

Mary Mead

Peter Sprague

Senior Project II

17 May 2024

Time Does Not Stop for Anyone

Falling in love takes time, and falling in love while torn between two self-identities takes even longer. Before delving in, pause for a moment. Martyna Majok, an immigrant from Poland, relocated to Kearny, New Jersey, at the tender age of five. She and her mother frequently moved back and forth due to visa complications. Once finally settled in the United States, life did not magically become perfect. Majok watched her mother struggle, and as she grew, Majok had struggles that led her to theatre and playwriting. Majok has played with time in each of the pieces she has published, most notably in her latest work, *Sanctuary City*, where she frames her characters in a specific time period, intentionally keeping them just out of reach of what they truly wanted. Although there are a myriad of ways to examine the manner in which Majok uses time in this project, the crucial theme of ‘so close, yet so far’ is perceived best through the inclusion of an LGBTQ+ character, immigration legislation, and the investigation of the Sanctuary City Movement, all of which are in perfect parameters of the early 2000s time period that Majok calculated.

Majok's three major works center on marginalized and immigrant communities in New Jersey, reflecting on time, her personal experiences, and her familiarity with the subject matter. *Ironbound* traces the journey of a Polish immigrant in New Jersey, anchored in a bus station over time. In a 2016 interview with The New York Times, Majok shared insights into her creative process, revealing that the narrative was largely inspired by her mother's experiences “[Majok’s]

goal was to show a character who for the most part, in [her] experience of consuming American pop culture, has been seen as stupid and just walks around with a funny accent: these horrible caricatures of what immigrants and poor people are” (NYT Majok 2016). The authenticity of the characters holds paramount importance, resonating deeply not just with the author but also with the audience. *Ironbound* diverges from conventional media by embracing hyper-realistic storytelling that unfolds across different periods of time. Central to what makes this piece so appealing is the stagnant set throughout changing time periods. A woman coming to terms with the fallacy that is the “American dream” over a span of 20 years. Majok avoids the theatrics of the stage and conveys lifelike situations while keeping audiences engaged which is no easy feat.

Majok's fascination lies in exploring the lives of overlooked individuals navigating systems designed to thwart their success. This theme culminates in her second and most acclaimed work, *Cost of Living*. *Cost of Living*, A play about the caretakers of people with disabilities and the relationship they form, was released in 2016 and won the 2018 Pulitzer Prize for Drama. Here again, she draws from personal experience having worked as a caretaker trying to earn enough money to simply live. Initially conceived as a monologue depicting a man grieving the loss of his wife, *Cost of Living* evolved to encompass four characters, exploring themes of familial bonds and connections between strangers. As she often writes what comes to her in fragments, she wrote another scene about a man caring for his injured wife and “soon realized that the two scenes were connected and that the play would have to go back in time from the monologue where the man’s wife was dead to the dialogue scene where she was still alive” (Diep Tran 2022). The prologue unfolds with a scene set after her death, providing context for the audience before the play progresses to bring viewers up to speed with the unfolding narrative. Majok’s obsession with time peaks throughout as the play unfolds over the course of several

months, occasionally jumping into the future to provide additional context. Most importantly, *Cost of Living* is proof that time is fleeting and nothing is permanent. The reason this play is timeless is because “individuals with disabilities are the largest minority in this country, and we’re the least represented in the entertainment industry” (Sullivan 2022). Katy Sullivan is someone who has worked with Majok on *Cost of Living* numerous times since its debut. As a disabled person, Sullivan is the authority on this subject. The persistent decline in the economy, which impedes these characters from leading "normal" lives, is always indicative of the present day. Oftentimes humans lack care about most until it is too late.

Majok’s most recent work, *Sanctuary City*, pushes the constraints of time and provides audiences brief glimpses of the lives the characters are living, enough to keep them interested, but slow in the revelation of information. Though Martyna herself is not disabled, she has a remarkable way of giving marginalized communities a platform to feel seen in *Cost of Living* and *Sanctuary City*; one speaks for the disabled, the other for queer, undocumented youth. Nothing is ever easy, but choosing one identity over another is an incredibly painful path. Majok illustrates that “[she] was trying to show what an impossible situation this is. Particularly in the time that it takes place in. [Her] plays are kind of love letters for the people that [she] grew up with and this isn't any different. [She] wanted to invite people into the world that [she] know[s] and experienced” (New York Theatre Workshop Majok 2021). The trials that one of the main characters, G, endures—from coping with an abusive stepfather to being surprised with her mother's journey to naturalization—parallels Majok's upbringing in Kearny, reflecting her personal experiences and the challenges faced by countless immigrant families. Majok drew inspiration from the undocumented teens she encountered during her early life, listening to their narratives and experiences, which fueled her creative process. In *Sanctuary City*, the protagonist,

