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[*working title*]

A Screenplay.

By

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An Honors Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for Graduation from the
Western Oregon University Honors Program

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Abstract

Toni Morrison said, “If there's a book that you want to read, but it hasn't been written yet, then you must write it” (Morrison). That has always been my philosophy when it comes to writing. I don't want to write the same story I've read, I want to write what I wish I had been able to read. This means I write a lot of abused gay women, and maybe one day someone will look at a collection of all my writings and comment on the fact that I wrote a lot of abused gay women, and I'm really very much okay with that, because I will have filled the niche I so desperately missed when I was a young gay kid, and later when I was an abused gay adult.

The film begins with a woman coming home to make dinner. She pours herself a glass of wine and gets everything she needs to make fajitas. It's mundane and honestly a little boring, with intention. I wanted to establish the reality quickly and help the audience suspend any disbelief early so that when it starts to pick up, they are swept along with her, and not jolted out of the moment, because when it gets going it goes by quickly. The entire story happens over 29 minutes.

With this story, I not only wanted to share my experience with the audience, but communicate the mundanity of my experience. To do that, I drew on experimental practices, naturalism, found space theatre, and the theatre of the oppressed. I used what I saw and what I studied at Western, and then I wrote. And then I threw that entire script out the window because it honestly wasn't that good. Then, I sat down, and in 3 hours, I wrote, [*working title*].

Beginnings; before the script

This project started because I was thinking about performance art. Then, I was thinking about rape and how performance art could be used to make a bold statement about the impact of the impartial observer -- the friends who watch it happen from a safe distance. The entire idea centered around a woman alone on stage, a man texting her threatening messages, and the audience, in some way, having the power to save her. My goal was to violently tell the audience how important their role is. In the context of the piece, they're completely in control of whether or not the woman on stage gets raped. The intention was to show how oxymorous the impartial observer is.

I didn't develop this idea far enough to know just how the audience would be in control, or how far I would allow it to go before stepping in. It didn't get developed far beyond a few one on one meetings with potential co-conspirators, but the idea was there, planted firmly in the part of my brain dedicated to telling this story, and it stayed there as I began thinking about my thesis.

Once you watch the film or read the script, you're bound to notice that the project has developed away from the short and rude awakening it once was, and has become a deeply depressing and hopefully moving piece about the life of a woman afraid. To boil it down to its most basic ingredients: the story is about a woman who's being stalked. She reaches out to a friend who then writes her off.

There are moments in the text that make it painfully clear he's outside watching her. My hope is, at least in part, to scare the audience. Being stalked is a lot

scarier than I think some people realize. For example, when I told a friend of mine I was being stalked, he said to me, “yeah. You look like a girl who’d have a stalker.” That’s not okay. What about me makes it okay for a man to scare me like that? Or to think he has the power to do what he wants when he wants? My situation never resulted in physical harm for me. And I can talk about it now without feeling anxious, which is why I want to do something with it on stage.

The story I want to tell is important, especially in a “me too” world. There are people who will see this show and take comfort in the knowledge that they are not alone. There are also people who will see the show knowing they wrote off someone’s experience, and will have to see the story from the other side. I’m sure there are also people who will hate it or not relate or just be generally bored, and that’s okay. This won’t be for everyone and I can live with that.

Write What You Know, at first

While this show is loosely inspired by events in my life, it has taken on a whole new shape. This isn't my story anymore, and the woman in the script isn't me.

I like that she isn't me. Originally, she was going to be me, wholly and truly. But I've done that. The first solo show I wrote, *Happy Goodbye's*, is about things that have happened to me. The entirety of *Happy Goodbye's* is my story, except the ending. The point of that show is the horrifying possibility of the ending. She is filming a vlog, in which she's painting and talking to the audience:

Enter silently, dressed for the day. Tired.

Walk to center, set bag down. Take off shoes and jacket.

Put on music.

Look for sweats/shorts (temperature depending) on the floor, mixed together with other clothes.

Take off socks and jeans.

Put on sweats/shorts.

Put on sweatshirt (temperature depending).

Go to Keurig and turn it on.

Go to camera and turn it on.

Hook up the camera and get it ready to go.

Make tea.

Turn on the projection.

Sit down on blankets left of center with tea and camera.

Hi. Me again. When I started making these videos I didn't think anyone would want to watch, but you guys are all here. This is going to be my last video. I know. Sad. But I never planned for this to last much longer than a few weeks, but somehow we managed to survive the whole year. I've really enjoyed talking to you guys and letting you in on what my life is like.

