

SAVING SEPTEMBER

A Thesis About Bullying in Two Acts

by

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the
University Honors Program
University of South Florida, Saint Petersburg

4 May 2012

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GRATITUDE

While stationed in Iraq in 2006, I walked a dusty mile between my living quarters and work place. At first, I grumbled under my breath for having to lug so much gear for so far a distance; over time, those walks became my time for daily reflection and gratitude. Yes, I was in a war zone, away from my family, and frankly, I wasn't very supportive of America's presence in Iraq. But, I was extremely grateful for my health, relative safety, and I knew many people were sending good thoughts and prayers my way for a safe return. At night, without much light pollution, bright stars crowded the sky above me. During my solitary walks home, I could always pick out the large constellation, Orion. The Greek hunter quickly became my confidant and he heard my many confessions of gratitude; I continue to send him gratitude on clear, quiet evenings here in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Saving September would not have been possible without my esteemed thesis committee: [Dr. Trey Conner](#), Dr. Julie Buckner Armstrong, and Dr. Thomas Smith. Each provided very different perspectives and valuable advice during my thesis year and helped me make *September* what it is: American literature, composition and rhetoric, political science, social justice, open-source, and civic engagement. To my committee, and all my USFSP professors, a very

grateful nod of thanks for the academic encouragement and friendship.

It must be said I wouldn't have joined the Honors Program or perhaps even be in college today without the encouragement, support, and love of Pedro Acosta, my partner in life. The federal government and the state of Florida won't let me call him my husband (yet), but he is that and much more to me. To him, cwm.

My college years came later in life after a 20-year career in the Air Force. *Saving September* could not have been possible if not for the [Post-9/11 GI Bill](#). Said without an ounce of shame, I, like many other kids from poorer families, joined the military for the education opportunities. My grateful acknowledgement goes to the American public for not only making *September* possible, but my entire college education – I hope their investment in me pays dividends in making our country a better place to live. Thank you.

To everyone else, near and far, I send sincere gratitude out to the universe – via Orion – for the opportunity to write *Saving September*. It's been the most fulfilling academic experience in my life and has confirmed to me that "writer" is what I'm meant to be.

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THESIS

In 2010, a [rash of suicides](#) – especially among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth – began a national conversation about bullying. United States laws and policies along with prevailing societal attitudes towards homosexuality create an ethos condoning such bullying often leading many LGBT youth to conclude it is better to commit suicide than it is to go on living.

ABSTRACT:

Growing up isn't easy for anybody, but it's all the more difficult when you are (or perceived to be) LGBT. *Saving September* is part narrative play, part civics lesson about the difficulties of growing up gay in America and the various forms of [bullying](#) surrounding LGBT children.

Narrative story: Destructive forces rail against young people – gay and straight – attempting to survive their adolescence. An [ill-fated love story](#) intertwines with that of *September*, a teenager struggling against a riptide of homophobia.

Dialogues: Pointed and poignant verbal and visual essays reinforcing the author's thesis: anti-gay rhetoric surrounds LGBT youth leading them towards ideas of suicide. The production company adds its own context and experience to the "[Dialogues](#)," making each a communal conversation.

Creating the play requires the production company to examine and consider the play's larger ideas while including local context. The author's intention is to show how the broader ideas of homophobia impact all members of a community. [Choice of music, imagery, and some dialogue](#) are left up to the company and in this way, the play's message becomes organic and authentic for the audience.

REFLECTING FOREWORD

When Dr. Thomas Smith accepted me into the [USF St. Petersburg Honors Program](#) in the summer of 2010, I knew then I would write a script for a play or film for my thesis year; however, I didn't know what my subject would be about. I decided on my topic in October 2010. It was during this time politicians, media pundits, and regular folks vociferously debated around kitchen tables, televisions, and various venues across the Internet about LGBT equality and civil rights issues such as: [repealing "Don't Ask, Don't Tell,"](#) [same-sex marriage,](#) and [whether homosexuals should be allowed to adopt children.](#) This national conversation created the backdrop for the horrific news in September 2010 of a [13-year old boy who hung himself from a tree](#) in his yard after incessant bullying at his school because he was perceived to be gay. Then a boy [shot himself](#); then another boy [jumped off a bridge.](#) Within a month, seven children had committed suicide all because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation. Their deaths inspired me to learn more about what has now become known as "[bullycide.](#)"

The One-Percent

When thinking about the goals and intention of my play, I was inspired by Eve Ensler's community-action play, [*The Vagina Monologues*](#), where anyone – with a vagina – can get involved in the theatrical experience to talk about violence against women. Performing a play “on book” (a staged reading of a script) appealed to me. Doing so allows regular folks outside the acting community to get involved. I didn't want to write a play solely for trained actors. I wanted to create a play that could be performed by regular people in real communities so the message could reach a wider audience. [*The Laramie Project*](#) is performed this way as well and these plays became models for me when writing *Saving September*. Both plays demonstrated the effectiveness of community inclusion in social justice theatre that I wanted *September* to emulate. The goal for my play would be to bring a community together to learn about bullying and use their knowledge as a base to create an organic theatre experience.

The first step I took to start my thesis year was to keep a journal. I've attempted journals in the past and have never been successful due to a lack of passion for the endeavor. This time, I promised myself to stay on track.

I attribute my journaling experience as my number one resource for keeping me thinking about my thesis and not losing potential ideas. Whether I was in a class about American literature, geography, or art history, my journal was there and ideas popped up all the time.

Digging Deeper

I used my Fall 2011 semester exclusively to conduct research and remain open to new ideas about my thesis. I watched movies and documentaries, read books, plays and a graphic novel, joined Facebook advocacy groups fighting bullying, studied academic articles, and talked with friends, family, fellow students, and faculty about my thesis. I searched for anything that remotely spoke to my working thesis: American society implicitly condones bullying homosexual children through its laws and culture; I did not find any one source that put my entire thesis together. It seems I may have broken new ground.

Part of my research was free writing within my Advanced Composition class with Dr. Trey Conner, my thesis director. I experimented with different rhetorical techniques overtly and covertly with classmates to determine the effectiveness of my message. By the end of

the semester, I wrote a sample scene for my play and had classmates workshop it live in class. This was a tremendous learning experience for me and was literally the first time I had ever heard my words read aloud by others. My biggest take away from the experience was how I, the author, lost control of how others interpret what I put on the page.

Big Ideas

I can't look back at my thesis year and not remember my first conversations with Dr. Conner about my very grandiose plans for my thesis year. Originally, I was to study and conduct research during my Fall semester. I would then use my research and work with local non-profits and civic leaders to craft my play during the Spring semester. Once finished writing, I would workshop the play with a test audience and conduct a Q&A session – perhaps even during my thesis defense! Lofty goals indeed. The reality of an 18-credit hour semester set in and my plans had to change.

The major change in plan was dropping non-profit involvement and the end-of-semester workshop. Neither endeavor became feasible during the Spring due to a heavy

reading and writing load during the semester. Making the decision to eliminate both aspects from my thesis year sits heavy on my heart. My original intention was to involve my community in the development of *Saving September*. Not having their voice in my ear as I wrote bothered me greatly. To solve this problem, I created several opportunities within my script for future production companies to insert their voice and perspective into the production and make *Saving September* their play.

To create a unique community production, I went beyond the "choose your own adventure" convention common in many murder-mystery-type plays and improvisation used in many children's theatre productions. Instead, I included many prompts within *Saving September* allowing local choices in music to help create September's character, organic video production to present the community's point of view, vernacular choice, and even choosing the gender for certain characters. Indeed, the introduction to both acts and several Dialogues are completely invented by the community production team based solely on script guidelines. Again, the intention is to allow the community to study the issues within the story, make choices, and present a theatrical experience relevant to their community.

While I cannot be 100-percent certain my idea is unique, I did not discover any plays encouraging so much civic engagement, learning, and service while doing my research. It's hard for me to imagine any two productions of *Saving September* ever looking alike due to its inherent demand to use a local perspective of LGBT issues. In this way, I believe I've broken new ground.

Ass in Chair

A wise professor - who will remain nameless - once told me, "ass in chair" is all the advice some writers need. I'm sure I could have continued the research phase of my thesis indefinitely. The American LGBT landscape is extremely dynamic with new laws, outrageous denouncements, and tragic events occurring almost daily. However, when the Fall semester ended, writing had to commence.

My writing work ethic does not include diligently writing for a prescribed period of time at a scheduled time of day. That doesn't work for me. When the mood strikes, I clear my day and I produce an entire work at once. The work could be a brainstorm with sticky notes scattered all over my office wall, one or more monologues, an outline, or an entire play. In the case of *Saving September*, I wrote

in this exact way. I brainstormed ideas all through the Fall semester and during Winter break. I wrote essays and monologues which would become Dialogues from January to March 2012. I outlined elements for a narrative story that intertwined the Dialogues in early March. And finally, I birthed the narrative play in a weekend.

Typically, my best ideas come out of the blue when "lightning" strikes. By March, I didn't have a coherent play beyond my thesis and the concept of having a civic engagement play; I hadn't had my Oprah Winfrey-esque "aha moment" showing me the way how I could connect my various, disparate essays together. I knew I was in trouble; I needed to produce a coherent script. I remembered my professor's advice. I needed to get my "ass in chair" and write a narrative script – with or without a good idea.

Shakespeare Saves *September*

I wrote the first draft of *Saving September* before Spring Break and it was a very forced and stilted story about a gay teen who attempts suicide after being incessantly bullied. The plot was completely invented and really didn't have any heart. Elements from this version are barely present in the final version of the play. The

only surviving characters from the original version are September and FDM. The love story between Ava and Grayson did not exist in the first draft.

Then, finally - thankfully - lighting struck: William Shakespeare! During my second semester of Shakespeare, I had an epiphany during one of my assignments. My Shakespeare professor, Dr. Lisa Starks-Estes, assigns a group performance for her final. Groups must take one of the semester's assigned plays and create an imaginary production of our own design. Without limits on budget, venue, time period, or context, groups create an original, yet imaginary, Shakespeare production. This mental exercise helped evolve *Saving September*.

Though I would never profess to be an expert of the Bard, I can safely acknowledge I do know Shakespeare's talent wasn't in creating truly unique story lines; he borrowed almost everything he wrote about. He's revered and studied because of his use of language and how he made his source materials new and relevant.

Studying Shakespeare inspired me to borrow and make something new. For the narrative story of *Saving September*, I essentially borrowed the "[two houses](#)" trope from Shakespeare's [Romeo and Juliet](#) as a jumping off point.

My two houses are the conflicting ideologies regarding LGBT equality and, of course, the love story within the play. However, beyond the two houses trope, I would be dishonest in saying *September* is any sort of an adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*. It is not. Shakespeare just helped me get the ball rolling.

That said, I don't think it presumptuous to say I wove together disparate source materials to create my narrative story as a way to make them new and relevant to my audience. For example: in the play, Grayson never expresses a romantic interest to Levi, however, Levi murdering Grayson was directly inspired by the [murder of 15-year old Larry King](#) - also detailed in the Dialogue, "[And We're Walking](#)." *Saving September's* fictional plot exists no where else, but echoes of it can be found in real life.

Rhetorical Questions

I attempted several rhetorical conventions through out the narrative story and the Dialogues. [Ethos, logos, and pathos](#) were my watch words through out writing *Saving September*.

I make claims. I argue. I appeal. I use music, imagery, dialogue and emotion attempting to persuade. I am a novice in the employment of classic rhetoric, but I know enough from my composition classes and past military career, one never depends on one strategy to win a war. That said, I don't think bullying will end by simply making it illegal or making it a hate crime. Bullying is a war of ideas.

As I learned during my American literature classes with Dr. Julie Buckner Armstrong, my thesis second reader, hearts and minds rarely change solely through legislation making actions illegal. Indeed, as she points out in her class and in her book, [*Mary Turner and the Memory of Lynching*](#), lynching did not end because Congress passed [*hate crime laws*](#) - that wouldn't happen until 2009. Lynching ended only after a concerted effort from multiple academic and artistic voices from across the country joined together to examine, deconstruct, and educate the public about the "raw, naked, brutal facts" of America's shame (Armstrong 127). From this on-going national conversation, lynching eventually became taboo and ended as an accepted practice. With that spirit, I submit a national conversation about bullying is needed in America. A conversation to end, once

and for all, the toxic phrase, "[kids will be kids](#)" and the idea nothing can really be done about bullying.

Saving September participates in this larger conversation about bullying and can be a means to end it by making the idea of bullying out-of-bounds and taboo. In stark and subtle ways, I attempt to show the multiple ways LGBT children continually encounter bullying while growing up in America. From insidious legalized discrimination like the [Defense of Marriage Act](#) to [overt violence](#), I deploy the "raw, naked, brutal facts" of bullycide. Then I show the tragic consequences that happen far too often because of bullying.

A part of rhetoric is audience consideration. My casting directions encourage recruiting from a broad community spectrum. If successfully cast, people who may not typically participate in plays or be attuned to LGBT issues will be exposed to new ideas and will hopefully be persuaded to share them with others. Additionally, with new and atypical actors participating, ripples in the water expand when they invite their friends and family to see the play. Ultimately, I did not want *Saving September* to preach to the choir.

Finally, I recognize a means to strengthen an argument is to present the counter-arguments and then defeat them. I carefully considered this technique and decided *not* to present counter-arguments in my thesis. It is my opinion most, if not all, counter-arguments justifying discrimination towards the LGBT community are religiously based. I did not want *Saving September* politicized as an attack on religion. Secondly, religious arguments are by definition faith-based and, therefore, irrational in the sense no amount of empirical evidence will defeat religious dogma. I specifically avoided religious arguments in *September*. Overall, I decided that if a strong counter-argument in favor of bullying LGBT children to the point of suicide was to be made, it wasn't going to be made by me. *Someone else can write that play.*

Killing My Little Darlings

At the beginning of the thesis year, Dr. Smith told his thesis students to write everyday. Write a little, write a lot. Just write. The more we wrote, the more ideas would come. He reminded us not to worry about staying too close to our subject in the beginning. Let ideas flow and see what emerges. He warned us the hard

part would come later. We would have to kill our little darlings as we honed our thesis and edited our work.

I can attest this was absolutely true for me. My many brainstormed ideas yielded many ideas that did not make the cut in the final product. When I wrote my Dialogues in earnest, I wrote many square pegs that did not fit round holes. I created many arguments that needed to be heard, but they ultimately strayed from my original thesis about bullying. These became my little darlings.

One especially poignant and personal essay that wasn't included in *Saving September* honored a personal hero of mine, Air Force Vietnam veteran and recipient of the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart, [Technical Sergeant Leonard Matlovich](#) – the first-ever servicemember to intentionally out himself as a way to legally challenge the military's ban on homosexuals. Matlovich purposely revealed his sexual orientation to his commander in 1975 and when the Air Force attempted to discharge him, he challenged the move in court eventually winning his case. When he died in 1988, his [gravesite](#) in Congressional Cemetery in Washington D.C. became an unofficial memorial and gathering place for all LGBT veterans. His headstone reads, "Never Forget, Never Again – A Gay Vietnam Veteran – When I was in the

military, they gave me a medal for killing two men and a discharge for loving one" (Bedwell). I, too, served in the Air Force. The difference between Matlovich and myself: I had a 20-year career and retired honorably - silent and safely in the closet of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," never having the courage to challenge the policy like Matlovich. I nixed over a dozen essays that - to me - had similar resonance and power in an effort to stick to my original thesis.

What Did We Learn This Year?

I'll let my play speak for itself as far as what I learned academically about my topic. The experience of creating a play taught me far more important lessons about my desire to be a creative writer.

Most importantly, writing the play never felt like work to me. This affirms my decision to pursue a creative writing career in either in theatre or film. Writing *Saving September* was always a pleasure and being such, I often felt guilty when it detracted from my other classes. However, in all things - good and bad - I attempt to learn something.

Having such a daunting schedule between school, home, and a decent position at the Salvador Dalí Museum taught me I can accomplish massive amounts work and balance it with my creative writing goals. Having now accomplished my honors thesis, I'm more confident as I look forward to graduate school.

My thesis year helped focus my direction for grad school beyond just a Master of Fine Arts in creative writing. *Saving September* also opened my eyes to the possibilities of combining social justice and civic engagement with the dramatic arts. I can see taking *September* forward, honing it, and creating other social justice theatre projects. Also, my last two semesters studying Shakespeare surprisingly made me a huge fan. I had never studied Shakespeare prior to Dr. Starks' classes and she opened my eyes to the enormous opportunities to appropriate and update his themes addressing the problems of today. If I could design my grad school program right now, it would include playwriting with a concentration in social justice employing Shakespearean influences. It's truly the direction I see for my future writing.

September's Future

As mentioned above, *Saving September* does not end when I turn in my thesis and defend it as an undergraduate. I see a big future for *September*.

I look forward to establishing a non-profit organization and teaming up with others to combat bullying. I've purchased and reserved the domain names savingseptember.com and savingseptember.org. I also established a [YouTube channel for Saving September](#) so that locally produced video materials can be archived and shared between communities. Ambitious? Why not? I model my idea on Eve Ensler's, [The Vagina Monologues, and her V-Day campaign](#) combating violence against women. Sharing *September's* message with communities across the United States (and around the world) is my ultimate goal.

The end of my thesis year and my graduation from USFSP were the artificial deadlines for *Saving September*. I somehow feel forced to induce labor early and deliver *September* premature. *September* needs to mature with workshops to polish the dialogue. For example, I know the teen angst conversations between Ava and Perri aren't quite realistic – me being a 41-year old gay man doesn't help. I realize many scenes need work. Having theatre workshops to

polish dialogue, pacing, and scene energy is really the only way to solve these problems. This didn't happen while I was in school, but this will happen with future opportunities.

All's Well That Ends...Well?

I've never written anything as complicated or as comprehensive as *Saving September*. My greatest wish for my play is to have it live beyond the page and see it produced on stage. I want to see the ripples of change go out into the world and heal our national trauma called bullycide.

Between September and October 2010, seven children committed suicide and their needless deaths pushed me into action. Since then, scores more children have taken their lives. At first, I attempted to record every name, every story of a bullied kid who took his or her life during my thesis year as a way to honor them. I quickly realized I would inevitably fail. My various search engine alerts were not catching every suicide; sadly, there were just too many to cope. So as not to erroneously leave anyone out, I decided to focus on the first seven children – which is why Act 2 has seven narrative scenes. They began *September's* journey and they represent all the children who will never

live to see their dreams come true. However, I would be remiss if I didn't recognize one name.

On April 14th, 2012, 14-year old Kenneth Weishuhn of Primghar, Iowa [committed suicide](#) after receiving multiple death threats via his cell phone and a Facebook group that personally targeted him. According to Kenneth's family, he was well-liked and had many friends – before coming out at school. Once he told his classmates the truth, they turned on him and within a matter of only weeks, Kenneth was dead. He had a [Pinterest](#) web page filled with his dreams. He [planned his wedding](#) with a future husband. He saw [inspiring messages](#) assuring him, "It Gets Better." And yet, he's gone. Kenneth doesn't mark the last bullycide; his was the most recent before I turned in my paper for a grade. Children continue to choose death over life because bullies tell them to.

Kenneth's death, the seven in September and October 2010, and all the others in-between... they didn't kill themselves because they were depressed or because they didn't want to be different. They were systematically, verbally, physically, and psychologically attacked to the point they choose death over life.

We as a country need to accept the problem is not within the children who commit suicide. The problem isn't really with the children who bully other children. It's Us. Our society is broken.

Until We stop legalized discrimination within our society, until We truly recognize and embrace our diversity, until We stop making excuses like, "kids will be kids," bullying *will* continue.

Bullying will continue while politicians feel safe to heckle boys who use [pink bowling balls](#). Bullying will continue when administrators [cancel school proms](#) to prevent same-sex couples from attending. Bullying happens because our society accepts it and condones it. Bullying in America is not taboo. It is not forbidden.

Bullying will not end until We say with a united voice, "No child should be bullied - ever, for any reason." Until that day comes, We, the People, should become accustomed to the idea of children who'd rather stick gun barrels in their mouths, swallow handfuls of pills, and hang in their closets than live in a society that hates them.

SAVING SEPTEMBER



a thesis about bullying in two acts

John Jay Boda

SAVING SEPTEMBER

or

The Most Excellent and Lamentable Story of Ava and Grayson

A Thesis About Bullying in Two Acts

by

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version 1.0

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CASTING

While the narrative scenes are meant to be acted off-book (memorized), the Dialogues may be read on-book (read from a script) by non-actor 'civilians' allowing increased community involvement and impact.

