Excerpt terms and conditions

This excerpt is available to assist you in the play selection process.

You may view, print and download any of our excerpts for perusal purposes.

Excerpts are not intended for performance, classroom or other academic use. In any of these cases you will need to purchase playbooks via our website or by phone, fax or mail.

A short excerpt is not always indicative of the entire work, and we strongly suggest reading the whole play before planning a production or ordering a cast quantity.

Dramatic Publishing
We Are Proud to Present
a Presentation
About the
Herero of Namibia,
Formerly Known as
South West Africa,
From the German Südwestafrika,
Between the Years
1884-1915

Drama by
Jackie Sibblies Drury
Drama. By Jackie Sibblies Drury. Cast: 4m., 2w. A group of actors gather to tell the little-known story of the first genocide of the 20th century. We Are Proud to Present... takes place largely in a rehearsal room that descends from collaborative to absurd as a group of idealistic actors—three black and three white—attempt to recreate the extinction of the Herero tribe at the hands of their German colonizers. Along the way, they test the limits of empathy as their own stories, subjectivities, assumptions and prejudices catalyze their theatrical process. Eventually the full force of a horrific past crashes into the good intentions of the present, and what seemed a faraway place and time comes all too close to home. Unit set. Approximate running time: 90 minutes. Code: WG9.
We Are Proud to Present a Presentation
About the Herero of Namibia,
Formerly Known as South West Africa,
From the German Südwestafrika,
Between the Years 1884–1915

By

JACKIE SIBBLIES DRURY

Dramatic Publishing Company
Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa
*** NOTICE ***

The amateur and stock acting rights to this work are controlled exclusively by THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC., without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be given. Royalty must be paid every time a play is performed whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. A play is performed any time it is acted before an audience. Current royalty rates, applications and restrictions may be found at our website: www.dramaticpublishing.com, or we may be contacted by mail at: THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC., 311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098.

COPYRIGHT LAW GIVES THE AUTHOR OR THE AUTHOR’S AGENT THE EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO MAKE COPIES. This law provides authors with a fair return for their creative efforts. Authors earn their living from the royalties they receive from book sales and from the performance of their work. Conscientious observance of copyright law is not only ethical, it encourages authors to continue their creative work. This work is fully protected by copyright. No alterations, deletions or substitutions may be made in the work without the prior written consent of the publisher. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, videotape, film, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. It may not be performed either by professionals or amateurs without payment of royalty. All rights, including, but not limited to, the professional, motion picture, radio, television, videotape, foreign language, tabloid, recitation, lecturing, publication and reading, are reserved.

For performance of any songs, music and recordings mentioned in this play which are in copyright, the permission of the copyright owners must be obtained or other songs and recordings in the public domain substituted.

©MMXIV by
JACKIE SIBBLIES DRURY

Printed in the United States of America
All Rights Reserved

(WE ARE PROUD TO PRESENT A PRESENTATION ABOUT THE HERERO OF NAMIBIA, FORMERLY KNOWN AS SOUTH WEST AFRICA, FROM THE GERMAN SÜDWESTAFRIKA, BETWEEN THE YEARS 1884–1915)

For inquiries concerning all other rights, contact:
AO International
540 President St., Unit 2E
Brooklyn, NY 11215 • Phone: (917) 521-6640

ISBN: 978-1-58342-945-7

© The Dramatic Publishing Company
IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

All producers of the play must give credit to the author of the play in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play and in all instances in which the title of the play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the play and/or a production. The name of the author must also appear on a separate line, on which no other name appears, immediately following the title, and must appear in size of type not less than fifty percent (50%) the size of the title type. Biographical information on the author, if included in the playbook, may be used in all programs. In all programs this notice must appear:

“Produced by special arrangement with
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC., of Woodstock, Illinois.”

In addition, all producers of the play must include the following acknowledgment on the title page of all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play and on all advertising and promotional materials:

“*We Are Proud to Present* ... received its world premiere in April 2012 at Victory Gardens Theater, Chicago, Illinois, directed by Eric Ting, Chay Yew, artistic director, Jan Kallish, executive director, and had its New York premiere at Soho Rep., Sarah Benson, artistic director, Cynthia Flowers, executive director. *We Are Proud to Present* ... was developed at Magic Theatre’s Virgin Play Series, San Francisco; the Bay Area Playwrights Festival, Playwrights Foundation, San Francisco; and Victory Garden Theater’s IGNITION Festival.”
We Are Proud to Present... received its world premiere in April 2012 at Victory Gardens Biograph Theater in Chicago.

