

Outside the Black Box: The Challenges of Performing in Found Space

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Fine Arts in Performing Arts

at

The Savannah College of Art and Design

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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Performing Arts Department
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Fine Arts in Performing Arts
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By

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For Adam

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Theatre is an intensely personal experience for an actor, but as an audience member one can often feel far removed from the action on stage. This thesis project was an experiment in utilizing non-theatrical space for performance—not only to explore ways to create low-budget theatre, but also to attempt to draw the audience as closely as possible into the performance while still maintaining a “fourth wall.”

Chapter 1: Beginnings

One of my first scripts was written at my grandmother's desk on a series of Post-It® notes. It was a holiday (I'm not sure which one), and I was struggling to round up my cousins and get them focused—not an easy task for a third grader. I assigned roles, we pieced together some makeshift costumes, and after what might be considered a rehearsal, we proudly called the rest of the family together to see our production.

This ritual was repeated at countless family gatherings. The scripts were frequently conceived and written just before dinner, someone always forgot his or her lines, and one person typically quit mid-rehearsal and had to be wooed back. But the thrill I felt and the way these memories seared into my mind should have been my first clue that I was going to grow up to be a director.

From my first quarter at SCAD, I began looking for a script to direct. In Winter Quarter of 2012, a classmate handed me a script that she thought I might find amusing. It was “Election Day,” and I knew from the first read that this was what I had been looking for. The script was witty, hilarious, and purposely vague on real-world political situations and viewpoints—something that was important to me because I am keenly aware of the widely varied political viewpoints that exist on a college campus.

The play was written by Josh Tobiessen, a young playwright originally from Schenectady, New York. Tobiessen had earned an undergraduate degree in philosophy from Grinnell College in Iowa and spent some time in Chicago working as an actor and taking classes at Improv Olympic with Del Close and Charna Halpern. In 2000 he moved to Galway, Ireland where he earned a master's degree in theatre and drama. While in Ireland, he founded the theatre

company Catastrophe, which went on to produce eight of his plays. He also taught theatre classes at the Galway Youth Theatre, and he taught playwriting classes at the National University of Ireland, Galway.

Tobiessen returned to the U.S. in 2004 and enrolled in the MFA playwriting program at the University of California San Diego Department of Theatre and Dance, where *Election Day* was first produced in 2006 for the Baldwin New Play Festival. The play was also a finalist in the Keneda Graduate Playwriting Competition at the Alliance Theatre in Atlanta, Georgia, and it was produced in 2007 at the Second Stage Theatre's Uptown Festival in New York. Since *Election Day*, Tobiessen has written several critically acclaimed plays, including *Red State*, *Blue Grass*; *Spoon Lake Blues*; and *Crashing the Party*.

Election Day was originally chosen by 3rd Act (the student Performing Arts and Production Design club at SCAD) as their fall 2012 second-stage show, but due to a conflict with the Performing Arts Department's season, the club was forced to choose a different production. I was determined to bring this show to life, however, and with the encouragement of club members, faculty advisors, classmates, and my husband, I decided to produce it as a lab show. This was a little intimidating, because without the umbrella of 3rd Act I would have to find my own funding and recruit my own technical staff—difficult to do as a graduate student because we have significantly less overlap with the Production Design Department than undergraduate students.

This thesis details my journey to bring *Election Day* to life with a small budget, small staff, small space...and big dreams.

Chapter 2: Breaking it Down

I. Spectacle

Genre: Comedy

Given Circumstances

A. Time

1. Play was first produced in 2006
2. Play setting is listed as November of “the present”—Election Day 2012
3. Takes place over the course of one day—Election Day

How to use this information: This play relies heavily on the audience’s view of politics in general (not specific issues). It deals with a current climate that views politicians as two-faced, advocacy groups as extremists, informed citizens as overbearing, and the average citizen as uninformed and relatively apathetic. The fact that it takes place on Election Day fuels the tension because voting decisions cannot be counted any other day so the window of chance is limited. The result of long efforts will also be decided today, so anxiety is high in several of the characters.

B. Place, or physical environment

1. “A small American city”
2. Because it is a small city, local elections take on more importance because results are seen more clearly and immediately; local officials also typically command higher respect and esteem than in a larger city
3. People know a larger percentage of their community and know each other’s business more closely than in a larger city

How to use this information: Whereas in a large city, one's decision to vote may not be noted by many people, in a small town it is a big deal. A few votes really can make the difference. Therefore, deciding who to vote for (or deciding not to vote at all) is a bigger deal. Candidates go all out to gain each individual vote. Personal relationships also matter more in a small town, which makes Clark's door-to-door approach less hokey and more crucial. Clark also has more prestige and influence to gain than he might in a bigger city, raising the stakes for him. He has a lot to live up to because the community knew his father's political career and he is expected to follow suit.

C. Society

1. Clark and Brenda are both public officials and therefore in a higher income bracket than most of the other characters. We know they went to high school together and dated, so they grew up in the same circles.
2. Adam is middle class; he has a professional job and a car. Adam did not know Brenda in high school so either there is an age gap or they went to different schools (which probably indicates an income gap growing up also).
3. Cleo and Edmund are lower-middle class; they both have blue-collar jobs (cat shelter and waiter, respectively) and ride the bus (which would not be as easy in a small city—limited range and availability). Edmund is involved with environmental extremist groups, and while Cleo is involved with these groups, it is more for Edmund than her belief in their cause or friendship/identification with the other people in the group.

How to use this information: People often have difficulty relating to others who are from a different class or background. These people also tend to have differing ideas about what issues are important in an election. These differences (perceived and actual) fuel some of the conflict in the play. Brenda and Adam are at odds because he doesn't find being an informed voter as important as Brenda does. Clark and Brenda clash because of their opposing political views. Because of his radical environmental views, Edmund clashes with Brenda, Adam, and Clark. Cleo seems to blend into whatever situation she finds herself in—and while this is good for getting along with others, it exposes a rather shallow personality that has not developed its own viewpoints or meaningful thoughts.

D. Economics

1. Clark could potentially be in charge of a lot of the city's money if a proposed casino deal goes through—Brenda is concerned about this.
2. Clark offers Adam and Cleo favors for their votes (paving their road, waiving their parking tickets, etc.).
3. Brenda and Adam are moving in together, but Brenda still appears to be keeping a “mine and yours” mentality to their money and possessions.
4. Cleo makes minimum wage at the cat shelter (which makes it a big deal that she blew up her SUV just to impress Edmund).
5. Adam gives Cleo a handful of change to go use the pay phone at Starbucks.

6. Brenda buys lunch at the Pine Nut Café since she put flyers and posters up.
7. Edmund gives Brenda a free glass of wine at lunch.
8. Edmund also gives Brenda a free bag of pot (which he wrote his number on).
9. Clark says “taxes continue to rise like a rocket, hurting our local industries and kicking hard working citizens like you and me right in the wallet.”
10. Clark drinks several of Adam’s beers, and offers them to other people as if they were his own.
11. Clark offers \$5000 and then \$10,000 for the sheets on which he had sex with Cleo so they don’t tell the public; Cleo asks for \$20,000.

How to use this information: Clark claims to be concerned about the city’s finances and taxes, but then he offers personal favors that would be paid for with taxpayer money. This shows his doubled-sided nature and reveals that he is not genuine. Edmund gives away free drinks and destroys property to make a point, showing that he does not care about others’ rights. He also gives Brenda a bag of pot, which at first appears generous, but may really be an attempt to get rid of incriminating materials. Brenda’s resistance to melding her financial life with Adam shows her reluctance to take their relationship to the next level. That Cleo would blow up her SUV while making minimum wage and her quick acceptance of Clark’s bribe shows her inability to see beyond the present moment.

E. Intellect and Culture

1. Adam knows a little about wine because he and Brenda took a wine tasting class (but at the community college).
2. Brenda is a public defender, so she graduated law school.
3. Clark is running for office and appears to be well educated.
4. Brenda's apartment is nicely decorated.

How to use this information: Brenda seems more educated and refined than Adam; Cleo, Adam's sister, sees this as possibly causing conflict in their relationship (she's neat, he isn't). Adam, however, seems to want to change himself for the better to be with Brenda (taking the wine-tasting class at the community college, for instance). Clark and Brenda are from the same background and therefore it could be slightly threatening to Adam that Clark once dated Brenda.

F. Spirituality

1. Cleo likes how "in touch" Edmund is with the planet (referred to as "she").
2. Edmund has a "Native American name" even though he is not a Native American "by blood."
3. "Jesus Christ" is used as a mild form of swearing. "Goddammit" is also used.

How to use this information: There is no organized religion present in this play. However, there are some new age references to the Earth and Native Americans, but these seem more trendy than committed.

G. The World of the Play

This play revolves around how we view politics in the United States today. The view expressed in the play is that politics are all about self—what this can do for me. For Adam, politics can bring him closer to Brenda. Brenda uses politics to get back at Clark for their past rivalry. Jerry uses politics to please his father and gain wealth and popularity for himself. Cleo uses politics to get along with people and mooch off them. Edmund uses politics to make himself seem cool and to feel important.

All of the characters pursue their own selfish ambitions, but it is Adam's love and willingness to be open that ultimately triumph. He is open to hearing what others have to say, even when he disagrees with them. This information changes him, and he finds the courage to do something bold when he realizes how much he loves Brenda. He also finds the courage to stand up for himself instead of being told what to do, and because of this the story ends relatively peacefully.

How to use this information: The play needs to revolve around Adam's transformation from doormat to man. He may seem the most vanilla character in the play, but he needs to be able to subtly undergo this transformation. The other characters need to avoid being caricatures, but be a heightened sort of real—they represent the current political climate of memes and political cartoons and sound bites. The set also needs to be realistic—Adam represents all of us, who need to find what we believe in and have the courage to stand up and fight for it.

II. Character

Identify and define the characters

A. Protagonist: Adam

Most of the action centers around him, and he is the character who changes the most throughout the course of the play.

B. Antagonist: Clark

He is the character that creates the most problems for Adam. He occupies all of Brenda's time because she is obsessed with making sure he doesn't win the election, and he invades Adam's apartment and keeps him from getting anything accomplished (including voting).

C. Other characters

1. *Cleo*: Adam's sister also prevents him from getting a lot done, and she contributes to Clark's antagonism of Adam.
2. *Edmund*: He is actually behind a lot of the problems that Adam has with Cleo and Brenda. It is only toward the end of the play that he also directly becomes involved with Adam.
3. *Brenda*: Adam's girlfriend with whom he is moving in. She is obsessed with making sure Clark is defeated in the election. She also seems aloof when it comes to committing to Adam.

D. Relationships and conflicts

1. *Adam vs. Brenda*: Brenda is Adam's girlfriend
2. *Adam vs. Clark*: Clark is a mayoral candidate who visits Brenda's apartment

3. *Adam vs. Cleo*: Cleo is Adam's sister
4. *Adam vs. Edmund*: Edmund is an eco-terrorist who hits on Brenda
5. *Adam vs. his own apathy*
6. *Brenda vs. Clark*: old high school rivals, current political rivals
7. *Edmund vs. Clark*: opposing political views
8. *Edmund vs. Cleo*: Cleo is trying to hook up with him, but he is just using her
9. *Brenda vs. Edmund*: Brenda is attracted to him, but she is already dating Adam
10. *Edmund vs. "the man"*: Edmund is fighting against environmental injustice

Character Analysis

A. Brenda

1. **Given Circumstances:** She is 30 years old and is a fairly no-nonsense, intellectual type. She is a public defender, so she is a lawyer, but she defends poor clients and earns less than she could in order to help others. She is a female working in a male-dominated profession. She is physically attractive and mentally sharp and smart. She lives in a small but nicely decorated apartment in a small city.
2. **Objective:** To ensure Clark's election defeat
3. **Qualities:** Her career has taught her to be relentless and to work harder than everyone else to obtain what she wants. She is willing to give long

hours for little pay when she believes in something. This also means she puts everything else—including her close relationships—on the back burner while she is pursuing that goal.

4. Conflicts:

- *Brenda vs. Adam:* Brenda wants Adam to be as passionate as she is about defeating Clark and making informed political choices; he seems to be apathetic and this frustrates her.
- *Brenda vs. Clark:* Brenda dated Clark in high school but he was a sore loser after she beat him in the student council elections. She thinks he is bad for the city and is determined to make sure he is defeated in the election.
- *Brenda vs. Edmund:* Brenda is attracted to Edmund but she is already seriously dating Adam. Edmund is a distraction to her campaign efforts but she finds him difficult to resist.

5. Conflict of Objectives:

- Clark's popularity and persuasive personality
- Adam's apathy toward Clark's potential election
- The effects of ingesting of a large amount of pot
- Cleo's desire to impress Edmund
- Edmund's advances

6. Willpower: Brenda throws all her efforts behind ensuring Clark's defeat and is blind to how her single-minded efforts affect those around her. She is a force!

7. **Values:** Brenda values being informed about current political events and taking action to improve the local community. She values confidence and those who see the world the way she does. She also values order and structure. She doesn't like laziness, apathy, or messiness. Her morality is muddled because she has no problem kissing another man or smoking an illegal substance, but she does think throwing a brick through someone's window and cutting off Clark's finger are wrong actions.
8. **Personality:** Brenda is focused and determined. She takes charge and micromanages because she doesn't trust that other people will follow through. She always needs a cause to fight for—she had to fight to get where she is, she fights for her clients, and she is fighting to get Clark defeated. She can come off as slightly bitchy and rude but inside she is a decent person.
9. **Appearance:** Brenda is 30 years old and is fairly attractive, though she rarely wears dresses or skirts. She almost always wears makeup, but it is natural looking rather than garish.
10. **Thoughts and Feelings:** Brenda carries the weight of the political world on her shoulders. She believes she is responsible for motivating everyone and telling them why they should care. She feels alone in her struggle and wants others to care as much as she does. She wants what she thinks is best for her surrounding community. She has a hard time opening up and letting others in. She is not very in touch with her feelings or her sexuality,

which is why the encounter with Edmund surprises her and throws her off balance.

11. Behavior: Brenda is always correcting others and telling them what to do, not because she thinks they are stupid but because she thinks she knows more and/or cares more than they do. She is very territorial, especially when it comes to her apartment. She does whatever it takes to achieve her goals, even at the expense of her personal relationships, but she expects others to be understanding of this.

12. Complexity: Brenda is aware that her actions achieve results, but she does not realize the toll they take on her personal relationships. She does not see things from other person's point of view; she thinks her way is the right way of looking at things.

B. Adam

1. Given Circumstances: Adam is a 28-year old graphic designer who is your average man. He has an adopted sister named Cleo who lives nearby. He and Brenda met when Cleo got arrested and Brenda represented her. They have been dating for a while and are moving in together. He is not very excited about politics.

2. Objective: To gain respect

3. Qualities: Adam works hard when he has to but also enjoys relaxing and spending time with the people he cares about. He is balanced and wants

other to be as well. He loves Brenda and wants to know that she cares as much about him.