When casting, companies should recruit from the broader community spectrum including many ages, races, gender identifications/orientations, religious backgrounds, socioeconomic/education levels, parents/non-parents, and professional backgrounds including local civic leaders, law enforcement, educators, etc.

By including atypical "actors," the potential increases to reach audience demographics who might not otherwise hear the play's message or think about LGBT issues.

The Cast

Eph Diem (FDM)

- A Fairy Drag Mother, owns The Lighthouse Flower Shop
- Any gender; adjust pronouns/idioms as necessary

Grayson

- High school student (probably a senior)
- September's cousin
- Transgendered male (born physically female)

September

- High School student (probably a sophomore/junior)
- Grayson's cousin
- Any gender; adjust pronouns/idioms as necessary

Ms. Conroy

- High school teacher
- Any gender, adjust pronouns/idioms as necessary

September's Parent

- Any gender

Ava

- High school student (probably a junior/senior)
- Levi's girlfriend, Perri's friend
- Female

Perri

- High school student (probably a junior/senior)
- Ava's friend
- Female

Levi

- High school student (probably a senior)
- Ava's boyfriend
- Male

Sarah

- Ava's mother
- Female

Mr. Romano

- High school vice principal
- Male

Levi's friends

- High school students
- Male

Perri's friends

- High school students
- Female

Ticket Taker

- Any gender

Security Guard

- Any gender

Dialogues Actors

- 'Actor-civilians'
- See casting notes above

STAGING

A blank space without formal sets. Plain chairs, tables and doors create stripped-down, imaginary sets. Pacing should be quick without much fuss/set-up between scenes.

A video projection screen mounted either center stage or stage left or right (or both) shows imagery for locally produced video pieces.

The author does not provide specific stage direction or a stage plan; he envisions narrative actors to enter and exit the stage traditionally, while Dialogue actors may remain on stage seated upstage or flanking stage left and right during the action of the play.

MAKING *SEPTEMBER* ORIGINAL

Context: The play studies anti-LGBT conditions at a national level, but the play allows opportunities for the community theatre to include local anti-LGBT realities. Several occasions exist to insert local details. Therefore, the company is highly encouraged to use the play as a way to study LGBT issues and include local laws, actions, and "color" (idioms, vernacular, news, pop culture, etc.) to make the play relevant to its audience.

Video: Small amounts of community-created video are essential in telling the complete story of *Saving September*. With the increasing ease and availability of presentation and video production software (along with many [open-source](#) options), the author does not view this as overly burdensome.

The company should use video as an opportunity to reinforce the play's message while representing context and ideas important to the community. Video should be produced in as simple a way as not to distract or overwhelm from the live production.

Music: Music should be played before each act to set the desired tone (See [Pre-Show notes](#)); music during scene transitions is also encouraged. Music should be the music of September's character – the music the company imagines to be on September's iPod play list. In all ways, attempt to breakdown stereotypes.

Verbiage: Vernacular, especially dialogue within brackets [], may be replaced by the production company to better express local idioms or to make the play more accessible to younger audiences while maintaining the author's intention and meaning.

Ultimately, the play should be relevant and realistic for the community where presented.

SCENES

ACT I

Dedication

Introduction: Bullies

Prologue: Margaritas

Dialogue: Inventing Homosexual

Scene 1: Rally

Dialogue: Homosexuality, Now Legal Since 2003!

Scene 2 - Gossip

Dialogue: DOMA Is a Four-Letter Word

Scene 3 - Diversity

Dialogue: Homophobia Eye Test

Scene 4 - Homecoming Part 1

Dialogue: Just Words

Scene 5 - Help

Dialogue: Just Words, Too

Scene 6 - Homecoming Part 2

Dialogue: Sticks and Stones

Scene 7 - Dance

Dialogue: Rated Hate

Scene 8 - Kiss

Dialogue: LOL - You're Dead

Scene 9 - Ambush

ACT II

Introduction: Bullycide

Scene 1 - Suspension

Dialogue: Google It

Scene 2 - Intentions

Dialogue: Coming Out

Scene 3 - Rejection

Dialogue: It Gets Better, Jamey

Scene 4 - Daisies

Dialogue: 140 Characters

Scene 5 - Swallow

Dialogue: And We're Walking

Scene 6 - Nightfall

Scene 7 - Vigil

Epilogue

SAVING SEPTEMBER

ACT I

PRE-SHOW

Music of empowerment should play in the lobby, auditorium while audience takes their seats. While creating September's character, imagine and create a play list of music that September would enjoy.

This is an opportunity to set an uplifting tone and establish September's character. If music is played between scenes, the music should also typify selections September listens to.

Music needs not be music 'typically' associated with the lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered community.

DEDICATION

LIGHTS UP.

VIDEO PROJECTION:
SLIDE TEXT:

Between September and October 2010, a rash of suicides among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) youth began a national conversation about bullying.

VIDEO PROJECTION:
SLIDE TEXT:

United States laws and policies along with prevailing societal attitudes about homosexuality create an ethos condoning such bullying often leading many LGBT youth to conclude death is preferable to life.

VIDEO PROJECTION:
SLIDE TEXT:

In late 2010, activist Dan Savage created the "[It Gets Better Project](#)" as a way to bypass normal barriers between society and LGBT kids as a way to save lives.

VIDEO PROJECTION:
SLIDE TEXT:

To date, over a quarter of a million people have created inspiring videos as a way to speak directly to children struggling with suicidal thoughts.

VIDEO PROJECTION:
SLIDE: SHOW PHOTOS WITH NAMES.

Saving September is in memory of those who we lost in September and October 2010:

[Billy Lucas](#)
[Seth Walsh](#)
[Tyler Clementi](#)
[Asher Brown](#)
[Raymond Chase](#)
[Aiyisha Hassan](#)
[Zach Harrington](#)

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.

ACT 1 - INTRODUCTION - BULLIES

LIGHTS UP.

VIDEO PROJECTION:
VIDEO CLIP MONTAGE .

An 'overture' on the topic of bullies.

Short montage of video clips (1-3 minutes) as if surfing the internet or flicking through television channels. Short bursts of anti-gay actions shown in the form of hate speech, violence, and other messages injected into mainstream consciousness. While violence easily translates to video, attempt to show more subtle anti-gay issues such as restrictions on marriage equality, historical actions, restricting same-sex couples from attending school dances, etc. *Creativity is always welcome.*

The author encourages researching and studying national, state, and local stories related to anti-gay issues, messaging, branding, etc.

Source examples might include:

- Newscasts / documentaries
- Anti-gay violence/depictions in television/film
- Political speeches
- Anti-gay music/videos
- Religious condemnations such as Westboro Baptist Church protests / signs, etc.

PROLOGUE: MARGARITAS

LIGHTS UP - DIM.

(An empty set - dark. A figure backlit and shown in silhouette appears -- it is important the figure's identity be unknown (the actor playing September should be used here.)

(The figure has a gun in its hand. Without audible cries or screams, it falls to its knees weeping. It puts the gun in its mouth.)

QUICK BLACKOUT.

(A gun shot rings out.)

(FDM enters and lights a candle - she places candle on table/alter located either stage right or left; candle burns and remains on stage during entire play.)

LIGHTS UP.

FDM

(Using a 'Chorus'-type persona)

Once upon a time...

Once upon a child.
Twin nations, separate, but not equal,
Occupy one space, not so unlike here.
Old discourse anew; behold a sequel!
Human rights: struggles never disappear.

Hateful ideas dissolve civility
And our precious children, they do listen.
To the Fates: succumb to senility
So old grudges die and end division.

Love is Love. Eros says not, "Who loves Who?"
Society: judge not with ignorance;
Death results and youthful bodies accrue
When we accent others' difference.

Oh,

Please attend this, and watch this carefully.
Our intent, to mend your hearts perfectly.

LIGHTS CHANGE.

(Transforms into FDM Persona - perhaps through changing wardrobe or sitting at a dressing table finishing makeup.)

FDM

Her name was September. Her parents named her for the 9th month, the month she was conceived. Her sister, April. Her brother, August. Well, you get the idea.

(Sighs)

Whatever happened to old-fashioned names ... like Moon-Station? All in all, she wasn't so different than you and me.

(Looks at himself)

Well... maybe you. I don't know anyone quite like me.

She was born of the way the ancient Greeks called... Well actually, they didn't exactly have a word for her 'kind' way back when. The word "[homosexual](#)" didn't come along until Oscar Wilde was a boy.

(Aside - stage whisper)

Can I tell you a secret? All those religious books written long, long ago in Hebrew and Greek never mentioned "the gay." That 'sin' wouldn't come along until years later. Just another myth - busted.

Here's one more myth. September's parents weren't horrible people who didn't care about their [lesbian daughter]. It's just that... they didn't really understand her. They meant well, they just didn't know what to say to her sometimes. I mean really, could you blame them? She grew up with her mother and father, they were even married - fancy that. But they weren't lesbians. Okay, there was that time her mother was in college... But we really only count post-collegiate homosexuality these days. Hey, everybody tries on a pair of shoes now and then, right?

(Looks directly at audience member - winks)

Don't we?

Anyway, that's where I come in. Who am I, you ask? Why, I'm your Eph Diem (eff-dee-em), darling. Sort of like Dorothy's Auntie Em - but in Technicolor - and with a hell of a lot more fashion sense. F-D-M. You can think of me as your Fairy Drag Mother.

So, September came to my attention when she wandered into my little shop - The Lighthouse Florist. I've tended to many flowers like September over the years. When children don't get the tenderness and sunshine from their friends and family, they go looking for it elsewhere - I promise. She found my garden and I could tell she needed some looking after. Don't we all need a little looking after?

LIGHTS BEGIN TO FADE.

Oh! Wait!

(Speaking to technicians)

I'm sorry. Please, bring the lights back up. Before we go on, I need to explain what all "this" is.

LIGHTS UP.

First, "this" is the hit parade of self-pity. We're not here to watch anyone wallow and weep for two hours. So let's all relax.

That's not to say they didn't try to darken September's light. Believe me, darling - they tried. In no uncertain terms, she got the message - even as a little girl. She got it everyday and in every way: September - and people like September - are not supposed to be in this world.

People like September - people like me - we're not in your history books. We're not your role models. Parents don't let their children grow up meeting people 'like us.'

Gay folks have to learn who they are all by themselves. That's our right of passage. And we come to know our place in society is separate-and-not-entirely-equal -- at best. "Liberty and justice for all," you say? Please. More like liberty and justice for some.

And - yes - people 'like us' take a lot of shit when we're kids.

Okay - I know what you're thinking. It's tough being a kid - regardless of who you are - period. Growing up isn't fun for anybody. But, try it as a kid being told by everything around you:

(Pointing to audience members)

You're made wrong, you disgust me, you're an abomination and going to Hell, you're a freak of nature. Who I love seems to be everyone's business, but my own. Hell, the world won't even let me donate blood for fear everyone might catch "the gay." And religion... girl, don't get me started.

I am my mother's lament and my father's shame. Think about that. Growing up with all that garbage in your head, who'd want to grow up at all?

(Shouts up to the Universe)

I get it! I hear you! I got the message!

(Big sigh)

"This" is about living in a world that does all it can to erase your existence, pushes you down. It constantly whispers into your ear, "Go away - we don't want you."

No, honey. "This" is telling the world, "Fuck you! I'm here whether you like it or not." "This" is some truth telling. I'm NOT squeezing a bunch of lemons and handing you a tall, refreshing glass of lemonade.

No, ladies and gentlemen. I took those god-damned lemons - okay, mine were limes - and I made a pitcher of margaritas - and went to the beach - and I partied with the best of them.

You see, I saved my life - no thanks to my family and so-called friends. You bet your ass, I did. And I'm here to save September's. And maybe I'll save yours... or your kid's... or your best friend's.

Trust me. Someone you know right now is hurting. But, you don't see what you don't know about; what you don't want to see. But, I'm gonna give you sight. That's why I'm here. To give you a pair of glasses, so you might see your brother's pain. To teach you the language, so you might talk to your niece.

That's it. That's what all "this" is. I cracked the code. And I'm giving it away like kisses under the mistletoe. To quote the fabulous B52s, I'm gonna "tell it like it T-I Is." I'm telling "it." Naming "it." Destroying "it."

Enjoy your bliss while you can... Because no one deserves to be brought into this world with the understanding they don't. belong.

(FDM Exit)

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.

DIALOGUE - INVENTING HOMOSEXUAL

LIGHTS UP.

ACTOR

Before the year 1868, the "homosexual" did not exist. That's not to say 'women who loved women' and 'men who loved men' did not exist. However, society had other ways to describe "these kinds of people." Let's see, they were sodomites, pederasts, abominations... you get the idea.

The man who coined the term "homosexual" didn't come from the world of science or medicine. He didn't invent the word to empirically categorize the biological relationship between genders of animals and plants. He created the term when his close friend committed suicide after having been threatened and blackmailed for his "crimes against nature."

Karoly Kertbeny was his name. Born in Vienna as Karl Benkert in 1826, he changed his name to reflect his Hungarian heritage when he was 21 years old. He was a man of letters who proudly translated Hungarian literature into western languages so others could benefit from his culture. He also spoke out in favor of social justice issues - a dangerous hobby in that time, in that place. It's a dangerous hobby in this time, and in this place.

Beyond the act of coining the word "homosexual" - and "heterosexual" - no one really remembers Kertbeny for his writing achievements. He wrote no epic poem, no magnificent opus, nor a definitive treatise for others to enshrine and study.

No. Karoly Kertbeny merely did one great thing in his life. When there wasn't a kind word to describe his friend beyond a Biblical sin, he joined two words of different languages together: the Greek "homo" meaning "same" and the Latin "sexus" meaning "sex" - as in gender. He did not glorify his friend nor make him out to be something he wasn't. He simply described why his friend had committed suicide - in plain, scholarly language.

In this simple act, Kertbeny extended dignity and respect to millions of men and women. Men and women who before this, had nothing to call themselves besides religious epithets, whispered euphemisms, and sexual expletives.

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.

Source:

Takács, Judit. "Commemorating Károly Kertbeny." *Homepage for Judit Takács, PhD*. Judit Takács, PhD, 29 June 2002. Web. 7 Sept. 2011. <<http://desk.nl/~gris/public/nyul/kertbeny-en.php>>.

ACT 1 - SCENE 1 - RALLY

(Setting: School Auditorium - Day)

LIGHTS UP.

MR. ROMANO

Thanks, Levi. We're really proud of your accomplishments this year. You and all the guys are doing a heck of a job out there. And that's why we all need to show up next week for the big homecoming game. We expect a big turn out so don't let me down.

(Thumbing through papers)

Oh. Okay, before we go, we have an announcement from the...uh, "[Gay Straight Alliance](#)." Come on up, September.

(SEPTEMBER steps out from the audience, approaches podium.)

AUDIENCE MEMBERS

(Some members of the cast seated within audience lightly heckle, moan with anti-gay epithets)

SEPTEMBER

(Softly)

Thank you, Mister Romano. I think we'll all be...

AUDIENCE MEMBER

We can't hear you.

SEPTEMBER

Ahem... I said, I think we'll all be out in force supporting the team at homecoming next week. Go [Bulls]!!!

AUDIENCE MEMBERS

(Hoots - cheers for local team name)

SEPTEMBER

Um... As everyone probably knows, I'm the president of the Gay Straight Alliance.

AUDIENCE MEMBERS

(More heckling)

[Faggot, dyke, etc.]

MR. ROMANO

Everyone needs to settle down.

SEPTEMBER

Um... Attendance has been pretty low at our meetings lately. There's only a few of us these days.

(Nervously chuckles)

I'd like to remind you that everybody can be part of GSA. You don't have to be gay or lesbian. It's a club for everyone. We mainly play games and...

LEVI

(Levi seated in audience - heckles)

Like what? [Carpet munching? Hide the sausage? Cross-dressing?]

MR. ROMANO

McDermott. I'm warning you. Another outburst and you get an invitation to my office after the pep rally.

SEPTEMBER

Um, we also like to talk about how we can make our school better. Safer for everyone. We listen to each other when we have problems. Last month we had a dance and we only had about seven students show up.

AUDIENCE MEMBERS

Get off the stage, [faggot/dyke/etc.]!

GRAYSON

(GRAYSON seated in audience)

Leave her [the fuck] alone. Let her talk. Jesus Christ.

MR. ROMANO

Grayson - my office! Seriously. Everyone check yourselves or we'll all have a meeting in my office after the rally.

September, let's wrap this up. When and where are your meetings?

SEPTEMBER

Uh, they're every week on Wednesday during homeroom. We meet in the group study area of the library. I'd like to mention again, you don't have to be gay to join our group. It's the Gay AND Straight Alliance. We're trying to build a group of students who support each other no matter who they are...

(Mr. Romano interrupts)

MR. ROMANO

Great. Thanks, September. Okay folks, we're done. Have a great day and a safe weekend. And remember... [Go Bulls!]

LIGHTS CHANGE
TO INDICATE CHANGE OF LOCATION.

(Cast members in the audience get up and exit via stage)

(Setting: School hallway. September hands out flyers to passing students. Some keep them, others toss them on the ground.)

(Levi approaches September)

LEVI

So, uh, what do you guys talk about at these 'meetings?' What would I have to do?

SEPTEMBER

Oh, um, you know, it's just a place to hang out. We watch movies sometimes or play games. Are you actually interested?

LEVI

What me? Are you kidding? I'm just curious what you guys do. Like, why are you even a club? Who cares about being gay?

SEPTEMBER

It's not like that. No one cares who's gay. But, some kids get stressed out about it. There's a lot of pressure from friends and family. It's just a safe place to talk about stuff. It's also a place to show support for all students. You don't even have to be gay to join.

LEVI

My dad says he doesn't know why gays have to shove their homo lives down everyone's throat.

(Enter TWO OF LEVI'S FRIENDS. Levi sees them and becomes agitated.)

LEVI (CONT)

(More forceful)

Seriously, why don't you just go back in the closet where you came from, you [freak of nature].

(Levi slaps the flyers out of September's hands. Levi and his friends laugh.)

SEPTEMBER

Hey!

LEVI

Why don't you try acting normal instead of being a [dyke] for a change and maybe you could find a [boyfriend].

(Levi's friends laugh as September picks up her flyers as Mr. Romano enters.)

MR. ROMANO

What's going on here?

LEVI

Oh, we were just helping September pick up her homo flyers she dropped.

SEPTEMBER

Leave me alone, [asshole.]

MR. ROMANO

Hey, hey. Language missy.

SEPTEMBER

Mr. Romano, He threw my flyers all over the floor. He's a complete homophobe.

LEVI

I did not, pervert. I don't even care about your homo club.

MR. ROMANO

Whatever. Fellas, get yourself to class.

(Exit Levi and his friends)

MR. ROMANO (CONT)

September, can I give you some advice. Social clubs are all well and good - I suppose. But maybe you should think about sports. Girls like you - don't you like softball? Why not try out for the team? I'm sure you'd be great.

SEPTEMBER

"Girls like me?" What's that supposed to mean?

MR. ROMANO

You know. How you dress and act. What? I'm trying to help you fit in.

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.

DIALOGUE - HOMOSEXUALITY, NOW LEGAL SINCE 2003!

(Production note: Statistics listed are current as of April 2012 and are highly volatile due to the dynamic nature of LGBT politics. The author encourages production companies to research the current state of affairs to ensure accurate information.)

LIGHTS UP.

ACTOR

In 1998, consensual same-sex sexual activity remained illegal in 14 out of the 50 states. These states enforced the law indiscriminately, but they enforced it.

Until late one night when a Texas deputy sheriff busted into an apartment with weapon drawn and arrested two men in response to a false domestic disturbance report from a jealous and romantically connected neighbor. The arrested men, John Geddes Lawrence and Tyron Garner, were held overnight in jail and charged with violating Texas' anti-sodomy law prohibiting sex between members of the same-sex - a Class C misdemeanor.

Lawrence and Garner plead no-contest and were found guilty by a local justice of the peace. The men took their case to a Texas criminal court asking for the case to be dismissed on the grounds Texas' law violated the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment. The criminal court refused the request. Later, the Texas Fourteenth Court of Appeals found the Texas law was unconstitutional in a 2-1 decision.

Texas appealed and the case, [Lawrence vs Texas](#), was heard before the U.S. Supreme Court in 2003 where in a 6-3 decision, the Court decided: "The Texas statute furthers no legitimate state interest which can justify its intrusion into the personal and private life of the individual." With its decision, the Supreme Court struck down the Texas sodomy law - and thereby all other sodomy laws within the United States.

To date, 29 states continue to allow discrimination based on sexual orientation and 35 states do not outlaw discrimination based on gender identity or expression.

Until 2009, hate crimes committed based on the victim's sexual orientation or gender identity are outlawed in all 50 states under the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act.

