



SOUTHBANK
THEATRE COMPANY

PRESENTS

NATURAL SHOCKS

A ONE-WOMAN PLAY INSIDE A TORNADO
BY LAUREN GUNDERSON



MAKE HISTORY

A close-up photograph of a ripe pineapple with its green leafy top. It is wearing a pair of bright green sunglasses with dark lenses. The background is a vibrant pink with a pattern of small, semi-transparent red circles.

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Natural Shocks Makes Political History

BY MARCIA EPPICH-HARRIS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

This season, Southbank takes on issues at the heart of the political landscape for women and society's most vulnerable. *Natural Shocks* reveals the interior conversation an abuse victim repeatedly has with society, and frankly, it's time for real talk. In this performance, we meet Angela – a self-proclaimed liar and cheater. But far from being morally objectionable, Lauren Gunderson's protagonist is a symbolic everywoman – a representative of abused intimate partners.

Angela lives her life in an attempt to fulfill society's demands of her – she must stay on brand, never complain, always be positive, and reserve her vulnerability for an imaginary audience – us. Victims of domestic violence often do not have an inner circle. Their abusers' tactics include isolation, cutting off escape routes, and Angela is no different. Estranged from her mother, and throwing herself dutifully into work, Angela survives day by day only through denial and fantasy. Likening herself to Hamlet, Shakespeare's famously inactive protagonist, Angela concurs with the assessment that we'd "rather bear those ills we have than fly to others that we know not of." "That sums up humanity pretty well I think," she says. "We're just scared shitless. All the time. I am." Having no inner circle to rely on, no one to confide in, the only circle in Angela's life is the whirlwind we hear above her – the destructive force of her tornadic husband.

One victim is one too many; however, the violence within intimate partner abuse also spills into our gun-obsessed culture in devastating ways. In the journal *Injury Epidemiology*, Lisa B. Geller, et al., reported that "59.1% of mass shootings between 2014 and 2019 were DV (domestic violence)-related and in 68.2% of mass

shootings, the perpetrator either killed at least one partner or family member or had a history of DV.”¹ Our society has shrugged helplessly – and sometimes apathetically – at the permanency of gun violence, domestic violence, and the oppression of women. We need to acknowledge that these things don’t just happen to other people. They happen to us. And we are complicit. Natural Shocks begs the question: If we won’t act to protect society’s most vulnerable, why won’t we even attempt to save ourselves? To act or not to act is not the question. It’s time to expose the tactics that allow abusers to maintain control and reclaim the power to fulfill our own destinies. Based on Hamlet’s famous “To be or not to be” soliloquy, Natural Shocks is a damning condemnation of violence, abuse, and firearms in America.

(Content warnings: domestic violence, guns)

1. Lisa B. Geller, Marisa Booty, and Cassandra K. Crifasi, “The role of domestic violence in fatal mass shootings in the United States, 2014–2019,” *Injury Epidemiology* 8, 38 (2021).

Domestic Violence Resources

If you or someone you know are not safe in your relationship, there is help available. The National Domestic Violence Hotline is available 24/7 for help: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233). Their website is <https://www.thehotline.org/>.

Local resources in Indianapolis include:

1. The Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence at 1915 West 18th Street, Suite B, (317) 917-3685, <https://icadvinc.org/>
2. The Julian Center at 2011 N Meridian Street, (317) 920-9320, <https://www.juliancenter.org/>
3. Coburn Place at 604 E. 38th Street, (317) 923-5750, <https://coburnplace.org/>

Additionally, if you are suffering from depression or suicidal ideation, the new National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is 988, and they take calls 24/7. More information can be found at <https://988lifeline.org/>.

Remember, internet usage can be monitored. It is impossible to erase completely. If you’re concerned your internet usage might be monitored by your partner, the National Domestic Violence Hotline has resources on digital security. Remember to clear your browser history after visiting any of the websites above.

Eric Bryant

From the Director

I was not familiar with Natural Shocks by Lauren Gunderson when Marcia Eppich-Harris put out the word that she was looking for someone to direct the play. Full confession: not only was I not looking to take on a project at this time, but despite Ms. Gunderson being one of the most-produced playwrights in America, I was completely unfamiliar with her work (apparently, I've been living in my own basement!). After a quick read, I knew that I wanted to be involved with this play. Not only was I absorbed in the journey that Angela, the sole character in the play, goes on, but the journey that she takes the audience on quite literally took my breath away.



As Ms. Gunderson herself states on her website, the play is based on Hamlet's "To be or not to be" speech and puts the reality of gun violence in America directly in the lap of the audience (laurengunderson.com). In 2018, inspired by the way that the survivors of the Parkland school shooting turned their pain and outrage into political action, Ms. Gunderson waived production fees so that nationwide readings of the play could be organized to raise money for gun violence prevention and domestic abuse prevention. It should be noted that Ms. Gunderson herself was spurred to become an activist protesting gun violence when she was a 17-year-old high school student in Georgia after the Columbine High School shootings in 1999.

Ms. Gunderson describes the play as taking place "in a tornado." Those of us who have lived in the Midwest can certainly relate to the unpredictable destructiveness of these types of storms. It is an apt metaphor for the seemingly unpredictable nature of domestic and gun violence. I recall my mother driving me around areas hit by tornadoes when I was a young boy. The sheer destructive force, as well as the random paths taken by these storms sticks with me. I have seen with my own eyes farm equipment lodged in the branches of trees and entire neighborhoods reduced to rubble save for one seemingly untouched house. It is a reminder also that violence of any kind is not suffered only by the individual, but by the entire community.

