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### Lighting the Stage: The Lighting Design Process and Production of Will Eno's Middletown

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Lighting the Stage: The Lighting Design Process and Production of Will Eno's *Middletown*

By

Levi Bradford

An Undergraduate Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the  
Fine and Performing Arts Scholar Program  
Honors College  
East Tennessee State University

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Date

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Melissa Shafer, Thesis Mentor

Date

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Jonathon Taylor, Reader

Date

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### **Project Background:**

This process first started at the end of the 2018 spring semester when, during an advising meeting with Melissa Shafer, I was approached about the possibility of designing a show during my junior year at ETSU. It was decided then that I would be the lighting designer for the show *Middletown* by Will Eno, directed by Melissa Shafer. Immediately, it became clear that this would be the show I would use as my Thesis topic to meet the requirements set by the Fine and Performing Arts Honors College. Having just finished working on another show for the ETSU department of Theatre and Dance, *The Flick*, I was very eager to work on this show. *Middletown* felt as though it had more space for creative expression than *The Flick* did. *The Flick* only required lights to come on and off with no real room for expression and differentiation because it was set in an everyday, rundown movie theater. *Middletown*, however, would be different for a few reasons.

ETSU's production of *Middletown* did not have a permanent set on the stage. *The Flick* was set in a movie theater and had to have a set that met that requirement and could make the auditorium look like a realistic movie theater. However, *Middletown* is set in a different location in each scene of the show. A single set built only to represent one location would not have worked for the show. Instead, key aspects of each location were built and placed on the stage to suit the needs of the scene. This type of theatrical set is referred to as a unit set, as each scene is comprised of different units that can be rearranged or switched out to establish a new location. For example, in act two of the show, there are a few scenes that take place in a hospital. Instead of building an entire hospital room with walls, mounted cabinets, etc. the set designer used stereotypical pieces of a hospital room like the hospital bed and trashcan to indicate the location for the audience. In addition to the sets used in this show, the costume design for *Middletown* is

also very important and helpful for establishing time/location. During any scene that took place in the hospital, actors were dressed to look like actual sick patients waiting for treatment, nurses assisting those in need, and doctors consulting others to see what needed to be done. All of these costumes used only what was required to establish the character. There were not any unnecessary accessories or pieces. The minimal nature of the set pieces and costumes worn by the actors meant that lighting could now be added into the mix to work together with the other designs to present a unified style that assists and boosts one another in conveying the same ideas to the audience.

Because this show was not tied to the idea of full-scale realism in its set design, the lighting design could also be unrealistic in that it could be used not only to draw focus by isolating scenes on the stage, but also to enhance scenes in ways that a realistic design would not allow. (When I use the term “realistic lighting,” I am referring to lighting that mimics how lighting appears in the world around us. When someone turns on a light upon entering a room, the light will not stop on only one side, it will fill up the room unless there is a barrier blocking it. Also, “realistic lighting” will do its best to conform to the proper colors in the real world. For

instance, sunlight has a warm tint to it while LED light sources typically have a cool tint.) In a surrealistic scene close to the end of the second act of *Middletown*, the Mechanic performs a stylized



Native American dance to music from an offstage

Ben Patterson as “The Mechanic” in *Middletown*,  
Act 2, Scene 12  
-Larry Smith and ETSU Photographic Services

source. When the actor begins dancing, the lights shift from naturalistic lighting to a cue that uses reds and purples from above and behind to outline him, a red sidelight on each side of the stage to cast his shadow along the wall, and a star filled background behind him. All of this is unrealistic because it would not happen in anyone's ordinary day to day life. In this show not only could it happen, but it also helped the audience to move past the idea that this was a mechanic dancing in a hospital room and see him as a sage who was dancing with the world around him. This was a pivotal moment in this character's arc and the lighting was a way to underscore the scenes importance without overshadowing what was happening on stage.

Finally, this show would be different because it presented challenges that I had not encountered before. For this show, the stage was not used in its entirety very often. Most scenes only would require a section of the stage, others needed around half the stage, and only a few scenes used the whole stage. Each of these sections would represent different locations which seldomly overlapped. The challenge was making sure that each area of the stage was equipped with enough lights to cover it sufficiently while also providing options for color, directionality, and modeling depending on what the scene required. For example, if the downstage right corner of the show was used for a scene that was set at night in the beginning of the first act and then used again later for a scene set during the day, that area had to have enough lights set up to make sure it was covered with the proper amount of light along with options to meet the requirements for those different scenes. The night time scene bathed the stage in cooler tones but the day time scene required warmer tones. I had to plan precisely to make sure both of these needs would and could be met. Another major consideration for this show was that all this planning took place over the course of four weeks in which during that same time I was juggling classes along with an off-campus job. If done properly, planning would be very important to this process as it could

save very precious time in the long run and could enrich the design thanks to the copious amount of thought that would go into it.

