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## A Journey Up Scotland Road

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# **A Journey Up Scotland Road**

A Thesis Project  
Master of Fine Arts in Directing  
Lindenwood University, St. Charles MO

by Jason Cannon

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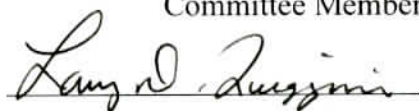
**Department of Fine and Performing Arts  
Lindenwood University**

Upon the Recommendation of the Department of Performing Arts, this thesis is hereby accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Fine Arts.

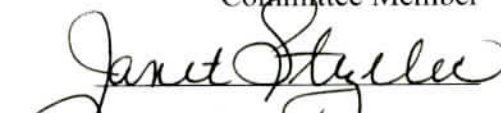
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## Prospectus

I find that my approach to directing a production is liquid. It alters in sundry subtle ways depending on the nature of the text, the social and political environment I find myself in, the zeitgeist of the culture at the time, and the energies of the flesh and blood actors that join me for the journey. Having majored in undergrad in not only Theatre but also English, and having taught university-level Writing for five semesters, my research process in the theatre often closely resembles the process I use when writing papers, tending towards the literary and symbolic. My early directorials were often referred to as “intellectual” and “precise”, but that cleanliness often came at the expense of heart, soul, and guts. Over the last few years, even as I continued discovering more and more similarities in jargon and strategies between writing and directing, I have been forcing myself to open up my directing to impulses less intellectual in nature, and to engage more fully with all aspects of myself—not just the brain stuff that is (seemingly) strictly under my control. Basically, I’ve been trying to embrace the freedom to be messy in the process and discover a more fully realized production while “cleaning up” rather than trying to keep everything pristine all the way through.

I say all this to set the scene for the research and discoveries about to follow in this document. When I first read Scotland Road, my experience was visceral rather than intellectual. The play stuck with me not because of what it did to my head, but because of what it did to my breathing, my stomach, my pulse. As I began my research, several facts quickly came clear. First of all, the playwright, Jeffrey Hatcher, writes quickly and from his gut. Not only was the genesis of this play one of those “bolt of lightning” moments (as will be discussed later), but as my analysis broke down the architecture of

the text, many technical and timeline inconsistencies manifested themselves. Here was a play written in a flurry, with little or no consideration for technical integrity—or rather that integrity was less important than the mounting emotional impact. These inconsistencies will be more fully explored later on, but suffice to say that I found myself in the throes of a text that cared more for gasps than logic. My overtly intellectual approach was not going to be sufficient.

Secondly, while it was clear that Hatcher had done his due diligence as far as researching the Titanic went, he was more interested in romance and myth than facts. Yes, he got his numbers and details correct, but the action of the play focuses on a man so wrapped up in the *mythology* of Titanic that he literally time travels. This man creates an identity entirely out of myths (we never actually learn his *real* name!), and one of the key moments of the play centers on a character who may or may not have historically existed: the mythological man who escaped the Titanic dressed as a woman. This text wasn't a documentary; it was a riff. It was a love letter. As I began to read the stacks of Titanic literature—most of which I imagined Hatcher himself had dug through—I started to realize that book facts, like my overall approach, were simply not going to be sufficient. The books all relate the same information. The facts are well known. But the *stories* and the imposing of archetypal narrative... here is where the fanaticism around Titanic reared its head, and here is where I started to find the footprints of Hatcher more clearly outlined.

So, knowing full well the inherent dangers, and forcibly stifling the screeching voices of English teachers past, I shifted the focus of my research to the Internet: chat rooms, fan sites, etc. The on-line devotion to the mythology of Titanic was astounding.

Again, the facts were consistent—after fact-checking the first several sites I visited against “real” sources, I realized that fanatics rarely get their statistics wrong—but the “fact-ness” of the facts was secondary to the various ways in which they were lovingly listed and catalogued. These devotees could all quote the facts by heart, but the *manner* in which they quoted them... *there* was the raw material that had so moved Hatcher. After all, it was a tabloid article that first inspired Hatcher to create this play (again, this genesis is more fully discussed in Chapter 1).

Having convinced myself that these sites were not going to contradict each other on matters of historical record (and they never did), I set up camp among them. I waded in and immersed myself in the romance and mythology, and the less I worried about the facts, the more the play opened itself up to me. No longer was I an essayist looking to document the larger critical conversation. I was no longer even the detective tracking Hatcher’s footsteps. Instead I concerned myself simply with approaching the altar of Titanic and trusting that as the romance and mythology permeated my point of view, it would come out during rehearsal in the form of gut impulses and empathy. Never before had I researched by studying the actual page layout of websites, comparing colors, catalogue styles, choices of images. The information was not the point; rather I was digging beneath the surface, trying to catch the wispy tails of the deep-seated impulses that drove these people to create these sites in the first place. How were they *presenting* this information, and *why*? These were the questions that would lead me toward a fuller understanding of Hatcher’s intentions and his main character’s desires.

The following document therefore may not always read in a strictly literary fashion. Discoveries may have a specific birth-point, a wandering journey, or mysterious



manifestation. Before finalizing this document I will do a final double-check of the websites to ascertain that the information/stories I stumbled upon are indeed still there. These websites will also scarily outweigh the more traditional sources of research, but again, this was an intentional choice that opened up the text in a fascinating and fruitful way, a choice made while fully aware of the potential “legitimacy” issue that actually goes right to the heart of the play (are any of the characters who they initially claim to be?). And this may have been one of the greatest benefits to my artistic future as a director: the discovery that “strictly literary” and “traditional sources of research” may not necessarily hold sway over every production/text I tackle, especially as technology and the nature of “sources” continue on their accelerating evolutionary path.

One last detail to clarify: obviously the word “Titanic” will be employed often throughout the following pages. But there are two “senses” (if not outright “definitions”) of this word that I will be using in specific and differing ways. When I refer to “the Titanic” (as opposed to simply “Titanic”), then I am most likely using the term to describe the actual object, the ship, the RMS Titanic of the White Star Line in all its tangible “thing-ness”: hull, smokestacks, deck, ballroom, etc. However, when I use simply “Titanic” without the article “the” attached, then the reader should understand that I am bringing to bear all the romance and mythology surrounding the Titanic and its sinking; Titanic as existential destination rather than tangible location. “The Titanic” is a thing that can be seen and touched, while “Titanic” is an idea, the shared obsession of Hatcher’s play and all the websites I frequented throughout the research and production process.

## **CHAPTER I: AUTHORIAL RESEARCH**

### **A. Hatcher's Other Plays**

Even a cursory glance at a list of Hatcher's output immediately reveals two facts important to my approach to Scotland Road.

First, he is a playwright who works extremely quickly. The sheer volume of his work over the past 20 years is astounding. His is an insatiable mind—the amount of reading and historical research he must have to do is staggering. But can he truly become an expert in anything if he's knowledgeable about everything? And in his eagerness to portray imaginative accounts of historical figures and events, does the crafting of the play suffer?

Secondly, Hatcher clearly is one to re-imagine and reinterpret. He is fascinated by the murky area where story and history overlap. Appendix A is a list of plays by Hatcher that are either adaptations of other works or based explicitly on historical figures/events. This is not his entire output, but the number of entirely fictional plays he has written is much less than what is recorded in Appendix A. This list demonstrates his predilection to build his plays on the foundation of history and/or previously published texts. The very title "Scotland Road" springs from Hatcher's need to re-create and re-imagine. Scotland Road was a real place, and the "denizens" of the Titanic borrowed this geographical and social marker to re-imagine the steel hulks as their temporary home—much like Hatcher sets up temporary home in the history and creativity of other artists. Clearly I ought to be on the lookout for moments in this text that resonate as Hatcher's "take" or "spin" on common knowledge.

Two of Hatcher's plays especially impact the way I view Scotland Road. Compleat Female Stage Beauty, while getting its facts right, is a fantasia, conjecture. Structurally it is full of twists and sudden betrayals, yet it ends with a moment entirely theatrical: the main characters play the murder scene in Othello (a pleasing riff on the theme of identity, which is central to Scotland Road), and then the ancillary characters directly address the audience, speaking in verse, performing something of an epilogue. I see echoes of the structure of Scotland Road here: twists, turns, an obsession with identity, and an ending entirely theatrical with a coda-like epilogue ("John" and the Woman literally time travel to the Titanic and then via projection and sound the audience is confronted with the post-collision iceberg). The important discovery here is that *the coda is not the climax*. The event is achieved *prior* to the epilogue/coda. In both plays, the tension in the audience needs to be released *before* the final image impacts.

The other play that structurally informs my approach to Scotland Road is A Picasso. In a small room, a female soldier severely questions Pablo Picasso, but the tables turn and turn again. Also, tying again into identity issues, Picasso must actively create art to prove who he is. The set-up is very similar to Scotland Road: severe questioning, tables being turned, a fascination with Titanic (rather than art), some provoking moments of sexual tension. However, A Picasso is not broken up into small scenes with abrupt black outs. I will need to deal with the problem of momentum in Scotland Road, which is not as present in A Picasso since the action is continuous.

## **B. "Scotland Road"**

Scotland Road is three things.

First, it can be used as slang to reference a passageway that allows access to the entire length of a vessel.

Secondly, Scotland Road was a specific lower deck corridor that ran the entire length of the Titanic. It is especially important to the action of this play and the social status of the Woman that it was a *lower* deck corridor.

Lastly—and most significant historically if not as directly related to this play—Scotland Road was a road running north out of the center of Liverpool, although it came to refer not just to the road itself but to the migrant, melting pot neighborhood and abundance of pubs that lined the road. In the late 1700s, Scotland Road was a stagecoach route (that went to Scotland, hence the name). In 1803 the road was widened and many streets of housing were laid out for the working class as the city quickly grew. (“The History of Scotland Road”)

It makes sense that a waterfront city like Liverpool would give rise to slang terms for sea-going vessels. And “Scotland Road” makes a lot of sense for a corridor of this type. A corridor that ran the length of a ship would run “north-south”, and since these lengthy corridors were usually below-deck, in the midst of the lower class passengers, “Scotland Road” would also reflect the working class population living on the actual street. The population density—being crammed together in lower class on a ship—would also reflect the actual environment back in Liverpool.

A juicy irony to chew on in terms of directing this play is that many of the Irish immigrants to Scotland Road had moved there to escape the potato famine in the 1840s,

and found themselves unable to afford passage to the New World, and so were forced to take up residence along Scotland Road. ("The History of Scotland Road") In the play, the Woman remembers and reveals that she was on the Titanic in order to pursue employment as a parlor maid in Pittsburgh. She became a citizen of Scotland Road on the ship, and of course ended up never leaving either. Hatcher, with his choice of this title, clearly is bringing the social/class issues to the forefront of his story.

### **C. John Jacob Astor**

It is not surprising that “John”, in his obsession with Titanic, would choose to pass himself off as the grandson of John Jacob Astor IV. (Note: I will consistently refer to the main character in Scotland Road as “John”, with quotation marks. I do this to remind the reader that “John” is not the character’s real name, and that in fact he has created his entire persona. We in fact never learn his actual name.) According to the Woman’s supernatural knowledge (which “John” does not dispute), “John”—whatever his name originally was—changed his name to John Jacob Astor some years previous to the beginning of the action of the play. Why would “John” choose the Astors over the other numerous luminaries on board?

Basically, John Jacob Astor IV was the richest man on board the Titanic. His net worth was over 87 million dollars (in 1912, mind you), and his staterooms on the ship with adjoining servants quarters and working fireplaces cost \$4,000, or \$50,000 today. (“Col. John Jacob Astor IV”)

His prominence resulted in many exaggerated reports of his actions. Allegedly he was the one who opened the kennel to release the dogs (including his own—which was seen next to him as the lifeboats pulled away). There’s also a story that he put a woman’s hat on a young boy to ensure the boy would be allowed on to a lifeboat. And several websites mention his supposed quip after the initial collision with the iceberg: “I asked for ice, but this is ridiculous.”

Astor therefore shows up in practically every account of the Titanic tragedy: books, films, miniseries. His status and the more verified story about how he tossed his gloves to his pregnant wife in the lifeboat, lit a cigarette, and waited to go down with his

dog make him the logical choice to emulate in the case of "John": rich, brave, romantic, the largest legend in the collection of myths.

Also, it is true that John Jacob Astor IV brought a manservant along on the voyage, who Hatcher conjectures as the lover of the Woman in the play.

However, what is also useful for this particular production—and why Hatcher subverts the very romanticism he sets up with the choice of Astor—is that Astor initially asked to board the lifeboat, due to the fact that his wife was pregnant. He was not allowed to board. ("Col. John Jacob Astor IV") The Woman claims that when Astor appears in South Dakota he will say "The sons of bitches kept me from the boats, and when I get back to New York I'm gonna sue the bastards for every penny they've got!" (Hatcher 41) "John" also conveniently ignores the fact that Astor's pregnant wife was only 19, at least an issue for gossip if not an outright scandal.

### **D. Mrs. Winnie "Minnie" Coutts**

The Woman in Scotland Road claims to be one Winifred Coutts. Here Hatcher takes more liberty with the facts than anywhere else in the play. Hatcher's Winifred is one of the 99 women presumed lost at sea, a 26-year-old, Welsh-born woman being sent to Pittsburgh to be a parlor maid. She has a liaison with Astor's manservant and dies alone in her cabin.

The real Winnie Coutts was 36 years old, born in Ireland, married, and was travelling with her two sons to New York to join her husband who had been working to save enough money to bring them over. She and her two sons escaped the third class lower decks after encountering one of the infamous barred gates. She was able to get herself and both boys onto lifeboat 2, even though the officer in charge of that boat initially didn't want to let her elder son (9 years old) on board. They all survived, and were reunited with her husband. They moved to Pittsburgh in 1920, and she lived to the age of 84. ("Mrs Winnie "Minnie" Coutts (née Trainer)")

Why Hatcher altered Winifred's story so much is puzzling. He is so exact about all the other facts in the play, and even his conjectures are based on hard facts. Using only "Coutts" and Pittsburgh as the solid points of reference for the character of the Woman seems to lessen her impact. Of course, most audience members aren't going to know how far off Hatcher's Coutts is from the historical Coutts. I wonder if there may be defamation or libel laws at play here, but for the sake of the production I think this is one bit of research that may be just a director-and-actress-need-to-know as opposed to something explicitly playable.



### **E. Music on the Titanic**

A key plot point in Scotland Road hinges on what song the band on board the Titanic played *last*. Here Hatcher again introduces *some* of the facts, but omits the most likely conclusion, probably because the most likely last song isn't nearly as romantic/conducive to legend and myth.

"John" holds to the myth that the final song played by the band as the Titanic sank was "Nearer My God to Thee". This opinion would have to be intentionally held, since most of the evidence doesn't support him, and the evidence that does support him is shaky at best. He is not alone in his opinion. "Nearer My God to Thee" was the choice of most American papers, because the religious connotations and comforting lyrics preparing one for death and entering into the presence of the Lord fit so well. It was a comfort to everyone watching in horror, basically. Several survivors, both British and American (a point that will become very important later in the argument), claimed that "Nearer My God to Thee" was the last song played, and the most widely accepted public mythology of Titanic still clings to this opinion. ("The Music of the Titanic's Band") A gorgeous version is played in James Cameron's blockbuster film.

However, there are three key reasons that "Nearer My God to Thee" was almost certainly *not* the final song played. First of all, the whole point of the band playing out on the deck in the first place was to help calm and cheer the passengers as they clambered into lifeboats. There is no doubt that most of the songs they played were popular waltzes and ragtime, so as to raise everyone's spirits and keep some sense of civility as panic threatened to overtake everyone. ("The Music of the Titanic's Band") Playing a death-

centric hymn like "Nearer My God to Thee" would run antithetical to the very purpose of playing in those circumstances.

Secondly, none of the witnesses supporting "Nearer My God to Thee" were close by. The survivor closest to the Titanic testifying on behalf of "Nearer My God to Thee" was a full quarter-mile away at the time the song would have been played. ("The Music of the Titanic's Band")

Lastly, there are the hymn experts: the hymnologists. The fact that both Brits and Yanks testified to "Nearer My God to Thee" is actually a huge hole in the argument, because the lyrics were sung to different tunes on either side of the Atlantic. There were in fact two versions in Britain alone. ("The Music of the Titanic's Band") Certainly the band would not have played all three versions, so how did various witnesses name the same song when they didn't even really *know* the same song?

Hatcher goes along this far. He also does not buy in to "Nearer My God to Thee" being the final song, for he has the Woman deny "John's" claim. She asserts that the final song was actually "Autumn". This is also a hymn (which thus faces the same initial doubt: why would the band play such a downer when their goal was to raise spirits and keep the calm?), with lyrics just as fitting: "Hold me up in mighty waters". No less authority than the New York Times, just six days after the sinking, quoted Second Wireless Operator Harold Bride as adamantly claiming that "Autumn" was the final song. His story has fewer holes: he was on deck to the very last moment, and he had been trained as a wireless operator to listen closely. ("The Music of the Titanic's Band")

But those pesky hymnologists point out that “Autumn” is actually the name of a tune, a melody. Hymns are almost always known by their first line, so why would this Brit call a hymn by its melody?

