GRACE
By Jane Doe
Directed by Andrea Dolaldson

Produced by Nightwood Theatre in association with Crow’s Theatre

Resource and Background Material

Created by Sadie Epstein-Fine with assistance from Jane Doe

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INTRODUCTION
By Jane Doe

Ever since my sister’s trial I wanted to create something that dealt directly with her experience. However, I struggled with the fact that it was not actually my experience, but hers, and that to once more remove her power to tell her own story, as happened in the legal system, would be disempowering, backwards, and potentially very hurtful and damaging. This is where the idea to collaborate with her emerged – it occurred to me that perhaps instead of me trying to guess the best way to tell her story, I should try to facilitate a process in which she could tell it herself.

We had a lot of discussion about whether or not this was a good idea for her, and I tried to make it very clear that I wanted her to make the choice that was going to serve her best, and not just try to make me happy by agreeing to do the project. When she did agree, we set clear boundaries about what was on the table in terms of content. She was given veto power, with the ability to stop the project or take a break at any point. In these ways we hoped to create a positive, supportive, and empowering process.

What soon emerged as a central idea was the injustice of a system in which believability is valued over reality; a system that prioritizes provable facts over the complexity of the truth. Inspired by this, we designed a process in which I would be responsible for finding “the facts” surrounding her experience through research and interviews, while she would tell the truth of her story through creative writing. By sharing our work, it also gave her the chance to respond directly to the dominant narratives of sexual assault that I was unearthing in my research. Given our focus on the construction of truth, we decided to additionally document the writing process itself and include it in the script, hoping to lay bare the way in which we assembled the story.

This process started before the Jian Gomeshi scandal or the #MeToo movement. Since then our societal conversation around sexual assault and our legal system has had a transformation. I am proud that the voices of our family are joining all of those others speaking out about the impact of sexual assault on their lives, and the ways in which our legal system fails to serve the needs of survivors.

THEMES
Consent, Childhood Sexual Assault, The Canadian Legal System, The Failure Of Justice And Family Bonds, Documentation

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS
Drama; Media Arts; Gender Studies; Family Studies; Philosophy; Law; English; Healthy Living; Psychology; Philosophy
CHARACTERS
SARAH
Grace’s sister. Mid twenties.

GRACE
Sarah’s sister. Early twenties.

DIANE*
Sarah and Grace’s mom.
*Also plays Emil Karlsson, author of *Neuroscience, Memory, and the Courtroom*

STEVEN**
Sarah and Grace’s dad.
**Also plays Psychologist, Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime, The Devastation of Sexual Assault, Officer, Ephemerical

CAST AND CREATIVE
Playwright - Jane Doe
Director - Andrea Donaldson
Performers - Conrad Coates, Rose Napoli, Brenda Robins, Michaela Washburn
Set and Costume Design - Joanna Yu
Lighting Design - Michelle Ramsay
Projection Design - Laura Warren
Sound Design - Deanna H. Choi
Stage Manager & Associate Lighting Design - Christina Cicko
Assistant Sound Design - Cosette Pin
Assistant Director - Sadie Epstein-Fine
Production Manager - Pip Bradford

About Nightwood Theatre
Nightwood Theatre is Canada’s leading producer of contemporary theatre created by women. Founded in 1979 by Cynthia Grant, Kim Renders, Mary Vingoe and Maureen White, it is known as the oldest professional women’s theatre in Canada. Since its founding, Nightwood has created and produced award-winning plays, which have won Dora Mavor Moore, Chalmers, Trillium and Governor General’s Awards. Today Nightwood remains at the forefront of developing and disseminating new work by female-identifying playwrights in Canada, with a legacy of nearly four decades of propelling women’s voice. As a feminist theatre, Nightwood creates a forum for a vital conversation about women’s lived experiences to a broad and engaged audience. It brings together diverse female-identified artists and provides them with unparalleled opportunities and essential resources to develop and produce widely acclaimed, provocative, entertaining and socially relevant theatre. Committed to artistic excellence, the avid promotion of gender equity in the arts, and the successful training and development of emerging female-identified talent, Nightwood has become an established, nationally respected theatre.
SYNOPSIS

SC 1- TRIGGER WARNING
GRACE delivers an extensive trigger warning detailing themes in the show.

