Two Rooms
By: Lee Blessing

Audition Packet
CSS Theatre

Directed by Benjamin Borchert

Audition Dates
Monday, November 9 at 6:30 p.m.
Tuesday, November 10 at 6:30 p.m.
(Possible Call Backs – Wednesday, November 11 at 6:30 p.m.)

You do NOT need to attend both audition days.

Performance Dates:
February 12-14 and 18-21, 2010
Play Description
The two rooms of the title are a windowless cubicle in Beirut where an American hostage is being held by Arab terrorists and a room in his home in the United States, which his wife has stripped of furniture so that, at least symbolically, she can share his ordeal. In fact the same room serves for both and is also the locale for imaginary conversations between the hostage and his wife, plus the setting for the real talks she has with a reporter and a State Department official...
The wife is goaded by unforeseen developments to speak out against government policy and, in doing, triggers the tragic series of event that brings the play to its startling conclusion. In the end there are no winners, only losers, and the sense of futility and despair that comes when people of goodwill realize that logic, compassion and fairness have become meaningless when dealing with those who would commit such barbarous acts so willingly.
–from Dramatists Play Service INC.

Auditions for Two Rooms will be held November 9th and 10th at 6:30 p.m. in the CSS Theatre.

There are casting opportunities for 2 men and 2 women.

Audition packets are always available in the Theatre Box Office and on the Theatre web site. Scripts may be checked out at the library.

Questions or Comments?

Benjamin Borchert
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**Audition Process**

**Monologues**  
I will ask each actor to choose a monologue from the audition packet and deliver it. It does not need to be memorized. Gender is irrelevant; you can choose any of the monologues. I will be looking for stage presence, delivery, and an ability to change internal motivations.

**Readings**  
A list of readings for the audition is found elsewhere in the audition packet. There is a possibility of cold readings from the script. I would recommend reading the script before coming to auditions. I will be looking for your ability to connect and interact with other characters and your process of feeling out the character.

**Improvisation**  
I am not planning on having improvisation exercises, but it may be that in order to see the full range of an actor’s talents, we will need to use them.

**Movement/Stage Fighting**  
There is no explicit stage fighting, and the movement in this show will be minimal.

**Performance Dates**  
This show will be performed February 12, 13, 18, 19, and 20 at 7:30 p.m. and February 14 and 21 at 2:00. Make sure you are available for all of these dates prior to auditioning.

**Rehearsals and Conflicts**  
Rehearsals are typically Sunday afternoons and Monday through Thursday late afternoons and/or evenings, depending on schedules. Usually not every actor needs to be at every rehearsal. I’ll know more about scheduling once the show has been cast. Actors will be required to attend ALL rehearsals the last two weeks of the production.

Please provide a schedule of conflicts at auditions. Make sure you list your course schedule, both Fall and Spring, as well as other conflicts such as work and one-time conflicts. I will attempt to work around conflicts if I am notified well in advance.

Absences, tardiness, lack of preparation for rehearsal, and lack of advance notice of conflicts can result in an actor being fired from the production.
The Characters

Men’s Parts
Michael: Educator (History), Hostage, longing
Walker: Reporter, passionate, sympathetic, wants a story

Women’s Parts
Lainie: Educator (Natural Sciences) Married to Michael, devoted
Ellen: A representative of the State Department, sometimes cold, but needs to be sympathetic

These characters are malleable. Trust your instincts. Read the script.

Audition Scenes

The two big pieces of this audition are scenes and monologues. Be familiar with these scenes and be prepared with a monologue.

1.) WALKER, LAINIE, and, ELLEN: Page 13-15

2.) LAINIE and WALKER: Page 17-19

3.) ELLEN and LAINIE: Page 20-22

4.) ELLEN and LAINIE Page 31-32
Monologues

MICHAEL – Page 15
I ask all the time, “Why did we stay here? Why did we stay here? Why?” (A beat.) I look back now and can’t believe we stayed. Can’t believe we actually sat there at the University and said, “One last term. Then we’ll leave.” One last term. I wonder if we would’ve left even then. I wonder if somehow, some part of us even liked the danger. Or was in awe of what we were witnessing. I mean, why does anyone stay? This city’s in the hands of boys. Teenagers roam the streets carrying AK-47’s and somebody stays? I don’t know if there’s ever been a city that has for this long been such a horror. That’s taken itself apart brick by brick, life by life. And so many of us stayed. We walked down the street, through the rubble, past the checkpoints, past the bombings—we had days full of ordinary moments. Amid—what?—devils from Hell. Boys who might shoot you the next moment. Cars that might drive up, park and explode. (With a growing tension that finally breaks through.) And none of us seemed ready to say, “Leave it. Let us out of here! Please, God anything but this! Stop it!” (A beat. He recovers himself.) And none of us was ever quite ready to leave.

LAINIE – Page 16
(She is showing slides)
This is a hotel in Beirut near where we lived. It was destroyed in some shelling a couple of months before… before he was taken. (A new slide) A car bombing. Michael used to take pictures as he walked along. He wasn’t looking for these kinds of things. You just couldn’t avoid them. People at the University told him it was dangerous. It made people notice him. Even more, I mean. And he did stop a few weeks before… (Another slide) This guy commanded a whole block. He liked Michael. He wanted to pose. (Another slide) Michael said he could’ve taken this picture a hundred times. I’m not sure what it was about her. He didn’t know her. He saw something different as he passed. Maybe the sun’s shining on her in a different way. Maybe it’s something about the way she’s standing, or—whatever it is, all the values just seem to… hold you.

ELLEN Page 29
These men, all kidnap victims, are of course undergoing dehumanizing conditions in their false imprisonment. No one denies this. They are being held by men who would as soon kill them as anything else. Yet, since 1984 out of the total of more than sixty foreigners taken, only a few have died. Over thirty have been released. We in State have to believe that the kidnappers are no more interested in dead hostages than we are. That ultimately the situation will be resolved—after a presidential election here, or a shift in the military or political situation there or whatever. A break will come. But if I’m wrong, if these men in fact all suffer torture and die as a direct result of this country’s policy in the Middle East, I must be ready to accept that too. American citizens have to realize that when we take a risk, the U.S. government can’t always save us. That the time comes when we—on an individual basis—will simply have to pay.
Sometimes I wake up with the most intense desire to know what day it is. Sunday? Thursday? I feel like I’m going to die the next minute if I don’t find out. Other times I’ll wake up and suddenly realize that months have gone by—must have gone by—since I last had a conscious thought about time. It makes me feel like the astronaut who travels forty years at the speed of light and then returns, no older. “What’s happened to everyone?” he must think. “Time must be for them, not me.” I never thought of time as a coat you could take off and put on again. Too cold to live without it—so we all keep it on. We hug it to ourselves, because if we can’t… (A beat.) Time is change. That’s all it is. When there’s no change. When there’s no change…Yesterday one of my guards told me I’d been here three years. (A beat.) I didn’t know what he meant.