

Capstone Cover Page

Weber State University Bachelor of Integrated Studies Program

Name: Rainer Rohde

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Project Title: "The Supreme Sacrifice: Using Brechtian Theatrical Techniques to Expose the Myth"

Brief summary of project: A Brechtian play using "Alienation Effect" to increase social awareness to the problem of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in today's society along with a support paper.

Area of Emphasis 1: European Studies

Committee Member from that discipline: Dr. Thomas Mathews

Area of Emphasis 2: German

Committee Member from this discipline: Ms. Erika Daines

Area of Emphasis 3: English

Committee Member from this discipline: Dr. Victoria Ramirez

Bertholt Brecht's Alienation Effect
in Contemporary Theatre

Rainer Rohde

BIS 4800

Capstone Committee

01 March 2013

In order to complete the necessary requirements for the Bachelor of Integrated Studies degree from Weber State University, I have selected for my Capstone Project the task of writing a stage performance piece utilizing dramatic techniques made popular by Bertholt Brecht, a German playwright and dramatist, during the 1900's.

This project was approved by my Capstone Advisory Committee which consists of Professors E. Daines, T. Mathews, and V. Ramirez, as it demonstrates knowledge in my three fields of study: German, European Studies, and English.

In order to understand Brecht's development and usage of these dramatic techniques, I will, first, explore Brecht's history and background in order to understand the factors that motivated and influenced his thinking. I will then define, discuss and explain the various elements that make up "Alienation Effect" and how it has been used in contemporary theatre since Brecht. Finally, I will then explain the particular elements of "Alienation Effect" that I am incorporating into my project piece.

Bertholt Brecht General Biography

Through his work, *Brecht on Theatre*, by J. Willet, we learn about Brecht and his history. Bertholt Brecht was born on

February 10, 1898, in Augsburg, Germany. At that time, Augsburg was a part of the Bavarian region of the German Empire. His father was Catholic and his mother Protestant. Brecht was the older of two children; he had a brother, Walter, who was two years younger. Brecht was baptized as Eugen Bertholt Friedrich Brecht. His father was a factory worker; his mother was ill and battled breast cancer during most of his young life.

Brecht, a sickly child himself, suffered from a congenital heart condition as well as a facial tic. At age six he entered a Protestant elementary school, and at age ten attended a private school where he studied Latin and the humanities. At age twelve he suffered a heart attack, but he was able to recover fairly quickly and resumed his education. Willet continues:

Young Brecht was exposed to Martin Luther's German translation of the Bible, a text considered by most linguists and historians to be "instrumental in the development of the modern German language. Quotes from and references to the Bible abound throughout Brecht's work and can be found most particularly in *Mother Courage and Her Children* in the mouth of the chaplain (Willet).

While in school, Brecht began writing in earnest. He co-founded and co-edited a school magazine, *The Harvest*. By age

sixteen, he was writing for a local newspaper and had written his first play, *The Bible*. At age eighteen, he was expelled from school for having voiced dissention about the necessity of military service in time of war. At nineteen, he served as a clerk, having been exempted from direct active duty due to his health problems. At war's end, he resumed his education by attending Ludwig Maximillian Universitaet in Munich as a medical student.

By this time, Brecht's mother's cancer had advanced to the point that she was almost constantly drugged with morphine. He began to write *Baal*, a play concerned with the suffering caused by excessive sexual pleasures. The play sensationally depicted immoral attitudes of the time.

Brecht's own sex life is described as "fascinating," (Willet)., given the moralistic attitude he portrays in *Baal*. It is believed that Brecht had no fewer than three mistresses at any given time throughout his adult life. The family maid, Marie Miller, played sexually explicit games with the young Brecht boys. Through Brecht's own writing, we learn that his mother would inspect young Brecht by smelling his clothes in order to ascertain whether or not any sexual activity had recently taken place. At age sixteen he frequented brothels, and between then and the age of twenty, he openly

pursued eight girls simultaneously, including Paula Banholzer who later bore him an illegitimate child in 1919. "[Brecht] is known to have experimented with homosexuality. . . . His diaries, although vague, mention his need for both males and females to fulfill his sexual desires. Brecht's desire for experience was, throughout his life, all-consuming" (Willet).

In 1921, Brecht visited Berlin where he met Max Reinhardt and other influential directors. During this period, he received various awards for his work, including the Kliest prize for young dramatists. He married an opera singer, Marianne Zoff, with whom he had a daughter, all the while continuing to have extramarital affairs. He moved to Berlin in 1924 where he met the Viennese actress, Helene Weigel, a communist. Brecht fathered another illegitimate child, divorced Zoff, and married Weigel all by the age of thirty-one.

