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Faced with faces

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FACED WITH FACES

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 Theater

by
Donald Watkins
B.A., Greensboro College, 2010
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Before I take you through the torture...I mean the wonders that are my thoughts I would like to first thank God for everything that he has done for me. Growing up, never did I think that I would be so blessed to do what I love and live out my dreams in such an honest way. I would like to thank my entire LSU family as well as my Greensboro College family. You guys make me better every day. I would like to thank Lauren Stefanski for doing the fabulous sound design for the show. I would also like to thank Mercedes Wilson, Miranda Rozas, Lauren Stefanski, and Devin Williams for bringing all of these wonderful voices to life. I'd like to thank my parents. Wendell and Regina Hopkins for always believing in me and never letting me settle. My father for being the silent wisdom that echoed through my thoughts, particularly when I was set to make a bad decision and my mother, for being a driving force of strength and passion in my life. Everything that I was, am, and will be will always be a direct result of them. I would also like to recognize my brother Ade for constantly being an inspiration for me. My sister and brother in-law Eddie and Elisia White for always being a phone call away. My aunts and uncles Jackie and Lockett and Sabrina and Clinton. You all keep my spirits high and I love you and thank you so much. To my friends and the rest of my family, thank you. I do what I do because of you all. And most importantly I'd like to thank my son Elliott Elise Watkins. To Elliott I'd like to say that you are the most important person in this world to me. Even though you won't fully comprehend this for some years to come, you have made a lot of sacrifices to make this possible and I love you with all of my heart.

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ABSTRACT

FACED WITH FACES is a contemporary commentary on the male to female relationship. While I'm aware these are not the only relationships formed in our day in age I needed to find a scope and tackle one central theme. The addition of same sex relationships is very important in our society but I couldn't find a way to weave it in without making it all about that or without it seeming to not fit into the over arcing story. Perhaps in the evolution of this process I can find a way to add more voices that speak to all.

The story follows a young African American male through his progression from awkward shy adolescent to overly confident young adult. When asked a question that he's not sure he can answer, Scottie's confronted with by the one person who can call him on his bluff...himself. The character of YOU takes Scottie through his past relationships with influential figures in his life to figure out why he is the way he is and how he can inevitably answer this posed question.

THE WHY?

This all started with a simple phone conversation on a Tuesday afternoon. I was talking with a friend of mine who I've recently lost touch with, but at the time we were quite active in one another's lives. I was sitting at the edge of my bed listening to her talk about a failed relationship and not understanding why things took the turn that they did. This particular friend also happens to be exceedingly trusting and began questioning if her naivety was the cause of her lack of progression with men. After much discussion I assured her that it wasn't necessarily anything that she was doing wrong but the sheer fact that "we are men" and "that's the way we process things sometimes". After making such a general assumption about my fellow Y chromosome counterparts she promptly told me that I should "write a book about this stuff". I chocked a little on my water and laughed for about 30 seconds. The thought of me writing anything formal on the basis of relationships was completely out of the question. I didn't mind giving much needed advice from time to time but the thought of me imparting what I believed to be common knowledge to a mass of people at one given time, free to interpret and twist my meanings to fit their own lives was not appealing to me...until I gave it further consideration. I stared off for a bit contemplating if this could actually be done or not. I remember thinking that there are so many books and articles and "how to's" on dating but nothing like what I was considering. "That would be a great idea for my thesis," I told my friend as we both danced with our imaginations. It's not quite a book but I think it would help you and others to kind of understand where the other side comes from. It's going to be hard, but you know what Solo? I think you just gave me my idea for my thesis show.

THE RESEARCH

I wanted to make the experience as "real" as possible. I maulled over wanting to purely research the psychology of men and women particularly focused in a relationship. I got about two days into that and realized that for my purposes I wasn't going to find the raw material I needed to create a provocative piece of Theatre that I would be satisfied with. I started questioning myself if this is even what I wanted to do anymore. Not knowing how to go about collecting reliable material was my first hurdle to jump in the process. I remember thinking that I should just read all of the Cosmopolitan magazines I could find and try to make a spoof. Even though it was a weird concept it helped a lot. I began trying to pull inspiration from anywhere I could. Movies and television became my first form of source material. There was film that came out close to this time called "How to act like a woman, but think like a man" that I was all over. It tackled many of the same issues that I was about to try and shed light on in a funny yet provocative manner. I also remember watching amazing stand up comedy by Chris Rock, Kevin Hart, Kevin James, Bill Cosby, Richard Pryor, Bernie Mac, Steve Harvey, Dave Chappelle and Maronzio Vance. The thing that appealed to me about stand up was not only the material, but how this individual works the crowd and keeps them engaged for a half hour, how ever long the special is. I couldn't lose site of the fact that I would at some point make a performance and then perform said performance all by myself.

I can't recall exactly where I was, but I know it was somewhere near downtown and the idea just hit me to interview my friends and family. I wasn't sure what the questions needed to be or who I wanted to interview, that would all work itself, but I knew right then the only way I would get what I needed was to go hear it straight from someone's mouth.

