Monday, August 2nd 2021

Heather

Misery

1st time

Recall:

The words were almost my own. When I sat on the bench and it almost tipped over I almost completely blanked. And the line was My thinking is a little muddy. A couple places, that was the main one. I feel like I could have at times taken in his reaction to pain more. I felt very connected to him but didn’t always clock his pain. Connected to myself. The laughter was unexpected and I used it in a way that kind of threw me a little bit but in a good way in that everybody is laughing at me and I don’t know if that amped things up a little bit. At the very beginning. Maybe amped in a weird way. And trying to keep on task. It sent me in a slightly harder to get back on track. Place was mine.

Critique:

He has the lions share of the critique. Beautiful work and while you’re in service to the director you’re making things your own.

Craig

Misery

1st time

Recall:

Word were my own, connected to H and myself, circumstances are real. Place is real. Definitely when she opens the curtain. The only and it’s not a problem but the relationship with the level of pain he’s suffered and is trying to avoid. I’ve never felt that kind of pain. So rather than fake pain what do you think about when you’re in that pain. Those are the things I’m exploring. Thinking about those thoughts instead of focusing on pain that doesn’t exist.

Critique:

He has the lion's share of the critique. Beautiful work and while you’re in service to the director you’re making things your own.

Josh (dir)

Misery

1st time

Recall:

We’ve only rehearsed this 2 1/2 times. We combined some scenes. But it was really let’s get moving on something. Had a blast. Tiniest little tweaks. I was thinking Craig maybe lean forwards when she’s giving you the soup. H – when you hit your profanity line I wanna walk through that sequence again

J: The moment where’s kind of bashfully rejecting her opportunity to criticize him even though she wants to. Want to see how you’re feeling.

H: I anticipated the spill. Before I even saw the spill it was Look what you made me do.

J: we should review how you’re feeling there and how to work it in. Felt like you were bubbling a little early. The spill, work on your body position…if you feed him right before you spill it’ll create a good moment of anticipation. And the moment where you sit down and the grand opera legs, take in his condition a little more. Tray when you sat down. Tiniest little things. I wrote down Annie….I think that should be, when he returns to you with out of the blue kindness, I feel like you might need a moment to take that in. It’s what you wanted but he hasn’t shown you that yet.

S: Tell me about the process.

J: super happy where it’s going. One rehearsal that was normal speed. They were connected beautifully, love the play. Just do it more to get into more detail. I’m having a lot of fun.

Critique:

I think you’re in an interesting place. You’re really thinking differently about what you’re doing. Use of space is good. You’re patient, you aren’t creating fireworks, letting the piece unfold very authentically. It’s solid. There’s two places where our work can start to open up. It’s a very different convo than what we’ve had before. More elevated. How much does concept play a role in how you approach what you’re directing? An idea that guides one, a guiding principle. What are you saying through your Misery? There are things that I think are beautiful. Going really well. Her leaning into him when talking about the husband shit. Lovely things taking place. But have you thought about what your Misery means? And I think concept is, that’s the real language for what we do. Everything else is almost the craft of directing and now we’re getting into the art. There’s a craft competent to acting and the art and you have to have the craft shit down. This is a little different because there are different pieces. SO with it, what is your Misery? What does this mean to you and how does that affect the staging of it, and how does that affect the quality of light, sound. So making it up…say it means “untreated mental illness” well that’s going to be a way different deal than if you see this as government suppression. Each of these ideas is going to bring a different…blocking, structure. What does this mean to you? Could be a comment on how society deals with artists. No one else has to understand your concept. It’s for you. What’s moving you in this. And it’ll help shape and guide you. It’ll inform everything. You have from top to bottom a cohesive look and journey because everything is coming from this base. Clear base equals consistency. I’ll take a competent director over directors who are trying to give my eye candy. You see concept play all the way down the line.

J: I’ve done more of that with projects that are less formed. I think I took for granted how well I know this piece.

S: The other thing…you can direct to moments and shape and chisel and carve moments or you can direct to discoveries. Let me unpack it for you. I’m someone that directs for discoveries. There are moments that are shaped but I want them to surprise me. Shaping doesn’t give a whole lot of room. I know that you already do a lot of this. You are collaborative and you’re smart and efficient. I’m talking about opening it up more.

J: I treat this more like a shoot. I feel like there would’ve been moments of coverage where I’d have been able to give more thoughtful notes.

S: That’s a fair point. After we do this maybe one more time, I think we should do a steady diet of shoots. A shoot is a one minute scene, two minutes tops. Actors are allowed to live with the material. You have 20 minutes to get the shoot ready for the take. No rehearsal. You’ve got 20 minutes, I’m being sweet. Camera blocking. Your first wide. This is the rehearsal for that scene. You can use that 20 in any way you see fit. I want to see how you give notes on the fly from the beginning. You’re a tv director, you’re showing up and working with them. They have access to the script prior, but you don’t get to talk.

