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2013

## A Costume Designer's Approach to Agatha Christie's And Then There Were None

Angela Kristie Sahli  
*Minnesota State University - Mankato*

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A COSTUME DESIGNER'S APPROACH TO  
AGATHA CHRISTIE'S  
*AND THEN THERE WERE NONE*

by  
ANGELA SAHLI

A THESIS SUBMITTED  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
MASTER OF FINE ARTS  
IN  
THEATRE ARTS

MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO  
MANKATO, MINNESOTA

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## ABSTRACT

Sahli, Angela, M.F.A. A Costume Designer's Approach to Agatha Christie's *And Then There Were None*. Mankato: Minnesota State University, Mankato, 2013.

This document is a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the Master of Fine Arts degree in theatre. It is a detailed account of author Angela Sahli's artistic process in designing costumes for Minnesota State University, Mankato's production of *And Then There Were None* in the early spring of 2013. The thesis chronicles the designer's artistic process from pre-production through performance in five chapters: a pre-production analysis, a historical and critical perspective, a journal, a post-production analysis and a process development analysis. Appendices and works cited are included.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## CHAPTER I

### PRE-PRODUCTION ANALYSIS

This chapter is an analysis of Agatha Christie's mystery play *And Then There Were None* which will be presented by the Department of Theatre and Dance at Minnesota State University, Mankato, February 21–23, and February 28–March 3, 2013 in the Ted Paul Theatre. The production will be directed by Heather Hamilton, have a lighting design by Steve Smith, scene design by Mary Jane Olson, costume design by Angela Sahli, sound design by Curtis Fleigel, technical direction by George Grubb and Samantha Goerrs will be the Production Stage Manager.

This project offers an opportunity for the designer to grow as an artist by interpreting research and analyzing the script to create an effective costume design. This is also an opportunity for the designer to use and further develop research skills, to collaborate artistically with other members of the production team and to improve communication with the director in order to create a costume design that will successfully actualize characters in the world that both the playwright has created and the director envisions. Sketching and sewing skills, specifically patterning and draping, should also improve from working on this production. *And Then There Were None* offers many opportunities for the designer to grow and further develop skills in delegation, communication, time management and organization as well as build confidence as a costume designer.

The Samuel French Acting Edition of *And Then There Were None*, which this production is using, is a mystery play in three acts spanning three days on secluded Soldier Island off the coast of Devon, England. Eight guests and two servants are invited to the island by a mysterious host and hostess. As the guests begin to arrive it is brought to their attention that their hosts will not be joining them until the following day. The eight strangers decide to make the best of the situation as they make introductions, have a few drinks and dress for dinner. While getting to know one another they take notice of a poem above the fireplace titled “Ten Little Soldiers”. Beneath the poem, on the mantle of the fireplace are ten soldier statuettes. Before everyone gets too comfortable, however, an ominous voice accuses each person on the island of murder. Various reactions occur: fainting, denial, silence and confession. As the guests begin to share details about how they came to be invited to the island and present their defenses regarding the accusations made against them by the unknown voice, one of the guests chokes on his drink and dies. Shortly after the commotion, one of the ten soldier statuettes sitting on the mantle is found broken on the floor. It only takes a few more deaths for the party guests to realize that their mystery host is having them killed in a manner following the poem hanging above the mantel and the statuettes about the ten little soldier boys who die one by one. As each party guest dies a soldier statuette mysteriously leaves the mantel.

The designer has considered information, actions and dialogue from the play and novel to develop her interpretation of the characters. The house on Soldier Island is being maintained by an older married couple, Mr. and Mrs. Rogers. They are working class servants. Rogers does not appear to be a highly educated man though he is a well-

trained and experienced manservant. He and his wife have been employed on the island for only one week prior to the guests arriving. Mrs. Rogers functions as a cook and resents the fact that there are no maids to do the cleaning. She is an old fashioned woman, who seems unhappy with her lot in life and would not be going back into service work again if it hadn't been for the high pay offered for working on the island.

Fred Narracott is another man who works about the island. He makes daily trips by boat to deliver packages and groceries as well as to take orders for the next day's deliveries. He does not stay on the island, as there is nowhere safe to leave a boat due to the way that the house was constructed on the location. He also drives all of the guests to the island from the mainland by boat.

Vera Claythorne is a young secretary hired by Mrs. Owen, the mystery hostess. Vera is attractive and maintains a professional demeanor as she greets the other guests in the hostess' absence. She is polite, light hearted, good humored and maintains a positive attitude until she and the other guests are accused of murder. Vera may appear naïve at times, however she is very smart. She should have the appearance of a driven, young professional woman who embraces her good looks and intelligence.

Philip Lombard is a good looking and confident man in his early to mid thirties. He is easy going, smooth talking, likeable and flirtatious. He seems like the kind of man who is used to getting his way. Philip is extremely confident and formerly a captain in the King's African Rifles. However, he is no longer involved with the military. Philip is an adventurer and flirt. He should appear confident, worldly and attractive.



Anthony Marston is a young man who is rich, spoiled and not too bright. He is very proud of his fast car, a Sports Varletti Carlotta. He also enjoys bragging about how fast he drives his car. Anthony shows interest in Vera, as does Philip, but Vera does not reciprocate Anthony's interests and merely maintains a professional level of polite interaction. Anthony's youth, immaturity, wealth and air of entitlement should be reflected in his appearance.

William Blore is a middle aged man who initially introduces himself as Mr. Davis, a wealthy man from South Africa. He makes a point of introducing himself repeatedly as Mr. Davis and is not a very clever liar. Instead of appearing as a wealthy man, he comes off as classless. Not until after the accusations are made does Blore admit that he was hired as a detective by Mr. Owen, the mystery host. Because the other guests know Blore's true identity after the first night, his appearance may change very much from the initial introduction as Mr. Davis the millionaire, to Blore the detective.

General MacKenzie is an older man whose personality seems to have been shaped by his experience and career in the military. He is a creature of habit. For the last ten years MacKenzie has sat in the same chair at the Benton Club where he lives. When he finds Wargrave sitting in a chair that occupies the same location as 'his' chair at the Benton Club he doesn't know where else to sit and will not sit down until Wargrave sits in another chair. MacKenzie hasn't been invited to a social event in the past four years. He seems to be the type of man who is set in routine, is very particular (he won't let Rogers unpack for him), and he needs that order and routine to survive. His military background along with his need for routine should influence MacKenzie's appearance. It

may be fitting starting in Act II for MacKenzie to appear more disorganized, as if he is losing control of his appearance while he lets go of reality and awaits death.

Emily Brent is a harsh woman. She is blunt and speaks in short, direct statements. She is very opinionated and has no qualms about speaking her mind and making judgmental statements about the strangers around her. She not only criticizes Vera's dress for dinner but also goes on a tirade about the young generation and their lack of modesty. In Act II, she begins to read aloud from the Bible describing how the wicked shall go to Hell. Emily is the antithesis of Vera who is warm, welcoming and open. Emily should look cold, rigid, unappealing and as if she is lacking warmth and humanity.

Sir Lawrence Wargrave is an older man, and a judge. He is described as looking like a tortoise by another guest, darting his head in and out. He is also said to have sent more innocent people to death than anyone else in England. Wargrave is a well educated and respected man in society and takes charge immediately after he, along with all the guests and Mr. and Mrs. Rogers have been accused of murder. It is not until the last two pages of the play that the audience finds out Wargrave is the maniacal host killing off his guests. It will be interesting to find a balance between the image of an elderly magistrate and the crazed and warped judge that has been a part of him all along.

Dr. Armstrong is a middle aged man, formerly a surgeon and now a nerve specialist. He is very focused on his work, having visited a patient on the way to the island and having been invited by Mr. Owen to observe Mrs. Owen's nerves. He talks about not hurrying himself and criticizes Anthony for his dangerous driving, having been nearly run off the road by him on his way to the island. After the accusations are made,

Armstrong is the most adamant in denying his crime saying at first that it's a joke, then denying it all and saying he can't even remember the name of the victim. Armstrong also talks about how tired and overworked he is. This exhaustion can be reflected in his appearance. Armstrong's crime was that he killed a patient in surgery while intoxicated. He became a successful nerve specialist after the incident and now buries himself in his work to keep his mind off the guilt. He has quit drinking since the incident.

*And Then There Were None* uses mystery and suspense to cause its characters to break down, drop their facades, show who they really are as they doubt not only those around them but also themselves. Some characters have more time to show these changes and each of them has different extremes. These changes may be made by a strong contrast from the initial impression given by the characters upon their arrival on Soldier Island and their appearances at dinner to those the morning after the first death and even more so on the third day after many deaths and growing suspicions and waning trust for those that are left and waiting.

This will be the designer's sixth production as a costume designer at Minnesota State, Mankato and the third production on the Ted Paul stage. This being said, Sahli may not have as many opportunities for new experiences as earlier in projects but rather an opportunity to use lessons learned from those earlier experiences. This project will give the designer a second chance to work with Hamilton as a director which will ideally show how much she has grown and learned since her first project at Minnesota State, Mankato. Working and collaborating with the production team to create the world of the characters as well as the director's vision always brings new and different obstacles and

opportunities for growth as an artist. This project will be an ideal situation to see how well Sahli has learned to communicate with the costume shop manager and those working in the costume shop, to test the clarity of communication and the foresight to solve problems before they arise and to answer questions clearly and concisely.

By having a strong understanding of the characters and their relationships and a clear vision based on research and the director's concept, the designer should have a positive experience and be prepared to design costumes for this production while maintaining deadlines and staying within the designated budget.

