

**EMBRACING THE FEMALE THEATRICAL PERSPECTIVE:  
DIRECTING SOPHIE TREADWELL'S *MACHINAL***

Honors Thesis

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### Director's Note

The following is the note that I placed in the program for our production. This is something intended for the audience members to read before the performance of a show. There is specific information about my concept and the history of the play that I believed was important for the audience to know before diving into the play headfirst.

## A Note from the Director...

The story of a woman, written by a woman, and retold by a woman. In a society where patriarchy is still engrained in the fundamental structure of daily life, a statement such as this is infrequently dictated. It brings me great pride to reveal to you that this exact statement represents the production you are about to witness. I am a female director, bringing you the story of a real woman, as a female playwright has written it.

I was first introduced to *Machinal* through two exceptional theatre classes at our university. From the very first lines I read, I knew that this play was something special. I have been completely immersed in the story of Helen Jones and how she, as a character, represents the convicted Ruth Snyder as well as countless women of the 1920s. However, my fascination does not simply end in this decade. What makes this play important to me relates to how the struggles of women in the 1920s are all too similar to the struggles of women in the contemporary era. I encouraged you to embrace the story of our Young Woman and reflect on how her journey compares to that of a modern young woman.

One aspect of Helen's episodic journey that particularly relates to audiences of today involves the influence of media. Note the sound of a vintage printing press constantly clunking or the sound of tapping typewriter keys. Notice newspapers carted around and reporters remarking at any chance. While keeping these images in mind, it is important to know that during the late 1920s the trial of Ruth Snyder and Judd Gray, which is undoubtedly where our play finds its roots, was the most sensationalized media event of its time. To further develop this picture: the *New York Times* ran a story about the trial every day, on the front cover, for three months. Another unbelievable comparison states that there was more media coverage of this trial than there was of the sinking of the Titanic in 1912. I stand back and look at the historical events that helped shape this play and find myself disheartened. Ruth Snyder's humanity was taken away, in part, due to her representation by the media. Helen Jones is also trapped in a machine that strips away her humanity. I cannot help but think that women of today are in this same mechanized trap. One would hope that with time, progress would have been made since the 1920s to dismantle this machine, but if anything it has grown more technologically sound.

But now, to business: I must first thank the Student Theatre Ensemble for granting me the opportunity to direct this play which I hold near and dear to my heart. Infinite thanks go to Professor Peter Sampieri for advising me throughout this process. This production, being my senior honor's thesis project, would be lost if I did not have Peter as my mentor. To the Salem State University Theatre and Speech Communications Department as a whole, a massive thank you is always spoken. Lastly, the most important thank you goes to you, our audience, for without your support of live theatre, where would we all be?

Emily Grove  
Director  
Student Theatre Ensemble Publicist

Script Analysis:  
*Machinal* by Sophie Treadwell

I. **GIVEN CIRCUMSTANCES:**

a. **ENVIRONMENTAL FACTS:**

i. Geographical Location:

1. The setting of our production takes place in the hustle and bustle of 1920s New York City and its surrounding areas. The episodic nature of this play requires us to use multiple different locations throughout the course of the story; however, I find it is the most beneficial for the understanding of the audience to have the same base location in which different places within the base location are explored. Very little specificity is offered as to where precisely these scenes should take place. Based off of the information offered to us in the script, I selected particular locations to help clarify the world of our play.

a. Episode 1: To Business

i. An office. Presumably, any office. For our purposes, we have decided to be more specific with the setting of this scene. The office of a newspaper publishing company fits perfectly.

b. Episode 2: At Home

i. The kitchen of a rundown home. Helen and her mother are unable to afford much because of their small income. Their lives appear to be downtrodden and this should be reflected in the type of home that they live in.

c. Episode 3: Honeymoon

i. A cheap hotel. A motel is far too tacky for George H. Jones, but he is always looking for a bargain. Atlantic City is an option for a specific location. The boardwalk is a popular attraction in Atlantic City and the ocean is easily within reach. A popular vacation destination for the 1920s. Tourists were fond of Atlantic City.

d. Episode 4: Maternal

i. An impeccably clean maternity hospital. Completely disinfected and bleached. Growing population means more babies, which means more space is needed in a hospital. This is why the hospital is under construction. The hospital smells like death and disinfectant. Everything is perfectly white.

e. Episode 5: Prohibited

- i. A sleazy speakeasy. It is crowded and bustling. All sorts of illegal activities occur here. The bar attracts all types and alcohol is by no means in short supply. Music is always playing. People are always dancing. Drinks are always being refilled. There is a sexy atmosphere.
  - f. Episode 6: Intimate
    - i. The ground floor of an apartment complex. A one room apartment. Dirty. Dingy. Romantic, just the same. The apartment of a man who is always on the move. Nothing is fully unpacked. Trinkets from various journeys are littered throughout the room. The windows of the room bring in the most light. Besides the windows as a light source, the rest of the room is rather dark.
  - g. Episode 7: Domestic
    - i. The living room of George H. Jones. Nicely decorated because he can afford it. A telephone is always within reach. No matter what, this is not home for Helen. She cannot help but feel uncomfortable in this place. It feels like a complete trap.
  - h. Episode 8: The Law
    - i. A typical courtroom. It is packed to the brim with people. The lighting is harsh. Helen cannot help but feel boxed in. This is another trap for her. Again, this is an impeccably clean space. Everything is orderly and functioning as perfectly as it should be.
  - i. Episode 9: A Machine
    - i. A void. A jail. Absolutely black. Echoing and scary. This emptiness is the Young Woman's Hell. She is absolutely alone. There is nothing here for her besides an end. Everything in this space is harsh, metallic, and cold. There is no light in this place.
- ii. Date/Season/Time of Day:
  1. Episode 1: To Business
    - a. Early morning. The work day has begun.
  2. Episode 2: At Home
    - a. Evening. Supper time.
  3. Episode 3: Honeymoon
    - a. Late afternoon. A long day of traveling.
  4. Episode 4: Maternal
    - a. Mid-morning. The doctors are making their first round with the patients.

5. Episode 5: Prohibited
    - a. Early evening. Preparing for a night of drinking, dancing, fun, and intimacy.
  6. Episode 6: Intimate
    - a. Evening. Sunset. A romantic time of day.
  7. Episode 7: Domestic
    - a. Nighttime. Just before bed after a full day of work.
  8. Episode 8: The Law
    - a. Morning. Court has just begun one of its many sessions regarding this trial.
  9. Episode 9: A Machine
    - a. Nighttime. The end of the Young Woman's very last day.
- iii. Economic Environment:
1. The only moment in which money seems to be of major importance in this play is during Episode 1 and 2. The Young Woman expresses concern about money during her monologue in the first scene. The mother builds upon this concern in the second scene when she says, "Does he know you've got a mother to support?" (Treadwell 17). The Young Woman and her mother are not financially stable without the office job that Helen works. Once Helen marries George H. Jones, all money problems subside. It is later mentioned in Episode 7 that the mother receives a monthly allowance from the couple.
- iv. Political Environment:
1. Politics never really come into play within this show. The only moment where anything political comes to light is the idea of the death penalty. Clearly this is a world where the death penalty is an accepted and expected form of punishment.
- v. Social Environment:
1. Episode 1: To Business
    - a. The Young Woman is the outsider. All of the girls in the office talk about her and gossip incessantly. She is not a part of the group. Part of this is because George H. Jones has selected Helen as his object of affection. There is a sense of jealousy that is always present when the girls talk to or about Helen.
  2. Episode 2: At Home
    - a. The home environment for Helen is toxic. Her mother nags her constantly. The Mother demands that she be in the highest position of status in the home, but this is only because she is the oldest. Helen works and provides for the family, in a way, she should be the one who has the highest status in the house because she finances it. But, Helen is the daughter and this means she can be pushed around by her mother. This environment echoes the idea that "Mother knows best."

3. Episode 3: Honeymoon
  - a. George H. Jones tries to force Helen to be the typical prototype of a wife. He embraces the idea of newlywed's bliss, but Helen immediately rejects it. She runs away from her new husband at any chance. She is perfectly content to act like she did when she was a single woman. Helen is not able to be the wife that George H. Jones believes he deserves, but he still tries to force her into behaving the way a proper wife should behave.
4. Episode 4: Maternal
  - a. During this unit of the play, Helen is just a part of the assembly line. The Doctor and the Nurse have no real emotion towards her. The vibe is given off that they just want to make sure they can get her out of the hospital so that they can get a new patient in the bed. She is a nobody to them. Everything is strictly professional. The only relationship that Helen experiences is with George H. Jones when he comes to visit her. He gives her a pep talk. He tries to encourage her to get better and says that "having a baby's natural! Perfectly natural thing –" (Treadwell 28). We cannot help but get the feeling that there is no true connection between these two people. George H. Jones is talking at the Young Woman, he never really speaks to her. Socially, this relationship is uncomfortable to witness.
5. Episode 5: Prohibited
  - a. There is a lower class environment in the speakeasy. There are criminals and crooks lurking everywhere. Illicit activities could take place at any time. The location is low on the food chain. However, everybody has a good time and enjoys themselves here. Although there are illegal happenings all around, there is a lighthearted carefree spirit around.
6. Episode 6: Intimate
  - a. This relationship is certainly taboo. Affairs are universally frowned upon. This situation is unique, however, because the relationship between the Lover and Helen is the most romantic experience within the whole play. Socially, we begin to question if it is more immoral to remain with somebody who treats you badly and whom you do not love, than to have an affair with someone who loves and cares for you.
7. Episode 7: Domestic
  - a. The environment of this scene is by rote. The Young Woman has embodied the type of wife that George H. Jones believes he wants, but she is not very good at it.

