

The Making of a Great Moment

By
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JANUARY 6 2017 MRT DRAFT

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CHARACTERS

Mona Barnes

Actor from the Victoria, Canada theater community bicycling a play around the Continent.

Terry Dean

Actor from the Victoria, Canada theater community bicycling a play around the Continent.

No accents or any presumptive Canadian behavior should be used.

CHARACTER PROGRAM BIOS

MONA BARNES is thrilled to be a company member with TVBTC, is thrilled to be able to inspire underserved audiences across the continent with this important work, and is thrilled to be touring this important work by bicycle over the next several years.

Mona received her Masters of Fine Arts in Theatre from the University of Salmon Arm and has since been seen all over British Columbia, mostly in plays. Favorite shows include Telegram for the Man, The Pastor, The Camera Repairman, The Whore of Lake Charles and Why is the Flower Vase Empty, Patricia? (Vickie Nomination). With TVBTC she has collaborated with director Polly Kensington on several works, including Where The Wolves Went, Falling Timber, and Louise and Clara: A feminist retelling. (Vickie Nomination.)

Mona would like to dedicate her performance to you, the spectator. You, the spectator, are why she has chosen her craft. You, the spectator are the reason that she has left her family, her friends, her home. She does this willingly, in the hopes that her performance will perhaps be the catalyst in giving you, the spectator, a fuller life, a more meaningful life, that is powerful and boundless. It would really thrill her if that happened...Please let her know if it did.

Great Moments in Human Achievement marks **TERRY DEAN'S** four hundred and seventh production he has been in and also represents his acting debut in the lower North Americas.

The accidental result of heavy drug use at a farmer's market, Terry Dean was born into a harsh and treacherous set of circumstances. Fortune, however, diverted his seemingly inevitable journey towards a life selling his body for cigarettes and soda and led him instead to a life in the theater, when he was discovered at the age of nine in a public park by the renowned Ontario director Argus Haversham, who instantly offered him a role in his acclaimed and controversial production of Caligula, Untold. As part of a subsequent legal settlement, Dean became the youngest person to be accepted into the Royal Academy of Canadian Dramatic Arts, earning several degrees, certificates, special stamps and has since been performed acts all over Canada, non stop, including on the television in numerous non-recurring roles.

Terry has enjoyed his career so far. He believes himself to be a success, despite what could objectively be described as a trajectory of achievement that seems to be lowering and lowering and lowering with every passing year. Survival is success in his book.

This is his first play he has ever toured by bicycle.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THE MAKING OF A GREAT MOMENT received its world premiere at Merrimack Repertory Theatre, Sean Daniels, Artistic Director, Elizabeth Kegley, Executive Director

THE MAKING OF A GREAT MOMENT was developed at the NYUAD Theatre Program

THE MAKING OF A GREAT MOMENT was also developed at Z Space, San Francisco, Lisa Steindler, Artistic Director

Thanks to Aysan Celik, Danny Scheie and Sean Daniels for being inspiring and the inspiration.

Thank you Lisa Steindler for dramaturgy and wisdom, and to Liisa Ingimudsen for the Canadian dramaturgy.

Thanks guys!

ACT ONE

(A CLICK of a light switch.

A bright ugly light, perhaps a single Fresnel, lights up on MONA and TERRY.

They are completely drenched in sweat. Really really sweaty. Dripping. Especially MONA. A mess.

They're looking up at the light.

MONA is holding a switch. She clicks it again. The lights go out. She clicks it again. The light goes on. Click. Off. Click. On.)

TERRY
Is that all they have?

MONA
I think so.

TERRY
That is all they have.

MONA
It's all that seems to be up there.

TERRY
One light.

MONA
At least it's bright.

TERRY
Yes. At least it's that.

MONA
I can see if they have some barn doors to sharpen the edges.

TERRY
The edge of the one light.

MONA
You're obsessing.

TERRY

Over the one light? I'm obsessing over the one single solitary light we have available to us for our professional theatrical performance? Please, Mona, I beg you, give me another light to obsess about.

MONA

Terry. "We can't let our obstacles turn into a course."

(TERRY gives MONA a look.)

TERRY

Click it off again.

(SHE does.)

TERRY

God!

MONA

What?

TERRY

Look how long that takes to black out!

MONA

It's an old light.

TERRY

They're going to see the quick changes.

MONA

We'll have to add a beat.

TERRY

They're supposed to be quick, Mona. Thus the appellation.

(MONA clicks the light on again.)

TERRY

Not even a fade? Not even a fifty percent. Just on and off.

MONA

Terry that is all I am aware of at the moment.

TERRY

Where'd that girl go?

MONA

Getting our sandwiches.

TERRY

She's the tech contact?