I spoke with Professor Leigh Clemmons and she advised me that before I did anything I needed to find the scope of the piece. What was I trying to say? Who would be my target audience? And from that I would find just where I needed to begin research. I decided that I needed for this piece to be specific in character but universal in message. I chose the sixteen to twenty-five range because I felt what I needed to say would resonate better with that age group. Plus, I'm twenty-four, I've lived through those ages and I wanted to feel comfortable onstage.

The process was to be simple in thought yet difficult in execution. My goal was to interview fifty women and fifty men on the basis of relationships. There would be no time limit, only a set amount of questions to answer. The questions would start off surface and manifest into more weighty discussions as the interview went on. I chose to do it this way to keep my interviewees comfortable. I didn't want to start off with such heavy questions out of fear that I might get a canned answer. I found that through all of the interviews I performed after about question number six the walls were down and we were really into some great discussions.

Also, in order to receive the genuine responses I wanted I came up with a confidentiality form for my interviewees. I wanted them to know that whatever they told me would purely be used for the purposes of research and the creation of this show. No names would be used and no one other than myself would ever see and or listen to the videos we made. The official text for the consent form and questions read can be seen below.

As part of this research project, we will be making a photograph/videotape/audiotape recording of you during your participation in the experiment. Please indicate what uses of this photograph/videotape/audiotape you are willing to consent to by initialing below. You are free to initial any number of spaces from zero to all of the spaces, and your response will in no way affect my gratitude for your participation. I will only use the photograph/videotape/audiotape in ways that you agree to. In any use of this photograph/videotape/audiotape, your name would not be identified. This research is strictly confidential and will only be viewed by myself.

Please indicate the type of informed consent

Photograph Videotape Audiotape

Name Print: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

SOLO? Questions

1. How old are you?
2. Where are you from?
3. Are you currently in a relationship? If so...
 - What attracted you to your partner?
 - How long have you and your partner been together?
 - If you could change one thing about your partner what would it be?
 - If your partner could change one thing about you what do you think it would be?
4. Describe your dream date?
5. What's the most important thing that money can do for you?
6. In terms of relationships, what does it mean to be a man/woman?
7. Who controlled the money growing up?
8. What's one thing that would be a relationship breaker for you?
9. How important do think monogamy is to a relationship?
10. Do you believe there is a dominant one in a relationship?
11. How do you feel about children?
12. What's one thing that makes you crazy about the opposite sex
13. Have you ever been in love? How did you know?
14. How important is physical attraction?
15. What's one thing that you love about the opposite sex?
16. Do you consider yourself to be more logical or emotional?
17. When picking a partner what are some things you look for?
18. Have you ever cheated or been cheated on?
19. Have you ever considered yourself to be "just a friend"?
20. How important is sex?

CREATING THE CHARACTERS

Finding the physical life for all of these characters would prove to be one of the most interesting but difficult portions for me. I made a video recording of all of my interviews so in order for the characters to pop to the audience I had to first make them pop off the screen. For all of the characters I wanted to find trends. The way a person would answer a question if they were unsure or embarrassed, or the way people would move if they were tired. I decided to take all of those mannerisms and give specifics ones to the characters that they most closely gelled with. For example "The Uncle" his energy was a direct contrast to someone like Scottie. While Scottie was very much timid and unsure, the uncle was centered, confident, and grounded.

Scottie had to grow up through the show so I decided to make him extremely awkward as a child and that would continue through the time until he met "That Dude". His posture wouldn't be perfect and he would constantly be messing with his hands. Once he gained more confidence however his energy would become more like "That Dude" very confident on the exterior but there would be flashes of vulnerability that he would never admit. This presented a challenge because Scottie is set to be sensitive in nature and the suave exterior is not his natural energy.

The real challenge came when I was trying to portray the women. It was essential that I paid close attention to the videos because I needed the women to more real in some ways the men were just because I didn't want anyone thinking I was "playing at it". It's very easy for someone to get on stage and play at a stereotype, but to really break down the vocal patterns and the tempo of speech is something that I felt was necessary to give the women of the show the respect that they deserved.

I decided to use voiceovers to illustrate the females going into each scene followed by the snaps to transition while in the scenes. I chose each woman because they all have a unique sound and quality to their voices that I thought would be a nice contrast to the tone of Scottie.

FIRST CRACK

The first draft that I put out was a video outlining the characters that I wanted to portray in the piece. There were to be six characters that would represent six different types of ideals of men.

