

Awarding the First Lipsky

A Museum Theatre Adventure

by Elizabeth A. Pickard

Vice-President, IMTAL, and Chair of the Lipsky Panel

On March 14, 2014, five IMTALers had a meeting that they were actually excited to attend. It started with one of those calls that most of us are flattered to receive and also dread—a call to serve on a committee. As it turned out, this meeting was not a ho-hum yawner with people doing other work and eating Skittles while their line was muted. Oh no. This meeting was transformative, it was moving, it was exciting, it was personal, and there was conflict—like a really strong museum theatre piece, in fact.

Of course, strong museum theatre was the very reason we were on this conference call. It was the first ever panel meeting to choose the winner of IMTAL's inaugural Jon Lipsky Award for Playwriting Excellence. The submissions ran the same gamut the field does—there were anthropomorphized animals, civil rights struggles, trains, romance, mayhem, calls

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Photo: Judy Fort Brememan

Addae Moon, winner of the Jon Lipsky Award for Playwriting Excellence, with Lipsky Panel Chair Elizabeth Pickard.

The winning submission, Four Days of Fury by Addae Moon of the Atlanta History Center, begins on page 23 in this newsletter, and an interview with the author begins on page 6.

The International Museum Theatre Alliance (IMTAL) is a nonprofit, professional membership organization and an affiliate to the American Alliance of Museums. IMTAL's mission is to inspire and support the use of theatre and theatrical technique to cultivate emotional connections, provoke action, and add public value to the museum experience. For more information, to become a member, or to volunteer, please visit our website, <http://www.imtal.org>, or contact a board member via email.

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President's Report

Hello. It is my pleasure to share with you the IMTAL highlights from the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) conference in Seattle.

Whether you attended and loved AAM or missed it, you should join us for our regional conference in Chicago at the Museum of Science and Industry (MSI) this fall. The IMTAL conference will have everything you love about AAM, but with more theatrics. Our regional conference will provide valuable time with museum theatre colleagues, which is an immeasurable professional development experience. Of course, this isn't a competition between IMTAL and AAM. In fact, it is the opposite. I shall now praise the excellent work that happened in Seattle.

According to the AAM website, 4,500 people attended, and 160 sessions were presented. One of the keynote speakers was Erik Larson, author of the national bestseller *Devil in the White City*. Hey, there's another Chicago connection. AAM is making it too easy for me to plug our regional conference.

Our conference luncheon was well attended. The IMTY Award and the new Jon Lipsky Award for Playwriting Excellent were given out. You can read more about the award winners, and read the award-winning script *Four Days of Fury* in its entirety, in this issue of INSIGHTS.

Your Vice President, Elizabeth Pickard, and I attended the Council of Affiliates meeting and were pleased to discover that IMTAL is sitting in a comfortable place among our organizational peers. We are right on track with other professional groups of our size in terms of challenges and successes.

Your board met and had a successful meeting. We also meet monthly via phone and will meet in person in Chicago. With your IMTAL conference registration, you are welcome to join our board meeting at the regional meeting this fall.

Our museum theatre showcase featured the diversity of our work with fantastic examples of traditional museum theatre

and stellar examples of theatrical techniques. Showcase attendees were captivated by all the performances: Discovery Place's hilarious science show, *Today's Special—A Taste of Them*, performed by the extremely talented Douglas Coler; the tear jerking performance of *Ruby Bridges: A Marshall's Perspective* by the equally talented Todd D. Norris of the Children's Museum of Indianapolis; Elizabeth Pickard of the Missouri History Museum, who entertained us with a delightful new piece, *Glory the Gargoyle Finds a Home*; and Carla Burton from MSI, who exemplified the educational power of using theatrical techniques by taking us on a high energy interactive tour of MSI's *Coal Mine Experience*, which you'll see in person if you attend the regional conference in Chicago.

The IMTAL 2014 conference fee includes performances at Second City, the Shedd Aquarium, and the DuSable Museum. Of course, deep-dish pizza will be served, and you'll have the opportunity to explore MSI, but most importantly you'll have several days to devote to thinking and discussing all things museum theatre. Our IMTAL conference theme is "Saying Yes: Promoting A Museum Theatre Culture." Now all you have to do is say, "YES" by registering at <http://imtal.org/page-1329539>.

Stephanie Long

Science Museum of Minnesota,
IMTAL President



Editor's Corner

This is a hefty issue—the largest *INSIGHTS* we've ever published, near as I can tell. If it were printed on paper, it would weigh close to a pound.

What justifies such a volume?

First and foremost, our 2014 award winners: Betty Brewer and Rebecca Gilliam of Minnetrista, recipients of the IMTY; and Addae Moon of the Atlanta History Center, winner of the first-ever Jon Lipsky Award for Playwriting Excellence, for *Four Days of Fury*. I had the honor and pleasure of interviewing all three during the AAM conference. Their stories, ideas, dedication, and insight could fill a year's worth of newsletters.

Wonder what goes into an award-winning script? The full text of Addae's play is reprinted here, with his gracious permission. Elizabeth Pickard, chair of the Lipsky award panel, reveals what it's really like to be on the panel charged with judging the entries.

You'll find photos from the 2014 AAM conference, including IMTAL's successful theatre showcase

presentation, and, not to be outdone, information about the rapidly approaching IMTAL Americas conference and pre-conference, plus news and announcements from members.

There's an important deadline to pay attention to, too: **July 8, 2014**. That's the deadline for submitting session proposals for our fall 2014 conference. Submitting is easy—everything's online—and there are plenty of format options to choose from.

We need you—your ideas—your dedication—your inspiration—your talents and insight—at this year's conference. Submit a proposal, register for the pre-conference and conference, and keep *Saying Yes! to Promoting a Museum Theatre Culture!*

Judy Fort Brenneman
Greenfire Creative, LLC
IMTAL Publications Officer

IMTAL 2014 Regional Conference

September 28 through October 2, 2014

Hosted by the Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago.

Additional information on page 5.

CHICAGO.
THIS FALL.
SAY YES!

IMTAL's new address

Use this address if you need to send us anything by snailmail. If you need to contact any of the board members—and especially if you would like a fairly quick reply!—email us instead. Board member emails are listed in the masthead as well as on the [IMTAL website](http://imtal.org/board_of_directors). [http://imtal.org/board_of_directors]

IMTAL
c/o New England Museum Association
22 Mill Street, Suite 409
Arlington, MA 02476

Quick summary of dates

July 8, 2014: Deadline for **session proposals** for the 2014 IMTAL-Americas Regional Conference.

Sept. 1, 2014: Deadline for the next issue of **INSIGHTS**.

Sept. 28–Oct. 2, 2014: *IMTAL-Americas Regional Conference*, Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago, IL

Oct. 18–21, 2014: *ASTC (The Association of Science-Technology Centers) Annual Conference*, Raleigh, NC

Nov. 18–22, 2014: *National Association for Interpretation (NAI) National Workshop*, Denver, CO

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to action, and more than one mention of poop. The plays were funny, engaging, thought provoking, and moving.

Now this group of crusty museum theatre professionals (other than me; I am merely wizened) had all done long service in the trenches of the field. If they weren't its actual inventors, they were still among its pioneers—driving their mighty (station) wagons to the frontiers with their Van de Graaff generators, Lincoln beards, and fairy wings. In the course of reading the submitted scripts this crusty (wizened), sometimes cynical group of tough judges had moments of transformation. We were inspired, we argued, and ultimately we came to a unanimous decision (see pages 6 and 23). We felt rejuvenated, as though serving on this panel was Oil of Olay to our crusty (wizened) visages.

A few of the panelists knew and worked with Jon Lipsky, the great museum theatre playwright for whom the award is named. All of us are or have been on the IMTAL board in one capacity or another and had seen and produced a whole lot of museum theatre. Two of us work at science centers, two at history museums, and one at a nature/history/garden/art museum. All of us had our minds blown or our boundaries pushed or our concepts expanded by reading the submissions and listening to each other's take on each piece.

We all want *you* to both consider submitting a play for the award next year and to consider being on the Lipsky panel, so here is a little of what this year's panelists had to say about the experience:

It's pure and simple. Jon Lipsky was, in all artistic and academic terms, an accomplished playwright. Not only that, but he greatly enjoyed interpreting the wonderful humanity that exists within and throughout museum exhibits. And therefore, what could be more appropriate for IMTAL than to offer an annual Jon Lipsky Playwriting Award?

And what could be more important in our shared goal of producing quality educational theatre than to encourage the development of compelling new dramatic literature?

For this reason, I feel very honored and grateful to have served on the adjudication team for the inaugural Jon Lipsky Playwriting Award."

—Larry Gard, Science Museum of Virginia

The Lipsky award acknowledges the skill of scriptwriters who rise to the challenge of developing scripts that meet high artistic standards and education best practices while moving forward the

missions of the organizations that produce them. It really is an honor to read the work being done in the field. My own work can only improve by being a part of this process.

—George Buss, Minnetrista

I think the Lipsky Award is an important step towards improving best practices within the Museum Theatre field as a whole. Yes, we often know a good piece when we see it, but the award will provide proof that their work is at the top of our field. We can track choices the next few years to look for commonalities and differences that can benefit new programs. It will provide an agreed upon and updated model each year for others to aspire to. The award honors the work of those who put in the extra effort, and the juried process allows for important discussions on what makes good Museum Theatre.

In short, I am honored to be a part of such a respected inaugural committee. John Lipsky, too, would be proud of this honor. I look forward to more submissions in the coming years, and to see how others push the boundaries and define quality. I also think that like the IMTY, this award allows the organizations who fund and believe in Museum Theatre to be a part of the success.

Thanks for the opportunity, and keep up the great work, IMTAL!"

—Greg Hardison, Kentucky History Center

I am in Belize, so I agree with Greg."

—Paul "Cruisin'" Taylor, The Franklin Institute

As for me, I want to thank the panelists for saying "yes" to being on this panel, for their thoughtful responses, for their forceful yet courteous arguments, and for their good humor, laughter, responsiveness, and prompt and complete work. I want to thank the playwrights who submitted their work—it takes courage to submit your work for this kind of adjudication, and we found each of the plays thought provoking and interesting.

As for you, IMTAL members, the deadline for the next Lipsky will be January of 2015—what can you send in? Start thinking now, because for this to be a strong, meaningful award, we need even more good people to apply for it. We want the competition next year to be just as fierce, if not fiercer, because we want to sing out the good in the very best the field can do. You are beautiful IMTAL, and this is a great chance to show just how beautiful you are.



SAY YES! It's Time to Register!

2014 IMTAL-Americas Conference (and pre-conference, too)

We call it our “regional” conference, but in the case of IMTAL—a global organization—“regional” means Americas. This year, the Museum of Science and Industry (MSI) in Chicago is our host, and they have a grand time planned! You’ll want to come early to take advantage of the one-day preconference session, too—a workshop taught by Tessa Bridal on starting museum theatre at your institution.

This is the conference you don’t want to miss! What other conference includes tickets to Second City? VIP tickets and shows at MSI, Shedd Aquarium, and the DuSable Museum? Chicago-style pizza? Only IMTAL!

Registration and more info: <http://imtal.org/page-1329539>

September 28, noon to 6:00pm: *Theatre in Museums Workshop* (pre-conference session)

Begins with lunchtime orientation and an opportunity for brief introductions. From 1:00pm to 6:00pm, sessions will focus on:

- ♦ Criteria and reasons for establishing a theatre program at your institution, including the importance of support from your board and upper management, and how to obtain it;
- ♦ Styles of theatrical presentations and demonstrations, and how to determine the ones best suited to your institution;
- ♦ Differences between theatre and demonstrations, and who develops, writes, and presents them.

September 28 through October 2, 2014: *Saying Yes: Promoting a Museum Theatre Culture!*

Explore how museum theatre has been successfully implemented to educate, entertain, and inspire museum guests. Meet and network with a variety of performers, playwrights, museum professionals, and industry leaders. Come discuss, present, and workshop new ideas to actively promote and enhance museum theatre in your organization. Registration includes Very Cool and Fun Stuff as well as plenty of Inspiring and Useful Stuff. More info: <http://imtal.org/page-1751341>.

SAY YES, PART 2

Call for session proposals due by July 8, 2014

CHICAGO.

THIS FALL.

SAY YES!

The 2014 IMTAL Regional Conference will focus on the idea of how saying “yes” to museum theatre culture in your institution can affirm your organization’s mission and vision. This year’s conference will gather a variety of performers, museum professionals, and museum theatre supporters to discuss, present, and workshop ways in which we may actively promote museum theatre.

We are currently accepting session proposals that include the following:

- ♦ High audience participation and/or a strong interactive component;
- ♦ New ways of showcasing museum theatre principles (e.g., cultivating emotional connections, provoking action, and adding public value to the museum experience);
- ♦ A focus on program development and the creative process;
- ♦ Artistic and creative conveyance of educational content through strong storylines.

For details, session types, and to submit your proposal online: <http://imtal.org/page-1860081>

Interview: Addae Moon

Jon Lipsky Award for Playwriting Excellence

by Judy Fort Brenneman

Addae Moon of the Atlanta History Center won the inaugural Jon Lipsky Award for Playwriting Excellence for his play, *Four Days of Fury*. I met with Addae at AAM to talk about this powerful story. (The complete script is reprinted beginning on page 23.)

JFB: Elizabeth (Pickard, IMTAL's VP and head of the Awards Panel) says it was a tough competition. Your script is very powerful and definitely deserving.

AM: Thank you, I appreciate it.

Addae Moon, winner of the Jon Lipsky Award for Playwriting Excellence.



Photo: Judy Fort Brenneman

JFB: How did this particular story show up?

