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The creation of "Voices in My Head," a one-man show

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Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College

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THE CREATION OF “VOICES IN MY HEAD”, A ONE-MAN SHOW

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
of the Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College

In partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the degree of
Master of Fine Arts

In

The Department of Theatre

by

Anthony Michael McMurray
B.A., University of Northern Colorado, 2010
May 2013

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First and foremost I would like to thank myself. The amount of hard work that I put into this project is astounding. I feel that my level of virtuosic comedy will never again be matched by man. My ability to be the most creative, clever, and charming person in the northern hemisphere is unmatched. If there were a noble peace prize for telling jokes, I would win in a landslide. There may never be another person like me, in the whole world, or perhaps in the history of humanity.

I would also like to give a small amount of credit to my parents for conceiving me during the holiday season of 1984. Their one time act of passion will go down with the creation of the light bulb, or the Snuggie, as a moment of great historical significance. Even though their covenant only lasted for a year, they left a seismic mark on the world by the name of Anthony Michael McMurray

I would also like to thank my editor at the graduate school of Louisiana State University for letting me thank me and only me in my acknowledgments. You are a beautiful person inside and out. Your clothes are always fashionable and hip. The smell of your perfume is the closest thing to heaven that I can imagine. You are by far the smartest, most thoughtful person in the history of graduate school editors. Your attention to marginal details is incredible. Have I buttered you up enough?

A great deal of gratitude is also owed to the 2012 Kansas City Chiefs football team and their pathetic attempt at a football season. Their inability to be the least bit competitive allowed me to focus on creating this show as a distraction from their lack of wins. Even though their losing ways are nothing new, I appreciated the fact that they allowed me to have a clear mind this fall. Now win a damn playoff game!

Finally, I would like to acknowledge anyone who is reading this and is even the slightest bit offended by these self-important indulgences. You obviously don't know me or my sense of humor, and for that I am sorry. However you have taken the time to read this illustrious academic document and I appreciate it. This may be a tedious, dense, and boring paper but that doesn't mean it has to be devoid of humor.

Oh yeah, I guess I want to thank my MFA faculty and the 10 individuals that I have shared the last 3 years of my life with. You all mean the world to me. I will always value our time we spent together, good times and bad. That said, I can't wait for us to fall out of contact with one another and forget we ever met. Thanks.

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ABSTRACT

The thesis assignment began with one simple question, “Can we conceptualize, compose, and create a one-man show, where we hold an audience’s attention, for no less than 30 minutes?” We were encouraged to find a piece that we could live with over the course of the next 9-12 months. Not wanting to carry around some heavy emotional weight, and knowing that I can’t take anything seriously for more than a month at a time without making fun of it, I went in the opposite direction of drama and dove head first towards the land of comedy. From the moment that I entered LSU, George Judy, the Head of the MFA program, insisted to our ensemble that the theater is a safe place to do dangerous things. Wanting to take full advantage of the graduate school safety net, I took the leap. From the beginning, I set out to create and execute a show that could have a life beyond the LSU Studio Theater. My first swing was a 30 minute filmed sketch comedy pilot. This first iteration of my show was crushed by the weight of its own technical demands. What I ultimately created is a show that I can take to any major comedic market and perform a set multiple times a week with minimal production requirements. One man, one microphone and dozens of joke. Over the course of the next subsequent months I conceived and wrote stand-up and sketch comedy material. Some of it was horribly offensive; a lot of it was quirky, and throughout I discovered a strong comedic voice, which I suspected was always inside me. This thesis paper will document the process of creating a one-man show, and serve as the final step in three years of intense classical acting training.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

I traveled to Baton Rouge, Louisiana in the spring of 2010 after receiving an offer to attend their graduate school for acting. Once in Louisiana, I was captivated by the culture, the food, and the campus' beauty, including its theater building. Having been open only nine months, the Music and Dramatic Arts building at Louisiana State University was gorgeous and unrivaled in the nation. The South as a whole was bustling. The film and television community was vibrant and fruitful. The faculty was generous and supportive; however, the MFA Acting Graduate Students were a different story. They shuffled and groaned through the hallways as if they had a general disgust for life. In the little time that I had with these individuals, the only thing they seemed interested in telling me was about their one-man/woman thesis shows. Several of them went on and on about how they were not enjoying the process and how it was a ridiculous idea to begin with. I listened to all six of them go on and on about how they weren't writers or even how they thought that one-man shows were "stupid!" (That last part said in a very sweet British accent.) After that uplifting interaction they sent me on my way back to Colorado and said that they hoped to see me in the fall. After returning home and accepting my offer from LSU, I began to think about my discussion with the graduate students. Shortly after, I promised myself to never be like them. I started to feel excited about the possibility of writing my own one-man show.

The vast majority of my graduate training has been tremendous. The improvements I've made in my alignment, as well as my vocal instrument, have been off the charts. Ballet will never be my specialty; however, I can now proudly walk and chew bubble gum at the same time. I'm a stronger actor as a result of 3 dedicated years of training. The one area that I never felt comfortable in was the couple of courses that we took from the PHD faculty. Both of the men who taught these courses were brilliant - almost to a fault. I spent over half the time shaking my head, while making futile attempt to keep up. I was, for the first time in my life, intellectually intimidated. Their brains were so powerful that my charming redneck sensibilities were rendered helpless. Let's be honest here: I was not asked to attend LSU on a full academic scholarship, plus an MFA assistantship for my brains. If I had to guess why I was brought here it would be for my beautiful jaw line, and/or, my eyes that are so blue you could drown in them if there wasn't a lifeguard on duty. Either way, I never found my footing in any of the intellectually heavy righting classes. (purposively misspelled, I'm funny)

During the spring of our second year, we were required to take performance theory and criticism. This course was intended to give us the vocabulary to study performance in all of its capacities. We spent a good part of the term reading articles written by French philosophers on art. Some of it was entertaining; a lot of it was tedious. I began to be turned off by theater in general. It all started to seem artificial and trivial to me. There are so many performance artists and performance pieces that are trying so hard to say something. They pine to deliver a message that is important to them and their community at large. Often times such pieces are not well received by the community. I felt that all of the articles we read they were missing a crucial piece of vocabulary in performance, which was entertainment. Throughout the course, I kept coming back to the question: what made he or she think that what they were doing onstage was captivating enough to keep a large audience's attention for any amount of

time? If we question whether it will hold an audience's attention, is it worth presenting to a paid audience? The answer I was given was not to worry about if an audience would enjoy a piece of theater. I was completely floored by this notion. I, as an actor do what I do, at my core, to entertain. Otherwise, I don't know what we as actors, are here to do. The notion that entertainment is extraneous sent me away buzzing.

The final project for performance theory and criticism was to write a summary of what we wanted to write about for our thesis shows. Immediately, a few of my classmates came up with tantalizing ideas. I was perplexed. What if I didn't have anything to say? I then began to ask myself: what do I hope to take away from this experience? My first thought was to create something that I could take with me when I graduate. I wanted to produce something that could have a life of its own, whether that was on the Internet, or as a vehicle to procure future work for myself as an actor. I then noticed that within the wording of the assignment there was no requirement that we had to write a piece of theater. The only requirement was that it had to be a one-man show. Now this was a very liberal bending/massaging of the overall assigned parameters, but oh well. I wanted to approach the assignment as if I was writing a television pilot for myself. Not only would it be a good exercise to work on, but also it would be the type of theater that I want to create; theater where the ultimate goal is to entertain. The only thing I wanted to leave with my audience was a good time and a few laughs. This topic also got me excited every time I started to think on it, which I felt was a good sign. I needed an assignment topic that I would be devoted to over the course of a busy semester. I accepted from the very beginning of this process that my thesis show would either fall on its collective face, or soar like an eagle before eagles were put on the endangered species list. The theater is a safe place to do dangerous things.

