

THE ACTUAL DANCE

A loving play by Samuel A. Simon

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ABOUT THE SHOW

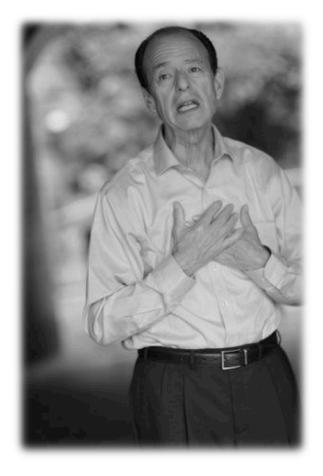
2013 Northern Virginia Theater Alliance Award for Best Production of an Original Play

2013 Best Actor Nomination from the Northern Virginia Theater Alliance

2013 Best Overall Production Nomination from the Northern Virginia Theater Alliance

An Official Selection of the 2013 Midtown International Theatre Festival (NYC) and the 2013 Capital Fringe Festival (DC).





Written & Performed by Samuel A. Simon

Directed byJessie Roberts

DramaturgGabrielle Maisels

An award-winning play, *The Actual Dance* is one of the most beautiful love stories ever told—a spiritually inspiring journey, from navigating the uncharted waters of a cancer diagnosis, through the fear and trepidation at the possible loss of a spouse, and ultimately achieving dual survival through the power of love. Upon learning his wife's grim diagnosis of breast cancer, the ringing in Sam's ear was not as one would expect, in fact it was an orchestra, playing the music of his life—*The Actual Dance*.

Sound design by Jon Roberts, Stage Manager & Production Assistant Justin Cornell

CREATIVE STATEMENT

By Samuel A. Simon

The Actual Dance has been inside me for a long time, I just did not know it. It has been unfolding for about five years, as elements of the show have appeared through my work with Artistic New Directions and teachers Carol Fox Prescott, Gary Austin and Jeffrey Sweet.

Elements of the show have been discovered along the way. One major character in the show, the breast surgeon, was developed during a Gary Austin workshop called the 48th Street Exercise. The Ballroom metaphor came together in Carol Fox Prescott's acting classes.

The Actual Dance became full-born when I hired Gabrielle Maisels as my dramaturg and she guided me through completing the work. And since completing in chief the script in June 2012, I have learned that the show itself has a deep gift within it – and that each time I perform I learn new things about the work and the gift.

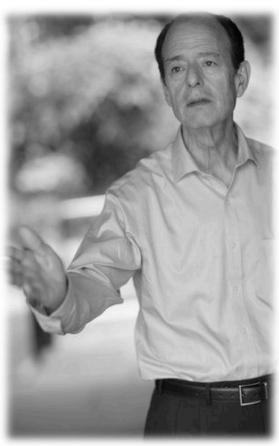


Photo by Xanthe Elbrick Photography

It has broad appeal and presents a point of view that is almost never heard. It is the man's story and voice in the breast cancer experience. It is a love story. And it is a story that explicitly talks about confronting the most dreaded possible experience – taking the person you love most in the world through the end of life. It isn't about their story—it is about "How do I do this? How do I dance the last dance with (Susan)?" It is about moving from the fear of a "devastating and tragic experience" to an understanding of "the beauty and dignity" of the gift of the Actual Dance and that "it will be the ultimate consummation of our love."

The audience reaction and feedback is what energizes me to continue the development and performance. From the first reading and for each reading and now performance, someone – and usually many -- in the audience are in some way changed or transformed by the show. A few of the audience reactions that I have received:

"I never understood why my wife reacted to my cancer the way she did, now I know." "It changed my life." "I am still living in the glow of last evening...and your singing the Hebrew Prayer totally blew me away. It was brilliant..." "I want to tell you again how much your play moved me. Parts of it have kept coming into my mind when I least expect it. It was so powerful, sweet and tender, and at the same time gut-wrenching and full of pain and anguish..."

Through performance and engagement with audiences I have come to understand that there is a hunger for this topic. The experience of writing and performing this play has also transformed me. I have begun to write poetry based on the play. I invite you to look at the poetry at www.theactualdance.com (Click on the poetry tab).

