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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

Arielle B. Brown

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

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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.

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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).

Research: The American Government, Politics, Media, and Hostages.

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.” (Weinstein, 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 not 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”.

JOURNAL ENTRIES: REHEARSAL PROCESS

9/27/2015

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?

09/29/2015

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.

9/30/2015

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.

10/12/2015

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.

10/15/15

Today's rehearsal was great. Tiffany, Nathan, and I were able to have a private rehearsal on our own at Starbucks. 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.

10/19/2015

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.

10/24/15

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.

10/25 /2015

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.

10/27/2015

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

Page	Note	Line
16		But all this ear hair
16		A beard? I can't imagine it
16		He wasn't looking
16		People had started fishing with grenades
16		Maybe it's something about the way
17		These pictures were harder than I thought
17		Written anything up (until) now
18		Couple of miles away, and warblers mostly. I'm working on them
18		I can't explain it, but for me he is
18	Swap	The rest of the house – everywhere else
18		Why do you care about this
19		You really think that
20		Whatever will get him back
23		I watch the warblers there , nesting
23		A much larger bird
23		And there he is – nearly as big
23		Immense volume of food, and waiting
23		Cuckoo chick is blind – in the nest
23		With food. But as they do, one by one
24		Push (and push) against anything that touches its back. Push and push
24		This blind, newborn, totally innocent bird murders each of the blind, newborn, totally innocent warblers
24		The indentation in the (baby) cuckoos back
26		I've had friends take advantage of me before . I've had them hurt me, betray me. I know what it is like
26		You think that just because you've been in this room

26		It's the one place I can go
26		If I can have Michael
31		Ellen always wants me to open the window
34		I won't be able to look at it
34		They could get nervous. Someone could make a mistake
35		And from the families of the other hostages
36		No, thanks , this'll be fine
37		When did you first decide I had this quality
37		You'll write a lot of articles now won't you? No matter how it comes out
37		Because for all I know. I haven't done anything more than risk the lives of innocent people tonight
38		Who makes friends just so he can push
38		We (just) call it work so we can keep doing it
38		We could.. we could shape it to our lives
38		Reporters call. I can't see him anymore
39		He may as well has disappeared into the earth
40		About the same. it's been a long time
40		I've just gone back to work
40		Last month. I'm teaching again
41		What are you saying?
41		So somebody at state said
42		If you started you'd never been able to stop
44		We should obliterate the city
47		I want to be able to lock them in whatever room you have for that
47	Messy Some swaps	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?
47		Not right now. Not for a while
48		(because) after they mate
48		He flies off and finds food
48		Through a little hole in the wall he's built

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.

10/29/ 2015

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 come 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

Page	Note	Line
9	Swap	Talking to Lebanese or talking to Syrians
9		Undersecretary of state ... this doesn't work at all
10		I scrubbed and painted all the walls
10		In the basement
16		But you should do it all over your face evenly
16		A beard I can't imagine it
16		And he did stop a few weeks before
16		People had started fishing with grenades
16		He didn't know her
16		Maybe it's something about the way
18		No. I'm working on a project. It's something I couldn't do in Beirut
18`		And Warblers mostly I'm working on them
18		I (can) feel it the moment I come in
18	Swap	The rest of the house – everywhere else
18		Why do you care about this
18		There's so much you can choose from
19		You really think that
20		You know what will get him back

22		Can we get them not to print
23		I watch the warblers there, nesting
23		And there he is – nearly as big
23		Cuckoo chick is blind – in the nest
23		With food. But as they do, one by one
24		Push (and push) against anything that touches its back. Push and push
24	Dropped	And with great effectiveness, one by one
24		This blind, newborn, totally innocent bird murders each of the blind, newborn, totally innocent warblers
24		The indentation in the (baby) cuckoos back
26		People call me
26		I've had friends take advantage of me before. I've had them hurt me, betray me. I know what it is like
26		You think that just because you've been in this room
26		It's the one place I can go
26		If I can have Michael
26		People are calling me
27		Unless I just want to be thought of
27		A lot of reporters would work
30		Grabbing the whole nation by the elbow
32		Because he wasn't lucky enough to be abducted in airport? (or) with a bunch of other people
34		But this is (just) a picture
34		They could get nervous. Someone could make a mistake
35		And from the families of the other hostages
36		No, thanks , this'll be fine
37		When did you first decide I had this quality
37		You'll write a lot of articles now won't you? No matter how it comes out
37		Because for all I know. I haven't done anything more than risk the lives of innocent people tonight
38		Who makes friends just so he can push
38		We could.. we could shape it to our lives
38		Reporters call
39		He may as well has disappeared into the earth
40		About the same. it's been a long time
40		I've just gone back to work
40		Last month. I'm teaching again
41		What are you saying?
41		So somebody at state said
42		If you started you'd never been able to stop
44		We should obliterate the city
47	Swap	I want to be like you. <i>Tell me how to be like you</i>
47		I want to be able to lock them in whatever room you have for that

47	Messy Some swaps	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?
47		Not right now . Not for a while
48		(because) after they mate
48		He flies off and finds food
48		Through a little hole in the wall he's built
48		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

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

Page	Note	Line
9	Swap	Moslem & Christian line swapped with Lebanese & Syrian line
9	Swap	Talking to Lebanese or talking to Syrians
10		I scrubbed and painted all the walls
16		But you should do it all over your face evenly
16		People had started fishing with grenades
16		He didn't know her
16		He saw something... Maybe it's something about the way
17		These pictures were harder than I thought
17		Why haven't you written anything up (until) now?
17		when there is nothing natural
18		No. I'm working on a project. It's something I couldn't do in Beirut
18	Swap	The rest of the house – everywhere else
18		Why do you care about this
22		Can we get them not to print
23		I watch the warblers there, nesting
23		And there he is – nearly as big
23		Cuckoo chick is blind – in the nest
23		With food. But as they do, one by one
24		Push (and push) against anything that touches its back. Push and push
24	Dropped	And with great effectiveness, one by one
24		This blind, newborn, totally innocent bird murders each of the blind, newborn, totally innocent warblers
24		The indentation in the (baby) cuckoos back
26		People call me

26		If I can have Michael
26		People are calling me
27		A lot of reporters would work
30		Grabbing the whole nation by the elbow
31		Ellen always wants me to open the window
31		A few weeks ago
32		Because he wasn't lucky enough to be abducted in airport? (or) with a bunch of other people
34		But this is (just) a picture
34		They could get nervous. Someone could make a mistake
36		No, thanks , this'll be fine
37		You'll write a lot of articles now won't you? No matter how it comes out
37		Because for all I know. I haven't done anything more than risk the lives of innocent people tonight
38		Who makes friends just so he can push
38		We (just) call it work so we can keep doing it
38		Reporters call
39		He may as well has disappeared into the earth
40		Last month. I'm teaching again
42		If you started you'd never been able to stop
44		We should obliterate the city
47	Messy Some swaps	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?
48		Review the whole bird thing

My objective is to make the necessary objections.

11/2/2015

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

Page	Note	Line
9		Taking the furniture out of this room
9	Swap	This is absolutely wrong // this doesn't work at all
10		I scrubbed and painted all the walls
24		The whole 'it's back ... eaten by rats or snakes' was out of order and messy
26		That's for me to decide, that's my choice, you took my choice.
30		I know how long it has been
34		I won't be able to look at it

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

I will get it done!

11/3/2015

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.

11/17/2015

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-discoveries. 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.

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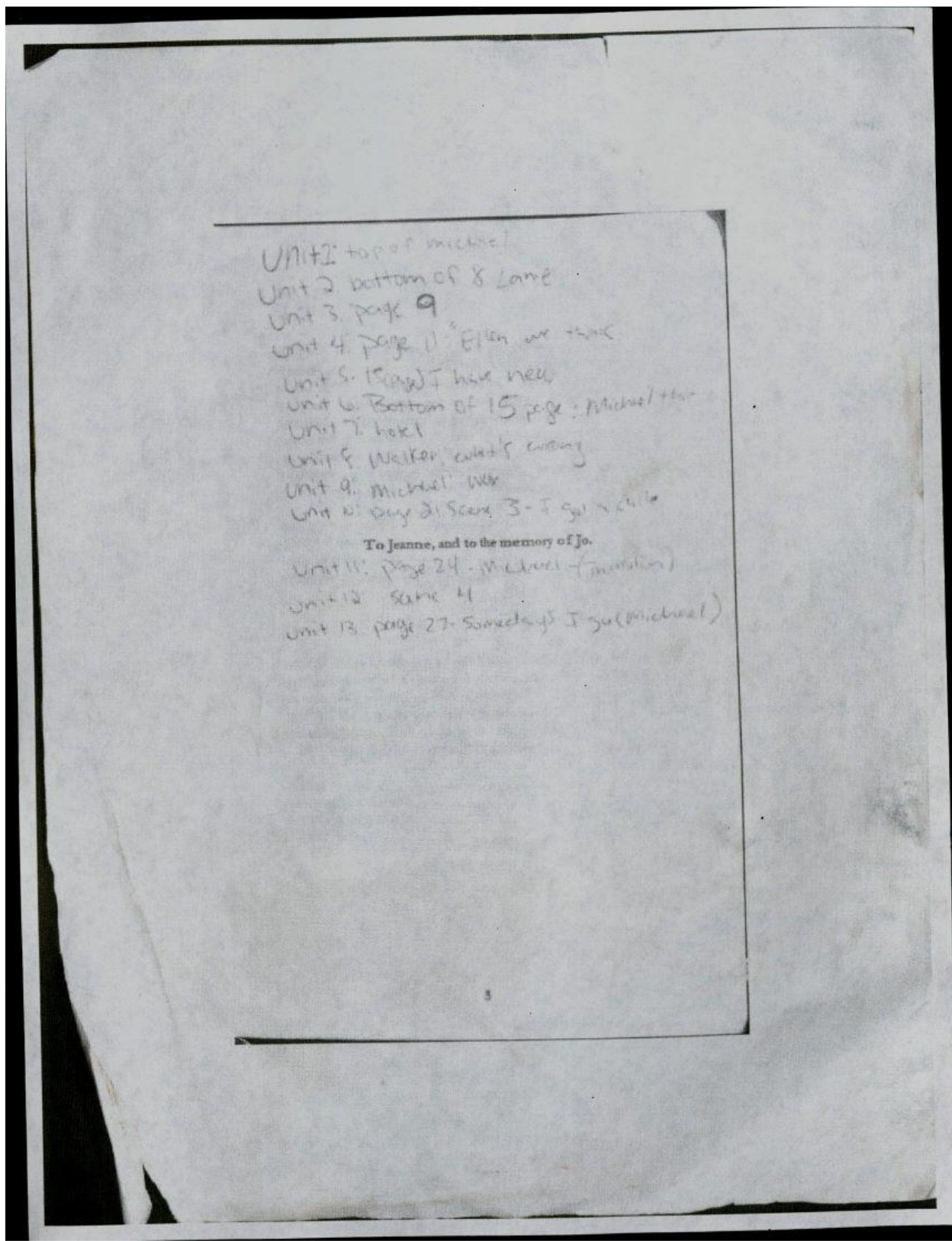
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Appendix A: Scored Script and Photographs



