



TIME STANDS STILL

BY
DONALD MARGULIES



DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.

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TIME STANDS STILL was produced on Broadway
by MTC Productions, Inc.

(Lynne Meadow, Artistic Director; Barry Grove, Executive Producer),
Nelle Nugent, Bud Martin, Wendy Federman, Ted Snowdon, Max Cooper,
Susanne Adamski, Mari Nakachi, Elisabeth Morten/Sharon A. Carr
in association with Jack M. Dagleish and Joseph Sirola.

Originally produced in New York City by the Manhattan Theatre Club,
Lynne Meadow, Artistic Director; Barry Grove, Executive Producer;
by special arrangement with Nelle Nugent/Wendy Federman.

Originally commissioned and produced by the Geffen Playhouse,
Gilbert Cates, Producing Director; Randall Arney, Artistic Director.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In addition to the talented people listed on the credits page who contributed immeasurably to the care and feeding of *TIME STANDS STILL*, I would like to thank Lynsey Addario, Ethan Bronner, Brooke Gladstone, Lori Grinker, Fred Kaplan, Jack Saul, Bruce Shapiro, Lynn Street and Bob Woodruff, all of whom had insightful and inspiring things to say. A special nod of thanks to Elisabet Klason, Björn Lönner, Malin Buska and Michel Riddez, the cast of the Playhouse Teater production in Stockholm, Sweden, where the play had its European premiere on October 2, 2009; the director was Anders Björne.

TIME STANDS STILL was commissioned and given its world premiere by the Geffen Playhouse (Gilbert Cates, Producing Director; Randall Arney, Artistic Director; Susan Barton, Acting Managing Director) in Los Angeles, California, on February 11, 2009. The director was Daniel Sullivan; the set design was by John Lee Beatty; the costume design was by Rita Ryack; the lighting design was by Peter Kaczorowski; the original music was by Peter Golub; the sound design was by Jon Gottlieb; the production stage manager was James T. McDermott; and the stage manager was Jill Gold. The cast was as follows:

SARAH GOODWIN Anna Gunn
JAMES DODD David Harbour
RICHARD EHRLICH Robin Thomas
MANDY BLOOM Alicia Silverstone

TIME STANDS STILL was originally produced in New York City, by the Manhattan Theatre Club (Lynne Meadow, Artistic Director; Barry Grove, Executive Producer), by special arrangement with Nelle Nugent/Wendy Federman, at the Samuel J. Friedman Theatre on January 28, 2010. The direction and design team were the same as in Los Angeles, with the exception of the sound design, which was by Darron L West; the production stage manager was Robert Bennett; and the stage manager was Shanna Spinello. The cast was as follows:

SARAH GOODWIN Laura Linney
JAMES DODD Brian d'Arcy James
RICHARD EHRLICH Eric Bogosian
MANDY BLOOM Alicia Silverstone

After a hiatus, the play resumed performances at the Cort Theatre and opened on October 7, 2010. It was presented by MTC Productions, Inc. (Lynne Meadow, Artistic Director; Barry Grove, Executive Producer), Nelle Nugent, Bud Martin; Wendy Federman, Ted Snowdon, Max Cooper, Susanne Adamski, Mari Nakachi, Elisabeth Morten/Sharon A. Carr; in association with Jack M. Dagleish and Joseph Sirola; Associate Producer Kenneth Teaton. Christina Ricci assumed the role of Mandy; Denise Yaney was the stage manager.

CHARACTERS

SARAH GOODWIN, late 30s – early 40s, a photojournalist

JAMES DODD, late 30s – early 40s, a freelance journalist

RICHARD EHRLICH, 55, a photo editor

MANDY BLOOM, 25, an event planner

SETTING

A loft in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. The present.

The space is raw, unfinished, resourcefully furnished, with nothing slick about it. Its decor reveals a good eye, wide travels, and limited budget. Shelves are crammed with books; foreign graphics, postcards and pictures are push-pinned to the walls. Two bicycles may be stowed. The space is open: cooking, dining, living, sleeping, working; a bathroom and the front door. When the play begins, the house-keeping is wanting; someone left in a hurry.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

I have used a slash [/] to indicate where the next actor is to begin her line; the asterisk [*] cues the actor to continue his line so that it is spoken simultaneously with the dialogue that comes between it.

At the start of the play, Sarah is on crutches. One leg is in a soft cast, an arm is in a sling, and one side of her face is pocked with shrapnel; it is noticeable but by no means is it grotesquely disfiguring.

The action of the play spans about a year during which Sarah gradually recovers from her injuries.

TIME STANDS STILL

ACT ONE

1.

A loft in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn. Winter. Night. The front door is unlocked and opened, casting light from the hallway. James, hauling duffles and camera bags, helps Sarah, on crutches, inside. Both are winded, having climbed the stairs.

