

# BURNIN' DOWN THE HOUSE!

AN ACTOR'S CREATIVE PROJECT



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BY

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This creative project is submitted in partial fulfillment  
for a  
Master of Fine Arts Degree  
From  
The University of Southern Mississippi

May 2013

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STRIKING  
THE  
MATCH

## About Max Frisch

When Carol Petersen wrote her biography on Max Frisch in 1971, she had this to say: “The Swiss writer Max Frisch is today one of the most highly regarded living writers in the Western world” (6). However, at one point in his career this author of nine novels, three journals, and twelve plays almost gave writing up for good.

Max Rudolf Frisch was born on May 15, 1911 in Hottingen, a suburb of Zurich, Switzerland. His father, Franz Bruno Frisch, was a local architect and real estate broker in Zurich. His mother, Karolina Bettina Wildermuth, was “the daughter of a painter, who had once been the director of an arts and crafts school in Zurich” (Petersen 12). Frisch attended high school in Zurich and in 1930 “passed his final examination at the gymnasium, more for his parents’ sake than for his own” (Petersen 12). It was during this time that Frisch made the decision to become a writer. At the age of 16, Frisch wrote his first play. It was “a domestic comedy, and a play about the conquest of the moon” (Petersen 12) entitled *Steel*. According to Carol Petersen, “With the fine unconcern of youth – he was sixteen at the time – he sent them to Max Reinhardt in Berlin, who returned the manuscripts two months later with detailed criticism and encouraged him to continue writing” (Petersen 12-13).

In 1931, Frisch enrolled in the University of Zurich where he studied German language and literature. Unfortunately, after two years of study, Frisch’s father unexpectedly died. Unable to continue his education because of financial difficulty and because of the need to take care of his widowed mother, Frisch found a job in journalism. This job gave Frisch “the opportunity not only to hone his skills as a writer but also to travel around Europe” (Hart). Frisch did, indeed, use this time as a journalist to continue to write his own material. He

produced two novels during this time. However, in 1937, dissatisfied with the finished products and, according to The Encyclopedia of World Biography “despondent because of a lack of critical notice” Frisch burned everything he had written to that point in his career and vowed never to write again.

After swearing off writing, Frisch turned to the occupation of his father and, with the financial backing of a family friend, enrolled in the Federal Institute of Technology to study architecture. Frisch earned his degree in architecture in 1940. After his graduation, Frisch was called up by the Swiss army because of the outbreak of war in Europe. This enlistment period pushed Frisch to break his vow on never writing again. He began to keep a journal which was published under the title *Blätter aus dem Brotsack (Leaves from a Knapsack)* in 1940.

Frisch’s years serving in the Swiss army during World War II had a great effect on his life and writing. Frisch’s first play *Santa Cruz*, and his first produced play *Now They Sing Again* were shining examples of Frisch’s changing world view. Carrying on through subsequent plays, Frisch began to write about the political issues of the time as he observed them. According to Peter Hutchinson, “from this point on he produced a succession of plays and novels (many of these becoming bestsellers); he also wrote a number of essays and published his diaries” (2). For his writings, Max Frisch received many literary awards.

Max Frisch travelled extensively throughout his career and these travels, like World War II, heavily influenced his writing. However, it was the travels of another playwright, Bertolt Brecht, which was arguably the biggest influence on Frisch’s writings.

## The influence of Bertolt Brecht

Bertolt Brecht is known for many things in the world of theatre. He is, obviously, a very well-known playwright and was the founder of the Berliner Ensemble. But according to Wilson and Goldfarb, "Bertolt Brecht is one of the few dramatists who are as well-known for their theories as for their plays" (408). One theory that Brecht is most well-known for is what is referred to as Epic theatre.

Epic theatre actually began through the work of Erwin Piscator in the 1920's. Piscator coined the phrase "epic theatre" due to the grand scale of the productions which he originated. "Piscator's epic theatre was first and foremost political and was meant to instigate social change" (Wilson and Goldfarb 407). He used many heightened theatrical effects on the stage that had never been used before. This new form of expressionistic theatre, which came to be known as documentary theatre, and the cutting edge new techniques used in these productions "were employed solely to one end: to depict reality in a more exact and authentic manner, to give drama the authority of a documentation of events" (Roose-Evans 66). Piscator not only wanted to point out the wrongs in society, he wanted the audience to become emotionally involved in the production to the point of being informed enough to go out and affect a change in society.

In the 1930's, based on the work of Piscator, Bertolt Brecht began work on his own brand of epic theatre. There were ways in which Brecht's evolution of epic theatre were in agreement with Piscator. Both wanted to present the wrongs of society to the audience in order to affect a change in society and neither one believed "in the autonomous writer or

director” (Roose-Evans 68). Scripts were ever changing based on input during rehearsals.

However, there were ways in which Brecht differed in opinion from Piscator.

In developing his new form of Epic Theatre, Brecht cautioned his actors about using Stanislavski acting techniques. “Brecht felt that in the realistic style of acting the actors put both themselves and the audience into a kind of hypnotic trance” (Brestoff 148). It upset him that the audience would go into a theatre only to be entertained and leave unchanged. “Brecht wanted to stimulate a reaction rather than encourage the kind of acquiescence found in old bourgeois theatre” (Roose-Evans 68) and believed that “plays which ‘carried away’ their spectators were not suitable for the modern age” (Hutchinson 18). Brecht wanted the audience to be emotionally detached from the action onstage and to be constantly aware that they were in a theatre watching a play. He felt that in order for this to happen “a separation between the actor and his role was not only necessary, but needed reinforcement” (Brestoff 148-149).

This effort to emotionally separate the audience from the action onstage has become known as the “alienation effect.” Brecht attempted to use many different techniques “all in an attempt to disrupt the audience’s tendency to fall into a dream” (Brestoff 149). He hoped that by constantly attempting to distance the audience that “he would create a theatre that caused them to think and then incite them to action. Action outside the walls of the theatre space. Action that would change the world itself” (Brestoff 149).

Max Frisch met Bertolt Brecht in 1948. Brecht had been forced by the Nazis to leave Germany in 1933 and had lived in many places all over the world. After World War ended, Brecht began to make his way back to Germany and settled in Zurich for six months. During

this stay in Zurich, Brecht and Frisch developed a close friendship and had many important conversations, many of them “over the preliminary draft of Brecht’s *Short Organon for the Theatre*” (Butler 7). Peter Hutchinson tells us that “Frisch obviously learnt much from their conversations, although he felt intellectually inferior” (17). Frisch admired Brecht not only for the way in which he listened to those around him but, more importantly, for the way in which he questioned those around him and his ever present sense of discovery. Michael Butler says of this relationship that “it was this attitude of critical questioning coupled with an artisan’s down-to-earth approach to the craft of writing that most caught Frisch’s imagination” (7). Frisch took every opportunity while in the company of Bertolt Brecht to develop his own style of drama. Frisch began to employ many “Brechtian devices” in his writings, and particularly in *The Firebugs*. Frisch believed that the audience should have a sense of separation from the story so that they would be able to reflect on what they were watching. In *The Firebugs*, Frisch accomplishes this through his use of the chorus commenting on the action of the play as well as by having Biedermann break away from the story to speak directly to the audience. Frisch doesn’t try to create a realistic setting for the play. And finally Frisch intentionally creates stylized characters which are harder for the audience to identify with. However, while there were similarities in style between these two dramatists, there were some fundamental differences.

One major difference between these two was their beliefs about society. According to Peter Hutchinson, Brecht “tends to see humanity as basically good, forced into evil through the conditions which oppress it. Frisch, on the other hand, seems to see humanity as basically bad” (19). It was this view of humanity which led Frisch to his differing reason for alienating his

audience. While Brecht wanted his audience to instigate social and economic change, it was a much more personal process for Frisch's audience. Frisch never believed that theatre could instigate social change. "Frisch felt the role of drama was to raise questions and thereby stir the consciousness of audience members, who, as individuals, have the power to effect change in their own lives" (Nolan). Frisch also differed from Brecht in writing style. Brecht wrote his plays in "an 'open' form, that is, an episodically structured play with each scene having its own importance and not being dependent on others" (Hutchinson 18). *The Firebugs*, on the other hand, "is rather a traditional play with Brechtian trappings. Frisch's plot structure is certainly orthodox, with one scene leading quite clearly to the next. There is an exposition, complication and climax. There is a certain amount of suspense too, and the author has taken great pains to entertain his spectators through a good number of traditional comic devices" (Hutchinson 19).

In an interview for *The Paris Review*, Frisch sums up his relationship with Brecht and Brecht's influence on him:

First of all, he was the first great writer I knew personally. That makes a difference. He gave me an idea of how serious art-making is, and also how great a part rationalism has in art. He was not a romantic writer. So I had a master. And then I saw truly great theater for the first time, theater that he made first here in Zurich and later in Berlin. He taught me about what we were talking about before, about narrative. That I don't have to show the feelings of the character on stage. I understand his feelings, and I judge his feelings. This distance is what he called alienation. You don't need to make theater or art reproduce normal life (Daynard).

**IGNITING  
THE  
TINDER**

## Character Analysis – Gottlieb Biedermann

*The Firebugs* by Max Frisch

### **Who am I?**

My name is Gottlieb Biedermann. My name is literally translated from the German to mean “God-loving Everyman.” This name is quite ironic considering that not only do I not love God, but think myself higher than God and that I am only concerned with myself and no one else. I am a very wealthy and powerful businessman. I have gained this wealth and power through the sale and development of Hormotone, a hair tonic invented by one of my employees.

My wife, Babette, and I have a marriage that is not necessarily based on love. It is more of a traditional, husband says wife does relationship. Babette is the only person who I would consider to be my equal, and many times I won’t even let that be the case. She appreciates our relationship for the money and prestige it affords and I appreciate the relationship because it is the type of relationship expected for someone of my status. We share a certain joy in our high status and also in the pain suffered by others.

I live in a terrific home which is taken care of by my housekeeper, Anna. Although she lives in the house, she certainly is not a part of my family. She is an employee only.

I am completely self-absorbed. I know that I am better than everyone else and I am not afraid to let everyone know it. I am cold-hearted, cruel and ruthless and will do absolutely anything that I can do to make sure that my high held place in society stays secure.

*Due to the style of the play, having a large mix of realism and non-realistic styles represented, I decided not to create a large backstory for Biedermann. Creating a backstory*

*for a character isn't something that I typically do as a part of my process for any production. I thought it best to base my character simply on what the playwright provided for me in the script and the conversations with the director and cast based on that information provided.*

### **Objectives**

My main objective in the play is to eliminate any potential threat to my wealth, security, well-being or status. I believe that I have earned the wealth and power that I have and that these things should not be taken away from me. I also believe that I must uphold an image of upstanding, moral citizen. I do not want to appear inhuman, but I will not allow anyone to question my authority or endanger my sense of security. It is for this reason that I fire Knechtling. I see Hormotone as a product, not an invention. When Knechtling wants payment of royalties on the sale of this product, I see that as a threat to my financial security. Firing him sends the message that I am in charge and will not be bargained with.

After Knechtling's suicide, I am left with having to deal with the guilt of his death. I also have to deal with two uninvited guests into my home. I suspect that these two guests may be the firebugs that are setting house fires all around the district. I see these two as a threat to my personal well-being. However, I do not want to appear inhuman. In order to eliminate the perceived threat, I endeavor to make these potential enemies my friends. I believe that my friends would never burn down my home. This ensures my safety and the safety of my home and family.

### **Dramatic Action**

As a respected, or feared, businessman, husband, and well-known member of

society, I see it as my responsibility to maintain the status-quo. I must always behave in such a manner that I am able to protect those things which are most important to me. I am cruel and cold-hearted. I am never concerned with who I have to step over or, more specifically, walk through in order to protect my status, wealth, family, well-being and status-quo of society. However, I can also be charming, witty and extremely convincing to achieve my goals.

When it comes to Anna, I look to control her and order her around. She is more often than not the first person that people come into contact with when they visit my home, so I must be sure that she maintains the highest standards of behavior and decorum.

Because of the more traditional and quite mechanical nature of our marriage, I constantly assert authority over Babette. I do not order her about as I do with Anna, although I do have her take care of specific tasks from time to time.

I treat both Mr. and Mrs. Knechtling with a high level of disdain and I dismiss both of them quite harshly. My dismissal of Mr. Knechtling is so cruel in nature that he actually commits suicide.

I find that I have to treat Schmitz and Eisenring somewhat differently and delicately. I suspect that they are the district arsonist and fear that they may burn down my house if I should treat them in the same cold-hearted, inhuman manner that I treat many others who are not of the same class as I am. I feel sure that if I do whatever it takes to befriend these two, then my home will not be burned. I must appease Schmitz and Eisenring in order to protect what is important to me.

Finally I feel like I must challenge the chorus and the chorus leader when confronted about the gasoline in my attic. It never pleases me when others think that they know better

than I do, especially about thing happening in my own home. I also have to persuade them that I am doing what is right and that I know how to handle things in my home. They have to believe, as I do, that if Schmitz and Eisenring are my friends, then they will not burn down my home.

### **Conflicts**

Most of the conflicts that I face are minor conflicts, at least I feel that they are. I am of the opinion that, because of my status and power, I should be able to easily bring people around to my way of thinking, be it through force or charm. There are several of these minor conflicts that I face throughout the course of the play.

First is my conflict with Knectling. He feels that because he “invented” Hormotone hair tonic and it is being sold by my company, he should receive royalty payments. I simply do not see things that way. I view Hormotone as a product. When it becomes evident that Knectling will not be convinced to see thing my way, I fire him.

Next is my conflict with Babette. She feels that Schmitz and Eisenring are firebugs and should be removed from the house. While I have my suspicions that they might be the firebugs, I feel like we must remain hospitable and let them remain our houseguests. I even go so far as to have a special dinner for our guests and endeavor to make them my friends, which is not a term that I use for many people.

I have never encountered anyone or any group that I could not take care of through force. However, throughout the course of this story, I encounter two groups which challenge this and are therefore major conflicts. The first group is Schmitz and Eisenring, or the Firebugs, and the second is the chorus of firemen.

The firebugs are unwelcomed guests into my home who threaten my position of power in a way that I have never experienced before. Not only do they blur the line of class distinction, they very well could be the firebugs that are setting the houses in the district on fire. Actually, I have a very strong suspicion that they are. However, I do not want to believe that they could actually set my house on fire, although I know that it is a distinct possibility. Instead of my usually cruel and cold-hearted way of usually dealing with threats, I instead seek to appease these guests and strive to make them my friends.

