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Fight Master Magazine

The Society of American Fight Directors

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Spring 2013

## **The Fight Master, Spring 2013, Vol. 35 Issue 1**

The Society of American Fight Directors

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# The Fight Master

Spring 2013

The Journal of the Society of American Fight Directors

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THE WORKING-DAY**  
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at the Frazier  
History Museum

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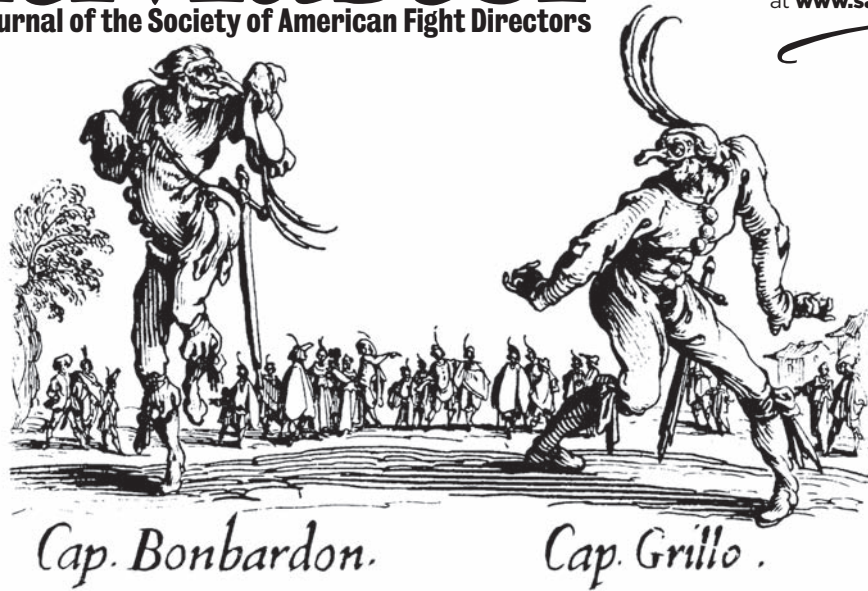
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# The Fight Master

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The Journal of the Society of American Fight Directors

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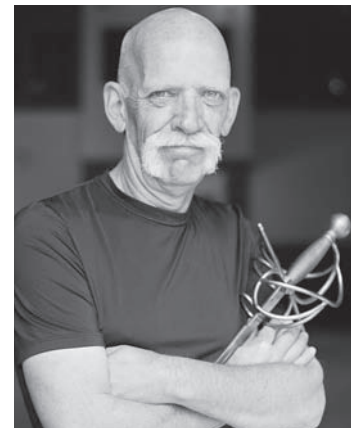
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*Robert Maffia and Michael McKean from the original Steppenwolf production of Superior Donuts by Tracy Letts. Photo by Michael Brosilow and used with permission from Steppenwolf Theatre Company.*

# Editorially Speaking



Over the past few years, efforts have been underway to establish a digital archive of *The Fight Master*. While this task is nearing completion, I wanted to share an interesting perspective I have gained from scanning through the archive and how what I have gleaned can impact the future of this publication and all involved in the process of its publication.


A recurring theme struck me while scanning through the back issues. The theme pertained to the continual pleas for articles and regular reprinting of material, first from other publications and then from earlier editions of *The Fight Master*. Perhaps my sensitivity is due to my current role with the publication and my own struggles with obtaining enough material to warrant publication. However, I also began to wonder what could cause a dilemma like this when there is such an abundance of information from various areas that contribute to the craft of stage combat, such as acting/performance, historical research, martial practice/application, direction, teaching/education just to name a few. These topics are huge areas of study and each has sub-categories with equally devoted study, so how is it that a publication like *The Fight Master* has continued to struggle to locate content for a publication that is only published twice a year?

It is true that not everyone is a writer, either by desire or ability. There are also time restrictions placed on everyone regularly that adds to the difficulty of writing. Finally, there is the self-conscious aspect of generating material, which I think can be the largest underlying factor. I struggle against these issues myself. Even as a newly certified teacher, how could I offer anything valuable to the larger stage combat community when I still have so much to learn myself?

*The Fight Master* began as a newsletter for the SAFD offering articles as a way to share information when access to information was less accessible than it is today. As the publication grew, the desire to maintain the academic integrity of a journal was enhanced, but with it came a further reduction in content due to the rigorous nature of academic writing. As a result, the number of issues per year was reduced from as many as four per year to what we currently produce. This brings us to where *The Fight Master* is today; oscillating between a journal and a magazine depending on your academic perspective.

So how can this information benefit the future of *The Fight Master*? Historical evidence has made clear that pleading for content is not a successful approach and that repetitive requests with expectations of different responses only perpetuates the madness. That is why I am happy to write that the pleading ends now. Through recognition of the error in this approach, I have been seeking ways to increase the diversity of readers and contributors over the last few years. Toward this end, I am revisiting an option once offered by this publication that was lost over time, subscriptions. My hope is that within the next year, *The Fight Master* will be available for purchase separately from the SAFD membership. This approach will increase the number of readers and make wider distribution more affordable for non-members. With increased distribution to national and international stage combat organizations, choreographers, teachers, theatre companies, academic institutions and more, the publication will increase in global recognition as well as contributions, perspectives and advertising opportunities.

For years, *The Fight Master* has been a valuable source of information to the SAFD membership, but in a world with increasing levels of technological advancement exponentially interconnecting our lives and increasing our access to information, it is time that the publication be updated and strategically positioned to make better use of the talent and unique perspectives on stage violence from around the globe. As members of the SAFD, you are included but no longer alone.

  
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## SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Editorial and graphic content featured in *The Fight Master* is the product of contributions from SAFD members of all levels as well as from the global stage combat community. Participation is greatly encouraged and submissions are accepted on a rolling basis, with deadlines for the Fall and Spring editions occurring on June 1 and January 1 respectively. For submissions by traditional mail, please send a shipping address request by email.

## Articles

Submitted material will be edited for clarity and length with the assistance and approval of the author. Articles should include a short biography 150 words or less, as well as contact information. By submitting material to *The Fight Master*, it is assumed the author agrees the following:

- All submissions are subject to editorial discretion
- All work submitted is assumed to be the original work of the author, and *The Fight Master* will not assume any of the author's copyright liabilities and publication rights.
- Submissions must include any and all necessary supporting documentation (bibliographies, etc.)
- Before publication, author must approve all changes beyond grammar and conventions
- Submissions must be written in a clear and professional manner
- No submissions defaming individuals by name will be published
- Authors are assumed to be working toward the betterment of the SAFD and, thus, will not be paid for submissions

Please forward submissions and questions to:

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## Graphics

Both digital and traditional photographs are accepted; however, resolution will play a factor in where, or if an image is used. All photos should be accompanied by the names of the performers w/ roles (if fewer than five are pictured), photographer, play, playwright, fight director, theatre company, and year of performance. Without this information, we can not give proper credit to the contributors and the picture will not be used.

Traditional images/negatives submitted by mail should be sent in an envelope clearly labeled "Photos—Do Not Bend," with larger photos secured between cardboard or foam core. Submissions should also include a return self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Digital images must be submitted in an uncompressed format (RAW, TIFF, PNG or TGA) on a CD or DVD if possible. Images that have been reduced in size to send by email will also be considered as long as a larger version exists that can be requested later. Please do NOT crop or alter photos. Touch-ups and color correction will be performed as needed.

Please forward submissions and questions to:

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After earning a B.S. in Education in Speech and Theatre at Southwest Missouri State University, and an M.A. and Ph.D. in Theatre Arts at the University of Missouri-Columbia, professor **Robert W. Dillon, Jr.** joined Southeast Missouri State University in 1989. Rob has been a regular contributor to *The Fight Master* and has published many scholarly and popular articles on theatre, stage combat and Japanese martial culture. He is also senior editor of the online stage combat journal *The Journal of Theatrical Combatives*, a publication of the *Electronic Journals of Martial Arts and Sciences*. In addition to being a licensed teacher of traditional Japanese swordsmanship, Rob owns and trains (at the advanced-beginner level) Foundation Bred American Quarter Horses and fly-fishes whenever he can.



**Taylor Hohman** is a native son of Lexington, KY. He holds a BA in Theatre Arts from Catawba College, North Carolina, and an MFA in Physical Theatre from the Accademia dell'Arte in Arezzo, Tuscany, where he has resided for seven years. He has performed in English and Italian on stages in Italy, Germany, and France, creating performances with Les Heures Musicales in Le Treport, the Berliner Schule für Schauspiel in Berlin, the Scuola di Arte Drammatica Paolo Grassi in Milan, and FLIC Scuola di Circo in Torino. Taylor is an Intermediate Actor Combatant with the British Academy of Stage and Screen Combat and the guitarist for the Italian rock band "Whitebread". Taylor can be reached through his website: [www.taylorhohman.com](http://www.taylorhohman.com)



**Terry Kroenung** is one of Fight Director Geoff Kent's Colorado students, having tested in all weapons except staff. "West" is one of the plays in his anthology *Blood and Beauty*, a collection of 12 combat plays for women written backstage while playing Geoff's dad in *Romeo and Juliet* (Lord Montague has a lot of down time). His fight-filled fantasy novel *Brimstone and Lily* won the Bronze Medal in Fantasy/Sci-Fi at the 2010 Independent Publishers Book Awards. *Paragon of the Eccentric*, a Steampunk mash-up of *War of the Worlds*/James Bond with Bartitsu fights and tentacled temptresses, is under consideration by Tor Books. Terry has choreographed fights for dozens of shows, including *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, *Cyrano*, *The Three Musketeers*, *Treasure Island*, *Peter Pan*, and *Moon Over Buffalo*. His other books include a new version of *Musketeers* and *Gentle Rain*, a Civil War play.



**Brian LeTraunik** is an actor, director, fight director and SAFD Certified Teacher based in Chicago, IL. He has been a professional union actor (SAG/AFTRA/AEA) for almost 30 years. He has taught stage combat throughout the country at such institutions as University of Findlay, Coe College, DePaul University, Wichita State University and Simpson College as well as at several different SAFD workshops including Winter Wonderland Workshop, Carnage in the Corn, Cease and Desist, Rumble in the Rockies, Central Illinois Stage Combat Workshop and the NSCW. He has also taught acting, voice, movement and musical theatre at Drake University and Western Illinois University. Brian has a BA in Theatre from Columbia College Chicago and a MFA in acting from Western Illinois University.



**Edwin Millheim** is an actor and stage combat stunt fighter who has been acting in shows and productions since 1989. Edwin has spent 23 years studying Whitelotus kungfu, a mix of northern and southern Shaolin and has been Cast Coordinator for interactive shows, as well as stunt and fight director for various film and live action stunt shows. He has had featured parts as a stunt fighter, and has choreographed hundreds of hours of scenes over the years for medieval and renaissance faires and pirate fests. Edwin and his daughter also founded Stalking Dragons Stage Combat, a stunt choreography team which teaches a safe method for stage combat.



**Ted Sharon** is an Associate Professor and Head of Performance in the Department of Theatre and Dance at the State University of New York at Fredonia. He is a Certified Teacher with the Society of American Fight Directors, a Senior Instructor with Dueling Arts International and a member of the faculty at the Action Film Workshops. Mr. Sharon's work on stage has been seen at the California Shakespeare Festival, the Boston Lyric Opera, the Chautauqua Conservatory Theatre Company of New York, Sight and Sound Theatres in Pennsylvania, the Children's Theatre Company of Minneapolis, the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and internationally in Taiwan R.O.C., mainland China and at the Bargello Museum in Florence, Italy. Mr. Sharon has produced, directed and co-written over thirty video productions in cooperation with the Center for Layered Polymeric Systems at Case Western Reserve University and is also the founder of Mind Tools ([www.mindtoolsinnovations.com](http://www.mindtoolsinnovations.com)).



**Jim Stark** is a Certified Teacher of stage combat with the SAFD and is Professor of Theatre at Hanover College in southern Indiana. He teaches acting, stage combat, film appreciation and Shakespeare, along with frequently directing departmental theatre productions and working professionally with the Riverrun Theatre Company, of which he is co-founder and Artistic Director.



# Warriors for the Working-day

## Interpretations at the Frazier History Museum

By Jim Stark

*You're an actor with full-time, ongoing employment. Your daily schedule includes a fight call, some rehearsal time, a performance or two and a community outreach event followed by a few hours researching, writing and choreographing fights for your next script. Your repertoire is always changing, and it includes twenty or thirty titles on any given day, with settings and fighting styles that span the past thousand years. There are a handful of people with jobs like yours in the western hemisphere, and they're all sitting in the greenroom for your morning meeting below the Frazier History Museum in Louisville, Kentucky.*

**T**HE INTERPRETATIONS PROGRAM at the Frazier has been a major feature of the museum since its founding in 2004, when Owsley Brown Frazier offered to the public his remarkable collection of historic firearms. At the same time, the Royal Armouries of the United Kingdom named the Frazier its sole partner in North America and sent a tremendous collection for display in Louisville. Barrett Cooper joined the organization as Manager of Interpretations, starting with only a part-time staff. Eight years later, as Curator of Historic Interpretations, he works like an old-time actor-manager with an enthusiastic, dedicated “rep” company. These actors have varied levels of training and experience in theatre,



Kelly Moore and  
Tony Dingman in  
*John Wilkes Booth*.

Opposite: Tony  
Dingman and  
J. Barrett Cooper  
in *The Elizabethan  
Fencing-Master*.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE FRAZIER HISTORY MUSEUM 2012





martial arts and stage combat, and their talents combine to maintain a rich and diverse repertoire. They present armed demonstrations in a variety of authentic historical styles; monologues and scenes depicting real characters whose lives are relevant to the museum's exhibits; and fully produced theatre pieces. Actors conduct tours of the galleries, sometimes in period costume, and offer distance-learning sessions via the Internet to students all over the continent. The days are busy.

Performers maintain a repertoire of character monologues that run from ten to twenty minutes, and each is free to propose and develop new pieces. These repertoire pieces tell the stories of historical persons such as Lucrezia Borgia or Buffalo Bill, as well as anonymous types like The Towton Bowman or The Suffragette. On any given morning, in a wide basement hallway, an African-American cowboy may saunter past Clara Barton combing out her wig while two men in plate armor clank out of the elevator doors. Several pieces are presented each day, in the ground-floor lobby, to audiences ranging from a handful to a hundred. The text gives as much historical information as possible, within the limits of the character's knowledge, so there's no dry exposition or second-guessing the history.

The stage reserved for these pieces is equipped with multiple projection screens for historic photos and illustrations. On a shelf in the basement hallway, buffered aspirin and muscle balm stand next to bore cleaner and car wax. There's a sewing table, and ironing board, a workbench for maintaining reproductions of historic weaponry

**Above: J. Barrett Cooper and Eric Frantz in *Arthur Conan Doyle*.**

**Opposite: Eric Frantz and Kelly Moore in *The Maupin*.**

and a large, well-organized wardrobe room full of clothing, armor, shoes and accessories with elaborate period details. The museum's leadership has committed significant resources to the Interpretations Program because of the power the program has to give patrons a dynamic connection with the legacy of craftsmanship, ingenuity and courage in the face of danger and necessity that is common to all human societies. People from nearly every nation in the world have visited the museum, according to the participative map on display, where patrons place self-stick dots on their home cities.

After a performance, the actors chat with the patrons. Where a child wants to wear the hat, or a grandma wants to feel the weight of a cavalry saber. Some of these visitors are history buffs, of course, and they want to try out their knowledge or pet theories on the actors. This is where the strength of the company's process is revealed. Since the actors have researched and written their own pieces, they have knowledge from multiple sources of details pertaining to the character, period and significance of the subject. Patrons nod and smile, impressed with the responses. Actor and patron exchange recommendations for further reading. The visitors are confronting their history, their culture and their own fascinating selves in a dynamic way. This is where the organization's mission is most completely fulfilled.



skill with substantive educational value. On most performance days, the show is a warm-up for the rest of the day's work.

Armed demonstrations of historical fencing are the core of the department's mission. These are presented in an imaginatively designed theatre with formal "lists" defined by stout fences, set in front of steeply raked bench seating. Twice a day, actors enter the space to present demonstrations of historic fencing techniques, in a theatrical mode. The repertoire of armed scenes covers the use of the longsword, arming sword, rapier with buckler or dagger, and the smallsword. The actors develop their own choreography, working "by feel" to ensure a natural flow of effort, but with this special observance: that every move and technique must be derived from period documents. Demonstrations include only techniques that appear in the manuals of the time in which the weapon was typical. However, the choreography of each piece remains fluid, changing as a new actor takes part or as an established member of the company has a new insight about the use of the weapon.

These armed demonstrations are presented in authentic period costumes. The actors appear in plate armor to demonstrate the arming sword; in tunic, hose, and soft pointed shoes with the 15th-century longsword, and so on. Gloves are worn only when period illustrations show them. The interpreters spend a great deal of time in acquiring clothing and accessories of traditional construction and materials, rather than making do with modern approximations. Museum patrons are as fascinated by the articulations of a gantlet as they are by a pommel attack.

Many of the demonstrations are inspired by theatrical sources. The "Elizabethan Fencing-master" uses *Romeo and Juliet* to illuminate the various styles of sword-play appropriate to the period, and uses Capo Ferro and George Silver to footnote Shakespeare's dialogue. The

ghost of Hamlet's father is invoked to explain the purposes of various pieces of plate armor. The smallsword performance mentions Angelo's connection to Garrick, and even Sheridan's dueling career, not forgetting to cover some techniques for the transition rapier. Most theatrical of all is a three-actor biography of the Maupin, with choreography for transition rapier and figure-eight foils, audience participation and comic techniques such as the late knap, the ale-tankard disarm and the devastating "belch parry." This piece is *tour de force* of the genre. It offers an audience a more vivid experience of historical culture and artifacts than anything else likely to be seen in decades of museum visits. This is *lively* history.

After a demonstration, the generosity and hospitality of the staff find their opportunity for full expression. The interpreters answer questions enthusiastically, and allow patrons to feel the weight of the weapons and the textures of costumes. Everyone is smiling, learning and sharing an intense experience of history and human nature. The interpreters answer all questions with spontaneity; even the most often repeated ones. The one they hear the most is "How did you get this job?" ❖

*The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the Frazier History Museum in the preparation of this article, especially the Interpretations Department: J. Barrett Cooper, Curator of Historic Interpretations, with Tony Dingman, Eric Frantz, Zoe Jackson, Kelly Moore, Victoria Reibel, Gerald Rose and Brian West.*

Sometimes, the interpreters serve as cultural ambassadors by strolling around the display areas with a cart full of helmets, gantlets and breastplates, to let people try them for fun. They call it the "kids' cart," but everyone wants to heft these pieces and learn for themselves what it's like to peer out through a knight's visor. The self-defense instinct emerges from the toddler, student, hobbyist and pensioner.