The other notes…it’s taken from multiple places. Where are we?

J: the book burn hasn’t happened, he hasn’t been hobbled. She hasn’t done anything awful to him yet. He feels uncomfortable about her, she keeps denying him the phone. He’s hiding his pain meds, which is why he responds to the pain. This is the first indication that she’s a complete h job.

S: So probably starting Act 2, we definitely crossed the threshold and we’re in the special world. The resurrection of Misery…I don’t know what we’re directing TO. You’re handling of them and each other is really beautiful. Are we at the turn? If the turn is, your story is the resurrection of Misery, then this right here is the special world. If that’s the case, what does that mean resurrecting this character that’s been a trap for him for years. I’m not saying that’s what it is, I want to understand its story, what it is, so you can articulate it.

Kevin

Art

3rd incarnation

K: connected to myself, words were my own. Beginning was different. Words were going everywhere, grasping in a few areas. It shouldn’t make me feel good. I looked at it again and saw that he thrives in chaos and I think that’s what you meant about the cap.

S: The work you did on the opening was worth it. When you first did it there were components of the casting that had judgment. This first scene- absolutely. That wasn’t as cooked for the 2nd scene. If I was directing, I would say the pen cap was on the second scene. I like your Yvonne. I like him as a big guy. You traveled a journey with this now.

Bob

Art

3rd incarnation

B: the words were going everywhere. I was connected to Kevin so much so that the words that are usually my own were not in places. Kevin was making me mad. I was more angry at Kevin than usual especially since the thread that I pulled coming in was that I was going to be nicer to him. The place was great. Circumstances were there.

S: I think of you as a big ego. I have no problem with you as this guy. He has a big intellect and a huge opinion. Height isn’t an issue. I think your assessment of what made the lines go was on point. It’s exactly what took place. What’s the fix for that? I don’t mean the angry response, I mean the fix that something different happened and it threw your lines.

B: One of the reasons I got thrown was because I was trying to be nice and he’s pissing me off. The fix could be exploring compassion for Yvonne.

S: That's going to affect the anger response. That’s not going to fix when something divergent happens and that throws you. In the moment you do what Bob did- he was able to get the thought across so the scene could move forward. There was nothing wrong with what you did. It came across very genuine.

Variation in absorption. More variation to your relationship to the given circumstances. Then different possibilities have been absorbed so there’s different places you can go.

B: I’ve understood variation to be exploring different beliefs, oppositional thinking and pulling on different threads but in addition there has to be absorption with the different threads pulled.

S: that allows you to live in discovery and since you’ve been so many places with the absorption. As long as the scene partner is at least getting the essence of the scene. It sounds complicated but it’s simple. It’s your imagination running wild. It’s a recognition, it shouldn’t be heady.

Question: I can say you look well rested and depending on where you are it will be taken differently. In our absorption we might be a little more defensive or … there are different ways to approach it.

Question: the given circumstances don’t change but my relationship to them does. That’s unique to me.

When we start the absorption, we want to make sure we’re coming at it from different threads.

S: If I have a job and I booked a guest star who is a witness to a robbery and it’s 3 scenes, 2 pages each. I can put my all in that and have variation quickly. Then if I do Hamlet, I’ll obsess. Then I’ll do a CSI scene that I can’t get into my body. Now it’s going to be more than that. It depends on my relationship with the scene.

If I’m caught by the story, I’m good. If I can’t find my way into it it’s going to be a battle until I can find my way in. There are so many variables.

Marissa

Sleepless in Seattle (2nd time)

Recall:

Connected to Rachel, connected to the place, to myself, had all these butterflies. I think that was just the circumstances playing on me. Was aware of a fluttering feeling. I was watching the tv like Oh there’s nothing on there. The givens were playing on me more, Walter was more this time. Like oh god is this cheating? Words felt good. Didn’t have any panic this time of ooo do I know it.