SC 2- DECIDING TO MAKE THE PLAY
SARAH welcomes the audience to the theatre and describes the process of making the show. She speaks about how she approached her sister to co-write the play with her and how she involved her parents.

SC 3- THE FACTS
SARAH researches statistics and facts about sexual assault and children who have been sexually assaulted and GRACE responds to those statistics. GRACE’s PSYCHOLOGIST’s notes are featured, discussing the problems she first came in with before disclosing her assault.

SC 4- ANIMALS
The audience enters GRACE’s private world for the first time as she talks about all of the cats she has fostered. SARAH describes how her sister is always putting herself before others.

SC 5- WHAT’S WRONG WITH GRACE?
Beginning with “The Life Chronology of Grace” we learn that Grace changed from being a social and outgoing child to isolated and unhappy.

SC 6- DISCLOSURE
GRACE’s disclosure of her sexual assault to her family is documented through “The Life Chronology of Grace,” personal memory and statistics. It begins with her disclosing to a group of peers, then telling her family and her abuser’s wife and daughter. The scene ends with DIANE calling the police.

SC 7- LEGAL PROCEEDINGS
Through phone calls, emails, interviews and memories the family’s process of following through with the allegations is documented. They spent a lot of time waiting and not getting answers. They prepare for GRACE to be interviewed by an OFFICER.

SC 8- LOST
The audience enters GRACE’s world where she describes riding her horse. It is in the middle of the legal proceedings and riding her horse gives her a moment of peace during this process.

SC 9- SURVIVOR
This scene documents the role of “the victim” in court proceedings. GRACE discusses why she prefers the word “survivor” over “victim”. DIANE processes the phone call with the OFFICER who doesn’t think they have much of a case. SARAH interviews a criminal defense lawyer.

SC 10- THE FALLABILITY OF MEMORY
SARAH lets the audience know that, while her sister wrote a testimony about the assault (a file that DIANE gave her), those details will not be in this play. An expert, EMIL KARLSSON, gives a lecture on
how memory is not reliable. SARAH reveals that she doesn’t remember if her mom gave her the testimony or not.

SC 11- WRITING
The fact that GRACE likes to write is used against her in the criminal proceedings, as if she is making up what happened to her. GRACE describes why she likes to write and what she likes to write about. SARAH finds GRACE’s self-deprecation annoying, but what really makes SARAH mad is that the abuse permanently altered GRACE.

SC 12- MOVING FORWARD
The family waits for a decision about whether or not they are going to trial. Finally they get a call telling them the trial will not proceed because there is not enough evidence.

SC 13- A LEGAL OUTCOME
Each family member weighs in on how they felt about the case being dismissed. GRACE recalls how long the process was; Steven feels a mixture of emotions including appreciation, frustration, weariness and relief; DIANE understands why the lawyers made the decision to dismiss the case, but she is disappointed that they did and that there was no possibility of a good outcome; SARAH feels that since this story never got told it should now.

SC 14- WHERE ARE WE NOW?
SARAH describes a fantasy she has where she bumps into the man who assaulted GRACE in Starbucks and she gets to yell at him. STEVEN reveals that the way he sees himself as a father has changed since he found out about GRACE’s assault. Similarly, DIANE expresses her responsibility for what happened and how this will affect GRACE forever. After reading a draft of this play GRACE reveals that she didn’t know her parents felt this way. SARAH reveals that all of the names of the family members have been changed to protect their identities.

SC 15- RETURN TO WRITING
GRACE talks about how she stopped writing during the legal proceedings. She realizes that she really started to heal when she started writing again.

SC 16- A GOOD OLDER SISTER
SARAH and DIANE have a conversation about how this project has made SARAH and GRACE closer.

SC 17- THE PERFECT FUTURE
GRACE takes on the task of writing the perfect future for herself. At first she is bogged down by the reality, but then she just lets herself dream. She imagines her job, pets, home, partner and children.

