THE INTERFERENCE

BY LYNDA RADLEY

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For my pal Lisa, and anyone else who answers the phones.
THE INTERFERENCE was first presented by Pepperdine University’s Pepperdine Scotland Exchange at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe on August 3, 2016. It was directed by Cathy Thomas-Grant and produced by Alex Fthenakis; the assistant director was Kylie Owens; the sound design was by Michael John McCarthy; the live sound artist was Katelynn Kutiper; the costume design was by Melanie Watnick; the scenic design was by Brittney Rivera; the lighting design was by Nicholas Connolly; the properties were by Sarah Bond; and the stage manager was Melanie Allen. The original ensemble was as follows:

Sarah Barney
Christopher Bozzini
Will Craig
Dakota Dickerson
Alexandria Garrett
Parker Johnson
Brittany King
Kate Klimist
Katie Lavelle
Caroline Pitts
Brandon Ruiz
Evatt Salinger
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Sincere thanks to Jeff Baker, J.D., Director of Clinical Education and Associate Clinical Professor of Law at Pepperdine, for notes on the early drafts, your own insightful telling of this story, and continuing work in this area. I would like to acknowledge the valuable information provided by Connie Horton, Ph.D., who is the Associate Vice President, Senior Director, Counseling, Health and Wellness at Pepperdine University. Thank you to Paula Dunn, Prevention and Education Worker at Glasgow Rape Crisis, for everything that you and your colleagues do. Thank you to Fiona, Emma, and all at Playwrights’ Studio Scotland for your support. Thanks to Gareth, Janette, JC, and everyone else who watched early runs, and to all the wonderful actors who gave up their time to read early drafts aloud. I must acknowledge the support of all at Pepperdine University who make this exchange possible, including the Friends of the Theatre. My agent Davina Shah and everyone at Macnaughton Lord offered huge support. An exhaustive list of my research and sources would be too long. There are too many cases. However, Jon Krakauer’s Missoula and Kate Harding’s Asking For It helped me identify the patterns. Thanks and love to MJ, Mum, Finn, Barbara, and Bryan. And finally to Cathy, Alex and the original company: it meant so much to work with you.
AUTHOR’S NOTES

On the Text
The play was originally written for a cast of twelve young performers, with everyone other than the actor playing Karen performing multiple roles. It is possible to stage the text with more or fewer performers, though a cast size of less than eight would be challenging. The number of online commentators, newscasters, etc. can be changed to suit the cast size. A number of the roles are not gender specific: where roles are gender specific I have endeavoured to make that clear. Each cast will, I hope, find their own connections within, and path through, the cacophony of voices that make up this text. Above all I believe this play works best when the performers are not afraid to look the audience in the eye.

The play was written for, and developed with, an exceptional young cast and crew from Pepperdine University. I wrote the play, but this was a collaborative process enriched by the contributions, observations, and notes I received from the whole company.

There are a few topical references in the play, such as to *The Good Wife* for example. As the play ages directors should update these references appropriately.

Considering how many people have experienced sexual violence, I would encourage anyone directing this play to take great care of their cast, including making sure they have access to counseling services if required, and that all cast members are given information about how to respond appropriately if someone discloses that they are a victim of rape or sexual assault. Equally, it is important to make sure that your audience is given information on how to access and donate to services that support those affected by the issues in this play.
On Sound
In the first production the sound and music, composed and designed by MJ McCarthy, were controlled and performed live from the center of the stage by a sound operator who essentially became another character within the production. Many other choices are possible, but sound interference and play should, in my opinion, be an essential element of any performance of this play.
CHARACTERS

