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### Abstract

The primary goal of this thesis is to explore the use of known techniques in creating a piece of documentary theatre. Upon completion of this study, I aim to put into practice said techniques and subsequently analyze their application within a play of my own creation. I will begin by examining a selected inciting incident that inspired my own personal *hunch*, a term coined by Tectonic Theater Project to be defined more in depth in Chapter One.

In selecting a topic to research for the thesis, I was soon exposed to documentary theatre, a form which serves as a way to represent past events and real-life stories, as well as being used to memorialize happenings that might otherwise be forgotten. This creates a difficult ethical paradox for the creator of a piece of documentary theatre, considering the commandeering of a person's life story in order to create a dramatic narrative for audiences to enjoy. That being said, I seek to explore several techniques that two separate published plays utilise to accomplish this task, following by an analysis of whether or not the final products achieved a respectful depiction of the initial event.

Creating a play of this sort in an era of fake news means that the creator is attempting to offer "truth" to an already-skeptical audience. It is for this reason that, from the start, I do not define the final play as fact. Like all dramatizations, it is to be taken as one interpretation of a story -- though one that still deserves to be told.

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## Introduction

On the twenty-third night of March 2018, two men in their mid-twenties entered the home of Mireille Knoll in Paris' 11th arrondissement. Concealed by the darkness, the duo broke open the door and attempted to rob the second-floor apartment. Upon discovering the eighty-seven-year-old grandmother in her home, the intruders stabbed her eleven times, allegedly uttering "Allahu akbar," or, "God is great," in Arabic during the violence. After she was dead, the men attempted to set fire to her apartment. Ms. Knoll, a survivor of the Vel d'Hiv roundup during the Holocaust, was found that same night, her body partially burned from the flames. A forensic autopsy later determined that her apartment had been ignited with five separate small fires that eventually grew into the inferno (TOI, et al.).

Ms. Knoll was known to those around her as "a typical Parisian lady... [she was] coquettish and quick-witted," (Peltier and Breeden) spending her days mostly alone, save for visits from her part-time caretaker. This attack on a widowed eighty-seven-year-old is unlikely an isolated incident or a burglary gone wrong. Ms. Knoll's murder comes as just one in a growing trend of violent crimes against Jews across France in recent years. In 2017 alone, there were 353 reported hate crimes, over one-fifth of the total annual reports, resulting from Anti-Semitic sentiment throughout the small European power ("Hate Crime Statistics"). In spite of the outpouring of support for the victim and her family in the days following the attack, occurrences of hate crimes in France continue to grow at exponential rates, igniting a spike the last decade of grave desecration, assault, and vandalism (Peltier). The victims are often chosen for little reason besides the fact that

they are Jewish. From the beating of Jonathan Benarousse and his family,<sup>1</sup> to the murder of Sarah Halimi in the 13th arrondissement<sup>2</sup> (the same neighborhood in which Mireille Knoll lived), the steady rise of Anti-Semitism is a threat that has quickly evolved.

### **Interdisciplinary Approach**

As both a Theatre and French major, discovering this gruesome incident struck me on two levels. Firstly, I wanted to better understand the historical, cultural, and political context in France surrounding this event. It is no secret that France has had a great push and pull between public display of religion and its resolution to be a secular state, but there are few European countries that have seen more religious intolerance in the past several years than France. In 2017, the French Ministry of Interior had recorded 72 violent anti-Muslim hate crimes, up from 67 in 2016, as well a reported 97 anti-Semitic violent hate crimes, up from 77 in 2016. Alongside crime comes a growing anti-Jewish sentiment throughout the country. According to a nationwide poll, over one-fifth of French citizens agree that “Jews [have] too much power in the country,” (France 2017 International Religious Freedom Report.) a perception that does limit itself to the general public. In March of 2017, approximately one year before the murder of Ms. Knoll, the official Twitter page for the French Republican Party tweeted an image depicting

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<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Benarousse, along with his mother, his father, and his girlfriend at the time were victims of an attack December 1, 2014. The two perpetrators, donning balaclavas, broke into Benarousse’s apartment in which he lived with his elderly parents in the small French town of Créteil. Along with theft and kidnapping, the assailants were later charged with the rape of Benarousse’s girlfriend, Laurine.

<sup>2</sup> On April 3, 2017, Kobili Traoré approached his elderly neighbor, Sarah Halimi, in the Belleville public housing complex in which they both resided. Traoré soon began beating the Jewish woman, hurling insults and crying out, ‘*Allahu akbar!*’ Halimi was eventually pushed over the bannister where she fell into the Parisian courtyard three stories below.

President Emmanuel Macron as a hooked-nosed banker slicing the tip off of a cigar with a bright red sickle. The tweet, which was deleted soon thereafter, was quickly compared to images of Nazi propaganda that cropped up across France during the rule of the Vichy state (Bulman). In examining even a handful of examples such as these, it becomes clear that, despite the government's efforts to evolve into a strictly secular nation, many of France's religious troubles seemingly stem from an othering of religious minorities such as Muslims and Jews. Not only does this cautionary measure border religious oppression, it fosters a culture in which citizens do not know their neighbors or what they practice behind closed doors, thus fearing them. Muslims and Jews have suffered for hundreds of years at the hands of one another, perpetuated by the violence over Palestine and the Gaza Strip. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict marks a clear precedent of bad blood long before these crimes, but it is seemingly the pressure for a secular France by the Republic that places an all-encompassing taboo on religious expression.

On the other hand, as a theatre artist, I began to think about how I could respond to this event through storytelling. What might this shocking crime teach audiences in the US about their own lives, and perhaps more importantly, the world around them? In searching for a method to approach this, I was met with a more challenging question: How does one transfer not only a real life incident, but a hate crime into a dramatic narrative? This led me to research the genre of documentary theatre, a genre that relies on use of verbatim text to recreate historical events on stage. Ranging from political accounts to depictions of communities at turning points in their histories, documentary theatre seemed the appropriate means of depicting the attack on Mireille Knoll. It offers the opportunity for theatre artists the opportunity to respectfully tell stories that are not

necessarily their own. Moreover, it provides a chance to memorialize an incident after the media headlines fade and public attention has moved onto the next sensational event.

Inevitably, the next story needs coverage, and soon the crimes against one are forgotten for those of another. However, with the utilization of art forms aimed at remembrance, this cycle can be broken and lives can be immortalized within a documentary play.

## Chapter One

### Defining Documentary Theatre

Despite its extensive utilisation by theatre artists worldwide, documentary theatre is sometimes mistaken as an artistic movement or a genre, rather than a distinct theatrical form. As this chapter will go on to discuss, its usage dates back at least one hundred years, thus rejecting the erroneous assumption that limits this method of storytelling to a time-constrictive theatrical movement such as Expressionism or Postmodernism. In the case of more contemporary plays, documentary theatre often fosters three unanimous aspects: “a desire to reinstate the voices and experiences of those written out of history [...] a belief that the words of individuals telling their stories can provide a powerful corrective to the mediatized versions of reality claiming legitimacy [...] and a recognition of the power of performance to challenge the master narratives and discourses of history” (Ben-Zvi). In other words, they share the ideal that the personal experiences of the (typically marginalized) individual not only have a claim to be seen, but that they have the potential to impact communities outside of their own. That is not to say that these elements define a play as documentary, but rather that considering these philosophies in the play-making process can help guide the playwright to using the documentary form.

To dictate what exactly one means when one says “documentary theatre” is complicated. Carol Martin, a leading academic in the “Theatre of the Real,” explains in her essay “Bodies of Evidence” that “... documentary theatre’s blurring of the real and the represented is just as problematic as television’s ambiguous ‘reenactments’ [...] and ‘reality’ shows [...] No doubt the phrase “documentary theatre” fails us. It is inadequate.



Yet at present it is the best phrase available” (Martin 23). For the purposes of this thesis, the working definition of “documentary theatre” is a play that is characterized by its use of found text to convey narrative. Additionally, the focus on the documentary form for *La Vie Que J’avais Prévvue* implies the aforementioned ideologies as motivation for the genesis of the play. In terms of the appropriate terms to describe my personal praxis going forward, as well as the case studies in Chapter Two, I intend to solely maintain the term “documentary theatre,” as opposed to phrases with which it is sometimes conflated, such as “verbatim theatre” or “docudrama.” While the latter may typically connote a fictionalized dramatization based on real events,<sup>3</sup> the former is a specific term within documentary theatre. “Verbatim” stipulates that the author(s) has created the script from the exact words spoken by people interviewed about the particular topic or event. The utilization of “verbatim” denotes a word-for-word presentation of text, and coupled as a modifier to “theatre,” it suggests a repeated display of real life. This form may feel novel to audiences who are used to fictionalized dialogue, encouraging them to pay close attention to the words being spoken. At the same time, because it provides a live recreation of actual events, verbatim produces a compelling representation of the real. From a spectator’s perspective, experiencing verbatim text may support the sentiment that a piece is more “real” in part because it is a live reenactment. Documentary theatre thus requires a specific sort of viewing on the audience’s part, one unlike other types of theatrical spectatorship. The audience must engage themselves in the play, taking a more active role than is traditionally expected of them. In order to absorb the slew of information being presented, one must reject the passiveness of voyeurism and instead

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<sup>3</sup> e.g. Jason Robert Brown’s *Parade* would be categorized as a docudrama, whereas Emily Mann’s *Execution of Justice* is considered a piece of documentary theatre.

access the listening of participants (Dawson xii). According to dramatic historian Gary Fisher Dawson, “when a documentary play works, it does so because it moves the conversation about its subject matter from a state of entropy to a higher level of activation energy and discourse” (xii). In other words, documentary theatre gives the viewer a unique role in the process as a participant. This feeling may extend so far as changing the spectator’s identification from “audience member” to “witness.” While it may appear to be an insignificant linguistic change, the connotations between the terms are, in fact, strikingly different. This shift of rhetoric brings with it a shift of action from the passive bystander to the active ally, thus fostering “a shared sense of responsibility” (Brenner 16). By “witnessing” a piece instead of merely “watching” it, the viewer becomes a participant in the play, tasked with not only giving their attention to the performance, but recognizing the reflection of their own community on stage.

It is important to distinguish that, for the purposes of this thesis, I will be using terms that make use of the words “theatre” or “play,” excluding terms that could potentially also apply to other mediums such as television or film. Because “docudrama” is too closely associated with the “Based-on-a-True-Story”’s of Hollywood, its reputation “... is at cross-purposes with a rule of accuracy in the documentary play” (Dawson xiv). At the same time, the popularity and critical acclaim of documentary films suggest that audiences are drawn to depictions of actual events. Thanks in part to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Science’s decision to include a documentary category at its annual awards ceremony, documentary film has quietly crept its way into the mainstream.