## CHAPTER II

### HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

This chapter will look at the life of Agatha Christie, as well as the history, dates and details regarding And Then There Were None as a book, play, film and other forms of entertainment. In The Complete Christie: An Agatha Christie Encyclopedia published in 2000, Matthew Bunson states that Dame Agatha Christie has sold over “one-half billion copies [of her books] in over 100 languages...eclipsing even the Bard, William Shakespeare,” (Bunson, VII). Christie’s career as a writer spanned from 1920 with the publication of The Mysterious Affair at Styles, to her death in 1976. Her legacy includes sixty-six crime novels, more than one hundred short stories, twenty plays, three collaborative detective novels, and six romantic novels written under the pseudonym of Mary Wetmacott (Wagstaff, 8).

On September 15, 1890, Agatha Mary Clarissa Miller was born in Torquay, Devon, England (Bloom, 21). She was the youngest of three children and saw very little of her brother and sister who were away at school much of the time (Wagstaff, 8). Growing up like an only child, Christie’s main source of interaction was an elderly nanny. Her lack of social interaction led to a very active imagination. She recalls clearly in her autobiography memories of a pretend family of kittens and in vivid detail a set of imaginary school girls she had created as playmates.

Even though Christie's older siblings attended school, her mother decided that she did not want the same experience for her youngest daughter. She believed that it was better for the eyes and brain to avoid learning to read until the age of eight. Christie's nanny was horrified to report to her mother, "I'm afraid, ma'am, Miss Agatha can *read*," when she was not yet five years old. Christie had taught herself to read by looking at words while stories were read to her and asking about the letters in signs above shops. From then on Christie demanded books for her birthdays and Christmas (Christie, An Autobiography, 13). Throughout her autobiography, Christie recounts with great fondness the authors and books she enjoyed while growing up, giving a clear impression that literature and reading had always been an important part of her life. Having no formal education until the age of sixteen, she learned mathematics from her father until his death, received piano and voice lessons from various tutors, learned French from her servant and read anything that she was interested in.

On Christmas Eve, 1914, she married Captain Archibald Christie. Two days later he was sent to fight in World War I. While her husband was away, she began volunteering at a local hospital as a nurse and was eventually transferred to work in the hospital pharmacy and dispensary. During her free time she began writing her first mystery book, The Mysterious Affair at Styles, which was published in 1920. By 1926, she had published four books but she found herself in an unhappy marriage with a very young daughter.

Archibald admitted being in love with another woman, Nancy Neele and after a failed attempt to keep their marriage together for the sake of their daughter he said he was

leaving. Agatha packed a bag and drove away from their home. The next morning her car was found with the hood up and lights on. Her suitcase, a fur coat and driver's license were found inside the vehicle. A missing person report was filed and a reward of one hundred pounds was offered for her discovery. She was found at the Hydro Hotel where she registered under the name Teresa Neele. Archibald met with her privately before telling the press that she had, "...suffered the most complete loss of memory and does not know who she is," (Bunson, 2). Shortly after the strange eleven day disappearance which remains unexplained to this day, she and her husband divorced.

In 1928, while visiting an archaeological dig in the Middle East, Christie met Max Mallowan who was working as an archaeological assistant. They were married September 11, 1930 and were together until her death on January 12, 1976. She retained the name Agatha Christie for the purpose of her books but in private life she referred to herself as Mrs. Mallowan. She spent much of her time alongside Mallowan while he worked as she continued to write. Come Tell Me How You Live, a nonfiction account of her life on an archaeological dig was published under the name Agatha Christie Mallowan (Bunson, 1-4).

Christie's experience during World War I in the pharmacy and dispensary helped her to become very familiar with drugs and poisons. In more than half of her sixty-six novels, she uses poisons, drugs or other chemicals as means to the victim's demise. She used poisons, by either murder or suicide, more than any other detective or criminal fiction writer. She not only used poison often but also very well. Her catalogue of poisons surpasses the traditional chemicals known by most mystery writers (Gerald, 5-6).

In And Then There Were None there are three individuals who meet their deaths through poisons. Anthony Marston asphyxiates on cyanide salts, which are soluble in water and alcohol and are highly toxic (Gerald, 10); Mrs. Rogers is given a lethal dose of chloral hydrate which appears like an overdose of a sleeping aid (Gerald, 19); Emily Brent is injected with a concentrated solution of cyanide (Gerald, 27).

Christie's experience with and knowledge of medications is also used in the characters' pasts. In the Rogers' crime, their victim died because they did not give her the medical attention she needed. Her anti-angina medication was withheld (Gerald, 82). Dr. Armstrong explains, "...In a certain form of cardiac trouble, amyl nitrite is used. When an attack comes on an ampoule of amyl nitrite is broken and it is inhaled. If amyl nitrite were withheld – well, the consequences might easily be fatal," (Christie, And Then There Were None, 113-14).

Christie uses eight different drugs in And Then There Were None, some of which aid in committing murders. Amyl nitrite which is used for Angina, aspirin for headaches, bicarbonate of soda for digestive disorders, bromide for sleep, chloral hydrate for pain, ether as an anesthetic, sulfonyl for sleep and trional used as a sedative (Gerald, 222). Christie used poisons and medications more often than firearms or violence to murder her characters. In a 1970 interview Christie explained, "I don't like messy deaths... I don't like violence," (Gerald, 4).

Agatha Christie was not only inspired by her medical experience but also by children's literature. "The attraction is obvious – the juxtaposition of the childlike and the chilling, the twisting of the mundane into the macabre," (Curran, 105-106). Christie



exploited children's nursery rhymes "more comprehensively" than other crime writers. She used nursery rhymes as inspiration for titles such as One, Two Buckle My Shoe, Hickory Dickory Death, and *Three Blind Mice* (re-titled *The Mousetrap*). The overall scheme in And Then There Were None was based on a rhyme. Curran claims, "The dramatic impact of an innocent nursery rhyme transforming into a killer's calling card is irresistible to an imaginative crime writer such as Agatha Christie."

John Curran was able to dissect some of Christie's planning and thought process for writing And Then There Were None in his book Agatha Christie's Secret Notebooks. In her autobiography Christie mentions what a difficult but rewarding process it was to create the story while basing it around a very specific nursery rhyme. While none of the notes from her initial planning survive, there is a notebook that gives some insight into Christie's process for creating the story. Her notebook shows that she had started with eight characters, which grew to twelve including husband-and-wife combinations. In her notes, Christie wrote about a nameless "watcher" who witnessed some of the deaths. She did not continue with that idea and some of the characters on her earlier lists were cut. However, many of the characters, situations, names and relationships are in the final product.

And Then There Were None was originally published by William Collins Sons and Co., Ltd., London, 1939, under the title Ten Little Niggers. The title was altered when it was first published in the United States in 1940 by Dodd, Mead and Co., New York (Bunson, 18). Christie describes the process of writing And Then There Were None:

...It was so difficult to [write] that the idea fascinated me. Ten people had to die without it becoming ridiculous or the murderer being obvious...It was clear, straightforward, baffling, and yet had a perfectly reasonable explanation; in fact it had to have an epilogue in order to explain it. It was well received and reviewed, but the person who was really pleased with it was myself, for I knew better than any critic how difficult it had been.

(Christie, An Autobiography, 457)

Christie's American publishers, Dodd and Mead, found the original title, Ten Little Niggers, unacceptable even though she had taken it from the rhyme by Frank J. Green, 1869 (Bunson, 19). Green had altered the lyrics originally written by Septimus Winner, a songwriter, who had written "Ten Little Injuns" in 1868. Green changed the lyrics so the song could be used for minstrel shows (Jennings). It was the publisher who chose the new title And Then There Were None; however other titles such as Ten Little Indians and The Nursery Rhyme Murders have also been used in its place (Bunson, 19). The title was seen in England without any bias or racism and merely as a reflection of the nursery rhyme on which it was based (Hack, 158). The changes made to the title caused adaptations of the location in the text. Hence, Nigger Island became Indian Island or Soldier Island.

Having accomplished her goal of successfully writing the book, Christie thought, "It would be exciting to see if I could make it into a play," (Christie, An Autobiography, 457). She felt that the novel was suited for adaptation to the stage, which resulted in the play *Ten Little Indians*. She thought that it would be impossible to leave the story as it

was in a play because there would be no one left to tell the tale. She felt that making two of the characters innocent, left to survive at the end, would be a suitable modification. Christie based the altered ending on the second version of the last stanza of the rhyme: “One little Indian boy left all alone; he got married and then there were none” as opposed to “...he went and hanged himself and then there were none,” (Bunson, 18-19). Because the nursery rhyme had versions with both endings, Christie felt that her change would not be contrary to the “spirit of the original nursery rhyme,” (Christie, An Autobiography, 457).

Christie had success with the book but had difficulties getting a producer for the play. She almost saw the project produced by Charles Cochran who believed in the play but he was unable to convince his backers who claimed it was “unproduceable and unplayable, people would only laugh at it, there would be no tension,” (Christie, An Autobiography, 457). In 1943, the play was produced by Irene Henschell and started with a brief run at the Wimbledon Theatre in London under the book’s original title. It moved to the St James Theatre in the West End in November. The play was quite successful but due to the Blitz it was moved to Cambridge and played for several months there, running for more than 250 performances. The play, now titled *Ten Little Indians*, had a strong run in New York starting in the summer of 1944, opening at the Broadhurst Theatre (Bunson, 435-436). Christie says in her autobiography that it was this story that started her on the path towards playwriting. “It was then I decided that in future no one was going to adapt my books except myself,” (Christie, An Autobiography, 458). In 1966, the play was revived in England with its original title. There was strong objection,

however, and the producers quickly changed to the title of *Ten Little Indians* (Wagstaff, 167). “Agatha Christie is still the only crime novelist to have had an equally successful career as a playwright,” (Curran, 286).

