

META

by Patricia A. Durr

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Medium: Stage

Note:

Several years ago I met a Deaf German Jewish woman who had survived several concentration camps. Her experiences inspired me to write this play. This is not a biographical piece but rather a collection of the many images I have heard, seen, or read about. Knowledge of these atrocities is invaluable especially in light of the growing xenophobia and anti-foreigner activities by Neo-Nazis in Germany and the genocide in Yugoslavia and Iraq. The name of the play is in honor of the woman who inspired it so we may all bear witness.

"Injustice anywhere is injustice everywhere" MLK, Jr.

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Cast of Characters
In Order of Appearance

Old Meta: Deaf, 70s, mouths some German words while signing nervously in American Sign Language. She has arthritis and wears a housecoat and slippers.

Young Meta: Deaf, late twenties, she occasionally uses German signs but mostly mouths German and uses mime and gestures. She has long auburn hair. In later scenes she will be shaved bald or with a head covering.

Kemba: An African-American Deaf, college student (early - mid twenties), uses American Sign Language. She is dressed casually, in jeans and a nice shirt. She carries a knapsack with a "silence = death" pin.

Janna: Kemba's roommate, 18-21

Marc: Kemba's roommate, 18-25

Note: all other characters are hearing but do not speak verbally. They just move their mouths to illustrate what Meta receives as information. Voicing can be provided for hearing audience members who do not understand American Sign Language when Old Meta and Kemba are conversing. During the reenactments there is no voicing to portray Meta's experience.

Mother: 50 - 60 years old, hearing. She gestures and uses German mouth movement.

Brother: Mid twenties, hearing. He gestures and uses German mouth movement.

Sister: Late teens - early twenties, hearing. She gestures and uses German mouth movement .

Actors can play multiple roles:

Male Prisoner #1

Soldier #1

SS Doctor

Female SS

Friend, Prisoner #1, Prisoner #2: Women

Extras: Deaf people, blind people, elderly, crippled

5 Extras: Female (to play various roles)

2 Extras: Male (to play various roles)

Pregnant Woman

Woman #1

Woman #2

Other Woman SS

Young SS

Neighbor: elderly woman

Prisoners wear stripped uniforms - some w/ yellow stars a few w/ red, purple, or pink triangle.

Note: SS and Gestapo are used here to mean any Nazi working for the German government.

Three stage areas - stage left (Kemba's apt), stage right (Meta's apt), center stage (hospital room and behind a scrim are Meta's reenactment). Sets should be minimal with a versatile unit for the flashback scenes that can serve as barracks, bunk beds, tower, crematorium, train, ...)

SCENE 1

(Stage left couch with coffee table. JANNA is sitting on the couch watching TV. Enters her roommate, KEMBA, stage left.)

- Kemba: Do ya mind if I watch a videotape? *(Looks at watch)* I want to start it before Marc shows up and wants to watch Wheel of Fortune.
- Janna: He's in love with Vanna White *(mimes)*. Anyway, you can watch the tape any time. It's not Marc's TV.
- Kemba: I know but I just want some peace. He's always looking for a fight with me. No offense but I prefer a black roommate like John. He was a great roommate, cool. But then he moved and now we stuck with Marc.
- Janna: He's fine just a little immature.
- Kemba: Little! *(starts to take out videotape)*
- Janna: What's the movie?
- Kemba: It's not a movie - its for my history class.
- Janna: What's the tape about?
- Kemba: H-o-l *(looks at the tape for the correct spelling)* o-c-a-u-s-t. You know during World War II when Hitler killed all the Jews.
- Janna: Why do you have to watch it?
- Kemba: I have to research this and then interview a person who survived. The teacher says I must read alot and watch videotapes first. She's afraid I'll go in there and ask really stupid questions. I told her I wanted to research Malcolm X and she said "no" right in my face. I call that discrimination.
- Janna: Malcolm X - why him?
- Kemba: You know Malcolm X - come on man. You know with all the shirts and hats ..
- Janna: Yeah, but what's the X for? What's it mean?

Kemba: "X" is NOW. "X" is *(can't explain)* "X" - oh it's a black thing. "X" is for pride. Proud to be black. It's for our people - black people. "X" is because black people are pissed off. Whites pushing us around, controlling us for money all the way from slave times to now. Right, right. I remember. Blacks, when they was slaves, can't read and write. Whites trying to keep them down. So if the blacks had to sign a paper, the master just tell 'em to put an X down for their name - cuz they couldn't write. Understand?

Janna: *(nods yes)*

(MARC runs past the TV room and then runs back ward)

Marc: Kemba *(use sign name)* your mommy's on the phone ..

Kemba: I'm not here!

Marc: No way. I already told her you're here.

Kemba: *(stares at Marc)*

Janna: She already told you - she isn't here!

Marc: *(takes off imaginary glasses - wipes them - looks in the room again, flashes light switch or just waves to get Janna and Kemba's attention as they are chatting on the couch.) (Sign name for Janna)* I'm looking for Kemba - I can't find her. If you see her, tell her to call her stupid mother so I don't have to play this phone tag - OK?

Kemba: *(gives him an OK - 'f' handshape with a wink then adds an index finger to sign asshole).*

Janna: He is a big jerk but you owe him. We can't keep telling your mom you're not here. You're gonna have to talk to her soon.

Kemba: I know, I know.

Janna: Before you were talking about blacks being slaves, well Jews were slaves long, long ago and in WW II.

Kemba: What are you, Jewish?

Janna: No. I watched the movie with Moses - you know the Jews had to make the Pyramids ...

Kemba: Slaves! Jews! No way. Jews are supposed to be rich.

Janna: And blacks have good rhythm.

Kemba: Move over. Let me see that, man! Jews slaves. Hmm ... well, we'll see what the video shows but later I'm gonna check out Malcolm X!

SCENE 2

(Lights shine down on stage right, which has a slightly elevated platform seating a big arm chair and a small wooden chair. META is seated in the arm chair. The Wheel of Fortune is on.)

Meta: *(walks around tidying up. Sits down straighten outs her dress and fusses. Picks up clock on table to see it better. Looks at strobe light. Starts to get involved with the TV) (Wheel of Fortune).*
THE WRST F ohhhh O O. Come on. *(Shaking her head, drops pencil. Gets on knees to find pencil - freezes)*

Lits dim stageright and come up on center stage

Young Meta: *(Kneeling position same as old Meta. Plays with ant. Shadow of soldier appears. She responds by running to catch bread. Eats it hurriedly but savoring each bite. Climbs on cot, stands on tippy toes to peak out of window. Lights fade).*

Meta: *(Door bell light stage right flashes on and off. Lights go up to find old Meta started from position of staring out the window in same position of young Meta. She shakes herself out of the memory. Straightens up her clothes and hair and goes to answer the door. She looks through the door hole, looks around surprised - slight smile. Opens the door a crack because of chain lock.)*

Meta: *(fingerspells) K E M B A (closes door, unhooks lock and opens door).*

Kemba: Hello, I'm Kemba. Thanks for seeing me. I gotta do this history project Friday so.. *(carries videocamera and tripod, bumps into many things. Busily sets up camera)*

Meta: Coat?

Kemba: Yeah, thanks.

Meta: *(takes coat and hangs it up. Points to where Kemba should sit).*

Kemba: Nice apartment.

Meta: Thank you.

Kemba: Thank you for agreeing to see me. I know it is hard to talk about this. I saw the videotape about Hitler and the ... Killings ... really gross.

Meta: That is why when you called and asked, I said, "Yes, I will tell you about my experiences in the camps." But it is hard. I watch the news and see so much badness. Always against other races. Fire in LA and I see camps again in Europe - Yugoslavia. That gives me strong, strong memories.

Kemba: You know about LA and all that stuff.

Meta: Yes, I watch TV.

Kemba: Cool. Honestly, I wanted to research about Malcolm X so I could understand my people better. Ya know, imagine - I'm deaf black and a woman - wow! So I don't really know much about this topic but for history class, ya know we have to study this stuff.

Meta: Yes, I remember when I moved to the U.S. and in the 1960s I saw on TV all the problems in the South - I was very surprised. Here in America the blacks are Jews.

Kemba: What do you mean?

Meta: I see the police and dogs attack people in the streets and I saw the people in white robes with hoods. The burning crosses. The hangings. I couldn't understand why and then a friend explained about all the slaves in the South before working on farms and so the whites there have very strong feelings of hate. That is why so many Jews worked with the blacks to fight for equality.

