

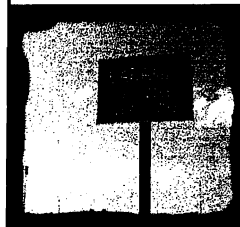
The Laramie Project
By Moises Kaufman and the Tectonic
Theater Project

Elements of Postmodernism:
Use of Multiple Perspectives

The Laramie Project

*The Life and Legacy of
Matthew Shepard*

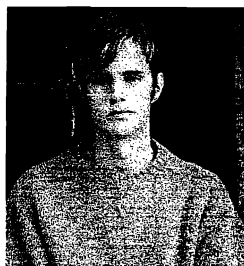
Background Info



- ❖ *Location: Laramie, Wyoming*
- ❖ *Aftermath of an anti-gay hate crime*
- ❖ *The Tectonic Theater Project, headed by Moises Kaufman, spent two years conducting interviews of citizens*
- ❖ *Play was performed nationally*
- ❖ *HBO film*

Who is Matthew Shepard?

- ❖ *Born December 1, 1976*
- ❖ *He stood 5'2" and weighed approximately 105 pounds*
- ❖ *"optimistic and accepting young man" and "was very approachable and open to new challenges"*
- ❖ *University of Wyoming*



What Happened That Night?



- ❖ *October 7, 1998*
- ❖ *Went to a local bar and meets Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson*
- ❖ *They left, with Matthew, and drove to a remote area east of Laramie*
- ❖ *Beat Matthew with their hands and the handle of a shot gun and tied him to a split-rail fence; they took his wallet and his shoes*
- ❖ *Discovered 18 hours later by a cyclist who thought he was a scarecrow*
- ❖ *He died on October 12, 1998 at 12:53 a.m. in a hospital in Fort Collins, Colorado with his family by his side*

About The Laramie Project

- ❖ *Kaufman desired to learn more about why he was murdered that night and about Laramie, Wyoming*
- ❖ *Question: How is Laramie different from the rest of the country, yet how is it similar?*
- ❖ *Answer: Play of MOMENTS*



What Is Meant To Be Accomplished...

**STOP
The Hate**

- ❖ *Awareness*
- ❖ *Tolerance*
- ❖ *Realization*
- ❖ *Understanding*
- ❖ *Acceptance*
- ❖ *Change*

But What Do These Words Even Mean?

- ❖ ***Awareness:** having knowledge or being conscious of; informed, alert, knowledgeable*
- ❖ ***Tolerance:** interest in and concern for ideas, opinions, practices, etc. that are different from one's own; the act or capacity of enduring*
- ❖ ***Realization:** coming to understand something clearly and distinctly*
- ❖ ***Understanding:** mental process of a person who comprehends OR a state of cooperative or mutually tolerant relations between people*
- ❖ ***Acceptance:** a disposition to tolerate or accept people or situations*
- ❖ ***Change:** to make the form, nature, content, future course, etc. different from what it is or from what it would be if left alone*

Foundations Dedicated To The Cause

- ❖ *The Matthew Shepard Foundation*
- ❖ *Matthew's Place*
- ❖ *The Equality, Erase Hate, and Youth First Projects (GLBTQQ Rights)*
- ❖ *The Matthew Shepard Act (Bill for Congress)*



YOUR JOB AS A READER!

- *How is this play Post Modern?*
- *What can we gain from reading this play?*
- *Why are we reading this play?*
- *How will issues from this play effect us in the future?*
- *How do multiple perspectives shape our understanding of what happened that night? (Play of Moments...)*

Introduction to The Laramie Project
Group Anticipation Guide/Discussion Topics

1. What, in your definition, is a hate crime?

2. Agree / Undecided / Disagree

I could never possibly be the target of a hate crime. There is nothing controversial or disagreeable about me.

3. Describe Basking Ridge in one word.

4. Draw a symbol that best describes Basking Ridge.

5. Agree / Undecided / Disagree

It is highly unlikely that Basking Ridge can be the location of a hate crime.

6. Do you believe that Basking Ridge is diverse? Why or why not?

Act 1 Guided Reading / Viewing Questions

1. How did Moises Kaufmann and the Tectonic Theater Project gather information for the play?
2. What is the significance of Jedeiah Schulze's choice of monologue scenes? What might the risk he takes foreshadow about the events in Acts 2 and 3?
3. What is a "Moment" play? How does this type of literature aid you in gaining multiple perspectives on the events surrounding Matthew Sheppard's murder?
4. Provide three quotes that describe how the residents of Laramie view their town. In your opinion, is Basking Ridge anything like Laramie, Wyoming? Why or why not?



The Laramie Project

Background Article Activity

Guiding Questions...

- "Laramie, Wyoming: Mirror of a Nation"
 - What are the events surrounding the death of Matthew Shepard? Who are the key players?
- "From Life to T.V.: The Power of Voices"
 - What were Kaufman's visions for "The Laramie Project"? What did he try to achieve?
- "Beyond Laramie: Roots of Intolerance"
 - What do these acts of hatred have in common? How can we prevent them from happening?
- "The Laramie Project: Notebook"
 - Why does a "Play of Moments" do Mathew Shepard justice?

Objectives...

1. Articulate the purpose of The Laramie Project
2. Identify key players/perspectives
3. Read and analyze various articles for pertinent background information, the roots and effects of intolerance, and the play's format as a "play of MOMENTS"

inTIME

LARAMIE
POP 24410
ELEV 7165



In November 1998, ten New Yorkers set out for Laramie, Wyoming, to explore a town and a crime that occurred there.

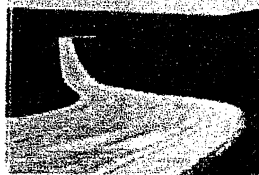


Over the next year, they conducted interviews with more than 200 residents of Laramie. The result was a deeply moving play—and now a film—about bigotry and tolerance, fear and courage, hate and hope.



