

Transcript for Pangea Playback Theatre’s “What Now?”

June 11, 2021

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This transcript is part of *Storytelling on Screen: An Online Playback Theatre Archive and Guidebook* and was derived from Pangea Playback Theatre’s “What Now?” video available on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/ZtpmZBwM92g> and VTechWorks at <http://hdl.handle.net/10919/103918>.

Additional information on the Playback Theatre methodology is available in J. Rosin and H. Vogel Winters, *Storytelling on Screen: An Online Playback Theatre Archive and Guidebook* (Blacksburg: Virginia Tech Publishing, 2021). <http://hdl.handle.net/10919/104420>. Licensed with CC BY NC SA 4.0.

Production Credits

Conductor: Hannah Fox

Musician: Steve Nash

Actors: Joyce Lu, Cherae Halley, Ricardo Pérez González, Will C.

Technician: Federico Mallet Flores

Video length: 92 minutes and 39 seconds

Transcript

Federico: Welcome, everybody. It's great to have you here. Thank you for being here. We appreciate your presence. My name is Federico, I'm going to be your tech support for the day.

Before we get started, I just want to make sure that we're all on the same page as far as Zoom tech. You saw that some of the slides we are presenting suggest that you stay in Gallery View throughout this performance. That means you'll be able to see multiple boxes as opposed to just one big one and multiple small ones. You will find that option at the top right corner of your Zoom screen where it says "View." Just make sure you're on Gallery View. Now for the next part, this is a bit more tricky. "Hide non-video participants" is an important setting. If you could all go ahead and turn off your cameras for me, stop your video, please. If you could all stop your video for now, please. Rena and Florence, if you can stop your video for me or I'll bring you back. Just give me a second. Rena, I'll bring you back. All you're seeing is me at this moment. You're just seeing a big square with me speaking on it. You're good. You don't need to do anything else as far as settings. If you see a bunch of other boxes with names on them, including your name, this is what you need to do. [NOISE] You need to go to your box, and on the top right corner, you'll see three blue dots. You're going to click on those three blue dots, and a menu is going to pop down. You're going to click on "Hide non-video participants." That should allow you to only see me at this moment. If you're on a tablet or phone, you need to tap where it says "More," the three blue dots, you're going to click on those three blue dots and then Meeting settings. Then another menu is going to come down that says, "Show non-video participants." If that has a checkmark with a little green checkmark, you're going to uncheck it, and then you should be okay. If at any point you find difficulties, please feel free to reach out to me. You'll find me on your participant list all the way to the top as Federico Tech.

You can send me a private message and I'll do my best to support you and help you in whatever you encounter. Thank you again for being here and without further ado, enjoy the performance.

Hannah Fox: Hello everyone. I'm Hannah, and I'm zooming to you today from the Mid-Hudson Valley, New York, a little bit outside New York City. The land of the Lenape and Scopus people. I've been starting to hear planes overhead in the sky. It's such a strange sound after a year of not hearing planes overhead. I have mixed feelings about it. On the one hand, it means, wow, maybe I can travel again and work overseas and see my friends and family overseas or across the country and get out of this little box. On the other hand, it means that this pause where human activity slowed down, and the sky and the sea and the land suddenly became less clogged with pollution, and the animals could roam freer. This means now that we're going to clog up the airways again with all these planes, and I feel less motivated to travel. [NOISE]

Joyce Lu: Is that a bird?

Cherae: What?

Will C.: It's so soon.

Joyce Lu: I can't get out of here. I can't get out of this box.

Ricardo Perez Gonzalez: [FOREIGN] Ricardo. My name is Ricardo and I am Zooming at you from Los Feliz in Los Angeles, which is the land of the Chumash and the Takic. My pronouns are the he series and the she series, if culturally appropriate to you. In LA, we are returning to something of a normal and we're able to go out wherever they go to restaurants, we're able to see friends. I find myself, as others are returning to normal, feeling like I'm returning to anything but normal.

Ricardo Perez Gonzalez: The past year has been all about survival thanks to the pandemic, thanks to being a queer man of color, and thanks to everything that's going on in the world. As we are merging into a more free sense of being, all of the emotions that I have been ignoring for the last year while focusing on survival are

coming up in great spurts and floods. I find myself randomly bawling and randomly laughing. I do not know which end is up.

Cherae: My name is Cherae and I'm zooming in from South Africa. Today my seventy-year-old mother got vaccinated. It's a pretty big deal for me because she's all the way on her own in a different city. She has had no response from the government systems that had been put in place pertaining to registering for a vaccine. I've been hearing back and then being directed to a vaccination center.

Today she took a chance and walked into a center and got vaccinated. I'm relieved.

Hannah Fox: Put it here.

Joyce Lu: Safety.

Hannah Fox: These arms are for hugging.

Will C.: Hello everyone. My name is Will C., I currently live right next to Boston, Massachusetts. Since the Biden administration has taken office, I've noticed that the push for political correctness by trying to actually make things better isn't as important of a topic anymore. It concerns me because I'm in a marginalized group that often gets pushed to the sides. I've been trying to work and figure out new ways to do these artistic projects that bring these issues to the light and try to engage us again. But what I'm noticing is that white supremacy conditioning runs really deep, it's like running into a huge, vast monster. I'm both paralyzed by looking at this monster but also in awe of how vast and large it is. I'm trying to figure out how to balance that sense of awe and get over my paralysis.

Joyce Lu: I'm going to do something.

Ricardo Perez Gonzalez: Hello, hello.

Joyce Lu: Wow. Get back.

Ricardo Perez Gonzalez: Hello. Hello.

Hannah Fox: Help me.

Ricardo Perez Gonzalez: Hello, hello.

Joyce Lu: Wait, it's in me. It's in me.

Ricardo Perez Gonzalez: Hello. [NOISE]

Joyce Lu: Hi everyone. My name is Joyce and I'm also in Los Angeles on Tonga Territory, and I've been studying Tai Chi since like the mid-1990s. I've had several teachers; none of them would teach me the actual fighting application of the movements. But during the pandemic, I actually, even though I was predominantly working from home, found myself in a lot of contentious situations where I needed to engage the art of war basically. Strangely enough or maybe not strangely, I happened to find a Tai Chi teacher walking distance from my house who is really into teaching the applications and wants to teach me the fighting applications, so I feel like during this time, I leveled up in my personal warriorship.

