Thursday Night Class, 7/29/21 with Stuart

Kristin, “Lungs” (new)

Recall: I was very connected to myself, the environment, present with kevin, words defn felt like my own. Circumstances yeah. I felt like I was watching it for one or two moments. The convo at the end talking about our fears- when that transition happened I felt too giddy too quickly. It was the most serious convo we’ve had about children…. I feel like our communication isn’t the greatest. This little ending beat is nice. It was the easiest thing I’ve ever absorbed. I really like this script and the punctuation was great. It was just fun to perform. Exploration was good- I did a wait til the last minute thing. I had a fun time exploring- I was resting on my laurels. Global warming is real. Once I did the real research and looked up everything, but that’s where she is. Once I did that work yesterday everything felt much more real. I just feel like if I were to go again I’d like to work more on our relationship up to this point and solidify more specifics for me on him.

Critique: Great job, good first scene. You said you wanted to work on the relationship- tell me how you do that. “Some of the specifics I want to work on are convos we’ve had in the past about what we envisioned in our life. How they took space, just imagine the convo. I want to recreate events from our past.” I got a shortcut- beliefs rather than scenarios. What you’re doing is not destructive but I want to see something- I’m interested in in-depth very quickly. I think I can save you some time and there is a way that you’re exploring that’s giving you security but costing you. I’m seeing something particular. The quality of your exploration- analytically minded vs open/fluid. Here’s why a favor fluid over analytical- when you’re creating subjectivity, it’ll come faster by being more fluid. It’s faster and it’s about percentages. Sometimes we can objectify things bc we’re looking at it. This is going to cook it deeper faster. I want you to trust your intuition more. I’m not suggesting you shouldn’t think more about the relationship but who you believe him to be. How he misses the mark in convos. This things are going to make it more particular vs what who did what when. It’s all about what you believe now. I think you have superpower and you’re not using it. Kinesthetic awareness. You’re avoiding intimacy and it’s actually your superpower. We tend to avoid the thing we’re best at. When you’re present to yourself you fill up immediately. You’re a kinesthetic learner. You’re smart as a whip but you feel the world first. This has got to be where you start your work from, where you explore, before you get into the scene. It is your superpower. It’s going to make everything fast with more depth, and it’s going to scare you a little bit. That’s where your power is.

Kevin, “Lungs” (new)

Recall: I liked how that went. Something that I noticed for me was I was pressing in our rehearsals and nothing was going on so I went back to what lead to this moment. Why did I bring up the baby before this- I just turned my attention to Kristin and everything that she’s giving off to me and to adapt to that. I felt very connected to Kristin and bc of that I felt connected to the environment and everything else. Something that I decided about our relationship is that I feel like we’re growing apart. She doesn’t realize she’s too good for me so I feel like I’m trying to hold on. She loves me so much and I don’t understand why. The whole convo about global warming and having a baby, I’m trying my best to build an argument. I had to go in and decide what is it about this moment that makes me want to have a baby.

Critique: Good work. Deciding why you’re talking about it now… I don't know why I do anything but I don’t know if that’s the reason why. When I had kids we talked a lot about it but can I isolate what is was. There was a ton of reasons but at the end of the day we both wanted to. I think not talking is more powerful than landing. Exploring the reasons is more exciting then you land on it. When we decide then it’s over. I think you could drift on why not too. There are a lot of reasons to not also. “A lot of what I do is think of an image and then it goes where it goes.” There’s a benefit in having options. Does it ever feel like we’re thinking about the story now and I’m doing my acting work as opposed to thinking about my life. Start thinking like “this is my life” and take a moment and let that resonate. “I think I want a kid.” Is there any resistance? If there’s no resistance then what are we building on? I just want to have a moment to take stock on yourself and not decide anything, there’s more impulse on that. I think we can get more in depth with being a fraud. She buys it but it’s just yeah, we can go further there. There’s going to be fucked up thoughts. When in play- you’re going to think you suck but that’s just in story.

