Thursday Night Acting Class with Mike 7/22/21

Kevin, Barry (new)

Recall #1: Feels good. I just started with a core set of beliefs and built off of there. The beliefs are in contradiction with what’s happening in this scene to force me into this situation. The beliefs were a value mantra. I tried to really focus on keeping the beliefs in mind and focus on what AJ needed in the moment. There’s a way where the menis can be there from the top but I don’t feel like he needs that in this moment. There’s a lot of tactics I try to use before I have to snuff him out.

Critique #1: I want to add for you, by this point he wants out. Take where you ended and start there. That’s where we’re at at the top of this scene. It’s more fucked than it’s ever been. And then there’s him. He’s your guy. He’s got a wife and kids. I just want to elevate where you start off your prep. I want to start from an 8. Also, you mentioned tactics, based on what I’m getting from AJ, they aren’t reaching him. There’s humor, there’s touch, the expectations. You have to expect he’ll man-up.

Recall #2: It felt like what I did with my beliefs was tied to what I was trying to get out of him. I do want to calm him and convince him. My belief is I’m a good person and I only kill bad people and I’m giving him a thousand exit ramps. If I kill him what I believe breaks and I can’t hold onto that anymore.

Critique #2: It played like you were trying to save his life. Like you were begging him, let me save you. The undeniable imminent tragedy. Once he killed his buddy, I felt differently about him. Your agenda shifted into save his life and it played differently, it attached that heady stuff into relationship. Really different and amazing.

AJ, Barry (new)

Recall #1: I feel okay. It’s a hard one. I’m really trying to focus on everything before. I don’t think I know what’s happening from second to second. It’s like a million thoughts, a million emotions. At times I don’t feel as connected to Kevin as I should be. But how could I? He made me do it. I don’t know what I’m trying to get him to do.

Critique #2: You’re exactly where you should be. The confusion is all really good. I want you to start. You weren’t ready to start when you started. You gotta be at the place where you cannot function with this any longer. As much as you’re focused on your prep, Kevin has to believe what you’re saying. You’ll turn yourself in and he won’t get caught. And your wife knows. Once you have that homework done, none of it matters. Now it’s all about your scene partner. I’m not saying he’s changing you but you have to deal with what he’s telling you. And then at the end you have to convince him that you’re cool.

Recall #2: It felt very similar in a lot of ways. I tried to really focus on learning who this guy is. It made me feel more crazy. I think I was very anxious about doing this scene, there’s some sort of mania in it. I’m more comfortable with guys that go between the ears. I told Kevin I was nervous about this.

Critique #2: You knew you’d fucked up. There were moments you used your eyes as weapons. There are moments when you look over and deal with him. The last time you did it with that blushy pink cheeked smile. You knew you’d fucked up. You travelled to a lot of different colors and places. You were following impulses and dealing with your scene partner in a different way. You have a way of finding the truth and being honest but don’t let that hold you back and put you in a corner. I think the process you guys came from feels really solid.

Genny, “Sideways” (new)

Recall #1: That went pretty darn okay. It’s not like an overly complicated scene. I opened the newspaper and the article was about a show. How do I get his attention, I really like this guy and then the bombshell drops. I try not to overthink it. She says getting divorced from her husband is a big deal and even though Jack is the one crossing the line, he’s crossing the line too. I worked really hard to be okay and I thought he was a nice guy but he’s not. He lied to me too. Frehsman roommate is not taking responsibility. That’s lame.

Critique #1:

Recall #2: I felt a little self-concious at the start and felt his bicep and he didn’t do anything with it. I think for me, I was connected and listening a lot but then I kind of got lost when I was talking about Stephanie, because I have to fix it now. I was flustered. The part right before he had to fuck me first, I was giving him a chance and he blows it.

Critique #2: I think the sexiness is a part of this. I wanted you to keep touching him.

Darrin, “Sideways” (new)

Recall #1: Trying not to overthink it. I thought this would be, I wanted to do what we talked about, letting things wash through. I’m not forcing anything. I’m connected to what I’m doing, who she is. And then just trying to deal with her. If I had a focus coming into this scene it was just to be present and dealing with what’s in front of me.

