

# IMPRO THEATRE SCHOOL STUDENT HANDBOOK 2023-24

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# **WELCOME**

Dear aspiring improvisers and seasoned performers,

We are thrilled to welcome you to the heart of spontaneous creativity, where the stage is a blank canvas, and your imagination is the paintbrush...or a flamingo. Any other suggestions from my dear readers?

At Impro Theatre School, we believe in the power of improvisation to not only entertain but to inspire, connect, and transform.

Our school is more than just a place to learn the art of improvisation and unscripted theatre; it's a community of passionate individuals who share a love for storytelling, quick thinking, and the thrill of the unknown. Whether you're a complete beginner or a seasoned improviser, you'll find a place here to grow, experiment, and play.

What makes Impro Theatre School special:

- World-Class Instructors: Our experienced and talented instructors are dedicated to nurturing your creative potential. They bring a wealth of knowledge and a passion for improvisation that is contagious. They are seasoned industry professionals who believe in the power of education and mentorship for the next generation of improvisers.
- **Diverse Classes:** We offer a wide range of classes, from the fundamentals of narrative improv to advanced techniques, genre-specific workshops, and more. There's something for everyone at every skill level.
- A Safe Space: We believe in fostering an inclusive and supportive environment where you can take risks, make mistakes, and learn from them. Our theatre is a place where you can be your authentic self.
- Life Skills: Beyond the stage, our training can enhance your communication, teamwork, and confidence in everyday life. Improv isn't just an art form; it's a life skill.
- Performance Opportunities: For those who aspire to perform, we offer numerous opportunities to showcase your talents in front of live audiences. Our shows are not only entertaining but also a chance to celebrate your growth as an improviser.

So, whether you're here to ignite your passion for improvisation, unleash your creativity, or simply have a blast, you've come to the right place. Join us on this exciting journey, and let's explore the limitless world of improvisation together!

This handbook contains policies and guidelines for all students, whether online or in-person. Impro Theatre School reserves the right in its discretion to modify or change its policies and guidelines at any time. For questions about our policies and guidelines please contact the school program coordinator at: <a href="mailto:school@improtheatre.com">school@improtheatre.com</a>

## **ADDING A CLASS**

Students can register for class online through improtheatre.com. Go to the "class" tab and then click "register". Open enrollment starts when a class is posted on the website and ends after the 1st session. Any students registering for a course past the 1st day of class may be subject to a \$20 late registration fee. It's at the discretion of Impro Theatre school whether or not a student will be permitted to join a class past open enrollment. Please contact school@improtheatre.com for questions or concerns or to request permission to register for a class after open enrollment.

## DROPPING A CLASS

Should a student's enrollment be terminated or canceled for any reason, all refunds will be made according to the following refund schedule:

Cancellation requires the submission of a Cancellation Request in writing via email to Tuition@improtheatre.com. If the student does not start any class and cancels within 5 business days after making a payment, then 100% of fees and tuition will be refunded. Additionally, if Impro Theatre School must discontinue or cancel a class for any reason a full refund will be issued or the student can choose to receive a credit for a class at a later date. Credit must be used within 90 days.

Cancellation after enrollment through 60% of the program will result in a prorated refund and includes a \$20 Late Drop free. Program completion is computed on the number of weeks completed since enrollment to the total number of weeks allocated to complete the program, whichever is greater. Canceling after completing more than 80% of the program will result in no refund. Missed classes initiated by the student will not be prorated or result in a refund. Please see the student handbook for allowable absences and class attendance in regards to program progression. Refunds will be made within 30 days of termination of student's enrollment or receipt of Cancellation Request from the student.

## PAYMENT PLANS

Payment plans for Impro Theatre School courses are available on a monthly, bi-weekly, or weekly basis. Classes listed at full-price are often set at discounted rates. Some payment plan options cover additional processing and administrative fees that range between \$3-5 per transaction.

Once enrolled, payment plans cannot be changed or modified online. Any changes or modification must be requested in writing via email to Tuition@improtheatre.com or School@improtheatre.com. We will do our best to accommodate your needs. It is at the full discretion of Impro Theatre School whether to accept or deny payment modifications.

