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## The director-playwright collaboration on new play production

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**THE DIRECTOR-PLAYWRIGHT COLLABORATION ON NEW PLAY  
PRODUCTION**

by

Brian Haimbach

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Theatre

Department of Theatre Arts  
University of Nevada, Las Vegas  
December 1995

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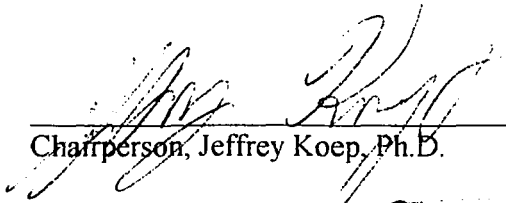
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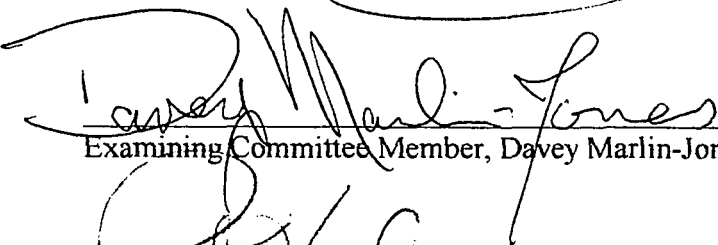
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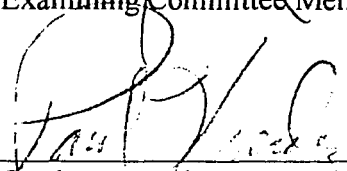
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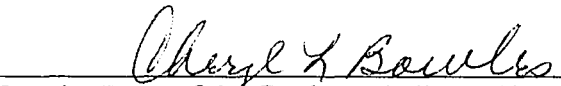
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December 1995

## **ABSTRACT**

*The Director-Playwright Collaboration on New Play Production* is an investigation of the working relationship between the playwright and the director and the process of new play production. The research is gathered by a series of interviews with student and professional playwrights and professional directors. The body of the thesis consists of an explanation of the interview process, a reporting of the information assembled during the interviews, an analysis of the information, and conclusions. Biographies of those interviewed are included as an appendix.



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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

As a graduate student in the theatre arts one sees a great deal of live theatre on and off the college campus. Some of it is exceptionally good, some of it is fairly good, and too frequently the quality is very poor. Two playwrights articulated explanations for the frequency of the poor quality of theatre. Kent Brown stated that, "Probably the worst work done in the American theatre is done in the hands of directing. There is no quality control. Anyone can direct. The quality of acting is higher than the quality of direction." And Julie Jensen added, "There is notoriously bad directing in this country. The playwrights are usually better than the directors. And the stupidest actor is not as stupid as the stupidest director." This thesis explores the possibility that a playwright's observations and suggestions on the art of directing are one of the keys to consistently producing quality theatre. Since the playwright and director work together most frequently on the initial production of a script, the question is: How does the director best collaborate with the playwright to produce new plays?

The research is conducted through a series of interviews with playwrights and directors. Because of the interviewer's ease of access to a large number of playwrights, the interview process began with students in the graduate playwriting program at the

University of Nevada at Las Vegas. Interviews were conducted at a coffee house close to the campus and were tape recorded. Members of the faculty of UNLV's Theatre Department referred the interviewer to professional playwrights and directors who potentially had valuable input due to greater experience.

The Fifth Annual North Carolina Playwright's Festival in Pinehurst, North Carolina provided an opportunity for the interviewer to contact many other professional playwrights. At this location the interviews were also taped conversations.

The remaining interviews were conducted and taped over the telephone. A few of the interviewees were given a list of the questions in advance, but the majority of them replied to questions without prior briefing.

A review of literature in the field (e.g. magazine articles and text books) provided no insight into the director-playwright relationship. The information contained in most published material concerns extremely successful playwrights or directors. Because of this, student playwrights, student directors, and directors new to the process of producing new plays may find this thesis contains information that is practical and useful when approaching a production or developing a script.

### **A Note About the Text of the Interviews**

The largest portion of the thesis is the interviews. Their organization requires some explanation.

The lengthiest time consumer on this project has been the sorting of the information received during the interview process. The construction of the responses is slightly unconventional. The interviews were conversational and a reply to one question would often prompt another question, as opposed to adhering to a strict framework of questions. This served to make the reporting of the information difficult. A question is stated and the replies that are most applicable to that question are listed. Organizing the information in this manner conveys the information in the most understandable fashion, as well as retaining the integrity of the information acquired from the interviews. To report the interviews in all direct quotes (implying that a specific answer accompanies a specific question) would have been inappropriate. Also, mistakes in grammar and fumbling over words make for difficult reading, just as sentence fragments extinguish continuity. However, many of the subject's replies were concise and articulate and to paraphrase these would have been even more inappropriate. Combining quotation marks and ellipses with paraphrased material would have made the thesis bulky and awkward. Therefore, stating each reply in an articulate combination of direct quotes and paraphrased information not only makes the material more cohesive, but better conveys the essence of the subjects' replies.

For continuity and consistency the pronoun, "He," is used when referring to a non-specific person. Occasionally a, "She," is used when referring to someone specific.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THE DIRECTOR-PLAYWRIGHT RELATIONSHIP**

This chapter discusses the responsibilities of the director, what qualities playwrights find beneficial in directors, and the working relationship between playwrights and directors. The information is analyzed to explore the possibility that a playwright's observations and suggestions on the art of directing are one of the keys to consistently producing quality theatre.

#### **1. What is the director's job?**

An examination of directing texts offers a precise definition of the director's job:

By play directing, therefore, we mean the presentation of a play on the stage for an audience interpreted both in terms of dramatic action and dramatic sound and in terms of the emotional and intellectual concepts of an author's script (Dean and Carra, 25).

The definition and the following information gathered from the interviews are presented here for comparison and to analyze whether or not the interviewees are operating from a common conception of the task of the director. This is done to derive a consistent definition for the remainder of the thesis.

### **Responses to Question 1**

Censabella: A director's job is to move bodies in space. He must also know how to talk to actors.

Crawford: Directors are interpretive artists who need to make sure the story isn't distorted.

Jones-Meadows: His job is to embellish, enhance, and heighten the script.

Laird: Ultimately, his job is to bring a play to life on the stage.

Lion: The task of a director is to prepare the script for an audience.



### **Analysis of Responses to Question 1**

The responses express somewhat dissimilar definitions of the director's job, but though they are not as all-inclusive, the interviewees' responses are supported by the text-book definition. What they chose to include in their definition may indicate what they personally feel is the most important function of a director. The responses elicit some interesting questions. Crawford, Jones-Meadows, and Lion feel that a director's task is textual, but Censabella and Laird do not mention script work in their reply. Does this mean that Censabella and Laird do not feel that a director's job involves the text?