The Chorus of Firemen present an altogether different challenge to me. I do not perceive them as a direct threat as do the firebugs, but I see them, rather, as more of a nuisance. They feel that it is their duty to confront me about the happenings in my own home. I know very well better than they do how to handle my unwelcomed guests. It is highly unusual for anyone to offer me unsolicited advice or to even attempt to tell me how to run my affairs. I would usually have such people fired or taken care of in other forceful ways. But, as these are civil servants and not my personal employees, I must rely upon other means to win the battle against them. I turn to cunning to deal with them. I decide to charm them in order to convince them that I am in complete control of the situation.

### **Willpower**

As it happens, I do not have a strong willpower at all. I am actually very cowardly. I always operate under the knowledge that the thing I do will eliminate any threats to me and protect my wealth, well-being, family, and status. However, this knowledge is very faulty. My cruelty towards some and appeasement of others are the things that eventually lead to my demise. If I really wanted to protect those things that are important to me, it should be very easy.

As soon as Schmitz arrived on the scene, I easily could have kicked him out of the house. I could have done like so many others had done: invite him in then call the police. I should have been able to simply force him to leave my home. This would have truly protected everything. By allowing Schmitz to charm his way in and in convincing Babette that he isn't a firebug, that then allows Eisenring to infiltrate my home with his gasoline barrels. This escalation in momentum is something that I am unable to deal with, leading to my demise in the end.

### **Values**

There are many things that I value. The thing that I value above everything else is status. It is very important to me that I always maintain a position of power and authority. I am willing to do whatever it takes, including driving a man to suicide, in order to maintain my high societal status. In order to achieve the level of power that I have, I have acquired many things that I also value.

I value wealth and all of the things that money can buy. It is important to me to possess only items of the highest and finest quality in order to show to everyone that I am rich and powerful. My extensive crystal and silver is a perfect example of this. I would never have my table set for dinner guests unless my very best crystal and silver place settings adorn the lace tablecloth and fine damask napkins that will inevitably be there. It is inconceivable to me that anyone can be in a position of power unless they have the money to get and keep them there.

I value family. I think that it is important here to notice that I say I value family, not that I love family. While I do believe that Babette and I love each other in our own way, I am not above using Babette or our relationship to save myself and maintain my wealth and

status. I do not hesitate to make Babette out to be the villain who will call the police against Schmitz and Eisenring. I value what my association with my wife can do to help me maintain my status level.

Finally, I value the status-quo. It is extremely important to me that everyone know what their status is and that these class distinctions be maintained for the benefit of everyone. I believe that society could not survive without people belonging to different classes. I even tell Eisenring that it is a good thing that there will always be rich people and poor people. I believe that it is right to maintain the status-quo and I will use whatever means necessary to ensure that society doesn't change.

### **Personality Traits**

I am a very powerful man and have worked, if you can call it work, very hard to achieve my level of power. I am a manipulative person. It is easy for me to pretend to like someone and even encourage people when I know that their work will directly benefit me. I am also cruel, ruthless, and uncaring to those who are beneath me. I am always willing to step over or walk through anyone who stands in my way.

Mr. Knectling is a perfect example of someone that I manipulate and then discard. Knectling has invented a hair tonic that has made my company, and more specifically me, a lot of money. I am able to string Knectling along for fourteen years while he works on this hair tonic to make it perfect. As soon as I no longer have a use for Knectling, I dismiss him as unnecessary. I refuse to see him when he comes to my home and even go so far as to tell Anna to tell him to go kill himself, which he does.

I am also humorous and protective, both traits that are directly tied to being cruel and ruthless. When I talk to Babette about Knectling, I find it quite funny that I fired him

after I got what I want from him. But I also fired him to protect what I find important to me, which is my wealth and power.

While I am a manipulative person, I am also easily manipulated. I am so concerned with how I am perceived by the public, that it is easy for others to use that against me. I don't want to appear inhuman to others, and Schmitz and Eisenring are able to take advantage of that.

Lastly, as strange as it may sound, I am a caring person when it comes to my wife. Babette is the only person who can really hold their own against me. She values the same things that I do and is probably the only person with whom I have a real relationship.

### **Complexity**

I would say that I am fully aware of everything that is going on around me. However, there is a big difference in knowing what is going on around you and being willing to accept what is happening. I know that Schmitz and Eisenring are the district arsonists. Pretty much everyone, including Schmitz and Eisenring, tell me that they are the arsonists.

I know that the barrels that they have been moving into my attic are full of gasoline and could ultimately be used to burn down my home. Schmitz and Eisenring tell me very bluntly that the barrels are gasoline. However, I remain in a constant state of denial about the entire situation. This state of denial is of my own doing, of course. I could easily accept, at any time, what Schmitz and Eisenring tell me and have them arrested. But I must always remain in control. I am convinced that if I can befriend these two arsonists, I can change my fate. Even after I have given them the matches and listened to the Ph.D. confirm, again, what they were up to, I still choose to remain in a state of denial. But being in denial about

the situation doesn't mean that I am not fully aware and knowledgeable about what is happening.

### **Relationships**

**Anna** – Anna is my maid. I expect her to do any and everything that I tell her to do without any hesitation. There are times when Anna tries to stand up to me, but I make sure that she knows her place and stays there. I would never see her as my equal.

**Babette** – Babette is my wife. She is probably the only person that I have ever known that I feel is truly equal to me. She is cold-hearted, but not anywhere near my level of cruelty towards others. She has many of the same values that I have. She believes in maintaining the status-quo and keeping everyone in the status level in which they belong. She values money and power and is pleased to have both. However, we do have a relatively conservative, traditional relationship. I am the head of the family and I clearly run the house. Babette may doubt some of the decisions that I make, but she always follows me and does the things that I tell her to do. My relationship with Babette is probably the only real relationship that I have in my life.

**Schmitz and Eisenring** – These two gentlemen are easily able to dupe me into letting them into my home because of my ever-present concern with how people in public might perceive me. I have the feeling that these two men are the arsonists that have been plaguing the district. Because I think that I can personally protect myself, my family, and my property, I plan to make friends out of these potential enemies. I let them stay in my home. I offer to let them use my personal bathroom and I even invite them to dinner. These are things that I would normally never do for those that I know are obviously in a lower class than I am. However, I know that they can hurt me so I strive to put us all on the

same level. It is my hope that that this will keep them from making my home their next target for fire.

**Mrs. Knechtling** – Mrs. Knechtling is so far beneath me that I really do not have time to deal with her. I am busy readying my home for a dinner with Schmitz and Eisenring that must go well. The longer she hangs around demanding my time, the less likely it is that my dinner will go well. Her husband may be dead, but I cannot be concerned with that. It is best that she take my advice and talk to my lawyer.

**Chorus and Leader** – These citizens of the town confront me about what is going on in my home. Unlike with Mrs. Knechtling, I must take the time to deal with them. I must convince them that I am in control and that I know what I am doing. I take the time to try and convince them that I have everything well in hand and that, at any time, I can get rid of my visitors and that they really shouldn't worry. I even get most of them on my side at one point. Ultimately, it really isn't about what they think. I know that I have a plan and that my plan will work. The chorus can try to interfere, but I won't let them.

**Ph.D.** – I do not have much interaction with the Ph.D. but the little time I do spend with him is important. The information that he gives to me about the true nature behind the reason of the fires serves to further prove to me that there is really nothing I could have done to stop them.

**The Audience (The Citizens of the Town)** – It is important to me to have the audience on my side. Usually, what the citizens of the town think would not matter to me. However, because of the extenuating circumstances and because I do not want to appear inhuman to them, I try very hard to get them on my side. I speak directly to them when I

am confronted by the chorus. It is my intent to convince them of the importance of helping their fellow man.

Later, when in my cellar, I treat the citizens of the town as close advisors. I ask them what they would have done were they faced with the situation in which I find myself. I want them to really think about that so that I can win them over to my side and be truly justified in my actions.

*I see myself as the protagonist of the play. I base this on the definition of the protagonist as the person who is most effected by the action of the play or the person who stands to lose the most because of the action of the play. While I recognized both Eisenring and Schmitz as individuals with individual, dynamic personal characteristics, I perceived the threat coming from them to be the same...they both sought to burn down my home and destroy me personally. It is because I saw the threat coming from them as being the same that I chose to deal with them in a common way. I looked to befriend and appease them in hopes that I could nullify the threat. I saw Schmitz as more of the physical threat and simply looked to fulfill his requests. I felt that I could appeal to Eisenring, however, on a more intellectual level because he was more educated. Still, these were merely tactics chosen in an attempt to achieve that overarching goal of appeasement and survival.*

## **The Creation of Biedermann**

When *The Firebugs* was selected for our 2012-13 theatre season, I wasn't exactly sure what I thought and it certainly wasn't my first choice immediately for my creative project. I didn't know the show at all and the only thing I knew of Max Frisch was his play *Andorra*, and I didn't even make the connection at first that this was the same playwright. However, once I read the play, I knew that there was just something about it. It was unlike any play I had ever done before and I knew instantly upon reading it that, should it be assigned for my creative project, I would certainly be challenged.

After reading the play several times, the role of Biedermann quickly became my first choice of creative project role. I found Biedermann to be dynamic, funny, sadistic, and completely challenging. It was without hesitation that, when asked by my committee what my creative project choices were, that I requested to play Biedermann and I was fortunate enough to be granted my first choice.

Once I was informed that I would be playing Biedermann, I really had to buckle down and figure out who this guy was and what made him tick. As I said earlier, I had absolutely no base of knowledge for this show. I had never seen or even read the show before it was selected. I knew that historical research needed to be my first step. It was important that I really find out who Max Frisch was and why he wrote this play. I needed to know what his influences were. It was also important to me to get a historical context for the time in which the play was written. Finally, I needed to know, in depth, who the characters are. The information that I was able to gather from this initial research was extremely helpful. Besides the print sources from our library which helped to inform me of

the history behind the play and playwright, I also found several online articles which gave me some really great critical information about the play and the characters.

One invaluable resource on this project was our dramaturg, Rachael Swartz. Rachael is a second year MFA Acting student and just happens to speak fluent German. As a part of her German studies in Undergraduate school, Rachael studied *The Firebugs* extensively in its original German form. Her notes provided me with much insight into the world of the play. She was able to provide some clear translations for lines which may have been translated strangely or completely omitted from our chosen translation. She also had great information about the decorum that these characters would operate under considering when and where this play was written. (See appendix for Dramaturg Notes)

With all of this research in mind, I was able to begin to make some very specific, informed choices about Biedermann and the world in which he exists.

Once we began rehearsals, it was time to layer physical and vocal choices on top of the historical context I had received from my initial research. I knew from the beginning that I was going to rely on my prior and ongoing Lessac training to inform my vocal and physical choices. In his book *The Use and Training of the Human Voice*, Arthur Lessac tells us that “the craft of acting also demands an integration and instinctive coordination of voice, movement, awareness, emotion, and perception with the spoken language”(3). He calls this form of training “kinesensic training – an intrinsic sensing process where energy qualities are physically felt and perceived, then tuned and used for creative expression”(3).

The Lessac training method involves the use of three vocal energies or NRG’s and three body NRG’s. The three vocal NRG’s are consonant, tonal, and structural and the three body NRG’s are buoyancy, potency, and radiancy. In developing the vocal life for

Biedermann, I wanted to lead with consonant NRG being supported by tonal and structural NRG's. I made this choice specifically based on conversations with the director about the concept for the show and after having seen the design presentations. I think that this was an important choice to show Biedermann's place in society and how, as his world begins to unravel, his vocal life also changes.

I also wanted to integrate Lessac's body NRG's with my vocal choices. Status is very important for Biedermann and this status shifts quite often during the course of the play. I knew that I wanted to use potency and buoyancy for the times when I was at a high status, and then allow radiancy to lead when I was either low status or struggling to regain high status.

A majority of these choices came during the rehearsal process, particularly my physical choices. Two elements in rehearsals really helped me to inform my physical choices. These elements were my rehearsal clothing and my rehearsal cigar. I actually wore my own dress shirt with the collar simply turned up instead of turned down. The first time I wore my clothes like that and picked up my cigar, I was able instantly to find the physical life for Biedermann. I found myself walking very upright with a centered lead. I began to use my cigar as an extension of my arm and found myself using the cigar to help relate my emotional state of being. As I added different body NRG's onto my base physical state, I was able to easily find my status shifts. These physical changes led to vocal changes which I believe enhanced who Biedermann was and made him really come to life for me.

As a result of the integration of Lessac's body and vocal NRG's into my character development, I found that in times when Biedermann was in control, or felt that he was in control, of any situation, I walked in a way that was very upright and direct with little

wasted movement and with much stored energy which was used at times of extreme anger. The way that I talked in this same situation was very sharp, making sure to clearly enunciate all consonants, especially at the ends of words.

As the world around Biedermann collapsed and he began to lose control, I walked and moved with more nervousness and less structure. I allowed consonants to become less pronounced and sharp while not losing volume or clarity.

The final result of integrating my research, notes from the dramaturg, and Lessac training into the creation of Biedermann was a character that was fully integrated and developed, and a character whose collapse was physically and vocally clear from beginning to end.

ADDING

FUEL

TO THE

FIRE

- I. Time
  - A. Time of Composition
    1. First appeared as a sketch titled *Burleske (Farce)* in Max Frisch's *Tagebuch 1946-1949 (Diary 1946-1949)*.
    2. First produced as a radio play in 1953 under the title *Biedermann und die Brandstifter*.
    3. Rewritten for the stage and first performed at the Schauspielhaus in Zurich, Switzerland on March 29, 1958.
    4. First published under the name *Biedermann und die Brandstifter* in 1958.
    5. "An English-language edition of the play was printed by Hill and Wang in 1963" (Hart).
  - B. Time of the Action – In his essay "The Firebugs," John W. Fiero says that "The long one-act play utilizes techniques that help convey a sense of that timelessness. Although the setting is modern, the action is not localized to any specific time or place" (Fiero).
  
- II. Dramatic Time – The Present
  - A. Scene 1 – Between 8pm and 9pm on Thursday evening (Day 1)
  - B. Scene 2
    1. Begins on Thursday evening immediately following Scene 1
    2. Ends at 4am Friday morning (Day 2)
  - C. Scene 3
    1. Begins on Friday morning a few hours after Scene 2
    2. Ends on Friday evening
  - D. Scene 4 – Saturday morning (Day 3)
  - E. Scene 5 – Saturday afternoon a few hours after Scene 4
  - F. Scene 6 – Saturday evening – around 7pm
  - G. Scene 7 – Saturday evening immediately following Scene 6
  - H. Scene 8 – Saturday evening immediately following Scene 7
  
- III. Place
  - A. Geographical Locale – There is no geographical location given for the play. According to John Fiero "The details about things mentioned or used in the play are all generic, found everywhere, and, therefore, nowhere in particular" (Fiero). However, Frisch does give us a couple of small clues to a general location.
    1. As Schmitz is demonstrating his acting technique as a ghost in Scene 8, Babette comments that "We saw that in Salzburg" (Frisch 77). This would lead me to believe that the location is somewhere in Europe in or near Austria.
    2. The next general clue comes from Schmitz. While having breakfast with Babette, he mentions that everything is "State-controlled" (Frisch 26). Wherever this place is, it seems that it is run by a sort of socialist government.
  - B. Specific Locale – There are three specific locales for this play
    1. The living room of the Biedermann home

2. The attic of the Biedermann home
3. The sidewalk just outside of the Biedermann home

#### IV. Society

##### A. Family –

1. Gottlieb and Babette Biedermann – a married couple. Presumably they have no children, as none are ever mentioned.
2. Schmitz – speaks about his mother who died when he was seven years old and his father who was a coal miner.
3. Eisenring – talks briefly about his father who wanted him to become a lawyer.
4. Mrs. Knechtling – she is the widow of Knechtling, the inventor of Hormotone. She is sick and has three children to take care of on her own after her husband commits suicide.