I wanted to explore having these men cycling through a therapy session and somehow being all connected at the end. The beginning stages of this project seemed more like I was trying to dispel myths about men more than anything. There was never really any give to the female prospective outside of commenting on what they thought about men. It was still pretty early in the interview process when I came across a session that made me flip my entire prospective of the project. Let's call the young lady subject four. Subject four was the first African American that I interviewed. About mid way through our time I found myself relating often to the comments that she would make. She spoke in particular about the type of men that she finds attractive and not knowing why certain men felt the need to try to be something that they weren't. She also spoke about the "player" persona that a lot of young men feel they have to adapt to survive in the dating game today. I immediately related to this statement because I could remember growing up and feeling this deep urge to try and please others by not being true to myself. I began to think about a lot of my friends that would conform to this "player" default in order to attract women. It's interesting because growing up stability and commitment were almost frowned upon. If you really wanted a girl you had to show her that you weren't interested. At that point I decided that I would transform all of these men into one character that grows up during the play. SCOTTIE BANKS is an extension of myself along with unique circumstances and experiences from one hundred other people. I figured that what I would do is take the answers from my interviewees and create scenarios and lessons from SCOTTIE'S past in order for him to become a better father.

THE SCRIPT

Cast

Note: Doubling Schemes are possible. Though originally written to be performed as a one man show, FWF contains the material to be staged with additional actors. It is imperative that SCOTTIE and You are played by the same actor.

SCOTTIE/YOU - 20's African American male.

ECHO 1 - 20's -30's African American Female

ECHO 2 - 20's Female

ECHO 3 - 20's Female

ECHO 4 - 20's Female

ECHO 5 - 20's Female

ECHO J - 40's Male

ECHO 7 - 20's Female

Elli - Male * *Elli's age can vary from small child to young adult*

Imagine the change we could create
If we embraced our true selves and
Stopped holding ourselves hostage

Don Watkins

ACT 1

AFTER THE PRE-SHOW MUSIC ENDS AND THE LIGHTS FADE THIS QUOTE BEGINS TO PLAY THROUGH THE SPEAKERS

"I heard once that they rather hear about memories than enemies. Rather hear what was or what will be than what is. Rather hear how you got it and what it cost you. Rather hear about finding yourself and how you lost you. Rather you make this an open letter. About family and struggle and it taken forever. About hearts that you've broken and ties that you've severed. No doubt in my mind that'll make them feel better" -DRAKE

LIGHTS UP ON SCOTTIE. As you hear through the speakers the ECHOS

MOVES TO THE MIDDLE OF HIS LIVING ROOM WITH HIS HEAD IN HIS HANDS. HIS FACE REMAINS HIDDEN UNTIL THE ECHOS STOP.

→1st VO CUE←

ECHO 1

SCOTTIE GET YO ASS OUTTA THAT ROOM! AND YOU BETTA NOT BE PLAYING WITH YOURSELF! C'MON NOW WE GONE BE LATE

ECHO 2

Welcome to Reginelli's would you like to try our new Tiger Calzone Surprise?

ECHO 3

Separate please. Actually can we just split it down the middle? Thank you. What? This isn't a date you don't need to pay for me. You know that right?

ECHO

You're just really nice and I don't want to hurt you.

ECHO 4

You're a player Scottie Banks. You know exactly what I'm talking about

ECHO 5

Hey Scott. You said you were going to call me. What happened

ECHO 7

See you don't let me talk. I took a chance on you. Everybody said "Scottie Banks?" and I said yeah. Scottie fucking Banks. Maybe it's just me. You say all these...these things to me. And it's the same shit. Over and over same shit and I'm the pig that just keeps rolling around in it. I can't do this with you. You said you love me and want...

SCOTTIE

Well maybe I don't. Maybe I don't love you like I said I did. Sorry for wasting your time.

Spotlight DS

It don't matter who or what is to blame, because the first week after a breakup alone, always feels the same.

→2nd VO CUE←

YOU

Well that was intense.

Hey! Over here.

No. Uuh uh.

Turn around Scottie. Right here.

Yes.

SCOTTIE STARES AT A BODY MIRROR THAT'S UP STAGE CENTER

Don't look so surprised. You see me all the time.

SCOTTIE

But you don't...wait what?

YOU

What? I don't what?

SCOTTIE

You don't talk.

YOU

Sure I do. I'm talking right now.

But I'm not here to just talk to you Scottie.

SCOTTIE

Who are you.

YOU

You can call me "YOU"

SCOTTIE

You're me?

YOU

No, you're Scottie
I'm "YOU"

SCOTTIE JUST GAZES ON YOU WITH A LOOK OF CONFUSION

Look Scott, what's important right now isn't what my name is. We both know exactly why I'm here. This moment right now, what you choose to say next. It can't be taken back.

SCOTTIE

But I don't know what to say

YOU

And that's why I'm here.
All of the answers are already inside of YOU
Let's play a little role reversal.
I'll be Scottie and you'll be YOU
The real YOU
For once in your life

SCOTTIE CROSSES TO THE MIRROR FRAME AND SPINS IT SLOWLY REVEALING "YOU". YOU STEPS THROUGH THE FRAME AND CONTINUES DIALOGUE.

They say the early relationship between a boy and his mother will directly reflect in the way he treats women throughout his lifetime.

