“goodbye for the present. yours truly, Polly.” Creating One of Five.

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“goodbye for the present. yours truly, Polly.”

Creating *One of Five*

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of the Arts
of Bard College

by
Azalea Eve Hudson

Annandale-on-Hudson, New York
May 2023
To
Mary Ann “Polly” Nichols,
Annie Chapman,
Elisabeth Stride,
Catherine Eddowes,
and Mary Jane Kelly.
Acknowledgements

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    Thank you for listening to me ramble for hours on end. Thank you for making me smile. Thank you for pushing me to be all that I can be and introducing me to what I love. Thank you for being proud of me no matter the outcome.

I love you all.

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One of Five

by Azalea Eve Hudson

Characters:
POLLY: Mary Ann “Polly” Nichols, 48. The first canonical victim of Jack the Ripper.
EDWARD: Polly’s Father, a blacksmith and a widow.
ELLEN: Polly’s friend, sweet and generally optimistic.
WILLIAM: Polly’s estranged husband.
HOST: The host of a true crime show. Robert Stacks like.
KEEPER: Mr. Blodgett, the keeper of Wilmott’s lodging house.
COWDRY: Polly’s former employer. Wealthy, wants to help, a bit condescending.
INTERVIEWEE(s): Various forms of commentary, to be played by many different voices.

Setting: An 1880s street, a 1980s true crime show. While there are many locations in play, the stage is meant to be barren.

Original Cast (Fall):
POLLY…………………………………………………………………………… Zoë Manwiller
WILLIAM……………………………………………………………………………… Emma Tilley
HOST/KEEPER……………………………………………………………………… Allie Sahargun
EDWARD……………………………………………………………………………… Azalea Rusillon
ELLEN………………………………………………………………………………… Maya Lavender
INTERVIEWEE(s)......................Cameron Eaton, Chris Hoefs, Bob Tourangeau, Leah Gometz

Original Cast (Spring):
POLLY…………………………………………………………………………… Allie Sahargun
WILLIAM/HOST……………………………………………………………………… Emma Tilley
EDWARD/KEEPER…………………………………………………………………… Azalea Rusillon
ELLEN/COWDRY…………………………………………………………………… Maya Lavender
INTERVIEWEE(s)......................Cameron Eaton, Chris Hoefs, Bob Tourangeau, Mia Caccavaro, Grant Venable, Megan Lacy, and Scotty Hindy.

Property List:
1 Lamppost
1 Book (a copy of Jane Eyre)
1 Black Bonnet
1 Black Top Hat

Music List:
“Unsolved Mysteries Theme” by Lyftblud
“Roads” by Portishead
“Fade Away and Radiate” by Blondie
The scene begins in darkness. There is a lamppost upstage left. It is perpetually evening, the location is never quite clear, the world is hazy.

HOST V/O: “This program is about unsolved mysteries. Whenever possible, the actual family members and police officials have participated in recreating events. What you are about to see is not a news broadcast.”

HOST is standing upstage right, POLLY is lying still below the lamppost stage left in shadow.

HOST: On August 31st 1888, at approximately 3:30 am a woman was found cut into ribbons on the side of the road. When Constable John Neil arrived on the scene in Buck’s Row, Whitechapel, it was clear that she had been brutally murdered merely minutes earlier. Neil had been “on the spot where he found the body not more than half an hour” before he stumbled across the crime scene. He had “neither heard a cry nor saw a soul”. With little to no evidence left behind many questions still remained, how was the crime committed with no notice? What was the motive? And most importantly, who could have committed such a heinous act? It was clear that “It [was] nothing less than a midnight murderer[. A man] whose step is noiseless, whose strike is deadly, and whose cunning is so great that he leaves no trace whatever of his work and no clue to his identity.” It has been over a hundred years since then, leaving only speculation in his wake. Will he ever be found? Watch closely and maybe you could be the one to finally unearth his identity.

POLLY begins to move as if waking from a deep sleep. HOST moves behind POLLY and crouches, picking up the bonnet. HOST’S tone has shifted.

---

1 Unsolved Mysteries
2 The Times, 3 September 1888
3 The Daily News, 3 September 1888
4 The New York Times, 4 September 1888
HOST: Polly, the victim, the first of many, was 48 at the time of her death. A mother, a daughter, a sister . . she was but one of the many lost women wandering the streets of London, unknowing of her path and unsure who to reach out to.

HOST steps back and stands.

HOST: Her father (EDWARD enters) Edward Walker, worked as a blacksmith in the printing industry, and tried his very best to be a good father to his three children.

HOST exits.

EDWARD: Polly, it’s time to wake up.

POLLY: Father? I just had the oddest dream

EDWARD: (Teasing) Did you really?

POLLY: I don’t- I’m not-I

POLLY is at a loss. Beat.

EDWARD: Polly, are you feeling alright?

POLLY: I feel . . . strange. . . off, as if I’m not really here. Does that make any sense?

EDWARD: Well, you’ve certainly always had a way with word-

POLLY: I think I’m fine though.

EDWARD: Are you sure?
POLLY: Yes . . . yes. I’m sure that I just had an odd dream.

EDWARD: *(slowly)* Alright then. If you’re sure.

POLLY: I am.

*EDWARD looks at his watch.*

EDWARD: Oh! I really need to be off now.

POLLY: Can’t you stay a little longer?

EDWARD: No Polly, I can’t, I have to go to work. *(helping POLLY up)* But I’ll see you tonight. I love you Polly.

*POLLY and EDWARD embrace.*

POLLY: I love you too, goodbye Father.

*EDWARD exits.*

INTERVIEWEE V/O: “Did you consider that she was very cleanly in her habits?”

ELLEN V/O: “Oh, yes, she was a very clean woman”

*ELLEN runs in clutching a book.*

ELLEN: Polly! Polly! I finally found it. Look! It’s wonderful isn’t it?

POLLY: It really is, it’s beautiful! But, how did you get this?

---

5 *East London Observer,* 8 September 1888. Qtd. in Rubenhold.
6 Ibid
ELLEN: I may have swiped it when no one was looking.

POLLY: Ellen! What were you thinking? You could’ve been caught.

ELLEN: Well I wasn’t, and I got it didn’t I?

POLLY: Yes, but the risk was-

ELLEN: Polly, nothing happened. I’m ok, I promise. Now here, how does it start?

*POLLY takes the book, somewhere in the middle of the text, ELLEN exits.*

POLLY: “There was no possibility of taking a walk that day. We had been wandering, indeed, in the leafless shrubbery an hour in the morning; but since dinner (Mrs. Reed, when there was no company, dined early) the cold winter wind had brought with it clouds so sombre, and a rain so penetrating, that further out-door exercise was now out of the question. I was glad of it: I never liked long walks, especially on chilly afternoons: dreadful to me was the coming home in the raw twilight, with nipped fingers and toes”7- *(POLLY looks up)* Ellen?

