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ONE-THIRD OF A NATION, THE SECOND AMENDMENT, A LIVING
NEWSPAPER PLAY

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Theatre Performance Pedagogy at Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

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Abstract

ONE-THIRD OF A NATION, THE SECOND AMENDMENT, A LIVING NEWSPAPER PLAY

By Linda Ann Watt

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Theatre Performance Pedagogy at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2018

Major Director: Dr. Aaron Anderson
Associate Professor and Associate Chair of the Department of Theatre

Documentary theatre, including living newspapers and verbatim theatre, uses socio-political commentary at critical moments in history to disseminate facts and offer ideological critique dramatizing the crisis through the lens of emotion, which can incite change. The audience is an active participant in challenging the canon and using solutions presented, thus making decisions about the socio-political issue(s).

This thesis explores the didactic medium of documentary theatre including “agitprop,” with the contributions of Vsevolod Meyerhold, Erwin Piscator, Bertolt Brecht, the Blue Blouses after the Russian Revolution, Hallie Flanagan, who coined the phrase “living newspaper” during the Great Depression, and the verbatim theatre of Moisés Kaufman, Anna Deavere Smith and others. These practitioners reveal facts, ideas, and

solutions to create an opportunity for community-engaged dialogue, which empowers society to affect change.

After research and examination of these pioneers and their techniques, which align with my own interest in the contemporary discussion of the Second Amendment and the prevention of gun violence, I thought that the subject matter of the Second Amendment –the peoples’ right to bear arms and the government’s right to control arms– would make a significant topic for documentary theatre. I have written *One-Third of a Nation, the Second Amendment, a Living Newspaper Play*, located in the appendix, to be used as a catalyst to bring coherent thoughtful discourse to Americans deciding how to put an end to gun violence.

Introduction

One-Third of a Nation, a Living Newspaper about Housing by Arthur Arent and *The Laramie Project* by Moisés Kaufman and the members of Tectonic Theatre, are both considered documentary theatre. I was introduced to living newspaper plays in 2018 at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). I read *One-Third of a Nation, a Living Newspaper about Housing*, which was produced by The Federal Theatre Project (FTP), an organization established and funded by the federal government through the Works Progress Administration (WPA) under Franklin Delano Roosevelt. This project was created to provide benefit to unemployed actors, writers, and stage technicians in the 1930s during the Great Depression (Brustein Forward).

One-Third of a Nation, a Living Newspaper about Housing opened in 1938, and presents a graphic chronicle of a one-hundred-year history of the housing shortage. The title was taken from President Roosevelt's second inaugural address, in which he said, "I see one-third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished" (Roosevelt Web). This play includes many perspectives on the topic of housing detailing the history of slums, in an effort to move the audience for a call to action to remedy the housing problems in the 1930s.

While I was enrolled at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte in 2017, I collaborated with classmates to write a verbatim play using the style of *The Laramie Project*. In his play, Moisés Kaufman used actual verbatim interviews of the family, friends, and community of Matthew Shepard, who was tortured, and left to die because of

his sexual orientation. *The Laramie Project* allows the audience to witness the many perspectives of the people living in a small town, who are coming to terms with their intolerance of homosexuality. By doing so, the play raises an exchange of ideas for a call to action so this hate crime will never happen again.

A mass shooting occurred in Parkland, Florida, in 2018, while I was reading *One-Third of a Nation, a Living Newspaper about Housing* for class. This was a point of crisis in American history. At every point of crisis in society, there may be an opportunity for a call to action to bring about change. We are presently living in a time when gun violence in America has reached critical mass. Momentum against gun violence is growing to push back on the Second Amendment, as witnessed with the student-led demonstration “March for Our Lives” in Washington D.C. on March 24, 2018. This march was reportedly larger than any demonstration including the Vietnam War demonstrations in 1969 (Durando Web).

Throughout history, documentary theatre has been used to answer societal crises and call people to action. Russian director Vsevolod Meyerhold’s theatre secured rights for the proletariat (the working class) in the 1920s. In the 1930s, the Federal Theatre Project gave a voice to the “Every Man” by dramatizing the crisis of slums in *One-Third of a Nation, a Living Newspaper about Housing*, as well as drawing attention to energy monopolies in *Power*, syphilis in *Spirochet*, and those starving in *Triple Plowed Under*. Hallie Flanagan, the director of the Federal Theatre Project stated, “. . .these various editions had a policy which in its broadest sense was to study and dramatize various

problems in our national economy—agriculture, power, housing, showing their historic development and their effect on people” (Flanagan 71).

I thought about the history of the Second Amendment in the Bill of Rights and what led up to this horrible situation of a mass shooting taking place every few weeks in this country. Just as *One-Third of a Nation, a Living Newspaper about Housing*, and *The Laramie Project* brought change to the crises they were respectively addressing, I thought that a documentary play could be written and performed to give context to our present crisis of gun violence and invite the audience for a call to action. It was with this passion that I researched the history of the Second Amendment from America’s earliest settlements to present day.

In this thesis, the history of documentary theatre is explored and I present an original documentary play, *One-Third of a Nation, the Second Amendment, a Living Newspaper Play* borrowing the styles of Arent and Kaufman. I wrote the play based on historical facts using actual dialogue, transcripts, news clippings, video, and letters to document a timeline of events pertaining to the Second Amendment. I used the living newspaper’s stage device of the loudspeaker as a narrative voice of reason, and cynicism, mirroring back through announcements the realities of the human condition. I also inserted the comedy of stand-up comedian, Jim Jefferies, to be an additional voice of reason and cynicism. His humor on American attitudes about guns highlights the absurdity of today’s interpretation of the Second Amendment.

The title of my play, *One-Third of a Nation, the Second Amendment, a Living Newspaper Play*, was chosen to honor the Federal Theatre Project, but also because of the

fact that approximately one-third of the 323 million citizens in the United States of America are documented gun owners (Gremlich Web). It seemed a fitting title.

CHAPTER 1 DOCUMENTARY THEATRE OVERVIEW

The arts are political, whether they like it or not. If they stay in their own realm, preoccupied with their proper problems, the arts support the status quo, which in itself is highly political. Or they scream and kick and participate in our own country's struggle for liberation in whatever haphazard way they can, probably at the expense of some of their sensitive craftsmanship, but definitely for their own soul's sake.

Peter Schumann¹
of the Bread and Puppet Theater

Documentary theatre uses socio-political commentary at a critical time to get the facts out and offer ideological critique dramatizing the crisis through the lens of emotion, which can incite change in society. The audience is an active participant in challenging the canon and using the solutions presented about the socio-political issue(s).

Documentary theatre was started as far back as 494 BC with the Greek playwright Phrynichus, who wrote *The Capture of Miletus* about the Persian war. His use of depicting recent, actual events caused the audience to leave in tears.² Phrynichus was fined by the government for causing societal upset and all production of documentary theatre ceased in Athens at that time (Mendelsohn Web, Morris 1).

Morality, mystery and cycle plays that followed in Medieval theatre at times functioned as a means for social protest (Van Erven 6). When the ruling class was criticized, the plays became dangerous in political terms and the theatre was pushed to the

¹ Peter Schumann founded The Bread and Puppet Theater in 1963, which has a political focus (Van Erven 54). Van Erven. *Radical People's Theatre*. Pre-Preface. Indianapolis. Indiana University Press. 1988.

shadows of society. Theatre continued to cater to the ruling class with political hegemony, while capitalism made the arts into a commodity (Van Erven 6). Entering the twentieth century, increasing numbers of theatre people cut ties with bourgeois theatre and offered theatre to the deprived classes (Van Erven 6). With total disillusionment of the bourgeoisie, who were blamed for the First World War (Anievas 100), documentary theatre flourished and living newspapers were taken to the masses in Russia (Deák 35-46).

Documentary living newspaper plays take factual stories from current events that affect a population, generally proletariats, and include the audience in its discourse. The audience observes the facts and solutions presented, feels the emotional pulse of the actual dialogue and actively makes judgments based on common experiences by using their intellect and empathy. In living newspaper plays fictional portrayals of factual events are allowed. Documentary verbatim plays, made popular with the advent of recording devices, are more difficult to execute because the writer has to be careful to use the exact words, without piecing sentences together in a speech, which could change the speaker's meaning.

František Deák refers to the term "living newspaper" as a Russian public event, started after the Russian Revolution when the news was performed live for those who were illiterate (Deák 35-46). Documentary theatre became critical of Russia's government after their revolution in 1917, and was used to keep an illiterate factory worker population informed on current news and events. After studying under Konstantin Stanislavski in Russia, Vsevolod Meyerhold introduced biomechanics in his productions. This machine-like physicality of gymnastics was appealing to factory workers after the Russian

² Mendelsohn, Daniel. "The Greek Way." *The New York Review of Books*. 11 Apr. 2002.

Revolution because of the advent of machines, as biomechanics depicted man as a well-oiled machine. Meyerhold's actors wore blue uniforms. The Blue Blouses copied from Meyerhold, using the factory worker uniforms to perform (Deák 35-46). Chapter 5 gives more information on Meyerhold and biomechanics.

As living newspaper troupes became more popular, the Blue Blouses took over in the Soviet Union with 484 professional troupes and 8,000 amateur groups, entertaining with socio-political propaganda (Deák 35-46). They incorporated acrobatics, singing, dancing, posters and even film to convey their "agitprop" to the public (Deák 35-46). At the same time, German playwrights Erwin Piscator and Bertolt Brecht used facts, headlines, audio recordings, film recordings, and satire to challenge the inequities of the Weimar Republic (Morris vi). Chapter 3 gives more detail on Piscator and Brecht.

Hallie Flanagan, who traveled Europe and the Soviet Union interpreting types of theatre created by others, coined the term "living newspaper" (Flanagan 64-65). In 1935, Flanagan was hired as National Director of the Federal Theatre Project (FTP), an organization established through the Works Progress Administration (WPA) under Franklin Delano Roosevelt's "New Deal." This program was created to help unemployed actors, stage managers, stagehands and writers gain employment during the Great Depression (Brustein xi-xx).

Flanagan invited Elmer Rice, an innovative writer of the time, to direct the FTP plays. Flanagan attended *The Night of January 16th* with Rice and his wife, Hazel. After seeing the play, Rice felt convinced that he should not take the directorship of the New York project. He thought there would be too many sets to be built for all of the

productions. Flanagan persuaded him that they could produce living newspapers without expensive scenery, just living actors, light, music, and movement. Rice then agreed to direct (Flanagan 64-65). The WPA hired a staff of reporters and copyreaders, an equal amount to a city newspaper, to research and write historic dramatic content for living newspaper plays (Flanagan 65). The list of newspaper plays written for the FTP in 1936-1938 include *Highlights of 1935*, *Injunction Granted*, *Living Newspaper, First Edition*, *Living Newspaper, Second Edition*, *The Living Newspaper*, *On-Third of a Nation*, *Power*, *Spirochete*, and *Triple-A Plowed Under* (Flanagan 390).

After opening in New York, *One-Third of a Nation*, a *Living Newspaper about Housing* played in other cities with changes to its script to reflect each city's housing problem. It played in Seattle, including facts about Seattle's slums and tenements. There were photographs of the slums in the lobby during its run. The results of highlighting Seattle's housing problem caused Seattle's civic leaders to pass legislation to improve housing. After the play closed, the Seattle Housing Authority had one of the most active campaigns against slums in the United States (Guthu Web).

Verbatim Theatre

Verbatim theatre, which became popular with the arrival of recording devices, is more difficult to execute because the writer has to be careful not to change the wording or meaning of the speaker's intention. Robin Soans whose verbatim plays include *Life after Scandal* and *Talking to Terrorists*, writes, ". . .the audience for a verbatim play will enter the theatre with the understanding that they are not going to be lied to" (Soans 19). The original words of the speaker document his or her truth of the event. In verbatim theatre,

actual footage or sound recording of the speaker can be used, or the actor might mimic the diction, cadence, and physical behavior of the speaker he or she is portraying. Two examples of this form of theatre are *Fires in the Mirror: Crown Heights Brooklyn and Other Identities*, created in 1991 by playwright and actor, Anna Deavere Smith, a pioneer in verbatim theatre, and *The Laramie Project*, created in 2000 by playwright and director, Moisés Kaufman and the members of Tectonic Theatre. *Fires in the Mirror: Crown Heights Brooklyn and Other Identities* was written using the interviews of both communities in a racially charged Brooklyn neighborhood, after the Hasidic grand rebbe's motorcar, led by a police escort, hit a black child who was left unattended to die. The rebbe's passengers, who all survived, were taken by a private ambulance to the hospital while the child expired on the concrete. This seemingly gross indifference for black life from members of the Orthodox Jewish community caused a riot to ensue, resulting in an innocent Australian Jewish student being killed in retaliation. Smith captured the essence of each person interviewed to perform this one-person show. The staging included a stark set with large photos of Crown Heights, Brooklyn (Johnson Web). *The Laramie Project* was written using interviews of the family, friends, and community of Matthew Shepard, who was tortured, tied to a fence, and left to die because of his sexual orientation. This play explores the effects of a hate crime on this small college town in Wyoming and society as a whole. Staging included projections and forced perspective of the vast Wyoming landscape (Neeman Web).

Folklorists refer to the German term, "sagen," as a story based on fact with specific times and places, making use of the information for didactic purposes (International

Encyclopedia Web). What makes documentary theatre so magnetic for an audience is that it looks at current news through an emotional lens of storytelling. The focus is on the “real” as it attempts to unearth truth and engage audiences (Parenteau Web). The news we receive today is usually in the form of newspapers, radio, television, and Web information, which reports on the facts in small sound bites. We usually don’t get to witness the depth of emotion of the players who are making the news, the intimate commentary on the event, or the conclusion of the event. As an audience member of living newspapers and verbatim theatre, we are called to action, observing the problem and the possible solutions.

Although documentary theatre is objective in how it uses factual information from opposite points of view, it falls short of being fully objective, as all writers who put pen to paper have an agenda, even if their motive is subliminal and subconscious. I started writing *One-Third of a Nation, the Second Amendment, a Living Newspaper Play* after hearing about the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting, which took place on February 14, 2018. There was a momentum of societal outcry from this event, more so than from previous events of gun violence. The surviving Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School students publicly spoke out with impassioned eloquence for changes in America’s gun laws. They asked for gun control measures instead of “thoughts and prayers.” President Trump met with the victims who survived and the perished victims’ families. There was emotionally charged commentary on both sides of the gun control issue. I wanted to expose the facts and the key players’ emotions. I also wanted to uncover facts in history to find the motivations of our forefathers who shaped the Second Amendment, and how the amendment is interpreted today. In recent times, it seems like there is a mass shooting

every week (Miller Web), with those who feel that gun control restrictions should be stronger and with those who feel that everyone should have a gun, highlighted by Vice President Pence saying in a recent speech in 2018, “. . .the quickest way to stop a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun” (Pence Web).

I found that for my play, I chose facts using areas of speech or words that would weave the storyline in a cohesive forward path, while keeping the verbatim words intact. This is where the writer’s subjectivity can come into play, and where news propaganda can be buried. The words I chose for *One-Third of a Nation, the Second Amendment* –whether or not I realized it– aligned with my belief system. Soans states, “As with all documentary mediums, the participants are speaking off the record with a frankness. This confers a responsibility of the audience to listen with increased intensity” (Sloan 24). The audience takes in the facts and information presented through their own filters to come to their own biased conclusions. In documentary theatre, the audience is more important than the writer, as they are not passive observers, but active seekers of the truth. Documentary theatre, which includes living newspaper plays and verbatim plays, is vulnerable to being written with subjective, subliminal propaganda. However, although documentary theatre can be subjective, it is the closest we have to objective storytelling.

Arthur Arent who wrote three living newspaper plays, used a loudspeaker as a theatrical device. The idea came from Flanagan, who used a loudspeaker as the narrator in an earlier play she co-wrote at as a professor at Vassar, *Can You Hear Their Voices?* (Arent 16). At times the loudspeaker was the voice of reason and the cynic, breaking the fourth wall to talk directly to the audience. The loudspeaker is a great device to cue in the

audience without having to change scenery. I used a loudspeaker in *One-Third of a Nation, the Second Amendment, a Living Newspaper Play* when I wanted to cut a paragraph from a transcript of speech while holding integrity or cue the audience in. Just as Flanagan's living newspaper elements were at times borrowed from Aristophanes, *comedia dell'arte*, Shakespearean soliloquy and the pantomime of Mei Lan Fang (Flanagan 70), I borrowed the stand-up comedy of Jim Jefferies from his Netflix show, *Bare*, as the outrageous voice of reason. Inserting his humor highlights the insanity of American gun laws, changes the rhythm of the play, and hopefully helps to ease the deep emotional pain of the topic. I named characters "Little Man" and "Little Woman," as Arent did, to depict every man and the powerlessness of that lone voice in our society. Although I did not use my actual name, I am the Little Woman. Luckily, I remembered events and verbatim conversations pertaining to the Second Amendment while growing up in the twentieth century.