I think we've done pretty much all of my favorite things together. Went to the coast, did a makeup tutorial, go-pro'd an acting class. I really hope you enjoyed those things as much as I do, it's been fun to share all of this with you.

If this is your first time tuning in, welcome to my therapy appointed camera time, it's a pleasure having you.

For my last video, I'm gonna paint you guys a picture. My happy little goodbye to each of you.

She then talks to the audience in the internet while she paints, and tells stories from her life. Every story she tells is something I chose to share with the audience about my life. Sprinkled on top of my life and stories is beats that allude to the twist at the end, after she finishes painting:

Oh hey. It's finished. It looks nice, don't you think? A happy little thing for you to remember me by. Our time together on these videos has been really

special. Even if it didn't help in the way I think it was supposed to, I'm happy I did it.

Finding way back to the original camera set up and position.

What else is there??

I don't like eggs or seafood or anything with too much cinnamon. Orca's are the most badass animal on this earth, and I will fight anyone who says different. I have an Orca tattoo!

Show orca tattoo.

I'm deeply, deeply obsessed with Victor Hugo. The way he saw the world. How he wrote about art and people and history. I mean. He makes me care about history because of how much he cares about it. It's a rich understanding that makes his writing so good. Fuck. I can read what he has to say about the fucking cathedral bells 40 times over and still find it beautiful. I need someone to love him as much as I do. Fucking A. One person. That's all I'm asking for. If you can take anything away from what I've said here today, let it be whales and Victor Hugo.

Alright. I think that's everything. Bye bye, all. Thanks for tuning in and following this train straight through to the end. It's been good.

Camera gets repositioned on the painting and stays there for the remainder of the play.

Go to dresser and pull out wine glass.

Set on top of counter and pull out wine bottle. Red.

Fill glass.

Pull out pill bottle and take a few, swallow it down with the wine.

Continue until all the pills are gone.

“Oh What A World” should crescendo while spinning and dancing center stage, finishing off the glass and collapsing. Slowly dying in a pile of blankets on the floor.

Clearly I have a thing for the “drinking a whole bottle of wine” aesthetic. I’m also very stage direction centric in my writing. I like movement and music and silence.

Finding a reason to talk in a solo show is one of the foremost challenges of getting started. Talking directly to the audience, abolishing the fourth wall, is a go to for a lot of solo shows. You can monologue for the whole fucking thing without having to justify any of it, because the audience is who you’re talking to. Without that, you’re talking to yourself.

With the first show I wrote, I chose to use a camera as my audience. She’s live streaming a painting vlog and talking into the void of the internet so that it makes narrative sense for her to be monologuing. To an extent, she’s talking directly to the

audience, because they're the makeshift internet void. Unlike my first play, in [working title] a majority of the dialogue exists in text messages. Also unlike my first play, there's no score. The audience is forced to sit in silence with the woman, read the messages she receives, and wait with her in real time for responses. The goal of the sound design, is to create a sense of anxiety in the audience every time her phone dings, and to feel the weight of anticipation for that sound.

Experimental Theatre

Experimental theatre has me the most excited I've been for a piece of theatre since I first started performing. When I first started acting, all of it was new to me — new and exciting and fresh. There are so many firsts that can happen when you're first starting out: your first audition, your first readthrough, your first dance call, your first Shakespeare piece, your first monologue, your first fight scene, your first dance solo, your first role, your first lead, your first professional job, your first directing job, your first failure. There are truly an endless number of firsts, and then seconds and thirds and fourths and hundredths. Once you've tried everything, what is there? Experimental theatre.

Experimental theatre is always different, and hard to define. The true definition boils down to a rejection of the bourgeoisie. "Avant-garde artists reject dominant methods of producing and writing plays and do their own thing," and it's not always good, sometimes it's really bad, but it is always different and new (TDF). When you want to see something that's never been done before, experimental theatre is a good place to start.

Alfred Jarry is largely credited with the popularization of Experimental Theatre in the Western World, with his play *Ubu Roi* (TDF), but many an artist has run down the path toward experimental work. Now, there are entire theatres dedicated to experimental and devised work, including the Portland Experimental Theatre Ensemble. The Experimental movement is largely about doing things no one has done before, and when the movement first started that meant nudity, audience

participation, breaking the fourth wall, non-linear storytelling, and leaving out a narrative. Most of these things have now been done and experimental theatre has moved more toward the incorporation of digital media and what's being called "sleep no-more" shows (TDF). Audience immersion is still prevalent in the style as well as a sense of confusion for the audience. For a show to be truly avante-garde though, it really has to be groundbreaking because almost all of the classic experimental theatre practices have been largely popularized in modern theatre and no longer carry the same weight for the audience as they would have when first performed.

