Thursday Night 8/26/21 – Mike Teaching

Kristin, “Lungs” (1st repeat)

Recall: I did do the conjuction game thing, I can be in love with him and annoyed. It was a mind shift that needed to take place, letting down my walls and allowing myself to be vulnerable. Very connected to everything except “I think im going to be sick line” what he’s saying it does resonate with me, and I feel affected by what he says, but for whateer reason I cant make myself feel sick. Its kind of stupid to have a kid right now, but you gotta do it if you want a kid. Im disgusted in myself im disgusted that people aren’t being concious and popping out way too many . I think saying they shouldn't have kids is okay, but saying would it be so bad if they cant, taking their autonomy away totally that part makes me feel sick. I just feel like its so fascist. Its horrible to tell someone you’re not allowed to have kids. Him holding me comforted me. We hit a wall and can’t talk about it anymore. Stuart said my super power is vulnerability and he said I wasn't using it. I needed to tap into it.

Critique: There’s room to have this thought, and then think, that’s racist, and then be like is that me? no that’s not me. Then you realize omg im the thing I hate in most people. I love where you’re at with this piece, there’s one thing I want to show you. You are so sincere, vulnerable, and present in this piece. Better than the show in NYC. This is good stuff, I watched your prep and I knew ten min before class that you were ready to go. You looked completely different. The first beat with the ice was great. Number one I think you guys should do this play- you’re both perfect for it. The work on the relationshiop is really strong, it feels like you’ve tracked this play. The thing I want to add in now is the baby. Because now you’re both ready for it. You’re both where it doesn’t feel real, but it’s real. The conversations that you guys are having . What kind of parent will I be? And will my kids have ten fingers and ten toes? It seems you both have protected yourselves from that thought. Don’t make decisions about the way results have to be. I think at different moments with different conversations you come up with different fears and solutions. Lock nothing in and do some discovering. Is my body up to this? You’re both so grounded and listening to each other, and you also understand the movement of the piece and the tone of the piece. For the cuddle, find the cuddle. Don’t be afraid to make huge turns. Traction, one of the difficulties of this play is we’re just chewing on the same topics.but your job is to get you guys traction so it feels like we’re moving and coming to some dicision or ending. Even though you know if 5 lines that none of this will matter anymore. Vulnerable. It is one of your super powers, sometimes I don't know how seriously you take it. Make sure it’s not just a general, but make sure it’s honed on something important.

Kevin, “Lungs” (1st repeat)

Recall: This is a challenging piece, even the way the stage is set suggests it happens in a vacuum. They aren’t in a good place, and what made me suggest having a baby. In the first incarnation I felt like she is better than me and she doesn't realize it and I think I didn’t explore that as much as I could have or should have. If shes better than me what does that me? As I was working on it I was like I’m losing her, so if we have a baby then I’m not losing her. What did we fall in love over? We’re older and now I can’t keep up with her. I just started with the phrase “losing her”. I’m trying to make this argument for a child the way she would present it to me. I don’t have the emotional maturity to say “I feel like we’re drifting apart, how do we fix this?” That’s how I portrayed it. I didn’t feel like the performance was different, but it felt so much different. I feel like shit.

Critique:

Rachel, “Uncle Frank” (new)

Recall: I was definitely more nervous than I wanted to be. Once I settled in it was really fun. It’s been so cool to do this piece. (How was the process?) I think it was finding this admiration for someone. It’s a realy special connection because she doesn’t have anyone, and finding someone that I care about so much. There are things they can talk about that she hasn’t been able to talk to anyone about. It’s so cool. (And you’re able to personalize him? Was that easy?) In the past I liked to pretend it’s like someone from your life. I couldn’t think of someone that I had that exact relationship with so I took pieces and feelings of different relationships. (Yeah like I think taking memories and your own imagination to build that is great. In terms of how you’re different from your family and town, your ordinary world, family how much work on that have you done?) I kind of did the same thing. I took the feelings of disconnect and moments of disconnect. All of these feelings of not connecting with people that I’m super close to, I found moments this week that gave me that frustration.

