

MARCH 3 - MARCH 29, 2020 | QUADRACCI POWERHOUSE

Play
Guide



ECLIPSED

By Danai Gurira | Directed by May Adrales

Executive Producers:

Jackie Herd-Barber & Michael Barber
Judy Hansen

Associate Producers:

Catherine & Buddy Robinson

SPONSORED BY



MILWAUKEE
REP

www.MilwaukeeRep.com | 414-224-9490

MARCH 3 — MARCH 29, 2020 | QUADRACCI POWERHOUSE

ECLIPSED

By Danai Gurira | Directed by May Adrales

Executive Producers:

Jackie Herd-Barber & Michael Barber
Judy Hansen

Associate Producers:

Catherine & Buddy Robinson

SPONSORED BY



Mark Clements
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Chad Bauman
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PLAYGUIDE WRITTEN BY
Lindsey Hoel-Neds
CONTENT WRITER

Katie Wagner
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

PLAYGUIDE EDITED BY
Jenny Toutant
Director of Education

Auburn Matson
Education Administrator

Lisa Fulton
Chief Marketing Officer

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Synopsis	3
Characters and Creative Team	3
About the Playwright	4
A Brief History of Liberia	6
The Liberian Civil Wars	8
Women Rebel Fighters in Liberia	10
Child Soldiers in the War	11
Women of Liberia Working for Peace	12
Allusions in the Play	14
Featured Artist	15

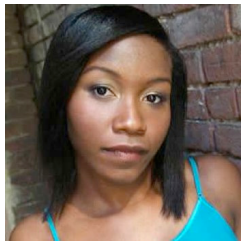
SYNOPSIS

Eclipsed takes place in 2003 during the second Liberian Civil War and tells the story of four women brought together by circumstance. The four women are all “wives” of a commander in the rebel group Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD). They have been kidnapped and forced to be domestic servants and sex slaves to the Commander.

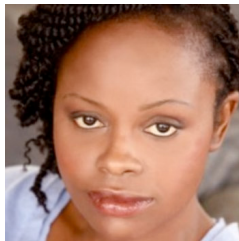
The women refer to each other in number order, but each has a distinct personality and story of her own. Helena, Wife #1, has been with the Commander since the first war and serves as the head of the small community of women they have established. Maima, Wife #2, has left the group to join rebel forces as a fighter. Bessie, Wife #3, is pregnant with the Commander’s child. “The Girl,” Wife #4, is fifteen and new to the group, after being kidnapped by the Commander like the other women were years before.

As the women negotiate their relationships with each other and within their forced domestic environment, Rita, a woman working with a peacekeeping organization, visits and tries to convince the women to join her cause. Maima has also returned, and tries to convince The Girl to join her in fighting for the rebel forces. As the story progresses, loyalties shift, lives change, and the women find comfort and conflict in each other.

CHARACTERS & CREATIVE TEAM



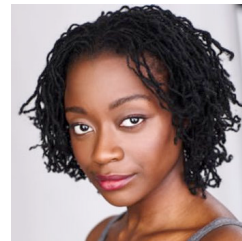
Ashleigh Awusie
Wife #2



Nancy Moricette
Rita



Jacqueline Nwabueze
Wife #1



Matty Sangare
Wife #4



Sola Thompson
Wife #3



Danai Gurira
Playwright



May Adrales
Director

Collette Pollard
Scenic Designer

Kara Harmon
Costume Designer

Annie Wiegand
Lighting Designer

Fan Zhang
Sound Designer

Judith Moreland
Voice & Text Director

Deanie Vallone
Dramaturg

Frank Honts
Casting Director

Kimberly Carolus*
Stage Manager

Rebecca Lindsey*
Assistant Stage Manager

Abbi Hess
Stage Management Resident

Kelsey Robins
Assistant Director



Danai Gurira. Photo Credit: Marvin Joseph, *The Washington Post*.

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT AND THE PLAY

Playwright Danai Gurira was born in Grinnell, Iowa in 1978 to parents Josephine and Roger Gurira, both members of the Grinnell College staff/faculty who later worked at UW-Platteville. Gurira is the youngest of four siblings. At age five, Gurira and her family moved back to her parents' native Zimbabwe after the country gained independence. Gurira spent the rest of her childhood in Zimbabwe and returned to the United States to attend Macalester College in Saint Paul, Minnesota from which she earned a B.A. in Psychology.

During a semester abroad in South Africa, Gurira participated in a program called Arts and Social Change, which served as a turning point for her, leading her to connect arts and her unique voice as a storyteller and writer. After finishing her studies at Macalester, Gurira attended the NYU Tisch School of the Arts and earned an M.F.A. in Acting.

