

This is background audition information for the  
Gaslight Theater Productions of John Cariani's Last Gas  
January 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> at 6:30  
Hallowell City Hall Auditorium  
Show Dates March 13, 14, 15, 20, 21, 22

The Characters:

**SYNOPSIS**

"Last Gas" is the land of last chances. It takes place in very Northern Maine at "Paradis' Last Convenience Store. Last Gas, Last Food, Last Phone for Forty One Miles". GAS is a gently unpredictable love story, with a quiet tension under the surface. Cariani says "This play is not about the Red Sox. It's about the quiet things that kill people, the internal what-ifs that we all experience, and the everyday choices that we make without thinking about the consequences that reach far beyond our imaginations or expectations." Nat Paradis is a Red Sox-loving part-time dad who manages Paradis' Last Convenient Store, the last convenient place to get gas—or anything—before the Canadian border to the north and the North Maine Woods to the west. When an old flame returns to town, Nat gets a chance to rekindle a romance he gave up on years ago. But sparks fly as he's forced to choose between new love and old. LAST GAS takes a hilarious and heartbreakingly hard look at love lost and found, and at what it means to "get back to happy."

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

John Cariani is an American playwright, best known for his first play, Almost, Maine, which premiered at the Portland Stage Company in 2004. It has become one of the most frequently produced plays in the world.

\*\*\*\*\*CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS\*\*\*\*\*

Casting note:

This play involves three generations:

Generation one: Dwight Paradis, Nat's father and Troy's grandfather

Generation two: Nat Paradis

Lureen, Nat's high school sweetheart

Cherry, Nat's ex wife and Troy's mother

Guy, Nat's best friend

Generation three: Troy, Dwight's grandson and Nat and Cherry's son.

Therefore, Nat, Lureen, Cherry, and Guy must be able to play similar ages. Dwight must play approximately twenty years older than them, and Troy must play approximately twenty years younger than them.

Nat Paradis: Male, 30-50

("PAIR-uh-dee) to play mid-thirties to early forties, a slight, seemingly harmless young man, a boyish, unassuming, likable, charming loser, ; he's damaged goods, he is a wounded idealist. He's lived his entire life in a remote area of Northern Maine running a gas and convenience store with his father. He prefers to avoid conflict and does his best to appear "happy" or "fine" with his situation in life, but watching the Red Sox on television is usually the highlight of his day. In

his heart he is seeking a way to “get back to happy” but change seems daunting. Good at seeming happy, he is a passionate Red Sox fan, runs his father’s gas and convenience store in northern Maine. He’s been stuck for a while and he’s depressed about it. He lives upstairs of the convenience store with his father, Dwight and his son, Troy, also stays with them on the occasion. Nat’s looking for direction. Years ago, he and his high school sweetheart, Lurene, had a plan to run away to NYC and begin a life together. Lurene did get away, but Nat never followed, and neither of them have really been able to move on since. Nat may still have feelings for Lurene. Trouble is that Nat may also be feeling a deep, puzzling kinship for his best friend, Guy.

Dwight Paradis: Male, 40-80

To play mid-fifties to early sixties, Nat’s father, a larger than life kind of guy, rough around the edges, substantial, loves a good time. A charming, affable guy who can be a bulldozer when he wants to make something happen that he believes should be happening. He can be a bit inflexible and rough around the edges. He fancies himself a ladies man and pursues women too young for him with confidence. He loves a good time, but there remains a hole in his heart from when his wife left him, His son is a source of disappointment.

Guy Gagnon : Male, 30-50

to play mid-thirties to early forties,, Nat’s best friend and unemployed sidekick; a widower, loyal, stoic, steady, and overweight, he wants what’s best for Nat and believes they belong together. Guy’s been burned in the past by relationships. He’s decided that he doesn’t have any more time to waste. Guy’s patient, honest, and has a wonderful, effective, deadpan humor, wry and dry. He’s ready to poke a stick at life and take a chance. His love for Nat runs deep. He is much more complex than he appears. He wants Nat to stand up and take the chance at a future with him. Passionate Red Sox fan. A Zach Galifinakis type, he has a surprisingly grace ability to swing dance.

