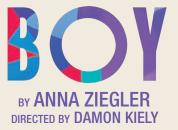


CHICAGO PREMIERE







Dear Friends,

I'm proud to welcome you to Anna Ziegler's *Boy.* We previously featured this beautiful play at a onenight event in 2014, also directed by Damon Kiely, as part of our TimePieces Play Reading Series. Anna was still developing the play at the time, and we're delighted to continue our collaboration with her as she quickly becomes one of the country's most prolific and insightful playwrights.

Boy is inspired by the true story of David Reimer and the decisions about his gender identity that his parents and Dr. John Money made during David's childhood. Raised as a girl, David was forced into an identity he didn't choose, and that never fit who he knew himself to be.

Anna acknowledges that her initial way into writing this play was as a mother, pondering the countless ways in which parents can harm their beloved children's lives, even with the best intentions or with the best information readily available. Decisions made at even a very young age can profoundly alter not only a child's image, but their ability to live as their most authentic self.

In the time since Anna's initial inspiration (and even since our reading

three years ago), *Boy* has only become more timely, poignant, illuminating and essential. And whether your life experience has included a depth of understanding about gender identity, or these issues feel foreign or taboo, the characters in the play are so recognizable and relatable.

On the subsequent pages of this *Backstory*, I encourage you to further explore a glossary of terms and the play's historical context, a timeline of notable events, and on the following page, a further examination of why TimeLine is eager to share this story today.

While David Reimer's life ultimately ended in tragedy, Anna elected to focus (and conclude) her play with hopefulness and love, while opening a door to issues in need of further examination and conversation. In the artist interview starting on page 9 of this *Backstory*, actor Theo Germaine articulates some of those issues with thoughts that are as eloquent as the performance Theo gives as the central character, Adam.

Finally, I must acknowledge one of the invaluable advocates for this play—Josephine Kearns. A colleague of more than a decade and a TimeLine Associate Artist, serving as both Dramaturg and Gender Identity Consultant on this production, Josie's insight and generous spirit have infused this production and our organization in innumerable ways. She's not only one of the most inspiring people I've had the fortune to work alongside, she also exemplifies what TimeLine's mission is about—taking us by the hand into a discussion about how the past and present connect and encouraging us all to strive to build a better, more inclusive future. She's as authentic as you'll find, therein illuminating the core of what this play is all about.

Best,



"Whether your life experience has included a depth of understanding about gender identity, or these issues feel foreign or taboo, the characters in the play are so recognizable and relatable."

WORDS TO KNOW THE STARTING POINT

When we are born, we are assigned a gender. Usually this is straightforward: a child's body is neatly defined as "male" or "female," and they grow up to identify accordingly. People who identify with their gender assignment are referred to as CISGENDER (CIS), and comprise most of the population.

But it isn't always so simple. Roughly 1 in 1,500 people are **INTERSEX**, with bodies that have traits typically assigned to both genders. Many appear visually ambiguous, while others seem clear-cut until the onset of puberty reveals unexpected results. Intersexuality often carries an incredible stigma. Historically, doctors have typically forced intersex people into one gender or the other, including through "normalizing" surgeries in infancy that can have devastating life-long effects.

There are also **TRANSGENDER** (**TRANS**) people—the roughly 1 in 200 who identify with a gender different from the one they were assigned. This could be a switch to the opposite gender or a switch to a non-binary (neither male nor female) identity.

Trans people live in a society where many laws either allow for or explicitly condone discrimination against them, and as a group they suffer from unemployment, housing and work discrimination, suicide, and murder at many times national averages. In all cases, the most affected group is trans women of color.

"Something profound is happening around gender, whether we choose to see it or not." – National Geographic

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In January 2017, *National Geographic* declared us to be in the midst of a "gender revolution," as issues affecting transgender and intersex people have pushed to the forefront of news cycles and legislative agendas alike. In *Boy*, Anna Ziegler tells one of the stories at this revolution's roots—the story of Dr. John Money (the basis for the character of Dr. Wendell Barnes in *Boy)*, who co-founded America's first gender identity clinic 50 years ago, and more importantly, the very personal story of his signature patient.

