

STUDY GUIDE

GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE  
**KEY LARGO**



WORLD PREMIERE ADAPTATION  
& GEFEN PLAYHOUSE COMMISSION

# KEY LARGO

11.06–12.10.2019  
GIL CATES THEATER

**SPECIAL THANKS TO**

Amy Levinson, Rachel Weigardt-Egel, Brian Dunning, Wendell Pascual, Brian Allman,  
Kristopher Karcher, Joannarae Ibañez, Ellen Catania and Jessica Brusilow Rollins.

**STUDY GUIDE WRITTEN AND COMPILED BY**

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ABOUT THIS PRODUCTION

# KEY LARGO

ADAPTED BY  
**JEFFREY HATCHER  
& ANDY GARCIA**

DIRECTED BY  
**DOUG HUGHES**

PRODUCED IN ASSOCIATION WITH  
**FRANK MANCUSO  
& ANDY GARCIA**

SCENIC DESIGNER  
**JOHN LEE BEATTY**

COSTUME DESIGNER  
**LINDA CHO**

LIGHTING DESIGNER  
**PETER KACZOROWSKI**

SOUND DESIGNER  
**ALEX HAWTHORN**

PROJECTION DESIGNERS  
**KAITLYN PIETRAS  
JASON H. THOMPSON**

COMPOSER  
**ARTURO SANDOVAL**

FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER  
**STEVE RANKIN**

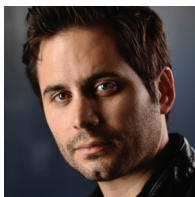
PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER  
**ROSS JACKSON**

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER  
**MICHAEL FRIEDLANDER**

CASTING DIRECTOR  
**JEFF GREENBERG, CSA**

BASED ON THE PLAY BY MAXWELL ANDERSON AND THE WARNER BROS. FILM;  
PRODUCED BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH WARNER BROS. THEATRE VENTURES

## CAST



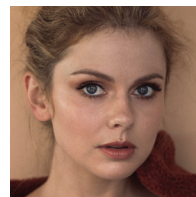
**STEPHEN  
BORRELLO**  
TOOTS



**JOELY  
FISHER**  
GAYE DAWN



**ANDY  
GARCIA**  
JOHNNY ROCCO



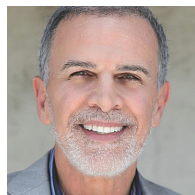
**ROSE  
MCIVER**  
NORA D'ALCALA



**LOUIS  
MUSTILLO**  
CURLY



**DANNY  
PINO**  
FRANK MCCLOUD



**TONY  
PLANA**  
MR. D'ALCALA



**RICHARD  
RIEHLE**  
SHERRIFF GASH



**BRADLEY  
SNEDEKER**  
ZIGGY

# SYNOPSIS

It's a year after the end of World War II. Disillusioned veteran Frank McCloud arrives at a fishing resort in the Florida Keys to connect with a fallen comrade's father, hotel owner Mr. D'Alcala and the soldier's widow, Nora. Though the resort is closed for the season, McCloud encounters other visitors, who turn out to be ruthless gangster Johnny Rocco and his dim underlings Toots and Curly and abused, alcoholic girlfriend, Gaye Dawn. The gang members hold Mr. D'Alcala, Nora, and McCloud hostage while they await the delivery of money for drugs they have smuggled in from Cuba. As a deadly hurricane comes ashore, McCloud, inspired by Nora's care and Mr. D'Alcala's courage, stands up to Rocco, who is obsessed with pulling off the lucrative drug deal and returning to Cuba.

**TIME/SETTING** September, 1946. The lobby of the Key Largo Hotel, Key Largo, Florida

**RUNNING TIME** 2 hours, including one 15 minute intermission.

**PRODUCTION NOTES** This production contains strobe lighting effects, gunshots, adult language, and the smoking of herbal cigarettes.

