2005

Direction of the Play: Rumors

Taunya Lyn Page
Central Washington University

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.cwu.edu/thesis_projects
Part of the Theatre and Performance Studies Commons

Recommended Citation

This Graduate Project is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Student Projects at ScholarWorks@CWU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Student Projects by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@CWU.
Direction of the Play Rumors by Neil Simon

A Project Report
Presented to
The Graduate Faculty
Central Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
Theatre Production

By
Taunya Lyn Page
July 2005
Rumors was selected for production and directed. The script was analyzed; background research was conducted; the costumes and set were designed and constructed; casting and auditions took place; rehearsals were scheduled and completed. Post-production elements were analyzed and supported the original concept statement. Documentation includes analysis of the script and the production at Mountain Home High School.
CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Graduate Studies

Final Examination of

Taunya Lyn Page

B.A., Boise State University, 1999

for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Theatre Production

Committee in Charge

Mr. George Bellah

Dr. Wesley Van Tassel    Mr. Scott Robinson

McConnell Hall

Room 117

Date of Oral Interview

7:30 p.m.
Taunya Lyn Page

Courses presented for the Master's degree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course No.</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Quarter Completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TH 501</td>
<td>Introduction to Graduate Studies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>L. Kash</td>
<td>Summer 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH 510</td>
<td>Studies in Dramatic Literature</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>B. Hubbard</td>
<td>Summer 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH 539</td>
<td>Directing Young Actors</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>W. Van Tassel</td>
<td>Summer 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH 546</td>
<td>Teaching Shakespeare</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>W. Van Tassel</td>
<td>Summer 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH 565</td>
<td>Creative Costuming</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>S. Robinson</td>
<td>Summer 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH 598</td>
<td>Musical Theatre Choreography</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>A. Childress</td>
<td>Summer 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH 511</td>
<td>Analysis &amp; Criticism</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>G. Meshke</td>
<td>Summer 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH 522</td>
<td>Program &amp; Curriculum Activities</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>D. Lane</td>
<td>Summer 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH 540</td>
<td>Graduate Directing I</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>M. Smith</td>
<td>Summer 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH 542</td>
<td>Musical Theatre Directing</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>M. Smith</td>
<td>Summer 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH 544</td>
<td>Acting Styles</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>M. Smith</td>
<td>Summer 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH 580</td>
<td>Scenic Methods</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>D. Lane</td>
<td>Summer 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH 534</td>
<td>Improvisational Techniques</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>D. Lane</td>
<td>Summer 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH 541</td>
<td>Graduate Directing II</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>M. Smith</td>
<td>Summer 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH 584</td>
<td>Puppetry in the Classroom</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>E. Luce</td>
<td>Summer 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH 700</td>
<td>Thesis Project</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>G. Bellah</td>
<td>Spring 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH 700</td>
<td>Thesis Examination</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>G. Bellah</td>
<td>Summer 2005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Credit Requirements - 50
BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Taunya Lyn Page

Born May 26, 1972, Othello, Washington

Undergraduate Study:

Boise State University, 1991-1999

Graduate Study:

Central Washington University, 2002-2005

Professional Experience:

Teacher: Mountain Home High School, Mountain Home, Idaho, American Literature and Drama, 2000-present
TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Title Page ................................................................. i
II. Approval Page ......................................................... ii
III. Abstract ................................................................. iii
IV. Acknowledgments ...................................................... iv
V. Course of Study ......................................................... v
VI. Biographical Information ............................................. vi
VII. Table of Contents ..................................................... vii
VIII. Section I: Preliminary Information
     a) Copy of Committee and Option Approval Form........ 1
     b) Copy of Playscript Approval Form.................... 2
     c) Project Parameters and Schedule.................... 3
     d) Permission of Hiring Authority...................... 6
     e) Evaluation of the Play as a Production Vehicle... 7
     f) Concept Statement....................................... 9
     g) Project Schedule.................................... 12
IX.  Section II: Pre-Production Analysis
     a) Given Circumstances................................. 13
     b) Listing of Previous Action......................... 16
     c) Analysis of Dialogue................................. 18
     d) Analysis of Dramatic Action (one-act example)... 21
     e) Character Analysis.................................. 82
     f) Ideas of the Play.................................... 94
g) Past Productions and Reviews................................. 97
h) The Playwright.................................................... 99
i) Listing of Learning Goals..................................... 104

X. Section III: Post-Production Materials
a) Production Journal.................................................. 105
b) Written Evaluations of Project Committee.................. 117
c) Self-Evaluation..................................................... 119

XI. Bibliography ................................................................. 125

XII. Appendices
a) Production Calendar.................................................. 127
b) Tickets and Program.................................................. 131
c) Costume Plot......................................................... 132
d) Inspiration for Cookie’s Costume................................. 133
e) Cookie Cusack......................................................... 134
f) Initial Set Design.................................................... 135
g) Set Construction Plot................................................. 136
h) Initial Floor Plan.................................................... 137
i) Design Inspirations.................................................. 138
j) Double Door Design.................................................. 139
k) Fireplace Design.................................................... 140
l) The Set................................................................. 141
m) Production Photos.................................................. 145
n) Lighting System...................................................... 153
o) Unedited Reviews............................................ 154

p) Invoice: Production Royalty Fees................................. 159
(Submit in Quadruplicate)  

GRADUATE COMMITTEE  
AND OPTION APPROVAL FORM  
CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Note: This form is to be completed as soon as the student has formed a committee and selected an option from the list below. The form should be submitted in quadruplicate to the Office of Graduate Studies in Barge 305.

Name: Tanya L. Page  
Student ID #:  
Date: December 20, 2004

Check option:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Written Exam*</th>
<th>NonThesis Project</th>
<th>Creative Project</th>
<th>Studio Project</th>
<th>Portfolio Review</th>
<th>Thesis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Indicate credits to be received for the thesis or option:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Masters Thesis Project</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Students taking written exam option may omit items 1-5 below.

1. Proposed Title: Rumors

2. Purpose of Study: Theatre production and text analysis will be the culminating experience for this program.

3. Scope of Study: Documentation based on pre-production research, post-production evaluation, and direction of the production (including design).

4. Procedure to be used: Three phases of study: (1) Pre-production research and thesis documentation, MLA style (2) rehearsal and direction of production (3) Post-production evaluation

5. Does the procedure involve collection of data obtained from Human Subjects (including use of surveys)? Yes** (No)

** If yes, your procedures must be approved in writing by the Human Subjects Committee or the Animal Care and Use Committee before you initiate your research.

George Bellah  
Committee Chair (typed or printed)  
Committee Chair (signature)  
Date: 1/3/05

Wesley Van Tassel  
Committee Member (typed or printed)  
Committee Member (signature)  
Date: 1/3/05

Scott Robinson  
Committee Member (typed or printed)  
Committee Member (signature)  
Date: 1/3/05

Approved by:  
George Bellah  
Dept Chair/Designee (signature)  
Date: 1/4/05

Approved by:  
Signature is illegible.  
Associate VP of Graduate Studies  
Date: 1/21/05

Students will be required to submit two copies of all motion picture film, film strips, sound film strips, slides, tapes, cassettes, pictures, etc. produced as part of the thesis. These are to be submitted at the time the thesis (three copies) is submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies and Research.

Please note:  
The signatures have been redacted due to security reasons.
MASTER'S THESIS PROJECT
PLAYSCRIPT APPROVAL FORM

(Please make sure that you have read the play selection criteria section in your graduate handbook)

Script Title: Rumors

Playwright(s) [If musical, list lyricist/composer]: Neil Simon

Number of Acts: 2  Approximate Total Playing Time: 1 hour 45 min.

CAST (fill in with the appropriate numbers):

Men: 5  Women: 10  Children: 0  Over 40: 2-3

Roles requiring people of color: 0  Roles could double: 1

Total number of cast: 11

Other casting concerns: None at this time

ARTISTIC STAFF (check those needed for this play or production idea):

Musical Director:  □  Dance Choreographer:  □  
Fight Choreographer:  □  Dialect Coach:  □  Specialty Hire:  □  (specify what kind)
Orchestra/Band: (specify what size):  □  
Will you be fulfilling any of the above?  □  If so, which?

Will a guest artist be fulfilling any of the above?  □  If so, which?

SCENERY/PROPS (check those needed for this play or your concept of the play):

Unit Set?: Yes  No (circle one)  Number of Settings: 1  
Historical Period: The present  Geographical Location: New York  
Brief description of set concerns or special requirements: A two story set is called for in the script which could be handled with platforms. Construction of a box set with flats is possible also.

Approximate number of props: 50  Period: None

Difficult or unusual props? Yes  □ No  (circle one) Describe:

Weapons or Firearms? How many: 2  Describe:

Two guns in holsters will be worn by Officer Welch and Officer Roddick.

COSTUMES (check those needed for this play or your concept of the play):

Approximate number of costumes per character: 1  
Historical Period: The present  Season: May - Late Spring

Special requirements:

- Police uniforms
- Tuxedo
JUSTIFICATION FOR CHOICE OF SCRIPT

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS SCRIPT PRODUCED? YES [NO] (CIRCLE ONE)

HAVE YOU DONE THIS PLAY BEFORE? BRIEFLY DESCRIBE YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE PRODUCTION:

No

WHY SHOULD YOUR ORGANIZATION PRODUCE THIS SCRIPT?

This play fits my cast size and my students typically enjoy performing comedy pieces. In addition, my local audience prefers them as well. I have enjoyed Neil Simon's work in text and I would like to produce one of his plays on stage.

WHAT ARE THE DRAWBACKS (IF ANY) TO DOING THIS PRODUCTION AT YOUR SCHOOL?

- The set will be difficult to construct
- Some of the language must be cut for my students to perform this play at the high school level.

PLEASE GIVE A BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF THE SCRIPT ON A SEPARATE SHEET OF PAPER AND ATTACH.

PLEASE INCLUDE A COPY OF THE SCRIPT FOR THE THESIS COMMITTEE TO REVIEW.

Submitted by: Taunya Page

DATE SUBMITTED: July 8, 2004

Brenda Hubbard — approved 7/8/04

Please note:
The signatures have been redacted due to security reasons.
Project Parameters and Schedule

Rumors will be produced April 13 – 16, 2004 in the Mountain Home High School gymnasium, which houses a thirty-five feet wide by fifteen feet deep proscenium stage. There are two battens above the acting area holding fourteen lighting instruments and four ellipsoidals are positioned in the ceiling of the gymnasium. A basketball hoop in front of the stage presents a problem for using the ellipsoidals in a cross-light pattern; even with the hoop raised to its limit, the ellipsoidals have to light the stage in a straight line in order to avoid getting a shadow from the hoop. Our lighting “booth” is located upstairs stage right, which also presents difficulty in lighting the show. Since the light board operator cannot usually see most of the stage, lighting cues are built into the dialogue as a sound cue from the actors.

Actors and production staff are only selected from Encore Co. This is an elective class in which plays are produced for the community year round. Rumors will be double cast (as are all productions) to provide backup actors in case of an emergency or failure of the actors to learn lines. Double casting also gives more students the opportunity to act. This does require more time because two separate casts must rehearse, but backup actors are convenient if necessary. Each cast has two shows and performs every other night.

Unfortunately, Mountain Home School District does not supply Encore Co. with a budget, so all funding for plays is provided through ticket sales from previous productions. Approximately $700 will be available to produce Rumors. The show will have a four-day run with royalty fees and scripts costing $411, including the music royalty for “La Bamba.” The interior set will be constructed with stock flats and doors; however, two additional doors will need to be purchased. An eight-foot long stock platform will be used to create the second floor landing, but a two foot extension for the platform is needed in order to accommodate both doors
needed on the second floor. A small spiral staircase with a banister will be built as well. Additional building supplies will cost approximately $250. Painting the set will cost $20 and set pieces and props will add $250 to the cost of the production unless these items can be borrowed. Encore Co. students will build the set with assistance from their resident builder, Daryl Page. Costume items and accessories will be pulled from stock or borrowed from Boise State University. Any remaining costumes needed will be purchased from thrift stores.

Plastic chairs will be set up for the audience, taking into account the terrible sight lines that emerge. A black cyclorama is available with two legs to mask the wing space and every attempt is made to keep the backstage area from being visible to the audience. Audience numbers are expected to range from fifty to seventy per night with ticket prices set at $3 for students/seniors and $5 for adults. Tickets will be sold at the door. Publicity will be assigned to a small group of students who will advertise the show with newspaper articles, photos, posters, table tents, flyers, bulletin boards, and free tickets to the play.

Auditions and casting will take place during the first week of January 2005 and class time rehearsals will begin January 10th. Because of the school’s block schedule, students are seen every other day for ninety minutes. Each cast has forty-five minutes of rehearsal time with the director; they spend the other forty-five minutes rehearsing with their stage manager. Blocking/working rehearsals will run from January through the beginning of February; polishing characters and their interactions on stage will take place in March to prepare for the April production. During the week before production, each cast has a total of twelve hours of rehearsal with the director outside of class time (including technical and dress rehearsals).

Because of the activities scheduled in the gymnasium, we usually run rehearsals on the stage with the curtain closed during basketball games or practice. This presents difficulty in
blocking the show since there are very few times rehearsals can be directed while viewing the stage from the audience’s perspective. Stage rehearsal time is also sacrificed when outside organizations use the stage for presentation purposes. Therefore, the space is only reserved for Encore Co. during dress rehearsals and performances. Because of this situation, the set cannot be erected until the first week of April. Technical rehearsal will take place on April 8th to prepare for first dress rehearsal on April 9th.

Students have typically had difficulty with voice projection in the theatre space available; therefore, additional time will be spent working on this area with breathing exercises and improvisation activities performed in the space. A choral shell will also be positioned behind the audience to help with the acoustics of the gymnasium and it will hopefully provide the feeling of a more intimate theatre.

In order to help students develop their characters physically and emotionally, improvisation activities will be utilized during class. Additionally, cast members will create a character backstory for their roles and identify character objectives as they work through the dialogue.
October 4, 2004

Theatre Arts Thesis Committee
Central Washington University
400 East 8th Avenue
Ellensburg, Washington 98926-7510

To Whom It May Concern:

Taunya Page has permission to direct and produce Neil Simon’s Rumors in the Mountain Home High School gymnasium. I understand that this production is the culminating thesis project for her Master of Arts degree in Theatre Production from Central Washington University. The show will run from April 13 – 16, 2005 with shows beginning at 7:00 pm. The approximate run time of 2 hours for the show includes intermission.

Sincerely,

Barry Cahill
Principal
Mountain Home High School
Evaluation of *Rumors* as a Production Vehicle

Neil Simon describes his writing experience as a life of duality. The introduction to *The Comedy of Neil Simon* titled “Portrait of the Writer as a Schizophrenic” is a biographical account in which Simon visualizes himself as “half-man, half-beast” (4). Reading this secured interest in selecting one of his plays for the thesis project because his style of writing is enjoyable. His characters are entertaining with their antics and his dialogue is witty. He states,

> I have had to come to grips with the frightening but indisputable truth: I am a creature controlled by some cruel fate that had twisted and warped my personality so that at the first sign of personal involvement, I became transformed from human being into the most feared and dangerous beast on earth, the observer-writer. (4)

Clearly, he is inseparable from his work and dedicated to his field of entertainment.

*Rumors* is a high-energy, fast-paced show that my students will be enthusiastic about performing. Although the characters are much older than high school students, the students will easily identify with the actions of the characters under pressure. They have all experienced moments of panic and loss of control over a situation and many of them have probably weaseled their way out of difficult confrontations. Teenagers are definitely familiar with the concept of rumors since their daily environment is filled with stories of who did what to whom and when. It seems to be an irrepressible part of human nature. Like the characters in the play, students believe what they need to and discard the rest.

Audiences for Encore Co. productions usually consist of parents, teachers, and friends of the actors with the occasional attendance of school district administration and other local community members. Unfortunately, the school gymnasium is a venue full of distractions,
which causes problems in maintaining the audience’s focus. Outside light invades the space from hallway entrances and doors to the gymnasium, so they are covered in an attempt at reducing this problem. The plastic chairs used for audience seating are uncomfortable, but finances are not available to purchase new chairs. For this reason, production time is usually limited to two hours. Additionally, the gym floor is very old and squeaks when anyone walks across it; therefore, a “no late seating or re-entry” rule has been implemented to avoid audience activity after the show begins. However, this does not always keep them still. The best remedy for distraction is to select plays that will hold their attention. Past audiences have responded more positively to modern comedies because they are fast-paced and funny.

Another important consideration in selecting a play for my class is cast size. In order to provide ample opportunity for students to be on stage, plays with larger casts are chosen to accommodate them. In the fall, Encore Co. will consist of twenty-two members. Rumors will need twenty actors and two stage managers in order to double cast the show. Actors are also assigned backstage work such as set construction, prop manager, costume manager, lighting technician, sound manager, and house manager.

One problem with the script is the use of obscenities. Some of the language in Rumors will have to be modified since it is inappropriate for students and the conservative audience. Although the use of strong language adds comic moments, it would not be acceptable by the school district administration and many members of the audience would be offended if their children were expected to use obscenities in a high school play.
Director's Concept Statement

After ten years of marriage, Charley and Myra Brock will celebrate their union of love with close friends as they gather in the Brock home for the decadent anniversary party. The champagne is chilling; the food is ready for preparation; gentle music invites romance; the lights are soft. Then BANG! All hell breaks loose with a gunshot wound to Charley's ear. While he lies in his bedroom dealing with the injury, a whirlwind of energy takes the stage when the characters intrude upon the serenity of the set with running feet, slamming doors, and hurried voices. The pleasant evening in May immediately escalates into an exploding firecracker and tensions mount as ridiculous lies are spilled forth in an effort to protect each other from the truth of the situation. Thus, the dramatic conflict in Rumors is born.

When the play begins, the set is inviting, soft in color and shape and tastefully decorated. White, creams, tans, and shades of gray color the set with variations of blue adding depth to the interior design of the Brock living room. Arched doorways and rounded furniture pieces soften the appearance of the room.

In contrast to the tranquil atmosphere of the stage, the characters immediately create a roller coaster of energy. Being the first to arrive at the party, Ken and Chris Gorman race frantically through the house trying to figure out what to do about Charley's situation. They are anxious and in a state of panic. Their dress is formal and sleek, but warm colors in the costumes reflect the high energy levels of the characters in their frantic search for resolution to this matter. Although they are dressed for an elegant dinner party, all sense of control is absent.

Lenny and Claire bring frustration to the stage with the demise of their new BMW and their tension conquers the scene. Interaction between the two couples is forced and uncomfortable as secrets escalate with Ken's attempt at protecting Charley from scandal.
Lenny’s sarcasm and use of foul language incorporates another dimension to the show. His language tears down the pretense of the tea cup society and brings a stronger sense of realism to the play.

The play continues circus-like, however, with the invasion of more characters throughout the night. Cookie’s terrible fashion sense pulls focus as she enters wearing a sixty-year old Russian dress and she becomes queen of intrusions for the night. Ernie’s clumsy mannerisms and bad jokes combine with Cookie’s back spasms to bring the farcical physical comedy to the stage.

Like a runaway train, tension builds as Glenn and Cassie enter with a cloud over their heads. Suspicion of Glenn’s affair increases as their conversation develops and the idea of relationships begins to be explored. Denial is Glenn’s defense, but Cassie tenaciously pursues the truth with a change in tactics as she attempts to make Glenn jealous.

Every character is unique in appearance and their personalities are evident through the strong physical choices of the actors and costume design. This animation of the characters plays a large role in fulfilling the concept of levels in this show. Although the situation is intense throughout the production, varieties of this intensity convey the mixture of emotion these characters are experiencing in one evening. A platform staircase provides the opportunity for more variation in staging levels in order to reflect the emotional upheaval of the characters. The characters sit, stand, crawl, and kneel throughout the production and their interactions with each other are effective in achieving a sense of chaos on the stage.

Music and lighting elements support the disorder of the production. The initial music acts as the antithesis of the situation about to take place on stage, but the underscore will also
build to crescendo when excitement overwhelms the actors. There is no call for dramatic changes in the lighting during the show; changes will be minimal and subtle.

Because Myra knocks on the basement door at the end of the play, the events of the evening are never resolved. The audience is left to wonder if Lenny’s description of the events could possibly be accurate and the show closes with all the chaos with which it began. Rumors is a roller coaster that does not end. It simply picks up speed and hits another loop.
Project Schedule

Course Work Completion:
July 2004

Thesis Documentation Sections I and II Due:
November 2004

Auditions and Casting:
January 4 - 6, 2005

Blocking/Working Rehearsals:
(Class time rehearsals: Class meets every other day for 90 minutes.)
January 10 – February 25, 2005

Polishing Rehearsals:
March 21 – April 8, 2005 (Class time rehearsals)
April 4 – 7, 2005 (after school rehearsals)

Set Construction:
April 2, 2005 (during class and after school)

Technical Rehearsal:
Friday, April 8, 2005

1st Dress Rehearsal:
Saturday, April 9, 2005 (both casts)

2nd Dress Rehearsal:
April 11, 2005 (cast one)
April 12, 2005 (cast two)

Productions:
April 13 – 16, 2005
7:00 p.m.

Complete Section III Documentation
May 2005

Folder Check and Final Documentation Due:
June 2005

Oral Interview:
July 2005
Given Circumstances

Rumors takes place during present day in the home of Charley and Mrya Brock located in Sneden’s Landing, New York (across from Dobb’s Ferry on the Hudson River). The story begins at 8:30 p.m. in the Brock’s living room on a pleasant Friday evening in May. The average temperatures in May are seventy-one degrees high and fifty-five degrees low. Humidity is high with 4.43 inches average precipitation (weather.com).

The economic environment of the play is indicated through the lavish lifestyle of the characters. The Brock’s live in an expensive home in Sneden’s Landing and they have hired servants to cook and clean for them. Real estate prices in Sneden’s Landing range from $400,000 to millions of dollars. The career choices of the characters have led them to financial success. Ken graduated from Harvard; he and Chris are both lawyers; Lenny handles investments and taxes; Cookie has her own cooking show and comments about enjoying her financial success; Ernie is a psychiatrist; and Glenn is running for state senate. Harry and Joan (not seen on stage) are on vacation in Venezuela and they sent a Steuben vase as a gift. Aside from Cookie, all of the characters are formally dressed in designer clothes for the anniversary party; Chris paid $1200 for her dress. Chris, Claire, and Cookie wear designer gowns to charity events. Lenny just bought a brand new BMW; Myra drives a Porsche and purchased one for her husband as a surprise anniversary gift. They are all members of a private tennis club. This is definitely an upper-class society.

The political environment consists of the modern day democracy of the United States where politicians are concerned with upholding images of good ethical values and leadership abilities. Since Charley is the Deputy Mayor of New York, Ken feels the need to protect him from political and social scandal. If an attempted suicide is revealed, he may be found
unstable and lose his position in the political world. Three of the four men have careers that involve them in politics. Ken is the attorney of a political figure (Charley); Lenny mentions the IRS in relation to what would happen if Charley’s books were examined; and Glenn is running for state senate in Poughkeepsie. Scandal needs to be avoided. When the police arrive, they threaten the political position of the men because they are representative of the legal institution in the country. Simon pokes fun at the system with Lenny’s manipulation of the officers.

Claire’s comment, “Paraguay and Bolivia don’t give a rat’s ass” (Rumors 50) suggests that other countries are self-consumed and they have to worry about their own problems.

The social environment of the play has the façade of gender equality, but the women in the play are expected to follow the lead of their men. Ken takes on the role of leader when he and Chris enter the house because he plans to take care of the situation his way. Chris follows his instructions by repeating to the doctor exactly what Ken tells her to say and later Ken is the one who tells Lenny and Claire about Charley’s situation. Claire’s dialogue builds her as a flighty character and Lenny treats her as such. Glenn is supposedly cheating on Cassie who is developed as a believer in superstition due to the use of her crystal. Cookie is domesticated by her career in the cooking industry and she has been cooking for people throughout her life.

Unlike the younger men, Ernie is helpful and doting with his wife; perhaps he sets an example for the other men in the play. They have been married for a long time and they have maintained a stable relationship. The social structure between the sexes is further demonstrated when the men try to make the decision about who will pretend to be Charley when the police enter. They fail to make the selection with their “finger game” strategy so the women play the game to make the decision.

Aside from Cassie’s belief in her quartz crystal, a religious environment is lacking in the
play. Cassie’s crystal represents freedom of religion in the United States and the variety of religions accepted in modern American society. Cassie believes in the power of her quartz crystal and it seems to bring her comfort at some level. When she accidentally flushes it down the toilet, she is devastated. “It’s a sin to lose a crystal. It’s like killing your own dog” (69). Glenn is embarrassed by her use of the crystal, but Ernie supports her religious belief when he comments, “If crystals work for her, if they give her a sense of comfort and pleasure, what’s wrong with it?” (75). Cassie’s comment about sin could also indicate a Catholic upbringing.

The other characters lack religious fervor and the play is filled with blasphemous comments such as “Oh Jesus” and “goddamn.” Rumors of adultery are prevalent in the play and other behaviors including smoking, drinking alcohol, and lying to the police make it very clear that aside from any religious dogma they may subscribe to, the characters do not lead lives of purity.
Previous Action

- The Brock’s have invited several of their close friends to dinner to celebrate their tenth anniversary.

- Ken and Chris Gorman heard a gunshot as they were driving up to the Brock home and since the front door was locked, Ken broke in to the back of the house through the kitchen window. Ken and Chris have been in the house for about ten minutes when the play begins.