4. Conflicts:

- *Adam vs. Brenda:* Adam loves Brenda and wants to know that she loves him, but she is so absorbed in the election that he is unsure. He also feels like she doesn't respect him and treats him like a child rather than a man.
- *Adam vs. Clark:* Defeating Clark is taking up all of Brenda's time and attention, which frustrates Adam. He becomes more jealous when he finds out Clark and Brenda dated in high school. Clark also becomes a direct conflict when he enters Brenda's apartment and refuses to leave. He later gets handcuffed to Adam's bed and eats and drinks a lot of Adam's food and beer.
- *Adam vs. Cleo:* Adam loves his sister but she often frustrates him. She agrees to come help him move but doesn't mention she no longer has her truck because she blew it up. She sponges off him fairly regularly. She also gets him involved with Edmund's scheme by bringing Molotov cocktails into Brenda's apartment.
- *Adam vs. Edmund:* Edmund gets Cleo involved in eco-terrorist activity. He also hits on Brenda and kisses her. Finally, he takes Clark hostage in Brenda's apartment against Adam's protests.
- *Adam vs. his own apathy:* A lot of the things that happen to Adam are because he is not strong enough to stand up to others forcefully. He may tell them no, but he still lets them walk all over him.

5. Conflict of Objectives:

- Cleo's desire to impress Edmund
- Brenda's obsession with seeing Clark defeated in the election
- Edmund's eco-terrorist schemes
- Clark's self-centeredness

6. Willpower: Adam is a pushover for most of the play. He tells people no, but then he does not do anything when they continue to walk all over him. It is not until the end of the play that he finds strength of will to fight for Brenda and kick the others out of the apartment.

7. Values: Adam values love and respect in relationships. He values trust and openness. He does not like being deceived or lied to, and he does not like it when others walk all over him or disrespect him (even though he may not do anything about it).

8. Personality: Adam is a likable, easy-going guy. He works hard and plays hard. He cares about those around him and wants them to be happy. He is honest and caring.

9. Appearance: An average-looking 30-year-old, Adam keeps up his appearance when he has to, but on his days off he doesn't do much to spruce up (including shave). He prefers comfortable and casual to trendy or stylish.

10. Thoughts and Feelings: Adam loves Brenda and wants to know that she loves and respects him in return. He worries about Cleo and the choices

she makes. He tries to get along with most people, including Clark. He is genuinely nice to people.

11. Behavior: Adam is a fun-loving guy who tries to loosen Brenda up and get her to have more fun. He doesn't shirk his responsibilities, but he also doesn't carry his work around with him or get too wound up about anything. He has a relaxed demeanor and doesn't typically assert himself.

12. Complexity: Adam looks for the best in others and has a hard time asserting himself or communicating his needs. He doesn't seem himself as a doormat, so he often doesn't understand how he ends up in certain situations. His main focus is Brenda, so he doesn't see the absurd situation piling up in the apartment until it is out of control.

C. Cleo

1. Given Circumstances: Cleo is Adam's adopted sister. She is in her mid-20s. She has been working for minimum wage at a local cat shelter for the past six months. She became involved with Edmund's eco-terrorist group because she is attracted to Edmund. She also blew up her truck to impress him. She has come over to help Adam move, but because she has no truck they are unable to do much moving. She has not had sex in months.

2. Objective: To impress Edmund

3. Qualities: She is slightly manipulative, but she tries to do it in a way that doesn't hurt anyone (which is why she blew up her own truck). She latches onto the nearest cause with great vigor and excitement, but she

doesn't seem to really believe in anything. She is comfortable with her sexuality. She is selfish to survive but she really does care about those close to her.

4. Conflicts:

- *Cleo vs. Edmund:* Cleo is attracted to Edmund and has been trying to get him interested in her for months. She joined his group just to get to know him, and she blew up her truck to impress him. He uses her interest to further his cause, but this backfires when she finds out he kissed Brenda.
- *Cleo vs. Adam:* Cleo and Adam have always had a lot of fun together, but now Adam is making more “adult” choices, which makes Cleo feel like he is starting to judge her. She wants him to be less like Brenda and more like his old self: fun-loving and more involved with her.
- *Cleo vs. “the man”:* Cleo takes part in environmental protests in an attempt to impress Edmund. She is somewhat interested in the environment, but she fakes the outrage she spouts at the atrocities being committed against the environment.

5. Conflict of Objectives:

- Edmund's lack of interest in her
- Adam's more serious personality
- Brenda's control over Adam and his home environment
- The general population's lack of concern for the environment

- 6. Willpower:** Cleo survives by going with the flow and transforming into whatever person the situation requires. However, she has a strong will when it comes to one of the few things she cares about (Edmund's affection, for instance). She also strongly defends her choices, whether they were right or wrong.
- 7. Values:** Cleo values friendship and trust. She works for a cat shelter and participates in environmental protests, so she cares about animals and the environment. She does not seem to value any sort of traditional morality, but she does not like being strung along by Edmund. She has no problem lying or sleeping with a married man whom she just met, and she has zero work ethic.
- 8. Personality:** Cleo is a free spirit, bubbly and friendly to almost everyone, but she has a biting sense of humor. Sometimes she can seem a bit standoffish or rude. She marches to the beat of her own drum, and she doesn't understand why others don't hear the same beat.
- 9. Appearance:** Cleo has an eclectic sense of style. She wears a lot of jewelry (mostly handmade) and tends to wear her hair down. She often wears long skirts, but she also sports torn jeans. Sandals are a must, and she rarely wears makeup. She is in her mid-20s.
- 10. Thoughts and Feelings:** Cleo wears her heart on her sleeve and doesn't get attached easily. She drifts through life, taking advantage of it—and others—whenever she can. She doesn't plan for the future, but stays firmly planted in the now, never really thinking about the consequences of

her actions. She plays dumb so no one expects much of her, but she really is quite sharp. She always tries to see how she can benefit from whatever situation she finds herself in.

11. Behavior: Cleo has lots of pent-up energy and rarely stops moving, whether it's pacing or fidgeting. She brings up the past only when it can help her cause, and she rarely looks at the future. Her focus on the present leads her to ignore the consequences of her actions.

12. Complexity: Cleo is unaware that her way of living is the cause of any of her problems. If things go wrong, it's because life isn't fair or people are mean or someone is against her. She has a strong survival instinct and uses whatever means necessary to assimilate to the given circumstances and get whatever she can out of the situation.

D. Edmund

1. Given Circumstances: Edmund works at the Pine Nut Café, but often slacks off at his job. He is in his early to mid 30s and has done little with his life. He was part of an eco-terrorist group called LEAF but when they were arrested, he ratted out the rest of the group in exchange for staying out of jail. He now runs his own eco-terrorist group called TREE. He smokes pot.

2. Objective: To force change to protect the environment

3. Qualities: He uses others to further his own interests. He wants to be known as a bad boy and take credit for TREE's actions, but he doesn't

want to be in danger himself. He has ambition but lacks the drive to see much of anything through.

4. Conflicts:

- *Edmund vs. Cleo*: Cleo is attracted to Edmund. He is not attracted to her, but he wants to use her for TREE's activities, so he strings her along. His need for her becomes more important when all the other group members back out at the last minute.
- *Edmund vs. Brenda*: Edmund is attracted to Brenda, but she has a boyfriend. He doesn't care and attempts to seduce her anyway.
- *Edmund vs. Clark*: Clark represents all that TREE is fighting against because he supports laws that are not environmentally friendly. Edmund wants to use Clark as a hostage to further TREE's agenda.
- *Edmund vs. "the man"*: Edmund is outraged at the lack of concern most people have for the environment. He thinks radical action, not peaceful debate, is needed to wake people up.

5. Conflict of Objectives:

- Cleo's persistent advances
- Brenda's objection that she has a boyfriend
- Clark's support of laws that are not environmentally friendly
- The general population's lack of concern for the environment

6. Willpower: Edmund has a strong will when there is something he wants.

He is willing to override others' objections. He has a strong survival instinct and is not afraid to leave others behind to save himself.

7. **Values:** Edmund values protecting the environment. He does not value personal property or the rights of others. He has no problem lying or deceiving others, and he can be violent at times. He does not value loyalty or faithfulness.
8. **Personality:** Edmund has a cool, apathetic demeanor that can be charming in a strange way. He doesn't care much about others and always looks for self-gratification. He thinks of himself as very important and wants others to see him as such. He is a coward at heart, talking a big game but running away when the heat gets turned up.
9. **Appearance:** Edmund is slightly unkempt with a beatnik-type look. He doesn't shave often and his clothes may or may not have been washed recently. He always wears sandals and usually a few handmade bracelets.
10. **Thoughts and Feelings:** Edmund thinks he is one of the few people in the world who cares what is happening to the environment. He thinks peaceful debate has done nothing and radical action is the only solution left to wake people up and force them to change. His emotions change quickly, and he does not tend to feel things deeply.
11. **Behavior:** Edmund acts like he is a very important person. He tends to drift through life doing as little work as possible, unless it's something to do with TREE (or LEAF, previously). Even then he tends to delegate rather than do much of the "dirty work" himself. He goes after whatever he wants, regardless of whether it is moral or ethical.

12. Complexity: Edmund knows the stakes and knows the game he is playing.

He tries to manipulate others so he is protected from the risks. He believes his cause is worth any casualties. He uses his self-important status to impress others who don't know him very well.

E. Jerry Clark

- 1. Given Circumstances:** Clark is running for mayor. His father was a federal-level politician and he is looking to follow suit. He went to high school with Brenda, so he is the same age (30). He is a former car salesman and his father is rich. He is willing to make whatever deal necessary to secure a vote.
- 2. Objective:** To win the election
- 3. Qualities:** He is manipulative, conniving, persuasive, and aggressive. He is a stereotypical politician who talks out of both sides of his mouth. He is confident and has an air of superiority even when he's trying to act like an average citizen.
- 4. Conflicts:**
 - *Clark vs. Brenda:* Brenda is the number one volunteer for Clark's electoral opponent. She also beat Clark in their high school student council election.
 - *Clark vs. Adam:* Clark wants Adam to vote for him, but Adam is reluctant (even though he can't give a good reason why other than Brenda told him to vote for his opponent).

- *Clark vs. Election Opponent:* Clark needs to get more votes than his opponent in order to win the election.

5. Conflict of Objectives:

- His opponent's political views
- Brenda's obsession with seeing him lose
- Adam's apathy
- Cleo accidentally leaving him chained to the bed

6. Willpower: Clark has a strong drive and will to succeed. He is willing to do almost anything to get elected, no matter how unethical or immoral.

7. Values: Clark says he has "traditional" values, but then he sleeps with Cleo, takes Adam's food and drink, and offers bribes for votes. He does seem to value others with the same drive he has, but only as long as they are supporting his goals.

8. Personality: He is high-energy, in-your-face, and can make a fast argument. He tries to catch people off guard and close the deal quickly, but when that doesn't work, he tries belittling them. He will say whatever he thinks someone needs to hear in order to vote for him.

9. Appearance: He is well dressed in an expensive suit and tie, and he is at least mildly attractive. He is a stockier build, with an imposing presence.

10. Thoughts and Feelings: Clark believes he can convince almost anyone to vote for him. He also thinks anyone can be bribed for a vote. He believes he deserves to win and he must follow his father's footsteps. He does not

really seem to care how his actions might impact anything or anyone, including his wife and family.

11. Behavior: He is impulsive and selfish. He does whatever he feels is right at the moment without a thought as to whether it's actually moral or ethical and without a thought to the ultimate consequences. He is aggressive and sometimes rude.

12. Complexity: Clark is aware of how voters think. He has the right idea about how to swing many votes, even though those ideas may not be ethical. He realizes politics is a game, and he is willing and eager to play to win.

III. Plot

Action Points (*E* – External, *I* – Internal)

Scene One

A. Given Circumstances: Brenda's apartment, Election Day, 7:30AM

B. External and Internal Actions

E Brenda is rushing around getting ready for the final day of campaigning when Adam enters from the bedroom.

I Brenda is excited that it is Election Day. Adam is groggy because he just woke up and has the day off.

E Brenda reminds Adam that it is Election Day and tells him to get dressed so he can go vote.

I Brenda is anxious that Adam will forget to vote.

E Adam tells Brenda he has been given the day off so he can vote. Brenda tells Adam to be productive on his day off and to come help hand out flyers.

I Adam wants Brenda to relax. Brenda sees a day off as lazy and gives Adam “productive” tasks to do.

E Adam says he is going to move his stuff over to the apartment instead because he needs to be out of his apartment by this weekend.

I Adam gets a little defensive when reminding Brenda that he needs to move his stuff to her place.

E Brenda apologizes for forgetting but says she can’t help today. She reminds Adam that she has taken vacation time to work on the campaign.

I Brenda forgot that Adam had to be out by this weekend but refuses to help him because it is Election Day. This hurts Adam because moving is important to him but doesn’t seem to be important to her. Brenda is frustrated that Adam doesn’t share her concern about the election outcome.

E Brenda suggests Adam call Cleo and have her help him move.

I Brenda thinks that Cleo is lazy and never has anything important going on.

E Adam says he doesn’t want to call Cleo. Brenda insists he call Cleo and tells Adam to make sure she votes and that they come hand out flyers when they’re finished.

I Adam wants to share the moving experience with Brenda. Brenda’s focus is elsewhere and she just wants the job done quickly so she can get more help for the election campaign.

E Brenda reminds Adam that she was student council president her senior year of high school.

I Brenda is proud of the fact that she bested Jerry Clark before, and she wants to do it again today.

E Adam comes on to Brenda, but she refuses his advances.

I Adam is frustrated that all Brenda can think about is getting outside to pass out flyers and posters, and he tries to break the ice by coming on to her. Brenda's mind is on the election, and she tries to gently avoid Adam's advances.

E Adam asks Brenda to stay for breakfast, but she says she already ate and that she has to get posters and flyers out before the morning commute. He asks her to join him for lunch instead, and he offers her his car since he will be using Cleo's truck.

I Adam tries again to get Brenda's attention by attempting to make a lunch date with her and offering her his car. Brenda is surprised that Adam would let her borrow his car.

E Adam says now that they are moving in together, they share items, such as shampoo and computers.

I Adam assumes that since they are moving in together, they will be sharing things.

E Brenda tells Adam not to use her shampoo or computer, and provides reasons why he shouldn't.

- I* Brenda is reluctant to start sharing any of her things when she is not around, which also hurts Adam.
- E* Brenda again reminds Adam to vote and slaps him so he'll remember.
- I* Brenda is still anxious that Adam will forget to vote.
- E* Adam begins to playfully spank Brenda.
- I* Adam thinks Brenda was playing when she slapped him, and he attempts to play back.
- E* Brenda gets mad at Adam for trying to start something again.
- I* Brenda gets angry with Adam's continued advances and yells at him; he is surprised by her strong reaction.
- E* Brenda tells Adam to take a picture of his ballot when he votes and send it to her.
- I* Brenda still does not trust that Adam will actually go out and vote. Adam is hurt by her lack of trust.
- E* Brenda tells Adam this is a serious runoff and it's important because the next mayor will have to decide about logging the forest and putting in a casino.
- I* Brenda defends her actions by stating the importance of this election on the future of the city.
- E* Adam reveals that he hasn't read some of the articles Brenda cut out for him. Brenda chastises Adam for not knowing more about current events.
- I* Brenda is frustrated by Adam's ignorance of some of the issues and that he has not been reading the articles she has cut out for him. Adam doesn't understand why it is such a big deal to Brenda.

