







UPSTAGE CALLBOARD

On The Exhale

By Martín Zimmerman Directed by Leigh Silverman

When a senseless act of violence changes her life forever, a liberal college professor (Tony Award[®] nominee Marin Ireland, *reasons to be pretty*) finds herself inexplicably drawn to the very weapon used to perpetrate the crime-and to the irresistible feeling of power that comes from holding life and death in her hands. Peering down the barrel of a uniquely American crisis, she begins to suspect that when it comes to gun violence, we're all part of the problem.

a note from Artistic Director Todd Haimes

In On the Exhale, Martín creates an exquisitely intimate relationship between audience and character, bringing us on the journey of one woman as she sees her worst fears coming true. What Martín has crafted is both a captivating story and a necessary theatrical exploration of America's relationship to gun violence at the most deeply personal level. He helps us as an audience to grieve the past, survive the present, and confront the future.

One of the things that I think Martín has done so beautifully is to write a play for one actor that never feels like the prototypical "one-person show." It is so layered and complex that you never feel the need for other voices to permeate the world of this piece. It is a true play, just one that happens to have only one character in it. And of course, I feel so lucky to have the remarkable Marin Ireland taking on this challenging role. She is one of the most captivating performers of her generation, and to have her command the stage alone in this play, under the direction of the brilliant Leigh Silverman, is simply thrilling to watch.

I'm also grateful to Martín for his choice to infuse such accessible humanity into a work that tackles a dark subject. Taken as a whole, the questions surrounding this country and its history with guns are, to my mind, utterly overwhelming. But Martín is able to break it down in a way that allows us to connect without shutting down. He considers the physical object of a gun itself, the act of holding one and how that differs from seeing one from the other side. He addresses the feelings of power and fear that the mere image of a gun can bring to the surface. And he holds nothing back either about the consequences of violence or our rituals of grief—in all of their insufficiencies. It is a raw, joyful, tragic, and stunning piece, and one that I am so proud to be sharing with you.



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INTERVIEW WITH PLAYWRIGHT MARTÍN ZIMMERMAN

Education Dramaturg Ted Sod spoke with *On the Exhale* playwright Martín Zimmerman about his work.

Ted Sod: Please give us some background information on yourself: Where were you born? Where were you educated? When did you decide to become a playwright and why?

Martín Zimmerman: I was born in Maryland outside of Washington, D.C. and grew up in a bilingual household. My mother is an immigrant from Argentina and my father is from Baltimore, so I grew up speaking both Spanish and English. Also, the D.C. area is an incredibly diverse area with residents from all over the globe, whether they are refugees or people who work for foreign governments or global nonprofits, so I had friends from literally all over the globe. This is something I suppose I took for granted at the time, but now I understand was a tremendous gift and has informed a lot of my thinking and artistry. I became interested in acting and theatre very late in high school, but when I became interested, I became very interested. I went to undergrad at Duke University, where I studied both economics and theatre. I dabbled in writing a little bit very early in undergrad and then I acted in a new play festival at Duke my freshman year, and I think that turned me onto the idea of writing plays. So I very aggressively embraced playwriting as an undergrad and wrote a ton and was very fortunate to get several of my plays staged during that time. I went straight from Duke to graduate school at the University of Texas at Austin-so I also have an MFA in playwriting.

TS: Since you studied theatre and economics, it sounds like you have both sides of your brain working.

MZ: Yes, and I also think that the economics degree helps inform my understanding of how people are shaped by circumstances. I think economics—and all the social sciences—can illuminate how social forces shape people. That informs my thinking as a writer politically as well; how social forces interact with an individual's psychology to shape the way they behave. Obviously, my mom being an immigrant has also informed the politics of my writing. By that I mean I also try to think globally, cross-culturally in much of my writing.

TS: Will you tell us what inspired you to write *On the Exhale*? Can you talk about your process writing it?

MZ: The initial spark for the play came in the aftermath of the Newtown Sandy Hook shooting and seeing how even something as horrific as that wasn't going to move our national government to take meaningful action on gun control. My frustration and deep anger about that was the seed for the play. Once I have the spark of an idea, I'm always immediately thinking about how the form of that play can be tightly bound to the content of the story I'm telling. I've long been fascinated with the act of firing a weapon and how it is a very aggressive act, but how, to do it well, you need to be incredibly calm, centered, focused. It can be a meditative experience if you do it very well-I've long been fascinated by that paradox. I think that those two things-my anger about gun violence and my fascination with the psychological experience of firing a weapon-converged in my mind. I knew that because the act of firing a weapon is so solitary I wanted the play to be one woman alone onstage in order to replicate that experience. I knew that pretty early on. And, because I knew it would be a one-woman play, the act of writing this piece was very much about being still and



trying to live in this woman's experience moment to moment. Then, as I was actually writing the play, the play became as much about that initial impulse as about how grief can isolate you—especially when you feel unable to grieve with a community. The writing process became about how that tunnel vision of grief can warp the psyche.

TS: Why did you choose not to name the woman who the play is about? MZ: In a lot of my writing I try to embrace a theatrical world that allows many different people to identify with what's happening onstage. I want to give just the right amount of specificity to make the world of the play and the characters vivid, but at the same time, I don't want to give extraneous detail that could shut people out of the world of the play. I feel like too much detail could put a barrier between the character and the audience. I've had a number of readings of the play, and at each one people think that the play takes place in many different geographical locations within the United States. Often, audiences see the town that they live in. I tried to make the play open-ended enough so that the play can contain multiple interpretations and can speak to people in different places.

TS: What kind of research did you have to do?

MZ: I certainly did some research for this play in particular, but a lot of specific research that I did for other plays also informed the writing of this play. I worked on a play for a while that was about soldiers in combat in the Iraq War, and a vital part of that play was about the emotional impact of firing weapons. For another commissioned play I'm currently working on, I have done a lot of research about trauma and

how it impacts the body and the mind—that research was especially helpful in writing this.

TS: How did you deal with writing about the grief of this character? Is that something that you had to explore for yourself?

MZ: I've certainly experienced grief in my life. Most people have. But seeing how people around me respond to deep grief had a greater impact on how I wrote this play than did my own personal experiences of grief. It's important when you're writing a character who is grieving to remember the dramatic fundamentals. I think those fundamentals serve you very well. They force you to constantly remember what the character is trying to accomplish. She is intentional. When a lot of people try to portray grief they will depict a character who is stuck in emotion and not moving with any kind of intention or motivation. This character is intentional and motivated, but grief keeps her from thinking strategically, from thinking in the long term. She's merely following whatever impulse happens to seize her in that moment. That's how her grief shapes her. When trying to write a character who is grieving, it's vital to remember that no one can live forever with such massive emotion weighing down on them. Their body would shut down after a while. One of the shocking things about the body is how people are able to assimilate things into their experience and genuinely function after a while. They may function differently, but they do function. Grief can surge up unexpectedly at any moment, but that doesn't mean someone who is grieving is always consciously aware of their grief. It more subtly tweaks the way that person navigates the world.

TS: Did you always know *On the Exhale* was going to be a play with one actor or did that idea present itself during the writing process? What are the challenges of doing that? What excites you about it?

MZ: I knew from the beginning it would be a one-woman because of the solitary nature of firing a weapon and also because of how being a victim of violence can make you feel isolated, alone. It's hard to write a one-woman play in the sense that I really had to be inside this woman's head. As for the challenges of writing a play with one character, once you've done that heavy lifting, the act of putting words on the page will flow more easily. You're just inside her experience. You don't have to constantly change your way of thinking while writing. Whereas when you're dealing with different characters, you're thinking, okay, well this is how this person sees the world, this is how they would behave, and you're having to leap from one character's experience to the next. We haven't entered rehearsals yet, but one of the things I find exciting about doing a solo play is that it is a much more intimate process. I think everyone is in greater communication because everyone is so vital to the process. It allows every collaborator to be really attentive to everyone else in the room, and that is really exciting to me.