# **ATTENDANCE**

We do <u>not</u> offer refunds for missed classes. Planned absences should be communicated to your instructor and/or the school administrator ahead of time. Students are welcome to join another class section to "make up" a missed class upon approval from the school coordinator and the instructor. The following are the number of allowable absences per the length of class:

- 8-week classes 3 absences [Intro to Narrative and CORE 1: Physical]
- 12-week classes 4 absences [CORE 2-4 and Genre Electives]
- 20-week classes 5 absences [Conservatory and Lab]

Students with more than the allowable absences may be asked to repeat their course before moving forward in the program.

# **CLASS CANCELLATION**

Impro Theatre School reserves the right to postpone or cancel a class due to low enrollment if it does not reach the minimum number of students.

Classes that are already in session may be canceled due to severe weather or other unforeseen circumstances. As a result, students will be notified via email and an additional "make up" day will be added to that class. If a "make up" day cannot occur and the class ends before its scheduled time frame, students will be issued a refund for the lost session.

## **CLASS EXPECTATIONS**

Students may be required to purchase the following for participation in a course:

- Books/plays/audio recordings
- Movies/TV Shows/Streaming subscriptions
- Costumes some may be available on-site

Students are <u>NOT</u> required to purchase the following:

- Furniture or props
- Photography/filmmaking/videography
- Decorations
- Food

Impro Theatre School does <u>NOT</u> reimburse students for out of pocket expenses. Any purchases outside of the class requirements agreed upon to fulfill the nature of the course is at the full discretion of the student.

## **CLASS PROGRESSION**

## \*\*Subject to Change 2024\*\*

The following is an outline of a typical progression through Impro Theatre School. Any individual student's matriculation might not take the following course, and some prerequisites can be waived on a case-by-case basis. Students may also be asked to repeat or revisit courses at any time during their progression through Impro's program.

- INTRO TO NARRATIVE: 8-week workshop
  - Prerequisite: None
- GENRE WORKSHOP LEVEL 1: 4-week workshops in classic Impro Genres
  - Prerequisite: None
- GENRE WORKSHOP LEVEL 2: 4-week workshops in classic Impro Genres
  - Prerequisite: Genre Workshop Level one or teacher approval
- GENRE WORKSHOP LEVEL 3: 4-week workshops in classic Impro Genres
  - Prerequisite genre workshop level 1-2 or teacher approval
- ADVANCED GENRE WORKSHOP: 8-weeks workshop with performances
  - Prerequisite: Genre Workshop levels 1-3 or teacher approval
- SPECIALTY CLASSES: 4-week Elective workshops taught by Impro Faculty and special guests
  - o Prerequisite: class dependent

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### **CORE PROGRAM**, a series of four 12-week workshops

- CORE 1: Physical CORE (8 weeks online)
  - Prerequisite: Passed Impro Basics or placement via audition or previous training
- CORE 2: Character CORE character and relationship
  - Prerequisite: CORE 1 or school approval
- CORE 3: Story CORE character objectives and story arc
  - Prerequisite: CORE 1-2 or school approval
- **CORE 4: Genre CORE** end of class performance in selected genre (genres vary)
  - Prerequisite: CORE 1-3 or school approval

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#### **APPLIED CORE**

- **ONGOING CORE**: ongoing class (no set end date, prorates available)
  - Prerequisite: Completion of CORE program or teach approval
- LA THEATRESPORTS: Variable length workshops
  - o Prerequisite: class dependent
- MUSICAL IMPROV CLASSES: 4, 8 or 12 week Musical Improvisation Workshops
  - Prerequisite: class dependent

#### THE CONSERVATORY

**CONSERVATORY WORKSHOPS** - 5-month workshops (no prorates available) Students will take both RomCom and Williams (though not necessarily in that particular order) upon being placed into Impro's Conservatory program.

- TENNESSEE WILLIAMS
  - Prerequisite: Placement audition or invitation.
- ROMANTIC COMEDY
  - Prerequisite: Placement audition or invitation.

