know. But talking with people like Walker doesn't help anyone, and if we've learned today, it's our own punishment. The one thing...
can do — the only thing that will be of any use — is to hope.

LAINIE. What do you mean?

ELLEN. It arises from God, doesn't it? Or Allah? Jehovah? Fate?

LAINIE. A higher power — isn't that right? Certainly not the government. The government doesn't do us any good. It's not an adjustment program.

ELLEN. I don't see how this —

LAINIE. I study hope all the time. You know where? The marsh. I watch the warblers there, nesting. I know their whole life cycle. Little, friendly. I won't bore you with the Latin-name warblers. Thousands of them. Going about their business. Not too many predators, plenty of insects to eat. They wouldn't need hope at all if it weren't for one thing.

ELLEN. Which is —

LAINIE. The cuckoo. A much larger bird, fewer of them, but —

ELLEN. I'm not sure I see the connection.

LAINIE. You're right. Cuckoos don't eat warblers. They eat insects. But cuckoos don't build nests. Instead, they wait till the warblers are away from theirs, then they lay their eggs in the middle of all the warbler eggs. Next, eh? Camouflage.

ELLEN. Sounds effective.

LAINIE. Oh, it works every time. The warblers return, and because they have — literally — bird brains, they don't seem to notice the great big egg among the little ones. They sit on them all. And what do you think happens? I mean, what's evolution for? The cuckoo hatches first. And there he is — nearly as big as his step-parents, demanding an immense whinge of food, and waiting for the warbler eggs to hatch one by one. And when they do, do you know what happens then?

ELLEN. Inform me.

LAINIE. They crawl around — blind, as the cuckoo chick is blind — in the nest, waiting for their parents to return with food. But as they do, one by one, they encounter a miracle of natural selection — the back of the baby cuckoo.
ELLEN. The back?
LAINIE. Its back, unlike other birds' backs, is indented. There's a hollow. And you know what it's shaped like? What it's got big enough for? A baby washer. And yet another miracle of nature: the baby cuckoo has an instinct. To do what? Push again and again that touches its back. Push and push until that thing is not there anymore. And with great effectiveness, one by one, the blind, newborn, totally innocent bird murders each of the blind, newborn, totally innocent washers, by pushing them out of the nest where they'll starve or be eaten by rats and snakes.
ELLEN. Thank you for sharing such a wonderful story.
LAINIE. I'm not done. Warbler Mom and Dad come home. What do they find? One baby—which is as big as a spool, and doesn't chirp like them. What do they think? Who will ever know what they do? Fended off, fledged, a different species. And, God or Allah or Name of God—which we've already agreed is the author of hope—fends on with something more than indifference. With approval. (A beat) The indentation in the cuckoo's back—is that the face of God. That is the chance of hope in the world.
ELLEN. Not every nest is visited by a cuckoo.
LAINIE. Mine was. Now offer me hope. (Lainie beams, enthusiastically)
LAINIE. Ellen, why, starts to follow after her. Before she can reach it, Michael enters in handcuffs. He is handcuffed. Ellen is surprised to see Michael.
a broom do to. I think about brine shrimp in the Kalahari.
ELLEN. Brine shrimp?
MICHAEL. Tiny shrimp that live in the desert, in Africa. Linnie
told me about them. They can live for years in suspended animation
in the mud of a dry lakebed. When rain comes — if it comes
— they wake up, and swim around, and procreate as fast as they can
and get eaten by everything around them. Then after a week or so
the lake dries up again, and the hermaphrodites hit the mud for another
decade. Ninety-nine percent of their life is spent waiting for
their life. You get out of the United States, you see a lot of that.
Whole cultures waiting to be alive.
ELLEN. You’re sympathetic to your captors’ cause. The Stockholm
Effect: A common syndrome — it’s documented.
MICHAEL. It’s convenient. You ensure your dreams don’t bother
you.
ELLEN. No more than the student’s dream of being late to the
exam bothers the student. There’s some real anxiety at first, but
ultimately —
MICHAEL. Indifference?
ELLEN. I realize it’s not real.
MICHAEL. I am real.
ELLEN. Of course. But I am not required to treat you that way. (She
exits quietly.) Lights fade to black.)
the room they're all in. Hell, everyone's in it. We can't get out.

LAINIE. People call me. They've been calling all week. They want to know if this room really exists. They want to know if they can come over.

WALKER. I'm sorry.

LAINIE. You're sorry...? My life hasn't been that different. You know. I've had friends take advantage of me before. I've had them hurt me, betray me. I know what it's like. But I never thought someone would come into my life now as it is now — and do this.

