

Regional Premiere

The Secretary

BY
**KYLE
JOHN
SCHMIDT**

**DIRECTED BY
CHRISTY MONTOUR-LARSON**

January 9 - February 22

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THE BUSINESS OF GUNS



Guns as an economic driver is at the heart of *The Secretary* and is inspired by a real town. At a time when many manufacturing jobs have left the US, gun manufacturers pride themselves on staying in America. **But what's the real impact of the industry?**

Gun violence is a far more profitable and impactful industry than gun manufacturing in America.

\$28B

U.S. gun industry

\$229B

annual cost of gun violence



Even in Colorado, the total economic impact of the firearms industry, including suppliers and ancillary industries, is eclipsed by the cost of gun violence.



\$768M Total economic impact in CO



\$3.5B

The price of gun violence in CO (\$668 per resident)

Political spending by the National Rifle Association outpaces opponents to ensure their interests are protected, even as the minority.

\$31M

NRA spent during the 2016 presidential election



\$3.88M

NRA support of Cory Gardner, CO Senator



25%

Americans are gun owners

78%

of gun owners support stricter controls opposed by the NRA



120 guns owned for every 100 Americans

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

"Guns don't kill people. People kill people."

Fred A Roff, Jr., President of the Colt Patent Fire Arms Company, is credited for first coining this phrase in a May 31, 1959 newspaper article from the Associated Press. Contrary to popular belief, it is not an official NRA slogan, though it has been used by NRA members and other gun rights advocates. Ironically, it has also been used as a gun safety slogan, as the full quote reads:

"Our big concern is to make sure that guns get into the hands of only those who know how to use them. Guns don't kill people. People kill people."

How you respond to Roff's statement depends a great deal on how you were raised and how you react to the world. The same can be said for one of the most confusing and hotly debated sentences in the Constitution: The Second Amendment.

"A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed."

The partisan divide that for years has defined public opinion about the nation's gun policies remains firmly in place. Mainstream liberals tend to focus on the first part, protection for state organized militia and almost nothing else. Mainstream conservatives tend to focus on the second part: the right to bear arms for each and every citizen.

Advocates on both sides of the gun-control debate have seized on the recent shooting in White Settlement, Texas, as a rallying cry for their respective causes. On December 29, a 43-year-old man opened fire in the West Freeway Church of Christ, killing two people before a member of the church's

security team shot and killed him. Gun rights advocates have pointed to the shooting as evidence that access to arms gives people better ability to defend themselves. But gun safety advocates argued that the shooting itself wouldn't have happened if America had stronger gun regulation.

We can see the world the same way, but react to it differently. How you experience *The Secretary* can fall along the same lines of how you feel about guns, which presents a unique opportunity to reexamine deeply held beliefs and the assumptions we make about ourselves and others.

I first met Kyle John Schmidt when I directed a stage reading of *The Secretary* at Seven Devils Playwrights Conference in McCall, Idaho. I continue to be fascinated by how *The Secretary* can present the complexities of guns in America, through the viewpoint of women, with humor – and a pinch of absurdity.

It is an honor to give this play to you.



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christy M-L".

Christy Montour-Larson
Director

SHOOT-OUT IN THE WILD WEST

Colorado natives are quick to tell you just how much the state has changed in the last decades and driving down I-25 reflects that change. Yet the mentality (and subsequent policies) of this purple state remains firmly planted in our Wild West heritage - especially our gun policies.

Colorado has a long history of gun violence, starting before we were even a state with the Sand Creek Massacre, continuing through Columbine, and into today. Recent statistics show that guns are the second-leading cause of death for children aged 1-17 in our state. And every 12 hours someone is killed by gun violence in Colorado.

When Colorado became a state in 1876, our state Constitution enshrined this provision:

“...the right of no person to keep or bear arms in defense of his home, person and property, or in aid of the civil power when thereto summoned, shall be called in question; but nothing herein contained shall be construed to justify the practice of carrying concealed weapons.”

With our purple population, gun regulation remains a hotly contested item in the state, often moving in the direction of the party in control and then ping-ponging back when election results change. Several gun bills are debated each legislative session and most don't make it up to a vote.

Our Western heritage and values are often at odds with the current reality of gun violence in Colorado.

