



INCENDIARY INCENDIARY

BY **DAVE HARRIS**

DIRECTED BY
MONTY COLE

WORLD PREMIERE

**WOOLLY
HLOWHWH**

MAY 29–JUNE 25

A NOTE FROM MARIA



As soon as I read my first Dave Harris play, I had to read everything that he had written. For a while, it seemed like every week the new work team was discussing a new Dave Harris play. It was heaven.

To me, Dave's work feels completely ahead of the curve. Each play is formally inventive, thematically unafraid, and completely unique. I find myself surprised at almost every turn, being challenged by the material one minute and laughing through my discomfort the next.

Dave says in the interview later in this playbill that "Everything I write I'm trying to find language for something that really terrifies me." I chose **INCENDIARY** as Dave's world premiere play for Woolly because, in many ways, I was scared of it in the best way (and because this is a theatre called Woolly Mammoth, fear is to be embraced!). The premise is highly theatrical and inspired by video games, though I've never played a video game that centered a hero who is a 53-year-old Black mother trying to save her son from death row. And that's the right thing for her to do, right? Is she doing it for love? Or is she doing it for herself? Notions of justice, violence, accountability, and generational trauma are completely upended in this play. Why? Because family is MESSY.

Monty Cole is a fearless director, and someone I have been excited to invite to Woolly ever since Woolly Company Member Nataki Garrett introduced us many years ago. Monty and Dave had their first crack at this play in a workshop production at The Goodman Theatre in Chicago before the pandemic, and I'm thrilled they have been able to re-unite to dig into this story once again.

I want to also take a moment to thank a few mammoths leaving the herd who have been essential to Woolly's success. Zack Lynch, our Director of Development, has helped create two of

the best-selling galas of all time at Woolly Mammoth, and we are going to miss all his pop culture references in our meetings. Our Interim Managing Director, Ted DeLong, has been part of the herd for longer than anticipated, and has handled every decision, even difficult ones, with skill and integrity. I'm so grateful for the time I have spent learning from these two. And to be honest, they are still part of the herd wherever they are—ONCE A MAMMOTH, ALWAYS A MAMMOTH.

We also have a new MANAGING DIRECTOR (woot woot!). Kimberly Douglas is as Woolly as they come; she is an out-of-the-box thinker who cares deeply about the role of theatre to ignite conversations in the DMV. I'm excited for you all to get to know her, and for all that we are going to cook up together!

Te veo en el teatro,



Maria Manuela Goyanes, Artistic Director
Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company

PRODUCTION DEDICATION

This production of *INCENDIARY* is dedicated to visionary philanthropist Laura Pels (May 1, 1931 – May 3, 2023).

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Woolly Mammoth acknowledges that our theatre stands upon occupied, unceded territory: the ancestral homeland of the Nacotchtank whose descendants belong to the Piscataway peoples.

Furthermore, the foundation of this city, and most of the original buildings in Washington, DC, were funded by the sale of enslaved people of African descent and built by their hands.

*Language developed in consultation
with Dr. Gabrielle Tayac*

WOOLLY MAMMOTH THEATRE COMPANY

MARIA MANUELA GOYANES
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

KIMBERLY E. DOUGLAS
MANAGING DIRECTOR

PRESENTS

INCENDIARY

BY **DAVE HARRIS**

DIRECTOR
MONTY COLE~

COMPOSER
NAVI

SCENIC DESIGNER
ANDREW BOYCE+

LIGHTING DESIGNER
MEXTLY COUZIN+

COSTUME DESIGNER
SAMANTHA JONES+

SOUND DESIGNER
TOSIN OLUFOLABI

FIGHT/INTIMACY
CHOREOGRAPHER
CHELSEA PACE

STAGE MANAGER
LEIGH ROBINETTE*

DRAMATURG
SONIA FERNANDEZ

INCENDIARY WAS PRODUCED IN A DEVELOPMENTAL PRODUCTION BY GOODMAN THEATRE, CHICAGO IN THE NEW STAGES FESTIVAL (ROBERT FALLS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, ROCHE SCHULFER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR)

INCENDIARY HAS RECEIVED DEVELOPMENTAL SUPPORT FROM THE KENNEDY CENTER, THE NATIONAL NEW PLAY NETWORK AND WAS DEVELOPED WITH THE SUPPORT OF PLAYPENN (PAUL MESHEJIAN, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR)

INCENDIARY IS PART OF THE LARK'S VENTUROUS PLAYWRIGHT FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM, FUNDED BY VENTUROUS THEATER FUND OF THE TIDES FOUNDATION



[~] Recognizes representation by the Stage Directors & Choreographers Society (SDC), a national theatrical labor union.



[+] Recognizes representation by United Scenic Artists, Local USA-829 of the IATSE.



[] Appearing through an Agreement between this theatre, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, and Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.*

Actors' Equity Association (AEA), founded in 1913, represents more than 45,000 actors and stage managers in the United States. Equity seeks to advance, promote, and foster the art of live theatre as an essential component of our society. Equity negotiates wages and working conditions, providing a wide range of benefits, including health and pension plans. AEA is a member of the AFL-CIO, and is associated with FIA, an international organization of performing arts unions. The Equity emblem is our mark of excellence. For more information, visit www.actorsequity.org.

