**Thursday Night Mike Teaching, 09/02/21**

**Reyneen, “Silver Linings Playbook” (new)**

Recall: It was okay. I don’t feel 100%. My prep work was coming from the scene before. Of course I text Jordy. I have depression, borderline personality disorder. I’m looking to feeling wanted and needed. I literally have no friends at this point. My parents yelled at me, calling me a fuck up. I’m thinking I can’t get myself into anymore trouble. I need to stay out of this shit and focus on myself. If I give him this letter it’s another mistake on my track record. I do have a Tommy and I miss him a lot. I’m spinning about how I’m a fuck up. I was trying really hard to listen. I think the scene started okay but the dancing thing, the competition, I’m trying to decide if it’s premeditated or if I just think he could do this with me. (I think the idea with the dancing, it feels like this is a dream for her. I think there’s a lot more homework and value to the dream of this dancing. It’s something you wanted.) So it’s kind of a trap in the beginning? It’s suffocating. They’re watching me very delicately. When I leave, they’re saying who are these guys. And Jordy is an ex-coworker of mine. They yelled at both of them and scared them off. Yelled at me.

#2 I think the parents thing, the anger at my parents and wanting to scream. Instead of the self deprecating inner voice it was like my fucking parents. (So you shifted your inner monologue, rather than being the victim, you’re pushing back.) The agenda, the dancing felt more powerful and it made sense as to like why, I want something and I deserve to have what I want. I give so much. I deserve something.

Critique: That’s up to you. When you discover oh my god, he’s gonna help me. That’s you winning the Tony. You gotta bear down on that a little more strongly. It’s gotta mean something. She really cares about this. Prep wise, I see a lot of good stuff going on in you but I don’t think you’re as engaged as you could be. These are exauhsting parts. I think the prep, let’s back you up to twenty minutes after your parents are yelling. She’s also not able to fully process all of those feelings and deal with them in a healthy way. She’s like I’m not fucking helping you. Are you grounded now? Like a kid? She’s no victim in this. Find a new prep for yourself and be embroiled in this mess, like she’s 16. She’s back into this mess and back living at the parent’s.

#2: And you’re gonna get it because you’re smart and manipulative. You decided fuck the POV of the victim and instead it was like I’m gonna make this happen for myself. You’re the one calling the shots. The first time through I think took the steam out of you. The moment where you laugh at him is the best moment in this scene. The impulse to feel something real that you never saw coming, that’s what great acting is. The feeling of being alive. That’s where you need to live. Honoring whatever’s really going on. I love that beat. So many beats were strong and crystal clear. Especially the last beat. Whatever decision you shifted, do your homework from that point of you. She copes by making terrible choices. The relationship with the parents is critical. You have to go back to high school. Whatever’s going on in that garage, even deeper. Even more. You’re out before you cry or whatever. You come out here but it’s not about him. I want you to be physically in your own shit. He’s a by the way at this point. If you want to make your point. Make it, then walk away. You start to say something really important and then start to walk away. Make sure physically you’re standing there and a force to be reckoned with.

**AJ, “Silver Linings Playbook” (new)**

Recall: It’s hard man, it’s hard coming back into something after leaving it for a while. I re-read the script, immersed myself in the scenes. I thought about the two scenes we’d done previously. The diner was right before this. I re-read the script and today again, just to try and find that stuff again. Working really hard on the scene before. I tried not to think about it too much but reconnect with the stuff that makes this guy tick. Especially coming from zoom to onstage. This dude is so physically driven and even in the rehearsals before this, felt like a leap. (Bringing my body back into it, what’s his walk, I agree this is a physical character. It’s all about your breathing and bringing life into your body. It’s not just about beliefs but using your body.) I think that’s the element that feels like the most untapped. I think there’s a little more that can come from that. Normally I can connect my brain to my body but I feel if I do that, I’ll be fucking crazy on stage. And not in a way that helps the piece. I don’t want to buckshot my energy all over the place. I think I want to engage my physicality more. I think another element is that he’s on medication now too and I think maybe that’s making him a little more grounded. I don’t think he’s manic anymore but this is how he’s used to interacting with the world.

#2 I’m feeling much better. I didn’t realize how much limiting language I was using. I think I was scared about this scene. And letting that go a little bit. This dude is pretty fearless. He’s not afraid to say whatever and step into some shit. I don’t know exactly what it was but I think that bread a lot into my prep.