Kemba: Jewish people worked with blacks?

Meta: Yes, with the one group - oh, I forget the name (*tries to fingerspell but can't recall the name*). Many many Jewish lawyers and teachers and Rabbis work together. But now the problem is much worse like in Brooklyn, no?

Kemba: Hmm. I didn't know all that stuff. Well, in Brooklyn it was just the Hassidics and the blacks. But you see what I mean. Why I'm really interested in black history.

Meta: Yes, that is very good you should know all.

Kemba: Well, I guess your time was bad too. It must have been terrible.

Meta: My time with Hitler. You can never understand - I pray you will never really know. Never Again.

Kemba: Will the camera bother you? (*without waiting for the answer finishes setting it up*)

Meta: You don't have to make it so high. (*Kemba looks at the tripod and at Meta*). Do you need help?

Kemba: No, no. You just sit down. I'll be ready in a minute. Ok, I think we all set. Why don't you start from the beginning? I mean why don't you start with explaining about what Germany was like when Hitler took over.

Meta: Light?

Kemba: Light? From the camera?

Meta: Red light? Should have red light mean on?

Kemba: Yeah. *(looks over the camera. Can't find it - starts to show frustration).*
Ok go ahead.

Meta: *(deep breathe, looking and reading from two sheets of paper, she signs)*
In 1941, I was deported from my small hometown with Jews to a bigger town. We were then marched by the SS commandant to the train. The SS were very rough. They put us all into cattle cars and we traveled many days to Poland. We saw many Jews from all over Germany and Austria. We were tired and cold and cried. Some people got sick and the SS separated them into another line. We don't know what happened to them.

We were hungry and became thin and weak. 2 month later, January 1942, SS called all the children, H.C., sick and old to go another place. But me, I was still in the same place. The SS did not know I am deaf. My heart was beating fast

SCENE 3

(Kemba's Apt TV room with papers and some books scattered on table. Janna is watching TV and Marc enters stealing remote & control from her and chasing her around the room climbing on furniture along the way. They both run out the door. Kemba enters carrying a glass and shaking her head at her roommates.)

Janna: Whatcha doing?

Kemba: Working on my paper. I met the Jewish lady today - Old!

Janna: Yeah, hard to understand?

Kemba: #Y-E-S, sometimes she seems to mouth German words and some signs are not clear.

Janna: Did she grow up oral in Germany?

Kemba: Yes. I tried to ask her some questions but she just read me her story from when she was captured and freed.

Janna: Read?

Kemba: Yeah. *(imitating Meta - "in 1941 I was captured ..." explains how Meta had the paper in her lap and retold the paper).* Yes, and it's weird.

See the last sentence "Thank God. I am alive..." She wrote G - D. Looks like she is afraid to type the whole word.

Janna: Oh, yeah. I heard different religions won't print their God's name out of respect.

(enters Marc)

Marc: What's up?

Kemba: *(ignores him)*

Janna: Talking about Kemba's research project. She is interviewing an old deaf Jewish lady about WW II.

Marc: Ah, I heard a great joke - wanna see it?

Janna: NO.

Kemba: NO!

Marc: OK, a woman is pregnant ... *(actor should exaggerate the story)*. After hours and hours of pushing, the baby won't come out. So the doctor finally says "you're Jewish, right?" And the pregnant woman pants "yes" so the doctor takes out a \$10 bill and holds it under her vagina and out the baby pops. *(laughing hard)*

Janna: You're such a fool!

Kemba: Funny, got any good nigger jokes?

Marc: S-U-R-E *(teasingly and starts to re-tell a joke when he sees that Kemba is really angry)*.

Janna: *(to Marc, mouths and signs small why signaling towards Kemba)* Be careful.

(light flashes)

Marc: It's for you *(pointing at Kemba)* and runs out of the room.

Kemba: *(looks at Janna and shakes her head no and then starts reading from her book)*.

Janna: Ignore him. If its your mom...

Kemba: Tell her what? Her daughter is still DEAF!

SCENE 4

(Center stage lights go up to show two guards with guns on watch as four prisoners slowly pass by. One falls down and the guards start to beat on him as the others carry him away. The guards laugh and then light cigarettes as the lights dim.)

(Lights go up on Meta's apartment, Kemba is seated with camera already set up and directed at her)

Kemba: *(looking at her notes)* OK you said you were captured in 1941. What was your life like before that. Did you go to a deaf school? *(jumps up startling Meta and turns camera to point at Meta)*

Meta: My school was the Hebrew School for the Deaf Mutes in Berlin. It was oral. I graduated and was working. After the war, I found out the SS stormed the school and took all the children to Auschwitz. All 146 children were killed.

Kemba: *(Again moves the camera)* They were killed because they were Deaf right?

Meta: *(waits for her to move the camera back)* No Because they were Jewish. German deaf children - non-Jews, they were not taken. They were just sterilized.

Kemba: #What? What for?

Meta: Hitler wanted a perfect race. No one should be diseased or ill. He had a special place to kill the retarded and the mentally ill. For the Deaf Germans, he just cut them to make sure they never had any more deaf children. ~~He also had a special institute with perfect German girls and they were had by the best SS and when they gave birth they had to give their baby to the state for the Nazis to raise. The Nazis had many plans.~~ Sometimes the doctors would sterilize the deaf boys and girls - little, without any anthesis. Sometimes they would experiment on the deaf to try and find out how to cure them. They poured hot oil down their ears, stuck instruments, cut them.

Kemba: Wow, sounds like cochlear implants. You know *(actress gives an exaggerated explanation of cochlear implants and how they work -she is obviously against them)*. That is how here people are trying to make deaf people into a perfect race. Germany's worse - sterilization - children! Killing the Jewish kids. Didn't the parents and teachers protest?

Meta: I found out one headmistress at our school *(M - sign name)* escaped with 12 Jews away in 1938 or 39 but most of the teachers and parents felt to be deaf was bad and agreed with the Nazis about disabled and the Jews.

Kemba: Did they experiment or sterilize you?

Meta: No, No! They would kill deaf Jews right away. They did not know I was deaf. I had to hide it. Many of my friends - non-Jews. Deaf. They have no children. There is no strong deaf family in Germany.

Kemba: Did you ever have any children.

Meta: After the war, I moved to the U.S. and met my husband. He is also a Deaf Jew from Russia but he moved when he was a boy before the war. We have two sons. . . They are hearing. I'm chilly. Do you want tea?

Kemba: *(looking impatient)* Yeah, sure.

Meta: *(goes to turn on stove, busy getting out tea cups etc)*

Kemba: *(turns off videotape. Notices Jewish star on table. Meta has returned. Kemba give her a draft of her paper.)* Here is some of the information I have written out for my paper. I'll get the tea while you read it.
(Kemba returns with two tea cups and bends over near Meta to set down the cup) What is it? Is it the wrong cup? Is this your good china - I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

Meta: It's nothing. It's just the smell - your hair, the burning.

Janna: What? My hair *(grabs and smells it)* I reached down for a tea bag I dropped ~~off~~, I must have burnt a little of my hair on the stove I guess .

Meta: Reminds me of the smell of the dead - of the burning. And babies too. Babies. Fire. Once I was working and everyone stopped. I looked and saw a big fire and the SS were throwing in babies - alive. They were screaming. The smell. *(touches Kemba's hair and pulls to her to smell. Shudders)*

Kemba: *(brings her hand up too and they end up holding each other's hand).*

~~*(Kemba and Meta walk over to the chairs carrying their tea: (sitting back in her chair (Kemba eyes the camera and realizes it is off, and sits sipping her tea and watching Meta).*~~

Meta: The snow is very pretty, huh?

Kemba: *(nods her head yes as she sips her tea. Stares at Meta in awe).*

(light fad stage right and comes up on center stage where we see Young Meta digging an invisible trench in the snow. There are a few people working around her. FRIEND is directly across from her digging.)

Female
SS:

(enters stage left and starts to order some prisoners around. Seeing Meta, she shouts to her.)

Young Meta: *(keeps working away)*

SS: *(shouts again and starts walking towards her in the snow)*

Friend: *(motions to Meta to turn around and face the SS guard)*

Young Meta: *(responds and turns around)*

SS: *(gives her instructions and walks away)*

Young Meta: *(stands shaking a little and looks back at friend)*

Friend: *(mouths instructions to Meta)*

SCENE 5

*(Kemba's working on map in TV room - plotting out information.
Janna's watching TV)*

Janna: *(waves)* You're working too hard. Makes me feel guilty. Knock it off!
(laughingly)

Kemba: *(laughs)* Strange - I'm trying to plot out all the different labor camps Meta
(sign name) was in and when and it's really confusing. The Germans
kept shifting her from one place to another.