Troy Paradis: Male, 14-22

to play 16, Nat’s son, a substantial, impressive young man, bigger and stronger than his dad, an athlete and scholar with a future, wants to study aeronautical engineering. He is a perceptive and intelligent young man, with a healthy dose of wise-ass teenager. He is eager to get out of Maine; and pursue his dream of becoming an astronaut. At heart he is a “good kid” who loves his dad. He also suspects he might have more strength and confidence than his dad and he is growing a bit protective of his father. Troy is trying to understand his father - whom he dearly loves, and whom he dearly loves to tease. Despite his positive outlook, he’s truly worried about his Dad. He’s concerned that if Dad doesn’t “get back to happy”, his Mom might not allow them to spend much time together anymore.

Lurene: Female,30-50

to play mid-thirties to early forties, Nat’s old flame, his former high school sweetheart. Who left Maine to chase her Dreams, today she returns home for the burial of her mother. Feeling lost, disillusioned and dissatisfied with the life she’s created in New York, she is desperately looking for something to give it more meaning. Once the “golden girl” she left town for NYC to make something of herself. Had dreams of being an astronaut, but is a temp in a Manhattan office building. She’s in town for her Mom’s memorial service. Lurene’s also here to see if she can rekindle a spark with Nat. She talks a he still loves Nat, but he doesn’t want her back. She is a little faster than the rest of the folks in her old hometown, dresses a little slicker, and is

discovering that it hurts to not fit in anymore. She's stuck as well, and is she's had her heart broken and learned to emotionally armor herself from having it happen again. Saving a hard time moving forward.

Cherry Tracy Pulcifer: Female, 30-50

to play mid-thirties to early forties, Nat's ex and Troy's mother, she is stoic opinionated, and straightforward to the point of being blunt. She is rigid stubborn, and overly literal. Possessing a wry wit, she is a substantial presence of a woman who enjoys wielding the power and status of being a forest ranger. She follows every "rule" in the book, and writes summons to people when her life feels out of control and she needs to feel more powerful. , ambitious, substantial, a Forest Ranger, she's outgoing and takes command, a problem solver, and a protector, who is frustrated in Nat's inability to take control of his life. Yet, she's stuck as well. She'd like to patch up her relationship with Nat. She's a large personality, but a real one. She recently lost 31 lbs (but still looks a bit "big boned"), and just wants to do what's right.

## AUDITION PIECES

\*\*\*\*\*MONOLOGUES\*\*\*\*\*

### NAT

Yeah! I'm all right! I'm ... more'n all right! Haven't felt this all right in a long time. 'Cause I got somethin' to feel all right about in this world. And I want you to meet her. Lurene Legassey is her name. Well, Lu. Soloway. Is her name now. She's visiting town and you're gonna meet her tomorrow. She's comin' by tomorrow afternoon. We're gonna have more fun like we did tonight. 'Cause she loves me, you know. She does, always has. And I love her. Oh, yeah! I do! Much as any man ever loved a woman! So much that ... well, I'm thinkin' that I might need to go see her right now and show her just how much I love her. 'Cause we just had such a fun time tonight, and I was bein' a gentleman after all the fun we had, but I'm not feelin' like bein' much of a gentleman right now, if you know what I mean, So I think I might just need to go finish what we started earlier in the evenin'.

### DWIGHT

I did it. I was asked to get a motel. And I did. Turns out ... I didn't need it. Young and Canadian decided I was a little too old and American for her. Disappointing. But ... It's okay. Things seem to have gone well for you tonight, though. You and Lurene ... tore it up at Adult Swing. Actually came by to tell you, Nat, that ... I've got a perfectly unused motel room for you and Lurene to use, 'cause it seemed like you two were havin' so much fun dancin', I thought that maybe your evenin' together might ... need to last until the mornin' Thought it'd be a good birthday present for ya. But ... she's not here. (Beat) Where is she? I thought she came by.

