



**WHY TORTURE
IS WRONG, AND
THE PEOPLE
WHO LOVE THEM**

BY CHRISTOPHER DURANG



DRAMATISTS
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Originally Produced at The Public Theater in April 2009,
Oskar Eustis, Artistic Director; Andrew D. Hamington, Executive Director.

In addition, the following acknowledgment must appear in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the Play:

“Dancing in the Dark”

written by Howard Dietz and Arthur Schwartz

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WHY TORTURE IS WRONG, AND THE PEOPLE WHO LOVE THEM received its world premiere at The Public Theater (Oskar Eustis, Artistic Director; Andrew D. Hamingson, Executive Director) in New York City on April 6, 2009. It was directed by Nicholas Martin; the set design was by David Korins; the costume design was by Gabriel Berry; the lighting design was by Ben Stanton; the music was by Mark Bennett; the sound design was by Drew Levy; and the production stage manager was Stephen M. Kaus. The cast was as follows:

FELICITY Laura Benanti
ZAMIR Amir Arison
LUELLA Kristine Nielsen
LEONARD Richard Poe
REVEREND MIKE John Pankow
HILDEGARDE Audrie Neenan
VOICE/NARRATOR David Aaron Baker

CHARACTERS

FELICITY — a perfectly nice young woman of 25 to 34.

ZAMIR — a charismatic but mysterious young man of indeterminate ethnicity; dark-haired, probably Pakistani or Egyptian or Indian. But could look Italian or Greek too. Does not have an accent, sounds American. 25 to 39.

LUELLA — Felicity's mother, sweet, somewhat dazed/befuddled woman. Dresses well. Late 40s to mid-50s.

LEONARD — Felicity's father. Strong-minded, formidable, one hundred percent sure he's right about everything. Late 40s to late 50s.

REVEREND MIKE — a minister who directs porno movies. Late 30s to late 40s. Likable face, bit sexy, mildly debauched feeling like a Mickey Rourke or a Kevin Spacey.

HILDEGARDE — a conservative, old-fashioned woman in her mid-40s to late 50s. Admires Leonard greatly, has a crush on him, though she doesn't think of it that way to herself. A nice, neat hairdo. Maybe a navy blue skirt, a navy blue jacket, a white blouse, and pearls. Ladylike.

VOICE/NARRATOR — age anywhere from late 20s to early 40s. Well-spoken, must make announcements. Also plays Looney Tunes (a hyperactive spy) and the suave Maitre d'. Maitre d' should sing well or pleasantly.

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ACT ONE

Scene 1

A bedroom in a motel. A man and woman asleep in bed. Man is in underwear and T-shirt (or shirtless), and has dark hair. Woman is in a slip. Her name is Felicity.

Felicity wakes first. Wakes up startled. She has NO IDEA where she is. Looks over at the man; he's still asleep. She gasps — she has no idea who he is. She peers closer — no, no idea.

She decides to sneak quietly out of the room. Finds her dress, starts to put it on.

MAN. Hey, how'd you sleep?

FELICITY. Fine. Thank you.

MAN. I was so drunk!

FELICITY. Really. That's too bad. How do you feel now?

MAN. My head hurts, but I'm used to that.

FELICITY. Uh-huh. Was ... was I drunk too?

MAN. Were you drunk too?? (Laughs.)

FELICITY. Yes, that's my question.

MAN. Oh, well I'm just repeating it because ... wow ... you were SO drunk. I mean *Apocalypse Now* kind of drunk. You were dancin'

like crazy, then you'd throw up, then you'd dance like crazy, and you'd throw up again. It was ... kinda hot.

FELICITY. (*Baffled why it's hot.*) Really?

MAN. Well, not the vomit. I may have my kinky side — as you know. (*He looks at her knowingly; she looks blank, and worried.*) But it doesn't include regurgitation. I just meant the crazy abandon of it. That's what was hot.

FELICITY. I see. Well, I'm glad you had a good time. Maybe we'll do it again someday. Do you know where my shoes are? I really should be going.

MAN. Going? I mean ... going?

FELICITY. Well, I have a feeling I may have appointments. My brain isn't working yet, but I think I should get to my apartment.

MAN. Well, usually married people live together, no? (*She stares at him.*)

FELICITY. What do you mean?