→3rd VO CUE←

ECHO 1

SCOTTIE GET YO ASS OUTTA THAT ROOM! AND YOU BETTA NOT BE PLAYING WITH YOURSELF! C'MON NOW WE GONE BE LATE

YOU

Ma! Ewww
Ain't nobody playin with they self
You always think somebody playin with they self
Not all guys do that you know.
Ma, I do need to talk you.

Now I don't really know how to say it but I...*Pulls out a piece of paper from his pocket*
Today after school I went to Leslie's house.
I know I was supposed to come straight home but I didn't.
We were sitting on the couch and she kissed me. And I liked it.
A lot.
Like a lot ma. I've never kissed a girl before. And umm...I think I love her. And I wanted to know if we could get married. *Beat*
Why are you laughing?
I'm serious. This is fate. It's Valentines Day and she gave me a candy heart.
She didn't give anybody else a candy heart.
I'm just asking because I want you to be there.

Echo 1

STOP. Just stop. Boy. You're in love with Leslie. Let me tell you something. You're not in love with Leslie. It might be hard to believe now because all your blood has vacated your brain but it'll comeback and when it does so will your sense. You are 11 Scottie. You're a smart 11 but 11 none the less. Now you gone kiss a lot girls in your life and I'm praying that you don't try to marry all of them. Nothing wrong with caring about somebody but I'ma ask you to trust me when I say that this is something physical. It's nature. And I have a good mind to call Shelia and tell her about fast little Leslie. *Sighs* Oh lordy. Well I guess it's about time we had this talk. Sometimes when girls and boys like each other they kiss. Sometimes it goes beyond that. In your case it will not. Not till you're 25. Keep your hands to yourself, your lips on your face and God in your heart. You understand? Good...C'mon now we late.

YOU

And that's how it starts. Why can't it all be that simple? Remember the days when you would see a girl and you pull out your best pencil, paper, and penmanship and spend twenty minutes writing eight words. Do you like me check yes or no. There was no room for maybe. But if she wrote maybe, then that's just her way of saying yes. Those were the days. When starting a relationship was easy. Now a days you never really get to say what you want. Just never seems to come out quite right. But you can't stay young forever.

→4th VO CUE←

ECHO 2

Welcome to Reginelli's would you like to try our new Tiger calzone?

SCOTTIE

Ummm...

CLEARs HIS THROAT THEN PULLS OUT A CRUMPLED UP PIECE OF PAPER FROM HIS BACK POCKET AND BEGINS TO READ

To the girl who works at Reginelli's on W Chimes Street
I came here because I saw you in the window and I needed to
know your name

The way you wear that red shirt with the little pizza with
one slice missing

I'm thinking to myself

That's me

I'm that missing slice

Who would've know that all this was in one slice of pizza?

But instead of saying all that I asked you about the new
calzone surprise

I'm not a huge calzone fan nor do I like surprises

I've been thinking about how to approach you for sometime

now and I think it'll sound something like this...*CLEARs*

THROAT...

Hey...

That's about it right now

But I do think that we...you and me...you kn...us

You know I don't do this...here often...like I don't ever just
be like

Walking up to girls and like writing them stuff..

You know I was reading an article about spontaneity

Caroline Clemmons, and she says that a woman is 3 times
more likely to respond to a man if she feels he's following
his heart...being spontaneous

So that's why I'm here.

Uhhh doin..Doing this...right now...

When you're not working do you think that perhaps you'd
like to...

What I'm trying to say is...going out with me...not like going
out

But you know being out...with me somewherez...in public

Like I know I...This is probably weird in some way

Like I just met you

I mean...I mean...this is crazy.

This is nuts.

Begins to exit

ECHO 2

What's your name?

YOU

Who? Oh umm...Scott...my names Scott
My friends call me Scottie.
I'm a Sophomore...
No not LSU, uhhh Mckinley.
Nice to meet you Jasmine

YOU

Wow, that was rough.

SCOTTIE

Yeah, you telling me I was there.

YOU

A little bit of faith and a whole lot of luck can get you a long way. Sometimes luck isn't enough. There are those special instances in certain situations where the rules haven't been so clearly defined. Where one parties affections clearly exceed the others. This area...zone if you will is tricky. Once you're stuck in it, it's hard to get out.

→5th VO CUE←

ECHO 3

Separate please. Actually can we just split it down the middle? Thank you. What? This isn't a date you don't need to pay for me. You know that right?

SCOTTIE

Oh yea of course...why would I think this was a date
I mean we're just cool
I'm your buddy...I'm your buddy...I'm yo...
That's something that I wanted to talk to you about
You know I have a great time hanging out with you
And you're a really terrific person
We make each other laugh and we like a lot of same stuff...
You know I did kinda think this was a...you know

HER iPHONE RINGS

No, answers it

Stop, don't be stupid

Pick up the phone

I'll be here

TURNS FULL ON TO AUDIENCE

SCOTTIE GRABS HIS PHONE

Brah what are you doing?