SC 18- GETTING LOUDER
SARAH contemplates if this play is a therapy piece. She reflects on her feelings about why she wanted to make this play and what she feels about it. She has more questions than answers. GRACE reflects on how she was once silenced by the legal proceedings, and now this play is giving her story a voice and she is able to tell it in exactly the way she wants to.
Questions before reading the article:
1. Have you ever heard the term ‘second rape’?
2. In what context have you heard it? What does it mean to you?

What is 'second rape' and what can we do about it?

By Marisa Kabas
Published: August 7th, 2016, Splinter News

In a recent speech at the White House’s first-ever United State of Women summit, Vice President Joe Biden passionately addressed what he described as the “cause of his life”: ending violence against women. And during his remarks, he used a phrase he seemed to assume the 5,000 attendees would understand but was completely new to me: “second rape”.

I took to Google to see what, if any, results came back—and sure enough, I was met with a wealth of scholarly journal articles on the term, which refers to the excruciating series of interrogations rape victims must endure after reporting their crime to authorities. This process reeks of victim-blaming and holds particular relevance at this cultural moment.

It’s been a little more than a month since the survivor of a rape on the Stanford University campus published the letter she read aloud at her attacker’s sentencing hearing. The anonymous victim’s 7,000-word address covered a lot of topics surrounding her sexual assault while unconscious. But a major theme was how, through the criminal proceedings that lasted more than a year, she was forced to relive the hurt and shame of being sexually violated—this, by definition, is second rape.

The first formal use of the term “second rape” can be traced to a 1991 book of the same name, written by psychologists Lee Madigan and Nancy Gamble. In the book, which focused entirely on the phenomenon, they wrote that, often, the second, emotional rape could be “more devastating and despoiling than the first” physical violation. In her statement, the Stanford survivor described, in no uncertain terms, how harrowing it was to be re-victimized in this way.

“I was pummelled with narrowed, pointed questions that dissected my personal life, love life, past life, family life, inane questions, accumulating trivial details to try and find an excuse for this guy who had me half naked before even bothering to ask for my name. After a physical assault, I was assaulted with questions designed to attack me, to say see, her facts don’t line up, she’s out of her mind, she’s practically an alcoholic, she probably wanted to hook up, he’s like an athlete right, they were both drunk, whatever, the hospital stuff she remembers is after the fact, why take it into account, Brock [her attacker] has a lot at stake so he’s having a really hard time right now.

And then it came time for him to testify and I learned what it meant to be revictimized. I want to remind you, the night after it happened he said he never planned to take me back to his dorm. He said he didn’t know why we were behind a dumpster. He got up to leave because he wasn’t feeling well when he was suddenly chased and attacked. Then he learned I could not remember.”

On top of everything, she was being forced to relive a trauma that she could not fully recall.
Rebecca Campbell has also been studying the idea of second rape since the 1990s. As a professor of Community Psychology and Program Evaluation at Michigan State University, her current research focuses specifically on the treatment of rape survivors. Before delving into this emotional research, Campbell volunteered as a rape victim advocate and saw firsthand how victims, instead of being handled with TLC, were treated, in some ways, as criminals themselves.

Campbell told me in a phone conversation this week “that the process of seeking help after a sexual assault, in terms of the medical exam, reporting to the police, the steps of prosecution—it was very traumatizing to victims. It was re-traumatizing. And many of the victims I worked with as a volunteer said language similar to this idea of ‘it feels like it’s happening to me all over again,’ ‘it feels like a second rape,’ ‘I feel like the rape just keeps going’.”

She decided to dig in herself, finding that her anecdotal evidence from her volunteer work proved to be much more widespread. And after many replications of her work by other researchers around the country, she realized that the problem was systemic.

“When victims do report to the criminal justice system, the way in which they’re treated is very distressing to [them],” she said. “And they do describe it as a second rape or secondary victimization. Something that exacerbates their post-traumatic stress symptoms above and beyond the rape itself.”