Gurira has pursued both acting and playwriting throughout her career. In graduate school, she and Nikkole Salter wrote a two-woman piece called *In the Continuum* about women living with HIV. They presented the piece in many places around New York, including for the United Nations. A longer version of the play premiered at Primary Stages in 2005, which led to a tour across the U.S. and in Zimbabwe. Gurira's other plays include *The Convert*, *Eclipsed*, and *Familiar*.

Gurira is probably best known for her some of her more notable acting roles. Two of her most well-known roles are as powerful woman warriors: Michonne on AMC's post-zombie apocalypse drama *The Walking Dead*, and as Okoye in *Black Panther* and other movies in the Marvel cinematic universe. Gurira has also appeared in the films *All Eyez on Me*, *Mother of George*, *3 Backyards*, *My Soul to Take*, *The Visitor*, and *Restless City*. She has also had roles on television series *Treme*, *Law and Order: Criminal Intent*, *Life on Mars*, and *Law and Order*.

Gurira is the co-founder and Executive Artistic Director of Almasi Arts, a collaborative to increase arts education in Zimbabwe. She also co-founded Love Our Girls, an organization that promotes awareness and activism around causes that impact women and girls around the world. She also serves as a UN Women Goodwill Ambassador highlighting gender equality and women's rights through her public platform.

Eclipsed premiered at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company in Washington, D.C. in 2009, and then made its Broadway debut in 2016. The Broadway production starred Academy Award winner Lupita Nyong'o as The Girl, and was the first Broadway production with an all-black female cast, black female director, and black female playwright. The production was nominated for six Tony awards, including Best Play, and won several other awards including an Obie, several Drama Desk awards, a Lucille Lortel award, and a Tony for Best Costume Design.



Photos Left to right: Gurira as General Okoye in *Black Panther*. Photo Credit: Study Breaks. | Gurira in *In the Continuum*. Photo Credit: Loving Danai Gurira. | Lupita Nyong'o and Zainab Jah in *Eclipsed* on Broadway. Photo Credit: Sara Krulwich, *The New York Times*. | Gurira as Michonne on *The Walking Dead*. Photo Credit: AMC. | Zainab Jah, Saycon Sengbloh, Pascale Armand and Lupita Nyong'o in *Eclipsed* on Broadway. Photo Credit: Sara Krulwich, *The New York Times*.

1816 - Robert Finley establishes the American Colonization Society (ACS) in the U.S. to lobby for the repatriation of freed slaves to Africa. The movement is a combination of abolitionists and those who fear the retribution of freed slaves.

1820 - Supported by Congress, 88 emigrants from the ACS set sail for West Africa. They settle on an island in Sierra Leone, but in three weeks a quarter of the settlers and all of their white sponsors die of yellow fever.

1822 - Survivors join other settlers who land at Providence Island. They buy a sixty-mile long strip of land from the indigenous Bassa tribe. They name the settlement "Christopolis."

1824 - The settlement is renamed Monrovia after American president James Monroe and the entire colony is named Liberia.

1847 - The U.S. government approves a constitution for Liberia written by Harvard professor Simon Greenleaf. Slavery is forbidden, but indigenous people are denied equal rights with the black American settlers. Liberia declares itself an independent state with the motto: "The Love of Liberty Brought Us Here."

1871 - The third president of Liberia, Edward J. Royce, starts a reconstruction program and goes into heavy debt with England. People resent him and he is deposed.

1893 - Wars between the settlers and indigenous people escalate.

1908 - The Liberian Frontier Force is established as mobile police unit within the hinterland to collect taxes and enforce government authority.

1915 - The Kru tribe revolts against the government's taxation and laws. The LFF crushes the rebellion and executes its leaders.

1926 - Firestone Tire Company signs a 99-year lease for land to establish rubber plantations in Liberia.

1929 - The League of Nations tries to abolish Liberia as a sovereign nation amidst claims of indigenous people being sold into slavery to Spanish plantations.

1930 - Liberia enters an economic depression.

1944 - At the request of the U.S., Liberia declares war on the Axis powers and becomes a staging area for the Allied war effort. Leaders of Liberia become the first African heads of state to travel to the U.S. as guests of the American president.

1946 - Indigenous people are given the right to vote.

1971 - In an increasingly politically charged world, the new president, William R. Tolbert, faces much opposition, and becomes less pro-American than previous administrations.

1973 - The Socialist Movement for Justice in Africa (MOJA) is founded.

1975 - The Progressive Alliance of Liberia (PAL) is founded.

1979 - Demonstrations over the high price of rice lead to the death of over forty people killed by security forces. MOJA and PAL gain popular support. Charles Taylor, a dissident Liberian student, returns to Liberia at the invitation of President Tolbert.

