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## Directing "Time Stands Still" by Donald Margulies in Studio 115

Victoria Fortune

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***Time Stands Still***

**Director's Journal**

Victoria Fortune

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of  
THEA 482

*University of Mary Washington*

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## ***I. Initial Thoughts***

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I had selected *Time Stands Still* because I was attracted to the emotional depths presented within the piece. Uncovering the heart of the story of Sarah and James is one that will take a lot of emotional analysis and understanding, as Margulies offers many layers to these characters and the relationship between them. My worries going into this process are mostly technical ones, such as the acquisition of the multitude of props, the execution of the set and what the piece requires, and making sure that the blocking is specific, effective, and fluid. With the furniture and/or playing spaces required for the text to make sense and provide dynamic blocking, I worry that there will not be sufficient space in Studio. This will require the scenic designer and I to take a more creative approach and determine what base furniture pieces are absolutely necessary.

The pregnancy belly, shrapnel scarring, and medical equipment (crutches, sling, etc.) also present challenges. We could purchase a pregnancy pillow, or make one ourselves. The important thing is that we can get it on in time and that it does not look unnatural on the actor while wearing it. The shrapnel scarring is something that we can take our time with. Shrapnel will cause swelling in the surrounding area of where it lodged itself, and causes the skin to feel like stiff rubber. If there is a lot of shrapnel left in the skin by doctors, there will often be little black dots where you can see the remaining metal, and the skin will be lumpy where the shards are. Shrapnel scars can either appear as various abrasions on the affected area that are a dark pink, getting darker in color the less fresh the wound is, or larger, more swollen and cracked abrasions that appear to separate the face into puzzle pieces of sorts. I think it'd translate better to the audience the scarring if we go with the former look, as it would distort the actor's face less and we'd be able to make up the actor's face and body with greater ease. The medical equipment shouldn't be too hard as Studio 115 has some things we need, but the actor's mobility will be limited. Due to the fact that there will be limited space in Studio already and it'd be difficult to obtain a knee immobilizer (or something similar) or an arm sling, I think I will go forward with having the actor just be on crutches in the first act with some soft cast on her leg.

I feel excited to begin the rehearsal process and dive in to all that this piece has to offer. My goals are to improve my ability to communicate with my actors, become more observant regarding the whole picture, and feel more confident in my current skills as a director. Previously, the closer we got to the production, the more tired I got when I was presented with problems and the quicker I wanted them to be solved and finished, and so I would sacrifice a level of quality or detail for an easy solution. I will strive to remain patient so that no element of the show is compromised. Another challenge ahead of me is the timing - any other shows that have had the slot wherein they rehearse one semester and perform the next has never had a full run-through until returning from winter break, and some of them did not have a full run at all before performing. I want to ensure that this not only happens but that the actors and myself feel totally prepared before we leave for break. Overall, though, I feel as though I am ready to face these challenges.

## II. Auditions

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### A. Sides<sup>1</sup>

- *Sarah + James 1*
- *Sarah + James 2*
- *Mandy + Sarah*
- *Richard 1*
- *Richard 2*

### B. Auditionees (**Bolded** were cast)

- Mina Sollars
- **William Pineda**
- **Hollis Cobb**
- Gus Grohmann
- Megan Dinneen
- Sea Coady
- Shannon Hardy
- Diana Bloom
- **Genesis Simmons**
- Allie Stanich
- **Jess Elkins**
- Nia Blondell

### C. Notes (Letters next to a person's name represents the character they played when reading. **J** = James, **S** = Sarah, **R** = Richard, **M** = Mandy)

- *Mina + William - **S+J 1***
  - Serious take on the scene from both
  - William typical hands
  - William used acting blocks
  - Mina quiet - got better as scene progressed
  - Mina young w/ honest eye contact
- *Hollis (**J**), Gus (**R**), + Mina (**S**) - **R1***
  - Hollis reacting & listening earnestly
  - Mina repeating same emotion
  - Gus good choices w/ vocals
  - Gus expressive face but rigid legs
  - Mina breathy words
- *Gus (**J**), William (**R**), + Mina (**M**) - **R2***

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<sup>1</sup> (Copies of sides are provided in folder behind the Director's Journal)

- 
- Gus same vocal choices as when he was Richard
  - William fighting for right
  - Gus pauses between words
  - William bringing energy
  - Mina so bright
  - Mina + Hollis - S+J 1
    - Mina more expressive
    - Hollis not so serious - good
    - Mina rigid stance
    - Hollis shifty feet
    - Hollis easy presence
  - Megan + Gus - S+J 2
    - Megan taking time- thoughtful
    - Gus relaxed posture but awkward arm movements
    - Megan good consonants
    - Megan fair + gradual build
  - Hollis (J), William (R), + Mina - R 2
    - William gets the easy humor
    - Mina more choices
    - Hollis plays young
  - Sean (S) + Shannon (M) - M+S
    - Sean reactive
    - Shannon minimal eye contact
    - Sean body language
    - Shannon plays too old for M
  - Shannon + Hollis - S+J 1
    - Shannon intense eyes
    - Shannon played “buddies” line
    - Shannon plays sarcasm well
    - Hollis more energized
  - Sean + Hollis - S+J 2
    - Hollis gestures
    - Good give + take
    - Hollis can be worked with
  - Sean (M) + Shannon (S) - M+S
    - Sean different body language
    - Shannon no inner monologue
  - Allie (M) + Nia (S) - M+S

