ARIZONA PREMIERE

WAIT UNTIL DARK

WRITTEN BY FREDERICK KNOTT
ADAPTED BY JEFFREY HATCHER

ARIZONA THEATRE COMPANY
THE STATE THEATRE
About ATC .................................................................................................................................................. 1
Introduction to the Play .............................................................................................................................. 2
Meet the Characters ..................................................................................................................................... 2
Meet the Creators ......................................................................................................................................... 3
Behind the Scenes ....................................................................................................................................... 3
Thrillers and Film Noir ................................................................................................................................. 5
Historical Context: 1944 .............................................................................................................................. 6
The Twenty Losses of Blindness .................................................................................................................. 8
Feminism and *Wait Until Dark* .................................................................................................................. 11
References and Glossary ............................................................................................................................. 12
Discussion Questions and Activities .......................................................................................................... 14

*Wait Until Dark* Play Guide written and compiled by Katherine Monberg, ATC Literary Associate and Kalan Benbow, Dramaturgical Intern, with assistance from April Jackson, Education Manager; Bryanna Patrick and Luke Young, Education Associates.

**SUPPORT FOR ATC’S EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING HAS BEEN PROVIDED BY:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APS</th>
<th>Stonewall Foundation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arizona Commission on the Arts</td>
<td>Target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank of America Foundation</td>
<td>The Boeing Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Cross Blue Shield Arizona</td>
<td>The Donald Pitt Family Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Of Glendale</td>
<td>The Johnson Family Foundation, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Foundation for Southern Arizona</td>
<td>The Lovell Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cox Charities</td>
<td>The Marshall Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Tucson Partnership</td>
<td>The Maurice and Meta Gross Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enterprise Holdings Foundation</td>
<td>The Max and Victoria Dreyfus Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ford Motor Company Fund</td>
<td>The Stocker Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freeport-McMoRan Copper &amp; Gold Foundation</td>
<td>The William L. and Ruth T. Pendleton Memorial Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JPMorgan Chase</td>
<td>Tucson Medical Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John and Helen Murphy Foundation</td>
<td>Tucson Pima Arts Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Endowment for the Arts</td>
<td>Wells Fargo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PICOR Charitable Foundation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosemont Copper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABOUT ATC

Arizona Theatre Company is a professional, not-for-profit theatre company. This means all of our artists, administrators and production staff are paid professionals, and the income we receive from ticket sales and contributions goes right back into our budget to create our work, rather than to any particular person as a profit.

Each season, ATC employs hundreds of actors, directors and designers from all over the country to create the work you see on stage. In addition, ATC currently employs about 100 staff members in our production shops and administrative offices in Tucson and Phoenix during our season. Among these people are carpenters, painters, marketing professionals, fundraisers, stage directors, computer specialists, sound and light board operators, tailors, costume designers, box office agents, stage crew – the list is endless – representing an amazing range of talents and skills.

We are also supported by a Board of Trustees, a group of business and community leaders who volunteer their time and expertise to assist the theatre in financial and legal matters, advise in marketing and fundraising, and help represent the theatre in our community.

Roughly 150,000 people attend our shows every year, and several thousand of those people support us with charitable contributions in addition to purchasing their tickets. Businesses large and small, private foundations and the city and state governments also support our work financially.

All of this is in support of our vision and mission:

OUR VISION IS TO TOUCH LIVES THROUGH THE POWER OF THEATRE.

Our mission is to create professional theatre that continually strives to reach new levels of artistic excellence and that resonates locally, in the state of Arizona and throughout the nation. In order to fulfill our mission, the theatre produces a broad repertoire ranging from classics to new works, engages artists of the highest caliber, and is committed to assuring access to the broadest spectrum of citizens.
INTRODUCTION TO THE PLAY

Wait Until Dark
Written by Frederick Knott
Adapted by Jeffrey Hatcher
Directed by David Ira Goldstein

ARIZONA PREMIERE

A gripping thriller from the author of Dial 'M' for Murder. Don’t let Susan Hendrix’s quaint Greenwich Village apartment fool you; hidden within is a treasure for which con men would kill. Susan, tragically blinded in an automobile accident, unwittingly becomes the key player in a dangerous game that threatens all she holds dear. Employing disguise and deception, two crooks become increasingly desperate and depraved, but must wait until dark to play out this classic thriller’s chilling conclusion. Spellbinding theatre as only ATC can do it.

MEET THE CHARACTERS

Susan Hendrix: Smart and independent, Susan is learning to adjust after being recently blinded in an automobile accident.

Sam Hendrix: A photographer and former Marine recently returned from fighting in World War II; married to Susan.

Mike: A soldier friend of Sam’s, home on leave from the Marines.

Roat: A depraved criminal with a dark master plan.

Carlino: Slightly unwilling assistant to Roat in his criminal endeavors.