1980 - Sergeant Thomas Quiwonkpa leads a small group of soldiers in staging a military coup. Tolbert is assassinated and thirteen members of his cabinet are later executed. Master-Sergeant Samuel Doe declares that the People's Redemption Council has taken power. He becomes head of state and co-chairman of the PRC. Taylor serves as the head of the Government Services Agency.

A BRIEF HISTORICAL TIMELINE OF LIBERIA

1983 - Anti-Doe/Pro-Quiwonkpa dissidents raid government buildings and an iron ore mine. Quiwonkpa attempts to flee, but is caught and executed. Charles Julu, a Krahn kinsman of Doe, leads bloody reprisals for the raids in the lands of the Gio and Mano tribes. This act inflames the tribal divisions that will exist later in the war.

1984 - Taylor flees Liberia following charges of embezzlement. He is arrested and jailed in Massachusetts for fifteen months awaiting extradition before escaping.

1985 - Doe becomes president in a rigged election and becomes an important Cold War ally to the U.S. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf is jailed after returning from exile.

1986 - Doe establishes a constitution for the Second Republic of Liberia. He officially recognizes the Mandingo people as a Liberian ethnic group, causing resentment from many other Liberians.

1987 - Taylor forms a rebel group called the National Patriotic Front for Liberia (NPFL) in Libya. The group plans to remove Doe from power and gets backing from Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast.

1989 - On Christmas Eve, around a hundred NPFL fighters cross into Liberia. They begin fighting the predominantly Krahn Armed Forces of Liberia.

1990-1997 - Liberia descends into war. (More details on this in the following article.)

1999-2003 - The second Liberian Civil War.

2006 - Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf becomes president of Liberia and the first female head of state in Africa.- Taylor is indicted for crimes committed in neighboring Sierra Leone.

2007 - Taylor's trial for war crimes and crimes against humanity begins.

2012 - Taylor is found guilty by the Special Court and is sentenced to fifty years in prison.

2018 - Liberia elects their first indigenous president, George M. Weah.

THE FIRST LIBERIAN CIVIL WAR

Eclipsed takes place during the Second Liberian Civil War, but understanding the First Liberian Civil War is essential to understanding the historical circumstances that led to the war in which our characters find themselves.

In 1980, Samuel Doe and his soldiers staged a military coup to overthrow the existing Liberian government. In 1985, Doe was elected president in what is widely considered to be a fraudulent election. In the late 1980s, as dissatisfaction with Doe increased, rebel forces planned to overthrow his regime. In 1989, the exiled dissident Charles Taylor and members of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) invaded Liberia from the Ivory Coast. Most of Taylor's troops were from the Gio and Mano people, who were opposed to Doe's predominantly Krahn government.

The NPFL clashed with government forces and ethnic groups that supported Doe's rule, specifically the Krahn and Mandingo people. While all sides generated civilian casualties during the conflict, Taylor's NPFL was responsible for the slaughter of thousands of Liberians -- both military and civilian.

As the NPFL advanced on the capital of Monrovia in 1990, they specifically targeted people in ethnic groups that remained loyal to Doe.

Because of the high number of civilian casualties, Ghanaian and Nigeria troops from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) arrived to help keep the peace, but ended up prolonging the war by aiding Doe's troops. In September of 1990, Doe was captured and assassinated along with members of his cabinet by Prince Johnson and his Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL), which had been waging its own campaign against the government.

ECOWAS prevented Taylor from capturing Monrovia and established an interim government with Amos C. Sawyer as president. Taylor refused to work with the government and continued fighting. As the war continued, at least seven factions became involved in the conflict, including the NPFL, the United Liberian Movement of Liberia for Democracy (ULIMO), the Lofa Defense Force, and many members of the Armed Forces of Liberia who were still loyal to Doe's government. These warring factions led to death of over 250,000 people.

In 1992, Taylor's forces launched "Operation Octopus" as an attack on Monrovia. Finally, in 1996, Nigerian officials forced the major warring factions to sign the Abuja Accord requiring that they all agree to disarm and cease conflict by 1997, as well as establish UN-monitored elections. In 1997, Taylor was elected president of Liberia.

Refugees fleeing the war. Photo credit: Chris Hondros, Getty Images.



THE SECOND LIBERIAN CIVIL WAR

The peace in Liberia was short lived. In 1999, the rebel group Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), backed by the neighboring country of Guinea, launched their campaign. Most of LURD was comprised of Krahn and Mandingo fighters, two of the ethnic groups that opposed Taylor. Many of them had been part of the group United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy (ULIMO).

In September 2000, Taylor persuaded anti-government dissidents in Guinea and Sierra Leone to form the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) to oppose the governments that were supporting LURD. Thus, the conflict spread to three nations. His actions were condemned by the United Nations and led to support for the governments of Guinea and Sierra Leone by Great Britain and the U.S.