AM: There is actually a tour that a scholar at Georgia State does. He takes a group around locations in downtown Atlanta, where the Race Riots from 1906 occurred. Having been in the city on and off for at least a good ten or fifteen years, I knew nothing about (the Race Riots), and the fact that I knew nothing about it, intrigued me. And the fact that some of the places where he was taking us were places I had been to a million times. I had no idea how these places existed within the historical context. So I think that is when the seed was first planted.

It didn't really shape itself into an idea until a coworker of mine was actually trying to solve another problem with another project we were working on, and she happened to mention this exhibit space that wasn't being used. I hadn't seen the space until we went down there one day. And as soon as I saw the space, the idea just popped into my head: You know, this would be a great space to tell this story. I knew I wanted to do something that was immersive, something where the audience moved around, and something that was not, you know, your traditional theatre piece, on a traditional stage. I hate those kinds of pieces anyway, and so I knew it would be a great opportunity to explore an immersive piece in a non-traditional space.

JFB: Do people physically move along the lines somehow?

AM: The first thing that happens is that the audience members are "raced"—they're given these name cards, like press passes. And they reverse them inside out, and it states whether they're black or white. That's one of the first things that happens in terms of the immersive aspect of it. The audience is raced. So you have a 90-year-old white woman who's playing black in the context of the play.

Each of the scenes are actually taking place in different locations in the gallery space, so that the audience moves around. It's a good sized space, and

partitioned off, so it has these intimate settings where no more than twenty-five—and that's the thing too, no more than 25 audience members at a time were engaged in the experience. We would run it three times a day, with 25 people in each run of it.

JFB: *Knowing that you wanted to do something that moved through the space, were you specifically trying to get a handle on the story of the Race Riots? Trying to accomplish something that has to do with how Atlanta grew up to be the town that it is, or to deliberately provoke people to talk about racial issues?*

AM: I think the first thing that always comes to mind when I do any piece with a museum is, How's this relevant to the audience? How does this impact their contemporary lives? That's always the first thing I ask. And the thing about the Race Riots as an event, that was interesting, is that the events leading up to it were all in some way related to ideas of media and pop culture. So the media in this case, early 20th century journalism and pop culture—those two elements are very relevant now—how we construct identity within a contemporary setting. So I started with that. Most of the themes explore how popular culture and the media shape our ideas about who we are. Within that context, ideas about race weave in and out. But it started with the relevance—I mean, how is this event relevant to our contemporary world?

JFB: *Your play dives into tough issues. When you think about it in terms of identity, what we look like and what we consider to be our own tribe versus somebody else's tribe is a fundamental part of what this play is talking about, and how media influence that hasn't gone away. If anything, it's more pervasive.*

AM: Yeah, now they have blogs! And tweets!
[laughs]

JFB: *How does the play help people talk about this stuff without feeling defensive?*

AM: It's one of the things that was exciting for me. We assign races to the audience, but we also had a cast that had a white female actor, a white male actor, and the other core actors were four black men. We had people playing different races on stage, and so this whole idea of the audience being raced, maybe not in their actual race, and these characters playing multiple races—I think because of that, it may allow the really hard sticky messy things to be a lot more palatable. That, and I totally get a kick out of playing with performance styles.

So playing around with performance styles, playing around with persona, I think was another way to make dealing with really hard messy subject matter a lot more pleasurable, if that's the word I can even use, a lot more palatable for the audience than it would be if I had a black actor playing a black character and a white actor playing a white character the entire time.

The actors play different genders, too. We have the female characters, the female actors played men and women, black and white.

So playing with persona and gender and race I believe made it not as preachy as it would have been if they had been their actual race. It made it a lot easier to deal with.

JFB: *That shakes the audience up in ways that also start defusing fear and defensiveness. They start realizing that we aren't actually all that different.*

AM: And it also allows people to step back and look at this objectively, without the emotional baggage that we normally bring. And you see realistic representations. So that distancing effect really comes in handy, I think, when dealing with rough subject matter.

“We have all been on this journey exploring race and the media and identity, and now we can all sit and talk about this in a way we couldn't do before. So in a way, the show becomes a way to really clear away all the bullshit, so that people can really start dealing with the hard issues about why these problems still persist in 2014.”

JFB: *How do you prep your audience before you begin? And at the other end of it, is there a time where you're doing facilitated discussion?*

AM: We had dialogue training actually, to facilitate the cultural discussion. To me, the post-show discussion was the most important thing. The pre-show exposition prepares them for what they're about to experience, kind of places them in the world. But it's what happens after the show—I think that's where the real learning and engagement happens. We have all been on this journey exploring race and the media and identity, and now we can all sit and talk about this in a way we couldn't do before. So in a way, the show becomes a way to really clear away all the bullshit, so that people can really start dealing with the hard issues about why these problems still persist in 2014.

JFB: *What kinds of things did they say or what did you observe? What made it powerful?*

AM: A lot of it was the anger and people's frustration that, you know, realizing that things haven't really changed that much since 1906. I think that was really frustrating for a lot of people. It was really interesting to see the differences between white audiences and black audiences, and audiences that were from the south versus audiences that may have grown up in the north. And people's different perceptions of those things, based on who they are ethnically, and who they are, in terms of what region of the country they came out of.

And also, I think there were some pleasant surprises for some people as well. People who don't know the history of Atlanta, and knowing the fact that it's a city that has always had a substantial black educated middle class, and having that discussion take place in the play, and people who were outside the confines of what we call the perimeter realizing this is not just a new phenomenon, this has been going on since the city's inception. There's always been this educated black middle class who've been trying to negotiate themselves within the context of race, and class as well.

But the frustrations that people had with regards to the persistency of the injustice I thought very interesting. Not surprising to me, but very interesting that people, a lot of people, were surprised and angered by that.

JFB: *Do you think that they have changed in a way that will propagate change in a positive way?*

AM: I hope so. I think, at the very least, it changed some people's perceptions. And especially when it comes to dealing with the issues of the media, my hope is that people become more critical, and become more vigilant, critical thinkers. And realize that the things you see on the news, or on blogs or the internet, aren't necessarily true. You really have to investigate and really explore, and look at the reason why certain images are being presented time and time again. At the very least I hope people become more vigilant critical thinkers after seeing the show.

JFB: *Tell me about the process of developing the play. Any special challenges?*

AM: Well, the biggest challenge was getting some of the museum people to okay using gallery space this way—they'd never had any kind of immersive theatre piece in a gallery space, and museums take their gallery spaces very seriously, like a sacred space, so, although there's nothing in there, the idea of us taking this space over and doing a piece of theatre in there was brand-new to them. Also, the idea of immersive theatre itself was brand-new to them. So the challenge was kind of selling the shareholders of the museum on that idea, that this is not brand-new, people in the theatre community do this, and that this works, and this will be something new for the museum's audience. That was really the hardest part.

The research was a pleasure and a blast because it's Atlanta. I could totally access the old newspaper articles, all the things that were being said that led up to the Race Riots. There've been at least four or five major books written about the 1906 Race Riots, and two authors of Race Riot books are actually scholars in the city, so we had access to them as well. And both of them had worked with the museum before, so that was really the easy part. And the fun part, the best part was the research for me.

I would say between the research and development of the piece it took probably about six or seven months. Then we cast it, and the rehearsal process started, and everything kind of fell into place.

JFB: *Is it still running?*

AM: No. We did it in February of 2013 and ran it for four weeks, and we did it again in September of 2013, one of the anniversaries of the actual riots, to commemorate that, and ran it for four weeks as well. Right now it's on the shelves until we decide to revisit it.

JFB: *What determines whether you run a show?*

AM: When the show was developed, we were under a grant, so we had access to the money. This was not a cheap show to do, and we had access to the funds to actually produce it. It's not a show that was going to make money necessarily, so the next immersive piece I want to do I will probably have to get a grant for it. Because, while it's amazing to do, it was an amazing discussion piece, it's not necessarily cost efficient. But I mean what theatre is?

But also the great thing about it, for a lot of people who had not been to the History Center and came to that show, it had a really strong impact and changed people's perceptions of that institution.

JFB: *How do you approach evaluation? How do you know that the program is doing what it should, or the script is working the way it should?*

AM: I don't know if you do. I mean for me, it wasn't until I sat in the first cultural discussion that I knew it worked. I mean I was totally satisfied with the show in and of itself, but in terms of its impact on the audience, it was sitting in that first cultural discussion that I'm like, "Okay, yes."

JFB: *You did it.*

AM: Yeah. I accomplished what I wanted in terms of people feeling comfortable talking about these really difficult issues in the same space. And a couple of discussions got heated, but it was great too, because the discussion times are thirty minutes, and people would stay in small groups talking about issues that they brought up in the discussion. So, when that happened I was like, "Oh yeah, it's definitely working."

JFB: *When you go back to the powers-that-be and say, "Okay, we need some grant money because we want to do another immersive experience," do you think it will be a hard fight again?*

AM: Actually, there was a change in leadership at the institution—our new president came in right around the time we were doing "Four Days," so his conception of what works is that. Having that kind of buy-in from a person that's just starting, and who's really thinking this is the direction the institution needs to be headed in, was just a piece of magic. He saw the responses from the board members—some of them weren't crazy about the piece, but they were also in the audience, and seeing an audience that they had never seen at the history center as well. So, he's totally on board with Museum Theatre as an interpretive tool. That's great.

And it's really interesting too because we're in the early development stages for a new exhibit about Atlanta. We're exploring what happens when you start thinking about performance at the early stages of the development of an exhibit, and how that might alter everything. We're already in discussion with the exhibition team, because this exhibition needs to be performance ready. And knowing that going in from the day this exhibit opens that we're considering performance as an aspect of it.

JFB: *So your team will develop the play in concert with the interpretive plan and the exhibit plan?*

AM: Yeah—this is the first time in the institution's history that this is happening this way. It's going to be a challenge, but it's very interesting to have them onboard with the idea that's going on. It definitely presents some challenges but also some amazing opportunities. We'll see how that turns out.

JFB: *Do you have other bits of advice, words of wisdom, cautionary tales, bad jokes.?*

AM: No bad jokes. I still feel so new to museum theatre. It's always frustrating work, but I'm okay with being frustrated, I'm totally cool with that. But it's really challenging work, because you have a lot of things to consider. It's much more challenging than just writing what I want to write about for myself and hoping somebody's gonna pick it up and do it at a theatre company. There are a lot of other people in the room whose decisions are as important as my own personal muse. So that's been a challenge for me, but it's been a great challenge because I think it's really impacted the work that I do outside of museums as well, in a positive way.

It's rough changing these big old institutions. But I think when people see something and see how it moves the visitor—I mean, minds change pretty quickly, especially when they see the visitor's reaction.



"It's always frustrating work, but I'm okay with being frustrated. I'm totally cool with that. . . . It's rough changing these big old institutions. . . ."

Interviews: Betty Brewer & Rebecca Gilliam

2014 IMTY Award Winners

by Judy Fort Brenneman

It would be hard, if not impossible, to find two more dedicated supporters of museum theatre. Betty Brewer, President and CEO of Minnetrista, introduced museum theatre to Minnetrista. She and Rebecca Gilliam, Vice President of Visitor Experiences, have nursed, nudged, pushed, and inspired everyone from newbie volunteers and entry level staff to board members, growing the program from start-up to a well-recognized combination of outreach and on-site performances that carry Minnetrista's mission throughout its 7-county region and beyond. Theatre techniques are part of training and professional development at Minnetrista, too.

Betty Brewer

JFB: *First of all, congratulations on winning.*

BB: Thank you. I was sorry I couldn't be at the lunch. My network that I'm on the board of was meeting at the same time.

JFB: *Let's talk a little bit about your work at Minnetrista and why you're committed to museum theatre.*

BB: Why I should be committed! (laughs)

JFB: *That's just part of the job description. What is it that caught your attention about museum theatre? What convinced you to incorporate it—you didn't come into an existing museum theatre program.*

BB: No, I brought it in.

JFB: *So, talk me through that.*

BB: I got into the museum field because I ended up not being an archeologist. You know when you've got that period of time between undergraduate and what's next, and you've worked those jobs that you really don't want to be working, and it was like, "Okay, so I'm not going to be an archeologist, what can I be? Oh—where do they take this stuff after they dig it up? They take it to museums."

So I went back to graduate school, and then just sort of ended up where I am. I had no plan that I would do this and then this. I just sort of went, "Oh—that's available, and that's interesting. Oh, that's kind of cool. Well, let's try that."

My experience with what I called "museum theatre" was a combination of first person interpretation—some good, some really bad—and the concept of using short plays associated with an exhibition. In my first director's position in Kentucky, when we relocated our museum, we opened with our first-ever traveling exhibit. A play came with the exhibit, and we turned that over to one of our local Little Theatre directors. She essentially re-wrote the play so she could get dance roles in it for her daughters, though I didn't realize that until later. But it still basically told the story that needed to be told, and it was cute and had all these kids in the play.

I never called science demonstrations "museum theatre" until I went to the Whitaker Center in

"I'm very much a professional development kind of person. And I want my staff to not just have opportunities. I want them to be engaged."

“I love the way museum theatre outreach can have so many variables, so many ways of doing things.”

Pennsylvania a number of years later. I came into a program called Big Science Theatre. It wasn't what I thought of as your standard or typical science demo, which, even if you do it with a cool looking lab coat versus a white lab coat, can still be awful.

These were demonstrations built into scripts that had other story lines associated with them. And they were fun. They got the kids engaged. Theatre took on a whole new sense for me. I saw how well it worked in that science scenario.

The gentleman who was directing that program moved onto something else, and I hired George Buss, and I really liked the way George worked.

George is also a storyteller and does so many other things. We used to just talk about museum theatre and all the ways it could be used. And we finally added an outreach component to the program at Whitaker.

When I got to Minnetrista, there wasn't anything like that. We do some science, but we aren't a science place; we're more history and natural history, environment. About a year in, I began asking how our existing distance learning program was associated with our mission. It served people in other places of the country, but we're more of a regional center.