### **The Star Field:**

This was the first show I had ever had to build a large lighting apparatus for. There are pieces of lighting equipment on the market referred to as star drops that can mimic stars while also being able to change color and brightness, but they are more expensive than what my budget for this show



Bryan Lumb as "The Astronaut" in Middletown,  
Act 1, Scene 7  
-Larry Smith and ETSU Photographic Services

allowed. In order to create the effect that we wanted but not

break the bank, Jonathon Taylor and I worked together to create our own "star drop" that met both budgetary and creative needs. We purchased two large nets of 600 small twinkling Christmas lights (typically used to quickly decorate outdoor Christmas trees). After hanging them upstage of the translucent black scrim, we began the process of taking 'black wrap' (a sheet of powder coated black aluminum foil) and applying it to individual lights in the net. This process was done over the course of a week with regular intervals of evaluation. These evaluations were focused on making sure we were creating a sight that resembled the randomness of the stars in the sky as accurately as possible. We blacked out some sections of the net entirely and left other sections brightly lit. This star drop was used in two separate scenes in this show, one of which was scene 12 in Act 2 (the Mechanic's Dance scene). The other scene was the Outer Space scene pictured above (Scene 7 in Act 1).

Before the design process begins, it is important to know and be familiar with the show at hand. *Middletown's* story takes place over the course of about a year. One of the main characters, Mary, becomes pregnant in Act One and gives birth at the end of Act Two. This is apparent throughout the show as the audience can see Mary's pregnancy develop physically through costume modifications. *Middletown* starts with the protagonist, Mary Swanson, moving into her new home while a mirrored scene of John Dodge (the other lead) making a house of cards is portrayed on the other side. Outside these houses is a police officer making his nightly rounds, observing the neighborhood, and discouraging local homeless persons from staying in the area. He does the latter by nearly choking out another character known as the Mechanic. The Mechanic is the local well-meaning addict who does his court ordered community service at the hospital performing for sick children. Mary eventually meets the town librarian making her first connection. After that she soon becomes fast friends with John Dodge. John Dodge is a handyman who jumps from job to job looking for any sort of belonging in the town. We find out he was once married but is not currently. Throughout the show, Mary Swanson's husband is never seen but always described as gone but returning soon. Even when Mary is going into labor in the second act of the show, her husband is not there and misses it.

At the beginning of the show, *Middletown* feels like it is full of lonely individuals who have no real connections to each other. The townspeople are living in a void that is inviting but not welcoming. As the show progressed, the audience learns that the old saying of everyone in a small town knowing each other is true. John and Mary struggle with a feeling of loneliness throughout this show. Mary is alone without her husband and struggles with being in a new place by herself. John is no longer married and struggles to connect to others. Both share a similar void in their lives and they look to fill it. Eventually, they do so with each other, but their ideas on



how the other fills that void are somewhat different. Mary is looking for a friendship, platonic love, while John seems to be searching for a more romantic relationship. Eventually, they realize their different motivations but that does not stop them from continuing their friendship. As the play progresses, we realize that they are not the only characters to have changes, growth, and connections with others. The dangerous Cop and the kind Librarian are old friends and reminisce on the memories they share of the officer's recently deceased mother. The Mechanic and the Cop have a somewhat deeper connection than what was originally implied. Even though the Cop has recently gone through a personal tragedy, he still tries to motivate the Mechanic into continuing with his community service (though it does feel as if he is going through the motions). He believes that what the mechanic has been doing for community service is really helping the sick children at the hospital. We see by the end of the show that Middletown is a real community of people who will not only continue to persevere in times of trouble, but will also help out their neighbors when they are too battered and broken to put themselves back together.

### **Production:**

Production meetings started for this show in late October 2018 with a discussion of the director's concept and how the designers can collaborate to create that vision. The production team discussed important moments/scenes in the play so the director and designers could approach those key moments in a unified way. Melissa Shafer, the director of *Middletown*, gave us certain phrases to assist us in keeping specific themes and moods in mind while designing; for the mood of the show our phrases were longing, loneliness, love, kindness, and truth. For the theme of the show, in the first production meeting Melissa gave us the sentence "Life is mundane, hopeful, and miraculous all at the same time" to use and inspire our designs. At first glance, all of these words and phrases are fairly contradictory but they accurately paint a picture of Will Eno's *Middletown*. This play presents characters as strangers and slowly reveals their connections with and feelings for one another. At other times the audience is presented with characters struggling with addiction, doubt, and feelings of alienation. It paints a realistic picture of how life can be; everyone will understand what it is like to be in these characters shoes because they have been there too.

When I started designing the show, I wanted to capture the isolation of the characters at the beginning and to expose their connections to each other as the show continued. The look that was used for the preshow of *Middletown* utilized multiple sources pointing at the floor of the stage making pools of lights that, while never touching, are near each other filling the stage. These almost touching pools of light represent Eno's characters who were so close in proximity without having any real connections with each other. The audience could also notice that in this cue that the majority of the stage is covered in a cooler blue tone to signify loneliness and the only spot on the stage with warm tones is the park bench on stage right. That bench was used

throughout the show as a place where characters connected to each other, often learning that they were not as alone as they had originally thought. By lighting it in warmer tones I can convey the idea that isolation will only lead to deeper depression, but spending time with others and making connections can alleviate those feelings of isolation.