By early 2002, LURD forces had outmaneuvered Taylor's troops and were closing in on Monrovia. In May of that year, they staged an attack on Arthington, only twelve miles from Monrovia.

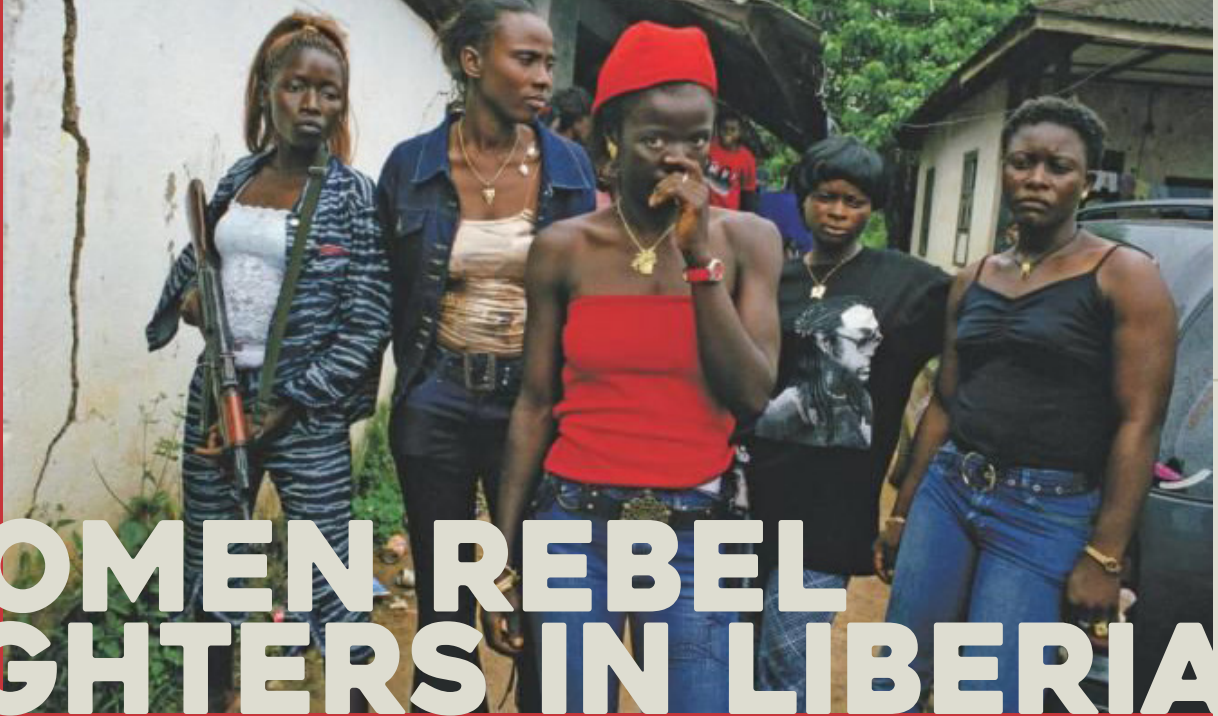
Another rebel group called the Movement for Democracy in Liberia, backed by the government of Côte D'Ivoire, moved into the southern part of Liberia to challenge Taylor by early 2003. By May, Taylor controlled only about a third of the country. With rebels approaching the capital on all sides, the president of Ghana, then chair of ECOWAS, proposed an agreement that would end the conflict. While Taylor was initially hesitant to sign the agreement, Leymah Gwobee and the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace staged a silent protest outside the capitol which led to his promise to attend the peace summit.

In July, even as peace talks were occurring, LURD forces approached Monrovia and began a siege that left thousands dead and injured. On July 29, LURD allowed ECOWAS forces to enter Monrovia to keep the peace. On August 11, 2003 Taylor resigned and flew to exile in Nigeria. On August 18, the Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement established a transition government and the first post-war elections to take place in Liberia in 2005.

Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf became the 24th president of Liberia and the first female head of state of an African nation as a result of the 2005 election. In 2007, Taylor went on trial at The Hague for his crimes against humanity and war crimes, and was convicted and sentenced in 2012. Johnson-Sirleaf served as president of Liberia until 2018.

Rebel soldiers, Monrovia, 1990.
Photo Credit: *Past Daily*.

Black Diamond (in red) and her commanders.
Photo Credit: Ricardo Venturi.



