

“I Want to Return to my Home”:

Spatial Theory, Veterans Studies, and their Presentations on the Stage in *The Unreturning*



Victoria Smith

Spring 2023

**“I Want to Return to my Home”: Spatial Theory, Veterans Studies, and their Presentations
on the Stage**

By
Victoria Smith
Spring 2023

Submitted to the Departments of Communication Arts and English in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of the Degree of Bachelor of Arts

I hereby recognize and pledge to fulfill my responsibilities, as defined in the Honor Code,
and to maintain the integrity of both myself and the College as a whole.

Victoria Smith

Approved by:

Professor Michael Mehler

Professor Alexis Hart

Acknowledgements

First, to my cast and crew. This literally would not have been possible without you. Thank you for taking this journey with me, for trusting me through this, and for making this paper worthwhile. You all are capable of such great things, and I'm so glad I got to be a step on your journey. Jude and Jess, here's to your first show together. Jill and Matt, here's to our last.

To my advisors, Michael and Prof. Hart, thank you for guiding me through this experience.

Michael, you have done so much for me. Thanks for practically adopting me, and making me a birthday cake, and letting me use your son's picture in the show, and just being an all around supportive person. Professor Hart, thanks for diving in with me and constantly providing great readings. I'm so proud to be your first real comp advisee.

To my roommates, all 6+ of you, thank you for bringing constant laughs, food runs, and overall support throughout the process. All of us comping at the same time was bonkers, but we made it out at least semi-alive.

To my family, thank you for the years of coming out to my shows and humoring my late rehearsals and line mumbling. Here's to many more years of performances that you get to see.

To all of my previous theatre teachers and professors, thank you for teaching me and convincing me that this is not just a hobby. You have all been instrumental in getting me to this point.

To Milton, my favorite director. Thanks for sticking with me through every rehearsal.

To our lord and savior Stephen Sondheim, may he rest in peace. We couldn't have made it through without your work. It will eternally be Sunday in the Park with George.

Lastly, to every audience member that has ever seen my work, thank you. Theatre is nothing without you.

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Introduction

I never thought I would be a director. But after a series of circumstances during which I proved to myself and those around me that I can be a director in the fullest sense, I decided to pursue a senior comprehensive project in directing. But I knew that choosing directing was not enough; I needed an approach and I needed a lens of analysis. That choice was surprisingly easier than choosing to direct. After first being introduced to spatial theory in junior seminar, I was fascinated by the presentation of home on the stage, both dramaturgically within the text and physically within the staging. Thus, that became the basis to my directorial approach, and the bar that guided my search for a play. It was not until I really dove into Anna Jordan's *The Unreturning* that I found what the true question was at the heart of my production: How do we understand the symbol of home in the context of veterans' stories? In other words, how do we portray the soldier's homecoming on stage?

The first step to answering this question was finding a play that focused on the story of a soldier returning home. After a semester-long search and a summer of reading, *The Unreturning* was the clear choice for my show. The show's unique portrayal of three storylines at once and the poetic nature of the language elevated it above all other plays I read. It also stood out to me for how well it combined the ideas of home and veterans studies within the content of the show itself. In a review of the show for *Financial Times*, Sarah Hemming describes the complex definition of home explored in the show:

From afar, their yearning takes on a physical quality, missing salt spray in their faces and damp sand beneath their feet, the familiar smells and sensations of their boyhood houses and haunts. But it's also clear that "home" means back — back to a place unchanged and to an earlier, younger self, ignorant of what the older man would become. As the "Un" in

the play's title makes plain, that's a journey that cannot be made. Instead, for each of them the arrival back home involves a painful reckoning with the damage done.

(Hemming)

This play seemed almost too good to be true with its perfect combination of homecoming narrative and veterans' issues. The only issue was the length: the play was 90 pages with a two-hour run time. So after finding the perfect script, I had to perform cuts to get it to the manageable length for my senior project. I went about this with a couple of different qualifiers. We needed to keep any scenes with major plot pieces and major character development. We also needed to recognize that the three main characters frequently echo one another and therefore to make sure the trio was completed. Lastly, I was hoping to make the divide of lines/focus relatively even for the three main characters. This was the basis for cutting down a lot of George's monologues.

But outside of the technical requirements for breaking down the script, I was also thinking about the themes and stories presented in Jonathan Shay's *Odysseus in America: Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming*. This was the main source I used for my perspective on veterans studies. Shay uses an analysis of Homer's *The Odyssey* in comparison to his own personal stories of talking to veterans of the Vietnam War. When reading it, I kept finding parallels between the anecdotes Shay was describing and the narrative of *The Unreturning* as it handled the intricacies of homecoming. It was evident that Jordan and her creative team did their research in crafting this narrative, as the themes at play are clearly grounded in real life experiences. What I love most about Shay's book is the choice to follow Odysseus, as it is one of the original soldier's homecoming narratives. Pairing my show and this analysis together made me think about the idea of heroism in veteran studies, and encouraged me

to look at this as the last part of the hero's journey, the return. This gave me a whole new frame to understanding our characters, especially Frankie and his desire for a hero's welcome. And with that idea of return, home is the driving force. In fact, home is just as important to Shay's understanding of the veteran's tale and just as difficult to conceptualize: "So much resonates in the one syllable, "home," that we should not be surprised if unpacking the idea makes quite a heap. Reach into the heap and pull something out, and you discover it's tangled with almost everything else" (Shay 245). *Odysseus in America* was integral to the creation of this project.

This, however, was not the only veterans studies piece I consulted. The chapter titled "Zones" in Kate McLoughlin's book *Authoring War: The Literary Representation of War from the Iliad to Iraq* also offered key information in my process. In it, she ties space and war together as she discusses the ways in which authors portray the relationship between soldiers and the land on which they fight. Her work establishes the importance of physical space for veterans, focusing on the way their combat history can be traced through the land itself, writing "in war, bodies and land become very close" (McLoughlin 90). This was foundational writing that acted as a jumping off point for my analysis surrounding how bodies and land remain close after returning from war. Both veterans studies pieces paired extremely well with the spatial theory material with which I decided to work.

The primary source I was introduced to regarding theatrical spatial theory, and the primary source I consulted in the completion of this project, is Una Chaudhuri's *Staging Place: The Geography of Modern Drama*. Billed by the publisher as "the first book-length study of the notion of place and its implications in modern drama," Chaudhuri analyzes multiple realistic dramas for the ways they construct home ("Staging Place"). She centers around this idea of "geopathology" or "the problem of place" that is a constant in modern American drama

(Chaudhuri 15). A lot of the book touches on how an individual defines home for themselves, based on their identity and relationship to those around them.

While this book was a strong jumping off point for my research, there are a number of shortcomings with *Staging Place*, including her limitation to realist dramas and the dedication to her own concept of geopathology that is at times confusing to follow. But the ways in which Chaudhuri reaches her conclusion are easily adaptable to other pieces of literature and were a primary takeaway as I conducted my own research. I also turned to an anthology that provided a more contemporary understanding of spatial theory as it is applied in the theatre. Edited by Emily Klein, Jennifer-Scott Mobley and Jill Stevenson, *Performing Dream Homes: Theater and the Spatial Politics of the Domestic Sphere* looks at how a lot of theatrical discourse involves language about home. They also examine the difference between house and home, stating, “while the semiotics of *house* can generally be understood to represent a physical dwelling, *home* is a much more fluid and amorphous signifier, potentially working across conceptual categories of embodiment, affect, memory, architecture, and geography” (Klein 15). All of these concepts help inform any presentation of home on the stage and help to understand what it takes to fully form a home for a show’s characters. *Performing Dream Homes* was published within the last five years, which provides a good update to Chaudhuri’s book as it brings dramatic works into conversation with contemporary issues and events. Again, not all of the concepts apply directly into my chosen work, but the ideas at the center of the anthology work are good guidance as I applied it to a British, non-realist drama.

In order to fully utilize spatial theory, I needed to acquaint myself with the precise definitions of space to which I was going to refer. Space, like home, is not a simple concept to tie down. In *Postmodern Geographies*, Edward W. Soja describes how there are three unique

understandings of space as a whole and that there can be no real separation when speaking of spatiality as a whole: “The possibility of independent conceptualization and inquiry, however, does not produce an unquestionable autonomy or rigid separation between these three spaces (physical, mental, social), for they interrelate and overlap” (Soja 120). This separation became a central idea that I had to navigate in my production, and a central challenge to my overall conceptualization of home in the show. Much like Klein wrote in *Performing Dream Homes*, “The concept of home operates as a dynamic signifier full of contradiction and potential, a private space constructed through public concepts of value and access, and a public space realized through intimate, personal exchanges” (Klein 16). Soja’s work played an integral role in the development of home for each character in the show.

I was able to take this idea of division of spaces that Soja presented, but much of the other material in his writing was harder to work into my directing. Thus I turned to Doreen Massey’s *Space, Place, and Gender* for a different presentation of similar themes. While Massey’s focus turns towards ideas specifically surrounding space and gender relations, she also has a description of the foundational aspects of spatial understandings, just in a more digestible way than Soja. She too emphasizes the importance of understanding the many levels of space in order to fully define any specific place, as she writes “the existence in the lived world of a simultaneous multiplicity of spaces: cross-cutting, intersecting, aligning with one another, or existing in relations of paradox or antagonism” (Massey 3). This idea of multiplicity is one of the central cruxes of *The Unreturning*, as each character enters the story with their own understanding of how the world *should be*. Where much of the tension arises in the show is when those definitions conflict in increasingly harmful ways. Jordan’s central themes are aided by being put in conversation with Soja, Massey, and similar scholars.

With a combination of sources to guide me, my project expands far beyond just directing a show, as documented in this paper. First, I will begin with a literary analysis of *The Unreturning* which seeks to answer, at least in part, the research question presented at the beginning of this process: How do we understand the symbol of home in the context of veterans' stories? Working my way through the script with the aid of the sources previously mentioned, I sought to find exactly how home is functioning in the stories of Nat, Frankie, and George. There is a way that the expectations of home are warped and manipulated for each character in the show that needed to be fleshed out before performance. After that, I move to the actual in-the-room process of directing a show. I go over different rehearsal structures, the key elements of our day-to-day activity, and the moments that we struggled with the most. All of this comes together in the third chapter where I reflect on the comprehensive project from start to finish. Here, I bring together my outside research and my practical work to evaluate how the show went, how I acted as a director, and how I can take this experience and apply it to any future creative endeavors.

Chapter One: Literary Analysis

The convergence of Chaudhuri's understanding of spatial theory and the concept of veterans studies lies with the idea of space. Like Chaudhuri describes, there is a way to look at a dramatic text with "a geopathic dramaturgy, in which every character and every relationship is defined by a problem with place" (Chaudhuri 56). When stories of soldiers are brought into the picture, this "problem with place" becomes increasingly important. Kate McLoughlin details the "special relationship between war and space," and she asserts that "the challenge for war writing is to convey this charged space, to communicate the complex situation — part psycho-physiological, part geographical — that is conflict" (McLoughlin 83-4). What Anna Jordan recognizes in her show *The Unreturning* are the challenges of presenting a war zone and adds to them by bringing in the challenges and complications of presenting home, or really three unique homes at once.

For this production of *The Unreturning*, the analysis builds on the ideas presented by both Chaudhuri and McLoughlin to make a different assertion about how the spaces of home and war come into conversation in the play. Chaudhuri focuses most of her book *Staging Place* on realist dramas and how the home begins to represent almost a separate character on stage. While a good foundation, Chaudhuri's work does not have a direct correlation to this play as it is fundamentally not the typical realist drama. In a similar sense, the majority of the action in *The Unreturning* does not take place in war zones. Instead, the focus is on individuals who bring elements of the battlefield home with them. The physical space being described relies heavily on natural elements that act as both contrast and support to the mental and social understandings of the space. So I will apply McLoughlin's assertions about the connections between war and space to the stories of the characters in *The Unreturning* and the idea of an altered *home* space after

returning from war. Their home of Scarborough has its own war history, which is represented through the lives of the three characters. As the stories intersect over a century of action, the descriptions of landscapes unite the characters in a messy, traumatic idea of a war-torn life that is forever altered by combat. In Jordan's work, it becomes clear that the "war zone" extends far beyond the actual combat area as the three main characters' homes have been forever changed by their own traumas. While George and Frankie are not in the physical space of battle when we begin the play, they are very much still in the psychological space; thus, they continue to affect the physical spaces around them as the two blend together. Nat returns to a battle scarred home that looks much different from the place he grew up in, and then must deal with the effects war has had on his own perceptions of the landscape of his home.

Beyond the connection to the physical space of Scarborough, the three men featured in the prologue are tied together by the repetition of the language, as each monologue starts "I want to return to my home" (Jordan 6). Finn, Nat's younger brother who remained in England, repeats this line later as he gives his own "I want" speech (80). This is not the only way that the first three monologues are connected. The characters' lines share a lot of the same imagery. Both Nat and Frankie emphasize the physical setting of their house, specifically the front door: "I want to scan our front door again" and "Greet the Front Door like an old friend" (6-7). The front door is a striking image that emphasizes the idea of entrance or being allowed into a place. A door keeps out unwanted elements and invites in welcomed ones. They both hope to be let in. However, even these parallel images have their own differences as Frankie's door is made into a proper noun, just like the names of his friends earlier in the script, further emphasizing the symbolism of the object more than in Nat's speech. Each man in the prologue also highlights aspects of the ocean. Nat is extremely focused on the landscape as a whole, specifically the feeling of it. For

Frankie, the ocean is a late addition to the list of wants, coming in the last section of the speech.

Yet both men emphasize the absolution that comes along with the sea, as Nat wants to “disappear into it” while Frankie wants to be “dissolved” by it (6, 8). George also puts the ocean later on his list of priorities, focusing once again on the feeling of the sea visit, specifically the wind and the salt which were mentioned in both of the previous speeches as well, in nearly the same phrasing. The waves become a symbol of consistency for each character as the play goes on.

But moving beyond the ocean, the five senses continue to play an important role throughout the prologue, with each character bringing attention to *feelings* of being home. Frankie is fixated on the physical aspects of his home itself. Beyond the front door, he describes “the cold brick of the garage wall” and “the shag pile” of the carpet (7). He also highlights the tastes of England with “sausage rolls and Jäegerbombs,” which is mirrored in George’s desire for drinking tea (7-8). The tea is attached to sounds for George as well, with the “clink of the china and the glug of the pour” (8). But it is Frankie who has the strongest description of sound with the “fanfares, and parades, and brass bands” that he describes at the beginning of his speech (7). This heavy reliance on the five senses not only grounds the audience in what they are hearing, a key facet for a non-realistic performance that will not have properties to rely on for this conveyance, but it also grounds the characters themselves in the idea of home. They define the entire environment of their homes before stepping foot on the physical area itself, so that when we do arrive there with them it is the character’s definitions that make up the audience’s understanding. George and Frankie return home to a land that is physically unaffected by combat and a community that has already mentally processed the war and prepared to move on. The two use their memories to try and ground themselves in a familiar looking world that has socially left

them behind. Nat, however, longs for that familiar terrain but sees it destroyed as the war has come home.