Critique:

You’re hitting lots of chaos now. Chaos is your friend. Keep going. ( I fight it a little bit) Keep going. Everything that happens in your work…we’ve been working off and on since you were a little pup. I love that you keep coming back. You’re in an interesting place artistically. Something happening in your work that’s really fucking cool. Coming from chaos and oppositional thinking. It’s so much more intuitive to you. More nuances happening in what you’re doing because they aren’t planned out. iF we go way back there was so much good girl in what you were doing. Your fighting against it now is not what it was then. This is the answer to the good girl. (it was terrifying and now it’s kinda fun) yeah you’re starting to appreciate the unknown. Whereas before you didn’t have enough trust in you. You’ve been good for a long fucking time, that’s not what I mean. There’s just a different thing taking place. The whole process helps us get out of our own way. So we’re more there fully. But it takes the process. The process doesn’t mean dick, it’s a tool to help you be authentic to this world. That’s the only thing that matters. Everything is to serve that but it’s all dependent on you throwing yourself in. The digging is all on you. Shovels make it easier to dig. We offer ways of digging but only if the person is gonna…the process is behind the person. The person is first. You’re willing to embrace chaos now so fukcing goooo. Let yourself be a lunatic in your own exploration. Do you let yourself go there back there before you come on? I think you did tonight a bit. Bring it.

Rachel

Sleepless in Seattle (2nd time)

Connected to Marissa, words, myself. Connected to the circumstances. To the environment. Circumstances mostly. There were moments that I was so thirsty like I’m’ so thirsty that I kept thinking I’m so thirsty, am I gonna make it through the end of the scene if I drink this. (so just the thirst?) yeah it was taking me out. (do you have more wine?) but I didn’t want to get back up and mess with the blocking. Trying to keep everything right in the blocking. There was a moment where I put on this movie that I love and I wasn’t watching it.

Critique:

You seemed a little bummed at the end of the scene (been exploring my ex all week long. Been playing on me constantly. All of my spins were just about him) Ok. Is this scene supposed to be funny? I think that’s the problem. (I felt the energy, I was trying to stay true to the givens to my spin and exploration, felt like I took the pendulum too far, didn’t want to push, thought it was more important to play with what I was exploring. Did the same thing in Fresno.) I don’t think you took it too far. I get that you thought that. Only once or twice did I think you tried to make it a comedy. I think you think they’re supposed to be funny. Fell in love with his temp. I think at some point you thought it was supposed to be a joke (not at all) okay great. How close are these two? When did you break up with your husband? Were you friends then? You never told her the real truth. That’s telling to me. Have you explored that? (yeah. It’s not that I wouldn’t tell her, I’m just not dealing with it myself.) she’s that close to her and you still can’t be open with her. (we were playing before the scene and there was a moment that I was super jealous that she was getting married) I like all this. This is the part I’m wanting to lean into. I’m not leaning into jealousy, I’m leaning into this belief that this dynamic…you’re the advice giver AND you envy her life. You don’t divulge circumstances in your life that are compromising. That’s a big boundary to have in a close relationship. SO what do you need her to believe about you? (that everything is good) and I think that can be cooked more. Because she has everything, on paper Walter is perfect. And he’ll always be there. (I focused on arriving, stay in, stay in, don’t move, you’re right there) you are where you are, be in your body. (my heart started beating HARD and I was bringing it into story and then the minute I stepped out here it was gone) that’s how it happens. Your feet hit the boards and it’s a different reality. On a great path, let it be what it needs to be. You’ll get comedy back.

Alisa

Rabbit Hole

3rd incarnation

A: It was really affecting me that I couldn’t get comfortable. I hated how uncomfortable it made me feel. All these thoughts about it. I was in a dark place about it. I didn’t feel connected to anything. I was trying so hard to put my attention to West. I don’t think I was ever there.

S: You were there but I get what you’re saying.

A: I walked in jittery.

S: How was your exploration

A: Sad. Fine. It’s this constant lonely feeling. I hate it.

S: I’m still getting to know you and I learned something new. The dark eats you- it’s hard for you to get out of it. We left out some important circumstances. How are you getting along with Augie. (He didn’t come to my birthday) and you took that as a sign that your relationship isn’t going well. (It’s a sign that this is a bastard child) It’s about the earrings. They are very pretty. (Is that what made me bad?) Good and bad have no place here. Obviously you are moved and affected by what you did. You missed some circumstances. You took a fictional circumstance and were affected by it. you are taking some things about her paradigm. There is judgement about her and her situation with Augie. This isn’t bad but it let’s us know about your tendencies. That helps because you know how things affect you. When you get a little dark, you want to put a blanket on everything. In the script, Augie is a working musician who is excited and wants to be with him. She is totally at ease with never owning her own home. She’s fine with getting knocked up by a musician and moving in with him. Izzy would have skull earrings.

