

The Goodman Theatre
Student Subscription Series
2004-2005 Season

Student Guide

The Story
by Tracey Scott Wilson

Directed by
Chuck Smith

Student Guide written and designed by
Jessica Hutchinson, Education and Community Programs Intern

Edited and published by The Goodman Theatre
Stacey Ballis, Director of Education and Community Programs
Abigail Boucher, Education and Community Programs Associate

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EXPLORING THE PRODUCTION

About the Playwright

Tracey Scott Wilson

Tracey Scott Wilson was born and raised in the north area of Newark, New Jersey, where the threats of the inner-city were always right around the corner. For many years, she dreamed of becoming a journalist, however she learned that she was more cut out for fiction while getting her B.A. at Rutgers University. She later earned her M.A. in English Literature from Temple University, and began writing for the theatre. With the original production of *The Story* at the Public Theatre in New York City, Wilson became an overnight success, and one of the hottest emerging playwrights. Among her many honors, Ms. Wilson earned the Van Lier Fellowship from the New York Theatre Workshop, the 2002 Helen Merrill Emerging Playwright Award, the 2004 Whiting Writers' Award, and the 2004 Kesselring Prize for playwriting, which she received in November of last year. This award is reserved for playwrights "who show exceptional promise, but have not yet received prominent national attention." Calling herself a political playwright, her other plays include: *Order My Steps*, *I Don't Know Why That Caged Bird Won't Shut Up*, and *Exhibit #9*.



About the Director

Chuck Smith

Chuck Smith is a Chicagoan - born and bred. From kindergarten in the Ida B. Wells Housing Facility to high school in the Hamilton Park neighborhood, Chuck has made a name for himself as a major talent and home-grown asset to the Chicago Arts Community. A graduate of Governors State University in Chicago, Chuck is an Artistic Associate for the Goodman Theatre. Past directing credits at the Goodman include *Proof*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, and *A Christmas Carol*. Mr. Smith is also an artist-in-residence at Chicago's Columbia College, a founding member of the Chicago Theatre Company, and an associate producer of Legacy Productions, a Chicago-based touring company. The two-time Joseph Jefferson Award nominated director was elected to the Literary Hall of Fame at Chicago State University in 2003, was awarded the 1997 Award of Merit by the Black Theatre Alliance of Chicago, and is a recipient of the Arts Midwest Minority Arts Administration Fellowship. For Columbia College, Mr. Smith has spent many years as head of the annual competition for the Theodore Ward Prize for African-American playwrights. Mr. Smith recently edited and wrote the afterward for *Seven Black Plays*, an anthology of past winner of the Theodore Ward Prize. The book is available from Northwestern Press, and contains a foreword by August Wilson.



Based on a True Story...

the real-life drama that inspired *The Story*

In September of 1980, a young and gifted African-American reporter named Janet Cooke wrote a story for *The Washington Post* called "Jimmy's World." It told the story of an eight-year-old boy who was allegedly a third-generation heroin addict living a rough life on the streets of Washington D.C. The public response to the story was one of instant outrage toward their troubled society and concern for the best interest of the boy. Even though many social services organizations wanted to find the boy to help him and his family, Ms. Cooke refused to reveal the real names and addresses of her sources, saying it was a journalist's duty to protect those people.

Then in April of 1981, Janet Cooke was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for her story, the most prestigious honor in the journalism industry. Unfortunately, shortly after winning her prize, Ms. Cooke revealed that there was in fact no "Jimmy;" that she had heard rumors of an eight-year-old addict while she was researching a new kind of heroin on the streets, but had never been able to locate the boy. It was also discovered that she had lied about her education and previous writing experience on her resume in order to get hired at the *Post*. Janet Cooke quickly resigned from the *Post*, the newspaper gave back her Pulitzer, and Ms. Cooke virtually went into hiding. She was next heard of in 1996 when she was interviewed by Mike Sager, also a former *Post* employee, Cooke's former boyfriend, and a Caucasian man, where she blamed her decision to lie on the editorial staff at the paper for creating a high-pressured environment and her father's strictness, which made it easier for her to lie and appear perfect than to tell the truth and face his anger and disappointment.

source: www.museumofhoaxes.com

The **Pulitzer Prize** is the most coveted award in journalism. It is given each year "as an incentive to excellence" for Americans in the fields of journalism, letters, drama, and music. To find out more about these prestigious awards, go to www.pulitzer.org



THINK ABOUT IT...

- Have you ever been caught lying? What did you do?
- What would you have done in Janet Cooke's place? Would you have written the story, even if you knew you might get caught? Would you have lied on your resume?
- What about "Jimmy" from her story? If there was a serious drug problem in the city, does it matter that Janet's story, which certainly brought public attention to the issue, wasn't really true?

EXPLORING THE CONTEXT

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JOURNALISTS

Volume 1, Issue 1

March - April 2005

Talking the Talk Journalistic Jargon

- **beat** : a reporter's topic area; think of reporters covering their areas as a police officer covers a certain part of town
- **circulation**: the number of newspaper copies sold on an average day
- **copy**: any text written for the newspaper, including stories and photo captions
- **dateline**: the city or place designation at the beginning of a story
- **editorial** - an article or column written by the editor expressing his/her opinions or perspective
- **lead**: the start of a story, usually one to three paragraphs
- **oped**: opposite of the editorial page; may contain columns and guest viewpoints
- **scoop**: as a noun, a story no one else has; as a verb, to do it to the competition (get the story first)

For more info, check out www.freep.com/jobspage/index.htm

Major US Newspapers and their Circulations

The Chicago Tribune	613,429
The New York Times	1,113,000
The Wall Street Journal	1,800,607
USA Today	2,120,357

Part of a Whole - Journalistic Job Descriptions

What is a Journalist?