# ARTISTIC BIOGRAPHIES

## JEFFREY HATCHER *Co-Adaptor*

At Geffen Playhouse: *A Picasso, Wait Until Dark* (adaptation). Broadway: *Never Gonna Dance* (book). Off-Broadway: *Three Viewings* and *A Picasso* at Manhattan Theatre Club; *The Government Inspector* at Red Bull Theater; *Scotland Road* and *The Turn of the Screw* at Primary Stages; *Lucky Duck* (book with Bill Russell) at The New Victory Theater; *Tuesdays with Morrie* (with Mitch Albom) at Minetta Lane Theatre; *Ten Chimneys* at Peccadillo Theater Company; *Neddy* at The American Place Theatre, *Fellow Travelers* at Manhattan Punchline Theatre. Other plays/theaters: *Compleat Female Stage Beauty*, *Mrs. Mannerly*, *Murderers*, *Cousin Bette*, *Smash*, *A Confederacy of Dunces*, and others at Guthrie Theater, The Old Globe, Yale Repertory Theatre, Seattle Rep, Huntington Theatre Company, South Coast Repertory, Arizona Theater Company, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Children's Theater Company, Illusion Theater, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Actors Theatre of Louisville, and dozens more in the U.S. and abroad. Film: *Stage Beauty*, *Casanova*, *The Duchess*, *Mr. Holmes*, and *The Good Liar*. Television: episodes of *Columbo* and *The Mentalist*. Grants/awards: NEA, TCG, Lila Wallace Fund, Rosenthal New Play Prize, Frankel Award, Charles MacArthur Fellowship Award, McKnight Foundation, Jerome Foundation, Barrymore Award Best New Play, and 2013 Ivey Lifetime Achievement Award. He is a member and/or alumnus of the Playwrights' Center, the Dramatists Guild.

## ANDY GARCIA *Co-Adaptor, Producer*

As one of Hollywood's most respected leading actors, Andy Garcia has enjoyed a multi-faceted career in acting, directing, and music. Roles include *The Godfather: Part III* (nominated for Academy and Golden Globe Awards), *For Love or Country: The Arturo Sandoval Story* (nominated for Emmy and Golden Globe Awards), and recent appearances in Columbia's remake of *Ghostbusters*, *Book Club*, *Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again*, *The Mule*, and television shows such as *Ballers* (HBO) and the upcoming Amazon show, *Modern Love*, based off of NPR's popular podcast *Modern Love*. Other notable films include *The Untouchables*, *Internal Affairs* (Showest Star of the year), *When A Man Loves A Woman*, *Night Falls on Manhattan*, *Black Rain*, *Things to Do in Denver When You're Dead*, and *Ocean's 11, 12, 13*. Garcia will star alongside Emory Cohen and Oscar Isaac in Brian Petsos' upcoming film *Big Gold Brick*. Garcia also enjoys the other side of the camera, forming CineSon Productions in 1991 and making his directorial debut with the documentary concert film *Cachao ... Como Su Ritmo No Hay Dos (Like His Rhythm There is No Other)*. He also directed and starred alongside Bill Murray and Dustin Hoffman in the CineSon film *The Lost City*, which earned him two Imagine Awards for Best Director and Best Film, as well as a Best Director nomination for the Alma Award. Other CineSon Productions he starred in include *Just The Ticket*, *Modigliani*, *City Island* (Tribeca Film Festival Audience Award Winner) *At Middleton*, and *The Man From Elysian Fields* oppo-

site Mick Jagger, James Coburn, and Julianna Margulies. In addition, Garcia has garnered multiple Grammy and Latin Grammy awards for producing the legendary Israel Lopez "Cachao," the father of the mambo. Garcia also heads his own 13-piece Classic Cuban Orchestra, The CineSon All Stars.

## DOUG HUGHES *Director*

Broadway productions include *Junk*, *The Father*, *Outside Mullingar*, *The Big Knife*, *An Enemy of the People*, *Born Yesterday*, *Elling*, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, *Oleanna*, the Tony-nominated revival of *The Royal Family*, *A Man for All Seasons*, *Mauritius*, the Tony-nominated revival of *Inherit the Wind*, *A Touch of the Poet*, *Outside Mullingar*, *The Father*, and *Doubt*, for which he won the Tony Award for Best Director. Off-Broadway productions include *Socrates*, *Dan Cody's Yacht*, *Incognito*, *The City of Conversation*, *Death Takes A Holiday*, *The Whipping Man*, *An Experiment With an Air Pump*, *Flesh and Blood*, and *Defiance*. In addition to the Tony, he has been awarded Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle, Lucille Lortel, Obie, and Callaway Awards for his productions. Hughes previously directed the West Coast premiere of *Farragut North* at Geffen Playhouse in 2009.