The couple attempts to play house in the best way they can, but there is no love in this room and it is absolutely clear.

8. Episode 8: The Law

- a. This courtroom is the most formal environment of the play. Everybody has their job and everybody knows how to do their job. The atmosphere of this environment is very professional, but there are moments where this decorum is broken and professionalism goes out the window. This happens particularly when the goals of the lawyers are respectively threatened. Whenever this occurs, the Judge reigns supreme and reels everybody back in.

9. Episode 9: A Machine

- a. This environment is the ultimate machine. If everybody knew their rightful place in the courtroom, this sensation is absolutely heightened within this scene. All of the characters know their purpose and they feel no emotion in regards to what their job requires. They do not care who the Young Woman is. Similar to the experience in the hospital, Helen is a nobody here. She is simply next on the list.

vi. Religious Environment:

1. There are only two scenes in this play where religion truly comes into play. First, we encounter the Lover telling Helen that he thinks she looks like an angel in Episode 5. Immediately in the next scene, the pair continue the conversation about angels. Helen says that the reason she came back to the Lover's apartment is "Because you told me I looked like an angel to you!" (Treadwell 48). This is a moment where it seems Helen finds comfort in a religious symbol. She feels special. The most potent moment of religion occurs during the final scene of the play. In Episode 9 we experience the Priest. The Priest, although comforting as a symbol, is not all that he is cracked up to be. This Priest is corrupt. He is going through the motions. He recites prayer upon prayer because it is his job. It is his place in the machine. The Young Woman has no faith in religion by the end of the play. The Priest tells Helen, "You didn't seek Him, daughter. Seek and ye shall find" (80). The Young Woman responds by saying, "I sought something – I was always seeking something." The Young Woman was always searching for religion, hope, or faith of some sort, but it was never available to her.

b. PREVIOUS ACTION:

- i. Episode 1: To Business

1. The moment before this scene takes place, the Young Woman has been stuck in the subway. She is running late for work, like she usually does. We can infer this based off of the commentary that the office girls make during this scene, such as when the Stenographer says, "Same thing yesterday. And the day before." Also, they are hard at work when the Young Woman finally arrives at the office. She struggles with arriving at work on time. She mentions later in the scene that she thought she was going to faint and that she was overwhelmed by "all those bodies pressing" on the subway (Treadwell 6).
- ii. Episode 2: At Home
  1. This is one of the only scenes in the play that seems to happen in a close relationship to the previous episode. The Mother has been making dinner before the scene begins and starts serving potatoes and stew as the scene starts. Based off of the conversation that occurs within this scene about the marriage proposal of George H. Jones. The Young Woman states, "There's a man wants to marry me" (Treadwell 15). The Young Woman begins to grapple with the ideas we heard in her Episode 1 monologue. These factors lead me to believe that this is a conversation occurring during the evening, after the Young Woman's day at work.
- iii. Episode 3: Honeymoon
  1. This is the first major jump in time that we experience within the play. The title of this scene is "Honeymoon." From this alone, we can infer that this scene takes place in close proximity to the actual marriage of George H. Jones and the Young Woman. George H. Jones states that "it was a long trip" (Treadwell 22). Before we arrive at this scene, the couple has been traveling all day to get to their honeymoon destination.
- iv. Episode 4: Maternal
  1. Another jump in time is experienced leading up to this scene. The Young Woman has just had a "sweet baby [...] girl," according to the Nurse from "the biggest Maternity Hospital in the world" (Treadwell 27). Seeing as the Young Woman has just had a baby, a timeframe can be placed around this scene. It has to occur at least nine months after the honeymoon in Episode 3. The Young Woman "is a little weak yet" (29). She begins the scene barely able to speak or move. She has become incapacitated since the birth of her baby, and that is how this scene begins.
- v. Episode 5: Prohibited
  1. Now that the previous scenes have established jumps in time, we continue to experience this phenomenon throughout the rest of the play. For this particular scene, we are unable to pinpoint exactly what sort of time frame we are dealing with.

Based off of the Young Woman's newfound energy and desire to dance, it seems as though a decent span of time has passed since the birth of the baby (Treadwell 36). The Young Woman has met up with the Telephone Girl before the two ladies arrive in the scene together. The Second Man remarks, "Nothin's eatin' me – thought somethin' musta swallowed you" (34). The girls have kept their dates waiting for a long time. Perhaps they were getting ready together before they left to go to the speakeasy.

vi. Episode 6: Intimate

1. This is another scene that takes place rather immediately after the previous scene. The Man, or Lover, and the Young Woman have since left the speakeasy and have arrived at the "one room apartment" (Treadwell 44). Judging by the title of this scene, "Intimate," the couple must have just had sex before the actions of this scene begins. The Young Woman says, "I never knew anything like this way! I never knew that I could feel like this! So, -- so purified!" (51). From this statement, it becomes clear that the Young Woman and the Lover have been just been intimate together in a way that she could never have experienced with her husband.

vii. Episode 7: Domestic

1. Later on, in Episode 8, the affidavit is read saying, "from the first day we met until I departed in the Fall, the said Helen Jones was an almost daily visitor to my room" (Treadwell 75). This indicates a jump of presumably a few months since the previous scene when considering the first layer of this time frame. An additional fact states that George H. Jones was murdered either "on the night of June 2<sup>nd</sup> or the morning of June 3<sup>rd</sup> last" (64). Here we see the second layer of the time frame. A good, but rough, estimate of time from between Episode 6 and Episode 7 would be about a year. The Young Woman presumably kills her husband by the end of Episode 7. Based on the timeframe that the lawyers give us, this scene would be occurring on the night of June 2<sup>nd</sup>. George H. Jones also states in the scene "it's only ten-forty-six" (57). It must be nighttime. George H. Jones is also taking many work related phone calls. Based off of this selected information, and others, the previous action of this scene includes the Husband's return from the office after a long work day. The monotony of the opening moment of this scene also indicates that the couple has been sitting and reading the newspaper for quite a while before the scene begins. They are continuing to partake in a daily routine.

viii. Episode 8: The Law

1. At the top of this scene, when asked where the Young Woman lives, she responds by saying, “in prison” (Treadwell 61). Clearly this is where the Young Woman was before the scene begins. This is logical because she is on trial for murder. There is no way she would be living comfortably at home under this circumstance. Also, drawing from general knowledge of legal proceedings, we can assume that the Young Woman and her Lawyer for Defense have been clarifying the line of questioning that she will be experiencing while on the stand. We see that this is true because the way in which these two speak to one another appears very rehearsed before the jury. Lastly, within the court the act of murder is said to have been “on the night of June 2<sup>nd</sup> or the morning of June 3<sup>rd</sup> last” (64). “Last” is a key word in this instance because it indicates a length of time passing since the event of the murder.
- ix. Episode 9: A Machine
1. It is not clear how much time has passed since the Young Woman was convicted of murder compared to the beginning of this scene. The only indication that an extended period of time has been experienced is the fact that the Young Woman refers to her Mother as a “stranger” (Treadwell 81). It is possible that the Young Woman has been behind bars for so long that she barely remembers the people from the outside world. Before the action of this scene takes place, we can infer that the Young Woman has been isolated in her jail cell.
- c. POLAR ATTITUDES:
- i. *How do I feel about my world?*
    1. Episode 1: To Business
      - a. The Young Woman feels the need to escape. She wants to “get out [...] In the air!” (Treadwell 6). She feels confined and claustrophobic. She says that she feels “like [she’s] dying.” The Young Woman feels like the walls are caving in around her.
    2. Episode 2: At Home
      - a. The Young Woman’s fear and stresses about the world become clear again in this scene. Helen says, “I’m all tight inside” and “sometimes I feel like I’m stifling” (Treadwell 19). Helen still feels stuck and utterly trapped.
    3. Episode 3: Honeymoon
      - a. The Young Woman feels trapped, yet again. She has no choice but to allow George H. Jones to treat her like a typical newlywed because it is what is expected. Although Helen tries to avoid this sort of behavior, it becomes clear that it is unavoidable and that she is powerless against this social norm.

4. Episode 4: Maternal
  - a. Helen wants free, fresh air. However, she is surrounded by incessant noise. The machine is constantly chugging around her. Every piece of the machine continues to move and yet she remains stuck. She is like an animal in a cage while she is in this hospital.
5. Episode 5: Prohibited
  - a. This world is new for Helen. She does not know what to expect. But, there is a sense of danger here that is intriguing. Helen cannot help but be drawn in by this new world. There is finally a sense of hope present in Helen's eyes. The Lover particularly contributes to this newfound desire by calling her "an angel" (Treadwell 43).
6. Episode 6: Intimate
  - a. Helen has a new sense of adventure. The Lover has made her feel like she never has before. She wants freedom even more than she ever had before. She wants to explore the world. Helen really wants to see the world with the Lover. She says, "We're going to stick together – always – aren't we?" (Treadwell 48). Helen is ready to leave the world as she knows it behind her.
7. Episode 7: Domestic
  - a. After riding on a high with the Lover, Helen is thrust back into reality when we see her with George H. Jones in this scene. Helen needs escape from this world more than ever. Now that Helen has seen what the world can be and all the possibilities that it holds, there is no turning back. The world is tormenting her. Helen exclaims, "I can't sleep – I haven't slept" (Treadwell 57).
8. Episode 8: The Law
  - a. This scene gives us a strong sense of how this mechanized world is holding Helen back. No matter what she says, or how she says it, her words are being twisted and used against her. Nothing she says can help her case. The world is pressing down on her until she finally explodes and cries "I did it! I did it! I did it!" (Treadwell 75). She cannot take the constant pressure and words being tossed at her like grenades. Helen cracks because of the pressure of the world upon her.
9. Episode 9: A Machine
  - a. By the end of the play the Young Woman feels betrayed by the world around her. She feels as though her humanity has been taken away by this world. She cries, "Submit! Submit! Is nothing mine? The hair on my head! The very hair on my head –" (Treadwell 79). The Young

Woman feels victim to the machine-like world around her.

ii. *How do I feel about my relationships?*

1. Episode 1: To Business

- a. In her monologue, the Young Woman compares and contrasts a world where she is married to George H. Jones and a world where she refuses to marry him. She feels stuck between these two options. She feels as though she must marry George H. Jones because of money (Treadwell 11). The Young Woman clearly does not fit in with the rest of the office girls based off of the way that they gossip about her (7). The Young Woman does not belong, and yet she is trapped within this feeling of isolation.