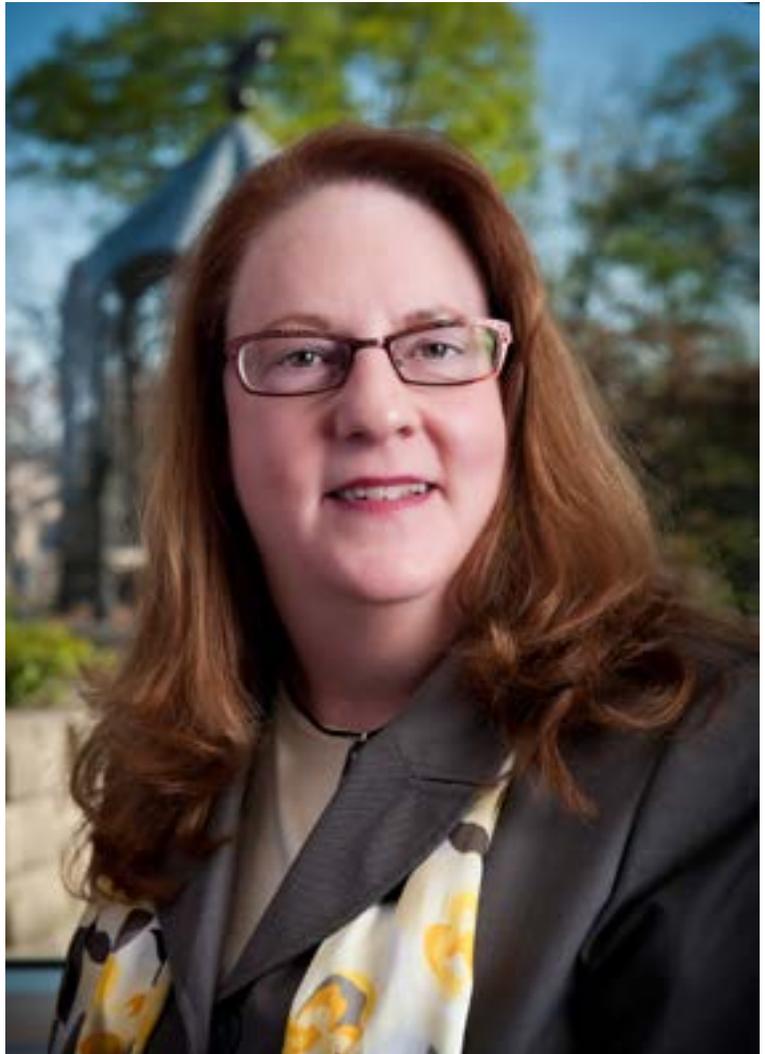
So I started talking museum theatre, and the young woman who managed my education program was skeptical, but I kept trying. This is a great way to do regional outreach; that's how I thought of it, doing outreach, knowing that I would eventually want it to come inside.

I finally put a budget together on how we could close out the other program and use that money as seed money, and then get a grant from our community foundation that would really be start-up funds. I had to convince my board because of the money thing.

I had one board member—the immediate past chair—who was very powerful and would fight. I said no, seriously, it will eventually start to make money. It won't make money for two years, but then it will.

JFB: *When did you finally launch the program?*

BB: I've been there almost nine years. George has been there six, God, really? So maybe six years ago.



It took him a year to really get it all together and figure out how we were going to staff it and everything.

I had also learned from the Whitaker Center program that you hire actors and teach them the content. Because educators frequently make really bad actors. That was one of my first concerns when I ran the science program [at Whitaker]. It was like, how do I know that the actors know what they're talking about? I'd sit in on the programs and ask, "Okay, what if they get asked a question that's not part of the script?" And they were pretty good. We worked with our education team to make sure the actors knew the content and that they didn't make up answers. If they didn't have an answer, they asked for the visitor's contact info and would get back to them with the answer. At Minnetrista, it's basically the same thing. It's embedded in our educational program. We hire actors, but they learn the content, not just their script.

Betty Brewer,
2014 IMTY
award recipient

And my board member who was so skeptical is now our biggest fan. He tells everyone, “You must go!” And he tells everybody on the board that he thought this was going to be a disaster. but it’s just wonderful.

Last year, we broke our records. We broke our intended budget numbers in income. It’s not huge dollars, and that’s okay. But it is bringing in revenue now. And it’s getting a name.

I didn’t even realize how far (our actors) were traveling. They were all over Indiana, into Ohio, they may have gone down into Kentucky, I don’t remember. They were invited up to the Musuem of Science and Industry (Chicago) to teach the staff about museum theatre programs, which is cool.

I’m very much a professional development kind of person. And I want my staff to not just have opportunities. I want them to be engaged. And I don’t mind being around for a really good professional museum theatre and having my team invited to speak. I think that is extra cool.

I love the way museum theatre outreach can have so many variables, so many ways of doing things. It’s fresh and it’s active and energetic, and it engages children. And they get excited about it—we always try to build in an opportunity for kids to participate some way. Sometimes kids get to come up and take a real role, and other times it’s a crowd participation kind of thing.

On-site, I wanted to do some things associated with exhibitions or with things we have on-site. George developed “Tales From the Ball Jar” because we’re the home of the Ball Jar.

The first two pieces were when we did the 125th anniversary of the Ball Jar exhibition—we did two very similar programs back-to-back. We had a 1930s-style kitchen designed, and we had a story called “Bounty” done for us about the jar that was made for the orphanage.

It’s about whether to fill the jar or not fill the jar, or whether to give the jar back or not give the jar back, because the woman has children, and what if one of her jars goes bad? Will she have to take her children to the orphanage?

The play is a blend of memories—working in the kitchen with your mother and your grandmother, the good things that the orphanage does, and how a friend recently had to take her children to the orphanage. It’s a really emotional piece. The first time I saw it I got really choked up and I’m looking around and I’m like, so is everyone else. So that’s just a wonderful piece. It’s not long, maybe 20 minutes. And there’s no resolution. You have to decide what you think the mother did.

Another piece that has real meat to it was about a KKK jar. It’s about a young man who had just been

hired by Ball Corporation. His job was mostly to clean up after shifts. He was cleaning up and talking about how he was gonna meet his girl and their friends and go to the movie theatre and stuff like that. And he finds, tucked under a bench, this jar that is emblazoned on the bottom with the KKK symbol.

The glassmakers were known for creating things after hours. Art pieces, you know, whatever. [In our collection] we have a glass top hat, glass canes, and we have the base of a KKK jar. We don’t have the whole jar. And of course the KKK was big in Indiana, but this was at a time period, at least in Indiana’s history, where there were people who were pro and con. It was more a political type of thing. So the character goes through this whole soliloquy of how his dad thinks the KKK is really bad but Uncle Joe is a member. Then he asks, “Do I tell? What if my boss is KKK? Will I get in trouble? What do I do? If I don’t tell, am I being bad?” And of course he doesn’t resolve this issue. Some of our guests want to know, What did he do? And of course it’s a whole made up story.

JFB: *It’s sort of the lady and the tiger approach to the story. It forces you to think about the issues in a different way. At the end of the show, whether it’s skewed for kids or adults, do you facilitate a discussion for those kinds of things?*

BB: Yes. There’s always opportunity for that. It depends on who is there watching, whether you’ll get much conversation or not. We try, if someone wants to go off the deep end on something, to bring it back, which is harder for our younger staff. You know, our actors are all young people, they’re not as experienced with managing that, so frequently, especially on-site, there’ll be another educator around, or George’ll be there. With “Bounty,” there’s not so much people going off the deep end. It’s just people really want to know, is that a true story? Well, the jar is for real, and we’ve got the whole history and background of the jar. The orphanage is still in operation. It has a different name, because we don’t call it an orphanage anymore, but the director was a child in the orphanage in the ’30s. He remembers the jars, and he has one on his desk. So we’ve got first person confirmation of all of this.

And it’s a great Ball Corporation story, as well. So people just are really interested to know how much of that is true. Of course we don’t use the original jar in the play, but we had it on exhibit, so we would point them to the original jar so they could see it.

The KKK play—audiences were uncomfortable as they watched it, and they didn’t want to talk about it after.

JFB: *When you saw the audience responding with this sort of reticence, did you believe the play was working the way you wanted it to? Did you consider shifting the script so that instead of triggering the “Uh-oh, I hope my ancestors are not the ones who did this,” it would nudge them more into the “What kind of decisions to make today” sort of a thing?*

BB: I talked to George about that a little bit, and I don't know whether he actually made some shifts in that script. I should talk to him again because I think he's bringing both of those back out. I know he's bringing “Bounty” back out. I think Josh (Moore) is taking that to high schools.

That was another thing that we were able to do with theatre, that we can't do as readily with most of our other programming. We're fairly traditional—K through 5th grade, K up to middle school, because you don't get so many field trips once you hit middle school and high school. Our theatre program is our only outreach. We don't do anything where we take artifacts into the classroom.

So, a couple of years ago, George leased “One Destiny,” which was written for Ford's Theatre. It takes place on the day after Lincoln's assassination, with the theatre manager and one of the actors talking about what ifs—If I had done this, could I have saved him? Could I have stopped this? Wondering if the theatre would ever open again—it was their livelihood, especially the managers.

The play had never been performed outside Ford Theatre before. George was able to lease it, and he ran it for just over a year, and it booked like mad, got us into the high schools and libraries. It let us reach a more adult audience.

That's another beauty of museum theatre, you really can cross so many different spectrums, in ways that are different or harder to do, I think, than with other educational programs. Sure, we can create educational programs for older kids or adults, but then they've gotta come and experience them. This way they don't have to use field trip time or field trip money. We actually did two seasons, not back to back, but two summer seasons of three library shows, where we performed in every library in our 7 county region, just to get “who are we” out there, so people would then feel comfortable with the idea of booking us.

It's been really good. It's a healthy program. Everyone who sees it is excited by it. We can work it in almost anywhere.

We use the concept of storytelling, and we utilize George's experience and skills to train our staff, volunteers, and board in delivering our new brand message. Which, if we didn't have the theatre program, we wouldn't have that in-house expertise. So. It's just...It's an opportunity to do things just a little differently and to experiment. I love the fact that you can just use it in so many ways.



AAM Conference 2014

Good Times, Great
Theatre Showcase



Opening session at 2014 AAM.

Photo: Judy Fort Brememan

Rebecca Gilliam

JFB: *Tell me about your role at Minnetrista, and how it intersects with Museum Theatre.*

RG: I'm Vice President of Visitor Experiences. Our museum, like all, has our own way of doing things. Here at Minnetrista, that means underneath "Visitor Experience" is my education team, my museum theatre team, exhibits, marketing, and frontline visitors' services. Part of our core mission is to be fully audience-centered, so that's why it makes sense that all those pieces go together. We see all those channels as serving the visitor either where they are or on-site, and we actually use museum theatre both ways—on-site and through our outreach program.

JFB: *For on-site versus outreach, is it the same team? Are they the same kinds of program? How does that work?*

RG: George [Buss] is our Director of Experience in Education. Under him is our Museum Theatre and Outreach Manager—that's what we call the person, but their training is in theatre. So it is the same team, however it is a small community, and we found that a variety of ways to use folks works best. We have folks that we hire very specifically as contract actors for specific shows if we need a certain type of person. We do have a year round part-time person who serves in an administrative capacity and is also an actor. So they fulfill the needs we have in our outreach—it's a really nice split.

In the summer, we have temporary folks who we bring on because we do a very specific theatre

program in the summertime that requires eight folks, but we mix and match with temps and staff to fill what we need. Our folks who are on staff are also performers—they are working managers. We're also doing new shows—we have core shows that we offer, but we bring in one or two new ones every season. So we're constantly looking at what we need and what might be the best way to fill that.

We've been doing this five, almost six, years so far. We've had to play with the model, because it had to be community specific. It's a college town, so we can draw students from three colleges as well as from community folks, but people have jobs—So it's been an interesting ride to figure out how to staff it.

JFB: *When you're drawing from the colleges, are there open auditions, or is it only through the drama departments?*

RG: We actually have a relationship with all of the theatre faculty and staff, and we hold auditions at the school to fill the different roles that we needed. That's where we found the year-round actors—recent graduates—so it's a nice year for them to get some great experience before they make their decision to go bigger or go in a different direction and see how that passion of theirs is going to fill their lives.

JFB: *Is it an internship?*

RG: No, it's paid—we do have internships, but we pay our actors. We actually pay our interns stipends. It's not phenomenal, but we do try to give them something that will cover their tuition for their credit hours.

JFB: *What convinced Minnetrista to add museum theatre to its programming?*

RG: There are a couple of things. One, Minnetrista was organized very intentionally to serve a seven county region. Our county is right in the center, and we serve all the contiguous counties. That is an incredible challenge; it's a fairly rural area. And reaching people in our area is one piece we knew we needed to get better at. The other piece was Betty (Brewer, co-winner of the IMTY). She came from an institution that had museum theatre, and she thought that it was a very good tool to deliver on the mission.

So those two pieces came together, and that's why we made the move. It was a great opportunity to grow our on-site programming and make it an even richer experience for the visitor, and we also saw that this could be a great tool to go out into our

“They do all the heavy lifting by far, but I make sure that they have what they need. Do they have the right tools, do they have the resources, am I telling the right stories so that folks know how powerful this really is?”

region and do a better job at truly serving a seven county region.

JFB: *Is the outreach primarily to schools?*

RG: It's two pieces, schools and libraries. We have found that there's a really large desire for both. Fall and springtime, we can hit the schools and do that primarily. In the summertime, we transition and do almost all library-based programs. It's a great match with the summer reading programs and the adult education programs, and we have theatre pieces that serve both those sides.