WALKER. Lainie —

LAINIE. That's why you were smothering, that's why. You were sitting in here and pumping the air out, and for all Washington cared you could do it forever. Your husband, the men in Lebanon, the people in this country need you. They need you to say "I trust" — in public. They need you to say, "I don't believe my government," and "We have to try new ways." They need to hear you say it over and over.

LAINIE. That's for sure decide! That's my choice. You make my choice! (A silence.) You think that just because you've been in this country, you understand! It's the one place I can go and find Michael. Where I can feel — however imperfectly — what he's experiencing. Not barriers between me. No one I don't have to hear about him from a government official or a reporter or concerned friends. I have him here. He's mine.

WALKER. (Quietly.) It's an illusion.

LAINIE. What's it take does you want me to experience Michael? On the news? In the faces of all the art human beings I've had to beg for his freedom? How many other helpless relatives? You're a great one to talk about illusions — that's your whole business. I don't understand you — no matter how I don't.

WALKER. I'm understanding. Do you understand?

LAINIE. (Unevenly, dazed.) Walker —

WALKER. I'm understanding. (He looks at her.)

People are calling me. Reporters — other reporters — want to interview me and this room. What are we going to do about it?

WALKER. I don't know. I'm sorry. (He starts out again.)
LAINIE. I'm going to give you an exclusive interview.

WALKER. Why?

LAINIE. Because now you've written what you've written, talking to someone is inevitable. Unless I get to be thought of as... odd. I'll have to speak out. A lot of reporters would work. I suppose. But with you there's special advantage. I know how far I can trust you. (WALKER sits. Lights fade quickly to black and quickly rise again. LAINIE picks up MICHAEL, who is blindfolded.)

MICHAEL. Some days I go around a room at home. Any room. Doesn't matter, they're all wonderlands compared to where I'm kept. Today it's my office. I try to remember everything about every piece of furniture. Where I bought it, what it was like that day, the smell in the air. It's really very sobering, how much the mind recalls when it's forced to. I remember my chair, my filing cabinet — and not just my filing cabinet, but the exact order of files: household, course-plans, medical, automobile, retirement — all of it. Askif took a picture. I remember the smell of my desk. And each day, I think I remember each day in my office — all of them. Cold days, wet days, days of incredible light. (A tear.) Did I tell you I was making a new country? On the wall I feel the tiny bumps. They're mountains, of course. And the crackle of rivers. I work with it all day, sometimes. Every mountain has a name. There's Mount Freedom — of course. There's Mount Hope and Mount Sense of Humor. And Mount Forgiveness. There's Mount Forgiveness. Most days though, I fill up with the people we know. You, mostly. (Lainie carefully removes Michael's blindfold. He smiles at her.) You know that child we thought about having? We had him. He's a... almost six months now. I'm aging him faster than normal so we can talk together again. His name is Andrew. Because like it. He has your hair and eyes, and... I can't tell about his nose yet. We may have a daughter later. I'm putting it off. (A beat. They stare at each other.) Who can predict the future? (Lights fade quickly to black.)

END OF ACT ONE
LAINIE. Do they move you very often?

MICHAEL. Now and then.

LAINIE. Are the rooms ever different?

MICHAEL. It's always the same room. Whatever it looks like.

LAINIE. Why do they move you?

MICHAEL. They're nervous. I'm a prize, remember? The Army could steal me away, another faction could steal me. Sort of like seagulls fighting over an orange rind on the beach.

LAINIE. What do you do all day?

MICHAEL. Write letters to you. What do you do?

LAINIE. Well, I . . . I do a lot of things. I do my work.

MICHAEL. And how's that?

LAINIE. Oh, you know . . . never-ending.

MICHAEL. (With a smile) That's the trouble with nature. What else do you do?

LAINIE. Nothing.

MICHAEL. Still?

LAINIE. I'm still getting used to it.

MICHAEL. It's been a —

LAINIE. I know how long it's been—it's been longer than you, all right?

MICHAEL. I know.

LAINIE. I wish they kidnapped women.

MICHAEL. They do sometimes.

LAINIE. They let them go? (A laugh)

MICHAEL. Does anything make you happy?

LAINIE. Sometimes Walker does.

MICHAEL. What's he like?

LAINIE. He's like you. He likes to be where he's told he shouldn't be. (A laugh) I gave him an interview.

MICHAEL. You did?