Furthermore, one must consider the imagery of a pre-recorded film, a series of captured images that follow a handful of subjects. The camera wields the power to cut,

edit, and redo certain aspects in order to force the content through a very narrow lens. This creates a mediated viewing experience for the audience, imposing a meaning by controlling what is being seen at all time. Despite the power to offer access to real subjects and locations in documentary film, there is little room for opposing interpretations because of its specificity in editing. In live performance, however, the implicit meaning has a wider range due to its lack of audience control. Documentary theatre puts a community of people in the same room as live actors, making it a more personal and raw experience for the viewer. The viewer is free to occupy this shared space alongside the performer, as they are quite literally in the same room as the action.

Here, it is also important to note the key difference between a period piece and a piece of documentary theatre. In the case of the former, there is often historical fact surrounding the story, while in a documentary play, that very historical fact *is* the story (Dawson 1). All things considered, a story rooted in fact will use different sources than one based on fact, often resulting in two entirely unique outcomes.

### **The Challenges of “Telling the Truth”**

For many theatre artists, creating a piece of documentary theatre is an exercise in both compassion and narrative structure alike. They must ask themselves many difficult questions in order to arrive at a solid starting point. How should this story be told? How do I do it justice? How do I remain true to history while assembling the story in a compelling way that will sell tickets? This third question is perhaps the most complex, in that it forces the asker to find a balance between the two compulsions. Allow that balance to tip too far one way and the play becomes a display of exploitation, a bastardization of a

real person's life in order to make a profit. If the scale tips too far in the other direction, the audience is no longer watching a piece of theatre, but rather re-living the trauma of another, making all those involved complicit in perpetuating the cycle of anguish.

Documentary theatre has the unfortunate capability to fall into a hole of voyeurism, reverting the audience to passive bystanders instead of the active participants they were meant to be. This trap is perpetuated by a phenomenon sometimes known as "the erotics of injury," or performances in which the artists will purposefully stage another's trauma whilst maintaining a safe distance from any actual effect. These demonstrations of suffering exist under the guise of creating a shared sense of empathy and compassion for the subjects, but ultimately, "... that is likely all they will solicit, an effect that restricts the audience to the role of "cultural tourist" (Tomlin 124). In other words, the lack of implication of the audience, as well as the artists involved, serves nothing more than the purpose of telling an unfortunate story. At the end of the day, this kind of documentary theatre has impacted nothing, encouraging neither healing nor activism.

Understandably, these challenges can prove to be a source of hesitation in the room for those attempting to create a piece of this kind. When one considers the nature of documentary plays, one may expect them to be a direct replication of the events by which they were inspired. However, it is crucial to recognize that there is an element of truth that can never be present in a documentary piece. In fact, the very notion of "truth" and all its subjectiveness lie more with the perception of the spectator than the presentation of content. The poststructuralist ideology of social realism concludes that "there is no 'really real' anywhere in the world of representation. Depending on who you are, what your

politics are, documentary theatre will seem to be ‘getting at the truth’ or ‘telling another set of lies’” (Martin 23). In other words, “... most people live guided by convictions about what they believe to be true” (Martin 3-4). To that end, even in the uncommon case that the story being told is the personal experience of the speaker themselves, the person on stage is representing a persona, a subjective retelling of their experience. This ensures that the use of an actor to represent a “real person” and their story is inherently false, lacking that in-the-moment realism that can only occur for those present at the original event. Thus, utilization of actors creates not a replication, but rather a representation of the primary event. The same can be said for recordings of “real people” -- both video and audio, which may also be a component of verbatim theatre (Martin 17). While they were once captured at a real moment in time, they are dated from the moment the reel ends to the moment an audience hears or sees it. The event is now in the past, narrowing its ability to be authentically current. Even in spite of technology that may have once recorded a live occurrence, Martin’s *Bodies of Evidence* suggests that “what is real and what is true are not necessarily the same. A text can be fictional yet true. A text can be nonfictional yet untrue” (Martin 24). In other words, the difference that she marks is the personal experiences, or lack thereof, that the voyeur imposes on the event.

Despite the dissection of the past and present in live theatre, there is something unique that verbatim theatre brings to the table. In the retelling of a moment from the past, rather than the replication, new life is breathed into something that could have otherwise been left in distant memory. Every time the piece is performed, it is a reminder of the events that it depicts, thus restoring it to the present once more. Though video and audio recordings are inherently dated upon watching, they can help to create a more

accurate retelling of an event. The speech patterns of the speaker, the emotions, the location, etc. are repeatable once they are recorded, separating the past and the present with the mere press of a “replay” button. Because technology is a primary component of the research, much of the data compilation is considered to be the “proof” that the event actually happened according to the account that is being depicted. Of course, raw footage is not sustainable enough to create a full, complex portrait of a scenario or a person, meaning that these texts, both visual and audible, must be cut and layered in a fashion to tell a clear narrative, a story-driven tale for the viewer. Only then can the form serve its intended purpose of bringing awareness to the experiences of others. Rather than accept these recordings as objective representations of events, however, Carol Martin suggests that they can be used to “... interrogate specific events, systems of belief, and political affiliations precisely through the creation of their own versions of events, beliefs, and politics by exploiting technology that enables replication; video, film, tape recorders, radio, copy machines, and computers...” (Martin 17-18).

Like any documentary form, the question arises regarding the lens through which the story is told. When it comes to staging a play based on a true story, there are difficulties that become immediately apparent. In the case of the murder of Mireille Knoll, one instantly feels a flurry of opinion. The senseless attack of an old woman may incite fear, disgust, and sadness, among other reactions, but it also creates the challenge of how close the writer should stick to documentary sources. In creating a narrative of an event with its own narrative structure already attached, it is a difficult road to navigate how much of the “truth” to use, and how much can and *should* be invented or

embellished. This notion must also encapture the morality of this potential embellishment of details.

In order to quell this anxiety, the perception of this authenticity must be acknowledged. That is to say, the idea that the presented material on stage is truth must itself be questioned. Theatre can be realistic, but it is by its very nature not reality. In the case of any sort of documentary form, the narrative is one telling of events, a certain point-of-view of any instance. The problem of “telling the truth,” as Martin describes it, is when the form insists that it is showing the *correct* narrative, meaning the most accurate, the most detailed, or perhaps even the most popular interpretation of the event. In this phenomenon of verbatim theatre, when done correctly, all of the resources that are used are accurate, but not all of the accurate sources are used. In other words, while the material that is presented to the viewer comes directly from historical records, documents, and interviews, not every shred of evidence on the matter will be used. If that is the case, then it becomes a matter of which leads are followed by the creator of the piece, and subsequently, which research needs to be scrapped. Documentary theatre artists take this research and arrange it in a certain order in order to convey a specific narrative. Truth is not only subjective, but becomes a matter of aesthetic choice.

In the spirit of authenticity, however, there are ways for companies to attempt to be more transparent about their process. In the contemporary dramatization of the real, the stage acts as a way to merge real life and the invented. Rather than highlight the differences between the two, the form serves to blend the line between fiction and nonfiction that is often defined by the “frame of the stage” (Martin 2). In this sense, there is typically a blurred boundary that separates reality from representation. This not only

creates an intimacy between the viewer and the performer, but it also relays the history in a compelling way to ensure that that intimacy is not lost too soon. In writing my own documentary theatre play about murder of Mireille Knoll, I had to address the question of which sources to select, as well as when and to what extent should I incorporate my own imaginative text, as well as whether or not the piece should call attention to its theatricality .

### **Theatre of the Real: Ethical Dilemmas**

In creating a play in this genre, one must also take into consideration the ethics behind the depiction of another's trauma. If one has not experienced such horror, it is difficult to wield any of the knowledge or awareness to write about it, and therefore have no right to do so. If an audience cannot be convinced that it is appropriate to be telling these stories, they can hardly be convinced that they should be watching it. Another issue in the staging of stories rooted in difficult topics such as genocide, sexual assault, or hate crimes, is that the audience is subjected to the same trauma that that occurred in the initial event, which could prove to be triggering or re-traumatizing. If the staging places the audience in the position of voyeurs, they are potentially being re-traumatized again and again with each performance, further perpetuating the cycle of horror and grief that began with the initial event.

Yet another issue of voyeurism lies in its potential for sensationalism -- of getting "pleasure" or entertainment out of watching someone else's pain. The only difference is that they lack the accountability that the perpetrators must carry with them; the viewer has the opportunity to have an "experience" and then leave the theatre without any



consequences. The spectator may leave the theatre feeling shocked, compassionate, or even angered at the performance they have just witnessed. This sense of empathy, however, "... is an unstable rhetorical stance that can function as an alibi for *lack* of action.. It can be '[a] way for us to feel [...] that we are not accomplices to what caused the suffering. Our sympathy proclaims our innocence as well as our impotence" (Hesford). Ideally, the voyeuristic atmosphere of being exposed to documentary theatre should force the theatre artists to question whether or not they are creating the piece for the right reasons, or, despite well-meaning intentions, they might not obtain the results they anticipated. Factors to be taken into consideration include the financial gains that the artists are reaping from the production, as well as whether or not their depiction serves to glorify themselves, rather than the living memory of the story itself. In the chapter that follows, I examine case studies of two different documentary theatre pieces that attempt to navigate these challenges.

### **Why These Plays?**

There is a vast array of theatre companies and individual artists worldwide to explore as models for influential documentary theatre-makers. From soloists like Spalding Gray to contemporary companies like The Civilians, the form has grown in popularity in the US over the last century from its humble beginnings around the era of the Great Depression, thanks in part to Living Newspapers. In a period in which literacy rates were poor, the Living Newspaper served as the great communicator, a performance rooted in current events. With its vast accessibility appealing to crowds of all backgrounds, the form earned notable reviews when it was soon adopted by The Federal

Theatre Project (Casson). “The dramatization of news stories had liveliness and vitality,” writes one reviewer. “... The two short plays were skillful intensifications of social problems, and [...] it was eminently successful acting for it gave an unusual sense of reality to the material it had at hand...” (Flanagan). Almost eighty years prior in Germany, *Woyzeck* playwright Georg Büchner wrote to his parents before his early death that a dramatic poet has a responsibility to “get as close as he can to history as it actually happened” (Edwards 133).