Even though Hatcher has the Woman “prove” that Autumn was the last song (she sings it), the evidence points to a different conclusion. There was a major hit—a popular waltz—in London in 1912 called “Songe d’Automne”, known as “Autumn” for short. It was huge in roller-skating rinks, cafes, etc.—*in Britain*. It had not yet made its way to America. It was a song that the entire band knew, that could be played in the dark, without sheet music, even on a sloping deck—all prerequisites for the band members to get through a tune. It also would fit the tone the band was aiming for, and a Brit claiming “Autumn” could easily be misunderstood. The Daily Telegraph in London actually backed up this likely fact by identifying “Autumn” as a “ragtime air”. (“The Music of the Titanic’s Band”) So the Brits never thought it was a hymn, while the Americans—*as yet unfamiliar with the popular waltz and likely influenced by the same need for a religious song that drove the popularity of the “Nearer My God to Thee” argument—*jumped to the conclusion of a hymn.

Regardless, these 8 musicians have achieved their own sort of immortality. By attempting to bring hope in the direst of circumstances with no thought to their own safety (they all died, which is why there are no undisputed first-hand accounts) they captured the public’s imagination. So much so that the bandleader, Wallace Hartley, was given a funeral with overwhelming pageantry, and his hometown erected a statue in his honor. (“The Music of the Titanic’s Band”)

The commonly accepted mythology overlooks some other facts. There were actually two musical units on board, a quintet and a trio. They came together, in spite of their disparate playlists and arrangements. This again supports the conclusion that they must have been playing popular, well-known songs. Legend also has them playing until the water was up to their knees, but by that point the deck would have been so severely sloped that standing, much less playing, would have been practically impossible. (“The Music of the Titanic’s Band”)

As far as how this information impacts this production of Scotland Road, for the purposes of the story I will have to buy in to the “Autumn” hypothesis. As my script analysis shows (Appendix A), I will be directing this production as though the Woman is indeed who she says she is, and that she and “John” bodily travel back in time and space to the Titanic. Therefore she *must* be correct in the world of the play, even if she probably is not in the real world. I think the puncturing of the “Nearer My God to Thee” myth will serve a dramatic and dramaturgical purpose, and the Woman’s singing of “Autumn” likewise has the potential to be a chilling moment in the action. So, as explained in my methodology, I will have to put my intellectual hesitation aside in terms of the last song played, and drum up the visceral impact of “Autumn” for all it’s worth.

I must say that—like in the case of Winifred Cou tts—I find Hatcher’s decisions of which facts to play straight and which to twist a tad confounding. He obviously did his research, so how could he have missed the most likely supported conclusion to this particular critical conversation? And if he didn’t miss it, was he himself unable to extricate himself from the warm, comforting idea of a hymn at the end, or was it an intentional oversight motivated by the emotional needs of the story he was trying to tell?

### **F. *A Night to Remember*: Notes on Viewing the Film**

A Night to Remember—both the book and the subsequent film—are universally acknowledged to be the most accurate representation of what actually happened on the Titanic during the sinking. I purposely chose to invest myself more into the film version of A Night to Remember rather than the book. This goes back to my outlined methodology for this production. The book is populated with real (as in historical) people. The film—by virtue of its far more interpretive medium—transforms those historical people into characters and imposes narrative, the very narrative into which “John” wishes to insert himself.

The film is also more able to amp up the Greek tragedy aspect of this event, by letting the camera linger over every seemingly tiny and insignificant detail that—should it have fallen a slightly different way—would have prevented the tragedy from occurring. Indeed, as my notes below indicate, the film’s central thesis seems to be that the tragedy was eminently preventable even though—as with all after-the-fact reporting—it is unavoidable.

So while I used the book as an “in” to the character of “John” (who was clearly obsessed with the books, but never mentions the film, although he does mention a TV special—I think we can assume he watched the film but put more cache in the book), I used the film to approach the play as a whole, as another narrative, as something meant for *viewing* rather than *reading*—just as I wanted the production to be viewed rather than read (visceral rather than intellectual). In either version, the key is that “John” wanted to enter himself *into* the narrative, and it is easier to enter yourself into a narrative filled with easily identifiable characters rather than multi-dimensional, messy historical figures.

I also intentionally avoided bringing James Cameron's massive hit Titanic into the rehearsal discussions. First of all, that film had yet to be made when Hatcher wrote his play, so Hatcher would not have had that influence lingering in the back of his mind. Secondly, especially after doing all the research, I find Cameron's take on the tragedy to be so focused on entertainment that the catharsis suffers. He didn't just transform historical figures into characters, he *invented* characters. He invests so much in his fictionalized central romantic characters that the tragedy becomes a backdrop for a cliché-ridden love story. The tragedy in effect is trivialized. This trivialization runs contrary to the character of "John" and his quest, which is in fact to embrace the tragedy. "John" doesn't want to escape the Titanic (tellingly, Cameron's central character, Rose, *does* escape); he wants to go down with it.

While my viewing notes are catalogued in their entirety in Appendix B, I need to highlight a handful of key images/thoughts from the film that had a direct bearing on my conversations with the actors.

The film portrays the same obsession with facts/numbers/figures that most Titanic literature fetishizes. This erotic element informs "John's" knowledge in the play, and can be tied in to the love story between him and the Woman.

Incorporating *actual* footage of the Titanic into the movie narrative creates a loaded, resonant feeling that needs to be found in the use of the iceberg slide in our production.

The blistering critique of class systems and social standing in the film needs to directly inform the interaction between "John", the Woman, and especially Miss Kittle.

The film includes a specific nod to the myth of the man escaping as a woman: the basis for Miss Kittle.

Finally, the world's reaction to the sinking of the Titanic shares many undertones to the reaction to 9/11. Obviously this film was not responding to 9/11. The point is that the utter destruction of cultural confidence permeates both events. When speaking to the actors, 9/11 (along with perhaps the Challenger explosion—another cultural touchstone) could be referenced as a way to get them to the depth of rattled-ness necessary in the play.

## **G. Previous Productions: Pitfalls to Avoid Based on Reviews**

I consulted eleven reviews of previous productions, ranging from Off-Broadway to community theatre. I was initially surprised that the negative reviews outweighed the positive reviews about two to one. In tying together the critical conversation between these various reviews, I found myself challenged to address five major obstacles in my own production: the lack of a specific event (reflected primarily in unclear endings/climaxes), the theme of identity overwhelming what I see as a central love story between “John” and the Woman, the tension between the intellectual arguments and visceral elements in the script (specifically when they are out of balance), pacing and the “problem” of the blackouts as written, and classifying the genre of the text.

### **1. Lack of Event/Unclear Climax**

Elyse Sommer’s was the first review I read, and the red flags starting waving furiously when she asserted that “John’s” relentlessness grew “tiresome” and that the play ultimately “stumbles on its utter implausibility”. Peter Marks belittles the entire script as “precious gamesmanship”, while Joseph Rozmiarek, in what is supposed to be a compliment, calls the climax “head-shaking” and “blatantly and pleasingly melodramatic”. Alvin Klein echoes Sommer, stating that “John”, as the “relentless inquisitor...goes nowhere”. An anonymous theatermirror.com review, while overall positive, describes how on press night no one could agree about the play. (Anonymous 1999) Another anonymous theatermirror.com review—of a different production—calls the climax “shattering...an unbelievable denouement” (Anonymous 2004), one of the few complimentary statements about the event of Scotland Road. Kevin Heckman argues



that the “necessary tension never materializes”, while Margaret Regan eviscerates the play as “boring”, “tedious”, “incoherent”, with a “non-ending so weak” that she and the audience members around her were unsure when the show was actually over.

The warning signs here unsettled me, to say the least. How could a show that read so clearly to me read so opaquely to so many reviewers? Obviously, I need to pay close attention to how I build the tension throughout “John’s” questioning of the Woman—there needs to be a definite sense of us going somewhere, each scene must motivate the next one in terms of what has been learned or withheld. With my cast we must find where every new bit of information is parceled out, so that we can—as anonymous experienced—gather “momentum by continually springing surprises”.

(Anonymous 2004) This will also help us find levels in “John’s” relentlessness, so that his driving need has more than one flavor throughout the certainly lengthy inquisitions.

Also, in order to avoid a weak non-ending, I must refine my statement of the event. I will speak about this more in Chapter 2, but if I do my job of building the suspense and keeping the focus on “John’s” quest rather than simply the Woman’s identity, we should be able to achieve the shattering and unbelievable ending, rather than the head-scratching one.

## **2. Theme of Identity and the Central Love Story**

I found that the reviewers became so distracted by the issue of identity that they missed what seems obvious to me: Scotland Road is at its heart simply a love story, two lonely souls finding each other.

I fully acknowledge that identity is a driving force in this play. We never actually learn “John’s” name; his entire persona is a fiction. The first major suspense question focuses on the Woman: who is she? We don’t hear her speak, much less learn her name, for the first half of the play. Dr. Halbrech is not the professional she claims. The text invites us even to wonder if she was stripped of her licenses. And of course Miss Kittle isn’t even a Miss!

However, this theme of identity is only a means to an end. It is a way to approach the never-ending and passionate—perhaps unhealthy—fascination we have for all things Titanic. The play is not *about* identity, it simply uses questions of identity as an obstacle to the culmination of “John’s” quest and the central love story.

But the reviewers! Sommer points out that “nobody turns out to be who they seem to be”, while Marks asks “who’s the biggest fraud here?” Rozmiarek asks a variation of that question: “is anyone on stage not a fraud?” Klein joins the chorus: “each person in [Scotland Road] is not what they seem”. Anonymous states that “no one is really what they seem” (Anonymous 1999), while Stackman twice uses the phrase “nature of identity” in his review. Eric Marchese spins the identity issue around the Woman, who, he claims, “may be the only person who actually is what he or she seems”.

This chorus of criticism leads me to examine very closely how I deal with identity in this production. This theme is so present in the text that I can see how it could very easily overwhelm the event I want to focus on. The reviews don’t strike me as evidence of the reviewers being ignorant, but rather of productions that didn’t recognize this pitfall and take steps to avoid it.

The easiest way to avoid this pitfall is to reinforce the need in my actor playing “John” to find as many levels to his inquisitions as possible, and to always remember that his quest is not to destroy and disprove the Woman, but rather to prove she is valid and that he needs her to take him back with her. Perhaps there is a moment when he first meets her where deep down he realizes she is his soulmate. Perhaps we see glimmers throughout his machinations where his need for her to be legitimate shines through. He wants so badly for her to be the real thing. Based on these reviews, I think not enough of the other productions recognized this as his goal.

I also get the idea that many of the other productions did not identify specifically enough the Woman’s role in the text. She is not there simply as a mystery. She is there because she also is alone and needs “John” to come back with her. Throughout the course of the play she has to remember and realize this, but once she does, the focus needs to shift from “who is she?” to “what does she want?”

### **3. Intellectual vs. Visceral**

The reviews also seemed to raise a discussion of the merits of the intellectual arguments in the play and how they acted as counter-weights to the prodigious amount of visceral, emotional moments and images present. Whether this discussion was actually a projection of my own struggle to step outside my intellectual impulses in my approach to this play—which had such an in-the-gut effect on me when I first read it—I may not be objective enough to say. But the evidence from the reviews seems to warn me in my production to make sure the visceral moments resonate enough to overcome what—I must admit—are some intellectual hurdles in the text.

Sommer's statement about the play's "utter implausibility" is echoed by anonymous, who also calls the set-up "implausible" (Anonymous 1999). Marchese's insistence that the text exists simply to "explore the nature of identity" mirrors Regan's description of Scotland Road as a "philosophical inquiry" that "ruminate[s] on the power of trash journalism". All these reviewers being so distracted by the implausible set-up—which it is—means that the productions didn't exist enough in reality to *earn* the supernatural. The play really is a "what if?" While the Woman's identity is a driving suspense question, as a director I have to start with the premise of "what if this really happened? What if this Woman really is one of the 99 women presumed lost at sea?" If the audience gets hung up on the "what if?" then they will never stay with the production on the journey it takes, and the climax/event will be a joke rather than cathartic. If I am going to sell that "John" and the Woman physically, in *reality*, travel through time and space back to the last moments of the Titanic sinking, then I as a director need to buy in completely to the "what if?" and make sure my actors do, too. We must accept at face value that in the world of this play, these things—as implausible as they may seem—can and do happen.

#### **4. Pacing and the Blackouts**

Hatcher wrote Scotland Road as a series of short scenes, some of which continue almost directly into the next, but most of which have some measure of time pass between them. (I outline in detail just how much time passes between each scene in Chapter 2.) He ends every scene with a blackout. Tricky. Will the continual and repeated plunging of the audience into darkness annoy them? What effect is Hatcher after? How can we keep the

momentum moving forward? What obstacles does this present in terms of costume and set changes?

These blackouts—and their effect on the pacing of the show overall—are a delicate business. The reviews are mostly antagonistic to the blackouts. Sommer calls them “discombobulating”, while Stackman calls the play a “series of short elliptical scenes which end quickly, without much explanation” and Regan mentions “choppy scenes” ruined by blackouts. It adds insult to injury that Regan specifically blames the director rather than the playwright for the hated blackouts.

I wonder how the blackouts were handled. Were they zero counts, medium-length blackouts, long blackouts? And this issue spills over then into every lights up, as well. Do they all need to be the same?

### **5. Classifying Genre**

In the course of researching these reviews, I have been strongly motivated to go back to my original script analysis and rethink my choice of genre. Clearly it’s a psychologically realistic text, but beyond that description—with so many elements in play—what additional designation will best guide my cast and me in our telling of this story?

The reviewers certainly can’t agree. Sommer calls Scotland Road simply a “thriller”, while Marks’ disdain comes through loud and clear in his labeling of the play as a “murky comedy-mystery”. Rozmiarek goes with “slippery mystery” while Klein throws in everything but the kitchen sink: “a sci-fi and mystery thriller”. Marchese goes with “psychodrama” and Brennen Jensen riffs on that label with “psychological thriller”. Anonymous is not alone in calling the play “surreal” (Anonymous 2004), Stackman votes

for "mystery", as does Regan, who also points out that the company mounting the production billed it as a "Gothic thriller". Jensen echoes this billing, adding "Gothic high-seas ghost story" to the grab bag of possibilities.

What is disconcerting to me is that not one reviewer mentions "romance" or "love story". Certainly "mystery" and "thriller" are accurate to a point, but is my insistence on focusing on the love story and "John's" quest a mistake based on the genre designations that populate these reviews? Or did the productions simply fail to bring the romance forward?

## CHAPTER II: PROCESS

### A. Why a One-Act? Why no Intermission?

Hatcher, according to his author's note in the Dramatists Play Service acting edition,

“originally intended SCOTLAND ROAD to be a two-act play with an intermission placed after Scene 13. That's how it's usually performed, and that's how it's laid out in the published version. However, a few recent productions have dispensed with the intermission altogether, and the result has been a taut, forward-moving 85-90 minute show. I'm completely comfortable with that option, liquor sales at the lobby bar notwithstanding.” (Hatcher 6)

The script bears out Hatcher's assertion: Act One ends after Scene 13. The evidence in the reviews researched also back up Hatcher's experience. Of the eleven reviews mentioned in the previous chapter, four mention the show being an intermission-less, 90-minute play, while only one notes it as a two-act play.

I am choosing to mount the production with no intermission, performing the play straight through. As noted in the performance reports appendix, every performance came in right at 85 minutes. I am going this direction not only because Hatcher gave his blessing, but for three other reasons.

First of all, the venue is not conducive to an intermission. The Downstage has no lobby, just hallways.

Secondly, I don't think an intermission will be needed. There is no ornate costume change to cover after Scene 13, and the audience isn't going to need a bathroom break after a mere 35 minutes.

Lastly and most importantly, I strongly feel that the story-telling will benefit from not having the momentum interrupted by an intermission. Hatcher uses the terms “taut” and “forward-moving”. I completely agree. I do see why he placed intermission where he did. The entire first act focuses on getting the Woman to speak, and finally she does in Scene 13. Then Act Two deals with the repercussions of the Woman speaking. It makes sense. Except in the course of my analysis I came to believe the story was “John’s”, not the Woman’s. In my staging I am purposely placing John down center stage as Scene 13 comes to its shocking end, with the Woman shrieking in the down right corner. Even as we are stunned by the sudden vocal fury of the Woman, the stage composition will force us to focus on “John’s” *reaction* to the Woman, which is more central to the story. In the next scene John will be cleaning up ice by himself, again down center stage. By visually connecting Scene 13 to Scene 14 with the staging of the main character, I hope to smooth over any awkward “transition” that might need to take place in the mind of an audience member who may feel the need for a “break” at that point. And of course a sign on the entrance stating the running time will help alleviate any expectation of an intermission.



## **B. Action vs. Tactic re: "John"**

In the course of completing the script analysis for this production, I came to realize that one of the main reasons the script read so clearly to me is that "John" in his relentless pursuit of his objective is a tactic machine. As I attempted to label the various beats and identify "John's" action from scene to scene, it became apparent that his action simply refused to vary by the slightest degree. I found myself writing over and over "John needs the Woman to speak" as his action, beat after beat, scene after scene, all the way up to Scene 13 when the Woman does finally speak. His single objective then shifts to "John needs the Woman to prove she is not a hoax". This objective takes him up through Scene 19. Then Scene 20 is all about him needing the Woman to take him back with her to the Titanic. He literally has only three objectives in the entire play—even his scenes with Halbrech and Miss Kittle all serve his need for the Woman to speak, prove herself true, and take him with her—and the fascinating work became about digging through the plethora of creative, sneaky, desperate, manipulative tactics that "John" relentlessly employs.