While what I'm doing with my show is not experimental in the contemporary sense, it carries a lot of the classic experimental ideas, and experimental theatre is something I want to keep pushing toward, and I felt it important to talk about in the context of this piece.

Found Space Theatre and Naturalism

While my show moved away from live theatre and into film, the roots of the piece is in found space theatre, so I think it's important to address.

Found space theatre is centered around finding space and then doing theatre there. It's not a complicated concept, and yet, it's one of the more experimental forms of theatre. For one, it doesn't happen in a theatre. There isn't a stage, and the audience is wherever the director and performers decide they're going to be. Sometimes, they use the space as part of the art, like I'm going to do. And sometimes they don't use the space except to perform in it. It's just a place to put the audience, like at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, where people perform in caves and hospitals because that's what's available.

Last year, After Hours Theatre put on a production of the play *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, where the audience was treated like patients of the hospital. Pre-show was a full hour, where patrons of the theatre were given new identities and checked into the hospital. They were given hospital gowns and could choose to be either chronic patients or acute patients, who would interact with the actors. The acute patients could walk around the space and play Go Fish with Dale Harding or search for Martini's missing doll, two characters in the show, and interact with the set all the while. The intention of putting on the show this way is to fully immerse the audience in the action of the play; to make them feel like they're part of it all, trapped in the asylum with the cast (Cherezova).

Found space theatre has always been designed with the intention of immersing the audience in the world of the characters and force them to relate to the story more deeply.

Naturalism and realism movements were designed to push the audience toward an easy suspension of disbelief -- make it really easy for the audience to get wrapped up in the world of the play and believe everything they're seeing. Performing the show in a space similar to the set, like putting *Cuckoo's Nest* up in a mental hospital, only enhances that push.

Naturalism is an artistic movement that calls for everyone to pay very close attention to detail, especially the set dressers, whose job it is to make the set look and function as realistically as possible. It's a step above kitchen-sink realism, which states that the set should be fully functional with real running water in the sink. Originally, this is what I wanted for [*working title*]. I wanted the woman's phone to be plugged into a real outlet and for her to be drinking real wine and making real food on a real working stove top. The key to naturalism isn't just in the set though, it's in the acting. The performer needs to believe what they're doing and be so fully immersed in the text that they're experiencing everything live for the audience to see¹; a well trained actor and fall in and out of this mental state without doing damage to their mental health, which is why I chose Phoebe for the part.

¹ Disclaimer: this is not the same as "method acting". Method acting is the practice of staying in character for the entirety of a run, which can last weeks or months. Staying in character that long can be extremely damaging to the mental health and stability of an actor, especially when playing a character who is suffering from mental illness. Shooting for my film lasted one day and we took breaks where Phoebe, who played the leading role in [*working title*], was expected to come out of character. I do not support or condone method acting with my performers.

When I was first writing this show, it was going to be found space theatre, done in my apartment. Not just to save money on set building costs, but because there were a lot of elements of naturalism in my writing. The woman cooks a full meal in the beginning. None of it is faked and she doesn't monologue through it all to make it interesting. It's simply a woman making dinner in front of an audience, and now a camera. I wanted to stress the idea that this is something that happens every day, all over the world. Nothing about this piece was artificial or staged to look a particular way. All the texts that are seen on the screen are being sent to her phone in real time as she cooks a meal and then eats it. The wine she's drinking is real, and the fear she's experiencing is as real as we could make it without causing serious mental harm to our actor.

I wanted to create what naturalism and found space theatre have the unique ability to create: an honest exchange with the audience. Even if there are parts that might be boring, it's all real. Life isn't always interesting, and I wanted to use the juxtaposition of the mundane with the scary to highlight the negative more severely. I wanted it to feel real to the audience so that they'd take the time to think about when this is happening to people they know, because it is happening. This piece gives people who wouldn't ordinarily be able to see it while it's happening, the opportunity to do that. And in order for that to really work on the audience, it had to be as natural as possible.