No, I'm at Pluckers
Dude, she Friend Zoned me.
Yes she did. Hard brah I kid you not.
The waitress came and I went to grab the check and she asked her if we could have separate checks. She said to split. "Lets just split it"
Yes in front of the waitress. She said this isn't a date. Really? Because it feels like date. I'll admit that I'm not the most active fella but I know what a date this feels like and this shit was a date. I'm sorry for cussing I'm upset. She was giving me all the signs. Like we're at the table and she smiled. She let her hair down and started like fixing it and immediately afterwards she was just giggling at everything I said. Like that's flirting right? Brah I mean it I know what...oh and guess what. So we're eating ice cream and you know how they bring you the two spoons? So she grabs one and I grab one. So I'm eating my ice cream eating my ice cream I'm just eating my ice cream. So I'm just eating my ice cream and she asked if she could have some of my ice cream. We're eating the same ice cream. You already know what it taste like. It's the same thing. So she puts her spoon down and perches up looking at me...she wanted me to feed it to her! Exactly! See! So I do and this wasn't just like a little bite. She put the whole spoon in her mouth. Whole thing. Like she was about to suck my..exaclty! She started laughing and she put her hand on my knee. Huh? It was there for at least six seconds. That's a long time for a hand to be on a knee. Why do girls do this man? They flirt with no intention on backing it up. She knows what she's doing!
Then she wants me to split the check? Umm..no...you want to know why? Because your food was significantly more than mine. So you don't want me to pay for the whole thing but you want me to pay a portion? I'm either paying for all of this shit or I'm not paying at all.
Am I being ridiculous? You'd tell me if I'm being ridiculous?...

Wait wait she's coming back, I'll talk to you later alright out.
Everything alright?
Good, you about ready to go?
Yeah lets just split it.

SCOTTIE

I remember that.

YOU

Yeah, but then it happens. The thing you dread most.

→6th VO CUE←

Compilation of ECHOS

Each echo will rotate between 5 females. As each line is delivered Scottie spins directing each line to each specific one.

ECHO

You're just really nice and I don't want to hurt you.

SCOTTIE

What do you mean hurt me?

ECHO

Sit down Scott

SCOTTIE

No I think I'll stand.

ECHO

I just don't think this is working.

SCOTTIE

Why? What did I do?

ECHO

You didn't do anything. Uh you always think you did something.

SCOTTIE

Then what is it? Is there someone else?

ECHO

No. There's no one else / Stop / Scott

SCOTTIE

Then what is it?

ECHO

It's just not working out / There's this guy / I've kind of been talking to someone

SCOTTIE

So you cheated

ECHO

Why are you doing this? / No we're just hanging out we haven't done anything.

SCOTTIE

Well if you've been talking to him while you're with me then that's cheating.

ECHO

But we haven't done anything.

SCOTTIE

It's still cheating. In a way it's worse when it's emotional.

ECHO

Scott / Scottie / Babe /

ECHO

You're such a good guy / Such a nice guy / You're just so sweet.

SCOTTIE

But I love you...

I'm sorry / Sorry Scottie / I'll miss you

SCOTTIE

Don't

YOU

Then there's a defining moment. The moment where everything changes. Some guys just develop a natural ease with the opposite sex. They like women and women like them. Bada bing. There's always That Dude.

THAT DUDE

*On the phone...*Well that makes no sense. Um hum. I'm just saying if you were scared that's all you had to say. No no, don't worry about it I understand. I wouldn't want to have to face me either. My mother taught me how to cook very well and there aren't too many women who can rival that. Say what? Ohhh you think so. Guess we'll just have to see about that want we? Just say the word...how about this...my place this Thursday. Oh that's tomorrow? Even better. Don't even trip you like it...Oh no? Then why are you smiling?

Laughs I don't have to see you I can just tell. I know these things. See you tomorrow then? Excellent...*hangs up*...Scott B, what's going on little man?

SCOTTIE

Nothing man just kinda chillin. Not as good as you obviously. Man, how'd you do that?

THAT DUDE

What you talking about?

SCOTTIE

That, with the girl. You just got a date just like that.

THAT DUDE

Oh, that. *Laughs* oh that's nothing.

SCOTTIE

No, that's something. I mean how'd you even know she was smiling?

THAT DUDE

I didn't.

SCOTTIE

But you said...

THAT DUDE

I asked her why she was smiling? Whether she was smiling before I asked her is irrelevant. The sheer fact that we were a having a pleasant conversation and then I ask the question in such way that will evoke nothing but a positive response. Women like to hear shit brah.

SCOTTIE

Yeah, yeah I know what you mean.

THAT DUDE

You know what I mean? What I mean Scott?

SCOTTIE

Well you know, about women. I know about women

THAT DUDE

Do you? Ok, well why don't you give me the Scottie 411 on women. You me know what women like.

SCOTTIE

Well...you know..like..if like time wasn't an issue. We'd like go to park. And I would find out what her favorite color was...and ummm then I would get flowers in that color. And ugghhh I would like we would have a picnic and just like stay till nightfall. We would just like look up at the stars. But like if we went back to her place we would umm you know we would we would we would make love. Or we would just lay there all night and just like converse. Fall asleep with our clothes on. Just fall asleep in each others arm.

