

Auditions for THE EXONERATED, produced by The Voices Theatre Project
By Jessica Blank and Erik Jensen
Produced and Directed by Meghan Randolph

Performance information:

Performances of THE EXONERATED will be held on April 8 and 9 at the Wil-Mar Neighborhood Center and April 21 and 22 at the UW Law School. The performances will include post-show talkbacks, which actors are asked to participate in if their time allows. Admission will be free, but we will ask for donations. Proceeds from the show will go to the [Wisconsin Innocence Project](#).

Rehearsal information:

Rehearsals will generally be evenings throughout the month of March. Actors can expect to attend about 5 rehearsals for individual character and scene work before runs. We will be extremely accommodating of schedules. Actors must be available for final rehearsals the week of April 2. Dates will depend on actor availability.

Audition information:

Auditions will be held Monday, February 13 from 6:30-8:30pm at First Baptist Church, 518 N. Franklin Ave., off of University Avenue. Advance signup is preferred so we know how many people to expect. Signup online at <https://goo.gl/forms/ksR4YynmpXKIOStK2>. **If you are unable to attend but still interested, please contact the director at voicestheatproject@gmail.com.**

What to prepare: Please come prepared to read from the script. E-mail voicestheatproject@gmail.com to get a copy.

Synopsis (from Wikipedia):

The Exonerated is a 2002 play by [Jessica Blank](#) and [Erik Jensen](#) that debuted [Off-Broadway](#) on October 10, 2002 at 45 Bleecker Theater and ran for over 600 performances. It won numerous awards including the [Lucille Lortel Award](#) award for Unique Theatrical Experience, the [Drama Desk Award for Unique Theatrical Experience](#), and the [Outer Critics Circle Award](#) for Outstanding Off-Broadway Play. It was adapted into [a 2005 film](#).

The work combines the first person narrative with legal records to tell the story of 6 wrongfully convicted inmates ([Delbert Tibbs](#), [Kerry Max Cook](#), [Gary Gauger](#), [David Keaton](#), Robert Earl Hayes and [Sunny Jacobs](#)).^[1] The production is performed as an [anthology](#) by actors seated behind music stands telling stories of the freed inmates that emphasize life after the death sentences, but that include much of the legal proceedings.

The characters are real people. These are their own words, taken from extensive interviews directly with the authors, as well as from police transcripts, letters, and court documents.

Information for auditioning actors:

- **This play will be presented as it was presented in its off-Broadway incarnation: As a reading.** Actors will need to be semi-memorized, but will have their scripts in front of them.
- **Rehearsal for this piece will take place over two weeks.** The rehearsal process will consist of table work and involved character study. Actors will be expected to spend time doing research on their own and with resources provided by the director.
- **Extensive theatrical experience is NOT required for this project.** What we require are performers who can evoke the essence of these real, nuanced individuals. We will consider actors of all backgrounds.

- **The indicated races for each character are not flexible.** These are real people who are being reflected, and in many cases their races played crucial roles in their situations, both positive and negative.
- **There is no pay for this project.** This production is an awareness-builder and fundraiser for the Wisconsin Innocence Project. Actors are not compensated. Rehearsal time will be minimal (2 weeks) and we will be extremely respectful of conflicts and scheduling needs. We so appreciate you helping to tell this story!

CHARACTERS:

DELBERT TIBBS: African-American, to play 60s. A seminary dropout, radical, and poet. His whole personality is like an old soul song; smooth, mellow, and with an underlying rhythm that never lets up. Possesses a substantial sense of humor in addition to his depth.

SUNNY JACOBS: White, to play 50s. A bright yoga teacher from California. Her lightness and positivity contrast with moments of great depth and clarity.

ROBERT EARL HAYES: African-American, to play 30s. A former horse groomer from the Deep South. Hardened but not lacking a sense of humor.

KERRY MAX COOK: White, to play 40s. A nineteen-year-old trapped in a forty-five-year old's body, born and bred in Texas. Kerry was imprisoned for twenty-two of his forty-five years, and is eager to rediscover the world. Always wants to make sure he connects with whomever he is talking to.

DAVID KEATON: African-American, to play 40s. A gentle, sad man, born and raised in northern Florida (aka Southern Alabama). Has a very strong spiritual sense and had aspirations to the ministry before being put on death row at eighteen. He is continually engaged in a battle between resignation and hope.

GARY GAUGER: White, to play 40s. A Midwestern hippie and an organic farmer. Clearly was in his element in the late 60s and early 70s. He is generally good-natured, friendly, and quite smart.

The Ensemble

GEORGIA/FEMALE ENSEMBLE 1: African-American, 30s. Robert's wife. Loudmouthed, outspoken, and extremely warm. Loves to speak her mind. Also plays SUNNY'S PROSECUTOR, KERRY'S JUDGE, and PAULA. Must be able to create a clearly different character in each role.

SANDRA/ FEMALE ENSEMBLE 2: White, 40s. Kerry's wife, plus other small roles TBD. Sweet, nurturing, loves her husband and has a great sense of humor. Must be able to create a clearly different character in each role.

SUE/FEMALE ENSEMBLE 3: White. Flexible age. Gary's wife, plus other roles TBD. Must be able to create a clearly different character in each role.

Male 1: Plays WHITE COP 1, KERRY'S DEFENSE, SHERRIFF CARROL, JESSE, DAVID'S PROSECUTOR, INMATE, WHITE GUARD, JEFF, CELLMATE, EX-BOYFRIEND, FARMER. Must be able to create a clearly different character in each role.

Male 2: Plays WHITE COP 2, RHODES, DEPUTY, SOUTHERN WHITE GUY, ROBERT'S JUDGE, , DOYLE, ROBERT'S PROSECUTOR. Must be able to create a clearly different character in each role.

Male 3: African-American. Plays BLACK COP, BLACK GUY ONE, INMATE. Must be able to create a clearly different character in each role.

Please direct any questions to voicestheatreproject@gmail.com.