Cast
White Man ......................................................... Bernard Balbot
Black Man....................................................... Kamal Angelo Bolden
Black Woman................................................... Tracey N. Bonner
Another White Man ............................................. Jake Cohen
Sarah ............................................................... Leah Karpel
Another Black Man................................. Travis Turner

Production
Director .............................................................. Eric Ting
Set Design ........................................................... Brian Bembridge
Lighting Design .................................................... Jesse Klug
Projections.......................................................... Mike Tutaj
Sound Design ....................................................... Sarah Pickett
Costumes ............................................................ Christine Pascual
Fight Choreography .......................................... Ryan Bourque
Stage Manager .................................................. Rita Vreeland
The play received its New York premiere by Soho Rep. in association with John Adrian Selzer in November 2012.

Cast
Actor 6 / Black Woman .................... Quincy Tyler Bernstine
Actor 5 / Sarah ............................... Lauren Blumenfeld
Actor 4 / Another Black Man ............ Phillip James Brannon
Actor 2 / Black Man ........................ Grantham Coleman
Actor 3 / Another White Man ............ Jimmy Davis
Actor 1 / White Man .......................... Erin Gann

Production
Director ........................................... Eric Ting
Set Designer ....................................... Mimi Lien
Costume Designer .............................. Toni-Leslie James
Lighting Designer .............................. Lenore Doxsee
Sound Designer & Choreographer ........ Chris Giarmo
Video Designer ................................. Jeff Larson
Props Master ...................................... Jon Knust
Violence Consultant ......................... J. David Brimmer
Production Manager .......................... BD White
Production Stage Manager .................... Terry K. Kohler
Assistant Stage Manager ..................... Alex H. Hajjar
Thank you to the following:

Mark Drury, Pat Sibblies, Sandy Shinner, Geoffrey Jackson Scott, Sarah Benson, Caleb Hammons, Raphael Martin, Eric Ehn, Lisa D’Amour, Mallery Avidon, Mia Chung, Joe Waetcher, Michael Perlman and Antje Oegle.
We Are Proud to Present a Presentation About the Herero of Namibia, Formerly Known as South West Africa, From the German Südwestafrika, Between the Years 1884–1915

CHARACTERS

Actor 6 / Black Woman
Actor 1/ White Man
Actor 2 / Black Man
Actor 3 / Another White Man
Actor 4 / Another Black Man
Actor 5 / Sarah

All are young, somewhere in their 20s-ish, and they should seem young, open, skilled, playful and perhaps, at times, a little foolish.

SETTINGS

A large space, a gathering place, a theatre:
    The Presentation.
    In these sections, the performers have an awareness of the audience or at least An Audience. We see glimpses of a Presentation occurring in a theatrical space.

And a smaller space, a private place, a rehearsal:
    The Process.
    In these sections, we see glimpses of a rehearsal through the 4th wall. The performers experiment without self-consciousness, rehearsing in the space without an audience, perhaps a bare-bones version of the actual space.
PRODUCTION NOTES

The Presentation sections and the Process sections are distinct at the start, but over time Process becomes Presentation, the spaces aren’t what they appear to be, and boundaries are broken.

The transitions between these sections should be quick and seamless. Each scene begins in the middle of things, and the play is performed continuously, cohesively, without breaks.

About the punctuation:
A slash (/) indicates the interruption of the next line of text.
A set of brackets indicate that the line can either be spoken or, um, indicated.
Line breaks indicate a subtle, internal shift—not a pause.
A dash is an interruption—either by oneself or by someone else.

About the music:
There is music in this text.
Music and rhythm should exist where they are indicated, and it should be added throughout.

About the time:
One can think of the Presentations sections as glimpses from a longer and complete presentation, one that uses a variety of theatrical styles. I’ve provided the years, roughly, that each scene is representative of. Or, we could say, the year in which the letter that is being presented was written. Please only use these years if/as they are helpful.

About the violence:
The performance calls for real contact as opposed to realistic contact. Actions that might make an audience wonder how they were done will work against the play. A slap to the shoulder, a loose rope around the neck: these things will feel much more dangerous than elaborate choreography or invisible rigging, in the end.
We Are Proud to Present a Presentation About the Herero of Namibia, Formerly Known as South West Africa, From the German Südwestafrika, Between the Years 1884–1915

Prologue: Intro, Lecture, Lecture/Presentation, Presentation

(ACTOR 6 enters.)

We’re all ready?

(ACTOR 6 greets the audience, probably with some warmth and casualness, definitely with some nervousness.

ACTOR 5 hands her a stack of note cards.)

ACTOR 6 (cont’d). Great.