AUDIENCE PRAISE

"The Actual Dance is actually eloquent, what can I say that I didn't, just know that silence says more than words. My heart stood still in places feeling your dance, mesmerized by the rhythm and pace of it saying so much about our lives and how we live it one day at a time." – Harriet L., December 2012

"Wonderful and insightful." - Peter E., December 2012

"If I was less voluble than usual last night it was because I was touched and moved by the play. It was very intense, and I think for people watching who do not know the (ok) ending it will be even more powerful. Knowing that Susan was sitting there made it easier for me. I wish you continued success in refining this, and in bringing it to share with others. I really think you have a winner there." – Susan G., December 2012

"I am still living in the glow of last evening...and your singing the Hebrew Prayer totally blew me away. It was brilliant." – *Gregg J., January 2013*

"I want to tell you again how much your play moved me. Parts of it have kept coming into my mind when I least expect it. It was so powerful, sweet and tender, and at the same time gut-wrenching and full of pain and anguish... I am so glad that it was taped as I want Chuck and other spouses and caregivers to see it. It is really such a rare gift that you have been able to share such an intimate part of yours and Susan's lives with so many friends and strangers. I think that being able to do so will give others a sense that they are not alone in this journey, as you have expressed so many of the feelings and fears that others have, or are afraid to express or even think. Thank you for that, Sam. You are truly a very extraordinary person." – *Anita T., February 2013*

"Mazel Tov on both your play 'The Actual Dance' and your performance Thursday evening. The audience was stunned with a lot to think about. Of course that is a sign of a good piece of literature, theatre or otherwise." – Rochelle Z., March 2013

"Sam's one-man drama is absorbing, moving, and very beautiful. Having previously had a professional relationship with Sam, learning about his talent as a writer and actor was a revelation. *The Actual Dance* should be seen by many more people!" – *Richard A., April 2013*

MARKETING HIGHLIGHTS

The Actual Dance takes you on the emotional journey of a man dealing with the difficult diagnosis of his wife's cancer. It is an exciting opportunity for you to promote your product or service to your best potential customers.

The audiences who fill our theater will see your message in a focused environment that can help see your product or service. We are offering several levels of sponsorship and multiple promotional opportunities:

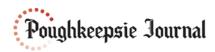
Advertising Materials
Social Media
Playbill
Access to events
PR efforts
Bill stuffers

Collateral Materials
Complimentary Tickets
Gift bag stuffers
Appearances
In-store displays

Website / e-blasts

*just examples

WHAT THE PRESS ARE SAYING...



Talking about the unspeakable, through theater

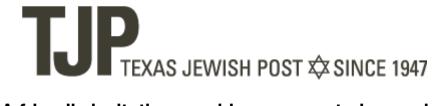
Written by Marji Yablon For the Poughkeepsie Journal

Sep. 29, 2013

The man on stage seems to be **speaking to each of us individually**. He is describing thoughts and feelings most of us hesitate to reveal. After he shows us how he and his wife learn she has breast cancer, he wonders aloud whether she — his one true love, the one he married before either of them had even finished college, the one to whom he's been married for more than 30 years — will be less attractive to him after her mastectomy. He muses over how it might feel to him, a man who has never lived alone, if he is to end up with the whole house to himself, his two children already grown and on their own.

He relates an **out-of-body experience**, false alarms and false good news. He lets us know he has moved his work materials to his wife's hospital room, so he can remain with her during the days of her surgery and recovery. He muses that now, having already watched his mother and several other relatives die: "It is my sacred duty to take Susan on that same journey." After that uplifting statement, he is compelled to add, "I just don't know if I can do it."

-- read more here --



A friend's invitation provides unexpected, meaningful blessing

Written by Harriet P. Gross For Texas Jewish Post

August 29, 2013

This is the way networking is supposed to be: You join a group, meet people and good things will happen. And so it has happened to me!

One day recently, I had an email from Marion Garmel, an Indianapolis resident with whom I became acquainted last year in Scottsdale, Ariz., at the National Federation of Press Women's annual conference.

"I'm in Dallas for a big family reunion," she told me. "And as part of the event, my brother, who has written a one-man play, is opening it to the public. Knowing you are interested in writing about Jewish activities and theater, I thought you might want to see it."

The next afternoon, I was seated in a meeting room turned into a makeshift small theater in the Westin Park Central, watching Sam Simon perform "The Actual Dance." He has already done so at a number of venues including the Midtown International Theatre Festival in New York and the Fringe in Washington, D.C., which is his home.