The Story deals with the lives of journalists, but what exactly is a journalist? According to Merriam-Webster's Dictionary:

journal-ist:

1 a : a person engaged in the collection and editing of news for presentation through the media; especially : a writer or editor for a news medium
b : a writer who aims at a mass audience

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF - This man or woman is responsible for overseeing the smooth operation of the entire newspaper. He or she decides on newspaper policies, appoints department heads, meets with them to decide the next steps for the paper - including which stories will be covered - and writes lead editorials.

STAFF WRITER - This person gathers and writes the news. In the course of writing a story, he or she may do research, conduct interviews, attend events - anything to get the scoop.

PAGE DESIGNER - He or she designs the layout of each page of the newspaper, deciding

where stories, pictures, advertisements - anything that goes in the paper - best fits.

COPY EDITOR - This person is responsible for checking and double-checking each story before it goes to press. He or she proofreads for errors in the copy and edits stories for length.

CITY EDITOR - Also called the Metro editor, this person is in charge of all local news-gathering operations. He or she oversees all the staff writers and photographers.

EDITOR - He or she is the top ranking person in each department. Some examples are: sports editor, arts editor, photo editor, and business editor.

PHOTOGRAPHER - He or she shoots or collects all the photos that accompany stories in the paper.

PUBLISHER: Often the owner of the newspaper, this person is the top-ranking executive of the organization. Some famous publishers: Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst.



EDITORIAL CARTOONIST - This individual is responsible for each day's editorial cartoon. This cartoon usually satirizes a current event or sheds new light on a controversial issue.

ACTIVITY:

Who's the Boss?

These job descriptions are not currently placed in order of seniority. Make a "family tree" of the newspaper staff showing which jobs oversee the others. Add any other job descriptions you might come across in your research to this list. Remember, there are often many people with the same job titles working in different sections of the paper!

What is Freedom of the Press?

In the United States, the First Amendment to the Constitution contains some of the often-exercised personal freedoms. One of the freedoms most vital to our democracy, many would argue, is the Freedom of the Press.

But what freedoms are guaranteed to journalists by the Amendment? According to the Legal Information Institute at Cornell University:

“Despite popular misunderstanding, the right to freedom of the press guaranteed by the first amendment is not very different from the right to freedom of speech. It allows an individual to express them-

1st Amendment to the United States Constitution

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

selves through publication and dissemination. It is part of the constitutional protection of freedom of expression. It does not afford members of the media any special rights or privileges not afforded to citizens in general.”

So, the press, like any individual, can say what it wants about what it wants and it can mass produce and distribute what it says throughout the United States and the rest of the world. But why is this right so integral to a functional democracy? The Committee to Protect Journalists, a non-profit organization established to

help protect journalistic freedom, or CPJ, puts it this way:

“Without a free press, few other human

rights are attainable. A strong press freedom environment encourages the growth of a robust civil society, which leads to stable, sustainable democracies and healthy social, political, and economic development.”

The CPJ and other organizations like it also fight against censorship, or “the institution, system, or practice of examining in order to suppress or delete anything considered objectionable,” (Webster’s) usually carried out by governments or powerful special interest groups both at home and abroad.

For more information visit the CPJ website at www.cpj.org

Press Freedom Worldwide

Reporters Without Borders, an international group dedicated to world-wide press freedom, constantly studies actual levels of press freedom. Each year issues a list ranking countries’ press and other news organizations around the world from most free to least free. Newspapers with the most freedom enjoy little government or other restriction regarding what they can publish, less if any censorship, and an ability to freely and openly communicate with the public. In contrast, countries with the least press freedom

endure heavy government censorship and are only allowed to print stories not detrimental to the regime and its interests. Here is a partial list of RWB’s latest report:

- | | |
|------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. | Denmark |
| 18. | Canada |
| 22. | <i>tie</i> United State & Belgium |
| 39. | <i>tie</i> Italy & Spain |
| 108. | the US in Iraq |
| 140. | Russia |
| 148. | Iraq |
| 162. | People’s Republic of China |
| 167. | (and the least free) North Korea |

THINK ABOUT IT...

Are you surprised to learn that the US ranked 22 in world press freedom? Did you think we would rank higher? Lower? What do you think newspapers look like in North Korea? What kind information is being withheld from people in Iraq or China? How would you feel toward your government as a citizen in one of these more repressive countries?

Reporters and Their Sources

What is a source? And why are journalists so dedicated to protecting them? A **source** can be a person or a document - anything that gives information on the topic the reporter’s covering. It’s important for a reporter to use a **credible** source, or one that is an expert on the topic or situation. For instance, you would not want to use a veterinarian as a source for a story about dirt biking. Many sources, especially those for

volatile subjects, will only speak on *condition of anonymity*, or under the agreement that the reporter won’t reveal his or her name or identifying information. Reasons for this secrecy usually involve potential damage to or loss of the source’s job or even life.

THINK ABOUT IT...

What do you think happens to the reliability and accessibility of information given to the public when reporters aren’t able to guarantee secrecy and safety to their sources?

THINK ABOUT IT...

The First Amendment guarantees **freedom** of the press, but not **responsibility** of the press. Do you think that news organizations should have the ability to say whatever they want, even if what they say is untrue or misleading? Is it the press’s responsibility to provide fair and accurate information, or is it the *public’s* job to make sure the information they’re receiving is the truth? How much should we trust the news that we receive?

ACTIVITY: *Walking the Walk*

Choose one job in the field of journalism (editor, writer, photographer, etc.) and do a bit of investigative reporting on the life of someone in that field. Go on-line, to the library, or - better yet - call a local newspaper to set up a day of job shadowing with someone who actually does the job for a living! Bring your findings back to your class.

