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CREATING THE ENVIRONMENT FOR *IN THE BLOOD*

By

Benjamin Ray Mays
B.A., University of Virginia's College at Wise, 1985

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of the University of Louisville
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of

Master of Fine Arts

Department of Theatre Arts
University of Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky

May 2006

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A Thesis Approved on

March 15, 2006

by the following Thesis Committee:

Thesis Director

DEDICATION

To my wife Kim

My son Alex

My daughter Jessica and grandson Riley

My parents Jack B. Mays and Virgie Mays Castle

My sisters Dana and Janice

My step daughter Brandi

Dedicated in loving memory of my brother Joseph “Scotty” Castle

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ABSTRACT

CREATING THE ENVIRONMENT FOR IN THE BLOOD

Benjamin Ray Mays

March 15, 2006

From the moment the audience enters the auditorium the play is a mystery. They are looking for clues as to the nature of the story in which they are about to participate. The designer's job is to select what these clues are. How does the designer decide what the audience will see or won't see? The audience sees only the final product which is a culmination of the process of creation. It is this process that is important and will lead to the creation of a successful theatrical environment, one which goes beyond the 4th wall to create a living, organic, and deeply personal connection with the audience.

My goals for *IN THE BLOOD*:

1. Take complete charge of design elements early on in the process (make up my mind sooner and have confidence in myself)
2. Pay attention to the minute detail
3. Have a strong vision for the design and don't shy away from that vision while still being open for compromise
4. Initiate communication early on with the director
5. Complete all designs by the required deadlines
6. Document the process. The product is important but it is the process where the knowledge is to be gleaned

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iv
ABSTRACT.....	v
INTRODUCTION.....	1
PREPARATION.....	12
THE DESIGN PROCESS.....	18
EVALUATION AND CONCLUSIONS.....	30
REFERENCES.....	33
APPENDIX I Research Photographs.....	34
APPENDIX II Early Drawings.....	42
APPENDIX III Final Drafting.....	52
APPENDIX IV Photographs of Construction Process.....	59
APPENDIX V Photographs of Finished Set.....	69
APPENDIX VI Journal Notes.....	80
CURRICULUM VITAE.....	101
ADDENDUM.....	107

INTRODUCTION

“The Japanese pupil brings with him three things: good education, passionate love for his chosen art, and uncritical veneration of his teacher.” (Eugen Herrigel, *Zen in the Art of Archery*, New York, Random House, 1981, 40).

I remember the first staged play I saw. It was the mid seventies and I was in the 6th grade at Castlewood Elementary School located in rural Southwest Virginia, where coal mines and cake walks still exist. I remember the thrill of venturing into the unknown as our teacher led my class out of the elementary school and across the lawn. I could barely contain my excitement as we marched single-file up the front steps and into the high school. I remember my eyes adjusting to the dimmer light of the interior as I beheld a world I had never seen before. At the end of a long hallway were six huge oak doors. Sitting in front of them behind a small desk was a college student with a shoebox in front of her. Into the shoebox went our quarters for admission. Then the oak doors moved to open. Wide-eyed and silent, we walked through those doors and into the auditorium. How exhilarating, this feeling of awe; this sense of discovery; going into the unknown.

Castlewood’s high school auditorium is the typical huge 800 seat cavernous hall, playing host for a multitude of events; plays, band concerts, talent shows and graduation ceremonies. As I recall, the acoustics were horrible and the lighting worse. We sat in the back of the auditorium where these problems were amplified tenfold. Huge windows, tall and narrow and lining both sides of the walls, were flanked with heavy blue velvet

curtains. The auditorium itself was raked enough to get a penny rolling pretty fast down the center or outside aisles if you so desired.

At the front of the auditorium I could see an elevated stage which was about 3' in height and fairly dark from where I sat. There was a heavy blue velvet curtain across the proscenium opening but I could occasionally catch a glimpse of tiny feet scurrying back and forth from beneath it. The natural reverb of the auditorium made the ever increasing noise of the students filing in almost unbearable. I had to shout just to talk to my friends seated next to me. Even if we didn't know why we were there, we were happy to be out of class. Our anticipation mounted. How glorious, this mystery for us all. How fun to share it with all my friends, my classmates, and all the others lining row after row in our swinging, wooden seats.

Suddenly a couple of high school football players began drawing the heavy drapes at the side windows closed. They worked their way from the front of the auditorium to the back, closing each curtain by pulling on a long rope attached to a pulley. The auditorium got darker and darker and our noise level got louder and louder. Just as the last drape was pulled shut I heard a loud metallic clanking sound as the houselights were pulled down. We were plunged into darkness, causing squeals, giggles, and laughter. The squeaking of the grand curtain being pulled open across the stage commanded our full attention, and a hush fell over the room. With another metallic clanking sound the stage came alive with a flood of light. We, the audience erupted in unsolicited cheering and applause.

There on stage I saw an adaptation of James Thurber's *Many Moons* presented by a local college. I was enthralled. The acting was quite exclamatory, as none of the actors

had microphones. The set was sparse. I remember a bed onstage and a cardboard cutout of a castle window. In the bed was a princess who had fallen ill by eating too many raspberry tarts. She believed the only cure was to possess the moon which was shining in her window. I remember the rich looking and brightly colored costumes of the King, the royal mathematician, and the court jester. Such a wonderful feeling of elation I had as I watched this play being performed under fairly horrid conditions. We were laughing, cheering, and rooting for the characters. We lived and breathed the world that was created just for us. And when the play was over and the actors took their bows our auditorium exploded in more cheering and applause. A standing ovation! From that moment I was hooked. I knew that one day I'd help to create and unfold mysteries for others. I looked at the seat where I'd enjoyed the past hour, another world and new lives. That chair, those seats, and others like them would forever remind me of something magical. Sit there, I thought, and you'll have a profound experience like nothing else ever imagined before you rise. I promised myself I would do everything within my power to be a part of creating such a thrilling experience. As we filed out of the auditorium, now transformed by natural light and the sounds and motion of the throngs of energized students, I knew there must be a place for me in that other world. All it will take is a little time.

The reality of living in a small rural farming community didn't deter me. What is theatre, I thought to myself. How can I do it? I asked so many questions of my teacher that she sent me to talk to Mr. Robinson at the high school. He was trying to interest students in drama. He gave me a book and told me to read it from cover to cover. I don't remember the name or author but I remember its smell. It had that peculiar odor

particular to very old books with earmarked pages sandwiched between musty leather covers. Its many passages were underlined in ink or pencil and it covered every aspect of staging a play. I devoured this book. I learned the basics of choosing a play, designing costumes, lights, and sets, acting and directing. It was gold to me.

I finished this book and he gave me yet another. This one focused more on building scenery. I learned about platforms and wagons and muslin covered flats. When I returned this book to Mr. Robinson, he gave me a script for a play called *The Mice Have Been Drinking Again* by Cleve Haubold. A few days later, he asked me to read it with him. Before I knew it I was cast as Jerry Reed and living on the same stage where there once was a sick princess confined to her bed in the royal castle, gazing at the moon. In her place was a San Francisco Victorian apartment interior... or rather a set that was waiting to be created. From the bare stage I looked down at the wooden seats. "You're going to love this", I said to myself.

One of the benefits of attending a small rural school is that you get the opportunity to do many things. People aren't afraid to tackle things they haven't really done before. For example, I had very little experience with power tools in the seventh grade. That would come a year later when I took courses in Shop and Agriculture. However, I did have experience with a hammer and nails. And I had read a book about theater.

Approximately ten of us, including our teacher, worked on building this set. We used the floor diagram found in the back of the script as our guideline. Some of our dads came in after school to help us and we designed as we went along.

Eventually our Victorian Interior was finished and our play successfully performed in front of the entire student body. High school and elementary school students were

brought in to watch two glorious performances. As they left, I could see magic in their faces.

The following year when I became an eighth grader and now over in the high school, I was dismayed to discover that there were no drama classes or programs. By the ninth grade I was determined to do something about it and convinced my English teacher, Dolly Wallace, to sponsor a Drama Club. She agreed, if I could get 10 people interested. I thought this would be easy until I tried recruiting others in the hallways. Sports were the main interest of my school as well as other schools in the region. This propensity for muscular aggression usually took most of whatever little free time people had. I finally talked a few of my friends, as well as a few people I didn't really know, into committing to participate in one show.

The Drama Club served me well through high school. I kept reading scripts. I learned everything I could about theater. I'm proud to say that the Drama Club continued without me and eventually became a Drama class.

After graduating from Castlewood High School I received a scholarship and enough financial aid to go to Clinch Valley College. I found myself attending this four year liberal arts institution which is now called The University of Virginia's College at Wise. While there I gravitated toward the theater, and met a professor who is to this day one of my best friends.

Dr. Charles Lewis, my mentor, produced many wonderful well made plays. As a one man theatre department with old school devotion for using a grand drape, he never once put his name on a play program. He taught all of the Speech and Drama classes, designed and built all of the sets, designed and implemented the lighting and sound, and

directed all plays. He occasionally even made guest appearances as an actor, and wrote several plays which he produced on stage and to rave reviews.

In his program I was able to participate at every level. Working with Charles Lewis, I honed my acting, carpentry, sound and lighting skills, developed my work ethic, and more importantly acquired the dedication and qualities that make a better human being. I was in awe of Charles. He could do it all and do it all well. His sets were very elaborate and beautifully detailed. Box sets complete with ceilings which could transform into other scenic configurations quickly and, mysteriously, out of sight of the audience. He came up with ingenious methods of making magic happen in theatre. Dr. Charles Lewis is a rare gift to our little town. I wanted to be just like him.

After graduating magna cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Performing Arts I came face to face with the harsh economic reality of living in southwest Virginia. For the first time in my life I found myself being forced to leave my community for employment. My bags were packed and my family was prepared to move to Northern Virginia where I had signed up to be a Virginia State Trooper. Then there was a knock on my door. It was Roadside Theater.

Roadside Theater is a national touring theater, making plays from the rich culture and tradition of the central Appalachian region. It is part of the multi-media art center Appalshop, Inc., located in eastern Kentucky. It is known nationally for its award winning documentation of Appalachian culture through its original plays, books, films, radio, and music.

With no professional theater experience, but a strong commitment to the Appalachian region, I landed my first job in professional theater. I became road manager, technical

director, musician and storyteller with Roadside. Our ensemble traveled across the country and overseas sharing our cultural heritage through the art of storytelling and theater.

I learned lighting, sound, and staging by working in the best equipped theaters in the country as well as the worst. I worked in non-traditional spaces such as churches, basements, warehouses, fire halls, grange halls, pueblo longhouses, “café-gym-atoriums” and outdoor venues. From the most technologically advanced to the simplest of venues I learned more and more about the craft of theater.

Part of Roadside’s philosophy and training style emphasizes the knowledge each individual brings with them when joining the company. Art is found within each of us and within our own community, but like a field or garden, needs tending to and nurturing in order to remain healthy and grow strong. This is the foundation of Roadside’s philosophy. The fine arts such as ballet, opera, sculpture and painting are vibrant, enriching and enlightening. But the seemingly simpler creations of making quilt tops from patches of homemade dresses and scraps of cloth, whittling train whistles out of branches, and making corn husk dolls with materials from one’s surrounding environment are also an important declaration of artistic expression. This idea, combined with central Appalachian’s ancestral voice, became the focal point for my unique and utterly incredible training ground. I learned the importance of turning the spotlight toward our own stories and experiences. Thus, by appreciating and telling our own story, we come to appreciate and share in the stories of other communities and cultures. Not unlike my adventure as a 6th grader seeing theatre for the first time at the high school auditorium, I could experience new worlds, new lives, new stories and new mysteries.

Ultimately, the lesson becomes universal. As theater for social change, Roadside Theater was able to create environments for diverse groups, communities, and cultures to gather together, learn about themselves and others by sharing their successes and failures. These groups could then develop proactive goals for making positive and lasting change by creating vital and necessary relationships with others. We celebrate our similarities, acknowledge our differences, and work together when possible to survive, thrive, and build respectful relationships. I have seen the world through an immeasurable variety of lenses.

I worked with many groups: Native American, Hispanic, African American, Latino, Czech, British, Welsh, Laotian. No matter where we worked I knew the environment I needed to create. The technically more advanced theaters offered me more tools but I had to overcome the inherent barriers of such spaces to create an intimate relationship between the performers and the audience. Barriers such as orchestra pits, poor acoustics, or bad sightlines were quite normal, even in some of the best equipped theaters. Sometimes primitive spaces were more conducive to creating an intimate environment despite their lack of lighting and sound equipment.

I worked with Roadside Theater for 12 years. The environments we created were different than the ones I had created in my previous experiences in theatre. Before, I had attempted to create realistic settings such as the Victorian apartment. At that time I wanted the audience to believe that they were inside a Victorian apartment and to forget that they were in a theater. Now I was attempting to create an organic environment conducive to having the audience participate on an intellectual and emotional level. With Roadside I had only a few simple wooden benches and ladder-back chairs to create this

environment. I relied on lighting and staging to help establish this intimate relationship with the audience. I did every thing possible for the audience to help them remain in the moment and to keep them from simply disconnecting from the play on stage.

After I tired of being gone from my own community so long I eventually created work for myself back in southwest Virginia. First I accepted a position at University of Virginia's College at Wise, where I became the technical director and adjunct professor of drama. I designed and implemented the sets, lights, and sound for all productions with the help of a few students. I taught stagecraft classes and supervised the students assigned to the scene shop. I also taught acting at Mountain Empire Community College as an adjunct professor and served as technical director and production manager for the area's largest arts presenting organization, which brought in all of the bus & truck tours.

My knowledge of theater was acquired in a much more organic fashion by actually doing the work. I did the work first and then learned the lesson or principle behind that work. I thought about the formal theatrical plays compared to the plays I did with the storytelling theater company. I began to realize that they were similar in that the important aspect of each was the story they had to tell. The technical elements were there to help tell the story. I wondered if I could utilize some elements of the organic approach used by Roadside Theater to the other plays I had worked with which were written to be performed in a more formalized way.

I felt comfortable enough with the organic approach of Roadside Theatre's design style but I needed to know more about the formal approach to theatrical design before I could truly combine elements of both styles. That is where University of Louisville comes into the picture.

Back when I was touring with Roadside Theater we performed at the University of Louisville as part of the American Festival Project. This was a conglomeration of culturally specific theater companies uniting to share their similarities and celebrate their differences. I remembered talking with Garry Brown and touring the Playhouse facility. I liked the feel of the theatre and the town. The university's theater wasn't the most technologically equipped but they produced at least 6 good shows a year. And being in a smaller program I would have the opportunity to work in all areas of design and not be limited to specializing in just one area. University of Louisville was the obvious choice.

On August 19th, 2005 I received the script for *IN THE BLOOD* by Suzan-Lori Parks. It has 9 scenes with one intermission. The scenes center on Hester's home under a bridge. Designing the set would be a challenge in many aspects. I was concerned with the modern almost movie like style of the script which has a few rapid changes of locale. A lot of modern plays are written in such a fashion with little regard for the technical needs of creating these scenes. I also had fears of designing in the thrust theater. The bulk of my experience has been with box sets in proscenium theaters where I relied heavily upon using the proscenium opening to frame my sets and hide anything I didn't want the audience to see.

The subject matter of this play is graphic and hard. I wanted to create an environment which went beyond the 4th wall. I needed to create an intimate, living, organic, and deeply personal connection with the audience for this play to be successful. The thrust theater gave me the intimacy I desired, but little stage space and even less wing and backstage space.

Professor Michael Hottois, in his Introduction to Design class, once drew a little squiggly mass of lines on a chalkboard. He spoke of how in the beginning of any design there is this little ball of confusion inside of every designer. As he continued to speak the little squiggly mass soon obliterated the entire chalk board. “This mass of confusion is your design waiting to be revealed...” he said, “and the key to revealing this design is adequate research”.

I would trust this process. I would embrace this mass of confusion. Along the way I would document my journey. Finally I would evaluate the results. Maybe somewhere in this squiggly mess was a set waiting to be revealed.

PREPARATION

I began my research two months before I ever lay hands on the script. From my conversations with our technical director Professor Garry Brown, I knew that *IN THE BLOOD* was written by Suzan-Lori Parks and was a play about a homeless mother living under a bridge with her children

I began the process by recalling my own experiences. Once while in New York City I remembered being out late one night and encountering a group of homeless people lying over a grate in the sidewalk. They were wrapped in cardboard for protection from the frigid night air. Many times here in Louisville I've seen lines of people waiting patiently for food from the local soup kitchen. I considered my preconceived notions and stereotypes concerning homeless people. During my first year in Louisville I was surprised when my son and I went to the public library one cold and early Sunday morning to find a line already formed of about 20 people. All of them had bags of various sorts, gym bags, small duffels, shaving kits, plastic bags, etc. I noticed the way they were dressed. Some wore heavy jackets zipped up to the chin and some wore only sweatshirts. Some heads and hands had hats and woolen gloves, some did not. Some wore thin tennis shoes while others had more substantial boots. Everyone was friendly and chatting with one another. As the security guard came to unlock the library doors I thought he'd probably refuse to admit these people. I was wrong. He simply unlocked the doors and held it while we all filed in. We sat down at one of the tables where a

couple of the men were sitting. I listened briefly to their conversation about the weather which had been unseasonably very chilly the night before. I was surprised when I heard them talking about local politics. I was even more surprised at what they were reading. One was reading a book on economics while the other was reading a book of plays.

My preconceived notion that homeless people were stupid or ignorant was obviously incorrect.

Next I asked myself, “What if I were homeless?”

- Where would I want to live if I were homeless and forced to live outdoors?
- What is it about one bridge that would make it better than another bridge?
- What other considerations might I have in my search?

The search for the answers to these questions guided my camera as I traveled Louisville seeking bridges that might provide the basic necessities. Most bridges provided some protection from the rain, wind, and snow but some did it better than others. Some bridges afforded more privacy and safety than others. The best bridges combined all of these characteristics with the added attraction of being closely located to civilization so you could easily go to the grocery store or obtain emergency help if needed. I studied these bridges and took a lot of pictures. (*Appendix I, fig. 1-14*) I was surprised at the scenic beauty to be found under most bridges. The views from the bridges in the downtown waterfront area were breathtaking!

There was a lot of junk and debris found under bridges. I began to notice items which could be very useful in everyday living. Empty wire spools make excellent tables and they come in several sizes. Milk crates make great seats and bedside stands. They also make excellent shelves to store your personal belongings. Oil drums make nice fire pits

whether in the full size or half size. Shopping carts and baby carriages make great traveling wagons to keep belongings safe and easily transportable.