- Upon arrival, they discovered Charley half conscious sitting on his bed with the television on, watching an evangelist show. He was bleeding profusely because of a gunshot wound to his left earlobe, which was apparently self-inflicted, and there was a bottle of Valium on his night table. He had a piece of paper in his hand, but he tore it up and flushed it down the toilet when Ken tried to take it from him. Ken and Chris suspect it might have been a suicide note, but they really have no idea what happened since Charley never said anything to them.

- Chris called Doctor Dudley, but he was at the theatre seeing a production of *Phantom of the Opera*, so she left two messages with the doctor’s answering service for him to call them back. Because this dates the play, we will be changing the reference to *The Producers*.

- Food is ready for preparation in the kitchen, but Myra and the servants are not in the house.

- Lenny and Claire bought a new BMW and were involved in a car accident on the way to the party. Lenny has whiplash and Claire has a minor lip wound. The glass gift they brought for the Brocks is broken.

- Earlier in the day, Myra purchased a 1990 red Porsche as a surprise anniversary gift for Charley and it was stolen off the lot at 8:15 p.m. The driver of the Porsche ran into Lenny’s new car immediately before Lenny and Claire arrived at the party.
• Harold Green told Carole Newman who, in turn, told Claire that Charley is cheating on Myra.

• Harold Green was just voted into the tennis club by proxy.

• Lenny and Claire had recently discussed splitting up.

• Cookie wore her sixty-year old Russian dress to an Emphysema charity function in August. Her back has gone out and she has been having spasms.

• Ernie scheduled a phone session with his Friday night therapy group.

• Harry and Joan were invited to the party, but they cancelled because they went on vacation to Venezuela.

• Glenn and Cassie arrived forty-five minutes late to the party. They have been having trouble in their relationship. For six months Cassie has suspected that Glenn is having an affair with Carole Newman.

• Carole flirted with Glenn and danced with him a week earlier at a cocktail party for the Democratic Fund Raising Committee.

• Glenn is running for state senate in Poughkeepsie.
Analysis of Dialogue

Simon’s use of dialogue is exceptionally natural, which allows the reader to hear the dialogue rather than just read it from the text. According to Edythe McGovern, who has studied his scripts in depth,

He reproduces speech so adroitly that it almost always seems that his characters ‘say’ exactly what they would say were they living human beings and not creations of the playwright’s imagination. This facility with dialogue is indispensable in giving Simon’s characters the plausibility which they must have for audience identification, while simultaneously eliciting laughter crucial to successful comedy. (190)

The short sentence structure keeps pace with the activity on the stage, as it is back and forth conversation between the characters. Overall, the lines are short and to the point, but there are times when the characters deliver two or three sentences at a time. Lenny’s monologue near the end of the play is the exception. This fictional narrative consists of three pages of text and Lenny seemingly makes it up as he goes, yet describes the activities in minute detail. He even uses sound effects like “Tap, tap, tap” (Rumors 109). Lenny’s monologue also includes some nonsensical Spanish that adds comedy to the piece since he does not know what he is saying. “Yo quito se dablo enchilada por quesa in quinto minuto” (110) says Lenny, as he relates what the strange young boy with a gun stated. Lenny then admits that he does not even speak Spanish, but he continues muddling through his invention of foreign language. Aside from Lenny’s futile attempt at Spanish, no dialects are involved in the play.

Language is not at all heightened regardless of the upper class cast of characters. In fact, they use slang and obscenities induced by the tension of their situation. According to
McGovern, Simon "relies neither on the play-on-words (the pun) for its own sake, nor on risqué language to get laughs (189). However, Rumors strays away from this pattern in Simon’s writing, assumedly because it is a farce. This sets it aside from his other scripts and he does use risqué language. Lenny, in particular, uses foul language and Ernie’s exclamations of frustration, such as “Oh fuckerini!” (Rumors 51), contribute to his character development. Because this type of language is not appropriate for a high school production, the actor will have to consider this in developing the character. The subtext should be the same, regardless of the spoken word.

Simon supplies Ernie with affectionate terms to use with his wife, which further develops his character and establishes the nature of their relationship. He calls her “Honey,” “Poops,” and “Chicken” and she refers to him as “Babe,” “Pops,” and “Puppy.” This sort of dialogue is reserved just for them, so it sets them apart from the rest of the characters in that they are a bit older than the other couples and they have a seemingly stronger relationship.

The characters notice some play with the words as they try to figure out the rhyming and alliteration connections between their names. Claire points out that all the women’s names begin with C, except Myra, but her middle name is Clara. Additionally, all the men’s names rhyme: Glenn, Len, and Ken. Charley is the exception, but his begins with C like the women. When Officer Welch enters, he gives his first name, Ben, which happens to rhyme with the other men. This part of the dialogue adds silliness to the serious situation. It is seems to be a trivial thing that Claire picks up on and elaborates, but it could also represent a separation of the sexes. Then again, Simon may have realized this connection when he reached act two in the writing process and decided to incorporate it into the dialogue. In discussing these silly lines, McGovern claims, “[...] we are tolerant of such lines because they are done ‘in character,’ and because the humor
in them stems from the illogical use of words which in another context might be perfectly reasonable” (189). A number of his characters do not talk to each other—or listen, really—and this circumstance, which is so often tragic in life, can be at least momentarily funny on the stage.
Rumors: A Farce by Neil Simon

Analysis of Dramatic Action

ACT I

SCENE: A large, tastefully renovated, Victorian house in Sneden's Landing, New York, about forty minutes from the city. Despite its age and gingerbread exterior, the interior is modern, monochromatic and sparkling clean. A nice combination.

An entrance doorway at Upstage Right leads onto an open vestibule. To the right of the door is a powder room. One step down, is the large and comfortable living room. The color is predominately white.

There are two furniture groupings in the living room. Stage Right are a love seat and two chairs. Upstage of the love seat and near the powder room door is a table and a telephone with a long cord. Center Stage is a large sofa and coffee table. Two chairs Stage Left are part of a grouping with the sofa. On the Stage Left wall is a mirror in an ornate frame. Against the Upstage wall are a well-stocked bar and a stereo system enclosed in a gorgeous cabinet. Between these two pieces is a closed door leading to the cellar.

From the living room, a curved staircase leads to a landing and two doors; each to a bedroom. On the landing is a railed bannister. At the Stage Left end of the second-floor landing is an archway leading to a hallway and more bedrooms. Downstage of this archway is an extension of the balcony which can be used as a playing area.

Through the living room, at Left, double doors lead into a dining room and then, the kitchen. A huge window
above the front door looks out onto a wooded backyard. A large window in the Stage Right wall overlooks a yard and the driveway beyond. Headlights of approaching cars may be seen through this window.

AT RISE: It is about eight-thirty at night on a pleasant evening in May.

CHRIS GORMAN, an attractive woman, mid-thirties, paces anxiously back and forth, looking at her watch, biting her nails. SHE is elegantly dressed in a designer gown. SHE looks at the phone, then at her watch again. SHE seems to make a decision and crosses to the cigarette box on the coffee table. SHE takes out a cigarette, then puts it back.

CHRIS. Oh, my God!

(Suddenly, Charley's bedroom door opens on the second landing and KEN GORMAN, about forty, dressed smartly in a tuxedo but looking flushed and excited, comes out to the rail. THEY BOTH speak rapidly.)

KEN. Did he call yet?

CHRIS. Wouldn't I have yelled up?

KEN. Call him again.

CHRIS. I called him twice. They're looking for him.

KEN. I'm not sure. He's bleeding like crazy.

CHRIS. Oh, my God!

KEN. It's all over the room. I don't know why people decorate in white... If he doesn't call in two minutes, call the hospital.

CHRIS. I'm going to have to have a cigarette, Ken.
KEN. After eighteen months, the hell you are. Hold onto yourself, will you?

(HE rushes back in, closes the door behind him. SHE returns to pacing.)

CHRIS. I can't believe this is happening. (SHE crosses to the cigarette box. The PHONE rings.) Oh, God! (SHE calls out.) Ken, the phone is ringing. (But HE's gone. SHE crosses to phone and picks it up.) Hello? Dr. Dudley? Oh, Dr. Dudley, I'm so glad it's you. Your service said you were at the theatre.

(Charley's bedroom door opens, KEN looks out.)

KEN. Is that the doctor?

CHRIS. (Into phone.) I never would have bothered you, but this is an emergency.

KEN. Is that the doctor?

CHRIS. (Into the phone.) I'm Chris Gorman. My husband Ken and I are good friends of Charley Brock's.

KEN. Is that the doctor?

CHRIS. (Turns, holds phone, yells at Ken.) It's the doctor! It's the doctor!

KEN. (Angrily.) Why didn't you say so? (HE goes back in, closes the door.)

CHRIS. (Into the phone.) Dr. Dudley, I'm afraid there's been an accident ... I would have called my own doctor, but my husband is a lawyer and under the circumstances, he thought it better to have Charley's own physician ... Well, we just arrived here at Charley's house about ten minutes ago, and as we were getting out of our car, we suddenly heard this enormous —
(KEN suddenly comes out of the bedroom)

KEN. Don't say anything!
CHRIS. (To Ken.) What?
KEN. Don't tell him what happened!
CHRIS. Don't tell him?
KEN. Just do what I say.
CHRIS. What about Charley?
KEN. He's all right. It's just a powder burn. Don't tell him about the gunshot.
CHRIS. But they got the doctor out of the theatre.
KEN. Tell him he tripped down the stairs and banged his head. He's all right.
CHRIS. But what about the blood?
KEN. The bullet went through his ear lobe. It's nothing. I don't want him to know.
CHRIS. But I already said we were getting out of the car and we suddenly heard an enormous - what? What did we hear?
KEN. (Coming downstairs.) We heard ...
CHRIS. (Into phone.) Just a minute, doctor.
KEN. (Thinks, coming downstairs.) We heard ... we heard ... an enormous - thud!
CHRIS. Thud?
KEN. When he tripped down the stairs.
CHRIS. Good. Good. That's good. (Into phone.) Dr. Dudley? I'm sorry. I was talking to my husband. Well, we heard this enormous thud! It seemed Charley tripped going up the stairs.
KEN. Down! Down the stairs.
CHRIS. Down the stairs. But he's all right.
KEN. He's sitting up in bed. He'll call him in the morning.
CHRIS. He's sitting up in bed. He'll call him in the morning.
KEN. You!
CHRIS. You! He'll call you in the morning.
KEN. You're very sorry you disturbed him.
CHRIS. I'm very sorry I disturbed you.
KEN. But he's really fine.
CHRIS. But he's really fine.
KEN. Thank you. Goodbye.
CHRIS. (To Ken.) Where are you going?
KEN. Him! Him! Thank him and say goodbye.
CHRIS. Oh. (Into phone.) Thank you and goodbye, Doctor ... What? ... Just a minute. (To Ken as HE goes upstairs.) Any dizziness?
KEN. No. No dizziness.
CHRIS. (Into phone.) No. No dizziness ... What? (To Ken.) Can he move his limbs?
KEN. (Irritated.) Yes! He can move everything. Get off the phone.
CHRIS. (Yells at Ken.) They got him out of Phantom of the Opera. (Into phone.) Yes, he can move everything ... What? (To Ken.) Any slurring of the speech?
KEN. NO! NO SLURRING OF THE SPEECH.
CHRIS. (To Ken.) Don't yell at me. He'll hear it. (Into phone.) No. No slurring of the speech.
KEN. I've got to get back to Charley. (KEN starts to back into Charley's room.)
CHRIS. (Into phone.) Any what? (To Ken.) Any ringing of the ears?
KEN. I can't believe this ... No. Tell him no.
CHRIS. (Into phone.) Yes. A little ringing in the ears.
KEN. I told you to say no.
CHRIS. It sounds more believable to have ringing.
KEN. Jesus!
CHRIS. (Into phone.) Who? His wife? Myra? ... Yes. Myra's here.
KEN. (Rushing downstairs.) She's not here. Don't tell him she's here. He'll want to speak to her.
CHRIS. (Into phone.) Dr. Dudley? My mistake. She's not here. I thought she was but she wasn't.
KEN. She just stepped out. She'll be back in a minute.
CHRIS. (Into phone.) She just stepped back. She'll be out in a minute. Yes. I'll tell her to call.

(KEN goes back upstairs.)

CHRIS. ... Okay, thank you, Dr. Diddley ... Dudley. Enjoy the show. Ken and I saw it, we loved it ... Especially the second act. Who's playing the Phantom tonight?
KEN. Are you going to review the whole goddam show? (KEN goes back into Charley's room.)
CHRIS. Oh, Charley's calling me. (Calls out.) Just a minute, Charley. (Into phone.) He sounds a lot better. I have to go. Yes, Doctor, I will. (SHE hangs up, furious at Ken.) Don't you ever do that to me again. He must suspect something. I didn't get his name right once.
KEN. (Coming out of the bedroom.) If anyone calls again, don't answer it. (HE starts to go into the bedroom.)
CHRIS. Then why did you tell me to answer that one?
KEN. Because I thought the bullet went through his head, not his ear lobe. Fix me a double vodka, I left Charley standing in the shower.
CHRIS. If he drowns, you're making that call.

(KEN goes into the bedroom.)

CHRIS. I don't know why we're always the first ones here. (SHE fixes the vodka.) Never came late once in our lives. Someone else could have dealt with all this. (SHE goes to the cigarette box once more. the DOORBELL rings. SHE jumps.) Oh, SHIT! Shit shit shit shit!

(The upstairs door opens, KEN comes out.)

KEN. Who's that? Who is that?
CHRIS. Am I near the door? Do you see people in here? You think I'm on roller skates?
KEN. Let me think a minute.
CHRIS. Take your time because I don't answer doors. I only speak to Dr. Dudley.
KEN. All right. It's got to be Lenny or Ernie, one of the others. We've got to open the door.
CHRIS. You've got arms, reach down.
KEN. I've got to dry Charley off and bandage his ear. Don't tell them what happened. I need a few minutes to figure this out. Can't you stall them?
CHRIS. His best friends are coming to his tenth anniversary, his wife isn't here, he shoots himself in the ear lobe and I'm supposed to make small talk when they come in?
KEN. Attempted suicide is a criminal offense, not to mention a pretty ugly scandal. Charley's Deputy Mayor of New York. He's my client and my best friend, I've got to protect him, don't I? Just play the hostess for a few minutes until I figure out how to handle this.
(The DOORBELL rings again.)

CHRIS. Play the hostess? There’s no food out, there’s no ice in the bucket. Where’s the help? Where’s the cheese dip? Where’s Myra? What am I supposed to do till you get back, play charades? I’m lucky I can still speak English.

KEN. You’re a lawyer yourself, can’t you figure out something to say?

CHRIS. Contracts! I draw up legal publishing contracts. If someone walks in the door and wants to make a deal, I CAN HANDLE THAT!!

KEN. Take it easy. Calm down. I’ll be right back.

(The DOORBELL rings again.)

CHRIS. Put some slippers on Charley and tell him to answer it.

KEN. (Yells.) Would you relax? Drink my vodka.

CHRIS. Why is a vodka better than two puffs of a cigarette?

KEN. Because they know you quit and if they see smoke in here, they’ll know something is wrong.

CHRIS. You mean falling at their feet is going to look better?

(The DOORBELL rings impatiently.
KEN runs into the bedroom and closes the door. CHRIS crosses to the front door. SHE opens it.
CLAIRE rushes into the living room. SHE’s an attractive woman in an evening gown. SHE holds a handkerchief to the side of her mouth, a purse in the other hand.)
CHRIS. Claire, darling, you look beautiful. Where's Lenny?

CLAIRE. (Coming in.) In the car. We had an accident. Brand new BMW, two days old, the side door is smashed in. Don't tell Charley and Myra, I don't want to ruin tonight for them. (She crosses to mirror and looks at her face.)

CHRIS. Oh, my God! Are you hurt?

CLAIRE. My lip is swelling up. (Looks in the wall mirror.) Oh, Jesus, I look like a trumpet player.

CHRIS. Where's Lenny?

CLAIRE. He's coming. He's walking slowly, he's got whiplash. His seat belt went right around his neck, and pulled him straight up. I left him dangling.

CHRIS. Oh, sweetheart, I'm sorry. Is there anything I can do?

CLAIRE. Just don't tell Myra. This party means so much to her.

(Lenny comes in through the front door. He's wearing a tuxedo, one hand holds the back of his neck, in the other arm he has a gift box from Steuben's.)

LENNY. (In pain, but smiles. His neck is stiff.) Hi, Charley! Hi, Myra! We're here, kids.

CHRIS. They're upstairs, Lenny.

LENNY. (To Chris.) Did she tell you what happened? Some stupid bastard shoots out of his garage like a Polaris rocket. I've got four doors on one side of the car now.

CHRIS. How does your neck feel?

LENNY. Stretched out, over to one side. I look like a Modigliani painting. (He crosses to the phone.)

CHRIS. Do you want a drink?
LENNY. I don't think I could swallow past my shoulders.

CLAIRE. Of all nights to happen.

LENNY. Here's their gift: Steuben glass. (HE shakes box. We hear broken glass RATTLE.) If someone brings them a bottle of glue, they'll have a nice gift. (HE starts to dial, carefully.)

CLAIRE. (Looks at her mouth in a hand mirror.) I could have lost the tip of my tongue. I'd be speaking Gaelic the rest of my life.

LENNY. (Waiting for his call.) A brand new, spotless car, never touched by human hands. Buffed and polished by German women in Munich and now it looks like a war memorial. (Into phone.) Hello? This is Leonard Ganz. Is Dr. Dudley there, please?

CHRIS. Dr. Dudley?

LENNY. (Into phone.) Yes, it is. I have a whiplash injury... I see... Do you know what theatre he's in?

CHRIS. Oh, God, I need a cigarette so badly.

LENNY. Could you? It's important. I'm at... (HE looks at phone.) 914-473-2261... Thank you very much. (HE hangs up.)

CLAIRE. I've got to settle my stomach. Is there anything to eat? Some canapes or something?

CHRIS. Gee, I don't see anything.

CLAIRE. No canapes? Where's the cook, Mai Li? She makes great canapes.

CHRIS. Mai Li? I didn't see her. I think she's off this week.

CLAIRE. The week of their anniversary party?

CHRIS. I think she had to go back to Japan. Her mother was sick.

CLAIRE. Mai Li is Chinese.
CHRIS. I know. Her mother was visiting Japan.
LENNY. (Still bracing his neck.) I can only look up. I hope tall people are coming to this party ... Where's Ken?
CHRIS. Ken? He went to the bathroom.
LENNY. And where's Charley and Myra?
CHRIS. They're still getting dressed.
LENNY. They're not ready? We had a car accident and we're on time.
CLAIRE. (Looks in hand mirror again.) My lip is getting gigantic. I don't think I have enough lipstick to cover it.
LENNY. No nuts or pretzels? I didn't even have lunch today. Three goddam audits with the IRS on an empty stomach. (HE gets up.) Claire, get me a Diet Coke, please, and something to munch on. (HE starts for the stairs.)
CHRIS. Where are you going?
LENNY. To the john. I haven't had a chance to do that either.
CHRIS. There's a guest powder room down here.
LENNY. Isn't Ken using that?
CHRIS. No, he's using the one in the guest bedroom upstairs.
LENNY. (Pointing to the powder room.) Why didn't he use this one?
CHRIS. I don't know. He said he had to go badly and he ran upstairs.
LENNY. If he had to go so bad, the one downstairs is closer.
CHRIS. You know how it is when you have to go badly. You don't want to stop running.
LENNY. But this is a shorter run.
CLAIRE. Lenny, it's not an Olympic event. Why don't you just go?
LENNY. That's why they build guest bathrooms.
(Starts for powder room.) If Dr. Dudley calls, I'll be right out. (HE goes into powder room and closes door.)

CHRIS. Claire, we have to talk.

CLaire. (Goes to sit near Chris.) What is it?
CHRIS. I'm coming apart at the seams.

CLaire. Your dress?

CHRIS. No, my nerves. I think I'm going to crack.

CLaire. I can see. (Taking Chris's hand.) Your hands are like ice. Something is going on here, isn't it?

CHRIS. Oh, God, you're so smart. You're so quick to see things.

CLaire. You're scaring me, Chris. Tell me what's happening.

CHRIS. Well, all right. Ken and I arrived here about ten minutes ago, when suddenly we heard this enormous...

(Charley's bedroom door opens. KEN steps out.)

KEN. Hey, Claire! You look lovely.

CHRIS. Yes! I was just telling her that. She looks enormously well, doesn't she? (To Claire.) Isn't that the dress you wore for Cerebral Palsy?


KEN. Where's Lenny?

CLaire. He's in the john. Where's Charley and Myra?

CHRIS. (To Ken.) Still getting dressed?

KEN. Yes. Still getting dressed... How's the new BMW? Is Len happy with it?

CLaire. Delirious.

KEN. Did he get the new features he asked for?

CLaire. More than he asked for.
RUMORS

KEN. Great.
CLAIRE. Are you through in the bathroom, Ken? I have to go myself. (SHE starts for the stairs.)
KEN. I think Myra’s in there.
CLAIRE. Then I’ll use Mai Li’s bathroom. Call me if she gets back from Japan. (SHE goes into the kitchen.)
KEN. (Waves his arms at Chris.) Up here! Quick!

(CHRIS rushes up the stairs.)
KEN. Hurry up!

(Breathlessly, SHE gets there.)
KEN. What did you tell her?
CHRIS. I can’t remember.
KEN. You can’t remember?
CHRIS. I couldn’t follow it, I was talking so fast. Why can’t we tell them the truth? They’re going to find out anyway.
KEN. I don’t know the truth yet. Charley is still mumbling. Now go inside. He wants to see you.
CHRIS. See me? Why does he want to see me?
KEN. He’s crying like a baby. I can’t stop him. He needs a woman.
CHRIS. ... To do what?
KEN. To cry on. I can reason with him but I can’t comfort him. Let him cry on your shoulder for two minutes, for crissakes.
CHRIS. (Starting into Charley’s room) Is he still bleeding? I paid twelve hundred dollars for this dress.

"Charley Needs a Woman"

K: Interrogates
C: Evades
K: Redirects
C: Grapples
RUMORS

(SHE goes in and closes the door just as LENNY comes out of the powder room.)

KEN. Oh, hi, Len!
LENNY. (Looks up, winces.) Oh, Jesus. (HE grabs his neck.) Hi, Ken. Did you hear about the BMW?
KEN. Yeah. Congratulations. Excuse me. (HE turns to go.)
LENNY. Where are you going?
KEN. To the john.
LENNY. Didn't you just go?
KEN. ... Yes. But not enough. Be right with you.

(HE goes into the guest room, just as CLAIRE comes out)

CLAIRE. This is very weird.
LENNY. Give me the pretzels. (HE grabs the bag.)
CLAIRE. (Pours two Cokes.) There's plenty of food in the kitchen, but nothing's cooked.
LENNY. Why didn't you open this first? (HE struggles with the bag.)
CLAIRE. There's a duck, roast ham, smoked turkey, all defrosting on the table. There's pasta sitting in a pot with no water.

(LENNY can't open the bag. HE bites into it.)

CLAIRE. Everything's ready to go, but no one's there to start it. Doesn't that seem strange to you?
LENNY. Not as strange as him peeing twice in a row ...

... Have you got something sharp, a nail file or something?
CLAIRE. Chris started to tell me something and then she clammed up.
LENNY. The door on my BMW opened like tissue paper but this thing is like steel.
CLAIRE. Her hands were as cold as ice. She couldn’t look me straight in the eye.
LENNY. This would be a safe place to keep your jewelry!! (HE tries one last time to open it, then throws it away.) Goddammit!!
CLAIRE. And why are they taking so long to get dressed? What is that about, heh?
LENNY. What are you so damn suspicious for? Give the people a chance to come down.
CLAIRE. Oh, you don’t notice anything is wrong?
LENNY. Yes, I noticed. I noticed the towels in the bathroom were piled up on the sink and not on the rack. I noticed there’s only a sheet-and-a-half left on the toilet paper. I think it’s sloppy, but not a scandal.
CLAIRE. Really? Well, I’m not so sure I’d rule out a scandal. (SHE walks away from him.)
LENNY. You think I don’t know what you’re talking about? I hear what’s going on. I hear gossip, I hear rumors and I won’t listen to that crap, you understand. He is my friend, she is the wife of my friend.
CLAIRE. Fine! Okay, then forget it.
LENNY. I don’t listen to filth and garbage about my friends.
CLAIRE. I said forget it.
LENNY: (Looks at her.) ... All right. Come here. (HE walks to the extreme Downstage Right corner of the living room.)
CLAIRE. What’s wrong with here?:

RUMORS 23
RUMORS

LENNY. They could hear us there. Here is better. Will you come here!

(SHE crosses to him. HE looks around, then to her.)

LENNY. It's not good.
CLAIRE. What's not good?
LENNY. What I heard.
CLAIRE. What did you hear?
LENNY. Will you lower your voice?
CLAIRE. Why? We haven't said anything yet.
LENNY. All right. There's talk going around about Myra and— This hurts me. Stand on my other side. I can't turn.

(SHE turns with her back to him. HE moves to her other side.)

