

## Blocking Assignments

### ACT TWO SCENE ONE AND SUB SCENE I A

#### GENERAL:

Now that our venue allows us to move on and off stage during blackouts we can preposition players on the stage which makes things easier on the blocking assignments. Entrances and exits can be more difficult on players and the audience being able to follow the plot. The set for the Salon should remain the same as Act One Scene Two. The set includes a style chair and trolley, a 4 chair seating area, a magazine rack and a cashier counter. During the blackout both players enter the stage from Entrance/Exit E. Bev is at the cashier counter and Alex is seated in the styling chair as the lights come up and the scene begins. Bev moves from the cashier area on stage right D to a position just off Alex's left shoulder. There is a waiting area for customers on stage left with four chairs. There is a magazine rack along the back stage left corner near the seating area. There is a list of props and the visuals to go along with the scene below. On the big screen there needs to be the same wide angle visual image of a typical hair salon with an empty styling chair, seating area, cashier counter, and mirrors. This visual is maintained throughout the entire scene. The seasonal tree is ever present and there is a window frame constructed so that it is suspended between two free standing poles to indicate that the tree is outside of the salon. This scene calls for Extras/Support patrons moving on and off stage during both the scene and sub scene. There needs to be continual drama on the main stage as Bev continues to style Brian's hair as the two converse on a lighter note where they appear to get to the point where Bev would believably invite Brian to the Sens game and call his mum. Likewise patrons of the Salon come in and sit in the waiting area. Meanwhile the lighting focuses on Kathryn who reads her email.

#### ACTION:

Bev is just finishing up with the last sale and begins to give her lines as she walks across the stage from right to left ready to do Alex's hair style. Throughout this scene Bev attends to her client, Alex, while listening to the conversation. The hair salon props are available to Bev. Throughout the segment Alex is in the Salon chair between the 7 and 8 o'clock position. (Like stage areas, the clock positions are seen from the audience's perspective so his chair points toward the stage left front corner)

Realizing the situation by reading Alex's expressions as he silently stares at Brian, Bev intuitively deduces what is about to take place next. When Brian reaches the position where he is directly in front of Alex she now slowly rotates the chair from the 7 o'clock position back to the 6 o'clock position directly facing the audience. While his chair is rotating Alex sternly keeps his eye on Brian who ignores him as he moves over to the waiting area and takes a seat. Throughout his segment with Alex, Brian is continuing to deliberately ignore him without showing him any disrespect. There is quite a long pause in the dialogue from the time Brian enters the stage and moves over to the waiting area – while Bev spins the chair slowly toward the audience – during which - Alex stares down Brian who consciously ignores him.

Brian's cue, to get up and go over to the magazine rack, because he realizes that Alex can still turn his head to see him, follows Alex's opening line which breaks the silent tension, "Well here he is." Likewise, Brian's response is equally well timed after pausing to walk over to the magazine rack. Now that Brian is well behind Alex and completely out of his sight. He is more comfortable in turning toward Alex to deliver his line "You still getting over it? Coach."

When Bev takes the apron away and moves over toward the cash drawer. It now becomes Alex's turn to ignore Brian giving him the cold shoulder as he moves toward the cashier counter with Bev. Throughout this segment, Alex's lines are positioned toward Bev who responds passively to this form of aggression without Alex making eye contact with Brian. Brian moves over to sit in the salon chair and aimlessly spins it back and forth between 7 and 5 o'clock with his foot on the floor. Even though Alex glances back at Brian as he pays Bev, he nevertheless does not make eye contact with Brian and his glance is merely a gesture.

Next, Alex still using the harsh tone says to Bev, "Keep the change" then he turns back toward Brian and is surprised that he would just seat himself in *the* chair. Holding up the tickets toward him and fanning them out as two separate tickets, and while gloating over them, he closes them as one would a handful of playing cards and slaps them across his arm saying "I hope it makes us even." as if the Tip, which is very small in comparison to the cost of the two tickets matters. Bev, forlornly looks down at the money in her hand, opens the cash drawer, puts the money in the drawer and also takes out 1 coin and drops it into a glass Tip jar on the counter top making a distinctive sound. The two Males continue to stare down each other as Bev breaks the silence after a dramatic pause with her line, "I hope you enjoy the game." Bev then picks up her broom and calmly begins sweeping the floor around the salon chair ready to do Brian's cut. Bev portrays by her actions that she is *standing* in solidarity with Brian, who is seated in the styling chair.