That patient, David Reimer (the basis for the character of Adam in *Boy)*, would most likely have identified himself as neither transgender nor intersex. But his story strikes at the heart of the issues facing both of these populations today. Like many transgender people, he was raised in a gender that didn't fit him; like many intersex people, that gender assignment was surgically foisted upon him in infancy, causing him lifelong trauma and medical complications.

Yet Adam was a cisgender male. He was labeled male when he was born, and he identified as male later in life. It was only a horrible accident that changed his story. And so his story illuminates the innate sense of gender we all possess, and shows us one example of what can happen when the world around us doesn't reflect it back to us.

TimeLine's production of *Boy* features the work of more than half a dozen artists who identify as transgender. Every element of the production reflects not only Adam's life experiences, but also those of the artists telling his story. Their stories can be found here, too—in the lobby, in this program, on the shelves of the set, and embedded in every detail of the show. Hopefully through their stories and through Adam's we can each, whatever our identities, see a bit of our own stories as well.

Doctors, too, believed in the importance of this segregation. Organizations like UCLA's Gender Identity Research Clinic in the 1960s and '70s existed solely to force children into the rigid boxes of societal expectations, especially working to "prevent [transgenderism] and homosexuality by training feminine boys to behave in masculine ways." But the boxes had begun to be pushed anyway.

TRAVERSING THE BINARY

In 1952, American newspapers ran headlines about Christine Jorgensen, a former G.I. who now identified and lived as a female. After traveling to Denmark to undergo a medical transition, she would live in the public eye for years. She was the first of many major transgender public figures, all of whom, in their own way, would suggest that gender is not as simple as a label we are assigned at birth. Over the ensuing decades, as

Christine Jorgensen.



more such stories were told, more trans people began to come out.

OUTSIDE THE BINARY

Meanwhile, intersex people—whose bodies typically couldn't be easily pinned down as either male or female—had been confounding doctors for centuries. Historically, medical treatment of intersex people had been wildly inconsistent. But in the late 1950s, a team at Johns Hopkins University, headed by Dr. John Money, posed a unique theory: that gender was not strictly innate, but remained fluid through the first couple of years of life.

Dr. Money suggested that if intersex infants were forced to conform to a single gender—including surgeries to "normalize" ambiguous genitalia—they could grow up happily in their prescribed identities. These surgeries, hidden even from the patients themselves, quickly became a standard treatment worldwide.

A LANDMARK CASE

In 1967, Dr. Money was presented with a unique patient: a non-intersex boy, 18 months old with an identical twin, whose body had been damaged in a circumcision accident. Money advised the boy's parents to submit him to surgery and raise him as a girl. Dr. Money later published the case to international acclaim. It seemed final, indisputable proof of the malleability of gender in infancy.

The child was David Reimer. But Money never acknowledged that David's life was one of immense hardship. "There was nothing feminine about [him]," his twin brother Brian would later say, and it led to a childhood of bullying, fist-fights, struggles with doctors and therapists, and depression. And when David transitioned back to male at age 14, Dr. Money simply ceased discussing the case, claiming it "lost to follow-up." Its success would continue to be lauded, and used as a basis for treatment, for decades.

QUESTIONS ARISE

In 1997, a researcher tracked down David Reimer and convinced him to publish his story. David told



The Reimer twins at age five, when David was being raised as female.

of the horrors of growing up in a forced gender and in a body that didn't fit him, and called the practice of forcing a gender upon infants into question. His words took on an especially tragic tone when he committed suicide in 2004.

At the same time, the newly formed Intersex Society of North America (ISNA) had begun making a similar argument. It turned out that the surgeries performed upon intersex infants—which had never been given a follow-up study—had been damaging lives, too. Many intersex people came forward with stories of medical complications, loss of fertility and sexual sensation, and severe psychological trauma, all stemming from treatment based on the premise that it was more important for their bodies to be "normal" than healthy.

The medical world is still grappling with these questions today. As more transgender people have come out (there are 1.4 million in the United States today) it has become clear that there is, indeed, something innate about gender identity—and that it is not as simple as a male/female binary.