LAINIE. I talked about you. I talked about how little anyone does. All the standard things I feel like such a fool when they roll over and nothing's happened. Why do we seem the way we are sometimes — all the ones who speak out, going around for years, grabbing the world while they blow the whistle, saying, 'This can't be done'! (4 beats) Do you ever hear such silly things as these? Or dwelling?
MICHAEL. Yes.
LAINIE. Close?
MICHAEL. Close enough. I imagine sometimes that the place gets hit. A hole opens up, and I run out of it. Like someone escaping from a crashed plane. About the same odds, I suppose. I like the reason this way. Thanks.
LAINIE. Well always want me to open the window.
MICHAEL. Maybe you should.
LAINIE. You think so?
MICHAEL. You know what I'd give for a window?
LAINIE. Yes. He turns, points towards the window. He makes a gesture as though opening a curtain. Light pours into the room. He looks out, smiles at me and joins him at the window. After a moment Michael turns U, leaving Lainie staring out. Lights fade to black.
ELLEN. Oh, wonderful. When they met again, Ellen and Lainie stood across the room from each other. The light on the room window is open, as before.
ELLEN. Well. This is certainly an improvement.
LAINIE. Thank you.
ELLEN. When did you start opening the window?
LAINIE. A couple of weeks ago. Right after you were here last.
ELLEN. Really. It's much more pleasant. Maybe I should stay away longer next time.
LAINIE. If you do, don't come back.
ELLEN. Don't be cross. You know I had to be in the office every minute lately. That's the whole point of a crisis, isn't it? Keep the bureaucrats in their place.
LAINIE. How's the crisis coming?
ELLEN. You should know. You're doing enough to intensify it.
LAINIE. That's not what I'm doing.
ELLEN. Is it? Let me remind you of your phone call to me yesterday.
LAINIE. You don't have to...
ELLEN. (For memory — perfectly, of course.) Walker says I should go on TV. I think he may be right. Maybe this is a real opportunity to put pressure on people.
LAINIE. I don't mean you.
ELLEN. Of course you meant me. You meant the State Department.
LAINIE. All right, so I did mean you. So what?
ELLEN. Lainie, this crisis has been manageable so far. But there's no telling what can happen. We have a lot of Americans trapped with some exceedingly dangerous terrorists in a very cramped charter terminal in Crete. If you and other hostage relations start pounding onto TV screens now, God knows what effect it will have.
LAINIE. Maybe a good effect.
ELLEN. I doubt it. Lainie, there are twenty-three Americans in that building. We can't break in, they have the building rigged to explode. We have to bargain. But, it's important that no other issue gets involved.
LAINIE. You mean Michael.
ELLEN. We're speaking of innocent lives here.
LAINIE. What's Michael gonna do?
ELLEN. [With a frustrated sigh.] There's a dead service man lying twenty feet from the door of that terminal. At the moment they won't even let us take his body away.
LAINIE. Oh, I see.
ELLEN. He just thought he was on vacation. He wasn't even in uniform, but he was unfortunate enough to have a military ID, and... [LAINIE. I know. (A beat.) Can't we just wait them out? Can't we just wait them out?]
ELLEN. The group likes to die for what they believe in. They're not like a bunch of bank robbers. As far as they're concerned, when they die, they win. (A beat.) Now, they have made demands. But none of those terrorists released. Those demands are being studied by various governments, and just between you and me, we may be able to come to an agreement. But it's rather complicated, you can imagine. But believe me, the terrorists take a group as large as this, everyone understands the short-term project.
LAINIE. Is that how you see it? What's Michael doing now?
ELLEN. He's working on it.
LAINIE. He's in a sense, yes.
ELLEN. He's not going to be able to be absolved as if there was a bunch of other people.
ELLEN. Lainie, there are physical realities.
WALKER. No.
LAINIE. Not.
WALKER. Either you're going to do this or you're not. You have a chance to make a statement here. But it's only going to be heard if you make it as strong as possible. "Quietest Hostage Wife Speaks Out" is a headline. "Quietest Hostage Wife Speaks Out" isn't.
LAINIE. But this is a picture.
WALKER. Doesn't matter. It's all imagery. The picture we choose, the copy we write, the interviews you give— it's all a matter of giving the proper image. That's how people think. Images— not ideas. Images.
LAINIE. (Of the picture.) If I give this up, I give it up. I won't be able to look at it. (A long, slow, sigh.) How many pictures.
WALKER. Good. Thanks. They'll pick this up everywhere, believe me. They'll run it all over— all the networks. This is the perfect time. Couldn't be more perfect. I can't find this sound all better by now, I really was.
LAINIE. How they let anyone get Women, children?
WALKER. Nobody. Not a one.
LAINIE. What if the decide to... to... ?
WALKER. All the others? It's possible. But it's not at all likely. They've already made their point with the soldier. We know they're serious.
LAINIE. They could get nervous. Someone could make a mistake.
WALKER. No one's going to make a mistake. These things are rituals. Everyone knows the role they're playing. Our role is bringing Michael into the deal. We can't. We're going to help him— starting with this... (Indicate the picture.) and one very listen interview. Come on— let's get you down to the studio. (Hesitantly) I mean, um, that she's not moving / Come on.
LAINIE. What happens after the interview?
WALKER. Another interview. Maybe a lot of them.
LAINIE. And after that?
WALKER. Everybody. Everybody who asks. 7 o'clock. 11 o'clock. Late-nights new. That's it.
LAINIE. And after that?
WALKER. I don't know. Threatening phone calls from the state...
Department — or the White House. [weeping]