Brecht continued having extramarital affairs and fathering illegitimate children. "It has been thought that many of these mistresses were responsible for writing many of his plays" (Willet). This is largely untrue. Elisabeth Hauptman, however, did contribute significantly to the writing of *The Three Penny Opera*, and Margaret Steffin helped write *The Good Woman of Setzuan*. Weigel tolerated Brecht's affairs, even to

the extent of running interference for him with other men wanting to move in on Brecht's mistresses.

In 1933, after the burning of the Reichstag, Brecht took his family and fled to Zurich, Switzerland, in order to escape Nazi rule. In order to stay ahead of the Nazis, he lived in exile throughout Europe, Scandinavia, and eventually, the United States, where in 1947 he was called to testify before the House Committee on Un-American Activities, also known as the McCarthy Hearings. Although never an official member of the American Communist Party, he left again for Switzerland the day following his appearance. Once back in Europe, he re-united with Helene Weigel, and the two relocated to Berlin in 1948 where they formed a theater company, the Berliner Ensemble, with the blessing of the Communist Party. In 1950, Brecht and Weigel applied for and were granted Austrian citizenship. J. Willet writes further:

Between 1938 and 1945, Brecht wrote what many consider to be, four of his greatest plays. "These included, for one, *The Life of Galileo*, which followed history slavishly. It dealt with the protagonist's self hatred for giving up his convictions in the face of the Inquisition. The others were *Mother Courage and Her Children*; *The Good Woman of Setzuan*, which in some ways follows from *Mother Courage* in

examining the compatibility of virtue and the capitalist world; and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, which introduces questions about power and who is entitled to own things [property]. After this period, Brecht worked on his famous adaptation of *Antigone* and spent much of his energy recording his theoretical ideas" (Willet).

Brecht's most famous musical collaboration was with composer Kurt Weill in *Three Penny Opera*. They filled the show with humorous scoundrels and catchy songs including "Mack the Knife." The play's most renowned line gives us an idea as to Brecht's political outlook: "Who is the bigger criminal: He who robs a bank or he who founds one?" (Brecht, *Three Penny Opera*).

(See Appendix A, A Brecht Timeline from J. Willet, *Brecht on Theatre*).

Political Influences on Brecht

In 1914, as Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia, causing a chain reaction which involved Russia and Germany, and resulted in World War I, Brecht, like many others, had a nationalistic outlook on the war. He wrote articles for newspapers about how young soldiers walked off to war with enthusiasm, wanting to find the glory that awaited them. This situation is depicted in a scene from *All Quiet on the Western Front* where German boys,

upon graduation from school, were handed a diploma and immediately escorted as a group straight to the induction center to enlist to fight for the "Fatherland," even before the ink had dried on their certificates. It didn't take long before Brecht's view on war drastically changed. Tens of thousands of casualties, as well as hundreds of thousands of civilian deaths due to disease and hunger, convinced Brecht that a socialistic or communist political system was the solution.

Germany was defeated, the Kaiser was overthrown, and the shaky Weimar Republic was established, which only lasted until 1933 when Adolf Hitler rose to power and aggressively banned and suppressed any left wing groups, socialists, and communists.

All of this political and economic turmoil formed the context of Brecht's writing. He believed that theatre must inform people, make them question authority, and show them that change is possible, even necessary. This point of view espoused by Brecht was found as subversive by the Nazis, his books were burned, his plays were banned, and he was exiled from Germany.

Brecht continued to adhere to and advocate for the theories of Karl Marx, and write about the revolution of the working class to overthrow the Nazis and the evil capitalists. In *The Life and Work of Playwright Bertholt Brecht*, Wade Bradford writes about Brecht: "His dramatic works blatantly condemn

fascism, but they also endorse communism as an acceptable form of government. His political views developed from his life experiences. Brecht fled Nazi Germany before the onset of World War II. After the war, he willingly moved to Soviet-occupied East Germany and became a proponent of the communist regime" (Bradford).

Artistic Influences on Brecht

As mentioned before, Brecht was influenced by the *Bible* and would refer to it often throughout his work. However, he denied the existence of God and was intrigued by the didactic, structural, and moral nature of biblical stories.

In his book, *Brecht on Theatre*, translated by John Willet, Brecht tells how he was influenced by Chinese theatre. He discusses a technique Chinese actors used, which Brecht calls "Alienation Effect" and explains the concept of "Breaking the Fourth Wall."

Wade Bradford writes that "Brecht was deeply influenced by Charlie Chaplin and Karl Marx. This strange combination of inspiration produced Brecht's twisted sense of humor as well as the political beliefs within his plays" (Bradford).