*POLLY begins to look for ELLEN but is stopped by the voices. She listens.*

INTERVIEWEE V/O: “It was gathered that the deceased had led the life of an unfortunate”8

INTERVIEWEE V/O: “Nothing was known of her”9

WILLAM enters.

---

7 Brontë 1
8 *London Times, Daily Telegraph, St. James Gazette*, 1 September 1888. Qtd. in Rubenhold.
9 Ibid.
WILLIAM: Polly what are you doing?

POLLY: I-I’m leaving.

WILLIAM: What? Are you ser-

POLLY: I need to get away from here.

WILLIAM: Fine! Go! Leave your entire family and your children behind. If you step out that door, you can never come back, do you hear me? Don’t expect m-

POLLY: I don’t expect anything from you William, how could I?

WILLIAM: What do you mean?

POLLY: You’ve made your decisions very clear and now I’ve got to make mine.

WILLIAM: What decisions?

POLLY: William, stop being obtuse! I know you’ve been seeing Rosetta next door. You’re not very subtle about it.

WILLIAM: So what if I have, it’s not like you’ve been around any. You’re disappearing more and more, only to return reeking of liquor.

POLLY: I’m tired of arguing with you.

WILLIAM: No, we need to talk about this Polly. You can’t leave us because you’ve made bad choices and things are getting hard. You have to try-
POLLY: I’m doing this for you! You know that if I stay they might kick us out.

WILLIAM: Don’t play the martyr! We can fix this. They need some . . . I need someone Polly. Please, I can’t do this alone. The children need a mother and that should be you.

POLLY: I can’t. (beat) I just- What happened to us William? When did the life we’ve built start falling to pieces? . . . Do y-do you think I can change?

WILLIAM: I just don’t know Polly.

_A Pause_

POLLY: I’ll go, as I planned. Tell the children I love them.

WILLIAM: I will.

POLLY: Goodbye William.

WILLIAM: Goodbye Polly.

_WILLIAM exits. POLLY is left alone on stage, but the world around her has changed. She is now in a small sitting room belonging to the COWDRY family._

INTERVIEWEE V/O: “A decent wife is enduringly, incorruptibly good; instinctively, infallibly wise and not simply for the sake of self development, but for self rumination.”  

POLLY: Hello? Is anyone there?

---

INTerviewee V/O: “Her duty to her husband is to never fall from his side.”


She finds the bonnet (to be placed mirroring the top hat). Holding on to the bonnet she examines it. Finding a mirror POLLY looks around (the blocking should mirror the end with a less sinister air; more curious) afraid of getting caught, this bonnet couldn’t possibly be hers. But she desperately wants to try it on. After determining no one’s there she puts it on and admires herself in the mirror.

COWDRY enters

COWDRY: Miss Nichols, I hope you’re settle-

POLLY caught by surprise quickly takes the bonnet off.

POLLY: Mrs. Cowdry! I am so sorry-ma’am, I just found this on the-/Here! I shouldn’t have-

POLLY hurriedly hands COWDRY the bonnet.

COWDRY: (chuckling) Miss Nichols! Polly—it’s fine. Now, come by here and let me take a look at you. I hope you are feeling quite welcome in our home.

POLLY: Yes ma’am, I really mu/st thank you.

COWDRY: I see such great potential in you. But, understand this, there is only so much I can provide. My husband and I are offering you this opportunity out of the goodness of our hearts. You must do your part to take it. All that we ask is that you complete all of the tasks assigned to you, to attend service with the rest of the staff, and to avoid any and all temptation. This is an act of reformation; it will be a challenging journey, but from the moment I saw you I knew you had

11 Ibid.
the strength to do it. Please, take this *(offering the bonnet)* chance and begin the next chapter of your life. Can you do that?

*POLLY takes the bonnet and cradles it.*

*POLLY: (quietly) Yes*

*COWDRY: Good. I’ll show you to the kitchen and Mary can direct you to your room.*

*POLLY: Thank you Mrs. Cowdry.*

*They begin to walk off stage. COWDRY stops.*

*COWDRY: Ms. Nichols, have you written to your family yet?*

*POLLY: I-well. . . no.*

*COWDRY: Perhaps you should.*

*COWDRY exits. POLLY pauses, considering, before heading to exit.*

*INTERVIEWEE V/O: “[They] presented a woeful aspect, being dirty, and very ragged.”*\(^{12}\)

*POLLY: (unnerved) Hello? Why can’t I see you?*

*INTERVIEWEE V/O: “[SHE] was the worst woman on the square.”*\(^{13}\)

*POLLY: Show yourself! This isn’t-*

*INTERVIEWEE V/O: “[They waited for] respectable people to appear, at which they’d take off their shawls and shake themselves as if they were cold, in order to invite some sympathy.”*\(^{14}\)

*KEEPER enters out of POLLY’s sight.*

*POLLY: This isn’t funny!*

*KEEPER: Nichols! Do you have the money or not?*

*POLLY: I. . . what money?*

\(^{12}\) *Daily News*, 26 October 1887. Qtd. in Rubenhold.

\(^{13}\) Ibid.

\(^{14}\) Ibid.
KEEPER: Don’t try to play that game with me, you know exactly what I’m asking for. Now, do you have it or not?

POLLY: Well . . . I- no.

KEEPER: Then you’d best be on your way.

POLLY: But- Mr. Blodgett, I’ll have the money by tomorrow. Couldn’t I stay just for the night?

You don't even need to feed me! I promise I’ll be out of the way an-

KEEPER: No Nichols, the rules are clear. No money, no lodging.

POLLY: Please, can’t I have an exception just this once? I know you've done it before. Alice was able to stay without her doss money just last week.

KEEPER: Alice has people to vouch for her, doesn’t she.

POLLY: Why-I- Ellen wou-

KEEPER: And Alice is of high moral character. She doesn’t sleep rough and she doesn’t stay out all night making her money doing God knows what.

(POLLY is speechless)

KEEPER: “We don’t make a habit of handing out beds to penniless drunks”\(^{15}\). Now, if you would be on your way.

*KEEPER begins to exit SL*

POLLY: *(Calling to KEEPER)* I will be back. “I’ll soon get my doss money, see what a jolly bonnet I’ve got now.”\(^{16}\) I’ll come back and you won’t be able to turn me away. You’ll see.

*POLLY walks SR*

\(^{15}\)Rubenhold 67

\(^{16}\)The Times, 1 September 1888
INTERVIEWEE V/O: All they were, were a few “moribund, drunken, trug-moldies.” “All Jack did was execute, and then gralloch.”

POLLY is stopped in her tracks by the voice.

POLLY: Who are you? Why are you saying this? I don’t underst-

INTERVIEWEE V/O: At least they “got intimate with one of the most famous men on earth.”