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- ADVANCED NARRATIVE: Ongoing class (no set end date, no prorates available)
  - Prerequisite: Williams, RomCom, and/or invitation
  - IMPROVISING PLAYS & FILMS: Ongoing class (no set end date, no prorates available)
    - o Prerequisite: Williams, RomCom, and/or invitation
  - IMPRO LAB: 5-month workshop (no prorates available)
    - o Prerequisite: Williams, RomCom, IPF, and/or invitation

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# **ADVANCEMENT & EVALUATIONS**

At the CORE-program level, student advancement is at the discretion of the instructor. Factors that are considered for advancement include, but are not limited to: attendance, skill development, disposition, and how well the student works with their peers, listens and incorporates feedback.

At the end of a conservatory level or Lab level class, an evaluation with the instructor will take place and a recommendation will be made regarding which class best fits the student's progression within the school. These are meant to be a resource for growth and are a chance for students to get direct feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of their work from their instructor, as well as apply self-assessment to their own work and to discuss and clarify their goals at Impro.

The instructors and staff of the Impro Theatre School will do their best to place each student in the class that is appropriate for their current skill level and growth as an improvisational actor. End-of-term evals may happen over email, on Zoom, over-the-phone or in an in-person meeting. The instructor will attempt to contact each student to set up a progress evaluation. It is the student's responsibility to follow up to set up a meeting time.

# **FACULTY PLACEMENT**

Impro Theatre School reserves the right to make changes to teaching staff with qualified teachers at any time without notice. A student is not guaranteed a particular instructor for any specific term.

# **COVID-19 POLICY**

<u>Effective April 4, 2023:</u> Students are no longer required to wear masks indoors. This follows Gov. Gavin Newsom's termination on Feb. 28, 2023 of California's pandemic State of Emergency. The new mask guidance is based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's <u>COVID-19 Community Levels</u>. Students, staff, and visitors always have the option to wear a face mask and will not be prevented from doing so. CDPH recommends that any individual with respiratory symptoms, such as a cough, wear a mask when around others. **STUDENTS EXHIBITING COVID-LIKE SYMPTOMS MAY BE ASKED TO WEAR A MASK, OR SENT HOME.** 

Covid testing will only be required in cases of close contact, Covid-like symptoms, or a return to class after a Covid illness. Students are required to monitor for any symptoms, and stay home if they are sick.

## **CLOSE CONTACT & POSITIVE TESTS**

If you have close contact with a person who tests positive, or you test positive yourself within a 7 day period of your last class, email us asap so we can tell if your class was exposed. The first day a person is exposed or experiences symptoms is Day 0. The student may return to class on Day 5 if no symptoms are present and they present a negative PCR for antigen test. Students must stay masked for 10 days, regardless. Positive students are good to unmask after Day 10, and are not required to test again until after day 30. If you are experiencing any symptoms you are required to stay home.

We do not offer refunds for missed classes. No transfers or credits. All drop requests must be in writing and sent to Tuition@improtheatre.com and School@improtheatre.com.

# CODE OF CONDUCT & BOUNDARIES GUIDELINES

Our organization is dedicated to maintaining a culture of respect, inclusivity, and professionalism. Any inappropriate behaviors including inappropriate verbal, physical, or sexual conduct, or the destruction of any property or of the Impro Theatre spaces, or the consumption of drugs or alcohol during class will not be tolerated and will result in removal from class, suspension from school, and forfeiture of class tuition. Impro has a zero-tolerance policy for racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, or any other type of discrimination against a marginalized group. Be supportive of each other. For our online classes, we have a zero tolerance policy for the sharing of inappropriate or offensive materials, virtual backgrounds and links.

We hold our faculty and staff to the same standards of conduct as stated above. Impro requires students to refrain from using forms of comedy that are offensive, or discriminatory towards race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, etc. While we understand to a degree that this may happen accidentally, occurrences of this type of behavior are grounds for suspension without reimbursement.

At all levels, discussion of boundaries will begin in the first meeting(s) of class or rehearsal. All students and ensemble members are encouraged to make boundaries

known and to indicate to their instructor or director immediately if they are uncomfortable or feel unsafe in any way. You are empowered to "call timeout" in such a situation in class or rehearsal. At no time, at any level, will any student or ensemble member be compelled against their will to participate in or proceed with any exercise or behavior which causes them distress. Impro Theatre & School embraces diversity, equity and inclusiveness.