# THE IMPACT OF SETTING



PHOTO BY PIXABAY

Setting in literature and drama encompasses the time and place in which a story occurs. The choices authors make about specific elements of setting—the locale, historical era, and time of year—often influence the dispositions and actions of characters, as well as how the plot unfolds.

**LOCALE:** How characters are shaped by and interact with places, including geographical areas, such as a mountaintop or island or rural village or city, and particular spaces, such as a home, school, business office, or kitchen, can tell us who characters are beyond their physical and personality traits.

Playwrights Jeffrey Hatcher and Andy Garcia have based their version of *Key Largo* on the original 1939 play by Maxwell Anderson and the 1948 film by writer-director John Huston and co-writer Richard Brooks. In all three works, the action is located in a hotel on the island of Key Largo in the Florida Keys, an archipelago of over 800 islands that reaches for 180 miles in a southwesterly curve from south of Miami into the Gulf of Mexico. Roads and over 40 bridges link the islands, most of which are small and uninhabited. Key Largo is in the northern group of islands and has long been a popular sport-fishing destination.

The action in the current version takes place in the lobby of a hotel, in which different characters show up and cross each other's paths in surprising and impactful ways. When the play begins, Frank McCloud arrives to call on the D'Alcala family and honor his friend Victor's memory, but steps unknowingly into a nest of gangsters and then must work to extricate Victor's father and widow from harm.

## ARCHIPELAGO

According to the National Ocean Service, "An archipelago is an area that contains a chain or group of islands scattered in lakes, rivers, or the ocean...The Florida Keys are an example of a coral cay archipelago, which form when ocean currents transport sediments that gradually build up on the reef surface." (NOAA)

## KEY OR CAY

A key is a small, low-lying coral island. (National Geographic)

**HURRICANE**

A hurricane is a type of storm called a tropical cyclone, which forms over tropical or subtropical waters. (National Ocean Service, NOAA)

**ORGANIZED CRIME**

Complex of highly centralized enterprises set up for the purpose of engaging in illegal activities. Such organizations engage in offenses such as cargo theft, fraud, robbery, kidnaping for ransom, and the demanding of “protection” payments. The principal source of income for these criminal syndicates is the supply of goods and services that are illegal but for which there is continued public demand, such as drugs, prostitution, loan-sharking (i.e., lending money at extremely high rates of interest), and gambling. (Brittanica.com)

**SOURCES**

tinyurl.com/IMDBLargo  
 tinyurl.com/WDigestSettingElements  
 tinyurl.com/BrittanicaOrgCrime

**TIME OF YEAR & CLIMATE:** The subtropical climate of the Keys makes September an oppressively hot and humid month, prone to hurricanes. Because of the pressure it exerts, the hurricane in *Key Largo* functions as another character. After Mr. D’Alcala cites the approaching storm’s potential for destruction, which is likely based on the devastation that actually occurred in the Keys in 1935, Rocco pits his will against the storm’s power by insisting it will not interfere with the completion of the drug deal and his return to Cuba. When the storm damages the hotel and knocks out the electricity and phone lines, it heightens the tension as Johnny and Frank struggle to overpower each other in the dark and chaotic surroundings.

**HISTORICAL ERA & SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT:** Screenwriters John Huston and Richard Brooks chose to move the story in Maxwell Anderson’s play from the 1930s into the late 1940s, when the optimism generated by President Roosevelt’s ideals and the end of World War II was supplanted by concerns over the expansion of organized crime in the United States, and the implications of the emerging Cold War with the Soviet Union.