THE LARAMIE PROJECT

EVERYONE CARRIES A PIECE OF THE TRUTH.



The Laramie Project
premieres on HBO on
Saturday, March 9, 2002,
at 8 pm / 7 c.

HBO

HBO FILMS



GOOD MACHINE



LARAMIE, WYOMING: MIRROR OF A NATION

A brutal killing forces a small Wyoming town to search its soul—and challenges all Americans to confront an enduring hatred

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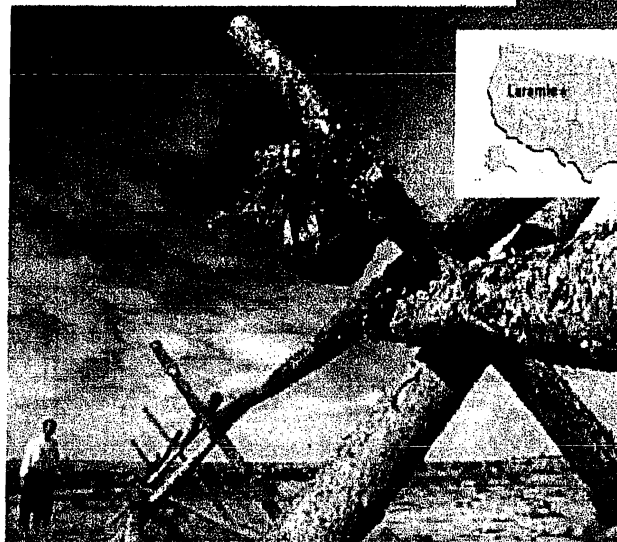
HAT PEOPLE MEAN when they say Matthew Shepard's murder was a lynching is that he was killed to make a point.

When he was 21 years old, Shepard was tied with rope, pistol-whipped and stretched along a Wyoming fence not just as a dying young man but as a signpost. "If we had our way," it says, "this is what we have in mind for gays."

With his beating on October 6, 1998, and his death six days later, Shepard ignited a national town meeting on the enduring hatred that shames this country—a hatred so intense that even death didn't save him from it. While Shepard lay in a coma at a hospital in nearby Colorado, college students there mocked him with a scarecrow atop a parade float. And while his parents prepared for his burial and spoke of their son's gentle ways, a Kansas minister made plans to mount a protest at Shepard's funeral.

To be sure, Wyoming has a strong record on certain human-rights issues: it's been known as "the Equality State" since 1870, when it became the first state to allow women to vote. But in Wyoming—and countless other places across the country, including schools, workplaces and the U.S. military—gay people often feel compelled to hide their identity rather than risk intimidation, ostracism or violence.

Jeff Korhonen, 27, can explain the situation as well as anyone else. He was raised in Cheyenne, his father a career military man, his mother a Mormon, his grandfather a minister.



LARAMIE
POP 26687
ELEV 7165

State representative Mike Massie of Laramie understands the situation, too. Four times during the 1990s, Massie co-sponsored anti-bias bills in the Wyoming legislature; four times they died. There's no problem with

enhanced penalties for crimes against race, religion or ethnicity, he's been told by fellow lawmakers. But if he doesn't drop sexual orientation from the list, then there's not a chance of passage.

"I am so angry over the fact that it never passed," Massie explains, because now the nation can wonder whether, "gee, maybe Wyoming tolerates this kind of thing." ■

Not until his early 20s did he tell his family that he is gay. "When I left Cheyenne for Laramie," he remembers, "my father said, 'I know you're very proud of who you are, but please watch yourself because there are people who will want to destroy you simply because of who you are.' I gave him a big hug and said, 'I know.' And then the first thing I saw when I got to Laramie was a bumper sticker that said HATRED IS A FAMILY VIRTUE."

• Could an attack on a gay student like the one in Wyoming happen in your own community?

YES 65%
NO 27%

• Federal law mandates increased penalties for people who commit hate crimes against racial minorities. Do you favor or oppose the same treatment for people who commit hate crimes against homosexuals?

Favor 76%
Oppose 19%

—FROM A TIME/CNN POLL

Explore more at time.com/1998/10/26/laramie and the cover story

HOPE, HEART AND HATE

The people who inspired
The Laramie Project

MATTHEW SHEPARD was a 21-year-old student at the University of Wyoming in Laramie when a brutal attack transformed him into a national symbol. His death became a rallying point in the struggle for tolerance and against hate.

Raised in Casper, Wyoming, Shepard was a first-year political-science major with an interest in theater. His stated career ambition was to become a diplomat or to work in politics. Two days before the attack, Matthew told a friend that



he had joined the campus gay and lesbian group and was "enjoying it." An avid outdoorsman, he had a passion for camping, hunting, fishing and skiing.

JUDY and DENNIS SHEPARD spoke lovingly of their son's nature: "If this had happened to another person," said Dennis Shepard, "he would have been the first person to offer his help, his hope and his heart to the family."

"Matt's beating, hospitalization and funeral focused worldwide attention on hate. Good is coming out of evil."

—DENNIS SHEPARD,
MATTHEW SHEPARD'S
FATHER



RUSSELL HENDERSON and AARON MCKINNEY, the men convicted of killing Matthew Shepard, were almost the same age as their victim, 21 and 22, respectively. The two friends worked sporadically as roofers and had had a number of run-ins with the police. To explain why he attacked Shepard, McKinney attempted to use a "gay panic" defense, claiming that he was



provoked by an unwanted sexual advance. Judge Barton Voigt refused to allow this argument, and the jury subsequently found McKinney guilty. The judge left it to Shepard's parents to decide if McKinney should receive the death penalty. Speaking to the court, Dennis Shepard told McKinney: "I give you life in the memory of someone who no longer lives. May you have a long life, and may you thank Matthew every day for it." Both McKinney and Henderson are currently serving life sentences in Wyoming.

