



ROAN@THEGATES



BACKSTAGE GUIDE

A publication of **COMMUNITY SERVICE** at
AMERICAN BLUES THEATER

BACKSTAGE CALLBOARD

ROAN @ THE GATES

By Christina Telesca Gorman*

Directed by Lexi Saunders

STARRING



Brenda Barrie



Jasmine Bracey

Nat is an outspoken civil rights attorney; Roan, the quiet one, is an NSA analyst who isn't even allowed to tell her wife the location of her next business trip. A long-time couple confronts questions about their marriage they never thought to ask as their personal relationship collides with national security. "Timely, thought-provoking play." – *Broadway World NJ*. "Clever staging concepts, and Edward Snowden-like, no-way-out, dilemma resonates." – *San Francisco Examiner*.

* Artistic Affiliate of American Blues Theater

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BACKSTAGE Contributors

Elyse Dolan
Associate Producer
American Blues Theater

with Gwendolyn Whiteside, Christina Telesca Gorman,
Lily Grace Walls, and Jared Gooding



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NOTE FROM ARTISTIC DIRECTOR **GWENDOLYN WHITESIDE**



Artistic Director
Gwendolyn Whiteside

Welcome to American Blues Theater's Chicago premiere of *Roan @ the Gates* written by Artistic Affiliate Christina Telesca Gorman and directed by Lexi Saunders. We're proud to share this relevant and timely story.

You'll find hundreds of news articles about data collection breaches, whistleblower protections, and surveillance of U.S. citizens by our own Democratic and Republican-led administrations. Open a newspaper or search your browser. Ask Alexa. Or Siri. Or Echo. Heck, even On-Star will respond if they're feeling cheeky.

Do you read the privacy statements before using a new app? What about reading the ever-changing notices from your credit card companies? Ever

receive a pop-up ad about a subject in which you've had a conversation only to suspect your phone or computer was "listening"?

Christina Telesca Gorman's title character Roan says, "What's being collected and stored is not information; it's leverage."

There are five U.S. federal laws that include a right of access to personal data: Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA), Family Educational Rights and Privacy Acts (FERPA), Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA), and Privacy Act of 1974. In addition, California's privacy act for residents began January 1, 2020. The most comprehensive data protection legislation is the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in the European Union. Even the United Nations created an aspirational Sustainable Development Goal 16, target 9, which calls for the provision of legal identity for all human beings.

This play's drama teeters on the balance between marriage vows and the required oath to the Constitution by some federal employees. Christina Telesca Gorman made this topic personal, intimate, and poignant. As you weigh Roan's decisions in this perilous situation, try *not* to think about all the data points collected on you today: point-of-sale purchases, web addresses visited, social media posts, cell-phone tower pings, and municipal and private businesses' video and audio recording devices.

If you haven't heard this battle cry yet, you will:
data rights are human rights.

— Gwendolyn Whiteside •

ABOUT PLAYWRIGHT CHRISTINA TELESKA GORMAN

Christina Telesca Gorman's plays include *Fidelis* (The Public Theater); *American Myth* (American Blues Theater, Theatre Artists Studio); *Roan @ the Gates* (Alley Theatre's Alley All New Festival); *On the Outs* (Ensemble Studio Theater); *Split Wide Open* (NYC Summer Play Festival); *Sorin: A Notre Dame Story* (University of Notre Dame, national tour); *Just Knots* (national and international theatres, winner of Samuel French Off-Off Broadway Festival Plays 34th Series); *Sacred Ground* (Stella Adler Studio); and *DNA* (Prospect Theatre Company, Hangar Theatre). Her plays have been produced and/or developed at Geva Theatre Center, Capital Repertory Theatre, New Harmony Project, Lark Play Development Center, Troy Foundry Theatre, Stageworks/Hudson, Playwrights Foundation, and Berkshire Playwrights Lab. Christina is an inaugural member of The Public Theater Emerging Writers Group, a WP Theatre Playwrights Lab alumna, and an Artistic Affiliate at American Blues Theater. She is published by Samuel French and Smith & Kraus. •



Playwright Christina Telesca Gorman

ABOUT THE BECHDEL TEST

Roan @ The Gates passes the Bechdel test, which has become a popular way to measure the representation of women in fiction.

The Bechdel test, also known as the Bechdel-Wallace test, is a measure of the representation of women in fiction. It asks whether a work features at least two women who talk to each other about something other than a man. The requirement that the two women must be named is sometimes added.



A character in *Dykes to Watch Our For* by Alison Bechdel explains the rules that later came to be known as the Bechdel test

About half of all films meet these criteria, according to user-edited databases and the media industry press. Passing or failing the test is not necessarily indicative of how well women are represented in any specific work. Rather, the test is used as an indicator for the active presence of women in the entire field of film and other fiction, and to call attention to gender inequality in fiction.