Janna: Maybe she was lucky. If she stayed in one place for a long time - they'd
find out she was deaf. Hey, let me watch the tapes. I got goose bumps
from the one about sterilization. Horrible, not a bad idea for people like
Marc but...

Kemba: hmm. I don't have any more tapes. I stopped taping her.

Janna: Why??

Kemba: It just happened by accident. I don't feel right using all this fancy high
tech equipment. It's really awkward dragging around on the subway and
all the people stare at me like its "hot" or something. No way a black
person could have a camcorder in NYC if...

Janna: You're paranoid. Anyway, she is old, right? We need the tapes to
remember her story.

Kemba: I'll remember her. I'm keeping careful notes and writing it out after each
time we meet.

Janna: Not everyone will want to read it - rather to see it.

Kemba: Its the videotape. It makes me feel like ... How can I make you
understand. When I was little, I used to have to go to the audiologist alot.

My hearing was really strange. It would fluctuate from DEAF to hard of hearing. I remember EVERY time my mother would take me out of school to go down town. And I always missed the best activities - coloring or

birthday parties. And then they would put me in the room. You know - with all the dots on the wall and the big cold headsets and a crowd - I mean a crowd of white people stood outside observing me through the window. At first I just sat there and they had to make it louder and louder and louder until I heard a sound. But right away all those people in their white coats, their faces got whiter and whiter and they would start looking really concerned and wacked out so I'd immediately raised my hand to make them happy. Always being afraid that they had turned off the machine and I'd get caught.

I feel like the camcorder is the same for her. I don't want to do that to her.

Janna: But if she doesn't mind it ...

Kemba: When I don't have the camera on, its more comfortable. We can just chat. It's not like an interview or a test.

Janna: What did she talk about then, ~~Since I can't watch it,~~ You'll have to tell me.

Kemba: Oh, I was asking about her family and she explained that her father died before the war and her mother was really sick. She had older brothers and sisters - they were married with kids. All the members of her family were hearing. She said that many people did not know what was happening to the Jews in the beginning. They really thought they were just being relocated. Also, it was very hard for Jewish people to escape. Her brothers and sisters all got papers. They got her papers too but her mom was really sick and she refused to go. *(Pause)* Then she said something strange *(looking at her notes)* "Understand a daughter comes from her mother. This bond can not be broken. We are the same. It was not hard to decide to stay. She gave me life - I must do the same ..." Then she started to explain.

SCENE 6

(Lights fade on stage left and center stage is illuminated showing three chairs and a wooden table. An oil lamp is lit on the table. Meta's mother is laying down. Young Meta is trying to understand everyone in this dimly lit room. Note - all is done with gestures and mouth movement - no voicing)

Brother: We must go to America now. Hitler will kill us.

Young Meta: *(points to mother)*

Sister: Papa is gone. You're Deaf. If they catch you, they will kill you.

Brother: Or maybe they will rape you, or experiment on you first.

Young Meta: *(no)*

Brother: Meta, Meta, we must go. They will kill us.

Young Meta: *Why? Why? I don't understand!*

Brother: *(points at star of David on Meta's dress)* JUDE *(and mimes Deaf then slitting throats. Gives her the papers.)* Go?

Young Meta: *(looks at brother, sister, mother. Puts arm around mother.)*

Brother: *(blows out the oil lamp)*

SCENE 7

(Stage right is lit up. Light flashes. Meta walks to answer door slowly. Kemba enters and hugs Meta. She offers her a loaf of bread. Meta looks out into the hall half expecting Kemba to have the videocamera.)

Kemba: How are you feeling today?

Meta: Old, Old *(with a little giggle)* You?

Kemba: Young, young.

Meta: You are in time to help me light the first Hanukkah lights.

Kemba: Shit - oh, I'm sorry. I should have brought a present.

Meta: *(holds up the bread)* The bread is my present. Bread is my life.

Kemba: I'm not Jewish.

Meta: But you can share the experience. Because you're black - because of your history you understand. Hanukkah is the Festival of Lights. Long ago the Jews were conquered and had no temple to worship but they fought back and won. When they entered the temple there was only a little bit of oil - tiny but they decided to light it and it lasted for 8 days. That is why we have the Festival of Lights to thank G-d for his miracle.

Kemba: Oil being lit for eight days is the big miracle!

Meta: The Jews are a simple people. We got back our temple and could celebrate our religion again and we were free. If we wanted many many big signs of his love, we would not have survived the camps. Small things can be the biggest things.

Kemba: *(nods her understanding and picks up picture on table)* Are these your sons? Do they live in NYC?

Meta: Yes. Now they are all grown up. One is married and has two sweet boys. The other, not yet. I wish he could find a nice girl like you.

Kemba: But I'm not Jewish.

Meta: You can convert like that little man, the dancer. *(Imitates tap dancing)*.

Kemba: Who? Oh, Sammy Davis Junior. Well, with all you're teaching me, maybe I'll convert to be Jewish? Who knows.

Meta: *(smiles)* Now, you ask me about my family. What about yours, hum? Do you see your family much?

Kemba: Oh, no not much.

Meta: Not even your Mamma?

Kemba: No. No.

Meta: Problem?

Kemba: Yeah, she doesn't accept I'm deaf. She wants me to get a cochlear implant. Remember that machine I told you about before that they cut your skull and put in your head - that!

Meta: And you are fighting this.

Kemba: Yes.

Meta: Good for you. But you can still see her. You can always fight the bad but still love. She is always your mother.

Kemba: Maybe. Anyway. You were telling about your decision to stay with your mother. Your brothers and sisters escaped to America and you stayed behind with your mother— remained in Germany?

Meta: One brother - he did not make it.

Kemba: How come, I thought you all had papers.

Meta: Yes, but he had the city of Jerusalem on his face - he looked very strong like a Jew. So he waited till all his family get through then he tried. He could not hide he is a Jew. All the SS need to do to the men is tell them to drop their pants and then they are gone. His wife saw from the boat. And he was taken away. No one ever saw him again.

Kemba: Pull down their pants - why?

Meta: Jewish men are circumcised so they would look and see who was a Jew and who was a non-Jew. Simple

Kemba: What happened to you?

Meta: My mother and I tried to live quietly so no one notice us. I wore the Star of David as ordered and obeyed curfew but soon all Jews in my town were forced together at the synagogue. There was a quell of us. We were to be deported. Everyone looked frightened. By then we heard rumors of the deaths camps. I tried not to look at our neighbors because some feared me.

Kemba: Feared you, why?

Meta: They knew I was Deaf. If I approached them and later a guard found out I was Deaf - he would punish them for not reporting me. Many mentally retarded, elderly, blind... etc already disappeared so they knew.

Kemba: Oh, I see. Then what?

Meta: We were moved to many different places but one was the worse. Long, long train ride - you know, box for animals? It was horrible. Pitch black so I could not communicate at all. I felt for my mother's face. It was wet with tears. Crying. I talked to her "where are we going?" Remember I was oral. And she write out the letters in my hand. *(takes Kemba's hand)* P O L A N D.

Kemba: Poland?

Meta: Yes. We were very scared. So many. Dirt, Death, and Darkness. Hell there. For my mother - it was worse.

Kemba: Why? Because she was sick?

Meta: No, because she was hearing. She could hear the moaning, crying, vomiting, fighting, dying, insanity ... She press her ears so hard. I was lucky to be deaf. For me there was only the darkness, smell, and heat. Sometimes a person would fall and cling to my leg trying to pull themselves up to not get crushed.

Many days on the train. Can't keep track because always dark. Don't know if it is night or day. Felt like one week in transport. Some times train stop and SS open door throw bread. All the people go wild. Fight and claw. The SS would stand, watch and laugh. Such animals. Once a saw a young man from my town. His father caught the bread and the man beat his father and stole his bread. Such horror to see this—his own father. One person very nice give bread to me. I give to my mother. She is so sick. Before they give us bread, we must work first. We must pass out the dead bodies. This give us more room but the smell all the urine and waste and death.