According to Christie’s second husband, Max Mallowan, “Agatha herself has always been allergic to the adaptation of her books by the cinemas...” (Bunson, 375). In spite of her opposition, more than thirty of Christie’s stories have been adapted to film and many others for television. The films based on *And Then There Were None* also embraced the happier and more romantic ending seen in the play and not in the novel (Bunson, 19). The first version was made by Twentieth Century Fox in 1945 and was directed by Rene Clair (Wagstaff, 167). Clair may have been a surprising choice for the film because he was regarded as one of the leading talents in European film-making for light comedies (Keating, 163-4). Notable cast members were Barry Fitzgerald, Louis Hayward, Walter Huston and Judith Anderson (Penzler, 27). This film was considered “Stylish, fast-paced, and suspenseful, even for those who have seen the film before or who are familiar with the original novel,” (Bunson, 379).

There are three more well known versions of the film made in 1965, 1975, and 1989, all titled “Ten Little Indians” (IMDb.com). The less popular ‘65 version made by Seven Arts Films, directed by George Pollock, changed the story’s location to the Austrian Alps (Wagstaff, 167). The third attempt, made in ’75 by Avco Embassy, directed by Peter Collinson, was even less popular than the second and the location was changed again, this time to the Shah Abah Hotel in Isfahan, Iran (Wagstaff, 167). The ‘75 film included Orson Welles as the recorded voice of U. N. Owen (IMDb.com). The

1989 version, directed by Alan Birkinshaw, and released by Breton Films stars Frank Stallone as Phillip Lombard. The setting is changed again, this time the story takes place on a safari in the African savannah. Actor Herbert Lom performed in both the 1974 and 1989 films (IMDb). “It would scarcely be possible for a worse film version to be made of this popular and enjoyable novel...every possible cliché is thrown into the plot,” (Bunson, 392-393).

While the '45, '65, '75, and '89 films are the most well known, there are even more versions based on Christie's popular book and play. There are multiple made for television movies and different films made all over the world that can be found under any of the various titles of “Ten Little Niggers,” “Ten Little Indians,” or “And Then There Were None.” Vincent Canby wrote in the *New York Times* regarding a German film production titled “Ein Unbekannter rechnet ab” that it was the kind of film that “damages the reputation of everyone connected with it...” (Hack, 234).

The original '45 film is most popular with fans and received the Best Film award in the Locarno International Film Festival in 1946 (IMDb). The '45 version also stayed most true to the setting and characters created by Christie. The other versions not only changed the location but also many of the characters' names, relationships and even how the murders were committed (Keating, 164-9). The '74 film made changes to accommodate a “big-name international cast” (Wagstaff, 167).

Not only has this story been a book, a play and a source for countless films and television variations but the characters and story line from And Then There Were None have inspired the creation of a video game by the same name. The player's role is Patrick

Narracott, a new character. He is the brother of Fred Narracott and in the game Patrick is the driver who brings the guests to the island by boat. Narracott gets stranded on the island when his boat is scuttled and takes part in the murder investigation. The game was released for PC October, 2005 and for the Wii in February, 2008. The game comes with a T (Teen) rating that claims it is suitable for ages 13 and older (Davis).

The review given at Gamestop.com says that the adventure game has a simple and moody soundtrack and good voice acting. It includes the original Agatha Christie ending and has a consistently dark and ominous tone. Unfortunately, the game takes many liberties with the story, the graphics look dated and the actual gameplay has little to do with the story line.

The Crown Crime Companion: The Top 100 Mystery Novels of All time, published in 1995, is a compilation selected by the Mystery Writers of America. Agatha Christie was chosen as the number one favorite female writer. And Then There Were None was voted the number one book in the Cozy/Traditional mystery genre. Christie also received the Grand Master Award in 1955, which is the highest award given by the Mystery Writers of America. It is presented to individuals who "...by a lifetime of achievement have proved themselves preeminent in the craft of the mystery and dedicated to the advancement of the genre," (Penzler, 145).

And Then There Were None has sold over one hundred million copies over the years and ranks as the top-selling mystery novel in the world. It has been called a masterpiece, as well as the "most baffling mystery" Christie has ever written (Hack, 159).

I don't say it is the play or book of mine I like best, or even that I think it is my best, but I do think in some ways that it is a better piece of *craftsmanship* than anything else I have written. (Christie, An Autobiography, 458)

## CHAPTER III

## JOURNAL

10/18/2012

The concept meeting was held this morning. Heather Hamilton, the director, described her vision for the production as a fun mystery that she hoped would also be legitimately scary at times. She said that she expected the production would get a few laughs but making a comedy out of the play was not her goal. She stressed the importance of creating a mysterious atmosphere and felt that subtle underscoring by the sound designer throughout the entirety of the play would be a key component to accomplishing this. The production will be set in the 1940s and Hamilton wants it to be opulent, stuffy and feel very “British”.

The director mentioned two characters: Vera Claythorne and Philip Lombard. She described Vera as pretty and Philip as being similar to Humphrey Bogart. Hamilton also said that the production should feel historically accurate and although the play is set in England there will be no dialects used in the production. Hamilton described the house, which she envisions as Victorian, as busy with its dressings and practicals.

Discussion of the novel came up at this meeting. Hamilton said that the novel is darker and more twisted than the play. It offers an ambivalent morality and is more sophisticated and successful at being scary. She said that the play has more of a parlor room drama element of fright to it. After discussing the novel and learning how the



director felt it compared with the script, I asked if she would like us to use the novel and its characters as a form of inspiration and research for our work and she approved. There will be some instances that a line will have to be drawn between the novel and the play, specifically regarding the characters of Vera and Philip whom the author and playwright made innocent and left as survivors in the play.

I brought up the issue of stage blood which may be needed for the production. There are potentially two types of stage blood in this show and I wanted to know right away if the director wanted a distinction made between them. There is a fake murder of the judge in which he is assumed shot through the head which would be fake blood within the show. There are two real gunshots fired at the end of the production which causes the actual death of the judge and an injury to Philip which would be seen as real blood within the production. Since the element of gore is not a main focus within the play, the director did not feel strongly that any distinction needed to be made. With the distance of the audience from the actors as well as the style of this production, I did not think that distinguishing between the two potentially different types of blood would be very important; however, I thought it would be wise to check early on in the production process in case the director felt otherwise.

Hamilton was very passionate about looking to cast this production diversely as well as being very open minded about body types. This may affect who I will be able to costume from stock but I am not worried about my budget for this show in that respect. Many of the characters in the play die after minimal costume changes which lessens the

quantity of costumes needed. Also, eight of the eleven characters are men and there seems to be quite a lot of options in stock for men in many sizes.

The technical director, Grubb, mentioned a previous production that created a rain effect on the large glass doors often used in the play. The rest of the production team seemed very excited by this idea, including the director. I cannot speak for the scenic designer but I think that the element of water would have a strong effect on creating the realistic atmosphere that Hamilton seems to want. Thinking about that level of realism makes me recall the first day of classes this semester as Hamilton described the play to the theatre and dance majors. She said she was looking for realism. At the time I thought that was a somewhat broad statement, however I have begun to understand the importance of it. The novel is able to create a mood of mystery, suspense and even fear at times which is more difficult to achieve in the play. If the characters do not read as realistic and genuine, the playwright's intent is easily lost.

I think it will be very important for the costume design to capture a historical feel of the 1940s while showing each character's social class and personality without looking too predictable or like a caricature. This balance will help support a level of realism needed to create the world for this play.

10/22/2012

Auditions were held tonight. I watched the monologue auditions as well as the callbacks and discussed casting options with the director before the cast list was posted. I attend auditions because I like to see the potential new faces and bodies that I might be

designing for. I did not go to auditions for my first costume design at Minnesota State, Mankato and I realized very quickly once it had been cast that I had no clue who most of the people were that I was designing for, which led to some design changes. It was nice to also see some of the actors read together as well because it allowed me to see them in relation to one another regarding height, weight and build.

I realized that this will be the first production since I've started in the masters program that I will have a cast before I have started designing the costumes for a show. Before I started my formal education and training in costume design I always had a cast first. Initially it was a difficult transition for me to design clothes for characters without knowing who was going to be wearing the costumes. It's funny to think that now I find it strange to have a cast before my designs are done. I don't think it is a bad situation at all. In fact there are definitely some advantages because I know the body types that I'll be costuming. The difference is I have the experience now to design for the character first and know how to alter my design for the actor if necessary rather than designing for the actor. I realize how much I have learned and grown from when I started three years ago.

11/01/2012

Today was our second production meeting. I've spent my weeks between meetings working on research and looking for images to present today. Some of the books I have been using are Forties Fashion by Jonathan Walford and Fashionable Clothing from the Sears Catalogs by Tina Skinner.

Olson, the scene designer, also presented ideas and research for the set design today. Some of her thoughts were: marble columns, using black and white, not using a lot of wood, having a minimalist set, having a lot of windows and making design choices based on the very beginnings of the Art Deco style. The idea of so many windows brought a warning from Grubb regarding the budget. Hamilton loved the idea of actually using water on the windows to simulate rain and make the bad weather on the island more realistic but the idea of having more than the two windowed doors called for in the script could be costly. Hamilton said that if the rain effect was going to be too expensive then it wasn't absolutely necessary. Unfortunately, this seemed to stop the discussion. I was really disappointed that the rain was cut so suddenly and without any actual price quotes based on research. I don't believe it was Grubb's intention to extinguish the idea, I think he was just trying to be up front about the potential costs that this effect could create. Olson hadn't said much about the effect, so I wasn't sure if she was interested in it or not. I absolutely love the idea of rain on the windows and think it could really help bring a level of realism to the production. I did not think that it was necessarily my place to argue for rain when it was not part of my design or my budget and I did not want to force it onto the scenic designer if she did not like it so I did not fight for the idea.