Colorado runs middle of the pack when compared to other states on gun legislation. We don't require permits or registrations to own firearms and are a “shall issue” concealed carry state – meaning that a granting authority *shall* issue a license if the criteria are met, as opposed to states that give discretion to law enforcement. There is no waiting period to buy a gun. In 1985, Colorado enacted a “Make My Day” law, which allows property owners to use lethal force on their own property. Welcome to the modern Wild West.

However, a number of progressive cities have enacted their own regulations on guns. The City of Denver first passed a prohibition on open carry back in 1950, which has been challenged in courts but still stands. Denver also passed an assault weapons ban back in 1989 which has also been challenged and modified (including most recently in 2018) but remains largely intact even though similar laws in Vail and Boulder have been deemed unenforceable due to the state constitution.

After a string of high-profile shootings in 2013, a number of gun control measures passed through the state legislature, including high capacity magazine restrictions, required background checks for private purchases, and prohibitions on gun ownership for those convicted of domestic violence. While these measures passed, they were incredibly contentious and the fall out resulted in the recall of two state legislators for their support of the bills. In the last session, a bill was introduced to repeal the high capacity



magazine measure. While it didn't pass, sponsor Lori Saine plans to bring it back again in the upcoming session.

In 2018, the state passed a "red flag" law that allows a court to temporarily remove firearms from people who are believed to be a threat to themselves or others. This controversial measure just went into effect on Jan. 1, 2020. This law was sponsored by State Representative Tom Sullivan who lost his son Alex in the 2012 Aurora Theater Shooting. At least a dozen counties have already declared themselves "Second Amendment Sanctuaries" and pledged not to enforce the law so we're sure to see a number of court cases about this issue in the years ahead.

In the future, Sullivan plans to sponsor a bill to require reporting of lost and stolen firearms to law enforcement. Another key regulation proposal developed by Representative Monica Duran deals with safe gun storage.

Perhaps one bright spot in the debate is agreement on the need for more mental health and counseling services in our schools. This effort gained considerable bipartisan support after the recent shooting at the STEM High School in Douglas County.

It's clear we are facing an epidemic of gun violence and the majority of Americans, including gun owners, believe that some additional levels of gun regulation are reasonable and needed. A number of interesting organizations are coming to the table as the debate evolves, including those such as Colorado Gun Owners for Safety, whose membership includes many retired and active members of law enforcement and military.

Curious has partnered with a number of organizations to wade into the complexities of this issue. Please join us for post-show discussions, online, and on social media for more in-depth conversation and information.

GO DEEPER

To learn more about *The Secretary*, go to our Go Deeper section on the Curious website:
CuriousTheatre.org/event/the-secretary

CURIOUS THEATRE COMPANY

presents

The Secretary

by Kyle John Schmidt

Directed by Christy Montour-Larson⁺

CAST

Kathleen M. Brady*, *Ruby*
Adeline Mann, *April*
Devon James, *Janelle*
Emma Messenger*, *Lorrie*
Leslie O'Carroll*, *Shirley*
Karen Slack, *Brandy*

SETTING

Ruby's office in a small town in rural America.

PRODUCTION TEAM

Set Design by Caitlin Ayer**
Costume Design by Meghan Anderson Doyle
Lighting Design by Colin D. Young**
Sound Design by **Jason Ducat****
Props Design by Saxon Rhoad
Stage Manager, A. Phoebe Sacks*
Assistant Stage Manager, Misha S. Zimmerman
Scenic Construction, You Want What Productions
Wardrobe/Run Crew, Kami Williams
Board Operator, Frieda Celeste

This play will be performed without an intermission.

SPECIAL THANKS

DCPA Theatre Company, Seven Devils Playwrights Conference, Matthew Campbell, **Kathryn Gray**,
Michael McNeill, **Jim Hunt**, and **Dee Covington**.

Bold = Curious Artistic Company Member

*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

**Member of United Scenic Artists, Local USA 829 IATSE

⁺The Director is a member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, a national theatrical labor union.



The Director is a member of the
STAGE DIRECTORS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS
SOCIETY, a national theatrical labor union.

BIOS



Kathleen M. Brady (Ruby) is making her first mainstage appearance with Curious Theatre Company. As a member of the Denver Center Theatre Company for more than 20 years she has performed in many productions including *Beauty Queen of Leenane*, *Arsenic and Old Lace*, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, and *Trip to Bountiful*. She has appeared on TV as Dorothy Yobs in Season 5 of *Breaking Bad* and in numerous commercials. Kathleen has received accolades from Westword for Best Actress in a Drama for the show *Well* in 2010, and Denver Post's 2009 Theatre Person of the Year.