On October 7, 1998, **AARON KREIFELS** went for a mountain bike ride in a remote section of Laramie. Kreifels fell off his bicycle and stumbled across what looked like a scarecrow. The seemingly lifeless form turned out to be the seriously wounded body of Matthew Shepard. At that point, Shepard had been bound to the fence for 18 hours but was still alive, and Kreifels ran to get help. Raised as a Catholic, Kreifels had been taught that homosexuality is a sin; to his knowledge, he had never met a gay person prior to finding Shepard. While he continued to disagree with the "gay lifestyle," Kreifels also came to believe that God had intended him to ride by the fence so that Matthew Shepard would not have to die alone.

REGGIE FLUTY of the Albany County Sheriff's Office was the police officer who responded to the emergency call about Matthew Shepard. When Fluty arrived on the scene, Shepard was still bound tightly to the fence, and she had to cut through the ropes carefully in order to release him without causing additional injuries. Shepard was so badly hurt that Fluty could not open his mouth to perform mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Once Shepard had been



hospitalized, Fluty was informed that she had been exposed to the HIV virus. Fluty had cuts on her hands, and Shepard had tested positive for the virus. She began taking the drug AZT, which can have a preventive effect if taken immediately after exposure, and was eventually determined to be HIV-negative.

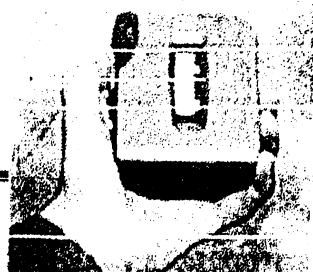
Though **ROMAINE PATTERSON** originally hoped to become a rock star, Matthew Shepard's death transformed her into an activist for tolerance. When Reverend Fred Phelps, Sr., staged an anti-gay protest at Shepard's funeral, waving placards reading "Matt In Hell," Patterson and her friends tried to drown out the taunts by surrounding the demonstrators and singing "Amazing Grace." Phelps returned to Laramie for the trials of Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson. This time, Patterson's activists put on home-made angel costumes with large wings and surrounded the Phelps group, silencing the hateful demonstration. Afterwards, Patterson was often asked to speak about Matthew Shepard and her work to promote tolerance in Laramie and beyond.



"We are a group of people bringing forth a message of peace and love and compassion."

—ROMAINE
PATTERSON

Roman Catholic priest **ROGER SCHMIT** was galvanized by the attack on Matthew Shepard and immediately took a stand against hate crimes and hate speech. Father Schmit insisted that his church be part of the community vigil for Matthew Shepard. Later, he worked as a spiritual counselor to Aaron McKinney, hoping to prevent the death penalty for McKinney. Schmit asked that society learn from the crime of McKinney and Henderson, and challenged all citizens to reflect on how these two young men had learned hate instead of love.



FROM LIFE TO TV: THE POWER OF VOICES

Hundreds of interviews form the basis
for a play and film that chronicle
a town's reaction to a killing

A month after the murder of Matthew Shepard, the frenzied media coverage of this brutal hate crime was beginning to subside. But just then the beleaguered town of Laramie got another influx of visitors. They were actors from New York City who had cast themselves in new roles: as reporters. With tape recorders in hand—and working in pairs at first, in case there was any trouble—they fanned out across the community to interview people affected by the crime: the bartender who saw Matt Shepard leave with the two men later convicted of his murder, the emergency-room doctor who treated Shepard, college officials, religious leaders, police officers, ranchers, friends.

The actors talked to more than 200 people and amassed some 400 hours of interviews over the next year and a half. Verbatim excerpts from those interviews make up the text for *The Laramie Project*, an unusual mixture of drama and documentary. "It brought a whole new focus on events," says Wyoming reporter Tiffany Edwards, who choked back tears on the play's opening night in Denver. "That's the difference between theater and journalism."



ON THE SET:
These photos, from *The Laramie Project* film, were shot on location in Wyoming. The film depicts Laramie residents standing up to hate in vigils (top) and parades (left), while following a group of actors (center) who went to Laramie to see how Shepard's death changed the town.

To find out more about *The Laramie Project*, visit www.thelaramieproject.com

WINNING A COMMUNITY'S TRUST

"The idea for *The Laramie Project*," explains MOISES KAUFMAN, "originated out of my desire to learn more about why Matthew Shepard was murdered; about what happened that night; about the town of Laramie. The idea of listening to the citizens talk really interested me. How is Laramie different from the rest of the country and how is it similar?"

The Venezuelan-born playwright and director saw a "watershed" contemporary event and enlisted members of his Tectonic Theater Project to help develop a stage work—and later a film—from it.

The actors found the townspeople wary of the media yet surprisingly willing to talk. "What helped was that we were clearly not experts and were groping our way," says company member Greg Pierotti, who traveled to Laramie with Kaufman. The interviewers won the community's trust; Kaufman even helped a woman move furniture when she was evicted from her low-income home.

"The experience of working on *The Laramie Project* has been one of great sadness, great beauty, and, perhaps most important, great revelations—about our nation, about our ideas, about ourselves."

—MOISES KAUFMAN, CREATOR OF *THE LARAMIE PROJECT*

CREATING A CULTURAL X-RAY

inTIME spoke with director Moisés Kaufman to learn why he embarked on *The Laramie Project*—and how he hopes his film will inspire viewers.

Q: Why do you think Matthew Shepard's murder attracted so much attention?

KAUFMAN: Matthew was a young student with his life ahead of him. We could all identify with him and say, "My God, they stopped his life at the most beautiful moment of it. He could be everybody's brother. He could be everybody's friend." There was also the symbolic nature of the crime: it was a crucifixion. You can't do that in our culture without getting an incredible amount of attention.

