Fragmenting Kill/Shot

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Fragmenting *Kill/Shot*
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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Drama

by

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Abstract

In “Fragmenting *Kill/Shot*”, I will explore how my play *Kill/Shot* changed over the course of the rehearsal and production process. I will explain and defend stylistic choices I made for this play, including how the others on the production team interpreted those stylistic choices. Finally, I will explore how changes to the script can help protect the play from being misinterpreted in the future.
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Chapter One: Style and Process

Part One: Genesis

Section a: The Worst Possible

During my first year at grad school, Stephen Karam (Sons of the Prophet) came to Fayetteville and spoke at the library. In his workshop he asked us to create a character and think of the worst possible thing that could happen to that character. This was not a new idea to me but later he shared that for Sons of the Prophet he thought of the worst possible thing that could happen to him, personally. From that moment, I wrote plays that began with something personal and then expanded to something outside of myself.

In addition to that, I write plays about issues that I have not yet been firmly convinced of one way or another. For example, coming into grad school, I wrote Onesies and Whiskey, which is about abortion. I was trying to decide how I felt about the issue and used my characters as my sounding board. Unfortunately, this lead to dangerous repercussions: many of my characters turned into talking heads for one side of the issue rather than actual people facing an actual conflict. The need for conflict brought me back to Stephen Karam’s workshop. If I wrote a play that started from a real place within me as Karam suggested, my characters had a better chance at demonstrating real need and conflict.

I began with myself. I want to be a professor and, in my fantasies, I would like to become a leading professor in my field. As an undergrad at the University of Notre Dame, I came in with a strong interest in Classics but struggled with Ancient Greek I. Also, while at the University of Notre Dame, I was the co-chair of the LGBT advisory board and the (then unofficial) ND Alliance, which was the University of Notre Dame’s Gay-Straight Student Alliance. I heard an incredible amount of stories of professors, rectors, and other faculty
members completely turning a blind eye to bullying and hate directed towards LGBT students. Many of my LGBT friends either transferred to another school voluntarily or attempted suicide so often that they were asked to leave. Building on these memories, I knew where I wanted my play to be set and who the protagonist was. The protagonist would have to be a Notre Dame student turned professor who would help these students or at least try to. The antagonist would need to be a LGBT student who was bullied.

Next, I added in a socio-political issue that I struggle with: guns on campus. Personally, both sides of the argument make sense to me, and both sides use scare tactics to confuse and enrage the general public who do not research issues before making a stance on them. I wanted to start from a neutral place, meaning both the protagonist and antagonist would need to access to a gun. I wanted to make sure that my characters were not arguing for or against the issue, risking them turning back into talking heads. Instead I wanted two characters on both sides of the argument, simultaneously.

For the next step, I returned to the worst possible thing that could happen. For me, as a professor, one of the worst things that could happen would be protecting my classroom from an armed assailant. To make it even worse, the armed assailant in question would need to be someone I cared about deeply, a student with whom I had connected. Suddenly, I had my story: A college professor must shoot a student she cares for deeply in order to protect the classroom.

Finally, gender is something that I consider to be a crucial element in all of my plays. All of my protagonists in Kill/Shot were originally written as American women of color because there simply aren’t enough plays with strong women. This is an issue within the theatre community that needs to be addressed and fixed, and I plan to actively work
against that. The reason I write plays for women of color is because for the few plays that are about women, many of those women are white, which I also find problematic. It seems the only time a woman of color is the protagonist of a story, she is a migrant, or the story takes place somewhere else as though the United States doesn't have any other citizens other than men and women who are white. In addition to the issue of misrepresentation of race on the American stage, many of the men in plays are heterosexual, which I also find problematic. I want my plays to systematically to represent the world I live in, therefore I knew my main character would be a woman of color and that her student would have to be queer.

Unfortunately, due to casting issues, I had to re-write the characters Ros and Celia. The female actors who auditioned at the university were all white. I did not feel right about having two very clearly white actresses playing Afro-Cuban American characters. I realize that's a choice some playwrights make. As someone who is adamantly against color-blind casting, I felt the best solution was to re-write the characters for this specific production. Had the play been centered on the Afro-Cuban identity, I would have insisted that we correctly cast those characters. For this specific production, especially because it was a University production, I chose to temporarily change the characters since *Kill/Shot* focuses more on sexual identity rather than racial identity.

**Section b: Removing the personal**

While some playwrights thrive working within the context of their own lives, I enjoy dissecting the imaginary and recreating it for performance. I wanted to write about a college professor, but I did not want to write about myself. I did not want to write the
character from the standpoint of “What would I do in this scenario” but rather “which choice creates the most conflict.” From this train of thought, Ros was created.

Removing Ros from myself turned out to be more difficult than I expected. On the surface, it was incredibly easy. I started with opposites. I grew up in a big, urban city in California. I chose to make Ros from the mountains of Colorado. I do not nor have I ever been to a shooting range or even held a gun. Ros not only goes to the shooting range regularly, but also has a concealed carry card. I dropped out of Classics as soon as I failed Ancient Greek I but Ros excelled in Ancient Greek and went on to get her doctorate. Ros is written as Cuban-American. I am Belizean-American.

After creating differing biographical backgrounds, other characteristics proved harder to remove. Initially, Ros and I had much more in common. We both had a mother suffering from mental illness, an absent father, and a torrid relationship with a sibling. We both valued education above all else and were both against attending and working for the Ivies. We were both LGBT and had confronted issues because of it. Soon, Ros was starting to sound too much like me, and my imagination had turned autobiographical.

This conflict was solved with the creation of Ethan. The way Ros handles Ethan completely differs from how I would approach this person if I were to meet him in real life. Realizing this, I decided to center the play on Ros and Ethan’s relationship, therefore pushing my play back into an imaginary realm that mirrors our own.
Section c: The World of the Play

When it came to creating characters that could live within this world, I decided early on that I wanted most of the characters to be female. The idea of guns and violence is so heavily associated with men that I wanted to counter a male-centered world. I wanted to show that women have guns too and know how to use them well. This is why I made Ros not only able to carry but also a sharp shooter with perfect aim. I wanted to address how women treat this issue differently and what other expectations and consequences come into play with a female-heavy dynamic.

Second I wanted the women to be very deeply involved in academia. The play centers around the student-professor dynamic, but I wanted to make sure the other characters were also on the same plain as Ros. I wanted to slightly be able to introduce the pressures of academia as well as the separation from local government. Universities tend to feel like miniature cities so I wanted to heighten that experience. In order to do that, I wanted to completely remove law enforcement and the police and focus on this community.

An issue that arose with this approach was that I needed at least one outside person who could fight for Ros, when I had not yet figured out if the play would end with a trial. To solve this, I wrote Dani as a defense attorney. I had originally planned on having Dani defend Ros once Ethan’s parents took Ros to court. Although Dani and Ros are married, Indiana, at the time this play was written, did not acknowledge same-sex marriage so that legal loophole would have allowed Dani to defend Ros. Ultimately I decided against the play ending in a trial once I realized my main focus would be mental illness and its effect rather than a play about a shooting.
As for the shooter, I wanted him to be male but still actively fighting the heteronormativity of what the media focuses on when it comes to incidents similar to this one. Most shooters (that are presented in the media) are white males who felt like they were entitled to something. While I liked the idea of the shooter feeling entitled to something, I decided to push the play in a different direction: Ethan and Ros’ relationship. I also wanted it to be clear that their relationship was not sexual but instead strikingly platonic. From here, I knew that Ros must be a lesbian and Ethan must be gay.

Finally, as an attempt to move further away from a “school shooting,” I wanted to add in both mental illness and bullying. I knew very early on that both Ros and Ethan would suffer from something. I refused to put a name on it because I wanted to show the fluid nature of diagnosing mental illness. Personally, I have known people who are originally diagnosed as Borderline Personality Disorder only later to discover that they are actually bipolar. I wanted a certain darkness to be inside of them and I worried that the “darkness” might be misconstrued as a statement from the playwright on mental illness, which is what I wanted to avoid.

Section d: Style Meets Voice

The playwright for whom I have the upmost respect and who even inspired me to come to playwriting is Caryl Churchill. Most of her plays are highly stylized, quick to conflict, and political. She writes short scenes with the turn almost always ending the scene. The scenes start as late as possible and finish as quickly as possible. Most of her plays that I have encountered include a non-realistic element blended into realism with little to expectation or explanation. The nonrealistic element is treated just as realistically
as everything else. Her plays give the director and design team the freedom and space to create the play as they see it. These are the kinds of plays I want to learn how to write. Unfortunately, my obsession with this style has held me back because instead of discovering my own voice, I tried to copy hers.

The issue of finding my voice has been an interesting journey for me while part of the MFA program. Because I did not start as an actor like my fellow MFA candidates, I did not approach plays the same way. Instead, I came to theatre as a stage manager with an interest in script analysis and dramaturgy. I fell in love with the stylistic differences based on the different major movements in theatre history. I became obsessed with wanting to mimic each of the styles successfully, leading me to write one acts using the three unities of the Ancient Greeks and Neoclassicists, the lyricism of Shakespeare, and the politics that came with Epic theatre. Due to this obsession, my professors pushed me to find my own voice. To be honest, I was not sure I had my own voice for a long time. I can mimic a style relatively well but finding my own is still something I am struggling with.

With this play, I intend to introduce my voice as best I can. I hope to prove that my voice utilizes the poetic and blank verse simultaneously, the political themes of Epic theatre, and centered on women. I want my plays to feel like a warm, comfortable bubble bath while the play is happening but I want the audience to feel as if they did not get a chance to rinse themselves off after the show is over. I want that residue to stay with them long after the play is over and to have questions. I want to use my voice as a playwright by using poetic images and inserting lines of poetry without it ever seeming that way. I want to create an accidental poem with my dialogue.
Style is everything and it’s what brought me to theatre. I never start a play without thinking about the way I want to write it. Will I incorporate poetry? Will I incorporate dance or music? Will the acts be structured so that they have the same amount of scenes?

When deciding to write *Kill/Shot*, I knew I wanted Ethan to be dead during the plot of the play and I wanted the scenes to have a fragmented feeling to them as though they are an incomplete thought. I wanted the audience to have to fill in the blanks. Many times, I think audiences do not think about what happens between scenes while they watch a play. I wanted to see if I could change that. Could I fragment this play to force my audience to wonder what happens when no one is watching?

I wanted Ros and Ethan to connect in a different plane than that of the other characters. The only successful way I saw this as possible would be to make Ethan a ghost. Initially, I wanted Ethan to be more than a memory; I wanted him to be able to communicate with present-day Ros. Using a blend of memory and present time, I wanted to break down the walls of realism.

**Part Two: Research Conducted**

*section a: Guns and Ammo*

I started off by attempting to research what kinds of guns there were and which states allowed conceal carry and which states didn’t. Researching this took me down a dark path that only confused me further. Laws state to state when it comes to guns are not only incredibly inconsistent but also confusing. There are some states where open carry is okay, meaning people can walk around with visible guns. Other states have concealed carry and some states have reciprocation laws, meaning they’ll acknowledge a permit from
another state but even then it’s incredibly difficult. Honestly, I think most people don’t realize how hard it is to get a gun legally. Finding an unbiased study on guns proved to be impossible. Fortunately, I realized I didn’t want the play to be about guns or gun control. I decided to try to understand guns in a different, non-academic way.

Instead of researching, I had a friend simply show me a gun and teach me basic gun safety. Thanks to that conversation, I was able to write the scene where Ros field-strips the gun and shows Ethan the inner mechanics. As a scene, it showed a new level of their relationship. As far as research is concerned, I realized this was the best option to make it realistic. I essentially recorded our conversation about the gun and wrote in Ros and Ethan.

section b: School Shootings

When I found that there had been a school shooting at the University of Arkansas, that actually helped me write the play. I wanted to build on the mentor-student relationship that was very similar to what happened at the University. I wanted to set the play at the University of Notre Dame because I know that school very well and how the inner workings either attempt to ignore or address the problem. University of Arkansas still feels more like an enigma to me, but I wanted to write something familiar, something that people in Arkansas would recognize as well.

The next shooting that helped me in writing Kill/Shot was at UCSB. The shooter left a manifesto explaining why he was doing what he did and essentially why his victims deserved it. He felt as though because these women had ignored him, they deserved to die. Something about that has haunted me. I had already started Kill/Shot before the event, but
the UCSB shooting definitely was a factor in the editing process over the summer. The idea that the victims deserve to die needed to be a part of this world.

Building on that specific shooting, I wanted to explore what would make one person think another person deserves to die. I wanted Ethan to have a specific and definite reason. That was when I realized I had to make Devin Ethan’s target. Also building on the UCSB shooter, I wanted Ethan to leave behind his own version of a manifesto: a notebook. The notebook evolved over time but it has continued to be the essence of Ethan. Destroy the notebook and you destroy Ethan. Part of what makes the UCSB shooter so terrifying is that with that manifesto, which is online, it will exist forever. Nothing on the internet really ever goes away. In some way, those dark, haunting thoughts will exist forever.

section c: The Classics Re-visited

*The Orestia* has lived with me since I first read it. At Notre Dame, it was the first play we read in my Ancient Greek and Roman Texts class and that play convinced me I wanted to be a Classics major. A trial in which a son takes his mother to court for killing his father. Which is worse? Patricide or matricide?

Knowing I wanted Ros to be a professor in the Classics, I knew I had to involve *The Orestia*. I wanted the play to hide within my play. Ethan discovers his mother dead and his father accuses him of killing her. Ros’ mother shoots herself and Celia then blames Ros for their mother’s death. Ros essentially kills her “son,” Ethan to protect her classroom. Initially, I even wrote in a trial with the university so that Ros could essentially mimic Orestes before the gods.
Once I got a further understanding of the characters both in *The Orestia* and in *Kill/Shot*, I realized the connections had to live within the characters. I also wanted to give Ros and Ethan an identical connection to the classics: a complicated mother-child relationship. I also wanted to explore the psychology of the characters. How would that relationship affect a person? Killing your mom isn’t an easy thing to do, and I wanted to play with both metaphorically killing your mother (post-partum that never goes away) and literally killing your mother (from suicide). How does that change these characters? In this way, I wanted to make *Kill/Shot* a modern Greek tragedy without relying so heavily on duplicating the voice of the Greeks.