CAST

Tanya	Nehassaiu deGannes*
Markus/Gerard/Joshua, U/S Manny	Breon Arzell*
Manny/Marcus	Brandon J. Pierce*
Jasmine	Shannon Dorsey*
Eric	Terrance Fleming*
U/S Tanya	Karyn-Siobhan Robinson
U/S Male Roles	Ricky DeVon Hall
U/S Jasmine	Fatou Jackson

MUSICIANS

Vocals	Carly Harvey
Keyboard, Synthesizers, Percussion	Sqore
Guitars, Bass	Ryan Buell
Drums, Additional Mixing	Dave Ray

CREW & CREATIVE TEAM

Assistant Director/BOLD Rising Director ...	Nailah Unole didanas'ea Harper-Malveaux
Assistant Stage Manager	Jazzy Davis
Assistant Dramaturg	Fatima Dyfan
Hair & Wig Stylist	Greg Bazemore+
Production Assistant	Briana J. Padgett
Lighting Programmer	Kristen Roth
Light Board Operator	Jaimee Fricklas
Sound Board Operator	Heather Hernandez
Production Props Supervisor	Amy Kellett
Wardrobe Crew	Thomas Nagata
Props Run Crew	Conri Connell
Crew Cover	Michael Turner
Scenic Charge	Sarah Phillips
Properties Artisan	Rooster Skylar Sultan
Electricians	Jaimee Fricklas, Milan Robinson, Mikayla French, Sydney Bronaugh, Lillian Moki, Simon Sinnreich
Carpenters	Sarah McCarthy, Stephen Lyons, Michael Tsaltas, Michael Turner, Gillian Ziegler, Jamiee Fricklas
Associate Scenic Designer	James Raymond
Associate Lighting Designer	Christian Henriquez
Associate Costume Designer	Jessica Utz
Associate Sound Designer	Madeline "Mo" Oslejsek
Movement Consultant	Breon Arzell

Casting by Judy Bowman, Danica Rodriguez. Understudy Casting by Danica Rodriguez. Key art design by Ro Brooks. Photo by DJ Corey Photography.
Special thanks to Eaton DC.

**Filming, recording, or taking photographs of this performance
by any means whatsoever is strictly prohibited.
Please silence your cell phones and any other noisemaking devices.**

DAVE HARRIS



DAVE HARRIS (*Playwright, he/him*) is a poet and playwright from West Philly. Selected plays include: *Tambo & Bones* (LA Drama Critics Award “Best New Play”, Playwrights Horizons, Center Theatre Group, 2022), *Exception to the Rule* (Roundabout Theatre Company, 2022), and *Everybody Black* (Humana Festival 2019). His first feature film, *Summertime* premiered at the 2020 Sundance Film Festival and was released in 2021. Dave is writing

the feature adaptation of *The Fortress of Solitude* amongst several other feature and television projects for AMC (*Interview with the Vampire*), ABC Signature, Goddard Textiles, and Amazon. His first full-length collection of poetry, *Patricide*, was published by Button Poetry. UPCOMING: **INCENDIARY** (Woolly Mammoth, 2023), *Tambo & Bones* (Royal Stratford East, London Premiere, 2023). When he isn't writing or pretending to write, he is cooking for the people he loves and dancing closely with strangers.

ABOUT THE SHOW

BREAK FREE: Tanya is a Black mother determined to break her son, Eric, out of death row — or die trying. She'll need guns, to get her hair done, and to f*ck some people up. As time ticks towards the fateful date of Eric's execution (and birthday), the play explodes into a collision of the hilarious and tragic. In this world premiere, playwright Dave Harris harnesses the storytelling techniques of comic books and video games to explore the complexities of generational trauma and daring heroism with his singular, satirical style.

OPENING NIGHT: JUNE 3, 2023

SHOW RUN TIME: This play runs for a duration of 90 minutes continuously, without an intermission.

CAST

Photo Credit: David Leyes



NEHASSAIU DEGANNES (*Tanya, she/her*).

A Brooklyn-based multi-hyphenate, Nehassaiu is thrilled to be completing her wholly unexpected 2022/23 DC-theater triptych at Woolly where she has wanted to work ever since playing “Lisa Body” in Trinity Rep’s regional premiere of Robert Alexander’s *Preface to an Alien Garden*! Most recently she was seen in Arena’s world-premiere of Nathan Alan Davis’ *The High Ground* & in Simon Godwin’s *Much Ado* at STC. Deeply

inspired by language, equally at home in classical, contemporary & devised new works, Nehassaiu broke her ‘COVID in-person theatre fast’ playing “Mary Church Terrell” in the rolling premiere of *My Lord, What A Night* at Florida Studio Theatre. To now embody Dave Harris’ force of a play just steps away from Terrell Place feels right & joyous & fitting. As poet & generative theater artist, Nehassaiu reawakens silenced repositories of myth & memory to reclaim collaborative envisions of race & belonging. (more at nehassaiu.com) IG @nehassaiu.



BREON ARZELL (*Markus/Gerard/Joshua, U/S Manny, Movement Consultant, he/him*) is thrilled to be back

at Woolly after appearing in *Ain’t No Mo* in the fall. Detroit native, he is an actor, choreographer, writer, & teaching artist residing in Chicago, IL. While choreographing for MUNY, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, The Kennedy Center & more, acting credits include: *The Comedy of Errors*, *DREAM* (Chicago Shakespeare Theatre), *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Baskerville*

(Metropolis Performing Arts Centre); *The Color Purple* (Drury Lane Theatre); *A Christmas Carol*, *Objects in the Mirror* (Goodman Theatre). TOURS: Theater Unspeakable, USA; White Horse Theatre, Germany); ACLE Theatrino, Italy). In the world of television, he is a recurring character on *South Side* (HBO Max), & choreographed for *The 4400* (CW). The recipient of 6 Joseph Jefferson Awards & 2 Black Theatre Alliance Awards (Chicago), he has also been recognized as one of New City Magazine’s 50 Players of Chicago in 2018 & 2020 & 2023. Along with other original works (both theater & screenplays), he is the co-creator & playwright of the revival & resurrection of the historical black musical, *In Dahomey*. @breonarzell & breonarzell.com.