During this segment, Alex, using the same arm that the tickets are in gestures toward Brian and says, "I'll see you later in my office." As if wanting to have the last word, Alex abruptly turns and moves toward exit ramp A. Alex is now at the front edge of the stage and about to exit. He overhears Brian say the words, "Right, Coach. Later." but fails to interpret the tone of voice that Brian uses and so he approvingly grins as if he has won the contest. Next, he hears Brian say, "My office, I mean (sarcastic pause) your office." and changes his facial expression to contempt as he scoffs and then stops off the stage at exit A.

Once Alex has exited the stage, Bev moves toward the cashier counter to put the broom back as she says, "I take it you're Brian." Then in a humorous way, she states the obvious "Your next."

Remove the stage direction for Brian which reads (defiantly he takes his seat in the chair)

Brian is still looking straight ahead at exit A as if wanting to ensure that Alex won't be returning. When Brian speaks the line "Give me the jar head look." He looks over in the direction of the Tip jar on the cashier's counter. Brian starts out speaking in a tone of voice that is defiant given what just took place with Alex. Bev, who knows nothing about Brian's dad or the family situation, is following Brian's lead and excepting his anger over the current state of affairs. She does not yet realize what Brian is concerned about and therefore she responds carefully to his request to shave off his head. Brian begins to open up his thoughts and feelings when he turns his head toward Bev and says, "I'm not sure. Do you think I should?"

Bev does not appropriately respond to this varied subtle change of heart. She is still imagining in her mind Brian's reaction to Alex. Her response "That depends." is therefore a flat response. Likewise, her next line which ends "Why do you feel you need to shave your head?" is spoken rather directly toward Brian without in any expectation of what his response will be. Brian, of course is now dealing with the separation from his dad which the audience is well aware of and begins to see in Brian's change of

behaviour. Brian needs to be changing his temperament sufficiently for the audience to pick up on it but not so much as to draw Bev's attention.

Brian says "It's all between me and my dad." is spoken truly from a heart. Bev in her response now thinks that Brian is dealing with the father who is just like Alex. Therefore, she again overlooks Brian's tenderness as if it were the reaction of some one being abused and feeling ashamed. The audience can now see that Brian has shifted from being angry with his coach Alex to being mournful about the separation between himself and his dad. In her next line, Bev says "you two are getting along? Is that it?" as if she is anticipating helping Brian to overcome his emotional shame of being conflicted by his dad's aggressive behaviour. So while she is preparing for her next thought to come out she learns by listening to Brian something that she wasn't expecting.

Brian stays focused with his emotional breakdown. His change of heart becomes more and more apparent to the audience and not entirely to Bev. Bev is not as fully aware of the depth of Brian's emotional state as is the audience and again responds out of context and this time with humour "Your dad was taking a bus all the way to Afghanistan from here?" she does so because she is acting on one level of perception, while Brian and the audience, who are fully aware of his transformation from being angry to being hurt are on a separate level.

It isn't the case that Bev is out of touch with Brian, just that she is not fully aware of his intent because she too has come through the episode with Alex. During this segment Bev needs to be very active styling Brian's hair and somewhat aware of the fact that the salon is starting to fill up with more customers.

During this time Extras begin entering the salon and being seated in the waiting area.

Brian stays focused but now his mind turns to describing the situation and reflect on what it means. The emotional response for the next segment shows the audience his distress. The line "so why can't they just get it together?" is as much distressing as it is heartfelt. The line "When one talks the other listens." is spoken more as a direction that carries over to the audience as well as being spoken as good advice for his own mom and dad. Bev now accepts what Brian has been saying and his emotional attitude which clearly demonstrates for her his maturity. This bonding is what will set up the invitation which is to follow regarding the hockey game in Ottawa.

Bev hides her response to Brian because now she realizes her inability to pick up the sentiment that Brian was expressing. She also identifies with this emotional loss because of her experience with saying goodbye to Kathryn. When Bev speaks "Do you feel like you're betraying your dad" she is trying to engage him and the deep level and recognizes that by softening that expression. Her questions are searching not just for answers but for meaning and she becomes absorbed by what Brian is saying. Bev gets her first clue that she has succeeded in better understanding Brian when Brian responds to her question "Do you feel like it's wrong to do that?" is positive.