11/08/2012

For today's production meeting I brought color swatches for each character. I have never brought in color ideas this early in the process, especially when I haven't presented any sketches but Hamilton requested colors for this week's meeting. When I

sat down with my colored pencils earlier it felt a little strange at first to try and see the characters, which had not yet been designed, in specific colors but after half an hour of trying different colors together I felt good about what I had on paper.

Hamilton seemed content with my choices and only brought up concern regarding a brighter tone of teal in the color scheme for the character of Blore, which we agreed would work in moderation. With color schemes chosen and presented I will start working on sketches to bring to next week's meeting.

The topic of rain was once again brought up. This time we talked about using a projection to create the effect but it was soon ruled out. The lighting designer, Smith, who had been absent from the last meeting, brought back the idea of using actual water. He wondered why we were trying to create the look of water when we could use the real thing. This was such an obvious question that it eventually led to the realization that everyone really wanted the same thing, real water on windows.

Now with water again in the mix, I was asked if there would be any concern with costumes getting wet and Smith mentioned that some fabrics do not actually appear wet when they are. I don't believe there will be any problems regarding costumes getting wet for the production but I will need to look through the script again and make note of the scenes that actors might come in contact with the rainy weather. Thinking about it now, I feel like there may only be one or two instances but the director may create more opportunities than the script actually calls for so I will need to make sure we communicate clearly regarding that issue.

11/15/2012

I brought some preliminary sketches to the production meeting today. Hamilton seemed happy with them but was concerned that Emily Brent might look too similar to a maid. I explained that Mrs. Rogers, who functions mostly as a cook, would be wearing a full apron and that Emily's costume, which I expect will be constructed rather than pulled from stock, can be made of a nicer quality fabric than that of Mrs. Rogers. I also think that putting Emily in a dark blue or deep purple instead of black, like I had been thinking, will help to distinguish her from Mrs. Rogers who will be in black and white.

I discussed the fact that all of the men will be in black and white once they have "dressed for dinner". I explained that there are some options for variation between the men in tuxedos. They can be single or double-breasted and with either a shawl collar or a peaked lapel. After consulting my advisor, David McCarl, I discovered that a white jacket would also be a plausible option for some of the younger male characters. I mentioned this as an option for Anthony Marston and noticed that Hamilton was hesitant. I explained that I thought it would help to separate him in that scene and that as a young and wealthy character it would be appropriate for him to stand out. I think it would also be visually very interesting, as he's the first victim, to see all of the other characters huddled around him. I told Hamilton that I'd like to try it and if she thought that the difference in color was too strong, we could easily exchange it for a black jacket during dress rehearsals.

We won't be having another meeting for two weeks due to the Thanksgiving break which gives me time to finish sketching the rest of the show for our meeting on the

29<sup>th</sup>. My final sketches are scheduled to be due two weeks after that which will give me time to add color and make any adjustments that Hamilton would like.

11/29/2012

At the production meeting today I brought in a lot of new and re-worked sketches which were received fairly well by the production team. I discussed having each male character in a particular suit look since most of them are wearing suits for the majority of the show and I want to help differentiate them from one another for the audience. For example, Judge Wargrave will wear double-breasted, pinstriped suits, while Dr. Armstrong will wear three-piece suits and Blore will wear a sweater vest with a two-piece suit. The characters will not wear the same singular suit throughout the show but they will stay with their designated style. I think this will help the audience to separate the characters and hopefully follow the play more easily. It may be an unnecessary concern but I know the first time I read the script I had a very difficult time remembering who was who and what they did because they're practically all introduced at the same time.

I brought in a new set of sketches for the character of Emily Brent. She is in a suit stylized more from the 1930s rather than the 1940s. Because I am expecting all of her costumes to be built, I designed her three costumes to be somewhat layered. I was hoping that by designing her costumes this way, I wouldn't be at risk of spending too much of my budget on one character. Hamilton seemed to think that it was an improvement from the initial design, however, I'm honestly not completely content with

it. This character has been really difficult for me. Upon my initial reading I envisioned this character with a very specific body type and that is not the body type of the actress in the role. I think the actress is great for the part, it has just been really difficult for me to figure out how to put onto paper what I am trying to accomplish with this design. I think the sketches that I showed today were an improvement, but I feel that they still need to be adjusted.

12/06/2012

Today was our final production meeting until next semester. I brought in new ideas for Emily Brent. After talking with McCarl it seemed very reasonable to design three completely different costumes for the character. I am still battling some instincts that conflict with designing, such as limiting designs for fear of the potential costs. I did not bring in actual sketches, but research to present to the team instead. We looked at images from the 1920s, an idea that I had mentioned at an earlier production meeting, and Hamilton seemed much happier with the choice. I think this will be a better option for this character and even though it has been a longer process of sketching and getting feedback and re-sketching a few more times, it has been a really good experience and I'm excited to see how this character turns out. I also presented a different approach to color choices for her. I had originally presented her in blacks and grays but I saw a pair of olive green colored gloves that had been included in a recent donation to the costume shop and immediately thought of Emily Brent. I brought the gloves to the meeting and explained that I liked the idea of putting her in colors that may not be very pleasing to the



eye, colors that make a person want to pull away, and Hamilton seemed right on board. Perhaps because I couldn't really visualize the character earlier, seeing her in black was the simplest solution but now that I have a more defined path, other aspects of her are falling into place.

01/07/2013

I started pulling costumes from stock today. Even though I've spent the majority of my time in the same particular room of stock, I realized that I have spent very little time looking through the collection of men's suits. Honestly, it's a pretty exhausting collection to look through. It is physically difficult to look through the items. The size of the collection combined with color, style and size options can be mentally tiring as well, plus I'm about two inches too short to easily pull a hanger off the highest rack. I do feel good about what I was able to accomplish but am not eagerly looking forward to another round with those suits.

01/08/2013

I re-read the script again tonight because I wanted to make note of all of the characters who went outside when it was raining. I ended up with a page of notes and realized it wasn't the script that I had read most recently, but the novel, so looking over the script again brought new things to my attention. There weren't any major new concerns, just a few questions and thoughts to bring up at the next production meeting and of course the instances of rainy weather and the characters that get wet. The only

two people that get wet, according to the script, are Philip and Rogers. I did realize that Philip will need an additional costume because he is not only getting actually wet in our production but the dialogue actually calls for it as well.

01/14/2013

I presented my sketches to the cast tonight which was a new experience for me. I wasn't completely sure how much detail I was supposed to go into when showing and describing the sketches because I have never seen a designer present anything to a cast before. I think everything went well and I became more comfortable and less nervous as I continued to talk. Hamilton was very positive and supportive throughout and the actors responded well and were very polite and attentive. There weren't many questions tonight but I'm sure more will arise as they begin to rehearse.

I also discussed the importance of rehearsal clothing, specifically dresses or skirts for the women along with high-heeled shoes, purses, gloves and hats. For the men I suggested blazers, hard soled shoes and hats. Some characters also use items such as a handkerchief, cane and knitting bag. I made it clear that it was not the costume shop's job to supply the majority of these items and Hamilton agreed that the actors should be rehearsing with items they provide themselves by next week.

I realized how important it will be for me to collect and provide research for the men in the show because many of them are unfamiliar with the hair styles of the period. I did reassure them that I would provide the necessary research and that they needn't worry about it now but instead simply continue to grow their hair. I haven't received any

complaints yet about hair length but based on prior experiences I wouldn't be surprised if I get requests to get a "trim" in the near future.

01/16/2013

I was a little surprised to find that I wouldn't be able to spend most of my shop hours pulling costumes for the show this week or having fittings. I wouldn't be as concerned if I was going to be in town next week but I'll be attending a conference and won't be able to work on the show during that time. I had hoped to get a good round of fittings done so that there would be alterations and labeling for the costume shop to work on next week but I'm not sure that I'll be able to provide that now. Luckily, I was able to get some options pulled last week during break, so worst case scenario I will have my first fittings on Monday, January 28. The goal is also to have all of the mock-ups made by then as well so I'll know how much fabric I need and be able to purchase that soon after I return.

01/17/2013

Today was our first production meeting since the winter break. I took the opportunity to go over any questions, concerns and new thoughts I had discovered during my most recent reading of the script from January 8. Most of the notes I had taken were reminders for myself, such as needing to design old age make up for the actor playing General Mackenzie and the exact date the play is set to occur, August 8. A few questions I brought up today were if Mackenzie really needed a shooting stick or if a cane would

work, if handkerchiefs needed to be provided to all of the men or only those scripted to use them, if the director would like Emily Brent to be in her hat and coat at the opening of Act II (as suggested by the notes in the script), and that the only scripted occurrence of wet characters from the storm are Rogers and Philip in Act II, Scene 2. Once I explained how a shooting stick differed from a cane, it was decided that we would not need one. Hamilton would like handkerchiefs provided to all of the men, she did not think it necessary for Emily Brent to have her hat and coat on and she reminded the stage manager to let me know if there would be any additional characters getting wet at other times throughout the play due to any blocking that required them to go onto the balcony during scenes with rain.