LENNY. There's talk going around about Myra and Charley. Only no one will tell it to my face because they know I won't listen.
CLAIRE. I'll listen. Tell it to my face.
LENNY. Why would you want to hear things about our best friends? He's my best client. He trusts me. Not just about investments and taxes, but personal things.
CLAIRE. I don't do his taxes, what's the rumors?
LENNY. Jesus, you won't be satisfied till you hear, will you?
CLAIRE. I won't even sleep with you until I hear. What's the rumors?
LENNY. ... All right. Your friend Myra upstairs is having herself a little thing, okay?
CLAIRE. What kind of thing?
LENNY. Do I have to spell it out? A thing. A guy. A man. A fella. A kid. An affair. She’s doing something with someone on the sly somewhere and it’s not with Charley. Okay?
CLAIRE. You don’t know that. You only heard it. You haven’t seen it.
LENNY. Of course I haven’t seen it. You think they invite me to come along? What’s wrong with you?
CLAIRE. You are so naïve, it’s incredible. Get real, Lenny. Myra’s not having anything with anybody. Your friend, Charley, however, is running up a hell of a motel bill.
CLAIRE. He may not be looking at her, but he’s screwing her.
LENNY. Will you lower your voice! ... Where did you hear this?
CLAIRE. Someone at the tennis club told me.
LENNY. Our tennis club?
CLAIRE. What is it, a sacred temple? People gossip there.
LENNY. Christ! Bunch of hypocrites. Sit around in their brand-new Nikes and Reeboks destroying people’s lives ... Who told you this?
CLAIRE. I’m not going to tell you because you don’t like this person anyway.
LENNY. What’s the difference if I like them or not? Who told you?
CLAIRE. Carole Newman.
LENNY. CAROLE NEWMAN?? I knew it, I knew it. I hate that goddam woman. She’s got a mouth big enough to swallow a can of tennis balls.
(The guest room door opens and KEN steps out onto the landing.)

KEN. (Affably:) How you two doing?
LENNY. Hey! Just fine, Ken.
KEN. Had anything to eat yet?
LENNY. Just a plastic bag.
KEN. Great! Be right back.

(KEN goes into Charley's bedroom and closes the door.)

LENNY. Wasn't it Carole Newman who spread the other rumor?
CLAIRE. What other rumor?
LENNY. The rumor that you and I were breaking up.
CLAIRE. No. It wasn't Carole Newman.
LENNY. It wasn't? Then who was it?
CLAIRE. It was me.
LENNY. You started the rumor?
CLAIRE. Me, you, the both of us. When we were thinking about separating, didn't we go around telling everyone?
LENNY. We told friends. That bitch told strangers.
CLAIRE. Hey! Hey! Do not call Carole Newman a bitch to my face. Besides, Carole Newman didn't start the rumor about Charley. Someone else at the club told her.
(SHE walks to the bar.)
LENNY. Who was the one who told her?
CLAIRE. Harold Green.
LENNY. Harold Green? Who the hell is Harold Green?
CLAIRE. He's a new member. He was just voted in last week.
LENNY. I never voted for him.
CLAIRE. Yes, you did. By proxy. We were in Bermuda.
LENNY. I don't believe it. A goddam proxy new member spreads rumors about my best friend? Who does he play tennis with?
CLAIRE. He doesn't play tennis. He's a social member. He just eats lunches there.
LENNY. ... This son of a bitch is a non-playing proxy social new member who just eats lunches and spreads rumors? What does he do for a living?
CLAIRE. He sells BMW's

(Charley's bedroom door opens and KEN steps out.)

KEN. Did anyone else get here yet?
CLAIRE. Not to speak of, no.
LENNY. Is anything wrong?
KEN. (Coming downstairs.) Why? Does anything seem wrong to you?
LENNY. You mean aside from the fact there's no food, no guests, no host, no hostess, and that you and Chris only appear one-at-a-time and never together. Yes, I'd say something was wrong.
KEN. Okay. (HE's looking at the floor, thinking.) Okay, sit down, Len, Claire.

(LENNY and CLAIRE sit. HE sits in the chair opposite.)

KEN. All right, I can't keep this quiet anymore ... We've got a big problem on our hands.
LENNY. (To Claire.) Aha! What did I just say, Claire?
CLAIRE. You just said, "Aha!" What is it, Ken? Tell us.
KEN. Charley ... Charley, er ... Charley's been shot.
CLAIRE. WHAT???
LENNY. SHOT???
CLAIRE. Oh, my God!
LENNY. Jesus Christ!
CLAIRE. Don't tell me this!
LENNY. I can't catch my breath.
CLAIRE. Please don't let it be true.
LENNY. (Wailing.) Charley, Charley, no! No, Charley, no!!
KEN. Take it easy, he's not dead. He's all right.
CLAIRE. He's not dead?
LENNY. He's all right?
KEN. He's alive. He's okay.
LENNY. Thank God, he's alive!
CLAIRE. Where was he shot?
KEN. In the head.
CLAIRE. In the head? The head? Oh, my, God, he was shot in the head!!
KEN. It's all right. It's not bad. It's a superficial wound.
LENNY. Where did the bullet go?
KEN. Through his left ear lobe.
CLAIRE. The ear lobe? That's not too bad. I have holes in my ear lobes, it doesn't hurt.
LENNY. I saw this coming, I swear. The truth, Ken, did she do it?
KEN. Who?
LENNY. Myra, for crissake. Who else would it be?
KEN. Why would Myra shoot Charley?
CLAIRE. You don't know what's going on?
LENNY. You haven't heard?
KEN. No. What's going on?
CLAIRE. Charley's been having a hot affair with someone.
LEN NY. It's not hot. You don't know if it's hot. Nobody said it was hot. (To Ken.) It's an affair. A plain affair.
KEN. (To Lenny.) Who told you this?
LEN NY. Nobody told me that. What I heard was that Myra was having a thing.
KEN. A thing with who?
CLAIRE. Someone else told me it was Charley who was having the affair.
KEN. What someone else?
LEN NY. Some bitch at the club named Carole Newman.
CLAIRE. She is not a bitch. And she only told me what Harold Green told her.
KEN. Who's Harold Green?
LEN NY. (Quickly.) Some goddamn proxy new social member who doesn't even play tennis. Comes to the club to eat lunches and spread rumors.
CLAIRE. Well, it seems to me Charley's the one who's having the affair if Myra was hysterical enough to shoot him.
KEN. Listen to me, will you, please? Myra didn't shoot him. Charley fired the gun. He tried to kill himself. It was attempted suicide.
CLAIRE. SUICIDE???
LEN NY. Jesus Christ!
CLAIRE. Oh, my God!
LENNY. Don't tell me that.
CLAIRE. I don't believe it.
LENNY. (Wailing.) No, Charley, no! Charley, Charley, no!
KEN. Will you stop it! It's enough grieving. He's all right.
CLAIRE. Oh, Charley.
LENNY. It's all because of that no-good fucking Harold Green. That guy's out of the club. I can get the votes.
KEN. Can we stick to the main topic here? Nobody knows if anybody had an affair. I don't know why Charley shot himself.
LENNY. (To Ken.) So how is Myra taking this? My God, she must be a wreck.
CLAIRE. (Rising.) I should go up to her. Let me go up to her.
KEN. (Stopping Claire.) Don't go up to her. There's no point in going up to her. She's not here. She's gone.
CLAIRE. She's gone? Charley shoots himself in the head and Myra leaves the house?
LENNY. She walks out on him now? Now when he's laying up there with a bullet in his ear?
KEN. It's not in his ear. It went through his ear. WILL YOU LISTEN TO ME? PLEASE!!! ... Maybe she wasn't even here when it happened. Chris and I were driving up when we heard the shot. The front door was locked. I ran around the back and broke in the kitchen window.
CLAIRE. I saw that. I thought maybe Mai Li did it and maybe Myra fired her. But I didn't know then that Mai Li's mother was sick in Japan.
LENNY. (To Claire.) Don't talk for a while. Let me and Ken talk. You just listen. (To Ken.) So you broke in and rushed upstairs. Was he on the floor?

KEN. No. He was sitting in bed. The television was on. One of those evangelist shows. A bottle of Valium was on the night table. He was half-conscious. I figured maybe he took a couple of pills to make himself drowsy, put the gun to his head, started to fall asleep and shot himself through the ear.

CLAIRE. Is that blood on your shirt, Ken?

KEN. (Looking down at his shirt.) Where?

CLAIRE. Below the second stud.

KEN. Oh, shit, I didn't see that. That won't come out, will it?

LENNY. That's what you're worried about? A stain on your dress shirt?

KEN. I don't give a damn about my shirt. I'm trying to prevent Charley from getting a suicide rap. When the others walk in here, I don't want to explain to them how I got blood on my good silk shirt.

CLAIRE. You could borrow one of Charley's.

KEN. He's two sizes too big for me.

CLAIRE. I don't think they'd notice your cuffs if Charley has a big bandage on his ear and Myra's not even at the party.

LENNY. Let the man finish the story, will you, please? (To Ken.) Did he tell you anything? Did he say why he did it?

KEN. Not a word. He was barely conscious.

LENNY. Did he leave a note or anything?

KEN. He had a piece of paper in his hand. I tried to take it from him, but he tore it up and threw it into the john. He flushed before I could get to it.
CLAIRE. This is not happening. I'm not hearing this.
LENNY. (To Ken.) Did you call the police?
KEN. No. Just the doctor. We told him he fell down
the stairs. As long as he wasn't hurt, I didn't want to make
this thing public.
LENNY. We've got to call the police. This man is the
Deputy Mayor of New York. We're talking front page on
the New York Times. Pictures of Charley with his suit
jacket over his head.
KEN. Exactly. That's what I'm trying to avoid till we
find out what happened.
LENNY. If we keep this quiet, we're all accessories. I
deal with the IRS boys. I'd be the first one they'd go after.
KEN. Why would they go after you?
LENNY. With attempted suicides, they open up
everything. They'd want to see his books, his portfolio,
his entire financial picture. They'd want to know how a
Deputy Mayor could afford a big house like this.
KEN. That's no secret. Myra's a wealthy woman. She
bought the house.
CHRIS. She did? I didn't know that.
LENNY. (To Ken.) You hear that? Now tomorrow
it'll be all over the tennis club.
KEN. I'm not bringing in the police until I have to. I
don't know what you're nervous about. Unless you have
something to hide you don't want the IRS to know.
LENNY. Are you accusing me of hiding something?
I'm the one who wants to bring in the police. Maybe
you're the one who has something to hide. You made out
his contracts. You made out his will.
KEN. Are you accusing me and Charley of conspiracy
to defraud the city?
(CAR LIGHTS flash on the window.)

CLaire. I hear a car pulling up.
LENNY. (To Ken, starting for the phone.) If you're not calling the police, I am.
KEN. Oh, no you're not.
LENNY. You're telling me what I'm not going to do?
CLaire. (At the window.) It's pulling up the driveway.
LENNY. Suppose the neighbors heard the gunshot and have already called the police?
KEN. I'll deal with that problem when it arises.
LENNY. Maybe the car is the police. Then the problem has arisen.
CLaire. (Looking out the window.) It's a Volvo station wagon.
LENNY. A Volvo?!!
KEN. Now I suppose you're worried it's the Swedish police.
CLaire. It's Ernie and Cookie.
LENNY. Ernie and Cookie?
KEN. (To Claire.) Why didn't you tell us?
CLaire. Why didn't you listen?

(LENNY and KEN join Claire at the window. Charley's bedroom door opens and CHRIS steps out.)

CHRIS. Ken, Myra and I are having trouble with her zipper.
KEN. No, you're not.
CHRIS. I'm not?
KEN. They know about it.
CHRIS. About Myra's zipper?
LENNY. We know that Myra's not here. Ken told us.
CHRIS. Oh.
CLaire. (At the window.) They're stopping to look at our BMW.
CHRIS. Did you tell them about Charley cutting his ear shaving?
KEN. They know everything. The gunshot, the ear lobe, the flushed note down the toilet, everything.
CHRIS. (Angrily to Ken, coming downstairs.) Why didn't you tell me you told them? ... They must think I'm an idiot.
LENNY. How is Charley?
CHRIS. He fell asleep. He's hugging the pillow with his thumb in this mouth.
CLaire. They're coming up to the house. I can't believe she's wearing a dress like that to a party like this.
KEN. All right, what do we do? Do we tell them or not?
CLaire. Why not? Ernie is Charley's analyst. Everything you tell your analyst remains confidential.
LENNY. What his patients tell him. We're not his patients. His patient is asleep sucking his thumb.
CHRIS. I can't believe I'm paying a baby sitter for this night.

(The DOORBELL RINGS. THEY ALL freeze.)

LENNY. So what did we decide? Do we call the police or not?
CHRIS. I say no. Cookie has her cooking show on television. Suppose she accidentally says something on the air?
LENNY. On a cooking show? Do you think she gives out suicide recipes?
KEN. I still think we say nothing till I find out what’s happened. Better safe than sorry. Claire, open the door.
LENNY. Chris, get us some drinks. Let’s look like we’re having fun.

(CHRIS rushes to the bar, gets drinks and sits beside Lenny on the sofa.)

CLAIRE. So what is it? We’re telling Ernie but we’re not telling Cookie?
LENNY. We’re not telling either one of them! I’m sorry we told you!

(The DOORBELL RINGS.)

LENNY. Just open the door!
KEN. Claire, don’t open it until I get upstairs. If Charley wakes up, maybe I can get the story from him.
(Dashes upstairs to Charley’s bedroom.)
CHRIS. (To Ken.) I took the Valium away from him. I hid them in the medicine cabinet.
KEN. Gee, what a good hiding place. (Exits into Charley’s room.)

(CLAIREF crosses to the front door. LENNY and CHRIS quickly sit on the sofa with their drinks as if THEY’re having an amusing chat.)

LENNY. (To Chris.) So, Mrs. Thatcher replies, “I don’t know, perhaps it’s in my umbrella stand.”
CLAIRE. (At the front door.) Are we ready?
LENNY. Yes! We're ready, we're ready!

(CL AIRE smiles and opens the front door. CHRIS and LENNY break into loud LAUGHTER.
ERNIE and COOKIE are at the door. ERNIE is in his early fifties, in a tux and carrying a gift box. COOKIE is in her forties, wears a god-awful evening gown. SHE carries a sausage-like cushion under her arm.)

CLAIRE. Cookie! Ernie! It's so good to see you.
(Hugs them both.)
CHRIS. Oh, God, that is so funny, Lenny. You should have been an actor, I swear.
CLAIRE. Everybody, it's Ernie and Cookie.
LEN NY. (Still laughing.) Hi, Ernie. Hi, Cookie.
CHRIS. (Waves, laughing.) Hi, Cookie. Hi, Ernie.
CHRIS. (To Lenny.) So go on with the story. What did Mr. Gorbachev say?
LEN NY. (After an awkward silence.) Mr. Gorbachev? ... He said, "I don't know. I never ate cat food before."

(There is much forced LAUGHTER.)

ERNIE. Sorry we're late. Did we miss much?
CHRIS. You have got to get Lenny to tell you the story about Mrs. Thatcher and the cat food.

(LEN NY shoots Chris a dirty look.)

ERNIE. (Laughs.) It sounds funny already. Heh heh heh.

COOKIE. Everyone looks so beautiful.
CLAIRE. Cookie, I am crazy about the dress. You always dig up the most original things. Where do you find them?

COOKIE. Oh, God, this is sixty years old. It was my grandmother's. She brought it from Russia.

CLAIRE. Didn't you wear that for Muscular Dystrophy in June?

COOKIE. No. Emphysema in August.

CLAIRE. (Looking at the cushion.) Oh, what a pretty cushion. Is that for Charley and Myra?

COOKIE. No, it's for my back. It went out again while I was dressing. (SHE opens the pretzels, easily.)

ERNIE. You all right, honey?

COOKIE. I'm fine, babe.

CHRIS. You and your back problems. It must be awful.

COOKIE. It's nothing. I can do everything but sit down and get up.

ERNIE. Hey, Lenny, is that your BMW? (HE laughs.) Looks like you put a lot of miles on in two days.

LEN. A guy shoots out of a garage and blind-sides me. The car's got twelve miles on it. I've got a case of whiplash you wouldn't believe.

COOKIE. (Crossing to other side of the room.) Oh, I've had whiplash. Excruciating. My best friend had it for six years.

(LEN. nods sardonically. SHE picks up the Steuben gift box.)

COOKIE. Oh, this looks nice. Who brought this? (SHE turns it to see the label but loses control and drops
Oh, my God ... Did I break anything? (SHE shakes the box. It RATTLEs.) What was it?
LENNY. Steuben glass.
COOKIE. Oh, don't tell me! Lenny! Claire! ... I'm so sorry.
ERNIE. It was an accident, honey. (To, Lenny and Claire.) We'll replace it, of course.
LENNY. Sure, if you want. I don't care.
CHRIS. What about a drink, everyone?
ERNIE. I'll have something.
CHRIS. What do you want?
CLAIRE. I'll get it.
LENNY. (Getting up.) I'm right near the bar. ERNIE. You're all going to get me a drink? Such friendly people. I'd love a bourbon, please.

(CHRIS crosses to the bar.)

COOKIE. I should have let what's-her-name pick it up. Moo Loo.
CHRIS. Mai Li ... Here you go, Em. (Gives Ernie his drink.)
COOKIE. Where's Ken?
CLAIRE. Ken? Ken's with Charley.
COOKIE. And Myra?
CLAIRE. Myra's with Ken ... They're waiting for Myra to get dressed.
COOKIE. (Grabbing the back of a chair and screaming.) Ooooh! Ooooh! Ooooh!
CLAIRE. What is it?
COOKIE. A spasm. It's gone. It's all right. It just shoots up my back and goes.
ERNIE. You all right, poops?
RUMORS

COOKIE. I'm fine, puppy.
LENNY. Listen, maybe we should all sit outside. It's such a beautiful evening.

ERNIE. (Smiles.) Okay. Okay, you kids, what's going on here?
CLAIRE. What do you mean?
ERNIE. You think I don't notice everyone's acting funny? Three people want to get me drinks. Chris wants me to hear this funny story. Lenny wants to get us all outside. Everyone creating a diversion. Why? I don't know. Am I right?
CHRIS. No wonder you're such a high-priced doctor.
OK... Someone's going to have to tell them.
LENNY. Tell them what?
CHRIS. About the surprise.
LENNY. What surprise?
CHRIS. The surprise about the party.
COOKIE. What surprise about the party?
CHRIS. Well, I think it's the cutest thing, isn't it, Claire?
CLAIRE. Oh, God, yes.
CHRIS. Tell them about it.
CLAIRE. No, you tell it better than I do.
COOKIE. I'm sorry. I think I'm going to have to sit down.
CHRIS. I'll help you.
LENNY. I'll do it.
CLAIRE. I've got her.

(They all help lower Cookie onto the sofa, beside Ernie.)

COOKIE: The cushion. I need the cushion.
LENNY. Here it is. *(HE puts the cushion behind her back.)*

ERNIE. You all right, chicken?

COOKIE. I'm fine, Pops ... So what's the big surprise about?

CHRIS. Well ... Charley and Myra decided ... because they were going to have their closest friends over to celebrate their tenth anniversary ... they weren't going to have any ... servants.

COOKIE. *(Nods.)* Uh huh.

CHRIS. No Mai Li, no anybody.

COOKIE. *(Nods.)* Uh huh.

CHRIS. Isn't that terrific. No help. Just us.

COOKIE. Why is that terrific?

CHRIS. Because!! We're all going to pitch in. Like in the old days. Before money. Before success. Like when we were all just starting out. Those were the best times in our lives, don't you think?

COOKIE. No, I hated those times. I love success.

CHRIS. But don't you find these are greedier times. Lazier, more selfish. Nobody wants to work anymore.

COOKIE. I work fourteen hours a day. I cook thirty-seven meals a week. I cook on my television show. I cook for my family. I cook for my neighbors. I cook for my dogs. I was looking forward to a relaxed evening. *(SHE reconsidered.)* But I don't want to spoil the fun. What do we have to do?

CLAIRE. We have to cook.

COOKIE. You mean all of us cooking in the kitchen together?

CHRIS. Everyone except Charley and Myra. Claire and I told them to stay up there and relax. We'll call them when we're ready.
COOKIE. What are we going to make?
CLAIRE. It's all laid out. Roast ham, smoked turkey, duck and pasta?
ERNIE. Roast ham? Duck? ... That's too much cholesterol for me.
LENNY. Ernie, we didn't come here to live longer. Just to have a good time.
COOKIE. I just don't understand why we're all wearing our best clothes to cook a dinner.
CLAIRE. That's not your best clothes. It's a fifty-year-old Polish dress.
COOKIE. A sixty-year-old Russian dress.
ERNIE. The dress is hardly an issue worth arguing about.
COOKIE. I didn't say we wouldn't cook it.
ERNIE. She didn't say we wouldn't cook it. Why is everyone getting so worked up about this?
CLAIRE. All right, Ernie, let's not turn this into group therapy, please.
ERNIE. This is nothing like group therapy, Claire. You, of all people, should know that.
LENNY. Oh, terrific. Let's just name all the people in your Thursday night group, Ernie, heh?
COOKIE. Why are Ernie and I being attacked? We just walked in the door.
CHRIS. Please lower your voices. We're going to spoil the surprise for Charley and Myra.
ERNIE. What surprise? It was their idea.
COOKIE. Listen, I don't want to take the blame for ruining this party. (To the Group.) I'll do all the cooking myself and Ernie'll do the serving.
ERNIE. Honey, no one's asking you to do that.
CHRIS & CLAIRE. If she wants to do it, let her.
LEN. If it makes her happy, she can clean up, too.
COOKIE. (Struggling to her feet.) Okay, then it's settled. Just give me forty-five minutes. I promise you this is going to be the best dinner party we ever had.

(Suddenly, we hear a GUNSHOT from Charley's room.)

COOKIE. Oh, my God!

(EVERYONE freezes. COOKIE falls back onto the sofa.)

CLAI'RE. Oh, give me a break.
ERNIE. What the hell was that?

(Charley's bedroom door opens and KEN, looking harried, comes out, looks over the railing and tries to appear calm.)

KEN. It's fine. It's okay. It's all under control. Hi, Ernie. Hi, Cookie. Oh, Chris, honey, could I see you up here for a minute ... (HE smiles at them and returns to Charley's bedroom.)

CHRIS. (Politely.) Would you all excuse me for a minute? I hate when this happens. (SHE goes calmly up the stairs and into Charley's room.)

ERNIE. Am I crazy or was that a gunshot?
LENNY. A gunshot? Nooo. I think it was a car backfiring.

ERNIE. In Charley's bedroom?
COOKIE. Ernie, maybe you should go up and see.
LENNY. Why? Chris and Ken and Charley and Myra are up there. There's more of them than us.

COOKIE. You just can't ignore a gunshot. Ernie, please go up and see.

LENNY. Oh, I know. I know. I know exactly what it was ... It was a balloon. They've been blowing up party balloons up there all day.

ERNIE. What kind of a balloon was that, the Goodyear blimp? ... I'm going up.

LENNY. Then how are we going to get the dinner ready? Charley and Myra must be starved. You and Cookie get started. I'll have a white wine spritzer, Ern. Claire, why don't you put on some music? (Rushing upstairs.) I'll be right down. Let me know if Dr. Doolittle calls. (HE disappears into Charley's bedroom. The TELEPHONE rings.)

CLAIRE. I'll get it. (SHE crosses to the phone.)

ERNIE. I still think it sounded like a gunshot.

COOKIE. Let's get dinner started, Ern. Help me up.

(Tries to get up out of the sofa.)

CLAIRE. (Into the phone.) Hello? ... Who? Dr. Cusack? Yes, he is. Who is it, please?

ERNIE. (To Claire.) Is that for me?

CLAIRE. (Into phone.) Uh huh. Uh huh. (To Ernie.) It's a conference call. Mr. and Mrs. Klein, Mr. and Mrs. Platt, Mr. and Mrs. Fishman.

ERNIE. Oh, it's my Friday night group. I have a telephone session with them.

COOKIE. Go on, honey. I can get up myself.

(ERNIE runs into the kitchen.)
RUMORS

CLAIRE. (Into phone.) He's coming, folks. (The other line on PHONE RINGS. SHE switches buttons.) Hello? ... Yes it is. No, my husband, just called.

(CLICK. SHE gets down on the floor and crawls on her hands and knees.)

CLAIRE. Yes, I'll tell him. (SHE holds the phone.) LENNY. (Comes out of Charley's room.) Who's on the phone?

CLAIRE. Dr. Dudley's service.
LENNY. (Nods and comes downstairs. HE sees Cookie crawling on the floor.) Oh, my God. What's that?

CLAIRE. It's Cookie.

COOKIE. It's all right. I do this all the time. It takes the pressure off my back.

LENNY. Where's Ernie?

CLAIRE. (Pointing toward the kitchen.) In there. He's got a session with his Friday night group.

LENNY. They're all in the kitchen?

CLAIRE. No. On the telephone.

COOKIE. (Crawling toward the dining room.) Ah!

Ah! Ah!

LENNY. Your back again?

COOKIE. No. Little shirt pins on the floor. (SHE crawls off into the kitchen.) Ah! Ah! Ah!

LENNY. (To Claire.) She must be such fun to live with.

CLAIRE. What happened upstairs? Is Charley all right?

LENNY. He was sleeping. Ken wanted to hide the gun in the closet so Charley wouldn't find it. He tripped on
Charley's slippers and the gun went off next to his head. He can't hear a thing in both ears.

CLAIRE. Ken or Charley?

LENNY. Ken. Charley was out cold from the Valium.

(SEES THE PHONE IS HUNG UP.)

CLAIRE. They hung up. I already took the message.

LENNY. You couldn't tell me that while I was on the balcony? What'd they say?

CLAIRE. They said Dr. Dudley already called this number. He doesn't want to be called out of the theatre again.

LENNY. (Angrily re-dials the phone.) I'm getting a new doctor. I'm not putting my life in the hands of the drama critic for Mount Sinai Hospital. (Into phone.) Hello? This is Leonard Ganz again. Dr. Dudley did not call this number. Please have him call me back. It's important. (HE hangs up the phone.)

CLAIRE. So what did Ken want Chris upstairs for?

