

To History / To Whom It May Concern
A Letter From Allies Of The Indigenous Silenced

Two: **WAR/GAMES**



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Performance script for presentation of Truth and Reconciliation
Tank Theater NYC, Oct 2019

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Characters

ONE

TWO

THREE

FOUR

FIVE

Notes

Adults of any age, etc. Female-id or NB preferred. POC preferred.

For ensembles of less or more than five, playwright will reallocate lines.

Director must be POC. Female-id or NB preferred.

Organic, pls, with no “acting”. No edits, revision, or altering of text.

Ellipses are omitted in quotes (when words are elided) to facilitate renderings.

If the NUMBERS can please be in non chronological order as this will add texture.

Play

This play was written for The Protest Plays Project’s *Heal the Divide* theater action.

To learn more or to participate in the current PPP actions, please visit

www.protestplays.org.

Playwright

Jaisey Bates writes/directs/performs with her multicultural nomadic theater company, The Peoplehood (the-peoplehood.com). A Princess Grace Award and O’Neill National Playwrights Conference finalist, she is a recipient of the Emerging American Playwright Prize from Marin Theatre Company.

Prologue.^A

ALL: **TO HISTORY**

ONE: To Whom It May Concern

ALL: **A LETTER**

TWO: From Allies of the Indigenous Silenced

ALL: **LETTER TWO:**

THREE: WAR/GAMES

FOUR: A short spoken word poem play

ALL: **WRITTEN**

FIVE: for the Protest Plays Project's *Heal the Divide* initiative

ALL: **WRITTEN**

ONE: on these pages, these white pages, these slivers of souls of gone trees,
in Indigenous Blood Stories-as-ink

ALL: **WRITTEN**

TWO: in the hope of opening eyes and efforts

ALL: **WRITTEN**

THREE: in the hope of recognizing Indigenous Silenced, past, present

ALL: **WRITTEN**

FOUR: in the hope of helping to inspire positive healing urgent united actions so we
together can help un-write an Indigenous Silenced, Future.

ALL: **WRITTEN**

FIVE: with special thanks to Amelia Tuplin, Member of the Maine Indigenous Peoples
Panel, for allowing us to share some of her eloquent and powerful words.

^A Optional

We prepare to write.

ONE: We prepare to write.

ALL: TODAY

ONE: [speak day of week]

TWO: [speak month]

THREE: [speak day of month]

FOUR: [speak year]

ALL: WE

FIVE: of different heritages, of different paths come together

ONE: here on this Indigenous ground,

TWO: here on this contested,

THREE: conquered,

FOUR: stolen land to

ALL: STAND

FIVE: beside the indigenous Silenced.

ALL: WE

ONE: – a community –

TWO: take this moment to acknowledge,

THREE: honor and give thanks to

FOUR: the ancestors of this land. Together

FIVE: we gather our courage. Together

ONE: we raise our words,

TWO: we raise silenced words,

THREE: we raise our pen –

ONE: our offering –
TWO: over this shared page in our lives,
THREE: in this place, this shared
FOUR: space of moments when we will
ALL: WRITE
FIVE: here, together, as Allies of
ONE: the Indigenous Silenced – standing beside
TWO: the Indigenous Silenced –
THREE: this letter,
FOUR: this song,
FIVE: this prayer,
ONE: this plea to
ALL: HISTORY
TWO: To
THREE: Whom
FOUR: It
FIVE: May
ONE: Concern.
TWO: Here is our letter.
THREE: Here is our song.
FOUR: May History
ALL: AT LAST
FIVE: Hear.

We write.

ONE: We write:

ALL: WAR.

ONE: On November 3, 1755

TWO: the Boston Council Chamber

THREE: in the Province of Massachusetts

FOUR: ratified Lieutenant Governor Spencer Phips'

FIVE: Proclamation which declared Penobscot

ALL: "INDIANS

ONE and FIVE: Enemies,

TWO and THREE: Rebels

FOUR: and Traitors"

FIVE: and required

ONE and FIVE: "Subjects

FOUR: of this Province to

TWO and THREE: Embrace

FIVE: all opportunities of

ONE and FIVE: pursuing,

TWO and THREE: killing

FOUR: and Destroying

FIVE: all and every of

ONE: the

TWO: afore

THREE: said

ALL: **INDIANS.”**

FOUR: The Council Chamber

FIVE: resolved the Treasury would,

ONE: starting November 25th,

TWO: pay bounty

THREE: for each Penobscot

FOUR: captive, or

THREE: on each Penobscot

FOUR: scalp, whether:

ONE and FIVE: man,

TWO and THREE: woman

FOUR: or child.

