

HICK: A Love Story

“Eleanor Roosevelt’s great lesbian love affair...A tender, touching tale.”
East Bay Express

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For press materials and hi-res color press photos, visit:

<http://www.press-push.com/hick/>

“Hick is a real love story like no other – a compelling, thoroughly researched one-woman show. Terry Baum shares her insights and feelings clearly, honestly, and with passion. A fascinating story that, at last, has come to light.” - San Francisco Examiner 2014.

_____ Presents

Terry Baum in a Concert Reading

Hick: A Love Story

The Romance of Lorena Hickok and Eleanor Roosevelt

With _____ playing Eleanor Roosevelt

Date _____

Time _____

Location _____

Ticket Price: _____

To buy Tickets: _____

Info: _____

Running time: 2 hours, including Intermission

[Trailer: https://vimeo.com/user37367978/review/124081553/a82f7976aa](https://vimeo.com/user37367978/review/124081553/a82f7976aa)

HICK: A Love Story, *The Romance of Lorena Hickok and Eleanor Roosevelt*, is coming to

_____ (theater) _____ on _____ (date) _____.

_____ (producer) _____ is presenting a concert reading of the play, which had sold-out and critically acclaimed runs in San Francisco and Berkeley. **HICK: A Love Story** was originally produced by Lilith Theater and is written and performed by Terry Baum, pioneer lesbian playwright. Baum has toured internationally as a solo performer, most recently in Cuba. The part of Eleanor Roosevelt will be read by _____ (actress) _____. **HICK: A Love Story** will be performed at _____ (time) _____ at _____ (location) _____. Tickets can be reserved at _____ (phone or website or whatever) _____. For more info on **HICK**, call _____ producer’s phone _____.

The SF Examiner called **HICK** “A real love story like no other – a compelling one-woman show.” The SF Bay Guardian said “Baum brilliantly captures Hick’s transformation as the First Lady returns her affections.” The Daily Californian called Baum’s performance “enchanting and comical, fully captivating and wrought with emotion.” The Benicia Herald said “This one’s a winner... A tour-de-force.” The East Bay Express lauded **HICK** as “a tender, touching tale.”

HICK: A Love Story explores **Lorena Hickok’s** life, and her love relationship with **Eleanor Roosevelt** (ER). Hick was the most famous woman journalist of her day and the first woman to have a byline on the front page of the NY Times. She met ER during FDR’s first Presidential campaign in 1932. She convinced her editor that this particular candidate’s wife was worth her own reporter, and was assigned to the job herself. The love affair between the patrician First Lady and the charming, hard-living butch reporter lasted several years. Their friendship lasted Mrs. Roosevelt’s lifetime. Hick helped Mrs. Roosevelt become an outspoken, media-savvy activist for democracy and human rights -- one of the greatest women of the 20th century.

To reconstruct the truth of the relationship between the patrician First Lady and the charming butch reporter, the playwright traveled to Hyde Park, NY to study original documents, including ER’s letters, in the “Lorena Hickok” files at the FDR Library. She also interviewed people who actually knew Hick.

Of the letters the First Lady wrote to Hick, 2336 survive, beginning in 1933 and only ending with ER’s death in 1962. These letters were discovered in 1978, when a researcher opened 18 boxes willed to the FDR Library by Lorena Hickok. The letters document a passionate lesbian relationship between Hick and ER in the early years of their friendship – and a deep connection that last ER’s lifetime.

In **HICK: A Love Story**, Baum uses direct quotes from Hick’s writing, Eleanor Roosevelt’s letters, and a scene from Pat Bond’s 1985 play about Hick. Mrs. Roosevelt’s letters are read verbatim by _____ actress _____. Baum brings Hick to life – as the renowned journalist, important chronicler of the Great Depression, and lover and “First Friend” of First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt.

To arrange an interview with Terry Baum or for additional info, please call or email Lesley Harter at [\(888\) 372-5622/](tel:888-372-5622) lilithperformances@gmail.com.

Bios:

Terry Baum (Playwright & Actress): Baum, a pioneer lesbian playwright, has toured internationally as a solo performer. Most recently in 2013, Baum toured South Africa with her play, *Lesbo Solo!* She has had her plays published, produced all over the world, and translated into French, Dutch, Italian, and Swedish. *Dos Lesbos* (1981, with Carolyn Myers) was the first time many lesbians saw their lives accurately portrayed in the media. It inspired the first anthology of lesbian plays (*Places, Please*, 1985). Baum has toured the U.S., Canada, Europe and Israel as a solo performer. Two of her short films have been shown at the LGBT Film Festival, San Francisco (1997, 2007). Baum ran for Mayor of San Francisco in 2011. She made a difference and had a good time.

