



Objectively/ Reasonable:

A Community Response to
the Shooting of Tamir Rice, 11/22/14

FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Why Tamir Rice? Why now? Why bother? Why question? Who cares? What kind of play do you call this? What d'you think you're doing? Who d'you think you are???

About halfway into the process, we started asking those questions and felt some anxiety about this production for the first time. Until then, we'd been going on instinct—if we were going to write a play about a topic of local importance, there was only one thing it could be about, and that was the gaping chasm staring all of us Clevelanders in the face. Every day. All the time. East Side, West Side, it's always the dark side. Yes, indeed. We don't claim to have solutions to the problems that have plagued our city and country since their inceptions. We're just doing what playwrights do: holding up a mirror, showing you what we see.

We knew there was limited interest in our own opinions about the Tamir Rice shooting and its causes and aftermath. So we went into the communities most affected by these issues and solicited the thoughts of others. And then we adapted them into monologues. Born-and-bred Clevelanders, Cudell residents, legal experts, caterers, teachers, activists, students, contractors, and self-identifying “mothers”...although they are presented anonymously, we all know who these speakers are. They're our own people, and they're often going unheard.

On November 22, 2014, twelve-year-old Tamir Rice was shot at close range by Cleveland police officer Timothy Loehmann at the Cudell Recreation Center. He was untreated by Officer Loehmann and his partner, Frank Garmback, and died at MetroHealth Hospital the next day. Soon after, a surveillance video was released which captured the officers' drive-up as well as earlier footage of Tamir's replica pistol (missing its orange toy-distinguishing cap) which generated the original 911 call. In December 2015, Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Timothy J. McGinty announced that a grand jury had declined to indict the officers on criminal charges, based in part on the opinions of his own experts. In April 2016, the city of Cleveland signed a \$6 million settlement with the estate of Tamir Rice, admitting no wrongdoing. In the national media, Tamir Rice was received as one of a growing number of African American males who died due to excessive use of force by police officers. Those are some essential details of the case for anyone who needs reminding.

The experts commissioned by Prosecutor McGinty used the phrase “objectively reasonable” to justify the officers' actions. Twenty-one months later, we're still wondering about those terms.

— David Todd, Playwrights Local

Playwrights Local Presents
A World Premiere

OBJECTIVELY/REASONABLE

A Community Response to
the Shooting of Tamir Rice, 11/22/14

WRITTEN BY PLAYWRIGHTS LOCAL
DIRECTED BY TERRENCE SPIVEY
CONCEPTION & DRAMATURGY BY DAVID TODD

AUGUST 18 - SEPTEMBER 4, 2016

CAST

Ashley Aquilla
Kaila Benford
India Burton
Samone Cummings
Ananias Dixon
Kali Hatten
Jameka Terri
LaShawn Little
Brenton Lyles
Nathan Tolliver

The run time of Objectively/Reasonable is ~90 minutes. There will be no intermission.

* Strobe lighting effects will be used during this performance. Patrons who suffer from epilepsy & other visual light stimulation effects please be advised. *

The video and/or audio recording of this performance
by any means whatsoever is strictly prohibited.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

It was a great honor to have Playwrights Local--David Todd and Tom Hayes--approach me to be part of an important work about a young man who has become, as his very gracious mother would say, "a figure." I would like to thank a terrific cast, the two young students, my stage manager/assistant director, the crew and the five major playwrights who dared themselves to go there, utilizing the arts: you all are soldiers-warriors. It was a challenging, collaborative and rewarding experience. I would also like to thank Andrea Simakis for her tireless coverage on such an important social issue beyond the arts. And, to Samaria Rice for giving her blessing to this very important work.