The interpreters' depth of knowledge is essential to another part of the daily schedule, when they provide guided tours of the museum's exhibits and collections. The actor rehearsing a 15th Century longsword fight must also be ready to comment on the chemical composition of Da Vinci's paints, as they are revealed by modern laboratory analysis. Within a few weeks, Venice departs the museum and Vicksburg arrives, to be followed by Vichy. The temporary exhibits change several times each year, and the Interpretations staff is always preparing new pieces to complement and support the displays. The research for new pieces also supports the company's outreach to patrons during museum tours. The actors become the hosts of the exhibit, introducing patrons to old artifacts with new connotations.

On a seasonal basis, the Interpretations Department presents fully produced theatre pieces designed for student audiences. A production featuring the works of Edgar Allan Poe is especially popular with school groups. The interpreters design and build the scenery, hang a light plot, collect props and costumes and perform together in these shows, which combine a high level of theatrical

## The Dramaturgy of Violence in Contemporary American Theatre

# From “Killer” to “Donuts”

## *Violence in the Plays of Tracy Letts*

BY BRIAN LETRAUNIK

**N**O CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN playwright more directly confronts the notion of interpersonal violence more so than Tracy Letts. While having only six works to his credit as author, one of those being an adaptation of Chekhov’s *The Three Sisters*, several of these plays incorporate some degree of violence in its dramatic action. Whether it is the outrageous, Jacobean tragedy-level violence of *Killer Joe* (1993), the small scale randomness of *Bug* (1996), the domestic battles of the Pulitzer and Tony winning *August: Osage County* (2007) or the knock-down, drag-out brawl of *Superior Donuts* (2008), Letts’s work often uses fighting, and by extension fight direction, to tell the story. This article will examine how violence is utilized in these plays from the point of view of those who created the violence on stage. To this end, interviews were conducted with SAFD Fight Masters J. David Brimmer, who created the violence for the New York premieres of *Killer Joe* and *Bug*; and Chuck Coyl who served as fight director on the original Steppenwolf Theatre production of *Superior Donuts* in Chicago as well as the Chicago, Broadway and London productions of *August: Osage County*. Their assistance and contributions are greatly appreciated.

The use of violence in contemporary drama is nothing new or unique. Such renowned American playwrights as David Mamet, Sam Shepard, Marsha Norman and Tony Kushner have all utilized violence as a storytelling element to some degree in their works. What makes Tracy Letts distinctive is his exceptional skill in structuring a violent episode in his plays and never allowing the brutality to exist for its own sake. Fight Master Chuck Coyl concurs. “Despite the graphic and sometimes over the top nature of the violence in his plays, the violence is there because the story demands it not because of a desire to shock or titillate.” Fight Master J. David Brimmer adds, “Tracy uses violence as exclamation marks in the play,” but its use is very specific and not as random as it may first appear. Much like Shakespeare carefully positioned his fight scenes to achieve an optimal effect dramatically, Letts is equally concerned with where a fight lies in the dramatic action. “Tracy likes to put his major violence at the end of his work,” says Coyl. “In *Superior Donuts* the only real fight occurs at the end and serves [as] the resolution of most of the play’s conflict. The fight serves as the vehicle through which Arthur’s emotional journey is resolved.”

*Superior Donuts* is set in Chicago’s Uptown neighborhood.

Arthur Przybyszewski owns the donut shop of the title, established by his father many years before. A Vietnam draft-dodger and self-described pacifist, Arthur is dealing with, among other things, the gentrification of the neighborhood, the recent death of his ex-wife, his estrangement from his daughter and on this day, the vandalizing of his shop. He meets, and hires, Franco, a young African-American man who shows amazing promise as a writer and strikes up an unlikely friendship. When Luther, a loan shark to whom Franco is in debt has him savagely beaten, Arthur takes a stand and defends him, financially and physically. The fight is described in the published edition of the script as follows:

*The fight:*

*The fight is long. And painful. It is sweaty and bloody. The fighters display great ferocity.*

*The fight involves fisticuffs, grappling, wrestling and found objects. The fight contains gouging, biting, kicking.*

*Arthur and Luther speak very little during the fight. They swear, they grunt, they cry out in pain.*

*Max, Kiril and Kevin are for the most part silent.*

*The fight goes through phases.*

*The early phase of the fight is somewhat of a surprise for both men... that they are in fact engaged in a fight, that they land blows, that they receive blows.*

*It is apparent in the early phase of the fight that Luther is the superior and more experienced fighter. He is also in better physical condition.*

*The middle phase also holds a surprise for both fighters in that their opponent shows more tenacity and resilience.*

*This fight will not be easily decided.*

*By the endgame, both men are bloodied and sweaty, their bodies bent with exhaustion. But ultimately, Arthur prevails, not because of dexterity or muscle, but because of his strength of purpose... and Luther’s ulcer. And although Luther will readily recover, Arthur has genuinely hurt him.*

*The fight is over.<sup>1</sup>*

For Coyl, the process was a challenge from the beginning: “I didn’t see the script for *Donuts* until the day before rehearsals started. Tina Landau, the director, Tracy and I worked collaboratively throughout the process on the end fight... We all struggled to make the ending effective.” Throughout the entire play, Arthur is either unwilling or unable to activate his own life. His pacifism has morphed into apathy. He is ambivalent about many decisions that will effect his life, including selling the shop to his next door neighbor Max so Max can expand his electronics store and even asking out the police-woman who frequents his shop and is obviously attracted to him. It is only when Franco is beaten and his work destroyed that he finally decides enough is enough and he cannot be a spectator anymore.



Robert Maffia and Michael McKean from the original Steppenwolf production of *Superior Donuts* by Tracy Letts.

PHOTO: MICHAEL BROSILOW AND USED WITH PERMISSION FROM STEPPENWOLF THEATRE COMPANY.

Coyl remarks, “Tracy constructed a play with an almost completely passive lead character and rather than have a scene showing the characters decision to stand up and take action he simply starts the next scene with the fight, leaving the decision making process off stage. This makes the fight the place where the characters journey has to be shown in its entirety.”

Another challenge was working with characters, and actors, who were not fighters. “We had wonderful actors to work with on *Donuts*,” boasts Coyl.

I could not have asked for two more talented and dedicated actors than Michael McKean and Rob Maffia. But of course there were significant challenges. Neither Michael nor Rob had much in the way of formal fight training. We were working on a very realistic set with a ceramic tile floor and everything. In the end we padded them both up like the ‘Michelin Man’ and adjusted staging as necessary. While I think we were in many ways successful (nobody got hurt and we told the story) it was not as realistic looking as audiences have come to expect...

Letts is equally concerned with how his characters fight as much as when or why. Set in a Texas trailer home, *Killer Joe* tells the story of Chris Smith, a young man severely in debt to a violent loan shark. When dealing drugs is unsuccessful, Chris conspires with his father Ansel and stepmother Sharla to murder his mother and collect on her life insurance policy. To ensure the task is handled appropriately, they employ the services of Killer Joe Cooper, a Dallas police detective who happens to moonlight as a hired killer. Since they don’t have the upfront money to pay him, Killer Joe insists on a retainer, namely Chris’s sister Dottie. It is discovered that Chris’s mother changed her insurance beneficiary at the last minute to her boyfriend Rex. Sharla is revealed to be having an affair with Rex, thus conspiring to abscond with the settlement, leaving the family and Joe with nothing:

**Joe:** Rex picked up the settlement this afternoon.

**Sharla:** What?

**Joe:** (*As ANSEL reaches t.v.*) Don’t touch that television. (*JOE takes a cashier’s check from his pocket.*) He gave it to me before he left. (*Hands check to ANSEL.*) “A hundred grand.”

**Ansel:** God almighty...

**Sharla:** Where did he go?

**Joe:** It’s worthless of course, made out to Rex.

**Ansel:** Oh my God...

**Sharla:** Where did he say he was goin’?

**Joe:** He was unavailable for comment.

(*JOE peels off his watch and pockets it as he approaches SHARLA.*)

**Sharla:** I don’t understand, why didn’t you get him to-? I can... I can get him to sign it over-

(*He punches her squarely in the face. She falls to her knees.*)<sup>2</sup>

This particular moment, albeit simple, had a visceral response from the audience. “The two actors involved [Scott Glenn and Amanda Plummer] had ideas about something much more involved, but Tracy came in and said ‘I want it simple,’” according to Brimmer. “He was right. This technically simple punch we have all seen and done numerous times elicited angry letters being written to the theatre, complaining about how it was too disturbing!”

The above moment is contrasted starkly with one of the violent episodes from *August: Osage County*. The Weston family gathers in their familial home in rural Oklahoma to deal with the disappearance of Beverly, the patriarch of the family. His acerbic and judgmental wife Violet is dealing with her addiction to prescription medication. Their three middle-aged daughters, Karen, the youngest and currently engaged, Ivy, who still lives in town and seems to be the eternal

spinster, and Barbara, the oldest and “favorite” daughter, confront their mother and each other as the ensuing days become a maelstrom of confessions, arguments and confrontations as skeletons long hidden become known. The challenge with this production seems to be the explosive randomness of the violence. At one point Barbara is driven to her wit’s end by her mother and lashes out and strangles her in the presence of the entire family:

**Violet:** Everyone’s got this idea I’m mean, all of a sudden.

**Ivy:** Please, Momma.

**Violet:** I told you, I’m just telling the-

**Barbara:** You’re a drug addict.

**Violet:** That is the truth! That’s what I’m getting at! I, everybody listen... I am a drug addict. I am addicted to drugs, pills, ‘specially downers. (*Pulls a bottle of pills from her pocket, holds them up.*) Y’see these little blue babies? These are my best fucking friends and they never let me down. Try to get ‘em away from me and I’ll eat you alive!

**Barbara:** Gimme those goddamn pills-

**Violet:** I’ll eat you alive, girl! (*Barbara lunges at the bottle of pills. She and Violet wrestle with it. Bill and Ivy try to restrain Barbara. Mattie Fae tries to restrain Violet... Violet wins, wrests the pills away from Barbara. Bill pulls Barbara back into her seat. Violet shakes the pill bottle, taunting Barbara. Barbara snaps, screams, lunges again, grabs Violet by the hair, pulls her up, toppling chairs. They crash through the house, pursued by the family. Pandemonium. Screaming. Barbara strangles Violet. With great effort, Bill and Charlie pry the two women apart...*)<sup>3</sup>

Coyl states, “In my experience Tracy’s use of violence is the classic case of characters resorting to physical violence when there is no longer a verbal way for them to resolve their differences. In all his plays the audience can sense that characters are going to come to blows just from the structure of his writing and dialogue.” The two characters mentioned above choose very different methods of violence based on who they are as people. Killer Joe is a professional hitman. He knows exactly what he is doing when it comes to inflicting pain on another person. His actions are methodical, precise and planned. Barbara is letting her emotions get the better of her in the above situation. Her aggression is a manifestation of years of pent up anger and frustration toward her mother. The specific choice Letts cites for Barbara to attack her mother, namely strangulation, could not be a more appropriate choice. It is an attack reserved for someone who has intimate knowledge of the other person. Additionally, it is a slow and steady way to inflict pain, much more so than a jab to the face.

*Killer Joe* eschews some of the naturalism of Letts’s later work and goes for a more extreme type of violence. Brimmer refers to it as a modern Jacobean tragedy. “It has all the elements of Jacobean tragedy,” he says, “matricide, fratricide, incest, not to mention a darkly comic sensibility.” The final, violent sequence of the play (the “ballet” as Brimmer refers to it) serves to reinforce the Jacobean aspect of the play as well as, in Brimmer’s words, how “violence is woven into the fabric of the play to demonstrate how extreme these characters are.” In this sequence, Chris confronts Joe with a gun, which leads to Chris being stabbed with a kitchen knife, strangled with a lamp cord, stabbed with a vegetable peeler, beaten with Joe’s bare hands, and finally shot. Brimmer states having not only the playwright, but also the director (Wilson Milam) collaborate on the violence was a great asset. “[Milam] is very specific and knows exactly what he wants. Tracy doesn’t pull punches, literally or figuratively, so I was able to ‘yes, and’ the violence, taking suggestions from them and the actors and heightening it with my own ideas.”

Another aspect of Letts’s skill as a playwright has to do with the use of implied violence. In *Killer Joe*, Chris decides to call off the killing and stands up to Joe about letting him have his sister in lieu

of payment and launches into a large monologue, ending with the following exchange:

**Chris:** ... So I can't pay this guy, and I don't even really want to. That means you gotta get out, Joe. You gotta get outta here, and leave my sister alone forever. Otherwise, you and me're gonna have some trouble. Do you understand? Do you understand?

*(A long silence. CHRIS slowly turns and looks at a large, overstuffed garbage bag sitting by the other garbage in the kitchen. CHRIS walks to the bag, starts to open it...)*

**Joe:** Don't open it. Do you want to help me get her in the car?  
*(Blackout.)<sup>4</sup>*

It is moments like this, according to Brimmer, that makes Letts's works so dynamic. "The action can turn on a dime," he says. It is also moments like the one mentioned above that can serve to illuminate the nature of the character. Brimmer states: "[The moment] foreshadows how Joe uses violence and terror to achieve his ends." Indeed, it is often the violence that happens off stage that has the most dramatic effect. I remember sitting in the audience of *Superior Donuts* at the Steppenwolf Theatre. At one point a character comes in to let Arthur know that Franco had been beaten, three fingers cut off one hand and the manuscript of his novel destroyed. This moment elicited audible gasps from the audience. While the violence on stage was expertly choreographed and performed, the mere suggestion of violence toward a character we had come to know and care about throughout the evening only fueled the fire for the eventual final set-to.

*Bug* is somewhat unique in that one of the most memorable pieces of violence does not occur against another person, but is self-inflicted. The play concerns Agnes, a waitress living in a motel room on the outskirts of Oklahoma City, having learned that her abusive husband Jerry has just been released from prison. She is eventually introduced to Peter, a soft-spoken army vet. Their friendship evolves into light romance, but something is amiss. Peter starts to spiral into paranoid delusions that there are bugs living in his skin, implanted as part of a government experiment while he was confined to an army hospital. He drags Agnes into his fantasies, leading to an extreme conclusion. As he descends into paranoia, Peter believes his aching tooth may be the source of the "bugs" he finds on himself. He takes it upon himself to remove it:

**Peter:** I am not a child. I know who I am. *(He picks up the pliers, walks to the bathroom, looks in the mirror.)*

**Agnes:** Let's at least go to a real dentist.

**Peter:** It's just not safe. I'm being watched too closely-

**Agnes:** You can't know that.

**Peter:** They haven't grabbed me because they want to see how the experiment turns out-

**Agnes:** Peter, stop it! Give me those! *(She attempts to get the pliers away from him. He pushes her away, not violently, but firmly. Again, he places the pliers over the molar. Counts to three silently-) Peter, stop it! Don't! (-then clamps and pulls. Hard. He screams.) Stop it! (He relaxes for a moment, and now, with renewed force, clamps hard, pulls, pulls, sweating, screaming-) STOP IT! (-and yanks the molar out of his mouth.) Oh, God-(Blood streams freely from his mouth, onto his chest, onto the sink, onto the floor...) I'm gonna be sick... (Peter carries the tooth to the microscope, pinches it in the pliers until it breaks apart. He taps the tooth fragments into a petri dish, looks at the petri dish through the microscope. He backs away from the microscope, giggling, pointing at the evidence. Agnes goes to the microscope and looks in...) Millions... (Blackout.)<sup>5</sup>*

According to Brimmer, the moment was essential. "It speaks to the desperation [of Peter] and how far he's gone. It's difficult to watch, but it is Peter's eureka moment. He still has the presence of mind to examine the tooth. It's his proof he was right." This moment too

was a moment of collaboration with director Dexter Bullard, actor Michael Shannon and Letts. "The moment was sculpted with Tracy's help, but it was all Michael Shannon. His back was to the audience, so they never really saw anything. It was his physicality, vocalizations and acting that made that moment. When do you reveal things to the audience? You can go overboard with Grand Guignol-style violence, but sometimes suggestion can be more powerful than cinematic realism."

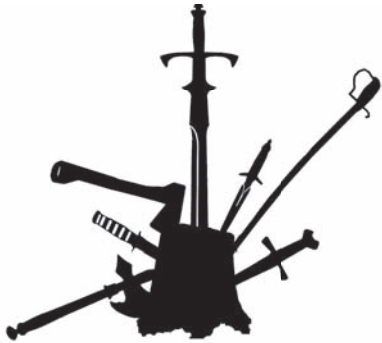
Letts is certainly one of the most prolific contemporary American playwrights being produced today. As has been discussed, while his works may be violent, the violence always serves a purpose. As both J. David Brimmer and Chuck Coyl have pointed out, the violence is never portrayed the same way twice. The moments of conflict are so particularly chosen to reflect those specific characters in those specific situations. Much like the songs in a well crafted musical, the violence must be in the plays to (a) uncover information about the character and (b) progress the story forward when words fail. Letts accomplishes both deftly. —f—

## Endnotes

- 1 Letts, *Superior Donuts*
- 2 Letts, *Killer Joe*
- 3 Letts, *August: Osage County*
- 4 Letts, *Killer Joe*
- 5 Letts, *Bug*

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# Hamlet, William and Salvatore Fabris

BY ROBERT W. DILLON, JR., Ph.D.

Revised and reprinted from the *Journal of Theatrical Combatives*

[B]oth the challenge and the resulting contest [in *Hamlet*] embody strains of significance largely inaccessible to a twentieth-century audience. . . . [T]he cultural context . . . is difficult indeed to recover, for the history of the arts of defense remains a neglected area in Renaissance studies.<sup>1</sup>

—Jay T. Algin, “*The Schools of Defense in Elizabethan London*” (1984)

**F**OR 411-ODD YEARS Hamlet has managed to catch Laertes in Laertes’ own spring thousands of times. Four centuries (and counting) of shifting tastes and tempers among critics, producers and audiences have not diminished the hold Hamlet and *Hamlet* have on us, as Willard Farnham points out in his 1970 introduction to the play.<sup>2</sup> Even while the cultural territory we cede to Hamlet and *Hamlet* has enlarged, continuing to grow broader in our emergent 21st century world culture, each passing age hopes that their broadened view may also bring “a new depth.”<sup>3</sup> Certainly over the ages a myriad of ways to deal with the problem of Hamlet and the problems of *Hamlet* have immersed, however, as those ways have accumulated, as their simple span has increased, *only sometimes* have they lead to a new depth. What holds true for the play and the character holds true for their parts, including the Act V fight in *Hamlet*. Here too, there are a variety of ways to approach the *Hamlet* fight but, to paraphrase T. S. Eliot, the best such efforts can hope for is be wrong in new ways.

