

***The Rimers Of Eldritch* by Lanford Wilson**  
**University of Virginia Department of Drama**  
**November 14-22, 2014**

**Context:**

I served as the fight director for the UVa production of *The Rimers of Eldritch* (directed by Associate Professor Doug Grissom). The scenes I staged focused on characters coming of age and making decisions that physically test the lines of sexual assault. *The Rimers of Eldritch* performed November 14-22, 2014. Although this play was included in our 2014-2015 season to encourage dialogue about sexual assault—we certainly could not have predicted that the opening of this play would coincide with the *Rolling Stone* article “A Rape on Campus” published November 19, 2014. Although not specifically prompted to write about connections between the play and current events, the following excerpts are examples of how the production engaged the audience.

**Student Reflection, DRAM 1010 (Fall 2014):**

*I love how theatre has the opportunity to address real issues in a classy and mature manner and through the plays we watched this semester, I personally have been affected by the messages represented within these works. The Rimers of Eldritch came at a very interesting time at the University and I believe that writing the review helped me process how I truly felt about the situation. Theatre may not be a survival mechanism but it can provide the will to survive.*

**Student Paper / Review of *The Rimers of Eldritch*, DRAM 1010 (Fall 2014):**

*[In watching] Eldritch face the tragedy of a murder mystery, I saw the University of Virginia facing the tragedy of sexual assault.*

*...parallels between the town of Eldritch and the community that I am living in today were made as I was thrown into the thought processes of the townspeople dealing with their own community's tragedy. As the townsfolk were trying to make sense of the murder trial, they flashed back to different situations they had been a part of in the events leading to the tragedy. These flash backs occurred in short, non-linear scenes that often confused the audience. However, I was engrossed in the process by which the events were relived as it paralleled my own attempt at dealing with the current situation in my own community. Further, I understood the reasoning behind the playwright's choice to display the story in such a format. The non-linear scenes demonstrated the confusion that a community faces at a time of tragedy and allowed me to feel the murder trials' effects alongside the residents of the town of Eldritch.*

*Further, the repetition of scenes depicted the way that the human mind harps on certain things that have been seen, heard, or read during a trying time in a community. The mind doesn't let anyone shake these thoughts no matter how hard they try. Just as the Eldritch community revisits the events that led to Skelly's murder; the UVA*

*community tries to stop the constant replay in their minds of a vivid rape scene that was revealed to them less than a week ago.*

*In addition, the intersecting scenes demonstrate the conflict in one's mind as it tries to piece together a tragedy. It is hard to remain in the present moment at a confusing time, and this was evident as the murder trial was often interrupted by scenes that showed the town's replaying of specific events. This is the same thing that happened to every UVA Student last Thursday as they tried to pay attention in class while their mind was interpreting the frightening events revealed in the Rolling Stone article.*

*Many people were confused and dissatisfied as they left the showing of *The Rimers of Eldritch*. While I left with the same emotions, which I disliked, I also left with a sense of awe as I felt like I had just watched my own reality being acted out in front of me. Although Wilson had no idea that the disturbing events in the current Charlottesville community were going to be happening during the showing of his work, I do believe that he intended for this play to parallel the thought process of a human being during disturbing events. This is evident as he chose characters that could be found in any ordinary community, as he gave them lines that revealed many dark secrets of humanity today, and as he set up the story to be told as though it was jumping between the minds of the townspeople as they witnessed a murder trial. While I will always be dissatisfied with the night I spent watching this play as it revealed my inability to understand sinful people, I will forevermore be able to relate to the feelings of confusion, distrust, and uncertainty within a community after tragedy strikes. I just hope that unlike *Eldritch*, Charlottesville and UVA will be able to establish justice and unite as a community in this difficult time.*