Acting Edition

Lunch Bunch

by Adrian Einspanier

SAMUEL FRENCH

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LUNCH BUNCH was first produced by Clubbed Thumb as part of Summerworks 2019 at the Wild Project, and premiered on May 17, 2019. The performance was directed by Tara Ahmadinejad, with sets by Jean Kim, costumes by Alice Tavener, lights by Oona Curley, sound by Ben Vigus, and props by Raphael Mishler. The production stage manager was Alex Williamson. The cast was as follows:

TUTTLE . . . . . Keilly McQuail
JACOB . . . . . Ugo Chukwu
HANNAH . . . . . Irene Sofia Lucio
GREG . . . . . Jon Norman Schneider
TAL . . . . . Eliza Bent
MITRA . . . . . Nana Mensah
NICOLE . . . . . Julia Sirna-Frest
DAVID . . . . . Mike Shapiro

LUNCH BUNCH was subsequently produced by Clubbed Thumb and The Play Company, and opened on March 15, 2023. The creative team was the same, and the cast was as follows:

TUTTLE . . . . . Louisa Jacobson
JACOB . . . . . Ugo Chukwu
HANNAH . . . . . Jo Mei
GREG . . . . . Francis Mateo
TAL . . . . . Janice Amaya
MITRA . . . . . Tala Ashe
NICOLE . . . . . Julia Sirna-Frest
DAVID . . . . . David Greenspan

CHARACTERS

TUTTLE
JACOB
HANNAH
GREG
TAL
MITRA
NICOLE
???DAVID???

SETTING

A city
Not unlike New York

A public defender's office
Not unlike The Bronx Defenders' Family Defense Practice

An open office
Tables, chairs, people. Or just people?
– it's the topography that's important –

No laptops. Or lunches
Or maybe just one – *sandwich* – at the end

Shit office lighting
The kind that makes you wonder:
"Can I keep a plant alive in this?"

Oh and, just because someone doesn't speak
Doesn't mean they aren't there – "listening," "working," "eating," "reading," "banging their head against something," what have you –

TIME

Dragon Fruit !

Black Beluga Lentils !

Perfectly Soft-Boiled Eggs !

Amidst the distinct fear/feeling that:

The world is, always has been, always will be (???) going to shit !

AUTHOR'S NOTES

Length:
roughly an hour (or rather, the length of a "Platonic" lunch break)

Casting:
Character's ages, races, gender identities, sexual orientations, physical shapes/sizes/abilities are mostly unspecified and in development we have found various/multiple compelling maps/versions. Names, pronouns, references might change accordingly—or not. As long it's *thoughtful* to the story it's telling. That said, quite practically, this play draws inspiration from a public defender office in the Bronx. There should be more women, trans and nonbinary people than cis men. Racial diversity is a must.

Formatting:
A slash / signals an overlap or interruption. Words in parentheses ( ) are not spoken.

For the sake of "reading" this play (as opposed to experiencing it LIVE in "performance"), perhaps CLAP(?)/STOMP(?)—mentally or physically—somewhat violently/viciously upon each centered and isolated asterisk, signifying "a new day." A rude rhythmic reset of sorts.

...

...

...

(The **LUNCH BUNCH** *[***LB***] includes* **TUTTLE**, **JACOB**, **HANNAH**, **GREG**, *and* **TAL**.*)*

LB. MONDAY

TUTTLE. VEGGIE ENCHILIDAS AND CLEMENTINE

*

LB. TUESDAY

JACOB. LENTIL LOAF WITH SWEET POTATOES AND BRUSSELS SPROUTS

NICOLE. That sounds / good

*

LB. WEDNESDAY

HANNAH. CURRIED QUINOA SALAD WITH SUNFLOWER COATED KALE / CHIPS

NICOLE. Oooouuuu/uuuu

*

LB. THURSDAY

GREG. BROWN / RICE

LB. RICE, BLACK BEANS, STEAMED KALE, SPICED TOFU

GREG. How did / you (know?)

