The Oklahoma City Bombing Project

High School Version Sample Scene

By Steve Gilroy
The Oklahoma City Bombing Project is the result of the collection, collation and editing of a series of Interviews conducted by the writer and members the Faculty of Oklahoma City University between September 2014 and April 2015.

The interviews took place in the State of Oklahoma apart from the Interviews with BBC Journalist Claire Bolderson and Producer Andrew Roy, which were conducted at BBC Television Centre, London, England.

Notes:

When performing it’s useful to consider the nature of ‘everyday’ speech. The ellipses, the patterns, the ‘ums’ and ‘uhs’ and the pace. In general conversation people often speak much quicker than one would imagine so it’s important where appropriate to play the text with pace and energy.

Words in square brackets [ ] are not spoken, but are for clarification of meaning.

A stroke (/) indicates the point of interruption by the following speaker or character. A character’s line placed within the text of another indicates that the latter continues uninterrupted. For example:

Claire: I think you got there sooner. (Andrew: Yeah.) I got there the next day.
   (Andrew: I got--) And you had a lot of delays, getting there, it was trouble it was really difficult I remember, I think you called from the plane or something?

‘slides’ refer to the projection of the text described. This could be a conventional projection onto a screen or a wall, or it could just be cardboard signs. The point in most cases is to identify the person/s. The slides should dissolve in. And then out. There are slides of images which serve as backdrops to the scenes. You may choose to use mine or come up with your own ideas. Or maybe not use any images at all and come up with a different idea.

The minimal set comprises a number of chairs, which is equal to the number of actors in the cast. The chairs are wooden, old, and a little battered. They are not of uniform design, but should be easy to lift and carry. The actors are on stage for the duration of
the play. When not involved in the action they sit on one of the chairs at the side of the stage.

All 25 main Characters and the voices from the documentary ‘Terror Hits Home’ are played by members of the company. The play was originally produced with eleven actors playing multiple roles, however there can be many more. The original production played with an intermission, but the play can run without.

Characters in order of Appearance and by scene:

ACT I

Scene 1
Jenifer Reynolds
Voices from the documentary ‘Terror Hits Home’
Aren Almon

Scene 2
Sam Gonzales
Waitress
Gary Marrs
Ron Norick

Scene 3
Jan Henry
Chris Sholer

Scene 4
Janet Beck
Jane Thomas
Claude Thomas

Scene 5
Andrew Roy
Claire Bolderson
Jenifer Reynolds
Imad Enchassi

Scene 6
Aren Almon-Kok
(The same character from Scene 1. Name change due to re-marrying)
Chris Fields
Bella Kok
ACT II

Scene 1
Mark Bays

Scene 2
Aren Almon-Kok
Chris Fields
Bella Kok

Scene 3
Bud Welch
Stephen Jones

Scene 4
Rebecca Denny
Christy Smith

Scene 5
Florence Rogers
Server
Polly Nichols
Scene 1

Blackout.

The cast hums a country/gospel tune (acapella). It carries on to underscore Jenifer's speech; quietly, but just enough to be heard. Although not dressed as a 'Pioneer woman' there is some signification of it; e.g. head scarf.

A spotlight focused on Jenifer Reynolds fades up.

Jenifer:  
(Expressively and with pace) Generally...they looked very weathered and worn and tired because it was a very tough life and when you came out here and you might spend a year or two years living basically in a hole in the ground... (Slide: Jenifer Reynolds, News Anchor) These were very, very, strong women, and they were stern and they were hardworking and they were no-nonsense and they were, uh, they were generally quite devout and they knew everything, you know? They knew everything.  
(Slide out) They could do everything, they could do little bitty needlework, they could milk their cow, you know, they would go out and help their husbands build fence. To me, the American Pioneer Woman is one of the most extraordinary human beings, ever.