Q: What did you hope to achieve by going to Laramie?

KAUFMAN: I've always talked about this as going to "Ground Zero." Those words now take on a very different meaning. But my idea was that if we went to Laramie and interviewed the people of the town, we might be able to create a document that was an X-ray not only of how Laramie was feeling at the end of the millennium, but about how the country was feeling and thinking and talking—about violence, class, education, sexual politics, privileges and rights.

Q: What do you hope students will take away from viewing this film?

KAUFMAN: Most importantly, *The Laramie Project* tries to put us in touch with our common humanity. Past the issues, past the ideas, it tries to focus attention on how we are all different and how we are all the same. When Matthew's murder happened, the students at the high school in Laramie were really shaken by it. And I think this is an opportunity for students all around the country to meditate on what that meant, and on how they can take steps to prevent another Matthew Shepard from being murdered in their communities and in their schools.

There's a line in the film where Father Roger Schmit says that every time someone is called a "tag" or a "dyke," that is the seed of violence. It would be interesting for students to look around their school environment and ask, Where are the seeds of violence here? In *The Laramie Project*, people ask: What is a community? And what are the values that guide a community? Those are great questions for students to think about.

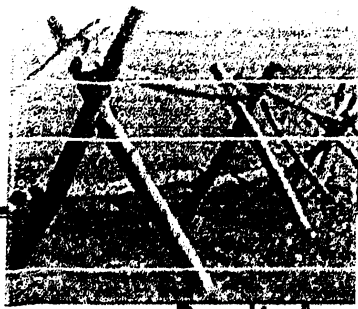


SEEKING JUSTICE: In a dramatic courtroom scene, the prosecutor plays a tape recording in which Aaron McKinney confesses to beating Shepard.



ANGEL ACTION: Romaine Patterson (right) and fellow student activists countered anti-gay protesters by dressing as angels and surrounding them. Costume designers for *The Laramie Project* re-created this moment for inclusion in the film (above).





BEYOND LARAMIE: ROOTS OF INTOLERANCE

Despite America's promise of freedom for all, citizens have faced persecution for being different. Six case studies shed light on the deep-seated causes of bigotry, violence and hatred

During the American Revolution, Colonel Charles Lynch—a fierce patriot—yearned to punish his fellow Virginians who were disloyal to the cause of independence. Lynch set up his own court, named himself its judge, and announced that suspects found guilty of supporting the British would be whipped under a tree in his yard. “Lynching”—in which a mob takes the law into its own hands to injure or kill a person accused of wrongdoing—became increasingly common as the nation expanded.

Between 1882, when reliable statistics were first collected, and 1968, 4,743 persons died of lynching; 3,446 of them were black men and women. Onlookers often cheered and children played during lynchings; pieces of the corpse were sometimes taken as souvenirs of the event.

American history is filled with countless stories of prejudice against

groups and individuals because of their political beliefs, race, religion, gender, national origin, sexual orientation or other differences. These stories are unsettling, but examining them can illuminate the causes of bigotry—as well as steps individual citizens can take to help America live up to its promise of liberty and justice for all.

1 JAMES BYRD: DEATH BY DRAGGING

Four months before the murder of Matthew Shepard, the small logging town of Jasper, Texas, was itself transformed by a vicious hate crime. James Byrd, a 49-year-old African-American resident, was killed by three white men who shackled him to the back of a pickup truck and dragged him for several miles. Pathologists believe Byrd was still alive and conscious for the first two miles, until the truck hit a concrete drainage ditch, instantly killing Byrd and severing his head, upper torso and right arm from the rest of his body. White supremacist roommates John William King, 24, and Lawrence Russell Brewer, 32, were sentenced to death in their 1999 trials. Both were members of the Confederate Knights of America, a faction of the Ku Klux Klan.

2 JAPANESE AMERICANS: SUSPECTED OF TREASON

In response to Japan's 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, the U.S. government decided to detain approximately

120,000 Japanese Americans in camps throughout the Western states. Although no Japanese American was ever convicted of spying for Japan during World War II, these American citizens and naturalized Japanese immigrants were removed from their homes, under suspicion of disloyalty or treason against the U.S. Families were forced to leave their communities quickly, often selling houses and businesses for a fraction of their worth before being taken to remote camps in deserts and other harsh environments. Ironically, many of those interned were later drafted into the U.S. armed forces and sent overseas to fight for the government that had imprisoned them.

3 ANTI-SEMITISM: THE TARGETING OF JEWISH AMERICANS

In August 1999, Buford Furrow, Jr. walked into a Jewish Community Center in Los Angeles and shot five people, including four children, three of them under seven. Furrow, a member of the white supremacist group Aryan Nations, told law-enforcement officials that his shooting spree was “a wake-up call to America to kill Jews.”

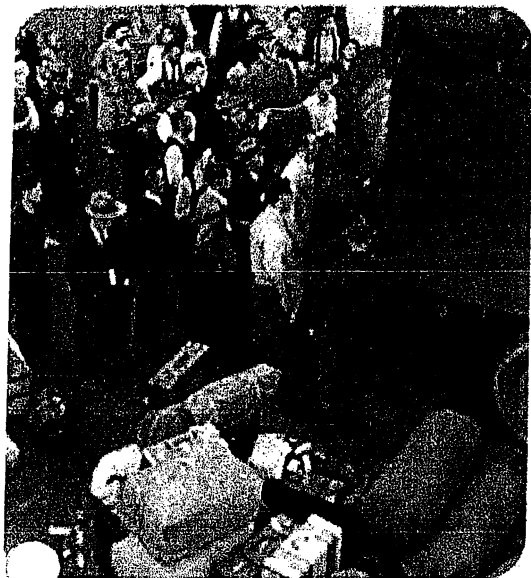
Rabbi Abraham Cooper of the Simon Wiesenthal Center of Los Angeles, which monitors hate crimes and hate groups, says that Jews are disproportionately singled out as targets for hate crimes, particularly in California. In 2000, for example, anti-Semitic acts represented 12



percent of hate crimes in the state, while Jews make up only three percent of the population.