*Middletown Pre-Show Lighting*  
-Larry Smith and ETSU Photographic Services

Isolation was an important aspect of this show that I felt the lighting had the ability to capture and express. Physical isolation on stage could be done easily with lighting by having the actors lit or in the dark despite what else might be happening on the stage. Another way to express isolation with lighting though would be using an important tool for any designer: color. There were times this show required colors that fit more into the realistic world such as using a warm toned lighting gel<sup>1</sup> to indicate that a scene takes place during the day or using a cooler toned white light to resemble the fluorescent lights used in most hospitals. As I stated earlier, this

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<sup>1</sup> A piece of lighting equipment used to color the lights beam.

show did not have to be strictly realistic which allowed me to use colors, specifically blue, to help paint the picture the director envisioned. Throughout the entire play, the color blue is used constantly. It was very helpful in scenes like the dance scene mentioned earlier, the scene set in space in Act 1, and in creating transitions between scenes with “blue outs”<sup>2</sup>. The color blue was also very useful in getting across psychologically a general sense of loneliness and depression. When John and Mary were in their houses, the rest of the stage was washed in blue. Because these areas were accented with a warm tone from above their homes stood out while they were surrounded by the cool color. (Shown in the picture)

My job was made even easier because the Bud Frank Theatre, where this play was performed, has a nice array of LED lighting



fixtures that have color mixing abilities. This allowed me to be able to pick any color that can be created with a

Kimberly Ireson and Kenny Tyler Mitchell as “Mary” and “John” in *Middletown*  
-Larry Smith and ETSU Photographic Services

combination of red, blue, and green diodes. Before LED fixtures the only kind of lighting fixtures used were incandescent lighting fixtures. When using these kinds of fixtures, the only way to color their beams was with lighting gels. These gels are not terribly expensive but do not typically last very long because being at the end of a light that has a 500-750 watt lamp in it will

<sup>2</sup> The entire stage is bathed in a dim blue color allowing for actors and technicians walking onstage and offstage to see where they are going and avoiding any potentially dangerous situations and traffic jams in the process of entering/exiting the stage.

create a large amount of heat. When the gel is exposed to this amount of heat for long periods of time it will begin to discolor at its center thus defeating the whole purpose of having the gel in the first place. Also, when an incandescent light is gelled for a show, it is the only color that the light will project until the gel is changed or taken out. This means that when designing lights using only incandescent fixtures, a designer has to plan carefully about which lights have which colors in them because once the show begins, the gels are then permanent and there is no changing them.

LED lighting fixtures do not face this kind of problem for a few reasons. One, they do not generate nearly as much heat as an incandescent lighting fixture so gels would rarely lose color with these fixtures if they ever needed to use gel. Two, some LED fixtures (like the fixtures in the Bud Frank Theatre) have color mixing capabilities built right into them so gel is made obsolete in this situation. Also, because of their innate color-mixing abilities, changing between colors in these fixtures is extremely easy, allowing the designer to use more colors in a show than what was previously possible with incandescent fixtures alone. The Bud Frank Theater has over 20 LED fixtures and I was able to bring a level of both creativity and versatility I would not have been able to using only incandescent fixtures.

When designing lighting, a designer has to focus on hitting a few key points. The first and most obvious of these is to make sure that whatever and whoever is on stage can be seen by the audience. After that, a designer needs to focus on mood (showcasing the emotion in a scene), modeling (making sure the actors onstage are bathed in light from multiple directions that makes them look three-dimensional as opposed to being hit with a single source and looking flat against the background of the stage), establishing key factors (i.e. time of day, location, etc.) and directing focus (making sure the audience knows exactly where to look at any given time). Some

of these aspects are easier to establish than others. Time of day can be established by simply having either an orange background for day time or a blue background for nighttime. Mood can be established with lighting by using colors in a scene that relate to the emotions that actors are portraying. There is no absolute feeling defined by each color but each color has a wide range emotions and feelings that can be tied to it. According to the book *Designing with Light: An Introduction to Stage Lighting* red can be tied to emotions like happiness, love, intensity, power, aggressiveness and hostility. (Gillette, 146). Blue relates to coolness, security, sadness, dignity, and comfortability. (Gillette, 146). In *Middletown*, Blue was the master color used to signify a sad, lonely feeling for the audience to exaggerate what Eno's characters were feeling. The secondary color was a light amber orange which has emotions like happiness and merriment (Gillette, 145) tied to it. These two colors together are on opposite sides of the color wheel and complement each other but their emotional meanings are also opposites adding another layer of support to the action on stage.

One of the trickier lighting objectives is modeling with light in a space like the Bud Frank because of its architecture. The Bud Frank Theater has a pipe grid over the stage that allows for top light and a small front of house catwalk for limited front light, but it has few options for side lighting on stage. Out in the audience there are lighting booms attached to the walls on both sides that allow for some front diagonal light but they could not deliver what I needed. In order to light the astronaut center stage during the scene set in space I decided that instead of having "sunlight" come from straight ahead, I would have it hitting him from a low side angle. This made the lighting look more interesting and reinforced the idea that "Greg" the astronaut had a different perspective from this location both literally but also metaphorically for how he views the world below him.