More Resources on the Web

High School Journalism site
www.highschooljournalism.org

The National Scholastic Press Assoc.
<http://www.studentpress.org/nspa/index.html>

Association for Women in Communications
www.womcom.org

National Association of Black Journalists
www.nabj.org

National Assoc. of Minority Media Executives
www.namme.com

Hollywood on a Life in Journalism

The film industry has had a lot to say about journalists and the lives they lead. Here is a list of movies to check out if you want to learn more.

CITIZEN KANE (1941)

starring Orson Wells, this movie tells an only-barely fictionalized tale of newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst and the sensationalist “yellow” tabloid journalism of his time

DEADLINE USA (1952)

a Humphrey Bogart film once touted by a Chicago newspaper man as “the best film about the trade”

HIS GIRL FRIDAY (1940)

a romantic comedy starring Cary Grant on the stresses of reporting - especially notable because of the female lead newspaperwoman

THE INSIDER (1999)

based on a true story of journalistic intrigue “ripped from the headlines” and features strong performances from Al Pacino and Russell Crowe

Becoming a Journalist



The logo of the Newspaper Association of America, one of the many organizations for professional journalists.

So, you think you'd like to become a journalist, but you're unsure where to begin. Luckily, there are a lot of resources out there that you can use to find out if a career in journalism is right for you. Here are some pointers on how to get your start:

- JOIN your school newspaper - this is one of the best ways to get the kind of experience you'll need as a professional
- READ as much as you can - and not just newspapers. Read daily and weekly publications you can find locally, but also check out news magazines and books about

other journalists. Good places to start are:

- *A Reporter's Life*
by Walter Cronkite
- *David Brinkley: A Memoir*
by David Brinkley
- *Broadcasting and Journalism: Female Firsts in Their Fields*
by Anne E. Hill

- LOOK for colleges that offer a journalism major. The Chicago metro area is home to many excellent journalism programs. Take a look at these great local schools:

* Northwestern University
www.northwestern.edu

* Columbia College Chicago
www.colum.edu

* Roosevelt University
www.roosevelt.edu

- FIND special journalism-oriented scholarships from places like:

* Columbia Scholastic Press Assoc.
www.columbia.edu/cu/cspa

* The Journalism Education Assoc.
www.jea.org

* Quill and Scroll
www.uiowa.edu/~quill-sc/

Succumbing TO the Image

I think this story is about a sister succumbing to the image. Used to be just young brothers but now thanks to MTV and I'm ashamed to say, BET, we've got the gangster bitch to contend with... This girl... these girls have succumbed to the image.

Pat - *THE STORY*

ACTIVITY: Logistics of the Logo
Images are all around us - every day! Name four companies and the represents each company. How often do you come in contact with these images? How does each one make you feel?

THINK ABOUT IT...

Read the American Marketing Association's definition of advertising below, and then write one or two paragraphs about what you think of advertising. Consider these questions in your writing:

- What is advertising?
- Why do we advertise?
- Would people still buy things if there were no advertisements for them?
- What do you think people would continue buy?
- What advertisements have influenced you?

ad·ver·tis·ing - The placement of announcements and persuasive messages in time or space purchased in any of the mass media by business firms, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and individuals who seek to inform and/ or persuade members of a particular target market or audience about their products, services, organizations, or ideas.

- the American Marketing Association



Target Audiences in Advertising

A "target audience" is a specific group of people usually broken down by age, race, gender, income, geographic location, etc. that advertisers define as potential consumers for a certain product, image, or idea. Target audiences can be defined very broadly or very narrowly. Here are some examples:

- Republican men ages 18 - 24
- Caucasian girls ages 6 - 9 living in Skokie, Illinois
- Urban African-American males ages 25 - 35
- Women of all ages

ACTIVITY: Targeting Your Audience

Think about a target audience that **you** might belong to. Remember to think about your age, race, income and education level, geographic location - everything that an advertiser might consider. Now, thinking about what *styles* of advertising affect you (celebrity endorsement, images of success, sex appeal, etc.), design an advertising campaign for a product you **don't usually** purchase - anything from paper towels to kitty litter. What media would you use in your campaign - TV, print ads, radio spots, billboards, etc? How would you make the product appeal to you?

The Image Makers

Who really decides who we are?

"For marketing purposes the 'image of what is' may be more important than 'what actually is.'" - the American Marketing Association

Andrew Robertson
President & CEO of BBDO Worldwide
Key Clients: General Electric Co.,
FedEx, Cingular Wireless, Office Depot
Main Office: New York City

John B. Adams, Jr.
Chairman & CEO of the Martin Agency
Key Clients: Geico, Hanes, UPS, TV
Land, Quizno's, Nascar
Main Office: Richmond, VA

Linda Wolf
Chairman & CEO of Leo Burnett
Key Clients: Kellogg's, McDonald's,
Hallmark, Visa, Walt Disney
Main Office: Chicago, IL

ACTIVITY: Who's the Boss of Me?

Take a look at these three top American advertising executives. Odds are, at least one of them has been behind the ad campaign for something that you bought. What do you notice about their common traits? What do you think of the fact that only one is a woman, and none are from an ethnic minority group? Does it make you feel differently about your response to advertising?

THINK ABOUT IT...

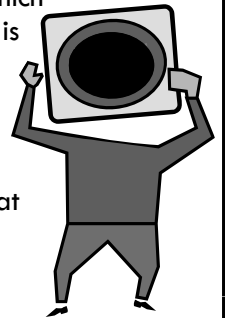
Look at a few images in your teacher's favorite magazine. As you think about each one, remember that they are *selling an image*. What is the image they're selling? How do you feel about it?



ACTIVITY: Advertising Awareness

For one week, try to collect as many examples of imagery in advertising as you can. Carry a small notebook with you and write down as many images as you can from TV, magazines, newspapers, billboards, etc., that you come in contact with each day. Decide which "target audience" the ad is meant to persuade.

At the end of the week, bring in your notes and discuss with your class what you found and how each image makes you feel.