Devon James (Janelle) has been previously seen at Curious Theatre Company as Julie in *Rancho Mirage* and Mandy in *Time Stands Still* (Henry Award Nominee & True West Award for "Best Supporting Actress in a Drama"). Other local credits include: *Plaza Suite*, *The Mousetrap*, and *Dividing the Estate* (Arvada Center for the Arts & Humanities); *Heartbreak House* (Denver Center Theatre Company); *Full Code, Seminar* (Boulder Ensemble Theatre Company); *Biloxi Blues*, *Collected Stories* (Miner's Alley Playhouse); *Honorable Disorder* (Emancipation Theater Company); *Steel Magnolias* (Senior Housing Options), *Androcles & The Lion*, *Lily's Purple Plastic Purse* (Denver Children's Theatre). Training: MFA-University of Southern Mississippi, BFA- University of Central Oklahoma. Devon is the Founder of "Actors With Intention" FACEBOOK: Actors With Intention; INSTA: @actorswithintention_awi



Adeline Mann (April) returns to Curious after appearing as Abby Barton in last season's *Sanctions*. Adeline is a Colorado native and holds a BA in Theatre from the University of Denver. She also serves as the Creative Development Director for The Wit Theatre Company. Most

recently, Adeline was seen onstage in *Fairfield* at Miner's Alley Playhouse, and in *Hamlet* with Pktnik Theatre Productions in Steamboat Springs. Other credits include: *Hooded, or Being Black for Dummies* (Aurora Fox Arts Center), *Pride and Prejudice* and *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley* (Boulder Ensemble Theatre Company), *The Rape of the Sabine Women...* (Local Theatre Company), *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Henry IV part 1*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Tempest*, and *Twelfth Night* (The Wit Theatre Company/Shakesbeer). www.adelinemann.com



Emma Messenger (Lorrie) returns to Curious after playing Della in *The Cake* last season. She was last onstage in the world premiere of Rodney Hick's new play *Flame Broiled, or the ugly play* at Local Theater Company. Other regional theater credits include *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *The Moors*, *Sin Street Social Club*, *All My Sons*, and *Sense & Sensibility* at The Arvada Center Black Box Repertory; *Romeo and Juliet* and *Twelfth Night* at the Colorado Shakespeare Festival; *Mud Blue Sky*, *Misery*, *Exit Strategies*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, *I'll Eat You Last*, and *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* at The Edge Theater; *Agnes of God*, *Stella & Lou*, and *'night, Mother* at Vintage Theatre; *The Lying Kind* at Theatreworks; *The Women* and *The Birds Sing Too Loud* at Circus Theatricals (New American Theatre); and *Twelfth Night*, *The Early Girl*, *Stage Blood*, and *So Long on Lonely Street* at American Stage. Emma has won the CTG Henry Award for outstanding acting three times and received seven nominations. She is a four-time True West Award-winner and has been honored multiple times by Westword including being awarded Best Season for an Actress. Voice over work includes *Jane Eyre*, *Pride & Prejudice* and *Wuthering Heights* as well as numerous video games and commercials.

BIOS



Leslie O'Carroll (Shirley) is back at Curious Theatre Company where she was last seen as Jean in David Lindsay-Abaire's *Good People*. Most recently, Leslie played Anne-Marie in The DCPA Theatre Company's productions of *A Doll's House* and *A Doll's House, Part 2*. Other noted credits at the Center include

The Whistleblower, *Benediction*, *Eventide*, *Plainsong*, *When We Are Married*, *Diary of Anne Frank*, *All My Sons* and multiple productions of *A Christmas Carol*. Leslie spent the last two summers at The Colorado Shakespeare Festival performing in *As You Like It*, *King Charles III*, *You Can't Take It With You* and *Richard III*. She has also worked at The Arvada Center, Aurora Fox, BETC, Senior Housing Options, The FAC Colorado Springs and Theatreworks, Colorado Springs. TV and Film credits include *Breaking Bad*, *Longmire*, and the original *Footloose*. Leslie is a recipient of Best of Westword and Denver Post Ovation Awards.



