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## SAN JOSE REP "DOUBLE INDEMNITY" Needs Motivation and Passion

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*John Bogar playing the role of Walter Huff in S.J.REP "DOUBLE INDEMNITY"*

**SAN JOSÉ, California** – It is night. Walter Huff (John Bogar) stands on the ship's stern observing the ocean's clashing waves. He coughs, and as he covers his mouth with a handkerchief, he can see blood in his spit. He grabs his left shoulder in pain where we can see the red mark of the bullet wound he received at midnight, as he was trying to meet Phyllis Nirlinger (Carrie Paff) his accomplice and lover in her house.

A full moon shining brightly in the night sky, makes him aware of a white shark swimming nearby. As he observes the shark, Huff starts talking to the audience, revealing different episodes of his past, that like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, when put together, assemble the story of the **DOUBLE INDEMNITY**, the world premiere and Co-production play by ACT Seattle and San Jose Rep that bring the Noir Classic to the stage.

For those unfamiliar with the term **Noir**, it is a word meaning "black color" and it is usually used to refer to the black and white contrast of the old German Expressionist cinematography, which was based in the term "Claro- Oscuro" (Light and darkness) a style used by Italian painters which utilized the contrast between darkness and light to emphasize details in their pictures.

In Hollywood, however, the term Film Noir, was primary used to refer to a Genre of mostly crime dramas of the early 1940's and late 1950's characterized by a central male figure: An average man, a detective, a policeman, an aging boxer or a salesman who is lured into a life of crime by a *Femme Fatale* an alluring sensuous woman



L to R Carrie Paff as **Phyllis Nirlinger** and John Bogar as **Walter Huff**

Based on the novel written by James M. Cain "DOUBLE INDEMNITY" was one of those films. The story was later adapted for the stage by David Pichette and R. Hamilton Wright. The play that S.J. Rep is presenting is a Co-production with ACT a Contemporary Theatre, in Seattle.

In "DOUBLE INDEMNITY" the role of Mrs Nirlinger, the *Femme fatale* is played by Carrie Paff, his "victim" in this case is Life Insurance's Salesman Walter Huff played by John Bogar

"DOUBLE INDEMNITY could have been wonderful as a play, but to make it believable, the dialogue in the play needs to be rewritten. The reason is that the dialogue as is, does not give the characters the proper motivation needed to commit a murder. To make matters worse while in the movie Phyllis confesses to Walter that she hates her husband because he always screams at her or simply ignores her, in the play Phyllis tells Walter her husband is good to her, as a result, her decision to kill him does not make sense.

Another problem of this production, is that the drama lacks the passion that the drama requires. In the scene where Mrs. Phyllis Nirlinger (Carrie Paff) and Walter Huff (Bogar) meet for the first time, Phyllis doesn't act sensual enough to make Walter fall in love with her at "first sight." As a person, Paff is a very beautiful woman, but as an actress she cannot portray the sensuality needed for a woman who wants to convince a man to help her kill her husband. On his part, Bogar is also a good actor, but again, his Walter needs passion. Bogar portrays a Walter that is very business like, not a passionate man which allows to be so blind by passion that he could kill a man. Because this mutual passion is lacking in their two main characters' performances, the audience does not see any passion between the two of them. We wanted to see more flirtation, more sexual innuendos. Without them, it sort of shocks the audience when Walter kisses Phyllis (They find it out of character) and shocks the audience even more when this "very proper gentleman" after a few seconds of dialogue not only falls deeply in love with this cold woman but also gets "very creative" in telling her the "most believable manner" to commit her millionaire's husband murder. Again, his action does not make sense because as portrayed by Bogar, Walter Huff is an average insurance salesman who lacks the passion he needed to have to love a woman so passionately that he is willing to kill a man for her.

The acting of Lola (Martin) was more natural, as an actress, she could portray better her sensuality. But when related to Walter, again it makes us wonder what attracted her to this plain man.

With the exception of Paff and Bogar, all the players represented different roles: Lola, Nirlinger/Nettie and Nurse (Jessica Martin) Nino/Jackson And Norton (Mark Anderson Phillips) and Keys and Mr. Nirlinger (Richard Ziman).

In most scenes, the play is well acted, the scenery is creative and the plot of "DOUBLE INDENMITY" interesting enough to keep the audience in their seats, but to make justice to the novel, the drama needs motivation, better dialogue and much more passion in the acting.