Hannah Fox: In our music today we have Steve Nash, from New Castle, England.

Steve Nash: Hi.

Hannah Fox: Hi, Steve. Thank you. We are Pangea Playback Theatre, and we create a space for compassionate listening and personal storytelling. We use theater as a tool for reflection and dialogue. We're improv artists, we come with no script, so your life stories will become the material for our play today, which means that you all are an essential part of this event and experience. We want to meet you. We're going to ask you all now to turn on your cameras so we can see you and you can see each other. There's a lot of wonderful people in this room. Here we all are.

Now, we have a couple of pages, at least on my computer, so feel free to turn your page and see all of these wonderful faces from around the world. If you see someone in this Zoom room who you'd like to say hello to, [NOISE] feel free to unmute yourself for a moment and say "hi" to someone that you might want to say "hi" to. There will be more time for chatting. That's what this whole thing is about, making connections and being with friends and making new friends. We can all mute ourselves now. We're going to be muting and unmuting and turning our cameras on and off and in this way we create a stage here on Zoom. This last year,

Playback has been very nimble, speaking of Tai Chi, and moved into the virtual world. It's exploded around the world, so we are adapting and we're doing Playback this way for now, and maybe we'll go back to the stage in-person with our bodies at some point as well. I think some people already are.

As you know, this is a public show. We've been performing together, this team, all year for organizations and commission gigs, almost every other week. We've been pretty busy, but we wanted to come and say "hi" to you all and check in. This show is a collaboration with Virginia Tech University and Wabash College, I think it is, because they're creating an online Playback Theatre archive so that future students can learn good practice. So thank you for playing it forward with us and agreeing to be part of this experience. If you are brand new to Playback Theatre, could you wave at the camera. Let's just see. Is anybody brand new? Hi, Danny. Welcome. Yes, I see Jonathan Fox, brand new, Luisa. Okay, wonderful. If you've been doing Playback Theatre or have seen it or done it for some time, can you now wave at the camera too? If you know this ritual, you know this thing. Yeah, okay. If you are a part of a Playback Theatre company, I'm going to invite you to put the name of your company in the chat, because for those friends here who are new to Playback, they're going to soon see how vast it is and it's in over seventy countries and it's being done all over the globe.

If you here now also practice Playback and have a company, let's see what all these companies are. We can all just take a moment to glance up in the chat and read all these wonderful names. True Story and Collectiva, Teatro Playback, they're coming in fast. The Healers. The Healers are here. Big Apple, Living Arts, The Crazy Thing Playback is a name of a company. Helsinki Playback is in the house. The Thunders are here, and on and on and on.

What's so exciting about Playback, especially right now doing this virtually, is how international these gatherings are. If you are zooming in today, tonight, morning, whatever it is for you, from Asia, if you're here today from Asia, could you

keep your camera on and the rest of us are going to turn our cameras off. If you are zooming in from an Asian country, let's see who you are and welcome you. Okay, wonderful, welcome. If you are zooming in from Africa, a country in Africa, the continent of Africa, please keep your camera on and let's see who's here from Africa. Yes, we have friends from Africa. Awesome. Hello, and welcome, and we're so happy you're here. If you're zooming in from Europe, a country in Europe, could you please keep your cameras on and everyone else will turn their cameras off. Now we want the Europeans to come on out, and we want to give you a warm welcome. Many different countries. You just unmute yourself. What countries?

Elsa Mauricio Childs: Portugal.

Lou van Laake: Ireland.

Linda: Germany.

Hannah Fox: Ireland, Germany.

Marcin: Poland.

Karen Kinfer: England.

Hadassss Pelter: Poland.

Rene Van de Vosse: Holland.

Shiloka: England.

Raz: Israel.

Hannah Fox: Israel.

Steve Nash: I want to be in Europe, I mean UK.

Hannah Fox: Oh. [LAUGHTER] Oh, sorry. If you are Zooming in from South America or Central America, could you turn your cameras on? The rest of us will turn our cameras off. South America, Central America. Hello and welcome. Andrea is driving. I hope you're not driving. I hope someone else is driving. Okay, great. If you are Zooming in from the, well, New Zealand, Australia, I don't think I'm just going to check. If you're Zooming in from the Mid-Hudson Valley, New York, come on out. This very spot, Mid-Hudson Valley, hello and welcome. Great. Now stay here if you

are Zooming in from New York, the Greater New York area, come on out, turn on your camera. New York folks, I guess I should be here too. If you are Zooming in from the East Coast, Eastern Standard Time, come on out. East Coast, United States, okay, here we are, hello. If you're Zooming in from Central Mountain Time, United States, join us. Okay, Heidi. [LAUGHTER] If you're Zooming in from the West Coast, United States, Pacific Time, please come on out and say hi. Great to have you. Canada's here, please come and join us. The Middle East, I also want to name the Middle East. If you're Zooming in from the Middle East, let's give you a moment as well. Then we'll turn our cameras off. Hi, Ben. Wonderful. Let's all come on back. That's who's here. This is the community that we're going to be hearing stories from today.

The theme, as you all know, is how are you in this moment, what's happening for you? As you can see, there are people from all over the world and we're all in different stages. We've all been through something pretty traumatic. All of us, all around the world. There've been some silver linings. There've been some wonderful moments, I hope for us this year. There's also been a lot of really difficult moments. Some of us are still in that dark tunnel.

Others of us are emerging out of that tunnel. We're here just to check in and find out what your stories are from the recent past, from this moment, what are you looking forward to? Just before we turn the floor over to you, I want everyone to raise their right hand. You're not going to swear anything in, or take a bow, or anything. But this is going to become a spectrum. When you think of COVID-19, if you feel like you're emerging out of it, at the tail end, or even it's behind you, you're going to be up here. If you're still in that dark tunnel with this pandemic, not vaccinated, or wearing masks, or locked in, then you're going to be down here. Everyone's going to put their arm on this spectrum so we can just see where everyone is at. Some of us might be down here, some of us might be up there. We're just going to notice, just take a notice for the rest of the community what

temperature they're at right now with COVID-19. You can put your hands down. I just want to find out now from you how you're doing. How is your mental health? How is your physical health? What's good? What's hard? This is Friday, we're at the end of a week. You can just share how you are today, how your week has been. For those of you who knew to play back, the way it works is you just volunteer to speak. You volunteer your story. You raise your hand, or you unmute yourself. You can even use the Zoom raising hand feature if you want. Now I remove that fourth wall, although there was never one there to begin with. We find out how you are in the audience. What's happening for you today? It's so nice to see old friends and new friends. Very cool. Okay, Warren has his hand up. Great. Warren, if you could just unmute yourself and start talking, you'll zip over here to the front.

