

WOOLLY WORLD NEWS

NOVEMBER 1 - 28, 2010 WOOLLYMAMMOTH.NET



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DISCRIMINATION?**
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MYSTERIOUS MURDER!

PUBLIC IMPLICATED IN BEAUTY QUEEN'S TRAGIC TALE!



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THEATRE CONTINUES STRIPEASE!

Artistic Director Encourages, Like, Actual Conversation

Our season-long "striptease of your subconscious" continues with the world premiere of *House of Gold*, a provocative new work that excavates some of the taboo thoughts we try desperately to repress. Using an infamous unsolved murder as its point of departure, the play comically exposes the libidinous suburban landscape surrounding a beautiful child, both before and after her tragic death. It marks the Washington debut of a dazzlingly original young playwright, Gregory S. Moss, directed by one of the great champions of daring new theatre in New York, Sarah Benson, Artistic Director of Soho Rep. Introducing these exciting artists to Woolly's adventurous audience is a thrill.

Sarah Ruhl's *In the Next Room or the vibrator play*, which opened our season, dealt rather explicitly with sexual content. But it gave us the safety of historical distance, setting its tale in the decorous home of a Victorian-era doctor and his wife. Greg Moss brings our season's theme up to the present with no safety net. JonBenét Ramsey was found strangled in her basement in Boulder, Colorado on December 26th, 1996. Her case has attracted wide media coverage ever since, and was re-opened in February, 2009. Just two days before rehearsals for our production began, the Boulder police announced that a new round of interviews in the case would begin.

I hasten to add that playwright Greg Moss has written neither a murder mystery nor docudrama. Rather, he has seized on the larger cultural phenomenon of JonBenét Ramsey—child beauty queen, tabloid sensation, object of speculation and fantasy—to explore our obsession with physical beauty, especially in children. The challenge of *House of Gold* lies not in the fact that it riffs on a sensational real-life case, but that it asks us to examine the contents of our own minds. Unfolding with the unpredictable logic of a nightmare, the play functions like a Rorschach test of our conscious and subconscious thoughts about children. It questions the reasons we value them, the expectations we place on them, and the ways we use them to fulfill our own needs.

The theatre, I believe, creates a safe zone where we can discuss important questions that define the very boundaries of our civilization. A good play doesn't provide answers, but uses provocative language, images, and behavior to tee up a conversation. We have a very full menu of in-person and online conversations surrounding *House of Gold*, including post-show discussions after every performance beginning November 10th. I invite you to make your voice heard, for I am certain the play will give you much to say. Enjoy.

Howard Shalwitz
Artistic Director



HOUSE OF GOLD

WORLD PREMIERE

WRITTEN BY GREGORY S. MOSS
DIRECTED BY SARAH BENSON

Cast & Creative Team for *House of Gold*

Man...Michael Russotto +*
Woman...Emily Townley*
The Girl...Kaaron Briscoe*
Jasper...Randy Blair*
Detective...Mitchell Hébert +*
Joseph M. Lonely, Jr...James Flanagan*
Apollonian Boy 1...Andrew M. Lincoln
Apollonian Boy 2...Ben Kingsland
Apollonian Boy 3...William Hayes

Set & Costume Designer...David Zinn
Lighting Designer...Colin K. Bills
Sound Designer...Matt Tierney
Projection Designer...Aaron Fisher
Properties Master...Jennifer Sheetz
Dramaturg...Miriam Weisfeld
Stage Manager...Laura Smith*

*Member, Actors' Equity Association
+Member, Woolly Mammoth Acting Company

Development of *House of Gold* was supported by the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center during a residency of the National Playwrights Conference of 2009

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This World Premiere of *House of Gold* is supported in part by:

Wade Carey & Ted Colman
Nancy Hartsock,
The Hasenberg and Hartsock Group at
Morgan Stanley Smith Barney
Rick Kasten
Karl K. Kindel & Carrol Benner Kindel
Rebecca Klemm
Eleanor Roberts Lewis & Roger K. Lewis
Julianna & Donald Mahley
Julie Rios
Sunny Jung Scully & William Alsup
Sallie Tyler

House of Gold Claque: Step Armah, Margaux Deloitte-Bennett, Elias & Elizabeth El-Hage, Brandon Gryde, Ryan Hayes, Piper Hendricks, Kathy English Holt, Molly Kinder, Manu Kumasi, Ben Noll, Steve Quartell, Jonathan Zucker