“...I just have to say, it doesn't look lonely from up here. Everything looks right-next-door. It's where you're sitting, right now. How 'bout that. You're breathing the Earth's atmosphere. You got mountains and clouds, oceans. People out doing things together. Soccer games and birthday parties, listening to beautiful music. Inexpressible, you know. How'd we get so lucky?” (Eno, 33).

**Journal Reflection:**

*October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018:* Today was the first production meeting for *Middletown!* This first meeting was dedicated to talking about Melissa's vision for this show and understanding where she wanted to take this show. We talked about where/when it was set, the general mood and theme of the show, practical problems that can/will arise, and about deadlines for this show. Melissa said this show is like "Color in the void" and "Warm pockets in Isolation." These really stuck out to me and I believe they will be effective in keeping me in line with her direction.

*November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2018:* Our initial research is due by the end of the month so I figured I'd start working on it now. I can't stop thinking about this space scene! I bet we could use Christmas lights and drape them somehow to create the star effect in the background, or maybe a gobo of sorts? I'm not sure yet but I know will be discussing it more at the next production meeting so I'll wait and see what Jonathon and Zach recommend. While I wait on the stars, I think I'm going to start deciding on a color scheme for the scene. All of pictures you find when you search space can be so differing from each other but there were three I saw that I liked. The first one is a black, purple, and blue color scheme. This scheme is used a lot with galaxy prints and related images, plus I really like using blue with this show so this is what I'm leaning most to. And the cool tones could be used to showcase the loneliness that the astronaut is feeling. The next color scheme is a warm toned Pink/Red/Black one. This one could be used to show a more loving, appreciative idea that goes with how the Astronaut views the world, making him seem less lonely out in space. The last one is simply black with the stars. I'm not sure if I'm super sold on this one but the ideas, I've had with this is maybe it could work as a mixture of both ideas? The astronaut is alone but he's surrounded by the stars all around him. So, is he actually alone? Also, I found some pictures that help me showcase each of these color schemes.



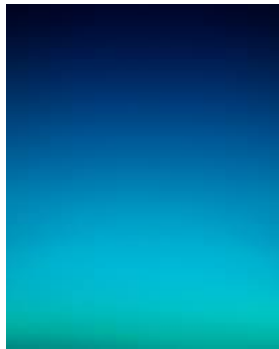
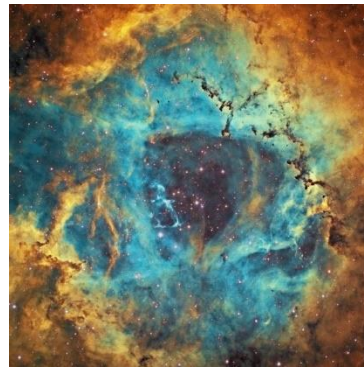
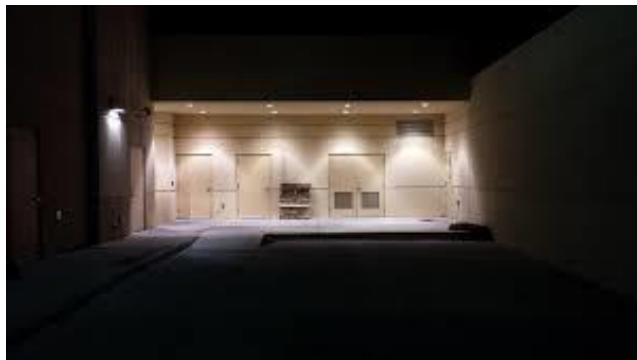


Initial Research  
Image for Color  
Schemes: Purple and  
Blue, Red and Pink,  
and Black with Stars  
only



*November 27<sup>th</sup> 2018:* Today was our second Production Meeting where we needed to have our initial research done and ready to present. The notes I have in my journal from the production meeting were mainly about solidifying a color scheme and being sure to make the lighting as a whole be more welcoming and hopeful. Also, Melissa gave us a few more phrases and ideas to stew on to fuel our research like the people in this town are small, insignificant, but also rare and precious, miraculous even. After presenting my research images (above and below), my next job is to continue research and also upload what I have to D2L. The first image is of a loading dock at a hospital. I used this image because in Act 2 Scene 5 the entire scene takes place behind a hospital in an area similar to this one. The lighting in a loading dock like this is very top heavy in origin so I wanted to make sure I took notice of that to try and recreate later. The next picture was yet another potential color scheme for the space scene that I ended up scraping pretty early on. After that picture, the following is an ombre of blue to black that had the right tone I

was imaging for this show. The next two pictures were for all of the street lamp scenes that would occur in this show, again I'm using those to take inspiration from to make those scenes somewhat realistic. And the final pictures are isolation tactics employed in lighting. The first being a hard sidelight with the one after that being a harsh top light.



More initial research images.

*December 13<sup>th</sup> 2018:* This was the day of our third production meeting. Today was the day our initial designs were to be presented. Throughout the meeting, a few ideas continued to pop up again and again from the director and the other designers. This show was definitely heavy

into existentialism. It also played somewhat into the theatre of the Absurd which when tying the two ideas together, it almost seems to say existence is absurd. It was noted that anxiety will play a large part in this show along with the idea of grappling with what it means to be or to exist. We talked about the star drop and tossed around the idea of putting in a “constellation” that resembled a city skyline with some of the lights. It’s not a guarantee but if it looks like it is possible, we might consider attempting it. I did not have much to add to this meeting.