B, must grapple with the agonizing choice of sacrificing either his queerness or his sense of wholeness, knowing that regardless of his decision, he faces a profound loss. Majok deliberately opts to exclude characters of Western European descent, emphasizing a non-white, diverse cast in *Sanctuary City*. Throughout the play, the characters remain tantalizingly close to attaining something positive, yet just out of reach, until the play concludes. However, amidst their struggles, they discover a ‘sanctuary’ within themselves and their connections with one another. Across Martyna Majok's body of work, a common thread emerges, revolving around similar themes, with time occupying a central position.

According to the Oxford Dictionary, a Sanctuary City is “a city whose municipal laws tend to protect undocumented immigrants from deportation or prosecution, despite federal immigration law.” This means that the masses are actively choosing to go against the federal government to do what they believe is right and offering up a space for undocumented or illegal immigrants to exist. The laws varied by city, but people in power agreed that instead of calling immigration services if there were undocumented immigrants they would just send them through the court system as if they had all their documents. The sanctuary movement has been around for decades, starting in the 1980s. A few leaders of the organization were “looking for a new approach, church leaders [in New York] and in the Bay Area of San Francisco independently arrived at a similar approach. An Ancient Tradition Churches would publicly declare themselves sanctuaries for people fleeing El Salvador and Guatemala in accordance with the ancient Judeo-Christian and Greek tradition recognizing houses of religion as sanctuaries.” (New York Times, Applebone 1986). The movement was active and alive until around 1996 when the final peace treaties were finalized with El Salvador and Guatemala. That means that these characters were alive and most-likely in the country during part of the Sanctuary City Movement, just

enough to get a taste. Majok makes sure that they are old enough to remember it and know about the movement, yet purposely places them in a time where it is resolving and becoming a time of peace. B and G are living the majority of their life in the United States in a time of turmoil and distress. After the events of September 11th, 2001 came the resurgence of racism and xenophobia leading to Majok suggesting in the preamble that none of her characters should be depicted by those of white or western european descent because she wanted to focus on these injustices. The rate of deportation also increased significantly in the months and years after September 11th, 2001. Majok has these characters exist in this new environment where they felt unsure before, but now are sure they know nothing. The characters, G and B, are living in the in-between, proving that “after 9/11, when ICE agents started to apprehend people at bus stations and airports ... undocumented members of the 1.5 generation demonstrate that, unlike their first-generation counterparts, their legal consciousness is less centrally informed by fear of deportation” (Leisy J. Abreg 2011). The real living examples of this time period have given their stories away and Majok lived through parts of it. She personally relates to her characters, yet in the same regard, she is miles away from where they are. B is stuck living in fear, looking around every corner, while G beats the system and is a legal citizen. They are on the two opposite sides of the 1.5 generation. Though they could have turned against each other, the two find a sanctuary in each other, knowing that someone else understands their pain and fear. Without this sanctuary or the concept of a Sanctuary City, this production would cease to exist and Majok allows the audience to access this knowledge in order to keep them on the edge of their seats. These characters were so close to living a relatively normal life, documented or undocumented, but the time frame Majok chose for them to exist in, takes normalcy away from them.

The delayed legal recognition of the DREAM Act is another tool Majok uses to keep these characters, mainly B, from having what they want is through The DREAM Act stands for “Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act” and the concept was drawn up in 2001 which is right before the play takes place. B and G are seniors in high school and would soon not be covered by this act since they would no longer be minors in the eyes of the law. Beyond the DREAM Act, even if undocumented immigrants did graduate from high school “federal legislation that was passed in 1996 has worked to keep the vast majority of illegal immigrants from obtaining in-state tuition benefits that would allow them to attend college” (Galassi 2003). In the play, B is constantly reminding G that he would have to pay for college out of pocket and that he cannot apply for scholarships even though she can because she was naturalized. Even though they came from the same place and very similar circumstances, G gets to live the life that B cannot. Majok chose this time period because of the laws and regulations in place to keep B, the main character, from going to college even though he is intelligent and capable. No matter how hard he worked, it was never a possibility for him because he was undocumented and there was no way to become documented while still living the way he wanted to. Majok chose to end the play in 2006 when the DREAM Act was loosely in politics, but not in major consideration until 2007. Even though “the DREAM Act was introduced many times ... before 2007, it was included in larger comprehensive immigration legislation that failed to pass in the Senate. In 2007 and 2010, the DREAM Act was introduced as a stand-alone policy” (Yalidy Matos 2020). B uses the hope that the DREAM Act gives him to keep working and maybe one day become a citizen and go to college. School and education are important themes throughout this work which leads to an important role for the DREAM Act to play, as these characters are the demographic that is directly affected by it. Even though his eligibility expires