LANE. And from the families of the new Members. They are going

in here — you know, Gaa, don't you? It is to compuls my

LANE. It's not the only — They will

LANE. M. [weeping]

LANE. [weeping]

LANE. [weeping]

LANE. [weeping]

LANE. [weeping]

LANE. [weeping]
Scene Two

Lights up on the empty room. Walker enters carrying a glass of champagne. He talks.

WALKER. Hey, Lainie! Come in here! What are you doing?
LAINIE. (Off) I'm getting some coffee.
WALKER. Coffee?
LAINIE. (Off) We need to sober up.
WALKER. Why? We did it! We got the message out! We put those bastards on the spot. They're going to have to ask for everybody.
I know it.
LAINIE. (Entering with a cup of coffee) I can't remember the last time I had alcohol.
WALKER. (Holding his glass towards her) Have some more. I'm sure it's a very good month.
LAINIE. No, thanks. This'll be fine. (Gradually a silencer同类; they look at each other, can't help a smile and a slight laugh.)
WALKER. You were fantastic. Fantastic. Everybody in America's for you, and that picture. Wasn't it great? The cameras were flashing up.
LAINIE. They were not.
WALKER. They were. I saw them. Sixty-year-old news guys. Men who've seen every disgusting, pitiful atrocity that ever happened. I bet they haven't cried since the doctor hit 'em. But they cried tonight. For Michael. For you.
LAINIE. No one has to cry for me.
WALKER. They do. That's the point. That's the power. You have whatever it takes. You have authority. People feel what you say. They can't help it. They look at you, and they trust what you say.
LAINIE. What if I say isn't for the best?
WALKER. They'll believe it anyway. Right now — not a week ago, not a week from now — but now this instant, people believe what you say. They're moved by it. They may even accept it. Now, why would...
think things happen in the world? They happen because every once in a while enormous numbers of people become ready to hear something. And if you've got what they're ready to hear, then you're a very powerful person.

LAINIE. Walker.

WALKER. Do it. You have to use it. You have to push at the ones who are pushing you.

LAINIE. No one's pushing me.

WALKER. Nothing in this world happens because it ought to. You have to push people into it. Right now, you have a quality that lets you push. You have a thing to say, and the means to say it. If you're lucky, when you look back on it, it'll have been moral. If not, too bad—you made your best guess.

LAINIE. When did you first decide I had this... quality?

WALKER. First time we talked.

LAINIE. And that's why you've kept at this? With me?

WALKER. Lainie.

LAINIE. I mean it. Is that all this has been? You've just been waiting for me to... blossom into some kind of spokesperson for you?

WALKER. Not for me, for yourself. For Michael. How do you think you're going to get him back? How? You going to pray he'll show up? He won't. You'll get him back when you make this government uncomfortable enough to make some other government uncomfortable enough to take it's someone—that's it. (Sighs at her coffee.)

LAINIE. You'll write a lot of articles now, won't you? No matter how it comes out.

WALKER. Yes, I will. That's my job. That's how I push. (A slight smile.) So look— in my business, when you make the government uncomfortable you drink champagne, not coffee. What do you say? (He offers her his glass. She doesn't take it.)

LAINIE. Go home.

WALKER. Go home?

LAINIE. I don't feel like celebrating.

WALKER. Why not?

LAINIE. Because for all I know, I haven't done anything more than risk the lives of innocent people tonight. That's no reason to
celebrate.

WALKER. That's not what you were saying earlier.

LAINIE. Earlier I didn't think I was with someone who — (She speaks herself.)

WALKER. Someone who what? Who what, Lainie?

LAINIE. Who makes friends just so he can — push.

WALKER. I have to be able to do my job.

LAINIE. That's what I think. It's probably what the Shiel says.