Lanie's
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 forgot was these 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-to-the-forehead routine, wrapped Mathison's hand up with his own shirt, blindfolded 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 your toes. Really, I'm remembering them on the beach at the ocean. 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 I felt overwhelmed by this powerful image of . . . a sea turtle, coming ashore, digging in the sand and laying millions, or hundreds — you'd know — of eggs. And it's stupid, but it made me feel connected in a way I'd never felt before, to amphibians. I mean, there 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 red, 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 so 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, Lanie 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

1980s
→
Modern
Day

Unit 2

Goal: Get Michael Wells back alive.

Obstacles: The Media, Politics, Walker, Ellen, Self, etc

Tactics: ?

Expectation: To find peace within the process of Michael's return

Scene objective "SO"

Exposition

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? (She regards the mat critically, slides it toward one corner of the room, silently appraises 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? (Sliding it to another corner of the room.) It's hard to know which was worse: talking to Moslems 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 her head decisively.) Washington. Definitely Washington. The Arabs wouldn't help me, but at least they'd respect the pain. In Washington, I was the pain. (Of the position of the mat.) This is absolutely wrong. (She moves it to another corner, stares at it.) The head of the University said they'd do everything humanly possible to get you back. So did the head of Amal. 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, mimes pulling down a shade and lights dim. She goes to the mat, sits on one side of it, then lies on it, allowing space as though another person were lying on it with her. Tentatively, she reaches out as though stroking the cheek of her 'companion'.) From now on, I'm only talking to you! (Lights fade to black. When they rise again, Lainie sits on the floor a few feet from the mat, staring at it. Walker stands staring at her.)

to invite

Action:
To purge

Scene obj.
To convince
Self
to ridicule
Lainie is
in Denial
the ridiculous

WALKER. How long has this room been like this? (A beat.) Do you redecorate often? (A beat.) Rest 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.)

Unit 3

So — what is it you'd say you've done to this room?

LAINIE. I cleansed it.

WALKER. Cleansed it? *(Attempting to break the mood.)* Is that a new thing? In decor? Cleansing? *(A beat.)* Lainie? *(A beat.)* 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.

WALKER. What if he comes back? Soon, I mean.

LAINIE. I painted everything. Walls, ceiling.

WALKER. A lot of consistency. What's the mat for?

LAINIE. I look at it.

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. My case. *(A beat.)*

WALKER. Ellen. What time is she coming?

LAINIE. I liked your voice. *Te disno. 44 / to come to redirect*

WALKER. What?

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

WALKER. Why?

LAINIE. It took its time. *(She stares steadily at the mat.)*

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 staring at?

LAINIE. His hands. *(Lights fade to black. Quickly they fade up again. Ellen now stands where Walker did. Lainie remains in the*

same position.)

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. (She 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 enters with a small ottoman.)

WALKER. Here you go.

ELLEN. Thank you.

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

LAINIE. Nothing. (Walker exits.)

ELLEN. Why is he here?

LAINIE. Shouldn't he be here? *To challenge*

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

LAINIE. It's better to be quiet. *(to Ellen) Please*

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. *(to Ellen) Please*

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. *(to Ellen) Please*

ELLEN. (Starting to go.) Then I'll go. *(to Ellen) Please*

LAINIE. No. *(to Ellen) Please*

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

LAINIE. When is there ever any information? *(to Ellen) Frustrate*

ELLEN. (Sighs, sits.) When are you going to do something about this room? (A beat.) Where were we?

Unit 4

SO=

To discover new information outside

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 barely speaking of a country at all. We're speaking of factions. Some friendly to Iran, some to Syria, some to Israel, some to us. They're all fighting for power. For all we know your husband —

LAINIE. Michael.

ELLEN. Michael may be liberated by a faction that fears us. Something like that could happen at any time.

LAINIE. What are the chances? *to question / challenge*

ELLEN. The important thing is to maintain cautious optimism. Advised hope, I call it. We're hopeful, but we're advised. We're not unintelligent. We recognize the reality of the situation, then we inject hope. Into that reality. Because without hope there can be no foreign policy. *(Walker reenters with a small tray-table. On it is a tea set. He sets it all down next to Ellen and pours.)*

WALKER. I let it steep in the kitchen.

ELLEN. Thank you. *(A beat.)* I'm so odd. Everyone in Washington pumps down coffee all day as fast as they can. And then there's me — 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 present possibility. Men have disappeared in Beirut, men have reappeared.

WALKER. So when's Michael Wells going to reappear?

ELLEN. Well — that is what I mean by hope. *(A beat.)*

WALKER. Sorry?

ELLEN. I mean, for example, there are pictures. We have pictures of Michael. Taken just a month ago. Pictures of him alive.

WALKER. He had the shit beat out of him. He was barely recognizable.

ELLEN. The point is, he's alive.

WALKER. He was alive then.

ELLEN. And hope keeps him alive, right up to the present

*walk
upstage*

moment. That's why we use hope. Hope enhances our power.

LAINIE. When will my husband be released? *Ying action*

ELLEN. We can't say.

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 leave.)*

LAINIE. Ellen. *(Ellen stops.)* *is direct*

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 he get you to come out here, anyway? It's a thirty-minute drive.

ELLEN. Lainie?

LAINIE. I won't talk to her on the phone. *To purge*

WALKER. Really?

LAINIE. 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. *To panic*

ELLEN. I come out here because I wish to!

LAINIE. I told them I'd fast. I'd chain myself to a building. *To entice*

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 responses 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 papers, 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? *To probe*

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

LAINIE. Monday.

ELLEN. *(A glimpse of irritation crossing her face.)* Monday. *(Ellen exits U.)*

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. *To dismiss*

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.)* 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? 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 onstage, as he was at the beginning.)* *To direct*

MICHAEL. I have new guards now. It's been more than a year, hasn't it? They don't tell me exactly. I've discovered some things here. For example, your hands can become friends if they're in handcuffs long enough. *(A beat.)* I once saw a hand just lying in the street. You remember that day I came home, after walking past a car-bombing? I didn't tell you at the time, but I saw it. Just a hand, lying there, unclaimed. It wasn't even horrible so much as . . . terrifyingly 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't believe we actually sat there at the University and said, "One last term. Then we'll leave." One last term. I wonder if we would've left even then. I wonder if somehow, some part of us even liked the danger. Or was in awe of what we were witnessing. I mean, why does anyone stay? This city's in the hands of boys. Teenagers roam the streets carrying AK-47's and somebody says I don't know if there's ever been a city that has for this long been such a horror. That's taken itself apart brick by brick, life by life. And so many of us stayed. We walked down the street, through the rubble, past the checkpoints, past the bombings—we had days full of ordinary moments. Amid—what?—devils from Hell. Boys who might shoot you the next moment. Cars that might drive up, park and explode. *(With a growing tension that finally breaks through.)* And none of us seemed ready to say, "Leave it. Let us out of here! Please. God anything but this! Stop!" *(A beat. He moves himself.)* And none of us was ever quite ready to leave. *(He moves towards a wall. Lainie enters and sits next to the wall, reaching out as though seeking Michael's hand. Michael is oblivious to her.)*

LAINIE. Michael? This bothers me. Here on this side, just below

Unit 5

Unit 6
50: To
unburden

your mouth. It's a line here. A little tuck, almost. A wrinkle. It's not on the other side. I don't mind you growing older, but you should do it all over your face, evenly. Don't you think? (A beat.) This, though. Here at your temple. I like this. The way the hairs glide along the side, over your ear, into the tangle in back. Just these hairs on the side, running straight back, like they're in a hurry. (With a slight laugh.) But all this is for hair. This has got to go. (Quater.) A beard. I can't imagine it. (A beat.) I suppose you don't get enough sleep. Or maybe you do. Maybe all you do is sleep. I hope so. I wish you could sleep from first to last. That you'd never open your eyes upon, till I was in front of you. Your eyes are so... Who do women love eyes so much? They say it's men that are visual. (A beat.) Michael! (Lights fade to black.)

hair
hair

Scene Two

A slide appears on the U. wall. It's a picture of a heavily damaged building in Beirut. We see Lamine and Walter silhouetted in the floor, looking up at it.