CHAPTER 2: INITIAL IMPULSE

As soon as I shifted my perspective of the thesis assignment, I became elated. I had found a way to do academic course work while also focusing my energy toward a project that I could easily continue post-graduation. My initial impulse was to write, and film, between six and eight sketches with which I would create a 30-minute sketch comedy pilot, complete with mock commercials. I also was drawn to this concept originally, because I could control what the final product of my thesis show looked like. I didn't want the risk of writing sketches for the live stage, because I was afraid of them bombing and taking my show down with it. We have all seen what happens when SNL goes awry. I was setting out to write a one-man pilot as if a major television network had approached me to write myself a vehicle for the air. In the process, I had several, what I would call, pitch meetings with various faculty members. This first step was the most exciting part of the journey. It was the part with the most unlimited possibilities. It was creatively fulfilling in every possible way.

The first major step was to find a clear and concise way of explaining what my idea was to the head of my master's program, George Judy. George is a warm, kind, and compassionate man, yet he can also be the most frightening man west of the Mason Dixon line. Ever since he snatched me up by my shirt, on stage, while he was playing King Lear, I've had a healthy dose of physical respect for the man. More than anything, I was concerned that my radical approach to the thesis work would in some way make him think less of me. I didn't want him to think that by I approaching the work from this angle I was in any way not taking my training seriously. In our first meeting about the thesis project I was met with a great deal of encouragement. He thought that I was being very smart in the way that I was looking at it. He did insist that I try and write some sketches from the darker side of my sensibility. He would later regret that, however he was confident in my abilities and work ethic enough to let me chase this sketch comedy pilot goose longer.

From there I began writing down any and every idea I had that was funny. My goal that I shared with George, was to have between 15-20 sketches written by our next meeting, which was scheduled in a month's time. I got colored note cards and wrote my bits on them. After I had written something on a card I would set it aside for a day or 2 to let it marinate. If it was still a funny idea I would take that card and pin it to a corkboard. In the end, I would say that every 1 out of 4 ideas were still funny enough to go on the corkboard 2 days later. That was ok; I was being creatively honest with myself. By the end of the month I had 23 ideas for sketches. At that point, I knew I had something pretty interesting coming out. I felt confident in my material, but was still apprehensive that I would be able to articulate my ideas to George. I needed someone to bounce these ideas off of that I respected artistically as much as I did George. I needed to schedule a dress rehearsal pitch meeting.

I zeroed in on a faculty member that would be kind enough to submit to my twisted sketch comedy material without judging me - or calling the police. That faculty member was Joey Watson. I had known Joey only in passing up to this point. He was the digital media specialist for the school, and since I would need to borrow a camera from him I figured starting with him was as good a place as any. I brought my corkboard to Joey's office one day and talked his ear off for nearly an hour. In general, he thought

my sketches were funny. He also was complimentary overall of the concept I had created for my show. However, he expressed some concerns about the massive time and technical constraints. I had known there were inherent challenges with my idea, but didn't want it to squelch the creative fire I had burning inside. I left my final dress rehearsal pitch meeting feeling like I was ready to go and slay the beast.

My corkboard and I arrived at George's office primed and ready to go. I walked him through all 23 sketches; as well as giving him scripted material for certain sketches that had already been written. He told me that I was on to something. The following chapter consists of the 6 sketches that I would consider the first written draft of my thesis show.

CHAPTER 3: FIRST DRAFT SCRIPT

“Voices In My Head”

Sketch Title: Really got to PEE

Location: Long hallway and a bathroom

Set-up: We open on a man trying to fight his way through a crowded hallway. By the way he is contorting his body we can tell that he really has to urinate. He finally makes his way to the bathroom. He enters to find that the bathroom is just as crowded as the hallway he was just in. All of the urinals are taken, and all of the stalls are occupied. The man stands awkwardly waiting for someone to leave. Finally, a man leaves the handicapped stall. He enters the handicapped stall and unzips his pants and tries to begin the flow of urine when there is a knock on the stall door. He stops, puts it back, zips his pants and opens the stall door to find a man in a wheel chair that is insisting that this is his stall. The man obliges the handi-capable person, and goes back to waiting for another venue to relieve himself. The smaller urinal opens up, and the man takes his position. It is so short that he has to crouch. Just when he gets ready to start again he gets tapped on the shoulder. He puts it back, turns and finds a vertically challenged person standing behind him who insists that this one's his urinal. The man then goes back to waiting. He finally gets fed up with waiting and gets up on the bathroom counter and begins to urinate in the sink. At this point a janitor enters and asks him what he's doing. The man insists that he wait until he is finished or, “He can go ask the midget or handicapper.”

Anthony- Why don't you make yourself useful and introduce me.

Janitor- Ok, ladies and gentlemen, put your hands together for Anthony Michael McMurray.

Sketch Title: OCD Doug

Location: Multiple location

Set-up: A commercial for a new show coming to a major network this fall.

Specific Dialogue:

Announcer

Coming this fall to a major network that uses a 3 letter acronym. “OCD Doug”. Watch our cameras follow one poor shmuck as he attempts to live his life in a complicated world with tons and tons of compulsions

We see Doug cooking in the kitchen. It appears that he has prepared an impressive meal for his girlfriend. He methodically counts out every piece of corn onto a plate. He picks up both plates and takes them to the dining room. He reaches in front of his girlfriend to put down the plate. He then retracts the plate. He repeats this action 7 times, then puts

down the plate. Doug then takes a lighter and lights the candle on the table. He blows out this and lights it again. He repeats this action 7 times.

Announcer

Tune in this fall to find out just how obsessive OCD Doug can be.

Doug and his girlfriend are seen sitting on the couch cuddling. They appear to be watching a movie

Girlfriend

Hey Honey, I can barely hear it. I'm going to turn it up.

Girlfriend grabs the remote and proceeds to turn up the volume. We see a close up of the DVD screen. The volume starts at 14, and she turns it to 17.

Doug

AHHHHH, what the hell? Make up your fucking mind. Is it 16 or 18? 16 or 18?

Girlfriend

Doug what's wrong?

Doug

You can't hear what's wrong. 17 is what's wrong!!! It can only be even numbers. Odd numbers don't sound right. So either press the fucking up button, or the fucking down button, but do it now.

Announcer

OCD Doug is going to be this fall's new reality television obsession. "It's like watching a real life version of As Good As it Gets", says one writer from a shitty gossip magazine. "OCD Doug is very obsessive compulsive", says Dr Jim from a fake doctor show on the same network. And "I'm sorry to see that life is this difficult for him", says Jesus from the Bible. OCD DOUG

We see Doug Vacuuming his apartment. He answers the phone while vacuuming.

Doug

(At the top of his lungs)

Hello

On the other end is Doug's brother Carl

Carl

Hey I'm outside, and we need to talk. I'm coming in.