##### B. Friendships

1. Eisenring and Schmitz – have known each other since childhood and are united in setting fires and destroying society.
2. Biedermann and the firebugs – this is only a friendship in the eyes of Biedermann and only in the sense that it will keep them from burning his house down.
3. The chorus and the audience – the chorus refers to themselves as “friends of the friendly town” (Frisch 3).

##### C. Occupational Groups (Principle Characters)

1. Biedermann is a wealthy businessman whose company is the maker of a fraudulent hair tonic called Hormitone.
2. Babette has no known occupation.
3. Anna is a maid in the Biedermann home.
4. Schmitz is a former wrestler and ex-convict. He claims that he is now homeless.
5. Eisenring is the former Headwaiter at the Metropol Restaurant. He has just recently been released from jail and is now homeless.
6. The chorus and chorus leader are firefighters and guardians of the city.

##### D. Status Groups – As I see it, there are three status or class groups present in this play: High Class, Working Class, and Low Class.

1. High Class – Gottlieb and Babette Biedermann
2. Working Class – Anna, Chorus, Ph.D, Policeman, Mrs. Knechtling
3. Low Class – Eisenring and Schmitz
4. These class distinctions do not always reflect the status of the characters. Eisenring and Schmitz often have a higher status than Biedermann and Babette. Mrs. Knechtling is low status to Anna when brought into the house and told to wait for Biedermann. The status of the characters often shift within and outside of the class distinctions

##### E. Social Standards – As members of different status and class groups, each character or group of characters is expected to behave in a certain manner appropriate to their status. However, just as the status of some characters in

the play shift within and outside of their class distinctions, they also sometimes behave in a manner which is inconsistent with their status group.

1. Gottlieb and Babette, being members of the high status group, are expected to behave in a manner which exhibits power and control.
2. The members of the working class are expected to either serve society, as in the case of the chorus, the Ph.D, and the policeman, or they are expected to serve their employers, as in the case of Anna and, in an indirect manner, Mrs. Knechtling.
3. There are not many behavioral expectations placed on those in the low status group. They are expected to be respectful of those who are in a higher social class than they are. Eisenring and Schmitz always behave in a respectful manner while at the same time cunningly playing a higher status than some of those who belong to a higher social class than they do.

- V. Economics – When considering the structure of the status groups in the play, economics play a vital role. The class warfare that takes place during the course of the play is essentially an economic issue.

Schmitz tells us that, within the world of the play, everything is “State-controlled” (Frisch 26). In a state-controlled economy, the government operates under the assumption that “the market does not work in the best interest of the people, and that in order for social and national objectives to be met a central authority needs to make decisions” (Investopedia). The government is in control of what and how goods are produced. The theory behind this is that having the government in control of the economy will create more economic equality among the citizens. In reality, however, this policy only perpetuates and often exaggerates the problem of class inequality.

Biedermann has used this economic system to his advantage. Biedermann is a wealthy businessman. He has amassed great personal wealth and power, very often at the personal detriment of others. Biedermann’s goal is to maintain the status-quo. He strongly believes that there should be distinctions between the classes and that is why he reacts so explosively to those who try to rise above their station. Biedermann believes that if those in the lower classes become economically independent, then that would raise their social status thereby making him less important.

He specifically uses this power to obtain wealth through the product Hormotone, which is the invention of his associate Knechtling. When Knechtling attempts to pursue royalties for this invention, he is immediately fired by Biedermann. Knechtling is used by Biedermann as an example to anyone who tries to get ahead socially or economically. This ultimately leads to Knechtling’s suicide.

However, beliefs are often set aside when personal safety is compromised. Biedermann goes out of his way to try and befriend those that he would normally ignore or denigrate because he knows that they have the very real potential to hurt him, a situation that Biedermann has never been in before. In Scene Five, Biedermann has a long conversation about not believing in class

differences and how the two of them were virtually equals. This goes against all of Biedermann's social and economic beliefs. Biedermann goes even further to compromise his beliefs when he tells Anna to make sure that the setup for dinner is simple and shows no class differences.

The final showing of Biedermann completely abandoning his social and economic standards is the dinner scene itself. Biedermann goes out of his way to make Schmitz and Eisenring feel like his equals. He offers them cigars, serves them wine, laughs at their jokes, and even refers to both of them by their first names.

It is this inequality of the social classes and economic status of society that is a prime factor for why the firebugs are setting fires in the first place.

- VI. Intellect and Culture (Principle Characters) – While there is no mention of formal education to speak of in the play, there are things that we can infer about the intellect of the characters in the play based on their behavior, things that they say, and their social status.
- A. Biedermann, being a wealthy businessman, probably has a great deal of formal education. His intellect has expanded into figuring out ways to take advantage of others for his own personal gain. This intellect does not, however, translate into the wisdom needed to acknowledge what is happening in his own house concerning the firebugs or how to stop it properly.
  - B. Babette gives no indication in behavior as to her level of education.
  - C. Anna probably was not educated very well. While not unintelligent, her station in life, serving as a maid to the Biedermann family, does not provide her the opportunity to educate herself further.
  - D. Schmitz has some formal education. We know this because when telling us how he is acquainted with Willi, he tells us “we were schoolmates together” (Frisch 33). However, this education as a child was limited. Because of this limited education and his upbringing after the death of his mother, he has become very street smart and wise as to how the world works. He is adept at using the story of his childhood to get the things that he wants.
  - E. Eisenring, while not as educated as Biedermann or certainly the Ph.D., seems to have more formal education than either Anna or Schmitz. His higher level of education is evident from the fact that he says “I could have gone to college; my father wanted me to be a lawyer...” (Frisch 49). He is very savvy and brilliant at being the mastermind behind all of the arson plans. He boldly shows his intelligence by hiding the truth in plain sight and not denying his plans to burn down Biedermann's home.
  - F. The Ph.D., by virtue of his title, is obviously very educated. He is a member of the firebugs, but not an active member. He believes in the “revolutionary ideology” (Cunliffe) behind the fires that are being set. However, once he realizes that this original purpose for the fires has been abandoned for simple pyromania, he becomes unable to stop them and tries to distance himself from these beliefs.

VII. Spirituality – There are many parallels and allusions in the play that cannot be ignored. The first parallel is the destruction of the world of the play by fire. In the bible, we are told the story of Lot who is told by God to leave Sodom and Gomorrah because of how wicked a place it had become. The book of Luke says “but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom fire and sulphur rained from heaven and destroyed them all – so will it be on the day when the Son of man is revealed” (Nelson 75). We are told plainly that the earth, like Biedermann’s world, will be destroyed by fire.

Next is the presence of God-like figures in the play. First is the chorus. The Christian faith accepts God as omnipresent. He is always with us, watching over us, guiding us and protecting us. The chorus, in much the same way, tells us that they are the “guardians of the city” (Frisch 3). While the citizens of the town sleep, they keep a constant vigil. The chorus says that they watch over the citizens “lest hidden danger come to light too late” (Frisch 3).

The other set of god-like figures in the play are the firebugs themselves, especially when looked at in the context of the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. God saw Sodom and Gomorrah as evil and determined that it should be destroyed. The only people who escaped the destruction was Abraham and his family, who God deemed to be righteous in his eyes. In much the same way, Schmitz and Eisenring have determined society to be beyond saving and must be destroyed. They have taken a God-like role to be judge, jury, and executioners. In their point of view, unlike in the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, they don’t determine anyone to be worth saving.

The use of fire for destruction in the play is important when drawing biblical parallels. As we have seen, Sodom and Gomorrah was destroyed by fire and we are told that the earth, one day, will be destroyed in the same way. But this is not the only reference to fire mentioned in the bible when referring to cleansing the earth of evil and wrong-doing. The book of Revelation says “Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire; and if any one’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire” (Nelson 236). It goes further and gets more specific by saying “but as for the cowardly, the faithless, the polluted, as for murderers, fornicators, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their lot shall be in the lake that burns with fire and sulphur, which is the second death” (Nelson 236-237).

There are two references to the Last Supper in the play. First is shortly after the arrival of Schmitz in Biedermann’s home. At the last supper between Christ and his disciples, Jesus offers bread and wine as a symbol of his body and blood to be remembered after his death. When Biedermann reluctantly offers hospitality to Schmitz he offers him bread and wine. The second reference to the last supper in the play is the last scene of the play when dinner is taking place. Just as Jesus revealed what was to happen to him to his disciples, so do Schmitz and Eisenring reveal and commence their final plan for Biedermann and society.

Aside from the biblical references and parallels, spirituality is used throughout the play as a way to manipulate or attempt to manipulate characters. This use of spirituality as a tool for manipulation is not done because any of the characters believe in God or are particularly spiritual. It is just the opposite, in

fact. Schmitz is fond of the phrase “God will reward you” (Frisch 14, 25, 26) and uses it to earn favor with Biedermann and Babette. Schmitz also comments that the fires referred to in the newspapers are “God’s will” (Frisch 13).

In conversation with Eisenring, and throughout the play, Biedermann invokes the name of heaven several times and tries to convince Eisenring that they are equal because they are “the creation of one creator” (Frisch 50).

Finally, in an attempt to keep Schmitz and Eisenring from setting fire to his home and convince them that he is their friend, Biedermann yells out to them “Gentlemen, I swear to you by all that’s holy” (Frisch 81) to which Schmitz replies “Willi doesn’t believe in anything holy, Mr. Biedermann. Any more than you do. You’ll waste your time swearing” (Frisch 81).

- VIII. The World of the Play – The world in which the characters live and operate is a world in which actions and inactions of characters lead to the ultimate destruction of said world. It is a world in which a large, state-controlled government dictates the lives of the masses which leads to a very real separation between social classes. Biedermann’s greed and lack of care for his fellow man leads to the suicide of a colleague. His inability to acknowledge the events happening in his own home lead to its destruction and his demise. The refusal of the Ph.D. to turn in Eisenring and Schmitz, knowing well what they are doing and why, allows them to continue their destructive behavior. Biedermann and Babette’s refusal to throw Schmitz out when he arrives, given their concerns that he could be a firebug, allows for the arrival of Eisenring and the destruction of the Biedermann house. This is a world that, seemingly because of fate, is destined to burn to the ground taking everyone with it.

*In talking with Monica about the type of government represented in the play, we came to the conclusion that there isn’t one specific type of “state-controlled government” represented. Max Frisch wrote generalities into the play for a specific reason. The same reason why no specific type of government is represented is the same reason why no specific geographic location is mentioned. Frisch wanted this play to be timeless. He was aware of the phenomenon of time repeating itself. He knew that the issues that were being faced by the world in the time of WWII and just afterwards were issues that had been faced before and would be faced again. If he wrote in specific about Nazism or Fascism, then someone from a country with a different form of government could easily dismiss the situations as not being applicable to them, thus perpetuating the idea of appeasement, which was important to my character choices. By stating simply “state-controlled” government, the firebugs could represent anyone fighting against any form of “big” government at any time in history. In making this decision for our production to remain general about this, I feel that I was still able to make specific character choices based on the knowledge that I was an agent of this “state-controlled” government and I found myself under siege by a couple of unwanted guests to my home.*

## Plot Structure

### *The Firebugs* by Max Frisch

1. **Action Statement** – To Protect what is mine, whatever it takes.
2. **Point of Attack** – *The Firebugs* has a late point of attack. The story begins after several fires have been set in this town. It is covered almost daily in the newspapers and the citizens of the town, especially Biedermann, have openly expressed their concern on the situation and what must be done. Also, prior to the play's beginning action, Biedermann has fired Mr. Knechtling and stolen his hair tonic invention. This action plays in later with Knechtling's suicide and Biedermann's feelings of guilt.
3. **Inciting Action** – The world of the play, or more specifically Biedermann's home and Biedermann himself are thrown into a world of chaos with the arrival of an unwelcomed stranger. When Schmitz arrives at Biedermann's home, Biedermann instructs his maid, Anna, to kick him out. When she explains that she cannot, he instructs her to have him wait in the hall. Biedermann expect to deal with this unexpected guest when it is convenient for him and own his own terms. It is when Schmitz physically appears in Biedermann's living room without invitation that Biedermann is taken out of his element and loses his higher status. Schmitz cleverly disguises that he has the upper hand and plays the lower status in order to dupe Biedermann. From this point on, Biedermann is forced to face his failures, greed, shortcomings, and guilt and his world crumbles around him.
4. **Complications or Obstacles** – The major obstacle in this play seem to be virtually everyone's unwillingness to do or say anything about the impending dangers facing them. Both Biedermann and Babette have ample opportunity to make Schmitz leave

their home. Instead, they allow themselves to be duped into letting him stay. That they now have an unwelcomed guest in their home is further complicated by the arrival of his friend who also becomes an uninvited guest in their home. Another complication is the suicide of Knechtling. If Biedermann had any real intention of kicking Schmitz and Eisenring out, that goes away with this event. The guilt that he feels over this, which he never acknowledges aloud, makes him even more determined to seem inhuman. He actively seeks to befriend Schmitz and Eisenring which makes him even more blind to the perils that he will certainly face. The Ph.D. could easily have stopped this whole thing well before the play began. He has been observing the activity of the firebugs for some time but does and says nothing to stop them. He only acknowledges what he has been doing when it is too late.

5. **Obligatory scene** – The obligatory scene in *The Firebugs* occurs towards the end when Biedermann hands the matches to Schmitz and Eisenring. Throughout the play we learn things about Biedermann and have seen him behave in a manner which would undoubtedly lead to his demise. It is handing over the matches that is the physical manifestation of Biedermann's undoing that the audience has expected from very early on in the play.
6. **Crises** – The major crisis for Biedermann occurs just before he gives the matches to Schmitz and Eisenring. Although Biedermann is still trying to convince himself that the firebugs won't burn down his home, he ultimately knows that it is going to happen. The more Biedermann comes to this realization, the harder he tries to convince Schmitz and Eisenring to stay and the more adamant he is to make

them his friends. He knows that if they leave his home, his world will come to an end.