E Brenda rants about how bad Clark is for the city.

I Brenda gets even more stressed talking about the election and Clark.

E Adam offers to make a romantic celebration for him and Brenda that night.

I Adam tries to calm Brenda again.

E Brenda says she hopes they'll have something to celebrate.

I Adam wants to celebrate their moving in together, but Brenda doesn't seem to think that is something to celebrate and continues to focus on the election.

E Adam tells Brenda he loves her. Brenda tells Adam to remember to vote, and then she leaves.

I Adam tells Brenda he loves her, and she responds by telling him to remember to vote. Adam is hurt and disappointed by her lack of affectionate response and goes back to bed dejected.

Scene Two

A. **Given Circumstances:** A bench by the sidewalk, same day, 9:45AM

B. **External and Internal Actions**

E Cleo is sitting on a park bench.

I Cleo is excited about meeting Edmund.

E Edmund enters with a paper bag and sits on the same bench.

I Edmund is nervous because he knows what they are planning to do and what he is carrying in the bag.

E Edmund says the first half of the password. Cleo responds by saying hello rather than saying the second half of the password. Edmund asks Cleo if her situation has been compromised.

I Edmund is frustrated that Cleo will not say the second half of the password.

E Cleo tells Edmund she forgot her half of the password.

I Cleo is irritated that Edmund is playing this password game.

E Edmund tells Cleo he shouldn't give her the package without the password.

I Edmund is agitated at Cleo's apparent lack of commitment to his group. However, he needs Cleo to throw the bombs, so he calms down.

E Cleo tells Edmund his hair looks good.

I Cleo tries to cheer Edmund up by complimenting him.

E Edmund tells Cleo that they have to maintain a level of discipline or all the members of TREE are "fucked."

I Edmund sees the compliment as another sign of Cleo's flippant attitude and scolds her. He is really anxious as he explains the stakes.

E Edmund asks Cleo if she's sure about what she's about to do, and she says she is.

I Edmund tries to get Cleo serious by reminding her that this is a big day for TREE and asks her if she's sure about going through with it. Cleo attempts to reassure Edmund by telling him she's ready for the task.

E Edmund tells Cleo the earth thanks her, and Cleo tells Edmund she likes how in touch he is with the earth.

- I* Edmund is relieved and encourages Cleo by saying the earth thanks her.
Cleo is turned on by Edmund and tells him she likes how in touch he is with the planet.
- E* Edmund talks about needing to listen to the earth. He points out a Humvee driver and says he isn't listening but is rather at war with the earth.
- I* Edmund begins to relax talking about the planet, but then he gets angry when he sees someone drive by in a Humvee.
- E* Edmund asks Cleo how many miles per gallon the Humvee gets, and he discovers she hasn't read everything he's given her to read.
- I* Cleo tries to mimic Edmund's outrage but he sees through her lack of knowledge and becomes agitated with her for not having read the packet he gave her.
- E* Cleo tells Edmund she trusts him and the rest of TREE. Edmund starts to argue again but gives up mid-sentence.
- I* Edmund is still frustrated, but he starts to subside when he sees his emotional outbursts aren't having an effect on Cleo.
- E* Cleo says she likes the color of the Humvee and tells Edmund she's trying to be friendly since they are going on a date later.
- I* Cleo attempts to lighten the mood again by commenting on the color of the Humvee.
- E* Edmund reminds her they have to "do this" first.
- I* Edmund's frustration with Cleo is renewed.
- E* Cleo points out that Edmund could be nice since they're going on a date.

I Cleo is hurt by Edmund's continued badgering of her. Edmund realizes he's losing Cleo's excitement, which he needs to carry out his plan, so he calms himself and tries to get on Cleo's good side again.

E Edmund tells Cleo the other half of the password and that they are both haikus he wrote.

I Cleo is touched by the beauty of the poetry and regains her happy self.

E Edmund slides the bag containing Molotov cocktails over to Cleo.

I Edmund feels that he is on more stable footing with Cleo now and entrusts her with the bombs.

E Cleo tells him the poetry is pretty and asks where they are going on their date. Edmund says they need to see how "this" goes first.

I Cleo attempts to talk to Edmund about their date again, but Edmund avoids the conversation by focusing on the task they are about to do.

Scene Three

A. **Given Circumstances:** Brenda's apartment, same day, 10:15AM

B. **External and Internal Actions**

E Cleo has arrived and is looking for food in the fridge. She asks Adam if she can have one of the mini-muffins.

I Cleo is hungry and wants to eat some of Brenda's food.

E Adam says they are Brenda's, but he has an apple she can have.

I Adam knows Brenda will notice and be upset if some of her food is missing so he tries to give Cleo some of the food he purchased.

E Adam asks what is in the bag Cleo brought, and Cleo says it's just some wine.

- I* Adam wants Cleo to leave Brenda's food alone; Cleo doesn't want Adam finding out what is in the bag.
- E* Cleo tells Adam she's having a mini-muffin and asks if she can have some juice.
- I* Cleo wants the muffin and juice so she takes Brenda's food anyway.
- E* Adam says she can have the juice and that he'll go shopping later.
- I* Adam says he'll go shopping later because he doesn't want Brenda to be upset when she gets home. He wants to try and patch things up from earlier in the morning.
- E* Cleo states that Brenda would be mad if she knew Cleo was at her apartment.
- I* Cleo feels superior because she thinks her presence will tick Brenda off.
- E* Adam tells Cleo that it was Brenda's idea to call her and that Brenda likes her.
- I* Adam wants there to be peace between Brenda and Cleo.
- E* Cleo jokes with Adam about him being alone with a sexy woman.
- I* Cleo wants validation from Adam that she is sexy so she flirts with him.
- E* Adam states that it doesn't matter if Cleo is sexy because she's his adopted sister.
- I* Adam doesn't find it funny and is a little grossed out. He points out that they are siblings.
- E* Cleo explains she was joking and says Adam is no fun now that he is with Brenda.
- I* Cleo is pouting that Adam is not being his typical "fun" (irresponsible) self.

E Cleo points out that the apartment is clean (not the type of place he's lived before) and says Adam isn't clean.

I Cleo thinks that Adam and Brenda are mismatched and that this will lead to problems down the road. Adam has been changing things about himself to be with Brenda, so he defends his choice to move in with her.

E Cleo starts talking about how the relationship might start to go south. Cleo hints at problems with Adam's sex life and says she's having a dry spell too.

I Cleo pounces on Adam's absentminded comment about Brenda's lack of interest in sex. She commiserates with him about their mutual lack of sex.

E Adam says Brenda wants them to vote and then hand out flyers downtown.

I Adam tries to change the topic because Cleo is making him uncomfortable.

E Adam asks Cleo if she's still working at the cat shelter.

I Adam attempts to placate Cleo by showing mild interest in her activities.

E Cleo says she's been there six months and hasn't gotten a raise but still gets free cats.

I Cleo wants to get Adam a present but doesn't want to buy him anything, so she tries to feel him out about whether a cat would be a good present.

E Cleo says Adam's birthday is coming up and says she doesn't make a lot of money so he shouldn't expect anything fancy.

I Cleo is jealous of Brenda's apartment and pokes fun at it.

E Cleo jokingly offers Adam her body and says it will solve both their sex problems.

- I* Cleo continues to use a wry sense of humor to get a rise out of Adam and offers him her body.
- E* Adam gets them back on track with the moving project, and Cleo says he's being like Brenda.
- I* Adam is more grossed out and gets upset with Cleo. Cleo backs off, frustrated that Adam isn't playing around like he used to.
- E* Adam mentions using Cleo's truck, and she says she sold it.
- I* Adam continues planning, but is stopped short when Cleo says she doesn't have her truck anymore.
- E* Adam asks how she got there, and she says one of her friends dropped her off.
- I* Cleo is unconcerned about her lack of truck, but Adam is upset—it's the whole reason he called her and she never mentioned it.
- E* Adam is surprised that Cleo has friends, and Cleo says she joined a nature club.
- I* Cleo tries to get Adam off her case by telling him she joined a nature club and has made friends.
- E* Cleo mentions that she makes signs for them.
- I* Adam and Cleo engage in basic sibling rivalry. He is hurt that she wouldn't have him make the signs because he feels he has more artistic talent, and she thinks that anything he can do, she can do too.
- E* Adam asks if that is what the wine is for and says he can tell if she got anything good because he and Brenda took a wine-tasting class last month.

- I* Adam deduces that the wine must be for her group and wants to show off his newfound knowledge of wine so he goes for the bag. Cleo tries to keep Adam out of the bag because she is afraid he will disapprove or try to stop her.
- E* Adam pulls one of the bottles out of the bag and before Adam says anything Cleo begins to make excuses and explanations as to why they aren't illegal.
- I* Adam is shocked and in disbelief when he realizes what is in the bag.
- E* Adam asks what is going on, and Cleo tells him it's a political protest that is planned in case a law passes that day. She explains that she finally has friends that get her and states that she's willing to commit vandalism if that keeps her in the group.
- I* Cleo immediately goes on the defensive, not even giving Adam a chance to ask questions. When he finally does, she defiantly tells him the truth about their plans.
- E* Adam and Cleo argue about Cleo's involvement, and Adam asks her to call her friend and say she can't do it.
- I* Adam is afraid that Cleo will go to jail, but Cleo is confident that Eddie wouldn't allow that to happen because she thinks Eddie is coming to care for her.
- E* Cleo agrees, but Adam says she shouldn't use his phone.
- I* When she agrees, Adam realizes his phone might be traced back to this eco-terrorist and tells Cleo to go use the Starbucks pay phone instead.
- E* Cleo tries to make excuses as to why she can't go to the Starbucks pay phone.

I Cleo is horrified at the idea of supporting a Starbucks.

E He gives her change to go to the Starbucks down the street and use the pay phone.

I Adam belittles her opposition and gives her more than enough change so she can't use that excuse.

E Adam says if Eddie is a real friend, he'll still be her friend even if she backs out.

I Adam tries to reassure Cleo that she's doing the right thing.

E Cleo tells Adam that he'll make a great father, which Adam says she should tell Brenda.

I Cleo was being sarcastic, but Adam takes it as a true compliment.

E Cleo leaves with the change.

I Adam is relieved that the situation is being resolved.

Scene Four

A. **Given Circumstances:** Pine Nut Café, same day, 11:30AM

B. **External and Internal Actions**

E Brenda goes into the café to put up posters and flyers. Edmund is sitting at one of the tables.

I Edmund is bored and lazy. Brenda is in a rush to continue putting up posters and handing out flyers.

E Edmund asks if she's going to get something to eat, and tells her she probably should.

I Edmund guilts Brenda into ordering something in exchange for putting stuff up in the café.

E Brenda asks Edmund to tell the kitchen she's in a hurry.

I Brenda reluctantly agrees to eat something but still feels rushed.

E Brenda doesn't want to be mistaken for a Clark volunteer and have her food spit in (which is what she would do), and she says this aloud.

I Brenda tells Edmund she's working for "the good guy" so he won't spit in her food.

E She starts to backpedal on the comment, but Edmund admits he sometimes does.

I Brenda is embarrassed that she made the comment aloud, but Edmund surprises her by saying he actually does spit in the food sometimes.

E Brenda tells Edmund it's important to vote.

I Brenda continues campaigning, even when she's ordering.

E Edmund shows Brenda the bandage from where he was chained to a tree for 29 hours. Edmund defends his protest methods by explaining that people don't read anymore.

I Edmund brags about getting hurt during a protest.

E Brenda orders and tells Edmund she was at the protest and sympathizes with his cause.

I Brenda is glad to find someone who seems to care about politics more than the average person.

E Edmund tells Brenda about TREE and his Native American name. Brenda expresses interest in the group and notes their website in her Blackberry.

I Brenda starts to relax and shows more interest in Edmund and his protest activities.

E Edmund takes her order and promises not to spit in it.

I Edmund continues to brag about TREE, and the two of them flirt a little.

Scene Five

A. **Given Circumstances:** Brenda's apartment, same day, 11:30AM

B. **External and Internal Actions**

E Clark shows up at Brenda's door. Adam realizes the bag of bombs is still lying out.

I Adam is panicked that someone may find the bombs.

E Clark asks who Adam is and where Brenda is.

I Clark was expecting to see Brenda and is surprised that a man has answered the door.

E Adam tries to get Clark to leave, but he barges in and begins playing patriotic music as he gives a speech to Adam.

I Adam is anxious to get Clark to go away, but Clark is persistent and has come up against voter resistance before. He becomes determined to get Adam's vote. Clark puts on his "good politician" demeanor to deliver the speech to Adam.

E Adam tells Clark he's not supposed to vote for him.

- I* Adam is surprised to learn this man is Jerry Clark and feels awkward telling Clark he is going to vote against him.
- E* Clark asks for a glass of water and then a beer, and comments on a picture of Brenda and Adam.
- I* Clark is trying to mooch off Adam and is checking out what Brenda has been up to.
- E* Clark tells Adam to think for himself and not just listen to what Brenda says.
- I* Clark takes the beer and tries to buddy up to Adam. He changes tactics by trying to shame Adam, pointing out that he's only voting against Clark because his girlfriend told him to.
- E* Adam tries to defend himself and his choice by saying he doesn't like some of Clark's policies, but when Clark presses him, he can't name what he doesn't like.
- I* Adam proves by his lack of knowledge that he is only voting against Clark because of Brenda.
- E* Clark tries to develop a personal relationship with Adam to get him to vote Clark. He explains that when you need something, you go to the person you know, and that's why Adam should vote Clark—because he knows him now.
- I* Clark sees the shame route is getting him nowhere, so he changes tactics. He tries to develop a relationship with Adam and convince him to vote for the guy he knows.
- E* Adam tells Clark he's made some genuinely good points and says he'll think about it more before he votes.

- I* Adam tries to tell Clark what he wants to hear to get him to leave.
- E* Clark tells Adam he's lying and refuses to leave.
- I* Clark gets fed up with Adam's refusal to acquiesce and tells him flat out to vote for him.
- E* Clark says Adam makes him "want to take a shit" and goes into the bathroom.
- I* Clark gets disgusted with Adam and goes into the bathroom.
- E* Adam stuffs the bombs in the freezer and hides his backpack.
- I* Adam is panicked that Clark might find the bombs.
- E* Cleo comes back and starts talking about the bombs to Adam.
- I* Adam panics when she starts to talk about the bombs.
- E* Adam tries to get Cleo to be quiet and talk over her.
- I* Cleo notices that Adam is acting strangely.
- E* Clark comes out of the bathroom and introduces himself to Cleo.
- I* Clark comes out of the bathroom in a noticeably nicer mood and tries to warm up to Adam again, complimenting him on the shower curtain.
- E* Cleo thinks he is a cop until he tells her he is running for mayor.
- I* Cleo panics at the sight of Clark because she thinks he's a cop. Clark turns the charm back on. Adam attempts to cover for Cleo's awkward behavior.
- E* Clark tries to convince Cleo to vote for him.
- I* Clark tries to convince Cleo to be independent and vote for him, but Cleo doesn't bite and says she isn't going to vote at all.
- E* Clark begins to bribe Cleo and Adam by offering them favors for their votes.

