Or, Betty Shabazz V. The Nation
By Marcus Gardley
Directed by Ian Belknap

Curriculum Resource Guide
By Devin Brain & Lisa Gutting
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More resources available online: http://actingcompany.dyndns.org
Login as a guest, password: CaesarX

Parental Considerations:
Play dramatizing Malcolm X's final days and assassination, with influence from William Shakespeare's Julius Caesar. Contains strong language and adult themes. Stylized violence, simulated explosions and prop guns. Created for mature audiences.
Playwright’s Note
By Marcus Gardley

The 1960’s were probably the most frightening time to be alive in the modern era. World and national figures were being assassinated within years of one another. To stand out, to lead, to voice one’s opinion was dangerous, required true courage and leaders were not easily swayed by popular opinion. My parents describe it as believing the world was coming to an end. Since I have always been a history buff and because my parents were activists, I am naturally obsessed with this moment in our history. The period has a particular significance because of the current state of affairs. This election year, for the first time in a long time, many are genuinely afraid of where the country is headed. I cannot think of a better time to look at the 1960’s to see what has changed, what has made resurgence and what remains the same.

Moreover, as a writer, there are stories that one writes because you know they will excite people and there are stories that one writes because they excite you; and finally there are those stories that one is simply born to write. The latter are stories that get into a writer’s skin and burrow themselves inside their heart. Malcolm X’s story, his life, his speeches, his eyes, the cadence of his voice and his brutal assassination haunts me. His life, for me, feels only half-told. Yes, there is Spike Lee’s incredible film and of course the autobiography, (which is the first book I read with my father,) but few have written or dramatized how, why and who really killed him. What if we can better understand his life if we looked at how he died? And why has his death been shrouded in so much mystery?

I’ve always been compelled by the story of Malcolm X. When I was young, my brother and I snuck into the local movie theater to watch Spike Lee’s movie, called X. I’ll never forget it, it was the first time I saw my older brother weep during a film. In fact, he was so moved; we watched it twice. It turns out that it was the death of Malcolm that upset him the most. He couldn’t rationalize why his own people, (brothers from the Nation of Islam) would kill him. He was surprised by that discovery and it opened his mind to what it means to truly trust someone. It also made him hate and love the film. I was inspired by his critique and have been obsessed with Malcolm X ever since.

I knew that there was something about this story, about this man, that I would revisit later in my life. After graduate school at Yale, I moved to Harlem and I’ll never forget walking on Lennox Avenue and 125th St, where Malcolm X often gave his speeches. I suddenly felt a sense of completion. The film, my brother and the journey to move to Harlem was flooding over me but more profoundly the ache to write about Malcolm began to stir inside me. This is why I am writing this drama.

Marcus Gardley is a Bay Area-born award-winning playwright, he holds an MFA in Playwriting from the Yale School of Drama.
I also want to enlighten audiences on who Malcolm X was. There are many aspects about his life that are not public knowledge. For example, in the latter part of his life, he altered his message to embrace peace, love, and brotherhood among all people. His pilgrimage to Mecca and visits to the Middle East and various countries in Africa showed him that the believers of Islam were of different races and nationalities peacefully worshiping together. Upon his return to America, he started speaking about this unity. Most people also don’t know that he was secretly meeting with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to form the Coalition of Afro American Unity. I want to share the truth about their bond and shed more light on his character.

In regards to Shakespeare’s Julius Caesar, there are aspects about Malcolm’s life that are parallel to Caesar’s. I think the epic nature and the political content of Caesar are excellent in terms of analyzing the plot of how Malcolm was murdered. Both dramas (Shakespeare’s and mine) are as much about the assassination of character as they are about the murder of a body. Both stories have premonitions; tense political climates and they are both based upon the lives of real leaders. My play will be a retelling, a loose adaptation of Shakespeare’s Caesar using the life of Malcolm X. If you don’t know Caesar, it won’t affect your understanding of my play but if you do, there will be numerous parallels and allusions to the Shakespeare.

This project is the most exciting drama that I have worked on in ages. Whereas one time I was haunted by how to write about Malcolm, now I wake up daily, elated to write about his final days and to resurrect the man while putting to bed the myths.

Marcus Gardley, playwright
Word Storm
Pre-Show Activity

Learning Objective: Students will explore various central ideas in *Julius Caesar* through word association

1. Write the play’s title “X: Or, Betty Shabazz vs. The Nation” on chart paper
2. As a whole group, brainstorm ideas, characters, themes, locations, emotions and images associated with the play’s title
3. When possible, group words together according to how they are related to each other
4. Re-visit the list while reading the play and before seeing the Performance

Discussion Questions:
Why might Marcus Gardley have chosen this title?
What other names is the main character know as?

Explore additional words:
Assassination, Tragic Hero, Civil Rights, Nation of Islam, Marcus Garvey

Visual Thinking Strategies
Pre-Show Activity

Learning Objective: Students will discuss the choices made by photographers, artists and designers who create works of art, posters and book covers about Malcolm X.