WOMEN REBEL FIGHTERS IN LIBERIA

In the play, Maima has left the compound and her servitude with the Commander to fight alongside the rebels. She tries to recruit The Girl, using arguments of freedom and autonomy to persuade her to the cause. Maima, and the real women like her, were Gurira's inspiration for the play. Gurira saw a picture published in the *New York Times* in 2003 of women rebel fighters, including the infamous Black Diamond, and was intrigued. In 2007, Gurira went to Liberia to interview women who survived the fourteen-year long conflict through similar survival tactics women in the play use: as soldiers, as peacekeepers, and as captive "wives."

The real women upon whom Gurira based the character of Maima were a powerful group who were unique in their place as women in two wars which seemed to be the conflicts of men. Many of the 30,000+ women who fought in the wars did so after being brutalized or raped by Taylor's forces while others were recruited while seeking safety in refugee camps. Regardless of their reasons, the women in the rebel forces were feared and saw fighting as a way to gain safety and power of their own.

One of the most well-known of the women rebel fighters was Black Diamond, who was known for her fighting skill and her fierceness. Black Diamond was interviewed by several international news outlets, and her story rings with elements that are shared by many who fought with LURD (Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy) or other rebel forces. When the war broke out, she was a promising young student growing up in her community of Voijama, where her father practiced

medicine. When Taylor's troops invaded her town, both of her parents were murdered and she was gang raped.

She sought shelter at the headquarters for LURD, and when the compound was attacked she picked up an AK-47, joined in the fighting, and never looked back. She quickly became a colonel in LURD's Women's Auxiliary Corps and developed a reputation as a strong fighter. She, and many women like her, saw joining the fight as a way to prevent more rapes and violence perpetrated against themselves and other women. An eponymous play by J. Nicole Brooks about Black Diamond's story was produced by Lookingglass Theatre Company in 2007.

In Liberian society, former fighters struggle with stigma and moving on past the horrors and atrocities they witnessed and in which they partook. Almost ten years after the war, Black Diamond said the following in an interview with *The Guardian*: "I am suffering today because of what Charles Taylor did. The war took everything from me: my parents, my education and my future. I want to spread the message that we must pursue peace. We must make sure that we never see another war here in Liberia."

CHILD SOLDIERS IN THE WAR

Both of the opposition groups, LURD and MODEL, as well as military forces, used children as combatants when the fighting resumed in Liberia in 1999. In some cases, the majority of members of military units were children under the age of eighteen. The use and abuse of children as soldiers was a deliberate policy on the part of the highest levels of leadership in all of these groups. While precise numbers are hard to pinpoint, the U.N. estimates that over 15,000 fought in the conflict, but other estimates put the number at over 35,000.

Regardless of the fact that international law prohibits the use of child combatants, thousands of children as young as nine or ten years old fought in Liberia. Child soldiers not only have to be the perpetrators of violence upon others, but also suffer physical, psychological, and often sexual abuse at the hands of their adult commanders and fellow soldiers. Many children were forced to fight, and those who joined willingly often cited revenge for atrocities perpetrated upon their families, fear of violence, or a need for safety and survival as their reasons for fighting.

Children were often the first sent out onto the front lines when in heavy combat, even with very limited to no training. Children were also tasked with manning roadblocks, serving as bodyguards for commanders, and kidnapping other children. The younger children also often had to serve as domestic servants in addition to having to fight in combat.

Girls were raped and served as sex slaves for commanders, much like the women in the play. They were referred to as "wives" whether they were assigned to a particular man or shared by multiple captors. The girls could sometimes avoid sexual abuse by capturing other girls and forcing them into sexual servitude.

While the conflict ended fifteen years ago, the costs to these former child soldiers is huge. Many have suffered poverty, loss of much of their families, and destruction of their homes. Not to mention the psychological and physical toll of what they endured during the war. In Liberia, there is still a stigma attached to those who fought in the war -- a social pressure also weighs heavily on these child soldiers now grown.



A child soldier with ULIMO in 1996. Photo Credit: Jean-Marc Bouju, AP Photo.



THE WOMEN OF LIBERIA WHO FOUGHT FOR PEACE

In the play, Rita serves as an agent of a women's peacekeeping group based upon groups that were actually working for peace during the wars. The women of Liberia used their voices and their unique place in their society to bring peace to their war-torn homeland.

The group Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace was started by Crystal Roh Gawding, Comfort Freeman, and Leymah Gbowee in Monrovia in 2003. They stated, "We would take the destiny of this tiny nation into our own hands. In the past we were silent, but after being killed, raped, dehumanized, and infected with diseases...war has taught us that the future lies in saying NO to violence and YES to peace!"

A coalition of Christian and Muslim women, both indigenous and the elite Americo-Liberians, came together to use non-violent protest to move the country towards peace after years and years of war, violence, rape, and subjugation of women. Early on in the second war, The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), a regional organization based in Ghana, realized the gravity of the situation and established the Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET). WIPNET operated in several West African countries, offering trainings in conflict resolution, empowering rural women, and opposing community violence. At the Liberian branch, only four women showed up to the first meeting, but at its height in 2003, regular attendance was over 500.