I Clark mooches three more beers from Adam's fridge like they were his own, and changes tactics again. He proceeds to try and bribe Adam and Cleo with favors.

E Adam says he's "whoring" himself out, and Clark takes that literally. Clark begins to undress and offer sex for votes. Cleo gets excited and tells Adam to go for it.

I Clark takes Adam's "whoring" comment literally and begins to disrobe, which makes Adam extremely uncomfortable.

E Cleo takes Clark up on the offer for sex. Adam thinks they are joking, but Cleo and Clark agree they aren't.

I Cleo is desperate for an orgasm, Clark is opportunistic, and Adam is aghast at what is happening in his apartment.

E Cleo and Clark go into Adam and Brenda's bedroom to have sex.

I Cleo and Clark treat the exchange as a business deal as they proceed to the bedroom.

Scene Six

A. **Given Circumstances:** Brenda's apartment, same day, 12:30PM

B. **External and Internal Actions**

E Clark and Cleo are having sex in the bedroom. Adam is playing loud music to try and cover the sound.

I Cleo and Clark are climaxing. Adam is horrified at what is going on in the apartment. He is trying to drown out the noise with music.

E Cleo comes out of the bedroom, still dressing herself.

I Cleo is excited and relieved because she just had sex. She feels obligated to hold up her end of the bargain and vote for Clark.

E Adam tries to convince Cleo that her vote is more important than her deal. Cleo leaves to go vote for Clark after asking Adam where the nearest Planned Parenthood is.

I Adam can't believe Cleo would trade sex for a vote is embarrassed that she asks about Planned Parenthood.

E Clark calls from the bedroom asking Cleo to come back in the room. Adam tells Clark she left.

I Adam is disgusted with Clark and wants him out of his apartment as quickly as possible. Clark is happy because he just had sex but also anxious to get out and keep getting votes.

E Clark asks if she left any keys, Adam says no, and Clark asks for a hacksaw.

I Clark gets worried when he realizes that there is no key readily available.

E Adam goes to the bedroom, sees Clark handcuffed to the bed frame, and slams the bedroom door.

I Adam is in disbelief when he sees Clark handcuffed to the bed.

Scene Seven

A. **Given Circumstances:** Alley behind the Pine Nut Café, same day, 12:30PM

B. **External and Internal Actions**

E Edmund is in the alley smoking a joint. Brenda comes back to tell Edmund goodbye.

I Brenda is nervous about talking to Edmund. She knows she is attracted to him.

E The two chat about the food, and Brenda thanks Edmund for the extra glass of wine.

I Edmund is playing it very cool and acts like he owns the place.

E Edmund admits he doesn't own or manage the restaurant.

I Edmund tries to make himself seem important.

E Edmund offers Brenda a toke. Brenda refuses but then changes her mind.

I Brenda is uptight about the election and being back there with Edmund, so she tries to joke about the toke but realizes she really wants a puff.

E Brenda starts talking about how no one else really cares about what's going on and vents about someone putting a "Vote Clark" sticker on her car.

I Brenda gets frustrated and angry as she talks about how no one cares enough.

E Edmund agrees with Brenda and tells her she looks tense.

I Edmund sees someone who thinks like he does and who is attractive, and he agrees with her ranting. Brenda says it's nice to meet someone who cares. She is opening up emotionally to Edmund. Her defenses are lowered due to the two glasses of wine and the pot.

E Edmund begins to massage Brenda's shoulders and then starts kissing her neck.

I Edmund is attracted to Brenda and makes a move to get closer to her by offering to massage her shoulders.

E Brenda moves away and tells Edmund she has a boyfriend who is moving in with her today.

I When he starts kissing her neck, Brenda gets scared and excited. She likes the physicality, but she knows she has Adam back home and doesn't want to hurt him.

E Edmund asks why she came to the alley. Brenda gives a variety of reasons and says she wants to join his group.

I Edmund is confused and angry at Brenda's mixed signals and confronts her about why she came back to the alley.

E Brenda makes up some excuses as to why she came back there, and Edmund blows through almost all of them.

I Brenda does not leave, so Edmund advances again. Both of them are physically turned on.

E Edmund gives Brenda a flyer and kisses her.

I Brenda prattles in a lame attempt to protest, but she does not move away.

E Brenda mildly resists Edmunds advances and he kisses her again.

I When Edmund kisses her again, the sparks fly.

E Edmunds phone rings and he answers it and has a brief conversation.

I Both are breathless. The phone call upsets Edmund, adding to the frustration of being interrupted.

E Edmund says he has to go, but he writes his phone number on a bag of pot and gives it to Brenda.

I Edmund is hopeful that Brenda will call him. Brenda is bewildered by what just happened and what she allowed herself to do.

Scene Eight

A. **Given Circumstances:** Brenda's apartment, same day, 1:30PM

B. **External and Internal Actions**

E Cleo returns from voting.

I Cleo is happy, having had a fun voting experience.

E Adam scolds Cleo for voting "for the wrong guy."

I Adam is angry and frustrated with Cleo for voting for Clark and for leaving him cuffed to the bed.

E Cleo talks about her voting experience.

I Cleo feels like she did something important.

E Adam reminds Cleo that she left Clark cuffed to the bed.

I Adam is still fuming about the situation with Cleo and Clark.

E Edmund runs outside, banging on doors and yelling for Cleo. Cleo yells back. Edmund storms into the apartment and tells Cleo everyone else has backed out.

I Edmund is panicking that everyone else has dropped out of their planned protest.

E Cleo tells Edmund that Adam knows about the plan and can be trusted.

I Edmund distrusts Adam, and the feeling is mutual.

E Adam tries to convince Cleo not to go through with their plan, telling Edmund she's not the type of person who would blow up a vehicle.

- I* Adam is frustrated and exasperated that Cleo is considering going through with the plan to bomb SUVs. Edmund is angry that Adam called their actions terrorism.
- E* Edmund tells Adam he saw her do it before, and Adam realizes that Cleo blew up her own truck.
- I* Edmund is proud of having seen Cleo set an SUV on fire before. Adam is in disbelief about this revelation, and even more so when he figures out that it was her own vehicle.
- E* Edmund says he wants Cleo to give the bombs back since she lied about destroying someone else's property before.
- I* Edmund is disappointed when he finds out that Cleo owned an SUV and that it was her own SUV she torched. He begins to question her commitment to the group and to their radical agenda. Cleo is afraid of losing whatever relationship she might be starting with Edmund, so she pleads with him to keep her in the group.
- E* Cleo discovers her bag is gone, and she and Edmund start to search the apartment for them.
- I* Edmund and Cleo panic when they cannot find the Molotov cocktails.
- E* Edmund discovers Clark in the bedroom and assumes Cleo kidnapped him. Cleo goes along with that and says she planned it as a surprise for Edmund.
- I* Edmund is stunned when he finds Clark, and then he is overwhelmingly excited and proud of Cleo. At first Cleo is ashamed of her actions, but

when she sees Edmund is pleased she gets excited. Adam starts to get worried as Cleo and Edmund hatch their plan.

E Edmund decides Clark would be more valuable as an actual mayor, so he goes to vote and make some calls.

I After Edmund leaves and the full weight of it starts to sink in, Adam is stunned and begins to panic.

E Adam argues with Cleo about her and Edmund's plans for Clark.

I Adam tries to figure out a way to get everyone out of the apartment without Clark being hurt or taken hostage.

E Clark comes out of the bedroom, having ripped the bed frame loose and dragging it with him. He tells Adam to go buy a hacksaw so he can continue campaigning.

I Clark is sick of being chained up and breaks the bed frame free. He is agitated that he is not out campaigning.

E Clark goes to the freezer to look for a drink and finds the Molotov cocktails.

I Clark is shocked and confused when he finds the Molotov cocktails.

E Cleo tells Clark she's part of an eco-terrorist group and they're holding him hostage.

I Cleo gets nervous and excited and blurts out their entire plan.

E Cleo rips the phone off the wall so Clark can't call anyone. Clark tries to leave but Adam refuses to let him.

I Adam is horrified that this is happening and he is being dragged into it. He is afraid if Clark leaves, they will all be arrested immediately, so he panics

and refuses to let Clark leave until he can figure out what's going on—
hopefully with Brenda's help.

E Clark tries to shout for help, but Cleo and Adam play music and sing to cover him up.

I Adam and Cleo begin to panic that Clark will leave. Clark begins to panic that he can't leave. Everyone finally realizes they're not getting anywhere with the panic and stops shouting.

E Cleo attempts to smooth things over with Adam.

I Cleo wants everyone to be happy and get along. Adam is furious with Cleo for putting him in this situation. Clark is frustrated.

E Adam goes into the bedroom to try and call Brenda.

I Adam knows he is in serious trouble, and he relies on Brenda to think through his problems for him, so he attempts to call her.

E Edmund comes back and gives Clark some pain pills for his wrist.

I Edmund is frustrated that he cannot vote and that everyone he knows already voted against Clark.

E Clark complains about his wrist pain again, and Edmund boasts about how long he has been chained to a tree.

I Clark is mildly addicted to painkillers, so he is happy to have some relief. Edmund is proud of his injury from the protest.

E Edmund explains that they are trying to get Clark elected so he'll be more valuable as a hostage.

I Edmund is frustrated and disappointed that he cannot figure out a way to get Clark elected so they have a better hostage.

E Clark tells Edmund to get the signs out of his car and put them up in place of his opponent's signs.

I Clark gets excited that he has someone willing to ruthlessly campaign for him, so he gives Edmund directions on how to undercut the competition and get ignorant votes.

E Adam comes back in the room and says Brenda's not answering but he wants everyone out of the apartment.

I Adam, unable to reach Brenda, tries weakly to kick everyone out but becomes a doormat as usual.

E Everyone refuses to leave except Edmund, who goes out to campaign for Clark.

I Clark is more than happy to hang out now that he has someone doing the campaigning for him. Adam is shocked that Clark wants to stay and worried that Brenda will come home and find the mess he's in.

Scene Nine

A. **Given Circumstances:** Brenda's apartment, same day, 7:30PM

B. **External and Internal Actions**

E Cleo and Clark are watching the election results on TV.

I Cleo and Clark are bored.

E Adam is in the kitchen getting food. Cleo and Clark ask him to bring them some.

I Adam is irritated that he seems to be the only sane person in the room. He gets more agitated when Cleo and Clark ask him to bring them more food and drink.

E Brenda, stoned, enters and starts rummaging through the cupboards.

I Adam is worried that Brenda will be upset when she enters the apartment.

E Adam tries to explain the situation to Brenda, but all she can focus on is getting something to eat.

I Brenda is stoned and completely focused on getting some food. Adam notices that something is wrong with Brenda, but he doesn't know what.

E Brenda notices the people in the apartment.

I Brenda is dazed and confused.

E Clark and Brenda recognize each other and Clark reveals the truth about his history with Brenda.

I Clark is elated that Brenda is finally back—he has been waiting all day to gloat to her face. Brenda is irritated that Clark is in her apartment. Adam is hurt and a little upset that Brenda didn't disclose the nature of her relationship with Clark.

E Brenda admits she's high and explains how she ate the entire bag of pot on the way home and has been sitting in Starbucks drinking espresso shots for the past half hour.

I Adam is shocked to find out that Brenda really is high. Clark is smug when he finds out.

E Clark tells Brenda that Adam didn't vote.

- I* Brenda is angry when she finds out Adam didn't vote and didn't move any of his stuff into the apartment. She thinks he did nothing all day. Clark continues to be smug and mean, putting down Brenda's choice to be in a relationship with Adam.
- E* Edmund comes back and says he put up the posters and made threats. Brenda calls Edmund "the cute guy from the café," and he recognizes her and realizes Adam is the boyfriend she mentioned.
- I* Edmund is pleasantly surprised when he sees Brenda, but then it becomes slightly awkward when he finds out Adam is her boyfriend (although he doesn't care much and adopts a cool attitude about it).
- E* Clark gets excited when he thinks Brenda is cheating on Adam. He continues to insult Adam.
- I* Adam tries to defend himself and keep his dignity in the face of Clark's insults.
- E* Adam and Cleo find out that Brenda and Edmund kissed.
- I* Edmund brags about kissing Brenda. Brenda admits that it was consensual.
- E* Adam confronts Brenda, and Cleo confronts Edmund.
- I* Cleo is furious when she finds out that Edmund has been rebuffing her but kissed Brenda.
- E* Cleo tries to get Adam to leave with her. Adam refuses.
- I* She begins to spout things she thinks will make Brenda and Edmund jealous. She tries to get Adam to dramatically storm out with her.

E Clark continues to goad Adam, who grabs the backpack of bombs and storms out.

I Adam becomes fed up with being insulted and goaded and storms out. He is at his wits' end. This is his moment of transformation.

E Brenda asks everyone to leave, but they refuse.

I Brenda is back to being dazed and just wants quiet.

E Edmund says he's going to cut off one of Clark's fingers so they know TREE means business.

I Edmund gets back to business and sets about readying himself to cut Clark's finger off.

E Edmund tells Cleo to get a kitchen knife, which she does.

I Clark gets scared that Edmund is actually going to cut off his finger. He pleads with Brenda to help him, but she is too high to care. Cleo gets nervous about them cutting off Clark's finger. Clark pleads with her to stop this.

E Brenda realizes where she had heard the name "Running Bear" and tells everyone about how Edmund ratted out the LEAF members to keep himself out of jail.

I Brenda has an epiphany when she realizes where she has heard the name "Running Bear." She exposes Edmund's cowardly past.

E Cleo gets angry at Edmund and refuses to cooperate with his scheme anymore.

- I* Cleo is beyond furious when she realizes the extent to which Edmund was using her and playing her. She's done playing his games.
- E* Cleo tosses the knife to Clark and it accidentally cuts his finger off. Cleo and Edmund fight for the loose finger.
- I* Cleo is just trying to get rid of the knife when she tosses it to Clark, she does not mean to harm him. She is upset when she sees what she's done. Clark is panicked because his finger has just been cut off.
- E* Brenda runs to the kitchen and grabs a roll of paper towels to help with the bleeding. She runs over to help Clark.
- I* Brenda is worried about stains in her apartment and about getting in trouble while she's high.
- E* Cleo smashes an empty beer bottle over Clark's head, grabs the finger, and fends him off with the broken bottle.
- I* Cleo is determined not to let Edmund have his way.
- E* Cleo takes off her earring—which has the key to the cuffs—and releases Clark, who begins to get dressed.
- I* Cleo is so furious with Edmund that she drops all pretense and reveals that she has the key to the cuffs. She wants to fully thwart all of Edmund's plans. Edmund is frustrated with Cleo's evidenced lack of commitment.
- E* Adam rushes back in and directs everyone's attention to the window.
- I* Adam is triumphant and empowered when he returns to the apartment.
- E* They all look outside and see a car burning. Brenda tells Adam that it is his car he set on fire.

