Women Behaving Badly

Taylor Elyse Wood

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SALLY MCDONNELL BARKSDALE HONORS COLLEGE
SENIOR THESIS 2011
WOMEN BEHAVING BADLY

by
Taylor Elyse Wood

A thesis submitted to the faculty of The University of Mississippi in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College.

Oxford
May 2011

Approved by

Advisor: Professor Dex Edwards

Reader: Professor Rory Ledbetter

Reader: Dr. Douglass Sullivan-González
ABSTRACT

WOMEN BEHAVING BADLY

*Women Behaving Badly* is the title of a performance piece that showed in Meek Auditorium at the University of Mississippi at 6:30pm on March 10 and 11, 2011. It was compiled and performed to address the issue of the suppression of the female voice. The piece interwove dramatic literature from various genres and time periods. The meaning and relevancy of each individual piece is explored in these pages. The women in these scenes defy societal expectations willingly, and the benefits and drawbacks of their decisions were explored in the piece. All proceeds from the production benefited Oxford’s Domestic Violence Project.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION ............................................................................. 1

CHAPTER 2: THE MAJOR SCENES ................................................................ 3
  SECTION 1: THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST .................................. 4
  SECTION 2: THE TAMING OF THE SHREW ................................................. 16
  SECTION 3: CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF ....................................................... 27

CHAPTER 3: THE MINOR SCENES ................................................................ 40
  SECTION 1: ANGRY YOUNG WOMEN IN LOW-RISE JEANS WITH HIGH CLASS ISSUES ........................................................................ 41
  SECTION 2: MEAN GIRLS ........................................................................... 45
  SECTION 3: NETWORK .............................................................................. 48

CHAPTER 4: THE MONOLOGUES .................................................................. 51
  SECTION 1: JAKE .................................................................................... 52
  SECTION 2: BITCH: IN PRAISE OF DIFFICULT WOMEN ...................... 55
  SECTION 3: TITULAR .............................................................................. 57
  SECTION 4: WISHFUL DRINKING ............................................................. 59
  SECTION 5: DOG SEES GOD ................................................................. 61
  SECTION 6: THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA .............................................. 63

CHAPTER 5: THE SCRIPT ............................................................................. 65

CHAPTER 6: POST-PRODUCTION ................................................................. 89

BIBLIOGRAPHY .......................................................................................... 91

APPENDIX ..................................................................................................... 94
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

I created Women Behaving Badly as a solo performance piece that spoke to the subtle but very real suppression of the female voice throughout history. In studying dramatic literature, I noticed a continually resurfacing mindset of women refusing to accept their place in society and ultimately paying the price for their rebellion. I found a prevailing difference between men and women: When a man pursues power and wealth, he is labeled strong and driven; when a woman does the same, she is labeled a “bitch.” This inspired me to create a piece celebrating women with strong voices and encouraging other women to find their own voice in the midst of repression. I weaved together pieces of prose, drama, and poetry that illustrated various women in literature defying societal expectations simply because they dared to want more than what norms could offer.

I planned Women Behaving Badly to feature three major scenes that would serve as a point of departure in organizing the piece. When these scenes were set, I situated the minor scenes and monologues around them. I began the script with comedic elements, slowly built to dramatic scenes, and then returned to more subdued comedy. The cast consisted of Adam Brooks, Ashley Mitchell, and me playing multiple characters, and we wore all black to direct attention to our faces. Costume pieces were sometimes added between individual scenes to differentiate characters. The set was simply a table and chairs and a few black boxes. The lights were designed by Michael Barnett and Dex Edwards, and I compiled the music. Rehearsals began on Thursday, February 17, 2011.
and the show opened at 6:30 on Thursday, March 10. In the final script, the names of each piece were never said out loud; each scene dissolved into the next through light and sound changes. The names of the pieces and the characters are in bold and italics in chapter 5 only for your reference.

In a way, this is a personal story of mine. The characters I chose challenged me to find my own voice. But whereas its roots lie in my own journey, I touched on a national and international problem. A majority of women are afraid to step out of the shadows and declare their wants and needs. They fear positions of power and leadership. Women represent a mere twelve percent of governor’s seats in America and only seventeen percent of seats in Congress (Hunt, The Post and Courier). Women are met with opposition when they surface as goal-oriented and powerful, so they choose the shadows. But this is not about politics or feminism; it is a human issue.

By looking at each piece of Women Behaving Badly as a separate entity and then examining the finished script, I will show how each character in my piece can be seen as a universal and timeless example of a powerful woman who refuses to accept her presumed place in society.
CHAPTER 3: THE MAJOR SCENES
SECTION 1: IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST

PART 1: THE SCRIPT

Evolution of Script

_The Importance of Being Earnest_ served as a nice starting point for me because it featured two women in a Victorian setting. This allowed me to show my training in this genre and illustrate the timelessness of women's mischief. The original scene was about 1,600 words and I trimmed it down to about 900. The three main scenes needed to be about the same length, and 900 words gave me about five or six minutes of material. The goal for this scene was to establish the characters and environment as quickly as possible, prove a point through intriguing dialogue, and conclude without distorting the dramatic through line of the show. Since this was the funniest of the three scenes, I situated it at the beginning of the show.

The first step in cutting the piece down from the original was to remove allusions to characters established earlier in the play. The other characters did not further the conflict of the scene, so I cut the reference to Gwendolen’s parents and the name of Cecily’s guardian. Leaving these references in the text would likely confuse the audience. I did another set of cuts to ensure the conflict arose as quickly as possible, and this included removing a majority of lines before Gwendolen began to worry about Cecily’s appearance. I also removed the brief discussion about the city and the country that happens after the butler comes in. The action built with the dialogue before the
butler enters, and the climax occurred during the tea scene. The last set of cuts came from lines I felt we didn’t “need.” *The Importance of Being Earnest* reads as social commentary, so excessive references to stereotypes of the Victorian era took away the focus of the scene. For example, Gwendolen says “The home seems to me to be the proper sphere for the man. And certainly once a man begins to neglect his domestic duties he becomes painfully effeminate, does he not? And I don’t like that. It makes men so very attractive” (Wilde, 157). While this dialogue could have provided some comedy, it wasn’t necessary to my argument.

I originally put together the scene with the idea that I would play Gwendolen instead of Cecily. With that in mind, I concluded the piece with a line of her dialogue. After the read through, Ashley and I switched roles; Cecily suited me better because the scene took place in Cecily’s home. The stage was “mine” in the whole piece, and Ashley came into my space. Therefore, I needed to be the one in control of the space. I added a line of Cecily’s dialogue to end the scene to make sure I maintained the upper hand.

**Historical Context**

*The Importance of Being Earnest* was written in the end of the Victorian Era in 1895. This directly followed the Married Women’s Property Act of 1882, which enabled married women to act as economically independent people separate from their husbands (Shanley, 103). The importance of this act stretched far beyond the legal ramifications: It started to weaken the dominate thoughts of the time that a woman was inferior and subordinate to a man (Shanley, 104). England began to change its attitude toward women: They were no longer thought to be confined to the home. Victorian feminism
emerged as a political force (Abrams, BBC Homepage). But while this new feminism arose, Queen Victoria still governed the nation as the supreme icon of marital stability and domesticity. She was described as the “mother of the nation,” and her influence likely contributed to the scene in Oscar Wilde’s play (Abrams, BBC Homepage).

Gwendolen and Cecily have a prevailing strength that is suppressed by the society around them, yet their priorities lie in their husbands. Since *The Importance of Being Earnest* was written as social commentary, this attitude likely dominated the time. Women were still under the strict conditions of society and were only beginning to gain a sense of their strength.

**How this Scene fits into *Women Behavin2 Badly***

This piece epitomizes the struggle of women in society and the timelessness of the limitations on the female voice. The masking of catty attitudes with sophisticated speech and dress shows how women cover up their independent voice due to societal restrictions. These restrictions and interactions have hardly changed through many generations. This also illustrates girls dueling over a man. Women often blame their husband’s infidelities on the other woman, and are more willing to stand up to other women than they are to men. *The Importance of Being Earnest* brings all these issues to light in a comedic way.
Royal Pronunciation Dialect: International Phonetic Alphabet Pronunciation

When an actor undertakes any dialect, they often use the International Phonetic Alphabet to make sure they capture all the sounds. This IPA transcription is taken from the Paul Meier book Accents & Dialects for Stage & Screen.

Pray let me introduce myself to you. My name is Cecily Cardew.

How nice of you to like me so much after we have known each other such a comparatively short time. Pray sit down.

Oh! Not at all, Gwendolyn. I am very fond of being looked at.

Oh no! I live here. My dear guardian has the arduous task of looking after me.

Yes, I am Mr. Worthing's ward.

Pray do! I think that whenever one has anything unpleasant to say, one should always be quite candid.

I beg your pardon, Gwendolyn, did you say Earnest?

Oh, but it is not Mr. Earnest Worthing who is my guardian. It is his brother—his
elder brother.

Quite sure. In fact, I am going to be his.

Dearest Gwendolen, there is no reason why I should make a secret of it to you. Our little county newspaper is sure to chronicle the face next week. Mr. Earnest Worthing and I are engaged to be married.

I am afraid you must be under some misconception. Earnest proposed to me exactly ten minutes ago.

It would distress me more than I can tell you, dear Gwendolen, if it caused you any mental or physical anguish, but I feel bound to point out that since Earnest proposed to you he clearly has changed his mind.

Whatever unfortunate entanglement my dear boy may have got into, I will never reproach him with it after we are married.

Do you suggest, Miss Fairfax, that I entrapped Earnest into an engagement? How dare
This is no time for wearing the shallow mask of manners. When I see a spade I call it a spade.

Yes, as usual. May I offer you some tea, Miss Fairfax?

Cake or bread and butter?

Hand this to Miss Fairfax please.

To save my poor, innocent, trusting boy from the machinations of any other girl there are no lengths to which I would not go.

It seems to me, Miss Fairfax, that I am trespassing on your valuable time. No doubt you have many other calls of a similar character to make in the neighborhood.
Royal Pronunciation Dialect: Rhythm

One of the most important things in a dialect is the rhythm of the sentences. RP speakers often begin a sentence with a higher pitch, swoop downward on the first syllable of the line, vary the pitch in the body of the sentence, and return to a higher pitch at the end of the sentence. They use upward inflection to end sentences instead of downward inflection seen in Standard American. The articulation muscles are tenser in RP as compared to Standard American, and RP speakers’ lips are more rounded. (Meier, 102)

The last thing I did before the show was add a personal touch to my dialect. I overemphasized the sound “əʊ” as in the word so. I also drew out some vowel sounds such as the “ei” in pray.

Royal Pronunciation Dialect: Trouble Spots

Some words proved harder for me to grasp; for example, the word anything. My southern dialect crept in and I wanted to say eniðən instead of an iðən. Another word was “machinations.” After a few weeks of rehearsal, I watched the Masterpiece Theatre version of The Importance of Being Earnest to make sure I captured all the RP sounds. I changed the way I said the word machinations based on what they said in the movie; instead of the Standard American mækəneɪʃənz, I said mæːʃəneɪʃənz.

PART 2: TECHNICAL ASPECTS

Costumes
Victorian drama is typically performed in Victorian dress. In this performance, we used minimal dress and costume, and relied mostly on the suggestive. In BFA acting studio, we used a long black cloth called a rehearsal skirt that served as our costume when we did period work. We used these skirts for the scene. I changed for the scene on stage while I talked so I wouldn’t stop the flow of the show. I positioned the skirt on the small black box before the show and laid it out so I could easily grab it. I had to “quick rig” my skirt, or make it easy to put on quickly, by attaching a snap that I could put around my waist in a few seconds. Ashley and I found universal shirts that functioned as period and modern wear. Adam wore a blazer to give him more bulk and defined shoulders, and the jacket looked formal enough to serve as a butler’s costume.

Set and Props

This scene took place around the table stage right. Ashley used a parasol and I used a fan, and we both had diaries. Because I transitioned directly from the opening monologue, my fan and diary were set on the table before the show began. Ashley entered with her parasol, diary, and reading glasses. Adam rolled in an antique gold tea cart with a cup and saucer, a teakettle, two plates, a bowl of sugar, a big plate of cake, and a knife. The props provided a lot of the comedy.