Brecht was also influenced by expressionism, distorting reality in order to create an emotional impact on an audience,

and had collaborated with Edwin Piscator, father of political theater. Piscator maintained that theater's purpose was to influence voters, cause rebellions, and encourage revolutions. Together, Brecht and Piscator developed the concept of "Epic Theatre." Epic Theater differs directly from Dramatic or Aristotelian Theater.

Aristotle wrote about Greek theatre. His theories prevail to this day, and the vast majority of theater productions follow his formula: Linear plot, where each scene builds upon the last, until we reach a climax, and then a resolution or end. Brecht believed that Aristotle's style made the audience identify with the hero, regardless of the hero's flaws. This caused an emotional catharsis which, in turn, resulted in preventing the audience from thinking for themselves. The name Epic stems from Episodic, meaning that each of a play's scenes stand alone and are not dependent upon other scenes to carry the plot forward.

The Epic Play

Brecht thought that the story line of the play should be one familiar to the audience so that the audience would be able to concentrate on the message and not worry about following the plot, another reason for having the scenes stand alone from the rest. Brecht often bookended each scene with songs, captions,

or gestures, anything to remind the viewer that this is indeed a play.

The Epic Actor

In epic theater, actors serve as narrators and demonstrators. They function more as a guide through the play than characters experiencing it.

The Epic Stage

Brecht would not hide any aspect of the production. Musicians, stage hands, props, actors not involved at that moment were all in plain sight of the audience, reminding them that this was a demonstration and not entertainment.

The Epic Audience

Brecht believed that to appeal to the audience's reason, you must treat them as thoroughly intelligent. Brecht wanted the audience to feel relaxed and at ease, much like the cigar-smoking crowd attending a prizefight. He felt that if done in an intelligent way, music, humor, and clowning could be used to tell stories with high political and social content.

Brechtian Techniques - Alienation Effect

Alienation Effect was also called Distancing Effect by John Willett, who later changed the name to Estrangement Effect. It

has also been called Defamiliarization effect, Distantiation, and other terms. In Brecht's native tongue, German, he calls it "Verfremdungseffekt." I prefer the definition offered by John Willett in his translation of *Brecht on Theatre*: " . . . the alienation effect . . . is a performing arts concept coined by playwright Bertholt Brecht 'which prevents the audience from losing itself passively and completely to the character by the actor, and which consequently leads the audience to be a consciously critical observer'" (Willett).

Language scholars as well as theatre scholars have been arguing the exact meaning and origin of the concept ever since Brecht first uttered the phrase. The debate goes on to this day. Until someone can arrive at a suitable term that is agreeable to the various critics, many have decided to put the debate on hold by using "V-Effect" or "A-Effect."

Techniques of Alienation Effect

Willett in his translation of Brecht's work, calls it the "making strange effect."

It is a technique which 'estranges' the audience and forces them to question the social realities of the situation presented in the play. Brecht achieved this by breaking the illusion created by conventional plays at the time. He

believed that the "suspension of disbelief" created by realistic drama was a shallow spectacle, with manipulative plots and heightened emotion. This theater is a form "escapism" and did not challenge the audience at all (Willet).

Didacticism

Didacticism is the teaching of a moral lesson. Brecht used this technique in his plays to teach lessons on certain aspects of politics, economy, and society to the audience. He often did this by creating characters that display contradictory characteristics, and showing the resulting problems that arise from poor choices. This technique is shown in *Mother Courage and Her Children*.

Breaking the Fourth Wall

The "Fourth Wall" is an imaginary wall separating the audience from what is happening on the stage. In traditional theater, the audience is made to feel that they are observing the action portrayed on stage and that the actors are real, but are unaware that they are being watched by an audience. To break this wall, Brecht had the actors acknowledge the presence of the audience, break the action, and speak directly to the audience.

Acting Techniques

Stanislavski's idea of "method acting," where the actor tries to become the character that he is portraying, would be a big no-no in Brechtian theater. Brecht reminded the audience that they are watching a play by having the actors break character by breaking the wall, playing multiple characters, and by standing in full view of the audience while not performing.

Gestus

"Gestus" is a theatrical technique where the actor performs actions or gestures, sometimes repeatedly, that are out of context with the story line, yet expresses the inner feelings of the character. An example from *Mother Courage* would be where Mother is forced into doing things in order to save her daughter's life, but she expresses her anguish to the audience by acting a silent scream.

Narration and Song

As previously discussed, Brecht constantly employed techniques to distance the audience and remind them of the fact that they were watching a play. Some of these reminders came in the form of slides or images that were projected onto the stage or songs that bookended a scene. Remember, each scene was a

stand-alone and not to be associated with the scene preceding or following.