POLLY: That’s not true! At least I- I don’t- Why can’t I see you? Why are you doing this to me?

INTERVIEWEE V/O: “Mary Jane Kelly was pretty, Stride, lively and . . .at least attractive . . . Otherwise, [Ripper’s] victims were gin-soaked drabs.”

WILLIAM enters SR.

WILLIAM: Isn’t this place amazing?

POLLY: Willam?

WILLIAM: I mean, it’s not much, that’s for sure. But it’s ours.

POLLY: (recognizing where she is, softly) It is, isn’t it? It’s beautiful here.

WILLIAM: Not as much as you.

POLLY: (with a laugh) Oh stop it, how many rooms do we have again?

WILLIAM: Four, one for each of the children, and one for just the two of us. Imagine it, we won’t have to wake up to your brother snoring anymore. I swear, it’s as if he’s louder than a train some mornings.

POLLY: True enough. . .I think I’ll miss it though.

---


18 Mayhew, “Not so Pretty Polly.” Qtd. in Rubenhold.

WILLIAM: Really?

POLLY: I mean I’ve heard it all my life, so the idea of suddenly being without, is strange... It’s awfully quiet here.

WILLIAM: Just wait until you hear the pitter patter of little feet and the sounds of constant amusement, then you’ll be longing for the quiet again.

POLLY: I suppose you’re right.

WILLIAM: Aren’t I always?

POLLY: Look at that window there, wouldn’t that be a perfect spot to have flowers grow?

WILLIAM: Let’s go get the children.

POLLY: You go ahead, I want to look around a little more.

*WILLIAM exits SR.*

INTERVIEWEE V/O: “The murder of the four whitechapel outcasts imply a universal belief that they had a right to life.”*20*

POLLY: What? How could you-just stop!

INTERVIEWEE V/O: “If they had no such right, then it was, on the whole, a good thing that they fell in with the unknown surgical genius.”*21*

POLLY: Stop! Please stop this! I don’t want to listen to you anymore.

*POLLY makes an attempt to leave SL.*

INTERVIEWEE V/O: “He, at all events, has made his contributions towards solving, “the problem of clearing the East-end of its vicious inhabitants.””*22*

*Before POLLY can successfully exit, ELLEN enters, hurried, trying to catch POLLY.*

---

20 *The Times*, 1 October 1888. Qtd. in Rubenhold.
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
ELLEN: Polly! Where have you been?

POLLY: Around.

ELLEN: I haven’t seen you in your bed for at least a week, are you ok?

POLLY: Yes, yes, I’m fine. As fine as I can be anyway.

ELLEN: Will you be back at Wilmott’s tonight?

POLLY: I wish I could. But, no, no. I can’t. I need to make up the amount for my lodgings.

ELLEN: Oh. . . well I would happil-

POLLY: No Ellen, I couldn’t ask that of you. I will figure it out the best I can on my own, I’ve only done this to myself.

ELLEN: Are you sure? It’s not a hardship to me at all. Are you feeling alright? You don’t seem well and you’ve bee-

POLLY: Stop, please! I’m fine. It’s just . . . (slowly) “I have had my doss money three times today and I have spent it.”23 . . . I don’t know what to do Nelly, I don’t know how to stop myself. I keep repeating the same mistakes again and again, and now . . . I can’t return to Wilmott’s until I have my doss money.

ELLEN: What do you mean? I’m sure that Mr. Blodgett would let you return if I vouched for you.

POLLY: I-no. I’ve tried already and he refused.

ELLEN: How could he . . . I refuse to take that as an answer. I’m sure that I can do something to convince him. Where have you been staying?

---

23 East London Observer, 8 September 1888. Qtd. in Rubenhold.
POLLY: “I’m living in another house, together with a lot of men and wo-a house where men and women are allowed to sleep.”24 “I don’t like to go there,”25 but it’s what I have. (beat) Nelly, I have to figure this out on my own. My choices are what brought me here and I need to get out of them-fix them myself. It’s only right and. truly it won’t be long. I’ll be there to read to you again tomorrow I promise.

ELLEN: Polly-I-that’s not-I just want to make sure you're safe. You don’t have to be alone.

POLLY takes ELLEN’s arms

POLLY: Don’t worry about me. I’ll be back soon enough.

EDWARD: Polly. . .Polly! Come here darling.

POLLY turns, seeing her father and hastily moves in his direction, they embrace. ELLEN watches her friend leave, not seeing EDWARD, before exiting .

POLLY: Father! I’ve missed you so much. How are you here? I was just-

EDWARD: What a welcome! But . . missed me? You’ve only been gone for a couple of hours.

POLLY: Oh . . I hadn’t realized. I have someone I’d love for you to meet! She’s right over-

EDWARD: Polly, there’s no one here but the two of us. Are you feeling alright?

POLLY: What? No, Ellen was just- oh.

POLLY sees no sign of ELLEN

A beat

EDWARD: Have you been out drinking again?

POLLY: I-no-So what if I have?

24 Evening Standard, 4 September 1888. Qtd. in Rubenhold.
25 East London Observer; 8 September 1888. Qtd. in Rubenhold.
EDWARD: You can’t keep doing this Polly! You’re putting not only yourself at risk but the livelihood of your brother and his family! I know that life has served you a bad hand, but you need to think outside of your bubble for once and see those around you!

POLLY: I am! Or at least I’m trying to! Please . . I just. . I can't seem to- (a beat) It kills me to know that I’ve disappointed you. I am so very-very aware of my faults in this. I know that I can better myself if I had the chance.

EDWARD: You were forced to grow up too fast and I am sorry for my part in that. The loss of your mother and your brother in such quick succession left me lost- But, I cannot recognize the woman I see before me. You have become something entirely other, an enigma. How did we get here Polly? Where is your drive? How can you do nothing when you’ve lost your children and are losing what remains of your family?

POLLY: . . .

EDWARD: I suppose that is just the way of things then. . . (slowly) Polly . . . I think . . . it’s your time to go. I’m sure we’ll see each other again one day, you just can’t be here anymore. But I think you know that. I love you Mary-Ann.

*Edward exits USR. Hearing her name Polly breaks from her reverie and watches her father leave stricken.*

INTERVIEWEE V/O: *Multiple voices are heard overlapping* "Come and look over here!"

"There's a woman lying on the pavement!" Is she dead? "I think she’s breathing, but very little if she is."

*Hearing the voices, Polly searches for the woman. She sees no one. Polly sinks down the lamppost trying to find a comfortable spot, taking off her bonnet, exhausted. As she holds the*
bonnet in her hands she looks at it for a moment before tossing it angrily in front of her.