Theatre of the Oppressed

Theatre of the Oppressed was created by Brazilian playwright Augusto Boal in the mid 20th century. Boal studied theatre in New York City, and was especially taken with Bertolt Brecht. What Boal liked about Brecht was that his plays “did not allow spectators to submit uncritically to any performance. [Brecht] wanted spectators to consider the consequences of the events they witnessed and to spur them to political action” (Westlake, 142). Boal wanted to use this idea to encourage Brazilian peasants and spectators to be the authors of their own stories. Together, they created a community based political theatre that would later have Augusto Boal tortured and exiled from Brazil (Westlake, 142). The style of theatre is a “community-based education that uses theater as a tool for social change”. According to Boal, “the purpose of Theatre of the Oppressed is to rehumanize humanity” (Theatre).

Theatre of the Oppressed is protest theatre, and it’s what I want to do with theatre. The sole intention of Theatre of the Oppressed is to show people what’s going on in the dark in the hope of bringing about change. It’s about encouraging people who are or have been oppressed to share their stories on a larger platform. When social inequality isn’t being talked about or witnessed, it can’t be changed. If oppression is only being witnessed by the oppressor and the oppressed, then it becomes the responsibility of the oppressed to do something about, and they are often incapable of creating that change because of the aforementioned oppression. It is therefore the responsibility of a third party observer to help. What Theatre of the

Oppressed does is give the opportunity for the community being oppressed to share their story on a popular platform in the hopes of reaching a third party observer. It also works to unite those who have been affected and feel isolated from other people.

As a performer who has been abused, I feel it is my responsibility to take that experience on stage with me when I perform. As a writer, I feel it is my responsibility to share what I have experienced, in the hopes that those after me can write a better story for themselves. I want to “spur [spectators] to political action” by writing about what I’ve experienced (Westlake, 142).

I wanted people to watch my film and not only be sympathetic toward the main character but to think about what they had the power to do in their own lives to help the people around them. And for men who have been the guy who just didn’t take the hint, I wanted them to know what kind of fear they have the potential to cause. I made something that’s relatable to most women, and I wanted that fact to shake the male audience members, because what happens on screen isn’t okay. While we don’t see any physical abuse, the psychological torment she endures is something many women, including myself, have had to deal with. A lot of the time, friends and family don’t get it when they can’t see physical damage.

Something I really like about the film we made and the message it created is the call to action is small. It’s not demanding mass social change and protest, but simply asking for people to observe their own lives and see where they can do better. For both the men who don’t think before they stalk or don’t realize they’re

doing it, and for the friends who don't listen when someone in their life asks for help.

As I Worked, A Detailed Journal

Through the process of writing, filming, and editing [*working title*], I kept a journal. I wrote it all down: the bad ideas, the casting choices, the procrastination, the time I rewrote the entire script because I just couldn't make it work. Before you read through my year long journey of making a movie, you should know that it started as a play. I wrote a play, and it was terrible. Luckily, you will never read it.

6/6/18

The construction of this show has become a problem. It is a bitch. What I want to happen and what I see being possible are two very different things at the moment. I want a working set with running water and wall plugs and stocked cupboards, and I don't have the means to do that on campus, and I'm not funded to put it up anywhere else. I don't have scenic carpenters to build the show, I don't have a way to break a wine glass on stage every night, and I don't have the computer skills to design this projection.

Gavin Keulks had the idea of staging the show at Gentle House. Doing a found space piece. That got me excited. I've always been fascinated by found space theatre. *Information For Foreigners* is one of my favorite plays, and the entire thing happens in a house. Different sketches in different rooms all happening simultaneously as the audience moves from room to room in no particular order. It's brilliant. A production of *Hamlet* was put on in New York, in a hotel.

The audience could go wherever they wanted, and they would run into the actors acting. They could pick an actor to follow from scene to scene and experience the entire show from the perspective of that character. It was brilliant.

The excitement I got over the prospect of doing a found show piece told me that was the direction I want to take. It's not just a convenient solution to a pressing problem, it's a new direction for my show. And I'm thrilled.

Kent Neely's recommendation to me, was to go to Gentle House and get some time in the space, with the hope that it will give me some inspiration. It's been a long time since I've sat and spent time in Gentle House, so this is probably a good idea. I'm a very visual writer. I have a clear picture of how the entire thing looks in my head before I put it on paper, which is what has been so frustrating with the writing process of this play.

I knew, once I started writing, that I wasn't going to have the ability to put it on the way I was seeing it. Initially, I told myself to ignore that feeling and just keep writing. I got about halfway before the issue of location was really eating at me. Now that it's solved, I want to reexamine the entire thing. I might just start rewriting, rather than edit.

I'm going to kill the projection darling. It was a good idea, but it's become a hassle and a half. I'm going to do a full rewrite, without the projection. If I have a free moving audience, there is no good place to put the projection.