JAMES. Almost there ... Wait a minute. Let me get the uh ... *(He turns on the light.)* Atta girl ... Watch / the uh ... [step]

SARAH. I know.

JAMES. How you doing? *(She nods.)* You're doing great.

SARAH. *(Sarcastic.)* Oh, yeah.

JAMES. There you go ... *(He helps her into a chair.)* And ... she's down. The Eagle has landed. *(Exhausted, she nods and manages a smile.)* That wasn't too bad, now was it?

SARAH. Piece a cake.

JAMES. Let's do this again sometime.

SARAH. Let's.

JAMES. Try it with an elevator next time. *(She smiles. A beat.)*

SARAH. *(Momentary alarm.)* Where are my cameras?

JAMES. *(Reassuring.)* They're right here. *(A beat.)* You okay?

SARAH. Thirsty.

JAMES. Water, or uh...?

SARAH. Water would be great.

JAMES. One water, coming up. *(He fills a glass. She removes her stocking cap and we see more clearly the scars on her face. He hands her the glass.)*

SARAH. Thanks. *(He waits for her to drink it all down.)*

JAMES. Okay? *(She nods while drinking.)* More? *(She shakes her head.)*

SARAH. Thank you. *(She gives him her glass.)*

JAMES. Hungry?

SARAH. Do we have anything? *(He looks in the refrigerator.)*

JAMES. Uh ... No. Nothing edible, anyway. *(He inspects containers of food, well past their prime, tosses them in the trash. He sniffs a quart of spoiled milk, reacts to the stench.)* Uch.

SARAH. What. *(He pours the clotted milk down the drain.)*

JAMES. I ran out of here so fast ... I didn't have time to empty the fridge ... *(A take-out container:)* Mmm! Want some six-week-old calamari? I *think* it's calamari, could be linguine. *(He dumps it in the trash.)*

SARAH. Don't worry about that now.

JAMES. *(Re: leftovers wrapped in foil.)* Gonna need dental records to identify *this* one.

SARAH. Jamie, really, just leave it. *(He abandons the task.)*

JAMES. I'll go food shopping in the morning.

SARAH. That's fine.

JAMES. Unless you want me to run down / now ... *

SARAH. No. * Just ... *(She gestures for him to relax. Pause.)*

JAMES. *(An idea.)* Hey how about a nightcap?

SARAH. I'd *love* a nightcap.

JAMES. Should be some scotch ... *(He finds a bottle.)* Yes. *(He pours two glasses. Silence.)*

SARAH. Strange.

JAMES. What.

SARAH. Being here.

JAMES. I bet. *(His cell phone rings.)*

SARAH. I don't want to talk to anybody.

JAMES. *(Looks at his phone.)* It's Richard.

SARAH. Not even Richard.

JAMES. Oh, shit, he wanted me to call when we landed.

SARAH. You've had your hands full. He'll understand; call him in the morning. *(James nods, turns off the phone, hands her the drink.)*

JAMES. Cheers, baby.

SARAH. Cheers. *(They drink. Silence. She thinks of something that makes her laugh.)*

JAMES. What.

SARAH. The cab driver. Just now. What a character! Wasn't he?

TIME STANDS STILL

by Donald Margulies

2M, 2W

TIME STANDS STILL focuses on Sarah and James, a photojournalist and a foreign correspondent trying to find happiness in a world that seems to have gone crazy. Theirs is a partnership based on telling the toughest stories, and together, making a difference. But when their own story takes a sudden turn, the adventurous couple confronts the prospect of a more conventional life.

"Mr. Margulies is gifted at creating complex characters through wholly natural interaction, allowing the emotional layers, the long histories, the hidden kernels of conflict to emerge organically. Throughout, his dialogue crackles with bright wit and intelligence. Although TIME STANDS STILL is deceptively modest, consisting of a handful of conversations among just four characters, the range of feeling it explores is wide and deep."

—The New York Times

"Can you be a dispassionate, uninvolved observer of horrific events, recording them for posterity and still keep a sense of right and wrong, not to mention your sanity? It's one of several questions getting a workout in TIME STANDS STILL ... Insightful writing, the work is smart, stylish, timely and layered with an intriguing seriousness that inspires discussion after the curtain comes down — a rarity these days."

—Associated Press

"Donald Margulies' TIME STANDS STILL compellingly demonstrates what a master playwright can do with great economy and efficiency ... A rare play that encompasses universal issues and personal problems with equal compassionate insight. A splendid theatrical experience culminates in the author's taking no sides and providing no easy answers. What we get is the assiduously impartial, clarifying confrontation of the existential dilemmas that confront all of us."

—Bloomberg News

"A solid play — taut and well-constructed, with hardly a single detail extraneous."

—Time Out New York

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