WALKER. What's wrong with that? It's a world of work, Laine.

LAINIE. It's a world of crime. We do it so we can keep doing it. (A beat.)

WALKER. I'm sorry you feel this way. I think I've been pretty far
patient, all things considered. I've waited a year for a story that—


WALKER. I know. That's why I'm writing about the stupid fuck. (A
long beat.) Lainie? (A beat. He takes a hesitant step towards her, then
hesitates.) I'll call you in the morning. (He walks quietly to the
shocking chair in her room. Lainie sits on the mat thoughtfully, in
a moment, then lets her head fall to her side and closes her eyes. Lights
change, solving her on the mat.)

WALKER. Michael? The first time I saw you, time turned a corner.
I'd always thought of it as gray, unchangeable. But it wasn't. When
I married you, I felt as though time were our child. That's why
we would... (He stops, sitting.) We could shape it to our own
purposes. In the darkness we hear Walker's voice. When lights rise, Lainie
is sitting on the mat, on the floor.)

WALKER. (Off.) Lainie? It's me, Walker. Can I come in? (Off.)
Lainie? (Off.) Your car's in the garage. I knew you were here. (Off.)
Lainie? (A beat. Walker enters. He looks at Lainie with concern
but not surprise.) It's not a defeat. It's a step closer. (No suspense. He
wants to her.) They released Madison. Plus everybody from the
charter's bills. That's a step. They recognized a problem. They
bargained. We can take credit for that. You're as responsible as
anyone that is Madison's free now.

LAINIE. Why him?

WALKER. No one knows. A best. We haven't been answering
your phone.

LAINIE. Reporters call. (Of the news.) I can't see him anymore.
morning, I haven’t been able to feel him. I can’t remember what he looks like.

WALKER. He’ll come back. I know he will. (She moves to the mat on all fours, places a hand at its center.)

LANIE. He may as well have disappeared into the earth. Right here. On this spot. I would feel more hope.

WALKER. Lanie, he’s... For God’s sake, we got Madison back.

LANIE. Did you see the President? On the news? “We have them back now, after eight harrowing days of captivity.”

WALKER. Pasha Madison.

LANIE. Is that what they tell mothers of dead soldiers? “Your boy’s dead, but don’t worry — the one right next to him was just fine.”

WALKER. I’m just saying that Madison —

LANIE. This is all for Madison. HER NOT MINE. A best. She collapses on the mat, crying. Walker kneels, moves to the door, steps, moves to her. He strokes her shoulder and arm unashamedly, softly. She is on her side, facing away from him. She stirs up and away while she cries. As her crying subsides, Walker moves to her back. After a moment, she moves closer to him, so that her head rests on his lap. She slowly grows silent as he continues to stroke her hair. Lights fade to black. Lights back up on Madison's face alone on the mat. Unit 22.

MIAGHEL. Sometimes I wake up with the most intense desire to know what day it is. Sunday? Thursday? I feel like I’m going too far the next minute if I don’t find out. Other times I’ll wake up and suddenly realize that months have gone by — must have gone by — since I last had a conscious thought about time. It makes me feel like the astronaut who travels forty years at the speed of light and then returns, no older. “What’s happened to everyone?” he must think. “Time must be for them, not me.” I never thought of time as a man could take off and put on again. Too cold to live without it — so we all keep it on. We hug it to ourselves, because it can’t. (Lights.) Time is change. That’s all it is. When there’s no change, when there’s no exchange. Yesterday one of my guards told me I’d been here three years. (Lights.) I didn’t know what he meant. (Lights fade to black.)
Scene Three

Lights rise on Ellen, sitting on the armchair. The window is open.