Additional Production Staff for *House of Gold*

Carpenters... Jason Caballero, Christian Sullivan
Scenic Painters... Alison Daniels, Sasha Goldstein
Electricians...Austin Byrd, Reuven Goren, Frank Miller
Asst. to the Director... Christy Denny
Asst. Costume Designer...Franklin Labovitz
Asst. Stage Manager...Patrick Magill
Asst. Dramaturg...Tom Bonner
Fight Choreographer... Lorraine Ressegger
Asst. Fight Choreographer...Joe Isenberg
Wardrobe Supervisor...Haley Raines
Asst. Lighting Designer/Lightboard Op/ Lighting Design Intern...Jared Richardson

Special Thanks: Jim Brady, Avril Krause, Ralph Terkowitz, Michelle Volansky

Actor's Equity Association (AEA), founded in 1913, represents more than 45,000 actors and stage managers in the United States. Equity seeks to advance, promote, and foster the art of live theatre as an essential component of our society. Equity negotiates wages and working conditions, providing a wide range of benefits, including health and pension plans. AEA is a member of the AFL-CIO, and is associated with FIA, an international organization of performing arts unions. The Equity emblem is our mark of excellence. For more information, visit www.actorsequity.org.

SDC The Director is a member of the STAGE DIRECTORS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS SOCIETY, a national theatrical labor union.
The lighting, set, and costume designers of this production are represented by United Scenic Artists, Local USA-829 of the IATSE.

COMMUNITY LEADERS SUPPORT INVESTIGATION!

Woolly's productions are only possible with the generous support of our many contributors, who will combine this season to provide half of our \$4 million budget. We want to take this opportunity to recognize and thank our largest contributors for their tremendous commitment to Woolly Mammoth. We couldn't do it without you!

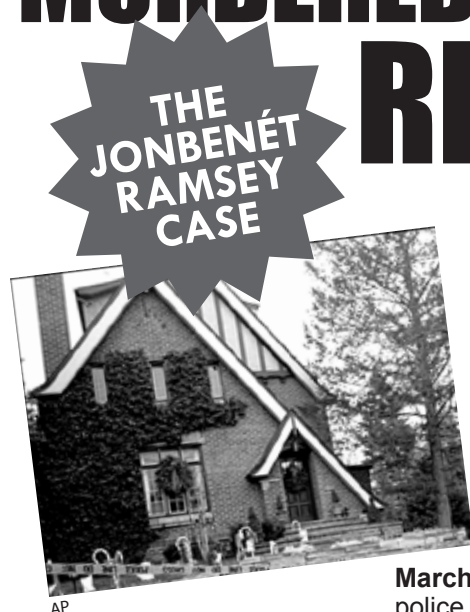
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This list reflects contributions received for the 18-month period ending September 30, 2010.

PLEASE TURN OFF ALL ELECTRONIC DEVICES.
The video and/or audio recording of this performance by any means whatsoever is strictly prohibited.
PERFORMANCE TO RUN 90 MINUTES!
No intermission!

PLAYWRIGHT GREGORY S. MOSS EXPOSED!
Inspiration for *House of Gold* revealed on Woolly Blog!

MURDERED BEAUTY QUEEN CASE RE-OPENED! REVISIT THE FACTS!



AP



Getty Images

Dec. 26, 2pm: John Bennett Ramsey discovers the beaten and strangled body of his six-year-old daughter JonBenét in a storage room in the basement of the house.

March 13, 1997: Noted Colorado Springs police investigator Lou Smit comes out of retirement to aid the investigation, which has failed to uncover any viable suspects.

Sept. 25, 1997: Lou Smit resigns, protesting that authorities are harassing the Ramseys while the real killer remains unidentified.

Aug. 16, 2006: In Bangkok, Thailand, a former schoolteacher named John Mark Karr confesses to the crime and is arrested; DNA evidence later proves his confession false.

Feb. 2009: Boulder District Attorney Stan Garnett re-opens the JonBenét Ramsey case; it remains unsolved.

Dec. 26, 1996, 5:52am: Patsy Ramsey dials 911 to report her that daughter has been kidnapped. Patsy says she has found a ransom note in their Boulder, Colorado home allegedly from "a group of individuals that represent a small foreign faction," demanding \$118,000—the exact amount of her husband John Bennett Ramsey's Christmas bonus.

Dec. 31: In the face of mounting suspicion that they are responsible, the Ramseys hire an attorney, a publicist, and their own team of investigators.

Sept. 15, 1997: A grand jury begins an investigation.

June 24, 2006: Patsy Ramsey dies after a battle with ovarian cancer.

July 2008: DNA evidence officially clears the Ramseys of suspicion.