Doug

(Still screaming)

OK, BUT I'M VACUUMING RIGHT NOW SO YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL I'M DONE TO TALK.

Carl proceeds to walk up to Doug's apartment and knocks on the door. Doug opens the door; all the while the vacuum cleaner is still running. Carl comes in and takes a seat on the couch. Doug is still very intent on vacuuming his living room. Doug is really intensely vacuuming. You can see by the look on Carl's face that something is wrong. Doug continues to vacuum. Maybe even throwing in some deep knee bends or thrusts. Doug finishes.

Doug
Ok so what is it that you need to tell me?

Carl
Mom's dead!!!

Doug
She's what? When did this happen? Why didn't you tell me sooner?

Carl
I tried, but you were too busy vacuuming. Can't you see that all of these compulsions are ruining our lives?

Announcer
Be sure to tune in this fall to watch this human train wreck in progress. "OCD Doug" you'll be glad that you're not him!!!!

Sketch Title: Facebook Divorce

Location: Conference room

Set-up: A couple is going through the process of divorcing. They have agreed on all matters that pertain to the divorce except...

Specific Dialogue:

We open in on a couple sitting in an empty conference room together. There is a very obvious negative energy between the two of them. They both sit with their arms crossed.
Enter Lawyer

Lawyer
Hello, Mr. Kline and soon to be ex Mrs. Kline. I'm Jerry Whipple, your court appointed divorce mediator. I'm here to help you, not hinder you. I also get paid by the hour so let's get started. (Opens a file) Let's see. It looks like you have already agreed to split the profit from the sale of your house. What about custody of young Peyton James? Have we reached an agreement on him?

Female

He can have him. I never really liked that kid!!!

Lawyer

Seriously...well that's a first. Ok, so you both are going to take back the debt that you entered the marriage with, and split the debt that was incurred over the course of the marriage. Is that correct?

Both

Yes

Lawyer

If all of these terms have been agreed upon what exactly can I help you with.

Female pulls out an enormous file of papers. She slams it on the conference table

Female

Here is a run-down of all of the Facebook friends I accumulated before I even met this sorry ass next to me.

Male

I'm sorry we're wasting your time like this. However, my contention with all of this is that some of these people are actually my close friends and I don't feel it necessary to unfriend these people out of my life just because I can't live with this horrible, heinous woman anymore.

Female

Well too bad. We're getting a divorce. They're my friends and you can't have them. This is the way that divorces work.

Male

Oh really? This is an issue that has been happening for all of divorce history?

Female

I wouldn't start talking history Mr. I had to take a survey history course at a community college 3 times before I could pass it. Classes that I paid for.

Male

You are a cold-hearted bitch and I hope you fall off a cliff.

Lawyer

Enough...Enough. So what your intended purpose for me here today is to decide who gets to remain friends with certain individuals on facebook?

Female

Exactly. Here is the file I have created with all of my FB Friends profile pics, and a brief description of why they should still be my friends.

Male

What about all of my friends on Myspace or Instagram?

Female

One thing at a time, needle dick.

Lawyer

Ok, so I guess we'll just start from the top of the pile. Terri Kline

Male

That's my mother. She can't have her. You don't get to keep her.

Female

That is not for you to decide. That's for Mr. Jerry to decide. Besides, she writes on my wall more.

Male

My mother has always hated you.

Female

Oh yeah, well then why does she "Like" all my pics and my posts.

Male

(looks at Lawyer)

Yep this is exactly why we are getting a divorce. You are obsessed with the internet.

You know what, take my mom.

(Female takes paper with the Male's mother on it)

Female

Next Friend!!!!

Lawyer

Patricia Kline

Male

That's my sister!!! Why on earth would you get to keep her and not me?

Female

Remember last Christmas when you called her a bitch and I ran outside and hugged her while she was crying in the snow. She's more my friend than yours now.

Male

Whatever, let's get this over with. Next.

Lawyer

Jesus Christ

Female pulls a cross necklace that has been hiding under her shirt

Male

Oh my god!!!

Female

Hey, he's not just your god, he's also mine.

Male

Jesus has an FB Page

Female

Duh, everyone does!!! He updates his status with really interesting biblical verses.

Male

This is ridiculous. I'm now fighting over the King of the Jews. I'm done. I can't do this anymore.

(Goes to leave)

Female

Wait, all you have to do is tell me who you want me to leave you and I will.

Male

All I want you to leave me... is ALONE!!!

(Slams door behind him)

SILENCE

Female

Who the fuck is Alone? I bet it's that whore he's been texting!!!

She's picks up her file and leaves as well. The Lawyer sits slumping in his chair in stunned silence.

Sketch Title: Child Doctor

Location: Dr. Office

Set-up: A man goes to the doctor's office to have some test results read. He came in the prior week to have a routine check-up. He is nervous and very hesitant to get the news

Specific Dialogue:

Nurse

Right in here Mr. McMurray. Just go ahead and sit on the table.

Anthony

OK

Nurse

So Mr. McMurray you're here to have your test results read from the ultra sound of your left testicle.

Anthony

Do you have any idea how uncomfortable that procedure really is?

Nurse

I know it wasn't pleasant, but if there is anything wrong hopefully we caught it in time and we can be well prepared. Well Mr. McMurray the doctor will be in a few minutes to read over those results. Good luck!

Anthony

Wow, Good luck? Thanks

Anthony sits on the butcher paper doctor's table. He is so nervous that he sits on his hands. He gets up and starts looking at the things on the doctor's desk. Possibly messing with the tongue dispensers or q-tips. He then moves to the magazine rack. The only magazines are Better Homes and Gardens, Nickelodeon. There is a knock at the door.

Anthony

Come in

The door opens. Dressed in appropriate doctor attire, small 12-year-old boy enters. He strolls into the room carrying a medical folder. He shakes Anthony's hand in an ultra confident way and leans against the desk.

Dr Miller

Hello Mr. McMurray I am Dr Miller and I am here to read your ultra sound results.

Anthony

Who are you?

Dr Miller

I am Dr. Miller. I am one of the general practice doctors here at the clinic and I am going to read your test results for you.

Anthony

Is this some sort of a joke, because I am really not in the mood for this. I just want to know if I have some sort of cancer, and then I want to go home and cry, either way.

Dr Miller

That is why I am here.

(Opens the medical folder)

Well it looks like...

Anthony

I can't do this, I can't do this. This has to be some sort of a joke. There is no way that you are a doctor. Who put you up to this little boy?

Dr Miller

No one put me up to this

(He points to the wall where a diploma from Harvard Medical School hangs)

There is my medical license that qualifies me to practice medicine in this state. Your reaction is a very natural one. However, I am more than qualified to help you. Did you ever see that show Dougie Howser? Well that's kind of the story of my life. So let's not wait any longer. Lets see if we can't put your mind at ease.

Anthony

I can't believe this is happening. **Slaps the medical folder out of his hand.** I came in for someone to read me my test results. That might just reveal that I have testicular cancer, and I am supposed to hear the results from a child whose balls haven't even dropped yet.

Dr Miller

The matriculation of my balls has absolutely no bearing on my ability to give you sound medical information.