Photo Credit: Emilie Krause



BRANDON J. PIERCE (*Manny/Marcus, he/him*).

A graduate of the University of the Arts, Brandon is stoked to be making his Woolly Mammoth debut! Born in the city of Philadelphia, where he has most extensively plied his trade, Brandon has had the pleasure to perform all over the country & is excited to add DC to the list. Broadway: *Birthday Candles* (Roundabout Theatre) Off-Broadway: *Exit Strategy* (Primary Stages) Regional: *Fat Ham*, *Kill Move Paradise* (Wilma Theatre)

Ben Butler (North Coast Repertory); *Native Son* (Playmakers Rep.); *Skeleton Crew* (Portland Stage); *Sweat* (People’s Light); *Metamorphoses* (Arden Theatre Company); *Richard II*, *Troilus & Cressida* (PA Shakespeare Festival). Brandon is a member of the Wilma Theater’s Hothouse Company. Love to Alexandra, Mom, & Dad.



SHANNON DORSEY (*Jasmine, she/her*). A true DC native, Shannon is thrilled to be back on Woolly's stage after appearing in the Regional Tour of *Ain't No Mo'* & is honored to play with such an amazing cast! Woolly Mammoth: *Ain't No Mo'*, *Fairview*, *BLKS*, *Familiar*, *An Octoroon*, *Kiss*; Off-Broadway: *777 Theater: The Great MacDaddy*; SummerStage: *The Power of the Trinity*; West End Theatre: *The Man Who Ate Michael Rockefeller*; Compagnia de' Colombari: *Revelation*. REGIONAL:

Arena Stage: *The Freewheelin' Insurgents*, *All the Way*; Ford's Theatre: *A Christmas Carol*; Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park: *The Trip to Bountiful*, *Safe House*, *Two Trains Running*; Round House Theatre: *Two Trains Running*; The Kennedy Center: Synetic's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Carmen*, *From the Mouths of Monsters*; Studio Theatre: *Skeleton Crew*, *Marcus; or the Secret of Sweet*, *In the Red & Brown Water*; Mosaic Theater: *Unexplored Interior*; Everyman Theatre: *Stick Fly*; Perseverance Theatre Alaska: *A Raisin in the Sun*; Shakespeare Theatre: *Red Velvet*. FILM: *Master* (Sundance Film Festival, Amazon Prime), *Life on the Rocks* (Cannes World Film Festival), *Slice of Pie*. Shannon is an award-winning multidisciplinary activist based in NY & DC. A seven-time nominee & a recipient of The Helen Hayes Award (Outstanding Ensemble), she is a Woolly Mammoth Company member & a TCG Fox Fellowship recipient. Jones-Haywood School of Dance; Duke Ellington School of the Arts (special thanks to Vera J. Katz & Kenneth Johnson); Temple University: BA Theater & BA African American Studies; The Ecole de Danse de Cannes Rosella Hightower, Cannes, France. @cooldiscoshann www.Shannd.com.



TERRANCE FLEMING (*Eric, he/him*) is from Mobile, AL. It's not always noticeable, but certain words give it away. From Murphy high school, he chose to further his education at the University of Southern Mississippi (USM), where he received his BFA in acting. Next stop for Terrance was Baltimore. During his time in the DMV, he's had the privilege to collaborate with many different theatres & many talented artists. STC: *King Lear* & *Much Ado About Nothing*, CSC: *Dracula*,

Her Majesty & Sons: *Twelfth Night*, BSF: *Hamlet*, Center Stage: *Dream Girls*, Artscentic: *The Wiz*. Terrance was an athlete, prior to acting. He still finds ways to maintain that part of him. Flag football is a go-to. One of Terrance's favorite things to say is "If you're gonna do it, do it."



KARYN-SIOBHAN ROBINSON (*U/S Tanya, she/her*).

Grateful to return to DC & this wonderful role. Woolly Mammoth debut. Graduated from the Stella Adler Studio of Acting in New York City in April 2023. At Adler: *Stay* (Deborah), *Angry Fags* (Peggy Musgrove), Shakespeare: *Love's Labor's Lost* (Holophernes), *Henry IV, Part One* (Bardolph, Mortimer, John of Lancaster). I've blogged about my acting journey since arriving in NYC in January 2021. Read about it at: <https://karynsiobhanrobinson.substack.com/>. At Adler, we are taught: Growth as an actor & growth as a human being are synonymous. Much thanks to my beloved daughter Siobhán for her support. Thank you for taking care of Mildred (the best cat in the world). Thanks to everyone who got me here emotionally & financially!!! Love you all! @karynsiobhanrobinson.

At Adler, we are taught: Growth as an actor & growth as a human being are synonymous. Much thanks to my beloved daughter Siobhán for her support. Thank you for taking care of Mildred (the best cat in the world). Thanks to everyone who got me here emotionally & financially!!! Love you all! @karynsiobhanrobinson.

Photo Credit: J. Demetrie



RICKY DEVON HALL (*U/S Male Roles, he/him*) is an actor, singer, community builder, & recent graduate of The Chadwick A. Boseman College of Fine Arts' Department of Theatre Arts at Howard University. Recent credits include *The Colored Museum* (Woolly Mammoth & Howard University), *A Raisin in the Sun* (The Howard Players), & *The Dangerous Acts Series*, in partnership with The Lucille Lortel Theatre & WNET directed by Phylcia Rashad. Ubuntu. BFA: Howard University, British American Drama Academy. @rickydevonhall (Instagram).