Realizing what she's done she hastily moves forward to pick up the bonnet, inspecting it for any damage. In this position, POLLY lets out a desperate laugh as she realizes the image she makes. After a couple of beats POLLY notices the top hat sitting innocuously across the stage from her in the shadows. She slowly makes her way SR to pick up the hat. She examines at. Where did it come from? Why is it there? Slightly unnerved, POLLY searches for the answers to her questions in her surroundings, slowly moving center as she does so. Once DSC, finding nothing, POLLY places the hat on her head. Sound Cue: Fade Away and Radiate.

WILLIAM V/O: “I forgive you as you are.”26

POLLY: (recognizing the voice) . . .William? I-

WILLIAM V/O: “I forgive you on account of what you have been to me.”27

POLLY tenses sensing a presence and change in environment. She is being watched. Slowly lowering the hat from her head (within those first drum beats), POLLY looks over her shoulder. She turns back, makes to move forward, and freezes as if a hand has harshly grabbed her shoulder from behind to stop her from leaving (on “baby”). With shaking hands she reexamines the hat (starting on “wrapped”) and realizes its significance (Realization on first “fade away”). POLLY slowly drops the bonnet from her hands (on the second “fade away”). She looks out into the audience and makes eye contact with “them” (on “radiate”)

Blackout on downbeat. Fade out music and a beat.

---

26 The Times, 3 September 1888. Qtd. in Rubenhold.
27 Ibid.
POLLY V/O: “I just write to say you will be glad to know that I am settled in my new place and going alright up to now. . . So, goodbye for the present. Yours Truly, Polly.”

*End of Play.*
Chapter 1: Playwrights Note

In colloquium, we were asked to develop an elevator pitch for our pieces as a way to distill our projects into their main beats. In the pitch for my piece, I described it as “a play that follows Polly, the first canonical victim of Jack the Ripper, through a series of her disjointed memories, all encompassed in a fictional episode of Unsolved Mysteries.” While that remains a pretty accurate, if surface-level, description of what the play is, the why fills in the missing pieces.

At first, I wanted to find a topic that would bridge Theater & Performance and Victorian Studies together and incite me to want to make something that I knew would cost a significant amount of time, energy, and labor. It grew into so much more than that as soon as I encountered Polly, and the rest of the five’s, stories in The Five by Hallie Rubenhold. I went into writing Polly’s story by starting at the end and as I learned more about Polly and her life, I began to fill in the holes as best I could. While I wrote out of order, the piece, too, showed the selected moments in Polly’s life nonlinearly. It was mirrored, beginning and ending in the same place following the same series of characters, albeit in reverse, like the idea of your memories flashing before your eyes in your last moments. Placing the scenes out of order was the only way that it made sense and felt whole to me. That choice allowed me to contrast the scenes between Polly and her loved ones and, to some extent, express the cyclical nature of life and death.

I wanted my piece to show the human behind a name in a circumstance where the simple fact that a victim had a life outside of their murder is often overlooked. I wanted to examine the influence of outside narratives and who gets to tell someone’s story.
One of Five is a play about Unsolved Mysteries.

One of Five is a play about the Whitechapel Murders.

One of Five is a play about perception and influence.

One of Five is about Mary Ann “Polly” Nichols.

One of Five tells the story of a woman, a person with a life and a family. She wasn’t perfect; she experienced many hardships and made many mistakes. But at the end of the day, she was human; until she couldn’t, she lived.
Chapter 2: Research

The Five

The White Chapel Murders, perhaps more widely known as the murders of Jack the Ripper, is one of the most well-known serial murder cases in history. To be more specific, one of the most well-known serial murderers in history. Both pop culture and historical study have tended to focus more on puzzling out the identity of Jack the Ripper than focusing on his victims. Several examples include Portrait of a Killer: Jack the Ripper – Case Closed by Patricia Cornwell, Jack the Ripper: Quest for a Killer by M.J. Trow and Jack the Ripper: Letters from Hell by Stewart P. Evans. Not to mention there is a shockingly large amount of historical fiction, both films and novels, often taking the form of horror/thrillers or detective novels, focused on Jack the Ripper. Some notable examples here include Dust and Shadow: An Account of the Ripper Killings by Dr. John H. Watson by Lyndsay Faye, 1976’s Jack the Ripper directed by Jesús Franco and 2001’s From Hell directed by Albert and Allen Hughes. The Five by Hallie Rubenhold takes a different and refreshing approach to the topic as one of the few authors focusing on the victims. The research for my project began there, with reading the book. The first readthrough ultimately inspired the direction my project would take, with the book providing a lot of wonderfully detailed information about the lives of those below the poverty line in Victorian London and the lives of the five canonical victims. From there, once I had chosen which woman to focus on, I began searching for contemporary newspapers documenting the case. I wanted to find quotations from those who knew Polly, the circumstances of the murder, and the tone through which the information was being conveyed. I was particularly

28 The Five canonical victims are considered Mary Ann “Polly” Nichols, Annie Chapman, Elisabeth Stride, Catherine Eddowes and Mary Jane Kelly. There were several similar murders before and after these women, but the five are the most alike in the manner, locations, times, and circumstances of their deaths. Thus they are believed to have been murdered by the same person.
curious about the tone as I wanted to explore how outside commentary can warp perception and potentially cause people to forget the person, the human, behind the name.

The case, very simply, is as follows. On August 31st, 1888, Polly was found deceased in Buck’s Row, Whitechapel, London, around three am by Constable John Neil. He claimed to have been in the area Polly was found only 15 to 30 minutes earlier and, in that time, had not traveled far and had not heard or seen anything out of the ordinary. Which suggests that the murder had taken place quite quickly and unexpectedly. Based on the appearance of Polly’s body once found, it was clear that it was a brutal and rather precise murder, with additional evidence pointing towards self-defense\(^29\) having taken place. It was believed that the final resting site was not, in fact, where the murder occurred based on tracks of blood found at the scene\(^30\). The murderer was never found and proceeded to act again a little over a week later with the death of Annie Chapman on September 8th, 1888.

Right out of the gate, the narratives surrounding Polly’s death were marked and prejudicial against who they saw as a “fallen woman.” From what her family and those few close to her expressed, there was minimal evidence that Polly was engaging in any form of sex work. When her father, Edward Walker, was interviewed after her death, he stated that he “did not think she was “fast” with men and was not in the habit of staying out late at night while she was living with him.”\(^31\) While he had not seen Polly for nearly two years by the time of her death, it was even more telling that Ellen Holland, a friend of Polly at the time of her death, corroborated Edward’s beliefs on her behaviors. She never knew Polly to have any male companions and

\(^{29}\) *The Star: Guernsey*, 4 September 1888.  
\(^{30}\) *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1 September 1888.  
\(^{31}\) *The Times*, 3 September 1888.
intended to stay only in single-sex lodgings\textsuperscript{32}. Nevertheless, the narrative about Polly and the other four women, of their perceived immorality, persisted and continues on in retellings today. Rubenhold, throughout the book, provides quotations from publications expressing their opinions of the victims. These included things like contemporary newspapers and modern texts. The quotations, many of which appear in my script as the Interviewees, sparked my interest in exploring the inclusion of outside narratives in my piece and having Polly directly interact with them.