- 
- Allie perky
  - Allie anxious movements
  - Allie cute spirit
  - Allie (S) + Nia (M) - M+S
    - Allie nice voice
    - Allie not playing the humor
  - Diana (M) + Genesis (S) - M+S
    - Diana making choices + fighting for right
    - Genesis listening
    - Diana swallowing consonants
    - Genesis young
    - Genesis choices - following script
  - Diana (S) + Genesis (M) - M+S
    - Diana fighting for right
    - Both speaking quickly
    - Genesis attentive
  - Nia (M) + Genesis (S) - M+S
    - Nia wide & expressive eyes
    - Nia taking time
    - Nia lovely structure
  - Nia (S) + Diana (M) - M+S
    - Nia formal
  - Jess (M) (read w/ stage manager) - M+S
    - Jess invested
    - Jess energetic
    - Jess active thoughts & reactions
  - Jess (read w/ stage manager) - S+J 1
    - Jess lovely inner monologue
  - Jess (read w/ stage manager) - S+J 2
    - Perfect dry humor
    - Trying new things physically every time

### III. Rehearsals

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#### A. Preparation & Goals

- Prior to rehearsals, I knew that I wanted to spend time building comfortable connections between the actors as the show consisted of a pair of couples, and three of the people had known each other for many years. I had looked up team-building exercises and compiled a list of ones I wanted to try, as well as ideas of my own, to use to further the relationships between the actors.
- It was also important for me to ensure the comfort of the actors of Sarah and James when we worked the end of Act 1 Scene 3, in which the characters make out and begin to have sex. I knew I didn't want it to go anywhere far, so I would just have to focus on the choreography of intimate kissing. I did not have any experience in this other than having two actors share one kiss in the first scene I'd ever directed, so I looked up various techniques to employ to ensure the comfort of the actors as we went through this process. In addition to these techniques, I researched and set guidelines for blocking the intimacy.
  - **7 Breath Connection Exercise** - Actors put palms together & share 7 deep breaths together, then hold hands & share 7 deep breaths, then touch foreheads & share 7 deep breaths.
  - **5 Things** - To build familiarity, actors tell each other five things about themselves. This can be facts about them, things that happened that day, or things that they often think about.
  - **Connected Breath** - Actor A sit with their back against Actor B's chest, Actor B wraps arms around Actor A, Actor A rests their arms on Actor B's, and both actors rest their heads on the other's shoulders. They sit like this and share full breaths.
  - **Guidelines**
    - ◆ Clarify boundaries
    - ◆ Determine safe word
    - ◆ Start at a slow pace
    - ◆ Practice individual parts before combining them
    - ◆ Maintain open & clear communication

#### B. Warm-Ups (Warm-Ups with an \* are ones we most commonly used)

- I like to start my rehearsals with group warm-ups as a means of transitioning into the right headspace for rehearsal, bonding with the cast, and skill building for scenes. Most of them are improv-based, but there are a couple that are simple warm-ups. I will alternate warm-ups, but I have a few that I routinely do. I've found that these warm-ups will make the cast more comfortable with each other and myself and often put them in a better mood for rehearsals, which helps to make the environment much more inviting and easy. It also helps to get some silliness out and build energy for rehearsals, and makes for an easier transition than just jumping right into rehearsals. I use improv-based games as I find that they best help to teach



and hone skills including: listening, quick-thinking, focus on multiple things, active thought, control of energy, eye contact, and giving to your partner.

- ***Improv-Based Games***
  - ◇ Big Booty\*
  - ◇ 8 Things\*
  - ◇ Beasty Boys
  - ◇ Zip Zap Zop\*
  - ◇ Energy Build-Up
- ***Warm-Ups***
  - ◇ Peel Banana\*
  - ◇ Banana, Prune
  - ◇ Count Breathing
  - ◇ Play the Alphabet

### C. **Process**

#### ➤ Monday, Oct. 21

- **7:30 pm - 9 pm** (Jess Elkins, Hollis Cobb) - *DuPont 211*
  - ◆ Bonding Exercises
    - *I had set up an obstacle course that the pair had to lead each other through blindfolded. Very high success in establishing connection and familiarity.*
    - *I had Hollis and Jess do Connected Breath and share 5 Things about themselves while in this position. **Any rehearsal that was just Jess and Hollis or William and Genesis, I had the couple do this before doing scene work.***
  - ◆ Read Scene 1.1