Susannah, “The Abyss” (new)

Recall: Good first run. I always find things when I do any run, holes. I feel like I identified what I need more work on. Make Michael a bit more real and I realized something, I know exactly what I’ve told myself, why she couldn’t stay with Bud anymore. It all makes logical sense but I think the underbelly is what you can’t explain to your girlfiends about leaving your husband. The illogical reasons that are a little more shameful. Some things I discovered, I’m walking into an awkward situation. But it’s also kind of a little cool. I’m coming back to where I’m comfortable and badass. And there’s just one person here I'm not cool with but I have to do it because this is my baby.

Critique: I’d add something to what you’re talking about. What was the dream? The dreams? I think our relationships with people that matter, we have dreams for the relationship. When we odn’t believe in the dreams anymore, it dies. That’s the real betrayal. When we don’t make good on the dream. And I think you guys had dreams. Sometimes dreams are just ours and we project them onto them. But I think some of your dreams shifted. I’d invest letting yourself drift on what those could be. Kind of arrive on them. Don’t clever yourself into them. Let them occur to you. You may sit there for a little hiwle. Let it go. You can figure out everything, don’t. Let the part that has all the imagination. Take it slow. I think you default into an analytical mindset. But I think your superpower is when you stop thinking and let your brain throw things at you. It’ll be specific to you, it’ll be weird and unique. It’ll be you. Arrive to a general idea and then let the spin fill in the blanks. See where your brain goes. Throw out generalities and then fill in all the blanks yourself. You have this unique imagination. That’s what you want to let take over. It feels frivolous. Story: When I was an actor and resistant to teaching acting, I was doing a play. I would explore but I wouldn’t call it that. I was embarrassed by it. I would play as Puck in my apartment. Like a grown ass man playing around. It kind of became my process. That I was totally embarrassed by it. When I started to teach I still wouldn’t talk about it. Then when I did start talking about it we both did the same thing. He said oh shower work, it’s what I do in the shower. Do you guys ever feel embarrassed? It’s not frivolous. Seeing things through other people’s eyes, we humanize them. We dehumanize people constantly. That’s a good guy. Someone cuts you off, they’re an asshole. You see who it is and it’s an old flame. Immediately they’re a person again. Our art is humanization. We drift into their narrative. We create a new narrative based on their circumstances. Let it come to you, don’t carve it out. Let it come to you.

Elliott, “The Abyss” (new)

Recall: Felt there were some moments where I knew what I was trying to do which is convince Lins that I needed her back by telling her she needed me back. Moments I really thought that was going to work, but it didn’t. When our eyes locked I was connected to her and saw I wasn’t getting there. I guess I was affected when she wasn’t looking at me because I wanted to see her. (Circumstances?) Yeah, I think I could do better but I always think that. Where I’m angry that she’s down here mostly because its dangerous but also I wasn’t really ready to see her. There’s not much I could do about that. (Is that a circumstance? Being angry at her?) Yeah. (Others?) I believe that there’s still something there between us. I really believe that. (And that you’re deep in the ocean? There’s a problem with the rig. There’s a storm?) I think the danger could be more real. (Words feel like yours?) Almost. (How’s your process going?) I laid out some scenario for how we met. We both had our own version and then made one. I use music to get into my headspace. I listened to Fleetwood Mac, tonight and at home while working.

Critique: Couple things. There’s a lot of focus right now on being involved emotionally. And I think emotions as a by product of the circumstance is great. The more the circumstances matter, the more emotional resonance is there. You have enough emotion for twelve people. You don’t need to worry about that. Fleetwood Mac, your listening to it because it seems like it puts you in a certain emotional place. I want you just to think about the predicament. Her. What’s the problem here? With her. Do you know what her deal is? (Stubborn. I think it’s more with me though. I’m also stubborn.) She wants bigger and better. She wants you to be something you’re not. She’s going out with Tesla. That’s not you. She stopped seeing you. I want you to let yourself feel where she is next to you. Can you feel her there. Like a kid at the movies, you feel the crush sitting next to you. You’re vibrating. That’s a different modality than seeing someone. That physical awareness is super powerful and creates a great flow. I want you to depend on that more than your eyes. Should you guys be together? (I know Bud does.) There’s a separation between who you are and who you think Bud is. Who’s Bud? (An underwater rig worker.) I think Bud is you and he’s right here. He’s not over there. Bud is you. Take a breath and feel where you’re at right now. Do one more. This is my life, say that in your mind. She left me. And I just want to be with her. She thinks I’m small. That does something to you doesn’t it? (Yeah.) It affects you different. Are you trying to be emotional right now? No. Is there emotional resonance to this? Yeah. We’re starting to accept these circumstances into our body. It’s you, it’s not him. The character is defined by the presence of the actor. It’s your brain, your body, you. In these circumstances. It’s just you, which is both empowering and a little more scary. That’s where I want you to spend time, just spinning. And let yourself ruminate. History: Everyone gets very particular aobut history and I’ve heard this a lot, “we need to agree on this stuff” I don’t even agree with my wife about how we met. I disagree, I was on a high dive and jumped off, my brother yelled penis and I belly flopped. My brother believes the opposite. We remember things the way we need to. We don’t have to agree on anything. Disagreements are good. It’s really our belief about he occurrence that makes it so much more powerful. It’s what gives them power and shape and makes them particular to us. That’s what it means to get under it. To dig into it. The people who excel at it are the people willing to unthank the unthinkable. Willing to risk. That’s the juicy part. Sit with it and then just deal with her. I think the agenda in this is fucked. You want her back but she’s difficult. It’s chaos with her.