- I* Brenda is panicked because she realizes it is their car. Adam is horrified and embarrassed when he figures out he set his own car on fire.
- E* Clark and Edmund make fun of Adam.
- I* Clark is delighted, Cleo is sympathetic, and Edmund is condescending when they see that Adam blew up his own car.
- E* Adam tells everyone to get out of the apartment and throws Clark's finger into the hallway.
- I* Adam gets angry and kicks everyone out of the apartment—for real this time.
- E* Clark threatens Adam, but Adam counters with blackmail about him and Cleo.
- I* Clark is indignant when Adam throws his finger in the hallway, but he panics when he realizes Adam could blackmail him for his affair with Cleo. Cleo tries to be cunning and extort money from Clark, but Adam won't allow it.
- E* Adam tells Cleo to help Clark get his finger and get him to his car. He tells Edmund he's keeping the bombs, and tells Edmund to help Clark carry the boxes of posters downstairs.
- I* Edmund pretends to be ill to keep from getting in trouble—another cowardly move.
- E* Cleo, Edmund, and Clark leave.
- I* Clark is cynically cordial as he leaves the apartment.
- E* Brenda and Adam react to what just happened.

I Brenda and Adam are relieved to finally be by themselves in the apartment. Adam is in disbelief that he blew up his own car. Brenda is scared because she is high and did things that were totally not her.

E Brenda tells Adam she wants to sit and watch TV with him and that she needs him.

I Brenda is strangely touched by Adam's gesture of blowing up the car. She realizes she loves him and needs him, and she tells him so. Adam realizes that Brenda is sincere and he is happy.

E They sit on the couch and watch the election results which show Clark winning in a landslide.

I Brenda is mortified and disappointed that Clark won by a landslide.

E Brenda puts her head in Adam's lap as Cleo reenters behind them and realizes that she had sex with the mayor.

I Cleo is proud that she had sex with the mayor.

Backstory

A. Outline the backstory points

1. Adam told Brenda he needed to move out of his apartment by this weekend.

Director's Notes: Brenda had to put it in her Blackberry, and even then she forgot. Work with Adam on how this makes him feel—does Brenda value their relationship so little? What is more important to her?

2. Brenda cut out articles for Adam to read, but he didn't read them.

Director's Notes: Brenda is a busy woman—why does she take time out to do this for Adam? Why didn't he read them? Work with Adam and Brenda on this difference, it has a big impact on their relationship.

Edmund and Brenda chained themselves to trees for three days. They ended up being the wrong trees, though, and their protest did no good. We also find out that Brenda had the key to her protest cuffs and left during the protest to go home and feed her cats.

Director's Notes: TREE was embarrassed, so Edmund wants to do something to make them seem important. Talk to Edmund about how this embarrassment motivates him to blow up the SUVs. Talk to Cleo about what this says about her commitment to the group and/or the cause.

3. Cleo and Adam are adopted siblings.

Director's Notes: This fact comes up a few times. How does this affect their relationship? Talk to the actors about issues such as not fitting in, dealing with differences, ease of blending families, etc.

4. Edmund promised Cleo a date if she'd throw the Molotov cocktails.

Director's Notes: Edmund had no intention of going on the date, he figured Cleo would get arrested. Edmund uses her feelings toward him to manipulate her into taking the blame so his organization gets the credit but he doesn't get

in trouble. Talk to Edmund about what this says about his character. How does this motivate Cleo's anger at the end of the play?

5. Brenda and Clark dated in high school, and Brenda beat Clark in the senior class student council elections. Clark broke up with Brenda by throwing a brick through her window.

Director's Notes: This started the conflict between Clark and Brenda, so it has been festering a long time. How does this motivate each of them? How did this possibly affect their careers up to this point? Why did Brenda withhold this information from Adam? Did Clark intentionally come looking for Brenda today?

6. Cleo blew up her SUV so Edmund would think she was serious about being part of TREE.

Director's Notes: What does this say about Cleo's motivations? Her respect for property? Her ability to look to the future? Talk to Cleo about her focus on the present and her lack of regard for the future or for consequences of her actions.

7. Edmund ratted out the members of LEAF to avoid going to jail himself, then started his own eco-terrorist group.

Director's Notes: This shows Edmund to be a coward. How would this quality play out in him throughout the play? Why do people still trust him?

Talk to Edmund and Cleo about how this affects the dynamic of their relationship.

B. How is the backstory information revealed?

The information is revealed in conversations with other characters. Most of the time it is revealed in the context of an argument or an unexpected answer to a question. This blurting out of information helps fuel the pace of the play and the comedy of the story.

Dramatic action structure

- A. **Inciting Action:** The inciting action is the fact that it is Election Day. This sparks Brenda and Clark's last-minute attempts to get people to vote the way they want. It also sparks TREE's planned attack on SUVs. Adam is given the day off because it is Election Day, otherwise no one would be home for the action to take place.
- B. **Main Climax:** The conflict reaches its highest intensity at the end of Scene 8 when Edmund and Cleo say they've taken Clark hostage. Clark sees Adam as being in cahoots with them. Adam wants Brenda to get him out of the situation but can't reach her and is unable to contain the chaos.
- C. **Falling Action:** The conflict is resolved at the end of Scene 9 when Adam blows up a car to impress Brenda, not realizing it's his own. He is emboldened to fight

for Brenda, which also gives him the strength to kick everyone else out of the apartment. After all this, Brenda finally tells Adam she needs him.

Identify the major and minor conflicts and obstacles

A. Major conflicts:

1. *Brenda vs. Clark*: They represent the opposing sides of the election
2. *Adam vs. his own apathy*: Adam is at first unable to stand up for himself or really think for himself, which enables him to be overrun by others
3. Political system vs. Radical change: Which is the best/most effective way to bring about change?

B. Minor conflicts:

1. *Edmund vs. Cleo*: She wants to date him, he wants to use her for his group's activities.
2. *Edmund vs. Brenda*: He wants to get physical with her, she has a boyfriend.
3. *Adam vs. Brenda*: Adam wants more affection and love from Brenda, she wants him to care more about politics.
4. *Adam vs. Clark*: Adam wants Clark out of his apartment, Clark wants Adam's vote.
5. *Edmund vs. Clark*: Edmund wants change in environmental policy now, Clark represents a system that is slow to effect change

IV. Ideas

Identify ideas in the play

A. Ideas in the words

1. **The title:** *What does the title tell us about the play?*

The title tells us the inciting action of the play and why this day is different than all other days. (Similar to Tennessee Williams' original title for "A Streetcar Named Desire"—"The Poker Night.")

2. **Discussions:** *What major ideas are discussed in the dialogue?*

A recurring theme is learning the facts and then taking action—Brenda and Edmund both use almost identical statements about this. However, while Brenda understands the action to be voting and getting involved in the political system, Edmund understands the action to be participating in violent and destructive demonstrations. Clark believes elections aren't about facts at all, but rather about relationships, feelings, and sound bites. Cleo doesn't see the importance of elections at all. Adam wants to care, but he finds it difficult to keep up with everything that is going on and really do the research himself—it is easier to let someone else digest the information and tell him what to do.

3. **Aphorisms:** *A concise statement of principle or truth is known as an aphorism. Do characters use aphorisms in their dialogue? If so, when, how and why? What does that tell us about the character?*

Clark uses a string of generic political aphorisms when he first enters Brenda's apartment and is talking to Adam. This tells us he is not saying anything with much substance, and that he is only telling people what they want to hear. Later when he is being candid with them, he says things that are contradictory to these aphorisms.

4. **Allusions:** *What references to people or things outside the play are made?*

What do they mean?

- Edward states that a Humvee is a war vehicle on civilian streets (a Hummer is based on the design of a Humvee but is a civilian vehicle).
- Cleo asks Adam where the nearest Planned Parenthood is (because she had unprotected sex with Clark and doesn't want to get pregnant).

5. **Imagery:** *Is there any special significance of something's appearance?*

Identify figurative language such as metaphors and similes. What mental images are conjured by the words the characters speak?

- Clark's appearance as the "good guy" candidate belies his slimy inner personality.
- Edmund describes the planet as something alive and vibrant.
- Edmund also describes the Humvee driver as being at war with the planet and those living on it.

6. **Symbolism:** *Does something in the play represent another thing? If so, what is the significance of the symbol?*

- Edmund's holding Clark hostage could be symbolic of the radical environmentalists holding the political arena hostage.
- Clark could be symbolic of sleazy politicians in general.

C. Ideas in the plot:

1. **Central Conflict:** The central conflict of ideas is whether to allow the political system to handle change or whether to take radical action.

How to use: The two different viewpoints can be reflected in the way the characters dress and act. Those willing to allow the system to work could be more measured and rational, with more demure clothing and accessories. Those who use radical means are impatient and full of pent-up energy, with more exotic clothing and accessories.

2. **The Main Idea:** "When you don't think for yourself, someone else will think for you."

How to use: A major concern for Brenda, Edmund, and Clark is the apathy of the general public. They each believe they have the "right" viewpoint, and they want others to see things from their point of view. They believe the facts support them in their viewpoint. Adam and Cleo are the keys here—they want to care and be informed, but they find it difficult to wade through all the information available. It is easier for them to let Brenda or Edmund

(respectively) digest the information and tell them what to do. This is dangerous, however, because sometimes the person telling you the “truth” does not have your best interest in mind, as we see with Edmund and Cleo.

3. **Climax:** The major climax in the play is when Adam realizes that Edmund and Cleo are serious and that he has been pulled into this eco-terrorist plot. He knows he cannot let Clark go without getting in trouble, so he must take part and detain Clark until he and Brenda figure out what to do.

How to use: This is when Adam begins to grow a spine and stand up to others. This begins his transformation into the person who would set a car on fire to avoid losing Brenda. We need to see the cumulative effect of all the previous events begin to lose containment in Adam.

4. **The Super-Objective:** To impress

How to use: Merriam-Webster defines *impress* as “to act upon (a person or a person's feelings) so as to cause a response.” All of the characters are trying to cause a specific response in one or more of the other characters. Adam wants to impress Brenda so she will love him. Cleo wants to impress Edmund so he will go out with her. Clark wants to impress everyone so they will vote for him. Brenda wants to impress others to vote against Clark. Edmund wants to impress others to care about the environment. The actors need to understand that all their actions are directed at causing this response in their targets.

5. **Action Summary:** Brenda wants Clark defeated in the election, so she tells Adam and Cleo to vote and she goes out to distribute flyers and posters. Adam calls Cleo to help him move into Brenda's apartment, but when she arrives she no longer has her truck so she isn't much help. Clark arrives seeking more votes and is accidentally left handcuffed to the bed by Cleo. Edmund seduces Brenda at the café where he works. Later, Edmund and Cleo decide to take Clark hostage and Adam doesn't know how to kick them out without getting in trouble. Brenda arrives but she has eaten a bunch of pot so she isn't much help. Edmund decides to campaign for Clark so he'll be a more valuable hostage. Finally Adam accidentally sets his own car on fire to impress Brenda and finds the strength to kick everyone out of the apartment.

How to use: Keep the storytelling clear and moving forward. A director tells the story in a clear and compelling way.

Themes

Themes: selfishness, voter apathy, equality in relationships, love vs. lust, truth in politics, facts vs. emotions in voting, radical means vs. letting the system work

How to use: These themes are extremely relevant this year. All of the characters in this play have a selfish reason for engaging in politics. By exposing the hypocrisy that exists on all sides of the political arena, the audience may be motivated to reexamine their own point of view. This play also deals with the importance of truth in personal relationships, so the actors need to find a connection to each other and be careful not to become caricatures.

V. Rhythm

Atmosphere

A. Pace: Brenda tends to have a brisk pace. Adam is baseline average pace. Cleo and Edmund typically have a slow pace, but when they get excited it speeds up quickly. Clark is fast paced all the time.

How to use:

- Scene 1: Brenda is fast-paced throughout the entire scene, and Adam is slow paced. This discord in pace fuels the tension in the scene.
- Scene 2: Both Edmund and Cleo are slow-paced in this scene. Edmund begins to speed up when he gets agitated, but when he realizes he is losing Cleo, he slows down again.
- Scene 3: Adam and Cleo start at the same pace—Adam is slower than normal because of his fight with Brenda, and Cleo is slightly faster because of her impending date with Edmund. The pace of both quickens when the Molotov cocktails are discovered. Adam stays at the quick pace due to his anxiety, but after Adam asks her to call Edmund and say she can't do it, Cleo moves back into her slow pace because she is deceiving Adam (she has no intention of calling Edmund).
- Scene 4: Edmund is very slow-paced and cool during this scene. Brenda is fast-paced because she is still focused on the election.
- Scene 5: Adam is average-paced during the scene with moments of quick pace when he's nervous about Clark finding the bombs. Clark is fast-paced throughout. When Cleo enters she is slow-paced throughout.

- Scene 6: Adam is still average-paced at the beginning and gets progressively faster as he realizes the situation with Clark. Cleo is also average-paced, quicker than her slow pace because she has just had great sex. Clark remains fast paced.
- Scene 7: Brenda is still fast paced, but a little closer to average because of the two glasses of wine she had. She gets progressively slower as the scene goes on, in part because of Edmund's efforts to get her to relax and in part because of the pot she smokes. Edmund is his typical slow-paced self until the end when he gets the phone call.
- Scene 8: Cleo is faster than average pace because of her excitement at voting. She slows somewhat when Edmund arrives to try and seem her typically cool self, but she picks her pace up when she stumbles onto the hostage idea. Adam is still fast paced because he is agitated with Cleo about the Clark situation. He remains fast paced as his anxiety grows throughout the scene. Edmund is fast paced throughout his first time in the scene—first because he is upset that everyone bailed out, and then because of his excitement at the hostage situation. When he returns in the second half, he is slow again because he thinks his plan is not working. Clark, as always, is fast paced.
- Scene 9: The scene pace reaches a frenzy towards the 2/3 mark of this scene, adding to the crazy humor of the events. Throughout the scene, Clark is still fast paced. Adam begins average paced, partly because the anxiety has worn him out and partly because he is trying to seem calm for Brenda. His pace picks up when he realizes something happened between Edmund and Brenda. He reaches fever pitch right before he storms out of the room in the middle of the scene. He

returns at average pace because he has expended his energy setting the car on fire. Cleo is slow paced until she realizes Edmund has been stringing her along, and then her pace quickens and stays that way until the very end of the scene. Brenda remains at a slower pace throughout the scene due to the amount of pot she ingested. Edmund is slow paced throughout most of the scene, but his pace picks up when Cleo has the knife and Brenda reveals that he ratted out LEAF members—he is afraid. When Adam returns and directs all the attention toward the burning car, he slows down again.