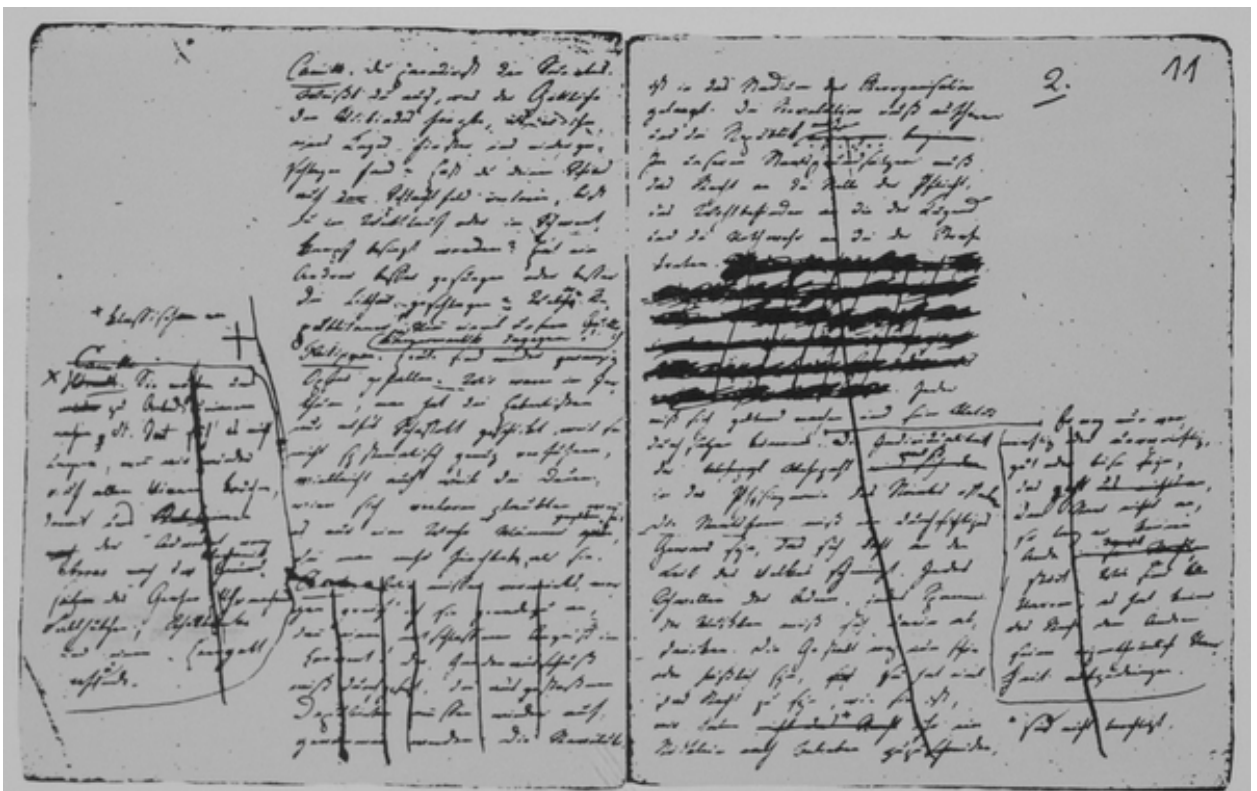


Figure 1: A page from one of Büchner’s manuscripts. July 28, 1835, Büchner writes to his family from Strasbourg, two years before his death at the age of 24. There, he laments the changes his editors have made to his manuscripts and refers to the dramatic poet as “nothing but a writer of history.” (Photo courtesy of the Georg Büchner Research Center)

In the introduction of Büchner’s play *Danton’s Death*, Manfred K. Kramer writes that “... the play is a historical drama; in view of the fact that Büchner quotes directly

from historical documents he has studied, it might even be called a documentary drama” (Dawson 3). This entry is one of the first concrete appearances in modern European theatre of the philosophy of the playwright to take on the role of historian as well. This notion evolved over the next hundred years to inspire monumental mainstream theatre artists such as Nola Chilton and, arguably one of the most well-known and most lauded documentary theatre makers, Anna Deavere Smith. With her works like the *Twilight: Los Angeles* and the Pulitzer-prize nominated *Fires in the Mirror*, Smith is notably one of the first American documentarians to bypass the use of historical documents and archival records. Instead, she engaged in active participation by interviewing members of the community and performing their words verbatim -- a large milestone in documentary theatre in the United States (Odendahl-James). While Smith’s legacy is undeniable, I have chosen to not include her works for the purposes of this thesis because of their monologue format. Smith’s presence on stage establishes herself as live mediator, omitting her own commentary to embody the various sides of a situation. While her performances demonstrate the ability to empathize and approach a topic from different perspectives, this model is very specific to a one-woman show.

In choosing to create an original piece of documentary theatre, my goal is to explore the motivations for a hate crime and the impact of the consequences on a community. For this reason I have chosen the work of two well-known examples of this type of documentary theatre: Emily Mann and Tectonic Theater Project. These quintessential masters habitually utilize both one-on-one interviews and historical documents to construct their pieces, which often revolve around isolated incidents of hate or intolerance in a community. Their individual layering of textual and non-textual

sequences creates a storytelling experience that has solidified them as experts in their field. Through an exploration of their respective plays *Greensboro (A Requiem)* and *The Laramie Project*, I will determine which of their techniques will be most useful in the construction of *La Vie Que J'avais Prévus*.

## Chapter Two: Case Studies

In this chapter, I will explore two published plays that were created using verbatim text and fall into the category of documentary theatre. Through a comparative analysis of *The Laramie Project* and *Greensboro (A Requiem)*, I seek to uncover if and how the respective creators produced an ethical depiction of the real-life events in their pieces. Considering that these plays each seek to tackle different societal prejudices (homophobia, racism, and anti-semitism) and depict hate crimes from different time periods, I will begin by analyzing the zeitgeist, or “spirit of the times,” of each piece.

The period in which art is created plays a major role in the structure of the product. *The Wizard of Oz*, for example, would be a very different film if it was made in 2018 rather than 1939, the height of the Great Depression. Perhaps the yellow brick road would more closely resemble a winding trail through a hot desert, the gates of the Emerald City replaced by a massive concrete border wall. Though the explicit meaning, or the artistic intentions of the creator(s), does not typically change with the passing of time, the implicit meaning, or audience interpretation, will always be different depending on the experiences of the individual spectator. Considering that the creation process does not occur within a vacuum, the state of the world is always bound to creep its way into the final product. For that reason, I examine the ways in which the aforementioned plays reflect the era in which they were constructed.

I will then continue to explore the process that each artist and/or company used to layer their found texts into the final product. In choosing to examine these two plays, I aim to analyze not only the forms and structures of the texts themselves, but also the processes of compiling them on behalf of the writers. I also seek to compare the approach

to the genre between Moisés Kaufman, (Artistic Director of Tectonic Theater,) and Emily Mann, two titans of American documentary theatre.

### ***The Laramie Project***

Firstly, I examine *The Laramie Project* because of its unique structure. A devised piece created over the course of several months by New York-based Tectonic Theater Project, *Laramie* depicts the story of several of the Tectonic artists traveling to Laramie, Wyoming to conduct interviews in the wake of the murder of University of Wyoming student Matthew Shepard. In the 1990s, gay bashing was certainly not a new crime. The AIDS Epidemic spread fear and “gay panic” across much of the United States, and in 1998 alone, the year of Shepard’s attack, there were over one-thousand *reported* homophobia-motivated hate crimes<sup>4</sup> across the United States (Kaufman et al. 178). When members of Tectonic Theater Project heard about the brutal attack of a college student in a sleepy little Western town, Artistic Director Moisés Kaufman suggested that a small team of company members should travel out to Laramie. Their ultimate goal was to create a piece surrounding not the attack itself, but rather its aftermath and how it effectively changed the town of Laramie. Inspired by the work of notable theatre artists such as Anna Deavere Smith and Emily Mann, the group conducted over two hundred interviews during their several trips to the town, on top of the hundreds of pages of court documents and newspaper articles that they perused (Kaufman et al. 179). The team even kept their own journals into order to document their personal thoughts and experiences

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<sup>4</sup> Shepard’s attack was ruled a hate crime soon after his death due to its brutal nature and the homophobic motivations of the two young perpetrators.

during the process. Little did they know that these journals would come to be one of the tools that make *The Laramie Project* so unique in the world of documentary theatre.

Despite *Laramie's* distinctive use of verbatim text, it also shares a key characteristic with many of the plays depicting the struggles of the LGBT+ community during this period of the late-20th century (*RENT*, *The Normal Heart*, *Angels in America*, etc.) Its focus on the narrative on the aftermath of an event, rather than the action of the event itself, is a large component of what makes the story so compelling. The opening scene begins nearly one month after the initial attack, informing the audience of the theater company's voyage out west to the small town. Though Shepard was the victim of the inciting incident, his role in the play is that of an unseen protagonist. There is never any depiction of the beating itself, nor any attempt to recreate the events of the evening of October 6, 1998. In the style that seems intrinsic to Tectonic's order of operations, the play diverts from falling down the obvious path. Rather, the company members conducted interviews with hundreds of people, many of whom never interacted directly with Shepard. This was, in part, due to the steadfast ruling of Artistic Director Kaufman, who, from the beginning, chose to explore the ripples that the murder had caused in Laramie, instead of the events leading up to it (Kaufman et al. 181). This philosophy struck a chord in the creation of *La Vie Que J'avais Prévüe*. In the discussion of the ethical dilemma of documentary theatre in chapter one, it is noted that the depiction of traumatic events on stage can perpetuate a cycle of horror by subjecting the viewer to the recreated trauma. By choosing to examine the consequences of the incident rather than the incident itself, one can circumvent that distress without sacrificing the valuable portrayal of its ramifications.

Another technique that the company utilizes is the key element of metatheatricality. Coupled with the verbatim text from interviews, court records, and newspapers, this dramatic tool is essential to *Laramie*'s ability to exist as both document and play. To exist exclusively as either one or the other would reduce to the work to nothing more than a newspaper clipping or, on the other end of the dramatic spectrum, another "based on a true story." Similarly to *Greensboro*, *Laramie* has a narrator, or group of narrators, that construct scenes before the viewers' very eyes, announcing the speaker and cluing the audience in on the timeline of events. For example, in order to contextualize the moment "McKinney and Henderson," a narrator first informs the audience of the speaker, "A friend of Aaron McKinney" (Kaufman 41). This metatheatrical use of narration not only helps the spectator to keep track of the dozens of characters that are interviewed over the course of the play, but it also is a reminder that they are watching a live re-enactment of that interview. By taking a moment to break the fourth wall and announce the character that the actor is about to inhabit, *Laramie* continues to refer back to its core principle that the depiction is just one interpretation of events. Moreover, the drama becomes not just about the event itself but the attempt to understand and then stage this investigation.