WIPNET identified several problems in the peacemaking process in Liberia: women were not "at the table" and as such, women's issues

Liberian women protest for peace.

Photo credit: *Face2faceAfrica*.

within the peacemaking process were not being discussed or met. WIPNET felt that if women created their own space to organize, this problem could be solved. Hence, the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace was born. "We'd been pushed to the wall and had only two options: give up or join up to fight back." Gbowee recalls, "Giving up wasn't an option. Peace was the only way we could survive. We would fight to bring it."

THE CAMPAIGN HAD THREE FUNDAMENTAL OBJECTIVES:

1. The conflict come to an immediate, unconditional ceasefire
2. That peace talks take place between government and rebel officials
3. That international intervention forces be deployed to Liberia

The activists used their status as women as a powerful weapon, often referencing their status as mothers, daughters, aunts, wives, etc. to reflect their role in Liberian society. This connection to the family and women as caretakers allowed the peacemakers access to combatants and government officials that others might not have been able to attain. The women even held a "sex strike" to move their cause forward.

The movement also gained traction when the women used their faith connections to move the needle forward, imploring Christian and Muslim religious leaders to publicize their cause. Media both in Liberia and outside of Liberia, both public and church-controlled shone a spotlight on the women's campaign. Large groups of WIPNET members took to the streets to pray in silent protest wearing all white and removing any jewelry or accessories that would indicate class

or religion, thereby presenting a united sisterhood.

The actions of the activists forced Charles Taylor to promise to participate in peace talks in Accra. Taylor was indicted by the International Criminal Court for war crimes. He abandoned peace talks and fled back to Liberia. The women continued their vigils for peace throughout Monrovia. By July of 2003, even as peace talks occurred

in Ghana, violence continued in Monrovia. Over 200 women staged a sit-in outside the peace talks demanding a resolution to the conflict. When the negotiators tried to exit without a resolution, the women threatened to strip off their clothes,

an act that would shame the men. The women physically barricaded the negotiators in the chambers until the lead negotiators came out to talk to them. He went back into the chambers and said, "If those women out there continue... because they are angry, they will come in here and they will do just what they please, so please, we have to do something, so that those women can leave the place."

Two weeks later, under the demands of the activists and pressure from the international community, the peace talks ended in an agreement. Two years later, at the end of the transitional government, Liberia elected Ellen Johnson Sirleaf the first female president of Liberia and in Africa.

In 2011, Leymah Gbowee and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf shared a Nobel Peace Prize with Tawakkol Karman, a female peace activist in Yemen.

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

DOCUMENTARIES:

*Women of Liberia:
Fighting for Peace*

Pray the Devil Back to Hell

BOOKS:

*Mighty Be Our Powers: How
Sisterhood, Prayer, and Sex
Changed a Nation at War* by
Leymah Gbowee

*Madame President: The
Extraordinary Journey of Ellen
Johnson Sirleaf* by Helene Cooper

Long Story Bit by Bit: Liberia Retold
by Tim Hetherington

ALLUSIONS AND TERMS IN THE PLAY

Throughout the play, the characters not only reference events and people in Liberia, but also popular culture and other people and things that are important for the audience to understand the context of the conversations in the play.



COMING TO AMERICA - At the opening of the play, the women are discussing the 1988 film *Coming to America*, which stars Eddie Murphy as the prince of a fictional African country called Zamunda who travels to New York to find a bride. The women of the play discuss the ending of the film in which Murphy's character, Prince Akeem returns to Zamunda and ends up marrying his American love interest instead of his African betrothed.



JANET JACKSON - Bessie refers to her wig making her look like Janet Jackson. Jackson is a pop star who has been in the public eye since her childhood as part of the famous Jackson family along with superstar brother Michael.



BILL CLINTON - Throughout the play, the women are reading a book about Bill Clinton, former President of the United States. Even though the play takes place in 2003, the women are not aware of Clinton's story due to the limited access they have to television or the internet, so they listen to the story as if it is an intriguing soap opera.

MONICA LEWINSKY - The women are intrigued when Monica Lewinsky, former White House intern and mistress of Clinton's appears in the book they are reading



YOUSSEU N'DOUR - N'Dour is a Senegalese singer known for his extensive vocal range and for introducing international audiences to *mbalax*, a popular African musical style. *Rolling Stone* called him "perhaps the most famous singer alive" in much of Senegal and Africa during the time when the play took place.



SEUN KUTI - Kuti is a Nigerian musician and the son of famous Afrobeat pioneer Fela Kuti, who heads the band Egypt 80.