[IDEA: with an audience of 15 or less, I could request phone numbers at the door and then when she texts her husband, they all get the message. They'll only be able to see half of the conversation...but it could be interesting. OR! Maybe there's another actor in the conversation too. Oooooo. I like this. I like this a lot.]

6/7/18

Upon speaking with Kent about the idea that floated into my head, I am so ready. The idea, as it has developed, is to give the audience a "groupme" code, or something similar, which would give them access to the conversation. Rather than collecting phone numbers. There will be someone in another room responding as the husband. The audience will have access to the full conversation on their phones. I'm so excited. I've never seen anything like this in theatre. I'm sure it's been done in a similar way by someone somewhere, but it's still gotta be new. I've seen a lot of theatre, and I've never seen this. This is the future. This is multimedia theatre. This

is the way phones can be used on stage to further the story. This is how we relate to the texting generation. This is it.

Wow. I sound like an asshole. I promise I'm not pretentious enough to believe that I am about to invoke a whole new wave of multimedia theatre. I'm just excited about the prospect of this. It's new and untested and has the potential for epic failure, and I can't wait to throw my thesis at it.

I'm combining a style of theatre I love with something I've never done before, and I'm writing it myself. This is by far the coolest project I've ever worked on. The fact that it has the potential to be truly incredible or horribly mediocre or just the worst, it's what makes me care about it so much. There's no way for it to be, "ok." It will be anything but "ok." Because it's a risk. There is nothing safe about this. I'm throwing myself into the deep end and hoping I learn to swim with the sharks before they eat me alive, and nothing has ever felt so thrilling.

[Dick pics? With the new stalker texting direction of the play, I'd really like him to send her a dick pic. To do this, I would need to find a consenting man who is not only okay with me having access to the photo, but anyone who sees the show also having access. It would have to be done formally with a lawyer, or I'd be at risk of him being able to press charges against me. I will look into this further.]

6/12/18

I've talked with my extra person who will begin, end, and text the show, her name is Brandilan (Andi) Moring. She's on board, which is good. So far, she is the only person to read the show. Kent Neely is next on the list, but I'm gonna let him finish out finals week before getting notes.

At this point in time, I'm not worried about the timing of the show. It's gonna be ready to go full tilt boogie by fall term. What I think is gonna happen is, if I don't get cast for a term, I'm gonna put on the show that term. If I somehow manage to get cast every term, I'm gonna have to do two shows that term, which won't be the end of the world, but also won't be my favorite thing ever.

For the last show I wrote, I had a staged reading of the piece so I could get feedback on the text. For this show, that's more of a challenge. I don't know that this show can be read aloud and make sense. Even just reading it is a little confusing. I'm trying to figure out a formatting that makes it more clear. For my own purposes, it doesn't matter if the script makes sense to anyone else, and I can explain it to my handy dandy Andi, but for the purpose of this thesis and being able to just read it and understand it...I'm gonna have to work to make that happen.

The rewrite of the show solved all the problems I was having. There is no longer a broken wine glass, which was my only remaining issue.

My next step is figuring out the logistics of the audience being able to receive the text messages. I'm so bad with technology, so I'm gonna have to explore "groupme" and see if it'll work. Or talk to someone who's better at this than I am and can help me find a software that'll work.

1/15/19

I set a date for the show (ish). We're putting it up in April. That's when Gabe is going to be back in town, and he has signed on to be my stalker. He's gonna help me build it up, and then be there for the actual show night, so if the audience is looking hard enough, they can see him.

In terms of the text messages, the show is invite only at this point, which means it's all gonna be done in a group chat, with the disclaimer that they cannot respond to the chat. Gabe will be the one sending the messages, so he and I will have to rehearse the show thoroughly. A good thing is, most of the messages are cued on what he sees or time passing, so it shouldn't be too difficult.

3/18/19

Things have taken a drastic turn. I sent Kent the script, and upon reading it, he suggested I film the project rather than perform it. I hadn't thought about filming it before, mostly because I don't really have the equipment. Recently though, I participated in my first short film festival. My film was well received and I enjoyed the process of filming it, especially when I got to do it with friends. Another friend of mine, Lea Sheldone, entered a film in the festival. After talking to Kent, and reading through the script again, I knew it was asking to be a movie, and not a play. It solved all of my problems with how to show the text messages and where to put the audience, and how to show what I wanted to show. Lea had done an excellent cinematography job with her short film and I knew she had a camera we could use, so I asked her to be my cinematographer. Then I had to decide if I wanted to be in the film or direct it. I decided to direct it. Which means I had to find an actor who could both act the role and handle the emotional distress. I asked Phoebe Medler to be that actor, and they agreed. I sent them the script to make sure they knew what they were taking on and then once they gave me an official yes, we set a date. We're filming on March 30th, and I'm so frickin excited to see how this comes together.