LAINIE: (off) Oh — Darjeeling or English Breakfast? I can't remember.
LAINIE: (throwing the traytable and inn.) Good. That's what I made. Imagine me forgetting. (She sits down the traytable and passes it for them both.) How are you both?
LAINIE: Really? Where'd you go?
ELLEN: St. Thomas.
LAINIE: You went there last year, didn't you?
ELLEN: Once I went every year. I even go to the same hotel there every year. It's the one my husband and I used to stay in when we were married. We both still go there. Only he goes a month before I do now.
LAINIE: That's an interesting arrangement.
ELLEN: It's not an arrangement at all. It's a circumstance. (A beat.) How are you holding up?
LAINIE: About the same. It's been a long time.
ELLEN: We're aware of that —
LAINIE: Since I've seen you, I mean.
ELLEN: Yes, well —
LAINIE: I've just gone back to work.
ELLEN: Really?
LAINIE: Last month. I'm teaching again. Everyone there is being very considerate. No "What's it like" questions.
ELLEN: Good.
LAINIE: Scenery to be around so many people all day. I'd gotten stiff out of the habit... (A beat.) Have you heard anything new about Michael?
ELLEN: Not specifically —
LAINIE: I thought when you called —
ELLEN: No, it wasn't that we'd heard anything new about Michael, precisely.
LAINIE: What was it then?
LAINIE: Is there something you want to say to me?
ELLEN: Of course. I'm here, aren't I?
LAINIE: Then why don't you say it?
ELLEN: It's just a little tricky, to be frank. It's—well, I'd like to feel I'm not here in my official capacity this time. That is, if you could feel that way.
LAINIE: Why?
ELLEN: Could you feel that way? (A beat.)
LAINIE: All right.
ELLEN: Good. I wanted to tell you about something that happened last night. It, um—well, it certainly took me by surprise.
LAINIE: What happened?
ELLEN: We intercepted someone. A terrorist. Not a Shi'ite, not even Lebanese. But an Arab, and... we killed him.
LAINIE: You what?
ELLEN: He fought back. He resisted. It made no sense—he was completely surrounded, but... he resisted.
LAINIE: Where?
ELLEN: In a small Italian coastal town. It should be on the news within an hour or so. We've managed to hold it back a bit, but—
LAINIE: What are you saying?
ELLEN: I think you know what I'm saying.
LAINIE: Michael's in more danger now.
ELLEN: They all are. (A beat.) It was bad enough for Michael that we intercepted this man. But to kill him. I'm afraid it's a very dangerous situation.
LAINIE: Not for you.
ELLEN: Lainie—
LAINIE: Whose idea was that?
ELLEN: I couldn't tell you if I knew.
LAINIE: What was the point? What did you think you had to gain?
ELLEN: This man was implicated in the deaths of scores of American citizens. He was behind at least three bombings.
LAINIE: So somebody at CIA said, "kill him."
ELLEN: They did not. They decided to capture him. If possible.
LAINIE: And it wasn't. So now Michael's going to—
ELLEN. Nothing will happen to Michael, for all we know. The risks were carefully analyzed, and—

LAINIE. The President's image is so that's what was analyzed. Did he need to look fearless this week?

ELLEN. We can assume that any of the hostages will be harmed simply because our terrorist leader was intercepted.

LAINIE. Killed using English. (A beat.)

ELLEN. Killed. It was the judgment of the Department that Michael and the others would not be greatly endangered.

LAINIE. Was that your judgment? (A beat.) You never answer questions like that, do you?

ELLEN. No.

LAINIE. Is it because you know you started you'd never be able to stop? (A beat.)

ELLEN. Early in the war between Iraq and Iran, there was an offensive. Iranian soldiers—Shiites, like the people holding Michael—needed a way to break through Iraqi minefields. Then these and all conventional tactics, classic World War I stuff. But with one difference. To clear the minefields, the Iranian army—which has some significant technical limitations—used boys. The boys didn't go out and dig up the mines. They ran over them. The mines blew up, killing the boys, and the soldiers followed after, across the newly cleared fields. These boys were fourteen, fifteen—up to twenty. Some were as young as ten. They had... volunteered for the duty. They wanted to be martyrs. And their families too, many of them, freely give their sons to this honor. The boys were white headbands, ran into the fields shouting 'Shahed', which means martyr. Some of them wrapped themselves in blankets first, so that when they were killed the explosions wouldn't blow them apart. Quite so much, and their bodies could be... gathered more easily, and returned home to inspire other boys to take the same path. Their parents do not grieve. They are proud, and satisfied their sons are in heaven—to them a place as tangible as this, without pain. (A beat.) There are times when it becomes impossible to negotiate. When the very act of negotiating legitimizes a philosophy that's... not human anymore. Those places where such a philosophy reigns have to be isolated. Those people who try to extend such a philosophy must be stopped. At any cost.
LAINIE. Any cost.
ELLEN. Any cost. (Lights fade to black. They come up quickly again in Laine and Walker. Laine looks agitated.)

WALKER. I don't think it means anything.

LAINIE. What do you mean, it doesn't mean anything? They said they were going to kill him.

WALKER. It's a radio report. They've been wrong dozens of times. They're almost never right.

LAINIE. What if they're right this time?

WALKER. It's a tactic. That's all it is. We hit them, they threaten the hostages. Nothing happens. It's just a pressure game.

LAINIE. This isn't theirs. They said they were going to kill him.

WALKER. That announcement didn't even come from his captors. It came from an entirely different faction. They wouldn't even know where he is, let alone how he is.

