

little eyes

By
Cory Hinkle

***Little Eyes* was developed at the Yale/P73 Residency, the Ruth Easton New Play Series at the Playwrights' Center and was a finalist for the Yale Drama Series Prize. It was produced by the Workhaus Collective at the Guthrie Theater's Dowling Studio in February 2011.**

© Cory Hinkle 2008
2.4.2011 draft

Cory Hinkle
3444 Colfax Ave. South #3
Minneapolis, MN 55408
(401) 528-7483
hinkcc@yahoo.com

Artist Representation:
Bruce Ostler & Mark Orsini
Bret Adams Agency Ltd.
448 West 44th Street
New York, NY 10036
(212) 765-5630
morsini@bretadamsltd.com

CHARACTERS

MARTIN, twelve years old; wide-eyed with too much to watch.

JUDY, Martin's mom, early 30's; fuzzy denial.

MARK, Judy's neighbor, mid 30's, contractor; passionate and emotional; a liar.

STEPH, Mark's wife, late 20's; wants a baby, hates sex; a visionary.

GARY, a photographer; simply, in the service of the Mayor.

Note: It is important that MARTIN be cast youngish. At the least, a teenage actor who looks much younger than he is; part of the fun is seeing someone so young deal with this world.

SETTING

A seemingly normal suburban neighborhood in a modest city Woodward, located in the mid-Southwest on the edge of where the Great Plains turns into Rock. In an alternate past, the moment after 9/11, post-invasion of Afghanistan, pre-invasion of Iraq. Confusion, fear and uncertainty grip the country, anything could happen.

At different times, this play was inspired by Sophie Calle, Iphigenia in Aulis by Euripides, the paintings of Miguel Calderon (made famous by Wes Anderson in The Royal Tenenbaums), Adrienne Kennedy's The Owl Answers, Sam Shepard's Angel City, tacky paintings of Southwestern landscapes often found in flea markets, the 50's, 80's, 90's and 2000's, the Book of Revelations, and the photographs of Philip Lorca DiCorcia and Gregory Crewdson.

SCENE 1

*In the American West
On the edge of where the Great Plains
Turns into rock –
The sound of houses being built
Hammer and nail
Air guns, shingle attached to ply
Workboots
Trucks dumping dirt
Newly poured cul-de-sacs
And houses completed
Rise up one after another after another
– Amazingly similar in look and feel –
Families move in
– Also, amazingly similar in look and feel –
Cars pull into driveways
Leak oil on concrete
Dads return home
Moms cook dinner
Kids cry
Parents watch news
– Hans Blix gives a press conference
to the international community –
and the boys of the neighborhood
put on green plastic helmets
and get out their cap guns
and shoot each other in the half-built houses
wade through the creeks
stay off the golf course
(Like they're supposed to)
And run home when the streetlights come on.
Then moms serve dinner
(Time for bed!)
The sound of
Boys whining
(They want to stay up!
Nope, sorry,
Get your ass upstairs)
The sound of the sun going down
The sound of fireflies
And of crickets
And a quiet descends
On THE NEIGHBORHOOD.*

*And for a little while, there's just the silence
But then TIME begins to gnaw
At the lives of each of our homes' inhabitants
And the economy weakens
And the houses that WERE built
DECAY
And the houses that were half-built
Aren't FINISHED
And in this economy,
Our homeowners don't have the money
For upkeep
So the paint chips
And the grass grows long
And the landscaping looks like SHIT
And the kids are dirty and won't stop screaming
(Shut the fuck up!)
Screaming, screaming
And the Wal-Mart
Opens a Super version of itself!
And on opening day
There's a clown and cotton candy
And free ice cream
And the mom-and-pops go out of business
And the big local oil company (the backbone of our fair town!)
Leaves for parts south
(Houston, Texas, I mean)
And on top of it all,
This past summer,
Gas tops three dollars!
And there's a drought – the farmers can't get a break!
And The Mayor can't sleep
Because of this gnawing sensation in his gut,
but he's an alcoholic
so he just drinks more
and one night he goes out alone
and drinks to excess at the Solo Club
and is pulled over by our local police
(DUI, motherfucker!)
But everyone knows the police are in the Mayor's pocket
So it's all very hush-hush,
Swept under the rug
But our Mayor is anxious, helpless, in absolute despair
And after many many nights
He finds what he SWORE he'd NEVER find –
God.
Yes, God.
And he resolves to ask our Lord
Again and again*

*And AGAIN
Until he receives an answer
“How can I save this city?”
And while he waits
Patiently
To receive that answer
The neighborhood,
Its inhabitants,
Their lives?
Continue ...*

SCENE 2

Night.

