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The creation of "Behind the Vote," a one-person play

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THE CREATION OF BEHIND THE VOTE, A ONE-PERSON PLAY

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts

In

The Department of Theatre

by
Jenny Ballard
B.A., University of Tennessee, 2003
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ABSTRACT

This thesis discusses the inspiration, creation and performance of Jenny Ballard's one-woman show, *Behind the Vote*, which was the other half of the thesis requirement in order to complete the Master of Fine Arts program in Theatre Performance. *Behind the Vote* examines the importance and meaning of voting, both during the women's suffrage movement and in the present, as seen through the eyes of three contemporary women, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. This thesis contains Ballard's inspirations for the project; her research materials about Stanton and Anthony and her source materials for her contemporary characters, including Facebook messages and emails; both her first and final drafts of *Behind the Vote* and what she learned from writing both versions; her thoughts and impressions on her performance of *Behind the Vote*, including audience response and feedback; her experiences and knowledge gained since beginning the process of writing her show; her vita; and a CD with photos from one of her performances of her one-woman show, *Behind the Vote*.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Our assignment was to write and star in a one-person show, which was to be 30-45 min in length. I came into LSU's graduate program knowing that I wanted to do a one-person show that was socially evocative and geared towards potentially having legs as a school touring show. I was interested in further researching the women's suffrage movement, based on a statue of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott and Susan B. Anthony marching together that I had seen many times in Knoxville, TN. After taking Performance Theory with Alan Sikes and a Thesis class with George Judy, I was determined to do a show that tied the women's suffrage movement with the 2012 presidential election, as seen through the eyes of different contemporary women.

My first draft was based on VH1's *Behind the Music*, and was too narrative and too much of a history lesson. So my goal was to make these parallel stories active and intermingled. Enclosed are both versions of *Behind the Vote*. With my thesis show performances in my rear view mirror, I can definitively say that the creation and performance of *Behind the Vote* was one of the more rewarding experiences in my life. I learned a great deal about myself during the process, including the discovery of my true capabilities despite my crippling fears. Additionally, I learned what I believe, as a woman, about people, politics and the world in general.

CHAPTER 2: INITIAL THOUGHTS ABOUT THE THESIS PROJECT

When I was doing graduate school interviews, Nick Erickson, the Associate Head of the M.F.A. program at LSU caught my attention when he said that our graduate thesis project would involve writing a one-person show. I was used to the standard 50+ page paper focused on a challenging character or characters, so an active thesis project like the one outlined by Nick was exciting, and really set LSU apart in my mind. George Judy, the Head of the MFA program, explained to us that he felt that writing a one-person show would not only be a great challenge for us, but it would also be something that we could market to theatre companies and other institutions post-graduation. George is a big believer in being able to create your own work in any situation, as am I, so this process, while terrifying, has been very exciting for me. I knew that I wanted to create a piece of theatre that would raise social awareness about a current issue, and that I could potentially market to middle schools and high schools, as I enjoy Theatre for Youth and working with children. Before coming to LSU, I was the founding Artistic Director of Children's Theatre of Knoxville, and had been working in children's theatre on and off for ten years. So, involving Theatre for Youth in my life post-graduation, in some capacity, was, and is, important to me.

In the following months, my head started spinning with a number of ideas, ranging from mental illness to the women's suffrage movement. In the spring of 2012, I took Performance Theory with Alan Sikes, and began seeing theatre and performance in very different ways. One of the solo performers that we studied in his class was Anna Devere Smith, the author of *Fires in the Mirror* and *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992*. I appreciated her focus on a specific, real life event; her portrayal of real people and their testimonies/interviews; and her relationship with her audience. I began thinking of constructing my show in this manner; having the characters primarily speaking to the audience about the event in question. I couldn't shake the idea of the women's suffrage movement, and after discussions with playwrights John Guare and Jim Sullivan, and George and Alan, I settled on the focus of the play being Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, the leaders of the women's suffrage movement.

The next step was to figure out how to tell the story. Would I focus on a specific event in the suffrage movement, or construct more of a biopic? How would I tie it to the 2012 presidential election? How was I to realistically represent women's voices when all I had was my own? How was I to decide on a framing device to make the work theatrical? Could I pull it off? With all of these questions in mind, I began researching Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony in March of 2012 to prepare for what would become *Behind the Vote*.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH MATERIAL AND CREATIVE IMPULSES

In June 2012, I began reading *In Her Own Right*, by Elisabeth Griffith, about Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and was struck by the relevance of her story and her battle to have it all; to be a successful force in the world of women's rights, while dedicating herself to her husband and seven children. I was also very moved by Stanton's *Solitude of Self* speech; her passion for women's rights and her desire for women to be the best version of themselves on a daily basis are evident throughout. I identified with her need for women to fight for something greater than themselves, and her desire to leave the world a better place than she found it. I was also fascinated by how contemporary it felt. Her story was inspirational and relevant and for some reason, I kept seeing it as a reality show in my head.

I continued my research by reading *Not For Ourselves Alone*, by Ken Burns and Geoffrey C. Ward, about Stanton and Anthony's friendship and their fifty year fight for women's suffrage. I was struck by their opposing views on marriage, family and women's rights. Stanton's husband and children were her top priority, whereas Anthony, who never married, believed that they were a hindrance. This conflict, still troubling women today, seemed like another tie in to the contemporary world. Additionally, I was struck by Anthony's catchphrase, "failure is impossible." Despite the fact that Anthony and Stanton fought for fifty years for women's suffrage, and did not live to see women win the vote, Anthony's message to the next generation of women, at the end of her life, was "failure is impossible." In a world that is besieged by apathy and selfishness, Anthony's ultimate message was inspiring to me. I knew that I wanted to incorporate it.

Still unable to shake the idea of a reality show, I began researching reality TV shows, and VH1's *Behind the Music* stuck with me. I thought that it seemed like a potential framing device. I could be filmed playing several different characters involved in Stanton's and Anthony's lives, as well as Stanton and Anthony themselves. In this manner, I could represent all voices involved; those in favor of women's suffrage and those opposed, while representing the two women at the heart of movement, Stanton and Anthony. I would need someone to handle the filming, and my plan was to edit the video on my laptop using Final Cut editing software. I watched several episodes of *Behind the Music* and took extensive notes on the formatting so that I could write my script accordingly. I wanted to mirror that style as much as possible.

I decided to use the 6 "commercial spots" within the hour long *Behind the Music* format as live monologue spots, as each would be about three minutes. I wanted each monologue to represent a different fictional woman's voice, and thought that I could potentially separate them by generation. I wanted to tackle different issues concerning voting, such as voter suppression, voter apathy, and American women's opinions about voting in today's society. I also wanted to examine why voting was important to me, and what voting means in a larger capacity.

CHAPTER 4: SOURCE MATERIAL: FACEBOOK CORRESPONDENCE

I wanted my monologues to represent real women's voices, not just my projection of real women's voices, so I decided to contact women via Facebook to ask their opinions on voting. Below are my Facebook exchanges.

"Hi ladies,

As many of you know, I'm working on my thesis project for grad school, and the subject is the women's suffrage movement. Hence, I was hoping you gals would be willing to answer a question for me. I know that we're all incredibly busy, but a simple sentence would suffice. I am most appreciative!! The question is: what does voting mean to you?
Jenny"

"Voting is my "tin can and string" telephone to the government under which I live. I can't walk into the white house and have a sit down conversation with Mr. Obama....but I can vote....and he can hear me." – Caroline King

"I believe voting is a way for people to express their opinion, participate political affairs and supervise their government; however, I also think voting in some ways disunites people from people. I think voting should only take place in countries where people understand what is democracy for them, if not, voting is just a way for politicians to ruin people and their country." – Chia-Wen Hsu

"I ALWAYS vote. I think it is so important to exercise this one chance to be heard - even when in the minority. So many people fought so hard for us to have this opportunity. To not take it says to me they fought in vain. I took my sons to the polls with me before they were old enough to vote and they became active voters. Now my husband (who used to never vote because he said it hardly counted) is even more adamant than my son and I. I think we had a positive effect on him. Ladies, we can be voters and create voters!" – Molly Buchmann

"Voting means having a say in my life, my choices. And also a say in the choices that shape the future." – Jennifer Osborn

"Voting to me means having a say, and taking an opportunity to evoke the change you want to see happen. It is important to me because I think it is such a privilege to be able to vote especially as a woman. As an individual I think it is our duty to contribute to the betterment of our community." – Sofia Hurtado

"Georgia Congressman John Lewis said it best when he called voting the most powerful nonviolent tool we have to create a more perfect union. I vote not only to have a political voice but to pay tribute to the women who secured me that right. It's what allows us to have a peaceful transition of power unlike any nation in the world." – Susan Kempainen

“Voting is important. It's my small opportunity and the only opportunity -within a good or bad system- to speak my voice. If you don't vote, you can't complain. If you don't take action nothing will change.” – Elizabeth Mathews

“I generally don't care whether I vote or not. If my job is any indication of how one individual can change a vote after all parties have voted and the count has been made, then why am I not to believe it is worse within the federal government. There's a lot of sexism in my job (a female firefighter) - there's nothing I can do about it: if I make a stink I am treated even worse. So, I look at it from this point: you're going to still pay me the same amount of money to do less work and I keep my job? Okay.” – Carrie Peterson Bradbury

“I told my daughter (and my son) To always remember that women have lost their lives and endured prison to fight for the right to vote and they did this because they were intelligent women that realized how negatively women were being treated in most aspects of lifework and education opportunities, pay, and many times even their own homes. That many if not all laws impact the quality and freedom of a woman's life so it is critical that we give our opinion....and our opinion is our vote. I also told both of my children that if you don't vote you can't gripe or complain....and I never want to give up my right to complain:).” – Jamie Whitehead Ramsey

CHAPTER 5: SOURCE MATERIAL: EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE

In addition to my Facebook message, I decided to reach out to friends and family via email. Below is my email correspondence.

“Hey Catie,

As you know, I'm working on my thesis project for grad school, and the subject is the women's suffrage movement. Hence, I was hoping you would be willing to answer a couple of questions for me. What does voting mean to you? And how would you explain voting to a small child? Love you! Jenny”

“Hey Jen,

sorry, totally forgot about this until today :(

HOW I WOULD EXPLAIN WHY VOTING IS IMPORTANT TO ME, AS A WOMAN, TO MY (NONEXISTENT) DAUGHTER

By Catie Ballard

Hello Imaginary Daughter.

Don't you look pretty today! How could you not, with these genes?—but there I go emphasizing beauty over brains. Shoot. I've only been a pretend mother for all of two seconds, and I've already damaged my daughter's priorities for life.

But the truth of the matter is that you're a girl, and a pretty one—if a tad invisible—and it's going to be up to you to prove you're more than that. You write your own future. (Your father and I only get creative license with your backstory.) But you're a pretty good kid so far, albeit imaginary, who makes pretty good decisions, albeit theoretical, and that's a solid start.

Which is, I think, a good jumping off place for this completely spontaneous lecture on why it's important for you to vote...

Your whole life, you have to follow rules—at school, at home—and you get in trouble if you don't. Right now, as a child, you don't have a say in any of these rules. You just have to follow them and trust that adults know what's best for you. Or don't trust that, but you still have to follow them.

There are also rules, or laws, that we have to follow because we live in this country, but you don't have to follow these rules blindly. Once you turn eighteen, you'll have a say. Naturally every single citizen doesn't get to show up at the Congress building and vote

on specific bills: The building's too small. It would be chaos. But you do get to elect people to represent you there, and trust that they'll pass laws that you believe in. Or don't trust that. If your candidate doesn't turn out how you thought he/she would, then write them a letter and complain. Visit their office. Don't vote for them next time. It's your right.

It's especially important that you, as a woman, exercise this right, because, for one thing, women didn't always have a say. For a long time, they weren't allowed to vote. The men who ran the country gave all sorts of excuses for not granting women the right to vote, including that they were trying to *protect* women. That's called paternalism, and it's annoying. Because here's the thing: women aren't children. We don't need protecting any more than men do. And we certainly don't need someone telling us what's best for us; we're quite capable of figuring that out for ourselves. We're not always right, of course, but neither are men. That's a question of humanity, not gender.