Kemba: *(in trance almost - then shakes it off) Where did you arrive?*

Meta: *To Poland. When the doors opened, I thought I would be blind. It was so piercing bright and I could feel a breeze. But soon I could see and I wished I was blind.*

Kemba: *What? Why?*

Meta: *Right in front of me the chimney stacks. So many, with the souls/smoke going up into the air. The smell! I didn't know what it was yet but I was frozen with fear.*

SCENE 8

(Stage right dims as center stage becomes illuminated to show two wooden doors opening with people being pushed and pulled out [146 written on the door in chalk]. Guards and Kapos pass by mouthing orders and mocking some of the passengers. A group of deaf, blind, and elderly people are stage left. A table with an SS doctor is center stage with his back to the audience. Several prisoners pass by in striped uniforms.)

Young Meta: *(rubs eyes and stares ahead with fear. She is pushed out and falls. She quickly gets up to find her mother.)*

Mother: *(thrown from the car, but almost smiling to be away from the sounds of the cattle car)*

Young Meta: *(catches mother, looks around, sees Deaf people stage left and looks excited. She starts to make a step towards them forgetting the danger of being Deaf. ~~Deaf person in the group points at the stacks and another deaf person signs fire.~~)*

Male #1: *(sees Young Meta, nods to the group and then nods at the stacks <audience> as he passes by) ~~shaking his head in warning~~*

Young Meta: *(freezes in her tracks, realizing all of those people will soon be sent to their death)*

Soldier #1: *(forces new arrivals to form a line, separating women and men.)*

Deaf man: *(realizing the danger, starts moving away. A Kapo with Brown Triangle badge sees him and starts mocking him and pushing him back with the handicapped group).*

Young Meta: *(stares on with disgust)*

Mother: *(looks frightened for Meta after making the connection)*

(Kapos and Guards take the handicapped group away to their death - left)

(New women arrivals are inspected by the SS doctor, who points left and right)

Woman with baby: *(watches and sees - left is for death and a prisoner whispers to her)*
(She saves herself by handing her baby to her mother knowing any woman with a child will be killed and her mother will be killed anyway since she is old)

Grandmother: *(takes baby)*

(line moves up with the young women going right and old or sick or with children going left)

Woman: *(goes right)*

Her Mother and baby: *(go left)*

Mother: *(7th from the front)*

Young Meta: *(8th from the front, she watches as people pass right and left. She realizes right is for the young and healthy. Left is for the old, sick, and children)*

Friend: *(9th in line)*

Prisoner #1: *(passes by the line and mouths something)*

Young Meta: *(looks back after him to understand, she taps her mother and shows on her face she does not understand what the man said)*

Mother: *(touches Meta on the shoulder to calm her down and moves behind Meta)*

Young Meta: *(stands in front of SS doctor and tries to lipread his command)*

SS Doctor: *(points to Soldier #1 to open Meta's coat)*

Soldier #1: *(tears open the coat - buttons fly and he laughs)*

Young Meta: *(stands humiliated and terrified)*

SS Doctor: *(points his left)*

Young Meta: *(goes stage right clutching her coat around her, holding back tears and shows relief. Looks back to see mother).*

SS Doctor: *(points his right)*

Mother: *(goes stage left, head held high, never looks back at Meta)*

Young Meta: *(starts to turn to run for mother)*

Prisoner #1 and Friend: *(grabs her and brings her off stage right)*

Meta: *(Stage right illuminated as center stage goes black)*
(in frozen pose like Young Meta)

Kemba: *(rubs arm - goose bumps)* Did you see her again?

Meta: *(looks blank, numb)* She went left! *(pause - really talking to herself)* No where to put the stone - no where.

Kemba: Stone?

Meta: Jewish people visit grave - put stone there so the dead know they came. They are not forgotten. Where to put the stone for Mama - where? The guilt. The woman who gave her baby to her mother, later she hung herself. Many survivors after they are freed kill themselves - the guilt is too great.

Kemba: *(long pause - shifts in seat)* What happened after the selection *(right left)*

Meta: We were stripped of our clothes and searched (every where). I was so ashamed and scared. I became truly numb. No thoughts nothing - like an animal. Gave us the zebra clothes - it didn't matter what size - no underwear and no bras. Later we don't need bras because our breast shriveled up to nothing. Then they shaved our heads because of the lice - we were treated like dogs - and if we escaped then the villagers would recognize we were prisoners. Also, use hair for mattress and sell. I had long auburn hair. Beautiful. Every night my mother brushed it. Stroke after stroke. When I was in line to have my head shaved, I remembered my mother walking left. She was proud, no weeping. I can not cry for my hair. I told myself pretend orthodox and it is the day after my wedding. I watched my auburn hair fall to the floor with a smile.

Kemba: Wedding?

Meta: Orthodox Jewish women shave head after marriage - not attractive to other men.

Kemba: Oh, then did you get a number tattooed on your arm?

Meta: Yes, for three years that became my name and the appellee - that was my panic. 3 or 4 times each day, morning, midnight, hot, freezing, didn't matter. I slept on the bottom bunk with my hands pressed to the floor wood to feel the vibrations if the guard came in to announce roll call. I had to fight horrible for bottom bunk but some there knew I am deaf so they give me the bottom bunk.

Kemba: *(looks at the note she scribbled on her pad) Appellee / Roll Call panic?*

Meta: I am Deaf and they never called the numbers in order because people changed everyday: some died, were sick, taken. Always I panicked. What if they catch me? I will disappear

SCENE 9

(Lights fade stage right, lights up on center stage. Line of women in prisoner uniforms with hats are standing in the cold. Lighting is dim to show early a.m. hours. Women move feet to keep warm, all stare straight ahead. Stage left SS female guard holds paper with numbers. Other male guards pass by.)

Female SS: *(mouths number/name as if shouting)*

Female Prisoner #1: *(steps forward, holds, then steps back)*

Female SS: *(mouths number/name as if shouting)*

Friend: *(steps forward, holds, then steps back)*

(The whole time we see Young Meta trying to lipread the SS guard but finds it impossible. Prisoners are step forward.)

Young Meta: *(taps prisoner on her left, shows her number, imitates SS shouting number, then indicates prisoner should nudge her)*

Prisoner #2: *(looks confused)*

Young Meta: *(puts hand over her ear to show she is Deaf then points at her number again, the whole time looking forward)*

Prisoner #2: *(stares ahead with a very stern face of disgust)*

Young Meta: *(taps prisoner on her right, shows her number, imitates SS shouting number, then indicates prisoner should nudge her; her face shows panic)*

Prisoner #3: *(looks around, afraid of being caught, finally nods yes)*

Female SS: *(still calling numbers and prisoners stepping forward; when a number is called and no one steps forward, guard circles the name)*

Female SS: *(calls Prisoner #3's number)*

Prisoner #3: *(steps forward)*

Young Meta: *(almost stepped forward thinking it was her signal)*

(more numbers are called and prisoners step forward or are missing)

Female SS: *(Calls Meta's number)*

Prisoner #3: *(gently nudges Meta)*

Young Meta: *(steps forward, stares ahead, spotlight shines on her shaking like a leaf)*

SCENE 10

(Center stage goes dark, stage right lights up)

Meta: Always panic, every single time, never know. Person next to me might decide to report me to get more food. Maybe other person afraid to help me because she might get caught. Another person might think Deaf people are a disease and should die. Always panic ...Lucky I had a friend. I must never be noticed. Must be very very small.

Kemba: You never got caught?

Meta: I'm still alive, no?

(Stage right fades, center stage spotlight on Meta, shaking. Behind her are prisoners with lighter clothing, different order and different female SS reading the numbers. Lighting is bright to show hot summer afternoon.)

Young Meta: *(steps back into line looking relieved)*

Other Woman SS: *(calls number)*

Prisoner #1: *(steps forward)*

(black out, mist raises, faint light on center stage to show new line)

Friend: *(nudges Young Meta)*

Young Meta: *(steps forward into light shaking lightly with frightened face as light fades)*

(center stage goes dark, stage right lights up)

SCENE 11

(Stage right shows Meta sleeping in bed with night light. Stage left Janna and Kemba' bed room. Janna is sleeping. Kemba has a small night light on and is pouring over a book on the Holocaust. She drifts into sleep. Lights up on Center stage. Young Meta with FRIEND in bunk. Silhouette gives image of slaves)

Friend: *(signing/miming poorly while coughing - she is deathly ill)*. Please kill me. Please. I don't want to die like the baby. Remember. Please, I want you to do it.