**Part Three: Evolution of the Play**

**section a: Discovering Conflict**

An early issue with the play was discovering the underlying conflict. Initially Ros read as a character who did not want anything. She was too passive while everyone else around simply wanted to save her. I played with making her completely passive, but it made the play uninteresting. I needed my protagonist to fight for something. Building on that, I needed my other characters to fight for something more than just “save Ros’ life.” In regards to Ros I think her need became clearer in this most recent draft. Ros wants to forget Ethan, she wants to escape from what she’s done, and most importantly she wants to stop herself from unraveling. Hopefully in this production draft Ros will seem more active. She attempts to move, does a series of job interviews, and at one point even begins packing. Probably the most compelling example is Ros’ interactions with the notebook. She knows if she destroys the notebook, she destroys him.
In addition to that, I wanted the surrounding characters to need more than to save Ros’ life. For Iris, her reasons for saving Ros are selfish. For most of the play she doesn’t care for Ros as a person but instead as an academic genius. Having Ros around makes Iris look better and Iris knows that.

Dani has to decide how much she’s willing to give up for Ros. The actor playing Dani actually helped me develop Dani greatly. Initially Dani was a very flat character who was mostly just a sounding board. I had to raise the stakes. In this most recent draft, Dani is up for district attorney. She is exactly where she wants to be in her career, but Ros wants to leave. Dani, after giving so much up already, has her threshold. How far will she go?

Celia was a little harder to track. I did not realize how little incentive I gave Celia until I had already turned in my “final” draft to the cast. For my next re-write I will give Celia more agency. Currently, she begins to realize she is losing family members and does not want to lose Ros forever. I think Celia is trying to figure out how to ask for forgiveness for most of the play. That will be clearer in later drafts.

Ethan’s motivation is also a little tricky. In the next draft, I will make it clear that Ethan both wants to haunt Ros and wants to defend his actions. His presence is the manifesto, his chance to explain why he’s done what he’s done and how in his mind there were no other options.
section b: Re-creating Ethan and Ros

When it came to Ethan and Ros, I knew I wanted their relationship to pass appropriate student-teacher relationship, but I wasn’t sure how far I wanted to go. Professors at Notre Dame are already pretty close with their students. The second a student starts to slip academically, the student is emailed and called in to talk about how to help the student pass the class. While I was a student there, I would visit my mentor frequently, and most of the time we did not talk about school. We talked about everything else. I used to call my mentor my therapist because he helped me so much when he knew I was unhappy. Blurring those already blurred lines became difficult.

The gun helped show how dangerous their friendship had become, but I wanted to explore those lines even further. In hindsight I realized while I talked a lot about my family and growing up, my mentor did not share as much. I realized then that Ros had to open up as well. She had to tell Ethan things she probably hadn’t told anyone. Once I realized that an exchange of secrets could help their relationship, it propelled the play forward. Suddenly this was a play about best friends and not just a teacher-student relationship. Once I realized that Ros would probably call Ethan her best friend, it helped build the world and their relationship. How do you kill your best friend?
section c:  

Auditions, Casting, and Rehearsal

Thanks to having a wonderful relationship with the director, auditions and casting could not have gone smoother. Brandyn Smith and I are able to communicate nonverbally, which became essential when the actors were in the room. After auditions, we sat and talked. Brandyn was wonderful about respecting my wishes and even called back someone who he wasn’t planning on casting per my request. Once Brandyn and I realized we would not be using MFA actors that helped as well. It did not seem worth it to compete with the main stage shows for those actors because at the same time as Kill/Shot was Kin and Cherry Orchard. Both of those plays have enormous casts and for the actors main stage shows are still seen as a better role than studio shows, especially if they’re new plays. I hope that changes in the future but that’s the current truth when it comes to casting.

Regardless of those things, I can say that I got my dream cast. Yes they were young and did not fit the play ethnically but they were open to work on a new play. In addition to their willingness to work, because they were such new actors, the conversations about these characters were open and helpful. During rehearsals, the actors did not try to prescribe how to make the play “better” or make choices that went completely against my intentions. The only problem we came across was they were too eager to keep my intentions. Brandyn and I both had to tell them that we wanted them to make strong choices, even if the stage directions said something differently. I explained to them I wanted to see what they pulled from the play without my commentary so I could see what lived in the play.

Also due to the young cast, Brandyn and I met to agree on a final day for changes. The first two weeks were originally supposed to be dedicated to the play and table work.
Because of the willingness of the cast, the table work was done by the first week. The second week I still made significant changes but the actors got to be on their feet, which helped.

Finally, I also wanted to give the actors and director some time to work without me there. Before I realized I would miss an entire week before tech, I told Brandyn I wouldn’t come every time. I wanted to give him the chance to direct the play without the actors checking in with me. For the most part, this process worked out beautifully.

**Part Four: Performance Analysis**

**section a: Experimenting with Process**

As I stated earlier, it was an important part of this process for me to not attend every rehearsal. This decision ultimately created a few issues with the general production. First, I had not realized I would be gone an entire week to go to Texas to compete for the Region VI American College Theatre Festival. The week, unfortunately, coincided with when many major decisions related to the script and the design would be made.

Before I left, the actors were still discovering their character and the design team still struggled with how to deal with set changes and various design aspects. Another complication grew from differing opinions about directing choices as well as having a very young design team. *Kill/Shot* was our lighting designer’s first show as well as that for the stage manager. The same was true of my actors. There were a lot of unknowns coming into *Kill/Shot* and for the sake of the production I wanted to make sure that I did not overstep as a playwright.
Once I returned to *Kill/Shot*, it was tech week. As a playwright, I made a very difficult decision. Returning to *Kill/Shot* during tech made it incredibly difficult to explain or even rectify many of the changes that had been made. The director had added in both nonverbal and verbal moments to the play that were not written down in the play because he felt he had that right as a part of the process. The designers had chosen a very metaphorical set due to issues with transitions and the vignette style of the scenes. Finally, even the actors started to make choices, based on the direction, that directly conflicted with the story I had written. There were a series of issues that I had not been made aware of, not by the fault of anyone. Without a dramaturg, there was no one there to make sure that the play stayed true to my original intentions. It was an honest mistake. The issue was that as the playwright I realized, with it being tech week, there was only so much I could change. It was too close to production to completely re-explain the script. My decision was to focus on the two major aspects I felt was wrong and to let everything else go for the sake of the production. My two foci were issues with the set and the direction of Ethan.

The set originally included hanging guns along with the newspaper background. The “issue” of *Kill/Shot* could not be the shooting itself, and I was worried that if the set stayed the same, the play would evolve into a play about a school shooting. I asked for the hanging guns, the gun, and the Jack Daniels bottle to be removed from the set. The hanging elements were removed because the lighting designer also had an issue with it. The other elements were not.

In addition to my issues with the script, the character of Ethan had been completely misinterpreted. Something happened between the time I left and the time I came back that completely changed the characterization of Ethan. Whether it was from directing or acting
choices, Ethan had been split into two different people: nice Ethan and mean Ethan. I do not agree with this choice, and this choice has led me to write a note for the character of Ethan in the future. I attempted to tell my director that “mean Ethan” came off a Disney villain. Rather than trying to get to the heart of what would break someone apart, the actor, due to his direction, was simply playing the stereotype of a villain rather than delving into the madness. I worked with the director as much as I could, but since I had come back to the process so late, there was only so much I could say. What inevitably happened was a misunderstanding: the “good Ethan” got more developed and the “bad” Ethan became an archetype.

Realizing that my input did not seem to change the direction of the play, I decided to sit back and watch the play evolve on its own. The production of my thesis, in my mind, became more about experimentation rather than a workshop. Playwrights need to be aware of what a director might find in their work if the playwright’s not able to be in the room. My experiment became two-fold. First I wanted to see what decisions the director made and where in the script he felt cause to make those decisions. Second, I wanted to see how the members of the audience who had not read the play would respond to the production. For a while, I thought I was being overly sentimental about the changes and that perhaps these changes would enhance the experience for the audience in a way I couldn’t foresee. Also, I needed to know where specifically in the script I needed to change so that this interpretation would never happen again. My experiment began late but ultimately I found the answers I needed.
section b: Enhancing the play?: Understanding Directing Choices

After second dress, I began to notice new moments within the play. Those moments were not there before I left to go to Texas, and I may have missed them in first dress because I was focused on transitions and the characterization of Ethan. My director had added in his own moments to my play. Many of my scene endings were longer. Ethan, as a ghost, ate on stage and touched many of the props. At times, Ethan completely pulled focus. Other moments were added that, as the playwright, I believed weakened the other characters. The Traveler interviewed both Brandyn and me about Kill/Shot. The article explains his point of view: “[a] director’s job is to interpret the script [and he] inevitably made some decisions for the play not written into the script.”

I cannot help but have an issue with this point of view. For new work especially I do not think the director has license to add moments not written into the script. For example, he changed the way certain characters reacted at the end of scenes, changed who said which lines, and lengthened the scenes. The lengthening would have been fine had I not been trying, intentionally, to create a snap shot. The changes added in by the director have made the editing process incredibly difficult because I did not get to see my play as written. I do not know what moments work because my moments were altered. The director’s stylistic elements interfered with the story I had written so often that it has made it almost impossible to continue to do edits based on this production. As a playwright, I am at felt powerless to make any crucial changes to the direction of the piece because I wanted to

respect the relationship we had established. I was vocal about changes that I did not appreciate but my objections were taken as loose suggestions.

While I completely disagree with the sentiment that directors can add in their own moments, I do understand my director’s need for it. The short, fragmented scenes are hard to direct, especially in a studio black box (for which the play is intended). Also my director does not have a lot of experience, if any, with new work. New work should be treated completely differently and there’s a fine line when it comes to differing styles that has to be respected. What would’ve helped would be a class the playwrights and directors could take together, at least a year before the thesis, where they can experience new work together while still being supervised. Knowing Brandyn Smith’s style meant there was only so much I could say before I was stepping on his toes and directing the piece myself. In the end, I had to accept that I was not the director, and that I needed to respect our collaborative process.

section c: Experiencing Kill/Shot and Future Edits

Experiencing Kill/Shot was very surreal. On one hand, I was incredibly proud of how much the actors had grown and how much they stepped into their characters. Emily Riggs has brought Ros to life in a beautiful way that I did not foresee. She dropped into her character truly last minute, which completely and radically enhanced Ros as the protagonist. The women were phenomenal. Opening was the best show as all of the actors were mentally and metaphorically present.

On the other hand, the transitions and other moments were hard to sit through. The transitions did not serve the play and conflicted with the story. Some of the underscoring took away from moments, and the added in moments gave the play an uneven feel. What I
had intended was for the scenes to have a snap shot effect so that the last scene, the longest scene, would sit and resonate with the audience as the most important. Due to lengthening of scenes and other various moments, that final scene did not have the impact I had originally intended.

Seeing the show with non-theatre people helped. My parents came to see the show and felt that the added in moments helped them understand the play. Once I got deeper into the conversation, I realized the play they “understood” is not the play I wrote. The story I wanted to tell I do not think was told. With that said, the story that was told was absolutely lovely and I am happy I had a chance to see it. I now know many of the problems with the script.

The first problem falls in the transitions. If the transitions take as long as the scenes, the play will not work. I will have to add in smoother transitions as well as include a note at the beginning of the play. Ideally, the play can work two ways: the stage separated into sections with lights or transitions adding to outside world. I prefer the second. I would like the transitions, from here on out, to show the world outside the fragmentation. What happens outside of the snap shots would help bring the style to life without adding unnecessary time.

The second problem was Ethan and Dani. Dani’s character is not fully developed. I did not notice until opening that her character development does not make sense. Again, I will have to revisit the script to be sure I was not picking up on moments that were added in. The other problem is with Ethan. This is both a script problem and a directing problem. The dichotomy of Ethan, as written, does make him seem like two different people. Ethan in
memory and Ethan as a ghost should not be two different entities. Also, the actor struggled to find Ethan's objective, so when I re-visit the script, I will have to make the clearer as well.

Truly, the experience was eye-opening. Any production of my play I am thankful for. The actors, director, and designers spent a lot of time making this story come to life. I've learned that sometimes playwrights have limits and no matter how vocal you are, that does not mean you will be heard. I've also learned that had I been more present, that may have helped, but in reality I may not always be in the room. Finally, a few problem spots were pointed out to me, which will only make the play stronger.

section d: Playwright’s Notes

I wanted to make sure that the play included in this thesis is the production script. In order to preserve that script, I've added my future playwright’s notes here. Once I add them in, I plan to emphasize that these notes are suggestions based on a previous production.

On Ethan: While Ethan's character lives both in past and present, his personality remains constant. Choosing to change Ethan’s personality to distinguish memory Ethan from present ghost Ethan will fail and confuse the audience further. Ethan at all times must be both kind and manipulative for his character's objective to be clear.

On transitions: This play works best if the transitions are used to show these characters outside of the fragmented world presented here in Kill/Shot. The transitions should be quick and effortless or it will stagnate the action.
Chapter Two: Synopsis and Production Script

Synopsis: Ros, a Classics professor, must live with her decisions that led up to killing her student, Ethan. While trying to work through the memories in her head, the ghost of Ethan haunts her and forces her to face the consequences of her actions. Now Ros must decide whether she will allow herself to descend into madness or if she will fight to stay where she believes she belongs.
Kill/Shot

by Rachel Washington
CHARACTERS
ROS, 30s, Classics professor
DANI, late 20s, ROS’ partner
CELIA, late 20s, ROS’s sister
IRIS, 50s, ROS’s mentor
ETHAN, 21, ROS’s student

TIME
2012

PLACE
University of Notre Dame, South Bend, IN
SCENE 1

In a dimly lit classroom, ROS lectures.

ROS

Perhaps Clytemnestra was the first feminist in recorded literature. A woman enraged, seeking equal--

Before she can finish her sentence, a young man in hoodie with his face hidden comes into the classroom. He has a gun. ROS immediately reaches for her bag.

The young man points the gun at a "student."

YOUNG MAN

Hail Mary, full of grace

ROS pulls out a gun and aims it at the young man.

ROS

Don't--

YOUNG MAN

(still pointing the gun)

The lord is with thee.

The Young Man prepares to shoot. ROS does as well. Blackout.

In the blackout, we hear two gun shots, just barely staggered.
SCENE 2

Five days later.

ROS is pacing in her living room, eating candy, drinking bourbon from the bottle, and singing Disney songs to herself.

On her living room table are papers she is “grading.” She flops down on the couch.

ROS

You can bet before we're through. Mister, I'll make a man out of you.

There is a knock on the front door. She looks at the door and then at the papers. She picks up one of the papers and “grades.”

Another knock.

ROS stares blankly at the paper. She sets the paper down and drinks more bourbon.

Another knock. ROS finishes off her bourbon. IRIS enters.

