

NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

MARQUETTE, MICHIGAN 49855

January 16, 1978

DEPARTMENT OF SPEECH

Ms. Myla Lichtman
2680 Barrington Avenue--#205
Los Angeles, CA 90064

SCRIPT TITLE: The Wetback

Dear Ms. Lichtman:

I am delighted to inform you that your entry in the First Annual Forest A. Roberts Playwriting Award is among the handful of final plays selected by our screening committee to be considered for production in April!

The response to our initial effort has been overwhelming. We have received over three hundred scripts (straight plays and musicals) from throughout the United States and Canada. They have been penned by Broadway and Hollywood professionals as well as by amateurs, housewives and students. It is indeed gratifying to see the quantity and quality of playwriting activity on all of these levels. My congratulations for being one of our finalists.

The scripts are now being read by a panel of five, including myself, and will be ranked by each individual judge in private. We will then meet as a panel and select one of the three scripts to receive the lowest number of points as our winner. Because of an unusually long Christmas vacation (one full month), we will not be announcing the winner until February 6th.

Enclosed please find a copy of both our Playwriting Award and Season brochures for reference. Please note Rule #3 in which "professionally produced" means that the play has not been presented by an organization with a salaried acting company. If your play was professionally produced, we will have to disqualify your entry. If there was a unique situation regarding that matter, kindly send me the details in a letter, or give me a call at: (906) 227-2553. A decision will be rendered within twenty-four hours.

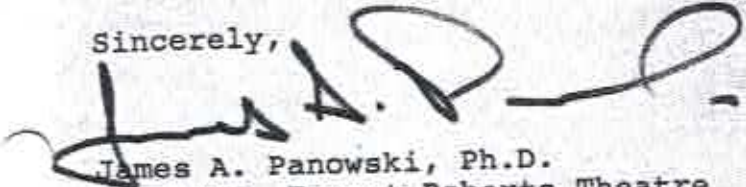
Please note that the actual production will be presented April 26-29. It is our expectation that, should your script be the winner, you will fly into Marquette to serve as Artist-in-Residence during the run. The airline and room and board expenses will be provided by Northern Michigan University. Should you not be able to fly in for the four days, please write or call immediately so that I can make a prompt decision.

In the event that your play is selected as the winner, I will need the following items: (1) six 8 x 10 glossy photographs to be used for display and publicity purposes, (2) biographical information, (3) a resume of your theatre background and experience, and (4) a paragraph to be used on you in the program; i.e., a Who's Who blurb.

It will not be necessary to supply us with scripts for production but we do request that you give us written permission to duplicate whatever number of scripts are needed for production purposes. The scripts would remain the property of Northern Michigan University with the understanding that full compliance with copyright laws will be observed.

Once again, my sincere congratulations! You will be hearing from me shortly.

Sincerely,



James A. Panowski, Ph.D.
Director, Forest Roberts Theatre

JAP:bb

cc

Enclosure

Drama TA finalist in international playwrighting contest

By Sharon Kilmer
staff writer

"Drama has to reflect the problems of the times," said Myla Lichtman, who is one of three finalists for an international award for her play, *The Wetback*.

Lichtman, a teaching assistant in the Drama Department, became interested in the plight of the illegal alien and migrant worker. Her explorations into these peoples' problems became the basis for her play, which is the final contender for a playwrighting contest sponsored by Northern Michigan University.

The *Wetback* is a courtroom

drama involving a young Mexican immigrant who has murdered his employer's son.

Lichtman said one reason for the widespread recognition her play has received is due to the use of a split stage. The play has only one set — half of the stage is set up as a courtroom while the other half resembles a jail cell. This technique allows two things to happen simultaneously.

"It is the overlapping of the two scenes that makes such a strong comment," Lichtman said.

Lichtman said there is a definite lack of understanding be-

tween the American and Mexican cultures. Her play seeks to give the audience a general awareness of the existing working and living conditions of immigrant Mexicans.

The Wetback has been submitted in various national contests in addition to the contest sponsored by Northern Michigan University.

If the play should win, it will be professionally produced at the Forest Robert Theater in Marquette, Mich., and Lichtman would receive an all-expenses paid trip to Michigan and \$500 in cash.

Although she was born in

Washington, D. C., Lichtman has lived in California most of her life. She was a theater arts major at UCLA before spending two years in New York at the Juilliard School of Drama, a professional acting school.



MYLA LICHTMAN

While in New York, Lichtman sang at nightclubs and dinner theaters. She also acted in off-off Broadway shows. Off-off Broadway plays, as opposed to off-Broadway plays, which are usually held in theaters with less than 99 seats, are not controlled by the unions. "They are similar to the showcasing done-out here on the West Coast," Lichtman said.

After returning to California, she obtained her bachelor's degree in drama from the University of California at San Diego and her masters at California State University at San Diego.

In the fall of 1976, she came to the university to work on her Ph.D. "USC is very inspiring because they give you a lot of support and opportunities to explore what you want to explore," Lichtman said.

Besides teaching a drama class on campus, Lichtman also holds private vocal lessons at her home in west Los Angeles. "I really enjoy teaching and I love the USC students," she said.

She decided to change her emphasis from acting to writing because of the disproportionate number of male roles as compared to female roles. "There are 25 male roles to one female role on television," Lichtman said.

"As a writer, I can create more roles for women and can write about women's problems," Lichtman said. "I can also feel that it is really important that the women's point of view be brought to the media."

She said women can "expand peoples' horizons" by writing not only about their own problems and ideals but also about the problems of men.

In the future, Lichtman would like to see the university sponsor playwrighting contests similar to the ones she has entered. "It brings attention to the university and stimulates writers all over the country," she said.

"The theater is not dead; it is only lacking good writers. I want to be the best writer I can so that I can be a good teacher."

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TO: Myla - Lichtman - Fields
RE: The Webback

Thank you for helping to make the fourteenth Annual Mill Mountain Theatre New Play Competition a wonderful success! There was a grand total of 176 professionally submitted entries! Although your play was not selected as one of the seven finalists, we sincerely want you to remember that it is through the creative energies of those such as yourself, that live theatre continues to be such a viable and spirited part of our lives.

We would also like to take this opportunity to remind you that Mill Mountain Theatre is interested in receiving one-act plays (running time 25-35 minutes) for our "Centerpieces" series of lunchtime script-in-hand productions. No re-entries. These can be sent at anytime, address to the Literary Department, Mill Mountain Theatre, One Market Square, Roanoke, VA 24011.

The guidelines for the 99-2000 contest are enclosed for your convenience. Please read carefully. Looking forward to your entry next year.

With deep appreciation for the interest you have shown in Mill Mountain Theatre, I am

Respectfully yours,

Jo Weinstein
Jo Weinstein
Contest Coordinator
Dramatists Guild
LMDA

Myla - thought you would like to know - your play was a semi-finalist - How a great rest of the summer - f.w.

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