First Reading On Wednesday, August 24th I finally read the script. Strong impressions, emotions, and images were noted in my journal:

Corrosion; everything has eroded or corroded away surrounding and including Hester. A bridge exists literally just over her “home”, a bridge that represents progress and freedom to some; but it is unobtainable to Hester and her children. It is impossible for Hester to cross this bridge because she is trapped under the weight of it. She is boxed in.

Everything surrounding her is a barrier to any sort of decent life. Broken concrete, decaying bridge support pillars exposing rusting internal bits of rebar hanging on for dear life.

Structural deformities everywhere; broken cinderblocks, bricks, rocks, dirt, exposed pipes, old paint cans, bottles, rusty jagged pieces of metal, old tires, wire spools, milk crates, mattress, old easy chair, rusty old oil drum, broken 50’s style metal kitchen chair, articles of clothing lying about.

Street lamp, old electric plate, old extension cord tying into the electric pole. Man made dark stained concrete walls covered with graffiti; a dangerous terrain of broken concrete, jagged rocks, old junk lying about like a minefield through which Hester is always navigating.

Second Reading The next day I read the script again. This time I looked for specific needs either explicit or implicit. My responses to the references are in **boldface** type:
p.4: “*The setting should be spare, to reflect the poverty of the world of the play*”

p. 5: Place-Here

p. 5: Time-Now

p. 7: Scene 1: Home under the bridge-the word “SLUT” scrawled on a wall, soda cans lined up. “Put it in the pile” reference to the cans. “slut” on wall in “practice place”-other words? Letters? – The letter “A” scrawled in the dirt.

p. 9: Sack for the cans-plastic, paper, or burlap?

p. 10: Setting the “table”, soup cooking-some sort of firepit? Possibly a steel oil barrel with a grate over it? an old soup pot? Ladle?

p. 14: Hestor presses the kids clothes

Props-shoebox with white pumps-tape player?

Note: Cinderella’s story, white pumps instead of glass slipper, under the bridge instead of castle.

p. 18-section to use as the bathroom

p. 19: Bully goes off a distance to sleep blankets? Mats? Old mattress? Sleeping bags?

p. 21: Scene 2-A Street Practice

Hestor walks alone down the street and Doctor comes in and meets her

p. 26: Doctor references an alley in his monologue

p. 30: Scene 3: The reverend is on his soap-box, he calls a taxi.

Scene 4: Welfare at Hestor’s place-kids are playing in the dirt.

Page 32: Hestor washes her hands again. In what?, a bucket? A basin?

Scene 5: Late-Hestor is attempting to thread a needle-where does the light come from in this nighttime scene? How late is it?

Scene 6: The Reverend on his rock. What kind of rock?

*Page 44: A cornerstone with the date inscribed in Roman numerals. **Both sides?***

Scene 7: Hestor and kids playing freeze tag in the street.

*Scene 8: back entrance of Reverends church. Jabber comes running “around the building” Hestor kills Jabber **where on stage?***

*Scene 9: Hestor in prison **What do we need to do here? Use Gobo?***

First Meeting with Director I scheduled my first meeting with the director, Professor Nefertiti Burton, on September 9th. But luckily I got an impromptu meeting with her a week earlier. Our conversation was noted in my journal:

ME: *Corrosion; everything about the play smelled of corrosion. The physical place of the play; A bridge with cracked and crumbling concrete. Pillars of support for the bridge crumbling under the weight exposing the rebar structure underneath-like Hester’s pain in her gut reference in the play. She is crumbling beneath the weight of society. Scattered piles of debri with sharp dangerous edges, rebar sticking out from the exposed concrete slabs threatening. Stains on the concrete from the acidic rain from the nearby factories spewing pollutants into the air.*

The institutions which surrounding Hester: the church, the social worker, the doctor. All of these are corroded to the point of accomplishing the exact opposite of what they should...using Hester, taking what they wanted.

Personal relationships: her friend who steals from her, the man she loved spurns her children and her.

Professor Burton: *YES, corrosiveness, rust, ugly. Hester is unprotected. At the mercy of all of the elements. EXPOSED.*

Nefertiti is in favor of the suggested debris pile but points out that Hester is not dirty, sloppy, or stupid. I agree. Hester keeps her space as organized and neat as possible. She has her youngest child smashing aluminum cans and stacking them neatly in the opening of the play, and the other children gather up trash through out the play.

Obviously Hester can't move the giant broken concrete slabs or anything in the debris pile of that nature...but she would if she could. She does what she can in the circumstances.

Hester is not an immoral person despite her actions within the play. Anyone in the same given circumstances would most likely behave the same. Look at Hester's expectations in her role of being a mother: her family eats together, they have a bed time which is adhered to, and she is trying to teach them to read and write. She has a more coherent and structured parenting style than most middle class families. We don't know Hester's background. She might have been a cook, a housewife, a teacher, a center worker. But we tend to judge her on just what we see in the moment.

In this play the community must have a presence. Hester isn't that far away from the community. The audience needs to know that the community is there and that they are worse for passing her by, passing over her, ignoring her plight. The community is blind to Hester and her family under the bridge.

At this point I have several concrete images in my mind to begin the sketching process. Several ground plans will be presented to Nefertiti. It is always good to give the director options early in the process.

THE DESIGN PROCESS

The commanding image I constantly referred to concerning the physical place of the play:

A bridge sagging with cracked and crumbling concrete. Pillars of support for the bridge crumbling under the weight exposing the rebar structure underneath-like Hester's pain in her gut... Scattered piles of debris with sharp dangerous threatening edges, rebar sticking out from the exposed concrete slabs. Concrete walls and huge columns stained from the acidic rain from the nearby factories spewing pollutants into the air. (Appendix I, fig. 11-12,14)

Hester's environment demanded huge cracked and crumbling concrete structures with exposed rebar. The column bases could be used by the actors to sit upon as well as provide a surface for the graffiti. Junk should be scattered everywhere.

In the beginning some very rough sketches and drafts were created. (*Appendix 2, p40-41*) I debated whether to draft by hand or computer. The decision was made to utilize the computer due to its wide spread use in the professional world. Sets, lighting, and sound designs can be quickly and neatly drafted by a variety of C.A.D. programs. It expedites the design process by calculating important information and facilitating easier changes to the design.

The initial drafting came quickly which I attribute to the adequate research and incubation period. I produced three floor plans for Nefertiti to review. (*Appendix II, 43-*

45). After reviewing these plans Nefertiti felt that Hester's home under the bridge felt too far off the beaten path. Society needs more of a presence.

Nefertiti felt the new church cornerstone needed to be a more defined area because that is where the church is literally. My feelings were that we needed to be careful in being too literal. There is danger in so clearly defining an area that it becomes unusable in the audience's mind for any other area.

In all of the proposed set designs I provided many "sit-upons". These are areas that are useful for directors and actors to utilize due to their average chair height of 18"-24".

In the next revision I had trouble visualizing certain aspects of the concrete retaining wall so I created a quick mock up of the set from printer paper. (*Appendix II, 42*)

Creating a rough mock-up is a good way to overcome many obstacles in the design process. And it can aid a director in visualizing the proposed design. I took this rough model to Michael Hottois for his input.

Michael felt that the revised floor plan and model was too overwhelming for the thrust theater. It also seemed overwhelming for our set budget of \$1700.00. The overhanging bridge structure on the upstage wall would be problematic for lighting. The pillars & bridge supports would be problematic for sightlines for the audience seated to either side of the $\frac{3}{4}$ thrust stage.

Michael believed the design was solid but the stage and play itself called for even less literalness and more for suggestive scenery. This would solve all of the present obstacles. He suggested moving scenic elements farther downstage to confine the actors in the same area for sightline purposes. He also suggested removing the church, lamp pole, guardrail, and alleyway because of sightlines.

Garry and Michael both suggested thinking in terms of non-traditional materials to portray the same ideas. I decided to use bug screen for covering the columns instead of other material simulating concrete. This would allow me to use lighting for dramatic effect from the inside of the column supports. By exposing the rebar in various degrees I could symbolically represent the decay of Hester's world to different degrees as the play progressed.

I determined to simplify my set down to the bare essentials. What is the essence of Hester's world? What would portray that essence to an audience walking into this theater with no prior knowledge of Hester's world?

Michael was presented with the revised floor plan a few days later. Most of my literal translations of scenic elements had been cut, leaving only the bridge column supports and the pile of junk. Using rebar as the framework for the columns I intended to have lights inside the columns which would be turned on to signify being under the bridge. Inspired by one of my research photos I designed a wall made of large blocks of stone for the upstage left area. (*Appendix I, fig. 4*) We decided that by making this wall from stock 4'x8' platforms we could keep under budget. This would add just another foot to my original plan as well as help to accomplish the director's needs of moving the dramatic action farther downstage.

One negative aspect of drafting on the computer is that it makes your designs look too sterile and too clean. By using the freehand drawing tool I could better realize the rough and realistic nature of the actual set. Painting the back wall to resemble the concrete retaining wall instead of building one from flats will save money. I am concerned with

spray painting graffiti on this surface due to the eventual restoration of the thrust theater. The graffiti may be hard to remove or paint over.

Nefertiti gave final approval to begin building the set. I made a white model to help her visualize the set and made a slight change on the column base heights. The upstage column will be taller thus helping to mask action in that area which will be used for costume changes. A fully rendered scale model will be given to the shop to serve as a guide for building and painting.

Nefertiti mentioned the possibility of some contour within the floor plan. This idea could be conveyed by the different piles of debris and placement of the concrete structures, but I agree to explore further. I considered building up a junk pile/soft area for the actors to literally fall down upon without hurting themselves. Maybe an old mattress surrounded by junk. But why would the mattress be there and not in their bedroom area to be used to sleep on?

After further research I found an interesting idea for more contour on the stage floor in the briefs from the Technical Solutions for Theatre series of books from Yale University. The necessary contouring and softness could be accomplished by using lath covered with carpet padding and burlap. Originally I thought of using an actual mound of dirt as the base for the junk pile but didn't due to health & safety concerns. This new plan would give me the same visual effect and added benefit of the area to be used for falling.

I also found a scenic treatment for the texture of the floodwall from the same series of books. The problem I faced with earlier flood wall treatment ideas concerned Hester's need for a drawing area. This included covering the platforms with 2" foam to replicate

the stonework. However, this section of the wall needed to be drawn upon with sidewalk chalk and erased nightly. I was afraid the foam would be too delicate and would have to be repaired nightly. I was also concerned that the foam would not show the chalk writing clearly enough for the audience to read. The treatment I discovered from the Yale technical briefs utilized a glue, cheese cloth, joint compound, and vermiculite, sand, or sawdust mixture which could be applied to the surface and would replicate stone or concrete work.

As part of our effort to create an organic environment, Nefertiti suggested placing actors, dressed as street people, strategically in the lobby before the show. The concern was that the intention of this idea in practice could be misconstrued and considered offensive. If the idea worked then people would then have to confront their prejudices and their ideas before they actually walk into the auditorium.

First Production Meeting

On November 15, 2005 I had my first official production meeting. Nefertiti and I had been meeting for about 3 months at this point. Ideas which came out of this meeting:

1. More junk upstage of stairs to audience seating
2. Cut height of flood wall from 7'6" to 6'0" to better utilize as an acting area and for lighting purposes
3. Integrate the house even more by dressing the audience rails chain link fence
4. Integrate more of the proscenium walls by same treatment of upstage wall
5. More color in the graffiti but careful not to create a mural
6. The year set in the stone is MMVI

In order to integrate the stage with the house, Michael suggested painting the proscenium walls to match the upstage wall. He also suggested using an old chain-link fence in stock to line the sides of the auditorium. In my research I had pictures of chain-link fencing under bridges, mostly to keep transients from taking up residence. (*Appendix I, fig. 10*) Earlier, I had thought about putting fencing along the back wall or across the upstage exits but didn't pursue it because of cost.

Zhanna had concerns for the amount of dirt onstage because of costumes and the footwear of the characters. I discard my idea for scattering dirt and gravel lightly across the stage.

January 11, 2006, the start of spring semester! Charles Nasby suggested an alternative treatment of column supports and the block wall. With lots of 2" foam in stock we proceed with the original idea for using the foam to replicate the concrete & stonework. (*Appendix IV, fig. 5*) Charles addressed my initial concerns of its durability by suggesting the foam could be sturdier if covered with cheesecloth. This would also create a nice texture and allow us to bevel the edges of the support bases. However, I am still concerned about the use of the chalk and its readability on the foam surface.

Garry suggested using sawdust instead of dirt to scatter across the stage. The sawdust could be painted, was plentiful in the shop, and would be cost effective. It also appeases Zhanna's concern for costumes.

During the lighting run thru I notice an actor furiously polishing the cornerstone. This made the cornerstone smooth; not rough like I originally designed. I decide to add a semi-gloss finish to reflect some light. The debris pile needs to be cut down another 6" for sightline purposes.

For the upstage wall we decide to create a muslin drop. (*Appendix IV, fig. 9*) This alleviates my earlier concern for the graffiti bleeding thru during the restore and it will speed up the strike of the show. The seams on the back wall will run vertically instead of horizontally. (*Appendix IV, fig. 7*) I see this as being coherent with the way this concrete structure was poured. We decided to use a muslin drop instead of just painting the wall due to the time we will save during the strike of the set and the house restore.

The muslin was sized with a 60/40 mixture of water and paint. We stretched the muslin starting at the center and working our way out to the sides, stapling to the floor as we went. With bare feet we smoothed out the wrinkles in the fabric. We used a combination of spattering and puddling techniques to apply the latex paint to the muslin.

Spattering involves putting a little bit of paint on the tip end of the brush and striking the ferrule of the brush against the palm of your hand, causing tiny droplets of paint to fly across the surface to be painted. Spattering from all different directions will accomplish better coverage.

Puddling involves dipping the end of your brush into the paint about ½ the way up the bristles and then immediately pulling the brush out of the paint and into a slightly angled upright position with the bristles pointed up into the air. Rotating the brush in a circular fashion will allow the paint to fall off the brush and into puddles on the surface being painted. We blended the two techniques by brushing the muslin with clean water. The muslin dries overnight.

The cheesecloth covering the foam for the stone & concrete work not only made the set pieces sturdier but gave it an interesting aged look. Not quite as grainy as just the

foam (which looked more porous and like a real cinderblock) but smoother with tinier pores giving the appearance of poured concrete.

On January 24th, 2006, the set was loaded into the theater. Michael offered more suggestions:

1. Tie the I-beams into the upstage wall even more by using a few masonite stones or bricks protruding out from underneath the beam as it would to support such a beam.
2. Graffiti-add some culturally specific African American names. Tag with the Arabic looking symbols so popular under bridges as the signature of certain artists. Use the big fat markers as used in NYC subways or Chicago Subways.
3. Using his former teacher Howard Bay as an example, Michael suggests unifying the whole by covering the set with graffiti. Sections of graffiti can be highlighted during play with the lighting design.
4. Add grayer tones to the existing I-Beams instead of just using the black.
5. Water down the rebar to get real rust to form instead of just painting it on.
6. Use joint compound to add texture to the column supports and to fill out the bug screen and rebar in certain places.

I designed an alternative to the I- beam supports. I used ¾” plywood to make steel plates which looked as if they had huge bolts connecting the floodwall to the steel supports. These matched the existing downstage steel plates which were really being utilized by the steel beams. (*Appendix V, fig.7*)

Floor Treatment One major idea I gleaned from both Michael Hottois and Paul Owen, the resident scenic designer for Actors Theater of Louisville, is the importance of the

stage floor itself. With a proscenium stage, the designer worries less about the floor since much of the seating is below the audience's line of sight. One might choose to paint the floor flat black in that situation to lessen light bounce or one might choose to use a different color or pattern to affect the light bounce in a different way. But the stage floor takes on a whole character by itself, and is in fact one of the most defining scenic elements when seen by the audience.

I wanted the stage floor to look like dirt compacted over spilled concrete in some areas. To achieve this effect we applied a base coat of rose colored latex to the masonite topped floor. Then we used a natural sponge roller to randomly lay down some patches of medium gray. Final prep was to scatter some sawdust, taking care to make it thinner in the more traveled areas. I used the Chapin sprayer for the final coat of light brown latex for the traveled areas and a darker chestnut brown for the less traveled areas. Watered down black paint was applied on the junk areas, column supports, and the less traveled areas of the floor. A water and glue mixture was dribbled on all the pebbles around all the stage to keep them in place.

From our next production meeting I made more discoveries:

1. Cornerstone onstage for entire scene without being used is problematic after its initial appearance. We solved this by draping a moving blanket across it as if to protect it. This can later be used by the actor. Also we can change the color from white granite to a charcoal gray, or possibly black if necessary.
2. The "chalkboard" paint used on the masonite set into the block wall is problematic since it is such a contrast to rest of the wall. Michael suggested blacking out more areas in the wall to counter-balance.

I blacked out the spots in the wall where it would naturally be darker, such as in the deep crevices underneath the blocks. I used a sponge to aid in the texturing.

The spacing of the blocks in this wall was unusual. This came from my research and I used it because it seemed slightly out of balance, just like Hester's life. Sometimes the real world is more interesting than the idealized world! (*Appendix I, fig. 4*)

The upstage right and upstage left exit curtains were now distracting to me. Since they are black I thought this wouldn't be an issue. This was solved by moving them offstage and hanging shredded black plastic in their original location. I had seen plastic at many sites under bridges used for construction purposes. I spattered paint on the plastic and cut slits in it to help the actors maintain their rhythm of exits and entrances. This not only served to uniform the whole set but gave the added benefit of the "swish" sound when actors made their exits. (*Appendix V, fig. 4 & 6*)

While spray painting the graffiti I had the side door to the theater open and some leaves blew in...Michael asked me, "Why not leave them where they blew in?" "Accidental art" is the term Michael used to describe these "happy accidents". I liked the leaves so much that I gathered up a box of them which had fallen from the trees located outside the theater and placed them all over the set. I absolutely loved this touch!

The paint and sawdust mixed on the floor treatment to make a really nice looking muddy mixture which also had the same consistency. Another incidence of accidental art!

I wanted to make the tape case the preacher used to carry his wares easily transformable into his soap box to be used when he was preaching. We put a lid on the

box using rope for hinges and a latch. The preacher simply sat his little milk crate case on the ground and stood on it whenever and wherever he decided to preach.

Charles brought over a funky old green chair from the shop to use during breaks. It was accidentally left on top of the block wall one day and Nefertiti loved it. I thought it looked good as well. That is probably why I forgot to take it off the set. It ended up being Hester's private place and an iconic location for a few scenes including the curtain call. Can we say accidental art again?

