

DIRECTOR'S COPY

(supplemental documentation)

THE FORT PILLOW MASSACRE

A dramatization of an actual event

By

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This play is based upon the Report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War as directed by the Joint Resolution of the 38th Congress, 1st Session, to look into the attack of rebel forces upon Fort Pillow, Tennessee on April 12, 1864.

Resolved by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War be, and they are hereby, instructed to inquire into the truth of the rumored slaughter of the Union troops, after their surrender, at the recent attack of the rebel forces upon Fort Pillow, Tennessee: as also, whether Fort Pillow could have been sufficiently re-enforced or evacuated, and if so, why it was not done; and that they report to Congress as soon as possible. - Approved April 21, 1864

NOTE: With the exception of the Narrator and the Moderator, every word spoken in this play was either taken verbatim from the Question & Answer dialogue in the Committee's Report, or is an exact extract from published material referenced by the Moderator to specific writers. NOTHING was added. - *The Playwright*

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Intent

In many ways, this play is a public hearing on the culpability of Confederate General Nathan Buford Forrest for the Fort Pillow Massacre during the Civil War in Tennessee on April 12, 1864. The prosecution's case is the verbatim testimony of the survivors and witnesses taken in April 1864. The defense is presented by contemporary writers and historians. The audience will be the jury. The challenge for the director is to assure a "fair" hearing.

Content and Timing of Play - Director's Decision

This may be an uncommon requirement, but the Director needs to reduce the 'basic' script to a manageable length. The basic script (rev 1.6) is over 2 hours long. There are several means of accomplishing this: (a) the entire Act 4 could be removed; (b) Some Witnesses from Act 3 and/or Act 4 could be removed; (c) individual Q&A sets could be pruned from the script. **Appendix A - Creative License** contains the guidelines for how the playwright and the director can work together to accomplish the desired script for a particular audience and performance.

Terminology

In a hearing, an investigator asks a question and the witness responds with an answer. This is a Question and Answer (Q&A) pair. In a book review, a moderator asks an author a question and the author replies. This exchange is also a Q&A pair. A series of Q&A pairs make up a 'set'. For example, the series of Q&A's between an investigator and a witness is a set. Similarly, the dialogue between a moderator and a writer on the same topic is a set.

Play Structure

The play, The Fort Pillow Massacre, is written as juxtaposed Question and Answer (Q&A) set series. That is, a collection (series) Q&A sets from the actual 1864 Congressional Record in contrast to a series of Q&A sets of a Moderator asking the setup question to an answer given as a direct quote from a published book by its writer.

There will be four (4) such series of Q&A sets in the play dictated by how the prosecution presents its case. The breakout is determined by these four (4) witness groups: White Superior Officers, White Surviving Officers, Black Soldiers and then White Soldiers.

The prosecution goes first (the testimony), followed by the defense using excerpts from books by the writers and historians seated on a panel.

Acts and Scenes

This results in a four (4) act play, with two scenes in each act. The four (4) acts are based upon the four (4) Witness Groups:

- Act 1 White Officers - Superiors, not first-hand eye witnesses**
- Act 2 White Officers - first-hand eye witnesses**
- Act 3 Black Soldiers (and black men) - first-hand eye witnesses**
- Act 4 White Soldiers - first-hand eye witnesses + Others - not first-hand eye witnesses**

The first scene in each act is the 'Investigator-Witness' Q&A set group, and the second scene is the 'Moderator-Writer' Interview Q&A set group.

The Cast List

The characters in the play are two categories of real persons: (a) deceased civil war soldiers and civilians, juxtaposed (b) writers and storytellers of history, many most likely currently living. In addition, there is a narrator speaking throughout the play.

Number of Cast Members

Most of characters in the play are giving testimony in an interview process. The number of cast members varies upon the director's decision to have an actor play one or more parts. The absolute minimum number of cast members needed for a reading is seven (7), ten (10) should work better, though there are twenty-eight (28) unique persons that could be each played by a separate actor.