Recall #2: I liked that so much more. I wasn’t nervous. I think before I was so caught up with making sure that everyone got everything. I feel like everything was there and I didn’t have to think about it. It felt so different. (Your listening was beautiful. Give yourself all the room in the world to be nervous. Your abiltity to listen to him and be present is beautiful and talented and lovely. You’re such a young woman at this point. If you’re 14 there’s a difference to all of it. And when he mentioned the birth control that was all beautiful. What I saw mostly from this take, this scene starts with New York, and whatever you think about before asking is I can’t believe I’m stuck here. It’s not specific for you enough. This couldn’t have been a good night. Dig into your paradigm here. And I want you to do your homework at 14 and 18. Do your homework from that stance, from that place. You finding that child in you and working from that place will be beneficial for you. And don’t worry about it not being your parents. )

Critique: Everything you’re doing is right and to add on that, a couple more read throughs of the script and some focused imagination work. On your parents and how you’re different. The specificity. The things he talks about with you can hit you more deeply and resonate more fully with you. It can be more specific. It doesn’t feel like a specific person could walk in on you guys right now. It feels like the dad could be more explored. I’m gonna give you a couple things to think about this time through, but the history of this family and your relationship to it is where you should look for the next time. It feels like you’re not afraid to commit and jump and your imagination is fertile. The age. You know a lot, you’re sophisticated. You carry yourself in a grounded way. This young woman is clearly bright but she’s not as sophisticated as you. There’s a few ways you can play with that. Your phsysicality but even the things he’s talking about, like birth control. It’s a little intense. It can hit you more deeply. No one’s every spoken to you like this before. You can take your time with these things. It’s not a trap, you can be yourself. These are things that can help you age yourself down. You’re different like he is. So the more you can set yourself apart from the world.

Elliott, “Uncle Frank” (new)

Recall: I’m feeling really good. I felt fully focused in on her. I like when everything else disappears. I could’ve been louder I think. (Is that a decibel thing?) Sometimes there is whispering going on especially with the conversation, and I don’t want the family to hear it. Homework wise I feel like I really understand this relationship and how I feel like Beth. It’s almost a second chance at having a normal relationship with a family member. It’s great. I can talk to my family about my life. It’s really nice. I know how bright she is and I know how limiting this town and family can be. It’s the closest thing I can ever have to a daughter. There are so many relationships I have in New York but you always long for family. (That’s really beautiful. It feels like you two made a really beautiful connection. It intuitively allows her to be open and genuine to you. Without you being pulled back, these conversations are a little easy for you right now. You’re giving her the keys to the kingdom. How specific is your work on the family and the history of it?) With my dad it’s, he tried to kill me when I was a boy. My first boyfriend, killed himself when I rejected him. I’ve been closeted ever since except in New York where I can be more myself. My sister knows. My brother just thinks I’m weird. (I love the way you’re talking about this family. Your note is why now? How difficult is this conversation? What led to this moment? You’re giving her a whole bunch of information that was hard to grab onto. It can’t be easy for you to do this. There are certain things holding you back from outing yourself.) The birth control part feels like I should be holding myself back. The second scene I feel more liberated. There’s a scene where her boyfriend, was using her to get to me. I didn’t know she was in New york and shows up at my apartment with all my gay friends and she crashed my party. Here we’re going cross country to my father’s funeral. I have to go. Wally said we have to go together. ()

Recall #2: I thought about what you said and I felt like there was more tension behind my voice. (When you ask about the grades, she doesn’t get it yet. You know more.) I feel like I’m playing off her. It feels right. (You’re really beautiful and gentle with her. The only place I want you to get more cemented in is your history with this family. The more you put into that, the more this relationship will shine.)

Critique: The note isn’t make it more difficult for yourself. The family is in the room while you’re doing this. I’m saying that in the doing of this, they aren’t present enough. Getting her out of the stoneage can be a deeper struggle for you. You’re giving her the keys to escape. You’re giving her information to make her independent from her family. It’s precious and it’s timed. You’re setting her free in some way. Your voice was going inward a bit and I get that we’re in the kitchen and whispering. It can be quiet but crystal clear. It can be quiet but you’re blowing her mind with this stuff. You can drop your voice but not your attention.

