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# **American Wee Pie**

By

LISA DILLMAN

**Dramatic Publishing Company**

Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa

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LISA DILLMAN

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*American Wee Pie* received its world premiere at Rivendell Theatre Ensemble in Chicago in 2013.

CAST:

ZED ..... Kurt Brocker  
LINZ..... Jennifer Pompa  
PAM.....Jane Baxter Miller  
PABLEU.....Mark Ulrich  
PHIL/MALCOLM/PETE ..... Keith Kupferer

PRODUCTION:

Director ..... Megan Carney  
Assistant Director..... Scott Verissimo  
Stage Manager ..... Stephanie Hurovitz  
Scenic Design..... Regina Garcia  
Sound Design ..... Joshua Horvath  
Costume Design ..... Lauren Lowell  
Lighting Design ..... Jessica Carson  
Property Design ..... Joanna Iwanicka  
Production Manager.....Jen Seleznow  
Technical Director..... Toni Kendrick

# American Wee Pie

## CHARACTERS

ZED: 40ish. A textbook editor. Quiet and a bit cautious but not timid.

LINZ: 40ish. An old high-school acquaintance of Zed's. A take-charge kind of gal.

PAM: Mid-40s. Zed's sister. No-nonsense, sharp-tongued and sarcastic with a huge beating heart underneath it all.

PABLEU: 40s. Linz's husband. A cupcake chef. Precise and graceful in all his gestures and speaks with a French accent.

\*MALCOLM: Pushing 50. A mailman. His pace is friendly and slow, but he gets the job done.

\*PHIL STONKLIN: The troubled spirit of a deceased coworker of Zed's. Loud, obnoxious and needy.

\*PETE PUTTERMAN: A real estate broker who specializes in cemetery property. A fast-talker and a financially oriented pragmatist.

\*These characters should be played by the same performer.

TIME: The present(ish). Midsummer through late fall.

PLACE: Gardensend, a small city in the Midwest.



# AMERICAN WEE PIE

## ACT I

*(In the darkness, the sound of crackling static is heard. A bell chimes somewhere. A light rises on ZED standing next to a streetlight. He is carrying a small suitcase. He opens his eyes wide then squeezes them shut again, attempting to focus. The static abates and a ghostly ice-cream truck version of Sondheim's "Send in the Clowns," or something similar, is heard, but fades when he opens his eyes again. Street noises fade in. Lights rise more, revealing LINZ standing next to ZED at an intersection. A beat. ZED steps off the curb. LINZ grabs him and pulls him back as tires squeal, a horn screams and a car zooms past.)*

LINZ. Jesus! That was—

ZED. I'm sorry!

LINZ. No, no, that guy was ... are you OK—? *(She stops.)*  
*Zed? (No response.)* It is you! Tim Zedlicki!

ZED. Yes ... ?

LINZ. *Linz!* Linz *Gofferty!* Jesus!?

*(Beat.)*

LINZ *(cont'd)*. You went to Gardensend Central? You had Mr. Drenth for freshman art?

ZED. Yes ... ?

LINZ. Mr. Drenth went to prison?

ZED. Uhhh ... ?



LINZ. No, he *did*. Not when we had him, but later. Kiddie porn. Ugly mess.

ZED. Sorry, were you in his class / with me or—?

LINZ. Zed! *Linz*. Lindsay Gofferty!

ZED. I know, but / I don't really—

LINZ. Wow, have I really changed that much? I mean, we *all* get older. Right? *You're* older. You're a *lot* older.

ZED. No, I know, I just meant ... I don't ... I'm not really sure I—

LINZ. Same old Zed. Ha ha ha. Everyone always used to think you were retarded, 'member? / Awww.

ZED. I don't ... think I knew that.

LINZ. I'd always say, "He's not retarded, he's smarter than the rest of you dweebs."

ZED. You told them that?

LINZ. Nah, I probably just told them you were stoned.

ZED. Ahh, ha. Well, thanks for that.

LINZ. You stepped right out into the street just now, mister. Without even looking—just doop dee doop dee doo. So, ya know, you owe me your life now. Ha ha ha!

ZED. I guess I do, don't I? ... Well. Thank you ... so ... how are you?