LENNY. To call Ken's doctor to ask him what to do for his ears. He wouldn't be able to hear what the doctor was saying on the phone. I've got to get back upstairs.

(HE starts back upstairs.)

CLAIRE. You mean she told the doctor a gun went off? Then she'll have to explain about Charley.

LENNY. No. She was going to say Ken was outside and a manhole cover blew up next to him.

CLAIRE. That's a good idea.

LENNY. Except the doctor wasn't in. His service said he was still at the theatre. There must be some kind of flu going around on Broadway. (HE runs upstairs. When HE hits the top step, the PHONE rings.) They purposely wait till I get on top of the stairs. Answer that, will you?
CLAIRE. (Crossing to the phone.) This is all too hard to follow. I need a bookmark in my head or something. (SHE picks up the phone.) Hello? Oh, Dr. Dudley, thanks for calling back. (To Lenny.) You want to speak to him?

LENNY. (Running down the stairs.) No. I’m taking a stress test.

CLAIRE. You know, if Ernie can’t figure out something’s wrong here, I’m not going to his group anymore.

LENNY. (Picking up the phone.) Hello, Dr. Dudley? ... Thanks for calling back ... Well, some idiot nailed me in my BMW about twenty minutes ago. I’ve got a little whiplash here ... Charley? Charley Brock? ... No, I wasn’t calling about Charley. Why? (Covering the phone, to Claire.) Jesus! Dr. Dudley is Charley’s doctor, too. (Into the phone.) No, Charley’s a lot better. He’s resting now ... Chris Gorman? You know Ken and Chris? Yes, I think she did call. (Covering the phone, to Claire.) He’s Ken’s doctor, too.

CLAIRE. Maybe he has a franchise.

LENNY. Will you make yourself busy. Put on some music. (Into phone.) Dr. Dudley? I’m sorry. A cold compress? ... Good idea. Let me connect you to Chris. Hold on. (HE presses “Hold” button, then looks at extension numbers.) Which button rings in Charley’s room?

CLAIRE. Why? Who’s going to hear it up there?

LENNY. (Not covering phone.) Jesus, you are a pain in the ass. I’d better run up and get Chris. (Taking the phone off “Hold.”) Dr. Dudley? ... What? ... Oh, yes, my wife has a pain, too. It’s no bother. Can you hold for Chris, please? (Putting the phone on “Hold,” then dashing upstairs.) We owe this guy a gift. Let’s give him Cookie
as a patient. See where Ernie is with my drink, will you?
(HE goes into Charley's bedroom.)

(The dining room door opens and ERNIE comes out with a
drink.)

ERNIE. I thought I heard Lenny in here. I have his
spritzer.
CLAIRE. I'll hold it for him. How's Cookie? (SHE
takes the drink.)
ERNIE. Not well. I gave her some aspirins for her
back, but she dropped them in the sauce.
CLAIRE. Good. Then we'll all get rid of our
headaches.
ERNIE. Did Lenny say what that sound was?
CLAIRE. The gunshot?
ERNIE. It was a gunshot?
CLAIRE. No, I was referring to the sound you
thought was a gunshot.
ERNIE. It wasn't a balloon, I know that.
CLAIRE. No. It was a can of shaving cream. It
exploded.
ERNIE. Shaving cream exploded?
CLAIRE. It's all right. It washes off.
ERNIE. Incredible.
COOKIE. (Sticking her head out the dining room
doors.) Ernie? I need you to put out some garbage.
ERNIE. I'm not through talking to my group yet.
COOKIE. They're fighting with each other. I put them
on hold.

(COOKIE and ERNIE exit into the kitchen.)
Charley's bedroom door opens and LENNY and KEN come out. KEN holds a towel over his ears.

LENNY. It'll clear up in a minute. These things don't last long.
KEN. You think this'll last long?
LENNY. (Opening the guest room door.) Lie down in the guest room for a while, Ken. You'll feel better.
KEN. (Looking into the guest room.) Maybe if I lie down in the guest room for a while...
LENNY. Right.
CLAIRE. (To Lenny.) What did the doctor say to Chris?
LENNY. He referred her to another doctor. He's not feeling well himself... My neck is killing me again. Where's my spritzer?
KEN. (Coming out of the guest room; to Lenny.) Is your sister here?
LENNY. No, my spritzer!! Come on, Ken. I'll heat that towel up again.
KEN. Don't tell your sister about Charley. Not till we hear the whole story.

(THEY go into the guest room.
The kitchen door opens and COOKIE comes out. SHE holds a ladle in one hand and her other hand supports a bag of ice on her hip.)

COOKIE. I've got a problem, Claire, can you help me? Ernie went out the kitchen door to put out some garbage bags and the door locked. My hands are full of grease. Could you let him back in?
CLAIRE. Of course. We would all miss him terribly.
(SHE exits to the kitchen.)
ERNIE. (Enters through the front door on his own.) I purposely went around so you wouldn't have to go to the door.

(Charley's bedroom door opens and CHRIS steps out.)

CHRIS. Oh, hi! ... Where's Claire?
COOKIE. She went out to the kitchen to let Ernie in.
CHRIS. (Looking at Ernie.) Oh. Okay (SHE smiles and goes back into Charley's bedroom, closing the door.)

(The dining room door opens and CLAIRE comes out.)

CLAIRE. Oh, there you are ... Cookie, the water's boiling over on the pasta.
COOKIE. Why didn't you turn it down?
CLAIRE. I don't know. I don't watch your show.
COOKIE. I'll get it. Ernie, get another bag of ice. I'm melting. (SHE exits into the kitchen.)
ERNIE. (Following Cookie, to Claire.) I'm beginning to feel like one of my patients. (HE laughs and goes to the kitchen.)

(Charley's door opens and CHRIS comes out.)

CHRIS. (Big smile.) Well, everything is just fine.
CLAIRE. It's all right. They're in the kitchen.
CHRIS. God, I'd smoke a Havana cigar if I had one.
(Coming downstairs, scratching under her arms.) I'm getting hives under my arms. (Going to bar to make herself a vodka.) Did you hear about Ken? He's deaf.
CLAIRE. He's better off. He's out of this thing now.
CHRIS. Why are we protecting Charley this way? Ken is deaf, Lenny can't turn his neck, Cookie's walking like a giraffe, I'm getting a blood condition. (SHE scratches.) For what? One more gunshot, the whole world will know anyway.
CLAIRE. The whole world isn't interested. Paraguay and Bolivia don't give a rat's ass.

(We hear another CAR coming up the driveway.)

LENNY. (Coming out of the guest room.) There's another car coming up.

(We see the HEADLIGHTS flash on the window.)

LENNY. Was anyone else invited?
CHRIS. Harry and Joan, but they cancelled. They went to Venezuela. But they said they'd call tonight.
LENNY. From Venezuela?
CLAIRE. Jeez, maybe they will hear about it in Bolivia.
LENNY. So who's coming up the driveway?
CHRIS. Maybe it's Myra. Maybe she's come back.
LENNY. Myra drives a Porsche. This is an Audi. (HE comes halfway down the stairs.)
CLAIRE. Ask Ken. He might know.
LENNY. Ken is reading lips right now. I don't think he can pick up on "Audi."

(We hear a loud CRASH from the kitchen.)

LENNY. Jesus, what the hell was that?
CHRIS. Cookie just blew up the micro-wave, what else?
LENNY. Chris, go inside and see what happened. Claire, go to the window and see who's coming. I'll go up and see how Ken and Charley are doing ... (HE has been gesturing with a white towel.) I feel like I'm at the fucking Alamo. (HE rushes upstairs, just as:)

(The dining room door flies open and ERNIE comes out, flicking his fingers in pain.)

ERNIE. Damn, I burned my fingers! Hot hot hot, oh, God, It's hot!
CHRIS. Oh, dear.
ERNIE. Sonofagun, that hurts. Oh, fuckerin!
CLAIRE. What happened?
ERNIE. (Quickly.) Cookie dropped her ice bag and slipped against the stove. The hot platter was about to fall on her, so I lifted it up. Then I dropped it on the table and it broke the water pitcher and the glass shattered on her arm and she's bleeding like hell. I got a dish towel on her wrist and I propped her up against a cabinet. But I need some bandages for her arm and some ointment for my fingers. I never saw anything happen so fast.
LENNY. I can't believe he's in pain and said all that without missing a word.
CLAIRE. (To Lenny.) Get the bandages. Why are you standing there?
LENNY. I was hoping there was more to the story. (HE rushes into Charley's room and closes the door.)
ERNIE. I'm sorry, Claire. Did you ask for a drink?
CLAIRE. Listen, you have other things to think about.
ERNIE. Right. (HE exits.)

(CHRIS and CLAIRE stare at each other.)

CLAIRE. You know what this night is beginning to remind me of? ... Platoon.

(A car DOOR slams outside.)

CHRIS. There’s the car. I don’t even want to know who it is. Why don’t you go and look?

CLAIRE. Like it’s going to be good news, right?

(SHE crosses to the window and looks out.) It’s Glenn and Cassie.

CHRIS. Glenn and Cassie Cooper? Together?

CLAIRE. That’s how they’re walking.

CHRIS. I heard they were having trouble.

CLAIRE. Not walking. (SHE comes away from the window.)

CHRIS. Jesus! Do you know that Glenn is running for the State Senate in Poughkeepsie.

CLAIRE. So?

CHRIS. That’s all he needs is to walk in here and be part of a hushed-up suicide attempt. He can kiss his career goodbye.

CLAIRE. Maybe Ken’ll figure this all out before they ring the doorbell.

(The DOORBELL rings.)

CLAIRE. Well, it’s going to be a tough campaign.
CHRIS. Listen, I have to go to the bathroom. You get the door, I'll be right out. *(SHE starts for the powder room.)*

CLAIRE. Wait a minute! I haven't gone since I got here.

CHRIS. Yes you did. In Mai Li's room.

CLAIRE. Yes, but no one was at the door then.

CHRIS. The hell with it. Someone else'll get the door. Come on.

(THEY BOTH go into the powder room and close the door behind them.

The DOORBELL rings again. LENNY comes out of the guest room.)

LENNY. Isn't anybody going to get the door? ...

Chris? ... Claire? ...

KEN. *(Peering out from the guest room.)* Are you talking to me?

LENNY. No, Ken. Put the towels back on your ears.

*(Yelling down.*) Claire? ... Chris? ... Where are you? ... Ah, screw it. I'm beginning to feel like my car. *(HE goes back into the guest room and closes the door.)*

(The dining room door opens and ERNIE comes out with paper towels wrapped around the fingers on both hands. HE is wearing an apron. HE shouts up.)

ERNIE. Lenny? You got those bandages?

(The DOORBELL rings again.)
ERNIE. Nobody getting that door? ... These kids are up to something, I know it. (HE crosses to the front door and tries to open it with burned fingers. HE is finally successful.)

(GLENN and CASSIE COOPER, a handsome couple, stand there in evening clothes. GLENN holds a gift from Ralph Lauren's. THEY seem very much on edge with each other.)

ERNIE. (Smiles.) Hello.
GLENN. Good evening.

(THEY walk in, look around. ERNIE closes the door with his foot.)

ERNIE. Good evening. I don’t know where everyone is.
CASSIE. You mean we’re the first?
ERNIE. No. Everyone’s here. They’re just — spread out a little.
GLENN. Could I have a drink, please? Double Scotch, straight up.
CASSIE. (Not looking at Ernie.) Perrier with lime, no ice.
ERNIE. Sure. Fine. I don’t believe we’ve met. I’m Ernie Cusack.
GLENN. (Coolly, nods.) Hello, Ernie.
ERNIE. Excuse my hands. Little accident in the kitchen.
GLENN. Sorry to hear it.
ERNIE. I would stay and chat but my wife is bleeding in the kitchen.

35) "Meet the Butler"
E: Welcomes
G: Orders
Ca: Dismisses
E: Apologizes
GLENN. Your wife?
ERNIE. Cookie. A water pitcher broke, cut her arm. I burned my fingers.
GLENN. That's a shame.
ERNIE. Nothing to worry about. We'll have dinner ready soon. Nice meeting you both. (HE returns to the kitchen.)

GLENN. I wonder why they're not using the Chinese girl?
CASSIE. Do I look all right?
GLENN. Yes. Fine.
CASSIE. I feel so frumpy.
GLENN. God, no. You look beautiful.
CASSIE. My hair isn't right, is it? I saw you looking at it in the car.
GLENN. No, I wasn't.
CASSIE. What were you looking at then?
GLENN. The road, I suppose.
CASSIE. I can always tell when you hate what I'm wearing.
GLENN. I love that dress. I always have.
CASSIE. This is the first time I've worn it.
GLENN. I always have admired your taste is what I meant.
CASSIE. It's so hard to please you sometimes.
GLENN. What did I say?
CASSIE. It's what you don't say that really drives me crazy.
GLENN. What I don't say? ... How can it drive you crazy if I don't say it?
CASSIE. I don't know. It's the looks that you give me.
GLENN. I wasn't giving you any looks.
CASSIE. You look at me all the time.
GLENN. Because you're always asking me to look at you.
CASSIE. It would be nice if I didn't have to ask you, wouldn't it?
GLENN. It would be nice if you didn't need me to look, which would make it unnecessary to ask.
CASSIE. I can't ever get any support from you. You've got all the time in the world for everything and everyone else, but I've got to draw blood to get your attention when I walk in a room.
GLENN. We walked in the room together. It was already done. Cassie, please don't start. We're forty-five minutes late as it is. I don't want to ruin this night for Charley and Myra.
CASSIE. We're forty-five minutes late because you scowled at every dress I tried on.
GLENN. I didn't scowl, I smiled. You always think my smile looks like a scowl. You think my grin looks like a frown, and my frown looks like a yawn.
CASSIE. Don't sneer at me.
GLENN. It wasn't a sneer. It was a peeve.
CASSIE. God, this conversation is so banal. I can't believe any of the things I'm saying. We sound like some fucking TV couple.
GLENN. Oh, now we're going to get into language, right?
CASSIE. No, Mr. Perfect. I will not get into any language. I don't want to risk a scowl, a frown, a yawn, a peeve or a sneer. God forbid I should show a human imperfection, I'd wake up with the divorce papers in my hand.
GLENN. What is this thing lately with divorce? Where does that come from? I don't look at you sometimes because I'm afraid you're thinking you don't like the way I'm looking at you.

CASSIE. I don't know what the hell you want from me, Glenn. I really don't.

GLENN. I don't want anything from you. I mean I would like it to be the way we were before we got to be the way we are.

CASSIE. God, you suffocate me sometimes ... I want to go home.

GLENN. Go home? We just got here. We haven't even seen anyone yet.

CASSIE. I don't know how I'm going to get through this night. They all know what's going on. They're your friends. Jesus, and you expect me to behave like nothing's happening.

GLENN. Nothing is happening. What are you talking about?

CASSIE. Don't you fucking lie to me. The whole goddam city knows about you and that cheap little chippy bimbo.

GLENN. Will you keep it down? Nothing is going on. You're blowing this up out of all proportions. I hardly know the woman. She's on the Democratic Fund Raising Committee. I met her and her husband at two cocktail parties, for God sakes.

CASSIE. Two cocktail parties, heh?

GLENN. Yes! Two cocktail parties.

CASSIE. You think I'm stupid?

GLENN. No.

CASSIE. You think I'm blind?

GLENN. No.
CASSIE. You think I don’t know what’s been going on?
GLENN. Yes, because you don’t.
CASSIE. I’m going to tell you something, Glenn.
Are you listening?
GLENN. Don’t you see my ears perking up?
CASSIE. I’ve known about you and Carole Newman for a year now.
GLENN. Amazing, since I only met her four months ago. Now I’m asking you to please lower your voice. That butler must be listening to everything.
CASSIE. You think I care about a butler and a bleeding cook? My friends know about your bimbo, what do I care about domestic help?
GLENN. I don’t know what’s gotten into you, Cassie. Do my political ambitions bother you? Are you threatened somehow because I’m running for the Senate?
CASSIE. State Senate! State Senate! Don’t make it sound like we’re going to Washington. We’re going to Albany. Twenty-three degrees below zero in the middle of winter Albany. You’re not Time’s Man of the Year yet, you understand, honey?
GLENN. (Turning away.) Oh, boy, oh, boy, oh boy!
CASSIE. What was that?
GLENN. (Deliberately.) Oh-boy, oh-boy, oh-boy!
CASSIE. Oh, like I’m behaving badly, right? I’m the shrew witch wife who’s giving you such a hard time. I’ll tell you something, Mr. State Senator. I’m not the only one who knows what’s going on. People are talking, kiddo. Trust me.
GLENN. What do you mean? You haven’t said anything to anyone, have you?
CASSIE. Oh, is that what you’re worried about? Your reputation? Your career? Your place in American history? You know what your place in American history will be? ... A commemorative stamp of you and the bimbo in a motel together.

GLENN. You are so hyper tonight, Cassie. You’re out of control. You’ve been rubbing your quartz crystal again, haven’t you? I told you to throw those damn crystals away. They’re dangerous. They’re like petrified cocaine.

(CASSIE is looking through her purse.)

GLENN. ... Don’t take it out, Cassie. Don’t rub your crystal at the party. It makes you crazy.

(SHE takes out her crystal. HE grabs for it.)

GLENN. Put it away. Don’t let my friends see what you’re doing.

CASSIE. Fine. Don’t let my friends see what you’re doing.

(The guest room door opens. LENNY comes out onto the balcony.)

LENNY. Glenn! Cassie! I thought it was you. How you doing?

KEN. (From inside the guest room.) I’m feeling better, thanks.

LENNY. Not you, Ken. It’s Glenn and Cassie.

GLENN. (Big smile.) We’re fine. Just great. Hi, Len ... Cassie, it’s Len ... Cassie.

CASSIE. (A quick nod.) Leonard.
LENNY. Did it suddenly freeze up out there?
GLENN. Freeze up?
LENNY. Isn't that an icicle Cassie has there?
GLENN. No. It's a quartz crystal.
LENNY. Oh. Where's Chris and Claire?
KEN. (From the guest room.) Did somebody come in?
LENNY. (Angrily, to Ken.) GLENN AND CASSIE!!
I TOLD YOU!! (To Glenn.) It's Ken. His ears are stuffed up. Bad cold ... Who let you in?
GLENN. The butler.
LENNY. The butler? The butler's here?
GLENN. He's getting us drinks.
LENNY. Is he alone?
GLENN. No, the cook's with him.
LENNY. Mai Li? God, what a relief. They came back.
We didn't have any help here for a while.
GLENN. Really? Where's Charley and Myra?
LENNY. Charley and Myra? I guess they're in their room.
KEN. (From the guest room.) My towel fell off, Lenny.
LENNY. (Angrily, to Ken.) I'LL GET YOU A TOWEL. I'VE GOT TO GET THE BANDAGES FIRST. (To Glenn.) Excuse me, kids. I've got to get some bandages. (HE knocks on Charley's door.) Charley? Myra? Is it all right if I come in? (In Myra's voice.) Sure, come on in. (HE goes into Charley's room and closes the door.)

(The guest room door opens and KEN comes out.)

KEN. Lenny? ... Lenny, where'd you go?

(GLENN and CASSIE look up.)
GLENN. Ken? Hi. It’s Glenn and Cassie.
GLENN. Yes, and Cassie. I hear you have a cold.
KEN. You think I look old? I haven’t been sleeping well lately... Hi, Cassie. Do the others know you’re here?
GLENN. Yes, we just saw Lenny.
KEN. Have you seen Lenny?
GLENN. Yes. He went into Charley’s room.
KEN. I’m sorry. I can’t hear anything. A manhole cover just blew up next to my ear.
GLENN. That’s terrible.
KEN. I said, “A manhole cover just blew up next to my ear.”
GLENN. Yes. I hear you.
KEN. I’m sorry. I can’t hear you. Anyone getting you a drink?
GLENN. Yes, the butler.
KEN. Sorry, there’s no help here. They’re in the Orient somewhere.
CASSIE. *(To Glenn.)* I think he’s gone dotty.
KEN. Yes, a hot toddy would be nice. I’m going to see if Lenny’s in Charley’s room. We’re all coming down soon.* *(HE knocks on Charley’s door.)* Myra? Mind if I come in?
LENNY. *(As Myra, from inside.)* Sure, honey. Come on in.

*(KEN goes into Charley’s room.)*

CASSIE. I’ll be right back.
GLENN. Where are you going?
CASSIE. To rinse off my crystal. *(Starting to the powder room.)* ... I suppose you'd like to make a quick phone call while I'm gone, huh? *(SHE tries to open the powder room door, but it's locked.)* Anyone in there?  
CHRIS. *(From inside.)* Who is it?  
CASSIE. Cassie. Who's that?  
CHRIS. *(From inside.)* It's Chris ... Just a minute, Cass. *(We hear a FLUSH. CHRIS comes out and closes the door.)* I didn't hear you ring, Cassie. I would have opened the door. Hi, Glenn. *(SHE crosses to him and gives him a kiss. By now she's getting pretty crocked from her vodkas.)*  
GLENN. Hi. Listen, is anything going on here?  
CHRIS. I don't know ... Who have you seen?  
GLENN. Well, Lenny and Ken for just a second. And the butler and Mai Li.  
CHRIS. You saw Mai Li and the butler? My God, I must have been in there for a long time.  
CASSIE. Are you through in the bathroom?  
CHRIS. Me? Yes. Sure.  
CASSIE. *(Tries the door again, but it's locked.)* You left it locked.  
CLAIRE. *(From inside.)* Who is it?  
CASSIE. Cassie. Who's that?  
CLAIRE. *(From inside.)* It's Claire. Just a minute, Cass. *(We hear a FLUSH. The door opens and CLAIRE comes out.)* Hi, Cass. Hi, Glenn. Don't you look beautiful ... Where are the boys?  
GLENN. Well, Lenny and Ken are up with Charley and Myra. Myra sounded very excited.  
CLAIRE. You spoke to Myra?  
GLENN. No. I heard her talk to Ken and Len.  
CLAIRE. I'd love to have a copy of that conversation.
CASSIE. Is anyone else in the bathroom, because I have to go. (SHE looks inside, then goes in and locks the door behind her.)

CHRIS. (To Claire.) Mai Li and the butler are here.

CLAIRE. You're kidding. Where's Ernie and Cookie.

GLENN. I just met Ernie. Isn't he the butler?

CHRIS. Oh. No. Okay. We've got that one cleared up.

GLENN. Then they're just back from the Orient?

CHRIS. I imagine so. You're so well informed.

GLENN. Why is everyone up in Charley's room?

CHRIS. Oh. There was something on TV they all wanted to watch.

CLAIRE. Right. Very good, Chris.

(Charley's bedroom door opens, and LENNY comes out.)

LENNY. (Jovial.) Well, this is beginning to look like a party.

GLENN. What were you all watching up there?

LENNY. Up where?

GLENN. On TV.

CHRIS. (To Lenny.) The thing you went up to watch with Ken and Charley and Myra.

LENNY. Oh. OH! That thing. That show. The PBS Special on what's-his-name?

CLAIRE. ... Hitler?

LENNY. Yes. The thing on Hitler. (HE comes downstairs, glaring at Claire.)

GLENN. On their tenth anniversary you wanted to watch a special on Hitler?

LENNY. Hitler as a boy. A whole new slant on him.
ERNIE. (Comes out of the dining room door. HE carries two drinks.) Dinner's coming along. (To Glenn.) Double Scotch, straight up.

GLENN. Oh, thanks.

ERNIE. Lenny, have you got the bandages?

LENNY. The bandages? Yes, I have them. I left them on Hitler ... On the television. I'll be right back. (HE runs back upstairs and into Charley's room, closing the door behind him.)

GLENN. Listen, I'm sorry. I mistook you for the butler.

ERNIE. I kind of thought you did. No, I'm an analyst.

GLENN. Oh, for pete sakes. I'm Glenn ... How's your wife doing?

ERNIE. The spaghetti's boiling, but the duck is still frozen.

GLENN. No, I meant her arm.

ERNIE. Oh, not too bad. She's a trouper. Her fingers are cramping up a little.

GLENN. Maybe she ought to see a doctor. Charley has one ten minutes from here, Dr. Dudley.

CHRIS. Oh. We called him. He's busy.

ERNIE. You called about Cookie's arm?

CLAIIE. No, about Lenny's neck.

GLENN. Lenny's neck?

CHRIS. And when the doctor called back, we told him about Ken's ears.

ERNIE. (To Glenn.) Isn't that incredible? From a can of shaving cream exploding?

GLENN. I thought it was a manhole cover.

CLAIIE. It was. But the pressure from the manhole cover made the shaving cream can explode.

ERNIE. (To Glenn.) I didn't hear that.
LENNY: (Coming out of Charley's room with the bandages. HE runs downstairs.) I got 'em. I got 'em.

GLENN: There certainly is some excitement around here.

CLAIRE. (To Lenny.) Guess who Glenn's doctor is?
LENNY. You're kidding. I wish I did his taxes.
ERNIE. Wait a minute! Glenn Cooper! From Poughkeepsie. You're running for the State Senate.

GLENN. That's right.
ERNIE. I have a good friend who knows you very well.

GLENN. Really? Who's that?
ERNIE. Harold Green.
LENNY. Harold Green! (LENNY drops the bandages.)

CLAIRE. Harold Green?
GLENN. Sure. I know Harold Green. We went to the University of Pennsylvania together. I haven't seen him in years. What's he doing now?
LENNY. He's a proxy new social member who just eats lunches and doesn't play tennis.

GLENN. Oh. At your club? (GLENN hands the bandages to Ernie.)

LENNY. Ernie, Cookie's waiting in the emergency room.