Gloria: The young upstairs neighbor of Susan and Sam with an unhappy home life, who helps Susan during the day.
MEET THE CREATORS

Frederick Knott (Playwright) was born to English missionaries in Hankow, China, in 1916. He was educated at Oundle School from 1929 to 1934 and later gained a law degree from Cambridge University. He is the author of the BBC television production and stage play, Dial ‘M’ for Murder, which premiered at the Westminster Theatre in Victoria, London, in 1952, and wrote the screenplay for the 1954 Hitchcock film of the same name. In 1960, Knott wrote the stage thriller Write Me a Murder, produced at the Belasco Theatre in New York in 1961. Wait Until Dark was produced on Broadway at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre in 1966, directed by Arthur Penn and starring Lee Remick, who won a Tony Award nomination for her performance. The film version, also titled Wait Until Dark, was released in 1967 and starred Audrey Hepburn in the lead role. Knott died in New York City in 2002.

Jeffrey Hatcher (Adapter) is the author of Sherlock Holmes and the Adventure of The Suicide Club, Ten Chimneys, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Ella and co-author of Work Song: Three Views of Frank Lloyd Wright and Tuesdays with Morrie – all of which have been seen on Arizona Theatre Company’s stage. Mr. Hatcher authored the book for the Broadway musical, Never Gonna Dance. Off-Broadway, he has had several pays produced, including Three Viewings and A Picasso at Manhattan Theatre Club, Scotland Road and The Turn of the Screw at Primary Stages, Tuesdays with Morrie (with Mitch Albom) at Minetta Lane Theatre, Murder by Poe and The Turn of the Screw with The Acting Company, Nedly at The American Place Theatre and Fellow Travelers at Manhattan Punchline. His plays – among them, Compleat Female Stage Beauty, Mrs. Mannerly, Murderers, Mercy of a Storm, Smash Armadale, Korczak’s Children, To Fool the Eye, The Falls, A Piece of the Rope, All the Way with LBJ, The Government Inspector and Work Song (with Eric Simonson) – have been seen at such theatres as Yale Repertory Theatre, The Old Globe, South Coast Repertory, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Intiman Theatre, Florida Stage, The Empty Space, California Theatre Center, Madison Repertory Theatre, Illusion Theater, Denver Center Theatre Company, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Philadelphia Theatre Company, Coconut Grove Playhouse, Asolo Repertory Theatre, City Theatre, Studio Arena Theatre and dozens more in the U.S. and abroad. Mr. Hatcher wrote the screenplays for Stage Beauty, The Duchess and Casanova, as well as authoring episodes of the Peter Falk series, Columbo. He is a member and/or alumnus of The Playwrights’ Center, The Dramatists Guild of America, Writers Guild of America and New Dramatists.

BEHIND THE SCENES

TALKING ABOUT THRILLS AND CHILLS
BY JENNIFER WERNER, SEPTEMBER 16, 2014

Jenni Werner, Literary Director and Resident Dramaturg at Geva Theatre Center, co-producer of ATC’s Wait Until Dark, sat down with director David Ira Goldstein during rehearsals, and asked him a few questions about the process.

JW: Wait Until Dark is a classic thriller, but many people are probably more familiar with the film starring Audrey Hepburn than they are with the play. Has that impacted your vision for the production?

I have been careful not to watch the film more than once, and that was several months before rehearsals. It is a very fine film, but after all, it came out in 1967 and I find that many people have a vague recollection at most. Over the last six months, as I told people I was doing the play, the response was generally, “Oh, that’s the one with Audrey Hepburn as the blind girl.” Unless someone has watched it recently, they don’t really remember the details or the surprises. Plus, we are doing a brand new adaptation that will have some surprises even for those who know the film or original play intimately. It is the same situations and characters, but beat by beat and line by line it is a different animal.
JW: Do you find that your approach to directing a thriller is different from your approach to other kinds of dramas?

There are certain universals that are important to me as a director no matter what the material: drama, comedy, musical, classic. The key for me is always honesty. Audiences can smell untrue acting a mile away no matter how far-fetched or unrealistic the action of the play. That is what distinguishes the theatre from all other media like movies or TV. The actors are living complex people in the room with us. It is at the basis of the theatrical experience and what draws me into a theatrical event even over spectacle or other elements. Those six people onstage in *Wait Until Dark* aren’t CGI, they are breathing with us in the room. Whether I am directing *The Kite Runner* or *The Pajama Game*, I always talk to the company about honesty in the acting. But there are different aspects to thrillers and mysteries that have to come to the fore. You must be absolutely committed to clarity of story-telling, you have to be patient with exposition and not short-change the set-up, and you can’t let the action go slack in the end.

JW: This play, even when you’re reading the script, is full of danger and suspense. You find yourself wanting to yell at the characters, to warn them. I love that about the play, but I can’t quite explain why. Do you have a sense about why we like suspense-filled plays and movies? What’s your favorite in this genre?