Critique #1: I’ve enver seen you quite so grounded and connected and listening. When you play with someone at this level, your game rises. You coming here after 4 years, and the first thing that happened was you were 100% connected to what you’re doing. Digging into your behavior at the top was so grounded. The foundation that both of you guys have is outstanding. My only note: Expectations. Once the bomb drops, all of the text beyond that is you fighting your way back. Find a way to remind her who you are, he’s a liar and I got roped into it. Saying you haven’t been with anybody has a lot of weight. You have to fight to the death. You can fix this because it matters to you. Use different tactics, play off of her.

Recall #2: Feeling a little deeper. I don’t think I’m penetrating enough.

Critique #2: One of the things I want to say to you, when you create music and working in that space. It’s a visceral thing for you. (That takes a lot of building.) The part that I want to include for you is the rest of your body. When she gets up, like stand up, I want you to be involved with impulses. You’re seeing what’s going on with her. Make sure the impulses you’re following emotionally, make sure your body’s with it too. You’ve gotta throw yourself in front of the car. Even if you don’t get up just sitting in the chair itself, I want you to feel that same sort of involvement.

Sam, “Pillowman” (new)

Recall: I liked tonight. My state was definitely a much bigger factor for me. I think I got lost in the screaming and did my own solo. I felt like I left my love for him hanging in the beginning. (With the electrodes on you, I thought your physical state was pretty awesome and committed. I didn’t have any problem with it) I felt like a really good detective tonight. I felt like I did my job. The audience is just meeting this guy and I have to drive the scene forward. I felt good about the pace and I got him back on track.

Critique: I wouldn’t back off on the physical state. It’s gotta hurt. I think you’re beautiful in this. I think you put yourself in harm’s way. That’s a pro move. What I thought was most professional about what you did, there’s a moment of discovery in this scene, the ability to stop a scene, stop the motor and take in what is going on.. Oh my god, those moments are crystal. That’s what you’re looking for in that scene. The one thing I can tell people is slow the fuck down. Trust yourself enough to stop, you stopping is such a powerful tool everyone is afraid to use. It’s not a trick I do, but there’s no question I use time to my advantage. You have to have complete confidence in your homework and process. I was so impressed in that whole bit when you got yourself together and made the discoveries. It was a pro moment and a pro move. You stood up and made sure he received that information. You also touched him and did that brother thing. This scene is powerful and difficult to watch. I want to keep playing.

Brad, “Pillowman” (new)

Recall: I feel mostly good. I think there’s a lot, there’s so much. This is the most I’ve read something before, I’m still seeking answers. I did kill two of the kids. There’s so many layers to this. What is truth, what I went through. That too, I had fun playing darker things, again how much do I know. And when I tell him near the end, I don’t feel great about it. And why did I start doing this in the past 3 weeks. I was really wanting to cling to an answer for that. It feels like this is new to me. (Is he pretending he’s debilitated) I don’t think so. There’s all the stories and violence against children. I say all children lead horrible lives. Is this my favor to them? So it’s a lot of things. I don’t think I’m puttingit on. I think I’m relying on that a little. Also I think I’m so desensitized to the violence but that’s my past. I tell him you don’t know what I can handle so that tolerance too. This kid can handle that. I did go there which was uncomfortable of course. Again what am I coming out of that with?