AP

PLAYWRIGHT EXPOSES ALL!



PRODUCTION DRAMATURG MIRIAM WEISFELD GETS UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL WITH PLAYWRIGHT GREGORY S. MOSS

WOOLLY MAMMOTH EXCLUSIVE!

What was it about the Ramsey case that inspired you to write a play?

The Ramsey case fascinates me in part because it fascinates so much of America. Interest in the case, and the little girl at the center of it, transcends demographics—people of all types follow the case obsessively. JonBenét continues to haunt the popular culture—she’s inspired a novel by Joyce Carol Oates, an episode of *South Park*, numerous YouTube tribute videos, a made-for-TV movie, and countless death metal songs. What is it about this tragic story that speaks to so many different people? Why does the case resurface, almost perennially? Why can’t we let go of JonBenét?

My interest in writing about her was never to “solve the case” or stage the tragedy in any realistic, documentary way. What I wanted to write about is what our fascination with JonBenét reveals about us, as a community. What would JonBenét see if she were to look back at us watching her?

How does the casting of a non-white actress as JonBenét inform the piece?

First of all, Kaaron is a brilliant actor, and that was the primary consideration in casting her. But casting Kaaron—who is very beautiful, but doesn’t especially resemble the six-year-old beauty queen—provides a level of theatricality, that I think allows us as an audience to examine the case with a critical eye. JonBenét the Beauty Queen is a fiction, an image concocted by her parents and by the media, and then applied to a real little girl who, I have to believe, was an entirely different person than the icon she’s become. It’s this fiction, this mask, I wanted to put at the center of the play, not the real little girl, who doesn’t need any more attention.

We’ve talked about how this play has a beginning and an end, but the middle is shaped more like a spiral than a straight line. How did you come to use this structure?

The shape of the play is a spiral, like a conch shell, with JonBenét at the center. We begin far from her, not even seeing her, guided only by the picture of her each of us carry from TV and newspapers. As the play progresses, we circle round her, closer and closer, until, by the end, we are actually seeing the world as she sees it—we are fully identified with her.

I think of *House of Gold* in the tradition of Bernard Pomerance’s *The Elephant Man* or Suzan-Lori Parks’ *Venus*. These are plays that critically evaluate the story of a single historical figure living in a society that finds them exotic, titillating, other. By tracking the ways in which such a character is treated, certain hidden elements of that society are revealed. JonBenét, like John Merrick and Sarah Baartman (or Lindsay Lohan or Miley Cyrus, for that matter) provides us with a snapshot of our cultural desire—the unconscious things we, as a community, crave, but do not fully recognize.

CAST OF CHARACTERS



MAN



WOMAN

THE PARENTS!



JOSEPH M. LONELY, JR.

STRANGER IN VAN!



JASPER

NEIGHBORHOOD BOYS!



APOLLONIAN BOYS



DETECTIVE

INVESTIGATOR!

MURDER IN THEATRE!
Satire reported dead. Full report unleashed November 2nd. woollymammothblog.com

KILLER ON THE LOOSE! LIST OF SUSPECTS NARROWED

GRIEVING FAMILY UNDER UMBRELLA OF SUSPICION

MAN
Michael Russotto returns to Woolly Mammoth, where he is a member of the Acting Company. Other Woolly credits include Werner in *Full Circle*, Alexandra in *She Stoops to Comedy*, (Helen Hayes Award Nomination, Outstanding Lead Actor), and The Soul in *Vigils* (Helen Hayes Award Nomination, Outstanding Ensemble.) Most recently he appeared as Henry et al. in *Travels with my Aunt* at Rep Stage and as William Howard Taft in *Teddy Roosevelt and the Ghostly Mistletoe* at The Kennedy Center’s TYA. Favorite roles include Mr. Lawrence in *Girl in the Goldfish Bowl* at MetroStage and Lou in *Lenny and Lou* here at Woolly Mammoth. Over the years, Mr. Russotto has also performed at The Folger Theatre, Olney Theatre Center, Theater J, Washington Stage Guild, Theater Alliance, Wayside Theatre, and Studio Theatre. In February he will appear in *American Scrapbook* at the Kennedy Center, and in the spring he will appear in *Art* at Signature Theatre. Michael teaches acting at The Theatre Lab and is a long-time narrator of recorded books for the Library of Congress.