The subject matter is grim: How does a man react when his wife is diagnosed with late-stage breast cancer? But my father of blessed memory, a truly caring physician, always used to say, "Take whatever you get, and do the best you can with it." Sam has done just that with a real-life story, that of himself and his wife Susan.

Sam almost **literally waltzes out in front of his audience**, setting an imaginary stage. He shares his vision of a grand ballroom in which an orchestra is starting to play someone's special song. And as that someone, with partner, begins to move, Sam realizes that this is the someone's last dance — the actual end of that someone's life. **Watching Sam, I could see the ballroom, hear the musicians tuning up and picture the dancers stepping onto the floor...**

This is not a stereotypically stoic man. Sam is **raw emotion** as he recounts, in words and movements, the course of Susan's illness; the unexpected discovery of the cancer and the unrelenting cheerfulness of "Dr. Happy," which finally flags when the doctor has to admit to a misread biopsy. Susan's lymph nodes were indeed highly involved, and disease remained despite the double mastectomy. Sam is not afraid to cry in public.

...read more here ...



Your guide to everything on Stage in New York!

"The Actual Dance" Review

Written by Alexis Woo for StageBuddy

"The Actual Dance," is a **passionate and moving one-man play** written by and starring Samuel A. Simon. It is based on Simon's personal experience with cancer and it is a story told from the rarely seen perspective of a man whose wife has just been diagnosed. The audience walks beside Simon on his journey as he fights to keep his sanity, despite the fact that he may lose the person he loves the most. It was **exceptionally thought-provoking and emotionally stimulating**, causing almost the entire first row to tear up throughout.

Although Simon wasn't the one diagnosed with breast cancer, he was the one reacting most intensely at the checkups, while his wife remained stoic and seemingly numb to everything. He met his wife Susan in his teens, and married her in his early 20s, so she was the only woman he had ever been in love with. To find out in his 50s that the rest of his life may be void of her was an irreparable trauma. The journey he embarks on is **a wild fear-inducing roller coaster** for the pair, in large part due to their extremely optimistic doctor whose diagnoses change from week to week.

Simon tells the audience about a "dance" that goes on his mind – described as a very random and uncontrollable experience where he could be in the real world one moment, and then suddenly he's in a wonderful ballroom playing a waltz melody. Although it may sound peaceful, Simon feels rather uncomfortable every time it happens and tries hard to snap out of it. The instruments are too noisy as they start being tuned, and the scene keeps popping up and intruding on his real life. He is also quite confused as to what this dance means, and if he's going crazy because normal people don't have "out of body" experiences. Only at the end of the play does he come to terms with this dance and look at it as something to be embraced.

The Actual Dance is part of the 2013 Capital Fringe Festival. Simon used this opportunity to not only express support for who's ever personally dealt with cancer, but also to bring into light just how real cancer is. One of the most powerful aspects of it was that it was all based on a true story – Simon's own personal life – and was extremely genuine and raw. It was eye opening for those that haven't been in that situation before, and it allowed the audience to gain more empathy for those who have.



Tent Talk: Writer and Performer Sam Simon

Written by Hunter Styles for DC Theatre Scene

July 23, 2013

I find Sam Simon at the Baldacchino Tent in the afternoon, sitting with his director Jessie Roberts and enjoying a few moments of calm before showtime. After our interview he's headed around the corner to perform *The Actual Dance*, a solo show chronicling his wife Susan's battle with Stage 3 breast cancer beginning with her diagnosis in 2000.

Sam's not a trained actor, although his accomplished career as a lawyer and public advocate speaks to his eloquence and smarts. "I learn by doing," he says. "There's no substitution for just stepping out onstage and doing it. That's given me encouragement over time."

Sam Simon, author and performer of The Actual Dance

The Actual Dance has indeed had time to grow, born of Susan's and his experiences with cancer for over a decade now. "This play has become a real passion of mine," Sam explains. "It's born out of my own experience. Pieces of it have evolved over the years. But the telling of this story is always true to me. Honestly, I do it for self-development."

...read more here...



nytheatre.com Q & A Preview with Samuel A Simon

June 17, 2013

What is your job on this show? Playwright and Solo Performer.