My intellectual impulse was to overcomplicate this actually very liberating discovery. Surely his action changed more often than this! But every attempt to state a new action simply resulted in a bevy of tactics. My analysis of Scene 2 revealed that for "John" the entire scene is actually one, single action. Each paragraph/beat shift is a shift in tactic in his attempt to make the Woman speak. I came to the same conclusion in Scene 4 and every subsequent interrogation sequence. The part of me that wanted to be thorough and identify all the beats at first felt cheated, but the more single-minded "John" revealed himself to be, the more I became intrigued by this affront to my intellectual

expectations. And once I embraced the intense and straightforward nature of "John's" action, the play snapped into clear focus. Without this key discovery, I would not have uncovered the event.

This discovery also clarified the role of the Woman. The biggest danger with the character of the Woman is boring passivity, that all of Hatcher's directions to "stare" would create a blank slate. All of the warnings in the reviews about "John" being one-note and tiresome could be calmed if the Woman were affected a little more in each interrogation, if she actually had to go through a journey herself, had to dig up all her memories and re-learn how to speak and even who she was. If the Woman showed signs of progressing towards communication, this would propel "John" forward, and the love story could start even before she started speaking. "John's" relentless quest would no longer just be a matter of treading water till Scene 13, but rather a direct and desperate collision of opposing actions: "John" needs the Woman to speak, while the Woman needs "John" to *make* her speak, to unlock her, enlighten her. They struggle *towards* each other from the very first time they meet.

### **C. Difficulties with the Timeline**

Clearly this play was written all in a rush of inspiration. As several reviews note, the story is that Hatcher had just finished reading a book about how Mary Shelley's father, Godwin, a noted rationalist, became obsessed about a newspaper story claiming that the body of a man had been discovered frozen solid in the Alps. When the man was thawed, he claimed to have been buried by an avalanche in 1660, a century and a half earlier. Godwin's rationalist mind was shaken, and he tried to set up an interview with the ice man. Of course, it turned out to be a hoax. The day after reading this book, Hatcher walked into a 7-11 in South Dakota (where "John" works, not coincidentally) and saw a tabloid headline reading "Titanic Survivor Found on Iceberg". (Sommer) With the happy colliding of these two bits of reading, Hatcher was off and running on Scotland Road, and the play bears the marks of the white heat of sudden, serendipitous inspiration.

While Hatcher provides plenty of "markers" to signify time passing and to plant given circumstances, there are several discrepancies in these markers and a lack of exactness in the number of days that pass both before the play and during the play.

In Appendix C I have charted all the internal textual evidence that deals with aspects of the timeline of the story. Below I will explain in detail the choices I made to fill in the gaps and make sure that all the markers lined up properly, the better to avoid confusion internally with the actors during rehearsal and with the audience externally during performance. Once the bigger picture is established, I will also outline how much time passes between each scene, as these blocks of time often contain off-stage action that impact the subsequent scenes.

In order to chart the full timeline of previous action and play-time action, I have worked “backwards” from the handful of EXACT timeline markers in the text. These include references to exact times, exact days of the week, exact lengths of time it took to do something, etc.

The explicit previous action begins at 2:41am on April 15, when the Woman is discovered by the fishing trawler. This is the exact time and day that the Titanic sank. Taking into account Halbrech’s report on the Woman’s condition (that “dehydration and hypothermia suggest some time on the sea. Days. Not weeks.”), I extrapolated even further backwards into some implicit previous action. The Woman appeared on the iceberg on April 10, which is the day the Titanic left Southampton in 1912. This explains why she’s been on the sea for “days”. She indeed is a flesh and blood creature, which is important for later discussions of acting and event choices. She is not a fantasy, not a spiritual being, but truly incarnate and tangible.

More explicit previous action can be pieced together from various lines and educated guesses. The tabloid article John sees in the 7-Eleven: the question to ask is “how long did it take for the story to make it to tabloid, to the publishers, to the 7-Eleven?” If we assume travel time for the trawler to go “250 miles” (according to the tabloid) from somewhere in the Atlantic (presumably where the Titanic sank—although this raises questions about why other Titanic “characters” would start appearing in South Dakota later on) to Iceland, that means the Woman arrives in Keflavik on April 17. From there the word would go out—to Halbrech in Reykjavik, and across the Reuters stringer to the wire services, and thusly to the tabloid office.

For the sake of nailing down the timeline, here are the choices I made: story breaks on April 18. Article gets printed in the tabloid on April 19. "John" says he was paying for something at 7:15am in a 7-Eleven when he saw the article, which means he could have seen it any day between April 19 and April 26 (for a weekly rag). However, the Woman reveals that John actually *works* at 7-Eleven, which means as the employee putting the tabloids into their racks he would have *immediately* seen the story, on April 19.

So April 19 is the start date for "John's" story. And if we take the Woman exactly literally when she says "John" has been missing "three weeks now," that means that the final line of the play takes place on May 10, three weeks later. This choice provides an exact start and end for the action of the play, enabling me to assign exact days to the various markers throughout the script and create a cohesive timeline. Of course, "three weeks now" may be a more generic, less exact unit of time measurement, which means there would be a plus or minus of about two days, probably two days shorter, around May 8, because of how compressed the action of the play is.

To wrap up the previous action: "John" steals all the money from his 7-Eleven on April 19 and starts making calls. He finds Halbrech first, in Iceland. Halbrech by this time would have been contacted by the people in Keflavik, and probably would have arrived in Keflavik by the 19<sup>th</sup> (especially since she would have been many hours ahead across the Atlantic). He is able to convince her to bring the Woman to Boston rather than stay in Iceland. Did "John" have the hospital lined up before he convinced Halbrech? On one hand, considering how often he lies, he may have bluffed his way through that conversation, counting on Halbrech being so appreciative of the offer that she wouldn't

ask too many questions. On the other hand, he is exact and precise in much of his plotting—would he have let something that key to chance? Either way, during the 19<sup>th</sup> he is able to convince Halbrech to come over, and he sets up the clinic in Boston.

It would take Halbrech a day or two—probably two—to get transportation set up and start her journey across the Atlantic, which means she and the Woman leave for the Maine coast (as “John” admits in Scene 6 and is established by Halbrech finding Kittle within 60 miles) on April 21. “John” arrives in Maine by April 21, as he tells Halbrech in Scene 1 (“I was here within 48 hours”). He starts converting the gas station into the holding cell, which takes less than a week, as he tells Miss Kittle. He also makes an off-handed comment about how it only takes five days to cross the Atlantic (surely Halbrech took a boat—flight would have required too much passport/paperwork—“John” probably wired enough money across to grease the palms of port authority). That five day number works well both for Halbrech and the Woman’s voyage, and for the time he needed to convert the gas station. Therefore, the gas station is prepared by April 26, just as Halbrech and the Woman are arriving.

Halbrech surely insisted on a day of recuperation from the journey for the woman, a “day off” on April 27. So the first line of the play would take place on April 28.

Scene 1 begins the evening of April 28 (evening because the Woman is “sleeping now” a little later). “John” and Halbrech talk. “When does she come in.” “Now.”

Scene 2 is practically continuous from Scene 1, just a few minutes later. Halbrech went in to Woman’s room and brought her out, settled her on the chair.

Scene 3 is about 90 minutes after Scene 2. Halbrech has read “John’s” speech in all those other languages and then put the Woman to bed. Halbrech says “John” has “six

days”—does that include today or not? Makes more sense down the road if six days *includes* the 28<sup>th</sup>, so he has until 8pm on May 3 to get what he wants. “John” also has the idea to serve a First Class dinner.

I have decided that April 29 needs to pass between Scene 3 and Scene 4, to make the number of days work out.

So Scene 4 starts at dinnertime on April 30 (“John’s” *third* day). We have the dinner—it took this long to find all the exact flatware and ingredients.

Scene 5 is relatively continuous from Scene 4—later that evening, Woman is in bed, dinner is over. “John” says he’ll need to see Woman alone “tomorrow.”

Scene 6 begins approximately 4pm on May 1. I can be this exact because of time markers in Scene 8.

Scene 7 is continuous from Scene 6, just a few minutes later. Halbrech apparently stormed in, took Woman into her room, confronted “John”. Gives the Woman the day off.

Scene 8: “John” took “day off” to mean 24 hours. It is now 4:27pm on May 2. In this scene Halbrech also says “she leaves tomorrow. Sunday night. Eight o’clock.” This enables me to establish that May 2 is a Saturday, and therefore April 28 was a Tuesday.

Scene 9 is mid-late afternoon on Sunday, May 3. “John” has spent all day trying to get the Woman to talk, finally he makes his last ditch effort in this scene. He reiterates that the Woman leaves “tonight”.

Scene 10 begins at 7:55pm on the evening of Sunday, May 3. I can be this exact because of Halbrech’s explicit statement. So it’s a few hours after Scene 9. “John” has been out to get champagne.

Scene 11 is a few minutes later. Halbrech has taken the Woman into her room, talked with her a little more, then put her to bed. "John" is also still cleaning up ice, so we're talking five-ish minutes rather than fifteen or twenty (otherwise the ice would have melted). Halbrech says "You have six more days", giving "John" until Saturday, May 9.

Scene 12 is 13 hours after Scene 11, according to Halbrech's explicit declaration. So it's about 9:15am on Monday, May 4.

Scene 13 is a few minutes after Scene 12. The day is spent talking to the Woman.

Scene 14 is the next morning, Tuesday May 5. "John" references needing "film developed this afternoon".

Scene 15 seems to be the next day, Wednesday, May 6. But this is problematic because the rest of the play occurs on this day, which is a full four days short of the Woman's "three weeks" statement. Is 17 days close enough to "three weeks"? I have decided it is. If I were to cram any more "hidden" (by which I mean not shown to the audience via a scene) days into this timeline, it would only dilute the intensity and lower the stakes. The action must happen quickly and with immediate consequences. The easiest and most useful way to untie this timeline knot is to assume that the Woman means "approximately three weeks" rather than try to find textual reasons that three or four more days pass than appear to.

So, back to Scene 15. It is early afternoon on Wednesday, May 6.

Scene 16 is a few hours later. "John" tells Halbrech she is "late". She is, because she's driven 60 miles, found Miss Kittle, convinced her to come, and driven back. A question—is it during this drive that Halbrech hears on public radio that there are others? If so, why didn't she say something to "John" about it in *this* scene? Distracted by the



slides and the news of Kittle arriving? Perhaps. This is a slip in the script that is very difficult to understand or explain. It's convenient from a tension/playwriting point of view, but doesn't make a lot of sense character or timeline-wise. Halbrech says she heard about Smith being picked up "this afternoon", which means it must be at least late afternoon or evening when the story breaks on to public radio. Or perhaps it takes the Woman unmasking Kittle for Halbrech to truly believe and thus lend credence to the radio news story.

Scene 17—based on Halbrech's "Now" at the end of Scene 16—is a few minutes after Scene 16, at least early evening, and I actually am going to push towards later evening, because I think the last moment of the play ought to occur at precisely 11:40pm, the time that the Titanic actually struck the iceberg. The text and stage directions point towards that last moment metaphysically connecting with the moment of impact, so working backwards from 11:40pm on Wednesday, May 6, Scene 17 would be somewhere in the 8-9pm range.

Scene 18 is a few minutes after Scene 17.

Scene 19 is thus an hour or so after Scene 18: Kittle has his/her heart attack or stroke and dies, Halbrech and "John" try to save him/her but are unable, then must decide what to do. They wrap up the body and put it in the van.

Scene 20 is about 30 minutes or so after Scene 19, so that would start the scene at about 11:30pm. And the play ends at precisely 11:40pm.

### D. Designs

Before meeting with the designers, it was imperative to decide on a setting. Hatcher simply states, “A white room. Now.” (Hatcher 5) In the course of reading the play, “white room” is clarified as an abandoned and converted gas station on an Atlantic-coast road. The date gave me a bit of hesitation. “Now” for Hatcher when he wrote the play was 1992. If we set the play “now” in terms of the production, it would be 2007. But two bits of text would then be contradicted. First, there is “John’s” line “We have time. The world will wait. The world *has* waited. For eighty years.” (Hatcher 14) “Eighty years” is mentioned a couple other times in the play as well, by both “John” and Miss Kittle. The Titanic sank in 1912, exactly 80 years before Hatcher’s “now” of 1992. This is a textual marker that would have to be altered if we set the play in a different year, much less 2007.

Secondly, Miss Kittle is the last living survivor of the Titanic, and she couldn’t have been an infant in 1912 because when she quizzes the Woman she asks very specific questions that it would take a self-aware and at least partly mature mind to remember. Also, when the Woman remembers Miss Kittle, she specifically uses the word “man” (Hatcher 38), and then subsequently describes this man as having “short hair, a small mustache, a burly frame”. (Hatcher 39) Clearly Miss Kittle must have been at least a teenager if not in her (his!) 20s or 30s at the time of the sinking to account for this description. Thus Miss Kittle—in 1992—would have to be at least in her mid-90s if not over 100 years old. If we were to set the play in 2007, that would add another 25 years to Miss Kittle’s age, and that would stretch credibility, even in a show with time travel!

So I knew the production needed to be set in 1992, but again I hesitated, this time because while “now” is evocative and leaves room to maneuver in terms of clothing and other design choices, putting “1992” in the program had the potential to turn the show into a period piece, creating very specific expectations in the audience by the sheer exactness of the date. I didn’t want audience members distracted thinking about what they were doing/wearing/watching in April 1992. So I settled on “early 1990s” for the program, while working with the cast on the assumption of 1992. I felt “early 1990s” would provide a little of the flexibility afforded by “now” while still keeping the math close enough to be believed. “John’s” precision in all his statements and the repetition of “eighty years” by more than one character makes it hard to rationalize the argument that perhaps “eighty years” is simply a “rounded” number, a nice full approximation, but it seemed like a fair trade off.

With the setting established, we could attack the various design elements. First, the set: “a white room”. We explored the possibility of painting the walls and floor of the Downstage, but the schedule and fumes made this an unattractive option. So we spent the bulk of our budget on many, many yards of white fabric and hung it up around the entirety of all three walls of the stage. Without the paint, we had to leave the floor black, but the bonus in using white fabric was that we could do our projections of the iceberg at the beginning and end of the play directly onto the wall/fabric without an extra screen. The white fabric also had the side effect of creating a terrific bump in the level of the lighting, meaning we could get more illumination from the very few instruments available. Even the black floor turned into a positive, as it helped eliminate bounce

during the final climactic lines, allowing us to create a terrifically tight focus of light on Keith and Maggie down center stage.

We very intentionally chose to put the door to the outside stage left, and the door to the Woman's bedroom stage right. The main reason goes back to our American, English-reading tendency to *start* at the left. By having the Woman's door up right, that spatially gave it more significance.

In terms of costumes—and in spite of my fears of a period piece—we were fortunate that Hatcher calls mostly for non-era-specific clothing: the Woman is dressed in her 1912 outfit and a basic white bathrobe; Halbrech is simply in slacks and a white lab coat; Miss Kittle is dressed in black Victorian lace; “John” is specified as wearing a “tweed suit...of a style that would be fashionable in almost every decade of this century”. (Hatcher 8) We simply trusted Hatcher on the costumes.

Finally there was the surveillance camera. Nick built this pivotal set piece from scratch. The key element I insisted on was a switch and a light, so that the audience could clearly and easily tell when the camera was turned on and off.

### E. Key Blocking Choices

Most of the blocking of the play was done fairly organically, in cooperation with the actors. But there were some key moments that I took almost complete ownership of, for very specific reasons. The observant reader will note that these moments correspond to the architectural moments I list in the script analysis (Appendix D). This is intentional. If these eight moments tell the entire story, then I want to be sure the composition speaks loud and clear.

Of course the blocking started with the set design process. As I mentioned in the previous section, we very intentionally chose to put the door to the outside stage left, and the door to the Woman's bedroom stage right. That fact will be important to keep in mind as I discuss some of these blocking decisions.

As we were working in a very small space, and working on a play with several mysteries to tease out, we kept the blocking fairly simple (in terms of number of moves) and still (in terms of distance of moves) in order to focus on the words and create as many dynamic and loaded pictures as possible.

Moment 1: page 8. The lights come up on "John" and Halbrech. There is a tense beat of silence. Then "John" utters the first word of the play: "Hotter". This is the Inciting Action. I specifically placed "John" center-right, with his back to the Woman's door, facing the audience with full body focus and an up-tilted face. Halbrech was center left, further away from center than "John", turned almost sideways to the audience and with her head down, writing in her notebook. This picture achieved one very specific goal: the audience focuses first on "John". It is his story, and he is the character I needed the audience to study first. Because American/English-reading eyes naturally move left

to right, when the lights came up the audience's inclination would be to look first to John. Also, the relative body and face position of "John" and Halbrech—forward versus profile, open face versus closed—and the placing of "John" slightly closer to center made it even more likely that the majority of attention would be on "John" when he speaks the first line.

Moment 2: page 15. "John" is interrogating the Woman, and we see a chink in his armor of cool demeanor for the first time. Hatcher calls for him to speak in a "deadly even tone" before "exploding": "I could tear the sound out of you. I could *rip* it out. With my bare hands, with my nails, with my *teeth*. *Make you...!*" (Hatcher 15) The key choice here, with the Woman seated center right in her chair, was to get "John" as far stage left as possible in his previous lines, so that during this intense and violent verbal attack he could have space to slowly stalk two steps or so before literally exploding the last two or three steps on "*Make you*". Also, by moving from stage left towards the Woman, "John" would end up just about center stage for his explosion, bringing as much focus to him (with movement, sound, and placement) as possible.