Huston and Brooks based the character of Johnny Rocco on two real-life heads of organized crime, notorious mobster Al Capone and his friend Lucky Luciano, who was deported to Italy instead of jailed for illegal activities, because “he helped U.S. military intelligence through his Mafia connections in Italy (IMBD),” during World War II. Luciano ended up in Cuba in the 1940s,

where he orchestrated a massive illegal drug operation throughout the United States. The Florida Keys, surrounded by water, lined with beaches, and relatively unpopulated, have long been used as entry points for the drug trade originating in South America.

Current playwrights Jeffrey Hatcher and Andy Garcia have kept the story in the same historical era, in which Frank McCloud is a veteran of the “Italian Campaign” during World War II and is despondent about how his comrades died; Johnny Rocco is trying to fund his return to the United States after being deported to Italy, by sneaking into the Florida Keys by boat and receiving \$250,000 for the drugs he has smuggled from Cuba.

In these ways, the details of *Key Largo*’s setting—a tropical island, a terrifying storm, criminal enterprises and the aftermath of a world war, in the 1940s—help turn a crime thriller into a distinctive and electrifying tale of good being summoned to overcome evil.

**DISCUSSION POINT**

How has a place in which you have lived or to which you have traveled helped shape you as a person? How has the era in which you have grown up influenced your attitude towards life, or the world?

# NOIR— ITS OUTLOOK & STYLE



PUBLIC DOMAIN / THE BIG COMBO (1955)

**IMPACT OF EUROPEAN ÉMIGRÉS:** The current production of *Key Largo* has come full circle: it started out as a play presented on Broadway in 1939, was turned into a popular movie in 1948, and has been reimagined as a theatrical experience in 2019. As it evolved from a play into a film, the historical era changed from the time of the Spanish Civil War to right after World War II. The story also became infused with attitudes and design elements associated with *film noir*. Known for its bleak outlook on life and exaggerated camera angles and use of light and shadow, film noir is rooted in German Expression, an aesthetic style transported by European émigrés fleeing Nazism in Germany in the 1930s and 40s to American popular film. Citing the work of several highly regarded European filmmakers who succeeded in Hollywood, such as Fritz Lang and Billy Wilder, author Jonathon Crow notes, “They also brought with them a war-weary foreigner’s sense of the country, one that saw the brutality and corruption of America beneath the patriotic bunting (openculture.com, 2014).”

**CRIME FICTION:** In the 1940s, crime novels were flourishing. In such works, private investigators or police detectives solve cases that usually involve murder. Along the way, they encounter dishonesty from those they are trying to help or corruption among local officials or politicians. Many of these stories, such as *The Big Sleep* by Raymond Chandler, were turned into classic noir films.

## NOIR

French for black. When used in relation to film, it refers to the dark mood and use of stark lighting and shadows of film noir classics in the 1940s, such as *The Maltese Falcon* (1941) and *Double Indemnity* (1944), and the cynical views of neo-noir films (modern, but similar in style), such as *Chinatown* (1974), *Collateral* (2004), and the *John Wick* series (2017-2019). It also is a genre of crime fiction, in which the hero is alienated and world-weary, and society is riddled with corruption.

## ÉMIGRÉS

An émigré is someone who has left their own country and lives in a different country for political reasons. (collinsdictionary.com)



## THEMES & TOPICS

### CORRUPTION

Corruption is dishonesty and illegal behavior by people in positions of authority or power.

(collinsdictionary.com)

### SOURCES

[tinyurl.com/BrittanicaNoir](http://tinyurl.com/BrittanicaNoir)

[tinyurl.com/OpenCultureNoir](http://tinyurl.com/OpenCultureNoir)

[tinyurl.com/PsychTodaySociopathy](http://tinyurl.com/PsychTodaySociopathy)

**FATALISTIC ATTITUDE:** Another key element of noir is the fatalism of certain characters who have given up on believing they can change their circumstances, since forces beyond their powers are in control. While fatalism often reflects a belief system that events in our lives are predetermined, in noir crime dramas, this attitude usually marks how discouraging it is to confront a web of corruption perpetrated by criminals and those who are supposed to protect citizens from criminals, such as law enforcement and government officials.