Critique: His energy is sprayed all over the story. I think part of it is revving yourself back up and spinning like him. Part of it is this internal motor and she’s got the same thing. You seem like a really grounded force in this scene and that’s what you want to portray to her, but what’s going on inside forces you out of your comfort zone. Underneath it there’s a fire going on and there is a craziness to this guy. Air on the side of too much. Physically too. It’s like goldilocks. The medication may change how you perceive things but it doesn’t cap what your beliefs are. Don’t let yourself off the hook. Dance. It’s so wildly out of the question. What happened with Jordy? What are your expectations at the top of the scene? (I’m gonna finish my run and then go home. I don’t know that she knows about Jordy.) You just did a good deed and the fact that she’s saying no, you know what you just did for her. This guy just put his neck out. The scene with the doctor is a great scene. (Most of the work I’ve done in class, this is the one that I’ve had the lowest capacity for, this was a busy week and I think I maybe settled into the scene too much.) In your prep, experiment with it, my prep for this thing is falling over to my left. You can’t be settled in any way. He’s always falling and catching himself. Anything you’re doing that settles you and grounds you isn’t what you want.

#2: I love what you’re saying right now and love your honesty. I think we all understand that, that don’t fuck it up. That message in your head is the devil. What that does is take the steam out. Running is the best prep. There’s no way for you to think about not fucking this up, it forced you right there and to be present. Also what she was giving you was different and you were forced to squirm and try other tactics. I think because of your prep and what you were saying. The fear of being caught acting. Where you guys are at with this now is a breath of fresh air. You guys can do this one again. It took a lot of energy to get you both into this place. It takes a lot to get there. The emotional psychological spin.

**Cameron, “The Devil Wears Prada” (1st repeat)**

Recall: Laptop wasn’t working for first Recall/Critique.

#2 I didn’t like it. I think the laptop and the sitting are bringing me down.

#3 (What’d we learn?) Don’t abandon the take. Hold your stance and your choices and beliefs. Don’t anticipate. (You can’t play a don’t so you have to put your expectations in a different direction. You’re engaged to your trip to Paris. Did you feel more engaged in the play of it?) Yeah. I understand where she’s coming from but I have to stand up for myself. This is something I want. (That first take you were pretty good. But this last time you made the decision to get on top of the scene. You decided you weren’t going to be a doormat.) I think it helped that Storie was more in it. I felt like no I have to stand up for myself. She didn’t hold back to hit me so I thought I’d hit her back. (I love you in this part and I love that it parallels some of your life. You’re taking the rapport of what you have with this job. You understand what she’s juggling.)

Critique:

#2 She made mince meat out of you. She had her way with you. Get on top of things. Are you guys in a relationship? She’s really feeling it. You’ve gotta get on top of this thing. You’ve gotta deal with her how you would in a relationship. If she’s being selfish and distracting you from Miranda, then she needs to fucking hear that. She needs to get it. You don’t need to be her punching bag. Miranda is calling you at the end of this. I don’t know how you answer the phone to her.

#3: You should continue on this path. It’s a really great part for you. You could get an Emily and a Miranda. Do you feel like you’re growing in the repeats? (Yeah. I like that it’s different each time. And I like fucking up, up here because it’s class.) You’re working at a high level and working with a pro up here. This is legitimately some really good work. You need to come into the scene ready to go.

**Storie, “The Devil Wears Prada” (1st repeat)**

Recall: Laptop wasn’t working for first Recall and most of Critique. ☹

#2: We fucked up all the lines.

#3: It was fun to do it different each time. I def. wasn’t judging myself in it. (As we said last scene you can do a lot of things with very little work. That’s a curse for you, it’s easy for you. But when you dig into a relationship, a moment. You took that beat at the top and ran with it. She walked into a bear trap. It gave you more colors in every direction and gave you more power. It allowed you to engage in the relationship. It’s an interesting relationship.

Critique: You bring so many gifts to the party. We can see how one comment can seep into your psyche. The relationship and the straw that breaks the camel’s back and she hasn’t even told you that yet. When you got up I thought you were enraged. Whatever you’re feeling, run with it. I’m not saying she has to be angry. So don’t be afraid of it Storie. What’s really important is that you take the words they give you and you use whatever’s going on in you and you gotta match them. Don’t get rid of your discomfort. Live in it and make her feel what’s going on in you. It’s your power as an actor.