In preparing to write *One-Third of a Nation, the Second Amendment, a Living Newspaper Play*, I researched the Second Amendment from the United States of America's inception. I was careful to find actual words of our forefathers from letters and/or speeches to string together a truthful story of America's history of the Second Amendment, which states:

"A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed" (Second Amendment Web).

The dialogue in *One-Third a Nation, the Second Amendment*, is taken from court transcripts, news, speeches, letters, performance and conversation. This is an opportunity for the audience to hear the actual dialogue recreated with emotion from an actor. I am

hoping it will make the words of the Supreme Court Justices and our Founding Fathers more palpable for the audience, so they may take the nuance of intent to decide if they agree or disagree with the positions presented. The audience is an active player in this documentary play, following Brecht's intentions when he devised "epic theatre" to keep the audience objective.

One-Third of a Nation, a Living Newspaper about Housing was created to give out-of-work actors a job. Flanagan writes, "The *Public Ledger* comments acidly on the number of people employed in the cast. . . . This reviewer seeming to forget that the pressing job of the Federal Theatre was to employ people" (Flanagan 217). I modeled *One-Third of a Nation, the Second Amendment* on Flanagan's style using many characters. I included verbatim wording when possible, in the style of Kaufman and Smith, solely to keep its integrity strong.

CHAPTER 2 THE LIVING NEWSPAPER AND VERBATIM THEATRE

Peter Weiss, author of *The Investigation* in 1966, wrote a dramatic reconstruction of the Frankfurt war crime trials using testimony of the Schutzstaffel (SS) members. This successful tribunal play was produced by Erwin Piscator (Malina 163). (More is written about Piscator in Chapter 4.) Weiss later wrote an essay entitled, “Fourteen Propositions for Documentary,” listing the needs of documentary theatre, which continues to influence all postmodern documentary theatre productions. The fourteen propositions, paraphrased in condensed form, are:

1. Documentary theatre is based on factual reports and shuns all invention. It is precise, on generally a social or political theme.
2. It questions all critique of news as suspect when gathering information.
3. It investigates the manipulations of those who are in power.
4. It is a reaction to a present state of affairs, for which it demands clarification.
5. Documentary theatre has to use means outside of protests to present a fragment of reality open to change.
6. Documentary theatre must remain an artistic production to justify its existence.
7. It uses analysis, control, and criticism to change reality into artistic medium.
8. It analyzes events with a critical aloofness by contradicting points and offers a solution.
9. It submits facts facing each other and the dependency between the two.
10. It takes sides and uses a “black-and-white” approach.
11. It can present a tribunal, and show points of view not shown in original event.
12. It inserts reports or fragments of reports for duration, using gradation or discordant elements using antithetic pieces to create rhythm or lack thereof. It can use masks, decorative accessories, music, sound effects, and flashbacks and can create insecurity for “shock,” but all needs clarification or solution.
13. It must not take place in conventional theatre. It must gain entry into factories, schools, sports grounds, and public halls. Along with abandoning traditional canon, it must question and develop new techniques for new situations.
14. It must be formed of a stable working group, using scientific inquiry from abundant archives. It cannot live in the realm of its own anger or despair. It must explain in minute detail (Weiss Web, Morris 102).

All of Weiss' fourteen propositions were used in *One-Third of a Nation, the Second Amendment*.

For the first proposition, facts and actual dialogue were used. This play raises a societal and political question of how to find a solution to American gun violence. Facts were gathered from many different sources of centrist news, along with left and right leaning sources; questioning all critique of news. An example of Weiss' third proposition of exposing manipulation of those in power is shown in *One-Third of a Nation, the Second Amendment* when Donald Trump debates Hillary Clinton in the 2016 presidential election. Trump states that Chicago has the toughest gun laws but has the most gun violence, therefore, having a national restriction on guns will not help. In researching why strict gun laws in Chicago are not working to eradicate gun violence, I discovered most guns are coming from Indiana, Mississippi and Wisconsin, which are states with very lax gun laws (Bump Web). The loudspeaker in this play –as the voice of reason– exposes Trump's manipulation of this fact.

Weiss' fourth proposition is addressed as my play raises questions, gives facts, and clarifies options to change the present state of affairs. *One-Third of a Nation, the Second Amendment* uses information and plot to give a reality that is open for change. This play is an artistic production. This play uses the analysis of history with criticism breaking the fourth wall coming from the device of the loudspeaker, or Jim Jefferies' comedy, in an organized way to change reality into an artistic medium. This play also analyses events from the beginning of American gun history with a critical aloofness. An example is the scene in the second act when two actors read off a chronological list of mass shootings

with a cash register bell, sounding with every mass shooting. The sound is an aloof symbol showing gun manufactures amassing profits. *One-Third of a Nation, the Second Amendment* presents many opinions and facts facing each other and the dependency between the two. Due to the NRA's dogma, and opposing the victim's dogma, there is a black and white opposite in thought and opinion on how this national crisis should be resolved. There are discordant effects in this play and scenes constructed using "fact" for shock, and every event shown was researched without anger or despair. *One-Third of a Nation, the Second Amendment* has not been staged; therefore the thirteenth proposition has not been addressed.

In his article "The Living Newspaper in the English Review," Harold J. Perry writes that a scene in a living newspaper play has the following characteristics:

1. The content is one aspect of a problem.
2. The content has been taken from current publications and placed in a dramatic form.
3. The Voice on Loudspeaker sets the scene; functions as a newspaper-article date line.
4. The stage is bare of scenery.
5. The dialogue is terse and concise.
6. The effect is gained by underplaying (Perry 11).

In all the living newspaper plays there is focus on one aspect of a problem or crisis. In *One-Third of a Nation, A Living Newspaper about Housing*, the aspect is housing and slums. In *Spirochete* the aspect is syphilis and stopping its spread. In *Triple-A Plowed Under* the aspect is the plight of the farmers in the dust bowl during the depression. The research for the productions included many researchers who accessed current publications. The voice of the loudspeaker was used for all living newspaper plays, narrating and

commenting. The loudspeaker was terse and concise. Living newspaper plays showed the plight of individuals in a matter-of-fact news style, which addresses problems and offers solutions.

A call went out in 1931 to those in theatre to dramatize the social issues and play to the “oppressed masses” (Van Erven 10). Under the directorship of Flanagan, the Federal Theatre Project was responsible for a new form of political theatre in documentary drama (Van Erven 10-11). In 1939, living newspaper plays were ended by an act of Congress on June 30, 1939, based upon the recommendation of the House Un-American Activities Committee, because the American government which was funding this project felt that the FTP through the “New Deal” was dominated by communists. They believed the plays were promoting messages of the left (Flanagan 334-335). Although Flanagan’s living newspaper plays ceased, documentary theatre continued, using tape-recorded material of real life in the 1950s with verbatim radio ballads (Paget 317). Documentary theatre continued to entertain in the 1960s, promoting social change with topics of feminism, civil rights and the antiwar movement (Martin 23). The San Francisco Mime Troupe, founded in 1959, produced plays exploring radical agitation including the topic of racism. They started in the style of *commedia dell’arte*, but went on to be a true force committed to social and political change, the art was secondary. One play they performed was *The Story of Chairman Bobby Seal and the Black Panther Party*. Their spokesman said they want to be known as a living radical force (Brockett 728-729).

Saturday Night Live (SNL), a weekly television show which debuted in 1975, uses skits as a form of living newspaper theatre. SNL has enjoyed a successful forty-year run

because portions of its program includes vignettes to present current events, using satire to incite audience thought and emotion about current news. According to the online newsletter, Mental Floss, “Political sketches are one of SNL’s hallmarks—so much so that voters have admitted to being influenced to vote for a particular candidate. . . It’s a phenomenon that has become known as ‘The SNL Effect’” (Mental Floss Web).

I learned when writing the verbatim play *Divided America* at UNC Charlotte, that there needs to be trust between the person being interviewed and the interviewer. Best known for telling the story of common folk and creating oral history, Studs Terkel got his start in the WPA’s Federal Writers Project (Biography Web). He interviewed people, getting right to the heart of how they feel about themselves (Terkel Video). Terkel was asked how he got people to open up about their lives and, in what can be construed as a mini lecture in ‘man on the street’ journalism, he described:

“They’ve got to believe you’re interested. If it’s a writer of a book, you’ve got to have read his book thoroughly. Or a person who is just an anonymous person—say for one of my books, say this guy is a carpenter—I’ll ask him about his life and as he’s talking I’m *listening*. I don’t have written questions. It’s a conversation, not an interview. ‘And then what did you do?’ No! ‘Just tell me about...’—and you start, sort of like you’re having a cup of coffee or a drink, so it’s informal and very easy” (Moser Web).

Anna Deavere Smith broke ground in verbatim theatre with her one-woman dramatizations including *Fires in the Mirror* and *Twilight*. She tells a story of what her grandfather told her: if she says a word enough times, she will become the word. Years later, in repeatedly listening back to the recorded words of the people she interviewed, Smith felt she became the words (Smith Video). I used her technique for *Divided America*, repeatedly listening to the recordings to get the emotional flavor of each chosen word.

Studs Terkel, in an interview with Smith, when she performed as Terkel at the Chicago Public Library, said, “I maintain, she did not mimic me, but she did something else... She caught something of which, I was unaware. This is one of the keys of Anna Deavere Smith,... to make the person aware.” Terkel was saying that he didn’t know how he felt about the question she asked him, which was, “What was a defining moment in American history?” until he heard his words being performed (Smith Video).

As stated in the first chapter, although living newspaper plays and verbatim plays are the closest to truth in theatre, it is not without manipulation from the writer of what material will be included. Smith interviewed over 200 people for *Twilight* (Smith Web). It was her decision on which interviews to include, and how to weave them into the story she wanted to tell.

In her book, *Get Real Documentary Theatre Past and Present*, Janelle Reinelt writes, “David Hare and Robin Soans freely admit they sometimes combine material from more than one source within one speech, or give a representative presentation” (Aston 13). This is a mistake, as this can corrupt the words by melding sources. If the original material can be retrieved from archives, it should be the responsibility of the playwright to keep the sources separate and the words intact. For *One-Third of a Nation, the Second Amendment*, when I wanted to take a piece of Justice Scalia’s dialogue and edit it, I used the loudspeaker as an interruption to allow a break in wording. It would have been easier to combine sentences of the Supreme Court justices to make the scene more concise, but the truth would have been lost.

As I outlined in Chapter 1, verbatim theatre has its roots in documentary theatre, but it has morphed since its genesis. After the Second World War, verbatim theatre was used to distance the audience. This device was made popular by Bertolt Brecht, to get the audience to question ideology. Brecht talks about the audience experience,

“a sister lamenting that her brother is off to the war; and it is the peasant war; he is a peasant, off to join the peasants. Are we to lose ourselves in her agony? Or not at all? We must be able to lose ourselves in her agony and at the same time not to. Our actual emotion will come from recognizing and feeling the double process.” (Willett 186).

Plays were written from tribunals, taking actual testimony from transcripts. In England, Peter Cheeseman used transcripts and interviews in his 1970's *Hands Up—for You The War Is Ended!* and *Fight for Shelton Barr*. Cheeseman remarking on his work, “that sense of pride and self confidence that every district outside London desperately needs, so you don't feel you're a nonentity” (Forsyth 232). Later in the 1990s, the interview became more personal. Instead of showing the broad topic it narrowed down to the individual account within the broad topic, as Smith did in *Twilight*. Smith interviewed people who best reflected the diversity and tension of Los Angeles during the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) Rodney King beating trial. Smith included a disabled Korean man, a white male Hollywood talent agent, a Panamanian immigrant mother, a teenage black gang member, a macho Mexican-American artist, Rodney King's aunt, and beaten truck driver Reginald Denny, among others to tell the story of race relations, social, economic, and political issues that caused the beating and fallout from the verdict in the King beating. Unlike the living newspapers, Smith's verbatim play did not bring about an obvious call to action, like the living newspapers, but it brought an understanding of the individuals'

plight, which sets up society for change just as Meyerhold, Piscator and Brecht did decades earlier.

The Federal Theatre Project wanted to create a national dialogue on issues concerning society in the 1930s. Moisés Kaufman and the Tectonic writers also wanted to create a national dialogue when they traveled to interview the town citizens after the 1998 murder of Matthew Shepard. The town was devastated by the torture and murder of the twenty-one-year-old college student. Kaufman's original verbatim play focused attention on the small Wyoming town and ultimately helped change law. The Federal Theatre Project used to open their living newspaper plays in fifteen to seventeen different cities around the country on the same night; this was the inspiration for Tectonic's theatre experiment (Kaufman 26). Ten years later, Kaufman and his group of writers revisited the town to see the lasting social impact. Kaufman thought that because of the publicity surrounding *The Laramie Project* and all of the theatres nationally that produced the original play, perhaps *The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later* could be a national event. They succeeded in this endeavor with 150 theatres participating on October 12, 2009. "City by city, Laramie became 'Any town, America' as one character put it in our play" stated Kaufman. With technology today, all of the theatres were linked to a Web cast to take questions and have a national dialogue after the performance (Kaufman 26). Just as the FTP performed for people who never attended theatre, people who would never venture out to the theatre attended *The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later*, reported Nan Elsasser of Working Classroom in Albuquerque, NM (Kaufman 26). On October 28, 2009, President Barack Obama signed the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention

Act into law, expanding federal law to include crimes motivated by a victim's sexual orientation, gender or disability as hate crimes (CNN Web). *The Laramie Project* and *The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later* succeeded in bringing a call to action by portraying a societal crisis, just as Meyerhold, Piscator, Brecht and Flanagan did years earlier.

CHAPTER 3

MEYERHOLD BIOGRAPHY AND BIOMECHANICS

Vsevolod Meyerhold was executed in Russia on February 2, 1940, for his political calling (Braun Introduction). It was Meyerhold's devised theatrical techniques that spurred the Blue Blouses, and living newspapers in Russian society and beyond in the 1920s.

Born in 1874, Meyerhold was christened Karl-Theodor Kasimir, the last child in the family. His father didn't pay much attention to him, instead grooming his older brothers to take over the family business. His father, a German distiller hosted performers, who traveled to their city in the southeast of Russia and Meyerhold's mother exposed him to music and theatre while he was growing up. Perhaps this exposure to the arts led to him to pursue acting. He rejected his father's German heritage and felt a great allegiance to Russia, changing his name, and becoming a Russian national. He also changed his religion from Lutheran to the Orthodox faith, this avoided conscription into the Prussian army and facilitated his marriage to a local Russian girl, Olga Munt. He attended Nemirovich-Danchenko's acting class (Braun 5-6). Nemirovich-Danchenko and Konstantin Stanislavski were partners. Meyerhold wasn't a fan of working in the style of realism of Stanislavski. In an early letter to his wife, when talking about Stanislavski's acting style, Meyerhold wrote:

Are we as actors required merely to act? Surely we should be thinking as well. We need to know why we are acting, what we are acting, and whom we are instructing or attacking through our performance. And to do what we need to know the psychological and social significance of the play, to establish whether a given character is positive or negative, to understand which society or section for society the author is for or against (Braun 9).

Although Meyerhold showed great promise, his performances were very theatrical. Meyerhold was criticized for a lack of professional polish and a tendency for exaggeration (Symons 22). He was rejecting realism and Ibsen. He was considered the Picasso of Theatre, by critic, Louis Lozowik (Symons Preface). Stanislavski and Nemirovich-Danchenko started the Moscow Art Theatre and invited Meyerhold to take the position of director, even though his style ventured out from realism in theatre.

There was a great unrest in Russia during the First World War. Allegiance to the Tsar, Nicholas II became less, as his officers were killed. The fall of the Romanov Dynasty promised hope for the end of repressive censorship in theatre (Braun151). Meyerhold had sympathies for the Bolsheviks and their principle of democratic centralism, standing up for the working class. During the political unrest, Meyerhold entered a sanatorium in 1919 for treatment of tuberculosis. The interim government's White Army arrested him. Meyerhold was paroled and went into hiding. When the Bolsheviks re-occupied his town, he joined their party and started military training. He was part of political and theatrical debates and set up amateur drama groups in workplaces (Braun159).

In 1921, Meyerhold was appointed director of the State Higher Theatre Workshops in Moscow. His young students were from the working class, had grown up through the war, and were former soldiers who rejected pre-revolutionary art (Braun170). Meyerhold's trademark theatrical approach was borrowed from early filmmaking technique, using film projection onstage to project slogans above the stage. On a center screen there were words with information of plot, characters and commentary, along with speeches from leaders

(Eaton 68). This is what the Blue Blouse troupes borrowed from and this is what Brecht used in his protest against the Weimar Republic (Deák 35-46).