For another thing, laws aren't permanent. A law may be passed by one Congress only to be repealed by the next. Only by voting can you make sure the "good" laws—or the laws that you think are good, anyway—stay on the books, and the "bad" ones stay off. Not everyone shares the same views as you, and you can bet that they're out there voting. (And some of them, by the way, still think of women as children.) Your vote could cancel theirs out; it might even be the crucial vote that puts your preferred candidate in office. So you should exercise your right to vote, if only to make sure your other rights aren't gone tomorrow.

The end.

"Hey Nancy,

As you know, I'm working on my thesis project for grad school, and the subject is the women's suffrage movement. Hence, I was hoping you would be willing to answer a couple of questions for me. Why is voting important to you? Thanks! Jenny"

"To me, voting means that I get a chance to participate in assuring the success of whatever cause I believe in. Whether it is voting for the president or voting on where to take the family for vacation, the democratic process is a marvelously peaceful way to make decisions. It means we don't have to kill each other every time a decision needs to be made or if someone voices a new/different idea. The unfortunate part is that it is a majority opinion which means there are people who will not be happy about the outcome. In our country, those folks try harder to get their way next election. In other countries, those people form coups that set their whole country and even region at war. What is ironic about that is that most of the time, religious conflict is the root of their problem. It is important to me as a Christian to resolve conflict peacefully- voting gives me that opportunity. As a poll worker, most of my experiences have been positive: I meet lots of people, some are area political figures which is nice as a business owner. It also opened my eyes as to how devious some politicians can be. For instance, since candidates are not allowed within 100 ft. of the polling venue, they send people they know into the venue to

hang around and talk to voters. This is against the law and it is up to us to know who they are and kick them out before they can influence voters. Some candidates send people in wearing t-shirts with their name on it- that is not allowed and we have them turn shirts inside out or leave. Last election, a guy wearing a Ron Paul shirt came in supposedly to vote. When we told him to zip his hoodie or turn his shirt inside out or leave, he got loud and belligerent. A cop from the next room heard him and came in to make him leave. But the guys mission had been accomplished- he got attention drawn to his candidate by coming in and causing a scene in the venue which was full of voters. He also had a huge Ron Paul sign in his truck parked right outside our door which is also illegal on election day. He didn't want to move his truck either- he lost that argument as well. One time we had a black man come in and start screaming an apology because he voted for Obama who turned out to be a bad president. That is definitely not allowed and we had to throw him out too. An incident during the last election for State Representative was probably the worst. Political signs also have to adhere to the 100 ft. boundary rule and only if they do not cause a hazard. Well, a couple put up a sign that was as high as my neck at the intersection of our venue and a busy highway. We went out to ask them to move it and they attacked us verbally- cussing at us, calling us retarded and stupid while accusing us of being partial to the other candidate. We are not allowed to argue because it could be construed as being partial to a candidate. So we listened while we tried to move the sign ourselves. The sign was facing the road- we didn't even know who the sign was promoting; we just knew it was causing a hazard and people complained about it blocking their entrance onto the highway. We just wanted them to move the sign- they wouldn't and while they were berating us, we took it down. Our defense was that it was a hazard to drivers. The most important thing for a poll worker to remember is to remain impartial to any candidate and issue. I have been working with the same group of poll workers for years and we pride ourselves on being impartial and running a clean election. Those people had us so upset because they attacked our integrity; they don't even know us! But there are more people that tell us how much they appreciate our work. Now, it has come to my attention that voters actually throw elections by voting against someone, not for someone. And they are so bold as to tell us that is what they are doing! We just tell them they can't say that in the venue. I think the biggest disappointment with the voting process is the lack of interest in voting. In our county, only 10% of eligible voters actually voted. We have elected officials who won by as few as nine votes! The apathy is disheartening. On a national level, it is scary to know that even though the elected officials won by a majority vote, those numbers don't reveal how many eligible voters did not vote. If those people would vote, it would change outcomes. Additionally, those non-voters have opinions as to how things should be done and who knows what some people will do if they become frustrated enough. We cannot make them vote- all we can do is offer the opportunity.” – Nancy Mayfield

CHAPTER 6: BEHIND THE VOTE, FIRST DRAFT

With my research mostly completed, and my source material compiled, I began writing my first draft of my thesis show. Below is the first version of *Behind the Vote*, modeled after VH1's *Behind the Music*.

Cast of CHARACTERS in BEHIND THE VOTE

Video Portion:

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *suffragette*
Henry Stanton, *Elizabeth's husband*
Judge Daniel Cady, *Elizabeth's father*
Harriet Stanton Blatch, *Elizabeth's daughter, suffragette*
Susan B. Anthony, *Elizabeth's closest friend and colleague, suffragette*
Lucy Stone, *Elizabeth's rival, suffragette*
Lucretia Mott, *Elizabeth's mentor, suffragette*
Harry T. Burn, *TN House Rep responsible for ratification of the 19th Amendment*
Febb Burn, *Harry's mother*

Live Monologue Portion:

Sara Beth, *President of the Women's Council of Greater Baton Rouge, 40s*
Taylor, *apathetic teen*
Lois, *Poll Worker, 70s*
Catherine, *voter suppression victim, 30s*

BEHIND THE VOTE VIDEO: Part One: Overview of Behind the Vote Episode

(This will be a montage of the following clips/sound bites sandwiched between the narration).

Narrator: We've all heard of the suffragettes. Many of us have seen statues of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony all over the country, celebrating these very important women. And since 1920, women have been going to the polls to cast their votes; to take advantage of this privilege that was won by the women that came before them. But do you know the story behind the vote?

Daniel: "Oh, my daughter, I wish you were a boy." I said that to Elizabeth time and time again. If she had been born a boy, I would have been proud of her ambitions. But she was a woman, and social reform was not woman's work!

Elizabeth: Well, I marched right up to Flora Campbell, and said, “don’t worry, Ms. Campbell. I promise that I will go through all of Papa’s law books with a pair of scissors, and snip out every statute that is unfair to women” (Griffith, 11).

Daniel: Elizabeth was too spirited for her own good. I knew she would always meet with trouble and always bring trouble upon her family.

Elizabeth: And so, ironically, my life’s work was laid out by Papa, who would be one of my biggest naysayers. In fact, he was outdone only by my husband, Henry.

Susan: When I was 11, the foreman at my father’s factory quit suddenly. I told my father that he should promote one of the female factory employees to replace him, and he told me that a woman would never be able to run a factory. And just like that, my torch for women’s rights was ignited.

Susan: The women’s suffrage movement was initially set back 8 years due to Elizabeth’s need for a husband and children. Marriage is a sign of weakness...a sign that you can’t do it alone. Having a husband and children is fine for the average woman, but for women like Lizzie and me, women “who had a special call for special work, having a family was an obstacle to the movement” (Burns, Ward, 83).

Elizabeth: I begged Susan to let it go. Who was to carry on our work if neither of us had children? My daughter, Harriot, poured her soul into the suffrage movement after Susan and I were gone. Not only did she get to vote, she ran for the New York State Assembly. My daughter changed women’s lives for the better. Susan can’t argue with that.

Elizabeth: I immediately liked Susan. “With her good earnest face and genial smile” (Griffith, 73). When she smiled, she lit up the room. And she was the yin to my yang. Unlike me, Susan was unmarried without children, so she had time to book venues, fundraise, organize campaigns and give speeches. I could write fiery speeches, and she could deliver them with fire. “I forged the thunderbolts, she fired them” (Griffith, 74).

Henry: Lizzie had more of a marriage with Susan than with me. But then again, I took second place to the women’s rights movement well before Lizzie met Susan.

Harriot: I have several childhood memories of Aunt Susan and Mother sitting at our kitchen table, which was always covered with books about the Constitution. Aunt Susan was a pretty dominant figure during my childhood...Daddy always partially blamed her for his estrangement from Mother.

Lucy: I understood that Elizabeth and Susan were trying to push the movement forward, but blatant racism was not the way to do it. I told Elizabeth to try to focus on the women, not their color.

Lucy: The final straw for me was when I saw my name associated with the message: “ALL WISE WOMEN WILL OPPOSE THE FIFTEENTH AMENDMENT” (Burns, Ward, 113) in

The Revolution. It was bad enough that that filthy paper discussed birth control, abortion and prostitution, but to make such a blatantly racist statement? That was when we broke away from Miss Anthony and Mrs. Stanton.

Susan: Lucy was jealous, pure and simple. Lizzie and I had a paper, and she didn't. When Lucy told me that she was going to leave the AERA, I said, "I AM the Equal Rights Association. Not one of you amounts to shucks except for me" (Burns, Ward, 110).

Harriot: Mother could be very selfish sometimes. And I do think that she took advantage of Susan's devotion to her.

Susan: On Tues, Nov. 5th, 1872, I went to the Rochester Barbershop and I voted. I voted for Ulysses S. Grant because he said that women's rights deserved a platform. Well, three weeks later, a U.S. Marshal showed up on my doorstep with a warrant for my arrest.

Lucy: It seemed to me that Susan was, as usual, fighting for suffrage with all of her heart, while Elizabeth, as usual, was fighting for herself. And it wasn't just that she didn't vote...it was that she was perpetually absent.

Susan: At about the same time, my sister Mary and I moved into our family home. For the first time in my life, I was master of my house. I immediately invited Lizzie to move in with us...living together, we could work non-stop on the suffrage movement.

Elizabeth: Susan was my dearest friend. But in some ways, she was also "the thorn in my side for forty years" (Griffith, 201). I didn't want to be under her nose all day, being expected to work non-stop on speeches and lectures. But I recognized that there was more work to be done.

Elizabeth: She asked if she'd see me again. I replied, "Oh yes...if not here, then in the hereafter, if there is one" (Burns, Ward, 207). Susan's and my life were much too intertwined for us to be parted by death.

Susan: A few days later, I received a telegram from Harriot telling me of Lizzie's death. "It was an awful hush...it seemed impossible that the voice was hushed that I longed to hear for fifty years. What a world it is...it goes right on and on...no matter who lives or who dies" (Burns, Ward, 208).

Febb: My Harry was always a good boy. And he knew that his mama wanted to be able to vote. I hadn't seen much activity on his part, so I sent him a little letter. "Dear Son, Vote for suffrage and don't keep them in doubt. I notice some of the speeches against. They were very bitter. I have been watching to see how you stood, but have not seen anything yet. Don't forget to be a good boy and help Mrs. Catt put the "rat" in ratification. With lots of love, Mama" (Wikipedia).

Harry: "I know that a mother's advice is always the safest for a boy to follow" (Burns, Ward, 224). At the very last minute I changed my vote to *yea*.

Narrator: Where are we today?

*****Clips of Video Interviews with women about what voting means to them*****

Narrator: Now...the story Behind the Vote.

MONOLOGUE #1---SARA BETH (President of the WCGBR, early 40s)

Good Evenin' y'all! I'm Sara Beth Hackney, President of the Women's Council of Greater Baton Rouge. Thanks so much for spending your election eve with us. Our goal tonight is to raise awareness about voting, particularly among women. How many of you here tonight have voted in at least one election? Two elections? Three elections? How many of you know of Susan B. Anthony? How about Elizabeth Cady Stanton? As you know, ladies, we have these extraordinary women to thank for our voting rights. They dedicated fifty years, their lives, to women's suffrage, and didn't live to see women win the vote. Doesn't seem fair, does it?

I don't know about you, but I know that by the time I was four years old, my mama was takin' me to the polls with her. I would sit there, watchin' people go in and out of the booths for sometimes three hours at a time. One day I asked her why she waited in line so long for something that wasn't at Disneyworld, and she said that votin' was important...that it really meant something. That day, voting meant that I got an ice cream cone for behaving, so I was in full support. Mom trained me to be a voter like Pavlov trained his dog. But my reasons for voting have moved beyond ice cream over the years...voting is important to me for many, many reasons.

Since you're here, I'm sure that you've all thought about what voting means to you. I'd love to hear your thoughts. (*Encourage audience discussion...will probably have a couple of people planted in the audience*).