Anthony

Like hell it doesn't. You don't even know what life is yet. You haven't drank. You haven't smoked. You haven't had any sort of relationship with a member of the opposite sex, besides your mother. You have no idea what is going on in my head. I haven't had kids yet. I haven't been to Graceland. I haven't even had some sort of a three way sorority girls. See you can't even relate to any of these things. As a matter of fact, you might actually be smaller than the mass that is on my testicle. So please let's not do this. Go and get another doctor and send him in.

Dr. Miller

Really that will not be necessary. Im going to read this to ...

Anthony

If you read a word of that I will slap a child in the face. I can't have the memory of a child telling me I'm about to lose a nut and possibly my life. It's not going to happen. Get out of this room and send in someone over the age of 14.

Dr Miller
Mr. McMurr...

Anthony
Shut your fucking mouth kid!!! Go get another doctor!!!

Dr. Miller
Yes sir, if you insist.

Anthony
I do insist. Have fun at your Bar mitzvah next year.

Dr. Miller exits the room. Anthony sits on his hands again. A moment passes. A knock at the door.

Anthony
Come in
A very old doctor barely opens the door. He begins to talk half way into the room.

Old Dr
Mr. McMurray? You don't have cancer. Everything came back fine from your ultra sound. The lump you felt might be something as insignificant as a swollen blood vessel or an in grown hair. You're free to go.

Old doctor shuts the door and leaves. Anthony grabs his things and walks out of the room. While walking back to the front he walks by Dr. Miller. Anthony stops to talk with him.

Anthony
Hey man I'm sorry about that back there. I was a nervous wreck. You know my life was flashing before my eyes the last couple of days and I have been freaking out. Maybe when you grow up you'll understand. Anyway thanks!!!

Anthony starts to go again. He gets a few steps away and then hears.

Dr. Miller
Hey, not all doctors are Jews, asshole!!! And my balls have dropped, bitch!!!

Sketch Title: Fantasy Sports Anonymous

Location: Dark non-descript room. Possibly a church basement. 10-12 folding chairs situated in a circle facing one another. Off in the background there could be a table for coffee and donuts.

Set-up: Scene opens on a woman finishing up sharing her grizzly story of recovery from drug addiction. After she finishes the group leader thanks her for her bravery and asks if anyone else would like to share. A young man pipes up. He is well dressed and doesn't fit in with these withered druggies.

Specific Dialogue:

Mike- Hello, my name is Mike and I am an addict. This is my first time attending one of these...things. I am here tonight to begin to face some of the demons that I have created. It is so interesting to hear all of your stories tonight, and very surprising for me to find that my story is so similar to a lot of yours. Growing up I was a good kid who loved sports. Nothing more. (Mikes phone buzzes in his pocket. He ignores it.) When I was in college a buddy asked me if I wanted to do it with him and all of his other friends, and for a long time I resisted. He always would say, "Every body is doing it Mike, Just try it this once." For a long time I was able to abstain. However, in my Sophomore year I eventually gave in. That was all it took. I was consumed by it. It went from being something that I would do whenever I had free time, to something that I had to do before I went to bed and first thing when I woke up. Actually I went from doing it with just one group of friends, to others, and eventually I started doing it with complete strangers (Mikes phone vibrates, he pulls it out to check it.) GOD DAMN it Lincecum. I knew I should have stayed away from him. Sorry where was I? Oh Yeah, complete stangers. They're the only ones that will feed my addiction anymore. My friends have disowned me, and have blocked my phone number in a couple of cases.

Group Leader- Mike I really appreciate all of this sharing. However I'm going to need you to be more specific about your addiction.

Mike- Ok, I cant stop myself ...from... playing fantasy sports. I have a serious problem here. I don't even recognize myself anymore. That first year I played I was unstoppable. I couldn't be beat. That lead to me joining another league, and another, and another. Pretty soon I was involved in a WNBA league.

Group Leader- Wait, you don't have any sort of chemical or substance dependency?

Mike- Fuck No. What you I look like a loser. I have a problem that is not so different from that guy over there that can't stop wanking it to internet porn. My wife has threatened to leave me if I don't find some way to get help. I told her that I would but I'm really scared of the withdrawel. I mean think about it sports are everywhere. I can't go to any bar without seeing some sporting event and then immediately think, "Do I have a player in this game."

(The other legitimate addicts are starting to get pretty pissed off by this point and are starting to turn on Mike)

Group Leader- Mike, this is AA. We don't deal with Fantasy Sports here.

Mike- What a crock of shit. Why don't you go say another serenity prayer, you cock smudger. I have tried to follow the 12 steps, and they don't work for me. I typically get stuck on step 8. "Make a list of all persons we have harmed, and become willing to make ammendsto them all." It's hard to find all those people that I have assaulted in fantasy leagues throughout the years. I need someone to do something. Please!!! I'm going to lose everything. All because that bastard Ben had to pressure me into it. "Just one time!!!" Asshole

(While Mike is caught up in his fantasy obsession a member of the group has snuck up behind him with a baseball bat, and hit him squarely on the back of the head, knocking Mike out cold immediately)

Group Member- Take that, fucktard!!!

Group Leader- Thank you, Larry. Who else would like to share.

(The group proceeds on as normal, while Mike lay unconscious on the floor bleeding. His phone vibrates.)

Sketch Title: PC Slavery

Location: Open Field

Set-up: 1850: A young affluent young man becomes friends with one of his father's slaves.

Specific Dialogue:

We open on David Smith skipping through the field. He is carrying a foot-long sandwich in one hand and a glass of lemonade in the other. From afar we hear.

David
Roscoe!!!

Roscoe
Man, David how you living

They exchange their handshake

David
I've been pretty good

Roscoe
Did you go into the town dance last night?

David
I did.

Roscoe
Did you cut a rug?

David
A what?

Roscoe
Did you cut a fucking rug?

David
I don't own a knife.

Roscoe
I mean did you fuck up that dance floor?

David
Yes, I did dance very well!!!

Roscoe
Did you use those moves I showed you?

David
Yeah, I dropped it down real low.

Roscoe
My man!!! Did you dance with Sally Williams?

David
(Smile)
I sure did!!!

Roscoe
That girl got a fat ass

David
Don't say that, she has big hips, that's all.

Roscoe

Whatever, she's a black man's kryptonite.

David

I don't even know what kryptonite is. Anyway, I can't thank you enough for teaching me how to dance and to interact with the ladies. You are my very best good friend Roscoe.

Roscoe

Shit, thank you for teaching me how to read. Did you bring me the paper?

David

Sure did

(Hands him the paper)

Roscoe

Who won the Yankees game?

David

Yankees

Roscoe

Them Mfer's are buying championships.

(Roscoe opens the paper in the middle of the field)

David

Hey, Hey, You can't be reading out in public. My daddy told me that I shouldn't be teaching people like you to read. He say, "Don't you be teaching the Niqwskjgfhity." "Don't you be teaching the Nigesslkfutyrh." Don't you be teaching them "African Americans" to read. Sorry that last one was my own words. I just can't bring myself to say that word.

Roscoe

Your old man needs to cut that shit out. He's been running around here lately acting like some kind of slave master.

They Both Laugh

David

I see what you did there. It's funny because he is a slave master.

Roscoe

All right man, let me get back to work before the sun goes down. Holla at ya boi!!!

David

(Screaming)

WHAT?