Sam, “Hell or High Water” (new)

Recall: Given circumstances are all firing and present and alive. We have to take the car back and drop it at the ranch. We’re gonna do one more tomorrow morning and launder the money. We need by tomorrow 15-20k. We’re not close at this point. The family stuff all makes sense. Kids are always hard. I do homework on them but it seems like to a certain point it’s substitution. (The only place I was going for was the kids. I think a lot of you as an actor I’ve seen you do a lot of unbelievable things on this stage. I think you could step into something tomorrow. Don’t let yourself off the hook with the kids. I’m cool with substitutijon. How are you negotiating this?) I’m using, I know Justin is 14 and wants to be the QB, I’m think about the idea of what it means to be responsible for two lives. I play the conjunction game and I know I’m a failure as a father. I have my hopes and dreams and all of my failures. I’m trying to live truthfully in those without pushing it. (Let me give you something, There’s a boy and he’s 14 years old. On his wall is a Johnny Menzel poster, he’s lying in bed and you’re imagining whatever he thinks about his dad. What’s his understanding of his father. His POV of his father and what it will be when this mission is complete. The connection of my father and how I think about my kid, is a real deep connection. I can draw from my childhood and project that on my kid. The deepest parts of parenting is when I can recognize myself in my kid. Oh yeah I’m that guy to him because of the relationship I had to my dad.) That’s helpful because we’re acting up here. I have no trouble making it real. I need stuff like that for certain subjects. I can build off of that. (Yeah and if there’s a boy lying in his bed and you can walk in without a dollar in your pocket or walk in with a deed to an oil ranch. He will understand when he’s a man. You have had a dad and have looked to him for certain things.)

Yeah that made it deeper. The way I heard the lines and responded was different. (Yeah he’s trying to pull you on this ride and you’re focusing on what’s deeper underneath.)

Critique: It feels like what we talked about changed stuff for you. I think you’re making headway on the kids. (Yeah I feel like after we talked I brought it into the scene with me more. I feel like I do homework from start to finish and in certain scenes I’ll gravitate to the theme that’s happening. In my first take I had things on the importance scale and flipped the one in the background to the front. There are times when I wish I had a director. I don’t think the work is ever bad but it feels like something’s missing.) I feel that way too sometimes. The key for me was he starts asking you about your kids and why you didn’t tell them about the grandma. That’s where I would pause and think about. What were you coming into this scene with? (The morning before this scene, I was thinking of the mix of adrenaline and what’s happening next. He sort of pulls me out of that spin and I was thinking more, we’re not going to talk about this and it’s surface level.) I’d go into this like you, it was a good day’s work. You got money in your pocket. Until he gets in your kitchen. The scene was good before I touched it, I just wanted to underscore a few things. You do need a third eye and yet, what you guys are learning in terms of texting. I feel like you’re a smart actor and didn’t miss anything. I’m trying to push you further into story. I get that, that’s not the first place you land as an actor. (I like to go fast so maybe if I had slowed down I would’ve solidified that earlier.) I don’t know how much work you put into this piece. But you don’t necessarily need a director.

Zach, “Hell or High Water” (1st repeat)

Recall: There were little jitters coming back. I just looked at him. (Relationship?) I mean yeah but I could always do more. It’s not as strong as it should be. I don’t know, it’s like editing. It’s never done. That’s what it feels like with homework. With play I get satisfication and see that it’s working. (Family stuff. It seems like you’re listening well and communicating well. In terms of what’s about to happen why is it important to his kids?) Through him my life has meaning. It breaks the spell of generations running through the family. (Is the death of your mom and the funeral and that he’s displaced, is that important to you?) I didn’t do homework on that part. We didn’t have a good dad growing up I killed the dad. I just want us to be better than anything we know of. (I want to put more meaning behind the scene and why you say what you say. And he doesn’t think we’re gonna make it out of this. you guys are on a spree right now and it doesn’t feel like this is going to end well. Whatever happens it’s like we’re not getting out of this. For you, all bets are off. You’re off the rails. Why?) He’s given up on his life and if he can make it better for him and his sons. (This character’s dreams and hopes aren’t even there.) He pretty much knows what’s going to happen. (And he’s never going back to prison. I’m trying to heighten the stakes a little bit. You’re in a different place than Sam. Take the reings off. Allow yourself to go to that place where it ends bloody. And within all of that you’re letting him know something in this scene which is important.)

