HANDS ON A HARDBODY:
COSTUME DESIGN AND STEREOTYPES

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ABSTRACT

This thesis combines the work I did for my Senior Capstone, costume design for Arizona Repertory Theatre’s production of *Hands on a Hardbody*, with the research I did on the stereotypes present in the show and throughout the history of theatre. While working on the production I noticed that there was a very fine line between authentic costumes or satire with designing these characters’ costumes. The show tackles identities as one of its themes, and the characters use stereotypes to attack each other or use as a façade. After completing the production, I decided to research the inception of the visual cues and stereotypes that costume designers use on stage to depict such characters. Because of the politically correct society we live in currently, there’s been an increase in calling out insensitive costumes and portrayals. I analyzed how these costume stereotypes may be damaging and how costume designers can work with visual cues that audiences recognize to convey characters in a sensitive manner. This thesis includes my research paper and documents pertaining to my Capstone design assignment: artist’s statement, research, renderings, production paperwork, and archival photos.
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COSTUME DESIGN AND STEREOTYPES: THE EVOLUTION OF VISUAL CUES AND PREJUDICE ONSTAGE

INTRODUCTION

Indiana Jones. Harry Potter. Darth Vader. Picture these characters in your mind and you know exactly what they look like. Their costumes were expertly designed to create such iconic images. Even without prior knowledge of the worlds that the characters from *Harry Potter* or *Star Wars* inhabit, there were enough clues within their costumes to tell you who these characters are. Harry’s long black cloak and school uniform informed you he was a young wizarding student. Darth Vader’s all black ensemble consisting of a cape, helmet, mask, gloves, and various mechanical elements showed you he was an intimidating villainous presence.

Now picture an African-American “thug” or a white sorority girl. An image popped in your head even if it wasn’t a specific character. How is this possible? Well just as the characters of Harry Potter and Darth Vader consist of images and ideas that allow the audiences to understand them as characters, we have been exposed to notions of what certain identities like the African-American “thug” or white sorority girl would look like. Although not all real-life instances of these identities may dress the way you imagined, in fact you may have encountered actual people who contradict these images, various forms of media have shown you what these identities look like. Perhaps you pictured a large hoodie and baggy pants for our “thug,” and various shades of pink, a short dress or skirt, and blonde hair for our sorority girl. These images have been propagated through media: onstage in the theatre, onscreen in television and film, even in the news.
One can see this in the media attention that was placed on Trayvon Martin and his death, and the fact that he was wearing a hoodie when he was killed. “A simple hooded sweatshirt has become emblematic of certain assumptions in America. And of a desire by many to overturn those assumptions. To a neighborhood watch volunteer in a Sanford, Fla., gated community, the young man in ‘a dark hoodie, a gray hoodie’ was a ‘suspicious guy.’ That’s what George Zimmerman told the 911 dispatcher before he shot and killed the 17-year-old” (Weeks). His hoodie did not make him a dangerous person, but that’s exactly what his killer thought due to images we’ve seen across media of dangerous, shifty people wearing clothes that obscure who they are. Costumes can inform an audience of a character’s identity onstage, and they can also provide us stereotypes to perceive people in our daily lives, a tool that can have disastrous consequences.

THE ROLE OF A COSTUME DESIGNER

Colleen Atwood, a four-time Academy Award winning costume designer says, “Costumes are the first impression that you have of the character before they open their mouth—it really does establish who they are.” As a costume designer, our job is to portray a character onstage in a way that conveys their entire identity to the audience before we’re thrust into the story. If you got tickets to see a production of Oklahoma! and the characters were wearing sparkly disco ensembles, bell bottoms, and polyester suits, you’d be incredibly confused when the characters started singing about life on the farm. A costume designer reads the script and determines what these characters would look like by analyzing their personality, intentions, identity, and journey through the story to provide context of the story to the audience. The designer then turns to research through historical examples, past productions, films, fashion, and little ideas she’s collected over the years. Combining these elements takes the character from
page to stage. With costumes, originality isn’t always the goal. Theatrical costume designer, Marcia Dixcy Jory says:

“I don’t know that costume design is a purely creative enterprise. It can be, but that’s not its salient attribute. More like a game of concentration, costume design requires the kind of mind that likes to remember seemingly trivial visual symbols and combine them accurately. There may be nothing new under the sun. A theatrical designer doesn’t care. She’s supposed to be a thief. Her job isn’t necessarily to come up with something that has never been seen. Rather, it is to find shapes and symbols that have appeared in a variety of times and places and to arrange them in a sympathetic universe” (Jory 4-5).

Unlike fashion designers who strive to create new trends and innovative ideas to stay afloat in their competitive industry, a costume designer must use pre-determined ideas for their “collection.” Even if the story is wholly new, with a completely different world than we’ve even been exposed to before, audiences need context clues that they understand before introducing anything truly groundbreaking. Take Star Wars for instance. Although the costumes may seem completely original and unseen before, they have a basis in existing military uniforms. “[George Lucas] wanted the Imperial people to look very efficient, and totalitarian, and Fascist—all that sort of thing. The rebels he wanted to look a bit like something out of a Western or U.S. Marines in Vietnam” (Alinger 15). By compiling a mix of symbolism, historical research, and other inspiration, costume designers can create the characters the writer has imagined and the audience will understand.

**VISUAL CUES**

How can we tell who people are by what they wear? One way is through established visual cues from various media that may dictate occupation, wealth, class, geography, race, ethnicity, age, health, and self-image among other things. “Symbolism is the root of theatrical costume design. Costumes become metaphors for your characters’ character. The clothes reflect the times, action, station, conditions, and even inner turmoil of your screen characters, while the
background costumes create the world that your main characters populate” (LaMotte 70).

Theatrical clichés, color symbolism, and the psychology of clothing are topics and techniques used by costume designers to find visual cues that the audience will recognize. For example, the color red may symbolize love, passion, evil, aggression, or other personality traits, which combined with the right silhouette can dictate the personality of the wearer. A short, low-cut red dress worn by a female character may symbolize lust, whereas a high collar Victorian gown of the type Jessica Chastain wears in the film *Crimson Peak*, alludes to her aggressive, bristly personality.

Visual cues also work to establish character personalities in worlds that are fantastical and don’t necessarily exist such as *Star Wars, Harry Potter*, and *The Lord of the Rings*. By implementing the same visual cues used in contemporary and period dress films, the audience is aware of the personalities, social stations, and other identifying characteristics of these characters. Speaking about establishing the characters for the first *Harry Potter* film, costume designer Judianna Makovsky says, “We researched everything from medieval sources to images of a Mexican surrealist painter. Most of the garments are based on academic robes, and no matter what period, you’d recognize who’s the teacher and who’s the student” (Landis 494).

In regards to period shows and films, costume designers turn to historical research but often use artistic license to present the characters in a way that contemporary audiences will understand. This may mean using colors, fabrics, and silhouettes that may not have existed in that period. One only has to view the film *Cleopatra* from 1963, to see this in action, with its incredibly 1960s looking gowns worn by Elizabeth Taylor, which have little basis in history. Designing to an audience’s idea of what a period would look like, possibly an idealized one,
also very common. Many of our visual cues for period shows don’t come from history itself but from longstanding theatre and film traditions. Anne Hollander for The American Scholar writes:

“Queen Elizabeth is always recognizable because of the familiar image; but for many others less easily schematized, specific costume conventions have long been established (originally for the stage, but lately adapted for the cinema) that now serve to signal the person or period in question without resembling anything actually worn at that date. So we had Norma Shearer as Marie Antoinette, and we knew it was she because she wore a very shiny, wavy white wig in most scenes. This particular kind of wig is a tried and true cinematic (and incidentally operatic) property of long standing, absolutely necessary to all films set in the eighteenth century in any country, although it does not faintly resemble anything worn in the eighteenth century itself.” (Hollander 672)

To contemporary eyes, clothing of the past often looks unattractive so costume designers often alter the silhouettes and cuts of period costumes so characters who need to look beautiful and alluring in their period dress will. Gone with the Wind, a prime example of this practice, was lauded for its “historically accurate” costumes. “But almost [a century later] we can see that many aspects of the film’s costume styles are rooted more in the 1930s than the 1860s…In all the dresses for the film, bodices were cut to conform to the shape of the bosom, whereas in the 1860s the corset formed the basis for the fashionable shape…Even the men’s suits in the film reflect the late 1930s cut…” (Maeder 128).

STEREOTYPES AND THEATRE

Besides theatrical clichés, color symbolism, and clothing psychology, one of the visual cues costume designers use to convey a character’s identity is through stereotypes. “In an effort to eliminate the time and errors involved in actual trial and error, we often short-cut the working out of adjustments to strangers whom we meet by casting them into a stereotype and treating them accordingly. From some element of their behavior, from their physiognomy, for their dress, or from some mannerism we generalize their personalities and behave toward them in terms of
 classifications rather than of actual personalities” (McIlrath 3). Stereotypes are one way audience members know exactly who a character is before they speak one line of dialogue.

Racial, ethnic, gender, and religious stereotypes affiliated with the clothing worn by different identities and propagated through media with different preconceived notions attached can speak volumes about the character. News and other media have taught us to be distrustful and suspicious of obviously Muslim people who cover their hair or wear clothing with religious connotations, as seen with numerous laws around the country dictating their legality to assuage fears after the events of 9/11 and other terrorist attacks. Hip-hop clothing like gold chains, basketball jerseys, and baggy hoodies have led to racial profiling of African-Americans and Latinos as gang members. Short, tight dresses worn by what are assumed to be “loose” women have led to massive debates over gender stereotypes and rape culture.

Stereotypes can also be relatively harmless. There are the stereotypes over identities that don’t necessarily have to do with race, ethnicity, gender, or religion, but deal with identities of specific subsets of society. Stereotypes like nerds and sorority girls also have specific clothing associated with them, such as the sweater vests and pocket protectors worn by the characters in Revenge of the Nerds or the comic book T-shirts and turtlenecks worn in The Big Bang Theory, or the various shades of pink worn by Elle Woods in Legally Blonde and its musical adaptation. Although these stereotypes are not as damaging as the religious, racial, and gender stereotypes I mentioned before, due to their tiny population size and white characters with majority privilege, they can still lead to prejudice of these identities among the population.