Incorporating Brecht's Techniques Into a Capstone Project

In using alienation effects, my project, would be better described as "Performance Art" rather than a standard play. It will be "Epic" in that the scenes I will write will be related in theme, but each will be stand-alone scenes. I will use Didacticism to educate the audience about the tendency of nations to glorify war in order to convince citizens and soldiers alike that fighting and killing is patriotic and honorable yet they ignore the residual damage; that of Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome, P.T.S.D. in epidemic proportions that afflicts the survivors, sometimes years after the actual conflict is over. I want to demonstrate that even before society knew what P.T.S.D. was, it afflicted soldiers from every war since the beginning of history. I have two storylines alternating on stage. One is an alternate ending to *The Red Badge of Courage* the second, a dramatization of a modern day family in crisis when the father, a war veteran, "snaps" under the effects of P.T.S.D. The narrator will be an actor taking the point of view of Stephan Crane, breaking the fourth wall to comment on the scenes as well as on the various video clips that will be projected on a screen on the back wall of the stage

which depict various war situations from the time of before Shakespeare through the American Civil War, and World Wars up to the present.

A few scenes will be separated by musical numbers like the theme from *M.A.S.H.*, "Suicide is Painless," and a parody of the tune "W.M.C.A." titled "P.T.S.D."

All in all, I think Brecht would approve.

Appendix A

A Brecht Timeline Taken from: Willet, J. *Brecht on Theatre*. Eyre Methuen, London,

1974

- Brecht born on 10 February in Augsburg to Berthold
- 1898 Friedrich Brecht and Sophie Brecht (formerly Wilhelmine Friederike Sophie Brezing)
- 1916 Brecht's interest in theatre is extended and he sees up to 40 shows this fall with friend Franz Feuchtmayr
- 1917 Enrols at university in Munich and, in October, undertakes service as a medical orderly in Augsburg
- 1919 Brecht's son, Frank is born to Paula Banholzer
Brecht was working as a theatre critic for *Volkswillen* and wrote many one-act plays including *The Beggar* or the dead dog and *A Humble Wedding*
- 1922 Brecht's first full length play, *Baal* is published
In October, Brecht begins work as a Dramaturge at Kammerspiele in Munich
Awarded the Kliest Prize for *Drums in the Night* on 13 November
- 1923 Brecht's daughter, Hanne is born to his first wife, Marianne Zoff
Premiere of *Baal* at the Altes Theatre, Leipzig on 8 December
- 1924 In September, Brecht moves to Berlin to work as Assistant Dramaturge at the Deutsches Theatre, Berlin
In November, Brecht's son Stefan is born to Helene Weigel
- 1926 Premiere of *Man is Man* at Landetheater, Darmstadt
- 1927 Brecht is involved in Piscator's directors collective based in the Piscator-Bühne in Nollendorfplatz, Berlin
- 1928 Brecht's short story, *The Beast* wins first prize in the Berlin Illustrierte competition in December
Brecht directs his first Lehrstück, *The flight over the ocean* and *The Baden-Baden cantata of Acquiescence* on 28 July
- 1929
- 1930 Brecht marries Helene Weigel and, on 18 October, their daughter Barbara is born
- 1932 Premiere of *The Mother* on 17 January which toured to working class districts of Berlin
In February, the police ban any further agit-prop performances of *The Mother*
- 1933 Brecht and Weigel flee Berlin the morning after the Reichstag fire on 28 February and travel to Prague, Vienna,

- Switzerland and then on to Paris
Exile in Europe
- 1935 Stripped of German citizenship by the Nazis in June
- 1939 Brecht completes *Mother Courage and Her Children* in June
- 1941 Leaves for California on 13 June, nine days before Germans invaded Russia
Exile in America
- 1942 Brecht works on script for *Hangmen Also Die*, which is filmed between November and December
- 1944 A son is born to Ruth Berlau in September, but dies a few days later
Brecht is questioned by the House Un-American Activities Committee, (HUAC) on 30 October and the very next day, leaves for Paris
Back to Europe
- 1948 Brecht's adaptation of *Antigone* premieres on 15 February
Brecht leaves for East Berlin in late October
Back to Berlin
- 1949 The Berliner Ensemble is created in January
Mother Courage and Her Children opens in the Deutsches Theater, Berlin
- 1950 Brecht and Weigel are granted Austrian citizenship on 12 April
- 1954 Brecht is awarded the Lenin Peace Prize on 21 December
- 1956 On 10 August, Brecht attends his last rehearsal
Brecht dies on 14 August 1956

Works Cited

Bradford, Wade. *The Life and Work of Playwright Berthold Brecht*.

n.p. <http://plays.about.com>, 2013.web.