#### ➤ Tuesday, Oct. 22

- **9 pm - 10 pm** (Jess Elkins, Genesis Simmons) - *DuPont 310*
  - ◆ Read Scene 1.2

#### ➤ Wednesday, Oct. 23

- **9 pm - 10 pm** (Jess Elkins, Hollis Cobb) - *DuPont 310*
  - ◆ Block Scene 1.1

#### ➤ Saturday, Oct. 26

- **9 am - 12 pm** (Genesis Simmons, Hollis Cobb, William Pineda, Jess Elkins) *DuPont 313*
  - ◇ Bonding Exercises
    - *For this rehearsal, I had set up a scavenger hunt across campus for each couple to solve. Each clue had a puzzle piece with a clue to another piece, and at the end the two groups had to combine all of their*

*pieces to find their final location where a prize awaited. Once that was complete, I had them go through a grid maze that they had to complete silently as a group. Afterwards, I had them play **Big, Tiny, Twisted**, then **Walk-Run-Sit-Jump-Stop** to work on paying attention and listening to each other and being creative with their bodies in the space. Afterwards we all played **Keepy Uppy** outside, and ended the day much more comfortable and happy with each other.*

➤ Monday, Oct. 28

- **7 pm - 10:30 pm** (Genesis Simmons, Hollis Cobb, William Pineda) *DuPont 211*
- **9:15** (*Add Jess Elkins*)

◆ Table Work

- *In the interest of timing and allowing the actors to have time to do their analyses, I held a couple rehearsals where we read scenes before conducting table work.*
- *At the end of our first readthrough, I tasked the actors with determining the Myers-Briggs personality type, Enneagram personality type, and the astrological sun, moon, and ascendent of their characters in addition to their regular character analyses. I am personally invested in these sorts of personality indicators, and I wanted to provide the actors, especially the two Freshmen, with different methods to understand their character more personally. I understand that not everyone finds the same thing helpful when analysing their character, and so I chose these three personality indicators as they provide different insight into the way a person's thoughts, feelings, and actions all interact.*

➤ Tuesday, Oct. 29

- **9 pm - 11 pm** (Genesis Simmons, Hollis Cobb, Jess Elkins, William Pineda) *DuPont 310*

◇ Block Scene 1.2

➤ Friday, Nov. 1

- **10 pm - 11 pm** (Hollis Cobb, Jess Elkins) *DuPont 313*

◇ Block Scene 2.2

➤ Sunday, Nov. 3

- **9 am - 12 pm** (Genesis Simmons, Hollis Cobb, Jess Elkins, William Pineda) *DuPont 313*

◇ Work Scene 1.2

◇ Block Scene 2.1

◇ Block Scene 2.4

- 
- Wednesday, Nov. 6
    - **10:30 pm - 11:30 pm** (Jess Elkins, Hollis Cobb) *DuPont 310*
      - ◇ Scene 1.1
  - Thursday, Nov. 7
    - **10:00 pm - 11:30 pm** (Jess Elkins, Hollis Cobb) *DuPont 310*
      - ◇ Block 1.3
  - Friday, Nov. 8
    - **12 pm - 1 pm** (Jess Elkins, Hollis Cobb) *DuPont 310*
      - ◇ Scene 2.2
    - **2 pm - 3 pm** (Jess Elkins, Hollis Cobb)
      - ◇ Scene 2.3
  - Tuesday, Nov. 12
    - **6 pm - 7 pm** (Jess Elkins, Genesis Simmons) *DuPont 310*
      - ◇ Scene 1.2f
    - **9 pm - 10:30 pm** (Jess Elkins, Hollis Cobb)
      - ◇ Scene 1.3a - 1.3b
  - Thursday, Nov. 14
    - **9:30 pm - 11 pm** (Jess Elkins, Hollis Cobb) *DuPont 310*
      - ◇ Scene 2.3
  - Friday, Nov. 15
    - **2 pm - 3 pm** (Jess Elkins, Hollis Cobb, Genesis Simmons, William Pineda) *DuPont 310*
      - ◇ Scene 2.4
  - Saturday, Nov. 16
    - **11 am - 12 pm** (Jess Elkins, Hollis Cobb, Genesis Simmons, William Pineda) *DuPont 313*
      - ◇ Cast & Production Team Marketing Photos
    - **12 pm - 2 pm**
      - ◇ Stumble-Through & Designer Run
        - *We combined our first stumble-through with our designer run so that the scenic and lighting designers had an accurate idea of the movement throughout the show. It went really well, but there were issues with blocking and lines in 1.2 and 2.1, so we used the next hour to run those scenes*
    - **2 pm - 3 pm**
      - ◇ Scenes as needed
  - Sunday, Nov. 17