The location of Hester sitting in her green chair on top of the block wall just happened to be directly under a big red graffiti sign of the word "HELP". (*Appendix V, fig.16*) Accidental art again as we didn't intend on a chair in that area and the painting was done in the other space, according to my drawings, but with no idea of how that particular scene would be blocked.

Another happy accident: the interior light from the large column upstage right spills through the rebar and lights up the "PEACE" sign high on the back wall. (*Appendix V, fig. 2*) This made a great juxtaposition with the turmoil which was going on in Hester's life.

Yet another happy accident was the shadow of the same rebar on the upstage wall. The shadow of the rebar resembled the bars of a cell. This foreshadows the ending of the play when Hester is imprisoned.

For the graffiti I carefully chose positive messages which I had actually seen spray painted under the various bridges in Louisville. Words such as "live", "breathe", "hope", "shine", "faith", and "love". (*Appendix V, fig. 5*) I also included a few symbols such as the peace sign, a heart, masks, flowers, a cross, and a cloud which looked like a jelly fish.

My favorite was “2 MANY CANS” which I had found in my research. It fit the play perfectly as the show opens with one of Hester’s children crushing and stacking cans. I also had huge black plastic leaf bags stuffed with cans flanking the stage on either side.

I invited other graffiti artists to join in the spray painting to give me several noticeable stylistic differences. The only guidance I offered was to use words or images which were of a positive nature. This added to the authenticity of the environment immensely.

Once the play opened an interesting thing occurred. The set was officially finished. I hid a few cans of spray paint backstage, telling only a few of my friends the location. Every day little bits of new graffiti began showing up on the set. Some of us were sneaking into the theater and “tagging”, or spraying, even more graffiti on any surface of the set we could find. This added a continually creative element to the process. Just like in real life.

EVALUATION AND CONCLUSIONS

In evaluating my design process for *IN THE BLOOD* the question I ask myself is could I have gotten to the final design earlier if I would have taken a different approach? Could I have skipped the 3 months of simply observing and photographing local bridges? Could I have skipped the incubation period? The process revealed the answers to the many questions, and this led to the design for the set. The answers and solutions seem simplistic once you arrive at them; you tend to forget the process by which you reached your destination.

Spending the extra time to learn how to draft by computer, putting myself in the shoes of the characters within the context of the play, asking the question “what if”, spending lots of time under Louisville’s many bridges...all of this led to my final design for *IN THE BLOOD*.

I took charge of the design elements early in the process. I paid attention to the details. I had a strong vision and communicated this vision to the director early on by initiating the discussion. All designs were completed on time enabling adequate time for construction and completion of the set. I documented my steps and most importantly I trusted the process of research to reveal the environment for *IN THE BLOOD*.

What did I learn? We should trust our initial instincts. I felt strongly that the new church cornerstone should be rough-hewn granite instead of the smooth polished block that finally became part of the set. The smooth granite seemed out of place for the set as

a whole. To remedy this we brought the cornerstone onstage during intermission, so it wouldn't be a distraction for the first half of the show. If I would have been clearer in communicating my strong feelings to the director on this issue I believe we could have used the rough-hewn cornerstone for the entire play. This is an example of an instance where I should have spent a little more time fighting for my initial vision.

I discovered that even with a strong vision of what I wanted for the final product, that it is good to be open for suggestions and improvements. Our shop foreman, Charles Nasby, made several suggestions which improved upon the original design. He suggested an alternative surface treatment for the column supports and the block flood wall. This new treatment allowed us to get a 1" chamfer on the edges of the column bases. His suggestions kept us under budget and improved the overall appearance of the set.

Delegating responsibility is also a skill developed during the creation of *IN THE BLOOD*. By sharing my ideas and vision with others, I was able to include them in the creative process. I utilized stagecraft students one day for a scavenger hunt in our prop room. I asked them to find items they would throw away. The resulting "junk" became my onstage debris pile. By giving them this responsibility I was free to work on other aspects of the design.

While painting the set I discovered that "over thinking" the process tends to stifle the product. This was evident when Megan McKinney and I first began painting the backdrop. The stained and weathered look of the concrete was finally revealed when we took off our shoes and got messy with the paint, and liberal with the water.

I learned the lesson again, that if you put an item on stage, the director will use it, no matter how many times they tell you that they won't. The block floodwall was originally 1'-0" taller, and had been turned with its highest point offstage. This allowed the actors different playing levels in the prominent upstage center area. There was no intention of having the actors on the highest level, which in my mind went off stage into infinity. It would have been difficult to light as well since the actors heads would have been almost in the lighting grid. After seeing the model the director decided she could utilize the upper level as well. So, I dropped the height of the unit by 1'-0", and rotated it to accommodate the lighting needs.

Originally the director had called for the cornerstone to be a scenic unit that could transform into a soapbox. From past experience I realized that the simple solution is often the best. That is how we settled on having two distinctly different set pieces for each of these. Cheaper, easier to build, handle, and operate. The "transforming" unit would have been disruptive to the flow of the play.

Even after my designs were complete I found it was best to remain receptive to "accidental" art, which might otherwise go unnoticed. Nice finishing touches, from the leaves which had blown in to the funky green chair. The constantly evolving graffiti, courtesy of talented students such as Caleb White, Patrick Fitzsimmons, and my own son Alex, added the finishing touches.

IN THE BLOOD was a culmination of everything I've learned. The bits and pieces of knowledge I've accumulated through my life and current studies came together to create a successful theatrical environment. An environment which went beyond the 4th wall allowing the audience to enter into Hester's world under the bridge.

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Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14