TS: Will you talk us through the development process for *On the Exhale*? How much rewriting did you do?

MZ: The initial spark happened in January or February of 2014. Then I got my first job in TV that March. I knew I wanted to focus on that job while I was in the writers' room, so I just let the idea percolate in my subconscious. Once I was on hiatus from that job, I knew I wanted to write a new play right away. It was very important to me to maintain my practice as a playwright. So I wrote the first draft in the Fall of 2014. Then I had an in-house workshop at Goodman Theatre during the spring of 2015, and then I had a public reading there in November of 2015. I had a reading at Roundabout Underground in February 2016 and a reading at the Ojai Playwrights Conference this past August. I had another reading at the Alley Theatre in September. Readings are a shorter process in terms of working on things, and there isn't a ton of rewriting—it's about gauging the audience reaction and assessing what you've learned about the play afterwards. I made the most substantial revisions during those first two workshops at the Goodman, and the workshop at the Ojai Playwrights Conference was more about trying to determine how the play will function theatrically. But I'm always open to rewriting.

TS: What do you look for when you collaborate with a director?

MZ: I look for people who are humane collaborators, who are very attentive to everyone in the process. Directors who can work with different aesthetics. As a writer, I try not to live in the same aesthetic world, I try to do very different things from play to play, so working with directors who can do the same is very important to me. I also look for directors who understand what makes theatre unique as an art form and know how to exploit the unique advantages of liveness.

TS: What qualities does the actress need to play this role?

MZ: Tremendous confidence. The character is very self-assured, and she has a great strength—she does so much by herself. She's very independent. You need to have an actor whose instinct is not to lean into the emotion—that's a great temptation when portraying grief. Part of the strength of this character is the self-assuredness to say, "No, there are parts of my emotional life that you don't get. They're just mine." I think that's a very important quality. From a technical standpoint, an actor playing this role needs the ability to really shape text—shape it classically—as you would have to do in playing Shakespeare.

TS: What advice do you have for a young person who wants to write for the theatre?

MZ: Writers often get told to start from a place of writing what they know. That's something I haven't actually done. To me the writing process has been about finding stories I can viscerally identify with that are also in some way outside of my personal experience. This approach then forces me to research rigorously, which helps keep my writing specific. I think it is important to try and tell stories that are alien to your experience. It's a scary thing to do—I won't deny it—but I think it's good to be scared. I think you should embrace that terror, use it to motivate yourself to be incredibly specific in your research, to be humane and gentle in how you represent characters. Writing plays in order to step outside yourself and learn is a way to sustain a lifelong practice.



GUNS IN AMERICA

On the Exhale taps into a complex and divisive issue of American politics-and American daily life: a civilian's right to own and carry a gun, and the government's responsibility to regulate the system that allows a civilian to do so. By household, gun ownership in America is on the decline. In 1977, more than half of American households owned a gun; today, the number is closer to one-third. But one sector of gun ownership has spiked (or at least spiked in documentation): since concealed carry laws were repealed or relaxed in multiple states over the past two decades, permits to carry concealed weapons have more than doubled, from around 5 million permits in the 1980s to an estimated 12.8 million today. And after certain events-mass shootings, terrorist attacks, and talk of gun control-gun sales see a major upswing. This is in part because people want to protect themselves; in part because they fear they'll be unable to do so if gun restrictions are enacted.

Gun violence in America occurs at unrivaled rates. According to data published in *The American Journal of Medicine*, in 2010, among 25 populous high-income nations, "90% percent of women, 91% of children aged 0 to 14 years, 92% of youth aged 15 to 24 years, and 82% of all people killed by firearms were from the United States." For more recent data, the Gun Violence Archive is a helpful resource; the website collects data from over 2,000 sources daily to track gun injuries and deaths in the U.S. As of late December 2016, there were 14,807 deaths (not including suicides, which number 22,000) and 30,235 injuries. Both statistics marked an uptick from previous years; in 2014, there were 12,547 deaths and 23,007 injuries; in 2015, 13,473 deaths and 27,025 injuries.

> A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed. **Amendment II to the U.S. Constitution**

And people keep buying guns. America has the most firearms per capita in the world. And in 2016, Black Friday gun shopping reached an all-time high: the FBI processed more background checks (185,713) for gun purchases on the Friday after Thanksgiving than they'd processed on any day since the instant check system was launched in 1998. Gun manufacturer stocks actually experienced a slump immediately after the election of Donald Trump; gun-friendly candidates aren't great for gun sales. But a combination of

factors—fears or unknowns about Trump's presidency plus discounted guns (some shops had stockpiled large quantities of inventory, assuming a spike in sales after a Clinton victory)—led to a belated sales boon. The gun industry is just that—an industry—and its success depends upon continuous sales. Since well-cared-for guns can last decades (or longer) and gun ownership in America is becoming less common, gun manufacturers must find new ways to make sales, whether by convincing first-time buyers that a gun is a necessary purchase or by courting existing gun owners with a new make, model, or sense of urgency. Today, statistics suggest that the latter business model is the more successful. Gun manufacturing rates have just about doubled in recent years, from nearly 5.5 million in 2010 to nearly 10.9 million in 2013 (the most recent data available). And in 2013, only about 400,000 of those 10.9 million guns were exported. Today, gun owners own an average of eight guns.

WHO SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO PURCHASE A GUN?

Federal law draws the line at a felony conviction or an involuntary commitment for inpatient treatment for mental illness. Some other factors—a documented history of domestic abuse without conviction, voluntary treatment for mental illness—are not yet a prohibiting factor for gun purchase. Mental illness has become a popular scapegoat for gun violence, largely due to high-profile mass shootings that were perpetrated by shooters with a history of mental illness. Of course, it's logical that people with a history of mental illness who also show risk factors for violence, towards themselves or others, should be banned from gun purchase. But the implementation of these limitations can be difficult. A 2015 study published in the American Journal of Public Health points out that, "On the aggregate level, the notion that mental illness causes gun violence stereotypes a vast and diverse population of persons diagnosed with psychiatric conditions and oversimplifies links between violence and mental illness. Notions of mental illness that emerge in relation to mass shootings frequently reflect larger

cultural issues that become obscured when mass shootings come to stand in for all gun crime and when 'mentally ill' ceases to become a medical designation and becomes a sign of violent





threat." Additionally, focusing on mental illness as the most significant predictor of gun violence (which, statistically, it is not) puts mental health professionals in a position to be the primary regulators of gun ownership—a nearimpossible responsibility.

WHAT STEPS SHOULD A PERSON HAVE TO TAKE TO PURCHASE A GUN?

As of 2013, 12 states required gun purchasers to obtain some kind of permit or license before buying a gun (though not all 12 required permits/licenses for both rifles and handguns). Though not a highly visible component of the gun debate, permits, which require gun purchasers to first make contact with law enforcement, rather than going directly to a dealer, do have a significant impact on gun violence. Connecticut's gun homicide rate fell 40% in the ten years after the state began requiring permits. By contrast, Missouri's gun homicide rate increased by 25% in the three years after the state stopped requiring permits. Background checks, too, are an important limiting factor for gun purchase, but they are not federally required for private sales (including gun show sales, online sales, or family gifts). An overwhelming majority of Americans (around 90%) support an expansion of background checks. In 2013, two senators with an "A" rating from the NRA (one a Democrat, one a Republican) proposed a bill that would close loopholes in federal background check law; the bill failed on the Senate floor.

