**Washed By Tears**

*Collage of sounds from the play edited together like a scream of noise fading into*

*Sung: Hush a bye baby*

**Sounds: Baby screaming Louder The sound of a cell door slamming**

1. **Abruptly cut short by the sound of a cell door slamming and key turning**
2. Dawn Speech Naturalistic talking to toddler in the park.

*Hey Madison, honey be careful! I now you’re a big girl now sweetie, but slow down! Do you want Mamma to come help you? No? Hey you’re so clever, you’ve made it over the monkey bars…….I’m so proud of you honey! Mamma loves you so much*! *Time to go soon though. Only five more minutes……*Come *over here honey now. Madison it’s time to go……, time to go! Come here! We’ll go get some candy on the way home! Shall we get some of those funny little rainbow sweets you like so much?*

Sounds of the park end abruptly as

1. **Door slams Key Turning Footsteps**
2. Dawn Speech: *She’s so tiny, tiny but perfect…..tiny finger nails like little pink shells and long lashes above little rounded cheeks. So soft. ( we hear Dawn gently breathe in the smell of the baby). What is that smell, warm like milk and honey…..everyone says that babies have a special smell but I never realised. She’s hardly any hair, but her head feels silky smooth, with tiny bumps and soft patches. How easy it would be to hurt her head……she seems so fragile. I never knew you could love anything so much………I never knew how fierce I could feel if anyone tried to harm her………such tiny perfect sweetness……. (Sings to her Hush a Bye baby)*
3. **Door Slams Key Turns Footsteps Guards Voice saying quiet (sound far away)**
4. *Dawn Speech: (Still singing a more upbeat song). Hey now sweetheart, gently does it….sorry am I hurting you? Nasty nappy…..just a moment longer, and you can have some lovely milk. (sounds of nappy changing). There’s a good girl….nearly done. There we go.*

*(picking the child up and giving her a bottle) That’s better. All clean now. Shall we go sit by the window. It’s a lovely day. (she sits down). You’re so good and quiet. It’s as if you aren’t really here. Where are you little one? Aren’t you hungry? You haven’t fed all day.*

*Don’t you see Mamma’s here……don’t you know I’m here???? ( Sings Hush a By baby in voice that’s beginning to crack with stifled sob)*

1. **Door Slams Key Turns Footsteps Guards Voice calling out a number (gradually getting closer)**
2. *Dawn Speech: (Angry), I wanted her to be perfect, what did I do wrong, she looks perfect but she isn’t. She’s never going to grow up. I saw another woman in the park today with her baby…she was just the same age as Madison. That child will grow up and walk and talk and go to school and college and get married and have children of her own. Why won’t Madison? I want to be a mother and a grandmother. I wanted to drown that other perfect baby…throw her in the lake…(ferociously) push her under the water so she stops breathing how long does it take to kill a tiny scrap like that …..why should she grow up and Madison not…….. Madison staring at me, I’m here, I love you and I might as well not be here at all……….*
3. **Door Slams Key Turns Footsteps Guards voice calling out numbers 3749, other prisoners reply with their numbers .**
4. *Dawn Speech:* *Nobody tells you how tired you get and how noisy such a little thing can be. All those lovely videos of smiley babies……Sometimes she screams and screams for hours. She doesn’t respond. Nine months of hell….I felt so sick, sick and tired, they don’t tell you that, I could barely eat a thing for ages……swollen feet, and then that awful tearing apart to get this tiny human into the world. I thought I did everything right, I tried so hard, so many books and so many people telling you what to do, eat this, do that, don’t do that……he wasn’t much use, I think he was in shock. (baby starts crying) What is it now? Are you hungry, Are you hurt? Are you sick? What can I do to stop the crying? I’m so tired. How many hours of sleep did I get?, two three four maybe….I can’t remember….. She’s fed, she’s clean, what’s wrong, what have I done wrong, why won’t she stop? She’s so small but she fills every cavity in my brain with fear and noise. Just stop, please stop! I’d do anything for it to stop!*
5. **Door Slams Key Turns Footsteps Guards Voice calling numbers, prisoners reply, guard calls Dawn’s number, Dawns replies**
6. Dawns Speech: I think I’ve been here for 5 years, or is it 5 months or……. fifty years……. “When I first arrived I was strip searched….the most humiliating thing that has ever happened to me. I couldn’t believe what I was being asked to do….to bend over, spread my cheeks….ugh….and cough twice. I cried from the sheer humiliation, Then I had to stand, completely naked in front of two female officers, whilst they went over my body writing down every mark, blemish, birth mark, tattoo……….I was finger printed, had my photo taken, then handcuffed. Then taken to have a shower. Have you ever tried to take a shower in hand cuffs? …(*laughs bitterly*) pretty hard I can tell you and all the time these two officers staring at me. Then they poured lice shampoo over my head. Lice!