What is your show about?

A true story, but does it really happen? A tale full of out-of-body experiences, sounds, images, dreams, and a Ballroom for the dance that we will all one day dance. Sam's life reconfigures as his wife battles breast cancer and he prepares for The Actual Dance.

When did you know you wanted to work in the theater, and why?

Theater was magical in our house as I grew up. I remember watching my sisters perform in plays such as 'Our Town' and being totally captivated. I did some school and community theater and then got caught up in "life." And then about a decade ago I returned and rediscovered a deep passion, which has turned into what may indeed be my entire purpose in life.

Who is more important in the theater: the actor, the playwright, or the director?

This is a trick question. The most important role in Theater is the Audience. One of the most important lessons I learned was that no one but the audience member gets to decide on what the play or work means or what the words mean. Having said that, I don't think it is fair to give anyone greater importance. Each has an important role to play, and what is exciting is that you can mix the group -- change the play, the director or the actor and the result is something brand new and original in its own way.

Do you think the audience will talk about your show for 5 minutes, an hour, or way into the wee hours of the night?

The Actual Dance provokes incredible reactions from the audience. It has been in development for just about a year. Each reading and then each developmental performance provoked incredible audience reactions. Everyone is touched in some ways. Indeed, even though I wrote the play and am the solo performer, I learn from the audience something new after each performance. Indeed, the risk is that people may be changed forever by their engagement with this show.

...read more here...



Capital Fringe Review: 'The Actual Dance'

Written by Mike Spain for DC Metro Theater Arts

July 15, 2013

3 + STARS

The Actual Dance is not a one man play. It is a **heartfelt dramatic** sharing of what Samuel A, Simon experience after his wife of 33 years was diagnosed with breast cancer. Simon emotionally shares with the audience his unique perspective. We hear the stories of people who battle cancer all the time, but we rarely hear the stories of the love ones who stand by their spouses when they have cancer, and here we do.

Simon talked about breaking down and crying and how his ill wife, Susan, comforted him, while battling cancer. He explained how he had to learn so many new medical terms so he could understand his wife's condition and the medications she was taking.

Simon weaves a creative bit about 'the dance.' He tells of a makeshift orchestra coming together for that final dance and how the orchestra warms up, how they start to play their song, and how they can suddenly stop mid-tune and pack up and leave. It is when they play the song completely that someone dies and that's the 'Actual Dance.' The dance is something Simon believes will happen, something he dreaed to talk about until his psychologist helped him gain new insight on the dance – that it was a really a thing of beauty and dignity. Perhaps the 'Actual Dance' was not something to fear, but a graceful way to leave.

...read more here...



Capital Fringe: The Actual Dance

by guest writer Sam Simon for DC Theatre Scene

June 20, 2013

It turns out that The "Actual Dance" has been inside me for nearly 13 years – and maybe longer. I just did not know it until I began to write it, and then it just poured out. It is as if the show itself existed inside of me and needed this time and place to appear.

The Actual Dance began as a brief monologue developed as part of Carol Fox Prescott's acting class in New York City. It was the first time I felt safe to begin to tell this story. I was afraid because, even as I wrote it, I thought it would make me seem crazy. The surprising, strong positive response to the monologue stimulated me to write "the rest of the story." In April of 2012, with the help of Gabrielle Maisels, a dramaturg and talented solo artist, I finished the script.

You see, *The Actual Dance* is a true story. But did it really happen? You must decide as you wander through the mystical world of spirits, out-of-body experiences, and a love so deep it seems tangible. Susan, my wife of 33 years, was finally diagnosed with Stage 3 breast cancer after years of false alarms. *The Actual Dance* is the story of what happened after that diagnosis.

But let's step back a moment. My first career was as one of the first lawyers to work for Ralph Nader. I went on to create a company that pioneered in building winning coalitions for public advocacy in Washington for 25 years. In my "third age" I served as a Senior Fellow at Intersections International in New York, a multi-faith initiative of the Collegiate Church devoted to justice, peace and reconciliation.

The Actual Dance represents a "fourth age" for me. As an Actor, I trained and worked with Artistic New Directions in New York for the last 15 years, as well as training in Gary Austin Workshops, with acting teacher and coach Carol Fox Prescott, and most recently with Gabrielle Maisels as dramaturg for *The Actual Dance* and as my solo show and acting coach and with my director, Jessie Roberts, who is an accomplished actor and playwright as well.