PART 3: PERFORMANCE

Blocking

Some of the physical comedy of The Importance of Being Earnest is rooted in the manners of the time. We blocked comic bits of action revolving around these manners:
We bent our knees slightly at the same time when we first met, we sat at the same time, etc. But most of the comedy centered on the props. Ashley’s character depended on her glasses, but only at times when she sees something interesting or shocking. She used her glasses three different times in the scene. The last time she pulled them out she gave them to me to use, breaking expectations and providing some comic relief. We choreographed this bit because comedy usually comes in threes; the first two actions are repeated to set up the gag, and the third time breaks the repetitive action with a related opposing or surprising action to break expectations.

We tried a rehearsal where we both used fans to help with mannered comedy, but it became distracting. In the end, Ashley used a parasol and I used a fan, and we blocked certain lines where we used our personal props. The comedy was crisp and choreographed to go with the time period. With the tea cart, I began by spooning the sugar into the tea then picked up the jar, filled the tea to the brim with sugar, and stuck the spoon in the teacup sticking straight up. After she spoke condescendingly to me about having cake in my house, I whipped out the big butcher knife and cut off a small piece of cake. I picked the bigger piece of cake up in my hands and threw it onto the little plate. This again broke expectations and added to the comedy. After Gwendolen tried to drink the tea, she stuck the spoon in straight up with a swift gesture to punch the comedic moment.

We delivered a majority of our lines facing straight outward because our characters do everything for show. When they are angry they look away from each other so they will not show their emotions, and they often look into the distance because they
think they look prettier that way. This scene was full of choreographed gestures and planned poses.

Notes for Other Characters

Ashley elongated the sounds of “oh” and “my.” A lot of the differentiation of her character compared to mine lay in the difference of her everyday personality. Gwendolen was cheery and spoke in a full, rich voice. Whenever I give her the wrong food and drink at tea time, she overreacted for comedic effect as if to say “you can try to take my man, but don’t you touch my tea!” She also hit the words “almost anxious” in the line “I was growing almost anxious.” Her character is saying “oh no, I almost felt something.”

Personal Character Notes: Voice

Cecily lives among high society and she has been taught to be a pretty social girl. Her voice is placed in her head and she speaks in higher tones. She also uses a lot of inflection for the same reason, especially for sarcasm and insults. Her default volume is 4 out of 10 because she has been taught that her voice should be a little quieter than normal. Cecily has been told she is a trophy all her life, and she feels the need to look and act ultra-feminine. Her voice “chirps” sometimes like a bird when she gets upset.

Personal Character Notes: Speech

Cecily’s speech rhythm is really fast because social interactions need to be carried out in a timely manner with ease. British people generally speak faster than Americans, so Cecily usually speaks immediately after Gwendolen finishes. Her sentence structure is
careful and calculated because she is well educated. She punctuates her plosive consonants because she has to appear crisp and sophisticated around others. Also, this is typical of the RP dialect. When Cecily says mean things to Gwendolen, she hits the insulting words so they will sting even while maintaining composure and feigning politeness.

**Personal Character Notes: Physicality**

Cecily walks in small steps and moves her neck around a lot. She is a lot like a bird; she moves her neck fast as if showing off, she flaunts her metaphorical feathers, and she appears singsong and happy until it comes to protecting something she loves. She is younger than most other characters in the play, so she carries herself with a high center and seems to float on the ground. She moves quickly with fast, smooth gestures.

**Personal Character Notes: Psychology**

Cecily has two separate objectives in the scene: She wants Gwendolen to jump up and down with her during the first part of the scene and she wants to pull her hair during the last part of the scene. She has to balance her want to pull Gwendolen’s hair with the societal conventions of the time. Cecily wants to make her happy and angry indirectly so she will leave town. She goes to polar opposites easily. She loves something or somebody deeply until she hates them intensely. Tactics she will use to get her to jump up and down with her are establishing a bond quickly, complimenting her, permitting her to speak freely, smiling often, and showing her the wedding ring. Tactics
she will use to make her leave town are making her mad with verbal insults, filling her
tea with sugar, cutting her a piece of cake instead of bread and butter, and alluding to her
as a prostitute. She is afraid Gwendolen will win Earnest, and this will ruin her life.

Cecily is like a bird because she is fragile but can spring into action if she is protecting
something she loves. This time period was all about looks, so women have to continue
smiling even when they are saying something catty. They become catty to each other
when they stop calling each other by their first names and switch to “Miss Fairfax” and
“Miss Cardew.” This is a hint from the script that the insults begin here, and that the very
act of calling each other by the last name is an insult in and of itself.

Evolution of Character

Ashley and I began rehearsing this scene without the RP dialect because we
wanted to wait to IPA the speech. Our attempt at the dialect with no research was not
successful. We eased into the dialect over many rehearsals, and my character developed
with my speech. This scene can easily become boring with the dialect and archaic
speech; for many rehearsals we were bland and solely reliant on the humor in the
dialogue. The Importance of Being Earnest is a farce, so the characterizations needed to
be over the top, flamboyant, and silly. It was not until after dress rehearsal that we
became as animated as we should. I associated the character with a drag queen. This
created an image in my mind to act big, sharp, and boisterous. I filled the space easier
with this image in my head, and the mean actions of the character came more organically.
SECTION 2: THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

PART 1: THE SCRIPT

Evolution of Script

I wanted to include all three actors in the main scenes, so I looked for a place in The Taming of the Shrew where I could have a scene with Ashley that evolved to a scene with Adam. I liked the scene where Kate is tying Bianca up, but it did not transition directly into a Kate and Petruchio scene. I ended the Bianca scene by chasing her off the stage and connected it to Petruchio's soliloquy to the audience. Soliloquys are often delivered on stage alone, and this time off stage allowed me to have some time to breathe, drink some water, and collect myself before the highly physical scene that followed. This sequence of text introduced my character of Kate as a shrew and helped Petruchio's soliloquy make sense; the audience knew he was talking about the Kate they already saw on stage. Petruchio's soliloquy also established the actors as interacting with the audience, a theme that carried throughout the scene. We fought somewhat for show. For the ending, I cut Petruchio's speech in half and added a line for Kate from later on in the play. This gave Kate the ending line and the upper hand.

Historical Context

Queen Elizabeth colored the Elizabethan Era with her rich personality, and she could “hold her own in wit and repartee with the best of them” (Dodd, 10). But while
some women may have been inspired by the queen to form a voice of their own, the man
still presided over his family with “regal authority.” In this era, the woman’s sole duty
was to tend to the house and kids (Dodd, 70). They were expected to live as frivolous
love interests who derived all joy in life from children or mindless recreation.

How this Scene Fits into *Women Behaving Badly*

Kate rebelled against the thought of living a frivolous life under a man inferior to
her in wit and intelligence. She has the mind of the queen, but everyone around her
suppressed it her whole life. She thinks she surpasses most men, and she consciously
scares them away. Everyone around her puts more importance on social charm and Kate
cannot help but be subconsciously jealous of her sister’s social life that always outshone
her mind. She is bitter at everyone around her, so she acts out in anger. She cannot help
but take pleasure out of using the people of this rigid society as her playthings. A perfect
eexample of a woman behaving badly.

Scansion

Shakespeare wrote in iambic pentameter, and the stressed and unstressed syllables
are carefully placed in the dialogue to help the actor. One of the first steps in acting
Shakespeare is to mark the stressed and unstressed syllables, which serve as a ground
plan for the way an actor speaks his or her lines.

Of all thy suitors here I charge thee tell
Whom thou lov'st best. See thou dissemble not.
Minion, thou liest. Is't not Hortensio?
O then, belike, you fancy riches more:

You will have Gremio to keep you fair.

If that be jest, then an the rest was so.

Well have you heard, but something hard of hearing:

They call me Katherine that do talk of me.

Mov'd! in good time! Let him that mov'd you hither

Remove you hence. I knew you at the first

You were a moveable.

A join'd-stool.

Asses are made to bear, and so are you.

No such jade as you, if me you mean.

Too light for such a swain as you to catch;

And yet as heavy as my weight should be.

Well ta'en, and like a buzzard.

Ay, for a turtle, as he takes a buzzard.

If I be waspish, best beware my sting.

Ay, if the fool could find it where it lies.

In his tongue.

Yours, if you talk of tales; and so farewell.

That I'll try.
So may you lose your arms.

If you strike me, you are no gentleman;

And if no gentleman, why then no arms.

What is your crest—a coxcomb?

No cock of mine: you crow too like a craven.

It is my fashion, when I see a crab.

There is, there is.

Had I a glass I would.

Well aim'd of such a young one.

Yet you are wither'd.

I care not.

I chafe you, if I tarry; let me go.

Go, fool, and whom thou keep'st command.

Where did you study all this goodly speech?

A witty mother! witless else her son.

Yes, keep you warm.

I'll see thee hang'd on Sunday first.

**Line by Line paraphrase**

<p>| Of all thy suitors here I charge thee tell Whom thou lov'st best. See thou dissemble not. | Of everyone who is courting you who do you love? Don't lie to me or else... |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minion, thou liest. Is’t not Hortensio?</th>
<th>You liar! Don’t you love Hortensio?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O then, belike, you fancy riches more: You will have Gremio to keep you fair.</td>
<td>Oh, so you want to marry for money! Then you will marry Gremio.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If that be jest, then an the rest was so.</td>
<td>If that was a joke, then so is this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well have you heard, but something hard of hearing:/They call me Katherine that do talk of me.</td>
<td>Well then you can’t hear. They call me Katherine that dare to mention me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mov’d! in good time! Let him that mov’d you hither/Remove you hence. I knew you at the first/You were a moveable.</td>
<td>Yeah right I will marry you. You better leave now. I knew you look like a pushover.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asses are made to bear, and so are you.</td>
<td>Asses are made to sit on, so you’re an ass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No such jade as you, if me you mean.</td>
<td>I will not marry a worn-out ass like you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too light for such a swain as you to catch:/And yet as heavy as my weight should be.</td>
<td>I’m too pretty for you to marry... and my body is out of your league.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well ta’en, and like a buzzard.</td>
<td>That’s a good joke for a lazy, foul animal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I be waspish, best beware my sting.</td>
<td>If I’m a wasp, watch out. I will sting you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ay, if the fool could find it where it lies.</td>
<td>You’re so stupid that you can’t see how mean I am.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So may you lose your arms. If you strike me, you are no gentleman; And if no gentleman, why then no arms.</td>
<td>If you are a gentleman, why don’t you have a coat of arms?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your crest- a coxcomb?</td>
<td>Instead of a coat of arms you wear a fool’s hat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No cock of mine: you crow too like a craven.</td>
<td>You will never marry me—you yell like a rat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is my fashion, when I see a crab.</td>
<td>I am angry because you look like a crab.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had I a glass I would.</td>
<td>If I had a mirror I would show you a crab: Your face.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well aim’d of such a young one.</td>
<td>Good guess from such a young stupid boy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I chafe you, if I tarry; let me go.  
Go, fool, and whom thou keep'st command.  
Where did you study all this goodly speech?  
A witty mother! Witless else her son.  
Yes, keep you warm.  
I'll see thee hang'd on Sunday first.  

I will annoy you if I stay—let me go!  
Go away, idiot, and command someone you actually have power over!  
Where did you learn these big words?  
A witty mother? Too bad she didn't pass it on.  
Yes, keep you warm and wise at home.  
This marriage will never happen!  

<table>
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<td>I'll see thee hang'd on Sunday first.</td>
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PART 2: TECHNICAL ASPECTS

Costumes

This is another piece that is traditionally performed in period dress. Ashley and I used our rehearsal skirts and I wore a white puffy shirt belted with a black tie. Ashley wore a black shirt that could appear modern or period. I put on the puffy shirt and rehearsal skirt over my black pants and button down from the last scene because I did not have time to change completely. When I was off stage during Petruchio’s soliloquy I put rubber bands around my sleeves and pushed them up to my elbows to appear more masculine. Adam wore a white puffy shirt as well.