In 2011, the U.S. Congress and President repealed "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" allowing all lesbian, gay, and bisexual military members to serve honestly first time in American history. They serve without any federal protection against discrimination for sexual orientation or gender identity. Additionally, transgendered servicemembers remain at risk.

Currently, the federal government denies troops legally married in states that allow same-sex marriage benefits offered to married heterosexual servicemembers. Benefits like access to base housing and health care for same-sex spouses. This is because the U.S. law called the Defense of Marriage Act defines marriage at the federal-level as being between one man and one woman.

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.

ACT 1 - SCENE 2 - GOSSIP

(Setting: AVA's Bedroom - Afternoon)

(PERRI is trying on Ava's clothes. Ava's on her bed looking at her smartphone.)

LIGHTS UP.

PERRI

Oh, my gawd. This is too cute. You have to let me borrow.

AVA

Sure, whatev.

PERRI

Seriously? Your mom won't mind? Ava... You remember what happened last time?

AVA

Don't worry about it. Take it.

PERRI

You are the bestest bestie. Mmmmmwah! So, what are you wearing to homecoming?

AVA

Don't hate me. But I don't think I'm going.

PERRI

What! Why?

AVA

It's so over done. People make too much about it. I'm mean really. Who cares?

PERRI

Are you crazy? You have to go. I'm going!

AVA

Exactly.

PERRI

Excuse me?

AVA

Kidding. You know I love you.

(Sighs)

I know, I know. I'm just not feeling it this year. Besides, Levi's being a tool. Did you hear him at the pep rally?

PERRI

Okay. What's wrong? Come on mama, tell me what's up.

AVA

Nothing. I just don't want to be around that kind of energy all night.

(Enter SARAH carrying folded laundry.)

SARAH

What about energy? You guys aren't taking drugs are you?

AVA

Mother - what have I told you about knocking?

SARAH

Yes - yes. Remind me, again. Whose house is this again? Besides, how am I supposed to get all the "dish" if I don't barge in? You never talk to me anymore. I remember when...

(Ava interrupts)

AVA

Oh god, mother. Just say gossip. And please. I have company.

SARAH

Hello, Perri. How are you? How's your mother's divorce, dear?

PERRI

She rants a lot. Today was bad so I had to escape.

SARAH

Oh, I'm sorry to hear that.

PERRI

Mrs. Amentugo, do you know what your daughter just told me?

AVA

Perri, don't even.

PERRI

She's not going to homecoming?!

AVA

Perri...

SARAH

Ava Marie Amentugo. Mind your mouth. It's hard enough maintaining civility outside of this house. I won't have disrespect under my own roof.

PERRI

Seriously, though. Tell her she has to go to homecoming with me.

SARAH

I thought you wanted to go. What happened?

AVA

Nothing... I just don't want to. Is it such a crime?

PERRI

She doesn't want to go with Levi.

SARAH

Why? What happened? I thought you two were getting along.

(To Perri)

See what I mean? I don't know anything about my own daughter.

AVA

Everything's fine. I just don't want to go to a dance. What's the big deal?

SARAH

Well, I hope that's all it is. And I hope you're being smart about your future. You could do a lot worse than, Levi McDermott. He's from a good family.

AVA

Oh my go--. Mother, please. A little space. Let me worry about my future.

SARAH

I'm only thinking of what's best for you. You know how you start dreaming. I can't believe you even mentioned the Peace Corps the other day. God forbid.

PERRI

OMG. The Peace Corps? I thought we're going off to college together. Aren't we?

AVA

Will everyone just relax! Nothing's changed. Mother, I'm fine. Perri - chill.

(Perri and Sarah stare at Ava.)

AVA (CONT)

If it gets everyone off my back, fine. I'll go to homecoming. Happy?

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.

DIALOGUE - DOMA IS A FOUR-LETTER WORD

(Production note: Statistics listed are current as of April 2012 and are highly volatile due to the dynamic nature of LGBT politics. The author encourages production companies to research the current state of affairs to ensure accurate information.)

LIGHTS UP.

ACTOR

On September 21st, 1996, a Republican-majority Congress and a Democratic president passed and signed the [Defense of Marriage Act](#) - or DOMA - into law.

DOMA defines federal marriage between one man and one woman - as husband and wife.

In 2004, the U.S. General Accounting Office reviewed all federal codes, laws, statutes, and provisions and determined DOMA denied 1,138 rights, privileges, and benefits contingent on marital status to same-sex couples legally married at the state-level.

The GAO divided these issues into 13 sub-categories ranging from social security benefits, taxes, military benefits, immigration, family violence, financial instruments, and other miscellaneous provisions.

Additionally, thousands of private-institutions, like banks, follow federal marriage guidelines for special spousal membership requirements.

In July 2010, a federal court held key provisions of DOMA to be unconstitutional. The law remains in effect while being appealed.

As of April 2012, only six states recognize same-sex marriage: Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont. The District of Columbia also recognizes same-sex marriages. Legally married same-sex spouses in these states only receive state-level marriage benefits.

A total of 31 states have state-level constitutional bans limiting marriage to one woman and one man to include [Florida].

In his 2004 State of the Union address, President George W. Bush endorsed the [Marriage Protection Amendment](#) to the U.S. Constitution defining marriage between one man and one woman, thus striking down all same-sex marriages nationwide.

President Obama officially opposes same-sex marriage, though he "supports full civil unions and federal rights for LGBT couples" and desires a full repeal of DOMA.

In February 2011, President Obama determined DOMA to be unconstitutional and directed the US Justice Department to stop defending the law in court. House of Representative leadership has decided to defend DOMA in federal court.

Today, DOMA remains in effect while many groups work to ratify and amend and the U.S. Constitution and include the Marriage Protection Amendment.

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.

Source:

"An Overview of Federal Rights and Protections Granted to Married Couples." *Human Rights Campaign*. HRC, 2011. Web. 26 Jan 2012. <<http://www.hrc.org/resources/entry/an-overview-of-federal-rights-and-protections-granted-to-married-couples>>.

ACT 1 - SCENE 3 - DIVERSITY

(Setting: Social Studies classroom - Day)

(September stands in front of class giving an oral report.)

LIGHTS UP.

SEPTEMBER

After his conviction in 1952 for homosexuality, Turing had the choice of going to prison or being chemically castrated. He chose castration and started a regimen of taking female hormones.

Two years later, Alan Turing, the father of modern computer science and the man who helped end World War II by inventing the code-breaking machine defeating Nazi Germany - Turing committed suicide by taking cyanide. He was only 41 years old.

In 2009, the British government formally apologized for its actions against Turing. Despite homosexuality having been later decriminalized across the United Kingdom, Turing has never been pardoned. Thank you.

(The class does not clap. September sits. MS. CONROY stands in front of class.)

MS. CONROY

Very nice report, September. Thank you.

Okay, that concludes our unit on cultural diversity and prejudice. I think we can tell from everyone's reports that our school, our town, our country, and our world is connected by many kinds of people from many kinds of backgrounds and cultures.

(As Ms. Conroy talks, Levi pesters September with lewd hand gestures, whispered comments, etc. September tries to ignore it.)

MS. CONROY (CONT)

Before I let you go, don't forget you have a lot of reading for next week. There will be a quiz so don't put it off to

the last...Levi, is there something you'd like to tell the class?

LEVI

Oh. No, I was just telling September how much I loved her report. Great job, September. Where would we be without the homos?

MS. CONROY

Thanks for that insightful commentary, Levi.

(The class bell rings)

Don't forget. You have a quiz next week. No mercy. Study study study!

(Students get up to leave.)

MS. CONROY (CONT)

September, can I talk to you for a minute.

That was an excellent report today. Alan Turing wasn't on the suggested topic list or in our reading. Where did you learn about him?

SEPTEMBER

The internet. I was searching for 'gay injustice' and his name came up - I hope that was okay.

MS. CONROY

No, it was great. You even taught me a thing or two. Thank you.

(September motions to leave.)

MS. CONROY (CONT)

So, is everything going well for you? How's GSA going? I've been meaning to sit in on a meeting, but it's been busy. I'm sorry.

SEPTEMBER

That's okay. It's going. It's just me and a couple of kids. Actually, it kinda sucks.

MS. CONROY

I'm sorry to hear that. I know you started it to make some friends. Is that happening?

SEPTEMBER

I guess. It's hard. No one likes to really talk much. Mr. Romano likes to sit in sometimes so he kind of kills the mood to talk.

MS. CONROY

Hmm...I can talk to him if you like.

SEPTEMBER

Oh, that's okay. Please, don't. I get enough attention about it as it is.

MS. CONROY

Is everything okay?

SEPTEMBER

Yeah, it's just... never mind.

MS. CONROY

It's okay. You can tell me.

SEPTEMBER

It's just that... he doesn't seem to like the club and it's like he's spying on us to see what 'the gays' are doing in his school.

MS. CONROY

I'm sure he's just curious since you're a new club.

SEPTEMBER

I dunno. Hey, I gotta get to class.

MS. CONROY

Okay, thanks for talking. Come by if you ever need anything, alright?

SEPTEMBER

Will do, Ms. Conroy. Thanks.

(September moves to leave. Exit Ms. Conroy.)

LIGHTS CHANGE
TO INDICATE LOCATION CHANGE.

(Setting: School hallway.)

(September is walking to her next class. Enter Levi with his friends. Levi is clapping - slowly.)

LEVI

Great report on the [homo].

(September tries to walk around him. Levi's friends block her.)

LEVI (CONT)

C'mon. Let's talk faggety-homo stuff. It's what you like isn't it?

SEPTEMBER

Leave me alone.

LEVI

So tell. What have the lesbos done for the world? Don't tell me, I know. They invented the... strap-on dildo.

(Levi obscenely demonstrates grabbing September. September tries to get away.)

SEPTEMBER

Stop it. Let me go.

LEVI

What's wrong, [diesel]? I thought that's what you 'ladies' liked?

(Enter Grayson)

GRAYSON

Levi. I thought I told you to leave her [the fuck] alone!

LEVI

Mind you're own business, [tranny].

GRAYSON

If you don't want a [tranny] to kick your ass, I suggest let her go. Now.

(Levi releases September.)

LEVI

(whispers to September)

I'll see you later, [dyke].

Bye-bye, ladies.

GRAYSON

You okay, cuz?

SEPTEMBER

Yes. Thanks, Grayson. What an [asshole].

GRAYSON

He is that. You know, I'm not always around the corner. You gotta protect yourself. There are a lot of assholes out there.

SEPTEMBER

I was fine.

GRAYSON

I could see that. You need something like this.

(Grayson shows September a knife)

SEPTEMBER

I'm not going all Guns 'n Ammo. I'm not carrying a knife around with me. With my luck, they'd find it and I'd get kicked out of school.

GRAYSON

I told you I know the tricks to get around that. You gotta watch your back. And stand up for yourself. Don't let them walk all over you.

SEPTEMBER

I just ignore 'em.

GRAYSON

And how's that working out for you? They're not ignoring you.

SEPTEMBER

Well, I'm not carrying a knife. I'll be fine.

GRAYSON

Come on, let's get you to class.

(Grayson and September Exit)

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.

DIALOGUE - HOMOPHOBIA EYE TEST

LIGHTS UP.

ACTOR

Hello and welcome. The test is about to begin.

Now, just relax. The test is painless - for most. Again, just relax. You've taken tests like this before. This test is kind of like getting your vision checked by your eye doctor. Remember when you were a kid and you'd sit in front of that big machine? You looked through the view finder and you'd see a cute little puppy or a fire fighter or a big letter A. The doctor turns some knobs and pushes some buttons and the image would flicker. It would be the same picture, but it'd be a little different and the doctor would say, "Is it better or worse?"

This is the same thing.

In this test, I'll be showing you a series of pictures. As I switch the pictures, I'll be asking you - is the image better or is it worse?

The only difference with this test is that I don't need to hear your answer. You'll say "better or worse" to yourself - silently. After the test is over, I'll give you your results and you'll be on your way?

Are there any questions? Great - again, just relax.

LIGHTS DIM.

VIDEO PROJECTION:
SLIDE SHOW.

(Photos are shown slideshow-style. A slide projector 'clicking' sound as images change can make this feel more authentic.)

ACTOR

Okay - we'll start off nice and slow to get you into the swing of things. Here we go:

(Slideshow Instructions:

- Photos will be shown as pairs, but displayed one at a time. A 'normative' heterosexual perspective photo will be shown first, then a 'non-normative' LGBT perspective photo will be shown. Photos will be grouped by topics - explained below.
- The Actor will announce the photos in this manner (ad libbing is allowed as long as the point is carried):

"Better or worse: (show 1st photo) **This or** (show 2nd photo) **this. Better or worse?"**

Each time a pair of photos are shown, the actor should reinforce the "better or worse" comparison between to the two photos. For the first few rounds, going back and forth between the the same 1st and 2nd photos may help warm up the audience to the idea.

- For the first couple of rounds within each group topic, the 'normative' photo should be shown first. The show order can then be 'randomized' between the normative and non-normative image.
- Group topics are listed below. Brainstorming other group topics is highly encouraged.
- Within each group, show variations within the 'normative' and 'non-normative' photos, i.e. traditional, odd-ducks, extreme versions of both straight and LGBT images as well as many demographics (age, sex, race, religion, class, etc.)

Groups:

- Women
- Men
- Girls
- Boys
- Couples (married, non-married)
- Weddings
- Domestic abuse (loving LGBT couple with a abusive straight couple (and vice versa))
- Occupations (police, fire fighter, military, sports, health care, child care, hair stylist, teacher, erotic dancer...)

- Social situations (neighbors, gardening, picking kids up from school, coffee house, club/disco, bar, sports bar, book club, swimming pool, sauna, hiking...)
- Civic actions (protesting, Members of Congress, on city councils, giving blood, in the hospital, providing disaster relief, as a governor, as President, as a judge...)
- Celebrities
- Films (action movie, romantic comedy, love story, drama, horror film)
- News makers
- Bullying
- Suicide (headlines can help here)
- Murder victims (headlines can help here)
- Children playing with toys: dolls, sports, cars...
- Infants (indistinguishable between gay and straight is the point)
- Ultrasound images (indistinguishable between gay and straight is the point)

- Pairs of photos should include one 'traditional' or heterosexual image and then one photo from an LGBT perspective.

For example: for the group topic "Women," the 'normative' photo could be a photo of a traditionally feminine woman and the 'non-normative' photo could be a woman who appears masculine. Several rotations of "Women" photos could go on to show well-known women (celebrities, newsmakers, etc.) who are known to be straight and/or LBT and have appearances that are very similar.

This technique blurs the lines of what it means to be straight-looking or LGBT-looking.

- Group topic photos should always be shown in pairs: a normative image with a non-normative image. For example: The topic, "Couples," would include one photo of a male/female couple and then one photo of a same-sex couple. Multiple examples or rotations of couple photos may be shown to emphasize the point.
- Include photos representing the L, the G, the B, and the T communities - please, don't concentrate on just the L and G. Attempt to be all-inclusive.

- The actor does **not** announce the group types or names. The actor can ad lib as the photos are shown, saying things like "Moving on" or "Here are some more photos", but the basic premise is to only say "Better or Worse".
- The "test" should only last a few minutes (no more than five minutes) and should include a fairly broad sampling of groups. Not all groups listed above need be represented.

Once the test is complete:

LIGHTS UP.

ACTOR

Alright, the Homophobia Eye Test is now complete. You all did great. Your test results may be found in the pit of your stomach - you know, your gut. It's that feeling...right...about...there!

(points to stomach)

After taking this test, you now know your own level of homophobia. Have a great day. Thank you.

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.

ACT 1 - SCENE 4 - HOMECOMING PART 1

(Setting: Lighthouse Florist Shop)

LIGHTS UP.

(Grayson preps deliveries. September is behind counter surfing the internet.)

VIDEO PROJECTION:
SHOWS WHAT IS ON SEPTEMBER'S COMPUTER.
IMAGES OF ANTI-GAY STATISTICS,
GAY BASHING, AND VIOLENT IMAGES.)

GRAYSON

So are you gonna be a [lazy ass] all day or are you gonna help me over here?

SEPTEMBER

Did you know [recent anti-gay violence statistic, incident]?

GRAYSON

Like I told you. You gotta protect yourself little girl.

SEPTEMBER

It's so depressing. The world is such a [ball of shit]. Why can't people just leave each other the hell alone.

GRAYSON

Human nature, baby. Read your Shakespeare. There's nothing new under this sun.

SEPTEMBER

God, it makes you wonder why we go on. People are so hateful. Look at this garbage.

(Enter FDM from back office)

FDM

Okay squirrels, I'm off. You've got the store 'til closing. Try not to burn the place down. What are you two squabbling about?

GRAYSON

September was just telling me how great it is to be homosexual.

SEPTEMBER

I was telling Gray about how how the world shits on us.

(FDM adjusts [an earring])

FDM

Do tell, my darling.

SEPTEMBER

Well, did you know the United States used to have internment camps and mental wards for gay soldiers serving in World War II - just like the Nazis! That was in the U.S.! Or that a 15-year old boy in California had his brains blown out a couple of years ago when he asked another boy to be his Valentine?

FDM

Ah the internet - history's great equalizer.

SEPTEMBER

FDM, I'm being serious.

FDM

Yes, dear. I can see that.

(sighs)

FDM (CONT)

Yes, our history is long. It's bloody. But it's glorious, too. Try not to concentrate on just the darkness.

Did you know the woman who wrote "America the Beautiful" played for our team or that one of the founders of Facebook is gay?

SEPTEMBER

(surprised)

Wow, really?

FDM

It's reassuring to know you youngins don't know everything, yet.

SEPTEMBER

Yeah, but who cares about that stuff when we're getting our brains blown away? We're not even equals under the law.

FDM

It's difficult, cherie. I know. Believe you me, no one walks around looking this fabulous without understanding that. I won't talk about what it was like when I was your age.

(feigns old-age)

"Back when I was little girl..."

Yes, bad things happen to good people no matter who you are. Gays certainly don't have the monopoly on being targeted for hate and prejudice. We're just one of many targets for those living in darkness.

GRAYSON

You gotta take the bad with the good, kiddo.

SEPTEMBER

Thanks. Did you get that off a Hallmark card? I'll have to write that one down. I'm just saying, it seems to me there's a lot more bad than good when it comes to gay folks.

FDM

Then they've won.

SEPTEMBER

What? Who?

FDM

Everyone who lives in the darkness. They push their message; we push back with ours. Everyone's got an agenda, hun. But you can't listen to just one side of the story - especially theirs. There's always a flip-side.

SEPTEMBER

Well they don't even let us talk about our side. Like, why do I have to take a test Abraham Lincoln's assassination, but only learn about [Harvey Milk's assassination when Sean Penn plays him in a movie]?

FDM

I'm sorry. Did I say life was fair? You know, somebody once said, history books are written by the victors. You've gotta fight - and win - to get into those books.

SEPTEMBER

Sounds pretty [shitty] to me. Why can't people just do the right thing?

FDM

I can see you've been watching Spike Lee again. Keep fighting my little lesbian. If you don't, the darkness win.

(FDM checks her watch)

FDM (CONT)

Ooh, I'm late. Okay, I'm off. I'm meeting Anita Mann downtown for drinks. Cheers, dears.

SEPTEMBER

Ahem. [*Anita Mann*]?

FDM

[Don't we all]?

(FDM exits)

GRAYSON

Feel better?

SEPTEMBER

Not really.

GRAYSON

Well, snap out of it. Who are you taking to homecoming?

SEPTEMBER

Shut up. Like I'd go to that [face-fest.] No thanks. Are you?

GRAYSON

C'mon, it'll be fun. We can torture the straights.

SEPTEMBER

Um... hello? No date. Thanks for reminding me.

GRAYSON

Um... hello. What about me? Do I have to get down on one knee?

SEPTEMBER

Imagine the fit Romano would throw if he saw two 'lezzies' going as a couple.

GRAYSON

Screw, Romano. We'll dress boy-girl, or girl-boy. Or half-n-half. C'mon, it'll be fun.

SEPTEMBER

I appreciate the thought, but haven't you forgotten something?

GRAYSON

What?

SEPTEMBER

We're cousins - that's kinda weird.

GRAYSON

Second cousins. Besides, I'm not asking you to be my wife in Appalachia. Relax baby girl, we'll go as friends. Straight girls do it all the time.

(Door chime/bell rings and Levi enters the flower shop.)

LEVI

[Holy shit], I didn't know you guys worked here?

GRAYSON

Oh, you. We're closed.

LEVI

Relax, relax. I'm just here to buy some flowers.

GRAYSON

We don't sell [stink weed].