The first scene of act one brings the three characters together once again, this time having their interactions overlap with each other as the focus jumps back and forth. Still there are moments where the three are seemingly having the same conversation, as Jordan utilizes repetition once again. Nat begins the dialogue, prefaced by the Chorus as he starts his journey: “This city has chewed me up and spat me out” (Jordan 15). Frankie continues the image and parallel structure with “this landscape has swallowed me whole,” followed by George’s third piece, “this country has split me in two,” that continues on into a more final statement before the Chorus speaks again (15). All three of these statements center around the idea of consumption and destruction, key clues into the physical and mental strain the three men are encountering. Nat is the only one who has alluded to an after, as he has been spit back out. The other two seem irreparably changed by their experiences; Frankie has become overtaken, swallowed whole with no sense of escape, while George is split into two with no sense of if or when he can come back together. For a scene fairly early in the show, there is a clear sense of irreparable damage that has been done to the characters.

This section also acts as a callback to the images presented in the opening series of speeches in a sort of foreshadowing moment. Though they are all referring to the place they are leaving, hence the name of the scene, they are linked to the initial descriptions of home. Nat catalogs businesses and landmarks across his entire city, the one he wants to return to, yet “this city” has done him harm (Jordan 15). Frankie too describes the “landscape” of home with specific place names and the detail of the coast that he wants to “dissolve” him, yet the landscape has already “swallowed” him (15). And George has the most traditional English wants: a cup of

tea and “Good English voices” (9). Yet his grievance is with “this country” (15). Are they talking about the source of their traumas or the source of their love? Here, they make a case for the two being closer than originally expected. These images further establish the lack of separation between the spaces they left and the ones to which they will return. The distinction between *there* and *here* are blurred in the character’s minds, so when they finally get to their homes, the definitions they gave in the prologue are muddled and corrupted by images of war.

The focus shifts to just George and Frankie as the first act continues, going back and forth between the two seamlessly as they both have their first experiences back in Scarborough. The arrivals are instantly presented as direct opposites, as George is met with celebration and Frankie is met with no recognition whatsoever. These homecomings are directly against what the characters desire in the prologue. George asked for tea and a calm reunion with Rose. Frankie described exactly what George actually receives, which begins to show the influence from one time period to the next. A lot of Frankie’s images of the soldier’s welcome that he is envisioning come from George’s generation. This is not the only moment of timeline crossing, but it is the first time their separation is purposefully noticeable. The opposition continues as George goes on to describe his version of England, which includes bright sun and the salty air. Frankie’s England is much more dismal, with the “hungover teenagers” and “screaming kids” (Jordan 20). They sum up their entrances with two very distinct feelings: George says “And I breathe,” while Frankie remarks “I can’t breathe” (20). From the beginning, Frankie’s homecoming is much more negative than George’s. He has no crowds of cheering countrymen, no loved ones on the sidelines. This is the experience of a more contemporary soldier which relates to the descriptions presented in Shay’s work: “combat veterans sometimes came to feel that the country had discarded them, that they were not the nation’s honored elite as they had been led to expect”

(Shay 246). The 2013 England held an unceremonious homecoming for the veteran, much different from the traditions of the 20th century. As the play continues, the characters diverge from each other further as more details about their pasts come to light.

The next couple of scenes focus on each of the main characters individually, as small details of their traumas are slowly being revealed. George's war trauma begins to be fleshed out as his commitment to his fellow soldiers invades his everyday life. The first time this happens is after getting a drink with Rose as he has visions of Tibbs, a fallen soldier from his section. George is prompted by this vision to list every member in full detail without knowing why (Jordan 30). This sudden prompting of remembering is not an uncommon occurrence with veterans, which Shay describes with Odysseus: "Odysseus' vow, 'I won't forget a thing,' is the vow of a combat soldier to his dead comrades to keep faith with them, to keep their memory alive. Bewildered families, hurt and feeling cheated by the amount of energy their veterans pour into dead comrades, apparently do not realize that to forget the dead dishonors the living veteran" (80). As George fights to "keep their memory alive," he blends which space he is occupying in his mind. Physically, he is home, and Rose works to keep up the social side of that space: drinks, dances, celebration. But for George, his mental space is corrupted. He fights between being fully home and being pulled back into war. Here, the two sides become one. Rose does not understand why this listing happens when it does, and neither does George, but they both must go through the motions before they are able to move on towards a more complete homecoming. Slowly, images of war slip into George's everyday life, stopping him from actually leaving the combat zone behind him.

The blurring of lines between warfront and home continues with the scene "The Hat." The traditional World War One Christmas story, of opposing troops coming together for

Christmas celebrations has been told over and over again, but what Jordan does here with George's version highlights not only the depths of his own personal trauma, but the hidden layers that haunt all war stories. George alludes to the first Christmas amnesty in his speech, but the joyful moment quickly turns sour the second time around. However, at the conclusion of his story, he tells the audience that he will not tell Rose the truth about the hat. He wants to keep the purity of home that Rose is helping to define, convince both of them that the corruption has not spread too far, and leave the horrors of war in the previous space. But we know this is not possible. The social space, which Rose defines as a space of moving on and celebrating victories, is at risk of falling victim to perpetuation of trauma that is seen throughout the show, especially for George. And it is not out of place considering greater veterans' stories. As Shay mentions in reference to *The Odyssey*, "Odysseus has also found he *cannot* talk about the war at Troy at this moment—at least not to people who show themselves incapable of hearing the stories with their heart...For Odysseus there can be no communalization of his experience here—not with this audience" (Shay 17). Rose, a civilian who could not possibly conceptualize every aspect of war, is not ready to hear the truth, evidenced by her outrage when George asked her to "have some respect" (Jordan 34). There are bits and pieces, both mental and physical, that continue to tie George back to the previous spaces he occupied, but he continues to try his best to remain present.

In contrast, Frankie's trauma is widely known by everyone but the audience at this point in the story. In the scene "Mum," the exact reasons why he got him sent home begin to be hinted at with mentions of reporters asking about him, an upcoming court case and the mysterious video that his family has seen and did not like. Here, again, George and Frankie are at odds with each other. For George it is his own mental space that has been corrupted to the point where it is

bleeding out. In Frankie's case, the scars of combat are seen in the social space where the perceptions of Frankie are forever altered. He asks his mother to follow him upstairs to "just...be there" for him and gets angry when he cannot go visit his Nan (Jordan 39). Frankie needs to know he is still loved, but he is only called a "monster" (38). He does not have the option to hide his "hideous" deeds from his loved one; that sense of privacy has been forcibly taken from him. He is, then, just as isolated as George but in a different way. George hides himself so the trauma does not ruin Rose's perceptions of him; Frankie is forcibly hidden because his family has ruined perceptions of him. As much as Frankie might want to put the past behind him, he cannot when his home has already become corrupted. Chaudhuri remarks on a similar effect in terms of geopathology, stating that characters may encounter "places that hold out the promise of new models of being, but that ultimately betray an unshakable complicity with the structure of the prison-home of geopathology" (Chaudhuri 64). Frankie is being made prisoner by his situation, and his home has turned as hostile as the battlefield he left.

Then there is Nat, whose trauma is plainly laid out in the first act. In "Crossing," Nat is roped into stating his explanation for returning to England: to find his brother. We also get the confirmation that Nat is on a completely different path than the other two main characters. He declares that he "can't kill. For anyone. Government or rebels" when asked why he left (Jordan 26). This alone creates a rift between our three main characters. He does not even make it back to England until the beginning of act two, begging the country "let me in!" (41). But his welcome is also not an idyllic one, as his hopes of finding his brother are dashed after talking to a rebel who details the "slaughter" that the Alliance had suffered (44). Nat is given ample time to adjust his understanding of what is waiting at home, so that his mental space matches the physical space. While Nat struggles to remain hopeful in the face of his probable loss, he looks to nature for his

inspiration. He looks up and sees “a kindness to the sky. And a wildness,” that reminds him he made it home (46). Despite everything else he had heard and felt, he celebrates the fact that he has returned to the landscape he knows and loves. But unlike the other two characters, the physical space is soon too corrupted for Nat to recognize.

All three men come together again in the scene “The First Night” that demonstrates a well used trope of trauma narratives: the absence of sleep. Here we see again just how compromised the soldiers are on their return home. There is no escaping the horrors of war, especially with their eyes closed. Shay highlights the idea of “peace of mind” and how impossible that it to achieve for the veterans:

Everyone knows that war can wreck the body, but repeatedly forget that it can wreck the soul as well. The sacrifice that citizens make when they serve in their country’s military is not simply the risk of death, dismemberment, disfigurement, and paralysis—as terrible as these realities are. They risk their peace of mind—please, hear this familiar phrase, “peace of mind,” fresh again in all its richness! (33)

There is no doubt that “peace” is something George, Frankie, and Nat have not held onto since long before this show starts. Again, their mental space is still dominated by the conflicts they endured; their minds have not been able to leave the battlefields. And here they rely on their senses yet again to find the familiar, find the things that make Scarborough *home*. Nat grounds himself with the grass and the earth, Frankie turns back to “the waves that have washed [him] to sleep for twenty-four years,” just as George “[times] his breaths with the waves” (Jordan 47). The physical landscape is the only thing that has not abandoned them. It is the only way they can remember where they are and that they got out.

The location of the shore unites the characters in action again at the beginning of the third act. The sea again represents a merging point for the three of them, as we are reminded that the physical location is central to the characters. This is a play about returning to a specific home, to Scarborough. At the beginning of each act we are reminded that the landscape is just as important as the buildings and the people. Even with nature providing comfort and security to the men, it also “conspires with physiological suffering to complete the geopathic picture” (Chaudhuri 59). The physical space responds to the trauma as well and switches back and forth between bolstering spirits and poking holes at hopes. The three men trace a clear line over iconic places until Frankie and Nat both reach the war memorial that recognizes George’s own comrades. Frankie re-lists the names that George listed in act one. This scene emphasizes the generational war trauma that has been haunting the play since the beginning. Not only are the characters informed by the wars that have come before them, but the land is informed as well. It is scarred and memorialized. Just as Frankie has images of previous generations’ homecoming and celebrations, he also has images of the tragedies this memorial represents. And those images last through Nat’s time. But while the characters remember the conflicts of time past, they do not learn from them. Shay points out that in many cases, “the veterans don’t want young kids wrecked the way they were wrecked” (Shay xvi). In a similar way, Frankie asks, “were they like me?” (Jordan 65). The combined timelines of the play answer this, showing that the feelings associated with returning from combat are just as everlasting as the memorials themselves. While Nat is still able to visit the memorial and to find the same connection as Frankie, he must reckon with the fact that the memorial has been destroyed as war has come ashore in his timeline. The physical space begins to have its own battle scars, and Finn is left to pick up the pieces and try to

reckon with the new landscape of home. His mental and physical space do not match, like with the others. But in this case, it is because the physical has become too corrupted in his absence.

The three men continuously struggle with the balance between their mental, social, and physical spaces. Even when they seek out their old haunts, they find something corrupted by the war. Frankie meets his friends at The Lion, something he has been thinking of since we first met him in the prologue. They not only cheer for the “war hero of Scarbados” but also declare their pride in his actions (Jordan 68). For Frankie, however, this is yet another reunion that does not go the way he wanted as they soon turn back to the subject of his video. While everyone else in his life sees the violence of the moment as monstrous, his friends begin to applaud it, calling him “a legend” (72). This praise is what Frankie wanted from the beginning, but not in these circumstances. He wants to deserve the celebration, but even he condemns himself for his actions. Here again the most important people in Frankie’s life just can not understand him, something that is often experienced by veterans. Shay affirms this with a story from one of the men he talked to, asking, “What kind of recognition and acknowledgement would have let Wiry feel he was “known,” understood, and valued? Any kind?” (31). Unfortunately, the only place Frankie is able to find this kind of comfort is in the ocean, in the unchanging landscape of home.

Frankie’s conclusion sees him return to the shore in sadness. He reminds us of the sensory aspects of the ocean that the characters first craved at the beginning of the story: sand, wind, and salt. But even these have been corrupted as he adds a new item to the mix: “blood and sand and the salt of [his] tears and the sea” (Jordan 81). He once again “roars” into the ocean, but instead of a declaration of possession, it is a plea for help or destruction. His wants have changed, and he tells the audience very simply, “I want to be the waves” (82). Of course he wants to be the only thing that has brought consistency to his warring spaces. The waves, the sea,

are the only things that have made his return an actual homecoming. He attempts to fulfill his wants by walking into the ocean, claiming he is “moving on” and “getting out” as he sinks in more and more (85).

George relies on the ocean to regulate his emotions, as he can not do it himself when his thoughts become too clouded with trauma. Yet another night in bed with Rose sends him spiraling, and the rough conditions of the waves make him “tense with each crash” and he imagines “the ghosts of the men” he fought with are “coming for [him]” with each new crest (Jordan 73). He again confuses exactly which space he is inhabiting, as lashes out at Rose thinking she is the ghost of Tibbs, which forces Rose to find treatment for him. The scene with Dr. Cohen is perhaps the only time trauma is directly addressed in the show, and the only time George’s trauma is fully explained. It becomes clear just how much nature means to him, as he describes the robin he saw as “a little glimpse of home” (79). But with the final scene, George loses grasp on reality even more as his standard ghosts are no longer following him, and even his dreamscape has been altered. He first thinks the actions taking place in “Transitions” are a dream, but the missing “blood” and “grey-faced men” challenge that ideal (83). Even his delusions have abandoned George at the end of the play, which makes him accept this moment as his last, telling his fallen comrades “I’ll see you soon” (83).

George’s story does not end in death, however, as he realizes he is being led to his wife holding their newborn child. It seems like he achieves a happy ending after all with the promise of “a beginning” as the last line of the show (Jordan 86). But if the show has taught us anything, it is that it can not be that simple. In the prologue when George first mentions the possibility of a child, that idea of fatherhood seems rather dim. He wants to, but the thought is incomplete. Something makes him hesitate. So when the imagined possibility becomes a reality at the end, is

it really a good thing? In a similar sense, it is unclear if George was actually healing at the end. The nightmarish images are gone, but he is so willing to give in to whatever horrible fate could be waiting at the end of the hall. The “beginning” is one grounded in trauma and violence. Not to mention the fact that George’s son will grow up in the midst of World War II, carrying on the legacy of combat. It is not a hopeful beginning after all, but the beginning of a vicious cycle. The very same cycle that Frankie, Nat, and Finn are wrapped up in.

