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## Story & Style: Pursuing Excellence on the Academic Stage

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Story & Style:  
Pursuing Excellence on the Academic Stage

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
University of New Orleans  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts  
in Film & Theatre  
Performance (Acting/Directing)

by

Ryan M. Decker

B.A. University of Northern Iowa, 2012

August 2018

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## **DEDICATION**

For Amanda.

I love you to the moon and back.  
(Times infinity.)



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank:

Amanda for her love and patience. She makes everything possible. None of this could've happened without her.

Sue and Duane Decker for bringing me up right, supporting my ambitions without necessarily understanding them, and making sure I've always had a home.

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Marco Ramirez for writing an incredible play. It was a privilege, challenge, and joy to direct.

The cast and crew of *The Royale* for their work, and for working with me.

The Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival and The Big Easy Entertainment Committee for the recognition and encouragement.

And you, for reading this. I think you're swell.

## FORWARD

Hello Ryan and Mr. Hoover,

My name is Marco Ramirez, and I just got forwarded a lovely email from my friend Gregg Henry over at the Kennedy Center.

Congrats on your production of *The Royale* being selected for the 2018 Region 6 Festival!!!

... I've had the great fortune of seeing several productions go up this year and last, but seeing a student production doing so well really filled me with pride and gratitude.

Thank you SO much for choosing *The Royale*. I know it's not an easy play to produce (it wasn't easy to write, either – especially those fight scenes – yeesh), but it looks like your hard work paid off! Please send my best to the cast and crew.

Wishing you the very best at the festival, and wishing you a great holiday season.

Best,

Marco Ramirez

– 14 December 2017 email

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## ABSTRACT

The following thesis is a brief view of the 2017-2018 production of Marco Ramirez's contemporary play *The Royale*, as produced by Theatre UNO, the theatre production arm of the University of New Orleans' Department of Film & Theatre. This thesis will include initial responses, analysis, interpretation, production synthesis and communication, and reflection with conclusions on performance, directing, and pedagogy in academic theatre. This thesis is supported by documentation of the production process, including a scored script. The play was performed in New Orleans, Louisiana at the University of New Orleans Performing Arts Center's Robert E. Nims Theatre, November 9-19, 2017; the University of New Orleans Performing Arts Center's Soundstage, February 17, 2018; and in San Angelo, Texas at the Angelo State University's Auditorium Theater, twice on March 2, 2018, as part of the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival, Region VI (KCACTF VI).

Keywords: The Royale, Marco Ramirez, Ryan M. Decker, Directing, Acting, Theatre

## INTRODUCTION

As I begin to write this document, the prospect is daunting. The laptop screen stares blankly at me. It is my antagonist. I am the single, active protagonist, doing things and learning things. Allegedly. Will this empty page prove to be my fake-opponent ally and reveal itself soon? Facing this foe, what can I learn? What *should* I learn? And how do I express it?

During my tenure at UNO, I have been mastering the enormous, esoteric concept of *Story*. And now that its abstract theories have finally begun to seep into my bones, the challenge is to extract them in a way that illuminates my understanding and effective application of them. Yet, knowledge alone does not a master make.

As Bayles and Orland say in *Art & Fear*, “The function of the overwhelming majority of your artwork is simply to teach you how to make the small fraction of your artwork that soars.” (5) Through trials by fire, I have been uncovering my directing style over the last decade. I value collaboration and attempt to establish this as the foundation of our process, with varying degrees of success. However, I believe the true mark of a master lies in one’s ability to recognize the intricacies of, and appropriately collaborate with, the egos, personalities, and personal agendas at play in the production process. A master does not merely offer him/herself as a collaborator to the work, but recognizes these nuanced challenges, and effectively fosters others to participate as collaborators as well.

Through this thesis, I will challenge myself to enter and thrive in exciting and uncomfortable territory, with the intention of elevating my craft to artistry with greater frequency. Through a case study of Theatre UNO’s fall 2017 production of *The Royale*, I will demonstrate my knowledge of story, ability to define and execute style, and synthesize my personal philosophies and best-practices in the areas of theatre performance and production, with a special

interest in pedagogical applications. While I hope the depth of my understanding will be evident, I have made special effort to be as concise as possible (whenever possible). A bulk of this document will be the evidence of my work as director on *The Royale*, in the form of appendices supporting the following chapters.