Bev as a mature adult realizes where this is going and moves forward by offering a different approach and saying "Shaving off your head is what's wrong." At this point the audience and Bev are in sync with Brian. Bev stays with the humorous approach but by no means is she now trying to be comical. Bev is appropriately avoiding any of her issues at this point and supporting Brian in a manner that will be helpful to him. She gets another chance to raise his esteem in the segment regarding basketball.

Feeling comfortable with Brian she offers him the chance to go to a Sen's game even though she knows that the other two tickets have just been given to Alex. In her mind she welcomes the challenge of mending the relationship because she recognizes that the struggle between them is phony. This is neither the time nor the place to go into that but it nevertheless is in the back of her mind when she graciously makes the offer and accepts responsibility to go even further and talk to Brian's mom.

Brian improves the situation with his promise of attention to Harvey. Not only is it genuine but it reinforces Brian's character. In her last segment Bev reveals the relationship with Kathryn without completely sharing her sentiments. Here again, it is important for this speech to be communicated to the audience as a measure of Bev's loving care for Kathryn. Even though the words are rather neutral it is important to communicate through them so that the audience will connect on an unconscious level with the tragic nature of separation.

These directions are indeed very detailed but they are intended to communicate with the audience and illicit their response to having felt the same degree of separation with their loved ones who have just returned from Afghanistan and vice versa. Rather than confront the issue of loneliness and separation in the context of the deployment, this scene must nevertheless deal with this overwhelmingly important emotion. Once again, Bev is also operating on an emotional level within herself when she speaks her final lines of the scene in order to move the audience to be aware of their emotional sympathies with what they see on stage. Brian is sufficiently engaged himself in taking a new course with his life that he is not caught up in absorbing Bev's emotionally charged dialogue.

This is best achieved by Bev placing her focus off in the distance to her right which is stage left and above the audience. It is at this point that Kathryn emerges on the Readers Stage. When Kathryn arrives she appears to be going over her Email which is on paper. When Bev says the line "I read her emails all the time," Kathryn looks up from her reading script and scans the distant horizon as if it were directly in front of her. The combination of the last speech and Kathryn's dramatic movements will solidify the audience being touched by the emotional connection with separation of a loved one and possibly allow them to experience a similar response of loss if they are indeed grieving. So it is once again, as with the case of Brian's two way communication, Bev's words say one thing but her communication with the audience says something that is far more emotionally connected to herself than to Brian in this case.

As the sub scene begins, the spotlight shifts to Kathryn as she reads her Email. Under subdued lighting, Bev continues to style Brian's hair and the relationship between them is friendly with Brian taking the lead and Bev being focused on her work.

There is no need to over dramatize the actions on the main stage when Kathryn says "I hope that you found someone special to share them with." At that point the audience will connect with the meaning in their own way which again carries more than one interpretation. This is where Kathryn pauses before telling the story of the IED attack. The next pause in the reading sequence follows the words "who was hurt the worst." The next segment ends with "console his family" there needs to be a long pause here for Kathryn to take in a deep breath.

Although Kathryn is a stage reader it is important to read the script in these smaller segments with a good deal of familiarity rather than keeping the eyes down on the page. Try to scan read them in one sequence and then speak them. In order to do this you will there needs to be a stage version of the

script with larger print and these segments sectioned off so that it is easier to dramatically present the dialogue.

The next segment ends with the words “and wonder why we are having doubts” there is now time for another pause. The line “it’s all still madness, but there is a huge difference being made.” is spoken on its own followed by the line “there’s a sense of chaos but things are not chaotic if you know what I mean.” The remainder of the segment is delivered quite naturally and quickly as there is on Kathryn’s part some urgency to get some sleep.

As the stage lighting on the Readers Stage goes to black Kathryn exits by the rear of the Readers Stage and the spotlight shifts to the center of main stage. Bev removes the apron from Brian and the two walk toward the counter. They complete the transaction with Brian also reaching into his pocket to hand Bev a \$10.00 Tip. She gently declines the offer but obviously appreciates the gesture. Brian moves to exit the stage at ramp A and the visual image of the salon on the screen goes to black.