LAMINE: This is a hotel in Beirut near where we lived. It was destroyed by Lebanese shelling a couple of months before... before we left. (We hear the sound of a slide projector. The picture changes the side of a car bomb explosion.) A car bombing. Michael used to take pictures as he walked along. He wasn't looking for these kind of things. You just couldn't avoid them. People at the University told him it was dangerous. It made people notice him. Even men I knew... and he did stop a few weeks before... (Another slide: a Lebanese youth, perhaps 22, with an automatic weapon.) He got command of a whole block. He liked Michael. He wanted to pose. (Another slide: the coast. A few indistinct figures at the shore.) Michael heard that people had started fishing with grenades. There were some grenades in the water, and... fish that way. (Another slide: a Lebanese woman, weeping bitterly.) Michael said he could've turned pictures a hundred times. I'm not sure what it was about her. He didn't know her. He saw something different as he passed. Maybe she wasn't showing us her in a different way. Maybe it's something

Unit 7
Dentist
To
mourn

about the way she's standing, or—whatever it is, all the values just seem to . . . hold you. (Suddenly the projector shuts off. The image disappears. Blackness.)

WALKER. What's wrong?

LAINIE. I want to stop now.

WALKER. We just started.

LAINIE. I'm sorry.

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. (Walker flicks on the lights. He stands at the U. wall. Lainie still 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 harder than I thought. I shouldn't have agreed to show them to you.

WALKER. It's a shame. They'd go awfully 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 talking.

WALKER. I guess I'd like to have your permission. (With a self-deprecating 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? (Lainie nods.) 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 natural. (A beat.)

WALKER. So. Do you sit in here all day?

Local Shift Unit 8
What happens? - to inspire

To confront

To confide

To purge

LAINIE. No, I'm working on a project. It's something I couldn't do in Beirut.

WALKER. What is it?

LAINIE. I watch birds. I go down to the marsh a couple miles and / W. Warblers, mostly. I'm working on them.

WALKER. Does it relax you?

LAINIE. It teaches me.

WALKER. And the rest of the time you're in here? Not much of a life. (A beat.)

LAINIE. Michael's here. I can't explain it, but for me he is, in this room. The moment I come in, I feel the warmth of his body. 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 tried enough. We could start with an interview. In depth, about —

LAINIE. My pain? To question

WALKER. Among other things. We could run it in the paper. Two, three installments. Maybe more.

LAINIE. We could run my pain in installments?

WALKER. It's better than nothing in a marsh. (A beat.)

LAINIE. Ellen says that won't help anyone but the kidnappers.

WALKER. No one knows what will help. That's the first thing. No one knows. All we know is what we've done, and what 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.

LAINIE. But why? Why our pain? There's so much to pick from. The world is full of terrible... outcomes. Why did you choose this is it because you can win an award?

WALKER. An award? What are you talking about?

LAINIE. Intense suffering. Along series. Lots of installments. A

*Research warblers

To touch

To confront

She loves birds!

To question

To replicate

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 apologize*

WALKER. I've stared into too many faces — yours included — of people who've been told, "Your husband's gone. He may be dead. There's nothing you can do." (A beat.) The reason I'm here is because more than anyone this has happened to — any family, I mean — you understand what's really going on.

LAINIE. What's really going on?

WALKER. What's really going on is that they'll let him die. They've already made the value judgment on him and the others. To this administration, it's more effective to use his captivity — 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? *To test*

WALKER. I know it. So do you. The day he's reported dead, do you think they'll be taking any responsibility? They'll be all over TV, pointing the finger at every terrorist 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? *to speak*

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

LAINIE. No.

WALKER. Why not?

LAINIE. (Shaking her head.) It's too public for me. It's too... public.

WALKER. Well. Fear of speaking. Right up there with — what? Fear of falling, fear of loud noises —

LAINIE. That's not fair.

WALKER. Oh, I'm not being fair? Sorry. You're right. Loud noises can be pretty rough. (He suddenly claps his hand loudly behind her ear. She pulls away from it, holding her ear in pain.)

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.

Take the part out

LAINIE. Get out of here!

WALKER. Care about your husband.

LAINIE. (dot)

WALKER. Do something!

LAINIE. I see

WALKER. Do more!

LAINIE. No! (A beat.) You know what will get him back? Nothing we can understand. Whatever took Michael, whatever will bring him back is power so incomprehensible we'll never understand it. And all the running around screaming about injustice won't change a thing. All we can do—all anyone can do—is take pictures of mourning widows. Write stories about mourning widows. Become fascinated with widows of men who aren't even dead yet. But nothing—nothing—will make a difference.

WALKER. Lainie, I'm out!

LAINIE. Get out! If I want to see a scavenger, I'll go to the marsh. (A beat. Walker hesitates, then exits. Lights fade to black. When they're again, Michael sits alone on the mat. He is blindfolded.)

MICHAEL. (A beat.) War isn't a tear in the fabric of things, it's the fabric. If earth is our mother, our father is war. The chief priority we have on earth is to vie with each other for a place to stand. Does any of this make sense, Lainie? I'm trying to explain why this has happened to us. Americans fight all the time—lots of war. But always far away. We haven't had to fight for the soil we stand on in a century. We've forgotten that level of sacrifice. These people haven't. Everyone in this country—Christian, Sunni Moslem, Shiite, Palestinian, Israeli—everyone is fighting for the ground. The ground itself. They stand here or nowhere. So it's easy for them to give up their lives. Small sacrifice. It's easy for them to kill, too. Small sacrifice. You know how being here, being swallowed up by it, makes me feel? Like I'm finally part of the real world. For the first time. Lainie, something in me never felt... affected... until this happened. You know what it makes me think of? Shiloh. Vicksburg. The Wilderness. What those places must have been like: suffocating, endless, bleeding disaster. Stacking of bodies ten deep for a few feet of dry ground. Don't you see? We're not different from these people, we've just forgotten. We think this urge doesn't exist anymore. We should let everything we objectify. We talk about

To explain

To command

to American

to American

Don't sing fight

nothing will make a difference

Unit 9

global politics, how all this affects the balance of power. Do you know what a twenty-year-old Shi'ite thinks of the balance of power?
(Lights fade to black.)

Scene Three

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

ELLEN. I got a call today.
LAINE. About Michael?
ELLEN. Not exactly. About Walker. He's been visiting you now and then, hasn't he?
LAINE. What's wrong with that?
ELLEN. Nothing. He was here about a week ago. You looked at slides, I believe.
LAINE. How do you know that? Did he tell you?
ELLEN. Walker? Oh, no. (Laughs slightly.) No, no, no. Sometimes we watch your house.
LAINE. You do?
ELLEN. Of course. You're on the list.
LAINE. What list? *To question*
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 can understand what Walker's done.
LAINE. 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. It'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

Unit 10

So =
To motivate
Ellen in her
efforts to
get Michael.
Laine needs
validation.

Seated
on the floor
facing her

...also this room.

LAINIE. He'd never do that without telling me. *to challenge*

ELLEN. That's what I thought. That's why I'm here, in fact. 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, if I could.

LAINIE. What?

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

LAINIE. No.

ELLEN. Whatever you like. Perhaps only a photographer just a picture of you sitting in this room with furniture, the window open. *(Lainie is silent.)* Well. Let's see what damage is done before we look for solutions. *(A beat. Ellen exits.)* I probably should be going back to the office. *(She moves to leave. Lainie is motionless.)* Lainie? Are you all right?

LAINIE. Are you pretending to care? *To question*

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 Walker —

LAINIE. Not about Walker, about Michael.

ELLEN. We do things all the time. Every day. We just can't tell you about them.

LAINIE. Nothing happens.

ELLEN. Sometimes something happens. People do get released.

LAINIE. Not because of 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 hostage families. And a willingness to let us do our job. It isn't easy for you, we know that. But talking with people like Walker doesn't help anyone, and as we've learned today, it's its own punishment. The one thing we

Check out

To frustrate

can do — the only thing that will be of any use — is to hope.

LAINIE. Hope?

ELLEN. Hope.

LAINIE. Hope doesn't come from you, does it?

ELLEN. What do you mean?

LAINIE. It comes from God, doesn't it? Or Allah? Jehovah? Fate?

A higher power — isn't that right? Certainly not the government.

The government doesn't dole out hope. It's not an entitlement

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

larger.

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

LAINIE. You're right. Cuckoos don't eat warblers. They also 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. Neat 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 volume 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.

To picture

To clarify

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 just big enough for? A baby warbler. And yet another miracle of nature: the baby cuckoo has an instinct. To do what? Push against anything that touches its back. Push and push until that thing is not there anymore. And with great effectiveness, one by one, this blind, newborn, totally innocent bird murders each of the blind, newborn, totally innocent warblers, 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 Buick, and doesn't chirp like them. What do they think? Who will ever know? What do they do? Feed the only baby they have. Until one day it flies off, fully-fledged, a different species. And God or Allah or Nature or Fate — which we've already agreed is the author of hope — looks on with something more than indifference. With approval. (A beat.) The indentation in the cuckoo's back — that is 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 turns, exits quickly — U. Ellen sighs, starts to follow after her. Before she can reach the door, Michael enters, in handcuffs. He is blindfolded. Ellen is unsurprised to see him.)

MICHAEL. They take me to the bathroom once a day. If I'm lucky I can shower once a month. Pardon my appearance.

ELLEN. That's perfectly all right.

MICHAEL. I imagine you dream about all your hostages.

ELLEN. Just you.

MICHAEL. Really?

ELLEN. Well, I'm assigned to you. The State Department's very big. Other hostages are dreamt about by others.

MICHAEL. (Nods.) Ah.

ELLEN. Don't misunderstand. The dreams don't bother me.

MICHAEL. They don't?

ELLEN. What do you... think about all day?

MICHAEL. I think about a man as a stored object. As a broom in

One
Lainie
and Ellen
Lainie is
in
a
cuckoo's
nest

To
clarify

To
entrap

To entrap

Unit 11

a broom closet. I think about brine shrimp in the Kalahari.

ELLEN. Brine shrimp?

MICHAEL. Tiny shrimp that live in the desert, in Africa. Lainie 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 two the lake dries up again, and the lucky ones 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're sure 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'm not required to treat you that way. *(She exits quickly U. Lights fade to black.)*

Avoidance?

Scene Four

Unit 12

So =
To get her
power back

Lights rise to reveal Lainie and Walker. The chair is gone.