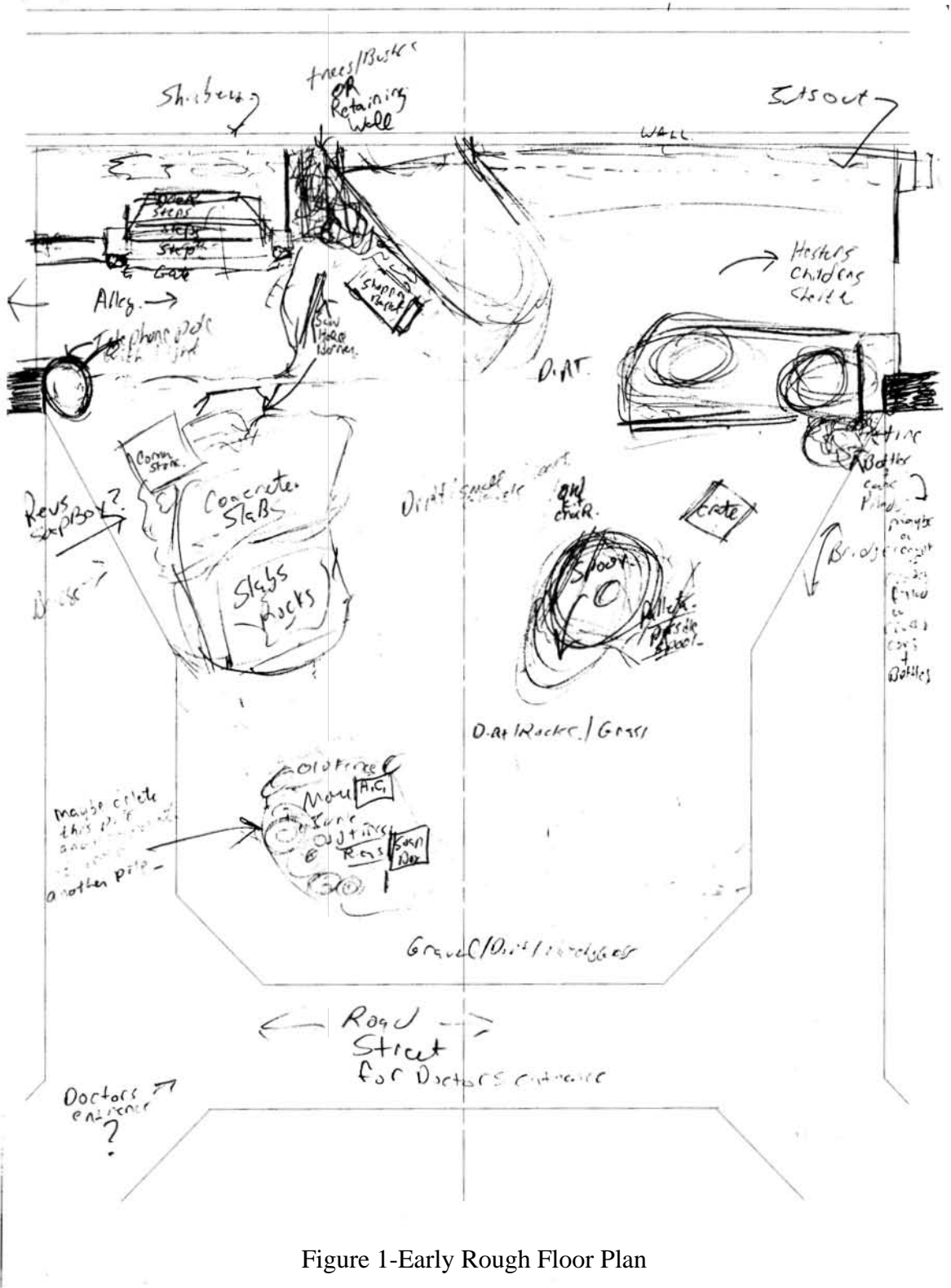


Figure 1-Early Rough Floor Plan

Check position
of steel beams

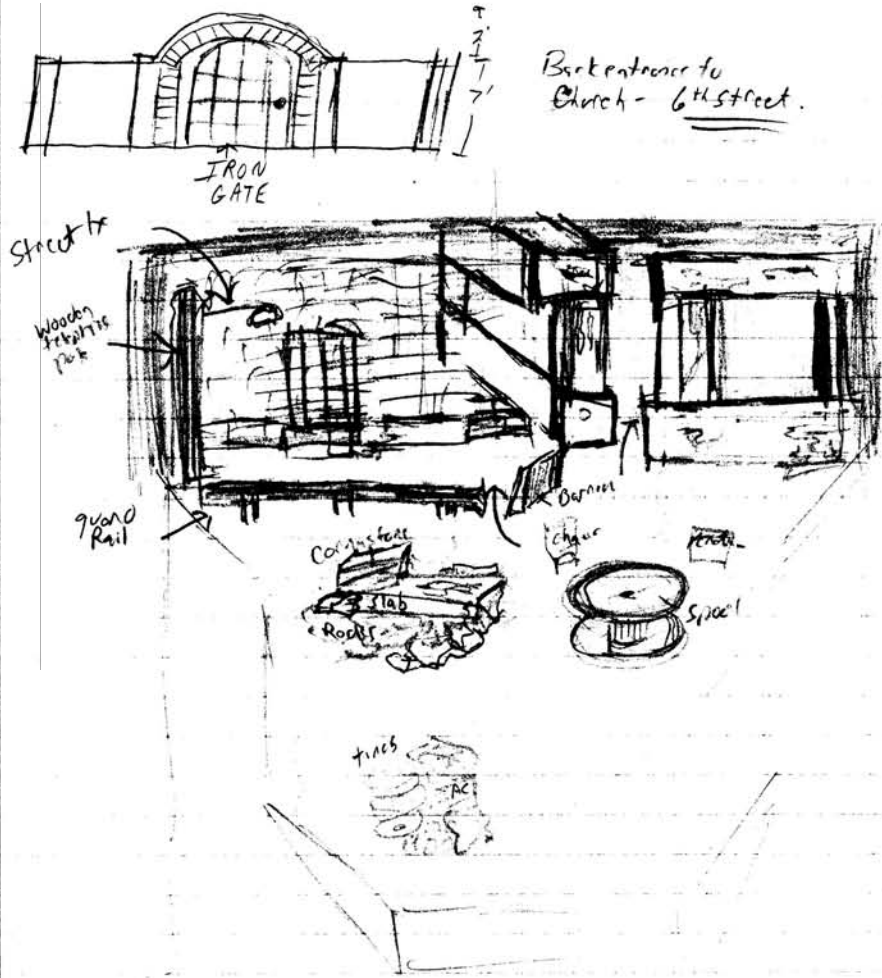


Figure 2-Early Rough Sketch

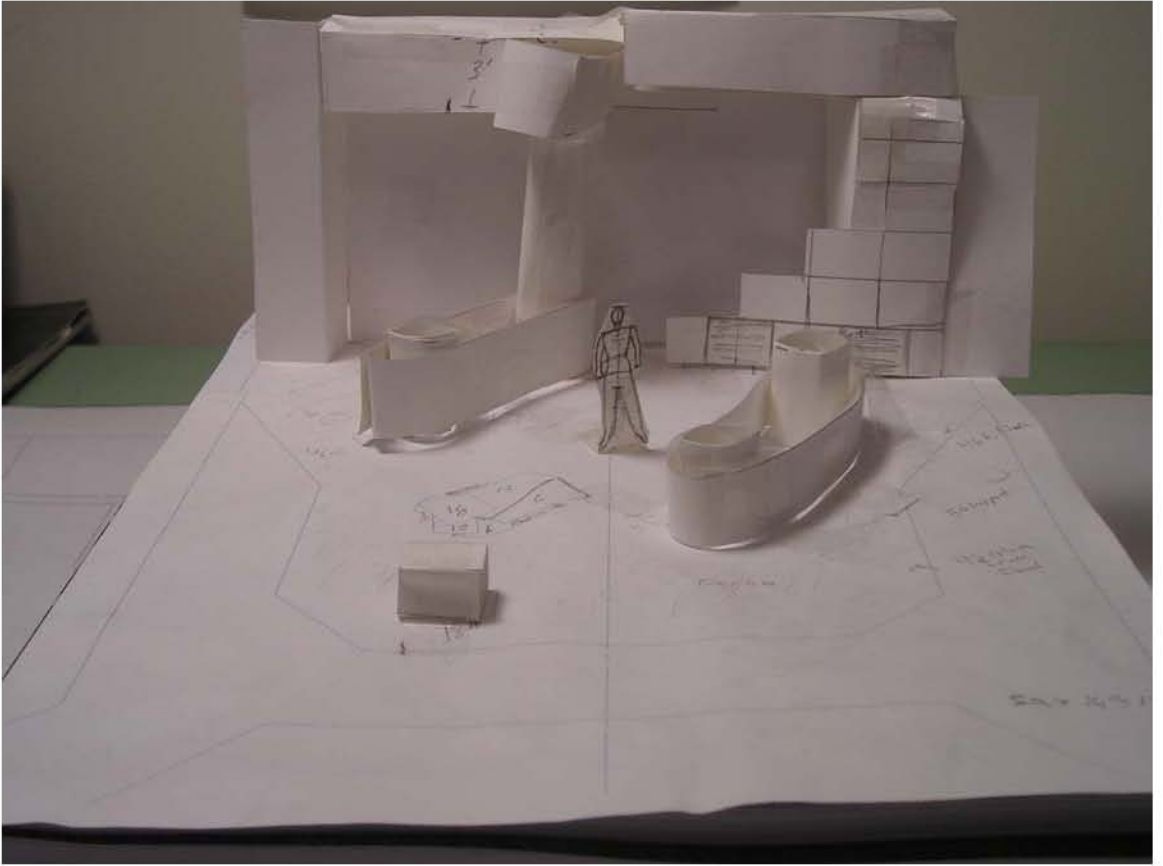


Figure 3-Early Mock Up

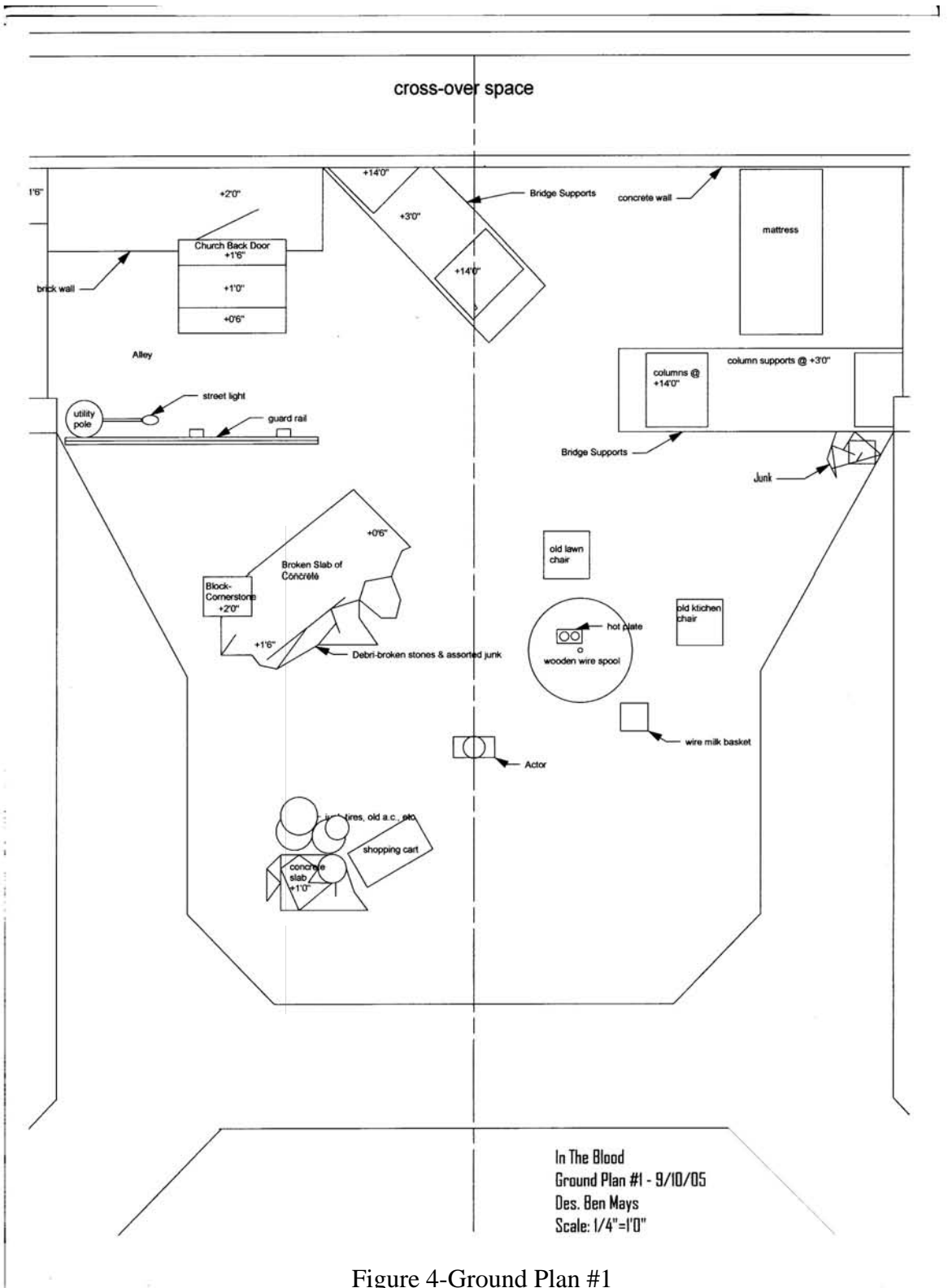


Figure 4-Ground Plan #1

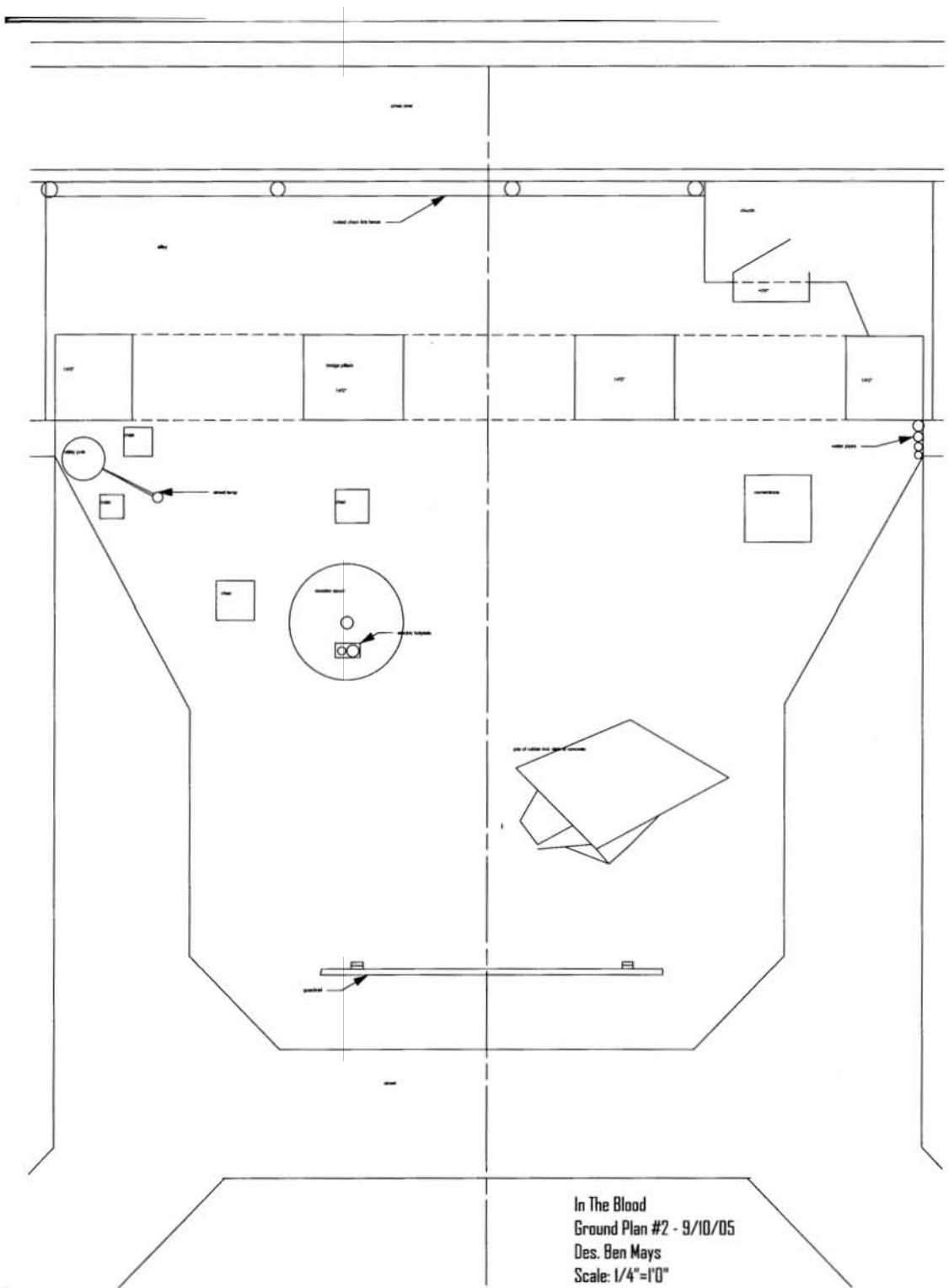