It is my intention that, through this case study, I will effectively reflect upon and examine, as wholly as possible, performance, direction, pedagogy, and myself as a craftsman, artist, and teacher.

PART ONE:  
**INITIAL RESPONSES & PREPRODUCTION**

“Ain’t nobody appoint you spokesperson of Colored People, Incorporated.”  
– *Nina, The Royale*

**THE IMPULSE**

I was very moved by *The Royale* after my first reading. Immediately attracted by its ensemble-driven nature and theatrical “pop,” the script, in my opinion, exhibited exactly what makes theatre such an enduring and unique mode of storytelling compared to film, television, and other dramatic narrative forms. The script balanced its formalist theatricality with convincing psychological realism – our prevalent western tradition of acting – and maintained simplicity and poetry atop the arc of justified and complex characters.

*The Royale* is a contemporary play that ultimately explores the responsibility of personal action and the complexity of its social consequences through the lens of racial tension in professional boxing in the middle of the Jim Crow Era. Our protagonist, Jay, is left with no easy answers. No easy choices to make. And I love that.

After my initial reading of the script, I had a sense that its prospects for Theatre UNO’s 2017-18 season were high, likely beating out two other contemporary, ensemble-driven contenders for various logistical and artistic considerations. Department Chair David Hoover confirmed such over the summer of 2017, placing it in our second slot of the season; my directing assignment for the year.

That's when the fear sunk in. It's a rather ambitious piece for all the same aforementioned reasons I was drawn to it. It would also be our season's entry to the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival (KCACTF), hot on the trail of our enormous success at the same festival just before. The year prior, our production of *The Aliens* took multiple top national awards, including Outstanding Acting, Outstanding Ensemble Acting, Outstanding Directing, and Outstanding Production, among others. The pressure to deliver a comparably successful festival production at KCACTF's special 50th Anniversary – real or imagined – was felt.

But the self-doubt did not end there. Dear reader, I have a confession to make: I am white. I am a straight, white, educated male from the American Midwest. "*Ain't nobody appoint you spokesperson of Colored People, Incorporated.*" Far from it.

In the socially-woke age of Black Lives Matter, #OscarsSoWhite, and Kent State's contentious attempt at *The Mountaintop* (Tran), I was aware that I was entering an artistic endeavor that some would justifiably wish I wouldn't. Despite the full support of my department, I couldn't help but feel that my voice (that of a white man) was not one intended to lead this production. After all, the play doesn't merely include characters of color, it closely examines the Black experience in one of the most painful and oppressive eras of our history. Who can tell this story? And who should? These were questions I visited many times in the early phases of this production. Satisfactory answers were only found through the production process itself. Add to that the director's usual diffidence, so truthfully described by Anne Bogart in *A Director Prepares*:

"Every time I begin work on a new production I feel as though I am out of my league; that I know nothing and have no notion how to begin and I'm sure that someone else should be doing my job, someone assured, who knows what to do, someone who is really a professional. I feel unbalanced, uncomfortable and out of place. I feel like a sham. In short, I am terrified." (84)



Upon the play's audition announcement, I was engaged in a brief, but meaningful discussion with Assistant Professor Laura Medina. She was curious as to why my character breakdown identified characters as "Black," as opposed to "African American." While she was concerned that "Black" could be construed as glib or reductive, I felt that the phraseology of "African American" inappropriately prioritized one's African ancestry over one's Americanness. *The Royale* is certainly an American story. The alternative "Person of Color" would not have accurately described the actors required. I was experiencing an *extremely mild* version of the dilemma Jay experiences at the time of his moral decision in the play; between a rock and a hard place. No clear answers. No clear direction. Nowhere to go. But onward.

Our discussion evolved, and I shared my struggle to self-define my role. "Well, you're the director," Ms. Medina offered. Right... Her observation was a fact I had always known, but lost sight of it under the cloud of my own insecurity. Hearing this simple assertion was exactly what I needed for the confidence to proceed.

I can direct. Or at least, I have. Script analysis, interpretation, casting, blocking, beat and action work, rhythm and pacing, visual composition, unifying a production; these are all things I am capable of, and all that is expected of the job. With that in mind, I was prepared to forge ahead and do well.