(This is a very passionate group...how excitin'.) Now, tomorrow, take your passion to the polls and vote, vote, vote! The change begins with you. We have a special treat for you tonight. Courtesy of PBS Great Performances, we have a rarely seen documentary about the women's suffrage movement, BEHIND THE VOTE. This special focuses on Stanton and Anthony, their lives, their work and the hardships on the road to the women's vote. Once again, thank you for being here tonight. Without further ado, please enjoy BEHIND THE VOTE.

BEHIND THE VOTE VIDEO: Part Two

Elizabeth: "What a pity it is she's a girl!" (Burns, Ward, 12), I heard my father's law students say that to him over and over when I was growing up.

Daniel: "Oh, my daughter, I wish you were a boy." I said that to Elizabeth time and time again. If she had been born a boy, I would have been proud of her ambitions. But she was a woman, and social reform was not woman's work!

Narrator: (*pics of Elizabeth's childhood/early adulthood. Home, schoolhouse, law offices, etc.*) Elizabeth Cady Stanton was born on November 12, 1815 in Johnstown, NY. She was the eighth

child of Judge Daniel Cady and Margaret Livingston Cady. Because she spent much of her time with her father at his law office, she witnessed many injustices that would shape her life's work.

Elizabeth: When I was 8 years old, this woman named Flora Campbell came into my father's law office. She had left her husband because he was a drunk, and she had nowhere to go because he had taken her entire inheritance, including her house, as well as her children.

Daniel: Elizabeth was so angry because she expected me to be able to fix anything. All I could do was stand there, helpless, and tell her that there was nothing I could do, according to the law.

Elizabeth: Well, I marched right up to Flora Campbell, and said, "don't worry, Ms. Campbell. I promise that I will go through all of Papa's law books with a pair of scissors, and snip out every statute that is unfair to women" (Griffith, 11).

Daniel: I was mortified. Children should be seen and not heard. Especially female children. But, I admired her spirit. I told her, "when you are grown up and able to prepare a speech, you must talk to the legislators about the sufferings of women, and if you can persuade them to pass new laws, the old ones will be a dead letter" (Burns, Ward, 12-13).

Elizabeth: And so, ironically, my life's work was laid out by Papa, who would be one of my biggest naysayers. In fact, he was outdone only by my husband, Henry.

Henry: I didn't appreciate Lizzie's radicalism. Public meetings are not the place for talk of birth control or the comfort of bloomers, for God's sake. Elizabeth was bad for my political campaigns. And honestly, she was bad for my ego. That's why we parted ways later in life.

Daniel: Elizabeth was too spirited for her own good. I knew she would always meet with trouble and always bring trouble upon her family.

Narrator: (*pics of Elizabeth as a child, transitioning into pics of Susan's childhood to mirror Elizabeth's childhood pics*). While Elizabeth was rebelling against the expectations of being a young girl, Susan B. Anthony was being born. Anthony was born near Adams, Massachusetts on February 15, 1820 to Quaker farmer Daniel Anthony and Lucy Read Anthony. Like Elizabeth, at a young age, Susan was made aware of the plight of women.

Susan: When I was 11, the foreman at my father's factory quit suddenly. I told my father that he should promote one of the female factory employees to replace him, and he told me that a woman would never be able to run a factory. And just like that, my torch for women's rights was ignited.

Elizabeth: I've never seen anyone with the level of energy and drive that Susan has. For her, slowing down is not an option. During one of her winter speaking tours of New York, she hurt her back so badly that she had to lie down on a sleigh and be dragged from meeting to meeting. She would then be carried inside and somehow find the strength to stand for the duration of her speech. She's a force of nature.

Susan: I had to be a force of nature. There was a huge amount of work to be done, and because Elizabeth chose marriage and a family, the majority of the work fell to me.

Narrator: (*pics of Elizabeth and Henry, etc.*) At age 24, while Susan was working as a teacher to support her family, Elizabeth met her future husband, Henry B. Stanton, an abolitionist and future politician. Since Henry was 10 years her senior and according to her friends, engaged to be married, Elizabeth contented herself with admiring him from afar, in the audiences of his abolitionist meetings.

Elizabeth: I was so in love with him. We went horseback riding one day, and on the way back, he told me he loved me and asked me to marry him. He was my knight in shining armor... everything I thought a man should be. Marriage isn't everything it's cracked up to be. (*cut to shot of Henry looking peeved.*)

Narrator: (*pics of Elizabeth and Henry, leading into pics of World Anti-Slavery Convention and Lucretia Mott*) Despite her father's protests, Elizabeth Cady and Henry Stanton married on May 1, 1840 in Johnstown, NY. Elizabeth refused to drop her maiden name, of which Henry was in full support.

Henry: I thought Lizzie was very exciting. She also wanted to strike the word "obey" from the wedding vows. She was so daring...so headstrong. What I initially *loved* most about Elizabeth was what I ended up *resenting* most about her in the end.

Narrator: (*pics*) And so, the power couple headed for London for their honeymoon, and for the first World Anti-Slavery Convention. Here, a friendship would be forged between Elizabeth and Lucretia Mott that would change history and set in motion the women's suffrage movement.

Elizabeth: Even though Lucretia was an abolitionist delegate to the World Anti-Slavery Convention, she had to sit in a roped off section and was not allowed to participate because she was a woman. I was in awe of her composure when she was arguing with the opposition..."calmy and skillfully Lucretia parried all their attacks" (Burns, Ward, 30).

Susan: Which, of course, Elizabeth learned to do in her own speech-making during the women's suffrage movement...her ability to wrap an audience around her little finger was stunning. She got away with a lot more that way.

Lucretia Mott: I thought Mrs. Cady Stanton was "bright, open and lovely" (Burns, Ward, 32). I thought that she had much potential as a women's rights activist; but I perpetually told her, "Thou must ground thyself." She drew attention for all the wrong reasons, like talk of birth control and women's divorce rights, and her radicalism was a bit unsettling, even to me.

Henry: Elizabeth spent most of our honeymoon with Mrs. Mott. Instead of performing her wifely duties in the privacy of our bedchamber, she was with that Quaker woman, eating and shopping and sitting in on conventions. Mrs. Mott just encouraged her independence and feminism which was bad news for me!

Elizabeth: I became much stronger under Lucretia's watch. Before Henry and I left to return to America, Lucretia and I vowed to hold a convention that would advocate for women's rights. I could think of nothing else.

Narrator: (*pics of Seneca Falls Convention, etc.*) It would be 8 years before Elizabeth and Lucretia enacted their resolution, in the form of the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention.

Coming up: (*footage from Part 3 of Behind the Vote*) Women's rights work is set back 8 years due to the birth of Elizabeth and Henry's first 3 children ... the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention and its successes and failures ... the beginning of a partnership that would forever change the face of women's rights ... and the end of an important relationship for Elizabeth ... on Behind the Vote.

MONOLOGUE #2---Taylor, jaded teen, 17

Because I'm grounded for the rest of my life. My mom came home from work early, and found Tommy and me naked on the couch. Sort of, anyway. Nope, no phone rights. It was totally worth it, though. He's hot. And he has a motorcycle. That really pisses mom off. No, she's out early voting. Hence the phone privileges. At least maybe now she'll shut up about the election. Like I give a shit. If I have to sit through another lecture on the importance of voting, I'll gouge my eyes out. Like I'm ever gonna vote. Cause it's pointless. Plus, it turns people against each other. Voting should only take place in countries where people understand what democracy is. We don't. Oh, come on, you know it's just another way for the government to control us. Since when are you so like "yay, voting!?"

This show is sooo boring. This special on the suffragettes. No, this is the only thing I'm allowed to watch...we have a test on it tomorrow in AP History. Yeah, it's like 10% of our grade. Yeah, I think Mr. Shaw has a hard on for the suffragettes. At least it's better than that touring shit that came to school last week. I didn't tell you about that? Hilarious. The ghosts of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony and Lucretia Mott haunted this poor Congress dude from TN until he agreed to let women have the vote. It was called...wait for it... "A Suffragette's Carol." I'm totally serious. Elizabeth Cady Stanton had this really thick southern accent...she sounded like Scarlet O'Hara. And the girl playing Susan B. Anthony was totally wasted or something cause she kept having to run off stage to puke. It was really gross. The guy playing Elizabeth's husband was hot, though. So that was cool. Yeah, he looked kinda like Ryan Reynolds. (*Mom enters*).

Yes, Ch. 33. It just started a few minutes ago, so you haven't missed much. Don't forget to vote tomorrow! It's important! I gotta go...my mom's here. (Should Rachel tell Taylor that she's pregnant at this point? If so, add line about Rachel's pregnancy. (*Hanging up the phone*). Sorry, mom. I didn't think you'd mind if I called Rachel to remind her to vote tomorrow.

BEHIND THE VOTE VIDEO: Part 3

Susan: The women's suffrage movement was initially set back 8 years due to Elizabeth's need for a husband and children. Marriage is a sign of weakness...a sign that you can't do it alone.

Having a husband and children is fine for the average woman, but for women like Lizzie and me, women “who had a special call for special work, having a family was an obstacle to the movement” (Burns, Ward, 83).

Elizabeth: I begged Susan to let it go. Who was to carry on our work if neither of us had children? My daughter, Harriot, poured her soul into the suffrage movement after Susan and I were gone. Not only did she get to vote, she ran for the New York State Assembly. My daughter changed women’s lives for the better. Susan can’t argue with that.

Narrator: (*pics of Elizabeth and boys, pics of Seneca Falls house, etc.*) In the 8 years between the international Anti-Slavery Convention and the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention, Elizabeth gave birth to 3 boys, Daniel, Henry and Gerrit, and moved from Boston to Seneca Falls, NY. With Henry mostly away from home, campaigning for office, Elizabeth was left alone to raise 3 children.

Elizabeth: I hated small town life. I hated being a housewife with an absent husband. “I suffered from mental hunger, and the wearied, anxious look of the majority of women” (Griffith, 50) made me want to take action. I wanted to empower women, and in my opinion that started with getting the vote. And that’s when I ran into Lucretia again.

Lucretia: After 8 years, I found myself at a party with Mrs. Cady Stanton. I was there with my sister, Mrs. Coffin Wright and my friend, Mrs. McClintock. Mrs. Cady Stanton spoke with such fire and passion that we were moved into action. And the Seneca Falls Convention was thus conceived.

Susan: For the Seneca Falls Convention, Lizzie and the other women drafted a Declaration of Sentiments that she modeled after the Declaration of Independence. She got 68 women and 32 men to sign in favor of the women’s rights movement. Lizzie also presented 11 amendments at the convention...the most important was #9, “the duty of the women of this country to secure to themselves their sacred right to the elective franchise” (Griffith, 56).

Lucretia: “Nowhere on earth did women have the right to vote.” I was quite concerned. “Lizzie,” I said, “Thou wilt make the convention ridiculous” (Burns, Ward, 40).

Henry: I was in favor of the declaration, but I felt strongly that “asking for suffrage would make the whole proceeding a farce” (Burns, Ward, 40). I told Lizzie that I couldn’t be associated with such radical views and I begged her to strike the suffrage amendment. She wouldn’t, so I left town until the convention was over. I had a political career to think about.

Daniel: As soon as I heard about this convention, I took my horse and carriage straight up to Seneca Falls to see if Elizabeth had completely lost her mind. If she had been born a boy, this ridiculous behavior would have been acceptable.

Elizabeth: What Henry and Papa never understood is that I didn’t need their support. I’ve always had a very strong sense of self, and I knew that one day, women would have the vote.

My good friend, Frederick Douglass was at the convention, and he spoke on our behalf. The resolution passed.

Lucretia: “Mr. Douglass’ eloquence helped carry the day” (Burns, Ward, 41). After the convention I said to Mrs. Cady Stanton, “Thou are so wedded to this cause that thou must expect to act as pioneer in the work” (Griffith, 60).