1. What is going on?
2. What do you see that makes you say that?
3. What more can you find?

www.vtshome.org

Examine various visual media featuring Malcolm X:
- Book covers
- Photographs
- Works of art

Writing Prompts:
What function might the images have?
What colors are used? Why might they have been chosen?
What words or phrases were chosen? Why?
What does the image tell you or make you feel?
PERSONÆ
MALCOLM X also known as EL HAJJ MALIK SHABAZZ, the prophet.
BETTY SHABAZZ, his wife. The prosecution.
LOUIS X, head of The N.O.I. The defense.
ELIJAH MOHAMMAD, former head of The Nation of Islam.
BROTHER EUGENE, a friend.
WILBERT X, Malcolm’s bro.
MUHAMMAD THE FIRST, son of Elijah.
BAILIFF, security.
BENJAMIN 2X
THE JUDGE, Islamic woman.
STENOGRAPHER, courtroom reporter.
KHADIJAH, Eugene’s wife
JOHN ALI
HALIM
BOOTBLACK/SOOTHSAYER
DOCTOR
FBI AGENT 1 & 2
REPORTER
NEWS ANCHOR
SECRETARY 1, 2, & 3
MYSTERY MAN 1, 2, & 3
DR. KING
BILLIE HOLIDAY

PLACES
Wall Street, A courtroom, Chicago, Arizona, Harlem, and places in between.

PERIOD
1963 - 1965 and time unknown.

PLAYING SPACE
The set is a rotunda in the style of a roman senate with audiences on risers, on both sides of the playing space. There is also a shoeshine stand center, that will morph into a pulpit, a bench, dining set, etc.. The action moves swiftly like a well-oiled machine. This play is a Trial. Actors address audiences seated on stage, they take sides throughout the play, and can adlib and shout in support of their arguments and allies. The Jury (the audience) sits in the risers. The Judge sits in the rear on a high bench. This drama is more of an interactive event than a traditional play, and audiences are encouraged to call out to the actors, laugh, sing and even snap their fingers when they agree with something being said. There is no need to hide any of the theatrical magic.

PALETTE
Characters wear dark clothing in the play save Malcolm’s final entrance and the Mecca scene. There should be minimal color besides black, whites and grays to emphasize the past, like a black and white photo. The present day of the play is unknown or the fictitious, recent past. Or let’s just call it ambiguously the 60’s.

AUTHOR’S NOTE: These characters are not meant to be realistic portrayals of actual people. The names are borrowed but the personas are fictitious.
Casting Scheme:
*X: Or, Betty Shabazz V. The Nation*

**PERSONÆ**
MALCOLM X also known as EL HAJJ MALIK SHABAZZ, the prophet.
BETTY SHABAZZ, his wife. The prosecution. Same actor is SECRETARY 2.
LOUIS X, head of The Nation of Islam. The defense. Same actor as MYSTERY MAN 3.
ELIJAH MUHAMMAD, former head of The Nation of Islam. Same actor is BOOTBLACK/SOOTHSAYER and DOCTOR.
BROTHER EUGENE, friend of Malcolm. Same actor is HALIM & DR. KING.
WILBERT X, Malcolm’s bro. Same actor is MYSTERY MAN 2.
MUHAMMAD THE FIRST, son of Elijah. Same actor is FBI AGENT 1 and MYSTERY MAN 1.
BAILIFF, security. Same actor is JOHN ALI, REPORTER, FBI AGENT 2 & BENJAMIN 2X.
THE JUDGE, Islamic woman. Same actor is SECRETARY 3.
STENOGRAPHER, courtroom reporter. Same actor is KADIJAH, NEWS ANCHOR, SECRETARY 1 and BILLIE HOLIDAY.

**PROLOGUE**

**ACT ONE:** “He wasn’t your traitor; he was our traitor.” – Louis Farrakhan

**ACT TWO:** “When I first saw him, he was galloping as though he was going someplace much more important than the podium.” - Betty Shabazz

**ACT THREE:** “A black person who takes a black leader and weaves his way into his confidence then betrays him, is decidedly beneath contempt.” - Bill Tatum (Amsterdam News) speaking about Gene Roberts

**INTERMISSION**

**INTERLUDE**

**ACT FOUR:** “Reviling a Muslim is disobedience to God, and fighting with him is infidelity.” - The Honorable Elijah Muhammad

**ACT FIVE:** “When I am dead—they are going to identify me with "hate". This is how they will truly kill me. They will say that I was a symbol of hatred. And that will keep most people from seeing my truth. All I did was hold up a mirror to reflect, to show, the history of unspeakable crimes that was committed against my race. But no one will remember this.” - Malcolm X.
Dramatizing Historical Figures
Pre- or Post-Show Activity

Learning Objective: Students will examine the ways Marcus Gardley interpreted the life and assassination of Malcolm X.

How well does history lend itself to art? In what ways do historical events lend themselves (or not) to dramatization?

How does Marcus Gardley use history to create a play that speaks to audiences today?

**AUTHOR’S NOTE:** “These characters are not meant to be realistic portrayals of actual people. The names are borrowed but the personas are fictitious.” – Marcus Gardley

Discussion:

- Name three historical figures that you have seen represented in a movie, tv show, or play?
- What is the difference between a historical text and historical fiction?
- Define dramatic license in the context of historical fiction.

Exercise: Look up two historical accounts of an event from Malcolm X’s life: such as, his comments on JFK’s assignation “chickens coming home to roost” statement; his journey to Cairo and Mecca; the assassination attempts on his life; his assassination. Compare them to the representation of those moments in *X: Or, Betty Shabazz V. The Nation.*

If one had to select one historical personality within the period 1940 to 1975 who best represented and reflected black urban life, politics, and culture in the United States, it would be extremely difficult to find someone more central than the charismatic figure of Malcolm X/El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz. Born in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1925, and growing up in the Midwest, young Malcolm Little was the child of political activists who supported the militant black nationalist movement of Marcus Garvey. After his father’s violent death and his mother’s subsequent institutionalization due to mental illness, Little was placed in foster care and for a time in a youth detention facility. At age sixteen he left school, relocating to Boston upon the invitation of his older half-sister, Ella Little. During World War II, the zoot-suited “Detroit Red” became a small-time hustler, burglar, and narcotics dealer in Harlem and Roxbury.