LINZ. You know what, I'm great. You probably wouldn't have expected that, knowing me in high school. Cuz my skin and everything. But I am really very satisfied with my little life. You know?

ZED. That's great. Not many people can say that.

LINZ. Right? And knowing me back then, you probably woulda figured I'd turn out to be some dumpy acne-scarred alcoholic shut-in by now.

ZED. I'm sure I didn't think / anything like that.

LINZ. But guess what? I went out and I found someone who loves me for me. And I'll give you a hint—it's not Jesus. Ha ha ha! Wasn't that a shocker about Trent Burnsidés?

ZED. What happened to Trent Burnsidés?

LINZ. He died.

ZED. Um ... died. *Shock-ing-ly?*

LINZ. Well. I mean it was *weird*.

ZED. What did he / die of?

LINZ. Oh, he had cancer, but it was, I don't know, like cancer of the tear duct or something? And it just rocketed through him. Super aggressive—six weeks diagnosis to death. Oh, and Kevin Dingledine, remember him? You guys hung out, right?

ZED. Yeah ... ?

LINZ. He shot himself.

ZED. Ohhh ...

LINZ. Russian roulette. (*Lowering her voice.*) In the desert. Iraq.

ZED. He was ... in the Army?

LINZ. Nah, he was just takin' a little me time ... ha ha ha! Your face! Yes, of course he was in the Army, dummy! Kevin was totally like that. 'Member? Poor guy. Heavy Kevvy, they used to call him. I mean, his last name was *Dingledine*, for God's sake. You'd think they could've done something with *that*. But chubby's always funny, right? Old standby.

(*Silence. She keeps looking at him, smiling.*)

ZED. I need to / get going.

LINZ. It is just so great to see you.

ZED. Yeah. You too! ... Yeah.

LINZ. In fact, come for dinner.

ZED. Ohhhh, / I—

LINZ. No, you have to. Where you living at now?

ZED. Chicago.

LINZ. The big city.

ZED. It is. Big. Yes.

LINZ. What do you do there?

ZED. I'm a textbook editor?

LINZ. Seriously?

ZED. Is that weird?

LINZ. No, you just said it like a question. "I'm a textbook editor?" But that's so great. I guess you're not retarded after all. I am so teasing you! Awww. Lookit your lil face.

(Beat.)

ZED. What do you do these days?

LINZ. Oh, me and my hubby run a cupcake emporium.

ZED. Like a bakery?

LINZ. More like a cupcakery. We've been *super* successful.

In fact, one of these days we wanna open up a second store in Rosary or maybe even Pinkling.

ZED. So it's just cupcakes?

LINZ (*cartoon voice*). "It's not *just* cupcakes. It's *all* cupcakes, all the time."

ZED. Is that your slogan?

LINZ. No. I just said it like that. We don't really need a slogan.

We're the only game in town. Well. Except for SwirlyCakes, but they don't really count. They're *way* undercapitalized.

They won't make it past New Year's. You like cupcakes?

ZED. Sure.

LINZ. See? Everybody does. It's the size. You get your own cake. Not a piece of cake. Not a slice of cake. A whole cake. Of your very own.

ZED. I don't think I've had a cupcake since about the third grade.

LINZ. No? Well, that's too bad, you really should. Because *our* cupcakes are for grown-ups. They're made with imported ingredients, and each recipe is designed and handcrafted by Pableu—that's my hubby. He's what you might call a cupcake genius.

ZED. So, I guess there's big money in ... little tiny cakes?

*(Beat. LINZ smiles, not knowing how to take this. Decides.)*

LINZ. You know what? You're funny. I always liked you.

ZED. You did?

LINZ. Always. You were sweet and lonely and kinda despised, and I was too, and we just sort of, I don't know. Clicked. I guess.

ZED *(warming to this notion)*. Yeah ... yeah, that's right, isn't it? I always thought you were really / ... really—

LINZ. Yeah? Awww! So, how long you in town for?

ZED. I'm not sure. A week, maybe.

LINZ. Yeah? Wow, so then you *gotta* come for dinner. Don't you dare tell me no. You gotta come and meet my sweetie. My Pableu.