The test is named after the American cartoonist Alison Bechdel in whose comic strip *Dykes to Watch Out For* the test first appeared in 1985. After the test became more widely discussed in the 2000s, a number of variants and tests inspired by it emerged. •

INTERVIEW WITH PLAYWRIGHT **CHRISTINA TELESCA GORMAN**

Associate Producer Elyse Dolan discusses *Roan @ The Gates* with Playwright Christina Telesca Gorman.

What inspired you to write *Roan @ The Gates*?

When I read about the actions Edward Snowden, I became fascinated by the idea of someone making not just a momentous professional decision, but also such a life-altering personal decision, especially without consulting one's life partner.

What conversations do you hope this play will spark?

What secrets do we keep from those we have pledged our life-long loyalty to, and what are the ramifications? How does a relationship navigate secrecy? What is the personal price we pay for it?

What are you working on next?

Recently, I visited Nepal to conduct research for my new play *Shiver*, about a woman's quest to retrieve her husband's newly discovered body from Mount Everest, where he went missing twenty years before.



Playwright Christina Telesca Gorman

"THE BACKSTORY" WITH DESIGNER **LILY GRACE WALLS**

American Blues Artistic Affiliate Lily Grace Walls is the Costume Designer for *Roan at the Gates*. We asked Lily to share some lesser-known facts about herself in "The Backstory".



Costume Designer Lily Grace Walls

If I weren't a designer: I'd be an Art Restorer.

Childhood nickname: Lillian Louise

Best career advice I've received: Get it in writing.

Favorite part of the job: The people I work with

Worst part of the job: The line at JOANN Fabrics

How I made my first dollar: Babysitting at age 13

What I'd want for my last meal: Charcuterie board

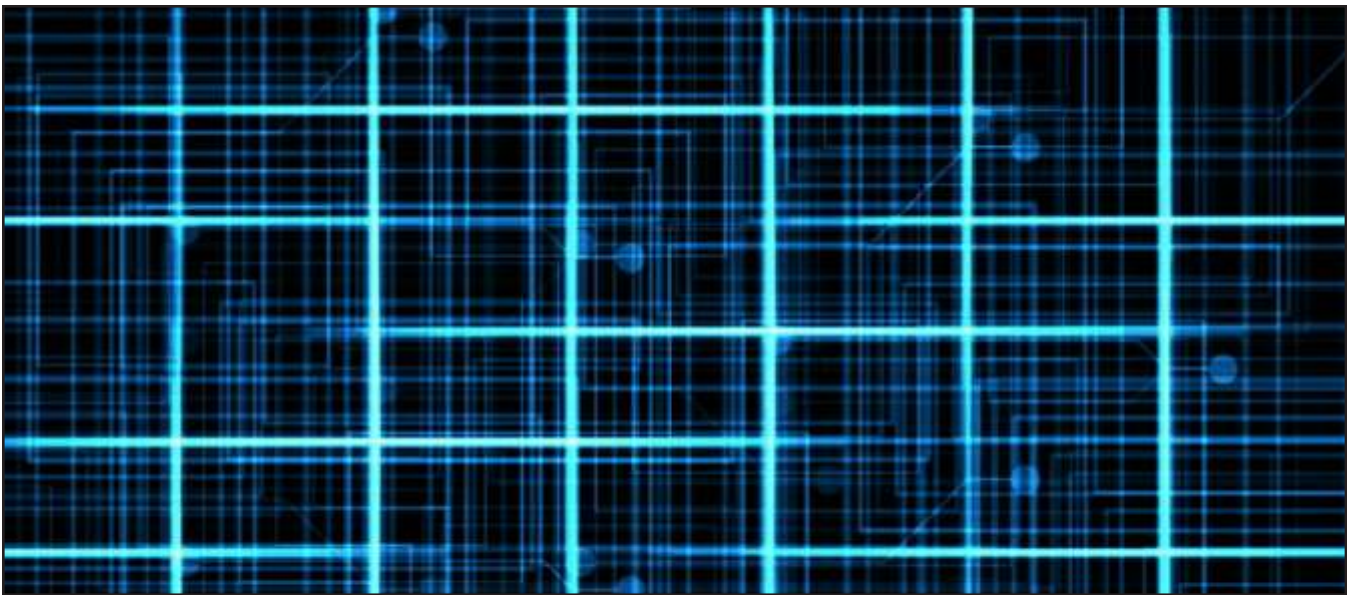
Favorite item of clothing: My Doc Martens

If I could invent one thing: A way to understand animals

One of my hidden talents: No matter the time zone or situation my brain wakes up at 6 am on the dot.

BEHIND THE SCENES WITH LIGHTING DESIGNER **JARED GOODING**

Lighting Designer Jared Gooding shares some of his initial research images and preliminary ideas for the lighting design of *Roan @ The Gates*.