### GUY

Trooper Roope said you were goin' nine. Nine miles an hour. In a fifty. Goin' so slow you endanger others. (Little beat.) But -- no aggravating factors, so no jail time, he said. Like, if you'da been goin' thirty miles over the speed limit, that woulda been an aggravating factor. But you were goin' forty-one miles ... under the speed limit. Which may be a record, he said. (Guy's dry humor isn't working. Nat is silent. Beat) Why didn't you call me? (Nat doesn't answer.) I woulda come and got you, you know. So Troy didn't have to. (Nat is silent. Beat) So what is it, they fine ya, right? 500 bucks. (Nat doesn't answer, but they both know the answer is yes. And that's a lot of money.) Oof. (Little beat.) And suspend your license, right? Ninety days, right? (Nat doesn't answer, but they both know the answer is yes. And that's a long time.) Oof. (Guy tries to look on the bright side even though there really isn't one.) That's -- what -- three months? That's nothin'!

### TROY

Well, Guy told me to give you this. Ticket to Sox/Yankees. He said you didn't want to go. (Troy offers his dad the ticket.) That you didn't want it. (Little beat.) How come? I mean ... good present! (Little beat.) He just left. You could catch him easy. You should go. I think it may be worth it for something as good as that, don't you think? I mean -- that's an awful nice present he gave you. (Nat is lost in thought.) Dad. Hey. You sure you're all right?

No-no -- stay. He'll show up. He will. "Cause ... he's told me about you, and -- oh, this is gonna be great! Look! We got balloons, and streamers -- and tape! We don't really do much for his birthday -- I didn't even get him a present 'cause we're just not really like that, you know?! And I'm not sure that's ... good ... so this'll be fun and maybe make him feel good. Or better. Or somethin'.

## LURENE

Needed to do my thing? I needed to do my thing with you! School was hard! I needed you to help me get through it! That was the plan! You'd come down and help me ... and then ... I was gonna take you places, remember? (Little beat.) But you didn't come down and help me. You didn't do anything. You never showed up, never called, never returned my calls. You just ... disappeared. And that ... wasn't easy to forgive. But I did it. I figured out how to do that. But ... I couldn't forget. And it's not ... forgive and remember, right? So ... how 'bout ... I forget now. It's forgotten, okay? And forgiven. 'Cause you are still [just the greatest thing] ... For some reason, I could never stop hoping that you and me -- I always hoped that we'd [figure out a way to be together] ...

## CHERRY-TRACY

Well, got some unfortunate activity goin' on: Fatality on Route 11. Black Ice. Dark night. Moose. Massachusetts plates. Those jeezless people aren't qualified to be here, in my book. Moose are comin' out from a long winter, and they don't know to look for 'em. Next thing they know, their spiffy little car's goin' right under moose. Take the top of their vehicle off and their head right with it. And they never see it comin', 'Cause it gets dark up here. People from away don't understand that. One of the last places in the country where it gets dark like this. Read it in my National Geographic. If the Pilgrims landed, say, just a few miles west of here right now, it'd be as dark here at night as it was in 16-whenever-they-landed-20. True Dark, they call it (Beat.) Funny thing, darkness: It's not there, but you can't see through it. You ever think about that? Only way you can see what's goin' on in it is if you shine a light. But ... by the time you shine a light ... well. You only see the leftovers of what was goin' on in it. 'Cause it's not dark anymore. Makes you wonder what you're missin' out on, In all the True Dark we got up here.

\*\*\*\*\*SIDES\*\*\*\*\*

### Readings for Last Gas

The excerpts below are sides for auditions

CHERRY. He is somethin' special, you know. >

NAT. Yeah.

CHERRY. People are tellin' me that.

NAT. Yeah, they're tellin' me, // too.

CHERRY. He's got potential, people're sayin'.

NAT. Yeah, well, we all got that, // we just --

CHERRY. Yeah, well, he's gonna actually *use* his.

NAT. Yeah, and I was gonna say, we need to make sure he does.