Photo Credit: Jared Tapy



FATOU JACKSON (*U/S Jasmine, she/her*) is so grateful to be making her professional theater debut in this compelling production. Born & raised in South Florida, she studied at Northeastern University & recently graduated from Savannah College of Art & Design with a BFA in Performing Arts. Select productions included *EVERYBODY*, *All Shook Up*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, & performing in the inaugural *Black Artists in Music* concert. She recently made her film debut

in Todd Haynes' *May December*, premiering at Cannes this year. Many thanks to Dave, Monty, Danica, & the Woolly Mammoth team for welcoming her into this Incendiary family. She sends all her love to her professors, friends, family, & most importantly, her mom who have all supported her in so many ways on this journey of storytelling. We're just getting started! Gros bisous! @fatoujackson.

CREATIVE TEAM



MONTY COLE (*Director, he/him*) is an award-winning theatre & film writer-director based in Chicago, IL. He has directed for The Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf, Center Theatre Group, The Playwrights Center, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Victory Gardens Theater, the Center for New Performance, Cape Cod Theatre Project, Alley Theatre, American Blues Theater & others.

He is currently an Artist in Residence at the Center for New Performance, a fellow at Hermitage Artist Retreat, an Illinois Arts Council Fellow, & a Research Scholar of the Bridge to Faculty at UIC. His short film "*Sons of Toledo*" won at many film festivals this past year including Best Short at the Washington DC International Film Festival & Best of the Fest at the Hip Hop Film Festival in New York. Monty has a BA in Theatre Studies from Emerson College & an MFA Directing degree from the California Institute of the Arts. He'd like to thank his wife Alysia Cole & family for all of their incredible love & support.

NAVI (*Composer, he/they*) is a non-binary Sri Lankan multimedia artist, music producer, & Helen Hayes nominated sound designer. A self taught creative, they've released five albums, & performed & toured as the lead vocalist for multiple bands. As a theater artist, they starred in & wrote the music for Pointless Theatre's *dOt.*, & have devised on stage with The Arcanists (*The Tarot Reading*), We Happy Few (*Frankenstein*), Dog & Pony (*Romeo & Juliet* for the deafblind), & more! They're an alumni company member with Pointless Theatre, where - in addition to Art Making™ as a lighting designer, composer,

sound engineer, performer, puppeteer, production manager, graphic designer & marketing content creator, they wrote *Forest Tréas* - an absurdist reflection on the 2002 DC Sniper crisis. Currently, they're running the R&D wing of Flying V as an Artistic Lead, exploring the vast reaches of performance, technology, & nerd culture! @/yourlocalnavi.

ANDREW BOYCE (*Scenic Designer, he/him*) is a multi disciplinary, award winning designer working on a variety on projects ranging from theater, opera, & live events, to film & commercial spaces. Andrew has designed on Broadway, Off-Broadway, in London, Chicago, & cities across the United States. He is thrilled to be making his Woolly debut. Andrew received his B.A. from Middlebury College with a degree in architecture, & his M.F.A. from Yale School of Drama. He has participated in the Lincoln Center Directors Lab, USITT, is a member of USA Local829 & the Wingspace Design Collective. From 2011-15, he taught in the Design Department at the Yale School of Drama & during the 2014-15 academic year, he taught at Ithaca College. He is currently an Assistant Professor at Northwestern University. Proud Dad to Atlas, Wyeth, & Calder with his partner Adrianna Durantt.

MEXTLY COUZIN (*Lighting Designer, she/ella*). Recent design credits include: *West Side Story* (Centro de Bellas Artes Puerto Rico); *Straight Line Crazy* (The Shed); *La Belle et la Bête* (Opera Parallèle); *Tambo & Bones* (Playwrights Horizons & Center Theatre Group). MFA University of California, San Diego '20.

SAMANTHA C. JONES (*Costume Designer, she/her*) is an LA based Costume Designer/educator with previous design credits at Center Theatre Group, Geffen Playhouse, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Huntington Theatre Company, Goodman Theatre, Court Theatre, Paramount Theatre (Aurora), Steppenwolf Theatre, Drury Lane Theatre, Lookingglass Theatre Company, Chicago Children's Theatre, Jackalope Theatre, Cleveland Playhouse, Kansas City Repertory Theatre, Alley Theatre, Seattle Children's Theatre, First Stage Theatre, Skylight Music Theatre, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Peninsula Players Theater, & others. Work currently onstage: *King James* (Manhattan Theatre Club). Her work can be viewed at samanthacjones.com.

TOSIN OLUFOLABI (*Sound Designer, she/her*) is excited to be back at Woolly for her fifth production, her previous ones being *Ain't No Mo* co-produced with Baltimore Center Stage, *There's Always the Hudson, Hi, Are You Single?* & *Gloria*, which earned her a Helen Hayes Nomination for Outstanding Sound Design for a Hayes Production. Her other most notable sound designs include *Sense & Sensibility* (The Village); *Fires in the Mirror* (Theater J); *Crying on Television*, Ken Ludwig's *Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery* & *The Sound Inside* (Everyman Theater); *it's not a trip it's a journey* & *School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play* (Round House Theatre); *The Great Khan* (San Diego Rep); *The Thanksgiving Play* (Olney Theatre Center); *A Wind in the Door* (Kennedy Center TYA); *Lela & Co.* (Factory 449).

CHELSEA PACE (*Intimacy & Fight Choreographer, she/her*) is an intimacy & fight choreographer, intimacy coordinator, & consultant. Chelsea is the Resident Intimacy Consultant at Woolly & is thrilled to work again on a creative team at Woolly following *A Strange Loop*. Select work includes the Broadway productions of *Strange Loop*, *Leopoldstadt*, & *K-POP*, Off-Broadway productions of *HELP* & *Bundle of Sticks*, & regional work at La Jolla Playhouse,

& Philadelphia Theatre Company. DC Area: Signature (*Passing Strange, Into the Woods, Color Purple, Daphne's Dive, RENT, Resident*), Studio (*John Proctor..., White Noise, Resident*), & Folger (*Midsummer*). Recent Film & Television: *A League of Their Own, Harlem, Wu-Tang, Best Man: Final Chapters*, & *RAMY*. Upcoming work includes *Drive Away Dolls, American Sports Story, Fun Home* (Studio), *SUMO* (La Jolla), *Bridges of Madison County* & *HAIR* (Signature). Chelsea is a Co-Founder of Theatrical Intimacy Education & the author of *Staging Sex* (Routledge).
@professorpace.