A couch lit only by a TV.

Left of the couch, a sliding glass door. Through the door, in the distance, a neighbor's house – a bedroom window lit yellow.

Further left, the bottom steps of a stairway leading up to a second floor.

JUDY sits on the couch, drinks a Corona and watches TV.

It's Jay Leno.

Jay interviews Arnold Schwarzenegger about how he had to push back the release date of his movie, Collateral Damage right after 9/11.

MARTIN appears on the stairs.

JUDY
Martin?

She mutes the TV.

JUDY
What are you doing?

MARTIN stares at her, silent.

JUDY
Honey, what are ya doin' up?

MARTIN
Where's dad?

JUDY
He's ... he's at his office.

MARTIN
Why?

JUDY
He's working.

MARTIN
Will he come back?

JUDY
Of course!

MARTIN
Where was he last night?

JUDY
At work.

MARTIN
Where was he this morning?

JUDY
Go to bed, honey.

MARTIN
How long's he been gone?

JUDY
Martin.

MARTIN
But –

JUDY
Don't.

MARTIN
B – b – but –

JUDY
Don't stutter.

MARTIN
Will he come home *tonight*?

JUDY
Yes, *yes* he will, but very late.

MARTIN
He didn't last night.

JUDY
Yes, but –

MARTIN
Where did he sleep?

JUDY
In his office.

MARTIN
In his *chair* – ?

JUDY
On a *cot*.

MARTIN
When he comes home –

JUDY
You'll be asleep when he gets in.

MARTIN
But when he does – ?

JUDY
Martin, stop! You're staying up too late. You need to go to sleep, *go to sleep*.

MARTIN *hears something*
And runs into the foyer, excited.

MARTIN
Dad!?!

JUDY
Martin! Martin, come back!

He returns.

MARTIN
I heard something.

JUDY
Go to bed.

MARTIN
It wasn't him ...

JUDY
Go. To. Bed.

MARTIN *walks back upstairs.*
JUDY *stays standing, looking at the door, now a bit scared herself.*

MARTIN *(from upstairs)*
Mom!

MARTIN *returns running.*

MARTIN
I saw something.

JUDY
What?

MARTIN
Someone's in the yard.

A moment.

*JUDY walks to the sliding glass door and looks through it.
She doesn't see anything.*

JUDY
No one's there.

MARTIN
A man.

JUDY
Honey ...

MARTIN
I saw him!

JUDY
It was probably just a neighbor.

MARTIN
He had a camera.

JUDY
Now I know you're imagining things.

MARTIN
He – he – he's –

JUDY
Don't stutter.

MARTIN
Don't make me go upstairs ...

JUDY
You need your sleep.

MARTIN
I can't sleep... I can't... Mom...

He's on the verge of tears.

She looks at him, sympathetic.

JUDY
Martin ...

*She takes him up on her lap and hugs him.
She strokes his hair.*

JUDY
What's wrong?

MARTIN
The man ...

JUDY
No one's there.

MARTIN
What does he *want*? Why is he *here*?

JUDY
No one's there. You're safe. No one wants anything from us, okay?

Pause.

MARTIN
Mom?

JUDY
What?

MARTIN
Where is he? Where is he right now?

JUDY
Who? The man?

MARTIN
No, dad.

JUDY
I told you, honey. The office.

Pause.

MARTIN
Will he come back?

JUDY
Of course, very soon.

She holds MARTIN and strokes his hair.
JUDY *looks back at the sliding glass door, afraid*
As the lights fade.