3/31/19

We filmed yesterday. It was surreal, honestly. We had three people working crew for us, and seeing everyone behind the camera, doing their job (working sound, sending the texts, etc) was really frickin cool. Lea was on the camera and Andi was sending the texts. Both me and Andi had scripts in hand and I would cue her exactly when I wanted a text to be sent. There was a point where I went off script, which meant the final script had to be altered (I wasn't sure I'd find last minute changes so exciting).

Phoebe did a phenomenal job. What they created was so much more than what I had in my head. Phoebe executed my vision in a way that I never could have imagined and it's some of the best acting I've seen from one of my classmates.

I wanted to film in the same way it would have been seen by the audience. Not like a horror movie, with fast cuts and a quick pace. I wanted to highlight the reality of the moment, and the idea that there is nothing exaggerated in what we did. Everything is real and true to life, and it happens all the time.

The first shot was almost 20 minutes. We had to do it in multiple shots because the camera wouldn't film for 20 minutes straight so there are gonna be some cuts thrown in that I would have rather done without, but couldn't really be helped.

Then, we had to take a dinner and wine break to give our lead some time to decompress before moving into the panic attack. For the bedroom shot, we had Scout Boicey (our boom operator) on the floor by the bed with the microphone, Lea with the camera in the doorway, Andi by the front door to both send texts and pound on the door when needed, and me crawling under the camera to set up the shot and then crawling back out to cue Andi once we were rolling. It felt like being on a movie set. Where tech is completely surrounding the action and no one will ever see it. No one, except those of us in that room, will know what it took to get those shots and I think that's brilliant.

Once we moved into the full panic attack close up shot, things got tricky. We had to have Andi on the phone for timing, but she had to be far enough away that the camera wasn't picking her up, which meant her going down the street a bit. Then, my upstairs neighbors starting arguing and we could hear them on the mic through the ceiling, which meant we had to stop filming for about 10 minutes. Eventually though, there was a long enough lull in their fight for us to get the shot we needed, but poor Phoebe had to stay in that emotional prep for about an hour, which I'm sure wasn't fun.

Now, time to edit. Which we probably won't do for a couple more weeks. Haven't figured out when and where we're going to show

the film yet, but it'll somewhere on campus for a very small audience toward the end of the year (probably in June).

5/18/19

The first round of video editing happened today. Lea spliced all the footage together, and proposed a way to handle the weird cut in the middle of the first shot, which worked out wonderfully. It doesn't have any of the text messages yet, and we're not totally sure what program we're gonna use to plug those in, but it's looking promising. Watching it without the texts is remarkably boring, so there's a little fear this isn't going to turn out.

6/2/19

We finished editing today. It definitely looks better with the messages.

Speaking of messages, we tried a few different things to get them to work. The first was pretty bad. It was a downloadable pre-set image thing that I don't totally understand. It looked like real text messages, but we couldn't change the size of the text boxes and it took fucking forever to put in more than one, and they were all the same size, which didn't really work with the messages being sent, so we abandoned it for a simpler approach. We made text boxes and then

filled them with grey and green coloring, appropriately. I think it looks pretty frickin great, if I'm being honest. It worked a lot better than the pre-set image program thing that we were trying to use.

Halfway through inserting the text messages the software crashed and deleted everything we had done...that was not fun. We got very good at saving after that.

It took a few hours, but we got it done and I'm very excited for the showing next week.

6/8/19

The showing was last night. It went exceptionally well, I think. It was a smaller audience than I had in mind, but they seemed to really enjoy what they saw. No one said it was boring, in fact, they said just the opposite. Which made me happy, definitely. There was a minor pixel lost, that we hadn't noticed before, but other than that, the movie looked great. It was the first time anyone (except me and Lea) had seen it, and I was terrified.