WALKER. I want to be able to give you my side of things. *(A beat.)* I want to show you that what I did —

LAINIE. You promised me. *(A beat.)*

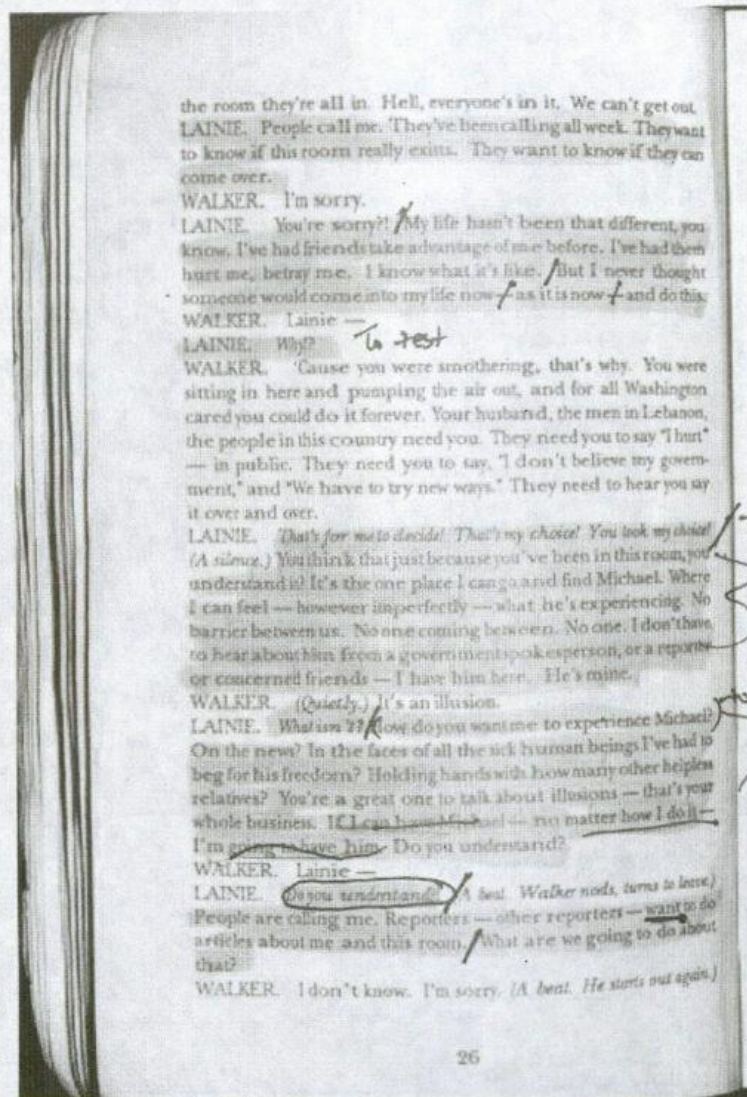
WALKER. That what I did —

LAINIE. You promised me.

WALKER. Lainie —

LAINIE. This room / You put this room in a newspaper. To ponder

WALKER. It's in a newspaper everyday. It's Michael's room. It's



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. Why? *To test*

WALKER. 'Cause you were anothering, 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 "Thurt" — 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 me to decide! That's my choice! You took my choice!* (A silence.) You think that just because you've been in this room, you understand? It's the one place I can go and find Michael. Where I can feel — however imperfectly — what he's experiencing. No barrier between us. No one coming between. No one. I don't have to hear about him from a government spokesperson, or a reporter, or concerned friends — I have him here. He's mine.

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

LAINIE. *What is it? How do you want me to experience Michael?* On the news? In the faces of all the sick human beings I've had to beg for his freedom? Holding hands with how many other helpless relatives? You're a great one to talk about illusions — that's your whole business. *I can have Michael — no matter how I do it — I'm going to have him. Do you understand?*

WALKER. Lainie —

LAINIE. *Do you understand?* *A beat. Walker nods, turns to leave.* People are calling me. Reporters — other reporters — want to do articles about me and this room. What are we going to do about that?

WALKER. I don't know. I'm sorry. (A beat. He starts out again.)

To teach

To purge

To preer

to question
to discover

LAINIE. I'm going to give you an exclusive interview.

WALKER. Why?

LAINIE. Because now that you've written what you've written, talking to someone is inevitable. Unless I just want 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 a special advantage. I know how far I can trust you. (Walker exits. Lights fade quickly to black and quickly rise again. Laine is with 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's my office. I try to remember everything about every piece of furniture. Where I bought it, what it was like that day, the smells 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. As if I 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 beat.) 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 cracks are rivers. I work on 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. (Laine carefully removes Michael's blindfold. He smiles at her.) You know that child we thought about having? We had him. He's um . . . almost six months now. I'm aging him faster than normal so we can talk together sooner. His name is Andrew. Because I 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 not ruling it out. (A beat. They stare at each other.) Who can predict the future? (Lights fade quickly to black.)

END OF ACT ONE

To taunt

Chris stage
Don't stage
lost and take a
beat

to patronize

unit 13

St beside
Michael
This is Michael's
Dream

Blat stage
Photo in
the mirror

unit 15

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 sea gulls 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. — To *deceive*

MICHAEL. It's been a —

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

MICHAEL. I know.

LAINIE. I wish they kidnapped women. — *Michael*

MICHAEL. They do. Sometimes.

LAINIE. They let them go. (A beat)

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 beat) I gave him an interview.

MICHAEL. You did?

LAINIE. I talked about you. I talked about how little anyone's doing. All the standard things. I felt like such a fool when it's all over and nothing's happened. We all of us seem that way to me sometimes — all the ones who speak out. Going around the country, grabbing the whole nation by the elbow, saying, "Please! Can't you do something?" (A beat) Do you ever hear gunfire when you are? Or shelling?

So =
to satisfy
the need of
Michael's absence.
The need is on
psychological
stimulation.

To evolve

MICHAEL. Yes.

LAINIE. Close?

MICHAEL. Close enough. I fantasize 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 room this way. Thanks.

LAINIE. Ellen always want me to open the window. To cheer/To free

MICHAEL. Maybe you should.

LAINIE. You think so?

MICHAEL. You know what I'd give for a window?

LAINIE. Yes. (He rises, moves towards the window. He makes a gesture as though opening a curtain. Light pours into the room. He looks out, smiles. Lainie rises and joins him at the window. After a moment Michael exits U., leaving Lainie staring out. Lights fade to black. When they rise again, Ellen and Lainie stand across the room from each other. The light in the room window is apparently still open, since the light remains brighter.) to confirm

ELLEN. Well. This is certainly an improvement. Unit 14

LAINIE. Thank you.

ELLEN. When did you start opening the window?

LAINIE. A couple of weeks ago. Right after you were here last. to connect

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've 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. to patronize

LAINIE. How's the crisis coming?

ELLEN. You should know. You're doing enough to intensify it. patronize

LAINIE. That's not what I'm doing.

ELLEN. It is? Let me remind you of your phone call to me yesterday.

LAINIE. You don't have to —

ELLEN. (From 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 didn't mean you. to provoke

ELLEN. Of course you meant me. You meant the State Department.

So:
To Include
in the Political
Affairs dealing
with Michael

LAINIE. All right, so I did mean you. So what? *to PINKIE*

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 relatives start pumping 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 American lives in that building. We can't break in, they have the building rigged to explode. We have to bargain. Fast. 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? Guilty?

ELLEN. *(With a frustrated sigh.)* There's a dead serviceman lying twenty feet from the door of that terminal. At the moment they won't even let us take his body away.

LAINIE. *Deaf.*

ELLEN. He just thought he was on vacation. He wasn't even in uniform. But he was unfortunate enough to have a military I.D. and —

LAINIE. *Deaf.* *(A beat.)* Can't we just wait them out? Can't we —

ELLEN. This 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. They want some fellow 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. Or somebody may. It's rather complicated, you can imagine. But believe me, when terrorists take a group as large as this, everyone understands it's a short-term project.

LAINIE. *Deaf.* *(A beat.)* Is that how you see it? What's Michael — *to frame*

ELLEN. Sadly, in a sense, yes.

LAINIE. *Deaf.* *(A beat.)* Because he wasn't lucky enough to be abducted in a airport. With a bunch of other people?

ELLEN. Lainie, there are physical realities. *to defend*

LAINIE. What about moral realities?

ELLEN. Please — don't mix apples and oranges. If you go public, if you make demands, you'll only delay matters and increase the danger for everyone involved. And frankly, no matter what you do, we won't ask for Michael's release.

LAINIE. You won't?

ELLEN. It's not his time.

LAINIE. His time?

ELLEN. It's nice with the window open. You should leave it this way, I think. *(Rising to leave.)* Well, I don't have much free time. I'm afraid I'll only be able to talk on the phone, at least until this present emergency's over. It's hard for me to be away right now. Lainie? *(Lainie hasn't moved.)* Soon it will be over and everything will be back to normal. *(A beat.)* I am sorry it can't be now. *(Ellen exits. Lights fade to black, then quickly rise again on Walker entering with a photograph in his hand.)*

WALKER. *(Calling out loudly.)* Lainie! This is great! This is fantastic! Thank you!

LAINIE. *(Entering.)* It's just a picture.

WALKER. Are you kidding? Michael and Jim Mathison together at the University of Beirut? You never told me you had this.

LAINIE. I didn't see any reason to —

WALKER. Look at it. They've got their arms around each other, they look warm, human, vulnerable — it's perfect.

LAINIE. Walker —

WALKER. We've got to bring this along. They'll want to use it on the show, I know it.

LAINIE. You think so?

WALKER. They'd kill for it. It's got everything you'd want: simple, affecting — that'll communicate.

LAINIE. I don't want to bring it.

WALKER. You don't?

LAINIE. I look at that picture. I don't want it flashed all over the country.

