

In the Deep End with Water Wing: An Actor's Portfolio

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is submitted for completion of a Master of Fine Arts degree through the University of Virginia's Professional Actor Training Program. Within the document, viewers will find video clips of selected monologues and a scene. Also included is a teaching philosophy, accessibility in education statement, biography, and a journal of creation of the video clips. The purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate the scope of training at the University of Virginia, while also providing materials that are applicable to a professional environment.

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Chapter 1

Transcription of Filmed Introduction

I'm drawn to acting and performing for a lot of the normal reasons. I love the challenge of trying to find a character. I love the act of storytelling and the reward after having done a final performance. But I am also someone who is very, very introverted, and I deal with a lot of social anxiety. However, I really crave and desire the web of connections that I would consider an extrovert to have. And the interesting thing about performing and acting and doing theater and doing film is that you have to go out and find those relationships and make those connections and weave that web for yourself. Otherwise, you are doing yourself a disservice to yourself as an actor but also the other actors and designers and directors and maybe writers that are in the room. And so when you walk into a rehearsal space or a film set you are forced to make those connections that I am afraid of, but also give me a lot of reward and I find a sense of belonging while also honing and shaping the character and the craft and the play and the script that we are working on.

But beyond that I think that theater—theater specifically—does this very remarkable thing in which you walk into a room, filled with strangers who you've never met before. And you probably won't interact with throughout the course of the performance. But by the end of it, you've gone on this journey with them. And it feels like that there's this community and sense of connection, and this own web of interpersonal relationships, just for those two hours in which you are in the performance, when you are in the theater. And it's just for those people. And it's just for that audience. And it's just for that cast for that night or for that matinee. And that's something that I really cherish. And that I can't seem to find anywhere else in any of the other performing arts.

Teaching Statement: Three Pillars of a Classroom

This document aims to describe my philosophy as an arts educator and how I conduct my classrooms. I have broken my philosophy into three different pillars. While there are other aspects of a classroom environment to be conscious of, these three ideas are always at the forefront of my mind when engaging with students.

Risk and Safety

The obvious job of a teacher is to teach. However, once in control of a classroom, what trumps the goal of students learning something new is their safety. Both the physical and mental well-being of students, no matter their age or experience, is far more important than their grade or performance. That said, when delving into the world of performance, there is a natural terror that can arise in performers, let alone students. Acting is scary, and quite frankly, it should be. Standing before an audience and pretending to be someone else is a mammoth task, and—in a sense—completely impossible. And this is all dwarfed by the possibility of a student's work triggering an intense negative emotion. Sometimes it can remind them of a traumatic experience in their past, but it often can just be the weight and pressure of the scene itself.

Due to all of this, I take special care to create an environment that feels safe. It's vital to push students to places where they feel uncomfortable as a performer, but still feel safe as a human. The performing arts requires its participants to leave places of familiarity but should never reach a state of actual danger. First, there is actual danger to a student's mental or even physical state; then there is a risk that comes with trying something new for the first time. This risk-taking can feel like an illusion of danger, however, the two are separate. Actual danger, which can harm a student, should never exist in an educational setting. Whereas taking a risk can feel frightening, but is harmless when in the confines of a controlled space. In my classes, I want students to feel safe to take risks. They should feel that trying something new or foreign won't result in something harmful. To achieve this, the initial set of classes is always dedicated to ensemble building and play. Through games and exercises, I focus on encouraging their personalities to come out right away. These games and exercises are designed to let the students play, laugh, and explore the early concepts of performance, without the stress and anxiety of rehearsing a character and scene. The basic goal of these games is for the students to become better acquainted and comfortable with each other, but it's even better if they begin to form the early bonds of a friendship. Getting to know one another is vital for an acting class, and sprinkling these games throughout warmups and class time keeps that atmosphere from fading as the semester progresses. In a room full of friends, it is easier to attempt something difficult, (rather than in a room with strangers.) Allowing them to seek that friendship and laughter can help create a space where students have liberties that are not typical in a lecture or lab. These liberties are vital for their exploration as young actors, and hopefully it grants them some bravery when attempting something that's difficult and foreign. Performing is scary; it can be terrifying, but it should also have a sense of play and fun. If

not, why even pursue it? Actors must be brave to undertake their craft, and to find that courage, I believe they must be able to play and laugh as well.