WOMAN
Emily Townley has previously appeared at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company as Lizzie in *Marial/Stuart*, Barbara in *Spain*, Heidi in *Fuddy Meers*, multiple roles in *Wonder of the World*, and Marilyn in *Watbanaland*. Her most recent local credits include Stevie in *The Goat, or Who is Sylvia?* at Rep Stage, Mrs. Gibbs in *Our Town* at Everyman Theatre, and Candida in *Rock ‘n’ Roll* at Studio Theatre. Other area credits include performances for Round House Theatre, the Folger Shakespeare Theatre, The Kennedy Center, Horizons Theatre, Freedom Stage, Source Theatre, and SCENA. She can be seen next as Cynthia in *The Real Inspector Hound*, directed by John Vreeke for Metro Stage. Mad props to Howard.

NEIGHBORHOOD BOYS WANTED IN CONNECTION

JASPER
Randy Blair is an actor, writer, and performance artist from New York City. His musical *Fat Camp*, which won Best of the Fest at the 2009 New York Musical Theatre Festival, recently received its pre-Broadway developmental workshop with Randy in the lead. He also created and starred in the award-winning cult hit *Perez Hilton Saves the Universe*, which played Off-Broadway at 45 Bleeker, Barrow Street Theatre, and Joe’s Pub. Other Off-Broadway: *Adding Machine* (dir. David Cromer), *The Yellow Wood* (dir. BD Wong), *Behind the Limelight*, and *The Tragic and Horrible Life of the*

THE GIRL

Kaaron Briscoe began performing at a young age. Some of her favorite roles include American Repertory Theater: Polly X in *Trojan Barbie*; ART/MXAT/IATT: 1st Sydney/1st Visitor in *Largo Desolato*, and Tallahassee Shakespeare Festival: Audrey in *As You Like It*. She has appeared on stages in London and Moscow, as well as in film and commercials. Kaaron is a native of New Orleans, LA and holds an MFA from the American Repertory Theater/Moscow Art Theatre/Institute for Advanced Theatre Training at Harvard University.



Singing Nun. Regional: premieres of *Spelling Bee*, *Avenue Q*, *Side Show*. Film/TV: *Law & Order*, *Naked Brothers Band*, *Across the Universe*, *Strangers with Candy*. His rock ‘n’ roll theatrical terrorism has been seen all over downtown New York, from PS122 to the Upright Citizens Brigade to (insert Lower East Side trendy bar-of-the-week here). www.therandyshow.com

APOLLONIAN BOY #1
Andrew M. Lincoln is making his Woolly Mammoth debut in addition to his Washington, DC theatre debut. He most recently performed with the Chesapeake Dinner Theater in Annapolis, MD in their production of *Joseph*. He is a musician in the Greater Baltimore area and works for the organization “The Building Life Project,” which raises money and awareness for the prevention

of teen suicide. He has directed and music directed for Children’s Theatre of Annapolis and is a volunteer for the Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center in Grasonville, MD. He would like to thank his family and friends for their support.

APOLLONIAN BOY #2
Ben Kingsland is appearing at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company for the first time. His other credits include Richard in the Helen Hayes-nominated *The Bread of Winter* at Theater Alliance; Daniel in *Intelligence* at Rep Stage; Adam in *Complete Works... Abridged* and Interrogator in *All’s Well That Ends Well* at Baltimore Shakespeare Festival; Harry Bumper in *The School for Scandal* at Everyman; Tour Guide in *The Constellation* for Active Cultures; and Gary in *Mission Control* for Madcap Players. He has toured thirty-three states with the National Players, InterAct Story

Theatre, Maryland Shakespeare Festival, and Educational Theatre Company. Ben is a published playwright whose work has been supported by the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County. Education: Johns Hopkins University. Please visit benkingsland.com.

APOLLONIAN BOY #3
William Hayes recently graduated with a BFA in musical theatre from Point Park University’s Conservatory of Performing Arts, where he appeared in *The Frogs*, *Parade*, and the premiere of Michael Rupert’s *Streets of America*. Other favorite roles include Bobby in *Urinetown*, Riff in *West Side Story*, and, most recently, Tony in Busch Gardens’ *Celtic Fyre*.

STRANGER IN VAN SUSPECTED

JOSEPH M. LONELY, JR.
James Flanagan most recently appeared in Taffety Punk’s *Bootleg Two Noble Kinsmen*. He has performed at many local theatres, including *dark play* or *stories for boys* for Forum Theatre; *The Intelligent Design of Jenny Chow* at Studio Theatre; *columbinus* at Round House Theatre; *Kimberly Akimbo*, *Hamlet*, and *Arcadia* at Rep Stage; and other venues, such as Everyman Theatre, New York Theatre Workshop, Longacre Lea Productions, Quotidian Theatre, Perseverance Theatre, Baltimore Shakespeare Festival, VSA arts, and The Kennedy Center TYA. Upcoming projects include *Photograph 51* and *The Moscows of Nantucket* at Theater J. James received his training at Towson University.

