

Erasures

By Don Zolidis

About the play: At an all-black middle school in Houston, a new teacher has discovered a conspiracy to cheat on the standardized tests. She's caught between reporting the truth or sympathizing with their plight.

About this scene: Monica, the Principal, has just been confronted by her teacher, who has suggested appealing to the school district for help.

MONICA, 30s-60s, African American. The Principal of the school.

Time: Present.

MONICA

This is what I'm talking about. There it is. There's the problem. You think, la-de-dah, everyone's gonna listen to me – I'll just put up a big flag and notify people and say, there's a problem over here, let's all fix it together. And we all put on our overalls and get to fucking work. And my point, my point, is that the only reason you think that's gonna work is cause you're white. And you don't know any better. You got no clue. And I know, I know, that the starving of our schools and the ruining of our people is *intentional*, that's been the goddamn position of the United States of America for four hundred years. And *that's* what's racist.

(Pause)

You know what you're feeling right now? You're feeling the wall. You just touched it. You just realized that the deck is so stacked that there ain't nothing to do. You think I don't die every day for these kids that don't know how to read? You think I don't wish I could give them three meals a day and a family that's all together where none of their parents is in prison? You think I don't care about these kids? I push them and I push them and I push them and I walk the halls everyday and I know, I *know*, some of these kids are going to prison when they grow up. There are wolves out there just waiting.

I been here twenty three years. I got kids of the kids I used to teach in here. I go to the same grocery stores with `em. I see those kids around town. Where do you live? How many of those boys I used to teach are all tatted up – into jail, outta jail – how many of them are falling apart as adults? How we gonna save `em? It's like I got my arms full of babies and people keep dropping more and more and I'm trying to hold as many as I can, but they're too many, and they're falling out of my arms, and the babies are dying when they hit the ground but I only got two arms and they're dropping so many.