



THE LIBRARY

BY SCOTT Z. BURNS



DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.



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For CGV, for reasons I can explain.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

It is my hope that this play will serve as a first utterance in a much-needed conversation about narrative. It seeks to explore the region between fact and truth and story; where we all search for things like justice, understanding, and healing. Every story I have ever endeavored to put on the page, including this one, eventually undergoes a peculiar kind of division, resulting in two stories: The one presented to the audience, and the one I have lived in the process of getting it there. And it is from this vantage point, within my own narrative, that I would like to thank a good many people who lent their expertise, experience, and moral support for the purposes of this play: Investigator Kate Battan; Dave Cullen; Erica Ellis, PsyD; Oskar Eustis; Craig Finn; Eric Harmon; Marry Ann Hopkins, MD; Alan Jackson; Kathleen Kennedy; Mark Lillienfeld; Frank Marshall; Chloë Grace Moretz; Valeen Schnurr; Dan Siegel, MD; Steven Soderbergh; Mark Subias; Barry Tyerman; Chris Whitcomb; Matthew Wilson; Doug Wright; and a host of friends who came and read and listened over the past few years.

THE LIBRARY was presented by the Public Theater (Oskar Eustis, Artistic Director; Patrick Willingham, Executive Director) in New York City, opening on April 15, 2014. The production was co-developed and supported by the Kennedy/Marshall company. It was directed by Steven Soderbergh; the set design was by Riccardo Hernandez; the costume design was by Gabriel Berry; the lighting design was by David Lander; the sound design was by Darron L. West and M. Florian Staab; and the production stage manager was M. William Shiner. The cast was as follows:

CAITLIN GABRIEL Chloë Grace Moretz
NOLAN GABRIEL..... Michael O’Keefe
ELIZABETH GABRIEL..... Jennifer Westfeldt
DAWN SHERIDAN Lili Taylor
RYAN MAYES..... Daryl Sabara
THE PUBLISHER/
AGENT MURTAUGH David L. Townsend
DETECTIVE WASHBURN Tamara Tunie
FATHER DUNSTON/
SPECIAL MASTER THORNTON Ben Livingston

CHARACTERS

CAITLIN GABRIEL — Sixteen years old. Golden Valley High School sophomore.

NOLAN GABRIEL — Her father.

ELIZABETH GABRIEL — Her mother.

DAWN SHERIDAN — Thirties. Joy Sheridan's mother.

RYAN MAYES — Eighteen years old. Golden Valley High School senior.

MARSHALL BAUER — Twenty-one years old. Golden Valley High School graduate.

NURSE

SURGEON

THE PUBLISHER

DETECTIVE WASHBURN

FATHER DUNSTON

SPECIAL MASTER THORNTON

PLACE

Somewhere in the United States of America.

TIME

The near future.

THE LIBRARY

The stage is dressed as the Golden Valley High School library. There are rows of bookshelves at the sides of the stage and a few tables. Backpacks hang from the backs of chairs and books are scattered around on the floor — some chairs are overturned. There are blood stains on the carpeting.

Upstage center there is a door to a storage room. It is closed. There is a smear of blood across the lower third.

The entire play will take place here in the library. However, with a minimum of propping, at times it will be a suburban home or a church or a police station or a memorial for the dead.

Now, it is an emergency room.

A gurney is rolled to the center of the stage. On it lies a girl we will come to know as Caitlin Gabriel. A surgeon and nurse work on her tented torso. (There is also the option of having the nurse and surgeon only as voices heard over the PA, if the theater has the capability.)

An EKG machine tracks her heartbeat.

NURSE. Caitlin, can you hear me?

SURGEON. Are you seeing this? She's in extremis.

NURSE. Riddled with fragments.

SURGEON. Multiple shotgun blasts to chest and abdomen. Was probably only about ten feet away. (*Nothing from Caitlin.*) I want to see her films! Let's get this shrapnel to pathology. They'll get it to police —

NURSE. Caitlin, honey, talk to me, can you tell me what happened? You were at school today — (*No response.*)

SURGEON. Do we know how long she was down?

NURSE. Paramedics said it was twelve minutes to scoop and transport — eighteen minutes inbound —

SURGEON. How old is she?

NURSE. Sixteen.

SURGEON. A sophomore. Right? Sophomores are sixteen. *(He taps on her chest.)* Pneumothorax on the right — hemothorax on the left. Bullet punctured the lung. Type and cross-match — and get drains in both lungs — *(Her heart rate starts to slow. The dialogue moves faster.)*

NURSE. Can you hear me, Caitlin? Can you move your legs for me?