Karen Slack (Brandy) has appeared in several Curious productions including: *Eurydice* (Denver Post Best Drama), *9 Parts of Desire* (Denver Post Best Season by an Actress), *Homebody/Kabul* (Denver Post Best Supporting Actress), *God of Carnage* (Westword Best Comedy) and many others. Other favorite roles include: William Dunn

in *Men On Boats* (Colorado Theatre Guild Henry Award Nominee) with The Catamounts, Medea in *Medea* (Westword Best Actress in a Drama) with The Edge Theatre, Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth* with the Colorado Shakespeare Festival and Listen Productions (Denver Post Best Ensemble), Frida Kahlo in *Painted Bread* (Denver Post Best Actress in a Drama, Colorado Theatre Guild Henry Award for Best Actress) with Theatre on Broadway and The Aurora Fox, and the one woman show *The Syringa Tree* (Denver Post Best Solo Performance, and Best Remount) with various theatres throughout Colorado. Karen received her training at The American Academy of Dramatic Arts and HB Studio in New York.

Kyle John Schmidt (Playwright) is a writer from Montezuma, Iowa. His plays have been produced by Actors Theatre of Louisville (Take 10 Apprentice Showcase and the Humana Festival), Crashbox Theatre, the Kid Magicians, Play-in-a-Bar, the Samuel French Off Off Broadway Short Play Festival, University of Texas New Theatre, and the David Mark Cohen New Works Festival. His full-length plays have received readings at Capital Stage, Stage West, and Nashville Repertory Theatre, and have been finalists for the Humana Festival, PlayPenn, the Lark's Playwrights' Week, and the Princess Grace Award. Furthermore, Kyle was co-winner of the 2010 Heideman Award and is a former member of the Ingram New Play Lab. He received his MFA from the Michener Center for Writers.

Caitlin Ayer (Set Design) is delighted to return to Curious this season, where she previously designed sets for *Time Stands Still* and *Good People*. Recent/Favorite credits include *You Can't Take it With You* (Colorado Shakespeare Festival; Henry Award for Best Set); *Feminine Octagon* (LaGuardia Performing Arts Center, W.P.); *Hecuba* (University of Colorado Boulder); *The Making of King Kong* (Spring/Break Art Show at Times Square & Target Margin Theatre, W.P.); *ID, Please* (Tête à Tête Festival London); *Opacity* (Live Arts Bard Biennial); and *Drag Queen Time Machine* (Off-Center @ DCPA). As an assistant or associate: *American Buffalo* (Broadway); *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* (Broadway); *The Untitled B-52s Musical Workshop*; *The Book of Mormon* (1st National Tour); *Manifest* (NBC); *Katy Keene* (The CW); *Starling* (Apple TV); *Blindspot* (NBC); and Shonda Rimes' *Untitled Anna Delvey Project* (Netflix). She received the Rose Brand Scene Design Award, The W. Oren Parker Award, and was named a "Young Designer to Watch" by Live Design Magazine. Proud member of USA 829. BFA Webster University. MFA Carnegie Mellon University. www.caitlinayer.com.

Meghan Anderson Doyle (Costume Design) returns to Curious where previous designs include *The Cake*, *The Brother Sister Plays*, *Good People*, *A Number*, *Up*, and *tempOdyssey*. Other select credits include *American Mariachi*, *The Wild Party*, *An Act of God*,

DragOn, The Glass Menagerie, Sweet & Lucky (Denver Center for the Performing Arts); *You Can't Take It with You, Love's Labour's Lost, The Taming of the Shrew, The Comedy of Errors* (Colorado Shakespeare Festival); *The Electric Baby, The Drowning Girls*, and *Waiting For Godot* (Arvada Center for the Arts and Humanities). Meghan holds a B.A. from the University of Denver and an M.F.A. in costume design from the University of Florida. DoyleCostumeDesign.com

Jason Ducat (Sound Design) has designed many shows at Curious including *Pass Over, Gloria, The Humans, Your Best One, Detroit '67, Appropriate, The Luckiest People, Venus in Fur, Good People, The Brothers Size*, and *Maple and Vine*. Jason worked as a resident sound designer at Denver Center Theatre Company where he designed *Glengarry Glen Ross, When Tang Met Laika, The House of the Spirits, Lord of the Flies, Shadowlands, Reckless, Superior Donuts, Heartbreak House*, and *Othello*. Other designs include *Henry IV, The Tempest, I Hate Hamlet, Macbeth* and *Richard II* (Colorado Shakespeare Festival); *Marat/Sade, The Winter's Tale* (Purdue University); *Lab Coats on Clouds* (Prague Quadrennial); *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (Elemental Theatre Company); *Sideways Stories from Wayside School* (Hope Summer Repertory Theatre); and *Tribulation and the Demolition Squad* (Chicago Dance Crash). Jason received his MFA in sound design from Purdue University.