CHARACTER TYPES	Min	Best	Max
Narrator [Informs and guides play]	1	1	1
Moderator [Questions Writers]	1 ***	1	1
Writer(s) or Teller(s) of History	1 *	2	10
• Investigator(s) [Of Witnesses]	1	1	2
• Witnesses [Civilians and Soldiers]			-
o White Man, Civilian(s)	0 *	0	0
o White Woman, Civilian(s)	0	0	0
o Black Man, Civilian(s)	1 **	1	1
o White Officer(s)	1	2	3

o White Soldier(s)	1 *	1	5
o Black Soldier(s)	1 **	1	5

TOTAL 7 *, 10 28**

Footnote: * = same white actor, ** = same black actor
 *** = Moderator's lines should not be delivered by Narrator
 These counts relate to: Script Rev: 1.6 January 18, 2019

LIST OF CHARACTERS

NARRATOR

The Narrator speaks throughout the play. He/she holds the play together, introduces the characters, moves the story along and provides the transition from one set of characters to the other. The Narrator is an objective voice. Narrator could be off stage and reading lines.

MODERATOR

The Moderator introduces and poses to the Writers the questions that are answered through their published writings. Her/his 'set-up' questions to the Writers are unavoidably biased and hence a less objective voice.

NOTE: Avoid the temptation to have one actor play both the Narrator and Moderator. They are treated separately in the Script.

WRITER(S)

The authors of the published writings that provide the historical reflection and interpretation of the events of the alleged massacre juxtaposed the recorded witnesses' testimony.

- B05 *Andres, Curt, Hearts in Conflict: A One-Volume History of the Civil War*
 B04 *Catton, Bruce. Never Call Retreat,*
 B17 *Dupuy, Trevor N. The Compact History of the Civil War,*
 B26 *Henry, Robert Selph. The Story of the Confederacy,*
 B18 *Pollard, Edward A. Southern History of the Civil War*
 B39 *Turtledove, Harry. Fort Pillow: A Novel of the Civil War,*
 B36 *Ward, Andrew. River Run Red: The Fort Pillow Massacre*
 B34 *Wills, Brian Steel. The Confederacy's*

- B30 *Greatest Cavalryman: Nathan Bedford Forrest*
Woodworth, Steven E. *Atlas of the Civil War: Enlistment of African American Soldiers*
- B35 Wyeth, John Allan. *That Devil Forrest: Life of General Nathan Bedford Forrest*

NOTE: Directors are encouraged to read the books listed above for additional dialogue and/or find additional published writings that provide the historical reflection and interpretation of the events of the alleged massacre that could become a another source of dialogue.

INVESTIGATOR (S) The two members of the Committee who take the testimony from the witnesses of the alleged massacre. The two men are Benjamin Franklin Wade United States Senator from Ohio (known as B.F. Wade) and Daniel Wheelwright Gooch a United States Representative from Massachusetts (known as D.W. Gooch.) The questions asked by these two men are indistinguishable so this part can / should be played by one actor. B.F Wade is the Chief Investigator.

WITNESSES The civilians, officers and soldiers, men and woman, black and white who are interviewed by the Investigators.

NOTE: The 'W' number before the name of the witness is the actual sequence number of their interview as it appears in the official Committee Report. Some of the numbers are missing as the Playwright did not include every witness's testimony in the play, as it did not add significantly to the telling of the story. The sequence in the report seems to be chronological. The Playwright did not feel bound to that sequence. See **Appendix B** for a roster of all the witnesses who gave testimony in the Congressional Report.

NOTE: The Director is free to make changes in inclusion and in the sequence as well. Specific Q & A may also be removed from the dialogue, but may not be altered. (See **Appendix A**)

CIVIL WAR SOLDIERS and CIVILIANS

Mr. WADE B.F. Wade was the Chairman of the Committee on the Conduct of the War which investigated

the alleged massacre at Fort Pillow. Mr. Wade is the central character in the play as the chief investigator who interviews witnesses to the event.

Mr. GOOCH

D.W. Gooch is a committee member and investigator, and like Mr. Wade, he interviews witnesses to the event.

NOTE: Mr. Gooch's role is a historical fact. However, his character part and lines could be performed by the same actor playing Mr. Wade without significantly affecting the telling of the event.

WHITE MAN(s)

All interviewed by Mr. Wade and Mr. Gooch. There were several civilian white men interviewed.

(to be added later as optional dialogue)

WHITE WOMAN(s)

All interviewed by Mr. Wade and Mr. Gooch. There were several civilian white women interviewed. Below are the ones whose testimony is included in the playscript.