SURGEON. Do we know any more about what the hell happened over there?

NURSE. Just heard there was a fire and a shooting — three more in triage. *(Still nothing. They are losing her.)*

SURGEON. We need to get that blood back into her ... Large bore saline — *(She flatlines. An urgent beep interrupts the dialogue.)*

NURSE. She's losing consciousness.

SURGEON. I'm gonna intubate her.

NURSE. Can you squeeze my fingers, Caitlin?

SURGEON. We gotta move her. NURSE. Caitlin? Caitlin?

Let's get her to OR — now!

(They roll the gurney off at a pace. Dawn Sheridan enters and steps into the pool of light stage right. She looks out at the audience — for her, it is a TV camera.)

DAWN. Someone at my work — I don't remember who — said that all the parents were supposed to go to the movie theater on Skylar — I guess it was the only place that was big enough to hold all of us. It smelled like popcorn — that was all they could make and they wanted to do something nice. So strange to be at that theater — I've seen so many movies there. Sat in those seats. Reverend Chapman was there with us and we prayed. *(The lights go down on her and up on ... Ryan Mayes. He steps into a pool of light stage left. He also stares at the audience as though it is a broadcast journalist.)*

RYAN. I was in there ... I saw it. My little brother, Ty, texted me around 10:30 to say that he needed the car to go to the dentist after lunch so we had to figure out a place to meet up because I had the keys ... He was on his way to the library to meet me when he was, uh, shot. *(Lights down on Ryan. Up on Dawn.)*

DAWN. I didn't even see the woman when she first walked to the

front of the theater — I was so lost in prayer. She read the names and we listened and I didn't know if I should be wishing to hear mine or not — I couldn't understand if it was a good thing or a bad thing for your name to be called. We had heard that eleven souls were lost. She was going alphabetically and I figured there must be eleven she called for sure ... and then she got to "S." (*Lights down on Dawn and up on Ryan.*)

RYAN. I was talking to Joy Sheridan and Pilar Nunez when Mr. Curtis came in, and he looked, I don't know, really out of it ... I went back to where I was sitting — by the door. Someone said, "Call 9-1-1," so I did. (*The lights switch again.*)

DAWN. I still thought that they were going to take me to her ... I really did. I thought it was a good thing to hear your name called. This is Joy's hat — it was in the car. I thought she might be cold. (*And again they switch.*)

RYAN. I know Joy from WWJD. That's What Would Jesus Do, it's a youth group at New Hope Methodist. There's this prayer — and Joy started saying it as soon as he came in. Like she knew. It goes, "Lord God, You are my strength. Hold my hand in my weakness and teach my heart to fly ... " (*Down on Ryan and up on Dawn.*)

DAWN. Just this morning Joy was reading to me in the kitchen — a book called *Winesburg, Ohio*. I told her that I didn't remember that one from when I went to school. Then I dropped her off on my way to work ... (*Down on Dawn and up on Ryan.*)

RYAN. I didn't know his name was Marshall Bauer until later when I saw it on the news. He shot this kid who was trying to leave and then he kneeled down and wrote something on his forehead. (*Switch.*)

DAWN. Joy gave me a hug and told me, "I love you." I remember that, cuz she didn't say that every morning. (*Switch.*)

RYAN. Then he went over to these two girls — I think he recognized one of them, Caitlin Gabriel, and they started talking. He asked her where the others were hiding and she said, "The A/V closet. They're in the A/V closet." (*Switch.*)

DAWN. Joy's in the library still — on that floor. Her body is anyway. Revered Chapman told me that the rest of her is already so far away. (*The lights switch again.*)

RYAN. I want to ask everyone in America to pray for the families here and to pray that it never happens again. (*Switch.*)

DAWN. Why won't they let us come into the school and take our babies home? (*Switch.*)

RYAN. Some kids make jokes about Satan and stuff and I hope they see now that the Enemy is no joke. (*The lights remain up on both of them.*)

DAWN. One police officer told me she would sit up with them tonight — inside the school — so that they won't be alone. Can you tell me again, what channel are you with?

RYAN. Mayes. M-A-Y-E-S. Ryan Mayes. A senior. (*Black. Lights up on Elizabeth Gabriel. Her daughter Caitlin is asleep in a hospital gown. Her arm is heavily bandaged. An IV hangs above her. Nolan enters.*)

NOLAN. How is she? (*Elizabeth sizes him up. There is considerable tension. They whisper so as not to wake Caitlin — the whispers filling with bad history.*) What?

ELIZABETH. Nadia? Nadia gave you a ride?