2. Episode 2: At Home

- a. Helen exclaims, "Ma! Don't nag!" towards the very beginning of this scene (Treadwell 15). This harsh exclamation sums up how Helen feels about her mother. She feels pressured by her at all times. When it comes to her relationship with George H. Jones, Helen feels pressure again. She feels like she has to marry him because all women have to get married. The Young Woman feels forced.

3. Episode 3: Honeymoon

- a. Helen clearly misses her mother judging by how she calls out for her during the last lines of this scene. When it comes to George H. Jones, the main relationship focused on in the scene, Helen wants to escape. She constantly dodges conversation and tries to change the topic. Every time her husband tries to touch her she moves away.

4. Episode 4: Maternal

- a. During the interaction with George H. Jones in the hospital, Helen immediately starts gagging. She cannot stand to be anywhere near him. He is forceful and uncaring. He pressures her and stifles her. She will do anything to get away from him. He even says, "She's got that gagging again – like she had the last time I was here" (Treadwell 28). This happens all the time for the Young Woman.

5. Episode 5: Prohibited

- a. Helen feels curious about her new relationship with the new man in the bar, her Lover. She asks him countless questions about his life. When it is revealed that he killed a man, she is more intrigued than frightened. She wants to know more. She asks questions like, "Why did

you?” (Treadwell 39). When the Lover responds, “To get free.” We begin to see a commonality between the two characters and a new relationship begin to blossom. Helen feels like she has newfound partner in this world.

6. Episode 6: Intimate

- a. Helen adores the Lover. She says, after singing to him, “It’s you and me [...] You’re the dish and I’m the spoon. (Treadwell 47). They are a pair. She has never been as free as she has been in this moment with him. She cherishes this relationship, which is why she takes the lily as a memento.

7. Episode 7: Domestic

- a. There is a boiling rage inside Helen when it comes to her relationship with George H. Jones at this point in the play. Now that she knows what love can and should be, she cannot stand to be anywhere near her husband. Everything he does is irritating and degrading. Helen cannot bear it. She experiences a moment of gagging again. She says, “I feel as though I were drowning” (Treadwell 56). This relationship is drowning her. She is not made to fit into the typical relationship in this mechanical world. That is why she finds herself in the position of murdering her husband.

8. Episode 8: The Law

- a. Helen feels betrayed by the Lover. That is the overwhelming relationship point within this scene. She killed her husband because of the inspiration that the Lover offered her. When she finds out that he is the one that has sealed her sentence, it is unbearable. After the affidavit is read Helen cries, “Don’t read any more No more!” (Treadwell 75). She is groaning in pain. This betrayal hurts her deeply because she felt so deeply with this man.

9. Episode 9: A Machine

- a. The Young Woman refers to her Mother as a “stranger” (Treadwell 81). The relationship between these two women has disintegrated. She feels as if the Mother has never really known her. When it comes to her relationship with God, the Young Woman states, “How could I know Him, Father? He was never around me” (80). The Young Woman is telling the Priest that God has always abandoned her. The Young Woman mentions her “sin of love” in reference to the Lover in Episode 6. Although this man betrayed her by giving up the information in regards to their relationship, the Young Woman still feels as though she was only ever

free because of that relationship. The Young Woman also experiences as relationship with the Negro Singer in the background of this scene. She says, "In understand him. He is condemned. I understand him" (78). This small and seemingly insignificant relationship is actually the only real feeling of hope and affection that the Young Woman can grasp. However, by the time the Young Woman speaks her final words in the electric chair, "Somebody! Somebod -," it becomes clear that she is always seeking somebody to understand her. She never is able to obtain this.

iii. *How do I feel about myself?*

1. Episode 1: To Business

- a. The Young Woman says, "My machine's out of order" (Treadwell 9). Although this may be true about her actual working environment, this is another why of saying that the Young Woman herself is out of order. The Young Woman feels broken.

2. Episode 2: At Home

- a. This scene is intriguing because this is when Helen admits that she feels unstable. She says, "Maybe I am crazy - I don't know. Sometimes I think I am - the thoughts that go on in my mind - sometimes I think I am - I can't help it if I am" (Treadwell 19). Helen is so overwhelmed by her environment that she is beginning to feel mentally disturbed.

3. Episode 3: Honeymoon

- a. This is another moment of the Young Woman feeling trapped and stifled. She keeps referencing the outside world and wanting to be out in the fresh air. Helen also feels embarrassed and afraid. She does not want to find herself in an intimate situation with George H. Jones. Her husband says, "I understand - kind of modest - huh? Huh?" (Treadwell 25). Helen agrees. She does not want to undress in front of him. She feels nervous and shy.

4. Episode 4: Maternal

- a. Helen is essentially comatose in this scene. There is a void, and yet she is a sponge. Helen has been absorbing every word that has been said the entire time she was in the hospital. That is why she monologues in the way that she does. Her thoughts and concerns have been piling up in her head the entire time. She needs a release. Helen feels pressured and trapped. She is, again, an animal in a cage.

5. Episode 5: Prohibited

- a. Helen feels uncomfortable with herself. She is unfamiliar with this situation and that shows. She rarely contributes to the groups conversation, but desperately wants to be a part of it. She chimes in whenever she can. She hopes and prays that she can fit in. She finds that she does fit in, with the Lover.
  - 6. Episode 6: Intimate
    - a. Helen says so herself, she feels “purified” (Treadwell 51). After her experience with the Lover she is new. She is not the same woman that she was before. She has reached a turning point and has embraced new feelings of hope.
  - 7. Episode 7: Domestic
    - a. Helen is frustrated. She is stuck. She is making herself sick living this life with George H. Jones. She feels desperate and willing to do anything. Again, she feels enough pressure to make her start gagging. She needs to break free and will take any risk possible to do it.
  - 8. Episode 8: The Law
    - a. Helen feels robotic in this part of the play. She is a marionette. She says what she is supposed to say. But she also feels cornered. She is guilty, but she does not feel that way. She feels right for killing her husband because it made her free.
  - 9. Episode 9: A Machine
    - a. The Young Woman feels void of herself. When her hair is cut she expresses that nothing can truly belong to her. Although she is forced to submit to the powers that be, the Young Woman remains strong. She says, “I will not be submitted – this indignity!” (Treadwell 79). But soon realizes, “I’m going to die.” The Young Woman has lost all faith and hope. She has lost herself.
- iv. *How do I feel about my prospects?*
- 1. Episode 1: To Business
    - a. This scene is full of indecision for Helen. Her final monologue is a constant back and forth. She is weighing the pros and cons of marrying George H. Jones. In the end Helen calls out, “Tell me, ma – something – somebody” (Treadwell 12). She is unsure of what her final decision should be. She is calling out for help. She is lost.
  - 2. Episode 2: At Home
    - a. By the end of this scene, Helen seems accepting of her chosen fate to marry George H. Jones. She says, “It’s my hands got me a husband” (Treadwell 20). When the Mother expresses shock about this sudden choice, Helen

simply says, "I suppose so." It makes us wonder whether or not Helen has given up on love at this point in the play.

3. Episode 3: Honeymoon
  - a. This scene finishes off with Helen crying for her mother. This comments on Helen's seeming desire to reverse time. She wishes she had rejected the proposal and never married George H. Jones. Helen is hopeless about her prospects.
4. Episode 4: Maternal
  - a. The Young Woman feels as if "it doesn't matter" (Treadwell 30). Helen feels no sense of hope for her future. The images she references in her monologue talk about puppies drowning. She is desperate. Is she potentially considering drowning her baby as if she were drowning the runt of the litter? Helen cannot see a future for herself.
5. Episode 5: Prohibited
  - a. This is when Helen begins to see the light. She sees hope because of the Lover. She especially sees freedom. He is everything she has ever dreamed of. He is her escape. Helen believes that she can escape the machine because of this new man.
6. Episode 6: Intimate
  - a. The start of Helen's newfound hope carries over into this scene. She feels potential freedom so clearly. It is within her grasp. She dreams of a new future. She asks if she can "ride mountains" with the Lover (Treadwell 51). He tells her, "Who knows?" Although the future is not set in stone. Helen can now look forward and see something new.
7. Episode 7: Domestic
  - a. Helen is more determined than ever to get what she wants: freedom. Nothing can stop her. Everything she reads in the newspapers reminds her that she can escape. She takes inspiration from her new love and uses it to rid herself of George H. Jones. Freedom is reachable for Helen now. At least, this is what she deeply believes.
8. Episode 8: The Law
  - a. Once Helen admits her guilt, there is a strange sense of hope when she admits that she killed her husband "to be free" (Treadwell 75). Maybe if she admits this dream everything will be all right. But, this cannot be so. As the courtroom adjourns, there is no way that Helen's fate can be anything but a lack of freedom.