--Terrence Spivey

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR



Terrence Spivey is a native Texan with a B.A. in Theatre at Prairie View A&M University. His was Artistic Director of Karamu House for over twelve years. During his artistic administration, Spivey programmed over seventy plus productions and directed over twenty five and winning numerous awards for the historical institution. During his stay, Karamu collaborated with numerous theatres and festivals throughout Northeast Ohio. He served as Director in Residence for Kent State Pan African Studies during the 2013-2014 season. Spivey has appeared in *Black Mask*, *Back Stage*, *Ebony*, *Artist and Influences* and *American Theatre*.

He served as board member for Community Partnership for Arts and Culture, Cleveland Arts Prize and currently serves on the national AUDELCO. He is a member of Black Theatre Network and an elected member of National Theatre Conference. In 2011, he was given a proclamation by the Mayor and the City of Cleveland for his artistic contributions and under his leadership, Karamu was honored the 2013 AUDELCO Award for Repertory Company of the Year in New York City. His most most recent works were the critically acclaimed *Bootycandy* at convergence-continuum and his adaptations of *God's Trombones* at Karamu in Spring 2016. His upcoming projects will be the world premiere of Peter Lawson Jones *The Bloodless Jungle* at Ensemble Theatre in September and the Regional premiere of Kia Corthron's female gang related *Breathe, Boom* at John Carroll University in November.

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHTS

Mike Geither is a playwright and solo performer whose works have been staged in San Francisco, Chicago, Toronto, New York and London. He is a four-time Ohio Arts Council fellow and has served as a resident artist at Headlands Center for the Arts in Sausalito. Recent works include *Creation Myth* (Convergence Continuum), *how small, how far away* (Zuppa Theatre, Halifax), *Flame Puppy* (Playwrights Local), *Tear It Off* (Convergence Continuum), and *Loki and Lucy* (Talespinner). He is currently an Associate Professor of English at Cleveland State University where he teaches in the Northeast Ohio MFA in creative writing.

Tom Hayes is an award-winning playwright who received his MFA from Cleveland State University and the Northeast Ohio Masters of Fine Arts (NEOMFA) program. His play *Lord of the Burgeoning Lumber*—was staged at convergence-continuum and was awarded Best Original Script by a Local Playwright — 2008 by *Rave and Pan*. Tom's play *Patterns* was staged at Cleveland Public Theatre in 2011. Other plays have appeared at the Manhattan Project and Playwrights Local.

Lisa Langford recently received her M.F.A. in creative writing. Several of her plays have been seen locally, including *InCogNegro*, *The Bomb*, and *The Split Show*.

Michael Oatman is the Playwright-In-Residence at Karamu Theater, the oldest African American theater in the country. He is only the second person to hold this honor in the storied history of Karamu; the first being Langston Hughes. In 2011, he won the CPAC Workforce Fellowship and the Cleveland Art Prize in 2010 for Best Emerging Artist and the 2010 Lantern Award for Best Play. In 2011, three of his full length plays were produced: *Breaking the Chains*, *You Got Nerve* and *Sometime Hope Is Enough*. In 2010, seven of his plays were produced in various venues: *Black Nativity* (Adaption), *War paint*, *Eclipse: The War Between Pac and B.I.G.*, *Course of Action*, *My Africa*, *A Solitary Voice*, *Not a Uterus in Sight*, *Hitler and Gandhi*. He earned an English Degree from Cleveland State University in 2004 and completed his MFA in theater from the Northeastern Ohio Master of Fine Arts Consortium in 2008.

David Todd's plays have been presented or developed in NYC at theaters including 59E59, Dixon Place, the Little Theater, HERE, and NY Theatre Workshop, regionally in DC, Portland, and Chicago, and internationally at the LaMaMa Spoleto Open in Italy. His playwriting residencies include Hangar Theater (Ithaca, NY), Classic Studio (NYC), and Chicago Dramatists. He earned his MFA in Dramatic Writing at NYU (Goldberg Award; Harry Kondoleon Award) and his PhD at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He has taught writing, literature, and film at NYU, SUNY Stony Brook, and Otterbein University, and is currently teaching at Cleveland State University. He is a Usual Suspect at NY Theater Workshop and a collaborator with the NYC-based Monk Parrots. His nonfiction book *Feeding Back* was published in 2012 by Chicago Review Press, and his play *Joy in Repetition* was published in January 2014 by Connotation Press. Currently, he is the Northern Ohio Regional Representative for the Dramatists Guild. He was awarded an Individual Excellence Award by the Ohio Arts Council for 2016.