HANNAH. You always bring / that

GREG. It has all the food groups **TAL.** I like it **TUTTLE.** Heallthy

JACOB. Hey—

*

LB. FRIDAY

TAL. BBQ JACKFRUIT SANDWICH WITH SIDE ARUGULA PEAR SALAD

...

...

...

AND A MINT ;)

LB. WOOOOOOO **NICOLE.** What's *jackfruit*?

NICOLE. —If you guys are ever looking for a / sixth

JACOB. I don't wanna jinx it /

HANNAH. Then don't / jinx it

JACOB. BuT I feel like this was our Best Week YET /

LB (EXCEPT TAL). YEAAAAAAAH

TAL. —Hey guys...?!

JACOB. fuck

HANNAH. You jinxed it / **JACOB.** I jinxed it /

TAL. I'M GOING TO PARIS!!!!!!!!

HANNAH. "Yay" **JACOB.** Shit

NICOLE. Paris /

JACOB. Shut up / Hannah

HANNAH. *You* jinxed it

TAL. I know this seems bad, but *Listen:* I'm only gone a few weeks! /

HANNAH & JACOB. "Uh huh" / **NICOLE.** Paris / ...

TAL. ANNNND you know what this means !!!

HANNAH.

We pick up all of your cases / ...???

TAL. *Nooo!*

HANNAH & JACOB. .../...

TAL. It means *Cheeses*!!!

HANNAH & JACOB. .../...

TAL. Lots and lots of *Cheeses!!!*

HANNAH & JACOB. .....

TAL. Brie!Camembert!Comté!Morbier?!Tome des (Bauges)—

—BAGUETTES?!?!

HANNAH & JACOB. .../...

TAL. —Greg???

HANNAH. He's /

HANNAH, TUTTLE, GREG. "vegan" /

GREG. I do love cheeses / ...

JACOB. *(To* **GREG.***)* Shut it /

TAL. Okay yeah plus you pick up all of my cases

HANNAH, JACOB, GREG. ...../

TAL. sorry

NICOLE. Not to interrupt, but:

Did I hear someone looking for a / fifth?

HANNAH. shit

NICOLE. Because if someone's leaving, I'm totally down to "Sub In"

...

...

NICOLE. Is that a / (yeees???)

JACOB. *(To* **GREG**.*)* Who's that/?

NICOLE. —me? /

JACOB. No /

GREG. *(Cough.)* Mitra

HANNAH, NICOLE, TUTTLE, TAL. Who's / (Mitra?)

JACOB. (Hey you—) MITRA!

MITRA. What? Huh. Me?

JACOB. What are you eating? /

NICOLE. Shit /

TUTTLE, TAL, GREG. (Oh—) heyyyy /

MITRA. Edamame hummus(?), portobello mushroom(?), tatsoi sprouted grain wrap(?)

NICOLE. Bit/ch

HANNAH. Spicy? /

MITRA. A little /

HANNAH. Is that a/—

MITRA. Blood orange, yeah

NICOLE. (I'm—) Nicole—*I'm free* /

JACOB. Wanna join our lunch bunch?/

MITRA. Your—? /

LB. LUNCH BUNCH

NICOLE. Not / again

HANNAH. *(Re:* **NICOLE**.*)* Is she *??cry/ing??*

MITRA. I don't know what that / is

JACOB. It's a lunch sharing group. Tuttle's Monday. I'm Tuesday. Hannah's Wednesday. Greg's Thursday. Tal WAS Friday /

TAL. *Gruyère/?!?!*

JACOB. Once a week you make slash pack five lunches for yourself and the rest of the group. The other four days one of us makes slash packs lunches for you

MITRA. What kind of—

LB. GOURMET

JACOB. Veggie slash healthy, friendly slash forward. NO /

LB. Peppers /

HANNAH. – Jacob's allergic / –

JACOB. Side or dessert /

HANNAH. – suggested, but not required –

JACOB. And:

LB. No Pretzels /

HANNAH. David /

MITRA. Who's /

JACOB. We don't talk about /

LB. David /

HANNAH. Or pretzels

JACOB. Let's just say /

LB. David's /

JACOB. no longer in the group /

LB (EXCEPT GREG). For A Reason /

JACOB. —Greg /

LB (INCLUDING GREG). For A Reason /

HANNAH. Pretzels Are Not A Side Dish /

JACOB. —You in?