## 9. Episode 9: A Machine

- a. The Young Woman is resistant when it comes to her fate, but as more and more layers of her strip away she comes to see that her fate is sealed. This realization begins when she says, "I'm going to die" (Treadwell 79).

II. **DIALOGUE:**a. **CHOICE OF WORDS:**

- i. Episode 1: To Business
  1. Air, Machine, Somebody, Hand, Love, Rest
- ii. Episode 2: At Home
  1. Hands, Love, Somebody, Kill, Rest
- iii. Episode 3: Honeymoon
  1. Air, Somebody
- iv. Episode 4: Maternal
  1. Love, Rest, Submit, Hands
- v. Episode 5: Prohibited
  1. Love, Kill, Free, Hand
- vi. Episode 6: Intimate
  1. Hands, Love, Free
- vii. Episode 7: Domestic
  1. Love, Free, Air
- viii. Episode 8: The Law
  1. Kill, Somebody, Hands, Free
- ix. Episode 9: A Machine
  1. Submit, Free, Love, Rest, Machine, Somebody

b. **CHOICES OF PHRASES:**

- i. Episode 1: To Business
  1. "My machine's out of order" (Treadwell 9)
- ii. Episode 2: At Home
  1. "When he puts a hand on me, my blood turns cold. But your blood oughtn't to run cold, ought it?" (Treadwell 18)
- iii. Episode 3: Honeymoon
  1. "You look a little white around the gills!" (Treadwell 22)
- iv. Episode 4: Maternal
  1. "I smell everything then" (Treadwell 28)
  2. "Start the up-hill climb!" (28)
  3. "Vixen crawled under bed" (30)
- v. Episode 5: Prohibited
  1. "I filled an empty bottle with small stones" (Treadwell 40)
- vi. Episode 6: Intimate
  1. "Quien sabe?" (Treadwell 49)
- vii. Episode 7: Domestic
  1. "Girl turns on gas" (Treadwell 53)
  2. "Woman leaves all for love -" (53)
  3. "Young wife disappears -" (53)

4. "Prisoner escapes – lifer breaks jail – shoots way to freedom –" (55)
  5. "Sale of jewels and precious stones" (56)
  6. "Woman finds husband dead" (57)
  7. "Another revolution below the Rio Grande" (58)
- viii. Episode 8: The Law
1. "Brutally hitting him over the head with a bottle – a bottle filled with small stones" (Treadwell 64)
  2. "Two big dark looking men standing beside your bed" (65)
  3. "This neck and these broken pieces and these pebbles were found on the floor and scattered over the bed" (69)
  4. "brutal and cold-blooded murder of a sleeping man" (74)
  5. "To be free" (75)
- ix. Episode 9: A Machine
- c. CHOICES OF IMAGES:
- i. Episode 1: To Business
    1. "Halitosis" (Treadwell 2)
    2. "Bodies pressing" (6)
    3. "Fat hands – Flabby hands" (11)
    4. "Little curls all over its head" (11)
    5. "Pressing – bodies pressing – bodies – trembling" (11)
  - ii. Episode 2: At Home
    1. "Mealy" (Treadwell 14)
    2. "Living in filth" (14)
    3. "Your skin oughtn't to curl" (18)
    4. "Wavy hair" (15)
    5. "Children with curls" (15)
    6. "I'm all tight inside" (15)
    7. "Stifling" (15)
  - iii. Episode 3: Honeymoon
    1. "Ocean" (Treadwell 22)
    2. "People – dancing" (22)
    3. "Boardwalk" (22)
    4. "French underwear" (25)
    5. "Swiss watch" (25)
  - iv. Episode 4: Maternal
    1. "Sweet baby" (Treadwell 27)
    2. "Gagging" (29)
    3. "Nausea" (29)
    4. "Puppies" (30)
    5. "Long golden stairs" (30)
    6. "Heavy book" (30)
    7. "A little bald girl" (30)
  - v. Episode 5: Prohibited
    1. "Heaven" (Treadwell 33)
    2. "Sunshine and orange groves" (33)

3. "Mediterranean and blue moonlight" (33)
4. "Mexico" (39)
5. "Tango" (39)
6. "Pebbles" (41)
7. "Sledge hammer" (41)
8. "Knife" (41)
9. "Angel" (43)
10. "One room apartment" (44)
- vi. Episode 6: Intimate
  1. "Pink sea shell" (Treadwell 45)
  2. "Little pig" (46)
  3. "Little Heaven" (46)
  4. "High dark mountains" (46)
  5. "Angels" (47)
  6. "Waves" (48)
  7. "Indians" (48)
  8. "Rio Grande" (49)
  9. "Street light going on" (49)
  10. "Full moon" (50)
  11. "Bay and the hills" (50)
  12. "Old blanket" (50)
  13. "Tar weed" (50)
  14. "Ride mountains? Ride donkeys!" (51)
- vii. Episode 7: Domestic
  1. "Flinched" (Treadwell 54)
  2. "Purity" (54)
  3. "Moon" (55)
  4. "Precious jewels" (56)
  5. "Drowning" (56)
  6. "Stones around my neck" (56)
  7. "No breath" (56)
  8. "Cold air" (57)
  9. "Swiss Watch" (58)
  10. "Prisoners" (58)
  11. "Precious stones" (59)
  12. "Head stones" (59)
- viii. Episode 8: The Law
  1. "Swept off its feet" (Treadwell 61)
  2. "Carried to the witness stand" (61)
  3. "Prison" (61)
  4. "A little girl of past five" (63)
  5. "Police" (64)
  6. "My husband's bed" (65)
  7. "Big dark looking men" (65)
  8. "Struck Mr. Jones over the head with it" (65)
  9. "Groan" (66)

10. "Bleeding" (66)
11. "Rambling, disconnected" (66)
12. "Bright moon" (68)
13. "Bleeding from the temple" (68)
14. "Rubber gloves" (69)
15. "Soften your hands" (69)
16. "Spattered" (71)
17. "Sharp edge cut" (71)
18. "Wash that blood away" (71)
19. "Chinese water lily" (72)
20. "Heavy artillery fire" (73)
21. "Machine-gun attack" (73)
22. "Rapid-fire questioning" (73)
23. "Speak-easy" (75)
24. "Intimate relations" (75)

ix. Episode 9: A Machine

d. SOUND OF DIALOGUE:

- i. The sound of the dialogue throughout this play is very sharp and cutting. It is rare that sentences flow off the tongue like water. The only instance in which this is true is during Episode 6 between the Lover and the Young Woman. This scene contains the most naturalistic dialogue in the play because this is when the Young Woman feels the most at ease. The Young Woman feels the most like herself. It is slow paced and lustful during Episode 6. This is completely different compared to the rest of the play, which is outstandingly metallic sounding. The rest of the play runs as if by machinery and this is completely purposeful. The world of this play is a well-oiled machine. The clearest example of this type of dialogue is during Episode 1 of the play. The office girls are all doing their jobs perfectly. They are an assembly line of sound. They perform a relay race by picking up the ends of others sentences as well as sharply cutting one another off. The images that I lend to this juxtaposition of sound are sandpaper and silk, steel and silk, and fire and water.

e. SYNTAX AND STRUCTURE:

- i. The syntax of this play is extremely broken up. Sentences are broken up into chunks of thought. Sometimes the sentence structure of the Young Woman lends me to the image of her short-circuiting. Some of her monologues remind me of a box of puzzle pieces and she is trying to quickly place the puzzle back together. The dialogue being broken up into pieces leads us to feel as though the characters are robotic. The dialogue, although choppy, strangely flows. It is as if you are on a bumpy rollercoaster.

III. DRAMATIC ACTION:

a. TITLES OF UNITS:

- i. Episode 1: To Business
  1. "Hello, hello!"

- a. "To Worry"
  - b. "To Flirt"
  - c. "To Criticize"
2. "Introducing, Mr. Jones"
  - a. "To Manage"
3. "Late, as Always"
  - a. "To Chastise"
  - b. "To Tease"
4. "Gossip Girls"
  - a. "To Amuse"
5. "How about a Date?"
6. "Out of Order"
  - a. "To Entice"
7. "Hands"
8. "No Choice"
9. "The Pros & Cons"
  - a. "To Reason"
  - b. "To Press"
  - c. "To Release"
  - d. "To Panic"
- ii. Episode 2: At Home
  1. "Supper Time"
    - a. "To Break"
    - b. "To Teach"
    - c. "To Nag"
  2. "Growing Up"
  3. "Adult"
  4. "Sneaking Out"
  5. "All Women"
  6. "Cheating"
  7. "Not in Love"
    - a. "To Beg"
  8. "Forceful"
  9. "Claustrophobia"
    - a. "To Confide"
    - b. "To Dream"
    - c. "To Simplify"
    - d. "To Stress"
    - e. "To Threaten"
    - f. "To Accuse"
  10. "Apologies & Decisions"
    - a. "To Judge"
- iii. Episode 3: Honeymoon
  1. "Pleasure Resorts"
    - a. "To Enchant"
    - b. "To Encourage"