Campbell was one of the main authors of a 1999 research paper titled “Community Services for Rape Survivors: Enhancing Psychological Well-Being or Increasing Trauma?” which surveyed 102 rape survivors about their experiences after reporting their own rape and how secondary victimization led to symptoms of post traumatic stress. The stories some shared are enough to make a victim think twice before coming forward.

"My therapist kept talking about my need for attention,” one told the researchers. “How I made bad choices in life because of my need for attention. How I got myself raped for attention. Those words hurt as much as the rape itself."

The study found that attitudes like this from criminal justice and mental health professionals were pervasive, and that they were particularly bad when the victim reported that the rape was carried out by a nonstranger. They wrote, “Nonstranger rape victims who received minimal help from either the legal or medical system…were nevertheless subjected to a high degree of secondary victimization, [and] experienced significantly elevated PTS scores.” It’s the age-old attitude of how could you by raped by someone you know?

Jennifer Norris, a retired technical sergeant in the U.S. Air Force, reported being raped and sexually assaulted by multiple servicemen in the military during her 15 years of service starting in the mid ’90s. She eventually came forward and two of the perpetrators were charged with sexual assault. But back in 2013, she wrote a post on her blog called “Betrayed Again” in which she describes the feeling of the second rape.

“In the end, I realized that the original oppression AND retaliation for reporting those violent crimes is what truly damaged me. I was completely taken by surprise. I had no idea that I would ever be
scorned and accused of causing a criminal to ‘lose their job’. I just assumed that I would be believed and taken care of. Boy was I wrong.”

Arden Greenspan-Goldberg, a New York City-based licensed clinical social worker, has worked with survivors, like Norris, throughout her career. And, like Campbell, she’s seen firsthand how the systems seemingly meant to protect women often only exacerbates their trauma.

“You haven’t done anything wrong, but you’re made to feel that because you’re part of that whole system [that you did something wrong],” she told me in a phone conversation. “The whole thing is jarring. Just going into the court, it’s the last place on earth that you think you would ever be, testifying and recounting the experience.”

Greenspan-Goldberg explained how the attorneys defending the alleged perpetrators try their best to throw victims off their game and make them wish they hadn’t reported the crime in the first place. She recalled a patient who was so beaten down by the system “she thought it was not worth it.” That she had to go to the jail, that she had to see a line up of different men and point out the right one, made it almost unbearable. “You have the initial trauma and then the retraumatization,” Greenspan-Goldberg said.

But she and Campbell both remain hopeful for the future of survivor care. Greenspan-Goldberg pointed to the rape crisis units in many hospitals, which provide support for survivors—someone to talk to and someone to hold their hand through the invasive process. And Campbell is actively working with organizations like the International Association of Chiefs of Police and End Violence Against Women International to educate law enforcement personnel about how to best approach victims.

“Law enforcement are fact finders. They have to investigate the case,” Campbell said. “They have to do it fairly and they have to do it impartially because they have a duty to public safety and a duty to due process. On the other side, they also have a responsibility to protect public citizens and protect victims. So the way in which they do that doesn’t need to be traumatizing. I think for the longest time these have been seen as two competing things, and I don’t think that they need to be.”

The organizations are teaching officials how to engage in “trauma informed interviewing,” which the International Association of Chiefs of Police, according to its website, hopes “will better equip law enforcement to understand the complexities of sexual assault through training centered on the neurobiological impact of trauma, the influence of societal myths and stereotypes, understanding perpetrator behaviour, and conducting effective investigations.”

There may be no solution to widespread sexual assault and rape in the near future. But there’s no good reason that a system that is supposed to protect survivors should be making it worse.

Questions after reading the article:
1. What are some ways you think the legal system could prevent ‘second rape’?
2. Relate this article to Grace’s journey. At what points did she have to relive the trauma, and how was she able to find healing?
Resources for reporting a sexual assault:

While Grace and her family had a difficult experience with the legal system this does not mean disclosing and reporting a sexual assault is not worthwhile. While there are obstacles to navigating the legal system as a sexual assault complainant there are organizations and resources that can help to make the journey easier. Below are some Toronto and Ontario based resources for victims of sexual assault who are seeking legal counseling, therapy, medical services, etc.:

Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic – Toronto
https://schliferclinic.com/
Services: Legal, Counselling, Interpretation

Assaulted Women’s Helpline – Toronto
Services: 24 Hour Crisis Line

Fem’aide – Ontario Wide
1-877-336-2433

Kids Help Phone – National
Call 1-800-668-6868 | Text CONNECT to 686868 | https://kidshelpphone.ca/
Services: 24/7 Professional Counselling, Information, Referrals. Volunteer-led, text-based support to young people in both English and French.

Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centre – Ontario Wide
https://sexualassaultsupport.ca/support/#To
Services: Will help you find a crisis centre near you

Support Services for Male Survivors of Sexual Violence – Ontario Wide
Toll-Free: 1-866-887-0015
Services: Multilingual Support, Immediate Crisis and Referral Services 24/7.

Talk4Healing – Ontario Wide
1-855-554-HEAL | https://www.talk4healing.com/
Services: A culturally grounded, fully confidential helpline for Indigenous women available in 14 languages all across Ontario.

The Toronto Rape Crisis Centre/Multicultural Women Against Rape (TRCC/MWAR) – Toronto
416-597-8808 | https://trccmwar.ca/
Services: Counselling, Court Support, Support Groups, Advocacy, 24 Hour Crisis Line, Public Education & Workshops. English, French and Spanish Language support.

If you are interested in helping to make change in the area of sexual assault contact TRCC/MWAR, The Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic or The Assaulted Women’s Helpline. They are all working really hard to make change and they have programs to educate allies to join the cause.
SCENE 8: LOST

*We enter Grace's world. Her text is juxtaposed against a visual or choreographic element.*

GRACE

She's blonde, he's blond, they match. Simplest way to put it. Easiest way to distill the relationship down to a single idea, a concept, a phrase; they match.

She's blonde and she's short and she's chubby. Or fat, rather, but fat sounds hard, and chubby, at least, sounds like she's supposed to look that way. He's blond and he's tall. Really tall. Skinny when she first met him, ribcage peeking through the skin where muscle and fat should be, hipbones a little too noticeable. Now his weight is decent, his muscle beginning to show. He'll be skinny off and on the whole time they're together and it'll drive her crazy, keep her up at night, but she doesn't know that yet.

She fell in love at first sight, and shouldn't have. Too tall, too skinny, too nervous, too dominant, too unhandled, too green, too much work. She listed reasons. He was lost. She wanted to find him.

It's later, now. She's getting off the bus, walking down the driveway to the barn, seeing him in his paddock. Her feet drag on the gravel. It's been a long day. A long few months. She is tired and exhausted in a way that she hasn't been able to shake for what feels like years and she's scared. Gnawing anxiety in the pit of her stomach for what is coming, what she knows is coming, what she will have to live through again. She wants to curl up and sleep, shut out the world, forget everything. But she can't. He needs her.

Under saddle, he's cheeky. He twists his head down and bucks. She slips to one side, grabbing for a handhold, trying to stay on. His head twists around; he stares at her. She rights herself in the saddle and tells him she's sorry. He does not understand her -- he is a horse, after all. But the ride afterwards is quieter.

After, she turns him out in the field. In a few days her plane lands with a bump that turns her stomach; here and now she tries not to think about it. It's like trying not to think about the air. She slides down beneath an oak tree and rests her head on her knees, counts to a thousand in her head. White noise. Then louder, the sound of him moving through the underbrush. Searching. He likes to be able to see her, gets anxious when he knows she's there but isn't sure where. He wants to find her. She's lost.
EXCERPT 2

SCENE 9: SURVIVOR

GRACE moves to the microphone.

GRACE
One of the things that I’m most interested in really bringing a perspective to, is, sort of, the role, I don’t know it’s a word I hate using, but it’s a word they always use, so the role of the victim in court proceedings. I always felt, considering I mean how much of what happened with XXXXX was about loss of control, and it struck me as absolutely ironic that all they were doing was taking control away from me.

She moves away from the microphone.