Crawford expresses the idea that a story may be distorted by a director. What exactly is meant by distorted? If the director has a vision of the script that differs from the playwright's is this considered distorting the story?

These questions will be examined in the thesis. But, for the purpose of Question 1, it has been established that the interviewees are operating from an informed definition of the director's job.

### **2. Can you direct your own material?**

When considering the function of the director, especially for new plays, one may logically ask if he is needed at all. Would it not be easier to create a product with a clear

artistic vision if only one artist created the vision? This question was most often asked when playwrights were complaining of the quality of direction their plays were receiving.

It is interesting to note, when the playwrights were asked why they need a director, none replied that they do not need one. Many playwrights direct their own material, but how well does this serve a new play?

### **Responses to Question 2**

Brown: I don't ascribe to playwrights directing their own material, even if they are good directors. It's very easy for them to overlook flaws in the text.

Most playwrights can't direct. I'm stunned at how many of them don't know anything about theatre.

Censabella: I'm not interested in directing. Directors are about process and have to do too much at once. I'm trying to become a producer to have more say in my material.

I could direct a play of mine once I've seen one production of it.

Jensen: I'd be guaranteed of getting a median, but I'd rather not.

Jones-Meadows: Once I had to direct my own play and it came out fine. I don't direct often. There's a lot of personal garbage I don't like to deal with.

I don't want to direct my own stuff, I want to listen.

Lion: Playwrights are awful directors, it's a skill. There are a couple of playwright who can handle their own material, in general it's not a good idea.

Paxton: I couldn't be objective. Once I've seen it staged I could direct it.

Pearson: I really think that I don't have the skills to direct. I know what my play looks like in my mind and I can see people moving, but I don't have the skill to make it real. I don't know how to talk to actors in the right way to get the right results.

I'm too connected to the material to direct, and I'm too impatient with the process. I don't have the director's ease in knowing at what time things should be happening.

Ramsey: I could probably do a good job with my own material, but I'd be better with someone else's stuff.

Rusch: I would not direct my own plays. Theatre is collaborative. The stronger a work the more open it is to interpretation.

### **Analysis of Responses to Question 2**

Brown and Pearson are the only playwrights admitting to not having the ability to direct their own material. In fact, Pearson admits to not being able to direct anything. The other playwrights seem to feel that they are qualified to direct their own material, but choose not to do so. They seem to feel that it is not their job. Jones-Meadows does not direct so that she can hear the play without being encumbered by the duties of a director. This seems to imply that a director is useful in script development. And Rusch states that “theatre is collaborative,” implying that part of her job is to hand the script over to someone else for “interpretation.”

Both Censabella and Paxton state that they could direct one of their plays once it has received an initial production. Does this imply that they would reproduce the production or that they simply need a stronger vision than they have when writing the play? Either way it seems that their statements are admissions that they are not qualified to direct a new play.

Lion’s statement leads one to believe that playwrights are not as qualified to direct their own material as they may believe. The fact is that many of the playwrights interviewed rarely get the opportunity to direct, be it their own or someone else’s play. Therefore, attempting to determine if they are able to direct their own material is futile.

Whether the reply be a resounding “no” from an experienced producer or an “I would rather not” from a playwright, it has been established that a director other than the

playwright is beneficial and most likely imperative in order to successfully produce a dramatic work.

### **3. Describe what you, as a playwright, are looking for in a director.**

The playwrights were asked what attributes or characteristics a director should have to direct one of their plays. This question was asked to determine if there are a few common abilities playwrights would like to see directors possess.

The term “dramaturg” is used in some of the responses to this question. *A Dictionary of Dramaturgical Terms* by David E. Jones and Jack Halstead defines a dramaturg as someone who will, “...read new plays...[and] translate, adapt or revise older plays.” He may function as a, “...Literary Advisor...” and serve in the, “... investigation of existing plays and the fostering of new ones.” They refer to a dramaturg as a, “...midwife to new plays...[and a] mediator between playwright and director.”

### **Responses to Question 3.**

Censabella: I’m looking for someone who is simpatico with my piece and who will collaborate with me. We must envision the same play, yet I’m always looking for

something bigger from a director. He also must be positive. I'm hard enough on myself, so I try to surround myself with positive people.

Crawford: I need a director to properly understand the material and the characters and to stage it so the audience's attention is sustained.

With new plays his first approach should be dramaturgical, making sure my point of view is clear. The vision of the playwright should be paramount.

Jensen: I need a director to pay enormously close attention to the text and to make a lot of decisions. Every decision should be based on the text. He should be smart, visual, textual, and good with actors.

I work with directors who give me more than just the words on the page and have sensitivity to the text.

Jones-Meadows: I work with directors who like working with living playwrights and new plays. The people I work with also bring a dramaturgical sense to their work.

One of the best directors I've worked with was so good because he understood the dynamics of theatre so well. He taught me a lot about the beauty of conflict.

Paxton: I want him to see a play with fresh eyes and open up other possibilities. A lot of directors are revisionists and can be too crafty for their own good. I'm not looking for that.

On the other hand, I had a director who took it as his task to stage the play as is and I wish he'd taken more of a dramaturgical slant.

Ramsey: Sensing my version of my script is important, but he needs to see more because I put a lot in that I'm not aware of. One of the best directors I've worked with helped the actors develop a specific past and served the spirit of the play before I knew what it was.

The number one, most important qualification a director must have, for me, is to be able to use the space. For example, very few directors know how to block in a thrust. For today's audience as soon as you've lost the picture of the play you've lost the play. He must be creative spatially. This is more important than character analysis.

And we have to be able to communicate.

Smiley: The director's volition makes the play work. He must have faith in the script and have tolerance and sensitivity with it. He shouldn't be in a hurry to say, "This doesn't work."

I've never learned what was in the text from a director. I want someone who will show me more than is there.

### **Analysis of Responses to Question 3.**

The interviewed playwrights agree that the most common attribute a director can bring to a new play is a strong vision. Many playwrights say they want “something bigger” or they want “someone who will show me more than is there.” But at the same time statements such as Censabella’s: “We must envision the same play,” make one wonder how open to interpretation playwrights may be. Do they want something bigger from a director as long as it is only augments the playwright vision? A director wanting to apply a concept to a production that the playwright had not previously conceived would be an example of the director staging the play without adhering to the playwright’s vision. When asked how accepting they would be of this approach to a new play the playwrights responded as follows:

Jensen: Of course, for a new play, no. No concept.

Jones-Meadows: Not on a first production.

Pearson: No! If a play were a concept I would have painted it.

Rusch: That can get out of hand.