I am grateful to Marcia and Southbank Theatre Company for providing this opportunity to me. I am grateful to our talented production team and to the Fonseca Theater Company for allowing us to rent their space. I am also grateful to all the talented actors who auditioned for the play. Finally, I am grateful to Carrie Ann Schlatter for taking this journey, and for sharing both her talent and insight as Angela. I hope that you not only enjoy this play, but that it spurs you to action as well.

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NATURAL SHOCKS



BY LAUREN GUNDERSON

Cast

ANGELA

Carrie Ann Schlatter

Creative Team

DIRECTOR

Eric Bryant

STAGE MANAGER

Missy Rump

LIGHTING DESIGN/OPERATION

Kairon Bullock

SET DESIGN

Aric C. Harris

PRODUCER/SOUND DESIGN

Marcia Eppich-Harris

COSTUMING

Carrie Ann Schlatter

SET CONSTRUCTION/PAINTING

Aric C. Harris, Eric Bryant, Marcia
Eppich-Harris, Kai Harris

Content warnings: depictions of domestic violence and gun usage.

Run Time: Approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes

There will be no intermission



Cast & Crew



Carrie Ann Schlatter (Angela) Carrie is thankful for the opportunity to bring this wonderfully silly and complex person to life! Carrie's last performance of a Lauren Gunderson character was playing Henrietta Leavitt in Summit Performance Indianapolis' production of *Silent Sky* several years ago. She fast became a Gunderson fan and has been hoping for a chance to explore more of her work. Carrie has been seen at various venues around town for years, working with companies like Phoenix Theatre Indianapolis, Summit Performance Indianapolis, Storefront Theatre of Indianapolis, Approxima Productions, and Booth Tarkington Civic Theatre. Other favorite past roles include Blanche in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Lauren in *Vino Veritas*, Gwendolen in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Katherine in *Impressionism*, and Emily Dickinson in *The Belle of Amherst*.



Eric Bryant (Director) Eric Bryant moved from Indianapolis to New York in the mid-1980s. He initially studied scene work with Sandy Dennis at HB Studio. Other HB instructors included Elizabeth Dillon (scene work) and Carol Rosenfeld (technique and scene work). Eric also studied fencing for the stage with his longtime friend and mentor, Joe Daly, eventually becoming his assistant, helping teach, develop choreography, and compose scene work for the actors. After touring the country in two separate productions of *The Three Musketeers*, Eric began studying at Circle Rep Lab under the instruction of Michael Warren Powell and Peg Denithorne, initially focusing on the works of Lanford Wilson. From this experience Eric was asked to become an apprentice member of The Lab Theater, which focused on artist development and developing new scripts.

Eric has appeared onstage both in Indianapolis and New York. After a hiatus from the theater for a few years to focus on family and career, he has enjoyed re-igniting his passion for performance and artist development. Most recently he was seen in the Indy Bardfest Prestige Project, *Lysistrata*. He is currently teaching an acting class for adults through Arts for Lawrence.



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Cast & Crew

Missy Rump (Stage Manager and Assistant Director) Missy is excited to be working with Southbank for the first time. She most recently was seen onstage in First Folio's production of *Richard II* as Bagot. She has also worked with Catalyst Repertory and several other companies in Indianapolis and the surrounding areas. Missy thanks her husband, Chris, for sharing her with community theatre.

Kairom Bullock (Lighting Design and Operation) Natural Shocks is Kairom's first production with Southbank Theatre Company. He is an Indianapolis native who began his technical theatre career his freshman year of high school, gaining experience in multiple areas of backstage work including lighting, sound, and set construction. Since then he has gone to work professionally around the city with the IndyFringe Festival, Onyxfest, Beef and Boards Dinner Theatre, Bard Fest, Phoenix Theatre and Cultural Center, and Catalyst Repertory Theatre.

Marcia Eppich-Harris (Sound Design) Marcia Eppich-Harris is the artistic director and founder of Southbank Theatre Company in Indianapolis. She holds a PhD in Shakespeare and Dramatic Literature and taught at the college level for over fifteen years. She is a playwright and a founding member of the Indiana Playwrights Circle (IPC), where she is the Scene Nights Coordinator and serves on the steering committee. Marcia's writing includes plays, fiction, poetry, scholarship, and reviews. She focuses thematically on politics, philosophy, the arts, gender, family, and culture. Her most recent productions include a variety of ten minute plays and performances of her full-length plays *Seneca and the Soul of Nero* and *The Profession*. Marcia also works on sound design, marketing, video editing, and more for Southbank.

Aric Harris (Set Design and Construction) A web developer and graphic designer by trade, Aric is proud to make Natural Shocks his fourth endeavor with Southbank. He has worked for acts such as Peter, Paul, and Mary, Manhattan Transfer, and Peter Sagal as well as done lighting design for *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. Aric is currently pursuing his dreams of being a Polynesian-Pop and Lowbrow artist while still running his small digital design agency. Aric's work can be seen at rikikitchen.com and 4621creative.com.



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TROILUS & CRESSIDA

by William Shakespeare

ADAPTED BY MARCIA EPPICH-HARRIS

MUSIC BY MARICA EPPICH-HARRIS

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AUDITIONS IN APRIL

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Sponsor an Actor

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Each show has its own budget with a variety of costs! If you are coming to sponsorship after our season has already begun, no problem! Individual shows can be sponsored, too.

Season Sponsorship

When we plan our seasons, we create budgets for each show that feed into our annual budget. Annual costs include renting rehearsal space and production space, costumes, actors, directors, crew members, set materials and construction, along with rights to produce plays. All of those costs add up substantially. With your help, Southbank can provide excellent theatre experiences that celebrate emerging and established artists from all backgrounds.

Contact Marcia Eppich-Harris at marcia@southbanktheatre.org or (650) 787-4115 to sponsor Southbank! Or checks may be mailed to 4621 Melbourne Road, Indianapolis, IN 46228. Thank you so much!