- **9 am - 9:15 am** (Jess Elkins, Hollis Cobb, Genesis Simmons, William Pineda)  
*DuPont 310*
    - ◇ Warmup
  - **9:15 am - 10:45 am**
    - ◇ Scene 1.2a - 1.2g
  - **10:45 am - 11:15 am**
    - ◇ Scene 2.1a
  - **11:15 am - 12 pm** (*Release* Genesis Simmons)
    - ◇ Scene 2.1b
- Monday, Nov. 18
- **9 pm - 11 pm** (Jess Elkins, Hollis Cobb, William Pineda, Genesis Simmons) *DuPont 310*
    - ◇ Scene 1.2a - 1.2g
- Tuesday, Nov. 19
- **9 pm - 11 pm** (Jess Elkins, Hollis Cobb, William Pineda, Genesis Simmons) *DuPont 310*
    - ◇ Scene 2.1a - 2.1b
- Wednesday, Nov. 20
- **7 pm - 8 pm** (Genesis Simmons, William Pineda) *DuPont 313*
    - ◇ Couple Bonding
      - *I had set up an obstacle course that the pair had to lead each other through blindfolded.*
  - **8 pm - 9 pm** (*Add* Jess Elkins, Hollis Cobb) *DuPont 310*
    - ◇ Scene 1.2a - 1.2g
  - **9 pm - 9:45 pm**
    - ◇ Scene 2.1a - 2.1b
  - **10 pm - 11 pm** (*Release* Genesis Simmons, William Pineda)
    - ◇ Scene 2.2
- Friday, Nov. 22
- **12 pm - 1 pm** (Jess Elkins, Hollis Cobb) *DuPont 310*
    - ◇ Scene 1.1
  - **2 pm - 3 pm** (Jess Elkins, Hollis Cobb, William Pineda, Genesis Simmons) *DuPont 310*
    - ◇ Scene 2.4
- Saturday, Nov. 23
- **10 am - 10:45 am** (Jess Elkins, Hollis Cobb) *DuPont 310*
    - ◇ Scene 1.1
  - **10:45 am - 12 pm**

- 
- ◇ Scene 1.3
    - **12 pm - 1 pm**
      - ◇ Lunch Break
    - **1 pm - 2:30 pm**
      - ◇ Scene 2.2
    - **2:30 pm - 4 pm**
      - ◇ Scene 2.3
  - Monday, Dec. 2
    - **8 pm - 9 pm** (Jess Elkins, Hollis Cobb, William Pineda, Genesis Simmons) *DuPont 310*
      - ◇ Transition Work
        - *I had decided that I wanted the transitions to operate more naturally as if the characters were bringing and putting away props and set pieces. I thought it would be more entertaining for the audience to watch the characters' lives continue naturally, and that it would help transitions to flow more naturally.*
    - **9 pm - 11 pm**
      - ◇ Scene 1.2a - 1.2g
  - Tuesday, Dec. 3
    - **9 pm - 11 pm** (Jess Elkins, Hollis Cobb, William Pineda, Genesis Simmons) *DuPont 310*
      - ◇ Run Act 1
  - Thursday, Dec. 5
    - **7 pm - 8 pm** (Jess Elkins, Hollis Cobb, William Pineda, *ADD* Genesis Simmons when available) *DuPont 310*
      - ◇ Run Act 2
    - **8 pm - 11 pm**
      - ◇ Run Show
  - Friday, Dec. 6
    - **5 pm - 7 pm** (Jess Elkins, Hollis Cobb, William Pineda, *DISMISS* Genesis Simmons when needed) *DuPont 310*
      - ◇ Run Show
    - **7 pm - 8 pm**
      - ◇ TBD based on needs
        - *We ran Scene 1.2, and Genesis rejoined us immediately after her scene was finished.*
  - Sunday, Dec. 8

- 
- **12 pm - 2 pm** (Jess Elkins, Hollis Cobb, William Pineda, Genesis Simmons) *DuPont 310*
    - ◇ Run Show

**D. Notes**<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> (Copies of rehearsal notes are provided in folder behind Director's Journal)

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## ***IV. Technical Rehearsals***

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### **A. Preparation & Goals**

- The Stage Manager, Carly Bishop, and I had made it our goal at the beginning of the process to make sure that tech would run as smoothly as it could. Both of us had experience with messy and/or hectic technical rehearsals in Studio, and we were determined to not have to repeat that. We made sure that we had all props that were not consumables prepared and accounted for two weeks before the start of break. We checked in repeatedly with the lighting and costume designers to make sure that costumes and lights were all set before the end of the semester.
- My goal was to complete a run with full tech on Monday night, complete another run on Tuesday night, and then have another run on Wednesday night if we deemed it necessary.