Roscoe
I mean I'll talk to you later.

David goes to leave. He turns around

David
Hey Roscoe, when this whole problem about you being a piece of property is over we should get an apartment together.

Roscoe
Man that isn't ever going to happen.

David
You never know. I recently had a dream about it.

Roscoe
Oh you think someone is going to have some dream and shit is going to change?

David
I know it sounds crazy, but in my dream people weren't judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character. And everyone was free at last, free at last, thank god all mighty they were free at last.

Roscoe
Man that shit ain't never going to happen David.

David
Yeah you're probably right. See you tomorrow Roscoe. Tomorrow I'll bring Watermelon.

Roscoe
You my best friend Dave, You my best Friend
OR
You my Nigga Dave, You my Nigga

Roscoe goes back to work. David goes back home skipping through the field.

CHAPTER 4: BACK TO REALITY

It felt so good to hand over that first draft of those sketches. I had set out to create a product, and I had delivered that product on time and under budget. Ok, so there was no budget, so therefore I was even budget wise. Either way I was riding high and had every confidence in the world that my “pilot” was great. For the most part George agreed. The only thing that he was worried about was that I didn’t have any live performance aspects in my show. I knew that at some point this very real fact would come up. He thought that I could still use some of the sketches, but I should write and perform some stand-up comedy as well. I was initially completely over whelmed at the thought of performing an art form that I have held in such high regard for so many years. I grew up listening to the likes of Jeff Foxworthy and Bill Cosby on CD at family functions as a kid. I had tried stand-up several years before when I was living in New York, and never had all that much success. I always loved stand up comedians but never pictured myself performing in that sort of median. George’s confidence in my own comedic voice is what motivated me to take a swing at stand-up comedy.

I had my 6 sketches, and now was in charge of writing stand-up material that could be comedic segues in and out of the sketches. I began writing about stuff that I thought was funny. My first comedic impulses were to come up with things that were shocking and offensive. I had jokes about getting your wiener stuck in a poo drain, and even asking a stripper to lactate on you. At first I thought they were hilarious, but not appropriate to what I was setting out to create.

At this point, I also accepted the fact that some of the sketches were going to have to be cut as well. I wondered what parent was going to loan me their precious child so that I could film a sketch about my testicles? I was also worried about the overwhelming technical demands I was placing on myself. Having to shoot and edit while trying to work on my stand up material was daunting. I ultimately gave up on trying to get all of my sketches into the show and shifted gears towards stand-up land. For nearly a month every thought that came to my mind was quickly turned into some sort of joke. It taught me a lot about humor and how humor is structured.

Near the end of October I brought in several pages worth of material for George to hear. We sat in desks in room 125 and listened to the material that I had written. Some of it was decent; a lot of it should never be heard from again. I put myself out there and it felt refreshing. I got some laughs, but I’m going to be honest, it’s not hard to make George laugh. We talked about some of the things he thought were strong and what some of my challenges were going to be moving forward. Before I left our meeting I asked George if there was any material that I should not work on with the guest artist that was coming next week. He assured me that I would be fine to share any of my material with her. I left this meeting feeling like I had achieved some pretty good results. I was also getting pretty good at tangling with the beast, with the southern accent.

CHAPTER 5: MOMENT WORK

We had the great pleasure of working with one of the most generous theater artists in the country, Leigh Fondakowski. She has been devising work around the nation for years as well as being one of the lead artistic influences of the show “The Laramie Project”. Leigh had come to LSU to workshop her new piece “Spill.” “Spill” focused on the disaster in the gulf created by the horrible oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in April, of 2010. Leigh was with us for 3 weeks. During her time on campus Leigh had also set aside some time to work with us on our thesis projects. My classmates were thrilled to have been given the opportunity to have access to such a tremendous resource on the creation of a show. I, on the other hand, wasn’t so sure about it. I was very apprehensive to share my material with her, only because my show included jokes about being born with enormous testicles, and being beat by my female spouse. I had a lot of respect for this woman’s work and didn’t want her to get the wrong impression of me based on my warped sense of humor.

My classmates and I met together on a Sunday afternoon to read through our selected pieces of our script. The material that was being shared by my classmates was awe-inspiring. What these non-writers had written in a lot of ways, blew me out of the water. Then, it was my turn. There I was sitting in a cold theater classroom, in the middle of the afternoon, trying to read through jokes for people who were so tired they were drinking coffee. It didn’t go well. I received some laughter, but it was the type of laughter you give to a young child as they’re learning to walk and they fall down. They were laughing, but mostly at my bravery. I also think that it is cruel and unusual to make someone do stand-up comedy sitting around a table in the first place. No one is funny sitting down. That is why it is called STAND-up, I believe.

After my nosedive in front of an artist that I hold in high regard, Leigh had some very helpful notes. She asked if I was writing these jokes from my own point of view, or if this was some sort of a comedic persona I was taking on. She said my material was coming off a little too Andrew Dice Clay. That’s when the light bulb came on, as they say. (Any one have any idea who they is?) She said that from the little that she knew me that these jokes weren’t truly how I felt about the world or my experience in the world. I was writing from some other voice that wasn’t my own. Don’t get me wrong, these jokes were still funny, but they didn’t have any heart, or at least not as much heart as I knew I could give them. I started writing about the things that I knew were close to my heart: my fiancé, my relationship with my family, and ultimately, the untimely and unexpected lose of my hair. As soon as Leigh challenged me to look at who these jokes were coming from, everything became so much easier. Jokes were easier to write, because they were true to my core beliefs.

Another question Leigh posed to me during our work together was what type of comic I was portraying. She wanted me to explore if I was an experienced comic, or a novice comic. This thought made me realize that I had to, in some way, acknowledge that I am new to this art form. There was already a safety net there, but now I needed to acknowledge that it was there. She insisted that I could find some humor from the novice point of view. This would make the audience root for me in a different way than if I were a veteran, smart ass comic. Everyone loves to root for the underdog, the newbie. Everyone is attracted to wide-eyed innocence. Thus, talking about things like my

childhood dream of wanting to make people laugh brought them closer to me, made them want to listen, want to laugh. Thank you Leigh Fondakowski. Yoda Shit!!!

CHAPTER 6: PRE-HOLIDAY SHOW/ POST HOLIDAY SHOW

After we closed the reading of “Spill” and finished teaching our classes for the semester, my classmates and I began individual meetings with George. For some of my colleagues that meant individual writing sessions with him. For others it meant going line-by-line in order to condense some of the material. Seeing as how I had finished my writing, it was important for me to get my stand-up material on its feet. There was no way to really tell if these jokes were going to work, other than to get up and try them out. In my first one-on-one session, we worked in the studio theater. It was George, myself, and about 130 empty chairs. At this point I was just standing on a blank stage trying to tell jokes to people who weren’t there. My material was funny, but it was difficult to test without audience response. That, plus the fact I couldn’t seem to figure out what to do with my set, or lack thereof, made the first go around frustrating. I had nothing that would ground me to a spot on stage. I kept trying to fill the space with my movement. My frantic internal energy had me bouncing all over the stage, making it hard for an audience to keep up with what was going on. It was then that I realized I was missing a crucial element in creating the comedic archetype. I had a very funny take on life however I was still looking amateur esque. Then it hit me, I needed a microphone. Any classic image of a stand up comic also contains a microphone. I needed the microphone as a prop more than anything. In the beginning it was my anchor. I couldn’t move around the stage, because I needed to stand with the microphone. It didn’t even need to be on, it only needed to be in my hand. Even though I didn’t need a microphone to fill the space vocally, I felt that it would help to set the stage for the audience. Everyone listens to a man with a microphone, it’s a part of our culture.