"The way that we chose to incorporate the themes of the show into the lighting was to lean in the cold and digital aspect that technology has about it. The characters are always have a bit of tech present in the with them, until things get to the point where the tech is the only way that they have to communicate with one another. We wanted to see that incursion of the tech into the story and the space, and took inspiration in the straight lines of circuit boards. We choose to have that enter as a part of the set, surrounding the characters more and more as the show progresses."

— Jared Gooding, December 2019 •

ABOUT THE NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY AND **MASS SURVEILLANCE IN THE UNITED STATES**

"Roan" in *Roan @ The Gates* works for the National Security Agency (NSA) as an Information Infrastructure Analyst.

About the National Security Agency

The National Security Agency (NSA) is a national-level intelligence agency of the United States Department of Defense, under the authority of the Director of National Intelligence. The NSA is responsible for global monitoring, collection, and processing of information and data for foreign and domestic intelligence and counterintelligence purposes, specializing in a discipline known as signals intelligence. The NSA is also tasked with the protection of U.S. communications networks and information systems. The NSA relies on a variety of measures to accomplish its mission, the majority of which are clandestine.

Originating as a unit to decipher coded communications in World War II, it was officially formed as the NSA by President Harry S. Truman in 1952. Since then, it has become the largest of the U.S. intelligence organizations in terms of personnel and budget. The NSA currently conducts worldwide mass data collection and has been known to physically bug electronic systems as one method to this end. The NSA is also alleged to have been behind such attack software as Stuxnet, which severely damaged Iran's nuclear program.

The NSA, alongside the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), maintains a physical presence in many countries across the globe; the CIA/NSA joint Special Collection Service (a highly classified intelligence team) inserts eavesdropping devices in high value targets (such as Presidential palaces or embassies). SCS collection tactics allegedly encompass "close surveillance, burglary, wiretapping, [and] breaking and entering".

The NSA's actions have been a matter of political controversy on several occasions, including its spying on anti-Vietnam-war leaders and the agency's participation in economic espionage. In 2013, the NSA had many of its secret surveillance programs revealed to the public by Edward Snowden, a former NSA contractor. According to the leaked documents, the NSA intercepts and stores the communications of over a billion people worldwide,



The seal of the U.S. National Security Agency

including United States citizens. The documents also revealed the NSA tracks hundreds of millions of people's movements using cellphones metadata. Internationally, research has pointed to the NSA's ability to surveil the domestic Internet traffic of foreign countries through "boomerang routing".

About Mass Surveillance in the United States

The practice of mass surveillance in the United States dates back to World War I wartime monitoring and censorship of international communications from, to, or which passed through the United States. After the First World War and the Second World War, the surveillance continued, via programs such as the Black Chamber and Project SHAMROCK. The formation and growth of federal law-enforcement and intelligence agencies such as the FBI, CIA, and NSA institutionalized surveillance used to also silence political dissent, as evidenced by

COINTELPRO projects which targeted various organizations and individuals. During the Civil Rights Movement era, many individuals put under surveillance orders were first labelled as integrationists then deemed subversive. Other targeted individuals and groups included Native American activists, African American and Chicano liberation movement activists, and anti-war protesters.

Following the September 11, 2001 attacks, domestic and international mass surveillance capabilities grew immensely. Contemporary mass surveillance relies upon annual presidential executive orders declaring a continued State of National Emergency, first signed by George W. Bush on September 14, 2001 and then continued on an annual basis by President Barack Obama, and upon several subsequent national security Acts including the USA PATRIOT Act and FISA Amendment Act's PRISM surveillance program. Critics and political dissenters

currently describe the effects of these acts, orders, and resulting database network of Fusion centers as forming a veritable American police state that simply institutionalized the illegal COINTELPRO tactics used to assassinate dissenters and leaders from the 1950s onwards.

Additional surveillance agencies, such as the DHS and the position of Director of National Intelligence have exponentially escalated mass surveillance since 2001. A series of media reports in 2013 revealed more recent programs and techniques employed by the US intelligence community. Advances in computer and information technology allow the creation of huge national databases that facilitate mass surveillance in the United States by DHS managed Fusion centers, the CIA's Terrorist Threat Integration Center (TTIC) program, and the FBI's TSDB. •



Headquarters of the NSA at Fort Meade, Maryland

ABOUT **EDWARD SNOWDEN**

Playwright Christina Telesca Gorman was inspired to write *Roan @ The Gates* after reading about the actions of Edward Snowden.

Edward Snowden is an American whistleblower who copied and leaked highly classified information from the National Security Agency (NSA) in 2013 when he was a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) employee and subcontractor. His disclosures revealed numerous global surveillance programs, many run by the NSA and the Five Eyes Intelligence Alliance with the cooperation of telecommunication companies and European governments, and prompted a cultural discussion about national security and individual privacy.