Moment 3: page 18-19. "John" attempts for the first time to make a real, human connection with the Woman. He allows himself to be completely vulnerable with the Woman, and reveals that he is a "kindred spirit", which may be the first bit of truth he speaks in the play. (Hatcher 19) The key moment is actually the "long pause as the Woman continues to stare at John". (Hatcher 19) The stage picture was actually dictated by Hatcher: "He kneels next to her", and "He gets very close to her". (Hatcher 18) But in the pause, I was adamant that the story not stop. How many "Pinter-esque" pauses have we seen stop a show in its tracks? The action needed to continue, even though

Hatcher only calls for a continued stare. So, in this pause—this stare—I directed Maggie to *attempt* to speak, to play it as though “John’s” vulnerability had convinced her it was safe, but that she just hadn’t remembered enough yet, that the catalyst that would spring her free hadn’t occurred yet. So, very specifically, Maggie would lean in toward Keith, he would kinesthetically respond by leaning in himself, they would both get still, she would open her mouth, no words would come, he would inch closer, she would again try to *squeeze* some words out, but then collapse back into her chair, defeated, as his body also deflated. And—quite intentionally—“John” would be almost dead center stage for this entire beat, because even though the Woman is trying to speak, it is “John’s” reaction to her attempt that carries the story forward.

Moment 4: page 21. The Woman speaks! I discussed this beat in Section A of this chapter, but here are more of the specific choices. The Woman is forced into the down right corner earlier in the scene by “John’s” aggression. “John” ends up in a violent argument with Halbrech down center, with John facing right (towards the Woman) and Halbrech facing left towards “John”. When Halbrech throws the word “Astor” in “John’s” face, the Woman suddenly speaks, repeating the name “Astor”. Halbrech and “John” immediately turn as needed to give the Woman full body focus as the Woman turns more downstage, opening herself up to the audience to draw their attention. Then the Woman screams, collapses to the ground, Halbrech dashes right and crouches down beside her, while “John” remains frozen down center. After the Woman utters the last word of the scene, “Ice”, *both* women look to “John” which means looking center and raising their faces up to him. Again, by using levels and placement on the

stage, the goal is to clarify that the story is “John’s”, and that his reaction to this event is more important than the event itself.

Moment 5: page 28. In an echo of moment 4, the Woman again impulsively and reflexively speaks the name “Astor”, only this time it is in response to a slide that “John” is showing of a photograph of a third class passenger on board the Titanic. This is another catalyst moment for the Woman, when she suddenly is able to remember her lover.

The set up here is a bit more complicated. We set up the projector to shoot light out over the audience’s head, so that “John” and the Woman both could look at the slides without turning their backs on the audience. Also, the description of the photographs was more chilling on its own than an actual projected image would have been—left more to the audience’s imagination. So we have the Woman seated on her chair slightly right of center, and “John” all the way up center behind the projector. This composition allowed the audience to watch “John” watching her, studying her for any reaction to the various slides.

For the actual “Astor” moment, I aimed to set up a strong and abrupt visual picture. The photo previous to the third class passenger is the iceberg, and during his lines “John” describes how some witnesses claimed to have seen a red stripe across the bottom of the iceberg: “a red slash—like red paint”. (Hatcher 28) And then he points, indicating in the photo where the stripe would have been. I directed Keith to move downstage during this speech, to down center, and to reach out into the air and gesture per Hatcher’s stage directions. Then he walks brusquely back towards his post behind the projector up center when he clicks to the next photo and says “Unidentified man at



the third class staircase". (Hatcher 28) This is the picture that elicits the Woman's response. So when she suddenly said "Astor", Keith was in mid-stride, not quite back to the projector, and he was able to whirl around on her, again bringing focus to him with movement (the whirl) and placement (just about dead center stage). Again, his reaction to her utterance propels the action.

Moment 6: page 39. Miss Kittle is revealed by the Woman to be the mythical man who escaped the Titanic dressed as a woman. Several things happen in this moment. First, the Woman proves pretty much conclusively that she is not a fraud. Secondly, Miss/Mr. Kittle suffers a fatal heart attack. And third, I personally need to once again make sure the audience takes in not just the information, but also "John's" reaction to the information.

The blocking in this moment was not so much about movement as it was about directing focus. The Woman in the course of the scene had risen out of her chair and moved just up and right of center stage. Miss Kittle was opposite the Woman's chair, in her wheelchair just left of center, and had just started to wheel around as though to leave, so that she was covering a little distance towards the up left exit without turning her face away from the audience. Halbrech was in the down right corner, and "John" was in the down left corner. Miss Kittle says "Thank you, dear" (Hatcher 38) and starts to wheel away, when the Woman drops her bomb shell: "When I laid eyes on this lady, she was not a lady. She had short hair, a small mustache, a burly frame, and how she managed to fit into the dress and the shawl only God can say". (Hatcher 38-9) With the Woman up center, Miss Kittle had to swing around suddenly from facing left to gasp towards the

Woman, while Halbrech and “John” each took a small kinesthetic move backwards in shock. This reaction achieves the first goal: proving the Woman is legitimate.

The next goal—selling Miss Kittle having a massive heart attack—was signified by her turning back towards the audience, gasping again, and bringing a fluttering hand to her throat, with Halbrech and “John” swaying forward a quarter step in concern. The third goal—bringing the focus back to “John”—was achieved by having Miss Kittle snap her head around to plead with and/or accuse him with her eyes. Not only did her extreme focus direct the audience’s attention to him (and with the Woman and Halbrech glued to Miss Kittle, any eyes wandering to them would follow the path to “John”) but the fact he was down left—the easiest position for American/English-reading eyes to reach—assisted in this very quick final shift of focus.

Moment 7: page 43. The Point of No Return, when “John” confesses he is not the great grandson of John Jacob Astor IV. Just previous to this moment, the Woman had been standing just right of center, a bit down of her chair, with John sitting on the floor next to her and on her left (almost center) with his head resting against her legs. She sings “Autumn” to him, then abruptly demands “Who are you?” (Hatcher 43) “John” scurries back like an animal on his hands and knees, getting to a spot just left of center that allows the two of them—for the first time in the play—to SHARE center stage. As he tries to cling to his false identity, he rises up on his knees, then sinks down on his haunches, utterly deflated, on “*No. I’m not.*” (Hatcher 43) This very subtle shift in the use of space between the two characters reveals that the relationship has fundamentally changed, that by letting go of his identity there is no going back (point of no return, indeed!).

Moment 8: page 46. The Climax, when “John” and the Woman travel through time and space to be together on the Titanic. “John” asks, “When does it come?”, and the Woman replies “Now.” (Hatcher 46) These are the last lines of play. The build-up includes the Woman getting all the way downstage, just right of center, body fully facing the audience. “John” approaches her from just up and left—he had been listening intently to her long monologue, and by putting him slightly up of her the audience again was able to be just as focused on his reactions as on her story. He approaches her as profile as he can, then turns out to the audience as the journey draws close. I trusted Hatcher’s blocking of the actors’ eyes: the Woman looks out while “John” looks at her, but then when she closes her eyes he is suddenly transported and can look out as well. And, just as Hatcher calls for, her eyes remain closed until just before her final line, “Now.” So we end with the two characters sharing down center, facing directly out.

I differed from Hatcher in this final moment in my use of light. He calls for “blistering” light after the Woman’s final line, but the Downstage simply didn’t have the capability to achieve the affect I believe Hatcher wanted. So I went extreme in the opposite direction. As “John” joined the Woman downstage, we slowly and relentlessly took out all light except for a pin spot on the two of them. This negative movement of the light, contrasted with the growing soundscape underneath, expressionistically evoked a sense of supernatural transportation, while at the same time echoing “John’s” description of the sea as “black marble glass”. (Hatcher 45) Then, by going to absolute dark and silence simultaneously on a zero count, the effect of “John” and the Woman disappearing/traveling was hopefully still achieved.

## **F. Sound Choices**

There weren't an abundance of sound cues in my production of Scotland Road, but a handful of key sound design choices bear discussion. Hatcher himself only calls for five sound cues. Using his outline as a starting point, I made some specific choices based on the sound capacity of the Downstage and my personal aesthetic to underscore some crucial moments in the play.

The two easiest sound cues were live and on-stage. "John" sings "Nearer My God to Thee", and the Woman sings "Autumn". We went with the well-known American version of "Nearer My God to Thee", as it is the one that would be most immediately recognizable, even to non-religious audience members (it was the version played by the band in James Cameron's Titanic). "Autumn" took a little more digging, but Maggie and I together found a well-known version with a tune recognizable to anyone who spent any amount of time in a Protestant church.

Hatcher in scene 14 also calls for very specifically timed and counted "clinks" of ice being dropped into the champagne bucket. These percussive beats are "John's" only "dialogue" in the scene. In order to not have a wet and slippery stage for the second half of the show, we wrangled some plastic ice cubes. The sound wasn't quite what I wanted (they sound, well, plastic), but the percussion was preserved and we didn't have to towel down the stage during a black out or risk an actor slipping. The trade-off, to my mind, was worth the slightly dinkier sound.

The two most important sound cues, unsurprisingly, occur at the very beginning of the play, and right at the end, during the climax. To start the play, Hatcher calls for "the sound of a large, powerful ocean liner moving through the sea. The hum of the giant

turbines, the low crash of waves as the prow cuts across the water". (Hatcher 7) This sound is supposed to build to a rattling threshold. I foresaw some problems trying to implement this specific cue. First of all, the Downstage is equipped with a cd player and only a couple speakers. While playing with levels, I became concerned that distortion would make the effect sound more like generic white noise than the specifically evocative engine and water. I was also concerned with finding and/or building a cue that would sound enough like what Hatcher asked for. I dug through several cd sound effect libraries, but almost all the engines were for cars, airplanes, or motorboats. And the only ocean liner cues I found had been slapped together with the thinnest sounding water.

This problem was compounded by the fact that Hatcher calls for a similar prow-cutting-through-the-waves sound over the climax of the play. This cue also is supposed to be able to build to a roar, and be evocative of a large ocean-going vessel. I faced the same problem: how to achieve such an evocative effect without a cheesy, amateur-ish sound effect subverting the moment.

I ended up contacting Tom Martin, a local Equity stage manager and theatre professional who had worked on a production of Scotland Road at the Repertory Theatre of St. Louis a few years ago, hoping maybe he still had a cd of the cues they had built. He suggested I check out an album called The Sinking of the Titanic, by the Gavin Bryars Ensemble. This album is basically a meditation: all the songs are titled "Sinking of the Titanic", and then have sub-titles like "Hymn 1" and "Lament". The music is a combination of radar pings, water, engine turbines, distant/distorted/watery versions of "Nearer My God to Thee", and other nautical-inspired sounds; not so much melodic music as soundscape. Mr. Martin said they had used tracks from this album in place of

the cues Hatcher called for. While expressionistic instead of realistic, the necessary evocative effect was preserved.

It took me only one listen to The Sinking of the Titanic to know I had also found my opening and closing sound cues. The only difficult step left was to choose out of the dozen gorgeous tracks which best fit to open and which to underscore the climax. But instead of scrambling for any cue that might work, I was selecting from a lush list of options.

I parted from Hatcher on one key moment, however. At the end of the play, he calls for the roaring sound cue to continue into the blackout and underneath the final projected image of the iceberg. I decided to take the sound out on a zero count, simultaneous with the lights going out on a zero count, immediately after the Woman utters the last word of the play: "*Now*". Where Hatcher has the sound and lights roaring and "blistering" after "*Now*", I took the lights and sound out as abruptly as possible, and had my final iceberg projection in utter silence.

Again, one of the key reasons for this decision was that the Downstage was not equipped to roar with sound and blister with light. Also, four of the twenty scenes end with a character saying "*Now*", and every scene ends abruptly with "Blackout. End of scene", either cutting off a line or punctuating a button. As I will discuss in the next section, this sense of abrupt endings (what one of the reviews called "discombobulating") led me to choose to use zero counts on all the blackouts. I have also found in my own experience that there is nothing that quite takes away the breath of an audience than the sudden disappearance of a long-established sound.

Also, for me the climax comes in the moment directly after the Woman's "Now", not during the final projection. The final iceberg image is more of a coda. The moment of highest tension is right before the Woman says "Now", and the climax is the Woman and "John" traveling to the Titanic, signified by their utter disappearance. I can see how altering the pattern established by nineteen previous scenes could also be impactful, but as I discussed in the Key Blocking Choices section, my manipulation of lights as "John" and the Woman approach their journey achieves the effect I believe Hatcher is aiming at with his final sound/light cue.

Lastly, there was the selection of sound for bows. I made what may at first seem an odd choice—the I Salonisti string quartet version of "Nearer My God to Thee" used in James Cameron's Titanic. Considering my discussion of the last song played on the Titanic in Chapter 1, and the revelation in this play that "Nearer My God to Thee" was *not* the last song played, why would I choose that song over a version of "Autumn" or even another track from The Sinking of the Titanic?

First off, from a purely aesthetic point of the view, I Salonisti's version is utterly gorgeous and chill inducing. But more importantly, choosing that particular sound for curtain call was my explicit nod towards the romantic love story at the center of the play. "Nearer My God to Thee" represents for "John"—in one song—all the mythology, legend, and romance of the Titanic. Even though the Woman takes away his belief in that song, she does take him back to the Titanic. He gets what he wants. So playing that song at the end both subverts the mythology of Titanic and acknowledges that "John" has achieved his objective, that the story of Scotland Road is complete.

## **G. Overcoming the Obstacles**

As discussed in Chapter 1, there were five key obstacles I identified in my research of reviews of previous productions. This section discusses what choices I made to deal with those obstacles, and in Chapter 3 I will discuss how successful (or not) my choices ended up being.

The first key obstacle was lack of a specific event. As the reviews revealed, many productions appeared to lack a specific event that brought focus to the mystery and clarity to the central love story. After much struggle, I settled on “John travels to the Titanic”. I had not articulated this final event before starting rehearsals. Like many of the reviewers, I was distracted by (and working through) the role/identity of the Woman. Clearly the play belonged to “John”, but was the Woman central enough to the action to warrant inclusion in the event?

I started with “John and the Woman redeem each other”, but as early as the first read-through—hearing the words in the actors’ mouths—I knew this wouldn’t encompass the entirety of the action, especially because the Woman’s role snapped into place as a catalyst for “John’s” journey.

I then moved on to several variations of “The Titanic calls John”, but this also quickly proved insufficient: “John” drives the action, he is the central player, not Titanic. And that particular grammatical structure put the action primarily onto an unseen and non-human agent.

It was when Keith and Maggie asked me during our first batch of scenework on the climax “what the heck was going on” that I realized that the simplest answer in this case was the best. Especially considering the discoveries I had made about “John’s”



action versus his abundance of tactics (discussed earlier in this chapter), I simply trusted Hatcher and the words he put into “John’s” mouth just previous to the climax: “I came here to...I wanted so to *believe* in you. I wanted so for you to be *real*. So I could be *there!*” (Hatcher 43) Three pages later “John” is seeing the iceberg from the prow of the Titanic, and he gets what he wants: “Yes, I *do*...I see it...It’s *huge!* A huge, white mountain of ice! Getting closer! *Closer!* I can touch it! I can feel it! It’s here! It’s here!” (Hatcher 46) What happens in Scotland Road? When an audience member leaves, what’s the one thing I want to be sure they *know* happened? What’s the show about? It’s about a man who travels to the Titanic. The play is all about his struggles to get there, the catalyst that drives him, the obstacles that he fights through, until he finally—physically—travels there.

Once I articulated this to myself and communicated it to Keith and Maggie, their playing of the scene immediately deepened from surface-y, emotive, melodramatic, and general to specific, with high stakes, erotic excitement, fear and exhilaration. Also, Keith’s approach in rehearsal took on a new clarity and specificity, as I was able to point him at a final target and help him understand what I had been talking about in terms of “John” being little more than a tactic-machine for the first half of the play.

I chose to make the journey of “John” and the Woman utterly and physically real rather than psychotic/psychological for two reasons: it raised the stakes much, much higher; and the evidence of Hatcher’s designated sound cues clearly supported the decision. Even though I went with more expressionistic sound cues (as discussed previously in this chapter), the fact that Hatcher calls for such exact, real-world sound

effects argues for the actuality of the Titanic, which then argues for flesh-and-blood time/space travel.

The second obstacle revealed by the reviews was the overwhelming of the love story by the theme of identity. I dealt with this obstacle simply: by constantly reminding Keith that he was rooting for the Woman to *not* be a hoax. “John’s” skepticism isn’t of the antagonistic variety; it is rather of the hopeful variety, the variety that uses interrogation and cynicism as a crucible to purify the object of study. Basically, he needed to put her through the wringer so that he didn’t get his hopes up unnecessarily. He needed to be sure before utterly letting himself go. The metaphor I gave Keith was, “It’s as if you have a huge crush on someone, and you ask a friend to find out if that person might be open to you asking them on a date.” By building all of the interrogation scenes on the desperate hope to believe—“be who you say you are”—I hoped to avoid distracting the audience from the story with something as unplayable as a theme. The theme of identity would rise up on its accord with no extra help from the actors or assistance from the director.

The third obstacle to overcome was the balance of intellectual arguments against the numerous visceral images and speeches. In my notes on the reviews I wrote, “The bad reviews: not enough visceral so the intellect ran off with it. The good reviews: so much visceral that the intellect came along for the ride.” Basically, the productions that failed to keep the reviewer’s attention allowed that reviewer to wander off into logic land and ponder all the discrepancies in the timeline and the big, important themes.