with age, his desperation shows how little he has going for him and continues to use it as hope for more legislation in his favor. Eventually, G uses this against him in a fit of anger and Majok applies her knowledge of future legislation to set the time period. In the coming year the DREAM Act would pass and turn a new leaf, but both Majok and G leave B heartbroken and distraught. After the DREAM Act came Deferred Action on Childhood Arrivals (DACA) in 2012, which was another form of temporary citizenship for immigrants who came to the United States when they were children. Though 2012 is roughly five years away from the end of the play, if the play were to start in 2007 and last the same amount of time it would have ended in 2012. However, Majok chose to place her characters in a time period where nothing is certain for immigrants and the semblance of a "normal" life is just out of reach.

An immense part of the story of *Sanctuary City* is B's identity as not only an undocumented immigrant but also as a homosexual. He is constantly at war with himself and cannot decide whether to be out as a gay man or closeted as a legally free man. The Gay Rights Movement is an ever-present struggle in society and it is one more thing working against B in this story. Although the movement started in the early 1900s, there has always been a stigma against being a gay man, especially after the AIDS epidemic in the 1980s. B is, as it is commonly referred to, a double minority and the "minority identity is linked to a variety of stress processes; some LGB people, for example, may be vigilant in interactions with others (expectations of rejection), hide their identity for fear of harm (concealment), or internalize stigma (internalized homophobia)" (Meyer 2003). Not only is B dealing with the external homophobia of the time, but also internalized homophobia. In the beginning of the play, set in 2002 and 2003, he could not admit to anyone, not even himself that he was gay. B has expectations of rejection from his best friend G because she is his only family and if he was

openly gay with her he might lose her the same way he lost his mother, which is not something he could risk in the position he was in. He is also concealing his queer identity in order to keep up societal norms and not be looked into more carefully than he already is by employers and friends alike. B is dealing with the same feelings on both sides of his identity and they are directly related to the time period that Majok chose. The play directly mentions the legalization of same-sex marriage in Massachusetts as a point of hope for B and his partner, Henry. This idea of hope is shut down since there had not been any states following Massachusetts' lead, another intentional choice made by Majok. Massachusetts passed the law on November 18th, 2003 to prohibit discrimination against same-sex marriages, coincidentally the year that the first act of the play leaves off. B has had three years to agonize over the thought that if one state legalized it, what was stopping others. If it was legalized in New Jersey then B would not be cornered into marrying a woman for citizenship status thus effectively hiding who he is. The play ends in 2006, almost 2007, but the next states did not come on board until 2008. The next closest state to New Jersey would be "Connecticut [joining] Massachusetts and California as the only states to have legalized gay marriages. The ruling, which cannot be appealed ... is to take effect on Oct. 28, [2008] held that a state law limiting marriage to heterosexual couples, and a civil union law intended to provide all the rights and privileges of marriage to same-sex couples, violated the constitutional guarantees of equal protection under the law" (McFadden 2008). Another clear delineation by Majok in her most recent work was allowing the play to culminate a mere two years before the characters could see what the future held for them. In the play G speaks with a sense of inevitability and as young adults, she makes B feel that everything is final. B, G, and Henry are currently stuck existing where such things as legalizing same-sex marriage seem so unobtainable. Massachusetts set the standard and in the grand scheme of legislation, twelve years

is not a lot of time. Majok understands that these characters exist outside of the pages of her play and felt that she needed to tell their stories. Not only is she interlacing the undocumented struggle, but also the queer struggle in the early 2000s when nothing was moving in the bigger picture. It cannot be said enough, Majok chose to show the cruel reality of human existence by setting the play in 2006 almost 2007 where the main character is so close to feeling more hope through the passing of LGBTQ+ legislation.