WALKER. Why not? That's exactly what you want to do. It's the perfect one. It affects you. It'll affect other people. *(She takes it from him.)*

LAINIE. I'll find another one.

to reprimand

to simplify

Unit 17

So:

To suppress
the ~~reputation~~ ^{reputation}
of her emotional
State to the
public.
She seeks
privacy.

WALKER. No.

LAINIE. No?

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 Sort Of Speaks Out' isn't.

LAINIE. But this is a picture. *Look @ picture*

WALKER. Doesn't matter. It's all imagery. The pictures 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 test. She gives it to him.)* *hand him picture*

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 was afraid this would all be over by now, I really was.

LAINIE. Have they let anyone go? Women, children?

WALKER. Nobody. Not a one.

LAINIE. What if they decide to ... to — ?

WALKER. Kill more of them? It's possible. But it's not all that 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 to get Michael into the deal. We can, too. We're going to help him — starting with this ... *(Indicates the picture.)* and one very intense interview. Come on — let's get you down to the studio. *(Hence to leave, turns, sees 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-night news shows. You name it.

LAINIE. And after that?

WALKER. I don't know. Threatening phone calls from the State

Department — or the White House, if we're lucky.

LAINIE. And from the families of the new hostages. They're going to hate me — you know that, don't you? If I try to complicate this negotiation by insisting that Michael —

WALKER. Bullshit.

LAINIE. It's not bullshit. They will.

WALKER. Do you care?

LAINIE. Of course I care. I know what they're going through —

WALKER. How long have they been going through it? *(A beat.)*

You've been in line. It's your turn, too — not just theirs. *(Michael enters, handcuffed but not blindfolded. Walker is oblivious to him, but Lainie sees him. Michael smiles at her, goes and lies down on the mat, closing his eyes.)*

LAINIE. All right.

WALKER. *(Taking her by the hand, exiting.)* Come on. Believe me, you'll get used to it. *(They exit. Michael suddenly bolts straight up, screaming.)*

MICHAEL. LAINIE!! LAINIE!! *(A beat. He looks around fearfully, as though expecting someone to enter. When no one does, he relaxes slightly.)* They moved me again. That's why I dreamed. They have a box that they put me in when they move me. It's the shape of a coffin. And it's soundproof. The first time they tried it, they put the box in the back of a van with a bad exhaust system. I was unconscious when they took me out. I know this is an illusion, but sometimes — usually right in the middle of the night — it occurs to me that I don't know, I don't absolutely know, whether I'm alive or dead. *(A beat.)* They brought Matheson here — you know that? No, of course you don't. I never actually saw him. They moved him into a room just down the hall. I could hear him go by once a day when they took him to the bathroom. He said something in the hall the first time he passed by. They shouted at him to shut up, but I could tell his voice. I was afraid they'd take him away again if I said anything back. I'd been warned about that sort of thing before. So for a week I'd just listen to him shuffle past, once a day. Then one day, I heard them moving him — for good, I thought — so I shouted to him. "Matheson!" Once, real loud. It got very silent in the hall. Then the sound of them shoving him out, and then my door opened. Two guards came into my room and beat me. They never would admit

Unit
18

he'd been there. But I knew. I heard him. He heard me. (Light fades out on Michael.)

Scene Two

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

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 silence surrounds them. They look at each other, can't help a smile and a slight laugh.)

WALKER. You were fantastic. Fantastic. Everybody in America felt for you. And that picture. Was I right or what? The cameramen were tearing up.

LAINIE. They were not.

WALKER. They were. I saw tears. Sixty-year-old union 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. — to reject

WALKER. They do. That's the point. That's the power. You have whatever it takes. You have authority. People feel what you say. You can't help it. They look at you, and they trust what you say.

LAINIE. What if what I say isn't for the best? — to challenge

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 act on it. How do you

Unit 19

To be friend.

So-

To speak
and demand
government
assistance
in efforts
of communication
with the
Middle East

Walker = media
- need the
impact given
by the media

think things happen in the world? They happen because every once in awhile 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. Use 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. Laine —

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? ESP? 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 lean on somebody — that's it. *(She starts 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 beat.)*

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. *(To dismiss)*

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 stops 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 Ellen says. It's probably what the Shit says.
WALKER. What's wrong with that? It's a world of work, Lainie.
LAINIE. It's a world of crime. We call it work so we can keep doing it. (A beat.)
WALKER. I'm sorry you feel this way. I think I've been pretty damn patient, all things considered. I've waited a year for a story that—
LAINIE. Michael's waiting. Not you. Not me. Michael.
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, pulls back.) I'll call you in the morning. (He exits quickly U. with the champagne, his glass and her cup. Lainie sits on the mat thoughtfully for a moment, then lies back on it, and closes her eyes. Lights change, isolating her on the mat.)
LAINIE. Michael? The first time I saw you, time turned a corner. I'd always thought of it as gray, impassive. But it wasn't. When I married you, I felt as though time were our child. That somehow we could ... (She stops, sits up.) We could shape it to our lives. (Lights fade. In the darkness we hear Walker's voice. When lights rise, Lainie is sitting in a corner on the floor.)
WALKER. (Off.) Lainie? It's me, Walker. Can I come in? (Off.)
Lainie? (Off.) Your car's in the garage. I know you're here. (Off.)
Lainie? (After a moment, Walker enters. He looks at Lainie with concern but not surprise.) It's not a defeat. It's a step closer. (No response. He moves to her.) They released Mathison. Plus everybody from the charter terminal. That's a step. They recognized a linkage. They bargained. We can take credit for that. You're as responsible as anyone that Jim Mathison's free now.
LAINIE. Why him?
WALKER. No one knows. (A beat.) You haven't been answering your phone.
LAINIE. Reporters call. (Of the mat.) I can't see him anymore. AS

to torment

to scrutinize

to provoke

unit 20

Unit 21

SO =
to interrogate
Walker.

Lainie is
hurting.
She's hurt
Visually
- The house
- Michael is
in control

To devastate

To condemn

Unit 22

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.)

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

WALKER. Lainie, he's... For God's sake, we got Mathison back.

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

WALKER. Plus Mathison.

LAINIE. 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 Mathison —

LAINIE. I did do this for Mathison! (HE'S NOT MINE!) (A beat. She collapses on the mat, crying. Walker hesitates, moves to the door, stops, moves to her. He strokes her shoulder and arm awkwardly, tenderly. She is on her side, facing away from him. He slurs up and away while she cries. As her crying abates, his stroking moves to her hair. 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 Michael sitting alone on the mat.)

MICHAEL. Sometimes I wake up with the most intense desire to know what day it is. Sunday? Thursday? I feel like I'm going to die 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 coat you 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 if we can't... (A beat.) Time is change. That's all it is. When there's no change. When there's no change... Yesterday one of my guards told me I'd been here three years. (A beat.) I didn't know what he meant. (Lights fade to black.)

unit 23

unit 23

Scene Three

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

LAINIE. (Of) Oh — Darjeeling or English Breakfast? I can't remember.

ELLEN. English Breakfast. Always.

LAINIE. (Entering with the tray-table and tea.) Good. That's what I made. Imagine me forgetting. (She sets down the tray-table and pours tea for them both.) How've you been?

ELLEN. Fine. Just got back from a vacation, actually.

LAINIE. Really? Where'd you go?

ELLEN. St. Thomas.

LAINIE. You went there last year, didn't you?

ELLEN. It's where I go 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. Strange to be around so many people all day. I'd gotten 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?
 ELLEN. Nothing, actually. Nothing official.
 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 this?
 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 State 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 —

Frustrated

To entangle

change

dominate

To question strongly

ELLEN. Nothing will happen to Michael, for all we know. The risks were carefully analyzed, and —

LAINIE. The President's image — that's what was analyzed. Did he need to look forceful this week?

ELLEN. We can't assume that any of the hostages will be harmed simply because our terrorist leader was intercepted.

LAINIE. Killed! Use English! (A beat.) — to anger

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

LAINIE. Was that your performance? (A beat.) You never answer — to entice questions like that, do you?

ELLEN. No.

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

ELLEN. Early in the war between Iran and Iraq, there was an offensive. Iranian soldiers — Shi'ites, like the people holding Michael — needed a way to break through Iraqi minefields. They chose an all-out frontal assault, 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 gave their sons to this honor. The boys wore 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 as Lainie and Walker. Lainie is very agitated.)* Unit 24
 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 a threat. 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. ~~Not knowing~~—this is... oh, GOD!
 WALKER. Lainie— *(She moves away from him, pacing the room with increasing agitation.)*
 LAINIE. There is a circle of hell for these people. There is 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? When they've got nothing to gain? It's not rational.
 LAINIE. What's rational about killing? *(A beat.)* 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

Unit 24

he's threatened

raise stakes

Beating point
Michael might be
dead!

To trouble

to challenge
deconstructed

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 focussed 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

mat and reclines on it, so that her hand now strokes his hair.) I think my favorite is the African hornbill.

MICHAEL. Of all birds. Why? *unit 28*

LAINIE. After they mate, the male walls 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. *to*
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*
prison at all. It's been . . . a fortress.

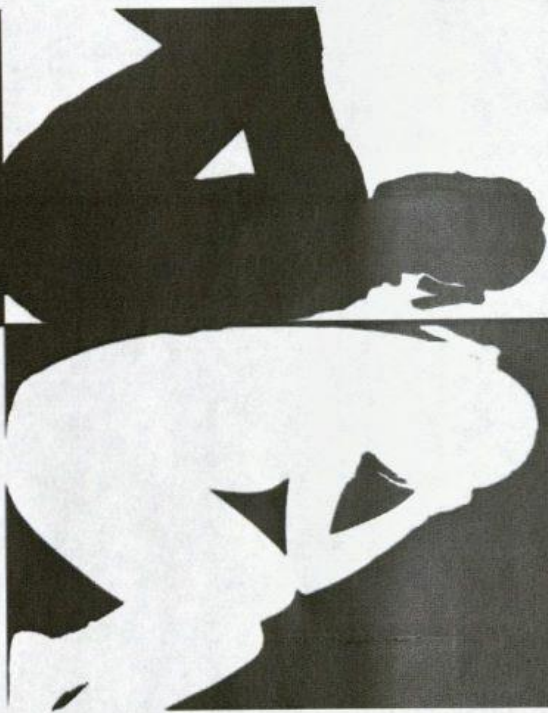
MICHAEL. Their devotion, you mean?