Always Ask

As a student, I have had my fair share of lecture-based classes. As an actor, I have become accustomed to directors who just tell me what they want to see out of my performances. Sure, there are times and places to when it is fine simply to be told information, but the best directors I have had have been the ones who spend more rehearsal time asking me about the character. These directors—while they are leading me to a specific choice about the character—are giving me the tools to find characters on my own. In short, they are teaching me how to best explore all aspects of my toolset as an actor, and teachers must be able to do this as well. The best directors are also the best teachers. Of course, there are moments when a lecture is warranted and an acting note needs to be corrected, but the reason we engage in performance is to express ourselves, and artists need to be able to search for something within themselves.

To find this, I spend more time asking my students about their work instead of telling them what was successful or not. When a student actor is told “yes” or “no,” that creates a limit on their capabilities. My objective is to slowly guide them to think more critically and deeply about their art. When a student makes a discovery on their own, that truth solidifies itself deeper than if an instructor recites a fact or critique or compliment. This also slowly trains an actor to explore multiple avenues when crafting a character.

To fully support their growth, I need to know what lessons, exercises, and theatrical experiments work for each individual student. As a teacher, I need to understand which of my lesson plans are unsuccessful and how to further adapt. Legitimately asking them if they discovered an aspect to their artistry is essential. Some students are not as likely to speak up. Some students may not completely understand what I am trying to motivate them to find. And some students may just be struggling to pay attention. I’ve discovered that the more I ask them, the more they must think about the material we are exploring. They connect with the lesson in a more engaging way, and I can better gauge how well the lesson is accomplishing its goals. Sometimes I think a lesson plan is going great. I see them doing exactly what I ask of them. However, the students might not be absorbing its intended goal. There may be days when they make eye contact and nod their heads, but I have failed to give them the tools they need. I must know when this is the case, and they must feel comfortable to express when they are not connecting. This links back to my pillar of safety and danger. They need to feel comfortable to say when they are confused or lost or simply just not understanding. Posing questions to my students can help them to think more critically, stay engaged, and shows me when my lesson plan is steering off course.

Accept Subjectivity to Encourage Discussion

It is important to remember, art is not math. There is no “correct” answer. Perhaps there are instances when artists need to check their work, but what is right for one student will

not necessarily work for another. Art is subjective, and that should be reflected in the classroom. Because of that, students should understand that they don't need to take my word as the absolute truth. They have the freedom to disagree with me. They also should have the freedom to disagree with one another.

When it has come time to sit down and watch a final scene or monologue, I need to establish that each piece of feedback---whether it's from a student or instructor---is just one person's subjective view. In the professional world of theater, there are always disagreements and conflicting ideas, and students of theater should be prepared for that. The goal here is not to create a classroom that focuses on where we disagree. But when we do, we should acknowledge that so we can discuss in a constructive and educational manner. And, most often, it's not that one party is wrong and the other right, it's that there's a multitude of different possibilities. They are not hiking a trail, they are hiking cross-country, and at times there are instances when their intended path, or even mine, is less effective than another.

Accessibility in Education Statement

I am constantly learning and understanding topics related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Due to this, this statement is a living document. I plan on updating this document to better reflect what my classroom and students need as I learn more. It is my job as an educator to always be conscious of the world that my students are required to navigate. With that said, I currently try to keep one aspect of DEI at the front of my mind: accessibility.

Accessibility is important to me because I have ADHD-C. I grew up with mentors and teachers who were unaware or even unsympathetic to issues of disability and neurodivergence. I have experienced what it is like for those in a position of power to disregard it, and I have experienced firsthand how hard it can be to learn with a disability. However, I also had teachers who were caring and conscious of the struggles that came with my disability. I have felt empathy and inclusion when my disability is accounted for. Because of this, I always aim to accommodate students with any requests so they may better absorb the material. Sometimes that request comes from the institution's disability services, but on occasion it comes from the student directly. I also encourage students to communicate their needs to me. Furthermore, I always check in with all my students one on one, regardless of whether they are diagnosed with a disability or not. I spend time asking them how they are continuing through the semester and if they need assistance from me. It's my job to help each student to grasp the class's learning outcomes as best as they can.