...read more here...



2013 Capital Fringe Show Preview: 'The Actual Dance' by Sam A. Simon

Posted on **June 23, 2013**

A Rare and Courageous Male Voice Brings to DC Fringe the Unique Perspective of the Love Partner in the Breast Cancer Struggle

The Actual Dance is a true story. But did it really happen? You must decide as you wander through the mystical world of spirits, out-of-body experiences and a love so deep it seems tangible. Sam's wife of 33 years was finally diagnosed with breast cancer after years of false alarms. The Actual Dance is the story of what happened after that diagnosis.

The characters and the story resonate deeply with all those who have faced a cancer diagnosis in a loved one. There is a gap in the cancer "ritual." There is support for the patient. There are infrastructures for the care givers. There is little, if any, discussion or support for those in a love relationship to the person diagnosed with cancer. *The Actual Dance* is about that difficult place and gives voice to the range of emotions, fears, love, and the occasional comedy.

...read more here...

PROMOTIONAL BENEFITS

Benefit	Title Sponsor \$100,000	Event Sponsor \$50,000	Media \$25- 50,000 in kind	Sponsor 25,000	Services Provider \$15,000	Product Placement on Stage
Title Sponsor						
Exclusivity						
Venue presence: Front of House, Marquee, Lobby	Logo	Logo	Logo			
Inclusion in Advertising Material appox: \$15k/week	Logo	Logo	Logo	Name	Limited	
Web Site Exposure/Link	Logo	Logo	Name	Name	Name	Name
Playbill/Souvenir book	Title page billing	Title page billing	Playbill ad and/or insert	Playbill ad and/or insert	Special thanks	Special Thanks
Press Releases	Announce ment	Include	Include	Include	Include	include
VIP Tickets	4/night	4	2	2	2	2 total
Opening Night Invitations	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Collateral Material: 5,000 flyers/wk, 50 window cards/wk, 1 three-sheet	Logo	Logo	Logo	Name	Name	Name

BIOGRAPHIES



Samuel A. Simon (Playwright/Solo Performer) has been active in Theater in the Northern Virginia/Washington DC area for about 15 years. He has performed in Temple Rodef Shalom Players Group, including roles in plays such as Last Night of Ballyhoo (Adolph), Neil Simon's Fools (Doctor) and roles in annual hour-long plays. Samuel has performed with other companies in the Washington, DC area including McLean Drama Company, Great Falls Players and others. He has also trained in improv starting with Sylvia Toone in Washington, and is a member of the S*T*A*R*S Troupe. He began working with Artistic New Directions of New York through their annual Improv Retreats in the Catskills and he has attended ten retreats including three "master retreats." He has taken Gary Austin, Rachael Hamilton, and Michael Rock workshops. He is an acting student of Carol Fox Prescott and has taken classes from

her for four years. He has performed in Gary Austin shows. *The Actual Dance* is his first play.

Jessie Roberts (Director) has an MFA (Acting) from Brandeis University. Directing credits include: Driving Miss Daisy, Steel Magnolias (SMP), Dearly Departed, The Fantasticks, Fuddy Meers (DS), Nunsense, Circle Mirror Transformation (Vienna Theatre Company); Next to Normal (Taking Flight Theatre Company). Acting credits: Coriolanus (Volumnia) Soho Repertory Theatre, NYC; Enchanted April (Rose), I Hate Hamlet (Felicia), Café du Grand Boeuf (Mimi), The Prisoner of Second Avenue (Edna) and Almost Maine (Ginette) (Vienna Theatre Company); Bus Stop (Grace) (Reston Community Players); What I Did Last Summer (Anna), The Glass Menagerie (Amanda - WATCH award nomination) (Vienna Theatre Company). Wrote book/lyrics for Believing Ruth, and script for Fee Fi Fa La La (Vienna Theatre Company).