After I found a way to complete the full stage picture; of a comic doing his set, it was time to address some of the issues that Leigh had raised to me in the previous weeks. The first issue was what would I do if the material isn’t funny or the audience doesn’t react. I arrogantly must admit that in all of the many months of devising this work I had never even considered this possibility. I was so confident in my comedic abilities that I hadn’t thought of it that way. After careful consideration on the subject I came up with a way around this issue. If a joke fell flat I needed to acknowledge, to the audience, that the joke wasn’t good. I thought there might even be some humor in my blunt honesty with the crowd. I took Leigh’s advice and made it a part of the show to explain to the audience what exactly they were seeing before them by honestly portraying a novice comic presenting his thesis project, in the hopes of making the audience chuckle, laugh, or even pee their pants. I was on to something. However, I felt that it needed another element to really make it work. That is when I came up with the idea that I could make the presentation of my show a part of my “thesis defense”, or at least so it would seem to the audience. I would introduce a character at the beginning of the show as the person I would be defending my thesis to on stage. Any joke that fell flat during my set, I would turn to the thesis prosecutor and instruct him to deduct points off of my thesis grade. This device seemed to be very interesting. It allowed me to create yet another safety net for the process, and still keep the truth in what I was taking on. I had no idea whether people were going to laugh, however I made it my mission that if the crowd didn’t laugh at my material, I would take that lack of laughter and try and turn it into a laugh.

Having what I considered to be a fully fleshed out show, I took to the stage for just George one more time. This time around I did 33 minutes of material. My set was getting tighter and tighter. I was finding some really interesting moments where I could defer to the thesis prosecutor. Often times, turning to the judge and admitting that what I had just said wasn't funny were some of the funniest moments of all. Overall my set was becoming something I could be really proud of. I had taken on the challenge of public speaking with the expectation of laughter, and was finding a moderate amount of success. However, it was soon time to take the training wheels off. It was one thing to perform my set for George in a nearly empty theater, and another to do my set for a group of people, a group of people that I trusted and care about their opinions. That was when George and I decided that I needed my ensemble to come in and watch my set.

The 11 of us got together one afternoon right before we were to be released for holiday break. We had a quick informal meeting to discuss what the plan of attack was to be for these shows after we returned from break. George then explained that before we broke he wanted all of my colleagues to sit in the theater and allow me to go through my set one time. Keep in mind, that this is noon on a Tuesday. No one is funny at Noon on a Tuesday. I had been working these jokes for so long one-on-one that I needed the practice of playing through my set to multiple people. This time my set was right at 30 minutes. I had only ever performed 5 minutes at a time. This was a huge victory. There was a lot of my stuff that worked. There were also things that crashed and burned worse than the Hindenburg, but that was ok. I had really put myself out there and it wasn't a complete disaster. I went from mildly questioning my abilities to pull this off, to having a good deal of confidence in what I considered to be an unattainable dream. After this run through, I was able to pin point some of the material that would be hard to make work under the best circumstances, and some of the material which was really working and I needed to take it further. I left for Christmas break floating. I was becoming a comic. I was funny!

After returning from break I was ready to take on anything. I was a man on a mission. I was a comedic machine. I spent my first couple of days back working on the technical elements of my show. Getting the sketches edited together, and working on the music. By the time all of my classmates returned I was ready to take the stage. No one could stop me at this point. I had written a few new bits over the holiday break and placed them in my set in place of some of the bits that weren't working. I had 2 more runs before the performances were scheduled to start. Both of those runs were productive, and I got a lot out of them. It finally came the time to put up or shut up. I had conceptualized, composed, and created a one-man show that I could be proud of; one that I was fairly certain would leave an audience entertained.

CHAPTER 7: THE FINAL DRAFT

Voices In My Head

Sketch Title: Really got to PEE

Location: Long hallway and a bathroom

Set-up: We open on a man trying to fight his way through a crowded hallway. By the way he is contorting his body we can tell that he really has to urinate. He finally makes his way to the bathroom. He enters to find that the bathroom it's just as crowded as the hallway he was just in. All of the urinals are taken, and all of the stalls are occupied. The man stands awkwardly waiting for someone to leave. Finally a man in a wheelchair leaves the handicapped stall. He enters the handicapped stall and unzips his pants and tries to begin the flow of urine when there is a knock on the stall door. He stops, puts it back, zips his pants and opens the stall door to find a man in a another man in a wheel chair that is insisting that this is his stall. The man obliges the handy-capable person, and goes back to waiting for another venue to relive himself. The smaller urinal opens up, and the man takes his position. It is so short that he has to crouch. Just when he gets ready to start again he gets tapped on the shoulder. He puts it back turns and finds a small young boy standing behind him who insists that this urinal is his urinal. The man then goes back to waiting. He then gets fed up with waiting and gets up on the bathroom counter and begins to urinate in the sink. At this point a janitor enters and asks him what he's doing. The man insists that he wait until he is finished or, "He can go take it up with the child or handicapper."

Anthony

Why don't you make yourself useful and introduce me.

Janitor

Ok, Ladies and gentlemen put your hands together for Anthony Michael McMurray.

INTRO MUSIC-METALLICA'S "SAD BUT TRUE"

Getting married

-So I'm engaged. (Crowd interaction if possible)

-She beats the shit out of me. I'm not talk about checkers either. She beats me. Domestic violence against men is a real issue. However you never hear about it. You know why? Because of all of those men who are being beat by their female spouses have buddies. I don't mean a friend at work, who you talk to at lunch. I'm talking about good friends. A good buddy will never let you live that shit down. (Act out a friend learning that his buddy is getting beaten. Buddy starts punching him in the stomach; calls him a pussy.) "She's a woman so I can't hit her, and I'm pretty sure she knows that."

-Being engaged is a lot like getting your library card taken away. Don't get me wrong I cheat on my spouse about as often as I read a book...and do I look like I read? I'd rather put my wiener in a toaster than read a book. But don't you know it, as soon as I can't go to the library and pick out a book, that's when I want to start reading again. Get some culture in my life. Learn a little bit about Geographical Anatomy, Reproductive systems, Asians...Asia, ASIA. Definitely stifles your learning.

-We're at that point in our relationship where we are having sex, but not a lot of it. That's ok. However I now have to unload the gun before I leave the house. (Euphemism for masturbating) I don't want to hurt anyone. If I don't unload the gun, I'm walking around with one in the chamber, and not being totally there mentally. "Titties, and Asses, and Vaginas." Got to unload the gun. It's like taking medicine.

-I've started to look at women different lately. I look at them and ask myself different questions than what I did when I was 16 or 17. Questions like: I wonder what she looks like in the morning? I wonder what she wears to bed. I wonder if she'll ever take out the trash or if that will exclusively be my job. I wonder if she'll guilt me every weekend for watching football. I wonder if she'll like my friends or if she'll make me not talk to them ever again. I wonder if she does anal. I have a lot of new questions. I can only imagine I'll have a ton more as I grow older.