Narrator: (*pics of Elizabeth and Declaration of Sentiments*) And pioneer, she did. After the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention, Elizabeth and the Declaration of Sentiments came under great attack because of the amendment for voting. Because of this, several of the signers of the Declaration of Sentiments asked to have their names removed. But Elizabeth stood firm in her determination. To her, bad publicity was still publicity.

Elizabeth: I told Lucretia that I thought “it would start women thinking, and men, too. And when men and women think about a new question, the first step is taken.” I still believe that “the great fault of mankind is that it will not think” (Griffith, 58).

Narrator: (*pics of The Lily, Elizabeth’s writings leading in to pics of Susan B. Anthony*) So the women’s suffrage movement had officially begun. Elizabeth began writing articles about suffrage, temperance, schools and childcare care that were published in a temperance monthly, *The Lily*. It was through *The Lily’s* editor, Amelia Bloomer, that Elizabeth met her most important partner in the suffrage movement, Susan B. Anthony.

Elizabeth: I immediately liked Susan. “With her good earnest face and genial smile” (Griffith, 73). When she smiled, she lit up the room. And she was the yin to my yang. Unlike me, Susan was unmarried without children, so she had time to book venues, fundraise, organize campaigns and give speeches. I could write fiery speeches, and she could deliver them with fire. “I forged the thunderbolts, she fired them” (Griffith, 74).

Susan: I had heard of Lizzie because my parents went to her second women’s rights convention in Rochester. And my colleagues, Antoinette Brown and Lucy Stone, followed her suffrage work. I found her voice to be “soul stirring” and I “liked her vastly” (Griffith, 74). Lizzie was an inspired speech writer, whereas my rhetorical skills were lacking. And because she refused to stop having babies, she needed me to be in the field. Henry used to always say that Lizzie had more of a marriage with me than with him.

Henry: Lizzie had more of a marriage with Susan than with me. But then again, I took second place to the women’s rights movement well before Lizzie met Susan.

Harriot: I have several childhood memories of Aunt Susan and Mother sitting at our kitchen table, which was always covered with books about the Constitution. Aunt Susan was a pretty dominant figure during my childhood...Daddy always partially blamed her for his estrangement from Mother.

Narrator: Together, Susan and Elizabeth organized a women’s rights convention in Albany, NY, that coincided with a state legislators meeting just two blocks away. Susan printed out 50

copies of Elizabeth's speech on suffrage and women's rights and placed copies of the desks of all the legislators.

Elizabeth: My speech at Albany was one of the biggest events in my life, and it certainly raised awareness of the women's suffrage movement. But it ended my relationship with my father. He told me that if I spoke at Albany, he would write me out of his will. His threats just made me want to speak more than ever.

Daniel: I begged Elizabeth not to speak about women's suffrage in Albany. "Speech making is unseemly for a wife and mother. And it was an embarrassment to me and to my family" (Burns, Ward, 77). I told her that her first lecture would be a very expensive one.

Susan: I was ready to hit the ground running after the Albany women's rights meeting, but the pressure from Lizzie's family got to her.

Henry: I did not understand Elizabeth's need to work outside the house. We had four children at the time, and they were a handful on a good day. I resented her need for independence.

Elizabeth: And by this time, I resented Henry.

Susan: And then, she got pregnant. Again.

Coming up: Elizabeth has 3 more children, costing time to the women's suffrage movement ... Elizabeth, Susan and Lucy form the American Equal Rights Assoc (AERA) ... Elizabeth fights for birth control and divorce rights but against the 14th and 15th amendments ... a schism divides the AERA, resulting in the formation of rival suffrage groups, setting the movement back 20 years ... on Behind the Vote.

MONOLOGUE # 3---Lois (70s, poll worker)

To me, voting means that I get a chance to participate in assuring the success of whatever cause I believe in. Whether it is voting for the president or voting on where to take my grandkids for vacation, the democratic process is a marvelously peaceful way to make decisions. It means we don't have to kill each other every time a decision needs to be made. It is important to me as a Christian to resolve conflict peacefully- voting gives me that opportunity.

As a poll worker, most of my experiences have been positive: I meet lots of people...some are area political figures which is nice as an active citizen. But I've had some negative experiences as a poll worker, too. For all their charm, politicians can be lying sons of bitches! For instance, since candidates are not allowed within 100 ft. of the polling venue, they send people they know into the venue to hang around and talk to voters. This is against the law and it is up to us to know who they are and kick them out before they can influence voters. Some candidates send people in wearing t-shirts with their name on it- that is not allowed and we have them turn shirts inside out or leave. Last election, a guy wearing a John McCain shirt came in supposedly to vote. When we told him to zip his hoodie or turn his shirt inside out or leave, he got loud and belligerent. A cop from the next room heard him and came in to make him leave. But the guy's mission had been

accomplished- he got attention drawn to his candidate by coming in and causing a scene in the venue which was full of voters.

An incident during the last election for State Representative was probably the worst. Political signs also have to adhere to the 100 ft. boundary rule and only if they do not cause a hazard. Well, a couple put up a sign that was as high as my neck at the intersection of our venue and a busy highway. We went out to ask them to move it and they attacked us verbally- cussing at us, calling us retarded and stupid while accusing us of being partial to the other candidate. We were sitting ducks, because we are not allowed to argue...it could be construed as being partial to a candidate. So we listened while we tried to move the sign ourselves. I'm 78 years old and I've already had two heart cath! I didn't sign up for manual labor! Those people had us so upset because they attacked our integrity; they don't even know us! I have been working with the same group of poll workers for years and we pride ourselves on being impartial and running a clean election.

This election is a really important one...I think that the young women are gonna determine the winner of this one. And I sure do hope they're paying attention to what the candidates have to say. Because they will be affected more than anyone else in this country. Well, the young ladies and the old folks like me. I know that I've certainly been watching this election closely. You see, I had my second heart attack earlier this year, 2 months after I lost my job and my insurance. I had to have my second heart cath, and a second stint put in. I would be screwed right now if one of the early provisions of ObamaCare hadn't saved my old ass. So you see, if the election doesn't go my way, I'll lose my health insurance again.

I think the biggest disappointment with the voting process is the lack of interest in voting. In our county, only 10% of eligible voters actually voted. We have elected officials who won by as few as nine votes! The apathy is disheartening. On a national level, it is scary to know that even though the elected officials won by a majority vote, those numbers don't reveal how many eligible voters did not vote. If those people would vote, it would change outcomes. Besides, if you don't vote, you can't complain. And I'm never going to give up my right to complain!

BEHIND THE VOTE VIDEO: Part Four

Narrator: (*pics/documents*) After the success of the Albany women's rights meeting, Elizabeth focused on being a mother, and gave birth to three more children. She still wrote speeches from home for Susan, Lucy Stone and Antoinette Brown to deliver. It wasn't long, however, before Lucy and Antoinette started families of their own as well.

Susan: Elizabeth, Lucy and Antoinette had the ability to actually change the system, and they gave themselves over to pushing babies out. And that left me to be the face of the movement! Me, with my lazy eye and my surly disposition.

Elizabeth: "My whole soul was in the work, but my hands belonged to my family" (Burns, Ward, 77).

Narrator: (*pics of Elizabeth, Daniel, etc.*) But it wasn't long before Elizabeth was able to rejoin Susan on the road. Six years after Elizabeth's falling out with her father, Judge Daniel Cady passed away. While she was devastated by his death, it allowed her the freedom to begin her public speaking career again.

Harriot: After Grandpa's death, Aunt Susan was always at the house. And when she was there, we had to stay out of sight so that she and Mom could work. Aunt Susan being at the house meant that Dad, if he was there, would be in a bad mood, and that we'd never see Mom.

Elizabeth: I would say that in general, Susan "ruled more by compulsion than by attraction" (Burns, Ward, 85).

Narrator: (*pics, etc.*) But not everyone felt that way. Lucy Stone, for example, believed Elizabeth to be the problem child of the suffrage movement. She feared that Elizabeth's radical views on birth control, women's divorce rights and religion would turn women away from the burgeoning women's rights movement. It was only thanks to Susan that Lucy tolerated Elizabeth.

Lucy: Her first big return speech was for the 10th annual National Woman's Rights Convention. All she talked about was divorce rights and how terrible marriage was. I think women's divorce rights are important, too, but suffrage was our #1 priority. I don't know that that was true for Elizabeth.

Elizabeth: Getting the women's vote was the key to getting other women's rights...which is why I always fought hardest for suffrage. But that doesn't mean that I thought it was the most important issue.

Susan: I kept reminding Lizzie and Lucy that this was greater than ourselves and we needed to put our petty issues aside. And for a while we did. Long enough to get the American Equal Rights Assoc. up and running.

Narrator: But the truce was short-lived. Shortly after the American Equal Rights Assoc. was formed, the 14th and 15th amendments were ratified, which allowed African American men to vote. To everyone's surprise, Elizabeth threw a fit about this huge success.

Henry: I tried to explain to Elizabeth that this was "the negro's hour." President Lincoln always said "one war at a time, so I say one question at a time" (Burns, Ward, 103). I knew that women would be next.

Elizabeth: What did Henry know? Did he "believe the African race was composed entirely of males?" (Burns, Ward, 103). Either men and women, black and white, were equal or they were not. Otherwise, we would have an "aristocracy of sex" (103).

Lucy: I understood that Elizabeth and Susan were trying to push the movement forward, but blatant racism was not the way to do it. I told Elizabeth to try to focus on the women, not their color.

Susan: And so we did just that. Kansas was going to have a vote for woman suffrage in November, so Lucy went there to rally the women. Lizzie and I gathered over 28,000 petitions from women wanting to vote in NY and presented them to the suffrage committee at the constitutional convention.

Lucy: That's when Elizabeth and Susan started keeping company with George Francis Train, a racist, small-minded con man. When the two of them partnered with that *fop*, I was flabbergasted.

Harriet: Mr. Train was a millionaire. They needed money to spread their word, and he needed a cause. But I do believe that he did more damage than good.

Elizabeth: If it hadn't been for George, we never would have been able to start our newspaper, *The Revolution*. And let's face it. No other millionaires were willing to support suffrage.

Lucy: The final straw for me was when I saw my name associated with the message: "ALL WISE WOMEN WILL OPPOSE THE FIFTEENTH AMENDMENT" (Burns, Ward, 113) in *The Revolution*. It was bad enough that that filthy paper discussed birth control, abortion and prostitution, but to make such a blatantly racist statement? That was when we broke away from Miss Anthony and Mrs. Stanton.

Susan: Lucy was jealous, pure and simple. Lizzie and I had a paper, and she didn't. When Lucy told me that she was going to leave the AERA, I said, "I AM the Equal Rights Association. Not one of you amounts to shucks except for me" (Burns, Ward, 110).

Elizabeth: We called an emergency meeting of the AERA, hoping that we could smooth Lucy's ruffled feathers. It was too late, though. The damage was done...and unfortunately, I lost a lot of my former allies, including Frederick Douglas. Every war has its casualties.

Lucy: Frederick, Antoinette and I started the American Woman Suffrage Association, "so that those who do not oppose the Fifteenth Amendment, or take the tone of *The Revolution*, may yet have an organization with which they can work in harmony" (Burns, Ward, 123).

Susan: Lizzie and I started the National Woman Suffrage Association in response.

Elizabeth: Now we would be free to fight for whatever we wanted without fear of retribution from Lucy and the other suffrage purists. And with the National Woman Suffrage Association, we tackled birth control, divorce rights, an eight-hour work day, equal pay for women and of course, suffrage.

Narrator: And so, in 1870, two separate women's suffrage organizations set out to win the vote for women, not realizing that in doing so, they would set the suffrage movement back twenty years.

Coming Up: Susan defies the legal system and votes ... Elizabeth delivers the speech of a lifetime before the U.S. Congress ... and after a fifty year battle, Elizabeth and Susan shuffle off this mortal coil without seeing women get the vote ... on Behind the Vote.

MONOLOGUE # 4---Catherine, voter suppression victim (late 20s/early 30s)

A fucking tail light. A fucking tail light is keeping me from voting this year. I've voted in every election since I turned 18...and to have missed the opportunity to have my voice heard in THIS election? When speaking up for women's rights is *this* important? Unfuckingbelievable.