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

THE END

TWO ROOMS

BY LEE BLESSING
DIRECTED BY ERICK WOLFE



. 7, 12, 13, 21
at 7:30pm

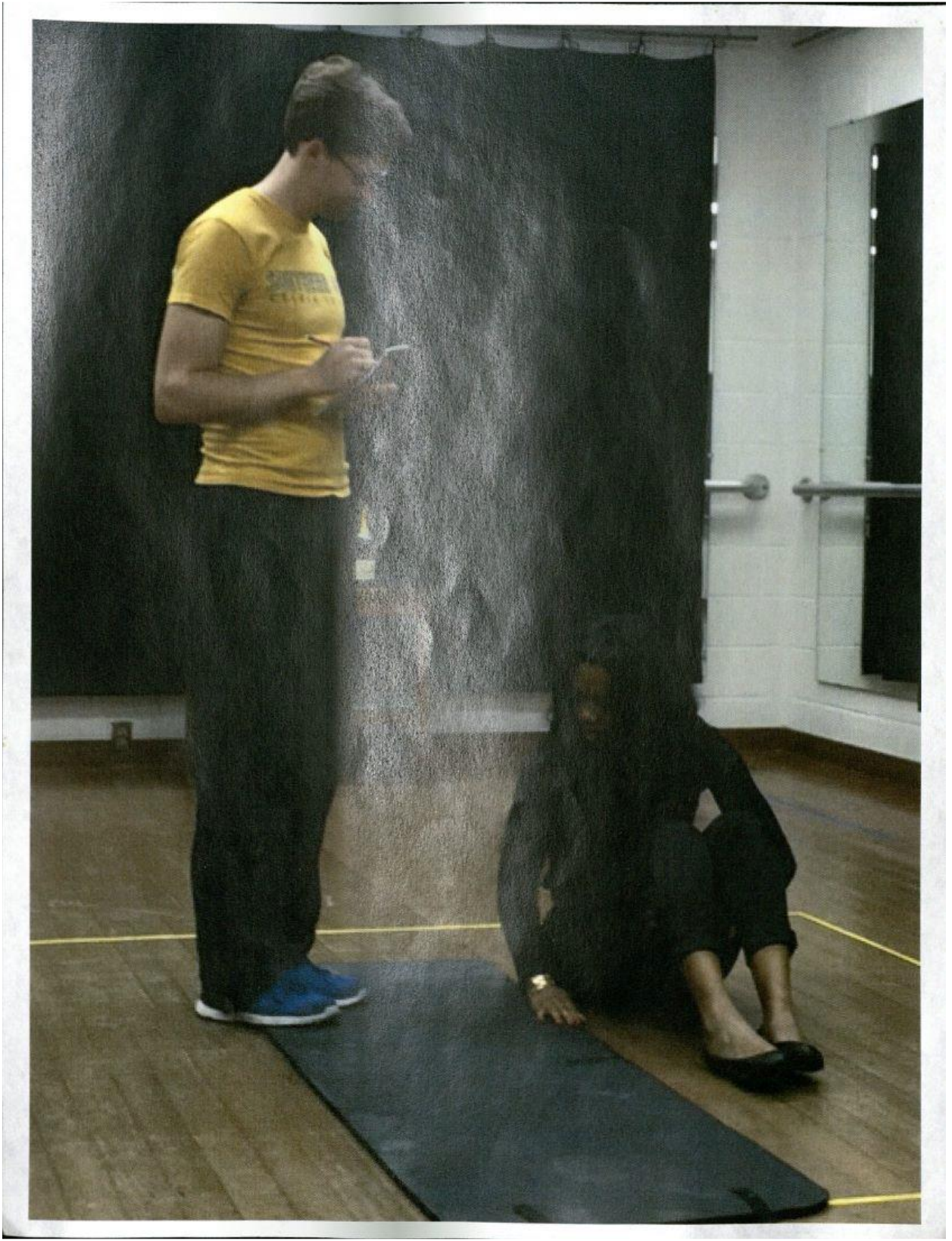
Lab Theatre - UNO
Performing Arts Center
General Public \$12