> Your physical safety is up to you, as it really always has been. Jeff Cooper, Principles of Personal Defense

ASSUMING THEY MEET FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS, WHAT KIND OF GUNS SHOULD PEOPLE BE ALLOWED TO BUY?

Since a federal ban went into effect in 1986, citizens are not allowed to buy machine guns. However, after a federal ban on assault weapons instituted in 1994 expired in 2004, they are allowed to buy semi-automatic rifles, which, with the addition of high-capacity ammunition magazines, mimic the appearance of machine guns—and become more lethal. These weapons are often referred to as "assault rifles." Demands for stricter gun control often call for a ban on these weapons, but many experts argue that semiautomatic weapons (a category which also includes many handguns, though they receive less attention than rifles) have come to occupy an outsize role in the gun debate. A 2004

Department of Justice study found that the 10-year federal ban on assault weapons didn't appear to have an impact on nationwide gun crimes or casualties, and only a fraction of annual gun homicides are committed with assault rifles. The nationwide focus on assault rifles, like the focus on mental illness, is largely due to the prevalence of mass shootings (incidents in which four or more people are injured and/or killed) in the US, many of which were committed by gunmen using assault rifles. While mass shootings have come to occupy a prominent position in public discourse-and are an important impetus towards gun control reform-it's important to remember that they are only a small percentage of the nearly 60,000 gun incidents each year. As New Yorker staff writer Evan Osnos writes in "Making a Killing: The Business and Politics of Selling Guns," "Most of the time, when Americans shoot one another, it is impulsive, up close, and apolitical." Many incidents of gun violence can be tied to crime or gang activity, everyday arguments, and domestic violence disputes. A cohesive effort towards gun control must take these common scenarios into account-and must consider that some of the most consistent demographic factors in gun violence-race and socioeconomic status-are often the least-discussed.

Guns stand in for a whole range of values — individualism, strength, American exceptionalism — that many gun owners hold dear. Tell a gun owner that he cannot be trusted to own a firearm particularly if you are an urban pundit with no experience around guns — and what he hears is an insult. Dan Baum, "The Price of Gun Control"

ONCE THEY'VE BOUGHT THE GUN, WHERE AND HOW SHOULD CIVILIANS BE ABLE TO CARRY AND USE IT?

All 50 states allow concealed carry, meaning that civilians are allowed to carry their guns out-of-sight on public property. Some states also allow open carry, which means civilians can carry guns in plain sight, though critics have argued that exposed weapons make other civilians feel unsafe and complicate police response in the event of a true gun threat. Restrictions on concealed carry policy vary by state: in some states, you must have a permit to carry the weapon. In others, you are not permitted to carry the weapon on certain types of property, including universities. As of 2015, eight states had passed laws that allowed concealed weapons to be carried, by both students and faculty, on college campuses.•

INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR LEIGH SILVERMAN

Education Dramaturg Ted Sod spoke with *On the Exhale* director Leigh Silverman about her work.

Ted Sod: Why did you decide to direct *On the Exhale*? What do you feel the play is about? Does the play have personal resonance for you, and if so, how?

Leigh Silverman: I think Marin Ireland is one of the best performers that I have ever had the joy of working with. She and I have done three shows together. Martín Zimmerman is a writer I've never worked with before, and I am honored to direct his first New York premiere. His intelligence and poetry radiate off the page and made it impossible to say no to this project. I do feel very personally connected to the material, and the subject matter is certainly essential right now.

TS: Would you say *On the Exhale* is looking into one woman's psyche, or is it more than that?

LS: I would say it's an exploration or meditation of one woman's journey to discovery and understanding.

TS: I know you're just starting rehearsals, but how do you understand Marin's character? How would you describe her?

LS: She is an Everywoman. She's a complicated woman who is learning and trying to reach beyond her current circumstances.

TS: What about the grief factor? Is that important?

LS: She's experienced unimaginable tragedy, but she's not even at the grieving stage yet. Something else happens first, and the play explores that moment before the grief.

TS: One thing I love about this character is that she seems to lead with her intelligence. Do you agree with that?

LS: Absolutely. She's fiercely smart and amazing. She's a very proactive character.

TS: What is the most challenging part of directing a one-person play? Will you give us a sense of your process as a director?

LS: There's an overall emotional ride we go on with this play. The challenge of rehearsing it is if we don't want to do the whole thing, how do you get on a ride half-way through—because it's such a taut emotional piece. Really, the trick of rehearsing it is a technical one, which is how to explore the overall arc of the play while working out the finer points without having to do <u>all</u> of it <u>all</u> day long.

As a director, it's rarely my job to personally experience the play the same way an actor does. Instead, my job is to stand outside and guide the process in a rigorous and hopefully artistically satisfying and challenging way for my collaborators and then the audience. It is my job to always have perspective. How the process works is mysterious and different with each project. Every process is a snowflake, and they each require slightly different ways of managing the artistic and technical requirements. That's where the magic is. And directorial craft.



TS: You have a reputation for doing new work. How do you go about working with a playwright on a new play?

LS: Martín and I met for the first time on the first day of rehearsal, and I had never heard the play before. It's kind of like marrying someone on the first date. I usually spend many, many years developing a play—sometimes three years, sometimes five years, sometimes more—and so the fact that I am walking into the rehearsal room never having heard the play before is very unusual and quite exciting.

Each writer is different. The way I talk to Martín is different from somebody like David Henry Hwang or Lisa Kron—writers who I've worked on three or more shows with, and whom I have a much longer, deeper experience with. I will usually ask a lot of questions and hear what the writer intended and sometimes I'll say, "That's really interesting, that's not what I see here," and then we talk about whether it might be performative or if it's a writing question or if I am understanding it correctly. And usually, if the writer is engaged in the process, we find a solution. Sometimes I will have a very strong point of view and I'll say, "Let me tell you how I experience this moment" or if I am looking for a new line or a cut I will say something like, "Might I audition something for you?" I really try to ask permission before suggesting big. That's just respectful. Sometimes not, and the director has to know what to say when, and when to push and when to step back.

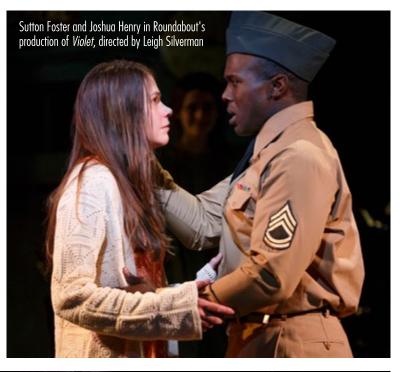
TS: The Underground space is very intimate. Are you familiar with it? LS: I am. What's challenging about it is finding ways to turn the intimacy into a virtue, if you will.

TS: What advice would you give to a young person who wants to direct for the theatre?

LS: See a lot of theatre, think about what interests you, what kind of work you want to do. Develop your leadership skills and by that I mean how to manage big groups of people and get them to joyfully and enthusiastically do what you want. In the professional world, assist people and sit in rehearsal rooms where you can watch people who know what they're doing. And then direct all the time—direct in the privacy of your own living room or in small theatres or at school or wherever, so that you're making your own work. No one is going to offer you that opportunity when you are first starting out. You have to be someone who can proactively make things happen.

TS: What else are you working on now?

LS: I've just finished directing a revival of *Sweet Charity* for the New Group with Sutton Foster. I'm directing a new play by Madeleine George entitled *Hurricane Diane*, which will be at Two River Theater in Red Bank, New Jersey and Ethan Lipton's show called *The Outer Space* at the Public Theater.•





GUNS ON CAMPUS

SPOTLIGHT ON VIRGINIA TECH

On April 16, 2007, one of America's deadliest mass shooting incidents occurred on the campus of Virginia Polytechnic Institute in Blacksburg, Virginia. Student Seung-Hui Cho shot and killed 32 people and wounded 17 others in two separate attacks, before killing himself. Cho was found to have a troubled history of mental health that had not been adequately addressed or disclosed by the University.