NOLAN. Christ, not now. OK?

ELIZABETH. I have to hear that on the news? On the day my daughter was shot.

NOLAN. Liz, someone I worked with gave me a ride because I was too shaken to drive?

ELIZABETH. Nadia.

NOLAN. Look, I just spent an hour with a reporter going over things and there was no mention of Nadia or anyone.

ELIZABETH. (*Sotto.*) Keep your voice down. She needs to sleep. (*He nods, crosses to Caitlin.*) Hope the beer smell doesn't wake her up.

NOLAN. What do you want from me? I am doing everything I can to deal with what is going on out there and I don't really see how you attacking me is going to help her.

ELIZABETH. I wasn't attacking. I was defending.

NOLAN. This Ryan Mayes thing is not going away. It's everywhere. So, I thought it was best if I take this guy from CNN across the street for a drink and try and get ahead of it.

ELIZABETH. What did he say? The reporter.

NOLAN. He asked if the police had made inquiries or issued a warrant.

ELIZABETH. Warrants? Why warrants?

NOLAN. I don't know. Cuz it's out there now. The reporter told me that the police are gonna want to look at her computer — that's what they do in these situations. They already got her phone from her bookbag.

ELIZABETH. Because of Ryan Mayes?

NOLAN. I want to go through her room when we get home. See if she is linked to this Marshall kid.

ELIZABETH. When *we* get home? (*Beat.*) Do I have any say in that? Or, is it just the — (*He walks away from the bed, takes the batteries out of the remote control.*)

NOLAN. Who put these back in there? Christ, Liz. You know what the police said.

ELIZABETH. I didn't do it. (*The batteries fall on the floor. The noise wakes Caitlin.*)

NOLAN. (*To Caitlin.*) Shit, sorry.

ELIZABETH. Baby, how do you feel?

CAITLIN. (*Moves and winces in pain.*) Shot.

NOLAN. A sense of humor. That's a good sign.

CAITLIN. Did the doctor come while I was sleeping?

ELIZABETH. Just the nurse to check on your pain level. What is it?

CAITLIN. I don't know.

ELIZABETH. Seven? Is it still seven?

CAITLIN. Maybe six. What does it have to be for me to go home?

NOLAN. Give yourself a couple more days to get stronger here. Get some healing going on. The doctor said you were awfully close to that shotgun — took the brunt of it.

ELIZABETH. A miracle, they're saying. You're a very strong young woman.

CAITLIN. I was trying to turn on the news, but the TV doesn't work.

NOLAN. You don't need to see that — you saw enough in that school.

CAITLIN. I knew him — Marshall Bauer. Remember? He delivered pizzas for a while. (*Beat.*)

ELIZABETH. You knew him? But not well, right? I mean you knew what he looked like and that's about all ...

NOLAN. You didn't know that monster — nobody did. That's the problem.

CAITLIN. (*Looks at the remote control.*) There's no batteries in the remote.

ELIZABETH. You should sleep anyway. You heal when you sleep.

CAITLIN. How's Laura? I asked one of the nurses about her, but she said not everyone went to the same hospital. Have you seen her parents?

NOLAN. We saw them at the theater they sent us all to, but not since then.

ELIZABETH. They were called away ... with a different group.

CAITLIN. We were hiding together and he came right at us — it smelled so bad. My eyes were burning.

THE LIBRARY

by Scott Z. Burns

4M, 4W (doubling)

After Caitlin Gabriel survives a deadly shooting at her high school, she struggles to tell her story to her parents, the authorities, and anyone who will listen. But there are other narratives that gain purchase in the media and paint her in a different light. Renowned Hollywood screenwriter Scott Z. Burns returns to the stage with this bold and chilling play that asks us to examine our relationship to the truth and the lies that claim to heal us.

“Good luck to the audience member who prefers not to be disturbed ... We’re scared, we’re dazzled, we’re hooked. Partly inspired by the 1999 shootings at Columbine High School in Colorado, THE LIBRARY doesn’t make the mistake of trying to find clear motivations for that crime. Instead, it considers how such events warp and contaminate those who survive them.”

—The New York Times

“The show isn’t concerned with the tragedy itself but with the stories people tell afterward, from he said/she said testimonies to the search for perfect victims ... Some may complain that THE LIBRARY is too emotionally detached, but that’s actually a strength: It’s rare to see a show take a step back so the audience can think.”

—The New York Post

“Scott Z. Burns delivers a smart and probing drama with an aggressive calmness. You’ll leave THE LIBRARY angry for all the right reasons.”

—TheaterMania.com

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