Beyond the drive to be, at least, wrong in new ways, the following exploration seeks first to expand possible approaches to the Act V fight into the 21st century’s expanded understanding of Renaissance martial arts. This effort aligns the study of Western martial arts of the Renaissance with Shakespeare studies in general and with *Hamlet* studies in particular. What follows then seeks to make

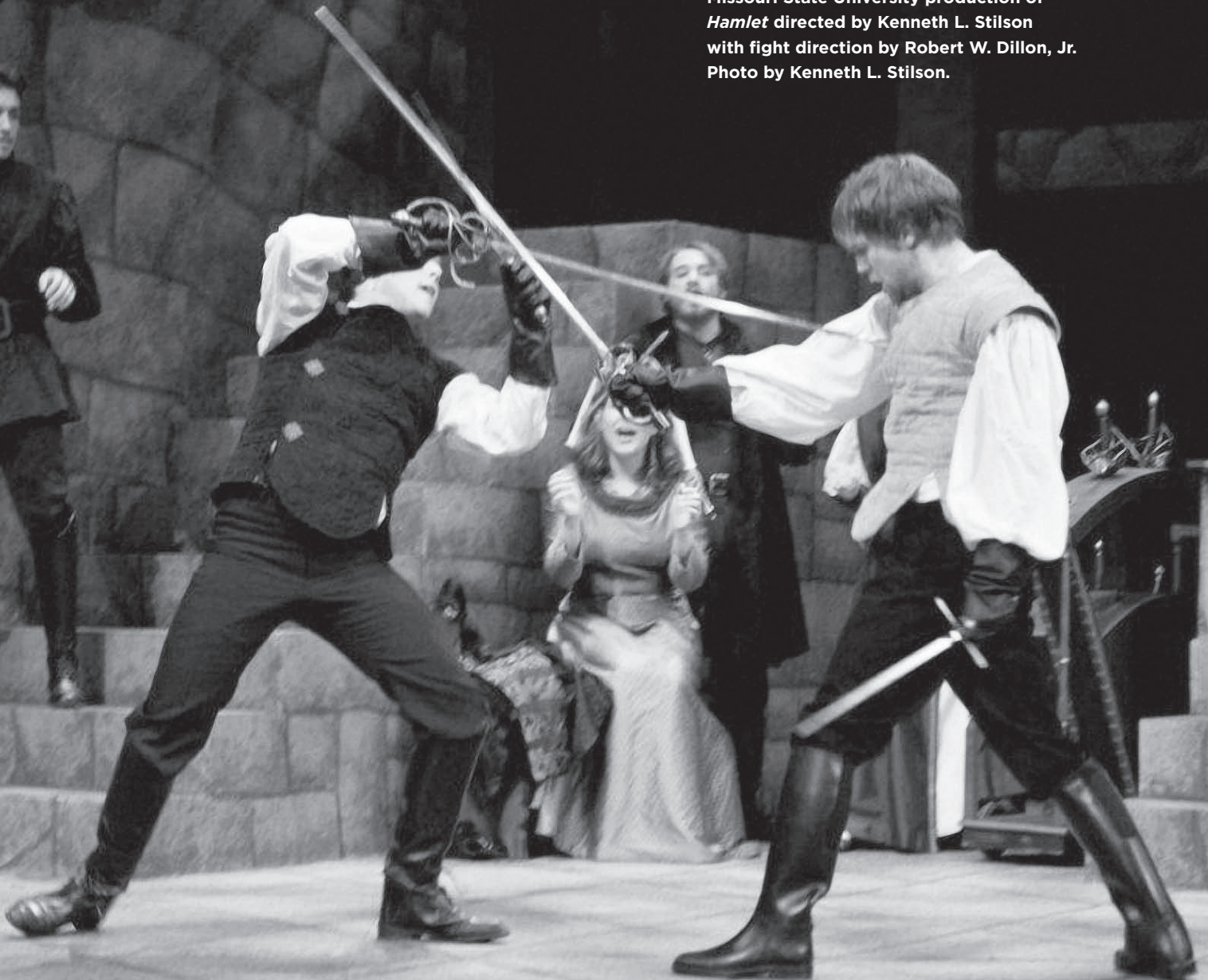
the fight a “thing” of significance that manages to be accessible to a 21st century audience; to create, in the Act V *Hamlet* fight, a renewed objective correlative which may recover some portion of Anglin’s “strains of significance.” With stage combat principles of safety and theatricality (and aesthetics, of course) taken for granted, the focus shifts to the current explosion in Renaissance martial studies as a way to identify a specific historical correlative-context for the fight. Out of that context-correlative, a specific form, content and style immerses, suggesting the potential for a specific objective correlative to move beyond the generic or clichéd in stage combat in general.

During the twenty-seven years since Jay T. Anglin’s observation, new paths into the art, history and practice of swordsmanship have been opened into expansive new territories. The history of the Western arts of defense is no longer a neglected area in Renaissance studies. In fact, such studies have literally exploded. Argument about the meaning of the word “foil” is now little more than of passing interest to someone about to stage the *Hamlet* fight. *Hamlet* fight directors have bigger fish to fry in bigger and better fry pans; fight directors no longer need to rely on so called classical fencing or generic ideas of stage combat swordplay.<sup>4</sup> Paddy Crean and the various stage combat societies revolutionized the art and craft of theatrical fencing by emphasizing safety and theatricality but that revolution is now eight decades old.<sup>5</sup> Crean’s staging of actual techniques was essentially Victorian, relying upon Victorian notions of swordplay as “attack-parry-riposte” in its content. The works of Edgerton Castle, Alfred Hutton and Carl Thimm, whose prejudice for “modern” fencing (still sanctified with the appellation “classical”) no longer need be the sole intermediaries of our understanding of historical European swordplay *and its application to staging depictions of swordplay*.

Research in the field of historical European martial arts has raced far ahead of the practical application of such research to staged swordplay. The breadth of research in the arts of defense of the Middle Ages and Renaissance is now no more than a mouse click away. One deep

# Shakespeare

The moment after Hamlet (Andrew Gehrlein) uses Fabris' technique (listed as Number 76) against Laertes (Jake Feree) in the Southeast Missouri State University production of *Hamlet* directed by Kenneth L. Stilson with fight direction by Robert W. Dillon, Jr. Photo by Kenneth L. Stilson.





and wide source, the premiere organization of this movement, the Association of Renaissance Martial Arts, includes virtually every known treatise or book on swordsmanship from 1295 to 1715 on their website.<sup>6</sup> Translation and explication of these once forgotten works has exploded into a publishing renaissance. This new breadth and depth of study has fed upon and fed in turn the living history movement.<sup>7</sup> The great joy in *living* history, through interpretation-in-action of the history of swords and swordsmanship, has resulted in the flourishing of schools and teachers of historical Western martial arts. It is now possible and practical to study and practice reconstructed systems of European swordplay, often just as vibrantly alive and factually real as the Tenshin Shoden Katori Shinto Ryu of Japan.<sup>8</sup>

## THE FORM OF THE FIGHT:

# Playing a Prize

THE FIGHTING IN *HAMLET* and *As You Like It*, unlike all the other fights in Shakespeare, are *public sportive contests*. Public contests were common to the country fairs and town squares of Shakespeare's England as well as the inn yards and theatres of his London. Contests similar to the one represented in *Hamlet*, were very popular forms of public entertainment in active competition, as Shakespeare and his contemporaries must have known full well, thus harnessing their popularity within the context of their theatrical work.

Hamlet is not a duelist; a term he would, like any good Wittenberg humanist, no doubt find distasteful. Claudius and Laertes do not challenge Hamlet to a duel. Duels were neither sporting contests nor staged as public entertainments. Nigel Alexander inadvertently made and confused the case against the idea of the fight as a duel when he wrote, "The most important thing about the fight between Hamlet and Laertes is that it is not, in the strict sense, a duel . . . It is . . . a judicial encounter or trial by battle . . . it is an affair of honour and therefore a duel."<sup>9</sup> The problem for Alexander and for many critics is that the fight is only a duel in the loosest sense and Hamlet only a duelist *metaphorically*.<sup>10</sup> The fight is also not a trial by battle, speaking strictly, but only symbolically, meta-theatrically, and metaphorically.

The distinction between literal and metaphorical dueling is an important one. For one thing, being a duelist of words and therefore ideas elevates Hamlet to the role of humanist-hero. This elevation seems precisely the point. Literal duelists, regardless of the code of honor overwriting what is essentially a vendetta, are at the very least morally suspect in a way that Hamlet is not and cannot ever be.

The Italian term *duello* came to have associations with the idealization of non-military personal combat through ideals of honor. These ideals of honor overlaid and attempted to morally and ethically mitigate against what was essentially street fighting in cities populated and governed by the rise and growth of the middle classes.

Touchstone parodies the *duello* ideals in all their self-conscious exactitude in *As You Like It*, indirectly suggesting that Shakespeare was at least familiar with Italian fencing master and author Vincentio Saviolo. Not only is Saviolo's 1595 treatise the first rapier and dagger manual in English, its second half is a detailed codification of matters of honor associated with the *duello*.

Laertes, duped by Claudius (claiming sympathy with Laertes' desire for patricide revenge, himself guilty of fratricide), confounds the *duello* tradition with the secret vendetta demonized by the code of the *duello*, itself an attempt to sanctify brawling. Laertes strikes, thus, a bad bargain between his public image or honor and his private need for revenge. Laertes is something of a rabble-rouser<sup>11</sup> and, if Polonius' suspicions are to be taken seriously, a "drinking, fencing,

swearing, quarreling" duelist,<sup>12</sup> where as Hamlet is not. Laertes' challenge precisely avoids labeling Hamlet as such. The fight's form (precisely in not being a duel) allows Hamlet to "win" the fight, beat Laertes on Laertes' terms, and still succumb to both the plot against his life and Shakespeare's tragic form. Freed from associations with duels and dueling, Hamlet remains the Wittenberg intellectual, eternally poised between medieval and Renaissance moralities and motivations—precisely because of the form of the Act V fight. In spite of the fight, within the form established by Shakespeare through Claudius, Hamlet retains his humanist stature partly through "art and exercise in [his] defense."<sup>13</sup> For in humanist terms swordplay as art and exercise stands superior to mere fighting.

Claudius elevates the fight above dueling when he invites Hamlet to participate in a sporting competition in a form similar to playing a prize, which was a particular form of public contest of skill around since Henry VIII and no doubt familiar to the citizens of Shakespeare's London. Partly arising from social pressures related to the gentrification of the growing urban middle class and partly from fitful cultural pressures to tame and civilize dueling, which the *duello* code had failed to elevate from street fighting and tavern brawls, the playing of prizes had begun to absorb some of the reckless street violence of the duel.

Shakespeare uses the word "play" in *Hamlet* thirty-five times, more than anywhere else in the canon. He never once uses any form of the word "duel." In *Hamlet*, nine of those thirty-five times he uses the word "play" in the sense of a sportive competition or of practice sparring with weapons, as opposed to life-and-death fighting. This is also the usage formalized in official documents of The London Masters of Defense.

Henry VIII granted a charter to The Corporation of Masters of the Noble Science of Defense in 1540.<sup>14</sup> In effect a labor union, the guild thus held a virtual monopoly over armed and unarmed self-defense instruction in and around London. The Corporation, following the format of scholarly colleges of the age, established four levels of study: scholar, free-scholar, provost and master. When ready to advance to the next grade, the student would fight a series of test bouts called "playing the prize." Time and place for a prize playing was determined and notices called bills of challenge were posted advertising the event and inviting public attendance. Whenever possible, prizes were played in playhouses or adapted spaces where it was easier to collect the admission charges, and often paid off better than plays. According to Herbert Berry's detailed study of the Sloan Manuscript 2530, from 1575 to 1590 at least thirty-nine prizes were played in London. At least thirty-seven of these prizes were played in playhouses or places that were soon to become playhouses.<sup>15</sup>

Rules for prizes, many to do with safety, were established by the guild and enforced through fines and other sanctions. Unlike a duel, the participants were not trying to kill, maim, or wound one another but the fights were not mere displays or exhibitions either. They were free-sparring practices just earnest enough to properly evaluate the players and entertain the public. Fighting at full speed, probably without protective armor other than gloves and heavy doublets, even with rules about controlling the force of blows, and the use of padded or rebated weapons, the bouts, as Laertes would have known, could sometimes be bloody but never lethal. Players could and did on occasion "bleed on both sides."<sup>16</sup>

Claudius and Laertes initiate their plot with a wager, horridly out of place for a duel; but as a form of public contest, appropriate for playing a prize. According to Osric, Laertes' wager is "six French rapiers and poniards, with their assigns, as girdle, hangers and so."<sup>17</sup> Claudius has put up "six Barbary horses,"<sup>18</sup> a kingly bet indeed and perhaps meant

to suggest Laertes' French ostentation but certainly not the sort of bet usually associated with a middle class, prize-playing-type fight. Yet, the fact of the wager is essential to the form of the fight and, if the King is right and Hamlet cannot "choose but fall,"<sup>19</sup> essential to the plot.

The actual terms of the wager have been the cause of much discussion. The King bets that Laertes will score no more than seven hits on Hamlet in a set of twelve "passes." Laertes, says the King's wager, will not beat Hamlet by more than three hits. This is similar to the way the guild handled the playing of prizes; a player could "pass" his prizefight without necessarily outscoring his challengers. Laertes must score eight to win. Hamlet only needs to score five to win the wager. "He" (Laertes), reports Osric, *went one better and "laid on twelve for nine."*<sup>20</sup> In other words, Laertes *responded to the King's bet by making a counter-bet*. In Laertes' counter he has increased the odds so that Hamlet can "win" the wager, if not the fight, with only four hits. Laertes wagers that he will hit Hamlet at least nine times out of twelve; all Hamlet must do is hit Laertes four times and the wager goes to Claudius/Hamlet (recall that Hamlet is fighting for Claudius who made the initial wager.) This is designed, perhaps, to make it harder for Hamlet to refuse the challenge and further puff up whatever envy Hamlet may experience.

Through understanding of the given circumstances of the wager, the King's "If Hamlet give the first or second hit . . ." pledge makes

sense from the perspectives of Hamlet, Horatio, the Queen and the court.<sup>21</sup> If Laertes has hit Hamlet three times at the beginning of the match Hamlet's odds of winning are greatly diminished. If Hamlet takes the first, second, or third hit he is still in good shape for getting three more. Meanwhile, Claudius wants to make sure that the plot succeeds in assassinating Hamlet. If Hamlet gets the first hit the plot is already in danger of failing. In other words it is the first hit that Claudius knows is all-important. If Laertes hits Hamlet in the first bout it is all over . . . if not . . . the King will act.

#### THE CONTENT OF THE FIGHT:

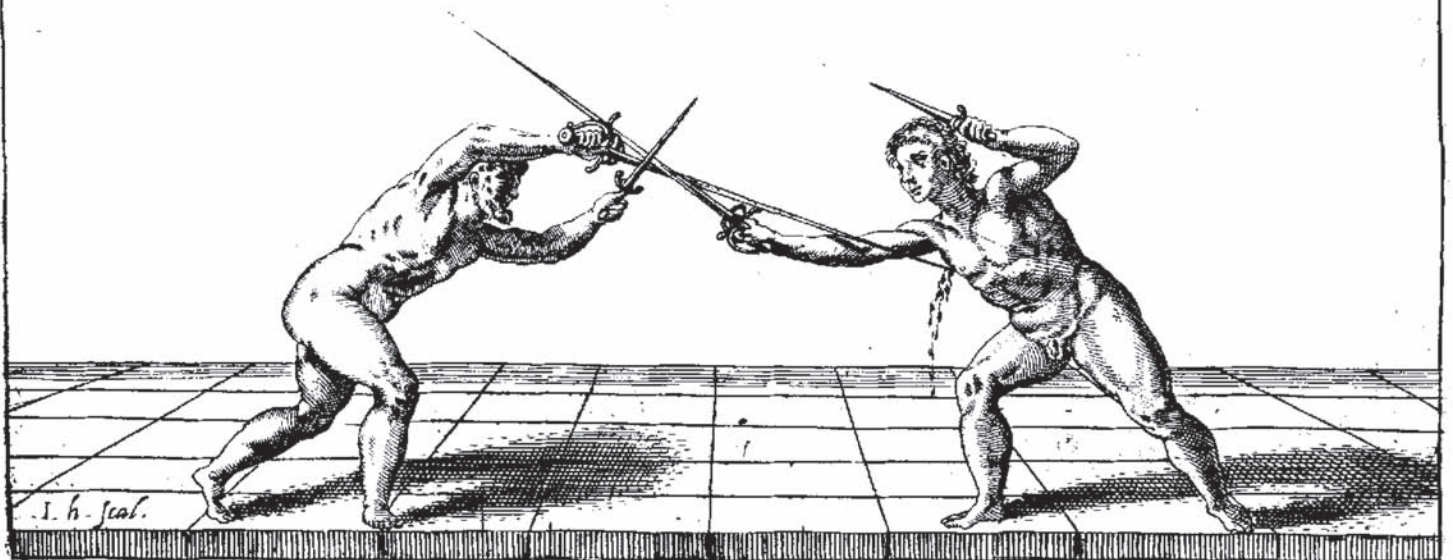
## Rapier and Dagger

THE FIRST AND SECOND QUARTOS as well as the folio edition of *Hamlet* all agree that Laertes' masterly report was for his rapier most especially and that his weapon is rapier and dagger.<sup>22</sup> This is the only play in which Shakespeare is so specific regarding exactly which weapons he imagined would be used.<sup>23</sup>

Rapier and dagger, relatively unfamiliar to 21st century audiences, can still carry cultural significances just as a modern fencing match with epee can be a potent bearer of cultural significances in a contemporized setting of the play. Even though audiences will have

76

Here is a wound of first guard performed while parrying a cut to the head from Salvator Fabris' plate 76 in *Lo Schermo, overo Scienza d'Arme*. This is a cross parry (i.e. one executed with sword and dagger together).



mixed understandings of the literal archaeology of the rapier, the “thing in itself” (to misappropriate Kant) has significance beyond mere literal knowledge. The rapier has a look, feel and use that is specific and particular, thus creating meaning as objective correlative.

In Shakespeare’s time audiences likely associated rapiers and rapier fighting with all things foreign and exotic since the most famed rapier teachers were Italian. At a time when the middle classes in England were founding fighting guilds more or less divorced from the traditional role of the military, the rapier, a continental invention from decades earlier and clearly designed for civilians to kill each other, was just beginning its popular ascendancy in England. London Masters charged a few pence for lessons. Italian rapier teachers charged hundreds of pounds!

The rapier and daggers likely to be used in playing a prize, with its elements of a sporting contest, would likely have been specially designed and made for “playing.” A well-made rapier blade was too expensive to be simply blunted on a grinding wheel. Shakespeare uses the term “foil” in *Hamlet* six of the eight times he ever uses it in the corpus. This may suggest that the weapons for use in the contest are specially made for competition. They might be more flexible than “real” rapiers and would, of course, have no edge or only a very rounded, bated or rebated edge. The ways in which the weapons are wielded, in any case, will help suggest the type and kind of blades being used regardless of whether or not the actors playing Laertes and Hamlet are using competition or theatrical blades.