#2

#3

**Susannah, “The Abyss” (2nd repeat)**

Recall: I’m doing alright. It was different than rehearsal. My prep was a little bit revving myself up. It’s a cage and that’s what she had to stabilize in for 6 hours. I’m not supposed to be here. I muscled my way in here and stabilized in a small room with a bunch of guys. I felt like a caged animal. I leaned in hard to this is my baby. These military guys are in here and they don’t know what they’re doing. I’m disappointed in him. He let them in. I got myself pissed. I was trying not to aim at it. Stuart said I was dancing whenever I felt uncomfortable or awkward. I think the one thing I was trying to not aim at is that last outburst I have. The way it’s been happening is that he touches a nerve. I know that it’s a weird fucking outburst and I never know if I hit it right. The words are weird. (What is it about the outburst?) It’s this weird joke and it’s childish. My anxiety is that I hope I'm at the heightened state of mind enough that it comes out naturally. That’s where my anxiety’s been coming out.

#2 Yeah that felt good. He’s telling me how to feel. (What happened with Tesla?) I got busy, haven’t been making the effort to see him. (Is he right?) Yes. But he doesn’t deserve to point that out. (Yeah that’s the beat. Like fuck you. He goes in your dirty underwear. You got a little bit fun and showy there, let’s try this one where you just push him back. Really make him feel your hand in his face. Why do you ask about the ring?) I think we’re supposed to be a united front and if you have your ring and I don’t, I’m the bitch. We already talked about the divorce. (For this take, do that and also humiliate him. You’re saying I don’t love you anymore. I let go. In his heart your still on his left finger. I think there’s more venom to it. Grow the fuck up.)

#3 I felt good. It was cool to go a third time and be able to bounce off whatever. I’m still looking at that last one. I went off lines. That’s what I do when, I mean he was kneeling. That’s what it probably looked like when he proposed to me. (That moment was beautiful. It’s a physical manifestation of what’s going on in the scene. You stood up and that was beautiful.) I completely forgot what the note was. I went to what I usually do when I feel weird. I forget the words and say what my character is thinking and feeling. I don’t know if it’s a crutch or not, because sometimes I can fit it into the words. (You can and you need to. It’s okay because it was a really organic beat. I really wanna teach you guys, you have to know your words. The bigger win is that in a proposal stance, you got the situation under your control and wounded him deeply.)

Critique: You’re both working really well. You guys are exploring the relationship. There’s a lot of adrenaline going on in this scene, I like where both of you guys are at. Your ownership of this space I felt like we were really in a sub. This feels like your ship. She has a strong point of view but I don’t think she’s looking for a fight. I think he’s getting under your skin but you don’t wanna show it. I want your head away from this moment. You’re trying to fix the ship, not get dragged into his bullshit, but he’s wearing the ring. And he pushes your buttons until he gets the reaction he wants. You can’t play a don’t. Don’t anticipate. All you can do is anticipate something else. The ship. The safety of these people. You didn’t come here to fight. He’s gonna goat you until you do. Whatever you’re doing up here has to take more attention. Whenever that outburst happens, I’ll buy it. I want your attention on the ship and when you can’t hold back anymore, Fuck you.

#2

#3

**Elliott, “The Abyss” (2nd repeat)**

Recall: I’m good. I made some discoveries in our last rehearsal. I didn’t think I would be able to get there, arguing with her. (Fill me in on the process and how the notes have gone.) I think in the first few runs of this I was earnest. I was focusing a lot on wanting to move on and not enough on the past of our relationship. I think one of the blocks is that I wasn’t comfortable being upset. Me, Elliott. I realized and remembered arguments with people that I’m close with, there’s trust there. I can be an ass with people I care about. There’s leeway there. (So the confrontation was uncomfortable?) Yeah and I think I still held back a little bit but it was better. Stuart told me to think about things that would make me more upset with the state of the relationship. (He understands that she has a job to do here.) I think she doesn’t need to be here and it’s genuinely foolish of her to come down her. I’m the risk taker and she’s the brain. It’s not her job. Also I’m worried about her. This is the most dangerous thing I’ve ever done and I don’t want her down here. (you feel pretty good?) Yeah it’s better. The state when you’re arguing with someone. You know you’re going off the rails a little bit and you know you’re being like a kid, throwing an adult tantrum, but that’s okay because you know this person understands you.

#2 Felt better. Clearer intentions. (You picked an agenda?) Yeah. (Is the heat as hot as it should be?) Yeah.

#3: I’m good I don’t know if I brought the fire. It was all powderkegged to the very end.