Figure 5-Ground Plan #2

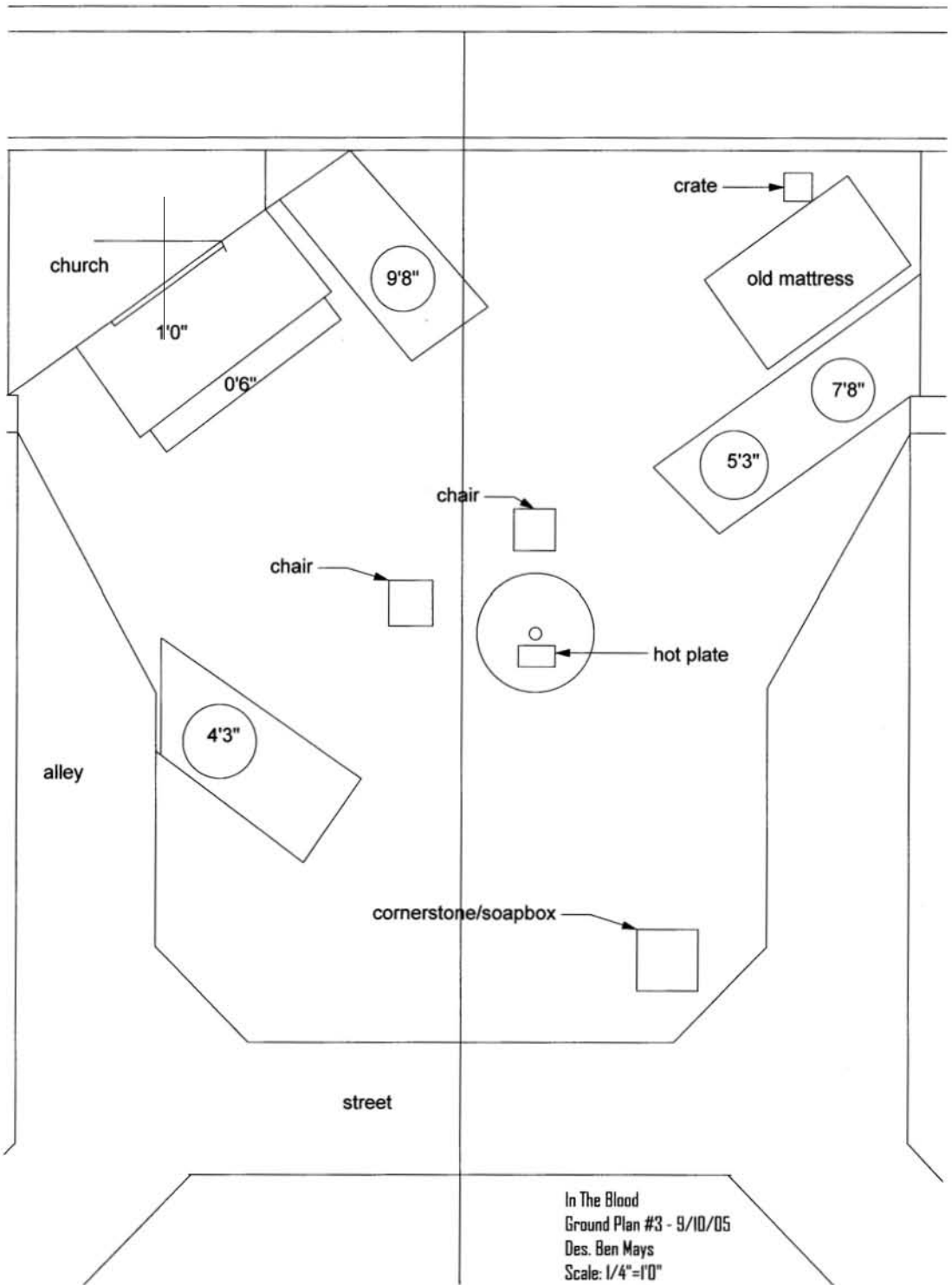


Figure 6-Ground Plan #3

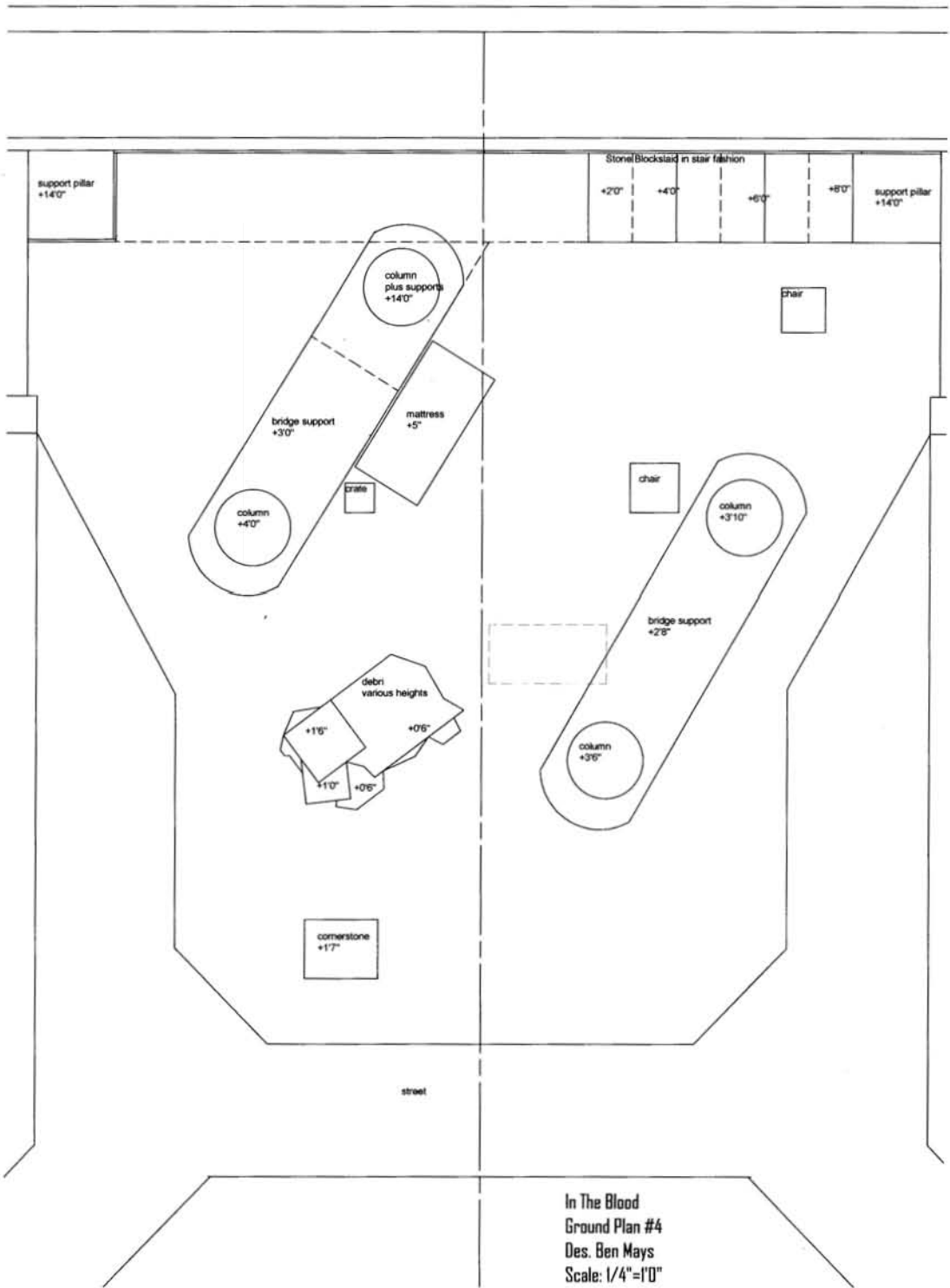


Figure 7-Ground Plan #4

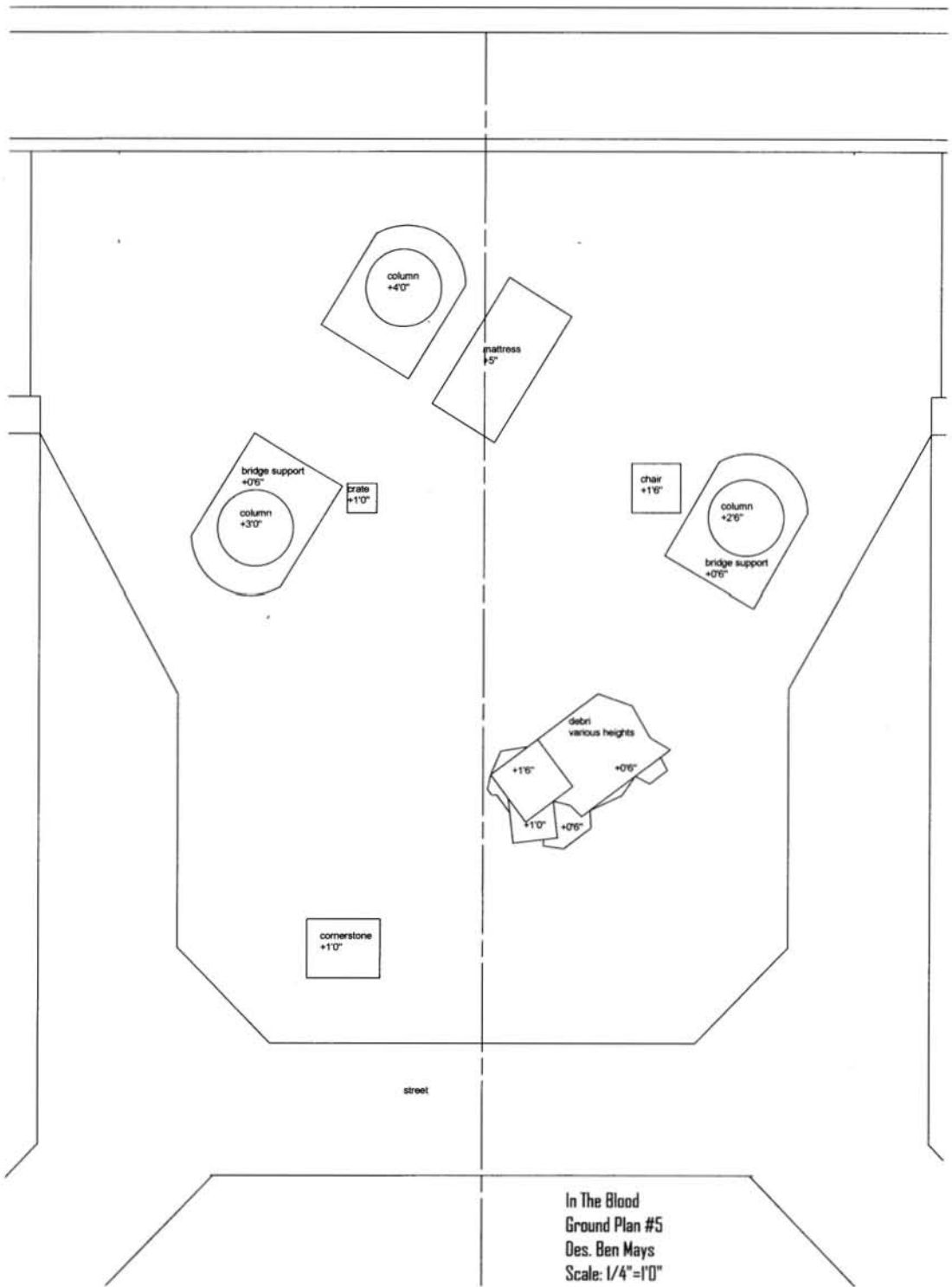


Figure 8-Ground Plan #5

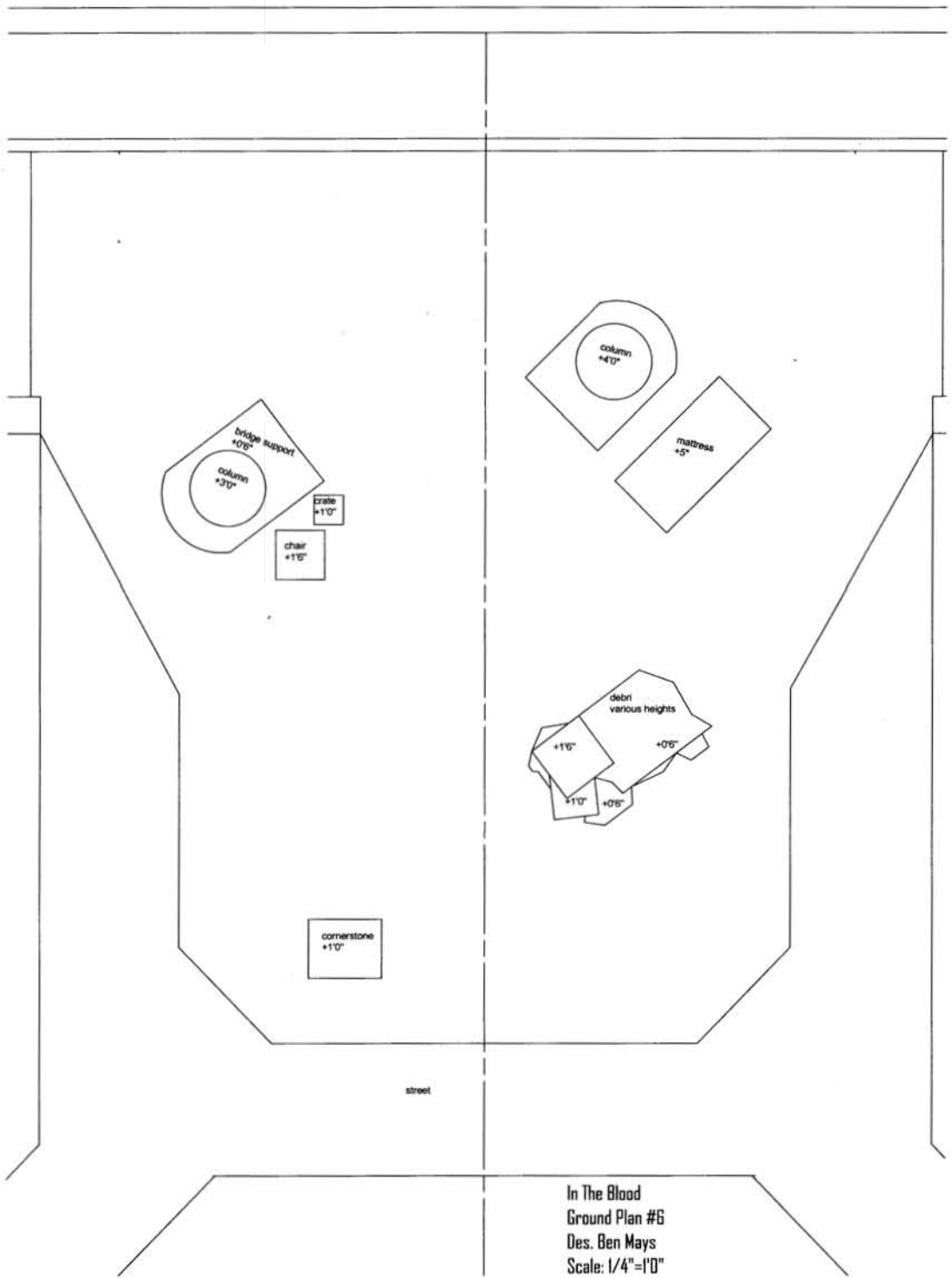


Figure 9-Ground Plan #6

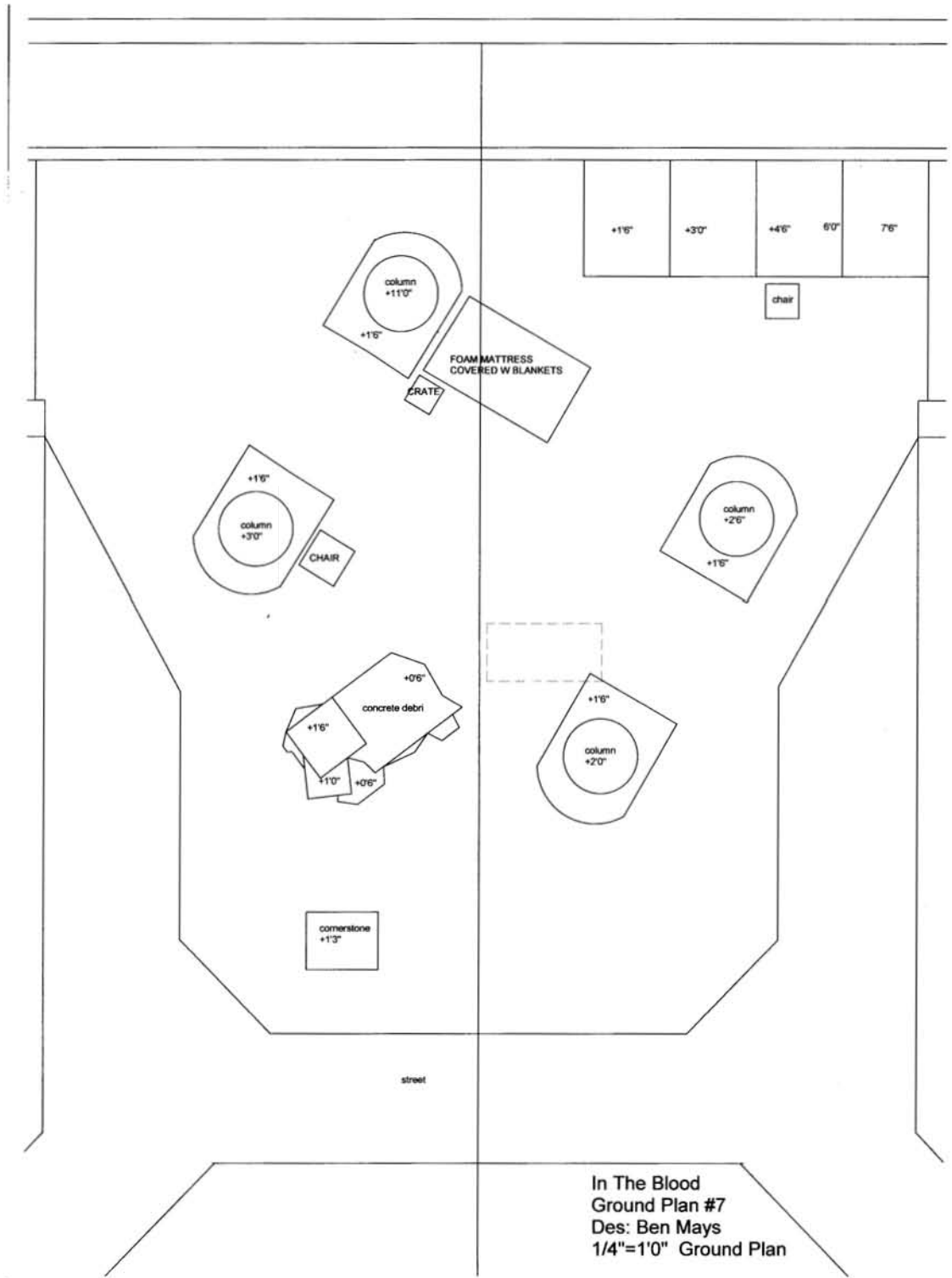