The official review panel survey, known as the Massengill Report, included in-depth inquiry of the shooter's mental health and mistakes made by both the college and the state that allowed this event to happen. It described "major gaps" in the mental health system that "prevent individuals from getting the psychiatric help when they are getting ill, during the need for acute stabilization, and when they need therapy and medication management during recovery." The Massengill Report offered recommendations to universities about their responsibility to identify and address mental illness and protect the wider student body from troubled individuals.

One year after the shooting, a study of U.S. campuses found that 64% of schools were paying "greater attention and respect" to the needs of security and safety. Mental health of the campus community became a higher priority for college administrators. Research by psychologists demonstrated that campus shootings result in post-traumatic stress disorder for school personnel, including teachers and administrators, in addition to students, and recommended that everyone impacted by such events receive counseling or treatment.

The Virginia Tech shootings ignited a national debate about the right to carry weapons on college and other school campuses. Gun control proponents pointed at the ease with which a mentally unsound individual was able to purchase two semi-automatic pistols, despite state laws that should have prevented such purchase.

The Massengill Report recommended state legislation to allow college campuses to regulate the possession of firearms and went on to recommend campus gun bans, "unless mandated by law." The report also recommended wider gun control measures such as stronger background check requirements for all private firearms sales, including those at gun shows. In 2008, Governor Tim Kaine attempted to enact a law requiring background checks. Less than a



year after the tragedy, despite passionate support from survivors of the event, the bill was defeated by a bipartisan committee of Virginia's State Senate. However, Kaine did work with the legislature to close a loophole that had allowed the shooter to buy a gun even though a judge had declared him mentally ill two years earlier.

Opponents of gun control asserted that the school's gunfree "safe zone" policy prevented students and faculty from being armed and able to defend themselves or stop the killer. In addition to increased advocacy for guns on campuses by the National Rifle Association, the event spurred student gun advocates to organize. A nationwide group, Students for Concealed Carry, started on Facebook and has grown to over 36,000 members today. The student-run group advocates for legal concealed carry on college campuses, as a means of self-defense in incidents like Virginia Tech. Today, SCC works to "push state legislators and school administrators to grant concealed handgun license holders the same rights on college campuses that those licensees currently enjoy in most other unsecured locations."

"Based on current trends, the problem is likely to become much graver over the next decade. It is imperative that lawmakers, policymakers, college administrators, law enforcement and others begin to have a serious dialogue and enact meaningful reforms to address this epidemic and make America's colleges safe again." *Citizens Crime Commission of New York City*



GUNS ON CAMPUS: STATE-BY-STATE

Among the many controversies about guns in U.S. society, the right to carry concealed weapons on school campuses emerged as a point of debate after 2007. While the majority of U.S. public colleges still prohibit guns, the states of Arkansas, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Mississippi, Oregon, Utah, Tennessee, Texas and Wisconsin have passed laws allowing the carrying of firearms on campus premises, including classrooms, dormitories, or parking lots.

Across these states, colleges have differing authority to determine gun policies. For example, Texas still allows each school to determine sensitive areas and buildings where concealed weapons will continue to be prohibited. But the Attorney General of Kansas recently denied a request by the University of Kansas to ban guns on certain parts of campus, such as high security areas containing dangerous materials.•

Learn more about campus guns on a state-by-state basis **HERE**.

THE BIG PICTURE: AN INCRE

AN INCREASE IN CAMPUS SHOOTINGS

A recent study of campus shootings nationwide looked at 190 incidents at 142 colleges between 2001 and 2016, which demonstrated an increasing percentage of campus shootings over time.

Sept 2001 - June 2006: 40 recorded shootings on or near college campuses. Sept 2006 - June 2011: 49 incidents (including Virginia Tech) Sept 2011 - June 2015: 101 incidents (153% increase)

The victims:

- 290 students
- 5 former students

to the school

- 40 college employees
- 77 not associated with the college25 with undetermined relationship

Who were the shooters?

- 59% not associated with the school
- 28% students
- 9% former students
- 4% employees
- 167 people were killed
- 270 people were wounded

12 states experienced more than 5 shooting incidents on or near college campuses. States with the most incidents were Tennessee (14), California (14), Virginia (13), Georgia (13), North Carolina (11) and Florida (11). The increase in incidents was most profound for colleges in states with increased access to guns.

The study conducted by the Citizens Crime Commission of New York City recommends:

- Real reforms must be enacted in order to make America's students safer.
- The Clery Act (requiring colleges that receive federal funding to report criminal offenses) should be amended to require reporting of all shooting incidents occurring on college campuses and incidents involving students near college campuses.
- State legislators should enact common-sense gun laws that make it harder for guns to get into the hands of so many people on or near college campuses (including one-gun-a-month law, training and license requirements, universal background checks, and strict carrying guidelines).
- Closer collaboration between colleges and local law enforcement is needed.
- Increased education for students and parents on the issues.
- U.S. News & World Report and other college-raters should include gun violence statistics in their college rankings to better inform the public.



INTERVIEW WITH ACTRESS MARIN IRELAND

Education Dramaturg Ted Sod spoke with *On the Exhale* actress Marin Ireland about her role.

Ted Sod: Where were you born and educated? Where did you get your training?

Marin Ireland: I was born in Camarillo, California, where the state mental hospital used to be. Now the mental hospital is closed and there's a giant outlet mall. I was super shy as a kid, but my school, which was a progressive Southern California-style elementary school, involved everyone in doing two plays a year, and when I started playing bigger parts in those, it was completely transformative for me. I ended up choosing to go to Idyllwild Arts Academy, an arts boarding school, for the last two years of high school, which was absolutely thrilling, a deeply joyful and rigorous experience. I chose to be part of the first class of the theatre division of The Hartt School at the University of Hartford. We were sharing teachers with Juilliard and Yale. We had a semester in England, a semester of new plays. Probably one of the most potent elements of that time was simply being on a bus ride to and from New York City. I saw so many incredible shows, bought so many rush tickets. I saw Julie Harris and Charles Durning in The Gin Game from the very last row of the balcony. It is etched in my brain forever! I did a ton of summer stock while I was in school, so I was lucky enough to have my Equity card by the time I graduated. I threw all my belongings in my little Honda Accord and drove around to all the theatres in the northeast. I'd call a theatre up, like a maniac, ask to speak to their casting person or associate artistic director and just say, "Hi, I'm an Equity actor! When can I audition for you?" And sometimes it worked. I went to the Equity open call for ART and got cast in Adam Rapp's first professional production, Nocturne. I had no lines, but that show moved to The New York Theatre Workshop, which is what led to me being cast in Caryl Churchill's Far Away. That show changed so much for me.

TS: Did you always know you wanted to be an actor?

MI: When I was younger, I thought I wanted to be a novelist because all I ever did was read books. I don't remember ever making the decision to become an actor. Once I started, there was never anything else. I went after it with every cell in my body.

TS: I have to say your journey as a working actress is fascinating. I don't think people realize how much energy and tenacity it takes.

MI: That's the thing. The few times I've taught, I've tried to talk about how many times I failed, what it feels like getting bad reviews and being rejected. I feel like that's important. I remember when I would watch interviews or go to talkbacks with actors and they would talk about their first big job and I was wondering, how did you even get a meeting with an agent? How did that happen? I didn't have an agent until I got cast in *Far Away*, which was two years in, and I thought I was already a failure. It is a hard, hard road becoming a working actor, and there is no arrival point where the struggle goes away entirely.