LEVI

Jeez - unclench. I just want some flowers.

GRAYSON

Like I said, we're closed.

LEVI

Ya know, that's wrong with you people. You think you're better than everybody else. I was trying to be nice.

GRAYSON

Try harder. Besides, we don't sell to "you people."

LEVI

What's your problem?

SEPTEMBER

I think... I'm gonna call Ephie.

GRAYSON

Don't bother. I got this.

(Grayson pulls his knife out and puts it on the counter.)

GRAYSON (CONT)

Look [jerk off]. You need to leave. Now.

LEVI

[Jesus], [dykes] seriously got some anger management issues.

GRAYSON

You're about to find out. I'm not going to tell you again. Get the hell out of here.

LEVI

Typical [diesel dyke, bitch.]

(Levi exits.)

GRAYSON

See? What'd I tell you? This speaks louder than words.

SEPTEMBER

Dude, you didn't have to go that far. It's like pouring gas on a fire. What happens if he comes back with his friends?

GRAYSON

He got the message. He won't be bothering us again.

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.

DIALOGUE - JUST WORDS

(Performance Notes:

- When casting allows, this piece is meant to be performed by two or more actors.
- Actors are encouraged to repeat words to show differences in meaning and shading depending on emphasis.
- Some words are divided into syllables by dashes. Each syllable is meant to be said separately and then the word itself.
- For an example of this speaking technique, search YouTube for "[Electric Company Silhouette](#)" videos.

Choreography:

- One of the many possible ways to stage this piece is to choreograph the actors based on the groups shown below.
- Group 1) Actors walk towards each other
 - Showing agreement
- Group 2) Actors meet/circle each other
 - Showing argumentation
- Group 3) Actors walk away from each other
 - Showing disagreement)

LIGHTS UP.

ACTORS

(GROUP 1)

Hell-o

com-passion

attract-ion

empathy

tolerance

good-ness

being kind / being human

human beings

hetero / homo

homo-sapiens

homophobes

homophobic

homo-phobia

a Kinsey zero / a Kinsey six

One out of ten

Practicing Homosexuals

Practicing Heterosexuals

Practicing hypocrisy

(Pause)

gay

lesbian

bi-sexual

trans-gendered

questioning

intersexed

asexual

L G B T Q I A

Why can't they just be normal?

(Pause)

You look...

pretty

handsome

beautiful

masculine

feminine

I'm not sure

a manly man

a man's man

she's mannish

he's rugged

he's effeminate

she's a femme

she's butch

he's girlish

she's girly girl

lipstick lesbians

chicks

babes

studs

twinks

boys

boy toys

tom-boys

sissies

they're just late-bloomers

it's just a phase

I don't think so

drag queens

drag kings

facades

illusions

confusions

Why can't they just be normal?

(Pause)

We the People

free-dom

liberty

justice / just us

for all

for some

human rights

civil rights

civil wrongs

on the wrong side of history

on the right side of history

equality

equal - ish

separate but equal

second class citizens

segregate

illuminate

act

activate

fight back

ACT UP

fight AIDS

silence equals death

(Pause)

gay agenda

entitlement

privilege

birth rights

rights denied

injustice

justice delayed

justice denied

conservatives

liberals

red states - blue states

rainbow flags

mediate

moderate

give and take

common ground

compromise

settle

sacrifice

surrender

forfeit

Why do they want special treatment?

(Pause)

We are family

boyfriends

girlfriends

best of friends

traditional marriage

oh no

here we go

one-man plus one-woman

Adam and Eve - Not Adam and Steve

the way it's always been

um...not really

biological families

test tube babies

surrogates

fertility drugs

Octomom

adoptions

foster family

foster love

mothers

fathers

two moms

two dads

water is thicker than blood

lovers

soul mates

husbands

wives

partners

exes

sexes

I'm still single

domestic partners

she's my fiancée

we're engaged

we eloped

I do

I don't

I can't

we're married

we're civil unioned?

we have a domestic partnership

whatever that is

I'm divorced

I've been married four times

I'd like to be married just once

They threaten the sanctity of marriage

What's next?

Marrying a goat?

(Pause)

Pride

pride parade

appreciate

L O V E

love-yourself

love-thy-neighbor

respect-yourself

respect each other

r e s p e c t

hiding in plain sight

a fly on the wall

invisible

outed

coming out

coming home

Why can't they just stay in the closet?

(Pause)

(GROUP 2)

It Gets Better.

It Gets Better?

It-Gets-Better

It-Gets-Worse

it's natural

it's unnatural

it's nurture

it's nature

it's healthy

it's diseased

so medicate it

castrate it

it's sick

it's a mental illness

they're possessed

they're criminals

they're security risks

they're blackmailed

they're normal

They are not.

(Pause)

(GROUP 3)

I'm sorry.

I don't mean to offend you, but...

god-hates-fags

fags-must-die

you're-better-off-dead

why don't you go-kill-your-self

I'm sorry?

Yes, you are.

You are...

hell-bound

disgusting

heinous

godawful

revolting

so nasty

appalling

vile

repulsive

despicable

sickening

offensive

repellant

filthy

contaminated

and infected

(Pause)

I am...

an abomination

nauseating

impure

unclean

evil

wicked

corrupted

depraved

shameful

sinful

immoral

a deviant

a monster

Sticks and stones

Break their bones

They're just words

Makin' headstones

She bullies

He bullies

They bully

We bully

They're bystanders

presidents

politicians

televisions

pundits

children

parents

teachers

the principal

clergy

judges

laws

popular votes

amendments

edicts

secular

religious

godliness

godlessness

sinful

Genesis

Leviticus

Romans

Corinthians

Timothy

Paul

Sodomites

inhospitable

purity codes

man lies with man

man lies

righteous indignation

Adam and Eve not Adam and Steve

lust

immoral

mortal sins

sins against nature

condemnation

excommunication

What would Jesus do?

(Pause)

cast-out

out-cast

put out

put-downs

beat-downs

witch-hunts

intimidation

harassment

rumors

verbal

physical

psychological

threats

promises

tease

pester

whisper

taunt

slap

trip

push

beat

punch

throw

shove

kick

stomp

cut

stab

pummel

trample

mutilate

shoot

run over

torture

burn

hang

suffocate

devastate

murder

bury

cover up

exterminate

extinguish

cruelty

innocence

difference

indifference

guiltless

kids will be kids

what about adults?

exquisite violence

(Pause)

Victims...

fight

stand up

stand your ground

endure

suffer

cry

plead

leave notes

have scars

(Pause)

stop me before its too late

it's too-late

it's never-too-late

it's a new-day

it's a new-beginning

there's no-choice

there's always new-choices

I like-you

Do you like-me

Please love-me

I love-you

don't hate-me

I hate-you

it's soul-crushing

I descend

I break-down
I'm broken
my heart breaks
don't suffocate my love

There's no end
so painful
so pain-filled
please stop the pain
it's worse than living
it's worse than hell
I'd rather be dead
the loneliness
the alienation
there's no end in sight

I want it to end
I'm waiting for the end
I'm waiting-for-you
waiting for release
release me
no limits
no judgment
I want to be me

I want to be like you

I want freedom

please free me

homicide

genocide

assassination

suicide

Pills

swallow

painless

endless coma

Ropes

trees

necks

snap

Razors

wrists

veins

flow

Bullets

mouths

lives

explode

Bridges

fall

rivers

swallow

Obituaries

vigils

candle-light

memorials

immemorial

wakes

funerals

anniversaries

birthdays

death days

October 1998

I'm-sorry

Matthew Shepard

February 2008

I'm sorry

Lawrence King

September and October

I'm-sorry

Asher Brown

Billy Lucas

Seth Walsh

Tyler Clementi

Jadon Higginbotham

Raymond Chase

Aiyisha Hassan

Zach Harrington

Rest in Peace

Peace

Good-bye

Bye

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.

ACT 1 - SCENE 5 - HELP

(Setting: September's Bedroom - Evening)

(September is sitting at her desk working on her laptop computer.)

LIGHTS UP.

VIDEO PROJECTION:
DISPLAYS SEPTEMBER'S COMPUTER SCREEN.
A [FACEBOOK] CHAT PAGE IS SEEN.

(Technical note: The scene is without spoken dialogue beyond the messages scene through the video projection. Character 'dialogue' projects and represents what's on computer screens. Diction and grammar are intentional. Aliases may be substituted, humor is encouraged.)

HAWT-MESS

omfg! your cousin pulled a knife? what'd u do?

BABYDYKE1996

nuthin. it was krazee tho. the world is so messed up. i can't stand it anymore

HAWT-MESS

indeed. sorry, chica.

JACKHOLE6969

anybody pull a knife on me, they get JACKED roltf lmfao

HAWT-MESS

Whatevs jackhole

JACKHOLE6969

`specially tranny dykes - hahahaha

HAWT-MESS

STFU a-hole. no one asked u

JACKHOLE6969

u no u like it

BABYDYKE1996

no one likes it Jackhole. gawd - this is wut i'm talkin
bout

HAWT-MESS

ignore the haters babydyke, he's prolly sufferin in da
closet

BABYDYKE1996

haters r everywhere. can't get away fm them

(Someone knocks on September's door. September shuts
her computer screen off.)

VIDEO PROJECTION:
GOES DARK.

SEPTEMBER

Come in.

PARENT

Hey, Aunt Jill called. Wanted to know if you were up for a
trip to their place for Spring Break? They want to show
you their 'gay mecca.'

SEPTEMBER

Yeah, maybe.

PARENT

C'mon... it sounds fun. A week away from the parents.
Sounds fun to me.

SEPTEMBER

Maybe.

PARENT

You know, I wouldn't mind a trip out west. I think you
should go. C'mon - adventure awaits...

(September seems distracted)

PARENT (CONT)

Honey, is everything okay? You seem bothered by something.

SEPTEMBER

I'm fine. School's just a drag.

PARENT

Did Ms. Conroy like your paper on Alan Turing?

SEPTEMBER

Yes. You were right. She loved it. I got an A.

PARENT

There you go. I told you she'd...

(September's cell phone rings)

SEPTEMBER

It's Grayson.

PARENT

Okay. Dinner's almost ready so keep it short.

(September answers phone)

SEPTEMBER

Hey Gray.

What? No!

I told you, I'm not going to homecoming.

No. I'm not going.

What the... No. You did not rent me a tux.

Well, get your deposit back.

Well that's your problem. I ain't going.

Stop it. You cannot guilt me.

(mocking)

Oh god. You so need new material. The "my parents kicked me out of the house when I told them I'm transgendered" story is getting really tired.

Fine... I'll go. You're such a guilt tripper. You're practically a parent.

Yes. What?

No, I don't care if you don't shave your legs. That makes two of us.

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.

DIALOGUE - JUST WORDS, TOO

Performance Notes: Reference "[Just Words](#)" Performance Notes.

LIGHTS UP.

ACTORS

sodomite

diesel-dyke

bent

lezzie

nancy

nelly

a friend of Dorothy

ass pirate

bull dagger

butt buddy

pole smoker

cream puff

one-of-those

top

bottom

versatile

wuss

pussy

pansy

poof

sissy

swisher

fruit

fairy

flamer

faggot

a three-dollar-bill

butch - femme

dyke

dykes on bikes

lesbo

a confirmed-bachelor

pillow biter

cock sucker

fudge packer

sword swallower

salad tosser

shit stabber

rug muncher

AIDS magnet

AC-DC

switch-hitter

closet-case

bedbug

leather-queen

drag-king

drag queen

tranny

queer-bait

fag hag

santorum

ACT 1 - SCENE 6 - HOMECOMING PART 2

(Setting: Ava's Bedroom - Evening)

(Perri is dressed for homecoming. Ava is not.)

LIGHTS UP.

PERRI

What do you mean you're not going? I'm not going with Bobby Bigalow all by myself.

AVA

Looks like you'll have to Perri-cake. I have an entire night of catching up on [Housewives, Buffy, Twilight, etc.].

PERRI

And what? You couldn't have told me this in homeroom?

AVA

I did, but you wouldn't listen. As usual.

PERRI

And what about Levi? He'll be devastated when you don't show up.

AVA

No. I already told him I wasn't going.

PERRI

Jesus, Ava. And what did he say?

AVA

Jesus, Perri... Who cares? I'm not going.

PERRI

You are so stubborn sometimes. I don't get you. What's your mom say about it?

AVA

(sighs)

She's thrilled for me. Said I should do whatever I want with my life and all she wants is for me to be happy.

(Sarah enters)

SARAH

I said no such thing. I said high school only comes around once. Think of all of the memories you'll miss out on, honey.

AVA

Mother - what did I say about...

SARAH

Never mind what you said. You need to go, darling.

PERRI

You need to listen to your mom, Ava.

SARAH

Thank you.

AVA

Why? Why do I need to go? So I can fit in? What about I want?

SARAH

Honey, think about your friends. And poor, Levi. You're being very selfish leading him on and canceling at the last minute. I raised you better than that.

AVA

Oh my god! Guilt? Really, mother?

SARAH

What? I'm just saying, it's rude.

PERRI

Seriously, Av. Everyone expects you there. C'mon, it won't be any fun without you.

AVA

(sighs)

Fine. I'll go.

SARAH

It's really for the best.

PERRI

Ooh. I know exactly what you should wear!

AVA

I'm sure you do.

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.

DIALOGUE: STICKS AND STONES

LIGHTS UP.

ACTOR

(Sing-song)

"Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me."

(Chuckles with sarcasm)

ACTOR (CONT)

Ah...that little ditty almost got me killed me when I was 12 years old.

(Condescending)

ACTOR (CONT)

"Oh...kids will be kids."

Hey... if you enjoy going to funerals - especially funerals for children - keep telling your kids that one. It's a real hoot.

Look. Put it this way... If you had the biggest, most precious, the most unique diamond in the world, would you take care that you didn't lose it? Would you do everything in your power to protect it? Of course you would.

Then why in the world do parents deceive and lie to their children about how hateful kids can be with each other? Have we forgotten what it was like to be a kid?

Hell...even if we did remember our childhoods, adults really don't have a clue what kids go through today.

(Addressing an audience member directly)

Put yourself into a kid's shoes today. Kids don't write their ABCs anymore. They text - "W.T.F." - to their parents. They don't play hide and go seek. They murder prostitutes to "level up" on Grand Theft Auto. If you don't know what any of that means, you need to catch up.

Gone are the days of getting off a school bus and casually walking to homeroom. My little niece sends her adorable pink Barbie lunch box and Capri Sun through an X-ray machine as she walks through a metal detector and gets a pat down – to get into kindergarten.

Sticks and stones...

(Sound: School bell rings)

Playwright, poet, novelist, and American treasure Tennessee Williams became a victim of assault in 1979 when five teenagers beat the crap out of him near his home in Key West during a spate of anti-gay violence.

Oh... kids will be kids.

(Sound: Laugh Track)

A school bus driver in Illinois goaded students on his bus to attack a 10-year old because he thought the kid was gay.

Oh... adults will be adults.

(Sound: Laugh Track)

A pack of 20 teenaged girls and boys beat two gay men after a concert yelling "faggot" as they broke one of the men's jaw.

Kids say the darnedest things, don't they?

(Sound: Laugh Track)

Three teenaged boys in Virginia nearly beat a 26-year old gay man to death. To finish the job so they ran him over four times to cover their tracks.

17 and 15. They're so cute at that age.

(Sound: Laugh Track)

Another 17-year old - a straight-A student, athlete, and clean-as-a-whistle Eagle Scout shot and stabbed a 37-year old man after consensual sex. "But the man had sex with a child!" True. However, the "child" admitted he murdered

the older man to see if he could get away with it after deciding homosexual sex was worse than murder.

I wonder where he got that idea?

(Sound: Laugh Track)

"Gay Nigger Number One" was scrawled on the dismembered, buried skull of a 19-year old in New York. He was murdered by his stepfather.

Parents. Can't live with them...

(Sound: Laugh Track)

One final "Father of the Year" story you can talk about around the camp fire:

A father in Tampa thought his 3-year old was becoming a "sissy." So the father did what every good father does: he slapped his boy's head and bounced him off walls to toughen him up.

Ronnie Antonio Paris, Jr. died in 2005 after sustaining multiple brain injuries and suffering bouts of lethargy, vomiting spells, and coma. Dad got 30 years in prison for second degree manslaughter and child abuse; Mom got five years probation for child neglect.

(Pause)

Kids will be kids. Kids will kill...kids. Strangers, friends, and parents, too I suppose. The point is... I think we've moved beyond "sticks and stones." Don't you?

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.

ACT 1 - SCENE 7 - DANCE

(Setting: Homecoming Dance - Evening)

(Grayson and September are arguing with the ticket taker.)

LIGHTS UP ON:
TICKET TABLE.

GRAYSON

What do you mean we can't go in? Here's our tickets.

TICKET TAKER

There's a dress code. Girls have to be in dresses. You got the rules when you bought the tickets. Next.

SEPTEMBER

C'mon, Gray. Let's go.

GRAYSON

No. I paid the same money as everybody else. Your rules don't apply to my closet. We don't wear no dresses!

TICKET TAKER

I'm sorry. There's nothing I can do.

GRAYSON

C'mon September. We're going in.

TICKET TAKER

Hey! You can't do that!

GRAYSON

I'm not askin'. You have my tickets. Take 'em or leave 'em.

TICKET TAKER

I'll have to tell Mr. Romano!

GRAYSON

Great. Tell 'em I said hi.

(Grayson and September enter the dance. Ava and Perri arrive together. They present their tickets and go inside without any problems. Ava and Perri find some

friends. Grayson sees Ava from across the room. Music erupts alluding to Grayson's love at first sight.)

LIGHTS CHANGE
TO INDICATE LOCATION CHANGE.

(Setting: Dance auditorium)

GRAYSON

Oh my god. Do you see Ava? She is looking [fine.]

SEPTEMBER

Why do you torture yourself?

GRAYSON

What?

SEPTEMBER

What? Besides her being completely out of your league? She's straight and goes out with Levi McDermott. Live in the now, dude.

GRAYSON

You never know... I'm going over to talk to her.

SEPTEMBER

It's your funeral.

(Grayson crosses to Ava)

PERRI

Oh Jesus. The freak is coming over here.

AVA

Don't be ugly.

PERRI

What? You like freak shows?

AVA

You can be a real [bitch] sometimes, Perri.

(Grayson approaches Ava)

GRAYSON

Hello. You two look very nice tonight.

PERRI

Oh my god. It is *not* trying to flirt with us. This is so embarrassing.

(Perri turns away)

AVA

You'll have to excuse Perri. She flunked manners. Hi Grayson. You look nice, too.

PERRI

Ava!

AVA

Perri! Be a dove. Could you get us something to drink? I'll just have water. Grayson?

GRAYSON

I'm fine. Thanks.

PERRI

I cannot believe you're talking to that...

GRAYSON

Person? Thanks. You can call me Gray.

PERRI

I'm sorry did you say gay?

(Perri exits)

AVA

I'm really sorry about that.

GRAYSON

No worries. That's tame compared to what I hear most of the time. But enough about me... you really do look spectacular tonight.

AVA

Thank you.

GRAYSON

Would you like to dance?

AVA

Oh. Um... I'm not sure if...

GRAYSON

Hey, that's okay. I've been shot down before. That's cool.

AVA

No. I mean, I'm not sure if it's allowed.

GRAYSON

Dancing?

AVA

You know what I mean.

GRAYSON

So do you always do only what's 'allowed?'

AVA

Unfortunately, yes. Pathetic, huh?

GRAYSON

Wouldn't life be a bore if no one broke the rules? Besides, originals are worth more than copies.

AVA

That kinda sounds like you got it off a greeting card.

(Perri enters with drinks)

GRAYSON

What would you do if I...

(Grayson quickly leans in and kisses Ava. Ava reacts and slaps Grayson.)

PERRI

What the hell, you perv?

AVA

Why did you do that?

PERRI

Because it's a freak. I told you to ignore it.

AVA

Perri, stay out of this.

GRAYSON

I'm sorry. I just felt in the moment...

(Levi enters quickly and pulls Grayson away from Ava.)

LEVI

Leave my girlfriend alone you [dyke]!

AVA

Levi, it's okay. Everyone, chill.

PERRI

Ava, let Levi handle this.

LEVI

This tranny-freak doesn't get to touch what's mine?

AVA

Excuse me?

GRAYSON

(to Ava)

I'm really sorry. I'll go.

LEVI

You got that right. You're a sorry excuse for a girl let alone a guy. What exactly are you anyway? Go home and put on a dress.

GRAYSON

That mouth is gonna get you in trouble.

(Mr. Romano enters)

LEVI

You're one to talk, [tranny].

MR. ROMANO

Grayson! You were told to leave. C'mon, let's go.