ONE and FIVE: Or child?

TWO and THREE: Or child?

[*Beat.*]

FOUR: Or child.

[*Beat.*]

We write.

ONE: We write:

ALL: GAMES.

ONE: On November 4, 2017

TWO: the Skowhegan Area

THREE: Chamber of Commerce

FOUR: in Maine posted:

FIVE (*chipper*): “PLEASE JOIN

ALL: US

ONE and FIVE: FOR

FOUR: THE FIRST ANNUAL

ALL: HUNT

ONE and FIVE: FOR

FOUR: THE

ALL: INDIAN!”

FIVE (*aghast*): The First Annual ‘HUNT for the INDIAN’?

ONE (*chipper*): THE FIRST ANNUAL HUNT FOR

TWO: a small wooden replica –

FIVE (*aghast*): You can’t be serious – a WOODEN INDIAN?

ONE (*chipper*): THE FIRST ANNUAL HUNT FOR

TWO: a small wooden replica

THREE: of the town’s “iconic”

FOUR: Skowhegan Indian

ONE: sculpture, by artist

TWO: Bernard Langlais.

FIVE (*aghast*): Please tell me he's not White – the artist's not White.

THREE (*chipper*): – the town's "iconic"

FOUR: Skowhegan Indian

ONE: sculpture, by artist

TWO: – White artist – Bernard Langlais.

FIVE: Wait, where were we?

ONE thru FOUR: "PLEASE JOIN US

ONE: FOR

TWO: THE

THREE: FIRST ANNUAL

ALL: HUNT

FOUR: FOR THE

ALL: INDIAN!

ONE: From November 24th

TWO: the Chamber

THREE: will visit

FOUR: a participating Member's location.

ALL: TOGETHER,

FIVE: we will place

ONE: the Indian

TWO: somewhere. After

ONE: the Indian

TWO: is placed,

THREE: we will take

FOUR: a picture

THREE: and post

FOUR: it to the

ONE: Chamber's

TWO: Face

THREE: book

FOUR: page, asking:

ALL: 'WHERE AM I?'

FIVE (*aghast*): WHERE AM I?

ONE (*chipper*): Skowhegan,

TWO: Maine.

THREE: You're in

FOUR: Skowhegan, Maine, asking

ALL: WHERE AM I?

ONE: When customers

TWO: visit your

THREE: business,

FOUR: if they are

FIVE: able to locate

ONE: the Indian

TWO: they will

THREE: receive

FOUR: a small

FIVE: discount.

ONE: At the

TWO: end
THREE: of the day
ALL: WE
FOUR: will
FIVE: collect
ONE: the Indian.
ALL: WE
TWO: hope
THREE: the
FOUR: Hunt
FIVE: for
ONE: the Indian
TWO: will encourage
THREE: shoppers
FOUR: to Shop Local
FIVE: and boost your sales.”

[*Beat.*]

We write.

ONE: We write:

ALL: WAR.

TWO: An education

THREE: for

FOUR: extinction:

FIVE: Boarding

ALL: SCHOOLS.

FIVE: Their motto:

ALL: “KILL

ONE: the Indian

TWO: and save

THREE: the Man.”

ONE: On November 1, 1879,

FOUR: Captain Richard Henry Pratt

FIVE: under authority of the US federal government

ONE: formally opened

TWO: the Carlisle Indian Industrial School

THREE: in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

FOUR: This school

FIVE: became the model, the

ONE: template for

TWO: twenty-six BIA

THREE: boarding schools,

FOUR: and for hundreds of
FIVE: religious
ONE: denomination
TWO: sponsored
THREE: boarding schools.
ONE: From 1879 through 1918
FOUR: over ten thousand
FIVE: Native children
ONE: from 140 tribes
TWO: attended Carlisle
THREE: Indian
FOUR: School.
FIVE: Native children
ONE: were forced
TWO: to leave their
THREE: families and
FOUR: travel far.
FIVE: Native children
ONE: were forced
TWO: to surrender their
THREE: cultures,
FOUR: languages,
FIVE: religions,
ALL: NAMES.
FIVE: Some ran away, some

ONE: were found,
TWO: were returned.
THREE: Many were sent home to die.
FOUR: Many died
FIVE: and were buried at the school.
ONE: Many are still there
TWO: in the school graveyards, still
THREE: waiting
FOUR: to hear
FIVE: their names,
ONE: their true
TWO: names, still
THREE: waiting
FOUR: to come
FIVE: Home.