**KEY LARGO TODAY:** The present-day *Key Largo* is a classic crime drama with certain noir elements, reflected mainly by how the main characters are lost,

except for one, and one is evil. Frank McCloud arrives so demoralized by the war, he questions his desire to live. Nora is enacting the role of a loving widow to support her father-in-law. Gaye remains devoted to Johnny Rocco even though he abuses her and she has been ravaged physically and mentally by alcoholism.

Mr. D'Alcala, who is blind and navigates the dangers of being surrounded by mobsters through his acute hearing, is a notably brave character because he has moral clarity and doesn't hesitate to take action to effect change. He speaks truth to power in how he resists Rocco, and when attempting to protect Nora physically, he disregards potential harm to himself.

Johnny Rocco, like the gangsters Al Capone and Lucky Luciano he is based on, is a sociopath — someone who is impulsive and cruel, breaks social rules, and is incapable of feeling empathy. At first cold and commanding, he resorts to threats of violence to get his way and rages to cover up his fear of forces he cannot control.

**DIFFERENCES:** Even though the crime-driven plot and cynical characters radiate noir tones, there are differences because the current play of *Key Largo* is a live, not screened, experience. Visually, the production has color, where most noir films are shot in black and white. The colors of the set, costumes, props, and lighting endow theatrical experiences with vitality and nuances, where film noir is usually built on stark visual contrasts of light and shadow.

Audiences may experience the tension-filled encounters among the characters more palpably than they do while watching a movie, since the film medium, while deeply engaging in its own way, allows for more distance from the action. Because of the immediacy of live theater, this production of *Key Largo* invites audience members to step into the lobby of the fishing resort right along with Frank McCloud and accompany him on his challenging and, ultimately, enheartening journey.

### DISCUSSION POINT

Do you enjoy noir films or noir fiction? If so, what are some favorite examples, and what do you find most gripping about noir style?  
If not, what styles of film or fiction do you prefer, and why?

# A RELUCTANT HERO

Works in literature and film and for the stage are populated by different kinds of “heroes”—a type of main character also known as a protagonist, originally based on figures in classical myths. Some heroes face an overwhelming challenge, often posed by a powerful adversary or antagonist, and use their courage and ingenuity to overcome it. In modern times, the “hero” can also be an ordinary person who drives the story through their choices and actions, or may serve as a *reluctant* hero—a main character who does not want to heed the call to solve a crisis.

Frank McCloud’s initial resistance to overcoming a powerful and unpredictable foe is sourced in his abandonment of his own life. While he registers Rocco’s vicious nature and stands up to him with taunts, he declines to kill him when supposedly given the chance. “What, am I supposed to die so there’ll be one less Rocco in the world? We fought a war to get rid of the Roccos! Is that how things worked out? Half the world’s still at war, and the other half’s trying to kill itself!”

This statement reflects McCloud’s bitterness with how the men in his unit died and, perhaps, with war in general. His only sense of purpose has come from visiting families all over the United States to provide comfort by honoring his comrades’ memories. When he tells Nora that she and Mr. D’Alcala are the last family members on his list, he implies he will now have little reason to go on living. Nora throws Frank a lifeline through her honest observations, which not only prompt Frank to reflect on his mindset but also open up a caring connection between them.

NORA

Your head’s saying one thing,  
your whole life’s saying another.

McCLOUD

What do you know about my life?

NORA

What you’ve said. What I’ve seen.  
Tide’s coming in, Frank.

Though roused from his defeated attitude by such conversations with Nora, as well as his impulses to protect Gaye from Rocco, McCloud still refuses to fully embrace his existence, as evidenced by his willingness to take the fall for a murder. When his ruthless adversary Rocco threatens to sexually assault Nora unless McCloud gets him back to Cuba on the resort’s fishing boat, he is moved to act. In attempting to save her, he steps back—fully empowered—into his own life.

## A NOTE ABOUT GUN VIOLENCE

Deaths and injuries from guns are at epidemic levels throughout the United States. Since this play is about the havoc a sociopathic mobster and his underlings wreak on their hostages’ lives, the use of guns reflects the realities of the dangerous circumstances and is not treated lightly: Rocco and his henchmen threaten other characters with guns to enforce compliance with their demands. The deaths that result from gunfire occur as characters engage in self-defense to preserve their own lives.