Many states have now legalized transitions not only between female and male, but also the gender marker "X," indicating non-binary people who identify as neither. And intersex "normalizing" surgeries are being questioned as well, with a United Nations committee declaring in 2011 that they "arguably meet the criteria for torture" and the World Health Organization in 2015 formally calling for "remedies and [compensation] to the victims of such treatment." However, the surgeries continue to be performed worldwide today.

THE TIMELINE: GENDER IDENTITY AND INTERSEXUALITY IN MODERN AMERICA

1919 Magnus Hirschfeld's Institute for Sexual Science, the world's first gender institute, is founded in Berlin.

1933 The Institute for Sexual Science is burned by the Nazis.

1937 The first standardized intersex treatment protocols are published by Dr. Hugh Hampton Young.

December 1, 1952 Christine Jorgensen's gender transition is revealed in the American press, making her the world's first transgender public figure.

1955–1958 Dr. John Money's team at Johns Hopkins publishes its landmark intersex papers, revolutionizing the treatment of intersex infants.

April 27, 1966 At eight months old, David Reimer's body is mutilated by a botched circumcision.

November 1966 Johns Hopkins announces its Gender Identity Clinic, spearheaded by Dr. Money. It is the world's second clinic for trans patients and the first at a respected medical institution, paving the way for others.

February 1967 Dr. Money appears on the CBC to discuss his gender clinic; Janet and Ron Reimer see him and write to him about David that same night.

June 1967 The Reimers make their final decision to raise David as a girl, and his first surgery is performed.

1968 First U.S. court ruling in favor of legalizing gender change is made.

December 1972 Dr. Money publishes David Reimer's case as a success, to great acclaim; meanwhile David is struggling in school, repeating first grade even as his identical twin Brian moves on.



The Reimer twins in 1970.

1974 Homosexuality is deleted from the North American list of psychological disorders.

1975 The first medical standards are established for transgender care.



David Reimer at age 18, in 1983. (Associated Press)

March 14, 1980
After a deeply
troubled start to
puberty, David
Reimer's parents
tell him his history.
He transitions back
to a male identity
within months.

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GENDER

21ST CENTURY WORLD OF

1980 Transsexualism is added to the North American list of psychological disorders, at once both acknowledging and stigmatizing it.

1993 The Intersex Society of North America is formed to challenge the treatment of intersex infants.

March 10, 1997 David Reimer's full story is published. Dr. Money is thoroughly discredited, and never grants an interview request again.

2003 In Lawrence v. Texas, the U.S. Supreme Court bans anti-gay sodomy laws that still exist in 14 states, officially legalizing homosexuality.

May 4, 2004 David Reimer commits suicide.

2011 The United Nations Committee Against Torture states that "normalizing" surgeries on intersex infants "arguably meet the criteria for torture."

2016 The state of Oregon becomes the first jurisdiction to legally recognize a third gender option.

CISGENDER (CIS), INTERSEX, and TRANSGENDER (TRANS) SEE PAGE 3

DEADNAME A name that a transgender person once had, but no longer uses. Many trans people strongly dislike hearing their deadnames, and deadnaming someone, or asking about their deadname, is highly disrespectful.

GENDER IDENTITY One's innermost concept of self as male, female, neither, something else entirely, or a blend of the above.

GENDER NON-CONFORMING / GENDERQUEER A person whose gender identity or outward appearance of gender does not fit the conventional social standards of either strictly male or strictly female.

NON-BINARY An umbrella term for a gender outside the standard male/female binary. Often used as a third category for gender identity, after male and female, and often associated with they/them pronouns. Most non-binary people identify as transgender.

OUTING Revealing someone's gender identity or sexual orientation, especially without their permission.

PRONOUNS Most commonly she/her/hers, he/him/his, or they/them/theirs, though there are others. English pronouns are heavily gendered and carry immense weight for trans and gender non-conforming people. "They" is not incorrect when used as a singular pronoun.