USQArtworks. University of Southern Queensland. 2012.web.

Willet, J. *Brecht on Theatre*. Eyre Methuen, London, 1974.Print.

THE SUPREME SACRIFICE

By

Rainer Rohde

PRODUCTION NOTES/STAGE DIRECTIONS

(Printed in red and *Italicized*)

This piece of performance art is written in Brechtian style utilizing "Alienation Effect" as envisioned and described by Bertholt Brecht. As such, all aspects of this production should adhere strictly to Brecht's concept of "Epic Theatre." Staging, sets, props and costumes are to be kept to a minimum. This piece is comprised of vignettes, scenes, and monologues with interjections of visual media which are projected onto a screen at the back of the stage.

MEDIA NOTES

This electronic script contains links to video clips used for this piece. They are unedited. Some of them are longer than what would be used in performance. I made notes as to proposed lengths with the links: i.e. (Cut at 6:32.)

Should this eventually be produced and/or performed, it will be necessary to obtain permission for their use.

The curtain is down. The house lights dim. A spot light illuminates the curtain at down stage right in anticipation of the entrance of the ANNOUNCER/STEPHEN CRANE. The curtains move as the ANNOUNCER finds his way through the curtains to the awaiting light. He finds his mark which is to remain the same throughout the performance. Should there be a smattering of applause; he will react to it and suppress it.

ANNOUNCER

Please hold your applause . . . please, no applause. Tonight's presentation is NOT for your entertainment nor is it for your enjoyment. If, at its conclusion you wish to applaud, it will only show that we have failed to achieve our purpose. If, however, you leave here feeling anger, rage, and contempt for a system that exploits its citizens, especially our young people, into believing that they are to fight and die for noble and honorable causes which in reality do not exist, calling it an honor and one's patriotic duty to serve and perhaps to die, then you might be getting it.

To lose ones life in service is glorified as the "Supreme Sacrifice," yet what about the tens of thousands who survive the battlefield only to lose the silent battle that continues within? Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, or P.T.S.D.

In no way is this performance intended to dishonor or disrespect the service and sacrifice of the millions of men and women who have chosen to serve this country for whatever reason; just the opposite. We want to bring attention to the responsibility of those who send these people into harm's way to care for those whose sacrifice wasn't "supreme" . . . yet.

WARNING. If any of you here are easily offended by discussions of the truth, depictions of violence or language of the real world, please excuse yourselves now.

ANNOUNCER *(waits for any of the audience to leave.)*

ANNOUNCER (Cont.)

Over the years, there have been a few leaders who have tried to paint an accurate picture for our troops letting them know just what might be in store for them and what they may expect.

VIDEO - Gen. George S. Patton - Speech to Third Army (Entire)

<http://youtu.be/9b5glavyCSA>

ANNOUNCER (Cont.)

My name is Stephen Crane. I'm best known for my novel, *The Red Badge of Courage*. Many of you have read it. Although I've written other works, none have brought me as much attention and acclaim as this; in fact, I was able, pretty much, to make a career out of this work. I've been gone quite a long time now, yet this book continues to be read and read again. Why, do you think? I believe it's because the topic has pertinence and significance to every generation since the birth of this country. We like war. Every generation in this country's history has had a war to deal with.

VIDEO - George Carlin - We Like War (Edit: Stop @ 3:24)

<http://youtu.be/UaS2bRGS86c>

CRANE

The interesting thing about it is that I never served in the army nor have I ever been in battle. As a young man, I did see the results of war.

Start slideshow of still photos of Civil War dead. (Go through sequence slowly as CRANE speaks.)

CRANE (Cont.)

I saw pictures of bodies strewn across battlefields, piles of amputated limbs stacked outside of battlefield hospitals. Amputations were happening faster than the limbs could be disposed of or carted away. So, I wrote about a young man, Henry Fleming, and the inner turmoil he endured as he struggled with doubts about his own courage which he overcame on the battlefield and ended up saving the day.

VIDEO - Red Badge of Courage Final Battle

<http://youtu.be/l5xTMl2CJQw>

CRANE (Cont.)

I thought that I did a pretty fair job of exploring the mind of a soldier. Had I actually experienced war, I may have written the ending entirely differently.

Lights come up dimly on stage right. We can barely make out the figure of a man as he lays on a cot. It is HENRY in his prison cell. We hear the sound of dripping water and footsteps coming toward the cell. STOCKY GUARD and TALL GUARD enter stage right. STOCKY GUARD is in the lead. He has a pistol strapped to his waist and is carrying chains. TALL GUARD follows behind cradling a shotgun in his right arm. They stop in front of HENRY's cell. HENRY doesn't react and remains on the cot staring at the ceiling, fingers interlocked; he holds his hands behind his head, elbows pointing toward the ceiling.