This negative response to a director's attempts at giving the playwright more than is on the page, but different than the playwright envisioned indicates that a playwright much prefers a director to augment the playwright's vision. If this is the case, is a director a creative artist or merely a stage manager who can move actors per the playwright's expectations? This question may be a gross generalization, but it makes one wonder if playwrights are asking for ambivalent qualifications when searching for directors.

One characteristic of a director that many playwrights are looking for is the inclination to use the playwright in the production process. Laura-Maria Censabella says she wants someone who will "collaborate with me." This makes one question if these playwrights are given the opportunity to collaborate with their directors. Is it odd to have the playwright available when producing a new play, or is it simply that the playwrights want more of a voice in making decisions? When asked if they are on location for the rehearsal period of a new play all but one playwright said they were almost always there. The playwright's involvement in rehearsals will be discussed later. But, they obviously want to feel more included as a collaborator.

Few responses address the aspect Censabella referred to in Question 1 when she stated that a director's job is to "move bodies in space." Ramsey is alone in including these mechanical aspects of the director's task. This most likely stems from the fact that Ramsey's plays have been produced in non-traditional venues such as bars. The physical

aspects of a director's job seem to be assumed when the playwrights state specifics of the director's task.

What is mentioned are the literary aspects of play direction. The playwrights seem to be looking for a director and dramaturg in the same person. An awareness of the literary elements of drama is apparently an advantage in producing new plays.

To summarize, the principal characteristics a playwright may look for in a director are that he be someone who has a competent sense of dramaturgy and is capable of bringing a new perspective to the play and making strong decisions based on that perspective and the playwright's vision of his play. He should also be willing to give the playwright fairly large input concerning decisions made during the production process.

**3a. Describe what you ,as a director, feel playwrights are looking for in a director.**

George Judy is a director who works with many new plays each year at the Utah Shakespearean Festival. This question was asked to substantiate and augment the replies to the same question asked of the playwrights.

### **Response to Question 3a**

Judy: For a new play, the director must assume the mind of the playwright, to realize and clarify what the play is communicating. He serves as the first sounding board to, an advocate for, and a devil's advocate against the playwright.

It is particularly beneficial for him to have some knowledge of structure, be it academic or innate. And he can't be locked into one way of working.

He must have good social skills because he is the hub of the whole process. He should be open to collaborating from a position of strength.

Most importantly, he has to create the illusion that he is in control.

### **Analysis of Response to Question 3a**

Mr. Judy agrees with the literary qualifications that the playwrights would prefer a director possess. His comment on collaboration and his second statement about directors: "He serves as the first sounding board to, an advocate for, and a devil's advocate against the playwright," seem to imply that he would be willing to take advantage of the playwright's presence during the production process. He obviously feels that a director must make strong decisions, which is what most playwrights requested, yet he mentions that a director "is the hub of the whole process," which is a different perspective than the playwrights offer. It seems that a playwright wants to be an

equal collaborator, but if the director is the hub of the whole process can the collaboration be completely equal? Are the playwrights requesting something that is impractical and ultimately non-beneficial to the development of the new script? Or would it be a boon to use the playwright in a more direct capacity? These questions are addressed in the next chapter, but examining Mr. Judy's first statement may provide some illumination.

He states that a "director must assume the mind of the playwright..." This statement can imply many types of behavior. Does it mean that a director must assume the perspective of the playwright concerning the reasons for writing the play and the playwrights general perspective of life? Probably not because Mr. Judy does not have very much contact with the playwright before rehearsals begin. In fact he sometimes has no contact. He does not say "assume the role of the playwright," so rewriting is not implied in the statement. A logical examination of the statement and the context in which it was made will suggest that the director must be completely aware of the literary techniques the playwright is using to convey the play. This, again, supports the notion that a director must also be a dramaturg.

#### **4. How important is it for you to like your director personally?**

Does it make for a better product if the collaborators are friends, or does this prove to be a hindrance? This question was asked of all the interviewees after Laura-Maria Censabella was interviewed and made the statement that, “A good director is someone you enjoy having dinner with.” Is this a common criterion among most playwrights?

#### **Responses to Question 4**

Censabella: It makes it more pleasant when you like each other. Professional discussions often get personal. If you can’t have fun, what is the point of it, you get no remuneration.

Jensen: I used to think it was important to like my director personally, but I don’t now, it’s business.

Jones-Meadows: I would definitely want to get along with my director. Everybody likes to be liked. And you need to be able to talk.

Pearson: You can be too friendly and then you don't say things. In the beginning I thought friends were important. You have to be able to talk, but dinner chatter is not important. I don't really care if they like my cats.

Ramsey: You should get along with your director, but you don't have to like him. You have to be able to discuss the play. I'd rather have a communicative jerk than a non-communicative nice guy. Respect and trust are more important than friendship.

Rusch: I'd rather not have a friend direct because you must be able to be perfectly frank. I may hate him, but if he takes my work seriously and is sincere, I'd give it a go. It may be for the best.

#### **Analysis of Responses to Question 4**

Censabella and Jones-Meadows are definitely in the minority with their opinion that a playwright and a director should be friends. Other remarks made during her interview such as, "I used to use a director as a therapist," and "Loving a piece can make theatre bearable," lead one to believe that Ms. Censabella mixes her vocation with her personal life. A similar conclusion can be drawn from Jones-Meadows statements: "During the rehearsal process is the only time I can be important," and, "I usually establish relationships with [directors]."

The other playwrights feel that communication is much more important than friendship. Even Jones-Meadows states that friendship is for the sake of communication. This seems to be the most essential aspect of the director-playwright relationship.

An assumption that can be drawn from the information thus far is that if the director has a view of the script that is common to the playwright's and the director can function as an intelligent dramaturg, there is bound to be some measure of pleasure for the playwright to have this person directing their script.

### **5. How should conflicts be handled when they arise?**

Conflicts are inevitable, especially if the lines of protocol are not well defined, as they often are not between the director and playwright. This question was asked in order to establish how conflicts can be resolved without hindering the production of a script.

#### **Responses to Question 5**

Censabella: It's good to fight your own battles because then it becomes your responsibility. I'm very strong and don't want to relinquish anything.

The question is when to pick your battle.

Crawford: Locate conflict areas before casting and always in privacy. If you use power you'll intimidate or get resistance. Nobody can work in a battle arena.

The playwright should have the last word.

DeMichele: I defer a lot until the last week, then not at all. If the process is good early on, you should have no problems.

Rusch: If you take the work seriously and are sincere you're not going to get a lot of problems.

Smiley: I try to shut up. I don't think my talk is going to make a difference anyway.

Theatre must be a monarchy, the director should have the first and last word.

### **Analysis of Question 5**

Crawford and Smiley have extremely different perspectives of who should have the final say in the production process. Crawford is remaining faithful to his thoughts that the vision of the playwright should come before all. And Smiley takes his statement, "a director is co-creator," one step further by giving the last word to the director.