(ACTOR 6 glances at the cards, retrieves a pen and crosses “Greet Audience” off the list.)

ACTOR 6 (cont’d, to herself). Greet audience.
Fire speech.

(ACTOR 6 gives the fire speech, complete with cellphone speech, etc.)

ACTOR 6 (cont’d, to herself). Fire speech.
Special Announcements.
(ACTOR 6 makes any special announcements. She probably reads them off her papers/cards. If there are no theatre related special announcements, perhaps there is a drink special at a near by bar? A sale at the store down the street?)

ACTOR 6 (cont’d, to herself). Special Announcements.
OK.

(ACTOR 6 reads a prepared speech. She also interrupts herself to clarify, talking directly to the audience. The lines that are read are italicized; the parts that are said are not.)

ACTOR 6 (cont’d). Hello. Thank you for coming.
Oh, I already did that.
Welcome to our presentation.
We have prepared a lecture to precede the presentation because we feel that you would benefit from some background information so as to give our presentation a greater amount of context.
Yeah. OK, so, the lecture’s a lecture but it’s not a lecture lecture.
We made it fun.
Ish.
Sort of.
Anyway.
The lecture’s duration should last approximately five minutes.
It might be ten. I’m bad at time.
Because, you know, what’s happening is the important thing, it doesn’t matter when it happens, or how long it happens for, it’s that it’s happening. Am I right?
(Nervous laugh.)
This is happening.
(Nervous laugh.)
OK.
_in this lecture—Um … Wait, what?

_She flips through the cards. ACTOR 5 might try to feed her the lines._

**ACTOR 6 (cont’d). OK.**
_(To the ensemble and the audience at the same time.)_ “We” forgot to write in the part “we” agreed “we’d” write about the overview.

So …
_(To the audience.)_ OK. So, there’s like a lecture that’s only sort of a lecture and then we did this thing that is kind of like an overview before the lecture, which is before the presentation.

Does that make sense?

OK.

Yeah …

I think I’m just going to skip some of this stuff, you know, since it seems it doesn’t actually say what we all agreed that it should say

Even though we went through a lot to figure out how to do this and introduce it properly, but this introduction isn’t what it’s supposed to be so …

This is what we’re doing: Lecture, Overview, Presentation. Super fun. Great.
_(To herself.)_ Skip skip skip.

_Helping me to present the lecture to you is our ensemble of actors._

_Our ensemble of actors:_

© The Dramatic Publishing Company
ACTOR 1. I’m an actor.
ACTOR 2. I’m an actor.
ACTOR 3. I’m an actor.
ACTOR 4. I’m an actor.
ACTOR 5. I’m an / actor.
ACTOR 6. And I am an actor.
ACTOR 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5. Hello.

ACTOR 6. I’m also kind of the artistic director of our ensemble, so.

OK.

In this presentation, which has already started, I know, I will be playing the part of Black Woman. I am also black, in real life, which you might find confusing. Please try to think of it like this: Black Woman is just the name of the character I’m playing. This actor will be referred to as Black Man. This actor will be referred to as White Man. This actor will be referred to as Another Black Man. This actor will be referred to as Another White Man. This actor will—
(To ACTOR 5.)
Actually, we haven’t really explained you yet. And they won’t get it, so …
(To the audience.) Just ignore her for right now.

OK. Another White Man … because this is true in real life and in this lecture and subsequent presentation.
Now, without further ado, we present to you a lecture about Namibia.

(A lecture shared by the group: a map, a Powerpoint presentation.)

ACTOR 6 (cont’d). A Lecture About Namibia.
Located in the southern most section of the African continent, Namibia is bordered by:
Angola,
Zambia,
Botswana,
Zimbabwe,
South Africa
and the Atlantic Ocean.
Let me repeat that.
Or—you guys get it: Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah and the Atlantic Ocean.
Some other facts about Namibia.
Namibia’s official language is English:

ACTOR 4. Hello.
ACTOR 6. Namibia’s Recognized Regional Languages are Afrikaans:
ACTOR 1. Hallo.
ACTOR 6. Oshiwambo:
ACTOR 2. Ongiini.
ACTOR 6. And German:
ACTOR 6. There is a reason for this. An historical reason.
This is really what the lecture is about.
An Explanation For The Recognized Languages In Namibia.
Let us begin with Oshiwambo.