### **B. Process**

- Emma Hastings, our costume designer, had a night class on Monday, so we decided to wait until Tuesday to incorporate costumes as she had all the pieces she'd rented from the department. I had run into difficulty with the balloons while collecting consumable props, so I had arrived to tech twenty minutes late. This did not affect anything, as Flo Medina, our makeup designer, was still putting makeup on Jess' face. Our original plan was to put scar makeup on the left side of her face, her neck, her left arm, and her left leg. However, there turned out to be significantly less face glue in the bottle than we had previously thought, and so we made the decision to only include it on her face so we could have enough for performances. We completed a full run with sound and lighting, and had worked through curtain call a few times.
- We had Emma Hastings on Tuesday night, and so we were able to incorporate costumes. However, not all of the costume pieces were accounted for like we'd believed, and so we were missing a pair of shoes and a purse for Genesis for Act 1 Scene 2, two jackets for William and Genesis, and a dress for Jess during Act 2 Scene 1 (this was because the piece we purchased for her was too see-through to wear onstage). Carly and I had provided alternate dresses for Jess, but neither of them fit or looked good, so Jess made a quick run home to grab a blue cocktail dress she had. The dress was ultimately the best choice, as we had all thought it suited her character more so than what we'd provided anyway. We went through most of the show with complete technical elements, but were unable to do the last scene before midnight. Because of this, as well as for the comfort of myself and the actors, we decided to have rehearsal the next evening.
- Since mine and Jess' evening class would not get out until late Wednesday night, we decided to forego lighting and sound so that we did not have to use time to set up the system and turn it off again, and could use that time to run through the show instead. We were still going to be doing full transitions and using props and costumes, now that all of the costume pieces were

collected. After everything was set up and makeup was applied, we began our run at 10:20pm. When it approached 11:45pm and I realized we would be unable to complete a full run, I had the actors change into their costumes for Act 2 Scene 3 so that they could run the transition into Act 2 Scene 4 with the quick change, which was the only change they had not had the chance to complete the night before. Afterwards, we ran curtain once more, and I had a discussion with the actors. Since we had run the show multiple times before break, completed almost two full runs with lighting and sound, and had now run all costume changes at least once, we determined we were at a comfortable place for performance and did not need to arrive early to call.

### C. Notes

#### ➤ Day One - 1/13/19

##### ■ *ACTOR NOTES*

- **H** - leave the duffle bag in front of the stool so it doesn't limit your movement
- **H** - quicker "sent you another one"
- **H** - Cheat out your freaked out flight attendant face
- **All** - Quicker to pick up on cues in 1.2
- **H** - Laugh w/W on "Central Services"
- **H** - Loved the "Stanford" like you knew it was impressive
- **H** - Remember to shudder
- **All** - Review lines in 1.2 - there are little one-or-two word lines that you're forgetting
- **W** - "Almost four" - Making it seem better to Sara
- **W** - Remember to build the volume so H has a reason to shush you
- **J** - I love your physicality when you slouch down in the chair
- **JJ** - I love the look on your face when Mandy moves closer to you
- **J** - Remember to make noise whenever you get up/et down
- **J** - SO smart to have a brain freeze
- **W** - Your voice was a bit weak today, its okay to be a bit more powerful as Ricard
- **H** - Don't block yourself off when you get down on one knee
- **H** - Make more eye contact w/ J - don't block yourself when fitting w/ er - Go all the way into the alcove when you try to leave
- **H** - It's okay to touch J when you kiss her - you have been kissin tis woman FOR YEARS - also remember to touch her leg @ especially like tis
- **H** - Don't start Act 2 w/ a swigg
- **G** - Move like you pregnant, b
- **H** - You HATE those seats, man
- **H** - "It's kitsch" - be loud enough for her to say inside voice



- **W** - now that you have that time & preparing to pour your glass, go ahead and pour your glass before the toast. Just use your drink as an easy leeway
- **All** - Review 2.1

■ *PROD NOTES*

- **Carly/Emma** - Do we have a trash can for the beginning?
- **Carly/Austin** - Can lights out begin earlier after Scene 1?
- **Carly** - Can we have a different song for scene 1 transition? Maybe have that one after 2.2?
- **Carly/Austin** - Can lights out begin earlier after Scene 2?
- **Carly** - Can we have a different song for scene 2 transition?
- **Carly/Emma** - Would you like me to bring in wrapping paper? Would Shannon be able to rewrap the gift every performance?
- **Carly** - Can we wait a bit before blackin out?
- **Carly/Emma** - Can the cigarette be preset in the camera bag & the lighter be preset in the drawer?

➤ Day Two - 1/14/19

■ *ACTOR NOTES*

- **H** - Wait until you're at the lamp to say "let me get the uh" - hold your hand there until the lights come up
- **H** - Don't pour so much water - takes up time & more time for her to drink
- **J** - SUCH a clear inner monologue
- **H** - You're listening so well
- **J & H** - Don't leave the back door open when going to change
- **H** - PASSPORT
- **H** - Much stronger horror explanation
- **H** - Go to help J when she's getting out of chair in 1.2a
- **G** - Lovely inner monologue while the fellas are talking
- ~~**G** - Can you tap W's arm & pocket to indicate to him to give you your phone?~~
- **H** - Look over your 1.2b lines - pick up the pace
- **G** - Take your EagleOne out of your phone
- **H** - If J drops her crutch, can you find a way to fix it when you're next by her? You don't want to leave your girlfriend stranded. Just watch out for that in general - **all**
- **H** - Give J your mug a bit quicker
- **H** - Great reactions whenever Mandy says something weird to Sarah
- **W** - Great timing
- **All** - You're very funny! Your conversation seems easy and natural
- **W** - Remember to kiss G's hand after smelling it