The contrast in these responses is interesting considering that these two playwrights are of similar experience and backgrounds. Perhaps Smiley is answering as a director as well as a playwright, since he has directed a considerable number of plays.

DeMichele's reply: "I defer a lot until the last week, then not at all," suggests a middle ground between Smiley and Crawford. He seem to be attempting to work with the playwright as much as possible to produce the play to the best of his ability.

Censabella and Crawford are in agreement on this idea, but if you "don't want to relinquish anything" how open can you be to an equal collaboration?

The general consensus among the interviewees is that if the relationship between director and playwright is amiably established early, conflicts will be minimized.

#### **6. Describe a good collaboration between director and playwright.**

As a summary to this chapter, some additional traits of a director who is suited to the new play process are discussed in the next question. Also presented are some characteristics a playwright needs to have to facilitate the production process.

During her interview Sybille Pearson said that, "theatre is collaborative." This is true in that it takes a number of people working together to present a play to an audience. But, to what extent is collaboration used to achieve the best production of a new play? Do playwrights feel that a wonderful collaboration would be to have the director stage

their play exactly as the playwright sees it? Do directors feel that an exemplary collaboration would be the playwright handing him the script and saying, “Do what you want with this?” It is doubtful that either of these is an actual collaboration.

Both Judy and Lion state that a good collaboration is a characteristic of the best productions. What can be done to make this intrinsic aspect of quality theatre more productive.

### **Responses to Question 6**

DeMichele: I had an incredible collaboration with one production. He let me do anything with staging, and I deferred to him totally in matters of text.

You need respect for each other’s territory. Exploration and willingness are also necessary.

Jensen: Doing your job.

Judy: Life is a negotiation. You have to be honest, forceful, open to the view of others, and enjoy collaborating. Lots of theatre people are fed up with collaborating.

You have to have a unified impulse, and that comes from the director. He provides the unified vision.

I have seen productions that have transcended themselves because of the collaboration.

Lion: In some sense there are competing interests. Trust must be established. The best productions are always when the collaboration comes together.

Know your jobs.

Paxton: Without respect for each other's craft you're going to have a bad experience and the journey will be torturous. You should have a shared vision (that comes from the playwright.)

There is usually a power struggle and a question of who'll take charge. Until a playwright gets some clout he is usually subordinated. This is good, because playwrights don't know theatre.

Pearson: Ideally, collaboration is people who understand each other's work and who can argue well together. You need the same amount of commitment to the project.

Most of us collaborate because we have to because theatre is collaborative, but there's so much compromise on all sides that you just congratulate yourself at the end for having done it well in a difficult situation. It's what you must do, it's not what you wish.

I have not yet found the ideal director/playwright situation. But, I've made a lot of good collaborations.

### Analysis of Responses to Question 6

Jensen states that a good collaboration consists of people, “Doing your job.” And Lion says that you must, “Know your Job.” Many of the responses agree with these assertions.

DeMichele supports this by stating that his job is staging and the playwright’s is text. He also states that respect for the job of your collaborator is important. Combining these two ideas suggests that performing your task is respecting the task of your collaborator.

Paxton agrees with DeMichele in matters of respecting the task of your collaborator, but disagrees with Judy in the matter of the vision of a production. Judy states that a “unified vision” for a production “comes from a director.” Paxton feels that it comes from a playwright. He goes on to say that “playwrights don’t know theatre.” How logical is it to allow someone who does not know theatre to provide the vision for a theatrical production?

Judy also brings to light the idea that some theatre artists find collaborating less than enjoyable. And Lion’s “competing interests” make Pearson’s “compromise on all sides” inevitable. But, obviously for the interviewees, no matter how torturous collaborating may be they continue to do it. If the best productions are a product of the collaboration, then theatre artists must collaborate. In order to collaborate, one must have a vision. How well would one be respected if he did not formulate his own creative

vision? Disparate visions are bound to produce compromise. Therefore, this painful aspects of theatre produce good theatre.

According to the above information, a good collaboration will consist of mutual respect, communication, and each of the parties taking responsibility for their respective tasks. It makes one wonder if the replies to the above question come from having operated in this manner in the past or if this is a utopian method of operation. Either way, the collaboration is certain to be dramatically different with different combinations of collaborators. It seems that the best one can do is to fulfill his responsibilities in the process to the best of his ability and to communicate openly.

### **CHAPTER 3**

#### **THE PRODUCTION PROCESS**

This chapter discusses the collaboration between director and playwright during the process from a staged reading to a full production. When asked how this process is usually executed, the interviewees agreed with John Lion's description of the process with few variations:

Lion: You should have a first reading, with an audience, to hear the play. Get feedback and rewrite. Now workshop it (off book, a set, no costumes). Get feedback. Now do some rewrites, but by the time you finish your workshop you pretty much know what you're going to have. Then do your full production.

## **7. Do Playwrights Collaborate with Directors for Staged Readings?**

Staged readings can take on many forms. They can be very informal, as Karen Jones-Meadows described: "...in a controlled setting, like my living room." They can also be much more formal by implementing elements of a full production such as suggestions of set pieces and even blocking. But, no matter how formal, a staged reading is just that: a reading of a play by actors seated in front of an audience of variable size. All the playwrights agreed that readings are an important step in the process of writing a play. Of course, some felt more strongly than others, but it was basically agreed that readings should be held for new scripts. This question was asked to see how early a director should become a collaborator. Do playwrights find it beneficial to have directoral input at this early stage of the script's development? Is a director needed for readings?

### **Responses to Question 7**

Crawford: You can overdo workshops and readings until you lose control of your own play. I like to have a play developed by myself to the point that when it goes into a directoral process feedback is minimized. A play can't be written by committee.

DeMichele: I don't usually direct readings. What's to direct?

Jones-Meadows: I'll experiment with directors during readings. A totally different interpretation is fun. The directors I've worked with are line by line asking questions, and they teach me a lot about writing.

Judy: When I'm directing a reading I try to create a dramatic event by sketching in some staging and improvising a sense of moment. I don't enjoy just hearing the words of the play. Sometimes a playwright does just want to hear it, and that's O.K. In those cases I shy away from being a dramaturg. But, in most cases I'll share my feelings with the playwright. And they usually say, "go wild."

Laird: In a reading he should just show a playwright what is on the page.

### **Analysis of Responses to Question 7**

Obviously, Crawford does not feel the need for directoral input at this stage of the script's development. Laird agrees with him by saying that she just wants to hear the words. This is interesting in that Crawford's replies express that he has a strong vision of his play and that is what should be staged. Quotes such as, "The playwright should have the last word," and, "The playwright's vision comes before all," support this assumption. But, Laird's responses such as: "I rely on a director to be another creative



mind,” express more leniency with the vision of the play. It seems that their purpose for readings is merely to hear what they have written thus far, as opposed to creating somewhat of a performance of the text. DeMichele shares their view; he feels that a director has no function in readings, but Jones-Meadows and Judy prefer the latter.

