

Statement of John Cariani, playwright of "Almost, Maine"  
November 3, 2011

"They Fell" is an examination of an inconvenient love. I wrote it because I don't think people fully understand that *everybody* falls in love at some point in their lives. And sometimes people fall in love with people of the same gender. And I wanted to write a scene about just that – the moment when two people of the same gender fall in love. I wanted to explore the inception – the moment of falling. I think that many forget that nobody gets to choose who they fall in love with. Love just happens. And when you fall in love with someone of the same sex – well, I think people forget that that's how it happens. You fall in love. And when it happens to be with a person of the same sex...well, joy doesn't follow. Usually fear and loathing follows. The Harford County School Board's actions are promoting this kind of fear and loathing, calling into question the validity of same-sex love, making it seem wrong and different and other. Which is not helpful in this day and age. We don't need any more Tyler Clementes and Jamey Rodemeyers and Jamey Hubleys. We need people – kids, especially – to know that it'll "get better."

In writing THEY FELL, I worked so hard to avoid controversy such as this. I tried to be as gentle as I can be. As a writer, I believe in revolting from within. I like to make people fall in love with the characters I create...and then I like to make things get ugly, so audience members have to decide whether or not they will stick with the people they're invested in. I don't think that Chad's declaration of love is ugly at all. But to some people it is. And to kids who grow up far away from things, in rural areas, it can be ugly. And I wanted to get people laughing, get them loving Randy and Chad, and then make them deal with their own issues as the two characters in front of them...deal with *their* issue!

I also think THEY FELL examines the root of homophobia – self-hatred. What do you do when you grow up in a rural area and work hard for a living and realize that the only person who makes you feel good is of the same gender? How do you behave if you have no frame of reference, no role models or relationship models for processing those feelings? Chad and Randy are truly afraid of being homosexual. Yet they confront it. And make us all think. And smile. And hope for what's best.