STOCKY GUARD

Git up, Henry. We been sent te fetch ye. The warden wants te see ye.

HENRY gets up slowly. The STOCKY GUARD proceeds to place the chains and shackles on HENRY as the TALL GUARD watches. HENRY is passive and co-operative, offering no resistance.

HENRY

Did the Warden git word back from the Gov'ner?

STOCKY GUARD

You'll have te ask him 'bout that yisself, I reckon.

HENRY

Well, let's go ask him.

The three start walking slowly towards center stage. They walk in single file; first, the STOCKY GUARD followed by HENRY who has to shuffle along due to the chains on both his hands and feet and, finally, the TALL GUARD carrying the shot-gun.

HENRY *(Starting to breathe hard)*

How much further?

STOCKY GUARD

Ah Henry. You bin there 'nuff times.

TALL GUARD

Come on Henry. Step lively. Our coffee's gittin cold.

HENRY

You try walking in these!

STOCKY GUARD

Take it easy, Henry. Usually the Warden don't insist on leg irons but he did today. Makes you wonder what's eatin' him?
(Beat) Our coffee IS gittin' cold

Lights come up on stage left. The WARDEN is sitting behind his desk working on some papers. There is a lone wooden chair set up in the middle of the room facing the warden's desk. As the three reach the office/desk, HENRY, now in the lead, pauses. Without looking up, the WARDEN speaks.

WARDEN

Sit down, Henry. Make yourself comfortable.

HENRY

Comfortable?

HENRY holds up his chains and gives them a quick rattle for the WARDEN's benefit. The WARDEN glances up to see HENRY shrug.

WARDEN

Take 'em off, boys.

The GUARDS unlock the chains. The STOCKY GUARD drapes them over his left shoulder. HENRY, rubbing his wrists, sits on the chair. The GUARDS stand back as if just inside the office door. The WARDEN leans back in his chair and lets out a long, audible sigh.

WARDEN

The Governor turned down your appeal.

HENRY

Did he even consider my war record?

WARDEN

Of course he did. Henry, everybody knows that you're a war hero. You even have a commendation signed by Abe Lincoln, himself, what they read in court. But like the jury, the Governor was appalled by what you done. Henry, you killed your own ma in cold blood! Stabbed her in the heart with her own knitting needles!

HENRY

As I keep telling everyone, I DIDN'T MEAN TO. Ever since the war I keep getting these Spells. It's like something just goes snap inside my head.

WARDEN

And I believe you, Henry. Ever since the war ended more and more fellas have been sayin' the same thing. It's like some infection or epidemic or something. Some folks are calling it a kind of brain fever. Doctors just don't really know what to make of it. Anyway, even though lots of fellas might be catchin' this, not too many have been murderin' their ma's. Sorry Henry. *(to guards)* You can take him back to his cell now, boys.

The WARDEN goes back to his papers as HENRY gets up, walks out the door (back in the direction of the cell.) The GUARDS follow behind. Upon leaving the office space, lights go dim and again we are in the prison hallway.

TALL GUARD

Don't you think we should put him back in irons?

STOCKY GUARD

Na, He ain't gonna run nowhere, besides it takes too long an' we've been gone long enough already.

TALL GUARD

Yeah, coffee's probably ice by now.

TALL GUARD (Cont.)

Geez Henry. Is all that really true?

STOCKY GUARD

Yeah, did you really stab your ma in the heart?

As they walk across the stage, the GUARDS are firing questions at HENRY; HENRY remains eerily silent.

TALL GUARD

Wow, I never knew that.

STOCKY GUARD

And with her own knittin' needles. I gotta' say, Henry, that's cold.

As they get near the cell, HENRY pauses.

STOCKY GUARD

I can't see a thing in here. My eyes need a minute to get used to this again.

TALL GUARD

Mine too. So, Henry. What's it like when you say: "It just goes snap"?

We can start to make out certain images as everyone's eyes begin to become accustomed to the darkness.

HENRY

I start getting real dizzy, just like now.

HENRY reels as though he's about to faint. STOCKY GUARD rushes in the darkness toward HENRY to keep him from falling to the floor. HENRY puts his arms around the STOCKY GUARD and wrestles for the pistol. In the confusion, TALL GUARD points the shotgun but doesn't shoot, afraid of hitting STOCKY GUARD.

STOCKY GUARD (*Shouting*)

HENRY, NO! (*to TALL GUARD*) HE'S GOT MY GUN, HE'S GOT MY GUN!!