Jones-Meadows and Judy see the reading as an opportunity to launch collaboration and for the dramaturgical duties of a director to begin. Jones-Meadows is being faithful to her feelings that a director will have a large influence on a script. And Judy is adhering to his belief that a director is also a dramaturg. Judy’s response most likely stems from his work at the Utah Shakespearean Festival where he directs numerous readings every summer. The reading is likely to be his only opportunity to work on a given text, so it is logical that he would want to have as much input as possible at this stage.

It seems that the director’s approach to a reading will stem from the playwright’s purpose of the reading.

### **8. Do Playwrights Collaborate with Directors for Rewrites?**

According to the results of the interviews, rewrites occur at various points from the first draft of a script to opening night. Rewrites are essential to a fully developed script. Does a director have a place in this phase of development? If the playwrights do

indeed want a director to be a dramaturg, it seems that he will be utilized for effective rewrites.

### **Responses to Question 8**

Laird: Rewrites come from myself usually and before rehearsals begin. I don't usually rewrite during the rehearsals for a production, but I would if I was working with a director who was good enough.

Pearson: The first time around I rewrite during rehearsal.

Good conversations with directors inspire rewrites (usually in the first two weeks of rehearsal). I would like to think that the structure work has been done before a director sees it, but if they end up fixing things that I haven't written, thank you very much.

Rusch: Rewrites come from me. If a director told me to rewrite I wouldn't. I want to have the best possible work before I turn it over to a director. If it doesn't speak for itself I've failed.

Smiley: The whole process is very exploratory. If a director can convince me to rewrite, I'll be glad to.

### Analysis of Responses to Question 8

There seems to be some reluctance on the part of Laird and Smiley to have a director influence rewrites. Laird wants a director to be “good enough” and Smiley needs a director to “convince” him to rewrite. Does this reluctance come from working with directors who are not “good enough” and have not “convinced” them to rewrite? Laird has worked with student directors for the majority of her productions, so this may be the case for her, but to examine Smiley’s statement it is useful to refer to Rusch’s response.

Rusch firmly states that she does not use a director as a partner in rewriting. She believes in rules of etiquette between the director and playwright and that violating each other’s territory ruins collaboration. When she states that rewrites are her own it is probably another example of her doing what she feels is her job and not the directors’. The same can be assumed of Smiley. He stated that, “The real work of the playwright comes pre-rehearsal,” and that a playwright needs to, “go away” and allow the director to do his job. From these statements, his rules of etiquette are similar to Rusch’s. In both of their interviews, these playwrights expressed the idea that a director is a full collaborator and they seem to be willing to allow him leniency with interpretation, as opposed to the more controlling playwrights. This may lead one to believe that their responses to the question about collaboration on staged readings are out of what they feel is their job and not a desire to have total control of their plays.

For Pearson it seems that using a director to help in rewriting has been beneficial. She attributes the ability to use a director in this capacity to good communication. The idea that communication is of the utmost importance in a good collaboration is one that continues to arise.

### **9. What do you expect from a director at your first meeting?**

With the exception of George Judy, when answering this question all the playwrights and directors assumed that a first meeting between director and playwright is to approach a full production, as opposed to a reading. This in itself is a substantial analysis of the question concerning readings. If they assume that their first meeting will be for a production, playwrights must not be collaborating with directors on readings. As stated earlier, Mr. Judy directs many readings, so it is logical that he assumes a first meeting will be in preparation for that purpose.

All directors and playwrights agree with Crawford's, "I like to meet as early as possible," statement and Jensen stating that she likes, "to meet a long time before rehearsals begin."

This question was asked to see if there is a formula for starting the collaboration in a manner that will best serve the play.

### **Responses to Question 9**

Brown: At our first meeting, I ask him to tell me my play.

Censabella: Initially, we should talk about the world of the play and how he sees it visually. This is the standard first meeting. At the next meeting I like to go line by line through the play. This way I can trust that we see each moment the same.

Pearson: Well, I know now what I would do, and it is something that Lanford Wilson said to me. At our first meeting I ask a director to tell me my play, to make sure they know what it is about, the story of the transitions and everything. Sometimes you find they are directing a different play, you don't know this until the third week of rehearsal. A lot of what I write is not on the surface, the underneath is what I need a director to know.

### **Analysis of Responses to Question 9**

It seems that most playwrights agree with Brown when he wishes a director to “tell me my play,” at a first meeting. The advice from Brown and Pearson for the first meeting seems to be given in order to keep the director from “directing a different play” than the playwright feels he has written. Both these playwrights are among the most experienced of those interviewed.

Censabella seems to feel the need to take this discussion of the script much further by having a line-by-line review of the text. This would be a certain way to discover how the director sees the play, but is it necessary? Sam Smiley's response to this question was, "I think a line by line would be terribly boring for a director." Ms. Censabella stated that she is not interested in directing, but she is interested in producing in order to have more control of her scripts. Is the line-by-line another attempt at controlling the script's production?

#### **10. How well does a director need to understand the play before rehearsal?**

Jennifer Laird stated that, "At the first meeting [the director does not] have to know exactly what the play is about." This question was asked to see if the other interviewees agreed.

#### **Responses to Question 10**

Censabella: A director has got to go in knowing something. It may take you 20 years to really know a play. They need to make discoveries and think it is bigger at the end of the process.

Jensen: The director needs to know what the play is about in terms of the look. Of course, he will make discoveries.

Judy: No, I don't really need to know what a play is about before I begin rehearsing it. I'd be less likely to take on a play if I fully understood it. But, that's interesting because a playwright doesn't want you to do it unless you do fully understand it.

Lion: No, a director doesn't need to know exactly what it's about, the playwright doesn't. If he knew exactly what the play was about there'd be no need to do it. We do things for mystery and adventure.

### **Analysis of Responses to Question 10**

From the responses of the playwrights, Judy is incorrect in assuming that playwrights require a director to fully understand a script before beginning its production. The discovery process seems to be more important than pre-existing total comprehension of a play. This refers back to playwrights previously expressing the hope that a director would have the ability to augment the script and give the playwright more than the words on the page.

### **11. How involved should the playwright be in casting?**

Is casting the job of the director? At this point in collaboration does the director take on more responsibility? Would a better production be had if the playwright achieved more input on casting?

When asked, “What is the element of production you would stand up for most?”, the majority of the playwrights said it would be casting. This is why the question was asked.

### **Responses to Question 11**

Censabella: I like a fifty-fifty say in casting, but I would give that extra one percent to the director. They have the experience.

In one play the first cast was fabulous, then the director and I disagreed on a replacement. I got my way, but I was wrong. I should’ve gone with his decision.