Thrillers get a bad rap. The best seller list is always full of them. Yet they aren’t often considered literary in the same way that classic mysteries have gained critical respect. They don’t often get to Broadway, yet when they do it is usually for a nice long run. Whenever we do one at Arizona Theatre Company, which is too infrequently, audiences flock to them. They do tend to get more critical respect in the movies, but that is certainly due in large part to the legacy of Alfred Hitchcock. As I have been working on *Wait Until Dark*, I am struck again and again by how Hitchcockian it is – and Hitchcock actually made the film of Frederick Knott’s other major play *Dial ‘M’ for Murder*. A woman in peril (Susan), the sudden importance of mundane prop (the refrigerator), the use of a McGuffin (the doll…!) are all Hitchcockian tropes that work on us in a psychologically insinuating way. And a good scare also has a physiological pay-off – we actually release adrenaline into our systems which gives us a physical jolt.

I have a special attachment to Victorian thrillers and monsters. Over my tenure at Arizona, we have commissioned and premiered several “Victorian monster” plays as I call them, but they really are all thrillers. Steven Dietz’s *Dracula* and his *Sherlock Holmes: The Final Adventure*, Jeffrey Hatcher’s *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and *Sherlock Holmes and the Adventure of The Suicide Club*. All four were enormously popular and have all had dozens or hundreds of subsequent productions all over the world, and all four were nominated for Edgar Awards. I doubt that any of them will ever be considered great literary works, but all four are very intelligent and damn good audience pleasers. Not an easy thing to pull off for a writer. *Wait Until Dark*, although set in 1944, has many of the same attributes and characteristics including a true monster in Harry Roat from Scarsdale as its villain. As to what I think is the best thriller ever written for the theatre, I would have to say *Sleuth*. It’s perfect.

JW: This production is Jeffrey Hatcher’s adaptation of Frederick Knott’s play. Mr. Hatcher has moved the setting from its original 1966 to 1944. How do you think that impacts the story?

It affects the story in many interesting ways. By setting the play during the war, the characters have an outside pressure that isn’t present in 1966. The threat of sudden death from the War hangs over several of them. It also puts the play smack dab in the middle of the height of film noir, which is definitely where it belongs. The play is about darkness and light – about the hidden and the seen – qualities we strongly associate with film noir and the classic Hollywood movies of that era. It gave my marvelous design team wonderful opportunities to play right into that. But Jeffrey has done much more than simply move the time period by inserting 1940’s references. He has also boiled down the language into the terse, lean dialogue of the period films. And, being Jeffrey, he has added a healthy dose of humor to the play, which is especially effective with the character of Susan, who now has just an edge of the wise-cracking ‘dames’ of the period.
When the first words you hear on entering the rehearsal room are “You can even finish him off here if you want to,” you know you’re in for a treat. If you’ve seen either the film version of *Wait Until Dark* or the play it’s based on (or if you have ever seen a thriller of any kind...), you know to expect a pretty terrifying fight between the bad guy and our heroine. Yesterday, director David Ira Goldstein and fight director Adriano Gatto were working with Brooke Parks and Ted Koch on a moment near the end of the play, and I was invited to observe. I promise not to spoil the ending, so you’ll still feel every adrenaline-filled scream at the theatre!

Imagine, if you will, a nearly empty rehearsal room. There are a few pieces of furniture – a table, a couch, a stove and a sink, and a shelf standing in as a refrigerator. Tape on the floor indicates walls, steps and other changes in level, but you have to work hard to imagine these things, as well as the locked door at the top of the “stairs.” Not only does the company need to create the scenery in their minds, but they also need to find a way to tell a dangerous story, while keeping the actors completely safe.

So where do they start? First, they take into account what kind of training these characters would have – how would they know how to fight? Ted’s character, Roat, is a con man. He knows how to fight because he learned it the hard way – on the street. Brooke’s character, Susan, is a blind woman in the 1940’s. Knife fights are something with which she would have very little experience.

They talk about the timing of each movement in great detail, including the moment before. The preparation for an action tells us almost as much about the impact as the action itself. The angle of an actor’s arm tells the story of where that arm will end up in the next moment, and whether or not it will hit its target. While observing today, I learned a new use for the word CRAFT – as an acronym for the steps in an act of stage violence: Cue – Reaction – Action – Follow-Through. The actors have to know what the cue for each movement is – is it seeing the weapon? Or is it seeing the other actor draw back in preparation for a strike? Then there’s a reaction to that cue: does the actor attempt to move out of the way to avoid being hit? The reaction and the action – a fist moving forward, a knife swipe, etc. – might happen almost simultaneously. Then, here’s the crucial thing: follow-through. It’s crucial to making an impact look real. Without follow through, stage violence doesn’t look like it hurts, it doesn’t appear to cause any damage.

With this show, there are even more details to consider. How dark is it onstage at this moment? Will the couch block the audience from seeing parts of the choreography? How does this action match with the dialogue in the script, and does it keep the tension mounting as the fight progresses?

Even though I watched them painstakingly work through every movement in this fight, when they ran it again at the end of rehearsal, I promise you, the answer to that last question was undeniable. Oh, yes, it does...

