

Betrayal didn't make it into the top ten "Though Shalt Nots", but it is a major sin with repercussions long past the actual event. And when a child is the victim, the echoes are felt long into adulthood.

"*Lies and Consequences*" fits squarely within the mandate of any theatre company willing to tackle one of the most damaging and pervasive wounds a trusted adult can inflict on a trusting child.

Information about characters, set requirements, comments about the play follow on the next pages.

First produced by Rare Day Projects in Toronto in 2019, directed by Jeanette Dagger, "*Lies and Consequences*" deals with the attempted sexual assault of a ten-year old, by her father's younger brother, John, a much-loved and trusted favourite uncle. While the event happened 20 years ago, Martha, the now adult woman, professionally successful, believes she has successfully buried the event, and has never confronted her assailant, until this day, when they are obliged to meet at an important family gathering. He responds by vehemently professing innocence, repeating his mantra: "You got it all wrong. Nothing happened". While technically true, the child was only saved because she heard her mother at the front door open, jumped up and ran out of the room. For a year she lived with the feeling that she had been "bad" until, finally she finally confesses to her mother. Without asking for details, her mother simply replies that she would speak to him. But to tell no-one. To "keep it in the family". When Martha broaches the subject later, her mother says, "I took care of it." And ends the discussion. They never speak of it again. Martha later realizes that her mother's intention was to protect the family at all costs, knowing that if her husband ever found out what his brother did, it would break up the family.

Martha has told no-one else of the incident, and now she and the perpetrator are the only two living witnesses to the event.

Complicating matters, on this day, the family has gathered to celebrate a professional award to Martha's favourite cousin, John's son. When avoidance becomes impossible, and Martha finally confronts her assailant, he is adamant that she totally misunderstood, she *got it all wrong, she had gone with him willingly, nothing happened*, even more reason for her to doubt her own innocence. He even tells her that when her mother spoke to him, he assured her little Martha had been mistaken. When she responds that her mother would have believed her, he replies, "How do you know? You weren't there."

Martha has tried to shield her cousin Peter from the truth, but the discovery of his father's actions overturns his world, deeply damaging his belief that his recently widowed father is a good person, a loving family man. He knows that he must still assume responsibility for his father's well-being, but now as a duty, not an act of love.

Although the truth is now out for all to know, Martha must still deal with the belief, vehemently expressed by John, that if he is guilty, then so is she. She objectively knows that the adult in such cases is totally at fault, but she is still haunted by the nagging thought: *I should have known, I should have known...*

While forgiveness of John would require his full apology, and may never occur, the more important question remains: will she ever be able to forgive herself?

The betrayal of trust has long tentacles.

“LIES AND CONSEQUENCES”, 75 minutes, no intermission.

First performance: Red Sandcastle Theatre, April 30 – May 5, 2019, produced by Rare Day Projects, under the Equity Artists Collective Policy.

Directed by Jeanette Dagger

with: Ryan Bannon, Tara Baxendale, Martha Breen, Christopher Kelk, Clara Matheson, Derek Perks

Characters:

Martha, aged 40, university professor, successful writer

Cathy, her younger sister, mid-thirties

Peter, Martha and Cathy's cousin, a few years younger than Martha

Karen, Peter's wife, in her thirties

Peter's father, Martha and Cathy's uncle, in his 70's

Andre, mid-40's, journalist, Martha's now estranged boyfriend.

There are four playing areas:

Martha's apartment, a public area, Peter and Karen's hotel room, and the hotel corridor.

The play begins with a prologue, a few weeks earlier. The main action of the play takes place between late morning and early evening of the same day.

Excerpts from reviews, comments:

“Life with more Cowbell” (online column, by Kathy McKim)

You can't change the past, but you can share it... With the genesis of this play occurring well before the emergence of the #MeToo movement, playwright Libman was inspired to return to it and complete the script – and tell the story.....Lovely work from the cast on this timely, sensitive topic....The past keeps rearing its ugly head and Martha must find the courage to confront it if she's going to have any peace.

Kelk's performance as John deftly combines the likeable with the deplorable; the supportive and trusted favourite uncle accused of having dark, secret desires – which John vehemently denies, spins and

gaslights his way around. Classic victim-blaming and shaming, as the perpetrator makes himself out to be the wronged party and the survivor struggles with self-doubt and self-blame.

Consequential theatre - Joe Szek on 'Lies & Consequences' by Rare Day Projects

Will McGuirk May 3, 2019

By Joe Szek

Thank goodness I stayed for the Q & A after the matinee performance of 'Lies and Consequences' because I learned a great deal more about the genesis of the story and how it came to fruition for playwright Carol Libman.. For this sometimes-controversial and shocking story of 'What happens when a family secret...is secret no longer', I believe Q & A's are extremely important for debriefing of highly sensitive subject material.

The intimate black box venue of The Red Sandcastle Theatre made me face head on what the playwright and director called a healing journey for themselves. This journey was sometimes difficult and uncomfortable for me. Why? Director Jeanette Dagger comments in the Program Notes she "was shocked to discover how many women, at some point in their young lives, have been either sexually harassed or abused...and to discover the variance of the overall effect of these incidents on their futures." I began to wonder how many of my female friends and/or family members might have faced the same issues and I was completely unaware of what happened. If anything happened to my family and friends, which story is the truth?