2. "An Escape is Beyond"
    - a. "To Grab"
  3. "Storytime"
    - a. "To Coax"
    - b. "To Challenge"
  4. "Cat & Mouse"
    - a. "To Surprise"
  5. "Caught"
- iv. Episode 4: Maternal
1. "Hello, Nurse"
  2. "Two-Faced"
    - a. "To Cover"
  3. "Perfect Prescription"
    - a. "To Dodge"
    - b. "To Diagnose"
  4. "Trapped in a Cage"
    - a. "To Escape"
    - b. "To Hypnotize"
    - c. "To Repel"
    - d. "To Engross"
    - e. "To Affirm"
    - f. "To Boost"
    - g. "To Expel"
    - h. "To Reason"
    - i. "To Press"
    - j. "To Grasp"
    - k. "To Banish"
- v. Episode 5: Prohibited
1. "Gentlemen"
  2. "Pick-Up Lines"
  3. "A Visit to the Doctor"
  4. "Help out a Friend"
  5. "Double Dating"
    - a. "To Engage"
    - b. "To Play"
    - c. "To Distract"
    - d. "To Celebrate"
    - e. "To Evacuate"
    - f. "To Bluff"
    - g. "To Embrace"
  6. "Most Women"
  7. "Illegal Activity"
    - a. "To Lure"
  8. "Poetry"
  9. "Common Goals"
  10. "Risky Decisions"

11. "Murder Weapons"
12. "Hooked"
13. "Sweet-Talkers & Angels"
  - a. "To Satisfy"
14. "One Night Stand"
- vi. Episode 6: Intimate
  1. "Sharing Cigarettes"
  2. "A Duet"
    - a. "To Tickle"
    - b. "To Amaze"
    - c. "To Entertain"
    - d. "To Validate"
    - e. "To Dream"
  3. "Reality"
  4. "Dreams & Adventures"
    - a. "To Tempt"
    - b. "To Adore"
    - c. "To Promise"
- vii. Episode 7: Domestic
  1. "Monotony"
    - a. "To Sell"
    - b. "To Placate"
  2. "Guilt"
    - a. "To Boast"
    - b. "To Deny"
    - c. "To Revel"
    - d. "To Denounce"
  3. "Under Water"
  4. "A Need to Escape"
    - a. "To Shove"
    - b. "To Escape"
    - c. "To Hope"
  5. "Head Rush"
- viii. Episode 8: The Law
  1. "A Court of Law"
  2. "Entering the Trap"
    - a. "To Intrigue"
    - b. "To Determine"
    - c. "To Disbelieve"
  3. "A Perfect Script"
    - a. "To Endear"
    - b. "To Sooth"
    - c. "To Enlighten"
    - d. "To Cover"
    - e. "To Taunt"
    - f. "To Dramatize"

- g. "To Recover"
- h. "To Prompt"
- i. "To Twist"
- 4. "Lack of Clarity"
  - a. "To Frame"
- 5. "Firing Range"
  - a. "To Stir"
  - b. "To Mortify"
  - c. "To Taunt"
  - d. "To Ensnare"
  - e. "To Amplify"
- 6. "Fate is Sealed"
  - a. "To Battle"
  - b. "To Melt"
- 7. "Freedom"
  - a. "To Dismiss"
  - b. "To Boost"
- ix. Episode 9: A Machine
  - 1. "Unholy"
  - 2. "Understanding"
  - 3. "Loss of Femininity"
  - 4. "Loss of Faith"
  - 5. "Unachievable Flight"
    - a. "To Summon"
  - 6. "No Time"
    - a. "To Cut"
  - 7. "Stripped by the Machine"
    - a. "To Wonder"
    - b. "To Pull"
    - c. "To Marvel"
    - d. "To Drag"
    - e. "To Worry"
    - f. "To Invoke"
    - g. "To Understand"
    - h. "To Beg"
    - i. "To Draw"
    - j. "To Demand"
    - k. "To Invoke"
    - l. "To Cry"
    - m. "To Plead"

IV. **CHARACTERS:**

- a. **DESIRES:** The Young Woman desires rest, peace, and freedom from the machine that controls every aspect of her life.
- b. **WILL:** The Young Woman will do anything to escape this world, including partaking in an affair and eventually murdering her husband.

- c. MORAL STANCE: The Young Woman's sense of right and wrong is muddled when it comes to achieving freedom. However, she understands the idea of justness. She believes that what the world has done to her is unfair. She understands the importance of love and will do anything to love and be loved.
- d. DECORUM: The Young Woman is introverted. She has nervous habits with her hands and her hair. She does not like to be seen and would rather disappear. She feels small.
- e. LIST OF ADJECTIVES: Original, nervous, twitchy, wide-eyed, small, quiet, strange.

V. IDEAS:

a. MEANING OF TITLE:

- i. *Machinal* is a riff off of the French word for "machine." The title sounds feminine, relating to the female protagonist that we follow throughout the course of the play. The harsh, machine meaning of the title comments on the machine-like world that this story exists within.

b. PHILOSOPHICAL STATEMENTS:

- i. "Am I never to be let alone! Never to have peace! When I'm dead, won't I have peace?" (79)
- ii. "A man flying! He has wings! But he is not an angel! [...] He has wings but he isn't free! I've been free, Father! For one moment – down here on earth – I have been free! When I did what I did I was free! Free and not afraid! How is that, Father? How can that be? A great sin – a moral sin – for which I must die and go to hell – but it made me free! One moment I was free!" (80).

c. OUTCOME OF CHARACTER'S STRUGGLE:

- i. The Young Woman spends her entire journey trying to fit into a machine of which she is not a part. Helen is inherently different from all of the other characters in the play. She was not made for this world. As much as she may try to fit into this machine, she is a piece of it that was never made to fit. Helen tries to appeal to the mechanized society that surrounds her. She gets a typical office job where she is unable to properly function. She marries George H. Jones in the hope that she will find rest and peace now that she no longer will have to worry about money. Marriage is a piece of the puzzle that she must embrace. With marriage comes babies, and Helen is forced to have a child with George H. Jones because it is what women are supposed to do. Helen is tossed and turned and thrown throughout this machine like a stone stuck within the cogs. She finds herself making drastic decisions all in the name of freedom, but in the end, the decision she makes to kill her husband just solidifies her fate. Although death might be viewed as the ultimate freedom from this world, it is not freedom for Helen. At the very end, a physical machine removes every ounce of humanity and individuality that Helen possesses. If the goal was to escape the machine, and a machine is the entity which brings freedom, then freedom was never to be found and never will be found.

## Process Logs

The following section of this portfolio contains journal-type entries that detail the rehearsal process of *Machinal*. The time span of these entries begins with the audition process through to the days leading up to opening night. Here I will discuss some of the challenges I faced while working on this play, but also some of the joys that I experienced. I will also discuss what I learned from each particular experience.

## Auditions, Callbacks, and Casting

The audition process for this show was unique compared to the way our theatre department typically auditions for shows. The department will typically host two evenings of auditions and will then hold a third evening designated for callbacks. This is originally how I intended on holding my auditions for the show; however, we had to change our audition planned due to lack of an audition space and to lack of time. Our auditions and callbacks happened all on the same day. Needless to say, this day was very long and rather exhausting.

Adelaide Majeski, my stage manager, worked with me to figure out appropriate time slots to see how we could use this day the most effectively. We decided to hold audition groups of five people in ten-minute slots starting at 11:00am and running until 4:00pm. We would then have a break for dinner from 4:00pm to 5:00pm. This is when callbacks would begin. Adelaide posted a sign-up sheet for all of the actors to pick their audition time. Her posting made it clear to the actors that callbacks would be happening that evening. She also informed the actors of the required audition materials that I had chosen.

When it comes to audition materials, I requested that each actor prepared two contrasting monologues that, as a package, run for a length of two minutes in time. I gave the actors a lot of freedom when choosing audition pieces. Two contrasting pieces could be anything ranging from a classic monologue paired with a contemporary monologue, to a dramatic monologue paired with a comedic monologue. There are limitless possibilities for combinations. Actors have a good idea of what their strengths are, and I want to see them do their best. This is why I allowed them to have more options for monologues. I also believe that *Machinal* is a very diverse play. There are moments of comedy and also moments of serious drama. The text of the play tends to be rather challenging. I would argue that the work that goes into analyzing and acting the text of this play is comparable to that of a classic piece of drama. What it comes down to is that I find great variety within the text itself and that is what I hoped to find during my auditions as well. Luckily, I ended up making the right choice and saw a lot of great auditions that day.

The first challenge that I was presented with this day was figuring out exactly who to give callbacks to for that evening. We had originally planned to let everybody know who they were called back for immediately after their audition. We did this because we hoped that people would sign up for earlier time slots if they knew they could have more time to practice their callback materials during the day. Unfortunately, this plan kind of backfired. People still signed up for later time slots. We had so few people in the morning that I felt the need to give out more callbacks than I probably should have. In the morning you don't know who you have in the afternoon, so you have to make sure that you secure a variety of people for callbacks later. Once we reached the afternoon auditioners, I had to be much more selective about who I decided to callback. Because of this, there were many people who auditioned in the afternoon who probably earned a callback, but I could not give it to them because I simply had too many people lined up.

Another problem that Adelaide and I encountered was how to deliver the news of callbacks to those who had auditioned. We ended up sending an assistant stage manager out into the holding room to announce who received a callback and which sides they should prepare. This happened immediately after the group of actors left the audition room. In the real world, this is a completely legitimate thing to do; however, in the world of

educational theatre this could be seen as insensitive. All of the people auditioning for the production are students and they are all still learning. Feeling the rejection of not receiving a callback immediately after an audition must have been very harsh. When I look back on the way we delivered this news, I wish we had handled it differently. I think it would have been a smarter choice to simply post the list of those called back at 4:00pm when our auditions ended. This way the actors would have had an hour before the callback began in order to prepare for cold readings.