**THRILLERS AND FILM NOIR**

*Wait Until Dark* is a representative of a long line of literary development that went into crafting the thriller genre, whose roots can be traced back to the 8th century BC and the epic poetry of Homer’s *Odyssey*, and which saw a rush of popularity on stage and in film beginning in the 1920s. Tenets of the genre began to become strongly identifiable as they recurred over the next decades in the work of film directors like Alfred Hitchcock, whose style embraced the most exciting combinations of character, pace, and visual and sound effects to maximize tension and suspense, and push audiences to the very edges of their seats.

Thriller plots traditionally revolve around a villain-driven narrative, withheld or manipulated information, high stakes (such as impending death), a mystery that must be solved, and the presence of innocence in a corrupt world that creates an intense desire for justice and morality among an audience. The protagonist is traditionally set against a seemingly unsolvable, dangerous problem, and must overcome great odds and grim circumstances in order to triumph.
Frederick Knott’s *Wait Until Dark* emerged in 1966 as the thriller genre came to overlap with elements of other storytelling techniques, such as horror and mystery, to create layered subgenres like psychological thrillers, action thrillers and crime thrillers. Jeffrey Hatcher’s adaptation of *Wait Until Dark* places the events of the story in 1944, when film noir was first emerging in response to a changing American identity as the dark effects of World War II were becoming keenly felt, but the end was not yet in sight. While stylistically speaking the original story may not fit strictly into the classic definition of film noir, its new setting brings out many of the same characteristics that the genre sought to emphasize.

Film noir, a French term meaning “black film,” was first coined by French film critic Nino Frank in 1946, who noted that many of the wartime and post-war popular American films had a dark, downbeat quality of image that reflected the anxiety of a people whose sense of security and trust had been shaken by the horrors of a world at war. That sense of pessimism and suspicion manifested in moods of alienation, moral corruption, disillusionment and evil, and were underscored by sinister or morally ambiguous characters, non-linear narratives, and visual techniques like expressionistic lighting, jarring juxtaposition of elements, unbalanced compositions, and ominous shadows – such as those created by light streaming through Venetian blinds.

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT: 1944

1944, three years after America entered World War II, contributes a unique historical perspective to the story of *Wait Until Dark*. Adapter Jeffrey Hatcher notes the significance of the year: “[It is] deep enough into the war that its effects were being fully felt by the people at home. Men could have gone away and come back. But it wasn’t so close to the end that the world was about to go back to normal again.”

The war effort inspired both energy and anxiety; people back home were swept up in a sense of pride and patriotism as a show of support for their soldiers overseas, alongside the harsh reality that many of those soldiers would not return home. Even for many who did return, physical and psychological damage was common, and the country rushed to create public aid and education systems to help veterans readjust to domestic life.

The 1940s economy fostered a boom of industry in the U.S. to create products needed for the war. With most of America’s able-bodied men overseas, those new factory and industrial positions were largely filled by women, many of whom were working outside the home for the first time. With the encouragement of Rosie the Riveter, women entered into positions of power and authority in the job market in unprecedented numbers, subverting the long-held belief that women were incapable of holding down physically or mentally demanding jobs.
The industrial boom of the war economy led to an increase in urbanization as workers flocked to the work in the factories, paralleled by a rise in the crime rate in urban settings. Most working-age men had been drafted and sent overseas to fight, leaving adapter Jeffrey Hatcher to ask, “What kind of men are left?” Reasons for not being accepted into the military included being classified as IV-F: deemed to be physically, mentally or morally unfit.

Another rapidly-changing facet of American social politics was treatment and attitudes toward disabled persons; the physical and psychological effects of the war lasted long beyond the soldiers’ return to American soil. Prior to World War II, participation in federal vocational programs for people with disabilities had been limited to those deemed to be “feasible” or self-supporting; because blind people were assumed to be unable to ever become self-supporting, very little assistance was available. In January, 1944, President Franklin D. Roosevelt made a commitment to the large number of servicemen blinded during the war by signing an executive order to guarantee that they would receive “adequate training” to meet the new necessities of their lives. Training included learning Braille, typing, writing, and orientation (or independent travel), using a cross-body protective long cane technique, further developed and improved upon by Richard Hoover in 1945.

Another hugely impactful facet of American life during the early 1940s was the rationing of many commodities that were in low supply as an effect of the war. Things like tires, cars, bicycles and gasoline as well as food items like sugar, coffee, processed foods and meat were documented by ration cards, which would allow the purchase of limited amounts for each individual person.