Critique: I love your confrontation. You can do it so now forget it. You’re watching your levels of confrontation, rage. Even at the top I see you stewing. You don’t have to show her all that, you don’t have to show us all that. When you see her and how much ownership she takes. You’re like fuck her, get out of my ship. Don’t worry about your level of anger. When you watch your emotion, it cuts you off from her. It fails you when you look inward and start watching your own anger. I want you to be not getting into this with her but you’re too interbulated to stop. It’s all about her. Do you have an agenda? (I was fearing and anticipating this conversation, but I wanted it to be on my terms. About our relationship.) So he can’t help himself. I want you to slow down a bit. Right now you’re thinking about jack it up. You do have an agenda in this scene. I don’t know if it’s secretly protect her, protect yourself from her, protect this turf, I want you to play one of them and slow everything down. It was so pumped up that it was happening too fast. If she ignores you, deal with that and find out what that makes you feel.

#2: I feel like we lost some fire but gained connection. While she’s doing shit, you can have other stuff that you’re doing. Each time she doesn’t give you the reaction that you want. She’s stuck down here, the line about the irresponsible things, you have to make that land on her. She’s calling you a moron about the levels. I want you to feel that. You can attack right away or walk away. I want you to live freely in the scene and not anticipate or aim.

#3 You’re allowing what’s really happening to you to happen. What’s exciting about this moment is the concept of confrontation, or being sexy, whatever it is, at the end of all that work is okay I'm there and forget that. Allow that to exist. Allow that possibility to exist. When she affects you in a certain way, that’s available to you. Those colors are available to you. You’re not forced to use the anger throughout the scene. You can be available to be present with whatever’s happening to you. The line about caring about you really landed on her. It didn’t patch up the relationship but you really opened up your heart to her in that moment. The main point I want to say to you is this: you’re a beautiful actor, sometimes you get stuck about if you have the tools. Absolutely you do. The relationship that’s going on between you guys matters to you. Trust that. That will lead you. Rather than okay I'm working on a confrontation. What’s going on beneath all that and why this matters to you two. Trust that and allow your scene partner to drag you. (This is the first time I felt stupid when she asked me about the ring.) Those thoughts start to come up. That realization right there is worth the whole exercise. It comes to you naturally rather than everything else.

**Brad, “Insurance” (new)**

Recall: I thought it would be fun to do a monologue that was written as a monologue to see what it’s like and play around with it. (I worked with him a bunch and there’s so many great monologues in this book. How do you feel?) It was pretty terrifying. Being alone on stage, I’ve never done that in here. To know I’m the only person being looked at is scary. I definitely felt tense at times. I was so nervous. (The nerves of a monologue is clear. You have Mr. Stearns with you.) Yeah and as fun as this one was, it became this mindgame of layers. Insurance salesmen and what kind and what’s the stronger comedic choice. Nothing is ever easy. I feel okay. I definitely more nervous than my rehearsal. (Did the nerves dissipate?) A little bit. I kind of went up on one moment but luckily I was on the phone so could pretend like I was listesning. I felt okay. It was fun to feel what was vibing in the room. (You’re an actor too that thrives on getting laughs and how to build on it without going for them.) That’s a fear with comedy too, like it is a relationship with the audience. The words are funny, but feeling that energy. It’s funny, like I’m being seen and also wanting to hold onto that. Like a standup comedian, feeling that pull. It is like a different feeling than I usually have on this stage. (You felt the room from the initial conversation with little Susy. I never felt like you lost it. I'm projecting everything onto you. How much of Mr. Stearn’s convo do you have?) I think most of it. There were a few times when I had to figure out what he was saying, but I do think I know what he was saying.

#2: That was really fun. I’ve never played it that sincere. (Maybe the truth of it is somewhere between the two. I’d also play with the scenarios more. You’re carrying both sides of the relationship. Your attention is on both tactics. There were different laughs.) I broke a little. I wasn’t expecting to. (I think you should play with a bunch of monologues.) I think in life too my nerves are telling me that I’m doing the right thing. Coming out of lockdown and having that weird feeling of being seen and out there. It’s like getting back on the horse. (And also the relationship with the audience is something you thrive on.) I felt more comfortable with the second take. I think there’s something really fun and special about the relationship with the audience. (You’re a master of playing with that relationship. You could should this monologue. And what if he’s playing on xbox.)

Critique: What if, he’s not selling insurance. What if he’s selling a peace of mind. Really creating an intimacy with him. He’s telling him dangerous things that could happen with his daughter and wife. He’s fighting the cheesey insurance agent thing, with working on the relationship. The relationship grows to being a friend at the end. He’s seduced by the fact that you care about him. It’s gonna change it. You might get fewer laughs. I’m interested to see how deep this relationship can go.