Set and Props

The Bianca and Kate scene was situated stage left around the black boxes, and the Petruchio and Kate scene expanded to the entire set. We used a longer black tie for Ashley’s hands and a bunch of loud props off stage to make fighting noises during Adam’s soliloquy. This included a big wire shopping cart, silver plates, trash cans, and old cardboard poles.
PART 3: PERFORMANCE

Blocking

Bianca has her hands tied at the beginning of the scene and Adam held the end of the rope while she pulled back onstage delivering her lines. This allowed me time to change into my new costume, pull my bangs down, and put my hair into a ponytail. I pulled her out into the scene after the words “unbind my hands.” The audience did not feel uncomfortable because I changed quickly and Ashley was active onstage. We made loud noises after specific words of his monologue: After “when she comes,” “sweetly as a nightingale,” “say she be mute,” and “uttereth piercing eloquence.” After the first 2 onstage noises we had a moment of complete silence on “newly wash’d with dew” because everyone was expecting another loud crash. Comedy was created by breaking expectations the third time. On “uttereth piercing eloquence,” Ashley screamed to contradict the words he said. When I entered the scene, I threw something off stage at her to tie in the previous noises with action and to foreshadow the physical action of the fight. We took some ideas for the blocking of the Petruchio and Kate fight from the ACT conservatory theatre production of *The Taming of the Shrew*. I began by looking him up and down, judging him with a movement of my hand toward the audience, and laughing at his attempt to say “Good morrow” to me. He caught my attention before I left by calling me by the wrong name. I hit him on the head when he kissed my hand. He pulled me onto his lap with the words “Come, sit on me” and I hopped up on “and so are you.” I fake slapped him by hitting his hand when he turned upstage. He pulled me down to the ground and I grabbed his belt on “a coxcomb” to emphasize the play on words. He threw me around during his monologue and I jabbed him with my elbow and bit him. We
rolled around on the floor while he pulled my leg up and I flipped him over and did the same to him. I ended by pushing him away from me and growling to the audience.

Early in the rehearsal process, our stage manager said the lines before we memorized them so we could get the blocking into our heads. This also made the text easier to memorize because I associated the actions I did with certain lines. I used the concepts I learned in stage combat: The slap, the stomach punch, the elbow jab, the hair pull, and the floor fall/roll. With time and practice, we executed all of these moves safely every time we rehearsed. Closer to performance time, we added choreographed looks to the audience and well placed pauses.

Notes for Other Actors

Ashley worked on elongating the beginning of the scene by coming in and out of the scene, screaming, and yelling “Good sister! No!” This gave me more time to change. Adam has a great look for Shakespeare because of his dark features, and he used his voice really well. Dex worked with Adam on punching individual words and understanding phrases. He pushed to be louder for the last half of the scene.

Personal Character Notes: Voice

Kate deliberately goes against everything that has been taught to her in high society, so she has a low brutish voice that rests in her chest. Her voice comes out in raspy spurts when she is angry. She doesn’t use a lot of inflection unless she is shocked, angry, or thrown off, but her voice is always full of energy and resonance. Her default
volume is 7 out of 10 because she doesn’t want to appear ladylike in any way. She shouts a lot.

**Personal Character Notes: Speech**

Kate’s speech rhythm is a little slower than normal because she wants the clever things she says to resonate. Her rhythm gets faster when she is worked up or if she is in a battle of wits. She speaks immediately after Petruchio speaks because she is confident in what she is saying and always knows what to say next. She punctuates her plosive consonants on insults so they will be effective. She always tries to maintain composure so her speech is fluid and flowing; when she loses control her words come out as blasts of sound.

**Personal Character Notes: Physicality**

Kate walks with big steps like a man, which differentiates her from the other characters in my piece. Because of this masculine mindset, she props her leg up on a block whenever she is around it, which is a subconsciously manly gesture. She wants complete control of everyone around her. She feels she has all the time in the world, so her gestures are mostly slower and indulgent. She has a keen sense of her strong weight, meaning she carries herself low to the ground and does not rise to her toes. Most women of this time period left a little space under their arms to appear more ladylike, but Kate does not.
Personal Character Notes: Psychology

For the first part of the scene, Kate’s objective is to see Bianca cry. She is really jealous of her sister’s good looks and suitors, and that manifests as hatred. Her jealousy also makes her want to be the opposite of Bianca in every way. She knows she cannot compete with her and she must push everyone away before they push her away. Tactics she uses to get her to cry are tying her hands together, pulling her by a rope, controlling her, scaring her, staring her down, threatening her, tying her up, getting in her face, and chasing her. If Bianca does not marry, she will stay with Kate; if she does, Kate will have to lower herself and marry a man. This will make her whole life miserable. If Kate does make her cry, Bianca will be afraid to marry and will be under her control. Her father won’t worry about Kate finding a man if Bianca cannot marry.

Kate’s objective with Petruchio is to leave. She is repulsed by all men because she thinks they are all stupid, so she can’t even stand to be in the same room with them. Petruchio is a little different; he talks back to her and this intrigues Kate. Kate decided to revolt from society and become a people-hating “shrew,” and she finally finds interest in a man who will give witty remarks back to her. Tactics she uses to get him to leave is laughing in his face, slapping his head, calling him an ass, walking away from him, arguing with him, engaging him in a battle of wits to show him she’s too good for him, calling him slow and stupid, trying to scratch him, biting his hand, pulling his hair, pushing him, and growling at him. Kate loves having the title of “shrew” because it makes her different. She loves scaring people because she is scared to open up and be herself in this society. Her voice is suppressed, so she subconsciously fights against the suppressors any way she can.
Evolution of Character

This character started out as a collection of blocking. I was mainly focused on the stage combat, so my character only manifested after the polishing of the scene was complete. I began to find her in my body with manly steps and a deeper voice. My actions became more defined and the fight became more aggressive. By making it faster and sharper, I felt her superiority and intelligence. Before the performance, we worked on getting the energy up and “chewing the scenery” by making the character big and aggressive. The last step was thinking of her feigned confidence and condescension toward others, and making the character take up more space than her body physically could on stage.
SECTION 3: CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF

PART 1: THE SCRIPT

Evolution of Script

I originally wanted to do a long monologue from *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* directed toward the audience because I was not sure Adam could play Brick. Adam is darker-featured and smaller, and Brick is traditionally a tough, all-American southern boy. With this in mind, I went through the play, found the best of Maggie's monologues, and strung them together. I soon realized it was not as effective to do Maggie as a solo; she wants children and love from Brick so intensely that he needed to be on stage. After a discussion with my advisor, we decided Adam could play the part.

I knew right away I wanted to include the dramatic scene between Brick and Maggie that is interrupted by Mae. This kept with the tradition of using all three actors in the big scenes. I wanted to show my dramatic range in the play, and I situated this scene later in the piece because I knew it could serve as part of the dramatic build. It incorporated some funny elements and some dramatic elements.

I started with Maggie and Brick's dialogue about her hating Gooper and Mae's kids. This set up the scene by showing the audience her jealousy and the irony of her situation: She hates kids, but is devoting her life to having some of her own. It also showed her personality and Brick's detachment. I cut out about five minutes of her rant about Mae. The information could give insight to Maggie's personality and the
history of the relationship of the characters, but I wanted to reveal the relationship in my
performance. I wanted the challenge of using body language and subtext to reveal the
situation.

In the original play, Brick just broke his ankle from trying to jump hurdles drunk,
and the character walked on crutches. Putting Brick on crutches would cause for more
dialogue to justify his situation, and also take away from the message of the play.
Because of the decision to have him walking normally, I had to cut one of my favorite
scenes where they fight over his crutch. I also had to do some internal cuts of the scene
that referred to his broken leg. I took out any allusions to Brick’s best friend/lover
Skipper, and Maggie’s affair with him. This took some depth out of Brick’s character,
but I wanted the scene to be more about Maggie than Brick. After those cuts, the script
was still about 2,000 words; I wanted the scene to be about 900 words.

There was a monologue where Maggie describes Brick’s character as “enviably
cool” and “indifferent.” Maggie described their sex life when they first got together, and
wondered out loud why it changed. My piece is about women with voices who want
more than people think they should have in this life, so I wanted to make her character
focused on how she will get the money she thinks she deserves. This justified cutting this
monologue. I connected Maggie’s “no-neck monster” rant with her satisfaction in seeing
an old man spit in the face of the Memphis society girl Susie McFeeters. This showed
her contempt for most people, especially those who are socially superior to her. I ended
the scene with Maggie’s lines “The dress that I married you in was my grandmother’s
weddin’ gown. So that’s why I’m like a cat on a hot tin roof!” We went into rehearsal
with this script, and after one week I realized that the ending was not working. Alluding
to the title of the play takes the audience out of the through line of my piece, and directs their attention to the title of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. I wanted the audience to buy into the concept that this is an eclectic mix of women behaving badly; it does not matter who they are or what plays they come from.

I went back to the script and thought about another approach. I wanted to make Maggie’s ending monologue longer so she could describe her situation and show Brick and the audience that she would do anything to get what she wants. I originally cut all references to Big Daddy, Brick’s rich father who is dying of cancer. This was another attempt to make the scene more focused on Maggie’s relationship with Mae and Brick. But when I revisited the script, I realized so much of what Maggie wants lies in Big Daddy. I added Maggie’s line “Born poor, raised poor, expect to die poor unless I manage to get us something out of what Big Daddy leaves when he dies of cancer!” This showed that she was not wallowing in self-pity; she was actively searching for a solution. I gave Brick the retort “…how in hell on earth do you imagine that you’re going to have a child by a man that can’t stand you?” This revealed the hopelessness of her situation; I wanted the audience to almost begin to pity her until she says “Well that is a problem I will have to work out.” This was a much more powerful ending because it asserted her determination to do anything to get out of her situation. It also allowed the scene to fall dramatically, but the statement held so much weight that it didn’t fall all the way. When I reworked the ending, the scene really began to shine.
Historical Context

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof was written in the 1940s, and set in the mid 1950s. Brick and Maggie are in their late 20s/early 30s, which would mean they grew up in the depression. The depression likely had a profound impact on Maggie than Brick, who grew up the son of a rich plantation owner. The 20-somethings of the 1950s who grew up like Maggie were all trying to overcome a childhood of financial hardship. They had a drive to make their life better through any means necessary. This especially rings true for women of that time. They were more likely to work for higher education so they could marry intelligent men for money and opportunity. When they were able to reach a comfortable situation, however, they still faced the typical repression seen throughout the ages. Because of dependence on the husband’s income, women kept the home and children and their needs fell secondary to their spouse. Maggie’s discomfort was typical of women of the time; they had intelligence, drive, and passion that eventually became suppressed under societal conventions.

The Deep South had a different climate compared to the rest of the world; they were still trying to cope with a changing culture and the outcome of the Civil War. Racist ideas still permeated southern society well after the Civil war, as seen by the 1962 riot at Ole Miss over integration, and the popularity of groups such as the KKK. The south stayed true to the long-standing beliefs that governed their way of life, and revolted against social change (Silver, 3). Because of this, women took pride in being old-fashioned and gentile. Pretty women or women from higher classes mostly operated by the rules of the Old South, and strove to maintain femininity and purity. Southern society measured a woman’s worth based on the amount of children they had, the satisfaction of
their husband, and their ability to stay away from scandal. Young women would “make their debut” into society, which was orchestrated by their parents. This “coming-of-age ceremony was an elaborate ritual for the parents to show the elite physical or monetary status of their family and suggest marriage availability for their daughter (Jabour, 118). Because of this important tradition, a dichotomy resulted in the attitudes of young women of the time: They likely felt like they were helpless instruments displayed to show social position, but they also associated their debut as “taking on a new identity” (Jabour, 120). Having control over a new identity and independent outlook on life directly contradicts the feeling of being manipulated by family for social purposes. This environment yielded elegant but repressed females who had inherent trouble accepting their sole position as a doll on a trophy shelf.

How this Scene fits into Women Behaving Badly

Maggie came out of Mississippi poverty, succeeded in college, and married Memphis money. She used her intelligence and beauty to do everything she could to pull her out of the living conditions she endured as a child, but she unexpectedly fell back into poor life conditions. She is determined to escape this. Her deep-seated attitude to overcome disadvantages and her complete lack of self-pity pervades her life in every aspect. She maintains a veneer of grace while refusing to accept failure. She knows her personal voice even in the midst of a strict, old-fashioned society, and while it may get her into trouble, she will not edit it to sacrifice what she feels she needs.
Southern Dialect

Maggie speaks with an Old South dialect, so her country accent is deeper than most people in the south now. She elongates words, drops her r’s, and draws out diphthongs. Her voice has a sing-song quality that is typical of southern females in the Deep South.

PART 2: TECHNICAL ASPECTS

Costumes

I knew immediately I had to change costumes for Maggie. She can’t wear pants because she is too feminine and concerned with her looks. She needed a flowing dress that fit her figure well. I knew I would not be able to change after this scene, so it also needed to be a dress that worked for every character I played after Maggie. A black, draping, short dress immediately came to mind. If I were actually doing the entire show Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, Maggie would be in bright, springy colors but I wanted to keep the costumes dark to pull the audience’s attention to our faces.