JFB: *That makes it a nice balance, a good division.*

RG: It is, and we pick up lots of organizations, too, odds and ends. There is a big push for canning and food programming, and we're home to the Ball jar—of course we have that—so we actually performed at our state fair this year. We picked up some of these odds and ends because of our niche.

JFB: *How does museum theatre fit in with Minnetrista's mission, beyond the outreach aspect of things?*

RG: We have intentionally picked programs that are unique to our mission that we do best because we have either the objects or the expertise. We are really trying to honor that, so that our program means something to the folks who bring the programs in and also delivers on our mission.

We have a couple of angles, for example, a show for children that's not about the food pyramid, but about food and healthy eating and healthy living. And then we use our collection. This is the part that I think is so awesome about our program. George really pushed for this. We take an object out of our collection and then we perform the story. It is so powerful.

We have one that is about a jar that was used in a Southern Methodist orphanage, and we leave people thinking about, "Do you give in a time of need?" In the Depression, the idea was you fill your canning jars and try and feed your family. Do you fill one extra jar and give it to the orphanage to feed children? Every time I even talk about it, it gives me goosebumps.



Photo: Judy Fort Brennehan

We serve older students as well as younger children, but we also serve adults, and stories like this are so powerful, especially for adults. We just performed it for our volunteer banquet; our volunteers skew a little older. You could just see them thinking back to their parents canning and how that felt, and the joy of being with your family, but also the fear of not having enough to eat.

JFB: *What's your role day to day with your theatre folks?*

RG: Support. I am a cheerleader. This was not my background. I have been with Minnetrista for ten years. George came in under me, and I knew very little about museum theatre. Betty was like, "I think we should go this route." And I said, "I have no idea what you're talking about."

I'm a researcher type of person, so I dug into all the literature to see how museum theatre was used in programming, in education, in exhibits. She introduced me to George and with a leap of faith, I was like, "All right, let's make this happen!" And I tried to keep the road blocks away.

So they do all the heavy lifting by far, but I make sure that they have what they need. Do they have the right tools, do they have the resources, am I telling the right stories so that folks know how powerful this really is? I can do that effectively. I can't perform—I'm horrible. But I can do the other side of supporting my team to be able to go out there, and that's what I love to do. I hope they think that's helpful because that's what I really try to do.

Rebecca Gilliam (CENTER) accepts the 2014 IMTY award from IMTAL president Stephanie Long (RIGHT) and Minnetrista colleague George Buss (LEFT).

“Museum theatre is not this add-on; they are an integrated piece.”

JFB: *That support is crucial.*

RG: Well, they get to do their job, and they're good at that part. So why mess with the other stuff if I can make that go away?

JFB: *How do you help the general public understand that this is a really cool thing? And that it will be important or exciting—how do you approach your marketing in that way?*

RG: So, because this was a start-up, we had to do the initial legwork of going in. This is one place I really pushed. I told [everyone on our team], “You will go to every person, every place you think we want to go to, and we will do face-to-face.”

Our region is small, and it's not a mass mailing. So our first go at it had to be face-to-face. We're going to meet people, we're going to take our program, we're going to take all the collateral that shows them pictures and gives them descriptions about what we're going to do, and we're going to ask them to come with us and join this fun program and bring it to their school.

We gave away a lot of free stuff at first, but that's what you have to do. And over time we have grown to have a mix of collateral that is print pieces. We now do some direct mail, but honestly, it's still the person-to-person.

There really is no such thing as “down time,” but the “not-performing time” is spent on the phone calling people. We cold-called, and it has been most effective. I am all for the “whatever works” sort of thing.

And so, as we have developed our reputation, what's interesting now is that we're getting calls before our stuff is going out. In the last 9 to 12 months, we have seen the scales start to tip. So we are now getting calls, I think we might have—what did they tell me—over 60 performances already scheduled. We can handle more, but that is a lot to be out. It could be a 2-hour drive to go out and do that plus all the work that is on-site. That's just going out.

So it wasn't anything fancy, no silver bullet, just a lot of hard work. That was my other job, telling our people, “You will call people, I know it's awful, and I know you don't like it, but you will call people, and you will meet people, and I will come with you if you need to, but we have to build relationships.”

JFB: *I have to ask: you said you're a terrible performer, so how do you know you're a terrible performer?*

RG: I just don't like it. I've tried, my whole life, I've tried. I sing. I would always want to be in shows because I want to sing, but I don't let myself perform. I feel like I look stupid. It's totally mental. But if you just put me off to the side and let me sing, I'd be okay.

But I can talk to anyone. And I can do this part. I can sell the program. Because I believe in it, and I love it. And I love what they do, and they're awesome. And it doesn't matter how many times I see the shows, they are wonderful. So it's very easy for me, that's what I tell them—you give me easy things to work with. I can sell your easy things because you're great. So you do your job and make it really great, and I'll make sure everyone knows that.

JFB: *What kind of road blocks, what things are you clearing out of the road for your team?*

RG: Less now, but initially it was what the heck is museum theatre and why do we need a theatre program. And, “These are trained professionals, we need to buy scripts.” I think with anything, it's sometimes easy to think that it's not as big, it's not as professional. It's making sure that [our board members] know what the program means, they know it is a professional program and yes, all these costs are associated with it.

Start-up programs have a lot of front-end costs that you're not going to recoup for several years. So we're reminding folks that we're here for the duration. What are the reasonable measures of success? So I'm setting goals with the team, I'm setting benchmarks and checkpoints, and then I'm making sure that's communicated, so that we are all trying to go towards success and not measuring something that's unrealistic. But also holding our people accountable, so I can say, “No, it isn't good enough, you do need to get on the phone,” and, “You guys are good, so there's no reason why you shouldn't be booked.” And resources, because when people see the value in it, the resources oftentimes follow—when you're doing an annual budget, and you're asking for a significant portion and you don't show the initial income over the first few years—I mean, it's managing expectations. Those are some of the roadblocks; it's mostly educating people.

Even our fundraising strategy isn't to a specific program, except when it was a start-up. We sought specific funds for that, but now we go with the campus-wide messaging.

We should all succeed and fail together. You can still evaluate individual programs, but we're all part of the whole book of delivering to the public. I don't want them to run as a parallel program, so I've been very careful to make sure that they're talking about it as part of the whole of what we offer. Museum theatre is not this add-on; they are an integrated piece. It's a methodology, it's a tool. We have decided to embrace that as part of how we deliver. If we get rid of theatre, we won't be able to deliver any of our programs the way that we have done them. We made the decision that they are a part of how we do it.

JFB: *That also helps avoid a potential roadblock—if funding is tough in a particular year, it's not easy to excise the theatre program.*

RG: Right. We said that we believe that this is a way to meet the visitors where they are.

JFB: *As you've gotten more immersed in this, and played more, has it changed your perception of your interpretative programming overall?*

RG: Absolutely

JFB: *In what ways?*

RG: The tools we used. We draw on theatre techniques. We use those as we're training our folks, as we're developing programs, how we're delivering the outlines. And all of our front line folks, who are also our interpreters, go through a series of trainings so that they understand how to incorporate those techniques. We use them in our school programs so the way we develop our school programs have those techniques embedded in them. And on top of it, we actually have characters that come out. We've been very specific that we use our trained theatre professionals to come in and do elements, but all of our staff know the basic techniques that are employed in theatre and specifically museum-based theatre, and they are expected to have those at their beck and call. Because we think that's a really solid method. And it suits our site; we're outdoors, indoors, we are very informal. So it really suits us.

JFB: *When you began implementing museum theatre programming, did it result in some changes to your existing training program?*

RG: Oh absolutely, everything changed.

JFB: *How did staff members react to the changes?*

RG: Well, everything was changing. It was time. It was time for everything to change. When I first came on, everything was based on NAI's interpretive model, which I had already been a part of where I had worked before, and it was not what I believed in, to be perfectly honest. That approach didn't work for me. I did not believe that it met our audience's needs and the type of visitors we had. There's definitely a place for it, but through my learning and experience with it, it wasn't my preference.

So we were already well into philosophically changing how we viewed our visitor and how we worked with them. So when we started to incorporate theatre-based technique, what was really cool about it was that it was tangible. I was trying to get them to do some things that were different, but George was able to put names and techniques and demonstrate them and folks were like, "Oh, okay. I can use that tool. I can make that happen."

"We should all succeed and fail together. You can still evaluate individual programs, but we're all part of this whole book of delivering to the public."

So yes, everything's changed, and it still is changing. We do great work, but we are certainly not awesome at this. So we rotate staff in all the time. New volunteers, new front-line staff; we are constantly changing. It's kind of fun. We get to hone our training programs, and we can also pull things that really stink.

We have been in a series of changes, which has been very intentional. In the last three years, we have built an interpretive plan, which this was a part of. We rolled out a new brand identity and messaging. We're doing some internal and external culturalization, so we have a parallel training program going on that really is helping people understand why Minnetrista matters. So all of it comes together, and all of these pieces help deliver on that.

continued on page 19

AAM Conference 2014



Photo: Judy Fort Brememan

Performers Elizabeth Pickard, Douglas Coler, Todd Davis, and Carla Burton answer questions and encourage audience members to give museum theatre a try, at the 2014 AAM Theatre Showcase. Below: MC Cat Chiappa coordinates the discussion.



Photo: Amber Parham Davis



Photo: Amber Parham Davis

Simone Mortan bravely samples *les fines foodstuffs* created by ze amazing chef Douglas Coler in *A Taste of Them*, at the 2014 AAM Theatre Showcase.



Photo: Judy Fort Brememan

Todd Norris as Federal Marshal escorting Ruby Sparks, at the 2014 AAM Theatre Showcase.

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JFB: *One of the things that's really impressed me is that you are very much focused on your audience. Not just focused on them as in, what do they need when they come through the door, but going out into the community and saying, "Who's out here, and why would they ever care about us to begin with, and how do we make those connections with them?"*

RG: Very intentionally. We are kind of militant about it because we are new at it, and we walk everyone through this, and it has been very rigorous, but amazingly productive. We eliminated programs, we've added new ones. And it all matters, so that the program matches or supports our mission. What do they say as they are setting it up? What is the conversation discussion afterwards? We have that all mapped out, so that it helps deliver on those experience outcomes that have been set up at the very beginning.

JFB: *Do you have recommendations or advice—or warnings!—for others who are just getting into it, people who, like you, are working behind the scenes in a supportive role?*

RG: It's hard work, it's hard—that's probably applicable to any start-up program, it's hard. You

have to have all the stakeholders on board, and you need to have realistic expectations and all have the same vision of what success looks like at different milestones. Because every community is different, every program is going to be a little different. That's what's been very interesting, is expectations. That was probably the most eye-opening—just managing expectations. If it's outside of what somebody knows [like museum theatre was for us], it takes that much more to help them understand what to expect. Somebody maybe thought the first year, we were going to do fifty performances, and the reality is that doing five was amazing. You have to educate and bring them along and remember it's not a one time thing; you're constantly bringing people along.

JFB: *Any final thoughts?*

RG: I can fundraise for this, because I think it works, I think it's valuable. I think when our people meet up with groups, who ever they are, school children, adults, they are sharing something that is going to bring them a personal experience, and we're delivering on our mission. And I should want to be able to sell that, and I can do that, I can ask people for money, I always say anyone can fundraise if they believe in what they're doing.



AAM Conference 2014

Glory Gargoyle, played by Elizabeth Pickard, rises to the occasion (left), spreads her wings (right), and helps us be owls (below), at the 2014 AAM Theatre Showcase.



Photos: Amber Parham Davis

Announcements & Calls for Submissions & Auditions

Conferences and workshops

Sept. 28–Oct. 2, 2014: **IMTAL-Americas Regional Conference**, Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago, IL. (Pre-conference is Sept. 28, noon to 6 p.m.) Details and registration: <http://imtal.org>

Oct. 18–21, 2014: **ASTC (The Association of Science-Technology Centers) Annual Conference**, Raleigh, NC

Nov. 18–22, 2014: **National Association for Interpretation (NAI) National Workshop**, Denver, CO
INCLUDING:

- *Better than Broadway: How to use theatre to create and present amazing interpretive programs*: A 3-hour intensive mini-workshop co-presented by IMTAL and CILH (Cultural and Living History, a Section of NAI) members Judy Fort Brenneman, Simone Mortan, Bill Weldon, and John Luzader.
- *Most Misunderstood Characters*: Time and date to be determined. An evening event where the audience and a panel of judges determine which of the performers is truly the most misunderstood. Open to all NAI conference attendees; performances by audition/proposal or invitation only; more information will be available through IMTAL and CILH soon.

Announcements

Effective Exhibit Interpretation and Design

by *Tessa Bridal*

Published by AltaMira Press (Rowman & Littlefield)
<http://tinyurl.com/tessabridal>

Tessa Bridal's latest book examines the impact of an integrated approach to exhibit design and development on the effective creation and support of live interpretation of exhibit messages and institutional mission.

Eight institutions collaborated with Tessa in examining the outcomes of approaching exhibit and live interpretation design and development collaboratively, the challenges of adding interpretation to spaces and exhibits not designed for it, and the guiding practices they have put into place. She argues that the interpreters who bring these exhibitions, an institution's mission, collections, and stories to life and to the forefront of a visitor's attention are a vital part of an institution's public face, and that neglecting to give live interpretation an equal seat at the table impoverishes the ultimate visitor experience.

Reviews for *Effective Exhibit Interpretation and Design*

Effective Exhibit Interpretation and Design is a mandatory, useful, and educational "how to handbook" for both novices and pros.

Harriet Lynn, Heritage Theatre Artists Consortium

Packed with effective, audience-tested, real world examples of the country's great institutions, *Effective Exhibit Interpretation and Design* is a thoughtful and thought-provoking book that will refocus those teams that already employ the techniques, and energize institutions that have yet to discover the rich and wonderful world of museum theatre.