Meyerhold wanted actors to be physically fit, able to balance, juggle and have movement that could fill the stage. The performances he directed were reminiscent of *commedia dell'arte* (Price 35). Meyerhold devised biomechanics based on general physical laws of technology, as expressed in physics, mechanics, music, and architecture (Braun 172). Biomechanics includes rhythm, discipline, constant surprises, gestural patterns, dance quality in actions, extensive play with props, conscious attention to external form, and responsiveness of the actor. Meyerhold wanted the movement of the actor to mirror the speed and efficiency of machinery. Biomechanic theory: Every movement must not simply be realistic, but be deliberate, reduced to essentials and this was particularly emphasized in response to the movement of the partner. The path of the actor must not begin from internal but from the external, from movement (Rudnitsky 93). Meyerhold describes the acting sequence or cycle as follows:

Each acting cycle comprises of these stages:

- 1) Intention is the intellectual assimilation of a task prescribed externally by the dramatist, director, or performer.
- 2) Realization is the cycle of volitional, mimetic and vocal reflexes.
- 3) Reaction is the attenuation of the volitional reflex after its realization mimetically and vocally, preparatory to the reception of a new intention (Braun174).

Meyerhold expressed that the actor is important, but to most observers he gave the actor freedom only if the actor carried out his explicit instructions (Symons 30).

Meyerhold was spurred on by the virulent mood of the times and the machine-age of

precise movement without extraneous alteration of gesture to finish a task. This was in direct contrast with the pre-factory age of Stanislavski (Braun 176). Meyerhold demonstrated through his techniques that theatre should be used as a tool for social discourse involving the audience on a more interpretive and intellectual level.

Meyerhold was putting forth Theatre of the Grotesque and Dada. Both of these styles went against realism and the bourgeois. Theatre of the Grotesque was not about plausibility, but it was about the actor's artistic fancy. Grotesque was satire and farce, and it pre-empted the sentimental (Symons 66-67). Dada started in Switzerland in 1916, as a reaction to the First World War. Engendered by disgust, since there could be no logic in the world to create such a war, dadaists performed calculated madness in theatres (Brockett 296). Both Theatre of the Grotesque and Dada ridiculed the meaninglessness of the world. Meyerhold rebelled against the illusions of realism, and broke down the fourth wall (Price 33). The plays he produced had political themes showing the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. He produced *Mystery Bouffe*, which fully adhered to Soviet ideology (Braun 155). Critics might have been judgmental, but the public loved it and came in droves with roughly 120,000 spectators (Price 35, Braun 169). The costumes of the "uncleans" in this play included blue uniforms, which was copied later by the "agitprop" theatre group the Blue Blouses (Braun 167).

In the 1930s Stalin wanted control of all arts using one approach: Socialist Realism. Meyerhold's work was political and Stalinism was critical of Meyerhold's avant-garde style and propaganda. The government shut down his theatre. From 1932-39, Meyerhold was restricted in his work. He produced classics, revisions of earlier projects, and radio

(Symons 17). Stanislavski invited Meyerhold to be his assistant after Meyerhold's theatre closed. On his deathbed Stanislavski asked Yury Bakhrushin, his deputy at the Opera Theatre to, "Take care of Meyerhold; he is my sole heir in the theatre." Meyerhold succeeded Stanislavski as the theatre's artistic director. In June 1939, Meyerhold was arrested, tortured and signed confessions of anti-Soviet activity. The torture was so painful he confessed to that, which he did not do (Braun 300-306).

CHAPTER 4

PISCATOR BIOGRAPHY AND BRECHT BIOGRAPHY

Say the name Erwin Piscator, and it brings up “agitprop.” Agitprop is the portmanteau word combining agitate and propaganda. After the First World War, plays were produced to agitate using propaganda to sway or enlighten an audience. Piscator defined his intentions in his production technique as an appeal to reason (Innis 29).

Piscator was born December 17, 1895 in Ulm, Germany. He was part of a middle class family. His father sold woolens and off the rack wool suits. In 1913 Piscator decided to become an actor and went to the Court Theatre. He was then conscripted into the First World War. He was in the trenches of war, a long narrow ditch, playing chess with his friend; his friend went through the trench to go to the bathroom and lifted his head up above the trench and a sniper blew his head off. Piscator discovered his friend dead. Piscator blamed the upper classes for the war, and became a leftist in his beliefs. He went to Berlin and got involved with avant-garde Dada. This was a more radical Dada group (Piscator 21).

After the war, people weren't interested in bourgeoisie theatre including Ibsen, naturalism and realism (Innis 20). Piscator was innovative, using film in his theatrical productions to bring attention to the larger-than-life beings in film that were projected on the stage, which dwarfed the actors and made them static in comparison (Innis 107). Piscator was in a play where there were no words, the audience after sitting for quite a while started to grumble and complain that the actors were a fraud. As the audience got up to leave, firemen stormed in and hosed down the spectators, who were dressed to the nines.

The men started to attack the firemen and wrestlers were sent in to force the audience to sit down. This was a story that Piscator told with gusto. It was never proven as having happened, but it made Piscator's point of throwing out all convention and abandoning bourgeois theatre (Malina 5).

Piscator took liberties with every play he produced. He was beholden to no author or playwright. He added eight scenes to Alexi Tolstoy's *Rasputin*. He would refine his work and then use it more than once. He threw a huge human shadow onto a screen as a symbol of fate in *Rasputin* and then again in *The Officers' Uprising* many years later in 1966 (Innis 70-71). Piscator stated it was through accident and necessity that he discovered the principle of "epic" scenery, because traditional settings and representation weren't available. Combining film and live actors showed the individual's problem as part of the political and social structure of society (Brockett 407-409). He used large screens for the first time in *Fahnen* in 1924, to point out a message of the play and for didactic principles. He describes that his techniques were proclaimed by others as "epic theatre" (Piscator 75).

In 1924, the climate of Germany was dismal with high inflation and unemployment. The Communist party, wanted to bring attention to their ideals and hired Piscator to write the *Red Review*. In the play, a butcher, and a piece worker argued as they approached the stage on the virtues of communism from bourgeois and proletarian viewpoints, they never left the stage as they continued to comment on the other sketches. The sketches included one entitled "The Revenge of the Bourgeoisie" showing slides and film of Noske's brutal suppression of workers in 1919. Actors gave speeches as Lenin, and the whole audience rose and sang the "Internationale" together. The *Red Review* became

the standard for agitprop review theatre, against which all subsequent productions were measured (Piscator 79). Piscator wanted a stage that could deal with the realities of the twentieth century (Innis 63). He believed in objective acting on the basis of oriental classical theatre. Objective acting means to do away with the fourth wall and include the audience (Malina 152-153). He agreed with Brecht that the action should be set before us to make judgments, rather than involving us with the characters by means of empathy.

Piscator produced a play, *Women in Distress*, to show how the rich are given qualified medical attention when having abortions, yet the poor go to back street abortionists. The audience witnessed the screams of an abortion victim. He stripped the fourth wall separating audience and cast by seating actors in the audience, who aired their views in character. It was during this time, that Piscator met Meyerhold, who was on tour with the Moscow State Theatre. They both took part in a platform discussion on political theatre (Piscator 341-342).

When the Nazis came into power, Piscator left Berlin. He wasn't Jewish, he was Protestant, but Piscator was recognized as Jewish by the government. He went to the Soviet Union in 1931, and then traveled to Paris where he made plans, but didn't work for three years. He immigrated to America in 1939 because of an invitation to direct a play. Broadway didn't embrace Piscator and the play was rejected for being poorly written, so Piscator began teaching acting at the Dramatic Workshop at the New School for Social Research (Piscator 344).

Brecht asked Piscator to come back to Berlin after the Second World War, as there was theatre but no directors. By the time he returned in 1951, all jobs were filled

(Malina 158-159). He continued working as a freelance director without success for twelve years. On his seventieth birthday, the mayor of Berlin invited him to take over the Freie Volksbühne. It was during this time, he produced tribunal theatre, *The Investigation* by Peter Weiss (as mentioned in Chapter 2). The play uncovers the crimes in Auschwitz during World War II, using verbatim trial testimony.

Brecht

Born February 10, 1898, Bertolt Brecht was the son of a manager for a paper manufacturing company. Brecht had talent for writing poetry and plays. He worked with Piscator when he became part of Piscator's Theatre in Nollendorf Platz in 1924. Brecht worked on *Rasputin*, *The Romanoffs*, *the War*, and *the People that Rose Against Them* and *Joe Meat-Chopper* later called *Wheat* (Volker 51-52)

Brecht had distaste for orthodox theatre, especially the pretentious German classical theatre (Willett 168). He did not agree with the audience being pulled into the plot to identify with the characters, as if the spectator were in a hypnotized state (Volker 169). He wanted the stage to allow the audience to watch, while being separated from the action, he wanted the audience to think. Brecht produced epic theatre. Brecht writes,

“They still mostly need to be worked out in detail, and include representation by the actor, stage technique dramaturgy, stage music, use of film, etc. The essential point of the epic theatre is perhaps that it appeals less to the feelings than to the spectator's reason. Instead of sharing up experience, the spectator must come to grips with things. At the same time it would be quite wrong to try and deny emotion to this kind of theatre” (Willett 170).

Piscator used the techniques of epic theatre including film and placards. Brecht started using the technique in 1926. He also included scene titles, half curtains, ranting, and over-emotional style (Willett 171).

The differences between dramatic theatre and epic theatre, as per Brecht's notes:

- Dramatic theatre uses plot, implicates the spectator in a stage situation, wears down his power of action, the human is taken for granted, he is unalterable, eyes on the finish, one scene makes another growth.
- Epic theatre uses narrative, turns the spectator into an observer, but arouses his power of action, the human is the object of the inquiry, he is alterable and able to alter, eyes on the course, each scene for itself montage (Willett 172).

To escape Nazi Germany, Brecht migrated to Scandinavia and then to the USA, where he produced, wrote, and directed plays and film. On October 31, 1947, Brecht testified before the House Un-American Activities Committee and left the USA. Back in Berlin, he saw that the war had evaporated German theatre. There was a need for directors and he started back to work immediately (Malina 158). Brecht expressed that scientific thought in social fields was to be identified with Marxism. He thought that scientific attitude should develop among the new class of workers whose element should be large-scale production. Propaganda in favor of thinking, whatever form it takes helps the cause of the oppressed (Willett 76).

Piscator caught up with Brecht and proved that theatre can contribute to the shaping of history as well as being shaped by history (Kerz 369). Artists including Meyerhold, Piscator, Brecht and the Blue Blouses were creating political theatre for the proletariat. These artists built the foundation on which Hallie Flanagan, Arthur Arent, Robin Soans, Peter Weiss, Moisés Kaufman, Anna Deavere Smith and others developed their craft.

CHAPTER 5

FLANAGAN BIOGRAPHY AND ARENT BIOGRAPHY

Hallie's Flanagan's maiden name was Ferguson. She was born in 1890, in Redfield, South Dakota. Flanagan majored in Philosophy and German at Grinnell College and participated in the dramatic club. She married Murray Flanagan and had two sons, Jack and Frederick. Her husband was diagnosed with tuberculosis and was treated in Colorado. To support her family, Flanagan took a teaching position at Grinnell. Her husband died soon after and her son, Jack, died in 1922 from spinal meningitis. Flanagan moved with Frederick and enrolled in George Pierce Baker's famous Workshop 47 Dramatic Production Studio at Radcliffe College/Harvard University, where she took a playwriting course. Baker was taken with her talent. Flanagan completed her Master of Arts degree at Radcliffe, and began teaching at Vassar College the next fall. She was hired for an experimental drama course for the English department and her title was "Director of English Speech," because Vassar did not have a drama department or stage. She was the first woman awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1926 to study theatre in Europe and Russia for fourteen months. While there, she was introduced to the theatrical styles of Piscator, Brecht and Meyerhold. When talking about the Federal Theatre Project, Flanagan stated, "Although living newspapers were sometimes compared by critics to the broad cartoon of news seen in London music halls, or on Russian, or German stages, they were not like them; to the best of my knowledge they did not resemble anything hitherto seen on the stage" (Flanagan 70). She might not have consciously used the styles of "epic theatre"

for the FTP, but the foundation of documentary theatre's living newspapers was in her subconscious because of the theatre she saw while traveling abroad.

When Flanagan returned to the states, she co-wrote a play with her former student, Margaret Ellen Clifford, entitled, *Can You Hear Their Voices?* This play, which used factual material, charts, statistics, loudspeakers and blackouts, was the prototype used for the FTP living newspapers (Arent 16). *Can You Hear Their Voices?* is about the effects of the Dust Bowl on the farmers in a small town in Arkansas. Reviews for the play included the Poughkeepsie *Sunday Courier*, May 3, 1931, "If a certain crusading congressman could have seen last night's production he would have probably branded the whole company as dangerous, if not Red agitators" (Vassar Web). In 1934, Flanagan married Philip Davis, a professor of Greek, but retained her first married name (Vassar Web).

President Roosevelt was a trustee at Vassar College and was knowledgeable of Flanagan's work at the university. Mrs. Roosevelt had a meeting with Flanagan and asked about her experience with governmental theatre in other countries. Mrs. Roosevelt also asked if Vassar's plays were produced on a small budget. Flanagan described the plays at Vassar and answered, yes, they were done on a small budget. Flanagan left the meeting with high hopes of bringing theatre to the American people, and bringing out-of-work actors a paycheck during the depression through the "New Deal" work program. She states, "A plan began to take form in my mind, dictated not by an art theory or an academic idea, but by economic necessity" (Flanagan 20). This was at a time when the depression was at its worst and film had taken the revenue that theatre used to receive (Flanagan 12-13).

Flanagan used her knowledge to produce at a fast pace for the FTP. In Flanagan's book *Arena*, director John Houseman writes,

“ . . .this small red-haired lady with the firm mouth and the ferocity of a roused tiger was receptive to almost any form of creative theatrical activity: the living newspaper, the poets' theatre, the classical theatre, the experimental theatre, the negro, dance and children's theatres—these were only a few of the projects she organized and fostered the country over” (Houseman v).

Flanagan started as Director of the FTP looking at a map of the country to decide how to put thousands of people to work. The WPA estimated 20,000-30,000 skilled theatre workers were out of work. (Flanagan 20-21). Elmer Rice, a successful American playwright, was asked by Flanagan to become the director of the New York division of the FTP. Rice told her, “This government theatre can be good, or it can be terrible.” As mentioned in Chapter 1, Rice was hesitant to take on the project. Flanagan convinced him that living newspapers could employ many out-of-work actors with little in the way of cost going to the sets (Flanagan 65).

American Puritan values had come a long way in even funding theatre, but spending money to bring attention to the problems of government and give a voice to the “Little Man” was being taken by congress members as propaganda for the communist left. Flanagan writes, “If this first government theatre in our country had been less alive it might have lived longer” (Flanagan 367). The FTP was alive and brought an entertaining didactic medium to the people, highlighting problems and solutions facing society.

Flanagan was asked to speak before the House Un-American Activities Committee. They questioned her about her two trips to Russia. She was asked if communist propaganda was distributed to the project. She said no. She was asked if the theatre could

be a weapon. She said the theatre could be all things to all men. Flanagan stated, "We have never done a play which was propaganda for communism; but we have done plays which were propaganda for democracy, for better housing. . ." (Flanagan 341-342).

Flanagan put up a good fight, but the minds of Congress were made up before she testified. The Federal Theatre Project came to an end in 1939 and Flanagan went back to academia (Vassar Web).

Arthur Arent

Arthur Arent, a writer whose first play was having little success being shopped around, was the first one to answer an ad for a writer with the FTP. He was asked to write a fifteen-minute news dramatization on the current news in Ethiopia. Rice was so impressed with his writing, that Arent found himself upstairs as managing editor of the whole project (Arent 16-17). Arent expanded on his fifteen minutes and wrote the first living newspaper play, *Ethiopia*, the dramatization of Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia. It was topical news and had aspects that would make a great play. Interestingly, the first group of actors sent to the FTP from the relief office was a large troupe of African citizens who were in the United States performing opera and were stranded. This was before the question of aliens receiving financial aid from America was addressed. The troupe did not speak English, so after much thought, it was decided they would play Ethiopians in crowd scenes without lines. Speeches, and transcripts of Mussolini were included in *Ethiopia*. They wanted to use a transcript of a radio broadcast of President Roosevelt and wrote to the White House to receive permission. The answer received:

This will direct that no issue of the living newspaper shall contain any representation of the head or one of the ministers or the cabinet of a foreign state unless such representation shall have been approved in advance by the Department of State (Flanagan 65-66).

Elmer Rice stated that he had fought censorship for fifteen years and would not tolerate it of the FTP. As a result, he resigned as Director of the New York office. *Ethiopia* only had one dress rehearsal and never made its debut (Flanagan 66-67). Arent went on to write FTP's living newspapers *One-Third a Nation* and *Power*. Upon seeing *Power*, Harry Hopkins, the administrator for the Works Progress Administration thought it was great propaganda for the consumer, as utility companies had been spending money on propaganda for themselves for years (Flanagan 185).

Arent wrote living newspaper plays with a staff of journalists, who were part of the Newspaper Guild. Almost 30 million people saw plays produced by WPA in its third year.³ *One-Third of a Nation, a Living Newspaper about Housing*, premiered at the Adelphi Theatre in New York, and was seen by more than 217,000 people (Flanagan 217). *One-Third of a Nation, a Living Newspaper about Housing* was performed successfully with mostly positive reviews (Flanagan 216-17). Ralph Holmes of the Detroit News wrote, "The worst thing about *One-Third of a Nation* is that it is true... [it has] unforgettable vividness and compelling power..." (Flanagan 217).

