Why Torture is Wrong, and the People Who Love Them

Synopsis

THE STORY: Christopher Durang turns political humor upside down with this raucous and provocative satire about America's growing homeland "insecurity." WHY TORTURE IS WRONG, AND THE PEOPLE WHO LOVE THEM tells the story of a young woman suddenly in crisis: Is her new husband, whom she married when drunk, a terrorist? Or just crazy? Or both? Is her father's hobby of butterfly collecting really a cover for his involvement in a shadow government? Why does her mother enjoy going to the theatre so much? Does she seek mental escape, or is she insane? Honing in on our private terrors both at home and abroad, Durang oddly relieves our fears in this black comedy for an era of yellow, orange and red alerts.

Characters

Felicity (lead) – Perfectly nice woman of 25 to 34; educated fast-paced New York type; funny, self-deprecating, clever, stylish; great comic timing and must be able to convincingly ballroom dance with a partner, a la Cyd Charisse. Just past ingénue age but not quite leading lady yet.

Zamir (lead) – charismatic but mysterious man of indeterminate ethnicity; dark-haired, probably Pakistani or Egyptian but could also be Greek, Italian or Jewish-looking; does NOT have a heavy accent and can sound American; a mix of sexy and scary; can go from charming to threatening in an instant; age can be 25 to 45.

Luella (supporting) – Felicity's mother, a somewhat dazed/befuddled woman; dresses well. Has an upscale suburban feel but is not snobby or patronizing (not a typical country club type); forgetful & repetitive but not annoying. Late 40s to mid 50s.

Leonard (supporting) – Felicity's father: strong-minded, formidable, willful, 100% sure he's right about everything. Republican tea party type. Dead pan, serious. Late 40s to late 50s.

Hildegarde (supporting) – a conservative, old-fashioned woman in her mid 40s to late 50s. Admires Leonard greatly, has a crush on him, although she doesn't think of it that way herself. A nice, neat hairdo. Navy blue jacket, navy blue skirt, and white blouse with pearls type. Great at slapstick comedic moments. Ladylike.

Voice/Narrator (supporting) – age anywhere from 20s to 40s. Well spoken, must make announcements. Also plays a wacky, hyperactive spy and suave maître'd. Should sing well or pleasantly. Ability to play multiple characters distinctly and convincingly a must. Energetic.

No roles have been definitively cast, but we are looking specifically to fill the roles of Zamir and Voice/Narrator before casting or making offers for the rest of the show.

Terrorism

Synopsis

THE STORY: An evocative and quirky exploration of life under a constant terrorist threat, with clear parallels with life in today's "amber alert" society. Originally performed at The Royal Court in 2003, Terrorism combines youthful exuberance and sharp, incisive writing by the Presnyakov brothers. A powerful, contemporary Russian play about the terror of the everyday in six scenes from urban life... Delayed passengers grumble about a bomb scare at the airport. A man and a woman commit adultery. Office workers bicker while one of their colleagues quietly exits to hang herself. Two women in a playground complain about their menfolk and make fun
of a man seated on the next bench. Policemen in their barracks scrap amongst themselves. The passengers on the plane finally prepare for take-off. By the end we realize these apparently random scenes are in fact linked by an almost invisible thread, subtly indicating that we bear responsibility for one another even in our soulless urban limbo. *Terrorism* paints a picture at once familiar and strange, deftly depicted with minimal means and depressingly informative about the moral bankruptcy of the new world.

**Characters**

**Ensemble consists of 5 women and 4 men.** All actors play at least 2 roles in unique 6 scenarios.

**Specific characters:**
- Airplane passengers, business men
- Flight attendant, female
- Airport military personnel
- Young adulterous wife
- Young wife’s lover (same age)
- Young wife’s husband (older)
- Office staff: young entry level female employees, secretary, middle aged management male, tidy-looking office manager male, older male
- Policemen
- Women at a playground (30s+)

*All roles open.*
Combination of roles will be determined by who gets cast in the show. The ensemble aspect is the most important factor when casting – all actors must work well collaboratively but also be able to create full, distinctive characters that can stand on their own. Playing multiple roles fluidly and making strong emotional choices are musts. Ability to play multiple ages, socioeconomic backgrounds, and perhaps different ethnic backgrounds helpful.