

EMMA CLAUDINE

A  
MEMORY PIECE\*

By  
Barbara White Morgan

CAST

EMMA CLAUDINE: Narrator. African American, Late Forties

EDDIE: Emma Claudine's deceased father, Mid-Twenties

MARIE: Emma Claudine's deceased mother. Same age

MINIMAL SET

TIME: Present/Past

PLACE: An urban American city

SYNOPSIS: This is a memory piece as told by the daughter of an unarmed Black man who was killed by a policeman who stopped him in traffic for speeding. The man was trying to get his wife who was in labor, to the hospital in time. This story is based on a true event.

AT THE RISE

Eddie and Marie are seated UPSTAGE in the car in DIM LIGHT

(o.s. the familiar "BLACK LIVES MATTER" chant)

LIGHTS FADE ON THE COUPLE, COME UP ON EMMA CLAUDINE

(The chant subsides as she speaks to the audience)

EMMA CLAUDINE

On an early spring evening in 1966 an unarmed black man was speeding through traffic; his wife was in labor and the hospital was a long way from where they lived.

LIGHTS FADE on Emma Claudine. SPOT Eddie and Marie in the car

MARIE

(agonizing) Hurry, Eddie! Hurry! I think my water's about to break!

EDDIE

Just hold on, Baby. We're almost there. Our son's not goin' anywhere until the time is right

MARIE

(through the pain) Candice...our daughter...I know we're having a girl.

EDDIE

Well. My money's on Edward Junior...but, and I say but...if we do have a girl, I wish you would re-consider and name her after our mothers. Baby, our mama's would be thrilled if we named her Emma Claudine.

MARIE

(agonizing) Ooooo! Another contraction!

EDDIE

I've got a surprise for you... was gonna wait until the baby gets here but this news will take your mind off the pain.

MARIE

Don't know if we can make it in time, but what's the surprise?

EDDIE

I got the plant manager promotion!

MARIE

(the same)

Oh, Baby! That's wonderful!

EDDIE

Yeah, it is...and with the salary increase I figure in a few months we can put a down payment on one of those tract homes we looked at.

MARIE

Ooooooo! Contractions are coming closer and closer together!

(SOUND OF A SIREN...THEN SCREECHING RUBBER)

POLICEMAN

(o.s.) WHERE THE HELL IS THE FIRE?!

MARIE

Fire's in my belly!

EDDIE

Officer, my wife's in labor. We're trying to make it to the hospital

MARIE

Please! Just give us the ticket!

POLICEMAN

YOU'RE GOING FIFTY IN A 35 MILE ZONE...PROBLY  
DON'T EVEN HAVE A DRIVERS LICENSE?! LET'S SEE YOUR LICENSE  
BUDDY!

(silence, then the SOUND OF GUNFIRE)

LIGHTS FADE on Marie's bloodcurdling screams

EMMA CLAUDINE

My name is Emma Claudine and the unarmed black man was my father. I am forty nine years old and I was born three hours after my father was killed. My parents were praying that I would stay put until they reached the hospital. My poor mother

had to endure the pangs of childbirth and the death of my father  
simultaneously.

LIGHTS DIM on Emma Claudine UP on Eddie and Marie

EDDIE

Cop lied. I reached for my license, and the gun went off. He  
said the car lurched, How could the car lurch when the motor was  
turned off car didn't move.

MARIE

And neither did time. Time stood still. In an instant our hopes  
and dreams were shattered for all time

LIGHTS DIM on Eddie and Marie

BLACK LIVES MATER CHANT (o.s.)

LIGHTS UP on Emma Claudine. As the chant subsides:

EMMA CLAUDINE

When I was old enough to understand, my mother never let me  
forget the tragic circumstances of my father's death, which was  
ruled accidental. That unjust verdict became my mother's  
millstone...the burden she carried until the day she died.

(beat)

The policeman killed my father, forty nine years ago...but my  
dad's death is being replicated almost every day. What can stop  
the carnage?

(beat)

Maybe if the outrage was more massive... more collective. We need  
worldwide outrage...the kind of outrage we see when someone kills  
a lion in Africa.

End of Scene