You may ask yourself if these stereotypes can be so damaging, why are they still so prevalent? Time. “One of the assumptions frequently made by theatre producers is that they can communicate their conception of a character to an audience with clarity and with a minimum of
misunderstanding. A corollary to this is the commonly accepted belief that all characters are basically stereotypes and can be accepted by audiences only because they are easily recognizable types” (Whitehill and Kodman 139). Although we may feel as if we could recognize a character without a specific, stereotyped costume, those in the creation of media don’t want to waste time on useless exposition that could be easily communicated by as much as the shirt a character is wearing. Without some stereotypes, the identity of a character falls apart. For example, Shylock from Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice* is an often-cited stereotypical Jewish character and has been depicted onstage with actors wearing prosthetic noses and long flowing cloaks unlike anything worn by the other characters in the play. These elements are integral to the plot and character in the show as he is discriminated against for looking “alien” and “foreign” to the other characters. Strip him of these Jewish stereotypes, offensive though they may be, and the show loses its meaning.

Although the Jewish stereotypes of Shakespeare’s time have persisted to today’s society, other stereotypes have not. Some of these stereotypes have become softened over time or their original negative connotations are no longer relevant or known to us. Some of these negative stereotypes have evolved into theatrical clichés, such as the rags of the Stage Irishman. Rags onstage no longer symbolize an Irish character, instead they represent a character of low-income status, regardless of nationality or ethnicity. “There are types or even stereotypes that transcend the caprices of fashion and current events. Certain images stand the test of time, working their way into the collective unconscious and reappearing with indefatigable impact. These images earn the title of archetypes. The misanthrope in black, the harlot in red, or the ingénue in white…” (Jory 11).
So where do these stereotypes and visual cues come from? Although Western theatre traditions go back to the ancient Greeks, for the purpose of my analysis we will focus on the images that have had more staying power in modern Western theatre, beginning my timeline with the Renaissance and continuing to the present day.

RENAISSANCE: COMMEDIA DELL’ARTE AND SHAKESPEARE

One of the first instances of generalized and stereotyped characters came in the form of commedia dell’arte, a popular theatre form originated in Italy during the Renaissance with easily identified character types who had specific costumes and masks across commedia troupes.

“…there may actually have been a supremely intelligent and practical motive for the general standardization of the costumes of the principal characters of the Commedia dell’Arte. In our own age, a person or character can be duplicated endlessly through the mechanical media, so that he or she can quite literally appear in multiple places at one time. This was obviously not possible for the actors of the sixteenth century. However, by providing a visual code in the character’s costume and by concealing the real actor’s face behind a mask, Pantalone dei Bisognosi and the rest of the comic line-up were able to replicate themselves wherever they wished” (Jordan 232).

With characters like Pantalone, an elderly Venetian merchant dressed in the clothing of his youth, and Il Dottore, a character symbolizing professionals like doctors and lawyers, commedia troupes were able to plug these characters into various scenarios, reacting to them with the personality characteristics and stereotyped identities assigned to each character. The costumes themselves were part of the stereotype, being based on actual people and condensing them down to the specific comedic stereotypes used in the performance. “Before their costumes had become entirely formalized, characters in the commedia dell’arte wore the kind of dress, perhaps a little exaggerated, which the types of people they caricatured would have worn in real life. The part of Pantaloon in the commedia was that of an old and rather seedy upper-class Venetian who was
identified by the regulation *toga* of a Patrician of the Republic” (Newton 265). These archetypes have persisted into American comedy and television with broad characters in sitcoms like *Gilligan’s Island* taking inspiration from the stock characters that have persisted through time and theatrical traditions.

Moving north to England during this period in theatre history, there were few stereotypes regarding ethnicity or nationality on the Shakespearean stage. “…If everyone in a play is of the same country, foreign fashion will do little to distinguish one character from another… Furthermore, textual evidence from the plays themselves strongly supports the likelihood that the great majority of characters in plays set in foreign lands were costumed in apparel that was typically worn in England at the time.” (Lublin 83). When plays did dictate the use of signifying costumes for a foreign character, theatre companies had a well-established vocabulary of clothing meant to represent different characters and their nationalities (Lublin 87).

Characters like the Jews Barabas and Shylock, from Christopher Marlowe’s *The Jew of Malta* and Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*, however, had specific costumes and looks due to their “otherness” in their plays. These characters’ foreign, alien identities are plot points and serve to cause tensions in the Christian characters they interact with. Because of this, these characters could not follow the stage conventions of English contemporary dress of the time used in shows from *Hamlet* to *Julius Caesar*, set in locations other than England.

Barabas and Shylock inhabit the Jewish stereotypes and stage conventions used during this period. Stereotypes of large noses, distinctive clothing, red beards, and moneygrubbing made up elements of each characters’ personality.

“What is perhaps most problematic about *The Jew of Malta*…is its seemingly anti-Semitic stereotype of the Jew…Marlowe’s ‘figure of the Jew’ is, for its Christian audience, ‘an embodiment…of all they loathe and fear, all that appears stubbornly irreducibly different,’ a ‘marked case’ who ‘enters already trailing clouds of ignominy.’
That ignominy was asserted and enforced in the mystery plays (still being played throughout the sixteenth century) which presented the Jew, ostentatiously marked by a large nose and red wig and beard, as histrionically greedy, deceitful, villainous, and faithless. Marlowe’s play clearly evokes that stereotype as it costumes Barabas in a long nose and possibly red hair as well and introduces him counting and fondling his “infinite riches” (Bartels 4).

Harkening back to medieval drama, *The Merchant of Venice* has multiple lines regarding Shylock as the image of the devil. This is because the devil himself was often depicted with a large, hooked nose in medieval mystery and morality plays (Lublin 159). Although not mentioned in the script as part of the mise-en-scène, an actor during this period would almost certainly wear a prosthetic nose to depict this character, and other characters who weren’t seen as Christian. In addition to the obvious physical characteristics of these characters’ appearance, they wore clothing unlike any worn by their Christian counterparts: long black cloaks and other stereotypical and traditional dress associated with the Jews. “You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog,/And spit upon my Jewish gabardine” (Shakespeare 1.3.121-22). Signifying their “otherness” these costume conventions showed the audience who these denigrated stereotyped characters were and further the plot.

**EIGHTEENTH CENTURY: “EXOTIC” RACES ONSTAGE**

With new theatrical forms like the opera and ballet becoming increasingly popular and colonization bringing previously unheard and unseen races and ethnicities to the forefront, Western audiences became attracted to aesthetics like chinoiserie and Orientalism bringing these “new, exotic” races to the stage. “By the eighteenth century, the Chinoiserie movement held fashionable European society in deep thrall, and the Heavenly Empire made a most spectacular debut onto the European stage. Theatre audiences throughout Europe were beguiled by tales of far-off, distant lands, and charmed by the mysterious, exotic characters that appeared in these theatrical productions” (Mouat and Mouat 49). Combining their ideas of what these “exotic”
people wore with the contemporary, fashionable dress of the time, costumes designers created distinct images of these identities, some of which persist today.

Depicting Chinese characters onstage, designers took court dress of the day and fantastical elements that would become associated with the Chinese, to create visual cues and stereotypes used throughout the period. “Martin’s design, typical of eighteenth-century Paris Opéra costumes for Turkish, Indian, African or Chinese characters, is a mix of both contemporary French court fashion and indigenous attire. Martin’s only concession to sartorial authenticity is a pointed Chinese coolie hat perched atop the dancer’s head” (Mouat and Mouat 50). Combined with choreography based not on the traditional dance of ballet performed by the white performers but on grotesque, acrobatic movements, incorporating gestures such as pointed figures that persists in performances of Tchaikovsky’s “Chinese Tea Dance” today, eighteenth-century French audiences created the fantasy, idealized version of China that they wished to see onstage.

The Ottomans and Native Americans were also depicted in an exotic manner onstage. Designing the Ottomans in much the same way as the Chinese, costume designers pulled some accurate elements of the ethnic costumes the Turks, fantastical and idealized elements from their imagination, and fashionable dress of the day to tell the stories of far-away Middle Eastern kingdoms.

“The typical features of the figure of the Turn and the color locale, that is the visual motifs of the Ottoman culture and its aesthetics were adopted, domesticated and then presented to the western Austrian audience…Complementary to the identification of the musical Other, the visual characteristics of the Ottoman protagonists were marked with stereotypical devices. The Ottoman male figures represented with the moustache, the turban, the shalwar and the caftan were easily distinguishable from their fellow Austrian actors and the audience itself. Their costumes, more authentic than those of the female performers, displayed them as the non-European, as the oriental Other” (Balkiş 190).
Native Americans were depicted similarly, though the images used for their costumes ranged from animal-like and savage to weak and showy, adorned with beads, feathers, and flowers.

“Whether nostalgic for a lost past or futuristic in their yearnings, the eighteenth-century Parisian public—both readers and audiences—constructed Native Americans in ways that filled in the insufficiencies of their own society. Sauvage society became a canvas upon which utopian sentiment could be projected with an appetizing palette of colors and subtle social texturing” (Meglin 87-88). Seeking their own idealized image of what they saw as “primitive, otherworldly” peoples, the French used the images of Native Americans for exotic storytelling in the vein of their Chinese and Turkish depictions, as well as way to solidify their status above such people and find pleasure and comfort in the act. The “savage” animal hide-wearing Native American characters brought humor and delight to their Western audiences who reveled in their more civilized lifestyle above such “primitive” people. “…Claude-François Menestrier’s prescription in Ballets anciens et modernes (1682) for stage Americans—‘a head-dress of various-coloured feathers, a cincture in the same style to cover their nakedness; also a neck-piece of such feathers, as well as a feather bouquet in each hand when dancing’…This is a vivid iconographic illustration of what Sayre has identified as a process of negation and substitution in European representations of Native Americans” (Meglin 94)

The denigration of Native American ethnic costume continues today as pow-wow dancers feel they must present the idea of their traditional dance costumes that white audiences have. Increasing the amount of feather used in their costumes for theatrical purposes to fulfill their audience’s outdated idea of how they dress, based in the eighteenth-century traditions discussed here, Native Americans have been unable to take back their identity.