³ Federal Theatre Project, Third Year Report from WPA to Department of Information.

CHAPTER 6

AMERICAN HISTORY OF GUNS AND GUN CONTROL

Adopted in the Bill of Rights as an addendum to the US Constitution, the Second Amendment states:

“A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed” (Second Amendment Web).

These specific words were chosen after the colonies presented the language they wanted, which was taken from each state’s constitution.

In writing the play, *One-Third of a Nation, the Second Amendment, a Living Newspaper Play*, I tried to incorporate the most outstanding events, which formed American’s relationship with guns and the gun violence. I included events from the seventeenth to the twenty-first century.

From the beginning of landing on American soil, settlements of British subjects in America were asked to participate in militias. The colonist population was asked to procure guns and gunpowder to keep for when there was an uprising. New England colonies created laws as early as 1632 requiring each person in the new world have a functioning firearm, ten pounds of bullets and two pounds of gunpowder. The head of the household was fined if the law was not upheld. No man was allowed to appear at a public meeting without being armed (Lindgren 2195-248). These colonists would ban together in militias to quell the uprising by American Indians and African slaves and others. In a 1792 law, blacks were not allowed to participate in militias (Old Yankee Web).

Historian Joseph Doddridge (1769-1826), a minister and early settler in the Ohio country wrote,

“The early settlers on the frontiers of this country were like Arabs of the desert of Africa, in at least two respects; every man was a soldier, and from early in the spring till late in the fall, was almost continually in arms. Their work was often carried on by parties, each one of whom had his rifle and everything else belonging to his wardress. These were deposited in some central place in the field. A sentinel was stationed on the outside of the fence, so that on the least alarm the whole company repaired to their arms, and were ready for combat in a moment (Dunbar-Ortiz 32-33).”⁴

American Indians were the indigenous people of North America. The colonists, who saw a potential for profit from this territory, kept pushing the Indians out of their land using the force of guns. Africans were brought as slaves from Africa to work on the sugar plantations in Santo Domingo (modern Dominican Republic) and then to the colonies to build a new land of capitalism, benefiting white society (USI Web). Guns were used to quell slave uprisings (Cramer Web).

There were thirteen colonies at the time of adopting the US Constitution. George Washington wrote in a letter to French aristocrat and military officer in the American Revolutionary War, Marquis de Lafayette, that there was enough support to get nine colonies to agree to the Constitution, but to add any additional conditions would cause debate and could undermine its ratification. He felt that a Bill of Rights could be agreed upon at a later date (Washington Letter). The Bill of Rights, including the Second Amendment, was ratified in December 1791.

⁴ Joseph Doddridge, Notes on the Settlement and Indian Wars of the Western Parts of Virginia and Pennsylvania from 1763 to 1783. Inclusive Together with a Review of the State of Society and Manners of the first Settlers of the West Country (Clearfield, PA: Clearfield, 2012) 109-10.

Each state had different wording and needs for the Second Amendment in the Bill of Rights. It is said that the Second Amendment came about because American colonies needed a militia in case of trouble. In truth, the Second Amendment was needed for multiple functions; the colonies were fearful of a new national government that could be corrupted and take away control from states. A state militia was needed to ensure state protection and individual protection. Slave owning states needed protection to dominate and suppress African slaves, preventing uprising and insurrection. States pushing out beyond the Appalachian Mountains needed militias to eradicate the American Indians, who were standing in the way of colony expansion, and militias were needed in case of a insurgency or a coup. Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey Pennsylvania, Vermont and Virginia had gun rights in their state constitutions before the Second Amendment was written into the Bill of Rights (Dunbar-Ortiz 29-72).

American history books supplied to schools and institutions have been shy about delineating all of the reasons the states were in favor of the Second Amendment. The colonists just finished battling the Revolutionary War with Great Britain. They feared violence from many sources. The British government under the control of the crown threatened to incite an American slave revolt (Dunbar-Ortiz 31, Rasputen 172).

Although most history books in schools list the Shays Uprising and the Whiskey Rebellion after the revolution as the catalysts for the Second Amendment, what most history books don't report on was the colonists' need to have militias to control slavery and annihilate indigenous people. Historian and author, Daniel Rasmussen, writes about why the 1811 New Orleans slave revolt has been left out of history:

“Because of that brutality and because of a shared belief in the importance of a specific form of political and economic development, these government officials and slave owners sought to write this massacre uprising out of the history books—to dismiss the bold actions of the slave army as irrelevant and trivial. They succeeded. And in doing so, they laid the groundwork for one of the most remarkable moments of historical amnesia in our national memory” (Rasmussen Prologue).

He was writing about the largest slave revolt in New Orleans, in 1811. There were many more; in Virginia, the first indentured servant and African slave revolt happened in Gloucester County in 1663. The servants and slaves met in the woods and agreed to steal weapons and march upon the governor’s home to gain their freedom (Wolfe Web).

The largest revolt before the American Constitution was written was the Stono Rebellion. On September 9, 1739, Jemmy, a black slave, coordinated first-generation slaves who were seasoned soldiers from the Yamasee War in Angola. They raided a warehouse, killing the white owners and placing their victims’ heads on the front steps. They continued marching, killing, and burning structures in the hopes of getting to St. Augustine, Florida, where they would be free. They shouted in their native language, “Lukango!” the word for liberty. The colonists rallied in a militia and killed most of the revolting slaves (Gates Web).

The states needed to protect against insurgents or antagonistic governments which could cause a coup. States did not want an overreaching federal government to control their states with a federal army. The U.S. Constitution, Article 1, Section 8 states,

”The Congress shall have Power. . . To raise and support Armies, but no Appropriation of Money to that Use shall be for a longer Term than two Years. . . To provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress insurrections and invasions.” (US Constitution Web).

By wording the Second Amendment with two linked clauses, the first clause delineates a need for arms for a militia and the second clause delineates that the people can protect themselves. The second clause can even be interpreted as going against an overreaching or corrupt federal government militia.

After the revolution, the thirteen colonies were under financial duress. In Massachusetts the government taxed citizens who had just served in the war. These former soldiers were not tending to their farms or trades because they were busy fighting, therefore their income was diminished. The money of the colonies had no value. European merchants wouldn't extend credit. The state was asking for enormous taxes to pay for the national debt and was confiscating farmland and personal possessions if the taxes could not be paid. Shays Rebellion in Springfield, Massachusetts, happened in 1786-87. Daniel Shays, along with others who served in the Revolution, were forced to give up their land to pay their debt. They felt they were being unfairly treated after serving in the war and led four thousand rebels who tried to overthrow the government. A paid militia was waiting for them and stopped the insurgence (History.com Web).

Still in debt to pay for war, the federal government demanded an excise tax be put on each gallon of whiskey produced. George Washington was against this tax and so were the distillers. The Whiskey Rebellion happened in 1791, large producers received tax breaks on volume, but small producers did not. This was unfair to the small producers. Officers sent to collect the tax were chased away with threats of violence. The violence escalated and people were killed. Finally, President Washington arrived with a militia to quell the uprising (History.com Web).

After the Civil War in 1868, the Fourteenth Amendment was ratified, which gave full citizenship rights to African American slaves. For a short period of time, in theory, freed slaves were allowed to run for office and partake in the privilege of the Second Amendment (History.com Web). However, the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) was formed at this time to suppress the black vote and to disarm black citizens. The KKK would maraud at night in white sheets to disguise themselves and break into freed slaves' homes, violently intimidating them and confiscating their weapons (Clark Web). It was the United States vs. Cruikshank Supreme Court ruling in 1876, which formally stopped citizen privilege for African Americans, after 106 black citizens were killed by a group of whites, who did not want blacks in office. This ruling put the power in the state and it took away the rights of black citizens. After the Civil War, the price of guns was increased to keep weapons out of the hands of black citizens and the poor (Kopel Web).

In the 1900s the first gun control law was the National Firearms Act (NFA). It came about after the increase in gangland deaths following The Valentine's Day Massacre in 1929. Shotguns, rifles and machine guns were taxed heavily at manufacture and transfer. This cut down on the gangster killings that used machine guns and sawed off shotguns.

After the assassination of President Kennedy in 1963, where the alleged assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald, purchased a mail order rifle, and the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and Senator Robert Kennedy, The Gun Control Act of 1968 was instated. This act prohibited the sale of mail order guns, as well as prohibited most felons, drug users and the mentally incompetent from purchasing guns. Due to easy concealment of the "Saturday

Night Special,” inexpensive, readily available handguns, urban areas instated stricter gun laws after hoodlum and gangster violence.

The Black Panthers, a militant black organization formed to address police brutality against the black population in 1967, armed themselves with magnums, shotguns, and pistols, as they protested at the California statehouse, declaring, “The time has come for black people to arm themselves.” They were making a point: making themselves into a militia to protect black lives. This then-legal move so frightened white politicians that the Mulford Act, a state bill, was enacted in 1967, which forbade the open carry of loaded weapons (Morgan Web).

In 1976, Washington D.C. barred residents from owning handguns. In 1986, the Firearm Owner’s Protection Act prohibited felons from owning guns or ammunition. The Law Enforcement Officers Protection Act prohibited the manufacturing, importing and selling of ammunition that could penetrate a bulletproof vest. After the assassination attempt on President Reagan when his press secretary, James Brady, was shot in the head, the Brady Handgun Violence Act was enacted in 1993, mandating a background check on the purchase of a gun. This law was riddled with loopholes and was later found unconstitutional. In 1994 The Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act became law. This law banned nineteen types of assault weapons, but it expired in 2004. Mother Jones publication’s research shows that gun violence decreased when this law was in effect (GliderMavin Web). In 2008, the Supreme Court Ruling written by Judge Scalia on the District of Columbia vs. Heller, unlinked the two clauses of the Second Amendment and granted rights to individual gun ownership without the need for a militia. (NPR Web). On

December 19, 2018, President Trump signed into law the ban on bump stocks, a device that can make a semiautomatic weapon fire multiple rounds (Provensano Web).

CHAPTER 7

PLANS OF PRODUCTION AND CONCLUSION

In planning to present *One-Third of a Nation, the Second Amendment*, to an audience, I will have two table readings to listen to the wording. I will make a judgment on what wording works and what has to be moved or removed to make the script compelling. After the edits are complete, casting will commence to find talent for each role in the play. Actors will be cast who have exaggerated demeanors of the actual historical figures they portray. The play will be put on in a black box theatre in a school setting, honoring the thirteenth proposition of Weiss' "Fourteen Propositions." The performance will contain film projections and recorded sound effects of actual historical events. There will be a talkback to allow an open discourse with audience members to share their opinions on the ideas raised in the play.

The dialogue in *One-Third of a Nation, the Second Amendment, a Living Newspaper Play* was taken from court transcripts, news, speeches, letters, interviews, performance and conversation. This is an opportunity for the audience to hear the emotion connected to the decisions, which shaped the Second Amendment. I am hoping this documentary play will make the words of the US Supreme Court Justices and our Founding Fathers more palpable for an audience, so they may take the nuance of intent to decide if they agree or disagree with the positions presented. In the style of Meyerhold, Piscator and Brecht, I hope *One-Third of a Nation, the Second Amendment* causes the audience to think objectively. The audience is an active player in this play.

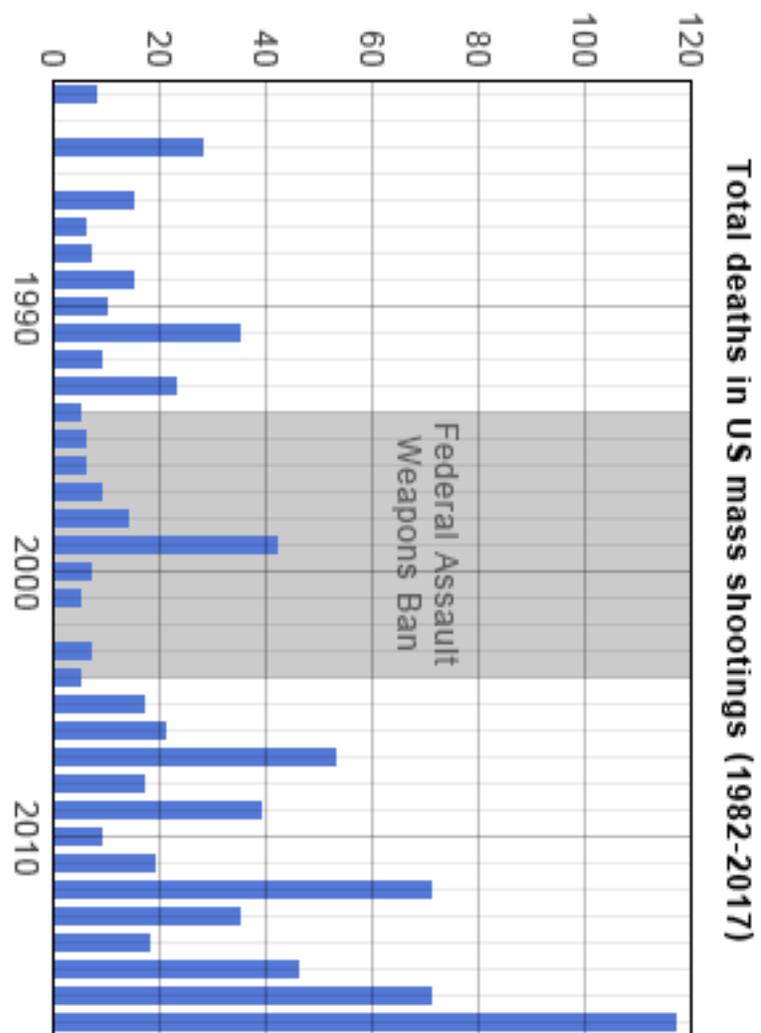
In Arent's play, there was original music for piano and organ by Clair Leonard. The music was used to set tone, commentary, and sound effects (Flanagan 215). I have not incorporated music in *One-Third of a Nation, the Second Amendment*, but after the table reading, I will have a better understanding of what will be needed to help the rhythm and action of this play. If I feel music will enhance the piece, I will consider hiring a composer to collaborate on the project. I did write sound and lighting cues for this play, just as *One-Third of a Nation, a Living Newspaper about Housing* used sound effects with lighting designed by Abe Feder (Flanagan 213).

To conclude, in *One-Third of a Nation, the Second Amendment, a Living Newspaper Play*, I tried to capture all points of view, from President Washington to President Trump, from the Little Man to the Little Woman, from those in power to those who are marginalized. There will be those who think this play is on the side of gun control, seeking to damage the Second Amendment and our rights to freedom from government regulation. I am sure the National Rifle Association (NRA) will not approve. There will also be those who feel this play is on the side of the NRA, and that it is outrageous to entertain the thought of our forefathers wanting us to possess drones and bombs to keep up with what our "militia" is now using. Writing this play with controversial content will create friends and enemies. Flanagan states, "*One-Third of a Nation*, like any powerful play on a controversial subject, made enemies as well as friends. There is nothing new about this situation" (Flanagan 220).

I made a decision to not show the faces of the actual shooters onstage, because I do not want to give notorious celebrity to these assailants. I want the information about the

gunmen and women to inform the audience about the reasons why people are being killed by guns. I included the humor of Jim Jefferies, because I feel the verbatim approach is at times labored, and the play needs levity and a little contrasting “shock” humor to make it palatable. Above all, I tried to include many points of view, which I researched for accuracy. This will allow the audience to make an educated decision on the Second Amendment. As Flanagan stated, “. . .an accurate fact carefully aimed may be as deadly as a bullet” (Flanagan 185).

Appendices

APPENDIX A⁵

⁵ Wikimedia Commons, GliderMavin, Mother Jones, Research, Web.