7. **Climax** – The climax occurs just as Schmitz and Eisenring exit and the Ph.D. addresses Biedermann and the audience. At this point, the Ph.D. reveals to us his involvement in the arsons and what has motivated Schmitz and Eisenring to commit them. We see the lights changing to red as the town begins to burn, we hear sirens of the fire trucks, the warning bells of the town, dogs howling, and flames crackling. This noise is so deafening that the dialogue on stage can no longer be heard. The entire town has begun to go up in flames and there is nothing that can be done.
8. **Resolution** – In the end, we see Biedermann and Babette standing in their home observing what is going on around them. Biedermann, still in a state of denial, admits that he has given matches to Schmitz and Eisenring saying “If they really were firebugs, do you think they wouldn’t have matches?” (Frisch 84). The chorus then addresses the audience confirming the disaster that is happening all around them as we hear the explosions go off all around them.

**FANNING  
THE  
FLAMES**

## **The use of charts in Script Analysis**

David Grote tells us in his book *Script Analysis* that “knowing more about a script before we produce it will mean less pain for all participants and more freedom for each individual to concentrate on the arts and crafts of the production” (v). The more we know about a script and the more ways we have in analyzing the script, the more we are able to learn and the better we are able to apply that knowledge. Grote has a very distinct method of script analysis. He recognizes that although all members of a production are looking at the same script and “we all need to ask similar questions of the script, each participant will use the answers differently” (v).

In order to find the the answers to the questions that we all must ask of a script, Grote breaks his method of analysis into three different approaches. Within each approach, he “asks a basic question, defines terms generally used to discuss that question, and explains how those terms relate to the script or play indicated within the script” (vi). Grote then applies the answers to the questions posed to a visual representation so that we are able to look at strong, script based answers that show the journey of the characters and help us to “avoid tempting but misleading shortcuts and distractions” (vi).

While Grote’s method of analysis was not my primary method of analysis for this production, there were a couple of the charts that he discusses that I found to be very useful to me. The first is the French Scene Chart.

According to Grote, a French scene is “a section of the script that begins with a character’s entrance and ends when either another character enters or a character on stage exits” (235). This chart is basically a cheat sheet which shows, at a quick glance, where these entrances and exits occur. I wanted to use this chart because I knew that I was going

to have very little time when I was not on stage and I wanted to know where these times occurred and how that time would be used. I had a couple of quick changes that needed to be planned, one of them a really quick change. I also knew that this show would be vocally and physically exhausting. I needed to know if I would have an opportunity during the course of the show to just have a moment of repose, a moment when I could just grab a little water or hot tea, collect my thoughts, and refuel myself for the remainder of the show.

The second chart that I found particularly useful was the Audience Expectation/Identification Chart. As an actor preparing the role of someone who is a less than savory person, I wanted to know if there were any times during the course of the play where the audience might identify with me. I firmly believe that any character, no matter how many flaws they have or how terrible of a person they might be, must have some redeemable qualities about them. Through the creation of this chart, I was able to discover those moments where I believed the audience might identify with Biedermann and this discovery helped to inform my acting choices for those moments.

French Scene Chart  
*The Firebugs* by Max Frisch

Scene One	1	2
Biedermann	X	
Chorus/Leader	X	X

1. Top of Scene – p. 3
2. Biedermann exits (...It's disgusting!) – p. 3

Scene Two	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Biedermann	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X					
Anna	X		X		X		X		X						
Schmitz		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X			
Babette									X		X			X	
Chorus/Leader													X	X	X

1. Top of Scene – p. 7
2. Schmitz enters/Anna exits – p. 8
3. Anna enters (...I knew you didn't mean it.) – p. 9
4. Anna exits (If it's no trouble.) – p. 9
5. Anna enters (Nothing but the truth.) – p. 11
6. Anna exits (Excuse me.) – p. 12
7. Anna enters (You think so?) – p. 13
8. Anna exits (...I have a visitor.) – p. 14
9. Biedermann & Schmitz exit/Babette & Anna enter (Excuse me.) – p. 15
10. Babette & Anna exit/Biedermann & Schmitz enter (...scared me to death.) – p. 15
11. Biedermann exits/Babette enters (Sh!!) – p. 15
12. Babette exits (...lie awake half the night.) – p. 16
13. Schmitz turns off the attic light – p. 16
14. Babette enters (The wife appears.) – p. 17
15. Babette exits (Four o'clock) – p. 17

Scene Three	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Biedermann	X	X							
Anna				X		X		X	
Schmitz		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Babette	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Chorus/Leader									X

1. Top of Scene – p. 21
2. Schmitz enters (I have to see my lawyer.) – p. 21
3. Biedermann exits (Good luck, Sepp.) – p. 22
4. Anna enters (I feel right at home, madam.) – p. 23

5. Anna exits (Morning.) – p. 23
6. Anna enters (Sepp! – But Sepp –) – p. 25
7. Anna exits (Anything else you'd like) – p. 25
8. Anna enters (Headwaiter.) – p. 26
9. Chorus enters (My friend Willi!) – p. 27

Scene Four	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Biedermann		X		X	X	X			X	X	X	
Anna			X		X							
Schmitz	X	X		X	X	X	X					
Babette										X		
Eisenring	X	X			X	X	X					
Policeman			X	X		X						
Chorus/Leader								X	X	X	X	X

1. Top of scene – p. 31
2. Biedermann enters (vocal) (It's morning. Bedtime!) – p. 31
3. Anna/Policeman enter (Simply speechless.) – p. 35
4. Anna exits/return to attic (Official business.) – p. 35
5. Anna calls upstairs (I know housewives.) – p. 36
6. Policeman enters attic (I'm coming.) – p. 36
7. Biedermann/Policeman exit (Is he dead?) – p. 38
8. Shift from attic to commute to work (He was never like that before.) – p. 38
9. Biedermann enters (Speeds to his office...) – p. 39
10. Babette enters (...I have other troubles right now...) – p. 41
11. Babette exits (Excuse me, sirs.) – p. 41
12. Biedermann exits (If you'll excuse me –) – p. 43

Scene Five	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Biedermann		X	X		X	X	X					X	
Anna				X		X							
Schmitz													
Babette		X									X	X	
Eisenring	X		X		X	X	X	X	X				
Mrs. Knechtling				X									
Ph. D									X		X	X	X
Chorus/Leader										X			X

1. Top of scene – p. 47
2. Biedermann/Babette enter (end of Lily Marlene) – p. 47
3. Biedermann/Babette exit – Transition to attic – p. 47-48
4. Transition downstairs – Anna/Mrs. K enter (...nobody ever believes it.) – p. 50
5. Anna exits – Transition upstairs (...don't get up any hopes.) – p. 50
6. Anna enters (vocal only) (Thanks...) – p. 52
7. Anna exits (vocal only) (Mr. Biedermann –) – p. 52

8. Biedermann exits (It's a date.) – p. 53
9. Ph. D. enters (You can come out, Professor.) – p. 53
10. Ph. D. exits/Chorus enters downstairs (That's no fun either, Professor.) – p. 54
11. Babette/Ph.D. enter (Tested and ready for action.) – p. 54
12. Biedermann enters (vocal only) (...last time we'll hear them.) – p. 54
13. Babette exits (Always too good hearted!) – p. 55

Scene Six	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Biedermann	X	X	X	X			
Anna	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Babette			X				
Schmitz						X	X
Eisenring						X	X
Mrs. Knechtling	X						

1. Top of scene – p. 59
2. Mrs. K exits (...go see my lawyer.) – p. 59
3. Babette enters (...that live without napkins.) – p. 60
4. Babette exits (I can't think of everything –) – p. 60
5. Biedermann exits (I'll be in the cellar.) – p. 61
6. Schmitz and Eisenring enter (How's that?) – p. 61
7. Anna exits (Good evening, miss.) – p. 61

Scene Seven	1
Biedermann	X

1. Top of scene – p. 65

Scene Eight	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Biedermann	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Anna		X		X			X	X	X	X	X
Schmitz	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Babette	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Eisenring	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Ph.D.									X		
Chorus/Leader											X

1. Top of scene – p. 69
2. Anna enters (Have you been in prison?) – p. 71
3. Anna exits (No excitement, now miss –) – p. 72
4. Anna enters (Hm.) – p. 74
5. Babette and Anna exit (...do you have to stand there and gape?) – p. 80
6. Babette enters (Not in front of my wife...) – p. 82
7. Anna enters (The matches.) – p. 83

8. Schmitz and Eisenring exit (...the whole sky is burning, Mrs. Biedermann.) – p. 83
9. Ph. D. enters (...Not our house...Not our...) – p. 83
10. Ph. D. exits (Professor –) – p. 83
11. Chorus enters (Don't be foolish, Babette!) – p.84

### End of Play

Explosions sound as C & L address the audience

C & L address the audience

**Climax**

→ Sound of the towns destruction rise and fall as lights fade on the livingroom

G tells B that he gave E & S matches

B asks G if he gave E & S the matches

G tells B that D is gone

B calls G

G calls to D

D exits

G tries to interrupt D

D reveals that E & S were setting fires for the joy of it

G interrupts D

D hands the statement to G

Sounds of fire and firefighting drown out D's statement

D begins reading a statement about E & S to G

G asks D who he is and what he wants

D enters

G expresses gratitude that his house is not burning

E & S bow and exit

A tells B that the sky is on fire

B asks A why she is upset

A enters with coffee

**CRISIS**

→ E asks G for the matches

B says that it was a nice evening

E & S confirm that they must leave

Everyone drinks

G toasts E & S

G fills the wine glasses and hands them out

G opens the wine

E tells B to tell G not to open any more wine

G offers E & S another glass of wine

B asks if E & S have to leave

B tells G, E & S that coffee will be ready in a minute

B returns

G tells E to lower his voice so B doesn't hear them

E comments on G's hesitation



S asks for matches  
G hesitates  
E tells G to give them some matches  
G asks what he can do to prove that he  
is a friend to E & S  
G tries to stop E & S from leaving  
E & S begin to leave  
E & S try to convince G that they are  
firebugs  
S asks G why he doesn't believe them  
G dismisses their comments  
E tells G that he & S are firebugs  
S tells G that they are not joking  
G tells E & S that he has had enough  
joking  
A exits  
G yells at A for doing nothing  
B exits  
G tells B to bring in some coffee  
G tries to keep E & S from leaving  
G questions E & S's timing  
E tells G & B that he and S have to leave  
G dismisses E & S's comments  
S confirms that they are not joking  
G tells E to stop joking  
E tells B & G that the fire is a decoy to  
lure the fire department away  
from the town  
B asks where the fire is  
G is relieved that the fire is not at his  
home  
Fire engines pass the house  
B opens the window  
G tells B to stop yelling  
B yells out about firebugs  
G dismisses E's response as a joke  
E tells G the noise was sirens  
G asks what the noise was  
Sirens ring out  
G raises a toast  
E, G, & S finish the song  
E & G join S in singing  
G comments on the song  
E tries to stop S  
S continues singing  
E tells S to stop singing  
S begins singing  
E asks S what he would sing

S asks E if he would like for S to sing a  
song  
G says not to talk about Knechtling  
E chastises S even more for his choice  
A asks if the performance is over  
G smoothes over the situation  
S apologizes  
E reassures B that S isn't Knechtling  
B hides her face  
E chastises S for choosing to be the  
Ghost of Knechtling  
E stops S  
B jumps up and screams  
S throws the tablecloth over G  
S states that he is the ghost of Knechtling  
B asks S who he is  
B encourages G to respond  
S as ghost calls G  
S as ghost continues  
G tells B to ask S who the ghost is  
G tells B that she is wrong  
B asks S if he is the Angel of Death  
S as ghost calls G  
E tells S that he must start again  
S continues  
G understands  
B corrects G's response  
G responds incorrectly  
S calls to G  
E explains that S can't continue unless  
G responds  
G hesitates  
E encourages G to respond to S  
S as ghost calls G  
B tells G that they saw the performance  
in Salzburg  
G tell B to be quiet  
B calls G  
S continues  
E encourages S to continue  
S continues  
E explains what S is doing  
S starts acting like a ghost  
A covers her face  
E pulls A into his lap  
A says that she is frightened  
E asks G & B if S looks like a ghost  
E puts the tablecloth over S's head

G asks about the theatre burning  
E scolds S  
B asks about the theatre burning  
S says he was in theatre for only a week  
before it burned down  
E says that S was very talented acting  
as a ghost  
S tells B upstage  
B asks S where he worked in theatre  
S nods in the affirmative  
B asks S if he was in the theatre  
E tells B that S was in the theatre  
E recounts S's childhood  
E tells B that S has no manners  
B tells E to leave S alone  
B pulls E aside  
E tells S not to smack his lips  
E comments on the candlelight to B  
A & B discuss the visitor  
A tells B that the visitor is still waiting  
A tells B that she doesn't know  
B asks A what the visitor wants  
G lights the candles  
G says that he will light the candles  
E asks for the matches  
G says that he has some matches  
E tells G that he has no matches  
S tells E that he has no matches  
E asks S if he has a match  
E comments about the candlesticks to S  
A brings the candlesticks to the table  
G demands that A bring the candlesticks  
A protests  
G tells A to bring the candlesticks to the  
table  
E asks A why the candlesticks are hidden  
E asks A about the candlesticks  
G answers B  
B asks G who has come  
E & S toast each other  
G comments on the card  
A tells G that he has an urgent message  
A hands a card to G  
A enters  
E & S laugh  
S continues E's story  
E & S toast each other and drink  
E tells S to finish the story

E examines the wine label  
E drinks his wine  
E tells how his restaurant burned down  
E explains how he was arrested and sent to jail  
G reprimands B  
E repeats B's question  
G tries to stop B's question  
B asks E how he ended up in jail  
E says that he heard of trauma's in jail  
G says that he hasn't  
E asks G if he has heard of a trauma  
E cleans his hands in the fingerbowl  
E explains that waiters cleaned their hands in their hair while others used fingerbowls  
E asks if B knows how waiters clean their hands  
E tells about being a waiter  
G tells everyone to drink  
E tries to clarify why A is crying  
A exits  
A begins crying  
E tries to calm A  
A gets excited  
E tells A not to get excited  
G pulls out the knife-rests  
A tells G that he has the knife-rests in his pockets  
G demands that A get the knife-rests  
A protests  
G tells A to get the knife-rests  
A calls G  
B asks A where the knife-rests are  
G laughs  
E ties the tablecloth around S's neck  
S asks E what he should do with the tablecloth  
E explains to S that the tablecloth is damask  
E tells B that S has never seen a tablecloth before  
E shows the tablecloth to S  
E apologizes to B for not being refined  
A begins to bring back the table settings  
A says that she will  
G tells A to get napkins  
A protests

E asks A to also get napkins if they have any  
E says these things aren't necessary  
B tells G that they have crystal and table settings  
E tells B that it is S's dream to eat at a table with crystal and silver  
G tells A to also get fingerbowls  
A responds affirmatively  
G tells a to get a tablecloth  
A enters  
G asks where A is  
B questions E about prison  
E says they didn't have tablecloths in prison  
E says he doesn't need a tablecloth  
G calls A  
B asks G if he heard what E said  
E comments about wanting a tablecloth  
B thanks E  
E tells B that her goose is wonderful  
S helps himself to more food  
E tells S it is alright to eat more  
S declines  
G tells E & S to help themselves to more food  
G offers a toast to friendship with E & S  
G tells B that E & S are joking  
G laughs  
B asks G what that means  
G tells B that he helped E measure the fuse for the bomb  
B asks S if he brought oil waste into the attic  
G offers drinks  
B asks why the joke is funny  
B says she understood the joke  
G explains the joke  
B asks G to explain the joke  
G tells B that she has no sense of humor  
B says she doesn't see that the joke is funny

ID with G — { Sc. 8 G asks B if she heard the oil waste joke  
G exits  
G asks the audience what they would do if they were in his place  
Sc. 7 G addresses the audience  
S says that dinner smells good

S puts his comb away  
S tells E not to forget  
E questions this  
S tells E that they will have to ask G for  
some matches  
S cleans his comb  
E tells S that he doesn't have matches  
either  
S tells E that he doesn't  
E asks S if he has any matches  
S combs his hair  
S tells E that all sawdust was confiscated  
E asks S why he couldn't get any  
sawdust

A exits  
E & S greet A  
E & S enter with a rose each  
A throws tablecloth on the ground and  
steps on it

A gets angry  
G exits  
G tells A to make sure things aren't so  
neat  
G tells A to get rid of the candelabra  
G tells A not to dress in maid attire  
G tells a to borrow one of B's sweaters  
A tells G that she doesn't have an old  
sweater

G tells A that he will get the wine  
A asks what wine to bring up  
A questions this  
G tells A that she will not be serving  
dinner.