Even with specially made competition weapons designed to replace “real” rapiers with something marginally safer, such as might be used in playing a prize, a relatively light blow to the head could cause a lot of bleeding. Bruises and scratches were not at all uncommon in prize playing. If the courtiers see Hamlet bleeding, they need not automatically suspect Laertes of any intentional breach of correct conduct or practice. Accidental deaths did occasionally occur and Hamlet’s might well be counted among these unhappy accidents.

But such an “accident” is not as easily arranged as might first be imagined. Laertes could (and certainly has over his 411 years) scratch Hamlet with a sharp rapier point since openly stabbing him seems far too obvious. But such an improperly rebated rapier-foil is far too likely to be noticed by Hamlet or someone in the court in the first place. A rapier, blunted or sharp, used at all well concentrates its thrusting power into a very small area at the tip of a long, narrow, relatively stiff blade. Injuries to the eyes, mouth and genitals were not uncommon even in well-played prizes. Reliable safety therefore requires a sizable ball or button-cap to cover that tip.<sup>24</sup> Hamlet may in fact, as Claudius claims, be “remiss, most generous and free from all contriving.”<sup>25</sup> but it is hard to believe that he could be *that* remiss or that no one else in the court notices that Laertes’ sword possesses no such button.

Given the danger inherent in attempting to sneak a sharply pointed rapier into a public contest, it is likely that Laertes’ rapier-foil must, if it is to have a reasonable chance of escaping detection, be secretly edged instead. Laertes could well arrange to have his blade ground to just a shallow bevel, just a slightly sharp corner possibly up from the hilt where it would be easier to hide; just an inch or two, a fraction of the total length. Such an edge could, with relative ease, cut Hamlet and, at the same time, not seem suspicious. After all, Laertes says that he need only scratch the victim with his venom and the victim will die.

Laertes hedges his bet with venom. Laertes’ “unguent” must work by injection and be lethal within twenty minutes at the most. Since Laertes mountebank does not have access to twenty-first century chemistry, his poisons must come from plants and his venoms

from animals. All the most toxic venoms come from New World animals. Europeans were trading in goods from the New World by the mid-1500s so Shakespeare might have known about some of them. For instance, found in the warm seas of Australia, New Guinea, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia and Japan, the saliva of the Blue Ringed Octopus contains substances 10,000 times more toxic than potassium cyanide. *Hapalochlaena* species can deliver an intramuscular injection by biting with its parrot-like beak and flooding the wound with its highly evolved saliva. This “injection” can and often does begin to cause paralysis in humans within a few minutes. Symptoms include nausea, vision loss and blindness, loss of senses, loss of motor skills, and, finally and fatally, respiratory arrest. When mixed with an inert unguent to make it thick and sticky the venom of the Blue Ringed Octopus would work in the way imagined.

#### THE STYLE OF THE FIGHT:

## Salvator Fabris

IN HIS BOOK, *THE ART OF THE FOIL*, Luigi Barbasetti (1859-1948) writes that Italian fencing master Salvator Fabris (1544-1618) “was the fencing master of the King of Denmark and even, it would seem, of Shakespeare. He is supposed to have suggested the technique of the assault, which occurs in the fourth act [sic] of *Hamlet*.”<sup>26</sup> Further evidence supporting Barbasetti’s story may be lacking but some of the facts behind the story make it tantalizing. The dates do not confirm a relationship between Shakespeare and Salvator Fabris, but Fabris was a contemporary master teacher of rapier-based fencing. Fabris was also associated with the court at Denmark (Shakespeare’s setting) and with Elizabethan and Jacobean England (Shakespeare’s culture and society) through marital relationships. Although the dates of the publication of Fabris’ treatise and the publication and performance of *Hamlet* do not align, it is possible, given all the circumstantial evidence and the fact that Shakespeare, James and Fabris could well have known each other before 1601, that Shakespeare did consult Fabris. It is, perhaps, more fantastical than historical but it is a tantalizing idea worth applying to production efforts. Fabris and Shakespeare do not need to be directly linked historically to use an actual style of rapier and dagger fencing and make practical and aesthetic sense for a 21st century production.

Tommaso Leoni, in the introduction to his 2005 translation of Salvator Fabris’ treatise writes

The extraordinary success Fabris enjoyed during his lifetime is evidenced by many factors. Apart from the fact that one of the most competitive monarchs of the time retained him as a teacher until old age, there is circumstantial evidence to suggest what legendary status Fabris had achieved by the time he died.<sup>27</sup>

Leoni lists the official day of mourning proclaimed for Maestro Fabris in Padua on the day of his funeral, a statue of the Maestro erected in Padua, the praise of other famous Maestros during and after Fabris’ long career, the popularity of his book in being continuously republished for over a century, accusations against other Maestro of plagiarism of the book, the Shakespeare story related by Barbasetti, and Fabris’ knighthood in the Order of the Seven Hearts. Leoni goes on to ask why and how it is that Salvator Fabris, and by extension all the old fencing masters, were more or less forgotten until recently.

Given Fabris’ tremendous (and amply documented) popularity during the heyday of the rapier, it is somewhat puzzling to see how . . . he and his teachings have been forgotten or misunderstood in

the last two centuries. This is in part due to the persuasive Victorian mentality of looking at history through a Darwinian prism: ancient things are by definition less evolved . . . In truth, such a mentality accounts for the poor treatment that every Renaissance master has received until very recently. But Fabris had two aggravating circumstances. The first was that his stances do not bear any resemblance to Classical fencing . . . [such that] early fencing historians [Victorians all] superficially dismissed [Fabris] as eccentric . . . The second . . . is that, unlike other texts, Fabris cannot be read and understood in a few hours . . .”<sup>28</sup>

According to Leoni, Fabris’ book is “arguably the most authoritative Italian rapier treatise of 17th century Europe . . . as valuable to the modern rapier student and researcher as it was for the late-Renaissance gentleman and fencing scholar.”<sup>29</sup> The book is exhaustive, clearly organized and explained, and the plates themselves are striking and beautiful. The illustrations are doubly so precisely in that they do not “bear any resemblance to Classical fencing” and thus can free him from generic and clichéd theatrical rapier and dagger fencing. With safety-first always in mind, a fight resulting from close reading and application of the book might thus be authentic and specific in ways which Shakespeare and Fabris might well have approved.

Salvator Fabris was born near Padua, Italy, in 1544. His swordsmanship, especially with the rapier, earned him first fame, then fortune, then a knighthood and finally, royal patronage. Leoni sums up Fabris’ style as “dynamic, athletic, strikingly baroque and as effective as only a truly refined [Western martial] art can be.”<sup>30</sup>

In the 1590’s, Johan Frederick, Duke of Schleswig-Holstein-Gottorp and Archbishop of Bremen employed Fabris. Then, in 1601, Duke Frederick’s cousin, King Christian IV of Denmark, appointed him royal fencing master. While in King Christian’s service, Fabris wrote *Lo Schermo, overo Scienza d’Arme*. King Christian sponsored the initial publication, even putting his court painter, Jan Halbeek, at Fabris’ disposal to create the illustrations. In 1606, the work was published commercially and was many-times re-issued until 1713. Fabris was brother-in-law to James I and he often visited his sister in England where his carousing with James became infamous.<sup>31</sup> The Maestro’s renown across Europe, his royal Danish patronage with connections to the English monarchy via those patrons, and his authorship of the most exhaustive, popular and influential rapier treatise in history made him an authority and celebrity that Shakespeare might have known and consulted.<sup>32</sup> This most likely would have happened after 1603, of course, but certainly James and Fabris knew one another prior to that date. Shakespeare may have known Fabris as well.

Fabris’ book is organized into two parts, the first section of Book I deals with theory and establishes the basic principles of Fabris’ style and the second book illustrates, with twenty engraved plates, the four guards or hand positions and their uses, variations of those positions and uses, tactics associated with each, and actions of attack and defense. Actors playing Laertes and Hamlet need know only the basics of Fabris’ theory supporting the illustration of the action and can rely almost completely on the beautiful illustrations. Theory is of interest only in so far as it could be enacted in tactics, technique and mechanics *actable* on stage.


Applying technique from Fabris’ 1606 treatise as a way into a 21st century staging of the Act V fight can help make the fight more meaningful to a 21st century audience inured to realism in depictions of violence.<sup>33</sup> Such an effort demands careful and detailed review but such efforts can lead to meaning-rich integration of real Western martial art with staged swordplay. An example of the possible integration of martial and stage arts can be made by connecting Fabris’

preference of the thrust over the cut and the use of cuts in the Act V fight. As Salvator Fabris states,

In all respects thrusting is more advantageous and deadlier than cutting. With a thrust, it is easier to strike quicker and from farther away, and to recover afterward. Thrusting is a most excellent and elegant attack, since it embodies all the subtleties of fencing. Cutting, instead . . . involves two rather long motions. Anyway, I wish to write no more on this than the necessary admonishments I have already presented, expanding instead on what is more technically complex, subtle and profitable.<sup>34</sup>

Laertes states that he will “scratch” or “gall” Hamlet in order to poison him. He thus has placed a handicap on his own potential to “win” the fight, preferring instead to murder Hamlet with poison. There are lots of ways to do this of course. One example might be for Laertes to execute, almost casually, a minor cut to Hamlet’s ankle or arm during a break in the action of the final bout. If this happens before the line “have at you now” the line can hide Laertes’ cheat by simply seeming to invite Hamlet back into the fight.<sup>35</sup> Laertes hopes to hide his “cheat” if not from Hamlet then from the court-audience.

Hamlet could have studied his Fabris through indirect contact before Fabris’ book was published. That leap of the imagination is not particularly huge given the later popularity of Fabris’ book, his fame all over Europe well before his book was published, and the social position of the Italian fencing masters. From an audience point of view, Hamlet is a prince of Denmark and Fabris a well-known fencing master to King Christian of Denmark. Any audience needs only this connection to make the leap of association between the character Hamlet and the historical Fabris.

Salvator Fabris, William Shakespeare and *Hamlet* need never have encountered one another for them to be remarkably well suited. Although the historical Shakespeare may never have studied, read or perused Fabris’ famous treatise, there is no reason why current interpreters of *Hamlet* cannot use the book to inspire and support their own approaches to the Act V fight. With high expectations of realistically staged violence from a 21st century audience, rapier and dagger techniques recovered from historical martial arts, such as put forth by Salvatore Fabris, can contribute toward recapturing some of the past cultural significances lost within our own efforts to achieve a new depth of understanding and appreciation for this classic text. 

## Endnotes

1 Anglin s8  
2 Shakespeare, William, and Willard Farnham 14-15. All text references to *Hamlet* were taken from this edition.

3 Ibid.

4 The Society of American Fight Directors does not claim to teach rapier and dagger as *historical martial art*. The Society rightly teaches actor safety and production-aimed combat theatricality with a lesser emphasis on what might be termed historical authenticity.

5 Maestro Patrick “Paddy” Crean, 1910 – 2003; called the father of stage combat, Maestro Crean served as Errol Flynn’s choreographer and stunt double, arranged fights for such legends as Sir John Gielgud and Sir Alec Guinness, and was directly involved in the formation of organizations devoted to stage combat in both Europe and North America. Maestro Crean and his immediate followers did their work so well that the art of staging fights, at least in live theatrics, has not changed much in 100 years; classical fencing is the still the primary root.

6 ARMA was founded by John Clements as the Historical Armed Combat Association in 1992 and went on line in 1996. According to their web site, “The ARMA’s efforts are directed toward resurrecting and recreating a legitimate craft of European fighting skills in a manner that is historically valid and martially sound.”

7 The Society for Creative Anachronism was founded in 1966 and now boasts

60,000 members worldwide. Civil War reenactment groups and Colonial groups abound in the U.S.A. In Europe Celts, Romans, Vikings, and such tight foci as Norman Knights flourish.

8 The oldest, extant Japanese martial art (founded in the 15th Century and practiced ever since) is truly “martial” in that it deals with weapons and tactics useful to soldiers in wars. Karate-do is not martial in that limiting sense.

9 Alexander 52

10 Sheldon P. Zittner nicely pits Hamlet’s role as metaphorical duelist against his character as humanist anti-duelist in his essay “Hamlet Duelist.”

11 Act IV, 4; 95-105

12 Act II, 1; 1-28

13 Act IV, 6; 85-90

14 My discussion on the playing of prizes in Shakespeare’s London has relied very much upon the 1984 Jay P. Anglin article mentioned above and upon Herbert Berry, *The Noble Science* . . .

15 Berry 5

16 Act V, 2; 248

17 Act V, 2; 111

18 Act V, 2; 117

19 Act V, 2; 121-122

20 Act V, 2; 121-122

21 Act V, 2; 202

22 Act V, 2; 105-109

23 There are of course a myriad of reasons to ignore this textual fact just as there are a myriad of ways to approach the fight itself; expense, tastes, directorial concept, and so on.

24 John Dover Wilson argues against the historical presence of buttons for rapiers but current researchers disagree. Joseph. Swetnam espoused the use of specially designed rapiers that were bated and had buttons “about the bigness of two pence” attached to the points. The buttons were covered with a stuffed leather ball about the size of a tennis ball “lest someone should lose an eie.”

Personal experience leads me to the strong belief that some sort of protective button was in wide use in prizes played in Shakespeare’s day.

25 Act IV, 6; 116

26 Barbasetti 248. Barbasetti calls the fight an “academic assault” erroneously, I think, conflating the German *mensur* tradition with Shakespeare and *Hamlet*. He also gets the act wrong.

27 Leoni xix

28 Leoni xx

29 Leoni 10

30 Leoni xxx

31 This carousing of the Schleswig-Holstein-Gottorp family and their disputes over Norway and Denmark may have partly inspired Shakespeare’s vision of Hamlet’s world.

32 It has been long assumed that Shakespeare’s actors staged their own fights based on their own skills and knowledge. The Barbasetti story, as well as the prominence of fencing masters in London during Shakespeare’s day, certainly challenges that notion.

33 There may be an ethical mandate immersing for fight and action directors in the 21st Century. It may be an aesthetic one too. Simply put, following the mandates of situational ethics, we may have to put more reality in staged violence wherever that staged violence purports some degree of realism. Audiences are not as easily fooled as they once were and the ugliness and brutality of violence is a fact no longer easily hidden or forgotten. This is a question for another paper, I think.

34 Leoni 10

35 Act V, 2, 244

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# On Capitano and the Spanish Rapier

BY TAYLOR HOHMAN

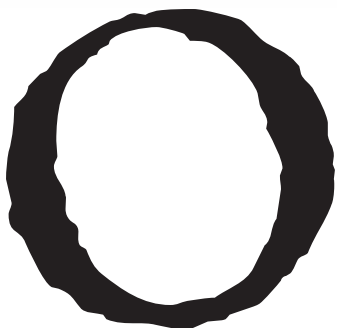


*Cap. Bonbardon.*

*Cap. Grillo.*

**Above: Two Capitani strutting and posing. The illustration is by Giacomo Callot from *Balli di Sfessania*, c. 1622**

*This article was distilled from Mr. Hohman's master's thesis On the Masque and the Sword: A Creative Exploration of Social Status Through Staged Physical Combat and the Commedia dell'Arte*



IF ALL THE CHARACTERS in the Italian commedia dell'arte, the Spanish captain is perhaps one of the most easily identifiable. He is immediately recognizable through his strutting, arrogant manner, his fanciful tales of bravery, his outrageously large costume and, of course, his giant sword: a Spanish rapier, in which he claims a certain expertise that in reality leaves much to be desired.<sup>1</sup> Taken as such, he seems quite simplistic and nothing more than a ridiculous caricature. Yet there is a much darker side to the Capitano, one that is anything but childish.

The golden age of the commedia dell'arte roughly coincides with the golden age of the sword, from the early sixteenth century until the mid-18th century. From their humble beginnings playing the streets and piazzas in Italy, commedia troupes rapidly gained popularity

until they were performing in the courts of kings throughout Europe. The birth of the commedia owes much to the Renaissance, which brought with it a shifting ethos in which the individual was expected to confront “fortuna” with “virtù”: that is with audacity, intelligence and courage. Beginning in the 15th century, kings and princes began gathering the nobility in from their country castle estates in order to exercise direct power over them at the royal court. As social, economic, political and military power was centralized around the king, thus giving rise to the Renaissance city-state, feudalism gradually disappeared. In its place emerged a new urban “merchant,” or middle, class, composed of professional guild craftsmen, doctors, lawyers, professors and soldiers. These competing social classes became the social types fundamental to the commedia dell’arte.<sup>2</sup>

Members of this new class were eager to establish themselves as “self-made men.” In stark contrast to the uneducated Medieval man, a true Renaissance man had a working knowledge of languages, mathematics, sciences, geography, sport, music and swordplay. The ubiquitous nature of the sword in Renaissance society is largely due to the development of the Spanish rapier. Arab metallurgists in Spain were able to craft a smaller, lighter blade with a more ornate hilt known as *espadas roperas* or “dress swords.” More suitable for urban dueling, which had become the preferred method for settling personal *vendette*, they were as much fashion statement and declaration of social status as weapon. The superiority of the rapier was quickly recognized and adopted all over Europe. Indeed, printed versions of theories for its use, particularly from the Italian fencing masters, became continental best sellers.<sup>3</sup>

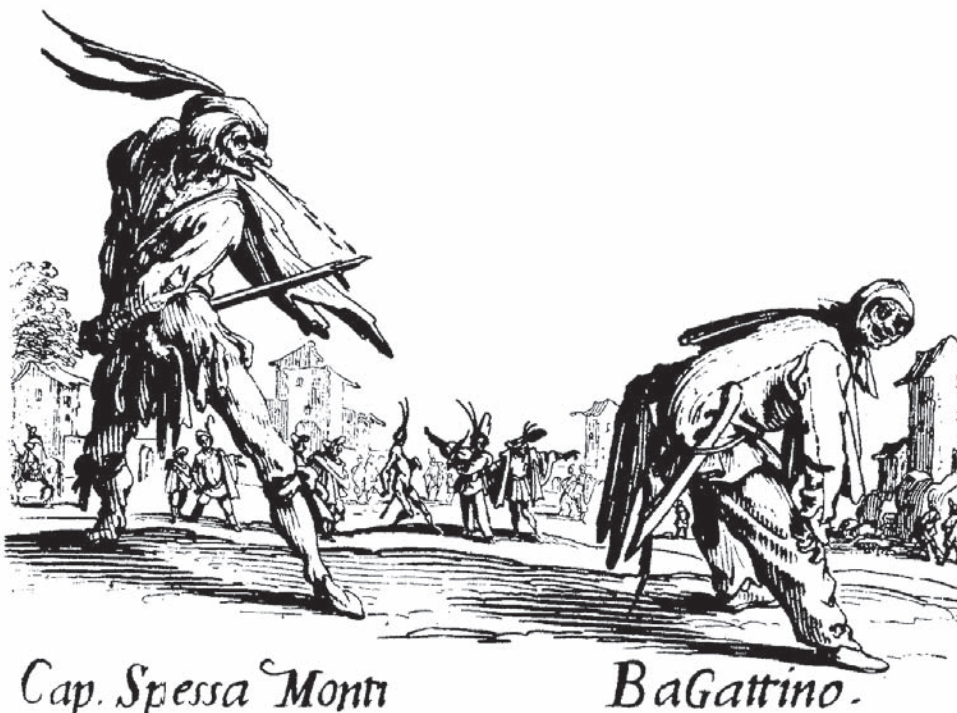
While the Spanish displayed a singular brilliance in the creation of the rapier, their dueling methodology was received outside of



Spain with less universal enthusiasm.<sup>4</sup> As the rest of Europe sought to simplify rapier technique, the Spanish did their best to create an obscure and intricate system.<sup>5</sup> This complexity with regard to sword fighting is exemplified in Don Jeronimo de Carranza’s *Libro Que Trata de la Filosofia de las Armas, y de su Destreza, y de la Agresion y Defension Christiana* (*Book That Is About the Philosophy of Arms, Their Art and Christian Aggression and Defense*). Carranza referred to his method as “La Destreza,” or “the high art,” as he considered it the pinnacled expression of all the Renaissance arts, exemplified in their purest form. The Spanish adored Carranza’s work, while elsewhere in Europe he was often considered an outright laughing-stock.<sup>6</sup> Instead, the Italians became the dominant fencing theorists, revolutionizing Western martial arts with authors such as Achille Marozzo, Camillo Agrippa, Michelangelo Buonarroti, Baldasare Castiglione and Rodolfo Capoferro.<sup>7</sup> As the rapier became still smaller and lighter throughout the continent, the Spanish clung to their longer, heavier model.<sup>8</sup>

The Kingdom of Naples in southern Italy was dominated by Spain for much of the early 16th to early 18th centuries, to the resentment of its Italian inhabitants.<sup>9</sup> Land was appropriated and given to the Spanish nobility with little or no compensation as peasants were either forced into labor in the country or herded into overpopulated cities. These nobility brought with them “... traditional courtly values such as preoccupation with honour, privilege and ritual and a penchant for *vendetta*.”<sup>10</sup> Taxes were levied on a regular basis to finance wars with France and Austria and revolts were brutally suppressed. The Spanish military bullied the southern peasants with impunity, and paraded around in their finery while the Italians were clothed in rags.<sup>11</sup> It was in this world that the Neapolitan servant character Pulcinella was developed, a servant quite often associated with Capitano.