At first read, however, it could seem that Nat breaks that cycle by escaping, refusing violence, and returning by his own choice. But even Nat can not go without losing something to conflict. He assumes it is his brother, but Finn makes a late entry with his own “I want to return to my home” speech in the third act. Finn is the only one who never truly left home like the other three, but there is still this driving force to return and to “rewind the time” back to a home without the scars of war (Jordan 80). Both brothers are stuck longing for the way things used to be, for a reunion. Scarborough is once again war-plagued, and Nat and Finn are swept away by it. Nat makes it back to his home, but just as nature overwhelms the three character’s definitions of home mentally, nature physically overwhelms the actual structure of the home. He notes that the outside has made its way into the home, “like nature trying to reclaim the house” (75).

As Nat enters his home, he finally accomplishes what he wanted from the beginning and finds his brother. But the reunion is not a joyful one as Finn thinks he is an intruder and stabs him. Nat falls victim to his brother’s own traumas and home becomes a combat zone in a physical sense. For the course of the play, Nat has been fighting to find his brother, and with that, to find something that is recognizable as home. He finds it in the wall carvings and in his brother’s arms; Finn even tells him “you’re home now” as he bleeds out (Jordan 85). He comes face to face with “the ghost [he’s] looking for...flesh and bone” (6). Much like Frankie finds

absolution in the cleansing nature of the waves, Nat at last is able to “disappear into” the landscape and become one with his home (6). But for Finn, there is no clear ending. His brother dies, and “the world still turns” (85). Life moves on, just as it has in George’s time and Frankie’s time, with no promise of healing or resolution.

Anna Jordan effortlessly weaves the stories of these three characters together with genius craftsmanship and literary skill. Her use of repetition, sensory language, and thematic elements paints an elaborate picture that reads and performs especially well. The show lends itself to a stripped-down, intimate setting as the words carry so much weight in defining space and relationships. But beyond the stage-ability of the words themselves, the language lends itself to rich analysis both as a beautiful piece of literature and a dramatic creation. Because of the density of the language, this analysis was an important first step before diving into the text with the actors. In order to fully understand and perform the corruption and trauma of the narrative, we needed to nail down exactly how it developed over the course of the play. Thus the next step was to turn to the rehearsal process.

Chapter Two: Process

When it was time to take all of the things in my head and actually put them into the world in the rehearsal room, there were a couple of expectations that I wanted to establish right away. First, due to the intense and sometimes difficult subject matter of the show, I wanted to make sure that the actors and management were not getting to a point where they were getting swept away by the trauma at play. To do this, I made a habit of playing music at the beginning and end of rehearsal to signify entering and exiting the space. It was a way to enter the space and decompress before we jumped into anything. It also certainly set a tone for the mood of the room depending on what we decided to pick for that day. Usually it was whatever stage management and I had stuck in our heads, but occasionally we would take suggestions from the actors. It frequently manifested as Sondheim musicals or whatever Jude was reading for the Broadway FS, but it got the point across. I hate a silent rehearsal room because I think it breeds tension as everyone walks in. With the music playing, we each were able to start with the same basis. The last song was our last deep breath before leaving behind the day's *whatever* to begin a rehearsal.

Additionally, I wanted something in the room to serve as a tension-breaker. A symbol that everything's okay. That manifested itself in Milton, our supervising director in the shape of a stress ball dog who presided over nearly every rehearsal. Not only did he make people, including myself, happy when they looked at him sitting next to his nametag on the table, but he became someone on whom we could blame mistakes. Bad takes? It's Milton's fault. Changing blocking? Milton can't make up his mind. It took some of the fear away when a moment does not go quite right. Of course we knew who was really to blame, but the cast upheld the suspended disbelief that Milton was really in charge. We also relied on him as support. Two people of the company had dogs put down during the rehearsal process, but they still had Milton there to support them.

He was a lifeline when we needed it. He was also a hat before we had a rehearsal prop for the scene between Rose and George. While a squishable dog certainly held a different energy than a German soldier's hat, what it accomplished was imbuing that sense of playfulness into the scene that was so important to Rose's motivation. She did not see the hat as something to be respected or valued, so placing a foam dog on her head got that across. Matt, as George, then had to attach the same emotional value to that as he would to an actual hat. It worked better than I originally intended it to, as I just gave them the dog so they'd have something to hold in their hands. From then on, Milton became a constant in the room. A smiling beacon of goodwill. It wouldn't have been the same show without Milton.

There is such a thing as too much levity in the rehearsal room, especially when it starts to derail the list of tasks for that night. And I am certainly guilty of letting us fall away more times than I would have liked. It is difficult managing a company of your friends because sometimes you just want to joke and mess around. There were many times that I had to remind myself why we were there and cut off something from going any further if we wanted to get our work done for the day. But some days it would be almost impossible to regain focus, and that normally meant something was off with the people in the room. On these nights, we might take more breaks than others or end up leaving a little earlier than we had originally planned. As much as I wanted to stick to a hard-and-fast schedule or force us back into action mode every time, I am also a student who has downer days too. Forcing a rehearsal doesn't do good for anyone, which is something I learned as a frustrated actor and will always bring into the rehearsal room.

Rehearsals followed a couple of different structures over our month and a half together. There were monologue days where the leads would each get a certain amount of time for just monologue work. Blocking days dominated the first two weeks, as I wanted to get the show on

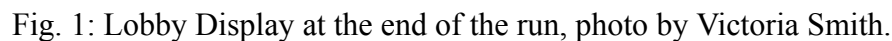
its feet as soon as possible. Then we transitioned into runs and clean ups for the remaining weeks. For the first rehearsal, it was important to get a strong handle on the language of the show. We started with the three prologue speeches, one at a time. The two main focuses for each actor were nature's role and the tactile language that is woven throughout each monologue. It was important to me that we set the tone for these pieces before bringing in the ensemble to start the rest of the scenes. It was like setting the bar: we could only go up from the prologue, so how do we make it the best it can be? These speeches were revisited many times in monologue runs not only to clean up the speech itself, but also to remind the actors where they started from before they grew and diminished in other scenes. Over the rehearsal process, the rhythm and structure of each monologue began to stick out. The series of monologues in the prologue were like waves: growing in intensity, cresting, then waning back down again. Which, given the language and imagery at the center of the speeches, made a lot of sense. So we started to explore how the other monologues functioned in the show. Did they have their own rhythm and flow? The answer was of course yes. How then can we use that in terms of the greater arch of the show?

Occasionally we would explore a non-traditional rehearsal day. The first non-blocking moment happened in the first week of rehearsals when I showed the actors a powerpoint presentation about Scarborough, England. The sensory elements of home are so important to the script, and without taking the cast to England, I wanted to give them something to refer to. I included pictures of real places that are mentioned throughout the play like Luna Park, the Spa, and the War Memorial. But I also included just general images of the shore and Scarborough as a whole. Because I chose to have no set pieces or properties that signal where the bulk of the story takes place, the responsibility is placed on the nature of the text and the way the actors deliver it

to define the playing space. The repetition in the script did part of the work itself. In the prologue, each character mentioned the wind and the salt of the sea placing us on the shore. Later, we got detailed descriptions of the buildings and businesses in town and how people interacted with them that helped the audience understand how the show moved from place to place. Even so, there are no visual indications of the British seashore in room 203. It was important to me that the cast have a solid understanding of the landscape they call home in order to effectively present it to the audience.

This attention to detail also came into the room by a home building exercise later in the rehearsal process where I gave the whole company the chance to figure out their own sensations of home. We spent about twenty minutes listing, first individually then as a group, the sights, smells, tastes, sounds, and general feelings of home much like the characters do in the play. The reasoning behind this was two-fold. We might not spend a lot of time thinking poetically about homes unless otherwise prompted, so to really understand the character's perspectives, there needed to be something the actors could grab onto. I specifically wanted them to think as themselves for this exercise to try and get into the perspective of the characters more. If we can understand the sensations of the places we are familiar with, it makes communicating the sensations of a far away place easier.

Once we successfully defined home for ourselves, however, I turned to setting the tone for the audience and made a lobby display out of our findings. The show starts so abruptly that I felt like we needed something to get the audience in the right mindset before we said go. So I took the words and phrases that made up everyone's home and created a kind of word cloud to go outside of the room. The idea was to get them thinking about home in the most intimate sense, and I even left the option for people to add their own words to the display in order to ease them



Another way to invite the audience into the atmosphere of the show was the frame device we created to justify not only the seating arrangement but also the constant fourth wall breaks that flood the script. Because the actors would be seated with the audience throughout the show, there needed to be a reason. Thus, the therapy group idea came to be. And it resulted in I think one of the best non-script work moments. We spent time watching a series of clips that featured

PTSD and veteran therapy groups from *The Punisher*, *Chicago PD*, and *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*. Something that really stuck out to me about the clips, especially *The Punisher*'s moment, was the shared themes and ideas that ran through both our show and all of these other representations. It could be easy to think that this story is isolated and contained, but it speaks to the other representations of veterans and adds to an already existing conversation. The actors said that they used the clips as examples of the physicality of the space: the ways anxiety and discomfort presented themselves in the body. As we moved further into the rehearsal process and started to invite more people into the room to watch the performance, I kept reminding the actors that we were casting the audience in a specific role when they joined our circle. This impulse was driven both from previous shows I have been a part of that work fresh eyes into the room as the show gets more polished and from my own experiences as an actor when I have preferred performing for someone before we open. With this show, it was even more necessary to fill seats because of the way the actors interacted with the audience.

Before we could get to inviting the audience into our space, we went through a two month rehearsal period. In that time, we were bound to have some injuries and illnesses. It became difficult to handle cast absences when we got into the detail work because I never knew how long a specific scene would take that night, so I had to be creative with what we could do with a smaller group of people. On one night where we were limited in bodies in the room, I decided to explore a movement night. Ideally, we would have had everyone present for these exercises just like any other night, but sometimes they worked best when we did not have enough bodies to effectively run through a decent number of scenes. The primary goal was to remind the actors that they needed to bring the body language up just like the spoken language that we had been drilling in previous rehearsals. Oftentimes, their bodies and the words they

were speaking seemed disjointed. For instance, in the final scene where Frankie is anxiously staring off into the ocean, his body was too casual. It was important that the audience that would only see his back be able to see the tension in his shoulders, his hands, as they could not see his facial expression. This paired with another night where we spent about half of the rehearsal time playing the Gibberish game, a technique suggested to me in order to get the actors out of their heads when dealing with new words, mostly in preparation for the Norwegian dialogue but also to get the actors out of their comfort zone a little. There comes a point where performances seem to get cemented in place. When you've rehearsed things a couple of times in a specific way, and it's hard to break out of that. By throwing these new challenges at actors, it threw them off their rhythm a little. Both nights functioned the same way with me giving prompts to the actors that they then had to communicate to the rest of the group so we could guess what they were doing. Structuring these like a game allowed people to be more willing to go for it and step outside of their comfort zone. When it came to the pseudo-charades activity, it helped the quieter people in the cast to see the more confident try and *fail* and try again to get their phrase across. When Matt's actions were almost indecipherable, it encouraged others like Nickel and Emily to not be so afraid of getting embarrassed if they stepped outside the box and it did not quite land. Much like Milton acted as a place of blame for any mistakes, the games acted as a way to experiment and try something new without any danger of being wrong.

When we got near the end of the rehearsal process, it was a struggle to figure out different ways to approach rehearsals when we had blocked it all and rehearsed it countless times but still needed to refine some larger ideas. What I tried to do was break down what it was that really needed development and kind of categorize it. This resulted in a "volume day" where we explored the extremes each actor could employ in the space. The idea for this developed out of a

conversation with my advisor after attending an early rehearsal. There were inconsistencies between actors about what a baseline volume looked like, some constantly running loud and some tending to be quiet. Performing in the space we did, there were different volume requirements than on a proscenium stage, and some of the actors were not used to having the audience so close. The intimacy made them go quiet, which was effective at certain moments but we could not have the whole show at that diminished volume. We started with each actor giving their loudest line, most middle of the road line, and quietest line to see what the average levels were for the company.

The alternative motive for this was I wanted a strategy to try and get the ensemble to have more personality instead of the consistent drone of a narration. So after talking through vocal levels, we ran a couple of the ensemble heavy scenes with the purpose of adding some vocal variety to the large sections. The blocking could only do so much work. Especially in “The First Night” and “George’s Nightmare” where George is physically getting overwhelmed by the ensemble as they crowd into him, there needed to be a sense of aurally overwhelming him as well. So we worked on building levels as each chorus member attacked him a little bit more. Having done this work, it also became a way for me to give notes to the actors if a scene was coming off one note: *can we add some vocal variety here? Let’s experiment with levels a little bit.* It became a really helpful tool to call upon as a different way to give notes that we might have been working with for a while. As the show became tighter and tighter, those nitpicky notes became harder to word as I felt like I was repeating myself. So I greatly appreciated a different spin that I could employ.

The actors in the ensemble all had varying levels of skill and experience, so it was a challenge meeting them each where they were and trying to bring them up together. Throughout

the process, however, I think there were a couple of key moments for each actor that established them as a good chorus member. For Jillian, who had to balance being random, one-off characters as well as the repeated personality of Rose, we needed to figure out how to make the dynamic shifts. With Rose, we were able to take a more traditional approach, figuring out her arc and what is happening in the down time to match the dramatic re-entrances as the show progresses. Maybe the most difficult part to nail down was Ryan in “The Lion” because of the over-the-top nature of the character. Jill needed to be brash and loud from the very first line of the scene, and she has a tendency to start rather small with things, to need time to work up into something bigger.

Compare this to Emily, who came into the production with significantly less college acting experience and who never repeated one of their ensemble characters throughout the show. I think this was one of the first shows in which Emily had to navigate the quick shifts from neutral to A to B and back to neutral again. The challenge with Emily was encouraging her to treat each scene with as much energy as “Mum”. We put a lot of time and effort into figuring out who that character was that the other ones seemed to almost have lesser importance. But it was important that each new character had just as much depth, whether we saw them for five minutes or five seconds. The volume work really helped in this aspect. With the scene “Crossing” we had to play with where Aldo sacrificed the quiet nature of their stealth voyage for outrage or shock. I asked Emily to interrogate how much Aldo knows and how invested he is in preserving Nat’s hope. Messing around with the volume of lines helped us see what the emotional moments might be and how they could be received by the other two characters.