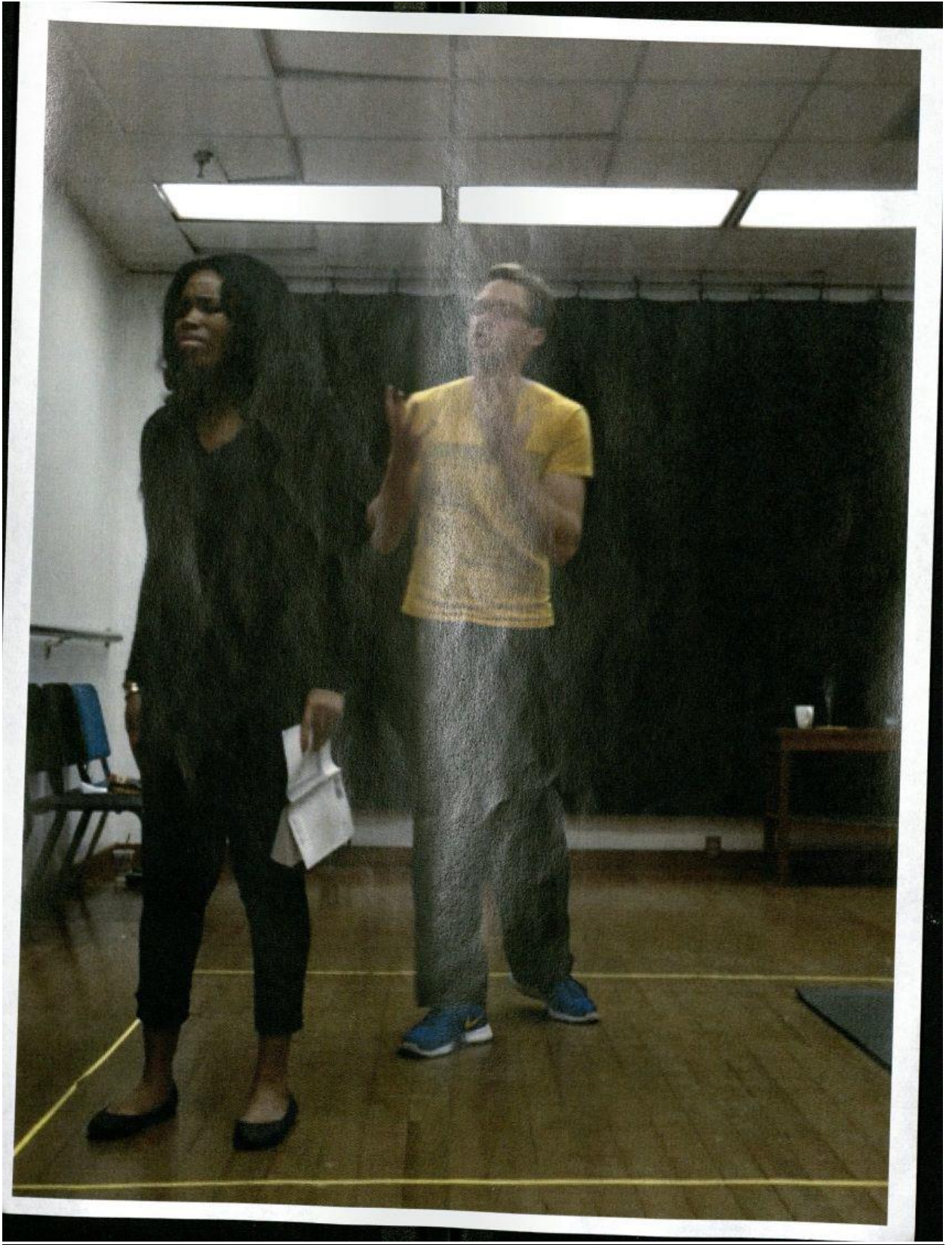




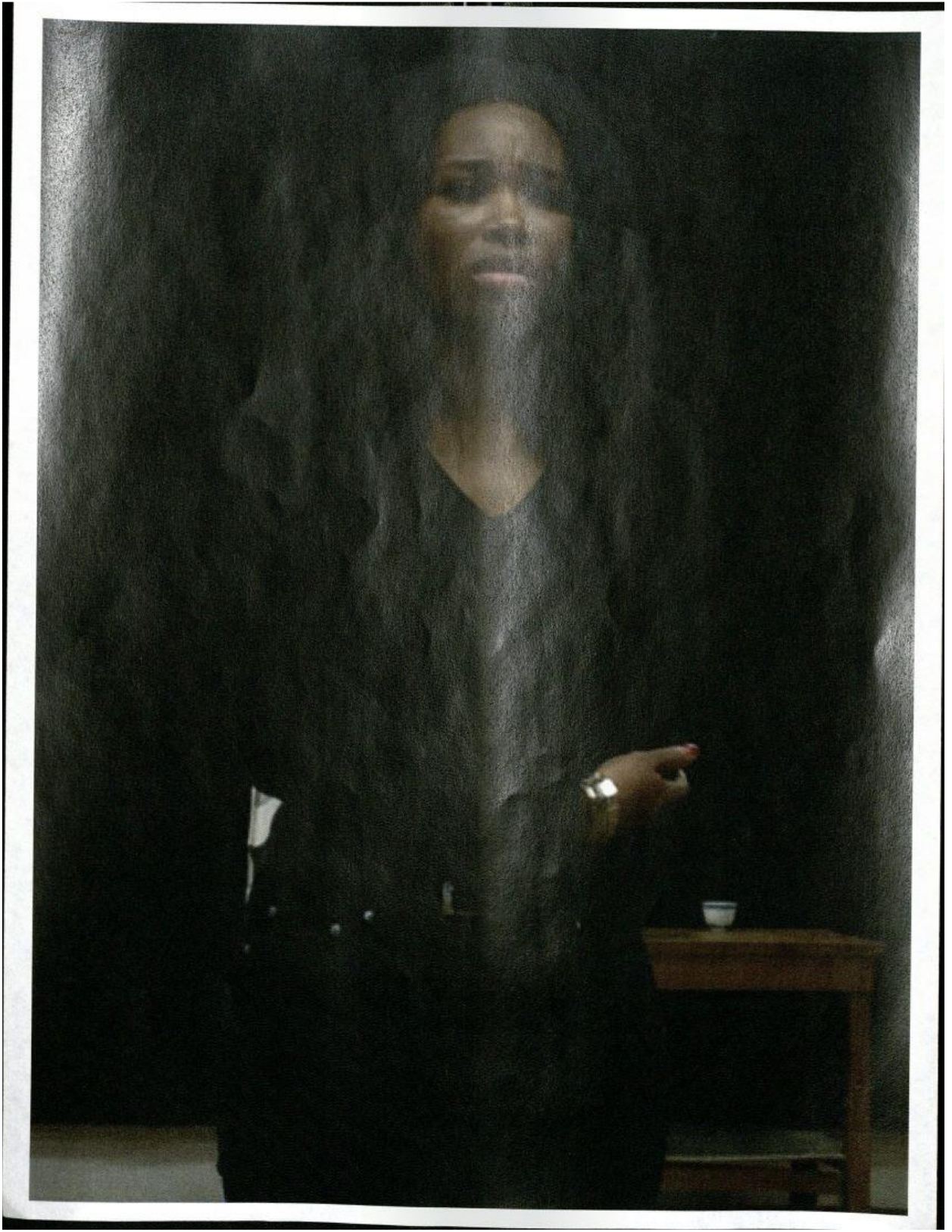


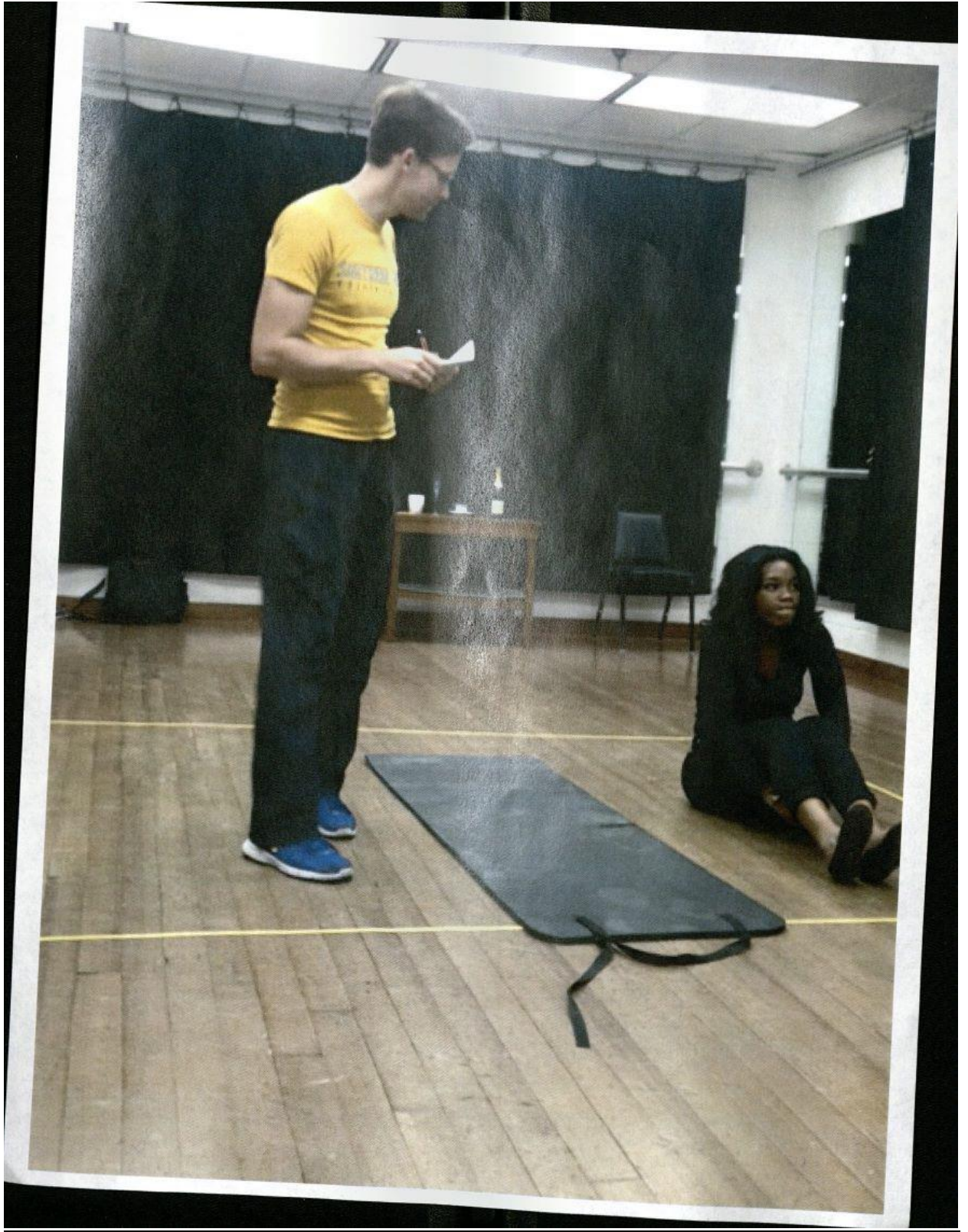


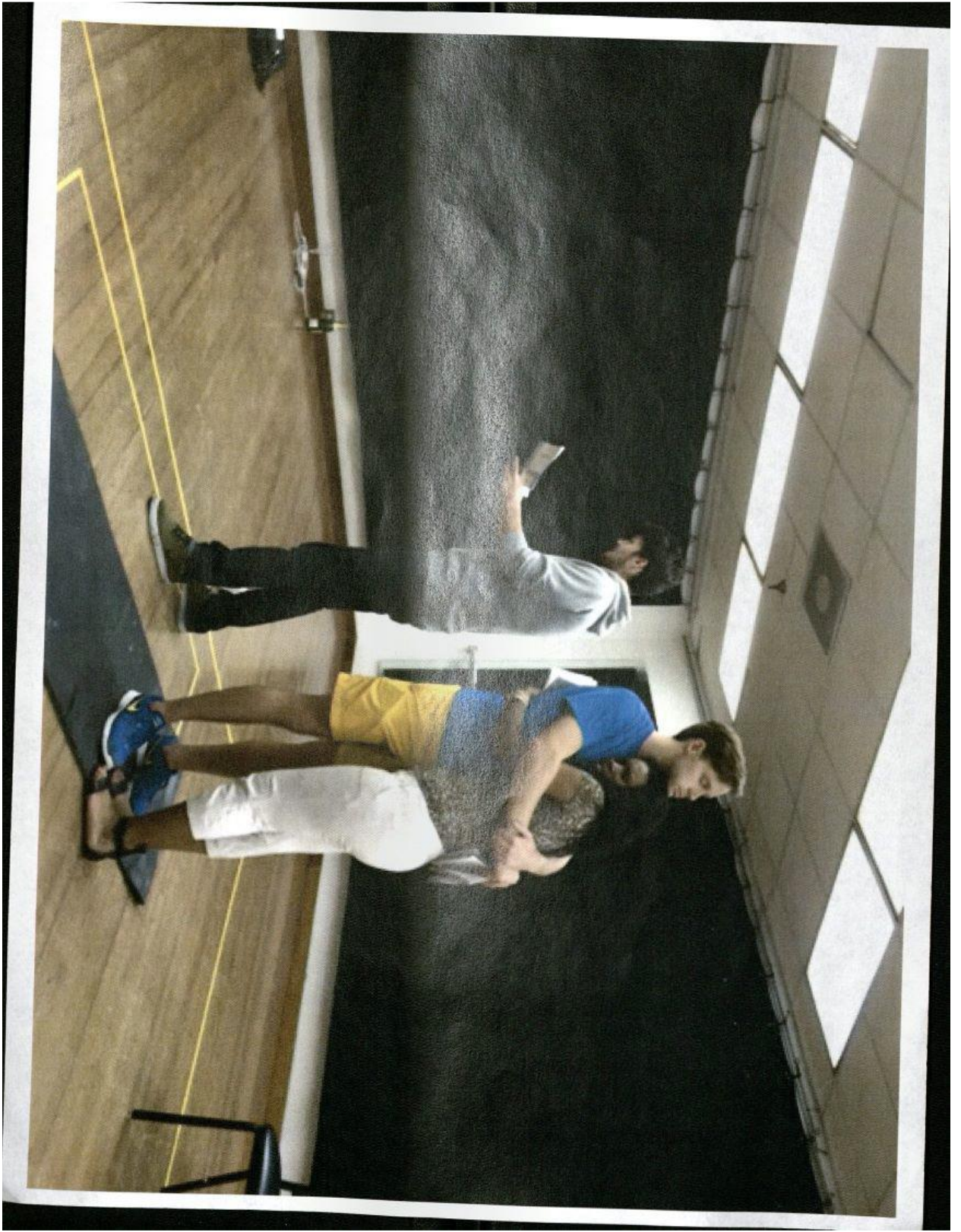


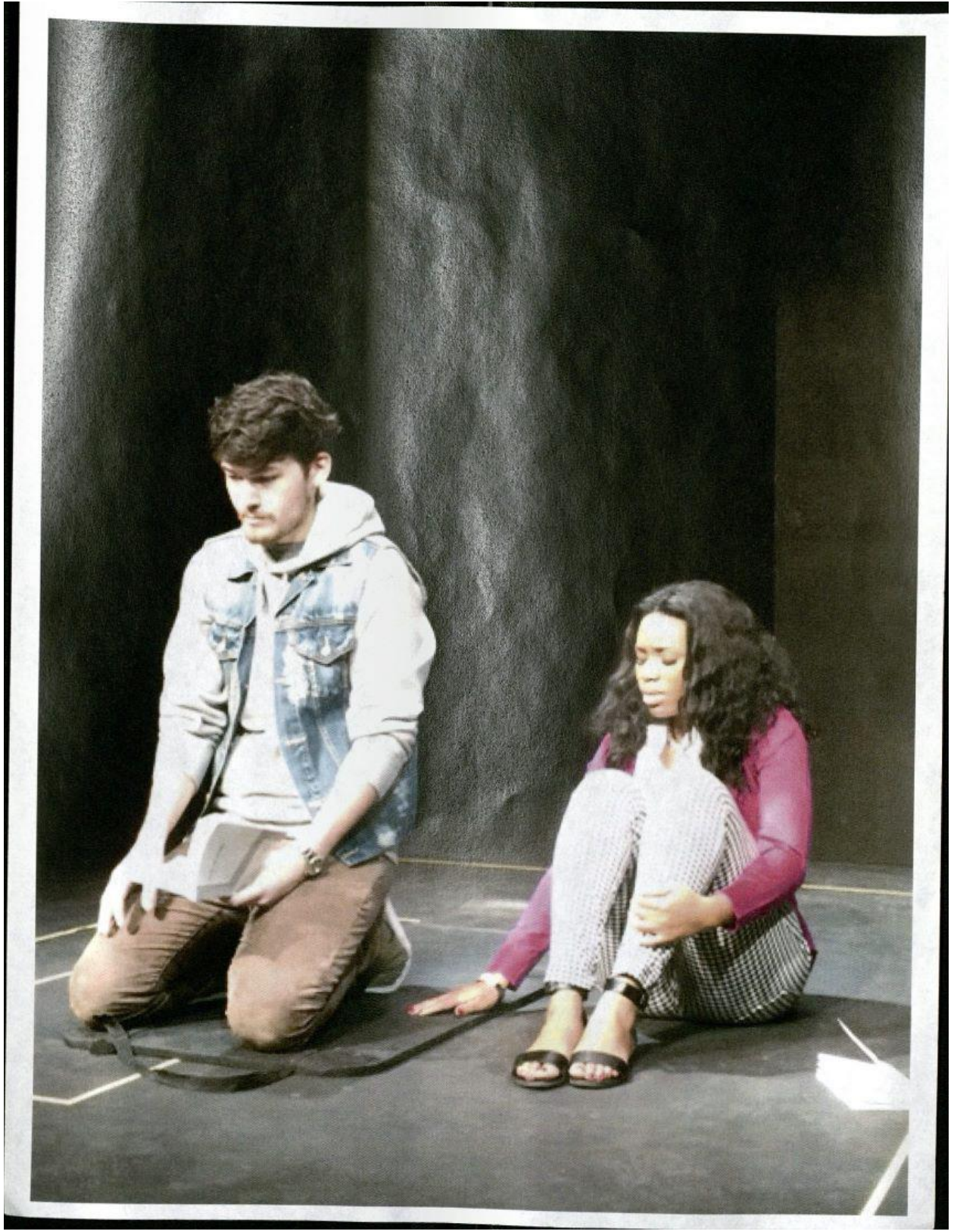






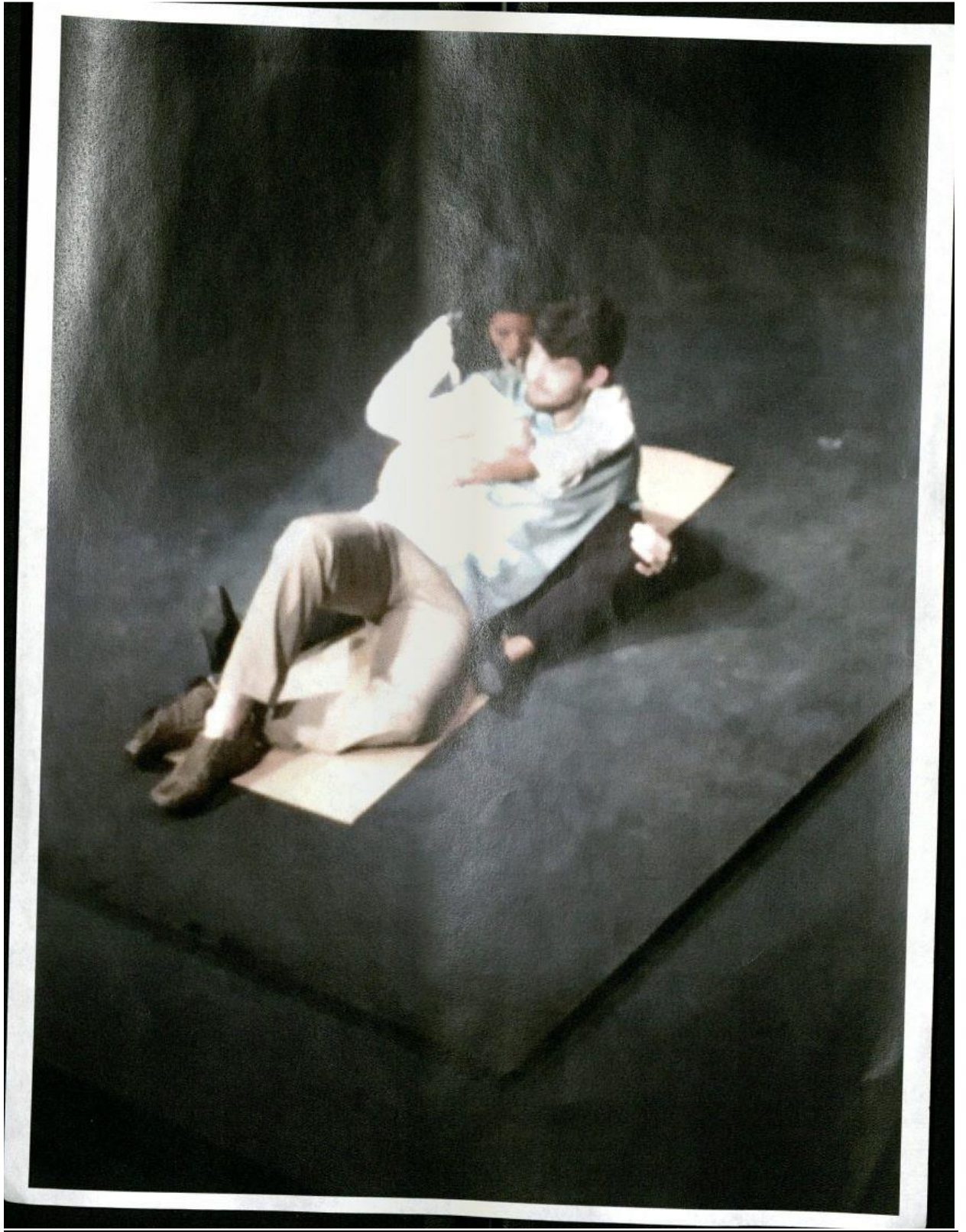
















Appendix B: Headshot and Resume



Arielle Bianca

SAG-Eligible

Email: ariellebrown07@yahoo.com

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

Miss Black Louisiana USA, 2016

FILM

A Quest for Joy	Joy (Lead)	Red Light Performing Arts Company
Infidelity	Jessica (Lead)	Dillard University
When The Game Stands Tall	Poly Cheerleader	Thomas Carter
Hot Tub Time Machine 2	Stand In	New, Orleans

TELEVISION

Underground	House Maid #2(Reoccurring)	WGN
Alicia Keys Music Video	Couple(Featured)	Christopher Robinson
Fox Morning Show	Guest	WUFX

COMMERCIAL

Popeye's	Ripin Chicken Lady	Popeye's Louisiana Kitchen
Orleans Parish Prison Systems	Inmate/Brandy	Blackbird Media
2012 National Pepsi NFL Commercial http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XpiK47DUT0	Fan Girl #3	PepsiCo.
2013 Superbowl Psy Gangnam Style Promotion	Principal Dancer	World Famous Pistachios
Commercial Print	Cedric the Entertainers' Date	Heat -Movie Print work

THEATRE