SEX / SEX ASSIGNED AT BIRTH Generally a "male" or "female" designation given to an infant, usually based exclusively on their external sex characteristics.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION The type of attraction a person feels toward others. Orientation is separate from gender identity; being cis or trans or intersex does not imply that a person will be straight, gay, etc.

TRANSITION For a trans person, the process of changing from one gender identity to another. This does not always imply a binary, i.e. a person can transition to a non-binary identity. The process may or may not involve social changes (name, pronouns, etc.), legal changes (legal name, gender markers on IDs, etc.), and/or medical changes (hormones, surgeries, etc.).



David Reimer in 1998.

David Reimer and his identical twin Brian were born in 1965 in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The Reimers seemed a normal, happy family until the twins were circumcised at eight months—and the doctor's electrocautery machine malfunctioned, destroying David's genitals.

Local doctors offered few solutions. But in February 1967, Janet and Ron Reimer happened to see Dr. John Money on TV. Money explained that gender was malleable in infancy, and described raising intersex babies successfully as girls. Janet and Ron wrote to him and he quickly responded, recommending that David be surgically given a vagina and be raised a girl (penile reconstruction was not yet possible).

The twins were raised with an exaggerated emphasis on gender. They received "boy" toys and "girl" toys. David was taught to cook and Brian to care for the car. David wore dresses even in frigid Manitoba winters. And in 1972, when David was seven, Dr. Money published the case to widespread acclaim, declaring it a success.

But those who knew David saw a different story. His photographic appearance of a little girl "disappeared the second [he] moved, spoke, walked, or gestured," wrote his biographer John Colapinto; he was bullied relentlessly and was deeply depressed. By 14, he had quit school and was refusing treatment from doctors and therapists,

including his annual checkups with Money (which, he and Brian later revealed, had included them being forced to strip naked for the doctor and role play sexual acts together).

Scared of where things were headed, Janet and Ron decided to tell the twins the truth about their past. And from David's perspective, "suddenly it all made sense." He took his new name and transitioned back to a male identity within months.

Things did get better for David. He met Jane Fontaine at age 23 and married her two years later. In her words, David was "a wonderful husband" and they "had a lot of good times." But he couldn't escape his tortured history.

In the mid-1990s, a researcher found David and informed him not only that his case was well-known, but still considered a success—and still used as a basis for treatment. Determined to prevent his horrors from being inflicted on others, David released his story in 1997.

But the media attention was difficult on a family that had struggled with unfathomable trauma and deep depressions, and both twins began to spiral downward. In 2002 Brian died after overdosing on antidepressants. David committed suicide in 2004.

"I'd give just about anything to go to a hypnotist to block out my whole past. Because it's torture."

- David Reimer

In the early 1950s, Money developed a theory that gender was not innate, but malleable until age 2 or 3 and fixed thereafter. This led him to publish three landmark papers from 1955-1958, which suggested that if intersex infants were given "normalizing" surgeries and raised in a single gender, they could live as a happy male or female. The papers were hugely influential, and the surgeries quickly became standard practice.

His theory also led Dr. Money to work with transgender adults. whom he viewed as troubled but (contrary to the wisdom of the time) unable to change. In 1965, he convinced Johns Hopkins to open its Gender Identity Clinic, the first of its kind, to provide hormones and surgeries for trans patients. Other

Dr. John Money in 1970.



"Dr. Money didn't do this out of evil. He was trying to think about what would be best. But we didn't know enough."

- Dr. Paul McHugh, Johns Hopkins University

medical centers followed suit, representing a major step forward for the trans population.

Money's most famous case, however, was that of David Reimer—the cisgender boy whose parents Money had convinced to raise as a girl. He published the case in 1972 to international acclaim. It was the first known case of a non-intersex child being raised in the opposite gender, and its supposed success seemed conclusive proof that gender was not innate.

Money was guite brash. He deeply believed in the normalization of sex and routinely showed intense pornography in his lectures. He also believed children should be allowed to play sexually. and—as the Reimer twins later revealed—at times forced them to do so. His intensity and his fierce convictions made him, in the words of one patient, "way too much for a child."