IRIS

Doctor Warren-Soriano, you've let yourself go.

ROS fakes a smile and continues to “grade” her papers.

IRIS

At least you're working. That makes part of this conversation easier.

ROS is silent. IRIS reaches for the empty bottle of bourbon. The tag’s been removed. She smells it.

IRIS

The cheap stuff. That’s not like you.

ROS

I figured if I was going to turn into an alcoholic that I better--
IRIS

Turn into? As in you’re not one now?

ROS

Yes. Turn into. I’m not going to go broke over alcohol.

IRIS

Right.

IRIS reaches into her bag and pulls out an electronic cigarette.

ROS

That’s new.

IRIS

It’s pretty fucking terrible, honestly. But out of respect for Dani, I won’t smoke in th--

ROS

And me. I live here too.

IRIS looks around the living room.

IRIS

This is pretty pathetic, kid. Even for you.

ROS

You don’t like it? This is the new trend. Hot mess. It’s in season.

IRIS smiles. Pause.

IRIS

The funeral is today.

ETHAN enters. ROS is the only one who can see him.

IRIS

Are you going?

ROS (looking at Ethan)

No.
IRIS
(holding up the empty bottle)

Got anymore?

ROS reaches under the couch and pulls out another bottle of bourbon. She opens it and passes it to IRIS. IRIS water-falls it into her mouth.

IRIS
Devin’s still in the hospital. He might make it.

ROS
Great. Wonderful news.

IRIS
It’s more likely that he won’t.

IRIS passes ROS the bottle. ROS drinks directly from it.

ROS
A double funeral it is then.

IRIS
The students are pretty shaken up about it.

ROS is silent, watching ETHAN.

IRIS
Erin O’Neil is being excused from this semester. Her parents are sending her to Spain to clear her head.

ROS
Erin O’Neil is a cunt.

IRIS
Your graduate students are wondering if they should be reading Orestia or Alcestis.

ROS
It’s in the syllabus.

IRIS
You teach more than one class.

ROS
Still in the syllabus.

Pause.

IRIS
Ros, you did what any of us would’ve done.

ETHAN moves closer to ROS.

IRIS
It was a pretty traumatic event. I get that. But this--this isn’t helping you.

ETHAN sits down next to ROS.
She is visibly uncomfortable.

IRIS
You have to come back to work, kid. The university stands behind you.

ROS
I’m not really ready to go back. I’m not...

ROS stares at ETHAN.
IRIS nods.

ROS
I’m not okay.

IRIS
Ros--

ROS
I should be fired. The whole right to life thing, you know?

IRIS
You saved your students’ lives. No one is going to fire you over that. The news has you painted up like--

ROS
I can’t go back, Iris.

IRIS nods.
She pulls a notebook from her bag.

IRIS
The cops needed help translating so they asked me to read it, see if they could get anything from it.

ROS stares at the notebook.

IRIS
I told them unless they wanted a term paper on the relevance and timeline of Euripedes’ work, they were wasting their time. They let me keep it.
IRIS tosses the notebook on the living room table. ROS picks it up and looks through it.

ROS
Wait. This is actually his notes.

IRIS
What’d you expect?

ROS
I don’t know. I...I don’t know.

IRIS
It’s all of his notes. And his paper, handwritten, in the back.

ROS
He handwrote his paper?

IRIS
Yeah.

ROS
Holy shit.

IRIS
I thought maybe you could burn it. Maybe it’d be...fun.

ROS
Right. Thanks.

Pause.

IRIS
Look. I didn’t come to ask. You’re coming back to work. Like it or not. For the sake of the department and the university, you’re going to give a little speech about the incident so the media stops harassing students. And then you’re fucking come back.

IRIS leaves. ROS reaches for the notebook.
ETHAN looks over her shoulder as she reads it.
After a moment, she pushes the notebook away
from her and reaches for the bourbon. 
ETHAN stands up and begins to leave. 
She watches him go.

SCENE 3

A couple of hours later. 
ROS is passed out on the couch with 
the notebook on top of her. 
Simultaneously, DANI and ETHAN enter from 
opposite sides of the stage. Only ROS can see ETHAN. 
DANI moves around as ETHAN addresses ROS.

ETHAN
You’re Doctor Soriano right?

DANI shakes ROS.

DANI
Ros. Get up.

ETHAN
Right. Ros. Sorry.

ROS slowly wakes up.

DANI
Ros!

ROS
Hi.

DANI
Hi. You have fun today?

ROS shakes her head.

ETHAN
Um, well I’m just dropping off my roommate’s homework.

DANI
Iris said she’d stop by. I was going to make dinner for the three of us. Wanna help?

ETHAN
Funny story actually. I wanted to go out drinking but he was all like Dude. I have to write a term paper on Herakles. And I was like Dude, it’s Hercules. We had a good laugh about it.

*ETHAN laughs to himself.*

*ROS just stares.*

DANI

Ros, honey. You listening?

ROS

What? Oh. Dinner. Iris already came. I don’t think she’s coming back.

*DANI nods slowly.*

ETHAN

So anyways, I’m just here to drop this off. With your late policy and everything. And he’s just super sick so...yeah.

DANI

Have you talked to anyone else? Other than Iris?

ETHAN

What’s he sick with? Oh...um...um...the flu? Yeah. The flu. Bad, bad flu. He’s got it really bad.

DANI

Ros?

ETHAN


DANI

Ros? Have you done anything today?

ROS

Yeah, I finished--

DANI

Other than drinking.

ROS

Oh.

DANI

Ros, I really think you should think about going back to therapy. It might--

ROS
I’m ready to go back to work now.

DANI

Oh. Really?

ROS 

nods, eyes on ETHAN.

ROS

Tomorrow. Going to give a talk and everything.

DANI

A talk?

ROS

Yeah. About the incident and how it all wasn’t my fault.

DANI

You’re not going to word it like that are you?

Silence.

ETHAN

I should head out. I’m actually late to a class.

Ros?

ETHAN

It was nice to meet you, Doctor--sorry. Ros. It was nice to meet you, Ros.

Ros?

ETHAN exits.

ROS

What? Yeah. You should write it. Being a lawyer and all. Make sure I don’t say anything incriminating.

DANI

O-kay. (quick pause) Ros, there’s nothing incriminating you could say. You didn’t do anything wrong.
ETHAN re-enters.

I keep forgetting I can’t leave. That I have to stay here.

Work huh? That’ll be fun.

DANI watches ROS.

You there?

ETHAN

What was it it you used to say? Death and madness.

ROS

(barely audible)

I’m surrounded by death and madness.

ETHAN

Consumed in it really.

DANI

Ros?

ROS

“The landmine is me.”

Pause.

DANI

Yup. Okay. I’m going to make dinner.

ROS

Dani. Wait.

DANI

Yeah?

ROS

Nothing. Never mind.
SCENE 4

The next day.

IRIS is in her office, smoking a cigarette, looking at papers. Without her noticing, CELIA enters.

CELIA sits down and clears her throat. IRIS just kind of watches CELIA for a moment. CELIA says nothing.

IRIS

Do you need something?

CELIA stares at her hands.

IRIS

Professor Warren?

CELIA

Ever notice that you always call Ros doctor but I always get called professor.

IRIS

No. I...

CELIA

I’m a doctor too.

IRIS

Well--

CELIA

And I know. Political Science is a...what did you call it? A scam?

IRIS

No, I--

CELIA

No. A rip off. Stolen goods. The Classics re-written into law. But still. It’s a subject. A subject in which I have a PhD. Which makes me a doctor. Just like Ros.

IRIS

Celia, you--
CELIA
Well not just like Ros. I’ll never be just like Ros. That’s pretty obvious but still. As far as doctors go--

IRIS
Celia!

CELIA
Sorry.

IRIS
Do you need something?

Pause.

CELIA
Have you spoken to her?

IRIS
Who?

CELIA
You know who.

IRIS nods.

IRIS
She was supposed to come back to work today.

CELIA
Oh.

IRIS
She hasn’t.

CELIA
Right.

Silence. IRIS watches CELIA for a moment and then returns to grading.

CELIA
Did she seem okay?

IRIS stops grading.
IRIS
No, Celia. She did not seem--

There is knock on IRIS’ door.

IRIS
(mostly to the person at the door)
Go away! I have work to do.

CELIA looks at the papers.

CELIA
That’s not Greek.

IRIS
It’s Latin. My job. To teach both.

CELIA
I thought you hated Latin.

ROS enters. She is dressed professionally.
Or at least she tried. Her hair is a mess
and she has buttoned the wrong buttons.
ROS stares at CELIA who immediately
tenses up.

CELIA
Right. I should go. I’m going to go. Bye Iris. Goodbye...Doctor Warren.

CELIA leaves. ROS watches her go.

ROS
What was she doing here?

IRIS
You’re late.

ROS
It took me a while to get ready.

IRIS looks at ROS.

IRIS
I scheduled the speech for Friday. Two days from now. Can you handle that?
ROS nods.

Are you drunk?

ROS shakes her head.

We ran out of whiskey.

ROS

Of course you did.

ROS sits down and pulls out a piece of paper. She hands it to IRIS.

IRIS

Dani wrote a speech for me.

IRIS

Well that’s adorable in a disgusting way.

IRIS reads the speech.

(IRIS reading)

“It’s a tragedy that we must move on from. While our lives will forever be impacted by this moment of our lives, we must learn how to find a way to move on.”

ROS nods.

IRIS

You are not saying this. Any of this. It’s cold. And poorly written. And...not you.

ROS

What am I supposed to say? Hey everybody. I killed a student. I really liked that student. He was very important to me. And then I killed him.

IRIS

You shot him.

ROS

Semantics.

IRIS
No. Not semantics.

Pause.

IRIS
Devin died early this morning.

ROS just stares.

IRIS
So words like killed or murdered or any of that...not okay. If it was possible not to say shot that'd be great too. No kill. No shot. No--

ROS
I got it.

ROS looks down at her clothes. She begins to fix her buttons. Pause.

IRIS
She's worried about you.

ROS continues fixing her buttons.

IRIS
I don't know that she's ready to admit it but she is.

ROS
Good for her.

IRIS
She's a lawyer too, you know? It doesn't have to be Ros and Dani vs the world.

ROS
She's not a real lawyer.

IRIS
She took the bar!

ROS
Only to be officially--

IRIS
Ros!
She cut me out first, Iris.

IRIS

How very mature of you.

ROS finishes with her buttons.

ROS

I haven’t needed Celia in years. I definitely don’t need her now.

SCENE 5

Friday, the speech. Split stage. On one side, ROS is dressed well and addressing the press (the audience). She is relatively calm and collected. On the other side, ETHAN talks directly to ROS.

ROS

What’s happened to this campus is heartbreaking. I’m not sure how we’ll heal from something like this but we can’t let this stop us, destroy us.

ETHAN

Devin and I have been roommates since freshman year. That’s four years. Same person, knowing everything about them. You know what it’s like here? Dorms turn into your home. Roommates turn into brothers.

ROS

We have to find a way to move on. To re-build. With our prayers and hard work, we can get past this.

ETHAN

And this place can be so...hard. It’s awful here. And everyone is so terrible. But Devin wasn’t. Legacy and all. He was one of the good guys. He used to make it so easy. Made me feel so at home.

ROS

I’ve heard that people in the press, even some people at the university, have made me into some sort of saint and that’s just not true. I’m a professor who panicked. Who, any other day, made a terrible mistake.

ETHAN

He was the only friend I had.

ROS
A mistake I hear I will still be penalized for.

ETHAN
So when he...found out. I don’t know. He just snapped. And all of that was gone.

ROS
And I accept that. I realize that I...

ETHAN
He started to make my life hell. Turned the whole dorm against me.

ROS
I am sorry to hear about the loss of Devin.

ETHAN
Threw coffee in my face.

ROS
I know his classmates have visited the Grotto to pray for him. And while I’m sorry I missed his prayer service in the Basilica, I know how healing that must of been for our entire campus.

ETHAN
Threw my laptop in the shower.

ROS
And I know--

ETHAN
Ripped apart my books.

ROS
I know he will be missed.

ETHAN
He even went to that pet store at the mall and bought a snake. And then put it in my backpack. A fucking snake.

ROS is visibly beginning to lose her control.

ROS
I know that I’ve said my prayers.

ETHAN
What am I supposed to do now? I can’t go back to my room. After everything’s that’s happened, how am I supposed to move on?
ROS
As for Ethan--

ETHAN
My rector’s been useless. He told me Devin was just playing around and for me to toughen up. He literally told me to man up.

ROS
Ethan’s actions are tragic as well and we have to--

ETHAN
It’s like everyone found out I was gay and then suddenly I was being too sensitive. Suddenly I was over reacting. A fucking snake. Ros!

ROS
I’m sorry. I can’t. I--I am officially resigning from my position. What I did was wrong. And I should’ve been fired for it. I killed someone. And the student I was attempting to save died anyways. I failed.

SCENE 6
Later that day.
ROS is sitting in her living room
flipping through ETHAN’s notebook.
ETHAN enters.

ETHAN
Indiana must be a shitty place to grow up gay. Like first of all, there’s nothing to do here. Just fucking corn everywhere. Like, if you’re not eating, you’re drinking. And drinking a lot. And that’s not even the worst part. Isn’t like the KKK near here or some shit? And white power groups? Dude this is not a good place to be not white. ROS closes the notebook and pulls out a lighter. She plays with it letting it flicker near the notebook. As she does this, ETHAN freezes. He is completely still.
She sets the lighter down. ETHAN unfreezes and continues.
ETHAN
Like no wonder this school is full of WASPs. Well not WASPs per se. The Catholic version of that. Which is like thirty times more intense. Catholics are intense. I told a kid here I was an atheist and he looked at me like I had said I personally killed Jesus. And that the crucifixion was my idea.
ROS
Ethan, I can’t do this right now.
ROS moves to light one of the notebooks on fire. ETHAN freezes again. She pauses. She can’t do it.

ETHAN un-freezes.
And Devin...he got it, you know? We would just laugh about all of it. Because it’s total bullshit anyway. All of it. And we could talk about anything. Like literally anything. We talked about poop schedules, Ros. Seriously. Everything.

ROS

Ethan--

ETHAN
Rос, it wasn’t supposed to happen. It wasn’t something I wanted to happen. Not like that. Not...we were so drunk. I barely even remember...We were out. Devin’s girlfriend had just broken up with him and he was not...okay. So we got drunk. Because why not right? And I mean wasted. Shit faced. So the next morning, when we woke up....and he was in my bed. I just...I always knew, you know? About myself but I...it wasn’t something I wanted to deal with.