4 INTOLERANCE ON THE WEB: THE RISE OF DIGITAL HATE

There are now more than 3,000 hate sites on the Web, notes Rabbi Abraham Cooper of the Simon Wiesenthal Center (www.wiesenthal.com), which



EVACUATED: FDR ordered Japanese Americans into detention camps.

tracks white supremacists and other hate groups that use the Internet to spread messages of intolerance. "These are multipurpose hate organizations," says Cooper. "They are anti-Jewish, anti-immigrant, anti-minority and, some would argue, anti-American." Combatting hate on the Web can be difficult, particularly because some hate groups use misleading tactics. For example, www.martinlutherking.org is a site created by people who hate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his message of justice. But unsuspecting Web surfers would assume the site is dedicated to the values or memory of Dr. King, when in fact it promotes racism and anti-Semitism. For more resources on countering digital hate, visit www.hbo.com/hate.

5 CAMPUS VIOLENCE: COLUMBINE AND BEYOND

Five years ago, Evan Ramsey brought a pump-action shotgun to his Alaska high school and opened up, killing the principal and one student. Now he is serving a 210-year term in a maximum-security prison in the Alaskan mountains. Every night, before crashing in the tiny cell he shares with a fellow murderer, he mops the prison floors, a job that earns him \$21 a month, just enough to buy soap, shampoo and stationery.

Ramsey says he committed his rampage because he was sick of being picked on in school. "Nobody liked me, and I could never understand why," he says. "It was pretty bad then, but it's a lot worse now. I sit there, and I wish, I wish, I wish, I wish I didn't do what I did."

Following the Columbine massacre of 1999—in which two students opened fire in a Colorado high school, killing 13 people and then themselves—a blue-ribbon panel criticized police, school officials and parents for not intervening after being given signs of the killers' murderous intent. "That would have been one of the best things a person could have done," says Ramsey of his own case. Adds Ronald Stephens of the National School Safety Center: "The best metal detector is the student." That's because in more than 75 percent of school-violence incidents, the attacker tells someone before resorting to violence.

6 MUSLIM AMERICANS: IN THE LINE OF FIRE AFTER 9/11

Following the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, hate crimes against Muslims, Arab Americans, Sikhs and others

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

We all grow up with prejudices. It takes effort to see them as clearly as others do. Human-rights experts recommend starting with our speech and thought patterns. Am I quick to label "rednecks" or "liberals"? Do I tell gay jokes? Am I careless with gender descriptions?

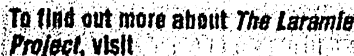
Here are some other questions you may ask yourself: How wide is my circle of friends? How diverse is my holiday card list? How integrated is my neighborhood? Why is that? Do I belong to private clubs that exclude? How often am I in the minority? Do I have the courage to ask a friend not to tell a sexist joke in my presence? How can I go out of my way to know people who appear different?

SOURCE: TOLERANCE.ORG

who appeared to be Muslim skyrocketed. In the two weeks after Sept. 11, the Council on American-Islamic Relations documented more than 600 anti-Arab and anti-Muslim incidents in the U.S., including four murders, assaults on 45 individuals, and attacks on 60 mosques. Many South Asian Americans and Arab Americans were afraid to go out in public for fear of violence, name-calling or other harassment based solely on appearance. Congressman John Cooksey of Louisiana told a radio program that "if I see someone that's got a diaper on

his head, that guy needs to be pulled over." (He later apologized.) And in a CNN poll, 49% of adults said that all Arabs—including American citizens—should be required to carry special ID cards. ■





VERBATIM
VERBATIM
VERBATIM

REALITY "I cannot mention anyone who has done more for this community than Matthew Shepard."

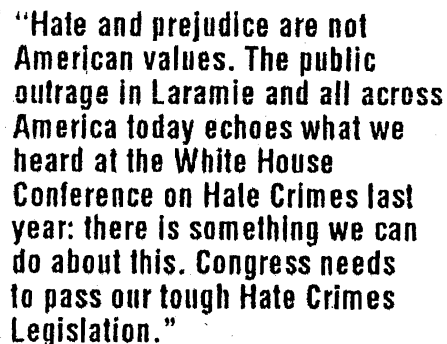
—FATHER ROGER SCHMIT, CATHOLIC PRIEST IN LARAMIE, WYOMING

"I don't know what the hell [Matthew] was trying to do, but I beat him up pretty bad. Think I killed him."

—AARON MCKINNEY, IN A TAPE-RECORDED CONFESSION TO THE ALBANY COUNTY, WYOMING, SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

"I would like to urge the people of Wyoming against overreacting in a way that gives one group 'special rights' over others. We will wait and see if the vicious beating of Matthew Shepard was motivated by hate."

—JIM GERRINGER, GOVERNOR OF WYOMING



—FORMER PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON

"I hope that Matthew Shepard as he was tied to that fence ... had time to reflect on a moment when someone had spoken the word of the Lord to him—and that before he slipped into a coma, he had a chance to reflect on his lifestyle."

—BAPTIST MINISTER IN LARAMIE, WYOMING

"I would be afraid to walk down the street and display any sort of affection for my [female] partner. You don't do that here in Laramie."

—ZACKIE SALMON, UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING ADMINISTRATOR

8,063 Total number of hate-crime incidents reported to the FBI in 2000 (the latest year for which figures are available). Reporting is a voluntary action taken by states and localities; experts agree that the number of crimes reported is significantly lower than the number actually committed.