THAT DUDE

That's the stupidest shit I ever heard. There's a lot you don't know. A lot you'll find out in time...ughhh what the hell I gotta couple minutes I can wrap to you for a bit. There is a constant game being played little brother and right now you sitting on the bench. I see you walk around and how you speak to girls and I'll be honest with you SB you're too nice brah. Girls say they want a nice guy all the time. Bullshit. Nice guys either finish last or don't finish at all you see what I'm saying. You'll get it later. The thing about a nice guy is there's no challenge. He's already sweet and caring and does shit for her. Where's the fun in that? There's no excitement. Women love the bad boys. Always want to fix a man. Something about a man who's mysterious or something about a man who they can't quite control. Drives em' crazy...like their own personal project. Trust me man I've been in your situation and you know where it got me? A lot of lonely nights and a strong grip. I used to be just like you. I had this one chick who I was crazy about. You know, we used to do all that stuff...and umm...you know don't even worry about it...because in the end all women are just looking to fuck you over so why not get yours? Get to them before they get you. Now I'll help you. In part all of this wisdom but you gotta promise me this...you can't catch feelings brah. That's rule number one. Number two keep yo shit to yo you understand? Don't go around telling everybody. That's how you get caught up...because as soon as a woman finds out that you told she's not gonna want to do again. And don't be afraid to juggle. You gotta juggle. Because if you don't then you run the risk of looking too available. Get you a stable. Starting 5...a camp. Look you play basketball...5 women who you can put into rotation. If one of them goes on the IR then you good. Pick somebody up out of free agency. But you gotta keep 5. Hold on...answers the phone...Hello? Hey how you doing? That's good, no nothing just talking to my little partner giving him some advice on

life. Oh you got jokes. I'm a great person to learn life lessons from. No what's going on? Tomorrow? That's Thursday right? Thursday Thursday...I think I'm busy...right Thursday I'm staying home I was gonna cook and watch a movie. No I rather you not. I can't have you come over to my place until it's at least presentable. How about this...let me make a mess in kitchen tomorrow and then I'll clean and you come over on Friday? How's that sound. Excellent...wait a minute that's crazy...I'm sorry I just didn't think it was possible to blush over the phone...you're gonna tell me that you're not? Then why are you smiling?...

YOU

Made you feel like a man didn't it?

SCOTTIE

Yeah, actually it did.

YOU

Well then I guess you know what comes next?

→7th VO CUE←

ECHO 4

You are a player Scottie Banks. You know exactly what I'm talking.

SCOTTIE

What? No. I'm not. I can't help it if girls like me.

ECHO 4

Oh whatever! "I can't help it if girls like me" Oh hello no. I see you. Always smiling. Every time one of them little girls come by you be the first person to hit em with that smile. Just as soon as you cast that line out they're hooked. That's the problem with y'all boys today. You can't just be satisfied with one. Who you texting?

SCOTTIE

It's none of your business. Dang man

ECHO 4

You right, it's none of my business. The same way it's none of my business when you call me talking about "I can't believe she did that" I'ma say "I'm sorry Mr. Banks but it's none of my mother fudging business.

SCOTTIE

What's wrong with you? Stop. Hello?

ECHO 4

Nothing I'm tired. My feet hurt. *Beat It's* not right Scott and you know it. Oo you boys make me so mad. You have a girl that likes you. In your case several. Pick one. You pick one and your try it out. If it doesn't work then it doesn't work but you can't pick em all.

SCOTTIE

Did I say I was picking em all? No, you asked who I was texting and I said...

ECHO

Negro I know what you said. I can hear. You listen with your big ears. I know you. I know you went out with the black girl on Monday then the white girl Tuesday and then the little Asian girl on Wednesday. Now you grown but I'm telling you it's not right. Then y'all boys wondering why there are no good women around. Cause they're tired of putting up with this. It's guys like you. Good guys too. Nice and polite and educated but you're children and you play with peoples feelings. You sit here and you tell a girl one thing and it's not true. We believe in that stuff Scott.

SCOTTIE

I don't understand why you iggin on me. I'm not the only one who does this shit. What do you want?

ECHO 4

I just don't understand why you do it. I've been there before. And then y'all wonder why some women are jaded. You call us hard and crazy. We're crazy because we care? Because a guy will tell you that he likes you and then won't call you for a week. Or he'll keep stringing you along just enough to keep you interested and once you finally let it go, here they comes again. Calling, texting. "I miss you" "I've been thinking about you" "I want to see you". Or we don't go out we just "hang out". Oh that's my favorite. "I'm just not looking for a girl friend right now" ...but you want to spend the night? And oh don't dare ask them about the relationship. We don't need to be shuttled off to France every night...some girls are only about that but that ain't who I'm talking about. I'm talking about real women. Women who just want to spend

time. Women who actually care how you're doing. It's that simple. That's what you don't understand Scott. You don't even give the girls a chance and it makes me sad. It makes me sad to watch my friend sit here and act this way. You get all mad when we say there are no more get men in the world...prove us wrong.