This costume change was difficult; I could not go offstage after my last monologue but I needed to be in a different costume. We solved this by pulling a black dressing screen onstage. After my monologue, the lights went black and I immediately began unbuttoning my shirt with my back toward the audience. When I said my first line as Maggie I walked behind the screen and Ashley helped me change in between my lines. Adam put a big pause in between my line and his first line, and this gave me time to get the dress over my head to put my head out of the top of the dressing screen for my second line. We rehearsed this change a lot until it happened in seconds. I also let my hair down
for Maggie. I put it out of my face with a feminine flower clip. We incorporated this into the scene by having me look on stage in the mirror to put in the clip. With this blocking, I was already looking at myself when I “catch his eye in the mirror.”

Set and Props

The dressing screen and the mirror were essential to this scene. Adam brought out the mirror and Ashley brought out the screen in the blackout. Brick is an alcoholic, so his alcohol-filled glass was an important character prop for him. We watered down iced tea to make it look like whiskey and put ice cubes in the glass. The whiskey prop served another purpose as well; I took it from Brick when I am insulting Mae and drank it. This gave me a ‘water break’ I knew I would need at that point in the play. Mae brings out the trophy from the archery contest, and we figured out a way to use it to my advantage. After Mae leaves, I throw it at her when I am talking about how jealous I am of her. It infuriated Maggie to be jealous of someone so beneath her. This gave me an emotional “launchpad” into the following monologue. Sometimes physical actions on stage trigger deep emotional responses.

PART 3: PERFORMANCE

Blocking

The blocking of this scene was based on internal motivation. In theory, all moves on stage should be internally motivated, but in a dramatic scene, the motivations are especially important. We used the entire stage because this scene was the most realistic, and it gave the audience the feeling of a real living room. The imaginary “no-neck
"monsters" were off stage right, and I gestured toward them. The first time I touched Brick was when I was trying not to be so angry about being childless. I crossed to him thinking "oh no, right now I am being the bitch he sees me as." This led me to say the line "Of course it's comical, but it's also disgusting." When I changed the subject, Brick seized the opportunity to move away from me and I did not follow him. This sent a message to the audience: Brick does not like me touching him, and I know it. I saw him in the mirror and thought "you were looking at me like you could kill me!" This led me to cross to him and confront him. I touched his shoulders when I said "I get lonely." I held his head and stroked him when I told him how much I love him. His statement "Would you like to live alone, Maggie?" made me pull away from him roughly. I slid my hands out toward him on the table during the line "You know, if I thought you would never, never make love to me again—I would go downstairs to the kitchen and pick out the longest and sharpest knife I could find and stick it straight into my heart, I swear to God that I would!" Sliding on the table looks threatening, and sent a message to the audience that I would go to any lengths to make him have sex with me. Mae interrupted this scene by walking in on us during my line. This blocking temporarily gave her the upper hand. I kept my hand on Brick whenever Mae was in the room. I was trying to make Mae jealous of how attractive my husband is and showing her we have a healthy relationship; Maggie knew Mae was jealous of her because her husband was never as good as Brick. I threw the trophy after Mae. As I did this, Brick crossed to the other side of the stage very calmly. Brick's calm move showed how little he responds, and indicated that this kind of scene happens frequently. I moved around the stage to Brick while he stared at himself thinking "what have I become?" I sat with him and put my
hands on his shoulders in an effort to get him to be gentler when I give up my pride and
tell him I want to sleep with him. He turned to me when he delivered his insulting last
line and stared at me in the eyes to show me how serious he looks. I stared back into his
eyes for the last line to show him he would not stop me.

Builds were important within the scene. I thought out how we could build each
section of the scene, and I made sure I never reached the true height of emotion until the
full climax. For example, during the part where I see Brick in the mirror, I built in the
intensity of my voice and physicality to the line "I can’t afford to be thin-skinned
anymore" then let it fall to quiet, but equally intense line "but Brick?" But I never let that
section reach the intensity I had when I delivered the monologue at the end of the scene.

Notes for Other Actors

During the read-through of the script, Adam said his dialogue in a deep southern
accent. This did not work for Brick; he should only have a slight southern accent. His
speech should also be slightly monotone because he is removed from Maggie through
alcohol. Adam became more familiar with the play and watched the movie adaptation.
Actors are warned against watching movie adaptations before acting a part, but this was a
special circumstance because the role of Brick is iconic. Brick is waiting for the “click”
in his head that tells him he is drunk enough to handle Maggie, so he is not fully drunk in
this scene. His feelings are still intact, if only by a little. He is deeply depressed because
his best friend Skipper committed suicide, possibly because of their taboo love for each
other, and he has to suppress his homosexual tendencies. He hates living with Maggie.
She became outspoken and mean and he is not mentally, emotionally, or sexually
interested in her. Adam and I talked through these notes about his character and it
continually evolved through the rehearsal process.

Ashley has a brassy quality to her voice that made her perfect for Mae. She had
to work on not falling out of her southern dialect. Mae and Maggie threw insults at each
other, so Ashley worked on making her seemingly happy comments into latent insults.

**Personal Character Notes: Voice**

Maggie taught herself to be a woman of society, so she uses a lot of inflection in
her sentences to make her sound feminine. Her voice is not too low, not too high, and it
resides in her throat. When she flirts with other men or insults women with a “mask of
manners,” her voice goes into higher pitches. Her default volume is about 5 out of 10
because she has been taught to keep up appearances in front of others and not get too
loud or soft. Whenever she gets upset and all her proper appearances go away, her
volume reaches to about an 8 or 9 out of 10 and it lowers to her chest.

**Personal Character Notes: Speech**

Maggie speaks with a southern dialect. She does not hit her r’s very hard, and
sometimes they fall away completely. Because of the dialect, she elongates her
diphthongs. Her rhythm is constant normally, but she often speaks faster when she is
worked up or slower when she is showing someone she is calm and collected. She uses
her vowels more than her consonants. Vowel sounds are connected to emotions, and the
layers of emotion in Maggie run deep. She usually tries to maintain composure and
ignore the sadness around her. When she cannot any more, her speech comes out
breathy. The intensity of her situation leaves her out of breath. Her speech is never whiney. She punches words like “hated” and “rich” for emphasis, and she makes fun of words like “moral patterns.” She knows how to effectively express herself, and her words are well chosen.

Personal Character Notes: Physicality

Maggie is a cat, and she moves like one. She is sultry and smoothly glides across the room. She is ultra-feminine. The Mississippi heat affects her, so she sometimes seductively shakes her head around to get the hair off her neck or she pulls it off of her neck with a flick of her wrist. She arches her back often and sways her rear end back and forth when she walks. She is not afraid of touch. She moves her body indulgently with slow gestures and a mixture of strong and light weight. She changes her physicality from light and carefree when she is trying to get her way through flirtation and indirect methods. When she is determined to get what she wants and doesn’t care what she looks like, she grounds herself. Her sexual femininity stays alive in her even in these moments because it is a part of who she is.

Personal Character Notes: Psychology

Maggie’s super objective, the goal of the entire scene, is to get Brick to kiss her. She thinks that if Brick would just sleep with her, all their problems would be solved. She would do anything to get Brick to have sex with her. She needs to feel wanted sexually, and she has a deep desire to be rich. She is afraid of being poor, and she only has a burning desire for a child because she wants to inherit Big Daddy’s estate. She will
Evolution of Character

I love this play, and I have a deep connection to the character of Maggie. When I began working on her, I had a tendency to whine some of my lines because I naturally play vulnerable in dramatic work. I had to fight that because Maggie is not a whiner. I did this by changing my subtext: For example, during the line “I get lonely,” instead of thinking “please sleep with me” I thought “you better have sex with me now.” Maggie doesn’t beg, she demands. I also looked at her big monologue about being poor as if she pitied herself, and I was way off base. With some coaching, I discovered that she is determined to win at any cause, and this is just her showing Brick how determined she is to get money. There is not any self-pity in her. The rest of the character really “clicked” in my body when I put on my dress. This is common in acting; the costume sometimes gives you the extra feeling you need to truly become someone else on stage.
CHAPTER 4: THE MINOR SCENES
SECTION 1: ANGRY YOUNG WOMEN IN LOW RISE JEANS WITH HIGH CLASS ISSUES

PART 1: THE SCRIPT

Evolution of Script

I chose the 20 minute scene entitled “Unprotected Sex” from the full-length play *Angry Young Women in Low Rise Jeans with High Class Issues*. I started with a ten minute cutting of the scene that focused on Rachel’s disappointment with the birth control pill, and how it affected her mood. The first cutting of the script focused too much on issues with birth control. I almost cut this scene all together because her attitude and actions were affected by the Pill, and not her own voice. I cut out all the references to the Pill and kept the comedic bits for which I initially chose the scene. This left me with about two minutes of material, and I used it as a transition scene into another section of the narrative monologue. The only problem I encountered was ending the scene effectively. There was nothing in the script that would serve as a “button” (a short line or action that ends the scene in a funny way). I eventually decided on a button with the addition of props; I used a Pringles can to hit him on the head. This provided a call back to the earlier concept of his habit of finishing food containers, and also concluded the action with a loud, funny noise. By beginning and ending the scene with the same concept, it became memorable and contained.
How this Scene Fits into *Women Behaving Badly*

Rachel represents the way a strong, driven female acts in a typical modern-day relationship. She confronts Brian when he does something wrong, and this allows them both to work through their problems. She is intelligent and funny, and knows what she wants the house to look like. The ability to vocalize dissatisfaction and then subsequently brush it off shows she has found her voice in modern day society and she knows how to use it without completely pushing others away.

**PART 2: TECHNICAL ASPECTS**

**Set and Props**

The setting was suggestive of a real living room in many ways. By putting Adam on the black box with a remote in his hand, the audience assumed he was watching an imaginary TV. The audience inferred the presence of an imaginary refrigerator/freezer when I pulled the ice cream carton out from behind the proscenium. This scene required many small props. Real food containers suggested a realistic living situation. Most of the comedy and narrative of the scene was based in props.

**PART 3: PERFORMANCE**

**Blocking**

Adam began the scene on the long black box, which served as an imaginary couch. This immediately established the dynamic between the characters: He is on a lower level and I am on a higher level. I was immediately the more powerful figure. My entrance indicated that I worked longer hours, which also makes my character seem more
dominant. When I sat down with him at the end, it indicated I was lowering my status to his equal and shrugging off the minor conflict at his request. This illustrated the everyday give-and-take of any relationship in the modern age.

Notes for Other Actors

Adam did well with the characters he played in my piece, but he struggled in this scene when he was encouraged to be himself. I suggested he be less stilted and enunciated to imply familiarity and comfort in the relationship. He needed to shrug off some of his lines without seeming uninterested. We went through the scene line by line to make it as naturalistic as possible.

Personal Character Notes

Rachel is similar to me; she walks and talks like I would. I play her like this as a concept for the bigger picture: This scene comes right before my speech-like commentary on relationships and I want the audience to picture my experiences. Even if I am largely myself, my character still must have intentions and objectives.

Rachel states her objectives in the script: She wants to eat some ice cream and then go to bed. Tactics she will use to eat some ice cream are going directly to the freezer as soon as she walks in, giving Brian a hard time over having eaten the last of the ice cream, and getting angry at him when he doesn’t admit to it immediately. Tactics Rachel uses to go to bed are throwing the ice cream in the trash, yelling at Brian for messing up the kitchen, refusing to clean up his mess, refusing to sit down, and agreeing to sit down next to him to go to sleep on his lap.
This scene rises and falls multiple times, so it is important to plan out how the scene will build as a whole and in individual parts. I start with my voice softer on “Who finished this,” and cap off the top of the build with a louder volume when I throw the ice cream carton in the trash. I start to build again with “why are these in the trash,” and then reach the dramatic height of the scene with “don’t order me around.” The rest of the scene falls in a playful manner to make my character likable until the comedic button of hitting him on the head loops around to the beginning. This caps off the frustration I carried through the whole scene.