In 2013, Snowden was hired by an NSA contractor, Booz Allen Hamilton, after previous employment with Dell and the CIA. Snowden says he gradually became disillusioned with the programs with which he was involved and that he tried to raise his ethical concerns through internal channels but was ignored.

On May 20, 2013, Snowden flew to Hong Kong after leaving his job at an NSA facility in Hawaii, and in early June he revealed thousands of classified NSA documents to journalists Glenn Greenwald, Laura Poitras, and Ewen MacAskill. Snowden came to international attention after stories based on the material appeared in *The Guardian* and *The Washington Post*. Further disclosures were made by other publications including *Der Spiegel* and *The New York Times*.

On Snowden's 30th birthday, June 21, 2013, the United States Department of Justice unsealed charges against Snowden of two counts of violating the Espionage Act of 1917 and theft of government property, following which the Department of State revoked his passport. Two days later, he flew into Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport, where Russian authorities noted that his U.S. passport had been cancelled, and he was restricted to the airport terminal for over one month. Russia later granted Snowden the right of asylum with an initial visa for residence for one year, and repeated extensions have permitted him to stay. As of October 2019, Snowden had been granted permanent residency in Russia, which is renewed every three years.

In early 2016, he became the president of the Freedom of



the Press Foundation, a San Francisco-based organization that states its purpose is to protect journalists from hacking and government surveillance. By 2019 he no longer felt the need to be disguised in public and lived what was described as a "more or less normal life", able to travel around Russia and make a living from speaking arrangements (locally and over the internet). He is currently married and living in Moscow.

On September 17, 2019, his memoir *Permanent Record* was published. On the first day of publication, the U.S. Department of Justice filed a civil lawsuit against Snowden over publication of his memoir, alleging he had breached nondisclosure agreements signed with the U.S. federal government. The memoir was listed as number one on Amazon's bestseller list that same day.

A subject of controversy, Snowden has been variously called a hero, a whistleblower, a dissident, a patriot, and a traitor. •

ABOUT PRISM

TOP SECRET//SI//ORCON//NOFORN

Introduction
(TS//SI//NF) U.S. as World's Telecommunications Backbone

PRISM

- Much of the world's communications flow through the U.S.
- A target's phone call, e-mail or chat will take the **cheapest** path, **not the physically most direct** path – you can't always predict the path.
- Your target's communications could easily be flowing into and through the U.S.

International Internet Regional Bandwidth Capacity in 2011
Source: TeleGeography Research

TOP SECRET//SI//ORCON//NOFORN

TOP SECRET//SI//ORCON//NOFORN

PRISM Collection Details
(TS//SI//NF)

Current Providers

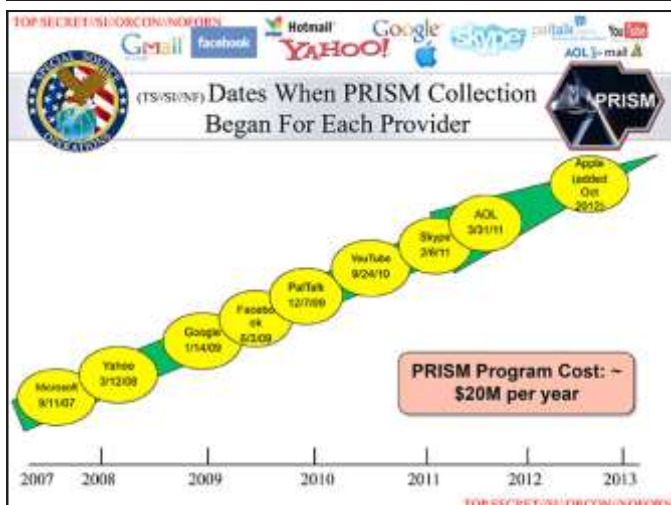
- Microsoft (Hotmail, etc.)
- Google
- Yahoo!
- Facebook
- PalTalk
- YouTube
- Skype
- AOL
- Apple

What Will You Receive in Collection (Surveillance and Stored Comms)?
It varies by provider. In general:

- E-mail
- Chat – video, voice
- Videos
- Photos
- Stored data
- VoIP
- File transfers
- Video Conferencing
- Notifications of target activity – logins, etc.
- Online Social Networking details
- **Special Requests**

Complete list and details on PRISM web page:
Go PRISM/AA

TOP SECRET//SI//ORCON//NOFORN



A few of the slides released by Edward Snowden showing the operation and processes behind the PRISM program.

PRISM is a code name for a program under which the United States National Security Agency (NSA) collects internet communications from various U.S. internet companies. PRISM collects stored internet communications based on demands made to internet companies under Section 702 of the FISA Amendments Act of 2008 to turn over any data that match court-approved search terms. The NSA can use these PRISM requests to target communications that were encrypted when they traveled across the internet backbone, to focus on stored data that telecommunication filtering systems discarded earlier, and to get data that is easier to handle, among other things.

