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Advanced Directing 329  
Production Book 2

## Production Book 2

### Script Analysis

#### **Core Action:**

I believe the core action of *Naomi in the Living Room* is the finding of balance in how one begins to accept norms. How people present themselves and then act when these societal norms are broken leads to questions of identity and why do we conceive these expectations as norms.

I want this core action statement to inspire the ensemble to explore these norms we follow every day. I want to be able to figure out and put names to these common norms in which we follow and may not even notice. By exploring these norms I want to find new ways to explore a space and enlighten the audience of these norms. When someone breaks a norm, people react differently, and by experiencing this, it will help us as actors discover new ways to react in ways that will seem even more natural because that is how we reacted as normal people. I want to explore these norms by experimenting with spacial relationships along with the ways in which we sit on furniture. Exploring what these choices do to the dynamics of the characters will create a more fulfilling piece that explores comedy through these discoveries.

Also I want to create a set of norms for each character that are different and not known to the other characters/actors. I feel as this creation will help with the choices and natural reactions to the oddities. By having these established, the way the characters present themselves will be

easier for the actor and their choices will be well thought out along with being consistent. I want the characters to be very clear and full of life.

I want Naomi to be honest and not a stereotype of a mental disease. I want the audience to think it possibly could be just a choice of eccentricity rather than being a mental disease. I feel as though it is a stronger choice to explore her having a choice of being eccentric rather than relying on just knowing the character has a mental disease. This choice will also help John's reveal make more sense without bringing in the idea that John is mentally ill. To me, John's cross dressing seems to be more about John starting to experiment and explore his latent homosexuality. I don't want this show to become offensive because of how easy it is to fall into the stereotyping of cross-dressers and of the mentally handicapped.

### **Given Circumstances**

#### **Environmental Facts**

- **Geographical Location:** Rosemont, Illinois. In this location is where a Hummel Museum is located. The mayor of this town, in 1984, donated his collection of Hummel's to be put in a museum. Thus making Hummel's extremely popular in this area. Hummel's are mentioned several times in the script and are important for John and Johnna in their grieving process.
- **Date:** 2:00pm Sunday April 26 1988. I picked this day and time because it seems like the most likely time for a family visit. Also John and Johnna are dressed up, which makes it seem like they are coming to Naomi's straight from church. I believe it to be April 26, 1988 because that was the year when the play was first performed and the month leaves it open to play with what the weather would be like; can be cold or warm. Also this was a

year before Precious Moment Figurines came out, so Hummel Figurines would be more of the fad.

- **Economic environment:** The characters seem to be of higher middle class. Johnna is wearing pearls, Naomi discusses owning Hummel figurines, Naomi makes references to having many rooms in her house, Johnna and John can afford counseling, and Naomi makes comments about manners on page 19. All of these clues lead me to believe that they live in a higher middle class status rather than a low status or super high status. They can afford nice things, but not super fancy things.
- **Political environment:** On page 23, Johnna states she is for abortion. Johnna seems more like a republican who bends on certain issues. The way she reacts to situations and her concern about the abortion conversation seems to lead me to this assumption. Naomi makes a comment on page 24 about proving Republicans right, which would make me assume that she is democratic since she clearly stated not wanting the other party to be correct. Due to John's cross dressing tendencies I am going to assume he is democratic.
- **Social environment:** In this show, Naomi really has no social institutions that she follows. Due to her mental illness she doesn't seem to abide by the normal structures that Johnna does. Johnna is under the social constructions of society dealing with manners of politeness, sensitivity to personal issues, and other norms of society. Dealing with Naomi makes Johnna have to confront these constructs and she also reveals her views with her reactions to Naomi's antics. John lives in the same social institution as Johnna at the beginning of the show until he shows his true colors as a cross-dresser. This action reveals a new construct in which he follows: breaking the gender norm. Both Johnna and

John's reactions to Naomi help display the social institutions of which they live. The honestly respond to Naomi's awkward breaking of norms shows this.

- **Religious environment:** On page 23, there is talk about Johnna being Christian when discussing Dan Quayle's Grandmother's argument about abortion. Naomi then clearly states she is not a Christian. John's religious point of view isn't hinted at but I believe him to be an agnostic posing as a Christian for the sake of his wife.

### **Previous Action:**

The scene begins in the middle of Naomi giving the tour of her home to John and Johnna. It is best to assume that they had arrived to the house no later than 15 minutes prior to the start of the scene. The living room seems to be the end of the tour, so the couple has probably been drug through the whole house.

### **Attitudes of the Characters:**

Naomi- Naomi begins the scene pretty mellow, but enthused to have John and Johnna over. At the end of the scene she has kicked them out, has a meltdown about being alone, and then decides she had a good time.

John- Is concerned for his mother at the beginning of the scene. He has seen her decay into insanity but still is sensitive about the issue. He doesn't want to baby her but doesn't want her obscene actions to go unnoticed. At the end of the scene he has finally let go of this sensitivity and let's himself loose. He leaves angrily when his mother can't seem to understand why he chooses to dress like Johnna and not her.

Johnna- Johnna begins the scene uncomfortable and confused about how to deal with Naomi. You can tell by this uneasiness that they don't visit often and she does not yet feel comfortable in this environment. Johnna ends the scene completely embarrassed and beginning to understand the severity of her situation with John and his mother.

### **Structure:**

The play is fully climactic in its structure. The scene is a straight expanse of time with nothing edited out from between the time frame of around 2:00pm to 2:30pm that Sunday afternoon in April. The playwright wrote the play in a way that it just clicks moment from moment with reactions always being made off of what has just been spoken. No cues of lights changes or expanses of time are noted.

### **Dramatic Action**

- Please see script for these details
  - Note Major shifts are in Green, Key Moments are in purple, major tempo shifts in red, and rhythm shifts in pink
  - Arc of the scene is located on last page of script

### Moods

#### **Unit 1:**

Touch: scratchy

Taste: peppery

Sight: a old welcome to my humble abode sign

Smell: old lady perfume

Sound: whimsical

Image: a music box

#### **Unit 2:**

-Touch: jagged

-Taste: tart

-Sight: a color changing ball  
-Smell: fruity  
-Sound: abrupt beginning to a beautiful song  
Image: a scream in a silent movie

**Unit 3:**

-Touch: leathery  
-Taste: soapy  
-Sight: old pictures  
-Smell: old people  
-Sound: multiple older voices  
Image: a sleeping lion

**Unit 4:**

-Touch: light  
-Taste: mint  
-Sight: question mark  
-Smell: tater tots  
-Sound: silence  
Image: a lingering pause at an accident

**Unit 5:**

-Touch: sharp  
-Taste: bitter  
-Sight: knives  
-Smell: burnt  
-Sound: screeching  
Image: an interrogation

**Unit 6:**

-Touch: satin  
-Taste: floral  
-Sight: transvestite  
-Smell: floral  
-Sound: opera music  
Image: unwanted surprise party

**Unit 7:**

-Touch: shocking  
-Taste: unpleasant  
-Sight: exit sign  
-Smell: garbage  
-Sound: yelling  
Image: a car crash

**Unit 8:**

-Touch: hard

-Taste: bland

-Sight: infant

-Smell: licorice

-Sound: crying

Image: a toddler's crying fit