

The Neighborhood Theatre Project: *The Willmar Project*  
Script Preview Shared May 2019  
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Draft 2 | 27

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### SCENE 3: The Barn Theatre

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**NICKI:** My name is Nicole Dyson. But I go by Nicki. I'm the Assistant Executive Director, here, at the theatre.

**ZACK:** And I'm Zackary Thelen Liebl, but call me Zack. (*laughs*) I'm the Executive Director. (*beat*) I started doing shows here back when I was, I think 14 was my first show, I did here. And I've done shows sporadic ever since. Normally it's the one's I get pulled into at the end, Musicals when they run out of people cause –

**NICKI:** (*simultaneous*) – they need more guys.

**ZACK:** (*simultaneous*) – they need more guys. And I detest, detest musicals. Being in musicals. (*beat*) In February we did 9 to 5 here and 9 to 5 was inspired by the Willmar 8 –

**NICKI:** I never knew that, I was honored to be a part of it.

**ZACK:** Yeah, she was actually in 9 to 5 she played Violet. (*referring to the Willmar 8 women*) It was a really really fun event for the ladies that night.

**NICKI:** It was very moving actually.

**ZACK:** It was very cool.

**NICKI:** I mean I had no idea, going into that –

**ZACK:** (*simultaneous*) Mhm. Yeah

**NICKI:** (*simultaneous*) – significance, that even the Willmar 8 had on...that show specifically even, other than just, the significance of them I mean nationally. Changing women in the workplace.

**ZACK:** There's a really good documentary –

**NICKI:** Our little town of Willmar –

**ZACK:** The one, not the newer one, like the very first original one is really good. The women tried to start the union and you had like the railroad people and all that from the old part of town, that was very, "Yep let's do this!" and then you had the other people that are like, "Ah they're just causin' a raucous!" I'd say if something like that happened again it'd probably be the exact same...

**NICKI:** Probably would!

**ZACK:** I think the most interesting times for with – with Willmar was when I decided to take my Political Science degree and run for office here.

**NICKI:** Yeah that's what I – that's what I was just gonna say, he ran for Mayor.

**ZACK:** In 2014 some members in the Chambers of Commerce asked if I'd consider running for Mayor. Cause we had just gone through 'bout what, the last what six or eight years? –

**NICKI:** Mhm.

**ZACK:** – there's all the dysfunction at the city council and like arguments and it was horrendous. Very very divided. Uh 4 very conservative, 4 moderate and liberal, and then a very conservative Mayor. So, anyway, they asked me to run for Mayor and then what happened is, a gentleman who didn't live in town, but he used to be from here, he was the Fire Chief for 12 years, he moved back into town that year to run for Mayor. I had phone calls from the good ol' boys club asking me to drop out and to just let him run unopposed and he called me asking to drop out and it was...it was interesting. So. But! I had him scared –

**NICKI:** Yeah you were –

**ZACK:** – cause he started pumping tons of money into the race. I assumed he would have a good shot, for voter turnout it's very heavy this older population so, just that age mentality of, you know, the young kid running for Mayor. I was seen more as the uh more liberal and then he was definitely more the moderate conservative and then this gentleman came out, Bob Score, came out running a right end campaign because we were just all too liberal for him, we were okay with all the immigrants and

stuff like that, so it was...probably some of the best times but probably some of the –

**NICKI:** Mhm.

**ZACK:** – awkward, scariest, sad conversations at people's' doorsteps cause...very close minded people here. Which you would say wouldn't be / the case.

**NICKI:** / But I think it's been enlightening though, I mean and – and Zack definitely gave him a run for his money, there's no question.

**ZACK:** Oh yeah, that was that was a good / race.

**NICKI:** / That was a good tight race, there's no question about it. I was on his campaign committee, so, / yeah...

**ZACK:** / It was, it was good –

**NICKI:** - but, yeah...so –

**ZACK:** But –

**NICKI:** – next time.

I had a hell of a year. How's that sound?

**ZACK:** Year and a half. Two years?

**NICKI:** Yeah exactly. No I –

**ZACK:** It's a good story.

**NICKI:** It is?

**ZACK:** Well not for you. (*laughs*)

**NICKI:** Last year I had done a show. Steel Magnolias in April when we were done with that. I was making basically a transition down to the Chicago area. Move many of my things.

**ZACK:** Well 'cause you had got laid off first.

**NICKI:** I had gotten laid off. Yeah. And, that – thank you Zach.

**ZACK:** Yeah sorry (*laughs*).

**NICKI:** We know each other very well, we're very good friends. And, so like yeah good friends. (*clicks mouth*) And uh I was then I do have a significant other down there. And we were finally trying to pull things together from a long distance relationship. I was coming back for a long weekend and my vehicle started on fire on the interstate. I ended up pulling over and it went up in flames basically. And so everything. I stood there just like (*laughs*) after hell on the side of the road watching my car go up and everything in my vehicle go up in flames. Like most of my favorite things and personal things. I came back here a week later and then / the –

**ZACK:** / The city flood.

**NICKI:** The city flood the next – next week we had a huge flood in the city. So I had like a foot of water in my basement so then everything there – here I'm saying it all matter factly. It's like it's an old story. So I had like three claims going. But all along still looking for work. And so I kind of was asked to come step into this position y'know to help the theater. But um, I'm not even really explaining it well it's just 'cause it's kind of all a dream now.