The Image Breakers

Changing the Face of Consumerism

Image is everything. If there's no visual magnetism to the ad, there's little chance that promises, branding messages, or special offers embedded in the copy or trumpeted in the headline will get their due.

- BtoB (Marketing Strategists' Magazine)

Sean "P. Diddy" Combs

Founder Blue Flame Marketing + Advertising
Key Clients: Nike, Pepsi, Reebok, New Lin
Cinema

Main Office: New York City

Damon Dash

Founder & CEO of Roc-A-Fella

Key Clients: independent record label,
clothing line, film division

Don Coleman

Founder & CEO of GlobalHue

Key Clients: Chrysler Corp., General
Mills Cereal, Shell Oil

Main Office: Southfield, MI



THINK ABOUT IT...

Look at a few images from your favorite magazine. Remember that they are *selling an image*.

What is the image they're selling? How do you feel about it? Compare and contrast these feelings with those you had towards your teacher's magazine.

African Americans in Fashion Design

*Russell Simmons -
Phat Farm*

*Kimora Lee Simmons -
Baby Phat*

*Sean "P. Diddy" Combs -
Sean John*

ACTIVITY: *Breaking the Mold*

Pick one of the above African American advertising professionals - or do some research to find someone else - and research his or her path through the advertising or marketing industry. What unique challenges did he or she face? What is his/her advice to young people of color? Present your findings to your class.

EXPLORING THE TEXT

VOCABULARY

"Words mean more than what is set down on paper. It takes the human voice to infuse them with deeper meaning." - Maya Angelou

ACTIVITIES: *Building your Vocabulary*

- Find each of the following words in the play—note the page where you find each one in the script.
- Write down what **you** think the word means on a separate sheet of paper—if you don't already know the word, use the context clues in the sentence you find it in to take a guess.
- Next, look the word up in the dictionary and write its definition below your definition. Make sure you keep track of the words that you defined correctly on your own!
- Try to find a way to use each word in a sentence in conversation—*maybe practice in class with a partner!*

admirable	ironic
alleged	lucrative
authorized	monumental
ballistic	naïve
biased	notoriously
blackmail	pathology
cajole	perspective
circumvent	precedent
conspiracy	pristine
corruption	pseudo
delicacy	ramification
editorialize	sector
fluently	sociological
ghetto	subtle
heir	succumbing
humble	sullen
ignorant	summa cum laude
incarcerated	tenuous
inquiry	utopia

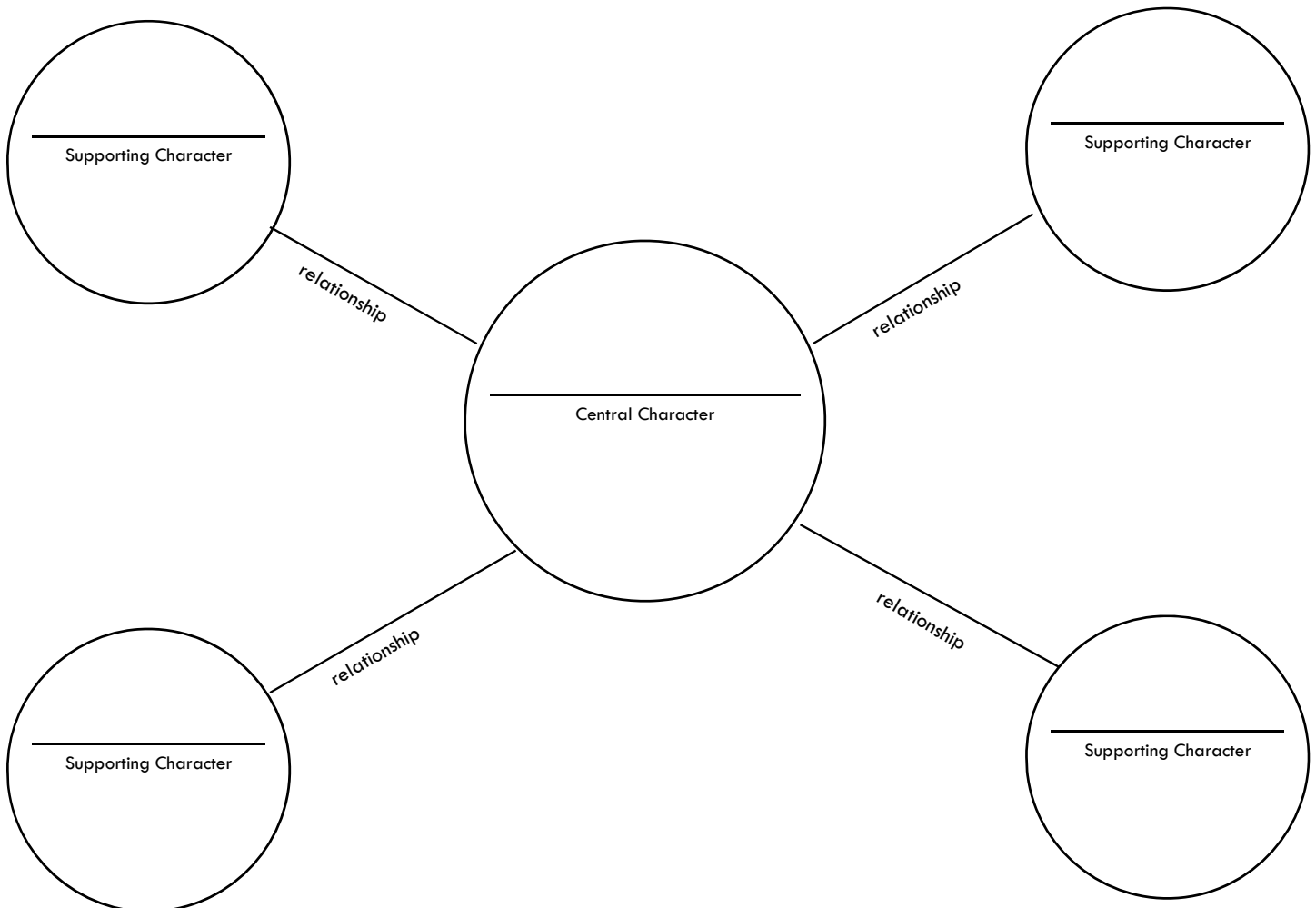
A Question of Character

examining
relationships in
The Story

The Story is a play full of complex characters who have equally complex relationships with one another. Each character is so detailed that he or she could be considered the central character of the play. Deciding who this play is really about for you affects how you look at all of his/her relationships.