The earrings aren’t a problem for me but they’re not Izzy’s world. I don’t think the “bastard” child is in her paradigm. Things are great there. Izzy talks so we would know if Augie was bad. The mom is excited for this baby. The only people who aren’t are Becca and Howie. There’s a tendency that never had to be a problem again if you recognize. If you go dark, you lose everything else. That’s the only thing that happened in this exploration and iteration of this scene. That doesn’t make you a bad actor. You went down this rabbit hole where you were shut down and abused. All of that you were doing I could see. It wasn’t bad acting, it was just a tendency. I want to make sure that you’re not basing if you’re a good or bad artist on one scene. In my mind, this was a really valuable thing that happened. You’re going to be more consistent for this scene. This was a win. Unfortunately we have a product based system where we value our work. Was your imagination playing you? Obviously you can fucking act. The dark is making it hard to see anything else.

Was there value even though it fucked with you?

A: yes. I felt like I couldn’t be there for my scene partner.

S: All the lessons aren’t going to be fun but it will save you some pain down the road. It was valuable. My suggestion is to do it once more because you don’t want this to be your last one. Recognize that your mom is excited. You love your mom and you’re super close to you. Augie is excited and is a really good dude. Is there anything in the script that says he isn’t? He has a new song for the baby every day. He took on a studio job so his hours are fixed and he doesn’t have to travel. When he plays the guitar, it’s effervescent.

West

Rabbit Hole

3rd incarnation

W: I did exploration. I might have done too much because I was lost in it. connected to space. Words were mostly my own. She did affect me in moments. There were moments when I couldn't hear her. There were moments I was really affected. She was just looking at me and judging and I was going with it. That threw off the blocking but I was exploring “who are you to judge me”. I felt like that took me off.

S: You weren’t in complete control but that’s what the story is. You’re fighting some shit that is brilliant. This is good stuff.

W: I had done the work so I was discovering the accusation along the way. Every time that accusation comes it takes my breath.

S: You see a problem, I see genius. Your body knows more than your head and you keep wanting to trust your head. Your body knows better.

W: If I did the work that he’s not guilty…

S: I know what you’re saying. I disagree with you. You want to control something and I’m going to push back.

W: We had blocking and it got thrown off. That’s my body taking over. I was trying to explore that he was blameless. But when the moment came, I felt guilty.

S: I get it. My point: The fact that you were not honoring the blocking because you were too perturbed is fantastic. You have to honor the blocking and deal with the fact that you want to crawl out of your skin or that you feel guilty. The way it’s hitting you is genius. The clever is a problem, it gets in your way. Knowing how the scene goes and you can whip shit out- you can impress people with that. Deal with it and own it. That shit that you need to walk to dispel? Just stand there and deal with it. That you can’t control your breath? These discoveries that are in your body to the extent that is in your body? Deal with it. You don’t get to rip her head off just like in real life.

I am not allowed to show my full anger. I have a violent temper- it comes out in an intense way. My wife knows how to push my buttons and I can’t fully let my anger show. That’s how I stay married.

You might want to rip her head off but you can’t . In that it will shape your expression. There are times in my life when I would like to say something different and I don’t. Trust it. Surrender.

Throw a rock and you’ll hit an acting class and most of them would say that you’re great. I see what’s in you and I want that. You have chops, they’re right there.

W: So it's not in expelling it. It’s in dealing with it.

S: find out in the moment what it is. The conflict is that you honor the conscious more than the impulse. Everything is going on and you’re trying to control it by walking around the table or wanting it to be different. All of this is in avoidance of this. What's happening to you is great. It’s taking you to critical mass. It’s getting the circumstances more in your body. It’s about intensifying the war of what’s happening in your body. Keep the chaos going.

Question: talk more about the clever? Don’t you love your ideas. They’re great in the moment. The “clever” is going to block what’s going on. There is no scarcity of ideas or insight. Just surrender.

It’s about you doing this yourself. I want you to go on your own. You’re good on your own.

Aubree

Chasing Amy

2nd incarnation

A: The note was to connect to him kinesthetically. I was connected to him and to myself. Enviro was good. Circumstances are def there. I worked on more oppositional thinking with him and my life and how can I maintain a relationship with him. It was a blast.

S: The scene is very alive now. It's a subtle shift which is necessary.

Now that the physical engagement is different and he’s more in play fully you could invest more in being out in public with him. The fact that your real life is somewhere else and this is your old stomping ground.

Lawrence

Chasing Amy

2nd incarnation

L: Having that kinesthetic connection helped. Sometimes words would come out differently. There was enough homework to let it go whichever way. It would be fun to do it again.

S: I would look at- is your relationship to your success and your career. I believe he has something to say. He is the big dog on the indie comic scene and there’s a lot of pleasure in that. MTV- even if you don’t want it is cool. Being able to tell people you don’t really want it is cool too. Also can you do it well? That's also part of it. It’s TV- it’s not what you do. That would make it more fun for you. It’s her, she’s another artist and she’s good but you’re more successful. You have the provincial down- the small town boy getting a taste of the city. So that’s where I’d go.