TS: Why did you choose to do this role in Martín Zimmerman's *On the Exhale*? What do you think the play is about?

MI: When I did a reading of this play in February of 2016, the world was already in a dangerous place, and it's even worse now. To be



able to use my voice as an interpreter for something that is not only beautiful, but relevant to a broader political conversation—to feel useful in some way while also having the privilege to deliver these exquisite words—is a great honor. I feel enormously grateful. It's really unlike anything I've ever read. It's a new place for me as an artist in many ways: it's surprising and challenging and I love that. I gravitate towards big challenges for sure; I try to push myself to lean into the fear, to step into the unknown. Something that is new and surprising and also meaningful is the holy trifecta for me. It's sacred, special work.

TS: What kind of preparation or research do you have to do before rehearsals begin, in order to play this role?

MI: I usually try to research the writer as much as possible to try to get inside his or her brain. I usually read other plays they've written and try to talk to that writer a lot. Whatever ideas continue to come up as I work on a piece, I always get sparks from that, and that leads to more research. I have been looking at sleepy suburban college campus towns, places affected by gun violence, other specifics that I don't want to give away here. I'm thinking a lot about the fact that this play is written in second person—which speaks to the fact that Martín takes us inside my character's mind. It is such a rare experience to read something in that voice. I've been thinking a lot about that grammatical choice and thinking about other things written in that voice and what that means. I try, at this particular phase, to let the text speak to me.

TS: What do you look for in a director when doing a one-person play?

MI: This is a very scary situation. It's never been just me onstage, so I really was looking for a director who I already trusted. I knew I would be scared to death every day. I didn't want to feel like I had to build trust with anyone new. Leigh Silverman and I worked together on The Beebo Brinker Chronicles-we did that twiceand then we worked together on In the Wake-which was a very challenging show in many ways. It was an incredible exercise in emotional, psychological, and intellectual stamina because I never left the stage for nearly three hours and I almost never shut up. I just kept talking and had to navigate these really immense intellectual arguments. Leigh is someone who can challenge me from the jump. We've been having conversations since she first read it. We are asking ourselves: How do we attack this? Where is this? Where is the drama in a one-person play like this? How do I dramatize it as an actor? These are questions we both have. Leigh will push me and catch me when I jump off cliffs, which will hopefully happen every day.

TS: How do you keep yourself inspired as an artist? What advice would you give young people who say they want to act?

MI: When I'm not working, those are the hardest times for me. I try to see a ton of theatre or film that makes me happy and that makes me want to act. I try to educate myself in terms of the work that is being done by my colleagues. I seek out people who are just starting, new writers who inspire me. I think of this job as devotional, in service of the writing, because the writing is bigger than me. I read a lot. My actor friends like Reed Birney, Jayne Houdyshell, and Deirdre O'Connell, who have been doing this longer than me, are the ones I look to, onstage and off, for support and inspiration. As far as advice to actors goes, I find myself telling people who want to be involved in this business that it is a long game. It's a lifelong pursuit. While I have had some big-break moments, I haven't had the one thing that has catapulted me into a place where you no longer have to worry about rejection or fear of failure. You will always have to deal with fear and rejection. It might be on a different level, but it always exists. The life of an actor is hard; success doesn't happen overnight. The more I do it, the more vulnerable I feel. I hope that it's because that's what I'm striving for: more openness and clarity within the work. There is great value in vulnerability. I think that as artists, we have to push ourselves to explore that. We have to constantly ask ourselves, why am I doing this? That answer will change and evolve as the artist does. Ultimately, I do think about it as a life of service. Being in service to the writer's ideas. And to the larger idea of connecting all of us together, cultivating empathy among strangers. We can change the world as artists, I do believe that. That is how we begin and how we continue.





AMERICAN GUN VIOLENCE

STATISTICS ON GUN VIOLENCE

- From 1966 to 2012, nearly a third of the world's mass shootings took place in the U.S. The U.S. had 90 mass shootings. The next highest was the Philippines with 18, Russia with 15, Yemen with 11, and France with 10.
- According to the <u>GUN VIOLENCE ARCHIVE</u>, which compiles data from shooting incidents, a "mass shooting" is any incident where four or more people are wounded or killed. By that definition, we've seen 28 mass shootings already in 2017.
- Of the 30 deadliest shootings in the U.S. dating back to 1949, **16 have occurred in the last 10 years**.

The 2016 Orlando attack (49 killed)
2007 Virginia Tech massacre (32 killed)
The 2012 Sandy Hook shooting (27 killed)

- People have a greater chance of dying in mass shootings if they're at school or work. According to data from 2013, incidents in schools and businesses represent 7 out of 10 active shootings.
- Most shooters take their own lives, or are killed. About 70% of active shooter incidents end with the shooter or shooters' deaths.



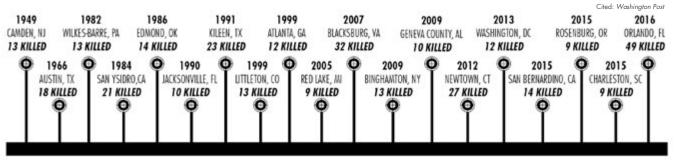
MASS PUBLIC SHOOTINGS PER DECADE

Cited: Washington Post MASS SHOOTING = an incident in which four or more victims are killed publicly with guns within 24 hours, excluding shootings in connection with crimes such as robbery, drugs, or gangs (as explained by Mass Murder in the United States: A History [2007])

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- **1970s** (13)
- 1980s (32)

2000s (28) 2010s (14)

A TIMELINE OF THE DEADLIEST MASS SHOOTINGS IN AMERICAN HISTORY





LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

In the United States, new federal laws must be created and approved by the House of Representatives, the Senate, and then signed into law by the President. More than 12,000 bills are currently under consideration in Congress; fewer than 4% will become law.

Bills under consideration in 2016 included everything from H.R. 3084: Thoroughbred Horseracing Integrity Act of 2015, sponsored by Republican Representative Andy Barr of Kentucky to S. 1555: Filipino Veterans of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2015, sponsored by Senator Mazie Hirono, Democrat from Hawaii.

Have an idea for a new law or want to support a current bill? Here's how the legislative process works:

FIRST, a bill (a proposed law) is drafted by a member of the House of Representatives or Senate. Anyone can lobby, or encourage, a representative or senator to write a bill. Individual citizens, corporations, labor unions, and others all frequently contact their lawmakers with suggestions.

> Find legislators' contact info. Click Here.

NEXT, the representative who has written the bill works to secure support of the bill from her fellow representatives and to find one or more legislators to sponsor the bill. If lawmakers from both parties sign on to sponsor a bill, it becomes a "bipartisan bill," which can give it some weight in the public eye. Additionally, representatives may sign on to sponsor a bill in order to gain favor with other lawmakers, or they might sign on to sponsor bills unlikely to pass in order to make a statement.

AFTER SPONSORSHIP IS OBTAINED, bills are formally introduced. In the House, a bill is introduced by being placed in a hopper, a special container on the clerk's desk, or given directly to the clerk. In the Senate, the sponsoring legislator requests to introduce the bill during morning hour, two ninetyminute periods of time held each week during which senators can reserve five minutes to speak on any topic.

ONCE BILLS HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED, they are assigned a number and referred to a committee with special expertise in the topic covered by the bill. Committee members may bring in citizens to testify, as our character does in *On the Exhale*, about the bill and get comments from relevant government agencies. If you're called to testify before Congress, you'll be asked to supply a short written statement and deliver an oral statement of less than five minutes. It's important to keep your statement personal and related to the issue under consideration.

Committees may make amendments or additions to a bill, or they may choose to "kill" the bill by not discussing it or moving it forward.