Warren Nebe: I am feeling incredibly grateful right now.

Hannah Fox: Pause for a moment, Warren. I'm going to ask the audience now to turn off their cameras. We're going to dim the house lights as it were and create a stage for our first teller so we can see and hear him better. Just remind everybody, Warren, where you're Zooming in from.

Warren Nebe: I'm zooming in from Johannesburg, South Africa.

Hannah Fox: Johannesburg, okay. You were saying you feel grateful?

Warren Nebe: Yeah, right now.

Hannah Fox: Okay.

Warren Nebe: Because I've been experiencing incredible cabin fever from all the lockdown and some of the isolation. Just really grateful to see people that I know on the screen, to hear your voice.

Hannah Fox: [LAUGHTER]

Warren Nebe: To be in the same room as a very dear friend.

Hannah Fox: You're feeling grateful in this very moment at this performance to feel this connection with friends. However, outside the Zoom room, there's still a lot of locked-in, sheltering in place, cabin fever experience for you.

Warren Nebe: Right.

Hannah Fox: What's the status in Johannesburg right now in terms of the pandemic?

Warren Nebe: We're in a third wave and it's rising very sharply. It's breaking the previous two patterns.

Hannah Fox: Third wave of COVID?

Warren Nebe: COVID, yeah.

Hannah Fox: The infections are up?

Warren Nebe: Up. The line is literally straight. It's not even curving. I live in an area that is highly infected. I'm very aware of friends who've been infected. I'm aware of people struggling. I live in a paradox because I got my first vaccination this week as a healthcare worker. I'm one of maybe 5 percent of the country that have been vaccinated at the moment.

Hannah Fox: Okay, 5 percent.

Warren Nebe: This is the backdrop. Today, we heard the news of the FDA-issued instruction to J&J to get rid of 60 million vaccinations. We are one of the sites of production for J&J. South Africa. South Africa has been waiting for J&J vaccines, which were ordered. This has a huge impact on our country. There's this paradox of getting really, incredibly sad, and angry, and frustrated. Very aware that we are nowhere near at the end of the tunnel.

Hannah Fox: You personally.

Warren Nebe: I'm privileged and I'm privileged in this space right now too.

Hannah Fox: Things are still pretty tough there in South Africa. But you have a little bit of protection yourself being vaccinated. Then also this is a nice experience for you being in a room with so many people.

Warren Nebe: Yeah, the electricity is working.

Hannah Fox: The electricity is working.

Warren Nebe: Because we've been having power cuts. [LAUGHTER]

Hannah Fox: I know, I've been hearing. We'll see this as a Zoom Sculpture. Let's watch.

Ricardo Perez Gonzalez: [LAUGHTER] It's almost like I can [LAUGHTER] touch you. There we are. Look at that face. Yes.

Cherae: Hello. Hello. Hello, COVID. Hello.

Will C.: Stay in this box. Why won't people stay in the box? Stay safe so we can get these numbers down. [NOISE] It's not [NOISE] much in here.

Joyce Lu: There's not enough of these. There's not enough. Why can't there be? There's enough, but why can't we give equal access? I don't understand. Why?

Ricardo Perez Gonzalez: It's so good to see you.

Joyce Lu: How hard can it be?

Cherae: Hello.

Ricardo Perez Gonzalez: So good to see you.

Cherae: Hello.

Joyce Lu: How hard can it be? I guess I just have to keep.

Cherae: Hello?

Joyce Lu: I'm lucky I have this one still. Five percent. I still have this.

Hannah Fox: Thank you, performers. Thank you so much. Warren, you can come back on for just a moment, checking with you. So happy you're here. Thank you for coming. Everyone, come on back. House lights go up, and we want to hear from the next teller. What's happening for you in your neck of the woods, in your community, in your home, in your mind, body? Someone raised their hand, but I don't know who it is.

Joyce Lu: Autumn.

Ricardo Perez Gonzalez: Autumn Ruskey.

Joyce Lu: They're connecting to audio currently. [LAUGHTER]

Hannah Fox: Autumn, would you like to say something?

Joyce Lu: I think their audio is still connecting.

Hannah Fox: We're going to wait. We're going to go back to Autumn in a moment. Who else might have something they'd like to say?

Autumn Ruskey: Am I connected?

Hannah Fox: Are you here, Autumn?

Autumn Ruskey: Yes.

Joyce Lu: Yes.

Hannah Fox: Wonderful. What's your feeling? What's your moment?

Autumn Ruskey: Right here, like I say over here. [LAUGHTER] Hi, I'm actually in my classroom right now. That was my drama teacher.

Hannah Fox: Hi. Wait. Great. Autumn, do you have a red shirt on?

Autumn Ruskey: Yes, I do.

Hannah Fox: Let's all turn our cameras off so we can see Autumn a little bit better. We're going to hear from a student next. Autumn, nice to have you here. What's your story right now?

Autumn Ruskey: Right now, I'm currently at my school. I just finished drama class, and it's the end of our day. I know we were talking about being like what do you feel at this moment. At this moment, I think I feel more overwhelmed just because I'm going into my junior year next year. Junior year of high school? Yes. I have a lot of decisions to make. I've been dancing for nine years, and I think I'm going to take a break this year to move on to theater and drama. I still have to make that decision. I have decisions whether I want to do volleyball because I really like to do volleyball. So between dance and volleyball and schoolwork, it's just so overwhelming. I love theater. Me and my class, we did a Playback group.

Hannah Fox: You've done Playback also?

Autumn Ruskey: Yes, I have.

Hannah Fox: With this pandemic happening, have you been able to do your dance classes offline and in-person, in theater classes?

Autumn Ruskey: Yes.

Hannah Fox: That's good.

Autumn Ruskey: We have them. We're really grateful to be able to do that. It just feels a lot of overwhelming. There's a lot of positives that I see without my dance community, my volleyball community, and my drama community. It brought us closer together just because we get to see what we can do. I never knew some of the things that we could possibly do with this new setup and everything.

Hannah Fox: Wow. Where are you zooming in from? Where are you? What's your location?