When it came to the way callbacks happened we had another challenge that we had to deal with. After communicating with the director of one of the shows in the theatre department, we decided that it would be okay to cast actors in my show who were also already cast in hers. The rehearsal processes were not going to overlap severely and it was beneficial for me to have a larger pool of actors to choose from when I started casting. The actors from the other show happened to have a rehearsal during the same time as our callbacks, so we had to split the audition time in half. Anybody who was not in the other play was called for the first half of callbacks. As soon as those who were in the other play were available, they would come and join us for callbacks. This process would have run a little smoother if we did not have so many people auditioning at callbacks. In order to avoid wasting anybody's time, we made cuts from the callbacks throughout the night. By doing this we were able to have only the actors that we needed by the end of the night. We ended our day of auditions just after 9:00pm. It was indeed a very long day.

Although the logistics were complicated, I made sure that everybody had a chance to read for the parts they were assigned to read. I also made sure to give all of the actors different notes to play with while they were reading. I would tell them to play the scene as if they were children, clowns, or a variety of other images. This encouraged the actors to make new and creative choices. It also allowed me to see how well they took my direction. Being able to have the actors play during the callback was beneficial for me when I had to start casting the show.

The process of casting is always tricky, but it is something that I pride myself in. I have found that I have very good instincts when it comes to casting. I can easily envision future stage pictures from callbacks as well as identify good chemistry between actors. However, this show was difficult to cast because there are so many actors required and almost every single actor plays multiple roles. It was important for me to make sure that all of the double casting was meaningful to the story being told. For example, I knew immediately that the actor who played the Doctor would also have to play the Judge and the Priest. By doing this all of the major authority figures would be played by the same actor. The same thoughtful casting method was employed for the Mother and the Nurse doubling as well as making the choice to cast George H. Jones and the Lover as the Guards in the final scene of the play. There is consistency with the story with this choice and it is also efficient. I also needed to find actors who were strong movers and were willing to make bold choices with their bodies and voices in space. I ended up casting two different versions of the show based off of two actresses who showed the most promise in the role as the Young Woman. After determining appropriate casts around these two actresses, I then had to weigh the pros and cons of each cast. I had to figure out which cast would best tell the story I wanted to tell.

In the end, I decided to go with an actress who has less training in our acting program than other actresses. I made this choice for a variety of reasons. Tina has a strong

dance background. I knew that I wanted the Young Woman to make bold physical choices with her body. An actress who has a strong dance background is very beneficial for this concept of the play. Also, Tina has a unique look about her. I feel strongly that the Young Woman is inherently different from everybody else in her world. Many productions feel that she is an “Everywoman” type. Although this is a warranted choice, it is not something that I felt as strongly about. I enjoy the idea of having the Young Woman stand out amongst the others in a crowd and Tina does just that. Another reason why I cast Tina in this role was because she has not had as many opportunities for acting in a leading part compared to other actresses. I think there is something to be said about giving the underdog a fair chance, especially if the underdog is a hard worker. I am all about giving actors and actresses a fair chance. It is too easy to cast the big stars. Sometimes it is worthwhile to take a shot on someone new or less experienced. I think it makes them more determined and it also helps me grow as I encounter new challenges with the actors.

Another casting choice I made was to put some of the strongest actors in the ensemble. In order to get our leading lady where she needed to be within her emotional arc of the play, she needs a lot of strong support. This kind of support can only come from a talented, hardworking ensemble. All of the women I decided to cast in the office are very capable of handling challenging text and the first episode of the play is filled with it. I knew that by casting these actresses, who are fully capable of handling complicated dialogue, they would be able to kick off the play at full speed and start our Young Woman’s journey off right. Casting these office characters as all women was another bold choice. I liked the idea of having only women in the office because of when George H. Jones first enters. I think it thrusts the idea of patriarchy and the submission of women to men’s will into the forefront.

To sum up my experience with auditions, callbacks and casting, I would say that I learned a lot. I learned that although pulling a marathon day of auditions is hardcore, it is also exhausting. This is true not only for the director and the stage management team, but also for the actors. Yes, it was efficient, but I would prefer multiple days of auditions and callbacks. Additionally, an educational auditioning environment and a real world auditioning environment are two separate things and they should be treated as such. It is not fair to bring the intensity of a real world audition into a student run production at the collegiate level. Sensitivity is key when working with students, especially if these students are also your peers. Finally, when casting a show it is always a very thoughtful process. It is okay to take time to make big, risky decisions. Taking chances on actors benefits them, but it also benefits the personal growth of the director.

## Rehearsal Process

My rehearsal process began with a read-through. This was a time for the whole cast to get together and read the script from beginning to end as all of their specific characters. I made sure to invite all of the designers working on the show so that they could hear the play aloud for the first time with all of our actors. This is also a nice opportunity for everyone in the cast to meet each other. My cast of actors was very diverse. We had people from all different grades in school as well as some people of different majors. This is mostly just a time for people to connect and to get excited about the play. I held this rehearsal before school broke for winter vacation. At the end of the rehearsal, I made it clear my expectation that all of the actors would return from vacation off-book, with their lines fully memorized at the start of our next rehearsal. By the end of this rehearsal I was very happy. I knew that I had made the right casting choices after I was able to hear the full script aloud.

The next step in the rehearsal process was tablework. Tablework is a time where myself, my assistant director (Brittany Paskos), and my actors get to sit down and analyze the script together. When we organized these rehearsals we made sure to break them down by each episode. We would never have the entire cast come to tablework a scene that they were not directly a part of. At tablework rehearsals actors would share their personal thoughts about the characters, the scene we were working on, or the play as a whole. I would also share my thoughts about the same topics. I would often ask the actors prompting questions. I would ask questions that would cause them to think more deeply about their characters. Many of these questions would involve the given circumstances that are explicitly mentioned in the play, and other questions would involve the imaginary circumstances of the play that the actor creates on their own. This is also a time when I will ask questions of each actor regarding their character's overarching objective (what they want) for the play, their common tactics for obtaining what they want, and what kind of obstacles are standing in their way. Although sitting at a table and talking about a play might not seem like the most exciting kind of work, it can really be immensely creative and fulfilling. Theatre is an art of collaboration. The way I run a session of tablework is as a way to share and contemplate new, creative ideas.

A few of our tablework rehearsals were spent with Tina, our Young Woman, one-on-one. The Young Woman is the center of this story. It is important that Tina and I have met and discussed the journey of this character fully. If we do not have a strong center point, then the whole play will be off-kilter. The most time we spent was on Tina's monologues. The monologues in Episode 1 and Episode 4 of the play are absolute monsters. The text is very complex and difficult to understand without breaking it down bit by bit. When working on these monologues, Tina, Brittany, and I would read through section by section and summarize what it being said to make sure that we all had the same understanding. We would mark any changes in thought pattern in our text. We found it very helpful to mark and map out the thought journey of these monologues in this way. We would look for repetition and key images that Tina could connect with. When we felt like the monologue was fully broken down and understood, it was a major feat. This was a lot of work, but it was absolutely necessary. We knew that if the three of us clearly understood what was being said in these mammoth monologues, then our audience would be able to come to an understanding once the piece was performed. Finally, once Tina and I had a common, base

understanding of the Young Woman and all of her moments in the play, that was when we were able to move away from tablework and into the staging of scenes.

Luckily when we were focusing on tablework, we did not experience much of an issue with our actors who were also cast in the contrasting department show. However, once we got into the period of staging our scenes we felt this conflict strongly. There were only a few scenes that we were able to rehearse and stage without the actors involved in the other show. If we could not do whole scenes, we would only stage parts of scenes. Additionally, our rehearsal space was less than ideal. We had to rehearse in an old room in the basement of the student activities center on campus. This room was old and dusty and did not have furniture that was conducive to staging. During the beginning of our staging process, we were only able to rehearse with the Young Woman, the Mother (who also played the Nurse), and the two lawyers from Episode 8. These are some pretty slim pickings. This period of time was frustrating for me. I was only really able to rehearse six different moments in the play for a good two weeks of our rehearsal time. It was tedious to have to work the same things over and over again, especially because we were never able to rehearse in a different space. I began to feel like we were beating a dead horse. The only aspect of these rehearsal times that I really began to appreciate was when we were able to extensively work the two major monologues. It was comforting to know that we could use this time to dedicated focus on the monologues and that when we go further in the rehearsal process we knew we would not have to worry about them as much.

The first rehearsal we had with the whole cast again was a Viewpoints rehearsal. The Viewpoints are a system of improvisational exploration that helps build ensemble that was originally created by dancer Mary Overlie and then expanded upon by director Anne Bogart. The Viewpoints focus on the movement of a body in space. The rehearsal that I ran explored the concepts of Viewpoints. I had all of the actors embrace the idea of grid topography. The actors could only move on a straight, grid-like pattern on the floor. This is a very rigid type of movement. Once the actors understood the proper topography of the space they were able to explore ideas of repetition, shapes their bodies could make, tempos of movement, duration of movement, how their body reacts to the response of others, and more. I encouraged the actors to move throughout the space as their characters once we added all of the proper viewpoints into the exercise. The actors moved about the space this way for about 20-25 minutes in total. This is quite a long time, but as soon as we all sat down to discuss, or unpack, the exercise everybody mentioned that it felt as if much less time had passed. Everybody was eager to speak about their experience working with the viewpoints. Some actors, such as the actress playing the Telephone Girl, found the physicality of their characters through this process of Viewpoint exploration. Many actors commented on discovering relationships with characters that they interact with during the play, and even new relationships with characters that they never interact with in the play. After we unpacked the first exercise, we jumped into another exercise utilizing the Viewpoints. This time I had the actors behave the same way on the grid, except now I added the sound of a ticking metronome in the background. The exercise began at a medium tempo, then it decreased to a slower tempo and from there it skyrocketed to a much faster tempo. I encouraged the actors to allow the tempo of the metronome to effect their movements. They could move with the sound or against the sound. Whatever impulse came to them, I encouraged them to accept it and move forward with it. The actors did exceptionally well with this exercise. There were many moments that they created that

inspired different staging within the play. This exercise particularly inspired the creation of the transitions between each scene of the play. The actors were moving in such a strict and sharp manner. They evoked images of a busy New York City street, hustling and bustling. They were all very motivated to move and they were all very aware of their surroundings. When we unpacked this portion of the rehearsal I found that the actors all felt similarly to how I felt as well. Tina responded that she felt claustrophobic and stuck. The exercise made her feel exceptionally anxious, especially because a lot of the actors were following her around and almost chasing her. I told her that this is a perfect way to feel. Brittany and I both encouraged her to remember how this exercise made her feel, because that is exactly how the Young Woman should feel at different moments during the play.