ERNIE. Right. (To Glenn.) There's your wife's Perrier. Nice to meet you, Glenn. (As HE exits to the kitchen.) ... thought I was the butler.

(Charley's door opens and KEN comes out.)

KEN. Somebody! Please! I need a drink real bad.

GLENN. How's your ears, Ken?
KEN. (Coming downstairs.) A beer would be fine, thanks.

GLENN. Maybe Charley has some ear drops. (To Lenny.) Did you see any in the medicine cabinet when you were getting the bandages?

LENNY. No, I didn't think of that.

GLENN. I'll go up and look.

(He starts to go up the stairs. Lenny and Ken block him.)


(The Telephone rings.)

KEN. Is there a cat in here?

CHRIS. A cat?

KEN. I just heard a cat meow. (The Telephone rings again.) There it is again.

GLENN. That's the phone, Ken.

KEN. Why would he want a bone? It's a cat, not a dog.

(The Telephone rings again.)

LENNY. I'll get it.

KEN. We're hungry, too, pussy. We haven't eaten either.

LENNY. (Into phone.) Hello? ... Who? ... I'm sorry, operator. We have a bad connection ... Oh, yes. Yes. (To Others.) It's Harry and Joan from Venezuela. They're calling Charley and Myra.
RUMORS

CLAIRE. This is going to be good.

GLENN. Joan? That's Cassie's cousin. Wait, I'll get Cassie! I'm sure she'll want to speak to her. (HE knocks on the powder room door.) Cassie?

LENNY. (Into phone.) Hello, Joannie. It's Lenny. How are you? ... Yes, everybody's here ... Yes, we're having a great time ...

GLENN. Cassie?

LENNY. (Into phone.) Charley and Myra? Of course they're here. What did you think? (HE laughs and motions for CLAIRE and CHRIS to laugh, too.) Sure. Just a minute. (Covering the phone) Claire! Speak to her.

CLAIRE. Me? She's calling Charley and Myra.

LENNY. Will you speak to her!! (HE shoves the phone at Claire.)

GLENN. (Knocking on the powder room door.) Cassie? It's your cousin Joan from Venezuela.

CLAIRE. (Into phone.) Joan? What a nice surprise. No, it's Claire ... Yes, a terrific party ... Myra? Oh, she looks beautiful. She's wearing a red kimono. Mai Li's mother sent it to her ... Wait, I'll let you speak to her. Hold on. (Covering the phone, to Chris.) Here. Talk to her.

CHRIS. Don't give me the phone. I'll drive your kids to school for a year.

CLAIRE. (Dumping the phone in Chris's lap.) I've done my part. I'm not the Red Cross.

GLENN. (Knocking on the powder room door.) Cassie? It's Joan and Harry. Don't you want to speak to them?

CHRIS. (Into phone.) Joan? Hi, sweetheart. How's Venezuela? ... No, it's Chris. You sent a gift? A crystal
vase from Steuben's? Gee, I think it's broken! Wait, Myra, will you tell you about it.

GLENN. (Still knocking.) Cassie, are you all right?"

CHRIS. Who didn't speak to her yet?

CLaire. Ken, Ken didn't speak to her.

LENNY. (Shouting at KEN, on the balcony.) Ken?

Do you want to speak to Joan?

KEN. What?

LENNY. Joan! Do you want to speak to Joan?

KEN. Sure. I'd love to go home.

CHRIS. (Into phone.) Joan? This connection is bad. I think I'm losing you.

GLENN. (Banging on the bathroom door.) Cassie, will you hurry up! We're losing the connection! Come on, will you!!

(ERNIE and COOKIE come out of the kitchen. SHE holds a hot casserole. HE holds two bottles of wine.)

COOKIE. It's din-din, everyone.

(The bathroom door opens and CASSIE comes out, in a state of shock.)

CASSIE. Who did that? Who banged on the door?

GLENN. I did. Your cousin Joan is on the phone from Venezuela.

CASSIE. You scared the life out of me! I dropped my crystal down the toilet. A TWO-MILLION-YEAR-OLD CRYSTAL!!

CHRIS. I can't take this. (SHE shoves the phone into Ken's hand.) Here. You can't hear anyway, what's the difference?

(44) "Crystal toilet"

Co: Advertises
Ca: Demands
Ca: Explodes
C: Collapses
G: Apologizes
L: Interrupts
Co: Complain
(KEN holds the phone, bewildered. As SHE walks away, SHE trips on the phone wire and falls flat on her face.)

CASSIE. (To Glenn.) Don't just stand there, idiot, get my crystal.

GLENN. Hey, just cool it, Cassie, okay?

KEN. (Into phone.) Hello? ... Hello?

ERNIE. (Starting up the stairs.) I'll go get Myra and Charley.

LENNY. (Dashing up the stairs, cutting off Ernie.) No, I'll get them, I'll get them. Myra and Charley! Myra and Chaaaaa ... (HE grabs his neck.) Oh, shit! There it goes. This time it's permanent.

KEN. Hello? ... Hello? ...

CASSIE. (Crying.) It's a sin to lose a crystal. It's like killing your own dog.

LENNY. Oh, fuck a duck!

COOKIE. Everybody grab a plate, kids. (As SHE hands out plates, her back goes out.) Whoops. Oh, no. Oh, Christ. Oh, man. Oh, Momma.

KEN. Hello? ... Hello? ...

CURTAIN
Character Analysis

Ken Gorman

Desire: Ken wants control of his friends in order to protect Charley from scandal. The heightened situation of *Rumors* reveals more character traits than would ordinarily be demonstrated under normal circumstances. Perhaps, however, the true personality of each character can be seen because of their trials throughout the night. Ken Gorman is Charley Brock’s attorney. Being the lawyer of the Deputy Mayor of New York City is a prestigious position and Ken is completely loyal to his employer and friend. When Ken arrives at the Brock home, he immediately thinks only of Charley and he tries to avoid a scandal. He tells the others, “I don’t give a damn about my shirt. I’m trying to prevent Charley from getting a suicide rap. When the others walk in here, I don’t want to explain to them how I got blood on my good silk shirt” (*Rumors* 31). He is obviously in a state of panic, but under the circumstances, it is expected.

Ken thinks things through and he tries to stay logical. He takes control of the situation and asserts himself as he tells Chris what to say to the doctor. He assumes responsibility for the situation and tries to figure out the best way to handle things. When Lenny suggests calling the police, he responds with, “I didn’t want to make this thing public” and “I’m not bringing in the police until I have to” (32). Clearly, he is in control and because of his strong sense of power, he emerges as the leader. Even Chris follows his directions and repeats to the doctor exactly what Ken suggests. She apparently does not mind letting Ken take control and she seems comfortable doing as he says. She tells the doctor, “He (Ken) thought it better to have Charley’s own physician” (11). Chris also tells Lenny, “Ken wouldn’t let me call the police” (76), which further demonstrates the power Ken has over his wife.
Will: Ken’s takes control over his wife and his initial push to protect Charley is strong; he lies to his friends in order to accomplish this. However, he does reveal the situation to Lenny and Claire, then later breaks down and tells everyone (even though they were already informed). Throughout the night, Ken makes comments such as, “I’ll deal with that problem when it arises” (33), “I need a few minutes to figure this out” (48) and “I’ve got to protect him [Charley] don’t I?” His dialogue is that of a man in control and his main objective, protecting Charley, is never out of sight. Ken does, however, recognize his own limitations and comments, “The pressure is killing me” (73).

Moral Stance: Under the circumstances, Ken does not show a great deal of integrity. Even though he is trying to protect his friend, he lies to others in order to achieve his goal. He cracks under pressure from Lenny and Claire when he tells them what he knows about Charley’s situation. Additionally, when the police question the group about the gunshot and the night’s events, Ken partakes in the scheme to redirect them by not coming clean with the truth.

Decorum: Ken is usually physically poised and professional, but because of the emotional stress he endures throughout the play, his decorum is out of sorts. He hurries. His knees are bent. He is leaning forward. At times, he stands with his hands on his hips, but he also uses his hands in conversation a great deal because of his heightened level of frustration. He speaks rapidly. After the gun goes off next to his ear, he leans to the opposite side when straining to hear dialogue from the other characters. He tries to maintain physical composure in front of the other characters until later in the play when he finally blurts out the truth in front of the whole group.

Summary Adjectives: Frustrated, protective, hurried, overwhelmed, injured
Character-Mood-Intensity: increased heartbeat and breathing, lightly sweating, increased muscle tension, anxious stomach. Ken's mood-intensity changes slightly throughout the play.

After he reveals Charley's situation to Lenny and Claire, he feels a weight has been lifted. He does not have to lie to them anymore, thereby allying himself with them; he feels like a part of the group once again. The situation is still intense, however, and Ken remains tense during the remainder of the play. His ear injury adds a different stress, but because of the injury, he seems to be in a state of ignorant bliss. When his hearing starts to come back, the stress of the evening also returns and it is apparent in his dialogue.

Chris Gorman

Desire: Chris wants other people to take care of Charley's problem. Like her husband, Chris Gorman is also a lawyer, but she does not seem to have Ken's sense of control and stress is difficulty for her to handle. She wants Ken to take as much responsibility from her as possible. Ken tells her to play hostess, but she does not think she will be able to lie to their friends. She reminds him, "I draw up legal publishing contracts. If someone walks in the door and wants to make a deal, I CAN HANDLE THAT!!" (16).

Will: She is not strong enough to get out of it completely. She follows instructions from Ken and does not make her own choices. Chris's loss of control is further demonstrated because of her desire for a cigarette even though she has not been smoking for eighteen months. She states, "Oh, God, I need a cigarette so badly" (18) and Ken tries to talk her out of it. She gets her desired nicotine at the beginning of act two, but she previously makes other comments such as, "I'd smoke a Havana cigar if I had one" (49) and "I was so desperate for a smoke, I went into Charley's bathroom and tried to light up a Q-tip" (72). Throughout the script, Chris is on the verge of a breakdown. Ken tells her to "Take it easy and calm down" (16). She tells Claire,
“I’m coming apart at the seams,” and “I think I’m going to crack” (20). She is unable to handle stress as well as Ken. Claire notices the signs of stress and tells Lenny, “Chris started to tell me something and then she clammed up” and “Her hands were as cold as ice. She couldn’t look me straight in the eye” (23). Chris later states, “I’m getting hives under my arms” (49) and “I’m getting a blood condition” (50).

Moral Stance: Under these circumstances, Chris lies to her friends. However, she tries to convince Ken to tell them, as they will find out anyway. She feels a responsibility to tell them, but she also wants others to share her knowledge of the situation so they can help her handle it better. On another note, Chris is wealthy and concerned about money, which is clear because of her comment, “I paid twelve hundred dollars for this dress” (21) and she is also prompt. “I don’t know why we’re always the first ones here. Never late once in our lives” (15). Chris’s sarcastic nature is also exposed under the circumstances. She makes comments such as “I don’t answer doors. I only speak to Dr. Dudley” (15), “I’m lucky I can still speak English” (16), “I can’t believe I’m paying a baby-sitter for this night” (34) and “I’ve got a six-year old child at home that behaves better than we do” (88).

Decorum: Chris has graceful mannerisms, but under the stressful situation she loses some of her poise. She is craving a cigarette, so she would probably fidget more than usual and feel the need to have something in her hands to take the place of the cigarette she so desperately wants to smoke. Normally she would walk briskly and confidently, but now she is confused and a bit out of control. She is hurried and uncomfortable. Her hands are searching for something to do; she finds the glass of vodka.

Summary Adjectives: addicted, hurried, confused, pressured, accommodating
Character-Mood-Intensity: When the play opens, Chris’s heart rate is increased and her breathing is slightly irregular because of the stress. She is lightly sweating; her muscle tension is increased and she has a nervous stomach. Chris’s mood-intensity is fairly constant during the play. Throughout the first act, she wants to smoke a cigarette and she is high strung. She smokes at the beginning of act two, which seems to calm her down briefly.

Lenny Ganz

Desire: Originally he wants to tell the police about Charley’s situation. When he understands that Ken has assumed control, he gives up that pursuit and simply wants to get through the evening without getting involved in a scandal. Throughout the course of the play, Lenny is written as a sensible character who challenges Ken for control of the situation. Lenny is Charley’s financial consultant so he also assumes some responsibility for Charley and he wants to help in the best possible way. He disagrees with Ken’s methods, however, and believes they should call the police. He tells Ken, “We’ve got to call the police” (32). He does not want a scandal for Charley, but he is also worried about his own wellbeing. “If we keep this quiet, we’re all accessories. I deal with the IRS. I’d be the first one they go after” (32).

Will: He is unsuccessful in calling the police after his argument with Ken only because they were interrupted by the arrival of Cookie and Ernie. After the intrusion, he doesn’t pursue his main goal anymore; he lets the ball drop. He is determined to play along with the others and go with the flow. Even though he threatens Ken with, “If you’re not calling the police, I am,” Ken overrules him. He tries to convince Ken that calling the police is the best thing to do, but Ken keeps control of the situation. He does take control, however, when he is elected to act like Charley at the end of the play. His three-page monologue is completely fraudulent, yet Lenny relishes in the sense of control he has as he is re-telling the night’s events for the police. After
the police leave, he even comments to the others, “It was the best goddamn time of my life”

(112).

Moral Stance: Lenny would lie to anyone and he does throughout the play. His monologue at the end of the play is indicative of his moral character and he is able to think on his feet in making up lies to the police. He even comments about his enjoyment of the role play as Charley. Lenny portrays himself as a true friend to Charley and tries to keep himself uninvolved in the rumor mill that circulates gossip. Because of his refusal to believe what rumors are being spread about Charley, Claire tells him he is naïve. He becomes admirable when he defends himself and Charley. He tells Claire, “I hear what’s going on. I hear gossip, I hear rumors and I won’t listen to that crap, you understand. He is my friend and she is the wife of my friend. I don’t listen to filth and garbage about my friends” (23). However, he then contradicts his own rumor philosophy when he tells Claire the rumor about Charley cheating on Myra.

Decorum: Because of his accident, Lenny’s normal decorum is upset. Usually he is confident and friendly; upon arrival at the Brock home, he is tense and nursing his neck injury. He is constantly rubbing his neck and he is not happy. The stress of the situation starts to build on Lenny and he makes comments like, “I can’t catch my breath” (50), “I feel like I’m at the fucking Alamo” (51), and “I’m beginning to feel like my car” (53). He holds up well, however, and miraculously manages to save the day in the end.

Summary Adjectives: Crude, sarcastic, manipulative, creative

Character-Mood-Intensity: Tense, injured, hungry because he has not eaten all day, uncomfortable because of his injury and his new car is wrecked.

Claire Ganz
Desire: Claire wants to have a good time at the party and socialize with her friends. She is concerned about her appearance and complains about her swelling lip caused by the car accident. As she is examining her face in the mirror, she whines, “Oh, Jesus, I look like a trumpet player” (17). She is worried about her physical presentation and she continues with, “I could have lost the tip of my tongue. I’d be speaking Gaelic the rest of my life” (17). She later returns to the mirror and once again comments on her appearance. “My lip is getting gigantic. I don’t think I have enough lipstick to cover it” (19). Her vanity is evident.

Will: She takes orders from Lenny and does not seem to mind doing so. She is happy in her marriage taking instructions from her husband, a man who is not very considerate of her. However, she seems to be content.

Moral Stance: Claire does what others tell her to do and she is content in her ignorance. Lenny’s wife, Claire, is written as a flighty character and Lenny treats her as such. He is frustrated with her and tells her she is “a pain in the ass” (46). Claire appears adapted to her husband’s treatment, however, because she never retaliates. She seems content living off of her husband’s wealth, going to the tennis club and charity events, and discussing the lives of other people. Claire feeds on gossip and lives in social circles where it reproduces rapidly. Lenny describes her as “damned suspicious” (23) and is amazed that she “won’t be satisfied” (24) until she hears the rumors going around about Charley and Myra. She tells Lenny, “I won’t even sleep with you until I hear” (24). She even started rumors about herself just to feed the gossip line. “It was me [who started the rumor]. Me, you, the both of us. When we were thinking about separating, didn’t we go around telling everyone?” (26). Throughout the night, Claire has lines of dialogue that bring her common sense into question. Upon hearing that Charley has been shot in the earlobe, she states, “That’s not too bad. I have holes in my ear lobes. It doesn’t
hurt” (28). She also does not seem to catch on to things very quickly. Lenny tells her, “Don’t talk for a while” (29).

Decorum: She is vain and when she enters the Brock home, she is concerned about her lip swelling. After she deals with her minor injury, she is suspicious of Ken and Chris because of their activities and her detective work in the kitchen. She is graceful and flowing; her movements are soft and she is gentle in her mannerisms.

Summary Adjectives: Passive, dimwitted, obedient, curious, nosy, talkative, social

Character-Mood-Intensity: Claire is tense upon arrival but begins detective work immediately. She seems like she has a hole in her marble bag, but she does catch on to some things, including the fact that Ken and Chris are acting strangely. Her tension increases over the course of the evening as the events unfold, even though she does not completely understand everything. She is anxious and becomes flustered at times.

Ernie Cusack

Desire: Before he learns about Charley’s accident, Ernie simply wants to make his wife comfortable and have a good time at the party. Shortly after his entrance in act one, he is suspicious and makes attempts at finding out what is going on. He tells the others, “You think I don’t notice everyone’s acting funny? Three people want to get me drinks. Chris wants me to hear this funny story. Lenny wants to get us all outside. Everyone creating a diversion. Why? I don’t know. Am I right?” (39). He eventually joins the others in the conspiracy to cover up the events of the night to avoid consequences from the law.

Will: He does a good job of attempting to make Cookie happy; he is doting and affectionate. Clearly, he accommodates his wife when he says things such as, “You alright, Poops?” (38). He is constantly concerned about her well being; when Cookie says she will cook
the entire meal for everyone, he says, “Honey, no one’s asking you to do that” (41). His effort in lying to the police is not as smooth as his interaction with his wife. He makes up a story to give to the police about Myra breaking her hip and no one accepts it due to the flaws in logic. He responds with, “We don’t need plausible. The man is in shock, mental anguish and emotional despair. Logic doesn’t mean shit to him right now” (85). He later tells the police his fictional account of Myra’s medical because the others did not offer anything else.

Moral Stance: He seems to have a good moral code, but he, too, agrees to hide the truth from the police. He goes along with the plot for Lenny to pretend to be Charley.

Decorum: He is a bit hurried in keeping Cookie comfortable and he leans over a lot to accommodate her. He is constantly touching her to reassure her of his concern for her and he continually goes to her side when he feels she needs him. He crosses his legs when he sits and has a slight feminine quality about him because of the pet names he uses for his wife. His choice of slang to express his frustration also makes him appear feminine.

Summary Adjectives: Loving, careful, analytical, doting, curious,

Character-Mood-Intensity: He is calm for most of the play. Upon arrival, he takes care of his wife. He later receives a phone call and gives advice to his patients during a scheduled anniversary party. He is suspicious of the others, but he believes their story about the surprise party and the cooking. He does not learn the truth until after intermission when the can of beans was finally spilled.

Cookie Cusack

Desire: Cookie wants to relax. When Chris invents the story of the surprise anniversary dinner they will be cooking, she tells them, “I work fourteen hours a day. I cook thirty-seven meals a week. I cook on my television show. I cook for my family. I cook for my neighbors. I
cook for my dogs. I was looking forward to a relaxed evening (40). After she is informed of Charley’s gunshot wound, she, too, wants to keep the information from the police.

Will: She is not able to get a break because Chris invents the cooking job for the surprise party. She agrees to prepare the dinner because she does not want to ruin the evening for Myra.

Moral Stance: Like the others, she lies to the police by going along with the charade that Charley and Myra are fine. She partakes in Lenny’s manipulation of the police at the end of the play by not revealing the truth to the authorities.

Decorum: Because she threw her back out while dressing, Cookie is hunch over and her hand is constantly holding her back. This is not the first time this has happened, so she probably spends most of her life this way. She carries her cushion with her for comfort in sitting, but it seems to just get in the way. She walks slowly and her feet are shoulder width apart with knees slightly bent.

Summary Adjectives: Whiny, annoyed, frustrated, tired, motherly

Character-Mood-Intensity: Cookie’s muscles are tense because of her injury and she tries to ignore the pain in order to make others happy. She does not slow down. She continues working on her cooking show and at home. She reveals her frustration regarding the cooking after Claire tells her they will be cooking for the surprise party. Her stomach muscles are tense. Her back is tense and her face is clearly pain ridden.

Glenn Cooper

Desire: Glenn wants Cassie to stop nagging him and he later wants to avoid a scandal that could keep him out of office since he is running for the state senate in Poughkeepsie.
Will: He is unsuccessful in getting his wife to stop suspecting him. His behavior is highly suspect and he does not have a good response for his wife. Although he tries to appease Cassie, he cannot bring himself to accomplish it.

Moral Stance: He is a liar. He is having an affair and he will not admit it to his wife even though she persists in accusing him. Glenn has no problem lying to his wife, which means he would not have a problem lying to others as well, especially if it means making himself look better. Being a politician, he is probably a professional liar.

Decorum: Glenn is confident and poised. He walks with his chin up and his shoulders back. Regardless of Cassie’s attempt to trip him up, he remains composed. He has one hand in his pocket and seems to ignore her attempts at baiting him to argue. He knows he cannot win or please her. He does not even care to try wholeheartedly. He has a fake smile and tries to win voters.

Summary Adjectives: Arrogant, annoyed, inconsiderate

Character-Mood-Intensity: He enters the scene fighting with his wife so his heart rate is increased and his muscles are tense. He is lying to his wife about his affair with Carole Newman so he is beginning to sweat. He is trying to avoid her questioning. His stomach is tight. His jaw is locked and pulsing. He exhales with large sighs.

Cassie Cooper

Desire: Cassie wants her husband to admit his affair and stop cheating on her.

Will: She is completely determined and will not give up...until she is so distracted that she forgets to pursue the issue in the end. She is caught off guard by the night’s events and her paranoia leaves her when the pressure is on. She seems to forgive Glenn without an admission or an apology from him.
Moral Stance: Cassie is so wrapped up in her own drama, she does not even stop to understand what is going on in the house around her. She gets angry with the police, but it is simply a reaction from her experience with Glenn. She does not lie to the police because she is unaware of the events. She seems to be a woman of good morals because of her constant contact with her crystal (until it gets flushed down the toilet).

Decorum: She is pissed. Her steps are hurried. She talks with grand hand gestures. She has her hands on her hips. She points. She has cocky head movements.

Summary Adjectives: Upset, vindictive, frustrated

Character-Mood-Intensity: Muscles are tense, stomach is queasy, increased heart rate, increased temperature, head ache, heart break, grinding teeth
Ideas of the Play

*Rumors* exposes humanity’s obsession with delving into the lives of other people. The characters spread rumors about each other and, like real people, some characters devour the stories, taking gossip at face value, while others, Lenny for example, refuse to believe the smut rumored about their friends. Lenny’s loyalty to Charley is initially clear when he states, “Why would you want to hear things about our best friends? He’s my best client. He trusts me” (24). Claire, however, is hungry for gritty details and threatens Lenny with, “I won’t even sleep with you until I hear” (24). Lenny folds under pressure and reveals that Myra is having an affair with another man. Claire counters with disbelief and insists it is, in fact, Charley who is being unfaithful. This dialogue continues with a lot of “who-said-what-to-whom” and confusion ensues. Simon points out the inability of people to communicate and demonstrates the destructive results. Problems cannot be solved when pertinent information is absent. No one really knows what is going on because they fail to question the source. Communication is the key to success in relationships and Simon conveys the lack of this element in the interactions between his characters.

Glenn and Cassie’s relationship is in a state of turmoil due to their inability to communicate and their marriage is unraveling because of it. Honesty is also missing between the two of them, which escalates the problem. Simon has introduced adultery as an idea in the play with the rumors about Charley and Myra, but infidelity becomes a larger focus when Cassie openly accuses Glenn of extramarital activities. Because divorce is not the implied outcome for these two characters by the end of the play, Simon clearly supports working through problems in order to salvage a marriage. Edythe McGovern’s critical study of Simon’s plays supports this notion. She states,
Another thread which runs through all of Simon’s work is a basic respect and regard for the institution which gives stability to society—the family. Even when there are contemplated or temporary lapses in marital fidelity; even when one or the other partner is less than the ideal husband or wife; even when the children are ‘disappointing’ to their parents, the playwright implies that the monogamous family unit is of paramount importance and should be preserved if at all possible. At the same time, he does not hesitate to make us aware through his characters’ dilemmas in this area that this institution is often in sad need of repair—but repair doesn’t mean demolition. (189)

Manipulation and lies are also examined throughout the play as the characters make up stories to tell to each other, about each other, and to the police. During the climactic moment of the play, Lenny is able to spew forth a volume of fictional detail regarding the Brock situation and he is proud of his ability to manipulate the police. He views this moment as a challenge and overcomes the obstacle confidently. Officer Welch does not believe Lenny’s explanation, but he accepts it because he wants to get home to his wife. Perhaps society at large is too lazy to dissect problems; people want to take the path of least resistance whenever possible.