Autumn Ruskey: I'm in Maryland.

Hannah Fox: Maryland. All right, Autumn. Thank you so much. It's great to hear from a high school student and what high school students are thinking right now. It sounds like there's some good things, but you're also overwhelmed with decisions that you're having to make. With this, as a Zoom Sculpture, let's watch. Autumn, you can mute yourself. [NOISE]

Will C.: So much to juggle. [NOISE] I don't have the hang of it yet. [NOISE]

Ricardo Perez Gonzalez: Do I go this way? Do I go that way? Do I go this way? Do I go that way? This way.

Joyce Lu: So many things I could do. There's so many things I do. When I get out of this box, watch out. When I get out of this box, I can dance, I can sing, I could play a role.

Cherae: Teenager, I see you.

Hannah Fox: Thank you, performers. Thank you. Thank you to Autumn for their story and let's get everyone back on. Let's see the audience again. So that's how it works. We hear you, we listen to you, we throw up a reflection. Nice to be overwhelmed with those kinds of questions and decisions. We want to hear now from someone else and do a few more short forms. Don't be shy. We don't bite, we can't bite. In-person Playback sometimes we bite, but now we can't bite.

Ricardo Perez Gonzalez: I see Danny with a hand, Hannah.

Hannah Fox: Okay. Danny, come on up. You can just start talking and then, and then we'll see you, Danny. Hi, Danny.

Danny: Hi, guys.

Hannah Fox: Everyone, you know the ritual by now. You can turn your camera off if you're not the teller, that way we give our good attention to the teller. We don't get distracted. We stay here, present, but Danny, tell us, what are you thinking about?

Danny: First thing, thank you for inviting me on this. I would like to share one of the experiences I had yesterday since we are talking about the COVID and pandemic. I think it has a bigger impact on younger kids as well, though we talk about adults most of the time. But kids like five years old, ten years old, though they don't talk about it, but I think it has impacted them a lot.

Hannah Fox: Yes.

Danny: Yesterday, I was with my five year old in the playground and another eight year old was playing with him. They were playing in the soil, they were digging very hard, and then I just asked one of the fellows, "What are you doing exactly?" He said, "I'm making a graveyard." So I was shocked. Yeah.

Hannah Fox: I'm just going to repeat that. Making a graveyard is what this little kid said.

Danny: Yeah. When I asked my son, "What are you doing?" Because he was doing exactly the same thing. Then he said, "No, I'm just planting a tree because I want to see more flowers." It's like, though you see the same thing happening with kids, their perspectives are different. They have many things in their mind which they are not able to talk about it. But when they show some gestures or do the act, I think we, the adults, we need to understand it in a better way and talk with them about it. What are they feeling internally and how they can express themselves. Because they do watch news all the time.

Hannah Fox: Yeah, they're absorbing. They've absorbed this crisis.

Danny: Yeah. I'm amazed how they think about it and at the same time, I'm confused about what we as adult can do with them.

Hannah Fox: Yeah. We'll see this as a Three-Part Story. Cherae, Ricardo, Joyce. What I'm hearing is that you were in the playground with your child and your child's name is?

Danny: Caguas.

Hannah Fox: Caguas?

Danny: Yeah.

Hannah Fox: He was playing with another child digging dirt and they had very different interpretations of what they were doing.

Danny: Right.

Hannah Fox: Graveyard versus planting flowers.

Danny: Right.

Hannah Fox: Yeah. How are the kids after these fifteen months and how can we help them? Let's watch. Deep down in the soil. Deep, deep down in the soil they dig and dig and dig, and what might we find in the young mind? What might we find in the young mind?

Ricardo Perez Gonzalez: Hi, it's me. It's dirt. Hi? I know I just look like a hole in the ground to you, but can we talk? Listen. We need to talk about what's going on with these kids. Just come over here. You see this one? He's putting flowers in me. It's great. I love it, I love it, I love it. This one, it's not such a rosy story. I might mean one thing to you, but please think about what I mean to them.

Hannah Fox: I often find myself wondering what's the best thing to do to raise my child. How can I give them the necessary support, the nutrients, the love, the care? Things had been so difficult. How do we talk about difficult things? How do we teach them to honor those who have gone and hold their difficult emotions? How do we love them and love ourselves when the world goes through a trauma? Thank

you, performers. Thank you, Danny, for your very important story. You can come back on for a moment, Danny, something like that. Unmute yourself.

Danny: Yeah, I'm sorry. It was intense, but thank you for sharing. Thank you.

Hannah Fox: Thank you. All right. If you are a parent of a human, bring yourselves on camera. If you are a parent of a human being, come on camera. All right. If you are a parent of a furry being, an animal parent, come on camera. These are the furry parents. Well, you may not be furry, but you have a furry friend. If you are a grandparent, turn on your video, come on stage and keep your camera on if you're a grandparent, so these are the grandparents. I think Erica there has her two grandkids with her right now. Can we see them? No. Okay. Everybody come on back. Before we move along in our experience together, I want you to get your arm out one more time. This is about hugs. How ready are you for a hug? If you're raring to go, ready to just grab the first person you see on the street, you're here. Hug is a metaphor for getting close again with people and getting in people's space and physical space. Where are you all? Lisa is way up here. Kathy is up here. There's some people who aren't quite ready for that big hug from the world.

What's going to happen next is we're going to put you in a little breakout room for a short time so that you can meet someone here and also just have a moment to add your voice to the conversation and think about what your story is on this theme. It's only going to be for seven minutes. It's not very long. So introduce yourself and just make sure that each person has, Federico, let's do eight minutes so it's even, each person has about four minutes to start to think about what your story is, how you're doing. What's happening now? What's happening next? What do you hope for? What are the challenges? We'll see you back in eight minutes. If you really don't want to go into a room to talk to someone, that's okay, just don't accept the invitation. But in Playback, we build a community of neighbors and not strangers, so we encourage you to go meet somebody. Chao. Lisa, you have your hand up.

Hannah Fox: We'll come back to you after. There they go. [NOISE] They're going, they're leaving, they're in the corridor, they're down the hallway.

(8 minutes later)

Hannah Fox: Welcome back.

David Babich: Hello.

Hannah Fox: Hello. David, where are you Zooming in from?

David Babich: I'm zooming in from Burbank, California.

Hannah Fox: Nice.