I was shocked and honestly appalled by the language used to describe Polly and the other victims in several of these pieces, especially the ones from the 21st century. In the 1880s, sex work was certainly frowned upon and illegal in many areas. But to use that work as an excuse or a way to lessen the horrific nature of the women’s murders, especially in modern discussion, is alarming and speaks to a larger undercurrent of misogyny. If these women were upper class and outwardly representative of how “good” women were (and to some extent still are) expected to behave-be virtuous, moral, well-kept, etc.-the way they would be discussed and treated in the media surrounding them would be rather different. The overt sensationalism causes harm and distracts from the acts of dehumanization actively occurring when the intricacies and intersections of life are glossed over-such as the impacts of addiction, loss, and homelessness-and people are boiled down to what moral judgment could be passed on them. Again, Polly, from what the evidence tells, was not likely a sex worker, but even if she was, it shouldn’t matter because a woman lost her life, alone, unsupported by her society, and never

\textsuperscript{32} \textit{East London Observer}, 8 September 1888. Qted. in Rubenhold.
receiving justice. Her murderer becomes one of the most famous serial killers of all time, while she is one of five women to be left behind, simply to be remembered as “just prostitutes.”

*Why Polly?*

When I first began devising the piece, I intended to explore the stories of all five women. However, it quickly became apparent that it simply wouldn’t be possible. Each woman was an individual with lives of their own, and to squeeze their stories into 15 minutes wouldn’t do any of them justice. Maybe it’s just because her story was the first I read and left an impression on me, but Polly’s story always stood out. Her life circumstances touched me. Though it should be noted that many elements—namely addiction, loss, and homelessness—were not entirely unique and some were present in the other victims' stories. Unlike many women of her class, she was educated into her early teenage years and seemed to have a hopeful future. Polly struggled and made some awful choices, but she continued to seek housing and tried to support herself with little help the best she could. I think I recognized the cycle she was stuck in, and it really resonated with me. In addition, there is something significant about being the first. It’s frightening, uncharted territory, and when more follow, it can lead to the first being the first forgotten. In Polly’s case, being the first puts the audience in a particularly tense place with knowing what’s to come. Even if they don’t know who she is or recognize the details of the case right away, the knowledge that she was only the first of many women to be murdered makes the circumstances feel so much bigger and, perhaps, more inevitable.

It was a challenge to distill Polly’s life, that we know of it, into such a limited amount of time. I chose to focus on the landmarks that seemed to impact her life’s trajectory most and feature the people that seemed to have the most impact. Most of those moments were hard, so I
thought it essential to add contrasting moments to add levity and express life’s hopeful and joyful moments.

*Unsolved Music Mysteries*

In our digital age, most people learn about true crime cases, both old and new, through various forms of true crime media. They can range from typical news reporting and documentaries to podcasts, youtube videos, and entire Reddit threads dedicated to the topic. The first form of true crime content I interacted with was the first run of *Unsolved Mysteries*, and I would imagine that’s the case for many people, as it was a pretty popular series. My father was a child and a teen during the show’s initial run and shared it with me, thus sparking my interest. Premiering in 1986, the show ran on and off between 1987 and 2010 before being picked up by Netflix for a reboot in 2019. The show focused on, as the title suggests, unsolved mysteries, some more outlandish than others, but more significantly, it worked to shed light on unsolved murders and missing persons’ cases.

The era that I am most familiar with is the late 80s early 90s when it was hosted by Robert Stacks, and it was specifically that era of the show that inspired the *Unsolved Mysteries* elements of the piece. I thought that the neon colors and dramatic tone of the show would contrast the serious subject matter of my project, potentially creating an in for audience members with the familiarity of the show. I went so far as to include the theme music and their opening disclaimer in the opening of my piece. The Host was inspired by Robert Stacks, and I had Allie and Emma, the actors playing the Host in the fall and spring, respectively, watch some of his monologues for reference in cadence and delivery.
While, admittedly, I remembered the show as being far more sensational than it really is, there was a level of sensationalism still present through, for example, the poorly acted reenactment sequences, the music, the set design, and the nature of it being a primetime television show, despite their seemingly good intentions. That sensationalism I saw reflected the sensation of the reporting on the Whitechapel Murders. In response, I heightened the text of the Host’s monologue to become more sensational and began to look at the Interviewee voice-overs as some kind of “expert” or witness commentary you often see on shows like *Unsolved Mysteries*, allowing me to construct the frame that would house the rest of the piece.

“Fade Away and Radiate” by Blondie was another source of aesthetic inspiration for the piece. When creating pieces of work, writing, or directing, I begin by listening to music. Often, when I listen to the right song, I can start to picture blocking, lighting, atmosphere, and more. When I heard “Fade Away and Radiate” for the first time, which was very early in the process, I immediately became attached to it and pictured the end sequence almost in its entirety, which I simply can’t explain. The music, while not an obvious choice for a piece primarily set in the 1880s, fit on multiple levels. The synth and pop sound of the song helps connect the 1980s aspects to the rest of the piece and the overall atmosphere of the beginning of the song reads so ominous to me, which matches perfectly with the stakes of the scene. It comes in so intensely that it can’t help but put you on edge, especially when it’s coming off of an extended silence. The song gives me chills every time I listen to it.
Chapter 3: Dressing Polly

I was fortunate enough to find a list of Polly’s “Life in Objects,” an inventory of the items found on her body once discovered, in *The Five*, which provided a solid basis upon which I began to dress Polly. Among the items listed, the few that stood out the most to me were the “black straw bonnet trimmed with black velvet,” a brown overcoat, men’s steel-tipped boots, and a “Linsey frock,” the latter of which I did not recognize, but after some research determined that it was a dress or outfit made from the material Linsey-woolsey, a coarse fabric made of cotton or flax and wool. These items stood out due to their significance as primary garments and, logistically, their accessibility, as it would be far more attainable to create or source these or similar items as opposed to trying to get together every item listed, of which there are 13, as accurately as possible. Much of Polly’s costuming in the fall focused on suggestion as opposed to a complete image, and I chose to focus on recreating a late 1880s style bonnet, as I knew that the bonnet would be an essential prop needed sooner rather than later. For the fall piece, Polly was dressed in a black overcoat, a blue-green high-collar late Victorian vest that I had on hand as a sewing project, a pair of pants, a pair of boots, and the bonnet.

*The Bonnet*

During the fall production, I became attached to the idea of the bonnet as an image of life and hope for the future. Polly is believed to have received the bonnet during her employment in the Cowdrey’s residence and may have intended to pawn it with her statements about her “jolly bonnet.” Both of these moments were opportunities for betterment in her life and the possibility of hope for her future. That, contrasted with the Top Hat as a representation of death and the stand-in for Jack the Ripper, imbued the bonnet with meaning and led to many of the blocking
choices with the bonnet, especially in the last scene with the dropping of the bonnet in exchange for the top hat as she lost her life.