WHEN THE COMMITTEE HAS A VERSION OF THE BILL THEY AGREE ON, it's placed on the calendar for the House or Senate. These calendars are controlled by the Majority Leader and Speaker of the House and the Majority Leader of the Senate, though a majority of senators can vote to bring a bill to the floor of the Senate at any time.

Call and encourage your senator to vote to bring a bill you care about to the floor.

THE BILL IS THEN DEBATED ON THE FLOOR OF THE HOUSE OR SENATE. In the House, the Rules Committee decides how long a bill can be debated and what kind of amendments can be added. In the Senate, debate is unlimited.

Senators can try to add anything they want to a bill—even on an entirely unrelated topic! They can also filibuster, which is to continue talking to prevent a bill from being voted on. The longest filibuster in American history lasted over 24 hours.

BARRING A FILIBUSTER, a bill is eventually voted on by the House or Senate. If it passes, it's sent to the other part of the legislative branch for a vote. If a bill passes both the House and Senate, it's sent to the President, who can either sign it into law or veto it. If the President vetoes a bill, Congress can vote to override the veto with a two-thirds majority in both houses.

TRAUMA AND THE BRAIN

Trauma is the Greek word for "wound." In ancient times, it referred to a physical wound, but today trauma is also understood as an emotional wound. or flight is impossible, the brainstem will trigger a freeze or collapse response. Processes not necessary for survival shut

Experiencing a *traumatic* event changes the chemistry of our body and brain. These changes can remain long after the event has ended.

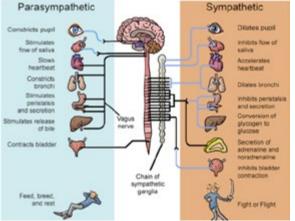
There are two types of traumatic events. In an *acute traumatic event*, someone experiences a serious injury or the injury or death of another person, or the threat of death or serious injury. Violations

of personal physical integrity, like rape or sexual assault, are also acute traumatic events. *Chronic traumatic situations* happen repeatedly over longer periods of time and include being exposed to domestic violence, living through a war, and some bullying.

The human brain is the most complex system known. It has three main parts.

- The *brainstem*, the most primitive part of the brain, controls the basics like breathing, eating, sleeping, and survival instincts.
- The *limbic* or *midbrain* processes emotions and controls how we perceive the world around us. The amygdala, which controls our sense of danger and safety and triggers the release of stress hormones, is part of the limbic brain.
- The *cortex*, the frontal and outer parts of our brain, is sometimes called the rational or cognitive brain. It controls language, empathy, learning, organization, and inhibition of inappropriate behaviors.

During a traumatic event, the limbic brain takes in sensory information from the body and sends it in two directions, to both the amygdala and to the frontal lobes of the cortex. The amygdala receives the information sooner and makes a snap judgement as to whether or not a situation is dangerous. In a potentially dangerous situation, the amygdala tells the hypothalamus and brainstem to secrete stress hormones. These hormones prepare the body for fight or flight: bronchial tubes and pupils dilate, digestion slows, muscles contract, heart and respiration rates increase. If fight



Fight or Flight

down. The cortex, the thinking brain, is disconnected from the limbic brain and essentially turned off.

Because of this disconnect, the human brain struggles to consolidate memories and emotions into a coherent narrative after a traumatic situation, which is necessary for working through a trauma. The areas of the brain responsible for understanding time and place are bypassed, explaining the

woman in *On the Exhale's* inability to process the central event of the play. Trauma is remembered as disconnected images and sensations.

In some cases individuals experience flashbacks of the trauma, or dissociate completely, unable to connect with either their emotions or their everyday life. The woman in *On the Exhale* seeks the rush of firing the gun, suggesting that she may be having a dissociating response.

After trauma, the amygdala, which warns of danger, can go into overdrive and trigger release of stress hormones in non-threatening situations. This can cause emotional and psychological problems, as well as physical symptoms like high blood pressure and digestive issues. In recent years, scientists have shown that trauma symptoms lessen if treatment includes a somatic, or body-based, component. Movement and breathing exercises like yoga, or group rhythm activities like dance or choral singing, send information from the body back to brain, signaling safety and calm. Over time, these practices can help create new patterns and physical responses in individuals who have experienced trauma.•

ON THE EXHALE

The human autonomic nervous system has two branches, the sympathetic and the parasympathetic. The sympathetic nervous system is responsible for reaction to danger, for preparing the body for fight or flight. It speeds up the heart. It's triggered whenever you consciously inhale. The parasympathetic nervous system controls healing processes like digestion. It slows the heart and respiration rates and promotes relaxation. It's turned on each time you exhale.



A solo show (often also known as a "one person show") can take many different forms, from just a comedian musing on stage to a piece of performance art. When we think of a solo show, many of us think of something biographical or a memoir. This is because the genre is dominated by this type of storytelling. Some famous examples include Elaine Stritch at Liberty, where Stritch documented her life, and actor John Leguizamo's semi-autobiographical solo shows on Broadway, which drew on his life experiences to create explosive storytelling. With one performer, the storytelling can lend itself to being more insular, for the performer to open up to an audience in an intimate setting. On the other hand, actors such as Whoopi Goldberg have also used the opportunity of a solo show to show their versatility, playing hundreds of different characters. On the Exhale charts a slightly different course-it is a full play that happens to be performed by just one actor, who is telling an original, fictional story. But what is it that makes the solo show so enduring? In an age of big, bombastic shows, why tell a story in this format?

On a practical level, solo shows are usually simple to assemble and cost-effective. You do not have to worry about paying a large multitude of actors, and sets are often cheaper. Also, budgetary concerns of theatres have limited cast sizes over the last ten years. In an article for the New York Times in 2007, Todd Haimes, Artistic Director of Roundabout, stated that "a new playwright now, no matter how talented, would never write a play for 15 people because it wouldn't get produced... [B]y virtue of the constrained budgets theaters have we've changed the style of playwriting. Arthur Miller wouldn't write The Crucible today." But does this mean you would opt immediately for a solo show? Not necessarily. In the same article, James Nicola, Artistic Director of New York Theatre Workshop (NYTW), had a slightly different view: "if you are comparing a solo piece to something with 12 actors and three musicians there is a huge difference in budget... but a four-person play as compared to a one-person playthe savings is some, but not huge. The bulk of production expenses are for advertising, design, printing expenses; those prices are the same whether there is one person on stage or 20." That being said, an average four-person show at NYTW costs \$300,000, whereas a solo show will cost around \$250,000, which is still a considerable saving. Fast forward ten years, and in terms of budgeting, it does not seem like much has changed. For On the Exhale, Roundabout estimates that the show will save \$85,000-



\$100,000 compared to a normal Underground show. The savings made are not just on actor budgets, but also costume costs, set design (as one person shows tend to be less set heavy) and labor (teching a show with one actor will be considerably quicker).

But simplicity and practicality are not the most important ingredients for doing a solo show. On the Exhale will be the first solo show at Roundabout since 2009, when Carrie Fisher performed Wishful Drinking. Before that show, the most recent solo shows at Roundabout were Beyond Glory with Stephen Lang (2007) and An Almost Holy Picture with Kevin Bacon (2002). Wishful Drinking was an autobiographical romp through Fisher's past, while Beyond Glory looked at the courage behind servicemen who were awarded the Medal of Honor. An Almost Holy Picture had Bacon playing a priest, and On the Exhale explores gun violence. So what binds all these disparate plays together? Simply, the ability to provide intimacy and a compelling relationship with the audience, to really engage with them on a visceral level, which you often cannot get through larger casts. In almost any solo show, the performer constantly breaks the fourth wall, and many shows are completely in direct address to the audience, so there is a constant immediacy with the performer. In the words of NYTW's Nicola, with a solo show "there is an energy in the room of authentic experience being conveyed that is not like anything else."•



RACHEL HAUCK-SET DESIGNER

On the Exhale could be set anywhere; Martín does not specify a location. Leigh, Martín, Marin, and I had some long conversations about what the liminal space might be from which our character would tell this tricky, dark, terrifying tale. It was important to make the journey for the character possible, but it was equally important that the audience be caught in the world with this character, that the people hearing this would not be safe on the other side of the fourth wall, as it were.