Simon’s use of wealthy characters in the play portrays upper class society as an ordinary group of people. Regardless of the social expectations they hold themselves to, all pretense is stripped away when pressure intensifies. Weaknesses are exposed. The characters act like stereotypical teenagers in their adventure through the night—they lie, they manipulate, they exaggerate, they gossip, and their plans are irrational. Simon is effective in getting the audience to identify with these outlandish characters because at one time or another, people have
experienced these emotions. He pushes the situation to the extreme with this farce, forcing people to analyze their own irrational behaviors. According to McGovern,

One of the most effective techniques Neil Simon uses in a number of his plays is the pointing out of human limitations—the contrast between intention and execution. This not only works well in that it enables audiences to laugh at themselves without being consciously impelled to acknowledge the target—since human limitation is such a universal characteristic—but it also serves to develop certain characters more graphically. (189)

*Rumors* does not offer answers to problems the characters face in their relationships because “Simon does not often use comedy to correct the vices of mankind. While he frequently explores genuine social evils, his mandatory happy endings trivialize the real problems he has exploited for dramatic effect” (Magill 1828). Even though the ideas of personal and societal problems are explored, “he never offers didactic solutions” (McGovern 192).
Previous Productions and Reviews

Neil Simon’s *Rumors* was first produced by The Old Globe Theatre in San Diego, California. It opened on September 22, 1988 and was directed by Gene Saks. The set was designed by Tony Straiges, the lighting was designed by Tharon Musser, and the costumes were designed by Joseph G. Aulisi. Douglas Pagliotti was the production stage manager. *Rumors* was subsequently produced by Emanuel Azenberg at the Broadhurst Theatre in New York City. It opened on November 17, 1988 (*Rumors* 6).

There are mixed reviews from critics about Simon’s skill as a playwright, but audiences have always responded well to his material which has made him the most popular of American comic writers. *Rumors* initially ran for fifteen months on Broadway, but despite its success at the box office, many critics found it lacking. Critic Thomas Hischak describes it as “entertaining undemanding audiences for 531 performances.” Hischak reports overall that critics were stingy in their approval of the script, but applause was given to director Gene Saks’s “razor-sharp direction” and he gives kudos to the farceur talents of the cast” (24).

Writer Jack Kroll of *Newsweek* contends that *Rumors* was “more appalling than funny” (88). According to Kroll, Simon’s first pure farce does not measure up to farces “made from less promising material than this. The problem is that Simon too often supplies the frenzy of farce without its hilarity. Sweat seems to pour from this production” (89). He also felt the characters were lacking; this opinion is clear when he states, “Simon’s people are such creeps that their manic shenanigans become irritating instead of amusing” (89).

W. A. Henry of *Time* magazine briefly discusses the play in his article “Falling Short” where he states that the play did just that. “Although preview audiences cheered, in truth the play falls far short of its promise” (94).
However, a positive review came from Edith Oliver, reporting for *The New Yorker*. She enjoyed *Rumors* and found it “funnier than almost anyone else’s comedies.” She compliments the script with, “There isn’t one moment in *Rumors* that doesn’t play, not a turn of the action that isn’t a surprise” and she calls every joke “a winner” (110).

Despite mixed reviews, *Rumors* has continued to be produced over the past fifteen years, even though it is clearly not one of Simon’s strongest scripts.
Neil Simon is the world's most successful playwright. He has been showered with more Oscar and Tony nominations than any other writer and he is the only playwright to have four Broadway productions running simultaneously. His plays have been produced in dozens of languages, and have been blockbuster hits from Beijing to Moscow. Simon's true success, however, is in his unique way of exposing something real in the American spirit (*American Masters*).

Marvin Neil Simon was born in the Bronx on July 4, 1927, and grew up in Washington Heights at the northern tip of Manhattan Island, New York. At the age of sixteen he graduated from DeWitt Clinton High School then joined the United States Army and briefly studied engineering at New York University (1944-45). He began his writing career while working for the Army when he became the sports editor of the base newspaper ("Neil Simon").

After being discharged from the Army, Simon returned to New York and took a job as a mailroom clerk for Warner Brother's East Coast office. He and his brother, Danny Simon, began writing comedy revues and eventually found their way into radio then television. Later, Danny helped Neil get jobs writing with him for such early TV classics as "The Phil Silvers Show," Sid Caesar's "Your Show of Shows," and "The Garry Moore Show," where he sharpened his comedic skills (Harmon). For the next 15 years Simon wrote for the "Robert Q. Lewis Show" (CBS radio); the "Phil Silvers Arrow Show" (NBC, 1948); the "Tallulah Bankhead Show" (NBC, 1951); the "Jackie Gleason Show" (CBS); and the "Red Buttons Show" (CBS) (MacNicholas 254). Simon received several Emmy Award nominations for his television writing, then moved on to the theatre where he quickly established himself as America's most successful commercial playwright by creating an unparalleled string of Broadway hits beginning
with *Come Blow Your Horn*. Still, critical acclaim came slowly for Simon. In spite of the fact that he had had more smash hits than any other American playwright, critics continued to take pleasure in dismissing him as a mere "writer of gags" ("Neil Simon").

By 1973, Simon was a major voice in contemporary comedy, but that year he entered a low period in his life when Joan, his wife of twenty years, died of cancer. Life went on for Simon, in some ways too briskly, and a few months later, he married actress Marsha Mason (Magill 1824). Just months after Joan's death, Simon met the actress at an audition for his play *The Good Doctor*. Two weeks later he proposed and she accepted. The couple moved from Simon's beloved New York to a place he had claimed he would never live--Los Angeles. They did it partly for Mason's career, but also, Simon says, "because Joan died and every place I walked there were memories." Eight years later the Simon-Mason marriage ended in divorce (Harmon).

His 1977 play, *Chapter Two*, dramatizes the grief of a newly remarried man trying to start over after the death of his wife. *Chapter Two* is considered one of his finest works and he followed it with the musical *They're Playing Our Song* (*American Masters*). However, his next three plays, *I Ought to Be in Pictures*, *Fools*, and a revised version of *Little Me*, all proved unsuccessful at the box office. Then, in 1983, Simon began to win over many of his critics with the introduction of his autobiographical trilogy--*Brighton Beach Memoirs* (1983), *Biloxi Blues* (1985) and *Broadway Bound* (1986)--which chronicled his stormy childhood, his brief Army career, and the beginning of his career in television. Suddenly, the critics began taking him seriously. He followed up in 1991 with *Lost in Yonkers*, for which he won the Pulitzer Prize for drama ("Neil Simon").
Even illness and death have their funny sides, and as an intelligent observer of people, Simon understands how they use laughter. Whether serious or frivolous, Simon’s plays employ humor as a defense, an escape, a weapon, or as low comedy—farce, burlesque, and slapstick. He often approaches comedy philosophically, combining all these types of humor with intelligent and sensitive commentary on modern life (MacNicholas 254). His typical subjects are the crises of middle-class, urban American families: youth asserting independence, a newlywed couple’s first argument, marital boredom, adultery, divorce, career pressures, alcoholism, urban paranoia, problems of old age, death, and family estrangement. He rarely portrays people whom he does not know well, and sometimes his work is fictional only in name. Simon does not write about religion or the feminist movement although he affirms conventional social values common in the liberal segments of the middle class. He might be considered sexist by feminists, since most of his female characters are conforming housewives who rarely assert themselves, and those women who do not fit this mold are usually portrayed as unhappy (Magill 1826).

During the course of his career, Simon has won three Tony Awards for Best Play (The Odd Couple, Biloxi Blues and Lost in Yonkers). He has had more plays adapted to film than any other American playwright and, in addition, has written nearly a dozen original screenplays himself. He received Academy Award nominations for his screenplays The Odd Couple (1968), The Sunshine Boys (1975) and California Suite (1978). He has also been the recipient of the Writers’ Guild Award, the Evening Standard Award, the New York Drama Critics Circle Award, the Shubert Award, the Outer Circle Award, and a 1978 Golden Globe Award for his screenplay, The Goodbye Girl (“Neil Simon”).

Since 1960, a Broadway season without a Neil Simon comedy or musical has been a rare one. His first play was Come Blow Your Horn, followed by the musical Little Me. During the
1966-67 season, *Barefoot in the Park, The Odd Couple, Sweet Charity*, and *The Star-Spangled Girl* were all running simultaneously; in the 1970-71 season, Broadway theatre goers had their choice of *Plaza Suite, Last of the Red Hot Lovers*, and *Promises, Promises*. Next came *The Gingerbread Lady, The Prisoner of Second Avenue, The Sunshine Boys, The Good Doctor, God's Favorite, California Suite, Chapter Two, Their Playing Our Song, I Ought to Be in Pictures, Fools, Brighton Beach Memoirs, Biloxi Blues*, the female version of *The Odd Couple, Broadway Bound*, and *Rumors*.

Simon currently owns the Eugene O’Neil Theatre in New York and continues to write plays and screenplays. His most recent plays include *The Dinner Party, 45 Seconds from Broadway*, and a revival of the musical *Sweet Charity* (Internet Broadway Database). Simon remains an avid theatergoer; among his favorite playwrights are Terrence McNally and August Wilson (Harmon).

Of his third and fourth marriages, both to actress Diane Lander whom he spotted working behind the cosmetics counter at Neiman Marcus, Simon’s only comment is "dismal." Now he is once again enjoying a happy marriage, this time with his new wife, actress and game show panelist Elaine Joyce. His marriages have given him three daughters, Ellen, Nancy, and Bryn, his adopted third daughter (Pelowski). Simon is enormously involved in the lives of his grandchildren and is thrilled that his daughters are also pursuing writing careers. (Ellen is the author of the screenplays for *Moonlight* and *Valentino* and *One Fine Day*.)

For almost forty years Neil Simon has invigorated the stage with touching stories and zany characters, but possibly his greatest contribution has been the ability to create humor from the lives and troubles of everyday people. Of Simon, actor Jack Lemon said, "Neil has the ability to write characters—even the leading characters that we are supposed to root for—that are
absolutely flawed. They have foibles. They have faults. But they are human beings. They are not all bad or all good; they are people we know” (American Masters).
List of Learning Goals

Students will expand their skills in the following areas:

- Learn techniques in set design and construction
- Participate in costume design and costume management
- Practice lighting techniques
- Practice make up application
- Learn the importance of timing in a farce
- Practice house management
- Clearly identify objectives of characters and advance skills in characterization, including embodying the physical character, scoring the actor's role, and detailed character analysis
- Practice publicity skills
- Further develop vocal projection and diction
- Analyze play structure
- Learn further skills in blocking and staging levels, including compositions
- Practice building dramatic tension
- Analyze and work with subtext
- Further develop communication skills
- Continue developing the confidence level of the actor
Rumors
Rehearsal/ Production Journal

Jan. 4, 2004
1st read. Cast two read act one aloud in class. We didn’t have time for act two, so they will read it in class next time with their stage managers. Most of the students have already read the whole play on their own. The students enjoyed the script and I anticipate they will have a good time with this show. The audience will like the fast paced modern comedy—it’s usually their preference for our productions.

Jan. 6
B 1-4
The actors not needed on stage read act two of the play with their stage managers. Most of the crew had already read act two on their own. Kyle and Misty started pulling costumes from stock just to give suggestions. I made a costume plot so they would have an idea of what to start with. We will borrow tuxedos from the choir department and students will start bringing in formal gowns as suggestion for the female characters. Cookie’s dress will be a little harder to come by. I will call BSU to see if they have anything that might work. Rehearsal went well. I’m excited to see the play developing. It’s nice only working with two actors on blocking. We went through the beats three times with each cast. Students are strong on their lines, but I don’t think they wrote down all their blocking. I need to enforce this more. They will forget my instructions by the time we get to review.

Jan. 10
B 5-8
Misty and Kyle are labeling the prop cart and trying to find props for the show. They are pulling substitute props. Rehearsal was smooth—lines and cues are strong. I’m trying to pull more from Layne (Lenny). He is coming across as tired and weak. He has a neck injury, but I still want the sarcasm and frustration to emerge from him. It’s hard to keep the level of energy up from last rehearsal since we are starting in the middle of a high energy spot.

Jan. 13
B 9-14
We have been getting through the beats three to four times per rehearsal, which is good. Andrew (Lenny) was weak with lines on beat 14 and he is constantly making jokes and fooling around during rehearsal. The remaining class members are bored. They need to contribute to technical work so I will get them started painting on Tuesday.

Jan. 18
B 15-17 (End page 30)
Daryl finished building the 2 foot platform extension and the spiral staircase. We bought two more doors and dowels for the banister. Set painting started today. Only 4 students were participating. I can’t supervise painting when I’m trying to direct, so many students are sitting in the dressing room wasting time. The doors are underway. I’m still having trouble keeping the energy level up. I need to get the actors more in touch with the characters. Intentions are weak and I don’t think students are feeling the parts. Layne suggested bar stools to help solve my
problem with acting areas. My floor plan only had three acting areas—now we have four. The stage seems a bit crowded so I don’t know if I’m going to get five in the floor plan.

Jan. 20
B 17-20
I’m worried the blocking will not hold. I’m incorporating diagonals and distance, but I think they will do their own thing and I will have to reiterate everything I’m telling them. Nervous movement is a problem for Chris (Ken). I’ve pointed this out to him and he seems to be making a concerted effort in addressing the problem. The characters need to be more animated and alive. Layne is weak on lines for beat 17. Cues were a problem today. Short, quick lines need to come faster. Actors need to learn the cue lines and rehearse this area further.

Jan. 24
B 21-23 (end page 40)
Daryl found pre-made banister poles that are decorative and shapely for about $4 each at Home Depot. I will get some of these for the banister instead of the dowel rods. I originally wanted the decorative ones, but our lumber stores in town don’t carry them. I told students we need to pick the energy level up and I will start pushing harder in this area. At this point, I’m just trying to get them to learn the blocking. I don’t have time to work with every actor on intentions and, unfortunately, they don’t take the time to do the work on their own. I may have to schedule individual sessions with each of them after school.

Jan. 26
B 23-25
Rehearsals are still lacking energy. Character interaction is weak. More training in subtext is needed perhaps. I am trying to bring in the physical comedy of farce by adding more to the blocking and stage business. I hope it works. I may have to change it once we get to the 1st review, but that won’t be until February 12. All the doors are painted and Kandis will begin taping them today.

Jan. 28
B 26-29
My costume and publicity crews are not working very diligently. I know it’s early, but I want these things to be done in advance so I don’t have to worry about the headache when the show gets here. I want to develop a new seasonal brochure and I thought it would be nice to have it ready for this show. No one seems interested in working on this idea, so I will have to do it myself.

As far as costumes are concerned, I have relayed my ideas to the cast and I have two girls working on putting together a costume morgue for visual ideas for each character. Nothing has come of it yet.

Feb. 1
B 30-34
Laura De La Paz will be playing Cassie in both shows because Laura Fagan has notified me she will miss 1st dress rehearsal. She is going to Seattle on a field trip. Fagan is still understudying
the part, but she will not get a show. This has been my policy for quite some time due to problems in the past with students not showing up for dress rehearsal. I expect to work with actors who want to work with me, so I'm not going to accept the fact that they can't (or won't) come to dress rehearsals, or any of the after school rehearsals for that matter. Students dedicate themselves to other activities or sports—they can dedicate themselves to drama as well.

Feb. 3
B 35-36
Misty has been pulling suggestions from stock for costumes, but we don't seem to have much that is worth of being on stage this show. Nothing is as fancy as I think it needs to be. The guys will be dressed in tuxedoes, which is an easy fix since the choir has tuxedoes for their shows. Three of my students are in choir, giving them a costume. I spoke with the choir director today and he said we could borrow as many as we need. This is one less thing I have to worry about.

Feb. 8
B 37-40
Lines were strong today, but cues are weak and the characters are not emerging. Even though we are just blocking right now, I wish I could get the actors to give me something to think about and work with as far as characters are concerned. I encourage them to do so and nothing really comes of it.

Ashley and Bridgett brought suggestions in today. Both girls have several formal dresses they have worn in the past. I really like Bridgett’s purple dress and we will probably use it for Chris. The color represents the character well and the dress is classy enough to cost $1200 (if it was made by a famous designer!) Most of the other dresses seem too young and they aren't very flattering on some of the girls. I like the yellow dress on Bridgett (Claire), but it doesn't seem to fit the character. We will have to keep looking.

Feb. 10
B 41-44
I asked the kids to go through an exaggeration rehearsal today in order to get them to take more risk and push the characters over the top. They think it's silly and they can't see the exercise as valuable. Some students were able to push further, but I don't think it will hold. They want to do it their way and they think I'm asking them to go out of boundaries to a place where they are not comfortable. Angela is pushing Cookie further in rehearsal, but her lines aren't very strong. I'm not getting much at all from Chandra, which is surprising because she usually gives more than she is.

Feb. 14
B 45-47
This was a good place to start again with the characters since we just finished working on the closing scene of act I. It was rough. The actors are working on reacting to each other and delivering the lines while keeping the comic energy up. Lines are still not strong and blocking without the script is proving to be difficult since lines are still the main focus of most of the actors. I need to get the energy level up and the pace needs to quicken.
Claire’s dress will be made since we can’t find anything I like that fits both girls. Louann Watson will be sewing the dress from a pattern I picked out at Wal-mart. I sent the material home with Rebecca today.

**Feb. 16**

B 48-51

Cookie’s scene with the earrings is not proving as comical as I had envisioned it. She is simply not pushing the envelope. Her back spasms are minimal—hardly noticeable—and Ernie’s affection for her is weak.

On another note, when Cassie comes out of the bathroom with her hair down, everyone started to take notice. Laura did an excellent job in rehearsal. Her lines were strong and she was captivating. If only the rest of the cast could pick up her level of energy. Lenny’s (Layne’s) reaction to her was priceless! Glenn and Cassie left the stage on a strong note. I feel good about today’s rehearsal.

**Feb. 18**

B 52-54

I went home sick. Kandis (set designer) took over blocking for me today. I left her a few notes for the blocking and just told her to keep it balanced and dynamic. She reported no problems, but mentioned that Amparo (Chris) and Len (Ernie) were not strong on their lines. If there are problems with the blocking, I will fix them during review.

**Feb. 23**

B 55-57

The police are outside the door and the actors are sitting comfortably while reciting their lines. What to do? We struggled through the level of pace and character exaggeration throughout rehearsal today. They have it for a moment, then it goes away. The students get tired and I can’t keep them in the state of panic they need to be in.

**Feb. 25**

B 58-60

I went home again—this time Jordan (my daughter) was sick. Kandis blocked the beats once again and didn’t report any problems. I missed “La Bamba.” I’m sure we’ll have to work on this during the review.

**Mar. 1**

B 61-63

Kandis found another costume option for her character, Chris. She bought a dress on sale that fits the character and it looks more expensive than the one we originally had. However, it doesn’t fit Amparo, the other actress playing Chris, so Amparo will wear the original dress.

Kandis painted the fireplace with a marble effect, but I don’t know if the look will work. She plans to work on it further so she pull some sample marble patterns online for me to look at and she will make another attempt with the design.
Mar. 3
Class was in session, but I scheduled a field trip for this day to the BSU theatre festival. Many of my students remained in class with the substitute. The stage managers (Chiara and Ashley) ran line rehearsals. Each cast reviewed lines and cues for act one. No problems were reported.

Mar. 8
B 64-68
I bought a loveseat and a wing back chair from Kandis’s parents for $50. This expense was included in my initial estimate for the set. Daryl picked it up today and delivered it to the stage. The colors will look nice with the set.

Mar. 10
B 69-73
There are a lot of actors on stage and since most of them don’t move from their location, they are not moving at all. They look stiff and uncomfortable or not interested in the scene. It’s hard to get performance quality rehearsals out of the cast. They are tired and they don’t want to give me anything in rehearsal. I will probably see things in their final performance that I have never seen them do before (even though I warn them about this). It’s frustrating.

Cookie is still a problem area. I envisioned her as a very strong physical force on the stage. She’s not. Neither one of the actresses is playing her strongly. I need her to be an irritation. She’s not.

Officer Welch (Chiara and Ashley) still needs to work on physical character and line deliver. Even though I have changed this male character into a female, I want her to be strong and intimidating. My girls are having a hard time with this. Nicole (Officer Pudney) is having a hard time delivering her lines—very choppy and unnatural. I have discussed this with her and she will work on delivering these lines with a more natural conversational tone even though she is simply reiterating information.

We don’t have the sound effect worked out for the walkie-talkie. I would like to use the real item with some sort of sound effect coming from the stage instead of from the speakers.

Mar. 11
B 74
Lenny rehearsal—I held after school rehearsal with both of my Lenny characters in order to work on the monologue at the end of the play. Layne had to leave early in order to go to golf practice, so I only got to work with him for 30 minutes. We ran through the monologue once so I could give him the blocking and he made notes in his script regarding beat changes throughout the monologue. We didn’t get to work on intentions or delivery. None of the other actors were there so I couldn’t see the interaction between them. Layne and Andrew both still need cues throughout the monologue. I worked with Andrew a bit longer than with Layne. Andrew’s energy level needs to come up. I explained to him that he needs to captivate the audience with his story otherwise they will go to sleep. It’s such a long monologue, but I didn’t cut any because of the humorous aspects of the story. If they play it at the speed of funny and get the audience and cast interested, it will play well. Otherwise, there goes 15 minutes of our show.
Andrew is proving to be difficult to work with. He doesn’t take direction—he seems to ignore the advice I give.

**Mar. 14**
B 74 - End
We finished blocking the play today. The Lenny monologue isn’t going very well. Both actors need cues (Andrew more than Layne), and the rest of the cast isn’t responding to the story. They are no noticeable beat changes, especially with Andrew, so we will need to work on this a great deal more. Will we have time?

I don’t feel good about the energy level coming from the actors. Of course, we’ve just been blocking until now, but I’ve been making suggestions for character development all along, and nothing new is coming to the stage. We start reviewing act two next time—hopefully I can bring something out of them.

**Mar. 16**
My techies are not pulling their weight with props and getting costumes organized. Many of the students will be bringing their own pants and shoes. I’ve asked them repeatedly to get these things together and organized. It won’t happen until I do it. I don’t have anything for Cookie or the cops yet, but everyone else is taken care of. We just don’t have anything hanging on the costume rack ready to go—except for Chris and Cassie.

I feel good about the floor plan and the blocking choices, though it’s hard to imagine the perspective of the audience since we have had all rehearsals with the curtain closed thus far. It’s difficult to work like this.

**Mar. 18**
The set is painted and waiting to be erected on April 2. Kandis bought a mirror and decorative candle holders for the set. We will paint them gray/silver and have them ready to hang. The three items were $28. This cost will be added into the initial estimate for set decoration. I will bring in the crown molding tomorrow so students can paint it. I have also decided to hang a chair rail so that needs to get painted as well. Kandis and I have talked about wainscot, but I don’t know if it will be visible. We’ll wait until the set is up to see if we need it for decorative purposes.

**Mar. 22**
I’m still working on collecting music for the soundtrack. I have all the sound effects, but I need seating and intermission music. Chris brought in some suggestions for seating music, but only one of his songs will work. I will have to keep looking. I would like to have the soundtrack ready for the review next time, but I don’t think I will have time to get it done.

**Mar. 24**
Cast two review beats 58-72 today. We didn’t have time to look at Lenny’s monologue or the ending scene. The purpose of these reviews in my mind is to work on the play. What actually happened is the students reviewed their lines. Frustration once again.
Apr. 2
Set Construction
We spent 6 hours constructing the set today. Three of my students Chandra, Kandis, Chris were there to help. We are out on spring break right now, so I really didn’t expect any of the students to show up—it’s nice that they were here to help. Daryl (my husband) and George (our friend) were there to help with constructing the platform, as it is difficult to get the doors braced on the platform. (I usually have trouble getting doors braced and working properly.) They anchored the platform to the stage with L brackets to avoid shifting once the doors and walls are attached. There is still a lot of work to be done on the set. Basically, just the walls and doors are up at this time. We still need to cover the chair with blue fabric, the trim needs to be hung, the backstage areas need to be masked, etc. I have a list of all the remaining things to be done—silly to list all 500 of them here. I will have a busy week ahead of me in order to get everything done by Saturday’s dress rehearsal.

Apr. 4
We were supposed to work on Lenny’s monologue in class, but since so much work needs to be done in the technical area, I had the class help with technical aspects in order to speed the process. I worked on masking the backstage areas, including Charley’s room and the guest room. I want to mask the main entrance to give the impression of an outdoor scene. Perhaps we can paint something on the back wall. I didn’t have time today—perhaps I will get someone working on it tomorrow.

After School Rehearsal—Cast One 3:30- 6:30
We focused on the first act. Cues are weak. It seems like I keep writing the same comments in this journal. Improvement is slow and/or non-existent. Characters are not improving. The pace is getting nowhere fast.

We stayed until 9:30 pm after cast one’s rehearsal in order to work on the set.

Apr. 5
After School Rehearsal—Cast Two 3:30- 6:30
Cast two is a bit stronger with cues in the first act, but for the most part, the characters are not emerging here either.

We stayed until 9:00 pm working on the set.

Apr. 6
After School Rehearsal—Cast One 3:30-6:30
Act two isn’t any better than act one. My frustration continues to grow.

We stayed until 9:00 pm working on the set. I still can’t find a costume for Cookie.

Apr. 7
We have been working on technical aspects of the set, props, and costumes all week during class. Since class time has been devoted to this area, some of the actors have been running lines, but most of the class is helping with final touches to the set—painting, taping, decorating.
I finally finished the soundtrack after buying several cds to select music from. I was not able to find the right phone ring for the cordless phone. It’s the ring of an older phone, but I like the urgency of the three rings in a row—it might pick up the pace a bit. I still can’t find a buzz for the intercom noise when Charley calls down. Our ancient sound board is still missing. It would have been perfect. The seating music is soft dinner music, mostly piano. I wanted a romantic mood to start the show with. I selected big band music for intermission because it seemed to capture the energy of the end of act one—all the characters are overlapping each other with pain, confusion, frustration. It fits well. We need to practice with the sound effects a great deal during tech rehearsal to make sure cues are hit on time.

After School Rehearsal—Cast Two 3:30 – 6:30 pm

We stayed until 9:00 pm to finish the set. It takes so long to get things done.