The bonnet design was based on the descriptions in *The Five* and extant bonnets in the MET Museum’s Costume Archive. Notably, there was a black straw bonnet that bore a striking resemblance to what I had pictured based on the description of Polly’s bonnet and it worked as a great reference point. My bonnet was made, following the instructions from a Redthreaded blog post, from an old straw hat that I cut apart, reformed, and sewed back together. I reused many pieces of the old hat, including its millinery wire and ribbon, and added a velvet lining with linen trim once the hat and floral decoration were spray-painted black. That was my very first time attempting any kind of millinery work, and it was definitely a learning curve; I broke several needles when sewing through two thick layers of fabric to add on the decoration as I had thoughtlessly sewed on the velvet and linen first. Apart from the process of making it, the bonnet took on a life of its own within the piece.

*The Dress*

Moving into winter break and preparation for the spring piece, I decided to pursue the creation of a bustle dress with its underpinnings, something I had wanted to do from the start, and as a result nixed the jacket and the vest. The jacket was a little overwhelming on Zoë, the actress playing Polly, and it, as well as the vest, would not have fit properly over a bustle dress. It was surprisingly challenging to find patterns for full garments from the 1880s within my skill set that would be appropriate for Polly’s circumstances. Many of the patterns readily available are, understandably, focused on the more exciting upper-class fashions, which Polly was decidedly

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33 Image in Appendix, pg 41
34 Images of the bonnet construction process on pg 43
not. I eventually settled on a style from the late 1870s. In particular the “Seaside Costume” from Black Snail Patterns, a company I had used before and was comfortable with. This choice had multiple benefits. Logistically, as it was to be made out of a lighter fabric, it would be far more comfortable for the actor to wear under notoriously hot stage lights. Dramaturgically, though, it contributes to the representation of Polly’s circumstances. As an impoverished woman, she likely would not have had the newest fashion styles and would have had to stick with her older wares. As a result, a dress from the 1870s that was somewhat out of style would not have been out of place.

Actually constructing the dress was a journey and a half. It was the largest and most comprehensive sewing project I had ever taken on in the short time I had been learning how to sew. The first few pieces, the chemise, entirely hand-sewn, the bustle pad, and the petticoat, while challenging in their own right, were deceptively easy and did not prepare me for what was to come. Throughout the process I felt like I was losing my mind. One stand out moment I vividly remember was from one night at the end of the dressing-making process where it was almost 3 am, and I had been working on the dress for at least 6 hours straight, if not more, which was admittedly not out of the norm but far later than usual. I was in my pajamas, set up cross-legged on the floor of my room, wrapped in a sweater, bent almost in half looking at my phone, which showed a video tutorial on making a bow, and a strip of ribbon. I had spent most of the night doing the finishing work on the dress: casting over interior seams, sewing on false buttons, and hand-sewing on a line of what felt like over a thousand snaps. By that time of the

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35 An example of an extant 1870s dress pg 41
night, I was in the home stretch, almost finished with the entire dress, and I was working on the belt made of black satin ribbon, which was to have a bow on the back.

I remember sitting there, my entire body sore and exhausted, a massive headache forming, and feeling intense eye strain as I stared at this single strip of black ribbon. I felt defeated, so utterly stupid, and very alone as I tried yet again to make a simple bow for the belt and failed. I had successfully completed a bow significantly more complicated than this last semester for the bonnet; why couldn’t I do it now? Is this a metaphor for how my project is going to go? Is this a sign? Should I just give up? I continued to spiral and almost began to cry before finally forming the bow, sewing it down, and going to bed. Logically I knew that I was struggling because I was exhausted and should have gone to bed hours earlier and simply because bows are hard to make in general. Yet, in the moment, I still felt this immense imaginary pressure to get the dress done and have it perfectly match this vision I had created in my head. But, the feeling I had when I saw the dress on Allie in its completed form, despite not matching precisely what I had imagined, is irreplaceable. I felt so distinctly warm and full of pride and joy.

The decision to dress Polly almost entirely in blue started out of convenience. In the fall, the vest, which was the stand-in for the more complicated dress that I had neither the time nor the skill to create, was already started in a dark blue fabric and was a convenient option. From watching the piece, however, it became clear to me that dressing Polly in blue should be something to stick with. The other actors were primarily dressed in neutrals, so as a result, the small bit of blue peeking out from under the jacket stood out and drew the eye, making her pop out from the black background whilst being accentuated by the purple in the lights, giving it a sort of glowy dream-like quality. While Polly may not have been wearing a blue dress, it is in the
realm of possibility. From what I have found, dresses made from Linsey-Woolsey tended to be in neutral and earth tones, like the color of unbleached muslin\textsuperscript{36}. However, with aniline dyes\textsuperscript{37} being invented in 1856, the production and availability of blue dyes and, subsequently, blue fabrics greatly increased across class divides, with many extant examples of deep blue dresses\textsuperscript{38} still available. Thus, making it possible that Polly could have worn blue.

\textit{The Others}

Much like the direction of Polly’s costuming in the fall, I approached the costuming of the rest of the cast through a suggestive lens. This was not only helpful in terms of utility but also further isolated Polly from the rest of the characters. Being infused with modern touches, like the sneakers all but Polly wore in the spring, they visually play into a sense of reenactment and confusion in time and place. The fall piece was very simple, with Allie, in her role of the Host/Keeper, simply removing a jacket and Maya wearing a shawl and a shirt with slightly poofy sleeves, for example. The spring iteration, while still holding the suggestive idea in mind, had many of the characters in more period-specific costuming. I had struggled with communication with the costume department for the fall piece, which led to almost no support in costuming the characters other than Polly. As a result, I took it upon myself to gather as many costume pieces as possible for the spring. I was very fortunate in being able to borrow costume pieces from the Concord Community Players’ stock in Concord, NH, who happen to have a large selection of historical costuming. I pulled shirts, vests, a suit, and a beautifully beaded cape for Mrs. Cowdry. In hindsight, I wish I had taken the opportunity and costumed Ellen more; I just felt at such a loss

\textsuperscript{36} An example of a linsey-woolsey garment, pg 41
\textsuperscript{37} “Aniline Dye.” \textit{CAMEO}
\textsuperscript{38} Examples of blue bustle dresses, pg 41 and 42
on how to dress her. I didn’t want her in a skirt, to keep that for Polly, and we had tried a shawl, but it ended up feeling a little too much like Ellen was on the way to the country club. I think that, in comparison to the others, she felt a little underdressed. That did help in differentiating her from Cowdry, but she still felt a little unfinished in a way that I can’t quite explain.
Chapter 4: Change

Casting

Like many in the production process, my piece faced several challenges and needs for change and adaptation. One of the most significant that stands out in my mind was the very sudden and unexpected dropping of the actress playing Polly in the spring semester. I had come back from winter break with the understanding that Zoë would be returning to play Polly, as I had not heard anything different. But several weeks into February, after several attempts at reaching out, I finally heard from her, and she was dropping out. While I was thrown for a major loop, I was fortunate that it was the beginning of the semester, and I had the time to make adjustments.