PRISM began in 2007 in the wake of the passage of the Protect America Act under the Bush Administration. The program is operated under the supervision of the U.S. Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court (FISA Court, or FISC) pursuant to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA). Its existence was leaked six years later by NSA contractor Edward Snowden, who warned that the extent of mass data collection was far greater than the public knew and included what he characterized as "dangerous" and "criminal" activities. Subsequent documents have demonstrated a financial arrangement between the NSA's Special Source Operations division (SSO) and PRISM partners in the millions of dollars.

Documents indicate that PRISM is "the number one source of raw intelligence used for NSA analytic reports", and it accounts for 91% of the NSA's internet traffic acquired under FISA section 702 authority." The leaked information came after the revelation that the FISA Court had been ordering a subsidiary of telecommunications company Verizon Communications to turn over to the NSA logs tracking all of its customers' telephone calls.

U.S. government officials have defended the program, asserting that it cannot be used on domestic targets without a warrant, that it has helped to prevent acts of terrorism, and that it receives independent oversight from the federal government executive, judicial, and legislative branches. •

ABOUT WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION

In *Roan @ The Gates*, “Roan” is a whistleblower who reports on the National Security Agency (NSA). Learn more about what a whistleblower is, what protections they have, and how it’s connected to current political events below.

What is a whistleblower?

A federal whistleblower is an employee who reports gross mismanagement, abuse of authority or other illegal or unethical activity to management, authorities, or—in the case of the executive branch—to Congress, which has oversight capacity.

What are whistleblower protections?

Federal Legal protections for whistleblowers were enacted through the Whistleblower Protection Act of 1989. The law offers the whistleblower some protection from criminal prosecution and administrative retaliation, such as firing or demotion. Because of concerns about classified information, the protections initially did not include the intelligence community.

Congress established a process for intelligence workers to report misconduct through the 1998 Intelligence Community Whistleblower Protection Act. It wasn’t until 2014 that lawmakers codified a directive from President Barack Obama also extending protections against retaliation to intelligence officials.

Despite these legal efforts, the law isn’t perfect. While non-intelligence civil servants can take retaliation cases to court, the intelligence community does not have this privilege due to concerns about classified material. This means intelligence whistleblowers could face punishment at work even if it’s illegal, possibly with limited legal recourse.

Did Trump’s whistleblower follow protocol?

Short answer: Yes. In recent weeks Trump and his supporters have accused the author of the complaint of being a “deep-state operative.” However, both the inspector general for the intelligence community and the acting director of national intelligence have said the individual followed legal procedure. Contrary to Trump’s claims, the law does not require a whistleblower to present first-hand information, it only requires a reasonable belief of a violation, said David Colapinto, co-founder and general counsel for the National Whistleblower Center, an advocacy group.

The protocol is for an intelligence official to file a complaint with the inspector general who is expected to refer the matter to the director of national intelligence. In this case, the inspector general alerted the House Intelligence Committee, even though the acting DNI consulted the Department of Justice first.

Will the whistleblower’s identity be kept a secret?

The president told reporters he is “trying to find out” the identity of the whistleblower. Ultimately, there’s nothing that can block Trump from revealing who he or she is, said Bradley Moss, a whistleblower attorney

who specializes in national security. However, the law explicitly tasks the president with enforcing protections against retaliation.

“It is patently offensive and insulting to whistleblowers to have the president talking about how he is going to out this person, how he is going to confront this person,” Moss said. “No matter who is in the Oval Office... the need for whistleblowers to be able to raise their concerns with confidentiality and anonymity is critical.”

What is unique about the Trump whistleblower complaint?

This is the first time a credible whistleblower case has involved the president. Now, the president is publicly criticizing a person he is mandated by law to protect. Questions also remain about the executive privilege and the president’s ability to stymie ongoing investigations against him. •



The United States Capitol in Washington D.C.

HOMOPHOBIA & RACISM IN CONTEMPORARY RUSSIA

In *Roan @ The Gates*, “Roan” and “Nat” are an interracial couple in a same-sex marriage who find themselves in Russia. The below summarizes some of the current national attitudes in Russia towards the LGBTQ community and people of color.