About 6 weeks ago, I got pulled over because my passenger side tail light was out...ironically, the replacement bulb was *in* my passenger seat. Anyway, the cop took my ID and looked me up, etc and long story short, I had been driving on a suspended license for 5 years. Speeding ticket in TN that I barely remember from 2007. Well, he called for back up, because apparently all 115 lbs of me posed a real threat to him, and while they scared the shit outta me, I didn't have to go to jail. I did, however, have to be booked a couple of days later, and my license was literally taken from my hands. My court date was set for Nov. 11, five days after the presidential election.

My plan had been to get my Louisiana license and register to vote in Baton Rouge...I've always really enjoyed going to the polls. My license and voter registration are currently in TN, and since my TN driver's license has been suspended, I obviously can't get a LA license. Without any kind of valid government issued ID, I can't register to vote in the state of LA. I was hoping that I'd find a loophole since LA isn't a voter suppression state, but to no avail. I checked into the option of absentee voting in the state of TN, but TN is a voter suppression state, meaning that they require a VALID government issued photo ID. I was in a three way phone conversation with Chip from Knox County Election Commission and Brandon from the Knox Co. DMV for three hours yesterday trying to work something out, only to be told once again that until Nov. 11th, I was not eligible to vote in any election. I have to wonder if the verdict would have been different if I was registered as a Republican.

After my encounter with voter suppression, I started doing some research. There have been documented cases of some form of voter suppression in at least nine states as well as in both the 2004 and 2008 presidential elections. The valid picture government issued ID law is just the latest in a long list of voter suppression ploys. And typically, those most affected are minorities and the elderly.

So, I feel helpless. That's why I'm here in Free Speech Alley participating in Political Awareness Day. I've been here since 8 am registering students to vote. We provide them with laptops and everything, so that they can register, or change party affiliation if they want to. I may not be able to vote in this election, which is fucking insane, but at least I can help other people get ready to use their voices.

BEHIND THE VOTE VIDEO: Part Five

Narrator: In early 1870, *The Revolution* had to be sold. Elizabeth took her usual attitude of “what’s done is done,” but Susan took the failure of the newspaper to heart.

Susan: It was “like signing my own death warrant” (Burns, Ward, 133).

Elizabeth: Susan knew that “when I drop anything, I drop it absolutely. You cannot imagine what a deep gulf lies between me and the past” (Burns, Ward, 133).

Narrator: The demise of *The Revolution* left Susan with a ten thousand dollar debt. Elizabeth refused to pay a single cent of it, even though she could afford to help.

Susan: It took me six years, but I paid off that darn debt. I’ve never understood why Lizzie was so unwilling to help me, though. It was very hurtful.

Harriot: Mother could be very selfish sometimes. And I do think that she took advantage of Susan’s devotion to her.

Narrator: Tensions continued to grow between Susan and Elizabeth as Elizabeth seemed to grow more and more distant from the suffrage movement.

Elizabeth: I was as passionate about suffrage as I ever was, but I hated those blasted conventions! “I can’t bear having to hold my tongue for fear of offending someone” (Burns, Ward, 134). Plus, Henry and I wanted to spend time with my children and their families. That’s what your dotage is supposed to be about. Not work.

Narrator: But Susan’s passion was reignited when Francis Minor, a lawyer from St. Louis, and his wife, Virginia announced their concept, the “new departure,” which supposed that women already had the right to vote under the 14th and 15th amendments, since women were in fact citizens. The Minors encouraged women all over the country to vote in the 1872 elections.

Susan: On Tues, Nov. 5th, 1872, I went to the Rochester Barbershop and I voted. I voted for Ulysses S. Grant because he said that women’s rights deserved a platform. Well, three weeks later, a U.S. Marshal showed up on my doorstep with a warrant for my arrest.

Elizabeth: I told Susan that there would be some kind of penalty. That’s why I didn’t vote that day...I had to consider my family.

Susan: The marshal was ridiculously cordial. He treated me like a lady, so I demanded to be handcuffed, just like any other felon. I was taken down to the courthouse and my bail was fixed at \$500. I refused to pay, hoping that my case would be taken before the Supreme Court, and the judge raised my bail to \$1000. I still refused to pay.

Lucy: I heard that her lawyer bailed her out, and that she was mad because he spoiled her chances of making it to the Supreme Court with her case. I was just glad that I wasn't associated with all of it.

Susan: 150 women voted in 1872...all 150 of us were tried and convicted before we even had a real hearing. But because my tender hearted attorney, Henry Selden, couldn't stand to see a woman in jail, our voting attempts had no legal impact.

Harriot: I don't think Aunt Susan ever really forgave Mother for not voting that year, either. And while we enjoyed our time with Mom, I can understand Aunt Susan's frustration.

Lucy: It seemed to me that Susan was, as usual, fighting for suffrage with all of her heart, while Elizabeth, as usual, was fighting for herself. And it wasn't just that she didn't vote...it was that she was perpetually absent.

Elizabeth: When Henry died, my priorities became crystal clear. I swore that I would spend as much time with my children as possible, and that is exactly what I did. And I still wrote for Susan. It was during this time that she and I drafted what would become the 19th amendment.

Susan: Because I was running the National Woman Suffrage Association virtually alone, I recruited several young suffragettes for the cause, including Rachel Foster Avery, Anna Howard Shaw and Carrie Chapman Catt, which gave us a second wind.

Lucy: My daughter, Alice, started pressuring me to make up with Susan and Elizabeth so that we could unite our organizations. Since Susan had turned it into a suffrage only movement, I was willing to do so.

Narrator: In February, 1890, the rival organizations united to become the National American Woman Suffrage Association. Elizabeth was president, Susan was vice president and Lucy was executive committee chair.

Susan: At about the same time, my sister Mary and I moved into our family home. For the first time in my life, I was master of my house. I immediately invited Lizzie to move in with us...living together, we could work non-stop on the suffrage movement.

Elizabeth: Susan was my dearest friend. But in some ways, she was also "the thorn in my side for forty years" (Griffith, 201). I didn't want to be under her nose all day, being expected to work non-stop on speeches and lectures. But I recognized that there was more work to be done.

Narrator: So, in 1892, they teamed up for one last hurrah. After years of trying to appear in front of the U.S. Congress, Elizabeth was invited to appear before the House Committee on the Judiciary, along with Susan and Lucy. Elizabeth delivered her *Solitude of Self* address, which has become synonymous with the suffrage movement.

Susan: It was her masterpiece. It was "the strongest and most unanswerable argument and appeal ever made for the full freedom and franchise of women" (Burns, Ward, 189).

Elizabeth: It was my best speech. I delivered it again at my National American Woman Suffrage Association retirement a few weeks later and then once more before the Senate.

Susan: After Elizabeth retired as president of the NAWSA, I stepped into the position...I nominated Anna and Carrie as my successors, and took over when I resigned in 1900.

Narrator: Even though Susan and Elizabeth grew apart after Elizabeth's resignation as president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, Susan made every effort to see her whenever possible. And so Susan visited her dear friend Elizabeth for the last time in June 1902.

Susan: I was making the rounds for suffrage in NY, and stopped by to see Lizzie. I just had the weirdest feeling while I was there...like I should be memorizing every aspect of our meeting. When I was leaving I hugged Lizzie and started crying. And I knew that was the last time I would see her.

Elizabeth: She asked if she'd see me again. I replied, "Oh yes...if not here, then in the hereafter, if there is one" (Burns, Ward, 207). Susan's and my life were much too intertwined for us to be parted by death.

Susan: A few days later, I received a telegram from Harriot telling me of Lizzie's death. "It was an awful hush...it seemed impossible that the voice was hushed that I longed to hear for fifty years. What a world it is...it goes right on and on...no matter who lives or who dies" (Burns, Ward, 208).

Elizabeth: I rather wish that I had outlived Susan, just to spare her that pain. I would have had my family to help me get through it...she had no one really.

Harriot: The morning of her death, Mom asked to be dressed and to have her hair done as if she was making a public appearance. "I placed a table for her to rest her hands on...she drew herself up very erect...and there she stood seven or eight minutes, steadily looking out proudly before her. I think she was mentally making an address" (Burns, Ward, 208).

Susan: Lizzie's funeral was lovely...at the head of her casket was the Declaration of Sentiments, which many people believe launched the women's suffrage movement, and on her casket was a picture of the two of us. She was my better half.

Narrator: In March, 1906, less than four years later, Susan Anthony died. 10,000 people attended her funeral. Less than a month before her death, however, she attended the annual National American Woman Suffrage Association convention and gave her final speech.

Harriot: She was magnificent. Before she could even start speaking, the audience stood and applauded for her for almost fifteen minutes. Anna had to help her stay standing!

Susan: I wanted the next generation to know that “failure is impossible” (Burns, Ward, 212). I do so wish that Lizzie and I had seen women get the vote in our lifetime. “To have been striving for over sixty years for a little bit of justice no bigger than that, and yet to die without obtaining it...It seems so cruel” (212).

Coming up: Women finally get the vote thanks to the mother of a TN Elizabeth ... What does voting mean to women in this part of the country? ... on Behind the Vote.

MONOLOGUE # 5 ---Sara Beth, (president of the WCGBR, early 40s)

I hope y’all are enjoying this as much as I am! Before we show you the final segment of Behind the Vote, I’d like to leave you with some excerpts from Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s final speech before the U.S. Congress entitled, “The Solitude of Self.” For me, this speech is what voting is about. It’s about being willing to make a change yourself, instead of expectin’ other people to do it for you. It’s about havin’ a say in your life; in your choices. It’s about being willing to fight for a cause that is greater than yourself. It’s about knowing who you are. I’ll let Elizabeth’s words do the rest.

“The point I wish plainly to bring before you on this occasion is the individuality of each human soul. In discussing the rights of woman, we are to consider, first, what belongs to her as an individual, in a world of her own, the arbiter of her own destiny. Her rights under such circumstances are to use all her faculties for her own safety and happiness. Secondly, if we consider her as a citizen, as a member of a great nation, she must have the same rights as all other members, according to the fundamental principles of our Government. The strongest reason for giving woman all the opportunities for higher education, for the full development of her faculties, her forces of mind and body; a complete emancipation from the crippling influences of fear—is the solitude and personal responsibility of her own individual life. As an individual, she must rely on herself. For safety in an emergency, we must know the laws of navigation. To guide our own craft, we must be captain, pilot, engineer, with chart and compass to stand at the wheel; to watch the winds and waves, and know when to take in the sail, and to read the signs in the firmament over all. It matters not whether the solitary voyager is man or woman; nature, having endowed them equally, leaves them to their own skill and judgment in the hour of danger, and, if not equal to the occasion, alike they perish.

To appreciate the importance of fitting every human soul for independent action, think for a moment of the immeasurable solitude of self. We come into the world alone, unlike all who have gone before us, we leave it alone, under circumstances peculiar to ourselves. We ask for the complete development of every individual, first, for her own benefit and happiness.

The great lesson that nature seems to teach us at all ages is self-dependence, self-protection, self-support. In youth our bitter disappointments, our brightest hopes and ambitions, are known only to ourselves. Even our friendship and love we never fully share with another; there is something of every passion, in every situation, we conceal. Even so in our triumphs and defeats. When death sunders our nearest ties, alone we sit in the shadow of our affliction. Alike amid the greatest triumphs and darkest tragedies of life, we walk alone. In hours like these we realize the awful solitude of individual life, its pains, its penalties, its responsibilities; hours in which the

youngest and most helpless are thrown on their own resources for guidance and consolation. Seeing, then, that life must ever be a march and a battle, that each soldier must be equipped for his own protection, it is the height of cruelty to rob the individual of a single natural right.

To refuse political equality is to rob the ostracized of all self-respect; of credit in the market place; on recompense in the world of work, of a voice in choosing those who make and administer the law, a choice in the jury before whom they are tried, and in the judge who decides their punishment.

In age, when the pleasure of youth are passed, men and women alike must fall back on their own resources. If they cannot find companionship in books, if they have no interest in the vital questions of the hour, no interest in watching the consummation of reforms with which they might have been identified, they soon pass into their dotage. If, from a life-long participation in public affairs, a woman feels responsible for the laws regulating our system of education and the state of our world, then her solitude will at least be respectable, and she will not be driven to gossip or scandal for entertainment.