KAREN HENSHAW, college student
MICHELLE, her friend, also a college student
TOM, a TV sports pundit
JERRY, a TV sports pundit
DETECTIVE O’DELL, a female detective who deals with Karen’s case
ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY, the public prosecutor who deals with Karen’s case
ANOTHER YOUNG WOMAN, a commentator on Karen’s case
ONLINE COMMENTATOR 1, against Karen
ONLINE COMMENTATOR 2, against Karen
ONLINE COMMENTATOR 3, against Karen
ONLINE COMMENTATOR 4, against Karen
ONLINE COMMENTATOR 5, supports Karen
ONLINE COMMENTATOR 6, supports Karen
NEWSCASTER 1–5 (there can be more or fewer and one of these can be doubled with Marcie if helpful)
MARCIE, a legal expert
SMITH’S LAWYER
KAREN’S LAWYER
COACH, a football coach
PANEL MEMBER 1, professor
PANEL MEMBER 2, graduate student
PANEL MEMBER 3, college administrator
PANEL MEMBER 4, undergraduate student
PANEL MEMBER 5, undergraduate student
PANEL MEMBER 6, assistant professor
DONOR, a rich philanthropist
MARKETING PERSON for the university
STUDENT HANDBOOK
REPORTER, the female journalist who takes up Karen’s cause
CULTURAL COMMENTATOR, preferably played by a woman
REPORTER’S FRIEND
ONLINE BANKING PERSON
MODERATOR of an online forum
Karen’s BOYFRIEND
Karen’s DAD
TEAMMATE 1, who may be on Karen’s side
TEAMMATE 2, football player
TEAMMATE 3, football player
CRISIS MANAGER, a PR consultant
CALLER, a young male caller to Tom and Jerry’s sports show
YOUNG PERSONS 1–4, college students discussing the case
OTHER GIRL, a potential ally for Karen

NOTE
Indented text in scenes represent “interference” and the juxtaposition of points of view within a scene.
THE INTERFERENCE

1.

The words in brackets can be played with/obscured as potential elements of sound design. This is a suggestion only. They should not be omitted.

VARIOUS VOICES.
[Stranger]
This kid
[These] young [players] Potential
[Allegation]
Butchered by [the]
Fifteen minutes Seeking
[Allegedly]
[Boys being] The future
[Due] process Drunk
[Persuaded] [Crush on the] star
[Turning it] over
[Sobbing he was] [Holding] you
No
[Not] thinking he did anything [Evidence]
[Not] the kind of falsely accused
character [coaches]
[Team] doubt
Some [girl]
Speak Bitter [Twisted]
[Not comfortable]
He said She said
Truth.

KAREN. (Football commentary. Sound of the crowd.) 3rd and 2
Smith wants to throw
Pressure from the back side
He’s still on his feet
Oh!
And that is a huge block from number 24
Absolutely levels Tyson Boswell
And quarterback Smith lets fly…
The crowd is
JERRY. disgruntled tonight, Tom.
TOM. I’m just going to say it: why this kid, Jerry? At this key moment in his football career
KAREN. he must weigh, what? more than 200 pounds.
NEWSCASTER. You just joining us here is the breaking story that
ONLINE COMMENTATOR 1. she should be ashamed of
ONLINE COMMENTATOR 2. lying bitch
TOM. is what I think we are dealing with here, Jerry.
KAREN. Maybe if I just lie here.
JERRY. But surfacing now, Tom. Right in the middle of the most important season these young players have ever
NEWSCASTER. faced no criminal charges. A gag order was placed by the university on the young
ONLINE COMMENTATOR 2. gold digging
NEWSCASTER. student. But she decided to speak out after an earlier verdict that resulted in expulsion for the quarterback was overturned by
ONLINE COMMENTATOR 1. common sense, man. There’s just no way.
NEWSCASTER. Back after these words from our
ONLINE COMMENTATOR 2. young sluts trying to ruin stars’ careers.

Another Young Woman: listening, flicking between channels, but also reading/typing on her phone or another device.
TOM. Her words could be enough to destroy a guy’s reputation, Jerry.
KAREN. Woke up and someone was on top of me. Not a stranger. This was my friend—

Another Young Woman mutes Karen. Her lips are still moving but we cannot hear what she is saying.
Another Young Woman types.
She presses send. We hear the noise of her phone as she receives replies and further comments. She wanders off, reading the responses to her post and typing some more, absorbed by the social media frenzy.