*January 15<sup>th</sup> 2019:* We had our first production meeting of the new semester and with it came the realization we have just over a month to get everything started and finished for this show. It will perform from February 21<sup>st</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> so it was go time. In this meeting we discussed budget, the star drop, the lighting design class this semester and how we could utilize them, uploading all our documents to D2L to make sure everything was up to date, and how we would do scene transitions for the show. My main contribution to the meeting was going over my initial design ideas with my lighting analysis. A lighting analysis is a document where as I read the script and I mark where there are definite lighting changes, either for scene changes or other purposes like to create tension and refocus the audience on a specific spot. Also, I document in this analysis any specific needs such as a practical lamp on stage that needs to turn on and off on its own or if the set has lights on its walls. For the most part, if it involved lighting, it would be mentioned in the analysis. Also, this meeting we found out when the designer run through was happening. This is a run through of the show specifically for all of the designers so that they can see blocking and use of the stage and props. It’s very important for lighting designers because this is where we see what areas of the stage are used in each scene and imagine how it needs to be lit.

*January 22<sup>nd</sup> 2019:* At this meeting I did not have anything to present. My job will get busier as we got closer to the show but for the early part of the process, I am mainly listening and planning on what I can do. But I do have assignments to work on from this meeting. The Star drop would be hung behind a scrim in the Bud Frank. This would require a few lights that were hung behind the proscenium to be moved out of the way. This fell under my jurisdiction. Also, I took a few notes about isolating areas of the stage (specifically the downstage), needing to add in some texture washes (lighting an area with a pattern breaking up the monotony of the light), and also getting the note that I would not have to worry about lighting the actor playing “Ground Control” in the space scene because he actually would not be on the stage. Adding to this list, I needed to finish my light plot which would show where I planned to hang lights on the stage.

*January 31<sup>st</sup> 2019:* This meeting was with Melissa where we discussed my next steps in the process as it was almost time for lighting to get started and take over the Bud Frank. My list of jobs I needed to get done was to make a work schedule of the days I would be in the theater so the lighting design class could come and assist me outside of regular class time to get some extra credit. Also, I needed to get a few lighting specials ready such as one that was down stage center for the actor playing the Public Speaker in the prologue, to finish my remaining lighting design related paperwork, create a task list for myself and the lighting design class to work on, and finally to listen to the music that Matt Stevens who is designing the sound for *Middletown* picked for the Native American dance in Act 2.

*February 4<sup>th</sup> 2019:* Tonight was the night of the first run through of the show. Here is a list of the notes/tasks that need to get finished for this show.

- Refocus the front lights in the coves
- Refocus the side lighting in the audience
- Regel the front and side lights

- Add in more side lighting on the edges of the stage
- Get the star drop patched into the light board
- Get rid of all the pre-existing two fers of lights
- Find warm gel for the side light representing the sun
- Add a special for the public speaker
- Add a special for John's death scene
- Add a special for Mary's birth scene
- Add a special for John and Mary on the bench
- Clean out old gobos and gels from lights

That's not too bad, plus with the help of the lighting design class this is a totally do-able list.

*February 5<sup>th</sup> 2019:* Production Meeting today! This meeting we discussed what lighting would be needed for the photo shoot on Friday for the promotional pictures. We decided to get three scenes ready; the space scene, John and Mary on the bench, and the Mechanic with the doctor on the loading dock. Other than the space scene, these were fairly simple to create quick lighting cues for, but this meant I had four days to get the star field up and looking halfway decent for pictures. I also got a work schedule for this week figured out and sent to Melissa and Zach so they could lend any extra hands to the cause if they were available.

*February 6<sup>th</sup> 2019:* Mostly this day was for cleaning out the lights of old gels and gobos that were not going to be used for this production. It was a short day as I only had time to be in the theater from 3 to 5 in the afternoon.

*February 7<sup>th</sup> 2019:* Today was the first day we (Jonathon Taylor and myself) begun working with the net lighting. In order to turn this over a thousand light mass into a star field Jonathon recommended using black wrap foil to individually wrap each light. This first picture (left) shows what the two net lights looked like when first hung but before the light blocking process had begun. There were roughly 1200 lights between the two net lights we had hung. The second picture is a progress shot of roughly an hour later. It was easiest to start with the bottom of the nets, but this would only be convenient for so long before we began to strain in reaching

the lights above our heads. At this point we decided to begin using the A-frame ladder and Genie lift to make our lives a little easier. By one o'clock we had over half of the net light partially covered, we also brought in a little extra help (Thanks Andrea and Melissa!). This progress shot is shown in the next picture. We reached our stopping point of the day just after 3:30 p.m. Over the course of the day, Jonathon had the idea that in order to add more irregularity and help the net lights to look less like a grid, we use tie line to tie some parts of the net to itself allowing the distances between the lights to be altered. This is shown in the next progress picture.