NICOLE. If you're not sure, I'm in. Happy to be / *"in"*

MITRA. Yeah sure okay /

JACOB. You're Friday

MITRA. Could I actually be / (Wednesday?)

JACOB. Friday /

LB. HI FRIDAY

JACOB. Every morning you'll get a text asking if you want your /

LB. Lunch Bunch /

JACOB. left in the office or court and telling you what color slash kinda bag it's in.

—Any questions?

MITRA. I don't / (think so)

JACOB. For a minute I thought I was really gonna lose my shit

HANNAH. – Jacob takes

LB (EXCEPT JACOB). Lunch Bunch

HANNAH. really seriously –

JACOB. Let's just say you don't wanna know what things were like before /

LB. LUNCH BUNCH /

JACOB. around here

LB (EXCEPT JACOB). .....

MITRA. I'm new /

LB. Obviously / **NICOLE.** me too /

MITRA. I just passed the bar /

LB. CONGRATS / **NICOLE.** same /

MITRA. How long have you been / (working here?)

HANNAH. Jacob's about to get his ten year plaque

MITRA. We get / (ten year plaques?)

JACOB. *IF* /

HANNAH. You make it

LB. – Ten Years – /

JACOB. People rarely make it /

LB. Three Years

HANNAH. Much less /

JACOB. Ten

HANNAH. Burn out

LB. Is Real

HANNAH. Shit's

LB. Fucking Depressing .....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

JACOB. Well okay then. Crisis averted /

HANNAH. Don't / (jinx it)

JACOB. —Where were we?

TUTTLE. —Hey guys...?!

JACOB. FucK

HANNAH. *I Said* / Don't—

JACOB. I jinxed it

TUTTLE. ...I'm doing Whole 30!!! ...

JACOB. —*Whole/???*

HANNAH & TUTTLE. 30 /

HANNAH, GREG, TUTTLE. No sugar. No grains. No dairy. No beans. No MSG. No alcohol. No fun. Basically: organic meats and veggies /

TUTTLE. And I'm a vegetarian so that means: /

HANNAH, GREG, TUTTLE. VEGGIES

JACOB. You gotta be fucking kidding me **TAL.** No *Cheese?*

TUTTLE. It's just 30 days. After that I can start reincorporating things back into my diet, one at a time, slowly, methodically, to isolate the culprits

JACOB. The—

TUTTLE. Whatever's been giving me occasional gas and near constant feelings of worthlessness

HANNAH. Did someone just / (fart?)

NICOLE. Sorry

JACOB. You're in

...

...

NICOLE. What? Who? Me? SER/IOUSLY!

JACOB. Go on Prime. Buy a cookbook and a cast-iron. Don't. Make me regret this

NICOLE. What's a cast iron? —WAIT. NO DON'T TELL ME HAHAHAHA KIDDING – I'll google it – THANKYOUTHANKYOUTHANKYOU /

JACOB. You're Monday

LB. HI MONDAY

NICOLE. You won't regret this

JACOB. I'm going to regret this

HANNAH. Yeah. Probably

TAL. *...Paris !*

...

*

(The **LUNCH BUNCH** *now includes* **NICOLE**, **MITRA**, **JACOB**, **HANNAH**, *and* **GREG**.*)*

LB. MONDAY

NICOLE. MIXED NUT BUTTER AND JELLY ON / LEFTOVER PITA BREAD ?

HANNAH. MOLDY PITA BREAD ?!

NICOLE. – wait, really, it's not that –

so/rry

JACOB. I already regret this

HANNAH. Totally

NICOLE. it won't happen again /

*

LB. TUESDAY

JACOB. LEMON TAHINI GODDESS NOODLES WITH TEMPEH "BACON" AND GARLIC BROCCOLINI

...

...

...