SCOTTIE

I went out with the Asian girl on Monday. You said I went out with the Black girl Monday it was the Asian one...smiles

ECHO 4

Don't smile at me. Ughh you make me sick.

SCOTTIE

Ok man I get it. That's enough of this. I know what's about to happen. I get it. I've seen enough...

YOU

I don't think you have. Don't look now Scott.

→8th VO CUE←

ECHO 5

Hey Scott. You said you were going to call me. What happened?

SCOTTIE

Hey...you. Yeah I meant ta...I meant to call you. I uh...I just got really busy. You know it's a lot going on these days. I'm doing a lot of stuff. How are you though? I mean you look good. You always look good. How are your classes coming? Biology right? Mass Com. Yeah that's right. Umm see I got the upgrade on this phone and like my contacts just didn't switch over. Not like fully anyway. I lost a bunch of pictures too. It's crazy when you're trying to switch carriers. But yeah I had great time with you and I'd love to do it again sometime. Maybe grab a beer and chill at your place or mine. Uhhh what's your number?

ECHO 5

What's my name?

SCOTTIE

Ugh...wow. C'mon now.
You think I don't know your name?
Quite frankly Trisha, I'm insulted.

ECHO 5

It's Jennie. You're an asshole

SCOTTIE

Alright! Alright! Dude what do you want from me?

YOU

Why are we here?

SCOTTIE

To answer the question. I mean I still don't know what to say. Like I thought I was cool and then you showing me this thing. You're not giving me any answer. I mean you but I don't...I don't know YOU.

YOU

All of the answers are already...

SCOTTIE

...already inside of you. Me. Inside of me.

YOU

Focus Scott. Think. Focus Focus Think Scott Think Focus Focus

Echo 6

Scottie. Sit. *Works on the car* I hear you having a little bit of trouble. What's going on?

Scottie

I fucked up. I'm hurting people unc. I don't know what to do anymore. Like one minute I think I being a good person and that I'm doing everything right, and then the next it's like...

Echo 6

There's your first mistake. There has never been a man or a women in the history of this world that did everything right, especially in a relationship. Me and ya aunt been together for 17 years, married for 14. We understand one another. Good marriage. Perfect marriage? Hell no. Do you think in the entirety of our relationship that I did everything right? Shit, no. Hell I made her mad this morning. Thought she was gone take me to see Magic Mike. She told me it was documentary about Michael Jordan. I looked it up and said oh hell no. You can take your little

friends to see that mess. You won't catch me in there.
(Laughs a little) Your aunt, I tell you what. She's a good woman, but you know what Scottie I'm old enough to know that she's not the first good woman I've ever had. You're in the same boat. I can see it. I can smell it on you. Don't make that face son. I've known you your whole life. I've always been honest with you and that's not gone change today. Three things. Number one, you have a temper. Up un uh let me finish. You have a temper and you know it. Now I didn't say you put your hands on anybody. You know better then that. Taught you better then that. But you're sensitive Scottie. Much more sensitive then you want to admit. *Hell most men are. In our society we have this idea of what a man is. Men are strong. Men are providers. Men just deal with it. Be a man. And it's hard. Trust me I know.*)You get so scared and you put up this front but if someone's paying close enough attention they can see it. Your fear is being seen. So when you fall for someone you let them see you. And as soon as they wrong you that sensitivity takes over. You shut down. You pull back because you don't want to get hurt. We all been hurt son. It's how you deal with that hurt that makes you a man. A man's not measured in how many he can have sex with. So number two, you got too many damn girls running around here. I see it, you and ya little friend. You're a flirt. Call a spade a spade. *Points at Scottie* Spade. You just as black. You talk to women like they're two minutes away from your bed. There's nothing wrong with a charmer but women see that and they take note. Ooh wee do they take note. Women see so much that men don't. We're so oblivious most of the time. It's the attention to detail. That attention that just makes them vipers. Not saying all men but a fair amount. Now you out here telling these girls what they want to hear, know how to make em feel special. But you don't mean it and that's the problem. But if everybody's special then no one is. You remember that. C'mon now don't look so sad.

Scottie

I'm alright. Wait, you said three things.

Echo J

I did? Hmm. Number three you're good looking. I know that's hard for you to hear, but just accept it. You're a Banks. It's in your genes. Speaking a jeans, till you figure all this out how about you keep that in yours. Trust me now.

YOU

So you do. For her. For the one woman you can't seem to live without. The woman who brightens your day. The woman who makes everything you've ever practiced. And things start to look up. But old habits die hard. Sometimes it just becomes too much. You say what you need to say and you move on. Move on being the operative. Or maybe you say too much. Men, we are prideful creatures. Sometimes to a fault

ECHO 7

Because you don't care about my feelings and if you did then we wouldn't even be having this conversation.

