

BlackBox

by

m k e n n e d y v o l c o f s k y

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BlackBox was performed for three nights in mid-November 1997 at The Williamsburg Art & Historical Society, in its raw basement space.  
Produced by WAH & Donald Breckenridge.

Man In The Suit – David Olson.  
Stool Woman – Claudia Hitzenberger.  
Book Woman – Elizabeth Juviler.  
Thrown Woman – Jessica Willis.  
Thrown Man – Matthew Seidman.  
Seated Man – William Dalton.

Composed, Designed & Directed by MKS Volcofsky.

BLACKBOX – PRODUCTION TEXT.

Dirt floor.

Two stacks of slate-slabs Down-Center, dirt piled at their bases.

Recording device on a slate-stack behind them, between them.

Dim light.

A plant with three candles burning in it at the edge of the beginning of the House, on the floor.

Man In The Suit enters, Left.

Penlight in mouth, measuring tape in hand. He measures off segments of the space & its objects.

Finally tallies it up, writes a figure on the air with light. Exits, Left.

He returns with a lantern, lit. He ties it to a line hanging Center. Scrapes a line in the dirt with a heel. Exits.

He returns with a set of two steps, puts them down at the line in the dirt Up Left. Takes his place at Up Right Corner. Stands.

From Up Right a woman carrying a tall stool with one hand by its foot over her head slowly enters, passing across the Man.

Behind her a woman carrying a book by a corner over her head enters, walking sideways, facing House.

The Stool Woman climbs the steps, places the stool down, then mounts the stool dangerously, standing atop it.

The Book Woman opens one of the steps, throws the book in, then mounts them, standing atop them.

They stand.

The Man In The Suit pulls a shofar from his suitjacket and gives a long blow on the ram's horn.

The Stool & Book Women begin a grotesque Go-Go, starting sexy then becoming more and more violent and aggressive, pulling the skin off themselves, frenzied, desperate.

While the Go-Go continues, the Man In The Suit goes off Up Right and re-enters, Down Right, pushing a woman in a kind of smock-dress with a light under it at her crotch. He throws her to the ground.

The Man In The Suit exits Right, returns, pushing a man, naked, and then throwing him to the ground.

The Man In The Suit exits, retakes his position in the Up Right Corner.

The two Thrown people get up, first the woman, then the man.

He is sobbing, drooling. She laughs at him.

She finally pulls off her smock and steps over an imaginary crevice and puts her dress on him.

The light under her dress is revealed as a small light inserted into a strap-on dildo she wears.

She returns to her spot, stepping over divide. He still sobs, hunched.  
She, annoyed, steps again over imaginary divide, straps the dildo on him, steps back to her place.

He begins to calm. Becomes upright.  
He turns dildo around, so it points out, behind him.

The shofar is blown again.  
The Go-Go stops.  
All stand still.

The two Thrown bring a hand to an ear, as if they were hearing something.  
They turn away from one another, lean over, back up towards one another, and the dildo enters the woman, from behind both of them, ass to ass.  
They have a kind of swimming, pain-faced sex, climaxing with the strap-on snapping off between the woman's legs.  
They stand upright, back to back, and make a rhythmic hacking sound, ten times, one arm pointing accusatorially off-stage.  
They turn to face House.  
The woman extends an upturned palm.  
The man tears a piece of his dress off, gives it to the woman tenderly.  
He then rips the dildo from between her legs, puts it, light-tip pointing out, into his mouth.  
They sit on the slabs.  
Using the dildo-light as illumination, the man readies himself, poised with a marker in his hand above her breasts.

The Book Woman reaches in the steps, pulls out two books, gives one to the Stool Woman, keeps her own.  
The Stool Woman sits on the stool. Book Woman remains standing.

The Man In The Suit comes, pulls the lantern to one side, pauses, then lets it swing. This is the signal to begin:

The man with the lit strap-on sticking out of his mouth pushes a button on the recording device. An engine sound begins, punctuated by human voices.  
The Thrown Woman begins reciting the transcript of a black box recording of a passenger airline crash.  
The Thrown Man begins to draw on her chest, eventually making the image of a kind of instrument panel dial.  
He stops periodically to point the strap-on light in her ear, making it blink with a finger, placed and removed, rhythmically.

During this the two Go-Go Women are working through Lady Macbeth's monologue, 'unsex me here.' The Book Woman trying to get the Stool Woman to 'get' the lines, with little success. Repeating phrases mis-pronounced. They make it through one time, the Book Woman reaches into her book and pulls out a coin, drops it into her student's

book. The books are closed. In unison now, they move through the speech again. “Acting” a little better. Another coin dropped into the Stool Woman’s book.