However, accessibility should go further than including those with a disability. It can mean bridging economic gaps as well. For example, textbooks can be hundreds of dollars, and not every student is able to afford that, so, when possible, I attempt to provide the class's material. Rarely do I ever assign a full book to read, and when I do, it is one that is accessible without spending any of their own money. If a student cannot afford a one-hundred-dollar textbook, they should face deductions to their grade. But I also believe that exposing students to a multitude of mediums and authors is vital to their growth. For example, I love Robert Benedetti's book *The Actor at Work*. I find that it makes some of the abstract and confusing concepts of to be approachable. However, not every student who reads those chapters feels the same way that I do. Because of this, I must expose these students to other authors with whom they may better understand and resonate with.

Accessibility can also relieve student stress and emotional hardship. I had a student whose father was in stage IV cancer. Naturally she wanted to spend as much time with her family as she could. While the school had granted her accommodations for extra excused absences, which I was happy to provide her with, she had also asked for recordings of class time to avoid from falling behind. She and I both thought that the recordings would simply be an easy way for her to stay caught up with the rest of the class. While this was true, before she even returned to class, she expressed how excited she was to get back into the classroom and start acting again. The recordings kept her up

to date, but more importantly they provided her with a sense of joy and stimulation in an otherwise tumultuous time. While she was dealing with enormous amounts of stress, she said that getting the chance to return to class was exactly what she needed at that point in time. It had never occurred to me that her artistic exploration in my classroom had become an outlet for her to better process a very difficult and emotional moment in her life. But her time in my class, and watching the recordings of the content that she had missed, helped her navigate such an emotional distressing event.

Accessibility is not just cutting students some slack. It is not a way out of the work. It is a path into the work for every student. It gives the student a trajectory that is unique and personal for them. Everyone learns differently, and I cannot deny a student the opportunity to learn because their needs are in conflict with my lesson plans and strategies. It is my job to make sure that all my students leave my class with tools and concepts they can use later in their artistic careers. But the way I give them those tools is not always effective for every student. Often, it is because of a disability. Other times it may be economic in nature. Or perhaps it is a life event that prevents them from absorbing the material the best they can. It is likely that there are a multitude of other reasons why a student is having difficulty accessing those tools. But whatever the reason is, it is my job to understand what they are missing, and how to best get them those missing pieces. On its surface, teaching seems to be all about showing students something new. However, at its core, I think that teaching is more closely related to adaptability. With the ability to adapt to a student's needs to better understand the material, I better succeed as a teacher. I need to reach out to them, just as much—if not more—than they also need to reach for the learning outcomes of the class.

Chapter 2

Biography

Jack Clifford is an actor, playwright, and theater educator from California's Central Coast. Born and raised on the Monterey Peninsula, Jack came to theater through the public school system. From his middle school years till his high school graduation, he had always envisioned himself as an actor. In his first few semesters at Saint Mary's College of California, he discovered a love for playwriting as well. During his undergraduate years, Jack had numerous original plays produced, and served as an actor to fulfill scholarship requirements. Upon completion of his degree, Jack returned to the Peninsula where he worked as an electrician and theater manager. Though, as time passed, he yearned for the creative outlet he had in his days in the public school system. So, he took a chance at graduate school, and was accepted to the University of Virginia's Professional Acting Training Program. While enrolled, Jack had the opportunity to serve as a Graduate Teaching Instructor, and thus, Jack stumbled upon his most recent theatrical practice: teaching. Jack expects to graduate in May of 2023. He hopes to continue acting and teaching upon completion of his degree. Recent credits include Alex Moore in *Buyer & Cellar* (Live Arts), John Willoughby in *Sense & Sensibility* (University of Virginia) and Nick Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (University of Virginia).