- **W** - It looked like blocking when you move @ “Sid & Nancy” - don’t travel so far, you block G from HL
- **J** - Great empathy when talking about Tariq’s kids
- **H** - I love the inner monologue & the expressions you’re making on the couch
- **W** - Keep the blocking where you walk around the island rather than go behind the girls
- **J** - Funny “So?” head shake @ G’s “I saw this documentary”
- **H** - Smooth recovery w/ lines @ “We’ve been putting ourselves”
- **H** - Thoughtful “I had lots of time to think” hospital bit
- **H** - Cut J off earlier @ confession
- **H** - Watch out for shift feet
- **H** - I like the getting up @ “How could you fall in love” rather than “Oh my god”
- **H** - Don’t face all the way towards J when yelling at her - cheat out
- **H** - We’ve lost the passion in the angry rant. Don’t rant just bc they’re your lines. Talk bc you have so much that you *need* to say - you’re frustrated! What gets you frustrated?
- **H & W** - Put the couch aligned w/ the red spikes
- **W** - Hilarious reaction to “wouldn’t it be awesome if..”
- **J** - If the book is upside down, don’t fix it once you’ve opened the book - then the audience knows
- **J** - Don’t face the floor @ “Poor Richard”
- **H** - NEVER let your shoulder go fully upstage
- **G** - Move W’s jacket onto the counter before sitting on the stool
- **G** - Step downstage a bit when defending Richard so you’re not right behind him
- **W** - Put the trash by the door
  - ◆ **H** - Take it offstage w/ you in transition
- **All** - Be careful when leaning on the counter - it only has 3 legs
- **H** - Keep your eyes on J while she considers opening up to you - remain focused on her while she recounts the event
- **J** - I loved the looking around after “make a home”
- **J** - If he has the remote in his hand, go ahead & take it from him
- **J & H** - Be quicker to pick up on cues in 2.3
- **J** - Go to the counter through the chair & sofa
- **J & H** - We need to accelerate the tempo & build urgency earlier
- **H** It’s the left hand
- **H** - SCOFF

- **J** - Smart & smooth save w/ lines

- **PROD NOTES**

- **Shannon** - Can we put more water in the scotch? It's a bit dark, should be more amber
- **Emma** - Don't we have coats for G + W in scene 2? Can we get some?
- **Emma** - Can we find a purse for G?
- **Carly** - Can we switch Evanescence w/ the song that's after 2.3?
- **Shannon** - Can all bags be cleared during intermission so that J doesn't have to return & grab things?

➤ Day Three - 1/15/20

- **ACTOR NOTES**

- **H** - Can you get the water w/ more urgency? Also, don't put away water until you go back for scotch - takes too much time
- **H** - Take less time w/ the food - you can throw away food & examine while the next you're talking about the one prior
- **H** - PASSPORT - remember to take it out during 1.2 transition
- **G** - Remember to go in for the hug
- **G & H** - Talk about the neighborhood as you take off coats
- **G** - Don't act so much while you're making note of *Brazil*
- **W & H** - Don't take so much time during "dreams & meds" bit
- **G** - Move excitedly over to grab balloons & meet Sarah
- **H** - Shudder & go right back to talking - don't pause in between
- **G** - Not such a big pause before "You know, like where?"
- **G** - Don't give such a big "You're hurting my hand"
- **J** - Don't pause before "congratulations"
- **W** - You keep skipping the "creepy men" line
- **W** - Don't be so angry during "Richard's hot girlfriend" bit. I loved what you were doing before but we've lost some of the sarcastic humor
- **W** - Quicker pick up on "I was at ICP"
- **W** - Don't hunch over
- **W & H** - Walk on the ends of each other's lines w/ "I'll go with you" bit
- **G** - Reel back some of the energy - she's appearing less authentic
- **G** - Take it a step back on the "my dad" joke
- **J** - I liked when you didn't make eye contact until after "hmm?" can we bring that back?
- **W** - Review where you say "Don't have to do this"
- **J & H** - Fight for right more in quarrel before viewing pictures
- **G** - Don't lean over so much to look at photos