Douglas Coler, Discovery Place

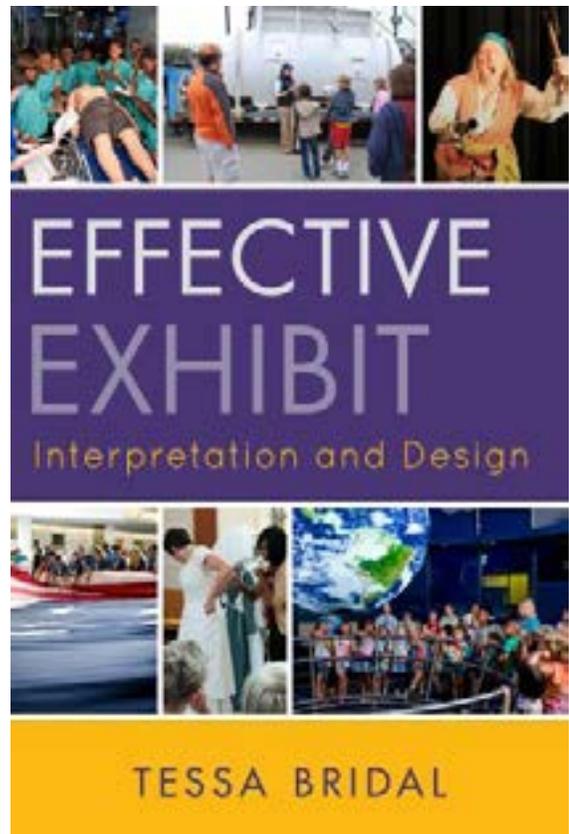
This valuable and practical guide is packed with case studies and clear instructions for selecting appropriate content to interpret, designing performance spaces, finding professional script writers, and hiring and working with actors.

Barbara E. Brennan, George Washington University

For Whom It Stands—A "Top 10 Must-See Exhibit This Summer" (USA Today)

now through February 28, 2015

by *Harriet Lynn, Producer/Artistic Director, Heritage Theatre Artists' Consortium*



The Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African-American History and Culture's new exhibit, *For Whom It Stands: The Flag and the American People*, opened on May 17, 2014 and runs through February 28, 2015. This 3,200 square foot exhibition has more than 100 works of art, artifacts, documents, and photographs reflecting the breadth of American experiences.

Opening day included the premiere of *O Say Can You Feel*, an oral history performance featuring ten individuals whose flag related stories paint a montage of experiences ranging from rage to glory, innocence to tragedy. These powerful, personal stories, interwoven with poetry and music, come from throughout our history—from the American Revolution to today's headlines—and tell us something about ourselves and the strength of the human spirit. Performances of *O Say Can You Feel* are scheduled throughout 2014. Visit the museum's website for more information: <http://www.rflewismuseum.org/FWIS>

Calls for Submissions

Submit articles, news, and ideas for the next issue of *INSIGHTS!*

The Big Topic for the fall issue is *Creating Stories: How to, why to, challenges, and triumphs*. We're looking for articles, opinions, and news about events, programs, your site, and your self. We prefer articles and opinions that address the Big Topic, but will consider other subjects, too. News can be on any topic. Articles and opinion pieces can be from 250 to 3,000 words long; must be in MS Word (.doc preferred, please); and it would be really nice if you could format your file to be double-spaced, first paragraph indented, 11- or 12-point Times New Roman or similar. But the most important thing is to send us your article, opinion, or news: to pubsofficer@imtal.org no later than Labor Day (Sept. 1, 2014). (*It doesn't have to be perfect; it just needs to be reasonably coherent. If we have questions, we'll contact you.*) Send photos, too!



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Four Days of Fury

by Addae Moon

Atlanta History Center

Winner, 2014 Jon Lipsky Award for Playwriting Excellence

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To see excerpts of the performance:

<http://tinyurl.com/fourdaysoffury>

<http://tinyurl.com/fourdaysoffury2>

FOUR DAYS OF FURY

**Audience assembles outside the gallery in lobby area, where they grab a lanyard and can look at newspapers from 1906 and other relevant exhibits.*

After a brief introduction by a history center staff person, a gentleman in early twentieth century clothing wanders amongst the group asking questions and attempting to engage them in conversation. He jots down notes on their various responses before he addresses the entire crowd.

MAX

Excuse me.

(shaking an audience member's hand)

J. Max Barber from *The Voice of The Negro*. Would you mind answering a few questions? What do you know about the *Atlanta Race Riots of 1906*?

Are you Atlanta born and bred? Me neither.

Had you ever heard of it prior to today?

Have you ever heard of Hoke Smith? No, the infamous gubernatorial candidate during the riot?

Surely you've heard of the *Atlanta Constitution*? What was their position on the riot? How about the *Atlanta Independent*?

What about the popular playwright and novelist Thomas Dixon? How did his controversial work help to ignite some of the feelings of the people involved?

What about the great man of Tuskegee, Booker T. Washington, what were his opinions about the riot?

How about Atlanta University Professor W.E.B Dubois? Or Professor Adrienne Herndon, wife of the business mogul Alonzo Herndon? What were their opinions?

(To the entire audience)

Better yet....let's try another line of questioning...

How do we formulate our opinions, or perceptions about others? Think about that for a moment.....

(after the audience is given a moment to think about it, Max then begins a discussion of it with them.)

This question of perceptions is at the core of incidents leading up to the Atlanta Race Riots of 1906.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MAX (cont'd)

Let me see a show of hands if you know anything about this historical event?

(responding the lack of raised hands.)

Ummm....Fascinating.

Why do you think so few people have heard of one of the major events that helped to shape our city?

(Asking several people in the audience.)

Are there things in your own personal history that you might conveniently want to forget? Things that contradict with how you want the world to see you.... Or how you see yourself.

Well in many ways a growing city is just as fragile as a human being. Many people in the city clung to newspaper man Henry W. Grady's vision of "The New South"

In a speech he made in New York City in 1886 Grady stated: "There was a South of slavery and secession - that South is dead. There is now a South of union and freedom - that South, thank God, is living, breathing, and growing every hour,"

But while many Atlantans pushed for this ideal of the New South, in 1906 other Southerners were still wounded from the loss the Civil War and angered by the experiment that was Reconstruction...Grady's vision did not reflect how they viewed themselves or their city.

(Stopping himself)

I'm sorry. Here I am, speeding along like a trolley car with no tracks. I have a tendency to do that....

I didn't properly introduce myself to all of you.

My name is Jesse Max Barber. I was the editor of *The Voice of the Negro*, the country's number one monthly Negro periodical, published right here in Atlanta.

Due to circumstances beyond my control, the magazine no longer operates as *The Voice of the Negro*, we have undergone a slight name and location change--but more about that later....

So glad to make your acquaintance. For these proceedings you may simply call me, Max.

(Jokingly) I've been told that I strike a rather imposing figure, but I promise you, I am neither a cannibal nor a murderer.

I'm simply an editor and a journalist... which, depending on who you talk to, is far worse.

(CONTINUED)

I'm in the business of documenting and shaping communal memory.

So, of course I find it rather curious, even amazing, that in your time, so few of you have heard of the Atlanta Race Riots.

I did expect there to be competing narratives, but I had no idea that the story would die completely.

It was written about in newspapers all over the globe and, in many ways, it was the word spinners, opinion makers, like myself who lit the match to this powder-keg.

It's the job of a journalist to report the facts, unbiased impersonal facts, right?

That's what I used to think.

But what power does a fact have in a world steeped in false perceptions and fear? Where the boogeyman is very much alive and real... and in the minds of many citizens, he bears a striking resemblance to the handsome gent you see before you.

Fear. How does one fight... fear?

How does a city like Atlanta, the Gate City of the New South, prosperous and progressive- succumb to a storm of fear on September 22, 1906...leaving from 26 to possibly 40 bodies in its wake?

How does a journalist report the facts when the public's perception is already being shaped by popular culture, irresponsible media, agendas, counter-agendas, insecurities, fragile memory and raw emotion?

My attempts at reporting the facts as I saw them resulted in me being chased out of town.

The concerted effort, by men in power, to shape the memory of the citizens is the main reason many of you have never heard of the Atlanta Race Riots of 1906.

The irony of that calculated effort is that it created a communal memory that allowed Atlanta to become "The city too busy to hate."

You can't hate what you don't remember...right?

So come along with me. I will be your conductor, on a little street car ride through memory. Just a few

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MAX (cont'd)

stations, brief forgotten stops along our communal past.

Now in order for us to make this trip, you will need to activate your press credentials.

Open the lanyards you received. If you flip them inside out, you will notice that they are either black or white. Place the reversed cards back in your lanyards.

Good. Now remember the stations that we will be visiting are in Atlanta during 1905 and 1906. The Atlanta of this time has a very rigid color scheme called Jim Crow. So, we will have to follow those rules.

I would like those with the designated white lanyards to form a line in the front of our memory street car.

My dear Negro friends, you will form a line behind them.

Alright, hold onto to something stable--or each other--the road through public memory is filled with potholes.

MEMORY STATION I: The Grand

Theater--The Clansman

(At Memory Station One there will be two rows of seats in front of the performance area and one behind labeled COLORED ONLY. He will suggest that all of the "white" audience members sit. The remaining "black" audience members stand in the back.)

MAX

The Grand Theater, Downtown Atlanta, 1905. The amazing thing about popular culture, in any era, is that it provides one with many insights into the values and morals of the people living in that time period.

In 1905, the dominant form of entertainment for Americans of every race, class and region is minstrelsy.

(slide show with music begins)

White performers in black greasepaint or burnt cork, pretending to be singing, dancing, jovial Negroes, has made this theatrical genre popular throughout the world since the mid 1800's. By 1905, the Negro blackface minstrels are dominating the art form and transforming

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MAX (cont'd)

it into the American musical and vaudeville. The once blatantly racist caricatures are becoming more subtle, nuanced, complex and for many masterful Negro performers, a very lucrative way of making a living. But the portrayal of the Negro onstage in more "serious" work is still being done by white performers in blackface.

ENTER Thomas Dixon (A performer comes on as Dixon and takes a bow, he begins to arrange and direct the other performers in preparation for the scene as Max continues to speak.)

A well respected minister turned novelist, who has decided to adapt the 2nd novel of his soon to be "Trilogy of Reconstruction" into a play.

ENTER 3 Actors All of the actors in the production are white, but they will portray the novel's Negro characters as well. (The white performer marks himself as "negro" with a line of greasepaint on his cheeks.)

Like so... Now if you ever get confused about the particular race of whoever is speaking, simply look at the glove and it will tell you. (Max begins putting on white gloves) So, in case you might be a little slow on the draw. For this particular memory station, in the tradition of minstrel vernacular

(all of the performers, including Max, strike a minstrel pose)

"We's all white folk!" For all of his use of minstrel tropes, Dixon creates a new archetype that begins to seep into the subconscious of the audience members that witness the play's sell-out run at Atlanta's Grand Theatre... Introducing Dixon's creation, Gus.....

(The actor playing Gus takes a bow)

The newly emancipated, lustful and dangerous Negro male.

(actors exit off stage R)

DIXON

(to audience)

Thank you ladies and gentleman for joining us for this open rehearsal of the theatrical adaptation of my best-selling novel *The Clansman*. In every city that we visit we like to invite a small group of exclusive guests to come witness our rehearsal process so that they might gain a greater appreciation for the hard work that goes into mounting a touring production. It is also our hope that your insight into the process might be used to

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DIXON (cont'd)

persuade some of your more reluctant neighbors... like the genteel people of Macon, GA... of the importance of such a historic production.

The scene we are about to rehearse is adapted from the chapter of my book entitled The Hunt for the Animal.

At this point in the story our hero, Ben

(Actor enters and poses with hat off)

Has just discovered that the love of his life, Marion... (motions to a mannequin on the ground...)

Has leaped to her death after being defiled by the dusky savage brute Gus....

(Actor enters and strikes brutish pose)

But this fact has yet to be discovered. (He exits)

In a failed attempt at trying to save her daughter, Marion's mother Jeanie (He motions to the ground....but no one's there) Jeanie....? Where in the Sam Hill is Jeanie?!

(the rest of the cast shrugs)

You! (Dixon motions to one of the audience members)
Would you be so kind as to be my stand in for Jeanie.
Thank you. (helps them lie down on stage)

Where was I? Yes...Marion's mother, Jeanie, has also fallen down the cliff trying to save her daughter, and is now about to expire.

The doctor at the scene of the tragedy (Actor playing Doctor enters and strikes pose) Suspects foul play...

And has discovered a brilliant scientific solution to unveil the truth.

Places!!....The Clansman, Act III Scene 6

(scene begins)

DOCTOR

My boy, I wish you to witness an experiment.
(He removes a microscope from his case)

BEN

What on earth are you going to do, sir?

(CONTINUED)

DOCTOR

Find the fiend who did this crime--and then we will hang him on a gallows so high that all men from the rivers to the ends of the earth shall see, feel and know the might of an unconquerable race of men.

BEN

But there's no trace of him here.

DOCTOR

We shall see...

(the doctor, adjusting his instrument.)

I believe that a microscope of sufficient power will reveal on the retina of these dead eyes the image of this devil as if etched there by fire. The experiment has been made successfully in France. Psychologists hold that nothing is lost from the memory of man. Impressions remain in the brain like words written on paper in invisible ink. So I believe that images remain in the eyes, if we can trace them early enough. I believe that the fire-etched record of this crime can yet be traced from the victim's retina.

(He first examines Marion's eyes, but finds nothing.)

It's as I feared with the child, I can see nothing.