- B. **Tempo:** Most of the scenes are a fairly even tempo, but there tends to be a “reveal” moment in each scene where some key piece of information is revealed.

How to use: This is a comedy, so the tempo needs to be brisk. However, the actors need to make sure not to rush over that important nugget of information in the scene. In the longer scenes—8 and 9—there are several of these nuggets, and the tempo picks up as the scene progresses, so paying attention to tempo becomes more important in these scenes.

- C. **Rhythm:** The action in the apartment seems to steadily escalate. In contrast, the scenes outside the apartment tend to be very low-key.

How to use: The scenes outside the apartment are spaced so that they provide “rest” between the steadily escalating scenes inside the apartment. This gives the audience an emotional break so they can return to the apartment scenes with renewed emotional energy.

- D. **Mood/Atmosphere:** The external atmosphere should be very average so the audience feels like they could inhabit this world. The mood is upbeat and honest.

How to use: The characters really need to believe that what they are doing is making their world a better place. While there may be sarcasm, the cynicism should not be played. That is what will make the comedy work. The audience needs to be able to see themselves fitting into this world and a bit of themselves and those around them reflected in the characters.

- E. **Polarity:** The play begins with Adam seeking love and affection from Brenda, and it ends with him receiving just that—but not in a way or through means he ever expected. Brenda begins all pulled together and full of hope, and she ends crumpled on the couch with everything a mess around and within her.
- F. **Style:** The style is realistic, but with a “heightened” realism. The characters are a little “more than real,” a little bit larger than life. Be careful not to make them caricatures, however.

VI. Dialogue

Analyze the dialogue

- A. **Style of the Dialogue:** Realistic. Clark uses “political speech” when he first meets Adam, and Edmund and Cleo sometimes use ecological rhetoric.
- B. **Dialect:** None.
- C. **Grammar and Structure:** Clark uses long, complex sentences when he’s trying to make a point. Cleo sometimes rambles. In general, however, the dialogue is short and informal.
- D. **Qualities of Dialogue:** In Scene 2 Edmund uses poetic language for the passwords. His language also gets more descriptive when he’s talking about the

environment. He is trying to show off through his language and make his cause seem more important. Clark uses complex sentences when making a point as a tactic to try and confuse his listener into agreeing with him. Brenda is typically articulate, so when she is high the change in speech is poignant. Adam's speech is typically weak and he trails off a lot. When he finally grows a spine, he uses more commands and stronger language. Cleo tends to ramble on, which seems more a defense mechanism against having to commit to anything or say anything important. However, when she feels passionate about something she gets very direct and aggressive in her speech.

- E. **Subtext:** Subtext is used a lot in this play. Often characters only allude to or hint at what they are really thinking. It is important to understand the objectives of each beat so that the correct subtext is played in relation to the words that are spoken.

Chapter 3: Laying the Foundation

Initial Thoughts after First Reading of Play

- Funny!
- Pokes fun at all sides, much less offensive than a lot of political comedies I've read
- Broad appeal, not too vulgar
- Adam is the guy that just has one of those days—very likable and relatable
- Lots of caricatures, but that's what makes it work and makes it funny
- The finger thing was a bit much, seemed a little out of place—not enough reaction from Jerry?
- Makes you realize how ridiculous elections can be sometimes—completely not about the issues, or maybe it is in the end? (landslide victory)
- Jerry really plays on relationships a lot—but he has a point! Really seems to understand people, but uses it for selfish ends
- Adam and Cleo are more alike than they want to admit!
- What a transformation in Brenda—buttoned up to hanging loose
- Ridiculous acronyms are funny!
- Kind of like a sitcom—all takes place in one room (for the most part)
- A little dated when it comes to technology (no cell phones?)
- Dialogue nice and quick—I like the pace of this piece—snappy
- I was afraid of this piece by the title, I thought it would be very one-sided, especially when Clark entered the picture, but I was pleasantly surprised that it was so balanced; equal opportunity offender, shows flaws in all parts of the political system and process

Thesis Show Proposal

One of the reasons I am earning my MFA in Performing Arts is so I can one day teach at the university level. As a professor of performing arts, I will undoubtedly be called upon to direct shows on a regular basis. For this reason, since I started the MFA program it has been my aim to direct a show for my thesis project.

Election Day initially attracted me because it was quick-witted and funny, and I thought it would appeal to a broad audience during October of an election year. It was originally chosen by 3rd Act as their fall show, but the Season Planning Committee opted to stage *44 Plays for 44 Presidents* instead. At the encouragement of many 3rd Act board members and others in the department, I have decided to pursue it as a lab show instead.

Obviously the content of the show suggests it should be staged in the fall quarter. I also think fall is an ideal quarter for me to stage my thesis show. It would be important to have rehearsals for this show as early as possible in the fall quarter. The quarter begins late (September 10), and Election Day is November 6. The film festival runs October 27 through November 3. I will not attempt a tech week during the festival, so the show would go up ideally the weekend before the festival starts (October 18-20). Assuming the show is cast by the end of the first week of classes, this gives it a five-week rehearsal period. The show is a one-act and has only five actors, so it should be possible within the compressed time frame.

I am interested in exploring the production of a play in “found space.” For this reason, I have selected a non-traditional location in which to stage the play: a former clothing store on Abercorn Street. The space is laid out with the appropriate number of entrances and exits needed, and there is enough space to seat approximately forty people. I think non-traditional spaces are becoming more common due to the lack of funding faced by many theater companies.

Experimenting now with this possibility will help me be more prepared to take (or avoid) similar risks when I am working professionally.

Official Casting Notice

Auditions for *Election Day*, a SCAD MFA Thesis show directed by Ryan Long, will be held Monday, September 10 from 5-10pm and Tuesday, September 11 from 5-7pm in Crites 300. Callbacks will be held Tuesday, September 11 from 7-10pm. Rehearsals will begin Thursday, September 13. The production will run from October 18-20 at the Vineyard Church Multipurpose Space, 1020 Abercorn Street.

Roles available:

- Adam: 30 years old, graphic designer, “average Joe,” Brenda’s boyfriend and Cleo’s adopted brother
- Brenda: 30 years old, public defender, strong-willed woman, Adam’s girlfriend
- Jerry Clark: 30 years old, charismatic politician, switches demeanor frequently, stage combat experience helpful
- Edmund: 35 years old, eco-terrorist, beatnik style
- Cleo: 25 years old, hippie style, free spirit, stage combat experience helpful

Auditions are by appointment only. Please prepare one monologue in three different ways (memorization not required). Sides will be provided at callbacks. Send an email for appointment to rylong22@student.scad.edu . A PDF copy of the script is available upon e-mail request.

Psychological Concept

I want to focus on the characters' selfish reasons for engaging politically.

I will direct Adam to be sincere in his love for Brenda. He truly wants to be as excited as she is about politics, but he just doesn't have it in him. When he finally sets the car on fire at the end of the play, it needs to be out of desperation to show Brenda just how much he cares. If he can't show her in a "by the book" way, he'll show her in a "radical" way.

I will direct Cleo to be very self-centered in most of her actions. She has the thinnest veil over her selfish motives. But she does not see anything wrong with pursuing something for selfish reasons. To her it is about survival.

I will direct Brenda to be very determined in her quest against Clark. She has facts to back up her reasons for not wanting him elected, but deep down it is personal. As a lawyer, she is supposed to be objective and look at the facts, so the fact that she has a selfish personal reason for campaigning against Clark is a point of shame for her. She will go out of her way to hide it.

I will direct Edmund to be very cool and casual. He plays low so that no one will see he is desperate for attention. He wants to be notorious for being the leader of TREE, but he is a coward at heart. He, like Brenda, hides his selfishness under the guise of facts.

I will direct Clark to be unashamed at his attempts to get votes. Each tactic he tries needs to be completely sincere, with an almost total change in personality accompanying each one. He is a master actor, able to be whatever the constituent needs in order to give him a vote. He needs to have a continued air of confidence to hide the desperation underneath.

Politics has many layers, including facts, emotions, and personal preference. But most of the time people have some sort of selfish motive for their political actions. They may try to bury this under something else (like facts), and they may get more desperate to hide it as the veil gets

thinner. But it is almost always there and needs to be admitted before honest dialogue can take place.

Figure 3.1: Ground Plan

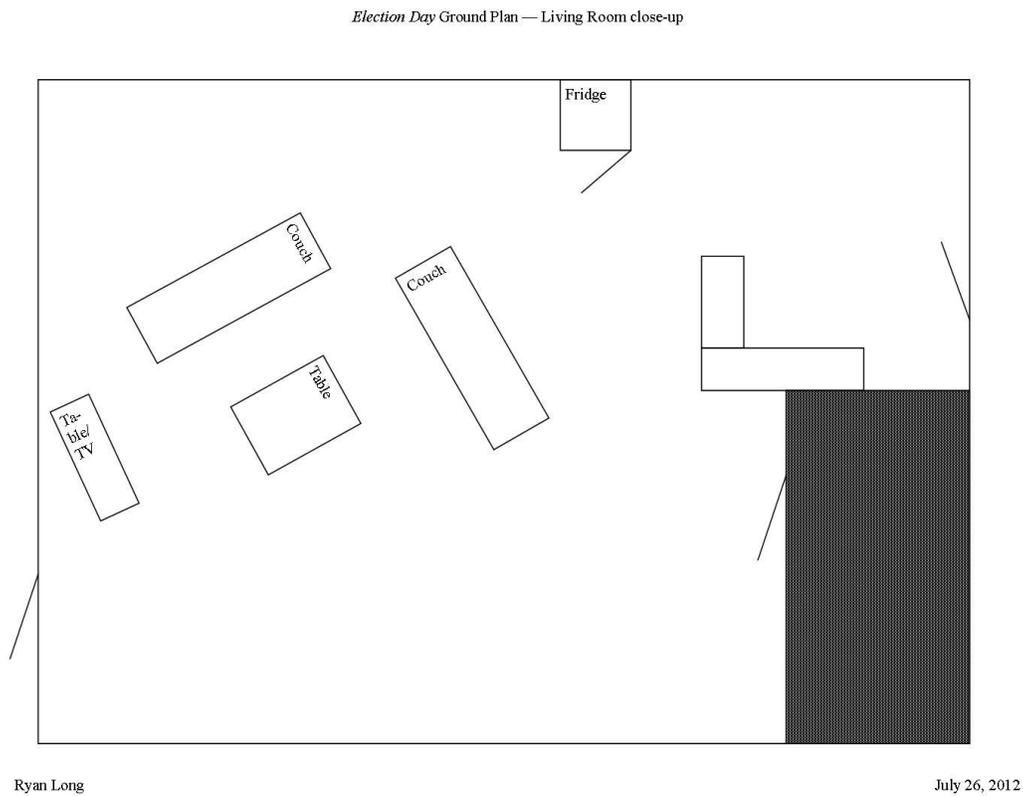


Table 3.1: Pre-Production Budget

<i>EXPENSES</i>	
<i>Anticipated expenses: materials</i>	
Scenic materials	200
Props	50
Furniture rental	0
Costume materials, rentals and purchases	50
Make-up and hair costs	25
Lighting equipment rental	0
Lighting soft-goods purchases like gobos, gels	0
Sound equipment rental	0
Space rental	50
<i>Subtotal materials</i>	375
<i>Anticipated expenses: Advertising</i>	
Printed material costs (posters, fliers)	150
Placed ads (newspaper, radio, TV)	0
Printed program	50
<i>Subtotal advertising</i>	200
<i>Other</i>	
Truck rental to transport materials	0
Opening night party	75
Script purchases	75
Rights/royalty fee and postage/shipping costs	225
<i>Subtotal other</i>	375
TOTAL EXPENSES	950

Chapter 4: Building the Show

As part of the thesis project, I was required to keep a journal of the process. I wrote one entry every rehearsal date (plus a few extra entries).

9/10/12

Tonight was the first night of auditions. We didn't get as many people as we planned for, but the ones who showed up were good. It was tough making the callback list because I know a lot of these people and see them every day. I know what they go through and how much they want to be cast. Even so, I knew I had to put my feelings aside and make the decisions that were right for my production. A lot is on the line with this show (and any show, really, whether it's budget money or season ticket holder satisfaction or something else), so I know what needs to be done, but I just wish my head would tell my heart to shut up. Maybe that's where being an actor is a disadvantage when it comes to directing?

9/11/12

We had a handful of additional auditions tonight, and then callbacks...which were brutal. I thought it would be pretty easy to narrow it down and make a decision, but a lot of people really brought some good choices and good work tonight. It ended up lasting about twice as long as I had planned...much to the chagrin of my husband who had been waiting up at home. I was really surprised at how much of the FINAL decision was based on how the cast looked as a unit. There was one actor in particular who had great comic timing and interacted well with half the cast, but when put next to the love interest, he just looked and acted awkward (he was a gay man who was

struggling to play a straight character). I was also surprised at how much reputation kept creeping in. I was trying to keep an open mind about the new students who I had never worked with, but I found myself thinking, “Well, I know this person can do [x] because I’ve seen him do it in that show.”

It really was an agonizing decision, but I’m really happy with the cast we’ve settled on. I’m also quite pleased with the understudy cast, and I’m toying with the idea of adding an additional show so they can at least perform it once. I’ll have to talk to my adviser about the possibility.

9/12/12

Mary Beth [cast as Brenda] just backed out. She was cast in a mainstage show and although she told me she’d talked to the director of that show and he said she was OK to audition, evidently she wasn’t OK to accept a role. He said our tech was too close to their tech (they are a week apart). I offered to have her only attend half our tech since she’s only in the first and last scenes, but that wasn’t good enough I guess. Now I’m struggling with whether to go with the understudy or have another callback. I know she’s a good actress, but I’m concerned about the relationships with Tyler and Evan. I feel guilty that I’m not jumping to go with her as the replacement, but I feel like everything is messed up now. The chemistry of my cast is not balanced anymore, and I don’t know why. Mary Beth brought just the right balance of energy to the role, and now I’m not quite sure what to do. As I write this, I’m texting my adviser; maybe she can shed some light on how to proceed.

9/13/12

Today was full of difficult things. First, I asked the director of the other show why Mary Beth couldn't be in both shows. He informed me that she had made the decision herself, he had not stopped her. I don't know if the actor was being intentionally misleading; it may have just been a misunderstanding when she said she talked to the director and "couldn't do both." The director said you see that a lot in this job: people will often fudge the truth because it's difficult to tell someone you have to break a commitment. Lesson learned.

Second, I found out that both of the actors I cast as Clark are in a president's singing group that could be called up at any moment, regardless of prior commitments (including performances). One of the actors had put this on their conflict sheet, but the other had not. So now I have to recast the understudy role.

Finally, I ended up having another callback for Brenda. I brought in three actresses, including the understudy (Theresa). I went in fully expecting to put her in the main role and just cast an understudy. However, her relationship with the Evan was not nearly as authentic as she had been with the understudy (John). She also struggled to grasp a direction I was trying to get her to go in a scene with Edmund. I tried three different times to get a result, but each reading was the same. This really surprised me, and I found myself questioning the consistency of her performance. The Cleo understudy (Halley) was another actress I called in, whom I had been looking at for Brenda in the original callbacks. She was incredibly consistent and showed good timing and understanding of the script.