**Apr. 8**
Ashley and Bridgett ran into the downstage right wall of the set and bent the entire wall out of shape. The door wouldn’t even open. Needless to say, I was a little upset. Luckily, we simply had to pop one side of the wall back into place and it fixed the door problem.

Kyle and Len are working on gelling the lights. They still don’t have the softening effect on the main portion of the walls. I will have to work on it myself.

After School Technical Rehearsal—Both Casts 3:30-6:30
Kyle is still working on last minute direction of the lighting instruments. He is still trying to soften the walls of the set with skin tone gels, while leaving a sharper white light on the platform area. The contrast is nice, but the platform is extremely bright. We aren’t getting very good lighting downstage because we only have 5 ellipsoidals working. We need more light bulbs in order to get the other ones going. I thought we had more—we don’t.

Cast one ran act one—cast two ran act two. My technical crew was present the whole time to run the light and sound cues and to make sure the curtain was pulled on time. Everything seemed to go smoothly—except the amount of cues needed for the actors just to get through the script.

The set looks nice. I borrowed a floor plant, silk flowers, and two metal stands from my mother. It helps give the set a more comfortable feel. I’m not particularly fond of the choice for the bar, but it will have to do since we are out of money. We need a picture to bring more color to the stage in the up center position between the doors. Perhaps Picasso’s “Blue Nude.”

We stayed until 8:30 pm

**Apr. 9**
1st Dress
Cast One—Act One(9 am – 12 pm)
I decided to focus only on act one today instead of trying to get through the whole play. Getting through act one was a nightmare with lines (as you will be able to see on the tape!), but we made
it through the act in one hour ten minutes. This is the first time I've been able to time the first act, and it still isn’t accurate because the lines are so weak. Cues are weak. Characters are weak. I feel like I have accomplished nothing in three months. They seem to be maintaining most of the blocking, but at times they lose it and do what they want.

Cookie still doesn’t have a costume because the gray robe I tried to modify looks terrible. I thought I would be able to take the pockets off and add some black fur trim to make it look like more of a dress than a house coat. No deal. It looks terrible and I don’t see a solution in sight. I will email George to see what suggestions he has. The other costumes look fine.

Lenny--Andrew had to switch rehearsals with Layne so he could take his ACT test. Layne is weak on lines and he continually throws in comments that make him seem young and inexperienced. His cumber bun is down around his hips—he needs to learn how to wear it.

The pace of this show is still not where it needs to be. Cues and lines are too weak to get it where it needs to go.

Cast Two—Act One (12:30 pm – 3:30 pm)

Andrew (Lenny) still won’t get his hair out of his face. I don’t know what to do with him. He’s not very cooperative and he doesn’t take feedback well. He has not been this difficult in the past. He won’t bring his energy level up at all and he is not following directions. He isn’t interacting well with Claire (Bridgett). She is frustrated with him because his lines are weak. He tries to improv his way out of it, and she won’t go along with him. Luckily these two will not be performing together.

The rest of the cast is still having problems with a few cues, but overall this cast is stronger than cast one. Cast one needed 70 cues for act one—cast two only needed 15. Still, 15 cues is enough to slow the pace of the show and this cast is not doing much better in that respect. The show still seems to lack the energy and humor I thought it would have. It seems like most of what I tell the actors about their characters, pace, and energy gets filtered and they continue doing what they were doing in the first place. Progress is not taking place.

Apr. 11

Cast One—2nd Dress (Act Two)

Could act two get any worse than act one? Yes, of course it can. This was a complete disaster. This cast opens in two days and this is their last rehearsal. Cues are still weak. Blocking is weak. Characters are still weak. I feel like I should cut some actors, but I don’t want to take away the hope that they will pull it together on stage. I’ve seen it happen over the past few shows—they get it together for the audience. I will see how cast two does and I will make the decision to cut at that time.

I bought Monet’s “Waterlillies” for the up center position on the platform. I was not able to find “Blue Nude” at the mall. Chris worked on cutting and framing it today.

Apr. 12

Cast Two—2nd Dress (Act Two)
Act two was a bit better for cast two, but again, lines and cues are not terribly strong. I feel like I have to make at least one cut in cast one. Cookie (Angela Gruver) has been consistently weak with her lines and cues and her double (Chandra Wilson) is very strong with her lines. Chandra is prepared to perform in all of the shows. Both girls have trouble letting the character of Cookie emerge, but I feel Chandra will at least have the cues down and that will help with maintaining the script on stage. I pulled another suggestion for Cookie’s costume after getting an email from Scott Robinson. He recommended a website of Russian immigrants as a resource. It’s not what I had originally pictured for Cookie because I was thinking she should be wearing bright colors, but I attempted to get the same silhouette from her new costume choice. Hopefully it works. The head scarf is what really pulls it together. It will have to do. I’m out of time.

Apr. 13
Opening Night
Cast One—Show One
I cut Angela Gruver (Cookie—Cast One) from the show today—she will not be performing in any of the productions. I was not able to get in touch with her last night, so I met with her this morning to let her know that she will not be performing tonight. She said she understood, but obviously she’s upset.

Act one had a few technical bumps with light cues, the curtain at intermission, and line cues. Lots of down time made it uncomfortable for the audience. The downstage lighting is really dark. We lost an ellipsoidal bulb today and I don’t have any to replace it. We will try to redirection a few things tomorrow to fix the lighting problems.

We need to fix the technical aspects. Act two went completely down the toilet. I thought I was watching another play. The actors were lost on stage. They didn’t have their cues and they were not able to find their way. Andrew was trying to improv his way back to the script, but no one else was playing along. The acting is dead, due in part to the cues being weak. Overall, opening night was a disaster. We lost the last 20 minutes of the play, which contains important elements of the plot. The audience was left wondering what happened because most of the lines from Officer Welch were missing. Officer Pudney didn’t even get to say her two lines (she was in tears!)—therefore, the fact that gunshots were reported at the residence was never mentioned on stage. The play ended—I don’t even remember how—and I didn’t even have a clue what had happened. I know the audience was completely in the dark! The curtain didn’t even close on cue to end the show, because the cops (who run sound) were so upset about their lines that they didn’t focused on what they were supposed to be doing when they left the stage. A stage hand had to finish sound then run around to the other side of the stage to close curtain. The end of the play is supposed to be a tableau on the staircase with all the characters. However, the characters froze in positions all over the stage because Myra’s knock on the door came too quickly. After a long delay, the curtain finally closed on the scene. Ugh!!

Because of these problems, I will cut 3 more actors from the Friday show. Cutting only Angela was not effective (though her replacement hit all of her cues!). The show still fell apart. Lines have continually been shaky for Len (Ernie), Alex (Glenn), and Chiara (Welch) and if I remove
them from the show, we may be able to salvage a smoother run from the remaining three performances.

Apr. 14

Cast Two—Show One

After discussing the problems of opening night and cutting the three actors previously mentioned, cast two decided they should run over act two again in class to avoid the mishaps from the previous evening. Their lines have been stronger in rehearsal, so I’m hoping they will have a strong show. It’s so frustrating that they spend so much time focused on their lines and they still don’t have them down. It’s the grunt work and they don’t want to put in the time. They memorize their lines five minutes before they come into rehearsal, then they forget them as soon as they give them to me. I need a stronger way to get them to hold their lines. It’s hard to get any character/intention work done when they don’t even know what they are saying. The pace of the show is lost because of the cues.

The show was smoother than opening night as far as lines and technical mishaps are concerned. The sound cues came when they were supposed to and the curtain was closed on time. I have still not been impressed by any of the character work. It feels like a high school production. I know it is—but it doesn’t have to feel that way. Layne (Lenny) added things to his dialogue in an attempt to be funny. After the finger game, when he is crossing to go upstairs to pretend to be Charlie for the police, he told Glenn, “I’ll give you one finger.” Usually students think things like this are funny and the audience laughs, which encourages them to continue with their antics. I come down hard on this sort of behavior whenever it emerges, but they still don’t seem to get the point. They don’t take the comedy seriously enough to make it funny. Ironic.

Apr. 15

Cast One (sort of)—Show Two

This cast now consists of a combination of Cast One and Cast Two. Lenny, Claire, and Officer Pudney remain of the original cast, the others were replaced with their doubles. They were disappointed, but I felt it was necessary for the sake of the production. Hopefully they will be able to apply what they have learned to the next show. I should have pulled them right after dress rehearsal, perhaps sooner.

George arrived to see this production and I was taken off guard because I expected him for the Saturday show. Miscommunication on my part. I was nervous at first because sometimes Andrew (Lenny) can be a loose cannon and I never know what he is going to do. I told my students George was in the audience to make sure they would take it as seriously as possible. I met with George briefly before the show and I expressed my concerns about the lines being shaky so he was prepared for that aspect of the show. There were some moments in the show where silence pervaded. I try to train my students to cover with improv, but they haven’t had enough experience with it to be good at it.

Overall, the show was the best it has been, so I was happy they pulled it together a bit more. Still, the problems with the characters and pacing exist.
I met with George immediately following the show and we talked for 2 hours about the production. He had valuable feedback and suggestions for improvements. I expected him to critique the areas he did, and I was also pleased that he found some areas to compliment.

**Apr. 16**

**Cast Two—Show Two**

The final show in the run was similar to the previous two nights. Cues and lines weren’t terribly poor, but there were some bumps that took away from the element of professionalism that I am constantly striving for with our productions. Also, the energy level of the show suffered. Actually, the opening of the play was weaker than it had been in any of the previous shows; it was stronger in rehearsal. I can’t pinpoint the difference.

After discussing the show with George last night, I watched the show with a detached sense. I wanted it to be something other than what it was—I didn’t meet my own expectations. I didn’t get the fast paced, character driven play that I imagined when I first read the script. I shall speak more on this matter in my self-evaluation.

We had our cast party after the show and the cast seemed in high spirits, even though they knew my general feeling about the show. For the most part, students don’t concern themselves with self-evaluation. When their friends and family tell them they did a great job, they take that and run with it. I’m glad George was here to give an honest, specific evaluation, which I will read to them when I receive it. It’s important for them to hear something more than “Good job.” I will give them each a written critique, but unfortunately they will still revert to the “Good job” that they get from others. It feels better for them. Some students are critical of my feedback and get angry when I make suggestions for improvement—they want affirmation at any cost. If the production is struggling, they still want me to point out the good things. I think it is beneficial to some extent, but I have a hard time praising something that needs so much work. Hopefully they will take my feedback and work on improving those areas. Some will—most won’t.

We will strike the set on April 25—we are leaving it up for an art awards ceremony. Borrowed costume pieces will be dry cleaned and returned by the end of the week.
Self-Evaluation

When I first read the script for *Rumors*, I thought it was funny and I laughed out loud a few times. However, I never laughed while watching my play. The comedy seemed to get lost and obstacles overwhelmed the production; I was disappointed in the lack of comic energy coming from the show. I can recognize the positive aspects of the production, but the lack of character emphasis from the actors had such a negative impact on the play that it is difficult to focus compliments on the stronger areas of production. The characters were not developed and over the top like I initially saw them and lines and cues were not solid, which took away from the pace of the show. These are the areas that have needed work in all of my productions and the solution to these challenges remains to be seen. More rehearsal time would help, but where shall I find it?

The most difficult obstacle in directing *Rumors* (and all of my productions) is the absence of professional actors. My students’ experience on stage is limited, sometimes non-existent, which significantly affects their performances. Students are learning the craft of theatre during production and many have not even seen a professional play. As they are learning, however, I expect students to give all of their energy to the production and learn as much as they can about theatre. Often times, this expectation is not met. Many of the problems facing us are problems that can be overcome with additional dedication from the students. I want them to take more responsibility for learning their lines and cues in order to move on to developing more captivating performances.

Overall, the cast of *Rumors* was not strong on cues; therefore, the pace of the show was interrupted and slow. Also, many of the students failed to write their blocking in their scripts; therefore, more of our rehearsal time was consumed by students tying to remember their
blocking and their lines. They do not have the self-discipline to review their lines and blocking in order to improve these areas for performances. This has been a constant frustration for me ever since I started teaching drama.

In order to help alleviate the frustration, I changed my expectations at the beginning of my second year teaching. The current policy states all students must have an A on all memory grades in order to keep their parts in the play and memory grades are due when we block the beats in class. Unfortunately, being procrastinators, students usually learn lines five minutes before class, they present them to me for a grade as we work on blocking the show, then they never look at the lines again until dress rehearsal. I may be exaggerating a bit, but whatever the process is, it does not work.

More rehearsals after school throughout the rehearsal process would help. However, scheduling more rehearsals usually presents problems for students with jobs and/or other activities to attend. Currently, I only have one review session after school, usually at the end of the first act on a Saturday. I did this with Rumors and it did not seem to help. The cues were still weak. This is one of my biggest frustrations. I consider learning lines the responsibility of the student and my part in this process is making them do it by grading them on the effort. The other thing I have done to ensure line memory is take away parts, but perhaps they do not believe I will do it to them. At any rate, lines and cues continue to be a problem. I see this as a huge interruption in directing a play. It is extremely challenging to work effectively on other areas until the lines and cues are strong. How can a student actor confidently develop a character and his interactions with other characters if he does not even know what he is saying?

Development of the characters and their interactions on stage was the most disappointing aspect of this production. More rehearsal time would have helped in perfecting the technical
aspects of the production, but it would not have contributed anything to the characters because I often find myself repeating direction without seeing results from the actors. I worked on open scenes with students in order to clarify intentions with the use of action verbs, but this activity, though useful in the classroom, did not seem to affect the actors’ stage performances. I also asked each student to make strong physical choices for their characters. When this did not take place, I found myself molding and shaping the actors much like a mannequin exercise. Most of my students seem to have difficulty playing physical comedy and they are hesitant in taking risks. I try to push them over the top, but most of them will not budge. I tried an exaggeration rehearsal to push them further; no luck. When nothing substantial emerged, I suggested actors try to adapt an animal to their characters as a movement exercise. In the script, Chris refers to Cookie walking like a giraffe, but when my actors tried to incorporate this, they felt uncomfortable—and it showed.

On another note, I made good choices with the blocking. The stage pictures were nice throughout the show and I incorporated triangles as suggested by Hodge; however, some of the crossing should have been stronger. Students were instructed to cross on the diagonal, but my instruction did not come through in the show. One reason for this could be our rehearsal space. Our rehearsal space is the stage on which we will perform, but I have to direct with the curtain closed due to the classes taking place in the gym. I am on stage with the actors, which is a huge frustration and a difficult way for me to work. I do it, however, because it is the only space big enough to map out the set. My classroom is too small and when I requested use of the wrestling space, I was rejected. Having a quiet rehearsal space large enough for adequate direction to take place has been (and will continue to be) a challenge for me.
Another strength in the production was the set. It came together nicely, though it took many hours to complete; this is the most time I have ever spent on a set. The platform idea was new; we had never used a second level with the flats and I was not sure how it would come together. My construction crew made it work, but it took a long time. The construction of the set was successful and I was pleased with the floor plan. I tried to incorporate a fourth acting area up left, but in doing so, the set seemed cluttered; therefore, it was eliminated.

A stronger contrast color for the trim and the spindles of the staircase banister would have been more effective colors on the set. My set designer, Kandis Lutz, based the color choices on Ken’s line in the script referring to people decorating in white. Initially, I agreed with her color choices, but the contrast color of the trim was very weak. George suggested pulling the cyclorama closed around the back of the set to get a sharper contrast overall between the set and the black curtain. However, we needed the curtain open because of the escape stairs behind the set. Perhaps we should have tried pinning the curtain to the wall to get it to stay back. We also could have painted the back wall black in order to avoid pulling the curtain shut.

I am satisfied with the costume choices for the characters and the costumes were fairly easy to collect. The tuxedoes were readily accessible since we were able to borrow them from our school choir. The dresses were supplied by my students; the only dress we had to make was Claire’s and since Claire’s mother is a seamstress, it was a quick fix. The only costume I struggled with was Cookie’s. The research I assigned to my students did not get done and I found myself doing it at the last minute. It was a headache, but the costume I finally chose for her was pulled from our stock. It seemed to work out fine in the end. In the future, it would help if my students could be more reliable in this area. As their teacher, I delegate responsibility in order to increase their educational experience. When they do not fulfill their obligations, I have
to pick up the slack to make the production work. Regardless of the grade they are given, the show must go on. I am not sure what the solution is in this department. I want them to do the work and feel ownership of the show, but it always proves to be a frustration when costumes need to be taken care of at the last minute.

Makeup and hair seemed acceptable at the time of the show, but after reviewing George’s comments and watching the tape, I realize I could have polished this area further. Initially, the only problem I saw with hair was Andrew Crowden as Lenny. His hair was in his eyes and he was constantly pushing it to the side. One reason he did not look like Lenny is because of his hair style. However, convincing him to let me style his hair differently did not go over well with him. I suppose I could have pulled him from the show for not allowing the Lenny hair style I wanted him to have, but it was not a battle I chose to fight. Claire’s hair was more decorative the first time she performed, but she did not take the time with it for her second performance, which is the show George watched. In the future, I need to take more time polishing the physical appearance of the actors. I was more concerned with the lack of character intensity on stage and I did not focus my energy on hair and makeup.

Lighting was not only a problem for Rumors; it continued to be an obstacle in my next show. George said the pale color choice for the Rumors set contributed to the darkness of the actors and pulled focus from them; however, I’m not sure it was the color. For my final show of the year, I painted the flats green and the same problem occurred—the actors appeared dark. To compound the problem, two of the ellipsoidal light bulbs burned out during dress rehearsal and I did not have any replacement bulbs in stock. If I could get all seven instruments working, the front lighting would be greatly improved. I have never had this problem in the past when all the instruments were working. I plan to speak to Tina or Derek about my lighting problems. George
suggested getting a 12 dimmer system instead of just the 9 dimmer system that we currently have. Doing so would allow us to add more front lighting to help with the appearance of dark actors. The funds, however, are not available for such a purchase at this time. I will replace all of the light bulbs in order to alleviate the immediate problem.

Producing a play by myself is an arduous task and very few students contribute what is needed in order to aide me in this challenge. Training actors while producing a play becomes overwhelming, but with the time constraints of the school year, it is necessary. As a director, my biggest weakness is being able to pull character emphasis from the actors. I have not figured out how to get the students where they need to be. I can communicate it to them, but apparently not effectively because I do not see the result on stage.

Aside from the difficulties, I enjoyed working on Rumors with my students. Some of them (specifically Kandis Lutz) were tremendously helpful. Working in educational theatre has been rewarding and I will continue to strive for excellence with my students.
Works Cited


- You may only miss 2 in-class rehearsals when you have lines due.

- All after school Rehearsals are mandatory.

Encore Co.
February 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sun</th>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Tue</th>
<th>Wed</th>
<th>Thu</th>
<th>Fri</th>
<th>Sat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 B 30-34</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3 B 35-36</td>
<td>4 NO SCHOOL</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>8 B 37-40</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10 B 41-44</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12 ASK</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>15 B 45-47</td>
<td>16 B 48-51</td>
<td>17 B 52-54</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 NO SCHOOL</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23 B 55-57</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- B 30-36
- B 35-36
- B 37-40
- B 41-44
- B 45-47
- B 48-51
- B 52-54
- B 55-57
- B 58-60

NO SCHOOL
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sun</th>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Tue</th>
<th>Wed</th>
<th>Thu</th>
<th>Fri</th>
<th>Sat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B 61-63</td>
<td></td>
<td>BSU Theatre Festival</td>
<td>BSU Theatre Festival</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B 64-68</td>
<td></td>
<td>B 69-73</td>
<td></td>
<td>ASR C1&amp;C2 LENNY B74 330-530</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B 74-END</td>
<td>CAST ONE REVIEW B 45-57</td>
<td>CAST TWO REVIEW B 45-57</td>
<td></td>
<td>1:30 CAST TWO REVIEW B 45-57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CAST TWO REVIEW B 58-74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11:30 CAST ONE REVIEW B 58-74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SPRING BREAK</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Spring Break
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sun</th>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Tue</th>
<th>Wed</th>
<th>Thu</th>
<th>Fri</th>
<th>Sat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B 74 END</td>
<td>CURTAIN CALL &amp; TECH</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4 ASR</td>
<td>5 ASR</td>
<td>6 ASR</td>
<td>7 ASR</td>
<td>8 ASR TECHNICAL</td>
<td>9 1ST DRESS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1 330-630 ACT I</td>
<td>C2 330-630 ACT I</td>
<td>C1 330-630 ACT II</td>
<td>C2 330-630 ACT II</td>
<td>C1:330-530 C2:530-730</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>11 2ND DRESS CAST ONE 330-630</td>
<td>12 2ND DRESS CAST TWO 330-630</td>
<td>13 CAST ONE SHOW</td>
<td>14 CAST TWO SHOW</td>
<td>15 CAST ONE SHOW</td>
<td>16 CAST TWO SHOW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23 CAST PARTY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character</td>
<td>Actor-Cast One</td>
<td>Actor-Cast Two</td>
<td>Costume Desc.</td>
<td>Costume Change</td>
<td>Items Needed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ken Gorman</td>
<td>Quentin Smith</td>
<td>Chris Bodovinitz</td>
<td>Tuxedo Shit-bloodstain Black accents Wedding Ring Watch Black shoes/socks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris Gorman</td>
<td>Amparo Hurtado</td>
<td>Kandis Lutz</td>
<td>Evening Dress Wedding Ring Jewelry Hose Shoes Handbag</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lenny Ganz</td>
<td>Andrew Crowden</td>
<td>Layne Short</td>
<td>Tuxedo Red accents Wedding Ring Watch Black shoes/socks</td>
<td>Pajamas-monogram Robe Slippers Ear Bandage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claire Ganz</td>
<td>Rebecca Watson</td>
<td>Bridgett Snyder</td>
<td>Evening Dress Wedding Ring Jewelry Hose Shoes Handbag</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emir Cusack</td>
<td>Len Holcomb</td>
<td>Jorge Pedroza</td>
<td>Old-style tuxedo Black accents Wedding Ring Watch Black shoes/socks</td>
<td>Apron Finger bandages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cookie Cusack</td>
<td>Angela Gruver</td>
<td>Chandra Wilson</td>
<td>60-yr old Russian dress Hose Tacky Jewelry Tacky Shoes/bag Wedding Ring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenn Cooper</td>
<td>Alex Stewart</td>
<td>Ian Borreson</td>
<td>Tuxedo Black accents Watch Black shoes/socks</td>
<td>Bloody Shirt Bloody hanky</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassie Cooper</td>
<td>Laura Fagan</td>
<td>Laura De La Paz</td>
<td>Evening Dress w/&quot;cape&quot; distressed Jewelry Hose Shoes Handbag w/ crystal Wedding rings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officer Welch</td>
<td>Chiara Jewell</td>
<td>Ashley High</td>
<td>Police Uniform w/hat/gun/badge black shoes/socks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officer Pudney</td>
<td>Nicole Cadena</td>
<td>Brandy Jenks</td>
<td>Police Uniform w/hat/gun/badge black shoes/socks walkie talkie notepad</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Cast</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ken Gorman</td>
<td>Chris Bodovinitz</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris Gorman</td>
<td>Kandis Lutz</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lenny Ganz</td>
<td>Andrew Crowden</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claire Ganz</td>
<td>Rebecca Watson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ernie Cusack</td>
<td>Jorge Pedroza</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cookie Cusack</td>
<td>Chandra Wilson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenn Cooper</td>
<td>Ian Borreson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassie Cooper</td>
<td>Laura De La Paz</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassie</td>
<td>Laura Fagan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassie</td>
<td>Ashley High</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myra's Voice</td>
<td>Nicole Cadena</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officer Welch</td>
<td>Misty Heckathorn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officer Pudney</td>
<td>Misty Heckathorn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Crew</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Taunya Page</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Director</td>
<td>Kandis Lutz</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage Manager</td>
<td>Chiara Jewel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set Design</td>
<td>Kandis Lutz</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set Construction</td>
<td>Kandis Lutz</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set Painting</td>
<td>Kandis Lutz</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costume Manager</td>
<td>Misty Heckathorn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prop Manager</td>
<td>Misty Heckathorn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting Design</td>
<td>Kyle Donahoo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting Assistant</td>
<td>Jorge Pedroza</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting Operation</td>
<td>Misty Heckathorn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting Assistant</td>
<td>Len Holcomb</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound Operation</td>
<td>Taunya Page</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound Design</td>
<td>Chiara Jewel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House Manager</td>
<td>Len Holcomb</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicity</td>
<td>Taunya Page</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Thanks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daryl Page</td>
<td>Set Construction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Rodrigues</td>
<td>Set Construction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lou Ann Watson</td>
<td>Sewing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve &amp; Cathy Goldsmith</td>
<td>Set Design</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matt Donahoo</td>
<td>Ashley High</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jorge Pedroza</td>
<td>Misty Heckathorn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jorge Pedroza</td>
<td>Len Holcomb</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jorge Pedroza</td>
<td>Taunya Page</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jorge Pedroza</td>
<td>Chiara Jewel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jorge Pedroza</td>
<td>Len Holcomb</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jorge Pedroza</td>
<td>Taunya Page</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jorge Pedroza</td>
<td>Chiara Jewel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jorge Pedroza</td>
<td>Chiara Jewel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jorge Pedroza</td>
<td>Chiara Jewel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jorge Pedroza</td>
<td>Chiara Jewel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jorge Pedroza</td>
<td>Chiara Jewel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jorge Pedroza</td>
<td>Chiara Jewel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jorge Pedroza</td>
<td>Chiara Jewel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jorge Pedroza</td>
<td>Chiara Jewel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jorge Pedroza</td>
<td>Chiara Jewel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jorge Pedroza</td>
<td>Chiara Jewel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bastrop: The Legend of Dracula

October 27—31, 2004
7 p.m.
When Count Dracula causes the death of a young woman named Lucy, her fiancé and friends must conquer their fears to become vampire hunters. In order to free Miss Lucy’s soul, they must destroy her body, and more importantly, the Count’s as well. The hunters are led by Dr. Van Helsing in a daring character departure portrayed here as a woman. Their only hope for survival is the vampire’s destruction.