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- **W** - Get to the couch by the couch @ “Maybe it’d be good for you”
  - **G** - The “Oh my god”, “Are those burns?”, & “Is he dead?” have to be less put together & quiet
  - **J** - I love the look you had yesterday @ I saw this documentary - can we keep that?
  - **G** - Not such a happy wave to J, more a polite & uncomfortable wave
  - **H** - Replace bowls while J is moving, attention’s on her
  - **H** - You keep missing “a crane could come crashing down”
  - **H** - Not so long of a pause before “Lots of time to think”
  - **J** - Good reaction of pain when he squeezed your knee
  - **H** - Review the page where she asks you how you knew
  - **J** - Can you put the crutches on the other side of the counter?
  - **H** - “Waiter arm” has disappeared, but now you’ve gained “limp half arm”
  - **H** - “These things happen” - Rush to assure her, move forward quickly
  - **H** - Your anger has to translate to your body - rushed movement, tense hands/forearms
  - **H** - Review the freakout bit - lines are getting mixed up
  - **J** - Can “I fell” be more of a pained reaction?
  - **G** - Keep an ear out for cues so that your back isn’t turned @ “Sit...”
  - **H** - Feel free to use your outside voice earlier while ranting
  - **H & W** - Swap who is on which side when moving couch
  - **G** - You keep missing “They sucked”
  - **G** - Don’t be so scared w/ “One little scallop won’t hurt”
  - **W** - Are you motioning to her before you get up?
  - **W & J** - Use the short glasses for 2.1
  - **H** - Don’t take so long w/ “It’s coming”
  - **H & J** - I love you going to help her up from sitting & her glaring on couch
  - **W** - More apologetic “piece has been assigned”
  - **H** - Less angry, more hurt reaction to “maudlin”
  - **H** - You’ve got to open up, my boy
  - **W** - Can you step slightly more DS @ “I knew you’d have a fit”
  - **H & J** - Great shove
- *PROD NOTES*
    - **Shannon** - The whisky bottle should be on the counter at the start of 2.1

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## V. *Self-Reflection*

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One of my goals with *Time Stands Still* was to create a lovely show that could affect others, but primarily I wanted to cultivate an environment where the actors felt comfortable and challenged, and where I could sufficiently learn as worked. Reflecting on the process, I feel as though I have accomplished my goals. I am satisfied with the final product and all of the work that everyone - designers, actors, electricians, stage managers, and myself - had contributed. Saying that, I acknowledge that it was not a perfect show and that there were things that, if I'd had the chance, I would fix or do differently as a director.

### A. Process

What I'm most proud of is the rehearsal process. It was such an invigorating, challenging, and incredible period of time, and I feel proud and delighted that rehearsal became something that myself and the actors actively looked forward to. The cast and I grew to be close to each other during the process, and we had this wonderful balance of joy and determination throughout rehearsal. In saying that, there were a couple of bumps in the road along the way. Due to conflicts with *Fun Home* and evening classes, we were not able to regularly have all four actors together to rehearse for a few weeks. Additionally, when *Fun Home* went into tech, there was a two-week period in the middle of the process in which we could only have two, *maybe* three rehearsals for the whole week. Because of this, there were not many rehearsals spent on the two long scenes that involve all four characters until after the off-book date. When we started having rehearsals off-book, we'd be trudging through the scenes because the actors were not totally comfortable with the blocking without the challenge of remembering their lines. So, if I were to do this again, I would want to prioritize finding more time for those scenes before launching the actors into being off book.

I would also want to spend more time on Sarah's physicality when walking with a cane. Jess and I had spent a lot of time making sure that she could move realistically and sufficiently using the crutches, but because we didn't have a cane until tech, we were unable to work on that physicality as much. When rehearsing, we had used a single crutch as a substitute and had discussed the ways in which her mobility would be different/improved. However, that obviously did not offer the same movement that the cane did, but when we had gotten to use the cane during tech we did not have as much time as I would have liked to fully work on the physicality of using a cane.

Speaking of tech, I'd want to spend more time during tech making sure that all of the moments we'd fine-tuned before break remained fine-tuned after we returned. I think that, for the most part, what was rehearsed was performed, but I had noticed that there were great moments of vulnerability or humor that were previously rehearsed that were lost as tech and performances went on. I think that I had not done enough to ensure that we retained those moments during tech, either due to time or a distribution of focus on other things. Next, I would have preferred to have been able to complete three runs of the show for technical rehearsals rather than one and two almost-complete runs, so I would allot more time for tech.

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Despite these difficulties, I believe that I have grown as a director during *Time Stands Still* in a way that I had not during a rehearsal process before. Although I'd directed a full-length and various scenes before, I hadn't directed anything of this caliber or with actors with such different ways of communicating. I felt I had learned so much more about assessing the moods of everybody, observing the ways the actors best learn and communicate, determining what was needed in a moment of struggle, and how to best articulate my direction to each actor so they may understand and act more efficiently. One of my goals when I'd cast William was to do what I could to encourage him to make different choices, as he's talented but has a tendency to stick to what he's comfortable with. This involved making him aware of the typical poses, gestures, positions, and vocal choices he would routinely use, and challenging him whenever he would fall back into one of those habits. This helped motivate him to be more creative with his choices.