ACTIVITY: Charting Relationships In the flow-chart below, pick a character to focus on. That person's name goes in the center. From there, choose four other characters in the play and write their names in each of the four outer circles. Using the text of the play as your guide, describe the relationships your main character has with each of the four supporting characters in one or two words and write them on the lines connecting the circles. Compare your chart with others' in your class - were your ideas different or the same?

TAKE THE NEXT STEP: Think about the four supporting characters' relationships *with each other*. Draw lines connecting those that share a relationship, and write words describing that connection on the line you draw.



THINK ABOUT IT...

If you were going to draw a table like this one for *your* life, who would you include? Which four people do you feel are your "supporting characters," and what kind of relationships do you have with them? What are their relationships to or with each other?

Exploring Relationships

ACTIVITY: *Who's Who and How Do They Feel?*

Use the list of characters in your script of *The Story*, and your chart from the last page to determine each character's relationship to the others. Start with a one-word explanation of the relationships, but then go more in depth. Use the script to help you. What do these people say to each other? What do they say *about* each other? What do their actions say that their words might not? Write a short paragraph about each relationship, then compare your paragraphs with the rest of your class - either as a large group, or in smaller ones. Discuss what your descriptions had in common, and what you disagreed on.

When Love is Blind: Interracial Relationships

Do your parents ever tell you who you "can" and "can't" have a romantic relationship with? How does that make you feel? What if there were laws that said it was illegal for you to date certain people?

As recently as 1967, 12 states in the US had laws on the books that made it illegal for two people of different races to marry. People were sent to jail for committing this "crime." In 1967 the Supreme Court declared those laws unconstitutional.

Now, in the United States and around the world, interracial dating, while not illegal, is often met with nasty looks and snide remarks.

THINK ABOUT IT...

What do you think of dating outside your race? Have you ever dated someone from a different ethnic group? What did your parents or friends think? Does it matter to you what other people think of your romantic relationships? What is the most important factor to you when choosing a boyfriend or girlfriend?

When It's More Than Professional: Dating @ Work

Deciding on a policy for dating in the workplace is something each office has to make. Some employers find that their workers have increased productivity when they're dating someone at the office. But if the relationship ends poorly, what happens next? Here are some numbers to consider from a 2003 survey by the American Management Association.

391 Managers and Executives responded to this survey:

- 30% admitted to having dated someone from work
- 92% of companies prohibit dating a lower-ranking person in the company
- 69% of companies prohibit dating your boss
- 68% of men and 64% of women think it's OK for co-workers to date.

ACTIVITY: *What's the Difference?*

Look at these different interracial dating scenarios. Jot down notes on what you think about each relationship; what assumptions about the couple do you make; is one 'more okay' than another? Why? Remember *not to censor yourself* when working.

Black Man + White Woman	White Man + Black Woman
Asian Man + Black Woman	Asian Woman + Black Man
White Man + Asian Woman	Asian Man + White Woman
White Woman + Latino Man	Latina Woman + White Man
Latino Man + Black Woman	Latina Woman + Black Man

Now look at your notes. Do any of your responses surprise you? What makes you think these things? Parents? Church? School? BE HONEST!

Think about people of *mixed* race. Where do they fit in? Who do **you** think these people should have romantic relationships with? If someone has both White and Black heritage, should he/she date a White person or a Black person? Why? What about other mixed heritage individuals? Someone who is Latina and Black? What about Asian and White?

What would you say? what we say and who we are...

There are a lot of things that go into ascribing race to a person. It's not just looks... It's also how they speak. Do they speak with an accent or not? Do they speak a certain style of English, or a different style of English, for instance?

- Pilar Ossorio, scholar and professor

"The words you choose to say something are just as important as the decision to speak." - Anonymous

ACTIVITY: Getting What You Want

Now it's your turn to get up on your feet and use language to get what you want. Each round of this game requires two volunteers, and full class participation!

Send the first volunteer (A) out of the room. Now, as a class **quietly** (so that A can't hear) decide what the second volunteer (B) wants from A. It should be something simple that can be done in the room. Examples are: give B a hug, tie B's shoe, do a cartwheel, say a certain word (hippopotamus for example) - anything the class comes up with. Now, send B out of the room and repeat the process, deciding what A wants from B. Now, the two of them come together and play a scene, each one trying to get what he or she wants from the other person.

Here's the catch - neither person can directly say what he or she wants. The trick is to use *persuasive language* to get it - just like Yvonne and Neil in **The Story**. Remember to consider who you're speaking to; what's the most effective way to talk to him or her?



(Sometimes a time-limit is needed for this game!)

ACTIVITY: What are they really saying?

Grab your script and open it to page 25, the top (or beginning) or Scene 6. Re-read this scene, stopping in the middle of page 28 with the Assistant's line: "I'm sorry. I can't help you. I'm not a Delta. Goodbye." Take a closer look at the way Neil and Yvonne each speak to the people that they question. What kind of language do they use to get what they want? They are both trying to get the same information, but the way each one speaks is very different. Discuss the following questions as a class or in small groups:

- Why do these characters choose these two ways of speaking?
- Is one more effective than the other? Why?
- Does one sound more professional than the other? Why?
- Which way would you be likely to speak in the same situation? Why?