Rumors: A Farce
by Neil Simon
April 13–16, 2005
7 p.m.
Rumors is set during the tenth anniversary party of New York City’s deputy mayor, Charley Brock, and his wife, Myra. As the play opens, Chris and Ken Gorman arrive at the party to discover Charley lying in bed with an unexplained gunshot wound through his ear, while his wife and the servants are nowhere to be found. Couples arriving at the party are kept in the dark regarding the Brock situation and the evening escalates into a hilarious night of miscommunication and misinformation.

Joe Mufferaw and the Robbed Reindeer

North Elementary: Dec. 13
West Elementary: Dec. 15
Saturday Matinee:
Dec. 18, 2004  12&3 p.m.

In this children’s theatre production, Dr. Crankspea steals antlers from Santa’s reindeer and frames Joe Mufferaw for the crime. There will be no Christmas unless Joe can prove his innocence with the help of Jane the reporter and return the antlers to the reindeer.

The Lost Elevator
By Percival Wilde
This short one-act comedy will be on tour at Mountain Home Junior High School on May 18 and at Hacker Middle School on May 20. An express elevator is stuck between floors in a high rise building with an assortment of characters on board.
District III Drama Competition
Encore Co. members prepare short scenes to showcase their talents and compete against other schools at the District III Drama Competition every November. Qualifying students advance to compete at the state level in the Idaho State Drama Competition held in December. Students can compete in technical theatre events as well as acting events.

The Oregon Shakespeare Festival
During spring break, Encore Co. travels to Ashland, Oregon, home of one of the country's greatest Shakespeare festivals. Students have the opportunity to see three professional productions, take a backstage tour, and participate in an interactive workshop with professional stage actors.

Encore Co.
Tickets are sold at the door for each show
Lloyd Schiller Gym
Mountain Home High School
300 South 11th East
Mountain Home, ID 83647
Phone: 208.587.2570
Fax: 208.587.2579
Email: page_tl@sd193.k12.id.us

"All the world's a stage and the men and women merely players."
—William Shakespeare

Year-round Productions
Taunya Page, Director
Bringing quality theatre to the community of Mountain Home, Idaho
Len Holcomb
“Life is full of peaks and valleys. My peaks are performances. My valleys are rehearsals.”

Amparo Hurtado
“I have a special passion for theatre and I hope to continue studying drama and singing.”

Brandy Jenks
“Drama is like a box of chocolates. You never know how many nuts you’re going to get.”

Chiara Jewell
“I enjoy acting and being a member of Encore Co. It offers me a break from the stress of my academic courses.”

Layne Short
“Drama is awesome. It has been an enjoyable part of my high school experience.”

Chiara Jewell
“Encore Co. is more than a class. It consists of teamwork, dedication, and friendship. Without these, we cannot achieve anything.”

Jorge Pedroza
“This was supposed to be my stress-free class. Oh well.”

Quentin Smith
“I enjoy acting and my determination will be the key to a successful career in the theatre.”

Bridgett Snyder
“Drama lets me express who I really am. I enjoy it!”

Alex Stewart
“I enjoy drama. Wewwww! It helps me release my fun side.”

Rebecca Watson
“I love what I do in drama—being able to portray someone else. Working with all my friends makes it a great experience.”

Chandra Wilson
“Drama allows me to escape for a while, to be whomever I choose. It has taken me out of my comfort zone and given me confidence.”
Encore Co.

Encore Co. is a production-based class in which students have the opportunity to participate in theatre productions year-round. In this advanced theatre course, students apply knowledge gained during the prerequisite class, Introduction to Theatre. Students gain hands-on experience as they produce shows for the community throughout the year and they continue developing their skills in acting; lighting design and operation; sound design and operation; costume design and management; set design and construction; and makeup application. In dedicating themselves to the craft of theatre, students develop self-confidence and a sense of camaraderie with their fellow Thespians.

Joe Mufferaw & The Robbed Reindeer
December 2004

Chris Bodevinitz
“Theatre is part of my life. I’d be lost and empty inside without it.”

Ian Borreson
“Drama is my thing. It helps me come out of my shell.”

Nyoce Cadena
“I love being a member of Encore Co. I plan to pursue a career in theatre, so this class is helping to prepare me for my future.”

Andrew Crowden
“I love drama. It makes me feel like I belong.”

Kyle Donahoo
“I have enjoyed being in drama. I like to work on the technical side of theatre.”

Laura De La Paz
“This is my third year in drama and it has become an important part of my life. I could not imagine my life without it.”

Laura Fagan
“Being in drama has helped me find my way in the world. I’ve enjoyed playing different characters during my time with Encore Co.”

Angela Gruver
“Drama and choir are important parts of my life.”

Mista Heckathorn
“Being on stage is nice, but I also enjoy working on the technical side of theatre. Backstage work makes the show.”

Ashley High
“Drama is a place you can get involved. It has become a major part of my life!”
Inspiration for Cookie's Costume
Rumors - Set Construction

What we have:

11 - 4 x 8
8 - 4 x 4
9 - 1 x 8
1 - window 4 x 8
2 - single doors
1 - double door
1 - 8 x 4 x 2 platform
1 - fireplace

What we need:

6 - 4 x 8
298 - 1 x 8
1 - window flat

5 doors
(3 double hinged, 2 practical)

1 platform w/ banister
1 staircase w/ banister
2 triangle "masks"
1 fireplace
Initial Floor Plan
Design Inspirations

[Image of fireplace with painting]

[Sketch of curtains]

[Image of plant stand]

replace painting

(E) plant stand
Double Door Design

Total door widths:
- 29 inches - double doors
- 29 inches - new doors
- 31 inches - old single doors

Total door heights:
- 80 inches - double doors
- 79 1/2 inches - single doors

Scaled 1:4

18" x 64" oval for dbl doors
18"/18½" x 31" rectangle for bottom panel
18½" x 35" polygon for top panel

- New doors -
- add 1/2 inch either side

"inserted" for old doors
Production Photo:
Cassie, Lenny, Cookie, Claire, Officer Welch
Ellipsoidals: 750 Watts (These are in the ceiling of the gym--#28-33)

Fresnels: 500 Watts

Scoop: 500 Watts

- **9 dimmer controls**
- **2250 Watts per dimmer**

- A **Gobo** is a round metal cutout which is placed in front of an ellipsoidal instrument to cast a design on the wall/floor.
- A **Gel/Filter** is placed in front of the lighting instrument to change the color of the light.

- **Working lights** are the fluorescent lights in the ceiling of the acting area.
- **Stage lights** are positioned on battens hanging from the ceiling in the acting area.
- **House Lights** are in the ceiling of the gym just past the apron of the stage aiming straight down at the floor.
Philip Bosco and Victor Garber were the main reasons to catch the "worthwhile but a little commonplace" revival of Shaw's The Devil's Disciple on November 13 at the Circle in the Square. Bosco, who was becoming New York's favorite Shavian interpreter, played General "Gentleman Johnny" Burgoyne with all the bluster of a cannon, and Garber was a sly and very sexy Dick Dudgeon. Stephen Porter directed the comedy, which was held over for 113 performances.

His serio-comic autobiographical trilogy completed, Neil Simon turned to broad and escapist farce with Rumors (11-17-88, Broadhurst), which entertained undemanding audiences for 513 performances. Deputy mayor Charley and his wife, Myra, have invited four couples to their town house for a party to celebrate their tenth anniversary. But Ken (Mark Nelson) and Chris Gorman (Christine Baranski), the first to arrive, find Charley in the bedroom wounded from a suicide attempt (he only managed to shoot himself in the earlobe) and Myra missing. In order to avoid scandal, they try to keep the hosts' predicament from the other couples when they arrive. But a second gunshot brings the police, and soon all four couples are manufacturing stories to continue the cover up. Critics were stingy in their approval ("old-hat humor not encountered in our time outside the world of dinner theatres") but applauded Gene Saks's razor-sharp direction and the farce talents of the cast, which also included Ron Liebman, Joyce Van Patten, Jessica Walter, André Gregory, and Lisa Banes. Tony Straz's elegant white setting, featuring several doors upstairs and down, garnered kudos. In time, the farce became a popular staple in community theatres.

No play yet in Papp's Shakespeare Marathon had received such glowing reviews as those for Coriolanus on November 22 at the Public. Yet praise for the "updated and truncated, impertinent, overboard, but overwhelmingly beautiful production" was far from unanimous. British director Steven Berkoff cut the script radically, set it in modern times with black and gray costumes on a set of black slate, and punctuated it with an all-percussion score that added to the driving street in Sydney, but it had all the backstabbing and depersonalization of a Hollywood expose. Writer Colin (Daniel Gerroll) and his editor wife, Kate (Gates McFadden), move from Melbourne to the bigger city, where his career is propelled upward by the fast-talking dealer Mike (Dan Butler). Before long Colin has abandoned serious projects, is considering television soap operas, and is infatuated with a public relations woman named Helen (Alice Haining). Mike takes one of Kate's favorite projects, a novel about aboriginal peoples, and hawks it as a film vehicle for Eddie Murphy in Tennessee. Forced to reevaluate themselves, Kate and Colin consider returning to Melbourne until they realize that Sydney is not the problem. "Don't blame us," Colin notes as marriage and artistic goal engagement was limited anyway, but the "insanely, best and, in an unprecendented, the entire text in that year.

Romantic ideals of the brated and exploded in Majestic Kid (12-1-88, St. Pet that was not favored by t afterwards in regional the art Zagnit), a New York a the Southwest with his Jean Pollard (Kay Wallby) battle against eastern com to exploit their land and hein a child, Aaron has imaginagog JJ, a gun-toting h justice in the West. Aaron's rival is William S. Hart Finlay (Michael Cullen), a redneck judge who hopes to add to his fortune by the proposed land deals. Aaron's mentor is "The Laredo Kid" (Alex Wipf), a fantasy figure right out of the westerns, who guides the young lawyer in his fight but upbraids him when he starts to weaken and fall for the judge's ex-girlfriend Lisa Belmondo (Juliette Kurth). Finally Aaron finds his true inner self and no longer needs the Kid to help him win his battles.

The Lincoln Center revival of Thornton Wilder's Our Town (2-4-38) on December 4 at the Lyceum was well received, winning exemplary no
Glampour in a Housecoat

SPOILS OF WAR by Michael Weller

BY WILLIAM A. HENRY III

What is the most influential drama in American literary history? As plausible a candidate as any is The Glass Menagerie. Since Tennessee Williams brought his family confessional to Broadway in 1945, virtually every U.S. dramatist of substance has revealed himself in a guilt-ridden memory play, from Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman and Eugene O'Neill's long-concealed Long Day's Journey into Night to Lanford Wilson's Lemon Sky and Neil Simon's Broadway Bound. Into those ranks comes Michael Weller. Heretofore best known for Moon children and the screenplay of Hair, both

mean spirited vehemence at the least challenge to macho authority. The exceptional person in this triangle, and the reason Weller's play can arouse memories just as vivid for onlookers as for him, is the mother Elise, played by Kate Nelligan. Seductive yet deserted, maternal yet uncondition, witty and gay in the midst of poverty and squalor, supremely self-confident and supremely self-destructive, Elise might easily seem nothing more than that old literary standby the bundle of paradoxes. As played by Nelligan, the character comes exuberantly alive. Vitality and beauty are common enough in star turns; so is warmth, although Nelligan, whose technical gifts are extraordinary, has never before shown it to this degree on the U.S. stage, and only once on film, in her 1985 performance as a heroic Greek mother in Elektra.

Her remarkable feat is to make audiences believe at once in this woman's intelligence and her ultimate helplessness so that they view her as her son does with affection and even admiration despite her frustrating futility, her fumbling of life's every chance. From the first scene, when she serves a dinner of warm milk (hers liberally laced from a pocket flask) in an apartment without electricity, to the climactic reunion, when she arrives unkempt in a bedraggled housecoat and proceeds to exude glamour and sophistication from every pore, she makes life an adventure. Unlike the mother in The Glass Menagerie, whose tale of having 17 gentlemen callers seems a sad fib, Elise is convincing when she says, "I used to make quite the impression when I entered a room. I stood perfectly still, and everything moved in my direction."

There are other things to cherish, notably Alice Playten's touching portrayal of a family friend, and things to regret, including Andrew Jackness's drab, unevocative sets and director Austin Pendleton's clumsy use of them (more than once, stagehands can be seen moving furniture). But Nelligan redeems everything. The play debuted in May at Second Stage, an off-Broadway house primarily devoted to neglected American works. Thanks to a truly unforgettable star, Spoils of War need not wait for rediscovery.

Mother love and filial fascination: Nelligan and Collet

Making a hard life into an exuberant adventure.

valedictories to the '60s, Weller looks back to his adolescence, a decade earlier, in Spoils of War. His story of estranged parents and a teenage son who schemes to reunite them is a harrowing addition to the genre and the only work of lasting value to debut on Broadway this season.

The stand-in for Weller is Martin (Christopher Collet), a gawky and irritable but predictably literate youth whose clumsy idealism embraces everything from ending the cold war to a metaphorically equivalent attempt to halt the chilly state of nonrecognition between his mother and father. The parents are former leftist activists who once lived for "the movement" and each other, and now find only regret in recalling either ardor. The father (Jeffrey DeMunn) is genial enough—a mildly successful photographer who deflects his son's attempts to romanticize him—although his affability fades into
THE THEATRE

A Man for All Seasons

Neil Simon’s “Rumors,” at the Broadhurst, is set in the living room of a house in Sweden’s Landing, where a party to celebrate the tenth-anniversary of a couple named Charlie and Myra is about to take place, but the host and hostess are nowhere in sight. The handsome living room, designed by Tony Straiges and lighted by Tharon Musser, indicates “the prosperity and taste of the place,” senator, and his pretty wife, who susceptibility to sudden pain, is a victim of whiplash. Charlie and Myra is about to take the phone and the doctor.

Mr. Simon has been writing comedies for theatre and movies almost year by year since 1961, some of them good, some not so good, and “Rumors” is the funniest—funnier, come to think of it, than almost anyone else’s comedies. There isn’t one moment in “Rumors” that doesn’t play, not a turn of the action that isn’t a surprise. Under the direction of Gene Saks, the performances are everything they should be. (“Rumors,” by Simon and Saks, wouldn’t be far off the mark), every actor being worthy of the character assigned. There is no skimping on characterization, either. Christine Baranski, leggy and lovely and an inspired comedian, has never been funnier than she is as Chris, herself in the know and trying to conceal a number of truths from the other guests, and to control her distraught husband—as portrayed by Mark Nelson—who is in and out of that upstairs bedroom. Ron Leibman is the whiplash sufferer, and does very well with the one monologue in the piece; Jessica Walter is his perky wife; André Gregory is the psychoanalyst, generally benevolent in a fuddled kind of way, never quite getting the point of anything; Joyce Van Patten is his helpful wife, prone to sudden screams when the spasms hit her; Ken Howard is a more than usually obilious pol, with that state-senate election always in mind; beautiful Lisa Banes is his wife; Charles Brown is the unflappable, unfoolable cop; and Cynthia Darlow is his deputy. The cast is an honor roll. I laughed hardest at Miss Baranski, Mr. Gregory, and Mr. Brown, but there was nobody I didn’t laugh at. The unseen characters could be mentioned, too—the poor, bleeding host lying quietly in his room on the second floor, who speaks once or twice over an intercom, and the beleaguered doctor, summoned time after time by his beeper from his seat at “The Phantom of the Opera” to hysteria at the other end of the phone. “Rumors” being a farce, there are, needless to say, plenty of doors, plenty of stairs, plenty of turns and twists of plot, plenty of questions (a number of them unanswered, but who cares!), and plenty of jokes, each of them a winner.

“The Devil’s Disciple,” Shaw’s dashing melodrama set in New Hampshire during the American Revolution, can be seen in a tame production at Circle in the Square, with Victor Garber in the title role of the rascal Richard Dudgeon, who is casually prepared to sacrifice his life on the gallows when he is mistaken for a rebellious parson. Roxanne Hart is the parson’s wife, who stops on the brink of falling in love with Richard. Philip Bosco is the only Gentleman Johnny Burgoyne I’ve ever seen who could be an Army career man, and Bill Moor is soldierly enough as Major Swindon, his aide. All of them are O.K. but no better than that, whatever their good credentials. The literal direction was by Stephen Porter. Imagine Bernard Shaw taking second place to Neil Simon! So it goes.

—Edith Oliver
WARNING TO PARENTS & KIDS

KIDS CAN GET CIRRHOSIS, TOO!

- Without warning, drugs and alcohol can cause serious and often permanent damage to the liver. It's called cirrhosis and it affects young and old alike.
- But drug dependency is only half the problem.
- Even if the youngsters kick the drug habit, the cirrhosis can destroy their livers.
- Drugs are deadly. So is cirrhosis.

PLEASE WARN YOUR CHILD.
The American Liver Foundation can help you. Write for a free brochure.

AMERICAN LIVER FOUNDATION
Cedar Grove, NJ 07009
201-857-2626

Space for this message contributed by Newsweek Inc.

THEATER

Here a Gag, There a Gag
Simon tackles farce

Here's this week's quiz. What's your reaction to the following gags?

Number one. Nervous woman: I'm so desperate for a smoke I tried to light up a Q-Tip...

Number two. Man: Charlie wouldn't look at another woman. Wife: He may not be looking at her, but he's screwing her...

Number three. First man: Dinner won't be ready until 11. Second man: I have a slight gastric problem; I'm not supposed to eat after 10. First man: So we'll set our watches back an hour...

OK, it's not fair. These lines from Neil Simon's Rumors are taken out of context and there's a difference between comedy delivered live and comedy on the page. Still, funny is funny. So the question is, is "Rumors" funny? I mean really funny, not just a gag here and a gag there, a pratfall here and a triple take there. What makes you laugh is a matter almost as personal as religion and sex. But there is a workable consensus; very few people worship goats and not many people sleep with armadillos.

Am I saying the Broadway audience that will probably make "Rumors" another long-running Simon hit is a bunch of goats-dillos? Certainly not; I'm simply arguing for one of the great American freedoms, freedom of boffola. For me "Rumors" was more appalling than funny.

After his semiautobiographical trilogy ("Brighton Beach Memoirs," "Biloxi Blues," "Broadway Bound"), Simon decid-
Newsweek Diaries – the choice of corporate America.

Choose the planners that best suit your lifestyle – desk, pocket or both!

**Desk Diary**
Impressing on your desk, and so much more than just an elegant appointments diary. With its 32-page color Atlas, and over a 100 pages of valuable up-to-date international data, you'll find it indispensable. Month by month and annual forward planning; 5-year calendars; a business expense log; staff vacation chart; conversion tables; wine vintage guide; and for the frequent business traveler a comprehensive guide to 48 countries, including current entry and exit regulations. It's all in the 1989 Desk Diary. Size: 10 1/2 x 8 1/2 inches.

**Pocket Diary**
Slim, flexible, and very smart. Slips neatly into your jacket pocket or purse...and matches your desk diary exactly. Also available in a deluxe leather wallet if preferred.

**Pocket Address Book**
Bound in rich black leather, with room for over 700 names, addresses and phone numbers. Also available in matching leather Wallet.

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>COLOR</th>
<th>1-2</th>
<th>3-24</th>
<th>25-49</th>
<th>50+</th>
<th>TOTAL USE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NW201</td>
<td>Desk Diary with Newsweek logo</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>30.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW202</td>
<td>Desk Diary without Newsweek logo</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>14.50</td>
<td>18.00</td>
<td>24.00</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td>35.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW203</td>
<td>Desk Diary with Newsweek logo</td>
<td>Burgundy</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>35.00</td>
<td>40.00</td>
<td>45.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW204</td>
<td>Desktop Diary</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>17.50</td>
<td>21.00</td>
<td>27.50</td>
<td>33.00</td>
<td>38.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW205</td>
<td>Desktop Diary</td>
<td>Burgundy</td>
<td>23.50</td>
<td>28.50</td>
<td>35.50</td>
<td>42.50</td>
<td>49.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW206</td>
<td>Desktop Diary and Wallet</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>26.50</td>
<td>32.50</td>
<td>42.50</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>57.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW207</td>
<td>Desktop Diary and Wallet</td>
<td>Burgundy</td>
<td>33.50</td>
<td>40.00</td>
<td>52.50</td>
<td>63.00</td>
<td>73.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Gold Blocking of Initials**
For that finishing touch of class you can have your initials – or those of friends and colleagues – blocked in gold on the front cover of any item.

**GUARANTEE** If not completely satisfied return within 30 days for full refund or credit.

**FREE**
World Time Zone Calculator with any order

**PLUS FREE**
10-piece portable DESK KIT when you order 3 or more items

---

Your choice of Color
Desk and Pocket diaries for 1989 are offered in a choice of classic black, or rich burgundy bonded leather.

Your initials blocked in Gold
For that finishing touch of class you can have your initials – or those of friends and colleagues – blocked in gold on the front cover of any item.

---

**Strenuous logistics:** Good farces have been made from less promising material than this. The problem is that Simon too often supplies the frenzy of farce without its hilarity. Sweat seems to pour from this production; one is all too conscious of the author and director Gene Saks and the cast working their buns off to organize the strenuous logistics. Simon may have been partially moved to write “Rumors” by the Broadway success in recent years of English farces by writers like Alan Ayckbourn (“Absurd Person Singular”) and Michael Frayn. But those playwrights have updated the concept of farce with such technical innovations as the view of the theatrical troupe from both sides of the footlights in Frayn’s “Noises Off.” And somehow they make you care about their characters, Simon’s people are such creeps that their manic shenanigans become irritating instead of amusing.

Although the cast are solid professionals, none is a natural at farce; there are no Steve Martinas or Bette Midlers. Leibman has the virtuosity but not the lightness of touch. After his climactic nonstop monologue, an investigating cop (Charles Brown) tells him: “I liked it.” And Ernie adds: “I am impressed. Sincerely impressed.” Well, I guess you can’t blame Neil Simon, no lover of critics, for reviewing his own work before the curtain comes down.

---

**Credit card holders in the U.S. and Canada may call TOLL-FREE**
800-247-2570
(in Iowa 800-362-2860)

Ask OPERATOR 2 for Diaries Dept. NN3C09
We honor Amex/Diners/MasterCard/Visa

---

JACK ROLL
### Invoice: Production Royalty Fees

**Total Royalty Due on this Invoice:** $324.00

**PLEASE RETURN YOUR PAYMENT WITH YELLOW COPY**

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON REVERSE**

---

**Rumors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Title / Description</th>
<th>Title No.</th>
<th>Loc</th>
<th>Unit Price</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Royalty/Perfs</th>
<th>First Perf IS</th>
<th>Ea Addl Perf IS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RUMORS</td>
<td>00943</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>75.00</td>
<td>75.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FOR RUMORS:**

A mandatory royalty is charged to secure the rights for the use of the song LA BAMBA. This does not secure the rights for any recording of LA BAMBA, including that of Ritchie Valens.

---

**Samuel French, Inc.**

7623 Sunset Boulevard • Hollywood, CA 90046 • USA

**Performance Contract**

Mountain Home High School

**Attention:** ACCT Payable/DRAMA DEPT

300 South 11th East

Mountain Home ID 83647

---

**Samuel French, Inc.**

7623 Sunset Boulevard • Hollywood, CA 90046 • USA

**Performance Contract**

Mountain Home High School

**Attention:** ACCT Payable/DRAMA DEPT

300 South 11th East

Mountain Home ID 83647
IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR OUR CUSTOMERS

Under U.S. copyright law, the title(s) you have ordered is/are subject to a royalty charge for any production before an audience, whether or not admission is charged. The royalty due is clearly shown & is payable one week in advance of the date of your first performance. Your cancelled check serves as your receipt.

Please return one copy of this invoice when remitting payment. Otherwise, your account may not be properly credited.

Should you decide not to produce the play(s), or have a postponement, please so advise by returning this invoice to us in order that we may properly mark our control records.

PLEASE NOTE: Samuel French, Inc. requires that due authorship credit appears in all programs and advertising issued in connection with your production. In addition, please refer to our acting edition for any Important Billing & Credit Requirements. Also, the following must be printed in all programs and in all advertisements:

"Produced by special arrangement with SAMUEL FRENCH, INC."

This invoice is for amateur live stage production only. No other rights are granted herein. No television, film, video or audio recordings may be made of your production unless specifically authorized ahead of time in writing by Samuel French, Inc.

No changes of any kind may be made in the text of the play without prior written permission from Samuel French, Inc. on behalf of the copyright owner. Unauthorized textual alterations constitute a violation of U.S. copyright law.

Please note: Amateur royalties listed in our catalogue are for theaters with less than 400 seats.

All sales are final. No books may be exchanged or returned without advance authorizations.

Best wishes for a successful presentation.

Tax Identification Number
13-0745220

Terms: Books - Net cash 30 days after date. Royalties due one week before production.
Encore Company presents

RUMORS
by Neil Simon

Wednesday, April 13 · Thursday, April 14 · Friday, April 15 · Saturday, April 16 2005
Mountain Home High School
7 p.m.
Tickets at the door: $3 Students · $5 Adults
Produced by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.