“The feathered costume of the Plains Indians, for example, represents an exaggerated traditional use of feathers. The resulting costumes illustrate newly created symbols
overlaid on tribal costumes; they are not symbolically linked to that particular culture, but instead are a reflection of the dominant culture’s expectations. The pressure that led to the ‘gaudy’ and ‘showy’ use of feathers came more from the dominant culture’s acceptance and willingness to pay for such dancing displays. Providing a flashier and exciting show for non-Indians became the impetus for costume development. The current ‘fancy’ dance costumes make it virtually impossible to tell what tribe a dancer represents” (Hill and Lujan 111-112)

As these eighteenth-century stereotypes and exoticism persisted into the next century, with more widely circulated media like magazines, comic strips, vaudeville shows, and more prejudiced, xenophobic feelings increased due to mass immigration, they started to take on a more negative and discriminatory tinge.

NINETEENTH CENTURY: MASS PRODUCTION OF CLOTHING AND HOMOGENOUS APPEARANCES

As the industrial age brought mass production of clothing, appearances became more homogenous and people had a harder time perceiving another person’s identity and status through their garments. With sumptuary laws a thing of the past, certain expensive fabrics becoming rarer or delegated to only the most formal occasions, and clothing becoming more casual as women entered public life and leisure activities like tennis and cycling became popular, anxieties rose as identities became less explicit through clothing. “The nineteenth century anxiety about the difficulty of telling who strangers are by what they wear is an expression of anxiety linked to a still-remembered earlier period in which dress placed its wearer within a social hierarchy organized through recognizable codes and conventions” (Monks 106-107). Society then turned to the theatre to assuage their concerns.

Costumes depicted certain characters onstage even though the performers almost certainly did not belong to the identities of the characters they portrayed. Depicting “exotic” races onstage continued from the eighteenth century through costumed white performers.
Although Western audiences had a firm idea of what these other races and nationalities abroad dressed like due to the traditions passed on from the century before, the minorities they faced at home were starting to dress like them and it was harder to denigrate them as such. As they had depicted other nationalities through stereotyped costumes, they started to depict these minorities onstage through stereotyped costumes as well. “…This period had a particular investment in depicting idealized and denigrated bodies onstage through the production of stereotypes, in which costume played a crucial role in rendering identity and bodies knowable and readable” (Monks 105).

With these stereotyped costumes disparaging minorities came the popularity of the Stage Irish character and the rise of minstrel shows and their racist depictions of African-Americans as audiences sought out performances to ease their anxiety about the homogenization of appearances and reinforce their perceived self-status above such minorities. Aoife Monks writes:

“These stereotypes, such as blackface minstrelsy’s depiction of African American identity, the pantomime dame’s representation of post-menopausal womanhood, or the Stage Irish comedians’ depiction of Irishness worked to make identity instantly recognizable, through an easily decoded, repeated and recognizable costume. Costume then worked to reinforce and produce power relationships between the audience and images onstage, making appearance and identity seamless” (107).

Both identities were depicted in rags, regardless of their economic situation, as white audiences saw them beneath themselves and used the stereotyped images of these characters to affirm their own social status. Both stereotypes were also used for nostalgic purposes, as the white “civilized” audience sought stories of simpler characters and simpler times, using their race and ethnicity to explore more serious topics. Civil and human rights for the African-American were uneasy topics for even Northerners during the period, who preferred stories of happy-go-lucky African-Americans rather than plays about slaves seeking freedom (Knobel 52). However, tensions during the period changed some of the stories these characters were a part of. Though
the Stage Irishman had a long history as a comedic character going back to the Renaissance, increasing tensions in Britain between the English and Irish and the discrimination Irish immigrants faced in the United States, led to the character’s more menacing and violent identity in the nineteenth century (Monks 110).

Common during this period, Irish actors who performed Irish stereotypes onstage also played African-American characters in the ubiquitous minstrel shows of the period. By performing in blackface, these actors who were discriminated against due to their nationality reaffirmed their own “whiteness” though it wasn’t afforded to them in the stage stereotypes they inhabited. As a more exaggerated, grotesque version of the Stage Irish stereotype, minstrel costumes included:

“...ragged trousers that were too short, collars that were too large, a straw hat, worn boots and, of course, a burnt cork mask, with his whitened lips distorted into a grimace that indicates his character’s status as a clown. The image offers us a clear depiction of a racist caricature: Bryant is presenting a fixed representation of black identity that is part of a long theatrical tradition of white performers playing black on the nineteenth-century American stage. While the black make-up he wears can easily be understood as a mask, in fact his entire costume functions as a kind of mask: a presentational disguise that stands in for an entire racial category” (Monks 115).

While the Irish actor plays a caricature of himself that the “white” audience wants to see, the mask he wears playing the African-American in blackface sets his status as “white” above the people he is depicting. “Minstrelsy here might also be seen as a form of training in how to ‘look’ race at bodies on the street. Dan Bryant’s blackened face and ragged costume became a means for audiences to reconfigure their own embodiment as white and modern, and to configure their view of black people after the performance had ended” (Monks 116).

During this period, also came vaudeville caricatures of the Chinese as their immigration caused anxiety in the white majority population. Devolving from the exotic place in theatre the Chinese had in the eighteenth-century, their depictions now had a more discriminatory layer.
Charles Parsloe, a vaudeville performer of the period, used specified, stereotyped costumes which became equivalent to a Chinese person to the audience in the absence of language and skin color.

“Yellowface uses Orientalist costume pieces—the Chinaman’s robe and queue—in a ventriloquistic performance…Parsloe himself serves as the manipulator of his body as a dummy, for so much of his own speech as the Chinaman is incoherent and requires translation through other voices in the theatrical space…He reproduces the words and movements that he (through his improvisations) and the playwright imagine their inarticulate Chinaman would produce. Parsloe’s body, therefore, communicates in ways apparently intelligible to his audiences in the void of meaning produced by his Chinaman speech” (Metzger 649)

His portrayal sought to ease the audience’s anxiety of Chinese immigration by making their image totally foreign and unable to assimilate.

TWENTIETH CENTURY: STEREOTYPES ON BROADWAY

“From the time of its emergence as a distinct theatrical genre in the early twentieth century, the American book musical has played a significant role in the formation of a national persona inflected by the particularities of race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality” (Pao 35).

Softening the negative stereotypes of the previous century, while sometimes subtly reinforcing them, and bringing back the exoticism of eighteenth-century theatre, Broadway used stereotyped characters and costumes for nostalgia, bringing sentimental and sometimes politicized stories of minorities to the stage, and exploring cultural divides.

Similar to the Stage Irishman and minstrel shows of the previous century, Broadway was a way to bring nostalgia to the audiences who yearned of times past. Even today shows like Oklahoma!, Anything Goes, and Porgy and Bess still popular with audiences wanting to experience past periods through the traditional musicals of Broadway’s Golden Age.

“In 1927, Show Boat’s ‘Ol’ Man River’ was a response to two decades of momentous resettling—the urban migration of blacks from the rural South. Inventing a pastoral portrait of the Reconstruction South, Show Boat claims that if the past was peaceful, then
so, by god, is the present. Similarly, *Oklahoma!* (1943) revisited and whitewashed the nation’s territorial past in order to shore up a patriotic present in the middle of World War II. When the Oklahoma territory becomes a state, it suggests, the biggest obstacle is how to have the ‘Farmer and the Cowman’ become friends. This kind of cultural nostalgia allows no room for individual difference; rather it encourages the fantasy of similarity” (Rugg 46).

Ignoring the discrimination that minorities have faced and softening the negative stereotypes from past theatrical traditions, playwrights and composers used minorities as a lens through which to tell nostalgic stories of the past with sentimental, sympathetic characters whose concerns don’t involve their own racial and social standing.

By the mid-century attitudes started to change and playwrights and composers explored themes of social justice as civil rights became increasingly important. Rodgers and Hammerstein were notable in their efforts to bring stories of Asians to the stage with the works *Flower Drum Song* and *South Pacific*. However, it can be argued that those efforts were in vain. Continuing the long tradition of white composers telling the stories of Asians such as Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly* and *Turandot*, the two used Western invented musical clichés of Asia and the stereotyped costume conventions from the past. “Besides their subjects, what all of these pieces had in common…was that they were written entirely by white composers and playwrights, whose perceptions of Asia (and Asian America) drew on testimonials and secondhand sources rather than personal experience. With no Asian-American viewpoint informing the work, the ensuing dialogue between East and West was entirely one-sided, and the authenticity of the results has varied in relation to these white authors’ intentions and approach” (Tran 59).

*South Pacific*, lauded for its sensitive treatment of racial prejudice, preaching tolerance, and representing interracial romance, falls flat in its efforts to eradicate the differences between the ethnic and racial groups it depicts (Most 307-308). Using white performers in yellowface to
play one-dimensional stereotypes, the production isn’t quite as socially aware as it presents itself to be:

“By demonstrating the fluidity of racial and ethnic identity on the stage, chameleon-like performers in musical comedies expose the problems inherent in the biological rhetoric of race. Eddie Cantor, for example, a well-known performer of the 1920s and 1930s, adopted numerous masks in his stage and screen roles, performing as an Indian, a black minstrel, a woman, a Greek, or a stage Jew. His broad characterizations and quick changes highlighted the ways in which these identities were constructed and performed—they were a product of costume and accent, not blood. But in South Pacific, the theatricality of these stereotypes is repressed. They are instead forced into a ‘realist’ structure and twisted to serve a pedagogical function. When a theatrical racial type like Liat or Bloody Mary becomes the basis for a ‘real’ character in a ‘realistic’ play, the stereotype takes on deeply problematic and even sinister nuances” (Most 313).

Using stereotyped costumes and yellowface to depict “realistic” characters propagates the same images and stereotypes from centuries and theatrical traditions past, and serves to cheapen the message of the show. Relegating it to the group of musicals from previous decades like Anything Goes and Thoroughly Modern Millie which depict their Asian characters as exaggerated stereotypes with racist names like Ching and Ling (changed to Luke and John in later revivals of Anything Goes) or costumes including high-collared slinky dresses and chopsticks in their hair, with white performers South Pacific is just a step above these shows in its efforts to discuss prejudice and tolerance.

Exoticism also continued during this period with the aforementioned Asian costumes in shows like Anything Goes and Thoroughly Modern Millie, as well as costumes depicting Latino ethnicities. As audiences sought nostalgia on Broadway, they also sought spectacle, and the exotic colors and garments of Latinos were just the ticket. The show West Side Story brought nostalgia, social justice, and exoticism to the stage with its story of the conflict between a white gang and a Puerto Rican gang, based on Romeo and Juliet. With clever lyrics penned by Stephen
Sondheim about the conflict between the two groups, the Jets sing a song near the top of the show that asserts their dominance as well as their “whiteness.”