GRAYSON

No problem. I was just on my way out.

(Grayson exits as Mr. Romano follows)

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.

DIALOGUE - RATED HATE

(Production Notes: The author encourages production companies to further research and include/replace quotes from local, state, and national figures who employ anti-gay rhetoric affecting the lives of young people.)

LIGHTS UP.

Video Projection:

Slide Text.

The following are real messages from real people impacting the lives of young people.

Video Projection:

Photo and name:

Sally Kern

Oklahoma State Representative

ACTOR

"The homosexual agenda is destroying this nation. It's just a fact. ... I'm not gay bashing, but according to God's word that is not the right kind of lifestyle. It has deadly consequences. For those people involved in it, they have more suicides ... there's more illness. Their lifespans are shorter. It's not a lifestyle that's good for this nation. As a matter of fact, studies show that no society that has totally embraced homosexuality has lasted more than a couple of decades. It's the death knell of this country. I honestly think it's the biggest threat ... even more so than terrorism or Islam. ... Because what's happening now they're going after, uh in schools, two year olds. ... They want to get our young children into the government schools so they can indoctrinate them. I taught school for close to 20 years. They're going after our young children as young as two years of age to try teach them that the homosexual lifestyle is an acceptable lifestyle. I tried to introduce a bill last year that would notify parents, uh schools had to let parents know what clubs their students were involved in. And the reason I did that bill primarily was this, we had the gay straight alliance coming into our schools. Kids were getting involved in these groups, their lives were being ruined. ... One of my colleagues said "We don't have a gay problem in my county so that's why I'm not voting for that bill." Well you know what, to me that is so dumb. You know if you have cancer in your little toe, do you say, I'm gonna forget about it cause the rest of me is fine. It spreads. ... This stuff is

deadly. It's spreading. It will destroy our young people and it will destroy this nation."

<http://abcnews.go.com/Video/playerIndex?id=4423704&affil=wftv>

Video Projection:
Photo and name:
President Richard Nixon

ACTOR

I don't mind the homosexuality. I understand it. Nevertheless, goddamn, I don't think you glorify it on public television, homosexuality, even more than you glorify whores. We all know we have weaknesses. But, god-dammit, what do you think that does to kids? You know what happened to the Greeks! Homosexuality destroyed them. Sure, Aristotle was a homo. We all know that. So was Socrates.

http://www.infowars.com/articles/occult/bg_nixon_tape_homosexuals_at_grove.htm

Video Projection:
Photo and name:
Roy Moore
Alabama Chief Justice

ACTOR

The homosexual conduct of a parent -- conduct involving a sexual relationship between two persons of the same gender -- creates a strong presumption of unfitness that alone is sufficient justification for denying that parent custody of his or her own children or prohibiting the adoption of the children of others.... Homosexual conduct is, and has been, considered abhorrent, immoral, detestable, a crime against nature, and a violation of the laws of nature and of nature's God upon which this Nation and our laws are predicated. Such conduct violates both the criminal and civil laws of this State and is destructive to a basic building block of society -- the family....It is an inherent evil against which children must be protected.

<http://www.glapn.org/sodomylaws/usa/alabama/alnews06.htm>

Video Projection:

Photo and name:

Trent Lott

Former Senate Republican Leader

ACTOR

It is (a sin)... You should try to show (kids) a way to deal with that problem, just like alcohol...or sex addiction...or kleptomaniacs.

<http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1696&dat=19980617&id=7w0bAAAAIIBAJ&sjid=DEgEAAAAIIBAJ&pg=6755,2269043>

Video Projection:

Photo and name:

Michelle Bachmann

Congresswoman, Minnesota

ACTOR

Don't misunderstand. I am not here bashing people who are homosexuals, who are lesbians, who are bisexual, who are transgender. We need to have profound compassion for people who are dealing with the very real issue of sexual dysfunction in their life and sexual identity disorders.

<http://thenewcivilrightsmovement.com/michele-bachmanns-top-ten-anti-gay-quotes/politics/2011/06/02/21233>

Video Projection:

Photo and name:

50 Cent

Rapper

ACTOR

I ain't into faggots. I don't like gay people around me, because I'm not comfortable with what their thoughts are. It's OK to write that I'm prejudiced. This is as honest as I could possibly be with you. ... But women who like women, that's cool.

<http://www.queerty.com/hip-hops-homophobic-haters-20090227/#ixzz1rB2HqzKw>

Video Projection:
Photo and name:
Tim Hardaway
Miami Heat guard

ACTOR

I hate gay people, so I let it be known. I don't like gay people and I don't like to be around gay people. I am homophobic. I don't like it. It shouldn't be in the world or in the United States. So yeah, I don't like it.

<http://sports.espn.go.com/nba/news/story?id=2766213>

Video Projection:
Photo and name:
Jason Williams
Sacramento Kings Guard
Said to an Asian-American fan

ACTOR

Are you a fag? Are you gay? Do you remember the Vietnam War? I'll kill y'all just like that.

<http://www.outsports.com/antigay/antigayrockerslist.htm>

Video Projection:
Photo and name:
Pat Robertson
Founder, The Christian Broadcasting Network,
The American Center for Law & Justice (ACLJ),
and Regent University

ACTOR

Since our nation was founded, we have discriminated against certain things. We discriminate against kidnappers. We discriminate against murderers. We discriminate against thieves...There are laws that prohibit that kind of conduct. And there have been laws since the founding of our country against what are considered unnatural sex acts, sex between members of the same sex."

<http://www.wiredstrategies.com/robertson.html>

Video Projection:

Photo and name:

Jerry Falwell

Founder ,The Thomas Road Baptist Church,
Lynchburg Christian Academy (now Liberty Christian Academy), and
Liberty University,
Co-founder of the Moral Majority in 1979.

ACTOR

AIDS is the wrath of a just God against homosexuals. To oppose it would be like an Israelite jumping in the Red Sea to save one of Pharaoh's charioteers ... AIDS is not just God's punishment for homosexuals; it is God's punishment for the society that tolerates homosexuals.

http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-500486_162-2816499-500486.html

Video Projection:

Photo and name:

Anthony Falzarano

Founder, Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays (PFOX)
National Director of Parents and Friends Christian Ministries

ACTOR

Basically, homosexuality is a neurosis. It's healable, it's treatable. We are ministering to 6,000 former homosexuals in the Exodus network. Basically, homosexuality is a stunting of psychosexual growth. They are children inside, and any parents out there -- you know, when your kid is spoiled, he'll keep coming at you and keep coming at you and keep coming at you until you give him a whack on the bottom and say, 'Enough!' and then the child will stop.

<http://www.frc.org/net/st96d2.html>

<http://www.wiredstrategies.com/exgayspeech.html>

Video Projection:

Photo and name:

Robert George

Princeton Professor, Political Science
Co-founder of National Organization for Marriage,
Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution,
Senior Fellow at the Witherspoon Institute

ACTOR

(Being gay is) beneath the dignity of human beings as free and rational creatures.

<http://www.glaad.org/cap>

Video Projection:

Photo and name:

Gary Bauer

Former President, Family Research Council
Former Under Secretary of Education and
Domestic policy adviser to President Reagan

ACTOR

Involvement in homosexuality can kill you. It can kill you emotionally, it can kill you physically, and it can certainly kill you spiritually.

<http://www.frc.org/net/st96j3.html>

<http://news.change.org/stories/anti-gay-hate-groups-not-made-for-tv>

Video Projection:

Photo and name:

Robert Knight

Former Family Research Council Director of Cultural Studies,
Media Fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution,
Senior Fellow, Cultural Policy Studies
for the Heritage Foundation,

Testified before the U.S. Senate committee on Labor and Human
Resources against the Employment Nondiscrimination Act (ENDA)

ACTOR

Homosexual behavior is extremely unhealthy, contributing to the spread of AIDS, hepatitis A, B and C and other sexually transmitted diseases ... Other reports indicate that homosexuals are more likely to have drug and alcohol abuse problems.

<http://www.wiredstrategies.com/frc.html>

[ENDA Hearings, July 29, 1994 - committee on Labor and Human Resources, US Senate.](#)

Video Projection:

Photo and name:

Tim Wildmon

President, American Family Association

ACTOR

There is nothing about homosexual conduct to be proud of, and much to be ashamed of.

<http://www.glaad.org/cap>

Video Projection:
Photo and name:
Dr. Laura Schlessinger
Radio host

ACTOR

Rights. RIGHTS! RIGHTS? For sexual deviant, sexual behaviors? ... That's what I'm worried about with the pedophilia and the bestiality and the sadomasochism and the cross-dressing. Is this all going to be 'rights' too, to deviant sexual behavior? It's deviant sexual behavior. Why does deviant sexual behavior get rights? Don't understand that to start out with.

<http://www.glaad.org/glaad/eyeonthemedia/drlaura/drlauratranscripts.html#latimes>

Video Projection:
Photo and name:
Joseph Farah
Editor of World Net Daily

ACTOR

I wonder what kind of database Obama uses to locate people like [openly gay Kevin Jennings and Chai Feldblum]? Is it Monster.com? That would be appropriate. Or is it FreaksUnlimited.com? Maybe Obamanations.com? No, it's got to be Perverts.gov. I'm telling you, the entire federal government is going to have to be fumigated some day when these deviants and degenerates are finally sent packing.

<http://www.glaad.org/cap>

Video Projection:
Photo and name:
U.S. Department of Justice
From a motion to dismiss the case arguing whether
the Defense of Marriage Act is constitutional
(Aug 3, 2009)

ACTOR

In 2009, the U.S. Department of Justice defended the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) - the federal-level law banning same-sex marriage - showing it was constitutional by citing 52-year old legal precedents banning marriages involving incest and minor children.

Paraphrased the government's motion said the following:

"Courts have followed the principle in relation to the validity of marriages performed in other States. State courts may refuse to recognize marriages from other states that conflict with its state policies. As an example, see Catalano v. Catalano wherein

1961, an uncle married his niece in Italy but the marriage was not considered valid in Connecticut. Additionally in 1958, Wilkins v. Zelichowski showed the marriage of a 16-year old girl was not recognized in New Jersey despite it being legal in Indiana. Finally, a challenge to the Mortenson's Estate in 1957 showed the marriage of first cousins was held invalid in Arizona, though the cousins were lawfully married in New Mexico."

West, Tony. "Memorandum of Points And Authorities In Support Of Defendant United States Of America's Motion To Dismiss." *Scribd*. Scribd Inc., 2009. Web. 7 Dec 2011. <<http://www.scribd.com/doc/16355867/Obamas-Motion-to-Dismiss-Marriage-case>>.

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.

ACT 1 - SCENE 8 - KISS

(Setting: Outside homecoming auditorium - Night)

(Ava and Perri enter, [smoking cigarettes])

LIGHTS UP.

PERRI

I can't believe that he-she kissed you.

AVA

Perri, Jesus. Stop being so hateful. It was no big deal. I was just surprised, that's all.

PERRI

What?! You like being kissed by transvestites?

AVA

It's transgendered.

PERRI

What is?

AVA

He... she...

(Ava chuckles)

AVA (CONT)

You know, I'm not really sure what to say. Grayson is transgendered, Perri. She's not a transvestite.

PERRI

Well, excuse me. I don't even know what that means. All I know is you seem to like being kissed by trans-whatevers?

AVA

(touching her lips)

It was good kiss.

PERRI

What?! Oh my god. That is so disgusting. What is wrong with you?

AVA

What's wrong with you? It was just a kiss, Perri. Calm down.

PERRI

Calm down? The king - or queen - of the deviants comes up to you and kisses you in front of the entire school and you're "oh-whatever"? What would your mother say?

AVA

I don't expect she'd say anything because she doesn't need to know. It's not the end of the world. Girl or boy, it was just a kiss.

PERRI

I'm ... I'm in shock. What are you saying? You like to kiss girls now?

AVA

I'm not saying anything. I'm just saying it was a kiss.

PERRI

Ava. You kissed a girl pretending he's a boy. That's completely and totally sickening.

AVA

I think you're attitude is sickening. Who even cares?

PERRI

I care.

AVA

Maybe you shouldn't.

PERRI

Ava, wake up. Do you remember when we used to play Barbies? You loved it when Ken kissed Barbie. Barbie didn't kiss Skipper.

AVA

(mocking)

Well Skipper was Barbie's little sister. That'd be a little gross don't you think?

PERRI

That's not the point and you know it. Focus. Girls don't kiss girls.

AVA

Why not? I don't get what the big deal is. Who cares what's between each other's legs? It should matter what's between their ears.

PERRI

[OMG] - I don't get you. I'm going inside. Maybe it wasn't a good idea for you to come tonight.

(Perri exits. Ava is alone when Grayson enters.)

GRAYSON

So you don't care what's between people's legs?

AVA

What? Were you eavesdropping?

GRAYSON

No, no. I was just walking to my car and heard your voice. I wanted to apologize for... before. That was out of control. I'm really sorry. I was really out of line.

AVA

It's okay. You just surprised me. I'm sorry I slapped you.

GRAYSON

(smiles)

That's okay. It only hurt - a little.

AVA

You really need to learn about boundaries.

GRAYSON

Yeah, folks keep telling me that. I'm not really good staying inside the lines - if you can't tell.

AVA

And then there's that. I didn't mean anything...

GRAYSON

That's okay. So did you mean what you said before? About not caring...

AVA

Well, yeah. Kinda. In a general sense why can't girls kiss girls and guys kiss guys? I don't know why everybody's gotta get so uptight about it.

GRAYSON

So we never had that dance. No rules out here.

AVA

You really don't stop, do you?

GRAYSON

Not until I'm happy.

AVA

Well, we can't dance without music.

(Grayson pulls out his [iPhone].)

GRAYSON

I never leave home without it.

(Grayson taps the phone and music plays. Ava and Grayson begin to dance. Grayson leans in to kiss. Ava doesn't recoil.)

GRAYSON (CONT)

I hope that was okay.

(Ava leans in to kiss Grayson.)

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.

JONNEE

k - gotta go

KD

xoxoxoxo

(Shown on screen: Animated Facebook-type
"conversation" between friends with avatar pictures
for characters. Actors may read messages.)

KD

luvvvvv is grand <3 <3 <3

AIMEE

who?????

KD

u knowww whoooo!!

AIMEE

omg!!!! I'm so happy for you!

MERCEDES

tell us allllll!!!

REGINA

yes tell ussss!!!!!!!

KD

nothin 4sure. we go out fridayyyyy

MERCEDES

better bring protection, guys never do lollllllll

KD

ewwww... its jus a moveeee

AIMEE

ewwww iz rite. gross!!!

REGINA

4 real, bring trojans, jus incase ;-P

KD

whatev

REGINA

my parents r outta town if u need a place to get down ;))))

KD

no thx, i'm good

MERCEDES

can we hide out and watch uuuu???? lolllllllllll

AIMEE

she's not a slutttt

KD

thxx

REGINA

thats not what ive heard hahahaha

MERCEDES

me 2. i heard shes a big fdf!!!

REGINA

omgggg! hahahaha

KD

stop it!!!!

MERCEDES

dont be shy, own ur slutitude lolll

AIMEE

what's a fdf???

REGINA

first date fuck hahahahahaha

KD

I AM NOT

MERCEDES

touchyyyyy ... feeeeeeeellly

REGINA

how many guyz so far slutttttt???

AIMEE

leave her alone, jus ignore them

MERCEDES

dont deny. the slutttttt knows it true hahaha

REGINA

ive got pix of her doing it

KD

STOP it or ill block u.

MERCEDES

show me the pix!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

REGINA

block me and ill POST them on twitter

KD

u dont have pix

REGINA

wanna bettttt BITCH!!!!!! dont try me

MERCEDES

post random porn and attach her face

REGINA

waaaaaaay ahead of you

AIMEE

cmon, leave her alone

MERCEDES

shut it or you;ll b a lezzy on twitter 2morow!!! lolllllll

REGINA

a big diesel dyke with her face hahahahahaha

MERCEDES

hahahaha i have 500+ followers

KD

plz u guys

REGINA

ooooo...look who's so nice now... FUCKK UUUUUU

MERCEDES

u had ur chance WHORE!!!!!! everyone's gonna know ur a slutttttt now lolllll

REGINA

apologize slutttttt!!!! NOW!!!

MERCEDES

say ur sowwy skanKKK lollllllllll

KD

plz. don't

REGINA

check twitter

MERCEDES

OMG!!! 3 guyz at once! lollllllllll

REGINA

i know!!!! do u like her face?

MERCEDES

u scary good with photoshop ;P

REGINA

a new pic evryday hahaha

MERCEDES

have fun at skooooool BITCH!!!!!!!

KD

I'm sorry, plz take them down

REGINA

evryday, a new pic with new rumors. I cant wait hahahahahaha

MERCEDES

how will u go on living being such a dirty wh00000re???
lollllllll

REGINA

sluttttts should slit their wristsssss hahaha

MERCEDES

pillz r betta - no blood lollllll

REGINA

watch out BITCH - someone might push u in front of the
busssss!!!

MERCEDES

good 1 hahaha

KD

Please. I'm really sorry...

KD

Hello?

KD

Please. Don't...

(Video fades and transitions to a news web site
headline)

Sixth Grader Dies After Months of Cyberbullying

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.

ACT 1 - SCENE 9 - AMBUSH

(Setting: School parking lot - Night)

(Grayson and September walk together to Grayson's car.)

LIGHTS UP.

SEPTEMBER

And you actually kissed her? Then what happened?

GRAYSON

She kissed me. She could write a book about kissing.

SEPTEMBER

Oh my god. You have some big balls. I could never do that.

GRAYSON

I like to think if I had balls, they'd be cannon balls.

(Levi and his friends enter.)

LEVI

Hey guys, look. It's Mr. And Mrs. [Lesbo].

(The boys laugh and surround Grayson and September)

LEVI

So did you get you jollies tonight, [Diesel]? You have fun with my girlfriend?

GRAYSON

Well, I didn't hear her complaining.

SEPTEMBER

(whispers)

Gray, shut up. Let's go.

LEVI

Check your mouth. I don't care if you are a girl. No one touches my property.

GRAYSON

You need to check a calendar. No one owns, Ava. Piss off.

LEVI

Girl, you just don't know when to shut your mouth do you?

GRAYSON

Looks like we do have something in common.

LEVI

I guarantee there's nothing alike between you and me. In fact, I think us boys need to teach you girls an old-fashion lesson about the difference between boys and girls.

GRAYSON

Seriously, Levi. Get out of here or you'll all be sorry.

(Grayson pulls out her knife)

SEPTEMBER

Gray, c'mon.

GRAYSON

Go, September. I got this.

(September attempts to leave. Levi's friends try to block her way but she gets past them. September exits.)

LEVI

Now now. C'mon. Be a man. You want to be a real man don't ya?

(Levi pulls out a gun.)

GRAYSON

Levi, I guarantee you, I'm more of a man than you'll ever be.

LEVI

Again, that mouth. Grab her.

(Levi's friends jump Grayson and hold his arms. Grayson struggles.)

LEVI (CONT)

Now for that lesson in womanhood.

GRAYSON

I'm sure you could teach me a lot about being a woman.

(Levi covers Grayson's mouth.)

LEVI

What am I going to do with that mouth? C'mon, let's take her to my car. People will see us here.

(Grayson struggles and manages to cut Levi.)

LEVI

Ow, you bitch! You cut me.

(A SECURITY GUARD enters with September)

SECURITY GUARD

What's going on here?

(Grayson struggles free - flailing his knife. Levi hides his gun.)

SECURITY GUARD (CONT)

(reaching for his gun)

Whoa - buddy. Put down the knife.

GRAYSON

You don't have to worry about me. These asshats attacked me.

LEVI

That's bullshit. Look who has the knife! She jumped us.

SECURITY GUARD

Everybody calm down. Put down the knife, son, and we'll get this all sorted out.

(Grayson complies)

SECURITY GUARD

You know I gotta tell Mr. Romano. Come on, let's go.

LEVI

This isn't over, [diesel].

GRAYSON

Not by a long shot.

(Everyone exits.)

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.

END ACT I.

INTERMISSION.

SAVING SEPTEMBER

ACT II

PRE-SHOW

Music of anger/resentment/resignation/isolation should play in the lobby, auditorium during intermission. While creating September's character, imagine and create a play list of music that September might listen to as she learns more about LGBT issues and her place in society.

This is an opportunity to set an uplifting tone and establish September's character. If music is played between scenes, the music should also typify selections September might listen to.

Music needs not be music 'typically' associated with the lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered community.

ACT 2 - INTRODUCTION - BULLYCID

LIGHTS UP.

VIDEO PROJECTION:
VIDEO CLIP MONTAGE.