Pat Bond (Playwright) Pat’s career was launched by her appearance in the landmark documentary about gay people, *Word is Out*, in 1973. This lesbian actress, writer, and comedienne toured the country in the 70’s and 80’s, telling stories about her life as a dyke in San Francisco in the 50’s, and as a WAC in the army during a witch hunt against lesbians after World War II. For thousands of gay people, Bond was the first out lesbian they had ever seen onstage. Bond wrote and toured solo shows on Gertrude Stein and Lorena Hickok. Pat Bond had had a crush on Eleanor Roosevelt since the age of seven. It was the fulfillment of a life-long passion to play Lorena Hickok.

Lilith Theater: The Bay Area's internationally renowned women's theatre of the 1970s and 1980s, was founded in Berkeley, California in 1974, by Terry Baum, Charlotte Colavin, and Shelley Fields. Moving to San Francisco in 1976 and continuing through 1985, it produced collectively created original plays: *Lilith Theatre*, *Good Food*, *Moonlighting*, *Sacrifices*, *Exit the Maids*, and productions by women playwrights: *Pizza*, by Michele Linfante, *Manifesto* by Dacia Maraini, *The Daughters of Erin*, by Carolyn Myers and Elizabeth Roden. A touring company at European and American Theater Festivals, **Lilith** also gave an impromptu performance during a ferry strike, and was caught in the Mt. Saint Helens eruption. Now, after a hiatus of a few decades, Terry Baum and Carolyn Myers have revived **Lilith Theater**. Lilith returned the Bay Area theater scene with its production of Terry Baum's solo play: *Hick: A Love Story*.

Lorena Hickok was born in 1893 in rural Wisconsin, into desperate poverty. At the age of 14, her mother died and her father kicked her out of the house. She worked as a hired girl, completing high school with the help of an aunt. Her journalism career began at the Battle Creek Journal, in 1913, writing for the women's page. At the Minneapolis Tribune, starting in 1917, Hickok became known for the humor and humanity of her writing. She eventually became a top reporter for the Associated Press, in NY. By 1932, she was the nation's best-known woman journalist. She and Eleanor Roosevelt (ER) fell in love when Hickok was assigned to cover the future First Lady during the 1932 Presidential campaign.

After FDR became President, Hickok had to leave journalism, as her close proximity to the President compromised her. She was chief investigator for the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), reporting on the suffering of the Great Depression, and the effects of the New Deal. Her reports were posthumously published as a book, **One-Third of a Nation**. Hickok's writing for FERA is considered an invaluable description of the Great Depression.

Hickok inspired several of Eleanor Roosevelt's initiatives, including her daily syndicated column, her all-women press conferences, and her planned community at Arthurdale, WV. She vacationed with ER, and Eleanor went with her on an investigative trip to Puerto Rico. When not on the road, Hickok lived at the White House.

From 1936 to 1939, Hickok worked as publicist for the New York World's Fair. During this time, the relationship between Hickok and Mrs. Roosevelt evolved from a love affair into a deep friendship that lasted Mrs. Roosevelt's life. From 1940 to 1945, Hickok worked for the Democratic National Committee, living at the White House for most of this time.

Hickok had several love relationships with other women after Mrs. Roosevelt – most importantly with Marion Harron, a tax court judge in Maryland. But since the First Lady remained her first priority, none of the relationships lasted.

Hickok lived out her final years at Hyde Park near Mrs. Roosevelt. She published several books, including biographies of Helen Keller and Mrs. Roosevelt herself. She died in 1968. Her feature stories are still studied in journalism schools, as examples of entertaining and heartfelt writing.

Eleanor Roosevelt was born into the American aristocracy, in a family ravaged by alcoholism. She was the favorite niece of President Theodore Roosevelt. She married rising politician Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1905 and became fully immersed in public service. By the time she arrived in the White House as First Lady in 1933, Mrs. Roosevelt had overcome a painful childhood, a domineering mother-in-law, and her discovery of FDR's enduring love affair with another woman. She was deeply committed to a public life of her own, fighting against injustice, racism and advancing the rights of women.

During the longest tenure of any First Lady, which included the Great Depression, the New Deal and World War II, Eleanor Roosevelt remained a controversial figure because of her outspoken views and activities. She was the first presidential spouse to hold press conferences, write a syndicated newspaper column, and speak at a national convention. In 1939 she publicly stood up for Marian Anderson when the African-American singer was denied the use of Washington's Constitution Hall because of her race. She arranged for Anderson instead to perform on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.

After FDR's death in 1945, Mrs. Roosevelt was appointed as a delegate to the United Nations by President Harry Truman. As chair of the Human Rights Commission, she used her influence and prestige to persuade the UN General Assembly to adopt the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The legacy of her words and work appears in the constitutions of scores of nations and in an evolving body of international law that now protects the rights of people across the world. In the last two years of her life, from Jan. 1961 until Nov. 1962, she served as chair for President Kennedy's Commission on the Status of Women, the first governmental organization of its kind.