In the entire rehearsal process, one of the scenes that held the most challenge was “Mum”. It was a deceptively simple scene, but the emotional build up proved to be the most

difficult part. On the first go around, we were starting with too much emotion to the point where Mom was practically crying on the first line. I went through so many different iterations of notes to give on the scene. First, I tried finding the high points of the scene with the actors, asking where each character has their explosions. Even then, there was almost no build up to the climaxes. Then I asked if we could run it as if it were a melodrama so that they could get all of the over-emotion out and we could tear apart what worked and what didn't. And it felt like we got somewhere on that, but the next rehearsal it had reverted back to the previous iteration. One strong point was when we realized that the Mom's comparison between Frankie and Ryan was being used like an insult or an attack. Jumping on that tactic, we were able to negotiate what moments were offensive or defensive, which led to creating a cold, standoffish tone that felt much more supported by the text than the other, more devastated, emotional one with which we started. What finally cemented this scene was the week before tech when I asked Mom to add two gestures to the scene: a crossing arms moment and a harsh point on "Hey!". Up until that point, Mom was not really doing anything with her arms because the first few times we ran the scene, she was emphasizing every single line by letting her hand drop against her thigh. At first, I was challenging her to not move her hands at all so that that specific tick was not being repeated. But I had never replaced that frozen posturing with anything. Those two simple movements really changed the energy of the scene and made it one of the strongest moments for Frankie.

Some of our challenges had less to do with conceptual performance ideas and more with the physical use of the space. In "Lifeline 1" and "Lifeline 2" the bench proved to be an increasingly difficult moment to handle. I have been in many performances that utilized thrust staging, but I never took the time to understand what could be considered the rules of thrust blocking. Conceptually, I knew that you did not want an actor only playing to one side for the

whole time, but for this bench scene that became increasingly challenging. My advisor encouraged me to look at this scene differently, specifically to find a way that the two actors could sit without both facing the same direction. It took three or four iterations of movement for me to figure out exactly what the scene needed to give the whole audience the best sightlines. I was staunch in my decision to keep the bench as two seats both facing the same direction, so we had to figure out ways for the actors themselves to turn across the scene. The solution it seemed was to have Anthony up more than down, but then we had to navigate the balance between too much movement and not enough movement. Anthony was great at pacing, sometimes too great. It was tech week when we nailed down stopping places for him. Not only was the constant pacing just too much to follow, we were losing the weight of what he was saying. The pauses gave importance to the words and added a more human nature to him. Frankie became less robotic as we could see the emotions overwhelm him. It also made the explosion when he turns violent more earned. It is clear he was prone to action when the emotions became too much, but Frankie also had his fair share of quiet and still moments as well that we needed to add depth and clarity too. The “Lifeline” scenes show the full arc of Frankie, from cautious to enraged to devastated again.

There came a time when I needed to stop directing the performers’ actions and instead convince them to change their own performances in a different way. So the last run before tech I gave the actors individual challenges to apply to their run. I came up with a personal goal or frame to consider for that run specifically and told it to only that person, not anyone else, not even the stage managers. These partly came from practical things, like part of Anthony’s was to not anticipate the ending and make sure he reacts to things as they happen. But the rest of the challenges were personal motivators that came from a friend and classmate who had worked with

them on other shows in other roles. I channeled old grudges I knew they had, different passions and motivators, just general encouragement. Some actors had a lot of fun with the idea; Kenzie loved the pettiness of her challenge and took it with stride, while Liz had less of a reaction to the kind of petty motivator, and I wasn't sure if they had really internalized it or not. Regardless of how much they liked or identified with the challenges, that Thursday was one of the best runs they ever had. I think it gave them something else to focus on and got them out of their heads a little. Instead of focusing on the "perfection" of their lines or blocking, they were thinking about their performance as a whole and what it was accomplishing. Were they proving their points? And were they living up to the challenge laid before them? At the end of the rehearsal, a couple of actors asked if they could share their challenges with everyone else, but I told them not to divulge their secrets until after the show closed and tried to remind them of it before the rest of the performances. There was a clear difference when they had a performance-focused show compared to a perfection-focused show.

When I look back at all the steps it took to reach performance days, I realize just how much work it takes to create a show, both on my behalf and that of my cast and crew. Despite any flaws or less than perfect days, the performance was incredibly well received on Friday and Saturday night. I was blessed with an amazing team to help me put up this show, and without whom I would have struggled to make it through. My work, however, was not completed with the successful closing of our run. It then became time to reflect on the project as a whole, from beginning to end, and to critically look at how this translates into real world experience that I can bring with me into graduate school and beyond.

Chapter Three: Self-Reflection and Analysis

There's a difference between learning how to direct and how to be a director. I feel confident saying that when I started this project, I knew how to direct. Two directing classes under my belt and a show at the community theatre convinced me that I had the ability to point actors around a stage and end the process with a fully-fledged show. But with this show, I really had to learn how to *be* a director, with all of the complicated connotations that come with that word. When it came to movement work and integrating preparation I did not quite reach the bar I had hoped for, but overall, I think that the development and execution of this show highlighted a lot of things that I might have taken for granted earlier in my career.

To start, there are a number of moments that I am extremely proud of when thinking back on the show. Adding an audience always adds a new energy to a show and to a performance space, but as a director I feel like it encourages me to notice details that I had overlooked in the past. The audience enters with fresh eyes and no expectations, and when I take on that role with them, I too see things for the first time. On the general side, I fell in love with the transitions between scenes after seeing them from an audience member's perspective. In rehearsals, I saw the show in bits and pieces, I was focused on how one scene ended and how the next one began. But when I actually got the chance to sit back and experience everything as one, I noticed just how well things blended together. The movements from one scene to the next were clean and purposeful as furniture was swiftly placed and struck. I finally understood how the show worked as a whole piece, and I wish I would have had the chance to see it a little sooner. When I was directing, it became hard to see the forest for the trees. I thought about progression in terms of the individual characters and recurring images or phrases, but it took just sitting down to enjoy it to appreciate it as a complete piece of theatre.

Another success for me was the development and strong presence of the three main characters. This came, in part, because of good casting. Creating a character is both the responsibility of the actor and the director. While the three main actors brought a lot of their own choices to the table, my job became refining and directing their instincts towards a unified presentation that works with the way I too understand their character. Working with the three actors individually was still its own challenge, as they all needed different directions in order to reach their maximum potential in the role. Anthony, in an interesting way, needed almost the least amount of character work. He immediately put himself into the character of Frankie, latching onto some connecting force from the first read at the audition. What I focused on the most with Anthony was refining his instincts and working on making his natural behaviors more of what is needed for performance. Mainly, this was in his physicality. In scenes like “Lifeline” there was too much movement and physicality, in “Transitions” not enough. He had a deep understanding of who Frankie was and was moving the way Frankie might in real life. The problem was his physicality was not perfectly tuned for the stage.

In “Lifeline 2,” he originally worked through the scene pacing for the majority of the dialogue. While this feels natural for him and may be what Frankie would do in real life, this is not ideal for the stage. Constant movement draws focus and energy away from the words that he’s saying. This text is so packed with key information, that if the audience missed even a part of Frankie’s story in this moment, they would misunderstand the rest of his narrative. Additionally, I cut down the text to only include vital moments, so the audience needed to hear what was kept in. I encouraged Anthony to cut down the movement, first by letting him experiment with where he felt natural pauses came. We soon realized that Anthony was quite set in his ways with his pacing so I had to pick the stops for him. After running it a couple of times,

he figured out the flow of the scene and resisted the urge to stay in constant movement. When we got to performances, the stops were not exactly where we had originally envisioned, but he navigated through the scene with strong pauses that not only drew focus back onto his words but highlighted the overwhelming emotions at the center of the scene.

Matt was the most technically prepared for the role. While his baseline might have been higher than the other two main actors due to his experience on the stage, he needed a lot of guidance in terms of the extreme repression that George was facing. Where I was talking through specific movements with Anthony, with Matt I was talking through metaphors and interpersonal connections. This allowed him to do a lot of the work himself as he developed the character outside of the rehearsal room. For Kenzie, the biggest challenge was making this extremely internal character of Nat external enough for the audience to understand him. This manifested in a completely different direction style with a focus on line delivery. Kenzie grasped onto the character fairly well and also had that higher level of acting training compared to Anthony so there was not as much movement work needed. We played with the volume and pace of lines and talked about the subtext to really cement the emotions at play.

It became a real test of my directing to try and cater towards what each actor needed in order to flourish. I admit that I was better with the main three than with some of the ensemble actors, taking longer to figure out what worked best. Because the actors are all people I have worked with, I was more prepared to adapt to what they needed. Additionally, we were all learning together in this process, so I wanted to be able to push them forward and coach them a little towards something greater than they perhaps had been before. The process encouraged them to take something from this experience just like I was and taught them skills they could take to their next production. This is very unique to working in a college performance with other

students as we are all constantly learning something new. Even with my two stage managers, I was teaching them how to be an effective manager in the room and what will be asked of them if they manage again. As I move forward in directing, the ability to work with a variety of actors is good and may be a style in itself. But I want to try and figure out what my directing style is more precisely. I feel like I developed a process with this show, but even that was a little hit or miss.

There were a lot of difficult moments in the show, both textually and visually, that needed a lot of finessing to land just right. When we found it, we found it and it hit perfectly. But often, it took a long time to get there. I recognize that some of this late discovery is simply a part of the rehearsal process. Sometimes someone does something a little bit differently and it's exactly what we need to lock in a scene. However, I do think there was more I could have done to facilitate this. My style of blocking a scene was split into two different approaches: I either knew exactly what I wanted and pictured it in my head, or I had no clue and we needed to mess around for a while until we hit something. Both styles can be beneficial. A director should have a vision going into a work in order to effectively guide the ensemble to a unified message. The danger comes when there is no room for discovery. A lot of good work comes from collaboration in the room, and sometimes the actors bring enough of themselves into the character that they do something the director could never imagine.

I certainly came into the room with a lot of preparation and a lot of images in my head. I could hear the lines in my head, see the movements across the stage. My problem was that I did not give a lot of wiggle room when I was sold on something. I would struggle to get the actors to see what I saw, and then I would get frustrated that the scene was not going the way I wanted. Then if I was frustrated, I would have no more words to communicate what I wanted to say. This became a curse of having so much forethought for the show. A rehearsal room needs to have the

space to grow, the chance for actors to bring something of their own to the characters. Having read so much about veterans' stories, I had a very clear idea about how characters interacted and why the play included certain circumstances. I then had to navigate how much of that research I was sharing. I can not ask the whole cast to read Shay's book for a greater understanding of veterans' experiences. But I did share some quotes when I felt they could help the actor. For example, in the scene "Celebrations," we struggled with George's listing of names. I wanted to share the passage where Shay talks about Odysseus's need to tell the stories of his fallen comrades to try and give Matt an understanding of how this scene touches on larger themes across war stories. But at other times, I felt like I needed to quote the whole book to get the cast to understand why I wanted them to carry themselves in a certain way.

At the same time, where the preparation failed was in how long it took me to get a grasp on just what my project's question was. We started rehearsing before I knew exactly what my analysis argued. So I had all of these quotes and ideas about spatial theory and veterans studies but I did not know what I wanted to say about them. I could not share anything in an effective way until I knew how I was using it. In this way, I needed more preparatory work, or rather, I needed to get it done earlier than I had. In the latter half of rehearsals, we had moments of retconning what I had directed earlier because after having worked through the analysis I realized something we had not considered in the original staging. Even one of the most impactful "tablework" days, the home exercise and the media clips, came later in the rehearsal process than I would have ideally wanted because I had not considered it until then. My priorities in my preparation needed to be adjusted in order to most effectively utilize our rehearsal schedule. I was so focused on getting blocking ideas out and onto paper that I neglected making sure they were informed blocking ideas. In a similar sense, I was consistently doing the work of directing,

but my motivation behind my decisions were not always clear. I struggled to navigate whether I was doing something just because I had seen it done before or because it was for the better of our production. These two categories could, of course, overlap. But I am not sure I fully conceptualized it when they did. This is not to say that everything I did before completing chapter one of this project was horribly uninformed. I had done the readings so the knowledge existed in my head, and my instincts were able to carry me farther than I originally thought. And I know the importance of spreading out notes and information so as not to overwhelm the actors at the beginning of the process with every single bit of information they will possibly need for the show. I just wish I would have been able to plan out when I would bring things to the table, instead of figuring it out as I furthered my analysis.

Scheduling as a whole was an area that could use improvement. The last show that I directed was a two-hander where both characters were in every scene so we simply worked from scene to scene in each rehearsal. I went in with a goal of what to cover that day but if it ended up taking less than the rehearsal period that day, we simply moved on to the next scene. With *The Unreturning*, we had to be precise about calls and what scenes we could do with what people. Not to mention that the conflict calendar was quite extensive, so there was a lot of fiddling with who was available when. My stage managers and I pretty successfully figured out how to handle limited bodies in the room, but the main issue became scheduling too much time to work on specific scenes, especially in the beginning weeks of blocking. If the whole cast had been present, then we would just move on. This was, however, not the case most days; instead, I was left with trying to figure out where we could go next with the people we had in the room. Similarly, there were times that I accidentally called someone that did not need to be there for what we were running. My default was to call everyone, which while helpful is not the best

method for anyone's sake. This resulted in a few days where I had to apologize to the actors and send them on their way, though I would try to run at least one scene they were in to make it not a waste of a trip. I recognize that in a different situation, much of the scheduling would have been in the stage manager's hands, but it was important for me to have to figure it out for myself and take responsibility for that task. As I turn to my next show, I will have a better grasp on how long something might actually take to get on its feet. Though, no matter how much I prepare every team, every play, every rehearsal room is different, and I will need to be prepared to handle the variables.

On a similar note, I spent a lot of time trying to make sure that each actor and each scene was getting a fair amount of rehearsal time. This was of course at the discretion of actors availability, which was sparse as mentioned before. I mainly looked at how we could fairly work the main three actors given in relation to how many lines they had. This led to Matt being called the most, practically every day, as he had the most monologues and the most stage time. But I tried to give him some early dismissals or late calls here and there even if I could not give him a solid day off. Beyond that, I was very conscious of over-rehearsing a specific scene even when it needed the most work. I did not want to target any individual actor or make them think that they needed more work than others.

This was hard with Emily, who is a strong actor that just happened to fall in a couple of difficult scenes. With "Mum," there were days when I just wanted to figure it out and keep going until it landed, but I recognized that for one, we needed to move on to other moments and two, I did not want Emily and Anthony to feel like they were doing a bad job. I tried to buoy this by explaining what was not working so they knew it was not just their acting. Eventually, I had to move on and come back to it with fresh eyes on a different day. But when it came to the

transition into scene two, it was very important that Emily placed the chair for the boat at the right position or it would mess up the orientation of the rest of the boat because Kenzie and Liz based their placement on Emily's. The first couple of times we ran this, she was just missing the angle. So I had us just work the transition like six times in a row in order to drill that movement in her head. She began using self-deprecating talk around the third or fourth time, blaming this on herself. I tried to step in and blame it on me a little bit, saying it was my fault for making this so particular, but I also tried to help everyone understand that we needed to do this work so that it looks smooth for an audience and that it's what rehearsal is all about. It did take a chunk of our rehearsal time that day, but it was absolutely worth it to see how great the transition was in performance mode.