One-Third of a Nation, the Second Amendment, a Living Newspaper Play

Cast of Characters

ACT 1

Scene 1

Girl 1

Girl 2

Scene 2

Dylan Klebold

Eric Harris

Scene 3

Dylan Klebold

Eric Harris

10 High School Students

Girl

Loudspeaker

Scene 4

Little Woman

Scene 5

Investigator

High School Guard

Mrs. Klebold

Loudspeaker

Russell

Scene 6

Loudspeaker

Scene 7

Jim Brady

Sarah Brady

Loudspeaker

Scene 8

4 Slaves

1 Mulatto

1 White Man

Scene 9

8 Towns People

Shays

Loudspeaker

- Scene 10
George Washington
Loudspeaker
- Scene 11
Thomas Jefferson
Loudspeaker
- Scene 12
Comedian, Jim Jefferies Look-Alike
Attorney Dellinger
Judge Roberts
Judge Kennedy
Judge Breyer
Judge Soufer
Judge Stevens
Judge Thomas
Judge Ginsburg
Judge Alito
Judge Scalia
General Gura USA Counsel
Attorney Mura
Loudspeaker
- Scene 13
Car Mechanic Man 1
Car Mechanic Man 2
Car Mechanic Man 3
2 Police Officers
2 Well Dressed Men
Loudspeaker
- Scene 14
3 Nazi German Soldiers
4 Family (Man, Woman, 2 Children)
Loudspeaker
- Scene 15
Husband
Wife
Child (Little Woman)
- Scene 16
Little Woman
Little Man

- Scene 17
Comedian Jim Jefferies Look-Alike
Hillary Clinton
Donald Trump
Moderator
Loudspeaker
- Scene 18
Accident Man
Loudspeaker
- Scene 19
Tax Collector
3 Men with guns
Loudspeaker
- Scene 20
8 Union Soldiers
General Burnside
Loudspeaker
- Scene 21
Loudspeaker
Historian
Senator Pomeroy
Philp Berger, Organizer NAAGA
- Scene 22
Senator Obama
- Scene 23
3 Students
Student National Guard Reserve
- Scene 24
Comedian Jim Jefferies Look-Alike
Young Man
Mother Little Woman
- Scene 25
Emma Gonzalez
Loudspeaker
- Scene 26
NRA Speaker
NRA LaPierre
Vice President Pence
Loudspeaker

ACT 2

Scene 1

Loudspeaker

1st Person

2nd Person

8 Male Assailants

3 Female Assailants

Comedian Jim Jefferies Look alike

Little Woman

Jonathan Metzl

American Psychological Association Member

Phillip Van Cleave

Facebook Woman

Don Lemon

Eisen

Mrs. Orfanos

Dedication

This play is dedicated to all those who lost their lives to gun violence.

ONE-THIRD OF A NATION, THE SECOND AMENDMENT,

A LIVING NEWSPAPER PLAY

ACT 1

Scene 1

Columbine High School Cafeteria

Sound: School Bell Rings.

Lockers on sides, tables in the middle. Students getting their books out of their lockers.
TWO GIRLS pass downstage stage right to stage left, talking.

Girl 1

Did you finish the project for class?

Girl 2

I couldn't, I was babysitting and I didn't get home until late....

They walk out of earshot while still talking....

Sound: School Bell Rings.

Lights: Blackout.

Scene 2

Field

Spotlight on two Boys, DYLAN KLEBOLD and ERIC HARRIS wearing black trench coats.

Klebold is downstage right shooting at target, which is downstage left. Harris is next to him.

Harris

Come on, we need to be there before first lunch.

Harris and Klebold gather guns and put them in duffle bags and exit.

Blackout.

Scene 3

Columbine High School Cafeteria

Lights come up on cafeteria.

The room is empty. Harris and Klebold enter in black trench coats, they look around, gesture to each other and set the bags with bombs around the room. They exit.

Sound: Lunch Bell, (pause) Bomb Ticking starts low and increases in volume.

STUDENTS enter Cafeteria with trays, talking and sitting.

Sound: Gunfire is heard, alarms are heard, people are screaming.

Sound: Loudspeaker in Cafeteria: Code 500, Code 500, this isn't a drill, ...Code 500.

Harris and Klebold enter the lunchroom gunning people down. People duck under the tables.

Sound: Gunfire and Screaming.

Harris
This is awesome!

He fires a gun with precision below all the tables.

Harris grabs one victim and pulls her up, she is bleeding from her chest.

Harris
Do you believe in god?

Girl
(Bleeding)
Yes.

Harris throws her down and continues shooting others. He puts his gun down and takes a soda off a table and takes a sip, picks up the gun and leaves.

Blackout.

Loudspeaker

This could be Virginia, New York, Texas, Pittsburgh, or Florida. It's Colorado 1999. Columbine High School. This was the deadliest attack using guns at an American high school until Parkland Florida shooting at Stoneman Douglas High School on February 14, 2018.

Scene 4

Lights up.

LITTLE WOMAN walks into the light, center stage.

Little Woman

Isn't it strange, in 1975 there were rifle clubs in the high schools. We were taught how to shoot. Students would bring their little canvas rifle bags and leave them filled with their rifles in the classrooms as they studied Algebra. My school in Bellmore, New York had a rifle range. This was normal.⁶

Blackout.

Scene 5

Police Interrogation Room

Light Up

Columbine SCHOOL GUARD sitting in center stage left. The INVESTIGATOR walks around him while talking.

⁶ Linda Ann Watt, Memory of New York High School in 1975.

Investigator

So, let me get this straight, you had a camera in the lunchroom,... but what happened?

Guard

I usually look at cameras, but I went to change the videotape for the camera before lunch.

Investigator

You didn't witness them arriving or leaving the duffle bags?

Guard

No, I was changing the tape.

Stage right. Light comes up on MRS KLEBOLD. Investigator walks to her area and walks around her while talking

Investigator

Mrs. Klebold, you and your husband don't own guns?

Mrs. Klebold

No, we never knew that Dylan had guns. We don't own guns. (She looks away from the investigator, out past the audience) When I heard it was Dylan shooting those people, I had a sudden vision of what he might be doing. And so while every other mother in Littleton was praying that her child was safe, I had to pray that mine would die before he hurt anyone else.⁷

Investigator

Mmm. Do you know where your son got the guns?

Mrs. Klebold

I don't know where he got any of the guns.

⁷ Andrew Solomon, *Far from the Tree*, 2012.

Loudspeaker

It's called strawman. Someone legal buys guns and gives them to those who can't purchase them. Robyn Anderson, an eighteen-year-old, Klebold's friend, purchased two shotguns Klebold sawed off the double barrel shotgun to 23 inches, a felony under the National Firearms Act, while Harris sawed off his 12-gauge pump gun to 26 inches. They also had a semi-automatic handgun with history. The manufacturer first sold it to Navegar. It

Loudspeaker (continued)

was then sold to Zander's Sporting Goods and later sold to Colorado dealer, Larry Russell. He then sold the gun, but he didn't keep records. Later Mark Manes and Philip Duran were convicted of selling the guns to Klebold and Harris.

Lights up on MR. RUSSELL sitting stage Left. Investigator is walking around him.

Investigator

Mr. Russell, the gun you sold was the gun that Harris used in this massacre. Did you sell the gun to Harris, who was underage?

Russell

No, I never saw Harris or Klebold,

Investigator

(shows him picture of woman)

How about this young woman, Anderson, did you ever see this young woman?

Russell

No sir. I never saw her. I never saw any of them.

Blackout.

Scene 6

Projected on large screen upstage: Footage of President Reagan walking from the hotel to his car 30” away waving.

Sound: Accentuated Sound of Gunfire.

Footage shows: Secret service push Reagan into the limo. Limo peels away. Secretary Brady, Secret Service, and a police officer are on the ground. There is shouting. The gunman is wrestled to the ground. A secret service man with an automatic weapon looks around, as secret service men are on top of gunman, Hinkley. News crew keeps getting close and is pushed away by Secret Service. Blood is dripping from Brady’s head; blood pool gets larger.

Blackout:

Loudspeaker

1994, Hinkley, acknowledged as mentally ill was able to purchase a gun to attempt to assassinate the president to win the affections Jody Foster, an actress. This attack injured President Reagan and left his press secretary, James Brady, permanently brain damaged. The bullets used were the type that explode on impact. The Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act, known as The Brady Bill was adopted.

Scene 7

Public Event 1993

Lights up.

Upstage Right, Reagan’s Press Secretary JAMES BRADY is in a wheel chair, his wife, SARAH BRADY wheels him out to center stage. Sarah Brady leans down to hear James Brady, his face is a little contorted as he gets words out. She pats him on the shoulder, and he puts a thumbs-up to the audience. Sarah walks towards the podium downstage right.

Sarah Brady

I think it's symbolic that members of Congress could stand up to a large lobby. I think it's symbolic of a lot of things. But I don't want anyone to feel that that's all it is. The Brady Bill is not just symbolism. It will begin to make a difference. It will begin to save lives. We read in The Post this morning that in four states alone, over 50,000 people were stopped in the last four years from getting weapons illegally -- or over the counter. It will help.⁸

Lights Down:

Loudspeaker

The Brady Bill, asks for waiting time for a person to purchase a gun. The courts didn't uphold the Brady Bill, because it violated the law that allows states to hold power of its laws. This is the Tenth Amendment to our Constitution. No state must be forced to change laws. And a Brady law loophole, private gun sellers are not obligated to run background checks on their customers.

Blackout.

Scene 8

Music: A Slave song can be heard.

Lights Up.

1700s fields one of the colonies.

BLACK SLAVES, TWO MEN AND TWO WOMEN are stacking sugar cane, they are hot and tired. ONE MULATTO and ONE WHITE MAN are holding muskets on them. One pushes the back of the woman.

⁸ Sarah Brady, Remarks at the Signing of The Brady Gun Control Bill, Washington, 30 Nov. 1993.

Loudspeaker

The militia was needed to control the black slaves and insurgents.

Blackout:

Scene 9

Outside Massachusetts's Courthouse 1786

Center stage. PEOPLE in period clothing, mostly men and some women in the year 1786, standing in the street, men with rifles are seen on the court steps, woman leave the stage. The men are protesting the government. The crowd is unruly and moves behind SHAYS on the steps center stage looks downstage.

Shays

My name is Daniel Shays. I fought in the Revolution, and I will be damned you will not foreclose on my farm. It is Massachusetts's fault that farmers can't pay their debts. You will not open this courthouse today, if you want to see another day!

Sound: People scream in protest against the Governor.

Blackout.

Scene 10

Light Up.

Washington's Home 1786

Downstage Left GEORGE WASHINGTON in period clothing is writing a letter at a writing desk with a quill pen.

Loudspeaker

George Washington was calling for a constitution because of the conditions after the war included the Shays rebellion. He wrote a letter to Henry Lee.

Washington
(reading letter)

You talk, my good sir of employing influence to appease the present tumults in Massachusetts. I know not were that influence is to be found, or, if attainable, that it would be a proper remedy for the disorders. Influence is not government. Let us have a government by which our lives, liberties, and properties will be secured, or let us know the worst at once.⁹

Loudspeaker

He then wrote a letter to Marie-Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier Marquis de Lafayette, he was an aristocrat and military officer in the American Revolutionary war.

Washington
(reading letter)

The opinion of Mr. Jefferson and yourself is certainly a wise one that the Constitution ought by all means to be accepted by nine States before any attempt should be made to procure amendments. For, if that acceptance shall not previously take place, men's minds will be so much agitated and soured, that the danger will be greater than ever of our becoming a disunited People. Whereas, on the other hand, with prudence in temper and a spirit of moderation, every essential alteration, may in the process of time, be expected.¹⁰

MRS. WASHINGTON enters stage and places a tray with two tea cups on desk.

Lights go down slowly on George Washington and Mrs. Washington. He remains seated she is standing both are very still.

⁹ George Washington, Letter to Henry Lee, Mount Vernon, October 1786.

¹⁰ George Washington, Letter to Lafayette, Mount Vernon, 1788.

Loudspeaker

The constitution was agreed upon. The amendments to the constitution were added in the Bill of Rights. It was similar to the English Bill of Rights. The Second Amendment, which was ratified in December 1791.

Blackout:

Scene 11

Lights up.

Thomas Jefferson's home 1780

Downstage left THOMAS JEFFERSON in period clothing.

Loudspeaker

Thomas Jefferson in a letter to his nephew.

Thomas Jefferson
(reading letter)

A strong body makes the mind strong. As to the species of exercise, I advise the gun. While this gives moderate exercise to the body, it gives boldness, enterprise and independence to the mind. Games played with the ball and others of that nature are too violent for the body and stamp no character on the mind. Let your gun therefore be the constant companion of your walks.¹¹

Blackout.

Scene 12

Stage.

Spotlight on COMEDIAN JIM JEFFERIES look-alike, enters from downstage left, holding a wireless microphone. He speaks with an Australian accent.

¹¹ Thomas Jefferson, Letter to Peter Carr, 19 Aug. 1785, Thomas Jefferson Foundation.

Jim Jefferies Look-Alike

Ya' know people don't listen to comedians, but sometimes they say things that are true. Take Jim Jefferies,... he says, "I am all for your second amendment rights, I think you should be able to have guns, it's in your constitution. What I am not for is bullshit arguments and lies. There is one argument and one argument alone for having guns and this is the argument, FUCK OFF I like guns. It's not the best argument but it's all you got. But don't give me this bullshit, I need it for protection, I need it for my family...."¹²

Jim Jefferies look-alike exits stage right.

Lights up on center stage.

Washington D.C. 2008

Upstage on-screen there are stills of US courthouse interior.

MR. DILLENGER, Attorney, sits opposite Supreme Court Judges ROBERTS, KENNEDY, BREYER, SOUFER, STEVENS, THOMAS, GINSBURG, ALITO, and SCALIA in black robes. The Attorney has his back to audience facing the Judges. There is a camera upstage the projects the Attorney up on the screen upstage, so the audience can see his reactions.

Loudspeaker

Dick Anthony Heller, a police officer, wanted to keep his handgun loaded, ready for self-protection in his home. He brought an argument against the District of Columbia for prohibiting handguns in its district. This case went to the Supreme Court.

Mr. Dellinger was District of Columbia's attorney. These are actual excerpts from that oral testimony March 18, 2008.¹³

¹² Jim Jefferies stand-up material from *BARE*, Netflix Special, 2015.

¹³ Transcript, Supreme Court Case. District of Columbia v. Dick Anthony Heller. Anderson Reporting Company. 18, Mar. 2018.

Justice Kennedy

As you've indicated, they're in Article I and Article II. And so in effect the amendment says we reaffirm the right to have a militia, we've established it, but in addition, there is a right to bear arms. Can you comment on that?

Mr. Dellinger

Justice Kennedy, I think any interpretation that delinks the two clauses as if they were dealing with related but nonetheless different subject matters has that to count against it, and what you don't see in the debates over the Second Amendment are references to, in those debates, the use of weapons for personal purposes. What you see is the clause that, that literally transposes to this: Because a well-regulated militia is necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be...

Justice Kennedy

Well the subject is "arms" in both clauses, as I've suggested is the common subject, and they're closely related.

Mr. Dellinger

The Second Amendment must be interpreted in light of its obvious purpose to ensure the continuation and render the effectiveness of the military forces.

Justice Scalia

I don't see how there's any, any, any contradiction between reading the second clause as a -- as a personal guarantee and reading the first one as assuring the existence of a militia, not necessarily a State-managed militia because the militia that resisted the British was not State-managed. But why isn't it perfectly plausible, indeed reasonable, to assume that since the framers knew that the way militias were destroyed by tyrants in the

past was not by passing a law against militias, but by taking away the people's weapons -- that was the way militias were destroyed. The two clauses go together beautifully: Since we need a militia, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed.

Mr. Dellinger

Yes, but once you assume that the clause is designed to protect the militia, it -- surely it's the militia that decides whether personal possession is necessary.

Justice Kennedy

It had nothing to do with concern of the remote settler to defend himself and his family against hostile Indian tribes and outlaws, wolves and bears and grizzlies and things like that.

Mr. Dellinger

That is not the discourse that is part of the Second Amendment.

Justice Scalia

Blackstone thought it was important.

Stage darkens on the Supreme Court Judges.

Upstage on screen, painting of Sir William Blackstone.

Loudspeaker

Sir William Blackstone, a Tory Politician, He commented on England's laws for the lay person to understand. American Framers looked to his commentary when creating the constitution.

Lights come back up on the Judges.

Justice Scalia

Blackstone thought it was important. He thought the right of self-defense was inherent,

and the framers were devoted to Blackstone. Joseph Story, the first commentator on the Constitution and a member of this Court, thought it was a personal guarantee.

Justice Ginsburg

But wasn't there a leeway for some weapon prohibition? Let me ask you, in relation to the States that do have guarantees of the right to possess a weapon at home: Do some of those States say there are certain kinds of guns that you can't have, like machine guns?

Mr. Dellinger

Some people think machine guns are more dangerous than handguns -- they shoot a lot of people at once -- but a handgun is concealable and movable. It can be taken into schools, into buses, into government office buildings, and that is the particular danger it poses in a densely populated urban area.

Justice Alito

But even if you have -- even if you have a rifle or a shotgun in your home, doesn't the code prevent you from loading it and unlocking it except when it's being used for lawful, recreational purposes within the District of Columbia? So even if you have the gun, under this code provision it doesn't seem as if you could use it for the defense of your home.

Lights down.

Spotlight on Jim Jefferies Look-Alike with wireless microphone walks out from stage left to center stage.

Jim Jefferies Look-Alike

You're going to be ready if someone's breaking into your fucking house. See if you have it readily available in your bedside table your kid picks it up and shoots another one of

your kids. Happens every fucking day. But we all go, not in my house I'm a responsible gun owner, I keep my guns locked up in a safe. THEN THEY'RE NO FUCKING PROTECTION. Someone comes into the house, you're like wait there fuck face. Oh, you've come to the wrong house here buddy boy. I'll tell you what, I'll fuck you up. (leans down opening a safe) Okay, is it 32 to the left, or 32 to the right?... (he looks to his left) Your mother's birthday, why the fuck would I know your mother's fucking birthday? Maybe if you didn't leave the fucking window open, because it's too hot in here, we wouldn't be murdered.¹⁴

Blackout.

Lights Up.