### RATIONED ITEMS DURING WORLD WAR II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rationed Item</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cars</td>
<td>Feb. 1942 – Oct. 1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycles</td>
<td>July 1942 – Sept. 1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gasoline</td>
<td>May 1942 – Aug. 1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuel Oil &amp; Kerosene</td>
<td>Oct. 1945 – Aug. 1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solid Fuels</td>
<td>Sept. 1943 – Aug. 1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stoves</td>
<td>Dec. 1942 – Aug. 1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubber Footwear</td>
<td>Oct. 1942 – Sept. 1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoes</td>
<td>Feb. 1943 – Oct. 1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>May 1942 – 1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffee</td>
<td>Nov. 1942 – July 1943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processed Foods</td>
<td>March 1943 – Aug. 1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meats &amp; Canned Fish</td>
<td>March 1943 – Nov. 1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheese, Canned Milk, Fats</td>
<td>March 1943 – Nov. 1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typewriters</td>
<td>March 1942 – April 1944</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During and following World War II, Reverend Thomas Carroll developed a new mobility program to help blinded veterans return to civilian life and society. As an advocate for the rights of the blind and the visually impaired, Carroll published his book *Blindness, What it Is, What it Does, and How to Live With It* in 1961. In the first section of the book, “Analysis of What is Lost,” Carroll addresses the multitude of social and psychological adjustments that accompany vision loss. Although rehabilitation services and assistive devices have come a long way since Carroll’s work, his insights are still considered to be highly relevant informational tools today.

Much of the training for those learning to cope with vision impairment involves using the other senses to identify landmarks and surroundings, including a focus on sound, touch, smell and kinesthetic awareness in addition to visualization, or the creation of mental pictures based on sense observation and visual memory.

## CARROLL’S TWENTY LOSSES OF BLINDNESS

### Basic Losses to Psychological Security

1. **Loss of physical integrity**

   Self-esteem is closely related to physical competence and appearance. When individuals experience blindness, they may feel ‘broken’ or no longer whole. When they were sighted, they may have had negative stereotypes of blind people. They may now see themselves as outsiders and different from those in the broader community.

2. **Loss of confidence in the remaining senses**

   Vision is the dominant, integrating sense. Without it, one must learn to trust the other senses. However, this does not occur automatically. People often have the mistaken belief that blind people have extraordinary senses of hearing and touch. This has been shown not to be true. It is actually the result of increased concentration and training. There is no magic compensation in the remaining senses. Vision is such a dominant sense that the newly blinded do not find it at all easy to gather environmental information from the remaining senses.

3. **Loss of reality contact with the environment**

   Sight plays the primary role in maintaining orientation. When sight is lost, individuals can lose a sense of where they are, and of who or what is around them. Although sound can be helpful, it moves and echoes off objects and is not as localizing or specific as vision. Objects may no longer be where they were expected to be. A feeling of “separateness” and a sense of isolation also occurs because the brain is receiving less stimulation.

4. **Loss of visual background**

   Sighted individuals have a far-reaching experience with the environment. Sight gives them an instantaneous sense of what is in the environment beyond their immediate task. In the absence of vision, hearing can provide some information, but only about people or objects emitting sound. Touch reaches only as far as arm’s length. Also, peripheral vision can no longer be relied on as a warning system. People and objects just suddenly appear and it’s frightening. Newly blinded persons are in a visual vacuum, without a palette of colour and movement around them.
5. **Loss of light security**

It is a mistake to equate blindness with darkness. The vast majority of people who are legally blind have functional vision, and many others can perceive light.

Equating blindness with darkness also has broader psychological implications. Light is associated with goodness, truth and, in general, positive characteristics. Darkness, on the other hand, is associated with evil, despair, and ignorance. Light and darkness, therefore, have emotional connotations for both sighted and blind people. According to Carroll, this can result in barriers to full acceptance in the broader society.

Those who have been totally blind since birth – those relative few who have never had light perception – must rely on the word of others who say they live in darkness. Also, those who are experiencing a progressive loss of vision often fear the final loss of sight as complete darkness.

**Loss in Basic Skills**

6. **Loss of mobility**

Significant loss of vision results in a loss of independence and in the ability to negotiate the environment. Newly blinded persons may be afraid to move around their homes on their own. They are without a sense of freedom, security, and control in their environment and feel very dependent on others.

7. **Loss of techniques of daily living**

The performance of daily tasks leads to repeated frustration. The result is that the individual is constantly reminded that he or she is blind.

**Loss in Communication**

8. **Loss of ease of written communication**

With the onset of blindness, individuals lose their ease of access to reading and writing. They are no longer able to deal with making lists, keeping track of appointments, taking notes, or maintaining confidentiality in correspondence. They can no longer see photographs and other graphic illustrations. Newspapers and magazines become inaccessible, as do the books they may have enjoyed reading to their children. The loss of written communication also has detrimental effects on one’s profession.

9. **Loss of ease of spoken communication**

Gestures and facial expressions are important aspects of spoken communication and are lost with the onset of blindness. It becomes harder to interrupt in a conversation, to know who’s there, or to know when someone may have walked away. Without visual cues, silences can be difficult. An individual may feel he or she is expected to say something to fill the silence. Public speakers also lose the ability to refer to their notes.

10. **Loss of informational progress**

Fewer forms of information are readily and naturally available. This makes it difficult to keep up with what’s going on in the world at large, in the community, or among friends. It’s also more difficult to keep up with current hair styles and fashion. Individuals may find their world becoming smaller.