Another use of metatheatricality is perhaps the more obvious utilization of casting. Firstly, the company made the decision to use the aforementioned narrators, but cleverly wrote themselves into the play as these guides. In the final printing of the play, one can see real-life Tectonic Theater Project members Barbara Pitts, Moisés Kaufman, Amanda Gronich, etc. In the original production of the show, these people played themselves on stage, speaking words from their own journal entries that were kept during



their time in Laramie. Even in other productions that do not include Tectonic actors, they still are written as characters into the script. These characters are soon revealed to be double-cast with the townspeople of Laramie, Wyoming, allowing the actors the opportunity to transform before the audience into yet another person. In doing so, the actor becomes a character playing a character. This pointed decision to acknowledge the theatre-makers in the final product reminds the audience that the play is still, in fact, an artistic interpretation of the murder of Matthew Shepard and its aftermath. In the opening moment of the play, a narrator introduces the character of Greg Pierotti, who begins to speak:

My first interview was with Detective Sergeant Hing of the Laramie Police Department. At the start of the interview, he was sitting behind his desk, sitting something like this (*He transforms into St. Hing.*): I was born and raised here. My family is, uh, third generation. My grandparents moved here in the early 1900's. We've had basically three, well, my daughter makes it fourth generation.

(Kaufman et al 21)

Not only do these opening seconds contextualize the play's inclusion of its writers, it introduces the theatrical form of a character's seamless transition into a different person. Suddenly, the audience becomes aware that they are watching an actor play a character who is playing a character. This use of metatheatricality reinforces the play as a representation of a real event, rather than reality itself.

In a following scene, another "Journal Entries" moment provides insight into the company members' individual qualms about creating the play. A narrator introduces Stephen Belber, who explains, "Leigh told me the company was thinking of going out to

Laramie to conduct interviews and that they wanted me to come. But I'm hesitant. I have no real interest in prying into a town's unraveling" (Kaufman et al 24). Rather than ignore the fact that the company's story is a single interpretation of the narrative, the piece chooses to depict the struggles of individual company members in their attempts to "tell the truth" and showcase the real experiences of the citizens of the town. It is this self-referentiality, like the metatheatrical casting, that emphasizes Tectonic's focus on transforming the typical forms of the stage and theatricalizing the traditional into innovative forms.

Tectonic's mission when creating a new piece is divided into two distinct parts: examining the subject matter and exploring the theatrical language and form (Kaufman 12). A clear example of this exploration of the theatrical language in *The Laramie Project* is the usage of non-linear storytelling. Although the interviews may be arranged in an order similar to that which they were conducted, the chronology in which the audience receives information jumps back and forth. In the moment "Seeing Matthew," Detective Rob Debree describes his experience seeing Shepard in the hospital in critical condition: "... I went down to Poudre Valley where Matthew was and the thing that bothered me the most is seeing him, touching him. As a homicide detective, you look at bodies... I get this flash of seeing Matthew" (Kaufman et al 54-55). This dialogue is spliced between an account of Aaron Kreifels' acute anxiety after stumbling across the scene of the attack while on a bike ride: "It's not pleasant whatsoever. I don't want it to be there. I wanna like get it out. That's the biggest part for me is seeing that picture in your head" (Kaufman et al 55). These two monologues are then spliced once again by Reggie Fluty's

retrospective reflection on her first instincts when she arrived at the crime scene, followed immediately by her HIV diagnosis approximately thirty-six hours later:

It was just an overwhelming amount of blood... and we try to wear protective gloves, but we had a really cheap Sheriff at the time, and he bought us shit gloves, you know, you put 'em on, you put 'em on, and they keep breaking, so finally you just ran out of gloves, you know... Probably a day and a half later the hospital called me and told me Matthew had HIV. And the doctor said, "You've been exposed, and you've had a bad exposure." (Kaufman et al 55-56)

These three events take place side-by-side, or within the same page and a half of text. Though they did not actually happen in the order in which they are presented in the play, Kaufman and the company cleverly sequence them together to emphasize their dramatic functions. Individually, each account is about the concrete, personal experience that the speaker has about seeing the beaten body of Matthew Shepard. Combined together, however, they become three pieces of the same abstract whole: the horror of an image of a human body so disturbing that it is ingrained in your mind's eye. This is just one example of textual sequencing that Tectonic uses over the course of *Laramie*. The skillful matching of text that conveys similar meanings is a signature of Kaufman's masterful understanding of the power of layering within a play.

*The Laramie Project* has had an immense cultural impact on both documentary theatre and the onstage representation of LGBT community alike. Tectonic was able to foster an environment of healing in opening up a public space for the townspeople to grieve, unpack, and express their interpretations of Matthew Shepard's death on the small town. The first two fundamental elements of a documentary play, "a desire to reinstate

the voices and experiences of those written out of history [...] a belief that the words of individuals telling their stories can provide a powerful corrective to the mediatized versions of reality claiming legitimacy [...]” (Ben-Zvi) are both achieved as demonstrated by the juxtaposition between the two narratives represented: the vast media coverage of Shepard’s life and death and the deep repercussions of the crime on the people of Laramie. The third element, “...a recognition of the power of performance to challenge the master narratives and discourses of history,” (Ben-Zvi) is not entirely present, considering that the status of the hate crime was mostly undisputed; the Laramie, Tectonic, and the rest of the world knew that it had been because Shepard was gay.

***Greensboro (A Requiem)***

On November 3, 1979, a parade of neo-Nazis and KKK members suddenly ambushed a public assembly in a residential neighborhood of Greensboro, firing dozens of shots into the crowd, killing five people and wounding several others. Longtime Artistic Director of McCarter Theater in Princeton, NJ, Emily Mann was already an experienced documentary playwright, having published *Still Life* in 1982. Mann, a descendant of Holocaust victims, told the *New York Times* in 1996 that she chose to research the blitz in Greensboro because, as an artist, she is compelled by “... the people, places, and language of social conflict” (Clendinen). This particular social conflict went unnoticed for many years due to its proximity to the beginning of the Iranian hostage crisis, unlike *Laramie*, which was covered widely by the media. Finally, in the early 1990’s, NBC contacted Mann, curious to if she would be interested in writing this story as a television script instead of a play. After her partnership with NBC ended

unexpectedly, she returned to the theatrical drawing board, so to speak, eventually publishing the piece in 1996.

Mann's inclination towards a cinematic approach to documentary theatre is apparent in her own work. When prompted to describe the form, she says, "I usually ask them if they have seen any documentary films. Almost everyone has. I say, well that's what I do. I go out and I find the event. I go to the place. I do a lot of work on it. I do a lot of research on it. I interview a whole lot of people. I find documents that don't have to do with that. Then I construct a play out of that. I'm working from life and it's very personal" (Dawson 5). This hunger for the personal carries its way across the pages of plays like *Greensboro* with its interview subjects ranging from the family members of those killed to members of the Klan itself. Mann works alone, meticulously collecting data and cataloguing it to be assembled at a later date. While the piece cuts back and forth in time like *Laramie*, *Greensboro* lacks the theatricality that Tectonic implements in their work. The majority of the story is told through text, although the incorporation of mixed-media paints a clear picture of setting for the viewer. These elements function as tools to show a 360 degree analysis of the singular event of the KKK's ambush on protestors, switching back and forth between victim account and Klan members courtroom testimony. Rather than delving into the deeper cultural consequences of the incident, the narrative obsessively attempts to present every possible perspective of the same incident. To that end, Mann aims to deliver the information to the audience to be up for interpretation, providing them a truly in-depth portrayal of the events of the riot, vacant of agenda. One method of doing so comes in the opening lines of the play, which come

barreling at the audience like a slew of bullets, spoken by a grouping of individuals that quickly grows into a crowd:

"For a hundred years, the Klan has beaten,"

"Murdered and raped."

"They have shot and lynched thousands of black people --"

"Tarred and feathered black and white union organizers --"

"Ridden in the night shooting into people's homes."

"How do we fight these dogs?"

"They should be physically beaten and chased out of town."

"This is the only language they understand!"

[...]

"Death to the Klan! Death to the Klan!" (Mann 254-255)

With this charged beginning, the stakes are immediately raised. The playwright's skillful ability to piece together a plethora of voices into a single stream-of-consciousness conversation is a key tool in making the audience feel included in the narrative, as if they are a part of this crowd. In later scenes, Klan members like David Matthews discuss their individual experiences of the massacre. "There were some innocent people shot, I reckon, as I'm told, anyway. But I was shooting at the [n\*\*gers]" (Mann 296). The stark contrast between accounts lie clearly between both rhetoric and tone. The cool, calm, and

collected, Matthews brags about his crimes, as opposed to the jarring demonstration in the opening scene. His separation of “innocent people” and black protestors furthers the disparity between himself and non-Klan member characters. Even minor details such as these contrasts showcase Mann’s own masterful technique of layering her found text to heighten the situation being depicted. By juxtaposing characters with opposing perspectives, she is able to highlight both parties and define their protagonistic or antagonistic traits more clearly -- a technique that proved to be vital in *La Vie Que J’avais Prévüe*.

Mann’s process is conducted much like that of a journalist researching for their next article. Once the content has been gathered, her “‘theatre of testimony’ [...] is then shaped and theatricalized, but not altered, and presented in performance by actors” (Benzvi). Her after-that-fact work does not often give her the same sort of privileges that Tectonic experienced in the creation of *The Laramie Project*, such as the writing of the play during the legal proceedings, allowing writers to follow the real-life narrative arc as it was happening<sup>5</sup>. Replicating this research process would naturally be difficult for an independent documentary playwright like Mann who conceived *Greensboro* a decade after the proceedings, and so her one-on-one interviews and access to court transcripts are both more dated and limited. Her focus, however, remains on the event itself, rather than the lack of societal consequences, such as the defendants’ narrow escape from serving any time. However, this fixation on the massacre sometimes drifts the narrative into a staleness, leaving the audience yearning for more. Though the attachment to the inciting

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<sup>5</sup> Through the revenue from their production of *Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde*, the company was able to fly out to Wyoming to be present for these events as they unfolded in real-time.

incident feels redundant at times, Mann emphasizes its purpose: to ensure that the audience returns to their life with the events of the play burned into their memory, as opposed to *Laramie*, which was unlikely to have been forgotten any time soon. After the overshadowing of the event, it is clear why Mann depicts such a limited scope of the event -- in order to engrave the names of those affected in history, rather than just faceless victims of the Klan's tyranny. They will not forget what unfolded in Greensboro, the play concludes. In Mann's own words, "No one's getting off easy here" (Clendinen). With this sentiment, the playwright solidifies her stance on the purpose of her play, which achieves all three of the key principles of a documentary theatre play. With its "... desire to reinstate the voices and experiences of those written out of history [...] a belief that the words of individuals telling their stories can provide a powerful corrective to the mediatized versions of reality claiming legitimacy [...] and a recognition of the power of performance to challenge the master narratives and discourses of history," *Greensboro* manages to represent a story that would have otherwise been buried with time.



### **Chapter Three: Praxis and Analysis**

Prior to the discovery of documentary theatre, I struggled greatly to find a form that felt appropriate for the subject matter of my in-process play. Without the guiding principle of found text to inform my writing, I quickly fell into the trap of creating an alternative, fictionalized narrative of events. Beginning with a made-up granddaughter-of-Mireille character and ultimately concluding with several short sequences of non-textual moments that took the audience on a silent tour of Paris, that idea was scrapped soon thereafter. Upon being introduced to the documentary style, however, I quickly found inspiration in the compelling real-life narrative surrounding the rising Anti-Semitic hate crimes in France.