GREG. Jacob

HANNAH. this

MITRA. is

NICOLE. SoGood

…

…

…

JACOB. I'll send you the recipe

*

LB. FRIDAY

MITRA. COZY TURMERIC BLACK-EYED PEA STEW WITH CRUSTY WHOLE GRAIN BREAD

…

…

MITRA. I left yours in the

JACOB. —got it

TUTTLE. Looks good ;)

—I love turmeric

JACOB.

Is this…*Adobo?*/*?*

MITRA. yeah

JACOB. nice touch /

MITRA. thanks

…

MITRA. *(On the phone.)* Hi yes this is—

—I'm your new

Uh huh, Uh huh, Uh huh

—Yeah no I can see why you

—Sorry would you mind

—No it's just You're You're speaking a little (?uh?)

—Hello?

—He(llo)

...

She hung up on me

TUTTLE.

—Ms. Tucker?

MITRA. yeah /

TUTTLE. She does that

MITRA.

—should I call her back?

TUTTLE.

...in a minute...

...

TUTTLE. shit

...

(Re: her shoes.) —Do these match?

...

HANNAH. —Has anyone seen Greg?

MITRA. I think he's on intake

HANNAH. got it /

TUTTLE. Oof —Again?

MITRA. ?/?

TUTTLE. Last week he got *Six New Cases* in one day

MITRA. —Is that *?a / lot?*

TUTTLE. Two weeks ago I got *Four* then had a long cry in the coat closet

MITRA. —Which (closet is that?)

TUTTLE. Around the corner. First door on the left —The coats absorb the sounds of sobbing in the winter —You should try it

MITRA. ...

thanks

TUTTLE. Poor Greg. I don't think he's won a hearing in months/...

HANNAH. He just got overnights for the González family

TUTTLE. —ACS agreed to that??? —What Judge?

HANNAH. Tompkins

TUTTLE. *I loooove Tompkins...* —OU! I just remembered!

HANNAH & MITRA. ...

TUTTLE. I had another dream I killed Judge White

MITRA. —wh/at?

HANNAH. —Method?

TUTTLE.

Slow... Asphyxiation... —Do you think / that's bad?

HANNAH. That's not a nightmare. That's my fucking fantasy

TUTTLE.

—I could have sworn something bad happened... —You sure there wasn't an issue with the shelter?

HANNAH. You're thinking of the Richards

TUTTLE. Am I/?

HANNAH. They got fucked because of their history with DV /

TUTTLE. —ugh *that?* That whole thing was / *bOgus*

HANNAH. She's at single women's, he's with the brother, kids are out of foster staying with an aunt in North Carolina /

TUTTLE. *North Caro/lina?!*

HANNAH. keep up

TUTTLE. *; (*

Greg's resilient... He never cries in the coat closet

—No, Wait, ONCE!

HANNAH. That was because his mom had cancer

TUTTLE. HIS MOM HAD CANCER ?!?!

HANNAH. *? yeahhh* / *?*

TUTTLE. —IS SHE *??? O/KAYYY ???*

HANNAH. How the fuck would I know

...

TUTTLE. One time Hannah got *FIVE NEW CASES* on intake, but then she won two 1028s the same day

MITRA. —*Seriously???*

HANNAH. "1028 *Kween*" —You're not a cog. You're a wrench /

TUTTLE. "Fucking up the machine" **HANNAH**. Fucking up the machine

HANNAH. I grabbed Greg's. Bringing it to court. Later

...

TUTTLE. I'm a wrench, I'm a wrench, I'm a wretch

...oughhh/...

MITRA. How does she do it?

TUTTLE.

I don't know. Some of the cases, I look at them and think "This is bad. This is *really* bad," and she's just like "Oh? This?"

—You should follow her. She's good

NICOLE. (So this is—) Tooooom-rick?

MITRA. ...

yeah

TUTTLE. (It's—) anti-inflammatory. Have you tried—

MITRA. activating it with pepper

TUTTLE. You're good *;)*

HANNAH. —Forgot my badge

MITRA. ...

Hey—

HANNAH. ???

MITRA. ...

nothing

HANNAH. ...

All right. I'm out

...

...

MITRA. Not to be— But does she...*Have something?*

– on *Her Eye?* –

Lid