“...To emphasize this idea, the visual differences between the two gangs were highlighted in the costume design by Irene Sharaff—deep purple, pinks, and oranges for the Sharks and lighter colors for the Jets: ‘The colours were ingenious choices, seeming to suit the gang-members’ physical appearances. Even though the Puerto Ricans were on the defensive, their outfits gave them an aggressive quality, and their girls, less uniform and more exotic, had brilliant colours, in startling contrast to the Jets’ girls who wore pastels and seemed homogeneous.’ Laurents’ stage directions inform us that during the famous scene at the dance, ‘the line between the two gangs is sharply defined by the colors they wear.’ While the film version used hair dye and makeup to point up racial difference, the show’s costumes were meant to theatrically heighten and stand in for differences in skin color” (Hoffman 104-105)

By using warm, brilliant colors to signify the characters’ identities as “Sharks,” or Puerto Ricans, the costumes continue the same exoticism of minority groups from centuries past and colonizing traditions as the choreography turns these Latino characters into exotic whirling dervishes for the audience’s entertainment. Like productions of South Pacific, productions of West Side Story have also featured white performers playing minority characters, and thus these minorities’ voices are silences in the very stories that are attempting to give them a chance at a better social status.

TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: POLITICALLY CORRECT CULTURE

With the turn of a new century and a new millennium, came new attitudes towards the depictions of race, ethnicity, class, and other identities across media. Especially in the last decade, there’s been an increase in calling out different media depictions of stereotypes that are considered offensive. Television shows like How I Met Your Mother have come under fire recently for depicting races like Asians in a caricatured manner using outdated costume ideas such as crossed chopsticks in a high bun. Kai Ma, a Korean journalist, critiqued the show for Time Magazine writing:

“The masters were portrayed by the show’s all-white cast, Alyson Hannigan, Josh Radnor, and Colbie Smulders; all donned silk robes and spoke with stereotypical Asian
accents framed between flute music and wind chimes. The show also utilized the Fu Manchu mustache and ‘chinky fonts’ to boot…What’s problematic here—other than the lazy writing—is that [How I Met Your Mother] doesn’t feature Asians or people of color in its regular rotation. So a white person in a Fu Manchu mustache is one of the few ‘Asian’ representations ever featured on the show. There are no other Asians on the show that are authentic (read: can speak English and lead normal lives as human beings). It’s one-dimensional and harmful” (Ma).

As the lack of minority representation has become more aware, with award shows like the Academy Awards criticized for only white actors being nominated, there’s been a demand for more diverse casting and storytelling across media. However, those in leadership and executive roles in the creation of such media have been loath to potentially sacrifice profits on untested minority roles and stories, sticking with the tried and true white, straight, male actors that audiences have proven to enjoy. Even if they choose to depict a character or story that comes from a minority background, production companies have often chosen to use white actors instead, with the infamous example of Mickey Rooney playing a Japanese man, Mr. Yunioshi, in the film adaptation of Breakfast at Tiffany’s, a portrayal widely decried as racist, and the more recent example of Scarlet Johansson in the film adaptation of Ghost in the Shell, a manga and anime originating from Japan. “…This practice continues in entertainment for reasons far more complicated than the refusal for white Hollywood to employ entertainers and performers of color. Whites donning theatrical make-up and costumes to display blackness, brownness, or Asianness is utilized for white viewers to explore and have fun with their collective fears and anxieties surrounding the other” (Ma). Just as shows in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries depicted minorities onstage in the way white artists and audiences desired to see them, this practice has continued into the twenty-first century.

Concurrently with the clamor for more diverse casting and stories, and more authentic depictions of race and other identities in media, came the popularity of satirical media taking on
various topics of contention such as prejudices surrounding identities by over exaggerating depictions of these identities to the possible point of offensiveness. *The Producers*, the stage musical adaptation of the Mel Brooks film of the same name, allows the audience to find humor in the stereotypes of the past by exaggerating them for comedy and giving them a break from the newfound politically correct society they inhabited. “In the economy of *The Producers*, comedy is the gold standard. But placing comedy as the highest value has political effects; it means trafficking in stereotypes, which come at the expense of other, more current social values. While undeniably funny, many of the musical’s jokes don’t rest altogether easy in today’s culturally sensitive climate” (Rugg 53). With the stereotypes the show is tackling being taboo in today’s day and age, their depictions seem even harsher and more extreme onstage compared to their past representations, though the over exaggeration and comedic nature of the show communicates to the audience not to take them literally and pushes the stereotypes into parody and satire territory rather than the serious, denigrating, and discriminatory stereotypes of the past.

CONCLUSION

With the lines between authentic portrayals, satire, and offensive stereotypes being very fine to today’s modern audiences, what can costume designers do to convey the characters in a way the audience will recognize and understand, but in a sensitive manner? We must understand the history of the visual cues we’ve learned from viewing media throughout our lives. Some of these cues and stereotypes have been softened over time, as we saw with the transition from the nineteenth century to the twentieth century, but we need to know where they came from and how they’ve evolved. As globalization and mass production of clothing continues, like our ancestors from the nineteenth century, we will strive for a way to perceive others’ identities through their clothing. With the limited amount of time we sit in the theatre watching a show there will always
be a need for boiling a character’s identity down to its most basic, generalized components. “The need for typification is also the basis for stereotyping by directors, producers, actors, costumers, and all concerned with stage production. It is during production, rather than in the actual writing of the play, that many stereotypes are fixed…Stereotyping of this sort will continue to exist and to be a cause of concern to all who are interested in the social implications of drama” (McIlrath 8-9).

One thing costume designers can do to combat the marginalization of certain identities, such as race and ethnicity, is by doing the proper research and not defaulting to previous ideas and depictions of these races and ethnicities onstage. While designers could use the easily recognized images from the past for various ethnicities, such as the slinky silk robes adorned with dragons for the Chinese and Japanese, or the harem pants and large turbans for Middle Eastern identities as seen in *Aladdin*, it is more important to challenge these inaccurate depictions and bring more accurate costumes to the forefront to start training audiences to recognize. Works from the past and their easily recognized images will constantly be produced, such as *South Pacific* and *Miss Saigon*, but we can breathe new life and authenticity into these works by working with the people they represent. Diep Tran for *American Theatre* writes:

> “Indeed, for all the misgivings that many artists have about these works, the consensus is not that they shouldn’t be mounted anymore. What’s important now is that there’s also new work that more authentically represents the Asian and Asian-American experience…Still, white theatre makers aren’t going to stop writing these shows. So what’s the best way to make them more authentic and respectful? [Lea] Salonga has some advice: ‘If, say, an all-white creative team can actually go to the country they’re writing about, singing about, choreographing about—actually get into those experiences, and then write about it—then it’s different. Then you make it come from a deeper place’” (63).

Minority creators themselves can also bring more authentic and accurate depictions of their identities to the stage. Although white artists could pull off a show with the proper
advisement and research, minority creators are the only ones that can truly provide the authenticity needed. With shows like Allegiance and rewrites for shows such as Porgy and Bess and Flower Drum Song, people of color have could take back theatrical versions of their identities. Allegiance, a show about the struggle of Japanese-Americans living in internment camps during World War II, is the first show on Broadway to be entirely created by Asian-Americans with a mostly Asian-American cast. The rewrites of Porgy and Bess and Flower Drum Song allowed African-Americans and Asian-Americans to reclaim the material and give authenticity to the previously one-dimensional stereotyped characters. Abroad, directors of various nationalities have also reclaimed Western theatrical depictions of themselves. Director Zhang Yimou staged the Puccini opera, Turandot, a show with incredibly imperialist and orientalist views, in his native China. However, with people of color still trying to cement themselves in the theatrical world, producers and directors are more likely to go the safer, commercial route by relying on white performers. Although he staged his production in Beijing with Chinese performers, the leads were still played by Western actors, a decision that was criticized, though it may have been deliberate to shine a light on where this work came from. “While the decision to use non-Chinese singers does silence Chinese voices onstage, for example, the costuming of Europeans more or less in yellowface may call attention to the fact that these characters are constructions derived from a European imagination” (Metzger 216).

With all this said it’s a long road to obliterating stereotypes in the theatre. So long as humans feel the need to use labels to identify themselves and others, with preconceived notions for these labels, we will continue to generalize and stereotype those by who they are and what they wear. Though old ideas denounced as discriminatory have faded into the past, they’ve evolved over time as our ideas of the people surrounding us have changed. As media progresses
to be more diverse and inclusive, costume designers will be right there to help audiences understand these new characters. After all, “Types never die; they just reinvent themselves—and costume designers are there to note what makes them look like who they are” (Jory 11).
HANDS ON A HARDBODY: ARTIST’S STATEMENT

OVERALL CONCEPT

Based on the documentary of the same name, Hands on a Hardbody tells the story of ten people who are down on their luck and decide to enter a car dealership’s contest where the last person with their hands on a truck wins the truck. The contestants come from a wide background of identities: an older white blue collar worker, a former Marine, a sorority girl, a second-generation Mexican immigrant, a devoutly religious Latina woman, a jovial African-American, and a self-described “redneck” to name a few. Each of these contestants is chasing their idea of the American Dream, with the goal of winning the truck for transportation, starting a business, or selling it to pay the bills. The show discusses themes of identity, prejudice, income inequality, and perseverance. As the contest progresses, the contestants tackle these issues and learn about themselves and their competitors as their prejudices are challenged. Set in 1995, the costumes for this show are blue-collar, western, and second-hand.

There’s a note in the beginning of the script regarding how the characters should be played, stating, “Despite their colorful eccentricities and regional turns of phrase, the characters in our story are inspired by very real people. They should not be played broadly, or with an implied ‘wink.’ Rather, they should be acted with integrity, with full regard for their ardent hopes, heart-breaking foibles and core decency” (Wright et al. 8). Because of this I wanted my design to emphasize real people rather than stereotypes. I took inspiration from a story Ann Roth, an Academy Award winning costume designer, told while being interviewed for the Hollywood Costume exhibition for the Victoria & Albert Museum. While working on the film Closer, Ann Roth saw a girl lying on a bench in a ratty blue coat with white fur. She immediately
knew this was the costume for Natalie Portman’s character, a stripper. Rather than dress the character using stereotypes and preconceived notions of how a stripper would dress, she pulled inspiration from a person she saw in real life to give the character authenticity as a real, fleshed-out person instead of a one-dimensional stereotype. I scoured my memory for images of real people that I had met who had personalities similar to these characters. I remembered a couple I had seen shopping one time, who were wearing matching NASCAR T-shirts. One day one of the theatre professors came down to the costume shop while I was doing my research, wearing a “Texas tuxedo,” a completely denim ensemble consisting of a denim jacket, shirt, and jeans. I thought about the clothing my own grandmother wears to base Virginia Drew on, and how my father dresses as a physician while researching the character Dr. Stokes.