The Prison Years and Early Ministry: 1946-55

In January 1946, Little was arrested for burglary and weapons possession charges, and received a ten-year sentence in the Massachusetts prison system. While incarcerated, Little’s siblings introduced him to the Nation of Islam, a tiny black nationalist-oriented religious movement led by the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. Converting to the NOI’s version of Islam, Little experienced a spiritual and intellectual epiphany behind bars. Emerging from prison in August 1952, as Malcolm X, the talented and articulate young convert was soon the assistant minister of the NOI’s Detroit Temple No. 1. In 1954, Malcolm X was named minister of Harlem’s Temple No. 7, which he led for just short of a decade. As an itinerant spokesman for black nationalism, Malcolm X traveled constantly across the country, winning thousands of new converts to the NOI.


Between 1955 and 1961, Malcolm X was personally responsible for establishing more than one hundred Muslim temples or mosques throughout the U.S. As the chief public spokesperson for Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm built the NOI from a marginal sect to a spiritual organization of over one hundred thousand. By the early 1960s, Malcolm X was a widely celebrated (and feared) public speaker and debater at universities and in the national media. The Federal Bureau of Investigation’s efforts to discredit the Nation and its leaders led the agency to engage in illegal acts of wiretapping, surveillance, disruption, and harassment.


In 1960 Malcolm X established the newspaper Muhammad Speaks, which by the end of the decade would have a national circulation of 600,000, the most widely-read black-owned newspaper in the country. However, by this time, serious divisions developed between Malcolm X and the NOI’s patriarch, Elijah Muhammad, and his coterie of organizational leaders based in Chicago, over a number of issues. Malcolm X was personally dismayed when it was publicly revealed that Muhammad had fathered a number of children out of wedlock. He also chafed under the NOI’s political conservatism and its refusal to support civil rights protests.

Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, and the Civil Rights Movement.

In reaching out to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., James Farmer, and other civil rights leaders, Malcolm X proposed a broad coalition of black activist organizations, working in concert to achieve social justice.

http://www.columbia.edu/cu/ccbh/mxp/
In March, 1964, Malcolm X announced publicly his break from the NOI. He soon created two new organizations, the Muslim Mosque, Inc., designed for former NOI members as a spiritually-based group, and the secular-oriented Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU).

A New Vision? The Epiphany of Mecca.
Converting to traditional Islam, Malcolm X completed his spiritual hajj to Mecca in April, 1964, and returned to the United States the next month as El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz.

During his two extended journeys through Africa and the Middle East in 1964, Malcolm X gained new insights into the problem of racism. In his Autobiography, he later wrote: “I was no less angry than I had been, but at the same time the true brotherhood I had seen had influenced me to recognize that anger can blind human vision.” He now believed that race war was not inevitable, and felt that “America is the first country ... that can actually have a bloodless revolution.” Malcolm X’s new political strategy called for building black community empowerment, through tools such as voter registration and education, economic self-sufficiency, and the development of independent politics. He called upon African Americans to transform the civil rights movement into a struggle for international human rights.

1965: The Final Months.
Upon Malcolm X’s return to the United States in November 1964, death threats escalated against him and his family. in the early morning hours of February 14, 1965, his home in Elmhurst, Queens, was firebombed.

On Sunday afternoon, February 21, 1965, just before delivering an address at the Audubon Ballroom, Malcolm X/El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz was assassinated before a crowd of hundreds of people, including his pregnant wife Betty Shabazz and three of their four children.
The profound religious and political sojourn of Malcolm X was hardly noticed in the immediate aftermath of his assassination. The New York Times editorialized that Malcolm was “an irresponsible demagogue” and “an extraordinary and twisted man,” who had utilized his “true gifts to evil purpose.” Time magazine declared that the dead leader was “an unashamed demagogue” whose “gospel was hatred.” But others saw Malcolm X more clearly. President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana sent a telegram of condolence to Malcolm’s widow, saying that “your husband lived a life of dedication for human equality and dignity so that the Afro-American and people of color everywhere may live as man. His work in the cause of freedom will not be in vain ...”
Nation of Islam

The Nation of Islam (NOI) is a religious and political organization that establishes local temples, teaches Muslim beliefs, promotes black pride and self-reliance, and creates black businesses and schools. The NOI was founded in Detroit in 1930 by W.D. Fard Muhammad as a variant of traditional Islam, teaching that God was black and whites were a race of devils. In 1934, Fard disappeared and NOI leadership passed to Elijah Muhammad (formerly Elijah Poole), who began his reign during a period of limited growth. Through the 1950’s membership in the NOI grew dramatically and attracted thousands with a doctrine of personal pride, economic self-reliance, and separation from white America. Malcolm X became a member in 1952 and, with Elijah Muhammad’s blessing, he began to establish new temples and raise the membership and national profile of the NOI at a rapid pace. In 1963, Malcolm X became the national spokesman for the NOI, his words inspired many blacks through his numerous speeches, debates, and the establishment of the NOI’s newspaper Muhammad Speaks to spread the Messenger’s teachings.