I recalled my initial attraction to the script. The character's struggles resonated so strongly with me, not because they were Black or White, but because they were Human. The script's apparent contradictions of style, which bolstered its humanity, lived in harmony with each other and within my aesthetic wheelhouse. By embracing the script which I enjoyed, I was able to confidently move forward as the production's director. I believe I did well, and hope to demonstrate such in the remaining pages.

At this point, however, I would like to affirm my first personal philosophy and directive on the craft and art of performance and direction: **Do things you like. Do things that scare you.** **(Preferably only and both.)**

Do things that can fail big and go for it.

## **THE REALITY**

Now, allow me to qualify my directive above: it's always in one's best interest to set him/herself up for success, whenever possible. When proceeding into something scary, exciting, or even *dangerous*, do so as smartly as possible. In this process, it becomes vitally important to revisit or solidify a definition of "success."

Knowing that our production was a KCACTF entry, obviously, getting picked-up for the regional festival and/or receiving festival accolades would be a clear indicator of success by the metrics of an outside body. However, this is a fairly superficial and subjective measure of success, to some degree beyond the control of our collaborators. I prefer to define the benchmark of success by answering another question: **What can we be the best at?**

The University of New Orleans Department of Film & Theatre, like all university and college departments (or at least, as all would claim), is a unique program, and therefore unique in its resources, limitations, and strengths. We have a small graduate theatre performance cohort; a large, racially diverse undergraduate population; a small theatre-specific faculty; access to a variety of highly-skilled theatre professionals in our own backyard (one of the most culturally diverse cities in the United States); and partnerships with several professional theatre companies. At times, however, sifting out these facts as either opportunity or obstacle gets sticky. Many of our program's benefits are also its drawbacks, and vice versa. I find, they must be considered on a show-by-show basis, observing the larger context of our Department and theatrical season.

With a large-scale, musical co-production opening our season (*Urinetown* with The NOLA Project Theatre Company), neither a large-cast show nor an extravagant, hyper-realistic build seemed viable in our second slot. Casting, rehearsal space, scheduling, build-time, and other obstacles had to be accepted on the path to our best work. One must confront brutal facts.

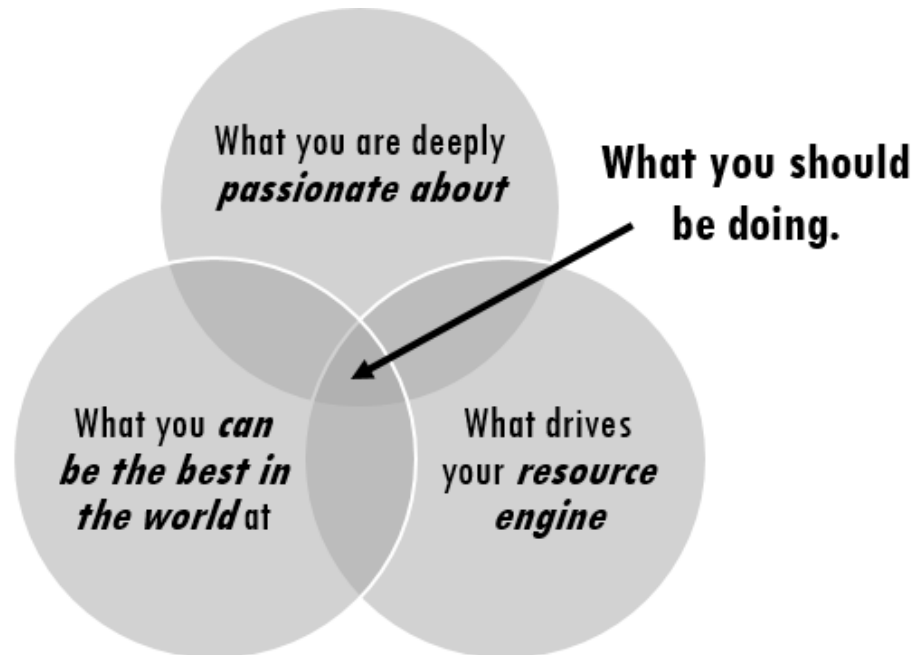
**Logistic limitations reveal strategic plans.**

With a small cast list required, we were able to exploit our historical strength of ensemble acting, built on our small graduate cohort and performance faculty's shared and close understanding of the Practical Aesthetics acting methodology.

The time and human resource constraints also encouraged us to pursue a production with an abstracted story-world; viscerally effective, but less demanding in the minutia of stagecraft. Fortunately, opting for a stylized production would also play into (what I believe are) our faculty designers' natural strengths and interest.