Martyna Majok uses time as a major thematic device in all of her works, but especially her most recent one, *Sanctuary City*. While taking a closer look at her other works one can see the pattern starting to build. Whether Majok knows it or not she is obsessed with time and the concept that everything takes time and that time does not stop for anyone. Each move Majok made in this work of art was so painfully intentional. The brush strokes are seen while the characters are looking for sanctuary from their immigration status, trying to find someplace safe. As the movement passes they have nowhere to turn but to each other. Her movement can also be seen in the hurt behind DREAMers looking for hope, but still falling just one year short of being taken seriously. The LGBT movement has been stretched out over centuries but Majok still makes it seem like each year is dragging tediously and painfully but in this work adds new color in the time spent trying to be equal in any right possible. Martyna Majok laid the groundwork for herself and found her footing while she was creating this work. Although the characters in this work struggle with finding the right time for everything, Majok herself found the perfect time to compose this piece in a mere three days. *Sanctuary City* shows audiences that no one knows what lies ahead, so even if life feels hopeless, just wait, the time will come.

Works Cited

- Abrego, Leisy J. “Legal Consciousness of Undocumented Latinos: Fear and Stigma as Barriers to Claims-Making for First- and 1.5-Generation Immigrants.” *Law & Society Review*, vol. 45, no. 2, June 2011, pp. 337–70, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5893.2011.00435.x>.
- “An Interview with Martyna Majok.” *Culture.Pl*, <https://culture.pl/en/article/interview-martyna-majok-playwright>. Accessed 7 June 2024.
- Applebome, Peter. “SANCTUARY MOVEMENT: NEW HOPES AFTER TRIAL.” *The New York Times*, 6 May 1986, <https://www.nytimes.com/1986/05/06/us/sanctuary-movement-new-hopes-after-trial.html>. Accessed 7 June 2024.
- Collins-Hughes, Laura. “Q. and A.: Martyna Majok, Putting Immigrant Lives on Center Stage.” *The New York Times*, 17 Feb. 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/21/theater/q-and-a-martyna-majok-putting-immigrant-lives-on-center-stage.html>. Accessed 7 June 2024.
- Corrunker. “‘Coming Out of the Shadows’: DREAM Act Activism in the Context of Global Anti-Deportation Activism.” *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies*, vol. 19, no. 1, 2012, p. 143, <https://doi.org/10.2979/indjglolegstu.19.1.143>.
- “Cost Of Living - Directed by John Vreeke.” *Fountain Theatre, Los Angeles*, <http://johnvreeke.com/costofliving/>. Accessed 7 June 2024.
- Galassi, Jennifer. “Dare to Dream - A Review of the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (Dream) Act.” *Chicana/o Latina/o Law Review*, vol. 24, no. 1, 2003, <https://doi.org/10.5070/c7241021150>.

- Majok, Martyna. *Ironbound & Sanctuary City*. Theatre Communications Group, 2024.
- Matos, Yalidy. “The ‘American DREAM’: Understanding White Americans’ Support for the DREAM Act and Punitive Immigration Policies.” *Perspectives on Politics*, vol. 19, no. 2, Oct. 2020, pp. 422–41, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s1537592720002492>.
- McFadden, Robert D. “Gay Marriage Is Ruled Legal in Connecticut.” *The New York Times*, 10 Oct. 2008, <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/11/nyregion/11marriage.html>. Accessed 7 June 2024.
- Meyer, Ilan H. “Prejudice, Social Stress, and Mental Health in Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Populations: Conceptual Issues and Research Evidence.” *Psychological Bulletin*, vol. 129, no. 5, Sept. 2003, pp. 674–97, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.129.5.674>.
- Oxford English Dictionary*.
<https://www.oed.com/search/dictionary/?scope=Entries&q=Sanctuary+City>. Accessed 7 June 2024.
- “Plays — Martyna Majok.” *Martyna Majok*, <https://www.martynamajok.com/plays>. Accessed 7 June 2024.
- Tran, Diep. “Martyna Majok’s ‘Cost of Living,’ in This Economy?” *AMERICAN THEATRE*, 29 Sept. 2022,
<https://www.americantheatre.org/2022/09/29/martyna-majoks-cost-of-living-in-this-economy/>. Accessed 7 June 2024.
- “When Was These Article Published.” *Khan Academy*,
<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/us-government-and-civics/x231f0f4241b58f49:citizens-us-gov-civics/x231f0f4241b58f49:what-is-the-difference-between-citizens-and-non-citizens/a/the-dream-act-and-daca>. Accessed 7 June 2024.