G tells A to take the tablecloth away  
B exits

G tells B not to upset him  
G tells B to get it exchanged  
B tells G that they ordered it, but it is  
incorrect

G asks B what the wreath is for  
B enters with a wreath  
G tells A to make the setting very  
simple

G gets angry about the table setting  
K exits

G tells K to go see his lawyer  
G tells K that he has no time for her  
L sees that C is ready to work

ID with A

ID with B

ID with K

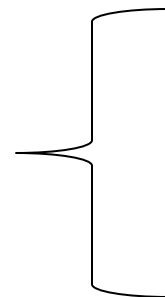
Sc. 6

L greets D  
L calls C to action  
D addresses L  
C addresses the audience  
B exits  
G calls for B  
B address audience  
B agrees to deliver D's message to G  
B & D enter  
C & L address the audience  
E continues working  
E tells D that he doesn't like him  
E laughs  
D adjusts his glasses  
E questions why D follows him & S  
D cleans his glasses  
E asks D to watch thing while he & S  
go to dinner  
E tells D that he can come out of hiding  
G exits  
G & E agree to a dinnertime of 7:00  
that evening  
G invites E & S to dinner  
E asks why  
G asks E if he likes goose  
G calls down to A  
A calls for G again  
E asks if it is the police  
A calls up for G  
G thanks E  
E opens a window for G  
E recognizes that G is not accustomed  
to gasoline fumes  
E asks G what the problems is  
G sits on a barrel, sweating  
E tells G that everyone gets what is  
coming, regardless of sense of  
humor  
E puts down the fuse  
G comments on his sense of humor  
G dismisses the "joke"  
G laughs  
E thanks G for the help  
E measures the fuse  
E begins whistling again  
E interruptst G  
G dismisses E's response as another  
joke

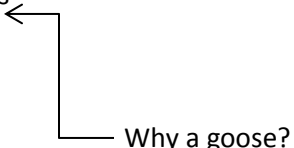
Who is the Ph.D.?

E hands G one end of the fuse  
E confirms that it is a fuse  
G questions this  
E tells G that he has a detonator and a fuse  
G asks what E has in his hands  
G asks what E is doing  
E begins whistling "Lily Marlene"  
E begins attaching detonator cap to the fuse  
E blows detonator cap clean  
E finds the detonator cap  
G puts out his cigar  
E tells G that he shouldn't be smoking in the attic  
E declines the offer  
G offers E a cigar  
G explains that he doesn't believe in class distinctions  
E asks G why he is smiling  
G smiles  
G questions E's statement  
E states that he hopes S hasn't been nabbed  
E comments on S's absence  
E strings out the fuse  
A exits  
A tells K not to get her hopes up  
K sits  
A asks K to sit  
K stands  
A tells K that her visit to G will do no good  
K sits  
A shows K to a seat  
A leads K into the living room  
E tells G how he and S are able to dupe everyone  
G tells E that he is put off by E & S's type of joke  
E tries to put G at ease  
B asks about gasoline again  
E states that G doesn't trust E & S  
G asks E if there is really gasoline in the barrels  
G tells E that he didn't sleep at all  
G relights his cigar  
E calls out to the doves

ID with K



E recounts his tragic youth  
E denigrates S  
G tells E that S didn't tell him  
E asks if S told G that E just got out of  
jail  
G questions E  
E tells G that he didn't have a bathroom  
when he was in jail  
E asks G if he has seen a detonator  
cap  
G asks E why he is shaking his head  
E shakes his head  
G offers E & S the use of his bathroom  
E asks G if he is going to kick them out  
E interrupts G  
G begins to explain why he came to  
speak to E  
G laughs  
E explains that sawdust spreads fire  
G questions E's response  
E tells G that S went out to look for  
sawdust  
G asks where S is  
G asks if he is disturbing E  
E tells G that he did not sleep well  
either  
G tells E that he did not sleep well  
E asks G how he slept the night before  
G asks E if he can come in  
G opens the attic door  
E tells the knocker to come in  
G knocks on the attic door  
E sings "Lily Marlene"  
B tells A to set the dinner table for four  
G exits  
G hands his jacket to B  
G removes his jacket  
G explains that he must make E & S his  
friends  
B asks G why he is removing his tie  
B questions G  
G demands B to follow his orders  
G takes off his coat and throws down  
his briefcase  
B enters the living room  
G enters the living room  
E checks the wind direction  
E sings "Lily Marlene"



Why a goose?

Sc. 5 E unwinds cord from a reel  
L exits  
C exits  
C & L address audience  
G exits to catch a taxi  
G dismisses C & L with finality  
G lights cigar  
L converses with C about what G has  
told them  
G gets a cigar  
G tells C & L that he was about to  
throw E & S out until he was  
stopped by B  
G defends himself to C & L  
B exits  
G and B converse secretly about buying  
a wreath  
B asks G if she is interrupting  
G asks B what she wants  
B enters  
G dismisses C & L  
G tells C & L that what happens in his  
home is none of their business  
C & L continue to confront G  
G tells C & L to let him pass  
G shouts at C & L  
C & L confront G about the gasoline  
G calls for a taxi  
G enters  
C & L address the audience  
E asks S if he has the detonator  
E & S discuss G  
G & P exit the attic  
G asks if Knechtling is dead  
P laughs  
E & S confirm that the barrels are filled  
with Hormotone  
G looks for help from E & S  
G tells P that it is hair tonic  
P asks G what is in the barrels  
G tells E & S that he will be at the police  
station if anyone needs him  
G says yes  
P asks G if he would rather talk in  
private  
G hesitates  
P asks if G knew Knechtling  
P tells G the accident involved Knechtling ←

Why the coverup?

G recoils  
P tells G that an accident has occurred  
G, P, E & S all greet each other  
P tells G he doesn't have to leave the  
attic  
P enters the attic  
The Door opens  
G moves to answer the door  
Knock on the door  
G reiterates his position on the barrels  
A calls up for G  
G confirms that he will call the police  
E asks if G will call the police if they  
don't  
G tells E & S to get the barrels out of  
the house  
A calls up for G  
E lectures S  
G states that B would have a heart  
attack if she knew about  
the gasoline  
G reminds E & S about the firebugs  
B asks if E & S are insane for bringing  
Gasoline into the attic  
E & S confirm that gasoline is in the  
barrels  
G asks E & S if gasoline is in the barrels  
G dismisses this as a joke  
E tells G that the barrels are full of  
gasoline  
B asks E & S what is in the barrels  
B asks if what is printed on the label  
is true  
P tells A that he is there on official  
business  
A asks P why he is there  
A tells P that she will call G  
A enters livingroom with P  
G inspects the label  
S shows G a label on the barrels  
E tells G that he couldn't leave his  
barrels in the street  
G express anger about the barrels  
E & S look for a label on the barrels  
G asks where the barrels came from  
G, E & S discuss the barrels in the attic  
G asks what E & S are doing  
G tells E & S that B did sleep well

Why is P in the attic?

because of their noise  
G tells E & S that B has a heart  
condition  
E laughs  
E admonishes S  
G confirms that S did not ask  
E clarifies with G that S didn't ask  
about E being a guest  
E reprimands S  
E empathizes with G  
E interrupts S  
S explains to G who E is  
E tells S to answer G  
G demands an explanation  
E scolds S for not asking G if E could  
stay  
G asks E & S what is going on  
G asks why there are two people in  
his attic  
E introduces himself to G  
G sees E and is speechless  
S tells E that G usually doesn't behave  
in this manner  
G again insists that S leave at once  
G threatens to have B call the police  
S hesitates  
G tells S to leave immediately  
S asks G when he should leave  
G insists that S leave the house  
S greets G and apologizes for the noise  
G addresses S  
G enters the attic without seeing E  
E opens the door  
E makes himself presentable  
G insists that they open the door  
E & S discuss G's tone  
G tells them to open the door  
G knocks on the attic door  
E tells S that it is bedtime  
Doves are heard  
E says that G's guilt would prevent it  
S asks E why G would not  
E asks S why G would call the police  
E cleans his hands  
S persists  
E tells S to keep going  
S asks E what they do if G calls the  
police

Does G know that E is there?

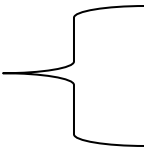
Why is G so upset?

Sc. 4 E tells S to be quiet  
S & E stack gasoline barrels in the attic  
C & L address the audience  
S says that the gentleman is E  
A tells B that he is wearing a frock coat  
A tells B that he is from the fire insurance and wants to look over the house  
B asks A what he wants  
A tells B a gentleman is at the door  
B asks A who is at the door  
A enters  
S explains who E is  
B asks S who E is  
S tells B that E could be at the door  
The Doorbell Rings  
S tells B about his friend E  
S interrupts B  
B begins to answer S  
S asks B what she was going to say after G left  
S tells her that they are a bit underdone  
B asks S how his eggs are  
S apologizes to B for misunderstanding  
S admits that B didn't actually order him to leave  
S eats an egg  
B gives the salt to S  
S thanks B  
B explains that she doesn't care about S's bad manners  
S sits  
B ushers S back to the table to eat  
B tells S that he misunderstood her  
A exits  
A asks S if he would like anything else  
A enters with eggs for s  
B comforts S  
S pretends to cry  
S tells B about his mother's death  
B feels sorry for S  
B stops S from leaving  
S tries to leave  
S explains his upbringing  
B asks if she has hurt S's feelings  
B shows sympathy to S  
B tries to stop S



Is S expecting E to show up?

ID with S

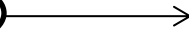


S tells B that he is leaving  
B tells S that he misunderstood  
S talks about his lack of manners  
B gets confused  
B says that she doesn't want to hurt S's  
feelings  
B tells S that he misunderstands  
S tells B that she thinks he is a firebug  
S eats some cheese  
S asks B to explain  
B tells S that she wouldn't put it that  
way  
S tells B that she wants to get rid of  
him  
B tries again to ask S to leave  
B offers S various breakfast items to  
calm herself  
B tries to ask S to leave  
S comments on A's dismissal  
A dismisses S  
S flirts with A  
S calls for A  
A begins to leave  
S specifies to A how to prepare the  
eggs  
B tells A to cook two eggs for S  
A enters  
S tells B he feels at home  
B calls for A  
S asks for two eggs  
B asks S if he would like an egg  
S pretends to not know what B means  
B suggests that S will be leaving soon  
B insists  
S hesitates  
B tells S that his breakfast is ready  
S tells B how he slept  
B asks S how he slept  
G exits  
G dismisses S  
S greets G & B  
G explains why he fired Knechtling  
B asks G why he fired Knechtling  
S enters  
G kisses B and starts to leave  
G tells B to do that  
B tells G that she will feed S then  
send him on his way

Sc.3

G tells B to trust S  
B tells G to stop yelling at her  
B enters room  
G & B argue about whether S is a  
firebug  
C & L address audience  
B exits  
B addresses the audience  
B enters  
C & L address the audience  
S turns out the attic light  
B exits  
B addresses the audience  
G exits attic  
B asks S to confirm that he isn't a  
firebug  
B acclimates S to the attic  
G & S enter the attic  
B asks A who the rusty bicycle belongs  
to  
A tells B that she has no boyfriend  
B scolds A about her boyfriend  
B asks where G is  
B enters with A  
G ushers S out of the livingroom  
G explains that it is B  
S asks G if it is the police  
The Doorbell Rings  
S tricks G into giving him a bed in the  
attic  
G justifies his reaction to Knechtling  
S expresses amazement at G's  
humanity  
G asks S how his food is  
S condones G's response  
G apologizes to S for his behavior  
A exits  
G tells A to inform Knechtling about G's  
guest  
G explodes in anger  
A and G discuss Knechtling  
A tells G that Knechtling wants to speak  
to him  
S continues reading the article  
G probes S for an explanation why he  
says things will happen  
A brings in some mustard for S  
S expresses the inevitability of the

Crisis



Why does B ring doorbell?  
Why is this S's first thought?

← ← What doesn't Knechtling understand?

Who is Knechtling?

situation  
G asks S why  
S tells G that he doesn't read  
newspapers  
S reads the article  
G shows S the newspaper article  
G tells S about the article in the  
newspaper  
S tells G about bad experiences  
as a houseguest  
S shows gratitude to G  
G invites S to eat  
A exits  
S tells A that she forgot the mustard  
A enters the room with food  
G offers S an ashtray  
S strokes G's ego more  
S tells G about his childhood  
S explains his laughter  
G asks why S is laughing  
S laughs at this  
S calls G out for saying there is no spare  
room  
G looks for A  
S tells G about working in the circus  
S strokes G's ego  
G offers S a chair to sit  
S praises G  
G & S discuss G at the bar  
A exits to kitchen  
S adds to A's food list  
G instructs A to bring food and a glass  
S accepts refreshments  
G offers S food and wine  
S tells G that he has no place to sleep  
G demands to know why S has come  
G lights cigar for S  
G gives S a cigar  
S reassures G that he is no peddler  
G asks S what he wants  
S gives cigar back to G  
G drops cigar  
S startles G  
A exits  
S enters room uninvited  
G reprimands A  
G tells A to have peddler wait  
G reconsiders

Why was G at the pub?