(turning to Jeanie)

It is on the mother I rely. In the splendor of life, at thirty-seven she was the full-blown perfection of womanhood, with every vital force at its highest tension, perhaps the image was retained in her eyes--

(He uses the microscope to examine Jeanie)

BEN

What is it, sir?

DOCTOR

Look now and tell me what you see!

BEN

I can see nothing.

DOCTOR

Your powers of vision are not trained as mine.

BEN

What do you see?

DOCTOR

The bestial figure of a negro--his huge black hand plainly defined--the upper part of the face is dim, as if obscured by a gray mist of dawn--but the massive jaws and lips are clear--merciful God--yes--it's Gus!

(CONTINUED)

GUS

(enters, breaking character)
This is absurd!!!

(the other actors break character, annoyed.)

DIXON

(embarrassed, but trying to save face in
front of the audience)
You haven't entered yet, Gus...

GUS

The whole premise is absurd!...How in the heck do you
see a killer in a dead woman's eyes ...with a
microscope?!

DOCTOR

Can you stick to the script, please!!

DIXON

This is theatre! We are allowed the suspension of
disbelief!!

GUS

This is inane!... And you wonder why they won't let us
play Macon?

DIXON

(Composing himself...and helping up the
guest performer)
Thank you for your assistance.

Well... I'm sure many of you have heard about
the...resistance we've encountered with the fine folks
of Macon in regards to our production. The city
officials seem to be under the false impression that
mounting this exquisite show might possibly cause an
uproar within their citizenry. I am here to assure you
that this show is an honest, realistic and inspiring
representation of our rich Southern heritage.

Moving on!!!.... Gus has been captured.

(Gus enters between two men in Klan regalia)
Places!

ACT III Scene 7...

(Clansmen take off hoods)

CLANSMAN 1

I am here, brethren, to accuse the black brute about to
appear of the crime of assault on a daughter of the
South.

(CONTINUED)

His feet have been measured and they exactly tally with the negro tracks found under the window of the Lenoir cottage....

(Gus starts laughing.)

His flight to Columbia, and return on the scene of the crime, is a confirmation of our case. I will not relate to you the scientific experiment which first fixed my suspicion of this man's guilt.....

(Gus laughs louder)

DIXON

(Furious) Scene!!

(to Gus)

What is your problem?!!! We have guests here!

GUS

His feet?! Negro tracks? Scientific experiment?!!!

Somebody's been sipping a little too much hooch...

DIXON

That is purely recreational....!

(They continue to argue and gesture silently)

MAX

Now I'm sure many of you might be thinking, "How can a play I've never heard of impact communal memory?"

This particular play, *The Clansman*, is later adapted into D.W. Griffith's groundbreaking film *Birth of a Nation*.

(actors run off arguing; image on screen)

Griffith's film, the first cinematic blockbuster, helps to transform the novelty entertainment of motion pictures, into a major art form and propaganda tool.

But, the play and novel also have a strong impact on a sweet little southern gal by the name of Margaret Mitchell. Margaret performs a version of the end of this last scene, when Gus is lynched, on her front porch...using children from her neighborhood.

When her father sees the spectacle he is furious! ...not by the racist representation of history or the violent lynching... But because his young ambitious daughter obviously knows nothing about copyright infringement. Margaret would later re-count this story in a letter she writes to Thomas Dixon after the

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MAX (cont'd)

success of her novel *Gone With The Wind*. The two writers shared a mutual admiration. But that's farther down the tracks.... The play's immediate impact on the minds of the Atlantans who went to see it in the late summer of 1905 is to further fuel their fears of a growing Negro population. This growing population's freedom of movement, coupled with the right to vote, will become a crucial factor in the early stages of the campaigns for the Governor's race.

Follow me and we will take a look at what's happening in the judicial sector leading up to the riot.

MEMORY STATION 2: Judge Broyles'

Courtroom.

(As the audience begins to leave the previous station, the barking voice of the BAILIFF is immediately heard. At the station, the audience area is separated by a line, with a few chairs in front of the line. The performing area has an elevated section with a Judge's bench and a lower section with a defendant's chair.)

BAILIFF

Hurry up people! Move it, move it, MOVE IT! The docket is full and we are already running late. (looking at Max) But considering who you with, can't say I'm surprised. So, I'm going to make your little colored paper this week Barber?

MAX

It's a monthly, sir. Difficult to say if you will warrant a mention. Let's see how the day pans out.

BAILIFF

(To audience)

I'm gonna need the white defendants in front of this here line and the negroes behind it.

(to Max)

Even the white ones moving about as slow as field hands

(Bailiff laughs and coughs. Max stares and offers him a handkerchief. Bailiff coughs and blows his nose.)

BAILIFF

Thank ya.

(Offers it to Max.)

(CONTINUED)

MAX

Keep it. Early Christmas gift.

Bailiff enters the performance area and addresses the audience.

BAILIFF

Defendants please stand. That means you. You have now entered the sacred halls of Atlanta Recorder's Court. Judge Nash R. Broyles presiding.

(Broyles enters in half-mask. The scene that follows is intentionally exaggerated. The character of Broyles is a cross between Pigmeat Markem's vaudeville judge, Boss Hog, and Pere Ubu.)

BROYLES

Some of you may be seated. Don't get too comfortable, now. I got people to do and thangs to see...let's move on it. First case!

(The Bailiff brings two of the "black" defendants to the stand. There's a beat.)

Ain't you gonna swear em in?

BAILIFF

I can't find the Negro bible, Jedge. I could use the white one.

JUDGE

Then we won't have anything for the white folks. Never mind.

(looks through his notes.)

Let's see here...what are these boys being charged with? Says here that the two of you are being charged with not giving up your seats to a white woman on the street car?

What you gotta say for yourself?

(If the two audience members begin to defend themselves or if they say nothing at all...Judge Broyles chimes in)

I'm sure you would much rather be getting drunk in one of the Negro dives on Decatur Street right now.

Right?

Well I'm gonna tell you what I'm gonna do.

I'm gonna let you leave this court room and drink to your heart's content?... But you both will be 50

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JUDGE (cont'd)

dollars short. 50 dollar fine for each of these boys.
Next case!

(Bailiff brings up another "black" defendant to sit on the stand)

Well, well....lookey here. Been at least two months since I last see you in here, boy.

Says here....we got you on another vagrancy charge, boy.

Say's you been hanging out on Hunter Street again. Totally ignoring the state's anti- vagrancy laws.

All this work available in the city and you can't find nothing to do?

If you spent more time working and less time reading Booker T. Washington and Teddy Roosevelt, then I wouldn't be spending all this quality time witcha.

I tell ya what...I bet three months of hard labor at the brickyard is gonna leave you with little time for your intellectual pursuits.

Three months of hard labor. Next case!

(Bailiff brings a "white" defendant to the stand. The Judge looks at his notes.)

Hmmmm. Say's here, Mr. McWilliams, that you are accusing your Negro associate Brisco Gaines of robbing you while you were intoxicated in some dive on Decatur Street.

Well sir, "you are not the first to discover that social equality is a losing proposition so far as the white man is concerned." (The judge continues to gesture and mouth words as Max speaks.)

MAX

Granted we have exaggerated Broyles' courtroom a little....but only a little.

These are his the actual decisions and statements from actual cases.

Defendants faced his bench with no counsel, due process was completely ignored and the sentence was completely left up to Broyles' mood that particular day.

In fact the comic, arbitrary nature of his sentencing inspired a regular column in the Constitution called

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MAX (cont'd)

Judge Briles....that's right....with full minstrel inflection... JUDGE BRILES.

(brief minstrel interlude between Max and Bailiff)

MAX

Ya know dey say JUDGE BRILES back on the bench today ...

BAILIFF

What dey say?

MAX

Dey say JUDGE BRILES back on the bench today...

BAILIFF

Thought he was on vacation?

MAX

Well he done vacatin'....now he back and ready for business.

BAILIFF?

Do lawd...I might get executed for jay-walking.

(end of minstrel interlude)

JUDGE

Next case!

MAX

In 1906, Broyles' travesty of justice earned the city \$141,809 in fines alone. And he was efficient. His court handled 19,000 of the 21,000 arrests in Atlanta. A city three times as big, Milwaukee, had one quarter the arrests.

Not to mention the free labor for the city and neighboring corporations.

His arbitrary sentencing not only resulted in guilty verdicts for 70 percent of the black defendants that entered his courtroom.

It was easy enough. Any Negro male walking the streets of Atlanta in 1906 was vulnerable to arrest for vagrancy.

But even with all of these documented historical facts about the Judge's courtroom and its practices, the following memorial--dated November 4, 1947--can be found in the 75 Georgia Appeals Reports about the Judge's legacy:

(CONTINUED)

"A believer in the enforcement of the law, an opponent of trifling technicalities, an advocate of the punishment of the guilty as a protection to society." It was said: "His strength lay in his faith in the eternal principles of right and wrong."

Really now?

Well, We are stockpiling our wood.

The power of popular culture in shaping communal perception. The travesty of a local justice system that financially supports both the city and local corporations. Unfair judicial decisions that contribute to the growing fears of the white populace.

Now, it's time to continue our journey and see how the media comes into play.

MEMORY STATION 3: Street
Corner--Downtown Atlanta

(A newspaper boy is hustling his wares. This is one of the few stations where movement and space is not mitigated by "race.")

NEWSBOY

Extra, Extra!!! Read all about it-- "Hoke Smith supports Tom Watson's ideas on Negro Disenfranchisement!"

MAX

Young man, what do you know about local politics?

NEWSBOY

I only know what's on the headline, buddy...--all I need to know.

MAX

Aren't you concerned about who the state's next Governor might be?

NEWSBOY

You serious, buddy?.....Extra, Extra!! "Young white woman attacked by Negro in Lakewood--"

MAX

Of course, I'm serious? Some of the information you're peddling is downright erroneous?

NEWSBOY

What--you got job for me or something?

(CONTINUED)

MAX

Well, I--

NEWSBOY

--Thought not--Extra, Extra!!! "Ballots now or bullets later--"

MAX

--See that's the sort of thing I'm talking about! If we don't call out the fallacies in these news reports.

If we don't make people aware of what's really going on. Something detrimental might--

NEWSBOY

Look buddy, I'm witcha...alright...(looks around to make sure no one is watching) but this is my job, see?

It's all a load of horse poop. I mean, whadya got here?

Two newspaper men, Clarke Howell and Hoke Smith both running for Governor of Georgia. These guys are loaded.

Totally out of touch with your average White or Negro voter, but one thing they do understand is the power of words and controversy.

They also know that everybody is a little uneasy about the power of the Negro vote and how it might impact the Democrat and Republican parties.

MAX

So, why don't they court the Negro vote?

NEWSBOY

You're not from around here, are you buddy? ...See there was this little War a couple of years back... the Civil War...or as folks around here like to call it--

MAX

The War of Northern Aggression--

NEWSBOY

So you ain't a total nincompoop...had me worried there for a sec.

MAX

You're rather astute yourself...for a newsboy.

NEWSBOY

I read a lot.

These guys are still caught up in losing the war so,
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NEWSBOY (cont'd)

the last thing they would want to do is ask for the Negro vote.

Then there's the fact that you got guys like me out here hitting the pavement, when there are all these younger Negroes getting these respectable jobs at the post office, owning fancy little barber shops downtown, some even going up on the hill to get educated at one of them Negro colleges in town.

MAX

Any white person who works hard enough can achieve the same thing.

NEWSBOY

Sure, of course-- but you have to see it from their point of view.

They don't get how a group of people two generations away from slavery, only 29 years from Reconstruction, is able to get so far so fast?!

MAX

Even with Jim Crow laws and segregation.

NEWSBOY

Exactly!

All that success makes poor whites green with envy and the white elite nervous as all get out. They put a lot of stock in being superior.

MAX

(holding one of the papers)
So, this is all about insecurity?

NEWSBOY

Ain't it always.

That and fear and desperate attempts at trying to maintain some illusion of power.

Look at Hoke Smith's "mentor" Tom Watson, stoking fear of the Negro vote.

Not too long ago, this same guy was trying to unite poor white and negro farmers to fight against the corruption of the big corporations.

MAX

But he failed and had to reinvent himself as a "child of Dixie," pushing Hoke Smith to initiate his campaign based on "fear of the Negro vote."

(CONTINUED)

NEWSBOY

And his opponent Clark Howell joined right in the fear mongering in order to keep up.

After all the progress made after the War, giving colored men the vote, suddenly the Governor's Race hangs on taking the right to vote away from the Negro.

We can all sing Dixie because if the Negro has no voting power....everyone is happy.

MAX

Everyone, but the Negro. So, what about all the reports of attacks on white women.

NEWSBOY

One real attack is enough to fabricate hundreds. As long as you keep pumping fear into the machine it keeps running.

So, you got the papers providing the fuel-- the Negro middle class and White business class trying to put out fires... and the machine keeps right on moving.

MAX

Interesting... So, whose side are you on?

NEWSBOY

Side? Ain't got no side buddy... I'm like one of those carpetbaggers. No matter what happens, it'll make the news....and I'll have papers to sell.

Extra, Extra!! "White school teacher attacked on her way home!"

(Newsboy walks off)

MAX

Well... we seem to be getting closer to the moment when the fury is unleashed.

But before that happens, let's take a little detour down the alleyway to a place where Jim Crow hasn't completely stalled the flow of movement.

MEMORY STATION 4: Juke Joint on

Decatur Street

The area has moody lighting. During the entire scene, ragtime or some early blues is playing low in the background. There are 3 tables with chairs and benches for everyone to sit on. A man and a woman are sitting at one table laughing and

(CONTINUED)

joking. Another actor is behind the bar. The audience should be in the space as opposed to simply observing.