Workshop, New York Theatre. "SANCTUARY CITY Talkback with Martyna Majok." *YouTube*,
Video, 2 Dec. 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5gnQOU2aSHI&t=6s>. Accessed
7 June 2024.

Molly Mead

SPJ II

Peter Sprague

17 May 2024

Goals and Impacts

When I set out on this journey I hoped to accomplish becoming a better Stage Manager, in every capacity of the word. On every other project that I have had the pleasure of participating in, I have been working alongside other Stage Managers or overbearing Directors. I never really have creative freedom the way I felt I would with this project. I wanted to be able to fully take on the role of Stage Manager, doing all the aspects of my job. Being a senior collaborator and Producer I have found that it is easier to produce when you are on the production side of the process. The chance to stand in my own light and create a new identity for myself within the Purchase College theater community, that I could take into the “real world” seems very exciting and I can’t wait to see what the future holds..

I originally wanted to work more closely with Line Notes and find a way that worked for me because as a writer, a playwright and a screenwriter, it is something that has grown very important to me. There is an understanding that each word has meaning, and the author purposely chooses and thinks about each word before they write it. I wanted to help my actors achieve everything I knew that they could achieve through working with the script instead of against it. Though there are apps, I wanted to toy with the difficulty of line notes and find a way that works and will translate to any and all future projects.

Sanctuary City was a good place for me to start my career because not only was I the Primary Stage Manager, but this was the first pre-written play I have worked on. When the work

is coming from a student, usually one who is involved in producing it, there have proved to be difficulties in taking creative liberties. I felt that I would have more wiggle room so to speak on this project. I wanted to do this project as my capstone so that I would have real life experience of Stage Managing and working with every part of the machine that is necessary in order to put on a full production, which was also new to me. This is the first full length piece I have had to connect with on such a deep level and it was truly an enriching experience.

I know that line notes are very important and they are also one of the most tedious tasks to do while also balancing blocking, cast relations, directorial input, props, set pieces, and everything else. Another goal was to delegate. As someone who considers themselves a perfectionist, I often struggle to ask for help, but this time around it was different. I feel that I turned a new leaf and started delegating to my Assistant Stage Manager. I truly could not have gotten through this production without Lilly Ritter. Having somebody there that knows you and knows the production as well as you is so unbelievably helpful and my ASM really did it all, from being at rehearsals when I could not, to putting in extra hours with our actors so they could learn their lines.

This show greatly impacted me as a production team member, because it taught me the struggle of working with a smaller cast. Prior to this all of the shows I had worked on had six or more cast members and while having to wrangle more people is harder due to schedules it is easier to manage when someone can't make it. Having to work consistently with 2 to 3 people is harder because it also means that each person has more lines to learn and needs to have consistent attention to make sure they are keeping up. This experience is something that is definitely going to sit with me for a really long time, not only because of holding a more significant role, but also because I have gained more respect for smaller casts.

I also hope to spread the message that not everybody is perfect, even the playwright. The further research I did into *Sanctuary City* the more I found out how collaborative Martyna Majok is in her work, especially with this project. She would often have her actors suggest lines that made more sense the more they got into character. Having the knowledge that this work was constantly changing made my goal of strict line notes a little less strict. My goal was updated to, helping my actors to develop their characters into everything they wanted them to be and creating an open flow of dialogue about the script and the play itself. Another goal that came out of my research was really making the director's vision come to life. Each project that I have worked on at this school has brought new challenges and helped me create goals to better myself and my skills as a Stage Manager and *Sanctuary City* was no different.

The biggest impact I hoped to show with this production is that we only get to see little bits of people's lives. The small windows in which we are able to really truly connect with people are often shown in patterns and these moments are few and far between. I hope to show people that the little moments are the ones that truly matter. Asking someone how their day was might mean nothing to you but the world to them. After seeing the show and reading the script over and over and over again it really deeply impacted me in a way that I know I will never forget. It really presses the theme that everything is temporary, be it people in your life or the things we hope for. I hope to show audiences the same thing that it showed me. This show really teaches a lesson about how little we truly know about each other, even the people we think we know best in this world.

