

Acting Edition

Kodachrome

by Adam Szymkowicz

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|| SAMUEL FRENCH ||

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ISBN 978-0-573-70808-4

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KODACHROME was developed in the Dorothy Strelsin New American Writers Group at Primary Stages in New York, New York. It was workshopped at JAW: A Playwrights Festival, produced by Portland Center Stage in Portland, Oregon in 2015.

KODACHROME had its world premiere at Portland Center Stage in Portland, Oregon; Chris Coleman, Artistic Director. It opened February 9, 2018. It was directed by Rose Riordan with sets and lights by Daniel Meeker, costumes by Alison Heryer, sound by Casi Pacilio, projections by Will Cotter, and original music composed by Jana Crenshaw. The production stage manager was Janine Vanderhoff. The production assistant was Jordan Affeldt and casting was by Brandon Woolley and Rose Riordan. The cast was as follows:

PHOTOGRAPHER Lena Kaminsky
POLICEMAN /
 HARDWARE STORE OWNER Ryan Vincent Anderson
GRAVEDIGGER / YOUNG MAN Ryan Tresser
LIBRARIAN / WAITRESS / FRIEND Tina Chilip
HISTORY PROFESSOR /
 PERFUME MAKER / EMT 1 John D. Haggerty
MYSTERY NOVELIST / FLORIST / EMT 2 Sharonlee McLean
MARJORY / YOUNG WOMAN Kelly Godell

CHARACTERS

5-16 total

3f, 2m up to 8f, 6m, 2 gender neutral

Actors can be any race

PHOTOGRAPHER – (mid-30s to mid-40s) Suzanne, female

GRAVEDIGGER – (mid-30s to mid-40s) Earl, male

HARDWARE STORE OWNER – (mid-30s to mid-40s) Charlie, male

HISTORY PROFESSOR – (early 60s) Harold, male

MYSTERY NOVELIST – (early 60s) Georgette, female

MARJORY – (mid-20s) Female

YOUNG MAN – (early 20s) Robert, male

YOUNG WOMAN – (early 20s) Florence, female

FRIEND – (early 20s) Female

EMT 1

EMT 2

LIBRARIAN – (mid-30s to mid-40s) Renee, female

WAITRESS – (early 30s to mid-40s) Jen, female

PERFUME MAKER – (early 30s to mid-40s) Martin, male

POLICEMAN – (early 30s to mid-40s) Pete, male

FLORIST – (mid-30s to mid-40s) Heather, female

Doubling for 5

Gravedigger / Young Man / Policeman

Hardware Store Owner / Perfume Maker / History Professor / EMT 1

Mystery Novelist / Librarian / Florist / Friend / EMT 2

Young Woman / Waitress / Marjory

Doubling for 7

Gravedigger / Young Man

Hardware Store Owner / Policeman

Librarian / Waitress / Friend

History Professor / Perfume Maker / EMT 1

Mystery Novelist / Florist / EMT 2

Marjory / Young Woman

SETTING

Colchester, Connecticut
a small rural New England town

TIME

The present or recent past

NOTE ABOUT PROJECTIONS

These are not entirely necessary. I think the photographer just showing the audience is also effective in an *Our Town* kind of way. Which is to say please don't be daunted by the projections. They are nice but entirely unnecessary.

If you do projections, I suggest the photos taken onstage be taken beforehand in actual locations like an actual diner or an actual library so there's a richness that you won't be able to get from an onstage photo. In the original production, they were projected onto the rear wall.

For the photos of the audience, in Portland, the actress had a wireless video transmitter connected to her camera and concealed in her costume. They used a program called Isadora to "watch" the video feed from the camera, and output individual frames of the feed to a projector as the actress took photos. They found that outputting a video feed from the camera and capturing images on the computer eliminated the delay incurred by outputting images from the camera directly. Again, if that seems daunting, just have her take photos which aren't projected.

SPECIAL THANKS

In no particular order to Rose Riordan, Chris Coleman and the amazing staff, cast and crew at PCS. Don and Mary Blair, Tim and Mary Boyle, Keith and Sharon Barnes, Ronni S. Lacroute, Kelly Douglas and Eric H. Schoenstein, Ritz Family Foundation, John and Rhoda Szymkowicz, Seth Glewen, the Gersh Agency, Tish Dace, Kristen Palmer, Wallace Szymkowicz. Tom Cleary. Elizabeth Bochain. Joe Kraemer.

Moritz von Stuelpnagel, Michelle Bossy, the Primary Stages Writing Group, Project Y Theatre. The JAW team: Susan Louise O'Connor, Danny Wolohan, Gavin Hoffman, Sharonlee McLean, Laura Faye Smith, Karin Magaldi, Maria DiFabbio, Kelly O'Donnell.