An 'overture' on the topic of bullycide.

Short montage of clips (1-3 minutes) as if surfing the internet or flicking through television channels. Clips should be associated with cases of [bullycide](#) - suicides as a result of bullying - i.e. news reports, photos of children who have committed suicide, memorial web sites, etc. The montage does not necessarily need to include exclusively LGBT youth.

The company is encouraged to research and study national, state, and local stories related to bullycide.

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.

ACT 2 - SCENE 1 - SUSPENSION

(Setting: Mr. Romano's office - Day)

LIGHTS UP.

(Mr. Romano, Grayson, September, Levi, and the boys from Act 1, Scene 9 discuss the fight from the ending of Act 1. Everyone but Mr. Romano and September yell and talk over each other about who caused the fight. Ad libbing encouraged.)

GRAYSON, LEVI, AND BOYS

(Yelling over each other)

You jumped us!

That's [bullshit]!

You had a knife!

We were just walking to our car.

Etc.

MR. ROMANO

Enough! I've heard enough.

(Everyone quiets down)

MR. ROMANO (CONT)

As if my job isn't hard enough, you jackasses have to go and make it even harder with this kind of [BS]. Pathetic. And on school grounds? You know better than that. You guys know we have a zero tolerance policy about fighting.

Well, I think the facts make things pretty clear. So in that respect, I guess you've made my job a little easier. As I see it, one group was walking to their car and minding their own business and the other group attacked because of actions that occurred earlier during the dance. It's pretty clear who's going down for this one.

GRAYSON

Damn straight.

MR. ROMANO

I'm talking about you, Miss Telupac. Bringing a weapon on school grounds? (tsk tsk) Not very smart young lady. Mr. McDermott is clearly the injured party and has the wounds to show for it. Levi and his parents have every right to press charges if they so choose.

LEVI

You bet your ass I'm pressing charges.

MR. ROMANO

Mr. McDermott, I'll remind you to hold your tongue.

GRAYSON

You got it backwards. They jumped us! I was defending myself - and September. The said they were going to rape us.

MR. ROMANO

Well there's the problem. You're a *boy* - or that's what you want to be. Why would they want to rape you? Besides, it's really your word against theirs. And who am I to believe? They're clean-cut student athletes. You're a cross-dressing trouble-maker barely passing her classes - and who only minutes before the attack blatantly defiled our homecoming dance and school rules. Let this be a life lesson young lady.

GRAYSON

Is this the *Twilight Zone*? How does how I dress have anything to do with this?

MR. ROMANO

It has everything to do with it. You need to learn life has many rules - even for you - and your kind. You're not a special class of people. And when you break the rules, there are consequences.

GRAYSON

But, you don't understand...

MR. ROMANO

No! You don't understand. I'm done arguing. I'm suspending you and September until the school board can review your case and decide what they want to do with you.

(Levi and the boys quietly congratulate themselves)

SEPTEMBER

But I didn't do anything, I was the one who ran for help.

MR. ROMANO

I'm sorry. There's nothing else I can do. Boys, you're not off the hook either. I'm putting you on academic probation. One more slip up and you're off the football team.

GRAYSON

So that's how it is? They get slapped on the wrist and we're kicked out of school? That's [bullshit]!

MR. ROMANO

I suggest you mind your filthy manners and act like a proper lady for once or I'll notify school security to call the police. I'm being charitable here, Miss Telupac. Be grateful. Boys, you're excused.

(Levi and the boys exit. Mr. Romano gives Grayson and September slips of paper.)

MR. ROMANO (CONT)

Here, take this to security so they can escort you to your classes and you can collect your assignments. Security will then escort you off campus. I hope you take this as a real learning opportunity and a chance to redeem yourselves. God bless you both.

GRAYSON

God bless this!

(Grayson takes the paper and they both exit)

LIGHTS CHANGE
TO INDICATE LOCATION CHANGE

(Setting: School hallway)

GRAYSON

Can you believe that BS?

SEPTEMBER

I can't believe you couldn't keep your mouth shut just one time. Now we're both expelled?

GRAYSON

Huh? You're blaming me for for getting expelled?

SEPTEMBER

If you'd just keep quiet for once and keep you're head down, people wouldn't bother us.

GRAYSON

Are you kidding me? That's what you think? Just shut up and take it? That's your answer?

SEPTEMBER

I don't... Look, I don't know. I just know I'm suspended and my parents are going to completely freak out.

(September becomes increasingly excited - pacing - etc. Talks to herself.)

SEPTEMBER (CONT)

I had a full scholarship lined up if I kept my grades up and had a clean record. That's gone now. My parents were counting on me to get in college. What now? Flipping burgers? I might as well kill myself.

GRAYSON

Okay, okay. The world isn't over. Hey, I'm sorry. Calm down. It'll be okay. Shh...

(Grayson tries to hug September, but September pulls away)

SEPTEMBER

Leave me alone. This is all your fault. You ruined everything!

(September exits, running away from Grayson)

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.

DIALOGUE - GOOGLE IT

Production Notes:

- This piece is best seen rather than described.
- An example of this piece may be viewed here:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zIX7fTwNexY>
- The video conveys a completely random message based on results extrapolated from an internet search engine's "autocomplete" results.
 - Many search engines, such as Google, use autocomplete suggestions to help predict what users try to look up. Suggestions are provided in real-time as the user types letters into the search field.
 - Suggestions are ranked from top to bottom based on the search engine's users' most common search terms and phrases.
 - Essentially, millions of users searching millions of search terms create the autosuggest results and thus the impacting message.
- The story is of a bullied child who interacts with the internet to find answers to his or her questions.
 - Where children once were told to look up unknown words in the dictionary or encyclopedia, they now consult the internet.
 - One search leads to another based on how the larger internet community interacted with the search engine.
 - The child forms an opinion, a belief based on all the previous searches from society.
- Listed below are the search terms used for the example video.
 - Results may vary when reproducing the search depending on the time, date, and search engine used.
 - Production companies may vary the search pattern as long as the thread of the story remains the same: Child is bullied, child looks for answers, child becomes suicidal, child finds help.

LIGHTS UP.

Hello

I am your child

I am 14, 11, 8 years old

People call me gay but I'm not

I looked up "gay" in the dictionary

I didn't understand what it meant

so I googled it

here's what I found

gay is...

gays are...

the bible says homosexuality...

homosexuality is...

how do I know if I'm gay

do gays...

will gays...

can gays be happy

gays have...

aids is...

do all gays ...

can I stop being gay...

I don't like being gay...

gay suicide hotline

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.

ACT 2 - SCENE 2 - INTENTIONS

(Setting: Split-scene - Lighthouse Florist and Levi's bedroom - Evening)

(September sits at the counter typing on the computer / Levi sits at his bedroom desk surfing the internet.)

(Technical notes:

- Similar to Act I, Scene 4, the scene is without spoken dialogue beyond the messages scene through the video projection.
- Character 'dialogue' is shown via video projection and represents what's on each character's computer screen.
- Stage lighting or multiple video projection screens should indicate who's computer screen the audience is looking at.
- Soft music may play and/or change between characters to help distinguish character's dialogue.)

LIGHTS UP.

SEPTEMBER

Mom and Dad,

When you find this, I'll be gone and you'll have questions. That's funny, because I have many questions, too.

(Back spaces / deletes text. Starts over.)

When you find this, I'll be gone. You want to know why. I don't have an answer except to say my heart hurts too much to live.

LEVI

(Surfs internet pulling up: Hateful images/video, protests against gays / violence against gays in TV & movies)

SEPTEMBER

I don't want to hurt you. You've only shown me love. I couldn't ask for better parents. But there are things even you can't fix.

LEVI

(Anti-gay teaching/religious images/video, 'God Hates Fags,' Family Research Council / Pat Robertson)

SEPTEMBER

My life is nothing but pain. I see nothing but pain. I feel nothing but pain. I have no control to stop the pain. Even if you wanted to stop it, you can't.

LEVI

(Harmful images/video: Exodus International / doctors saying they can 'cure' homosexuality)

SEPTEMBER

The world is a hateful place and I don't have a place in it. If I have a place, I don't want to be a part of it.

LEVI

(Consequence images/video: Larry King murder, LGBT suicides, cases of bullycide)

SEPTEMBER

Everything around me tells me I'm broken. The way I dress is broken, the way I think is broken, the way I love is broken. I am broken.

LEVI

(Loving images/video: Photos of same-sex couples / happy / children)

SEPTEMBER

I feel like I'm normal. But there must be something wrong with me if I can't understand why everything is so upside down.

LEVI

(Positive images/video: Pro-gay reforms / Pride parades / Pro-gay TV & movies)

SEPTEMBER

Please tell April and August I love them. Tell Grayson this isn't his fault. I've thought about this for a long time.

LEVI

(Hopeful images/video: It Gets Better messages)

SEPTEMBER

You won't understand my choice, but I know you love me. I hope you will forgive me someday. I love you. Goodbye.

Your loving daughter,
September

(September prints the letter. She holds the letter in her hand - reads it. Crumples it up and throws it away. September exits.)

LIGHTS FADE
ON SEPTEMBER.

LEVI

(Scenes of homoerotic images/video)

(The scene ends with Levi looking at erotic gay images and beginning to undress insinuating he's about to masturbate.)

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.

DIALOGUE - COMING OUT

(Production Notes: Presented as a self-help lecture.
PowerPoint-type slides help establish the premise.)

LIGHTS UP.

VIDEO PROJECTION:
SLIDE TEXT: Coping with Coming Out

ACTOR

Hello there! Welcome to Coping with Coming Out - a support group for families and friends with loved ones who have recently come out of the closet.

As we all know, "coming out of the closet" - as it is called - can be a difficult time. When someone comes out, they have many fears and questions. Many wonder: Will I be rejected by my friends and family? Will I be perceived differently? How will my life change?

But, just as the person who comes out has many questions and fears, so do their families and friends. And that's why you're here. You want to understand your child, your brother or sister, an aunt or uncle, or maybe your best friend; you want to love them. We understand. You have your own fears and questions about someone who now seems to you like a familiar stranger.

That's okay. It's perfectly normal to have these feelings. We're here to help.

So let's talk about the questions you might be asking yourself. Keep in mind, every situation is different - nothing is one size fits all. We're going to try cover as many bases as possible, but your situation may differ slightly. If it does, just substitute as best you can. Got it? Let's go!

VIDEO PROJECTION:
SLIDE TEXT: Out of the Blue

Alright, let's talk about the typical coming out process. You're at home. It's just a regular Tuesday night and you're making dinner. And out of the blue - your child,

maybe your best friend just "comes out of the closet."
Bam!

Goodness, what do you do? Think about it. You've known this person for years. Sure... maybe you had your suspicions. Maybe not. What do you *do* if your child or friend comes out to you as... black, white, Asian, Hispanic, or maybe Arabic? Perhaps your loved one reveals they are Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, "just spiritual," or god-forbid, an atheist. Just kidding. Again, the scenarios are virtually endless. If I haven't mentioned your child's specific situation, just substitute going forward. Got it? Great, let's keep going.

We at Coping with Coming Out *understand* these are major life revelations that often take parents and friends completely by surprise.

Here are some initial questions you might be asking yourself: Where did this come from? Why now? Will my child or friend be safe in a world full of hate and discrimination directed towards them? Can they ever be happy? I assure you, these questions are absolutely normal. Never fear, we have answers and support for you. This can be an extremely difficult time, but it doesn't have to be. We've developed tools to help you and your child get through the storm.

VIDEO PROJECTION:

SLIDE TEXT: Support is Not a Four-Letter Word

Now the biggest question we *hope* you're asking yourself is: How can I support my blue-eyed child or friend? Is it even possible to support them if it goes against my beliefs? You might be surprised to learn the answer is - yes. And yes, we realize it can be traumatic to discover someone you love has parents born in a foreign country.

From the outset, it's important to realize - regardless if your child or friend came out to you, or you found out unintentionally, they need you now. Every person's worst fear is that by coming out, their family and friends will reject them. No matter what your beliefs, fears or prejudices, you need to let your loved one know that you still love them.

Your child is the same person they were before coming out of the closet. Remember, being gifted with intelligence is just one part of who they are. It was there all along. The child who loved Barbies and/or The Beatles is still the same kid you've loved since their birth.

Nothing about them has changed, except now you have more knowledge about their life. Try to take this opportunity to connect as you did before you knew about their taste for Afro-Cuban jazz music. Was there a meal you liked to cook together, a favorite TV show you watched? Make sure you continue to do the things you did as a family or as friends.

VIDEO PROJECTION:
SLIDE TEXT: Talk It Out

When someone comes out of the closet, it's important to communicate. If you feel comfortable asking questions about being born "on the wrong side of the tracks," do so. But you don't need to focus on it exclusively. Just talk - talk about school, work, other activities and interests. Studies show that children whose parents take an interest in their lives are less likely to engage in risky behaviors.

VIDEO PROJECTION:
SLIDE TEXT: Coping with It

Let's be honest. You may blame yourself for your child taking a liking in ancient mythical literature. Don't. It's not your fault. Most scientists and psychologists agree, most people are born predisposed to their orientation. It is not something that you could have influenced one way or another.

You may feel depressed and isolated about your child having red hair. Maybe you feel like you have no one you can talk to. Never fear. This is a safe place. You can talk here. Or if this isn't the right place for you, we can refer you to many reputable, supportive counselors in the area.

And it's okay. Some things will be different and perhaps not what you hoped for with your left-handed child or friend. Many want their kids or friends to be like them and get married and have children. That's completely normal. Letting go of that dream for your child can be

hard. Remember though, that was YOUR dream. However, many of these people choose to spend their lives with just one person *and* have children. So there's hope!

And it's important to accept that even though your child did not choose to be the way they are, they may make some life choices you do not agree with. Although this may be hard for you, remember, it's their life and they have the right to live it as their own.

VIDEO PROJECTION:
SLIDE TEXT: In Their Shoes

Now let's try to see things from the point of view of someone who has come out of the closet. When someone comes out as either pro "Mac" or pro "PC," they often question their place in society. They wonder how they will fit in with their family? Can they still have a family? Can they get married? Can they have children? How will their faith community accept them? Will their friends accept or reject them?

Here's where you have a choice. You can help them feel accepted and loved, or you can add to their feelings of isolation. Make sure they know they still have a place in their family, no matter what the outside world cruelly and often brutally tells them.

In any case, support your child if someone makes a disparaging remark or physically abuses them because of their height or weight. If they become a victim of verbal, psychological, sexual, or physical harassment because of it, stand by his or her side - and help them.

VIDEO PROJECTION:
SLIDE TEXT: Who Can I Tell?

Who to come out to is ultimately your child's or friend's choice. Remember - who you tell can have a consequence on their life. On the other hand, you might need to talk to someone and don't want to keep such important information to yourself. It's important that you be able to get the support that you need. Check in with your son or daughter before you tell anyone about them being perceived as a nerd or geek. Let them know you need to be able to talk to people to get support for yourself. REMEMBER you can always talk to support groups online, many anonymously.

VIDEO PROJECTION:
SLIDE TEXT: Religion Says It's a Sin

Now here's where things can get uncomfortable. Some religions will call your child a sinner, an abomination, bound for Hell, or worse. Other religions are more open and accepting. You and your child are probably having many conflicting feelings about their being born female. The best course of action is to take a look at the work of some religious scholars who have a different interpretations of the hundreds of variations, editions, and translations of the various religious texts of the world. Only you will know the right answer, but you'll find the directive to love outnumbers hate in every major world religion.

VIDEO PROJECTION:
SLIDE TEXT: You're Not Alone

It's important to know you're not alone. Millions of parents and friends are going through what you are - right now! And there are many resources available.

Here are some *real* books to get you through your turbulent storm. Again, some of these titles might not address your child's situation. But as a rule, these lessons are universal for kids and families dealing with issues surrounding the coming out process. Just substitute and apply these lessons the best you can. Got it? Here you go!

(Production Notes:

- Actors read the book titles with blurbs. Titles and blurbs should be read with sarcasm as these are actually meant to be 'helpful' and 'positive' books.
- The author encourages production companies to do additional research and include other 'helpful' self-help books.
- Slides should show book covers / titles with blurb.
- All book information available via Google Books or Amazon.com.)

VIDEO PROJECTION:

SLIDE TEXT:

- ***Gay Children, Straight Parents: A Plan for Family Healing***
There is hope and healing for families.

- ***Straight Parents, Gay Children: Keeping Families Together***
A survival guide for all parents who wish to help their gay children cope with the inevitable cruelty from which they cannot hide.

Unfortunately, some parents will have to go beyond simply coping with a son or daughter who comes out of the closet. Some children cannot bear society's scorn. Many children go on to take their lives despite their family's love. If you find yourself in this situation, here's one of literally dozens of books written by parents after their child's suicide.

VIDEO PROJECTION:

SLIDE TEXT:

- ***Prayers For Bobby: A Mother's Coming To Terms With The Suicide Of Her Gay Son***

Bobby Griffith was an all-American boy ... and he was gay. Faced with an irresolvable conflict - for both his family and his religion taught him that being gay was " wrong" - Bobby chose to take his own life.

And of course, some members of society will sadly never accept many who come out of the closet. Sometimes, children are murdered. Thankfully, there are many books available for parents to turn to as a way to cope with their child's murder. Like this helpful book by Judy Shepard.

VIDEO PROJECTION:

SLIDE TEXT:

- ***The Meaning of Matthew: My Son's Murder in Laramie, and a World Transformed***

Heart-wrenchingly honest, *The Meaning of Matthew* is an unforgettable and inspiring story, chronicling one ordinary woman's struggle to cope with the unthinkable.

But not let's forget about the folks struggling with coming out in the first place! There's help for them, too. Here are a few books for people dealing with the coming out process:

VIDEO PROJECTION:

SLIDE TEXT:

- ***Mom, Dad, I'm Gay: How Families Negotiate Coming Out***

(It) illustrates the wide range of family reactions and discusses the factors that determine how parents come to terms with the disclosure over time.

- ***Now That I'm Out, What Do I Do?***

For most gay, lesbian, and bisexual people, acknowledging and accepting their homosexual orientation are only the first steps ... They then must ... reevaluate the most basic themes of human existence: family, love, spirituality, work, and community.

- ***Crisis: 40 Stories Revealing The Personal, Social, And Religious Pain And Trauma Of Growing Up Gay In America***

Hundreds of thousands of gay teens face traumatic depression, fear, rejection, persecution, and isolation-- usually alone. ... Homophobia and discrimination are at the heart of their pain.

And then there's the rest of us. Your friend, possibly your best friend, comes out to you. Here are some books to help you cope with one of the most trying times of your friendship:

VIDEO PROJECTION:

SLIDE TEXT:

- ***Outing Yourself: How To Come Out As Lesbian Or Gay To Your Family, Friends, And Coworkers***

A 14-step program - complete with exercises, meditation notes, and anger checks, as well as the accounts of the coming-out experiences of other lesbians and gay men -- shows how you can successfully handle this life-changing, life-renewing process.

- ***Virtually Normal: An Argument About Homosexuality***

No subject has divided contemporary America more bitterly

than homosexuality. Addressing ... how a predominantly heterosexual society should deal with its homosexual citizens.

- ***What If Someone I Know Is Gay?: Answers To Questions About What It Means To Be Gay And Lesbian***

How Do People Become Gay?

Is It A Sin? Is It A Choice?

No Question Goes Unanswered In This Important Book About Being Gay.

- ***101 Questions About Homosexuality***

"My son just told me he is gay. He says he's finally accepted who he is, and that he's never been happier. Can this really be true?"

Now, don't think we've forgotten those of you with religious tons of questions about coming out. We gotcha covered. Heck, there are whole sections of bookstores devoted to this *thorny* subject. Here are a few to help you "pray the gay away":

VIDEO PROJECTION:

SLIDE TEXT:

- ***The Gay Agenda: It's Dividing The Family, The Church, And A Nation***

Can we still love people in this lifestyle, but hate the sin? What impact is this agenda having on the traditional American family? What impact will this agenda have on our nation?

- ***Is The Homosexual My Neighbor?: A Positive Christian Response***

A classic work of gay spirituality – newly revised to reflect today's issues, including gays in the military, the AIDS crisis, and genetic research on homosexuality.

- ***A Parent's Guide to Preventing Homosexuality***

Many insist we believe that nothing can be done about homosexuality, but research indicates otherwise. Clear insight is provided for identifying potential developmental problems in children and gives practical advice for addressing them.

VIDEO PROJECTION:
SLIDE TEXT: Going Forward

Ultimately - a friend or child bursting out of the closet is always a traumatic experience - for them *and* you. But, you don't have to go it alone. Help is not only available, but plentiful.

