

Excerpt from 9/11: An Exploratory Theatre Piece

By

Co-Created by Keth R. Huff and the members of the Advanced
Performance Theatre Class at BCHS

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NOT FOR DUPLICATION

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ACT IScene 1 Cave Dreams

Darkness. Sounds of water dripping and echoing. Maybe a suggestion of wind. The actors enter in a single file line and follow A who has a lantern or some source of light. A moves towards the wall with the petroglyphs drawn on it. The actors sit in front of the cave drawings and A begins. As each actor finishes they hand off the source of light.

ELDER:

Listen! Come close and gather around. You are about to hear a story. A story of our people and how it is that we came to be here. This is how the story was told to us by the old ones and this is how it will be told to you. We were not always here on this land. For many moons we lived somewhere else; far across the great waters in another place where we were told how to live and what to believe. We endured this mistreatment until we could not endure anymore and so we left without knowing exactly where we were going. We left to start a new life on our own and it is here that our past begins.

SHIPS:

Intro: Our history is as diverse as it is troubled, but as we will come to learn, freedom has always overcome here. In a way, as a civilized nation from the very beginning, building up was the only option. And building up is what we did. In the early 1600's, explorers began to sail across the Atlantic Ocean to North America. These brave souls came for riches at first, but later for an escape. All sailing for a new life with a multitude of different reasons. With this first melting pot of different creeds and livelihoods, the seeds of America were planted, and the roots thrived.

EAGLE:

And so, as a tree plants its roots in the ground, so did our people craft the foundation of their houses. The wings of the eagle slowly spread their shadow over the land.

KING:

Before we came to this land we were watched over by a terrible leader who we called King and that is why we escaped as we did and came here. And for awhile it was good and our people prospered and grew. But there came a time when, far across the sea we heard King's call and he whispered to come back to him. But we were happy and so we

(MORE)

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KING: (cont'd)

ignored his whisper and closed our ears to his words. And so he sent his warriors as a yell across the waters; a yell that we could not ignore and we took up arms against them.

ROAR:

The war against King's warriors was a hard time for our people and there were moments when we thought that he was too powerful to be defeated; his warriors too many. But the will of our people is strong and our warrior's hearts could not be taken. And with a loud roar that could be heard back across the great waters we sent King's warriors back to him and the roar that was heard we called freedom and it means that we are all one; that no person is greater than the other; that you are no better or worse than your brother; it means that we are free and so we created an image; a symbol to show that freedom.

TWO TRIBES:

Our people were not always united as they are now. A long time ago we were split into two great tribes; the tribe of the North and the tribe of the South. And because of this, a great war was fought between the two and many of our ancestors fought against their own kind; some even fought against their own family. We were a broken people then with much pain and hurt; but once the fighting had stopped and our wounds had time to heal; we were made whole and the two great tribes were made a nation and we were once again made one.

THE SECOND WAR:

Since that time we have had many conflicts throughout our history but never did any come so close to where we live as this one. The world had gone mad once before and the second time it happened we did our best to stay out of the conflicts of the great tribes of the world and for a moment of time we did. And just as the stars can only hide from us during the day the Great War found us on a cold night when we were least expecting and dragged us kicking and screaming into the madness of war.

Scene 2: A Day to Remember

The actors move to sit in front of a big white screen.

ELDER:

In the beginning when you were young we told you the history of our people and how it was that we came to be here. But now that you are older we need to talk about a day; one specific day; that was a specific event. This is not a happy story; it is sad and hard to remember. But it is a story of our past and it is our past that has made your present. Our

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ELDER: (cont'd)

people, our land, our country, started as a dream and the dream was beautiful. The dream was about a world where all people could be free, where people would come together to share ideas, where our people would be safe. And from that dream a city was born. A city that started out small and grew and grew until it was the biggest city in our land and everyone was so proud of the city. And the city was not just a city for us but a city for all people of the world to come together and work as one; and we called this city New York.

The Story-Teller sits in a chair
Stg L of the screen and reads from
a big book. The story is
illustrated through the use of
shadow puppets.

THE STORY-TELLER:

If you look closely at New York, you will notice there is an empty spot, right in the middle of the big city. This was where the world trade center was-

Hole shadow puppet; cloth covering
NYC

Knot metaphor with string
introduced puppet here

Now imagine everyone on the world had a string attached to them, always. This empty spot was the place where all the strings met, and became a bow, like the ones on your shoes. Some people do not want to be tied to everyone else. Yes these people want to be a knot all by themselves. And if you look at it this way, knots and bows could make each other stronger if they worked together- but these people wanted to be bigger than the bows on your shoelaces. They wanted to ruin all the strings that tie us humans together, and this is the story of how they tried:

NYC Unveiled here with the skyline
The sun rose on the world trade center like any other morning. It was an any other day. For the any other people who lived in a place like no other, New York.

People puppets introduced here;
going about everyday lives

The men and women of Manhattan hailed taxis and the children boarded school buses- the same as you every morning. Some off to the world trade center.

There were all sorts of people who worked at the world trade center. People in suits and people in boots, all moving about in the two towers.

(CONTINUED)

As they settled into their desks and made phone calls and filed and copied and shook hands- the sound of an airplane echoed in every bustling hall, the noise came so close that the building began to tremble, and in a new York minute, tower one was struck. Now it's a wonder why a plane would route through a building, but this was no mistake. The people who wanted no part of our world had attacked us. The building stood strong, holding its shape long enough for the people to cover their mouths through the smoke and running down the many staircases. The people held hands, strangers, good friends and co workers hustled each other out of tower one.

But some people stayed behind, they did not leave the building that day, as sometimes people do not make it through. Souls flew from the building like bunches of balloons.

Balloon Puppets

Outside the world trade center, every human turned on their television set, finding that what held us so tightly together was being torn apart.

Before we knew it, a second airplane was heard low in the sky of Manhattan, the second tower, was hit, by the people who didn't like our unity. The towers burned in the New York skyline, and people waited to hear from their family, their friends.

And so quickly, the towers began to shake. They shook like our unity, humans connection to each other. The towers began to topple and we didn't feel so safe.

But as the rubble cleared, and all that remained climbed from the ashes we stood right back up, linking arms and cleaning up a mess that we didn't make but were made to clean.

Firefighters, Ladders and truck puppets introduced

The human race went on, we tied ourselves together again, stronger than ever.

Everyone connected holding hands together

Because you didn't have to be there to remember.

Scene 3: I Remember that Day (10
years Later)

ELDER:

Buildings burn; ashes rain, towers fall, people die and we
move on. Children are born, a generation is raised in the
wake and still we move on. Time passes...we live...we
rebuild...and we remember. I remember.