Nothing strengthens the judgment and quickens the conscience like individual responsibility. Nothing adds such dignity to character as the recognition of one's self-sovereignty; the right to an equal place...conceding, then, that the responsibilities of life rest equally on man and woman, that their destiny is the same, they need the same preparation for time and eternity. Whatever theories may be of woman's dependence on man, in the supreme moments of her life, he cannot bear her burdens. Alone she goes to the gates of death...no one can mitigate her pangs; and if her sorrow is greater than she can bear, alone she passes the gates into the vast unknown.

But when women are recognized as individuals, responsible for their own environments, thoroughly educated for all positions in life they may be called to fill; guided by their own conscience and judgment, then they will in a measure be fitted for those hours of solitude that come alike to all, whether prepared or otherwise.

There is a solitude which each and every one of us has always carried with him, more inaccessible than the ice-cold mountains, more profound than the midnight sea; the solitude of self. Such is individual life. Who, I ask you, can dare take on himself the rights, the duties, the responsibilities of another human soul?" (Ward, Burns, 189-197).

I just love that speech. So empowering. Thank you again for bein' with us tonight. I would so appreciate it you would fill out a comment card before you go...they will be collected at the door. Thank you once again, and please enjoy the final section of Behind the Vote.

BEHIND THE VOTE VIDEO: Part 6

Narrator: After the deaths of Susan and Elizabeth, Carrie Chapman Catt, Anna Howard Shaw and Harriot Stanton Blatch continued the suffrage work. For fourteen years, they campaigned, marched and rallied women across the country. Finally, in 1919, the Anthony Bill, written by Susan and Elizabeth in 1878, was passed by the House and Senate.

Susan: Because I was so much more involved with the next generation of suffragettes, my name was just better known...I fear that must have been frustrating to Lizzie.

Elizabeth: The bill was finally passed. At the end of the day, that's all I cared about.

Narrator: Now, the new suffragettes just had to get 36 states to ratify the 19th Amendment. Carrie had been rallying women state to state for years, so getting 35 states to ratify was surprisingly quick work. But on a hot, muggy August day in 1920, the ratification of the Anthony Amendment was in the hands of the state of Tennessee and a young rep. named Harry T. Burn.

Febb: My son, Harry, was the youngest man in the legislature. He was only 24. I was so proud of him.

Narrator: But Harry had pledged to vote against the 19th amendment, and was wearing a red rose in his buttonhole to show his support for the "antis" vs. the "suffs."

Harry: I got a letter from my mama just before the state senate meeting. She told me to "remember to be a good boy" and to vote in favor of the amendment. My mama "was a college woman, a student of national and international affairs who took an interest in all public issues. She could not vote. Yet the tenant farmers on our farm, some of whom were illiterate, could vote" (teachamericanhistory.org). I couldn't justify that to myself.

Febb: My Harry was always a good boy. And he knew that his mama wanted to be able to vote. I hadn't seen much activity on his part, so I sent him a little letter. "Dear Son, Vote for suffrage and don't keep them in doubt. I notice some of the speeches against. They were very bitter. I have been watching to see how you stood, but have not seen anything yet. Don't forget to be a good boy and help Mrs. Catt put the "rat" in ratification. With lots of love, Mama" (Wikipedia).

Harry: "I know that a mother's advice is always the safest for a boy to follow" (Burns, Ward, 224). At the very last minute I changed my vote to *yea*.

Febb: I've never been so proud of my boy in my life. I voted that fall for Democrat James Cox. President Harding won, but I had a say, and it was wonderful.

Harry: The "antis" were so mad that they came after me and I had to hide out in the attic of the Capitol building and eventually climb out a window. But my mama was awful proud of me.

Narrator: So the 19th Amendment, the Anthony Amendment, was ratified, and women were allowed to vote as of the fall of 1920. Although Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony were not alive to see this victory, their spirits were with the women that flocked to the polls that year. In 1920, voting was a new, exciting, liberating privilege to women all over the country. What does voting mean to women today?

VOTING NOW

*******I will record interviews with several women about what voting means to them to round out this section.*******

Elizabeth: Voting still matters to women. They have a real voice now. They must always use it.

Susan: I knew that women would get the vote. “Failure is Impossible.” Never forget that. No matter what you’re fighting for. “Failure is Impossible.”

END OF PLAY

CHAPTER 7: FONDAKOWSKI'S INFLUENCE

In November, 2012, my MFA class participated in a thesis creation workshop with Leigh Fondakowski. Leigh is a member of Tectonic Theatre Project, the company responsible for *The Laramie Project*, as well as the author of *SPILL*, a full length play about the BP Oil Spill. We met with her for several hours every day, and she led us through a series of exercises that were geared towards helping us develop our one person shows. We brought in seven minutes of text from our shows, and read them out loud. She asked us a series of questions on the first day, and we had two minutes to answer each of them; her objective was to get us to write down first instincts. The questions included: What is the central theme of your play? What do you love about your play? Why do I need to tell this story? What is the question that I'm trying to answer with this play? What do I want the audience to take away from my one-person show? What images come to mind when I think about my show? Where is the conflict? We were also asked to answer a series of questions on our own that were to be timed at 30 seconds a piece, including three resonant or significant ideas, images, moments, sounds, smells, objects, places and text/phrases. Lastly, we were also asked to write free form for two minutes about the world of the play.

I learned a great deal about *Behind the Vote* on the first day of the thesis workshop. When selecting my seven minutes of text that I wanted to share, I had a really hard time. I couldn't decide what I thought best represented my show. Because of the documentary, sound bite format of *Behind the Vote*, I didn't want to share any of the suffragette portion of my play, because it wasn't active, or particularly playable. So I decided to share two of my monologues, Lois, the poll worker, and Carrie, the voter suppression victim. They were my newest monologues, and I wanted to get feedback on them specifically.

Also, I found answering the questions to be very hard, especially free form writing about the world of the play. I couldn't seem to get a grasp on what the world of the play was, because of its structure. In answering the exercise questions, several things came to mind: making your voice heard, taking responsibility for your life and choices, registering students to vote, women in line at the polls, young women fighting alone, and the image of an older woman, at the end of her life, alone on stage. In thinking of locations, I came up with free speech alley, a voting booth, a voting location, city court, jail, a police car, my car, and Disneyworld. In thinking of objects, I came up with a laptop, sign, voting booth, driver's license, handcuffs, police car, cane, cigarette, glasses and a shawl; from that list, I narrowed the objects down to a laptop, my driver's license, a cigarette and a shawl.

After doing all of these exercises, I realized that the heart of my play was with Stanton and Anthony and their leadership within the women's suffrage movement, and yet, I wasn't actively telling their story. I was passively describing it via the *Behind the Music* format, which was increasingly seeming to trivialize their life struggle. I needed to figure out a way to make the story more immediate and present, and less distanced, as well as more dramatic and less narrative. My unifying principle seemed to be "to get out the vote." So, my next step was to figure out how to make this principle a part of each character's story. The unifying principle

needed to work on both a character, or micro, level and an overall story, or macro, level. I decided to scrap the video portion of the show, because it wasn't working on any kind of dramatic, active level. It was reading like a history lesson. I also had begun to feel like I was hiding behind the video, so that I didn't have to step up to the actual challenge of being alone and present on stage for a full forty minutes. Additionally, I was fearful that I couldn't pull the video portion off. In my head, the video portion was playing like a Tina Fey production, but realistically, with my limited time, resources and editing/filmography training and skills, it would be difficult to make it as professional as I would've liked for it to be.

I decided to keep most of my contemporary monologues because they had a point of view, and decided to tie them together as a family. The primary character became Cynthia, formerly known as Sara Beth, and her conflict became trying to convince her daughters, Taylor and Carrie, to vote, because they couldn't, or wouldn't, for various reasons. I decided to make Cynthia a women's rights teacher speaking to her students on the 2012 presidential election eve. I decided to dramatize Stanton's and Anthony's story by focusing on a single event. Deciding on the event was fairly easy for me since I was so drawn to Stanton's Solitude of Self speech; the event became the weeks leading up to her speech, and continued through the days following her death. The conflict became Anthony's fight to get Stanton involved in the suffrage movement again, despite Stanton's resistance to her efforts. Lastly, I tried to tie the two eras and stories together through ideas and themes as much as possible.

CHAPTER 8: THE FINAL DRAFT OF BEHIND THE VOTE

After a series of edits and rewrites, my one-person show was ready to be performed. On January 16th and January 20th, 2012, I performed my one-person show, *Behind the Vote*. Below is the text for my show.

BEHIND THE VOTE

(Projection # 1 will come up in blackout, as sound cue #1 begins. Sound should play for approx.. 30 sec. as well as projection.)

MONOLOGUE #1 – Susan B. Anthony, late 70s, 1891

(Lights come up dimly as Susan enters as sits at table in SR chair. She dips her pen into ink and begins to write. As Susan begins to write, sound cue # 1 and projection #1 fade out).

SUSAN: December 7, 1891...My dearest Elizabeth. It has been nearly two years since we have spoken, and even longer since we have seen each other. *(beat)* I know that I behaved badly...as I often do. I should not have reacted so childishly to your refusal of a room in my house. Please understand that I saw an opportunity to work side by side, day after day...forgive me...but can you blame me for wanting to spend as much time with you as possible? *(beat)* I know your desire is to spend your dotage with your children, Lizzie; that you see them as your life's work...but try to remember that they are only *half* of your life's work; you must not forget about the other half. We must finish the fight for suffrage, Lizzie. The next generation of women needs you. They need us. And we're running out of time. *(beat)* I long to hear your voice, Lizzie. I long to talk to you, face to face. But even more than that, I long to *work* with you once again, battling on the front line; to be inspired by your speeches, and use them to inspire other women. Remember, this is not for ourselves alone. If not for me, do it for your Margaret...or for your Harriot. *(beat)* Our moment has come, Lizzie...the moment that we've been fighting for for the past 50 years. The National Woman Suffrage Association has been invited to appear before the House Committee on the Judiciary. We can win, Lizzie...but not without you. You must write a speech and it must be an unanswerable argument. And *you* must be the one to deliver it. *(beat)* I've been delivering your speeches out of necessity for years, and thanks to your powerful words we have been a success, but the truth is, no one likes me, Lizzie. Too abrasive, they say, too direct, which we both know is the truth. But you, Lizzie; everyone loves you. And you *move* people. You *move* people into action. *(beat)*. I will be coming to New York next month on Jan. 17th, the day before our little visit to Congress. We will look over your speech, and we will ride together to our appointment. *(beat)* Failure is Impossible, Elizabeth. You taught me that. Yours, Susan.

(Susan freezes after "yours, Susan," and the lights fade. Sound #2 should fade in when Susan freezes as should projection #2. Both should stay up throughout transition in monologue #2 and should fade out as Cynthia finishes writing "sex" on the white board. Lights should come up when Cynthia is at white board, before she begins writing).