**Losses in Appreciation**

11. **Loss of the visual perception of the pleasurable**

Loss of vision means losing the ability to access objects you found visually pleasing. This also includes looking in the mirror or seeing how a new outfit looks. Does the food “look good” to eat? Singles bars just aren’t the same! You can no longer see the faces of your family.

12. **Loss of visual perception of the beautiful**

This is a significant loss for those who once enjoyed the visual arts – museums, art galleries or a scenic walk in nature. It can be frustrating to try to imagine while someone else tries to describe something beautiful.
Losses Concerning Occupation and Financial Status

13. Loss of recreation
Recreation, whether physical or intellectual, is vital to stress management. Perhaps the individual used to play basketball with friends or took art classes. Even informal recreation activities like sitting down with a good book or playing the piano using sheet music are gone.

14. Loss of career, vocational goal, job opportunity
Many who experience blindness are seniors who have already retired. Others may have careers they can return to with minor adjustments. For many working age adults, however, this is an important loss. The reality is that personal identity is very much tied to work. A favourite question at parties is “What kind of work do you do?” This is an uncomfortable question for someone who has recently experienced a loss of vision. At the same time, it is telling when the question isn’t asked at all because of the lack of expectation often associated with blindness.

Work also fills a lot of time in people’s lives. There is a large void of time, intellectual stimulation, social contact and sense of accomplishment when work is taken away.

15. Loss of financial security
Having to quit work or leave for retraining results in a loss of financial security. A major role in the family changes if the person with vision loss is a caregiver or breadwinner.

Expenses may also increase as a result of medical issues and those associated with living with a disability. Taxi costs may increase, bargain-hunting is much more difficult, and dry-cleaning bills may increase.

Resulting Losses to the Whole Personality

16. Loss of personal independence
People in the general public may believe the stereotype of the “helpless blind man” and reduce their expectations of the person’s independence.

The person with vision loss may struggle between the desire to remain independent and hold onto the freedom it allows and the desire to remain dependent in order to take advantage of the protection it provides. A major part of independence is knowing when to ask for help. People with “giving personalities” have a more difficult time accepting help.

17. Loss of social adequacy
This loss tends to come from the lack of expectation of others who are trying to be kind and sympathetic. In their former sighted lives, people experiencing a loss of vision may have felt pity for those who were blind. This perception can carry over into their newly blind identity. Blindness may also result in a separation from society at large. Either the individual is seen as helpless or as possessing superpowers of hearing or memory. In either case, a feeling of social inadequacy may result.

18. Loss of obscurity
This involves the feeling that you’re always “noticed” by others. People who experience blindness lose their privacy. They are noticed and may become public figures merely because of their blindness. They may not want this attention but don’t always have a choice. They become “the blind graduate”, “the blind lawyer” or “the blind dad of the first grader”.

19. Loss of self-esteem
There are two aspects to self-esteem – the objective, based upon a realistic sense of our accomplishments, talents and contributions, and the subjective sense based on our feelings about ourselves.

When blindness occurs, it is no longer possible for one’s “former self” to exist due to some or all of the losses above. People experiencing vision loss may alter their expectations of making contributions in the future and be affected by how they are perceived by others.
20. Loss of total personality organization

A wide range of psychosocial problems can manifest themselves as a result of vision loss. The individual’s total personality experiences an onslaught of blows. How she or he reacts depends in part on personality and on individual strengths and weaknesses. Inevitably there is a significant shock to the system.

- List reprinted from *Balance for Blind Adults*: http://www.balancefba.org/living/vision_loss/20losses.html

**FEMINISM AND *WAIT UNTIL DARK***

While it might not seem obvious that *Wait Until Dark* has feminist leanings, Susan’s quick wit and unwillingness to be taken advantage of by men because of her gender or her disability can lead us to some interesting feminist conversations; it also doesn’t hurt the case that the play’s original 1966 premiere fell smack dab during rise of Second Wave Feminism.

Second Wave Feminism was a movement that began in the early 1960s and primarily fought for reproductive and workplace rights. Distinct from the First Wave of Feminism, which took place during the 19th and early-20th century and focused mainly on women’s suffrage and property rights, Second Wave Feminists helped establish a dialogue about domestic abuse, birth control, wage inequality, workplace sexism, and the availability of childcare, among other things. Advocates for feminism during this period rebelled against the idea that certain jobs were “naturally” more suited for certain genders, and the expectation that women should fulfill an “ideal image” of femininity as a wife, mother and homemaker.