## SOURCES

[tinyurl.com/HeroTypes-Journey](https://tinyurl.com/HeroTypes-Journey)  
[tinyurl.com/WikiReluctantHero](https://tinyurl.com/WikiReluctantHero)

## DISCUSSION POINT

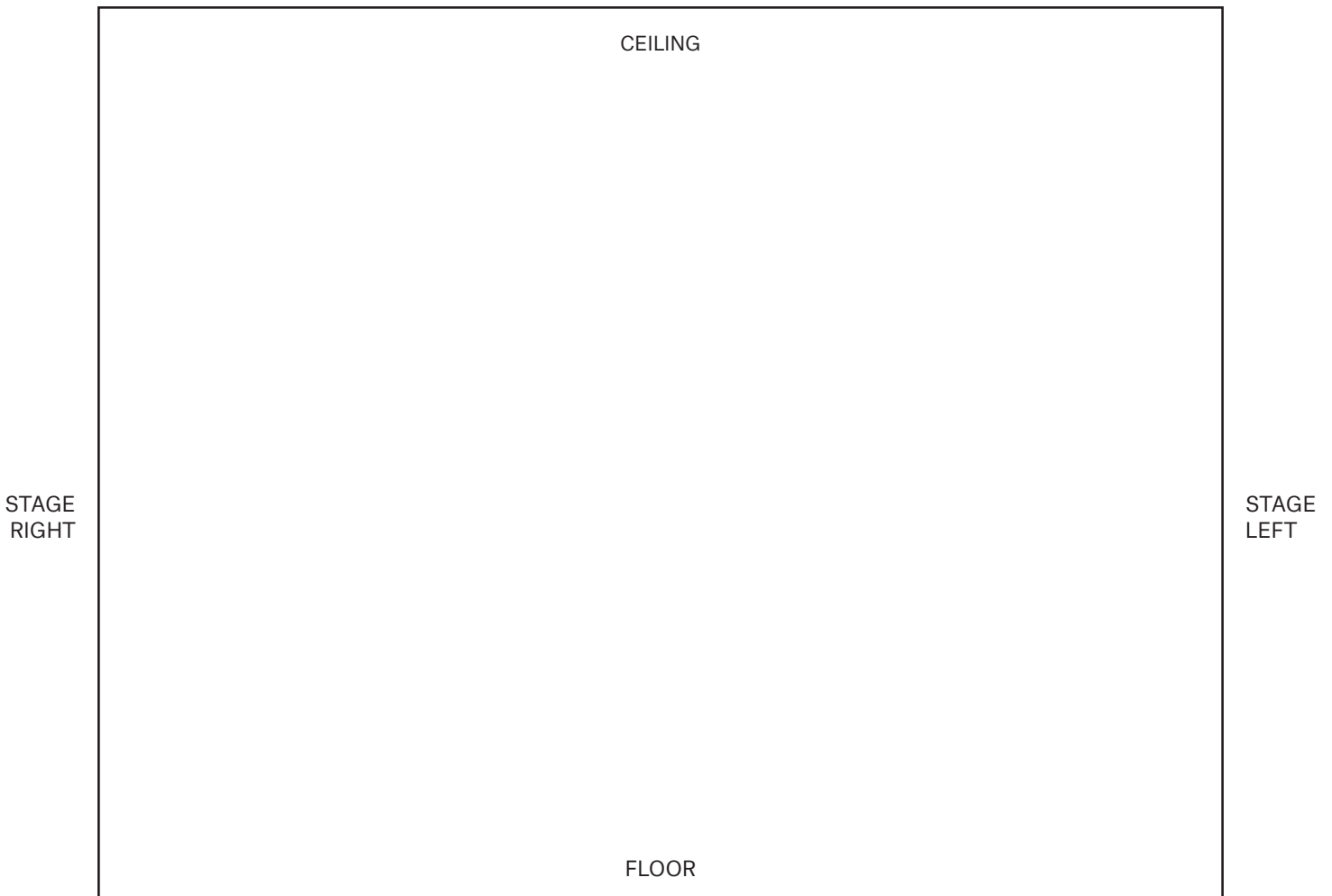
Have you ever been reluctant to meet a challenge that once you handled increased your sense of courage and understanding about life? What was the challenge? Why did you hesitate to meet it? What did you learn or gain from managing it?