MONA

She's the only person listed.

TERRY

Special skills: Mascara.

MONA

Problem solving, Terry.

Making do.

"This is our clay from which we must mold."

TERRY

Where are we? What is this pit?

MONA

There are people / in the other room.

TERRY

What is this sad pathetic arid desperate backwash Podunk
backwater wasteland of the American landscape?

MONA

New Hampshire. We're in New Hampshire.

And we have to accept that.

It needs us.

Our show is not about the light.

It's about emotion, revelation, transformation.

It is about what we do on that stage.

TERRY

"Stage."

MONA

"A great performance can transform the foulest bog into a -

MONA AND TERRY

-fragrant arena." Angela Bradelhuger.

TERRY

Ah, the great teachers.

MONA

This is our bog.

TERRY

I know we can "do" the show, Mona.

MONA

How about we figure out entrances and exits.

TERRY

This is about respect.

MONA

(Trying to ignore)

We can use the kitchen, / they said.

TERRY

There is a standard that must be reached / in order for us to do our best work.

MONA

And that's a closet. They can unlock it. The audience is coming from the / center..

TERRY

I don't even blame New Hampshire.

MONA

So one of us would have to wait in there once the house / is open.

TERRY

I blame Polly, if we're being honest.

MONA

No Polly rant, please.

TERRY

Why would that bitch book us in this hole?

MONA

It is not a hole.

TERRY

It is a Nursing Home! A very special kind of hole. The hole before the hole.

MONA

"As long as there be a tremble of breath, a soul awaits underneath, waiting to be stirred."

TERRY

You're disgusting.

MONA

(Simmering.)

I am just trying to lift us up, Terry.
Keep the bad feelings down, Terry.
So we can have a good show, Terry.

TERRY

Well, Mona, I don't think we should do the show in conditions like this. If someone doesn't give us another light, we should leave. We should get back on our bicycles and go.

(Beat.)

MONA

You selfish petty brat diva queen.

TERRY

Mona.

MONA

Narcisstic Beast. Man-Avatar of Satan. Hack!

TERRY

I am an award winner.

MONA

I DID NOT. RIDE. SIXTY, TWO, GOD, DAMN, MILES, TO NOT, DO, A SHOW!

TERRY

I did not ride sixty-two miles to be disrespected.

MONA

Would you like to die?

TERRY

Oh my.

MONA

Would you like me to maim multiple parts of your body simultaneously with my teeth? Swallow your blood?

TERRY

OK, I know what's happening here.

MONA

And the GALL.

TERRY

Electrolytes!

(TERRY RUNS grabs some packets of ATHLETIC GOO.)

MONA

Of YOU.

TERRY

We haven't had our elec/trolytes.

MONA

To SUGGEST we don't EXECUTE-

TERRY

How about / blueberry?

MONA

-The ONLY THING of PURPOSE we DO in our GOD DAMN / LIVES.

TERRY

Mmmm blueberry. / Blueberry Mona!

MONA

THE. ONLY. THING-

TERRY

SUCK, MONA, SUCK!

(THEY squeeze the goo packet into their mouths. Voraciously.

Silence.

A gasp for breath.

An immediate change in demeanor. Shock, realization, shame.)

Oh my god! MONA

Oh my god! TERRY

Completely forgot- MONA

How did we forget- TERRY

Electrolytes. MONA

We hadn't had our Electrolytes. TERRY

Stupid! MONA

We were. TERRY

I was seeing flames. MONA

Spinning. Everything was. TERRY

I had this tremendous, boiling, hate. MONA

For me. TERRY

I don't even remember the last ten minutes. MONA

How long have we been here? TERRY

We need to remember to hydrate and electrolyte before...anything. MONA

TERRY

Or you might kill me!

(They LAUGH together at the nature of sudden emotions and how sometimes they just take over.)

TERRY

You know I would never want to cancel a show.

MONA

Oh I know I know you just touched a nerve and I...

TERRY

I just wanted to make sure I was being heard. Sometimes I think I'm not being heard.

MONA

I hear you.

TERRY

I know you do. Most people don't. I know you do.

MONA

I know this is bad.
One light is bad.

But we have to do the show.

Please.

(half joke/threat)

Or else.

TERRY

We will be laughing about this on the road tomorrow.
Another anecdote for the play about the play.

MONA

We will make the best of it.

TERRY

That is what we do.

MONA

That is our mission statement.

Literally.

TERRY

(SNAP OUT to the audience.)

MONA
The Victoria, Canada Bicycle Theatre Company.

TERRY
"We Make the Best of It."

(Beat.

SNAP BACK to the scene.)

MONA
Oo! We need to center, Terry.

TERRY
Oh god. Fine, let's center.

