Finding Lucille Ball

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

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Abstract

Many, if not all, Americans have seen or at least heard of the 1950s red-headed star: Lucille Ball. As popular entertainment progresses, for better or worse, Ms. Ball and her popular television series, “I Love Lucy”, remain iconic pieces of American culture. However it is a common misconception that Lucille Ball held the same characteristics as Lucy Ricardo. Within my play, I examine her background as an artist before her big break as well as her relationships with her fellow cast members and business-man husband, Desi Arnaz. The two acts of the play serve as a look at Lucille Ball’s life before and during “I Love Lucy” and what came after the show stopped production. It is my hope that readers leave my play with a fresh look at Ms. Ball while still keeping any previous love and memories of this iconic red-head.

Acknowledgements

It is with great gratitude that I thank my advisor, Ms. Jennifer Blackmer for being a wealth of information and encouragement not only throughout this project but my entire college career. I can attribute so much of what I’ve learned at Ball State University to her classes and personal lessons.

I would also like to thank my family for being so abundantly supportive. Thank you for encouraging me to pursue my dreams and always being behind me every step of the way. Dreams really do come true!
Author’s Statement

Years ago, my family and I were discussing our ancestry when my father happened to mention our direct connection with Lucille Ball. At the time, I did not think much of this significant relationship. But as I grew older and began college, studying theatre, I began to realize just how exciting and profound my lineage is. I began to connect much of my attitude towards work ethic as well as my vivacious personality with Lucille and knew that there had to be some way to utilize our relationship within my college career. When I picked up the Senior Honors Thesis packet in January of 2012, many different ideas rushed through my head but surprisingly, none of them involved Lucille Ball. I called my father one day and went over a couple tentative plans with him. He suggested I utilize my connection with Lucille Ball as a basis for my thesis. From that point on, I contacted my academic advisor and the Honors College before officially putting my plans into action.

As a theatre student, I had participated in a playwriting class my sophomore year which was taught by my advisor, Jennifer Blackmer. I discussed my plans about my Honors Thesis and creating some sort of play about Lucille Ball with her and she signed on as my thesis advisor. I chose to write a play as the experience would broaden my previous skills as a playwright and theatre student. The project would prove to add much to my knowledge and talents by further pushing my creative mind and my analytical mind as a researcher of part of my family history.

My father and I had discussed plans to visit Jamestown, New York where Lucille Ball was born and where some of our relatives still live. Unfortunately, those plans never came into fruition, but I knew that even without that extra contact, I could still accomplish my task as a researcher and read as many books as possible about Lucille. I checked out every single book about Lucille Ball from Bracken Library and kept each one until I had read every word in each of them. There were three particularly useful resources I have kept throughout the process as a means of checking back on my information while editing my play to ensure I’ve kept all the information accurate.

The journey of creating this play has been a very exciting and enlightening one. I now know more about Lucille Ball than I could have ever hoped to. And it’s my wish that anyone who happens across my play will find the information just as entertaining and edifying as I have.
Works Cited