ZED. I don't think / I'll be—

LINZ. C'mon! What else ya gonna do in Gardensend, fer cryin' out loud?

ZED. Go to a funeral?

LINZ. Oh! Wow ... whose?

ZED. My mom's.

*(Beat.)*

LINZ. God. I'm so sorry, Zed. I didn't hear about it! I don't know what / to say.

ZED. There's nothing / to say.

LINZ. When's the service? Should I come?

ZED. No no, it's not that kind of ... there's no ... it's not / really a—

LINZ. How's your dad taking it?

ZED. Um. He died when I was little so—?

LINZ. Bonk. I knew that. Well honey, I'm just so sorry. Here. Let me hug you.

*(She does. ZED stands there, inert. After a moment, he hugs her back very tightly. They stand there, hugging, till LINZ finally has to extricate herself.)*

LINZ *(cont'd)*. OK. OK, Zed. You're all right. You're OK.

ZED. Thank you.

LINZ. Sure! Sure. Like I said, I'm so sorry. She was a great lady.

ZED. Did you know her?

LINZ. No. I just assumed.

ZED. She had a pretty sad life.

LINZ. Awww. Do you have a card?

ZED. A card?

LINZ. A business card? ... That's OK. Here. Take mine.

*(She hands him a card.)*

ZED *(reading)*. “Le Petit Gateau.”

LINZ. Mm-hm! Now, I know you're going to be tied up some. But, if you feel like not even *talking* necessarily but just having someone to look at TV with or whatever, ya know, give us a call.

ZED. Well. My sister's going to be here, too, so—

LINZ. Like I say. Call. We'll look at TV, maybe test drive a couple cupcakes. It'll be good.

*(And she exits. ZED watches her go. MALCOLM, a mailman, wearing the shorts version of the postal uniform, trudges by with his mail cart. He nods at ZED. Lights fade as traffic sounds rise, morphing into television sounds.)*

*Zedlicki house. Lights up on PAM sitting on a tiny couch staring blank-faced at an enormous TV. After a moment, the stutter of a shorting doorbell buzzer is heard. PAM looks around but has no idea what the sound is. She looks back at the TV. The sound happens again. She is creeped out. She turns the TV up and continues staring at it without expression as a laugh track rises and falls. ZED enters and stands across the room looking at her. PAM finally sees him and turns the TV down. NOTE: With her mouth guard in, she speaks with a pronounced bilateral lisp.)*

PAM. Jesus. You scared the crap outta me.

ZED. You look just like Mom sitting there.

PAM. Oh *great*.

ZED. I rang the bell so you'd know / I was here, but—

PAM. Is that what that was? Sounded like a cat hawking up a furball.

*(She rises and goes to him. They hug. It is brief, but not unfriendly, and ends with mutual light pats on the back.)*

PAM (*cont'd*). Well. She's gone. You believe that?

ZED. Yeah. Yeah, I do.

PAM. I don't. Not really, not yet. But, she's in a better place.

ZED. I guess.

PAM. For all we know anyhow. It was the mailman who found her.

ZED. Yeah. You said.

PAM. Well, from what they told me, he didn't actually "find" her, he just—

ZED. Yeah—

PAM. Got concerned when her mail started stacking—

ZED. Are you wearing your mouth guard?

PAM. Oh crap. Sorry.

*(She pulls out a plastic mouth guard and drops it into her pocket.)*

ZED. Still grinding, huh?

PAM. My dentist says it's the economy. Says all his patients are grinding their teeth down to powder ... how you holding up, Zed? Really?

ZED. I'm all right. So, you're going to be calling me Zed?

PAM. Should I not do that?

ZED. No, no, whatever. It's up to you. My name *is* Tim.

PAM. I know, but do I usually call you "Tim?"

ZED. We don't usually talk.

PAM. When we *do*.

ZED. Tim. Yeah. But I don't mind Zed. Either way.

PAM. I guess it's just, well, being *here*. Right? But, my bad. I'll work on it.

ZED. Doesn't matter.

PAM. Then why'd you mention it? Tim. *Tim. Tim.*

ZED. It's not a big deal.

PAM. People should call you by your *name*, Zed! Don't get so beaten down by everything all the time. Jesus Christ. That drives me nuts. And we do so talk.