**Inciting Incident**

Why is S dressed that way?

G threatens to throw peddler out  
A & G discuss peddler  
G rages about newspaper article  
Sc. 2 A tries to get G's attention  
C & L address audience  
G exits  
G extinguishes cigar  
G addresses audience  
C & L enter or appear  
Sc.1 G lights cigar

Why the refusal to talk?

G – Biedermann  
A – Anna  
B – Babette  
S – Schmitz  
E – Eisenring

P – Policeman  
C – Chorus  
L – Chorus Leader  
K – Mrs. Knechtling  
D – Ph.D.

## **Audience Expectation/Identification Survey Results**

As I said in my earlier explanation for my use of the Audience Expectation/Identification, I wanted to find moments where I felt the audience might find themselves identifying with Biedermann. According to David Grote, "Identification is the process by which each individual audience member shares emotionally in the experience depicted in the play" (169). With this definition in mind, it ultimately didn't matter to me whether the audience liked Biedermann as a character. I wanted the audience to be able to find those moments in the play where they emotionally invested in Biedermann's situation. Grote tells us that "identification in general involves four stages, which we will call *understanding, attraction, empathy, and sympathy*" (170).

In order to gauge whether the choices I made caused the audience to identify with Biedermann, I conducted an audience survey. This survey was sent to all instructors of our Theatre 100 classes with the request to give the survey to their classes after they had all viewed the play. The survey was only one question and was very simple. It asked "Did you ever identify with or feel sorry for Gottlieb Biedermann? Yes or No. If yes, when?" After the instructors conducted the survey, the results were given to me for analysis. I must clarify that this is, obviously, an unscientific survey. However, I felt that the sample of audience respondents to the survey would be sufficient to determine an accurate response.

I received results from 6 of the 10 sections of Theatre 100 as well as a set of results from the Theatre History class. In total there were 231 responses to the question. Of these 231 responses, 141 or 61% said that they did identify with Biedermann and 90 or 39% said that they did not identify with Biedermann. There were many rationalizations for these answers. The overwhelming answer for those who did identify with Biedermann said that

they identified with him most when I addressed the audience directly and for those who responded that they didn't identify with Biedermann gave the reason being that Biedermann ignored the truth too many times for them to identify with him.

I have to admit that I am pleased with the results of the survey. I worked extremely hard to find Biedermann's human moments and those moments when the audience, whether they liked Biedermann or not, could identify with him. I think that the data I collected showed that I was able to make effective choices that would affect the audience. I was able to make them think about the situation that Biedermann found himself in and make a choice as to how they felt about it.

SPREADING  
LIKE  
WILDFIRE

ADMIRING  
THE  
INFERNO

## **Rehearsal Log 1 – September 3, 2012**

### **Pre-Rehearsal**

Rehearsals begin today. We are starting one week after our originally scheduled starting date due to Hurricane Isaac. I feel more stress now than I think I ever have for a show. This stress doesn't come from thinking that we won't be ready in time. I have complete confidence that we will be ready when opening night arrives. I am just nervous that an abbreviated schedule will make it more of a challenge to fully develop the character and the relationships with other characters to the fullest extent needed for a successful production. I know that in order to overcome my apprehensions, I will need to work even that much harder outside of rehearsals on the external preparations needed to fully ready myself for rehearsal.

Tonight are design presentations and, I assume, a read-through and table work. I am excited to see what others are going to bring to the table and how that is going to influence the work that I have done to this point. I try not to have anything ever set in stone. The moment I feel something is set and immovable, then it makes it impossible to adjust to what anyone else is doing. I am not able to respond appropriately to whatever it is that my acting partners are giving me. I look forward to hearing my cast mates discuss their take on the characters and the situation in which we find ourselves. I am ready to use their input to help inform the choices that I will make as Gottlieb Biedermann.

### **Post-Rehearsal**

There were many great presentations given tonight by our team of designers. This helped me be able to set the world of the play in my mind. Knowing more specifics on the world of the play will help me to inform my character decisions in upcoming rehearsals. We also talked about rehearsal protocol and the first week's rehearsal schedule. It is going to be a very hectic time in the near future. I am very excited about being able to get this project on its feet. I realize more and more just how much work is still left to be done on my creative project. I have to get better at not procrastinating, which is my standard M.O, and staying focused on the work. I think this is going to be a very exciting project to work on. We have a great director and a talented cast. I am ready to work.

## **Rehearsal Log 2 – September 4, 2012**

### **Pre-Rehearsal**

Begin read-through, table work, and character discussion tonight. I'm ready to get on my feet and get going. I am looking forward to playing with the other members of the cast and seeing what they are going to bring to the table. Not completely sure what Monica has definitively planned for rehearsal. I am going in prepared to discuss my character and background preparations. We'll see what everyone else has to add and how that will help determine the choices that I make.

### **Post-Rehearsal**

I got some great information from my fellow cast mates tonight. It is always interesting to me how others see the show that we are working on. After reflecting on the night's discussions, I have a few things that I need to contemplate and explore. First, I need to look back at my work on the play's given circumstances, specifically religion, and incorporate the literal translation of my name. Gottlieb Biedermann is translated to God loving everyman. The meaning of my name and the mentions of God in the play are something to look at. Second, I need to explore, with Lacy, the seemingly mechanical and

ritual nature of our relationship and how it has gotten to this point. Third, I need to look at the importance of the silver and crystal items on the dinner table when setting up for dinner with Schmitz and Eisenring. I must decide which of these items are important and how I can make things seem simpler. Finally, Robert had a great quote tonight that I am certainly going to work into my character development. He was telling this story of a vagabond (his words) basically charming him into a situation that could have been potentially dangerous for him. In telling the story he said "I feel like no one can touch me." It struck me as soon as he said it that maybe that is how I feel and that is one of the reasons that I am so easily duped into letting the firebugs into my home. I want to explore this subtext.

### **Rehearsal Log 3 – September 5, 2012**

#### **Pre-Rehearsal**

Tonight will be more character discussion and exploration. Tonight's exploration and discussion will be focused on myself and my relationship with the two firebugs. Matt, Robert and I have had a chance to get together on our own to read through and discuss the play. Matt and I have also had some extensive discussions of character before these rehearsals started, as this is the creative project for the both of us. Tonight, I want to focus on the reasons that I am so easily duped into letting the firebugs into my home and why I seem unwilling to get rid of them. These are things that I have thought about and discussed with Matt. I am interested to get Robert and Monica's input on this. I also just read the section on Max Frisch and this play in Martin Esslin's book *The Theatre of the Absurd*. His interpretation of the play is that the professor, an intellectual, is one of the firebugs but has a higher ideal and reasoning for the destruction. I had not thought of this before in my readings, but think it makes a lot of sense. I want to bring this up in discussion tonight and see how it might affect my relationship with the firebugs or if it is insignificant.

#### **Post-Rehearsal**

There was a great energy from the chorus members tonight. They gave us a little preview of the work that had been done and then I ran my confrontation scene with them. I like the idea of being able to win the empathy and admiration of the chorus for my handling of the firebugs instead of the scene being purely knock-down, drag out confrontation. I feel like it provides a moment of humanity and likeability that I am searching for from this character. It could be a moment where the audience might just identify with Biedermann, especially if I treat parts of this moment as direct address to the audience as if they were also members of the chorus.

There was also an exciting discussion of the relationship of the firebugs not only to me, but their relationship to each other and the Ph.D. I brought up the Esslin writing and that led to some good discoveries and leading off points for their relationship. This relationship doesn't affect me, but could influence how the Ph.D. approaches me to confess and turn in the firebugs.

What a great experience this has been already. I truly feel that I am creating a role in a play that is exciting and thought provoking. I find the challenge of this role intriguing. I can't wait to discover all that I can about this character and the world in which he lives.

## **Rehearsal Log 4 – September 6, 2012**

### **Pre-Rehearsal**

Another night of table work and character exploration. While I enjoy this part of the process, I am ready to get on my feet and work. That is how I find a lot of the most useful information for me. I think that tonight I just want to observe and take in all of the information that I can from the other actors in the play in preparation for setting some blocking tomorrow.

### **Post-Rehearsal**

It was a great rehearsal tonight. There was more reading of scenes and breakdown of moments and events in the table work. I got more specific things to think about today than I thought tonight. Specifically in Sc. 4 I need to find where my denial actually begins. I also need to play with my discovery of Eisenring and the gas barrels in the attic as well as how my tactics shift throughout the scene. Also in this scene, I need to explore a bigger contrast in my reaction to the knocking on the door when I think it is Anna as opposed to when the policeman comes in and I realize that he was the one knocking. In Sc. 5 I have to pay attention to the script calling for whispering at the end of the scene once Anna begins calling me. Also I must look at how the trouble in the scene escalates.

I was surprised to find that in Sc. 8, I got pulled into the story of Eisenring and Schmitz meeting as well as Schmitz's acting as the ghost. I also discovered that when the policeman reveals that Knectling has committed suicide, that my reaction is cold and self-centered. Instead of concern for Knectling's family, I am annoyed that my reputation could be tarnished and that I now need to work to put a good public spin on the situation.

## **Rehearsal Log 5 – September 7, 2012**

### **Pre-Rehearsal**

Rehearsing today with the firebugs and Babette. Pretty sure that we are going to begin staging some of our scenes. My goal for today is to be very specific with my shifts in events and tactics. I also want to start working on the physicality of Biedermann as well as specifics of my relationship with Babette.

### **Post-Rehearsal**

PUSH CONTRASTS! That seems to be the major note from Monica today. There are some other things that I need to focus on this weekend before I resume rehearsals on Monday. I need to play with tempo/rhythm changes with Biedermann. Monica suggested using the cigar a physical manifestation of a slower rhythm. I need to pay attention to specific tactics and responses.

We had a great time playing in the attic space. It was fun to play with different levels and responses to power shifts. I also got to explore the relationship with Babette. We discovered that it is a yelling one moment, laughing the next type of relationship.

Back to rehearsal on Monday. I have lots of work to do this weekend. It's time to get busy.

## **Rehearsal Log 6 – September 10, 2012**

### **Pre-Rehearsal**

Today is our first real blocking rehearsal. My goal for today is to start developing the vocal and physical life of Biedermann. I want to focus specifically on his vocal life. I

plan to incorporate elements of Lessac into my warm up and character development. I also want to begin to get comfortable working in the space.

### **Post-Rehearsal**

Awesome rehearsal tonight. The time really flew by. We explored Scenes 2 & 3 then ran Scenes 1-3. I was able to make some good character choices both physically and vocally tonight. These character choices, based on my Lessac training, incorporated the three body NRG's (Buoyancy, Radiancy, and Potency) not only into my physical life, but into my vocal life as well. I find my physical posture to be very upright and I lead from the center/pelvic area when I walk. In general, my stride is very buoyant as is my voice when I am in control. My stride and voice tend towards potency when I feel like I am under immediate threat and they go towards radiancy when I am dealing with Babette. The question I ask myself is will these tendencies change as the stakes in the play get higher.

### **Notes:**

#### **Scene 1:**

- take my first line when confronted by the chorus to the audience

#### **Scene 2:**

- the characters are going in a good direction
- much better rant on Knectling

#### **Scene 3:**

- better connection with Babette on joke about firing Knectling. It seems like we actually know him.
- Good relationship with Babette
- look at final exchange on p.22 before my exit. We will work on this in rehearsal

### **Reflection:**

- The energy felt low to me when we ran the scene with the chorus. Monica said that they didn't play slow.

## **Rehearsal Log 7 – September 11, 2012**

### **Pre-Rehearsal**

Tonight's work will focus on Scene 4. I found out a great deal about my vocal and physical life. I want to explore that further tonight. The stakes of my situation increase greatly in this scene with the introduction of Eisenring into the mix as well as a confrontation with the chorus. I am interested to see if the change in stakes and further confrontation will change or strengthen the vocal and physical life that the character is taking on. I also want to explore my relationship to Schmitz and Eisenring. Just how much do they intimidate me? How easy is it for me to regain control...or can I? Do they just let me think I am in control? These are the things that I will begin exploring tonight.

### **Post-Rehearsal**

Exhausted. That's what I am. Focus on Scene 4 was time consuming in intense. I was able to find a few new things with my physical life. I use much more potency when confronted by the firebugs. This is because I feel like I am out of control, much like when I was confronted by Schmitz earlier. I have also found that when I am about my daily business (going to work, hailing a taxi, etc.) my physical life tends to move more towards radiancy while still maintaining the essence of buoyancy. I think I need to continue to work

on this. I need to specify where each NRG is present and be very clear about it. There were more great discoveries with the firebugs and the humor of the beginning of Scene 4.

My confrontation with the chorus is much different. Buoyancy is dominant throughout. I never feel like I am out of control. They never seem to throw me off balance and I even succeed in winning them over at one point. Still much to explore

**Notes:**

- My use of the wife excuse is a scoundrels tactic. I need to squirm more when I use it
  - This could be an excuse to place blame and get them on my side or it could be a threat. I need to explore which one this is.

**Rehearsal Log 8 – September 12, 2012**

**Pre-Rehearsal**

There are two specific things on the agenda tonight. First is a run of Scenes 1-4 off book and then blocking Scene 5. I am not feeling too confident about being off book. I am going to do the best that I can and see where it goes. I plan to continue my physical and vocal exploration with Lessac NRGs.

**Post-Rehearsal**

I found it difficult to try and focus on anything specific today physically. It was a run-through for the first time off book. I already didn't feel very confident (I did better than I expected) and we were missing an actress, so the energy and rhythm was off. I got three pages of line notes....all of which I knew were coming. I must focus on getting off book. We run Scenes 1-7 off book on Monday. I will be ready by then.

We also blocked out Scene 5 tonight. It was good to work one-on-one with Matt on this scene. We have never had any real significant work on stage together until now. I had a great time just exploring our scene together. I certainly need to explore how my physical life is different in this scene...I could feel that it was.

**Notes:**

- Review Scene 2 with Robert...our blocking was off
- Scene 3 – stay standing for firing Knechtling joke

**Rehearsal Log 9 – September 13, 2012**

**Pre-Rehearsal**

Tonight the plans are to run scene 5 (which we blocked last night), block scenes 6 & 7, and then run scenes 1-7 for the designers. I want my goal for tonight simply to be consistency from scene to scene. I am starting to get to a stage where I am constantly run down and tired. This fatigue, if not consciously dealt with, can lead to an undoing of all the exploration that I have done to this point in the process. So tonight, I am just going to try to be consistent, find things when they happen, and get through the run.