-Have you ever loved someone so much that you understand why there are laws in place on murder? I do.

-My fiancé makes this clicking noise when she gets disgusted with things. It's a sound that I can only describe as...murder worthy. A sound that would piss off a deaf dog. A sound that Helen Keller herself would punch a handicapped child in the face just to get you to stop. Again, you can't hit them.

-Act out of Clicking noise scenario.

-My family keeps nagging me about getting married because they are worried about one of my grandparents dying before the wedding. Doesn't seem like my problem.

-So I have to hurry up the most important day of my life because he couldn't put down the Canoli's

-If he makes it, he makes it.

-The other day my mother called me to tell me that my grandpa has cancer. My response was, "Its about fucking time." Don't judge me. I have never lost a single-family member in my life. Sure I have lost some of my great-grandparents, but you're supposed to. I've never lost anyone, and I'm 27 years old. Grandparents still alive, mother still alive, father won't die.

Kids

-Scared shitless to have kids.

-I can barely tie my own shoes some days.

-Don't want to fuck a kid up. I saw firsthand how easy it was for my parents to do to me.

-Think about it: you can fuck a kid up within 24 hours of being born. Naming them.

Parents manage to fuck this up all the time. Black people are taking the mother's and the father's first names and combining them to make a new super name. White people will take a name and just intentionally misspell it. Just to fuck around.

-Here's what you have to do before you name your child. Type that name into Google and see what it says. You type in ARIC; Google asks, "Did you mean ERIC...Dumbass." Use the technology that's already there in place

-I have a godson Peyton.

-He is great, and I have a very special connection with him

-Last time I saw him, we were playing in the back yard. Had a great time. 15 minutes later he wanted to watch a movie. Mother pulled out her phone, clicked one app, and he was watching a Disney movie. On a phone. I can't compete with that. What has happened to children? It was a beautiful day. When I was a kid I would have done unspeakable things to orphans to go out and play. (Porn IPAD Story)

DIVORCE

-What scares me the most is divorce. If divorce is like Cancer, in that it's genetic, I am very highly predisposed. If that previous statement is true, I am not long for this world.

-Between my parents they have had 6 divorces.

-My mother has had 4 by herself.

The good part is that my mom joined frequent divorcee club back in the 80's, so her next divorce is free.

Losing my Hair

-So I'm losing my hair, which has to be one of the cruelest things in the world. I'm still relatively young, however the hair on the back of my head has decided that it has had enough of this world. I'm 27, and by my math I should have about another 60-70 years left on this earth. Why does God or Buddha, or whatever figure is up there want to take my hair a quarter into my journey? Doesn't seem right. I would have preferred to have never had any hair ever. I like to treat my body like it's a temple. You try your best to take care of it. You plant some shrubs in the front yard; you try to keep the interior plumbing is up to date, and all of a sudden a corner of a room of the backside of the house just disappears. At first you think it's a fluke thing. Probably just a strong windstorm. Then one day there is an entire wall gone, then another wall. Then you have a huge fucking sky light in the master suite with no way to repair it. You try to put a tarp over it (A Hat) But it eventually starts to spread to the master bathroom...then one of your kids room... then you have to sell the house because you're upside down on your mortgage, and your wife is leaving you. You develop a drinking problem, and an

addiction to hookers. All because some shitty builder, my father, had to will me an inferior product.

3ft bike rule

- No helmet, you get hit.
- If you run a red light on your bike, you get ticketed and then shot.
- Notice these rules didn't exist in the 1930's. People were smart enough to not ride in the middle of traffic. If you rode your bike in the road a truck hit you, and they blamed your death on a mill accident.
- Now everyone thinks that it's ok to walk out into the street. (Act out mother with stroller and child walking into traffic)
- Geese and ducks and shit have now figured out you can't walk out into traffic.

Huge Balls

- I have a very serious medical issue. My testicles are huge.
- I'm not talking about being gutsy or ballsy. But I am Ballsy. I mean that I'm not talking about my sense of adventure
- Act out of getting sweaty balls unstuck from your leg
- Sure, its gives women the impression that I am well endowed. It's all a mirage. Well. I'm. Above average
- Sometimes I can tuck a testicle in really high socks
- When I was born my parents thought I was born with 4 legs. I was so ugly when I was young that my mother started crying and then questioned if her and my father were cousins. I was that deformed looking.
- My nuts were so big my parents had to buy me geriatric diapers.
- Were not going to cure cancer anytime soon. Can we get some medical research on this?

Porn star gets pregnant

- That kids baby book would be great. I.e. Debby makes Dallas
 - Which one of the 9 guys in that scene is the father?
 - When that kid grows up and asks how she met her dad I want to be there?
 - If it's a girl she is born for the pole.
- Notice I didn't say dick
That's her mother
- When that kid becomes a teenager she will have a reason to be embarrassed of her mother. (Act out of friends bitching). "Oh yeah my mom blew 5 guys in a hot tub scene last night."

-Here is a joke that has no place in my set. Do you know what's wrong with the Catholic Church? They force their Bishops to only move in diagonals

Road Trip

I recently took a huge road trip. I drove from Baton Rouge to Scottsdale in 2 days, 22 hours and 15 minutes, 1457 miles, stopped for gas 7 times, and averaged 31 mpg's the whole way. There is a man sitting out there tonight who is saying to himself, "He made good time." You damn right I made good time.

-It made me realize that I would have been a terrible pioneer. I would have been sitting in the back of the covered wagon screaming, "go faster."

Mustache

-Having this Mustache has made me have a better understanding of what the black man must have gone through. People judge me based on my appearance all the time. Parents trust me around their kids about as much as a Korean storeowner trusts a black man walking through his store. I'm sick and tired of being judged not by the content of my character, but rather by the hair on my upper lip. (Act out old school politician preaching about mustaches) I should be able to get a table for 1 at my local chucky cheese without such inflammatory accusations, or else I'll get the mustache equivalent to Al Sharpton and Rev Jesse Jackson. It's either Burt Reynolds or Tom Selleck.

-I know that I joke about race, but I have a very deep love for black people. I love them. I love the way they walk. I love the way they dance. I love the way that they never have jobs. I love them. I've always wanted to be one. When I was in Kindergarten my teacher went around the room and asked all the students what they wanted to be when they grew up. You got the typical response from young kids. Doctor, Fire Fighter, Mommy. Not me. I wanted to be a black man. Not just any black man, but one black man in particular. Jaleel White was his name. You may know him as Steve Urkel. I wanted nothing more than to be Steve Urkel when I grew up. I loved the show Family Matters and Steve Urkel so much that I dressed as him 2 Halloweens in a row. That's how committed I was to this one lovely chocolate man. (Picture of Young Anthony dressed as Steve Urkel). However it wasn't long until I came to the realization that my dream was never going to come true. I came home from school and told my dad what we were talking today at school. I told him that the teacher asked us what we wanted to be when we grew up. In a very proud fatherly way he said, "And what did you say?" I told him that when I grew up I wanted to be Steve Urkel. At first he said, "Oh you want to be an actor." I said, No dad I'm not gay!!! I want to be Steve Urkel. After a length in-depth question and answer session as to what I meant, my father crushed my hopes and dreams by pointing out a rather obvious prerequisite I was missing. "Anthony you can't be Steve Urkel, you're white. After insisting that this problem could all be solved with a can of paint. My father stopped in cold with one full swoop that, "I was white, and I was always going to be white, and that there was going to come a day that I would be thankful for that." I know he is an Asshole. Why would you do this to a young, starry eyed, Louis Farrakhan loving child. What was he worried that would happen? That one day I would go to a high school career fair and be very disappointed when I couldn't find the black

man table. That I would grow up thinking that I could dunk, or that I would grow up loving white women with big asses. They're the black man's kryptonite.