ANYONE WITH INFORMATION LEADING TO ARREST SHOULD CONTACT DETECTIVE AT 555-555-5555.

DETECTIVE
Mitchell Hébert is a long-time company member at Woolly, where he was last seen in *Clybourne Park*. His many credits at Woolly include *The Gigli Concert*, *Patience*, *Koetch*, and *The Clean House*. He has performed at many of the DC area’s leading theatres, including Round House Theatre, where he is a member of its Artist’s Round Table; Olney Theatre Center, where he directed the critically acclaimed production of *Rabbit Hole*; Shakespeare Theatre Company; Studio Theatre; Theater of the First Amendment; Rep Stage; and Everyman Theatre in Baltimore. Upcoming projects include *Charming Billy* at Round House Theatre and *Art* at Signature Theatre. He has been nominated for a Helen Hayes Award (Outstanding Lead Actor/*The Drawer Boy*) and received the Greater Baltimore Theatre Award for Outstanding Actor (*Uncle Vanya*). Mitchell is on the faculty of the University of Maryland’s School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies, where he is a Professor of Acting and Directing.

BENSON AND MOSS CAPTURED ON TAPE!
Exclusive footage podcasted on Radio Woolly!

ASSISTANT TO ARTISTIC DIRECTOR SPILLS ALL!
Tom Bonner divulges the dirty secrets about his first time on the Woolly Blog.

GREGORY S. MOSS (Playwright) is a writer and performer from Newburyport, MA. He is a graduate of Brown University's MFA Playwriting Program. His plays include *sixsixsix*; *Garden*; *The Argument*; and *punkplay*. His work has been developed or produced by The A.R.T., Red Eye, Playwrights Horizons, PlayPenn, Soho Rep, and New York Theatre Workshop, among others. His collaborations with filmmaker Roger Beebe have been screened widely at film festivals in America and abroad. Gregory is the recipient of a 2006-2007 Lucille Lortel Playwriting Fellowship, a 2009 Eugene O'Neill Center National Playwrights Conference residency, and a 2010-2011 Jerome Fellowship. *punkplay*, published in *Play A Journal of Plays*, was recently produced at The Steppenwolf Garage. A new play, *Orange, Hat & Grace*, premiered at Soho Rep in September 2010 directed by Sarah Benson, and *Billy Witch* premieres at Northeastern University in October 2010. Writing, video, and audio are archived at www.gregorysmoss.com.

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TOP-NOTCH TEAM ASSEMBLED TO REVEAL TRUTH BEHIND CASE

SARAH BENSON (Director) has been the Artistic Director of Soho Rep since 2007. New York credits include Soho Rep: Gregory S. Moss' *Orange, Hat & Grace*, Sarah Kane's *Blasted* (Obie Award, Drama Desk nomination) and Manhattan Theatre Club: Polly Stenham's *That Face*. She has also worked on new plays at The O'Neill, New York Stage & Film, and New Dramatists. Ms. Benson moved to New York from London on a Fulbright for Theater Direction. She co-curated the PRELUDE Festival at the Martin E. Segal Theatre Center for two seasons. At Soho Rep she has produced new works by artists including Young Jean Lee, Dan LeFranc, Nature Theater of Oklahoma, and John Jesurun. Upcoming: A.R.T. Boston: Sophocles' *Ajax*, Soho Rep: Richard Maxwell's *Samara*.

DAVID ZINN (Set & Costume Design) Broadway: costumes for *In the Next Room or the vibrator play* (Tony and Drama Desk nominations), *Xanadu*, and *A Tale of Two Cities*. Recent Off-Broadway: sets and costumes for Vineyard: *Middletown*; Playwrights Horizons: *Circle Mirror Transformation*; Manhattan Theatre Club: *That Face*, *The Four of Us*, and

Back Back Back; set design for MCC: *The Pride*; and ERS/New York Theatre Workshop: *The Sound and the Fury*. Regional work includes: sets and/or costumes at ART, Yale Rep, Mark Taper Forum, Berkeley Rep, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, La Jolla Playhouse, Intiman Theatre, Seattle Rep, Guthrie Theater, New York City Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Curtis Institute of Music. 2008 Obie for Sustained Achievement in scenic and costume design.