Evolution of Characters

We worked on making this scene playful and funny. At the beginning, I came across as too angry to be likable. We played around with different intentions on two separate occasions. The scene began to work better when I thought of my character as just being tired and annoyed, not angry. Adam made the relationship believable when he decided that his character wasn’t scared or mad; he was just trying to keep the peace.
PART 1: THE SCRIPT

Evolution of Script

I transcribed all the scenes from *Mean Girls* that involved the character of Regina George. The most relevant scene in the movie is when Regina sat at the hospital explaining her helplessness in controlling her bitchy qualities; it is sincere with elements of comedy. I put this at the end of the show after the dramatic climax to help with the denouement. This scene encouraged me to have at least one other scene from *Mean Girls* in the middle of my piece so I do not surprise the audience by introducing a new script at the very end. I chose one of my favorite scenes that showed two girls using a prank call to ruin another girl’s relationship. I used the prank call scene to build up to the climax and separate two consecutive monologues. It broke up the rising action by having another actor on stage with me in between solos. It also transitioned from the comedic qualities of the *Wishful Drinking* monologue into the dramatic qualities of the *Dog Sees God* monologue.

How this Scene Fits into *Women Behaving Badly*

The *Mean Girls* scenes serve as a dramatic foil to *The Importance of Being Earnest* scene; Regina is a modern-day Cecily. By keeping the scenes short, I provide a brief glimpse into the catty world of high school girls. Each bully in high school has a
reason for acting the way they do; they usually behave badly out of contempt for their life situation. Regina is an example of a girl who is pampered for her external beauty so much that her mind is largely neglected. Therefore, she acts out of spite because she can, and she is smart enough never to be caught. Whereas she may dislike her life situation, she loves her social status. She would do anything to maintain popularity and superiority, including making others scared of her.

PART 2: TECHNICAL ASPECTS

Set and Props

Both Mean Girls scenes happened on the same side of the stage to make the characters memorable for the audience. A cell phone was used for the prank call scene. Ashley brought it in with her and then left it on the table as she crossed to go off stage. Later, I picked up the phone left on the table during the Network scene, which alleviated the stress of getting another prop on stage in between scenes.

PART 3: PERFORMANCE

Blocking

These scenes did not require much staging. Ashley entered on the last line of the Wishful Drinking monologue and I walked from center stage to join her stage left. We both looked at the exit sign when we were referring to Taylor and Jason. We pretended to look past people in the mall by moving our necks back and forth to make it seem more real. The last scene took place on the long black box; we wanted it to look like a park bench.
Personal Character Notes

Regina speaks with a higher voice than most people in my piece. She punctuates her plosive consonants like a valley girl and elongates words like “Oh my God.” She often draws out words for emphasis. She has a strong, powerful stance because she is always the one in charge. She often puts her hands on her hips. She has a strong undercurrent of jealousy, even when she is trying to be nice.

Evolution of Character

When I changed my voice for the secretary Susan, I originally lowered it and made it sound more professional. We decided it would be more comically effective if I had a higher pitch with a slightly northern accent. I originally had some problems with the last Mean Girls scene. I came directly from a dramatic, heartfelt monologue into a somewhat comedic scene. I wanted to snap out of the drama too quickly and play this scene too lighthearted and animated. I fixed this by approaching the character as having a touch of regret. This allowed for more of a sad quality that later evolved into comedy with “No, I threw it down the stairs.” This helped the denouement of the entire piece to happen slower.
SECTION 3: NETWORK

PART 1: THE SCRIPT

Evolution of Script

I wanted to use the *Network* script because of Diane's monologue where she discusses her ineptitude with everything in life due to the focus she places on her work. The selection of this scene came right before the final script, and I knew I wanted to use it as a part of the climax. In the original script, Max has huge blocks of monologue text. My first step was to cut his big monologues down to one or two sentences so the scene would have more focus on Diane. These cuts left the scene too short and did not provide enough build into the dramatic climax that followed. I reworked the script and added Diane's phone argument before Max entered. This gave Diane enough time to show her temper to the audience, justifying the ensuing breakup. I also broke up Diane's line "Max, where are you going?" to be "Max? (pause) Max! (pause) Where are you going?" This allowed the tension to build with his leave. I repeated the line "Don’t leave me" at the end because I wanted to show some vulnerability before the climax that followed.

How this Scene Fits into *Women Behaving Badly*

Diane knows the only thing she cares about is work, and she does not allow anyone to get in her way. I included this piece because I felt it was important to show commentary about what strong women could easily lose. She pretends the world around
her does not affect her, but her vulnerabilities, though suppressed, are still very real. She illustrates the difficulty strong women encounter when trying to be accepted and the overly strong drive that inevitably pushes loved ones away.

PART 2: TECHNICAL ASPECTS

Set and Props

I put a white, fluffy pin in my hair during *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* that I take out before the *Network* scene. This accessory was meant to make Maggie feminine, and Diane is very manly. I used the phone Ashley placed on the table as she was leaving the *Mean Girls* scene, and I put it back on the table when I transitioned into the next monologue.

PART 3: PERFORMANCE

Blocking

I began this piece as a monologue addressing the audience, and changed into a scene as the same character when the lights shifted. I maintained the same physical choices and just shifted my focus to the back side of the auditorium when I was on the phone. Max came in from the furthest upstage door to indicate he was coming in from another room in the house. He walked off stage left to show he was leaving and moving on. This is a common concept in directing: Walking stage right indicates a character is going back to their past, while walking stage left shows they are moving on to the future.
Notes for Other Actors

Adam has a hard time with big, dramatic climaxes. Because of this, I cut some of his lines and encouraged him to bring the level of his drama and anger down to a lower level of resignation and sadness. I told him to think of his lines as if Max were thinking "There is nothing you can say to change my mind."

Personal Character Notes

Diane uses the lower register of her voice because she needs to be taken seriously in the workplace. She speaks fast because she does not have any time to waste. Her desire for success at work is central to her character, so she walks and talks like a powerful man. She yells and screams to get her way, she intimidates everyone around her, and she puts everything in her life beneath her work. Her steps are large and she puts her hands on her hips as if to say "I won't take no for an answer." This gesture also serves as the defense mechanism she uses to shut out the world.

Evolution of Character

This character manifested after I put my hands on my hips during the monologue. This made me feel powerful, and everything fell into place after that. I pictured Diane from the movie: When she talked on the phone, she screamed and jumped up and down like a child throwing a tantrum. At first, I was not vulnerable enough after their breakup to lead into the tearful Devil Wears Prada monologue. When I added to the script the repetition of the line "Don't leave me" spoken introspectively down to the floor, I immediately felt the vulnerability that propelled me into the next monologue.
CHAPTER 5: THE MONOLOGUES
SECTION 1: JAKE

PART 1: THE SCRIPT

Evolution of Script

I used the entire script of Jake as a vehicle to carry the audience through my piece. I chopped it into three separate sections and I began with it, placed a section in the middle, and ended with it. My first cut was not as effective because I split the piece up too much; I only had about two or three sentences of dialogue instead of paragraphs, which did not give the audience enough time to grasp the comedy of the situation. I cut some of the explicit words because of the character choices I made; I wanted her to be sincere, and the excessive cuss words contradicted this quality.

How this Scene Fits into Women Behaving Badly

This character says what could be considered the worst thing to say to a man. By placing this character in the play, I show that even innocent women with sweet, high voices can be dangerous if you fail to give them what they want. Jake serves as a comedic motif to carry the audience through all the differing kind of women who refuse to accept boundaries.

PART 2: TECHNICAL ASPECTS

Costumes and Set
The character of Jake is scattered throughout my piece, so we gave him a baseball cap as a signature costume prop that immediately identified him to the audience. Adam wore his blazer because he had to transition quickly to the next scenes. I wore my contemporary outfit for the first of these scenes, but I had to wear Maggie’s dress for the last scene. This did not matter because my dialogue and Adam’s body position in the last scene pulled focus toward the conflict, and diminished the importance of costume.

PART 3: PERFORMANCE

Blocking

I began the scene standing over him, which immediately established my character as superior. This also allowed for me to pull away from the scene quickly for the next part of the script. Jake froze during the light shift as to not pull focus from me while I was speaking to the audience in the next part of the script. Whenever I crossed back over to him, he unfroze and continued the scene. I sat because I got on his level to identify with him. He left after every section so I could cleanly transition to the next scene. We stayed at the table for all three pieces of Jake to establish audience familiarity. Jake began by looking at me sitting straight up, slumped over in the middle of the piece, and ended with his head on the table. His head fell as his ego fell.

Personal Character Notes

This character speaks in her higher register. She is softer spoken than other characters, and her inflection rises at the end of her sentences. She is innocent and sweet,
and she doesn’t fully realize the impact of what she is saying. She walks on her toes and seems to float through the air. Her gestures are light and free.

**Evolution of Character**

I originally played this character as closer to the way I would say it in everyday life. She was mean and sarcastic. Within the first few rehearsals, I switched my approach to the character to provide for more likeability and comedy. I played this character as naïve, sincere, sweet, and innocent. She does not know the effect she is making on him, and this contrast produces the comedy. During rehearsal, I would sometimes fall into a whiney vocal quality, which is not what I wanted. To get away from this I thought “this is just the way it is, I’m sorry baby.” That made my speech more focused and intentional.
SECTION 2: BITCH: IN PRAISE OF DIFFICULT WOMEN

PART 1: THE SCRIPT

I read *Bitch: In Praise of Difficult Women* as soon as I decided what my topic would be, and certain sections immediately stood out to me. My cutting of this book helped clarify the topic sentence of my piece, making it somewhat of a performance essay. I snaked this script through the piece just like the *Jake* scenes, and I changed a few words to make sure it made sense in the context of my piece. These sections of text carried the audience through the meaning of *Women Behaving Badly* as a whole. I made the *Jake* sections and the sections from *Bitch: In Praise of Difficult Women* intertwine each time they were in the script. I thought of this piece more as exposition, and I put more sections toward the beginning to explain what was going on before diving into performance. Once the audience understood my direction and meaning, I didn’t need this text; for example, I had four pieces of this script before *The Taming of the Shrew*, but I only had one piece after. The last piece served as the final conclusion to tie *Women Behaving Badly* together and reiterate my main point.

PART 2: PERFORMANCE

I did not have a character for this portion of the script. I spoke to the audience as myself. I delivered it mostly center stage and moved around when I wanted to. When the lights were set later, my moves were more fixed and definite. I planned the builds of
each speech so they rose to a louder, more dramatic climax and subsequently fell. I built
to the sentence “I will not be nice” in the first section; “so we could learn to behave” in
the second section; “do you know why” in the third section; and “catch me if you can” in
the last section. By building dramatically with my voice up to certain sentences, my
speech was more targeted are focused.
SECTION 3: TITULAR

PART 1: THE SCRIPT

Evolution of Script

This monologue came from a contemporary performance poetry piece. It originally had more rhyming words and alliteration. I deleted some poetic devices to make them seem less jarring on stage. I wanted it to blend into my piece and sound more like a monologue.

How this Scene Fits into Women Behaving Badly

This piece features a young woman who stands up for her body in a comedic way. It provides a feminist look into the concept of body image, and encourages women to look for the good in the bodies they have.

PART 2: TECHNICAL ASPECTS

Costumes

Adam took the baseball cap he wore for Jake and flipped it backwards to play the hippie guy in this piece. He also added a pair of sunglasses. These additions allowed Adam to be a completely different character.
PART 3: PERFORMANCE

Blocking

After the Importance of Being Earnest scene, I crossed downstage to give Adam room above me to say his line. After Adam exited stage left, I counter-crossed him stage right and stood in the same spot for the rest of the monologue. I spoke directly to the audience.

Personal Character Notes

I think of this character as very similar to me. She speaks in her middle register and uses inflection for comedy. She is sassy and strong, so her weight is centered lower and it grounds her into the floor. When she is sarcastic and biting, her voice moves up in inflection and pitch.

Evolution of Characters

I originally played this character as myself, but I found some differences along the way; for example, she used her arms more and had a quicker temper. I worked on getting my energy level up through the rehearsal process. I did not have to work on this monologue as much as the other ones because it came naturally for me.
SECTION 4: WISHFUL DRINKING

PART 1: THE SCRIPT

Evolution of Script

I watched *Wishful Drinking* as an HBO special after I had already finished my first cut, so I was aware of what my piece was missing. Because of this, I immediately recognized the exact spots I could mix together to create a monologue. The only thing I changed for a more comedic effect was the song lyric. Paul Simon wrote the original song *Allergies* for Carrie Fisher, but I changed the text to indicate the song was *dedicated* to her instead. This allowed me to do the piece as a different character, and it eliminated the need to explain Carrie Fisher’s personal relationship. I wanted the audience to get my message, and keeping the original character and material would have had to be justified through unnecessary material irrelevant to my topic.