Especially considering I had already started constructing the costume to her measurements. I was faced with several options: I could cast someone entirely new, and with the addition of Cowdry to the script, I was already considering holding auditions. But that brought the problem of actually finding someone, which, as the lack of auditioners in the fall proved, would likely be an immense challenge, and I’d have to make sure they had the time and ability to learn the material and the other contextual information. As I saw it, the other option was to find a Polly from within my own cast and figure it out from there. However, the problem was I’d have to re-assign the doubling and still need to cast someone entirely new.

Allie stepped in to take over Polly, which left the Host and the Keeper, originally doubled, and Cowdry without actors. Here I determined that I could either fill all of the roles with new actors, double some of them, or double all other than Polly. I felt that it was all or nothing in terms of the doubling. Had only some of the characters been doubled, it would have felt weirdly unbalanced. It only worked in the fall because the Host and the Keeper were the only
two figures who weren’t particularly close to Polly, and their scenes ran directly into each other. In doubling all the characters, I had a couple of directions I could go in. I knew that I wanted to double Ellen and Cowdry because they are the only two women in Polly’s life that make an appearance in the play, and I wanted to explore what the contrast between them could feel like when the same person plays them. For the others, I considered keeping the Host/Keeper doubled and doubling Edward and William. However, that made transitions particularly complicated and far more challenging to differentiate the two, a note expressed by some audience members in the fall; it also brought up some possible implications with the father and husband being doubled, that I had no interest in or need to explore. The doubling I decided to go with seemed to provide the most in terms of clarity as it kept an equal distance between all of the doubled characters. It is as follows: Host/William, Edward/Keeper, and Ellen/Cowdry. At the time, I didn’t have many other options in consideration. Still, now I wonder what could have changed had I doubled Ellen and the Host, especially with the blocking choices I made with Ellen being the slightest bit more aware than the other characters.

I had initially asked Zoë to be a part of the piece because I knew she could pull off the material in a limited amount of time, as I had taken an acting class with her in the past. I thought she would be quite visually striking with her height and red hair, and most importantly, I found the graceful way she carries herself and her gentle yet firm tone of voice to be a good fit with how I had imagined the character. But Allie’s interpretation and delivery of the character was, as one could expect, different. She brought an edge to the character that I didn’t realize was missing, for example putting up a great defense with the Keeper. It only makes sense that, while emotionally impacted by re-experiencing the moments in her life, Polly would not be the softest.
A moment that stood out to me in Allie’s performance was in the second Ellen sequence. Her delivery of the doss money line\(^3\) was in distinct contrast to how Zoë performed it in the fall. Allie really relayed the gravity of her circumstances through her tone and it was clear that she was working through her thoughts in the pauses, whereas Zoë moved very quickly through the line and placed here emphasis more so on the later housing focused line\(^4\). I feel that Allie did a beautiful job highlighting the humanness of Polly with the range of emotions she depicted throughout the performance and really made the character feel like a three-dimensional person.

**Lighting**

Another significant change occurred during tech week for the spring performances, where I began to feel unhappy with the look and feel of a substantial part of the lighting. At least a third of the play is dedicated to the transitional interviewee moments. They occur in between almost every scene and play a significant part in the overall arc and narrative of the piece. Consequently, it’s important that the lighting in these moments is distinct from the rest of the scenes where Polly is with another character and properly communicates the atmosphere and tone. Stacey, the wonderful lighting designer, created a lighting motif where the lights would continually strobe in each interviewee moment and increase in speed and intensity along with the scenes as they progressed. It was a cool concept, and initially, I had no problem with it. But as I watched them during rehearsals, they began to feel very off, and not in a good way. It occurred to me that this lighting element was starting to feel too overwhelming, transforming the piece into exactly what it was supposed to be commenting on, something entirely too sensational. It was as if we had

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\(^3\) This line can be found in the middle of pg 13.
\(^4\) This line can be found on the top of pg 14.
gone too far into the *Unsolved Mysteries* direction, flashy and in your face. I wanted to find the dream-like space that was missing.

The world of the piece exists in a place of the in-between. We actively travel through broken, disjointed fragments of memory whilst also existing in this place of limbo as the interviewees provide their commentary and we wait to be pulled into the next memory. I describe the atmosphere at the beginning of the script as “perpetually evening, the location is never quite clear, [and] the world is hazy.” It is not intended to be quite so literal as to use a haze machine, for example, but instead meant to suggest a feeling of disorientation and liminality, in the sense of perhaps having been there before. I pictured what it might feel like to walk down a dark, quiet alley alone in the middle of the night. The only source of light is a single lamppost, and an early morning fog has settled over the street, making everything fuzzy and distorted around the edges, and it is hard to see too far out of the bubble of light. There is something deceptively calm and comforting about the beacon of light and the hour of the morning, and yet, there too is an undercurrent of something dangerous in the darkness, the feeling of being watched.

I was very anxious about reaching out to Stacey with my concerns. While we were able to meet and successfully work out a new solution, I had to work myself up and ask for advice before I could even send the initial email. The anxiety, I think, was coming from a place of self-doubt, not wanting to make more work for people and not wanting to be a burden. When I got into the cueing session with Stacey (with Maya and Allie for moral support and to be bodies on stage), it was immensely relieving to be at least somewhat capable of properly communicating my thoughts (having established them beforehand) and having them be reflected in the overall piece. Instead of the continual strobing, we adjusted the lighting to have a single
flash moving into a dark side-lit environment in shades of blue and purple. The simplicity of the newer lighting scheme allowed Polly to be highlighted as the only figure on stage and created space for the Interviewees and Polly’s reactions to them to create the intensity of the moments.

_The Matter of Time_

Throughout the process of creating *One of Five*, time continued to play a significant role in forming how I worked on the piece. Often, when my brain is otherwise completely blank, the pressure of a looming deadline, internal or external, gets the gears moving, and that certainly occurred several times when writing the script. Time also created the need for significant alterations to my script in both the fall and spring iterations. The time limits set for the duration of the play were a hurdle that I continually tried to overcome to various degrees of success. The fall piece was more successful in keeping the 10-minute time limit, achieved through discussions with my actors on energy and intention; the phrase we landed on for many of the stickier sections was “desperation” and cutting the script. All of the cuts made to the original script focused on the Keeper scene and the final Edward sequence as I knew that the end moment would always run around a minute and a half as it was timed to a piece of music. The fall piece was presented with the recognition that it was an unfinished piece and the cuts ended up working seamlessly enough that I completely forgot what was cut to begin with and they made it into the final script as I wrote it.