Documentary theatre almost always takes its narratives from significant events. Whether it be an economic crash, a civil war, or an assassination attempt, the questions that each play poses are motivated by the three elements mentioned in chapter one: “a desire to reinstate the voices and experiences of those written out of history [...] a belief that the words of individuals telling their stories can provide a powerful corrective to the mediatized versions of reality claiming legitimacy [...] and a recognition of the power of performance to challenge the master narratives and discourses of history” (Ben-Zvi). By narrowing the focus of the topic to that of a hate crime, the play is able to explore both the lead up to the incident as well as its denouement -- the impact on those directly and indirectly involved. Contemporary documentary inspired me with its combining of intentions from history; its original purpose with the Living Newspaper was to inform the illiterate masses of current events, while artists like Buchner argued that it served to

remind people of the past. With this thesis, I sought out both with this form: to bring awareness in addition to memorializing.

### **The Research Process**

In his preface to *The Laramie Project*, Moisés Kaufman writes that he came to a great realization when conducting research for the play's predecessor, *Gross Indecency*: “[I] was struck,” he says, “by the clarity with which [the transcripts] illuminated an entire culture. In these pages we can see... the ideologies, idiosyncrasies, and philosophies that formed the pillars of that culture and ruled their lives” (Kaufman 11). In this observation, Kaufman asserts that it is, indeed, in the documentation of events that culture is preserved, but it is in the dramatization of events that culture is remembered. To that end, there are sometimes occurrences that shake the world awake; they have the power to begin a dialogue surrounding the way that we as a population see the differences between us. With *La Vie Que J'avais Prévüe*, the inciting incident is recent, having occurred less than one year ago. There are still people alive who have been directly affected by the death of Mireille Knoll. However, the cultural impact that her death is not an isolated force, but rather a piece of something bigger. That is to say, the play is not just about the murder of a single woman; Mireille Knoll is just one microcosm of an epidemic of intolerance against Jews in France. *La Vie Que J'avais Prévüe* recognizes this intolerance and seeks to juxtapose the persecution of French Jews during the Holocaust and the culpability that France chooses to claim.

In order to expose myself to a wide range of voices, the methodology of compiling data to include in my play was based mainly through the online newspaper

network. That is to say, it was increasingly easy to gather information with the help of *The New York Times*' suggested article links, for example. For every piece of writing on Mireille Knoll that I found, three additional stories appeared at the bottom of the webpage as potential next steps. I began to use international sources such as *Le Figaro* to delve into the French point of view, not only on this isolated attack, but on the rise of Anti-Semitic attacks across the country. Perusing through interviews with the family, friends, and neighbors of Ms. Knoll, I found many corresponding accounts of utter shock in the wake of the crime. As I began to piece together these interviews, I began to notice great discrepancies between reality and what was being marketed as reality to the news outlets by several major French politicians. One of the most apparent contradictions came from Marine Le Pen, daughter of Jean-Marie Le Pen and President of right-wing group Le Front National. Various Twitter threads and online message boards confirmed that she had been unofficially banned from the vigil for Ms. Knoll in response to prior comments she had made denying the culpability of the French government in the Holocaust. This inconsistency in what the people of France consider the history of Anti-Semitism in their country piqued my interest, and I began to search for more examples of disparity between the two groups: civilians and politicians.

When it came to research, it was crucial to separate fact from fiction, truth from opinion. According to historian Louis Gottschalk, when one chooses to write about history, it is that person's responsibility to complete four core steps: "... seek out records; critically examine these records; interpret the information culled; and present the results as accurately as possible for the purpose of 'writing up'" (Qtd. in Dawson xvii). Within that third step of "interpretation," one can look to the philosophy of drama scholar

Richard Courtney. In his own words, "... to be regarded as genuine educational research, historical inquiry should be: rational and objective, accurate, based on primary sources, and supported by secondary evidence" (xvii) In other words, the interpretation should be impartial, and the impartiality should be based on fact alone. It is, then, difficult to create a piece rooted in fact with an art form that is steeped in making pretend. With *La Vie Que J'avais Prévüe*, I wanted to use the facts I had compiled and present them as they were, allowing any dramatic interpretation to be left to the audience. It is not my job, I finally decided, to make these events "exciting." It is only my job to tell a story as it happened to the best of my ability.

As my work with Tectonic Theater Project continued over the course of the spring of 2019, I was met with an unprecedented new outlook on the types of narrative structure that I had previously used in playwriting. My learned instinct to tie up a play into a neat little bow had slowly yet suddenly diminished. I found myself yearning for open-ended questions, for scenes that finish and make the audience think, not merely react. The phrase, "We don't want it to *make sense*," etched itself into every corner of my brain as I compiled scenes and dialogue together. This, of course, is more complex than one is led to believe. To give an illustration, it is simple enough to say "Bigotry is bad and here is why;" it is a concrete ideology that leaves little room for debate. In my own praxis of a documentary play, the organizing principle is not a statement, but rather a question: What happens once history begins to repeat itself? With this in mind, the question allows the performer to present content as it is without attempting to impose meaning on it for the viewer. By allowing a conclusion to be drawn organically by the individual, the play

opens itself to experience greater longevity, rather than conveying a single message that may fade from relevance with time.

### **Rehearsal & Performance**

Though I did not initially anticipate a live reading of any of the final pièce, the opportunity arose to perform an excerpt from *La Vie Que J'avais Prévüe* during the Drew Day of Scholars event on the fifth of April 2019. The first task soon became the question of content; without performing the entirety of the script, the reading would have to depict an appropriate range of the narrative in order to paint a full enough picture of the play in a limited time frame.

Another question lay in the casting of the wide range of characters. In the spirit of the many characters of both *The Laramie Project* and *Greensboro (A Requiem)*, the *dramatis personae* of my piece is extensive. In the case of the former, Tectonic conducted over two hundred interviews with the citizens of the town during their research process, resulting in a plethora of voices in the script. For Emily Mann, her use of both historical documents and live interviews also contributed to a considerable amount of characters, many of which make up entire crowds of protestors in certain scenes. My own research consisted of almost entirely of verbatim text from historical documents rather than a vast array of subject interviews, thus limiting the amount of roles found in the text. Although I did conduct a handful of interviews, newspapers articles, public speeches, and the like provided more valuable content due to the geographical distance between myself and the primary subjects in France.

Once I was able to get a team of actors into the room, I was able to face the logistical obstacles that were not immediately apparent when they were merely on the page. One difficulty, for example, was the casting. The aforementioned list of dramatis personae proved to be more extensive than that of the available actors. Double-casting became a necessity in order to pull off a reading of several scenes. Typically in a play, characters do not have to be introduced upon entry, either to the audience or to the other players on stage. Just as in life, names and expositional information arise naturally over time through dialogue. In a documentary play such as this, however, in which actors are constantly switching back and forth between characters for single lines, it was essential to identify each person as they came and went. Like *Greensboro's* opening scene, the quick-pacing was key to a heightened presentation of the dialogue, but the identities of the speakers are essential to their interactions with each other.

Another logistical dilemma that arose in rehearsal was that of the translations. In an ideal world, *La Vie Que J'avais Preue* would be performed for French students studying the language and cultures. However, it was clear that the audience for the Drew Day of Scholars may very well be entirely comprised of English-speakers. Without the time to design twenty pages worth of translated projections, it became clear that we would have to adapt in order to keep the audience engaged and present with the text. The most straightforward answer seemed to be to simply read each translation aloud alongside the French. The layering of these texts was difficult, as they would have to be read over each other to maintain the pacing of the dialogue. I asked the actors to play with their volume in relation to each other, starting the French in a stage voice and then dropping it down to a low murmur when the English translation came in a few moments later.

## Conclusion

It would be simple enough to create a play about the attack of Mireille Knoll. The process would typically follow the form of most Western contemporary plays: a playwright would write for a given amount of time and produce a fictionalized script. This script would be handed off to a director and producer, who would cast actors, hire designers, and rehearse the words, the movements, and the technical aspects of the play. The finished product would open to an audience, who would watch it, clap, and then return to their respective homes. End of play. However, the shift to creating more postmodern work at the end of the twentieth century found this model poised to be toppled, and theatre artists that hungered for more “experimental” work began toying with new approaches to create their plays. Artistic Director Moisés Kaufman explains that

This [traditional] method is very well suited for some forms of theater, like realism and naturalism, but not so for others. It is also well suited to a capitalist economy because it is cost effective: it streamlines both the creative process and the costs of production. First, one artist develops a play (inexpensive); once the play is written, actors and directors come together in a room to rehearse (more expensive); and once they move into the theater, the production is “dressed up” with all the appropriate theatrical elements—sets, costumes, lights, sound, etc. (most expensive). It’s very efficient, because it avoids large expenses until as late as possible. But is it always the most creatively effective process? (Kaufman et al. 34).

Drawing from the experiences of professional companies like Tectonic is endlessly helpful to other documentary playwrights, serving as a guide to other documentary playwrights and informing the future of this work with an array of techniques. However, for all the similarities that Emily Mann and Tectonic Theater Project share, there are just as many differences. Obviously Mann, a solo artist, does not have the sort of organic, guided toolbox that is Moment Work, and therefore relies heavily on the dramaturgical approach to creation. She arranges each piece of text with great care, resulting in a highly-detailed final product that is able to encapsulate virtually every aspect of November 3, 1979. She sheds light on a story that would have otherwise gone untold, while Tectonic, for lack of a better word, exploits a story that was already on the cover of newspapers across the country. Despite the company's vast breadth of experience and knowledge on the subject of creating documentary theatre, Tectonic is not infallible when it comes to its processes. Primarily, there lies an ethical dilemma within the very compilation of *Laramie*. Aside from the fact that several artists from Tectonic identify as members of the LGBT+ community, the company has no direct connection to the death of Matthew Shepard. They are not from Laramie and have no link to any of the people in the town. In other words, one could argue that they are merely a group of people who flocked to a tragedy in order to capitalize on the trauma of the town in the wake of Shepard's attack. Because Laramie was thrown into the national spotlight in late 1998, the "heat" that Kaufman and company felt could be interpreted as the scent for publicity. With this in mind, it is crucial to keep one's own process in check when investigating sensitive topics such as hate crimes for the sake of a documentary play, taking care to not colonize the story of another. The New York company manages to rebalance the scale in



their favor, however, by acknowledging the very potential to exploit or misrepresent this story.

Moreover, the company takes pains with their respectful and thorough emphasis on the community of Laramie as a whole, no matter their feelings toward the Shepard attack. Tectonic gives the people of Laramie the space to work through their trauma without imposing explicit meaning onto their words. It does not attempt to recreate the events of October 6, but rather, makes the audience aware that they occurred and open up the lens to see the deep repercussions.