Young Meta: *(caressing the woman and gently rocking while shaking her head 'no')*

Friend: *(more begging to be killed)*

Young Meta: *(looks around - sees one woman from another bunk watching)*.

Prisoner 2: *(gestures at shoes)*

Young Meta: *(looks and understands. Takes off Friend's shoes while fighting tears. Holds them to her chest. Looks lovingly at friend and then give them to prisoner)*

Prisoner 2: *(gets out of bunk - puts on shoes and hides old ones. Does a little jig and then turns to Friend. After taking strip of cloth and wrapping it up. Crazy look in her eyes)*.

Young Meta: *(stops her and motions for her to be gentle. Prays quickly over Friend then bends down to kiss her. Motions for Prisoner to kill Friend as she looks away)*.

Prisoner 2: *(somewhat touched by the prayer. Kills Friend but has in her eyes a gleam of pleasure)*.

Young Meta: *(cradles her dead friend harder and harder while rocking)*

(lights out center stage and lights on for stage right and left show Meta and Kemba in their beds rocking back and forth. Suddenly Kemba wakes from her night mare panting as Meta continues to toss and turn in her continual hell).

SCENE 12

(center stage lights go up to show a guards on a tower with a spot light. He moves the spotlight across the stage and through the audience. We see three prisoners trying to escape undetected. We also see the doctor emerge from behind the tower zippering up his pants. Young Meta crawls behind him back towards her barracks.)

(stage right, Meta with Kemba watching the end of a soap opera)

Kemba: Oh, I knew they would have to kill her when they brought her husband back after being missing for 10 years.

Meta: Yes, but what about the little boy. Remember after they declared her

husband dead she remarried and then that guy was killed by the spy. But before that they had the little boy.

Kemba: Oh, yeah what will happen to him? Soap Operas! Do you want some of the bread I brought you?

Meta: Yes please.

(Kemba goes out to get bread, Meta naps a little)

Kemba: *(sets down bread hitting Meta's arm - she jumps)*

Meta: Oh, Oh. I thought you were - oh..

Kemba: Thought I was the spy from the TV show *(wiggling her eyebrows)*

Meta: *(giggling, eats bread)* Ah this is much better than the camps. Ha - the camp bread was so hard and old. One piece every day that is all.

Kemba: I heard some husbands tried to shoot bread over fence to wife ...

Meta: Bad, bad.

Kemba: Bad??

Meta: Yes, how do I explain? If you eat good, you will have period. Little food, you will stop period. Guards watch us in bathroom, if see woman have period, will pull out and be gone because it means she stole the food.

Kemba: *(shocked face, reaches for knapsack to pull out pad and pen. She has a Silence = Death with Pink Triangle pin)*

Meta: *(reacts and reaches for the Pink Triangle pin on the bag)*

Kemba: Oh, that's for AIDS. Pink Triangle means -

Meta: Gay *(old NYC sign)*

Kemba: What?

Meta: Boy with boy, girl with girl

Kemba: Right. *(surprised)* I want the government to pay attention to AIDS and help people who are sick. That's why it says Silence = Death. Your time — Deaf and Jewish (silent) = Death and parallel now today people quiet about Silence and AIDS = Death.

Meta: Pink triangle from Hitler.

Kemba: W-h-a-t? No, this is new.

- Meta: Nazis hated many groups. Jews, handicapped, gays... So they made them wear badges too.
Yellow Star for Jews (*takes from chair and holds up star*)
Pink Triangle for homosexuals (*uses NYC sign and points to pin*)
Red for Political
Brown for (thinking) Gypsies
Purple
Much Much Hate
- Kemba: (*looks from Meta, the star, and to her pin with a puzzled expression, confused by how much she does not know, long pause*). Why did they hate so much. It's so insane. All planned out like that—badges tattoos, trains. It's so crazy.
- Meta: There is no "why." We can't explain it. The SS were the animals but they tried to make us into their image. They would make us kneel on broken glass for hours. They would hang children and make us watch. They would have young men burn their own fathers and mothers in the oven. They were the animals. When the Americans freed us, they forced the SS to bury our dead. They forced them to fix the rail roads so we could go back to our homes. The SS were working for the Jews. It is very strange how G-D can change it all in one day.
- Kemba: A whole bunch of the top SS guys killed themselves when they knew the Americans and Russians were getting close right?
- Meta: Yes and some, some SS tried to be good - to show G-D. (*long pause...*) One SS knew. I was moved again because the Russians were very near. We had to walk very far and it was freezing. People thought we would be saved soon. They heard bombing and the SS looked scared. We were so cold. My clothing froze and I could not move the cloth to go to the bathroom. Once I fell in the snow and started to cry and an SS came and hit me with a whip on my face. I had a horrible headache. I thought I would faint and then freeze in the snow. Many did, freeze like statues. I got up. I don't know how. We finally arrived at the next camp and we had to stay in tents. Many, many were dying: sick, beaten .. What were we talking about? (*very tired*)
- Kemba: Not being caught - You said one SS knew you were deaf.
- Meta: Yes, I was always very careful and quiet - small like a mouse. Never wanted to make a mistake or they would catch me. Many SS were escaping and others were panicked. I was working in the compound moving rocks with the wheelbarrow and

(Meta nods off to sleep, Kemba debates if should she should wake her. She decides to let her sleep. Picks up her back pack, looks carefully at the pin and back at Meta.)

SCENE 13

-21-

(Stage right dims, center stage lights up. All actors look cold and worn out.)

Young Meta: *(pushing wheel barrow to next location. One rock has fallen out without her noticing)*

Young SS: *(enters, see the rock fall in his pathway and calls out to Meta to come back and pick it up.)*

Young Meta: *(unloads rocks stage right)*

Young SS: *(comes up behinds her, shouts at her back. No response, he spins her around with his stick and shouts in her face while pointing at the forgotten rock)*

Young Meta: *(spins around, looks at the soldier terrified, sees the fallen rock. She looks at his face and then to the rock, seems puzzled and then starts to move for the rock)*

Young SS: *(with the stick he holds her still, looks her up and down, then looks around puzzled at how she could exist there undetected, gives her a look of disgust at his discovery and storms off)*

Young Meta: *(shaking, touches her pants to feel them damp with her urine. Other workers pass as if nothing happened; several refuse to look her in the eye. Meta begins to work by mistakenly putting rocks back into wheelbarrow and looks over shoulder constantly)*

(Black out, spotlight, center stage)

Young Meta: *(stands alone in roll call position, gets nudged imaginarily and steps forward ready to be taken away or shot on the spot. She shakes but stares straight ahead then steps back and trembles)*

(Black Out, spot light)

Young Meta: *(sleeping on bunk, alone, with hand pressed to floor, waking up constantly and looking in the darkness for the soldier to come take her away when there is nothing there)*

(Black Out, light up center stage)

Prisoners: *(pass by carrying things)*

Young Meta: *(Pushes wheel barrow, while looking over shoulder)*

Young SS: *(looks around, no one watching, steps in her path. Mouths exaggeratedly/orally to her "Gut Morgen", which means Good Morning in German and walks away)*

Young Meta: *(frozen, follows him with her eyes, looks around and starts to tremble as soon as the SS has left)*

(center stage light fades, stage right is illuminated to show Meta deep in sleep and slightly trembling)

SCENE 14

(stage left, TV room. Kemba is working on paper while Marc is watching TV. Marc becomes bored and throws something at Kemba.)

Kemba: *(jumps - scared. Looks up, Marc turns his head quickly and then looks back— she show her middle finger with 'f' moving up an down to mean fuck off)*

Marc: Oh, what's that a black sign?

Kemba: No, it's universal. I think it should be come your sign name - Marc. *(speaking to an imaginary person)* Meet my roommate "Marc"

Marc: *(laughing)* I threw that at you cuz I'm curious. I wanna know what's the problem with your mom?

Kemba: My mom. My mom wants me to get a Cochlear Implant.

Marc: No, way! Your mom can afford a Cochlear Implant.

Kemba: Yes — my mom's high up in this company. She earns a really good salary. Not all black people are on welfare - for your information.

Marc: I know. Why she want to waste her money for electronic gadget to make you into a robot.

Kemba: She's paranoid I won't successful in the work world — Deaf black woman - no speech *(imitates shocked look of employer)*

Marc: Man, your mom should know better - she's black herself. We're Deaf not Dumb. We can do anything. I mean would your mom paint you white cuz it would get you a job more easily?