ZED (*gesturing to the TV*). Can you—

PAM. Sure, yeah.

*(She turns off the TV with the remote. The stillness is sudden and enormous. Then the TV pops on again. Loud.)*

PAM (*cont'd*). It's been doing that. Must have some kind of short or something. (*She turns it off again. Beat.*) Are you going to put that suitcase down at some point? ... Look at this place. Gahhhh.

ZED. So is ... is your, uh ... I mean, is Richard ... ?

PAM. Is Richard what?

ZED. Is he ... here?

PAM. Why would *Richard* be here?

ZED. OK.

*(A silence during which both of them stare at the TV.)*

PAM. I bought her that. I know, what was I thinking? Look at that thing. Where you staying?

ZED. Here?

PAM. *Here* here? Eesh, really?

ZED. Where you staying?

PAM. At the Microtel in Rosary. I'm sorry, but this place ... gahhh. I can't do it, ya know? It's bad enough in the daytime ... she wanted us to scatter her along the banks of the mighty Sheboyviak. Don't ask me why.



ZED. I know where she means.

PAM. I had Goodwill clear out most of the furniture, and I got rid of a lot of old boxes of crap. Oh, and I have to be out of here by Sunday morning, so there're a couple things you'll need to take care of. I'll make you a list. Think you can handle that?

ZED. "Handle it."

PAM. Well, I just mean / you know—

ZED. Can I "handle it"?

PAM. You know what I mean.

ZED. I'm not retarded, you know.

PAM. I never said you—! Wow. *Tone*. We're on the same team here, buddy. This isn't happening just to *you*.

ZED. It's not happening to either of us. It already happened. To Mom.

PAM. Don't lecture me, Zed. You come in here and right away you pick a fight with me—what the fuck did I do? / Can you just tell me that?

ZED. Nothing! You didn't ... I just. I'm sorry. OK? I'm a little crazy right now, that's all ... there's Mom and there's this work thing / and—

PAM. What work thing?

ZED. I really don't want to talk / about it.

PAM. Then why'd you bring it up? What happened? Did you get laid off?

ZED. Pam—

PAM. Did you? Because trust me, this is *not* a good time to be losing your job.

ZED. The guy in the cube next to me, Phil Stonklin—

PAM. He got laid off? Zed? What happened?

ZED. They gutted my whole department, and I guess they still needed to lose one more editor. So, it was between this guy Phil Stonklin and me, and they laid him off. He was overweight, a smoker, had this constant phlegmy hack you could hear all over the building, always talked with his mouth full and he told these really gross, stupid jokes. I'll be honest—he was annoying. I did *not* like him. But he was over fifty and he'd been there way longer than me.

PAM. So? *You're* not an insurance liability. A fat smoker? In this economy? Puh.

ZED. Anyway. Phil was packing up his cubicle, you know, still telling his creepy jokes, but he looked really, really ... broken. His face was gray ... and all his stuff fit in this really little box. I mean seriously (*Gestures a small box with his hands.*) this big. Seventeen years he'd worked there. I couldn't get over how small that box was.

PAM. Well, he did have a cube, not an office.

ZED. He didn't even really need a box. All he had was one of those big stupid mustache coffee cups. And this office birthday card, from a few years ago when the company still pretended to give a shit about that kind of stuff. It was all curled up on the edges. I was like—that's it. That's what *I'll* have.

PAM. Don't make it pathetic.

ZED. It is pathetic.

PAM. Well kinda, but it's your life so honor it. They kept you, they gave Stonklin the boot. I'd take that as a win.

ZED. So, I'm watching him leave with his sad little box. And as he gets to the elevator, he turns around and waves at me. This cheery little “see ya” sort of gesture. The elevator doors open. And as I raise my hand to wave back, he suddenly pitches over right onto his face. Massive heart attack, the paramedics said. Dead before he hit the floor.

PAM. Whoa. So ... you were the very last thing he saw before he ... ?

ZED. Yeah.

PAM. *Jesus.*

ZED. And when I got home that night, that's when you called about Mom.

PAM. Wow. Zed, that's horrible.