When David Reimer transitioned back to male in 1980. Money was aware but chose not to publish a follow-up at the time. When the story broke in 1997. Money was disgraced, his theory discredited. He immediately stopped speaking to media. Meanwhile, intersex activists had begun making headway as well, bringing to light other damaging effects of Money's surgeries.

Money later wrote one follow-up, suggesting several explanations for the failure of David Reimer's case that would still fit with his theory. and attempting to discredit the intersex activists who questioned him. He never addressed David's allegations of abuse, or his 2004 suicide. John Money died himself in 2006, at age 84.



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THEO GERMAINE



Theo Germaine

Josephine Kearns

During rehearsals, actor Theo Germaine (TG) sat down with dramaturg Josephine Kearns (JK) to discuss playing Adam, their trans experiences, and the story behind the play.

JK: I'd like to start with you and Adam—what are some ways you see yourself in him, and ways in which your experiences differ?

TG: Adam and I were both raised as girls—he was assigned male at birth, I was assigned female. He was able to transition to the gender he identified with—what he always identified with—around 14 or 15. I came out and started transitioning around age 18. Adam's a cisgender male; I'm a trans person.

JK: He also exists in a male-or-female world. whereas you identify as non-binary.

TG: Yes! But I wasn't always a non-binary identifying individual. I grew up in a very rigid, gendered community and felt for a long time that because I wanted to be on testosterone and have top surgery, that must have meant that I was 100 percent boy. That "boy" was the only other option besides "airl."

But I know myself so, so well now. I understand and feel that I'm not either. I believe with my whole heart that gender is this glorious spectrum. Some people may align more with one end or the other, but that's not me.

JK: So even though you identify differently from Adam, the experience of that discovery feels somewhat similar?

TG: I think so. There are a lot of little things in his history that I look at and go "oh crap, I know that feeling." I got bullied a lot because I was bovish looking. I hated my body for a long time. I thought

I was crazy and was told I was crazy. I also believed that because of who I was, I was never going to live a normal life. That I'd always be alone and my body would be my secret, and I'd have no friends. For a while it was hard to get close to people, or to let them get close to me.

JK: Let's talk about the flashback scenes, where Adam steps into his own childhood. They've always appealed to me because they reflect my own memories—I don't have an image of myself as a little girl, so I sort of see this adult-bodied person inside these memories of a child.

TG: I feel you! In the flashback scenes, you can see the journey of Adam figuring out he is not Samantha—he's not what people have told him he is at all. He gradually gains the ability to articulate his feelings about his conditioning [as a girl].

I relate to that, of course, but also, strangely, it feels kind of easy to slip into the mindset of a child. I had a lot of trauma that I'm finally on the other side of, and I'm in a period of rediscovering who I was before age 11. Getting to play a kid, even for a few minutes, feels positive, pure.

JK: How about the adult scenes?

TG: Adult Adam is on a journey of being comfortable with himself, and being able to be physically intimate with his love. Jenny. As a trans person it took me a long time to be comfortable with those things as well.

He also mentions at one point in the play that when his dad told him the truth, it was "the night he was born"—at age 14. I also felt like I was born, or born again, when I came out and started transitioning into Me.

"We're envisioning a happy moment in this person's life ... [but] David Reimer committed *suicide* because people forced him to exist in this structure. It needs to be talked about."

Adam and I are both in our 20s and still feel like babies in so many ways because there are so many things we're trying to figure out. So many first experiences in our right bodies.

JK: I talk about having gone through second puberty.

TG: I'm going through like my fourth one right now.

(LAUGHTER)

JK: I want to ask about the first conversation you and I ever had, which was about the fact that this is a story about a cis character that we are telling with trans voices.

TG: Oh, yeah. I was having conversations with other trans and gender non-conforming folks and everyone had a different opinion. We all still disagree on things. I was really upset by the play for a long time—mostly because of how much I felt the story didn't tell about the real-life person, David Reimer.

I want people to know these things: the truth about how horrible Dr. Money was to David and his twin Brian, doing "treatment" that I view as emotionally and sexually abusive. The lack of discussion around the mental health of the twins, and how they both committed suicide. And how their household included substance abuse and suicide attempts by at least one parent.