Kemba: She doesn't understand. She wants what's best for me but she doesn't understand that the best thing is to accept me.

Marc: That's bullshit. I mean she's black right? She should be able to understand easily.

Kemba: Yeah, but your deaf right and you go around making all your racist jokes and being real stupid on Jews and Blacks. And here you be Deaf—you're supposed to understand better ...

Marc: That's different.... I'm just shitting around—that's not the same as telling you to put a machine in your head and ..

Janna: *(enters.)* Didn't you hear*(to Kemba)* ?

Kemba: What?

Janna: The news, a group of Neo-Nazis set an apartment building on fire in Germany.

Kemba: WHAT! Jews there?

Janna: I don't know. Two people dead.

(Kemba runs out of the room)

SCENE 15

(center stage Kapos come out pushing female prisoners . They all get in formation facing a gallows with their backs to the audience.)

Young Meta: *(Back row and taps friend of explanation)*

Friend: *(Indicates she does not know what is going on)*

Female SS: *(Comes up and begins shouting -no voice)*

All prisoners: *(respond with a jerk except Meta)*

Female SS: *(Calls two soldiers to bring another prisoner)*

Prisoner: *(Gets up on the gallows)*

Female SS: *(Continues to lecture to the women showing that they all must watch and no one turn their heads)*

Soldiers: *(Put the noose around the woman's face.*

(Spot light shine on her face and young Meta. Hang victim stares proudly ahead, Meta turns her head away.)

(stage right Kemba running up to Meta's door - hits doorbell and pounds on the door - no answer. Neighbor opens door and comes up behind Kemba.)

Neighbor: *(moves mouth only)* What's wrong?

Kemba: *(very upset, trying to be clear, mimed)* Worry - no answer...

Neighbor: *(looks her over)* Wait. *(Then goes back to her room)*

•Kemba: Call someone to come open the door - please - call

Neighbor: *(takes key and opens the door)*

Kemba: *(bursts into Meta's apt TV is on - 8 Hanukkah candles burning. Meta enters from bathroom. Startled to see Kemba) .*

Kemba: I was worried. You didn't answer the door so your neighbor let me in.

Meta: I was in the bathroom. I have no light flasher there. What's wrong?

Kemba: I was worried about you. Germany - the news.

Meta: Yes, see it happens again, again. They call us liars - they ignore our tattoos and our dead - and it happens again.

Kemba: I know, I know. But it won't be like before. Everyone saw it on TV - it will be in the newspapers and people will stop it.

Meta: It is a horrible thing - it makes me so sick. Because I know some Germans will say "Whew, only Turks, they are not coming for me." I know the feeling - it is so sick. Remember - I told you of my mother going left. I am sick every time I think of it. Why because I am glad for one short second - I am glad this old sick woman is not around me anymore and there will be less risk of me getting caught. Oh when I thought that thought I cried out - I cried so loud - I cry for my momma - no I cry for me, for the loss of my loss of my soul.

Kemba: You could not help it. All the fighting for food, shoes, survival ..They made you inhuman - it is not your fault.

Meta: My friend. She was a good one. She sheltered me and when she begged me to help, I could not. It is so sickening. Why do I live and they are all gone. And now again.

Kemba: No, no. It won't happen again. To many people know about it now.

Meta: Oh we survivors are old and dying. No one left to remember. Some say it is a made up lie. It was all a Hoax.

Kemba: I will remember. I know it is true.

Meta: But you do not know it all. What I saw. It was so horrible. *(takes a deep breath - this is hard for her)*. After I was freed and arrived in America I met my husband. I put the camps out of my mind. The memories would pop up but I would fight them out until I was pregnant, then I had the worse dreams. I would wake up shaking, my pillow soaking. My husband will hold me to calm me down but he could never understand - never. It is hard for the men, they can not forgive themselves for what happened to us. I could never tell my husband the shame, the pain, the

changes my body experienced. It was so pitiful - women who looked like starved men.

Kemba: You never told him? You never told anyone?

Meta: Yes, I told my family but it is not the same. They are all men. As I am older, the memories are stronger. I see my Papa and Mama's faces. I see the faces in the camps. I relive it. I had to watch everything. No ears to hear. So everything is burned into my mind. I wonder if the hearing people have such memories. Everything clear.

We are the same. And you are my daughter now. We are bound to what war can do to us. It can never can do this to a man. On the news a Grandmother and her grand daughter killed in Germany. They are our family.

Kemba: You said your memories were worse when you were pregnant, why?

Meta: Yes, this is what I am speaking of. When I was pregnant with my first son. Oh, I would wake up screaming night after night after night. My husband thought this is a woman thing. He did not know it was of the camps. My heart was racing so hard. I tell you now so you really know.

One night I was sleeping with my hands on the floor wood always ...

SCENE 16

(Stage left lights fade as center stage lights come on dimly. Bunks are shown with several women sleeping close together on the bottom and top bunk. Young Meta has her arms stretched out so she is touching the floor with her hands.)

Pregnant woman: *(walks from stage left and falls near Meta and clutches her stomach)*

Young Meta: *(wakes, rubs eyes to see)*

Other women: *(move in their sleep)*

Friend: *(Climbs down from upper bunk to comfort pregnant woman)*

Pregnant woman: *(starts to scream in pain—not audible)*

Other women in bunk: *(start to wake up)*

Friend: *(Looks to see if guard coming, puts her hand in pregnant woman's mouth to stifle the screams)*

Pregnant Woman: *(Crying, kicking, panting)*

• Young Meta: *(reaches out to hold her hand while keeps other on the floor to "listen")*

Friend: *(face shows pain from pregnant woman biting her hand)*

Woman #1: *(from bunk, she sadly gives her shoe to Friend)*

Friend: *(puts shoe in pregnant woman's mouth and moves to crotch area)*

Women in Bunks: *(watching as baby is being born)*

Young Meta: *(holds hand up as she sees baby come out)*

Women in Bunks: *(faces light up)*

Pregnant Woman: *(collapses)*

Friend: *(cuts cord, begins to hand baby to mother)*

Young Meta: *(Slow motion - feels vibrations, drops mother's hand, waves to friend)*

Female SS and Kapo: *(enter quickly as lights go on in the barracks)*

Friend: *(Slow motion - gets up to run stage left)*

Bunk women: *(cover ears from screaming baby and stamping feet. Many hide faces)*

Female SS: *(Slow motion - grabs baby from Friend)*

Friend: *(falls to knees sobbing)*

Pregnant Woman/mother: *(Slow motion -grabs at female SS as she passes by with baby, SS almost falls.)*

Female SS: *(Slow motion - motions to other guard to beat the mother)*

Female Kapo: *(bends over pregnant woman/mother to hit her with baton. Women in bunk look on in terror.)*

SCENE 17

(Black out center stage, stage right lights up. Meta is clinching her left hand from memory of the pregnant woman holding it.)

Meta: The mother never even looked at her. It was a very small baby girl - from mother to daughter - life. It would have died but better to die in its mother's hands than theirs. In America, during my pregnancy, safe in my bed thousands of miles away and thousands of years later, I woke to sweat and my heart racing. I dreamt they came for my child. They took everything from us: our hair, our period, our breasts, our virginity, our daughters.

•Kemba: How did you survive?

Meta: We were numb. Animals and cruel. But when the baby was born we were all awoken for a few minutes. We were alive until the pain came back and we went numb again. Up went the wall. The baby was taken from us like our mothers were. Everyday I wanted my mother. Every time I thought they'd come to take me to the chimney. I'd pray, and pray, and pray ..

Kemba: You still believed in God? You still have faith (*points at the Menurah*)

Meta: Without faith - no life. Chai (*necklace*) is because of faith. How to explain? I sometimes passed near the gas showers and once I saw a group of people, old women and children waiting, waiting. The children's bare feet frozen to the grounds and their mothers had to tear them up as the line moved on closer to their deaths. The women knew. Lipreading I saw they were singing. All together they sang. Hebrew. The guards saw they could not take OUR God. God was there. God was there. And guilt. Not me? Go numb again - no pain. Secretly proud of surviving.

Kemba: I wonder if that's what slaves felt like?

SCENE 18

(Center stage lights go up half way to show building with two young guards with guns near entrance. Young naked women are pushed into a line and forced to enter the building. Young Meta pushes a wheelbarrow by and one guard starts shouting at her and pushes her away. She is shocked by what she sees and runs from the scene. The naked women begin to fight more).