However, I couldn’t ignore the stereotypes entirely as much of the show is concerned with how the characters view each other and themselves. Characters like Benny Perkins and Cindy Barnes openly admit their xenophobia, with Benny singing, “I said, please remove my neighbors/Can’t you see they’re Mexican? /They don’t even share our language/Or the color of our skin” (Wright et al. 92) and Cindy asking the contestant Jesus for his green card in a derisive tone. Janis Curtis, a low-income mother of six on food stamps, proclaims her “redneck” identity with pride. Other characters have contempt for certain people competing, fixating on various aspects of their identity. After Ronald McCowan, an African-American, is the first to lose the contest, Benny Perkins says, “Big surprise, he’s first to go” (Wright et al. 36) to which Norma Valverde responds, “What’s that supposed to mean?” (Wright et al. 37). This moment was emphasized in our production at the Arizona Repertory Theatre as an African-American woman was cast in the role of the Latina Norma Valverde. Benny Perkins’ identity as one of the older contestants is also fixated on as the younger contestants, Greg, Kelli, and Heather, disdainfully
remark on his place in the contest, calling him an “old man.” Identities and stereotypes are also used as façades, specifically with the characters Chris Alvaro and Benny Perkins. These characters use their identities to intimidate the other characters in the competition as well as hide their true feeling behind. Chris, a former Marine wearing camouflage and dog tags, standing strong and silent, confesses his journey from a young cowardly man into a soldier battling PTSD to the other contestants before leaving the contest. “How come/I’m the one got to/survive, /When I don’t feel like/living any longer?” (Wright et al. 55). Benny, who tries to intimidate the other characters with his tough and racist personality, goes from singing, “It’s like the first time that you kill a deer/And it looks you in the eye/That intense exhilaration/As you watch that creature die!” (Wright et al. 57) to confessing his sins to the other contestants, “I beg you to release me/From my foolish righteousness/And my poison prejudice/And this awful emptiness” (Wright et al. 94).

J.D. DREW

The character description at the beginning of the script indicates our contest winner is, “60, a ‘good old boy’ with pomaded gray hair and a high wattage grin” (Wright at el. 6). A traditional blue collar worker, he lost his job on an oil rig due to injury, putting he and his wife’s livelihoods in danger. Although he wears a leg brace and has a limp, he decides to enter the contest exasperating his wife. The song “Alone With Me (Reprise)” describes his once youthful looks as “Jimmy Dean and Steve McQueen rolled into one” (Wright et al. 68). The oldest character of the contestants, he begins the nostalgic song, “Used to Be,” a lament longing for the local shops of the past that have been replaced by chain stores. J.D. teams up with the antagonist Benny Perkins and is one the few characters sympathetic to him.
For my design of this character I chose to focus on his status as a blue-collar worker and the oldest of the group. Originally I chose a quite literal denim shirt and jeans based on the “Texas Tuxedo” one of the theatre professors wore down to the costume shop one day, as seen in my preliminary research. Deciding this was too homogenous and literal, I redirected my sights towards plaid clothing, contrasting him from the graphic T-shirts some of the younger contestants wore. I purchased a short sleeve tan Western shirt with little saguaro details that I had intended to use for his contest outfit, and pulled a blue plaid shirt from out costume stock for his nicer epilogue look. I ended up switching these shirts as the blue one looked better on him and made the actor look much older. Underneath the shirts he wore a white distressed A-shirt which was revealed during his final scene on the truck near the end of the contest as he is disheveled and worn out. The rest of his costume consisted of a standard pair of straight leg jeans, a brown Western belt, casual brown leather shoes, and a wedding ring. In addition, the actor had gray brush-in hair dye to make him look 60 instead of 22.

KELLI MANGRUM

Kelli is one of the youngest contestants in the “Hands on a Hardbody” contest, along with Greg Wilhote and Jesus Peña. A UPS worker, she dreams of a better life, traveling the world and finding work as an actress in Hollywood. The other characters note how determined and prepared she is to win the contest, eating bananas instead of junk food and wearing comfortable, sturdy sneakers. Fiery and unintimidated, she resents Benny for entering the contest a second time, calling him an old man with derision. During the contest, she finds companionship with Greg, who comes to her rescue when she loses the contest, wandering sleep-deprived off into the night towards a four-lane highway. With the epilogue, we learn she is in a relationship with
Greg, got him a job at UPS, and the two of them are saving up for a two-week vacation to Las Vegas and Los Angeles.

Kelli’s costume was mostly based on how the real person Kelli Mangrum looked like in the documentary. She has long brunette hair held back in a ponytail with a blue scrunchie, a backwards blue baseball cap, and the yellow contest T-shirt the rest of the people in the documentary wear. Although the contestants in the documentary wear these T-shirts, the script doesn't call for any matching T-shirts, wanting individualized costumes for each contestant instead. While watching the documentary, I became attached to the yellow color for Kelli, and chose to use it for her as a little reference to the documentary. The director wanted some tie-dye shirts included due to their prevalence in the 1990s, so I chose to make her yellow T-shirt a tie-dye one, though I briefly considered a yellow raglan shirt. For Kelli’s shorts, I considered her background as a struggling UPS worker and decided she was so down on her luck that she has very few pairs of pants besides the ones for her uniform, wearing her brown utility shorts for the contest. For her “sneakers with those big waffle bottoms” (Wright et al. 30), I chose to interpret them as hiking sneakers. Unfortunately, these shoes were too slippery with dancing on the truck so we switched to a pair of black Converse instead. As the contest progresses she adds a blue trucker hat and sunglasses and ditches her sneakers for a pair of fluffy white bunny slippers. When she returns in the epilogue, she wears the nicest clothes she has, a short sleeved blue button down with embroidered daisies and denim capris with her hair down.

BENNY PERKINS

Our main antagonist of the show, he won the contest two years ago, which is the cause of resentment in the other contestants. “Mid-40s, with a lanky frame, weather-beaten face, ingratiating grin and lots of homespun philosophy” (Wright et al. 6), he references Asian cultural
things like tae kwon do, Sherpas on Mt. Everest, and Sun Tzu’s *Art of War*. Self-righteous and egotistical, he eggs on the other contestants with racist, xenophobic, and prejudiced attitude. He doesn’t care for Norma’s displays of faith, has seemingly little respect for Chris’ backstory, and thinks the rest of the contestants are week. Seeing a kindred spirit in J.D. Drew, the two make a pact to help each other get through the contest, as he does whatever it takes to win, including tricking the other competitors. Towards the end of the contest, we learn his whole attitude is a façade he’s kept up to deal with the pain of his wife leaving him and his son’s suicide. Regretful and mournful of his actions and behavior, he confesses his sins in the song, “God Answered My Prayers,” choosing to let go of the truck and lose the contest.

For Benny’s costume, I wanted to play up his “tough guy” façade and the stereotypes he chooses to inhabit. The real Benny Perkins had a distinct look in the documentary and I wanted the costume to reflect that as well. I initially chose a red henley shirt, as the real Benny wore in the documentary, for the costume. However, because the truck in the show is also red he would have blended in too much. I decided instead to dress him in the ubiquitous “Don’t Mess with Texas” shirt I had been looking for a place for in the show due to its presence in pop culture, as well as its relation to his “tough guy attitude.” A maroon Western shirt was layered over this because I still wanted a red color associated with him as the villain in the show, a color only he wore. Gray jeans, cowboy boots, and a hunter’s camouflage hat completed the ensemble, as well as a Confederate belt buckle, a representation of his façade and prejudiced identity. For the epilogue, he came back in a formal Western shirt and cowboy hat, a softened version of his costume as he’s come to terms with his prejudices and painful memories.
GREG WILHOTE

One of the younger contestants in the show, he’s described as “a freckled kid in a baseball cap” (Wright et al. 6). Out of work for two years, he’s been trying to get another construction or factory job but they’ve been increasingly difficult to find in the region. He wants the truck to fit in because he’s been driving his mom’s Volkswagen Beetle. An earnest, naïve young man he yearns for better things, and he and Kelli find common ground in their dreams to travel the world and find employment in Hollywood, she as an actress and he as a stuntman. The two become an item by the second act of the show, as he is worried about her wellbeing when she loses the contest, wandering off into the night sleep-deprived without proper shoes. His naivety and caring for Kelli becomes a weakness, the others take advantage of as they convince him of the dangers she faces and he chooses to leave the contest to help her. In the epilogue, we learn that he got Kelli safely home, he’s gotten a job at UPS, and the two are saving for a vacation together.

Greg’s costume was that of a typical early-20s kid: graphic T-shirt, plaid button-down, and cargo shorts. I chose a blue and red plaid shirt for his All-American boy charm and a Star Wars T-shirt to suggest his youth and desire to become a stuntman for film. Like Kelli who is also down on her luck, he wears his cargo shorts and boots from his previous construction job. I chose a Dallas Cowboys hat to help convey the geographical location the characters were in. For the epilogue, he returns in his nicest clothes: a yellow plaid button-down, jeans, and blue sneakers. For he and Kelli’s costumes, I did some color matching, a common technique costume designers use to suggest relationships. During the contest, he wears blue and she wears yellow, in the end the two characters return wearing the other’s color, he in yellow and she in blue.
A former Marine, Chris chooses to enter the contest to help his family because of his unemployment and to prove his worth. Wearing a hoodie and aviator glasses, his identity is mysterious to the other contestants until he reveals his dog tags and USMC shirt at Benny’s goading. Disenchanted with religion due to the horrors he saw during his deployment, he doesn’t join the other characters in singing the gospel song, “Joy of the Lord.” Becoming upset he tells everyone to shut up and confesses his discomfort and backstory. “I was a baby, newly married/With the baby that she carried/And I was lost and looking for my way/And he asked me if I loved the USA. /And God I hoped they’d take me/Cause he swore they’d make me/Stronger/Than that coward I kept hid” (Wright et al. 53). We learn of the horrors he faced, his PTSD and depression, and his suicidal thoughts, as his façade comes crumbling down. Embarrassed of how much he’s revealed, he bolts off, losing the contest. In the epilogue, we learn he’s returned to his family, reconciling with his wife, and was able to get a part-time job but lost it.