At the place in the crash transcript which says “72 second interruption on recording” the entire company just stops, leaves the stage. Recording device turned off. Enters House. Each stands behind an audience member, watches the emptied stage – but which now has a man, barefoot, sitting in a chair Up Left, watching the House.

When he entered the stage is not clear.

The company leans and whispers “Thank You” to the audience member in front of them, and about 72 seconds after leaving, return to their positions.

Recording device is turned on.

Resume the recitations, and the payment.

Upon finishing the transcript, the two Thrown hook their arms through one another’s armpits, face to face, and with arms extended, slowly spin Off Right.

The Stool Woman exits the same way she entered, carrying the stool by a leg over her head.

The Book Woman follows, exiting the same way she entered, walking sideways, facing the House.

She stops at the Man In The Suit.

He tilts his head back, opens his mouth.

She pours all the coins in her book – a large amount – into his mouth, and exits.

The Man In The Suit closes his mouth. Steps forward. Reaches into his inside pocket, pulls out a piece of paper, unfolds it, makes ready to recite, proclaim what is on it.

All that comes out of his mouth is a sluggish stream of coins.

He crumples up the paper, obviously disappointed, and moving to the lantern, cups it in his hands and as if intending to kiss it, blows it out.

He exits Left.

The man in the chair has disappeared.

End.

#### TEXTS:

Macbeth. I, v. 1.35-53

#### LADY MACBETH

The raven himself is hoarse

That croaks the final entrance of Duncan

Under my battlements. Come, you spirits,

That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here;

And fill me, from the crown to the toe, top-full

Of direst cruelty! make thick my blood,

Stop up th’ access and passage to remorse,

That no compunctious visitings of nature  
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between  
Th'effect and it! Come to my woman's breast,  
And take my milk for gall, you murd'ring minis-  
ters,  
Wherever in your sightless substances  
You wait on nature's mischief! Come, thick night,  
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,  
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,  
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,  
To cry 'Hold, hold!'

TRANSCRIPT RELEASED BY THE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD OF VALUJET  
FLIGHT 592 COCKPIT RECORDINGS. "CRITTER" REFERS TO VALUJET'S SMILING AIRPLANE  
LOGO.

Takeoff.

Sound of click.

Sound of chirp heard on cockpit area microphone channel with simultaneous beep on  
public address channel.

Pilot: What was that?

Co-Pilot: I don't know.

Pilot: We got some electrical problems.

Co-Pilot: Yeah. That battery charger's kickin' in. Ooh, we gotta.

Pilot: We're losing everything.

Tower: Critter five-nine-two, contact Miami center on one-thirty-two-forty-five, so long.  
We need, we need to go back to Miami.

Sounds of shouting from passenger cabin.

Female voices in cabin: Fire, fire, fire, fire.

Male voice: We're on fire. We're on fire.

Sounds of landing gear warning horn for three seconds.

Tower: Critter five-ninety-two contact Miami center, one-thirty-two-forty-five.

Pilot: Unintelligible to Miami.

Tower: Uh, five-ninety-two needs immediate return to Miami. Critter five-ninety-two,  
uh, roger, turn left heading two-seven-zero. Descend and maintain seven-thousand.

Sounds of shouting from passenger cabin subside.

Tower: Two-seven-zero, seven-thousand, five-ninety-two. What kind of problem are  
you havin'?

Sound of horn.

Pilot: Fire.

Cockpit: Uh, smoke in the cockp ... smoke in the cabin.

Tower: Roger.

Pilot: What altitude?

Co-Pilot: Seven-thousand.

Sound similar to cockpit door moving.

Sound of six chimes similar to cabin service interphone.

Flight Attendant: OK. We need oxygen. We can't get oxygen back there.

Sound similar to microphone being keyed only on interphone channel.

Flight attendant: Unintelligible is there a unintelligible way we could test them? Sound of clearing her throat.

Tower: Critter five-ninety-two, when able to turn left heading two-five-zero. Descend and maintain five-thousand.

Sound of chimes similar to cabin service interphone.

Sounds of shouting from passenger cabin.

Cockpit: Two-five-zero seven-thousand.

Flight attendant: Completely on fire.

Sounds of shouting from passenger cabin subside.

Co-pilot: Outta nine.

Sound of intermittent horn.

Sound similar to loud rushing air.

Cockpit: Critter five-ninety-two, we need the, uh, closest airport available ...

Tower: Critter five-ninety-two, they're going to be standing by for you. You can plan ...

72 Second interruption in recording.

Sounds of tone similar to power interruption to recorder, loud rushing air, repeating tones similar to recorder self-test signal starts.

Tower: Unintelligible contact Miami approach on, correction, you, you keep on my frequency.

Interruption on recording.

Sounds of repeating tones similar to recorder self-test signal starts and continues, rushing air.

End of recording.