(MONA and TERRY touch each other's
palms and stare into each other's eyes.

Mutual deep breaths.)

MONA
I see commitment.

TERRY
I see solutions.

MONA
I see passion.

TERRY
I see control.

MONA
I see strength.

TERRY
I see endurance.

MONA
I see effort.

TERRY

I see sweat.

I see you're sweating a lot.

MONA

I see a professional.

TERRY

It's really just pouring down your face.
It's hard to look at anything else but the sweat pouring
down your face.
There's a drop just dangling from the end of your nose.
Three drops on your chin, on the cusp of falling off.
One Mississippi two Mississippi three mississ-There they
go. They just fell on your shoe.

(MONA takes a breath in, about to
speak-)

TERRY

You look like a Popsicle. An oozing, salty Popsicle in the
blazing sun at a state fair coating the hand of a bratty
little girl, a molten sugar glaze. I see a snotty wet
glazed donut nobody wants to eat.

(Beat.)

MONA

I see death.

Pale, hollow, skin barely keeping your cheekbones from
poking through.

I see surrender. Like you've surrendered to the forces of
decay. Hello life, I'm Terry Dean and I'm waving the white
flag. Break me down. Eat me away. I shall not fight with
creams, or vigor, or hope. I will observe the slow steady
taking of things away and do nothing to fight time.

I see the end.

(Beat.)

TERRY

There's no shower here, is there.

MONA

There's a sink.

TERRY

I feel dread.

MONA

That's your process. We're on in five minutes.

TERRY

Mona, I fear that one day, this play will destroy us.

MONA

Terry, I hope that one day, this play will remake us.

(Beat.)

TERRY

We shall see who is right, Mona Barnes.

MONA

Yes we will, Terry Dean.

TERRY

For show time is almost upon us.

MONA

Yes. It is almost show time.

TERRY

In New Hampshire.

(Beat.

Then a JUMP TO

THE SHOW.

LIGHTS change abruptly into the "Single
One Big Light."

MONA and TERRY transform into their
onstage personae.)

MONA

What if we were to tell you that that this moment, right
now, is the beginning of a Great Moment in Human
Achievement?

TERRY

What if we were to tell you that you that something momentous was about to happen right here, not only on this...stage, but inside all of you?

MONA

Would you believe it?

TERRY

I might not.

MONA

Would you believe that any of us have the potential to make a species changing impact on humanity?

TERRY

We're going to prove it to you.
We're going to prove it to you right now...

(Beat.)

MONA

Hello.

TERRY

Hello.

(Beat. Then very quickly.)

MONA

Bonjour.

TERRY

Ni Hau.

MONA

Ciao.

TERRY

Nay Hoh.

MONA

Namaste.

TERRY

Hujambo.

| | |
|---------------------|-------|
| Asalām 'alaykum. | MONA |
| Shalom. | TERRY |
| Konichiwa. | MONA |
| Merhaba. | TERRY |
| Marhaba. | MONA |
| Czesc. | TERRY |
| AHN-YOUNG-HA-SE-YO. | MONA |
| Sa-wahd-dee-krap. | TERRY |
| Aloha. | MONA |
| Halo. | TERRY |
| Olá. | MONA |
| Hola. | TERRY |
| Hallo. | MONA |
| E kaaale. | TERRY |
| Sawubona. | MONA |
| Zdravstvuyte. | TERRY |

Saluton.
MONA

Salve.
TERRY
(Latin)

Khaire.
MONA
(ancient Greek.)

Nyny.
TERRY
(ancient Egyptian)

I'm Mona Barnes.
MONA

And I'm Terry Dean.
TERRY

And we are-
MONA

The Victoria Canada Bicycle Theatre Company.
MONA AND TERRY

(THEY bow.)

We are actors.
MONA

Professional actors.
TERRY

And we are here today thanks to many great human achievements.
MONA

We are here because someone asked a question:
TERRY

What can I do?
MONA

What can I do?
TERRY

MONA

What can I do?

TERRY

What can I do?

MONA

And when millions of people ask that question, who knows where it may lead?

(TERRY transforms into BARON KARL DRAIS.)

TERRY

What can I do?

MONA

Baron Karl Drais. Germany. 19th century.

(MONA exits.)

TERRY

We were all starving that summer of 1816. The crops had been lean for years. And then the Volcano made it even worse. Oh my goodness, the volcano. Snowed that whole summer in Europe. And the horses...I wept for hours when my family had to put sweet Elmar and Kaiser to letzte-schlafen. And I cried even harder when we ate them.

What were people going to do without their horses?

"What can I do?"

That is what I wondered as I stewed Elmar's hooves in a pot as part of an effort to turn them into adhesive.