-My love of the African American made me think that I can't be the only one that loves people with a little extra melanin in their skin. There is no way that could be possible. There is no way that all people in the Slavery Era hated black people. There had to of been at least one person who loved the blacks...

SKETCH 4 "PC SLAVERY"

Sketch Title: PC Slavery

Location: Open Field

Set-up: 1850: A young affluent young man becomes friends with one of his father's slaves.

Specific Dialogue:

We open on David Smith skipping through the field. He is carrying a foot-long sandwich in one hand and a glass of lemonade in the other. From afar we hear.

David
Roscoe!!!

Roscoe
Man, David how you living

They exchange their handshake

David
I've been pretty good

Roscoe
Did you go into the town dance last night?

David
I did.

Roscoe
Did you cut a rug?

David
A what?

Roscoe
Did you cut a fucking rug?

David

I don't own a knife.

Roscoe
I mean did you fuck up that dance floor?

David
Yes, I did dance very well!!!

Roscoe
Did you use those moves I showed you?

David
Yeah, I dropped it down real low.

Roscoe
My man!!! Did you dance with Sally Williams?

David
(Smile)
I sure did!!!

Roscoe
That girl got a fat ass

David
Don't say that, she has big hips, that's all.

Roscoe
Whatever, she's a black man's kryptonite.

David
I don't even know what kryptonite is. Anyway, I can't thank you enough for teaching me how to dance and to interact with the ladies. You are my very best good friend Roscoe.

Roscoe
Shit, thank you for teaching me how to read. Did you bring me the paper?

David
Sure did
(Hands him the paper)

Roscoe
Who won the Yankees game?

David

Yankees

Roscoe

Them Myer's are buying championships.
(Roscoe opens the paper in the middle of the field)

David

Hey, Hey, You cant be reading out in public. My daddy told me that I shouldn't be teaching people like you to read. He say, "Don't you be teaching the Niqwskjgfhty." "Don't you be teaching the Nigesslkfutyrh." Don't you be teaching them "African Americans" to read. Sorry that last one was my own words. I just can't bring myself to say that word.

Roscoe

Your old man needs to cut that shit out. He's been running around here lately acting like some kind of slave master.

They Both Laugh

David

I see what you did there. It's funny because he is a slave master.

Roscoe

All right man, let me get back to work before the sun goes down. Holla at ya boi!!!

David

(Screaming)
WHAT?

Roscoe

I mean I'll talk to you later.

David goes to leave. He turns around

David

Hey Roscoe, when this whole problem about you being a piece of property is over we should get an apartment together.

Roscoe

Man that isn't ever going to happen.

David

You never know. I recently had a dream about it.

Roscoe

Oh you think someone is going to have some dream and shit is going to change?

David

I know it sounds crazy, but in my dream people weren't judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character. And everyone was free at last, free at last, thank god all mighty they were free at last.

Roscoe

Man that shit ain't ever going to happen David.

David

Yeah you're probably right. See you tomorrow Roscoe. Tomorrow I'll bring Watermelon.

Roscoe

You my Nigga Dave, You my Nigga

Roscoe goes back to work. David goes back home skipping through the field.

CHAPTER 8: THE SHOW/FUTURE PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITES

The show is a success in my book. The sketches that I shot played well with the audience. My stand-up material got laughs, and to top it all off, no one threw a tomato at me. I'm not sure if people still throw tomatoes at comics, but I was pleased to find out that no one took aim with any sort of vegetable. My show was 32 minutes from the first sketch to the last. It was short, sweet, and to the point. I was worried how the show would play with an audience that didn't know me all that well. Some of my bits could be viewed as racist or even misogynist, if you didn't know me. I am pretty sure that everyone in the theater laughed at least once. There was a lady in the back who didn't laugh, but I'm pretty sure her jaw was wired shut. Another thing I learned as a result of performing my show is that stand-up comedy is not a, "give you a hug" after you perform art form. After my classmates finished their shows, audience members couldn't wait to wrap their arms around them. It was as if they had to embrace these actors, or they would combust. I, on the other hand, received almost no physical affection. No one wants to hug a person who spent the last 25 to 30 minutes telling jokes about how he is losing his hair, or how his testicles are enormous, or even how he keeps his mustache around in order to be sympathetic with the black man's plight. The audience seemed to be appreciative for what I had presented, but still not willing to touch me. This at first drove me crazy. I am such a people pleaser to my core that I was disheartened by the lack of physical affection I was receiving. This discontent didn't last for long. I quickly accepted that stand-up was not a hugging median. No one wants to hug someone after they tell a good black joke. Maybe if I had written a show about a war veteran dying, or even about my recent horrific divorce I would have received the physical affection that I longed for, however I chose to do something different, and in return I received laughter in exchange for hugs. I made the conscious decision to entertain rather than to depress. In the end I created the right show for myself. I wouldn't trade that laughter for any amount of hugs in the whole wide world.

At the end of this process, I felt a tremendous amount of pride for what I had accomplished. I also felt a great deal of despair. I had never felt this way after closing a show. I realized that all the hard work I had put in over the last several months was coming to an end. All I had to do from there, was to write this shitty paper that you are reading now, and turn it in. I didn't want the process to be over. I was just getting good at stand-up. I wanted to keep going. I quickly realized that this is exactly what I needed to be feeling at this point in the process. The little amount of success I had achieved made me want to keep going. I had fallen in love with stand-up comedy, just like I thought I would. Now even when I am not working on a show I now have a show that I can work on by myself; MY stand-up show. I will always look back at this experience with fond memories. Who knows I might even make a career out of it. No matter what, I am perfectly satisfied with what I did. Now I must get back to writing jokes. All of this serious academic writing has gotten in the way of me trying to make my lactating stripper joke work!

VITA

Anthony Michael McMurray was born and raised in and around the Kansas City area. After graduating from Blue Valley West High School in 2004 he went and studied at The New York Conservatory for Dramatic Arts in New York City. After completing the program in the spring of 2006, Anthony went on to work as an actor in NYC. He was seen on daytime dramas, as well as, several national pharmaceutical print ads and trade show publications. Artistically unfulfilled he chose to go back to school in order to finish his bachelor's degree. He attended the University of Northern Colorado where he was seen in nearly 12 productions in 2 years. While in Greeley, Anthony received 3 Kennedy Center; Irene Ryan Award nominations. After graduating with honors in the spring of 2010, Anthony decided that he wasn't done with his educational journey quite yet. He was accepted to Louisiana State University in the fall of 2010. While at LSU Anthony has been active in the classroom as well as on stage, teaching a beginning level acting/improv class, and performing in 16 Swine Palace productions. His post graduation plans are to become a real adult, and enter the "Real World". He currently lives in Baton Rouge with his extraordinary fiancé and their 2 cats; Rizzo and Joplin.