Like Benny, Chris also wears a costume to convey his façade, he tries to convey his identity as a tough, strong Marine to hide the depression and aimlessness he feels underneath. For his costume, he wears a black Marine T-shirt from the 90s that I found on eBay, that we altered to make more fitted and remove the sleeves. I attempted to distress a pair of cargo pants by spraying them with dye to give the illusion of more wear and tear but since the pants were 100% polyester it didn’t show up as well. I purchased desert combat boots at a local military surplus store and pulled a web belt and dog tags from stock. A gray hoodie and aviator glasses were used to conceal his identity in the beginning of the show. To complete the look, the actor
cut his hair short and I provided temporary military tattoos to wear. For his epilogue outfit, he returns in a green polo, jeans, and sneakers, since he no longer has to keep up his façade.

RONALD MCCOWAN

“35, a good-natured African-American with a slight Louisiana accent” (Wright et al. 6), Ronald chooses to enter the contest because he drives a car that doesn’t have brakes and wants a truck to start a landscape business. His game plan for the contest comes from his days doing high school track, eating Snickers bars to keep his energy up. This doesn’t prove to be a winning strategy though, as he loses the contest due to heatstroke and an upset stomach. A bit flirtatious, he takes a liking to Norma, cheering her on through the contest after he loses. He antagonizes Benny when he returns, asking where his wife and son are, setting into motion Benny’s soul-searching. When he returns for the epilogue, we learn he’s gotten a job, “My lady friend got me this job/Her daddy fixes highway lights/So I’m all set—No problem! /Problem is—I’m scared of heights!” (Wright et al. 104).

For Ronald, I looked to the documentary for inspiration since he has a smaller role in the show. In the documentary, he’s quite the character as he tells us his game plan for winning, eating oranges and Snickers, something from his high school days, which is also referenced in the musical. The other people in both the documentary and the musical remark on how ill-prepared he is so I decided to focus on this. He references his high school track days so much I decided that those were his glory days and this contest is a way to go back to that time. For his costume, I decided to dress him in a teal track suit as if it was one of his own track meets from back in the day. In the documentary, he’s wearing a pair of huaraches sandals, and complains about how uncomfortable they are, so I decided he would wear those sandals for my design as well. Along with the Snickers, the track suit contributes to his heatstroke, with the other more
prepared characters wearing lighter layers. When he returns to cheer on Norma, he wears a Muhammad Ali shirt and blue kangol cap, a request from the director. His nicer epilogue outfit consisted of a wildly patterned short-sleeve button down, khaki shorts, and his huaraches.

HEATHER STOVALL

A restaurant hostess and former sorority girl, Heather is shallow, vain, and will do whatever it takes to win the contest. Entering the competition to win the truck so she doesn’t have to ride her bike anymore, she makes a deal with Mike Ferris, one of the moderators of the contest, so she can win and he can have someone “photogenic” for the advertisements rather than one of the older or minority contestants. Constantly fixing her hair and makeup and taking banned stimulants to stay awake, she draws ire and suspicion from the other contestants who wonder why she is so unconcerned and unfazed with the contest, especially by Janis Curtis who catches her cheating and is furious that none of the moderators will do anything about it. Heather later loses the contest after the guilt is too much and she becomes obsessive of how uncomfortable the gloves are, telling everyone the contest is fixed and that she made a deal with Mike. Returning in the epilogue, she tells the audience that she entered the contest again the next year, winning, with the stage directions indicating that she should wink with this line.

Vain and flirty, placing importance on her hair and makeup throughout the contest, I decided that Heather would be dressed for the photoshoot that would happen when she won rather than dressing in a more well-prepared manner with comfortable but possibly unfashionable clothes. Knowledgeable about fabrics and distasteful of the synthetic content of the gloves, I wanted her to look more fashionable than the other contestants but she stills come from a rough background and has entered the contest for the same reasons as the others. Her outfit also had to give Mike the motivation to make a deal with her, and the choreography in our
production suggested the two were also having an affair. For her contest costume, she wore a pink floral sleeveless blouse tied at the waist, layered over a pink camisole, worn second-hand Daisy Duke-type shorts, and brown cowboy boots. I initially chose white strappy sandals, but these were unsafe to dance in, and the director wanted more cowboy boots onstage for Western wear and Texas representation. For the epilogue, she returns in a floral tank top, denim mini skirt, and brown leather sandals.

VIRGINIA DREW

J.D. Drew’s wife, she is reluctant to cheer him on in the contest because she thinks it’s a fool’s errand with his bad knee. His layoff has put the family in a bad spot financially as they try to cover his medical bills and he refuses to let her take a job at Walmart, feeling a duty to provide for his wife though he is unable. Although she tries to be supportive, her coddling and worrying irritates J.D., and she leaves him singing, “I wish I knew/What I could do/To make myself enough for you/The way that you’re enough for me. /But I can’t watch you kill yourself/It’s killing me/You’d do anything/To keep from being alone with me” (Wright et al. 39). After learning about how close he is to winning on the radio, she returns to the contest to discover he’s won and the two reconcile, with J.D. proclaiming the truck hers.

A “one-time beauty settling into middle-age” (Wright et al. 6), I decided to take inspiration from how my grandmother dresses for her costumes. I chose lightweight khaki or linen capris, a linen tunic and camisole, and strappy sandals for her initial costume. Consulting the script for the passage of time and my director for his thoughts on her costumes, we chose a Western style cream floral button down and jeans for her first look before she leaves J.D.’s side at the contest, a more low-income looking outfit since the two weren’t doing well financially. During “Alone With Me (Reprise),” she appears to J.D. in a dream state, wearing a navy
sundress from her youthful days as he pines for the past. When she comes back to discover he’s won the contest, she arrives in a slightly dressed up white tunic and green skirt, marrying her first two outfits together of the aging, worn-down beauty and the feminine sundresses of her youth. In the epilogue, she comes back in the costume I initially chose for her, the dressier linen pants and tunic.

MIKE FERRIS

Sales Manager of the Longview Floyd King Nissan dealership, this character is the epitome of “sleazy car salesman.” Boyishly handsome and wearing a cheap tie with a NASCAR clip (Wright et al. 6), he’s the host of the contest and uses it to improve the image of the failing dealership due to his mismanagement. Hoping the exposure of the contest will lead to more customers buying the extra units he overzealously ordered, he makes a deal with Heather to win the contest so he can use her in the advertising, seeing her as a more photogenic contestant than the others. Though the character is unsympathetic due to his egotistical view that his mismanagement is not the reason for the dealership going under, we see his attempts to repair the relationships in his life with misguided means: conceding to his wife’s wishes for Tuscan marble for their kitchen though they can’t afford it, begging and pleading with the regional manager to keep their dealership open, and trying to help his friend and co-worker Cindy Barnes stay afloat as they lose the dealership. In the end, we learn that, “Floyd King Nissan, it went belly up/We couldn’t fill the quota/But the contest still continues/Right here at Floyd King Toyota” (Wright et al. 105).

My initial design concept for Mike Ferris was to emphasize his “sleazy car salesman” personality. Taking inspiration from the Saul Goodman character from *Breaking Bad*, a sleazy lawyer wearing bright colors, wacky patterned ties, and cheap looking suits, I patterned Mike’s
costumes on Saul with a cheaper, slightly dated vibe just like the set design for this show, a wood-paneled car dealership office complete with shabby furniture, water cooler, and potted plant. The director however, didn’t want him to look too dated or shabby, emphasizing that the character is supposed to look boyish and Heather finds him alluring enough to have an affair with him. My Costume Design professor and advisor encouraged me to find Western style sport coats and suit jackets, and we had the actor wear his own jeans. I pulled a series of novelty Western-print Tabasco ties and off-white or yellow shirts to go with each outfit. For his nicer epilogue look, he wore a gray Western suit, white shirt, fancier abstract tie, cowboy hat, and boots.

CINDY BARNES

“A former Miss Gregg County, still fond of pageant hair and pastels” (Wright et al. 6), Cindy oversees Public Relations at Floyd King Nissan, and the main referee for the “Hands on a Hardbody” contest. Working hard to make ends meet with her ex-husband behind on child support, she is furious with Mike for buying surplus cars in a bad economy and fixing the contest. She attempts to uphold order in the contest, becoming much stricter about the rules, and going after contestants such as Jesus Peña who she deems suspicious. Racially profiling him, she asks if he has a green card, attempting to speak with him in badly accented Spanish. This exchange shows us the undercurrent of distrust and prejudice hiding within the former pageant queen. Cindy loses her job at the dealership as a result of Mike’s mismanagement, but the two later open a Toyota dealership, as we learn in the epilogue.

As a former pageant queen, I chose pastel skirt suits for her role as Public Relations at Floyd Kind Nissan. Starting in a put-together but worn pink skirt suit with scuffed white heels, she tries to carry herself with pride and keep her clothes in good shape though she struggles to
make ends meet for her and her children. The character wears her hair with the same volume and
curl of her pageant days, and we decided to wig the actress to show this, though it was
unsuccessful and we chose to cut it from the show. As the contest progresses and becomes
fraught with tension due to allegations of cheating and her anxiety over the future of the
dealership, she loses her jackets and appears in white blouses and pastel skirts instead. For her
epilogue outfit as she lives a brighter future for herself with the opening of the new dealership,
she ditches the solid pastel suits for a bright pink floral dress.

JESUS PEÑA

A second-generation Mexican immigrant and American citizen, he enters the contest with
the hopes of selling the truck to pay for books and housing for veterinary school at Texas A&M.
One of the younger competitors in the contest, he is driven and prepared to win, wearing boots,
and trying not to let himself be intimidated by Benny Perkins. Dealing with anti-immigration
prejudice and racial profiling his life though he was born in the U.S., we learn his story and
feelings through the song, “Born in Laredo”: “You look at me/And you think I run dope/A killer,
my gang’s name carved into my arm/Just a monster, unworthy of hope./Or you look at me/And
think, he’s not too bright/Let him cut grass, bus dishes/Shine shoes at the mall,/Clean the stalls at
the Greyhound at night” (Wright et al. 65). Losing the contest due to sleep deprivation and
hallucinating that his dog is there, we learn in the epilogue that he’s working double shifts to get
his degree.