MAN. I'm just saying normally married people live together.

FELICITY. (*Screams.*) AAAAAAAAAAAGGGGGHHHHH.

MAN. What's the matter?

FELICITY. Are you saying we got married last night?

MAN. Yeah. In between all the vomiting. You said you never put out unless you got married first. And I thought you were joking, but I decided to call your bluff. And we got married. See ... (*He shows her a ring on his finger.*)

FELICITY. Oh my God. (*Looks at her hand.*) But I don't have a ring.

MAN. We got mugged on the way into the hotel.

FELICITY. Were we hurt?

MAN. I don't remember. I think you need to call and stop your credit cards though.

FELICITY. You mean my bag is gone?

MAN. Yeah, that's what I mean.

FELICITY. Did they take *your* credit cards?

MAN. I don't have any. I'm ... footloose and fancy-free.

FELICITY. Uh-huh. And you don't have any credit cards?

MAN. I don't have good credit. I don't like to pay bills. Plus I think food and electricity and housing should be free.

FELICITY. Do you have a job?

MAN. Um ... well depends what you mean by a job.

FELICITY. I mean do you work and get paid?

MAN. I'm not sure what you mean.

FELICITY. Good God, if we're married, do you have any money? Do I have to earn everything?

MAN. It would be great if you earned everything. I should have asked you last night, but thanks for offering it now.

FELICITY. I'm not offering it, I'm just trying to figure out ...

MAN. Hey. I do stuff. Sometimes I drive a big van in the middle of the night, and I deliver things, and I get paid. Or I get a tip from someone where I can ... you know, score something big. And sometimes I just find money ... under a rock, you know.

FELICITY. Under a rock?

MAN. Yeah I do something for somebody, it's a little dangerous, maybe a little illegal; and they tell me to go to some field and look for a tree by a rock, and underneath the rock there's this envelope with like, you know, a lotta cash.

FELICITY. Oh I'm feeling scared. Am I an alcoholic? Did I have a blackout? Did you give me a date rape drug?

MAN. You mean like penicillin?

FELICITY. No, I mean roofies or something.

MAN. Roofies. (*Laughs.*) Baby, I don't need to give anybody roofies to go to bed with them.

FELICITY. Well ... is there ... paperwork on this marriage?

MAN. I think so. Hold on.

FELICITY. If only I'm dreaming, and I can wake up.

MAN. That's a hurtful thing to say. I have a temper, you know, be careful. (*Goes through a pile of his clothes, finds something underneath.*) Here it is. (*Hands her something folder-like.*)

FELICITY. (*Takes it.*) It's a menu.

MAN. Yeah, the marriage certificate is inside.

FELICITY. (*She opens it.*) Ah. So it is.

MAN. See. I told you.

FELICITY. (*Looks at menu.*) Did we get married at Hooters?

MAN. No. That's where you threw up the first time. But Hooters told us of this minister guy who also makes porno. And he married us.

FELICITY. Also makes porno. I've never met anyone who makes porno.

MAN. Yeah, that's what you said last night. I hope you're not going to repeat yourself a lot in our marriage. That would be a drag.

FELICITY. Well it's obvious we should get this annulled. (*Man*

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by Christopher Durang

4M, 3W

Christopher Durang turns political humor upside down with this raucous and provocative satire about America's growing homeland "insecurity." WHY TORTURE IS WRONG, AND THE PEOPLE WHO LOVE THEM tells the story of a young woman suddenly in crisis: Is her new husband, whom she married when drunk, a terrorist? Or just crazy? Or both? Is her father's hobby of butterfly collecting really a cover for his involvement in a shadow government? Why does her mother enjoy going to the theatre so much? Does she seek mental escape, or is she insane? Honing in on our private terrors both at home and abroad, Durang oddly relieves our fears in this black comedy for an era of yellow, orange and red alerts.

"Christopher Durang, our Poet Laureate of the Absurd, has written a smashing new play."
—New York Observer

"You may laugh yourself silly at this silly symphony whose every movement is a scherzo."
—Bloomberg News

"Is there a living playwright more willing to take on the big-picture questions with such unwavering trust in the power of the truly silly?"
—New York Newsday

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ISBN 978-0-8222-2401-3



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