THINK ABOUT IT...

What about the "Word on the Street" urban dictionary? Think of the slang terms you use everyday. Could you make a dictionary of them so that your parents or other adults in your life could "translate" the things you say? Do you think they would need it?



WORD ON THE STREET

The Young Voices Urban Dictionary to help understand your kids

- **Buff/Choong** Very attractive
- **Long** Taking a long time
- **Mans/Man dem/Boys** Friends, people you associate with
- **Blood/Cuz (cousin)** Friend, family
- **Hater** Envious or jealous person
- **Dun know/You get me** You understand!
- **Wha blow** Hello
- **Wha gwan?/Sup?** Hello/ what's happening?
- **Bare** Lots of, many
- **On road** On the street, living the street life
- **Safe** OK, cool
- **Boy/Boyed** To make a fool out of
- **Standard** End of discussion
- **Neek** Nerd (geek)
- **Bun dat** Forget it
- **Manor/ Ends** The area you're from
- **Vex/ Aggee** Angry, agitated
- **Later/One** Goodbye

source:
www.voice-online.net

The Whole Story

What the characters
don't tell you...

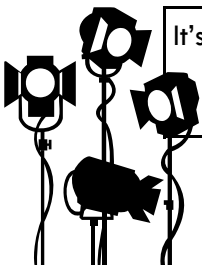
At the end of *The Story*, Tracey Scott Wilson leaves you without a clear idea of what happens to the characters. Both Yvonne and Jessica are left with huge decisions to make that will change the courses of their lives.

ACTIVITY: *What Was She Thinking?*

In the theater, the term "inner-monologue" refers to what a character is thinking or feeling but doesn't say out loud. These speeches are often a complex set of thoughts and feelings and very useful to an actor when he or she is trying to understand a character's motivation, or reason for taking an action. Write inner-monologues for each of these complex characters, explaining the decisions you think they'll make and why they make them after the end of the play. Perform your piece for the class, or trade with a classmate and perform each other's pieces.

Yvonne

Jes-



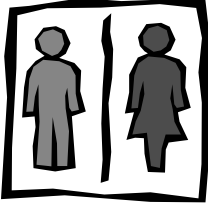
It's like grammar school all over again and all the cool black kids hate me. Something in my walk. Something in my talk tells them I'm not 'down.' I'm not keeping it real. But this is it. This is my real.

Yvonne - THE STORY

ACTIVITY: *This is my real*

Everyone has their own sense of what it is to "keep it real" - to be true to yourself. Write a monologue, a poem, or a song explaining **your** real. Have an "open mic" day in class where everyone performs his or her pieces for each other.

EXPLORING THE SOCIAL ISSUES



Preconceptions * and *Prejudice

Though we rarely talk openly about it, everyone has preconceptions about people who are different from him or herself. Sometimes, that preconception can also be a prejudice. Here's the difference between these two terms:

pre-con-cep-tion: an idea formed prior to actual knowledge or experience

prej-u-dice: injury or damage resulting from some judgment or action of another in disregard of one's rights

ACTIVITY: *Perceiving Preconceptions*

Sometimes we aren't even aware of the preconceptions we have about groups of people until we put them into words. Complete each of these sentences with physical characteristics and/or personality traits you believe each group to have. Work quickly, and write the first things that come to mind. **Don't censor yourself while writing! No one should judge you based on this exercise.** Some words to think of to help you get started are: *powerful, sensitive, bossy, quiet, submissive, thin, smart, etc.* After you finish, take a look at your responses - does anything surprise you? Now try to decide **why** you associate each trait with a specific group of people. Write a short paragraph detailing your reasons and discussing any responses that surprised you.

THINK ABOUT IT...

- What are the consequences of having a prejudice against someone? Of someone having a prejudice against you?
- Have you ever had a preconception about someone that turned out not to be true? How did that make you feel?

1. All white women _____, _____
_____, and _____.
2. Black men always _____, _____
_____, or _____.
3. If someone is _____, _____
_____, and _____, that
person is most likely a Latina woman.
4. A woman of Asian decent will _____,
_____, and _____.
5. Most Black women _____, _____
_____, and _____.
6. Usually, a White man _____, _____
_____, or _____.
7. Every Asian man _____, _____
_____, and _____.
8. If a man is Latino, he _____, _____
_____, and _____.



Self-Conceptions



Take a look at your racial and gender-based preconceptions on the last page. How do your answers for your own race and gender fit with your self-image? Are these ideas accurate? How much are you aware of your racial heritage in your everyday life? Use the survey on this page to see...

ACTIVITY: *Racial Identity Status Self-Assessment*

Directions: Check those statements that apply or that are mostly true for you.

1. ____ My race does not play a significant role in my everyday life.
2. ____ I have had the experience of feeling guilty for having denied the significance of race in a situation.
3. ____ I try to learn all I can about my race.
4. ____ I feel a sense of pride about my race.
5. ____ I believe we should all consider ourselves American regardless of race.
6. ____ I can recall receiving some historical information (positive or negative) about my race that had a profound impact on me.
7. ____ I believe some members of my race are not fully racially identified.
8. ____ I am at peace about my racial identity and do not feel the need to be defensive about racial matters.
9. ____ I value other aspects of my life such as religion, lifestyle, social status, career, more than I do my race.
10. ____ I have been confused, alarmed or depressed over a racial issue.
11. ____ I regularly attend political and cultural meetings that focus on racial issues.
12. ____ I believe that racism is part of the American experience and I work to erase its presence.
13. ____ I have not given much thought to racial issues or concerns.
14. ____ I have been angry at another race for causing social problems.
15. ____ I often read about the history of my race.
16. ____ I insist on being acknowledged as a member of my race.