I also brought up the issue of blood, because I was uncertain about how much blood Hamilton was envisioning for both the Judge's head shot wound and Philip's gunshot wound. This concern brought to light some issues regarding the stage combat that involves the gunshot, specifically that the actual location of the wound had not been decided, however the entire fight had been blocked. After some discussion, the left shoulder was chosen as the target. Hamilton suggested that the actor take advantage of a long period of time spent behind a piece of furniture on stage to change from one shirt to a duplicate shirt with a blood stain on it so we could avoid having to rig a blood effect for every performance.

At this point, I have a few concerns. Is the furniture going to adequately block sight lines? Will the actor have enough time to make the costume change? Will he be successful at making the change without looking too disheveled? How much blood does

the director want on the shirt? If I use paint to create a permanent blood stain on the shirt will it look like fresh blood? How will I get the actor to remove his sport coat before the gunshot is fired?

The biggest surprise of today's meeting was finding out that the ending of the play was changed. Not only have the lines been changed but also the state of the weather. Instead of having the stormy weather break, Hamilton requested that Smith keep the lighting dark. I personally feel that these slight changes are not only inconsistent with the playwright's choice, who also happens to be the writer of the original piece of literature on which the play is based, but it also may be seen as disrespectful by Christie fans, who I assume will be a portion of our audience. It would also seem that by keeping the weather stormy, the boat which comes to the island at the end of the play for the two survivors would not be able to approach the island, as is mentioned throughout the play.

01/29/2013

I had my first fittings for the show today and I feel like they went really well. There's something about seeing the actors in costumes that takes a project to the next level in the process. Getting to see the research, analysis, sketching and time spent going through stock come together before my eyes on a real person always breathes new life into a project. Considering that I've been thinking about, reading and researching this material for nearly a year, it is definitely nice to have some new energy and excitement.

01/31/2013

At today's meeting I had to ask management to explain to the cast how important it is that they show up to their fittings. An actress missed her fitting yesterday and did not call in advance or after to reschedule. Because the costume shop is building all of her costumes I am nervous that her absence may have pushed things back. I have had longer build schedules for the other larger shows I have costumed the last two years because they have been musicals and I realized that today when I looked at the calendar and saw that first dress rehearsal was on February 17. It sounds so close and if actors continue to miss fittings or come late, it could cause problems.

I brought in some research images for a wig and robe for the Judge because a rehearsal report noted that Hamilton would like Wargrave to wear them during his final monologue. The images were approved but I was warned that the items might be cut if the character looked too comical and was told not to spend any money on the items.

Yesterday during a fitting my advisor, McCarl, and I were discussing some ways to handle the blood stain on the left shoulder of Philip. I presented the option of having a removable shirt pocket that covered a blood stain on the shirt so that the actor would not have to change shirts. Hamilton said she wanted a lot of blood, so that option would not work. I feel that a heavy amount of blood would not be stylistically appropriate for a Christie play. I also think that a lot of blood might make Philip's wound appear fatal. When I picture Philip with a lot of blood, stormy weather and an ending that doesn't finish with the easy going line about getting married, the play seems to have a very

different finish than what was written by Christie. The novel has a much darker ending, but the play is not the novel.

02/03/2013

The costume shop manager, Catherine Schmeal-Swope, and I went shopping for fabric and two men's suits today. It was a really successful trip. I was able to find what I was looking for and purchased the fabric and suits at a very reasonable price.

02/07/2013

Today was the final production meeting. I had a few questions at the meeting concerning specifics on publicity photos, lobby photos and double checking if any of the actors needed to purchase makeup kits. We also set call times for the technical rehearsals next week.

02/10/2013

I watched rehearsal tonight and compiled a list of questions, items that I still need and research that needs to be done. There were a couple of accessories that are needed for blocking purposes such as a clutch to hold a letter and glasses that an actor uses for his character. I need to decide hairstyles for the actors and get research images to them so that they can get their hair cut if necessary.

02/17/2013

Tonight was the first dress rehearsal and I think it went really well. Some changes need to be made but for the most part those changes should be relatively simple. My biggest concerns are the judge's wig that Hamilton wants Judge Wargrave to wear during his final scene and that I need to change the way in which the blood effect occurs because the plexiglass used for the windows shows the actor's reflection as he changes from the shirt he is wearing into a duplicate that has a blood stain. Unfortunately the plexiglass hadn't been installed in that area until today, otherwise we would have known about that problem before. However, altering the way in which the blood effect is accomplished shouldn't be much of a problem because we already had another idea so I just have to put in the time and labor to make the change.

I have spent some time searching online for judge wigs that I can order quickly and I think my best option will be ordering from a company in Minneapolis. Hopefully the close proximity will mean that I can get the wig in before Thursday's opening performance. I would really be disappointed if I had to give an actor a new costume piece that late in the process, but I was told earlier that we would not be ordering a wig so I did not look into that option.

02/18/2013

After tonight's rehearsal I had more notes for actors about hair and makeup than I did about costume concerns or changes, which makes sense because it was their first opportunity to work with those elements. With the show being so dimly lit much of the



time it is difficult to see the aging that some of the actors are doing for their hair and faces. Hamilton and I agreed that many of the men in the show were using too much gel in their hair to style it, which caused a very wet look.

I like the changes that were made from the first dress rehearsal. Emily Brent and Vera both have hats for their initial entrance and Mackenzie's Act II costume was completely changed and looks much better. It's always helpful to see all of the characters together on stage with the scenery and lighting to find out what is and is not working and make any necessary adjustments. There seemed to be a slight hiccup tonight during the costume change from the initial Act I costumes into the dinner dress for that same scene. Only one actor seemed to have a problem with that change during first dress, however, tonight a different actor wasn't able to get his shoes tied before entering the scene and a second actor came in late without looking completely put together. The only change was that I have added vests for some of the actors and I didn't realize that they would cause such a problem. I'll discuss some quick change solutions with the actors and the wardrobe crew tomorrow night before the rehearsal to fix any problems.

Unfortunately, one of the actresses injured her ankle backstage during intermission tonight. She damaged her stockings and shoes in the process but those items can be easily replaced. She spoke her lines from the house of the theatre while elevating and icing her foot for the rest of the rehearsal. Luckily, the other actors carried on very well without her physically being on stage with them and it was not as noticeable or distracting as I thought it might have been. I spoke with the actress after rehearsal and recommended that she wear her own flat shoes for tomorrow's rehearsal so that her ankle

could have more time to heal and avoid any additional stress for at least one night. It didn't appear that she would need to wrap it for the show, but if that is the case I'll just have to make it work.

02/19/2013

Tonight I worked with the wardrobe crew before the show on the hair of the actress playing Emily Brent. I don't have a lot of experience working with hair but I have had the opportunity to style wigs for some of the other shows I've designed while at Minnesota State, Mankato and have become more confident. I have decided that when it comes to styling I much prefer wigs. The actress seemed very anxious while I was working with her hair and worried about it being damaged from back combing. When I style a wig, I can take my time and hold the wig head at the height and angle I prefer. I did not want to use a wig for the show because the actress had long enough hair to work with; however, I was unaware that she would be so uncomfortable with the idea of backcombing. In the future I feel that I can continue to style wigs for productions but if I need actual hair styled I would prefer to have someone else do the styling and I'll provide the research and design. The wardrobe crew will assist the actors with any hair styling needs throughout the rest of the process.

I feel that the wardrobe crew is doing well. I demonstrated how to properly hang dress pants yesterday, however, I forgot to explain which hangers were used for which garments so we talked about that tonight. It's a reminder of how specific and detailed I

need to be when leaving others in charge of something that I am so familiar with while they are not.

Hamilton requested a gun holster for Philip. I explained that I felt a gun holster would affect the way the audience sees Lombard. That he would look more like a police officer rather than an “adventurer” who happens to be prepared for a rough situation. Hamilton supported my opinion and I was able to cut the use of a gun holster for the character. Tonight was the third dress rehearsal and I feel confident in the costume design for the show. I have a few notes to work on for tomorrow but no major concerns and I think the actors and the wardrobe crew have successfully worked out any issues with quick changes, since there were no problems tonight.

02/20/2013

Unfortunately, the wig I ordered did not get in today so the actor using it will have it for opening night without a prior rehearsal. Hamilton was not concerned and the actor was not worried about it either but I’d like to try the wig on him tomorrow before the show in case a chin strap needs to be added.

02/25/2013

The show’s first weekend of performances has just finished. While I was in the costume shop today I decided to look closely at the costumes to make sure they were being hung up properly and to see how they were being maintained. I was disappointed to find that there were multiple garments that were damaged and needed repairs but they

were not written on the repair sheets that were posted in the dressing rooms. The dress worn by Mrs. Rogers had a six inch tear under the sleeve. The navy dress worn by Vera Claythorne during the final two acts was badly damaged. The hem of the dress was torn, the bow on the left hip had come unattached and the entire backside of the skirt was smeared with white. The evening dress also worn by Claythorne had red lipstick on the backside. The shirts worn by Judge Wargrave and Anthony Marston had a great deal of makeup on the collars that had been building up all week without being treated.

I understand that makeup will get on costumes and that repairs need to be made but I am annoyed that none of these items were written on the repair sheet. If I had not personally gone through all of the costumes there would have been quite a few last minute repairs to be made Thursday night at the show's next performance. That could have been a problem since that is also the night that production photos are being taken. I know that the actors don't always notice when something has been damaged and that the wardrobe crew won't catch all of the problems either but I find it unlikely that none of these issues were noticed by none of the crew or the actors wearing the costumes.