**The woman, ROSE, is white but can be played by a female performer of any ethnicity. The man, STEWART, is black and can be played by a performer of any ethnicity. The other characters are JAKE the owner (who enters at the end) a black man and TOM a white bartender--race and gender of the performers not important.*

Max enters with the audience.

MAX

Jake's Juke Joint. Feel free to sit or stand anywhere you want to. No color lines here.

ROSE

Well, Mr. Barber seems you brought all of Decatur Street with you.

MAX

Ahhh. The lovely Rose Smith. The best telegraph operator in the Gate City.
(Kisses her hand)

ROSE

Bet you say that to all the ladies, Max. Meet my friend, Stewart. Stewart this is Max...

STEWART

(excited...rises to shake his hand)
J. Max Barber....Mr. Barber, I'm a huge fan of The Voice Of The Negro.

MAX

Thank you, young man.

ROSE

Stewart is a student at Atlanta University...studying?

STEWART

Literature, sir. I want to be a school teacher.

MAX

Well, the race definitely needs more young and energetic school teachers.

ROSE

Stew here is keeping me company while his friends are being "entertained" at the burlesque house.

(CONTINUED)

MAX

You don't like burlesque, Stewart?

STEWART

(bashfully)

It's not that, it's just...well... I'm engaged, sir. I didn't think it would be appropriate.

TOM

Appropriate? Boy, you realize you on Decatur Street, right?

(They laugh at his naiveté. Max walks over to Tom and the two share Tom's cigarette.)

STEWART

(embarrassed)

Yeah...well...

TOM

What's that saying the Negroes have, Max...?

MAX

Which one?

TOM

The one about the types....uh... Decatur...um.

MAX

Oh...There are essentially two types of Negroes.

(in Victorian)

Auburn Avenue Negroes.

(in Vernacular)

And Decatur Street Negroes.

TOM

(In Victorian)

Stewart is obviously the former.

(They laugh. Stewart wants to crawl under the table.)

STEWART

(looking at Max, shocked)

You smoke Mr. Barber?

MAX

Don't tell nobody.

ROSE

Ignore them, Stewart. See, that's what I was talking about. Perceptions.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ROSE (cont'd)

It's like when I went home to visit my folks in Newnan. I told my father that I'd become a suffragette. The look he had on his face...it was as if I'd told him that I was marrying a Negro.

STEWART

What would your father say if he walked through that door and saw the two of us sitting at the same table?

ROSE

Honestly...He'd probably beat me within an inch of my life.

STEWART

What would he do to me?

ROSE

...probably string you up.

STEWART

Even though I'm a happily engaged man, With no dishonorable intentions.

ROSE

Doesn't matter. Perceptions.

STEWART

What about you, Ms. Rose? You read the newspapers. Here you are on Decatur Street in the middle of the night in some Juke joint in an alleyway. You're not even a little afraid.

MAX

He's got you there, Rose.

ROSE

Why should I be? I grew up on a farm in Newnan. I hunt better than any of my four brothers, and I can skin an animal faster than most men.

MAX

So, you are not afraid of being defiled by one of us "dusky black brutes."

(Tom and Max laugh. Rose leans in close, flirtatious, making Stewart very nervous.)

ROSE

....I carry a straight razor at all times...and I know how to use it.

So, are you gonna listen to these two drunks

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ROSE (cont'd)

yapping--or are you gonna get up and dance. Can you dance, Auburn Avenue?

(Max and Tom howl at her challenge. Rose and Stewart get up and dance.)

At various times during Max's monologue, Rose and Stewart will bring up an audience member to dance. Max snaps his fingers and swings a little at the beginning of the monologue.)

MAX

Syncopation....music....and movement. When I delve back into my memory of that time, for some reason those are the things that I remember most about the city before the riot.

The major tragedy of Jim Crow is that it limits both space and movement.

For everyone: black, white, male, female, rich, poor and in between. Your entire existence is constricted. You can barely breathe and because of that, you are easier to control.

The real danger on Decatur Street wasn't the drugs, prostitution, crime, burlesque houses, home-made liquor or violence.... and believe me those were very real and occasionally dangerous...

But I'm speaking of the deep unspoken danger.... the core danger that spawns all of the exaggerated and tantalizing news reports.

The real danger was that Decatur Street was a free zone, a place of unrestricted movement.

If you were a young white woman, educated and independent with no responsibilities. A working class white man, away from his family, with money to spend. A black male student at one of the city's black universities, out on the town with your buddies for a night of adventure.

A working class black woman trying to unwind after a long day of hard labor.

Your class and your race didn't matter on Decatur Street.

Jim Crow did not exist.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MAX (cont'd)

Places of unrestricted movement, have always been the most dangerous places in the minds of those who want to maintain power and control.

In these spaces, people of different backgrounds can laugh together, drink together, lean on one another and talk.

The free zone gives you the opportunity to appreciate another person's humanity.

(Jake rushes in. Crowd noises, sirens and bullhorns can be heard.)

JAKE

Alright people--time to close shop! Atlanta's Finest is making the rounds--and they cracking skulls!!

MAX

Alright folks that's our cue to leave.

(to Rose)

Make sure the kid gets out of here, safely! Nice to meet you, kid--stop by the office sometime.

STEWART

I will, sir!

(The performers rush out first.)

MAX

We need to make a move before we end up back in Judge Briles' court Come with me, I want to introduce you to some friends of mine.

MEMORY STATION 5: The Barbershop

(Max enters the barbershop on Marietta)

LOUIS

Al, I know that ain't the dapper dandy from South Carolina?

AL

Lawd, it must be judgment day cause the chosen one has graced our presence dis here afternoon.

MAX

I just stepped in the damn door and yall done started signyfyin?

(to audience)

See what I gotta deal with.

(CONTINUED)

(He sits in Al's chair.)

LOUIS

(code switching)
Did you here that, Albert?

AL

Heavens Louis, did Jesse Max Barber drop a consonant?

LOUIS

Did he say "signyfyin"....not at all apropos.

AL

Is dropping a consonant even allowed in the Niagara Movement?

LOUIS

Improbable. I must consult Dr. Dubois on this matter.

AL

I think he's been spending far too much time with those...Negros...in that barbershop on Marietta.

LOUIS

Backward heathens.

AL

This might require a correspondence to the Elder Washington in Tuskegee.

MAX

Please don't do that.

AL

I forgot, you and the elder are on the outs presently. How unfortunate.

(They all laugh. Code switching drops.)

MAX

Damn, fools.

LOUIS

(*to one of the audience members)
Come on, sit in the chair. Don't be shy.

AL

I wouldn't sit in that chair either.

MAX

He must have heard.

(CONTINUED)

LOUIS

Never mind them. How about I make your hair look just like mine.

AL

So, how was that little meeting up in Harpers Ferry?

MAX

You should have come up, Al. You would have enjoyed yourself. Might have encountered your next future ex-wife.

AL

Nah, yall dicty folks ain't want my kind up there.

LOUIS

Here, he go.

MAX

How many times I gotta tell yall, the Niagara Movement is for all of our people. It's about acquiring equal rights for all of us.

LOUIS

All of who?

(sarcastically)

Bunch of bougie Negroes trying to question the integrity of Jim Crow.

AL

"In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress."

MAX

Don't start quoting Booker T, and you both kill me acting like you some "regular down home country folk." You own this shop!

AL

Yeah, and our clientele got nappy hair just like yours. In fact we are one of the few places that will cut your nappy head.

LOUIS

And his head is nappy.

AL

Alonzo and Leland ain't cutting your hair at their shops.

(CONTINUED)

LOUIS

Sure ain't.

AL

But that's the kind of "big money Negroes" yall want at your little meetings. I didn't get an invitation to the first meeting in Niagara, so why should I go to the second one.

LOUIS

Alonzo went.

MAX

Am I gonna ever live that down?

LOUIS AND AL

Nope.

MAX

It was a mistake. I apologize.

AL

Besides, I don't like that mess yall pullin.

MAX

What mess?

LOUIS

Hot mess.

AL

That underhanded sneaky mess you and W.E.B. pullin with Booker T.

MAX

Here we go.

AL

"Here we go," nothing
(pops him with comb.)

MAX

Ouch!

LOUIS

Hot divisive mess.

AL

Don't you know that if it wasn't for Booker T. Washington and his National Negro Business League,

(CONTINUED)

AL, MAX, LOUIS

"Negros like us wouldn't exist."

MAX

How many times am I gonna have to hear this?

AL

Until you and Dubois realize that what yall are doing, pitting the Niagara Movement against the National Negro Business League, is pulling the race apart--

LOUIS

--Like crabs in a dang barrel, if you ask me. --

(During Max's speech Fred Walton enters. He walks with a limp. Fred sits in another chair.)

MAX

--We are not trying to divide the race. The Niagara Movement is trying to move the race forward. We have to start dealing with these voting rights issues and Jim Crow laws if we expect to have any real freedom in this country. "In all things purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress." Is not going to work anymore--Things have been going one step forward, two steps back for too long.

FRED

Lord yall done got Max hot now.

MAX

Fred, would you tell them what I'm trying to say?

FRED

I understand what you sayin, Max--but I see what they sayin too.

What you and W.E.B. gotta understand is that you have a whole generation of folks that are going to support the old man in Tuskegee until the day they die.

MAX

I wish they would hurry up and die, then.

(silence. Beat.)

LOUIS

No, this Negro didn't--

AL

--You see me about to cut him with this straight razor--

(CONTINUED)

FRED

--Crabs in a dang barrel.

LOUIS

What's ole Alonzo Herndon's stance on all of this?

FRED

(laughing)
Yall know the boss don't get involved in no political mess.

MAX

He's like the newsboy out there on the corner--

AL

--Yeah, but he was at the first Niagra meeting.

MAX

He even brought his wife and son, Adrienne and Norris, along. Couldn't convince him to commit to active membership, though.

LOUIS

Cause he ain't stupid.

AL

Alonzo Herndon got plenty of sense--

FRED

--Yeah, the boss is always gonna follow the greenback--

MAX

--Yall, make me sick. (looking at his watch.) Let me leave this den of colored complacency.

LOUIS

Ohhh that's a whole six syllables.

AL

He so edu-micated. (Max pays Al) When we gonna see your ole burr head again?

MAX

I probably see yall Sunday at church. We should go have a sip afterwards.

LOUIS

Yall know I don't drink on the Lord's day.

(Beat. They all look at Louis. He's a damn liar.)

(CONTINUED)

FRED

Be careful out there, Max. Those crazy news reports got people tense.

AL

Yeah...you can feel it in the air. Keep your head down and get to where you need to go. Quick.

MAX

Yes, sir.

**Louis, Al and Fred freeze*

MAX

(to Audience)

That was the last time I saw Louis, Al and Fred.

During the riots....a white mob came upon Fred as he was leaving Alonzo Herndon's shop. He was killed in the streets.

The murder was witnessed by a young Walter White, who would later become a civil rights activist and leader in the NAACP.

Louis and Al's shop was raided, but luckily they were not inside. Harry Leland wasn't so lucky.

Just a block away at Leland's barbershop on Peachtree, the owner and two of his barbers were cutting the heads of their white clients.

The mob entered the establishment. Leland was clubbed and his two barbers were shot in the back of the head. Their bodies were mutilated... then placed in front of Henry Grady's Statue on the corner of Marietta and Forsyth Streets.... A blood sacrifice to the New South.

We're about to reach the rough part of our journey. Follow me....and watch out for the potholes.

MEMORY STATION 6: Trolley Car- The

Riot Begins

(The trolley car space has "Negroes" in the rear, "whites" in the front. It should be a cramped space. Two "negro" characters are in the rear and two "white" characters are in the front. The V.O. will be the newsboy's voice pre-recorded.)

MAX

At this point on the memory track we will be making a transfer to a smaller car. Can I please have my negro

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MAX (cont'd)
passengers in the rear, white passengers in the front.
Please be sure not to touch the walls...they are very
fragile.

September 22, 1906. Saturday. 9:30pm

NEGRO 1
Wonder why it's so crowded this evening?

NEGRO 2
I don't know, but I'll sure be glad to get home and
soak these feet. It's been a long day today.

NEGRO1
Who you tellin?

WHITE 1
When the rest of the family coming to the city?

WHITE 2
Not sure. Thinking about talking to the foreman about
getting my son a job at the Mill. It be a lot easier
with two checks coming in.

Don't want the wife out there looking for a job,
especially with all the stuff that's been going on.

WHITE 1
Yeah, the city ain't a safe place for a white woman
these days.

NEGRO 2
I usually don't see you on the route this early on a
Saturday.

NEGRO 1
Yeah, I normally work the late shift at the hotel-- but
Ferguson let a couple of the late shift folk off
early.

Said he got a feeling that these white folks might get
a little antsy with all the stuff that was in the
morning papers.

WHITE 2
I blame it on them uppity Negroes on the hill at them
schools. My brother was doing some road work over
there. Said them folks look and talk like they from
England.

(CONTINUED)

WHITE 1

Well, the papers say it's the crazy bucks that be hanging out on Decatur Street. You couldn't pay me to walk down there in the middle of the day with a lantern.

NEGRO 1

I don't trust nothing them rags got to say. They just trying to make money and compete with each other.

Just trying see who can come up with the craziest headline. People got more sense than that.

V.O.

Extra, Extra!!!! Negro man assaults Sarah Jacobs in grocery store!!

WHITE 2

Didn't that happen this morning?

NEGRO 2

Not sure if I would call a kiss on the hand an "assault."

NEGRO 1

In this town it is.

V.O.

Extra!! Extra! Negro attempts to assault Mary Chaffin near Sugar Creek Bridge!

WHITE 2

This kinda thing can't keep happening. Liable to get folks all riled up over nothing!

V.O.

Extra!! Extra!! Second Assault!

NEGRO 1

I thought this was the third, obviously they losing count.

NEGRO 2

I dunno....my stop coming up soon though, I'm just gonna try and get home as quick as I can. This don't feel right.