How this Scene Fits into *Women Behaving Badly*

This piece illustrates the effect strong women have on men in a comedic way. It is a dramatic foil to the *Network* piece, and uses lighthearted comedy to foreshadow the drama to come.

PART 2: PERFORMANCE

Blocking
I entered from the extreme upstage opening between the panels. I crossed downstage and delivered the monologue as I moved from side to side on certain lines. When I was on one side of the stage, I angled myself toward the back of the other side of the theatre to talk to the audience farthest from me. This opened up my voice and body so everyone could hear and see me clearly.

**Personal Character Notes**

This character thrives on sarcasm. It is her defense mechanism, so it is present in her voice and body even in things that should make her sad. She uses her upper register often and adds many inflections to her comedy. She uses a lot of strong weight and light weight in her physical posture.

**Evolution of Characters**

I did not want to play this character as Carrie Fisher; I wanted to create my own character. I borrowed vocal and physical traits from a comedienne I know who uses cheerful sarcasm to convey the horrors of her life. I quickly realized that sarcasm was hard to play on stage, and Dex suggested the way to fix this is to use a lot of energy. I was nervous about this piece even close to opening because it was positioned right after *The Taming of the Shrew* and I was abnormally quiet and out of breath. I had to push a lot of voice and physical energy from my exhausted state. I found the character when I took my time with her while maintaining my energy level, and when I chose lines for humorous “takes” out to the audience. Once I had fun with what I was saying, the audience had fun too.
PART 1: THE SCRIPT

Evolution of Script

My friend did this monologue from Dog Sees God in class, so I already knew what part of the script I wanted to do. I positioned it before the Cat on a Hot Tin Roof scene because it is a dramatic monologue with elements of comedy. The tension of the piece kept building without being fully dramatic yet.

How this Scene Fits into Women Behaving Badly

This character does not care what the world thinks of her, and she rebels against “good girls” without regretting her actions. The piece also shows a different connotation of the word “bitch;” to this character, the “bitch” is the “Ms. Puritanical Princess” who judges others for their behavior.

PART 2: PERFORMANCE

Blocking

I pulled the chair out from the table and set it downstage. This suggested I was sitting in the chair of a classroom. I leaned forward and pretended to look over the shoulder of the girl in front of me. I stood up when I said “Bitches like that make me sick;” I rose in defiance of the people who told me what I did was wrong. The last lines
were delivered standing, and I walked upstage when the lights dimmed to transition into the *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* scene.

**Personal Character Notes**

This character does not justify her actions for anybody. Her voice is lower and she punctuates the plosive consonants *p* and *t* because it makes her sound harsher. She wants others to be afraid of her, so she stands anchored to the ground with head cocked sideways. She puts up a front so no one will mess with her, but her inferiority complex is revealed in the way she uses her feet: Her toes are occasionally subconsciously turned inward. This shows she really wants to run away and hide.

**Evolution of Characters**

This monologue did not come to life until I associated the character with a girl I know. I used her speech pattern and physicality, and pictured her being in the situation explained in the monologue.
SECTION 6: THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA

PART 1: THE SCRIPT

Evolution of Script

I originally wanted to include scenes from *The Devil Wears Prada* with Miranda and Andy, but I cut them out after the focus of my piece became clearer. Also, my set limited me; most of the scenes in the script took place behind a desk that we did not have access to. I narrowed my focus and chose Miranda’s monologue about her husband’s divorce papers. I cut it down to about three minutes and picked out the most useful part. This was the most tearful and heartfelt monologue in the piece, so I situated it as the dramatic climax.

How this Scene Fits into Women Behaving Badly

This piece shows the vulnerabilities of a powerful woman. The stakes are high for women who have priorities, and *The Devil Wears Prada* illustrates everything a strong woman can lose when they spend their life focused solely on their work. The constant reach for success can hurt relationships with friends and family.

PART 2: PERFORMANCE

Personal Character Notes
Miranda’s voice lies in her throat. She speaks faster than normal, but she slows down when she is upset. She is trying to keep composure so she can warn fellow strong women about giving their lives over to the quest for power. She loses her composure when she talks about her husband leaving her. She feels her whole life has been a waste of time because she has nothing left that she loves.

**Evolution of Characters**

This monologue seemed bland when I first performed it; I couldn’t get the emotional connection right away. I think this problem came from the *Network* scene. Before I added the second “Don’t leave me,” the *Network* scene ended on an angry, strong note. Adding the moment of weakness for Diane left me with enough sadness and vulnerability to perform the *Devil Wears Prada* monologue. This monologue needed to be as big as possible because the drama of the play built up to it, and I needed to make sure my emotions ran deep. I was able to get as big as I wanted to by opening night.
CHAPTER 2: THE SCRIPT
WOMEN BEHAVING BADLY

Jake: It's not that you're a bad guy, Jake, or that I don't enjoy being with you. I do. I always have. It's just, I need something more. (Eunich, 1).

Bitch: Women need something more. Strong women are hungry. Hungry for balance. And I have noticed that women who would do anything for balance and satisfaction in life are often called... difficult. I been called a bitch so many times I guess I am one (Wurtzel, 26).

Jake: And when I say something more, Jake, I don't mean looks, or money, or laughs. You're great with all that. I need a bigger penis. What it boils down to is, well, your penis is just too tiny. It's cute, it's quaint, and on occasion it has done some nice things for me, but it's just not worth the time and effort anymore. Your penis is like Mount Everest. Not in size. In challenge. Once I climb to the top, I'm too tired to enjoy anything.

Bitch: So, I'm a bitch. And of course the bitch persona appeals to me. It is the illusion of liberation. I don't want to diet, I don't want to say no, thank you, and pretend somehow that what is there is enough when always, always, I want more. What if
you want to be large in a world that would have you be small? I can't go along with the fiction that the world would have me believe and adhere to: That I ought to accept the crumbs that are supposed to pass for a life. All women who are labeled as "bitches" have that defining characteristic: You have appetites. Everything says to not talk to that guy first, we don't need another piece of chocolate cake, we don't need another Gucci bag, another trip to Sephora. Well, this is meant to be a piece about people who are so beyond need, who want and have figured out that it's never too soon to make demands of this life, this world, this everything. It's about how nice it must be to just decide I will not be nice, I am never sorry, I have no regrets.

_The Importance of Being Earnest:_

**CECILY:** Pray let me introduce myself to you. My name is Cecily Cardew.

**GWENDOLEN:** Cecily Cardew? What a very sweet name! Something tells me that we are going to be great friends. I like you already more than I can say. My first impressions of people are never wrong.

**CECILY:** How nice of you to like me so much after we have known each other such a comparatively short time. Pray sit down.

**GWENDOLEN:** Cecily, do you mind my looking at you through my glasses?

**CECILY:** Oh! Not at all, Gwendolen. I am very fond of being looked at.

**GWENDOLEN:** You are here on a short visit, I suppose.

**CECILY:** Oh no! I live here. My dear guardian has the arduous task of looking after me.
GWENDOLEN: Your guardian?

CECILY: Yes, I am Mr. Worthing's ward.

GWENDOLEN: Oh! It is strange he never mentioned to me that he had a ward. How secretive of him! I am very fond of you, Cecily; I have liked you ever since I met you! But I am bound to state that now that I know that you are Mr. Worthing's ward, I cannot help expressing a wish you were—well, just a little older than you seem to be—and not quite so very alluring in appearance. In fact, if I may speak candidly—

CECILY: Pray do! I think that whenever one has anything unpleasant to say, one should always be quite candid.

GWENDOLEN: Well, to speak with perfect candour, Cecily, I wish that you were fully forty-two, and more than usually plain for your age. Earnest has a strong upright nature. But even men of the noblest possible moral character are extremely susceptible to the influence of the physical charms of others.

CECILY: I beg your pardon, Gwendolen, did you say Earnest?

GWENDOLEN: Yes.

CECILY: Oh, but it is not Mr. Earnest Worthing who is my guardian. It is his brother—his elder brother.

GWENDOLEN: Cecily, you have lifted a load from my mind. I was growing almost anxious. It would have been terrible if any cloud had come across a friendship like ours, would it not? Of course you are
quite, quite sure that it is not Mr. Earnest Worthing who is your 
guardian?

CECILY: Quite sure. In fact, I am going to be his.

GWENDOLEN: I beg your pardon?

CECILY: Dearest Gwendolen, there is no reason why I should make a secret 
of it to you. Our little county newspaper is sure to chronicle the 
fact next week. Mr. Earnest Worthing and I are engaged to be 
marroned.

GWENDOLEN: My darling Cecily, I think there must be some slight error. Mr. 
Earnest Worthing is engaged to me. The announcement will 
appear in the Morning Poston Saturday at the latest.

CECILY: I am afraid you must be under some misconception. Earnest 
proposed to me exactly ten minutes ago.

GWENDOLEN: It is certainly very curious, for he asked me to be his wife 
yesterday afternoon at 5.30. If you would care to verify the 
incident, pray do so. I never travel without my diary. One should 
always have something sensational to read in the train. I am so 
sorry, dear Cecily, if it is any disappointment to you, but I am 
afraid I have the prior claim.

CECILY: It would distress me more than I can tell you, dear Gwendolen, if it 
caused you any mental or physical anguish, but I feel bound to 
point out that since Earnest proposed to you he clearly has changed 
his mind.
GWENDOLEN: If the poor fellow has been entrapped into any foolish promise I shall consider it my duty to rescue him at once, and with a firm hand.

CECILY: Whatever unfortunate entanglement my dear boy may have got into, I will never reproach him with it after we are married.

GWENDOLEN: Do you allude to me, Miss Cardew, as an entanglement? You are presumptuous. On an occasion of this kind it becomes more than a moral duty to speak one's mind. It becomes a pleasure.

CECILY: Do you suggest, Miss Fairfax, that I entrapped Earnest into an engagement? How dare you! This is no time for wearing the shallow mask of manners. When I see a spade I call it a spade.

GWENDOLEN: I am glad to say that I have never seen a spade. It is obvious that our social spheres have been widely different.

MERRIMAN: Shall I lay tea here as usual, Miss?

CECILY: Yes, as usual. May I offer you some tea, Miss Fairfax?

GWENDOLEN: Thank you. Detestable girl! But I require tea!

CECILY: Sugar?

GWENDOLEN: No, thank you. Sugar is not fashionable any more.

CECILY: Cake or bread and butter?

GWENDOLEN: Bread and butter, please. Cake is rarely seen at the best houses nowadays. You have filled my tea with lumps of sugar, and though I asked most distinctly for bread and butter, you have given me cake. I am known for the gentleness of my disposition, and the
extraordinary sweetness of my nature, but I warn you, Miss Cardew, you go too far.

**CECILY:** To save my poor, innocent, trusting boy from the machinations of any other girl there are no lengths to which I would not go.

**GWENDOLEN:** From the moment I saw you I distrusted you. I felt that you were false and deceitful. I am never deceived in such matters. My first impressions of people are invariably right.

**CECILY:** It seems to me, Miss Fairfax, that I am trespassing on your valuable time. No doubt you have many other calls of a similar character to make in the neighbourhood (Wilde, 155).

**Titular:** Now you might not believe this because it’s fucking pathetic, but it’s true. So I’m sitting in my car with my ex and he says to me “You know, I like your boobs better when you’re on the pill and they’re all swollen from the hormones.” He actually said this shit to me. This guy, who thinks he’s all hippie, all vegetarian-granola-earthy, actually thinks it matters to me how he prefers my titties, and he is suggesting I engorge them artificially with the birth-control pill? Excuse me? So I go listen, honey, these titties don’t belong to you, they belong to me, and they are currently protruding from my body. They are mine, and I like them. They may not be huge but these motherfuckers are perky—they stand at attention 24/7. And you know what? Your perception of my worth physically doesn’t mean shit to me. I trust you don’t want to go too deep into the ‘size’ discussion. Let’s not
rush into that one too fast. So screw you, dude, and screw your swollen-tity fantasy. My boobies, my body. News flash: These aren’t for you, my titties are for me (Kann, Indiefeed Performance Poetry).

Angry Young Women in Low-Rise Jeans with High Class Issues:

**RACHEL:** How was your day, sweetie?

**BRIAN:** It was okay. And yours?

**RACHEL:** Fine. I’m ready for some ice cream. // Who finished this?

**BRIAN:** What do you mean?

**RACHEL:** What do you mean what do I mean? Somebody put an empty carton of ice cream in the freezer. Why would you do something like that? All I wanted was to have some ice cream and go to bed and not only is there none left but an empty carton is in there just to tease me.