On stand: GENERAL CLEMENT, Counsel for the USA. His back is to the audience facing the judges. A camera projects him onscreen upstage.

Loudspeaker

General Clement is counsel for the United States of America.

Justice Stevens

Does the right to keep and bear arms define one or two rights?

General Clement

Oh, I suppose it probably does define two rights that are closely related.

Justice Kennedy

In your view this amendment has nothing to do with the right of people living in the wilderness to protect themselves, despite maybe an attempt by the federal Government,

¹⁴ Jim Jefferies stand-up material from *BARE*, Netflix Special, 2015.

which is what the Second Amendment applies to, to take away their weapons.

General Clement

Well, Justice Kennedy, we would analyze it this way, which is we would say that probably the thing that was foremost in the framers' minds was a concern that the militia not be disarmed such that it would be maintained as a viable option to the standing army. But especially when you remember, as Justice Alito pointed out, that the Constitution in Article I, Section 8, clauses 15 and 16, the militia clauses, as un-amended, gave the Federal power -- the Federal authorities virtually plenary authority to deal with the organization and regulation of the militia. The most obvious way that you could protect the militia.

Justice Kennedy

You think Madison was guided by the experience and the expressions of the right in English law, including the Bill of Rights of 1689?

General Clement

I do, Justice Kennedy, and I think in that regard it is telling that -- I mean, there are a variety of provisions in our Bill of Rights that were borrowed from the English Bill of Rights. Two very principal ones are the right to petition the government and the right to keep and bear arms. I don't think it's an accident.

Blackout.

Lights Up.

ATTORNEY GURA on Stand, his back is towards audience facing the judges. A camera projects his reactions on a screen upstage.

Loudspeaker

Mr. Gura is the attorney for Mr. Heller.

Mr. Gura

(almost frantic to get it out quick)

All 50 states allow law-abiding citizens to defend themselves and their families in their homes with ordinary functional firearms including handguns. Now I'd like to respond to one point that was raised lately by the General....

Justice Scalia

Talk a little slower; I'm not following you.

Mr. Gura

Okay. I'd like to respond – Certainly, Justice Scalia. I'd like to respond to the point about the – the District of Columbia's position over the years with respect to the functional firearms ban.

Justice Breyer

Focus on the handgun ban. As I read in these 80 briefs – and they are very good, I mean really good and informative on both sides. And I am trying to nail down the statistics where there is disagreement, and roughly what I get – and don't quarrel with this too much; it's very rough that 80,000 to 100,000 people every year in the United States are either killed or wounded in gun related homicides or crimes or accidents or suicides, but suicide is more questionable. That's why I say 80,000 to 100,000. Now in light of that, why isn't a ban on handguns, while allowing the use of rifles and muskets, a reasonable or a proportionate response on behalf of the District of Columbia?

Loudspeaker

The argument continues.

Justice Breyer

That brings me back to the question because Blackstone describes it as a right to keep and bear arms “under law.” And since he uses the words “under law,” he clearly foresees reasonable regulation of that right. And so does the case not hinge on, even given all your views, on whether it is or is not a reasonable or slightly tougher standard thing to do to ban the handgun, while leaving you free to use other weapons?

Mr. Gura

The time frame that the court must address is always the present. The framers wished to preserve the right to keep and bear arms. They wished to preserve the ability of people to act as militia, and so there was certainly no plan for say a technical obsolescence. However, the fact is that miller spoke very strongly about the fact that people were expected to bring arms supplied by themselves of the kind in common use at the time. So if in this time people do not have or are not recognized by any court to have, a common application for, say a machine gun or a rocket launcher or some other sort of.....

Loudspeaker

The Judge who ruled in the Miller hearing in 1939 was Justice McReynolds. He ruled that the Court cannot take judicial notice that a shotgun having a barrel less than 18 inches long has today any reasonable relation to the preservation or efficiency of a well-regulated militia and therefore cannot say that the Second Amendment guarantees to the citizen the right to keep and bear such a weapon.

Loudspeaker

The Supreme Court in a vote of five to four ruled in favor of Heller. The court held that a District of Columbia law banning handgun

possession in the home violated the second amendment.

Black Out.

Scene 13

Lights Up.

Chicago Car Garage

THREE MEN in 1920s work clothes.

Upstage on screen car garage from 1920s.

Sounds: Bottles clanking in cardboard boxes, workers counting bottles.

1st Man
(carrying a case of bottles)
Here's Capone's liquor shipment?

2nd Man
Marone will be happy about this. How much?

3rd Man
Not sure, have to count 'em.

FOUR MEN enter the building, two men dressed as police officers, two well-dressed men.

2nd Man
Can I help you?

All men start to realize it's a hit. 2nd Man goes for his gun, the two police officers and two well-dressed men take out machine guns from their coats

Sound: Machine Gunfire.

Men start shooting with speed hundreds of rounds of ammunition. All shop workers fall on floor. The two well-dressed men put their hands up and the two police officers escort them out of the building.

Loudspeaker

This was the Valentine's massacre, this event and others using automatic weapons, caused the National Fire Arms Act of 1934.

Black Out.

Scene 14

Low Light Up.

Nazi Germany Apartment 1939

Upstage on screen Nazi soldiers marching with towering swastikas. Stage left FAMILY sleeping.

Sound: Pounding on an apartment door.

The door flies open. THREE NAZI SOLDIERS enter.

Sound: Machine Gunfire

Family killed.

Blackout.

Scene 15

Lights Up, Stage Right.

Kitchen New York home 1968

HUSBAND and WIFE sitting at the kitchen table, wife is reading the newspaper. CHILD about 9 years old (when an adult is the Little Woman) is sitting eating.

Loudspeaker

The Omnibus Crime Bill prohibited interstate trade in handguns and increased the minimum age to 21 for buying handguns. This legislation was soon followed by the Gun Control Act of 1968, which set forth additional gun control restrictions because of Senator Kennedy's assassination.

Wife

Here we go.... Now they are restricting interstate handguns. How long will it be until the fascists leave us open to what happened in Nazi Germany? If those Jews had guns, Hitler never would have happened.

Husband

I'm not registering our guns. That's just opening the door so we're sitting ducks. I don't want to be on a list so they can come in and take them.

Child

(Little Woman)

Is there any more cake?

Blackout.

Scene 16

Lights Up.

Outdoor field

Center stage, LITTLE WOMAN and LITTLE MAN with pistols at target practice. Little Woman fires the gun towards the audience at a target downstage.

Upstage on screen are pictures of trees outside.

Sound: Gunfire

Little Woman

I understand that you don't agree with everything that Clinton stands for, but Trump is standing up for white supremacists and he's not presidential material. I heard Clinton talk, I promise you, she doesn't want to take away the Second Amendment. She makes no mention of taking away guns. I've listened to her.

Little Man

I understand that Hillary isn't doing anything about guns, but she's getting rid of the ammunition. Since Obama has gotten into office, the shelves are empty. I'm lucky that I fill my own bullets, that's why I'm not voting for Clinton. I'll take Trump any day. Nobody's taking my guns.¹⁵

Little Man fires at target.

Sound: Gunfire

Black Out

Scene 17

Spotlight on Jim Jefferies Look-Alike enters downstage left with a wireless microphone.

Jim Jefferies Look-Alike

And don't get me wrong, I get that the Constitution is important to ya,' I understand your feelings. And people come up to me and scream out at me, as I'm leaving the theatre, going "You Can Not Change the Second Amendment," and I'm like, Oh yes you can... It's called an Amend-ment! I'm like if you can't change something that is called an Amend-ment....

Jim Jefferies Look-Alike

(continued)

See many of you need a thesaurus more than you need a Constitution. And if you don't know what a thesaurus is, get a dictionary and work your way forward.....¹⁶

Jim Jefferies Look-Alike exits stage right.

¹⁵ Actual Conversation. Remembered by Linda Ann Watt. South Carolina. 2015.

¹⁶ Jim Jefferies stand-up material from *BARE*, Netflix Special, 2015.

2016 Presidential Debate

Lights Up.

Presidential Music “Hail to the Chief.” Balloons are dropping from the rafters.

On the Stage are HILLARY CLINTON and DONALD TRUMP. MODERATOR with his back to the audience. TWO PEOPLE march onstage with a banner saying “2016 Presidential Debate” and stand on each side of two podiums. One podium is on stage left and one is on stage right.

Upstage on screens are the Donkey and the Elephant.

ABC News Moderator

You just heard Secretary Clinton’s answer, does she persuade you that while you may disagree on regulation, that in fact she supports a Second Amendment right to bear arms.

Trump

Well the D.C. vs. Heller decision was very strongly and she was extremely angry about it I watched, an she was very, very angry when upheld and a Justice Scalia was a so involved and it was a well-crafted decision, but Hillary was extremely upset extremely angry and people that believe in the Second Amendment and believe in it very strongly were very upset with what she had to say.

ABC News Moderator

Let me, let me bring in Secretary Clinton, were you extremely upset?

Clinton

Well I was upset because unfortunately dozens of toddlers ah injure themselves even kill people with guns because unfortunately not everyone who um has loaded guns in their homes takes appropriate precautions, but there’s no doubt that I respect the Second Amendment that I also believe there’s an

individual right to bear arms that is not in conflict with sensible common sense regulation. And ya' know look, I understand that Donald's been ah strongly supported by the NRA the gun lobby's on his side. They're running millions of dollars of ads against me and I regret that because what I would like to see is for people to come together and say of course we're going to protect and defend the Second Amendment, but we're going to do it in a way that tries to save some of these 33,000 lives that we lose every year.

ABC News Moderator

Let me bring Mr. Trump back into that because in fact you oppose any limits on assault weapons, any limits on high capacity magazines. You support a national right to carry law. Why sir?

Trump

Well let me just tell you before we go any further in Chicago, which has the toughest gun laws in the United States, probably you could say by far, they have more gun violence than any other city. So we have the toughest laws and you have tremendous gun violence. I am a very strong supporter of the

Trump (continued)

Second Amendment. And I am, I don't know if Hillary was saying it in a sarcastic manner, but I'm very proud to have the endorsement of the NRA, and it's the earliest endorsement they've ever given to anybody who ran for President, so I am very honored by all of that. Ah we are going to appoint justices, this is the best way to help the Second Amendment, we're going to appoint justices that will feel very strongly about the Second Amendment

that will not do damage to the Second Amendment.¹⁷

All Actors freeze onstage as lights lower.

Loudspeaker

Sixty percent of guns used in Chicago crime come from out of state. Most come from Indiana, Mississippi, and Wisconsin, states with very lax gun laws.

Blackout.

Scene 18

Lights Up.

2016 home office

MAN sitting at a desk cleaning his gun Downstage Right.

Sound: Phone Rings.

He picks up his phone.

Man

Hello son, I am going to the range at 11, as soon as I clean my gun. Do you want to go shooting with me? Okay. See you later.¹⁸

He puts the phone down, he takes the gun and starts to clean it pointed at himself.

Sound: Gunshot.

Man slumps over.

Loudspeaker

This accident happened in Weddington, North Carolina. Accidents are happening everywhere.

Blackout.

¹⁷ Third Presidential Debate, October 19, 2016. Video. You Tube.

¹⁸ Linda Ann Watt, Neighbor of Victim, Weddington, NC, Aug. 29, 2015.

Scene 19

Country Home 1794

Lights Up.

TAX COLLECTOR walks from stage right to stage left.

Tax Collector
(Knocking on door)
I am here to collect Whiskey tax.

THREE MEN come out with muskets.

Man 1
Get right back on your horse mister. You are
not collecting tax here.

Tax Man
I am authorized by the state of Pennsylvania
to collect your taxes.

The Men shoot in the air.

Sound: Gunfire

The Tax Man grabs his hat and runs. The Three Men freeze.

Lights lower.

Loudspeaker
More than 500 men attacked General John
Nevelle's home in the Whiskey Rebellion in
Western Pennsylvania. Washington
responded and headed 13,000 militiamen
provided by Virginia, Maryland New Jersey
and Pennsylvania. The militia was needed in
1794 to protect the national government.

Black Out.

Scene 20

Lights up.

Outside near a barn 1866.

Upstage projected on screen: Scenes of the Civil War.

8 MEN in Union soldier Civil War uniforms casually loitering center stage with their guns.

Sound: Bugle.

The Men stand at attention as GENERAL BURNSIDE enters stage left and walks in front of them.

General Burnside

Out of ten soldiers who are perfect in drill and the manual of arms, only one knows the purpose of the sights on his gun or can hit the broadside of a barn!¹⁹

He walks off stage left.

The Union soldier Men stand still, Lights lower.

Loudspeaker

The Union record was released, out of 1,000 rifle shots only one confederate was hit. Shortly after the war it was suggested to President Lincoln that an organization be put in place to allow people to train for a successful militia. In 1871, a Charter of the National Rifle Association was started. The NRA, General Burnside was elected President.

Blackout.

¹⁹ David Harsanyi, First Freedom a Ride through America's History with a Gun, Simon and Schuster, October 2, 2018.

Scene 21

Lights Up.

Upstage on-screen is picture of Western Town from the 1800s with sign that says, "Carrying of Fire Arms Strictly prohibited."

Loudspeaker

What was going on in the wild-west at that time?

HISTORIAN enters stage right walks to center stage.

Historian

People were allowed to own guns, and everyone did own guns for the most part. Having a firearm to protect yourself in the lawless wilderness from wild animals, hostile native tribes, and outlaws was a wise idea. But when you came into town, you had to either check your guns if you were a visitor or keep your guns at home if you were a resident.²⁰

Projected up stage onscreen: Poor shacks, and pictures of the Ku Klux Klan.

Loudspeaker

So when did gun control happen officially?

KANSAS SENATOR SAMUEL POMEROY enters the stage left walking downstage while talking.

Kansas Senator Pomeroy

A key purpose of the fourteenth Amendment was to guarantee that freedmen could exercise their Second Amendment right to own guns for self-defense, especially against gun control organizations such as the KKK. the three "indispensable" "safeguards of liberty under our form of government": the sanctity

²⁰ Tamara Dietrich, "How to counter mass shootings: mental health care or gun control," March 13, 2018.

of the home; the right to vote; and “the right to bear arms...[so] if the cabin door of the freedman is broken open and the intruder enters...then should a well-loaded musket be in the hand of the occupant to send the polluted wretch to another world.”²¹

Senator Pomeroy stands still, lights lower.

Loudspeaker

The Ku Klux Klan was the first gun control organization in America. The KKK would enter homes of the freed slaves and confiscate their guns.

Spotlight on PHILIP SMITH, enters stage left and walks to center stage.

Philip Smith

I started the National African American Gun Association in 2015. I wanted a voice for our community where we could feel comfortable to gather, a place where we could come and learn about firearms together in a very peaceful and nonthreatening environment.

Loudspeaker

Why did your membership go up after Trump’s inauguration?

Philip Smith

Well, I think it’s a three-headed monster. I think, one, people are looking at, you know, the state of the United States in terms of robberies, burglaries, things that are happening on your daily basis. Two, I think also - probably just as important - we see what's happening around the world. You know, terrorism is something that scares black folks just like anybody else. So we are aware of that. But also, we look at what's happening in the political arena in terms of the

²¹ David Kopel, The Racist Roots of Gun Control, February 23, 2018.

conversations and the types of conversations. We see folks that were on the fringes of society, let's say, eight, nine, ten years ago. But they're now out front talking about various things that are somewhat disturbing (pause). I think there are some individuals out there that have negative views of African-Americans. They have gotten bolder and bolder in their conversations in terms of our place in society. We're getting too progressive. Or we're moving too much up the ladder in society, so they want to kind of keep us down. When we hear those things - and me being a black man - your alarms go off. And you say, you know what? I think the days of us sitting back and just turning the other cheek - I think those days are long gone (pause). As an organization, we believe that if you're a violent person and you beat your wife, you never need to own a gun. If you have a violent felony, you never need to have a gun. And a third piece - if you on - are the no-fly list, you need to not have a gun for any shape, form or reason (pause). If you look at our communities right now across the country, they are in a wreck because we cannot protect those communities. These communities are just literally wide-open markets for violence, and that needs to change. If you look at urban areas such as L.A. or east L.A. or South Chicago - and there's a lot of gun violence in those areas. Let's be blunt. The reason those areas are having issues are the following - anytime you take a group of young men - black, white or any color - put them in an area in which they have a confrontational relationship with the police and, on top of that, give them no economic skills that can be transferable into 2018, and I'll tell you what's going to happen. All those gentlemen and ladies are going to be very, very frustrated. And they're going to do what they have to do to survive. If that means

killing folks and shooting folks, unfortunately, that's what's going to happen. That's what's driving gun violence in certain areas throughout the U.S. It's not because it's the gun. It's that these folks, that these brothers don't have any recourse for anything viable that's going to allow them to have a skill to provide for themselves and their family.²²

Blackout.

Scene 22

Lights Up.

2008 Presidential Election

Upstage on-screen, pictures of the 2008 election.

Candidate SENATOR OBAMA at Podium, center stage.