At the beginning of a course or rehearsal process instructors/directors will explain the types of interactions may be encountered throughout the term, especially in regard to personal space. Students will be encouraged to share their personal boundary preferences at that time and are free to update their preferences throughout. In the event that a course or genre seems to ask for more than a student is comfortable with, Impro will work with the student to find a solution.

## LEVEL 1: Intro To Narrative and Drop-Ins

## **Conventional Public Setting level**

**Touch which may be allowable:** Handshakes, high fives. What a reasonable person would find acceptable in a conventional public setting where people might not know each other and would normally be expected to observe reasonably decorous standards of conversation and behavior.

**Content on stage:** Topics appropriate for the scene or exercise and adhering to "PG-13" standards. Specifically discouraged is anything meant only to shock and gratuitous references to violence, sex, drug abuse, etc.

## LEVEL 2: CORE 1 - 3

### Social situation amongst acquaintances level

**Touch which may be allowable:** Reasonable social touches with which acquaintances would be comfortable, such as: Touching a shoulder, arm, holding hands, light hugging, dancing with a partner.

**Content on stage:** Topics appropriate for community spaces with mixed company and acquaintances.

## LEVEL 3: CORE 4 and Ongoing CORE programs

## Friendly level

**Touch which may be allowable:** provided mutual consent is granted in advance, during an in class discussion: Hugging and holding, a kiss on the cheek, sitting on laps and, if training has been provided, very light stage combat such as fake slaps or fake punches.

**Content on stage:** Guided by the source material and attenuated by in-class/rehearsal discussion. Topics you would typically openly discuss with your peers, which might include explicit language and content, innuendo and in-scene flirtatious behavior, provided it is appropriate to the author, genre or style at hand.

## LEVEL 4: Conservatory, IPF, LAB

#### Ensemble level

**Touch which may be allowable:** Essentially, a combination of examples listed above and will vary depending on genre. Includes that which is agreed-upon by ensemble members and deemed acceptable and appropriate for rehearsal and performance, especially in regard to the specific author, genre or style at hand.

**Content on stage:** Guided by the source material and attenuated by in-class/rehearsal discussion. Topics you would typically openly discuss with your close friends, which may include explicit language and content, innuendo and in-scene flirtatious behavior, provided it is appropriate to the author, genre or style at hand.

## **NEVER ALLOWABLE**

**Never allowable behavior:** Open mouth kissing, biting, any unrehearsed stage combat of any type, nudity, verbal abuse, or any other non-consented intimate or physically aggressive behavior.

# **MEDIATION & CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

Any Ensemble member, staff, or volunteer who becomes aware of or is subjected to possible violations of the Impro Theatre's Code of Conduct (see employee manual) should notify a person they feel most comfortable reporting to in a leadership position. This could include the Artistic Director(s), Technical Director, Stage Manager, Show

Director, Studio Manager, Executive Director, or any member of the Board of Directors immediately, or as soon as reasonably possible. Impro Theatre may ask that complaints be put in writing to facilitate the investigation process.

## Concern Resolution Path (CRP)

The goal of the CRP is to provide a documented communication pathway to address issues in a class, production or within Impro Theatre's organization. The CRP seeks to inform participants what to do and who to address with serious issues, and dispel the fear of reprisal for reporting issues of safety, harassment, or other serious concerns. This Concern Resolution Path will be printed and distributed to all participants **before the first day of class, rehearsal or training**. The goal is to seek to resolve concerns early, before participants are put at risk and before the concern escalates.

### The Concern Resolution Path follows a three-level structure:

**Level One**—We recognize that many concerns can be resolved through conversation with the parties involved. Whenever possible participants should be encouraged to discuss challenges and concerns with one another. Sharing and hearing concerns with openness and respect can prevent situations from escalating further.

**Level Two**—The following participants (in no particular order) should be granted a certain level of authority and trust to determine whether a concern can be resolved at this level or if it needs to be sent to the next level. All concerns should be reported to Level Three, even if no action is required.