**ZACK:** (*laughs*)

**NICKI:** But it's just been, it's, you know, it's just been me this year. And I've been with it. I don't know. I dug out of quite of a quite a hole this year / so.

**ZACK:** / I would have killed somebody by now if I were you, cause it was – I mean just timeline wise you had, you'd decided to move, car went up. Oh you got laid off.

**NICKI:** Yep.

**ZACK:** Decided to move. House flooded.

**NICKI:** No luck.

**ZACK:** Your neighbor ran through your fence.

**NICKI:** Oh dear god I forgot about that. Jeez yeah there's so / many.

**ZACK:** / Her backyard fence.

**NICKI:** Literally they drove through their garage through my fence. It was like seriously what else could / happen?

**ZACK:** / And then.

**NICKI:** I had a cat that I would have to leave behind. Not that I would leave her extended, my daughter is in town and so she would check on her, but I was worried about her and ultimately she did die. *(beat)* That's why I say this is like home for me here because it's pretty darn tight group. But this for me is kind of my happy place. So I don't know if I really had a real good plot. *(laughs)*

**ZACK:** It's for the best.

**NICKI:** It is yeah it is.

**ZACK:** In my opinion.

**NICKI:** Yeah whatever that worth. / But anyway.

**ZACK:** / *(fake gasp)*

**NICKI:** I'm kidding! *(beat)* I can only speak for this production because I was involved in it, but 9 to 5 um a lot of things happened throughout that production rehearsals and whatnot and I – very drastic things. Where do I start. Our director was – had to at the last minute step in like a week before and because there was somebody from New York that was supposed – damn those New Yorkers *(laughs)* I'm just kidding – that was going to be coming and directing and something had happened with that. So he stepped in and it was fabulous but we had issues like right from the beginning.

**ZACK:** Big issues.

**NICKI:** We were right in the early stages of rehearsal.

**ZACK:** First week / wasn't it?

**NICKI:** / Um, first or second. The pianist and the vocal director wasn't feeling real well but Sunday she – she died. We lost our pianist. She just – died. *(awkward laughs)* And oh this is weird, it's like, where is this coming from?

**ZACK:** This is a bizarre story of / 9 to 5.

**NICKI:** / It is bizarre! We then look desperately for somebody else and found this wonderful gal who's accompanied before we love her. She came one night for a day and she slipped on the ice and fell and tore / her –

**ZACK:** (*simultaneous*) / – tore her rotator cuff, right.

**NICKI:** (*simultaneous*) Rotator cuff so she couldn't play the piano because she couldn't move her arms. We eventually did get a rehearsal pianist. We got through the show we had some little blips here and there which / are –

**ZACK:** / – some cast members leave.

**NICKI:** Yeah. And all that happens anytime. But then after the show had finished / the director.

**ZACK:** / Well, prior to that.

**NICKI:** I'm sorry what?

**ZACK:** Opening night.

**NICKI:** Can't even remember so much happened. Tell me /...oh!

**ZACK:** / This was the first time we've ever had / to -

**NICKI:** / Hello!

**ZACK:** – postpone an opening of a show.

**NICKI:** Two nights cause of some of us being –

**ZACK:** Because the cast was so incredibly – everybody was sick and we had two people having to go into the hospital with influenza. So we had to have the place cleaned top to bottom and we postponed the opening by two days and had to transfer 400 people to different nights of the show. So that next morning I called Sally and we all met here at 7:30 in the morning started going through. We had to call every single person to verify that they could go on that new night or else transfer 'em to different

nights. And while we're doing phone calls that morning we literally had people coming in off the street to see if they could help.

**NICKI:** And to me that's that's community. That's what's gotten me through the last year or so is having these people. You like to think that the theater is full of egos and that kind of thing. And drama.

**ZACK:** Oh it is!

**NICKI:** And of course it is but they're truly – I have found, that's why I say it's home for me because I have just found such incredible people here.

**ZACK:** I mean there's – there's different people that don't talk to each other. But then when something happens everybody comes together.

**NICKI:** But yeah we've had our little our share of.

**ZACK:** It's been a long year.

**NICKI:** It has been, yep, so anyway, I hope I brought that back around somehow but, that was my intention.

**ZACK:** Somehow. (*laughs*).

**NICKI:** Like so...but enough about me. How was your year? (*laughs*) We're just kidding.