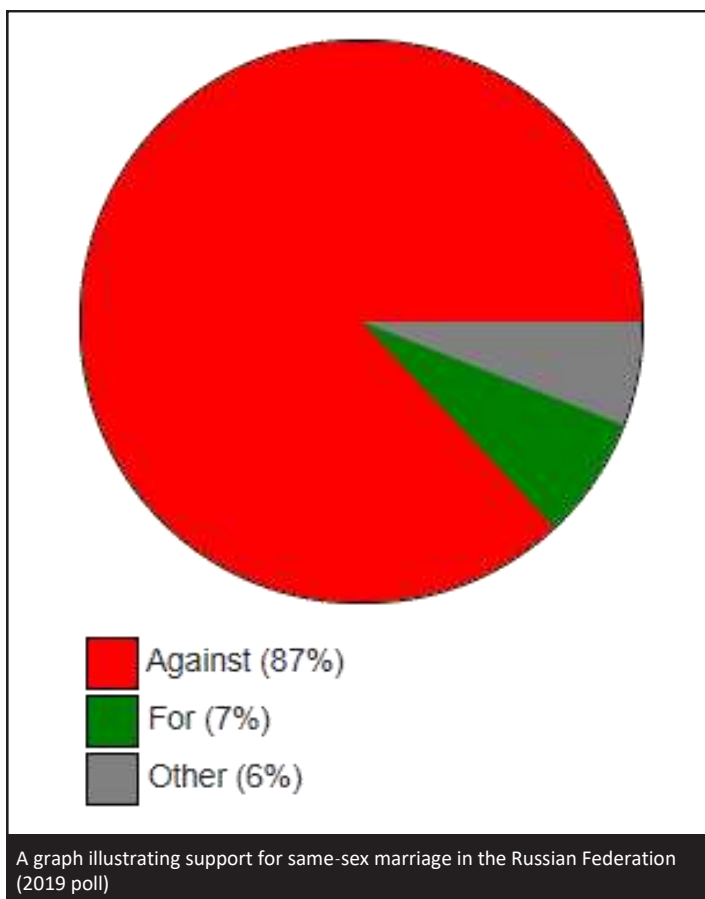
Homophobia in Russia

Public opinion in Russia tends to be hostile toward homosexuality and the level of intolerance has been rising. A 2013 survey found that 74% of Russians said homosexuality should not be accepted by society (up from 60% in 2002), compared to 16% who said that homosexuality should be accepted by society. A 2015 survey found that 86% of Russians said homosexuality should not be accepted by society. In 2019, a poll showed that only 2% would show interest and a willingness to communicate if the neighbor was a homosexual couple or a member of a religious sect, the last of the category of people presented.

In Russian psychiatry, Soviet mentality about homosexuality has endured into the present day. For instance, in spite of the removal of homosexuality from the nomenclature of mental disorders, 62.5% of 450 surveyed psychiatrists in the Rostov Region view it as an illness, and up to three quarters view it as immoral behavior. The psychiatrists sustain the objections to pride parades and the use of veiled schemes to lay off openly lesbian and gay persons from schools, child care centers, and other public institutions.

Neither same-sex marriages nor civil unions of same-sex couples are allowed in Russia. At a 2011 press conference, the head of the Moscow Registry Office, Irina Muravyova, declared: "Attempts by same-sex couples to marry both in Moscow and elsewhere in Russia are doomed to fail. We live in a civil society, we are guided by the federal law, [and] by the Constitution that clearly says: marriage in Russia is between a man and a woman." According to a 2019 poll carried out by the Russian Public Opinion Foundation (FOM), 7% of Russians agreed that same-sex marriages should be allowed in Russia, while 87% opposed the idea.

Unlike in many western nations, LGBTQ persons in Russia are not protected by specific legal protections. Violent criminal acts carried out against these persons are prosecuted as criminal offenses under Russian law, but the fact that these crimes are motivated by the sexual



orientation or gender identity of the victim is not considered an aggravating factor when the court determines the sentence. Among the more vicious crimes that would qualify as hate crimes outside of Russia that have been reported in the press include the following:

- On 9 May 2013, after Victory Day parades in Volgograd, the body of a 23-year-old man was found tortured and murdered by three males who stated anti-homosexual motivations, even though family and friends state the victim had no behavior inclination.
- On 29 May 2013, the body of 38-year-old deputy director of Kamchatka airport Oleg Serdyuk was found in his burned out car, having been beaten and stabbed the previous day. Local authorities said the murder was motivated by homophobia. Three suspects (who were local residents) were tried and sentenced to prison

terms of 9 to 12 years.

- From October 2013 – February 2014, anti-gay attacks targeting the LGBT community in Moscow were reported at Russia's largest gay nightclub Central Station, including gunfire and gas attacks.

In June 2013 the national parliament (the State Duma) unanimously adopted, and President Vladimir Putin signed, a nationwide law banning distribution of materials promoting LGBTQ relationships among minors. The law does not explicitly mention the word "homosexuality", but instead uses the euphemism "non-traditional sexual relationships". Under the statute it is effectively illegal to perform any of the following in the presence of minors: hold gay pride events, speak in favor of gay rights, or say that gay relationships are equal to heterosexual relationships.

Critics say that the statute is written so broadly that it is in effect a complete ban on the gay rights movement and any public expression of LGBTQ culture. In March 2018 the Russian authorities forbade the biggest gay website Gay.ru because of "propaganda of nontraditional sexual relationships".

