

CLARENCE BROWN THEATRE

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

CASTING BREAKDOWN – *HOW TO DEFEND YOURSELF*, Lab Fall '24

Updated 4.25

AVAILABLE ROLES

BRANDI, 21, she/her/hers, open to any race/ethnicity (*Playwright's note: "tbh so far has been workshopped by white women and I'm curious to see a version where Brandi is a person of color who presents with a high degree of privilege."*) Sorority VP & a black belt in Karate. Her confidence is camouflage for trauma.

MOJDEH, 18, she/her/hers, Iranian-American. Desperate to lose her virginity.

DIANA, 18, she/her/hers, Mexican-American. Loves guns. Tightly wound and resentful. Pretends to care less than she does.

KARA, 21, she/her/hers, open to any race/ethnicity. Into rough sex & not afraid to say it. Sorority sister to Brandi.

EGGO, 20, he/him/his, person of color. Wants to be loved, by anyone really. Sensitive and a little embarrassed by it.

NIKKI, 20, she/her/hers, person of color. Pulls in all her tentacles to disappear. Wants approval and is the most innocent in the group.

ANDY, 21, he/him/his, white. Just beginning to recognize his own privilege. He's trying to be an ally, he's really trying.

SUS, 6, she/her/hers. A young woman of color who makes a wish. In last scene only.

UNDERSTUDIES

Understudies may or may not be cast from this audition and process. It is also possible that we will seek "external" understudies in a separate audition process.

Notes on Character Identities:

How to Defend Yourself takes place in a very real, contemporary college setting. The characters come from a variety of backgrounds and experiences with sex and violence. Most (perhaps all) of the characters have their own wounds related to intimacy and are struggling to express their needs and desires and find ways to feel safe. See below for specific information regarding...

Race/Ethnicity/Nationality – The playwright has designated the race/ethnicity of most characters, and every effort will be made to honor her intentions. Below, "POC" is short for "person of color," i.e. any person who is of mixed race or of a race other than White.

Sex/Gender – Given the subject matter, gender specificity is important to the play. However, cis- and trans-gendered men and women, and non-binary actors, will be considered for roles.

Physical Ability – The play takes place in a self-defense class where martial arts moves are taught. The action is very physical and all roles require some degree of physicality. All actors in this production will be treated as the experts on their own bodies and abilities/disabilities. Choreography will be created in partnership with actors with this in mind.

Content Note– The dialogue, action and subject matter may be triggering to some actors and every effort will be made to create a safe and supportive space during auditions and rehearsals. You do not need to disclose any information about psychological or emotional disability or personal relationship to the material during the casting process unless there are specific accommodations you want to be assured of in advance of accepting a role.

Age - This play will be cast with primarily undergraduate actors, regardless of age (with the exception of SUS). Actor tracks are listed with characters’ ages only.

Character	Pronouns	Race/Ethnicity	Physical Ability	Character Age	Intimacy	Violence
Brandi	She/Her	Any	Disabled or Non-disabled	21	No	Yes – grappling
Mojdeh	She/Her	Iranian-American	Disabled or Non-disabled	18	Yes, kissed by Diana	Yes - grappling
Diana	She/Her	Mexican-American	Disabled or Non-disabled	18	Yes, kisses Mojdeh	Yes – grappling, punches Kara
Kara	She/Her	Any	Disabled or Non-disabled	21	Yes, licks Eggo’s forearm	Yes, grappling, punched by Diana
Eggo	He/Him	POC	Disabled or Non-disabled	20	No	Yes, grappling
Nikki	She/Her	POC	Disabled or Non-disabled	20	No	Yes, grappling
Andy	He/Him	White	Disabled or Non-disabled	21	No	Yes, grappling
Sus	She/Her	POC	Any	6	No	No

QUESTIONS?

Email the director, Jayne (jemknox@gmail.com), for any clarifications that would be helpful to your audition process.