The Florentine Francesco Andreini, a member of the famous Gelosi family commedia troupe, is credited with devising the Capitano of the commedia dell’arte in the early 17th century with his Capitano Spavento della Valle Inferna, (Captain Fearsome from Hell’s Valley).<sup>12</sup> Inspired by his time in the Tuscan army and as a prisoner of war to the Turks, Andreini resurrected the Atellanaen stock braggart captain character Miles Gloriosus.<sup>13</sup> In 1607, Andreini published *Le Bravure del Capitano Spavento*, outlaying the character as “Suzerain of the Devil, prince of cavaliers, bravest of the brave, arch-despot and killer, master and lord of the universe, son of the thunder and lightning, near relative of Death and close personal friend of the Great Devil of Hell.”<sup>14</sup> Southern Italian commedia performers quickly adapted this outrageous, blustery character, giving him a Spanish personality to reflect their revulsion of the Spanish soldiers, which eventually



**Above: Capitano proudly swaggering with his sword drawn. Image taken from Tristano Martinelli’s *Compositions de Rhetorique* (Lyon, 1600-1601)**

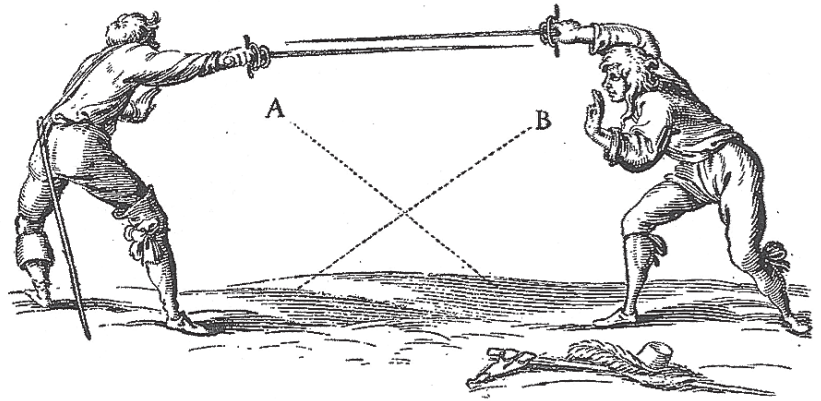
**Left: Capitano reacting in anger as a servant mocks him. The illustration is by Giacomo Callot from *Balli di Sfessania*, c. 1622**

became a highly representative interpretation all over Europe.<sup>15</sup> The Neapolitan actor Silvio Fiorillo played Capitan Matamoros (Moor-slayer) as early as 1614, and perhaps not so coincidentally achieved later fame as one of the creators of the servant Pulcinella.

Il Capitano storms into the scene, demanding the full attention of all the characters present, launching into a tirade about his latest “brave” endeavor. In one historical monologue, he claims to catch a cannon ball in his teeth, flinging it back with great strength to destroy his enemy, and hurling his foe so high into the heavens that he flattens Mars and causes Jove to quake with fear.<sup>16</sup> His ridiculous attempts at wielding his overly large sword are more dangerous to himself than his chosen nemesis, and he leaves destruction in his wake. Certainly in southern Italy, and often elsewhere, his servant and most common foil is Pulcinella; the plainly clothed southern Italian peasant, slow of movement and speech, but sharp of wit. In one historical exchange from Silvio Fiorillo’s *Lucilla Constante*, Capitan Matamoros and Pulcinella hurl insults at each other, with Pulcinella comparing Capitan’s bragging to various barnyard animal sounds, so enraging Capitan that he challenges Pulcinella to a duel.

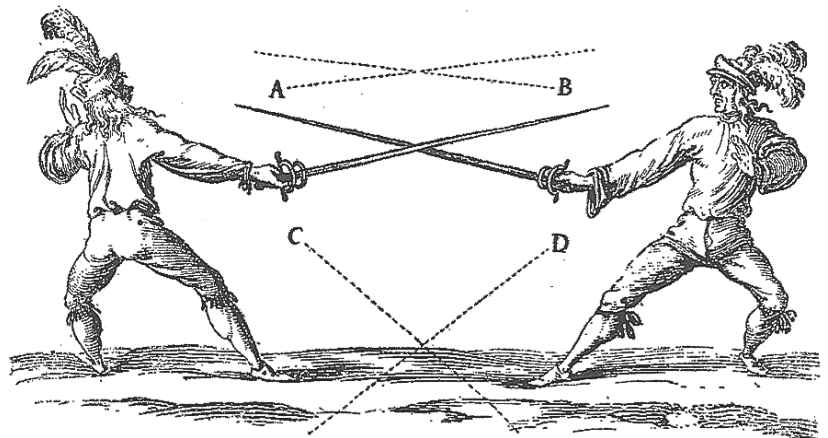
Capitano, for all of his hilarious nature within the commedia dell’arte, is a character evolved from a particularly brutal period in Italian history. While he has varying regional personalities (*Spavento* in Tuscany, *Giangurogolo* in Calabria, *Rogantino* in Rome) he consistently features a bullying, superficial bravura that seeks to mask his underlying cowardice and carries a ridiculously long sword. This duality embodies the greater frustration of the lower classes with the oppressive military power of the higher class; particularly in Naples, where for the better part of two centuries rapier-wielding Spanish soldiers ravaged the local populace and Spanish nobles imported an oppressive culture of honor and dueling. Duchartre, speaking about peasant attitudes toward the soldier, states that “He lived by ravaging the country indiscriminately, pillaging to the right

**Right: Historical print demonstrating rapier technique from Francesco Alfieri’s *L’Arte di ben Maneggiare La Spada*, 1653. Note the elaborate hilts and the length of the blades in relation to the combatants.**



GUARD OF SECONDE.

GUARD OF PRIME. After Alfieri.



GUARD OF QUARTE.

GUARD OF TIERCE. After Alfieri.

and to the left... since they were unable to revenge themselves upon him, they invented the character of the Captain as a substitute. His braggadocio was, therefore, never too outrageous to please them, nor were his fears too contemptible, nor were the blows he received ever too numerous or too hard.”<sup>17</sup> Capitan is a far darker, more nuanced, character than the childish caricature he is often presented to be. His outlandish uniform, brutish behavior, preoccupation with honour and dedication to the unwieldy Spanish rapier with all of its dizzyingly complex theories, were intentionally devised by a desolate populace, desperately lampooning their oppressors in order to find a small measure of solace through satire. ❦

## Endnotes

- 1 Rudlin 121
- 2 Elias 181
- 3 Cohen 24-28
- 4 Cohen 29
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Cohen 30, 38
- 7 Cohen 24-28
- 8 Cohen 36
- 9 Duggan 61, 76
- 10 Duggan 74
- 11 Duggan 71-75
- 12 Nicoll 97-98
- 13 Duchartre 231
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# THE KING OF NEW YORK

By Edward “Ted” Sharon

**N**OVEMBER 2011: “Hi Ted, it’s Allen. Why don’t you come over to our rehearsals at Paper Mill Playhouse in New Jersey? We’re doing a little show that I think you’d like.” J. Allen Suddeth had never steered me wrong, so I was in my car and off to see a “little show” that was soon to become a Tony Award winning Broadway musical with show stopping song and dance numbers like “Carrying the Banner” and “The King of New York.” Like *Newsies*, Allen too came from humble beginnings, tracing back nearly 40 years to when he first arrived on the New York City scene.

In September 1974, Allen packed a red Pontiac station wagon and drove from Ohio to the Big Apple. He arrived with a BFA in Acting from Ohio University, \$800 in his wallet and no backup plan . . . on purpose. He tells stories of the lean years, of walking all the way across town (East Seventh and Second Avenue to West 72nd and Broadway) to collect a paycheck . . . after two days without food. He went on foot because he didn’t even have the 35 cents for subway fare. Allen’s determination fostered a spirit of resilience that defined those early years, and set up his star for its inevitable rise.

While acting jobs allowed him to eat, they barely covered the rent for apartment 1A in New York City’s East Village; \$155 in those days. “There was a point when I was so poor I was almost evicted,” Allen soberly recalls. “I was brought to court, terrified. I paid [the rent], but I was poor as a church mouse.” He lived for an entire year with a dead fridge. “I would put my milk and butter in the window. Those were rough years . . . interesting, but tough, very tough.”

Allen’s financial ends were met through “temp jobs.” Tempting offers from corporate America followed, but each of these he simply rejected to continue working as an actor. Dinner theater and summer stock finally lead to a break in an off-off Broadway show at the Westbeth Theater. He knew the owner and Monday night was “Open Show Night” so Allen and partner AC Weary created fight scenes for the occasion, “never thinking they would go anywhere,” he adds. Soon one creative, well-choreographed fight each Monday night grew into two; two grew into three; then three became an occasional four. The scenes were a hit and Allen and AC were developing a following. The fight scenes became so popular that the theatre eventually gave them their own night, and *A Night at the Fights* was born. AC and Allen’s creative work attracted so much attention that they were offered a three-week run.

It wouldn’t be a good story without a crisis, and here it comes: The night before they were to open a fire broke out in the theater. The next morning Allen and AC received a phone call with the news. The

two rushed to the theater to find it submerged beneath four inches of water. Undaunted, they gathered push brooms and swept the water down three flights of stairs and out onto the street. That done, they rebuilt the set (Allen rolls his eyes remembering the smell) and despite the disaster they opened their three-week run that evening to critical acclaim. The *Soho News*, a vibrant paper in its time, called it “a swashbuckling pageant, which is possibly the most satisfying spectacle now in performance on or off Broadway.” They were the writers, actors, casting directors, set designers and builders, riggers, lighting crew, directors and producers . . . and they were a success.

It was also during 1977 that Allen reconnected with Erik Fredricksen, a fellow Ohio University alumnus. Following their meeting in New York City, Allen made decisions that changed the course of his career. “We struck up a friendship in New York and he recruited me to join the newly formed Society of American Fight Directors (SAFD). I joined because I thought I could make a difference; maybe influence the Society’s progression.”

By the early 1980’s Allen had become an SAFD Fight Master and was teaching privately. In 1982, he founded The Actor’s Combat Training School at the Ken Zen Institute on West 26th Street. His students eventually became so skilled that Allen held a meeting with his advanced actor-combatants and founded Fights-R-Us. The work poured in and the group was hired for daytime television (*Guiding Light, All My Children, One Life to Live, Ryan’s Hope, Texas, Search for Tomorrow* and *Another World*), created Equity children’s theatre, and choreographed and performed fights for theatres all over New York City. In short, Allen had created a clearinghouse for fight and stunt players. The influence of Fights-R-Us was felt locally and eventually nationwide. Actors and subsequent SAFD certified teachers, fight directors and fight masters such as Richard Raether, Steve Vaughan, Ricki Ravitts, Ron Piretti, Sterling Swan, Patricia Tallman, J. David Brimmer, Michael Chin, Kent Shelton and Robert Walsh got their start under slogans such as “We’ll break our backs for you, or certainly make it look that way.” For those with a treasure hunting spirit, type the following URL and you’ll find historical footage illuminating the movement that was Fights-R-Us: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=R05OKkYBC3g](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R05OKkYBC3g).

Teaching continued to be an essential part of who Allen was, and in the classroom he became lauded as a Master. New York City schools including the Juilliard School, the Stella Adler Conservatory, and the Lee Strasberg Institute, as well as institutions outside the city such as Boston University, Rutgers Mason Gross School of the Arts and SUNY Purchase College have all graduated students that bear Suddeth’s seal of approval in staged violence. These actors are technically savvy, highly motivated and possess a creative daring, all fingerprints of a master teacher. These qualities not only fill Allen’s

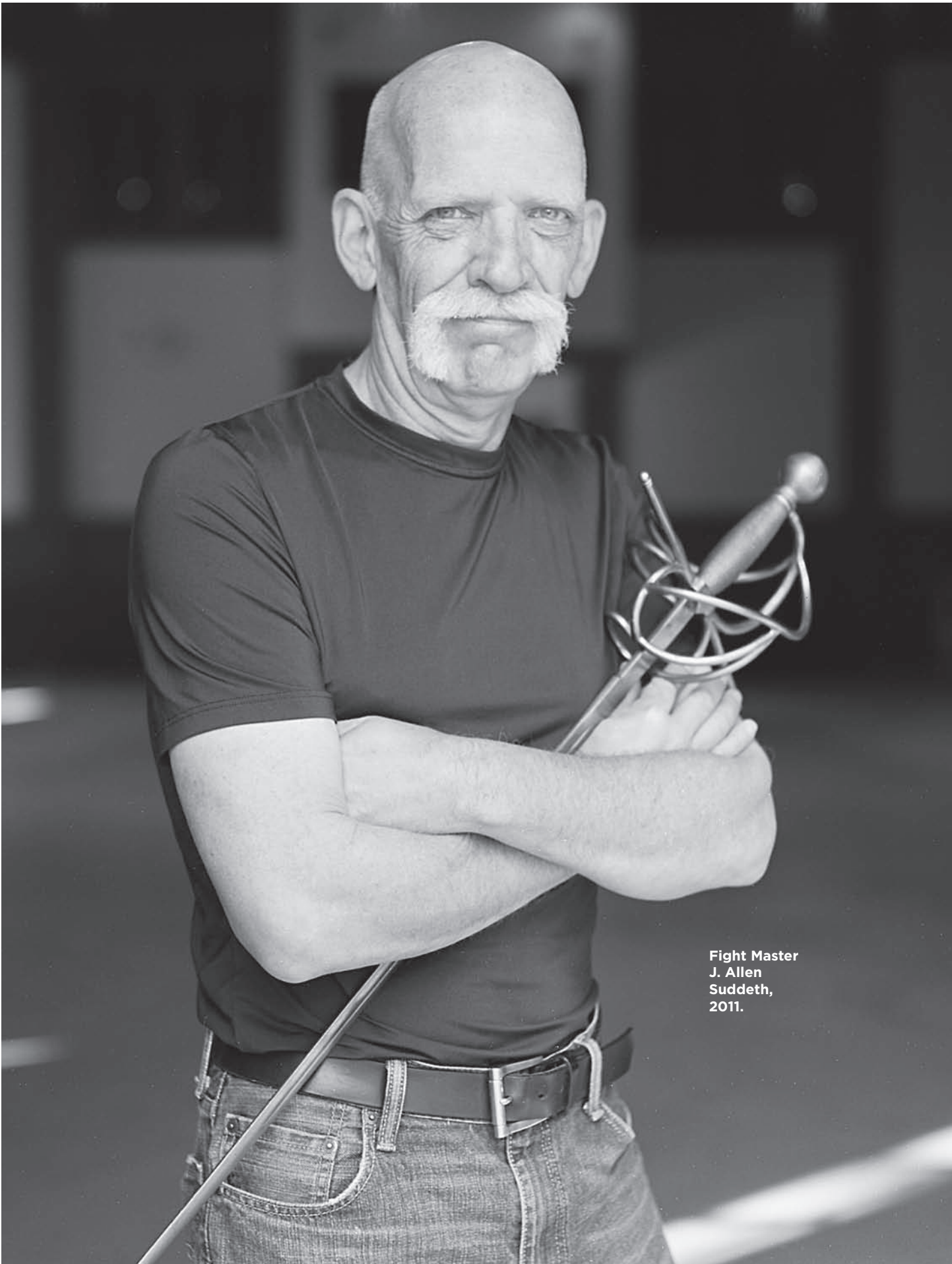
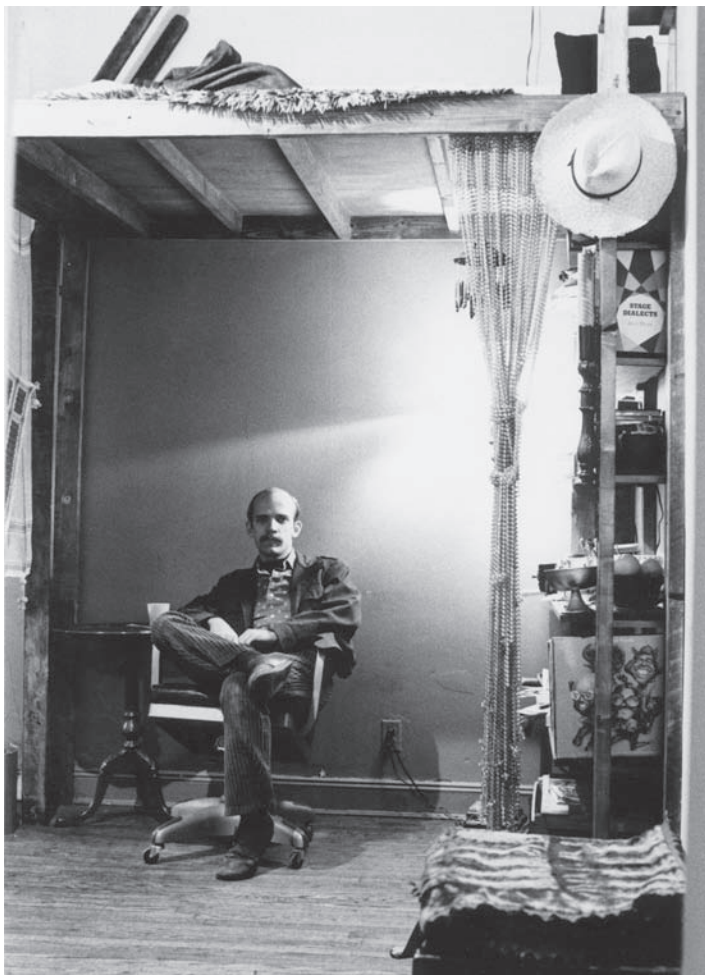


PHOTO BY MICHAEL CINQUINO

Fight Master  
J. Allen  
Suddeth,  
2011.



classrooms, but also pour over onto LORT and off-Broadway stages. Audiences in the New York City boroughs and all across the country have witnessed the innovative and story inspired choreography that is essentially Suddeth.