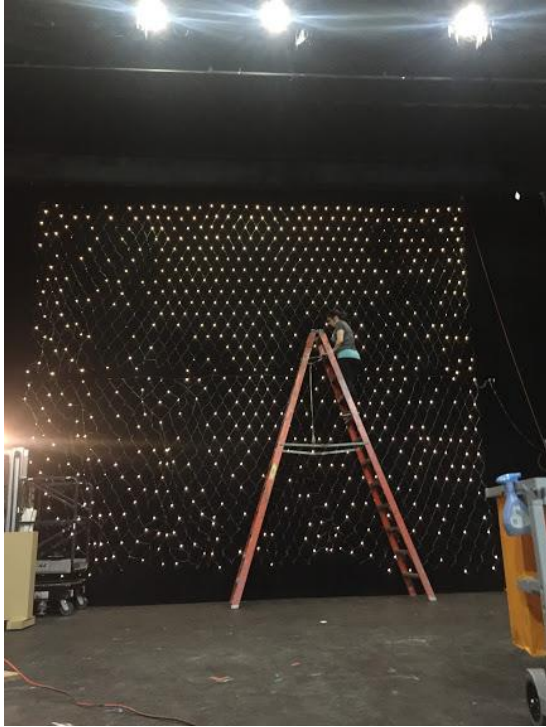


Progress Shot 1

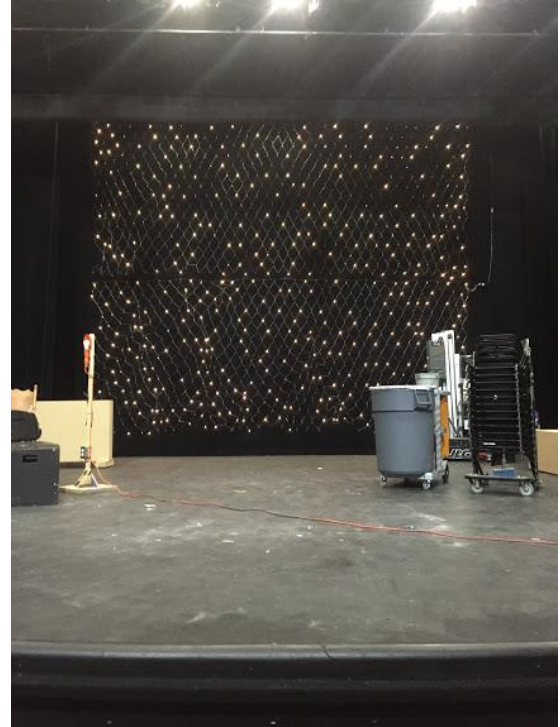


Progress Shot 2





Progress Shot 3



Progress Shot 4

*February 8<sup>th</sup> 2019:* This was the last day I had to get everything ready for the promotional shots that were happening that night. The star drop was up and working and didn't look too shabby, but there were still a few other small details I needed to hammer out before I could call it a day. There were still lights that needed to be gelled and focused. I also needed to set up a special side light for the astronaut during the space scene. Finally, I needed to program and save these lighting cues so they could easily pull them up for the pictures. Luckily, I had a little more time today and was there from 1:30 to a little after 5 that evening.

*February 12<sup>th</sup> 2019:* Guess what, it's another production meeting! This meeting I was given specific notes as to what was missing or needed to be added to the show. These notes were mainly about adding in gobos to make the outside scenes appear to have trees casting shadows, make sure there was a deaf interpreter special ready, add in a special for the Mechanic on the

downstage left side of stage, add in more top light to the Native American dance scene, add in two tight top lights to light John and Mary when they are in their “houses,” and update the task list I had for the lighting design class as they would be helping out that week. The majority of this week would be dedicated to getting everything finished that was not already so when we go into tech this following Saturday, we run into as few hiccups as possible.

*February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019:* It’s the Thursday before tech week and the day the lighting design class will be helping out! In order to make the best use of their time and assistance, I split the class into multiple groups to work on separate projects. Over the course of their class, they were able to complete creating top light specials for John and Mary’s homes, putting new plug ins on the ends of three lights to convert them from Edison plug ends to Twist Lock to be more compatible with our set up in the Bud Frank, continue fine tuning the star background by covering up a few more individual lights with black out foil, adjust the front light coming from the cove, and picking out gel for the lights in the cove. Overall it was a pretty productive day!

*February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019:* It’s the first day of tech week. Today we’ll be in the Bud Frank from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. The majority of the morning was dedicated to allowing me to create the specific lighting cues for each scene and teaching my lighting board operator, Ryan Leonard, how to use the board for the show. The afternoon, we touched up the cues as we went from scene to scene working the transitions for both the stage crew and the board operators in order to make sure the transitions looked as smooth as possible.