Malcolm X expanded his message of black pride and self-sufficiency to include self-defense and stood in contrast to the Civil Rights Movement rooted in non-violence and the NOI’s passive response to civil rights activism. In March, 1964, Malcolm X publicly separated from the NOI and created two new organizations, the Muslim Mosque, Inc., a spiritually-based group for former NOI members, and the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU), a secular Civil Rights group. In April 1964, Malcolm X completed his spiritual hajj to Mecca, converted to traditional Islam, and returned to the United States renamed El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Differences in</th>
<th>Theology</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Traditional/Universal Islam</strong></td>
<td><strong>Nation of Islam</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Origins &amp; Core Islamic Belief</strong></td>
<td>Founded in the 7th Century on the Arabian Peninsula by the Prophet Muhammad. There is only one God (Allah) and God works through prophets rather than assuming a physical form.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Prophets</strong></td>
<td>God revealed His existence to a number of prophets, including: Adam, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad. Muhammad received God's final revelation.</td>
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<td><strong>Race</strong></td>
<td>The Qur'an says Allah created the human race &quot;from a single male and female, and made you into nations and tribes, so ye may know each other, not that ye may despise each other.” Al-Hujurat 49:13</td>
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Adhan: The Call to Prayer from The Pluralism Project at Harvard University, http://pluralism.org/religions/islam/the-muslim-experience/the-call-to-prayer/

“Muslim daily life is punctuated with five ritual prayers, or salat. In the early Muslim community in Madinah, according to tradition, faithful Muslims would gather around the Prophet Muhammad without any summons. The Prophet considered using a horn, as did the Jews to call the community to prayers, as well as a wooden gong, as the Eastern Christians did. One of his followers had a vision in a dream, however, in which a man taught him a better way to call people to prayer.”

CHORUS OF MEN (singing)
ALLAHU AKBAR ALLAHU AKBAR
ALLAHU AKBAR ALLAHU AKBAR
ASH-HADU ANLA ILAHA ILLAH
ALLAH. ASH-HADU ANLA
ILAHA ILLAH ALLA ASH-HADU
ANNA. MUHAMMADAR-RASULULLAH. ASH-HADU ANNA
MUHAMMADAR-RASULULLAH
HAYYA AS-SALAH HAYYA ASSALAH.
HAYYA AL-FALAH HAYYA
AL-FALAH. ALLAHU AKBAR
ALLAHU AKBAR ALLAHU AKBAR
ALLAHU AKBAR LA ILAHA ILLA
ALLAH. LA ILAHA ILLA ALLAH
X, Act II

TRANSLATION
Allahu Akbar - Allah is the Greatest
Ash-hadu alla ilaha illallah - I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah
Ash-hadu anna Muhammadar Rasulullah - I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.
Hayya alassalah - Come to Prayer
Hayya alal-Falah - Come to success.
Allahu Akbar - Allah is the Greatest.
La ilaha illallah - There is none worthy of worship except Allah.

“The Prophet confirmed this dream and appointed Bilal, a freed African slave, to be the first muezzin, to use his penetrating voice to sound this call to prayer, the adhan, from the masjid. From this time on, for thirteen centuries, the adhan has called the faithful all over the world to perform their five daily prayers. The adhan is a regular reminder of the submission of all of life to God’s will, and a reminder that life is shaped by prayer.

The adhan is a summons to enter the prayer space, to turn one’s body, mind and spirit toward God. In many predominantly Muslim countries, the call to prayer is broadcast over speakers five times each day from the minaret of each local masjid. In the United States, most Islamic Centers and mosques issue the call from within their buildings to those already gathered for prayer. Others call the adhan publicly before special community gatherings: at the Islamic Center of Toledo, the muezzin climbs the spiral staircase of the minaret and issues the call to prayer across the vast Ohio cornfields.”

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Rhetorical Analysis: Prose & Verse
Pre- or Post-Show Activity

Learning Objective: Students will discover the difference between prose and verse while learning relevant literary terms and figures of speech.

MALCOLM:
Friends, Romans, Africans, don’t lend me your ears
Without letting me hold your hearts. I come to bury the beliefs I once stirred
And not praise the dogma that upon yesteryear I so doggedly barked.
The evil that men do, that men preach will live on after them
But it cannot tear apart that which we hold true to be self-evident;
That all are equal in the eyes of Allah. And if we do good oft, if we love
Not soft but with ambition; when our bones are interred, our souls will be caught
up by His mighty hand. And no more will we be lost and our dreams differed for this
is His great commission: for every man to love every man.
I have no venom in my heart for those who killed me.
Instead, I’ve come to tell my side of the story.
And make no mistake, I am an honorable man.
Malcolm X, X, Act IV

MARK ANTONY:
Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears;
I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.
The evil that men do lives after them;
The good is oft interred with their bones;
So let it be with Caesar. The noble Brutus
Hath told you Caesar was ambitious:
If it were so, it was a grievous fault,
And grievously hath Caesar answer’d it.
Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest—
For Brutus is an honourable man;
So are they all, all honourable men—
Come I to speak in Caesar's funeral.
He was my friend, faithful and just to me:
But Brutus says he was ambitious;
And Brutus is an honorable man.
He hath brought many captives to Rome
Malcolm X, X, Act IV

Prose /prōz/
Written or spoken language in its ordinary form, without metrical structure

Verse /vərs/
Writing arranged with a metrical rhythm, typically having a rhyme

Learning Objective:
Students will compare and contrast speeches in Gardley’s X and Shakespeare’s Julius Caesar.