Storie, “The Devil Wears Prada” (new)

Recall: I thought it was good. I feel like I’m still working through it. It doesn’t feel good because the conversation isn’t long enough, there’s so much I want to say but I don’t get to. Yeah I don’t feel satisfied. Yeah I think I’m affected by her. (When will you know? Are the circumstances playing?) I believe everything that’s happening. (Words?) Yeah. (Place?) Yep.

Critique: It’s good to see your work. I think the givens are working on you for the most part. The one thing I question for both of you, which is good. You guys live together right? I’d like you to make the place yours a little bit more. If I’m in my house, I know where we got the stuff. There’s a lot of stuff. Like the couch. Did you guys get it together? I don’t need you to agree on it but I want you to decide what this stuff means because pretty soon you guys aren’t going to be having this stuff together anymore. The separation of the stuff ritual. I think it’s just gonna ground you both a little bit more. It’s kind of a symbol of your relationship. What are you upset about in this scene? (That it’s over,) you know that from the get-go? (Yeah.) What I’d like you to sit with more, I think you’ve explored it so it’s very much a yes-and critique. Again, when doing a break up I want you to focus on the good in the relationship. What you believed about her, what you thought about with her before. The after is more poignant when the before is more in play. I think you’ve don’t your beliefs about who she is now and I do think it’s affecting you. You have a really good head for story. That’s what we were doing on zoom together. You’re really smart. You can get uglier in your exploration. You can get a little meaner. The kind of blame you have. I’d love to see you be ruthless in your exploration. You’re being kind of polite. At least in your exploration. Let that dark fucked up stuff work for you. (I def. romanticized our relationship in my mind.) Here’s a tool, you go to set and you’re supposed to be in love but they’re an asshole. You can say, I hate them but thank god I’m in love with the character name. And that’s kind of the reverse of this. Let that divide, it’ll let the ugly out. I’m not saying be more angry. You’re gonna feel all the feelings backstage, all of that stuff. Just check it out, feel it, don’t try to stuff it down. Indulge in it, feel it. It’s the best thing you can do. It means you’re alive, it’s good. The more you allow yourself to feel it, it’s like pain. Have you ever been injured? When you first get injured you’re fighting pain, then you just let yourself feel it. You can manage it then. You’ll miss it when it’s not there.

Cameron, “The Devil Wears Prada” (new)

Recall: I’m good. I felt better than in rehearsals. I was really in my head when we were rehearsing. I was really scared cuz I knew it would be in front of you. Today I lived life out of my head. In the scene it worked. Afterwords I felt shakey because I was affected by the scene and Storie. (The givens are playing on you?) Yes. (Words?) yeah. (Place?) Yeah. (How’s the job?) The job is something that I’m good at. I don’t know if it’s what I’m supposed to do, but I’m good at it.