Because Jesus is racially profiled by a few of the characters due to his name and accent, I
decided his appearance should also be instrumental. Looking like a Mexican laborer, he wears a
plaid button-down layered over a simple white T-shirt and jeans. I wanted each character to have
a distinct color to differentiate them and I chose orange for Jesus, using a warm color that’s
traditionally been used for “exotic” characters of his ethnicity as seen in *West Side Story*, though I shied away from red since that was the color I chose for Benny. With his situation virtually unchanged in the epilogue, he returns in a slightly nicer plaid shirt.

**NORMA VALVERDE**

“A stout Latina woman in tennis shoes and a floral applique T-shirt” (Wright et al. 6), Norma is a devoutly religious woman whose husband is unemployed, and chooses to enter the contest for a truck to drive her children to school, her husband to a job, and her whole family to church. Very caring and looking out for the other contestants, she leads the group in a gospel song, “Joy of the Lord,” after the others remark how happy she is listening to her religious music to get her through the contest. This music later becomes her downfall when the battery in her CD player dies and Chris and Ronald sing to her acapella to keep her spirits up. After joining in she becomes so moved she starts clapping, fainting when she realizes she’s taken her hands of the truck, losing the contest. During the epilogue, Norma tells us, “Ramon’s still in search of steady work/ Ours not to question why. /I got extra hours at my job, with God’s help—we/ Get by. /Now I see he didn’t bring me/ To this contest on a whim, /He put me in it, not to win it, /But to bring more souls to him” (Wright et al. 105).

Following the character descriptions at the beginning of the script and taking inspiration from the real Norma Valverde from the documentary, I saw Norma as the kind of woman who would iron the appliques and rhinestones onto her shirt herself. I looked in various thrift stores for a suitably crafty and 90s looking white crew neck embroidered T-shirt, eventually finding a white T-shirt with printed doves and flowers. I bought vintage purple shorts from the 90s at a local thrift store, an idea based on Norma’s outfit in the documentary, and white reebok shoes and slouch socks for an appropriately 90s look. This was too much white however for the
African-American actress cast in the role, so I dyed the T-shirt an orange color and the socks lilac. A gold cross completed her competition look. For the epilogue, I chose to have Norma return in an outfit that she would wear to church: a white blouse dyed teal, a very 90s floral Southwestern skirt, and black sandals.

JANIS CURTIS

Janis, a self-proclaimed “redneck,” is described by the playwright as “a tough old bird with sun-burnished skin and missing teeth” (Wright et al. 6). With six nearly grown children, she and her husband find themselves in dire straits and enter the contest to try to lift themselves out of poverty. Deeply devoted to her husband, the two work together to help her through the contest with Don as her “pit crew” on the sidelines. Because of the hand life has dealt her, she is distrustful of the other contestants especially Norma, who Janis can’t understand why she can be so happy, and Heather, who is getting away with cheating due to her good looks. Living on food stamps, down to their last quarter, and without access to healthcare, Janis is enraged and feels cheated by the system in every way, especially as she realizes Heather won’t be disqualified for cheating. “Everywhere you go, it’s all the same/We’re just pawns in this crooked game/The little ones get cheated/And who’s to blame” (Wright et al. 70-71). Janis decides to take the high ground and leave the contest after confessing to her own cheating and mistake. As one of a couple characters that gets nothing out of the contest, Janis sings in the epilogue, “While the world rewards the cheaters/We ain’t got two cents to spare/Got our family/Got each other/And out twenty tons of air” (Wright et al. 104).

Easily my favorite character in the show, Janis was a fun challenge to design. I found inspiration from the real Janis Curtis in the documentary, people I had met with her personality and identity, and the stage direction, “Like one of the mythical Furies, Janis exits with Don on
her heels” (Wright et al. 72). Stubborn and tough, but seen as a little kooky by the other characters, I chose a purple tie-dye shirt with wolves I’ve seen middle-age women of her “redneck, trailer-trash” identity wear. Paired with ill-fitting acid wash pants, teal Tevas sandals, colorful wacky socks with fairy cats, and a purple visor, she was both kooky comic relief and the formidable character she becomes when confronting the contest organizers about it being a fix. The director also requested a fishing vest for her to put the photos of her kids in, so I added all kinds of embroidered patches to it: aliens, cats, “I survived shit creek,” among others. To complete her transformation into Janis, I provided the actress with teeth blackening paint and temporary tattoos. Janis’ dressier epilogue outfit gave the character a softened look with a lavender tie dye shirt with kittens, khaki shorts, and crazy socks with trailers, palm trees, and flamingos on them.

FRANK NUGENT

The disk jockey commentating on the contest for 105.7 KYKX Kicks, Frank Nugent is “a die-hard good ole boy dressed in a Stetson” (Wright et al. 6). Wearing “shit-kicker” boots, he’s described as a mid-life white guy who still plays air guitar in his wood-paneled rec room (Wright et al. 61). During casting our Frank became a “Fran,” because of a lack of male actors. The flashy Western shirts, jeans, and bolo ties were then translated to women’s Western blouses and denim skirts. Among her outfits for the five-day contest were: a sleeveless Western denim blouse with multicolored denim pencil skirt, a frilly white and blue Western shirt and jeans, and a hot pink Western shirt with beaded fringe and a black suede skirt, all paired with a beautiful pair of black cowboy boots with turquoise embroidery, the most expensive costume piece purchased for the show.
DON CURTIS

Janis’ “pit crew” and husband, he “wears a cardboard sign on his head that proclaims ‘I LOVE YOU JANIS, GO BABY GO’” (Wright et al. 6). Enthusiastic and very affectionate, he’s there for his wife throughout the contest, helping her with whatever she needs including using reverse psychology to trick and anger his stubborn wife. Devoted to each other the couple sing, “Cause her and me/We got this little pact. /If she don’t sleep, then I don’t sleep/If he don’t eat, then I don’t eat/And life is sweet, with six kids almost grown/It’s true we may not have a lot/If I got squat, then she got squat/But we don’t have to go through it alone” (Wright et al. 28-29).

After his wife forfeits the contest, Frank the radio host asks him how he feels and he says he’s proud that she’s standing up for herself.

As Janis’ “pit crew” I decided to have the character wear a NASCAR shirt, ready on the sidelines with a water bottle on a strap over his shoulder and a fanny pack full of snacks for the next break to give her whatever she needs. Like Janis he also wears socks and sandals, a fashion faux pas. The real Don Curtis in the documentary had a very distinctive look which I chose to incorporate in my design: large coke bottle glasses, missing teeth, and the cardboard hat copied down to the handwriting. I also gave the actor temporary tattoos to match Janis. For the epilogue, he wore a blue tie dye shirt with wolves like the kind Janis wears and matching khaki shorts.

DR. STOKES

Played by the same actor as Don Curtis, Dr. Stokes is interviewed on the effects of sleep deprivation as the contestants go on 72 hours with little to no sleep. Being a doctor and likely having a higher income, I wanted his costume to contrast him from the other characters’ second-hand and Western clothing. I initially based his design on what my father wears to work as a physician: colorful dress shirts, Jerry Garcia-like ties with abstract swirls and patterns, and
pressed slacks. This was too much of a contrast however, and I chose to redesign him more conservatively with a gray suit, white shirt, and abstract patterned tie with muted colors. A lab coat was discussed but nixed for being too obvious and “costumey.”

FINAL PRODUCT

I am very proud to have had this show as my Capstone for my Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Theatre Production with an emphasis in Costume Design. As a Costume Design student, we take classes in costume construction, costume design, script analysis, and period styles to prepare us for a mainstage design assignment for our Capstone. My production assignments prepared me for dictating work to the shop by learning the role of each position, from stitcher, first hand, draper, and wardrobe supervisor, to working as an assistant costume designer under my professors, Patrick Holt and Richard Tuckett. In addition to my coursework and production assignment, I designed a studio series production of *Psycho Beach Party* in our smallest black box theatre and completed an independent study with my professor Richard Tuckett, learning how to implement a costume design by budgeting and creating paperwork, that were instrumental in my preparation for my Capstone. By completing a mainstage production, I could build on what I learned throughout my time here taking courses, working as an assistant costume designer under my professors, and as costume designer for a small studio series show, to create the costumes for *Hands on a Hardbody.*

I feel successful in my efforts; I created costumes for each character that were appropriate to their identities that illustrated the theme of identity and prejudice in the show without falling into offensive or satirical territory, though I had some close calls. I lost sight with the characters a couple times, most notably giving Janis a “White Trash” patch for her fishing vest that was removed after the first dress rehearsal. Because I was one of a few people who had read the
script and was aware of the characters’ names and identities, it was easy to refer to them by their stereotypes, calling them “that trailer trash character” or the “sleazy car salesman” when talking to someone who wasn’t familiar with the show. I also learned a lot about compromising in regards to this show, specifically with wigging the character Cindy Barnes. The character was described as wearing her hair pageant-style, but the actresses’ own hair was thin and stick-straight. I knew the “big Texas hair” would complete the character’s pastel ensembles so I chose to purchase a blond wig that was styled with curls and lots of volume. My budget didn’t allow for a high-quality wig and the director was displeased with both the styling of the wig and its quality. He asked me to go with the actresses’ own hair instead but she was unable to get the volume I desired. I wish we could have come up with another solution but there was no time or room left in the budget. The review in the local paper, the Arizona Daily Star, was favorable, though the costumes, or any other aspect of the technical elements, were not mentioned. “While ‘Hands on a Hardbody’ is not brilliant theater—and there are definite eye-rolling moments toward the end as everything is neatly packed up and infused with a vein of sentiment—there are some beautiful songs in the show” (Allen). The closest Kathleen Allen came to mentioning the costumes was referring to the characters as “cliché-ish” which may or may not be considered a success in my efforts to highlight their identities without boiling those identities down to a single stereotype.
HANDS ON A HARDBODY: PRELIMINARY RESEARCH
J.D. Drew

- 60, a “good old boy” with pomaded gray hair and a high-wattage grin
- Used to work on an oil rig, but lost job after injury
Kelli Mangrum