ACTIVITY: *Interpreting Judgments*

A respondent checked "yes" to these numbers on the above survey: 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 14, 15, 16. Look again at those statements, and decide what you would assume about the person if he or she was:

A Person of Color OR A Caucasian Person

Quickly (and without censoring yourself) write down your assumptions and words you would use to describe that person. Now, look at what you wrote. What do your assumptions about others say about yourself? Discuss your thoughts in class.

- THINK ABOUT IT...**
- Look at the statements that you checked as true or mostly true for yourself and answer these questions:
- Do any of your answers surprise you?
 - How did you feel about answering these questions? Did any make you uncomfortable?
 - Do you think you can "score" your level of racial identity? What do you think of the survey on this page?
 - Do you feel a number could accurately reflect how you feel about your race and your identity?
- Write your own definition of racial identity - share this with the class.

This survey was adapted from the complete version developed by D.L. Plummer & Associates - Diversity Management & Organizational Consultants

DIVERSITY IN JOURNALISM



On this page are the local 10:00 p.m. news anchors for the three major Chicago networks: ABC, CBS, and NBC, as well as their national nightly news counter-parts. TV journalists often tend to have a higher visibility than newspaper and magazine, or "print" journalists - the average person is more likely to know what he or she looks like.

Dan Rather
CBS Evening News

Peter Jennings
ABC World News

Brian Williams
NBC Nightly News

Jon Stewart
The Daily Show

see below...

ACTIVITY: Diversity in the News
Analyze the diversity of the top news anchors in Chicago. Which station has the most diverse anchors on their 10:00 news team? Now look at the diversity - or lack thereof - of the national prime-time news anchors. How do you feel about the differences between these two markets? How would you change the situation?

ACTIVITY: Trusting a Source
Now let's look at your personal bias. Who would you be most likely to trust as a source of information? Why? Is the person of your ethnic group or not? Is he or she of your gender or not? What other factors were involved in your decision? Be as honest as you can about your choice of anchors and your reasons behind it.

Research the anchor that you chose. Is he or she the person you assumed? Are there any facts that surprised you?

Write a short paragraph outlining your perfect news anchor - one you would find it easiest to trust. Is this person a man or a woman? What ethnic group does he/she belong to? What other qualities are important to you?

ACTIVITY: Equal Representation
For one week, watch the local nightly news on one of the 3 major networks. While you're watching take notes, keeping in mind these questions;

- How many stories feature or mention members of the white community?
- How many of these stories are positive; how many are negative?
- How many stories feature or mention members of minority communities?
- How many of these stories are positive; how many are negative?

Have a class discussion about your findings.

A note on Jon Stewart: Mr. Stewart is not an actual news anchor. He is a comedian. Yet, many Americans have begun turning to him as their primary news source citing his unique position to comment on the subjects he reports. How does this make you feel? What does that make you think about the sources you choose to trust?

Honesty & Ethics

THINK ABOUT IT...

In The Story, what Yvonne does to win her job and her promotion to the Metro section could be considered cheating. It could also be considered "leveling the playing field" for an African-American woman in a game dominated by Caucasian men. Each viewpoint has a different rationalization or reasoning that make its conclusion true, but is one more valid than the other?

LYING TO GET AHEAD: everybody's doing it, but does that make it right?

COLLEGE STUDENTS STUDIED

- Between 12% and 24% of college student resumes contain false information (Vallen and Casado, 2000)
- 95% of college students are willing to make at least one false statement to get a job (McShulskis, 1997)
- More than 40% have already lied in pursuit of a job (McShulskis, 1997)

ADP Screening & Selection Services BACKGROUND CHECKS

- 44% of applicants lied about work history (Bowles, 2002)
- 23% fabricated licenses or credentials (Bowles, 2002)
- 41% falsified educational background (Bowles, 2002)

from "Small" Lies, Big Trouble: The Unfortunate Consequences of Resume Padding by Roland E. Kidwell, Jr.



SITUATION 1 Midterms are coming up, and you have a huge research paper due. Your teacher has asked that you use at least 6 sources in your research, and cite them in your paper. You could only find four sources in the library, but know you have enough information to write a really great paper. You decide to make up two websites as sources and say that information from other places came from those sites. Rationale: Your teacher doesn't have time to double-check all the references in everyone's paper. Not to mention, your paper will be great and complete, no matter how many sources you really used.

SITUATION 3 You are applying for your first job so that you can start saving money for college. You go to your favorite restaurant where they are looking for a part-time server. Unfortunately, the ad says "only experienced servers need apply." You decide to say you've waited tables before, even though you really haven't. Rationale: You know you'd be a great server, you just need an opportunity to prove it. Besides the money's going toward paying for college.

ACTIVITY:
Is It Cheating?
Read each of these scenarios and decide if you think the action taken should be considered cheating or not. Make sure to make your answers more than just "yes" or "no," explain why you think what you do. Then discuss your answers in a small group or as a class.

SITUATION 2 A couple has been dating for fifteen months and engaged for three months when they have a major argument, one of many, over how each views the relationship. He says she wants too much of his time. He's not serious enough, according to her. She leaves to go on a 3-day trip before they have resolved the issue between them. If one or the other of them meets someone new and takes advantage of the time away from each other to start a brief relationship (either she, on the road, or he, at home) is this cheating? Rationale: He/she doesn't care about me anyway. It's time he/she learned what would be missing if we broke up.

SITUATION 4 You take a quiz in class and the teacher lets the students correct them in class. You didn't do that well and when the papers are exchanged, you get the opportunity to make a silent deal with the person who has your paper to mark some of your wrong answers right. Rationale: You'd do it for someone if they asked. And why not? The teacher could have corrected the quiz herself, but didn't; so why miss an opportunity to get a better grade?