LEIGH ROBINETTE (*Stage Manager, she/her*) is thrilled to return to Woolly Mammoth. Previous credits include *There's Always the Hudson, Describe the Night, Gloria, Botticelli in the Fire, Familiar, The Arsonists, Hir, Baby Screams Miracle, An Octoroon, & Guards at the Taj*. Other DC stage management credits include *Angels in America, Holiday, Change Agent, Dear Evan Hansen, The Originalist, & Mother Courage & her Children* at Arena Stage, *English* at Studio Theatre, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with Folger Theatre, *The Second City's Love, Factually* at the Kennedy Center, & *Love Sick* at Theater J. She has worked Off-Broadway at Second Stage, with the Huntington Theatre Company in Boston, & the Hangar Theatre in Ithaca, NY. She is a graduate of Boston University.

SONIA FERNANDEZ (*Dramaturg, she/her*) is a dramaturg, administrator & producer specializing in new work. She is happiest in a new play process. Currently serving as Director of New Work at Woolly, Sonia was previously interim Artistic Director & prior to that Associate Artistic Director of Magic Theatre in San Francisco. Favorite production dramaturgy credits include *unseen* by Mona Mansour at OSF, the world premiere of *Don't Eat the Mangos* by Ricardo Pérez González, *The Chinese Lady* by Lloyd Suh at Magic, & *Quixote Nuevo* by Octavio Solis at Cal Shakes. She is the proud mama of two awesome humans, two terriers & 47 plants.

NAILAH UNOLE DIDANAS'EA HARPER-MALVEAUX (*Assistant Director/BOLD Rising Director, she/her*) is a queer multiracial theatre director & generative artist focused on transformative new work. She facilitates & curates artistic engagements that center & celebrate the beauty, complexity, resilience, healing, & joy of those living in the margins. As Woolly Mammoth's BOLD Rising Director, she has assisted on 3 productions this season & is developing a new play inspired by Derrick Bell's short story "Space Traders." She is currently the Director of Artistic Programming & Engagement at Crowded Fire in San Francisco & directed the world premiere of *Getting There* by Dipika Guha. She has worked at Williamstown Theater Festival, Berkeley Rep, Baltimore Center Stage, American Conservatory Theater, Z Space, Shotgun Players, & Crowded Fire. She received her B.A. in American Studies & Theatre Studies from Yale University, where she studied the intersection of Black Femme Liberation & performance studies.

GREG BAZEMORE (*Hair & Wig Stylist, he/him*). Broadway: *Holler If Ya Here Me, Stick Fly*, Off-Broadway: *King Headley II*, Regional: *Souvenir, Mahalia a Gospel Musical, Sophisticated Ladies*, 2010 August Wilson's *Century Cycle* Kennedy Center. National Tours: *Color Purple* (first national tour) & *Dreamgirls*. Film & Television: Key on Season 2 *Power* Book: *Ghost* Season 2, Head Hair for *LEGENDARY*, 3rd; Season 2 & 3 *POSE*, Season 1 *First Wives Club*, Key Season 1; *Love Life, Wonder Woman 2*, Key Stylist; *Killing Lincoln*, Key

Stylist; *Killing Kennedy*, Key Stylist; AMC's *TURN* Season 1 Theatres: Arena Stage, Contemporary American Theatre Festival, Hartford Stage, Kennedy Center, San Diego Rep., Signature Theatre, St. Louis Rep., Studio Theatre, True Colors Theatre Co. Awards: 2021 Emmy Winner for *POSE* Season 3, 2019 Emmy Nominated for *POSE* Season 2, Nominated for *Killing Lincoln*, for the Hollywood Makeup Artist and Hair Stylist Guild Award 2013, Emmy Winner for *POSE* Season 3, for the Hollywood Makeup Artist and Hair Stylist Guild Award 2021.

INCENDIARY TALKBACKS

Join us for a series of conversations after *INCENDIARY!* Woolly staff will be joined by the cast to discuss the themes in the play.

THURSDAY, JUNE 15 (Evening) | SUNDAY, JUNE 25 (Matinee)

SPECIAL EVENTS

On **June 10th**, please join us after the matinee performance for a special post-show conversation with Hilton George, co-founder of BlerDCon. BlerDCon, which takes place in Washington DC every summer, celebrates "Blerd culture and creates a marketplace of ideas where sharing that culture can take place with proper context, attribution, and positivity in an inclusive environment." George will discuss Blerd culture in DC and how nerd culture informs the style of *INCENDIARY*.

On Sunday, **June 11th**, join us after the matinee for a special panel conversation to discuss on how the themes in Dave Harris's *INCENDIARY* resonate with issues affecting DC residents. Woolly staff will be joined by members of the Mayor's Office on African American Affairs (MOAAA) and Mayor's Office on Women's Policy and Initiatives (MOWPI), as well as other community leaders and experts.

Love cosplay? Theatre? All things nerdy? Join us for a special crossover cosplay night for *INCENDIARY!* Coinciding with AWESOMECON (June 16-18) and looking forward to blerDCon (July 7-9), we're inviting audience members to attend the **June 16th** performance of *INCENDIARY* in their coolest cosplay. Come see Dave Harris's comic-inspired play and make sure to share your legendary cosplay fits on social media for a special shoutout from Woolly!