I have staged countless (a la Tom Stoppard) matri, patri, fratri, sorori, uxori and sui - cides, rapes (too many), and murders for hire. I've been responsible for the death of Shakespearean kings (Richard II, Richard III, Henry IV, Henry V, Henry VI, MacBeth, Ceasar and Hamlet), nobles (Othello, York, Warwick, Young Siward, Laertes, Lady MacDuff, Cornwall, Antigononus, Richmond, Tybalt, Brutus, Edmund, Cloten and Paris) and commoners (Romeo, Juliet, Mercutio, Desdemona, Falstaff, Bardolf, Oswald, Jack Cade, Electra, Atarwhalpa and St. Joan) who I've stabbed with poles, spears, broadswords, rapiers, sabres, daggers, knives and meat hooks, and hacked with axes, halberds and glaives. I've had them shot, clubbed, strangled and torn apart by a crowd. This isn't meant to put myself above my peers, or teachers, or predecessors, who indeed had marvelous careers too. I have simply wanted to note some of my (very lucky) experiences over a five decade long career.

(Quoted from, *My Experiences*, an unpublished manuscript by J. Allen Suddeth.)

Broadway first called on Allen's fight direction for *Hide and Seek* with Elizabeth Ashley. *Saint Joan* with Michael Langham would call again and so on through Tony Kushner's 1993 production of *Angels in America*. Even after all of his success, Allen gives Disney's *Newsies* a special place among his 10 Broadway credits.

"This is really something special," he acknowledged early in the rehearsal process. The same creative team that mounted the Paper Mill production in 2011 would remount the show in 2012 on Broadway. Respect and admiration for Allen's creativity and daring were evident early on. The writers penned in some brief episodes of violence



TOP PHOTO BY J. ALLENSUDDETH



(falls, punches and kicks) but topped off Act I with a 25-person brawl that covered the entire deck and three stories on each of three towers spanning the stage. To see the show is to see one of the biggest fights ever on Broadway, and Allen's scene awes the audience into intermission.

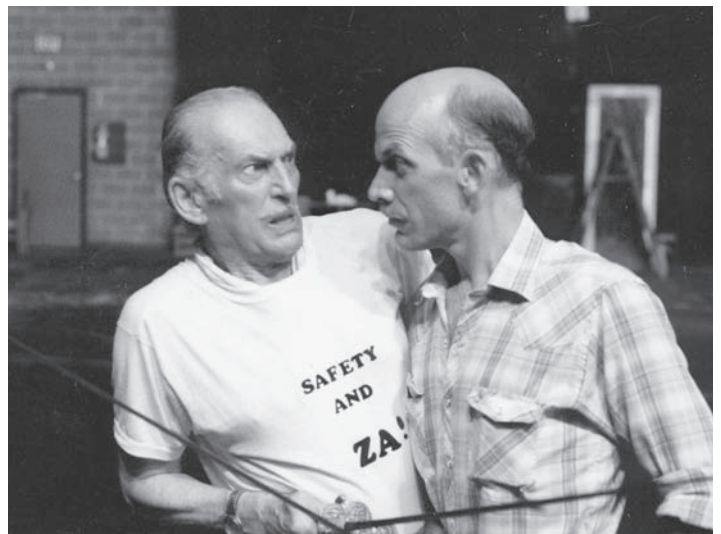
One of Jack Feldman's best lyrics in the show reads, "Give life's little guy some ink and when it dries just watch what happens." In the case of *Newsies*, the little show that could...did! In Allen's case, what was \$800, a BFA and some NYC-bound tenacity turned into a beautiful and innovative wife (Grace), a growing family (Nicole and Patrick), and a successful career in "the business." What will it be in your case? Maybe you'll be the next King of New York! ✦

**Opposite top: The early years: Allen in his East Village Apartment, 1974.**

**Right: Master and Student: Patrick Crean and Allen, 1988. Memphis, TN.**

**Opposite bottom: Gaining Ground: Allen with students at the Juilliard School, 1991.**

**Above: Vera Varlamov and J. Allen Suddeth in a staged action shot taken by Bruce Fuller.**



*\*Concurrent with the release of this article Allen's work can again be seen on Broadway in Jeff Calhoun's 2013 production of Jekyll and Hyde at The Marquis Theatre at 1535 Broadway starting in March.*

# A Beginner's Guide To Delivering Camera-Ready Choreography

BY EDWIN MILLHEIM



**A**CTION AND STUNT FIGHT coordination on a film project is a highly collaborative process. You are part of a team that has been brought together to bring a director's vision to life. So how do you start to get into this line of work? Networking is simple. If a friend is working on a project, offer your assistance. For future projects, they might remember your work and give you a call. Your friend might mention you to a producer, who gets the ball rolling and hires most of the crew. Personally, I helped with a promising actor/screenwriter on film school

and sitcom projects a few years ago, and he remembered me when he progressed to bigger things.

If you are familiar with stage combat training and choreography, then you already have a solid foundation to expand into action coordinating and learning the stunt trade. The best way to begin or expand your knowledge is to take a stunt person's class or boot camp. The Internet is the best tool to start your search; just use the keywords "movie stunt school." There are many different training options available, so do your research on who is running the program. A good course with reputable people will offer staging for the camera, covering basics like high falls, the use of air rams, wire work and car hits, but also how to get hired and keep a film job. While no one can guarantee a job, instructors can set you up with the tools demanded of the profession.

PHOTOS: EDWIN MILLHEIM (OPPOSITE LEFT AND THIS PAGE); DAN REID (OPPOSITE RIGHT) COURTESY/REID NICEWONDER AND NICEWONDER FILMS.

Rather than address how a film is made from every department, subjects that have been addressed in multiple books on film making, I will share my experience as an action/stunt fight coordinator. I will use examples of my approach from my recent work on the action horror film *Sanctuary*, which is a low budget film from Nice Wonder Films currently in final sound and dialogue edits as of the deadline for this article. My work as an action coordinator on this production demonstrates multiple action scenes, setups and the way I approach such a project. The approach I will detail, has worked well for me, though it is by no means the only approach.

So a producer invites you to work on a low to mid-budget independent film. What now? The film's producer hires most of the team (director, assistant director, director of photography, the stunt department and even the actors for a film). To generalize, the producer is in charge of the business end of a film and is part of the film from beginning to end. Once production begins, however, you will be coordinating more with the director or assistant director. They are also typically the ones who set up location viewing ahead of time.

It is important to try to get a look at the set in advance to prepare. Visit the locations, if you can, preferably with the director and director of photography. This is a good time to determine where the action will take place. Will the action take place in a stairwell or through the whole location or set? Will the characters be firing weapons in a large room with furniture?

Lead-time is important; getting a copy of the shooting script several months before training begins is not unreasonable. There



is no typical time frame leading up to filming. I have worked three to four months ahead and spent two weeks in preparation with the directors, fleshing out when a piece of action would take place as well as the length of the scene they were after.

With knowledge of the project and access to the script, it's a good idea to learn about the talent (actors) with whom you will be working. What skills do they bring? Does the film's budget leave wiggle room for stunt doubles or only for the actors? If only actors, you will have to work even closer with the director, depending on the ambitiousness of the action. When going over character backgrounds, it is important to collaborate with the director on how you envision the action sequences based upon the background provided in the script. If a character has a particular martial background, then he or she should carry him or herself differently in a fight than someone

without training. The director may already have clear ideas of what they want when it comes to a character's fighting style, be it stylized like Karate or Kung fu (such as high-flying wire work) or more realistic, brutal and brawling as in the film *Sanctuary*.

In *Sanctuary*, the character Brandon is revealed to be an ex-police officer, who patrolled some of the more vicious parts of a big city. With Brandon being no stranger to violence, the director and I worked out that he would know how to hit a person to bring them down, using a combination of boxing, knee attacks and hair pulling to control and move his opponent where he wanted.

With a firm understanding of the location and the characters involved, you can begin storyboarding the fight. You might create drawings; write out the action, or perhaps even use a video camera to record choreography with an assistant. Filming choreography also gives you the opportunity to block out shots with the director and the director of photography. This can help the director to envision the action, and the director of photography to gather ideas on how best to film the sequence. Full collaboration, however, is not typical and depends on the individual director(s); some already know what they want and may be more controlling than others. Most times you coordinate the action, build the choreography and the director and director of photography decide how it's shot. In some cases the director delegates blocking out the action shots to the director of photography. Other directors may specify exactly how they want the action filmed and where they want the cameras.

For *Sanctuary*, I had a collaborative experience with the directors and the director of photography. During rehearsals for a chase scene, I filmed the action with a hand-held digital camera to provide the directors with an example of the choreography. They liked the footage so much that for the actual filming, the shots were duplicated almost frame by frame from my example. At the end of the day, the goal is to deliver camera-ready choreography; so filming your work can serve the production as well as your own knowledge and understanding of action coordination.

**Opposite left: Ali Willers and Fedor Steer rehearse a chase scene from the film *Sanctuary*.**

**Opposite right: The author working with Blake Logan and the safety clear rubber sleeve on the knife.**

**Above: A view from behind the lights and camera position as Special Effects get ready with Blood gush effects.**

After arranging the action to flow with the director's vision and concept for the film, the next step is to meet with the actors and any action doubles. If you're working on a lower-budget film, be prepared to work only with actors. Depending on the skill level, you may have to change the choreography, better to adjust than have someone get hurt.

You may run into challenges regarding your choices; be diplomatic and offer alternatives. You have more wiggle room in film when it comes to showing someone throw a punch. You can set up your talent outside of measured safety distance and use the angle of the camera to establish the illusion of contact.

During *Sanctuary*, I had been originally informed that a scene involving a character getting hit by a car would be done digitally. Then (due to budget) it turned out that the action was to be a practical effect (done live, not via computer). My specialty is stage combat and not car hits. I, therefore, suggested an optical effect

with the live action. Being filmed from the correct angle, the actor would not need to be in front of the car, but 7 to 10 feet to the side. The director of photography, using a long lens and wider angle, shot so that when the car came into frame, the actor acted as though they were hit and it looked like the actor was clipped by the left front of the car.

Like any other production, it is best to know about previous injuries or concerns ahead of time. Training can be very demanding for the actors. Depending on how much action is involved, it's not uncommon to practice three to five months in advance. Preparation and training are important, and going through the action repeatedly is how I prepare a team of actors. This method has yet to let me down. Fight sequences are created with each actor's attributes, strengths and weaknesses in mind, and the majority of the time is spent preparing the actors for relatively short, on camera action sequences. Why so much time? Well, safety for one, actors must know the choreography. The time also increases when working with action doubles because they must also learn the choreography. Everyone must know the actions for their own character, and must be just as comfortable performing the action with the other actor as with their action double.

Never assume that the person you are working with will be able to pick up choreography quickly because they have a few gigs under their belt. It does happen, but take time to go through the basics, including warm ups, body mechanics, action and reaction, and empty

grabs. The basics are very important for a couple of reasons. First, you will see evidence of the skill level present. Second, and more importantly, everyone works together, which builds a team and "film family" psychology. This camaraderie established through warm up, stretching and exercise is worked into the first session and I suggest it be part of your routine.

I also recommend obtaining the props that the actors will be using from the prop department as soon as possible, the sooner the actors get used to the actual prop the better. There is nothing worse than practicing with a two-ounce broom handle and then (on set) dealing with a prop that weighs two pounds. Check with your production contact about getting the props that will be used for the action in particular. I say "in particular" because if the picture has a larger budget then they will have several different props

**Below left: The actual filming of Blake Logan performing the knife sequence rehearsed.**

**Below right: Fedor Steer takes aim with a replica .45 pistol in a scene from *Sanctuary*.**

**Opposite left: Blake Logan and Ali Willers rehearse a hair pull.**

**Opposite right: Blake Logan and Ali Willers perform their rehearsed hair pull for the camera with Michael Andrew Scott.**



## The Electronic Journals of Martial Arts and Sciences

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of the same item. The first is called the hero prop. This is the item that is filmed close up so it has the most detail. Then there is the stunt prop, which can be made of something that won't hurt when striking someone. There is also the background prop, which has little to no detail and is used for background shots and long shots (when background actors need to be in the scene with props). Deciding which props are used (and when) is not your department, though if you are working on a low to mid-budget film, you can expect to work with props that you may have to assess for safety (which you should do anyway).

A case in point, the prop master for *Sanctuary* (the person who handles getting the props for a film set or scene) got hold of a butterfly knife for a couple of knife scenes. To my horror it was not a prop but the real deal, which was unacceptable. I knew of a prop house that carried what we needed, but the prop would not have arrived in time. A woman working in costumes and set dressing devised a simple solution. Thick rubber tubing from an aquarium filtration hose was affixed over the blade and extended well past the point, which I tested extensively before I cleared it for actor use. The tubing would not be seen in the shots that used the knife, so the actors were safe and the shots sold the effect.

Most actors I have worked with are serious about their craft; they view the choreography much like what it is: a dangerous dance routine. They are smart enough to know that what we do does not translate to actual fighting. We embellish and simulate violence. The

fight and action are just a continuation of the story in the film. Your fights must have meaning in the storyline.

You can do this by not thinking of the action as purely confrontational but as elements of the narrative. An action scene should not stop the story of the film.

One of the first chase scenes in *Sanctuary* is a prime example. The storyline established that unseen forces outside made opening doors dangerous. So when the actress playing Crystal runs from a demon-possessed madman and braves the outside balcony in an attempt to get away, her action of facing an unknown danger rather than the immediate threat and environment therefore furthers the storyline. Through this action the environment/location became a character of its own.

As the action coordinator, you're responsible for keeping an eye on the action sequences and taking steps to prevent injury. One of these steps is to remind everyone that safety must be the top priority on set and off. Getting an action sequence on film is never worth anyone's life. Just before the cameras roll, you or the director will go over what to expect in the sequence about to be filmed. Then the first assistant director will call for "last looks" (that's the call for wardrobe and makeup to check the actors once more). The phrase "place us on the bell" may be called so the sound mixer sounds a bell to signal silence. "Roll Sound" is called, the boom operator calls out "sound / speed," signaling that sound is up and ready. Cameras come on and "Slate" or "Mark it" is called, the slate marks the scene and then... Action! 🎬



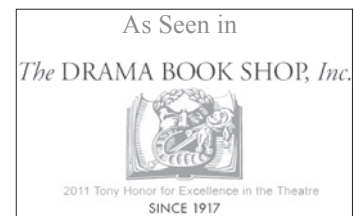
PHOTOS: DIRECT FROM FILM FOOTAGE WITH REHEARSAL SHOT FROM EDWIN MILLHEIM COURTESY OF REID NICEWONDER AND NICEWONDER FILMS.



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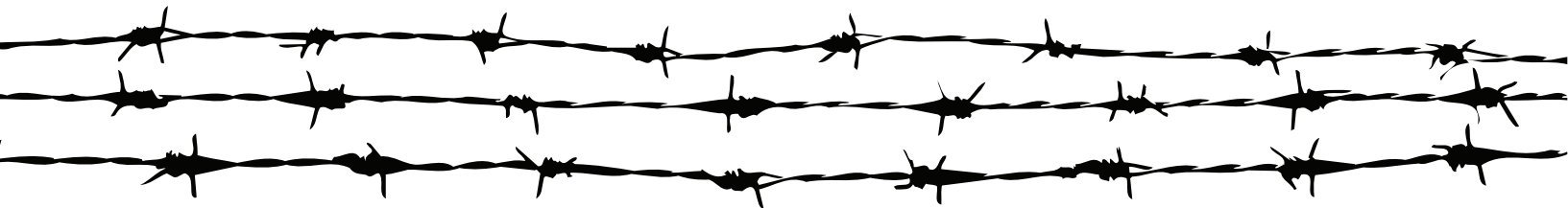


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# West

BY TERRY KROENUNG



**SCENE:** Assistant commandant's office, German concentration camp; spring, 1945.

**SET:** Door SL and in UR corner (in SR wall). Desk SR, facing DL. Besides the usual office items, it also has a liquor bottle on it. Comfortable executive chair behind desk. Armless chair facing it. Metal cabinet UC. Floor lamp SR of cabinet. Coat rack at SL door. Imagined window DC.

**KLAUS MANN**, late 30's, the acting camp commander, stands DC, looking out of the "window". He smokes a cigarette, which is nearly finished, and toys with his SS dagger. He is in full uniform, collar undone, but his holster is empty. His mistress, **CHRISTINE**, late 20's, sits on the desk in a white slip, red high heels, and his cap. She is playing with his pistol, "shooting" imagined enemies with appropriately childish sound effects. She is coming off a recreational morphine dose. Artillery can be heard in the distance. It will be heard throughout the play, becoming progressively louder. Occasionally a plane or two flies past and trucks roll by outside the window. The floor lamp is on. It is very late at night.

**KLAUS:** Thirty kilometers.

**CHRISTINE:** Hmm?

**KLAUS:** Sounds like they're about thirty kilometers east of us. They'll be here in a day or two, at the rate they've been moving.

**CHRISTINE:** The Americans?

**KLAUS:** East!

**CHRISTINE:** Not the Americans?

**KLAUS:** Soviets. *(under his breath)* Dimwit.

**CHRISTINE:** Oh, the Russians. It must be true. They're certainly "rushin'" to get here. *(laughs hysterically)*

**KLAUS:** *(rolls his eyes; mutters)* My mistake. Halfwit.

**CHRISTINE:** *("Shooting" him in the back)* You know, the morphine doesn't make me deaf.

**KLAUS:** Nor any smarter.

**CHRISTINE:** Look who's talking. The Commandant abandons us here for Uruguay and you raise your hand like a good little Nazi: "Gee, I'd love to be in charge of this camp when the Russians break down the gate. What an honor!"