4,337 Number of hate crimes in 2000 motivated by racial bias. Federal statistics show that crimes against African Americans are the most common form of hate crime.

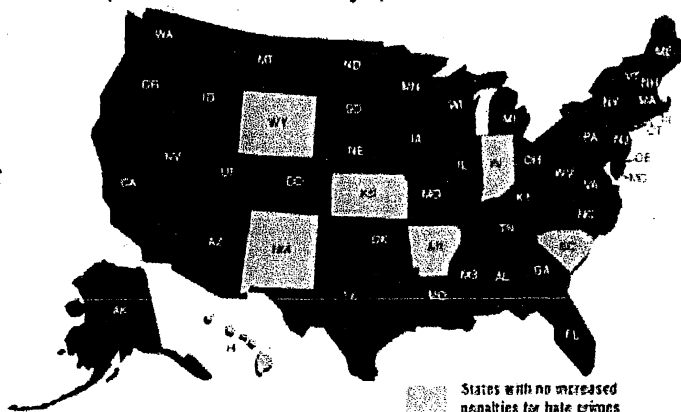
1,472 Number of hate crimes in 2000 motivated by religious bias. Crimes against people of the Jewish faith are the second most common form of hate crime.

1,299 Number of hate crimes in 2000 motivated by sexual-orientation bias. Crimes against gay men are the third most common form of hate crime.

SOURCES: FBI UNIFORM CRIME REPORTING PROGRAM; PARTNERS AGAINST HATE

HATE-CRIME LEGISLATION IN THE U.S.

Hate crimes target victims on the basis of their perceived race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, national origin or ethnicity. The role that these personal characteristics play in motivating the offender is the key difference between hate crimes and other crimes. In 41 states, extra penalties are imposed on crimes fueled by racial hatred; 24 states apply steeper punishments to crimes motivated by sexual-orientation bias. The Supreme Court unanimously upheld these laws in 1993.



States with no increased penalties for hate crimes

Name: _____ Period: _____ Contemporary Literature

Directions: As you read/watch, complete these graphic organizers for key “characters” in the play (be sure they provide a unique and necessary perspective in understanding Matthew Shepherd).

| Speaker | Relationship to Matthew | What added information about Matthew do we gain from this person’s perspective? | Evaluate the information presented by this speaker. Does it provide you with a valid representation of Matthew Shepard? |
|---------|-------------------------|---|---|
| | | | |

| Speaker | Relationship to Matthew | What added information about Matthew do we gain from this person’s perspective? | Evaluate the information presented by this speaker. Does it provide you with a valid representation of Matthew Shepard? |
|---------|-------------------------|---|---|
| | | | |

| Speaker | Relationship to Matthew | What added information about Matthew do we gain from this person’s perspective? | Evaluate the information presented by this speaker. Does it provide you with a valid representation of Matthew Shepard? |
|---------|-------------------------|---|---|
| | | | |

1) a. How does *The Laramie Project* portray the media's effect on our perception of Matthew Shepard?

b. On a broader and more universal level, how might a play of "moments" serve as a fair representation of Matthew as an individual?

2) Why did you choose these three individuals? What perspective do they provide that would otherwise go unheard?

***The Laramie Project* Moment Juxtaposition Project**

Directions: Using all graphic organizers and activities from your reading of *The Laramie Project*, your group will construct meaning by re-ordering *moments* in the play.

In your groups:

- ☐ Each group will re-order a group of moments from *The Laramie Project*
- ☐ Each person will contribute to the construction of a new meaning from your new order of moments
- ☐ Each person will analyze the new construction by comparing it to Kaufman's text (will be collected in group packet)
- ☐ Each person will contribute equally to a group discussion fueled by each group member's findings
- ☐ Each group will analyze the two meanings (Kaufman's order of moments vs. your group's order of moments) and evaluate Kaufman's choices of moments for a class discussion (one group member should take notes for when your group is ready to share with the class)
- ☐ One spokes-person will use these notes and speak on behalf of his/her group

Objectives:

- ☐ Reconstruct the text according to speaker and the most logical, chronological presentation of meaning
- ☐ Analyze your new construction for meaning and compare this meaning to what is presented in the text
- ☐ Evaluate Kaufman's choice of arrangement

Example of Poster (one per group):

***The Laramie Project* Moment Juxtaposition Project**
By: Group Members

| | |
|-----------|---|
| Moment 1: | TITLE SPEAKER SUMMARY OF MOMENT JUSTIFICATION OF PLACEMENT OF MOMENT |
| Moment 2: | TITLE SPEAKER SUMMARY OF MOMENT JUSTIFICATION OF PLACEMENT OF MOMENT |
| Moment 3: | TITLE SPEAKER SUMMARY OF MOMENT JUSTIFICATION OF PLACEMENT OF MOMENT |

Papanikolaw
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Name: _____ Period: _____

Analysis of your group's new order of moments

Use this space to conduct an independent comparative analysis of the new construction of moments. In paragraph form, justify the new order of moments and compare it to Kaufman's. This will be collected.

"Charlie Howard's Descent" Mark Doty

Between the bridge and the river
he falls through
a huge portion of night;
it is not as if falling

is something new. Over and over
he slipped into the gulf
between what he knew and how
he was known. What others wanted

opened like an abyss: the laughing
stock-clerks at the grocery, women
at the luncheonette amused by his gestures.
What could he do, live

with one hand tied
behind his back? So he began to fall
into the star-faced section
of night between the trestle

and the water because he could not meet
a little town's demands,
and his earrings shone and his wrists
were as limp as they were.