PRODUCTION STAFF

DIRECTOR

Terrence Spivey

COSTUME DESIGNER

Maya Jones

ASST. DIR/ STAGE MANAGER

Maya Jones

BOARD OPERATOR

Ludie Cummings

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Margaret Peebles

CARPENTER

Tom Hayes

Henry Rosebrock Hayes

Kirsten Rosebrock Hayes

Greg Smith

SOUND DESIGNER

David Todd

SET DESIGNER

Terrence Spivey

MASTER ELECTRICIAN

Stephanie Kahn

PLAYWRIGHTS LOCAL STAFF

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

David M. Todd

DIRECTOR IN RESIDENCE

Dale Heinen

MANAGING DIRECTOR

Thomas W. Hayes

OUTREACH ASSOCIATE

Michael J. Geither

TEACHING ARTIST

Arwen M. Mitchell

ARTISTIC ASSOCIATE

Jaclyn C. Cifranic

PLAYWRIGHTS LOCAL MISSION

Playwrights Local is dedicated to supporting the dramatists of Northeast Ohio. As a playwrights' development and production center, we foster diverse talents and present locally written works.

SPECIAL THANKS

Playwrights Local offers its deepest thanks to Samaria Rice and the Rice family for their consideration and support. We also thank all of this play's other interviewees--who shall remain nameless, according to our agreement--for their time and thoughts. We thank Andrea Simakis and Lynn Ischay of *The Plain Dealer* for their generous attention. Others that we couldn't have done this play without include A Harris Brown; Amy Callahan and Waterloo Arts; Greg Smith; Jaclyn Cifranic; Rob Peck; Harold Crawford; Kwanza Brewer; Daniel McNamara; Julia DiBaggio; Heather Pederson; Jennifer Gomez; the Slovenian Workmen's Home; Peter Lawson Jones; Ronnie A. Dunn, Ph.D.; Mansfield Frazier; Daniel Alverio; and Margaret Craig.



Ashley Aquilla (“It Has an Impact”; “A Cleveland Filter” [A]; “A Figure Now”) This performance and bio are dedicated to my brother Bryant ‘Stevie’ Henderson. Stevie died unjustly and untimely in police custody on July 21, 1998 at the age of 25. He was father of two, son, brother, and friend to many. Stevie was flawed, but he was beautiful and his life mattered. In a way *Objectively/Reasonable* is telling my brother’s story and the story of countless others that have died because of hatred and cruelty. My dear brother Stevie, I give you

my body and my voice so you may be seen and heard. I love you, and you are not forgotten.

Kaila Benford (“A Feel-Good Project”; “It’s Really Interesting”; “The Black Body”) Kaila Benford was born and raised in Cleveland, Ohio, where she attended the Cleveland school of the arts high school as a theater major. She then graduated and went to Ohio University where she received her Bachelor of Fine Arts in theater performance. There she was active in multiple student produced shows, produce her own show and was cast in Ohio University’s *As you Like It* (Madame Le Beau). Kaila believes strongly in the power of the arts to heal our community, our heart and our mind. She would like to thank her family, friends/fellow co-artist’s and her girlfriend for their support and love.