Crawford: If you’re not there for casting you’re going to get hurt. I like to stay out of it until they ask me. And the directors always do.

DeMichele: Playwrights work at home, the director works in the theatre.



Jones-Meadows: I like a bunch of say in casting, I hear and see everything when I write. But, the director will have a sensibility that I don't have. Directors also know if an actor has the power to sustain the run.

Judy: It's useful to have a playwright there for casting, although I usually don't. But, the director should have the final say. When I cast I try to uncover the essential qualities of the characters and cast that, I can teach the rest. A playwright may be useful to help illuminate these essential qualities.

Laird: I'd be involved in casting quite a bit if I had my way. I've had practically no say in the past, but I ended up being glad with the way things turned out. There was one actress I didn't want and I ended up loving her.

Lion: Casting is a very delicate process. My general advice from a producer's stand point is for playwrights to stay away from casting. Directors know what to look for in actors. A lot of playwrights get involved in casting to their later regret.

Ramsey: I like to be very involved in casting and plan to stay that way. I'm assuming that the director will know more about the actors than I do, but I have a strong eye for tones and colors. I cast for soul. I have a sense about people and I'm rarely wrong.

Rusch: A playwright should be involved in casting, but I'm bad visually. I go by insides.

### **Analysis of Responses to Question 11**

The interviewees agree that casting is the job of the director. This seems to be the first time the playwrights are willing to admit that the director has more control of the process. Censabella, who has previously indicated that she prefers a director agree with her vision of a play, is willing to give control of casting to the director. Crawford claims to stay out of casting, but he knows that he will be asked for input. It seems that Ramsey feels he possesses a talent that other playwrights do not which gives him the right to have an influence on casting. Laird wants more involvement. One may wonder why because she has had very little in the past and been pleased with the results. And both Rusch and Jones-Meadows admit that a director has abilities that they do not.

Of the non-playwrights interviewed, Judy is the most willing to use the playwright in the casting process. Both Lion and DeMichele state that playwrights have no place in casting; indeed, DeMichele feels that a playwright has no place in a theatre. But, Judy is willing to use the playwright as a resource to cast appropriately. He admits that he rarely has the playwright at his disposal. One may wonder if he would be inclined to agree with Lion and DeMichele if he consistently had the playwright in residence for casting.

**12. How involved should the playwright be in the rehearsal process?**

This question was asked to try to discover the amount of involvement a playwright should have in the rehearsal process in order to achieve the best production possible.

**Responses to Question 12**

Censabella: A playwright should be there for early rehearsals. Then I like to go away and check in with the director, then come back.

You need to let them go with their own decisions and let them realize their own mistakes. If things are going badly, there does come a point when you have to step in.

Crawford: Some residency is vital. You should be there for the first week. Come back for the first run through unless you are asked back. But, you can come back too late and the damage has been done. So, be around or on call.

DeMichele: The playwright should be there for all of the first week, then come back for tech week.

Judy: It's not useful to have the playwright there all the time. I've requested stretches of time (usually two weeks) without the playwright. This is the time when we are sketching it in and getting it on its feet. After that the playwright should come once a week.

It would be really helpful to have the playwright at your disposal to keep a check on the dialogue. After a while, if the actors can't get the words out, something is wrong with the words.

It's wonderful for the playwright to be there for the rehearsal process, but he should communicate with the director only.

Pearson: I wish I could say, "Take it and I'll come back in four weeks." Perhaps that will be a very adult thing to be able to do some day. I don't think I can yet. I think I would feel so deprived of the rehearsal process. I like to be able to be at all rehearsals, although I certainly won't go to every one.

Unless they are lying, actors say they love to see me in rehearsal. I talk directly to actors only if the director is there and I walk on eggshells. And I don't like to interrupt the director. As long as I feel he will have time to talk to me, at least an hour after each rehearsal, I'm fine.

Ramsey: Be there for casting, design meetings, and long enough to see that the actors can do the parts. I don't have the patience to sit through rehearsals. I have to get away and

let the director direct. Then I come back four or five days before opening, but I stay close enough to know how it's going, being careful not to let it get too bad.

Rusch: I've been very involved and not involved at all in the rehearsal process. I like it in the middle. After an incubation period the playwright can come back and check things out. But, he must be complementary. I hate it when a playwright comes in and wants to run things. That's bad manners and it kills collaboration.

I'm afraid that some people, and actors in particular, are afraid to talk in front of the playwright. I'm old fashioned in that I believe that the playwright should communicate only through the director and that the director communicates to the actors. That's good manners.

### **Analysis of Responses to Question 12**

Rusch feels that a playwright has to allow the director to do his job. If he were not allowed, there would be no collaboration. All interviewees would most likely agree with this statement as well, but the wording of some of the replies makes one wonder to what extent.

Both Censabella and Ramsey seem to believe that if things "get too bad" they have the right to "step in." This would seem to be true only if the collaborative team agrees that the playwright has ultimate control over the production. Perhaps on a

production of a new play this is appropriate. But, this seems to be assuming a great deal about the circumstances under which the play is being produced.

Although they vary, most respondents agree with Censabella's suggestion concerning the frequency of a playwright's rehearsal attendance. Practically all state in one form or another that a playwright should be there for early rehearsals (usually the first week), leave for the bulk of the rehearsal process, maintaining consistent contact with the director, and then attend the last week of rehearsal.

Pearson differs in her preferred attendance policy by wanting to be able to attend all rehearsals. In her experience it seems that this is an acceptable manner in which to operate, especially if it is true that "actors say they love to see [her] in rehearsal." Her statement that she would feel deprived of the rehearsal process is logical considering her earlier statement about how she rewrites during the rehearsals of a new play and depends on communication with the director to motivate rewrites. Pearson also expressed the desire to attend rehearsal in order to ensure that her syntax is serving its purpose. Judy and she are in agreement on this point.

This is the first response from Judy that indicates that he would prefer to work independently of the playwright. His other replies have proven him to include the playwright a great deal in the new play process. It seems that he feels that the beginning of the rehearsal process marks when the director takes charge of the collaboration. The other interviewees agree in varying degrees.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **CONCLUSION**

One of the most broad conclusions that can be drawn from the preceding information would be that every collaboration and production is a unique work of art. There are so many variables that contribute to the development of a script and the process of production that rules are difficult, if not impossible to apply.

The replies of the interviewees prove this by their being disparate at many points. However, a general comparison of the material without the structure of the question framework may provide some answers as to how the director can successfully collaborate with the playwright in order to produce a new play.