This element is key for the construction of *La Vie Que J'avais Prévüe*. In other words, "... without a self-conscious emphasis on the vicissitudes of textuality and discourse, such a play can too easily become disingenuous exercises in the presentation of 'truth', failing (or refusing?) to acknowledge their own highly selective manipulation of opinion and rhetoric" (Dawson 57-58). For this reason, it is crucial for the spectator to be made aware that they are not witnessing real events, but rather a recreation of them. Of course, theatre is almost always framed within the understanding of falsehood. Audiences recognize that they are not buying tickets to see the live assassination of a Roman emperor who has somehow been resurrected and brought to the present only to be murdered once more.

The process of writing this thesis has created a final product in the form of a play, a concrete result at the end of an academic exploration. However, the primary objective was not to prove that documentary theatre is effective, nor to prove the most useful techniques for creating a piece of such. Rather, I aimed to conduct an exploration of preexisting techniques in the hopes to understand the process as a theatre artist. Of

course, creating this piece does not change the past. It does not resurrect Mireille Knoll, it does not undo the Anti-Semitism that the Jews of France have suffered. Documentary theatre cannot retroactively alter these events, but it can redirect the future of the past: the way in which it is remembered, the way in which it is perceived. This recontextualization of the horrors of yesterday open the perspective of the spectator, allowing them to shift their involvement from bystander to participant.

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Appendix A

*La Vie Que J'avais Prévüe*

or

*The Life I Had Imagined*

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Personnages

**Student**

**François Hollande**, former President of France

**Marine Le Pen**, President of Le Front National

**Josh Simon\*\***, an American Jew, early 20's

**Interviewer**

**Daniel Knoll**, son of Mireille

**Allan Knoll**, son of Mireille

**Joanna Galilli**, a Parisian Jew in her late 20's

**Michel Serfaty**, a French rabbi

**Ahmet Ogras**, president of the French Council of the Muslim Faith

**Jonathan Benarousse**, a Jewish victim of an attack

\*\*Name changed

Note: The role of the Student and the Interviewer should be double-cast

Scene: A STUDENT enters from UR.  
S/he crosses to CS and begins to pray.

STUDENT

*Yitgadal v'yitkadash sh'mei raba. B'alma di v'ra chirutei, v'yamlich malchutei,  
b'chayeichon uv'yomeichon uv'chayei d'chol beit Yisrael,  
baagala uviz'man kariv. V'im'ru: Amen.*

*Y'hei sh'mei raba m'varach l'alam ul'almei almaya.*

*Yitbarach v'yishtabach v'yitpaar v'yitromam v'yitnasei, v'yit'hadar v'yitaleh  
v'yit'halal sh'mei d'Kud'sha B'rich Hu, l'eila min kol birchata v'shirata, tushb'chata  
v'nechemata, daamiran b'alma. V'imru: Amen.*

*Y'hei sh'lama raba min sh'maya, v'chayim aleinu v'al kol Yisrael. V'imru: Amen.*

*Oseh shalom bimromav, Hu yaaseh shalom aleinu, v'al kol Yisrael. V'imru:  
Amen.*

Beat.

STUDENT (CONT'D)

French is a lot similar to Hebrew, more similar than you'd probably realize at first. It's the *rchhhh*. It's counterintuitive, really, because of the shape that your mouth has to make in order to form the sounds, or maybe rather your tongue. Like being choked.

STUDENT removes a folded up newspaper from their inner pocket and unfurls it. They open it deliberately to a specific article and begin to read.

STUDENT (CONT'D)

“Early on a Thursday morning in July 1942, more than 4,000 police officers set out in pairs through the streets of occupied Paris, carrying arrest orders for scores of Jewish men, women and children. Within days, 13,152 people had been rounded up for deportation to death camps. No more than 100 would survive. The 70th anniversary of that dark episode — known as the Vel d'Hiv roundup, after the arena where many of those arrested were taken — has brought a flurry of commemorations this month, with official ceremonies, museum exhibits, wide news media coverage and an address by President François Hollande.”

HOLLANDE enters UL and addresses  
an invisible crowd.

HOLLANDE

La vérité, a-t-il dit, c'est que le crime fut commis en France, par la France.

*Projection: "To the Jewish martyrs of  
the Vélodrome d'Hiver, we owe the  
truth about what happened 70 years  
ago. The truth is that the crime was  
committed in France, by France."*

HOLLANDE exits UL.

STUDENT

Perhaps most telling, though, is a modest installation at the municipal hall of the Third Arrondissement in central Paris, where the national police are exhibiting for the first time the documents that record the operation in cold administrative detail. Beneath the hall's marble pillars and gilded cupola, visitors can examine the nine-page police circular, marked secret, that specified non-French Jews as the targets of the operation, men ages 16 to 60 and women 16 to 55. 'Children of less than 16 years will be led away at the same time as the parents,' the yellowing paper reads. Also on display is a note dated July 21, 1942, five days after the roundup began, pronouncing a grim arithmetic: "Men: 3,118; women: 5,919; children: 4,115; or in total: 13,152 arrests. Maurice Papon, for instance, a former Vichy administrator, served as Paris police prefect after the war, before being convicted in 1998 of complicity in Nazi crimes against humanity. The first official recognition of broad French culpability for the Vel d'Hiv roundup came only in 1995, when President Jacques Chirac, on the anniversary of the operation, spoke of the nation's 'collective wrongdoing.'"

End of scene.



SCENE

JOSH SIMON sits across a large desk facing DS. The INTERVIEWER sets up a recording device on the table, crosses DSR, and turns to face the table.

INTERVIEWER

So... what happened?

SIMON

Well, we kind of wandered into it; I'd been there before years ago. But it was cool, it was a happy accident. I very much like the neighborhood. It's a very Jewish neighborhood, you can tell.

INTERVIEWER

Where?

SIMON

In Paris.

INTERVIEWER

No, but what neighborhood?

SIMON

I don't know the name of the -- I don't even know what arrondissement it's in. It's... if the river is parallel and you're on the north end, so think of it like that. It's a little bit east of the Louvre. It's in the city centre, though.

INTERVIEWER

Okay. So you guys were just walking?

SIMON

Yeah. We were trying to go... where were we going? I forget 'cause you met up with that person at Notre Dame. And then I lost Saad somewhere, and then... oh, I met up with you in the Louvre. But we were just walking around and trying to find something to eat. And we ended up there.

INTERVIEWER

And you guys stayed in that neighborhood?

SIMON

For a little bit. We just wandered around. I saw this interesting picture that I wanted to get for my parents, but it was too expensive. It was a swimming contest, and Moses won because he just split the water and walked through it.

They both laugh.

INTERVIEWER

So you guys were walking and the guy...?

SIMON

Oh, the Brooklyn guy.

INTERVIEWER

Yeah.

SIMON

He was most likely a scammer of some sort, but somehow he knew I was Jewish. He went up to me and was like, "it's Shabbat." I forgot it was a Friday and --

INTERVIEWER

He said that it was Shabbat?

SIMON (CONT'D)

Yeah. He tried to give me these weird candle things, which I think is an Orthodox thing. He put this weird thing on my head and at first I was playing along with it, but then I realized he was trying to make us buy it. I was like, "Nope, I'm good."

INTERVIEWER

So he was from Brooklyn?

SIMON

I swear to God this guy spoke perfect English. I'm confused why he was in Paris, but he did not sound French at all.

INTERVIEWER

So he tried to give you guys stuff?

SIMON

He put it in our hands and was probably going to make us pay, but I'm used to that sort of thing. I've been around big cities before.

INTERVIEWER

And what was he saying to you?

SIMON

He was just saying things about Shabbat, that I need things, I need these things. And then he was like, "get some for your parents, too," and I was like "no."

INTERVIEWER

And why do you think he thought you were Jewish?

SIMON

A lot of people have told me I look stereotypically Jewish. My hair was particularly long, my beard was thick, so I look very European Jew. Dark hair, thick beard, very long curly hair.

INTERVIEWER

Did he say anything to Saad?

SIMON

He said, "What about your friend?" I said, "No, he's good. He's not Jewish." And that was it, we just walked away. I told him "Shabbat Shalom."

JOSH SIMON stands up from the table on the last line and crosses SL. He is in the street, walking. He passes JOANNA GALILLI.

GALILLI

L'antisémitisme est assez élevé. Vous le ressentez énormément. Ils crachent quand je marche dans la rue.

*Projection: "Anti-semitism is pretty high, and you feel it enormously. They spit when I walked in the street."*

SERFATY

Je l'ai moi-même constaté. Jour après jours, des insultes, et finalement les gens s'exclament, «Trop c'est trop, on s'en va. »

*Projection: "I've seen it myself. Day after day, the insults, and finally people say, 'Right, that's it, we're leaving.'"*

OGRAS

C'était un fourre-tout. Nous avons été choqués. Ils doivent arrêter de pointer du doigt les musulmans. Pourquoi n'étudient-ils pas l'islamophobie dans la communauté juive?

*Projection: "It was a grab bag. We were shocked. They have to stop putting the blame on Muslims. Why don't they do studies of Islamophobia in the Jewish community?"*

JONATHAN BENAROUSSE steps forward. He is testifying to an unseen jury.

BENAROUSSE

Quatre ans après, c'est encore très douloureux. C'est votre vie qui est détruite. Je pense à Ilan Halimi. J'ai peur qu'ils nous torturent. (to OGRAS) Et je ne veux pas que d'autres citoyens, dans ce pays, aient peur d'être ce qu'ils sont. Ceux qu'on agresse chez eux parce qu'ils sont juifs, en général, ne survivent pas. J'ai senti la haine. Ils ont dit en parlant de mes parents --

*Projection: "Four years later, it is still very painful. It is my life that is destroyed. I'm thinking of Ilan Halimi. I'm afraid they're torturing us. And I do not want other citizens in this country to be afraid of being who they are. Those who are attacked at home because they are Jewish, in general, do not survive. I feel*

*hatred. They said when talking about my parents --"*

OGRAS (as attacker)

*Ils sont où, les vieux juifs?*

*Projection: "Where are they, the old Jews?"*

BENAROUSSE

*Ils ont parlé du rond que mon père portait sur la tête. Ils ont tout cassé, arraché la mezouza. Ils ont dit --*

*Projection: "They talked about the kippah my father was wearing on his head. They broke everything, snatched the mezuzah. They said --"*

OGRAS (as attacker)

*On va les gazer. Me prends pas pour un con? Les juifs, ça ne met pas l'argent à la banque.*

*Projection: "We will gas them. You take me for an idiot? Jews do not put money in the bank."*

BENAROUSSE

*Ils m'ont demandé si elle m'avait déjà trompé. Et, pour me montrer que j'étais qu'une merde, pour m'humilier, ils l'ont violée. Ce n'est pas la vie que j'avais prévue.*

*Projection: "They asked me if she had ever deceived me. And, to show me that I was a shit, to humiliate me, they raped her. It's not the life I planned."*

STUDENT enters and counters BENAROUSSE. STUDENT begins to pray. After one round, BENAROUSSE joins in, transforming back into another STUDENT.