COLIN K. BILLS (Lighting Design) is an Associate Artist with the Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, where he has lit over twenty productions, including *Gruesome Playground Injuries*, *Clybourne Park*, *Full Circle*, *Eclipsed*, *Fever!*, *Dream*, *Stunning*, *The Unmentionables*, *Dead Man's Cell Phone*, and *The Clean House*. His designs have been seen at The Berkshire Theatre Festival, CENTERSTAGE, Contemporary American Theatre Festival, Didactic Theatre, Everyman Theatre, Forum Theatre, Imagination Stage, Intiman Theatre, The Kennedy Center, Maryland Stage, Metro Stage, Olney Theatre Center, Round House Theatre, The Smithsonian Institution, Signature Theatre, Studio Theatre, Synetic Theatre, Theater for the First Amendment, Theater J, Tsunami Theatre, Vermont's Northern Stage, the Washington Revels, and The Williamstown Theatre Festival. Mr. Bills has won two Helen Hayes Awards, for his designs of *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches* and *Dead Man's Cell Phone*. He is a 2009 recipient of a Princess Grace Fellowship in Theater and is a graduate of Dartmouth College. He shares his life with his beautiful wife, Rachel.

MATT TIERNEY (Sound Design) Recent productions include Manhattan Theatre Club: *That Face*; Playwrights Horizons: *THIS*; Soho Rep: *Blasted* (Hewes Award). Current associate of Elevator Repair Service (The Select: *The Sun Also*

Rises and *The Sound and the Fury* at New York Theatre Workshop, Lortel nomination); Young Jean Lee's Theater Company: *Lear*, *The Shipment*, *Church*; and The Wooster Group; The Public Theater: *Hamlet* (Lortel nomination); the film *There's Still Time...Brother*; *Who's Your Dada?* at MoMA, and *The Emperor Jones*. Other credits include several productions with Ridge Theater Company including *The Death of Klinghoffer*, *Decasia*, and *Jennie Richee* (Obie Award), Brooklyn Academy of Music, The Kitchen, P.S. 122, as well as many other theaters, domestic and abroad.

AARON FISHER (Projection Design) Returns to Woolly Mammoth, where he assisted in the projection design of *Full Circle* and *Current Nobody* and was Video Engineer for *Gruesome Playground Injuries*. He recently designed projections for Signature's *Chess* and Useless Theatre Company's *Perfect Chocolate Milkshake*. Aaron has also assisted on several other projects, including *Passing Strange* at The Studio Theatre 2nd Stage, as well as *La Momia en el Closet* at Gala Hispanic Theatre.

LAURA SMITH (Production Stage Manager) returns to Woolly where she previously stage managed *The Unmentionables*, *Vigils*, *After Ashley* and assisted on both *Cooking with Elvis* and *Patience*. She has worked extensively in the Baltimore/DC area. CENTERSTAGE: *Working it Out*, *Cyrano*, *Fabulation*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*; Everyman Theatre: *Rabbit Hole*, *Doubt: a parable*, *Gem of the Ocean*, *The School for Scandal*, *And A Nightingale Sang*, *A Number*, *Someone Who'll Watch Over Me*; Olney Theatre: *Stuff Happens*; Folger Theatre: *Measure for Measure*,

AUDIENCES ENGAGED!
Nightly conversations at Woolly strengthen relationships with plays, one another.

Comedy of Errors; Studio Theatre: *Caroline, or Change*; Theater Alliance: *Headsman's Holiday*, *Pangea Project*.

MIRIAM WEISFELD (Dramaturg) is the Director of New Play Development at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, where she has dramaturged World Premieres including David Adjmi's *Stunning*, Robert O'Hara's *Antebellum*, and Dania Gurira's *Eclipsed* (all of which received Helen Hayes nominations for Outstanding New Play). Her other credits include work for New York Theatre Workshop (projects with JoAnne Akalaitis, Ivo van Hove, and Universes); American Repertory Theater (with Robert Woodruff, Anne Bogart, and Paula Vogel); Steppenwolf Theatre Company; Actors Theatre of Louisville; and Lookingglass Theatre Company. She has lectured on theatre at Harvard University, MIT, Suffolk University, Northwestern University, the Kennedy Center, and the Moscow Art Theatre School. She holds an MFA in Dramaturgy from the American Repertory Theater/Moscow Art Theatre School Institute at Harvard University.

SUBURBAN PERVERSIONS AIRED
Your neighborhood's dirty little secrets revealed on Radio Woolly November 10th.