Gabrielle Maisels (Dramaturg) is an actor, playwright, and acting coach, and the writer/performer of two solo shows, *Two Girls* and *Bongani*, inspired by her family's experiences in South Africa. Gabrielle studied Political Theory at Harvard and Columbia, acting with Carol Fox Prescott, and playwriting with Matt Hoverman. New York theatre includes: Solo shows in FringeNYC 2010 and 2011, *Clear Cold Place* by Caroline Prugh, Agnes in Tony Kushner's *A Bright Room Called Day*, Esther in Kushner's *Terminating*, Rocky in *Men of Clay* (Off-Broadway, with Matthew Arkin, Danton Stone, Steven Rattazzi), Rebecca in *In the Voice of Our Mothers*, Nancy in *June and Nancy* (FringeNYC 2012). New York workshops include *Pete Smalls* (screenplay reading, with Peter Dinklage, Sam Rockwell); *Pushkin* (reading, with Daniel Sunjata, Jake Robards, dir: Erica Gould). Film includes *The Great Pretenders*, dir. Jeremy Cohen, *Now Forager*, dir. Cortlund & Halperin (Gotham Awards nominee, in theaters now). Member Actor's Equity. www.gabriellemaisels.com

Jon Roberts (Sound Design) has a varied thespian career including singing with the National Symphony Orchestra for 11 years, acting in various community theatre productions in the Washington DC area. Prior to that Jon has been an aerial photographer for the Air Force as was a foster parent to 13 "interesting young ladies," not all at the same time. Jon was bitten by the sound bug while doing community theatre 6 years ago and has since done both sound and

projection design for various productions such as *Legally Blonde, Circle Mirror Transformation, What I did last summer, 33 Variations, Savannah Disputation, and Someone Who'll Watch Over Me to name but a few.* He has received awards for sound design and special effects for a variety of shows, and a Judge's Discretionary Award for musical accompaniment (guitar) by the Northern Virginia Theatre Alliance (*Spoon River Anthology*). Jon is married to the director, Jessie Roberts "but that is NOT how I get my sound gigs!" says Jon, "although I do blame her!"



Justin Cornell (NY Stage Manager/Production Assistant) is an aspiring stage manager, playwright and director from New Jersey. Since graduating from Ramapo College in 2010 with a degree in technical theatre, he has stage managed in independent theatres throughout New York. He has also worked as an assistant stage manager at Florida Repertory Theatre, Penguin Repertory Theatre (NY), and the Castleton Opera Festival (VA). In Spring 2013, Justin wrote and directed his first play, Nothing's Going To Happen, as part of New York's Planet Connections Festivity. This production was nominated for the festival's Outstanding Playwriting and Outstanding Overall Production awards. He is currently working on his follow-up, a collection of one-acts tentatively titled Wow, Such Plays, Much

Entertainment. Justin has been involved with *The Actual Dance* since June 2013; he worked as the stage manager on both the Midtown Festival production and the traveling show.



Katie Rosin / Kampfire PR (Marketing/Publicity/Social Media) was instrumental in the launch of the Broadway musical Brooklyn and the National Tour of Mother Load. She worked on the publicity team for the comedian, Jerry Seinfeld, and his movie Comedian. Highlights include: IT Award recipient Children of Eden, GLAAD Award Winner, She Like Girls, IT Award recipient Elizabeth Rex, Center Stage; Drama Desk Nominee (mis)UNDERSTANDING MAMMY: The Hattie McDaniel Story, Theatre 5.

Kampfire's Off-Broadway highlights include: *Me and Jezebel*, Snapple Theater; un*FRAMED*, John Jay College Performing Arts Center; *My Sinatra*, Midtown Theater & Sophia's'; *Modotti*, Acorn

Theater; ...Another Man's Poison, Jay Sharp Theater; Swimming With The Polar Bears, 45 Bleecker Street; Glimpses of the Moon, Algonquin Hotel; Mother Load, Sage Theater; Wasps in Bed, Beckett Theater; Anaïs Nin: One Of Her Lives, Beckett Theater. Some of Kampfire clients include: All For One Theater Festival, Astoria Performing Arts Center, the cell theatre, Tony Award Winning Double Play Connections, The Hive Theater Company, Manhattan Theatre Works, The League of Theater Women, New York Innovative Theatre Awards, Queens Theater, terraNOVA Collective and WorkShop Theater.

www.kampfirefilmspr.com

For more information please contact Katie Rosin at <u>Katie@kampfirefilmspr.com</u> or 917-438-9223.

Additional show information, including press, tour cities, and clips from the show, can b at www.theactualdance.com	e found