Critique: Your job. Sometimes these jobs become important. Like air is important. This job is important. These people all take it so seriously. Like you’re curing cancer or something. We do that. I would investigate, like people die for this shit. This magazine changes people’s lives. Storie just doesn’t get it. She’s not a sous chef, she’s not an executive chef, she’s not Gordon Ramsay. Right now she’s a cook and can’t understand your life. Right now you’re dealing with important people. This story is about selling your soul to the devil. Miranda is the devil and right now you’re believing it. You’re gonna feel ugly with it, let yourself. Do you know how to do that? (Not really. I’m very new and I’ve never done a scene on stage before. I don’t know how to do this, this and this. I don’t know what I don’t know.) Take a deep breath. Look down. Take in this idea, Miranda is a genius. She’s the most difficult human on the planet. Does that feel true? (Yeah.) I hate her and I kinda love her. And then see what this makes you think about. This magazine changes people’s lives. I’m part of something bigger than myself. She just doesn’t get it. She makes me feel awful for the first time I’m feeling of value. I’m guiding you with these thoughts and beliefs. Does it feel like you’re doing anything? (No.) No, but you are. (I feel like I have to do more. I’m just second guessing myself) When you worry you think about shit that’s gonna go wrong, what’s confidence? Believing that shit is gonna work out. We live in our imaginations constantly. We just don’t see it. We think about what we want what we wish would happened. We can’t even think about our own history without fucking it up. It’s just swimming. An authentic thought process leading to an authentic experience. Just drift in it think about it, day dream, be frivolous. No one else really understands how hard it is to be honest in front of a group of people. We’re not lying, we’re having authentic experiences in front of people that are judging you. This room is actually pretty good. Just let it go. It’s the most natural thing in the world so it won’t feel like you’re doing anything.

Brad, “Pillowman” (1st repeat)

Recall: My notes the first time, as much as I had prepped, I was so overwhelmed by my history and backstory and that I was scraping the surface on a lot of things. Physically I was between myself and something else. I was very much figuring it out as I was going. So since then I feel like I’ve come to a lot of realizations. I’ve done a lot of exploring and belief building. I think there was one thing holding me back. I think fear of playing mentally and physically. I really wanted to understand it myself. It was from the 7 years torture as a kid. So I think I really did that. I didn’t want to just go overboard with that. I feel like I’ve come further with it. Tonight I felt very connected to Sam, felt the environment, words felt like my own, some circumstances I don’t know where I land: Like the threat of death. I really dig this guy. It’s tough.

Critique: I think from what you’re saying you’ve come lightyears with this. I think it’s in good shape. I think everything Mike said helped you but it’s also what you do. How I feel about death… I don’t know. Do you know how you feel? I don’t think you have to land on a decision. (I wonder because it’s so tied to the circumstances. I don’t know this might be the first time I’m hearing it.) Even so what if in the moment you’re like I don’t wanna fucking die. Or hmm I don’t know. Let yourself ruminate. Just think about it. You don’t have to land. It isn’t necasarry. If we land too much we don’t have enough discovery. Physical stuff, doesn’t he talk about having an itchy ass. He’s digging in there. What do you mean when you say go overboard? (Over the top or like offensive to people watching.) Guy’s scratching his asshole, he murdered three children. I think offensive is been there done that. (No offensive to the mental stuff. Not like I Am Sam. That’s what I spent time doing.) What’s your mental impairment and what does that mean to your world. Overboard means playing at it? (excatcly.) You didn’t want to be a caricature of a cognitively impaired human. I think we can continue to dig into Kitarian. You kind of fuck him over in the story don’t you? You tell them that he told you to do it. That’s not nice is it? For a cognitively impaired person that’s quite clever isn’t it? Somehow he never got over 8 or 6. They’re smart little fuckers. Clever. Deceptive. So I think we want to look at your beliefs and what we know. On one hand wouldn’t you agree he tells you stories and takes care of you, you truly care for him. On the other hand, why did he get to be normal? Why were they nice to him? And he’s always on you about everything. And his stories did give you ideas. I think it’s a mixed bag with him. On one hand he’s almost god-like. His stories transport you and you become the Pillowman. On the other hand, he’s the cause of every pain you have. You can go a little deeper into your dreams. Why kids? (All children are going to live terrible lives.) Why cut toes? You cause intense pain. (I want to see how true these stories are.) I think there’s another thing you aren’t saying. They aren’t being tortured. I think there’s a little resentment towards the world. You are now in the room where you’re safe. He’s in the room getting tortured. There’s a whole variation of things going on right now. I don’t know what right is. You’re trying to remember a story. Was he writing stories when you were tortured. (Yes he’s writing the stories based on me getting tortured.) If you’re cooking this relationship in different ways, him being tortured could be satisfying or awful, it could be- unlimited. All the different things it could be.