In addition, I believe there's a greater conversation around the involuntary surgeries that intersex babies suffer, and how Dr. Money was "treating" intersex children and teenagers against their consent.

I hope this play opens up all those conversations around consent, intersex folks, trans folks, and mental health.

JK: On the other hand, so many stories told about trans people are tragic, and fraught, and angsty.

TG: Angsty, yes!

JK: And one of the things that drew me to this play was its hopefulness. And, I also agree with what you're saying about the lack of a complete truth about this particular story. It's a tough thing to reconcile.

TG: Right. I think both of those exist in the same sphere. It is good that this play ends well. It's not good if it means we aren't talking about what nonconsensual genital mutilation does to people.

JK: And the things that were done to him are still being done today.

TG: They are. Exactly! This is what I want to talk about! We're envisioning a happy moment in this person's life—because I think things did start to get okay for him for a while, as much as I have read. But there is all this *really* messed up stuff happening that you don't see on stage. David Reimer committed *suicide* because people forced him to exist in this structure. It needs to be talked about.

JK: Any parting thoughts?

TG: There's definitely a part of me that's a little scared to do this play, because of my personal history. But there are so many great people who are involved —including you! So anything I might be nervous about is overshadowed by my excitement to be working here.

Actors Theo Germaine and Emily Marso at Boy first rehearsal.



TimeLine is pleased to recognize generous longtime supporters, Mary and Bruce Feay.

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DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Mary and Bruce's first introduction to TimeLine was when they attended Copenhagen in 2005, but Fiorello! in 2006 and The History Boys in 2009 are what really caught their attention. Mary had been a member of The Saints, volunteer ushering for theatres around Chicago, but "by 2007 I realized that I really enjoyed just attending the plays and being able to go to dinner before." In 2010 they began subscribing, and it was in 2011 that "we realized that we really didn't want TimeLine to go away, so we became supporters in addition to being subscribers. That is when we also started coming to the Step Into Time benefit regularly." Mary goes on to say: "Theater, in general, and TimeLine in particular, is one of the main things that we really love about Chicago ... I feel bad that it took us so long to discover you. We missed probably eight good seasons, but we don't miss any now."

Their favorite TimeLine production was the 2012 world premiere of *My Kind of Town*, which their generous support helped to make possible. Through a special opportunity, they followed the development of the play from first reading to final production, getting to know playwright John Conroy and Associate Artistic Director Nick Bowling as the two collaborated and shaped the play in intriguing ways, including changing the ending. Mary adds, "We also loved *To Master the Art*—we loved Julia Child, and each time we saw the play we felt like she was coming alive, and yes, we got the aroma of her cooking."

What has inspired Mary and Bruce to support Time-Line for so long, in so many ways? "It's fun!" Mary remarks. "I think coming to the benefits is always a joy. We get to support TimeLine and get to know the TimeLine actors, directors, etc. Being so personally involved with the actors and getting to know them as people rather than just characters is great. I say that I go through three stages with a good actor: First, I just take the character at face value. Then, I get the sometimes uncomfortable feeling that they are the "bad" person who they play. And finally, I realize how great their acting is to portray someone so different from who they really are."

Certain actors and performances have made a lasting impact with them over the years. "We saw *A House with No Walls* in 2008," Mary recalls, "where we discovered A.C. Smith and became a fan club for his expressive eyes. We have enjoyed him in performances



Artistic Director PJ Powers with supporters Mary and Bruce Feay.

through the years—no matter what part he plays, his eyes play a lead role."

When not at TimeLine, Mary and Bruce are busy engaging with the other organizations they support, including Remy Bumppo Theatre, the Lincoln Park Zoo, the Field Museum, and National Geographic, or traveling and taking photographs of their travels to share with others.

BACKSTORY: THE CREDITS

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Our Mission:

TimeLine Theatre presents stories inspired by history that connect with today's social and political issues.

Our collaborative artistic team produces provocative theatre and educational programs that engage, entertain and enlighten.