Over the course of rehearsals, I tried to bring variety into the room. We moved relatively quickly through the blocking process and started to drift into over-rehearsal territory which was the last thing I wanted. So I brought in the alternative rehearsals, like movement and volume day. I will admit that these were great ideas, and I think they did add something to the process that we might have been missing. But I was woefully unprepared for those days. The volume work I adapted from something we had done in *She Kills Monsters* rehearsal, but the movement I really made up on the spot. I took what had worked from the Gibberish game and tried to apply it to movement based work which did not really land as well as I thought it would. In the end, we were really just playing charades. I think one of my biggest flaws with this was that I really wanted to focus on physical communication and body language which is not inherent in the movement exercises from which I was borrowing. Movement played a very big role in my piece, as did silent communication and physicality. I know how to direct it, for the most part. But I did not do enough external research into how to make an effective rehearsal period out of my ideas.

Moving forward, if I want to be a director that brings a lot of movement into my pieces, I need to dedicate myself to developing my skills regarding it more fully.

In regards to the main objective of my project, I sought to answer the question “How do we understand the symbol of home in the context of veterans’ stories on the stage?” Through my analysis I found that the characters in *The Unreturning* contribute to a corrupted home, both by their own hands and the actions of their loved ones. This corruption extended from the horrors of war, both real and perceived, and infested the idealized *home* that the soldiers imagined. Kate McLoughlin, in her analysis of war and space, argues that there is a “special relationship between war and space. War is fought over and in space, it alters irrevocably the space on and within which it occurs” (McLoughlin 83). What I have realized over the course of this project is that the alterations do not stop at the battlefield. Which is something that Shay began to think about when he asserts that, “Homer shows us the first way that combat soldiers lose their homecoming, having left the war zone physically—they may simply *remain* in combat mode, although not necessarily against the original enemy” (Shay 20). Wherever these soldiers go, whether the fight has ended or not, they continue to change the spaces they inhabit by bringing the war with them. The idea of staging home is complex in any and all its iterations, as Chaudhuri makes apparent. But when working veterans stories into the mix, it becomes even harder to handle. The construction of this show effectively relayed the connection to veterans studies both because of the content of the script itself and our informed presentation. The spatial theory aspects were less effective.

Home in *The Unreturning* is transient, it's ever-changing. What we needed to do was lock it down, or at least, lock down every character’s understanding of it in order to successfully present its shifts. As Shay discusses, there is a difference between getting home and being home

(Shay 145). This distinction is so internal, so character driven that bringing it out into the world for an audience became difficult. Where we struggled was relying too heavily on the language to do the work for us. Jordan's writing certainly helped create the setting and fill in the gaps left by scenery, lights, and sound. And yet, I had so much analysis that I hesitated to bring into my direction. I hesitated because by the time I had figured out exactly what I was saying, it was hard to work in my points to the already existing understanding of the characters and the plot. We established the connection to home, and we showed that the characters suffer over the course of the narrative. However, we did not establish that the characters are suffering because of their home or, vice versa, that the homes are suffering because of the characters. It got muddled as I struggled to completely wrap my head around the differences between the physical, mental, and social spaces at play. I still do not have a solid grasp of that concept, and that confusion led to a lack of distinction in the staging. In the last few weeks of rehearsal, I tried to bring focus to why the personal relationships in the show fail and how that emphasized the conflicting ideas of how the soldiers interact with their homes. We needed at least one more rehearsal that was solely devoted to retracing the spatial theory side of things to effectively see the build and the fall of their idealizations. By the time the show premiered before an audience, we had successfully established the character relationships. We did not, however, reflect on what that meant for the state of home in their lives.

What we were missing was the breakdown of how Frankie, George, and Nat viewed their homes upon return, how their loved ones Mum, Rose, and Finn viewed their homes, and how their homes were actually manifested. Those different spaces interact and overlap constantly, and the staging needs precise calibration to show their intricacies all at once. Of course, as stated before, this is one of the complexities of putting the home on the stage, and I never assumed it

would be easy. I also never assumed I would master it. I do not think anyone has. I do think I needed to devote more time to it. Establishing home was never the goal, though that is what it turned into. It is clear from the first words of the show that this will be a story about home. I worked on defining the characteristics of Scarborough and making sure the audience understood where we were at which time throughout the process. But once I achieved bringing home to the stage, it took a back seat in the room. I do not believe it was a total failure, as the script does provide the skeleton to the development of the problem of place as it is seen for veterans. It is just that there were a lot more thoughts in my head that I was unable to insert into the production.

There were so many things that contributed to making this show a complete production. Some of them I fully anticipated, others not so much. It became a balance of knowing what to do because of years of experience and learning the reasons behind those choices that I had never considered before. As I move forward in my theatrical career, this experience will continue to influence every aspect of my directing. I plan on continuing to explore these themes in future productions as I continue with non-traditional staging and immersive environments. This was a successful stepping stone on my way to bigger and better things in the future.

Conclusion:

In the final chapter of Shay's *Odysseus in America*, he claims that "it is impossible to overstate the importance of the arts in creating the supportive social movements that permit trauma to have voice and the voice to be heard, believed, remembered, and respoken" (Shay 244). If this is the case, I am proud to have allowed this story to be voiced and heard by so many people. The homecoming narrative is a classic trope in literature, and Sarah Hemming claims in her review of *The Unreturning* that this show should join the ranks of some of the best: "From *The Odyssey* to *The Hurt Locker*, the returning soldier moves through fiction, sometimes hero, sometimes anti-hero, always profoundly altered by the displacement of war. Anna Jordan's new play picks up on that tradition" (Hemming). Through Anna Jordan's words, we gave voice to decades of trauma and hardship grounded in real life experiences. Today in 2023, as combat and conflicts are continually popping up across the globe and mental health stigma is constantly challenged, this production of *The Unreturning* is perfectly situated to encourage change.

Studying this show has shown me that we must consider and perhaps critically examine the legacy of trauma that is intertwined with the history of combat before we blindly charge forward into another conflict. The stories of Nat, Frankie, and George highlight how generations of veterans can continue to affect a space despite anyone's best intentions. Even the physical land holds the memories of the people that came before them. In order for us as a society to encourage growth and healing, we must share the stories. Doctor Cohen tells us this in the final act of the show, saying "we advocate confronting these memories. Working through them" (Jordan 78). Even Shay touches on this, confirming that "healing requires voice. The circle of communication of trauma, which is essential to the healing of trauma, is aided by the arts" (Shay 243).

The problems at the center of Jordan's drama, such as the ever-changing definition of home and the struggle to maintain one's identity, ring true to every audience member, whether a veteran or not. By working through the lens of spatial theory, the complexities of a homecoming become much more apparent as the mental, physical, and social understanding fight for dominance on the stage. This is only complicated by working in veterans studies, which elevates the stakes. Not only did we strive to accurately portray home, one of the most difficult concepts to nail due to its "problem of place," but we also had to uphold the sanctity of the soldiers' lives at play (Chaudhuri 15). Telling a story is great, but it means very little if you do it no justice.

There is very little I would change about the final product of *The Unreturning*. I walked away from our two performances overwhelmingly happy with the end result. Even now, when I talk to people that saw it, they tell me something they took away, something they are still pondering over. I am proud of what we accomplished in the space, how we transformed the classroom into something more. But most of all I am proud of the story we told and the truth that we spoke into the room. I have a newfound affinity for handling stories of combat and the intricacies of putting these stories on stage. I hope to be able to continue exploring both spatial theory and veterans studies in future studies and productions. I said that this project allowed me the opportunity to learn how to be a director. I don't think I am quite there yet. Because what I have realized is one key part to being a director is to keep exploring, to keep learning.

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Appendix A: Production Materials

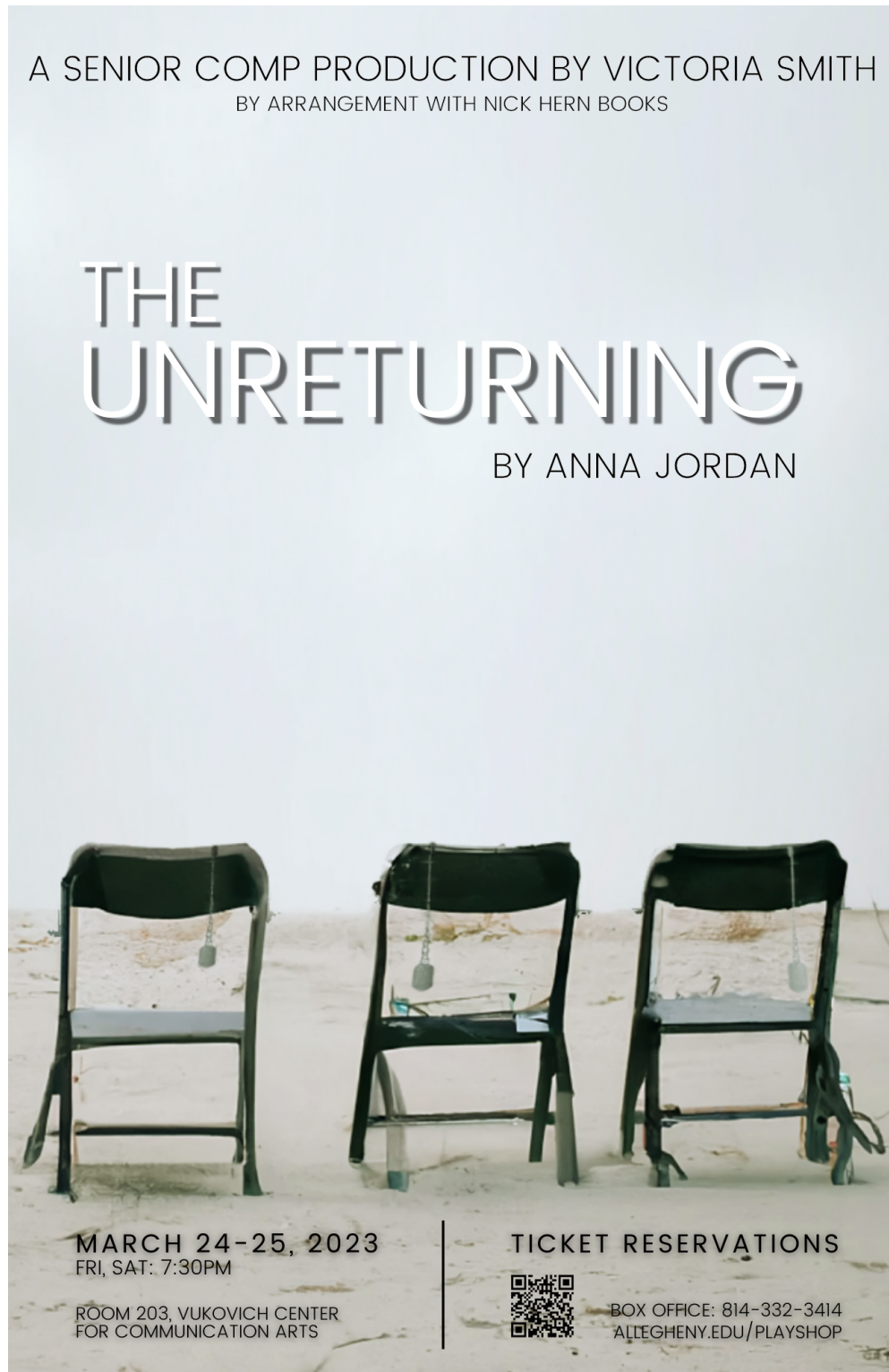


Fig. 1: Production poster, designed by Benjamin Bargar.

A SENIOR COMP PRODUCTION BY VICTORIA SMITH
BY ARRANGEMENT WITH NICK HERN BOOKS

THE UNRETURNING

BY ANNA JORDAN



CAST

Nat.....McKenzie Smith
 Frankie.....Anthony Swanson
 George.....Matthew Dugan
 Ensemble/Rose.....Jillian Bradley
 Ensemble/Finn.....Nickel Spartz
 Ensemble.....Emily Adams
 Ensemble.....Liz Driscoll

PRODUCTION STAFF

Director.....Victoria Smith
 Stage Manager.....Jude Gotschall
 Assistant Stage Manager.....Jess Duerstein
 Costume Designer.....alex martin
 Marketing.....Benjamin Bargar

NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Playshop Theatre has been my home away from home for the past four years. I have grown into the person I am today within these echoey walls, for better or worse. How appropriate it is that my last show at Allegheny College be about the ways we define place and the way place defines us. In my time here, the space has been defined and redefined over and over again. For this show, we transformed an everyday classroom, that I have somehow avoided ever having class in, into an English seaside. And for some of you, that might become the only understanding you have of 203. I am forever proud to leave my legacy on this building and the people within it, and "The Unreturning" is just the show I want to exit with.

Thank you to everyone that has gotten me this far: my professors for convincing me that I am in fact a director (I hope you still have that faith after the show). To my fellow students for being my collaborators, my inspirations. Especially my fellow seniors, Matt and Jill, from "Everybody" to this, we've gotten the chance to grow together, laugh together, cry together. Thank you so much. And to you, the audiences, who have come to see everything we have done. Theatre does not exist without you. Do not take your power lightly.

Please no photography or audio/visual recording of any kind for the duration of the performance. Our show runs about an hour with no intermission.

Content Warnings: The show contains strong language and descriptions of racial profiling, trauma, violence, and intimacy.

Fig. 2: Production Program with cover image by Benjamin Bargar and program materials by

Victoria Smith

Lobby Display Description:

I want to return to my home...

These simple words start our show and are repeated countless times after that. It's a unifying thought that we all have had at some point in our lives. We crave the security, the comfort, the predictability of *home*. While introducing the home of Scarborough to our cast and crew, I wanted them to reflect on their own homes as well. What does your home smell like? What tastes transport you back? What are the sensations of walking in the door? College kids are uniquely situated to think about their homes, whether across the country or just down the street. We spend a lot of time considering home. But we also spend a lot of time making a new one in this small, hilly town in Pennsylvania. So I also asked them to reflect on this place, Allegheny College, as a home as well. We had a lot of shared experiences, but there was still individualization when reflecting on Meadville. As a senior quickly approaching my leaving this place, it hit a lot harder than I thought it would. Meadville is my home, and home to so many others at the same time.

Before we invite you to join us in Scarborough, spend some time getting to know our homes in the most intimate sense. And, if you're willing, tell us what your home is like. The sensations. The memories. See what you have in common and what sticks out from the bunch. It's okay to feel a little homesick. Embrace it.

Do **YOU** want to return to your home?