We have chosen to set it in a highly psychological environment. From the moment the audience enters, this is never a comfortable room. The environment begins charged; it is a place of tension, which only increases as the story unfolds. It's also a very neutral world, the quality of which can change radically with lights and sound, and of course with Marin's remarkable performance. I suppose I would call this an aggressively minimal environment. There is nowhere to hide, no stool, no glass of water. The character is pinned between two planes. These planes could be the hallway at the school where she teaches, the walls of her home, they could be the barrel of a gun. What these planes represent will be different for everyone who watches this play. We also chose to soften the walls of the theatre itself to make them a little harder to define, to create a void within which we are all a bit trapped together.

The thing about this story and the way that Martín tells it is that though none of us imagine we could be in her shoes, this could not happen to us. But of course. It could.

JENNIFER SCHRIEVER-LIGHTING DESIGNER

When I read *On the Exhale* for the first time, I was a sleepdeprived new parent (I still am), feeding my 4-week-old son, Henry. I'd happily spent the 4 weeks since his birth ignoring the heart-shattering woes of the world and simply basking in the perfect newness of his gentle being. This was the first new script I'd read since he was born, and I was eager to dive into another world. What I wasn't expecting was a sucker punch to the gut and an instant instinctual emotional release. The experience I had reading the script for the first time is a journey I hope I'm able to support visually through lighting. Rachel's set has a focused straightforwardness that I think encompasses the world of this story in a sort of abstract beauty. It is an island, an abyss. It allows us to be comfortably delivered into a void of our worst fears, and then having to redefine everything we used to know. Instead of literally describing the various locations visually, we're supporting a deep emotional journey. The lighting may describe the familiar as a comforting haven or sometimes an inescapable prison. It might be freeing or constricting, immediate and bright, or floating in a vast expanse. I hope the lighting will be able to deliver us visually—from familiarity, to chasm, to surreal discovery, and then perhaps catharsis.

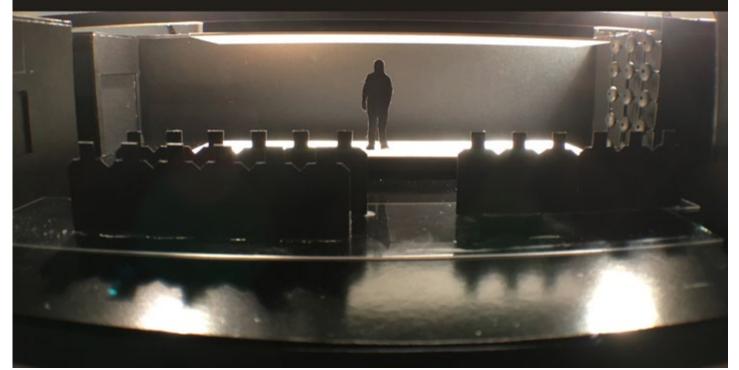
BART FASBENDER-SOUND DESIGNER

Before reading the script, all I knew of On the Exhale was that it was a one woman show that Leigh Silverman was directing. Working with Leigh is always a great experience, and our last show together, Neil LaBute's All The Ways To Say I Love You at MCC, also a one woman show, was no exception, so I was psyched. The first read through of a script for me, I try not to "hear" too much in my head because I don't want to get too many strong ideas before meeting with a director to discuss her concept. In his production notes at the beginning of his script, Martín Zimmerman instructed "metaphoric sound" as a must. So I did have that in mind as I started. There are no scenes. no transitions, no grounded locations that need to be established in order to convey story; the words alone take care of that. It became clear that my sound design would need to have a light touch and stay out of the way of the words, not lock in any specific emotion, time or location. I was thinking of wind. Not like a blustery cold wind, more a wind that you don't know you feel unless you focus on it. It's there, it's part of the environment, you sense it subconsciously but you don't notice it...unless it becomes completely still. I'll consider it a job well done if no one knows.





Set model for On the Exhale





PRE-SHOW

HOW DOES AN ACTOR REHEARSE A ONE-PERSON SHOW?

(Common core code: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.3)

On the Exhale is performed by one actor, who remains on stage the entire time. What are the challenges and possibilities of solo performance?

READ & Working in actor/director pairs, have students select one of the three speech excerpts found here. All text comes from true Faces of Courage statements **HERE**.

REHEARSE Reveal the stage space and show students the minimal prop and set pieces (perhaps just a block or two or a chair) they will have access to. Ask students to begin staging their speeches as a one person show, and to make choices on their character's relationship to the audience. Encourage bold physical choices and use of the space. The rehearsal process can last for just one class period or stretch out for a week.

SHARE At the end of the rehearsal period have students perform for each other or a small invited audience.

REFLECT What was it like to perform someone else's words? How was performing alone similar to, or different from, performing a scene? Did your feelings about gun violence change as you worked on these pieces? What differing choices were made with the same text?

POST-SHOW

HOW DO WE SENSE AND CONTROL OUR NERVOUS SYSTEM'S RESPONSE TO STRESS?

(Common core code: CCSS. ELA-LITERACY.RST.11-12.9)

In this activity, the teacher provokes a minor stress reaction in students in order to set the stage for exploring how humans can interact with their instinctive reactions to situations. As teaching artists we call this way of beginning a class a "bust-in." In the days leading up to this activity, have students read "Trauma and the Brain" from page 14 of this guide.

- **BUST-IN** The teacher enters the classroom or begins class by announcing something that will provoke a stress reaction in the students. A "pop test" worth a significant portion of the class grade is a safe option, but you may wish to push your students farther and create a different scenario. Anything that will cause an instinctive fear or stress reaction will work. Keep the ruse going for several minutes, then end it.
- WRITE Have students write stream-of-consciousness monologue about what they experienced during the "bust-in." What went through their mind? What happened to their bodies? What specific events do they recall? What happened when the bust-in ended?
- **EXPERIMENT** Spend two to five minutes on each of the following group activities: a simple rhythm game like "Pass the Clap;" choral singing, adding a round if possible; and a simple, repeated yoga flow (such as mountain pose to forward fold and back to mountain pose) done with awareness of breath. After each activity, ask students how their bodies or minds have changed. Is there a difference in heart rate? Muscular tension? Emotion? Connection to the group?

ANALYZE & Working alone or in small groups, re-read "Trauma and the Brain" from page 14 of the guide. Though we experienced only a small stressor, our bodies reacted. Does anything that happened in your mind or body connect with the response described in this article?

20 ROUNDABOUT THEATRE COMPANY

POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES

POST-SHOW

HOW DOES AN ACADEMIC COMMUNITY HOLD A CIVIL DEBATE ON GUN POLICY?

(Common core code: CCLS SL 11-12.10)

After seeing On the Exhale, students debate gun rights on college campuses, in the role of college administrators or college students. (Note: This will be a richer activity if you can give 2-3 hours of time).

- PREPARE
- Read and discuss the "Gun Control on Campus" article on page 11 of this UPSTAGE guide. Point out that, currently, 10 U.S. states permit guns to be carried on college campuses, although each state gives campuses different authority to regulate guns.
- Tell students they will be in-role as College Administrators and Students, at a fictional college in a state whose law now permits guns on college campuses.
- Divide students into 4 groups: Pro-gun ADMINISTRATOR, Pro-gun-STUDENT, Anti-gun ADMINISTRATOR, Anti-gun STUDENT.