Saxon Rhoad (Props Design) is a newcomer to Colorado and to Curious Theatre Company. Saxon spends the majority of his time running the scene shop at the University of Denver. As a Prop Master, Saxon has worked on shows such as *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Five Women Wearing the Same Dress*. Back in his home state of Texas, Saxon had worked in other technical capacities on shows such as *Hunchback of Notre Dame, The Magic Flute, The Tempest*, and *Cabaret*.

Christy Montour-Larson (Director) is a multiple Denver Post Ovation and Colorado Theatre Guild Henry award-winning director, named Top Director by Westword, 5280 Magazine and CBS4 Denver. Christy's recent work has been seen at the Denver

Center (*Two Degrees*), Arvada Center (*Diary of Anne Frank*), Creede Repertory (*August: Osage County*), Theatre Aspen (*Sex with Strangers*), Phamaly (*Into the Woods*), Local Theater Company (*The Rape of the Sabine Women...*), and 13 seasons at Curious (*Charles Ives Take Me Home, Good People, Time Stands Still, Red, 9 Circles*). She has also directed at Pioneer Theatre (*The Way North*), Tent Theatre (*Catch Me if You Can*), New American Theatre (*Oliver!*), Town Hall Arts Center (*Crimes of the Heart*), Boulder Ensemble Theatre Company (*This*), Rochester Civic Theatre, the Duluth Playhouse, Dark Horse Theatre, and for Seven Devils Playwrights Conference, where she sits on the Board of Directors. A passionate supporter of new work, she has directed more than 30 staged readings including *Minneapolis/St. Paul* by Lee Blessing, *The Robertssy* by Kathleen Cahill, *Suicide, Incorporated* by Andrew Hinderacker and *No More Sad Things* by Hansol Jung. She has also directed the world premieres of *Two Degrees* by Tira Palmquist, *General Store* by Brian Watkins and *I Am Alive* by Denise Gentillini. MFA in Directing from Rutgers University. Proud member of Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers. www.christymontourlarsen.com

A. Phoebe Sacks (Stage Manager) has been the stage manager at Curious for *Pass Over, Skeleton Crew, The Humans, The Cake, The Intelligent Homosexual's Guide...*, *The Body of an American, Appropriate, Hand to God, Constellations, The Luckiest People, White Guy on the Bus*, and *Sex with Strangers*. She previously served as stage manager or assistant stage manager for more than 30 productions at Denver Center Theatre Company. Favorites include the world premieres of *The Legend of Georgia McBride* and *The Whale*. Phoebe has also stage managed for Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, New Denver Civic Theatre and Lizard Head Theatre Company. She holds a B.A. in Technical Theatre from the University of Northern Colorado, is a member of Actors' Equity Association, and is on the Curious staff team as Production Manager.

Colin D. Young (Lighting Designer) is making his second appearance at Curious. His Colorado credits include *Gloria* (Curious), *Pride & Prejudice* (BETC) & *The Curious Incident*

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of the Dog in the Night-Time (BETC). Off Broadway he has worked on *Detroit '67* (Public Theatre); *Fragments and Talking Pictures* (Signature Theatre); *In the Continuum* (Primary Stages); *Native Son*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *The Blacks: A Clown Show*, *Crazy Locomotive*-2003 Audelco Award, *Henry V*, and *Seed* (Classical Theatre of Harlem); *The Jazz Age*, *Havana Bourgeois*, *Rearviewmirror*, *Widows* (59E59); *Fatboy*, *Mephisto* (Reverie Productions); and *Spooky Action* (New Victory). Regionally, he has worked at Yale Rep, Woolly Mammoth, Kirk Douglas Theatre, Goodman, PTC, and, Cincinnati Playhouse. Colin was a co-founder and Artistic Director of Reverie Productions, and the founding festival TD for the New York Fringe Festival. He studied at the Yale School of Drama, and wrote and translated *Beowulf* for the stage.