COMING UP NEXT AT WOOLLY
A GIRL'S GUIDE TO WASHINGTON POLITICS
DECEMBER 8, 2010 - JANUARY 9, 2011



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adapted by Jesse Berger

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A STRIPEASE OF YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS

IN THE NEXT ROOM OR THE VIBRATOR PLAY
BY SARAH RUHL, DIR. AARON POSNER
EXTENDED TWICE THRU OCT 3

HOUSE OF GOLD
BY GREGORY S. MOSS, DIR. SARAH BENSON
NOVEMBER 1 - 28, 2010

A GIRL'S GUIDE TO WASHINGTON POLITICS
WRITTEN/PERFORMED BY CHICAGO'S THE SECOND CITY
DEC 8, 2010 - JAN 9, 2011

DEDIPUS EL REY
BY LUIS ALFARO, DIR. MICHAEL JOHN GARCÉS
FEB 7 - MARCH 6, 2011


THE AGONY AND THE ECSTASY OF STEVE JOBS
BY MIKE DAISEY, DIR. JEAN-MICHELE GREGORY
MAR 21 - APRIL 10, 2011

BOOTYCANDY
WRITTEN/DIRECTED BY ROBERT O'HARA
MAY 30 - JUNE 26, 2011

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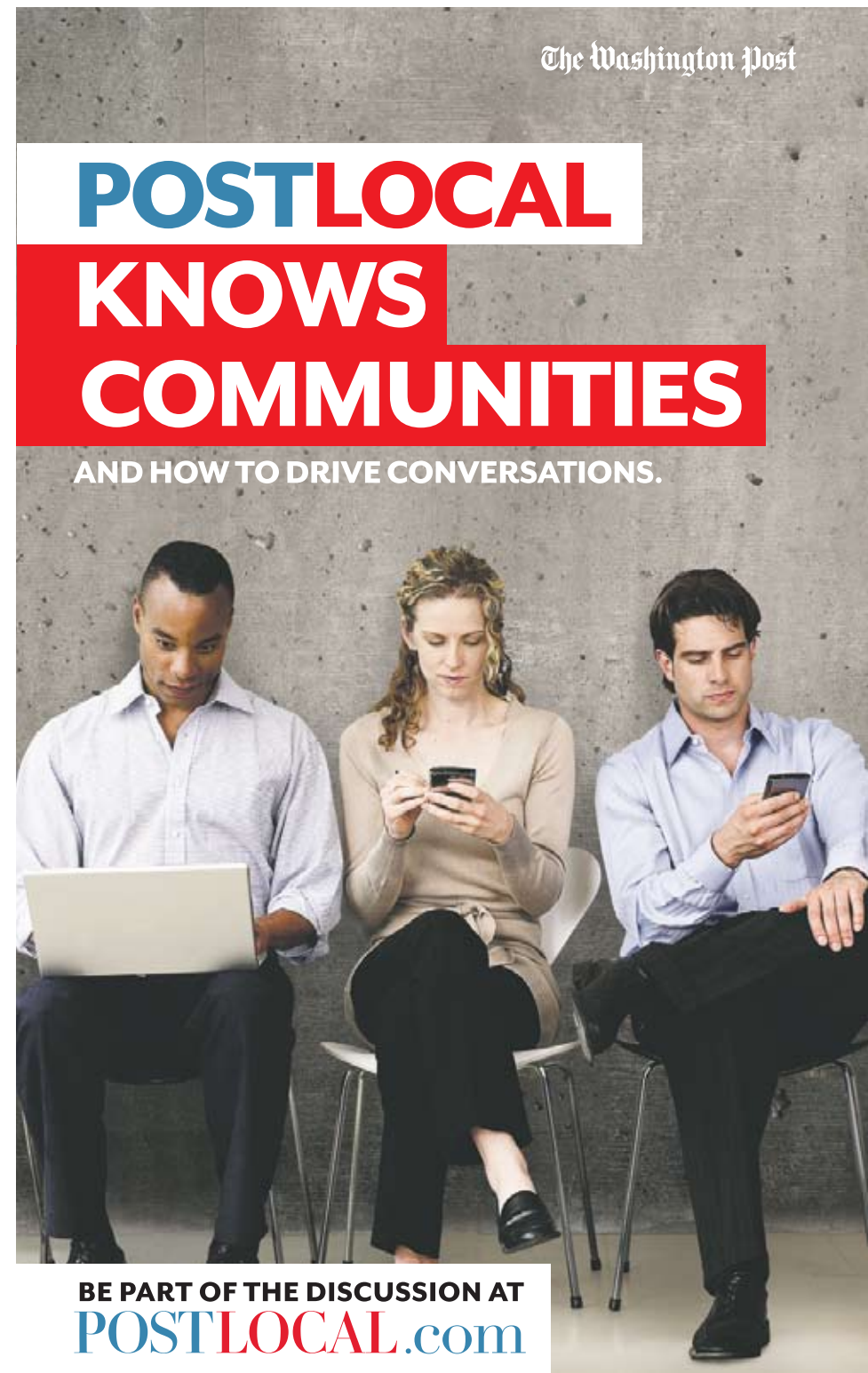
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NOW YOU SEE THEM, NOW YOU DON'T