Another reason that I think that this Project is important is because it exemplifies the struggle of immigration in America. All the issues faced are real situations that countless people have been in. Majok draws from personal experiences which are integral for people to see the

coldness of the world that she and many others have faced first hand. Purchase College has a very diverse campus and people come from all backgrounds. Being undocumented does not hold the same meaning now that it did then, and reminding people just how difficult it was for undocumented people, even children who were brought here by their parents is essential to understanding that the majority of undocumented immigrants came to the country legally, but overstay their visas because the renewal process is too strenuous. In a country that is pitted against its people I believe it is best to let each person who chooses to interact with this show know that they are not alone in their struggles no matter what they may be. Everything is temporary, and this show can have a real impact on the way that people see their lives because there is something to relate to in each of these characters.

I also hope to show people that being queer is not a choice because lord knows if B could have chosen to be straight he would have. Whether or not one is undocumented there is always a struggle to be yourself and *Sanctuary City* is the perfect example of that. Showing this work to as many people as possible is as important as Majok's other works because it draws from her own life stories and the stories of those around her. It shows that we should be trusting in what we see is important as life is constantly changing around us. It directly relates to SUNY Purchase in that these are our formative years and everything around us is constantly changing. We also have the right to change our own narrative in order to succeed in life.

Having a set goal going into this project was a new experience for me. As always I hope to come out a better stage manager, but putting myself in a mindset to accomplish something that I wanted to do for me. I found that this project played a large role in how I want to stage manage and it helped me achieve goals that I did not know I had prior to signing onto this project. Line notes are important, but not as important as knowing that I can't do everything alone which is a

lasting impact this show has for me. Along with the life lessons it has taught me. There is always something lying underneath, so we should always be looking into everything twice. This show taught me how to listen to what the actors need and what they are feeling on top of line notes depending from play to play if the author needs the collaboration of everyone involved in the story telling.

Molly Mead

SPJ II

Peter Sprague

17 May 2024

Reflection Paper

Reflecting on this project has been no easy feat and the more that I am forced to look back I have found there are few good things to say. Not only has this project helped me to reflect on my skills as a Stage Manager, but also see how my education fell short. While I know this is not the Design/Technology program, and I was always scheduled to have a Bachelor of Arts, not Fine Arts, I did not think that there would be such a deficit in class selection and availability. I have talked to so many professors about the variety of classes that are offered and that would truly help students to work through the Theater and Performance Major better with a more comprehensive understanding of each part of the industry. Most importantly I wish there were more classes that SUNY Purchase offered to the Theater and Performance students focused in production. I feel that every course that I took that truly contributed to my understanding of being a stage manager, was rooted in the BFA program which is sorely disappointing. I loved all of the professors that I got the opportunity to get to know and after talking to them I think they would agree with me, but we just don't have the resources.

I truly feel that my experiences of Stage Managing at Purchase College were not representative of the real world and what it is like to have work as a Stage Manager. I was constantly being asked to do somehow more than and not enough of what being a Stage Manager entails based on my understanding through the few classes I was able to take. On my final project, I became an official producer, not just part of a production team, and what I found was

that producing with people who do not know what it's like to be on a production team is very difficult. The size of this cast was so small that virtually everybody should have been part of our production meetings, yet because two of our producers were actors they often did not know what was going on behind the scenes. Everything that we were doing and knowing what was going on, is a lot to deal with, and is not fair to those who have been doing it for years to have to catch everyone else up to speed on what they should be doing as a producer.

This project specifically was an utter train wreck, and I do not believe I played a large part in that, though the blame is on each of us in our own ways. I was constantly disrespected during this process, not only by my fellow producers, especially the Director, but also by faculty. I was consistently left out of the loop, by not being CC'd on emails from faculty that were being sent out regularly. I was not even included on the poster and for the amount of time and effort that I put into this project that was a real kick to the stomach. My cast and crew mates were forwarding me the emails that I was missing, some of which were essential to my role in this production. It felt like my role on this project was being diminished because of the lack of recognition from faculty even though I fully believe this project would not have been able to go up without my assistance.

Having to deal with an unruly cast member was especially hard as there were only three actors working on this project, two of which were supposed to be co-producers. There were a lot of rushed decisions being made and accusations being thrown around. The task to potentially replace the actor for Henry was thrust onto me. Something that should have been a collective decision with an audition process, was dealt with in hushed conversations and uncertainty. Luckily replacing Nick did not end up being necessary, but it added a lot of stress and everybody was looking at me, not to say that being a Stage Manager isn't important and that it isn't part of

my job to help find somebody new, but it is not solely my job. Having clear rules and roles defined was something that we sorely lacked not only on this production. This has been an issue that I have faced in nearly every senior project I worked on at this college.

After finally having an open and honest conversation about the issues that Nick was experiencing, there was now a 'feud' so to speak between Nick and Gabe. There were constant silent aggressions and discussions of what was happening behind the scenes which led to more struggle and strife. The entire conflict was completely avoidable if the Director had been doing her job. The disagreement grew from the actors into their characters which made it harder for everyone as they were supposed to have romantic chemistry on stage. The spat also allowed some sort of homophobia to grow within Gabe. This was a difficult attitude to work around as two of the characters out of three in the show are rooted in the LGBTQ+ community.

I also had an emotional personal event with Gabriel during tech week. I, to this day, don't really understand what he was feeling because he seemed to be frustrated that we were staying late and doing cue to cue. Going through everything slowly and staying through odd hours is part of theater work. This proves to me that he had not been part of another production at the school, because that is how it has gone for me every single time that I have done a production and because he was a producer, he should've been aware that he had a role to fulfill which sometimes means staying late. He was always informed earlier as to the time to arrive and notified that there was no set time he would be leaving. I also gave him numerous reminders that he should be bringing food for himself and not wait until he gets home to eat because I knew he was a commuter. We had breaks for dinner and he was not eating during those times no doubt leading to him being more tired, more hungry, and more easily irritable and he then blamed it on me. There was an instance where he got frustrated because we were going through things slowly to

fix lighting issues. He said some unsavory words, walked out of the theater, and punched a hand sanitizer box off the wall out of frustration. When I went to calm him down and tell him to take a break he retaliated. He then proceeded to threaten me saying “don’t make me hurt you, Molly” which is laughable, but still disappointing and most-likely because of his lack of knowledge of a production at Purchase College. The director had to get involved in this as well as Chris Walker who was there to keep the peace among Nick and Gabe, which is truly going above and beyond in his role.

Another issue was the rights and reimbursement. Since I was not the one who pitched this play in the first place, it was on the Director to secure the rights to the show. Something that did not happen until *maybe* a week before the show opened. We never had the official script in our hands, but rather a scanned edition that came from I don’t know where. Not having access to a decent version of the script was detrimental to the process. The actors had to work with a script that did not know what page it was on. There were ups and downs, but it made it harder for them to learn their lines and it made it harder for me to do line notes. Even after we officially obtained the rights of the show through our director, she did not supply us access to the script. It was me finding the script through a professor.

The pre-production process was a mess, starting with the fact that the Director did not listen to me and give the actors the script over the summer so we could start off the year with them having to know some of the lines. Instead, she did not print out the scripts until the second week of school when we had our table read with the full cast. As it was, there were 90 pages, most of which between two characters. The way the Director chose to take was a realistic depiction of it meaning that even if a ‘scene’ was only three lines long the actors would have to be in different positions. It was a matter of staging each scene and having costumes so that the

audience could better understand what was happening but it made it significantly harder for, the actors because they were tasked with not only memorizing their lines, but also the order of their blocking and moving back and forth constantly due to the time jumps in script.

The Junior Seminar process was also extremely lacking and led to me signing onto a project that I did not necessarily love. This was extremely frustrating because there was far too much expected of us in such a short amount of time with no forewarning other than talking to graduated alumni. Learning that we should have been thinking about pitching years in advance was news to me and I have found it is significantly harder if you were on a production team because you are too busy giving your all to a production to think about what is coming around the corner. There is a definite lack of awareness of Senior Projects before your Junior year, and if we are to meet certain requirements, it was ridiculous for us to have gotten the handle of it within the 15 weeks that were Junior Seminar.

Overall, this project definitely helped me learn about the production process. What we should and should not be doing; what we should and should not be expecting of ourselves. I fully believe that had it not been for me this show would have fallen apart (and I know Stage Managers are important, but me personally) I have been thanked by the two cast members that put in the most work and we've had numerous discussions about how everything went down and how this show lacked in general. I also really enjoyed working on this project because it is something that genuinely means a lot to me now. I have a huge amount of respect for Martyna Majok as a playwright, and as a person. I truly enjoyed getting to know this work. The more that I read the script the more I came to understand the characters and everything that they were going through and hopefully everything that Martyna hoped to convey.