This realization did not mean I had *carte blanche* to create a bunch of visceral pictures with no logic behind them. Rather, by getting every detail of the timeline nailed

down and buying in to the reality of the event, I hoped to *earn* the supernatural payoff. Again, the event was key. If we could get the audience to focus more on “John” and his journey rather than simply “who is the Woman?”, then the momentum of the story would carry them past those trickier moments where the logic alarm might sound.

The fourth obstacle to confront was the “discombobulating” blackouts. I discussed these blackouts briefly in Chapter 1: Hatcher ends every single scene with a blackout. As mentioned previously in my discussion of the handling of the climax, Hatcher’s use of “Now” to end four of the scenes signified to me that these blackouts were meant to be sudden, that the feeling of these vignettes was to be almost like snapshots. He even uses the phrase “the lights dump out” at one point. (Hatcher 46)

In terms of pacing, it became immediately apparent that anything other than a zero count “dump” of the lights after every scene would create an intolerably self-indulgent and wincingly ponderous sense of self-importance and “significance”. In a way, we wanted the blackouts to be discombobulating, even confusing in the sense of making the audience think “what just happened? What was the last thing they said?” We would get more reflection from the audience by *not* allowing them time to do so, and this would also keep us one step ahead in the storytelling, which was very important to the pacing as well. So every scene ended with a zero count blackout, and every lights up was on a quick but more “inviting” two count. We also worked extremely hard during tech/dress rehearsals to keep the set changes as brief as possible, again with momentum in mind.

Finally, there was the obstacle of genre. As the reviews revealed, there was wide opinion as to what exactly this play was, and the focus on mystery/thriller—while at first

appealing to me—clearly reflected what I came to see as a lack of focus on the central love story. For me the genre classification need to be tied very closely to the event, so as my event took shape, my genre also evolved from “psychologically realistic, supernatural mystery-thriller” to “psychologically realistic, supernatural love story”. This obstacle was not one that would necessarily be apparent to the audience, but the clarification in my own analysis I hoped would assist the actors in making specific choices.

## CHAPTER III: REFLECTIONS and EVALUATION

### A. Success in Overcoming Obstacles

In Chapter One I outlined five key obstacles identified in the various reviews researched. In Chapter Two I discussed how I intended to deal with those obstacles. This section will explore how successfully (or not) my attempts to deal with those obstacles turned out.

The first obstacle of course is the lack of a clear event and climax. The detailed and precise blocking that the actors and I worked out for the climax I think succeeded in communicating to the audience that the two characters literally traveled through time and space to the Titanic. I don't think anyone left thinking that the Woman was a figment of someone's imagination, or a perpetrator of a hoax, or that "John" had gone insane, or anything like that.

However, as I reflect on the performances and go back through my analysis, I have come to wonder if my event actually is large enough to cover all of the action in the play. In Scene 19, the skeptic Halbrech says "There *are* others" after hearing a radio report of Captain Smith showing up off the coast of Nova Scotia. (Hatcher 40) The Woman herself tells "John" that more Titanic folk will be found, including his alleged great-grandfather, John Jacob Astor, who will show up "in the Badlands of South Dakota." (Hatcher 41) These predictions are wrapped up in an admittedly vague charge: "Until you know what you must do." (Hatcher 41) What is this never defined action that "John" must accomplish to stop this inundation of drowned Titanic characters? It is never specified, but the structure of the play seems to suggest that "John" *does* do what he is supposed to, going back to the Titanic with the Woman. Because the Woman ties these appearances so closely to "John's" actions, I think perhaps my event *is* large

enough, and I think in performance the actors were specific in the choice we had made, but if I were to go back and start again, I think this would be an issue deserving of more thought.

The next obstacle was to not let the theme of identity overwhelm the central love story. Looking back through my original script analysis I see that I had also bought in heavily to this theme, even to the point of thinking the event might revolve around “John” discovering who he truly is. This was a fortunate case of research nudging me towards a wiser course by showing me where my original course was likely headed! With the actors’ help, I believe this was an obstacle we obliterated: after all, themes cannot be played, but falling in love can. The small details put into each scene by both the actors and myself constantly reinforced the burgeoning love story and continually refocused attention on how desperately these two people needed each other: the Woman attempting to speak rather than just staring, “John” basing his interrogations on hope rather than antagonism. These specific choices were our defense against that terrifying word in the reviews, “vague”.

By avoiding the plague of “vague” we also bolstered our immunity to the danger of the intellectual overtaking the visceral. But while the love story I think read clearly, I’m not as certain that we were able to calm the audience’s intellect completely. The rehearsal logs in the appendix reveal the early and somewhat lengthy battle we had with the timeline. While I believe we played it as specifically as we could, I don’t know that we clarified the timeline for the audience completely. With so many scenes—many of them fairly short—and so many time markers that often seemed to contradict each other, there wasn’t much we could do beyond being certain in our own minds *when* we were.

The hope was that our assuredness would assuage any consternation in the audience so that the visceral impact of screams, slideshows, fights, music, revelations, and near kisses would not be compromised.

I also believe that this process was a terrific step in the right direction for myself personally in my own balancing act of intellectual versus visceral. As I discussed in the Introduction, I chose this play because of its visceral impact on me. And while I came into the rehearsals having done my typical load of intellectual preparation, I intentionally resisted the urge to dump it all onto the actors. Rather, I gave them a few kernels, then trusted that the visceral impact that had happened to me would happen to them as they simply read the play for themselves. I used their initial responses to guide our rehearsals, rather than my piles of research and analysis. I realize that especially in the university setting I will not always be blessed with an ensemble of actors quite as talented and well-suited to their roles as this group was, and that I may have to shove more intellectual foundation into the rehearsals, but it was quite liberating to let go so fully and trust the actors, the text, and the process to tell me when the intellect was needed and when we could just keep “playing” for a little longer.

The fourth major obstacle was those tricky blackouts. Once again, I believe my decision was an effective one, true to the text and—for the most part—well executed. However, some of the blackouts lasted longer than others, and some simply lasted too long. This was due to a few tricky set changes, especially with the projector, that needed a new table, a cord, and careful handling. I considered trying some cover music, especially since in that small space we also had the problem of being seen and heard while moving, even in a complete blackout. Instead of complete sensory deprivation—

which was the goal—we got shadowy figures rustling around for a few seconds. Thus the “snapshot” effect wasn’t quite achieved, and when the blackouts lasted too long, we edged into that area where the audience gets a tad restless, and that’s when they would potentially start thinking about what didn’t make sense in the timeline in the previous scene. I’d say about half the blackouts came off as well as could be hoped in that space: quick, immediate, the merest of a breath, no time for the audience to wander. The other half varied from barely too long to one that was almost excruciating.

Finally there was the question of genre. It is difficult to ascertain how successful we were in convincing the audience that it was a love story wrapped in a sci-fi-mystery-thriller and not vice versa. There were no critical reviews of this production, and it’s more an academic question than something that comes up when an audience member talks about what happened in the plot. Because this obstacle is so closely tied to the event, I prefer to think that the specificity we poured into the relationship between “John” and the Woman read as a burgeoning romance rather than just inquisitor and mute, but I also acknowledge that the text focuses much more on suspense questions and forwards in the world of “who is she?” and “will she talk?” rather than “when will they kiss?”

Overall, because we crafted so many of our choices while highly aware of where we wanted to go and where we definitely did not want to go, I think we avoided most of the obvious pitfalls so brutally categorized in the reviews. Whether other of those pitfalls are just too inherent in the text or whether we became so focused on avoiding them that we neglected to fully travel the road we chose, I’m honestly not sure. If I were to start over, I think I would try to find more of the overlap between the identity theme and the love story, find more of the common ground they share in the text.



## **B. Working With the Actors**

Underlying all of my interaction with the actors during this production was the concept of “distance of communication”, a term I latched on to from my Acting for the Camera class. On stage, you need to speak and gesture to the farthest corner of the back row. But the camera brings the entire audience right up to you. The distance of communication is greatly lessened. I apply this same concept to every stage show I direct, because each space is different. Too often actors and directors fall into the trap of simply thinking “bigger” or “smaller”, when in fact the acting stays the same and it’s simply that one must communicate over greater or smaller distances.

Because of the incredibly intimate nature of the Downstage Theatre, we were practically in the land of camera acting, where the smallest move and glance would read in very significant ways. The distance of communication was minimal. Also the amount of space on the stage itself was minimal (I refuse to say “limited”—obstacles are just opportunities for creativity), therefore I urged the actors to think in terms of “trusting stillness”. Especially in smaller spaces, I am an ardent believer that very little is more captivating than filled, resonate silence/stillness. In stillness you allow the audience to do the majority of the work: they bring themselves to the edge of their seats by wondering what all of that potential energy is going to be used for and when that moment will come when it transforms into kinetic energy.

At first, the actors resisted. They felt like they weren’t “doing anything”. I needed to convince them that a simple turn of the head, or one movement of a hand in an otherwise still scene, or a whisper was just as if not more impactful than leaping/crossing/shouting. I also needed to help them learn to be still without tightening

up, without clenching and holding their breath, to “ease into the freeze” as I would often say in rehearsal.

I will discuss how I broke through these barriers with each actor individually later in this chapter, but in terms of working with them as an ensemble, this obstacle of trusting stillness led me to articulate one of the most useful tools I have ever stumbled across as a director. I’m sure I owe its central idea to other directors/actors/writers, and it’s based on the politically proven notion that anarchy breeds only chaos and that rules/structure actually enable the greatest creativity. I call this ridiculously useful tool “Two Moves”. It’s not quite a game, not quite improvisation, not quite organic blocking, but a dastardly blend of all three. The rules are simple: in whatever beat or scene we are working on, I will give the actors a starting point and an ending point (in terms of blocking). And they each get “two moves”. They can move whenever they want, on whatever line or pause they want, and wherever on the stage they want, as long as they start and end where I specified.

The variations are endless: I can specify size of moves (ranging from one step to a full stage cross); I can stipulate that each move must be of a *different* length/speed/style (move instantaneously or take 20 seconds, creep or sprint, crawl or leap); I can even let two actors “share” moves, i.e. they get four moves total to use however they decide between themselves in the course of playing the scene, so one actor may get three or four moves while the other gets only one or zero, but they decide without my input. I can also stipulate that a hand gesture or head turn counts as a move, if we’re working an especially still and intimate scene.

I settled on *two* as the magic number because one still felt limiting to the actors (especially once I realized I was getting more bold choices when I set the end point myself—if I don't set the end point then their one move defines it) while three was a little too much to concentrate on. With *two*, the actors know that their second move has to land them at the designated end point, and so they pour all the creative energy they have into that first move. In the very strict limitation of this exercise, the actors are completely freed up from thinking too hard or too far ahead, and can just react to each other with specificity, since they also know that their scene partner is operating under the same rules.

“Two Moves” resulted in all sorts of discoveries, some of the subtlest moment-to-moment kind and some in actual final blocking choices. The more it worked the more I kept playing with it, and the more flexible it became. If one session of “Two Moves” resulted in a blocking choice we all liked, then we'd set that particular move as the new starting or ending point and play again.

Again, I don't think “Two Moves” is necessarily earth shattering or blazingly original, but the *naming* of this particular exercise/game/set of rules granted me a sense of freedom and trust in the actors that I hadn't experienced before, and the actors ate it up. It allowed them to focus so exhaustively yet creatively without feeling lorded over or dictated to. I am not ashamed to admit that I have made consistent use of “Two Moves” in every show I've directed since Scotland Road. But this production lent itself particularly well to this technique, because many of the short scenes in Hatcher's script didn't need more than two moves!

**Keith / "John"**

This was a challenging role for Keith. He hails from a more musical theatre background, and is just a naturally high-energy, constantly moving type of person, so the starting from stillness approach took him the longest to accept and internalize. "Two Moves" became a particularly affective tool to help Keith channel all his energy and ideas.

I took an especially outside-in approach with Keith. I constantly encouraged him to focus on his speech/accent, his feet, and his posture. Because, as revealed in the analysis, "John's" objective is so incredibly constant, we didn't have to have extensive conversations about what he wanted in each scene. So I intentionally couched his tactic ideas in purely physical terms: where does your voice shift? Where are your feet pointed and how do they support you? When and how does your posture shift as you alter tactic?

In terms of Keith's accent, I eased off on pushing him entirely into the British clip. Rather than distracting him with learning an accent as he was struggling against what he perceived as too severe limitations, I started to direct in terms of "speech" rather than "accent". I don't know that this choice was entirely effective: sometimes it ended up sounding like an accent would come and go, depending on the prevalence of certain vowels in certain stretches of dialogue.

A breakthrough in Keith's speech occurred when he fully understood that "John" has to be "performing" in the early interrogation scenes, the scenes where all his lines were going to be repeated in several other languages. This implies that "John" scripted out his speeches and translated them, which means he can't really deviate from what he prepared. This added level of intentionality helped Keith slow down and get exact, and this exactness mimicked a level of British-ness that I thought worked fairly well in

communicating that this character thought he was socially above the others, which to me was more important than a precise and accurate accent.

I have been discovering more and more—through Suzuki training, my own professional work, and my continued work with university students—that everything starts with the feet: balance, voice, movement. My own personal breakthrough in this understanding of the importance of the feet started with this production, specifically with Keith. I ended up referring to his dance training to find a language we could speak together in terms of what I wanted for stage pictures and what his impulses were in terms of blocking. Together, Keith and I developed a foot placement strategy for him based on “first position”, only with the heels spread a bit apart and often the weight shifted back on whichever foot was behind the other at any given time: a weight distribution of about 60% to 40%. This helped to ground Keith, to support him, to connect him to the power of the earth rising up through him. As a dancer, when he felt that support, he felt safer in *not* moving, and since we were exploring the power of movement out of stillness, this support was key to Keith buying in to our approach.

By focusing so much attention on the feet, we were also able to get specific with Keith’s posture—and unsurprisingly, this focus on the posture reinforced the vocal world I wanted Keith to inhabit. I pointed Keith at Hatcher’s admonition that “John” seems effortlessly in control. So, while we definitely explored a ramrod spine and upturned head, it was not of the military type, but rather the gentleman type. Especially the head: rather than held rigidly, it needed to float almost weightlessly above the squared shoulders.

Overall, I believe Keith's portrayal of "John" was much more successful than not. There were a few moments (which I will discuss later in this chapter) that were not as effective as I had hoped, but I feel the outside-in approach with Keith was the appropriate strategy to take, and resulted in a detailed, specific, deeply wrought performance.

### **Maggie / The Woman**

My strategies to work with Maggie were diametrically opposed to those I used with Keith. Maggie bought in to the stillness approach right away, allowing for a more inside-out approach to her character work. Her willingness to explore stillness very well may have been a direct result of the fact that she was blocked—by Hatcher—to spend the first half of the play sitting in the deck chair. Her movement was limited to head and hands for her first several scenes, and this created a vocabulary that translated easily into her later scenes on her feet. So whereas most of my conversations with Keith centered on literally what he was physically doing, my conversations with Maggie were—almost by necessity—focused on the internal development (emotionally and intellectually) of her character.

This vocabulary of stillness was especially useful in Maggie's climactic monologue near the end of the play, because while she wasn't seated in the deck chair, I placed her strictly down center and asked her to create the entire memory from the waist up. The danger with this monologue was that the pace would suffer, that it would become self-indulgent in its stillness and lose the necessary active immediacy. Again, the foundation of her earlier scenes, I would argue, helped us for the most part avoid this danger.

Maggie, like Keith, also had some accent work. Again like Keith, I asked her to give us a flavor without becoming distracted by worrying about exactness in every single syllable and vowel. In Maggie's case we were working towards a Welsh sound (Cardiganshire is in Wales). However, in retrospect, I think this was not the most effective choice. The Woman needed to have a stronger sense of "the Other" about her, and a thicker accent would have helped achieve that sense. This "Other-ness" would have created more intrigue in the mystery and added another level of "performance" that "John" would have to analyze. More specifically, a stronger Welsh accent would also have underscored the social class differences between the Woman and "John". The less specific her accent became, the more it simply started to sound vaguely British, closer and closer to the sound of "John", undercutting the important economic divide between the two. In Maggie's case, I should have pushed a lot harder for a much more specific Welsh accent.

One moment, however, that was entirely effective was Maggie's scream at the end of Scene 12 when the word "Astor" is first uttered and she comes face to face with ice for the first time. This moment signified the sudden breakthrough of the woman's ability to remember, and needed to be not just any old scream. The scream needed to contain the fear of the iceberg/sinking, the sudden flooding back of her personal history, etc. The metaphor I used to communicate to Maggie the sort of scream I felt was needed was the scream that is torn out of you on a roller coaster. It's not a scream that you have to push out at all; it's involuntary, as though some force were yanking the scream out of you. I know this moment was effective not just from my own observation and reflection, but because during one rehearsal, right after Maggie screamed, we heard frantic

scrabbling at the stage door. Two large men burst through, having thrown the wood plank lock aside, primed to attack. They were security guards, honest-to-goodness cops, and they thought Maggie was a woman being *attacked*. We all laughed once the misunderstanding was cleared up, but after the men left I made sure Maggie understood that what she had done was exactly right. An involuntary scream full of terror and potential loss brings people running!

Maggie's performance was one of the strongest and most consistent in the production. I believe the more inside-out approach was effective in communicating with her, and while her accent was not an example of her strongest research and study, I take full responsibility for the choice and can't lay that blemish at her feet.

### **Jamie / Halbrech**

With the character of Halbrech it was important to distinguish her type of power from "John's". By differentiating the ways they assert power, the struggle between them would be made more apparent in a tangible, physical way. Hopefully this would help our production avoid the lack of tension that seemed to plague some of the others I researched.