Jack Clifford

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Height: 5'10"

Weight: 130

Eyes: Hazel

Voice: Tenor

<i>Buyer and Cellar</i>	Alex More	Live Arts	Jude Hansen
<i>Sense and Sensibility</i>	John Willoughby	University of Virginia	Marianne Kubik
<i>How to Live On Earth</i>	Bill & Russ	University of Virginia	Matthew Davies
<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	Bottom & Egeus	University of Virginia	Colleen Kelly
<i>When the Rain Stops Falling</i>	Joe Ryan	University of Virginia	Marianne Kubik
<i>Death of the Author</i>	Jeff Egan	University of Virginia	Colleen Kelly
<i>Of Mice and Men</i>	Curley	The Western Stage	Jon Selover
<i>American Night</i>	Harry Bridges	The Western Stage	Lorenzo Aragon
<i>The Three R's</i>	Bud	The Western Stage	Collin Saint John
<i>As You Like It</i>	William & Jacques De Boys	Livermore Shakespeare Festival	Lisa Tromovitch
<i>Sense and Sensibility</i>	Ensemble	Livermore Shakespeare Festival	Jennifer Le Blanc
<i>Good Person of Szechwan</i>	Wang the Waterseller	Saint Mary's College	Daniel Larlham
<i>Chaste</i>	Paul Rée	Saint Mary's College	Rebecca Engle
<i>Antigone</i>	Haemon	Saint Mary's College	Frank Murray

Education

University of Virginia	2020-2023	M.F.A. Acting	(Currently Enrolled)
Saint Mary's College of California	2012-2016	B.A. Theatre	

Workshops & Other Experience

Arnold Warner Studio	2022	Camera Work Intensive
Kathleen Turner	2022	Acting Master Class
University of Virginia	2020-2023	Graduate Teaching Instructor
Tectonic Theater Project	2020	Moment Work Intensive
The Western Stage	2018-2020	Master Electrician
Carmel Unified School District	2016-2018	After School Theater Enrichment Teacher
Livermore Shakespeare Festival	2015	Performance Apprentice
Pacific Repertory Theatre	2014	Arts Administration Intern

Special Skills & Training

Moment Work, Intermediate American Sign Language, Skateboarding, Rock Climbing, Surfing & Skimboarding, Horseback Riding, Beginner Viewpoints, Beginner Guitar, Beginner Ukulele



Chapter 3

The following chapter comprises a journal that documents the selection of my scene and monologues. These have been individually taped and archived with this thesis document. Following the journal are the excerpts of each piece I have selected.

Journal of Portfolio Creation

Selecting material for myself has always been a struggle. Self-casting is a task that I am not particularly fond of. It is a process that the more I practice, the more I realize how elusive it is for me. However, actors are required to do this. It is a reality of the theater industry; it is a process that I am required to undertake if I wish to audition for most anything. Typically, I will discover a piece, and it sounds perfect. It is dynamic. It is fun. It is a text that I can clearly visualize myself performing. But then I commit to it. And after rehearsing, I often discover that my original visualization for the monologue is not what the text needs. By the time I have used the piece for an audition or a class assignment, I feel as though I have over complicated the monologue and missed a chance to best showcase myself and the piece. The way I had envisioned monologues in my head seemed to never materialize into reality.

Naturally, I was nervous in selecting monologues for my thesis portfolio. Originally, I wanted to break my pattern of disappointment in finding new text. I was determined to avoid the same discombobulated mess that I experienced when I selected past monologues for myself. But as I sifted through texts, I found myself going through the same motions: excitement, experimentation, and disappointment. Though as I kept searching, I found myself stumbling across familiar playwrights and their monologues I had attempted before. The more I rediscovered these pieces, the more I began to long for another opportunity to do them justice. These were mostly pieces I had selected on my own that had fallen short of full realization. However, I still wanted to try at least one character that was completely new to me. So, in the end, I selected four pieces. Three were monologues that I had attempted before, with the fourth being a new scene which I was cautiously optimistic about. In the monologues, I tried to focus on what I had struggled with before, and correct those mistakes, whereas my goal for the scene was to put my expectations for it to the side, rather than attempt to create the version I saw in my head.