WHITE 1

Why is the trolley slowing down?....

V.O.

Extra!! Extra!! Angry Citizens in pursuit of black Brute in Chaffin case!

(CONTINUED)

NEGRO 1
Why is the trolley slowing....?

V.O.

*(Live voices from either inside or outside
trolley)*
Are we white men going to stand for this?!!!

V.O.
Extra! Extra!!! Third Assault!

V.O.
(Live Voices. Overlapping)
Are we gonna let this happen. We can't stand by and do nothing. Don't know they place.

Just like that play we saw. Some old Southern justice. We need to bring order back. Shoulda sent them back to Heathens, can't civilize them. Wouldn't let them in my house.

(The live voices over-lap with the recorded ones. Sounds of broken glass and gunshots. The audience is being--safely--pushed within the confines of the small rectangle.)

MAX
Be careful! These are innocent travelers! They are with me!

WHITE 1
Him?! We're not with him--!

WHITE 2
We don't even know this guy-!

They rush out off the trolley.

MAX
They haven't done anything wrong. Stop it!

NEGRO 2
We better get out of here, Barber doesn't know what he's dealing with--!

NEGRO 1
Right behind you!

MAX
Stop it, please! STOP IT!!

Sounds abruptly stop. Lights dim. A faint crowd sound can be heard in the distance.

(CONTINUED)

MAX

Come with me. Hurry!! I know a safe place we can go until it dies down. Hurry!

MEMORY STATION 7: The Ghosts-
Stories of the riot.

(A bombed out alleyway. Broken furniture. Larger images from riot, newspaper headlines, and Jim Crow on wall. Three ethereal figures emerge. It seems as if they are not even there.)

MAX

This is the hidden place. The place where memories rest when they are not claimed. Where history goes when it is suppressed or ignored.

GHOST 1

We turned out the lights early, as did all our neighbors. No one removed his clothes or thought of sleep. Apprehension was tangible. We could almost touch its cold clammy surface.

GHOST 2

I woke up somewhere around midnight... and could feel tension in the room.

GHOST 3

Her eyes were gentle, her voice was for soft singing in the stiff-backed pew, or on the porch when evening comes slowly over Atlanta. But she remembered.

GHOST 1

Father told Mother to take my sisters, the youngest of them only six, to the rear of the house which offered more protection from stones and bullets.

My brother George was away, so Father and I, the only males in the house, took our places at the front windows of the parlor.

GHOST 2

My mother and her sister were kneeling....in front of the window....Looking out into the street... I got up and said "what is it?"....they said go back to bed....but I knew something was going on...

GHOST 3

(as old black woman)

After they cleaned out the saloons and the dives The drunks and the loafers, they thought they had better Clean out the rest of us. And it was awful. They snatched men off of street-cars, beat up women. Some of

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GHOST 3 (cont'd)

our men fought back and killed too. Still It wasn't
their habit. And then the orders came For the milishy,
and the mob went home, And dressed up in their
soldier's uniforms, And rushed back shooting us just as
wild as ever.

GHOST 1

A voice which we recognized as the son of the grocer
with whom we had traded for many years yelled,

"That's where that nigger mail carrier lives! Let's
burn it down! It's too nice for a nigger to live in!"

GHOST 2

And I came to the window...and knelt down between
them...and there I saw a man...

GHOST 3

(as old black woman)

They broke into groceries, drug-stores, barber-shops,
It made no difference whether white or black. They beat
a lame bootblack until he died, They cut an old man
open with jack-knives The newspapers named us black
brutes and mad dogs. So they used a gun butt on the
president Of our seminary where a lot of folks Had set
up praying the whole night through.

GHOST 1

In that eerie light Father turned his drawn face toward
me. In a voice as quiet as though he were asking me to
pass him the sugar on the breakfast table, he said,
"Son, don't shoot until the first man puts his foot on
the lawn and then--don't you miss!

GHOST 2

And there I saw a man...strung up to the light pole...
men and boys on the street below were shooting at
him... until they riddled his body with bullets....

He was kicking and flailing his legs when I looked
out...

GHOST 3

And then our folks got sick and tired Of being chased
and beaten and shot down. All of the sudden, one day,
all got sick and tired The servants they put down their
mops and pans And brooms and hoes and rakes and
coachman whips, Bad niggers stopped drinking Dago red,
Good Negroes figured they had prayed enough

All came back home--they had been too long away-- A lot
of visitors had been looking for them. They sat on

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GHOST 3 (cont'd)

their front stoops and their yards, Not talking much,
but ready; their welcome ready: Their shotguns oiled
and loaded on their knees

"And then There wasn't any riot any more."

GHOST 1

From the Biography A man Called White by Walter White
(Ghost 1 exits)

GHOST 2

From an oral history of Evelyn Witherspoon
(Ghost 2 exits)

GHOST 3

From the poem An Old Woman Remembers by Sterling A.
Brown
(Ghost)

MAX

Final Stop....follow me.

MEMORY STATION 8: The meetings/

Epilogue-

MAX

The rioting continued intermittently over the next 3 days. The governor and the police were slow to respond. The militia was called in to protect whites against a possible black retaliation. As Sterling A. Brown described in his poem, early Tuesday morning--on the fourth day of the riot--the all-Negro working class settlement of Brownsville was invaded by white police officers and citizens...creating a stalemate in the conflict.

Not since the riots in the Pittsburg neighborhood a few years earlier, had white Atlanta experienced armed resistance from its frustrated Negro citizens.

Perhaps they'd forgotten. Memory is funny that way. We tend to remember the things that re-affirm our perception of the world.

It's easy to see "the other" as an amorphous unemployed brute attacking southern innocence. It becomes a bit more complicated when the person baring arms is simply protecting their family, as any human being would. The man that delivers your mail, the woman who takes care of your children, the quiet person you see on the street car everyday reading the newspaper.

(CONTINUED)

(Newsboy comes out...struggles with each headline revision as Max corrects him.)

NEWSBOY

Extra Extra!!! White men killed from dark ambush by infuriated Negroes!

MAX

Actually the white men ambushed the Negro neighborhood, causing 3 times as many Negro casualties.

NEWSBOY

Hmmmm...Extra! Extra!! Negroes begin campaign of Murder!

MAX

Well, since they didn't leave their neighborhood you can't call it a campaign. It was self-defense.

NEWSBOY

Alright....Extra! Extra! Suppress our lawless element!

MAX

When is self-defense against the law?

NEWSBOY

Listen, buddy...this is 1906. Do you actually expect a newspaper to report about a justified armed resistance?

MAX

As I said... It happened in a community on the South Westside of Atlanta. The Pittsburgh Riots of 1902.

It left three policemen, two black civilians and one white civilian dead.

NEWSBOY

And who remembers that?....

MAX

My point exactly.

NEWSBOY

No newspaper will ever report--!

MAX

Which is why I wrote my telegram to the World, in New York--!

NEWSBOY

Which is why they chased you out of town!... But you are getting ahead of the story.

(CONTINUED)

(Newsboy leaves)

MAX

Right. As I was saying.... The Brownsville invasion created a stalemate in the riot. Negroes stood their ground with guns ready to defend their neighborhood. Disorganized bands of white rioters weren't sure of their next move.

(MAN 1 enters. He gives a memo to Newsboy. The two begin to debate.)

Two meetings were scheduled for Tuesday to discuss how the city should move forward.

MAN

That's the headline!

MAN 1 exits. Newsboy reluctantly reads next headline.

NEWSBOY

Extra Extra! Atlanta is Herself Again: Business Activity Restored And the Riot is Forgotten!

MAX

Wait...what are you talking about?

NEWSBOY

Thought you went to that 2nd Chamber of Commerce meeting at City Hall, buddy?

MAX

I was there. It was the first time in the city's history there was a meeting between middle class Negroes and Whites, to discuss Atlanta's future.

NEWSBOY

(pointing at the paper)

They're calling it a "compromise" between those Negroes and Whites.

They're placing the blame for the riots on the juke joints and dives on Decatur Street and a few angry working class white men.

MAX

But that's not the truth! What about the newspapers and other media? The courts, the Governor's race? The general fear of a city in transition?!

NEWSBOY

Extra Extra!! Last Trace of trouble gone; All business becomes normal; whites and blacks both calm!

(CONTINUED)

MAX

These headlines are not even close to the real story!

*(Newsboy stops then looks at Max, annoyed...*He creates a "fake" headline)*

NEWSBOY

Extra Extra!.... A "colored citizen" denounces recent coverage of Atlanta's reconciliation!

Max shrugs

MAX

I didn't want to do it... honestly I didn't, but it had been gnawing away at me since that first meeting.

Then that attention-grabbing newspaper man, John Temple Graves, Goes on and on in a telegram about "the wave of lustful crime" causing the riot. And his fabrications get published in New York's The World newspaper.

At that point I decided to send my own telegram to The World. I wrote about the things I saw and heard. I talked about the innocent people that were maimed and murdered, about the irresponsible journalism, about the complacency of the black middle class and the possible role of the white middle class.

I had to do it anonymously. I knew it was dangerous move, but I had to get the story out there.

NEWSBOY

Really?... Did you really think it would stay Anonymous?

Telegrams can be traced, Even Booker T. Washington knew you authored it.

MAX

And he made sure the word spread... I'm not sure what I was thinking.

NEWSBOY

Maybe you wanted to be found out? The "compromise" obviously made you that uncomfortable.

MAX

It was a compromise founded on deception.

NEWSBOY

It was business... and business ain't always pretty and rarely fair.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NEWSBOY (cont'd)

But both Blacks and whites benefited from this truce.

The compromise that ended the Four Days of Fury, helped to shape this city into the most progressive and open minded metropolis in the South.

MAX

So progressive and open-minded it caused many blacks to move north. It also caused the Jim Crow laws to intensify, making the segregation between Negroes and Whites even more pronounced.

And they made sure to crack down on the establishments on Decatur Street, ensuring that there would be limited social interaction between the races.

NEWSBOY

But out of this we got Auburn Avenue. One of the most prosperous all Black business districts in U.S. History.

MAX

Hoke Smith's election as Governor cemented black disenfranchisement.

NEWSBOY

This may be, but Negroes and whites negotiating on civil concerns, Started at that Chamber of Congress meeting, And became a major strategy of diplomacy during the civil rights era-- and the model for how Atlanta navigates the difficult terrain of race.

MAX

And Dixon's "dusky black brute"... is as powerful and polarizing a stereotype now as it was then.

NEWSBOY

Someone's still bitter.

MAX

Maybe I am. This "coalition" chased me out of town. My very life was threatened in both subtle and not so subtle ways. I was able to settle in Chicago for a while.

I changed the name of the journal to *The Voice*. The riot taught me that the issues were not simply about race, but class as well, and the repercussions not simply national but global.

We wanted to become *The Voice* for oppressed people worldwide.

(CONTINUED)

NEWSBOY

And you're still at it. You've spent this time re-assembling shards of memory. Why?

MAX

Because we all have to.

NEWSBOY

"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

MAX

George Santayana, 1863-1953. It makes a great headline.

NEWSBOY

That it does.

(He begins to leave)

EXTRA, EXTRA!....Four Days of Fury: Atlanta 1906.

MAX

We are all responsible for writing our headlines. Telling our stories.

Salvaging the memories. It is our duty as a human community. We must remember.

The End Draft 11

APPENDIX

THOMAS DIXON

A new terror...growing of late more and more a menace to a country home, the roving criminal negro. He is densely ignorant and lazy often with no white man who is his friend.

KELLY MILLER

The un-employed City Negroes form the dregs, the scum, and the menace of municipal life.

RANDOM NEGRO CITIZEN

There are two type of Negroes in this city. Auburn Avenue Negroes and Decatur Street Negroes.

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

No race can prosper till it learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem. It is at the bottom of life we must begin, and not at the top.

(CONTINUED)

CITY COUNCIL REPORT

The squalid negro hovels that teem with vice and vermin.

ALLEN CANDLER

I don't believe in the higher education of the darky. He should be taught the trades, but when he is taught the fine arts he gets educated above his caste and it makes him unhappy.

J. MAX BARBER

This Negro, uneducated, un-Christianized, uncivilized is the kind of Negro for whom the Southern white man has expressed his preference.

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

If anywhere there are efforts tending to curtail the fullest growth of the Negro, let these efforts be turned into stimulating, encouraging, and making him the most useful and intelligent citizen.

THOMAS HARDWICK

Until the South is finally rid of the negro even as a political potentiality she will never again have either freedom of thought or independence of action.

WILLIAM BENJAMIN SMITH

If we sit with Negroes at our tables, if we entertain them as guests and social equals,... is it possible to maintain it fixedly in the sexual relation...in the propagation of our species?

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress.

Draft 10.5....2/10/12Working Draft . Additions to pages (inserts) Memory Station 1- Clarified Dixon's language to highlight the "experiment"

Memory Station 8- Added a few lines to help clarify the decisions that were made at the meeting.

Zeroing in on the following main ideas:

1.) How popular culture, judicial decisions and mass media shaped the perceptions which led to the riot. (how do they shape our perceptions now?) This is done early on by directly posing the question: How do we formulate our opinions, or perceptions, about others?

2.) How post-riot compromises between the white and black middleclass created the template for how Atlanta

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON (cont'd)

deals with race...(and the pros and cons of this template)

Footnotes:

Dialogue within *The Clansman* "meta text scenes"--with the exception of Gus' outburst--are taken directly from Thomas Dixons' novel *The Clansman*
(<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/26240/26240-h/26240-h.htm>)

"Vagrancy" case based on a case described in *Negrophobia*. Bauerlein, Mark. Pg. 38-39.

Mr. McWilliams accusing Brisco Gaines of robbery from *Negrophobia*. Pg. 44-45.