Senator Obama Presidential Candidate

You go into these small towns in Pennsylvania and, like a lot of small towns in the Midwest, the jobs have been done now for 25 years and nothing's replaced them. And it fell through the Clinton administration and the Bush administration and each successive administration has said that these communities are going to regenerate but they have not. And it's not surprising that then they get bitter, they cling to their guns or religion or antipathy to people who aren't like them or anti-immigrant sentiment or anti-trade sentiment as a way to explain their frustrations.²³

Blackout.

²² NPR Transcript, March 31 2018, Philip Smith, The National African-American Gun Association.

²³ Obama Speech, Obama Fundraiser in San Francisco, April 6, 2008.

Scene 23

Lights Up.

UNC Charlotte Classroom 2016

Upstage on-screen are pictures of classroom.

A FEW STUDENTS on stage downstage with their backs to audience. SPEECH CLASS STUDENT stands speaking to them.

Loudspeaker
UNC Charlotte Campus, 2016.

Speech Class Student
Hi, I would like to bring your attention to what is going on in the name of security, but it's not working. I am a student here at UNC Charlotte. I am licensed to carry a handgun. I am a reserve in the National Guard. I feel strongly that I should be able to go anywhere with my gun to be prepared to stop violence. I can't though,... I come onto this campus and there are signs that it is a gun free zone. I have to leave my gun locked in my car, which is not safe. Someone can break into my car and take my gun. I walk through campus and there are no metal detectors. I'm law abiding, but not everyone is. Someone who is mentally ill can carry a concealed weapon and enter this campus. We are all helpless because of this campus law. I hope you will think about what I am telling you. Thank you.²⁴

Student and those who were seated walk off stage.

Upstage on-screen is footage of the Stoneman Douglas high school shooting.
Sounds: Gunfire.

Upstage on-screen projected, actual footage of Trump.

²⁴ Speech in UNC Charlotte Speech class, July 2016.

President Trump

I am going to right the bump stock essentially write it out, so you won't have to worry about bump stock. Shortly that will be gone. We can focus on other things.²⁵

Upstage on-screen projected actual footage of Trump.

President Trump

I will do away with gun free zones at schools,.... well you have to.²⁶

Blackout.

Scene 24

Spotlight on JIM JEFFERIES Look-Alike enters stage right with wireless microphone walks downstage center while talking.

Jim Jefferies Look-Alike.

I believe in your right as Americans to have guns. I'm going to say some things with facts. Right, In Australia we had guns, right? Right up until 1996, in 1996 Australia had the biggest massacre on earth still hasn't been beaten.... and now, after that they banned the guns, now in the ten years before Port-Arthur there were ten massacres, since the gun ban in 1996 there hasn't been a massacre since. I don't know how or why this happened,... maybe it was a coincidence.²⁷

Blackout.

²⁵ President Trump, White House, CNN Politics, 3:10PM ET, News Room CNN.

²⁶ President Trump, "Eliminate Gun Free Zones at Schools," CNN, Published January 7, 2016. You Tube.

²⁷ Jim Jefferies stand-up material from *BARE*, Netflix Special, 2015.

Scene 24

Lights up.

Kitchen present day.

YOUNG MAN and his MOTHER (Little Woman) in kitchen present day center stage.
Mother sipping coffee.

Young Man

You talk about having a gun so you can be protected if a rogue government comes into power, but mom,... think about it.... One drone can take out your house with all of your guns.... Our forefathers didn't know there would be drones and atom bombs.

Mom (Little Woman)

I guess you're right,... I didn't consider drones. (laughs) Considering drones, then if we need weapons to have a militia to have a free state, then we should be able to use what a militia uses now. We need to have a drone. We should be trained in how to use a drone and how to detonate bombs.

Young Man

Really we need grenades. We should be allowed to have grenades and learn how to use them (laughs). In theory, interpreting the Second Amendment, you're right.

Lights lower. Young Man and Mom (Little Woman) are still.

Loudspeaker

And Congress after being reminded twice by George Washington finally created the U.S. Military on September 29, 1789.

Spotlight on Jim Jefferies look-alike entering stage left with a wireless microphone.

Jim Jefferies Look-Alike

Now I'm going to wrap this up. The reason why the Second Amendment, the right to bear arms was to form a militia to fight against a tyrannical government in case the government became a bunch of cunts, you could get your guns and fight back and that's why it was written, and that made a lot of sense when it was just muskets, the government had muskets. But you do know the government has drones. Right you get that. Your bringing guns to a drone fight. Like if we went back to muskets, I'm all for it, keep the Second Amendment, if we all had muskets, muskets are awesome every gent should carry a musket at all times. You know what's good about a musket? A musket gives you a lot of time to calm down. Like a guy calls your wife fat and you say, Fuck You (mime filling musket, continue filling the musket) Ah,... you're not a bad guy, you're alright.²⁸

He exits the stage.

Blackout.

Scene 25

Lights Up.

Upstage onscreen a rally in Washington

EMMA GONZALEZ walks to podium center stage.

Sound: Reverberation in microphone at large event with cheering.

Emma Gonzalez

Six minutes and about twenty seconds. In a little over six minutes, 17 of our friends were taken from us, 15 were injured, and everyone, absolutely everyone, was forever altered.

²⁸ Jim Jefferies stand-up material from *BARE*, Netflix Special, 2015.

Everyone who was there understands, everyone who has been touched by the cold grip of gun violence understands, "No one could comprehend the devastating aftermath or how far this reach or where this could go. For those who still can't comprehend because they refuse to, I'll tell you where it went. Right into the ground, six feet deep. Six minutes and twenty seconds with an AR-15 and my friend Carmen would never complain to me about piano practice. Aaron Feis would never call Kira, "Miss Sunshine." Alex Schachter would never walk into school with his brother Ryan. Scott Beigel would never joke around with Cameron at camp. Helena Ramsey would never hang out after school with Max. Gina Montalto would never wave to her friend Liam at lunch. Joaquin Oliver would never play basketball with Sam or Dylan. Alaina Petty would never. Cara Loughran would never. Chris Hixon would never. Luke Hoyer would never. Martin Duque Anguiano would never. Peter Wang would never. Alyssa Alhadeff would never. Jamie Guttenberg would never. Meadow Pollack would never. (pause of silence for four minutes) Since the time that I came out here, it has been six minutes and twenty seconds. The shooter has ceased shooting and will soon abandon his rifle, blend in with the students as they escape and walk free for an hour before arrest. Fight for your life before it's somebody else's job.²⁹

Light down. Emma Gonzalez in silhouette still.

Upstage on-screen Newscasters reporting news.

Newscaster

The New York Times reports that Walmart, the biggest gun seller, announced late in the

²⁹ Emma Gonzalez "March for Our Lives Speech," Guardian News, March 24, 2018, You Tube.

afternoon that it would not sell any gun to anyone under 21 years of age. It also said it would no longer sell items resembling assault-style rifles, including toys and air guns.

2nd Newscaster

Early in the day, Dick's said it was immediately ending sales of all assault-style rifles in its stores. The retailer also said that it would no longer sell high-capacity magazines and would also require any gun buyer to be at least 21, regardless of local laws.

Loudspeaker

Out of 107 mass shootings in America, only 12 of the shooters were under 21. And of those, only one purchased his own weapons from a gun store. Under federal law, a person must be at least 21 to buy a handgun from a firearms dealer. But 18-year-olds can buy semi-automatic rifles and other firearms.

Blackout.

Loudspeaker

In May 1994, former President Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan wrote to the US House of Representatives requesting that semi-automatic assault weapons be banned. They cited a 1993 CNN/USA Today Gallop Poll that 77 percent of Americans supported a ban on the manufacture and sale of these weapons.

Scene 26

Upstage on-screen actual video of Vegas concert mass shooting. 15 videos edited on timeline.

Sound: Music loud Automatic gunfire starts, music stops, people start screaming.

Sound: Woman saying, "Stay down, stay down. stay down." Woman screams in pain

Blackout.

Lights Up.

Upstage on-screen NRA posters.

SPEAKER for the NRA enters stage left and walks to podium center stage.

NRA Speaker

Banning guns from law-abiding Americans based on the criminal act of a madman will do nothing to prevent future attacks. This is a fact that has been proven time and again in countries across the world. In Las Vegas, reports indicate that certain devices were used to modify the firearms involved. Despite the fact that the Obama administration approved the sale of bump fire stocks on at least two occasions, the National Rifle Association is calling on the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (BATFE) to immediately review whether these devices comply with federal law.

NRA Speaker (continued)

The NRA believes that devices designed to allow semi-automatic rifles to function like fully-automatic rifles should be subject to additional regulations. In an increasingly dangerous world, the NRA remains focused on our mission: strengthening Americans' Second Amendment freedom to defend themselves, their families and their communities. To that end, on behalf of our

five million members across the country, we urge Congress to pass National Right-to-Carry reciprocity, which will allow law-abiding Americans to defend themselves and their families from acts of violence.³⁰

NRA Speaker leaves, LA PIERRE walks to podium.

Sounds: Cheering from crowd.

NRA LaPierre

We must declare that there are no shades of gray in American freedom. It's black and white, all or nothing. You're with us or against us.³¹

VICE PRESIDENT PENCE enters stage left and walks to the podium. LaPierre sits behind him.

Vice President Pence

President Trump also signed critical legislation to fix the National Instant Background Check System to keep deadly weapons away from those who should never have them in the first place. And we're pursuing new resources to ensure that those struggling with serious mental illness have access to the treatment that they need (applause). With the President's leadership, we've joined the NRA to call on states to give families and law enforcement the tools they need to stop mass shootings before they happen, because we know we can protect public safety and due process at the same time. (applause). And President Trump has urged leaders all across America to follow the example of states like Indiana, and allow qualified school personnel on a voluntary basis to carry concealed weapons, because the

³⁰ NRA Statement Regarding Gun Control, Issued Saturday, February 24, 2018.

³¹ Wayne LaPierre, Executive Vice President, NRA, Speech, 2002 Annual Convention.

quickest way to stop a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun!³²

Sound of Applause.

Loudspeaker

The Federal Assault Weapons Ban is a subsection of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, which includes a stop on the manufacture of semi-automatic firearms, including the AR-15 and large capacity magazines. This was a ten-year ban passed by congress on September 13, 1994 with a 52-48 vote. Signed into law by President Clinton. The law ended on September 13, 2004.

Black out.

³² Vice President Pence, NRA Annual Convention Speech, May 4, 2018.

ACT 2

Scene 1

Light up on PERSON 1 and PERSON 2.

Each has what looks like an old style cash register center stage. A receipt comes out of each machine, alternating with the

SOUND: a ding with every report.

Each person takes turns reading the contents spewed out on the receipt and then puts it on the receipt spindle nail, which is placed in between them. As they mention each attack, an ASSAILANT dressed in orange prison clothes enters from stage right and stands upstage center on a riser. If the assailant committed suicide or was killed by police their prison clothes are white. The crowd of assailants keeps growing to 36 Assailants in total.

Loudspeaker

Gun and ammunition manufacturers will have revenues of \$13.3 billion and profits of \$1 billion. Gun and ammunition stores will have revenues of \$85 billion and profits of \$265 million.

1st Person

Thousand Oaks, California, November 7, 2018, Ian Long, 28, killed 12 and injured many at a bar with a semi-automatic handgun with an extended magazine, illegal in California. He assaulted his coach in high school. He was a machine gunner in the military in Afghanistan. He attended Northridge University in 2016. Deputies were called to Long's home. He was irate, acting a little irrationally. They called out a crisis intervention team, they talked to him and cleared him considered that he was suffering from PTSD. The gun used was purchased legally. He died in the melee.

2nd Person

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, October 27, 2018, a gunman killed 11 and injured 6 in the Tree of

Life Synagogue. Robert Bowers, who had an active license to carry guns, had a semi-automatic AR-15 rifle and handguns. He was taken by police after gunfire. He posted his hate rants against the Jewish people on a free speech site, GAB.com. He killed himself.

1st Person

San Bruno, California, April 3, 2018, four people were injured and the shooter, a woman, Nasim Aghdam killed herself. Her brother said she was a gentle soul who advocated for animal rights. She had no record. She killed herself.

2nd Person

Parkland Florida. February 14, 2018, Nikolas Jacob Cruz, 19 years old, killed seventeen people and injured seventeen. He used a semi-automatic rifle. The Broward County Sherriff's office had received 20 calls about him and his younger brother. Cruz was diagnosed years earlier with depression, autism, and ADHD. He received mental health treatment and medication. While he was a student at Stoneman Douglas, he wasn't allowed on campus with a backpack, because, faculty felt he might kill students, and yet he was able to pass the background check to purchase a semi-automatic rifle.

1st Person

Las Vegas, Nevada, October 1 2017, Stephen Paddock, 64, opened fire on a crowd of 22,000 people at a concert, killing 58 and injuring about 700. He used semi-automatic weapons that he modified legally to become automatic. He was taking valium for anxiety. Valium can cause aggressive behavior.

1st Person (continued)

His girlfriend had witnessed his behavior screaming “Oh my god” for no apparent reason. He killed himself.

2nd Person

Dallas, Texas, July 7, 2016, five police officers were killed in a sniper attack by military veteran, Micah Johnson. He used an AK-74 semi-automatic weapon. He targeted officers as racial retribution. Johnson told military, “I feel stress, anger, road rage, my heart feels like someone is pinching it.” Johnson was diagnosed with PTSD. Doctors gave him antidepressants, anti-anxiety medication a muscle relaxant and sleep medication.

1st Person

Orlando, Florida, June 16, 2016, 49 people were killed and 53 were injured at the Pulse nightclub, the gunman was Omar Mateen, 29. He used a Sig Souer semi-automatic pistol. He told an acquaintance a few weeks before “he’d been real worried about whether or not he’d slipped into psychosis.” He had researched anti-psychotic drugs, but no drugs were found in his system.

2nd Person

San Bernadino, California, December 2, 2015. An armed couple, Syed Rizwan and Tashfeen Maliik, fired shots inside a conference hall where employees had gathered, leaving 14 dead and 17 wounded. They were angry that Syed, a Muslim, had to attend a company Christmas party. They used AR-15 style semi-automatic rifles and semi-automatic handguns.

1st Person

Colorado Springs, Colorado, November 27, 2015. Three people were killed, a police officer and two civilians. Nine were wounded

with an assault semi-automatic rifle at a Planned Parenthood clinic. Robert L. Dear Jr., 57, surrendered. He spent decades with mental illness.

2nd Person

Roseburg, Oregon, October 1, 2015. Ten people were shot dead at Umpequa Community College after Chris Harper Mercer, 26, opened fire with a semi-automatic Glock and a semi-automatic rifle and other handguns. He had anger issues all of his life. He was medicated as a teenager. He gave a suicide note to a classmate, days before. He pointed a gun at his mother. Instead of contacting authorities, she went target shooting with him.

1st Person

Chattanooga, Tennessee. July 16, 2015. Five people were killed at two military locations. The gunman was Mohammad Youssuf Abdulazez, 24. He used an AK-47 gas powered automatic rifle, purchased legally. He had suffered from depression most of his life. He self-medicated. His family tried to get him into a mental facility for drug rehab, but insurance wouldn't cover it.

2nd Person

Charleston, South Carolina, June 17, 2015. Nine people were killed at a historic black church. The shooter, Dylann Storm Roof, 21, a white supremacist. He used a Glock semi-automatic pistol. He was first arrested by police for entering a mall wearing all black and asking odd questions, along with having a controlled substance, Suboxone. He told friends he planned on killing people. His friend hid his gun, but his friend was on probation and couldn't have a gun on his premises. He gave it back.

1st Person

Maryville, Washington, October 24, 2014. A fifteen-year-old student, Jaylen Ray Fryberg, opened fire on his high school. He used a Baretta handgun. He killed himself. He lived on an Indian reservation, which has almost double suicide attempts of youth as the national average.

2nd Person

Isla Vista, California, May 23, 2014. Elliot O. Rodger, 22, a college student killed six people. He used a Glock semi-automatic handgun and a Sig Sauer handgun. He committed suicide. He was prescribed anti-depressants but he didn't take them. His parents contacted police three weeks before the killing because of his odd behavior, but nothing was done.

1st Person

Killeen, Texas, April 2, 2014. Ivan Lopez, an Iraq war veteran, killed three and wounded 16 before committing suicide. He used a handgun. There was a paperwork error that caused him to snap. He was under psychiatric care for depression and PTSD. He was prescribed Ambien to help him sleep.

2nd Person

Washington, September 16, 2013. Aaron Alexis, 34, a former Navy reservist, killed twelve and injured three others before being killed. Alexis selected a Remington 870 Express 12-gauge semi-automatic shotgun, after passing a state and federal background check. Alexis had been suffering from some serious mental issues, including paranoia and a sleep disorder, as well as hearing voices. He had been treated by the Veterans Administration for mental problems with trazodone, an anti-depressant. Previously in a

rage blackout, he shot out a car's tires, but no arrest was made.

1st Person

Santa Monica California. June 7, 2013. John Zawahri killed five people including his father and brother with a semi-automatic rifle. His father was abusive and threatened to kill his mother many times.