(Stage right lights go up. Kemba appears at Meta's apartment ringing bell. Neighbor comes out).

Kemba: (*Signs and Mimes*) I got an A on my paper - I want to show it to her. She knows I'm coming. She's probably in the bathroom.

Neighbor: She went to the hospital.

Kemba: (*shakes head - I don't understand. Gives paper with pencil to neighbor.*)

Kemba: Hospital! Where? (*writes down*)

Neighbor: (*writes down*)

Kemba: (*starts to leave - Kemba returns and asks neighbor for key - and mimes menohura. Lights all the candles on the Menohura. Enters apartment sits in chair, puts hand in seat and finds an envelop and the Star of David*).

SCENE 19

(Black out. Lights up on center stage. Meta hooked up to a monitor in a hospital bed. Enters Kemba stage left- she is carrying her research paper).

Kemba: *(looks around, looks lovingly at Meta. Crumples up paper. Holding Meta's hand - opens the letter she found in the arm chair).*

Kemba:

Long ago there was an old, old woman
who'd hid her soul
(It was hidden deep in the core of her bones)

She met a young woman with
eyes of brilliant innocence
(who bore out the old woman's soul with her kindness)

The old woman never intended to reveal so much pain
and confide so much shame

But no cameras or paper could capture the truth
This must go from:
Eye to eye, mind to mind, heart to heart, soul to soul.

After the horror stories were told, the silence broken
The young girl brought her peace

She reminded the old woman
The bond from mother to daughter can never be broken

Keeping the faith, may G-D keep you

Shalom, Meta Goldstein

(Kemba puts down the letter and lights the Menorah in the hospital room - lights all 9 candles and turns to Meta)

Kemba: Happy Hanukkah!

(monitor goes flat, slow black out)

SCENE 20

(center stage, dim lights show female bodies all over floor as male prisoners pick up and move them around. They start to take a lunch break in the room when the SS doctor arrives. They stand at attention and he orders them to start loading the

crematorium. Two prisoners open the door of the oven. Bright red lights flare in the background on a canvas which is waved to create the feeling of flames. The prisoners react to the heat as the other prisoners begin to load the body into the oven. Lights dim out).

(stage left, TV Room)

Janna: *(reading poem)* Beautiful. Maybe she knew she was going to die.

Kemba: No, it was in the chair with the Star of David. She was waiting for me to come again so she could give it to me.

Janna: Do you have the star?

Kemba: No, I gave it to her oldest son at the funeral. He should have it to give to his children.

Janna: I still think she was waiting. You know they say people wait until the right time to die. But now she's dead and she doesn't know that people in Germany are fighting the Neo-Nazis. She probably thought it was happening all over again.

Kemba: She knows it won't.

Janna: Why?

Kemba: You gotta have faith.

Janna: In what? Millions of people were killed and for her to die after seeing it start again ..

Kemba: No, no - you don't understand - her dying shows she has faith. A soul that strong can't die.

Janna: Are you going to give her sons a copy of your paper when you're done?

Kemba: Yeah, I think so. It will take me a long time to write down her whole story. I can give it to them at the stone setting ceremony.

Janna: *(huh?)*

Kemba: On the first anniversary of a Jewish person's death they put down the tombstone.

Janna: One year - why??

(phone light flashes. Janna looks at Kemba. Enters Marc)

Janna: *(to Kemba)* Want me to get it?

Kemba: *(nods her head yes)*

Marc: *(looking around)* Ah, you know its your mom. You gotta face her some time. Just give her a piece of your mind. Either she accepts you as a deaf person or fuck off.

Kemba: *(looking through a book of Holocaust artwork)* I know. I'm just waiting for the right time. I want to tell her as clearly as possible so she can really understand me.

Marc: What good is being silent. You never.... What ya looking at?

Kemba: These are artwork from a Deaf survivor from Dachau — David Bloch.

Marc: A Deaf man painted these?

Kemba: Yeah, and they have special symbols see...the cross?

(Kemba and Marc flip through the book - slides are projected onto the scrim showing the artwork of David Bloch. Slide of hanging and tower. Slide of quad. Lights come up on center stage to show concentration camp scene recreated from the slide with the prisoners. Slide of prison cell. Slide of prisoners at fence and woman with child. Center stage lights come up to show prisoners behind barbed wire as in the slide and spotlight on woman and child.

Kemba: *(affected)* I have to call my mom now.

Marc: *(gives her a thumbs up and keeps looking at the pictures)*

(Slide of woman and child and prisoners at the fence shown again. Slide of Roll call with SS and folded uniform in place where prisoners are gone. Lights up to show prisoners in position with Female SS taking roll call, guard present, Kapos with clubs, doctor inspecting, and uniforms folded in places where prisoners are gone.)

(black out. Lights up slowly on center stage. Tombstone with carving. Fall leaves are scattered about. Kemba looks one year older and has on a different Fall jacket. Hair is different. A black woman - her mother is with her but stands in the distance).

☆

Meta Goldstein
Beloved Wife and Mother
Survivor 1941-45
1922 - 1992

Kemba: *(brushes leaves off the grave, pulls a stone from her pocket and sets it on the tombstone)*

13. 8x10



Peter W. Wollenhaupt

Patricia Mace

Erika Koza

Gina I. Switalski

Cynthia C. Barrett

Christine Wania

Anne Wania

META

13. 9/11

Police Spenser

you have to
take the name





Robert Cagle

Andrew Rubin

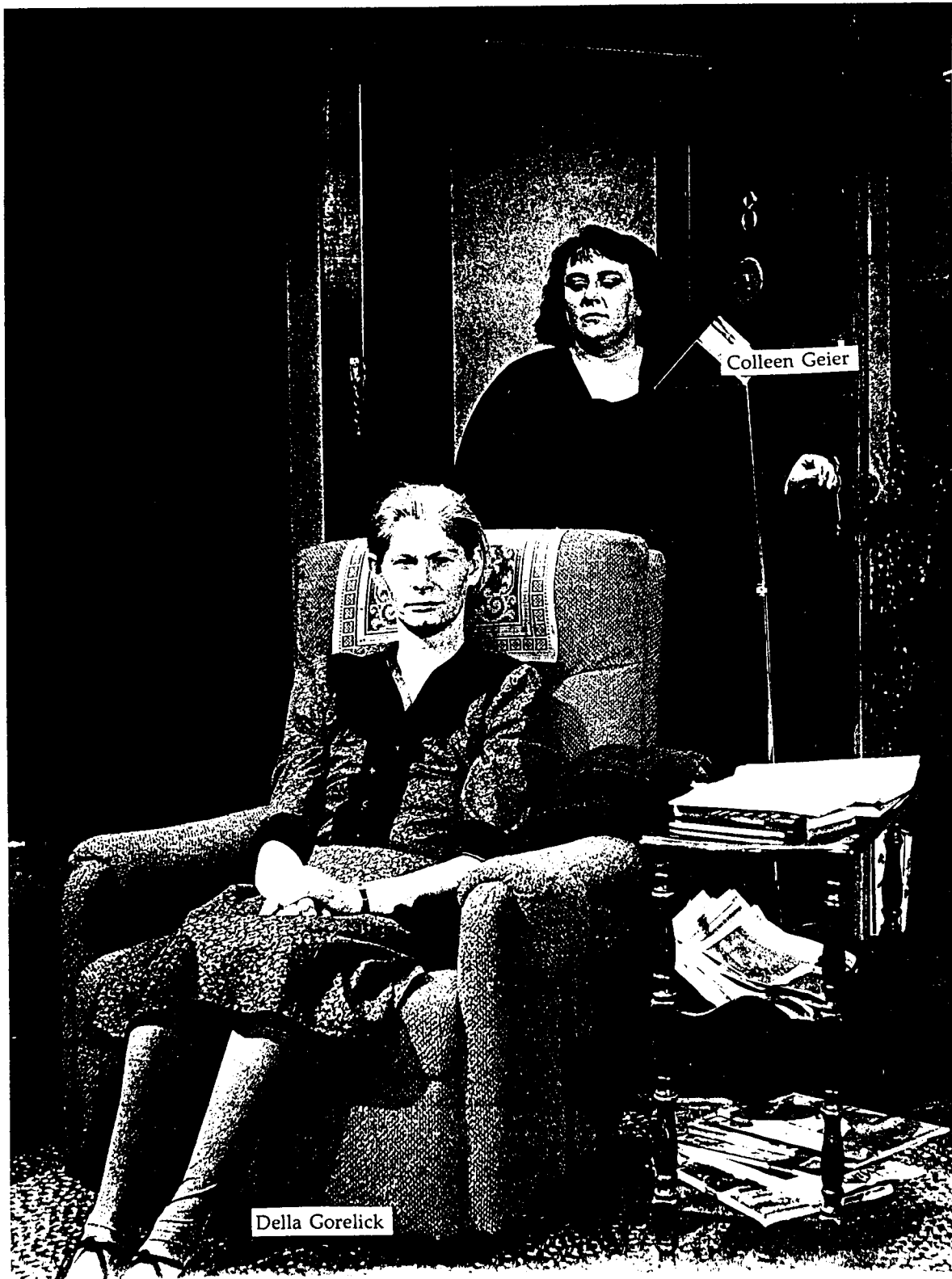
Frank Kimmes



Tara Petrites

Roger Vass Jr.