02/29/2013

I reminded the cast last night that they needed to write any repairs or special cleaning concerns, such as makeup on costumes, on the repair sheet in their dressing rooms. While waiting for the production photos to be taken I overheard the actress playing Emily Brent tell another actor how her necklace came unclasped during the show so she threw it "into the ocean" off the balcony, which she thought was hilarious. I think

that she could have easily given it to the actor who was on the balcony with her because he had pockets instead of risking damaging the jewelry any further. I asked her if she had picked it up yet, which she hadn't, and told her that if it was broken to write it on the repair sheet. I checked the sheet and the necklace this morning. The sheet was blank and the necklace was still broken.

03/03/2013

Today was the final performance followed by strike. This morning I saw that the stage manager had texted me about an issue with the wardrobe crew. I spoke with her and was told that some of the actresses had complained last night that they were having problems with the crew. They had voiced concerns regarding crew members' attitudes and that they were not receiving help that they needed when making costume changes. I told the stage manager that I had asked some of those same actors last week if there were any problems with the wardrobe crew and nothing was brought up. It was made clear from the beginning to the actors that the wardrobe crew was there to help them but it was the responsibility of the actor to tell the crew when and how they needed help.

I made sure to come in early before the show so that I could speak with the crew. I asked them if they were having any problems and if they thought changes were running smoothly. All of the crew members felt that the show was running smoothly and that there weren't any issues. I was told by one crew member that she felt like a dog. She told me that one of the actresses would snap her fingers at them when she needed help instead of asking for it. I found out later when talking to one of the actresses that she

didn't know the names of the crew members who had been helping her for the last two weeks. She said that she never snapped at them to get their attention, however, she did refer to the two women who had worked with her as "the big one" and "the little one" while I was talking with her. She also told me that she had problems getting out of one of her costumes and that the other actress had to help her every night while the crew was in the next room. Why she did not ask for help, I do not know. I also don't understand why complaints were made to management the night before the final performance if there had been problems the entire time.

I realize now that I should have personally introduced the crew members to the entire cast and will always make a point of doing that from now on but I have a difficult time comprehending how someone can help you with your hair, clean your costumes and get you dressed for two weeks without you asking for their name. I think it is also important for the actors to realize that the wardrobe crew does not always consist of people who are heavily involved in theatre. Things that may seem obvious to the actors are often unfamiliar to the crew so the actors should not assume anything. The crew was told to be ready and available to help and they were. The actors were told to communicate their needs with the crew but I do not believe that always happened.

This was the first mainstage experience for all three of the actresses so that might be part of the communication problem but it seems like they had a difficult time following directions. Even though I had repeatedly asked them to write problems with their costumes on the repair sheets provided to them, I received an email from the stage manager about the hem in Claythorne's evening dress being ripped. I promptly let the

stage manager know that all repairs are the wardrobe crew's responsibility on the weekends while the costume shop is closed and that they would take care of it as long as the actor wrote it on the repair sheet. The crew was aware of this weekend policy and I'm surprised that management was not. I was disappointed to see during the final performance this afternoon that the dress was being dragged on the floor because the hem was never fixed. I found out after the show that it was never fixed because the actress never wrote it on the repair sheet and the crew was never told about it.

I had more difficulties with actors during this production than any of the other shows I have worked on at Minnesota State, Mankato. There were multiple missed and late fittings by the same actors which put the costume shop behind in some cases. The stage manager and I found that posting a copy of the fitting schedule on the callboard helped the actors to remember when they were scheduled. I think that if I have a similar problem in the future I will try to solve it in the same manner. Unfortunately, some of these concerns were brought to my attention very late. I am glad, however, that I was made aware of the miscommunications so that I can prevent them in the future through clearer communication of expectations with the actors, stage management and wardrobe crew.

## CHAPTER IV

### POST-PRODUCTION ANALYSIS

This chapter compares and analyzes the ending result and experiences of the designer to the pre-production analysis in chapter I. The initial goals and perceptions will be evaluated against the finished product. In the pre-production analysis the designer described the opportunities for growth through working on this production. Some of the goals included developing a stronger level of artistry based on the interpretation of research and script analysis, along with clear communication skills to assist in collaboration within the production team. The designer hoped to refine skills in sketching and sewing abilities, specifically patterning and draping. She also expected to hone her capabilities in delegation, communication, time management and organization. The pre-production analysis also described and focused on specific characteristics and qualities of the characters in *And Then There Were None* as perceived by the designer prior to meeting with the director and production team.

There have been many opportunities during the last five semesters for Sahli to develop her research skills. *And Then There Were None* offered a new level of research, being set in the 1940s, since the designer's work up to this show could all be considered relatively modern. Due to the period in which this production was set there were new



questions to be considered such as fabric rationing, hem lengths, the width of the brim on men's hats, the size of the lapel on men's jackets, types of fabrics that would be available, new silhouettes, shoulder pads and appropriate ladies' undergarments.

Every show offers the opportunity to learn new facts and become more aware of details. The time invested conducting research to prepare for this production assisted in making the designer more informed regarding appropriate silhouettes and textures so that sketches clearly portrayed characters from the correct time period. Not only did the research assist with Sahli's designs, the knowledge gained gave her confidence when presenting and discussing designs with the production team because choices were deliberately made and executed. Being part of a production team can be a test of communication skills with new people and a chance to use knowledge gained from past experiences to expedite the collaborative process, understand personalities and facilitate communication. Through script analysis and research Sahli was able to clearly communicate opinions and ideas with the rest of the production team as well as take part in discussions which led to a positive experience in collaboration.

The costume sketches and renderings are a very important tool when communicating with the production team. By investing time in research, getting advice from her advisor and paying careful attention to detail when sketching costume designs, the designer was able to clearly communicate her intent with other team members. Not only have her drawing and rendering skills improved through creating the designs for this production, but her level of confidence in her work has also increased. She is aware that there is still room for growth and will continue to sharpen her skills.

Advancement in sewing skills, specifically those regarding patterning and draping had been a goal mentioned in the pre-production analysis. The designer spent very minimal time, however, making alterations to costumes for the production, much less doing any new construction. The schedule in the costume shop for the spring semester had many student workers who needed projects and tasks to work on while in the shop, which left few opportunities for her to sew. The shop manager performed the draping and patterning tasks for the show along with some of the construction. Much of the construction was delegated to student workers. While the original goal was not accomplished, Sahli was able to learn and grow from this experience. She was able to assist students more while in the costume shop as they made alterations and asked questions, which improved her teaching skills.

It was also important for the designer to learn what information was unclear in her renderings since others were relying on them to drape garments and answer important questions regarding construction and fabric choices. Working closely with the shop manager throughout the draping, construction and fitting process of garments was still an educational experience for Sahli who was able to ask questions and observe. By not spending her time draping and patterning the four constructed garments, she was able to spend more time searching in costume stock, ordering items and instructing student workers as they made alterations for the production.

When comparing the characteristics and qualities of the characters described in the pre-production analysis to the renderings and realized costume designs, the designer

found that her initial impression was adequately realized and maintained in the costumes that were seen on stage for this production.

Vera Claythorne wore a light blue suit at the beginning of the play which created a professional and approachable appearance. For dinner she entered in a pale blue, low backed, evening gown with sequined embellishments that showed off her figure as well as her personality as she was criticized by Emily Brent for her immodesty. In Act II Vera wore a navy dress, the darkest of her outfits reflecting her changing mood and the atmosphere in the play.

It was clear at the opening of Act I that Philip Lombard was different from the other men in the play. His entrance was made not in a suit, like the rest, but in a leather bomber jacket. His less conventional appearance helped show his youth and confidence while reinforcing the adventurous aspect of his personality. When Philip wore a suit in Act II it was in a lighter tone than the rest of the men, aiding in making him appear younger and less serious than the other characters who appeared in darker colors.

Anthony Marston also made his entrance without a suit. Instead he wore tan pants, a light colored argyle sweater vest, a blue blazer and a cap. His clothing, both in style and color scheme assisted in showing his youth. In the latter part of Act I after everyone had dressed for dinner, Marston's white jacket helped him stand out from the rest of the men who wore black tuxedo coats. This differentiation assisted in showing Marston's personality, ego and youth.

In the beginning of Act I William Blore, posing as the wealthy Mr. Davis from South Africa, wore a muted green two-piece suit with a burgundy sweater vest. This

costume contrasted with the patterned sweater vest, plaid green blazer and tan pants worn in Act II when Blore was no longer posing as Mr. Davis. The blazer had a tighter fit than the suit coat, showing the busy pattern on the sweater vest while emphasizing Blore's stomach. Blore's habitual tendency for food and drink was emphasized by drawing focus to his stomach, creating a visual contrast between his true character and his more conservatively dressed persona, Mr. Davis.

General MacKenzie first appeared in a pale, blue-grey, double-breasted, pinstriped suit with a grey fedora. He was one of two men in the show to wear a double-breasted suit, both of whom were older men. The muted tone of his suit fit with his initial mood which was mellow. In Act II MacKenzie's appearance changed from clean lines in dull colors to a loose fitting burgundy cardigan and dark brown pants. The softer lines and silhouette, along with the color change assisted in showing MacKenzie's change in demeanor.

The designer's goal when creating the image for Emily Brent was of an older woman who looked cold, rigid, unappealing and as if she lacked warmth and humanity. Emily Brent is an opinionated and intolerant woman and therefore should not look passive. Brent's clothing was based on styles from the 1920s to create the image of an older woman, not dressing in the current 1940s styles. She entered in a cool gray skirt suit with a large collar, green striped trim and an orange vest. She also wore an angular moss green hat. Straight lines were emphasized with the rows of green trim along the edge of her jacket and on the collar. A long row of black buttons running along both edges of the jacket helped to create additional lines. In Act II Brent wore a green skirt

suit with dark blue and brown accents. Curves and soft edges were avoided and straight lines were once again emphasized and created.