Chip Walton (Producing Artistic Director) co-founded Curious Theatre Company in 1997 and has served as Producing Artistic Director for the entire history of the organization. Named Denver's "2005 Theatre Person of the Year," he has directed more than fifty shows for Curious over the past 21 years and his work has garnered more than 100 local and national awards. In 2008, Curious was honored with the Mayor's Award for Excellence in the Arts. Chip has served as the President and Vice President of the National New Play Network, a network of professional, non-profit theatres across the country dedicated to the development and production of new plays for the American theatre. Chip

was also selected in the inaugural class of the Bonfils-Stanton Foundation Livingston Fellows, recognizing exceptional non-profit leaders with significant potential for contribution, change and leadership in Colorado's nonprofit sector; additionally, he served on the Board of Directors of the Bonfils-Stanton Foundation as their first Community Trustee. Chip has participated in the Visiting Professionals program at the Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center, as well as serving on the Leadership Group for *Imagine 2020: Creating a Future for Denver's Culture*. He has directed in the National New Play Network Showcase of New Plays, the Kennedy Center's MFA Playwriting Festival in Washington, D.C., and accepted a National Theatre Company Award in New York for *Curious* from the prestigious American Theatre Wing. Most recently, Chip was honored to serve as a 2017 Aspen Ideas Festival Speaker.

Actors' Equity Association ("AEA" or "Actors' Equity"), founded in 1913, represents more than 49,000 actors and stage managers in the United States. Equity seeks to advance, promote and foster the art of live theatre as an essential component of our society. Equity negotiates wages and working conditions, providing a wide range of benefits, including health and pension plans. AEA is a member of the AFL-CIO, and is affiliated with FIA, an international organization of performing arts unions. The Equity emblem is our mark of excellence. www.actorsequity.org

While firearms are used in less than six percent of suicide attempts, over half of suicide deaths are with firearms.

everytownresearch.org



GROWING UP IN GUN TOWN



Playwright Kyle John Schmidt and director Christy Montour-Larson during rehearsal for the *The Secretary*

It's December 14, 2012. Kyle John Schmidt is working from home and watches as the events unfold moment-by-moment on the news: 20 first graders and six adults are murdered at Sandy Hook Elementary School. In a Facebook feed littered with news, outcry, and grief, he found an odd juxtaposition as he saw the posts from his high school friends from his small town in Iowa. "They weren't talking about this big event – they were talking about overtime and bonuses," shares Kyle in a phone conversation.

Kyle's hometown is home to one of the largest gun supply companies in the country. In the three weeks following Sandy Hook, the company sold three years worth of AR-15 magazines, the same ammunition used to take the lives of those children in Connecticut.

Yet, no one in that small Iowa town seemed to realize that one was a reaction to the other: their overtime was because first graders died at school. "I don't think anyone made

the connection," said Kyle, "they still haven't... Nationally, people have made the connection that mass shooting means gun sales go up. It's been attributed to people's fear that regulations are coming. I think it's also people seeing these events in the news and feeling that they need to protect themselves."

So Kyle began to "ferment" on this, trying to reconcile the economic driver of his hometown with the tragedy of the nation. Even today, Kyle seems largely conflicted. The company in question gave Kyle a scholarship, sent him to camp, and have done a lot of good in the community. "I love them; they're a really great company."

But as an "indirect beneficiary" of profits made off mass murder, Kyle began to question how he and his community might be complicit. "The play sprouted from this idea that guns can take on this kaleidoscope of meaning. They're objects of terror, tokens of love, lifesavers, job creators, and my mom's favorite hobby. It was the horror, humor, and beauty of this kaleidoscope that brought me to writing *The Secretary*," Kyle explained. "The year my mom got a shotgun for Christmas – I've never seen her so happy."