Although our graduate acting class was small, we had an ability that few university theatre programs have: the capacity to cast our graduate "wringers" and afford casting opportunities to undergraduate students in one ensemble show – all in meaty, challenging roles.

Finally, the racial diversity of our student population was another consideration. In "Assessing Color Blind Casting in American Theatre and Society," Dr. Jocelyn A. Brown discusses the needs of Black Americans in theatre and implores theaters to "consider new intercultural/mixed race projects that represent the Black race with all of its cultural expressions rather than merely the Black color." (164) Most universities are not as fortunate as UNO to have such a multiplicity of students. This advantage allowed us to consider scripts (including *The Royale*) that other theatre programs simply couldn't.



*The Hedgehog Concept. From Good to Great and the Social Sectors by Jim Collins.*

---

For these reasons, it became quickly evident that *The Royale* was, in fact, something we could realistically “be the best at.” We realized that it was a show we not only had the capacity to do, but in a sense, a responsibility to do, as well.

Jim Collins, in his monograph, *Good to Great and the Social Sectors*, describes The Hedgehog Concept, the essence of which is “to attain piercing clarity about how to produce the best long-term results, and then exercising the relentless discipline to say ‘No, thank you’ to opportunities that fail the hedgehog test.” (17) The concept is comprised of three questions: (1) What are we deeply passionate about; (2) What can we be the best in the world at; and (3) What drives our resource engine? (See Venn diagram above.) Would *The Royale* hold up to the test?

The Department of Film & Theatre at UNO espouses that it “is committed to an interdisciplinary belief that film and theatre arts enrich one another. The Department of Film and Theatre fuses the artistic, technical and analytical dynamics of theatre and film in a collaborative environment, educating the next generation of professional storytellers. In accordance with this

philosophy, the department undertakes to educate its students, enrich the UNO and larger community, and encourage faculty development.” (University of New Orleans)

Upon reviewing the Department’s statement (most of which is expected language for an academic program’s philosophy/mission statement), I was struck by the inclusion of “[to] enrich the UNO and larger community.” While that phrase is likely vague by design, it carries many possibilities. I was already personally passionate about *The Royale*, but as a team player for the Department of Film & Theatre, *The Royale* – it’s story and examination of ideas – could provide the contemporary specificity needed to enrich both on campus and abroad.

In examining our resource engine – time, money, and brand – we were close to identifying the production which would be our best fit. The realistic six-week rehearsal, availability of sufficient student and faculty labor, budget allocated by the University and Department, and Theatre UNO’s brand – historically, as a strong producer of contemporary, ensemble theatre – all reinforced the decision we were making.

With our Passion, Best At, and Resource Engine ascertained and in alignment with *The Royale* as a selection, the “Hedgehog Test” was passed, and the realization of the production began.

## **THE WHO**

Another *Good to Great* philosophy applicable to theatrical production is “First Who... Then What”: “Those who build great organizations make sure they have the right people on the bus, the wrong people off the bus, and the right people in the key seats *before* they figure out where to drive the bus. They always think *first* about the ‘who’ and *then* about what.” (34)

Although I’m addressing the “who” after material selection, I think it is obvious that the consideration of who would be involved in the project – or who *potentially* would be involved – was inherent in that process. As a human process, human resources are our most valuable in the

theatre. A small number of people were already in place from the beginning: myself as director and faculty designers in the areas of scenic, lighting, and costume design. Filling the rest of the seats on the bus would involve auditions for casting purposes and inviting select students and guest artists to vacant production roles.

Elia Kazan believed that directing was 75% casting, and I tend to agree. (Jones, 138) That said, I'm not a fan of the audition process, neither as a director nor an actor. While actors are encouraged to approach auditions as an opportunity to present their work, livelihoods and/or personal identities often hang in the balance. For the director, it's a series of interdependent, complex decisions which ultimately and inevitably disappoints a majority of the hopefuls invested in the project.

For auditions, I opted to use sides from the script in lieu of prepared and potentially polished monologue presentations. In productions that depend upon psychological realism (as *The Royale's* "book" scenes did), I prioritize the appraisal of actors' chemistry and physical presence with each other. Observing scene work from an intended script, in my opinion, is always the favorable assessment in this respect; it reveals not only performance potential, but to some degree, indicates one's rehearsal ethic.