Love Thy Neighbor	Sandra	University of New Orleans
Bengal Tiger at the Bagdad Zoo	Leper	University of New Orleans
Relative Strangers (1 Act)	Marie Barrett	University of New Orleans
Parsifal Worthy	Ensemble/Ghost of Christmas Past	Academy Award Winner: Mark Medoff
Women in Manhattan	Billie (Lead)	Jackson State University
Ruined	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	Artist as Citizen
Christopher Bayes	Clowning; Physical Acting Workshop
Jessi Perez	Hip Hop Workshop
Georgia Stitt	Musical Theatre/Vocal Workshop
Kennedy Center Theatre Regional Festival	Commedia Dell Arte; Voice; Michael Chekhov Technique, Improvisation
Jerry Katz	Ivana Chubbuck Technique;
James Yeargin	Movement
David Hoover	Advanced Acting I, Advance Acting II
Aimee Hayes	Voice; Shakespeare; Kristin Linklater; Scene Study
Yolanda Williams	Directing; Shakespeare
Yohance Myles	Acting for Camera, Improvisation, and Movement
Patrick Benton	Audition Workshop
Nadia Bodie-Smith	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 Lyrical, and Ethnic;
Miscellaneous: Bartending, Teaching, Cocktail Waiter, Licensed Driver, Majorette, Pageantry, Modeling, Stage Host, Pool Player, and Bicycling

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.