CONTENT TRANSPARENCY

This play contains discussions involving gun violence, solitary confinement, carceral violence, generational trauma, suicidal ideation, the death penalty, the legal system, domestic abuse, depression, fetish, arson, and violence against children/schools.

This play contains depictions of gun violence and prison.

IN THE LOBBY

This spring, Woolly is excited to continue our partnership with Pan Underground, in collaboration with Consulting Creative Partner CM Caplinger, on a series of art installations.

Pan Underground is a production company specializing in work which challenges the way live theatre and creative experiences are made and engaged. The company has offered a platform for projects and artists creating unique opportunities to engage and collaborate through creative facilitating, artistic consulting and producing – including its 2021 premiere production of Caridad Svich's *Red Bike*, as seen in American Theatre.

CM Caplinger is a storyteller who works to bridge the arts, environment, and technology.

For more information visit panunderground.com or reach out directly to info@panunderground.com.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS



ESPERANZA ALZONA (*Artist, Lobby Art Installation, she/her*) Esperanza Alzona is a sculptor from the greater Washington, DC metropolitan area whose work has been widely exhibited in the region. An award-winning independent choreographer, Ms.

Alzona directed her own contemporary dance company based in Turin, Italy, where she lived and danced for six years. As a visual artist she has worked as a graphic designer and film photographer. As an arts administrator, she was executive director of the Loudoun Symphony Orchestra for over six years

before assuming her current role as operations manager for the Shepherd University School of Music. She is on the faculty of the Mid Maryland Performing Arts Center, and at Shepherd University's Department of Contemporary Art and Theater she continues much of her studio practice in contemporary sculpture.

Ms. Alzona is a graduate of Leadership Frederick County, and has served as Director of Performing Arts for the Frederick Arts Council, as a Maryland State Arts Council Dance Advisory Panelist, Secretary of the U.S. Mid-Atlantic Regional Advisory Panel of the Royal Academy of Dance, and Secretary of the Board of Directors of the Weinberg Center for the Arts, the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra Committee in Frederick and the TAWA Dance Company. She is a member of the Washington Sculptors Group, the International Conference on Contemporary Cast Iron Art, the Frederick Arts Council and the Frederick County Art Association.

Ms. Alzona holds a teaching diploma from the Royal Academy of Dance, an associate in arts degree in humanities and social science from Montgomery College, a Bachelor's degree in psychology from George Washington University and a Master's degree in public communication from American University.



KHAMAR HOPKINS (*Artist, Lobby Art Installation, he/him*) is a graphic designer, animator, photographer, marketer, & artist located in the Baltimore, Maryland area. He is currently pursuing two Masters degrees from Goucher College in Baltimore, Maryland & currently does freelance graphic design for different clients all around the DMV area. He has been making designs/animations professionally for the last six years & loves it! It's truly his passion. One thing he loves about it is that there's never only one way to approach a design problem. He also enjoys the fact that whenever someone asks him what he does or what he's working on, he can just show them. He's just a big, chill, nerdy guy who loves creating.

LOVE AND VIOLENCE

A CONVERSATION WITH DAVE HARRIS

INCENDIARY playwright **DAVE HARRIS** sat down with our New Work Department to talk about family, writing and video games:

Can you talk about the seed of the play?

When I started writing this play, I was reconnecting with my dad for the first time in 20 years. For most of my childhood, I grew up with just the idea of him and the legacy of him. Our house lived with the ghost of him. So much of my life was dominated by this idea of struggle and survival through the violence we had inherited. I'd had all these ideas and then when I saw him after 20 years, I was like, "Oh, you're just a dude." It was one of those dark moments where you realize your parents are just human beings. In that realization I started confronting my relationship with my mother and thinking through how we had grown up. So, writing this play was a way of processing and exorcising the ways in which [how] we grew up was a choice.

Everything I write I'm trying to find language for something that really terrifies me. I think a lot about generational violence, generational trauma, and how many things in my family cyclically repeated without ever having the ability to describe where they came from. My mom had my oldest sister when she was 16, had me 10 years later. I think for her the way she constructed her identity was through, "I'm going to put all my notions of survival into my children so as long as they're doing well, then I've done my job. And thus, I'm okay."

At a certain point, you realize that the way you are loving your children is a result of the violence that happened to you. How do you find yourself inside of that? How do you let your kids find themselves inside of that? How do you separate what you're doing because of your own free will and your own choice, or what you are doing because this is what you've learned from someone else? Is there any difference between those things?

The big confrontation inside this play was, how do I write characters who have the power and agency to do whatever they set their mind to, and within that what does that then say about the nature of the love, the violence, and the history between all of them. That is why writing it through language is so important to me. If I have the tools to describe it, then I have some control or choice over it. I really felt like that was the power that was lacking in all the secrecy in my family.

You mentioned the interest in anime video games and action movies. Can you describe those influences in the play for someone who might not have that context?

My plays got so much better when I started letting myself borrow from the dramaturgy of things that weren't just theater. I was instructed in a way where I was imitating other playwrights that came before me. And then it was like, oh, no, some of the things that emotionally affect me the most, and the things I grew up with, are video games and anime. And also, these are things that I enjoyed with my mom.

The journey of the play operates a lot like a video game where you have a protagonist who in each level finds something new that they then take to fight the final boss. There's a lot of fun in that. For me, action movies, and anime, and video games are all about internal drive, an internal pleasure, and a joy that's just yours. And for Tanya, for the mother of this play, so much of this play is about her reckoning with the fact that everything she is doing, even though it's based on her idea of struggle—she's enjoying it. What does that mean? When, the dark things that you are capable of are also fun for you.

You talked about always wanting to write into something that terrifies you.