In addition to pairing and recalling actors to read sides with each other, I began the evening by collecting all the auditionees together for a group rhythm improvisation game. The purpose of this activity was two-fold: to put the actors at ease with each other and the audition process; and to determine who had the requisite rhythmic and percussive skills inherent to the language of Ramirez's stylized scenes.

Ultimately, I was able to cast a senior undergraduate student (as Jay, the protagonist), a freshman undergraduate (as Fish, his sparring partner), and two graduate acting students (as Max, his white manager; and Nina, his sister, the antagonist).

Another undergraduate senior was identified as a potential Wynton (Jay's trainer); not so much for his acting skills or chemistry with the others, but for his natural physicality and pattern of speaking which lent itself to a believably aged characterization. However, upon consideration of his previous work ethic and his indecision to cut his hair to an appropriate style, it became apparent he was *not* the right person to put on the bus. With appreciation for all the auditionees, in my estimation there were no other viable actors in the pool for Wynton. We now had an opportunity, however, to invite another kind of actor to the process: the guest artist.

After reaching out to a number of age-appropriate UNO alumni (all gainfully employed at the time), we eventually reached out to a younger actor whose work the graduate cohort became familiar with through *Urinetown*. Based in New Orleans with an M.F.A. in acting from Louisiana State University, he graciously accepted.

Another guest artist position was available for sound design. Because of the show's suggested on-stage clapping and my early uncertainty as to how far down the stylized rabbit hole we would eventually go, I wanted to find a versatile artist with great competency in traditional sound design as well as music composition and direction, in case either or both would be needed. Our award-winning sound designer and music director from *The Aliens*, with an M.M. in music theory and composition from University of Arkansas, was the ideal candidate.

While trying to identify a management team, we immediately considered a highly-effective undergraduate student – a prolific assistant stage manager for Theatre UNO co-productions with Southern Rep and The NOLA Project. When I approached her with the offer of stage manager, she

confessed she had little interest in stage management, and wanted to be a director. As a result of her interest and contributions to our previous productions, I offered her a role as assistant director. She and I would collaboratively undertake stage management duties – filling out reports, setting up the rehearsal space, etc. – until an appropriate stage manager was secured.

Finding a stage manager took more time than ideal, as the proficient, competent students we pursued were all unwilling or unable to join. Eventually, with rehearsals well underway, an undergraduate freshman came forward with interest. She had experience as a stage manager in high school, but was hesitant, knowing that stage managing a collegiate show could be an entirely different beast. That self-knowledge alone was an encouraging sign. Paired with her interest in the show and stage management, I brought her onto the production team.

There were still some production roles vacant, and remained difficult to fill as the actual performances approached. As less dedicated students would show interest and drop, the solid production team we had in place was accommodating and adaptable to the needs of the production. Our stage manager would eventually operate the light board; our sound designer operated the sound board (live mixing sound); and I served as the properties master.

Not only were all the cast and production team members requisitely competent or expert in their area of specialty as it related to the show, all were kind, generous, and open. In a word: Collaborative. Everyone, in my perception, was genuinely interested in both telling this story and pursuing our best work.

All collaborators must be a choice, not an accident. **Get the right people on the bus.**

=====

With the right team in place, and reality as a co-pilot, the impulse to tell remarkable story may be successfully pursued.



## PART TWO: **ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION**

“A battle of the elements, of water and fire.”  
– Max, *The Royale*

### **INTRODUCTION**

In a play, is it possible to see past given circumstances, beyond plot, deep into story and reveal something unexpected? To uncover these answers as they related to *The Royale*, I first identified the play’s given circumstances, and then, after encountering problems with Aristotelian analysis, explored some alternative analytical methods. I investigated the text with a methodology devised from John Truby’s *The Anatomy of Story*. Through this analysis, I found a deep understanding of the story for translation onto the stage.

Please note that a significant amount of my personal commentary and research on analysis, herein, originates from my work in the course Form and Idea in Media, which may be found in my essay “A Comparative Story Analysis of *The Seagull* and *Stupid Fucking Bird*.” Additional analysis and interpretation is modeled off of my final analysis project on *Around the World in 80 Days* for the course Concept, Conflict, and Character.