Three children, Bonnie, Pat and Anne dressed in Halloween costumes move cross the area in front of the stage from stage left to the foot of ramp A, on the audience level, along with the two moms Jessica and Betty. The Halloween Group move quickly toward the head of the aisle that leads back through the audience and go in front of Brian who stops at the foot of the ramp just to watch. Bev meanwhile begins to work with the next client as the lighting on the salon dims to black.

The girls all act playfully with each other and let out the sounds of joy as they prance along the aisle away from the stage but staying in a close proximity to the moms who follow along closely behind. The scene closes when the girls and the moms reach the outer limit of the lighted area around A which will be approximately 20 feet from the stage. The light goes black. Brian moves down the aisle to leave the area. Those on stage take exit route E.

#### **PROPS LIST:**

There is a window frame suspended between two free standing poles to indicate that the tree is outside of the salon,

There is a small trolley (from a hair salon) to be used by Bev.

Various salon implements including comb, razor, shaving cup, shaving soap, hand mirror, clippers. And scissors, curling rod, blow dryer, hair spray.

4 chairs for the waiting area.

Broom.

Glass Tip jar.

Magazine rack with papers and magazines to read.

A cashier counter with a drawer to store a cash box (no register required).

1 Toonie (placed in the cashier drawer.)

Brian carries a \$10 bill.

A salon styling chair.

Apron for clients.

We will also need sufficient glow in the dark cam sticks or tape to mark out entrances and exit ramps in the dark.

Bev has 2 hockey tickets in her cash drawer.

The seasonal tree is now quite barren for Fall..

#### **STAGE DIRECTOR NOTES:**

The makeshift window is positioned prior to the opening of the scene along with the styling chair which goes in the centre stage. There is a trolley for the styling implements behind the chair and slightly to the left. Stage crews will enter from the centre rear of the stage E. They are assembled in the penalty box area and they carry with them small LED lights to assist them in moving about during blackouts. The seasonal tree is positioned at all times on stage at the rear of the stage directly in front of exit E. There needs to be sufficient room for the movement of players and crew around the tree as they move on and off the main stage. The seasonal changes of the tree are part of the set preparation and conclusion. This set piece becomes a focal point for the play and also serves to mark the opening of exit E so that it can be easily found in the dark. Once again light reflecting tape on the stage floor must be used. The final set requires the 4 chairs in the seating area at B on stage left. The magazine rack goes along the back stage left and the cashier counter is along the stage right at D. Neither the seating area nor the cashier counter must block the side audience lines of sight.

#### **COSTUMING:**

There is no special costuming for either of the three main players or the Extras who appear as patrons of the salon. Bev wears clothing suitable to being a salon hairstylist and possibly wears a stylist's apron with large pockets. Alex is dressed in casual attire. Kathryn is now wearing her Tim Horton's uniform. The three children are wearing suitable Halloween costumes. The moms are dressed suitably for going out with their children toward the late afternoon and early evening.

#### **IMAGE SCREEN OPERATOR:**

After the blackout and before the lights come up the image on the screen is displayed and remains on the screen throughout the scene. Following the image on the screen two areas of the stage are lit - the centre stage C and the runway A. In addition the seating area along with the magazine rack should be lit as well as the cash counter. These areas respectively are B and D. The sequence for lighting and image changes at the end of scenes is for the image to go to black followed by the lighting going to black. In this scene the image goes black when Brian exits the salon. There is lighting for Kathryn as she reads her Email from the Readers Stage left.

#### **MAKEUP:**

There are no special requirements for each of the players. Each of the players in the scene will be responsible for doing their own makeup under the direction of the Makeup Artist. No special attention is required for this scene. Makeup for the children who are dressed in Halloween costumes will depend on what sort of costuming is decided upon in consultation with the actual parents of the children and the Support/Extras Director.

#### **LIGHTING:**

The centre stage C is lit at the opening of the scene along with areas B, C, D and A which is at the front area of the stage and entrance ramp. The Readers Stage is also lit when Kathryn appears and black when she exits. At the tail end of the scene the salon goes to black and the spot light on A is dimmed to create the effect of a late October afternoon.