Jamie understood this power dynamic very quickly. Because she was significantly shorter than Keith, we had to find ways for her to assert/struggle against authority that didn't rely simply on her physically imposing her will—she was not going to be able to loom over Keith. We started with her feet. Whereas Keith was constantly, intentionally "posing", Jamie and I agreed that the environment—a patient's room—even though in a converted gas station, would be familiar to a doctor. She would feel "at



home", as it were. She wouldn't feel the need to perform, especially when the Woman was not present. So her feet and posture could be of a more relaxed shape: a wider base in the feet, a less ramrod spine, more likely to shift and move through the space in little kinesthetic responses to changes in the environment.

We also, as a trio, discovered early on that in such a small space the power dynamic (who had the upper hand at any one moment) could be clarified by who was facing down stage as opposed to profile, and by who was giving eye focus to the other. We established another consistent vocabulary that we then could turn on its head for key moments. Whichever character was facing out was usually in control, while the character in profile was struggling against being controlled. This also typically meant that the character *giving* eye focus was struggling while the character looking out was in control. This was not a surprising discovery for me in terms of how stage pictures work and giving focus, but it was a good foundation for the three of us to speak to each other in terms of the ever-shifting politics between the two characters.

With this foundation in place, we then could play with moments where the character in control could suddenly give eye focus as an extra loaded attack, and also with moments where the character turning down out of a faceoff could actually be seen to be weaker than the character staying in profile. This physical language of power dynamics helped us off-set the height difference between Jamie and Keith, and also helped us to free Jamie from her most insidious physical crutch: leaning forward from the waist whenever saying anything emphatically. She was already keenly aware of her tendency to do this, and actually asked for help in breaking the habit. We found that the specificity of our take on the power struggles helped her immensely.

Another significant challenge for Jamie in this production was staying actively engaged through the many early interrogation scenes where she simply watches “John” grill the Woman. The temptation would be to take constant and copious notes, but we saw early on that such constant activity read as demonstrative listening rather than active listening. Together Jamie and I looked for key moments—usually at beat shifts—where she could quickly scribble down a note or two before returning her entire attention to the interrogation taking place.

While Jamie didn’t explore as wide a vocal range as the other actors in this production, her understated, internally tightly wound performance worked as a counterpoint to the more increasingly flamboyant characters. The more outside-in approach, especially in terms of the central power struggle, was very effective with Jamie, and I must also note that her script analysis skills were the highest in the cast. She helped me with the timeline more than anyone else, especially in making sense of the last few scenes.

### **Tanya / Miss Kittle**

Even though Tanya only had one scene, what a scene! A perfect example of the cameo role that can steal a show. I was extremely fortunate to have an actress of Tanya’s age—a full generation older than the other three actors—to help create the sense of difference in age that is vital to this character operating effectively. While Tanya wasn’t even close to the right age, her relative age next to her 20-something cast mates was an incredibly valuable commodity for this production.

However, even though she was the elder statesman in the ensemble, Tanya had the least training and stage experience. Plus she was faced with the same dilemma as Maggie in her early scenes: complete confinement. Tanya, as written by Hatcher, had to create her entire performance from a wheelchair, even her legs covered by a blanket. It was truly a performance only from the waist up.

This confinement, though, while at first seemingly a limitation, was actually a gift to both of us, especially for a less developed actress. I employed the same strategies with Tanya as I did with Maggie in her early scenes, developing a blocking vocabulary focused on hands, eyes, the face. Especially for such a self-controlling character, this outside-in approach gave Tanya tangible tools in her effortless puppet-string-pulling of "John".

The major obstacle, even with wheelchair confinement, was Tanya wanting to move too much. Usually this manifested with a busy neck, the head swiveling on every line. Tanya had trouble fully accepting that because she basically owns the room for her entire scene she didn't need to assert herself, that the *less* she demanded it the more the others would dance to her tune.

Her head swiveling also tended to dissipate the tension in key moments near the end of her scene. We worked on applying very specific actions to very specific lines, even down to the level of specific words. But I think I was not fully successful in communicating to Tanya the *reasons* for the specific blocking, how the storytelling was being served by not moving her head here rather than there. I failed at helping Tanya get past being simply mechanical in a few spots, although overall I think she as an actress

achieved what she needed to as the character in order for the story overall to be moved forward by her appearance.

Tanya approached her dialect work similarly to Keith, with my prodding. Rather than British though, we worked in the world of Boston/East Coast/Katherine Hepburn, again just a flavor rather than a full-blown dialect. I again resorted to an outside-in approach, directing her vocally in terms of clenching the back teeth to help create the sound we were listening for. Here I believe Tanya did terrific work; I'm fairly certain she spent several hours outside rehearsal listening to tapes and watching movies to find the sound we wanted. Here, in the dialect, she broke through the mechanical wall and found the dialect that immediately communicated social status and control.

### **C. Key Choices that Missed**

I have usually discussed the effectiveness of key choices while explaining why I made the choices I did, but there are a few other issues in the production that I did not address elsewhere in this document, and I would like to do so now.

A key moment in the production that looking back I wish I had pulled back the actor was Keith singing “Nearer My God to Thee”. Not only did Keith give in a little bit to his musical theatre background—over-singing the song, “performing” it for the audience rather than for the Woman and Halbrech, singing it “too well” rather than as a ragged last ditch effort to break down the Woman’s defenses—but I burdened him with a blocking move during the song that was intrusive and prescriptive. We were dealing with a bottle, an ice bucket, a couple champagne flutes, a towel, and I needed Keith to get all the prop stuff finished by the time his song ended so that the stage picture ending the scene supported the central action of the Woman rediscovering her power to remember and to speak. In rehearsal I was so focused on getting to that end point that I failed to clarify for Keith how that traffic could work without feeling imposed and stagey. Viewing this moment during the three performances, I completely understood why Keith would fall back on his musical theatre instincts: I hadn’t given him enough specifics to hold on to.

Another key moment that did not play out as effectively as I would have liked was, unfortunately, the very last image in the show: that second slide of the iceberg, except with a red stripe along the bottom, as alluded to in the text. My terrific stage manager Josefine tackled this particular problem pretty much on her own: she found the best image of the iceberg she could, then she photoshopped a red stripe onto it, except to

make it read as anything in that space, she had to photoshop it fairly thick. It ended up being literally correct but physically impossible (the Titanic would have needed to be about 100 times bigger to leave the gash she created). While the image did tie back to the textual reference, it was also a bit of a disconnect for the audience, I think, because it just didn't look quite right. I'm not sure there was a good fix here, but I would be remiss not to mention that this obstacle wasn't quite overcome.

The final iceberg image was also undercut by a poor decision on my part in the sound design. In the production, I had the Sinking of the Titanic "music" playing underneath Keith and Maggie's final lines. When Maggie suddenly opened her eyes and uttered the last line, "Now", the lights went out on a zero count, and I had the sound also go out on that same zero count, plunging the audience into total darkness and silence for a couple beats before bringing the final iceberg projection up. Looking back on the performance and gauging the audience reaction, I realize I created a false ending with that simultaneous black/sound out. I should have kept the zero count blackout, but just started the sound on a lengthy fade that played throughout and underneath the slide projection, so that silence came only with the *final* blackout as the slide projection of the iceberg also faded to black. The continuity of the sound would have avoided creating a false ending and have more strongly supported my notion that "John" and the Woman had just travelled bodily back to the Titanic, signified by that red gash on the iceberg.

### **D. Updates to the Analysis**

In the course of putting together this document and going back over my original analysis after viewing the production in performance in front of a live audience, I have found that a few of my original conclusions need to be clarified and/or deepened, or even jettisoned in favor of a more effective point of view.

The largest shift regards the character of "John". In my original analysis of his polar attitudes, I concluded that "John" starts from a place of disbelief. That is, in spite of his desire to believe in the Woman, he thinks the Woman is faking. What I came to discover in the course of rehearsal is that since Halbrech already believes the Woman is a fake (or rather that she is suffering from a delusion), if "John" also believes the Woman is fake then the central conflict between "John" and Halbrech is greatly diminished. However, if they were to start with *opposing* points of view concerning the Woman, the stakes would be raised and the conflict intensified. As I've discussed previously, I directed Keith to play "John" in terms of belief first, that for some reason *this* story about Titanic (presumably "John" had seen and dismissed multiple Titanic hoaxes in his studies) was somehow unique. What was so special about this tabloid story that he stole money from his work and set up such an elaborate scheme? Clearly his suspicions must be as close to belief as possible to warrant such extreme behavior. And—again as previously discussed—by starting from a place of belief, we avoided the danger of the interrogations becoming tiresome. This was a shift in my analytical point of view that happened quite early in the rehearsal process, so early that I didn't even realize what a significant shift had been made until I went back to my original analysis after the production had closed.

The Woman presented a tough case in terms of when she remembers each detail of her own Titanic voyage. Clearly some moments—like when she screams and involuntarily chokes out “Astor”—she is remembering details right then in the moment. But especially later in the play, as she regains more and more of her memories, it becomes more difficult to diagnose when she is “in the moment” and when she is wielding her new-found knowledge after the fact. The keenest example is her utter destruction of Miss Kittle. There is a clear moment in the text where the Woman remembers who Miss Kittle really is, but the revelation doesn’t just tumble out. Rather the Woman seems to tease it out so as to cause the maximum amount of psychological damage. Could she even be accused of homicide in this case? In my original analysis I had concluded that the Woman was willing to use any tactic in the book, that the ends justified the means for her. In the course of rehearsal I started wondering if this would make her too unsympathetic for the audience to root for her. With Maggie’s input, we eventually decided to play it more as an accidental death but still with a tint of social class revenge and enjoyment in turning the tables: you were trying to prove me a fraud, but actually you are!

Lastly, in my director’s notes I talked about how Hatcher in this play was both criticizing and buying in to the romance of Titanic. This was a conclusion that sounds very good for some sort of critical analysis or essay (or one of the more self-important reviews I read in my research), but it simply wasn’t playing in rehearsal. I quickly discovered that by focusing on what *Hatcher* was “doing”, I was losing focus on what “*John*” and *Halbrech and the Woman* were doing. I was giving in to the classic temptation to direct a *theme* rather than a *story*, a *message* rather than the *action*. So,



with the invaluable assistance of my cast, we pushed through this notion of "romance" and found what we decided was the heart of the play: the love story between "John" and the Woman. This discovery colored every subsequent decision we made together. And, unsurprisingly, by playing the real romance for all it was worth, we found that the themes rose to the top of their own accord, without any effort or pushing from us.

## **E. FINAL THOUGHT**

Overall I was extremely pleased with the cast, the tech support, my stage manager and crew, and the production as a whole. I thought we all worked together in a terrifically collaborative fashion, and that we told the story of Scotland Road cleanly and clearly. The fact that all three performances came in on the button at 85 minutes I think testifies to the cohesive and well-rehearsed nature of the production, and that my direction overall was tight and specific. While that level of exactness may have resulted in a few moments of mechanical acting and imposed stage traffic, for the most part the actors were alive, responsive, and compelling. If I were to do it all over again, I'd surely start further along on the analytical road, and I would attack some of the tech issues much earlier and with much more ferocity, but my methodology with the actors would remain collaborative and individually tailored. As I've moved forward from this production, I've embraced the incredible level of preparation that a director needs to reach before even casting begins, and of course I've employed "Two Moves" practically non-stop, even presenting it in a short workshop at the Directors Lab Chicago in August 2008.

Since I had done several professional and university directing gigs before Scotland Road, this particular journey functioned more as an opportunity to clarify, put into practice, and articulate many of the gut impulses, ideas, and instincts I'd been having in previous directorials but hadn't yet made concrete in my artistic consciousness. So, thank-you and thank-you to the Lindenwood faculty, my terrific cast and crew, and all the other collaborators on this project for helping me to push always towards more and more specificity.

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- Please note: all websites were re-visited on 28 May 2009 to ensure their viability.*

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: List of Hatcher's Plays

Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde: adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's tale.

Ella: musical focused on life and work of Ella Fitzgerald.

Compleat Female Stage Beauty: fictionalized account of historical first female actress.

Hanging Lord Haw-Haw: focused on pro-Nazi broadcaster William Joyce.

Korczak's Children: focused on Polish doctor, Janusz Korczak, and his fight to keep his orphanage open during WWII.

Pierre: based on Herman Melville's novel.

Two, Nikita: featuring Nikita Khrushchev's 1959 visit to the US.

Wellington Defeated: based on the David Leavitt - Stephen Spender controversy.

Work Song: Three Views of Frank Lloyd Wright: obviously concerns Frank Lloyd Wright.

Smash: based on An Unsocial Socialist by George Bernard Shaw.

Murder by Poe: adapted from the stories of Edgar Allan Poe.

The Servant of Two Masters: adapted from Carlo Goldoni.

To Fool the Eye: adapted from Jean Anouilh.

Tuesdays with Morrie: based on the book by Mitch Albom.

The Turn of the Screw: adapted from the story by Henry James.

A Picasso: fictionalized account of historical characters (Pablo Picasso).

Tyrone and Ralph: newest play, fictionalized account of historical characters (Tyrone Guthrie).

Armadale: a theatrical version of William Wilkie Collins' novel.

The Boys: not yet produced, still just in readings, but focuses on 1931 season at Dublin's Gate Theatre. Characters include historical figures Orson Welles, Hilton Edwards, and Micheál MacLiammoir.

The Duchess: a film (he was screenwriter), focusing on historical figure.

## Appendix B: Viewing Notes on A Night to Remember

Note: the notes I took during the actual viewing are in non-bolded text. The bolded text are my reflections on my notes in the days following my viewing of the film.

Tremendous irony in opening scene, even before credits: smashing champagne on the Titanic's hull, saying "may God bless her and all who sail in her." IRONY, HUBRIS, FATE—legend was in place even before sinking.

"unsinkable"—uttered by sundry characters

Characters in a train not allowed to criticize the Titanic, chastised by others—different legend/mythology before it sank. Truly was part of the public consciousness, a communal point of pride. **Maybe something to fold into Miss Kittle?**

Obsessed with numbers/facts/figures—like John in the play—characters in the film are shown counting or showing exact numbers of food, passengers, luggage. EXACTNESS of numbers—part of the mythology/symbology/numerology—into legend. **Underscores John's knowledge of final meal, and maybe even the erotic tension? Eroticism in lovingly cataloguing everything?**



Film incorporates ACTUAL FOOTAGE of the REAL Titanic leaving harbor. Very sophisticated use of footage—creepy. **Similar feeling to what the iceberg slide should feel like in the play.**

Film sets up the Californian very early and in consistent parallel scenes: again, adding to the legend/myth/FATE/irony.

HUGE criticism of social/economic class structures. Stairs, signs, parallel stories. Music styles, cutting between proper string music in First Class to raucous dance music in Steerage. **Hugely important to distinguish class between Woman, John, Miss Kittle.**

Irony dripping: telegraph room, message from the Titanic reads “Wish you were here.” **Double irony for this production: John DOES wish he was there!**

Many ice reports, but the foreshadowing is actually irony again. Reports were out there, but for various reasons the necessary reports did not get to the correct place—in fact one iceberg report is accidentally covered/buried in a stack of other telegrams—telegrams that RICH folks are sending. Irony AND class criticism. Brought it on themselves???

MONEY—Titanic telegraph guy is so busy with rich people’s telegrams to shore that he refuses to accept an interrupting ice report message—I need to do all these PRIVATE messages. Again, did the rich bring this on themselves? HUBRIS? **Where does the**

**hubris live in the play text? Does Hatcher acknowledge it? Probably mostly with Miss Kittle...**

Argument of the film (or a sub-title) seems to be A PREVENTABLE TRAGEDY. So many close calls and "if onlys". **But is that also true of most tragedies? How many historically significant events could have been prevented/avoided by the tiniest change in action by the most insignificant person involved? Is this what keeps John up at night? Is that why he wants to be there? Or is it more about giving in to the inevitability—does he SAVE the Woman simply by BEING with her?**

Once the ship hits the iceberg, fascinating how the seriousness of the situation was pretty much rejected. UNSINKABLE. Everyone conjecturing, no one with a sure sense of the severity of the situation.

Passengers even playing SOCCER on deck with ice chunks.

The sinking occurs practically in real time during the film.

2200 on board, only space for 1200 in boats. **This led to investigations and new laws.**

Californian telegrapher actually GOES TO SLEEP. An officer comes in and listens to the Titanic's SOS, but doesn't understand Morse. He TURNS IT OFF. IRONY. FATE. TRAGEDY.

While on the Carpathia, the operator only hears the SOS BECAUSE he is going to sleep.

Californian doesn't believe/understand the Titanic's rockets—"a ship like that" is unsinkable. Also a sense of jealousy/class structure. **May be a real key to the Miss Kittle character in this shattering of such a sense of absolute-ness about Titanic.**

Class criticism—rich women fighting NOT to wear life jackets because they are ugly. But they DO want to go get their diamonds while the Steerage passengers are fighting just to get up to the deck and not be trapped below-decks. **Again—distinguishing class in this production is crucial.**

Miscommunication on all sides. SO MANY near misses—fate, tragedy.

Incredible class statement: group of Steerage passengers finally DO break out and stumble in to the First Class dining room. They come to an abrupt stop, STUNNED. Woman whispers, "First Class." They are so overwhelmed by the decadence that they momentarily forget their panic. **Can't say it enough—Woman is lower class, Kittle is upper class, John is lower class faking as upper class...**

**Much self-sacrifice, the embodiment of the "best" that John yearns for in himself. Putting others first, refusing to be parted from loved ones. The legend, the BEST IN OURSELVES.**

Panic—which was trying to be avoided above-decks—was CREATED in the Steerage passengers by keeping them pretty much locked up.