**KLAUS:** Pinhead.

**CHRISTINE:** *(goes to him, hugs him from behind, strokes his chest)* You should try to be nice to people.

**KLAUS:** *(wry laugh)* It's a tad late in the day for that, don't you think? Am I supposed to start adding good deeds to my side of the balance now, to tip the scales of eternal justice against the outraged shades of a couple of million butchered Jews?

**CHRISTINE:** *(gives him a playful swat)* I said you should be nice to people, silly. Pay attention to me, will you?

**KLAUS:** *(softly)* Late in the day for that, too. *(knock on SL door)* Enter! *(A camp inmate enters, bows)*

**WOMAN:** Commandant, they have found the one you asked for.

**KLAUS:** When?

**WOMAN:** This morning, in the train from Zagreb.

**KLAUS:** Was she treated as I directed?

**WOMAN:** Your orders were followed perfectly.

**KLAUS:** Good. Have her brought here.

**WOMAN:** At once. *(bows, exits)*

**CHRISTINE:** "Her"? Should I go and change the sheets?

**KLAUS:** Shut up.

**CHRISTINE:** Late in the day for that, too. *(returns to desk, sits on it again; lays pistol aside)* Who's this one? Another clear-skinned Gypsy teenager? You sure you can keep "up" with her after all the schnapps you've guzzled today?

**KLAUS:** You're one to talk, after working your way through my enlisted men.

**CHRISTINE:** Oh, I'm sorry. Are you telling me to keep my hands off your privates? *(giggles)*

**KLAUS:** And save some morphine for the wounded, why don't you?

**CHRISTINE:** What wounded? They don't stop running long enough to get shot. A few sprained ankles, maybe. Pretty soon the inmates will be guarding themselves. *(crosses to him, takes his cigarette, puts it in her mouth)* So, who is she?

**KLAUS:** No one. Just another Jew with a chimney appointment.

**CHRISTINE:** Except that this one also has an appointment with the camp commandant. Why might that be, I have to wonder?

**KLAUS:** Wonder till you turn blue. It's camp business.

**CHRISTINE:** And here I thought I'd been getting the camp business all this time.

**KLAUS:** Shut up. Go to your room and sleep it off. *(pause)* I'll...be there later.

**CHRISTINE:** *(licks her lips)* You bringing her with you?

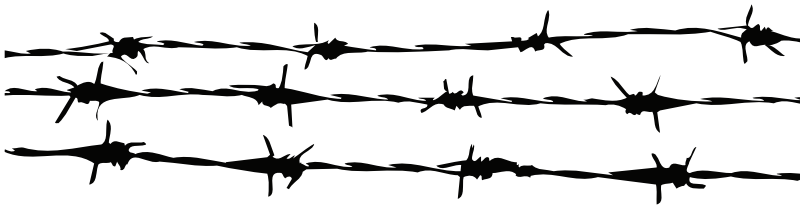
**KLAUS:** Why? It's not your birthday.

**CHRISTINE:** As if you have a clue when that is.

**KLAUS:** That's because I suspect you don't have one. More likely you came out of Mengele's lab.

**CHRISTINE:** *(whispering in his ear)* Built to your exacting specifications. *(exits UR; takes pistol from desk as she goes)*

**KLAUS:** *(to himself)* Then I should have been more specific... *(aloud, at her back)* I left you a card on the night table. *(He goes behind the desk, buttoning his collar. He checks to ensure his uniform is perfect as a knock is heard at the SL door. He straightens the desk, puts liquor bottle in UC cabinet.)*



*Another knock. He makes a final survey of the room, scabbards his dagger, and buttons the holster.)* Come in.

*(The Woman enters with JUDITH FRIEDHOF, who is still in the filthy clothes she arrived in: trousers, man's shirt, boots. She has been given an army greatcoat, however. Her hair has not been cut. In her late 20's, she is striking but not beautiful.)*

**WOMAN:** The Friedhof woman, Herr Commandant.

**KLAUS:** Good. Dismissed.

*(She nods and exits SL. Judith stands at C. Klaus moves to stand directly in front of her)*

**KLAUS:** *(after a pause)* Fraulein.

**JUDITH:** Major Mann.

**KLAUS:** *(after a pause)* Seat?

**JUDITH:** No. I've been sitting on the floor of a cattle car for four days.

**KLAUS:** *(reaching for her face)* My poor Judith---

**JUDITH:** *(jerking her head away)* Don't.

**KLAUS:** *(crosses toward desk)* Ah...so I'm to pretend that we are merely jailer and inmate, then?

**JUDITH:** Pretend? I've been locked up with the dead and dying for the better part of a week, up to my ass in their puke and shit, nearly deaf from their pathetic pleadings to an indifferent God. Five miles away from here we started gagging from the chimney stench. Inside the gate we were herded between head-high heaps of contorted corpses while the guards cackled like lunatics. My entire group, those not pulled lifeless from the car onto the frozen ground, were shoved shrieking into your so-called showers. At the last second I was yanked aside and dragged to a barracks. Now I'm here. Precisely where is the pretense, Herr Jailer?

**KLAUS:** *(after a pause)* At least take off your coat.

**JUDITH:** Why, does some shivering soldier need it back?

**KLAUS:** *(smashing a hand on the desk)* God damn you!

**JUDITH:** Truer words were never spoken. *(Removes her coat, throws it at him. He catches it, folds it carefully, places it atop the cabinet)* Somehow that reminds me of a mortician carefully preparing the body.

**KLAUS:** There was a time when you didn't particularly mind my preparing your body.

**JUDITH:** That stupid girl died years ago. I buried her under ten tons of remorse. You can't send her up your chimney. *(pause)* What's going on here?

**KLAUS:** It's complicated.

**JUDITH:** You thought I'd walk in here and throw myself breathlessly into your manly arms? "Oh, Klaus, you saved me from the gas! Take me, my love!"

**KLAUS:** Not at all.

**JUDITH:** Because I have to tell you, moonlight and candles on the Rhine this isn't.

**KLAUS:** Stop...

**JUDITH:** Granted, there is a certain ineffable charm to the warm glow of the crematory fires. And the piles of glasses and dentures make for an erotic ambience a girl would be hard put to resist.

**KLAUS:** *(moving toward her)* Please... You don't---

**JUDITH:** I have to confess that the dead bodies of the desperate tangled in the electric fence do make me think of romance, somehow.

**KLAUS:** Judith---

**JUDITH:** They remind me of how I'd like to cut your heart out, just like you did mine when you started butchering my people wholesale!

**KLAUS:** *(slapping her)* Shut up!

*(pause)*

**JUDITH:** *(doesn't move)* Yes, that's the sentimental lover I remember. If memory serves, that was your parting kiss in '39. The taste of blood really takes me back to the good old days.

**KLAUS:** Don't try to put it all on me.

**JUDITH:** Not at all. I place all the blame on me. If I hadn't been such a naïve, starry-eyed child to think I could make a decent human being of you, we would never have ended up in the same bed.

**KLAUS:** *(wryly)* Many a good man has been created in those circumstances.

**JUDITH:** Every good man...and every bad one, too. *(wavers, grabs back of armless chair)*

**KLAUS:** *(grabbing her arm and putting her in the chair)* Come on, sit. No arguing. *(She sits, leans over to forestall fainting)* This comes of trying to be a superwoman, running around Yugoslavia blowing up our trains.

**JUDITH:** So surrender, if you care so much for my welfare.

**KLAUS:** *(very softly)* That happened long ago. *(pause)* Didn't they feed you when you arrived? I left orders.

**JUDITH:** Potato soup, a little beef, some black bread. But six years living on slogans and honor can't be countered in a day.

**KLAUS:** *(opening UC cabinet)* I'll have more sent in. *(pours her a drink from the bottle he had placed there)* Here.

**JUDITH:** *(takes it reluctantly, sniffs at it)* Ah...you were drinking this when we met.

**KLAUS:** I've drunk nothing else since.

**JUDITH:** Who would guess that the master of... *(indicates camp)* all this...would be so sentimental?

**KLAUS:** That's your doing.

**JUDITH:** The sentiment, or all this?

**KLAUS:** That's a foolish question.

**JUDITH:** No. 'Why would a good Jewish girl fall in love with an SS officer?'. That's a foolish question.

**KLAUS:** Please don't say it was the uniform.

**JUDITH:** I think it looks pretty silly, truth be told.

**KLAUS:** As do I, actually. Should I take it off?

**JUDITH:** Far too late for that. You should never have put it on.

**KLAUS:** Agreed.

**JUDITH:** Is that an epiphany I smell?

**KLAUS:** Something like that.

**JUDITH:** *(sniffs)* Strange...it smells like cheap perfume. Does she know about me?

**KLAUS:** No.

**JUDITH:** Ashamed of your old Jewish mistress?

**KLAUS:** Ashamed, yes...but never of you.

**JUDITH:** And here I was dreaming of that touching bedroom

scene where you roll over, light her cigarette, and say, “Darling, did I ever tell you about my lover, the rabbi’s daughter? We met in moonlight...”

**KLAUS:** *(quietly, at the window, more to himself than to her)* “... moonlight. It caught in her black hair like stars in a net. Her blue dress caressed her long luscious legs as she danced with old Colonel Haupt. Some of us wished we were him. I wished I was the dress. Every man in the room knew she was a Jew<sup>w</sup> and probably a spy; and none gave a damn. They moved on her as if she were a fortress to be taken by storm, and their battalions broke upon her defenses. I could see she would never fall to a blitzkrieg; only to a gentle siege.”

**JUDITH:** *(smorts)* Gentle!

**KLAUS:** “All the time I was cocooning her in music and tenderness, I believed that I was undermining her bastion. Imagine my surprise when I reached for my heart one summer night and found it in her iron grasp.”

**JUDITH:** Would you like it back?

**KLAUS:** An exchange of prisoners? Against current Wehrmacht regulations, I’m afraid. *(pause)* “That September she fled the field, to wage war anew in other killing grounds. I pursued, but she melted into the fog of battle. Vague intelligence reports hinted at her movements: assassinations in Warsaw, kidnappings in Bucharest, prisoner rescues in Prague. Always a Dark Angel was mentioned, the last lovely/lethal memory of our men. And then her phenomenal luck finally broke in Zagreb. She fell into our eager hands like a delightful surprise gift, all unlooked for. Naturally she was sent to me, for... final processing.” And a last reckoning.

**JUDITH:** You always did tell a good story. “I know no touch of it, my lord.”

**KLAUS:** *(smiles)* “‘Tis as easy as lying.”

**JUDITH:** Just because you wear black it doesn’t make you Hamlet.

**KLAUS:** Well, I do have relatives in Denmark.

**JUDITH:** So did I. *(glares at him)* But they’re all dead now. They were last seen at your cozy train station. *(pause)* Shall we jump ahead to the fifth act, since we’ve seen this play before? The stage is already set for it—bodies everywhere, enemy army at the gates, characters choking on their own guilt...

**KLAUS:** *(to himself)* Flawed hero about to be redeemed through sacrifice and death.

**JUDITH:** *(not hearing)* So let’s ring down the curtain on this tragic farce, hm? Thank you for the last meal, and the last drink. But we both know how the show ends. Let’s get going.

**KLAUS:** What?

**JUDITH:** Give me a bar of soap and point me toward the showers. I’m eager to wash off the muck of this miserable world.

**KLAUS:** You...? No! *(goes to her)* Judith, love, you’re reading from the wrong script.

**JUDITH:** No, no. It says right here: “We owe God a death.”

**KLAUS:** He’s been overpaid already. You have a refund coming.

**JUDITH:** *(suspicious now)* What are you talking about?

**KLAUS:** This isn’t *Hamlet*. The heroine lives. *(draws his dagger, places it in her hands)* It is the tragic hero only who must fall.

**JUDITH:** *(stepping back)* Oh! You miserable Christians! You set fire to the entire blessed world and then think you can atone for the conflagration by falling on a knife?

**KLAUS:** No. I just want out of a burning building.

**JUDITH:** Then what---? *(finally gets it)* Ah... then this is *Julius*

*Caesar*.

**KLAUS:** *(nods)* Only without the honor.

**JUDITH:** *(holds the dagger out to him)* Find yourself another Strato, Brutus.

**KLAUS:** Too late. You auditioned for the role six years ago.

**JUDITH:** No! I walked out on the production.

**KLAUS:** It’s not that easy!

**JUDITH:** I will **not** do this!

**KLAUS:** Why not? You had no trouble cutting the throats of those five Gestapo men in Bucharest.

**JUDITH:** They weren’t running up to me, eager to taste the blade.

It was combat.

**KLAUS:** So is this, my little commando! Look around you! This is how wars end! The losers bleed out their little lives in bathrooms or courtrooms and the rest of you march off to write smug history books.

**JUDITH:** *(buries the dagger blade in the armless chain)* Write it yourself! My inkwell is dry.

**KLAUS:** You need motivation, then? A superobjective? *(goes to desk, takes another knife from a drawer)* How about survival? Hot blood instead of cold!

**JUDITH:** And I thought the situation was as surreal as it could get.

**KLAUS:** *(walking toward her)* I will **not** be a rag doll dancing on Russian bayonets.

**JUDITH:** And I will not make this easy for you! If you want to open your veins to cheat them, then do it! Don’t cry to me to help you along.

**KLAUS:** No crying, no begging. If it’s the shock of combat you need... *(slashes at her, misses)*

**JUDITH:** *(jumping back, away from the chair and the dagger)* Are you out of your mind?


**KLAUS:** Not anymore. I had a six-year mad scene, but it just ended. *(thrusts; she evades it)* Come on, Dark Angel! Miss Freedom Fighter! *(gets between her and the SL door)* Earn your liberty.

**JUDITH:** And get shot two steps out that door.

**KLAUS:** I gave the guards written orders to let you go. There’s a car behind this building. Take the road west. I left a signed pass on the seat. Go west and get into the American lines.

*(He cuts at her. She controls his wrist, pulls him past, and makes for the door. He catches her from behind by the hair, hurls her at the chair where her dagger waits. He thrusts. She parries with the chain, still unwilling to use the dagger)*

**JUDITH:** This is lunacy!

**KLAUS:** And just how are we judging madness these days? Is this crazier than filling pits full of sobbing, writhing civilians? Than enslaving tiny children? Than boiling your family for soap? *(She wails, pulls the knife from the chair, attacks him. He parries)* Ah, finally some heat. You’ll have to try harder. I won’t just stand still for you. You see, this isn’t so much *Julius Caesar* as it is *Macbeth*... Jew bitch! *(The fight intensifies. She presses him SL, toward the door. He knocks her back with the coat rack)* Pretty good for a Christ-killing harpy! Let’s go! You only get out this door over my dead body! Don’t pretend that distresses you. *(Fight intensifies again. They use the whole room)* I hunted your people with a religious fervor when you left. Like I was on a mission from God. Shot cripples in the head, buried babies alive, burned expectant mothers naked and shrieking in their miserable synagogues! *(Fight goes into a frenzy, ending in a tau corps-a-corps at C. Christine enters from UR door with a letter in one hand and the pistol in the other; she watches from there, frozen)* Remember... go west. There lies the freedom you’ve been seeking all this time. *(He lets her envelop his blade upstage. It flies out of his hand. She buries her blade in his chest)* I’ll be there, waiting for you. *(Kisses her; falls. Christine steps into the room, pistol raised. Judith ignores her. She slumps from exhaustion and hunger. Christine moves down behind her, aims the pistol. She weavers as Judith turns to look at her with weary sad eyes. Christine drops the pistol, falls to her knees, still clutching the letter. They embrace, beginning to cry. Artillery is heard, very near now. Fade out)* 