ROS lifts the lighter to the notebooks again.

ROS

Go away.

ETHAN freezes. ROS sets down the lighter.

ETHAN
Not with him. I swear to God, I never thought about him that way before. But after...after it was all I could think about. I was devastated. Do you have any idea what it’s like to realize you’re in love with someone after you sleep with them? What that does to you? I tried to talk to him about it. But I--when I asked him if we could talk about it he said “Fuck off faggot. There’s nothing to talk about.”

ROS

I told you to go back to therapy, Ethan.

ETHAN
I love him, Ros. And I know he loves me too. He’s just scared. With his family and how he grew up. I could help him. I could--

ROS

Go away, Ethan.

ETHAN sits down across from ROS.

ETHAN
He loves me too, Ros.
Please. Go away.

ROS

*ETHAN says nothing.*

Please.

ROS

SCENE 7

Later that day.

*DANI enters. ROS is on the couch reading the notebook. ETHAN is not there.*

So. I watched the news.

DANI

Oh.

ROS

That’s not the speech I wrote.

DANI

Nope.

ROS

I especially didn’t tell you to confess to anything. Or, better yet, quit your job.

DANI

Nope.

ROS

And now I have to deal with the police, the press. Ros, honey, I love you but I have actual cases of actual murderers that I should be focused on. The prosecution has been calling for my head and this year they might just get it because you can’t--

DANI

We should move.

*Pause. DANI waits for ROS to say more.*

*She doesn’t.*

DANI

Where?
I don’t know.

ROS pulls the notebook aside and pulls out her phone.

ROS
Brown’s got a pretty great Classics program.

DANI
Rhode Island? You want to move to Rhode Island?

ROS
Yes.

DANI
And you're disdain for the Ivys has just faded away.

ROS
I mean, that’s the peak, isn’t it? Like being a professor at an Ivy league school. I think Iris knows the head of the department there.

DANI
Uh huh. Are you still hoarding alcohol under the couch?

ROS nods.
DANI reaches under the couch and pulls out a bottle of wine.
She looks at the bottle confused.

ROS
The guy at the liquor store said it was pretty good.

DANI
It's wine.

ROS
I know.

DANI
You don't drink--whatever. So Rhode Island.

ROS
Yes.
DANI

To work at Brown.

ROS

Yes.

DANI

Honey, have you ever been to Rhode Island?

ROS shakes her head.

ROS

It’ll be an adventure.

ETHAN enters.

DANI

Uh huh. I’m going to go open this. Be right back.

DANI exits with the bottle of wine.

ROS and ETHAN stare at each other.

ETHAN

You got your undergrad degree here right?

Pause.

And you were like the president of Core Council right? That--what do they call it--LGBT counseling group.

ROS stares. DANI re-enters with two glasses of wine.

ETHAN

So you’re gay too then right?

DANI

You realize you can’t have a gun in Rhode Island right?

ROS stares.

ETHAN
I think I need your help. And I realize that’s weird but I’ve already come to your office hours a few times just to talk. And I know you’re not my teacher. But maybe...I don’t know. You could teach me Greek or something? I’m just...alone. I don’t really have anyone.

DANI
And I’m pretty sure your permit won’t be recognized there.

ETHAN
I know it’s pretty pathetic but I...I need help, Ros. And therapy isn’t working. It’s just not my thing.

DANI
I’d have to re-take the bar to practice law there.

ETHAN
I know you know what I’m talking about.

Pause.

DANI
Rhode Island.

ROS
Yes. Let’s go. Please.

ETHAN sits down.

ROS
I can’t stay here, Dani. Everything haunts me.

DANI
Ros, we can’t just leave.

ROS
Why not?

ETHAN
Ros, I need your help.

DANI
Ros, you’re not making any sense. You know what? None of this makes sense.

ETHAN
I can figure Greek out. I know I can.

DANI
You know what’s been bothering me?
ETHAN
I was really good at Spanish in high school. There’s gotta be some kind of crossover.

DANI
Why did you have a gun on you anyways? Isn’t it illegal to have a gun on campus?

ETHAN
Ros. Honestly. I’m desperate.

Pause.

ETHAN
Ros? Are you listening?

DANI
Ros!

ROS
It was a mistake. I took the wrong bag to school. I just…it was a mistake.

DANI
Hell of a mistake.

SCENE 8
The next day. IRIS is in her office, trying to grade papers. CELIA enters. This time IRIS notices.

IRIS
(focused on the papers)
It’d be more effective if you just called her.

CELIB
I can’t call her, Iris. She won’t pick up.

IRIS
So instead you’re stalking me.

CELIB
That speech.

IRIS looks up from her work.

IRIS
Horrific.

I can't believe she quit.

She hasn't.

What? She said--

She hasn't filled out any of the paperwork. At this rate, she may get fired after all.

Oh.

Pause.

Celia, she needs someone to talk to. She needs you.

*CELIA shakes her head.*

I can't.

I understand that you two have some--

No you don't. There's too much damage, Iris.

Pause.

I'm writing her a recommendation letter.

Is she seriously being nominated for something? She just killed someone.

Shot. And no. For Brown.

Is she going back to school?
She’s going to teach there.

At Brown?

Call her, Celia.

Is she okay? Like, I know she’s not okay but is she... Have you been helping her?

Her wife’s got that covered.

Right.

Pause.

Celia, she’s your sister.

Iris--

And she’s sick.

It’s not like she has cancer. She’s just... sad.

And that sadness is turning into a sickness.

Iris, what am I supposed--

What she needs right now is someone who speaks the same crazy she does. Who’s living through the same crazy she has.

Silence.

Mom has nothing to do with this.
IRIS
Your mother has everything to do with this.

CELIA
I cannot be expected to pay for what I did to Ros for the rest of my life, Iris.

IRIS
No one is expecting that of you.

CELIA
It was a mistake.

IRIS
Celia, no one is-

CELIA
Yes you are. You’re asking me to save her. I can’t do that. Whatever happened with...this kid. It’s not my fault.

IRIS
It’s not about fault, Celia. Jesus. Grow up.

CELIA
You’re asking too much, Iris.

IRIS
All I’m asking you to do is to grow the fuck up and call your sister.

CELIA
You don’t know what she’s like.

IRIS
I know more than anyone else in this goddamn town what Ros is like. Including you. I am not asking you to save her life, Celia.

CELIA
Are you sure? Because that’s what it sounds like.

IRIS
I’m asking you to help, Celia. That’s it. Just help her.

SCENE 9

Later that day.
ROS is in her living room, dressed professionally, on the phone. While she waits, she rolls a blunt. ETHAN is across from her.

ROS
Hello? Hi. This is Dr. Roslyn Warren-Soriano. Calling for Elsa Arma--Hmm? Yes. I can wait.

ETHAN
It’s weird going from knowing everything about a person to being completely pushed out. From knowing that his socks never matched to not even being sure if he’ll ever speak to me again.

ROS
Hello? Hi. This is--yes. I know. It’s so nice to meet you as well. No. (pause) Ancient Greek and Comparative Literature. (pause) Well yes. That’s what I’m famous for but I--(pause) Well I got the idea based on the fact that we got everything else from the Greeks. What makes us think feminism didn’t start there too?

ETHAN
I mean, my dad was never super excited about the gay thing but he had bigger problems. I guess that’s what it is. Bigger problems. Like how fucking sheltered is your life, Devin, that your biggest problem is who I have sex with?

ROS
Oh. Yes. Translation. Well I--(pause) I could definitely teach it but it’s not my--(pause) No. That makes sense.

ETHAN
In the beginning it was like well this is a stupid thing to be mad over. He’ll get over it.

ROS
Lights the blunt and inhales deeply as she listens to the phone call.

ETHAN
You know I slept in the library last night? That’s how afraid I am to go back to my room. I don’t know what he’s going to do next.

ROS
Yes? I’m still here.

ROS
Right, right. Makes total sense. I mean, I am not against teaching translating the ancient texts so long as it’s not the Bible.
ETHAN
And you’re the only person. The only person who is listening to me.

ROS
My mistake. Bad joke. Just a joke my boss...my old...my boss and I have with each other.

ETHAN
Nothing’s working. I stay up all night translating because it’s something to do. It’s an excuse to not have to face him.

ROS
Oh. The joke? Just that it’s been done before. A lot.

ROS inhales again.

ETHAN
He was my best friend, Ros. He was probably the most important person to me. And after all the shit I’d been through, I was really looking forward to college.

ROS
Plato? Oh. Um...I actually know a lot more about Euripides and Aeschylus. I actually am teaching (pause) Oh. Right.

ETHAN
I couldn’t just live in constant fear, Ros. I had to do something.

ROS
You didn’t have to shoot him.

Pause.


ROSS hangs up and inhales from the blunt again.

ETHAN
I had to do something, Ros.

ROS
Fuck you, Ethan.

SCENE 10

The next evening.

DANI is dressed well, setting the living room table as if it was a dining room table.

ROS enters in her pajamas.
You cooked?

ROS

DANI nods.

Is that ravioli?

ROS

DANI nods again.

DANI

I made it by hand. From scratch. Took me forever. Hungry?

ROS shrugs.

You look nice.

ROS

DANI

Thank you.

Pause.

How long have we been married now?

ROS

DANI

Two years. You know that.

ROS

Right. In two years, you have never hand made ravioli.

DANI

Five years.

ROS

What?

DANI

We've been together for five years. So it's really in five years, I have never--

ROS

Not my point.
DANI

Sit down. Let’s eat.

ROS

hesitantly sits on the couch.

Are we going to watch a movie?

DANI

No. We’re going to talk.

ROS

To each other?

DANI

Yes. Like ordinary couples.

ROS

We’re not ordinary.

DANI

You may not be.

DANI reaches for the ravioli.

ROS just stares.

Eat.

ETHAN enters.

ROS

This feels like a bribe or something.

DANI

Not a bribe. Just dinner.

ROS

How long did it take you to make this?

DANI

Four hours. While you were asleep.

ROS

Dani.
Eat.

ROS picks at the food.

This just kind of feels like a set up.

ROS

And if I'm going to get yelled at--

DANI

Eat the damn food, Roslyn.

ROS takes a bite.

It's good.

ROS

Thank you.

DANI

Silence.

ROS looks at ETHAN expecting him to say something. He doesn't. He just stands there.

I'm not moving.

DANI

What?

ROS

And if you move, I want a divorce.

Pause.

ROS

Dani.

DANI

(calmly)
I understand that something absolutely heart-wrenching has happened to you. I do. And I have let you mourn. I’ve let you sit around all day getting drunk and high. And sleeping more than a fucking koala. But I will not move to fucking Rhode Island.

ROS

Dani, I can’t--

DANI
(still calm)

I won’t move there because when we were in Connecticut and I begged you to stay and not come back here, you said you couldn’t. I have built a life and career here. And yes I realize I’ve only been here for two and a half years so moving wouldn’t be out of the question, normally.

ROS

Which is why--

DANI

But it is. Out of the question. Not going to happen.

Silence.

ETHAN

So...what do you do?

ROS

A divorce?

ETHAN

And don’t you dare tell me you do yoga. Or you swim. I know there’s something else.

DANI

Yes. A divorce.

ROS

Isn’t that a bit...I don’t know...fucked up?

DANI

You mean like forcing me to move to Rhode Island when there’s nothing there for either of us?

ETHAN

I know sometimes you just feel like destroying something. I can see it in you. What do you do then? What stops you?

ROS
Dani, please.

Tell me about Ethan.

There must be something.

Dani, I can't.

Let me help you.

ROS shakes her head.


What’s he got over you? Why are you letting this kid ruin you?

ROS stares at ETHAN.

What do you mean a different kind of therapy?

I can't.

I can't help you. No one can help you if you won’t talk about it. I can’t go through this again with you.

Ros. I need this. Please, You’re being really vague. Just tell me. What is it?

First your mom and now this. Ros, you have to talk to me.

Pause. ROS stares at ETHAN.

I taught him, Dani.
I know. Greek. The English major got obsessed--

ROS

No. Dani. I taught him how to shoot. He used one of my unregistered guns to practice.

DANI

Ros--

ROS

And that's the gun he shot Devin with.

Pause.

DANI

Who knows?

ROS shakes her head.

DANI

Who knows about this, Roslyn?

ROS

No one. I haven't told anyone.

DANI

Make sure that you don't.

Pause.

ROS tries to walk towards DANI seeking comfort.

ROS

Dani, I--

DANI denies ROS.

DANI

Don't.

DANI leaves.

SCENE 11

Later that night. ROS is dazed and alone, drinking, in the living room. ETHAN sits across from her. Though ETHAN and ROS both speak,
they are not speaking to each other.
(ROS mostly speaks to tune the memory of ETHAN out)

ETHAN
My mom was bipolar. Fucked up thing is it started when I was born. Started off as postpartum. And then just kind of...exploded.

ROS
We think my mom was schizo. Who the fuck knows?

ETHAN
My dad tried everything to anchor her you know? Keep things around the house he thought would trigger her happiness.

ROS
My dad thought they could pray it away. Held so tightly onto his rosary you could see the bead prints in his hand.

ETHAN
And I wasn’t a part of her happiness. So I stayed mostly to myself and out of sight.

ROS
One time my mom thought she was the queen of a country she made up in her head. Made foil crowns for me and Celia. Told us we were princesses.

ETHAN
Parent-teacher night was always the worst. My dad would come, pissed I was distracting him from my mother, and no matter what my teachers said I was always just a shit kid to him.

ROS
Luckily we were kids. What little girl doesn’t want to hear she’s a princess? But I think we knew. I knew. Mommy wasn’t okay. I knew.

Pause.

ETHAN
My mom drowned herself in the bath tub when I was sixteen. She took a bunch of muscle relaxers and just...died. Just like that.

ROS is silent.

ETHAN
I came home first. I saw her first. You have no idea what it's like to see the person who's resented you for years. Dead. You think it'd be relieving. That it'd be...freeing. It isn't. And finding her first?

ROS drinks.

ETHAN
The cops asked me if I killed her. Apparently my dad was suspicious.

ROS stares out.
ETHAN sits down on the couch next to ROS.
ROS finally acknowledges ETHAN.

ETHAN
Fucked up thing is sometimes I miss her. After everything, I still loved her. I still love her.

ROS moves off the couch.

ROS
I can't do this. Not now, Ethan.

ETHAN
And there were moments. Moments when she didn’t hate me. When my dad didn’t hate me. Moments when everything was actually okay and we were a family. A normal, ordinary family. And those moments were...perfect.

ROS sinks down to the ground.

ROS
So perfect.