Jason Schlafstein and the cast and crew of the workshop he directed at The National Conservatory of Dramatic Arts in DC: Nan Kyle Ficca, Phil Da Costa, Doug Wilder, Britney Mongold, Cambria Ungaro, Briyan Moreno, Camella Maloney, Antonio Sellers, Vitaly Mayes, Natalie Boland, Matthew Baldoni, Marketa Nicholson, Maria Paz Lopez.

Lia Romeo and the 17-18 Project Y Theater writing group: Rae Mariah MacCarthy, Daaimah Mubashshir, Stephanie Swirsky, Stacie Lents, Nora Sorena Casey, Holly Hepp Galvin, Pia Wilson, Dan B Moyer, Alexis Roblan, Tyler Dwiggins.

At Juilliard: Tony Meneses, Brian Watkins, Donja Love, Morgan Gould, Terrance Chisholm, Krista Knight, Madhuri Shekar, Jonathan Payne, Jenny Rachel Weiner, Jessica Moss, Marsha Norman, David Lindsey-Abaire. Richard Feldman, Kathy Hood, Jerry Shafnisky, Sarah Wells, Kaitlin Springston, Brittany Giles-Jones, James Gregg, Lindsey Alexander, Thomas Cline.

Marya Mazor and the cast and crew at Saddleback College: William Francis McGuire, David Anderson, Kent McFann, Tim Swiss, Lynn Durgom-McQuown, Chris Canada, Michelle Macdougall Jackson, Michael McCormick, Kristina Savage, Michael Ouimet, Jimmy Carlsen, Cole Altuzarra, Sarah Halasz, Jayden Leacock, Joanna Weingartner, Mikayla Kotlensky, Becca Orsbern, Ashleigh Gerberry.

Gwydion Suilebhan, the New Play Exchange, and all those who left reviews there of this play: Aleks Merilo, Gina Femia, Mike Sockol, Kat Ramsburg, Emma Goldman-Sherman, Ben Rosenblatt, Rachel Carnes, Ian August, Claudia Haas, Elenna Stauffer, Mark Mason.

Special thanks to the many, many actors who helped me by performing in development readings of this play.

For all those who live or have lived in Colchester, CT.

For love.

For you.

ACT I

Scene One The Photographer

(Projected: inhabitants and environs of a small town. But something is a little off. A little odd. The color saturated and too dark. The camera too close. Unusual perspective. Things like that.)

*(During the slideshow, the **PHOTOGRAPHER** enters. She is in all white or in muted colors and she wears a camera around her neck. She smiles at us.)*

PHOTOGRAPHER. I have loved! – No. Let me start again.

(Beat.)

I take photos. It's important, I think, to record things. To remember how things are right now. Later, people will want to know. Will wonder and think about days past. So I take a lot of photos of everywhere and everyone here in town. I'm not an official photographer although there are political grumblings from time to time to that effect. Does a town need an official photographer? Or an official poet? An official dreamer? An official lover? If the casual is made official, would that stop the rest of us from dabbling? That would be a crime in itself. So I don't need to be the official photographer. But I am good at it. People always come to me for keepsakes, or for help remembering. 'Course I'm having a bit of trouble remembering now too. Little things. It's one of the side effects of my condition. I'm getting ahead of

myself. I take photos. I can't stop time so instead I – I have photos up in a lot of public spaces. For historical record. For art, maybe. I don't know if it's art. I just help people look at things. Sometimes. If they're open to it. You can call me Suzanne. Or the Photographer. Hold on.

(Raises her camera to her eye, takes photos.)

Stay still. Yeah. Turn your head just. You're very photogenic. You too. Show me your sadness. Good. A smile? A sad smile. Now joy. Great! Can you button that up?

*(The **PHOTOGRAPHER** takes a bunch of photos of the audience. They appear on the screen behind her.)*

Good. That's great. I want to remember this. Maybe you will too. So. If you need anything, probably I'm the one to ask. Anything within reason I mean. Within my control. I'm not sure what's within my control. Where to first? Our time is limited.

*(Spot on the **PERFUME MAKER** in lab coat mixing scents. The **PHOTOGRAPHER** takes a photo and it is projected on the back wall.)*

The Perfume Maker makes perfume.

(He smells it.)

PERFUME MAKER. No. It needs more... This. No. This. No. Ah-ha!

*(Lights on **YOUNG WOMAN** and **YOUNG MAN**.)*

PHOTOGRAPHER. The Young Man thinks about the Young Woman. The Young Woman thinks about the Young Man.

*(They steal a glance. Lights out on **YOUNG WOMAN** and **YOUNG MAN**.)*

*(Spot on the **LIBRARIAN**, walking.)*

The Librarian walks by the hardware store on the way to the library. She wills herself not to look in the window.