LAINIE. Oh, God — I can't stand this. I can't. I know —

WALKER. (Whispering) Lainie — (the nurse away from him; pacing the room with increasing agitation.)

LAINIE. There's a circle of hell for these people. There's a circle of hell so deep —

WALKER. Lainie, calm down —

LAINIE. No!

WALKER. You know, there might even be an advantage in this.

LAINIE. Advantage?

WALKER. Listen to me! A false story's been broadcast. Michael's kidnappers may have to show pictures of him alive now. There could be a video tape, or —

LAINIE. And if there's nothing?

WALKER. That doesn't mean anything either. They can play this a lot of different ways. The point is, they've kept him for three years. And now they're just going to kill him? Why? They've got nothing to gain? It's not rational.

LAINIE. What's rational about killing? I want to go on TV. I want to talk to somebody. To everybody. I want to —

WALKER. You shouldn't do that.

LAINIE. Why not?

WALKER. Nothing's known yet. We have to wait and find out the
ELLEN. Some. When I worked in the Defense Department.
WALKER. Now there's a job.
ELLEN. It's nothing one looks forward to.
WALKER. What did you say to them?
ELLEN. What can you say? I told them their men were heroes. I said, "Your husband, son, brother, father was a hero. He died of bad luck." Not bad planning at the top, not tactical mistakes of his commanders. Bad luck.
WALKER. And they believed you?
ELLEN. Oh, yes. (A beat. He looks out the window.)
WALKER. Is that what you're going to tell Lainie? That Michael died of bad luck?
ELLEN. No, Lainie gets the truth.
WALKER. Which is?
ELLEN. Off the record.
WALKER. Nothing's off the record. (Ellen shrugs, sits silently. Walker sighs and looks out the window.) All right, all right — off the record. (As Ellen speaks, Lainie enters silently. Neither of them sees her.)
ELLEN. We miscalculated. We valued Michael's life below a chance to make an international point; We increased the danger for all the hostages. We chose to.
LAINIE. Thank you. (They turn with surprise.)
ELLEN. Lainie, I... I wasn't —
LAINIE. Going to say it like that? I'm glad you did. (A beat.) Is that all your business?
ELLEN. The President is sending you a letter.
LAINIE. I'll burn it.
ELLEN. Your husband's remains will arrive tomorrow morning at Andrews Air Force base. If you have no objections, there will be a short ceremony —
LAINIE. I object.
ELLEN. The body will be transported at government expense to a funeral home of your choice.
LAINIE. I get a choice?
ELLEN. Simply inform us where. (A beat.) Allow me to take this opportunity to convey the deep sympathy of the Secretary of State.
LAINIE. Go to hell.
ELLEN. And the President.
LAINIE. Why are you saying this?
ELLEN. It's my job to say this.
LAINIE. You don't have a job. You have a license to manipulate.
(A beat.) I want to be like you. Tell me how to be like you.
ELLEN. What do you mean?
LAINIE. I want to think like you. I want to be able to put people away in my head. I want to forget them there. I want to lock them in whatever room you have for that.
WALKER. Lainie —
LAINIE. Teach me! (A beat.) You won't, will you? That's your most closely-guarded secret. That's where all the real weapons are.
WALKER. (To Ellen.) You should go.
LAINIE. No. Not till I say. Ellen, I think you and government did your best. I think everyone did his best. Michael did his best. Walker did his best, you did, the Shi'ites — even the ones that killed Michael. Probably everyone has done his best. That's what frightens me. That's why I don't know if I'll ever be able to walk out of this room anymore. Into what? A world filled with people doing their best?
ELLEN. I wish I could take your pain away.
LAINIE. I wish you could remember it. (Ellen exits U. A beat.)
WALKER. Do you need me to be here?
LAINIE. Not right now. Not for awhile.
WALKER. I'd like to be.
LAINIE. No.
WALKER. Why not? (A beat.) I don't think you should be alone.
LAINIE. I'm not. (A beat.)
WALKER. What about tomorrow? I'll drive you to the Air Force base.
LAINIE. Thank you. You should go now.
WALKER. Are you sure? (She nods, stares at the mat. He looks around the room.) I'll call you later. All right? Lainie? (A beat.) Lainie? (She moves to the mat, kneels down beside it, stares at it. Walker studies her for a moment, then starts out U.)
LAINIE. (Pointing at the chair.) Could you take that out? Too much furniture. (Walker picks it up, stares at her, then leaves. She is again focused on the mat. Her hand strokes through the air, as though caressing Michael's face. At this point Michael enters U., silently. He moves to the
UNIT 28

LAINIE. After they mate, the male walla the female up in the hollow of a tree. He literally imprisons her. And all through the weeks of incubating the eggs, he flies off and finds food, and brings it back and feeds her—through a little hole in the wall he’s built. After the eggs are hatched, he breaks down the wall again, and the whole family is united for the first time. You see? It hasn’t been a prison at all. It’s been...a fortress.