By Miriam Weisfeld, Production Dramaturg

In *House of Gold*, playwright Gregory S. Moss exposes the temptation to fetishize certain victimized children while we turn a blind eye on others. The play presents a spectrum of neighborhood kids. On one end, an overweight, isolated boy: he idolizes Richard Pryor, the African American entertainer who turned his acutely painful life into comedy. The boy suffers bullying and beatings at the hands of young athletes; the adults seem to ignore him completely. On the other end of the spectrum, a girl: she is prized for her blonde, blue-eyed perfection, yet she feels very different inside. Instead of starving for attention, she's clobbered by it; every adult imposes a weight of desire, jealousy, and vicarious thrill that her small body can't possibly support. Only the kids themselves can see past the lenses of beauty, gender, and race to recognize each other's real experience. *House of Gold* catches us in the act of seeing—or failing to see—the real child beneath the crime.

America has long applied double, triple, or quadruple standards to young victims. On July 20th, 1979, fourteen-year-old Edward Hope Smith was reported missing in Atlanta. Eight days later, his murdered body was discovered on the side of a road. Edward's case set off a sequence of events that created a media frenzy in Atlanta. An

editor at *Playboy* summoned James Baldwin from France to cover the story. In his book *The Evidence of Things Not Seen*, Baldwin writes:

"Atlanta became, for a season, a kind of grotesque Disneyland: prophets, soothsayers, mediums, political aspirants, and political ruins all had their say... There was, of course, in all this, something humiliating and intolerable."

Eventually, Ronald Reagan granted the city of Atlanta \$1 million to aid the investigation. However, this assistance was not provided until *eighteen* additional Atlanta children had been killed in the months following Edward's death. The bodies counted in the "Atlanta child murders" eventually totaled twenty-eight. Twenty-six of them were boys; all were from low-income African American families. The case has become infamous, primarily for the sheer number of victims and the lack of a conviction in their slayings. However, the name and face of Edward Hope Smith—and those of the other twenty-seven children—have all but vanished from our nation's consciousness.

According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, roughly 800,000 minors are reported missing each year, or an average of 2,000 per day. Why do a handful of these

children linger as cultural icons, while the vast majority scarcely draws a second glance from the press and the public? The case of JonBenét Ramsey, a single six-year-old girl reported missing and found murdered in 1996, has become one of the most famous crimes in American history. Over \$2.4 million has already been spent on the national and local investigation. Last year, the District Attorney re-opened the case and mobilized additional experts in DNA and linguistics to re-examine the evidence. Innumerable books, TV specials, websites, newspapers, and tabloids have kept the name and face of JonBenét in our imaginations for much longer, in fact, than her short life lasted. It seems our hunger for this particular child is insatiable.

In a way, JonBenét Ramsey had been prepared for celebrity all her life. Former Miss West Virginia Patsy Ramsey entered her blonde, blue-eyed daughter in child beauty pageants almost as soon as JonBenét could walk. She was crowned Little Miss Colorado, America's Royale Miss Colorado Dream Queen, Miss Colorado Sunburst, and, the month she died, Colorado's Little Miss Christmas. After her murder, many blamed JonBenét's parents for promoting a sexualized public persona for their six-year-old that made her especially appealing to predators. Indeed, the tiny high heels, couture gowns, and

false eyelashes of child beauty pageants apply adult standards of beauty to children. Those deemed "winners" receive trophies, cash, scholarship funds, cars, and exposure to talent scouts and casting agents. But the attention JonBenét garnered as a champion was far exceeded by her fame as a victim. Now that she is gone, America can't get enough of her.

Some victims, sadly, remain invisible to us. Others shoulder the burden of our own projected fantasies until they recede behind the mask of celebrity. Either way, the images of these children make the most vivid impression when the children themselves are gone. In *House of Gold*, Gregory S. Moss points out our fickle regard for the youngest and most vulnerable among us. In a way, the play is less about the children than it is about us: the way we see, the way we remember, and the way we forget.

For more information or to get involved, visit the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children missingkids.com

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