MONOLOGUE #2 – Cynthia, 40s, a Women’s Studies professor at LSU, 2012

CYNTHIA: (*treating audience like students in class*) SEX. Is one of the themes of *Anna Karenina*, which I have no doubt you prepared for today’s quiz. But I want to talk about the *other* subject that’s been on my mind all day: VOTING. I’m sure it’s on your minds as well, considering that tomorrow is election day. NO? (*beat*) I know what you’re thinking... “*I read 75 pages of Anna Karenina to cram for a quiz that we’re not even gonna take? Doesn’t she know Dexter was on last night? Voting?! Seriously? What does that have to do with Women’s Studies!*” A lot actually. (*beat*) Raise your hand if you’ve heard the name Susan B. Anthony. How about Elizabeth Cady Stanton? The women’s suffrage movement? Elizabeth and Susan dedicated fifty years, their lives, to women’s suffrage, and didn’t live to see women win the vote; but ladies, we couldn’t cast our ballots tomorrow without their efforts. (*beat*). When I was an undergrad at the University of TN in Knoxville, I was taking a women’s studies class just for fun...are you having fun yet? We were assigned a final project that involved researching an important woman in history, and I immediately thought of a statue the suffragettes that had been erected in downtown Knoxville. I did a little bit of research on Elizabeth, Susan and Lucretia Mott and was really inspired by their story. I got an A on the project. Anyway, that research and work led to other research and work in the field of women’s rights and now here I am. A women’s studies professor. So I have Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony to thank for *my* life’s work. And you have them to thank for a privilege many women will *not* exercise tomorrow. (*beat*) How many of you have voted before? How many of you will be voting in your first election tomorrow? (*beat*). My youngest daughter, Taylor, *should* be voting in her first election tomorrow. I certainly raised her that way...but she’s decided that she doesn’t *believe* in it. That voting is a way for the government to control us, and that our country is politically bankrupt. The thing is, I’m not sure that Taylor believes any of that...I think she just wants to be different. From me, at least. Last night I came home and Taylor was on the phone, even though she’s grounded...NO phone privileges. I was standing in her bedroom doorway for a while before she noticed me...I hope that you guys are more respectful of your parents than she is of me!

(Cynthia freezes after final line, and lights fade. When Cynthia freezes, sound cue #3 and projection #3 should fade in, and stay in through transition into monologue #3. Sound cue #3 and projection cue #3 should fade out when Taylor begins doing leg lifts and lights should fade in).

MONOLOGUE #3 – Taylor, 18, jaded teen, daughter of Cynthia, 2012

TAYLOR: (*speaking on the phone*) Because I’m grounded for the rest of my life. (*beat*) My mom came home from work early night, and found Mike and me naked on the couch. (*beat*) Nope, no phone rights. It was totally worth it, though. He’s hot. And he has a motorcycle. That really pisses mom off. (*beat*) No, she has her women’s studies class until 9. Duh. Hence the phone privileges. I’m sure she’s preaching about Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony even as we speak. I just hope that it’s out of her system by the time she gets home. If I have to sit through another lecture on the importance of voting, I’ll gouge my eyes out. Like I’m ever gonna vote. (*beat*) Cause it’s pointless. Plus, it turns people against each other. (*beat*) Voting should only take place in countries where people understand what democracy is. We don’t. This country is politically bankrupt. (*beat*) Oh, come on, you know it’s just another way for the

government to control us. *(beat)* OMG. My mom forced me to watch this awful play at her school. It was, like, to raise awareness about voting or something. I don't think it was a comedy, but I laughed my ass off. The ghosts of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony and Lucretia Mott, Mott, like the applesauce, they haunted this poor House of Reps dude from TN until he agreed to let women have the vote. It was called...wait for it... "A Suffragette's Carol." I'm totally serious. Elizabeth Cady Stanton had this really thick southern accent...she sounded like Blanche DuBois. And the girl playing Susan B. Anthony was like a total bitch, so obnoxious, and wasted or something cause she kept having to run off stage to puke. It was really gross. The guy playing Elizabeth's husband was hot, though. So that was cool. Yeah, he looked kinda like Ryan Reynolds. *(seeing Cynthia enter)*. Oh...HI Mom! Rachel, mom's home...don't forget to vote tomorrow! It's important! Gotta go. *(Hangs up the phone)*. Sorry, mom. I didn't think you'd mind if I called Rachel to remind her to vote tomorrow.

(Taylor freezes after final line, and lights fade. When Taylor freezes, sound cue #4 and projection #4 fade in and stay up through transition into monologue #4. Sound cue #4 and projection #4 should fade out when Cynthia leans against desk and lights should fade in).

MONOLOGUE # 4 ---Cynthia, 40s, women's studies professor at LSU, 2012

CYNTHIA: I've had it up to here with Taylor's bullshit. I don't know how to talk to her anymore. And she doesn't listen to me. She just shuts down when I try to talk to her about anything. But I am her mother, and it is *my* responsibility to give her strong values. If I don't, then someone else will, and that scares the shit out of me. *(beat)* It's time for her to start caring about something other than herself. She's almost an adult, and she's going to have to rely on herself and *her* instincts to make it in the adult world. She's going to have to make decisions for herself. *(beat)* Your whole life, you will have to follow rules—at school, at home—and you will get in trouble if you don't. As children, you didn't have a say in any of these rules. You just had to follow them and trust that your parents knew what was best for you. But now, as adults, you have a say. Now you get to elect people to represent you in Congress, and trust that they'll pass laws that you believe in. Or don't trust that. If your candidate doesn't turn out how you thought he or she would, then write them a letter and complain. Visit their office. Don't vote for them next time. It's your right. But just like I said to Taylor, it's also your responsibility.

(Cynthia freezes after final line, and lights fade. When Cynthia freezes, sound cue #5 and projection #5 fade in and stay up through the transition into monologue #5. Sound cue # 5 and projection #5 fade out when Elizabeth begins writing at table, and lights fade in).

MONOLOGUE #5 – Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 80s, 1891

ELIZABETH: Susan. You can't imagine my delight upon receiving your letter. We have been through too much, old friend, not to be in each other's lives; I'm just sorry that I've been too stubborn to say that to you. *(beat)* From the moment that I met you on that street corner in Seneca Falls, I liked you. In some ways, our friendship was more of a marriage than the one I had with Henry. You certainly always understood me better. *(beat)* Thank you, by the way, for your lovely note after Henry's death. It's been hard on our children, of course, but he and I had been estranged for so long, that I have to remind myself that he's really gone. Does that sound

terrible? *(beat)* Susan, I cannot write another speech for you. I will not. My life is with my children now. I have done all I can for the women's suffrage movement. Your little suffrage club voted me out, remember? This next generation of women are acolytes of you and you alone, Susan. *(beat)* And there is no need to remind me of the 50 years of work that I've dedicated to women's suffrage... remember that I have been at this cause from the beginning. From when I first demanded the women's vote at the Seneca Falls Convention to this very moment, my commitment to this movement is beyond question; it's certainly beyond question by you. Your work did not begin until you met me. *(beat)* You must also never speak again about my dedication to my children. They are not *half* of my life, they *are* my life. The battle for the women's vote was my *work*. We made different choices, Susan, and you can't blame me for wanting to have a husband and children. It is the natural way of things. And how do we instill the values of the next generation, if not through our children? *(beat)* You are always welcome here, Susan, and I do hope that you will come see me soon. But no talk of women's suffrage. Yours, Elizabeth.

(Elizabeth freezes after final line and the lights fade. When Elizabeth freezes, sound cue #6 and projection # 6 should fade in and stay up through transition into monologue #6. Sound cue #6 and projection #6 should fade out as Cynthia leans against desk and lights fade in).

MONOLOGUE # 6 – Cynthia, 40s, Women's Studies Professor at LSU, 2012

I just find it so tragic that neither of my daughters will be voting in the most important election concerning women's rights in nearly a century! I've dedicated my life to the study of women's rights, for Christ's sake. *(beat)* It just makes me so sad that they won't have a voice in an election that will determine *their* future rights. I thought I had done everything right! I took them to the polls with me...I bought them ice cream after...I thought I had them trained them to vote like Pavlov trained his dog! *(beat)* What? *(beat)* Oh right, my other daughter. My other daughter, Carrie, *should* be voting tomorrow, but she can't, because she can't remember not to speed. Or pay a speeding ticket. Or change a tail light. *(beat)* Long story.

(Cynthia freezes after last line and lights fade. When Cynthia freezes, sound cue #7 and projection #7 fade in and stay up through transition to mono #7. Sound cue #7 and projection #7 fade out as Carrie begins typing on laptop and light fade in).

MONOLOGUE # 7 - Carrie, mid-late 20s, Cynthia's daughter/voter suppression victim

CARRIE: *(to student that she is registering)* Your mom must be really proud of you. For voting tomorrow, I mean. You're lucky. My mom is probably bitching about me to her women's studies class right about now...I can't vote because I got a speeding ticket and then I forgot – what? Oh, right, sure. You're on a schedule. Well, long story short, my mom is pissed at me. *(beat)* All right. Almost done here...would you like to be added to our mailing list? Ok, then. You are registered. Any questions? Just make sure to take this card to your voting location tomorrow, and make sure that you have your ID with you. Have fun voting tomorrow! *(beat)* Lucky bitch. *(beat)* *(to audience as others on the hill)* A fucking tail light. A fucking tail light is keeping me from voting this year. I've voted in every election since I turned 18...and to miss this vote; when women's rights are under attack again? Unfuckingbelievable. *(beat)* About 6 weeks ago, I got pulled over because my passenger side tail light was out... the replacement bulb was actually sitting *in* my passenger seat at the time. Hilarious, right? Anyway, the cop took my

ID and looked me up, etc and long story short, I had been driving on a suspended license for 2 years. Ok, my fault, right? Speeding ticket in TN that I barely remember from 2010. Well, he called for backup, because apparently all 115 lbs of me posed a real threat to him, and while they scared the shit outta me, I didn't have to go to jail. I did, however, get "booked" a couple of days later, no shit, front face and profile, and my license was literally taken from my hands. My court date was set for Nov. 11, **five days after the presidential election.** *(beat)* I've been in school in TN since 2003. So, even though I'm from Louisiana, the only place in which I've ever been registered to vote is the state of TN. And unfortunately, TN is a voter suppression state, meaning that they require a VALID government issued photo ID. *(beat)* After my encounter with the voter suppression MACHINE, I started doing some research. At least nine states have documented cases of some form of voter suppression in both the 2004 and 2008 presidential elections. The valid picture government issued ID law is just the latest in a long list of voter suppression ploys. And here's the kicker...typically, those most affected are minorities and the elderly. Vast right wing conspiracy, anyone? *(beat)* So, long story short, (too late!), no vote for me. So that's why I'm here on UT's campus participating in Political Awareness Day...sounds lame, but not so! We provide students with laptops and everything, so that they can register to vote, or change party affiliation if they want to. I may not be able to vote in this election, which my mom will never forgive me for, but at least I can help other people get ready. *(beat)* What? *(beat)* Oh, right, you have to get to class. Sorry. *(to next person in line)* Will this be your first time voting? Your mom must be really proud of you...for voting tomorrow, I mean.

(Carrie freezes after last line and the lights fade. When Carrie freezes, sound cue #8 and projection #8 fade in and stay up through transition into Mono #8. Sound cue #8 and projection #8 fade out as Susan begins speaking and light fade in).

MONOLOGUE #8 – Susan B. Anthony, late 70s, 1892

SUSAN: Elizabeth. *(beat)* I'm sorry, I didn't mean to startle you...Harriot let me in. *(Susan crosses closer to Elizabeth, wherever she is).* It's so good to see you, Lizzie. I've missed you so. Just let me look at you for a minute... *(beat)* You look well fed and healthy! Your children must be taking good care of you. *(beat)* Elizabeth, you must write this speech. We still have a week until our appearance before Congress. I will stay here with you and help you...we will work side by side, just like we used to. No, I will not take no for an answer. This is not your life alone at stake. Do you think I have made no sacrifices in the name of women's suffrage? No sacrifices for you? I have lost friends, colleagues of 25 years, because I stood by you and your radical opinions on birth control and divorce. I alone am still paying down a debt for a failed newspaper that *you* wanted to start, a paper that would have paid for itself if you would have given just an *inch* in your progressive beliefs. I alone stood up and voted in the 1878 election; I alone was arrested for doing my duty as a suffragette. Where were you? Ah, yes. Hiding behind your children. *(beat)* I *do not* regret not getting married and having children. I do not envy you that as you think I must. I am happy for your family and take no issue with marriage as an institution, Lizzie, but it is not enough for women like you and me. Women that have a special call for special work. *(beat)* *Finally*, we have the chance to be heard, Elizabeth, but we must act now; and we must act TOGETHER. You were right when you said that we need to instill values into the next generation...but won't they need a voice with which to speak them? We must win the vote for women. *(beat)* You will write a speech and you will deliver it next

Thursday before Congress. I will be right beside you, acting as your eyes and hands as you need me. *(beat)* Now let's get started, Elizabeth.