MICHAEL. Their devotion, you mean?

LAINIE. Their devotion. (He smiles, closes his eyes. She continues to stroke his hair. Lights fade to black.)

THE END
Appendix B: Headshot and Resume
Arielle Bianca
SAG-Eligible

Hair: Black
Eyes: Brown
Height: 5’7
Weight: 135

Email: ariellebrown07@yahoo.com
Miss Black Louisiana USA, 2016

FILM
A Quest for Joy
Joy (Lead)
Red Light Performing Arts Company

Infidelity
Jessica (Lead)
Dillard University

What The Game Stands Tall
Poly Cheerleader
Thomas Carter

Hot Tub Time Machine 2
Stand In
New Orleans

TELEVISION
Underground
House Maid #2 (Recurring)
WGN

Alicia Keys Music Video
Couple (Featured)
Christopher Robinson

Fox Morning Show
Guest
WUFX

COMMERCIAL
Popeye’s
Ripin Chicken Lady
Inmate/Brandy

Bossier Parish Prison Systems
Immortal Media
Blackbird Media

2012 National Pepsi NFL Commercial
Fan Girl #3
PepsiCo.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EjlM7DyDjTo

2013 Superbowl Pay Garnet Style Promotion
Principal Dancer
World Famous Pistachio

Commercial Print
Cedric the Entertainer’s Date
Heat-Movie Print work

THEATRE
Love Thy Neighbor
Sandra
University of New Orleans

Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo
Leper
University of New Orleans

Relative Strangers (1 Act)
Marie Barrett
University of New Orleans

Parnell Worthy
Ensemble/Ghost of Christmas Past
Academy Award Winner: Mark Medoff

Women in Manhattan
Billie (Lead)
Jackson State University

Rubbed
Sophie
Jackson State University

Love Doesn’t Have To Hurt
Sgt. Paige
Public Awareness Theatre Company

Everyone Plays the Fool
Mariah (Lead)
J Lee Productions

The Unwanted
Emma (Lead)
Jackson State University

TRAINING
M.F.A. in Acting, University of New Orleans
May 2016

B.A. in Theatre Performance, Jackson State University April 2012

Intensive Study, School of Julliard, New York, NY June 2015

Mary Mitchell
Christopher Hayes
Jessi Perez
Georgie Stott
Keneddy Center Theatre Regional Festival
Jerry Katz
James Yeager
David Hoover
Arren Hayes
Yolanda Williams
Yoloula Myles
Patrick Benton
Nada Bodie-Smith

Artist as Citizen
Clowning: Physical Acting Workshop
Hip Hop Workshop
Musical Theatre/Vocal Workshop
Commedia Dell Arte: Voice; Michael Chobnok Technique, Improvisation
Evan Chobnok Technique;
Movement
Advanced Acting I, Advanced Acting II
Voice; Shakespeare; Kristin Linklater; Scene Study
Directing; Shakespeare
Acting for Camera, Improvisation, and Movement
Audition Workshop
Fundamentals of Acting, Advanced Acting Dialects, and
Character Development

SPECIAL SKILLS:
Accents: Southern, British, Standard, and African; Sports: Cheerleading, Roller Skating, Basketball, Softball, and Soccer;
Singing Voice: Alto; Instrument: Alto Saxophone (Beginner); Dance: Hip Hop, Freestyle, Basic Lyric, and Ethnic;
Miscellaneous: Bartending, Teaching, Cocktail Mixer, Licensed Driver, Majorette, Pageantry, Modelling, Stage Hand, Pool
Player, and Bicycling

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VITA

Arielle B. Brown born was born in Grenada, MS on May 11, 1989. She graduated from Grenada High School in 2007. Between 2008 and 2012, she studied Speech Communication and Theatre with Emphasis in Theatre minoring in Social Work at Jackson State University in Jackson, MS receiving her Bachelor’s Degree. March 2012 Arielle became a member of the Alpha Psi Omega Theatre Honors Fraternity. In June 2015, she attended the Artist as Citizens Conference studying at The School of Julliard in New York City. Between 2013 and 2016, she studied Theatre Performance at the University of New Orleans in New Orleans, LA and received her Master of Fine Arts Degree.