There are a couple of moments that I want to work in: a signal to Anna that maybe I do want her to call the police once Schmitz is in the house that I later cancel somehow, a bit with Schmitz about him being unemployed and maybe he has come to ask me for a job, and a bit with the policeman when he is asking about the barrels. I discovered these moments in reflection on rehearsal and want to see if they work in the space.

### **Post-Rehearsal**

It was a great rehearsal tonight. Staging scenes 6 & 7 seemed quite simple. Monica had me break character and fully address the audience for my scene 7 monologue. It's amazing how different and awkward that feels...and liberating. I don't have to worry about keeping up the character, I simply appeal to the audience. One of the things that I wanted to find in this story was a place where the audience could identify with me. Every character should have redeemable qualities and I was struggling to find where that was for Biedermann. In this monologue...I found my moment.

The run seems rather smooth. I just have to get off book now. Our deadline to be off book is Monday. Lots of work to do this weekend.

### **Notes**

- Mirroring Mrs. Knechtling in scene 5 – Monica loved it.

## **Rehearsal Log 10 – September 14, 2012**

### **Pre-Rehearsal**

We are blocking the last scene of the show this afternoon. It will be good to have explored the entire show in the space by the end of the rehearsal. This is how I am able to memorize lines. I often associate lines with a specific piece of blocking or blocking group. My goal for today is to explore the potential deterioration of my relationships...if they have gotten to the point of complete breakdown in this scene and where they go.

### **Post-Rehearsal**

We got scene 8 staged today. It was a lot of stop and start because there are four of us in a small space. I found some great moments with everyone today that I need to continue exploring. One thing vocally that I need to be conscious of is that my southern dialect tends to creep in whenever I say "any" or "get." I will begin working into my vocal warm-up some de-regionalization exercises to help with this. Overall, I felt good about today. I still feel behind overall. I will be working this weekend to get myself off book comfortably enough that I will not feel the need to carry the script on Monday.

## **Rehearsal Log 11 – September 17, 2012**

### **Pre-Rehearsal**

Today is a run through off book of scenes 5-8. I feel that I worked hard this weekend and am comfortable being off book for 5-7. However, I am still going to need to carry the script tonight for scene 8. I know random lines throughout this scene, but if I try to go through this scene off book tonight, I will have to call line too many times to make the rehearsal productive. My goal for tonight is to work scenes 5-7 to see what discoveries are made in the playing of them. I then want to use to run of scene 8 to help get completely off book.

### **Post-Rehearsal**

It was a rather up and down rehearsal tonight. It is always a frustrating part of the process when the book first comes out of my hands. I want so bad to be able to do some constructive work, but I am so much in my head about making sure the lines are right that energy, listening, and responding sometimes suffer. I know that is a part of the process, but it frustrates me each time I get to that point. Tomorrow we work scenes 1-4. I feel confident in those scenes. Of course, I will still get together with Robert and Matt tomorrow to run lines before rehearsal as we do each day. And I plan to work hard to get

solid on 5-8....especially 8. That seems to be where I am having my biggest difficulty right now. I am not the only one having difficulty with that scene, but we will be ready for our rehearsal on Wednesday.

## **Rehearsal Log 12 – September 18, 2012**

### **Pre-Rehearsal**

Today is a working rehearsal of scenes 1-4. I feel solid on these scenes so I can play tonight. My goals for tonight are to explore the physical and vocal life of the character. I would like to also find moments that will help define my relationship with the other characters in the play.

### **Post-Rehearsal**

A great but tiring rehearsal tonight. We worked through scenes 1-4. I was able to find a lot of the things physically and vocally that I am looking for. I was also able to develop my relationships, especially with Schmitz and Eisenring. The beginning of Scene 4 felt good.

#### **Notes:**

##### **Scene 2:**

- Use more humor in the scene with Anna when telling her to have the peddler wait in the hall – I had it before, I just need to bring it back
- Keep eye contact with Schmitz for at least 5 of the 9 chimes and don't use the cigar to break the tension

##### **Scene 4:**

- Say the line “without asking” to Sepp
- Treat the policeman just like any other unimportant person until he talks about Knectling
- Use the end of the scene when chorus is turned away from me to sneak out on them

## **Rehearsal Log 13 – September 19, 2012**

### **Pre-Rehearsal**

Tonight is a working rehearsal of scenes 5-8. I am starting to be more comfortable with these scenes. I think I have fallen into the trap of becoming more familiar with the beginning of show and having the end of the show suffer because of it. My plan tonight is to use the rehearsal to solidify my knowledge of these scenes. I will play as I feel I am able, but that will not be my primary focus tonight.

### **Post-Rehearsal**

Rehearsal actually went much better than I expected it to. I still had a few line issues, but not as many as I thought I would. My relationships to the other characters seem to be coming together. I am finding the status shifts and am also finding those places where my tactics are solid. I did get (not git) a few notes tonight.

#### **Notes**

##### **Scene 5**

- Good solid base
- Taking my tie off is like being naked
- Imagine what is in my roof gutter when Eisenring says they use it for a toilet
- Don't put the ashtray on the barrel. Sit it on the landing and take it out

- Monica loved the invitation sequence

### **Scene 6**

- Escalate the dinner situation with Anna and Babette

### **Scene 8**

- Raise the stakes in order to make sure the dinner goes well
- Activate the verb “steal” when talking about sawdust
- Push in my chair when I get up
- Watch my southernisms as in “get” and “any” – this is a consistent problem for me...I need to focus on this in warm ups
- Get all the way to the tip of the table on “it can’t be”
- Don’t let the momentum drop at the end of the show with Babette – keep it high
- Articulate any words that end in “n’t”

## **Rehearsal Log 14 – September 20, 2012**

### **Pre-Rehearsal**

Tonight I am working in the Tatum with the chorus on various points in the show. I am not sure exactly what parts, so it is hard to pinpoint exactly what my goals for tonight’s rehearsal should be. As always, I will work to explore the physical and vocal characteristics of my character and where that will go. I will also explore my interactions with the chorus and work to further develop that relationship as well.

### **Post-Rehearsal**

Rehearsal went as expected tonight. Not a lot of work to do with the sensibility of being able to work on character or relationship. It was more of a rehearsal to work out spacing issues with the chorus. I had a big spacing issue with the chorus and got a bit claustrophobic for a moment. It got me in my head about lines and so I went up quite a bit. A second run of that scene with the spacing issue resolved went much better. Tomorrow is a run of the entire show. I have some work to do tonight with revisiting lines and blocking so that I am ready for tomorrow.

## **Rehearsal Log 15 – September 21, 2012**

### **Pre-Rehearsal**

We have a run-through of the entire show tonight. I am not as confident for the run tonight as I should be. I haven’t been able to prepare the way I would like in the last couple of days. We all know how life can get in the way sometimes. Corin has had some of his routine doctor’s appointments so that has gotten me preoccupied. But it’s time to shake that off and get ready. Tonight I want to focus on the entire character arc. I want to see if I can find those moments that affect Biedermann and force him to change. I want to see how my relationships develop throughout the course of the play.

### **Post-Rehearsal**

Tonight’s run actually went well. There were a few hiccups, of course, but overall I was pleased. There were moments where I felt a real connection with the characters, specifically scene 4 with Robert, scene 5 with Matt, and scene 6 with Claire. In each of those scenes, I was able to find new beats to play and new spots to explore. Obviously, I still have places to work. The biggest thing to do is to solidify my lines. There are a few places where lines get jumbled or where I have to think longer than I should have to for the

line to come. I will work to get this done this weekend. I plan to sign out some time in the rehearsal hall to walk through my blocking with my lines to make sure those associations are there.

## **Rehearsal Log 16 – September 24, 2012**

### **Pre-Rehearsal**

Tonight's rehearsal is a run/work rehearsal. I am expecting it to be a start and go type of rehearsal. I would like to work on solidifying my physical and vocal life for Biedermann. I hope that the stop/start nature of the rehearsal won't be a hindrance to this process. I also need to work on staying focused throughout the scene. There are scenes where other things are happening. I need to be able to block those things out and stay in the world of the scene. That is where I plan to be tonight.

### **Post-Rehearsal**

Rehearsal felt pretty good tonight. I feel it started a bit slow, but it started to pick up and I started to feel a good flow in scene 3. I feel like I had a good incorporation of vocal and physical choices with the character. I still need to find a few places where I can play with rhythm and pitch changes. I have some places where that occurs, but I know there are more where it would be effective.

### **Notes**

#### **Scene 1**

- “any”more – southern dialect crept in...this seems to be the only place it did. I need to check the script for all “any’s” and “get’s” to make sure I work on them

#### **Scene 2**

- Hit my line about Knechtling putting his head in the stove – this needs to land with the audience

#### **Scene 4**

- Raise the stakes about discovery of gasoline
- Take my line “Don't keep saying.....” to the audience. The entire audience deserves to laugh at that line

#### **Scene 5**

- Exaggerate “nabbed”
- Hit “person's sense of humor” for clarity

#### **Scene 8**

- Wait until everyone is seated to start dialogue
- Raise the stakes and make the obstacle bigger for the entire scene
- Don't anticipate the ghost of Knechtling – let it land, then react

## **Rehearsal Log 17 – September 25, 2012**

### **Pre-Rehearsal**

The plan for tonight is to work with Robin on some language issues that have been occurring. For me, it is being able to de-regionalize some of my “southernisms”. The two that Monica has pointed out are “get” and “any”. I have been trying to work on this, but they still creep in. My goal tonight is to take what Robin has to say and work hard to apply

it. I don't want to get in my head about these things and let it affect the performance. We are also going to finish working through scene 8 adding the chorus at the end.

### **Post-Rehearsal**

The work session with Robin was helpful. It is always good to have someone listen and point out where language issues occur. She pointed out the "get" and "any" as well as when I say "friends". That is one that I didn't realize. Robin gave me and Lacey some specific de-regionalism tools to work with together to alleviate this issue. The run of scene 8 went well also. It still feels a bit off, but we still have a week to get it perfect....those were Monica's words. I am not worried. I feel good about where I am at this point in the process. I still have a few things to work on, but I know I will get it there.

## **Rehearsal Log 18 - September 26, 2012**

### **Pre-Rehearsal**

Tonight is a crew view run-through. My goals for tonight are to focus on the language issues that we worked on with Robin last night. I marked in my script where my problems words occur and reviewed them at home. Tonight, I will be taking an inventory of where I get this correct and where I slip so that I can continue to focus on this.

### **Post-Rehearsal**

Well, tonight's run didn't feel good to me at all. I was talking to Matt and I likened the experience to a round of golf where you hit one bad shot early on and you are never able to recover. My focus was not where it should have been. Fortunately, I was able to recognize in the course of the run where things were not right and take an inventory of those things so that I can work on them during the course of the day tomorrow.

### **Notes:**

- When moving to Babette with the wreath, move SL behind Anna instead of the other way
- Have more of a reaction to the policeman when he enters

## **Rehearsal Log 19 - September 27, 2012**

### **Pre-Rehearsal**

Today is the actor on rehearsal in the Tatum. We have now vacated the rehearsal hall. If I am under the impression that tonight's rehearsal will be a jumpstart of tech rehearsal. I am excited to begin working in the space and being able to integrate the environment into my character. My goals for tonight are to focus on language notes from previous night's rehearsals. I didn't have as many issues yesterday, but there were still some. I also need to work on sharpening my mental focus. I was not where I should have been at last night's rehearsal, though I thought I was. Many factors led to my loss of focus. I cannot allow those outside factors to interfere with my process.

### **Post-Rehearsal**

I feel like tonight's rehearsal went pretty well. It felt much faster than it actually was. It was good to be able to finally play in the space with all of the levels. I felt much better about de-regionalization tonight, although Monica did get me on one. We still have much to work out in tech, but I know it will get there. I have to work on lines throughout the day tomorrow. I have been forbidden to even step into the building tomorrow...I was already staying away anyway.

## **Rehearsal Log 20 – September 29, 2012**

### **Pre-Rehearsal**

It is tech rehearsal today. We are working an 8 out of 10 hour day and the same thing tomorrow. I always treat tech rehearsals like working rehearsals. There are always new things to find and explore. Again, I want to focus on the vocal aspect of my character, keeping him de-regionalized and speaking clearly. This can sometimes be difficult with the stop/start nature of this rehearsal, but I owe it to myself to do the work that I know needs to be done to get me where I need to be in time for performance.

### **Post-Rehearsal**

So I feel like tonight's rehearsal went well. There didn't seem to be too many places where we had to stop for too long to work or fix things. It was probably one of the smoothest tech rehearsals that I have been in here. I did confirm a strange phenomenon that has been occurring to me in this show tonight. For some reason, there always seems to be one line that completely escapes me during the course of the rehearsal. The strange thing is that it is never the same line. I don't know why this is. I feel like my pre-show warm-up and preparation time is pretty thorough, but it keeps happening. The best thing that I can think to do are to keep reviewing lines and preparing and hopefully this will go away once we get into the run. I felt much better about my de-regionalization tonight. I can't think of any place where it stuck out to me that my southernisms crept into the dialogue. Tomorrow is a tech run and dress rehearsal. I hope that my prep time will get me where I need to be.

## **Rehearsal Log 21 – September 30, 2012**

### **Pre-Rehearsal**

This morning is a tech/run of the show and this evening is first dress. It is crazy to think that we are so close to opening this show. I am strangely calm about it, although I'm sure I won't be able to say the same thing on Thursday. Today, I just need to focus on putting all of the elements together. I want to focus on consistency with my integration of vocal and physical choices within the environment. I felt like I took a big step forward yesterday in being able to bring those elements together cohesively. Today it needs to happen.

### **Post-Rehearsal**

Well, tech weekend is finished and, overall, I must say that things went pretty well. I feel like there are still a few hitches in the system, but I am sure that they will work themselves out over the next two rehearsals before we open. Personally, I still feel that I have some work to do. I caught myself letting my southern dialect creep in during the dress rehearsal tonight. I think fatigue was a factor in this, as well as focus slipping because we did have to stop and start a few times. I do feel like this show has come a very long way in our abbreviated amount of rehearsal time. We have the day off tomorrow. I need to make sure that I stay focused during this rest day. I need to review lines and work specifically where there needs to be de-regionalization. It's getting close.