ONLINE COMMENTATOR 3. Just another girl who wanted to be part of
ONLINE COMMENTATOR 1. butchering our boy by social media.
NEWSCASTER. Culture of entitlement among those
ONLINE COMMENTATOR 3. wanting their fifteen minutes.
NEWSCASTER. Stay tuned for scenes from our next
TOM. college campus assault case.
JERRY. You mean alleged assault, Tom.
ONLINE COMMENTATOR 3. After that Rolling Stone article you can’t believe
PANEL MEMBER 6. a young woman with an excellent record of achievement and scholarship.
ONLINE COMMENTATOR 2. Bitch was giving out free samples.
MICHELLE. My friend
DETECTIVE O’DELL. may be seeking attention
ANOTHER YOUNG WOMAN. was in my class, seemed normal
ONLINE COMMENTATOR 2. has no idea of what’s coming for her. Truth
ANOTHER YOUNG WOMAN. be told most girls would be grateful for a chance with someone like him. Like who does Karen think
ONLINE COMMENTATOR 3. she is a sociopath, just like a serial killer.
ONLINE COMMENTATOR 1. Wants to play the victim.
ANOTHER YOUNG WOMAN. Smith is like a ten, she’s what?
ONLINE COMMENTATOR 1. A solid four.
ONLINE COMMENTATOR 2. Does anyone know where she lives?
Be fun to knock on her
ONLINE COMMENTATOR 3. sleep at night. I hope karma catches up to you real quick.
ANOTHER YOUNG WOMAN. Drag her name through the
DETECTIVE O’DELL. level playing field, but boys will be
ONLINE COMMENTATOR 1. on the lookout for women like this, especially if you are successful, they take no responsibility
MICHELLE. to look after my friend. But she said to me, she said,
we had no reason to be worried
ANOTHER YOUNG WOMAN. because why would he do that,
why would he risk that future that he had pretty much mapped
ONLINE COMMENTATOR 1. out of control. That this girl and
this journalist are allowed to make public
ONLINE COMMENTATOR 3. the police reports on this and
there are just too many inconsistencies. I don’t believe a word
ANOTHER YOUNG WOMAN. she says she’s traumatized. Look,
a lot of girls will tell you that they have been in that situation where
stuff is going on with a guy and they are not that into it. But it’s not
worth making a big deal of because
ONLINE COMMENTATOR 3. if it was really that bad, how come
she looks so composed on the news?
ANOTHER YOUNG WOMAN. I feel like his life could have been
ruined for a misunderstanding.
COACH. I can only tell you about the guy I have coached. And he
is a good guy. An upright guy. A hard worker. Polite kid. Guys like
that, in my experience, do not get
KAREN. (Football commentary.) caught! A great catch by Smith.
And watch this:
The block.
Out of nowhere.
What a block by teammate Colby Peterson
Nobody was expecting that trick play!
THE INTERFERENCE
by Lynda Radley

12 n/s (doubling, flexible casting)

“Allegations. Drunk? He said. She said. Truth.” In a culture of amplified voices and distorted information where student athletes become celebrities, everyone has incentive to bury truth. When a survivor speaks up, can her truth rise above the noise? THE INTERFERENCE is a story for a world in the midst of a tectonic cultural shift that shakes the old patriarchal society to its core.

“Lynda Radley’s script manages to distill a tragically familiar yet original story… a compelling narrative of broken snippets of conversation… [THE INTERFERENCE] capture[s] the essence of the moment in all its rage, its despair and hope. It’s a story that needs to be told.”

—BritishTheatreGuide.info

“…an intelligent, heartfelt show…”

—The Guardian (UK)

“Radley’s text is formidable… both in its powerful narrative structure, and in its ear for the chilling parallels between the brutal, aggressive language of the sports field, and the frightening attitudes to women that often go along with it… brisk, gripping, fiercely intelligent, and tightly focused…”

—The Scotsman (Edinburgh)

“…a damning indictment of a warped establishment protecting its own by any means necessary.”

—The Herald (Scotland)

“…serious, impactful drama… tight, poised and hard hitting… Radley’s intelligent dialogue shows the striking similarity between the lexicons of sport and rape culture… Radley’s writing exhibits a dark humour… there is an astonishing subtlety to the language of the play… [THE INTERFERENCE] adeptly addresses a difficult topic with a grace and thoughtfulness which is exceptional.”

—EdFringeReview.com

“…engrossing… [a] perceptive and compelling piece…”

—The List

ISBN 978-0-8222-3680-1