ETHAN
Apparently mental illness runs in my blood so...who knows? One day I might lose my shit too.

ROS
Absolutely perfect.

Pause.

ETHAN
I think that’s what terrifies me the most. What if all this Devin shit triggers something inside of me that I don’t know is there? What if I do something horrible?

Pause.
ROS rolls over to face away from ETHAN.

Sorry. I don’t know why I’m telling you this. It’s hard to really understand.

ROS
My mom shot herself after I told her I was gay. Trust me. I understand.

SCENE 12
DANI is in the living room, drinking directly from a bottle of wine and smoking a cigarette.
IRIS enters. They both stare at each other for a moment.

IRIS
You’re not the hot mess I was expecting.

DANI
I wasn’t aware that I was a hot mess.

Pause.

DANI
She went to the liquor store. Usually takes about twenty minutes.

IRIS
Twenty minutes? To go down the street?

DANI
She alternates. She doesn’t want them to think she’s an alcoholic. So on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays she goes to--

IRIS
Shit.

DANI
Yeah. Sit down, Iris. It’ll be a while.

IRIS doesn’t.

IRIS
Ros told me you didn’t smoke.

DANI
She told me a lot of things. Let’s compare notes.
IRIS
So is this what you two do all day? Get drunk and then have angry sex?

DANI
Did you need something, Iris?

IRIS
You think she'll come back to work?

DANI
I don’t know what I think.

IRIS
Brown does have a nice poly-sci program.

DANI
Fuck Brown.

IRIS
You’d be a great teacher. It’d be a nice change of pace.

DANI
I hate teaching.

IRIS
Oh.

DANI
Like zero, little to no interest in it. And being a lawyer in Rhode Island is like being a gay counselor in Utah. I don’t want to fucking do it.

IRIS
Well then.

DANI
Sorry.
IRIS
(motioning to the cigarettes)
May I have one?

DANI
Sure.

DANI hands IRIS a cigarette.

IRIS
Thanks.

She doesn’t light it.

DANI
When we were in Connecticut, she would talk about how absolutely insane it was here. How she hated it and the people were terrible. And racist.

IRIS
People suck pretty hard here.

DANI
I actually kind of like it here. Bum fuck Indiana. Who knew?

Pause.

IRIS
Maybe you could convince her to--

DANI
Not me. I can’t even convince her to shower.

IRIS
Gross.

Pause.

DANI
I’m up for District Attorney.

IRIS
Oh shit.

DANI
They told me today.
IRIS
Oh. Congratulations?

DANI
Yeah. Okay. Thanks, I guess?

IRIS
Are you going to tell Ros?

DANI
I was on my last year of law school when Ros entered the graduate program.

IRIS
Dani, I know that.

DANI
And then I got an amazing job after. Right out of law school.

IRIS
Yeah, Ros told me that you--

DANI
Ros. Ros. Ros. She's like a goddamn magnet.

IRIS
Dani--

DANI
I can't keep--fucking district attorney. Do you know how much good I could do if I was the goddamn district attorney?

IRIS
I do.

DANI
I can't let her pull me away.

IRIS
Good luck.

DANI
What?
IRIS lights her cigarette.

IRIS
Everyone puts their life on hold for Ros. It’s what we do.

DANI
We?

IRIS
Yes. We.

DANI
What have you done?

IRIS
You mean other than accepting tenure a week after Ros told me she was coming back? I was planning on leaving.

DANI
To go where?

IRIS
Cornell.

DANI
Oh shit.

IRIS
Yeah.

Pause.
IRIS reaches into her bag.

IRIS
I originally brought this for Ros but maybe I should give this to you instead.

DANI
What is it?

IRIS takes a pamphlet on Brown and hands it to DANI. DANI takes it but doesn’t read it.

DANI
Everything for Ros, right?
IRIS
It's what we do.

DANI
Why'd you stay for her?

IRIS
She's one of the most brilliant minds around. Why wouldn't I?

DANI
And what happens if that goes? What if she comes back and somehow all of...this has ruined her? What if her mind goes?

IRIS is silent.

DANI
Right.

IRIS
That won't happen.

DANI
She's disintegrating, Iris. I have no idea what'll happen.

IRIS
She's not going to stop being brilliant just because she shot someone.

DANI
You sure?

Pause.

IRIS
I need to go. There's a faculty meeting in the morning.

IRIS gets up.

DANI
I'm not going to give everything up for her. Again.

IRIS
There's only one option if you don't. Can you live with that?

DANI
I can't live like this.
IRIS leaves.
DANI puts out her cigarette onto the pamphlet. After a beat, she picks it up and looks at it.

ACT II SCENE 1

The next day.
ROS is in her living room, sitting on the couch. DANI sits beside her reading a pamphlet about Brown and drinking a glass of wine. ETHAN is sitting in a chair across from them. Though he and ROS speak to each other, their conversation is completely in ROS’s head and DANI cannot see ETHAN.

ETHAN
So how good of a shot are you?

ROS shrugs.

My dad hates guns. He thinks they should all be illegal.

ROS
Yeah. A lot of people feel that way.

ETHAN
Whatever. My dad’s a dick.

ROS smiles.

ETHAN
So, like if I threw a quarter in the air, could you shoot it?

ROS nods.

ETHAN
Holy shit. Have you ever had to shoot somebody before?

ROS shakes her head.

ETHAN
Would you ever?

ROS
I don’t think so.
ETHAN
Then why learn?

ROS
My dad taught me. We used to go shooting when I was little. It was how he de-stressed.

ETHAN
Just wandering around the mountains of Colorado, shooting at geese.

ROS
Not geese. I’ve never killed anything, Ethan. My dad would hunt and I would shoot.

ETHAN
Shoot what?

ROS
Mostly just trees.

Pause.

ETHAN
I’ve never even held a gun before.

ROS
Yeah. Well, California.

ETHAN
Yeah.

DANI throws down the pamphlet.

DANI
I am not moving to fucking Rhode Island.

ROS
I’m not signing divorce papers.

DANI
Great. I’ll help you pack but I’m not fucking moving.

ROS
The program looks good.

DANI
The program can suck a dick.
And just think of how amazing that’d look on a resume. Teaching political science at Brown. Doesn’t get better than that.

Stanford.

What?

Stanford’s got a better program.

Great. Let’s go to Stanford.

I don’t want to teach! I’m a lawyer. I like being a lawyer.

I didn’t know day drinking was your thing.

It’s not.

You going to work today? There are some criminals that need defending.

I called in sick.

Oh. Are you?

Are you?

I quit my job.

Awkward beat.
DANI reaches for her glass of wine.

Silence.
DANI

Iris still wants you to go back. Even after all this. I’m pretty sure you’re no longer allowed to talk to the press but they’d take you back.

ROS

I’m not going back.

DANI

They should call what happened a nervous breakdown. Get some fancy psychiatrist to examine the video and say you were clearly not mentally there.

ETHAN

Not mentally anywhere.

ROS

A psychiatrist?

DANI

Yup. I talked to one before. It’s not completely out of the question. Especially after I told him about your family history.

ROS

You talked to a psychiatrist about me?

DANI

Of course I talked to a psychiatrist. You’re not an easy person to be with. It probably wouldn’t hurt if you talked to one too.

ETHAN

That was rude.

ROS

Dani, I don’t--

DANI

Let me finish. You’ve barely spoken to me this last week. You’re constantly looking out into space as if something or someone is there. I need to know if you’re about to have a psychotic break.

ROS

Dani, you’re being a little--

DANI

I’m not being anything but honest. Now you try. Tell me about Ethan.
ROS

What about Connecticut?

DANI

What?

ROS

You loved it there. You've taken the bar there before. I'm at the top of my field. What about Connecticut?

DANI

Ros, I don't understand what you're asking.

ROS

Yale. I could easily teach at Yale. Got my PhD there. You graduated from there. We know the town. Let's go back.

DANI

Ros, I...

ETHAN

Ros, you can't just leave.

ROS

You hate it here. And you know that firm would love to have you again. I'm sorry I made you come to Indiana. I am. Notre Dame has always had this pull on me and I just...I'm ready to walk away.

Pause.

DANI

Please don't ask me this.

ROS

Why not?

DANI

Because I want to say yes and you know I can't.

ROS

Why can't you?

DANI

You said you had to come back.
I know. I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have.

You said this was home for you.

I was wrong.

Ros, don’t do this to me.

Let’s go back to Connecticut.

_DANI grabs her keys._

Where are you going?

Talk to me about Ethan. Please.

_ROS shakes her head._

Let’s just go. I can book the flight tonight.

_ENDANMENT_

_DANI_ tells me about Ethan first. Why did you teach him how to shoot? Did he manipulate you? Did you know he wanted to kill Devin? Did you help him plan it? Did you know all along you’d have to kill him? Is that why you brought the gun? Did you know you’d have to kill him? So he wouldn’t get arrested?

_ROS is silent._

_Ros!

I can’t._
DANI leaves. ROS and ETHAN stare at each other for a moment.

ETHAN

I didn’t want this to happen.

ROS

Yes. You did.

ROS leaves ETHAN alone on stage.

SCENE 2

Later that night.

ETHAN is on stage alone staring out into the audience. He is looking for someone.

Pause.

ROS walks into the living room, holding a bottle of Jack.

She notices ETHAN but doesn’t say anything.

She sits down and drinks from the bottle.

She stops, stares out into the audience.

She gets up and leaves.

ETHAN continues to search the crowd.

ROS returns with a safe box. She unlocks it and takes a gun out. She sets it on the table and stares at it.

She leaves. ETHAN continues to stare at the audience, intensely. ROS returns with a pack of cigarettes and sets them next to the gun.

ROS

The gun I shot you with.

She lights a cigarette.

ETHAN turns away from the audience and sits down across from ROS.

ETHAN

I know.

ROS

I killed you.

ETHAN

I know.
Silence.

You’re haunting me. You were even when you were alive.

I didn’t mean to.

I had to shoot.

I needed you to.

ROS picks up the gun and throws it away in a nearby trash can. She stands over the trash can.

There was a second, a delay.

I know.

You could’ve made the shot before I killed Devin.

I know.

You could’ve stopped me. Why didn't you?

Pause.

My mom was straight up crazy.

ROS smiles.

Mine too.

Like, one year she thought, for sure, Jesus was coming back and the only way to protect herself from the second coming was to bury herself under ground. So she starts digging.
ROS lights a cigarette still staring at the gun in the trash.

ETHAN
But she had lucid moments. And those were the best. She’d come and dance. Dance with my dad. Dance with me. Dance with our cat. Anybody. And she was so happy.

ETHAN’s words begin to visually impact ROS.

I think that’s how I knew. The person she was before I was born. The person my dad probably still cries for. That wonderful, alive person. And it was just a glimpse. I can’t imagine how much worse it must have been for my dad. Real problems. My dad. Me. We had real problems.

ROS fights ETHAN’s effect.

I loved her I did. But it was like...God. It’s really hard to love someone who just wants to hurt you.

ROS
Ethan...

ETHAN
And I know she wasn’t hurting me on purpose but it still sucked. But nearly as much as losing her. And knowing it was my fault. For being born. I couldn’t take that back if I tried.

ROS stares at the gun in the trashcan.

They say vampires can turn their emotions off. What if we’re vampires? What if that’s the only way we’ll survive? I am not going to survive Devin with my emotions turned on. He means too much to me and I just...It’s like my options are be sociopath...

ROS
...or die.

ROS leaves. ETHAN goes back to searching.

SCENE 3
The next day.
ROS is on the couch typing on her laptop.
There is an empty bottle of Jack next to her.
IRIS enters.

IRIS
(pointing to the bottle)
Little early isn’t it?
ROS shrugs.

Right. What’re you working on?

Another book.

IRIS is visible excited about this.

On the lost texts?

Sure.

IRIS
Ros, the university has been begging me to get you to write another book. This is going to be perfect news. What’s it called?

ROS
I’m calling it...Fuck you academia. Suck my dick.

IRIS
Great. Of course you are.

IRIS sits down next to ROS.
ETHAN enters and sits across from ROS.
ROS continues typing.

IRIS
Heard back from Brown?

ROS closes the laptop suddenly.

ROS
I have actually.

IRIS
Good news?

ROS reaches under the couch.
She’s out of couch alcohol.
Fucking perfect.

I’m guessing they didn’t hire you?

Doesn’t matter. I’m going to Yale. Dani will come with me if I go to back to Connecticut.

Right. Have you called them?

ROS shakes her head.

Is Dani here?

ROS shakes her head again.

Work?

ROS shrugs.

She left. She hasn’t been back yet.

When did she leave?

Maybe a night ago.

Pause.

Did you tell Brown our Bible joke?

ROS nods.

Classic. I brought you something.

IRIS pulls out three different translations of *The Orestia*. She hands them to ROS.
These are all shit translations.

I know.

If this is a joke, I’m missing it.

It’s not a joke.

Then what is it?

A Hail Mary.

Pause.

Dani loved Connecticut.

Yeah. It’s pretty fucked up of you to offer to move back.

It’s not fucked up if I mean it.

Too bad you don’t mean it.

How’s the book coming?

I’ve got like fifteen pages.

IRIS looks at ROS skeptically and then reaches for the laptop. She opens it and reads.

Holy shit.

I think it might get a Pulitzer.
IRIS (reading)

In the Orestia, Orestes demands justice. Because I don’t like trials, I demand you choke on smog and fall off a cliff.

ROS nods slowly.

IRIS

It’s a fucking masterpiece.

ROS

Thank you.

Silence.

IRIS

Listen. Brown called me to see how serious you were. They said you called once but said something about shooting.

ROS

Oh fuck. I never called her back.

IRIS

So they looked into it and they think you should take at least a year off and then they’d love to have you.

ROS

Really?

IRIS

Yup. The great escape.

ETHAN shifts. ROS tenses up.

IRIS

That’s what you want isn’t it?

ROS

Fuck.

Pause.

IRIS

Listen, Ros, you have to choose. Stay or leave. Either way, I’m...here.

ROS watches IRIS confused.
With everything that’s happened. Your mom two and a half years ago. And now this. I just--what do you need? Name it and I’ll get it. Recommendation letters. Moving services. Anything.

I’m fine.

No, Ros. You’re not.

I’m mourning.

Yeah. For a psychopath who shot one of your students.

He wasn’t a psychopath.

He is to me.

ETHAN shifts.

ROS shifts her focus to ETHAN.

He was being attacked. He couldn’t even go home.

He should’ve reported it.

He did.

Pause.

I know this goes without saying but...you know that what Ethan did was wrong. Right?

Silence.

Right?