LIBRARIAN. I will not.

*(Lights up on **HARDWARE STORE OWNER** with pipe.)*

PHOTOGRAPHER. The Hardware Store Owner does not see her walk by. He is measuring a length of pipe and trying not to think about the hole in the center of him he hasn't been able to fill.

HARDWARE STORE OWNER. And seven eighths.

*(Spot on **GRAVEDIGGER**.)*

PHOTOGRAPHER. The Gravedigger looks at the sky and wonders if it will rain.

GRAVEDIGGER. I wonder if it will rain.

PHOTOGRAPHER. He scans the gravestones looking for ghosts, but he sees none.

*(**GRAVEDIGGER** sighs. The **PHOTOGRAPHER** takes a photo and it is projected on the back wall. Lights on **HISTORY PROFESSOR** and **MYSTERY NOVELIST**. She is writing while walking. He is reading.)*

The History Professor and the Mystery Novelist both enter the kitchen at the same time from different directions. They both reach for the coffee pot.

(This happens.)

HISTORY PROFESSOR. You go ahead.

MYSTERY NOVELIST. No, no. You.

HISTORY PROFESSOR. I insist.

(They freeze. Lights out on them.)

*(Lights on **YOUNG WOMAN** and **YOUNG MAN**.)*

PHOTOGRAPHER. The Young Man thinks about the Young Woman. The Young Woman thinks about the Young Man.

*(They steal a glance. Lights out on **YOUNG WOMAN** and **YOUNG MAN**.)*

*(The **FLORIST** enters.)*

PHOTOGRAPHER. The Florist opens her flower shop.

FLORIST. Another day.

PHOTOGRAPHER. She is optimistic.

FLORIST. I think. Yes. I think. Why not?

*(The **PHOTOGRAPHER** takes a photo which is projected. Lights on **PERFUME MAKER** at table.)*

PHOTOGRAPHER. The Perfume Maker sits in the diner at his regular table. "Today," he thinks.

PERFUME MAKER. Today.

PHOTOGRAPHER. The Waitress sees him come in. But she does not get up yet. She does not reach for a menu, not that he would need it. In a minute she'll get up. Or two.

*(The **WAITRESS** sips coffee. The **PHOTOGRAPHER** takes a photo and it is projected on the back wall.)*

PERFUME MAKER. Today –

PHOTOGRAPHER. He thinks.

WAITRESS. Another day.

PHOTOGRAPHER. She thinks.

*(Lights up on the **LIBRARIAN**.)*

PHOTOGRAPHER. When the Librarian stops in the grocery store before lunch, there the Hardware Store Owner is, looking at radishes.

*(Spot on **HARDWARE STORE OWNER**, examining a radish.)*

She ducks behind the heads of lettuce.

*(**LIBRARIAN** hides. The **PHOTOGRAPHER** takes a photo and it is projected on the back wall. Lights on **YOUNG WOMAN** and **YOUNG MAN**.)*

The Young Man thinks about the Young Woman. The Young Woman thinks about the Young Man.

*(They steal a glance. Lights out on **YOUNG WOMAN** and **YOUNG MAN**.)*

Have you been to Harry's Place yet? It's a local landmark. We'll go there, yes?

Scene Two
The History Professor and the Mystery Novelist

(Projected: photo of Harry's Place. An older couple sit at a picnic table or rustic outdoor table, the HISTORY PROFESSOR and the MYSTERY NOVELIST.)

PHOTOGRAPHER. Harry's Place, established nineteen twenty. Drive-in, takeout, affordable hot dogs, burgers and fries. The History Professor and the Mystery Novelist sit in the shade. It's a mild August afternoon. The History Professor fiddles with his wedding ring.

HISTORY PROFESSOR. So.

PHOTOGRAPHER. He says.

MYSTERY NOVELIST. Yes.

PHOTOGRAPHER. She says.

HISTORY PROFESSOR. I guess it's time.

MYSTERY NOVELIST. No point in denying it.

PHOTOGRAPHER. She takes a bite from her lobster roll. Butter drips down her chin.

HISTORY PROFESSOR. I'll have it all drawn up.

PHOTOGRAPHER. She smiles at this, a small smile. A slight breeze. They watch a hummingbird pass.

(PHOTOGRAPHER takes a photo of her, projected on the back wall.)

MYSTERY NOVELIST. I do appreciate, of course, your sense of humor.

HISTORY PROFESSOR. Humor?

MYSTERY NOVELIST. Irony. Finality. History? I see how you are rounding it out, putting up bookends as it were.