When we finally got the whole cast together staging rehearsals were in full swing. We had to quickly stage everything that we had had to neglect for the past few weeks. Unfortunately, because we had to play catch-up so much, we ended up neglecting the scenes that we had been working on for the previous weeks. This was a struggle for those actors because there was a long period of time where they were not rehearsing frequently and they had to retain knowledge from a period of rehearsal that was seemingly very much in the past. Although this was not ideal, the actors did a good job of retaining their staging and applying it to rehearsals when they had to.

The major struggle that I experienced during staging rehearsals was the fact that I never received an accurate ground plan from my scenic designer. I had to make a lot up as I went along because I was never given a solid plan. This was frustrating for myself and for the actors because anything that we did could easily change. Fortunately, after discussions with the scenic designer, I was given full reign to make choices about where set pieces were placed on the stage. Brittany and I pushed ahead immediately after we were given this green light. Another hiccup about our staging process, however, has to do with us not being able to enter our performance space until two weeks after we were scheduled to. Due to an unforeseen renovation project in our performance space, of which we were notified after our rehearsal schedule was already set in stone, we had to rework our entire schedule of rehearsals and set-building for the last month of our process. This was a major blow. Not only were we unable to rehearse in the space, but we were unable to build. This meant that we were still unsure of how our set pieces were going to look in the space and how they were going to move in the space. Because our actors move all set pieces this was extremely concerning. The performance space in which our show was to take place also presents unique challenges for sightlines. For all I knew, the staging that I had been working on for the past few weeks could be completely useless once we got in the space. What if our audience could not see key moments? Needless to say, this whole aspect of the project was a major stressor, especially since we were not given elevated seating to watch our rehearsals until the final dress rehearsal of our show. Even though this was a problem I desperately wish we did not have, the whole company was able to overcome this incident. The cast was, again, resilient and adaptable to every obstacle that was thrown in their path. When we did get into the performance space to clarify our staging, everything truly started to come together just as everyone had hoped.

The closer and closer we got to the opening of our show, the more intense rehearsals had to become. There had to be a balance of running the show fully as well as breaking it apart and working on different trouble spots. Because we had less time in the space with set pieces than we would have originally liked, we ended up getting less full

runs in than I would have preferred. However, it was important for us to make use of any and all rehearsal time that we had. It was helpful for me to have a second set of eyes come into our rehearsals at times. I invited my thesis advisor and directing professor, Peter Sampieri, to come and see the show. He gave me notes on what he saw. His notes were helpful because often times they would simply confirm what I was already experiencing while watching the show. Other times, his notes would cause me to reconsider moments and look at the show in a different way. Overall, the best notes that he gave me were the ones that encouraged me to continue to strive to specify my vision and to encourage me to find creative solutions to problems that I was encountering.

After Peter viewed a run, I would spend the next rehearsal working trouble spots with Brittany. I found that this was a useful portion of the rehearsal process because we were able to zone in on particular moments and make them clear and concise. For example, I had originally staged much more movement within Episode 6 with the Lover. I made this choice because the scene felt too stagnant to me. But after I met with Peter he encouraged me to go with my gut instinct, which was to have the majority of the scene take place on the bed. After receiving this note, Brittany and I decided to hold a rehearsal full of acting exercises that would help heighten the scenes. We had our actors, Tina and Alex, work with the idea of touch during this rehearsal. They spent some time just touching each other's skin. They would touch hands, arms, faces, necks, or places where they agreed they were comfortable touching one another. The sensation of touch is extremely intimate and what this scene needed was more intimacy. I encouraged silence and eye contact during this exercise. I encouraged them to feel the sensation of touching the other, but also to feel the sensation of the other touching them simultaneously. After the two actors became comfortable with the form of this exercise, I then instructed them to speak their lines to one another while still feeling one another. There were not to move from the positions that they were in on the mats in our rehearsal space. They were to stay still but keep touching each other and speaking to one another. Both actors jumped right into this part of the exercise. Brittany and I were thrilled with the change that occurred once they began speaking their lines. The scene was actually so intimate that Brittany and I felt we could not even watch what they were doing. The two actors were experiencing a very private moment with one another as these two characters. It was perfect for this scene! Although I regret not having as many full runs of this show, I know that the troupe spot rehearsals we had were absolutely invaluable.

During our rehearsal process, two weeks before tech week, I ended up getting very sick. At the time I did not realize, but I actually had mononucleosis. Fortunately, I had Brittany as my wonderful assistant director and she was able to take over the rehearsal that I missed. The rehearsal that I missed was actually a major rehearsal where we were supposed to be rehearsing the transitions between each scene. Luckily, Brittany and I had clearly communicated what my vision was for each transition. She understood the effect that we were going for. Everything was to be extremely mechanical. I requested that the actors move in a grid-like manner, but not necessarily on the grid. Sharp turns were important because they would make the transitions look clean. I had the image of the busy New York City street scene running through my mind and Brittany knew this. At this rehearsal, Brittany took charge and figured out how every transition had to run. The assistant stage managers had tracked all the different set pieces that were required to move for each transition, and Brittany choreographed the whole thing. She did a killer job.

Once I was able to get back to rehearsals and see what she had worked on, I was incredibly happy. After she originally staged them, the two of us worked together to tweak the transitions and make sure that everything moved smoothly. I feel so thankful that Brittany was always on the same page as me during this process. She had my back and knew what vision I was going for always.

Another issue we had to overcome during the process was that many of the actors were not off-book when they were supposed to be. This was something that was frustrating for me because this was a request that I had made in December at our first rehearsal. I, by no means, expected everybody to be perfect for the first rehearsal, but it was clear that some actors took getting off-book much more seriously than other actors did. There were times when I would call an actor to rehearsal just so that he could run lines with one of the assistant stage managers while I was rehearsing another scene. Tina particularly had trouble with her lines because of the sheer amount that she had to grapple with. The one part of the play that she had the most trouble with was her monologue in Episode 4. Before we went away for spring break, Tina was scheduled to come in for monologue work. I knew that it would not be productive for us to spend four hours working her monologues. It would just exhaust her and it would end up being a waste of time. Instead, I made the choice to split her rehearsal time in half. We worked for an hour, after a staging rehearsal, on getting the words more into her body. I had her push a wall in the rehearsal room. Her goal was to push the wall down while saying her lines. I gave her this physical objective in the hopes that it would translate into what she was saying. This activity was helpful for her. I then had her move about the space in a grid pattern. She simply read her monologue from her script and made sure that she turned on the grid whenever there was a change in thought within the text. This helped her to identify the thought journey in her body. After we repeated this exercise, we began making specific physical choices that she could use in the actual performance of her monologue. We were able to creatively stage the whole thing connected to the words of her monologue. Knowing that Tina is a dancer, I hoped that forcing the words into her movements would help her memorize it more. The next day, she came and worked with me individually for two more hours. There was major improvement! She knew her lines much better than she had before. Her movements and her vocal choices were clearer. Everything that she said was becoming clearer as well. By the end of our rehearsal, in which we repeated our previous exercises a few times and then we moved back to doing the monologue with staging, Tina was 90% off-book. Once Tina came back from spring break, she was completely off-book and she was acting the hell out of her monologue. This whole situation just proved to me that sometimes you just need to do what is right for your actor in the moment, even if it means messing up your rehearsal schedule. Doing what is right for your actor and what your actor needs is the most important thing because they are your storytellers. If they struggle, the whole story struggles. Being trained as an actor myself, I feel like I am able to easily identify what each individual actor needs from a director. It was clear to me that what Tina needed, was a new way to memorize her pieces. I gave her a new way to work on her monologues and she improved drastically.

Overall, I feel as though I learned a lot about the challenges that a rehearsal process can experience. I was presented with challenges when it came to scheduling, the performance space itself, unwanted sickness, and the process of working with a very large cast. Every rehearsal is a learning experience and I tried very hard to take something away

from each and every rehearsal. The biggest lesson I believe that I learned is that I have to be the rock, the foundation of the play. If I begin to crack, then the rest of the play does. I need to be able to stay strong and problem solve in the moment. Thinking on your feet is key. Also, it is important to know what is in your circle of control and what is not. There are some things that are outside of your control and it is important to recognize this and accept this. Not being able to control everything made me crack sometimes. As the process moved forward, I began to become more accepting of that which I could not control. Once I was able to embrace what I could control in my world, I was able to mend my cracks and thus mend any fissures in my play.

## Tech Week

Tech week for any show is a tiring and tedious process. This is the time when every aspect of the show has to get thrust together. This week is the most collaborative of the entire rehearsal process. Our tech week ran a little differently than we would have liked.