Critique: The things you’re grappling with are all beautiful actor questions. You as a fine actor, you’re finding the character as you go, that’s a beautiful thing. You’re using class to find him. You have a real intelligence about you. When someone’s talking to you, you carry yourself as an intelligent human. There are moments in this scene you’re leaning into the debilitated state, there’s also a level of sinisterness beneath that. There are moments in this scene where you expand and then contract. Moments where you translate that into the disturbed boy. It feels like you’re still finding that, which is the best place you want to be. You gotta start nailing some stuff down for yourself. When you’re playing a reality that’s not clear, you have to nail things down so that if this is true, we’re being executed in an hour. Does he belive that? (I did in my notes write invincible? Not remorseful. Do I have this invincibility? Is that a threat to me? Is death a release?) When he says what if no kids are killed, are you acting to him? (I think I’m answering questions, staying with him from point to point.) Do you understand that you have killed these kids? That you’re lying? (I understand that it was a little lie. I told them what they needed to hear that we killed the kids together. But again it’s all he said, he said. I don’t know what to believe.) If we had 6 weeks of rehearsal and a director to help you, but also thank god you’re in acting class. Figuring these things out on your own is valuable. You’re in a beautiful critical place. You need to nail some things down. This is a truth: we’re brothers, you were tortured, beyond that you’re sliding around in truths. You need to work the equations because it’s so deceptive. You’ve got secrets and lies. Unless he’s dissociated, the world is your oyster. You have to nail the circumstances down. Then nail the physicality. (What if you lack the confidence in terms of the story?) Right now I’m gonna go Primal Fear and this is all a plan, rehearse that. Move a little further, rehearse that. Does it feel right? Then play fully debilitated. Find the truth, keep honing it in. That along with the physicality. Within there you’ll find the truth. You’re close. Right off the bat, you’re bored and he’s screaming and you’re not anxious about it. You did do an ahhh and there’s layers already. What does that scream to do me? Am I really bored or is that just what I say? I want to say this, whatever this guy went through, there’s no way you can over work that part of him. There’s a bottomless pit. Just keep going deeper and deeper, for your prep the willingness you allow yourself to go there. You have to think the unthinkable. You have to go there and sit with it. I feel like part of the answer lies in you as a little boy. (The mental side, that’s it’s own thing. The being impaired and how that overlaps with the violence. That’s a really hard thing to.) I don’t think you start with how mentally capable am I. You have to plant the truths. The more you move and see the flags, it’ll become more clear. There’s a lot of maze-like work to be done. It’s math. Also physically. You carry yourself like such an intelligent, sophisticated person. There’s also a gentleness in him. At the end of this process, there’s still a person on this stage that chops off toes and puts razor blades down a throat. It’s covered but it’s a truth. The sum of all those truths is where you play. What is true about this.

Katie, “Kevin Can Fuck Himself” (new)

Recall #1: I’m okay. I’ve been excited to move into a new house but then he just said we’re staying and I find out that the life savings is gone. He’s spent it all and I’m an idiot and a door mat and everyone thinks I’m stupid. I think I’m gonna kill him. I got the coke from this mechanic who’s been creeping me out but tonight I wanted someone to listen to me and even he won’t listen to me. (Are you gonna screw him?) No. (Is he thinking that?) I think and I think that I like that but I’m not going to. (Add that layer into it at the top.)

Critique #1: He’s feeding you this coke with expectations that there might be more to it. I don’t want to force this issue but there’s no idea of wanting to get back at your husband? (I’m mad and he’s ruined my life. And he’s an idiot and he hasn’t taken care of himself and I stayed. So I’m gonna kill him. I just don’t know how yet.) You’re still in it. Let’s put it right in it. Bring the specificity into the scene a little more and at least know that he’s hopeful with the sexuality.

Recall:

Critique #2: I have one more note for you. Have you done this substance before? What do you love about it? (Makes me positive, I talk a lot, I have a lot of energy.) How much have you had? I want you to go backstage and do a little prep on the physical state. You drank a 40 and then a line. Because of the state everything can begin to expand a little bit. I want to see how far you can go with the state and within that. When you start talking about the hope, I think there’s a deeper connection with you and the mechanic and she’s figuring it out.

Recall #3: That was fun. I like her because I feel very similar to her. It’s that moment when someone realizes they’ve been taken adventage of and how do you come back from that with that person. And it’s not just him, it’s the neighbors that told me he didn’t have any money. Prep: I think I was more focused on the 40. Adding that layer at the beginning gave me a place to go at the end.

Critique #3: You added on some state and some more prep. You started off speedy and state wise. You added the sexuality beautifully and at the end you dipped, went deeper. You sacrificed some laughs at the end of it, it was heartbreaking which is so much better. I love how game you were to play. These notes I’m giving you, what the state note did was give you more room to play. You’re whole body is involved. I think it’s so interesting how similar you say you are to her because I see this as such a character for you. There’s a fundamental essence of rapport that you feel with her and her pain, and you understand. I want to follow that.