-Director, Victoria Smith

Appendix B: Selections from the Director's Notebook

JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

The Unsettling by Anna Jordan

4 main characters - can't
notate
chorus/company makes up
others

3 main male soldiers → is it
1 female important to
keep them
male?

"should slip seamlessly
between scenes with pace"

Prologue "Longing"
3 monologues

chorus
member points
to actor in
audience who
gives speech

How
would
playing
space

At certain
intervals &
phrases chorus
members stand
& ~~to do~~ do action
related to words

ex: "I want to
leap off the
headland in
all my clothes"
→ chorus members
jump

George doesn't want to be called
on → or maybe it's Frankie
who jumps in & raises his
hand at the end

JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

stayed in 2 Rose
move close but speed
when 2 gets violent
"PLEASE" freezes the two in
the middle for
him to finish

when prologue finishes, all 3 men
niss & the chorus lower their
heads, allowing them to take
the stage

Options for Transition:
- all 3 enter at once & wait
to interact, unsure of what
is happening
- enter one @ a time when they
realize it's their scene

Act One "Leaving"

"chorus should be more than one voice"
↳ do they stay in
their state?
↳ probably for the
sake of rhythm

Can we create levels
in the rotating map?
not arena, maybe just
different
levels?
of platforms?

JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

When are these 3 stories?
what defines time?
How do they look?
- clothes
- stance
- age
What about props?
↳ how many are
absolutely needed
↳ what do they share
& what is uniquely
theirs?
↳ What is the ONE
defining object?

what do they
say about
them?

More soft
band
align

Started w/ only
Protestant
C (Catholic)
H (Hindu)
↳ importance of
spirituality

"Arriving"

How do they relate to
each other? what defines
their relationships?
How are they in conversation
w/ each other?

What would you
put on your
Day Tag?

ROSE → who is she? how is he?
↳ she must stay consistent
↳ is always searching
for her in the house

CLAVIROPHOBIA

"Crossing" how do we deal w/ translating
only N Kim? use the rest
interesting of the chorus
5 chorus??

JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

"celebrations" 2nd day

differences in language! → 2 is very
way they speak poetic → reflects
of time?

dance scene
↳ very interesting
maybe multiple
complex join
the dance

2 names other
soldiers
↳ spinning
around,
chorus
changes
physically

"Taxi" 7 Scarborough
7 scenes
↳ lovely w/ a
lot of ghosts
↳ what can we do w/ that?

The Hat not important!
only big monologue
about R needs to look
into some dramatization

"No Man's Land becomes Every
Man's Land"

Physical gun shot sound
↳ come from body not speakers

JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

"Mum"

↳ explosive → how do we play w/
changes in volume/attitude

"switch to all 3 in focus"
at the end → how do we
work the change in?

Mum stays the same → are these
Rose stays the same → H ever in
Kim/Aldo stays the same → the same scene?
Can they
overlap?

Sleeps?
↳ echo?

Act 2 "A Foot on English Soil"

Video? what do we do w/ that

"The First Night" All 3 again!
but chorus is only
describing 2 & R, technique at focus

"Perc's Breaking Point 1"
what is the physical
distance like here?
↳ maybe no touch?
↳ but the moving of touch?

"Lifetime 1" 7

↳ tempted by drama (modern influences & Box, Payne)
↳ forget Germans (Christian story)

JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

7 → drag

"Rose's Breaking Point 2"
picks up 1

multiple doctors circling
who's moving 2 doctors?

complete & utter
silence & stillness for
chair drops

↳ everyone all 3 react,
not just 2
(hide in audience)

"L. felix 2"
picks up
how is this transition?

haven't heard from N in a while
what's he doing?
what's 2 doing?
↳ is there a dimmed?

Act 3 "A Walk around the Old Town"

all 3

on the connection w/ the war
memorial
↳ same chair numbers
for names

"The Lion"

the video doesn't play. We just
react like it does.
There is no sound at all,
even w/ the reactions

JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

"George's Nightmare"
how who lingers down?
cloning in

"An Old Home"

"A New Home"

"This is violence."

↳ the destruction of
home as represented
by what they've
left & what they've
done themselves

* Pickem Ridge
July, 1917

"Reunion" (READ BETTER 7 H's FINN brother)
from house? 7 last one from
house too?

uh oh
someone acts it
out
↳ how looks on
@ them giving up
in house again
"they got what they
want!"

"Transitions"

when N dies, he puts head
down in chair

How do we end?

JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

Re Unreturning

Thoughts:

- really strong attraction
- I love the idea of the
same home in 3 different
times w/ 3 definitions
- strong characters
that I feel for

- so many questions!
- it can definitely be stripped

where would I put it up?

Dimbasso! circle of chairs is
like a support group!
that's where we are, everyone is
here for a support group!

Okay, okay. I like this a lot!

JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC

Time to dig in!
officially doing The Scarborough PPT/research in Jordan

Close Reading +
Reading notes

starting w/ Jonath
Olysons in 1914
landscape

Study note key

script connection whole page good! likes it! ♥
interesting scene division

Q: int :: discussion of trauma-influenced violence @ home
- a lot about the journey home which can be used for
- conclusion could be basis for introduction / conclusion: a call for the arts to have an active role in healing, advocating

Nat: 2026, future war
George: 1918, post WWI
Frankie: 2013, Afghanistan

Scarborough: attacked by Germany 1914

JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC

Script Analysis

* need to constantly consider what is able to be cut

prologue: I want to return to my home
parallelism
N: great landscape: valley bridge
sink, make peace
up the sea
7: here's welcome
mum, sister, nan
* repetition of front door in N & 7
have the waves, let them
drown me, take me back, feel
into the dark
G: mother, love
* repetition of feeling the wind/salt All
building to NO!
"need"
→ N needs to find ghosts

Reverse chronological order
what does this do?

first wants: N "find myself here"
7 "I want a hero's welcome"
G "I want to drink tea"
all have an idea of what should be waiting for them; 7 expects to be treated differently

5 senses: touch, taste, hear, smell, see
how are these wants achieved?

JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC

What are necessary

Prologue +
Act 1: Leaving +
Arriving
Crossing
Celebrations
The first night
Mum

Act 2: A Foot on English Soil
The first Night +
Rose's Breaking Point 1
Lifeline 1
Rose's Breaking Point 2
Lifeline 2

Act 3: A Wake Around the Old Tam
The Lion
George's Nightmare
An Old Home
A New Home
Reunion
Transitions +

Locations:
Valley bridge
Luna park
North bay
The Lion
Vivaz
The Spa
Pesschen dole
Pessholm Park

JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC

Act 2: Leaving
Starts plus time
present tense

Transitions we know
quick jump to 7's friends
no time to get comfortable / familiar
disorienting

* preview of journey home, not automatically there

7 shifts to reflective? narrates himself

100 parkin' tops, plastic
Passchen dole

intimate scene, many descriptions,
chous steps back

3 come together into convo: N "this city has chewed me up & spat me out"
F "this landscape has swallowed me whole"
G "this country has split me in two."

jumps between narrating & being narrated

language differences w/ trafficker: Kim
fight to return home vs being sent home

It is happy to go. 7 feels forced out while his friends at first envy him, N must claw his way there

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Auditions Talk

- callbacks after machinal auditions
↳ invite them to my show later that week

new people on stage

possible "orientation" in new semester

Thursday & possibly Friday

Tuesday auditions, Wednesday Machinal callbacks
Thursday (fr) Unstarring callbacks

Qs for Michael

- reserving rooms/getting keys
- platforms
- costumes
- how does second chapter look?
- do you ever have to come to rehearsals?
- order scripts
- Jude playshop drive

asked Rachel about possible document for when & where rehearsals will happen

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Process for Cuts:

- favorite scenes
- cool physical things
- what are the important moments for each character
- how many lines is reasonable
- does a jump cut make sense logically?
- do we maintain the integrity of the story & honor the trauma?
- is this a repeated motif? How many times does it need to be repeated?

George has the most lines
↳ is that cool?

Michael @ 1st stumble through additional run through done rehearsal show

Chp 1

what is important to action of play → therefore here is the theme I want to focus on

Chp 2 journal

wd of every week even for acts

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Act 1.1

- G Officer Emily
F Amy Bridges 1.3 → Sam as 3.2 ⑤ ① ②
N Eties } Nickel
N Ivostker } will not overlap
N Kim } Liz
1.3
N Kim
N Aldo Emily
1.4
G Rose Jill
G Rose Jill
F 1.7
Mum Emily
2.1
N Rebel Jill
2.3
F Tony Liz
2.4
G Rose Jill
G Father Nickel
G Doctor Liz has to be left out from other Dr
2.5
F Tony Liz
3.2
F Ryan Jill
F Luke Emily
F Ket Liz
3.5
G Rose Jill
G Dr. Cohen Emily
3.6
N Tim Nickel
3.7
N Tim Nickel

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Words

calderi - comes from carboic acid/soaps sweet smelling
Pasandale - site of deadly war crimes passion-chale hospitals
tarpaulin - tarp material

Christmas story 1.6

Pashto - eastern Iranian language, known historically
official language in Afghanistan as Afghani
Pitkem Ridge 1917 51,320 women casualties
↳ 3rd battle of Ypres, also at Passchendaele
Nandos saw after restaurant

Hangpol & hot day

Greenhwards - real battalion

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First Rehearsal - prologue

We only worked up the blue main actors today on the opening monologues. I think it was a very good start to the process because we got to talk about the importance of nature & the tactile language. All 3 of them did well getting the speeches up to where I wanted them. I think the prologue really sets the tone for what is happening & it will be important having those semi-ready before we bring in the ensemble tomorrow. Something new that I discovered is the opening monologues have a wave-like pattern to them as they grow & diminish in intensity. It was very cool to feel this coming & going from the actors. I'm excited to see how they all build on each other. I hope we can see more of this natural pattern in the text in places. I like this as a way that the landscape is even affecting the characters' behavior. Tomorrow is 1.1 of the whole ensemble.

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prologue / 1.1

Not a clown start

topical

2.7 gay? what's
I want to return

1.1 ensemble
"nearly fiddled..." P. earlier

papers? 7 into 700

"let's down" 7 + 6 P

"when I was a boy..." stand

alias "boy" stay in place

Home... in right pick-up

7 no pantomime clog
C "fights a war" end

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1.1 Reflection

I went in w/ a strong sense of where things were going, but there was still some figuring out along the way. I had to completely reblock the transition from Frankie to George because my original idea was way too much. I am still figuring out how to balance movement & language. Where does a combination do good & where does it become far too messy? I'm also working on balancing my joking we are all friends w/ my I am in charge. I think I did a good job of that, as we accomplished everything I wanted to tonight. We didn't get to Nomespar bit but I expected that. I think tomorrow will be less of me talking at them & more collaboration. I need to figure out how to encourage Anthony in certain places but also contain him a little bit. Otherwise I think we have a good ensemble that gets along well. They were having fun during breaks and generally pretty good together. I'm very happy about that. Tomorrow is 1.2 + 1.3. Should be good!

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1.2 1.3

1.3
what do we know about Nat?
fear of water?

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Today was wild. Half of the group was late. We had to figure out what exactly we were doing. We went ahead & blocked 2.4 because we needed something. I think act one looks pretty good, but there are some moments I don't love fully. I think I just need someone else to look at them. The most time was spent on 1.7 which took work. I struggled to find verbs to give to Emily, & I didn't think the ones I gave helped. I had them run it as fast as possible which did nothing. We finally got somewhere when we ran it as melodrama. It got their energy up & got them laughing again which allowed them to feel more free in it. I did feel stuck though, & they could tell I was stuck & I didn't want them to think it was all their fault. It should be good to leave it for a little bit & come back after some work. Act one down. 2 more to go.

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Matt - missing (sick)
Jill - missing

2.1 / 2.2 / 2.3 maybe

2.3 added a line bottom 51

Emily & Kenye need clarify
reachable pockets

Jess needs a pocket in shirt/pocket
to record from

Matt needs pocket for ticket

Tight combat:

7 night steps reach 23
L back steps 2 arms up

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We had a couple of people out today which made things a little difficult but it did give me time in the room to experiment w/ some things for the third act. I'm now very excited for 3.1. I think today went okay, people were just kind of out of it. We did get more done than I thought we would. Tuesday's rehearsal should be relatively short I hope. We are on track however for finishing this week, so that's exciting. We also did very loose fight choreo & I'm very glad Jess has experience because that made it easier.

I did realize there was a section of text that we needed back in the script in 3.1 to complete a trifecta that has been emphasized in previous scenes.

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Act 2

2.5
Barrio pit

Gibberish
day

paramoia turn to Tony

1.3 transition
1.4 insert

Bang! sound & pause

Act 2 = 2 run through

N "make my peace"

F beginning

does that sound gang

poke in the gutter - no pause

G "hot... from a pot"

1.1 E slow motion cross to F on "home"

Ni "cool"

N little England

1.2 F "fuk"

Frank Musgrave etc

1.3 N sound up loud stop

1.5 E "not those dickheads"

1.6 G shall I tell her / did I tell her look

1.7 more delivery / must sleep

2.1 set down / off NSA right now off loop date!

* something to save 4 seats
in house

2.2 beat @ end before insert

2.4 G "leave me alone" new insert

2.5 F "paramoia goes"

"I tell Tony this a wanker"

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Act 2 wk. * Pun

This was a pretty good day. We did get out early, which was good. We reached up the final scenes in act 2 & then ran everything. There are a few moments of movement that we need to clarify. Emily keeps setting the boat wrong, which throws everything off. J.F. was still off, there was too much emotion in the boat half. I think I need to call in Rachel to give me different advice.

Posters

3 chairs in sand
dog tags (one in sand)
cream
unfolding in the sand

Michael marketing things

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3.2

open - now

laugh

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I felt like I was fighting a lot tonight. We had a reasonable load & still got out early, but there were a lot of moments where I was having to kind of yell to get focus back. I could tell some actors were getting frustrated so I tried to figure out a way to get people relaxed when I was absolutely done. The best part was after everyone left & I was able to walk through the final scene. I feel good about repeated motifs. I do need to figure out how we will get a sort of curtain call. But that can be a much later problem.