The first day of rehearsal was supposed to be our cue-to-cue rehearsal without actors. During this time we intended on running through all of the sound and light cues with our designers and board operators. By doing this, we would make sure that all of the cues played out properly so that when the actors joined us for rehearsal the next day, everything would run smoothly. However, Corey, our lighting designer, was unavailable for half of our cue-to-cue day because of a conference he was attending. In addition to Corey's absence, Nate was unprepared. He was writing cues during our cue-to-cue time and even conducting some recordings. This was not ideal. In order to make this rehearsal time beneficial for us all, we made a decision a few days prior to the first cue-to-cue rehearsal to have the actor's join us for the day if they were available. Luckily, the cast was committed to the show and felt strongly that they should be there, even though they did not originally intend to be there. We used this newfound rehearsal as a time to solidify all of our transitions. At this point in the process, we had all of our set pieces fully functional. This was the first time we could really focus on the transitions with all of the added set pieces and props. So, we made the best out of an unfortunate technical situation. I think that using this time to run transitions was the best choice we could have made.

The second day of tech week consisted of our cue-to-cue with actors. Going into this day I was very nervous. This was going to be our first and only real cue-to-cue and I had no idea how it was going to run. Adelaide is a great stage manager and she is very experienced, because of her efforts our cue-to-cue ran perfectly! Many actors left saying that it was the best cue-to-cue that they had ever been a part of! This is incredible, because we ended up experiencing some major setbacks at the beginning of the rehearsal. We had told all of the actors to be at the theatre for 10:30am with an 11:00am start to cue-to-cue. But, when we got to the theatre, it was locked! We were completely unable to access our space for about an hour until a faculty member came by to let us into the theatre. With a late start to cue-to-cue, I became very nervous that we were not going to have enough time to run the show at the end of the day. Our show experienced so few full runs that this particular run was not something that I was willing to give up easily. But, Adelaide flew through cue-to-cue with ease. We even had time for an hour lunch break as well as time for the actors to start putting some costume pieces on and testing their makeup. I was so incredibly pleased with how this day went. I think everybody felt confident about the next few days of rehearsal before we opened.

The next three days of the rehearsal process consisted of dress rehearsals. These rehearsals were crucial for Sean and his costume, hair, and makeup crews. This aspect of the show's design was rather extravagant and it was important that everyone got enough practice working with these new elements. It was important to do everything in layers at this point. The first day of dress was dedicated to hair and makeup only; however, many actors chose to wear their costume if it was available. Sean was not opposed to this. The more time the actors had to wear and get used to their costumes, the better. Something that helped us all out during this process was making sure that the actors had staggered call times. Adelaide and Sean worked together to figure out who needed to be there the earliest

based off of who had the heaviest amount of makeup applied to them, or who had the most complicated hair styles. For example, the Telephone Girl was called much earlier because her hair was complex and she had very specific makeup. The Young Woman, however, was not called until about 6:00pm. She did not have to worry about being painted grey and her hairstyle was extremely minimal. Staggering call times is a simple decision that can really make a world of difference during a hectic tech week.

A problem that we continued to encounter during these three days of rehearsal was involving sound. Unfortunately, we were still lacking seating in the theatre. This might not seem as if this can affect sound greatly, but it really can. Adding seats to the theatre that has sounded like an empty bathtub for the past few days completely changes the way the room amplifies sound. The seats added to the theatre are anticipated to absorb any and all sounds happening. This meant that Nate was unable to properly set the levels for the show until our final dress rehearsal when we finally got seats. Additionally, the actors were unsure of how their own voices were going to sound within the space. I continued to encourage them to use crisp diction and to project louder than they have been previously. This way they would begin to know what it would feel like when the seats were added into the space, and later what it would feel like with an audience sitting there to absorb more sound. As always, the actors took this note and worked hard to make sure they were clear and easily heard amongst all the changes that were happening in the theatre.

The one thing I love about tech week, although it is stressful, is that everybody works hard to make the show come together. The whole team will do whatever it takes in order to get the show ready for performance. The one constant of our tech week was Corey. His professionalism is something that I value greatly. He understands where he fits in the hierarchy of a production company and he understands what his job is within the storytelling of a play. Corey would stay late in the theatre after the show in order to fix his light cues or refocus a light. He is dedicated to his art. One night, Adelaide, Brittany, and myself all stayed after rehearsal was over in order to repaint the floor of the stage. Yes, this was not technically our job. But this was something that needed to be done, so we did it. Another great moment of teamwork came in a rehearsal just before tech week. Nick and Sean needed to build in the theatre during our rehearsal time. This was unfortunate because I really wanted to be able to use our space in the days leading up until tech. But, I knew that if they boys did not have their time to build and paint, then the set would not be complete when I needed it to be. So, I brought my troupe's rehearsal into a different rehearsal space. Having anticipated that Nick would need a lot of hands, I made sure that all of the actors were called for rehearsal. I told them to bring some work clothes and to help build the set when they were not working with me on scenes. Every single actor showed up to this rehearsal ready to work. The atmosphere was so collaborative, full of teamwork, and a love of theatre that I will always remember this rehearsal as being one of my favorites during the technical process.

The biggest thing that I learned during tech week was that a director must be adaptable, but firm. A director is the number one advocate for the show, so it is important to communicate to all designers what is expected for tech week. Also, have a strong relationship with the stage manager is important. I am glad that Adelaide and I were able to work so well together. No matter what went wrong during the process, I was able to trust that Adelaide was going to figure out a way to make things right. It is important not to let a

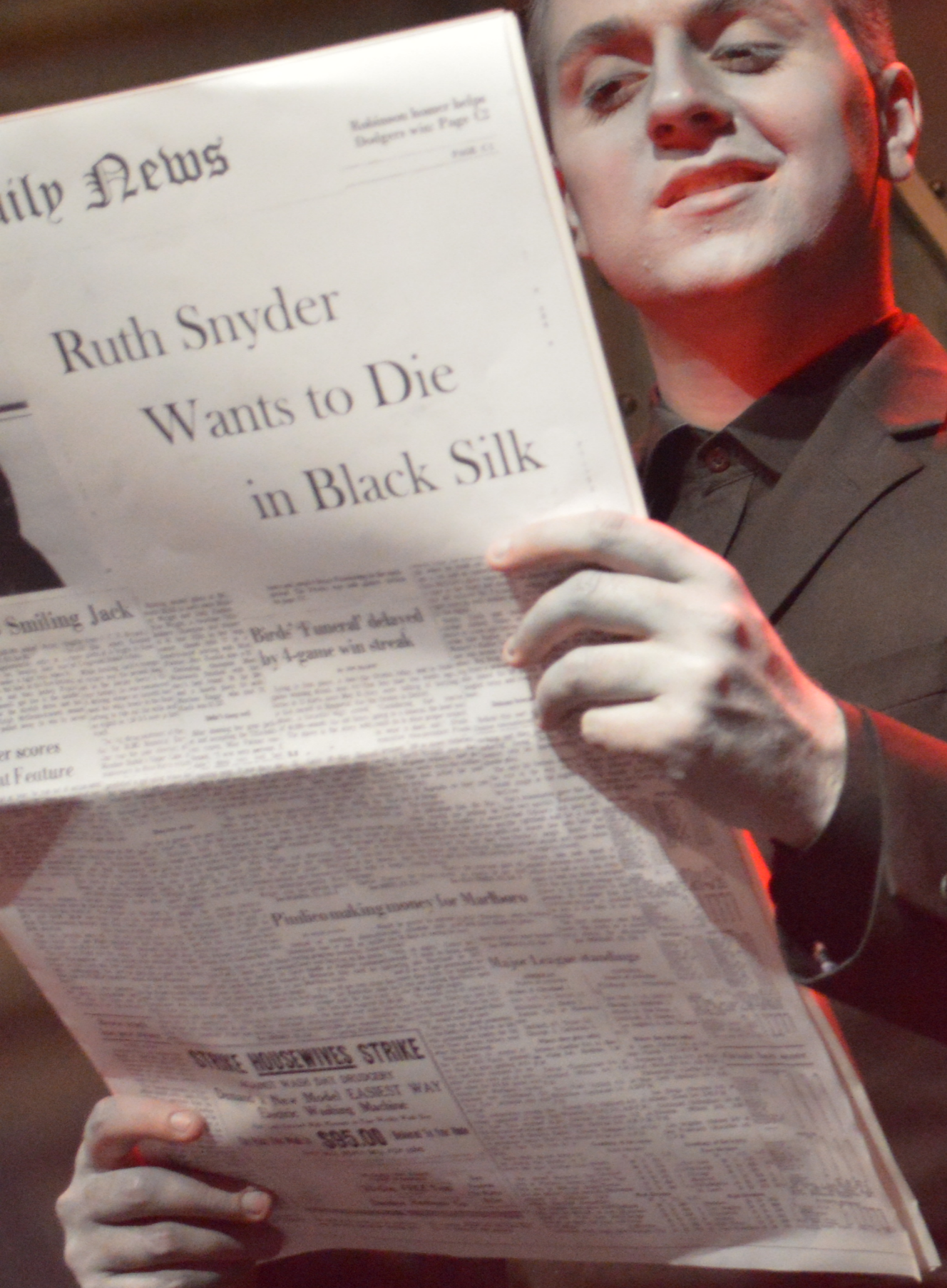
hectic tech week destroy you. I found that I had to let things go and just accept and believe that once the show opened, everything was going to come together.











Robinson leaves before  
Budgets via Page C2  
Page C2

# Ruth Snyder Wants to Die in Black Silk

Smiling Jack

Birds' Funeral delayed  
by 4-game win streak

er scores  
at Feature

Professors making money for Marlboro

Major League Standings

## HOUSEWIVES STRIKE

WOMEN WANT BETTER  
New Model EASIER WAY  
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EXIT