**BRIAN:** I’ll run down and get you some.

**RACHEL:** No.

**BRIAN:** It’s really no problem.

**RACHEL:** Don’t bother.

**BRIAN:** I’ll be back before you know it.

**RACHEL:** I won’t eat it. Even if Ben and Jerry showed up at the door with a fucking soft serve machine I wouldn’t eat it. // Why are these in the trash? These are recyclable.

**BRIAN:** I was just trying to keep the place clean.
RACHEL: But you can't do it right, can you? I hope you don't expect me to clean all these dishes. You better clean up your fucking mess because I'm in no mood to clean up after you.

BRIAN: It's okay. I'll do it. Just come sit down with me.

RACHEL: Don't order me around.

BRIAN: Okay!

RACHEL: What is wrong with you?

BRIAN: What is wrong with me?

RACHEL: What the fuck is the matter with you? You're such a little drama queen.

BRIAN: I'm the drama queen? // Forget it baby, come watch the game with me.

RACHEL: Don't call me baby.

BRIAN: Fine (Morillo, 53).

Bitch: All my life, one person or another has been telling me to behave. I probably do need to learn to behave. But I don't like it. It seems like, all this, all these years of feminism, Bra burning in Atlantic City--so we could learn to behave? Roe v. Wade--so we could learn to behave? Thelma & Louise--so we could learn to behave?

Jake: Jake, please don't let this hurt you. It's my loss. I should recognize your many good qualities and learn to cope with your small penis. God knows, I've tried. But I can't, Jake. I just can't. I need meat, you know. Something tangible, massive, something I can't withstand.
**Bitch:** Go to any bookstore and there are plenty of self-help books for women about how to deal with commitment-resistant, impossible men--Smart Women, Foolish Choices and the like--there is not one book addressed to men about how to work out their own damn problems with relationships. No book for men about how to learn to open one's heart, how to stop running from emotional involvement--I know, because I searched everyone for one for my last boyfriend and it doesn't exist. Do you know why? Because it doesn't need to. They don't have to change the psychic messages inculcated into their brains from way back in their pre-Oedipal days. They don't have to because we women will learn to behave. Well, I am sick of it.

*The Taming of the Shrew:*

**BIANCA:** Good sister, wrong me not, nor wrong yourself,
To make a bondmaid and a slave of me-
That I disdain; but for these other gawds,
Unbind my hands, I'll pull them off myself,
Yea, all my raiment, to my petticoat;
Or what you will command me will I do,
So well I know my duty to my elders.

**KATHERINA:** Of all thy suitors here I charge thee tell
Whom thou lov'st best. See thou dissemble not.
**BIANCA:** Believe me, sister, of all the men alive
I never yet beheld that special face
Which I could fancy more than any other.

**KATHERINA:** Minion, thou liest. Is't not Hortensio?

**BIANCA:** If you affect him, sister, here I swear
I'll plead for you myself but you shall have him.

**KATHERINA:** O then, belike, you fancy riches more:
You will have Gremio to keep you fair.

**BIANCA:** Is it for him you do envy me so?
Nay, then you jest; and now I well perceive
You have but jested with me all this while.
I prithee, sister Kate, untie my hands.

**KATHERINA:** If that be jest, then an the rest was so.

**PETRUCHIO:** I'll attend her here,
And woo her with some spirit when she comes.
Say that she rail; why, then I'll tell her plain
She sings as sweetly as a nightingale.
Say that she frown; I'll say she looks as clear
As morning roses newly wash'd with dew.
Say she be mute, and will not speak a word;
Then I'll commend her volubility,
And say she uttereth piercing eloquence.
If she do bid me pack, I'll give her thanks,

As though she bid me stay by her a week;

If she deny to wed, I'll crave the day

When I shall ask the banns, and when be married.

But here she comes; And now, Petruchio, speak.

Good morrow, Kate- for that's your name, I hear.

**KATHERINA.**

Well have you heard, but something hard of hearing:

They call me Katherine that do talk of me.

**PETRUCHIO.**

You lie, in faith, for you are call'd plain Kate,

And bonny Kate, and sometimes Kate the curst;

But, Kate, the prettiest Kate in Christendom,

Kate of Kate Hall, my super-dainty Kate,

For dainties are all Kates, and therefore, Kate,

Take this of me, Kate of my consolation-

Hearing thy mildness prais'd in every town,

Thy virtues spoke of, and thy beauty sounded,

Yet not so deeply as to thee belongs,

Myself am mov'd to woo thee for my wife.

**KATHERINA.**

Mov'd! in good time! Let him that mov'd you hither

Remove you hence. I knew you at the first

You were a moveable.

**PETRUCHIO.**

Why, what's a moveable?

**KATHERINA.**

A join'd-stool.
**PETRUCHIO.** Thou hast hit it. Come, sit on me.

**KATHERINA.** Asses are made to bear, and so are you.

**PETRUCHIO.** Women are made to bear, and so are you.

**KATHERINA.** No such jade as you, if me you mean.

**PETRUCHIO.** Alas, good Kate, I will not burden thee!

**KATHERINA.** For, knowing thee to be but young and light-

**PETRUCHIO.** Too light for such a swain as you to catch;

**KATHERINA.** And yet as heavy as my weight should be.

**PETRUCHIO.** Should be! should- buzz!

**KATHERINA.** Well ta'en, and like a buzzard.

**PETRUCHIO.** O, slow-wing'd turtle, shall a buzzard take thee?

**KATHERINA.** Ay, for a turtle, as he takes a buzzard.

**PETRUCHIO.** Come, come, you wasp; i' faith, you are too angry.

**KATHERINA.** If I be waspish, best beware my sting.

**PETRUCHIO.** My remedy is then to pluck it out.

**KATHERINA.** Ay, if the fool could find it where it lies.

**PETRUCHIO.** Who knows not where a wasp does wear his sting?

**KATHERINA.** In his tail.

**PETRUCHIO.** Whose tongue?

**KATHERINA.** Yours, if you talk of tales; and so farewell.

**PETRUCHIO.** What, with my tongue in your tail? Nay, come again,

**PETRUCHIO.** Good Kate; I am a gentleman.
KATHERINA. That I'll try.

PETRUCHIO. I swear I'll cuff you, if you strike again.

KATHERINA. So may you lose your arms.

If you strike me, you are no gentleman;
And if no gentleman, why then no arms.

PETRUCHIO. A herald, Kate? O, put me in thy books!

KATHERINA. What is your crest- a coxcomb?

PETRUCHIO. A combless cock, so Kate will be my hen.

KATHERINA. No cock of mine: you crow too like a craven.

PETRUCHIO. Nay, come, Kate, come; you must not look so sour.

KATHERINA. It is my fashion, when I see a crab.

PETRUCHIO. Why, here's no crab; and therefore look not sour.

KATHERINA. There is, there is.

PETRUCHIO. Then show it me.

KATHERINA. Had I a glass I would.

PETRUCHIO. What, you mean my face?

KATHERINA. Well aim'd of such a young one.

PETRUCHIO. Now, by Saint George, I am too young for you.

KATHERINA. Yet you are wither'd.

PETRUCHIO. 'Tis with cares.

KATHERINA. I care not.

PETRUCHIO. Nay, hear you, Kate- in sooth, you scape not so.

KATHERINA. I chafe you, if I tarry; let me go.
PETRUCHIO. No, not a whit; I find you passing gentle.

'Twas told me you were rough, and coy, and sullen,
And now I find report a very liar;
For thou art pleasant, gamesome, passing courteous,
But slow in speech, yet sweet as springtime flowers.
Thou canst not frown, thou canst not look askance,
Nor bite the lip, as angry wenches will,
Nor hast thou pleasure to be cross in talk;
But thou with mildness entertain'st thy wooers,
With gentle conference, soft and affable.
Why does the world report that Kate doth limp?
O sland'rous world! Kate like the hazel-twig
Is straight and slender, and as brown in hue
As hazel-nuts, and sweeter than the kernels.
O, let me see thee walk. Thou dost not halt.

KATHERINA. Go, fool, and whom thou keep'st command.

PETRUCHIO. Did ever Dian so become a grove
As Kate this chamber with her princely gait?
O, be thou Dian, and let her be Kate;
And then let Kate be chaste, and Dian sportful!

KATHERINA. Where did you study all this goodly speech?

PETRUCHIO. It is extempore, from my mother wit.

KATHERINA. A witty mother! witless else her son.
PETRUCHIO. Am I not wise?

KATHERINA. Yes, keep you warm.

PETRUCHIO. Marry, so I mean, sweet Katherine, in thy bed.

And therefore, setting all this chat aside,

Thus in plain terms: your father hath consented

That you shall be my wife your dowry greed on;

And will you, nill you, I will marry you.

KATHERINA. I'll see thee hang'd on Sunday first (Shakespeare, 126).

Wishful Drinking: I’ve had this song dedicated to me before. There’s this lyric in it I wanted to share with you. “My heart is allergic to the woman I love and its changing the shape of my face.” I don’t think that’s very flattering. My boyfriend dedicated it to me when we were on the way to the airport—we had been fighting all morning. And I’m about to get on the plane, right? So I turn to him and say you’ll feel bad if I crash. And he said maybe not. Later I found out he was gay. He forgot to tell me that he was gay. Well he forgot to tell me and I forgot to notice. But later, he explained to me that I had turned him gay. Turning people gay though, it is kinda a super power of mine. Admittedly, it is not called upon a lot. But when it is, I pick up my pink phone, put on my rainbow cape, and I’m there like a shot. He was really handsome. Well, he
still is. But when I met him he had hair. I do that too. I make them bald, I turn them gay, my work is done (Fisher, HBO)!

*Mean Girls:*

**GRETCHEN:** Oh my God, there’s Jason! He’s with Taylor Wedell.

**REGINA:** Wait. Jason is not going out with Taylor Wedell. No. He cannot blow you off like that. He is such a little skeez. Gimme your phone.

**GRETCHEN:** Don’t call him!

**REGINA:** Gimme a break. Wedell on South Boulevard. Hi, may I speak to Taylor Wedell please? This is Susan at Planned Parenthood. I have her test results, if you could have her give me a call. Today, if she can. It’s urgent. Thanks. She’s not going out tonight (Fey, Paramount Pictures).

*Dog Sees God:*

I was pregnant. I had just gotten an abortion the day before and the next day in biology we’re all ironically learning about reproduction. Fallopian tubes, the uterus, eggs, and I’m feeling sick to my stomach already. Trying to zone out on anything I can. So I started reading a note over Ms. Puritanical Princess’ shoulder and she’s telling her friend how happy she is that she is a virgin and how it’s going to stay that way till she gets married and how repulsed she is by all the whores at our school. Without thinking, I
reached into my pocket and pulled out my cute little red bic lighter and set her cute little red hair on fire. And every day in therapy they ask me if I’m sorry and I just can’t be. No matter how hard I try. Bitches like that make me sick. They’ve made me sick. I’m officially sick, psychotic, unrepentant and unremitting. I’ve been branded a sociopath and I have no choice but to believe it (Royal, 35).

*Cat on a Hot Tin Roof:*

**MAGGIE:** One of those no-neck monsters hit me with a hot buttered biscuit so I have t’change!

**BRICK:** Why d’ya call Gooper’s kiddies no-neck monsters?

**MAGGIE:** Because they’ve got no necks! Isn’t that a good enough reason?

**BRICK:** Don’t they have any necks?

**MAGGIE:** None visible. Their fat little heads are set on their fat little bodies without a bit of connection.

**BRICK:** That’s too bad.

**MAGGIE:** Yes, it’s too bad because you can’t wring their necks if they’ve got no necks to wring! Isn’t that right, honey? Yep, they’re no-neck monsters, all right, all no-neck people are monsters. Hear them? Hear them screaming? I don’t know where their voice boxes are located since they don’t have necks. Think of it, Brick, Gooper and Mae got five of them and number six is coming. Why, they have those children doin’ tricks all the time!
“Junior, show Big Daddy how you do this, show Big Daddy how you do that. Show your dimples, Sugar. Brother, show Big Daddy how you stand on your head!”—it goes on all the time, along with constant little remarks and innuendos about the fact that you and I have not produced any children, are totally childless and therefore totally useless!—of course it’s comical but it’s also disgusting. // Y’know what happened to poor little Susie McPheeters?