STUDENT

Aveinu malkeinu, chaneinu v'aneinu  
Aveinu malkeinu, chaneinu v'aveinu  
Ki ain banu ma'aseem

STUDENT & BENAROUSSE

Asei imanu tzedaka va'chesed  
Asei imanu tzedaka va'chesed  
V'choshianu

As they sing, more voices join in,  
creating a congregation behind them.

ALL

Aveinu malkeinu, chaneinu v'aneinu  
Aveinu malkeinu, chaneinu v'aveinu  
Ki ain banu ma'aseem

As the song begins to fade out, the  
lights lower with it.

Scene: JOSH SIMON sits on the curb and pulls a newspaper from the street. He reads aloud from it.

SIMON

“At 89 years old, Sarah Lichtsztejn-Montard is one of the few survivors of the Vél d'Hiv roundup --”

SARAH enters and slowly makes her way downstage in the silence. She is fragile yet elegant, and takes in the audience as SIMON continues to speak.

“-- one of a handful of people who managed to escape from the stadium-turned-internment camp in the summer of 1942. In 1942 Sarah was just 14 years old. The Polish-born teenager lived with her mother in a modest apartment in the 20th arrondissement of Paris. Her father, Moise, had been arrested in July 1941 and sent to the Pithiviers internment camp, from which he had managed to escape. He was hiding in a room in Paris and using false papers.”

As he is speaking this, SARAH begins to transform before our very eyes. She slowly straightens up, and suddenly she becomes 14 years-old.

“On July 15, Sarah and her classmates were celebrating the last day of school before the summer holidays. That day, a Jewish classmate told her that her parents ‘knew a police commissioner who told them that he was preparing a massive roundup of women, children and old men.’”

SARAH

*(to SIMON)*

Elle a ajouté qu'ils quittaient leur appartement et que je devrais en faire autant.

*Projection: “She added that they were leaving their apartment and that I should do the same.”*

SARAH begins to slowly make her way across the stage.

SARAH (cont'd)

Maman répétait : 'Mais ce n'est pas possible en France d'arrêter des femmes et des enfants. Pour elle, c'était le pays des droits de l'Homme. Elle s'est assoupie. À 6 heures du matin, on a cogné à la porte. Elle s'est réveillée en sursaut et elle a crié : 'Qu'est-ce que c'est ?'

*Projection: "Mama kept saying, 'But that's not possible in France, to arrest women and children.' To her, this was the country of human rights. She dozed off. At six in the morning, there was a rap at the door. She woke with a start and shouted, 'What is it?'"*

SIMON

"Two French policemen, a plainclothes inspector and a peacekeeper burst into the apartment and ordered them to get their belongings. At the request of the Nazi regime, the French authorities had just launched a massive roundup of Jews in Paris and the suburbs. Maria Lichtsztejn tried to resist, but without success."

SARAH

Ils ont mis les scellés sur la porte comme pour des délinquants. Mon enfance s'est écroulée à ce moment-là. Jusque-là, j'avais toujours pensé que les grandes personnes avaient raison, mais là, ce n'était plus le cas.

*Projection: "They put tape across the door as if we were criminals. That was the end of my childhood as I knew it. Until then, I had always thought that grown-ups were always right, but now I knew that was not the case."*

SIMON

"Some 13,152 men, women and children were arrested in the space of two days."

SARAH

Certains avaient mis des affaires dans des draps, d'autres portaient des matelas d'enfants. Les parents étaient complètement affolés, l'air hagard. Ils tenaient à bout de bras des petits mal réveillés qui pleuraient, le tout entouré par des policiers. C'était un choc terrible. Je n'ai vu que la police française arrêter des familles entières ce jour-là.

*Projection: "Some people put their things in sheets, others carried children's mattresses. Parents were*



*completely panic-stricken and looked haggard. They were holding little children, who were awake, crying, surrounded by policemen. It was a terrible shock. I only saw the French police arresting families that day.”*

#### SIMON

“Sarah and her mother were first driven for an hour to a garage on the corner of Belleville and Pyrénées streets. They were then pushed onto a French public bus. The bus crossed Paris. Not far from the Eiffel Tower on Nélaton Street, the vehicle stopped near the entrance to the Vél d'Hiv – where sporting shows and competitions usually took place – and ‘unloaded its cargo’”.

#### SARAH

Il y avait déjà 5 000 (cinq mille) personnes. C'était épouvantable. Il y avait un brouhaha horrible. Des enfants couraient partout, mais dans les gradins, les parents étaient silencieux. Il y avait surtout cette puanteur atroce. Les quelques toilettes ont été rapidement bouchées. J'ai même vu des adultes faire leurs besoins un peu partout. La nuit, je voyais les petits fantômes verts du Vél d'Hiv. À l'intérieur, il y avait une grande verrière peinte en bleue pour protéger le bâtiment des bombardements. Cela donnait une lumière glauque et les gens qui étaient assis là avaient un air verdâtre."

*Projection: “There were already 5,000 people in there. It was dreadful. There was a horrible hubbub. Children were running around, but the parents in the stands were silent. There was an atrocious smell. The few toilets were quickly clogged. I saw adults go to the bathroom everywhere. At night, I saw the little green ghosts of the Vél d'Hiv. Inside, there was a large blue-painted canopy to protect the building from bombs. It gave off a glaucous light and the people who sat there had a greenish look about them.”*

#### SARAH (cont'd)

Quand on demandait aux flics ce qu'ils allaient faire de nous, ils nous répondaient qu'on allait être envoyé pour travailler en Allemagne.

*Projection: "When we asked the police what they were going to do with us, they told us that we were going to be sent to work in Germany."*

SIMON

"But the arrival of old people and people in wheelchairs later that evening appeared to contradict this story."

SARAH

Ma mère me dit: "On nous a menti. Ils préparent quelque chose de très mauvais. On ne peut pas faire travailler ces gens-là. Nous devons nous sauver !" Elle me suppliait du regard. Moi, j'étais très timide. J'essayais de me glisser derrière les agents de police, mais on me repoussait toujours vers l'intérieur.

*Projection: "'We've been lied to,' said my mother. 'They are preparing something really bad. You can't make those people work. We have to escape!' She begged me to look for help. I was very shy. I tried to slip behind the police, but I was constantly pushed inside."*

SIMON

"Near the entrance to the camp, she heard some horrifying stories from earlier in the day."

SARAH

Une femme racontait à une autre que sa voisine s'était jetée du troisième étage avec ses deux enfants quand on est venu l'arrêter.

*Projection: "One woman told another that her neighbour had thrown herself from the third floor with her two children when she was arrested."*

SARAH (cont'd)

Un agent m'a alors dit : 'Qu'est-ce que vous voulez ?'. Je n'ai rien trouvé d'autre à lui dire que : 'Je ne suis pas juive, je suis venue voir quelqu'un'. Il m'a alors répondu de foutre le camp et de revenir le lendemain. Ce jour-là, je portais sur le bras un manteau léger. Alors qu'on était en été, ils ont dû bien se douter que je sortais du Vél d'Hiv et que je ne me baladais pas comme cela dans la rue.

*Projection: "A policeman said to me, 'What do you want?' I simply said, 'I am not Jewish, I came to see someone.' He said, 'Leave the camp and come back the next day'. I was carrying a light coat that day. It was summer; they could easily have guessed that I was leaving the Vél d'Hiv, not just strolling down the street."*

A voiceover plays, interrupting SARAH.

Marine Le Pen (V.O.)

"Vichy n'était pas la France, comme Chevenement, Séguin, Mitterrand, etc. Je condamne le régime collaborationniste de Vichy, et ma position vise d'ailleurs à ne lui donner aucune forme de légitimité."

*Projection: "Vichy was not France, not the France of Chevenement, Seguin, Mitterrand, etc. I condemn the collaborationist Vichy regime, and my position, since you mention it, is to give it no form of legitimacy."*

During this voiceover, a chair is slid underneath SARAH and she slowly sinks into it. She is, once again, 89 years-old, seated in her own living room. A wooden table is wheeled in front of her, a small TV set blaring in the background. SARAH takes the remote control off the table and clicks the television off, muting the voiceover.

SARAH

Cela me fait peur d'entendre des choses pareilles. C'était bien l'État français ! Jacques Chirac l'a admis en 1995. Il a eu le courage de le dire parce que c'était vrai.

*Projection: "It scares me to hear such things. It was the French State! Jacques Chirac admitted it in 1995. He had the courage to say it, because it was true."*

End of scene.

Scene: Lights up on DSR. Allan Knoll stands alone; he addresses an unseen interviewer.

ALLAN

Je ne proposerai pas un français de quitter la France. Nous sommes de nationalité française, nous sommes enracinés dans ce pays que nous aimons et il est hors de question. De confondre nationalité et culture et religion, ce sont deux choses totalement différentes.

Lights up on DSL. Daniel Knoll stands alone. He is wearing headphones. Suddenly, a chair is wheeled underneath him and he sits. He addresses an unseen interviewer.

*Projection: "Daniel Knoll, fils de Mireille, son of Mireille"*

DANIEL

Je pense que malheureusement l'avenir des juifs en Europe est en danger. Donc il faut préparer effectivement soit une alliance en Israël, soit un départ sur d'autres continents. La France n'est pas antisémite, mais il y en a... il y a encore des gens qui pensent que les Juifs sont tous riches. On vit avec le souvenir de ma mère. Chaque jour on explose en exposant larmes parce que on ne peut pas imaginer comment un monstre a pu tuer une femme sans défense... si paisible, si gentil, et si bonne pour lui. C'est un monstre. C'était une femme extrêmement ouverte sur le monde qui aimait tout le monde qui était d'une beauté incroyable et qui ne méritait pas ce sort.

*Projection: "I think that, unfortunately, the future of Jews in Europe is in danger. And so we must prepare to be in an alliance with Israel, to be on other continents. France is not anti semitic, but there's... there are still people who think that all Jews are rich. We live with the memory of my mother. Each day we explode, exploding into tears because we cannot imagine what kind of monster"*

*could kill a defenseless woman... so weak, so gentle, and so good to him. He's a monster. She was an extremely open woman to everyone and was incredibly beautiful and she did not deserve this fate."*

INTERVIEWER

Les deux suspects ont été mis en examen pour homicide volontaire avec le caractère antisémite qui a été retenu. Partagez-vous ce sentiment?