# SET DESIGN

The Set Designer, in collaboration with the Director, envisions the arrangement of the stage space—where features such as walls, doors, windows, and stairs go—and the props, including furniture and objects that belong in the space and to the characters. Below are some of the items the playwrights chose to include in the set design of *Key Largo*. Read through them, imagine the box below is the stage space from the audience's point of view, and then sketch your own set design for *Key Largo*.

## HOTEL LOBBY

- Double doors, leading to the front porch, with windows on either side.
- A big easy chair, sofa, tables.
- The front desk. On it is a telephone. Behind it is a door marked "Office."
- A staircase. Under it is a door marked "Kitchen."
- A bar, with a radio.
- Two revolving fans hang from the ceiling.
- The walls are covered with paintings, photos, rods, nets, shells, and gamefish.



# AN INTERVIEW WITH KRISTOPHER KARCHER



## **What is your title and how long have you been at the Geffen?**

I was hired about a month ago as the Literary and Casting Assistant.

## **What are your primary responsibilities?**

I split my time between working with Rachel Wiegardt-Egel, our Manager of New Play Development, and Phyllis Schuringa, our Casting Director. With Rachel, I manage our script submission database, evaluate submissions for season consideration, assist with administrative support for our outside readers, and provide dramaturgical research for current productions and workshops as needed. For Phyllis, I correspond with artists and their agents to schedule auditions as well as monitor and attend auditions.

## **What educational, artistic, and professional experiences led to you working at the Geffen?**

I had literary internships at the Riant Theatre in New York, the Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center in Connecticut, and Playpenn in Philadelphia, where I worked in new play development. After I graduated university, I spent a year at Asolo Reper-

tory Theatre as the Literary and Casting Apprentice, and then worked full time in house management while freelancing in new play development in Philadelphia, before landing this dream job!

## **What do you look for when considering plays to recommend?**

My favorite plays tend to be very bold, theatrical pieces of work. One of the first questions I ask is, why is this a piece of theater? Why not a movie or a novel or some other medium? I love magical realism in plays, and plays that break form or go somewhere completely unexpected. I also think about the immediacy of the work. What is the play responding to in our current moment? Lastly, I look at the specific roles available in the play. Are the roles meaty enough for highly regarded actors to want to take something like this on? Who could I see in these roles that would be exciting?

## **What makes an actor "right" for a role?**

I ask, "Who would be right for this production?" Sitting in auditions you realize that every actor has a very specific perspective on the character in question. Everyone makes their own choices. For callbacks, I like to pick a mix of actors

who make choices that agree with the director's perspective, but I also like to throw in a few that made choices that surprised me or made me think about the play in a new way.

## **What do you find most challenging about your work?**

Saying no to artists I really love. Sometimes a play or audition will completely blow my mind, but it just isn't exactly the right choice for us to make at the moment. If I could give one piece of advice to artists it's that a rejection often has nothing to do with the work you presented. A lot of the time, a "no" is the result of a million other factors you cannot control.

## **What do you find most satisfying?**

There is nothing more thrilling than watching a new play take shape, and being a part of that process. I love helping playwrights get closer to where they want their piece to be, and watching them make discoveries in the room. Their eyes light up with an idea and they start writing furiously. Even more exciting is seeing actors get the new pages and go, "Oh! This is awesome! I get it now!"

# AUDIENCE ETIQUETTE



PHOTO BY JEFF LORCH

Going to the theater is a unique experience, and we all need to be mindful of “audience etiquette,” or how to behave at the theater.

**THE AUDIENCE’S ROLE** The audience plays an essential role during the performance of a play. Without an audience, the actors are only rehearsing. Audience members’ concentrated silence and responses, such as laughing and applauding, provide energy to the actors as they bring their performance to life.