[*Beat.*]

We write.

ONE: We write:

ALL: GAMES.

TWO: An education

THREE: for

FOUR: extinction:

FIVE: Sports

ALL: MASCOTS.

FIVE: Symbols.

ONE: Stereotypes.

TWO: Caricatures. Costumes –

THREE: a mockery of sacred regalia.

FOUR: Chants. War whoops.

FIVE: War paint.

ONE: War path:

ALL: “KILL

ONE: THE INDIAN.”

TWO: Scalp

THREE: towels.

FOUR: Tomahawk

FIVE: chops.

[*Beat.*]

We write.

ONE: We write.

TWO: We work.

ONE: We write.

THREE: We seek

FOUR: an education for

FIVE: Awareness.

TWO: Inclusion.

THREE: Understanding.

FOUR: Empathy.

FIVE: Respect.

ONE: We write.

TWO: We write.

ALL: WE WRITE:

ONE: On November 5th

TWO: the Skowhegan Area Chamber of Commerce posted:

THREE: “Never were we so wrong in thinking that this promotion involving the Skowhegan Indian statue would be a good idea.

FOUR: This event has been canceled.

FIVE: It was never our intention to offend anyone, quite the opposite.

ONE: Now we understand

TWO: we’ve created a bigger problem of not seeing our actions from others’ perspectives

THREE: given the local and national issues

FOUR: around mascots

FIVE: and racism.

ONE: No apology

TWO: can take away

THREE: our lack of empathy

FOUR: and foresight

FIVE: in this decision.”

[*Beat.*]

ONE: On January 31st 2018 Amelia Tuplin spoke before the Wells Mascot Advisory Committee and the Wells-Ogunquit School Board as a Member of the Maine Indigenous Peoples Panel. With her permission here are some of the words she shared:

TWO: “Hello, my name is Amelia Wisawsuliewey Pikun Tuplin. I am Mi’kmaq.”

THREE: “I’m honored to be amongst so many passionate and strong Indigenous people. What you have here is a small example of how in-depth and beautiful our culture is and how resilient Indigenous people have always been. We come from different tribes, we speak different languages, our sacred teachings are unique, yet we’re all united. And within that diverse unity, we share a common struggle, survival.”

FOUR: “I’m going to briefly take a step back and talk about the response to my letter. Forgive me but my emotions are still raw, the following statement must be said in order for me to forgive and move forward. I feel strongly that the Wells-Ogunquit school department failed to protect my children from discrimination at school, based on race.”

FIVE: “I don’t regret standing up for my children and Indigenous people everywhere. I don’t regret putting myself on a public platform to bring to light the cultural misappropriation associated with your mascot. I’m proud to say it has gained support from Indigenous people across the nation and in Canada.”

ONE: “I was happy to find out that there were many people in this community who do support me and fully support changing the Warriors Mascot. Thank you to those who showed your compassion and support through letters, emails and phone calls. I’ve come to the conclusion that I must accept an apology I will never receive and move forward by educating people in order to preserve our culture.”

TWO: “With that being said, my hope is that you can open your hearts and take this opportunity to listen and learn, in hopes of moving forward with the process of rebranding and reconciliation.”

- THREE: “I’m going to give you a quick glimpse into how beautiful and sacred our culture is. Hopefully then, you will support preservation not cultural misappropriation. I’m going to share with you the spiritual significance behind the objects you mocked and used under the basis of harmless school spirit. Keep in mind these teachings vary from tribe to tribe.”
- FOUR: “With that being said, my hope is that you can open your hearts and take this opportunity to listen and learn, in hopes of moving forward with the process of rebranding and reconciliation.”
- FIVE: Amelia Tuplin shared the significance of headdresses, eagle feathers, ceremonial face paint and hand drums then continued:
- ONE: “These are the sacred teachings that have been passed down to me from my Elders, Parents, Uncles and Aunts who are respected Spiritual Elders, Pipe Carriers and Sun Dancers.”
- TWO: “These teachings are sacred and have a deep connection to Mother Earth, the creator and the spirit world. I cherish every word and teaching that has been gifted to me.”
- THREE: “It’s my job to protect and transfer my teachings to the next generation, my children. It is also my job to protect these cultural elements, teachings and traditions from being misappropriated and used in a fashion that falsely imitates their true meaning.”
- FOUR: “Now that you’ve had a glimpse into our culture and you’ve heard the voices of a wide variety of Maine Indigenous People, will you educate your students on what you’ve heard today? Or will you allow them to take a vote based on the misconceptions they have about our culture?”
- FIVE: “The removal and eradication of Native American Mascots needs to start here, in public schools. This is not the correct way to be teaching our children, by continuing to support false imagery of Indigenous People.”
- ALL: “I AM NOT YOUR MASCOT.”**
- ONE: “Wela’in.
- TWO: Amelia Wisawsuliewey Pikun Tuplin
- THREE: Mi’kmaq, Abeequeit First Nation
- FOUR: Maine Indigenous People’s Panel
- FIVE: Lisbon, Maine.”