I, imagine he took the insults in
and made of them a place to live;
we learn to use the names
because they are there,

familiar furniture; faggot
was the bed he slept in, hard
and white, but simple somehow,
queer something sharp

but finally useful, a tool,
all the jokes a chair,
stiff-backed to keep the spine straight,
a table, a lamp. And because

he's fallen for twenty-three years,
despite whatever awkwardness
his flailing arms and legs assume
he is beautiful

and like any good diver
has only an edge of fear
he transforms into grace.
Or else he is not afraid,

and in this way climbs back
up the ladder of his fall,
out of the river into the arms
of the three teenage boys

who hurled him from the edge-
really boys now, afraid,
their fathers' cars shivering behind them,
headlights on- and tells them

it's all right, that he knows
they didn't believe him
when he said he couldn't swim,
and blesses his killers

in the way that only the dead
can afford to forgive.

Name: _____ Period: _____ Date: _____

"The Laramie Project" Socratic Seminar Questions

In his introduction to the play, Kaufman writes *"There are moments in history when a particular event brings the various ideologies and beliefs prevailing in a culture into sharp focus. At these junctures the event becomes a lightning rod of sorts, attracting and distilling the essence of these philosophies and convictions. By paying careful attention in moment's like this to people's words, one is able to hear the way these prevailing ideas affect not only individual lives but also the culture at large"* (v). As you lead yourselves in discussion, you may want to use this idea as a touchstone for your larger conversation.

Directions: Answer the following questions IN A WORD-PROCESSED document and be prepared to submit your answers THE DAY OF our Socratic Seminar.

- 1) Why do the Tectonic Theater Project cast members interview so many different people in Laramie? How did this help Moises Kaufman achieve his goal in writing "The Laramie Project"? What was his goal? Has he achieved it?
- 2) How can this play be seen from a Post Modern viewpoint? Describe specific elements of Post Modernism and provide your opinion concerning how effective this play is as a vehicle through which to teach this literary genre.
- 3) How is Matt characterized in the play? How does that characterization change depending on the person talking? Describe specific people from the play.
- 4) What is the importance of the setting of the play? Could Basking Ridge be considered similar to Laramie? Why or why not?
- 5) What does the play say about the role of religion in Laramie? In the United States? Provide one example of textual evidence.
- 6) What does the play say about the role of education and the university in Laramie? In the United States? Provide one example of textual evidence.
- 7) What is the significance of the "journal entries" in the play? How do they contribute to the play's structure as a "Play of Memories"?
- 8) What assumptions do people outside of Laramie make about the community? How is this expressed throughout the play? WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF UNDERSTANDING LARAMIE, WYOMING?
- 9) What does the play say about Laramie? About Wyoming? About the West? About the United States?
- 10) Why do you think that you are reading this play in Contemporary Literature? How can understanding the themes involved in the life and death of Matthew Shepard guide you as you leave Ridge High School and pursue your higher education efforts?

Name: _____ Period: _____

Socratic Seminar Rubric Tally Sheet
The Laramie Project

| Student | # Times Contributed | Quotes Text Directly? | Analyzes Quotes Thoroughly? | Uses Others' Answers? | Presents New Ideas? | Adds Insight? | Speaks Freely? |
|---------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------|----------------|
| | | | | | | | |

- 1) What did this student do well?
- 2) What should this student improve upon for future Socratic Seminars?
- 3) Grade: A B C D E (Use Socratic Seminar Rubric from your notes)

Name: _____ Period: _____

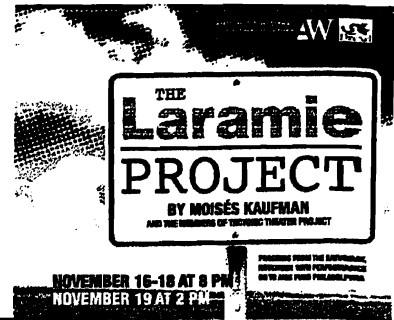
Socratic Seminar Rubric Tally Sheet
The Laramie Project

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|---------|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------|----------------|
| | | | | | | | |

- 1) What did this student do well?
- 2) What should this student improve upon for future Socratic Seminars?
- 3) Grade: A B C D E (Use Socratic Seminar Rubric from your notes)

Name: _____

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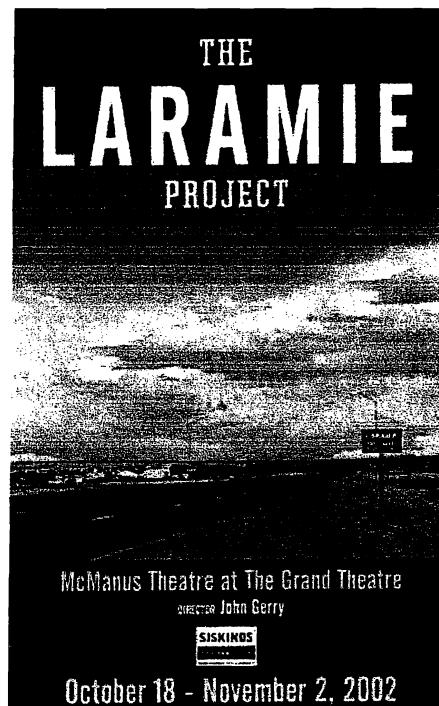
The Laramie Project

Final Assessment Project

As you viewed and read *The Laramie Project*, you were exposed to the voices of over hundreds of people within the Laramie community. Each “voice” brought about new perspectives and a different side to what actually happened to Matthew Shepard. The production of *The Laramie Project* received criticism, both good and bad, while it was performed nationally. How would Basking Ridge have reviewed a production of the play? How would cities nationwide respond to this production? IT WILL BE YOUR JOB TO FIGURE IT OUT!