TALL GUARD (*Shouting*)

I CAN'T SEE. I DON'T HAVE A CLEAR SHOT!

In the dimness, we see HENRY spring to his feet and holds the pistol to his temple. STOCKY GUARD jumps up and grabs for HENRY'S arm. He yanks it away from HENRY'S head, but not in time. The gun fires. The sound of the shot is deafening as it echoes in the stone hall. The flash from the gunpowder illuminates the entire area for a millisecond. In the flash we see HENRY'S silhouette as his body falls dead to the floor.

The GUARDS, mesmerized and in shock, stand staring down at HENRY's body.

STOCKY GUARD

Damn. Do you see that?

TALL GUARD

Yeah. So, what do we do?

STOCKY GUARD

We git a couple of Trustees te clean this up and then go have our coffee.

Lights fade and spotlight back on NARRATOR

NARRATOR

Wars have been around as long as the human race and before, so is it wrong to assume that P.T.S.D. has been around for just as long? We might not have had a name for it, but I'm sure it was there all the same.

VIDEO George Carlin - PTSD

<http://youtu.be/jeGKuTZtkpg>

NARRATOR (Cont.)

So, wars are inevitable, for now, anyway, and it doesn't look like things are going to change anytime soon. I think that we can all agree that the aristocracies and the bourgeoisie of the world need the proletariat class to fight these wars. Karl Marx came up with these terms. Now in today's terms, we call the proletariat class the "99%." The bourgeoisie, "Wall Street," and the aristocracy are the "Washington insiders." How are they able to convince the 99% to sacrifice all for their causes? Some rallying calls of the past were . . .

Slide of crusader knight.

In the name of God

Slide of another Medieval Knight

For King, or Queen, or country

Slide of George Washington

For independence

Slide of Confederate soldier

For States' Rights

Slide of Gen. Custer

For Manifest Destiny

Slide of Gen. Macarthur

For Honor, God, and Country,

Slide of Russian soldier

For mother Russia

Slide of Hitler

Fur das Vaterland

Slide of Viet Nam

NARRATOR (Cont.)

Well, we're still trying to figure out what this one was all about.

And the number one reason is...

VIDEO - Braveheart (Edit @ 2:10)

<http://youtu.be/gr OpFxCx-A>

NARRATOR (Cont.)

Freedom! How many lives have been given for the sake of freedom. Freedom is, indeed, a noble and worthy cause, but the term has been a bit abused.

NARRATOR (Cont.)

So, during the last ten years as we have fought and supposedly won two wars, are we any more free than we were before? Before the Patriot Act, before Homeland Security, and the N.S.A. and the like?

We went to war against Iraq so we can be free of terrorism. Some believe that it was actually to settle a personal score against Saddam Hussein. Oooops. I guess it turns out that Saddam wasn't the problem. It must be Bin Laden. Oooops. He's dead now too. Has anything really changed? Do you, really,

feel more free than you did on the day before 9-11? In fact, were Saddam around today, we would not be facing the threat of a nuclear Iran. Instead, we went after weapons of mass destruction that didn't exist.

VIDEO - Tearing down Hussein statue.

<http://youtu.be/wss urnuB7o>

NARRATOR (Cont.)

So, let's re-cap the situation. Billions of dollars wasted, thousands of lives wasted, our economy is in shambles and we are no closer to being really free than before. But the "Spin-meisters" are busy doing damage control, making us feel good about ourselves and what we've done. First thing we need to do is keep the morale of the public up and sympathetic to the cause.

NARRATOR (Cont.)

As they say, "No good deed goes unpunished."

We found no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. We, instead, opened a Pandora's box and found something more devastating than any bomb or germ. We unleashed a plague upon ourselves more devastating than any weapon science could devise: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, P.T.S.D., in pandemic proportions.

Show Title Slide Graphic: THE SUPREME SACRIFICE and then go to video - Mansions of the Lord <http://youtu.be/WtXNh9oxbSY>

NARRATOR (*Wearing white lab coat*)

What are the symptoms of PTSD? There are many: Nightmares, flashbacks, jumping at loud noises, severe depression. How do they manifest themselves? Sudden outbursts of anger or rage, survivor's guilt and suicide.

VIDEO M.A.S.H. theme (edit: Cut @ 1:15.)

<http://youtu.be/4gO7uemm6Yo>

NARRATOR (Cont.)

In 2012 the number of suicides among veterans outnumbered combat casualties. But something else became equally as disturbing. More and more vets are turning to a version of assisted suicide known as Suicide by Cop. Not being able or wanting to do the act themselves, the victim will create a situation where the police are forced to shoot him.

News anchor sitting at a television studio news desk.