CHERRY. Yeah, we do. (*Little beat.*) What's he up to tonight, anyway?

NAT. Huh?

CHERRY. Where is he? (*Little beat.*)

NAT. Out.

CHERRY. Where? Where'd he go?

NAT. Where he usually goes.

CHERRY. Uh-huh, and where's that?

NAT. Don't know, he didn't tell me.

CHERRY. Yeah, well, what's he doin'?

NAT. What he usually does.

CHERRY. Yeah, and what's that?

NAT. Don't know.

CHERRY. Yeah, well -- who's he with?

NAT. Who he usually goes out with and does stuff with.

CHERRY. Yeah, and who's that?

NAT. I don't know. // I asked him, but he didn't tell me.

CHERRY. Well, you oughta know, you're his father! This is what I'm talkin' about!

NAT. Well, do you know where he is?

CHERRY. Of course I know! I'm his mother!

NAT. Well, where is he?

CHERRY. I'm not gonna tell you.

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GUY. And anyway, he can't go. He's got plans. We got plans.  
DWIGHT. What?  
GUY. We're goin' to Boston.  
DWIGHT. Wha -- ? When?  
GUY. Tonight.  
DWIGHT. What are you talkin' about?  
GUY. To see the Sox play the Yankees. Got him tickets. For his birthday.  
DWIGHT. Well -- How you gonna get there?  
GUY. My truck.  
DWIGHT. That thing's not gonna get you to Boston! Thing barely goes!  
GUY. Oh, it *goes*! It *goes*! It's just a little starter issue.  
DWIGHT. Well -- when's the game?  
GUY. First pitch: 1:05.  
DWIGHT. Aw, you're never gonna make it! // You can't make that!  
GUY. Yeah, we will.  
DWIGHT. Well. he's gotta open Monday mornin', 'cause I'm not openin'.  
GUY. He'll be back in time.  
DWIGHT. Well, he can't leave Troy!  
GUY. He's a big boy, he can take care of himself.  
DWIGHT. Well -- he's not goin' to Boston.>  
GUY. Yeah, he is.  
DWIGHT. If he's goin' anywhere, he's goin' dancin' with Lurene.  
GUY. He doesn't wanna go dancin' with her, Mr. P.  
DWIGHT. Hey! He's my son!

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LURENE. I'm Lurene -- Lu, // people call me Lu now, and --  
TROY. Oh! Lurene! Hi! Nice to meet you.  
LURENE. Hi.  
TROY. My dad was tellin' me about you last night.  
LURENE. What?  
TROY. I'm Troy.  
LURENE. Huh?  
TROY. I'm his son.  
LURENE. What? (*Explosion of recognition and excitement.*) Oh! Oh, my God! >  
TROY. What?  
LURENE. Hiiiiii! >  
TROY. Hi.  
LURENE. Hiiiiii! You're Troyyyy! >  
TROY. Yeah.  
LURENE. Nice to meet yoooooooo // oou! >  
TROY. Nice to meet you, too!  
LURENE. Wowwww! So you're Troyyyy // y! >  
TROY. Yeah.  
LURENE. (*Looking him over.*) Wowwww! Your dad's right -- you're nothing like him.  
TROY. Yeah, I get that a lot.  
LURENE. Wow. Well, I have heard so much about you! -- No, actually I haven't heard very much about you, that was lying! God, you're not a kid at all, are you? You are fully formed. How old are you?!?  
TROY. Um... 16, al // most --  
LURENE. 16?!?  
TROY. Yeah, almost 17.  
LURENE. Wowww! You look so grown uuuuup!  
TROY. Yeah. (*Beat.*) How old are you?  
LURENE. Excuse me?  
TROY. Adults always get to ask the kids, why can't the kids ask the adults? How old are you?  
LURENE. Um... 40.  
TROY. (*Mocking her.*) 40?!? Wowwwwww!!! >  
LURENE. Yeah, that's funny --  
TROY. You look so grown uuuuup!  
LURENE. Yeah, well, I am grown up.