### **GIVEN CIRCUMSTANCES**

To identify the play’s given circumstances, I like to briefly answer questions posed by Frances Hodge in *Play Directing: Analysis Communication & Style*. Not all of Hodge’s

considerations are necessarily useful for the action of *The Royale*, however I will address them briefly to acknowledge these observations simply as facts, which may influence interpretation.

**Time.** Some point between 1905 and 1910. The action occurs in no particular season. Passage of time can be tracked accurately. The play takes place over a duration of three months. Time jumps in scene three.

**Setting.** Various cities in the US. No geographical features described. Scene one and six takes place in a boxing ring and inside the boxers' heads. Scene two takes place in a locker room. Scene three takes place in the training room and a press conference (simultaneously). Scene four takes place in a whites-only hotel room. Scene five takes place in the training room. Locations do not change in a scene, but multiple locations and "experiences" can exist at once.

**Social Environment.** Jay and Nina are siblings, a bit distant. The men are like a family: Wynton and Jay are like father and son; Max treats Jay like a son, but the relationship is not reciprocated strongly by Jay; Fish becomes like a little brother to Jay. All the men are friends, although their relationships are strained at times.

Jay is a boxer. Nina is a mother. Wynton is a former boxer turned trainer. Max is a fight promoter, also announcer and referee. Fish is a naval yard rope man and amateur boxer who becomes a sparring partner. The Black characters probably come from lower class, Max probably from the middle class. At the start of the play, Jay, Wynton, and Max are presumably upper-class. Fish appears lower middle class. Nina is middle class. The social classes of Black and White are also represented; Jay, Nina, Wynton, and fish represent Black, Max alone represents White.

Jim Crow laws are in place at this time, mandating racial discrimination and segregation under the auspices of "separate but equal." The reward for conforming is status quo. Racism frequently turns violent with little consequence.

***Economic Environment.*** Capitalism is the general economic system at work. Jay and company earn money from fight admissions. Fish was paid as a rope man. Fish purchases a present for Jay with cash. Wynton used to box for change. Jay and company appear well-enough off the economics exercises little control over their lives; he early on accepts Bixby's offer to fight for only 10% of the purse. Economics does not noticeably exercise control over Nina.

***Political & Legal Environment.*** The system of government at play is a representative democracy; it enables the Jim Crow laws at work.

***Intellectual & Cultural Environment.*** The general level of culture and education of the characters is not evident, although the characters are thoughtful, able to read, and even witty. Boxing, music, printed images, and newspapers are the dominant cultural elements of the play. No character appears obviously more or less educated or intelligent than others, but their circumstances and life experiences are different. Intellect or culture does not appear to exercise control on the lives of the characters, except for Jay wanting his picture on the front page of the newspaper. Generally, the White World controls the intellectual and cultural circumstances.

***Spiritual Environment.*** At this time in the United States, Christianity, in various forms, would be the dominant code of religious and spiritual beliefs – although not necessarily exhibited. There are no examples of specifically religious or spiritual activities or ceremonies. Characters reference religion with “I swear to god,” “Ohmygod,” etc. Nina is the only character that doesn't evoke “god” in some form. No one clearly controls the spiritual circumstances in the play, although Wynton's words are treated with the most reverence.

## **THE PROBLEMS OF ARISTOTELIAN ANALYSIS**

One of the traditional vehicles of script analysis is the Aristotelian form, based on the Greek philosopher and dramatic critic Aristotle's work, *Poetics*. While this staple for dramatic narrative

analysis has its value, particularly at the introductory level of criticism and theatre analysis, I would like to push back a bit on this standard to make way for alternative methods of analyzing plays.

The first problem of this methodology, in my opinion, is the historical context to which its foundational text, *Poetics*, belongs. Aristotle wrote *Poetics* in ancient times when the Greek Festival of Dionysus was the pinnacle of performance for dramatic texts. Drama and theatre as we know it today was essentially at the beginning of its history and development. The Roman, Medieval, Tudor, Jacobean, Restoration, and Classical periods, as well as non-Western theatrical traditions, would come to influence Modern and Contemporary playwrighting and performance. This text and analytical model could not have foreseen the specifics of today's theatre. The improbability of this foresight suggests to me that more contemporary approaches to analysis would offer deeper illumination and insights to today's texts and how to tell them.