FUFU - Fufu is a traditional food item in much of West Africa using cassava and plantain flour mixed with water. Other flours are sometimes substituted for the cassava.



TUPAC - Tupac Shakur was an American rap superstar, actor, and poet who achieved great success both during his life and after his murder in 1996.



GEORGE W. BUSH - Former U.S. president who was in power during the time of the play.

Coming to America Photo Credit: IFC Center. Janet Jackson Photo Credit: Marie Claire. Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky Photo Credit: WENN. Youssou N'Dour Photo Credit: Pan-African Music.com. Seun Kuti Photo Credit: BBC. Fufu Photo Credit: Immaculate Bites. Tupac Shakur Photo Credit: Deadline. George W. Bush Photo Credit: Wikipedia.

FEATURED ARTIST: LEAH HARRIS AND THE SHEROES CAMPAIGN



Women have been making strides in the last few years to say the least. We have seen them marching in the streets, driving climate discussions, drafting policies as new members of congress, and developing scientific breakthroughs. Milwaukee Rep's Director of Community Engagement, Leah Harris, believes it

is time to celebrate the women in our own community working to create a better Milwaukee. In conjunction with our production of *Eclipsed*, Harris and her team at Milwaukee Rep are launching the SHERoes campaign.

"This is our way of lifting up women, specifically women of color, in our community," says Harris. This kind of project has truly been a long time coming for Harris. While the themes and subject of the play blend well with the campaign, Harris has always been aware of how important women of color have been to Milwaukee.

"When I first started this job, everyone was telling me who to talk to and have coffee with to help develop community engagement, and I noticed that nine out of ten of these people were women of color," says Harris. When developing this idea, Harris has been motivated by what she has been seeing in her everyday life.

"I've been so inspired by the women I see that are up there holding the mantle and rewriting narratives about the city because there is so much good work being done that often times narratives that come from our really troubled history and past continue to dominate how we think and talk about the growth of our city." However, it was her conversation about community engagement with *Eclipsed* director May Adrales that really brought this idea together.

"We were talking about how these women are sheroes in their community and how they are multidimensional women who are truly fighting for the betterment of their surrounding circumstances," says Harris. This led her to wonder how that could be mirrored in Milwaukee during such a crucial time for women's rights in such a crucial city.

"In my work, it's almost always women of color who are advancing dialogues and rewriting narratives for Milwaukee's controversial past. There is a lot of attention on our city right now because of the DNC this summer, and it is a big election year," says Harris. Everything has seemed to come together for this campaign with *Eclipsed*'s run in the Quadracci Powerhouse this spring.

"With *Eclipsed*, I feel like if there was one opportunity in our whole season to uplift and amplify women who do the same kind of community betterment, involvement, and engagement in Milwaukee, this was the play that aligned really well with that," says Harris. The process for the campaign has been really rewarding for Harris to watch with about 100 submissions that were narrowed down to 12.

"Hopefully on opening night we will have all 12 SHERoes here with us and we will have a moment before the show starts to acknowledge them and their work," says Harris. But it doesn't stop there.

"I want this to be a dialogue with our SHERoes to see how they want their work to be amplified throughout the run," says Harris. Harris has many high hopes for this campaign and believes Milwaukee will see the benefits of this work.

"I'm hoping that people learn something new about some women in our community that we may or may not get to see in the spotlight very often. I'm hoping that it raises awareness about a very important piece of theater that is *Eclipsed*. Most importantly, I'm hoping that people learn and meet some new women throughout this and learn about what people are doing in our community," says Harris.

Eclipsed's opening night and celebration of the selected SHERoes will take place on March 3rd in the Quadracci Powerhouse.

Dr. Lisa Edwards, Professor, Director of Counselor Education; Coordinator of Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program at Marquette University

Dasha Kelly Hamilton

Crystal Harvey, MPS School Teacher

Itzel Hernandez, Artist

Katie Avila Loughmiller, Co-Founder, LUNA (Latina's United in Arts)

Shayvon McCullum, Founder, Secure Bridges

Kai Gardner Mishlove, Advocate Aurora Walkers Point Clinic, Tables Across Borders & EDOT Midwest Jewish Diversity Project.