Navigating the rough waters of coming out won't be easy. You can expect to go through nights of soul-searching with many fears and questions. It will be one of the greatest tests of love and tolerance you will probably ever experience. Our answer: open your hearts. Listen with compassion and love. The storm will pass - one way or another.

VIDEO PROJECTION:
SLIDE TEXT:

Dialogue and text adapted from actual parenting guides regarding the coming out process. Book titles and publisher notes are real and have not been altered.

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.

Source:

WHOF. "Parent's Guide to "Coming Out"" *Wipeout Homophobia on Facebook*.
WHOF. Web. 4 Nov. 2011. <<http://www.whof.net/parentsguidecomingout.htm>>.

ACT 2 - SCENE 3 - REJECTION

(Setting: School cafeteria - Day)

LIGHTS UP.

(Perri and her FRIENDS sit at a table eating lunch and gossip. Ava enters and crosses over to Perri's table. Ava approaches to sit down.)

PERRI

Oh, I'm sorry this seat is taken.

(Perri turns her attention back to her friends.)

AVA

Oh, sorry. I'll grab another chair.

PERRI

I'm sorry, the table is completely full.

AVA

(Taken aback)

Perri, what's wrong.

(Perri ignores Ava)

AVA (CONT)

Hello... what's going on? What's the joke? Perri?!

PERRI

What?!

AVA

What is wrong with you?

PERRI

Nothing. There's just isn't any room for you.

AVA

C'mon. What is it? Why are you acting like this?

PERRI

Acting? Like what?

AVA

Perri - stop being a [snot] and tell me what's wrong.

PERRI

Look I'm not the one acting like "a snot." You are. I haven't changed - you have.

AVA

How have I changed?

PERRI

Go ask your *girlfriend*.

(Perri and her friends laugh)

AVA

Oh god, you're still mad about the other night? I don't get it.

PERRI

No, you don't get it, Ava. We were best friends, we had boyfriends, we were going off to college together and all of the sudden you turned into a flaming bull dyke.

AVA

Perri - I'm not - like that.

PERRI

Then what's going on between you and that - thing you hang out with and kiss?

AVA

Grayson and I are just friends, Perri. I told you...

PERRI

Yeah, you told me how you liked kissing it. It's totally disgusting. You need to think about what you're doing, Ava.

AVA

What am I exactly doing, Perri?

PERRI

In the first place, how about respecting yourself? Imagine the diseases you're exposing yourself to. Secondly, you're

throwing your life away. Disappointing your parents.
Losing your friends. Throwing away your chance at a decent
boyfriend. Should I go on? You're probably going to hell
for acting the way you do.

AVA

(truly stunned)

Is that what you really think I am?

PERRI

Yes, I do. And so do your friends and family.

AVA

Well if that's what you think, then we don't have anything
else to say. Good bye.

(Ava walks away from Perri)

LIGHTS CHANGE
TO INDICATE LOCATION CHANGE.

(Setting: School hallway - Day)

(While walking Ava runs into Levi)

LEVI

Hey, babe. What's the rush?

AVA

Not now, Levi.

LEVI

(Levi steps in front of Ava and grabs her arm.)

Whoa. What's wrong?

AVA

I'm late. Please let me go.

LEVI

Just a second. I wanted to see you after school.

AVA

I can't. I have to be somewhere.

LEVI

Where? With that [dyke]? Jesus Ava, what is it with you and the freak? He's not even a guy.

AVA

Get out of my way.

LEVI

Look... I'm sorry. I wanted to see you after school... to apologize.

AVA

You don't seem to be doing a good job of it.

LEVI

I'm sorry... really. I know I've been a real ass to you lately.

AVA

Don't bother. I've been meaning to give this back to you.

(Ava takes off Levi's ring and tries to hand it back to him)

LEVI

What's that supposed to mean?

AVA

What do you think it means? It's your ring. I don't want it anymore.

LEVI

I gave you that ring because I love you.

AVA

Oh god. Seriously, Levi? Just take it.

LEVI

No. Let's talk later.

AVA

No - we can't. Here - take it.

LEVI

No.

(Ava places the ring on the ground)

AVA

Then don't take it, but I'm not keeping it. I've gotta go.

(Ava turns to leave)

LEVI

Your choosing that *thing* - over me? That's what you're doing? Over me?!

(Ava stops but does not look at Levi)

LEVI (CONT)

So what...are you gonna start coming to school dressed like a dude, too? Is that it? You gonna cut your hair and pretend you like pussy? So are you gonna play the man or woman? You gonna go down on her like you did me - you [fucking] whore!

(Ava turns to Levi)

AVA

I'm really sorry if it hurts you to think I'd rather be with him than with you. You're just gonna have to live with it - because that's how it is.

(Ava exits)

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.

DIALOGUE: IT GETS BETTER, JAMEY

(Production Note: This Dialogue may be either performed live or with Jamey's actual video.)

LIGHTS UP.

VIDEO PROJECTION:

SLIDE TEXT:

In May 2011, Jamey Rodemeyer - a 14-year old gay teen from Williamsville, New York - posted this inspiring message on YouTube to encourage LGBT youth. His video was part of blogger Dan Savage's "It Gets Better" campaign.

ACTOR

or show [JAMEY'S VIDEO](#)

"Hi, this is Jamey from Buffalo, New York and I'm just here to tell you that it does get better. Here's a little bit about my story.

Um, December 2010, I thought I was bi and then I always was got made fun of because I virtually have no guy friends. And I only have friends that are girls. And it bothered me because they'd be like "fag in bed..." and they'd taunt me in the hallways and I felt like I could never escape it and I made a FormSpring which I shouldn't have done and people would just constantly send me hate telling me that gay people go to hell and um...

I just want to tell you that it does get better 'cause when I came out for being bi I got so much support from my friends and made me feel so secure. And then if your friends or family aren't even there for you, I look up to one of the most supporting people of the gay community that I think of, that I know, um... Lady Gaga.

She makes me so happy and she lets me know that I was born this way. And that's my advice to you from her, that you were born this way. And all you have to do is hold your head up... hold your head up and you'll go far.

Because that's all you have to do. Just love your self and you're set. And I promise... you'll get better. I have so much support from people that I don't even know online. I know that sounds creepy, but they're so nice and caring. They don't ever want me to die... it's just so... so much

support for me. So just listen here. It gets better.
Just look at me - I'm doing fine. I went to the Monster
Ball and now I'm liberated. So... It gets better.

LIGHTS DIM.

VIDEO PROJECTION:

SLIDE TEXT:

Four months after posting his video, on September 18, 2011,
Jamey Rodemeyer took his life. Despite counseling and
pleas for help to Jamey's school, his parents say he had
faced school bullies for years.

VIDEO PROJECTION:

SLIDE TEXT:

Jamey's parents' message to the world, "To the kids who are
bullying - they have to realize that words are very
powerful and what you think is just fun and games isn't to
some people, and you are destroying a lot of lives."

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.

Source:

Rodemeyer, Jamey. "It Gets Better, I Promise." *YouTube*. YouTube, 2011.
Web. 26 Aug 2011. <[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-
Pb1CaGMdWk&feature=player_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Pb1CaGMdWk&feature=player_embedded)>.

ACT 2 - SCENE 4 - DAISIES

(Setting: Lighthouse Florist - Afternoon/Evening)

LIGHTS UP.

(FDM prepares a bouquet. Ava enters.)

FDM

Well ain't you the prettiest little flower. What can I do for you?

AVA

Oh, hello. I'm looking for Grayson. Is he working today?

FDM

I'm sorry. You just missed him. I sent him on a delivery.

AVA

Oh. Okay, thanks.

(Ava turns to leave)

FDM

He'll be back shortly. You're welcome to stay - for tea?

AVA

That's awfully nice, but you look kinda busy. I really should...

FDM

It's no trouble. These flowers go out tomorrow to Mrs. Smithson - she gets a weekly delivery whether they're ready or not. Really, it's no trouble. Please sit down. And where are my manners? I'm Eph Diem.

AVA

F dee...

FDM

F-D-M. It's Latin for Fairy Drag Mother.

AVA

I'm Ava.

FDM

Ava...that's a pretty name. Why do I know that name...
Hmm...Getting old is no fun, honey. So how do you know our
Grayson?

AVA

Oh, we uh... just really met each other last week at
homecoming. We go to high school together.

FDM

That's where I've heard your name. Grayson won't stop
talking about you. I have to admit, I can see why he likes
you.

(FDM gives Ava a cup of hot tea)

FDM (CONT)

I serve English-style. It's really the only civilized way,
don't you think? Milk or sugar?

AVA

Oh, thank you. Just sugar, please.

FDM

One lump or two, dear?

AVA

One is fine. Thank you.

FDM

Isn't this fun? I love a good old-fashioned tea party -
with some exceptions if you know what I mean.

(Ava looks distracted)

FDM (CONT)

What's wrong dear? Oh, I didn't mean to offend. I broke
my own rule: never discuss politics or religion with
friends. I'm sorry. I swear I have a real knack at
putting my size 13 in my mouth.

AVA

No, it's okay. I'm fine. I've just got a lot on my mind.

FDM

Oh, you kids these days. The world spins so fast for you. It's hard enough being your age; the world really piles on so much more than you need. Can I help, dear?

AVA

Oh, no thank you. I'll be fine. I'm just a little confused.

FDM

If you asked some of my family, they'd tell you you're talking to the right person about confusion.

AVA

I'm kinda in uncharted water right now - emotions-wise.

FDM

About Grayson?

AVA

And everyone seems to have an opinion about him.

FDM

Opinions (sighs)... you know what they say about opinions. They're like assholes - everyone has one.

AVA

Well, everyone says the most horrible things about Grayson and ever since I've given him the time of day, my family and friends are starting to say the same things about me.

FDM

And what do you think?

AVA

I'm just a little overwhelmed with everyone's reaction. And confused... I don't even know how I really feel about Grayson. A lot of feelings have been stirred up.

FDM

Ah - youth. I remember those feelings - barely. But now your family is - ["pitching a fit."]

AVA

Um, yeah. You could say that. My mother is convinced I'm literally going to Hell. She just called our pastor and arranged some kind of intervention.

FDM

Oh dear.

AVA

And my best friend just disowned me. God, why can't everyone just mind their own damned business?

FDM

Well, if it helps, they're trying - in their own twisted, eyes-wide-shut sort of way - they're trying to help you.

AVA

Help me? They think I'm throwing my life away.

FDM

Exactly.

AVA

I don't get it. Are you on my side or on theirs.

FDM

Yours dear - always yours. I'm just saying your family is afraid for you. Afraid of the unknown. They only know - or think they know - people like Grayson from what they create in their minds or what they see from movies. We're "The Creatures from the Black Lagoon."

AVA

I'm sorry. You lost me.

FDM

To them - Grayson is like the bogeyman. Something to fear. We're one of the last bogeymen out there. The bogeyman used to be black folks drinking from the same water fountain as white folks. Then it became women voting or women asking a man on a date - or clutch-the-pearls: women on the battle field.

I'm sure your family will come around. In my experience, once you get to really know something - someone - it becomes pretty damned hard to hate it.

AVA

What if my family never comes around? What if I lose my family?

FDM

(Heavy sigh)

And sometimes that happens, too. Some folks refuse to ever open their eyes. That's what actually happened to Grayson. His family threw him out of the house when he told them he was transgendered. Hasn't seen them since.

He had to divorce his parents and has been on his own since he was 15. Sadly, they refused to ever see the light.

AVA

Jesus... I didn't know that.

FDM

Jesus really had very little to do with it, dear. But I get your meaning.

Grayson has been through hell and back. He's had to make his own family - and he's got a pretty fabulous family if I do say so myself.

Many lose their blood. Religion or just good old fashioned bigotry gets in the way. Sometimes blood loses to hate.

So...We make our own family.

(Enter Grayson)

FDM (CONT)

And speak of the devil.

GRAYSON

Sorry I'm late I... hey, I didn't know you were coming by.

AVA

Oh, it's... Ugh... Everything is turning to shit.

FDM

I'm going to let you birds be. I'm heading home. This bouquet will have to wait tomorrow - I've lost the will to

deal with Mrs. Smithson. Good night, squirrels. Ava, remember what I said, okay. It'll all work out.

AVA

Thanks for listening and for the advice.

GRAYSON

(To FDM)

I'll see you tomorrow.

FDM

Don't stay too late, dear.

(FDM exits to back of shop. Grayson goes to Ava.)

GRAYSON

Tell me.

AVA

God, it's too much to tell. Everyone is going crazy.

GRAYSON

I'm sorry. It's a lot of baggage, I know.

AVA

I feel trapped between my family and wanting to see you.

GRAYSON

Hey - look at me. Eph Diem is right. You're going to be okay.

AVA

How can you say that? My mother wants to ship me off somewhere to be brainwashed.

GRAYSON

What?! Well, you don't have to go. You have options.

AVA

What options? I'm not like you, Grayson. My future is mapped out for me.

GRAYSON

Then remake the map.

AVA

Grayson, I can't just ignore my parents!

GRAYSON

Okay, okay. Breathe. You're not alone. I'm here. Besides, your family might surprise you.

AVA

Yours didn't.

GRAYSON

Eph Diem told you... well yeah, my family failed the test. But who's to say yours will. Let your family cool down. Nothing happens overnight.

AVA

I know. I just want things to be the way they were.

GRAYSON

I think it's too late for that. Don't you?

(Ava leans in to kiss Grayson)

AVA

It's too late for a lot of things.

GRAYSON

I know. But it'll be okay. Promise.

Ugh, I've got a lot of deliveries to make before we close. Can I see you later tonight? Let me finish up and I'll come by your house.

AVA

Okay. But, let's keep the drama low. Call me and I'll meet you outside. I don't want to deal with my mother.

GRAYSON

Deal.

(Grayson kisses Ava and she exits)

LIGHTING CHANGE
INDICATES LATER THAT DAY.

(Setting: Same - Evening)

(Grayson begins cleaning up the shop and getting ready to leave. The door chime/bell sounds.)

Levi enters. Grayson faces away from the door.)

GRAYSON

I'm sorry. We're closed.

LEVI

I just came by to apologize.

GRAYSON

Oh, great. Man, we're closed.

LEVI

Hey, seriously. Truce. I just came to talk.

GRAYSON

C'mon on man. No more games. Just leave well enough alone. You already got me kicked out of school. Isn't that enough?

LEVI

Look, sorry how all that went down. I've just been spun up lately.

GRAYSON

(Sighs)

Okay. Great. Thanks. We're still closed.

LEVI

I know you're pissed, but hear me out.

GRAYSON

Jesus... What?

LEVI

I'm just you know, really possessive and you were touching my girl.

GRAYSON

Well I didn't see "Property of..." stenciled on her forehead.

LEVI

I got it. I know I've been an ass. Sorry...

GRAYSON

(Eases up)

Yeah... well, I can see how you'd get tore up about that. If anyone touched my girl...

LEVI

So you understand. See?

GRAYSON

Yeah, I suppose.

LEVI

Anyway, I'm really sorry.

GRAYSON

That's cool. It's forgotten... just wish school wasn't messed up.

LEVI

Yeah, sorry 'bout that, too.

GRAYSON

Yeah, me too...

LEVI

Hey... You know, I've been wanting to ask you something, but you know - we hate each other and all...

GRAYSON

What's that?

LEVI

So...can you tell me... How did you know? When did you know?

GRAYSON

Know what?

LEVI

That you were gay.

GRAYSON

I'm not gay.

LEVI

What? I thought you were...

GRAYSON

It's called transgendered.

LEVI

Well, when...how did you know you're...trans-whatever. How old were you? Were you scared?

GRAYSON

Um...It didn't just come to me overnight, you know. But, uh basically I just...knew I was different. Most figure it out when they're pretty young. You notice you're not like a lot of the other kids. You're not interested in the same stuff as the other girls - or boys. For me, I felt like my outside didn't match my inside.

LEVI

So are you a...lesbian?

GRAYSON

Jeez - no. Trans-gendered.

LEVI

Sorry - I didn't...

GRAYSON

It's okay. A lot people get confused. For me, it's easiest to put it like this. I've got a guy's brain inside a girl's body. Most folk's brains and bodies match. Mine doesn't.

LEVI

But you like girls.

GRAYSON

Yeah - because I have a straight guy's brain.

LEVI

So you're not a lesbian?

GRAYSON

Like I said, it's not an easy to wrap your brain around sometimes. Lesbians are women with women brains who like women. Understand?

LEVI

Not really...

GRAYSON

Yeah, well try to catch up.

LEVI

So are you going to get one of those operations to make you look like a dude?

GRAYSON

Damn - man. Get personal much?

LEVI

Sorry, sorry. I was just thinking, how can you ever be really happy if the inside doesn't match the outside. I wouldn't be able to... I was just curious.

GRAYSON

(sighs)

Dude... I don't know, yet. There's no instruction manual for all this.

LEVI

Okay, okay. I'm just trying to understand it all. This is all kinda new to me, too, ya know.

Oh! What about God? The church says it's wrong. Don't you worry about going to Hell?

GRAYSON

Please. Let's not bring up religion. God and me have our own understanding, and She says I'm doing just fine.

LEVI

Seriously, I don't know how you deal with it. I'd be...super bummed.

GRAYSON

Ya know, I'm, uh... You know I'd love to explain all this to you, but I'm running late.

LEVI

Okay, okay. What about guys?

GRAYSON

What about 'em?

LEVI

Can guys love guys?

GRAYSON

What? Yes, of course. It's called being gay.

LEVI

But, can they really love each other? I mean can they be happy?

GRAYSON

Dude, I don't know. I'm mean, yeah, I'm sure they're happy. Are you okay? You look a little weird. Are you thinking you...

(Levi interrupts)

LEVI

I bet it feels like Hell. Like everyone hates you. I'd never make it. Alone, like a huge secret's gonna crush you.

GRAYSON

Dude, did you want to tell me something?

LEVI

What? Me? Hell, no. I'm good. I just never had the chance to talk to you before. You know how the guys would give me shit if I ever...

GRAYSON

Yeah, okay Levi. I don't mean to be a prick, but like I said, I need to go. So you're going to need to...

LEVI

Okay, fine. I'll leave, jeez. But hey, do me a favor, don't tell anyone I asked you about anything.

(Levi turns to leave, stops, pauses. Levi turns to Grayson.)

GRAYSON

You're secret's safe with me.

LEVI

I was coming in for flowers. For Ava. To say sorry for being such an ass.

GRAYSON

That's probably a good idea.

LEVI

What's good to give for an apology?

GRAYSON

Well, I'm no expert, but I write a lot of the cards for the deliveries. Um, you can never go wrong with roses. But, come to think of it, a lot of guys who apologize to girls seem to send daisies.

LEVI

Hmm...daisies - cool. I'll take a some. I'm going to her house after this.

GRAYSON

Oh...um... well, why don't you have them delivered. Apologize tomorrow.

LEVI

No, I want to give them to her right away.

GRAYSON

You know, girls love delivery. Makes it more special. You could have them delivered to her in class. Think how that'd look. Everyone will talk.

LEVI

(Pauses)

Yeah, delivery. I guess that'd be cool. Yeah - I'll do that. Let me see 'em.

GRAYSON

See what?

LEVI

The daisies. What they look like.

GRAYSON

Dude, they're daisies. [Shit,] they look like... daisies.

LEVI

Okay, but I want to see what you're gonna send.

GRAYSON

(Sighs)

Dude, just a second, I'll grab some.

(Grayson turns around to grab some daisies from a cart nearby. As this happens, Levi pulls a gun out of his jacket and takes aim at Grayson.)

LEVI

(Quietly)

I'm really sorry.

(Grayson turns around with the flowers in his hands and faces Levi. He sees the gun.)

LEVI (CONT)

Nobody keeps secrets safe.

QUICK BLACK OUT

GRAYSON

Levi, wait.

(A shot rings out)

END SCENE.

DIALOGUE - 140 CHARACTERS OR LESS

LIGHTS UP.

ACTOR

On March 12, 2012, the subject "ToMyUnbornChild" became a trending topic across the social media web site, Twitter. Thousands of people used the hashtag to post messages to their future unborn children.

The website "Storify" groups tweets together using trending topics and like ideas. Most of the tweets tagged "To My Unborn Child" were innocent and benign; however, one Storify user noticed a disturbing trend.

These are some of more than 100 *real* messages from *real* people to their unborn children posted on Twitter within a 24-hour period.

Names, grammar, and diction have not been edited.

VIDEO PROJECTION:

SHOW VIDEO MONTAGE USING STORIFY SOURCE WEB SITE LISTED BELOW.

(Video production suggestions:

- 1) Actors portraying parents can say the tweets as written
- 2) The actual tweets can be shown as text

Music for the video should invoke childhood, i.e. "Hush Little Baby" or "Rock-a-bye Baby."