Racism in Russia

Racism in Russia appears mainly in the form of negative attitudes and actions by some Russians toward people who are not ethnically Russian. Traditionally, Russian racism includes antisemitism and Tatarophobia, as well as hostility towards various ethnicities of the Caucasus, Central Asia, East Asia and Africa.

In 2006, Amnesty International reported that racism in Russia was "out of control." Between 2004 and 2008, there were more than 350 racist murders, and Verkhovsky, the leader of the anti-racist SOVA organization, estimated that around 50% of Russians thought that ethnic minorities should be expelled from their region.

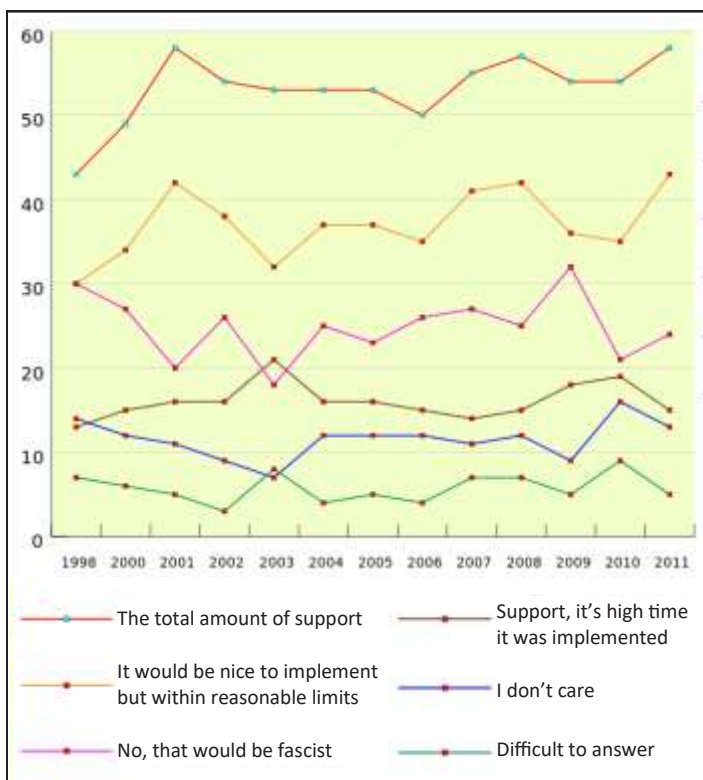
Russia also has one of the highest immigration rates in Eastern Europe. On 20 April 2011, Konstantin Poltoranin, spokesman for Federal Migratory Service, was

fired after saying the "survival of the white race was at stake."

In recent survey, Moscow Protestant Chaplaincy found that over half of Africans in Moscow had been physically attacked in the past. Attacks in Moscow Metro are common, and "monkey" insults are so frequent that students have ceased reporting them.

Posters and toys depicting Barack Obama as a monkey have been sold in Russian stores in 2015, and Member of Duma Irina Rodnina has publicly posted a picture showing Obama with a banana on Twitter.

After it was announced that Russia will host 2018 FIFA World Cup, a head of UEFA FARE Monitoring Centre, Dr Rafał Pankowski accused the Russian Football Union of downplaying racist chants in stadiums, saying: "Nazi slogans are common in many Russian stadiums. Matches are often interrupted with racist chants aimed at black players." More than 100 incidents took place 2012-2014. •



A graph illustrating a 2011 survey by the Levada Center on public support in Russia for the nationalist phrase "Russia for Russians".

ABOUT **AMERICAN BLUES THEATER**

AMERICAN BLUES THEATER

Winner of American Theatre Wing's prestigious National Theatre Company Award, American Blues Theater is a premier arts organization with an intimate environment that patrons, artists, and all Chicagoans call home. American Blues Theater explores the American identity through the plays it produces and communities it serves.

Our diverse and multi-generational artists constitute our 32-member Ensemble and have nearly 600 combined years of collaboration on stage. As of today, our theater and artists received 213 Joseph Jefferson Awards and nominations that celebrate excellence in Chicago theater and 38 Black Theater Alliance Awards. Our artists are honored with Pulitzer Prize nominations, Academy Awards, Golden Globe Awards, Emmy Awards, and numerous other accolades.

For over thirty years, American Blues has created essential productions and live theatrical experiences for Chicagoland. Their best known production is Chicago's holiday tradition *It's a Wonderful Life: Live in Chicago!* that has entertained over 50,000 patrons since 2002! Terry Teachout of *The Wall Street Journal* wrote American Blues is "exceptional" and the company "feels like home." Chris Jones of *Chicago Tribune* claimed Blues is "strikingly honest [with] deep emotional souls."