RESEARCH

Give participants time to research their assigned position, and have each participant choose one fact that support their claim as evidence. They may use the articles in this Guide, or these online resources:

<u>Aiming At Students</u> <u>Students for Concealed Carry</u> <u>Armed Campuses</u>

- DEBATE In role as the College President, facilitate a town-hall meeting for the campus community. (You may give a fictional name to your college.) Remind participants that the debate should remain civil, polite, and professional and respect the entire community. As President, call on different "Students" and "Administrators" to state their positions about guns on campus. Ensure all sides are heard and encourage students to ask and answer questions to each other. Challenge participants to come up with one or two proposals for your College's gun policy.
- **REFLECT** How has your understanding of guns on campus changed as a result of this activity? Has your position changed at all? What is the next thing you would like to learn about guns in America?

WRITINGStudents may compose a written argument about concealed guns on college campuses.EXTENSION(Common core code: CCLS W11-12.10)

FOR EDUCATORS



MOMS DEMAND ACTION FOR GUN SENSE IN AMERICA - MOMSDEMANDACTION.ORG

Much like Mothers Against Drunk Driving was created to reduce drunk driving, Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America was created to demand action from legislators, state and federal; companies; and educational institutions to establish common-sense gun reforms. The group was founded by stay-at-home mom Shannon Watts on December 15, 2012, in response to the devastating shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School. Moms Demand Action envisions a country where all children and families are safe from gun violence. Our nonpartisan grassroots movement has grown to include a chapter in every state across the country. We are educating, motivating, and mobilizing supporters to take action that will result in stronger laws and policies to save lives.

VIOLENCE POLICY CENTER - VPC.ORG

The Violence Policy Center (VPC) works to stop gun death and injury through research, education, advocacy, and collaboration. Founded in 1988, the VPC informs the public about the impact of gun violence on their daily lives, exposes the profit-driven marketing and lobbying activities of the firearms industry and gun lobby, offers unique technical expertise to policymakers, organizations, and advocates on the federal, state, and local levels, and works for policy changes that save lives. The VPC has a long and proven record of policy successes on the federal, state, and local levels, leading the National Rifle Association to acknowledge them as "the most effective ... anti-gun rabble rouser in Washington."

NEWTOWN ACTION ALLIANCE - ALLIANCE.NEWTOWNACTION.ORG

The Newtown Action Alliance provides comfort, education, scholarship and other support and resources to people and communities impacted by or living in the aftermath of gun violence in American society, and to help them lead the way toward positive cultural change. They are an all-volunteer arassroots organization founded by Newtown residents – a group of advocates, families of victims and survivors of gun violence, who are working to transform their tragedy into meaningful action to end gun violence.

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ABOUT ROUNDABOUT

ROUNDABOUT THEATRE COMPANY

Roundabout Theatre Company (Todd Haimes, Artistic Director) is committed to producing the highest-quality theatre with the finest artists, sharing stories that endure and providing accessibility to all audiences. A not-for-profit company founded in 1965, Roundabout fulfills its mission each season through the production of classic plays and musicals; development and production of new works by established and emerging writers; educational initiatives that enrich the lives of children and adults; and a subscription model and audience outreach programs that cultivate and engage all audiences. Roundabout presents this work on its five stages and across the country through national tours. Roundabout has been recognized with 36 Tonys[®], 51 Drama Desks, 62 Outer Critics Circle, 12 Obie and 18 Lucille Lortel Awards. More information on Roundabout's mission, history and programs can be found by visiting **roundabouttheatre.org**.

2016-2017 SEASON



STAFF SPOTLIGHT: INTERVIEW WITH JOHN O'BRIEN, COMPANY MANAGER – HAROLD & MIRIAM STEINBERG CENTER FOR THEATRE AT ROUNDABOUT THEATRE COMPANY

Ted Sod: Tell us about yourself. Where were you born and educated? John O'Brien: I was born and raised in St. Louis, Missouri. With a music degree (emphasis on French Horn performance) in hand from Truman State University in northeast Missouri, I trekked (sans horn) to NYC in 2014 to begin a career in theatre management.

TS: How and when did you become the Company Manager at The Steinberg Center for Theatre?

JO: I began working at Roundabout in 2015 as the Steinberg Management Apprentice. Just after opening *The Robber Bridegroom* at the Laura Pels Theatre, the previous Company Manager of the Steinberg Center moved to Roundabout's American Airlines Theatre and I was asked to step into his position to close out the remainder of the show. Something must have gone right because they haven't asked me to leave.

TS: Describe your job at RTC. What are your responsibilities?

JO: My primary task is to make sure that all artists working on productions in the Laura Pels and Black Box Theatres are well taken care of and happy. Company management at Roundabout helps to bridge the gap between the production and administration to make sure that all departments and individuals receive the support they need. Different productions present different challenges, so it is important to get ahead of any potential complications to make sure things go smoothly for everyone involved with the production. From booking doctors and paying bills to party planning for opening and closing, the day-to-day is varied, busy, and exciting.

TS: What is the best part of your job?

JO: Without a doubt, the best part of company managing at the Steinberg Center is getting to work with exciting, experienced artists on new and reimagined works. The Black Box Theatre allows new playwrights to work with great directors, designers, and actors on fresh and exciting pieces of theatre. I love helping to give these new playwrights the best possible experience. The cherry on top is the excitement of the Black Box playwrights returning to the Steinberg Center to work in the Laura Pels Theatre.

TS: What is the hardest part?

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JO: Managing the productions in both the Laura Pels Theatre and the Black Box Theatre simultaneously makes for a busy day, but I wouldn't have it any other way.

TS: Why do you choose to work at Roundabout?

JO: At Roundabout, I get to interact with talented and giving artists, managers, and employees who make coming to work enjoyable. Roundabout's commitment to making sure all artists have the best possible experience while working with us makes my job as a company manager all the more enjoyable. I can't think of a more supportive and encouraging place to work.

Learn more at roundabouttheatre.org. Find us on:

WHEN YOU GET TO THE THEATRE

TICKET POLICY

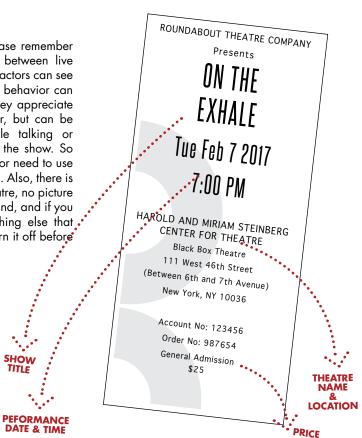
As a student participant in an Education at Roundabout program, you will receive a discounted ticket to the show from your teacher on the day of the performance. You will notice that the ticket indicates the section, row and number of your assigned seat. When you show your ticket to the usher inside the theatre, he or she will show you where your seat is located. These tickets are not transferable and you must sit in the seat assigned to you.

PROGRAMS

All the theatre patrons are provided with a program that includes information about the people who put the production together. In the "Who's Who" section, for example, you can read about the actors' roles in other plays and films, perhaps some you have already seen.

AUDIENCE ETIQUETTE

As you watch the show please remember that the biggest difference between live theatre and a film is that the actors can see you and hear you and your behavior can affect their performance. They appreciate your applause and laughter, but can be easily distracted by people talking or getting up in the middle of the show. So please save your comments or need to use the rest room for intermission. Also, there is no food permitted in the theatre, no picture taking or recording of any kind, and if you have a cell phone or anything else that might make noise, please turn it off before the show begins.



FOR FDUCATORS

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