"What can I do?"

I began to scour my brain. What other great human achievements will help me figure out what I can do?

(MONA enters as OO-DEE, 7000 BC, a rambunctious and inquisitive girl, with a nugget of copper.)

MONA

"What can I do with this metal nugget?"

That is what I asked when my parents gave it to me. All the other children are given nice stones to play with and they gave me this.

I was furious. And so I threw the nugget into the fire and lamented my condition. It wasn't long before I noticed that that the nugget had begun to change! It was moving! In the morning, it was hard again, but in a new shape!

Fire. Metals. Shapes.
Fire. Metals. Shapes.
Shaping metals with fire.
That is what I can do.

My name is Oo-Dee, and I was the first Metallurgist.

But how do I understand what metals do?

(TERRY enters as an ANCIENT SCIENTIST.)

TERRY

Maybe there's a METHOD I can use to understand what metals do?

My name is Babwa, and I was the first scientist.

But how can I share my knowledge with others?

(exit/entrance)

MONA

My name is Doe-Lee-Pa-Ta, and I figured out how to share knowledge with others through language.

But how can I get people to trust each other?

(exit/entrance)

TERRY

My name is Ma-ona, and I got people to trust each other through religion.

But how can I grow the number of believers?

(exit/entrance)

MONA

My name Bey-Oh-Eh, and I grew the number of believers by not being nomadic.

But what will we eat?

(exit/entrance)

TERRY

My name is Rihanna, and I came up with farming.

But how do I get this grain to where the people are?

MONA

(with scissors and paper.)

What if I cut here

And here

And here

And here

And here

And here

And here

And here

And here

And here

And here

And here

And here

And here

And here

And here

And LOOK!

(presenting a wheel.)

My name is Celine Wheel.

(TERRY runs back in as KARL.)

TERRY (AS KARL)

A-HA! I will use the wheel, shapeable metals, and scientific knowledge shared through language amongst a cooperating society that had built permanent homes because they grew what they ate!

I will use it all to help me achieve THIS!

(He REVEALS a BICYCLE.)

I call it the Die Laufmaschine.

Two wheels in succession. Straddled by man.
Isn't it nifty?
Gets you there without a horse!

In the future, maybe my solution shall help another with
what THEY can do.

(Beat. MONA and TERRY return to their
"self" persona.)

TERRY

The invention of the Bicycle was a Great Moment in Human
Achievement.

MONA

Terry and I would not have been able to bicycle all the way
from Victoria, Canada if it weren't for Karl.

TERRY

Thank you, Karl. Thank you very much.

MONA

And Karl couldn't have done it without millions and
millions of humans through history asking the same
question.

TERRY

Thank you Celine. Thank you Oo-dee, Babwa, Doe-Lee-Pa-Ta,
Ma-ona, Be-Oh-Eh, and Rihanna.

MONA

Now, what can we do for you?

TERRY

And what can you do for us?

MONA

Tonight, through acting, we hope to reach you more deeply
than we have ever done before.

TERRY

Tonight, through acting, we conjure into this room the vast
tapestry of risks and revolutions and surprises and
tragedies that have moved humanity forward.

MONA

Tonight, for the next four hours, we invite you to celebrate your patch in this quilt of progress and change, and help you figure out what you can do.

Welcome to our show...

MONA AND TERRY

Great Moments in Human-

(A SPARK, ZAP and a FLASH drown out their voices.

The ONE BIG LIGHT BLACKS OUT.

We can still detect the two bodies on stage.

A throat clears.

This should not be loud enough to understand by the audience or in a forced actor whisper.)

TERRY

[nervous whisper.]

MONA

[confused whisper]

TERRY

[accusatory whisper]

MONA

[defensive whisper]

TERRY

[more accusatory whisper]

MONA

[more defensive whisper]

TERRY

[pleading whisper]

MONA

[what do you want me to do whisper]

TERRY

[desperate whisper]

MONA

[frustration whisper into resignation whisper]

(beat.)

MONA

(performance voice.)

We...are in the dark.
About so many things.
These are dark times.
Most of us feel...non-illuminated.
How shall we find the light.
Is there light?
Please, let us find some light.
...
Does anyone have a light?

(JUMP TO

A TRENCH NEAR THE ROAD.

Not too far from the nursing home.
Bikes are in the background.

TERRY is unsuccessfully attempting to set up a TENT. MONA is or filling out a form on a clipboard. A camping stove is going with a pot on it.

THEY are both exhausted.)

MONA

"Four hours three minutes. Audience size: 26. Medical Emergencies: one."

TERRY

It's the long poles first right?

MONA

"Unexpected electrical limitation required some adjustments."

TERRY

The long poles, then the short poles for the front and back?