- Faculty Member
- Stage Manager
- Show Director
- House Manager
- Studio Manager
- School Coordinator or Administrator

Additionally, if any of the above listed people, or people in positions of responsibility for others, becomes aware of any incidents or alleged incidents of possible Impro Theatre Code of Conduct violations, such person must immediately report, as soon as reasonably possible, the incident(s) directly to the Executive Director or President of the Board of Directors before undertaking an investigation or other action.

**Level Three**—These participants should be considered the <u>final level of the path</u>, capable of resolving issues that have not been resolved prior to reaching this stage. They are strongly advised to consult with each other and review legal or other implications of any decision.

- Artistic Director
- Executive Director
- School Director
- President of the Board of Directors

Impro Theatre will take prompt action to investigate allegations and reports of Code of Conduct Violations. Based upon its investigation, Impro Theatre promptly will take any appropriate corrective action toward any Engaged Person found to have participated in prohibited conduct. Such persons will be subject to appropriate discipline or other corrective action, up to and including termination of employment or prohibition from any further affiliation with Impro Theatre.

Impro Theatre's policy is to keep all instances of alleged Code of Conduct Violations confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need for a thorough investigation. If a party to a complaint does not agree with its resolution, that party may appeal to the Executive Director or the President of the Board. Impro Theatre prohibits and will not tolerate or permit retaliation against any victim of or witness to a Code of Conduct violation or violations. Any Engaged Person who retaliates against another person because of that other person's good faith complaint or good faith participation in an investigation, will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment or prohibition from any further affiliation with Impro Theatre.

The School Director and Executive Director will maintain personnel files, which should include reported concerns. Such files are to be kept confidential and accessible only to the individual(s) responsible for maintaining the files. In the event of civil or criminal misconduct or liability, the Impro Theatre School's Code of Conduct Policy and the Concern Resolution Path is not a replacement for legal advice or action, nor does it stand instead of any local, state or federal law.

## **Confidential Feedback System**

In the event that you are reluctant to raise your concerns directly, you may submit anonymous comments online <u>HERE</u> and continue ongoing communication with a designated neutral party.

## DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION

If you believe you need accommodation because of your disability, you are responsible for requesting reasonable accommodation from the School Administrator at school@improtheatre.com. Impro Theatre encourages staff or students to include relevant information, such as:

- A description of the accommodation you are requesting.
- The reason you need an accommodation
- How the accommodation will help you perform the essential functions of your job or enhance your educational experience.

After receiving your oral or written request, Impro Theatre will engage in an interactive dialogue with you to determine the precise limitations of your disability and explore potential reasonable accommodations that could overcome those limitations. Impro Theatre encourages you to suggest specific reasonable accommodations that you believe would allow you to perform your job or enhance your educational experience. However, Impro Theatre is not required to make the specific accommodation requested by you and may provide an alternative, effective accommodation, to the extent any reasonable accommodation can be made without imposing an undue hardship on Impro Theatre.

If your disability or need for accommodation is not obvious, Impro Theatre may ask you to provide supporting documents showing that you have a disability within the meaning of the ADA and applicable state or local laws, and that your disability necessitates a reasonable accommodation. If the information provided in response to this request is insufficient, Impro Theatre may require that you see a healthcare professional of Impro Theatre's choosing, at Impro Theatre's expense. In those cases, if you fail to provide the requested information or see the designated health care professional, your request for a reasonable accommodation may be denied.

Impro Theatre will keep confidential any medical information that it obtains in connection with your request for a reasonable accommodation.

This policy is neither exhaustive nor exclusive. Impro Theatre is committed to taking all other actions necessary to ensure equal employment opportunity for persons with disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and California law.

## PHOTOGRAPHY & RECORDINGS

Impro asks that students refrain from taking any photographs, screenshots or videos during class time. It is the policy of the Impro Theatre School to not record or take pictures during class so that class time feels like a safe place to make mistakes and take risks. If a faculty member or staff member wishes to record or photograph part of a

class, students will be informed before any recording or photography takes place and will have the ability to privately inform the teacher that they wish to opt out of the recording or photograph. Any and all class-related performances may be recorded and preserved, and portions of these performances may be used in marketing materials.