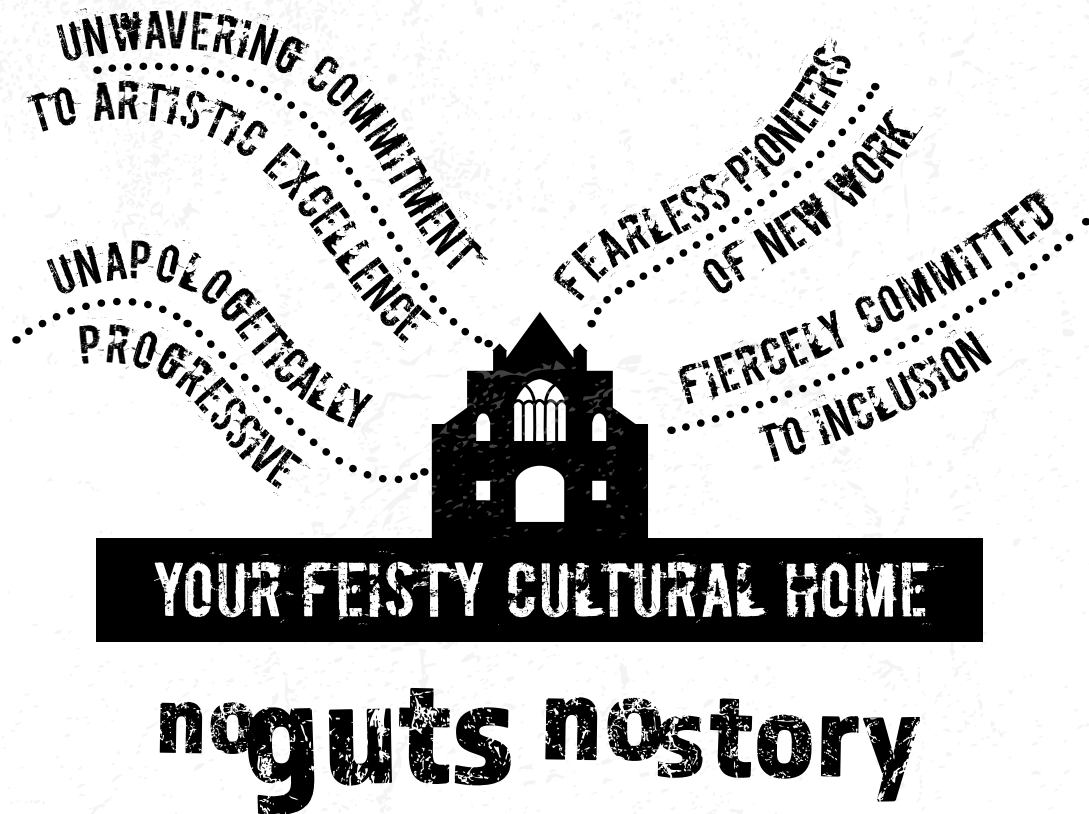
So the playwright started thinking, "Why would someone want to own a gun or not own a gun? Who should and should not be allowed to own a gun?" and *The Secretary* was born. Kyle's hope is that audiences will "Start the conversation in an open, generous way. Rather than 'you're an evil person' or 'you're stupid'."

The Secretary calls each of us to examine the complexities of guns in America. Kyle ended the call with the reminder, "Moments of empathy are where progress gets made."

ABOUT CURIOUS

WE ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY IN IMPORTANT CONTEMPORARY ISSUES THROUGH PROVOCATIVE MODERN THEATRE

Curious works at the intersection of art and social justice, using professional theatre to connect our community with pressing issues and social justice partners taking action in Colorado.



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DISCUSS

&

TAKE ACTION

WHAT NEXT?

At Curious, we're here to engage you in important issues. We use theatre as a catalyst for thinking about big, often uncomfortable topics and a way to connect you to vital steps forward to improving the world for everyone.

DISCUSS ???

1. What makes you feel safe, or not safe, in the world today? What would you do to feel safe?
2. Who is responsible for gun violence? Gun manufacturers? Merchandisers? Lobbyists? Politicians? Or only those that pull the trigger? What does that responsibility mean?
3. Half of Americans grew up in a house with guns and a third of adults own guns today. 58% of American adults or someone they care for have experienced gun violence in their lifetime. What is your experience with firearms and how has your background shaped your perceptions on policy?

TAKE ACTION >>>

While there is no easy solution to our gun violence epidemic, there are steps forward. If you are inspired to engage on this issue, here are some actions to take.

Call your Colorado state legislator as new legislation is introduced this session around safe gun storage and other measures. Find your local legislators here: leg.colorado.gov/find-my-legislator

Research candidates for federal, state, and local office - then vote according to your values!

Join a group that aligns with your views for updates and information:

- Moms Demand Action: text JOIN to 644-33
- Colorado Gun Owners for Safety: giffords.org/cogunowners/

GO DEEPER >>>

For more resources, please check out the Go Deeper section of our website at: CuriousTheatre.org/events/the-secretary

BY THE NUMBERS



1/5

WOMEN
own a gun

> 77% increase in
female gun ownership
since 2005



2/3

of gun owners say
it is for protection



4/10

gun owners
are women



2/3

of women say controlling
gun violence is more
important than protecting
gun rights

> vs. 39% of men

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