Sample video:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=aBaDVGEtp-Y

Storify Source:

<http://storify.com/homophobes/100-homophobes-who-would-kill-their-gay-child>

Alternatively, actors may perform a selection of tweets on stage.)

ACTOR

Forty-five out of the 100 tweets were fairly succinct and essentially had one or more of the following variations:

"If you turn out gay, go gay, you be a homo... if you are a fag... I'll kill you. Imma gonna kill you; I prolly kill you; I will fucking kill you faggot. I will kill yo bitch ass. I'll kill you myself. I will murder you." Many added "hahaha" and/or "LOL."

Other tweets about murdering an unborn gay child included:

#ToMyUnbornChild if you so much as think about being a homosexual I'll put a bullet in your damn skull

#ToMyUnbornChild if you turn gay, ill kill you and make another

#ToMyUnbornChild u bet not be gay. Because I will hang u at da first sign of gayness!!!

#ToMyUnbornChild if you turn out gay, I will burn you alive.

#ToMyUnbornChild u betta not be gay mi ahh fi kill u

"#ToMyUnbornChild if your gay i will beat you to death with a bible"

[The username of this homophobe has been removed upon request]

ToMyUnbornChild if you're gay... You will sleep in the oven.

#ToMyUnbornchild Never sweat these females & you bet not be gay neither or ima hang you from, a bridge and beat you

#tomyunbornchild the first time you experience your gay moment I'm stepping on your throat #fuckwitme

#ToMyUnbornChild if your a girl i will drown you in the bathtub, and if your a guy and your turn into a faggot ill kill you

#ToMyUnbornChild I Will Put A Bullet Through Your Skull If You Become Gay...

#ToMyUnbornChild if you're gay, I'm putting you down. No question about it.

#ToMyUnbornChild I swear if your turn Gay , I myself will Murder yuh bloodclatt. And Go A JAIL

#ToMyUnbornChild if you turn like this ~~~~ (gay) imma hang yo ass wit a coat rack lol

#ToMyUnbornChild don't choose to be gay or you will live a very short life

#ToMyUnbornChild if your going to be gay might as well die as a miscarriage

#ToMyUnbornChild if your gay... I will stab you to death.
#sorrynotsorry

#ToMyUnbornChild you better not be gay, or a pussy or you will die

#ToMyUnbornChild if you turn out to be a homosexual I will beat you until you die.

#ToMyUnbornChild if your a boy don't be gay or you will die

#ToMyUnbornChild(Son) You come up to me and say you wanna be gay. Ima shoot yo ass.

#ToMyUnbornChild you be gay imma be in jail and you'll be dead

#ToMyUnbornChild if you ever become homo.. Ohh shit ima kill your faggot ass

#ToMyUnbornChild I will kill you if you Turn Gay , (I support the gays but I will never be one , neither nor my unborn baby)

#ToMyUnbornChild if you ever come out a boy and turn into a faggot I will kill you

#ToMyUnbornChild if you turn out to be a homosexual....
That will be the last thing you will ever do. I WILL KILL
YOU.

#ToMyUnbornChild your ass better not be gay or ima kill yo
ass & throw you out. Cause I refuse to raise a sweet ass
child !

#ToMyUnbornChild If you EVER think about being gay imma
beat your ass to death ! #RS

#ToMyUnbornChild If you think gay is an option, let me know
because we'll abort you

#ToMyUnbornChild if your gay I will drown you

#ToMyUnbornChild If I find out you doin gay shit ill put a
gun to yo head and scare you straight

#ToMyUnbornChild turn gay and u die same time (:

#ToMyUnbornChild if u say some gay shit u might as well
kill yo self

#ToMyUnbornChild if your legit gay, than I'm sorry but I'm
gonna have to shoot you in the head

#ToMyUnbornChild if you are a boy please dont be gay or you
will die and if you are a girl i'll only accept being
bisexual

#ToMyUnbornChild If You Turn Gay Dont Even Come Home Cause
Either Way You Gone Die .

#tomyunbornchild if u dress, talk or act like a fag i will
kill you.

#ToMyUnbornChild if you gay like my pops told me Imma kill
you. #reckless #HateFaggots

#ToMyUnbornChild if you end up being gay, you will be beat
to death. #EndOfStory

#ToMyUnbornChild if you come out homo im kill you myself.

#ToMyUnbornChild if you are gay I will kill you. Painfully

#ToMyUnbornChild if you're gay, or even think about men, I'm sending you to Uganda to join Kony's child army. I won't lose any sleep over it

#ToMyUnbornChild if you come out gay imma shoot your ass!

#ToMyUnbornChild - Kick twice if you're a gay fetus. Newt said it was okay to abort you then. Thanks!

#tomyunbornchild if your a boy ill kill you if you turn gay
blank stare

@camerojones: #ToMyUnbornChild if your gay..." I'll shoot mine in the head..

#ToMyUnbornChild if you're a boy and you even think you're going to be gay abort yourself

#ToMyUnbornChild I will always love and support you..... Unless you turn out gay, then ill kill you.

#ToMyUnbornChild if you're a boy, and you're gay. i will attempt to kill you every time i see you and i'll disclaim you.

@ballislife_2013: #ToMyUnbornChild I'll kill you if you become a faggot" might as well kill yourself.....

#ToMyUnbornChild if you are gay, i am gonna murder you without hesitation.

#tomyunbornchild you better not turn out gay later on swear to god I'm killing you myself

#ToMyUnbornChild if You Think About Going Gay , Your Dad Will Kill You

#ToMyUnbornChild ion tolerate dat gay shit! Ill kill u & start over na. U gotta give me sum grand kids.

#tomyunbornchild if your a boy and your gay kill yourself and ill give u the gun to follow through

#ToMyUnbornChild If you end up gay. I'll stab you 357 times with a butter knife. #SlowPainfullDeath

VIDEO PROJECTION:
SLIDE TEXT:

Tweets collected by Storify user: "Homophobes"

VIDEO PROJECTION:
SLIDE TEXT:

#Tomyunbornchild tweets courtesy of following real people
(names / handles have not been changed):

Bibi gabriels
Samurai Dave
allen derosa
#T-raww
Camryn Alan Hart™
HAAAARRROOOOLLDD!!!
Moussa El-Sayed
MALEK
Abdulrahman.i Zahran
A-Flocka !
DJ Morton
Michael Morelli
Zachary waid
Rob Grant
Avontai Lackey
OJ tha Drankman
Brady Battenfield
Pin: 27D88D9E
Omeez
Adrian Sanchez
McKinley Duffer 🌸➔🌸
xYouthExplosionx
Colby Ross
18
That Bitch Sunny !
Mason Hendricks
theREALCooliee™
low'key mank
Ultra Log w/squirrel
Rodell™
©ApplyCherry (🌸~)~
Darryl Thompson
Korey Frost
z@(h@r¥ \$@n£0d
Daniel Goff

Chase Pate
Jackie Boone
Sticky Fingaz
Porgantonio.
Evan Rogers
dat nigga RASHAD
Clark&Mac*_*
Michael Taylor
Adam Elbadawi
Mason Hendricks
Mike Doherty
Kealii Kauahi
Matthew Chepinskas
Fly Brown Guy
Nina Zulkarnain
FUCK YALL !!!!!
Austin Battaglia
TheRealCalebU
DeeBo
Adan Lopez
Kyle Brewer
XO till we overdose
Al Capone
Tywan Cofield
♡TNT♡
☆ Josh Anderson ☆
codie sowders
Nicky Stix
Yoo Niggahh Lydiaa
Carmelo Anthony
Khalil
Arthur.
⇒Ä is for Asshole
-Ki:↪ñdyKush♥
Moo Bilbro →MARCH 24
terminaor
Jalen Bentley
Hunter Elliott
Chris Woodie
Trippy ™
Alexandria Jones
Darla Nitsch
mike mears
June 9th . . . ♡

Alex Byars
Martigus Henley
FLY Movement
Jesse Monroe Harris
Austin Rosenberry
Shane Magnifico
Mark Malm
#LakerNation
Adam Kusnyer
DV Mucho Dinero
D.
Alex Goodvin
Shiguy Walcott
Tucker Briley
Marcus Wilson
Yung Nigga
Storm Jones
Fredrick Stactic
Daborey Burrell
iBarber

VIDEO PROJECTION:
SLIDE TEXT:

#ThinkBeforeYouTweet

#TheInternetIsForever

Source:

#homophobes. "100 Real Tweets from Homophobes Who Would Murder Their Gay Child." *Storify* by #homophobes. Storify, 29 Mar. 2012. Web. 4 Apr. 2012. <<http://storify.com/homophobes/100-homophobes-who-would-kill-their-gay-child>>.

ACT 2 - SCENE 5 - SWALLOW

(Setting: September's bedroom - Evening)

LIGHTS UP.

(September sits at her desk staring at a bottle of pills. She's in turmoil. The scene is silent except for the music September has playing from her computer.

After deliberating, she opens the pill bottle and pours out the pills on the desk. She's crying as she lines the pills up, counts them.

Finally, September swallows first pill wincing at the bitter taste. She swallows a second pill.

As she's about to swallow the another pill, there's a gentle, but insistent knock at the door.)

PARENT (OFF)

September?

(September looks to the door and back to the pills. She swallows a another pill.

Another knock to the door, louder and more insistent.)

PARENT (CONT)

September, it's [Mom]. It's important.

(Again, September ignores the knocking and reaches for another pill. Very loud knocking interrupts September from swallowing another pill.)

PARENT (CONT)

September! Open up! Something's happened to Grayson.

(September wipes tears and opens the door.)

SEPTEMBER

What's happened?

(Her parent sees September has been crying and looks over to the desk full of pills.)

PARENT

What's going on? Oh my... baby, what have you done? What have you done?

(Parent pulls September into a hug.)

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.

DIALOGUE: AND WE'RE WALKING

(Production Note: This Dialogue takes place in a museum. The actor plays a docent.)

LIGHTS UP.

VIDEO PROJECTION:
PHOTO OF LARRY KING.

ACTOR

(Ingratiating and cheerful)

Okay! The next stop on our museum tour is about Larry King. No, no... not that Larry King. Larry's story is unlike the other children in our exhibit about Bullycide. His story is unusual in that he did not commit suicide after years of endless bullying for being gay.

(Gestures to photo of Larry King)

Now, here you can see a beautiful photo of Larry. Smiling and happy. However, Larry had a bumpy road through life. Adopted at age two, he had trouble connecting with his new family. He had his problems; he certainly wasn't the perfect little boy we all know and love in our families. Larry was born way back in 1993 and came out as gay to his friends and family at the tender age of 10 years old. Bless his heart. Can you imagine?

Anyway... Larry was, of course, teased and taunted in school for flaunting his sexuality in front of everyone - naturally. But, strangely he really never showed signs of wanting to commit suicide. In fact, after wearing women's make-up to school, his principal sent out a memo to the teachers about Larry's behavior and to be on the "look out" for trouble.

Now... you know how the little ones have their "crushes." Well Larry was no exception. When he was just 15 - this was back in 2008, he had his eye on a boy in his class named, Brandon McInerney. Larry was a total flirt with Brandon - you know how boys can be. Larry would practically parade around Brandon, wearing women's jewelry, blowing kisses, and even saying he *loved* Brandon. Bless his heart. And this was in front of Brandon's friends!

Some said it bordered on harassment! And you have to understand, Brandon was NOT gay and did NOT appreciate Larry's "attention." Can you imagine!?

Well... it was February. Kids being kids, you knooooow how they start thinking about Valentine's Day. And Larry had his eye set on Brandon; he even asked Brandon to be his Valentine at a basketball game. Isn't that adorable! Well! As you can imagine, Brandon was teased by his friends because of Larry's attention. Brandon even tried to get his friends to gang up on Larry to end the flirting, but his friends wouldn't do it.

So... Brandon did what every normal teenager would do and took the next logical step. The next day during their computer class, Brandon took a .22-caliber handgun out of his backpack, walked up behind Larry, placed the gun to Larry's head, and fired two bullets at point blank range into Larry's brain. Brandon then dropped the gun and walked out of school. Larry was declared brain dead the next day... one day before Valentine's. So sad. Can you imagine?!

(Heavy sigh)

Well, of course there's been all sorts of hubbub about what happened. Gay rights groups are in an uproar, the parents blamed the school, and Brandon claimed he was innocent. In fact, he said he was goaded into murdering Larry because *he* was being bullied by Larry. Brandon said he didn't want everyone to think he was gay. Can you imagine being accused of anything worse? Of course, the "LGBT" groups say the "gay panic" defense is groundless and smacks of the "Twinkie Defense" that Dan White used after he murdered Harvey Milk in the 1970s. It was a big ol' mess.

So what do you think happened to Brandon McInerney? Well of course, he was charged with murder and a hate crime - this all happened in California - if you know what I mean. Brandon's trial took eight weeks and had over a hundred witnesses. It ended with a hung jury who couldn't decide if Brandon committed actual homicide or just manslaughter. When prosecutors announced they'd retry Brandon they said they would drop the hate crime charge. So, Brandon plead guilty to second-degree murder and accepted a sentence of 21 years in prison.

Tsk tsk tsk... all that over a little ol' Valentine! Can you imagine?

Okay then, onto our next display... and we're walking...

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.

Source:

Salliant, Catherine. "Gay teen's killer takes 21-year deal." *Los Angeles Times*. Los Angeles Times, 2011. Web. 14 Jan 2012. <<http://articles.latimes.com/2011/nov/22/local/la-me-1122-gay-shooting-20111122>>.

ACT 2 - SCENE 6 - NIGHTFALL

(Setting: Split-Scene Ava's bedroom / Outside Ava's house - Night)

LIGHTS UP.

(Ava lies in her bed reading / Levi walks up to outside her house. He's carrying a bouquet of bloodied daisies.)

Levi pulls out his cell phone and calls Ava. Ava looks at her phone and can see it's Levi. She ignores the call.

Levi redials. Ava again ignores the call.

Levi redials again. Upset, Ava answers.)

AVA

Damn it, Levi. I don't want to talk to you.

LEVI

I'm sorry.

AVA

Great. Thanks. Good...

(Levi interrupts)

LEVI

I'm sorry - I've really been an asshole. I'm outside, can I come in?

AVA

You shouldn't have come. I have nothing to say to you.

LEVI

Ava, please.

AVA

Levi, go home.

LEVI

I'm really sorry. I just need to apologize.

AVA

Apology accepted. Now please...

LEVI

I have something for you - a surprise. I just got it for you.

AVA

Levi, I'm not in the mood for games.

LEVI

Come outside then - just for a minute - then I'll go. I brought you something special. Please...

AVA

Levi...

LEVI

Please...

AVA

Just for a minute, then you have to leave.

LEVI

Fine.

LIGHTS CHANGE.

(Ava puts on slippers and moves downstage to Levi)

LEVI

Look... daisies.

AVA

Really, there's no need.

LEVI

No, please, I'm really sorry.

(Levi forces the flowers into Ava's hands.)

AVA

O...kay. Thank you.

LEVI

(Sounding distant, robotic. Not addressing Ava.)

Grayson said girls preferred delivery. He said it makes it more special, but I couldn't wait.

AVA

Wait, what? When did you see...

(Levi interrupts)

LEVI

He said girls like daisies. Daisies. They're supposed to be good to say I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

AVA

Stop. Why did you see Grayson?

LEVI

To get you the flowers.

AVA

And he gave them to you?

LEVI

Yeah, when I apologized to him.

AVA

Did you say "him?"

LEVI

Yeah, we talked all about how he's like a faggot inside a girl's body and he said... guys can't really love other guys.

AVA

What? You're not making any sense.

(Ava looks down to the flowers and notices they're spattered with blood. She notices the blood on her hands and becomes visibly frightened.)

LEVI

(To himself)

I always kind of knew it. I mean, a long time ago. But, who could I tell? No way. Not nobody. Well I prayed. A lot. I prayed to make me... normal. I don't want to be no fag. I did what everyone told me to do. Did the right things. Did everything I was supposed to. Played football, got a girl. That's what Dad told me. Nothing helped. I can't help it. I'm still...

(Levi realizes what he's said. Snaps out of it. Levi looks up at Ava.)

LEVI (CONT)

Do you like the daisies? They're good for apologies.

AVA

Levi... what have you...

(Levi interrupts)

LEVI

And now I've got it all figured out. I know how to act like a real man.

AVA

Levi, you're scaring me.

LEVI

No, it's okay. I'll try harder next time. I know I messed up. I've been finding stuff on the internet and know what I did wrong before.

AVA

Levi, let me go inside and call Grayson.

(Levi pulls out his gun. Ava screams.)

LEVI

(Levi takes aim at Ava)

No! I'm your boyfriend. I can be a your boyfriend. I'm a man goddamn it. I'm not...not that...that... I'm not a f-freak! You're gonna be with me now. I'm a man. I'm normal. I like girls!

QUICK BLACK OUT.

AVA

Levi, wait...

(A shot rings out)

LIGHTS UP SLOWLY - DIM.

(Lights and blocking should match the beginning of the play's "Introduction" except Levi's face is seen and Ava is lying motionless on the ground.)

Levi falls to his knees audibly sobbing - should be the same action as from the beginning of the play.)

LEVI

God? Oh God, I just wanted to be happy. I'm sorry.

(Levi puts the gun in his mouth)

SLOW BLACK OUT.

(Shot rings out)

END SCENE.

ACT 2 - SCENE 7 - VIGIL

(Setting: School auditorium - Day)

LIGHTS UP.

(Entire cast files in leaving flowers, stuffed animals near a memorial set up for Ava and Grayson.)

Last to arrive are Perri and September. They arrive at the memorial at the same time.

Perri acknowledges September and they hold hands as they exit.)

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.

EPILOGUE

(Setting: Same as for Vigil - stage darkened)

LIGHTS UP .

FDM

Once upon a time...

 Once upon a child.
Twin nations, separate, but not equal,
Occupy one space, not so unlike here.
Old discourse anew; behold a sequel!
Human rights: struggles never disappear.

Hateful ideas dissolve civility
And our precious children, they do listen.
To the Fates: succumb to senility
So old grudges die and end division.

Love is Love. Eros says not, "Who loves Who?"
Society: judge not with ignorance;
Death results and youthful bodies accrue
When we accent others' difference.

 Oh,

Please attend. Did you watch this carefully?
Our intent, to mend your hearts perfectly.

(Small pause. FDM walks to candle lit in Act 1.)

A glooming peace this morning with it brings;
The sun, for sorrow, will not show his head:
Go hence, to have more talk of these sad things;
Some shall be pardon'd, and some punished:
For never was a story of more woe
Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.

(FDM blows candle out.)

LIGHTS OUT.

END SCENE.
END ACT II.

END PLAY.

SOURCE NOTES

Extensive research informs *Saving September*. However, as with almost any creative project, it's almost impossible to divorce the author's personal experience from research material.

The author is gay and grew up in a small Kansas town during the 1970s and 1980s. He was bullied and wrote his suicide note when he was 12-years old. He could not safely come out to his family and friends until he was 21-years old. The author also served in the Air Force for 20 years while closeted under the now defunct discriminatory military policy called, "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."

These experiences along with material within the [Bibliography](#) inform *Saving September*.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Saving September is John Jay Boda's first stage play and is based, in part, on his own experience being bullied and writing his suicide note at age 12.

Before graduating with honors from the University of South Florida, St. Petersburg with his Bachelor of Arts in English, Jay served his country for 20 years in the Air Force – [honorably retiring](#) as a Master Sergeant in 2010.

Today, Jay shares his life with his partner, Pedro, and their rescued chocolate Labrador, Guinness.

In 2013, Jay will begin the adventure of graduate school to attain his Master of Fine Arts degree with the ultimate goal to teach and combine his passions for social justice, civic engagement, and theatre. His dream is to see his work touch and transform lives for the better.

If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams,
and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined,
he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours.

Walden, Henry David Thoreau

DOCUMENT NOTES

The [Nelson Poynter Memorial Library](#) on the campus of the [University of South Florida, St. Petersburg](#) (USFSP) houses this document within its digital archive:

The permanent link accessible to the public is:

<http://dspace.nelson.usf.edu/xmlui/handle/10806/4612>

Snell House, home to the USFSP [Honors Program](#) maintains a bound hard copy of *Saving September*.

The electronic document takes advantage of [hypertext](#) as a way to include more context and information that may be “unpacked” at the discretion of the reader. The author attempted to include links only for credible websites that use enduring URLs.

Over time, organizations update their websites, delete and/or change material, or disappear completely. The author apologizes for any links that will inevitably change through out the years. When all else fails, [google it](#).

Pupitza