## **RELEASE**

With your registration for class at the Impro Theatre School or ticket purchase from Impro Studio, you agree to the following release:

"I consent to being photographed and/or being recorded by means of video or audio recording by Impro Theatre, or a designated representative thereof, during classes at Impro. These photographs and/or recordings can be used, without compensation to me, in any public display, publication or media, or website, or in any manner or form, and at any time by Impro Theatre in promotion of the mission to promote the theatrical arts and have theatre arts recognized in all phases of education. I release Impro Theatre, and its employees, agents, representatives, associates, Board of Director members, and consultants from any liability in connection with the use of such photographic, video and/or audio materials."

If you do NOT consent please email school@improtheatre.com

# LIABILITY

With your registration for class at the Impro Theatre School or ticket purchase from Impro Studio, you agree that you choose to voluntarily participate in the experience with full knowledge that the activity may be hazardous to yourself and/or your property. You voluntarily assume full responsibility for any risks of loss, property damage or personal injury, including death, that may be sustained as a result of participating in the activity. You agree to indemnify and hold harmless Impro Theatre School and Impro Studio as well as its employees, members & volunteers for any loss, liability, damage or costs, including court costs and attorney fees, that may occur as a result of your participation in the activity.

# **OUTSIDE GUESTS & PETS**

To foster a safe and supportive environment, the Impro Theatre School does not allow any outside guests in the classroom. For online students, we understand that students' living situations may make this challenging for those partaking in online classes, but we ask that students refrain from allowing any non-students in their living space to watch or participate in class time activities, or to engage with other students, even while on break.

No pets are allowed in the classroom. If you have a service animal and are requesting a waiver of this policy please contact the school coordinator at <a href="mailto:school@improtheatre.com">school@improtheatre.com</a>

Snacks and drinks are allowed in the classrooms, however, not on the carpets in 211 and 209. Please clean up after yourself and be respectful with regards to smell as the classrooms are contained environments. No pets are allowed in the classroom.

Please refrain from causing any damage to the spaces or equipment/items in the spaces. If you notice that something is broken or needs to be replaced, please tell your instructor or the school (info@improtheatre.com).

# STUDIO & CLASSROOM DAMAGE POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines and procedures for addressing incidents of damage caused by students within the studio, which is also utilized as classroom space. This policy aims to promote a safe and respectful learning environment, encourage responsible behavior, and ensure that all students are held accountable for any damage they may cause.

- **1. Responsibility:** It is the responsibility of every student to treat the classroom and its contents with care and respect. Deliberate or negligent damage to classroom property will not be tolerated.
- **2. Definition of Damage:** Damage is defined as any intentional or unintentional act that results in harm, destruction, or deterioration of classroom property, including but not limited to furniture, equipment, walls, technology, and instructional materials.

## 3. Reporting Damage:

- Students must immediately report any damage they witness or cause to their instructor or school staff member.
- Teachers and staff must promptly document and report any damage they discover in the classroom or studio.

#### 4. Investigation:

- Upon receiving a report of classroom damage, the school administration will conduct a thorough investigation to determine the responsible party.
- The investigation may involve interviews with students, review of security footage (if available), and other relevant evidence.

#### Consequences:

- Students found responsible for causing damage will be subject to appropriate consequences, which may include:
  - Financial restitution for repair or replacement costs.
  - Loss of privileges, such as participation in extracurricular activities or use of school facilities.
  - Removal or termination from classes.
- The severity of the consequences will be determined based on the nature and extent of the damage, as well as the student's prior record of behavior.

#### 5. Restitution:

- Students found responsible for causing damage may be required to pay for the repair or replacement of damaged property
- In cases where restitution is required, a reasonable payment plan may be established to ensure financial hardship is not a barrier to accountability.

## 6. Appeals:

- Students have the right to appeal the consequences imposed as a result of classroom damage. Appeals must be made in writing to the school administration.
- The school administration will review the appeal and make a final determination within a reasonable timeframe.

# **IMPORTANT CONTACTS**

Artistic Director(s) - AD Team@improtheatre.com
Impro School Coordinator - school@improtheatre.com
Impro School Tuition & Billing Questions - tuition@improtheatre.com
DEIA student representatives - deistudentreps@improtheatre.com (Bethany Price, Diana Elizabeth Jordan)