SCOTTIE

Seriously? I don't care your feelings?
Even if I didn't care, which I do, we would still have this discussion
It's very sweet and I do appreciate the surprise
But 1, you know I don't like surprises
And 2, he's my best friend. He's only here for one night

ECHO 7

Then leave Scottie! Just get the hell out

SCOTTIE

Why are you yelling?
Why is anyone yelling?
We're talking about feelings right?
Why are my feelings never valid enough to be respected?
I don't want...

ECHO 7

So you don't want to see me?

SCOTTIE

Not necessarily right tonight. Like right now...why can't...uhhh
It's guys night! Just me and Allen
Grab a beer, shoot some pool I'm back home by 2.
I put it on the calendar.
Why do we have calendar?

ECHO 7

It's not just Allen. You don't appreciate me. I feel like there's something that you're not telling. Like you don't treat me the same anymore. Monica said that she thought...

SCOTTIE

Are you serious right now? Monica said? Who gives a shit what Monica said. Why does Monica have a say so in this relationship at all? Why is it that our business can't just stay our business? One, Monica doesn't even know me and two, you said she's always male bashing. I've never seen Monica with a guy happily. Why is it different now?

ECHO 7

See you don't let me talk. I took a chance on you. Everybody said "Scottie Banks?" and said yeah. Scottie fucking Banks. Maybe it's just me. You say all these...these things to me. And it's the same shit. Over and over same shit and I'm the pig that just keeps rolling around in it. I can't do this with you. You said you love me and want...

SCOTTIE

Well maybe I don't...*thinks*...

Wait...

I didn't mean that.

I uh...

Points at the mirror YOU!

→9th VO CUE←

Temper...There is nothing worse then the week of a break up..SCOTTIE GET YO ASS OUTTA THAT ROOM..Welcome to Separate please...Hey Scott.

Then leave Scottie, Scott, Sb, Scottie Scott Scottie Scott Scottie Scott Scottie Scottie

*SOUNDS CONTINUE AS SCOTTIE FADEDS BACK INTO HIS CHAIR
ALL THE SOUNDS SUDDENLY STOP AND YOU HEAR THE VOICE OF ELLI*

Elli

Dad...

SCOTTIE LOOKS UP

You said you were going to tell me about relationships.

TAKING HIS TIME

SCOTTIE

Yeah...I did...sit down champ. You asked me about relationships. I think I'm ready to talk about them.

LIGHTS FADE

END OF PLAY

10th CUE ← This cue is meant for the bow after lights come back up.

MOVING FORWARD

I'm not sure what's next for this project. I definitely believe that it's the type of theatre that I want to do. When I say "type of theatre" I mean character and structure, not necessarily a solo piece. The more I think about the play the more it feels like an ensemble piece rather than a solo show. There were devices that I made work out of necessity that I absolutely fell in love with. I decided that I would use a snap to transition between the characters. The snap became more than a snap but almost it's own character. The way that the audience will just accept what you put in front of them if you set the proper perimeters was interesting to me. I wrestle back and forth because if you add actors then the illusion of what the other person is to Scottie is lost. There was always a beauty in transforming and having these people live through Scottie in order to be heard. It makes for a difficult physical and vocal challenge for the actor playing Scottie, which I feel pays off if executed correctly.

However, there is nothing like having the collective energy of an ensemble. Being able to listen and react is essential to an actor's journey. Picking up off of a partners impulses might give this show the boost that it needs to play to a larger demographic. It's difficult because the audience see's an African American male the whole time, so it's harder to associate the play with anything other than the figure of an African American male. Not all of women "echo's" are black women. I would actually love to see this done with a multicultural cast. While it's key that Scottie be played by a black actor, there's different room for the other roles to cast color blindly, I would actually prefer it.

I see this play being done a younger audience without a doubt. I picked to 18-25 range because I feel that's a time in a lot of men's lives where they're still trying to find themselves. As possible we never stop searching for who we are because we are constantly changing. The views we hold about ourselves and society is always being molded by our interactions with others. I've found personally that the 18-25 slot has brought significant change to my life that will directly reflect how I treat others throughout my life time. I feel that men and women; especially young men and women would greatly benefit from this show. Having the opportunity to get glimpse of what the "other side" is

thinking is key. The truth be told we think we know but at the end of the day we have no idea.

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VITA

Donald Watkins is 24 year old African American from Browns Summit North Carolina, by way of Greensboro. He was raised by his Mother and Father Wendell and Regina Hopkins, and his Grandparents Reginald DeBerry and Josephine Jackson. Donald was first introduced to Theatre in ninth grade at Southern Guilford and quickly fell in love. Donald continued his passion for acting at Southeast Guilford High School where he eventually graduated. He received his B.A from Greensboro College under the mentorship of David Schram, Ashley Hyers, and Robin Monteith. Donald attended Louisiana State University where he hopes this paper will be accept in order for him to receive his Masters in Theatre Performance.