2nd Person

Newtown, Connecticut, December 14, 2012. Adam Lanza killed 20 elementary school students, children, and six employees at Sandy Hook Elementary School. He killed his mother earlier and then himself. He used her guns, a semi-automatic rifle. He suffered from depression and OCD. He was a loner and had only a texting relationship with his mom.

1st Person

Brookfield Wisconsin, October 21, 2012. Radcliffe F. Haughton, 45 killed three women including his ex-wife at a spa and then himself. There was a restraining order against him. He wasn't allowed to own a gun. Three days before the incident he told his father and neighbors if he had a gun he would kill people. He then went out and purchased a gun. The gun store sold it to him.

2nd Person

Minneapolis, Minnesota, September 27, 2012. Andrew Engeldinger, 36, was fired from a sign company. He killed his boss and four other people. He stopped talking to his family two years before. He suffered from schizophrenia and paranoid. He was taking two anti-depressant medications, Mirtazapine and Trazodone, and Temazepam, a medication used to treat insomnia. They also found 18 empty prescription bottles for a

generic form of the anti-depressant drug Wellbutrin.

1st Person

Oak Creek, Wisconsin, August 4, 2012. Wade Michael Page, 40, killed six people in a Sikh Temple. He had ties to white supremacist groups. He never made eye contact with people. He purchased his gun legally.

2nd Person

Aurora, Colorado, July 20, 2012. James Holmes, 25, went into a movie theatre and killed twelve people, wounding 70. He was wearing body armor. He graduated at the top of his class and then his mental abilities declined. He told school psychologists he wanted to kill people, but for whatever reason they didn't alert authorities. He called a gun range and they said his voice was the most disturbing voice they had ever heard. He bought a semi- automatic gun, no problem.

1st Person

Oakland, California, April 2, 2012. One L. Goh, 43, killed seven people. He was expelled a few months earlier for bad behavior, they didn't refund his tuition. He was in debt. He felt the younger students in the class made him a laughing stock. He purchased his gun legally.

2nd Person

Seal Beach, California, October 12, 2011. Scott E. DeKraai, 42, killed his wife and seven other people. He was wearing body armor and he had three guns legally purchased. His wife had divorced him because he was physically abusive.

1st Person

Tucson, Arizona, January 7, 2011. Gabrielle Giffords, United States Representative, was

shot in the head by Jared Loughner. He killed six people and injured 14. His personality changed while he was in high school. He was asked to leave college to get a mental health evaluation. People in college thought he was capable of mass murder. He was still able to purchase a gun.

2nd Person

Manchester, Connecticut, August 3, 2010. Omar S. Thornton 34, Killed eight people at work with a semi-automatic pistol and a revolver and then he killed himself. As a black man, he felt he was discriminated against.

1st Person

Huntsville, Alabama, February 12, 2010. Amy Bishop killed three and wounded three with a pistol when she found out she wouldn't receive tenure. Odd thing, she killed her brother 20 years earlier before brandishing a shotgun against police, but no charges were filed.

2nd Person

Killeen, Texas, November 5, 2009. Nidal Malik Hasan, a military psychiatrist, killed thirteen people and injured thirty. He was noticed by federal officials months earlier for contacting terrorists. No action was taken.

1st Person

Binghamton, New York, April 3, 2009. Jiverly Wong, 42, killed thirteen and himself. He was delusional, thinking that police were spying on him. He had a gun permit. He didn't speak English well and felt demeaned.

2nd Person

DeKalb, Illinois, February 14, 2008. Steve Kazmierczak killed five students and

wounded 16 and then killed himself. He was treated while in high school for psychiatric problems. In college he was prescribed Xanax (anti-anxiety), Ambien (sleep aid), and Prozac (antidepressant). His girlfriend said that he stopped taking Prozac about three weeks prior to the shooting. She expressed bewilderment over the cause of the rampage, "He was probably the nicest, most caring person ever."

1st Person

Omaha, Nebraska, December 5, 2007. Robert Hawkins, 19, killed eight people and took his own life with a rifle. He threatened to kill his stepmother, Candace Hawkins, with an axe. In psychiatric care, he became a ward of the State, which lasted nearly four years. He had undergone two psychiatric hospitalizations, and was diagnosed with attention deficit disorder, an unspecified mood disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, and parent-child relationship problems. He had valium in his system at the time of the shooting.

2nd Person

Blacksburg, Virginia, April 16, 2007. Seung-Hui Cho, 23, Killed thirty-two victims and wounded many others with semi-automatic pistols at Virginia Tech. He was a quiet child. He was bullied in high school and told students he had a hit list. In college his professors were worried for their safety. Cho was temporarily detained for a psychiatric assessment, as he was suspected to be mentally ill and a danger to himself or others by a Montgomery County, Virginia district court. Special Justice Paul Barnett certified in an order that Cho presented an imminent danger to himself as a result of mental illness, and directed that as a court-ordered out-patient, he follow all recommended treatments. He was released and by law he could still purchase a gun.

Loudspeaker

This is only going back to 2007, but we can go back further...

2nd Person

Stockton School Yard, January 17, 1989.
Patrick Purdy killed 23 people and wounded 27. He used a semi-automatic handgun with a large capacity loading device.

Up stage on screen there is a graph of mass shootings from 1983 – through 2017, furnished by Mother Jones (Appendix B).

Loudspeaker

To be in this group, at least three had to be killed. There have been many studies that say that any bans don't work. Just look at the graph. It seems to me, the ban on semi-automatic weapons helped.³³

Spotlight on Jim Jefferies Look-Alike enters downstage left with a wireless microphone talking as he walks across the stage.

Jim Jefferies Look-Alike

Right? Yah, maybe it's just a coincidence.³⁴

Jim Jefferies Look-Alike exits stage right.

Upstage on-screen are pictures of the University of Texas Tower.

Sound: Gunfire.

1st Person

The first mass shooting that I remember, August 1, 1966, Charles Whitman an engineering major and ex-Marine on the top of the University of Texas Tower with three rifles, two pistols, and a sawed-off shotgun, who had previously complained of searing

³³ Appendix B Graph. Mother Jones.

³⁴ Jim Jefferies stand-up material from *BARE*, Netflix Special, 2015.

headaches and depression, had already murdered his mother, Margaret, and his wife, Kathy. He fired his first shots, aiming with chilling precision at pedestrians below. The crime scene spanned the length of five city blocks . . . Whitman stated that he wanted his brain examined after his death to check for signs of physical cause of mental illness. His request was granted in the form of a police autopsy, which showed that he had a brain tumor.

Blackout.

Scene 2

Spotlight.

Little Woman

So, what do we see? We need a mandatory waiting period to purchase a gun, any gun. There should be a national registry for background checks. All police records and psychiatric records should be included. And maybe that will deter people from seeking psychiatric help. . . . So, to purchase a semi-automatic handgun or rifle, there should be an additional notarized three-person voucher, to determine that the person is sane enough to own a gun. This voucher should include two family members and an associate or friend. And those people should be liable if the person proves not sane.

Little Woman exits.

Center Stage

Lights Up.

PSYCHIATRIST METZL, APA MEMBER, PHILIP VAN CLEAVE, WOMAN, CNN DON LEMON, enter from both sides of the stage and stand facing the audience center stage. There is an empty chair that they stand next to.

Jonathan M. Metzl Psychiatrist
 U.S. gun violence frequently show persons
 diagnosed with mental illness vastly under-
 represented as perpetrators when compared
 with a far more volatile population: the sane.

He exits stage.

American Psychological Assoc. Member
 The use of a gun greatly increases the odds
 that violence will lead to a fatality: This
 problem calls for urgent action. Firearm
 prohibitions for high-risk groups — domestic
 violence offenders, persons convicted of
 violent misdemeanor crimes, and individuals
 with mental illness who have been
 adjudicated as being a threat to themselves or
 to others — have been shown to reduce
 violence. The licensing of handgun
 purchasers, background check requirements
 for all gun sales, and close oversight of retail
 gun sellers can reduce the diversion of guns to
 criminals. Reducing the incidence of gun
 violence will require interventions through
 multiple systems, including legal, public
 health, public safety, community, and health.
 Increasing the availability of data and funding
 will help inform and evaluate policies
 designed to reduce gun violence.

She exits Stage.

Loudspeaker
 Phillip Van Cleave, president of the Virginia
 Citizens Defense League, a Second
 Amendment advocacy group.

Phillip Van Cleave
 In 1966 people walked around with guns and
 with mental illnesses, but no one worried
 about mass shootings. You have to look at
 what's changed, Guns haven't changed,
 schools haven't changed, the buildings

haven't changed. More focus and research should go toward mind- and behavior-altering psychotropic drugs such as Xanax, Zoloft, Prozac, and Adderall being used increasingly to treat anxiety and ADHD, or attention-deficit/hyperactive disorder, particularly in young people.

He exits stage.

Loudspeaker

Social Media reflects the thoughts of population. On Facebook it was posted on October 28, 2018, at 4:12PM.

Woman

154 mass shootings this year and not one committed by a black man or illegal alien. Let that sink in.

She exits stage.

Loudspeaker

CNN Reporter, Dom Lemon said....

Don Lemon

We have to stop demonizing people and realize the biggest terror threat in this country is white men.

He exits stage.

Loudspeaker

Another Facebook post on October 28, 2018 at 10:48P.M., this might have been from a bot, which behaves and interacts as if it were a user. Jeff Eisen has no information about himself posted, no friends and all his posts are consistent with a signature Eisenism. He posts in answer to President Trump's assertion that there needs to be guards at synagogues.

Light illuminates empty chair. Voice-Over of Eisen.

Eisen

No Mr. Trump. This is not a case of good guy with a gun versus a bad guy. It almost never is. Here are the facts: every one of the police who came to the scene was armed. The shooter took out the first six of them because he was armed with an AR-15. A weapon of war. Had the synagogue hired a guard armed with a pistol that would have added one more person to the body count. We don't need armed guards in our places of worship. We need to ban weapons of war.

Light darkens on chair.

SUSAN ORFANOS, Mother of Thousand Oaks victim, enters and walks downstage center wearing a Disneyland sweatshirt.

Susan Orfanos

My son was in Las Vegas with a lot of his friends and he came home. He didn't come home last night. I don't want prayers. I don't want thoughts. I want gun control,

Susan Orfanos (continued)

and I hope to God nobody else sends me any more prayers. I want gun control. No more guns!

Blackout.

Footnotes

- ¹ Peter Schumann founded The Bread and Puppet Theater in 1963, which has a political focus (Van Erven 54). *Radical People's Theatre*. Pre-Preface. Indiana University Press.
- ² Mendelsohn, Daniel. "The Greek Way." *The New York Review of Books*. 11 Apr. 2002.
- ³ Federal Theatre Project, Third Year Report from WPA to Department of Information.
- ⁴ Joseph Doddridge, Notes on the Settlement and Indian Wars of the Western Parts of Virginia and Pennsylvania from 1763 to 1783. Inclusive Together with a Review of the State of Society and Manners of the first Settlers of the West Country (Clearfield, PA: Clearfield, 2012) 109-10.
- ⁵ Federal Theatre Project, Third Year Report from WPA to Department of Information.
- ⁶ Linda Ann Watt, Memory of New York High School in 1975.
- ⁷ Andrew Solomon, *Far from the Tree*, 2012.
- ⁸ Sarah Brady, Remarks Signing of The Brady Gun Control Bill, Washington, 30 Nov. 1993.
- ⁹ George Washington, Letter to Henry Lee, Mount Vernon, Oct. 1786.
- ¹⁰ George Washington, Letter to Lafayette, Mount Vernon, 1788.
- ¹¹ Thomas Jefferson, Letter to Peter Carr, 19 Aug. 1785, Thomas Jefferson Foundation.
- ¹² Jim Jefferies stand-up material from *BARE*, Netflix Special, 2015.
- ¹³ Transcript, Supreme Court Case. District of Columbia v. Dick Anthony Heller. Anderson Reporting Company. 18, Mar. 2018.
- ¹⁴ Jim Jefferies stand-up material from *BARE*, Netflix Special, 2015.
- ¹⁵ Conversation. Remembered by Linda Ann Watt. South Carolina. 2015.
- ¹⁶ Jim Jefferies stand-up material from *BARE*, Netflix Special, 2015.
- ¹⁷ Third Presidential Debate, October 19, 2016. Video. You Tube.
- ¹⁸ Linda Ann Watt, Neighbor of Victim, Weddington, NC, Aug. 29, 2015.
- ¹⁹ David Harsanyi, First Freedom a Ride through America's History with a Gun, Simon and Schuster, October 2, 2018.
- ²⁰ Tamara Dietrich, How to counter mass shootings: mental health care or gun control, 13 Mar. 2018.
- ²¹ David Kopel, The Racist Roots of Gun Control, 23 Feb. 2018.
- ²² NPR Transcript, 31 Mar. 2018, Philip Smith, The National African-American Gun Association.
- ²³ Obama Speech, Obama Fundraiser in San Francisco, 6 Apr. 2008.
- ²⁴ Speech in UNC Charlotte Speech class, Jul. 2016.
- ²⁵ President Trump, White House, CNN Politics, News Room CNN.
- ²⁶ President Trump, "Eliminate Gun Free Zones at Schools," CNN, 7 Jan. 2016. You Tube.
- ²⁷ Jim Jefferies stand-up material from *BARE*, Netflix Special, 2015.
- ²⁸ Jim Jefferies stand-up material from *BARE*, Netflix Special, 2015.
- ²⁹ Emma Gonzalez "March for Our Lives Speech," Guardian News, 24 Mar. 2018, You Tube.
- ³⁰ NRA Statement Regarding Gun Control, Issued 24 Feb. 2018.
- ³¹ Wayne LaPierre, Executive V.P. NRA, Speech, 2002 Annual Convention.
- ³² Vice President Pence, NRA Annual Convention Speech, 4 May 2018.
- ³³ Appendix B Graph. Mother Jones.
- ³⁴ Jim Jefferies stand-up material from *BARE*, Netflix Special, 2015.

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VITA

Linda Ann Watt, born 1958, in New York, is a citizen of the United States of America. Watt has years of professional experience in the entertainment industry. She is a member SAG-AFTRA, AEA, and owner of Corlin Productions, a SAG-AFTRA signatory production house. As an actor, Watt worked in film, television, commercials and theatre. Through Corlin Productions, Watt produces and directs film and television. She directed Betty White, Nell Carter, Tippi Hedren, Dom DeLuise and Sid Caesar for PBS member stations and she produced the educational program, *The Method Based on Stanislavski and Strasberg* with Cloris Leachman, Martin Landau and Shelley Winters, based on the book, *Strasberg's Method: As Taught by Lorrie Hull*, which was the only teaching tool approved by Lee Strasberg.

Watt graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) in 2018. She holds an MFA in Theatre Performance Pedagogy. She holds a BA in Theatre, graduating magna cum laude from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNC Charlotte). Watt received the Karl M. Gabriel – Susan Cernyak-Spatz – Robert C. Reimer Scholarship in 2017, awarded to a student of high potential, when she produced and directed a documentary on the Berlin study abroad program for the language department of UNC Charlotte.

In New York, Watt attended SUNY Nassau Community College, Stella Adler Conservatory, American Theatre of Actors, HB Studio and she received a scholarship and

attended the New York Academy of Theatrical Arts. In Los Angeles, Watt studied extensively at The Beverly Hills Playhouse with Milton Katselas, and with Lorrie Hull, Ph.D. (master teacher for Lee Strasberg).

Watt served on the Board of Directors of Women in Film (WIF) in Los Angeles and chaired and produced the WIF Academy Awards Party for four consecutive years. She received a WIF Angel Award in 1994, an award given for outstanding service. Watt mentored students from universities across the country in film production and offered on-the-job training in film production to the homeless through her production company, located at Raleigh Studios in Los Angeles. She also taught on-camera acting to professional actors who wanted to perfect their craft.

Upon relocating to North Carolina, Watt was a recipient of education grants 2009-2014 from the Union County Community Arts Council, through the North Carolina Arts Council, for her not-for-profit organization, Learn with Laughter, which enabled her to teach an enrichment arts program in Union County Public Schools (UCPS) and produce a SAG-AFTRA New Media film for her acting and filmmaking students. She also presented an informative industry lecture for theatre students at Charlotte-Mecklenburg School (CMS) Northwest School of the Arts. She was invited to teach a master class at Blumenthal Performing Arts Center through their Education Department in 2011. Watt was nominated for a Tony Award[®] for Excellence in Theatre Education in 2015.

Watt is an Adjunct Professor at VCU in the Theatre Department and teaches acting for theatre and film in Atlanta and Charlotte. Along with being a guest lecturer at the

Muriel Moore/Danny Nelson SAG-AFTRA Conservatory in Atlanta, where she teaches Stanislavski's and Strasberg's "Method" techniques, Watt teaches master classes for beginning and advanced students at Mark Squared Studios in Atlanta and at Spirit Square in Charlotte. Watt has served on panels for the North Carolina Arts and Science Council and The Art Institute. Watt is also the Chief Contributing Editor for Broadway World in Charlotte.