India Burton (“A Cleveland Filter” [B]; “I’m Gone”): For the African American men and women who have lost their lives due to racial injustices and senseless acts of inhumane violence: “Time will prove the connection between the level of the lives we lead and the extraordinary endeavor to avoid black men. It shows in our public life.” --James Baldwin “I imagine one of the reasons people cling to their hates so stubbornly is because they sense, once hate is gone, they will be forced to deal with pain.” --James Baldwin “Please try

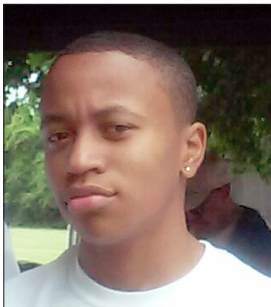
to remember that what they believe, as well as what they do and cause you to endure does not testify to your inferiority but to their inhumanity” --James Baldwin

CAST



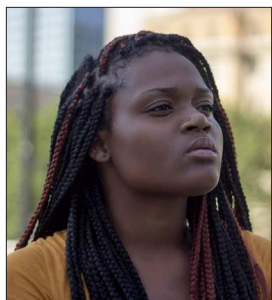
Samone Cummings (“Those are My Feelings”): Let me introduce myself. My name is Samone Leslie Cummings. I’m 10 years old. I’m in the 6th grade at Dike School of the Arts. I believe we all have a purpose and no one’s purpose is greater than another”. I feel I was brought here to make a positive impact on the world, through the arts. A scripture I always tell myself, God has not given me the spirit of fear, but of power, love and a sound mind.

Ananias Dixon (“Complicity”; “Us Against Them”): I did this for Tamir.



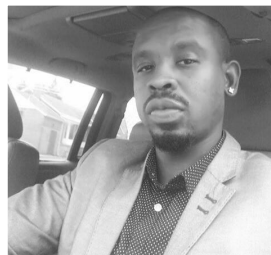
Kali Hatten (“A Lesson for Children”) is a ninth grade theatre major at the Cleveland School of the Arts. He is very excited to participate in *A Community Response to the Tamir Rice Shooting*. Kali most recently performed in the Madame C.J. Walker Extravaganza, the Kuumba Arts festival, A New Day in Hough, and *God’s Trombones* under the direction of Prester Pickett. Kali’s other notable performances at Karamu House include: *Leap of Faith*, *Joe Turner’s Come and*

Gone, and *Xanadu*. He also performed in the productions at the Cleveland School of the Arts including: *Home on the Morning Train*, under the direction of Dr. Scott Miller, and *Crying out for You*, under the direction of Jonathan Jackson. Kali dedicated this performance to his loving family and his church family of Olivet Institutional Baptist Church. He would like to share Numbers 6:24-26 with everyone. “The Lord Bless Thee and Keep Thee: The Lord make his face shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee, The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee peace.”



Jameka Terri (“We Own That”; “A Feel-Good Project”; “The Community Response”) “I regard the theatre as the greatest of all art forms, the most immediate way in which a human being can share with another the sense of what it is to be a human being.” --Oscar Wilde

LaShawn Little (“That One Time”; “The Loss of a Child”) has had the passion and gift to act since the age of twelve. He is a graduate of the acclaimed Cleveland School of Performing Arts where he studied theater and creative writing. He was the second recipient of the Alex Haley/Florence Kelley Scholarship at the Cleveland Playhouse. LaShawn continued his education at Wilberforce University where he studied theater and mass media communications. LaShawn has been in several main stage productions including Karamu Theater productions *Ceremonies Of Dark Men*, and *The Return of Superman*. He has also worked on the Dobama Theater productions, *Civil War Christmas* and *Superior Doughnuts*. LaShawn has also been chosen as featured extras with the Lilian Pyle casting company for the John Travolta motion picture film *Criminal Activity* and Lifetime movie *With This Ring*. LaShawn is also writer and co-producer/owner of I Was Rollin Productions LLC.