Figure 10-Ground Plan #7

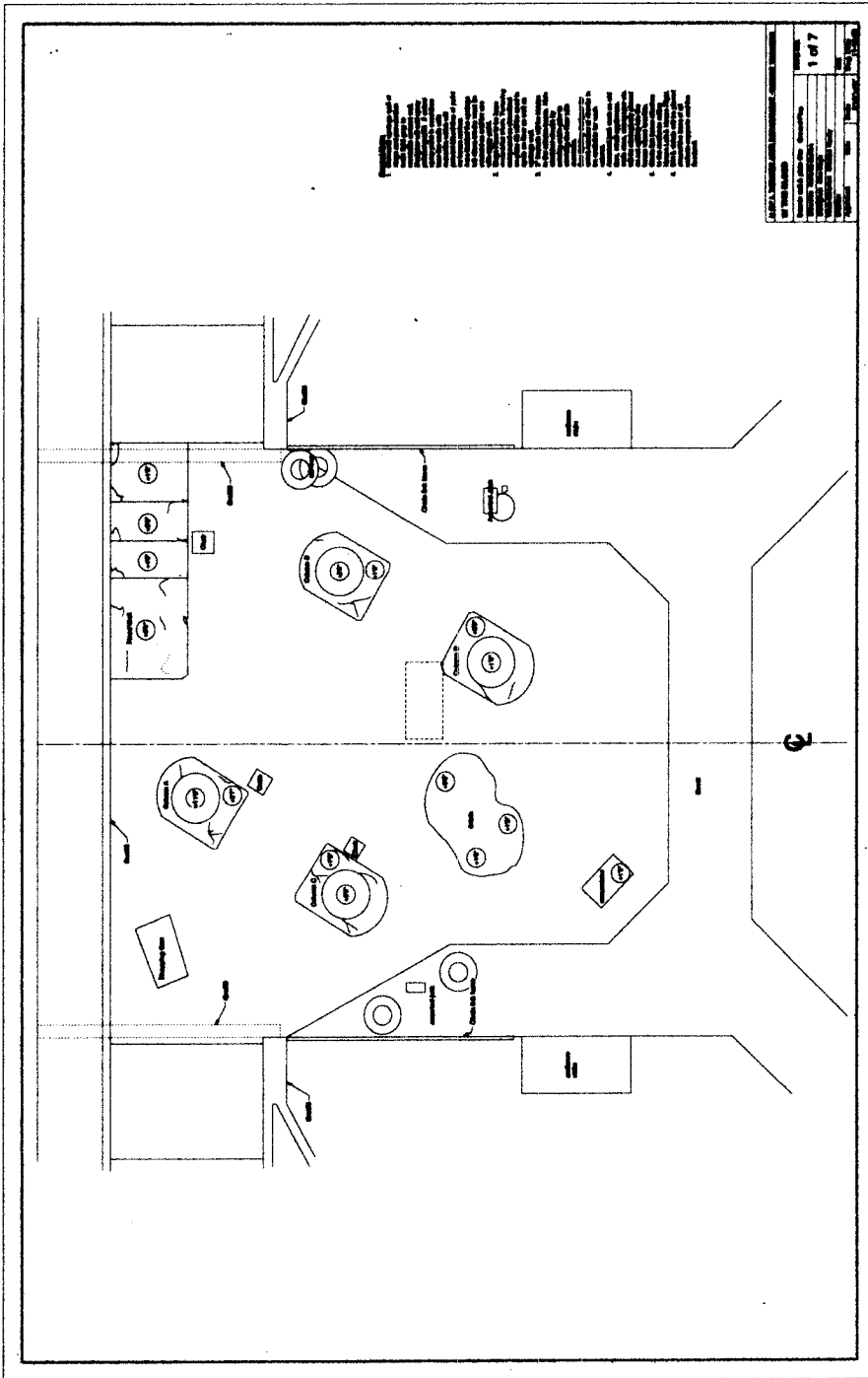


Figure 1-Final Ground Plan

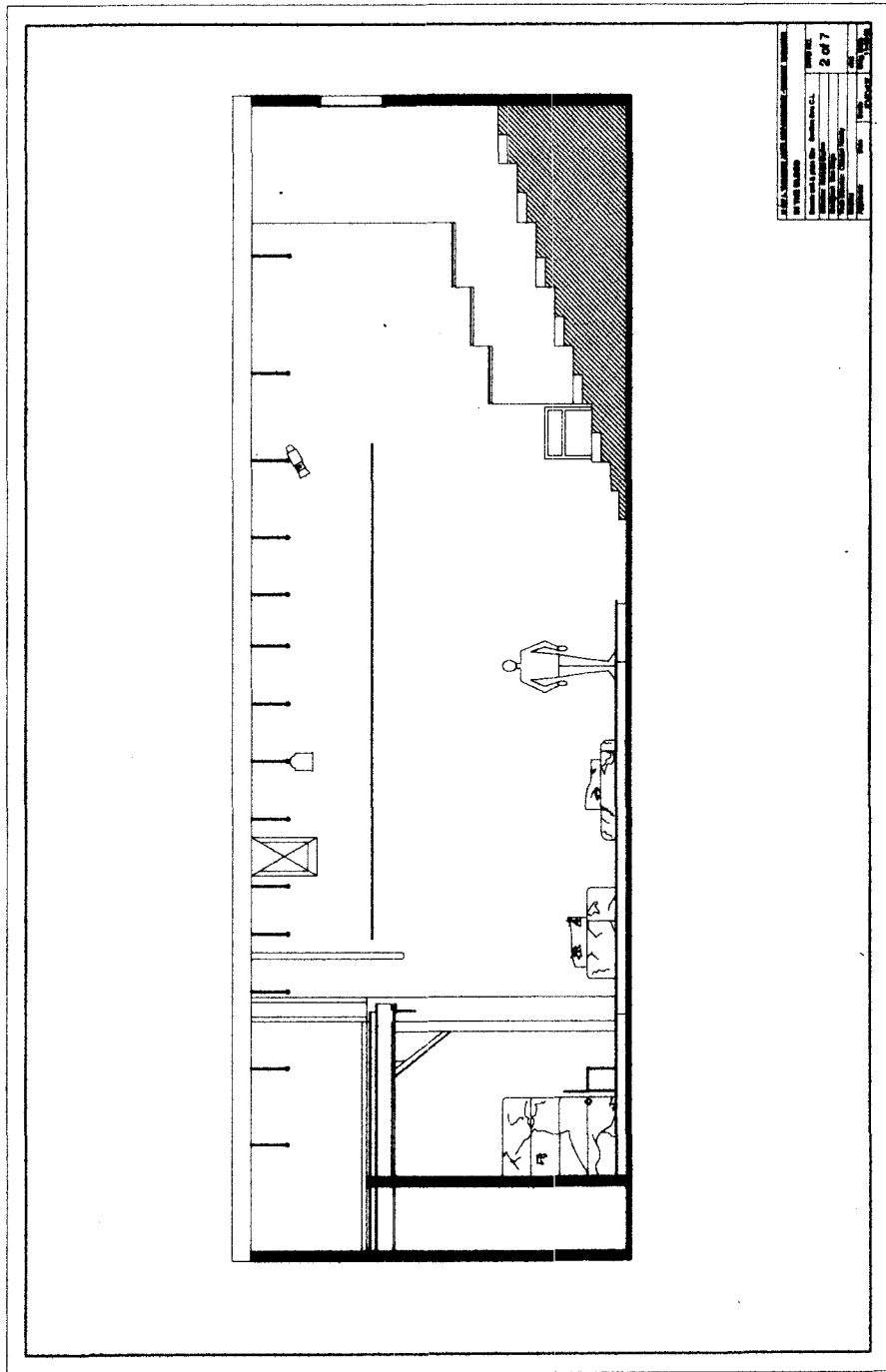


Figure 2-Section thru Center Left

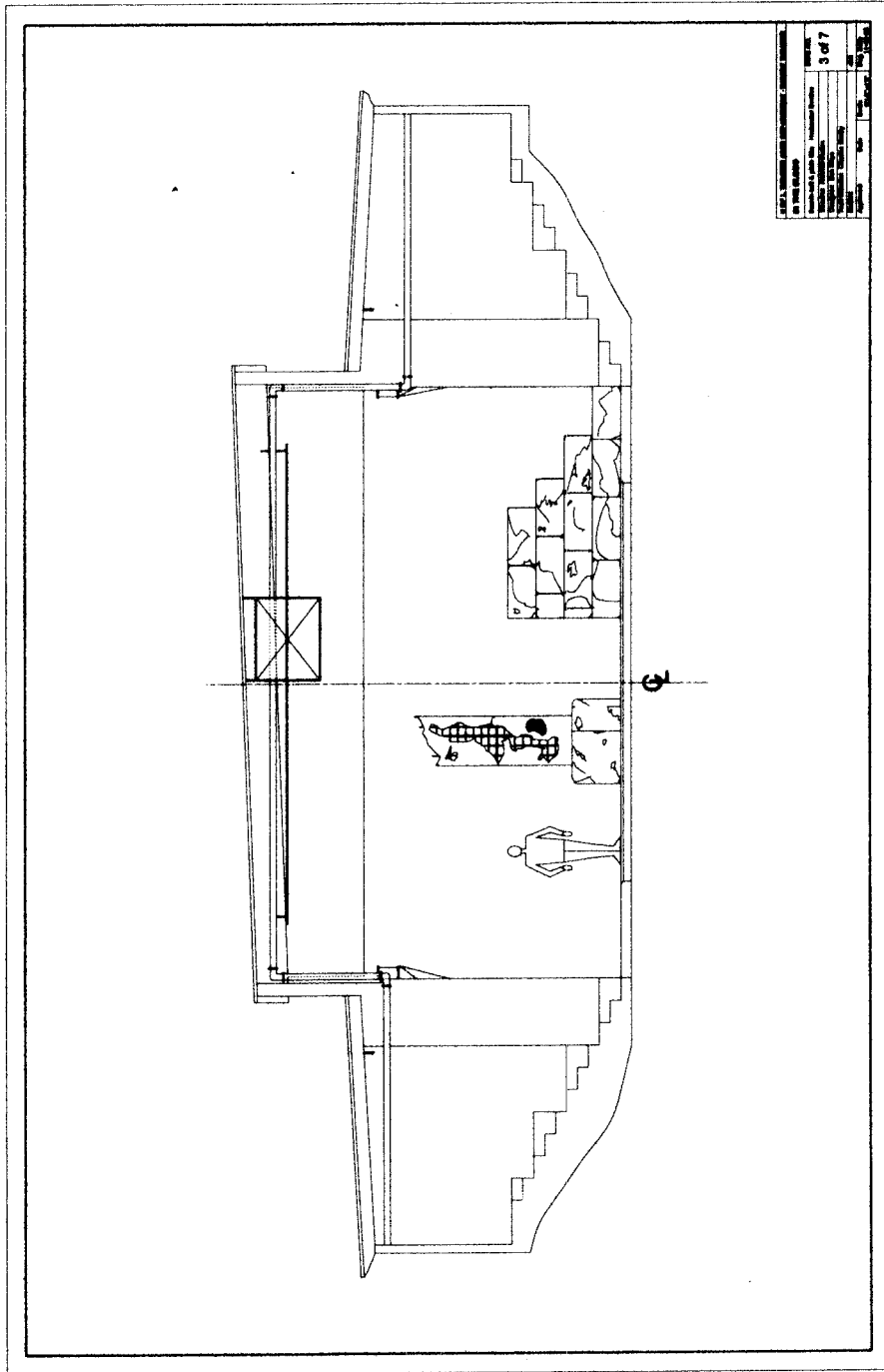


Figure 3-Horizontal Section

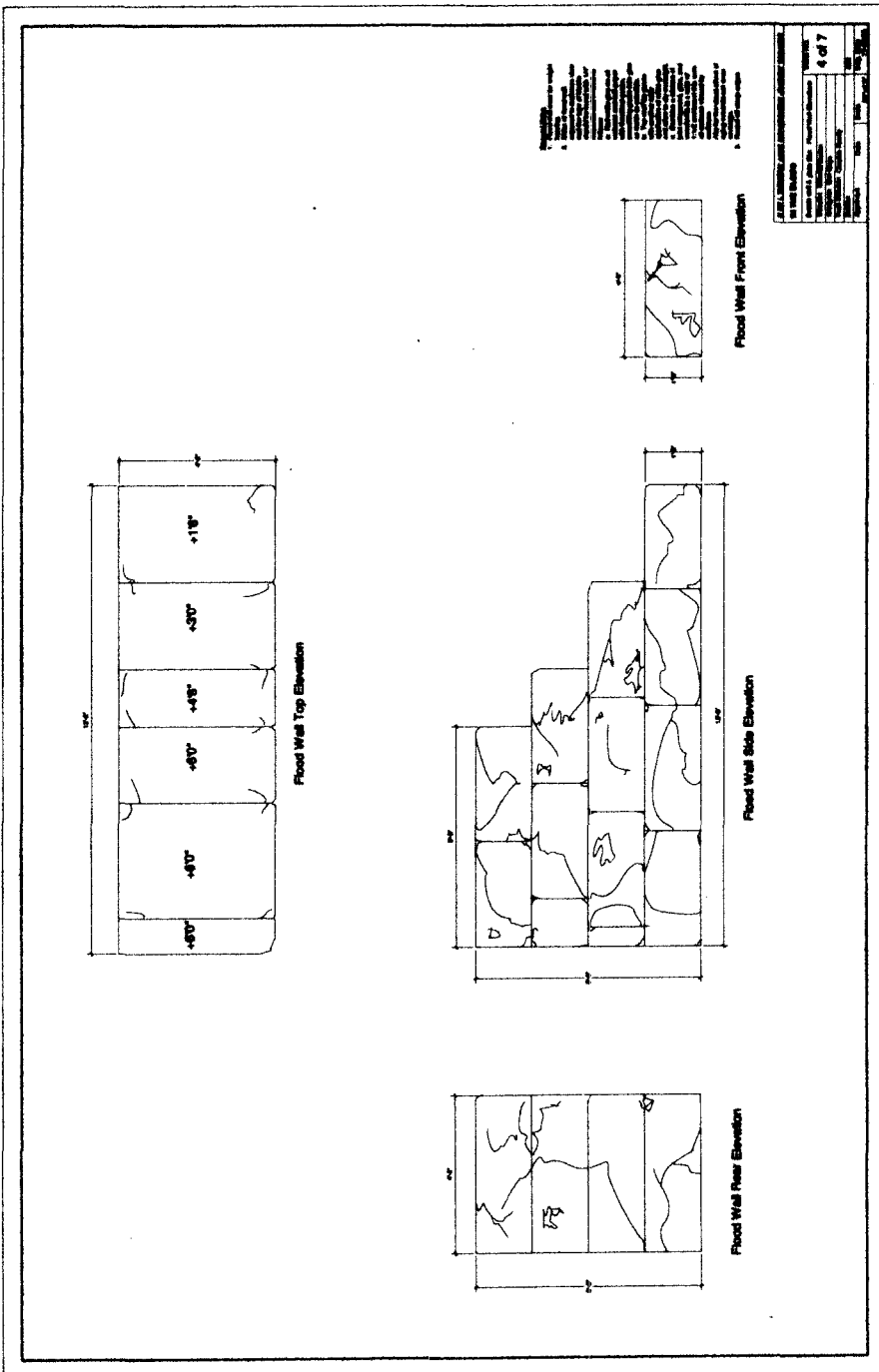
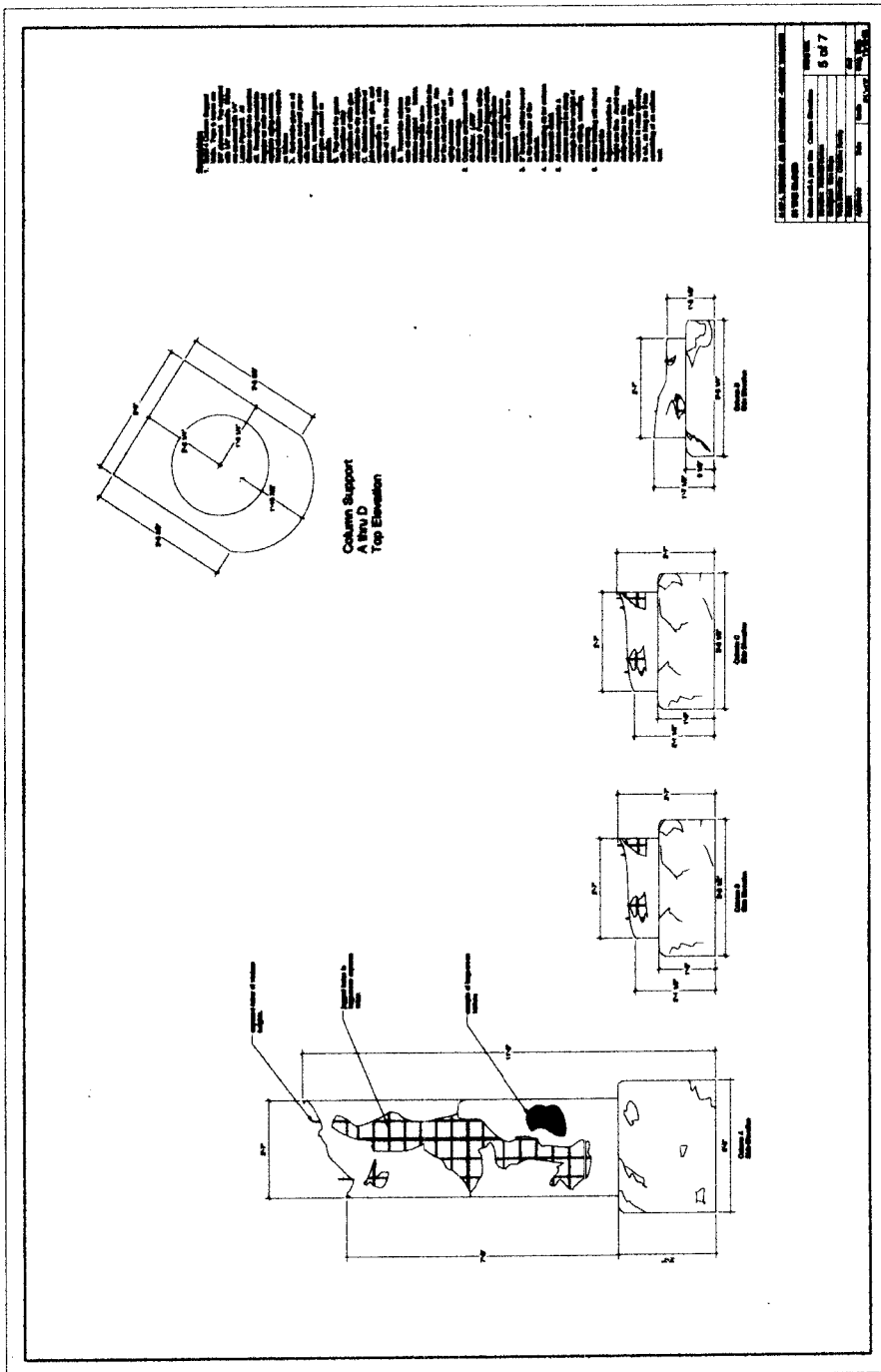