I think there is perhaps a terrifying proposal at the heart of this play about the selfish nature of love and the selfish nature of violence, about their abilities to completely coexist. And those things together can often look the same when someone is doing what they believe is their best. That is a scary thought with your parents. My dad was capable of terrible, terrifying things, and

capable of the smallest joys and loves too. And to do him justice, in my own emotional memory of him, I have to be able to hold both of them and have my judgment sure, but also recognize that I'm capable of the same.

The epigraph at the start of the play is from Lucille Clifton's "cruelty," "cruelty. don't talk to me about cruelty /or what i'm capable of."

For a long time, because I lived in a kind of respectability politics world it was hard to reckon with [our] own capacity to harm people. It let me process trauma and my family to understand [that], because for a while, I looked at my father and my grandfather, and the things they did, and I was like "man, you know they'd be completely different people if it wasn't for racism," which, it's true to an extent, and also it's like No, no, no. Also, there's reasons why they acted the way they did that are fully inside of them. To understand myself I have to understand my agency, and contemplate the agency of those before me.

One of the comments we like heard from audiences when we did the workshop production of this was with regards to Eric, "Oh, Black people don't do that." It's this kind of old impulse that we have to show that we're better than our oppressors in order to be treated like human beings. I understand that impulse, and yet it's so limiting because we have to treat ourselves with the same amount of freedom and agency as any other human beings to understand the full expense of our humanity. In auditions some of the actors came in, they would be like, "I feel like I'm acting like a white action superhero the way I'm like capable of all this." These are things that have only been allowed of white protagonists to be able to explore the nature of violence in their lives. It can be harder to swallow inside of black characters. I think it's necessary to see, to be able to understand, the fullness of what it is to be alive.

There's also something in the gendered nature of parenting. Throughout the play Tanya is finding herself, but it's still in service of this mission.

Yeah. yeah, and that's the constant question. She gets her hair done, and she's like "it's for my son," and the hairdresser is like,

“No, it’s for you. It’s for your soul.” Then in Tanya it’s like, “what if caring for someone else is the most selfish thing I can do,” then, who are you to tell me that I’m not living my full life? That’s the thing that is hard for me to reckon with because that’s my mom’s philosophy. How do you find yourself when your notion of your identity is so tied to others.

Your work is provocative. I’m wondering if you have a manifesto. What are you trying to do in the theater?

I think I want to—just keep surprising myself. I tend to write in really intense bursts, and then, when the draft is over, I’m usually crying. I don’t know exactly why. And then a couple of days pass and I’m just like, “oh, that’s what was happening!”

So, when I think about what I want from theater, I want to keep the work of writing very selfish because it feels the best when it’s for me, and it’s a very fortunate consequence when other people like it, too. I love theater so much, and also, I expect very little from the industry of theater. Because of that, the work itself has to be what feeds me and in order for it to feed me I think it has to be for me. For my own hunger.

Do you get that feeling from other types of writing?

Yes, I’ve been fortunate that the things I’ve worked on have been things that I care to work on. I avoided TV for a long time, because I watched friends get stuck writing things they don’t care about and then that affects a lot of different aspects of their being. I was like, oh, I want to avoid that for as long as possible, even though I do like money. But poetry, poetry, poetry, I do [get that feeling].

With poetry, if on the page you have to open yourself up and push into new language into new space with poetry, I find it harder to put yourself back together afterwards. Whereas with theater you have a bit more distance, and also, the light at the end of the tunnel with theater is always other people. I can write the best poem of my life and I will almost never experience that with someone else, and that can be so lonely. It is not a space that I can sustainably dwell in even though I love poetry so much and so much of my playwriting comes from poetry.

What could success look like for this play for you?

I am usually excited by almost all responses. For me, it was very healing to write this play. People get mad when I say this, but all my plays have happy endings. This play has a happy ending in my heart of hearts. I wrote this play trying to process a conversation between my mom, my sister and I that I don't think we will ever get to have. So, I think if children see this play, and then go home and call their mothers—great. If mothers and parents see this play and then talk to each other and think through what in their life is for them, versus for their kids—then great. I would be excited about people who saw this play and are open to seeing if there are tendrils of it in their own relationships. Those are the conversations that excite me the most about this play.



Pictured: Playwright Dave Harris (left) with Director Monty Cole (right), discussing the themes and pop culture roots of *INCENDIARY*.
Photo Credit: Rebecca Calkin

PREPARING A MEAL: A POEM BY DAVE HARRIS

If you follow the sink, you'll reach
a stream then a river then the ocean, though
no one in my family can swim. We'd all drown

if it weren't for these four walls
and someone's paycheck.

Fear is the true animal instinct in a world full
of broken hearts. In the kitchen, I wash
the blood off a chicken's skin and then off my own

while the red pours down the drain. I fear
nature when it isn't silenced by something man-made.

I don't think of where the meat came from while holding its soft
skin in my soft skin. It's hard to imagine the pain of another
without being swallowed by it. When I was a child, my mother

would starve herself so that her children could eat their fill.
You know nothing of love until you watch someone go hungry

for you. Even then, what do you know of hunger? I am a good
person, I think, though I need the flesh of another to make it
through the long, endless day. I don't believe being a vegetarian is

any better. I slice the meat of an onion and I'm overcome by the
life it spills. An onion makes us weep because it loves us, though

that too is a defense mechanism. I think beauty is when a person
is so afraid of losing something, they cry. I am in love
with reciprocity. I eat you eat. I starve you starve. I hunt

we live. Home is where I only fear what can break through walls.
For instance my father hit my mother and now the door is locked.

People cry when they see how meat is made until they want to
eat. Then, I dare you to stop an animal from devouring the whole
village. Cooking is the only way I know how to care for a person.

I'm old enough to teach my mother how to eat.
When I make a plate, I am saying

Look.