Brenton Lyles (“A Peaceful Place”) was born and raised right here in Cleveland, Ohio. He made his acting debut in 2010 alongside Fred Anthony Taylor in the stage play *Ultimus Venificus: The Last of the Sorcerers*. In 2011, he again worked with Taylor in *The Vagabond* at the Cleveland Playhouse Theater. In 2011 Lyles also got the opportunity to walk for local designers for Cleveland Fashion Week Spring 2011. It wasn't until 2015 after a brief hiatus that he resumed

acting with his first speaking role in the stage play *Starve The Devil*, written by Michael Oatman and directed by Stacey Malone. “It is an Artist’s duty to reflect the times in which we live.” - Nina Simone



Nathan Tolliver (“Crabs in a Bucket”; “Do a Cleveland on Me”) is an actor/singer from Cleveland Ohio. This is his first production with Playwrights local. His past credits include *The Wild Party*, *Slow Dance on the Killing Ground*, *Dreamgirls*, *Aida*, *The Wiz*, and *Black Nativity*. Nathan is honored to be working with such talent on this protest piece, continuing this important conversation about injustice and police brutality.

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Ludie Cummings (Board Operator) Ludie Cummings Wife, Mother, Educator for 15 years. Words I live by: when much is given, much is required.... Also when something is done in love, it will be received in love....so spread LOVE!

Maya Jones (Assistant Director; Stage Manager; Costume Designer) is an activist artist, which is to say her artistry is predicated on her activism. As a recent graduate of Allegheny College with a Bachelor of Arts in Communications; a dual minor in Black Studies as well as Dance and Movement Studies, her career is education driven. Her professional involvement in theatre began at the Cleveland School of the Arts, gracing stages around the city and nation. As an actor, performance poet, and advocate of girls empowerment, Maya found her best self in facilitating spaces of self-discovery. To her, theatre is a powerful tool for healing through reflection and truth telling, that leads to reconciliation when approached intentionally. She is interested in where this journey takes our community conversation after the final blackout.

Stephanie Kahn (Master Electrician) is delighted to work with Playwrights Local on this production. Recent credits include lighting design for the 38th Annual Marilyn Bianchi Kids Playwriting Festival (Dobama Theatre, 2016), lighting design and electrics for the 2014-2015 productions of the Playmakers Youth Theater, and electrics for the 2014 Starkid Productions Summer Season (Stage 773, Chicago, IL). She is a house manager at Dobama Theatre and a "Redcoat" usher at Playhouse Square. Stephanie graduated from Northwestern University in 2014, and worked on over 70 student theater productions. Outside of theater, Stephanie is a human services planner for a local nonprofit and a speech and debate coach for Laurel School. Many thanks to the team for a great process and the opportunity to be a part of this groundbreaking new work.

Margaret Peebles (Lighting Designer) is an MFA Candidate of Lighting Design at the University of Connecticut and received her BFA in Theater Design and Technology from Kent State University. Some of her current credits include Connecticut Repertory Theatre's *Sense and Sensibility* and *The Laramie Project*, The Trinity College Dance Festival, and *Lamia* with Suzanne Karpinski. She has also assisted on Hartford Stage's *Anastasia* and Porthouse Theatre's *Ring of Fire*. Margaret has recently completed the Lighting Design Internship at Williamstown Theatre Festival. She has also spent time working for several companies including Texas Panhandle Heritage Foundation, Porthouse Theatre, and Seagle Music Colony.

Henry Rosebrock Hayes (Carpenter) is an eight-year-old 3rd grade student at Fairfax Elementary in Cleveland Heights. Henry loves riding his bike, playing with nerf guns (like boys do), building things with legos, and playing video games. Playwrights Local was glad to have his help over two nights, wherein he applied mad skills in driving screws and painting platforms.

PLAYWRIGHTS LOCAL

2016 - 2017 SEASON

August 2016

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Written by Playwrights Local
Directed by Terrence Spivey

November 2016

The 2nd Annual Cleveland Playwrights Festival

January 2017

This is NOT About My Dead Dog

Written by Amy Schwabauer
Directed by Dale Heinen

March 2017

The Mac Wellman Homecoming Festival:

A three-day celebration of the
Cleveland-born playwrighting
innovator

April 2017

2017 Play Lab + Spring Workshops

May 2017

Things As They Are

Written by David Todd
Directed by Anjanette Hall
Original score by
Ben Chasny