Joyce Lu: David is my singing teacher. [LAUGHTER]

Hannah Fox: Singing teacher?

David Babich: A lot of Playback Theatre in San Francisco.

Joyce Lu: Yeah.

David Babich: Then Crawford I was like—

Hannah Fox: Oh, that's so cool. Did you hear Joyce? She had a little singing moment.

David Babich: Yes, I did. [LAUGHTER]

Hannah Fox: Okay.

David Babich: Awesome.

Hannah Fox: Hi Paul, how are you Paul?

Paul McIsaac: I'm good. Unfortunately, I have to run. Someone just came to the door. [LAUGHTER]

Hannah Fox: Okay.

Paul McIsaac: I'll be back in a minute.

Hannah Fox: Okay.

Will C.: Paul McIsaac you are a legend.

Hannah Fox: I know. Paul McIsaac in the house.

Will C.: He was one of the first people, when I started learning Playback, everyone said that I needed to meet.

Hannah Fox: Erica, too, hi.

Marcin: I just put some shoes on.

Hannah Fox: Oh, who's putting shoes on? You don't need shoes for this.

[LAUGHTER] All right. Welcome back everybody.

Marcin: Sorry.

Hannah Fox: Okay. Hi Rosie, hi everybody, Debbie.

Debbie: Hi Hannah.

Hannah Fox: Marcin hi, okay Dorothy. Lisa, you had your hand up before?

Lisa Kamen: I just wanted to know how to get to a group, but you know what?

Federico took care of it. [LAUGHTER] So I don't need to be in charge. [LAUGHTER]

Hannah Fox: Wonderful okay, great. Raise your hand if you were able to have a little chat just now with someone else? I'm hoping I see everyone's hand. That's a trick question but hopefully, okay, great. What we'd like you to do now is think about a title or a working title to describe what you just were sharing with your partner. It may not be a full-blown story, but if you were to label or title what you just were talking about yourself, could you please put that in the chat. Titles for your stories. Everyone can mute themselves, that would be helpful.

Joyce Lu: We're just going to start to read them off, so, riding the wave, it's worse than I can explain.

Ricardo Perez Gonzalez: Living in the liminal space, moving into the unknown with two cars and a cat.

Joyce Lu: Flying to love: close quarters.

Ricardo Perez Gonzalez: The most basic need fulfilled: discovering the gift of these times.

Joyce Lu: Sorry and beauty of the ocean: esperando/waiting.

Ricardo Perez Gonzalez: COVID from west to east, unexpected academic achievement.

Joyce Lu: Be twixt and between living in the opposite land.

Ricardo Perez Gonzalez: Unlock self, emerging into emptiness. This is a poem that we're creating together as Joyce and I are reading. [LAUGHTER] Real poetry we have here.

Hannah Fox: We will probably read all of them, so why don't you both read a few more and then we'll start to hear.

Joyce Lu: Okay.

Hannah Fox: From the audience.

Ricardo Perez Gonzalez: Yeah. Creo que te conozco Facebook quizzes.

Joyce Lu: Limitation is a state of mind. Our talk, Playback, and COVID.

Ricardo Perez Gonzalez: Isolation, my connection, and finally, the waves of life.

Hannah Fox: All right. You got to get Amazon addiction in there. Well, what a collection of stories. We want to hear some of these now and invite someone to possibly elaborate on that, on their title, on that little description. Who would like to be the next teller? Again, you can raise your hand like this, you can raise the Zoom hand, you can just start to speak. All right Elsa. People can turn their cameras off, and we will give Elsa the floor and hear a little bit more about her story in this moment.

Elsa Mauricio Childs: Thank you.

Hannah Fox: How does it begin?

Elsa Mauricio Childs: It begins with the fact that when COVID gets lighter, other news stories come to the foreground, and this is what I'm living right now here in Portugal. One news story in particular that is really just gripping me. Yes.

Hannah Fox: Tell us more.

Elsa Mauricio Childs: We just found out this week that the mayor of Lisbon, every time there's a protest outside an embassy here, because of something that's going on in the country that that embassy represents, that, he's been secretly informing the governments of the countries' that these people are protesting about who has been at the protests and their identities.

Hannah Fox: Ratting people out?

Elsa Mauricio Childs: Yes.

Hannah Fox: Naming names?

Elsa Mauricio Childs: Yeah, and this has been going on for a while, but now that COVID is lifted a little bit here, these stories are coming up. This one in particular has been discovered; we don't even know how to react to this right now. I now live in Lisbon, this is the mayor of Lisbon, someone who I actually voted for. So a left wing. Yeah.

Hannah Fox: What's his name? For those of us.

Elsa Mauricio Childs: His name is Fernando Medina.

Hannah Fox: Say it again.

Elsa Mauricio Childs: Yes. Fernando Medina. You can just use Medina.

Hannah Fox: Medina?

Elsa Mauricio Childs: Yes.

Hannah Fox: All right. On one hand, in Portugal where you are, COVID is lifting some?

Elsa Mauricio Childs: A little bit even though Lisbon now is not advancing in the end of the lockdown because things are getting worse again here. Yes. But still we're breathing a little bit now. Yes, which is good.

Hannah Fox: You're still in lockdown?

Elsa Mauricio Childs: We have certain restrictions but not nearly, it has nothing to do with what we were living before. Now we can walk freely, we can travel within the country freely.

Hannah Fox: All right.

Elsa Mauricio Childs: Yes.

Hannah Fox: Now, there's other turmoil. There are other concerns.

Elsa Mauricio Childs: Yes.

Hannah Fox: Political concerns, what's your feeling about this news about Medina?

Elsa Mauricio Childs: I'm very angry. I'm not really being able to find out yet, this is very soon. The last story about, this came today. I'm still trying to figure out how people are going to organize against this. Because now of course the right-wing parties are all using this against the left, and I know that there are so many good people that are still here trying to do the good work. But I cannot even begin to imagine how this man thought that this could be done. He's been ratting protesters to Israel, to the States, to Venezuela, to Russia, China. It's just unbelievable to know that this is happening. I've participated in some of these protests, you know what I'm saying?

Hannah Fox: Let me pause you Elsa, choose one of these actors to play you.

Elsa Mauricio Childs: Will C.

Hannah Fox: Will C. will play Elsa. So you said you've been protesting. What's something that you or others are protesting about in Portugal?