My first monologue was Katurian from Martin McDonagh's *The Pillowman*. The monologue has a clear forward momentum, but its structure is quite scattered. It is very tangential; Katurian never shuts up. He always has something to say. In this monologue, Katurian is being interrogated by two detectives, but rather than saying as little as possible to avoid self-incrimination, he rants and rants, trying to prove his innocence and cover his tracks. When I first attempted the monologue, I had used it for a dialect assignment, and so had most of my focus on how it sounded. However, this did not prevent me from visualizing how the monologue would look. The trap here was narrowing on his super objective of pleading with his captors. I focused on groveling and

begging. While I was able to find this, that was all I really played for the entirety of the piece. The monologue offers plenty of chances for Katurian to feel confident, then back track, to re-explain and to apologize. I hoped to showcase this wide range of actions in the piece in my portfolio performance. More specifically, I needed to establish each tactic clearly and precisely. This was incredibly difficult as he speaks in tangents, and I often start to fall into a vocal rhythm when that happens. I tried to remedy this through two different means: first, cut the passage in a way that would be easier for an audience to follow, and give myself more time to breathe. Katurian's thought process is so scattered that trying to connect his thoughts started to become more tedious than it was worth. More importantly though, I tried to collect my thoughts in a more calculated fashion, while still clinging to the sense of urgency that exists within the monologue. Taking the time to slow down and break my rhythm allowed me to implement more defined tactics that I had missed in the past. In doing this, I also hoped that each of those tactics became more apparent: here he is arguing, here he's humoring, and here he's groveling. It is always more interesting to watch a character use a multitude of different tactics rather than just one. This was my main goal in attempting this monologue again.

My second piece was Lewis from Shakespeare's *King John*. I initially attempted this piece in my second year during our Shakespeare voice class. I was looking for a monologue with a strong argument, and this had that. In the scene, Lewis has just been told by Cardinal Pandulph that the Pope and King John have reconciled, and Lewis may call off his invasion. However, Lewis's invasion has been successful so far, and since he's not directly beholden to the Pope, Lewis begins monologuing that there is nothing the Papacy can do to stop his war. Shakespeare is not always the easiest to understand, but for some reason, at the heights of his plays, when a character makes their last stand, or impassioned speech, it is crystal clear. What also made this monologue extra appealing was its natural and powerful build. Following that upward trajectory was one I could clearly see and hear myself doing. I also knew what that felt like kinesthetically. But when trying to find that build outside of my own brain, the emotion of the piece took full control. All the wonderful language that Shakespeare gave me was lost. And, like with Katurian, I found that I kept falling into a vocal rhythm when the character's emotional state was the main driving force. I was focused too much on the given circumstances of the character rather than what he was actually saying. This was the main mistake I wanted to correct in my new attempt. I focused on two main objectives: paint the most vivid visuals I could with the imagery Shakespeare implements throughout the monologue, and use questions that Lewis asks to find the build. When looking at the monologue, a reader can begin to see two halves. The first is Lewis setting the stage for his argument. To do that, Shakespeare provides some very clear and evocative pictures. Then in the second half, as the monologue begins to build in intensity, Lewis repeatedly poses rhetorical questions to Pandulph. Rather than relying on Lewis's emotional build, I spent more time trying to evoke the images Shakespeare gives and really ask the questions he poses. For example, Lewis explains how the Pope and Pandulph's breath "first kindled the dead coal of wars." In other words, their political gossiping and manipulations started this mess. Then Lewis argues that those "coals" have now grown

into a large fire and are “far too huge to be blown out by that same weak wind which enkindled it.” Here I really spent time focusing on those concepts of a weak breath. I tried to use the alliteration of “weak wind which” to create the sound of a soft weak breath. In the second half of the monologue, each question is a rhetorical one. I do not expect an answer. However, nothing seems to make me feel more stupid than when I am forced to answer an obvious condescending question. So, I attempted to place Pandulph in that position, and when he does not respond, that fuels Luis to throw more absurdly obvious questions for the purpose of cornering Pandulph and growing in intensity. Splitting the piece into these two sections, and giving myself the space to focus on each of these, rather than performing the overall argument, seemed to yield the most truthful and compelling renditions. Before, I was trying too hard to rely on the disposition of a young warmongering prince, but all that seemed to yield was a rendition that seemed monotonous, even though it had quiet high stakes. Breaking up the piece into two clear sections where I focused on the language, rather than the given circumstances felt like it created a much more grounded and dynamic performance.