Jeffrey’s Hatcher’s stage adaptation of *Wait Until Dark*, which places the events in 1944, neatly aligns with many of the ideals posited by Second Wave Feminism, though it falls before the formal chronological movement. By the end of World War I in 1945, the draft had pressed approximately 10 million men between the ages of 18 and 45 into military service, leaving vacant many of the factory and industry jobs that were integral to the American war effort and economy. Many of these jobs were filled by women, working outside the home and earning their own wages for the first time, and giving rise to a new image of femininity that included traits like capability, strength, and independence. Supported by capitalist and military-industrial agendas during the war, women found themselves forced out of those same jobs when the fighting concluded, to make room for the soldiers returning from overseas and seeking employment back home. It was expected that once women didn’t have to work they would no longer want to, but instead would quietly return home to build domestic lives for themselves and their families.

However, many women were no longer satisfied with the pre-wartime avenues of employment that were again presented as their only options: jobs like waitressing, secretary work, and nursing – sometimes referred to as “pink collar” jobs – were still deemed to be acceptable employment for women. However, while television shows of the 1950s like *I Love Lucy* and *Leave it to Beaver* seemed to call back the 19th-century cult of domesticity which outlines woman as pious, pure, domestic, and submissive, a spark of momentum had been ignited in the Feminist movement. Feminist authors like Simone de Beauvoir and Betty Friedan began to challenge the idea that the physical make-up of men and women differentiated them in any way, attacking the long-perpetuated myths that women were naturally less suited for positions that required physical capabilities or advanced reasoning, and leading to major legislative changes throughout the 1960s. In 1963 the Equal Pay Act made it officially illegal to pay people differently based on their sex; in 1964, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act made it illegal for employers to discriminate based on sex, ethnicity, color, religion, or national origin; and in 1966 the National Organization for Women was officially founded, today boasting more than 550 chapters across all 50 states.
REFERENCES AND GLOSSARY

4F: A draft exemption classification assigned primarily to those with muscular and bone malformations, hearing or circulatory ailments, hernias, syphilis, or mental deficiency or disease.

Adam: Reference to the first human according to the Book of Genesis in the Bible.

Aleutians: A chain of 14 large and 57 small volcanic islands forming part of the Aleutian Arc in the Northern Pacific Ocean. They form the westernmost part of the United States, marking a line between the Bering Sea and the Pacific Ocean.

Beef: A slang term meaning a complaint or a problem.

Blackout curtains: Plain black curtains that block light, used to prevent any airborne enemies from seeing light from windows.

Brass knuckles: Weapons used in hand-to-hand combat consisting of pieces of metal shaped to fit around the knuckles, designed to concentrate the force of a punch and increase damage to a target.

Brawn: Physical strength, often used as a contrast to intelligence.

Chianti: Any wine produced in the Chianti region of central Tuscany, in Italy, created from specific combinations of types of grapes.

Club foot: Also called congenital talipes equinovarus (CTEV), a congenital deformity with which the affected foot appears to have been rotated internally at the ankle. It is a relatively common birth defect that, with treatment, can often lead to full recovery during early childhood.

Dipso: One afflicted by dipsomania, more commonly referred to as alcoholism.

Draft notice: Governmental notification that one was selected from the draft lottery and required to serve at least one year in the armed forces; once the U.S. entered World War II, draft terms extended through the duration of the fighting. By the end of the war in 1945, more than 10 million men had been inducted into the military via the draft.

Femme fatale: An attractive, seductive woman; a common character archetype in film noir.

Florsheim’s: A U.S. shoe brand established in Chicago in 1892, still in business today with headquarters in Glendale, Wisconsin.

Fuse: A type of low resistance resistor in electronics and electrical engineering that acts as a sacrificial device to provide protection; when too much current flows through it, a metal wire or strip will melt to interrupt the circuit that it connects and protect the system from damage.

Grand Central Station: A commuter railroad terminal at 42nd Street and Park Avenue in Midtown Manhattan, New York City.

Hamlet: A small settlement with small population in a rural area, or a component of a larger settlement or municipality.

Icebox: A compact, non-mechanical refrigerator.

Locksmith: One who makes and repairs locks.
**Milk truck:** A truck that delivered milk in bottles or cartons, used mainly in the U.S. until the 1960s.

**Obstetrics:** The branch of medicine and surgery concerned with childbirth and the care of pregnant women.

**Orthopedics:** The branch of medicine concerned with the correction or prevention of deformities, disorders, or injuries of the skeleton and associated structures, such as tendons and ligaments.

**Ovaltine:** A brand of milk flavoring product made with malt extract, sugar and whey; some flavors of Ovaltine include cocoa.

**Pacific theatre:** The part of World War II fought in the Pacific and East Asia, generally considered to have begun in December, 1941, which brought the Sino-Japanese War into the greater global conflict of World War II.

**Palermo:** A city in Insular Italy, the capital of the autonomous region of Sicily and the Province of Palermo.

**Penn Station:** The main intercity transit station in New York City, located in Midtown Manhattan between Seventh and Eighth Avenues, beneath Madison Square Garden.

**Purple Heart:** A U.S. military decoration awarded in the name of the President to those wounded or killed while serving with the U.S. military, first instituted on April 5, 1917.

**Rockaway:** A peninsula on Long Island, New York, located in the borough of Queens and a popular summer resort area since the 1830s.