Elsa Mauricio Childs: Well, very recently the situation in Palestine and Israel.

Hannah Fox: Okay.

Elsa Mauricio Childs: That's one of the things. But the last one that I've been at actually last week was against the police intervention against this lesbian couple who were just in a garden. Portugal is one of the most advanced countries in terms of legislation for LGBT rights and still someone called the police because this lesbian couple were just kissing in the garden and there were children there. This person made a complaint to the police and nine policemen appeared to check out the situation and intimidate this couple. We protested against this last week in the same place, yes. So this was the last one I was in.

Hannah Fox: Okay.

Elsa Mauricio Childs: Yes.

Hannah Fox: Oh, okay. So I can hear in your voice, you're anxious, you're concerned, you're upset.

Elsa Mauricio Childs: Yes, I still don't know how to direct this anger, so this is very present in my whole body today. They're in my breathing, my heart, my body temperature.

Hannah Fox: Yeah. Okay.

Elsa Mauricio Childs: When you asked about that body and mental health today, this was here.

Hannah Fox: Present?

Elsa Mauricio Childs: Yeah.

Hannah Fox: Okay, so there's some shady activity happening at the top of leadership, naming names of protesters, emerging from one crisis into the next. Let's watch.

Elsa Mauricio Childs: Thank you.

Will C.: I can't breathe. It's like the system that's taking my breath away. The more I struggle, the more it smothers me. The only thing I could think of to get my breath back is to remove this layer and vote for a different way. I can see that there could be a different way.

Ricardo Perez Gonzalez: There's got to be a different way. There's got to be [MUSIC] different way. There's got to be a different way. There's got to be a different way.

Will C.: Who can bring that way to us? We've been living this way with no breath for far too long.

Ricardo Perez Gonzalez: Medina for mayor. Medina for mayor.

Will C.: Heard of him. I've heard of him.

Joyce Lu: He's our man.

Will C.: He promised to bring us the best things. He promised.

Cherae: I see you. I see you all.

Will C.: He sees me.

Cherae: I see you. I see all of you.

Will C.: He sees all of us. Everyone, he sees all of us. We have to vote for this guy. We have to get behind him, we have to support him because he's going to bring us our freedom. We want to be free if we want to breathe again.

Joyce Lu: Elsa, Elsa I think this doesn't feel quite right.

Will C.: [MUSIC] It looks right to me.

Cherae: Is real.

Joyce Lu: Hello, police. I need to report criminal activity. Yes, there's two women, they're being intimate and there's children. There's children there. I think this is wrong.

Will C.: Okay. It's just going to be okay. We don't need all of these police for this situation. I'm standing away. I will protest. I will protest to make sure.

Cherae: There's some information. They don't know. I've been watching them.

[LAUGHTER]

Will C.: They weren't supposed to know, but now that people are removing their mask a little bit more, we can see what you've been up to. We can see that you are not for us. We see you now. Do you know what you've done?

Joyce Lu: You betrayed us. You betrayed us.

Will C.: It's more than that. You've set us back so far. Now, the right side is claiming that their rights [MUSIC] because of the things that you did in secret at night. You can't even face me, can you? I voted for this joke. I just wanted to believe that I wasn't stupid to have some hope. If I were a different person, I would tell you. If I could just express the way that I feel, I would take my hands and I can't breathe.

Hannah Fox: Thank you performers. Let's get our teller back on. Elsa. Hope you liked that Elsa.

Elsa Mauricio Childs: Yes. Thank you.

Hannah Fox: Okay. Thank you

Elsa Mauricio Childs: Thank you.

Hannah Fox: Sounds like a challenging situation. Everybody come on back. Keep us posted, Elsa. Yeah. Thank you. Thank you. We have time for a couple more stories. Getting warmed up here. Who might have the next story? Again, we create a dialogue through stories, so one story responds to the next story. All stories are legitimate, are valuable, are meaningful. Sometimes we wait a moment. Various hands. Various hands. Okay, Lisa, go for it. This is your first Playback experience.

Lisa Kamen: Yeah, wow. Well, my story is based upon our little breakout experience with another Lisa in Germany.

Hannah Fox: Okay.

Lisa Kamen: We spoke about, are we ready to hug?

Hannah Fox: Yes.

Lisa Kamen: Today, I went hiking. I did the rock scramble at Mohonk, which is a vertical rock-climbing experience. I do it regularly with a friend, and in this case, we were coming down. As we were descending, two couples were ascending and the two women were having a massive anxiety attack and did not want to proceed. My friend and I said, "No problem, we'll take you down." One of us took the front, one took the back, and we assured these women who didn't know us from Adam that they would be safe and we'll escort them down, they'll be fine. When we got down, they threw their arms around us, as if COVID did not exist, and it was magnificent.

Hannah Fox: It felt good, it felt good. All right.

Lisa Kamen: I was crying as I was telling Lisa the story.

Hannah Fox: Okay. Recent experience of positive human connection, helping some people with anxiety, helping them back down this cliff.

Lisa Kamen: Yes.

Hannah Fox: Ends with a big hug.

Lisa Kamen: An unexpected, unsolicited.

Hannah Fox: Yummy.

Lisa Kamen: Unsafe, yummy hug. [LAUGHTER]

Hannah Fox: Without hesitation.

Lisa Kamen: Correct.

Hannah Fox: All right. We will see this as a Three-Part Story. We'll see Joyce, Ricardo. Let's watch.

Will C.: Can someone show me how to use this thing? [LAUGHTER] I've been here for a while and I knew I should have googled this or something. It's getting dark and these rocks are a challenge and I don't know what to do or where to go. Which way? Can you help me?

Joyce Lu: On the hiking trail I haven't seen a whole lot of people, but it's nice to see people coming back and walking freely, supporting each other, enjoying the greenery, enjoying the day. I've been having a sense of expansion and watching these humans also expand. I know that they've needed me. They've needed me and they've needed a sense of touch. They've needed a sense of touch. Not just with me, but with each other.

Ricardo Perez Gonzalez: Come on. Come on. Yeah. It's this way, this way, this way. Just follow me. Here we go. Here we go, and here we go, and here we go, and here we are. We made it back and there you are and there I am. What's happening? What's happening?

Joyce Lu: Do it. Do it.

Ricardo Perez Gonzalez: What are you doing?

Joyce Lu: Don't hold back.