I concluded my monologues with a speech from *Anything is Possible if You Think About It Hard Enough* by Cordelia O’Neill. I was originally drawn to the monologue because of the character’s love for the early hours of the morning. The way in which he talks about a sweaty bed is exactly how I talk about rock climbing, books, and music that I love, and I wanted to bring that tone to the monologue. I think we all live for sharing the things we love most with the people we love most. I could hear his infatuation with the morning in the same tone that I obsess over a band or book. My coastal Californian vernacular kept referring to his love as “stoke,” and that feeling of “stoke” was what I was desperate to find. However, he is so enamored by early mornings’ intimacy, that the setting of the early morning begins to feel sacred and intimate. It’s a place where we are most vulnerable and gross. We are half-conscious primates with bodily fluids oozing from our pores, mouth and who knows where else. As much as “stoke” is something I can tap into, the feeling is rather counter intuitive to the space’s intimacy. I actually felt that when I tried to tap into the “stoke” I was fairly compelling. But when I tried for a more intimate version, I felt like I was fitting the text with the tone the playwright intended, rather than my own desires. It’s obvious that the character is sharing something delicate and private, and using the vibe of “stoke” to communicate that is somewhat contradictory. Sure, one can be stoked about the early hours of the morning, but finding beauty in something as odd as the smell of early morning farts and sweat requires a certain amount of vulnerability. Much of the monologue is him describing the things he loves about his partner and about the crack of dawn in deep detail, especially through smell. Smell has also been proven to be the sense most linked to memory, so much that if one loses their sense of smell, memory recall becomes significantly more difficult. Each time I referenced a smell, I tried to recall upon when I have smelled that before. Furthermore, I also visualized the things and places I associated those smells with to try and strengthen my connection to them. When I referenced flowers, I imagined poppies. When I spoke of the bed, I imagined my own set of white sheets. And when I said that I “loved this hour before we wake up” I tried to visualize the orange glowing line on the horizon, just

before the sun breaches into the sky. This tool of using a sensory recollection was one that I have used very little as an actor. But when applying it to this piece, the result felt much more tangible and authentic than when I wanted to share my “stoke.”

The scene and final performance came from *The Flick* by Annie Baker. A colleague suggested I look at the character of Sam. It was not a role that I pictured myself in at all. Often, I find myself questioning why anyone recommends any part to me, mostly because I cannot initially visualize my rendition of the character. Though entering a piece of text with few expectations can yield more freedom and exploration. Without an initial picture in my head of how the character looks and sounds, I avoid the bottlenecks of a single interpretation that I seem to keep struggling with when I select pieces for myself. The character is more of a mystery that will require testing and experimenting to completely discover. I am not following a pre-set route, but rather taking a journey where I have more freedom to pick my own path. In that journey for *The Flick*, I found the hesitations and silences to be the character’s most interesting and compelling elements. In the scene Sam is confessing to his coworker, Rose, that he has been in love with her, and Baker has filled the scene with pauses, beats, silences and “terrible silences.” As we rehearsed, I began to discover how important those silent moments were. While the character is incredibly honest, he is also flustered and unsure of how to proceed from moment to moment. My main objective for this scene was to know exactly what causes him to pause or hesitate. For instance, before he admits he loves Rose, Baker has written in a “long silence.” To fill that silence, I made the choice that Sam is preparing himself for what he is about to say. He is both mentally and physically bracing himself for the impact he is about to experience. I attempted to find that through physical tension and limiting my breath, as I have observed in myself and others in high-stress situations. These silences and pauses are written everywhere in the script, and in giving them physical attributes I hoped to create a character who was clear, specific, and compelling.

Now, so what? How actually successful was any of this? Was I able to improve my past monologues? And was I able to create a compelling character in the new scene without relying on a skewed visualization? Well, I can confidently say that in each piece I revisited I was able to avoid the traps I had fallen into before and improve the monologue... at least, in rehearsals. Unfortunately, filming does not consider all the attempts. It only gives us the one. There is no luxury of getting a second go at it the next night, as we do in live theater. We only the few takes that you can squeeze out that day. There is only a single rendition to summarize all the work you can put in. So, after filming, I felt that I had achieved my goals for *The Flick* and *Anything is Possible if You Think About It Hard Enough*, but did not quite find all the nuances of *The Pillowman* and *King John*. This is just the nature of acting. There are days when we absolutely crush the monologues we work on. To a certain extent I felt that I had repeated the cycle of disappointment when I self-cast. However, knowing that I had been able to achieve each goal at least once—if not more in rehearsal —gave me some semblance of satisfaction. The most important thing to take away was that I was able to identify the key issues inhibiting my performance and take actions to fix them. Some were better than others, but

when entering this program, I wanted desperately to develop the skills to be self-sufficient as an actor, to identify issues, and set a course of how to remedy whatever may be wrong. After this experience, I know I am capable of that.