Sam, “Pillowman” (1st repeat)

Recall: I felt very connected to myself, Brad. The words feel like my own. We had a really good rehearsal today and all the given circumstances are there. Different than the first time. The notes for me, I felt like I was a little stuck in the state post-torture and not putting enough attention on my brother. The other thing Michael sent us with was trying it a bunch of different ways, freeing us up. Tonight a bunch more comedy came through. I think the first time my discoveries were sharper. But it’s still firing.

Critique: It’s good advice to have you do it different ways. I’m gonna have you do it the same thing differently. We need to prepare for a non-rehearsal reality. There’s great benefit to rehearsing well and experimenting. I love rehearsal. Who here has had a ten minute rehearsal and you go? That’s what I want to focus on. Or how we prep for rehearsal so we’re bringing loads to the table. I think you guys have a good grasp of exploration but I want to talk about freeing up first. You don’t ever have to land in your exploration. I think your exploration can have variation. I think you can get a little compartmentalized. IN your spin. An exploration, do you have a notion of how to create that variation in your exploration? (I find things that I like.) You’ll always have that in your head but if you’re focused too hard on the shit you like it dries up. Keep it open and it stays fertile. Do you use the conjunction game? (I remember it vaguely.) And and But. If you’re thinking about your relationship to your brother that you’re responsible for that he is what he is because of you. It was your parents but it’s your fault. And it could’ve been you. He means the world to you but he’s the biggest pain in the ass. And I would be free if he wasn’t here but I can’t go there. It’ll make oppositional thinking. Very rarely are we on one side of the argument. Introduce the conjunction and see what it makes you think about. Also want to define absorption a bit. Absorption, it’s not one thing. People think of it as memorization, it’s not. It’s a different thing. It’s about owning the words. Making them yours. In the beginning that’s what it is. Then it changes. We’re also linking exploration to the words. Then we’re breaking patterns before they get formed. You’ve texted it you understand the piece. You start to explore it, it’s resonating in your body. Now I want to sync it up. Guy breaks up with girl, it’s been 3 months, he’s doing awful. Biggest mistake of his life. Drinking too much, eating too much. She’s flourishing. A weight has been dropped. She’s feeling more fit, prettier. Promotion at work. Everything’s better.

Exterior park day: picnickers are reveling. He’s wearing oversized sweats, he’s sweating and hungover. They almost bump into one another. He says Hi, She says hello it’s been a while. He says, “has it?” I sit down to absorb it where do I start?

Start with where I am. Where am I? Exterior park day. I’m here and I hate everyone here. I feel awful I have a sense of hungover. My tongue is sticking to the roof of my mouth and now I see her. I look awful and now she sees me. Fuck! I look awful and she knows it. More exploration. People are happy and I’ve never been so fucking miserable. How can I go on. I see her and it’s a sign. I say hi. She says it’s been a while. This is exploring in a different way. I allow those differences into the absorption. My degree of play into the lines, I can do one at a time or a paragraph. I can feel the words resonate in my body. It’s going to be if you go slowly, you’ll get the words faster. They’re resonating deeper. Slow down. Explore it first. Take a walk.

When you feel burn out. Just stop for a second. Take a breath, recognize where you are. You’ve lost the given circumstances. In that moment it’s however I’m understanding what they’re saying. She says been a while, I think “What the fuck does that mean?” I’m staying in my subjectiveness but wondering what she’s saying. Come back into story. Come back into the park. That variation is key. It’ll make your work more varied and faster. When you come into play you’ll find out what it’s going to be. That variation allows you to be super flexible. Even a mediocre note will be easy to work with. Slow is smooth. You’ll move a lot faster. Rushing your work is an analytical mindset and nothing gets as deep.

Text, Explore, Absorption. Then we mix things up a bit as the process moves forward. I lost the word homework. Whereas exploration feels more open-ended. I loved to explore. Get lost.