• 22, a pretty brunette with steel ambition
• Considered favorite to win, good strategy like comfortable shoes and healthy food
Benny Perkins

• Mid-40s, with a lanky frame, weather-beaten face, ingratiating grin and lots of homespun philosophy
• Antagonist of the show
• Egotistical, high and mighty, racist, disrespects other characters
Greg Wilhote

- Early 20s, a freckled white kid in a baseball cap
- Wants to be a stuntman in movies
Chris Alvaro

- Former Marine, camouflage t-shirt emblazoned with USMC
- Well-built under his hoodie, wears aviator sunglasses to conceal his eyes
Ronald McCowan

• 35, good-natured African-American with a slight Louisiana accent
• Track athlete in high school
• Ill-prepared for contest
Heather Stovall

- 29, a flirtatious blonde restaurant hostess
- Sorority girl, vain about hair and makeup
Virginia Drew

• J.D. Drew’s wife, a one-time beauty settling into middle age
Mike Ferris

- Sales manager, late 30s, boyishly handsome, wears a cheap tie with a NASCAR clip
- Sleazy, egotistical
Cindy Barnes

- Former Miss Gregg County, still fond of pageant hair and pastels
- Public Relations at Floyd King Nissan
Jesus Peña

- Driven Mexican kid in his 20s
- Working to get into vet school
- Has dealt with anti-immigrant prejudice his whole life
Norma Valverde

- Stout Latina woman in tennis shoes and a floral applique t-shirt
- Very religious and spiritual
Janis Curtis

- Tough old bird with sun-burnished skin and missing teeth
- “Trailer trash”
Frank Nugent

- Die-hard good ole boy dressed in a Stetson, radio DJ
- Flashy Western clothing
Don Curtis

- Janis’ “pit stop crew”
Dr. Stokes

- Higher income
- Contrast from the other characters
- Facial hair to establish him from Don Curtis if played by same actor
HANDS ON A HARDBODY: COSTUME DESIGN RENDERINGS
Hands On A Hardbody - J. D. Drew
Hands On A Hardbody - Benny Perkins
Hands On A Hardbody - Greg Wilhote
Hands On A Hardbody - Chris Alvaro
Hands On A Hardbody - Heather Stovall
Hands On A Hardbody - Mike Ferris
Hands On A Hardbody - Cindy Barnes
Hands On A Hardbody - Jesus Peña
Hands On A Hardbody - Norma Valverde
Hands On A Hard Body - James Curtis
**HANDS ON A HARDBODY: PRODUCTION PAPERWORK**

**BUDGET**

*Hands on a Hardbody* Costume Budget: $2000

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COSTUME PLOT

**Keenan Larson (J.D. Drew)**

*Look One (Competition)*
- Blue Western shirt 
- White T-shirt 
- Jeans 
- Leg brace 
- Brown Dad shoes 
- Brown Western belt 
- Socks 
- Wedding ring 
- Gloves

*Look Two (Epilogue)*
- Short Sleeve Tan Western shirt

**Devon Prokopec (Kelli Mangrum)**

*Look One (Competition)*
- Yellow tie-dye shirt 
- Brown work shorts 
- Black converse 
- Brown socks 
- Ray Ban sunglasses 
- Blue trucker hat 
- Bunny slippers 
- Gloves
Add blue scrunchie, blue trucker hat at top of Act II

Look Two (Epilogue)
- Short sleeve button down
- Denim capris
- White socks

Brett Dixon (Benny Perkins)

Look One (Competition)
- “Don’t Mess with Texas” shirt
- Maroon Western shirt
- Dark grey jeans
- Black Western belt with Confederate flag belt buckle
- Cowboy boots
- Socks
- Silver tribal necklace
- Hunter camo hat
- Red bandana
- NASCAR sunglasses
- Sport watch
- Gloves

Look Two (Epilogue)
- Turquoise Formal Western shirt
- Jeans
- Brown cowboy hat
- Bolo tie
- Brown Western belt

Conner Morley (Greg Wilhote)

Look One (Competition)
- Red Star Wars shirt
- Blue plaid button down
- Cargo shorts
- Blue sneakers
- Socks
- Dallas Cowboys baseball hat
- Gloves

Look Two (Epilogue)
- Yellow plaid shirt
- Jeans
- Brown belt
**Josh Dunn (Chris Alvaro)**

*Look One (Competition/Cheering on Norma)*
- Black Marine shirt
- Grey hoodie
- Cargo pants
- Web belt
- Combat boots
- Socks
- Dog tags
- Wedding ring
- Sunglasses with camo croakie strap
- Gloves

*Look Two (Epilogue):*
- Green polo shirt
- Jeans
- Black tennis shoes

**Naphtali Curry (Ronald McCowan)**

*Look One (Competition)*
- Teal tracksuit
- White T-shirts
- Black huaraches sandals
- Teal baseball cap
- Gloves

*Look Two (Return in Act II)*
- Muhammad Ali T-shirt
- Denim shorts
- Teal Nike Tennis shoes
- Socks
- Blue kangol hat

*Look Three (Epilogue)*
- Funky patterned shirt
- Khaki shorts
- Black huaraches sandals

**Nicole Knox (Heather Stovall)**

*Look One (Competition)*
- Sleeveless pink floral blouse tied at waist
- Pink camisole
- Daisy duke shorts
- Nude pantyhose
- Brown cowboy boots
- Socks
- Pink earrings
- Small gold cross necklace
- Gloves

**Look Two (Epilogue):**
- Floral tank top
- Denim mini-skirt
- Brown sandals

**Kailyn Toussaint (Virginia Drew)**

**Look One**
- Floral button down
- Jeans
- Sandals
- Wedding ring
- Small gold watch
- Pocketbook
- Silver earrings
- Turquoise bracelet

**Look Two (Alone With Me [Reprise])**
- Blue sundress
- Wedges

**Look Three (JD has won)**
- White tunic
- Green floral skirt
- Gold hoops

**Look Four (Epilogue)**
- Chambray tunic
- Navy camisole
- Lightweight khaki capris
- Silver earrings

**Aaron Arseneault (Mike Ferris)**

**Look One (Day 1)**
- Medium Brown Western sport coat
- Tan shirt
- Cowboy Tabasco tie
- Jeans
- Cowboy boots
- Brown Western belt
- A-shirt
- Cheap gold tie clips
- Mirrored aviators
- Cheap gold watch
- Handkerchief

Look Two (Day 2—After “Gone”)
- Tan Western sport coat
- Yellow shirt
- Red Tabasco tie

Add brown cowboy hat for “Hands on a Hardbody”

Look Three (Day 3—After “Born in Laredo”)
- Medium Brown Western sport coat
- Cream shirt
- Bolo tie

Look Four (Day 4—Before “It’s a Fix [Reprise]
- White shirt
- Wagon Tabasco tie

Look Five (Epilogue)
- Grey Western suit
- 90s tie
- Brown cowboy hat

Cindy Barnes (Taylor Pearlstein, u/s Rachel Franke)

Look One (Day 1)
- Pink pastel skirt suit (Pink blazer/tan skirt—Rachel)
- White shirt
- White heels
- Gold and white button earrings
- White bracelet
- Gold watch

Look Two (Day 2—After “Gone”)
- Pastel blue jacket
- White skirt
- White purse

Look Three (“Hands on a Hardbody”)
-Pink Western shirt
-Jeans
-Pink cowboy hat
-Red cowboy boots
-Skinny red belt—Rachel

Look Four (Day 3—After “Born in Laredo”)
-White blouse
-Green skirt

Look Five (Epilogue)
-Pink floral sheath dress

**Daniel Lopez (Jesus Peña)**

Look One (Competition)
-Orange button down
-White T-shirt
-Jeans
-Work boots
-Socks
-Pet collar (worn on wrist)
-Gloves

Look Two (Epilogue)
-Orange and blue plaid shirt

**Adia Bell (Norma Valverde)**

Look One (Competition)
-Orange floral applique t-shirt
-Purple shorts
-White tennis shoes
-Lavender slouch socks
-Gold cross necklace
-Gold hoop earring
-Wedding ring
-Orange scrunchie
-Gloves

Look Two (Epilogue)
-Teal blouse
-90s Southwestern skirt
-Black sandals

**Dominique Ruffalo (Janis Curtis)**
Look One (Competition)
- Purple tie-dye wolf t-shirt
- Fishing vest w/ funky patches
- Acid wash pants
- Blue Tevas
- Fairy cat socks
- Purple visor
- Pink camo sunglasses with tie-dye croakie strap
- Wedding ring
- Gloves

Look Two (Epilogue)
- Cat T-shirt
- Khaki shorts
- Purple belt
- Flamingo socks

Chandler Corley-Essex (Fran Nugent)

Look One (Day 1)
- Sleeveless Denim Western shirt
- Multicolored denim skirt
- Brown belt
- Black Stetson hat
- Black cowboy boots
- Grey socks
- Big gold bolo tie
- Cowboy boot dangle earrings

Look Two (Day 2—After “Gone”)
- Frilly blue and white Western shirt
- Dark jeans
- Brown Western belt
- Silver rhinestone tie
- Blue horseshoe and cowboy hat earrings

Look Three (“Hands on a Hardbody”)
- Red plaid shirt
- Brown suede vest

Look Four (Day 3—After “Born in Laredo”)
- Blue plaid shirt

Look Five (Day 4—Before “It’s a Fix [Reprise]”)
- Pink Western shirt
- Black suede skirt
- Silver and gold cow bolo tie
- Cactus earrings

**Connor Griffin (Don Curtis/Dr. Stokes)**

*Look One:*
- NASCAR T-shirt
- Navy athletic shorts
- Black sandals
- White casual socks
- Cardboard crown
- Black fanny pack
- Black crocheted bottle holder
- Wedding ring
- Large 80s glasses

*Look Two (Dr. Stokes)*
- White dress shirt
- Charcoal sport coat
- Charcoal slacks
- Black dress shoes
- Fancy abstract patterned tie
- Black mustache

*Look Three (Epilogue)*
- Wolf flag shirt
- Khaki shorts
- Black dress belt
- Black sandals
HANDS ON A HARDBODY: ARCHIVAL PHOTOS

Photos courtesy of Ed Flores

Director: Danny Gurwin
Scenic Designer: Rachel Snow
Costume Designer: Marisa Lujan
Lighting Designer: Deanna Fitzgerald
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