Dave Grant	QS	Keith Pinault	UA	<b>Muhlenberg College</b>	<b>12/08/2012</b>
Stacey Polishook	QS	Alexandra Pucci	UA	<b>Michael Chin</b>	<b>J. David Brimmer</b>
Deanna Roseen	<b>QS</b>	Dave Register	<b>UA</b>	Stephen Bauder	UA
<b>UNCSA School of Drama</b>	<b>11/20/2012</b>	Seth Reich	<b>UA</b>	Rebecca Bitondo	<b>UA</b>
<b>Dale Anthony Girard</b>	<b>Scot Mann</b>	Amber Robinson	UA	Allison Bloechi	<b>UA</b>
Gabe Arant	<b>BSS</b>	Peter Romano	<b>UA</b>	Jeremy Borut	UA
Aundria Brown	SIS	Marcel Spears	<b>UA</b>	Jessica Cody	UA
Miles Duffield	<b>SIS SIS</b>	Angela Sperazza	UA	Adrianna Gentile	UA
Isabelle Ellington	<b>BS BSS SIS</b>	<b>Brooklyn College - Graduate School</b>	<b>12/06/2012</b>	Adrian Graham-hesnavage	UA
Noelle Franco	<b>SIS</b>	<b>Michael Chin</b>	<b>J. David Brimmer</b>	Eric Hedden	<b>UA</b>
Alec Grooms	<b>SIS</b>	Andrea Aranguren	UA	James Patefield	<b>UA-R</b>
Gus Halper	<b>BS</b>	Sean Chin	<b>UA-R</b>	Louisa Pough	<b>UA</b>
Mary Kate Harris	SIS	Jonathan Maldonado	UA	Ryan Rosenblatt	<b>UA</b>
Raymond Huth	<b>BSS</b>	Patrick McCormick	UA	Nicole Sahagian	UA
Madeline Meigs	<b>BS RD</b>	Aaron Mednick	UA	Kim Sehn	UA
Jacob Owen	<b>BS</b>	Jeremy Ping	UA	Mary Vecchio	<b>UA</b>
Ryan Pater	<b>BSS</b>	Sarah Poleshuck	UA	Nicholas Williams	<b>UA</b>
Lorenzo Roberts	<b>BS</b>	Alicia Rodis	<b>UA-R</b>	<b>Western Illinois University</b>	<b>12/08/2012</b>
Leighton Schlanger	<b>BSS SIS</b>	Keelie Sheridan	UA	<b>D.C. Wright</b>	<b>Ian Rose</b>
Clinton Tate	<b>BS BSS</b>	<b>City College of New York</b>	<b>12/07/2012</b>	<b>Barbara Seifert</b>	QS SIS SIS
Zach Tuckness	<b>SIS</b>	<b>Denise Alessandra Hurd</b>	<b>J. David Brimmer</b>	Mark Anderson	SIS
Eli Williams	<b>BS</b>	Michael Anthony	UA	Nathan Bush	SIS
<b>Arcadia University</b>	<b>12/01/2012</b>	Shawn Brown	UA	Franklyn Delaney	SIS
<b>J. Alex Cordaro</b>	<b>J. Allen Suddeth</b>	John Calero	UA	Arielle Leverett	<b>SIS</b>
Jeffrey Barth	<b>KN UA</b>	Tremania Campbell	UA	Dallas Milholland	SIS
Amanda Brandt	KN UA	Timothy Chan	UA	Theodore Mueller	QS SIS
Jaylene Gawlinski	UA	Victor Garcia, Jr.	UA	Amos Omer	SIS
Jeffrey Moorhead	<b>KN UA</b>	Cynthia Liu	UA	Chester Shepherd	<b>SIS</b>
<b>University of Oklahoma</b>	<b>12/01/2012</b>	Stephen Macari	UA	<b>AMD, NYC</b>	<b>12/09/2012</b>
<b>Matthew Ellis</b>	<b>Scot Mann</b>	Justin Olivencia	UA	<b>Joseph T Travers</b>	<b>J. Allen Suddeth</b>
Morgan Beach	UA	Nelson Patino Jr.	UA	Patino Deisy	<b>SIS</b>
Brad Brockman	KN	Erin Poland	UA	Dowle Francesca	<b>SIS</b>
Casey Coy	<b>KN UA</b>	Kevin Yeboah	UA	Trigueros Gonzalo	<b>SIS</b>
Jeremy Eoff	<b>UA</b>	Christina Zrake	UA	Velez Matthew	<b>SIS</b>
Connor Konz	<b>UA</b>	<b>Roosevelt University</b>	<b>12/07/2012</b>	Merrick Megan	<b>SIS</b>
Meredith Little	<b>UA</b>	<b>Neil Massey</b>	<b>Ian Rose</b>	Gurman Moses	<b>SIS</b>
Kelcie Miles	<b>KN UA</b>	<b>Charles Coyl</b>	SIS	Fregonese Rachele	SIS
Craig Musser	KN UA	Peter Byrne	UA	Casillas Ximena	<b>SIS</b>
Jennifer Pearson	UA	Zeek Dolezalek	UA	<b>Paradise Valley Community College</b>	<b>12/10/2012</b>
Lindsay Pittman	UA	Nick Druzbankski	<b>SIS</b>	<b>Andrea Robertson</b>	<b>Dale Anthony Girard</b>
Andrew Rathgeber	<b>UA</b>	Alyssa Frewen	<b>UA</b>	Ric Alpers	BS SIS
Brooke Reynolds	UA	Catherine Gonzalez	UA	Stephnn Baldetti	BS SIS
Laurel Sein	<b>KN UA</b>	Bradley Halverson	<b>UA</b>	Colton Becker	BS SIS
Marie Skubic	UA	Hillary Horvath	SIS UA	Matthew Bedsole	BS SIS
Michael Turrentine	UA	Emmanuel Linden-Broner	<b>UA</b>	Taylor Brady	BS SIS
Carley Walker	KN UA	Arie Marchioni	<b>SIS</b>	Sky Donovan	BS SIS
Jack Welborn	<b>UA</b>	William Marquez	UA	Alex Hansen	BS SIS
Kyle Whalen	KN UA	Jessica McCluskey	UA	DJ Hepburn	BS SIS
Conner Wilson	<b>UA</b>	Brendan Meyer	SIS	Jason Hetherington	BS SIS
<b>Temple University</b>	<b>12/01/2012</b>	Caleb Noel	SIS	George Janko	BS SIS
<b>Ian Rose</b>	<b>J. Allen Suddeth</b>	Kaleb Osagie	UA	Julian Lee	BS SIS
Quinton Alexander	<b>BS QS</b>	Batuhan Ozturk	<b>SIS</b>	Rachel Miller	BS SIS
Nick Ciepiela	<b>BS QS UA</b>	Gabriel Perez	UA	Jacob Nalley	BS SIS
Victoria Cox	UA	Sarah Reinecke	UA	Peter Oldak	BS SIS
Jaclyn DiFerdinando	<b>UA</b>	Alesa Rennick	UA	Danielle Plaso	BS SIS
A.J. Gagliardi	<b>QS SIS</b>	Collin Sanderson	UA	<b>Frostburg State University</b>	<b>12/11/2012</b>
Talia Kassie	<b>UA</b>	Daniel Sappington	SIS	<b>Darrell Rushton</b>	<b>Ian Rose</b>
James Kiesel	<b>BS QS SIS</b>	Zach Schley	<b>UA</b>	Elisabeth Becraft	RD SIS
jasmine Kojouri	UA	Nikkia Tyler	UA	Jessica Bishop	RD
Sarah Lightman	UA	P. Worley	<b>SIS</b>	Eric Brown	RD SIS
Kathryn Roper	<b>BS QS</b>	<b>William Peace University</b>	<b>12/07/2012</b>	Eddy Collett	RD SIS
Jason Singer	<b>BS QS UA</b>	<b>Jeff A.R. Jones</b>	<b>Dale Anthony Girard</b>	Nora Grider	<b>RD SIS</b>
Michael Tait	QS	Jason Bailey	BS KN UA	Peregrine Herlinger	<b>RD</b>
Lauren Williams	<b>BS QS RD</b>	Katie Barrett	UA	Gregory Isaacs	RD
Becky Zaritsky	UA	Jessica Becker	UA	Scott Turner	RD SIS
<b>Columbia University</b>	<b>12/04/2012</b>	Patrick Campbell	BS UA	<b>University of Michigan</b>	<b>12/11/2012</b>
<b>Joseph T Travers</b>	<b>J. Allen Suddeth</b>	Sidney Edwards	UA	<b>Nathan Mitchell</b>	<b>Erik Fredricksen</b>
Josette Canilao	UA	Eric Foster	KN UA	Joshua Aber	UA
Angelica Gregory	<b>UA</b>	Danielle Gehle	UA	Austin Andres	UA
Kenard Jackson	<b>UA</b>	Jonathan Mace	UA	Drew Ariana	QS RD UA
Tauriq Jenkins	<b>UA</b>	Hannah Murphy	KN UA	Ben Blackman	QS RD UA
Julia Joyce - Barry	UA	Kelly Richard	UA	Danielle Bolvin	QS UA
Eunyoung Jung	UA	Sawyer Stone	UA	Caitlin Chou	UA
Shiva Kalaiselvan	UA	Max Thomas	KN RD	Danielle Cohn	UA
Crystal Lee	<b>UA</b>	Kelsey Walston	UA	Kevin Collins	<b>UA</b>
		Shannon Wright	UA		

Elliot Cruz	QS RD UA	Victoria Johns	BSS KN SIS	Brian Nemiroff	UA
Matt Daniels	UA	Kathleen Lass	KN SIS	Reginald Robinson Jr.	UA
Tyler Dean	QS UA	Sharisse Manning	BSS KN SIS	Maxey Whitehead	UA
Alexandra Demaio	UA	Kein Onickel	KN SIS	Benjamin Williamson	UA
Avery Diubaldo	UA	Edward Reynolds	BSS KN SIS		
Lena Drake	UA	Alexander Schiff	BSS KN SIS	<b>Howard Community College</b>	<b>12/16/2012</b>
Elana Gantman	UA	Matthew Singleton	BSS KN SIS	<b>Lewis Shaw</b>	<b>Scot Mann</b>
Jordan Golden	QS RD UA	Andrea Soule	BSS KN SIS	<b>Jenny Male</b>	
Melissa Golliday	QS RD UA	Daniel Zuniga	BSS KN SIS	Brian Farrell	KN-R SIS-R
Emily Hanley	QS RD UA			Britt Herring	SIS-R
Lucas Kane	UA	<b>Columbia College Chicago</b>		Christopher Niebling	SIS-R
Zoe Kanters	QS RD UA	<b>David Yondorf</b>		Karen Schlumpf	KN-R SIS-R
Alex Madda	QS RD UA	Selena Boyer			
Tim Markham	QS RD UA	Bryan Kravitz	BS UA	<b>Sarah Lawrence College</b>	<b>12/17/2012</b>
Philip Maxwell	QS RD UA	J. Francis Nash	RD UA	<b>Sterling Swann</b>	<b>J. David Brimmer</b>
Jackson Pierce	UA	Matthew Stroh	BS RD UA	Eleanor Arculus	UA
Elizabeth Raynes	UA	Glenn Thompson	BS UA	Isaac Boorstin	UA
Samantha Rehr	UA	Charles Thoreson	RD	Pan Eric	UA
Phillip Rice	UA	Kegan Witzki	BS RD UA	Davya Eschenazi	UA
Teagan Rose	UA			Elias Higham	UA
Emily Shimskey	UA	<b>Elgin Community College</b>		Hannah Jackson	UA
Jacqueline Toboni	QS RD UA	<b>Dr. Stephen Gray</b>		Saibi Khalsa	BSS
Kendra Williams	QS RD UA	Erik Enberg		Katie Kurtzman	BSS
		Timothy Galvin	BS	Venez Leon-Rodriguez	BSS
		Justin Green	BS	Emma Lipschutz	BSS
<b>Columbia College Chicago</b>	<b>12/12/2012</b>	Kristina Lawrence	BS	Zachary Martin	UA
<b>John McFarland</b>	<b>Drew Fracher</b>	Thomas McAuliffe	BS	Leah Ogawa	UA
Evan Bruce	BS RD UA	Julien Moore	BS	Isabella Pinheiro	BSS
Rafal Cwiok	BS RD UA	Elizabeth Probst	BS	Lauren Ritter	BSS
Patrick Delaney	BS RD UA	Kathryn Pucillo	BS	Adam Sherman	UA
Samantha Garcia	BS RD UA	Karl Swanson	BS		
Kate Hardiman	BS RD UA	Eric Waddick	BS	<b>SUNY Fredonia</b>	<b>12/19/2012</b>
Alexander Lavelle	BS RD UA	Stephen Zeman	BS	<b>Edward Sharon</b>	<b>J. Allen Suddeth</b>
Colin Martinez	BS RD UA			<b>Steve Vaughan</b>	
Andres Merlos	BS RD UA	<b>NYU/TSOA</b>		Lisa Alberty	UA
Erin Nedelman	BS RD UA	<b>J. David Brimmer</b>		Andrew Albigese	UA
Chase Peacock	BS RD UA	Nikomah Anderson	BS	Mike Benoit	UA
Andrea Soule	UA	Ilona Castro	BS	Thomas Buckley	UA
Tyler Vaughn	UA	Laura Crone	BS	Vaughn Butler	UA-R
		Glen Feinstein	BS	Marisa Caruso	UA
<b>University of Virginia</b>	<b>12/12/2012</b>	Logan McCoy	BS	Pamela Clukey	UA
<b>Marianne Kubik</b>	<b>Dale Anthony Girard</b>	Brennan Pickman-Thoon	BS	Shelby Converse	UA
Amy Barrick	RD UA	Jefferson Reardon	BS	Jim Drake	UA
Amaree Cluff	RD UA	Tommy Schutz	BS	Theresa Egloff	UA
Brad Fraizer	RD-R UA-R	Lindsay Simon	BS	Ashley Evans	UA
Ahmad Helmy	RD UA	Arielle Thomas	BS	Rachel Gelfeld	BS-R RD-R
Christopher Murray	RD UA			Cassandra Giovine	UA
Whitney Wegman	RD UA	<b>NYU/TSOA</b>		Alex Grayson	UA
		<b>J. David Brimmer</b>		Marina Hirschfeld	UA
<b>Adelphi University</b>	<b>12/13/2012</b>	Todd Aquino-Michaels		Clayton Howe	UA
<b>Ray A. Rodriguez</b>	<b>Michael Chin</b>	Samantha Bilinkas	UA	Christopher Hughes	UA
Gregory Buckheit	UA	James Boland	UA	Brandon Hylton	UA
Tiffany Bux	BS	Brinda Dixit	UA	Danielle Izzo	UA
Richard Coraggio	BS	Shannon Foy	UA	Eric Jaynes	UA
Ernaisha Curry	UA	Kingsley Nwaogu	UA	Deanna Jelardi	UA-R
Lisa Gaylord	BS	Janelle Richardson	UA	Joshua Johnson	UA
Alixandra Golden	BS	Mikayla Savuto	UA	Elizabeth Kryzyzanoski	UA
Trevor Jones	UA	Robert-Didrik Soderstrom	UA	Mary Mazur	UA
Johnathan Kenny	UA	Stephanie Taylor	UA	Allison McCarthy	UA
Johnathan Kenny	UA	Rebecca Werner	UA	Allie Miron	UA
Jessica Kidwell	BS	Renee Wilson	UA	David Quinones	UA
Armand Lane	BS			Jaclyn Rahmlow	UA
Jose Leon	UA	<b>Mary Baldwin College</b>		Hannah Rocciano	UA-R
Anthon Mondesir	BS	<b>John Scheidler</b>		Steven Russel	UA
Nicholas Moneta	BS UA	Scott Campbell	RD	Nicholas Stevens	UA
Amalia Oswald	UA	Ben Curns	KN-R SIS-R	Rachel Stubbs	SIS-R UA-R
Ian Petersen	UA	Dane Leasure	RD	Eliza Vann	UA
Aubrey Quinn	UA	Charlene Smith	RD		
Emily Reed	BS	Jeremy West	KN-R	<b>Kean University</b>	<b>12/21/2012</b>
Leore Riven	BS	Rebecca Wright	RD	<b>Edward Sharon</b>	<b>J. Allen Suddeth</b>
Kyle Smith	BS UA			Natalie Bailey	UA
Kelsey Stokes	UA	<b>FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training</b>		Kyle Bergslien	UA
Blake Wales	UA	<b>Robert Westley</b>		Steven Carter	UA
James Weippert	UA	Kristen Blossom		Stefan Gina	UA
Anastatia Zorin	UA	Cale Hauptert	UA	Sara Leone	UA
Stephen Zuccaro	BS	Victoria Hines	UA	Aaron McMillan	UA
		Lucy Lavelly	UA	Lucas Pinner	UA
<b>Columbia College Chicago</b>	<b>12/13/2012</b>	Jefferson McDonald	UA	Jason Rader	UA
<b>David Woolley</b>	<b>Drew Fracher</b>	Zlatormir Moldovanski	UA-R	Andria Rogers	UA
Megan Maccamo	KN SIS	Amanda Mullen	UA	Jonathan Wells	UA
Megan Chaperon	BSS KN SIS				
Estefan Cruz	KN SIS				

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Logan Reid  
Deanna Roseen  
Benjamin Sheedy

**University of South Alabama**  
**T. Fulton Burns**  
Matthew Brewer

**12/22/2012**  
**J. Allen Suddeth**  
KN SIS  
**BS RD SIS**  
**BSKN RD SIS**  
**12/29/2012**  
**Scot Mann**  
BS

William Clark  
Amy Davis  
Chelsea Exum  
Brittney Harrell  
Erik Jennings  
Sarah Locklar  
Jessica Stowe  
Evan Wilson

**BS** Those who meet or exceed the standards of the SAFD's Skills Proficiency Test are listed in the Put to the Test section of *The Fight Master* in order to give proper recognition to the hard work that goes into each test. However, PtT is a work in progress and errors may occur in the entry of data. If an inaccuracy is detected please notify the Editor-in-Chief so that the discrepancy can be rectified and proper credit restored to the deserving party. The creators of this publication take the accomplishments of their fellow combatants very seriously and wish to show that by representing the most accurate information possible.



# Society of American Fight Directors Directory

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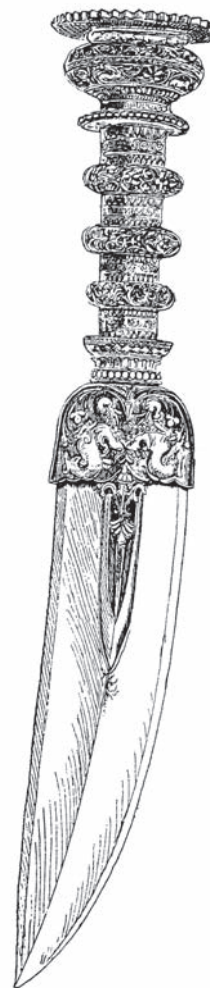
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The Society of American Fight Directors is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting safety and fostering excellence in the art of stage combat. The SAFD is committed to providing the highest level of service through initiating and maintaining guidelines and standards of quality, providing education and training, promoting scholarly research, as well as encouraging communication and collaboration throughout the entertainment industry.

Whether you are a producer, director, actor or teacher, we can help accelerate your stage combat skills. SAFD members gain access to a world class networking organization, high caliber stage combat training and mentorship designed to expand your career. Our members include professional actors, directors, producers, educators, dancers, singers, stunt performers, historians, scholars and armorers working in theatre, film, television, all levels of academia, stunt shows, opera and the video gaming industry.

### The SAFD Recognized Membership Levels

#### Friend

One need not be a stage fighter, teacher, or choreographer to join and be active in the SAFD. Any individual who has an interest in the stage combative arts who wants to keep abreast of the field and receive all the benefits of memberships may join as a friend.

#### Certified Teacher

Any individual who has successfully completed the SAFD Teacher Certification Workshop. These individuals are endorsed by the Society to teach staged combat and may teach the SAFD Skills Proficiency Test.

#### Actor Combatant

Any individual who has passed an SAFD Skills Proficiency Test and is current in Unarmed, Rapier & Dagger (or Single Sword), and another discipline. The SAFD considers Actor/Combatants to be proficient in performing staged combat safely and effectively.

#### Fight Director

Any individual who has held the status of Certified Teacher of the SAFD for a minimum of three years and has demonstrated through work in the professional arena a high level of expertise as a teacher and choreographer of staged combat. These individuals are endorsed by the Society to direct and/or choreograph incidents of physical violence.

#### Advanced Actor Combatant

Any individual who is current in six of eight SAFD disciplines, of which at least three (3) must be recommended passes and is a member in good standing. The SAFD acknowledges Advanced Actor Combatants as highly skilled performers of staged fighting.

#### Fight Master

Individuals who have successfully fulfilled the requirements of Fight Master as established and published by the Governing Body and awarded recognition by the current body of Fight Masters (College of Fight Masters). Individuals must be members in good standing and engage in continued active service to the Society.

33% savings  
for new  
members!

### Join or Renew Your Membership Today!

#### How much does it cost?

If you have *never* been a member of the SAFD, you can join for just \$30.00 for your first year of membership.

If you are a current or previous member of the SAFD, renewing costs as little as \$45.00 per year.

#### Ready to join or renew?

You will need to login or set up an account at through the SAFD website ([www.safd.org](http://www.safd.org)). From there you will be guided through the membership payment process.

Thank you for supporting The Society of American Fight Directors.



**COMING SUMMER 2013**

**JULY 1–19, 2013  
UNIVERSITY OF  
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**CHECK THE SAFD WEBSITE  
FOR UPDATED INFORMATION:  
[WWW.SAFD.ORG/TRAINING/NSCW](http://WWW.SAFD.ORG/TRAINING/NSCW)**

**PHOTO: ALEX MILES ORELLANA**

**THE SOCIETY  
OF AMERICAN  
FIGHT DIRECTORS  
NATIONAL  
STAGE  
COMBAT  
WORKSHOPS**