Exercise:
Throughout his public life, Malcolm X engages prose & rhetoric with dramatic purpose. Read the fictionalized speech by Malcolm X’s ghost just after his assassination, framed on many Shakespearean & rhetorical devices, and compare with Mark Antony’s speech to the Roman people at Julius Caesar’s funeral.

In these passages:
What ideas and words stand out most?
Is Malcolm’s passage in verse, prose, or a combination? Mark Antony’s?
Find words or ideas are similar & different?
Malcolm X and the F.B.I.
Pre-Show Activity

Primary sources allow the researcher to get as close as possible to the truth of what actually happened during an historical event or time period. A Primary source is the closest to the person, information, period, or idea being studied. It can be a document, recording, artifact, or other source of information with direct personal knowledge of the events being described.

Activity:
Using files from the F.B.I. vault, identify documents that connect to scenes in Gardley’s X: Or, Betty Shabazz V. The Nation.

http://www.columbia.edu/cu/ccbh/mxp/govdocs.html
https://vault.fbi.gov/malcolm-little-malcolm-x

Assassination
Pre- or Post-Show Activity

The root of the word “assassin” may be based in the Arabic word: Hashishin. A name associated with a small sect of Shiite Islamic warriors originating in the 9th century AD in Persia. This Order of Assassins (properly known as Nizari Ismailis) lacked the forces to wage war on its rivals (both the armies of the First Crusade and other Persian lords), so instead it sent single warriors trained in combat and stealth to kill its enemies’ leaders. There are many myths and folktales surrounding these men, and little concrete evidence due to the destruction of all their records when the Mongols destroyed their fortress in the 13th century AD. We do know that for over 300 years both Crusaders and Islamic lords feared the Assassins, enough that their name became a permanent part of many languages.

In popular usage today, assassination refers to any public murder of an important or famous figure, generally with connotations of political or religious motivation. While the word assassin has come to mean any hired or professional killer.

Discussion (Act I):
1. In reference to President Kennedy’s assassination, what does Malcolm X imply by using this analogy “President Kennedy never foresaw that the chickens would come home to roost so soon...Being an old farm boy myself, chickens coming home to roost never did make me sad; they always made me glad.”?

Press conference, December 1, 1963
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZsuOOhpddM

2. What are Malcolm’s thoughts on President Kennedy’s assassination: Who, How, Why, and the effect on the Civil Rights movement?

3. Malcolm X is one of the most famous assassinations in the 20th Century. Name other famous assassinations, compare and contrast the consequences and devastation of each.
Framing Device: The Trial
Pre-Show or Post-Show Activity

Learning Objective: Students will consider how a literary framing device adds structure to a work of literature.

Discussion:
What is a framing device? List examples of framing devices you have seen in works of art.

What does a trial represent to you?

What is involved in a trial? Who is involved? What are they doing?

How might those ideas enrich or affect the storytelling in a production focusing on Malcolm X?

Framing Device
A narrative structure that provides a setting and exposition for the main narrative in a work of literature.

Script Analysis:
How is the trial used to frame the narrative in X: Or, Betty Shabazz V. The Nation?

What key pieces of information/history/plot are revealed in the courtroom scenes?

Framing Device: Quotes
Pre-Show or Post-Show Activity

Learning Objective: Students will consider how a literary framing device adds structure to a work of literature.

Exercises: Select a quote
• Brainstorm what the Act might be about.
• Write a scene based on a quote.
• Based on the script text, why might these quotes have been chosen to begin each Act?

ACT ONE: “He wasn’t your traitor; he was our traitor.” – Louis Farrakhan

ACT TWO: “When I first saw him, he was galloping as though he was going someplace much more important than the podium.” - Betty Shabazz

ACT THREE: “A black person who takes a black leader and weaves his way into his confidence then betrays him, is decidedly beneath contempt.” - Bill Tatum (Amsterdam News) speaking about Gene Roberts

ACT FOUR: “Reviling a Muslim is disobedience to God, and fighting with him is infidelity.” - The Honorable Elijah Muhammad

ACT FIVE: “When I am dead—they are going to identify me with "hate". This is how they will truly kill me. They will say that I was a symbol of hatred. And that will keep most people from seeing my truth. All I did was hold up a mirror to reflect, to show, the history of unspeakable crimes that was committed against my race. But no one will remember this.” - Malcolm X.
Spotlight: Advertisement Jingles
Pre- or Post-Show Activity

Discussion:
1. Time period
2. Big business
3. Implications

Activity:
Create a jingle in the 1960’s style about a current product that may have health implications.

Music
Pre- or Post-Show Activity

STENOGRAFER (singing a 1960’s jingle into a mike as she smokes)
CHESTERFIELD’S CIGARETTES
SMOKING FOR THE WEALTHY, SEXIER SET
WE DON’T KNOW IT CAUSES LUNG CANCER YET OR DO WE?

STENOGRAPHER (singing a 1960’s jingle holding a box of Asbestos)
ASBESTOS, ASBESTOS
FULL PROOF YOUR ROOF
IT’S THE BEST IN THE WEST IT’S ASBESTOS, ASBESTOS
THE SHIT’S GONNA KILL WHEN YOU INGEST IT

STENOGRAPHER (singing a 1960’s jingle into a mike as she smokes)
CHESTERFIELD’S CIGARETTES
SMOKING FOR THE WEALTHY, SEXIER SET
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IT’S THE BEST IN THE WEST IT’S ASBESTOS, ASBESTOS
THE SHIT’S GONNA KILL WHEN YOU INGEST IT

Metaphor
A figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable.