#### **General Comparison of Research Material**

The one qualification agreed upon most consistently is that a director have dramaturgical abilities. Jensen said that she prefers to work with directors who are, “textual,” Lion said that a playwright should, “rewrite with a director,” Jones-Meadows

likes directors who, “bring a dramaturgical sense to their work,” Crawford feels that, “Directors should be a dramaturg first and a director second,” and Judy regularly collaborates with playwrights on rewrites. It seems that textual work, on the part of playwright and director, is the most important aspect of producing new plays.

The second most common concern from the interviewees is to ensure that the process is indeed a collaboration. Judy stated that a director and playwright, “can’t dismiss each other,” and Lion says they, “need each other.” Censabella wants a director, “who will collaborate with [her],” while both Rusch and Pearson state that, “Theatre is collaborative.” Both Lion and Judy expressed the idea that the best productions occur because of the collaboration among the artists involved and the other interviewees support this assertion.

Upon further analysis of the material one discovers that similarities become fewer after these two topics are addressed. A few playwrights mentioned the idea that a healthy collaboration will consist of collaborators knowing the confines in which their job exists and not encroaching on your respective partners tasks. Rusch mentions the, “good manners,” of not violating, “the protocol of the director-playwright relationship,” that Paxton says should be followed.

From the information supplied by the interviewees the protocol is as follows:

1. A playwright’s job is to provide the words of the play and the director is not to change them in any way.



2. The director's job is to provide the physical staging of the play and the playwright is not to attempt to change it in any way.

3. The director is also to have the final say in matters of casting, but the playwright may often have valuable input.

4. The playwright and director are to agree on how often the playwright is to attend rehearsals, but the first week and the last week or two are the times when the playwright's presence has proven to be most beneficial.

5. The playwright is not to communicate information concerning the production directly to actors, except with the director's permission.

Many interviewees expressed the thought that the protocol is easier to follow and collaboration is facilitated by having open lines of communication with your collaborator. Jensen asserts that, "If you can talk to your director you can excuse a lot." Pearson says that, "Good conversations with directors," help her to develop her scripts. And the majority of the interviewees preferred to work with people with whom they were not friends in order to be able to communicate openly.

Further analysis of the material presents contrasting information. The interviewees disagree on who supplies the artistic vision for a production. Crawford states that, "The playwright's vision comes before all," but Judy says that a production's, "unified impulse...comes from a director." Paxton wants the director and playwright to

have a vision that, “comes from the playwright.” while Smiley claims that, “The director’s volition makes the play work.”

Perhaps a compromise between the two positions would facilitate a successful collaboration. Many playwrights say they want a director to see the playwright’s vision but they also want more from the director. Censabella made the comment that she wanted, “to become a producer to have more say in [her] material.” But, she also said that she is, “always looking for something bigger from a director,” concerning her scripts. Jensen wants, “directors who give me more than just the words on the page.” If Ramsey’s statement: “Sensing my version of my script is important, but he needs to see more because I put a lot in that I’m not aware of,” is true for most playwrights, a director is wise to make sure he knows how the playwright envisions the play and augment this vision with his own artistic sense.

### **Synthesis**

In the task of discovering how the director best collaborates with the playwright to produce new plays, the research yields five conclusions which may be of interest to directors and playwrights:

1. A director should take a dramaturgical approach to the play's production. The input of the director on matters of dramatic structure and plot development have proven to be beneficial in the development of a script.

2. Equal collaborations on the part of director and playwright have proven to generate successful productions. Working together to develop the separate visions of the playwright and director creates a play that is more easily communicated.

3. Preconceived notions about how a script should be staged or how the story is conveyed through the elements of dramatic literature often do not benefit a script's development. A process of discovery on the part of both director and playwright is to be expected and encouraged.

4. Respecting that the director and playwright have clearly defined tasks that are separate from one another will create an environment in which collaboration can flourish.

5. Communication is the most important element of a good collaboration. The director and playwright should have nothing hinder their ability to talk openly about the work. Establish communication with your collaborator early and foster the communication.

### **Closing Remarks**

The process of conducting the interviews was enjoyable. It is always a pleasure to talk to people about subjects for which they have passion. The playwrights and directors were extremely generous with the information. There seemed to be a need to communicate the theories about which they spoke in hopes that they would become practicalities. The general impression from the interviews is that everyone wants to do quality theatre, the question is how.

## **APPENDIX**

### **Biographies of the Interviewees**

Baker, Cliff Fanin. Director. Founder and Producing Artistic Director, Arkansas Repertory Theatre; freelance director for regional theatres including: Alley Theatre, New Stage Theatre, Southern Repertory, American University, Theatre of the Open Eye, CitiArts, Portland Center Stage, and The Fortune Theatre in New Zealand; director of over thirty world and regional premieres; served for five years on the Board of Advisors of the Gathering at Bigfork, Montana (a national playwright retreat), the Atlanta New Play Project, the Mount Sequoyah New Play Retreat, and the Arkansas Arts Council Playwriting Fellowship panel; first recipient of the Individual Arts Achievement Award and the Golden Circle Award for Regional Achievement; currently an on-site reporter and panelist for the NEA; member, Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers.

Brown, Kent R. Playwright. Author of numerous plays produced regionally at: Boars Head Theatre, West Coast Ensemble, Arkansas Repertory, Company One, Hollywood Actors Theatre, Raft Theatre, and Walnut Street Theatre; served as co-editor of the Mt. Sequoyah New Play Retreat for many years; awards include a Mary W. and Eric A.

Eckler Lectureship in Literature and Drama, an Arkansas Arts Council Fellowship in Playwriting, and a Walter E. Dakin Fellowship; currently teaches acting, directing, and playwriting at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville.

Censabella, Laura Maria. Playwright. Plays include: *Abandoned in Queens*, *Posing*, *Every Girl Should Know*, and *Doll*; received workshops and/or productions at: Philadelphia Festival Theatre for New Plays, The Working Theatre, The Women's Project, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Interact Theatre, Belmont Italian-American Playhouse, and Tiny Mythic's American Living Room Series at the Ohio; received a playwriting grant from the New York Foundation for the Arts; two-time participant in the O'Neill Theatre's National Playwrights Conferences for plays; recipient of fellowships from Yaddo and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts; currently teaches playwriting in the Actors Studio MFA Program at the New School; has taught at Columbia University's School of the Arts, Columbia College, City University, The Lincoln Center Institute, Poets in Public Service; founder, Springs Young Playwrights Festival in East Hampton; author of *Physics*, a short film for H.B.O.'s "Women: Breaking The Rules" series; member of the Dramatists Guild, The Women's Project, and Ensemble Studio Theatre; received a BA in Philosophy from Yale.

Crawford, Jerry. Playwright. Author, *Acting In Person and In Style*; holds a BFA in acting from Drake University, an MA in directing from Stanford University, and a Ph.D.

in playwriting from the University of Iowa; author of over twenty plays, most of which have been produced professionally or published; served as a critic and adjudicator at major theatre festivals nationwide for over twenty-five years; elected to the College of Fellows of the American Theatre at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in 1991; currently retired as Professor Emeritus after thirty-two years at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas.