The talk-back after went really well. Everyone had a lot of questions that were all pretty easy to answer, and Lea even got in on the fun talking about decisions we made along the way. Something that really made me happy though was how the men in the audience were impacted by what they saw. My advisor, Kent Neely, in

particular, had questions about the reality of what was happening in the film. Which is the point. Dr. Neely is the audience I want to hit. Men (and Women) who have never been in a position to experience what's talked about. I didn't write this story for women who have experienced it, I wrote it for people who haven't. For people who don't know how truly common it is. It's obscenely common -- something that was further enforced by the number of women who watched it and related to it. The stalking and the abuse is painted to be an extreme case, but the first half of the story is something that has happened to most women; that persistence that comes from a man who just doesn't know when to stop and take a hint. I wanted to reach people who are the friend that gets the call. I want everyone to take it seriously when their friend calls them because they're afraid and need help, and to understand that calling the cops isn't always an option or wanted.

I truly believe we made something really powerful. This was an important story to tell, and I'm so happy with how we got to tell it.

6/14/19

I got my first review today.

Upon watching my movie, Kylie Burbank, a friend of a friend on facebook who saw the video, messaged me to say: "It was so intense...I

loved how normal it was. Cooking dinner, almost mundane. It makes it real. Because it is real. To so many women...Thank you for making that.”

Knowing the film was not only enjoyed but communicated what I so desperately wanted it to communicate was the best I’ve ever felt about something I created. I’m very happy with how this turned out, and I really hope there are other people who see it and take something meaningful from it.

[working title]

A Note From the Director:

What you are about to read or watch or skim is a fictional story, but it's true for too many women I know. The dialogue was compiled from real messages I have received from various people. This was entirely a collaborative effort, and I want to take a second to say thank you to some amazing people. Kent Neely, thank you for always believing that I was talented enough to do this, and for reading draft after draft, AND for suggesting we make it into a movie. Gavin Keulks, thank you for letting me do this in the first place, and for being so patient with me as I got it done. Phoebe Medler, you did so much more with this character than I ever thought possible. You took what was in my head and you made it 1000 times better, and I will forever be happy I cast you in this role. Lea Sheldone, thank you for filming and editing this monster with me. It took us a few tries to get what I wanted for the texting, and you were a model of patience through all of it.

Now, please, read, watch or skim, [working title].

Cast

Woman	- Phoebe Medler
Man	- Andi Moring
Friend	- William Ashburn

Crew

Writer/Director	- Mindy Mawhirter
Cinematographer	- Lea Sheldone
Editor(s)	- Mindy Mawhirter - Lea Sheldone
Crew	- Andi Moring - Scout Boicey - Citlalli Castañeda

[working title]

Woman enters through the front door.

She goes into the kitchen, tossing her keys and bag on the counter.

She goes into the living room and takes off her shoes.

She takes her phone out of her back pocket and sets that in front of her on the counter.

She goes to the fridge and pulls out onions and bell peppers.

She gets a cutting board and knife out.

She begins chopping onions.

[ding] Hey. Can I come over tonight?

She checks her phone, but does not respond.

She goes back to chopping onions.

[ding] We can do whatever.

She does not check her phone. She goes to the cabinet and pulls out a wine glass and bottle, pouring herself a glass of wine before going back to cooking.

[ding] I rented that movie you said you wanted to see.

[ding] I had to go to a few different Red Boxes to find it, but I knew you wanted it.

She continues to ignore and cook.

[ding] I'll make enchiladas and bring them over.

She checks her phone, and responds: I already had dinner.

[ding] Then I'll make dessert.

[ding] I'll bring ice cream.

[ding] I'm at the store. What do you want?

She responds: No, that's alright. I just want a night in by myself.

She goes back to cooking. He does not text her again for some time. She is sauteing the onions and peppers when he messages her again.

[ding] Have you been drinking?

[ding] Is that why you don't want to see me?

[ding] You get weird when you drink.

[ding] I got mint chocolate chip.

[ding] should I get condoms while I'm here?

[ding] I didn't get lube, is that okay?

She responds: I just want to be alone tonight.

[ding] I bet you'll change your mind if I come over.

She ignores the message.

She finishes cooking the meal, plates it, and sits down at the table with her food and her wine.

[ding] Are you just now eating? I thought you said you had eaten already.

She responds: I was already making food. I just want to be alone.

[ding] I'm coming over.

She responds: No. I want to be alone. You can't come over.

[ding] Why are you lying to me? Who's there?

She responds: No one. I'm alone.

[ding] Then why don't you want me to come over??

She responds: Because I want to be alone.

[ding] You're such a fucking cunt. Why the fuck do I put up with you?

She ignores the message and goes back to eating.

[ding] I'm coming over.

She responds: No. I don't want you to.

[ding] You'll change your mind when I get there. I promise.

[ding] I think I know what you want...