PHOTOGRAPHER. He thinks for a moment of the oak bookcase in his study crammed with Civil War tomes. He never liked bookends but he appreciates her appreciation.

HISTORY PROFESSOR. Our first date.

MYSTERY NOVELIST. Yes. You wore a letter jacket. How did you ever letter in anything?

HISTORY PROFESSOR. It was out of pity. You were cold. Wearing a tiny dress. I draped it over you.

PHOTOGRAPHER. She remembers the moustache he tried to grow. He thinks of her seventeen year old legs. They settle into an unsettled silence. That was then. But now – now –

HISTORY PROFESSOR. I'll move into the cottage.

MYSTERY NOVELIST. No, no.

HISTORY PROFESSOR. I insist.

PHOTOGRAPHER. He says goodbye in his mind to his oak bookcase and the red couch in his study. She feels the pull of the novel she's writing. How to get her heroine out of the water. Do boats just come along? Does she float for a while? Was she perhaps a champion swimmer? Reminds herself to look up how long it takes for hypothermia to set in. Instead what she says is –

MYSTERY NOVELIST. What will we tell the kids?

HISTORY PROFESSOR. Jonathan will take it in stride. But Marjory. I worry about Marjory.

PHOTOGRAPHER. She doesn't tell him that Marjory already knows. Over the phone. Last week. Marjory pleaded. Marjory cried.

(MARJORY appears in spot, in pain.)

MARJORY. Mother, please. Don't do this. He loves you. You love him.

MYSTERY NOVELIST. It wasn't enough.

MARJORY. Are you fighting?

MYSTERY NOVELIST. No. No.

MARJORY. I don't understand.

MYSTERY NOVELIST. I long for an empty bed. I want to drink coffee alone in the morning. I want to be lonely.

MARJORY. Is he having an affair? Are you?

MYSTERY NOVELIST. No. No. I want him to move out before I begin to hate him. His toenails. His breath. The grunty way he stands up.

MARJORY. Don't do this. Please!

MYSTERY NOVELIST. We will be civil when we see you. It is all very civil. We will come visit together maybe. We will have dinner. We will smile and we will enjoy each other's company. How's your roommate?

PHOTOGRAPHER. And Marjory is distracted for twenty minutes talking about the trials of life in Boston and the HR game. She might switch companies. It is what people do, to get ahead, to climb the ladder and ascending is what it's all about, right? But it would mean leaving her team who she has grown fond of. And starting over with new people and new processes.

MARJORY. Do you think I'm ambitious enough? It's something I want to be true about me. But sometimes I can't tell the difference between what I want and what I think I should want. What do you think?

PHOTOGRAPHER. And then she becomes aware of how dull she must sound to her mother, how unartistic, how grounded. Her mother admires her daughter with her feet on the ground, but then there never is the clouds of the mind to discuss. That much they don't share. But the Mystery Novelist asks questions to show she is listening. Like –

MYSTERY NOVELIST. How is the transition to the new software? How did you feel about last quarter?

PHOTOGRAPHER. And Marjory knows her mother is trying. Did she try in her marriage? Marjory cries and pleads and cries.

MARJORY. Nooooo!

PHOTOGRAPHER. She feels sorry for herself and imagines she now comes from a broken home. She looks at the bean bag chair and remembers when her parents helped her move in. Was there tension that day? She's not sure. She makes microwave popcorn and falls asleep to *Casablanca*.

(MARJORY exits. *Light change.*)

MYSTERY NOVELIST. I'll tell Marjory.

PHOTOGRAPHER. She says to her still husband. And a weight he didn't know was there is lifted off his shoulders.

HISTORY PROFESSOR. I'll say something to Jonathan.

PHOTOGRAPHER. And like that, the plan becomes all too very real.

HISTORY PROFESSOR. I'll leave tonight. Pack a few things. Next week, I'll come for more.

MYSTERY NOVELIST. There is no rush.

PHOTOGRAPHER. She says. But doesn't mean it.

MYSTERY NOVELIST. How is your burger?

HISTORY PROFESSOR. It's good. They're always good.

PHOTOGRAPHER. He thinks of Gettysburg. Maybe this year he'll make the reenactments. Where did that tin cup go? He thinks of the student with the short skirt in the front row of History One O One. He looks at his soon to be ex-wife. He fiddles with his wedding ring.

HISTORY PROFESSOR. Supposed to rain later. I'll leave tonight.

PHOTOGRAPHER. She feels the relief of his impending departure. She is able to better taste her food now. It doesn't stick in her throat. It melts. She savors it. His lips are chapped and the ketchup stings just a little.

MYSTERY NOVELIST. I need to stop at the pharmacy on the way back.

PHOTOGRAPHER. She doesn't say, "On the way home." It is a house they no longer share. Let's move on.

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

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