In addition to first-class theater, American Blues Theater believes it is an honor and duty to serve the community. They provide an integrated arts education program to Chicago Public Schools that serves approximately 3,000 students annually. They hold "Pediatric Previews" which donates a portion of box office sales to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. They donate thousands of complimentary tickets to underserved communities. They provide community engagement events for patrons following Sunday matinee performance, including curated discussions with Northwestern University psychologists. As a Blue Star Theater, they honor military service and first-responders through various initiatives. Former President of Illinois Labor History Society, Larry Spivak wrote, "American Blues is a dynamic force in Chicago – connecting culture, art, history, and politics into a holistic, aesthetic experience." •

SEASON 34 "Then & Now"



by Rick Cleveland*

Chicago premiere

Directed by
Marty Higginbotham*

Sept 6 - Oct 19, 2019



from Frank Capra's film

Directed by
Gwendolyn Whiteside*

Music direction by
Michael Mahler*

Nov 14, '19 - Jan 4, '20



by Christina Telesca Gorman*

Chicago premiere

Directed by
Lexi Saunders

Jan 31 - Feb 29, 2020



by Billie Joe Armstrong,
Michael Mayer, & Green Day

Directed by
Halena Kays

Music direction by
Zachary Stevenson*

June 26 - Aug 15, 2020

*Ensemble member or Artistic Affiliate of American Blues Theater

ABOUT **AMERICAN BLUES THEATER**

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THE THEATER

PERFORMANCE VENUE

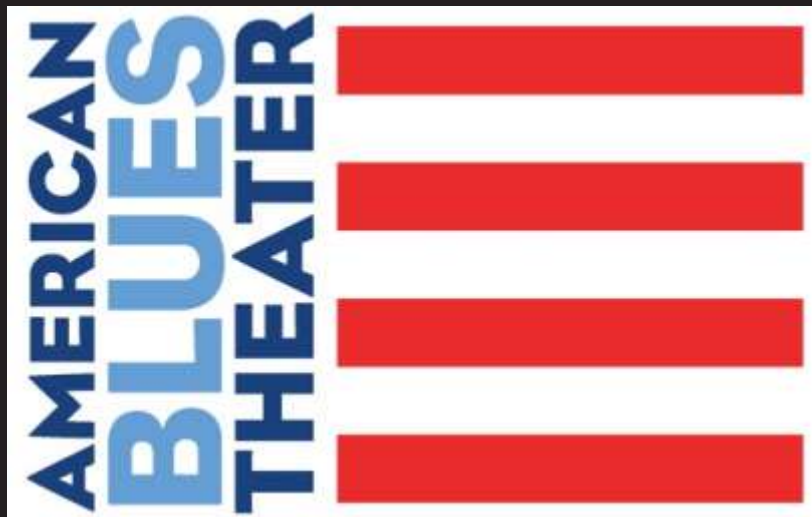
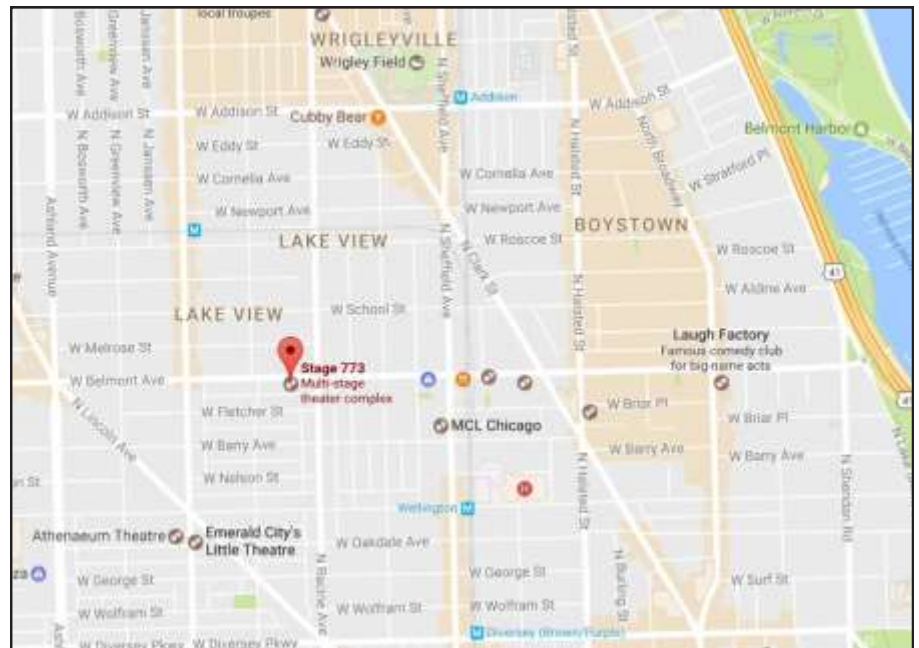
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AmericanBluesTheater.com



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