I think I made the decision to rob the bank right before I say that I don’t know anyone that got away with anything. (Let’s add that moment before giving that last bit of wisdom. You got the solution. I think there’s a lot of humor in this guy because I think there’s deflection.) Yeah I think this guy’s just living it up and partying. (Yeah he’s not worried about what he’s not going to accomplish.)

Critique: It’s evolving I think you had a little bit of a laugh, I think the party mode is what sets you a part and I think there’s a little bit of a cap that’s happening. I like when you get physicalized. There’s a party going on and this guy’s not afraid to be the fool. It’s part of this guy. They’re brothers but they’re different. You could laugh your way through this scene. There’s so many places where he could laugh. I think this character’s great for you but I think you could blow him out a little bit. You have a great understanding of this guy.

Brad, “Untitled Wedding Officiant Project” (new)

Recall: It’s wild to play it out. It felt good. From the minute we read through it, it was fun. The dialogue felt like it was there. As a writer I wanted to flip a little around. It was wild to prep for. It’s very personal too. There are certain things where there were a lot of layers. (Yeah just pulling it all together.) Yeah the nerves were great. I’m not super smooth. The turn is that it’s permission to give him more focus and we can hook up tonight and this is kind of a meet cute. This is page 3. This is very much set up for me. But he’s important because he stays around via text. It’s safe to invest in someone who actually isn’t available. For this character it’s more permission to fantasize about someone. I think because of my nerves it worked okay. I’m not literally Brad but maybe as a writer I can change a few things. (From what I’ve seen it’s compelling it’s interesting and feels personal to you. I highly recommend you working on this piece here. But I also think you should do a reading. Hearing it out loud without you worrying about it and watching it. If you don’t cast someone else, tape it.) I would like to do more in class but my best friend that goes on a road trip with me I don’t know that anyone in class would be right for it. I would love to do more though. (I think it’s important to hear it. Did you find it difficult to be present?) It was harder at first and rehearsing. Running it was a little more okay I felt like my nerves grounded me. I was going down a rabbit hole of thinking before coming on. It was harder than I thought to feel that present. (The prep becomes getting out of your own way. A physicalization, what I’d prep a little more strongly is officiating a wedding. You haven’t done the prep of officiating that wedding and stepping off.) It’s probably an hour, an hour and a half since.

The line drop totally grounded me. It got me into character. It was helpful. (It was amazing.)

Critique: Prep on simple things. The alcohol, the rush of coming off the stage. You’re the guy. Just to pull yourself together in this world. Focus on one thing. Get a drink in you, something specific and simple that you can lean into. The news that turns it at the end, take your time with that. If that’s the moment where this relationship switches, carve that moment. Take it in and don’t rush it.

Tommy, “Untitled Wedding Officiant Project” (new)

Recall: I was a little nervous at the beginning. I settled into it. It’s a fun role to play. He’s kind of the life of the party. He’s forward and doesn’t take himself too seriously. In my prep work, he is kind of one of those people that hasn’t found the love that he’s looking for either. And he is kind of safe because I know him through my family. This could be my person and I think that also made me nervous. He’s forward but he could also be the one. I think he feels like he doesn’t deserve it. I think he goes through partners fast and this playfulness is kind of a front that he thinks he’s undesirable. (Is there a problem here? A conflict because it was feeling too easy. But from what you just said, I love that you have this internal conflict. He could be different. Lean into that, not the discomfort. Internally, give him a negative internal monologue about himself and his own inadequateness.)

I was not going to get that line. (I loved that take.) I feel like before I went up on the line I had a moment where I was internally dealing with the fact that I was at a beautiful wedding and will I ever have a moment like that? I enjoyed it. I enjoyed being up here. (You’re so savvy with being up on stage and funny, it’s easy to overlook the anxiety underneath. I can help you just dig in deeper to story and the bottom.)

Critique: