

DISCOVERY GUIDE

BY

Lynn Nottage

DIRECTED BY

Kate Whoriskey

CENTER
THEATRE
GROUP

A CO-PRODUCTION WITH GOODMAN THEATRE



*This sandwich is my strength.
This sandwich is my victory.
This sandwich is my freedom.*

—Montrellous

Could a truck stop sandwich shop be a shot at redemption? For the kitchen staff at Clyde's, it just might. Struggling to rebuild their lives after serving time in prison, this motley crew of cooks endures heat from their menacing boss as they aspire to create the perfect sandwich.

SETTING

A truck stop sandwich shop, a liminal space
(a place of in-between-ness)
Outside Reading, Pennsylvania

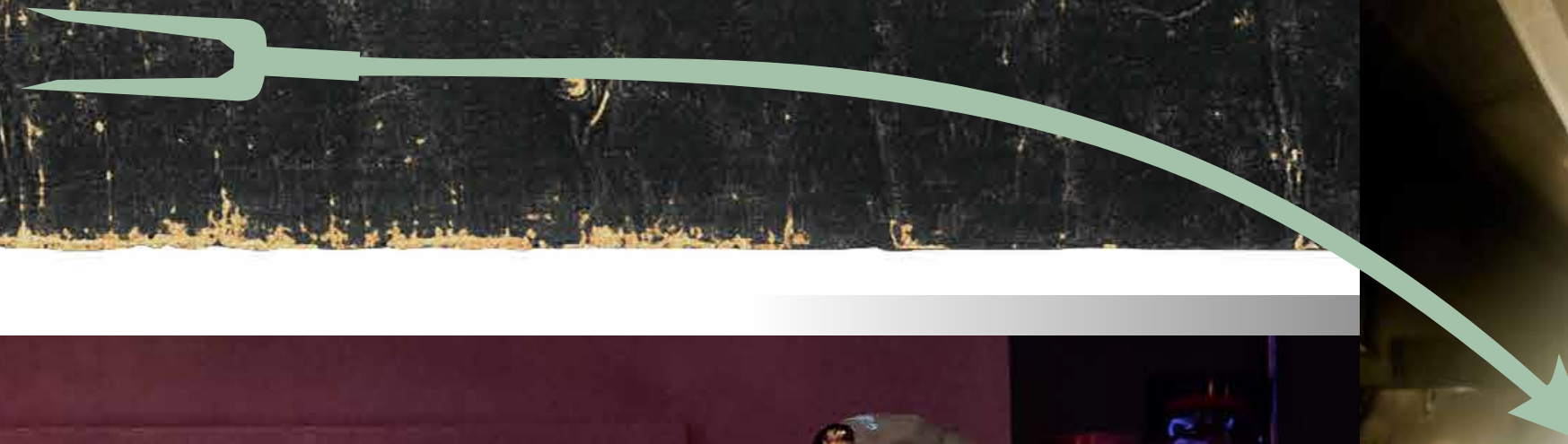
*Cuz if you here, you done something. We
all done something. And we just biding
ourtime 'til we can get to another place.*

—Letitia

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The setting of Lynn Nottage's play *Clyde's* is located outside Reading, Pennsylvania—home to the Susquehannok and Lenapehoking peoples. Center Theatre Group's production of *Clyde's* will take place at the Mark Taper Forum—home to the Tongva and Chumash peoples. Center Theatre Group acknowledges, with deep respect, their memories, their lives, their descendants, and their continued and ancestral stewardship of this land.

MEET THE CHARACTERS



Rafael

late 20s, line cook, gives playboy attitude, though his game is a little lame, a romantic

Your loss, Mama. You're chasing ants, I can teach you to catch fireflies.

—Rafael

Letitia

late 20s, line cook, strong and feisty, single mom, adds a little style to her work ensemble

Back then, I didn't get it... My negativity was legendary. I could pass blame like a magician.

—Letitia

Montrellous

head cook, Buddha-like mentor to the younger kitchen staff, makes a mean ass sandwich with love

I can show you how to make it, but... Where my hand leads, may not be where your hand takes you.

—Montrellous

Jason

late 20s, line cook, moody, white supremacist tats on his face, not a big talker

I don't bother you, you don't bother me.

—Jason

Clyde

sandwich shop boss, all steel, the gatekeeper

Is there more you wanna say, or can I get on with my life?

—Clyde

CREATIVE ARTISTS

Playwright Lynn Nottage



The key to writing comedy is telling the truth.

—Lynn Nottage

The plays that I write center people who have been marginalized by circumstance, who the American majority have not necessarily deemed worthy of placing center stage.

Two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Lynn Nottage, writes for both the stage and the screen. She is widely known for her plays *Ruined*, *Sweat*, and *Intimate Apparel*, among many others. Her breadth of work includes performance installations and librettos for musicals and opera.

Nottage grew up in Brooklyn, NY, and enrolled as a pre-med student on scholarship at Brown University. After bombing an organic chemistry test, she decided to change her major and worked three jobs so that she could stay in school and pursue theater. She later attended graduate school and became just the second Black woman to graduate from Yale School of Drama as a playwright.

Amid the trauma of the AIDS crisis and crack epidemic, Nottage was not yet convinced that her creative work was of enough service. Seeking to make a genuine impact, Nottage worked as a press officer for Amnesty International, a global organization focused on human rights. She says, “In many ways the time I spent with Amnesty International became my second graduate school. I arrived at a total synthesis of the human rights brain and the writing brain. I thought, I can do both things.”

Director Kate Whoriskey



I feel like we grow and develop through the telling of stories, and for me that's what theater is and that's why theater matters.

—Kate Whoriskey

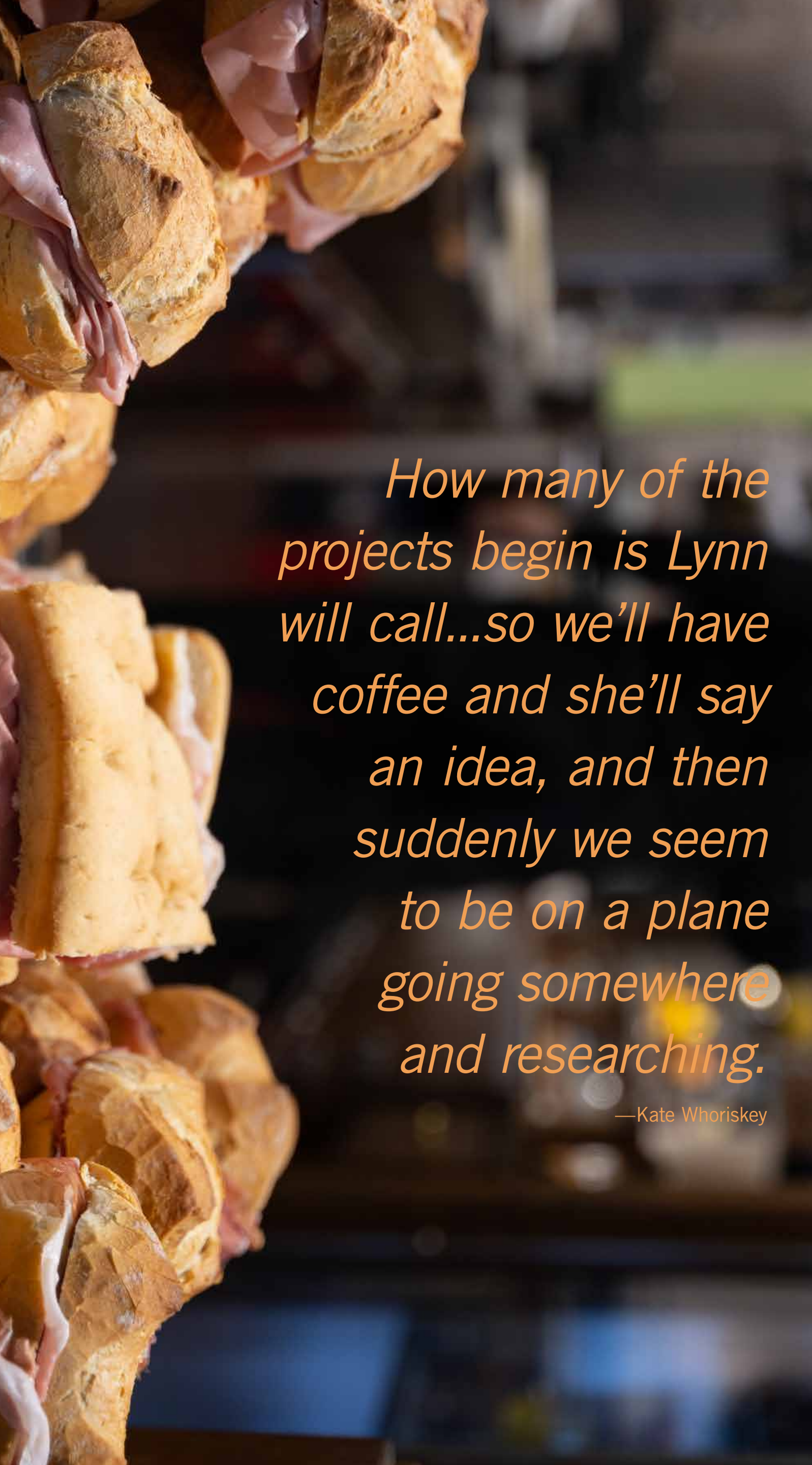
Kate Whoriskey, is a New York-based director of theater and opera. She has directed on Broadway, off-Broadway, regionally, and internationally. Whoriskey grew up in Massachusetts, majored in theater at NYU, and completed the graduate directing program at Harvard.

At age 16, her interest in the Vietnam War sparked her to interview former soldiers at a local VA hospital. Her teachers and friends performed the edited conversations, and parents—some who had been hippies and some who had been soldiers—engaged in discussion after the show. As a result, Whoriskey realized that theater has the ability to generate meaningful conversations.

Since 2003, Kate Whoriskey and Lynn Nottage have collaborated on several different creative works. They were first introduced by a producer who thought the two would make a great combination. Whoriskey's interest in theater that has political and social relevance, and a bold imagination seems a perfect match for Nottage's brave, new explorations.

It's exciting when you're working with a living playwright because you're on a team together.

Whoriskey recently received the Drama League Award for Best Direction of a Play for her Broadway production of *Clyde's*.



How many of the projects begin is Lynn will call...so we'll have coffee and she'll say an idea, and then suddenly we seem to be on a plane going somewhere and researching.

—Kate Whoriskey



CREATING *CLYDE'S*

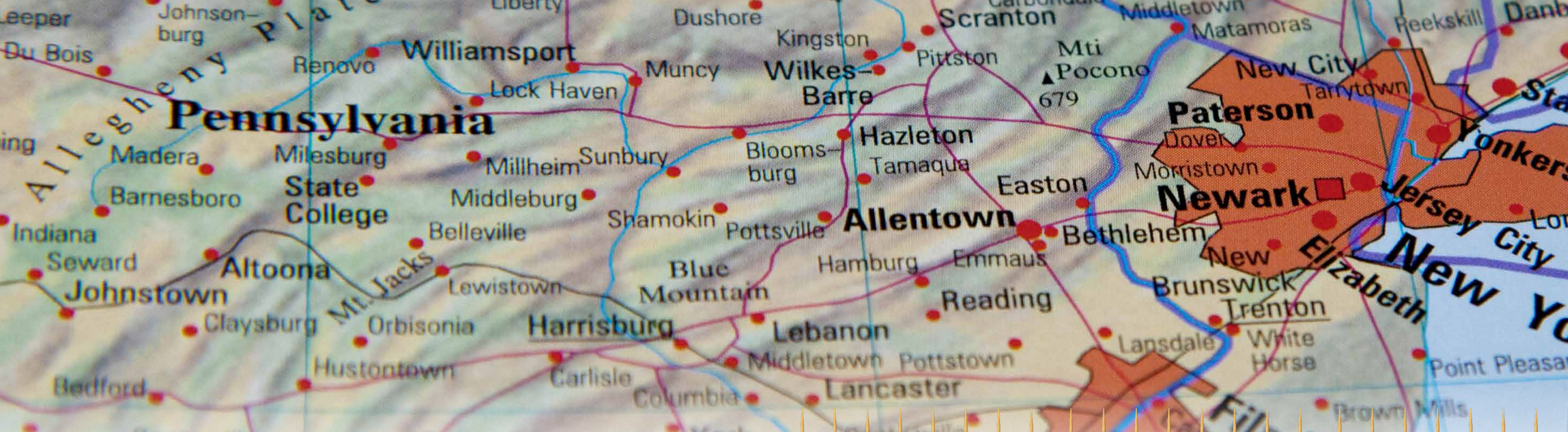
In 2012, Nottage began to explore Reading, Pennsylvania as a microcosm of what was happening in America. At the time, it was the poorest city in the nation. *Sweat*, *This Is Reading*, and *Clyde's* grew out of her team's interviews with residents there over the course of two years.

For the 2019 debut of *Clyde's* at the Guthrie, the cast and creative team visited All Square, a Minneapolis sandwich shop that employs individuals who have been formerly incarcerated. They drew inspiration for the direction of the play from conversations with All Square's staff.

Although not a sequel, *Clyde's* picks up where *Sweat* left off and is the next chapter for one of the characters, Jason. Together, the plays *Sweat* and *Clyde's*, along with the performance installation "This is Reading", explore the hardships and hopes of those left behind by social change.

I'm a playwright, and I'm developing a piece that is creative and not going to be solely based on their lives but inspired by conversations that we have.

—Lynn Nottage



MASS INCARCERATION

Really it's about second chances. It's about people healing from incarceration.

—Kate Whoriskey

The United States of America incarcerates more people than any other country in the world. Over 2 million people are currently locked up in facilities that include state and federal prisons, local jails, and juvenile detention centers.

In *Clyde's*, we get a glimpse into the lives of returning citizens, people who are attempting to reintegrate into society after having served time in prison.

The new-found freedom of personal control starkly contrasts with the structure of life behind bars. In prison, daily routines are

predetermined: what time to get up, when to bathe, how to dress, when and what to eat, when to go outside or make a phone call, what time to go to bed. Prison life is alienating and often fraught with distrust, suspicion, violence, and boredom. Some inmates turn to prison gangs for protection. These gangs are often determined by race or ethnicity, and tattoos are a way to mark membership.

Across state prisons, incarceration rates are 5 times higher for Black Americans and 1.3 times higher for Latinx Americans than for White Americans, and many returning citizens return to marginalized neighborhoods upon their release.

And you know what they say, cuz you left prison don't mean you outta prison. But, remember everything we do here is to escape that mentality.

—Montrellous

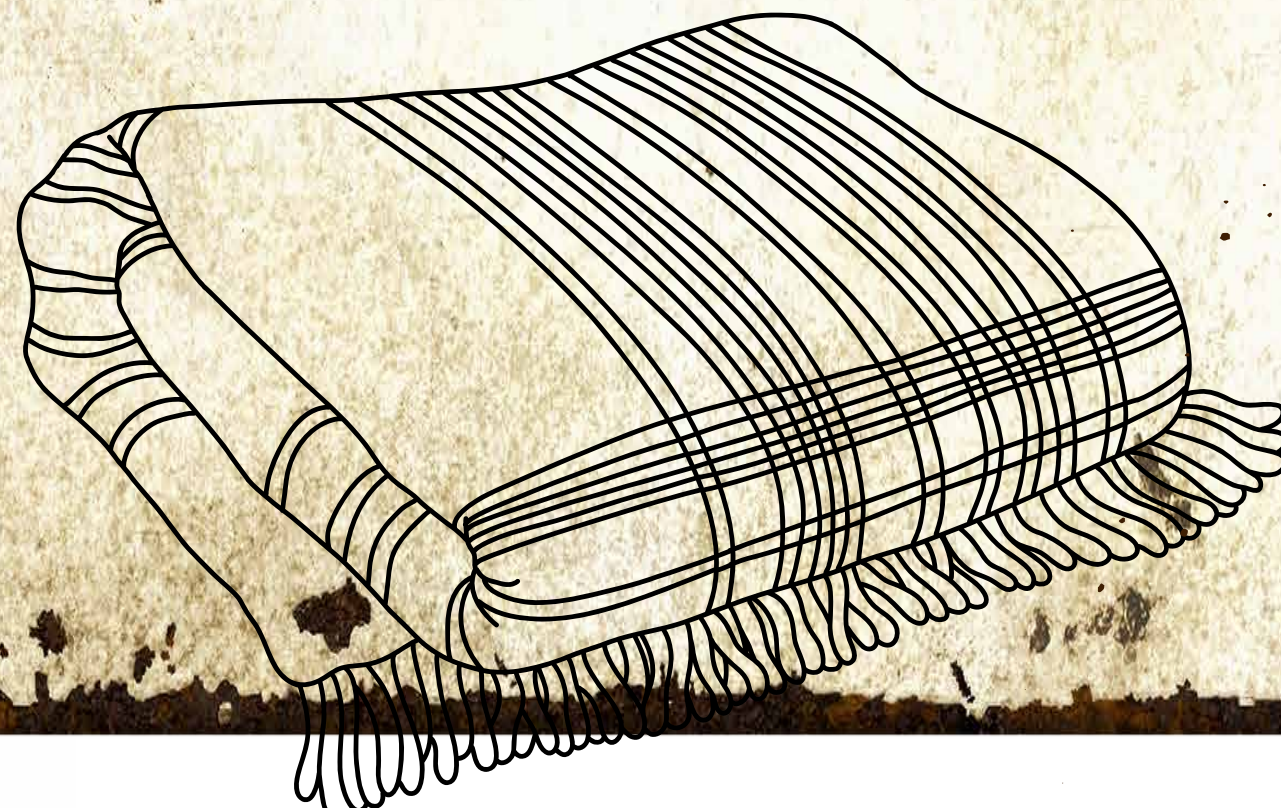
REENTRY: LIFE AFTER PRISON

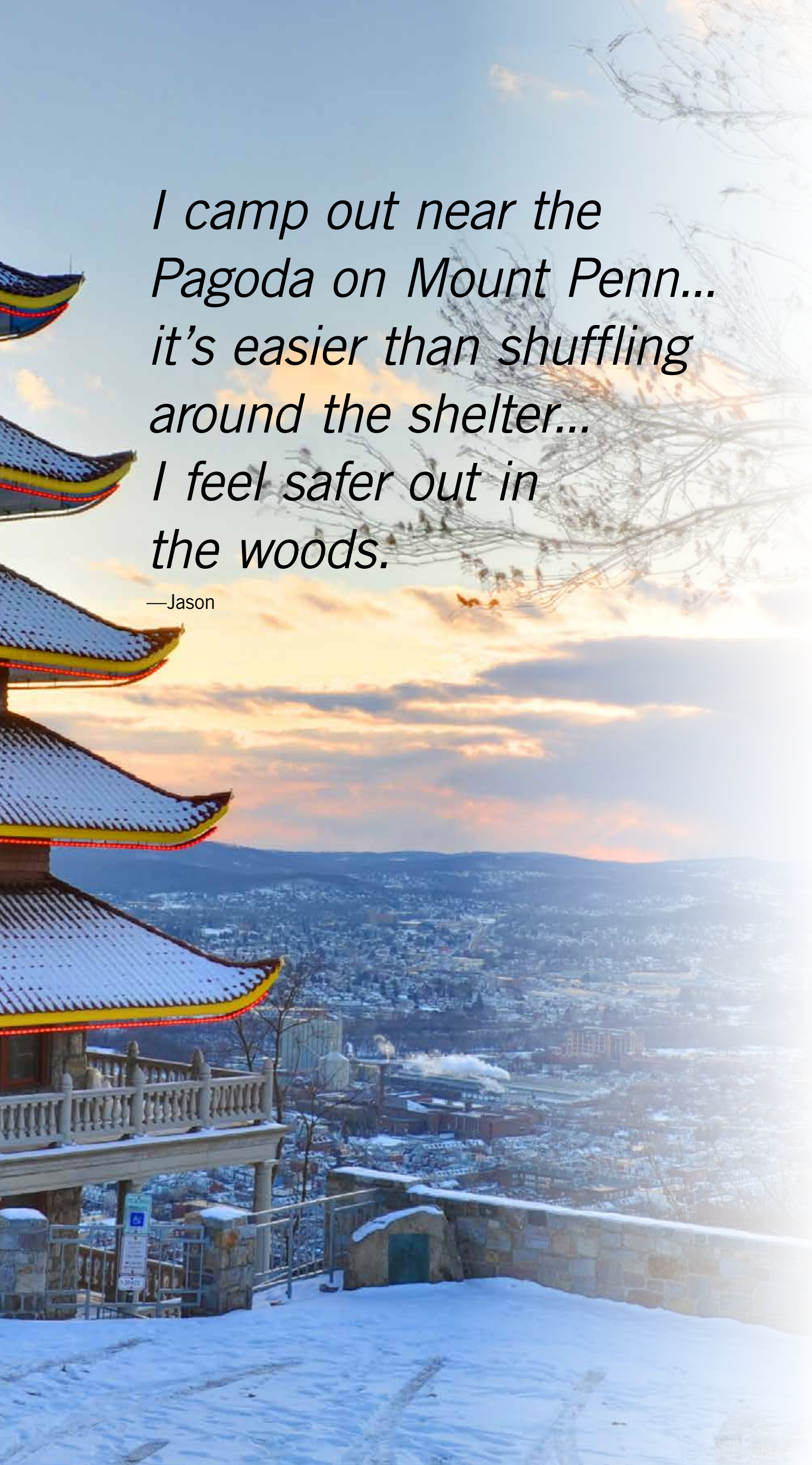
Upon release, people leaving prison and returning to their communities often face numerous barriers to reintegration. Such obstacles can make re-establishing their lives in society an overwhelming endeavor.

Many are subject to certain rules established by community supervision programs, such as parole. Monitored by a correctional officer, a person on parole can be sent back to prison if they violate the conditions of their parole or commit a new crime.

Of the over 600,000 people who are released from state and federal prisons annually, about two-thirds are re-arrested within three years and more than half return to prison.

Challenges of reentry such as poverty, mental health conditions, and substance abuse can lead reentrants to resort to illicit behavior. Restrictive policies and the stigma of a criminal record often limit access to basic needs such as **housing, employment, food, education, and support.**





*I camp out near the
Pagoda on Mount Penn...
it's easier than shuffling
around the shelter...
I feel safer out in
the woods.*

—Jason

HOUSING

CONVICTION is an adjudication of guilt and includes determinations by a court, a district judge, or a trial judge, or a plea of nolo contendere (no contest) that result in a fine, sentence or probation.

For this question disregard: offenses committed before your 18th birthday which were adjudicated under a Youth Offender Law, and any charges which have been expunged by a court or for which you have completed an Accelerated Rehabilitative Disposition Program.

For a variety of reasons, many reentrants do not have a loving home to return to after leaving prison. Support from family may not be an option. Instead, they may seek temporary refuge in homeless shelters, halfway houses, or low-cost rentals.

The cost of renting or buying a home can be prohibitive for someone already struggling to find a job with a living wage. In addition, housing complexes may run background checks and choose not to rent to someone with a criminal record.

Furthermore, a criminal record can make a person ineligible for public and supportive housing programs, which leads to increased risk of homelessness and housing instability.



EMPLOYMENT

Have you ever convicted of a criminal offense? OR Are you now under charges for a criminal offense? OR Have you ever forfeited bond or collateral in connection with a criminal offense?

Yes No

Laws, rules, and policies make many jobs off-limits to those who have served time behind bars. In a number of states, employers may cite a criminal record or lack of work history as grounds for not hiring someone who has been formerly incarcerated. Consequently, many reentrants do not receive a fair chance at employment.

Returning citizens who serve longer prison terms often encounter a knowledge gap in technology such as smartphones and computers. This unfamiliarity makes it harder to obtain the documentation required for employment (eg. driver's license, birth

certificate, or social security card). In addition, a lack of reliable transportation can prevent reentrants from finding and keeping a job.

Due to more open hiring practices, certain sectors, such as food and construction industries, may be more likely to hire returning citizens. However, reentrants may have to work multiple jobs in order to earn a living wage.

Ain't nobody gonna hire us, and she knows it.

—Letitia



FOOD

Research suggests that people who have been formerly incarcerated are twice as likely than the general population to experience food insecurity. That is, returning citizens, and their children, are at especially high risk of not having access to healthy food.

Reentrants may have a hard time affording food to eat; they may rely on food pantries to survive. Eligibility restrictions, application processing, and time limits can limit their access to government food assistance programs. In addition to the physical consequences, inadequate nutrition can have a significant impact on a person's mental and emotional wellbeing. Without this basic need met, returning citizens struggle to survive.

I just wanted to make sure that you feed Carmen...No Macdonalds bullshit this time. Real food. Fruit. Vegetables.

—Letitia

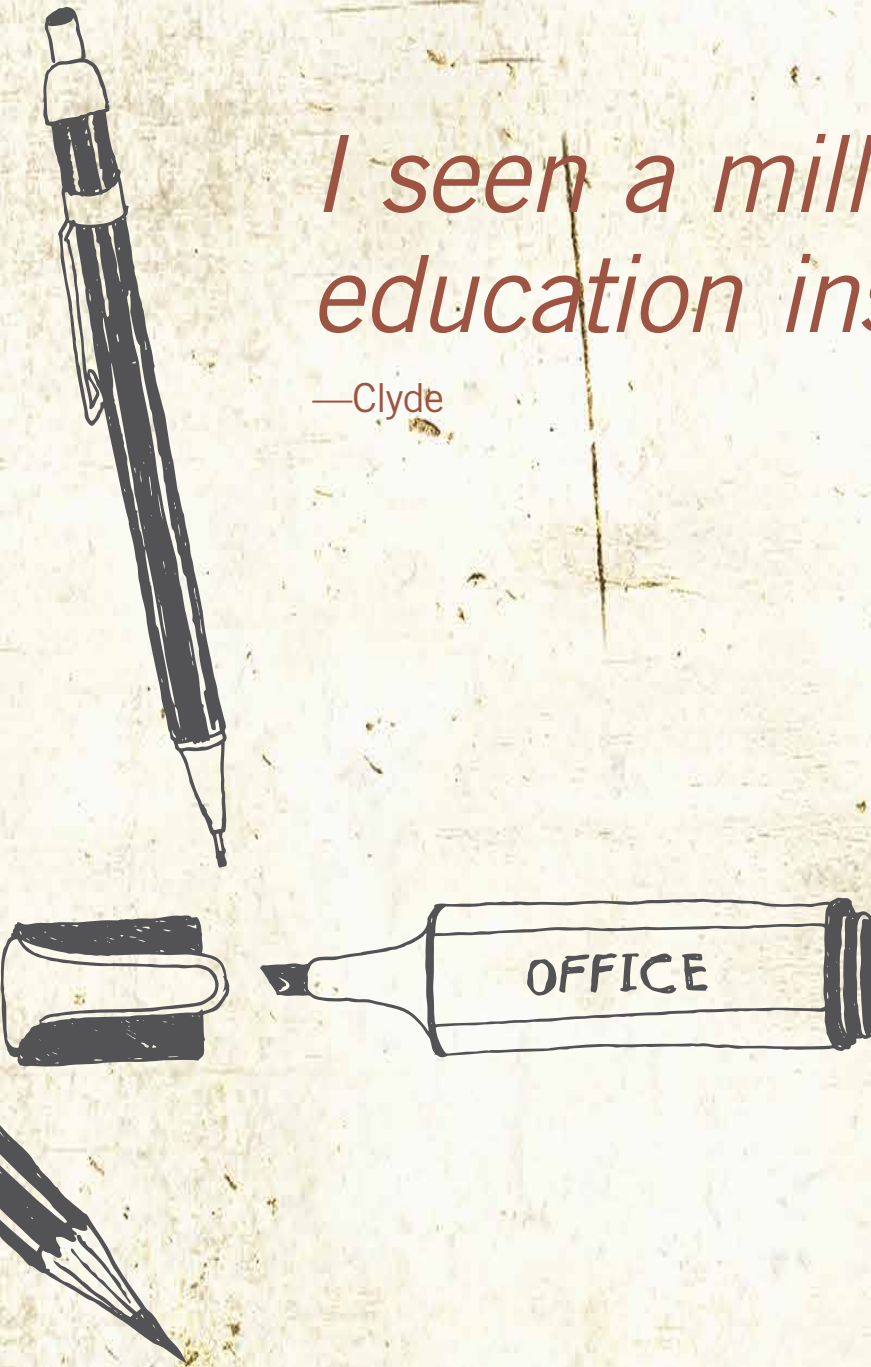
EDUCATION

I seen a million guys like you. You get a little education inside, think you can buck the system...

—Clyde

In prison, 40 percent of inmates do not have a high school degree or GED. Educational programs in prison can help inmates attain higher education and vocational training that can later increase their likelihood of finding a job; however, these resources are limited.

As a result of their incarceration, many individuals do not qualify for federal and state educational grants. College admission applications commonly ask about a person's criminal record, which poses yet another barrier to enrollment. Lacking access to educational opportunities, reentrants are less likely to have the skills and qualifications needed to compete in the job market.





SUPPORT

This kitchen, these ingredients, these are our tools. We have what we need. So, let's cook.

—Montrellous



Reentry programs provide vital resources and opportunities to support returning citizens' successful return to their communities. Programs offer services such as mentoring, counseling, technology and job skill training, substance abuse treatment, family reunification, legal aid, and food and housing assistance.

Here in Los Angeles, various organizations are working to help people who have been formerly incarcerated transition back into society. For instance, Homeboy Industries—the largest gang rehabilitation and reentry



program in the world—serves thousands of people every year. Also of note, the Community Entry Center at DOORS, celebrated its grand opening in 2019 and marks a collaborative effort between the Los Angeles County Probation Department, the Office of Diversion & Reentry, numerous community-based organizations, and other County agencies.

Support systems such as these are crucial to reentrants' futures as healthy, productive members of society.

*Folks aren't the
sum total of the
worst thing that
they've ever done.*

—Lynn Nottage

SECOND CHANCES

Imagine if you were only ever known by the worst thing you've ever done. The characters in *Clyde's* are striving to restart their lives in society, but that same society refuses to acknowledge their growth and capacity for change. Even they themselves struggle to forgive their own discretions.

Rafael

*We've been there.
We've all done things
we ain't proud of.*

Letitia

Word.

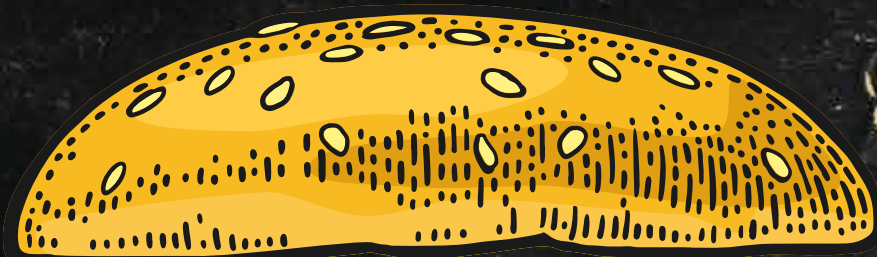
Montrellys

*But, we ain't bound
by our mistakes.*



- Have you ever given someone a second chance, or have you ever been given a second chance?
- Is it easier for you to forgive others or to forgive yourself for mistakes?
- Do you think everybody deserves a second chance?

SANDWICHES



My Favorite Part



Of Writing [Clyde's]



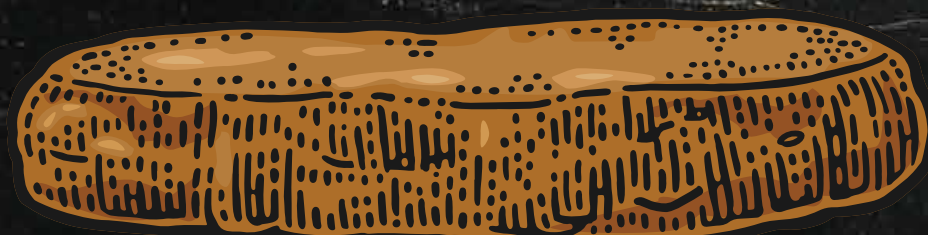
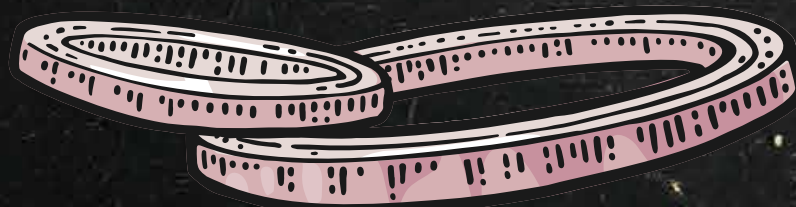
Was Imagining



The Sandwiches.



—Lynn Nottage



You know why I love the sandwich, 'cuz it's a complete meal that you can hold between your fingers. It's the most democratic of all foods. I mean, it's available and accessible to everybody.

—Montrellous

In Clyde's, the kitchen staff each dream up their own renditions of the most sublime sandwich. They combine tried and true combinations with their own new imaginings.

- Do any ingredients sound familiar?
- Are any of them new to you?
- What is your favorite sandwich?



Today's special

Maine lobster, potato roll gently toasted and buttered with roasted garlic, paprika and cracked pepper and truffle mayo, caramelized fennel and a sprinkle of...of...dill. —MONTRELOUS

Curried quail egg salad with mint on oven-fresh cranberry pecan multigrain bread. —MONTRELOUS

Cubano sandwich, with sour pickles, jalapeno aioli and...and sweet onions. —Rafael

Vietnamese sandwich, crisp baguette, barbecue pork-Cilantro, shredded sweet potatoes, a sprinkle of lime and hold for it...horseradish. —Rafael

Baby eggplant parmigiana with black olives, capers and anchovies, what's that sauce called? Yeah. Puttanesca on an olive and rosemary ciabatta. —Rafael

Grilled blue cheese with spinach, habaneros and candied apples. —Rafael

Grilled skirt steak sautéed in butter, thinly sliced, carmelized onions and peach chutney on a cheddar biscuit. —Jason

BREADS

Baguette: a long, thin loaf with a soft inside and crunchy outside

Ciabatta: a slipper-shaped, chewy, white bread with a slightly crispy crust

Focaccia: a spongy flatbread flavored with olive oil and herbs

Multigrain: bread made with more than one type of grain, such as wheat, rye, spelt, barley, millet

Potato roll: a soft and fluffy dinner roll made with a mix of (mashed) potato and wheat flour.



SAUCES, DIPS, AND SPREADS

Aioli: a creamy mixture of garlic, olive oil, and salt

Compote: a sauce made from fruits lightly cooked in water, sugar, and spices, usually served as dessert

Chutney: a condiment made from slow-cooked fruits or vegetables, vinegar, sugar, and spices

Horseradish: a spicy root vegetable with a mustard-like taste, prepared with vinegar and salt; often combined with cream or mayonnaise

Mojo: a marinade composed of olive oil, garlic, onion, oregano, and bitter orange or lime juice

Puttanesca: tomato sauce with garlic, olives, capers, and anchovies

Truffle mayo: mayonnaise infused with truffle (edible fungi that grow underground) oil



SEASONINGS AND GARNISHES

Capers: pea-sized, edible flower buds with a tangy, lemon-olive taste; usually consumed salted or pickled

Cilantro: edible plant leaves with a fresh, citrusy taste; often used to flavor soups and salads

Curry: a warm, earthy blend of spices; usually includes turmeric, cumin, and coriander

Dill: an herb known for its pungent smell and faintly sweet, grassy flavor; pairs well with seafood

Fennel: an aromatic vegetable with a strong black licorice taste

Paprika: a spice made from dried and ground red peppers; can be sweet, hot, or smokey; common in rubs and stews

Rosemary: a fragrant evergreen herb, most often used to season meats such as lamb



*There's too much anger
in your fingers, girl...
Relax. It's all about
the process.*

—Rafael

*Let it go for two minutes,
Tish. Be here and nowhere
else, let whatever you're
feeling become part of
your process, not an
impediment.*

—Montrellous

MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness is the practice of gently focusing your awareness on the present moment. Playwright Lynn Nottage credits meditation for helping her to manage anxiety. In *Clyde's*, Montrellous' sandwich-making could be considered a form of mindfulness. Mindfulness practices can help you manage emotions, pain, and stress.



- How do you practice being present in the moment?
- What are you sensing, thinking, and feeling right now?
- What activity brings you peace, clears your mind, or helps you relax?

We have these characters who seemingly will not get along, and we see them build a community. Through the strength of the community, their individual selves are strengthened.”

—Kate Whoriskey



COMMUNITY

The kitchen staff of *Clyde’s* dream of a better life. They share both that dream and the lived experience of having served time in prison. In solidarity, they establish their own community. Each person brings their own personal flavor to the mix, and together they are able to move toward a better future.