Sir Lawrence Wargrave wore only double-breasted pinstriped suits during the play. This slight variation helped to distinguish him from the other men, who wore single-breasted suits. In Act I he entered in a dark brown suit, a color that did not draw much attention and allowed him to fit in among the other characters. In Act II he entered in a teal suit which was a brighter color than his first costume. This transition from dark to light was unlike the rest of the characters, excluding Philip, whose clothing choices had all gotten darker. This could be interpreted as an attempt to draw more attention to himself as if a hint to his victims. In his final scene he entered in his judicial robe and wig, showing a strong contrast from the respectable and well educated man first seen to the crazed and warped man that he became while passing judgment on the other guests.

Dr. Armstrong appeared in brown tones throughout the play. This neutral coloring reflects his work as a nerve specialist, not wearing anything too bright or bold which might be upsetting. Dr. Armstrong combined his vacation to the island with two medical appointments and buried himself in his work in order to avoid his guilt. He wore a three-piece suit, giving him a professional appearance, as he was constantly working.

The entire process from analysis and research through design and execution was not flawless. However, any obstacles that were encountered were relatively easy to overcome with patience, communication and collaboration. This production and experience was positive, educational and rewarding for the designer who faced new challenges and had the opportunity to make adjustments from past criticisms.

## CHAPTER V

### PROCESS DEVELOPMENT

This chapter will discuss how the experiences and lessons from classes, projects and productions, and from hours worked in the costume shop as a graduate assistant at Minnesota State University, Mankato have aided in preparation for the role of costume designer in the Minnesota State University, Mankato production of *And Then There Were None*.

Having had the opportunity to design two musical productions at Northern State University while completing an undergraduate degree and eight productions for the Northern Fort Playhouse summer stock during and after completion of a Bachelor of Arts in Musical Theatre Performance, the designer found she had experience but lacked formal training and education in costume design. Anxious to continue a career in theatre, further development of the craft through graduate studies seemed the next logical step.

Sahli applied to be a Master of Fine Arts candidate in costume design in the spring of 2010, was accepted into the program and began classes that fall. There was a lot to learn, especially having had no classes in the technical area of theatre which was now her emphasis. During her time at Minnesota State, Mankato she has had the opportunity to design costumes for six realized productions, including three musicals; develop her understanding and training not only in the field of costume design but also in the elements of scenery, sound and lighting; expand skills in research and analysis;

become more confident in her communication abilities verbally, through the written word and artistically; learned to be a collaborative member of a production team; developed leadership skills as the graduate representative; and surprised herself by stepping out of her comfort zone in order to accomplish her internship.

During the fall of 2010 Sahli designed costumes for *Evil Dead: The Musical*, directed by Professor Heather Hamilton. This production offered many firsts for the designer: a concept meeting, creating and presenting designs, working with a production team, maintaining a designated budget and communicating with an advisor. These new elements combined with bad habits, lacking communication skills and fear created an experience that the designer is able to look back upon and see a tremendous amount of growth from then to her experience with *And Then There Were None*. In both productions Sahli worked with Hamilton as the director. Hopefully Hamilton also sees growth within the designer from her experience in 2010 to that in 2013, specifically regarding Sahli's level of assertion as a member of the team, which was criticized after her first project.

Designing costumes for *A Coupla White Chicks Sitting Around Talking*, directed by Michael James, in the spring of 2011 gave Sahli the opportunity to work on criticisms made regarding her first project and improve sketching skills. This show relied a great deal on how quickly costume changes could be made. Alterations were made to jewelry and shortcuts were made on closures. It was also important to train the backstage crew who were helping with costume changes. This experience laid the foundation for working with and training wardrobe crews for future productions.

Both of these shows were studio productions which meant the costume shop offered minimal assistance. This created an opportunity for the designer to spend a lot of time in stock getting familiar with its contents and layout as well as a great deal of time making alterations, adjustments and learning from mistakes. Unfortunately, many of these hours were spent without supervision or guidance which led to guessing, short cuts and missed opportunities to learn new skills and receive training. It was a good lesson to learn about asking for help and not being ashamed of not knowing the answers.

The first year of graduate school offered classes in Portfolio Seminar, Scene Design I, Costume Design I, Dramaturgy, History II, Costume Construction and Theatre Theory and Criticism within the theatre department. She also took Life Drawing through the art department to improve sketching skills.

Costume Design I was very helpful. The class covered skills that were needed such as basic figure drawing, rendering, research, and script analysis. It created an opportunity to practice designing unrealized productions and attain feedback. This class helped hone abilities to properly prepare for production meetings and give confidence when presenting ideas and concepts. All of these skills have improved with each opportunity to design costumes.

Dramaturgy taught the importance of understanding the history of the play, the playwright and the world in which the play is set. The class explained the importance of looking beyond the surface of the script and helped the designer to become more comfortable using the sources offered through the campus library and its databases. The



research skills developed in this class have been used in all of the designer's projects following the course.

The course in Costume Construction was taken to catch up on skills that were lacking upon entering the program. This class gave the designer an opportunity to learn the correct terminology regarding tools and stitches and added more hours of actual time spent working in the costume shop. The additional shop hours gave more opportunities for projects that increased skills in pattern alterations, fittings and cutting. The addition of these projects helped to teach the process and procedures that are used in this specific shop which ultimately saved time during future projects.

In the fall of 2011 Sahli designed costumes for the first two productions in the department, *The Shape of Things*, directed by Sara Pillatzki-Warzeha presented in the Andreas Theatre, and *Rent*, directed by Professor Paul Finocchiaro presented in the Ted Paul Theatre. Both shows increased skills that the designer was working on and gave new opportunities for growth and experience.

The allotted time for *The Shape of Things* was very short, which encouraged organization, planning and time management. This was also the very first production during which the designer would have the opportunity to prepare and use wardrobe crew. This experience helped with communication skills and the creation of paperwork such as costume check-in sheets. This experience was extremely helpful in preparing for the mainstage production of *Rent* which would have four wardrobe crew members and many more costume pieces to keep track of. An additional benefit of having a crew was the fact that it forced Sahli to step away and trust others to make sure they did their jobs of

laundering costumes, checking costumes in and placing them backstage for every performance.

Being a part of the production team for *Rent* was a completely different experience than any other show the designer has worked on. Sahli was the only student, other than the stage manager, on the production team. It was such a good learning experience to be a part of a team whose members came to meetings prepared, who did not have to check with their advisors before answering questions, who did not have to report weekly about how much of the budget they were spending, etc. It was an opportunity to learn by observing how faculty team members, with more experience, interacted, asked questions and collaborated with one another. It was also a new and rewarding experience for the designer to work with Finocchiaro as a director. He created a positive and nurturing environment while balancing honesty and an open mind in his response to ideas and designs.

The 2011-2012 school year consisted of classes such as Sound Design I and Theatre Research in the fall with Costume History, Theatre History I, Costume Design II and Theatre Management in the spring. Costume History taught skills to assist in analyzing a garment in order to obtain information regarding its place in history. That experience and those skills were helpful when designing costumes and pulling items from stock for *And Then There Were None*. Costume Design II helped to improve the skills that were developed in Costume Design I, specifically drawing and rendering techniques which have continually improved with each show for whom Sahli has designed costumes.

During the summer of 2012 she worked as a stitcher for the Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire for an eight week contract. This not only fulfilled the internship requirement needed for graduation but also presented an opportunity to test knowledge, skills and confidence while working in a new environment. It was clear that she was no longer working in an academic setting, but a professional setting when another stitcher was fired for unsatisfactory work. This was one of the most valuable experiences during graduate school because Sahli realized that she possessed the skills and knowledge needed to work in a professional setting. Confidence in technical skills has been one of her biggest concerns since she started graduate school due to her lack of formal training. After successfully completing the eight week contract, fear was replaced by confidence, enthusiasm and excitement.

The fall of 2012 was unlike any other semester. Sahli was not in any classes and was working twenty hours a week in the costume shop for the first time. These additional hours gave the opportunity to advance skills in draping and patterning, develop and grow as a leader within the costume shop, gain more experience assisting with fittings and allowed more time for construction projects.

The semester's artistic work consisted of designing costumes for *A Chorus Line* and two pieces in the fall dance concert choreographed by guest artists. Designing for *A Chorus Line* presented the opportunity to work once again with Finocchiaro but this time the rest of the production team consisted almost entirely of students. The production was another chance to work on communication as a member of the production team and with the costume shop. It was the first time the designer had sat down with the costume shop

manager to break down the costume plot and budget for a show, a step that was also taken before bringing *And Then There Were None* into the costume shop.

Working with guest artists was a new experience. It was a chance to work with artists who were unfamiliar and new, unlike the past directors who had been faculty or fellow students. This experience stressed the importance of communication and clarity when collaborating with someone who is not familiar with one's style or work.

The spring of 2013 offered courses in Lighting Design I, and Drawing and Rendering. Taking classes in the other technical areas has helped with better communication skills in production meetings and aided in collaboration. Even though Drawing and Rendering was taken after the renderings for *And Then There Were None* were created, the class has improved skills and techniques the designer will continue to use in future projects and designs.

During the nearly six semesters at Minnesota State, Mankato Sahli has had the opportunity to work with four different directors, two students and two faculty, in both the Andreas and Ted Paul Theatres. A great deal has been learned as situations both old and new arise; familiar situations such as quick costume changes and new situations like creating stage blood and getting it out of costumes repeatedly. All of the experiences have made Sahli a better designer and each completed project further affirms her decision to develop and grow as a costume designer.