**BEHAVIORS TO AVOID** Since the actors can hear the audience so clearly, it is important not to engage in behaviors that might disturb or distract them—and fellow audience members. These actions include:

- Talking
- Texting
- Allowing cell phones to ring
- Taking photographs or video
- Getting up to leave before intermission or the end of the show (unless it is a true emergency)
- Eating or drinking
- Unwrapping candy or cough drops.

**USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA** We appreciate you sharing your Geffen Playhouse experience via social media, but ask that you **do not do so inside the theater, where the use of electronic devices is prohibited.**

We recommend that you post your status in the lobby after the performance, and invite you to tag @GeffenPlayhouse and use #GeffenPlayhouse to share your experience and continue the conversation with us online.

**AUDIENCE AWARENESS ACTIVITY** Before going to the Geffen Playhouse for the first time, compare and contrast the experience of seeing a live play with:

- going to the movies
- attending a live sporting event
- watching television.

## DISCUSSION POINT

If you were onstage performing in a play, how would you want the audience to behave?

# POST-SHOW DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



PHOTO BY JEFF LORCH

Depending on the time available and your group members' interests, guide them to respond to questions selected from those suggested below. Encourage everyone to participate, while having respect for differing opinions. Individuals can share their thoughts with a partner or in a small group. Ask for several volunteers to share their groups' answers with the larger group.

- Overall, how did you feel while watching *Key Largo*? Engaged? Tense? Fearful? Bored? Conflicted? Excited? What made you feel this way?
- What genre would you classify this play as? A mystery? A thriller? A comedy? A noir? Or other? Please explain why.
- With which characters did you most *identify*? Why? With which characters did you most *empathize*? Why?
- What impacts did the play's *setting*—the time, place, and surrounding circumstances—have on the story?
- After the play ends, do you think Frank McCloud will stay in Key Largo with Nora and Mr. D'Alcala? Why or why not?
- Is this story an allegory, or extended metaphor, for anything that is currently happening in our world? How can you connect what you saw and experienced to real life?
- What was the most impressive technical aspect of the play? The rain? The wind? The lightning and thunder? The gunfire? Why?
- If you have seen John Huston's 1948 film classic *Key Largo* with Humphrey Bogart, Edward G. Robinson and Lauren Bacall, how does this version of *Key Largo*, adapted by Jeffrey Hatcher and Andy Garcia from both the film and Maxwell Anderson's 1939 play, compare?
- Would you recommend this production of *Key Largo* to other theatergoers? Why, or why not?

# RESOURCES

**WATCH** the 1948 film version of *Key Largo*, written by John Huston and Richard Brooks, directed by John Huston, and starring Humphrey Bogart, Edward G. Robinson, and Lauren Bacall. The DVD is available at the Los Angeles Public Library [tinyurl.com/LAPLKeyLargo](http://tinyurl.com/LAPLKeyLargo), as is the 1939 play by Maxwell Anderson upon which the film and current play are based.

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**LEARN** about the Florida Keys through a PBS travelogue video at [tinyurl.com/PBSFloridaKeys](http://tinyurl.com/PBSFloridaKeys) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) website at [tinyurl.com/NOAAFloridaKeys](http://tinyurl.com/NOAAFloridaKeys).

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**LEARN** about the formation and impact of hurricanes and storms at NOAA's [tinyurl.com/SciJinksStorms](http://tinyurl.com/SciJinksStorms).

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**WATCH** a video of a Category 5 hurricane in Miami, Florida to understand the phenomenal power of such storms at [tinyurl.com/FLAHurricaneVideo](http://tinyurl.com/FLAHurricaneVideo).

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**LEARN** about the history of organized crime in the United States at [www.themobmuseum.org](http://www.themobmuseum.org).

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**WATCH** a short documentary on the history and impact of Film Noir at [tinyurl.com/YouTubeFilmNoir](http://tinyurl.com/YouTubeFilmNoir).

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**LEARN** about the life and music of legendary jazz trumpeter Arturo Sandoval, who has composed music for the Geffen's production of *Key Largo*, at [www.arturosandoval.com/home/artist](http://www.arturosandoval.com/home/artist).

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