My great-grandmother. Her name was Sophie, and she was um feisty and had raised, she was widowed young, and raised four children as a washer-woman, which was the most um. . .hated chore on the prairie because it involved so much physical work; boiling the clothes, stirring the clothes, wringing the clothes. My grandmother would say they would wring clothes until they cried at night because their arms hurt so bad. And so she and her kids took in other people's laundry and that's how they survived. And she raised all four and got them all through school and I still have her box that had all the report cards in it because she was so proud of the fact. It was a tough, tough life. And
it was in the days before there was any government help, and I don’t think she would have taken it if there had been any, in fact she probably donated, you know? *(The sound of white noise or high pitch drone can be heard, drowning out Jenifer)* These pioneer women; they were real tough. Could cope with most things . . .

*Jenifer gives up speaking and prepares herself for camera. As she does so the rest of the cast leave their chairs and move to a position, spaced out across the stage and they stand in silence, staring out in different directions - in their own worlds. Blackout as the drone sound crossfades into the sound of the background to the bomb aftermath; helicopter, sirens etc.*

*What follows are the actual words spoken in the documentary ‘Terror Hits Home’, 1995 KWTV Channel - Oklahoma City Bombing Special hosted by Jenifer Reynolds and available on YouTube so actors can prepare and learn the parts ‘verbatim’. These lines are from the first 9 minutes of the film.*

Jenifer: This is Jenifer Reynolds for / KWTV bringing you the latest from the explosion in downtown Oklahoma City.

Voice 1: A tremendous blast came in through the windows, blew us out of our chairs and onto the / floors.

Voice 2: I thank the Lord that I wasn’t sitting at my desk at that time, because that portion of the building, that portion of the building has gone.

Voice 3: They are bringing people out who that just covered in blood ehm, ambulance crews have been arriving for the last ten minutes and they’re going into / the building.

Voice 4: We’ve got a lot of children hurt over here at the / YMCA.

Voice 5: What’s happening, it’s like it happened in slow motion.

Reporter 1: All around us there are dazed people, some with blood, some shirts are hanging off, glass debris everywhere, fires burning in the parking
lot, the devastation at the Alfred P Murrah building appears to be / almost uh, total.

Voice 6: I don't know what happened, just a / blast.

Voice 7: Just a tremendous explosion, ceiling, the windows came / in.

Voice 1: I was falling and then I hit and I was dazed for a minute and I realized it had to be an explosion or something.

Reporter 2: The large church at the corner of 4th and Harvey all the stained glass windows have been blown out...it is chaos / down here.

Rescue Worker: Can you tell me your name? Can you tell me / your name?

Questioner: Is there someone there?

Aren: My daughter's one, and she's in there.

Questioner: You went to the / nursery?

Rescue Worker 2: Well we were pullin'. We've pulled five little kids out and a couple of / ladies

Doctor: All we can do is just be of as much assistance as we can to those who are injured and try to get them some medical / care.

Reporter 3: You're doing a great job. We, all of us, in Oklahoma City thank you for what you've done today...The devastation in downtown Oklahoma City, it's / incredible.

Voice 8: Let's / move out!

Doctor 2: First have the ER people in their / groups of four.

Reporter 4: It's a just a shuttle of ambulances one after another bringing in the victims; you're looking at video / now we just brought back.
Jenifer: Right be careful, let’s just warn them now Cynthia that this is raw tape that we shot at the hospital which we have not censored in any way and you may see some graphic / stuff.

Reporter 4: Ages are from 2 months to 18 years / old.

Voice 9: They’re bringing out the bodies of many people and it’s awful hard on the officers and everybody that’s had to bring the bodies / out...It’s like a warzone /down there.

Voice 10: Let’s move these people at least to the middle of the / street!

Voice 11: On the 5th Floor right on the end, I can walk from here, from my office to the door where I normally enter and there’s nothing there anymore.

Reporter 1: It’s just astonishing to me that er an evil human being would do this to children and other innocent people, especially here in Middle of mid / America.

Reporter 2: This is something that happens somewhere else, this is something that happens in places like Beirut places far, far away with strange sounding names; it’s not something that’s supposed to happen in places like Oklahoma City. It’s not something that’s supposed to happen...at home.

Lights slowly fade as Glenn Campbell, ‘By the Time I get to Phoenix’ fades up. It is playing on the jukebox of a typical diner.

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OCU SCHOOL OF THEATRE / OKC BOMBING PROJECT SAMPLE SCENE