(to be added later as optional dialogue)

BLACK MAN(s)

All interviewed by Mr. Wade and Mr. Gooch. There were several civilian black men interviewed. Below are the ones whose testimony is included in the playscript. His names is:

w20 Jacob Thompson

**WHITE
OFFICER(s)**

All interviewed by Mr. Wade and Mr. Gooch. There were several white officers interviewed. Below are the ones whose testimony is included in the playscript. Their names are:

w01 Brigadier General Mason Brayman – Cairo, Ill
w02 Surgeon Horace Wardner - Mound City, Ill
w30 Lt. M.J. Leming, 13th Tenn. Calvary

**WHITE
SOLIDER(s)**

All interviewed by Mr. Wade and Mr. Gooch. There were several white soldiers

interviewed. Below are the ones whose testimony is included in the playscript. Their names are:

W22	W.P. Walker, Sgt. Co. D 13th Tenn. Calvary
W32	Francis A. Alexander, Pvt. Co. C 13th Tenn. Calvary
W34	Daniel Stamps, Sgt. Co. E 13th Tenn. Calvary
W36	W.C. Mays, Pvt. Co. B 13th Tenn. Calvary
W40	John F. Ray, Pvt. Co. B 13th Tenn. Calvary

**BLACK
SOLIDER (s)**

All interviewed by Mr. Wade and Mr. Gooch. There were several black soldiers interviewed. Below are the ones whose testimony is included in the playscript. Their names are:

W06	Benjamin Robinson, Sgt, Co.D 6th US Heavy Artl.
W07	Daniel Tyler, Pvt, Co.B 6th US Heavy Artillery
W10	Manual Nichols, Pvt, Co.B 6th US Heavy Artillery
W15	George Shaw, Pvt, Co.B 6th US Heavy Artillery
W16	Major Williams, Pvt, Co.B 6th US Heavy Artillery

Note: See **Appendix D - Creative License** for guidelines in how the script may be varied using the Q&A set sequence numbers.

Major Topics and Charges

There were **70** witnesses who gave testimony during the 1864 congressional hearing. (In addition, there were several letters and affidavits furnished.) Choosing which testimony was included in the 'basic' script was based upon which ones could tell us the most about what happened at Fort Pillow. Here is an important concept: there will be seven (7) Major topics covered in the play:

- 1 Violation of Truce**
- 2 No Quarter Given**
- 3 Treated as "Niggers"**
- 4 Massacre of Men**
- 5 Men Buried Alive**
- 6 By Forrest's Command**
- 7 Other issues**

The opening statements describing what took place at Fort Pillow could be summarized by seven (7) issues that equate to 'charges' brought by the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War against General Forrest and Confederacy. The

Investigators will cover these seven topics with each of the four Witness Groups. The writers will then provide a countering prospective of these charges.

NOTE: This concept and the notations below will be used in **Appendix B** (Witnesses) and in **Appendix C** (Writers).

The charges are:

Violation of Truce (T) . . . Did the Confederate soldiers under General Forrest violate the rules of conduct while under a 'Flag of Truce'?

No Quarter Given (Q) . . . Did the Confederate soldiers under General Forrest state that 'No Quarter Given', that is, no mercy would be shown?

Treated as "Niggers" (N) . . . Did the Confederate soldiers under General Forrest treat Black Union Soldiers as 'Niggers'?

NOTE: In current times, the word 'Nigger' is treated as a derogatory term for African Americans. It is regarded today as so offensive that it can neither be spoken nor written and is often referred to as the 'N-Word'. The term 'Nigger' in 1864 had a different connotation. When used, the meaning is that the individual(s) it is directed at is less than human, and therefore is not entitled to be treated as human. They are the property of the owner. That is, they can be bought and sold, and their families can be broken up and sold. Further, they may be beat, even killed with impunity as a dog, horse or any other animal. This is the definition used in this charge. It is not that someone used a 'bad' word.

Massacre of Men (M) . . . Did the Confederate soldiers under General Forrest massacre men at Fort Pillow? Massacre is the wanton killing of defenseless men and/or men who have surrendered in battle.

Men Buried Alive (B) . . . Did the Confederate soldiers under General Forrest bury men alive?

By Forrest's Command (F) . . . Did General Forrest have full knowledge, provide consent, or even ordered the above atrocities?

Other issues (O) . . . Did the Confederate soldiers under General Forrest commit other offenses? (e.g. burn men alive, murder children,..)

I rated the testimony of each witness, and those offering evidence of the most charges were included in the script.