(Susan freezes after final line and the lights fade. When Susan freezes, sound cue #9 and projection #9 fade in and stay up through transition into mono #9. Sound cue #9 and projection #9 fade out when Elizabeth is behind podium and lights fade in).

MONOLOGUE # 9 – Elizabeth, 80s, Solitude of Self Address to Congress, 1892

ELIZABETH: Members of Congress, the point I wish plainly to bring before you on this occasion is the individuality of each human soul. In discussing the rights of woman, we are to consider, first, what belongs to her as an individual, in a world of her own. Her rights under such circumstances are to use all her faculties for her own safety and happiness. Secondly, if we consider her as a citizen, as a member of a great nation, she must have the same rights as all other members, according to the fundamental principles of our Government. The strongest reason for giving woman all the opportunities for higher education, for the full development of her faculties, her forces of mind and body; a complete emancipation from the crippling influences of fear—is the solitude and personal responsibility of her own individual life. As an individual, she must rely on herself. *(beat)* To appreciate the importance of fitting every human soul for independent action, think for a moment of the immeasurable solitude of self. We come into the world alone, unlike all who have gone before us, we leave it alone, under circumstances peculiar to ourselves. *(beat)* The great lesson that nature seems to teach us at all ages is self-dependence, self-protection, self-support. In youth our bitter disappointments, our brightest hopes and ambitions, are known only to ourselves. Even our friendship and love we never fully share with another; there is something of every passion, in every situation, we conceal. Even so in our triumphs and defeats. When death sunders our nearest ties, alone we sit in the shadow of our affliction. In hours like these we realize the awful solitude of individual life, its pains, its penalties, its responsibilities. *(beat)* To refuse political equality is to rob the ostracized of all self-respect; of credit in the market place; of recompense in the world of work, of a voice in choosing those who make and administer the law, a choice in the jury before whom they are tried, and in the judge who decides their punishment. *(beat)* In age, when the pleasure of youth are passed, men and women alike must fall back on their own resources. If they cannot find companionship in books, if they have no interest in the vital questions of the hour, no interest in watching the consummation of reforms with which they might have been identified, they soon pass into their dotage. If, from a life-long participation in public affairs, a woman feels responsible for the laws regulating our system of education and the state of our world, then her solitude will at least be respectable, and she will not be driven to gossip or scandal for entertainment. *(beat)* Nothing strengthens the judgment and quickens the conscience like individual responsibility. Nothing adds such dignity to character as the recognition of one's self-sovereignty; the right to an equal place...conceding, then, that the responsibilities of life rest equally on man and woman, that their destiny is the same, they need the same preparation for time and eternity. *(beat)* There is a solitude which each and every one of us has always carried with him, more inaccessible than the ice-cold mountains, more profound than the midnight sea; the solitude of self. Such is individual life. Who, I ask you, can dare take on himself the rights, the duties, the responsibilities of another human soul? Thank you.

(Elizabeth freezes after final line and lights fade. When Elizabeth freezes, sound cue # 10 and projection #10 fade in and stay up through transition into mono #10. Sound cue #10 and projection #10 fade out as Susan crosses down to “coffin” and lights fade in).

MONOLOGUE # 10 – Susan B. Anthony, early 80s, 1902

SUSAN: I loved Elizabeth more than I’ve loved anyone in my entire life. She was my partner. She was my family. *(beat)* I cannot express at all how I feel. If I had died first, she would have found beautiful phrases to describe our friendship, but I cannot put it into words. *(beat)* It is an awful hush. It seems impossible, that the voice is hushed that I longed to hear for fifty years. Longed to hear her opinion of things, before I knew exactly where I stood. *(beat)* And the laws of nature are still going on! What a world it is...it goes right on and on – no matter who lives or who dies. *(beat)* She taught me everything I know. She was my mentor and my best friend. *(beat)* To think that she fought for over 50 years for a little bit of justice no bigger than that, *(inch between thumb and forefinger)*, and died without obtaining it. It seems so cruel. I know how hard she worked. I know the sacrifices she made. *(beat)* The last time I saw Elizabeth, she said, “remember when it *is* my funeral, that I want there to be no tears. Carry on, and go on with the work.” So that’s my charge to the next generation of women. Carry on and go on with the work. Failure is Impossible.

(Susan freezes after final line and lights fade. When Susan freezes, sound cue #11 and projection #11 fade in and stay up through transition to mono #11. Sound cue #11 and projection #11 fade out as Cynthia leans against desk and lights fade in).

MONOLOGUE # 11 – Cynthia, 40s, a Women’s Studies professor at LSU, 2012

I want to tell you exactly what I told my own daughters. VOTE. Don’t take this privilege for granted. Women didn’t always have a say. For a long time, they weren’t allowed to vote. The men who ran the country gave all sorts of excuses for not granting women the right to vote, including that they were trying to *protect* women. Because here’s the thing: women aren’t children. We don’t need protecting any more than you guys do. And we certainly don’t need someone telling us what’s best for us; we’re quite capable of figuring that out for ourselves. We’re not always right, of course, but neither are men. That’s a question of humanity, not gender. *(beat)* And you know what? Laws aren’t permanent. A law may be passed by one Congress only to be repealed by the next. Only by voting can you make sure the “good” laws—or the laws that you think are good, anyway—stay on the books, and the “bad” ones stay off. Not everyone shares the same views as you, and you can bet that they’re out there voting. *(beat)* And some of them, by the way, still think of women as children. Your vote could cancel theirs out; it might even be the crucial vote that truly makes a difference. *(beat)* All right, I’m done! So for tomorrow a quiz on the first 75 pages of ANNA KARENINA. *(beat)* And write this address down: 222 St. Louis St., Room 201, Baton Rouge. Tomorrow at 3 pm, I’ll be there working the polls, hoping that you’ll show up to vote. Use it or lose it, ladies (and gents).

(Cynthia picks up shawl, puts it around her shoulders and exits USL. As she moves to pick up shawl, sound cue #12 comes up, and as she begins to exit, the lights fade).

END OF PLAY

CHAPTER 9: WHAT I LEARNED FROM PERFORMING MY SHOW

Performing *Behind the Vote* was empowering and exhilarating in ways that I had never anticipated. My goal was to write a show that was educational and that would raise social awareness about an issue of importance in today's society; my hope was that it could potentially be used as a touring show for middle and high schools. My target demographic was, and is, middle school-college age students, particularly females, so performing for primarily undergraduate students was an inspiring experience.

The objective of the exercise of performing a one-person show, as explained by George Judy, was to see if we could hold the stage for thirty plus minutes. I was initially terrified of being alone on stage for thirty plus minutes, but I was surprisingly comfortable during the performance of *Behind the Vote*. In my experience, it is hard enough to be vulnerable during a performance of someone else's text; performing my own text while being in a vulnerable position seemed like an impossibility. Conquering those fears was very empowering to me, as was being in the middle of a story as inspiring as that of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. I received positive feedback from my graduate faculty and colleagues. Much of the feedback that I got from the female undergrads at LSU was very positive. Some of them found the play very inspiring, and it reminded them of, or solidified, their own desire to vote and empower themselves and other women; some of them were not voters, and had no knowledge of the women's suffrage movement, and the play made them rethink their indifference, if nothing else.

Playmakers of Baton Rouge, a local children's theatre company has asked to produce *Behind the Vote* as one of their educational touring shows for their 2013-2014 season. My immediate goals are to copyright *Behind the Vote* and make some edits to the play, including deleting the foul language, so as to make it more appropriate for middle and high schools, which will be the Playmakers' demographic.

CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSION

I learned a great deal about myself and my capabilities during the creation of *Behind the Vote*. When I was initially faced with the challenges of creating a one – person play, I was not excited, as were many of my classmates. I was overwhelmed by the selection of a subject, let alone the creation and performance of a one – person show. I was resistant to the assignment every step of the way. I can easily say that the creation and performance of *Behind the Vote* was a very challenging experience, but it was also a very rewarding experience. My objective with the play was to raise awareness about the need to vote, and the women’s suffrage movement, and based on the audience feedback, I succeeded in that. Additionally, my goal of touring the show to middle and high schools is already being realized through the potential Playmakers of Baton Rouge production for their 2013-2014 season.

I didn’t expect to learn so much about myself during the process. I learned that voting and women’s rights are more important to me than I ever thought. I learned that I can write creatively, and that I can meet any challenge that is put in front of me. I learned that I am my own worst enemy, my own worst critic, and my best chance of success. I learned that I’m stronger than I ever give myself credit for, and that I, myself, have issues with my place as a woman in the world. I have issues with the debate over family vs. career, and the eternal question of “can a woman have both?” I learned that I can hold the stage for 40 minutes, even under the roughest conditions. I learned that I have grown as an actor, and as a person. I learned that I have a huge support system, and that I don’t have to be afraid to reach out to them for help. *Behind the Vote* raised awareness about voting and the women’s suffrage movement for my audience, but it also raised awareness about who I am as a woman, and why voting is important to me, which was an unexpected benefit.

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VITA

Jenny Ballard was born in Kingsport, TN and raised in Tennessee, New Jersey and Minnesota. She was first bitten by the acting bug at St. Andrews-Sewanee in Sewanee, TN, where she was the recipient of the drama award during her middle school years. She went on to perform in several plays throughout high school before taking a break for several years during her time as an undergraduate at the University of TN, Knoxville, to focus on her British Literature concentration. During her junior year, she began taking theatre classes, and was once more drawn into the world of theatre and acting. She went on to perform in several plays during the remainder of her time in college, picking up a Theatre minor. During her senior year at UTK, Jenny landed her first professional job at the Tennessee Stage Company, where she discovered her love of performing Shakespeare.

After graduation, she went on to perform with several professional theatre companies in Tennessee, from 2000 – 2010, including the Actors Co-op, the Tennessee Stage Company and the Clarence Brown Theatre, where she began acquiring points towards becoming a member of Actors Equity. She also signed with Talent Trek Agency, and began doing commercials, television shows and films. In addition, she took the job of Education Director with the Actors Co-op, for which she organized touring shows, ran the high school intern program, directed all of the children's theatre productions and taught all of the children's classes. In 2005, Jenny accepted the job of Artistic and Education Director of Tennessee Stage Co., for which she organized touring shows, managed partnerships with local organizations such as the Metropolitan Drug Commission, taught children's classes and directed the at-risk youth program.

In 2007, Jenny co-founded Children's Theatre of Knoxville with Zack Allen, and took on the role of Artistic Director. While in this position, Jenny directed several of the children's productions, produced the remaining productions, taught the children's classes, was in charge of marketing and development and facilitated and directed the world premiere of Chris Grabenstein's *Curiosity Cat*.

Despite Jenny's love of children's theatre, acting was still her number one passion, and she felt that she had hit a wall with the work that she was doing on the stage. Additionally, she longed to teach theatre at a college level, and realized that graduate school was the next logical step. In 2010, once Children's Theatre of Knoxville was stable and successful, with multiple staff members, Jenny decided to audition for graduate school. She attended the general graduate school auditions at URTAs and received offers from a few schools; after deliberation, she chose LSU for a number of reasons, including their reputation for producing great actors. Additionally, from her research, Jenny learned that the MFA candidates got the opportunity to take on meaty

roles, to work with professional actors, to work in a conservatory atmosphere, to teach classes, to earn Equity points and to direct plays, all of which were selling points.

Jenny's experience as an MFA at LSU has been very positive. She has had fantastic acting opportunities with Swine Palace and LSU Theatre, including Karen in *August: Osage Co.*, Katharina in *The Taming of the Shrew*, Regan in *King Lear*, Jean Brodie in *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* and is looking forward to the role of Sadie Burke in the upcoming *All the King's Men*. Additionally, she has directed two collaborations between Swine Palace and Playmakers of Baton Rouge, *Godspell* and *How Can You Run with a Shell on Your Back?*, has taught Intro to Acting, Intermediate Acting and Intro to Theatre and has written and performed her one-woman show, *Behind the Vote*.

Upon graduation, Jenny plans to continue her professional acting career, and hopes to teach, particularly at a college or university level. Because of her love of children and children's theatre, she plans to continue directing Theatre for Young Audiences as much as possible.