Learning Objective: Students will analyze song lyrics to critically examine themes and messages

Exercises:
After you read the lyrics, draw a picture or write a few sentences about what you think the message of the song is.

Share your interpretations with other students. Can you identify any metaphors in the song?

Who is Lady Day?
Viewing the Play: Guiding Questions
Post-Show Activity

Learning Objective: Students will better understand the life and assassination of Malcolm X.

Exercise:
The discussion questions follow the general order of the play. Students can complete them individually or in small groups. Pull out selected questions for whole-group discussion.

Framework for Discussion:

1. In the opening prologue, the Boot Black encourages the audience to walk in the shoes of another person. Discuss the importance of developing compassion and cultivating empathy through considering other people’s perspectives.

2. (Act I) Why did Malcolm’s “chickens coming home to roost” metaphor about President Kennedy’s death cause his silencing for 90 days from speaking in public, attending public events and writing articles? How did the silencing effect his life and family?

3. (Act II) What news about Elijah Muhammad did Betty Shabazz urge Malcolm to investigate?

4. (Act II) Did all the secretaries agree that the affairs with Elijah Muhammad were dishonorable? If so, how did he abuse his position of power? Why might some secretaries not believe the affairs were dishonorable?

5. (Act II) Why do Malcolm and his brother Wilbert have to meet in secret? How does Wilbert betray Malcolm?

6. (Act II) Who suggests “We have to silence him (Malcolm X)...for good” and why?

7. (Act II) What are some reasons for conflict between Malcolm X and members of the NOI?

8. (Act III) What is Eugene’s relationship to Malcolm X?

9. (Act III) What information does the FBI want Eugene to provide?

10. (Act III) How did Malcolm’s perspective on race relations change and mature after his trip to Mecca?

11. (Act III) What happened to Malcolm while he was in Cairo, Egypt? Who was involved?

12. (Act IV) Who does the defense suggest is responsible for assassination attempts on Malcolm’s life? Is there evidence to support the claims?

13. (Act IV) Who do you think the “Mystery Men” are in the Audubon Ballroom?

14. (Act V) What final piece of evidence does Betty Shabazz produce? What does she do with it? What do you think that action reveals about Betty at the end of the play?
About the Playwright

Marcus Gardley

Marcus Gardley is a Bay Area-born playwright who is the recent recipient of the 2015 Glickman Award for his play *The House That Will Not Stand*. It was commissioned and produced by Berkeley Rep and had subsequent productions at Yale Rep and the Tricycle Theater in London and was a finalist for the 2015 Kennedy Prize. It is now being written as a film directed by Lee Daniels. Gardley was the 2013 USA James Baldwin Fellow and the 2011 PEN Laura Pels award winner for Mid-Career Playwright. Gardley was also the 2011 PEN Laura Pels award winner for Mid-Career Playwright.

The New Yorker describes Gardley as “the heir to Garcia Lorca, Pirandello and Tennessee Williams.” He is an ensemble member playwright at Victory Gardens Theater where his play *The Gospel of Loving Kindness* was produced in March and won the 2014 BTAA award for best play/playwright.

His play *Every Tongue Confess*, starring Phylicia Rashad and directed by Kenny Leon, was nominated for the Steinberg New Play Award, the Charles MacArthur Award for Best Play and was the recipient of the Edgerton New Play Award.

His musical, *On The Levee*, premiered at Lincoln Center and was nominated for 11 Audelco Awards including outstanding playwright. His critically acclaimed epic *And Jesus Moonwalks the Mississippi* was produced at the Cutting Ball Theater and received the SF Bay Area Theater Critics circle Award nomination for outstanding new play and had two sold-out extensions, while his *Black Odyssey* premiered at the Denver Center Theatre and opened to rave reviews. In 2014, his saga *The Road Weeps, the Well Runs Dry* had a national tour and was a finalist for the 2014 Kennedy Prize. His plays *This World in a Woman’s Hands* (October 2009) and *Love is a Dream House in Lorin* (March 2007) have been hailed as the best in Bay Area Theater. The latter was nominated for the National Critics Steinberg New Play Award. He has had six other plays produced including: *dance of the holy ghosts* at Center Stage in Baltimore and the Yale Repertory Theatre, *(L)imitations of Life* at the Empty Space in Seattle, WA, *like sun fallin’ in the mouth* at the National Black Theatre Festival.

He is the recipient of the 2013 Mellon Playwright Residency, 2011 Aetna New Voice Fellowship at Hartford Stage, the Hellen Merrill Award, a Kellsering Honor, a Gerbode Emerging Playwright Award, a National Alliance for Musical Theatre Award, a Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation Grant, a NEA/TCG Playwriting Participant Residency, the Eugene O’Neill Memorial Scholarship, and an ASCAP Cole Porter Prize.

He holds an MFA in Playwriting from the Yale Drama School and is a member of New Dramatists, The Dramatists Guild, and the Lark Play Development Center. Gardley lives in Harlem.
Set Model
Design by Lee Savage
Costume Design
Candace Donnelly

Malcolm X
Betty Shabazz

Elijah Muhammad
Bootblack
Malcolm X
Lous X

Secretaries
Creating a Theatrical Production
Pre-Show Activity

Learning Objective: The students will have a stronger understanding of the art of the Theatre.

Exercise: Brainstorm various people that work to put a theatrical production on stage. As students name key people involved, present information about the following professions:

Producer or Producing Organization
The producers raise the money needed to produce the play - the money allows the Creative Team to build its vision of the play. Producers oversee all aspects of the production to make sure the play adheres to their artistic standards. Producers often put together the Script, Director, Designers, and Cast.