There were also various moments in which Hollis would come to me after rehearsal to ask about techniques he could adopt so that he could improve and better execute the notes I'd given him. I had given him two different books on acting techniques, and he implemented this knowledge right away. It was thrilling to watch his acting transform into something more purposeful and real and to be able to help him to do that along the way. I felt myself and the actors growing and learning at the same time, which was exciting for me. It was an incredibly fulfilling experience to uncover the depths of these characters and this story with these actors, and I would end each rehearsal feeling nothing but excitement and pride at the work. So, although there were definitely things that could have been better executed, I am still deeply proud of what has been accomplished. The growth that has come from this opportunity has made this a worthwhile experience, and I feel that I did my job as well as I could at this level of experience.

## **B. Performance**

As stated, I am satisfied with the production that we were all able to create. I loved the set and the groundplan, and I thought that the blocking was effective and done mostly well. The lighting and sound worked really well for the show; the costumes worked really well for each character, too. The makeup was beautiful and did a fantastic job telling a story about Sarah upon first look. The technical elements did a fantastic job to serve their purpose in creating a realistic world that the characters belonged in. I think that that the transitions in between each scene were too long. I was proud of the way they flowed, with the actors moving pieces on and off in character, but that they were just a bit too long to be sitting there and watching nothing onstage. We did what we could to make sure they flowed as quickly as possible, but with the costume changes that needed to be made this was unavoidable. I am unsure of the proper solution to this without scraping the idea of the actors executing transitions within the world, but that is something I would want to make an effort to fix if I did this again. I also think some of the blocking would need to be fixed, as there were a few moments where the actors were either very close to the audience or crammed together in a small area due to the slight clutter of the ground plan. However, this was only a slight issue, and the rest of the show felt smooth.

I think that the actors did a splendid job interacting with each other throughout each scene. For the most part, they listened to each other and spoke very earnestly, making their characters shine through the witty and natural dialogue. Like I said, there were moments of vulnerability and humor that did not translate into performances, and I do think those lost moments caused some one-note or stiff deliveries. However, there was great banter and rich relationships between the characters that made up for it.

I think that Hollis was one of the most interesting to watch throughout the show. He was active and did well to show the change that occurs in James from scene to scene. Unfortunately, there were moments where he was facing too far upstage and his face got lost as a result. William was refreshing to watch as he showed off a softer character, playing very well off of his castmates and making natural physical choices. His physical relationship with Genesis was natural and romantic, working well to showcase the differences between their relationship and the one between Hollis and Jess. Genesis was an absolutely lovely Mandy who was truly invested in each moment of the play. Her bright and open energy perfectly contrasted to Jess' dry and sharp delivery. Jess gave a strong performance, though there were moments where it seemed she was relying on muscle memory and was not as invested as the other actors in the moment. Despite these moments, she had beautiful inner monologues and created a captivating narrative with all of her little details that she'd implemented within Sarah, making her feel more like a full character.

Although I understand there were faults with the performance, I believe that it was still a strong production. Though the transitions ate away at time, the scenes made up for the time lost. The actors did a splendid job in bringing these fun, intelligent, and interesting characters to life, and they did justice by Margulies' script. At the heart of this play is a story about the gain and loss of love within our lives, and the changes that come with both. It's a story play that demonstrates the universal truth that there is no "universal truth" in any one issue, personal or global, and I feel that we accomplished that at the end of the day,

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## VI. Research

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### A. Time Stands Still

- *Time Stands Still* - Most of these resources were looked up after the research for the play had been done and were more so for my own curiosity. However, the cornerstone report by Michael Bradley Sheeks was a fantastic point of reference for starting my research. Though it did not serve as the basis for my research, it seriously helped me to categorize what needed to be researched and served as another interpretation of the work that I could learn from, deciding what I agreed with and what I did not.

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### B. Global Events

- *War in Afghanistan & Related Current Events* - These resources were essential in my research on the war in Afghanistan. In order to build a background for the given circumstances, it was important to understand the conflict that's occurring in the area that James and Sarah were working in before the events of the play.

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- *War in Iraq* - These resources provided great information about the war in Iraq. It was important to understand the dangers that James and Sarah were witnessing and reporting, and to understand the timeline of events when building their backstory for the given circumstances.

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- *Syrian-Jordan Refugee Crisis* - These resources were incredibly helpful in familiarizing myself with the refugee crisis in order to understand the significance and topic of the piece that James had written.

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### C. **World Building**

- *Micro Environment* - These were wonderful resources in determining the components of the micro environment of the play. This includes the climate, the social, political, and economic environment of Brooklyn, specifically Williamsburg, and the average salaries for foreign correspondents and photojournalists.

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- *Macro Environment* - These resources were helpful in understanding the elements of macro environment of the play. This includes the social, political, economic, and religious environment of the United States.

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#### D. **Character-Specific**

- *Psychological Phenomena* - These resources helped me in researching the causes and effects of psychological phenomena, specifically PTSD, adrenaline-seeking, the cathartic effect of horror media, and the effects of growing up as a result of divorce/broken homes. These helped me to understand the psychological phenomena and trauma that affect both James and Sarah throughout the play.

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### E. Popular Culture

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