Tracey Washington



Colleen Geier

Della Gorelick

1990

1990



Donald R. MacDonald

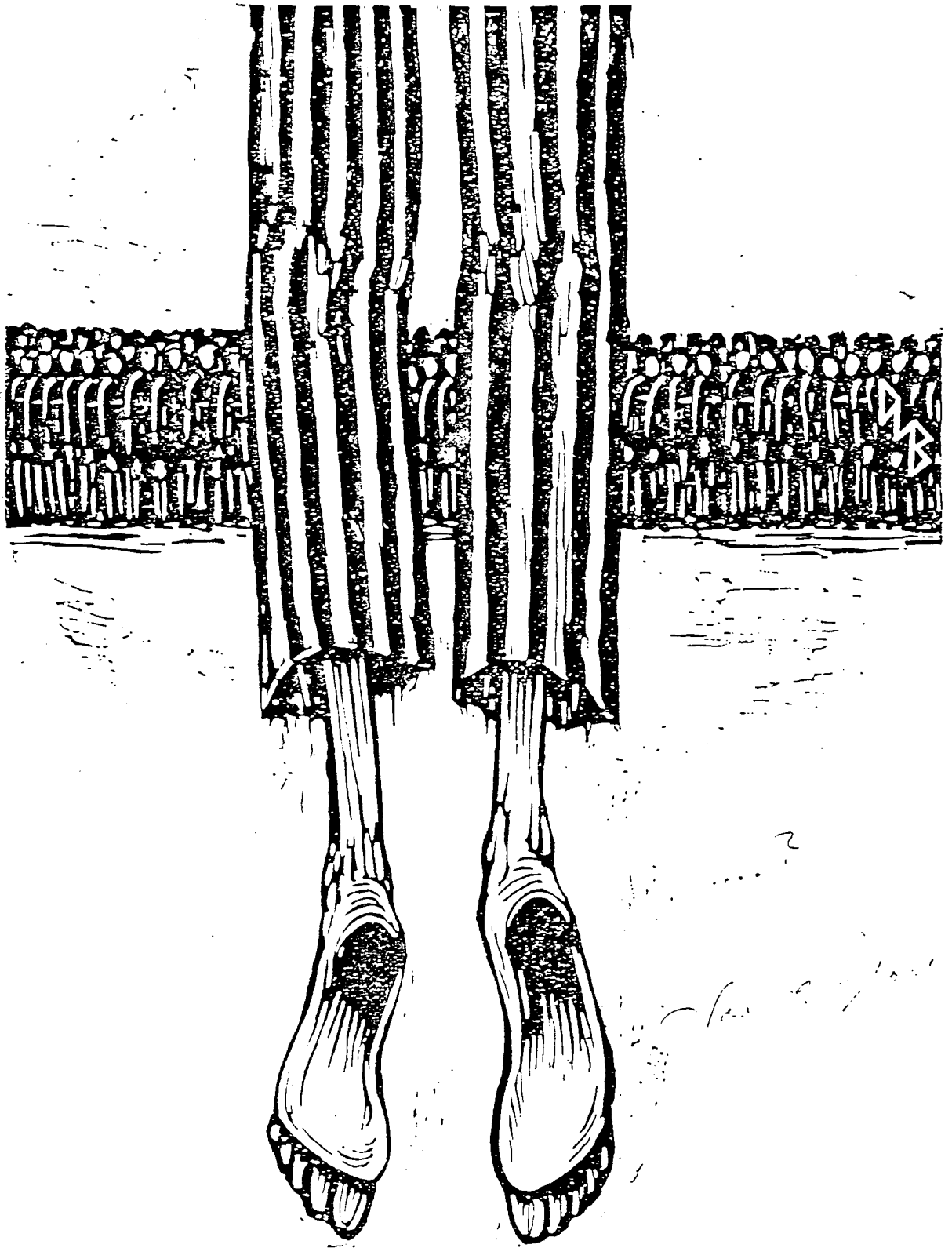
Kathleen Wania

Mel Westlake
Michelle Johnston

Survivor of
Dachau

David Bloch

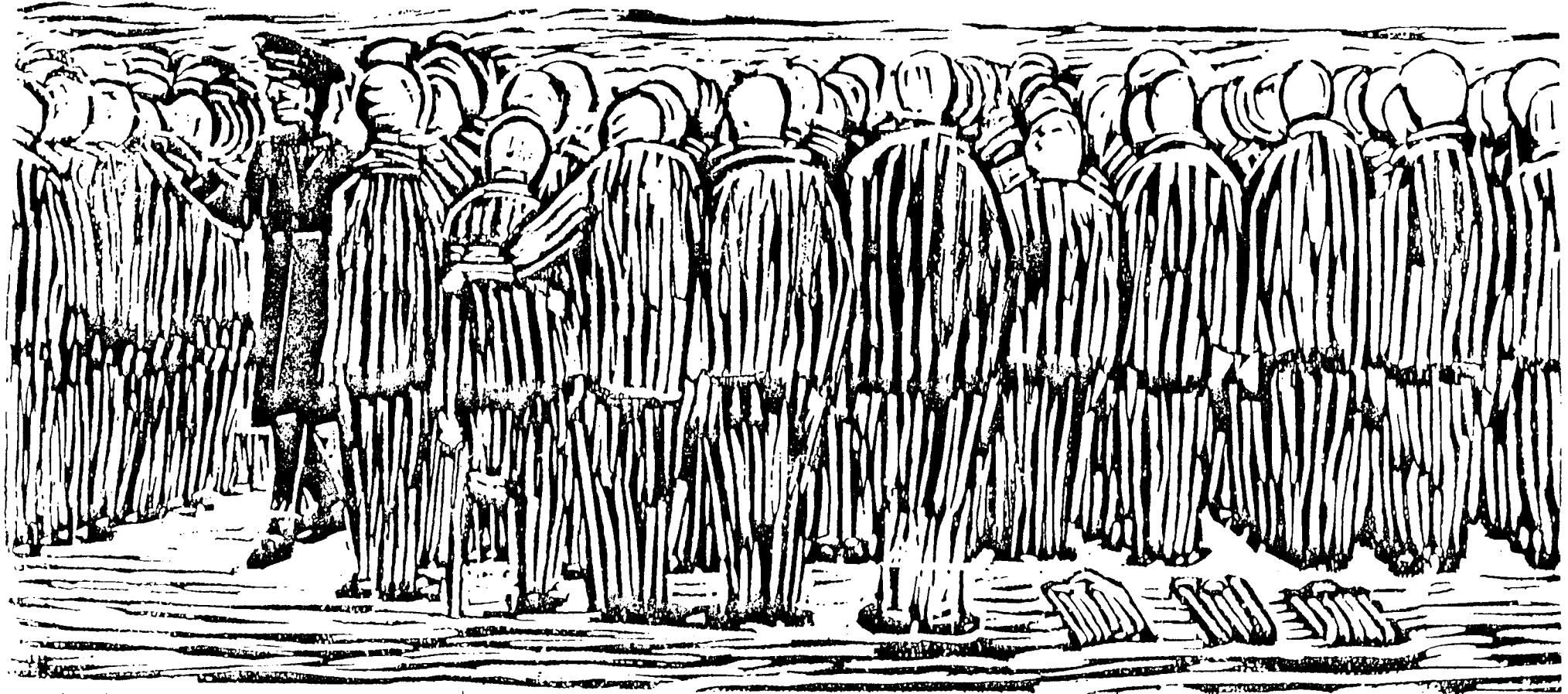






NEVER AGAIN





10/11/19