SEVERE critique of the Californian, sitting 10 miles away: “God help you.” **But didn’t they just accept what everyone accepted—unsinkable?**

Other ships hearing the SOS also wouldn’t/couldn’t believe it—only the Carpathian, and even there it was just the telegrapher’s word against everyone else, a solitary stand. **How many lives did that one man save? Again—huge moments in history impacted by small action of one person...**

**Guggenheim: “behaved decently.” Dressed in finest. Behaved like a gentleman. The LEGEND, the thing that John yearns for.**

Amazing shot of a wide array of survivors praying in different languages.

**The myth of the man escaping dressed up as a woman—Miss Kittle!—short little scene shows this!**

Class critique: panning across a lifeboat full of survivors. Steerage woman crying out “my baby!” Pans across rich woman in a huge fur coat saying “How can you smoke at a

time like this?" to someone else. **Class issues must permeate the production, or rather class is the bedrock of most of the interactions of the characters.**

Central thesis in last few lines of dialogue, from the officer who behaved most professionally and saved a LOT of lives: This sinking is "different. Because we were so sure. Even though it's happened, it's unbelievable. I'll never feel sure again. About anything." **Maybe there's something in John that simply wants to be SURE?**

**Actually, many many similar undertones to reaction to 9/11. Cultural confidence shaken to its core. Echo of the depth of rattled-ness that John must reach in the play.**

### Appendix C: Chart of Internal Textual Evidence for Timeline

SCOTLAND ROAD: INTERNAL TEXTUAL EVIDENCE		
PAGE	SCENE	REFERENCE
9	1	Tabloid reports: "at 2:41 on the morning of April 15 of this year"
9	1	Halbrech's report: "Dehydration and hypothermia suggest some time on the sea. Days. Not years."
9	1	"When does she come in." "Now."
11	3	"She's sleeping now."
11	3	"You have six days." Key question: six days MORE, or six days TOTAL (which would include today)?
12	4	"That's quite a nice dinner you have." Needed time to prep.
14	5	"I'll want to see her alone tomorrow."
15	7	"We're giving her the day off."
16	7	"After which you have twenty-four hours."
16	8	"Yesterday at four-thirty pm you told me... It is now four twenty-seven pm"
17	8	"She leaves tomorrow. Sunday night. Eight o'clock."
19	9	"You leave tonight."
19	10	"It's seven fifty-five." PM
22	11	"You have six more days."
23	13	"we've let her go thirteen hours since."
25	14	"We'll need film developed this afternoon."
28	16	"You're late." IMPLIED ARRIVAL TIME--where's Halbrech been? Driving to Maine!
30	16	"When does she come?" "Now."
31	17	"When does she come?" "Now."
33	18	"All done in less than a week." Referencing putting together the gas station--heat, plumbing, etc.
39	19	"Kaspar and Dane put the body in the van."
40	19	"We'll be back in a few hours." But Woman and John gone by then.
43	20	"He's been missing three weeks now."

**Appendix D: Script Analysis**

**PLAY: SCOTLAND ROAD**

**PLAYWRIGHT: Jeffrey Hatcher**

**YEAR WRITTEN: 1992**

**BRIEF PRODUCTION HISTORY: Presented as staged reading at 1992 National Playwrights Conference at the Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center in Waterford, CT. Originally produced by Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, February 1993. First New York production by Primary Stages in January 1998. Enjoyed a fairly consistent presence in regional theatres throughout the 90s.**

**CAST BREAKDOWN: 3 women, 1 man**

**TYPE OF PLAY/GENRE: psychologically realistic, supernatural love story**

**I. Given Circumstances—"facts" of the play.**

**A Environmental Facts.**

1. GEO: Playwright gives only "a white room / now" under setting. In stage directions he also gives "white floor...a very simple room...a small video camera peering down at the room". Eventually we come to learn that we are in a remodeled gas station on a coast road in the state of Maine, near the sea, less than a day's drive from New York.
2. CLIM: The room is temperature-controlled, and purposely kept VERY warm. The weather outside tends to rainy and windy, spring struggling towards summer.

3. DATE: The play takes place from April 28-May 10 of 1992. The scenes vary in times of day.
4. ECON: John at first appears to have money, but we come to learn he in fact stole a large sum and is running through it very quickly. Halbrech makes a decent living, but not so decent that she doesn't feel tempted by a hefty payday (which John directly refers to). The Woman has no money, of course. And Kittle appears to be comfortably well-off—probably inherited. She has a nurse (unseen) accompanying her.
5. POL: Severe power struggles among these characters. Outside politics do not come into direct play, although government is seen as a force that would take away/hide/manipulate/take advantage of the Woman—ironic, since John is doing the same, only for different purposes. But we are living in 20<sup>th</sup> century United States, so the framework is representative democracy, capitalist, etc. Among the characters, though: John and Halbrech struggle non-stop over the exact conditions in which to keep the Woman and the techniques allowable to get her to speak. John wields money, Halbrech wields her physician's position. The Woman eventually discovers her power over John, which is mystical/sexual. Kittle's power—which she wields over everyone until the Woman unmasks her/him—is her “having been there” on the Titanic. Her authenticity, as John puts it.
6. SOC: John pretends at being a gentleman—he's actually working class, but aches to reach above his station. He also carefully avoids



anachronisms, so as to not “trap” the Woman. “Lady,” “Gentleman,” manners of speaking. Very cool and clipped. Costuming greatly affected here. Halbrech scrabbling for upper-middle-class status. Woman clearly third-class passenger. Kittle obviously a first-class passenger.

7. REL: “God” or specific religious denominations/beliefs never explicitly mentioned. Not surprising, considering the supernatural nature of the action. “Nearer My God to Thee” is referenced and sung, as is another hymn, “Autumn.” But these are used as weapons and evidence rather than in any religious sense.

#### **B. Previous Action.**

The references I started putting together during my script analysis became a beast all its own, and I would refer any reader to the Timeline section in Chapter 2: Process. However, the single, key antecedent event that occurs immediately before the play begins is that John and Halbrech meet in person for the first time outside the gas station and he begins to give her the tour and lay down the rules. The play opens a few minutes into this process.

#### **C. Polar Attitudes.**

1. John: A collection of statements near the beginning. “I understand you’re one of 99 women,” “I understand you’re over a hundred years old,” “he could be part of the plot,” “I understand you floated on an iceberg for twenty-nine thousand two hundred fifteen days,” “she’s good.” These are scattered throughout the first couple scenes, but all point to a singular

point of view: that John—even though he badly wants to believe otherwise—thinks the Woman is a faker.

During the final scene, John says two key things that show how he has moved. “I am not an Astor, I have no great wealth, I am part of no great family. I wanted so to believe in you. I wanted so for you to be real. Help me. I’ll help you.” And even more telling: “I would have come back. I would come back...for you.” He has moved from wanting to believe in something OUTSIDE himself to fully embracing who HE IS. He moves from a selfish, inward focus to an outward, caring-about-someone-else focus.

2. Halbrech: “I don’t think she’s trying to do anything. There’s a difference between not telling the truth and being a fake.” Halbrech has compassion but no belief and not even an inclination to believe the Woman is “real”.

Near the end, she says to the Woman, “I want you to know: I believe...” She finishes this cliff-hanger with “I believe you’ll do very well,” but that is not the sense of the line when she first starts to utter it. She BELIEVES. She has moved from not even entertaining belief to believing—just two scenes later she even admits “There are others.”

## II. Dialogue.

Stage directions call for John to have a tightly wound, brisk, alert, in-charge, cool, wry, ironic, almost British demeanor. He speaks crisply, rapidly, not raising his voice. This is underscored by his text, which is often written in very short sentences, sentence

fragments, direct and straight-forward grammar. His big monologues to the Woman also have a very thought-out, planned feel—which makes sense, since he would have had to have it all memorized since it has been translated into various other languages. He truly has planned out exactly what he is going to say. So there's an exactness about much of his speech. Only near the end does John's text start to elongate and speed up, to depend on commas and dashes rather than periods. As his emotional state becomes more and more ragged, and he is brought closer and closer to facing the truth, his "control" wavers—reflected in his speech patterns.

Kittle has an even MORE British demeanor, since she hails from the British Isles. She has the most sophisticated grammar.

Playwright's gimmick: several scenes end with "When does she come? NOW." All characters but Kittle partake in this exchange, in one form or another, throughout the play. Indeed, the final exchange of the play is this very formula. Focus on immediacy—echoes John's desire to BE THERE on the Titanic. Also acts as a verbal parallel to the other theatrical gimmick of sudden/abrupt lights down for every scene. Which is in itself a much larger echo of much Titanic literature—the "snapshot" feel. A Night to Remember is best example: narrative that follows many different stories all at once tying them together, so you are seeing bits of pieces of many stories. The many scenes, all punctuated with "now" and lights to black, creates this sense of "vignette" and time-jumping, which is a favorite method of chroniclers trying to follow individual threads of stories without losing the big picture.

### III. Imagery.

WHITE: Obvious echo of ice/iceberg. Also an echo of death/Heaven.

Everything white but the furniture. Woman's bathrobe white. Halbrech's lab coat white. Clean slate—reflected in Woman's memory being wiped clean and needing a spark to reignite. Also LIGHT—from the slide projector, the "light at the end of the tunnel"—back to death.

CAMERA: Constantly watching. Red light—only "color" besides the furniture in the room. Sense of invasion.

TABLOID/TITANIC LITERATURE: representative of John's obsession. Also highlights the tension between reality and romanticism that pervades the play.

ICE: the iceberg picture at top of show and end of show. All the white. The ice in the bucket the Woman spills, which is also the major catalyst to open her memory. That THING that is larger than ourselves.

### IV. Character.

**A. Objective Section.** (*Will: 1 to 10, 10 strongest. Moral Stance: 1 to 10, 1 ends justify means, 10 is sainthood.*)

JOHN. Desire: to immerse himself wholly into the mythology of Titanic, to truly BE THERE. Will: 10. Nothing will stop him—not laws, not compassion. Single-minded. Moral Stance: 2. He does whatever it takes, regardless of the well-being of anyone else. The only thing he stops short of is actual physical violence. Decorum: It ends up being an act, a "mask", but he comports himself in a very British manner, with clipped speech and impeccable

dress. He almost never raises his voice. His consistency in decorum underscores the moments where he breaks down and/or explodes.

HALBRECH. Desire: to earn her way back into respectable psychological practice in America. Will: 8. She's truly fed up and ready to change her life. Moral Stance: 5. She's torn. She puts up a professional front and protests that she cares for her patient, but she is also willing to bend the rules pretty far, especially once the questionable methods seem to work. Decorum: works hard at presenting a professional, cool, composed exterior.

THE WOMAN. Desire: not to die alone. Will: 10. Moral Stance: 2. She will manipulate anyone, crush anyone in her way. She destroys (kills!) Kittle. She uses any tactic in the book to break John down. Decorum: comes from a different era, comports herself very properly—until it benefits her not to.

FRANCES KITTLE. Desire: to debunk the Woman and retain his/her elite status. Will: 10. Clearly an iron will to survive and exist the way he/she has. Moral Stance: 1. Anything goes for Kittle. No honor, nothing more important than his/her survival and entitlement. Decorum: like the rest, very proper, tightly wound, exact, every hair in place. Decorum for all these characters is intentional and a social/political statement.

### **B. Subjective Section.**

1. JOHN. Very intelligent, wry, brisk, observant, intimidating. Jude Law. Gary Wayne Barker.
2. HALBRECH. Sharp, wary, empathetic, compassionate, bitter. Meryl Streep. Lavonne Byers.

3. THE WOMAN. Demure, savvy, sly, erotic. Christina Ricci.
4. KITTLE: Regal, straight-backed, coy, hard. Maggie Smith.

## V. Title of the Play.

SCOTLAND ROAD. I refer any reader to the Scotland Road section of Chapter I for the full historical background. But the nutshell: refers to a passageway that runs the entire length of the ship. Referenced directly in the text in the sense of a journey: “We’ll go all the way up Scotland Road.” Stairway to Heaven. Title focuses action on the JOURNEY that John takes with the Woman. Play isn’t really about the mystery, or even about the Titanic—but rather how the observers of tragedy deal with it—reality vs. romance, yet again.

## VI. Big Moments/Architecture.

Moment 1: page 8. “Hotter”. First word. Inciting Action—begins the tug-of-war between John and Halbrech. Sets up antagonistic relationship between John and the Woman.

Moment 2: page 15. “I could tear the sound out of you, etc” John’s first break in façade, first chink in armor.

Moment 3: page 18-19. “What if you whispered it to me” to “I would try so hard to understand”. John’s heartfelt attempt to connect on a human level—long pause as Woman stares at him.

Moment 4: page 21. “Astor”, scream, “Ice”. Woman speaks for first time.

Moment 5: page 28. “Astor”—Woman identifies her lover in the photographs.

Moment 6: page 39. “only God can say”—Woman identifies Kittle as man who escaped the Titanic dressed as a woman. Proves she’s “real”.

Moment 7: page 43. “No. I’m not.” John confesses he is not John Jacob Astor. Point of No Return.

Moment 8: page 46. “When does it come?” “Now.” Last lines of play. They travel to the Titanic. Climax.

## **VII. Idea, Synthesis, and Event.**

### **A. Who’s play is it? What are the consequences of this decision?**

This is absolutely John’s play. He is in all but one scene, he undergoes the most significant journey and changes. The Woman also has a tremendous bearing on the action, but she is much more constant—the rock against which John throws himself. This choice clarifies the action as “the Woman beckons John to her” rather than “the Woman and John approach each other.” John must be broken down, must be forced to face himself, and brought back with her.

### **B. Idea.**

This play is about romanticism, mythology, and our deepest, secret desires. It’s also fundamentally about identity—who can we turn ourselves into? Who are we “meant” to be? What are willing to change about ourselves to get what we want—demeanor, gender, name, etc? For me, the Titanic has always had an uneasy yet fascinating appeal, simply because it sank on my birthday. I was just coming of age when they found the wreckage—that event shaped my awareness of the world in much the same way as the Challenger explosion. For the

audience, the Titanic taps into so much that is romantic and mythical, and the flip side is that we almost cheer the inevitability, the putting-the-hubris-in-its-place-ness of the Titanic sinking.

**C. Synthesis.**

This play is about a man who yearns so deeply to be part of the romantic tragedy and mythology/legend of Titanic that he conjures a victim and travels with her back in time to the actual tragedy.

**D. Event.**

“John travels to the Titanic.”



**Appendix E: Rehearsal and Performance Logs****REHEARSAL LOG****Play: Scotland Road****Company: Lindenwood University****Date: Monday, 10/22/07****Start Time: 7:00pm****Stop Time: 9:09pm****Location: Harmon 110****Planned Agenda****Realized Agenda**

- |   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Introductions/check schedules/contact info<br>Directorial point of view, John's story, event | 1. check                             |
| 2. Costume measurements   | 2. Should already be done/on<br>file |
| 3. Read-through   | 3. check                             |
| 4. Actor Homework/Research, watch <u>A Night<br/>    to Remember</u>                            | 4. check                             |

**SET NOTES**

Contact Nick!

**LIGHT NOTES****SOUND NOTES**

2 hymns. Motor sound?? Do you need it? Or go with music?

**COSTUME NOTES****PROP NOTES****STAGE MANAGEMENT NOTES**

Getting slide images.

**ACTING DISCOVERIES/OBSERVATIONS///DIRECTORIAL SELF-REMINDEES**

Timeline—taking in actors' observations. Page 43: three weeks!!

Time of reading: 7:34-8:37, 63 minutes. Should run under 90.

Keflavik—pronunciation? Accent on first syllable...?

Kittle—did she have an actual and complete sex change? No. Tanya very curious about his/her real family history—has he/she REALLY never set foot outside her house?

Could she be so sharp and insightful if she was so cut off? Why does she come? Doesn't want to die alone? Must be 100+ years old, yes?

Play: Scottish Gaelic

Language: English

Date: Tuesday, 10/12/2010

Location: Dundee

Character notes:

- 1. Vexed
- 2. ...
- 3. ...
- 4. ...

SET NOTES

White cloth in ...

How long ...

LIGHT NOTES

DC special ...

SOUND NOTES

Track out ...

COSTUME NOTES

Leather ...

PROP NOTES

Camera ...

STAGE MAP

...

ACTING NOTES

...

REMINDEES

Knife ...

About the ...

Amplification ...

Terminal ...

## REHEARSAL LOG

**Play:** Scotland Road**Company:** Lindenwood University**Date:** Tuesday, 10/23/07    **Start Time:** 5:30pm    **Stop Time:** 9:00pm**Location:** Downstage**Planned Agenda**

1. Warm up.
2. Share more research.
3. Block Unit A.
4. Run Unit A as able.

**Realized Agenda**

1. check
2. check
3. Got through scene 7.
4. Ran scene by scene.

**SET NOTES**

White sheet hanging from US light baton? Maybe paint or cover floor white?  
 How long is the chair? Central set piece—how long, how tall?

**LIGHT NOTES**

DC special—nowhere to hang, though. Use mini-Licos from R/L angles and frame them.

**SOUND NOTES**

Struck out on hymns—try iTunes.

**COSTUME NOTES**

Ladies—need to go get measured by Kari.

**PROP NOTES**

1 camera (not 2)—location should be on top of door UL.

**STAGE MANAGEMENT NOTES****ACTING DISCOVERIES/OBSERVATIONS///DIRECTORIAL SELF-REMINDEERS**

Keith—bring a suit coat or sports jacket to rehearsal!!!