- 1) You will be divided into six small groups and assigned a liberal or conservative city in the United States:
 - ☐ Miami, Florida;
 - ☐ New York, New York;
 - ☐ Los Angeles, California;
 - ☐ Provo, Utah;
 - ☐ Lancaster, Pennsylvania;
 - ☐ Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
- 2) You and your group will research the following about your city:
 - ☐ Demographics
 - ☐ Dominant religion
 - ☐ Race
 - ☐ Ethnicity
 - ☐ Education levels of the citizens
 - ☐ Socio-economic status
 - ☐ Political affiliation
- 3) Aside from researching your assigned city, you will need to find the above information about Basking Ridge. **Provide evidence of all research by printing out and annotating/highlighting each article (to be submitted the day of your presentation).**
- 4) You will conduct a comparative analysis between the two cities (Basking Ridge and your assigned city). This will include developing a hypothesis about how each city would respond to a production of *The Laramie Project*. Would they respond positively or negatively?
- 5) Your hypothesis will stem from your research –
 - ☐ Which factors most likely contribute to the response of the citizens?
 - ☐ The religious views?
 - ☐ The political affiliation?
 - ☐ The dominant race?
 - ☐ Be sure to include **ALL** contributing factors into your analysis.

- 6) You will put together a poster that represents the requirements listed above about your comparative analysis.
- 7) You will also be responsible for a 1-2 page comparative analysis paper about your assigned city and Basking Ridge. In order to receive the highest score possible, anticipate providing an answer to the questions listed in # 5 in your paper. **This paper will be submitted the day of your presentation.**
- 8) Your presentation **WILL NOT** merely be your group members reading off of your paper, but rather it will be an analytic response to how different aspects of a community (religion, socioeconomic status, etc) shape cultural perspective on a particular subject matter - **in this case homosexuality.**
- 9) *You will lastly need to provide me with a detailed list of the responsibilities given to each group member during Thursday and Friday's project creation days. Delegating responsibility is necessary and will delineate the varying grades among your group members.*
- 10) **Refer to the criteria sheet for grading.**



Wyo. town reflects 10 years after Shepard's murder

By BOB MOEN, Associated Press Writer Sat Oct 11, 6:00 AM ET

LARAMIE, Wyo. - A decade after a gay college student was beaten, tied to a fence and left for dead, many in this small college town are still struggling with the aftermath of a crime that triggered nationwide sympathy and brought a re-examination of attitudes toward gays.

ADVERTISEMENT

Ten years ago, 21-year-old Matthew Shepard died after being beaten and left in the cold by two men he met in a bar. Residents were shaken by the brutality of the crime, and the media descended on the town trying to explain why it happened.

Today, residents lament Shepard's death but insist it doesn't define Laramie or its people.

"It's not representative of Laramie, of Wyoming or the West," said Melodie Edwards, who owns a downtown bookstore.

"We have the same problems here that exist everywhere in the country — racism, sexism, homophobia all exist," said Jim Osborn, a University of Wyoming employee who is gay. "But I think that most people in Laramie are decent, friendly people who understand that while you might not like somebody, and you even have the right to hate somebody, you don't have the right to hurt somebody because of that."

Nestled in a valley between two mountain ranges, Laramie has a population of about 27,000, including roughly 10,000 students at the university:

"It's as close to small-town, rural America as you can get and still have a comprehensive university," said University of Wyoming President Tom Buchanan, who grew up in New York and moved to Wyoming more than 30 years ago.

There was a gay community here in the fall of 1998 when Shepard enrolled at the university. He joined its Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Association, a student group with about 50 members.

Shepard died Oct. 12, five days after his 5-foot-2, 105-pound body was found lashed to the lonely fence outside town. He was beaten so severely — his skull was fractured in six places — that the bicyclist who saw him initially thought he was a scarecrow lying on the ground.

The two men who killed him are serving life sentences in prison. Residents disagree whether Shepard's death was a hate crime, a drug-induced robbery that went too far or both. Prosecutors' cases included evidence with elements of robbery, drugs and hate against gays, but the court only determined that the men were guilty of murder and not why they killed Shepard.

Whatever the case, life in Laramie changed.

"One of the things that the Matthew Shepard murder did was it reminded all of us, and it continues to remind all of us, that there is no place that is immune from random acts of senseless violence that plague our country, our society," Buchanan said.

Laramie was thrust into the national spotlight by media attracted by the murder of a young gay college student in a small Western town. It also produced an outpouring of films, books and plays.

"A lot of the coverage I believe really capitalized on the mythos of the West," said Osborn, who was chairman of the student gay group when Shepard joined and now works for the university's diversity and equal employment opportunity office. "It was phrases like 'He was a different kind of cowboy.' Matt wasn't a cowboy!"

Some of the coverage attempted to blame Laramie for somehow creating the murderers. Osborn recalled seeing one TV report quoting a local man at a bar as saying gay people should expect to be attacked in Wyoming.

"The crime of two people was presented as a crime of the city," Mayor Klaus Hanson said.

Residents say prejudice against gays in Laramie is no different from anywhere else.

"I think people are pretty laissez-faire out here, pretty independent, a pretty accepting state," said Jeff Figg, a retired businessman who moved here six years ago. "This is a much more enlightened area, the exact opposite of what the press portrayed it."

Beth Loffreda, a UW English professor who wrote a book about residents' response to the murder, said that even though Wyoming lawmakers have declined to pass a hate crime law she has noticed a change in how residents treat gays.

"I think it's a little better here for gay and lesbian people than it was 10 years ago," she said.

There wasn't much in the way of publicly marking the 10-year anniversary of Shepard's death. A week ago, the university dedicated a bench that had been donated by a foundation set up by Shepard's parents to help support gay youths.

Osborn, Buchanan and others say the best way to honor Shepard is by treating gays as they would heterosexual people.

"We have realized in the most painful way that we cannot take tolerance and respect for granted," Buchanan said at the bench dedication ceremony. "Instead we must make it an explicit part of our mission even when this posture exposes students, parents, community members and our leaders to ideas and concepts that challenge ingrained ways of thinking."