ROS
He was brilliant by the way. He picked up Greek like that. His notebook is--

IRIS

Roslyn, he killed someone.

ROS

Someone who was torturing him.

IRIS

That doesn’t justify what he did.

Pause.

IRIS

You remember Dylan Greyson?

ROS

My grad student?

IRIS nods.

ROS

What about him?

IRIS

He’s teaching your undergrad class.

ROS sits up.

ROS

He doesn’t know anything about Euripides. All of his translations have been shit and he--

IRIS

He has a dog named Plato.

ROS

Noooo.

IRIS

Yeah.

ROS

That’s disgusting.

IRIS laughs.
IRIS
I know.

ROS
Ugh. He’s probably poisoning my students with his bullshit theories about The Iliad.

IRIS
Oh he definitely is.

ROS
If I didn’t know better, I’d totally call him a misogynist. You know he’s writing his thesis on Cassandra. Which at first is kind of awesome because no one talks about Cassandra.

IRIS
But his major focus is the issue of consent when it comes to gods and how her pride basically ruined everything.

ROS
He’s a dick.

IRIS
You picked him.

ROS
Because when I met him, he wasn’t like...a crazy person. He was really passionate about the women of The Iliad in a way I hadn’t seen before. How was I supposed to know he passionately hated them?

Pause.

IRIS
They’re going to make Ryan the new advisor of your grad students if you don’t come back.

ROS
No.

IRIS nods.

If it were legal, I’d set Ryan on fire. And then like drink a big glass of water in his burning face.

IRIS
I know. I know.
And he doesn’t know shit about the Ancient Greek texts. He only studies the Ancient Romans.

Those crooks.

He’s going to ruin my students.

He is.

He’s going to ruin the program.

Completely.

Aside *The Aeneid*, all of those texts are pretty fucking terrible.

Or re-written and stolen.

Or stolen! He’s going to destroy the program. I have worked so hard--

Then come back.

*Pause.*

Iris, I’ve done something. Terrible.

You did what you had to.

And I can’t.

*IRIS stands up and notices the gun in the trashcan.*
Roslyn! What the fuck?

She takes the gun out of the trashcan.

IRIS

What the fuck were you thinking?

ROS

Something absolutely terrible.

Silence.

IRIS

Look. I'm not going to--I'm taking this with me. I came here to warn you. The university needs a response. Either you officially resign or you take some time off or you suck it up and come back to work. I don't care which. Just make a fucking decision.

ROS

I have. I am leaving.

IRIS puts the gun in her bag.

IRIS

I'll have to create a job search then.

ROS

I hope you find someone great, Iris.

IRIS

I thought I already had.

IRIS takes the gun out of her bag and sets it on the table.

Something in her changes. She and ROS exchange a silent moment. IRIS relents, finally realizing ROS is not okay. IRIS places the gun on the table. Another quick moment.

IRIS

I wouldn't blame you.

ROS

Iris?

IRIS

I swear. Do what you have to.
IRIS leaves.

ETHAN

“The explosion is me.”

ROS gets up, throws the gun back in the trash, and wanders off stage. ETHAN follows her.

SCENE 4

That night.

ROS is on the couch, asleep. ETHAN enters.

ETHAN

Thanks for letting me sit in your class. I think I even held my own.

ROS opens her eyes. Even though she appears awake, she has entered her dream and into the memory.

ROS

Yeah. No problem. I think my grad students are actually a little jealous.

ETHAN

Well tell them that I was just bluffing. Reading the Iliad in Greek was like stabbing my eyeballs with a flame torch.

ROS smiles.

ROS

That’s just because it’s the fucking Iliad.

ETHAN sits down in his chair.

ETHAN

Which one’s your favorite?

ROS

The Orestia. I have mommy issues.

ETHAN nods smiling.

ETHAN

Tell me about it.

Pause.
ROS gets up, almost trance-like, and pulls the gun out of the trash. She wipes it off and sets it in the table. ETHAN just watches her.

ETHAN

Ros--

ROS

Look. I know I’m not supposed to have this here but I...before we go...

ETHAN

Safety.

ROS

Right.

ROS reaches for the gun. ETHAN ducks.

ROS

Calm down. If I wanted to kill you, I would’ve already. Great shot, remember? So rule number one. Don’t ever point the gun at a person. Ever.

ETHAN

Okay. So it’s loaded then?

ROS

What? No. I always have it unloaded.

ETHAN

Why?

Pause.

ETHAN

Right. Safety. So what kind of gun is that?

ROS

It’s a Smith and Wesson M & P Compact 40.

Silence.

ETHAN

What does that mean?

ROS
It doesn’t matter. So this is the magazine. It holds the bullets and this one holds--

ETHAN

Oh. The clip.

ROS

No. Don’t call it that. Nobody actually calls it that.

ETHAN


ROS

This one holds ten in the magazine and one in the chamber.

ETHAN

The chamber?

ROS

This one holds ten in the magazine and one in the chamber.

ETHAN

The chamber?

ROS

ROS takes apart the gun to show him the chamber.

ETHAN

Whoa.

ROS

Yeah. That’s how the gun is field-stripped.

ETHAN

How it’s what?

Pause.

ROS

Look. Ethan. All you need to know is don’t point the gun at a person ever. We’re shooting trees, not people.

ETHAN

Okay. So when--

ROS

And you have to promise me, swear, that you will never go shooting if I’m not there.

ETHAN

Ros, I promise you that every single time I put a gun in my hand to shoot it, you’ll be there.

ROS freezes. The memory blurs. ETHAN takes the gun
and exits. She reaches to stop him but he’s gone. 
ROS goes back to sleep on the couch.

SCENE 5

Later that night. 
ROS is asleep on the couch.

DANI (O.S.)

ROS wakes up.
DANI limps into the living room.

DANI

Oh. Hi.

ROS

Hi.

DANI

I hit my toe on something in the dark.

ROS

Oh.

DANI

I was just grabbing some stuff.

ROS

Oh.

DANI

Mostly clothes.

ROS is silent. DANI sits down.

DANI

Hotel down the street.

ROS

Right.

Pause.

DANI

I love you. You know that right?
ROS nods.

I love you too.

DANI

Like heart racing every time I see you love you. Like I get butterflies and vertigo and crazy love.

ROS

I know.

DANI

And I loved Connecticut. The life we could’ve had there.

ROS nods.

DANI

So you asking me...how could you ask me that?

ROS

Because I meant it.

DANI

No you didn't.

Silence.

DANI

When your mom died, you said you needed to come back. Here. And I thought it was to be with your sister but you haven’t spoken to her in years.

ROS

I can’t talk to Celia. You remember--

DANI

I do. I was there.

Pause.

DANI

A part of me still thinks you came back for her though. Maybe not to talk to her. But to be...near her. You two work...worked...in the same building.
I never saw her.

ROS

DANI

Never? Just because you didn’t speak to each other, that doesn’t mean you didn’t see her.

ROS shifts.

DANI

She’s been asking Iris about you.

ROS shifts again. She’s waiting for ETHAN to show up. He doesn’t.

DANI

I think she misses you.

ROS

She has no right to miss me.

DANI nods.

DANI

She was hurt. She said some things but you need--

ROS

No.

Pause.

DANI

I’ll go with you to Connecticut if you do one thing for me.

ROS

What?

DANI

Talk to the psychiatrist.

ROS

No.

DANI

Come with me to couples’ therapy.

ROS
No.

DANI

Explain Ethan to me.

ROS

She looks thinking he’ll come. He doesn’t.

I don’t know how.

DANI picks up ETHAN’s notebook.

DANI

He was good at Greek right. Held his own with your grad students. Was he thinking about applying to grad school?

ROS

Dani I can’t talk about Ethan. Please don’t make me.

DANI

Why can’t you talk to me? Just talk to me.

ROS

There’s nothing left to say.

Pause.

DANI

You’re going to lose me, Ros. Doesn’t that mean anything to you?

ROS

Dani, please--

DANI

I am not going back to Connecticut.

ROS

I cannot stay here.

DANI

Then please. Leave me. Because I do not know how to leave you.

SCENE 6

IRIS is in her office. She’s not grading papers. She’s smoking and drinking whiskey.
CELIA enters.

IRIS
Watch out, Celia. You might become my new favorite Warren.

CELIA
She’s not coming back is she?

IRIS
I don’t think so.

CELIA
Has she officially resigned?

IRIS
I’m going to have to fire her.

CELIA
I’m sorry.

IRIS
Silence.

You two used to do that weird Christmas thing. What was it called?

CELIA
Thanksmasyeare. Sometimes Ros called it Pangborn Thansmasyeare. Because that was our dorm so...

IRIS
Right. I don’t know why that popped into my head today but it did. Did you know every Thanksmasyeare Ros got me cigarettes and a pamphlet on cancer? Isn’t that hilarious?

CELIA
Did she really?

IRIS
Yeah. Ros used to love it. What was it? Exchange gifts, pretend to be a normal family?

CELIA
Something like that. Yeah.

IRIS
You think that’d work now?
CELIA smiles.

CELIA
I doubt it. It’s not where near Christmas time.

IRIS
Make a special exception?

CELIA
I barely know Ros now. I have no idea what I’d get her.

IRIS
Whiskey. She seems to be a fan.

Silence.

IRIS
You two were so close.

CELIA
Back then, yeah. She hasn’t tried anything...drastic has she?

IRIS looks blankly at CELIA.

IRIS
What are you asking me Celia?

CELIA
My mom killed herself pretty recently so I just...is she...

IRIS
You could call and check.

CELIA
I can’t do that.

IRIS
Christ, Cecelia. She’s fine. What’s wrong with you?

CELIA
It’s a fair question. I haven’t seen her. Normally I see her around campus and now...

IRIS
So your next guess is that she shot herself?
CELIA shrugs. Pause.

IRIS
I don’t know. I thought she might. I left her the gun so...

CELIA
Iris...

IRIS
Oh stop. You do not get to care now. It’s too much, remember?

CELIA
She’s my sister!

IRIS
Like genetics fucking counts when it comes to you and Ros.

Pause.

CELIA
I don’t know what to say to her.

IRIS
Start with hello. Work your way up from there.

CELIA
The last time I saw her I told her mom was her fault. At the funeral. In front of everyone.

IRIS
That was pretty fucked up.

CELIA
It was fucking Thanksgiving!

IRIS
Still though.

CELIA
I just...

IRIS
Cecelia. I am not your parent. I am not your therapist. Do what you fucking need to. Just know that if Ros dies, I will blame you. And then I will resent you for it. Forever.

CELIA
That’s a bit harsh, Iris.
Pause.

IRIS
The two of you are exhausting. I just know that if I had a sister who might off herself, I’d have some fucking last words I’d need to say.

SCENE 7

ROS is in her living room on the phone.
ETHAN is pacing around her.

ROS (on the phone)
Dr. Rosyln Warren-Soriano.

ETHAN
I need something else.

ROS
Yes. Undergrad at the University of Notre Dame. Grad school at Yale.

ETHAN
I thought shooting would help but it’s just made me...worse.

ROS
Classics. But I’m sure I could learn Italian.

ETHAN
How do people live like this?

ROS
Yes. I had to take Latin so I know it.

ETHAN
I just don’t understand how Devin can be so cruel.

ROS (relieved)
Yes. I prefer Greek. It’s my happy place.

ETHAN
How he could be so cruel to me.
ROS
Well I honestly thought maybe dramaturgy? I am an excellent researcher.

ETHAN
He sold my IPOD. Got the rugby team to beat me up. There's a fucking knife sitting on the futon just waiting--

ROS
(struggling to ignore ETHAN)
I love theatre. Always have.

ETHAN
And the shitty thing is that I know this hurts him too. How the fuck am I supposed to be okay?

ROS
Excuse me?

ETHAN
I am not just going to go away. I'm not going to make it easy.

ROS
Well, if you're doing Agamemnon that'd be perfect for me.

ETHAN
You have to listen to me.

ROS
Oh. Yes I'm aware it's an unpaid internship.

ETHAN
Ros!

ROS
No. I don’t mind at all. Like I said, I’ve always loved theatre and it would be fun to get on the other side of things so I could-

ETHAN
Face me!

ROS
(to ETHAN)
I'm trying to forget you.

ROS hangs up the phone and stares at ETHAN.
Loud silence.
This isn’t trying.

ETHAN

ETHAN exits. ROS throws her phone.

SCENE 8

CELIA is sitting outside drinking water from a whiskey bottle. DANI comes to sit down next to her. DANI looks at the bottle confused.

Hi.

Hi.

I almost didn’t come.

DANI

I was late because I didn’t think you’d be here. So thanks. I guess?

Sure. Want some water?

DANI

Why is it in a whisky bottle?

CELIA takes out a chip.

AA.

Since how long?

DANI

Since I got drunk and called my sister a murderer at my mother’s funeral.

DANI

Right.

Silence.
CELIA
I talk about you a lot in my classes.

Do you?

CELIA
A female defense attorney who has yet to lose a case? Yeah. You get brought up a lot.

Well infamy is always fun.

CELIA
Most of my male students assume you’re straight. So there’s that too.

And you haven’t told them?

CELIA
I haven’t even told them I know you. Well... kinda know you.

DANI
nods.

DANI
I read your dissertation. And then later your book. I own it, actually.

Really?

Celina

DANI
nods.

DANI
Women getting away with murder. Pretty relevant to what I do.

Silence.

CELIA
I get that Iris wants me to talk to her.

DANI
Good luck.

CELIA
She’s not talking to you?
DANI

Nope. Not at all.

Silence.

CELIA

He was just some kid.

DANI

They both were.

CELIA

Ros isn’t a child, Dani.

DANI

I meant Devin. Both Devin and Ethan. Both kids.

CELIA

I can’t imagine how...I forgot she lost two students.

DANI

She doesn’t give a fuck about Devin.

CELIA

Oh.

DANI

Like not even a little bit.

CELIA

Okay.

DANI

Which is awful.

CELIA

Right.

DANI

She doesn’t give a fuck about anyone but Ethan. Who she won’t talk about.

CELIA

She probably doesn’t know how.
At least you two have that in common.

Pause.

I’m sorry.

DANI

I’m not the one you said fucked up things to.

CELIA

You kinda were.

DANI

My mom died of cancer. So I kind of get it. Kind of. I told my brother he was useless. Not at the funeral, not publicly. But...

CELIA

Yeah. Not the same thing.

DANI

Right. Sorry.

Pause.

DANI

She’s moving.

CELIA

To where?

DANI

Oh. You’re not going with her?

CELIA

I don’t think so.

CELIA

Oh.

DANI
Yeah.

Pause.