ANCHOR

Albuquerque Police investigate the officer involved shooting of an Iraq War veteran. Kenneth Ellis III, twenty-four, was shot to death near the Seven-Eleven on Eubank and Constitution. Police say Ellis was waving a gun. When he refused to put it down, an officer shot and killed him. We take you now to Kim Vallez who is with Ellis' mother.

REPORTER *(On location, holding Mic.)*

I'm here with Annelle Wharton, Kenneth's mother. What can you tell us?

MOTHER

My son suffered from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

REPORTER

Do you mean P.T.S.D?

MOTHER

That's right. It was a result of his tour of duty in Iraq where he witnessed the death of his best friend. He was being treated at the VA, but stopped going.

REPORTER

I also interviewed Pete Comstock, a Viet Nam Veteran, and part of the Purple Heart organization of New Mexico.

COMSTOCK

When these guys get out, they try to transition. They try to find people to trust. It's impossible. They don't trust you, they don't trust the establishment, they sure don't trust the VA. The current system of treating PTSD is grossly inadequate. If things don't change, suicides among vets will continue skyrocketing.

NARRATOR

People are starting to get wise to, and reject, the government rhetoric.

VIDEO - Rocked to Sleep

<http://youtu.be/xbbv9odcuHo>

NARRATOR (Cont.)

. . . and who are the unseen victims of P.T.S.D?

VIDEO - Homecoming (EDIT @ 5:50)

<http://youtu.be/uSMlIM9zLio>

The next scene is played on a dark stage. It is nighttime. Six-year-old BOBBY is home with his DADDY who recently returned home from Afghanistan. The two are in the house alone. The dialogue is between BOBBY and the 9-1-1 OPERATOR on the phone. Later, 9-1-1 converses with POLICE over the radio. DADDY is having a crisis and we only hear his voice coming from behind the closed bathroom door.

We hear DADDY sobbing.

BOBBY

Daddy? Daddy, what's wrong?

We continue to hear sobbing and muttering, but can't understand the words.

BOBBY

Daddy, are you mad at me?

BOBBY starts crying and in a tone of frightened desperation

BOBBY (Cont.)

I'm sorry, Daddy. I'M SORRY. Please don't go. PLEASE DON'T LEAVE ME.

DADDY's voice still sobbing. Sound of footsteps

BOBBY

No, Daddy, NO DADDY, NOOOOOOOO. Don't go, Please stay with me.

Sound of bathroom door closing hard and sound of lock being turned. From behind door DADDY shouts

DADDY

Jacobs. Sanchez. Roberts. I told you to stay away from that truck.

BOBBY pounds on the outside of the door.

BOBBY

Daddy, you're scaring me. Open the door.

DADDY

I SAID STAY AWAY FROM THE DAMN TRUCK, BUT YOU COULDN'T LEAVE IT ALONE, and . . . and now you're all dead.

Sound of dial tone and three tones for 9-1-1

9-1-1 OPERATOR

9-1-1 Where is your emergency?

BOBBY (*frantically*)

Help. Please help my daddy.

DADDY

You bastards. You're all selfish bastards!

9-1-1 OPERATOR

Where are you calling from?

BOBBY

My house. My daddy's in the bathroom with a gun and he's yelling at somebody.

9-1-1 OPERATOR

Are you at 925 Avenue E?

DADDY

You're all dead and you left me here by myself.

BOBBY

Yes. Are you coming now?

(From behind door) BANG and then the sound of a gun being dropped to a tile floor. BOBBY drops the phone and lets out a blood curdling scream.

BOBBY

DAAADDDYY ! ! ! !

9-1-1 OPERATOR

(Into phone) Are you there? HELLO?

(Into radio) All units. Proceed immediately to Nine-Two-Five Avenue "E." That's Nine-Two-Five Avenue E - Echo. Shot fired. Juvenile on site. Possible hostage situation. Dispatching ambulance.

Red and blue strobe lights start flashing from stage left simulating emergency vehicles arriving outside of house and lights shining through living room window. We hear voices on police radios outside as BOBBY continues to cry.

Strobe lights fade as sound also fades.

Lights up on stage right NEWS ANCHOR Back on TV studio news desk.

ANCHOR

And on a sad note, veteran police officer, Brent Jensen, has died after being in a coma for two weeks. He died of injuries sustained when he shot himself with his service revolver. Doctors stated that he had been suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, a condition he developed from an incident where he was forced to kill Iraq War veteran, Kenneth Ellis, who also suffered from PTSD. C.D.C., Center for Disease Control, issued a statement assuring the public that P.T.S.D. is not contagious. A mental health expert from the American Psychiatric Association said: "It's far too soon to tell."

CURTAIN