I’ve never had lice! I started crying again *(sound of the baby crying in the background),* and shaking. Then I was put in white overalls….well I say white, more grey really, and huge…so big I was swamped……..I felt like a baby…..I was trying to walk, but kept tripping over…like a baby…….”

1. **Baby screaming gets louder and louder…..and then stops abruptly Male voice ‘what have you done!’ Dawn! Dawn! ‘what have you done!’**
2. Dawn Speech: Every day is the same here. There’s day for laundry, and a day to clean my cell…..actually I clean my cell a lot……I like cleaning….I like the smell of clean clothes and clean skin…….my baby smelt so clean and sweet. I love my girl. She’s so sweet and clever. She’s learnt to climb the monkey bars in the park…she frightens me a bit, she’s so fearless. She’ll be going into first grade soon….imagine that…….my baby!
3. **Sounds of the park as in A, but fades and is interrupted by male voice from courtroom (as prosecuting lawyer) ‘Do you think you were a good mother? Repeated and treated to sound nightmarish ‘You say you loved your husband but when he found you with the baby dead, you said you stabbed him too’**
4. Dawn Speech: I never see anybody here apart from the guards. I live for my mail and my telephone calls. When I first got here I had lots of mail, but as time goes on people are busy, and I think I’ve kind of faded into the background. I don’t call people, or write much as nothing ever happens…….there’s nothing to say……nothing to talk about. I don’t want to depress people. I don’t think anything will ever happen to me again. Nobody calls me by name. I’m just a number now
5. **Dawn (singing as if to her child) ‘One little, two little, three little Indians, four little five little six little Indians, seven little eight little nine little Indians, ten little Indian girls! Repeated and interrupted by overlay of the male voice (as doctor). ‘Now Dawn this is a very difficult thing to say to you, but your baby is sick ‘also overlaid by baby crying getting louder and male voice saying what have you done as in G, until the door slams and the key turns as in A.**
6. Dawn Speech: All you hear in here is numbers…..I am a number, everyone’s a number. (pause) I wonder if Madison can count to a hundred yet? She’s such a clever child. Everyone tells me how clever she is….top of her class…..tall and strong, and fearless. Perhaps she can tell me how long I’ve been here. One, two, three, four, five hundred…….how many hours, how many days……..how many tears…….the chaplain told me yesterday that if I’d been in Texas I’d have been dead years ago……I’m so tired. Maybe that’d be better, but I want to see Madison. (someone enters her cell – male voice. I’ve something important to tell you Dawn. The date 5th July is heard in the mix of sounds His words get mixed up with those of the doctor so you hear. There’s a date you need to know, and there’s no easy way to tell you get overlaid and mixed up. Dawn continues as if he isn’t there and nothing had been said)

We are going to the park later, in 5 minutes. When she’s home from school in 5 years, 5 months, no 5 minutes……….sounds of the children playing in the park from first scene invade the cell

Why can’t I see her…….O there she is!…… Madison! Madison! Honey I’m over here!

Remix of the scene in the park with Dawn’s words up to ‘time to go’

Sound of cell door opening; a collage of voices shouting numbers bursts through, Then male voice asks series of questions

* Do you understand what will happen to you?

Do you have any questions?

* What do you want for a last meal?
* Do you plan to make a last statement?
* What do you want us to do with your body?
* What do you want to do with your property?
* Who do you want to have your money?
* Who will witness your execution?
* Do you know what we expect you to do?
* Are you comfortable?
* If not what can we do?
* If your stay is denied who do you want to call?
* What colour clothes do you want to die in?

The list starts as a straight list being read and then the lines start overlapping and repeating like an echo…the last question being repeated several times, but overlaid on itself. And with Dawn’s voice saying ‘shall we get some of those funny little rainbow sweets you love, so that the words that you hear at the end are color, die and rainbow all mixed up together)

DAWN’s Voice or Male Voice (record both? See which we think works best?)

Dawn Carter was executed by lethal injection on 5th July 2010 in the Greensville Correctional Center, Virginia.

Dawn’s voice

‘Crime is redeemed by remorse, not by a blow of the axe or a slipknot. Blood has to be washed by tears, and not by blood.’

Maybe ‘washed by tears’ is repeated over and over again and finally fades into silence.

**Alternative ending**

After ‘time to go’ no remix of park scene, just cell door opening with collage of numbers being shouted and then

Dawn singing to her baby and replay of the nappy changing scene through which we hear

Male voice

Insanity or mental incompetency is a severe form of mental illness. Inmates who are insane, so out of touch with reality that they do not know right from wrong, and cannot understand their punishment or the reason for it, are exempt from execution.

Dawn continues singing and talking to the baby, remix of the second scene about tiny perfection and ending with the lullaby.

Male voice over continuing singing

Dawn’s life sentence was reduced to two separate sentences of 35 years in prison 9? Research needed for wording and suitable sentence length. She becomes eligible for parole when she is 101 years old.

Washed by tears quote and ending as before.