I ultimately decided to go with the consistent actress. It was extremely difficult to call Theresa and tell her we were not offering her the main role—especially since earlier in the day she had let

me know she was unhappy with the way things had been handled (that I had opted for a callback rather than just promoting her to the main cast). Directing your peers whom you see every day seems extremely difficult. Feelings become magnified and ever-present. There is no distance. I know we're supposed to be "professionals," but word gets around in a small place. Although I suppose the theater community itself is tight-knit anyway, so maybe this is just a microcosm of what is to come. I feel like I need a thicker skin, because casting this one role has been agony for 24 hours.

Theresa is deciding whether she wants to continue as the understudy for Brenda. I've selected a backup actress just in case. I'm also searching for a Cleo understudy now that Halley is cast as Brenda. It's like musical chairs...it makes me feel very incompetent as a casting director, even though a lot of the circumstances have been out of my control.

9/14/12

Today was our first read-through. We were missing Halley (Brenda) due to a work conflict, and we don't have an understudy anymore because both actresses who were at callbacks yesterday—who told me they would take the understudy role if it was offered—declined the role due to scheduling conflicts. Despite that, things went well. We talked a little bit about concept and purpose for doing the show, but everyone seemed a little out of it, I'm assuming because it was 9am (which is not early to me, but seems to be for everyone else), so we moved on to a first read-through. Karen (Cleo) had to leave for work at 10:30 and we don't have an understudy yet for that role either, so we ended up calling it a day at 11:15 because we only had 3 roles represented. We'll have 4 out of 5 again tomorrow, but we'll be meeting at the performance

space so maybe that will get people excited about the project. I'm still searching to fill 3 understudy roles, but it looks like it will be next week before any progress is made there.

9/15/12

Today's rehearsal was MUCH better than yesterday's. Being at the space definitely energized everyone, and it seems like people are starting to catch the vision for the show. We did a second read-through, this time stopping to clarify objectives, talk about the text, and make specific choices. The actors did some really good work, which I needed to see after such a discouraging week. I have renewed hope that this project will be successful and we'll produce a really good show. I have appointments with two possible understudies on Monday, so hopefully we'll fill those roles before we get too far into rehearsals. We're blocking Scenes 1, 3, and part of 6 on Monday. I know we're short on time so I should pre-plan all the blocking, but I really prefer an organic style. I think I'm going to get some pre-planned ideas but let the actors start on their own and see if something develops. If things don't come together quickly, we'll jump into the pre-planned stuff so we aren't wasting much time.

9/17/12

Today was the first day we had Halley, our new "Brenda," so we spent some time reading her scenes and doing some of the table work. I wish she'd been able to be at the group table work, but I guess you work with what you have. She seems to have good instincts about the material, so that's a plus. Then we finally began blocking. I didn't preplan much of the blocking for this show. It had been recommended to me that I plan out everything in advance since we have such

a short rehearsal period, but that's odd for me because in previous shows I've directed, I didn't preplan any of the blocking. So I went with a hybrid system. I didn't write out everything, but I did get an idea in my head of the blocking for each scene. However, I decided to let the actors take a crack at Scene 1 before saying anything, and it seemed to work out pretty well. There were some areas of physicality that need worked out at a later time, but I thought that was okay. Right now I just want to focus on getting a basic shape for the scenes. Scene 3 was the only scene I had completely written out because I had previously worked on it in class. This worked out well because the actors struggled a bit with creating organic blocking. They slipped right in to the preplanned blocking and found ways to start making it their own.

I'm really glad we've moved past the craziness of casting and are finally working on the show. Already I can see that the cast has good instincts and work well together. I'm a little concerned about the short rehearsal period, but I think this group can put in the work required to make it successful.

9/18/12

Today we blocked the scenes that are going to be filmed. The people I thought were going to be on my film crew are now booked with class projects and can't help me, so I may end up filming these scenes myself. I've done some video work before, but it makes me a little nervous to have to direct and be DP and produce it. I'm considering staging Scene 2 live but outside the window of the space. We could mic the actors, have the sound piped into the space, and put lights outside to make them visible. That would be one less scene to film if we don't have a crew. I'll have to think more about my options.

The scenes themselves went fairly well. I realized that they're all by necessity pretty static scenes, so the actors are really going to have to dig in to the text to make them interesting. We did a little character work today since the scenes didn't take long to block, and I feel pretty good about the interaction between the characters. We just need to work on raising the stakes a bit and making what's happening in the scenes really important.

9/20/12

Today we blocked Scenes 5 and 6, and it seemed to go well. David is struggling a little bit with going as far as I want him to with the character, but we can definitely work on that. Karen is really tuning into my vision of Cleo and I'm really excited to see what she does with the character.

I received an e-mail from one of my actors Tuesday night that has me a bit worried. It said, "Just a little concerned about being off book for Saturday with only 2 rehearsals. But I'm gonna do my best to be as close as I can! I just have a lot of work these next two days in class." I replied, "Rehearsals are for blocking and character work, not really for learning your lines. That's more something that should be worked on outside rehearsals. It doesn't have to be perfect by any means, but I do want to see some progress being made. With past shows, if I didn't set early deadlines for being off book we ended up with people calling for lines during tech. Just do your best." The actor seemed cool with that response, but now I'm concerned about others' commitment level to the show. I can't imagine saying that to the director of a mainstage show, so I'm hoping the actors don't think they can slack off because it's a thesis show.

9/21/12

Today's rehearsal was a little short because I was leaving for a conference in Atlanta. We worked on Scene 8 most of the time, and then we ran through Scenes 1, 3, 5, 6, & 8. Three of the understudies were there, which is good. I'm glad they have been coming to rehearsals. Tyler was absent so Steven stood in, which was awkward because he makes very different choices than Tyler. So I'm not completely comfortable with the Scene 8 blocking, but it has a good starting shape and it will be good to have Tyler back and see what he adds with the scene. I also think it will flesh out more when we have some furniture to work with.

9/22/12

I wasn't at rehearsal today due to a conference in Atlanta, but Meghan [the stage manager] ran the rehearsal. They started with a run-through of Scenes 2, 4, and 7, and then they did a line rehearsal. They got through Scene 7 before everyone had to look at their scripts. About half of the people were in good shape; most of them were good through Scenes 4/5. At least we've got a benchmark and people know where they need to focus their efforts. I'm pretty confident that they'll be off book in good time.

9/24/12

Today we had rehearsal at the performance space, which I think really helped the actors. They seemed to be more energetic and excited about being on their feet. We spent most of today working on Scene 9, which is by far the longest scene (Scenes 8 & 9 together are almost as long

as Scenes 1-7). I'm really struggling with this scene because there's so much physical action going on. I want to make sure the actors are safe, but I also want it to be funny. How much can I ask of the actors? I want to make sure they are comfortable with what we're doing. I also want to make sure it's believable, and the knife throw just seems so awkward. We'll have to see how it goes when we get real props.

Also, we launched the Kickstarter yesterday! We had initially planned to raise \$975, which was our proposed budget, but several people suggested asking for more than you need just in case there are unexpected expenses, so we're trying to raise \$1200. I hope this goes well, otherwise I'm going to have to figure out how to get \$1200 back (because I'm fronting most of the expenses right now with borrowed money).

9/25/12

Today we had our first complete run-through. It was a little rough, but it was good to get all the way through. After that we worked a couple things in Scenes 1 and 3. Understudies are still showing up, I'm really excited to see what they do when we start rehearsing them. We're also going to start having almost all rehearsals at the performance space; it seems to work better since we have the furniture there for the actors to interact with. There have also been others coming into Crites 300 after we've cleaned up, then they leave a mess and we get blamed for it—I'd rather just avoid that mess all together.

9/27/12

Today we really worked Scenes 9 and 5 in depth. We still don't have an actual bed frame or prop knife, so those parts of Scene 9 are still theoretical; I really hope we can get these props soon. I need to ask Professor Noyes a couple questions about what type of knife to get; Sean said he has a bed frame we can use, we've just got to get it to the space. Things are moving along with the scene, though, and the fight over the finger looks okay.

9/28/12

Today we worked on Scenes 2, 4, and 7 in depth, and the work that was accomplished really excites me. We focused a lot on the subtext of the scenes and did some exercises to explore this. With Scene 2, I had the actors ignore their blocking and say the lines while exaggerating the subtext and moving however they felt led. This gave them more freedom in their movements, and we decided to keep quite a few things they discovered in the exercise. With Scenes 4 and 7 we did the exercise where the actors have a single line of subtext that they repeat before each of their lines. It didn't accomplish much in Scene 4, where the subtext seems to change somewhat frequently. So we switched to the exaggerated subtext exploration, and that yielded better results. There are still some awkward moments we need to work through in Scene 4, though. The single-line subtext exercise worked BEAUTIFULLY in Scene 7, though, and the scene has really started to sizzle. I'm really excited that we are probably doing this scene live, because I don't think it would be as hot if it were filmed. There's something about being in the room with this sexy scene that really emphasizes the voyeuristic idea I'm going for.

I've decided I need to start focusing some on the understudies this week. Since we're going to have an understudy performance, I want to make sure that performance is something I am proud to put my name on. I really wish I had an assistant director—one that I thought would really work the actors and not just make sure they're following the blocking.

9/29/12

We ran Scenes 1-8 today. I wish we could have made it all the way through, but I had a SCAD Radio staff retreat I needed to get to and we ran out of time. Amy filled in for Halley as “Brenda” because Halley had to rehearse for KCATCF, and we worked a little on some of her blocking and choices. She has a totally different style than Halley, but I think it still works well for the character. I need to remember that understudies are not identical and can have their own interpretations as long as it is true to the character. It will be interesting to watch the understudy run-through on Monday, but I'm kind of excited about it. It's a chance to see the characters in a different light, and maybe some of the things the understudies discover can be incorporated into the main cast as well.

I got a look at some of the costume renderings last night, and Cleo and Edmund were the only ones that I really wanted changed. I envision their clothing being much more eclectic than what was proposed. Our lighting designer was also at rehearsal today and we talked about options for getting the space sufficiently lit. We're finally having a production meeting this week, so hopefully we'll get a lot of things settled and moving forward. Since we're rehearsing in the space now, we have the luxury of starting to move some tech things in earlier and working out some of the kinks. I also found out that the apartment above our performance space is available

for weekly rental, so I'm going to investigate whether we can rent it for the week and use it as a green room (it will also avoid complaints about the loud noises heard during the production).

10/01/12

Today was the deadline for actors being off-book. It was a little rough, but I can tell the main cast has been working. It's amazing how just taking the script out of one's back pocket can change one's confidence in the lines—scenes we were breezing through last week without looking were rocky today just because the actors knew they couldn't look at the pages.

The understudies were all present today to watch the run-through, take notes, and talk with the main cast members about character notes. I want to make sure both casts are on the same page as far as motivation and objectives so that their performances, while they may be stylistically different, still have the same heart. Because we have such a compressed rehearsal period, I don't feel like I can take time away from main cast rehearsals to work with the understudies, so Sean has so kindly agreed to work with them separately. It's nice to have an AD you can trust to do that.

10/02/12

Today I worked with the main cast at the performance space while Sean and Meghan worked with the understudies at Crites. It was a little difficult being on book for the actors while still trying to take notes, but I managed it okay. It made me appreciate my stage manager that much more, though! They're still struggling with lines a little, but I'm not worried. I can tell that

they've been working outside the rehearsal room, and that makes me happy. I was worried that because this is a lab show, the actors wouldn't take it as seriously, but the main cast really seems to be working hard.

The understudy cast does have me a bit concerned, however. They were supposed to be on the same schedule as the main stage cast for being off-book, but Sean said most of them didn't have ANY scenes memorized (though the girls did have a few scenes worked on). Although they were all supposed to have written down the blocking when they watched the run-through yesterday, there was a lot of confusion about who was supposed to go where when they actually got on their feet. If this is the state they're in now, I am worried about having an understudy performance. I wanted to give them the opportunity to perform after putting in the work of an understudy, but I also don't want to put up a performance that is sub-par. We'll have to see.

10/04/12

Originally we had planned a main cast rehearsal in the performance space and an understudy rehearsal in Crites, but Evan was sick tonight so I needed John to fill in with the main cast. We decided to have the understudies do a line rehearsal and then run the scenes that didn't include Adam. It was really obvious that John hadn't put in very much work at all, which was super disappointing. The reports from Sean weren't any better. The women were almost completely off book, but the men were not anywhere near ready. One of them was about halfway off-book, and the other two only had a scene or two even close. I'm going to have to talk to my thesis committee about this. I'm upset that I agreed to give them their own performance and this is what I've gotten in return.

10/05/12

Because almost all my cast members had mainstage auditions today—and all of them staggered so there was no block of time when we could assemble a cast—I canceled rehearsal today.

Instead, we'll be extending a few of next week's rehearsals to make up the time.

I also talked to Professor Majkowski about the understudy situation, and she was just as unhappy about the actors' behavior as I was. She told me to write them an e-mail chastising them and giving them a week to get off book, and she recommended that I copy my thesis committee in on it so they would know what's going on. This is the part of being a director that I don't like, but I agree it needs to be done. Hopefully we'll see some serious improvements next week.

10/07/12

We were supposed to have rehearsal yesterday, but because so many people were called back for mainstage auditions (Congrats to my cast members!) we moved it to today. Sean was unavailable to work with the understudies, so I'm having them watch the mainstage cast run-through and take notes. My thesis committee members are coming to watch the run-throughs this week...I feel like we've done some good work, but I know there are some areas where we really need help. I'm hoping the committee members can give us some direction on how to improve these. It's actually really nice to have the support of others who have done this a lot more and who can give me a bit of guidance—I wish I had a few more opportunities to stage shows with this type of assistance before graduating, but I'll take what I can get.

10/08/12

Today was the first day one of my thesis committee members was able to come to a rehearsal. Vivian watched a full run-through and then gave me her notes, and I found myself wishing she'd been here at least a week ago. A lot of the things I've been struggling to fix but not having any luck with were things she picked up on and traced back to lack of clear objectives. It's funny how as an actor you do certain things, and as a director you do certain things, but when you are both the two sides don't always talk to each other in your brain. Such a simple thing, objectives, but what a difference they make! We're going to spend some time this week sitting down and going back to the text so there is a firm foundation from which everything else can build.

It was also interesting to watch some of the things that happened when Vivian was in the room. You could tell everyone was much more nervous, and "line" was called a LOT more than yesterday. I think this is good, though, because they'll get a lot of those nerves out before the performances and be more relaxed once we open.

I also talked to Vivian about the understudy situation. I worked with them for two hours tonight, and we barely got through Scenes 5-8. The women are still on top of things, but the men still had scripts in their hands for Scene 8, and almost no character development has occurred. Vivian suggested that I make what had been planned as the understudy performance an "invited run-through" where the actors could invite friends or family, but it wasn't an open performance for the public. I like that idea. I feel bad that the women worked so hard and don't get the payoff, but at the same time this is getting presented as my thesis project and that means making difficult decisions for what's going to produce the best production.