About the camera—the Woman wouldn't know what they were, would she?

Anachronistic? Although she does know of moving pictures...

Timeline proving more and more problematic as actors bash against it. Need to iron it out.

**REHEARSAL LOG****Play:** Scotland Road**Company:** Lindenwood University**Date:** Wednesday, 10/24/07**Start Time:** 5:30pm**Stop Time:** 9:00pm**Location:** Downstage**Planned Agenda**

1. Warm up.
2. Talk timeline.
3. Pick up blocking with Scene 8, get through Scene 17 (or as far as possible)
- 4.

**Realized Agenda**

1. check
2. check, and continue checking in scene work
3. check (blocked through 17)
- 4.

---

**SET NOTES**

Doors? Scene 8 DOES require an entrance. Leave the door frames empty? Discuss with Nick.

---

**LIGHT NOTES**

---

**SOUND NOTES**

---

**COSTUME NOTES**

---

**PROP NOTES**

FAKE ice—plastic cubes. Avoid water/slickness. Also need ice bucket, champagne bottle, three glasses, towel

---

**STAGE MANAGEMENT NOTES**

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**ACTING DISCOVERIES/OBSERVATIONS///DIRECTORIAL SELF-REMINDEERS**

Do NOT need a portable tape recorder for Scene 13.  
DO need books/mags/T-shirt for Scene 12.  
Do we have any run crew?

## REHEARSAL LOG

**Play: Scotland Road**

**Company: Lindenwood University**

**Date: Thursday, 10/25/07**

**Start Time: 5:30pm**

**Stop Time: 9:00pm**

**Location: Downstage**

**Planned Agenda**

1. Warm up.
2. Discuss/practice hymns and timeline.
3. Block Units C and D
4. Stumble-through (if time allows)

**Realized Agenda**

1. check
2. check
3. check
4. Ran out of time.

---

**SET NOTES**

---

**LIGHT NOTES**

---

**SOUND NOTES**

---

**COSTUME NOTES**

---

**PROP NOTES**

---

**STAGE MANAGEMENT NOTES**

---

**ACTING DISCOVERIES/OBSERVATIONS///DIRECTORIAL SELF-REMINDEES**

Why does Kittle come? To DISPROVE—pride?—because Halbrech admits they CAN'T disprove her, so they need Kittle's help...

Why does Halbrech choose to go with body and not stay with woman? Doesn't trust John with the authorities? Does she have something else up her sleeve?

## REHEARSAL LOG

**Play:** Scotland Road**Company:** Lindenwood University**Date:** Monday, 10/29/07**Start Time:** 5:30pm**Stop Time:** 8:35pm**Location:** Harmon 110**Planned Agenda****Realized Agenda**

- |   |          |
|---|----------|
| 1. Warm up.                                     | 1. check |
| 2. Work Unit A, Keith and Jamie scenes          | 2. check |
| 3. Add Maggie, work Unit A M/K/J scenes         | 3. check |
| 4. Timeline clarification and revised schedule. | 4. check |

**SET NOTES**

SET NOTES

**LIGHT NOTES**

LIGHT NOTES

**SOUND NOTES**

SOUND NOTES

**COSTUME NOTES**

COSTUME NOTES

**PROP NOTES**

Food—how get each night? Something simple, easy. Rolls? All on one tray?

**STAGE MANAGEMENT NOTES**

STAGE MANAGEMENT NOTES

**ACTING DISCOVERIES/OBSERVATIONS///DIRECTORIAL SELF-REMINDERS**

E-mail completed timeline with all actor input to everyone.

Still need to pick up Scenes 8 and 9.

## REHEARSAL LOG

**Play:** Scotland Road**Company:** Lindenwood University**Date:** Tuesday, 10/30/07**Start Time:** 5:30pm**Stop Time:** 8:39pm**Location:** Downstage**Planned Agenda**

1. Warm up.
2. Run Scenes 1-7
3. Pick up and work scenes 8 and 9.
4. Start working Unit B

**Realized Agenda**

1. check
2. check
3. check
4. Worked through Scene 13, then did a continuity run of Scenes 8-13.

**SET NOTES**

Need a second chair for John in certain interrogation scenes. Just bring from off.  
Also need an end table or something for the food.

**LIGHT NOTES****SOUND NOTES****COSTUME NOTES**

Keith needs a watch. So does Jamie.

**PROP NOTES**

Find the actual books from Scene 12/page 22.

**STAGE MANAGEMENT NOTES****ACTING DISCOVERIES/OBSERVATIONS///DIRECTORIAL SELF-REMINDEES**

Make sure Tanya is aware of schedule changes.

**REHEARSAL LOG**

**Play: Scotland Road**

**Company: Lindenwood University**

**Date: Thursday, 11/1/07    Start Time: 5:30pm    Stop Time: 9:00pm    Location:  
Downstage**

**Planned Agenda**

**Realized Agenda**

- |                                       |                         |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Warm up.                           | 1. check                |
| 2. Schedule update                    | 2. check                |
| 3. Work Scenes 14-17, continuity run. | 3. Worked Scene 20A.    |
| 4. Work Scenes 19-20                  | 4. Worked Scenes 14-17. |

---

**SET NOTES**

---

**LIGHT NOTES**

---

**SOUND NOTES**

---

**COSTUME NOTES**

---

**PROP NOTES**

---

**STAGE MANAGEMENT NOTES**

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**ACTING DISCOVERIES/OBSERVATIONS///DIRECTORIAL SELF-REMINDE**



## REHEARSAL LOG

**Play:** Scotland Road**Company:** Lindenwood University**Date:** Tuesday, 11/6/07**Start Time:** 5:30pm**Stop Time:** 9:15pm**Location:** Harmon 110**Planned Agenda**

1. Warm up.
2. Work Scene 18A, 5:30-7
3. Work Scene 18B, 7-8:30
4. Pick up Scene 19, 8:30-9:00

**Realized Agenda**

1. check
2. check
3. check
4. check

---

**SET NOTES**

---

**LIGHT NOTES**

---

**SOUND NOTES**

---

**COSTUME NOTES**

Gray spray for Tanya's hair.

---

**PROP NOTES**

Camera—Nick—is it too big? Very visible and imposing, which is cool, and light working is GREAT.

---

**STAGE MANAGEMENT NOTES**

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**ACTING DISCOVERIES/OBSERVATIONS///DIRECTORIAL SELF-REMINDERS**

**REHEARSAL LOG**

**Play: Scotland Road**

**Company: Lindenwood University**

**Date: Wednesday, 11/7/07**

**Start Time: 5:30pm**

**Stop Time: 9:35pm**

**Location: Harmon 110**

**Planned Agenda**

**Realized Agenda**

1. Warm up.

1. check

2. Work Scene 20B, 5:30-7:00

2. check

3. Full RUN, 7-8:30

3. check

4. Notes/discussion/reflection

4. check

---

**SET NOTES**

---

**LIGHT NOTES**

---

**SOUND NOTES**

---

**COSTUME NOTES**

---

**PROP NOTES**

---

**STAGE MANAGEMENT NOTES**

---

**ACTING DISCOVERIES/OBSERVATIONS///DIRECTORIAL SELF-REMINERS**

**REHEARSAL LOG**

**Play: Scotland Road**

**Company: Lindenwood University**

**Date: Friday, 11/9/07**

**Start Time: 2:00pm**

**Stop Time: 4:30pm**

**Location: Downstage**

**Planned Agenda**

1. Warm up.
2. RUN THROUGH.
3. Notes.
- 4.

**Realized Agenda**

1. check
2. check
3. Held off till next rehearsal stop/starting ate up time.
- 4.

---

**SET NOTES**

Paint chair and both tables dark brown.

---

**LIGHT NOTES**

---

**SOUND NOTES**

---

**COSTUME NOTES**

---

**PROP NOTES**

---

**STAGE MANAGEMENT NOTES**

---

**ACTING DISCOVERIES/OBSERVATIONS///DIRECTORIAL SELF-REMINDEERS**

**REHEARSAL LOG**

**Play: Scotland Road**

**Company: Lindenwood University**

**Date: Saturday, 11/10/07**

**Start Time: 1:00pm**

**Stop Time: 4:15pm**

**Location: Downstage**

**Planned Agenda**

**Realized Agenda**

1. Notes from 11/9 run.

1. check

2. Warm up.

2. check

3. RUN THROUGH.

3. check

4. Notes.

4. check

---

**SET NOTES**

---

**LIGHT NOTES**

---

**SOUND NOTES**

---

**COSTUME NOTES**

---

**PROP NOTES**

---

**STAGE MANAGEMENT NOTES**

---

**ACTING DISCOVERIES/OBSERVATIONS///DIRECTORIAL SELF-REMINDEERS**

**REHEARSAL LOG**

**Play: Scotland Road**

**Company: Lindenwood University**

**Date: Monday, 11/12/07**

**Start Time: 7:00pm**

**Stop Time: 10:33pm**

**Location: Downstage**

**Planned Agenda**

**Realized Agenda**

- |                                      |                       |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Block/set scene changes           | 1. check              |
| 2. Warm up, get prepped, check props | 2. check              |
| 3. Tech run/stop-start               | 3. check              |
| 4. Notes                             | 4. Will e-mail notes. |

---

**SET NOTES**

White cloth to cover side panels, too, please.

Paint table and chair.

---

**LIGHT NOTES**

Any way to get light on the tops of the cyc?

---

**SOUND NOTES**

---

**COSTUME NOTES**

---

**PROP NOTES**

---

**STAGE MANAGEMENT NOTES**

---

**ACTING DISCOVERIES/OBSERVATIONS///DIRECTORIAL SELF-REMINDEERS**

**REHEARSAL LOG**

**Play: Scotland Road**

**Company: Lindenwood University**

**Date: Tuesday, 11/13/07    Start Time: 6:30pm    Stop Time: 9:30pm**

**Location: Downstage**

**Planned Agenda**

**Realized Agenda**

- |                                      |          |
|--------------------------------------|----------|
| 1. Warm up, get dressed, check props | 1. check |
| 2. Tech/Dress go at 7pm              | 2. check |
| 3. Big picture notes                 | 3. check |
| 4. E-mail full/detailed notes        | 4. check |

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**SET NOTES**

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**LIGHT NOTES**

---

**SOUND NOTES**

---

**COSTUME NOTES**

---

**PROP NOTES**

---

**STAGE MANAGEMENT NOTES**

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**ACTING DISCOVERIES/OBSERVATIONS///DIRECTORIAL SELF-REMINDEERS**

**REHEARSAL LOG**

**Play: Scotland Road**

**Company: Lindenwood University**

**Date: Wednesday, 11/14/07**

**Start Time: 6:30pm**

**Stop Time: 9:30pm**

**Location: Downstage**

**Planned Agenda**

**Realized Agenda**

1. Warm up.

1. check

2. Run projections.

2. check

3. Final Dress.

3. check

4. Notes

4. check

---

**SET NOTES**

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**LIGHT NOTES**

---

**SOUND NOTES**

---

**COSTUME NOTES**

---

**PROP NOTES**

---

**STAGE MANAGEMENT NOTES**

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**ACTING DISCOVERIES/OBSERVATIONS///DIRECTORIAL SELF-REMINDE**

**PERFORMANCE LOG**

**Play: Scotland Road**

**Company: Lindenwood University**

**Date: Thursday, 11/15/07**

**Start Time: 7:37pm**

**Stop Time: 9:02pm**

**Location: Downstage**

---

**SET NOTES**

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**LIGHT NOTES**

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**SOUND NOTES**

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**COSTUME NOTES**

---

**PROP NOTES**

Where was the T-shirt?

---

**STAGE MANAGEMENT NOTES**

Josefine—final cues? Curtain call music in at volume 1.

Bring up slide 1 later.

---

**ACTING DISCOVERIES/OBSERVATIONS///DIRECTORIAL SELF-REMINDERS**

Jamie—writing on your report, please.

YES! Humor! Just as we hoped for—their chuckles are reactions to tension and surprise.

Don't let it throw you.

Audience: 26

Scenes 1-17: 48 minutes

Scene 18: 16 minutes

Scenes 19-20: 19 minutes

From Top of Show blackout to End of Curtain Call: 85 minutes.



**PERFORMANCE LOG**

**Play:** Scotland Road

**Company:** Lindenwood University

**Date:** Friday, 11/16/07    **Start Time:** 7:32pm    **Stop Time:** 8:57pm    **Location:**  
Downstage

---

**SET NOTES**

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**LIGHT NOTES**

---

**SOUND NOTES**

---

**COSTUME NOTES**

---

**PROP NOTES**

---

**STAGE MANAGEMENT NOTES**

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**ACTING DISCOVERIES/OBSERVATIONS///DIRECTORIAL SELF-REMINDE**

Tanya—awesome! Just don't need to grab your heart.

Maggie—ASTOR during projection—gotta go deeper—your reaction is YANKED out of you—it's the CLIMAX of the scene.

Use of Kennedy and Jesus—both "tragedies" as well. Huh.

Audience: 30.

Scenes 1-17: 48 minutes

Scene 18: 16 minutes

Scenes 19-20: 19 minutes

From Top of Show blackout to End of Curtain Call: 85 minutes.

**PERFORMANCE LOG**

**Play: Scotland Road**

**Company: Lindenwood University**

**Date: Saturday, 11/16/07**

**Start Time: 7:36pm**

**Stop Time: 9:01pm**

**Location: Downstage**

---

**SET NOTES**

---

**LIGHT NOTES**

---

**SOUND NOTES**

---

**COSTUME NOTES**

---

**PROP NOTES**

---

**STAGE MANAGEMENT NOTES**

Josefine—where was that call?

---

**ACTING DISCOVERIES/OBSERVATIONS///DIRECTORIAL SELF-REMINDE**

Audience: 35.

Scenes 1-17: 48 minutes

Scene 18: 16 minutes

Scenes 19-20: 19 minutes

From Top of Show blackout to End of Curtain Call: 85 minutes.

NICE—85 minutes every night. Every major section consistent times. Good job, cast!

**Appendix F: Program**

Fall 2007 Season

Jelkyl Theatre

A Christmas Carol

Based on the Tale by Charles Dickens

November 30

December 1, 6-8

7:30 p.m.

Please come see us for our Spring 2008 season!

LINDENWOOD

Department of Theatre Presents



Scotland

Road

Jeffrey Hatcher

Directed by: Jason Cannon

November 15-17

7:30 p.m.

Hannon Hall 103 Downstage

There is something inherently off-putting about drawing from tragedies to create entertainment. Even the most high-minded movies, television shows, or plays must entertain while creating their art. And what about the many first-person-shooter video games set during WWII? My brother explicitly refuses to play such games, saying they make light of and even dishonor the men and women who actually went through it: they didn't have "health packs" or "unlimited ammo" and didn't play against computer-generated AI opponents whose level of difficulty could be altered with the flick of a thumbstick. DO we dishonor those truly affected by war or tragedy by putting ourselves through a re-creation, giving ourselves a visceral thrill? As we CHOOSE to experience their terror, do we truly challenge ourselves to think about those who had NO choice in the matter?

Approaching a play about the Titanic, the danger obviously is to be distracted by all the romantic myths and lose sight of the facts. The investigations show that this tragic sinking could have been avoided if just one of many, many small or not-so-small quirks of timing had fallen a different way. In fact, such is the overwhelming necessity of each and every small detail having happened JUST SO that the Titanic does indeed take on the resonance of a Greek tragedy, awash in the inescapability of Fate and hubris. And the catharsis inherent in such a story is what keeps the Titanic so firmly entrenched in the public and popular consciousness, even 95 years later.

Jeffrey Hatcher's play both criticizes and buys in to the romance, legends, myths, and pop culture resonance of the Titanic. The title refers to a name that third class/steerage class passengers gave to a passageway that ran the entire length of the Titanic, which they borrowed from an actual location in Liverpool which in the 1800s housed one of England's largest migrant populations. Why Mr. Hatcher chose this title will come apparent as you view the play, but I will leave you with this to ponder: many historians talk about the "sacrifice" made by those 1502 people who died in the Atlantic that cold, clear night. And indeed, much good came out of the tragedy: new laws were passed concerning the capacity and accessibility of lifeboats, nations increased cooperation to rigorously patrol sea lanes and send warnings to each other, engineers were galvanized to build even safer ocean vessels. But was the "sacrifice" worth it? Doesn't a sacrifice involve choice? If any of those 1502 people were given the choice: becoming part of history (legend?) and increasing safety for future passengers, or simply not getting on the boat...what would they have chosen? Do we romanticize their experiences for their sakes...or for ours?

John.....Keith Parker  
Halbrech.....Jamie Fritz  
Woman.....Maggie Murphy  
Frances Kittle.....Tanya Burns

### Setting:

Time: mid April, early 1990's

Place: A white room, near the coast

## Production Staff

Director.....Jason Cannon  
Production Stage Manager.....Nick Kelly  
Stage Manager.....Josefine Borrman  
Set Designer.....Nick Kelly  
Lighting Designer.....Nick Kelly  
Sound Designer.....Nick Kelly  
Costume Assistant.....Kari Lorenz  
Props.....Nick Kelly  
Shop Foreman.....Nick Kelly  
Lightboard Operator.....Josefine Borrman  
Sound/Projection.....Lizzy Nolen  
Marketing Team.....Tara Queen  
Kimi Wibbenmeyer  
Graphic Designer.....Tara Queen  
Box Office Manager.....Wes Rankin

### Stage hands

Kelly Buris, Aydan Gadzhieva