ACTOR 2. Oshiwambo—
ACTOR 6. Oshiwambo is spoken by a tribe called the Herero: The Herero:
ACTORS 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 (to the audience, with a helpful smile). The Her-er-oh.
ACTOR 6. Actually, Oshiwambo was originally spoken by the Ovambo people, but we aren’t really talking about them at all so … The Herero.
ACTORS 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5. The Herero.
ACTOR 6. Another of Namibia’s languages is English—
ACTOR 4. English.
ACTOR 6. English is spoken in Namibia because the English expanded their colonial holdings during World War I—
ACTOR 3. —World War I.
ACTOR 6. That is the reason why English is spoken in Nambia. The third of Namibia’s languages is Afrikaans—
ACTOR 1. —Afrikaans—
ACTOR 6. —Afrikaans is spoken in Namibia because Afrikaans speakers needed to expand their ranches into Namibia settling permanently around the turn of the 19th century—
ACTOR 4. —that’s 1900?
ACTOR 6. 1800.

(The slide is wrong.)

ACTOR 5. [Oh, fuck.]

(ACTOR 5 fixes the slide.)
ACTOR 3. 1800.

*(OK. Now they start to get it together. They’re getting into the section that they rehearsed the most.)*

ACTOR 6. *Around the turn of the 19th century, before Namibia became a German colony:*

ACTOR 1. Südwestafrika!

ACTOR 6. *—which is the name for the colony in German—*

ACTOR 4. Oshindowishi!

ACTOR 6. *—which is the name for German in Oshiwambo. Namibia became a German colony in 1884.*

*It stopped being a German colony in 1915, when it was taken by the English:*

ACTORS 1, 2, 3 & 4. During World War I!

ACTOR 6. *—but between 1884 and 1915, when Namibia was—*

ACTOR 1. Südwestafrika!

ACTOR 6. *—which is where—which is when?—*

*(ACTOR 5 disagrees with her “when,” saying “where.”)*

ACTOR 6 (cont’d). *Which is when we are concentrating today.*

*We have access to:*

ACTOR 4. Postcards!

ACTOR 1. Karte!

ACTOR 5. Letters!

ACTOR 3. Stukken van Document!

ACTOR 2. Ombapila!

ACTOR 6. *—a cache of letters from German troops stationed in German South West Africa between the years 1884 and 1915.*

But before we present the presentation of those letters, we have the overview.
Which we don’t have an introduction for. So.
This is going to be the overview.
Or, should we say it?

(The ACTORS agree: “Yeah.” or “I guess?” or “Yes, yes, keep going.” Etc.)

ACTOR 6 (cont’d). Yeah—let’s all say it together.

(A fast-paced cartoonish overview—a romp. They’ve like actually really memorized this part. They move through it very quickly, at times frantically.

If they have simple puppets/illustrations/costumes, ACTOR 5 made the puppets/illustrations/costumes. There’s probably slapstick, a prat fall, some hijinks. The announcement of each year is preceded by a sound: punctuation, the ding of a bell. And with each ding, a brief comic tableau that sums up what was said about the previous year.)

ALL. An Overview of German South West Africa Between the Years 1884 and 1915.