10/09/12

Today we re-blocked Scene 9, utilizing the bedframe more and moving the actors around the space. We also totally changed our approach to Brenda being stoned, making her much more stationary. The result was a MUCH more coherent and entertaining scene. It also seemed to inspire Halley to make some different choices that I thought were really great.

Later we did some intensive text work on Scenes 1-5, thoroughly discussing what the stakes were for each character and how they changed throughout the scene. We also discussed what the characters want from each other during the scenes, and the actors worked to come up with the backstory for each of their relationships. Some of the actors were more engaged in the work than others, but I think doing this work as a group helped keep those “others” thinking and making choices when they might have otherwise not done the work. It was good to see the majority of the actors really delving into their characters and enjoying what they found. I’m really encouraged by the work the actors did today, and I’m excited to see what this does to their performance on Thursday.

Professor Wainstein told me today that I should just cancel the understudy performance, that I didn’t have time to mess with a separate cast and I was being too nice. Having heard reports from the Assistant Director that the already-behind members of the cast have been texting, talking, and making rude gestures when they’re not actively performing, I was inclined to agree with him. So I told them tonight that there would be no understudy performance, but that there was a very real chance one of them may have to go on (between the illnesses making the rounds at Crites and David’s singing group) and I needed them to keep working and stay engaged so they are ready to step in at a moment’s notice. I really feel bad for the two women who really

worked hard to be ready—this is totally unfair to them, but I have no leverage to force the other three to shape up. Even tonight some of them still had scripts in their hands—a week before the show goes up. This behavior just surprised me coming from these particular actors; I expected a lot more from them.

10/10/12

We finished our text work today, going through Scenes 6-9. Due to a meeting at our performance space, we were going to meet in Crites, but it was a nice day so the actors requested that we meet at the museum courtyard. I think this change of scenery helped the cast to relax a little bit, which I think we needed at this point, but they were also noticeably less engaged than they were yesterday. I'm trying to find a balance between getting in the rehearsal time that we need to work on certain things, and letting the actors rest so they don't get sick or mentally check out right before the performances. David in particular seems to have a hard time with the text work. I don't know if it's because he doesn't like the character, doesn't understand the text, or just doesn't care for the work, but sometimes getting him to focus on stakes and objectives is like pulling teeth. It makes me wonder if he's done any character work at all on his own. I feel like it's not my job to hold the actors' hands when it comes to a lot of this character work, but at the same time I want it to be a good production, so I may have to anyway. I wonder if professional directors face the same dilemma when they have the option to fire and replace someone?

10/11/12

Tonight we got together for a warm-up that included some partnered breathing work, which Vivian suggested to help increase the Adam/Brenda and Edmund/Brenda relationships. Then we quickly re-worked the bedframe/knife section before it was time to do a run-through with Professors Noyes and Wainstein present. Wainstein had to leave between Scenes 7 & 8, so I am getting his notes tomorrow. Once again, nerves were apparent in the actors' lines; they forgot or messed up quite a bit more than usual. I'm glad we're getting these nerves out now instead of next week (assuming they improve by next week).

Professor Noyes had some excellent feedback, much of which I had put in my notes during the run. This excited me, because it showed me that I'm starting to notice things that I should be seeing in these runs, and that I'm making the appropriate course corrections as we go along. He also helped us with Brenda and Edmund's behavior while and after smoking pot, which is a detail I really wanted to get right but just wasn't sure about yet.

I was glad to see some of the text work pay off tonight, even though it was in patchwork areas, but there's still a lot of work to do with the objectives. I told the cast we could sit around a table and work on it Friday together, or they could have the day off if they promised to do the work on their own. They agreed, but we'll see Saturday whether or not they actually did.

One of the things that really bothered me tonight was that while I was giving notes, two people were on their phones—I assumed taking notes. However, after notes were over and I was discussing other things (needing their feedback), the phones stayed out. I finally confronted them, and they admitted they weren't taking notes but doing other things on their phones. Both of them were graduate students, so this behavior really disappointed me—I expected more from

them. Between this and the understudies, it seems one of the director's jobs is to play babysitter sometimes. Rather than fight that, maybe I should just accept and prepare for it; I might be a much happier director for it.

10/12/12

Professor Wainstein didn't have much feedback for me today, other than to tell me he thought I should rearrange my set/audience configuration a bit. Since he missed the last half hour, I don't think he realized just how much of the play's minutes take place in the apartment, because what he suggested would require the audience to be turned slightly left to view that section—and that's a long time to be looking left. He just thought the bench was too close to the audience. However, it was a large couch and not our small park bench that was in the space, so that may make a difference. He also thought I should keep the non-realistic set pieces (armoire as refrigerator, for instance) instead of going with a realistic set. He thought it added to the charm of the piece and that I shouldn't try to "make the space into a theatre." I may play with the audience configuration a bit, but since the other two professors gave me positive feedback about the placement of the scenes, I'll probably keep it mostly the same.

However, I've started to question the lighting situation lately. I'm a little bothered that we didn't stick with my original plan to use mostly ambient lighting (such as lamps). We haven't finishing hanging the lights, and my lighting designer is gone this weekend, so I may try it with a few lamps and see what it looks like. I know he's not really into non-traditional lighting, but that was one of the things I really liked about my concept, so I'd at least like to try it. We'd still need more traditional lighting for the non-apartment scenes, however, so he can work with that.

10/13/12

We rearranged a lot of the space today in preparation for moving the excess furniture out tomorrow and also so we could refine Scene 9 and solidify the stage combat toward the end of the scene. We spent all of today working that last scene, and I really think it paid off. It looks great, and the actors are much more comfortable with the movement and their intentions. We also took some time to work problem line areas in this scene, which the actors needed so they could focus on the movement instead of remembering lines. A few people were still calling “line” when we ran through the scene, and I told them this stops tomorrow.

During notes today I noticed that the phones were begrudgingly absent, but absent nonetheless. I tried to take the time to let them know what a good job they’ve done and how I’m glad to have the freedom to nit-pick at this stage (rather than still being stuck on larger issues). It does appear that they did their character work yesterday—we’ll find out just how much when we have a run-through tomorrow. I’m looking forward to my thesis committee members seeing it again and what their thoughts are about our adjustments. It’s hard to believe that in a week this will all be over!

10/14/12

Today was an exciting day! Everything is starting to come together, but it’s also bringing into focus the technical details that we have yet to take care of. Everyone tried on full costumes today, and I think they look really good. Lori has been amazing to work with; I haven’t had to worry about anything related to costumes—even down to the accessories and shoes! I’m so happy to have her on this project. We finally got all the furniture moved to the church, which

makes the space seem a lot bigger. We also FINALLY obtained a refrigerator (thanks to Professor Wainstein's garage sale), so the only big thing left is to build the kitchen counter. There are SO many small props that we're still rounding up, though. People keep offering to help, but then when they find out there's no practicum involved they back out. We at least have a run crew person, which I think will help.

The actors are really owning their warm-up time now, and they're doing the partnered breathing exercises every day. Because of the limited space available to us, they're warming up IN the space, which has created an interesting dynamic—they are getting into character as they go through the warm-up, not afterward. Just an observation...I'd like to try warming up on stage sometime and seeing how it affects me.

It doesn't look like my thesis committee will be able to see a run-through again before the show opens, which is disappointing, but I understand things are incredibly busy right now so we'll just have to deal with it. The training wheels are off—here we go!

p.s.—We met our Kickstarter goal!!!

10/15/12

Now that Karl is back from GTC, we're getting the lighting situation squared away. I talked to him about going back to the ambient lighting concept, and he seems cool with it. I brought in a bunch of lamps and showed him what I was thinking, and he gets the idea and is going to figure out how to run all the appropriate extension cords and such. I'm excited that we're going this direction with the lighting—it's much more in line with what I'm trying to do with the space. I'm

learning to go with my gut on some of these things...I'm not quite sure why it's taken me so long to learn this.

I'm also trying to back off a bit on giving the actors notes now. There are always things I'm going to want to tweak, but I also know that as an actor, having notes up to the last minute can make you a little neurotic. I want them to have time to settle into the characters a bit. I hope they can keep the energy level up, though. I know everyone is getting tired—as always happens toward the end of a rehearsal period—but this is what we've been working toward!

The kitchen counter still needs finished and stained—yikes! I realized today that the plywood we got is not long enough, so I have to go back and get more. Thankfully we're still under budget! We can't get headsets from the department because they're in use for the mainstage show, so I'm going to get a baby monitor with two receivers—one for outside the door and one for the green room. A dinner theatre I used to work at used this fix, so I'm hoping it works for us!

10/16/12

First dress rehearsal was tonight! The set is *STILL* coming together, but I think everything is at least in process and will be finished by opening...how close to opening remains to be seen. I'm trying not to panic—but I *REALLY* wish I had thought to recruit more crew members over the summer. Our run-crew girl quit today, so it's just Lori, Meghan, and me now. Lori's going to take care of the green room (which is in the house next door), Meghan is going to be outside the building door, and I'll be in the back of the house running the lights.

10/17/12

Tonight we finally had all but one of the props, set pieces, lighting, and sound together. It looked great! The actors had great energy and were really listening to each other, and the pace moved along nicely. I think it was really good for them to have this success tonight to give them a good step into opening night. It's hard to take my hands off and just let them go with it now, but I know it's what I need to do. For that reason, I tried to simply observe tonight and not take a lot of notes. I spend most of the note time letting them talk about how the run went and encouraging them. I feel like they've really come together as a cast, especially over the past week or so, and that's really helped their chemistry a lot.

I asked everyone to tell me if they had close friends or family coming to the show so I could make sure they have a seat, and I felt really bad that everyone had people coming except one person. You could tell this was hard for that person... I wish there were something I could do, but I know there's not. I do want to get the cast a little something for opening, just to make them smile and let them know I appreciate all the hard work they've put into this. Despite my gripes sometimes, they really made my job easy by doing the work and making choices and taking my directions pretty well. It definitely could have been much worse. Now we wait to see how people respond...!

It's amazing how many emotions I've got going on right now. I'm excited, terrified, relieved, and overwhelmed that the opening is almost here. I'm also sad that only one of my thesis committee members is going to be able to make it to the show (Vivian was sick tonight, which was the only night she could make it). I'm hoping we have a good turnout—it's going to be

really obvious if we don't. I hate the loss of control that happens at this point, but I suppose that's something I need to get used to. Here we go!

Chapter 5: Stepping Back

Never before have I been completely responsible for a show from start to finish, and having successfully staged this show has given me such a sense of accomplishment. I know it was comparatively small scale, but just knowing I did this completely changes my perspective on the possibilities I have to create performance art.

Having said that, there are definitely some things I would do differently in the future. To start with, I would absolutely recruit a larger technical crew and have production meetings sooner and more frequently (we had one formal meeting, the rest were just chats with individual crew members). I would also allow myself the freedom to take a little more time with the casting decision. For this show I felt very rushed and uncomfortable during the casting process, and I think that made me awkwardly handle some of the issues that arose. I would also make sure we had props MUCH sooner than dress rehearsals—at least rehearsal props so the actors could get used to handling them on stage. And finally, I would make sure the set is fully ready to go before dress rehearsals start (even if that means building it off-site and transporting it when the space is available).

It was interesting to note what personality traits this experience brought out in me and to reflect on how I handled certain things. The first thing I noticed was that I need to develop a slightly thicker skin when it comes to casting. I think a lot of the awkwardness came from the fact that I knew I'd see everyone in class the next day and that the casting results would be in the air between us. However, there's no guarantee that won't happen in a professional situation, so I need to learn to make the decisions that are right for the show and then stick by them.

While being a control freak can be a good trait in a director, there need to be boundaries to that. During a couple performances, I texted Meghan outside with notes, which looking back I think was completely wrong. I really needed to trust the stage manager and actors to work things out on their own. If I were an actor, I don't think I would appreciate the director giving me a note in the middle of a performance.

Despite all these things, which I view as growing pains in the development of a new director, I was so pleased with the show. The actors really stepped up the challenge and brought a lot of wonderful things to the table, and each crew member worked incredibly hard and took on multiple roles. This showed me how vital it is to have a team mentality when working on a show, and how important it is that everyone contributes to the process.

This journey was one of struggles, excitement, setbacks, teamwork...and rediscovery. This experience helped me see that producing a show for the sheer joy of putting on an entertaining performance—just like that third-grade girl at family gatherings did—is one of the beautiful things performance art is about.

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Appendix

Director's Note (As Printed in Show Program)

From the moment I read this play, I knew I had to direct it. The script's quick wit and well-rounded humor continue to make me laugh each time I read it, and its commentary on the various facets of politics are more poignant now than ever. How serendipitous that my final year of graduate school should fall in an election year!

Because this play deals with issues that are strangely public and private at the same time, I wanted to give the audience a similar experience. To accomplish this, I decided to experiment with "found space," or space not designed as a theatre. I want the audience to feel as though they are flies on the walls of these scenes—out in the open, but at the same time playing the role of voyeur.

It's always a director's challenge to translate the mental pictures one sees while reading the play into something tangible on stage. I have been blessed with a wonderful cast who saw my vision for these characters and were able to so skillfully bring them to life. I've also been privileged to work with a great crew who went above and beyond to fine-tune the look of the show.

I would like to sincerely thank everyone who worked on this project with me or in some way supported me during these past few months. Without such people in my life, I would not be able to accomplish anything. I would also like to thank Vineyard Church of Savannah for allowing us to take over their office for this project.

Special thanks to my husband Adam for being the most amazing man in the universe; without you I would have lost my marbles long ago. And finally, thanks to God for giving me everything and setting me free so I can participate in the creative process.

Enjoy the show,

Ryan Long

Appendix Table 1: Final Budget

Total Kickstarter funds raised: \$1202

<i>EXPENSES</i>	Anticipated	Actual
<i>Anticipated expenses: materials</i>		
Scenic materials	200	202
Props	100	74
Concessions	0	46
Costume materials, rentals, purchases	100	75
Make-up and hair costs	25	0
Tech equipment	0	66
Lighting soft-goods purchases	150	100
Sound equipment rental	0	0
Space rental	0	0
<i>Subtotal materials</i>	<i>575</i>	<i>563</i>
<i>Anticipated expenses: Advertising</i>		
Printed material costs (posters, fliers)	200	117
Kickstarter rewards	0	31
Printed program	50	104
<i>Subtotal advertising</i>	<i>250</i>	<i>252</i>
<i>Other</i>		
Kickstarter fees	0	101
Closing night party	75	23
Script purchases	15	15
Rights/royalty fee and shipping costs	225	225
<i>Subtotal other</i>	<i>315</i>	<i>364</i>
TOTAL EXPENSES	1140	1179
TOTAL GROSS INCOME POTENTIAL	0	0

Appendix Image 1: Show Poster

Inspired by Shepard Fairey

Final Design by Adam Long



Appendix Image 2: Program Cover

Concept by Sawyer Greenberg

Final Design by Adam Long