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3.1 & a Pun

support queer scenes

life is still moving, how?

mont
calls

lack of his hand struts - P

non-active

Notes on Pun

P: work on leg of N's monologue; Fleg; G R.T. submit
PERIODS SENSORY LANGUAGE

1.1 "what?"; "wrapped in plastic"; "tiny little hole"; jumps

on cue to make chairs for each

1.2 love to be trapped; start; run; follow; crowd; buy; mass

1.3 give clear look at what can be seen; stand on steps

1.4 start; start; look at camera; side view of back

1.5 "Big Michael" (open; man; etc.);

1.6 - first position

1.7 - Not Pun (mimic; hankie)

2.1 - how do we get in car?; big reactive N; to NSA; before I don't know

2.2 - start; N's words;

2.3 - SKIP

2.4 - things start; we don't have it; post; postline; mid match non-N; however pause for "I see"

2.5 - SKIP

3.1 - N look around before etc. non; final quote

3.2 - SKIP

3.3 - delayed split

3.4 - defined mount & leg

3.5 - pause in spot before line; Pickett Bridge line

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3.6 * cleaning

Today was okay, I felt like I was off today, which made other things feel off as well. It started okay, but I don't really know how to end Nick's monologue who is the actual stabbing. We did some good work on other scenes, but again 1.7 was the hardest. Rachel watched me really struggle through that one. I don't know what other words to say to get it away from emotional & towards harsh & biting. Emily keeps leaning into the dramatic emotional one, but I want her to be defensive & push back against him. We got somewhere w/ the Ryan line thinking about it like an insult. I also felt bad because Emily might have felt like it was an all against them day after moving the chairs for five minutes then going into that. I need a new way to approach that. I think we are still in a decent place for Tuesday, especially once we do the monologue night.

1.7 → What do I want?

guarded, very little weepy more defensive
family is abandoning Frankie
let us see it fall apart
hiding emotion from the child

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monologues!

George, Nat, Finn,
Frankie

George: pro, names, 1.1, 3.3, 3.5, 3.7

pro: climb, hot pot, pass after tried, dark hollows from
1.2: turn from who is she to me understanding what am I?
↳ maybe I got off the wrong boat

1.4: speed, quote

1.6: "shall I tell her" will she believe me / do it work

3.7:

but bird → bill the hope / tried of the optimism
almost got comfort from these niggleans, only rare meaning is new

Nat: pro, 3.4, 2.1, maybe, 0.11, 1.1, 2.1, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7

pro: met myself, no far, reopen

ghosts → turn, old self, flesh → love → impossible

Finn: 3.6, 3.7

3.6: padding why not → movable

mount on front door

defend → the home, not yourself

Frankie: pro, 1.5, maybe 3.8, 3.7

pro: like

1.5: Big Unwind

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Monologues:

Today was a pretty great time going over monologues. We did a lot of good analysis & breaking down the different.

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3.6 - 3.7 - Stumble through

↳ adjust Δ

3.6 → haven't been back for months
front door

↳ lets put
something @ 1

3.7 he can't win

Stumble through

pro: N part after 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9, 2.0, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 3.0, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 4.0, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 5.0, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 6.0, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6, 6.7, 6.8, 6.9, 7.0, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5, 7.6, 7.7, 7.8, 7.9, 8.0, 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6, 8.7, 8.8, 8.9, 9.0, 9.1, 9.2, 9.3, 9.4, 9.5, 9.6, 9.7, 9.8, 9.9, 10.0, 10.1, 10.2, 10.3, 10.4, 10.5, 10.6, 10.7, 10.8, 10.9, 11.0, 11.1, 11.2, 11.3, 11.4, 11.5, 11.6, 11.7, 11.8, 11.9, 12.0, 12.1, 12.2, 12.3, 12.4, 12.5, 12.6, 12.7, 12.8, 12.9, 13.0, 13.1, 13.2, 13.3, 13.4, 13.5, 13.6, 13.7, 13.8, 13.9, 14.0, 14.1, 14.2, 14.3, 14.4, 14.5, 14.6, 14.7, 14.8, 14.9, 15.0, 15.1, 15.2, 15.3, 15.4, 15.5, 15.6, 15.7, 15.8, 15.9, 16.0, 16.1, 16.2, 16.3, 16.4, 16.5, 16.6, 16.7, 16.8, 16.9, 17.0, 17.1, 17.2, 17.3, 17.4, 17.5, 17.6, 17.7, 17.8, 17.9, 18.0, 18.1, 18.2, 18.3, 18.4, 18.5, 18.6, 18.7, 18.8, 18.9, 19.0, 19.1, 19.2, 19.3, 19.4, 19.5, 19.6, 19.7, 19.8, 19.9, 20.0, 20.1, 20.2, 20.3, 20.4, 20.5, 20.6, 20.7, 20.8, 20.9, 21.0, 21.1, 21.2, 21.3, 21.4, 21.5, 21.6, 21.7, 21.8, 21.9, 22.0, 22.1, 22.2, 22.3, 22.4, 22.5, 22.6, 22.7, 22.8, 22.9, 23.0, 23.1, 23.2, 23.3, 23.4, 23.5, 23.6, 23.7, 23.8, 23.9, 24.0, 24.1, 24.2, 24.3, 24.4, 24.5, 24.6, 24.7, 24.8, 24.9, 25.0, 25.1, 25.2, 25.3, 25.4, 25.5, 25.6, 25.7, 25.8, 25.9, 26.0, 26.1, 26.2, 26.3, 26.4, 26.5, 26.6, 26.7, 26.8, 26.9, 27.0, 27.1, 27.2, 27.3, 27.4, 27.5, 27.6, 27.7, 27.8, 27.9, 28.0, 28.1, 28.2, 28.3, 28.4, 28.5, 28.6, 28.7, 28.8, 28.9, 29.0, 29.1, 29.2, 29.3, 29.4, 29.5, 29.6, 29.7, 29.8, 29.9, 30.0, 30.1, 30.2, 30.3, 30.4, 30.5, 30.6, 30.7, 30.8, 30.9, 31.0, 31.1, 31.2, 31.3, 31.4, 31.5, 31.6, 31.7, 31.8, 31.9, 32.0, 32.1, 32.2, 32.3, 32.4, 32.5, 32.6, 32.7, 32.8, 32.9, 33.0, 33.1, 33.2, 33.3, 33.4, 33.5, 33.6, 33.7, 33.8, 33.9, 34.0, 34.1, 34.2, 34.3, 34.4, 34.5, 34.6, 34.7, 34.8, 34.9, 35.0, 35.1, 35.2, 35.3, 35.4, 35.5, 35.6, 35.7, 35.8, 35.9, 36.0, 36.1, 36.2, 36.3, 36.4, 36.5, 36.6, 36.7, 36.8, 36.9, 37.0, 37.1, 37.2, 37.3, 37.4, 37.5, 37.6, 37.7, 37.8, 37.9, 38.0, 38.1, 38.2, 38.3, 38.4, 38.5, 38.6, 38.7, 38.8, 38.9, 39.0, 39.1, 39.2, 39.3, 39.4, 39.5, 39.6, 39.7, 39.8, 39.9, 40.0, 40.1, 40.2, 40.3, 40.4, 40.5, 40.6, 40.7, 40.8, 40.9, 41.0, 41.1, 41.2, 41.3, 41.4, 41.5, 41.6, 41.7, 41.8, 41.9, 42.0, 42.1, 42.2, 42.3, 42.4, 42.5, 42.6, 42.7, 42.8, 42.9, 43.0, 43.1, 43.2, 43.3, 43.4, 43.5, 43.6, 43.7, 43.8, 43.9, 44.0, 44.1, 44.2, 44.3, 44.4, 44.5, 44.6, 44.7, 44.8, 44.9, 45.0, 45.1, 45.2, 45.3, 45.4, 45.5, 45.6, 45.7, 45.8, 45.9, 46.0, 46.1, 46.2, 46.3, 46.4, 46.5, 46.6, 46.7, 46.8, 46.9, 47.0, 47.1, 47.2, 47.3, 47.4, 47.5, 47.6, 47.7, 47.8, 47.9, 48.0, 48.1, 48.2, 48.3, 48.4, 48.5, 48.6, 48.7, 48.8, 48.9, 49.0, 49.1, 49.2, 49.3, 49.4, 49.5, 49.6, 49.7, 49.8, 49.9, 50.0, 50.1, 50.2, 50.3, 50.4, 50.5, 50.6, 50.7, 50.8, 50.9, 51.0, 51.1, 51.2, 51.3, 51.4, 51.5, 51.6, 51.7, 51.8, 51.9, 52.0, 52.1, 52.2, 52.3, 52.4, 52.5, 52.6, 52.7, 52.8, 52.9, 53.0, 53.1, 53.2, 53.3, 53.4, 53.5, 53.6, 53.7, 53.8, 53.9, 54.0, 54.1, 54.2, 54.3, 54.4, 54.5, 54.6, 54.7, 54.8, 54.9, 55.0, 55.1, 55.2, 55.3, 55.4, 55.5, 55.6, 55.7, 55.8, 55.9, 56.0, 56.1, 56.2, 56.3, 56.4, 56.5, 56.6, 56.7, 56.8, 56.9, 57.0, 57.1, 57.2, 57.3, 57.4, 57.5, 57.6, 57.7, 57.8, 57.9, 58.0, 58.1, 58.2, 58.3, 58.4, 58.5, 58.6, 58.7, 58.8, 58.9, 59.0, 59.1, 59.2, 59.3, 59.4, 59.5, 59.6, 59.7, 59.8, 59.9, 60.0, 60.1, 60.2, 60.3, 60.4, 60.5, 60.6, 60.7, 60.8, 60.9, 61.0, 61.1, 61.2, 61.3, 61.4, 61.5, 61.6, 61.7, 61.8, 61.9, 62.0, 62.1, 62.2, 62.3, 62.4, 62.5, 62.6, 62.7, 62.8, 62.9, 63.0, 63.1, 63.2, 63.3, 63.4, 63.5, 63.6, 63.7, 63.8, 63.9, 64.0, 64.1, 64.2, 64.3, 64.4, 64.5, 64.6, 64.7, 64.8, 64.9, 65.0, 65.1, 65.2, 65.3, 65.4, 65.5, 65.6, 65.7, 65.8, 65.9, 66.0, 66.1, 66.2, 66.3, 66.4, 66.5, 66.6, 66.7, 66.8, 66.9, 67.0, 67.1, 67.2, 67.3, 67.4, 67.5, 67.6, 67.7, 67.8, 67.9, 68.0, 68.1, 68.2, 68.3, 68.4, 68.5, 68.6, 68.7, 68.8, 68.9, 69.0, 69.1, 69.2, 69.3, 69.4, 69.5, 69.6, 69.7, 69.8, 69.9, 70.0, 70.1, 70.2, 70.3, 70.4, 70.5, 70.6, 70.7, 70.8, 70.9, 71.0, 71.1, 71.2, 71.3, 71.4, 71.5, 71.6, 71.7, 71.8, 71.9, 72.0, 72.1, 72.2, 72.3, 72.4, 72.5, 72.6, 72.7, 72.8, 72.9, 73.0, 73.1, 73.2, 73.3, 73.4, 73.5, 73.6, 73.7, 73.8, 73.9, 74.0, 74.1, 74.2, 74.3, 74.4, 74.5, 74.6, 74.7, 74.8, 74.9, 75.0, 75.1, 75.2, 75.3, 75.4, 75.5, 75.6, 75.7, 75.8, 75.9, 76.0, 76.1, 76.2, 76.3, 76.4, 76.5, 76.6, 76.7, 76.8, 76.9, 77.0, 77.1, 77.2, 77.3, 77.4, 77.5, 77.6, 77.7, 77.8, 77.9, 78.0, 78.1, 78.2, 78.3, 78.4, 78.5, 78.6, 78.7, 78.8, 78.9, 79.0, 79.1, 79.2, 79.3, 79.4, 79.5, 79.6, 79.7, 79.8, 79.9, 80.0, 80.1, 80.2, 80.3, 80.4, 80.5, 80.6, 80.7, 80.8, 80.9, 81.0, 81.1, 81.2, 81.3, 81.4, 81.5, 81.6, 81.7, 81.8, 81.9, 82.0, 82.1, 82.2, 82.3, 82.4, 82.5, 82.6, 82.7, 82.8, 82.9, 83.0, 83.1, 83.2, 83.3, 83.4, 83.5, 83.6, 83.7, 83.8, 83.9, 84.0, 84.1, 84.2, 84.3, 84.4, 84.5, 84.6, 84.7, 84.8, 84.9, 85.0, 85.1, 85.2, 85.3, 85.4, 85.5, 85.6, 85.7, 85.8, 85.9, 86.0, 86.1, 86.2, 86.3, 86.4, 86.5, 86.6, 86.7, 86.8, 86.9, 87.0, 87.1, 87.2, 87.3, 87.4, 87.5, 87.6, 87.7, 87.8, 87.9, 88.0, 88.1, 88.2, 88.3, 88.4, 88.5, 88.6, 88.7, 88.8, 88.9, 89.0, 89.1, 89.2, 89.3, 89.4, 89.5, 89.6, 89.7, 89.8, 89.9, 90.0, 90.1, 90.2, 90.3, 90.4, 90.5, 90.6, 90.7, 90.8, 90.9, 91.0, 91.1, 91.2, 91.3, 91.4, 91.5, 91.6, 91.7, 91.8, 91.9, 92.0, 92.1, 92.2, 92.3, 92.4, 92.5, 92.6, 92.7, 92.8, 92.9, 93.0, 93.1, 93.2, 93.3, 93.4, 93.5, 93.6, 93.7, 93.8, 93.9, 94.0, 94.1, 94.2, 94.3, 94.4, 94.5, 94.6, 94.7, 94.8, 94.9, 95.0, 95.1, 95.2, 95.3, 95.4, 95.5, 95.6, 95.7, 95.8, 95.9, 96.0, 96.1, 96.2, 96.3, 96.4, 96.5, 96.6, 96.7, 96.8, 96.9, 97.0, 97.1, 97.2, 97.3, 97.4, 97.5, 97.6, 97.7, 97.8, 97.9, 98.0, 98.1, 98.2, 98.3, 98.4, 98.5, 98.6, 98.7, 98.8, 98.9, 99.0, 99.1, 99.2, 99.3, 99.4, 99.5, 99.6, 99.7, 99.8, 99.9, 100.0, 100.1, 100.2, 100.3, 100.4, 100.5, 100.6, 100.7, 100.8, 100.9, 101.0, 101.1, 101.2, 101.3, 101.4, 101.5, 101.6, 101.7, 101.8, 101.9, 102.0, 102.1, 102.2, 102.3, 102.4, 102.5, 102.6, 102.7, 102.8, 102.9, 103.0, 103.1, 103.2, 103.3, 103.4, 103.5, 103.6, 103.7, 103.8, 103.9, 104.0, 104.1, 104.2, 104.3, 104.4, 104.5, 104.6, 104.7, 104.8, 104.9, 105.0, 105.1, 105.2, 105.3, 105.4, 105.5, 105.6, 105.7, 105.8, 105.9, 106.0, 106.1, 106.2, 106.3, 106.4, 106.5, 106.6, 106.7, 106.8, 106.9, 107.0, 107.1, 107.2, 107.3, 107.4, 107.5, 107.6, 107.7, 107.8, 107.9, 108.0, 108.1, 108.2, 108.3, 108.4, 108.5, 108.6, 108.7, 108.8, 108.9, 109.0, 109.1, 109.2, 109.3, 109.4, 109.5, 109.6, 109.7, 109.8, 109.9, 110.0, 110.1, 110.2, 110.3, 110.4, 110.5, 110.6, 110.7, 110.8, 110.9, 111.0, 111.1, 111.2, 111.3, 111.4, 111.5, 111.6, 111.7, 111.8, 111.9, 112.0, 112.1, 112.2, 112.3, 112.4, 112.5, 112.6, 112.7, 112.8, 112.9, 113.0, 113.1, 113.2, 113.3, 113.4, 113.5, 113.6, 113.7, 113.8, 113.9, 114.0, 114.1, 114.2, 114.3, 114.4, 114.5, 114.6, 114.7, 114.8, 114.9, 115.0, 115.1, 115.2, 115.3, 115.4, 115.5, 115.6, 115.7, 115.8, 115.9, 116.0, 116.1, 116.2, 116.3, 116.4, 116.5, 116.6, 116.7, 116.8, 116.9, 117.0, 117.1, 117.2, 117.3, 117.4, 117.5, 117.6, 117.7, 117.8, 117.9, 118.0, 118.1, 118.2, 118.3, 118.4, 118.5, 118.6, 118.7, 118.8, 118.9, 119.0, 119.1, 119.2, 119.3, 119.4, 119.5, 119.6, 119.7, 119.8, 119.9, 120.0, 120.1, 120.2, 120.3, 120.4, 120.5, 120.6, 120.7, 120.8, 120.9, 121.0, 121.1, 121.2, 121.3, 121.4, 121.5, 121.6, 121.7, 121.8, 121.9, 122.0, 122.1, 122.2, 122.3, 122.4, 122.5, 122.6, 122.7, 122.8, 122.9, 123.0, 123.1, 123.2, 123.3, 123.4, 123.5, 123.6, 123.7, 123.8, 123.9, 124.0, 124.1, 124.2, 124.3, 124.4, 124.5, 124.6, 124.7, 124.8, 124.9, 125.0, 125.1, 125.2, 125.3, 125.4, 125.5, 125.6, 125.7, 125.8, 125.9, 126.0, 126.1, 126.2, 126.3, 126.4, 126.5, 126.6, 126.7, 126.8, 126.9, 127.0, 127.1, 127.2, 127.3, 127.4, 127.5, 127.6, 127.7, 127.8, 127.9, 128.0, 128.1, 128.2, 128.3, 128.4, 128.5, 128.6, 128.7, 128.8, 128.9, 129.0, 129.1, 129.2, 129.3, 129.4, 129.5, 129.6, 129.7, 129.8, 129.9, 130.0, 130.1, 130.2, 130.3, 130.4, 130.5, 130.6, 130.7, 130.8, 130.9, 131.0, 131.1, 131.2, 131.3, 131.4, 131.5, 131.6, 131.7, 131.8, 131.9, 132.0, 132.1, 132.2, 132.3, 132.4, 132.5, 132.6, 132.7, 132.8, 132.9, 133.0, 133.1, 133.2, 133.3, 133.4, 133.5, 133.6, 133.7, 133.8, 133.9, 134.0, 134.1, 134.2, 134.3, 134.4, 134.5, 134.6, 134.7, 134.8, 134.9, 135.0, 135.1, 135.2, 135.3, 135.4, 135.5, 135.6, 135.7, 135.8, 135.9, 136.0, 136.1, 136.2, 136.3, 136.4, 136.5, 136.6, 136.7, 136.8, 136.9, 137.0, 137.1, 137.2, 137.3, 137.4, 137.5, 137.6, 137.7, 137.8, 137.9, 138.0, 138.1, 138.2, 138.3, 138.4, 138.5, 138.6, 138.7, 138.8, 138.9, 139.0, 139.1, 139.2, 139.3, 139.4, 139.5, 139.6, 139.7, 139.8, 139.9, 140.0, 140.1, 140.2, 140.3, 140.4, 140.5, 140.6, 140.7, 140.8, 140.9, 141.0, 141.1, 141.2, 141.3, 141.4, 141.5, 141.6, 141.7, 141.8, 141.9, 142.0, 142.1, 142.2, 142.3, 142.4, 142.5, 142.6, 142.7, 142.8, 142.9, 143.0, 143.1, 143.2, 143.3, 143.4, 143.5, 143.6, 143.7, 143.8, 143.9, 144.0, 144.1, 144.2, 144.3, 144.4, 144.5, 144.6, 144.7, 144.8, 144.9, 145.0, 145.1, 145.2, 145.3, 145.4, 145.5, 145.6, 145.7, 145.8, 145.9, 146.0, 146.1, 146.2, 146.3, 146.4, 146.5, 146.6, 146.7, 146.8, 146.9, 147.0, 147.1, 147.2, 147.3, 147.4, 147.5, 147.6, 147.7, 147.8, 147.9, 148.0, 148.1, 148.2, 148.3, 148.4, 148.5, 148.6, 148.7, 148.8, 148.9, 149.0, 149.1, 149.2, 149.3, 149.4, 149.5, 149.6, 149.7, 149.8, 149.9, 150.0, 150.1, 150.2, 150.3, 150.4, 150.5, 150.6, 150.7, 150.8, 150.9, 151.0, 151.1, 151.2, 151.3, 151.4, 151.5, 151.6, 151.7, 151.8, 151.9, 152.0, 152.1, 152.2, 152.3, 152.4, 152.5, 152.6, 152.7, 152.8, 152.9, 153.0, 153.1, 153.2, 153.3, 153.4, 153.5, 153.6, 153.7, 153.8, 153.9, 154.0, 154.1, 154.2, 154.3, 154.4, 154.5, 154.6, 154.7, 154.8, 154.9, 155.0, 155.1, 155.2, 155.3, 155.4, 155.5, 155.6, 155.7, 155.8, 155.9, 156.0, 156.1, 156.2, 156.3, 156.4, 156.5, 156.6, 156.7, 156.8, 156.9, 157.0, 157.1, 157.2, 157.3, 157.4, 157.5, 157.6, 157.7, 157.8, 157.9, 158.0, 158