Ricardo Perez Gonzalez: Is this happening? [OVERLAPPING] Is this— [NOISE]

Hannah Fox: Thank you, performers. Thank you, Lisa. Hug story, helping story, human story. Thank you. [NOISE] We can always hug ourselves, pretend it's someone else inside our arms. We have time for one or two more. I'm going to pass the conducting apple over to my colleague Joyce.

Joyce Lu: Thank you. I'm going to conduct the next story. What's the next story? David?

Hannah Fox: I saw Kabelo and Paul also. You're going to have to choose.

Joyce Lu: Why don't we do Kabelo and then we'll have time for one more.

Hannah Fox: Yeah, we'll go back. We'll try and get everybody.

Joyce Lu: All right.

Kabelo Nokgehle: No, sorry. I don't have a story. Sorry about that. I was stretching my hand. No story from me. [LAUGHTER] So sorry about that.

Joyce Lu: You sure? Are you sure? [LAUGHTER]

Kabelo Nokgehle: I'm very sure.

Joyce Lu: Let's all go with David. [LAUGHTER]

David Babich: Okay, hello. [LAUGHTER]

Joyce Lu: Hi. We'll ask everyone else to stop video. [NOISE] David, how does your story begin?

David Babich: It begins being an actor in a television show.

Joyce Lu: Okay. Can you say what television show it is?

David Babich: I cannot.

Joyce Lu: Okay. [LAUGHTER] You're an actor in a television show.

David Babich: But I can tell you that it's a scene that involves FBI agents.

Joyce Lu: Okay. You're an actor in a show that involves FBI agents?

David Babich: Yeah. I'm an FBI agent.

Joyce Lu: [LAUGHTER] Then? What happens?

David Babich: What happens is that, and this was yesterday, actually, when you're working in these TV shows now there's all these COVID protocols. Until the moment when you're actually filming, you're either wearing a mask or a shield or both. Then even when you rehearse a scene, you're wearing those things. In this particular scene, it involves a bunch of extras, and it was this whole ensemble scene where you're put really close to each other just right on each other, super close.

When we're rehearsing with the masks and the shields, I was like, "Okay, this is fine. This is nice being close to people." But then when we were about to actually roll, they say, "Okay, shields off, masks off." You hand your stuff and then all of a sudden you're right next to everyone, no shield, no mask, and breathing each other's air, and I felt super uncomfortable. It was a heightened sense of discomfort. Not claustrophobia, but just something even deeper. I just have this frenetic body feeling somehow inside.

Joyce Lu: A frenetic body feeling. How long did this frenetic body feeling go on?

David Babich: I think until they actually said, "Action." The moments we were actually filming, it was fine, but up until the moment. It dissipated as soon as we were done also, but it was until the moment of actually shooting, it was just vibrating somehow.

Joyce Lu: You were able to do your job, and then?

David Babich: Yeah, exactly.

Joyce Lu: Are you going to be going back to these sets?

David Babich: No, I quit. No, I'm just kidding, [LAUGHTER] I'm just kidding.

[LAUGHTER] Yes, there will be another day of shooting. That was just one.

Otherwise, it's been normal, but all of a sudden boom, that one situation was really intense that way.

Joyce Lu: With a lot of extras. How are you feeling about going back?

David Babich: Oh, I feel fine. I feel fine. I think I'm totally okay to go back for more.

Joyce Lu: Okay, thank you. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

David Babich: No, I think that's it.

Joyce Lu: Okay, so Will C. has a Beat with Will C. and Hannah and the rest of us can stop our video. Let's watch.

Will C.: There is no business like show business. But I need you to keep your business to yourself. Because the way these rules have changed are for us to help. We need to have a mask, we need to have a shield, we need to have something. It

may not feel real, but it feels like we're still alive. I don't want anyone on this production to lose their life because we are being careless. I am the FBI and I am someone you can trust. But that moment we have to take off that shield and we take off that mask and we reveal the things that we have been going through these last series of months. COVID-19 is not something that I want. It's not something that I want to give to you, it's not something that I want any of us to have to go through. I am the FBI and I am trying to turn that F into I am fine, but I'm not feeling fine. Honestly, I'm losing my mind until they say, "Action." Now that I know, because I am an actor and I am a professional and I know that the show must go on. But that moment before action, it feels so long, it's scary, and I'm trying to figure out why is everyone so near me, and extra, extra, extra, extra everywhere. Extra, extra, read all about it. More people are dying. Even though we have the vaccine and I don't understand what any of this means, do any of us really? Is it silly for us to speak so freely? For this show that's going to be seen on TV? I know I'm very close to fine, but I'm still going to put on my mask in those other times.

Joyce Lu: Thank you, actors. David, could you start your video? How was that for you?

David Babich: Wow, that was amazing. Thank you.

Joyce Lu: Thank you. Well, I'll look out for you on the TV. [LAUGHTER] Let's invite everybody to start your video again. I will pass the conducting apple back to Hannah.

Hannah Fox: Thank you. I'm so curious, David. You're going to have to send us the link or something.

David Babich: I'll go ahead and tell you, they're so harsh on confidentiality. Here you go.

Hannah Fox: Let's take one last teller for this particular show. As you saw earlier, there's Playback happening all over the world. There are many more performances and places hopefully for you to tell your story and make connections. But we here

at Pangea headquarters, we want to welcome one last teller. Now, I know Paul has had his hand up and we're going to hear from Paul. But I also want to invite someone from outside the States. Can I go to Linda and then could you do yours as a short form, Paul?

Paul McIsaac: Sure.

Hannah Fox: Andrea, you have your hand up too? Andrea? We might have to meet again. Linda, please stay on. Everyone else can turn their cameras off. Paul, we will come back to you, I promise. Just want to get outside the United States a little bit since we're in such an international community here. Okay Linda, tell us.

Linda: I'm calling in from Berlin. The story starts last Monday at our last rehearsal, my group, we're all cancer affected. Some of us patients, some of them on ongoing chemotherapy.

Hannah Fox: Everyone's been touched by cancer. Some still dealing with it.

Linda: Yeah, and they will have to deal with it for the rest of their lives, so they have an ongoing chemo treatment. We were all glad that we all got our second vaccination. Since a week, Germany is slowly opening up. At the rehearsal, one of my colleagues told a story that she just had a checkup with her physician and they checked her body for the antibodies against COVID, and there was zero.

Hannah Fox: Zero antibodies?