CELIA
Are you guys legally married or...how would that work?

DANI
Really? That's what you want to know?

CELIA
Sorry.

Pause.

DANI
It wouldn't. Work, that is. It'll all just be shit.

CELIA smiles.

DANI
Yeah. I figured you'd respond that way.

CELIA
No. Sorry. I'm not happy about you two breaking up. I mean, yeah I was confused. And pissed. But that was back then. I'm not...it's not...sorry.

Then why are you still smiling?

CELIA
Ros used to say that.

DANI
What?

CELIA
It'll all be shit.

DANI nods.

DANI
I picked it up from her.

CELIA
It's how she felt every time we went home. How we felt really.
Silence.

CELIA
Did she ever tell you about Thanksmasyear?

DANI shakes her head.

CELIA
Right. I have to go. I'll see later, Dani.

DANI
Bye Celia.

SCENE 9
ROS is in the living room, looking through her books, packing.
CELIA enters with three plastic bags: one with a white substance, one with pills, and one with various kinds of candy.

CELIA
Nice house.

ROS turns around surprised.

CELIA
Door was unlocked.

ROS is still in shock.
CELIA holds up the bags.

CELIA
I brought treats.

ROS

Hi.

CELIA

Hi.

ROS

What are you doing here?

CELIA

Treats.

ROS looks at the bag. She takes the bag with the white substance away from CELIA and smells it. And then immediately laughs.

ROS

Celia.

CELIA

We thought we were so clever.

ROS

This is sugar.

CELIA

I know! Remember?

ROS nods.

ROS

We didn’t want to ruin our brilliant brains

CELIA

So we snorted sugar instead. (pointing the bad of pills) What’s that?

ROS

White smarties.

CELIA

Our ecstasy.

Pause.

CELIA
I heard you’re leaving.

ROS nods.

I am.

CELIA

Where?

ROS

Kansas.

CELIA

Kansas?

ROS

 Fucking Kansas.

 CELIA looks into the boxes. They’re empty.

CELIA

Packing seems to be going well.

ROS

I can’t remember what’s technically mine and...

CELIA

Technically Dani’s.

ROS stares at CELIA.

CELIA

You said her name.

ROS

Well yeah. She’s not Voldemort.

 CELIA picks up one of ROS’s books.

CELIA

This is yours, isn’t it? The book you wrote.

ROS

Yeah.
CELIA

Feminist Furies.

ROS

That’s not what it’s called.

CELIA

I know. It’s how I explained it to dad.

ROS is silent.

She continues to look through her books. Finally...

ROS

Is he okay?

CELIA shrugs.

CELIA

Well he lost the love of his life and his daughter refuses to speak to him.

ROS

He could me a demon when he last saw me.

CELIA

And now he’s drinking away his regrets. We both were.

ROS

That’s not--

CELIA

I’m not saying it’s your fault. Okay. I’m not here for that.

ROS

Then what are you here for?

CELIA

Candy?

ROS

Celia.

Pause.

CELIA

Okay. Let’s just dive in then. When mom killed herself--
Celia, I don’t--

ROS

CElia

Hold on. After you told mom you were gay, at Thanksgiving, fucking Thanksgiving

ROS

I’m not in the mood for--

CELIA

Sorry. Anyway, we were leaving. Mom shot herself and then--

ROS

Christ, Celia.

CELIA

I’m trying to get to the point.

ROS puts her book down.

CELIA

We never talked about it. We didn’t. Dad and I just got mad and said some shitty things. And then you got mad and vanished. On us. And we were so mad that we were just like “Yup that’s Ros. Being a bitch” but then this happened.

ROS

Celia, I don’t want to--

CELIA

And I know I’m probably the last person on earth you want to talk to and--

ROS

Yes you are.

CELIA

And I realize that we have a lot of shit to...work through. But I...

CELIA sits down.

I am sorry. I resent you for telling mom on her favorite holiday when she was lucid that not only were you gay but that you were going to marry the one Italian who isn’t Catholic.

ROS laughs.
It wasn’t because she wasn’t Catholic.

CELIA nods.

It probably didn’t help. (pause) And I should’ve talked to you. I should’ve. But none of us saw that coming. We didn’t know you were gay. You hadn’t told anybody. And you were always around guys so we just assumed you were a slut. But with, like, men.

CELIA shrugs as ROS smiles.

Celia, most Classics majors were guys. Future theologians, I might add.

CELIA

And God bless them. But how were we supposed to know?

Silence.

CELIA

Ros, you have to talk about it.

CELIA

I can’t.

ROS

Here’s what I figure. You don’t want to talk about it because you think you did something terrible and you don’t want people to think you’re a shit person. Right?

ROS nods.

CELIA

Well, I mean, you killed my mom. There’s really nothing worse you can say or do to me.

ROS

She was my mom too.

CELIA

I was making a joke, Ros.
It wasn’t funny.

ROS

Fine. A bad, bad joke. I’m sorry.

CELIA

Pause.

ROS

It’s complicated, Celia.

CELIA

More complicated than coming out to our possibly schizophrenic mother on her favorite holiday who then shot herself for which your family has been blaming you for the last three years?

ROS

Yes.

ROS

Ros.

Pause.

ROS

Mom wasn’t my fault.

CELIA

Neither was this.

ROS

You wouldn’t get it.

CELIA

I don’t need to get it.

Pause.

ROS

What do you want to know about?

CELIA

Ethan. What was he like?

ETHAN enters and sits in his chair.
He watches the sisters.
ROS
Well, we might by complete accident. Apparently Devin was playing hooky and got Ethan to turn his homework in for him.

CELIA
Wait. They were friends?

ROS
Best friends, actually. But then Devin found out Ethan was gay. And um... well he started to bully him. And when Ethan went to his rector, he didn’t--

CELIA
Who was his rector?

ROS
Father Abrams.

CELIA
That asshole? There’s no way that guy should still be a rector.

ROS
Yeah. I know. Well, I...I...

CELIA
Ros, just tell me.

ROS
I taught him how to shoot, Celia. We’d go shooting in the woods, just to blow off steam. Therapy wasn’t helping so I thought this would. But I made him promise.

ETHAN shifts.

CELIA
Promise what?

ROS
Not to shoot without me there.

CELIA
Oh fuck.
I guess he just...Well, he kept his promise.

CELIA

Yeah. Devin was the only guy he shot, right?

ROS

Yeah.

Pause. ETHAN shifts.

CELIA

So that’s it then?

ROS is silent.

CELIA looks over to “ETHAN's chair.”

She can't see him but there’s something about the chair. It’s almost as if she can feel him.

CELIA

Ros what is it?

ROS

You will never forgive me.

CELIA

Yes. I will. I already have. Ros, you have to talk about this to someone. Or it will haunt you. This shouldn’t be the thing that destroys you. You’re better than this.

ROS

No I’m not.

CELIA

Listen Roslyn. I have had to live my whole goddamn life in the shadow of the genius that is Roslyn Warren-Sorianao. If you don’t want me to resent you forever for being perfect, I’m going to need some dirt on you.

ROS

You said Soriano.

CELIA

Yeah.

ROS

Wow.

CELIA
Yeah. We’re all becoming better people. Can you tell me now? Please? What’s been getting to you? There must be more. Right?

Pause.

ROS
I hesitated. I let Ethan kill Devin. I wanted him to.

CELIA
What?

ROS
We both had our guns out and I’m a faster and sharper shot than Ethan. I could’ve just shot his hand and waited for the cops but I...

ETHAN stands.

ROS
God, I remember what that was like. The bullying. Devin had been antagonizing him. His rector wasn’t going to do anything about it. And I just...for a split second, I didn’t see Devin there and it wasn’t about protecting my student, it was about....

CELIA
Revenge.

ROS
But as soon as I heard the shot from Ethan’s gun, I just...instinct took over I guess. I pulled the trigger and I just...I didn’t mean to kill him. It was just...

CELIA
You’re a sharp shooter, Ros. You always have been. And from what I remember about guns and shooting people, if you’re going to do it

ROS
Make it a kill shot.

CELIA
It was instinct.

Pause. ETHAN walks closer to ROS.

CELIA
How’d he get the gun?

ETHAN stops.
I don’t know.

It wasn’t one of yours was it?

Do the cops know?

It was unregistered.

Grandpa.

You realize grandpa and all his theories about the government taking guns away is crazy right? And that you should never have an unregistered gun.

If it had been registered, I might have gone to a jail. 

Celia, I shouldn’t have...I should've either disarmed Ethan and saved Devin's life or aimed at a different place to stop Ethan. But not to kill him. I deserve some kind of punishment.

Probably.

I can't stay.

But who gives a fuck about what you deserve? We're Catholic. Our whole lives are about guilt. Go back to mass. Welcome to the fucking club.

Celia.

I'm being serious. You did a really shitty thing. You did. You allowed someone to kill someone else.
ROS
I know. I should've-

CELIA
But that someone else was an abuser. So it’s not like Ethan killed Jesus or the next Upton Sinclair or Paul Auster.

Pause.
ROS is silent. ETHAN just stares at her.

CELIA
I wouldn’t have been able to kill my favorite student.

What?

ROS

CELIA
Okay. So my favorite. Her name is Lila. If she came into one of my classrooms with a gun, she’d probably get a clear shot at least five different kids before my mind checked back in. I’d be fucking useless.

ROS
But Celia--

CELIA
Because it’s not that simple killing someone who you love. Orestes had to summon the gods to have a fucking trial over it. It’s a crappy situation.

ROS
But with the climate and everything--

CELIA
Oh fuck the current political climate. This wasn’t a misogynist who lost his mind and shot up a sorority house. This is one gay dude who got really pissed at his old best friend. This isn’t a school shooting. It’s just an old fashioned murder. I would know.

ROS
A murder I let happen.

CELIA
Ros.

Pause.
I want you to stay.
ROS

What?

CELIA
I need you to stay. All I've been thinking about since the shooting is what happens if you kill yourself? I can't lose you and mom in the same decade.

Silence.

You’re my sister. And when your upbringing is as shitty as ours, you start to realize that’s all you got. You're all I've got. And I want you in my life. For realzies.

ROS laughs.

For realzies?

ROS

Yes.

CELIA
Short pause.

ROS
I’m not a single package anymore. If I’m in your life, Dani would be too.

CELIA

Only if you stay. So stay.

ROS looks at ETHAN.

ROS
He’s haunting me, Celia.

CELIA
Tell him to stop.

ROS
What?

CELIA
Tell him to fuck off. I did it. It works.

ROS smiles.

ROS
You did it?

CELIA
With mom. It hurt like hell. But I was like “You know what mom? Fuck off. You’re crazy and shouldn’t have done that to Ros. Or me.”

ROS
Done what?

CELIA
Everything. All of it.

ROS
That’s a bit harsh, Celia.

CELIA shrugs.

CELIA
That’s what it takes, Ros.

Pause.

ROS
(looking at ETHAN)
Fuck off.

ETHAN looks at her confused.

CELIA
You have to mean it. Like this. GO AWAY YOU LITTLE SHIT! Now you try.

ROS looks directly at ETHAN.

ROS
GO AWAY YOU LITTLE FUCKED UP GENIUS ASSHOLE!

ETHAN leaves the stage.

CELIA
Perfect. Anything of his we can burn?

ROS picks up the notebook.

ROS
Just this.
CELIA
Great. We’ll have a bonfire later.

Pause.

CELIA
(to ROS)
Please don’t go.

DANI enters. She looks at CELIA and then at the boxes.

DANI
Are you packing to leave?

ROS
(surprised to see DANI)
Hi.

DANI
I didn’t actually grab all the clothes I needed so I...I also thought I’d drop off the key.

Pause.

ROS
I’m staying.

What?

ROS
I’ll go talk to Iris tomorrow. See how many asses I need to kiss to get my old job back.

Really?

ROS
This is my home. This is where I’m supposed to be. I’m so sorry, Dani.

DANI and ROS just kind of stare at each other.

CELIA
Please don’t kiss. Like I’m cool with it. But baby steps.

ROS and DANI laugh.
DANI
Celia, do you want to stay for dinner? I’d actually love to talk about your book.

CELIA
Sure. What’s for dinner?

DANI
(to CELIA)
Lasagna.

ROS
It’ll be vegetarian.

CELIA
What is it with lesbians and not eating meat?

ROS smiles.

Don’t. Don’t make that gross.

CElia and DANI go into the kitchen. ROS looks around the room. Ethan’s gone for good. She smiles and then follows behind CELIA and DANI.

END OF PLAY
Chapter Three: Professional Materials

Section a: List of Work (while enrolled in MFA program)

Full Length Plays:
*Onesies and Whiskey*: Saida and Tom want nothing more than to have a baby. Much to their chagrin, Georgie, Tom’s little sister, wants nothing more than to have an abortion. Now Saida and Tom must decide whether to keep Georgie’s baby for themselves or to help her obtain an abortion.

*Reason of Doubt*: Dana, a rape crisis counselor, has been accused of rape by her ex-girlfriend, Brooke. Now Dana must piece together the events of that night in order to prove her innocence.

*Refuge*: In order to save her failing marriage to FTM transgender Derek, Julia decides to open up the relationship to include free-spirit Summer but doesn’t count on Derek falling in love with Summer and out of love with Julia.

*Kill/Shot*: Ros, a classics professor, must face the reality of shooting her student and mentee before she loses her job, her partner, and her sanity.

*Give Me Shelter, También*: Clara and Pita are in the United States, illegally. When Mateo, their American born brother, comes home, they reveal their parents have fled the country and the INS is coming for Clara and Pita. Now the three siblings must decide: work together and fight for their right to stay or lose each other forever?

TV show:
*Mad Girl Underground*: Izzy, a college student and sex worker, creates rape fantasies for important business men and other prominent figures. After meeting Eric, she begins to question just how far she willing to go to ensure she does not have to pay for college loans.

section b: List of readings while enrolled


*Getting in: sin papeles*. October 2013. Open Fence Coalition. (Self-produced)


*Give Me Shelter, También*. February 2015. KC ACTF Region VI.

*backwoods*. February 2015. KC ACTF Region VI.
Rachel Washington

Education

MFA. University of Arkansas. Playwriting.
B.A. University of Notre Dame. Theatre and Gender Studies.