Throughout her life, Eleanor Roosevelt was supported by important relationships with dedicated, intelligent, exceptional women. Marie Souvestre, a lesbian and a feminist educator who sought to develop independent minds in young women, became a surrogate mother during ER's late adolescence. In 1920, Mrs. Roosevelt met Marion Dickerman and Nancy Cook, a lesbian couple who became her closest friends. With them, in 1925, she created the Val-Kill partnership, sometimes housed in Mrs. Roosevelt's own home in Hyde Park. This mutually supportive partnership eventually included the Women's Democratic News, which Mrs. Roosevelt edited, the Todhunter School for Girls, where Marion Dickerman was president, and the Val-Kill furniture factory, over which Nancy Cook presided. In 1928, Malvina "Tommy" Thompson became Mrs. Roosevelt's private secretary. Entirely loyal to her boss, she maintained her position at Mrs. Roosevelt's side until her death in 1953. Most importantly of all, in 1932, Mrs. Roosevelt fell in love with Lorena Hickok, a journalist, who had been assigned to cover Mrs. Roosevelt during her husband's first presidential campaign. For several years following, the two corresponded almost every day, traveled together, and consistently professed emotional and physical affection for one another. More than 3,000 letters from the pair's correspondence are preserved at the FDR Library in Hyde Park, NY. Their close friendship and working collaboration, on Mrs. Roosevelt's writing and other projects, continued after their love affair ended, until Mrs. Roosevelt's death in 1962.

TALKING POINTS -

DID KEN BURNS "IN" ELEANOR ROOSEVELT?

Ken Burns' documentary, "The Roosevelts," introduced Lorena Hickok to the American PBS-watching public. Burns acknowledged her friendship with Eleanor Roosevelt, but ignored their romantic relationship. When questioned about this, Burns said that there was "no evidence whatsoever" for a lesbian relationship. See quotes from ER's letters below, which contradict this statement.

Burns also claimed that "none of the historians and experts believe it, "which is manifestly untrue. Blanche Weisen Cook, the foremost living historian of the life of Eleanor Roosevelt, has explicitly supported the reality of ER's lesbian love. Other respected authorities concur. Burns interviewed Cook for his TV series, but never asked her about this aspect of Mrs. Roosevelt's life. Why, when he went into detail about FDR's sexual affairs? Why did he consider FDR's affairs "intimate," while a discussion of ER's lesbian affair would be "tabloid?" Inherent in Burns' attitude is an unconscious homophobia and an assumption that "outing" Eleanor Roosevelt would besmirch her reputation.

This has provoked a lively internet discussion. See below:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michelangelo-signorile/the-roosevelts-ken-burns_b_5866998.html

<http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/live-feed/ken-burns-does-not-eleanor-720336>

<http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/Roosevelt-doc-sidesteps-Eleanors-sexuality/48964.html>

Historical Facts about Lorena Hickok & Eleanor Roosevelt:

1. Eleanor Roosevelt was one of the greatest American woman of the 20th century. As First Lady, she worked ceaselessly to support the African-American struggle for civil rights, women's rights to be treated equally, and the struggle of all Americans to live life freely and decently. After FDR died, ER was appointed to the United Nations. She chaired the committee that wrote the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and was responsible for getting it passed by the U.N. General Assembly.

2. ER wrote 2336 letters to Hick over 30 years. Some quotes from these letters:

- *"I can't kiss you, so I kiss your picture good night and good morning."*

- *"I would give a good deal to put my arms around you and to feel yours around me. I love you deeply and tenderly."*

"Oh dear one, it is all the little things, the tones in your voice, the feel of your hair, gestures, these are the things I think about and long for."

3. Hick was the most famous woman journalist of her day – 1920's- 30's. She was the first woman to get a by-line on the front page of the NY Times (1928, story about the shipwreck of the Vestris)

4. Hick helped shape ER's public persona:

- Gave ER the idea for press conferences for women reporters only
(*ER was first First Lady to hold a press conference*).

- Gave ER the idea for a daily column – ER wrote one every day for over 30 years: "My Day"

- Edited and rewrote ER's articles until ER had learned enough to do it on her own.

5. Hick lived in the White House, on and off, beginning in 1933. Initially she slept on a bed in ER's dressing room. Later, she had a room across the hall.

6. Hick is one of the foremost chroniclers of the Depression. Hick traveled throughout the U.S. as Chief Investigator of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration. Her vivid, impassioned reports helped shape FDR's actions to alleviate people's suffering. Contemporary scholars consider her reports, which have been published in book form, to be a valuable source of information on that time.

7. Hick was known as "First Friend." She was such a constant companion of the First Lady, that the press nicknamed her "First Friend." Hick loathed the nickname. She wanted to somehow retain her journalistic anonymity. But the truth was, she had to stop being a reporter because her intimate relationship with ER made it impossible to claim any objectivity about current events.

Calendar Editors:

WHAT: Terry Baum in A Concert Reading of
Hick: A Love Story
The Romance of Lorena Hickok and Eleanor Roosevelt
Written by Terry Baum with Pat Bond /

WHEN:

VENUE:

TIX:

WEB PAGE: <http://www.crackpotcrones.com>

PRESS INFO: For press materials and hi-res color press photos, visit:
<http://www.press-push.com/hick/>

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/user37367978/review/124081553/a82f7976aa>

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