Tina Nixon, Founder, My Sistas Keeper

Shavonda Sisson, Program Director and Director of Ally Engagement, Public Allies Milwaukee

JohnRae' Stowers, Assistant Director of Student Educational Services at Marquette & Founder, Jazzyrae Boutique

May yer Thao, Assistant Deputy Director, Wisconsin Housing & Economic Development

Diana Vang-Brostoff, VA Medical Center, Social Worker

ECLIPSED RESOURCES

ABOUT THE PLAY AND PLAYWRIGHT

<https://www.newyorktheatreguide.com/news-features/interviews/interview-with-eclipsed-playwright-danai-gurira>

https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/magazine/fighting-with-black-panther-killing-zombies-writing-plays-what-cant-danai-gurira-do/2018/02/20/6ff0d634-0127-11e8-8acf-ad2991367d9d_story.html?noredirect=on
https://www.seattlerep.org/Plays/1718/FM/DeeperLook/FM_Playguide.pdf

<https://www.vogue.com/article/danai-gurira-eclipsed-interview>

<https://thetheatretimes.com/feminist-globalist-humanist-intercultural-dramaturgy-compassionate-action-danai-guriras-eclipsed/>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUqfBsAzVgJYFm-s4phlmwCA>

https://www.theatermania.com/broadway/reviews/eclipsed_76216.html

<https://logpledge.org/>

https://www.imdb.com/name/nm1775091/bio?ref_=nm_ov_bio_sm

LIBERIAN HISTORY

Ciment, James. *Another America: the Story of Liberia and the Former Slaves Who Ruled It*. Hill and Wang, 2013.
Hetherington, Tim. *Long Story Bit by Bit: Liberia Retold*. Umbrage Editions, 2009.

Reef, Catherine. *This Our Dark Country: the American Settlers of Liberia*. Clarion Books, 2002.

Streissguth, Thomas. *Liberia in Pictures*. Twenty-First Century Books, 2006.

<http://www.liberiapastandpresent.org>

THE LIBERIAN CIVIL WARS

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/aug/04/westafrika.qanda>

<https://qz.com/africa/1459254/liberias-civil-war-in-photos-child-soldiers-rape-then-peace/>

<https://www.blackpast.org/global-african-history/first-liberian-civil-war-1989-1996/>

<https://www.blackpast.org/global-african-history/second-liberian-civil-war-1999-2003/>

WOMEN REBEL FIGHTERS

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-2007-04-17-0704160088-story.html>

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2012/may/28/female-victim-charles-taylor-speaks>

https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/world-of-work-magazine/articles/WCMS_081362/lang--en/index.htm

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3181529.stm>

<https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=93112314>

CHILD SOLDIERS IN LIBERIA

<https://www.hrw.org/report/2004/02/02/how-fight-how-kill/child-soldiers-liberia>

<https://www.cfr.org/backgrounders/liberia-child-soldiers>

<https://www.newsweek.com/2013/07/31/when-liberian-child-soldiers-grow-237780.html>

<https://www.child-soldiers.org/news/if-we-didnt-pick-up-the-guns-we-would-have-been-killed>

THE WOMEN'S PEACE MOVEMENT

<https://tavaana.org/en/en/content/how-women-liberia-fought-peace-and-won>

<https://nobelwomensinitiative.org/laureate/leymah-gbowee/>

Cooper, Helene. *Madame President: the Extraordinary Journey of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf*. Simon & Schuster, 2018.

Gbowee, Leymah, and Carole Mithers. *Mighty Be Our Powers: How Sisterhood, Prayer, and Sex Changed a Nation at War: a Memoir*. Beast Books, 2013.



VISITING MILWAUKEE REP

Milwaukee Repertory Theater's Patty and Jay Baker Theater Complex is located in the Milwaukee Center downtown at the corner of Wells and Water Streets. The building was formerly the home of the Electric Railway and Light Company.

The Ticket Office is visible on the left upon entering the Wells Street doors. The Quadracci Powerhouse is located on the Mezzanine and can be accessed via escalator or elevator.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT ENABLES MILWAUKEE REP TO:

- ★ Advance the art of theater with productions that inspire individuals and create community dialogue;
- ★ Provide a richer theater experience by hosting Rep-in-Depth, TalkBacks, and creating PlayGuides to better inform our audiences about our productions;
- ★ Educate over 20,000 students at 200+ schools in the greater Milwaukee area with Rep Immersion Day experiences, student matinees, workshops, tours and by making connections with their school curriculum through classroom programs such as Reading Residencies;
- ★ Maintain our commitment to audiences with special needs through our Access Services that include American Sign Language interpreted productions, captioned theater, infrared listening systems and script synopses to ensure that theater at Milwaukee Rep is accessible to all;
- ★ Educate the next generation of theater professionals with our EPR Program which gives newly degreed artists a chance to hone their skills at Milwaukee Rep as they begin to pursue their theatrical careers. We value our supporters and partnerships and hope that you will help us to expand the ways Milwaukee Rep has a positive impact on theater and on our Milwaukee community.

Donations can be made on our website at
www.MilwaukeeRep.com or by phone at 414-290-5376.

MILWAUKEE REP RECEIVES SUPPORT FROM:

The Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation
The Richard & Ethel Herzfeld Foundation



**National
Endowment
for the Arts**
arts.gov