Playwright
A "wright" is a type of artisan who makes things that people can use. A wheelwright makes wheels. A playwright makes plays. Plays are of use to other artists - Actors, Directors, Designers - who use the script to make their own artistic statement.

Director
After reading the playwright's script, the Director decides on an overall vision for the production. The Director meets with the Creative Team to assemble a unified look for the sets, costumes, lighting, and other elements. The Director oversees the actors in rehearsal, often with the help of Assistant Directors and Stage Managers.

Voice and Speech Consultant
The Voice Consultant acts as an advisor to the Actors and Director on the play and is an expert on the text, the meanings and nuances of the words, and their pronunciation. They assist the Actors with the verse, period language of the script and unified approach to the text.

Not-for-Profit vs. For-Profit
- The Acting Company is a “Not-for-Profit” organization that uses money raised from donors, foundations, grants to do its work.
- A “For-Profit” organization gets money from investors. The investors receive a percentage of the profit made by the work.

Actors
The Cast is the group of men, women, and children who perform the play. Members of the cast may be seasoned actors or new to the stage. They have trained at different theater schools that teach acting in various ways and draw on their own experiences of life to create believable characters. Actors usually audition for the parts they play. This means that they had to work on the part and read, sing, or dance for the director and producers before they were given the role. All of the actors have to memorize their lines and attend many rehearsals, including technical rehearsals with costumes and props, before opening night.

Fight Director
The Fight Director must design stage violence that excites the audience with a sense of danger but is, in fact, safe for everyone on stage.

Education
Student performances and in-school educational activities create opportunities for students to learn through theater while inviting critical dialogue about historical & current events and social issues.
Creating a Theatrical Production (continued)

**Design**
The play needs an environment in which to take place. The set can be a literal world, with many objects or “props” and lots of furniture or it can be a suggestion of reality with minimal actual components.

For The Acting Company productions, the set must be easy to assemble and disassemble and must be portable. The sound and lighting design must be recreated in each venue.

**Set Designer**
All the scenery, furniture and props on stage at a production of a play make up the set design. The Set Designer's job is to design these physical surroundings in which the action will take place.

**Sound Designer**
The Sound Designer plans and provides the sound effects in the play, including music from existing sources. In addition, a composer may write original music for the show. All the music and/or effects in a play considered as a whole make up the "soundscape."

**Lighting Designer**
Lighting Designers make the best use of the subtle and powerful medium of light, creating effects that can be changed at will to match the mood of the action.

**Costume Designer**
Costume designers create the look of each character by designing clothes and accessories the actors will wear in performance. Depending on their style and complexity, costumes may be made, bought, revamped out of existing stock or rented.

**Crew**

**Stage Managers**
Stage Managers provide practical and organizational support to the director, actors, designers, stage crew and technicians throughout the production process. They are the director's representative during performances, making sure that the production runs smoothly.

**Lighting, Sound, and Wardrobe Supervisors**
Backstage the technical crew runs the lighting equipment, moves the scenery, adjusts costumes, and makes sure the technical aspects of the performance are perfect.

**Technical Director**
The Technical Director has the daily responsibility for the technical operations the show, including lighting, sound, set design, and coordinating necessary maintenance.

**Production Manager**
The Production Manager is responsible for budgeting, scheduling work, and coordinating the various production departments.

**The Theater Staff** - House Manager, ushers, box office staff, and others - are responsible for the smooth operation of the house (typically both the lobby and audience seating area) during the run of the show to support each performance.

**Marketing**
This work involves managing the promotion of the productions, services and public image of the theatre company.

**Development**
Development staff manage foundation & government grants and donations to be sure the producers have money to put on the play.
The Acting Company

presents

X

Or, Betty Shabazz v. The Nation

by Marcus Gardley

Scenic Design Lee Savage
Costume Design Candice Donnelly
Lighting Design Mary Louise Geiger
Sound Design/Music Composition Justin Ellington
Voice, Speech and Text Consultant Elizabeth Smith
Choreography Byron Easley**
Fight Direction Orlando Pabotoy**
Property Design Christine Goldman Bagwell
Casting McCorkle Casting, LTD.

Production Stage Manager Lindsey Turteltaub*
Assistant Stage Manager Geoff Boronda*

Directed by
Ian Belknap**

CAST
(in alphabetical order)

The Judge/Secretary ................................................................. N’Jameh Camara*
Malcolm X.................................................................................. Jimonn Cole*
Louis X...................................................................................... Jonathan-David*
Wilbert X.................................................................................... Kevio Hillocks*
Muhammad the First/FBI Agent/Mystery Man........... Gabriel Lawrence*
Bailiff/John Ali/FBI Agent......................................................... Austin Purnell*
Brother Eugene X/Doc............................................................... Joshua David Robinson*
Elijah Muhammad/Bootblack............................................... William Sturdvant*
Stenographer/Khadijah/Secretary/Singer..................... Tatiana Wechsler*
Betty Shabazz/Secretary.......................................................... Chelsea Williams*

Members of the ensemble also play reporters and mystery men.

*Member of Actors’ Equity Association
**Member of Stage Directors and Choreographers Society

This Acting Company production had its premiere at Mesa Arts Center- Piper Repertory Theater, Mesa, AZ on February 2, 2017.