**Rustic:** Of or relating to the countryside; rural; constructed or made in a plain and simple fashion.

**Scarsdale:** Town and village in Westchester County, New York, in the northern suburbs of New York City.

**Signal Corps:** The U.S. Army Signal Corps develops, tests, provides and manages communication and information systems support for the command and control of combined armed forces.

**“Tea for two”:** Possible reference to the song “Tea for Two” from the 1924 musical *No, No, Nanette*, with music by Vincent Youmans and lyrics by Irving Caesar.

**“Two to tango”:** Part of a common idiomatic expression which suggests that two people are inextricably paired in something, occasionally with negative connotations.

**Venetian blinds:** A window blind with numerous horizontal slats that may be set simultaneously at any of several angles so as to vary the amount of light admitted.

**WA-4-3502:** An example of the two-letter, five-number (2L-SN) system of phone numbers that became the North American standard in the 1950s when conversions from manual telephone operations to automated equipment required a uniform system of number dialing.

**Western Union:** A financial services and communications company based in the U.S., which delivered telegrams and money orders during World War II. The company took on special significance during the war because the arrival of a telegram usually signaled bad news about a family member on the front.

**Westport:** A coastal town on Long Island Sound in Fairfield County, Connecticut, ranked the 10th wealthiest town in the U.S.

**White cane:** A mobility tool used by many people with blindness or visual impairment, first introduced in its white form after World War I as a visual courtesy to others. In 1944, Richard E. Hoover developed what is now the standard method of “long cane” training for independent movement and orientation.
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How did the actress playing Susan make the audience believe she couldn’t see? What type of preparation do you think went into this particular aspect of her performance? How would that preparation differ for portraying different disabilities? Give some examples.

2. Susan and Mike have a very unique relationship throughout the play. Do you consider the character of Mike to be a “bad guy”? Did you think his feelings for Susan changed throughout the play? Did this change your opinion of him?

3. Susan starts the play newly blind and not confident in her ability to function on a daily basis. Imagine Susan after the play. How do you think she reacts to surviving the situation with three con-men? Do you think she becomes more confident? Or do you think she will continue to be afraid? How do you feel you would react in this situation?

4. This version of *Wait Until Dark* was adapted from the original play and the setting/time period was changed. Imagine you are the adapting playwright; what time period/setting would you place this play in? What changes could you make to the script to reflect the new setting? How does a new time period or setting add layers to or change a story?

5. Do you think this story would have unfolded in the same way had the protagonist been a man instead of a woman (Susan)? How does Susan defy the expectations that the male characters have of her? What do you think of Susan as a heroic character?

6. How did you feel while watching the play (tense, frightened, intrigued, confused, etc)? What made you feel this way? Did the actors succeed in creating a sense of danger during climactic moments?

7. How did the writing, directing, and acting contribute to a feeling of suspense within the play? Did the design elements (set, costumes, lighting, sound) contribute to this feeling as well?

8. How would you classify this play (drama, thriller, action, etc)? Can you think of any films that are similar in style or in content to this play? What are some challenges in telling a story like this live on stage versus in film?

9. What were your favorite design elements (set, props, costume, lighting, sound)?

ACTIVITIES

1. Watch the 1967 film version of *Wait Until Dark* with your students. Discuss similarities and differences in the story and in the storytelling devices that are common to the crime/thriller genre (lighting/shadow and music used to heighten suspense, camera angles in film, sound effects, characterization, pacing, etc). Which version do your students prefer? Is one medium – film or live theatre – more conducive to telling stories like this one? Why or why not?

2. Have students write an essay comparing and contrasting the 1967 film with this stage version, noting the similarities and differences listed above. Could either the film or the stage play be considered part of the film noir genre? Why or why not?
3. Theatre game: “Wink Murder”: One player is secretly assigned the role of “murderer”. The murderer has the ability to “kill” other players by making eye contact and winking at them. If a player is winked at, they must count silently to five before feigning sudden death, and either lying on the floor where they died, or silently leaving the playing area. If a player suspects they know the identity of the murderer, they may raise their hand and announce “I accuse”, without naming their suspect. At this point, the game pauses and the accuser asks for somebody to second their accusation, again with neither naming a suspect. When they have a seconder, both of these players simultaneously point to their suspect; if they are both pointing to a player who admits to being the murderer, the game ends. Otherwise (if they are pointing to different players, or to an innocent player) the accusers are both eliminated as if they had been murdered. Players are forbidden from communicating their thoughts on who the murderer might be, and players who are not the murderer are not allowed to wink.

In one variant of the game, another player, unaware of the murderer’s identity, is assigned the role of “detective”. All other players sit in a circle around the detective, whose objective is to correctly identify and accuse the murderer, minimizing the number of murder victims. A limit is often imposed upon the number of accusations the detective can make. In this version of the game, players other than the murderer and detective do not know the murderer’s identity, and have no role to play in the game other than to die noticeably if winked at.