My love is so real

you can feel it on your teeth. I killed

a whole family as proof.

Don't cry. It's ok.

We'll never be worth the pain that got us here.

ABOUT WOOLLY MAMMOTH

The Tony Award®-winning Woolly Mammoth creates badass theatre that highlights the stunning, challenging, and tremendous complexity of our world. Woolly is proud to be considered “a national champion of the new—and frequently provocative—American play” (*Washington Post*).

For over 40 years, Woolly has maintained a high standard of artistic rigor while simultaneously daring to take risks, innovate, and push beyond perceived boundaries. Woolly Mammoth was co-founded in 1980 by Roger M. Brady, Linda Reinisch, and Howard Shalwitz and is now co-led by Artistic Director Maria Manuela Goyanes and Managing Director Kimberly E. Douglas. Located in Washington, DC, equidistant from the Capitol Building and the White House, this unique location influences Woolly’s investment in actively working our mission: To produce courageous and invigorating new work to radically redefine theatre as a catalyst for an equitable, creative, and engaged society.

One of the few remaining theatres in the country to maintain a company of artists, Woolly serves as an essential research and development role within the American theatre.

PLAYS PREMIERED HERE HAVE GONE ON TO PRODUCTIONS AT HUNDREDS OF THEATRES ALL OVER THE WORLD AND HAVE HAD LASTING IMPACTS ON THE FIELD.

A STRANGE LOOP was produced at Woolly in 2021, ran on Broadway from April 2022 through January 2023, and won the Tony Award® for Best Musical in 2022. Other notable highlights include the world premiere productions of Danai Gurira’s **ECLIPSED** in 2009 that later went on to be the first Broadway play with a cast & creative team of all Black women; Bruce Norris’ Pulitzer Prize-winner **CLYBOURNE PARK** in 2010; and Anne Washburn’s **MR. BURNS: A POST-ELECTRIC PLAY** in 2012. Woolly produces theatre beyond our building by sending productions like Aaron Posner’s **STUPID F*CKING BIRD** across the nation, bringing Aleshea Harris’ **WHAT TO SEND UP WHEN IT GOES DOWN** to neighborhoods throughout DC, and launching a national tour of Madeline Sayet’s **WHERE WE BELONG**.

Woolly has built a reputation for innovation off the stage as well. Woolly values building relationships with its local community and resident artists in the DMV area. Our nationally-acclaimed Connectivity Department is one of the ways we accomplish this by linking Woolly to like-minded community organizations in order to generate mutually beneficial, impact and power-aware partnerships.

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Pictured in **A STRANGE LOOP**: Jason Veasy, John-Michael Lyles, Jaquel Spivey, John-Andrew Morrison, James Jackson, Jr., Antwayn Hopper.



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WOOLLY LEADERSHIP



MARIA MANUELA GOYANES (*she/her*) is the **Artistic Director** of Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company. Prior to joining Woolly, she served as the Director of Producing & Artistic Planning at The Public Theater, where she oversaw the day-to-day execution of a full slate of plays & musicals at the Public's five-theatre venue at Astor Place & the Delacorte Theater for Shakespeare in the Park.

Earlier in her career at The Public, she managed some of the theatre's most celebrated productions, including *Hamilton* by Lin-Manuel Miranda, *Josephine & I* by Cush Jumbo, *Straight White Men* by Young Jean Lee, *Barbecue* by Robert O'Hara, & *Here Lies Love* by David Byrne & Fatboy Slim.

While at The Public, Maria also held a position on the adjunct faculty of Juilliard & curated the junior year curriculum of the Playwrights Horizons Theater School at NYU. She has guest lectured at Bard College, Barnard College, Brown University, Columbia University, Juilliard, the National Theater Institute at The Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, UCSD, the University of Texas-Austin, & Yale University, among others.

Since 2015, Maria has also served as a member of the board of the National Alliance for Musical Theatre. From 2006 to 2008, she co-chaired the Soho Rep Writer/Director Lab with Jason Grote, & from 2004 to 2012, Maria was the Executive Producer of 13P, one of her proudest achievements. Maria is a first-generation Latinx-American, born to parents who emigrated from the Dominican Republic & Spain. She was raised in Jamaica, Queens, & has a collection of hoop earrings to prove it. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in 2001 from Brown University.



KIMBERLY E. DOUGLAS *(she/her)* is the **Managing Director** of Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company. She has 20+ years of experience in event production management, program development, strategic partnerships, arts education, & the performing arts.

Graduating from Duke Ellington School of the Arts, Kimberly then continued her studies at Howard University College of Fine Arts graduating with a

B.A. in Music Business minor in Jazz Voice.

Kimberly served as the Managing Artistic Director for THEARC Theater, a program of Building Bridges Across the River. For 15 years she led the theater operations for a 365-seat theater & a Black Box, led the development & fundraising for theater initiatives such as facilities & buildings enhancements & upgrades, curated seasonal programming on THEARC Theater stage & Black Box, & expanded relationships & funding for the iCAN Technical Theater internship. Through her leadership, THEARC Theater is widely recognized as a cultural staple for artists, arts organizations, & community East of the River. Kimberly served as a board member for Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company from April 2021–March 2023 after establishing a long-standing partnership as Woolly Mammoth’s Core Connectivity partner.

Kimberly launched her company KD ARTS Consulting in March 2022, providing program curation & production services, talent & operations management, & arts administration. Through KD ARTS Consulting, she worked with organizations like Demaskus Theatre Collective in residency at the August Wilson African American Cultural Center & The Musicianship’s 2023 Wammie Awards. Currently, Kimberly is co-chair of the D.C. Co-lab Equity & Justice Committee advocating for arts education. She was born & raised in D.C. & presently resides in Upper Marlboro, MD.

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