*February 17<sup>th</sup> through 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019:* It’s tech week! Over the course of these four days, I worked on fixing all the small problems and fine-tuned the show as much as possible. While I was working, I made note of what I accomplished but did not separate it into days like I had been previously for the journal. Over these four days, my list of tasks to complete were as follows:



- Refocus all side lighting to be off of curtains on stage
- Shutter the light on channel 5
- Black wrap the downstage side of channel 60 (the “sun”) to stop the light from spilling out the side
- Add in foliage gobos for the outdoor scenes
- Refocus channel 26 to be on the cabinets in Act 1, Scene 8
- Add channel 19 to cue 29
- Refocus channel 65
- Re-shutter channel 9
- Refocus channel 95 onto the hospital loading dock in Act 2, Scene 5
- Lower the intensity of channels 111 and 108 in cue 36
- Refocus channel 96 onto Mary’s Hospital Bed in Act 2
- Add back lighting to the dance scene in Act 2
- Quicken the fade in and out of cue 12
- Refocus the “sun” to get the light off of the floor and more onto the astronaut
- Make cue 26’s fade down time 1 second
- Make cue 27’s fade down time 1 second
- Add in a split fade for cues 19 through 21
- Add in the foliage lights to Cues 27 and 37
- Add a gel to channel 65 to tone down its bright beam
- Make cue 33 have a 1 second down fade
- Cue 44 needs a 1 second fade down
- Find out what’s causing channel 89 to flicker
- Add in a cue 26.1 that takes out Mary and John’s house specials
- Make cue 15 have a minute long fade down when switching from the monument to the bench scene
- Act 1, Scene 7 needs a faster fade down
- For the transition to the “audience” in the last scene of Act 1, have the LED’s above at 5 percent to give the crew enough light to see to set the scene
- Add in bump cues for Act 2 on lines “hey I’m standing” and “Me”
- Have a 12 second fade to black at the end of the show
- Add in the public speaker cue after the black out for Shelby to dismiss the audience
- Add in a cross fade to the post show cue
- Refocus channel 22 off the concrete floor
- Add more front light on Gabe during the police scenes
- Add channel 6 to cue 47
- Slow the fade up from the prologue
- Adjust the house light levels for Mary and John’s specials, Mary’s is a little too bright
- Add in side lighting for the Mechanic in the Library Scene
- Look at channel 35, its starting to flicker
- Clean up any loose cables in the grid above the stage
- Make the bump cue on the line “Me” a zero count fade down
- Add in deaf interpreter specials for the performances

Also, in addition to this list was updating any and all paperwork for the stage manager and board operator so that when they conducted channel checks before each performance, they had the most updated information. Luckily, there was not anything too crazy that needed to be completely redone during this week so it was overall a fairly stress-free tech process.

### Conclusion:

Throughout this process, even though I was working by myself most of the time, I never felt panicked or abandoned. I knew that if anything went wrong, I had a great mentor and awesome design faculty to back me up and help get me back on track. Thanks to this show, I learned what it meant not only to plan in advance as much as possible, but also to be able to delegate tasks to other people instead of relying upon myself to get everything done. I had never been in a supervisory or leadership position before but thanks to Melissa Shafer and her lighting design class, I was able to get experience in that area. In a professional setting, that kind of work of directing others on what to do and where to focus or adjust lights is the industry standard. Before working on *Middletown*, I never had the opportunity to work with a team of electricians, let alone lead them in completing an entire list of tasks for a show.

Overall, it was a wonderful opportunity, and I would gladly do it again. I was able to overcome challenges that I had expected and some that I hadn't. From the beginning of the process, I knew that we would have to create a backdrop with stars and learned that there were more ways of doing so than simply buying a star drop. I knew isolation was going to be a large part of the design for this show. What I did not expect was how much I was going to enjoy working with a team that made the entire process feel more like a passion project as opposed to a job. It has shown me what a professional production process is like which has in turn helped me out with other jobs after *Middletown* ended. I look forward to the next project and what it may hold but I will not forget the lessons I learned and memories I made during this journey.

## Appendix of Lighting Paperwork

### Lighting Analysis Examples:

#### *Middletown* by Will Eno Lighting Analysis

Cue #	Page #	Act/Scene	Description of Lighting	Mood
1	0 0		Preshow Lighting	Curious
2	0 0		Blackout	None
3	7	Prologue	A single spot on the stage lit for the public speaker, mixture of front and top or possibly just front diagonal	Official
4	8	Transition	Blue out for transitions and silhouette	None
5	9	Act 1/ Scene 1	Dimly lit upstage, with pools of lights representing street lamps for the Cop to pass through with a specific pool for the mechanic	Inviting
6	11	Transition	Blue out for transitions and silhouette	None
7	12	Act 1/ Scene 2	Warm toned lighting, with a decent amount of top light similar to how most libraries have	Clean, Neat
8	18	Transition	Blue out for transitions and silhouette	None
9	19	Act 1/ Scene 3	Similar to Act 1's lighting but with a bit more lit and emphasis on the people in the houses, not much more but enough to make sure the audience can see and acknowledge their presence	Observing
10	20	Transition	Blue out for transitions and silhouette	None
11	21	Act 1/ Scene 4 + 5	Bright Light, Sunlight like if possible	Blissful
12	29	Transition	Blue out for transitions and silhouette	None