Periods and Setting

There are two periods and settings juxtaposed one another:

- 1) Military outpost in April 1864;
 - o indoor hearing room, AND
 - o indoor military hospital ward
- 2) Contemporary;
 - o indoor private sitting room, OR
 - o indoor TV program book-author interview set, OR
 - o indoor TV program panel of book-authors

Stage and Set

NOTE: The following are only suggestions:

Option 1: The stage is split - left and right:

- Stage Left is an indoor hearing room in a military outpost in April 1864, AND indoor military hospital ward.
- Stage Right is an indoor contemporary private library or sitting room.

Option 2: The stage is split - front and elevated rear:

- Stage rear is an indoor hearing room in a military outpost in April 1864, AND indoor military hospital ward.
- Stage front is an indoor contemporary private library or sitting room or panel dais.

The hearing room where testimony is taken should give the impression and feel of a hearing room in a military post in 1864. Seating for the investigator(s) is optional. The space should be stark with few or no visual distractions. Director's option of whether one or two investigators (if two are used) are in the space at the same time.

The military hospital ward where testimony is taken could be represented by a single bed replacing the witnesses chair in the hearing room. The use of a bed is optional; testimony could be taken from the wounded in a chair in the hearing room. Director's option.

Director's option if the Narrator is present on-stage or off-stage.

Director's option if the Moderator is present on-stage or off-stage.

The set for the modern-day writers could be a contemporary sitting room with comfortable sitting chairs. The backdrop could be a private library.

An alternative setting would be a TV program set where the Moderator is the host. (This is the setting used in the basic script.) The backdrop could be pleasant and colorful such as bookcases, coffee tables and lamps. This is the space that the contemporary writers and storytellers of history will read excerpts from their books and letters. It is the Director's option of whether there is more than one character in the space at the same time.

A third alternative, is a panel of experts on the history of the event and would read from books dealing with the alleged Fort Pillow Massacre. (But are not the actual authors of the books.)

Note: If the Director chooses to use one of the settings not assumed in the basic script, contact the author and suggest revisions to the Moderator's dialogue. (see **Appendix A**)

Props

The interviewer(s) may be holding a tablet or clipboard of presumed questions to be asked. The prop could actually hold the characters lines.

The writer(s) and storyteller(s) of history may be holding a book or letter of presumably their written works. The prop could actually hold the characters lines.

In contrast, the witnesses of 1864 need to speak their lines from memory in response to the investigator's questions. One exception is Lt. Leaming who could be reading from his (implied) notes.

Stage Direction - removed from script

All stage directions has been removed from the script. It's the Director's option on how direction is given. Action movements were self-evident. It is suggested the switching from one scene to the other be done through lighting in conjunction with the dialogue of the Narrator / Moderator. See below for samples of the direction that were removed from the script.

- *Make all scene transitions with lighting.*

- *Consider dimming the lights whenever the Narrator interrupts the Q&A dialogue to provide information.*
- *Lights up. Seated are the Moderator and one or more writers in a modern period TV studio set of a panel of experts facing the audience.*
- *Lights dim on TV Studio set. (to end scene)*
- *Lights up on Hearing set. Seated is a Black Soldier. OR consider replacing the hearing chair with a cot allowing the Black Soldier to be sitting up in a bed to represent the hospital wards.*
- *Surgeon Wardner rises, nods to Mr. Gooch, and exits. Lights dim. (to end scene)*
- *General Brayman rises, nods to Mr. Wade, and exits.*
- *Surgeon Wardner takes the witness stand.*
- *The actor reading for Catton could leave the panel. I did this because Catton is such a heavy weight. I couldn't imagine him sitting in on a panel with lesser-knowns.*
- *Writer may read the script inside a book prop. (meant for all Writers)*
- *The actor could have the script to read as his 'Notes' (for Lt. Leaming)*

Director's option on the use of dialect.

Script Format

The playscript format has been purposely selected over the more popular format of centering the characters and blocking their dialogue below. The reason is that this play is a dramatization of an actual event which was essentially the gathering of testimony by the question and answer process. The playscript format is more appropriate for this form of documentation. The lines can be spoken at a rate of approximately **1.5 minutes/page** of script.

Script Revisions

The script is designed to be easily revised. Each dialogue line is tagged to the right (in 50% shade) with: (a) a unique Sequence(**SEQ**)code; and (b) a unique Character Identification(**ID**)code.

-end-