She responds: I want to be alone

[ding] That's just cause you haven't seen me in a while. You'll change your mind when I'm kissing you and rubbing your clit.

[ding] I know you want to see me.

She responds: I don't want you to come over.

She gets up to go lock the door and then returns to her meal.

[ding] Don't worry, baby. You're gonna love it.

[ding] I'll be there in a minute.

Fuck.

She gets up and goes to turn out the lights.

She goes into the adjoining room.

She begins pacing around the room.

She takes off her sweater, revealing bruises on her shoulder and back.

She sits in silence.

[ding] I'm here. Where are you?

She does not respond.

[ding] Are you hiding from me? YOU FUCKING BITCH

[ding] I'm not leaving.

[ding] You're a fucking cunt.

[ding] Who do you have in there?

[ding] I've never done anything but be nice to you, and this is how you treat me?

[ding] Where the fuck are you?

[ding] When I get in there, I'm gonna kill you.

[ding] fucking let me in!

She responds: Go home, or I'm gonna call the cops.

[ding] Baby girl, you wouldn't hurt me like that.

[ding] Besides, you know what happens when you go to the cops? I beat the shit out of you.

She ties up her hair. There is a bite mark on the back of her neck.

She picks up her phone and calls a friend. They answer.

Hey. Can you come over? That guy I was telling you about is here and he won't leave and I don't know what to do. I'm really scared. Please.

{He's always coming over. Just kick him out. It's not hard. Maybe if you were clear with him.}

Please. Just come over.

{I'm hanging out with my friends right now. You'll be fine. If you really need help, call the police}

She throws the phone down and cries.

[ding] Why are you always such a bitch?

[ding] You should just fucking kill yourself.

[ding] I don't know why I waste my time with such a fucking cunt.

[ding] I'm going to the bar. Text me when you're back and I'll come over.

I never should have responded. I never should have slept with him. I never should've flirted with him. I should have known. I know better. I know better. I know better. Help me. Someone help me. Fuck. I know better. Why didn't I know better? Why is this happening?

To view online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TB-CjP4Mum8&t=2s>

Please! Leave a comment and let me know what you think.

You can also reach us at <https://www.facebook.com/BadRoommateProductions/>

Annotated Bibliography:

Cherezova, Polina. "Spectators Act as Patients and Interact with Cast in After Hours' Asylum Play." *Daily Bruin*, 28 May 2018, dailybruin.com/2018/05/28/spectators-act-as-patients-and-interact-with-cast-in-a-fter-hours-asylum-play/

This is a show review published by the Daily Bruin in 2018, written by Polina Cherezova about a production of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* at After Hours theatre. The production was performed in a functional mental hospital and the audience members were treated as patients. This example of found space theatre exemplifies the direction my play was going in, before we decided to film it.

Morrison, Toni. "Writing Quotes ." *Goodreads*, Goodreads, www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/writing.

The quote from Toni Morrison, used in my abstract, perfectly describes my perspective on theatre and writing. Write what you wish you had read.

"TDF Theatre Dictionary "Experimental Theatre." *Experimental Theatre*, Clubbed Thumb - Theatres, 13 Nov. 2014, dictionary.tdf.org/experimentalthatre/.

Experimental Theatre is hard to define, as is pointed out in this entry of the Theatre Dictionary. It's constantly changing, as what was once shocking becomes mainstream. This TDF entry really helped me condense what I was struggling to define, and provides a really good summation of what Experimental Theatre is and why it matters.

"Theatre of the Oppressed." *The Mandala Center for Change*, www.mandalaforchange.com/site/applied-theatre/theatre-of-the-oppressed/.

This website gives a very brief look at the Theatre of the Oppressed, and gave me a very strong quote to pull from Augusto Boal. Most of my research on him came from a different source, but this was a good place to start.

Westlake, E. J. "The Americas." *World Theatre The Basics*, Routledge. 2017, pp. 132–155.

The book, *World Theatre The Basics* is a wonderful read for anyone interested in world theatre and how international theatre has affected the western world. It highlights artists whose work has been overshadowed by time and westernization. The chapter that I pulled from specifically is "The Americas," chapter 7. That section talks specifically about Augusto Boal, and Griselda Gambaro, who are two of my favorite playwrights. Augusto Boal is the founder of Theatre of the Oppressed, used heavily by Griselda Gambaro in later years. Both playwrights were exiled from their home countries in response to the work they were doing in theatre. Their drive for social justice is what propelled their art, and it's something that I strive to match in my own work.