Figure 4-Floodwall Elevations



DATE	BY	CHKD	APP'D
10/10/00	J. Smith	M. Jones	K. Brown
PROJECT NO.			5 OF 7
SHEET NO.			100
SCALE			AS SHOWN

Figure 5-Column Elevations

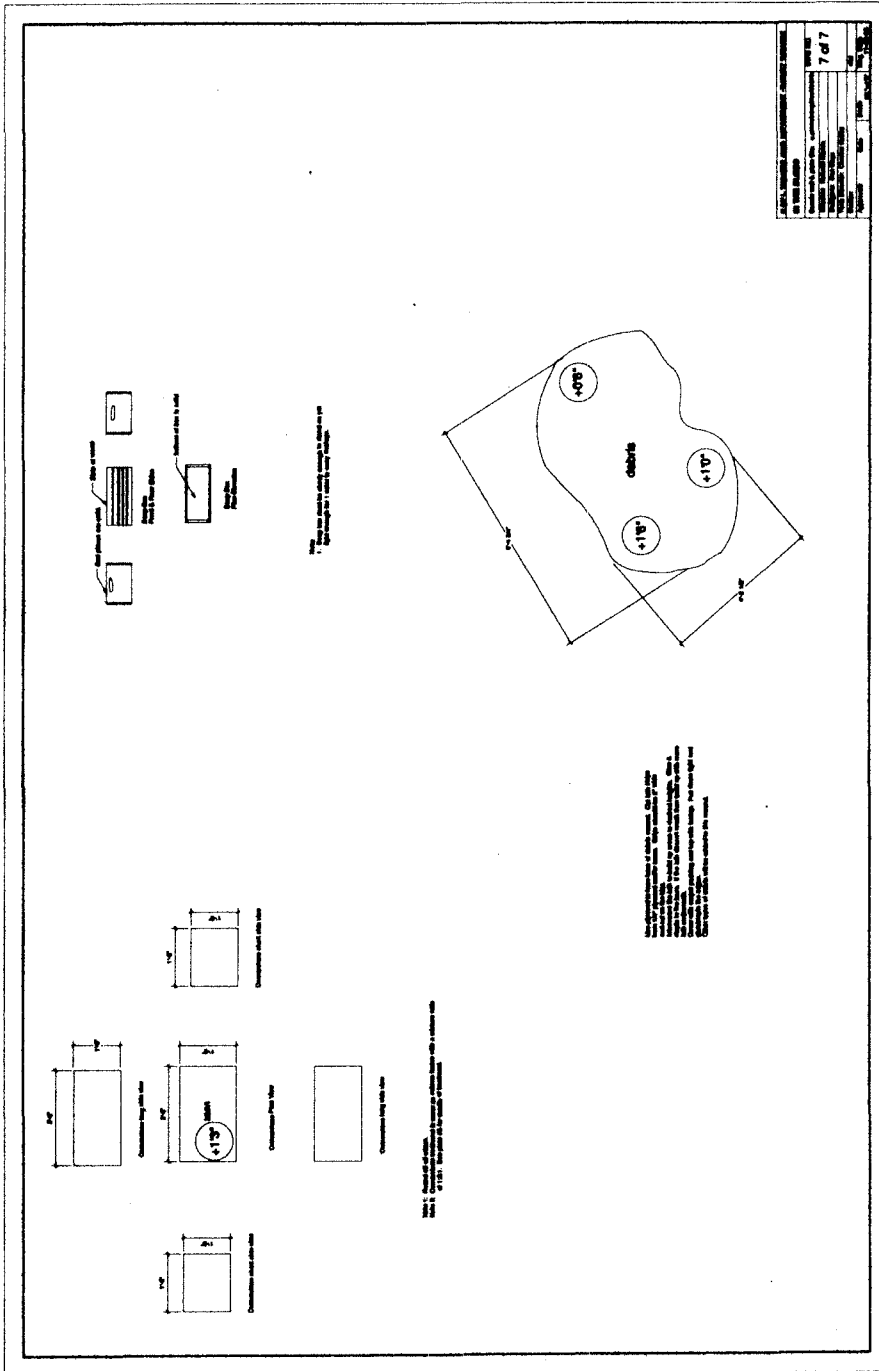


Figure 7-Cornerstone, Soapbox, Debris Pile Detail

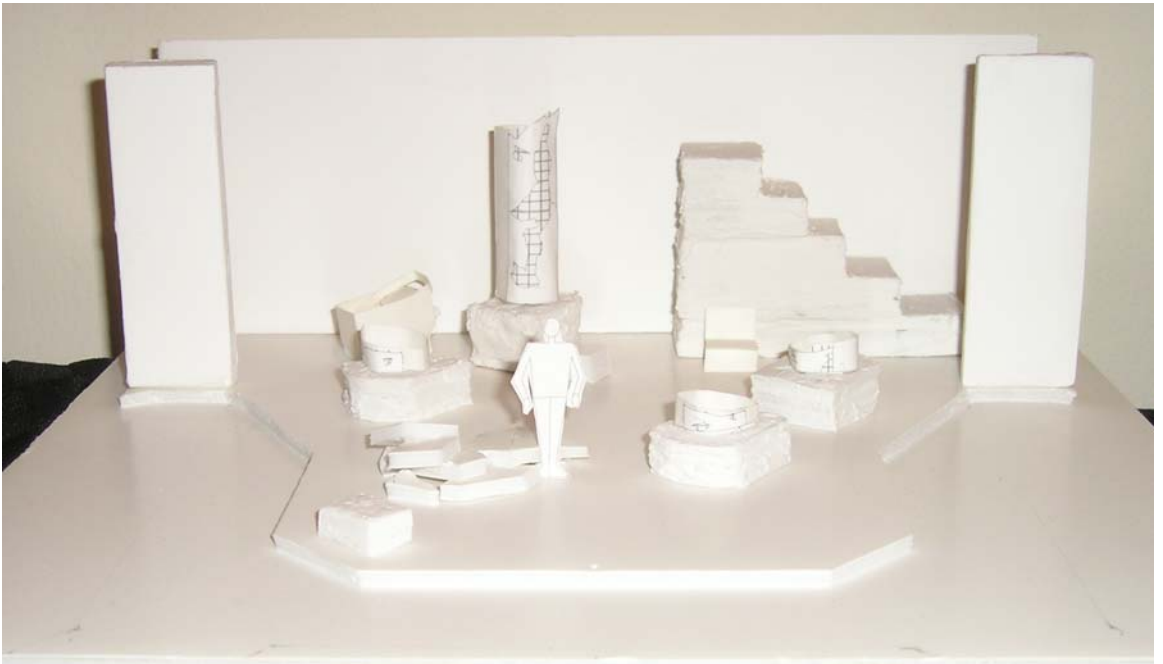


Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5

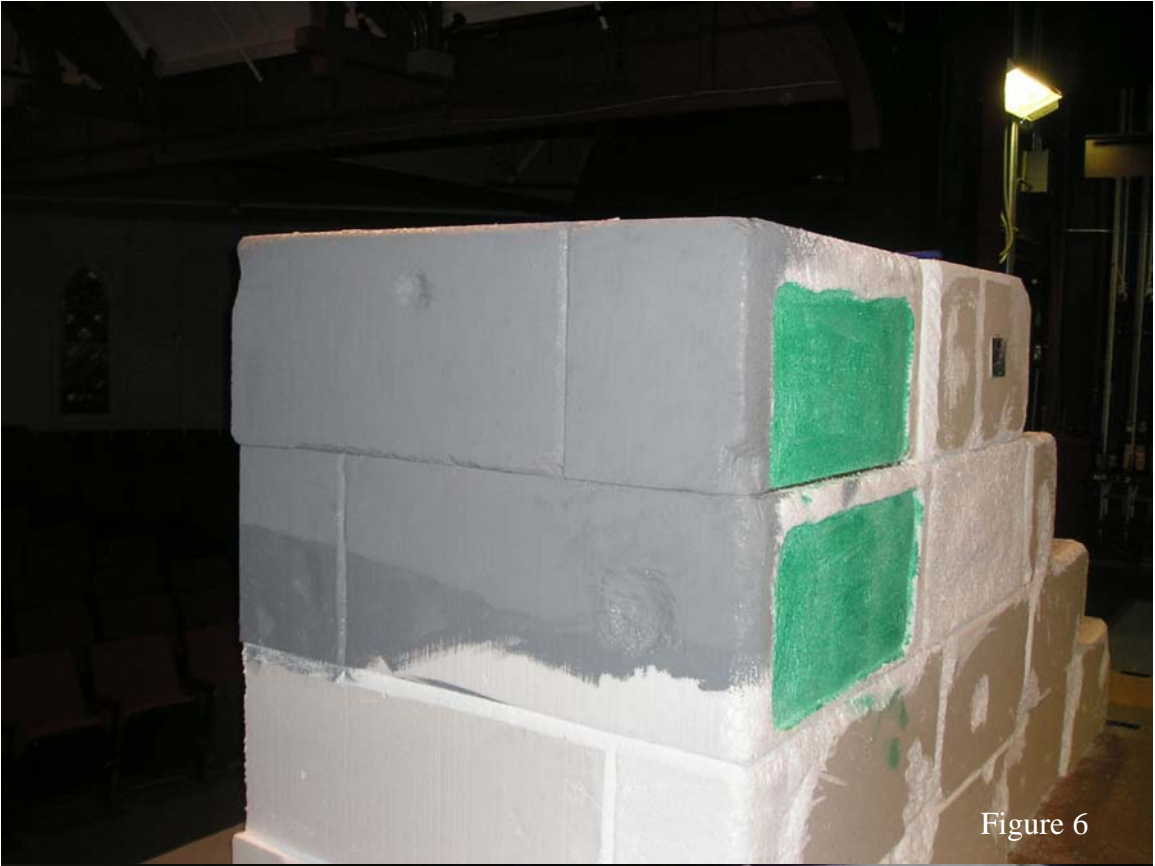


Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9

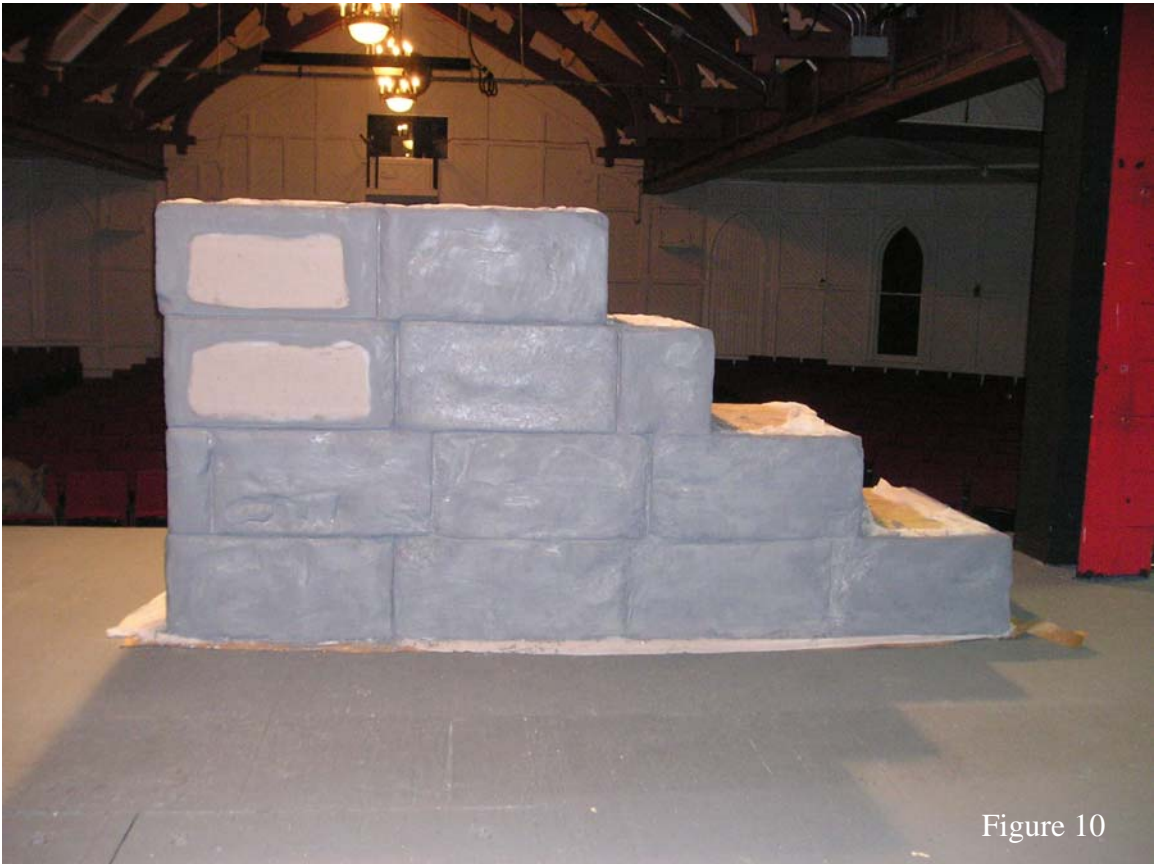


Figure 10

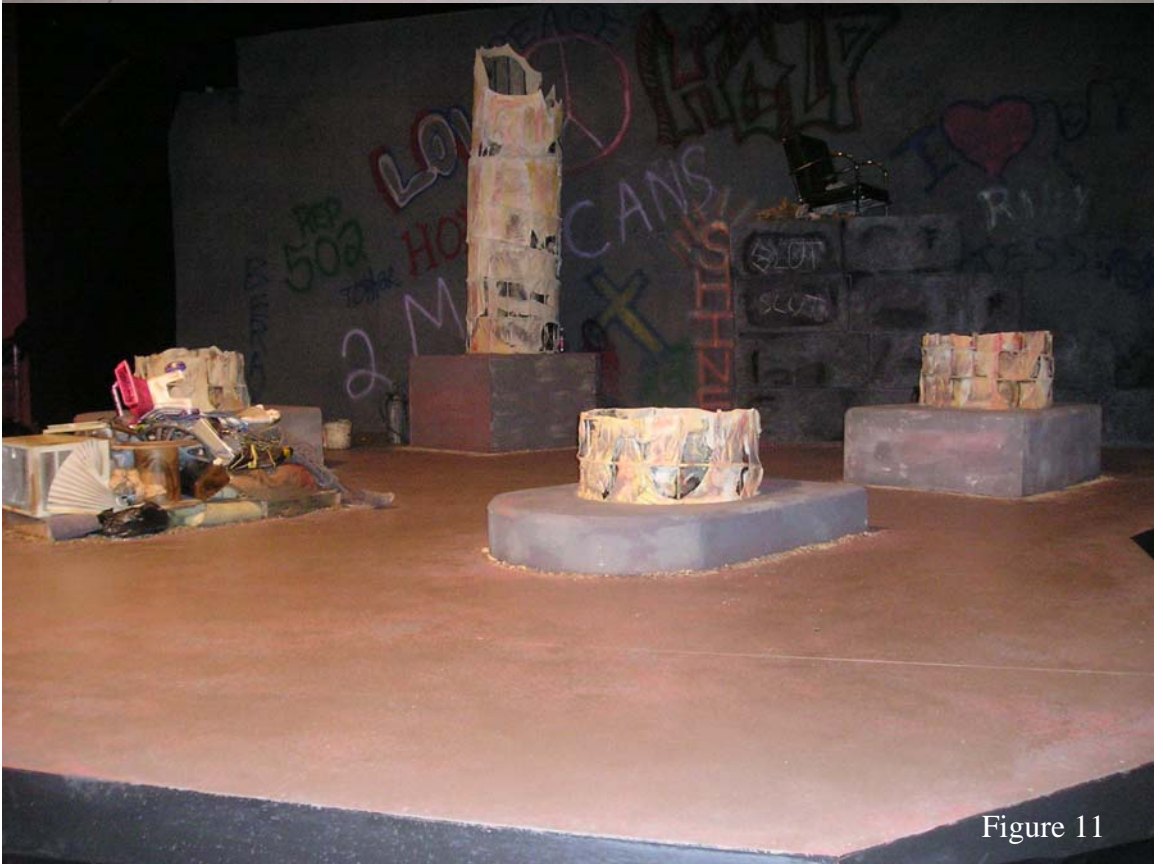


Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18



Figure 19



Figure 20



Figure 21



Figure 22

JOURNAL NOTES

Friday 8/19/2005

My goals for IN THE BLOOD:

1. Take complete charge of design elements early on in the process (make up my mind sooner and have confidence in myself)
2. Pay attention to the minute detail.
3. Have a strong vision for the design and don't shy away from that, BUT be open for compromise.
4. Initiate Communication early on with director
5. Complete all designs by the deadline
6. Document the process. The product is important but it is the process where the knowledge is to be gleaned

Wednesday 8/24/2005

My First Reading:

IN THE BLOOD by Suzan-Lori Parks c.2000

The script says, “The walls should be spare, to reflect the poverty of the world of the play”

Images, feelings, strong impressions, strong emotions that jump out at me...

Corrosion; everything has eroded or corroded away surrounding and including Hester.

A bridge exists literally just over her “home”, a bridge that represents progress and freedom to some but it is Unobtainable to Hester and her children. It is impossible for Hester to cross this bridge because she is trapped under the weight of it. She is boxed in. Everything surrounding her is a barrier to any sort of decent life. Broken concrete, decaying bridge support pillars exposing rusting internal bits of rebar hanging on for dear life. Structural deformities everywhere; broken cinderblocks, bricks, rocks, dirt, exposed pipes, old paint cans, bottles, rusty jagged pieces of metal, old tires, wire spools, milk crates, mattress, old easy chair, rusty old oil drum, broken 50’s style metal kitchen chair, articles of clothing lying about. Street lamp, old electric plate, old extension cord tying into the electric pole.

Man made dark stained concrete walls covered with graffiti; a dangerous terrain of broken concrete, jagged rocks, old junk lying about like a minefield through which Hester is always navigating.

Thursday, 8/25/2005

Second Reading

Specific needs called for by the script.

p.5: “The setting should be spare, to reflect the poverty of the world of the play”

Place and Time: Here and Now

p. 7: Scene 1: Home under the bridge-the word “SLUT” scrawled on a wall-soda cans lined up. “Put it in the pile” reference to the cans. “slut” on wall in “practice place”- other words? Letters? – The letter “A” scrawled in the dirt.

p. 9: Sack for the cans-plastic, paper, or burlap?

p. 10: Setting the “table”, soup cooking-some sort of firepit? Possibly a steel oil barrel with a grate over it? an old soup pot? Ladle?

p. 14: Hestor presses the kids clothes

Props-shoebox with white pumps-tape player?

Note: Cinderella’s story, white pumps instead of glass slipper, under the bridge instead of castle.

p. 18-section to use as the bathroom

p. 19: Bully goes off a distance to sleep, blankets? Mats? Old mattress? Sleeping bags?

p. 21: Scene 2-A Street Practice

Hestor walks alone down the street and Doctor comes in and meets her

p. 26: Doctor references an alley in his monologue

p. 30: Scene 3: The reverend is on his soap-box, he calls a taxi.

Scene 4: Welfare at Hestor’s place-kids are playing in the dirt.

Page 32: Hestor washes her hands again. (in what?, a bucket? A basin?)

Scene 5: Late-Hestor is attempting to thread a needle-where does the light come from in this nighttime scene? How late is it?

Scene 6: The Reverend on his rock. What kind of rock?

Page 44: A cornerstone with the date inscribed in Roman numerals. (both sides?)

Scene 7: Hestor and kids playing freeze tag in the street.

Scene 8: back entrance of Reverend's church. Jabber comes running "around the building" Hestor kills Jabber where on stage?

Scene 9: Hestor in prison. What do we need to do here? Use Gobo?

Friday, August 26th, 2005

Sent email to Nefertiti requesting first meeting to share our impressions, ideas, and specific needs.

Monday, August 29th, 2005

Meeting arranged for next Tuesday at Noon.

Tuesday, August 30th, 2005

While at the Thrust to catch Michael Hottos after his faculty meeting I bumped into Nefertiti who was available for an impromptu meeting. What luck! Although I didn't have my notes, script, or research with me I knew the play well enough for discussion. I was very interested to hear her thoughts on specific scenes as well as the play as a whole. Nefertiti asked me to go first.

ME: Corrosion, everything about the play smelled of corrosion. The physical place of the play. A bridge with cracked and crumbling concrete. Pillars of support for the bridge crumbling under the weight exposing the rebar structure underneath-like Hester's pain in her gut reference in the play. She is crumbling beneath the weight of society. Scattered piles of debris with sharp dangerous edges, rebar sticking out from the exposed concrete slabs threatening. Stains on the concrete from the acidic rain from the nearby factories spewing pollutants into the air.

The institutions which surrounding Hester: the church, the social worker, the doctor. All of these are corroded to the point of accomplishing the exact opposite of what they should...using Hester, taking what they wanted.

Personal relationships: her friend who steals from her, the man she loved spurns her children and her.

Nefertiti: YES, corrosiveness, rust, ugly. Hester is unprotected. At the mercy of all of the elements. EXPOSED.

Nefertiti hadn't thought about the play in the same way I did, but we believe we are on the same page-just two sides of the same coin.

Nefertiti likes the idea of the debris, but points out that Hester (contrary to the belief of many of Nefertiti's students who have read the play) is not dirty, sloppy, or stupid. Hester keeps her space as organized and neat as possible. She has her youngest child smashing cans and stacking them neatly, and the other children gather up trash without really even thinking about it. They just do it instinctively and pile it up as they go.

Obviously Hester can't move the giant broken concrete slabs or anything in the debris pile of that nature...but the point is she would if she could. She does what she can in the circumstances. But it is like the more you sweep the more dust is stirred up.

I asked Nefertiti about the firepit or barrel idea for cooking needs but Nefertiti pointed out how Hester was smart. She might very well steal electricity from the electrical pole or an outside socket at the church. Maybe whoever lived under the bridge previously had left the cord dangling, kind of a homeless hideaway for a lot of people through the years which Hester inherited.

Nefertiti made a very important point: the community must have a presence. Hester isn't that far away from the community. The audience needs to know that the community is there and they are worse for passing her by, passing over her, ignoring her plight. The community is blind to Hester and her family under the bridge. They don't see her.

This answers one of my question about the church-it is still needed but not the main focus. The bridge (Hester's home) is the main focus. Answers my question about the main focus...the bridge is the main space. How do we stage this without detracting from Hester's space?

Nefertiti suggested the idea of imminent domain when a freeway is put right in the middle of a community. It splits that community in two, buries it, for the good of the whole community. Think about Hester's community...the church that was there first...the bridge that was put in obscuring it.

Hester is not an immoral person despite her actions within the play. Anyone in the same given circumstances would most likely behave the same. Look at Hester's expectations in her role of being a mother: her family eats together, they have a bed time which is adhered to, and she is trying to teach them to read and write. She has a more coherent and structured parenting style than most middle class families.

We don't know Hester's background. She might have been a cook, a housewife, a teacher, a center worker. But we tend to judge her on just what we see in the moment.

To Do: Nefertiti will let me know more about the idea of the cast and designers spending the night at a homeless shelter, which would be sponsored by the Wayside Christian Mission.Com. Here we would eat the same food, live the same, and sleep the same for one day and night.

I will make Nefertiti a copy of my research photos thus far so she can utilize them with the cast.

Our meeting for August 29th is now on hold since we had such a productive meeting today. I will begin sketching and getting Nefertiti's ideas on floorplans. *At this point I have concrete images in my mind but they are jumbled as to how to best fit together.*

Saturday, September 3rd, 2005

I rode my bicycle all around the Park River trail down at the Waterfront Park area and also around the Butchertown area for a couple of hours to reflect and take in the architecture of this section of Louisville.

It was interesting how many different ways a back door could be put into a building. Some were recessed a couple of feet and some were not. Some would have a couple of steps going up then you wouldn't see the door at all because the stairs would make a turn and keep going out of sight. Some were plain while others quite ornate. (see rough sketches)

From these observations I got the idea for :

1. Bars on the windows & doors
2. a utility pole, possibly with a light which could be used for illumination as well as a place for Hester's stolen electricity to come from
3. a bridge could span the whole stage at an angle with the low height of 7 feet
4. more than one bridge...three or four could criss-cross each other

Friday, September 9th, 2005

I spoke with Michael concerning my goals with this set design. He agreed that maybe I learned something after all and suggested giving the director 2 or 3 ground plans to look at. Even if you are really married to one idea offer up a couple of others to give director some input in your design. Also no one will get the impression that you are not working hard. A great idea!

Saturday, September 10, 2005

The third drafting of the first floor plan idea came very quickly after so much research and thought. I used Vectorworks to bone up on my CAD skills. I came closer to understanding the CAD program only after so much handdrafting. Before when trying to draft on the PC the ideas didn't seem to flow as quickly or fluidly, but after practicing the art of handdrafting the PC seemed much more idea friendly. I knew it would take more time on the front end but would benefit me in the long run when revision had to be made.

I then knocked off two earlier ideas offering Nefertiti 3 good possibilities for a set. It will be interesting to see which one she prefers. My favorite is #1.

September 20th, 2005

Nefertiti emailed me ready to meet after having reviewed the floorplans for a week.

September 22nd, 2005

I met with Nefertiti today for her input on the 3 design ideas. She felt that Hester's place under the bridge felt too far off the beaten path. She wants Society more present because we don't want to let society off the hook.

The sit-upons are great.

The cornerstone needs to be more defined because that is where the church is literally.

I pointed out that we needed to be careful in being too literal. There is danger in so clearly defining an area such as this because once we define this area as being only the church for example, then it becomes unusable for anything else. Much like a special in lighting. If the special is so tightly focused or has a particular color for one scene it becomes almost useless for any other scene.

Nefertiti agrees and also thinks our ideas may be too literal. I will simplify my designs and get a new floor plan to her. I will continue to base my design on the ideas we both felt good about.

September 23, Friday, 2005

I finished new floor revision 4 but had trouble visualizing certain aspects of the concrete retaining wall particularly when I added the upper bulk of the wall so I created a quick mock up out of printer paper. I took this to Michael for his input.

Michael felt that the revised floorplan and model was too overwhelming for the thrust theater. Also overwhelming for our set budget of \$1700.00. He encouraged me to actually price out what I was proposing but urged me to simplify even more. The overhanging bridge structure on the upstage wall would also be problematic for lighting. The pillars & bridge supports would be problematic for sightlines.

Michael felt the design was good but felt the space and play itself called for even less literalness and more for suggestive scenery. This would solve all of the present problems. He suggested moving elements further downstage to confine the actors in the same area for sightlines and to lose the church which was far too literal. Also lose the lamp pole, guardrail, and alleyway because of being far too literal.

Garry and Michael also suggested thinking in terms of non-traditional materials to portray the idea. Like using bug screen for covering the pillars which would then allow you to use lighting for dramatic effect from the inside of the supports.

This gave me the idea of how to literally translate one of my earlier impressions. By lighting the pillars from the inside with gobos I can expose the rebar and decay of Hester's world to different degrees as the play progresses.

Check out the parallels with *The Scarlet Letter* which is basically the same story. There may be clues in this story to aid me with *In the Blood*.

To Do: Meet with Michael on Monday and show him the images I am working with and hopefully a revised simpler floor plan.

September 26,2005

Meeting went well except I forgot to bring on of my three revisions. The one I forgot is the one which was closer to what Michael felt would be a good compromise. The two I did bring were simplified too much. I will clean up the one I forgot and talk to Nefertiti to see what she thinks.

This is part of the process of whittling down to the bare necessities or the basic instinct. Don't forget your original instincts but don't be so dead set on them you can't compromise.

Might I have been able to get to this point earlier? I'm not sure. It would have saved me several incarnations of this set and lots of work, but I think it is the process by which I arrived to where I am at today and the process is just that...a process and not an immediate destination.

Michael suggested looking at the bug screen door material or hardware cloth as possible outer covers for my columns. He liked the idea of using rebar as the framework and interior lights to signify when we were under the bridge. He also liked the research photos I did over the summer particularly the one of the large blocks of stone shoring up a block retaining wall underneath a railroad bridge. He suggested I could add this back to my floorplan by making it out of stock 4x8 platforms which would keep us under our budget. This would mean adding just another foot to my original idea and it helps to accomplish getting the action moved farther downstage where the director wants it. He also liked my idea of painting the backwall to resemble a concrete retaining wall and putting graffiti on it. By painting it we will save money. He suggested making the upstage column taller just as I had before since we don't really need to be too concerned with sightlines this far upstage. My son Alex had also suggested this the night before when I was showing my plans to him. I guess great minds think alike! Remember: THIS IS A PROCESS OF CREATION!

Monday, November 7th, 2005

Today is my 43rd birthday! I celebrated by meeting with both Michael and Nefertiti. Michael pointed out one problem with drafting on the computer is that it makes your designs look too sterile, too clean. He suggested using the freehand drawing tool to make the design look as much like what I really wanted it to look like.

I also need a definite O.K. on this design by Nefertiti. Directors all tend to be a little wishy-washy when they have to make such decisions so we have to nail them down. Nefertiti loved the revised set. She wants to experiment with varying the levels of the column supports. She also wants to make a cornerstone which will transform into a

soapbox. Michael and I both recall the haybale which Charles and I worked many hours on making it a transforming piece. It eventually became a real haybale.

I suggested after rereading the script that the cornerstone remain stable and just be carried on during intermission. If it did stay onstage perhaps it could be disguised with a blanket or such draped across it. The soapbox I felt needed to be a simple wooden crate which the reverend would carry his wares around in. it would be flipped over for him to preach from.

Nefertiti asked for a rough white model because she had trouble visualizing my idea on paper vertically. Also a slight change on the column base heights. She liked the upstage one at the higher level because it allows her to mask some action up in that area for the rougher scenes. Final OK has been received.

Note to self: This is why I wanted to spend the extra time and learn how to draft with Vectorworks...makes the revising part so much quicker. I knew it would take me more time on the front end but save me lots of time on the back end. I'm glad I didn't give in to the urge to hand draft it. The changes were made in a couple of hours.

To Do: finish the white model or go ahead with full blown model?

Note to self: Once again it is interesting to note that "simple" is often the best solution.

We tend to overthink everything and stifle the creative process.

Nefertiti threw out the idea of having actors dress as street people placed strategically around in the lobby before the show to make people think before they enter the auditorium. The trick is that it can never be revealed that these are actors. People would then have to confront their prejudices and their ideas of who these people are before they actually walk into the auditorium. I like the idea and agree to do it one night.

Nefertiti mentioned the possibility of some contour within the set as in ground not always being level. I think we will get this from the different piles and concrete structures enough but agree to explore the idea. It might work in the junk pile area to just build it up as a soft area so actors could literally fall down there without hurting themselves. Maybe an old mattress surrounded by junk. But why would the mattress be there and not in their bedroom area to be used to sleep on?