*Projection: "The two suspect were indicted on voluntary homicide with anti-semitic motives. Do you agree with this?"*

KNOLL

Au départ nous pensions que c'était vraiment que crapuleux mais c'est le parquet qui a défini cela et à ce moment là nous avons fait confiance à la police et à la justice donc les choses nous ont bouleverses complètement et ont remis en cause notamment la marche de ce soir ou nous ne voulions pas participer au départ mais le fait que ce soit un crime antisémite fait que nous participons et que tous les Français bien entendu quelle que soit leur confession pourront venir.

*Projection: "At first we thought that it was really awful, but it was the prosecutor who labeled it. That's when we had confidence in the police and the justice so things are completely upset and challenged. At the march tonight, we did not want to participate at first, but the fact is is that it is an anti-Semitic crime. That's why we participate, and that all French people, whatever their beliefs, may come."*

INTERVIEWER

Vous êtes persuadé désormais qu'il y a une dimension antisémite.

*Projection: You are now convinced that there is an anti-semitic dimension.*

KNOLL

Eh, ouais, parce que d'après ce que j'ai entendu il l'aurait poignardée en criant "allah ouakbar" et on sait tous que ca veut dire comment un musulman s'il comprend le coran peut faire ca. C'est impossible. Je ne veux pas dire fou. C'est pire que ca. C'est des monstres, des monstres humains. Il faut que le peuple français se lève contre ca et ce que les gens vont enfin comprendre que c'est inacceptable et réagir. Alors ils veulent faire les moutons et attendre que ca arrive encore.

*Projection: "Uh, yeah, because after I heard that he stabbed her and shouted 'Allahu akbar,' and we know exactly what that means, like a Muslim that understands the Quran can do it. Truly impossible, it really is. I don't mean that it's crazy. It's worse than that. These are monsters, human monsters. The French people must rise against this, and they have to understand that it is unacceptable and react like it. Otherwise, they want to be sheep and wait for it to happen again."*

INTERVIEWER

Considérez vous que la France est un pays antisémite?

*Projection: "Do you think that France is an anti-semitic country?"*

KNOLL

Je ne pense pas mais il y a des antisémites. Il y a des imbéciles. Il y a des gens qui croient encore que les juifs sont tous riches. Ma mere touche 800 euros par mois. C'est une personne riche qui vit dans un HLM? Toute sa vie? Non. Donc, tout le monde n'est pas riche. C'est pas vrai. Il faut arrêter avec cette idée, que certains ne comprennent rien à la vie.

*Projection: "I do not think that there are anti-semites. There are idiots. There are people who still think that all Jews are rich. My mother got 800 euros per month. Is this a rich person who lived like this? Her whole life? No. And so, everyone is not rich. It's not true. We must stop with this idea, some people know nothing about life."*

INTERVIEWER

Ce crime peut-il remettre en question votre présence en France?

*Projection: "Does this crime make you question your presence in France?"*

KNOLL

Absolument, absolument. Ça fait des années déjà que je me disais que ma retraite... j'apprendrai ailleurs... mais c'est vrai que ça l'a confirmé. Ça l'a confirmé.

*Projection: "Absolutely, absolutely. There have been years before that I say to myself that my retreat... I will learn to go somewhere else... but it's true that this confirms it. It confirms it."*

INTERVIEWER

Pour des raisons de sentiment d'insécurité?

*Projection: "Because you do not feel safe?"*

KNOLL

Et autres, ouais. C'est une épreuve qui va me hanter toute ma vie. J'imagine ce que ma mère a dû souffrir et c'est insupportable. Nous avons déjà souffert avec mon père qui était un ancien déporté et l'on se retrouve avec une mère assassinée. Ça veut dire que toujours, toujours les gens ne comprennent pas.



Les gens ne comprennent pas ce que c'est que d'être juif. Mais nous aimons la France. Nous l'aimons profondément.

*Projection: "And other reasons, yeah. It's a test that will haunt me for my whole life. I imagine what my mom had to suffer and it's unbearable. We already suffered with my dad who was a former deportee, and we had it again with a murdered mother. I mean that always, always people don't understand. People don't understand what it is to be Jewish. But we love France. We love it deeply."*

#### INTERVIEWER

Le CRIF<sup>6</sup> a demandé à Marine Le Pen et Jean Luc Mélenchon de ne pas participer à la marche blanche ce soir. Ils y participeront finalement quand même. Partagez-vous ce refus de voir la France insoumise et le Front National présent à la marche?

*Projection: Le CRIF asked Marine Le Pen and Jean Luc Mélenchon to not participate in the white march this evening. They will still participate in it in the end. Do you share this refusal to see a rebellious France and the National Front present at the march?*

#### KNOLL

Je ne suis pas en mesure de faire de la politique personnellement. J'appelle toutes les personnes de bonne volonté, tous qu'elles viennent, qu'elles que soient a venir a la marche, si ces personnes veulent venir qu'elles sont les bienvenues. On peut pas de faire de sélection dans un... dans un cadre comme celui la.

*Projection: "I am not in a position to discuss my personal politics. I call upon all people of good intention, everyone"*

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<sup>6</sup> Conseil Représentatif des Institutions Juives de France, or the Representative Council of Jewish Institutions in France

*who is coming, everyone that will be going to the march. If these people want to come, they are welcome. We cannot be selective with a... with a frame like this one."*

End of scene.

Scene: MARINE LE PEN enters UR and crosses CS. She exchanges a look with KNOLL. She picks up a discarded newspaper and crumples it into a long tube. She carefully bends the tube into a circle, raises it ceremoniously, and places it at the foot of the stage. As she does this, KNOLL removes his tricolore tie and lays it carefully over the back of his chair. When MARINE LE PEN is finished with the newspaper wreath, she notices the tie, picks it up, and drapes it across her chest. It is a sash.

#### LE PEN

Vichy n'était pas la France, comme Chevenement, Séguin, Mitterrand, etc. Je condamne le régime collaborationniste de Vichy, et ma position vise d'ailleurs à ne lui donner aucune forme de légitimité. Je pense que, de manière générale, plus généralement, d'ailleurs, s'il y a des responsables, c'est ceux qui étaient au pouvoir à l'époque, ce n'est pas la France. La France a été malmenée dans les esprits depuis des années. En réalité, on a appris à nos enfants qu'ils avaient toutes les raisons de la critiquer. De n'en voir que peut-être que les aspects historiques les plus sombres. La France n'est pas responsable pour Vel d'Hiv. Comme Charles de Gaulle, François Mitterrand, ou encore de nos jours Henri Guaino, je considère que la France et la République étaient à Londres pendant l'Occupation et que le régime de Vichy n'était pas la France. C'est une position qui a toujours été défendue par le chef de l'Etat, avant que Jacques Chirac et surtout François Hollande, à tort, ne reviennent dessus. Je veux qu'ils soient à nouveau fiers d'être Français.

*Projection: "Vichy was not France, not the France of Chevenement, Seguin, Mitterrand, etc. I condemn the collaborationist Vichy regime, and my position, since you mention it, is to give it no form of legitimacy. I think that more generally, moreover, if there are officials, it is those who were in power at the time, it is not France. France has been maltreated in people's minds for*

*years. In fact, we have taught our children that they have every reason to criticize it. To see only perhaps the darkest historical aspects. France is not responsible for the Vel d'Hiv roundship. Like Charles de Gaulle, François Mitterrand, or even today Henri Guaino, I consider that France and the Republic were in London during the Occupation and that the Vichy regime was not France. This is a position that has always been defended by the head of state, before Jacques Chirac and especially François Hollande, wrongly, come back on it. I want them to be proud again to be French."*

On "Hollande," lights up DSC on FRANÇOIS HOLLANDE, who stands at a podium. He begins to speak, and LE PEN'S voice fades out as lights slowly fade on her.

#### HOLLANDE

Nous sommes rassemblés ce matin pour rappeler l'horreur d'un crime, le plus épouvante qui soit pour exprimer le chagrin de ceux. Nous devons aux martyrs juifs du Vélodrome d'Hiver la vérité sur ce qui s'est passé il y a 70 ans. La vérité est que la police française, sur la base de listes qui avaient été établies, s'est chargée d'arrêter des milliers d'enfants et de familles, pris au piège le 16 juillet 1942. La gendarmerie les a escortés jusqu'au camp d'internement. Ces juifs croyaient que le pays de la grande Révolution, celle des droits de l'Homme, que la ville Lumière, Paris, leur serviraient de refuge. Ces juifs, venant de l'étranger, aimaient la République avec une passion inspirée par la gratitude : ils se souvenaient que c'était à Paris, en 1791, sous la Constituante, que pour la première fois en Europe, les juifs étaient devenus des citoyens à part entière.

*Projection: "We owe the Jewish martyrs of the Winter Velodrome the truth about what happened 70 years ago. The truth is that the French police, on the basis of*

*lists that had been established, took charge of arresting thousands of children and families, trapped on July 16, 1942. The gendarmerie escorted them to internment camp. These Jews believed that the country of the great Revolution, that of human rights, the city of Light, Paris, would serve as their refuge. These Jews, coming from abroad, loved the Republic with a passion inspired by gratitude: they remembered that it was in Paris, in 1791, under the Constituent Assembly, that for the first time in Europe, the Jews had become full citizens.”*

#### HOLLANDE (CONT'D)

La vérité est dure, elle est cruelle. Mais la vérité, c'est que pas un soldat allemand, pas un seul, ne fut mobilisé pour l'ensemble de cette opération. La vérité, c'est que le crime fut commis en France, par la France. Mais la vérité est aussi que le crime du Vél' d'Hiv fut commis CONTRE la France, contre ses valeurs, contre ses principes, contre son idéal.

*Projection: “The truth is hard, it is cruel. But the truth is that not one German soldier, not one, was mobilized for the whole operation. The truth is that the crime was committed in France by France. But the truth is also that the crime of the Vel 'd'Hiv was committed against France, against her values, against her principles, against her ideal.”*

HOLLANDE removes his tie and places it on the podium. He steps out from behind it and dissolves into the actor.

ACTOR

This crime took place here, in our capital, in our streets, the courtyards of our buildings, our stairways, our school playgrounds. It was to pave the way for other roundups, in Marseille and throughout France - in other words, on both sides of the demarcation line. The truth is that French police - on the basis of the lists they had themselves drawn up - undertook to arrest the thousands of innocent people trapped on 16 July 1942. And that the French gendarmerie escorted them to the internment camps. The truth is that no German soldiers - not a single one - were mobilized at any stage of the operation. The truth is that this crime was committed in France, by France. Conscious of this history, the Republic will pursue all anti-Semitic acts with the utmost determination, but also all remarks that may lead France's Jews even to feel uneasy in their own country. In this area, nothing is indifferent. Everything will be fought with the last ounce of energy. Being silent about anti-Semitism, dissimulating it, explaining it already means accepting it. Long live the Republic. Long live France.

END OF PLAY.