When interviewing for the program in 2010 Sahli was asked what she wanted to do with a degree in costume design: did she want to work professionally or academically? She did not have an answer. During the past year she has had the opportunity to

experience working in a costume shop and designing for theatre and dance during the fall semester, and working in a costume shop, designing and teaching during the spring semester. This layout created an ideal situation for her to experience both options, in a sense. When it comes to that question of what to do with the degree once it's been earned she has come to a conclusion: she wants to design. Whether that means designing and teaching in an academic setting or designing professionally, she has realized that there will always be questions to answer, problems to solve, budgets to maintain, and schedules to follow. Either option will require hard work and either option will be rewarding

APPENDIX A

RENDERINGS AND PRODUCTION PHOTOGRAPHS



Rogers Act I



Ethel Rogers Act I



Fred Narracott Act I





Vera Claythorne Act I



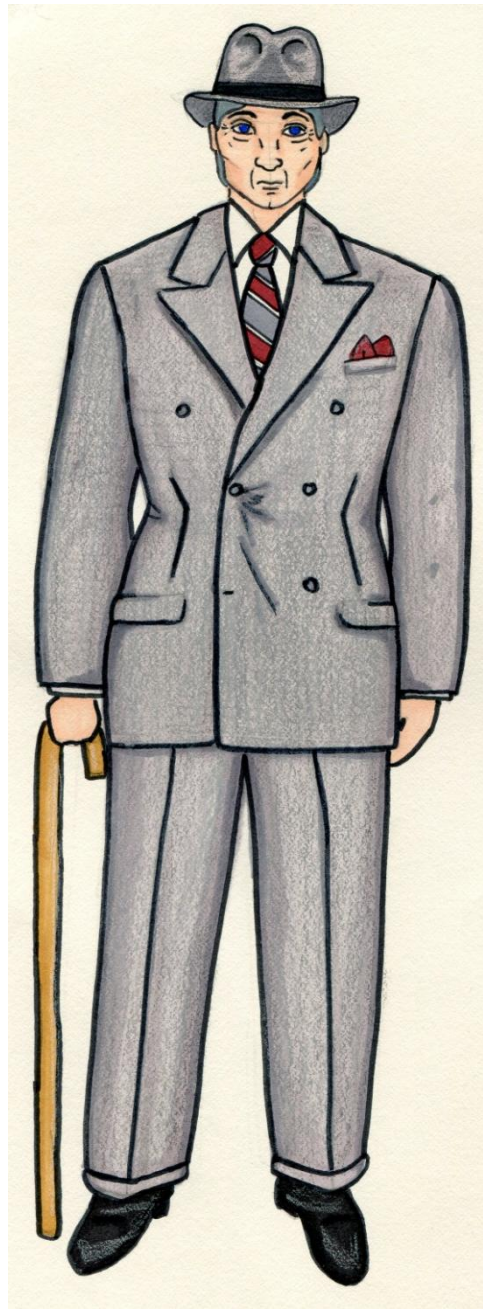
Philip Lombard Act I



Anthony Marston Act I



William Blore Act I



General Mackenzie Act I



Judge Wargrave Act I



Emily Brent Act I



Dr. Armstrong Act I





Vera Claythorne Act I Dinner Dress



Vera Claythorne Act I Dinner Dress Back View



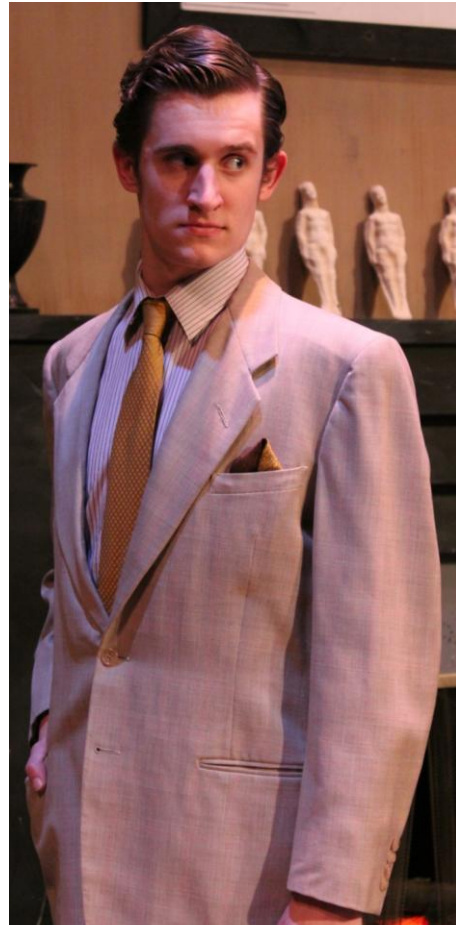
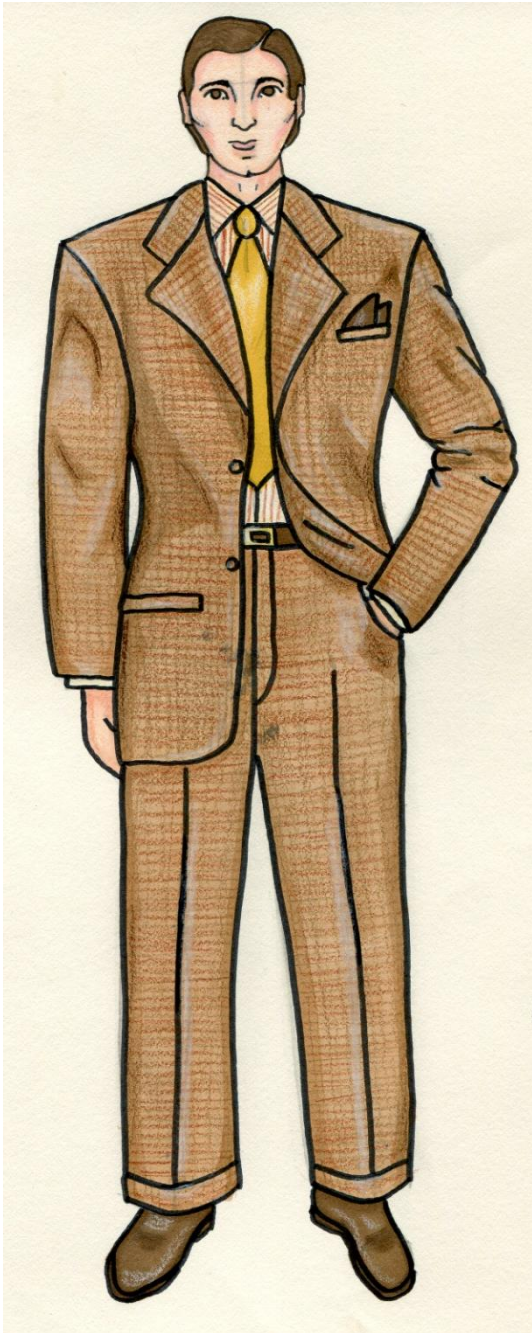
Emily Brent Act I Dinner Dress



Lombard, Wargrave, Armstrong and Blore  
Act I Dinner Dress



Marston, Lombard and Claythorne  
Act I Dinner Dress



Philip Lombard Act II, III



William Blore Act II, III



General Mackenzie Act II





Judge Wargrave Act II



Emily Brent Act II



Vera Claythorne Act II, III



Dr. Armstrong Act II

APPENDIX B

INITIAL COLOR SAMPLES





APPENDIX D

SAMPLE MIRROR SHEET

**ALLEN, CARTER**

WHITE UNDERSHIRT

WHITE DRESS SHIRT

STRIPED TIE

TAN W/DOT PANTS

BROWN LEATHER JACKET

BLACK SOCKS

SHOES

WHITE UNDERSHIRT

WHITE TUX SHIRT

BLACK TUX PANTS

BLACK TUX COAT

BLACK BOW TIE

BLACK PATENT SHOES

BLACK SOCKS

WHITE UNDERSHIRT

GREY/RED STRIPED SHIRT

TAN W/STRIPE PANTS

TAN W/ STRIPE JACKET

GOLD TIE

SHOES

WHITE UNDERSHIRT

WHITE DRESS SHIRT

TAN TIE

TAN W/DOT JACKET

WHITE SHIRT W/BLOOD

## APPENDIX E

## BUDGET

Date	CS/FPO#	Account	Vendor	Amount	Budget Balance
					\$1,500.00
2/3/2013	charge	331171	SR Hams Fabric Outlet	\$326.35	\$1,173.65
2/3/2013	charge	331171	K7G Fashion Superstore	\$309.86	\$863.79
2/4/2013	refund	331171	Lane Bryant	(\$58.00)	\$921.79
1/29/2013	charge	331171	Lane Bryant	\$94.00	\$827.79
2/4/2013	charge	331171	DSW	\$57.90	\$769.89
2/4/2013	charge	331171	6pm.com	\$69.99	\$699.90
2/6/2013	charge	331171	Lands End	\$30.94	\$668.96
2/11/2013	charge	331171	JoAnns	\$12.05	\$656.91
2/8/2013	charge	331171	JoAnns	\$54.78	\$602.13
2/14/2013	charge	331171	Tip Top Tux	\$54.95	\$547.18
2/13/2013	charge	331171	Michael's	\$1.38	\$545.80
2/14/2013	charge	331171	Tractor Supply Co	\$12.00	\$533.80
2/18/2013	charge	331171	Walmart	\$36.92	\$496.88
2/18/2013	charge	331171	Norcostco	\$60.10	\$436.78
3/18/2013	charge	331171	Like-Nu Cleaners	\$255.98	\$180.80



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