*(Beat.)*

ZED. We should be talking about Mom.

PAM. Right. OK ... what do you wanna do about the house?

ZED. That's not / what I meant.

PAM. There's no money, just so you know. There's the house, that's it. Oh, and the deed to a double cemetery plot she and Dad got as a *wedding* present and never used. Maybe we can get something for that because, I'll tell ya, there wasn't even enough cash to pay for the cremation—I had to put it on my Discover. Oh, and I did buy an urn. It was sixty-eight bucks. I didn't want to go with the absolute cheapest one, but the one I got is still kinda ... well, you'll see it. Anyhow, I think we should put this place on the market right away. Stop looking at me. I know I'm supposed to act some particular way or whatever ... but I've been dealing with *everything*, ya know, years of it, and ... she was old and unhappy, and she wasn't very nice to me, really ever ... so it feels—you know what I'm saying—I loved her, I *did*, but I don't have a lot of stored-up, or really *any* ... and you weren't ever *here*, so—I mean, go ahead and talk about her, I can sit here and listen—I mean, I can do that much, /and I'm happy to.

ZED. Hey, no. It's OK.

PAM. I would *love* to cry with you—I would if I could. / But I—

ZED. We don't need to cry together, Pam. Seriously.

PAM. Well. That's good. (*She chuckles lamely. Long beat.*) You can have the TV if you want it.

ZED. We'll see.

PAM. I don't think she ever watched it. I had a dish put on the roof and everything. She sat right here mostly. Parked in front of a jumbo idiot box she refused to watch. Staring into space or reading that mind-numbing local paper. They only put it out twice a week anymore, do you know that? You should see it. It's like three pages, no national news of any kind. Apparently nothing outside the Gardensend city limits matters at all. It's the Incredible Shrinking World. I think I need to go back to the Microtel right now.

ZED. Do you remember Lindsay Gofferty?

PAM. OK. I guess we're changing the subject?

ZED. Sorry. Did you want to say more about that?

PAM. No, God no. Please. Tell me about Lindsay Gofferty.

ZED. I ran into her on my way from the bus station. And she recognized me.

PAM. Did you recognize her?

ZED. That's the thing. I couldn't remember anything about her. I mean not even the *fact* of her.

PAM. There were a whole bunch of Goffertys. One of the brothers was in my year. Skip. Skip Gofferty. He had really bad neck pimples, that's all I remember about him.

ZED. See that? Skip Gofferty. Some peripheral ... just some random hallway guy, but you can pull up this incredibly specific ... I don't remember anything. About anybody, I swear.

PAM. Well. That's just sad.

ZED. Yeah. It is, right? She was telling me about all these old classmates I didn't remember ... and it was like an alumni update from High School of Horror—everybody was either dead or in jail.

PAM. Gardensend ... *gahhhh*.

ZED. She and her husband bake cupcakes. For a living.

PAM. Puh.

ZED. So anyway, I might see her again. While I'm here. You know. If there's time.

PAM. There's not gonna be time.

ZED. I might call her up.

PAM. What for? You don't even *remember* her. Oh Jesus Christ, what do I care? Doesn't matter to me. Hoo, yeah, I gotta get outa here. *(She rises and puts her mouth guard back in.)* I'm sorry. I don't mean to abandon you. You want to grab dinner or something? I'm not hungry so I can't eat, but I could go with you or we could ... ?

ZED. Nah. I'm good.

PAM. I shouldn't leave you here all alone.

ZED. It's OK, I like the quiet ... I mean ... you know what I mean.

*(She nods. The TV pops on, and PAM jumps. ZED turns it off.)*

PAM. Yeah. OK. I'll see you tomorrow. We'll get going on all this ... and, you know, catch up. Oh. And there's a box in the kitchen with your name on it.

ZED. What's in it?

PAM. I don't know, Zed. It wasn't for me. There's *nothing* here for me.

*(PAM exits. Silence. The TV pops on. Loud. A strident soap opera exchange. ZED zaps it off. It pops on. He zaps it off. A battle ensues—on, off, on, off—but ZED finally wins. He stands poised for a moment, making sure. He sits on the couch. After a moment, he pulls LINZ's card out of his pocket. Lights.*