Linda: Zero antibodies.

Hannah Fox: Which isn't good.

Linda: Which is very bad because she's not protected at all. We all got shocked. We went like, "Oh gosh, it's not over yet, it's not over yet." We're all in the process now of checking each other, checking with the physicians if we're protected at all. First of all, it's very frustrating because it was just about the point where we're going like, wow, now it's going to happen. We can meet at rehearsals again. We can see each other again. Everything is on the stop now and there is no end to it somehow. We don't know how it's going to end or what kind of solution there's going to be.

Hannah Fox: You're still in danger?

Linda: Yes.

Hannah Fox: You're not out of danger, out of the woods, even though you've been vaccinated?

Linda: For me personally, I don't know yet. I would know only in a week from now.

Hannah Fox: You being your group, collectively?

Linda: In my group, yes. I know that at least two or three are going to be affected in this way. I'm still trying to figure out how to support them and what to do.

Hannah Fox: How are you feeling?

Linda: Frustrated [OVERLAPPING] and also it's a bit fearful, it's threatening, because we're looking so much forward to the solution now.

Hannah Fox: The solution of finally getting protection and antibodies as a vulnerable population, being able to meet and touch and hang out again together.

Linda: Yes.

Hannah Fox: Okay. All right. This virus is a new one and much we don't know. Thank you, Linda. We're going to do this as a Tableau. Let's watch. Linda is in a Playback Theatre group of cancer survivors and they recently got back together. Some are past the sickness, some are still dealing with the sickness. They are a vulnerable population, but soon they will be vaccinated. The vaccine arrives, shots in arms, and let's build our protection. A group member reports that, in fact at a doctor appointment, she was told that she has no antibodies, no protection post-vaccination. This armor isn't working. Danger still lurks. What are we to do? Do I stay in? Do I go out? When are we going to be past this virus?

Joyce Lu: Thank you performers and let's get our teller back on for a moment.

Thank you, Linda.

Linda: Sorry. Ending with such a dramatic story. Sorry.

Joyce Lu: No. That's what we're here for. Thank you so much.

Linda: Thank you.

Joyce Lu: I hope the story gets better.

Linda: It's also to call awareness to others that are affected to check it.

Joyce Lu: Just terrible.

Linda: It's not much talked about.

Joyce Lu: All right everyone. Let's come on back and we're going to hear from our final teller for today, Paul McIsaac. He has been around Playback a long time. We haven't seen much of him. Great to see him today and Paul, in the short version, what did you have to tell?

Paul McIsaac: I've been Zooming and Zooming and Zooming talking to groups about the filibuster. Now for those of you outside of the States, you might not know. We have a very weird thing in the Senate where one person can stop legislation. Even though we got rid of Trump and the Democrats control the presidency and the Senate and the House, one person can stop the legislation. It's not only every single important legislation you can imagine about race, about economics, but it's about the fundamental democracy in this country is threatened by what's going on in the Republican Party. They're trying to run the country as a minority party. I've been on frantically talking with groups and we've been organizing and I've become incredibly frustrated because so far, the only thing that the groups that oppose this filibuster had been doing is making phone calls and sending emails to their senators, which is great. But I and a few other people have been saying we've got to do more, we've got to get on the street, we've got to demonstrate, we've got to go out in big numbers and nobody wanted to do it. I'm so thrilled to say that in the last couple of days, and guess who it is, the Poor People's Campaign. The people who represent the poorest people in this country have said, we're going to Washington, and we're going in numbers and we're going to say save our democracy. So I guess I'm going from total frustration to yes.

Hannah Fox: A little bit of hope and optimism and movement. There are people going to Washington to address this problem. We'll do this as a final Zoom

Sculpture for Paul, and we're going to include all of that. There's real frustration because no one's really dealing with this. You've been trying to get people motivated and finally, there is some activity. Let's see if there's any change. All right. Let's watch. Vamos a ver.

Cherae: Get out there. Come on. Let's gather everyone together because we are stronger when we are together. We are stronger when we are more. Come on people. Come on.

Ricardo Perez Gonzalez: Come on. Come on. Come on. You're going to go, we're going to go. Come on. Let us go.

Joyce Lu: Yeah. We're going to go. Okay, not enough. We're going to find something to do.

Will C.: They just talk and talk and talk, but we're done talking. We care about what you say. You have to say something that is valuable. We're going to hold you accountable. We're going to change this system.

Joyce Lu: We're going to go out there.

Cherae: We will—

Hannah Fox: Thank you performers. Thank you so much. Another story about protest and change. Paul, thank you to help us finish our journey here together on a note of optimism and hopefully some good positive change. Everybody, just keep your cameras off for another moment because we're going to finish up here with one more little ditty. We're going to invite you back in just a moment. Once there was . . .

Ricardo Perez Gonzalez: Once there was a woman who was part of a group of caring individuals who all were touched by cancer and received the shocking surprise that maybe they weren't as well protected as they thought.

Hannah Fox: Oh no.

Cherae: Might be nothing. Once there was a woman who saw the truth of her vote. Who realized the truth of her mayor.

Ricardo Perez Gonzalez: I see you now.

Hannah Fox: Watching me? Well, I'm watching you.

Will C.: Straight again.

Joyce Lu: Behind the curtain, that what goes on?

Will C.: Once there was an unexpected hug that felt so good. It broke the recipient down to tears.

Joyce Lu: No hesitation.

Ricardo Perez Gonzalez: That's right. Bring it in.

Cherae: Human touch.

Joyce Lu: We're not broken. Once there was a young person who is moving on to their next year of high school. They had so many choices about what they were going to do that they felt totally overwhelmed. Maybe I'll have that and I'll have a little bit of that, but I also have to sleep and I have to eat.

Hannah Fox: I'm a good actress and I can dance. Once there was a group of people from around the world who gathered in a Zoom room on a Friday afternoon in June to meet each other and listen to each other and tell stories, build empathy and connection, and who hope for a new and better day. Thank you so much for coming. Come on back. We want to say goodbye. Thank you so much. Never feels like enough time, but we know that you took time out of your life to be here with us today. Andrea, if you had a story, we want to hear it next time. For everybody, hopefully you can find a squirrel or a child or a spouse or a tree to tell your story to. Stay safe and take care until we see you again. Thank you so much.

I'm going to put on some music so you can dance out of the Zoom room. See you again. Thank you so much.