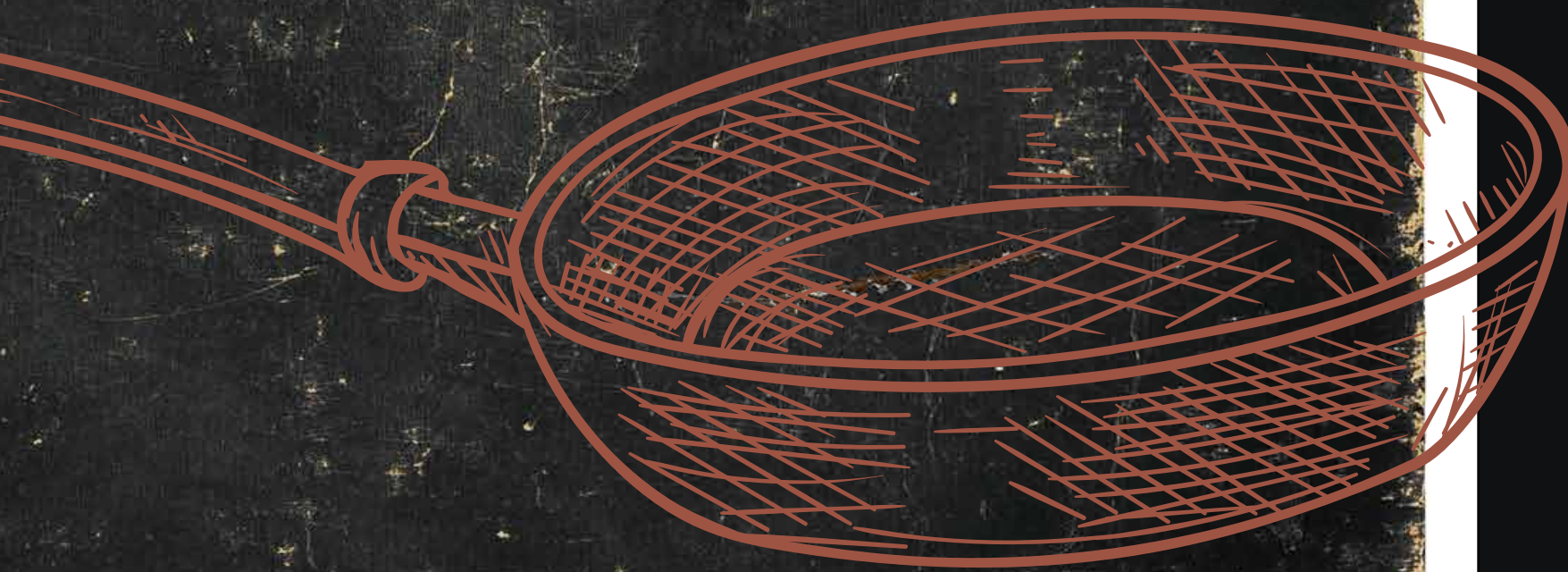
- What communities are you a part of?
- Which community uplifts you? How?
- What individual strength do you bring to your community?

We leave the pain in the pan. We got each other’s backs, that’s how we get back up.

—Rafael

The entire play is about using the imagination to escape your circumstances.

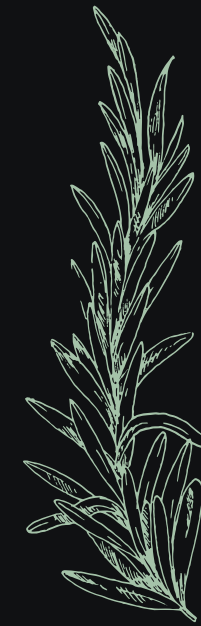
—Lynn Nottage



CREATIVITY

In *Clyde's*, the characters use their collective creativity to achieve the perfect sandwich. Creativity is an essential life skill that relies on imagination. We can use our imaginations not only to escape reality but also to affect the attitudes and actions that shape our reality.

- What is a creative activity that you enjoy?
- How does the creative process affect how you feel?
- What hopes and dreams do you envision for your future?



But, what if we turned this into somethin' we're all proud of? Huh? Something transcendent. Something that defies everyone's expectations.

—Montrellous



STUDENT MATINEE PROJECT FACULTY

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FURTHER RESOURCES

History of the Sandwich
<https://www.pbs.org/food/the-history-kitchen/history-sandwich/>

Sandwich Central: Crafting the Perfect Sandwich
<https://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/packages/sandwich-central>

PBS Newshour *Searching for Justice* Series
<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/tag/searching-for-justice>

Probation and Parole in Pennsylvania
https://www.aclupa.org/sites/default/files/field_documents/aclu-pa-overview_probation_and_parole_in_pa.pdf

National Reentry Resource Center
<https://nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/>

Homeboy Industries
<https://homeboyindustries.org/>

Root and Rebound Reentry Advocates
<https://www.rootandrebound.org/>

A New Way of Life
<https://anewwayoflife.org/>

The Art for Justice Fund and Lynn Nottage on *Clyde's*
https://youtu.be/4SZh_id_R50

Lynn Nottage
<http://www.lynnnottage.com/>

Other selected works by Lynn Nottage:
Poof!

Intimate Apparel

Fabulation, or the Re-Education of Undine Ruined

By the Way, Meet Vera Stark
Sweat

This Is Reading

The Secret Life of Bees

MJ the Musical

She's Gotta Have It #LBD



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