The cutting in the fall proved to be good practice as I had to once again cut my script in the spring. The first run in LUMA at the beginning of tech ran an immense 20 minutes, 5 minutes over the time limit, which I had a feeling would happen, but nonetheless caused my heart to utterly sink. We were to run again that night, so as soon as we finished with notes, I ran
downstairs, panicking, trying very hard not to cry, and relayed the news to my actors. They were simply incredible, and we worked together to find areas in the middle of the script to trim significant portions down and reaffirmed the need to continue driving forward in the piece. The second run that night ran an impressive 16:46; we had successfully cut almost three and a half minutes. From there, our times pretty much leveled out, and after a second and almost third round of cuts, it got to a point where I could not, in good conscience, cut any more from the script. I had already cut a significant amount; lines from almost every scene were stripped down or cut entirely until all that remained were the lines that provided the most important historical, contextual, and emotional information. To cut anymore would threaten the clarity and depth of the story being told. I was also concerned about what it would do to my actors. While I’m sure they could have made the adjustments, they had worked extremely hard to create a rhythm and consistent flow to the piece that I loved. It was important to me that there was some space to breathe as the piece drove forward; it created time for everything to feel the slightest bit off and out of place, supporting the many quick changes in time and place without the story becoming entirely nonsensical. For example, the first scene between Polly and William could have been trimmed even more but the presence of the lines earlier in the scene created the space needed for an appropriate emotional build-up between Emma and Allie, as opposed to them rushing into the scene shouting at each other. My piece, during the run, consistently ran between 15:40-16:30 minutes. While the joys of live theatre certainly impacted the duration of each performance, I was pleasantly surprised by how close we got to time and the high-energy directness that resulted from trimming the script.
Chapter 5: Notes to Self

The process of creating this project was such a labor of love. While, in hindsight, there are plenty of things I would have done differently in terms of my own management, I can’t help but be proud of what I’ve created. A year ago, while I could picture something of what this would be, as I had a plan that excited me early on, I don’t think I could have imagined just how it turned out. I grew as an artist in countless ways. I taught myself to sew! I wrote and directed a piece of my own creation! But I learned a lot about myself in the process as well. It reaffirmed that I have skills to work on, such as time management and asking for help when I need it.

Looking forward, it has started to become clear to me that I find myself wanting to tell stories of women overlooked. To investigate the stories we tell and who gets to tell them. I remember Nilaja Sun once told me that I was one to heal through my art, and I can only hope that rings true.

I think it’s going to be hard to let this one go. Maybe I’ll return to it one day. But for now, I need to prepare to move on to the next chapter.
APPENDIX

Performance Edits

Pg. 2, Cut “Neil had been on the spot . . . crime scene.” from HOST’s “On August 31st” line.

Pg. 3-4, Cut from “EDWARD: Are you sure?” to “POLLY: I am.”

Pg. 5, Cut “ELLEN:Well I wasn’t, and I got it didn’t I?” and “POLLY: Yes, but the risk wa-”. Cut POLLY’s monologue: “and a rain . . . nipped fingers and toes-”

Pg. 6, Cut “and your children” from WILLIAM’s “Fine! Go!” line, the first sentence from WILLIAM’s “So what if I have” line, and “you’ve made bad choices and” from WILIAM’s “No, we need to talk” line.

Pg. 7, Cut “The children . . should be you” from WILLIAM’s “Don’t play the martyr” line.

Pg. 8, Cut “there is only so much I can provide” and “This is an act . . . strength to do it.” from COWDRY’s “I see such great potential in you” line.

Pg. 9, Cut “COWDRY: Good. . . to your room.”

Pg. 10, Cut “You don’t even . . . out of the way an-” from POLLY’s “I’ll have the money by tomorrow” line.

Pg. 11, Cut “Why can’t I see you? . . . doing this to me?” from POLLY’s “That’s not true!” line.

Pg. 13, Cut “How could he . . . ” and “I’m sure. . . convince him.” from ELLEN’s “I refuse” line.

Pg. 14, Cut “My choices . . . fix them myself” from POLLY’s “I’m living in another house” line.

Pg. 15, Cut “You’re putting . . . brother and his family!” from EDWARD’s “You can’t keep doing this” line and “I am so very very aware . . . If I had the chance” from POLLY’s “I am! Or at least I’m trying to!” line.

Pg. 16, The blocking in the stage directions was changed to have more isolated moments. The taking off of the hat remains the same with an added stiffening of the body. Within the drum beats before the pull back POLLY flinched and rolled her neck, as if feeling someone touch her hair, she fully turns to one side (stage left), hunches over as if stabbed, makes a bigger turn stage left, to be pulled back on the right shoulder at the given time in the music. Instead of stumbling back she fully falls to the floor and scrambles back, before locking on to a figure in front of her. She rises again around “wrapped like candy,” drops the bonnet as given in the script, and lurches forward on the downbeat.
Note: The only edit made post production is reflected in the script above on pages 13 and 14, the last scene between Polly and Ellen. In a few of the lines I switched Polly calling Ellen by her name, to “Nelly.”. This was to add familiarity in a moment of heightened emotion. I had been reminded that Nelly was another name Ellen was called (*Times, September 3 1888*) when revisiting my research in preparation for this paper.
Reference Photos from Notes:

(33) 1880s Bonnet, MET Museum Costume Institute.

(35) 1877 American Bustle Dress, Designed by: Mrs. F. M. Carroll, MET Museum Costume Institute.

(36) A Victorian linsey-woolsey petticoat, Textile Research Centre, Leiden.

(38) 1885 French Afternoon Dress, Designed by: Augustine Martin, MET Museum Costume Institute.
(38) 1881 American Bustle Dress, MET Museum Costume Institute.

Costume Construction: The Bonnet
Costume Construction: The Dress
Allie Sahargun as Polly.
Performance Photos
Bibliography

A blue floral bustle dress designed by Augustine Martin from design house Augustine Martin & Company. Dated to 1885.

“Aniline Dye.” CAMEO, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 3 Oct. 2020, https://cameo.mfa.org/wiki/Aniline_dye#:~:text=Aniline%20dyes%20were%20the%20first,(fuchsin)%2C%20was%20discovered.


The bonnet is dated to the 1880s.


Daily News, 26 October 1887. Qtd. in Rubenhold.

Black bustle dress designed by Mrs. F. M. Carroll, dated to 1877.

East London Observer, 8 September 1888. Qtd. in Rubenhold.

Evening Standard, 4 September 1888. Qtd. in Rubenhold.


London Times, Daily Telegraph, St. James Gazette, 1 September 1888. Qtd. in Rubenhold.


*The Times*, 1 October 1888. Qtd. in Rubenhold.