ACTOR 6. 1884
ACTOR 1. Germany is in charge.
ACTOR 3. Sort of. All the tribes are actively not saying they hate us.
ACTOR 2 & 4. Hey, Germany. We aren’t saying we hate you.
ACTOR 6. 1885
ACTOR 2. Agreements are reached with tribal leaders—
ACTOR 1. Germany is totally in charge.
ACTOR 2. Well, some of the tribal leaders.
ACTOR 6. 1886
ACTOR 1. Germany is like actually in charge.
ACTOR 3. Germany is telling other people that they’re in charge.
ACTOR 1. Germany is like basically actually in charge.
ACTOR 6. 1887
ACTOR 1. The Germans are impressed by one tribe in particular, the Herero.
ACTORS 2, 3, 4 & 5. The Her-er-oh.
ACTOR 6. The Herero.
ACTOR 2. So tall.
ACTOR 4. So muscular.
ACTOR 1. The Germans put—
ACTORS 2, 3, 4 & 5. The Her-er-oh.
ACTOR 1. —in charge of all the tribes—
ACTOR 6. The Germans put the Herero in charge of all the tribes in German South West Africa.
ACTORS 2 & 4. Hurray!
ACTOR 6. 1888.
ACTOR 2. The Herero are in charge.
ACTOR 3. Sort of.
ACTOR 6. 1889.
ACTOR 1. The Germans are kind of over the Herero.
ACTOR 3. Over the Herero.
ACTOR 2. So childish and ungrateful.
ACTOR 4. So impudent and unwashed.
ACTOR 6. 1890.
ACTOR 1. The Germans put the Hottentots—
ACTOR 3. The Nama.
ACTOR 1. The Nama in control. The Germans give a bunch of Herero cattle to the Nama
ACTOR 3. Herero cattle to the Nama.
ACTOR 2. Which, like sucks.
ACTOR 4. Because the Herero love their cows.
ACTOR 2. We do.
ACTOR 6. 1891.
ACTOR 1. The Germans are sort of over the Hotten—Nama
ACTOR 3. Over the Nama.
ACTOR 6. 1892.
ACTOR 1. The Germans put the Herero back in control.
    They give a bunch of Nama cattle to the Herero.
ACTOR 3. Nama cattle to the Herero.
ACTOR 4. Which is sort of stealing.
ACTOR 2. But they were our cows to begin with.
ACTOR 6. 1893.
ACTOR 4. The Nama fight the Herero.
ACTOR 2. The Herero fight the Nama
ACTOR 1. The Germans take the cattle—
ACTOR 3. —take care of the cattle—
ACTOR 1. —care for the cattle—
ACTOR 6. 1894.
ACTORS 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5. Tenuous Peace.
    (Tableau: Tenuous peace. Smile: ding!)
ACTOR 6. 1895.
ACTOR 1. The Germans decide to build a railroad into the interior.
ACTORS 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5. More resources for everyone.
    (Tableau: Fiscal success. Bigger smile: ding!)
ACTOR 6. 1896.
ACTOR 1. We are building that railroad.
ACTOR 3. We are building that railroad.
ACTOR 2. We are building that railroad.
ACTOR 6. 1897.
ACTOR 1. We are failing.
ACTOR 3. We are failing.
ACTOR 2. We are building that railroad.
ACTOR 6. 1898.
ACTOR 1. We are really failing.
ACTOR 3. Not good.
ACTOR 2. We are building that railroad.
ACTOR 6. 1899.
ACTOR 1. We are fucked.
ACTOR 3. So fucked.
ACTOR 2. We are building that fucking railroad.
ACTOR 6. 1900.
ACTOR 1. German settlers are getting poorer and poorer—
ACTOR 3. —and madder and madder, and the German gov-
ernment—
ACTOR 1. —is getting madder and madder, and poorer and poorer.
ACTOR 3. Because of the fucking railroad.
ACTOR 2. We are building that—
ACTOR 6. 1901.
ACTOR 1. Germany tinkers a little with the law.
ACTOR 3. If you are German and a cow wanders on to your land:
ACTOR 4. It’s yours!
ACTOR 3. If you try to take a cow from a German and you aren’t a German:
ACTOR 2. You get hanged.
ACTOR 1. Problem solved.
ACTOR 6. 1902.
ACTOR 1. Germany tinkers a little more with the law.
ACTOR 3. If you are German and you see land that doesn’t belong to a German:
ACTOR 4. It’s yours!

ACTOR 3. If you contest a German land claim and you aren’t German:
ACTOR 2. You get hanged.

ACTOR 3. If you are German and you see cattle on the land you have just claimed:
ACTOR 4. The cattle are yours!

ACTOR 3. If you steal cattle from a German and you aren’t German:
ACTOR 2. You get hanged.

ACTOR 6. 1903.

ACTOR 4. The Nama rebel against German rule.
   It doesn’t end well.

ACTOR 3. But it does end quickly.

ACTOR 6. 1904.

ACTOR 2. The Herero rebel against German rule.

ACTOR 1. The Herero are taught a lesson.

ACTOR 3. The Herero are made examples of.

ACTOR 1. The General Issues The Extermination Order.

ACTOR 6. 1905.

ACTOR 1. The General Issues The Extermination Order.

ACTOR 3. The Germans imprison thousands of Herero in labor camps.

ACTOR 6. 1906.

ACTOR 1. The General Issues The Extermination Order.

ACTOR 3. The Germans force thousands of Herero into the desert.

ACTOR 6. 1907.
ACTOR 1. The General Issues The Extermination Order.
ACTOR 3. The Germans erect a wall to keep them in the desert.
ACTOR 6. 1908.
   The Extermination order has been issued.
   The labor camps have closed.
   Eighty percent of the Herero have been Exterminated.
   Those that survived the camps
   were used as a source of unpaid labor by the German settlers.
   And in this way, the German regime continued:
   1909

   1910

   1911

   1912

   1913

   1914

   1915.

   And then. And only then do the English intervene.
ACTOR 3. World War I.
ACTOR 6. And there you have it.
   A history of German Colonial Rule in Namibia.

   (Big finish: The formal beginning to the presentation.)

ALL. We Are Proud to Present a Presentation About the
Herero of Namibia, Formerly Known as South West Africa,
From the German Südwestafrika, Between the Years 1884
and 1915.