where can we put the front door?

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- 5.1: adjust chains @ leg; back of hand starts; STRUT; F turn on R shoulder; won't move; head quote; less clean mount; F place chain & go around the room
- 5.2: Attention; hear sheep's looking; sitting; end
- 3.3: R position
- 3.4: FD placement?
- 3.5: posture; E levels when examining, sharp looking around w/ eyes;
- 3.6: longer pause before start; pause after first line; watch posture of walk
- 3.7: F deep breath as he walks in; F squat; mount w/ some me (spin?); check that nothing changes; shift N & F; monologue; innocence; let us hear how young he is; E doesn't start until into position; F stops position?; G all the way over; R step forward away from other two; F jumping as he gets ready; pump up; will be cries;

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Act 2 fun lighted room Δ;
1.2: good 50% of the time facing out
1.1: wrapped ...; what;
1.4: mount

- 1.1: what? sharper; Timmy music!
- 1.2: earlier turns
- 1.4:

2.1: pivot chains 90°; more dynamic turn

Actor challenges:
how to get more

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We worked through Act 3 which is quite short, so we hit a point where I didn't really know what to do next. I asked them what they needed & they requested time for lines so that's what we did. I am curious to see what comes of the run. I think people will be nervous & that will affect their performance a little bit. I think I need to let them go a little bit & tell them not to worry about details & maybe that will help.

When we get back I think we will be really focused on runs & trying out our experiments. I wanted to try something w/ this run before back but I think it's too much w/ it being the first ~~book~~ run off book.

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First off-Book Run

- 1) be calm, be confident
- 2) how to call line
- 3) speak up if you're lost
- 4) fine notes
- 5) break expectations
- 6) mount/fight call

PROPS

Run Notes

- P.N. mixed - play; notation; alone & with others; transition of F & N; salt & wind again; G repression; compare after please.
- 1.1: "what"; early transition to F; jumps on A's shoulders; circle of hands; V.A.M.S.; Δ; "had things"; "cool"; not on time; posture of sit; N.D. don't; G get into creeps; this re-enters; same posture on sit of G & F;
 - 1.2: "my country"; N. bang; "fuck";
 - 1.3: how to tighten placement; does N want to share?; F weeks ago
 - 1.4: "Dear Henry/ No!"; list of names; speed on pace; turn on Eric
 - 1.5: don't hold fake note; control fatigue; full turn & clock
 - 1.6: shall I tell her; repression "how is it & work here; motivation to the mount; how does the emotion work; who is he telling this to? (fellow veterans?); Δ; fellow order volume
 - 1.7: "she's even" who's they?; "fucking big" energy; ride turn around; can don't change transition right;
 - 2.1: how to "wait... for my best"; volume of get down; where does he look from; less panic; "you left him"; bring up the defense a little; how does this compare to last story? "let me see him" volume
 - 2.2: pass on first line; mount to Δ; miss B noticing
 - 2.3: F don't sit; fix faces @ tops still; F turn earlier "we don't want to lose you"
 - 2.4: clean crouch to stand; G mount
 - 2.5: F starts standing; F turn earlier if look up; fatigue's pacing; "go on make us stick it over";

Yowie Home Now - Finn

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31. F haul still after exit;
 32. Mung! a bomb is about to go off
 33. exact minute to 12; R exit w/ Jill
 34. how fixed is B; speed of lines; control D pace;
 "not in"
 35. pleading!!; do we open door same way;
 watch shoulder minute;
 36. F watch where you're looking; squat longer; F fidget;
 R no step above spa; how does build reflective same;
 not!!; B don't start till @ 12; F+N eye contact
 while B build; F hype/prep; B keep flat
 through walks; accept "this is the end" then
 sounds nervous.

1hr 9 min run

Thoughts from comping:

reviewing definitions of home
 George: this country has split me
 in two; how does we use this
 idea of two Georges?

concepted home -> how does stage-shed?

Frankie needs physical disappointment when let down

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First Rehearsal Back!

Matt's full scene
 ↳ building in something
 physical to show restraint
 ↳ pot metaphor

40 total chairs in room means 30
 reservations w/ 10 standing room

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1 tonight was rough. The lines
 were not there, especially later in
 the show. There was a lot of struggle
 & I considered letting them grab
 scripts but I didn't think that
 would be the best. They needed the
 time to see how they were struggling
 to motivate them. And the pressure
 of their costumes. Hopefully they
 put in the work this week. To show
 as the words left, the movie left as
 well. I think repetition is the best
 course but we also need to fix things
 so I have to figure out what the
 balance can be moving forward.

Challenges / Successes / Things to Consider

- dividing rehearsals effectively
- how much time do I spend w/ one actor
- changing tactics (1.7 -> gesture)
- room control

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Volume night!

Amusement - candle commitment
 - poster
 - reservations
 - donations

3 levels of lines!

* email Michael about vacuum

1.7: body language! * how do we
 constant advance communicate
 silently?

2.2: chorus vocal variety

2.4

3.

1.6: hat choreo

1.3: wealth & dynamics

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I was happy to see what our levels could look like in the room especially w/ how low it could go. I used this work to try & get our choro to once again have more personality. There are times when the kind of chore & works. But other times we need something more happening w/ them. Especially playing w/ the idea of how they remain in character - the ensemble needs to be notable when they appear. They are the corrupted home; we need them to help define our landscape. I want to start to find moments where they can be antagonistic or meddling. Then maybe supportive or calming. They can take on different roles throughout the show, both as new characters & as just a shapeless ensemble. I think tonight we might need to go into each scene & figure out what exactly is happening for the choro: are they friend or foe?

make it an intimate space,
then ~~don't~~ disrupt it!

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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

Reminders :

- body language
- levels & dynamics
- conflicts

Challenges: 1 Run

Ensemble work

Run Notes:

pro: great esp;

1. cut paper pantomime; get all - about man; turn the bag packing; delay & re-examine; for no reason quite true; (London Morning); wait for please
2. is she the "genuine"; confused
3. N wait for N wait for what's happening
4. giggle & turn some other direction
5. more playful before take staff;
6. I start of more confusion; shaper submit for don't!
7. let us hear the battle over me; they 'as you
8. N enfold; diction
9. turn has turned back; gaze toward higher
10. leap pose before osman
11. don't anticipate explosion; & close
12. pose & want . . . ; double hood

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This was a great run. I was very impressed with what the actors pulled off. ~~Mon~~ Tuesday was so so much that I didn't know what to expect by the end of the week. But they really stepped it up. Hopefully Sunday is just as good. I am kind of worried we will ~~then~~ fall into the tech week trap where people will either get lazy or start trying to do something to add flair or whatever. I need to remind them to perform the show we rehearsed. We need to make sure that this week we don't over rehearse at all. One run a night w/ a definite day off on Thursday should be perfect. On Tuesday maybe all we show the therapy clips & ~~video montage~~ ~~video montage~~. On the same day I'll introduce them to the lobby display so they know what's happening before the show. We can actually pull this off. And I already have 33 seats reserved. This is crazy. We have a show!

SM's check in list
picture for N-71

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Fright Call !!

most ft

→ add jumps/crash

Tech traps speech

Kun
P. P.

Rachel
D. L. 10/10/10

Whole-Things

picture

- silence phones

1st week's schedule

rick

Run notes

pro: add jumps/crash to fight; L₁K₂R; 7 don't move till resolved.

- 1.1. what?; TUCKS; O when u lost; N "mind" thing at all; N "like a bird"
- 1.2. N: stop when u learn
- 1.4. little to my lips
- 1.7. point change;
- 2.3. don't at night away; full turn
- 2.5. adjust ^{new} setting
- 3.1. K at sea; N move on wobbly legs
- 3.2. Frank what are you doing
- 3.4. N: left hand open
- 3.5. 6 repairs traumatic or dramatic
don't get lazy in nesting positions as
show girls on
- 3.7. N: be conscious of hands; 6 don't speak until
you turn around; 7 what to do while
waiting; 7

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 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

Show! 1st Night

The first show went remarkably well. I think "Mom" was just right for the first time & it felt really good. I noticed just how smoothly things moved for the first time. The transitions worked really well. Something that surprised me was how people kept trying to see what was on the phone in "the lion". I think I am just so used to it being nothing that I didn't even consider. Hopefully this means that the reactions were good enough that the audience thought they had to be watching something.

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 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

Show! 2nd night

So many people came up to me
 & said how much they were
 crying during it. Which, of course,
 wasn't the goal but I'm really
 happy that they got something
 from it. Early in the show we
 had the unfortunate table casualty
 which put me on edge for the
 whole show. But it made me hyper
 aware of things. Like how Anthony's
 whole body tumbled in the final
 scene which was honestly impressive.
 I was also really impressed w/
 how live slip ups were handled.
 Matt's name flub was able to
 continue w/o a hitch. I am very
 sad to leave this show behind me.
 esped thing I have pics to
 look at for all eternity.