

Statement of Purpose

Throughout the late 1960s, black people in the western part of the United States struggled to find their place in society. Societal pressures challenged these people and it was seemingly impossible to create an identity among the white-driven society. As *Goin' a Buffalo* by Ed Bullins demonstrates, black characters struggle in the pursuit of the “American Dream”. This artifact depicts the journey of a group of people trying to find identity and a place in society. These African American workers trying to make a living in society. Much like the “American Dream” states, they attempt to find their place in society and maximize their capabilities. These characters, through trial and tribulation, seek opportunity to succeed. Jails, strip clubs, riots, and complications with jobs are among the many obstacles inhibiting them from fulfilling their ambitions. Clearly fruitless impulses exist which tempt the characters as they struggle to deal with daily life. The characters in this play try to escape Los Angeles to begin a new life in Buffalo. **Though society may complicate life, these African Americans try to define their own sense of community and family, as they work together in an attempt to create an identity for themselves.**

Ed Bullins also communicated the theme of creating an identity through his audiotape interviews. Sarah Toll, in 1972, interviewed Bullins on two separate occasions to discuss topics such as roots of theaters and the emotions he tries to convey in his works. A few of the chief ideas he presents are about the roles of blacks in theater. He says that black theater originally started in Africa thousands of years ago, older than any famous Greek theater (Citation). In fact, black people in Africa have been creating and developing their own identity through theater for much longer than America was founded. With that being said, African Americans still have

trouble integrating into American society. So, in an attempt to thrive for a better way of life, these characters embark on a journey to ameliorate their financial and social circumstances.