[*Beat.*]

ONE: In September 2005

TWO: the American

THREE: Psychological

FOUR: Association

FIVE: issued a resolution:

ALL: “WHEREAS

ONE: the continued use of American Indian MASCOTS, symbols, images, and personalities

TWO: undermines the educational experiences of members of all communities [...].

ALL: WHEREAS

THREE: the continued use of American Indian mascots, SYMBOLS, images, and personalities

FOUR: establishes an unwelcome and often times hostile learning environment for American Indian students that affirms negative images/stereotypes that are promoted in mainstream society.

ALL: WHEREAS

FIVE: the continued use of American Indian mascots, symbols, IMAGES, and personalities

ONE: by school systems appears to have a negative impact on the self-esteem of American Indian children.

ALL: WHEREAS

TWO: the continued use of American Indian mascots, symbols, images, and PERSONALITIES

THREE: undermines the ability of American Indian Nations to portray accurate and respectful images of their culture, spirituality, and traditions.

ALL: WHEREAS

FOUR: the continued use of AMERICAN Indian mascots, symbols, images, and personalities

FIVE: presents stereotypical images of American Indian communities [...]

ALL: WHEREAS

ONE: the continued use of American INDIAN mascots, symbols, images, and personalities

TWO: is an offensive and intolerable practice to American Indian Nations that must be eradicated. [...]

ALL: THEREFORE

ONE and FIVE: BE

TWO and FOUR: IT

ALL: RESOLVED

THREE: [...] that the American Psychological Association supports and recommends the immediate retirement of Indian mascots, symbols, images, and personalities by schools, colleges, universities, athletic teams, and organizations.”

We hold our letter to the sky.

ONE: We hold

TWO: our letter

THREE: to the sky.

FOUR: Today,

ALL: TOGETHER,

FIVE: here,

ONE: now,

ALL: WE STAND

TWO: beside
THREE: the Indigenous
FOUR: Silenced.
ALL: TOGETHER,
FIVE: here,
ONE: now,
ALL: WE RAISE
FIVE: our words,
ONE: our voices, our choices,
TWO: our pen,
THREE: our shared pen,
FOUR: over this page,
FIVE: this shared page
ONE: in our lives, in
TWO: this place, this
THREE: shared
FOUR: space of moments.
ALL: TOGETHER
FIVE: here,
ONE: now,
ALL: WE WRITE
ONE: as
TWO: Allies
THREE: of
FOUR: the

ALL: INDIGENOUS

FIVE: Silenced –

ONE: standing

TWO: beside

THREE: the

ALL: INDIGENOUS

FOUR: Silenced –

FIVE: this letter,

ONE: this song,

TWO: this prayer of pages,

THREE: this plea to

ALL: HISTORY

FOUR: To

FIVE: Whom

ONE: It

TWO: May

THREE: Concern.

ALL: HERE

FOUR: is our letter.

ALL: HERE

FIVE: is our song.

ONE: We hold it to the sky.

TWO: We stand as Allies of the Indigenous Silenced.

THREE: We call for

ALL: HISTORY

FOUR: to, at last, hear.

FIVE: We must help History hear. Because:

ONE: There's a structure

TWO: under construction

THREE: for a couple centuries, in the garden that is our shared home.

FOUR: Its bones

FIVE: are broken treaties, endless oppressions. Stolen

ONE: lands, children, languages. Lives.

TWO: Its joints

THREE: are greased with blood.

FOUR: It's rising up.

FIVE: Monstrous.

ONE: Ravenous.

TWO: It eats Indigenous voices.

THREE: Because:

FOUR: This structure is a story.

FIVE: Those in power wrote it. Built it.

ONE: Are writing it. Building it.

TWO: They call it History.

THREE: Because:

FOUR: In these days of days if our home is to survive,

FIVE: if we wish to work toward a world

ONE: worthy

TWO: of our children's

THREE: bright

FOUR: promise,

FIVE: and of their children's bright promise, we need to do more

ONE: than watch as

TWO: History opens

THREE: its eyes. As

FOUR: History opens

FIVE: its mouth.

End of play.