Portfolio Materials

The following excerpts were performed, filmed, and archived as supplemental material to this thesis.

The Flick by Annie Baker¹

ROSE: Could one of you give me a ride home tonight? My sister borrowed my car.

AVERY: Oh. Um. My dad is picking me up.

ROSE: Sam? Sam.

AVERY: But. Um. I guess I could ask him if he'd take you back to Boylston.

ROSE: Sam. What the fuck.

SAM: Why'd you show Avery how to use the projector. What the fuck is wrong with you.

AVERY: Uh. I'm gonna go to the bathroom.

ROSE: I didn't know you / wanted—

SAM: Yes. Yes you did. I've been working here for almost twice as long as you and you know Steve only promoted you first because he thinks you're hot. And three months ago I asked you if you would train / me and you said—

ROSE: Okay. Okay. You're right. I'm sorry.

SAM: Do you know how humiliating it is to be working with like twenty-somethings who are rising in the ranks of your shitty job faster than you are?

ROSE: I'm sorry. It's— I was stupid. I wasn't thinking. I just— I can train you too. Then if I get sick you can / take turns—

SAM: No. No way. I'm not interested anymore. No fucking way.

ROSE: Okay. So. What. Are you gonna like hate my guts now?

SAM: Oh god.

ROSE: What's going on?

SAM: I feel sick. I feel like I'm gonna...Oh my god.

ROSE: Sam.

SAM: I just... I can't stand it. I can't do it anymore. It's making me nauseous. It's making me sick. I'm like breaking out in fucking rashes.

¹ Baker, 118-130.

ROSE: I have no idea what you're talking about.

SAM: You don't? Really? I like— I fucking love you. I don't even know why. You're like... I see all these things that are wrong with you. But it's like— It's really bad. It's really bad. It's not like a— It goes way beyond the word "crush" or like— I want to like—I can't sleep. I mean, I haven't really slept for the past year and a half. And then when I do sleep I dream about you and you're like talking to me. Or like fucking some other guy. Or standing in front of me in like a motel room like brushing your teeth. It's never been like this before. I walk down the street and all I'm thinking is: Rose. Rose. Rose. It's like the fucking soundtrack to my life. Just your name is like... I've pictured saying this to you. I've pictured saying it so many times.

ROSE: So what do you want?

SAM: What do you mean?

ROSE: Like what do you think is going to happen now?

SAM: I don't know. I guess I just...I guess I needed to get it off my chest.

ROSE: But is this the kind of thing where you want the person to love you back or you actually secretly don't want them to love you back?

SAM: That's a good question.

ROSE: Because it sort of seems like it has nothing to do with me. Like me me. You know?

SAM: That's not how I wanted it to seem. Be. That's not how I wanted it to be.

ROSE: Like— Like even right now. It's like you're performing or something.

SAM: I'm not performing. I'm not performing.

ROSE: So turn around and look at me.

SAM: Do you like me back?

ROSE: Oh my god. Would you please just turn around? Sam. You're seriously not going to turn around and look at me? You don't know me. Like for whatever reason you like me... I'm not like... I'm not like like that at all. Trust me. Okay?

EVERY: Oh my god. Someone took a... Someone took a shit on the floor of the men's bathroom and they—And they spread it all over the— It's all over the walls and it—I just puked. I just puked on the floor of the bathroom. I feel like I'm gonna—

SAM: You gotta sit down. You gotta sit down and put your head between your knees. You gotta breathe. Take deep breaths.

EVERY: Oh god.

SAM: I'm gonna take care of it. You just take it easy.

ROSE: I'll help.

SAM: No. No. You stay here and you watch him and you get him water. I'm gonna take care of it.

AVERY: You're gonna have to— Now my puke is all over the place. I'm so sorry. Are you still mad at me? SAM: It's fine. I'm not mad at you.

