

Riot Act, Inc. Definitions and Protocols for Moments of Intimacy and Sexual Violence in Production

Riot Act, Inc. considers blocking and choreography in which the given circumstances of the production require physical and/or imaginative touch, or sexual violence between actors as a moment of “intimate contact.” These moments are not limited to but may include the following:

- Kissing
- Intimate touch
- Imaginative intimate moments, (moments where the actors are asked to portray moments of romantic chemistry between characters even when physical touch is not needed).
- Violent touch that is interpreted as an abusive physical, sexual and/or mental act.
- Imaginative violent moments without touch (moments where violent mentally abusive behavior is portrayed but physical touch may not occur)
- Exposure of any performer’s breast, buttocks, pelvic/genital area.

In the interest of making the rehearsal and performance processes demonstrative of best pedagogical and professional practices for all concerned, **Riot Act, Inc.** requests its directors employ the following protocols:

- Secure an Intimacy Choreographer, Intimacy Director, or Intimacy Designer for the production should the scale of intimate moments in the production deem it necessary. This decision will be made in collaboration with the artistic team.
- Provide information on all possible intimate or sexually violent moments in the production at the time of auditions and encourage auditions to document and communicate any personal boundaries.
- In both in auditions and in rehearsals, have a boundary establishment system for the actors. Should an actor state an area of the body is off-limits to touch, that boundary is to be respected during the staging process and in performance. Consent of boundaries can be given and revoked at any time during the process. The boundaries may change from day to day or person to person.
- Limit attendance in early rehearsals to director, actors, stage management and the intimacy choreographer when intimate moments are being staged or rehearsed. If others are asked for or required in the room, gain permission from the actors involved in the scene before allowing these extra people in the room.
- Stage management is to record all blocking and choreography.

- Once blocking and choreography is set, ask the actors to independently document what they understand is the agreed-upon choreography for each intimate or violent moment. Make sure everyone involved has the same understanding of what the blocking/choreography is.
- Employ a self-care “cue” for the production. This is a word or phrase that anyone can say to “hold” a rehearsal while a moment of physical or mental stress is addressed.
- Allow the actors to use a placeholder in place of kissing or other intimacy until the kiss/intimacy has been appropriately choreographed. Actors should never be directed to “figure it out” without guidance from the director and/or intimacy specialist.
- If nudity is being staged, actors must have consented to staging this before being cast. Actors should determine for themselves the degree of exposure/nudity they are comfortable with throughout rehearsals until dress rehearsals where the full nudity/exposure required for the production must be performed.
- Encourage the production team to use anatomical language when referring to body parts. Scenes should be referred to by act and scene number rather than loaded terms such as “the sex scene” or “the rape scene.” Team members should offer comments or opinions on the staging of these moments to the director and stage manager only.
- Educate everyone in the production as to how, when, and where to report an issue should one arise. Please refer to the Communication Resolution Path (CRP) created for each production.
- Allow time during pre-show set up to incorporate an intimacy call before each performance if needed. This is for actors can rehearse moments and address any concerns with stage management before the house is opened.