Projected: "Talking the Talk: the Importance, History, and Limitations of the Word Survivor" from the blog Ephemeradical

EPHEMERADICAL
‘Survivor’ is an excellent replacement for ‘victim’ primarily because it avoids the problems which ‘victim’ carries with it, in both social and psychological contexts. In particular, it communicates a fundamental passivity which is both inaccurate and damaging. At the same time, it carries connotations of blame: that the passivity is somehow chosen.

These meanings of passivity and blame which accompany ‘victim’ should be avoided because they are inaccurate. Both during and after sexual abuse and other violence, women use active strategies to reduce, avoid and recover from the harm done to them. Even what may look like a passive response is usually a crucial survival mechanism.

GRACE
Survival. That’s what it is, really. Pushing things away, making them into a nightmare, a story, something that happened to some other girl who deserved it, not you. Victim is weak and powerless. For you, victim is during the act, not fighting back, confused and scared and hurting and ultimately believing, trusting, that it was your fault and your responsibility. Victim is gone. Victim is in your past. Survivor lives. Survivor goes to school and gets a job and has friends and lives a life after everything, becomes just another person. Survivor can look back at what happened and understand it from all perspectives. Survivor keeps you going during the trial. Victim holds onto you like a child, engulfs you sometimes, but ultimately you are Survivor and hearing that word, remembering where you’ve come from, is enough for you to politely correct the person speaking.

SARAH
In both theatre and in court, we choose a story, a truth we want to tell, and then figure out how to make a group of strangers believe it. If they do, we have been successful.

It doesn't really matter if the story is true, it matters that it is believed.

But what’s more believable, more convincing? Witness interviews, expert testimony? Or does the key lie in evoking an emotional response in the jury, your audience?
DIANE
Notes from phone call:
- Grace does not have perfect recall; there are some inconsistencies/some things she doesn’t remember, some detail that they would expect her to remember.
- Only victim they have. For a person to rape a child, there has to have been others.
- The defense lawyer won’t pull any punches with her; he will make it traumatic.
- The issue isn’t whether they believe Grace – they do – but whether they can prove the case.
- New administration is asking the question, should they have gone forward in the first place? XXXXX is a white man and a religious leader. New administration concerned about how they will look in the press/ how they appear. Don’t want a high-profile embarrassment. This is a high profile case.

SARAH
I talked to a criminal defense lawyer as research. I asked them how they go about building their case when defending against a sexual assault charge. They said, since the case rests so much on the believability of the complainant, their first task is to discredit them. If you can prove that the complainant has been dishonest, then you can argue that their testimony cannot be trusted. You cross examine them at the preliminary hearing - get one set of information. Then when they're on the stand at the trial you try to get them to contradict themselves, or say something that you know you have the evidence to disprove. And while it isn't the onus of the defense to do so, it will make your case stronger if you can provide a motive to fabricate. That is, if your defense is that the complainant is lying, then explain to the jury why they would do this. Are they angry? Jealous? Crazy?

They also said that part of how you, as a defense lawyer, get the complainant to contradict themselves, appear unreliable, or angry, or crazy, is to get under their skin at cross-examination. They said that the people they had cross-examined probably had not enjoyed the experience. That they had probably re-victimized some people. But that's their job. Because they have to make sure that no one is wrongfully convicted.
Questions for discussion:

1. What character did you most relate to in the play?
2. What did you think about Sarah and her family’s decision to remain anonymous? Would it have changed the play if they used their real names? Would it have changed your experience watching the play?
3. How do you think Sarah’s relationship with her family changed from doing these interviews?
4. How do you think Diane was impacted by being the Project Manager of Grace’s case?
5. The play moved between facts/statistics and Grace’s creative/imaginary world. What was your response to this switching of genre? Do you think it told the story effectively?
6. Do you think this play was a “therapy piece”? What makes a play a “therapy” play?

Suggested activities:

1. Create a play on a topic that is personal to you using interviews from your family/friends/community. Document your interview process.
2. We are currently in a time when more and more sexual assault allegations are being tried in court. Compile articles about these cases. How does the media cover these cases? What are the similarities in these cases? What are the differences?
3. Write a letter to Sarah or Grace to let them know how their show impacted you.