## **Rehearsal Log 21 – September 30, 2012**

### **Pre-Rehearsal**

Today is our first dress rehearsal after tech. It is good to be on set with costume and makeup. The world of the play seems complete now. I got some notes from Monica from Sunday night's rehearsal. My goal for tonight is to work on these notes. They are:

- Face the “window” for Knechtling putting his head in the gas stove line – let this speech build, dovetail your own thoughts
- Good work on de-regionalizing (I feel I have some more work to do on this)
- Exaggerate Nabbed every time I say this – lost it the third time – rule of 3's
- Try to hide the barrels from the policeman – “casually” lean across, distract
- Let the fact that K did put his head in the oven freak you out/spook you/etc...God as “other”/you merely look annoyed
- Work with Mrs. K on three moves when I have gone pale from gasoline fumes
- Work candle blow out cue into muscle memory
- Intensify obstacle in last scene – it is going in the right direction, the climax is building well

Monica feels that I am doing professional grade work on this role. I feel great about that note, but I still feel like I am not quite there yet. I still have more that I can do. That is my plan for tonight.

### **Post-Rehearsal**

Tonight was such a great rehearsal. It was the first time since we started running the show that I felt like all of the elements finally came together. It seemed like all of the vocal and physical characteristics that I have been working on for my character were integrated into a fully realized character tonight. There was never a time when I felt that I had to search for Biedermann. There have been times during the process when small things have thrown me off of my character, but that didn't happen tonight. I feel like I am able to live and exist in the world of the play now. There were a few notes given by Monica at the end of the run:

#### **Notes**

- use the 4<sup>th</sup> wall in the breakfast scene with Babette – I need to get my eyes up and out
- tighten up the pick up cues in scene 4
- I need to have an “oh shit” moment when the policeman enters. Use upper register of the voice and try to “hide” the barrels. Good reacting to Knechtling when he is mentioned.

## **Rehearsal Log 22 – October 2, 2012**

### **Pre-Rehearsal**

So tech weekend is done and we are in dress rehearsals. I felt good about how tech went this weekend. I was able to work through the environment of the play and figure out how to work in the space. Tonight, I want to focus on the solidifying the vocal life of Biedermann. I have had some trouble with de-regionalization with this role. I have spoken with Robin about this, and I am implementing a more comprehensive Lessac based vocal warm-up routine to see how this helps with the issue.

### **Post-Rehearsal**

Tonight's rehearsal was quite possibly the best rehearsal of the entire process. Not once did I feel like I spoke with any regional dialect. I felt entirely connected as a character. My physical and vocal life, I feel, were completely there. I felt connected to the other characters in the play and to the environment itself. I haven't felt this good about a rehearsal in a very long time.

### **Rehearsal Log 23 – October 3, 2012**

#### **Pre-Rehearsal**

Tonight is our final dress rehearsal. I would like to build on the success of last night. I want to explore new moments in the play, especially with the two arsonists. This is such an important relationship in the play and I would like to keep pushing this to see what else I can find.

#### **Post-Rehearsal**

So tonight wasn't as good as last night. It wasn't bad by any means, but it just didn't feel nearly as connected. There was a stoppage in the show for a wardrobe malfunction which I pulled me out of the world of the play, even though I wasn't on stage for it. There were a few other minor happenings that stifled the energy of the rehearsal. However, it was still a positive rehearsal and a great place to move into the next stage of the process...performance.

**EXTINGUISHING  
THE  
BLAZE**

## **Post-Show Analysis**

When I first set about the process of working on this creative project, I have to admit that I was more than intimidated and overwhelmed. I knew what work would be required of me, but there was always that voice in the back of my head that was constantly saying to me, "This is your CREATIVE PROJECT. Your entire degree depends on this. You didn't give up a great job and ask your wife to give up a tenured professorship just to screw it all up after two years." That was a lot of pressure to put on myself. But the great thing about pressure is that, at least for me, it forces people to do the best work that they know how to do. I think that one of the most valuable things that this process has done for me is that it has forced me to evaluate every step of my creative process.

I have never gone into a show knowing that I had the role without even having to audition for it. I view this as both blessing and curse. The blessing comes from the fact that I didn't have to audition for the role and I could begin to prepare for it well in advance of the official cast list going up. I was given the opportunity to conduct research and really delve into the script to try and begin figuring out who Biedermann is. The curse comes from the fact that I didn't have to audition for the role.

In self-assessing, I know that one of my weakest areas is auditioning. I often joke that as bad as I feel my auditions usually go, it is a wonder that I ever get cast. I love using each audition, whether it is monologue or cold reading, as a chance to improve on this weakness. Fortunately, during the call-back process, Monica got Matt (who also had this show as his creative project) and I to come in and read sides with the actors who were under consideration for the other roles in the show. This was a great process for me.

One benefit of reading during the call-backs was that I was able to work on cold reading audition technique without the nerves and pressure that I usually experience. I was able to connect and play with the actors who were reading and really create a sense of relationship. I wasn't worried about whether I was giving the director what they wanted or whether I was playing the scene right. I simply used my point of view as Biedermann and made choices. This was the second benefit of reading during the call-backs. I was able to begin making possible choices on my feet well in advance of rehearsals actually beginning.

Looking back on this evening, I don't know if any of the choices I made that night actually ever made it into the final performance. But being able to play and start thinking about possible choices was of immense value to me in the process and is something that I have to allow myself to do in any audition situation. I cannot be afraid to limit my choices. I have to be willing to make bold choices in auditions.

Rehearsals began with table work. Again, this was very valuable work. I had, obviously, done research on the play at this point and was eager to bring what I knew to the table. I was also very eager to know what everyone else thought about the play, characters, situations, and dilemmas that we would all find ourselves in on the stage. So many of the relationships that were developed over the course of the production began to take their shape around the table. Some ideas I had were reinforced and some were destroyed. This work around the table was a fun and inclusive part of the collaborative process and helped me to inform many of the choices that I made during rehearsals.

Things starting popping for me once we got on our feet. Rehearsals began one week late because of Hurricane Isaac. This was one more level of stress added to the creative project stress. I felt like I was behind the eight ball before we got started. We all knew that

we had ground to make up and that there would be no time to lose. With this in mind, I knew that I had to come into each rehearsal fully prepared and, as Monica says, “ready to play.”

When we began to put scenes on their feet, I couldn't help but think of previous conversations with Lou Rackoff. He had directed me in Moliere's *The Learned Ladies* and Shakespeare's *King Lear*. When talking to him about my process in rehearsal and what I could do to improve, Lou didn't hesitate with an answer. He told me that he knew I would get there (where he wanted me to be), he just wanted me to get there sooner. He told me to make big choices early. This feedback stayed in my mind during the entire rehearsal process.

If I honestly look at my process during rehearsals, I know that there were times when I didn't make the biggest, boldest choice my first choice. I know that there were times when I reverted back to my habitual patterns. But I can also honestly say that this was the first time in a production that I gave myself the permission to make the biggest, boldest choice my first choice. There were never times when I wasn't willing to say “yes, and...”.

There are many times when I am in a production that I feel the need so strongly to set things in stone from the very beginning, that I get rigid. That makes it very hard to really listen and respond effectively to what the other characters on stage are saying and doing. For this show, I wanted to make a conscious effort to keep things open. There were times, especially when rehearsing scenes with Robert Isaac when he would come up to me and tell me that he was going to try something. In the past, I think that I would be rather apprehensive about this because I didn't know how that would affect what I had planned

out to do. However, each time Robert would tell me he was going to try something, I would simply tell him to go for it and I would play with whatever he gave me. I found this incredibly liberating. Because I didn't know what he was going to do, I was forced to listen and respond to him in the moment. This ultimately led me to play choices that I never even thought about playing and, in turn, made for a much more realistic relationship between the two of us.

Another big challenge for me, and something that frustrated me during this process, is my ongoing battle with my southern dialect and being able to neutralize it. I cannot even count the number of times that I was corrected because of, specifically, my pin/pen substitution. Words such as get, any, friends, and gentlemen quickly became my enemies. In much the same way that Beidermann tried to befriend the firebugs, I knew that I had to make these word enemies my friends. I knew that I had to be proactive about making this correction.

I talked to Robin Carr, our vocal coach and professor of voice, about ways to correct my dialect issues. After talking to Robin and discussing similar issues with Matt, I work the sentence "We needn't get any friends any more, gentlemen" into my daily vocal warm-up. This sentence addressed all of my problem words and made me constantly aware of them. The correction of this vocal issue reiterated to me the vital importance of vocal warm-up routines in my preparation process.

Moving into the performance space was a bit surreal. For me it drove home that this show was happening and that opening was coming up soon. Honestly, when we moved into the space, I wasn't completely sure that I was ready for opening. I began to have my reoccurring self-doubt. I often question myself. Did I prepare well enough? Did I live up to

the director's expectations? Did I live up to my own expectation? Am I ready for what is about to happen. However, I knew that I had to make a choice....a big, bold choice. If I were to dwell on these questions I knew that I would doubt each performance and all of the strides I made in rehearsal would be for naught. On the other hand, If I simply ignored each of these questions I would be free to just go out there and play. I would have the liberty to take all of my discoveries from rehearsals and let them play out on the stage. I wouldn't have to worry about if I was prepared enough. I would know that I was well prepared. I decided to make the big, bold choice and I never looked back. I never doubted that I was ready. When things went wrong, and they did, I didn't panic. I listened, reacted, and let the moment play out. I went out for each performance and had fun. I did work that I was proud of each and every night and I know, without a doubt, that it was done to the very best of my abilities.

So now that the show is over and I look back at it, I have to ask myself If I would do anything differently If I could do it all again. I think that there are always things that you look at in the process and say you would change that. Personally, the one thing that I think I would do differently would be to work harder to implement tools to deal with my regional dialect. After getting dialect notes several times, I worked tools into my daily warm-up to correct the issue. I should have been more proactive to make this correction sooner so that I would not have gotten the note as many times as I did. Getting the note once should have been enough and I know in the future I have the tools to make sure that it doesn't become an issue.

I learned so many valuable things about myself as an actor and about my process because of the decisions that I made. I learned that I have a process that works for me. I

also learned that my process now may not work in the future and I have to be flexible enough to allow my process to change as it needs to for future work. I learned that the more in depth my preparation, the more rewarding the final outcome became. I learned that I am a constant example for others, whether I want to be or not. I learned that working can be fun and playing can be hard. But most importantly, I learned that I still have a lot to learn. I have never presumed that once I graduate I will know everything I need to know. However, this process has shown me the importance of being able to assess myself. It has helped me to be able to figure out my own strengths and weaknesses. It has also helped me to figure out how to go about developing a process to turn my weaknesses into strengths and to make my strengths stronger.

Ultimately, I am so very proud of the work that I have done on this project. I could not have imagined how rewarding this experience would be. I was fortunate enough to be able to work with so many extremely talented people. I don't usually dwell on a show once it is closed. I usually take what I can from it and move on. But this show is different, and not just because it is my creative project. It isn't every day that you get to work on a show that you like and the more you work on it, the more you begin to fall in love with it. That happened to me with *The Firebugs*. I love this show. This play has had a profound effect on me and I am so thankful I was allowed the opportunity to play Biedermann. I sincerely hope that this is not the last time that I have the opportunity to work on it.

*"I feel like no one can touch me." This was a statement that Robert made during table work while telling a story that really stuck with me throughout the process of the play. It really was the driving force in my decision making as a character. Even when confronted by the firebugs and the chorus and when things began to spiral out of control, I couldn't let that*

*phrase go. As a character, I had to always feel like I could win, no matter what. No matter how bad it got and how bleak the situation, Biedermann had to always think "I feel like no one can touch me." If he ever let that go, even when he knew all was lost, he ceased completely to be who he was and I didn't feel like I could let that happen. I carried that phrase in my head each night. It was too important not to.*

### **Committee Members Feedback**

As a part of my post-show analysis, I spoke with each member of my graduate committee to get their feedback on the show and my performance. I wanted to find out from each of them the things that they thought worked well and where they feel I still need improvement. What follows are bulletpoint lists of the feedback given and my response to what they had to say.

#### **Sean Boyd**

- Had no sympathy for Biedermann and was glad that Biedermann failed because he makes stupid choices and ignored the truth. He was pleased with the ending
- I started out aggressive and volatile. Because I started out so high, I didn't have much room to go up, but I did find good places to go down
- My approach to aggression was one level. I was very combative in the same way
- I played into being a member of the highest echelon of society which worked with figuring out status
- Scene 8 was the best scene in the play. My aggression was tempered. There was more desperation
- Vocally I traded some fluidity for volume

- The tempo/rhythm of my speaking seemed controlled by me as opposed to Biedermann. This changed and got better towards the end
- Physically I need to work on rigidity
- I kept the play together

I feel like many of these notes come specifically from character choices that I made that I usually would not. I played this character much differently than I would usually play a character, both physically and vocally. I usually would not start a character so volatile and aggressive. But I made the decision that I wanted the audience to see big changes in Biedermann as his world began to unravel. The more cruel and volatile Biedermann was at the beginning, the bigger his fall at the end. I do agree with the note about trading fluidity for volume. I think this feeds into my need for ongoing vocal training.

### **Monica Hayes**

- Biedermann was a departure from the line of roles that I have played and could be marketable as a type
- I worked well in rehearsal
- There was a good development of my relationship with Babette
- Good process through the use of the cigar
- Including the audience in Sc. 4 brought the scene to a new level
- Physical choices to show status in Sc. 8 were appropriate. Trying to play equal status from the low status Point of View gave the character a good arc
- I had a good instinct on where to go with the show
- I handled the issue with de-regionalizing my dialect really well
- I still have some dialect issues

- Tonally my voice pops in performance. I need to back it off in everyday speech, especially in an interview

I was pleased to get such great feedback from Monica, especially about my physical choices. One of my goals in the rehearsal process was to allow myself to make big choices and let them play out. Being the director, she was able to see on a daily basis how I worked and the choices I made. I am proud of the note on de-regionalizing my dialect for the show. I worked hard on those vocal notes each day to correct that issue.

### **Robin Carr**

- ✓ My articulation was clear
- ✓ I need to work to incorporate vocal notes faster – repeated notes on southern dialect
- ✓ Work to use de-regionalization techniques in everyday speech
- ✓ I made clear, unexpected physical choices – choices that I have never made before
- ✓ My relationships with the other main characters, especially Babette, were very specific
- ✓ Use of woodblock clicks (ex. – the tt in little) were played a bit too harshly
- ✓ My analysis and understanding of the script was clear
- ✓ My character had a good overall arc
- ✓ I understood the style of the play really well
- ✓ I played the stakes of the situation and didn't become the caricature that I easily could have

I am pleased with the feedback that I got from Robin. I had heard some of this feedback already from having had feedback on dialect notes earlier in the rehearsal process. These

notes do reiterate for me the need for further vocal training and coaching. I think that I have made strides vocally, but I know that I still have a long way to go. I have already planned to continue Lessac training next semester and have begun talking to Robin on continuing training after my graduation.

**ASSESSING  
THE  
DAMAGE**

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**RISING FROM  
THE  
ASHES**