Stage Management Experience

• *Sonnets for an Old Century.* Northwest Arkansas Community College  
  Jan 2015—May 2015
• *Disfarmer.* Arkansas New Playwright Festival. Theatresquared.  
  June 2014
• *Raw Vision.* Arkansas New Playwrights Festival. Theatresquared  
  June 2013
• *Digging Up Arkansas and Bear State of Mind.* Trike Theatre.  
  Aug 2011—April 2012

Presentations/Conferences

• Panelist. *Transforming Theatre.* U of Arkansas GSE Conference  
  March 2015
• Panelist. *Writing Women of Color.* University of Wisconsin, Madison  
  TDGSO Conference  
  February 2014

Playwriting Experience

• 10-min Semi-finalist KCACTF for *backwoods*  
  February 2015
• Finalist for Rosa Parks Service Award, Latinidad Playwriting Award, Paula Vogel Award for KCACTF for *Give Me Shelter, También*  
  February 2015
• *Kill/Shot.* Staged Reading. University of Arkansas.  
  April 2014
• *Getting in: sin papeles.* Staged Reading. Open Fence Coalition  
  October 2014
• *Refuge.* Staged reading. Theatresquared.  
  June 2014

Teaching Experience

• Teaching Assistant. Northwest Arkansas Community College  
• Latin American Playwrights. Self-created class. University of Arkansas.  
  Aug 2014—Dec 2014
• Theatre Appreciation. Teaching Assistant. University of Arkansas.  
  Aug 2012—Dec 2013
Performance Experience

- *Happy Endings and Such*. One-person show. Wrote, directed, and performed. Dec 2012

Producing Experience

- Artistic Director. Open Fence Coalition. Aug 2013—present
- Produced *Undergraduate Playwriting Project*. February 2015
- Produced *How to Win a Pulitzer Workshop*. Dec 2014 to present
- Produced *Getting in: sin papeles*. October 2013

Other Experience

- Literary Associate. Theatresquared. Dec 2013 to present
- Wardrobe. *Flamingo and Decatur*. June 2013

Affiliations/Memberships

- Member. Dramatist Guild. Aug 2013—present
Works Cited


References for Pictures:


All of the pictures included in the appendix are courtesy of Brandyn D Smith and Rachel Washington. All of the pictures are cited above.
Appendix: Pictures and Program

Figure #1: *Kill/Shot* rehearsal picture. Grant Hockenbrock (left) and Emily Riggs (right). Photos courtesy of Brandyn D. Smith
Figure #2: *Kill/Shot* rehearsal picture. Emily Riggs as Ros.
Photos courtesy of Brandyn D. Smith
Figure #3: *Kill/Shot* rehearsal picture. Grant Hockenbrock (left) as Ethan and Emily Riggs (right) as Ros.
Photos courtesy of Brandyn D. Smith
The Program:

The University of Arkansas
Department of Theatre
Proudly Presents

Kill/Shot
By Rachel Washington

at Studio 404

Directed by
Brandyn D. Smith

Scenic Design
Joshua O. Samaniego

Costume Design
Rachel Boekhaus

Sound Design
Kenzie Wolfe

Lighting Design
Tiffany Miller
Dear Studio 404 Patron,

First of all, welcome to Studio 404 at Kimpel Hall for the 2014-15 Studio Series season under the newly named Department of Theatre! You may be wondering why we decided to change the name from Department of Drama to the Department of Theatre. The short answer is quite simple. We are a department made up of scholars and artists who “make theatre.” The training our students receive is rooted in the principles and technique one needs to know in order to sustain a life creating high quality, imaginative, and engaging theatre. We believe that the subtle name change more closely reflects who we are and what we do.

2014-15 is an exciting year for us as we continue to make changes in an effort to grow our season subscriptions and patron list as well as make it easier for you to find us on campus. I hope you saw the “Sandwich Board” signs guiding you to our studio 404 here in Kimpel Hall – we know many of you know your way around, but some of you may be attending for the first time and we wanted you to feel welcome as you maneuver through our beautiful campus.

I am so pleased to report that between 2013 and 2014, the number of patrons who support the Department of Theatre has grown by 50% with an increase in giving by 65%! Not only will your contribution continue to allow us to produce theatre at the highest level, it will also serve our students by offering them experience and training using state-of-the-art technology. In an ever changing technological world, it is more important today than it has ever been to give the students at the University of Arkansas a leg up on the competition by providing outstanding training – your generous gift helps to make that a reality for us. Although we do receive state funding that supports some of our production costs, by no means does that cover the expenses associated with providing the highest caliber training possible.

As chair of this fine department, it is my desire that each of you will become a member of our theatre “family” by subscribing to either our Main Stage Series presented at the University Theatre, or our Studio Series here in Kimpel Hall – Studio 404. Both will provide you an outstanding live theatre experience at an incredible value. I would also like you to consider supporting our exceptionally talented students by contributing to our Department of Theatre Patron Program. By becoming a Friend ($50-$99) Patron ($100-$199), Grand Patron ($200-$349), Angel ($350-$499) or Super Angel ($500+)

I hope you enjoy this evening’s (or afternoon’s!) performance.
Staff for the Production

Stage Manager…………………………………………………………Olivia Tener
Props Master………………………………………………………………Joshua O. Samaniego
Associate Lighting Designer………………………………………Katie-Beth Thomas
Wardrobe Crew……………………………………………………………Madison Lawson
Set/Prop Crew……………………………………………………………Erin Edmisteen
Light Board Operator…………………………………………………Aimee Espenschied

Special Thanks To…

Clinnesha Dillon Sibley, Ann Martin, Joey Farley, Caitlin Stoddard, Bob Ford, Les Wade, Brittany Taylor, Robert Flaherty Hart, Ashley Edwards, Ashley Cohea, and Barbara Springer

STAFF for the Department of Theatre

Chair of Theatre………………….Michael J. Riha
Vice-Chair of Theatre.........Patricia J. Martin
Office Manager………………….Barbara J. Springer
Business Manager……………..Ashley Cohea
Scene Shop Manager…………Justin Ashley
Costume Shop Manager…….Valerie Lane
Music Theatre Accompanist…..Jennie Lee
Box Office Manager………Rachel Washington,
                          Bob Hart
Publicity Manager………Guadalupe Campos
House Manager…………………Brittany Taylor

Theatre Faculty….Mavourneen Dwyer,
                 Amy Herzberg, Kate Frank,
                 Robert Ford, D. Andrew Gibbs,
                 Morgan Hicks, Shawn Irish,
                 Bryce Kemph, Michael Landman,
                 Valerie Lane, Gail Leftwich,
                 Patricia J. Martin, Jenny McKnight,
                 Michael J. Riha, Clinnesha Sibley,
                 Les Wade, Weston Wilkerson
Cast
Ros.........................................................Emily Riggs
Iris.......................................................Jami Dunaway
Ethan.................................................Grant Hockenbrough
Celia.................................................Maggie Harrington
Dani................................................Lauren Gunn

Setting
Time: 2012
Place: Notre Dame, Indiana

Director’s Notes
In a world centered around headlines and media pressure, most issues seem black and white. *Kill/Shot* examines the gray area that is rarely talked about and the victims caught in the crosshairs. The issues of bullying, guns, and mental illness have made great targets in recent papers, appearing in sometimes incomplete or biased stories. We hope to present these issues and allow you, the audience, to draw your own conclusions.

It is our hope that when the play is over, you'll have a deeper compassion for our fellow man, a bit more empathy for those we don't understand, and more awareness of the dangers facing us with gun control laws.

**WARNING:** This production contains the use of strobe lights, electronic cigarettes, stage weaponry, and simulated gunfire.
Who’s Who in the Production

Rachel Washington (Playwright) is a 3rd year MFA Playwriting candidate at the University of Arkansas. She received her B.A. from the University of Notre Dame where she majored in Theatre and Gender Studies. Her recent credits include producing the Undergraduate Playwriting Project and becoming a finalist for KC/ACTF Region VI Rosa Parks Award and the Paula Vogel Award for her play Give Me Shelter, También. After graduating, she plans to teach theatre on the collegiate level and continue to create resources for local writers here in Fayetteville. Kill/Shot is Rachel’s graduate thesis.

Brandy Smith (Director) is a third year MFA directing candidate from Dallas, TX. He received his Bachelor’s of Arts in Theatre and Dance from Henderson State University where his directing credits include: The Trestle at Pope Lick Creek, The Shadow Box, and Laundry and Bourbon; his choreography credits include: Urinetown: the Musical, The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee, Much Ado About Nothing, and several pieces for the Henderson State Dance Company. While attending the University of Arkansas, his directing credits include: Tribes, The Little Dog Laughed, and Godspell; his choreography credits include Next to Normal and Romeo and Juliet, both at TheatreSquared, and Godspell here at the University of Arkansas. His professional credits include: The White Swan in Matthew Bourne's Swan Lake, Basilio in Don Quixote the Ballet, the Arabian in The Nutcracker, and Carabosse/Caradoc in Matthew Bourne's Sleeping Beauty.

Upon graduation Brandyn hopes to teach theatre and dance at the collegiate level.

Emily Riggs (Ros) is from St. Louis, MO. She is currently a sophomore theatre major at the U of A. Previous credits in St. Louis include Singin’ in the Rain, The Adding Machine, and Bye Bye Birdie. Most recently Emily was one of the assistant stage managers for Kin and the costume designer for Talking Pictures at the U of A. In the future Emily would like to attend graduate school and pursue an acting career.

Emily Riggs (Ros) is from St. Louis, MO. She is currently a sophomore theatre major at the U of A. Previous credits in St. Louis include Singin’ in the Rain, The Adding Machine, and Bye Bye Birdie. Most recently Emily was one of the assistant stage managers for Kin and the costume designer for Talking Pictures at the U of A. In the future Emily would like to attend graduate school and pursue an acting career.

Jami Dunaway (Iris) is a senior working toward a BA in Theatre here at the University of Arkansas. She is Originally from Siloam Springs, AR. and has appeared in numerous productions around Northwest Arkansas. Past credits include Godspell, Bachelorette (U of A), Thoroughly Modern Milly (ACO), Ordinary Days, Little Shop of Horrors, Lucky Stiff (Sager Creek Arts Center), Extra! Extra!, and The Humble Heart (NWACC) among others. After graduation Jami is planning on moving to Louisville, KY to begin a career in music and to seek a M.F.A. in Acting.

Grant Hockenbrough (Ethan) is originally from Dallas, TX. He will be graduating this semester with a B.A. in Theatre from the University of Arkansas. His professional credits include: The White Swan in Matthew Bourne's Swan Lake, Basilio in Don Quixote the Ballet, the Arabian in The Nutcracker, and Carabosse/Caradoc in Matthew Bourne's Sleeping Beauty.

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Grant Hockenbrough (Ethan) is originally from Dallas, TX. He will be graduating this semester with a B.A. in Theatre from the University of Arkansas. His professional credits include: The White Swan in Matthew Bourne's Swan Lake, Basilio in Don Quixote the Ballet, the Arabian in The Nutcracker, and Carabosse/Caradoc in Matthew Bourne's Sleeping Beauty.
A Street Car Named Desire, and Time Stands Still (U of A). In the future Grant plans to work in regional theatres as an actor, director and stage manager and eventually attend an acting graduate program.

Maggie Harrington (Celia) is from Ft. Worth, TX. She is a sophomore majoring in both theatre and communications. Technical credits include assistant stage manager for Spring Awakening (U of A) and light board operator for Hamlet (Theatre Squared). Acting credits include Tribes, V is for Violin and Talking Pictures. Maggie plans on becoming a broadcaster and performing in regional theatres.

Lauren Gunn (Dani) is from Bentonville, AR. She is a sophomore theatre major at the U of A. Lauren was recently seen as Katie Bell in the Undergraduate Project Talking Pictures. After graduation she would like to pursue a professional acting career in New York City, making her way through Broadway, then merging into film and television. Following an acting career, Lauren would like to move back to Bentonville and teach musical theatre at the high school level. She would like to inspire young minds the way her professors have done for her.

Joshua O. Samaniego (Scene Designer) is from San Antonio, TX. He is a graduate Scene Design candidate and holds a B.F.A. in Theatre Design and Technology from Texas State University. Previous scenic design credits include Doubt: A Parable and Top Girls (Texas State University).

Rachel Boekhaus (Costume Designer) is from St. Paul, MN. She is currently a senior at the University of Arkansas. Rachel previously designed make-up for Godspell and was recently seen as one of the Townspeople in The Foreigner. In the future she would like to work towards a career in make-up design.

Kenzie Wolfe (Sound Designer) is a senior at the U of A. Her past sound experience includes She Stoops to Conquer and sound mixer for Godspell (U of A). She plans on graduating with a Theatre degree in the fall and will then complete a Fire Science and EMT training to become a firefighter. She hopes to one day continue her education in theatre at a graduate level.

Tiffany Miller (Lighting Designer) is originally from Springdale, AR. She is currently working on her B.S. in Psychology. Previously she was part of the costume crew for A Street Car Named Desire at the U of A. In the future Tiffany plans to pursue a M.A. in Sociology or Psychology and continue to support the theatre community.

Olivia Tener (Stage Manager) is a Freshman at the U of A. She is currently a theatre major, and this is the first show that she has stage managed. Olivia is originally from Bentonville, and graduated from Benton County School of the Arts. She was an active member of the theatre department at her high school, and hopes to continue to do theatre for the rest her college career and thereafter.
DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE PATRONS

SUPER ANGELS………………………………………Orville and Susan Hall, Barbara Shadden, Trike Theatre

ANGELS………………………………………………………………………………………………………..Mike and Terry Johnson

GRAND PATRON……………………………………..…Hugh and Nancy Brewer, Ronnie and Nancy Denn, D. Andrew Gibbs and Mary L. Gibbs, Roger and Patricia Gross, Ralph and Gale Jensen, Roger and Jessie Koepppe, Luke and Janet Parsch, Peter and Mary Savin, Martha Sutherland


FRIENDS…………………………………………………………….Dick Bennett, Jo Bennett, Eugenia Donovan, Brandon James and Elizabeth Barnes Keener, Sylvia King, Barbara Moore, Denise Nemec, Polly Rea, Nadine Purvis Schmidt, Jane Scroggs, Frank and Sara Sharp, Carolyn and Murray Smart, Charlotte Taylor and Tim Hudson, Bobbie Nell Templeton.

For more information on how to become a patron of the Department of Theatre, please call (479) 575-6067, email us at theatre@uark.edu or visit our website at http://theatre.uark.edu.

We are proud to announce our 2015-2016 Mainstage Season

*Hay Fever* by Noel Coward
October 1-11

*Twelfth Night* by William Shakespeare
November 13-22

*Eurydice* by Sarah Ruhl
February 19-28

Green Day’s *American Idiot*
April 15-24

Season Tickets will go on sale March 13, 2015.
Please visit http://theatre.uark.edu or call 479-575-6067.