AVERY: It's everywhere. Why would somebody do that?

SAM: This happens. This kind of thing happens in movie theaters. I'm gonna deal with it.

AVERY: But you have such a sensitive sense of smell!

SAM: Avery. Don't worry about it. I'm totally cool with puke. I'm totally cool with shit. I'm gonna take care of it. I'm taking care of it! ROSE: You want a cup of water?

AVERY: Yeah. That would be great.

ROSE: Avery. Please don't tell Sam about what happened the other night.

AVERY: Of course. I mean. You don't either.

ROSE: I won't.

AVERY: Can I still fill in for you on Thursday night?

ROSE: I'll make it work. Sometimes I worry that there's something really, really wrong with me. But that I'll never know exactly what that is.

AVERY: Uh. No. You're fine.

ROSE: Really?

AVERY: Yeah. ROSE: I'll get you some water.

The Pillowman by Martin McDonagh²

You know? A great man once said, "The first duty of a storyteller is to tell a story," and I believe in that wholeheartedly, "The first duty of a storyteller is to tell a story." Or was it "The only duty of a storyteller is to tell a story"? Yeah, it might have been "The only duty of a storyteller is to tell a story." I can't remember, but anyway, that's what I do, I tell stories. You read these things, these "stories," supposedly, "The police are all this," "The government is all this." All these political ... what would you call 'em? "The government should be doing this." Please. Fuck off. You know what I say? I say if you've got a political axe to grind, if you've got a political what-do-ya-call-it, go write a fucking essay, I will know where I stand. I say keep your left-wing this, keep your right-wing that and tell me a fucking story! You know? I have no axe to grind, no anything to grind. No social anything whatsoever. And that's why, I can't see, if that's why you've brought me in here, I can't see what the reason would be, unless something political came in by accident, or something that seemed political came in, in which case show me where it is. Show me where the bastard is. I'll take it straight out. Fucking burn it. You know? You know what I mean?

² McDonagh, 8.

***King John* by William Shakespeare³**

Your Grace shall pardon me; I will not back.
 I am too high-born to be propertied,
 To be a secondary at control,
 Or useful serving man and instrument
 To any sovereign state throughout the world.
 Your breath first kindled the dead coal of wars
 Between this chastised kingdom and myself
 And brought in matter that should feed this fire;
 And now 'tis far too huge to be blown out
 With that same weak wind which enkindled it.
 You taught me how to know the face of right,
 Acquainted me with interest to this land,
 Yea, thrust this enterprise into my heart.
 And come you now to tell me John hath made
 His peace with Rome? What is that peace to me?
 I, by the honor of my marriage bed,
 After young Arthur claim this land for mine.
 And now it is half conquered, must I back
 Because that John hath made his peace with Rome?
 Am I Rome's slave? What penny hath Rome borne?
 What men provided? What munition sent
 To underprop this action? Is 't not I
 That undergo this charge? Who else but I,
 And such as to my claim are liable,
 Sweat in this business and maintain this war?
 Have I not heard these islanders shout out
 "Vive le Roi" as I have banked their towns?
 Have I not here the best cards for the game
 To win this easy match played for a crown?
 And shall I now give o'er the yielded set?
 No, no, on my soul, it never shall be said

³ Shakespeare, 5.2.2358-2388.

Anything is Possible if You Think About it Hard Enough by Cordelia O'Neill⁴

I love this hour, this hour before we wake up
There's that smell
First thing in the morning
Breath and farts and sweat
I love that
The indent of the night
The mess of pillows
Her breath is awful in the morning
Always has been
It's like a mixture of garlic and dirt
No, fuck it, I'm being polite, it's a mixture of garlic and manure
You know that smell in the country
The air around a farm.
That's her breath mixed with garlic
But only in the morning... The rest of the day it's like...
Flowers.
I don't mind
I never have
I love the smell

Chapter 4

⁴ O'Neill, 90-91.

Filmed Supplements List

Personal Introduction

Jack Clifford

Monologue

Rupert, *Anything is Possible if You Think About it Hard Enough* by Cordelia O'Neill

Monologue

Katurian, *The Pillowman* by Martin McDonagh

Monologue

Lewis, *King John* by William Shakespeare

Scene

Sam, *The Flick* by Annie Baker

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