Running time: 2 hours including intermission
UNDERSTUDIES
Understudies never substitute for listed players unless a specific announcement for the appearance is made at the time of the performance

TOURING STAFF

Technical Director................................................................. Aaron Verderly
Wardrobe Supervisor.......................................................... Christina Rene Polhemus
Lighting Supervisor............................................................. Chris Thielking
Sound Supervisor............................................................... Jonathan Robertson
Assistant Technical Director/Properties Supervisor............... Gage Steenhenagen
Company Manager............................................................. Lisa Gutting
Staff Repertory Director..................................................... Devin Brain

*Julius Caesar* and *X* were rehearsed at the New 42nd St. Studios and The Theatre at St. Clement’s, NYC

For *Julius Caesar*: Co-Costume Designer-Christopher Metzger
For *X*: Wig Designer-Tom Watson, Costume Assistant-Glenna Ryer, Assistant Choreographer-Laura Hamilton

For both shows:
Scenic Elements/Set Constructed by JAG Fabrications; Costumes Constructed by Arel Studio and Dawson Tailors; Tour Lighting Equipment provided by PRG; Sound Equipment provided by Sound Associates; Tour Trucking by Clark Transfer; Tour Accommodations by Stage and Screen Travel; Poster Artwork by Andrew Bannecker; Photography by T. Charles Erickson; Video by Fifth Floor Productions

The Acting Company is a not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) organization.


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THE ACTING COMPANY

Artistic Director Ian Belknap
Executive Director Elisa Spencer-Kaplan
Associate Artistic Director Devin Brain
Program Director Freddy Arsenault
Program Director Lisa Gutting
Associate Producer Joseph Mitchell Parks
Associate Director of Marketing Paula Raymond
Controller Nancy Cook
Development Associate Liana Fernez
Finance Manager Bernard Rashbaum
Administrative Assistant Alexandria Sherman
Production Manager Peter Feuchtwanger
Education Consultant Paul Fontana
Interns Emily Buckner, Anna Schultz

Teaching Artists
Devin Brain, Mark Bly, Jimonn Cole, Christian Conn, Leslie Geraci, Ian Gould, Gabriel Lawrence,
Peter Macklin, Katherine Puma, Joshua David Robinson, Sid Solomon, William Sturdivant,
Matt Steiner, Lois Walden

Press Representative
Katz PR

Legal Representation
Jason Baruch, Sendroff & Baruch, LLP

Certified Public Accountants
Janover, LLC

THE ACTING COMPANY operates under an agreement with Actors’ Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States. The Actors and Stage Managers employed in this production are members of Actors’ Equity Association.

THE ACTING COMPANY is a member of Theatre Communications Group, the national organization for the American theater, and the Alliance of Resident Theatres/New York.

TONY® HONOREE FOR EXCELLENCE IN THEATER

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WWW.THEACTINGCOMPANY.ORG • FIND US ON FACEBOOK AND TWITTER
Founded 44 years ago by legendary theater impresario John Houseman and longtime producer Margot Harley, The Acting Company strives to cultivate a discerning national audience for classically based theater, while nurturing the next generation of great American theater artists. Since its inception with members of the first graduating class of the Drama Division of the Juilliard School The Acting Company has been honored with numerous awards and is the recipient of a 2003 Tony Award for Excellence in Theater.

The Acting Company:

• **Builds a discerning national audience for the theater** by playing exceptional productions on tour nationwide for diverse audiences.

• **Develops the best young American actors** by giving them an opportunity to practice their craft in a repertory of classic plays and new works.

• **Educates** by engaging students in under-served and disadvantaged communities, which have little or no access to the arts and have been hardest hit by cuts in arts education.

The Acting Company has performed 143 productions for millions of people across America and has ignited the careers of some of our finest artists, among them Kevin Kline, Patti LuPone, Rainn Wilson, Jeffrey Wright and 400 more of the country’s finest classically-trained actors. Company alumni continuously populate stages in New York and nationally, appear regularly on film and in television, lead regional theaters and head some of our top theater conservatories. The Company’s celebrated educational programs – master classes, workshops and artistic residencies – reach over 15,000 students yearly, particularly those with no other access to arts education and live performances.

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www.theactingcompany.org
Curriculum Connections

*Julius Caesar*, by William Shakespeare
*X*, by Marcus Gardley

Career & College Readiness Standards
By attending this performance your students will:

**Theatre**
S1: C1: PO 101 – Demonstrate respect for others’ opinions by respectfully listening while ideas are being articulated.
S1: C1: PO 104 – Follow established theatre safety rules.
S2: C2: PO 105 – Infer a character’s motivations and emotions and predict future action.
S2: C5: PO 105 – Identify current and historical periods and cultures in dramatic scenes, scripts, informal and formal productions. (e.g. Western/Eastern Traditions)
S3: C2: PO 101 – Demonstrate respectful audience behavior.

**Visual Arts**
S2: C1: PO 105 – Make connections between art and other curricular areas.
S2: C4: PO 101 – Interpret meanings and/or purposed of an artwork using subject matter and symbols.

Career & College Readiness Standards
These standards are acquired by participating in the study guide

**English Language Arts**
Grades 7-12.RI.7 — Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
Grades 7-12.SL.1 — Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
Grades 7-12.SL.4 — Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
Grades 7-12.SL.6 — Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.
Grades 7-12.W.4 — Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
Grades 7-12.W.7 — Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
Grades 7-12.L.5 — Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

**Math**
Mathematical Practice 1 — Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
Mathematical Practice 2 — Reason abstractly and quantitatively.
Mathematical Practice 5 — Use appropriate tools strategically.