**BRICK:** No. What happened to little Susie McPheeters?

**MAGGIE:** Somebody spit tobacco juice in her face. Some old drunk leaned out of a window yelled, “Hey, Queen, hey, hey, there, Queenie!” Poor Susie looked up and flashed him a radiant smile and he shot out a squirt of tobacco juice right in poor Susie’s face.

**BRICK:** Well, what d’you know about that.

**MAGGIE:** What do I know about it? I was there, I saw it!

**BRICK:** Must have been kind of funny.

**MAGGIE:** Susie didn’t think so. Had hysterics. Screamed like a banshee. They had to stop th’ parade an’ remove her from her throne an’ go on with—why are you looking at me like that?

**BRICK:** Like what, Maggie?

**MAGGIE:** The way y’ were lookin’ at me just now, befor’ I caught your eye in the mirror and you started t’ whistle! I don’t know how t’ describe it but it froze my blood!—I’ve caught you lookin’ at me like that so often lately. What are you thinkin’ of when you look at me like that?
BRICK: I wasn’t conscious of lookin’ at you, Maggie.

MAGGIE: Well, I was conscious of it! What were you thinkin’?

BRICK: I don’t remember thinking of anything, Maggie.

MAGGIE: Don’t you think I know that--? Don’t you--?—think I know that--?

BRICK: Know what, Maggie?

MAGGIE: That I’ve gone through this—hideous!—transformation, become—hard! Frantic!—cruel! That’s what you’ve been observing in me lately. How could y’help but observe it? That’s all right. I’m not—thin-skinned any more, can’t afford t’be thin-skinned any more. But Brick? Brick?

BRICK: Did you say something?

MAGGIE: I was goin’ t’ say something: that I get lonely. Very!

BRICK: Ev’rybody gets that...

MAGGIE: Living with someone you love can be lonelier—than living entirely alone!—if the one that y’love doesn’t love you...

BRICK: Would you like to live alone, Maggie?

MAGGIE: No!—God!—I wouldn’t! You know, if I thought you would never, never make love to me again—I would go downstairs to the kitchen and pick out the longest and sharpest knife I could find and stick it straight into my heart, I swear to God that I would!

BRICK: Why, Sister Woman...

MAE: Brick, is this thing yours?

MAGGIE: That’s my Diana Trophy. Won it at the intercollegiate archery contest on the Ole Miss campus.
MAE: It's a mighty dangerous thing to leave exposed round a house full of nawmal rid-blooded children attracted t'weapons.

MAGGIE: "Nawmal rid-blooded children attracted t'weapons" ought t'be taught to keep their hands off things that don't belong to them.

MAE: Maggie, honey, if you had children of your own you'd know how funny that is.

Brick, you should've been downstairs after supper! Kiddies put on a show. Polly played the piano, Buster an' Sonny drums, an' then they turned out the lights an' Dixie an' Trixie puhfawmed a toe dance in fairy costume with spahkluhs!

MAGGIE: Oh, I bet. It breaks my heart that we missed it! But Mae? Why did y'give dawgs' names to all your kiddies?

MAE: Dogs names?

MAGGIE: Dixie, Trixie, Buster, Sonny, Polly! -Sounds like four dogs and a parrot...

MAE: You know the real names of our kiddies. Buster's real name is Robert.

Sonny's real name is Saunders. Trixie's real name is Marlene and Dixie's— Maggie? Why are you so catty?

MAGGIE: Cause I'm a cat! But why can't you take a joke, Sister woman?

MAE: Nothin' pleases me more than a joke that's funny.

MAGGIE: I wonder what Dixie's real name is.

BRICK: Maggie, being catty doesn't help things any...
MAGGIE: I know! WHY! –Am I so catty?—Cause I'm consumed with envy an' eaten up with longing? Brick, y'know, I've been so God damn disgustedly poor all my life! Always had to suck up to people I couldn't stand because they had money and I was poor as Job's turkey. You don't know what that's like. Never havin' any clothes. When I came out, the year that I made my debut, I had just two evening dresses! One Mother made me from a pattern in Vogue, the other a hand-me-down from a snotty rich cousin I hated! –the dress that I married you in was my grandmother's weddin' gown... I'm not tryin to whitewash my behavior, Christ, no! Brick, I'm not good. I don't know why people have to pretend to be good, nobody's good. The rich or the well to do can afford to respect moral patterns, I never could afford to, but I'm honest! Born poor, raised poor, expect to die poor unless I manage to get us something out of what Big Daddy leaves when he dies of cancer! This is Big Daddy's last birthday. I'm sorry about it. But I'm facing the facts. Mae and Gooper are tryin to freeze us out of Big Daddy's estate because you drink and I'm childless. But we can defeat that plan. We are going to defeat that plan. I have been completely examined, and there is no reason why we can't have a child whenever we want one. Are you listening to me? Are you LISTENING TO ME?

BRICK: Yes, I hear you, Maggie. But how in hell on earth do you imagine—that you're going to have a child by a man that can't stand you?

MAGGIE: That's a problem that I will have to work out (Williams, 18).
I was married for four years and pretended to be happy and had six years of analysis and pretended to be sane. My husband ran off with his boyfriend, and I had an affair with my analyst. He told me I was the worst lay he had ever had. I can't tell you how many men have told me what a lousy lay I am. I apparently have a masculine temperament. I arouse quickly, consummate prematurely, and can't wait to get my clothes back on and get out of that bedroom. I seem to be inept at everything except my work. I'm goddamn good at my work and so I confine myself to that.

Now, I don't want to play butch boss with you, but when I took over this department, it had the worst programming record in television history. I am making this situation better. Another couple of weeks of this, and the sponsors will be bailing out!

Diana?

This is breach of contract! You better get him off this corporate universe kick or, so help me, I'll pull him off the air!

I'm tired of finding you on the goddamned phone every time I turn around!

I told him! I've been telling him every day for a week! I'm sick of telling him! Now, you tell him!

I'm tired of being an accessory in your life!

I don't need you. I don't want your decay and death! I don't need you, Max.
**MAX:** You need me badly! And that painful, decaying love is the only thing between you and the shrieking nothingness you live the rest of the day!

**Diana:** Then don't leave me! Don't leave me?

**MAX:** It's too late, Diana! There's nothing left in you that I can live with! If I stay with you, I'll be destroyed (Lumet, United Artists)!

**The Devil Wears Prada:** Divorce papers. Preliminary, of course. Funny thing is, I thought Stephen and I were going to make it. At first they're always proud to be with me, proud to be with a powerful, accomplished woman. They say they don't want some little housewife. But then... I love him. I do. I just can't be what he wants me to be. The more powerful you get, the more you'll be judged and scrutinized, on display. You'll miss things—vacations, sunsets, moments with your family. Some people in your life will never accept your priorities. Not everyone can withstand that pressure (McKenna, 20th Century Fox).

**Mean Girls:**

**Regina:** I'm sorry I took Aaron from you like that. He really does like you, you know. He was always talking about how “unusual” you are. It pissed me off so bad. It was, like, when I was 7, I had this really expensive doll house from Germany, but I never played with it anymore so my mom...
wanted to give it to my cousin. And even though I didn’t want it anymore--

**CADY:** You begged your mom to let you keep it?

**REGINA:** No. I threw it down the stairs. I smashed it so no one could have it. But that’s just me.

**Jake:** Jake, maybe if your penis was at least medium size, we could work something out. Maybe if it was impotent. There are pills, therapy, Zen. But it’s not impotent, it's tiny. So tiny. Like a Vienna sausage, except without the bulk. So please know that I still love you and always will. We were such great friends before. I hope this doesn't change things.

**Bitch:** But for a woman, to assume she has to be not nice, it puts her out of what is acceptable. She can be a deeply depressive Sylvia Plath, a decadent Delilah, a homicidal Amy Fisher, she can be anyone who decides that what she wants and needs and believes and must do is more important than being nice. She may, in fact, be as nice as can be, but as soon as she says catch me if you can I'm so free this is my life and the rest can kiss off -- it's amazing how quickly everyone finds her difficult, crazy, a nightmare: a bitch.
CHAPTER 6: POST PRODUCTION

In reflection, I am satisfied with the script and performances of *Women Behaving Badly*. The response was overwhelmingly positive, especially for the *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* scene. This scene stood out to most audience members because I effectively transformed into the character of Maggie. Even my own sister said Maggie engrossed her to the point that she forgot she was watching me. This likely came out of my costume change, my love for the script, and my understanding of the character. I wish I would have had more time to work on my southern dialect for the character of Maggie. I did not have time to study the Deep South dialect section in my dialect book, and I based my accent on people I know and experiences I’ve had in the south. This led me to miss some specific sounds, though people unfamiliar with the old south dialect may not have noticed.

If I had to do the show again, I would schedule more rehearsal time. Most of this was beyond my control. I scheduled about three weeks of rehearsal time, which would have been fine if we rehearsed Monday-Saturday. But I was out of town on Ole Miss Forensics tournaments 2 of these weekends from Thursday-Sunday. Whereas I worked my monologues in depth with my forensics coaches, the lack of group rehearsals affected the scenes and transitions of the show. We did not get enough full run-throughs of the entire show, and this proved to be a problem right before opening night. The final dress rehearsal on Wednesday was rough: I dropped the cake on the floor during *The*
Importance of Being Ernest. I could not change clothes fast enough before The Taming of the Shrew, Adam and I were too quiet during The Taming of the Shrew, I was out of breath during my monologue from Wishful Drinking. Ashley forgot to place the changing screen out for Cat on a Hot Tin Roof. I tripped over the legs on the changing screen once it was brought out, I was not dramatic enough for The Devil Wears Prada monologue, and my final monologue from Bitch: In Praise of Difficult Women needed to be bigger.

We worked hard in between final dress rehearsal and opening night to address all of these problem areas. These mistakes were not visible on opening night, save my exhaustion during the Wishful Drinking monologue. Whereas I was still out of breath after the intensely physical Taming of the Shrew scene, opening night proved a success. This problem would have been solved with one more run-through because I was not at all exhausted the following night. More run-throughs would have also given me more confidence, which I needed opening night. The confidence I had during the second performance made the play more effective.

I would not change my script, my blocking, or my actors; I am happy with the pieces I used and the message I sent. The subject matter was racy at times, but I felt that my topic lent itself to explore controversial issues. I am pleased with my final product. I showcased my ability to write and compile a play, displayed my acting range, and collected $40 for Oxford’s Domestic Violence Project. And above all, I had fun.
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APPENDIX
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Press Release

Ole Miss honors senior, Taylor Wood, to perform one-woman performance piece March 10 and 11th in Meek Auditorium

Oxford, MS, March 7, 2011: Ole Miss Theatre and The Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College at The University of Mississippi present "Women Behaving Badly" a one woman performance piece compiled and performed by Honors College Senior Taylor Wood. This production is Wood's Thesis performance and will run Thursday and Friday, March 10 and 11 in the Meek Hall Auditorium on the Ole Miss Campus.

This is a performance piece that, according to Wood, speaks to the subtle but very real suppression of the female voice throughout history. Wood, a member of the Ole Miss Forensics Team housed in the Lott Leadership Institute, has spent most of her college career studying and performing literature either on the stage, in the classroom or in intercollegiate competition. "Women Behaving Badly" brings together many of the characters and literary artists who have challenged and inspired Wood in finding her own voice. From Shakespeare's Kate to Regina from "Mean Girls"; from Wilde's Cecily Cardew in "The Importance of Being Earnest" to Tennessee Williams' famous Maggie from "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof", these women defy societal expectations simply because they dare to want more than what societal norms can offer them – often to the detriment of their own personal relationships.

"Women Behaving Badly" will be performed in Meek Auditorium at 6:30 March 10 and 11 and is free and open to the public, however donations are being sought to benefit Oxford's Domestic Violence Project. Notice: Mature Themes and Subject Matter.

The Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College is Ole Miss' nationally recognized honors program, known for fostering intellectual curiosity in its students. Ole Miss Theatre is the production arm of the Department of Theatre Arts and works to develop the performance, design, film, dance and directing talents of its students and faculty.

For Release March 7, 2011
Women Behaving Badly

A Thesis Performance Piece
Defying Female Stereotypes

Created and Performed by Taylor Wood

March 10th & 11th
6:30 p.m.
Meek Hall

No Admission, however, Donations Accepted at the Door
For The Domestic Violence Project

Produced Under the Direction of The University of Mississippi
Department of Theatre Arts and
The Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College