"This life ain't to be glorified. Its lonely and it hurts."

Dana on GangStyle.com

Gang Life

The Chicago Police Department Defines Gangs:

"A gang is an organized group with a recognized leader whose activities are either criminal or, at the very least, threatening to the community. Unity, identity, loyalty and reward are normal characteristics that are admired, but when associated with gangs they become distorted. They are traits each gang shares in order to survive.

Gangs display their identity and unity in obvious ways, such as the use of jewelry, selected colored clothing, jargon and signals. Members remain together in quiet times as well as in conflict. In response to this twisted loyalty, gang members are rewarded by being accepted and recognized as a gang member.

The main source of income for most gangs is narcotics. Members of all ages are used by the gang in the illegal sale of narcotics and other unlawful activities. It is a mistaken belief that gangs operate only in less affluent neighborhoods. Gangs exist in virtually every community."

...I'm in this gang. The AOBs. We dress like guys and roll people. We dress like brothers so we won't be ID'd, and rob Korean groceries and stuff, but no one ever catches us 'casue we look like any other brother on the street. That's where we got the name from. The AOBs. Any Other Brother. The cops ain't looking for no girl so we don't get caught. Until now. Now we kinda worried. Kinda in trouble.

Latisha - *THE STORY*

In *The Story* Latisha invents a gang called the AOBs. Why would she invent a group like this? What is her reasoning behind it? What is the reasoning behind the thousands of teens who join real gangs each year? According to research, there are several "risk factors" that, if present, make it more likely a young person will join a gang.

- **Early involvement in the criminal justice system**
- **Poor or no relationship with parents**
- **Lack of interest and low achievement in school**
- **Friends who get into trouble / join gangs**
- **Disorganized neighborhoods with gang activity already present**
- **Lack of positive self-image / positive role models**

So, what are the rewards or benefits for joining a gang? Most sociologists agree that they break down into these basic categories:

Love	Acceptance
Power	Safety
Money	Identity

THINK ABOUT IT...

What do you think of these risk factors and reasons for becoming part of a gang? Are they accurate? Are there major factors these analyses leave out? Do you think the benefits of gang life outweigh the dangers? Write a persuasive essay either for or against gang life. These essays should be kept anonymous so that you can honestly express yourself. Remember **there isn't a right answer**, this is about how you feel.

"Mah storys sad to tell, it's about mah baby, we were engaged, we were in love so much in love I joined to bed wit him, one night we was chillin at his apartment, when he decided to go out to his car cuz he forgot sumthin, the next thing I haerd was gunshots, so I grabed my 9, by the time I got out there there was noone to be found except my baby, lying there in a puddle of blood, my whole body went cold, I wanted revenge but I had no way of getting it, I was just a lost 14 year old girl in the streets of Chicago, now not a day goes by without me wondering what the f-- was I thinking getting in gang life, anyway it was my baby who got killed but then I remember he chose his way of life, ... quite a few of my fiends have died, now I'm left to wonder, am I next? ~THUG ANGEL~

Excerpt from www.gangstyle.com

The internet has become an outlet and a resource for people struggling with life in and out of gangs. One of these sites is www.gangstyle.com whose tagline is "street gangs.help.advice.expression."

The Streetz

Sweat beats down my face
As I wake from the sleep I
Tremble in. Demons enter my
Dreams at nite tryin to take
my life livin in the hood is a
every day fite to see another
day of life. My mama'z heart
brakes as her tears fall down
her face. You live yo life how
you feel. Watchin the door close
at the crib knowin this mite be the
last day that you'll ever live.
Dropping to the floor screamin
Lord, Forgive Me! Askin for
His forgivness the streets said you
Didn't need him you know you
Wanna change,
No more bangin,
No more slangin,
No more blazin,
Thinking that this don't phase you
At night you brake down and cry at
Your bedside,
The next day when you wake you
Realize this is your life....

LF Baby

From www.gangstyle.com

ACTIVITY: In Your Own Words

Read these excerpts from GangStyle. How do they make you feel? Jot down any feelings you have while reading. Now think about your own feelings about gangs. Write a poem, short story, rap or other creative piece as a response to one of the excerpts provided here.

RESPONDING TO THE PLAY

STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS

1. What aspect of their childhoods do Tracey Scott Wilson and Chuck Smith have in common?
2. What made Janet Cooke winning a Pulitzer Prize culturally or historically important?
3. Why is it important for a theatre to use effective images in its advertising for a show?
4. Why does journalism come with its own jargon or “language?” What other jobs share this trait?
5. Based on the info on page 9, which major US newspaper is most successful? Why?
6. Why is the 1st Amendment important to journalism? What would happen if it didn't exist?
7. What's the difference between an editor-in-chief and the arts editor?
8. If you were writing a story about your neighborhood's YMCA, who might be a credible source?
9. Do you think Hollywood movies are a credible source on real life situations? Why or why not?
10. What do you think is most important to think about when designing a company logo?
11. Do you think a free-press is important? Why or why not?
12. Why do advertisers establish target markets for different products?
13. Why might it be important to be aware of advertising and its effect on you?
14. Look at the photos at the top of pages 14 and 15. Briefly describe the image each is selling.
15. How do you determine the relationships between people in a play? In your own life?
16. What are some disadvantages of workplace dating? What are some advantages?
17. Why is *how* you say something just as important as *what* you say?
18. Why is it useful for actors to write out their characters' inner monologues?
19. What's the difference between a preconception and a prejudice? Which is worse to have about other people, or for others to have about you?
20. Is it important for a TV network to have diversity in its news team? Why or why not?
21. Is one situation *more* dishonest than another, or is cheating the same no matter what?
22. What are some reasons young people might have for becoming involved in a street gang?
23. True or False - you should wait **as long as possible** before writing your Student Response Letter and getting it to your teacher.