After further research I found a interesting solution in the technical briefs from the Technical Solutions for Theatre series of books from Yale. The idea of using lath built up to contour and covered with carpet padding and burlap would provide necessary contour and softness. This sounds good to me as I had originally thought of using a mound of dirt as the base for the junk pile but couldn't due to health & safety concerns. This would give me the same visual effect and added benefit of the area to be used for falling.

I also found a scenic treatment from the same series which gave me more of what I was looking for as texture on the floodwall. The problem before was hester needed a drawing area which I couldn't figure out how to do with the originally conceived foam based stones. This treatment uses glue, cheese cloth, joint compound, and vermiculite or sand or sawdust if needed.

November 15, 2005

FIRST PRODUCTION MEETING

I guess I should say the first official production meeting since Nefertiti and I had been meeting for about 3 months now...Integration of stage with the house ideas came out of this meeting as well as deadlines:

1. Idea of more junk upstage of stairs to audience seating
2. Is it possible to cut height of flood wall from 7'6" to 6'0" to better utilize as an acting area and for lighting purposes?
3. Integrate the house even more by dressing the audience rails chain link fence.
4. Integrate more of the proscenium walls by same treatment of upstage wall.
5. More color in the graffiti but caution not a mural.
6. The year set in the stone is MMVI

Deadlines for taping the stage November 22nd, Design presentation on Monday at 7pm, Rehearsal begins again Jan. 6, 2006. Costume parade is Jan. 18th. Program bios to Debbie Hudson by the 13th.

I love Michael's ideas for integrating the stage with house more such as the proscenium walls and the chain link fence. It is always a question where to end the set and it can get pretty crazy sometimes with scenery spilling over to the back of the house. In my research I had pictures of the use of chain-link fence under bridges, mostly to keep transients from taking up residence. I had thought about putting the fence along the back wall or across the upstage exits but didn't pursue it because of cost. But we apparently have lots of fence in stock.

Zhanna had concerns for the amount of dirt onstage because of costumes and the footwear of the characters.

January 11, 2006

Start of spring semester! Charles suggested alternative treatment of column supports and the blockwall. We had lots of 2" foam in stock so we went back to original idea of using the foam to replicate the concrete & stonework. Charles suggested covering this foam

with cheesecloth which would not only give us a nice texture but then we can bevel the edges of the support bases as we wish and the cheesecloth makes the foam base sturdier for actors to use without damage to the set.

Garry suggested using sawdust instead of dirt. The sawdust could be painted as well and was plentiful in shop, saving us even more money.

The junkpile has been cut down about 6" for sightline purposes.

From the light runthru I notice the actor furiously polishing the cornerstone...oops! I guess this means the cornerstone is smooth and not rough like I had originally designed it. I think it needs a satiny finish to reflect some light without being obtrusive.

I want the seams on the back wall to run vertically instead of horizontal. I see this as being coherent with the way this concrete structure was poured. We decided to use a muslin drop instead of just painting the wall due to the restore. And with the money saved in other areas we could buy muslin. Another design student Megan McKinney helped me to size the muslin with a 60/40 mixture of water/paint. We stretched the muslin starting at the center and working our way out to the sides, stapling to the floor as we went. Megan is a great scenic artist and showed me many tricks on getting the wrinkles out of the fabric in preparation for painting. She also showed me techniques for applying the color. A combination of spattering and puddling.

The cheesecloth covering the foam for the stone & concrete work not only made the set pieces sturdier but gave it an interesting aged look. Not quite as grainy as just the foam (which looked just like a real cinderblock) but more like poured concrete. Megan brought in a hot knife which I wanted to try carving the foam with. It worked great but

the fumes were pretty intense so I ended up utilizing the sculpting tool or Sureform tool to make my cuts and indentions.

January 24th, 2006

I met with Michael at the thrust where my set has been loaded in. He seemed pleased with my progress. He questioned the contrast between the upstage flood wall and the block wall unit. The upstage flood wall is smooth, and looks like poured concrete which has been exposed to the elements many years while the block wall is rougher, cut stone. Will wait and see if the graffiti ties it together. But he noted that perhaps we do want the difference in the texture of the materials.

Michael had some other great suggestions:

1. Tie the I-beams into the upstage wall even more by using a few masonite stones or bricks protruding out from underneath the beam as it would to support such a beam.
2. Graffiti-add some culturally specific African American names. Tag with the Arabic looking symbols so popular under bridges as the signature of certain artists. Use the big fat markers as used in NYC subways or Chicago Subways.
3. Using his former teacher Howard Bay as an example Michael suggesting unifying the whole by induating the set with graffititi. By having layer upon layer of graffiti you will pull it all together and then you can selectively show parts of it by your lighting.
4. add more gray to the existing I-Beams instead of just using the black.
5. water down the rebar to get some real rust going instead of just painting the rust.

6. use joint compound to add texture to the column supports and to fill out the bugscreen and rebar in certain places.

I designed an alternative to Michaels idea concerning I-Beam supports. I used ¾” plywood to make steel plates which looked as if they had huge bolts connecting the floodwall to the steel supports.

January 26th, 2006

Production Meeting Notes

1. Rocks are a concern for the actors in high heels and for people dropping to their knees. Can do some reblocking but it would be helpful if we could adhere the rocks more to the natural places they would accumulate such as around the structure edges. They are also very noisy on the wood floor.
2. the debri pile is still too high. We can't see actors when they are on their knees.
3. The chair back is a problem due to sightlines as well.
4. we don't need as many milk crates because the coloumun supports are so nice in providing not only seating areas but counter top area as well!
5. Cornerstone-cover up with polishing cloth when not in use to help prevent distractions.
6. finish cornerstone with clear latex because not as much bounce as polyurethane.
7. cornerstone is problematic after its initial appearance because it draws so much attention being there for one whole scene and not being used. We solved this by having a moving blanket draped across it as if to protect it. This can later be used by the actor to polish it with. Also we change the color from white granite to a charcoal gray, or possibly black if necessary.

8. floor treatment-dripped water and glue mixture on all the pebbles around all the stage set objects which adhered them to floor very well. We base coated the masonite topped floor with a rose color. Then used a natural sponge roller to randomly lay down some medium gray. Final prep was to scatter some sawdust taking care to make it thinner in the more traveled areas and to use the Chapin sprayer for the final coat of light brown latex for the traveled areas and a darker chestnut brown for the less traveled areas.
9. I spattered watered down black paint on the junk areas and the column supports and also on the less traveled areas of the floor. This is really starting to make things “pop”.
10. The “chalkboard” paint used on the masonite set into the block wall is problematic in that it is such a contrast to rest of the wall. Michael suggested blacking out more areas in the wall to counter-balance.

I started blacking out the natural spots in the wall where it would be darker such as in the deep crevices underneath certain blocks. I used a sponge to aid in the texturing.

Michael questioned the spacing of the blocks in this wall. It definitely was against any principle of block laying I was aware of as well, but in my research the actual wall caught my eye and that’s why I went with it. Sometimes the real world is more interesting than the idealized world!

The stage right and stage left upstage exit curtains really bother me. They are black and I thought wouldn’t bug me but seeing the whole set now they jump out like a sore thumb. I fixed this by moving them back a pipe and hanging shredded black plastic in their place. I had seen plastic in such a state at many sites under bridges apparently

blown down by the wind elements and just kind of hanging in shreds. I spattered some paint on this plastic and cut slits in it to help the actors maintain their speed of exits and entrances. This really does the trick and helps to unify the set even more! PLUS I got the added bonus of the sound of the plastic as actors entered or exited the stage.

While spray painting the graffiti I had left the side door to the outside open. Some leaves blew in...Michael suggested why not leave them where they blew in? WOW! Accidental art as he called it. I ended up getting a box of leaves from outside and put them all over the set. Absolutely loved this touch! Art does imitate life!

Column supports-the stagecraft students had spread the joint compound to regularly and evenly on the supports. We went back and added more joint compound to break this pattern up.

The paint and sawdust mixed on the floor treatment to make a really nice looking muddy mixture which also had the same consistency. Another incidence of accidental art!

The train which usually interrupts every event in our theater at least 6 times a show really worked to my advantage on this show. One of the best sound effects ever and we could actually feel it rumble as it went by.

The soapbox/tape case is working well and a great idea.

Charles brought over a funky old green chair from the shop just to take breaks in as we were loading in the set. It was accidentally left on top of the block wall one day and Nefertiti loved it. I have to say I thought it looked good as well and that is probably why I forgot to take it off the set that day before I left. It ended up being Hester's private place

and an iconic location for a few scenes including the curtain call. Can we say Accidental art again?

The location of hester sitting in her green chair on top of the block wall just happened to be directly under a big red graffiti sign of the word “HELP”. Accidental art again as we didn’t intend on a chair in that area and the painting was done in the other space, according to my drawings but again there was no chair initially and the top of the block wall was initially not an acting area. As Garry and Michael both say, anything you put on stage will be used as an acting area if at all possible, even if the director says that it won’t be.

Another happy accident: the interior light from the large column upstage right spills through the rebar and lights up the “PEACE” sign high on the backwall.

Note on Graffiti: Nefertiti was concerned that the graffiti might be too overwhelming. This was initially a big concern for me as well. But when I looked at the content of this show...nothing could overwhelm this show. And the graffiti shows the years of neglect by the community.

Observation from my wife Kim having seen the show two days prior... “before you added the graffiti it was a very nice looking set of under a bridge. After the layers of spray paint it WAS UNDER THE BRIDGE.”

CURRICULUM VITAE

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Qualifications

15 years experience designing and conducting workshops in theater; set/stage design & construction, lighting design & implementation, C.A.D. with VectorWorks, road management & touring logistics, storytelling/acting technique, oral history collecting, interviewing, & writing projects, producing & marketing, both nationally & internationally.

Exceptional interpersonal and crew management skills. Capacity to realize a design concept from preliminary hand drawn sketches to full renderings.

Uniquely skilled in working with diverse groups in the community and professional world.

Fully knowledgeable with aspects of lighting theory including drafting light plots, creating and maintaining hookup lists and instrument schedules, set design and construction, including budgeting, cut-lists, and scale drawings.

Skilled in meeting the diverse requirements of faculty, production staff, and production schedules.

15 years production & touring experience in all areas of theater/film/video; including lighting, sound, set-design, construction, touring logistics & management, theater maintenance & scheduling, producing & marketing, developing an audience, storytelling & music, and stage & film acting.

Experience

Sound & lighting design for *As Bees in Honey Drown*, set designer for *In The Blood*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Trojan Women*, sound designer and assistant technical director for *Steal Away* and *Antigone*, assistant technical director for *Black Nativity*,

lighting designer for *Inspected by # 35* and *Number the Stars*, designer and performer in Verizon Wireless's *Cheap Sunglasses*, dramaturge & performer in *Life's Circle*, as both a community service project and touring show in the healthcare field.
2003-2006

Freelance Sound Technician/Assistant Stage Manager with Axxis, Inc., Louisville Kentucky, A sound, lighting, and staging company. Also served semester internship with Axxis, Inc., in the lighting, sound, and rigging departments. Worked with large analogue and digital consoles, audio processing equipment, static and moving lights, and rigging.
2005-2006

Sound & Lighting technician/Technical Director on call for the Clifton Center, a 500 seat modernized performing arts facility.
2003-2006

Technical Director and Adjunct Professor -University of Virginia's College at Wise-Set, Lighting & Sound Design for 2 major productions per year as well as Technical Director for all incoming shows & student productions. Instructor for Theatre 250, a hands-on approach to technical theater in the working world, & Theatre 202, which is a more, advanced technical study of lighting & scene design, as well Theatre 195 Introduction to Storytelling.
1997-2003

Set & Lighting Designer for Pro Art Summer Arts Camp production of *Sound of Music*, *Oliver*, and *Joseph & the Technicolor Dreamcoat*.
1999-2001

Set, lighting, sound designer for Appalachian Children's Theater productions of *Hansel and Gretel*, *Babes in Toyland*, *Dragon's Wagon*, *Nutcracker*, *School House Rock Live*, Jr.
1999-2001

Adjunct Professor of Theater for Mountain Empire Community College Acting/Production. Pilot Program working with area high school students for college credit after school. Program culminated with performances in the school and community.
2001

Technical Director for Pro Art Association, responsibilities included communication, organization of local resources, management of local crews and all other technical aspects for incoming national touring companies. Also served as Technical Director for J.W. Adams Performing Arts Center. A 817 seat state-of- the-art facility for bus & truck tours as well as community productions.
1999-2001

Technical Director/Road Manager/Performer/Producer/Workshop leader for Roadside Theater, part of the Appalshop, Inc., an award winning multi-media arts center based in Whitesburg, KY. Roadside Theater is recognized as one of the National Endowment for the Arts top ten theater organizations in the United States.
1987-1999

Member of the Appalshop Board of Directors, 1987-2002.

Technical Director & Co-Instructor for “Issues in Community Based Arts”, at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. A multi-year project by Roadside Theater, in which students worked with diverse on & off campus groups collecting personal & historical stories. The stories were adapted for the stage, and fully produced in the various communities in which they were acquired. Students produced, designed, and implemented the tour under my direction in various spaces ranging from primitive to the most sophisticated in the country.

Scenic Carpenter for *Dr. Jekell & Ms. Hyde*, Barter Theatre, Abingdon, Virginia.

Co-founder of APPALACHIAN LIGHT & SOUND, a professional lighting & sound company serving the theatrical needs of Southwest Virginia.

Founder of NORTH STAR PRODUCTIONS entertainment & technical service. Providing professional entertainment as well as jobs for local artists.

21st Century Learning Program
Sound Workshops with Children
2003

Professional Radio Disc Jockey and Voice-over Artist
WSPC, AM 1140
WNVA, FM 106.3
1980-1985

Professional Affiliations

Screen Actors Guild (1998-Present)
Pi Kappa Phi

The following spaces in which I have worked are representative of my touring experience:

The Royal Festival Hall/London, England
Gammage Auditorium/Arizona State University/Tempe, AZ
Hancher Auditorium/Iowa Center for the Arts/The University of Iowa
The Bayfront Center/St. Petersburg, FL
Mahaffey Theater/Fort Lauderdale, FL
Kerr Cultural Center/Tempe, AZ
Louisville Center for the Arts/Louisville, KY
University of Southern California/Santa Barbara, Ca
Lincoln Center/New York, NY
Seven Stages/Atlanta, GA
Madison Morgan Cultural Center/Madison, GA
Pepperdine University/Pepperdine, CA
Koger Center/University of South Carolina/Columbia, SC
El Teatro Pregonis/South Bronx, NY
University of Nevada/Las Vegas, NV
Caribbean Cultural Center/Harlem, NY
Dartmouth University/Hanover, NH
Myrna Loy Theater/Helena, Montana
Humbolt University/Arcata, CA
Craig Cultural Center/Las Vegas, NV
Cal Tech/Pasadena, CA

Painted Bride Arts Center/Philadelphia, PA
 The Carver Center/San Antonio, Texas
 Lafayette College/Williams Center for the Arts/PA.
 London International Festival of Theater/London, England
 Tour of Wales, various venues

Film/Television Experience

THE CORNER	<i>Principal</i>	(Award winning HBO series)
FBI FILES	<i>Day Player</i>	(Discovery Channel)
NETFORCE	<i>Day Player</i>	(ABC/Victor)
HOMICIDE; Life on the Streets	<i>Douglass McCord</i>	(NBC)
NEW DETECTIVES	<i>Gary Ace Donahue</i>	(Discovery Channel)
RAVEN TALES	<i>Lead</i>	(Horror Pictures International)
FIRE DOWN BELOW	<i>Day Player</i>	(Warner Bros.)
JACKAL	<i>Featured</i>	(Warner Bros.)
FAT MONROE	<i>Stand-in.</i>	(North Fork Films)
WITCHES	<i>Lead</i>	(H.I.P. Productions)
MR. TWISTED	<i>Lead</i>	(Student Project Video)

Industrial and Commercial Experience

NAPA AUTO PARTS	<i>customer</i>	Regional
NORTON COMMUNITY HOSPITAL	<i>patient</i>	Regional
SECC INFOMERCIAL (<i>tele award</i>)	<i>voice-over</i>	Regional
COUNTRY PINES CABIN RENTALS	<i>actor</i>	National
COMPUNET INTERNET SERVICES	<i>spokesperson</i>	Regional
POWELL RIVER LABORATORIES	<i>actor</i>	National

Stage Experience

MOUNTAIN TALES AND MUSIC		(<i>Storyteller/musician/TD</i>)
CUMBERLAND MOUNTAIN MEMORIES		(<i>Storyteller/musician/TD</i>)
BORDERLINE		(<i>Storyteller/musician/TD</i>)

(3 member ensemble with over 2000 performances in 46 states)

THE RIMERS OF ELDRITCH	<i>(Skelly Manor)</i>	UVAC Theatre, Wise, VA
TRAIL OF THE LONESOME PINE	<i>(Red Fox)</i>	Outdoor Drama, Big Stone Gap, VA.
THE GLASS MENAGERIE	<i>(Tom)</i>	UVAC Theatre, Wise, VA.
ENTERTAINING MR. SLOANE	<i>(Mr. Sloane)</i>	UVAC Theatre, Wise, VA.
YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU	<i>(G-man)</i>	Theatre Bristol, Bristol, TN.
BIEDERMAN UND DIE BRANDTSTISTER	<i>(Chorus Leader)</i>	UVAC Theatre, Wise, VA
MINNIE AMERICA	<i>(HIGGENS)</i>	UVAC Theatre, Wise, VA
LOOT	<i>(Sgt. Truscott)</i>	UVAC Theatre, Wise, VA

(Other theatrical credits available upon request)

Education & Training

M.F.A candidate, Theater Design
University of Louisville
2003-2006

B.A., Performing Arts
Magna Cum Laude
University of Virginia's College at Wise
1981-1985

Voice & Acting Workshop
Robbie McCauley, *New York*

Singing, Storytelling, & Music Workshops
Roadside Theater

Acting, Voice, Songwriting Workshops
Michael Keck, *New York*

Storytelling Workshops
John O'Neal, *New Orleans*

Acting & Voice Workshop
Rebecca Wackler, *Atlanta*

Acting & Movement Workshops
Steve Kent, *Los Angeles*

Stage Combat Workshop
Edward Ted Sharon, *Wisconsin*.

Improvisational Acting Workshops
Theatre Bristol, *Bristol, VA*

Awards

Red and Black Faculty Mentor
University of Louisville
2004

Appalachian Agency for Senior Citizens
Emergency Services Program
2001-2004

The Cohen Family Memorial Award in the Arts, *1985*.

ADDENDUM