13	30 Act 1/ Scene 6	Perhaps a variation of the previous scene's lighting, a dimmer version with more oranges to suggest evening, having a few small pools of light to suggest the street lamps turning on	Peaceful
14	31 Transition	This transition if possible will start with the blue out and slowly fade to a black out for the next scene	None
15	32 Act 1/ Scene 7	The back ground is the first to be lit, it has christmas lights or something similar to represent stars	Curiosity inducing
16	32 Act 1/ Scene 7	Next have a bright warm light beginning lighting up the "capsule" from the back, backlighting the silhouette	Warm
17	32 Act 1/ Scene 7	Have some front light come up so the audience can see the actor, cause apparently that's what they're here for	Warm
18	34 Transition	A slow fade to black from the previous scene	None
19	34 Transition	Back to the Blue out	None
20	35 Act 1/ Scene 8	General Illumination similar to that of a stereotypical kitchen	Ordinary
21	39 Transition	Go to a very low level blue out so that the intermission audience can sneak on	None
22	41 Act 1/ Scene 10 End of Act 1	Top light for the audience lighting, add in some front light so they're not shadowed out	Confusing
23	46 Transition	Stage goes black	None

## Channel Hook Up Sheet Example:

MIDDLETOWN

Channel Sheet

Channel	Address	Dimmer	Circuit	Location	Inst. #	Inst. type	Lamp	Focus	Color
1		1	23/E1	Cove Two		26 deg Source 4	HPL 575w	DL	n/c
2		2	22/E2	Cove Two		26 deg Source 4	HPL 575w	DL	n/c
3		3	37/E3	Cove Two		26 deg Source 4	HPL 575w	DL	n/c
4		4	26/E4	Cove Two		26 deg Source 4	HPL 575w	DC	n/c
5		5	33/E5	Cove Two		26 deg Source 4	HPL 575w	DC	n/c
6		6	27/E6	Cove Two		26 deg Source 4	HPL 575w	DC	n/c
7		7	35/F1	Cove Two		26 deg Source 4	HPL 575w	DC	n/c
8		8	34/F2	Cove Two		26 deg Source 4	HPL 575w	DR	n/c
9		9	41/F3	Cove Two		26 deg Source 4	HPL 575w	DR	n/c
10		10	40/F4	Cove Two		26 deg Source 4	HPL 575w	DR	n/c
11		11	25/G1	Cove Two	two-fer	26 deg Source 4	HPL 575w	wash	cool
12		12	24/G2	Cove Two	two-fer	26 deg Source 4	HPL 575w	wash	cool
13		13	38/F6	Cove Two	two-fer	26 deg Source 4	HPL 575w	wash	warm
14		14	39/F5	Cove Two	two-fer	26 deg Source 4	HPL 575w	wash	warm
15		15	H4	HL Boom		36 deg Source 4	HPL 750w	deaf	n/c
16		16							
17		17	H1	HL Boom		19 deg Source 4	HPL 750w	wash	Warm
18		18	K4	FOH Pipe		36 deg Source 4	HPL 750w		n/c
19		19	H3	HL Boom		19 deg Source 4	HPL 750w	wash	Warm
20		20	M2	Overhead Pipes		PARnel	HPL 750w	DR	3500
21		21	M4	Overhead Pipes		PARnel	HPL 750w	DRC	3500
22		22	L1	Overhead Pipes		PARnel	HPL 750w	DC	3500
23		23	P2	Overhead Pipes		PARnel	HPL 750w	DLC	3500
24		24	O2	Overhead Pipes		PARnel	HPL 750w	DLC	3500
25		25	L6	Overhead Pipes		36 deg Source 4	HPL 750w	USL	
26		26	L5	Overhead Pipes		36 deg Source 4	HPL 750w	USR	3500
27		27	N1	Overhead Pipes		PARnel	HPL 750w	SLC	3500
28		28	P4	Overhead Pipes		PARnel	HPL 750w	SL	3500
29		29	O6 + G4	Overhead Pipes		PARnel	HPL 750w	wash	n/c
30		30	M1	Overhead Pipes		PARnel	HPL 750w	DR	73
31		31	M3	Overhead Pipes		PARnel	HPL 750w	DRC	73

## Lighting Cue List Example:

### Middletown Cue List

- Cue 1: Preshow
- Cue 2: Cross fade to podium
- Cue 3: Transition to Houses
- Cue 4: Opening
- Cue 5: John House out
- Cue 6: Mary House Out and Small Scene with Mechanic
- Cue 7: Cop to Audience
- Cue 8: Back to cue 6
- Cue 9: Transition to Library
- Cue 10: Library
- Cue 11: Transition
- Cue 12: Cop Talking Radio
- Cue 13: Transition
- Cue 14: Monument scene
- Cue 15: Bench Focus
- Cue 16: Transition
- Cue 17: Librarian Downstage Center
- Cue 18: Transition to space
- Cue 19: Space
- Cue 20: Transition
- Cue 21: Kitchen
- Cue 22: Dark Scene
- Cue 23: Audience Lighting
- Cue 24: Full Black out
- Cue 25: Intermission
- Cue 26: House Standing
- Cue 26.1: Transition

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- Eno, Will. *Middletown*. Samuel French, 2014.
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