DeMichele, Mark. Director. Faculty member at Phoenix College; producer and director of many new works; awarded and administered two Internal Vibrant Arts grants; holds an MFA in Drama from the University of Arizona; member, Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers; recently appeared under Lee Breuer's direction in productions of *Play*, and *The Wrath of Kali*.

Jensen, Julie. Playwright. Director of the graduate program in playwriting at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas; received readings at the Taper New Works Festival at the Mark Taper Forum, the Salt Lake Acting Company, and productions at LATC, The Complex, and Friends and Artists for *The Lost Vegas Series*; published by Theatre Communications Group in *Plays in Process*; winner, the 1990 Award for New American Plays and the CBS/Dramatist Guild Prize; received premiers at the Arena Stage in Washington, DC and the Capital Repertory in Albany, NY; received a professional staged reading at the Playwright's Horizon with Kathy Bates in the leading role.

Jones-Meadows, Karen. Playwright. Plays include: *Harriet's Return*, *Henrietta*, *Tapman*, *Major Changes*, *Private Conversations*, *Everybody's Secret*, *Sala Cinderella*, and *Harriet Returns for Us*; worked with the Negro Ensemble Company, Hudson Guild Theatre, The Women's Project, New Federal Theatre, Houston Ensemble Company, Indiana Repertory Company, Penumbra Theatre, Frederick Douglas Creative Arts Center, Luna Stage Company, and Crossroads Theatre Company; co-produced short films for Fox Television and Comedy Central; recipient of the Drama League of New York Playwright Award, the Cornerston Award from Penumbra Theatre, and an Emerging Artist Fellowship.

Judy, George. Director. Professor of acting, Florida State University; director of numerous staged readings of new plays at the Utah Shakespearean Festival.

Laird, Jenny. Playwright. Holds a BA in psychology from the University of Virginia; currently in the MFA playwriting program at UNLV; received numerous productions at UNLV; received a reading at the North Carolina Playwrights Center and was selected for competition in the 1995 Kennedy Center/ACTF competition for *Kissing Shadows*.

Lion, John. Director of the Kennedy Center/American College Theatre Festival and Youth and Family Programs. Founder, General Director and Artistic Director of the



Magic Theatre in San Francisco from 1967 to 1990 where he directed over 70 of the 200 plays produced; producer of Sam Shephard's Pulitzer Prize and Obie Award winner *Buried Child* in 1979; served on the Rockefeller Foundation Playwright's Award Committee from 1983 to 1989; recipient of the Margo Jones Award: "Significant Contributions to the Dramatic Art Through the Production of New Plays"; attended the University of Chicago, Berkley and Stanford University.

Paxton, Robert. Playwright. Received an MA in creative writing/dramatic literature from BYU and an MFA in playwriting from UNLV; currently, Director of Theatre Programs at the TACAHN Center for the Arts; awarded second place in the Vera Hinckley Mayhew Playwriting Competition in 1990 for *Fair Play*; recently completed *UTAH!*, "America's Most Spectacular Outdoor Musical Drama," which premiered in June of 1995 at the TUACAHN Amphitheater; co-author with Producer-Director Lyman Dayton, *Second Chance*, a feature film; received a staged reading of his historical drama *Heir to the Covenant* at the Utah Shakespearean Festival.

Pearson, Sybille. Playwright. Tony nomination for Libretto of *Baby*; author of the plays: *Sally and Marsha*, *Phantasie*, *Watching The Dog*, and *Unfinished Stories*; published in The American Theatre Magazine; won the Berrilla Kerr Award for Play writing in 1994; recipient of a Rockefeller Playwrights Fellowship; participant at the O'Neill Playwrights Conference, the Sundance Playwrights Conference; founding member of The Playwrights

Circle at The New York Theatre Workshop; currently teaches musical theatre at the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University; member, Dramatists Guild; recently received a commission from the Mark Taper Forum for *True History and Real Adventure*.

Ramsey, Eric. Playwright. Currently an MFA playwriting student at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas; received the Michael Kamin National Short Play Award at the Kennedy Center/American College Theatre Festival; two-time winner of the Artcore Short Play Competition; holds a BA in literature from the University of Wyoming.

Rusch, C.G. Playwright. Member, Dramatist Guild, The Actors League, and The North Carolina Playwrights Center; received fellowships from The Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, Sweetbriar, Virginia, and The Millay Colony for the Arts, Austerlitz, New York; plays include: *Train: Beyond the Blues*, produced at the Performance Network in Ann Arbor; *The Charity Fish Fry Tinikling Show*, finalist in the Margo Jones Biennial National Playwriting Competition; *Going After*, a 1990 semi-finalist at the Actors Theatre of Louisville National Playwriting Competition; and *Vanishing Point*, included in the Works by Women Series, Greenwich Street Theatre, New York; dramatic works are published in many acting texts.

Smiley, Sam. Playwright. Writing credits include the publication of numerous articles, seven screenplays, and many television scripts; plays include: *Date*, *Hemingway*, *First Day of Winter*, *Property of the Dallas Cowboys*, and *Summer Lights*; author, *The Battle of Tippecanoe*, an outdoor drama that recently ran for two summers in Indiana; served as head writer on the TV series “The Catlins” and script consultant to ABC Television; founder of the Department of Theatre and Drama at the University of Evansville; served as the University’s first Dean of Fine Arts; taught in the Department of Theatre at Indiana University for Fourteen years; former Artistic Director of Brown Playhouse; author, *Playwriting: The Structure of Action* (considered by some to be the standard book in dramatic writing); earned a BFA at Illinois Wesleyan University, an MFA at the University of Iowa, and Ph.D. at Indiana University.



DATE: August 10, 1995

TO: Mr. Brian Haimbach

FROM: Dr. William E. Schulze, Director *Wm. Schulze*  
Office of Sponsored Programs (X1357)

RE: Status of Human Subject Protocol Entitled:  
"Directing from the Script"

OSP #123f0895-042e

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The protocol for the project referenced above has been reviewed by the Office of Sponsored Programs, and it has been determined that it meets the criteria for exemption from full review by the UNLV human subjects Institutional Review Board. Except for any required conditions or modifications noted below, this protocol is approved for a period of one year from the date of this notification, and work on the project may proceed.

Should the use of human subjects described in this protocol continue beyond a year from the date of this notification, it will be necessary to request an extension.

cc: OSP File

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Smiley, Sam, Playwright. 1995. Telephone interview by author. 30 June, Las Vegas, Nevada. Tape recording.

Rusch, C.G., Playwright. 1995. Interview by author. 7 June, Pinehurst, North Carolina. Tape Recording.