Another problem we face, if our desire were to offer the purest form of Aristotelian analysis possible, is that we base our form of analytical investigation upon a text which may not be complete or even true by the standards of its author. Today, there is much scholarly suggestion that *Poetics*, as we know it, is an early, private rough draft of a work in progress – part of a canon of texts on dramatic structural analysis by Aristotle, which may or may not have existed, but in either case has not survived for our use. One of the factors which supports this probable theory is what text remains absent in today's *Poetics*: a significant discussion on comedy. (BBC Radio 4) This leads us to another problem.

In *Poetics*, Aristotle makes mention of epic poetry, tragedy, comedy, and dithyrambic poetry, yet in the text we have, his focus is on the formers – epic poetry and tragedy – with allusions to comedy and the suggestion that alternative or additional factors must come into play in its consideration. At the Festival of Dionysus, epic poems and tragedies were relieved by the

performance of comedies (satyr plays being particularly popular). It makes logical sense that Aristotle would have intended to address comedy too, in a manner representative of the form's magnitude. While *The Royale* is most akin to tragedy, it too is frequently relieved by humor, and an Aristotelian address of comedy, if it were to exist, could perhaps offer a more complete prism to explore our script in question than the material we have on tragedy. *The Royale*, like most contemporary plays, provides a complex tapestry in the way of genre identity, which renders a binary view on the matter of little use to us.

In a brief sketch, Aristotle's rubric for dramatic narrative falls apart. There is a clear line of action attached to Jay, our single, active protagonist. Jay is orchestrated against four characters with less-ambitious desire lines; as a result, he consumes the most individual stage time and drives the text forward. There is, however, a strong and compelling subplot between Wynton and Fish. While their action lines are connected to Jay's, this would be impermissible by *Poetics*' standards. *The Royale* is an ensemble piece. In this way, the Unity of Action falls apart. *The Royale* is set in a boxing ring, a sparring room, a training room, hotel room, and the showgrounds (fluidly so in Scene 3). Here, the Unity of Place also falls apart. Six months rapidly elapse in Scene 3, and most scenes take place on independent days, beyond the single-day limitations of Aristotle's Unity of Time. The Three Unities (Action, Place, and Time), a major thrust of *Poetics*, does not hold together in the consideration of this work.

In defense of Aristotle, *The Royale* contains the six essential parts of Tragedy. Plot, character, diction, and thought are present, although to the extent I would argue they exist in every dramatic work. Spectacle exists, if nowhere else, in the play's suggestion of boxing. Song/Music too exists in the traditional Aristotelian sense, by way of the phonograph playing "Take Your Boots Off." I would also argue that music is present via Ramirez's device of the claps.

And again, we have a single, active protagonist doing things and learning things. Ultimately, however, I submit that Aristotelian analysis does not offer revelatory observations of the text. In this determination, I hope that I have made room for us to consider alternative methods of analysis.

### **ALTERNATIVE MODES OF ANALYSIS**

In the search for alternative methods of analysis, *Interpreting the Play Script: Contemplation and Analysis* by Anne Fliotsos seems a promising place to turn next. While Fliotsos' text is unique and innovative for "new age" approaches to interpretation and synthesis (chiefly Zen as an interpretive lens), she proceeds with an understanding of formalist analysis and traditional conventions of structure. Fliotsos suggests, as have I in the previous section, that Aristotle's process, while a point of origin for understanding plays, is not the destination (43):

Though Aristotle provided a starting point for analysis, further terminology and analytical systems have evolved over the centuries. In 1863, a German artist and scholar named Gustav Freytag wrote *Technik des Dramas*, giving us "Freytag's Pyramid," a graphic depiction of the play's action with a central climax, which has been taught – at times in an altered form – for more than a century.

While Freytag analysis can be useful in understanding a play's shape – as a series of tension and release, cause and effect, cathartic reversals, and earned climaxes – it unfortunately reveals very little to us in the way of *story*. Freytag focuses on mechanics: exposition, inciting incident, rising action, crisis/climax, falling action, and resolution. (Fliotsos, 44) Its intrinsic limitation appears to be that it is ultimately an external view of plot, not an understanding of the interconnected internal web of what a play is *about*.

In *Backwards & Forwards: A Technical Manual for Reading Plays*, David Ball introduces a more contemporary approach to play script reading and analysis by promoting a sort of “backwards” view. “Sequential analysis of actions is most useful when done backwards: from the end of the play back to the start. It is your best insurance that you understand why everything happens.” (18) His belief is that “Going forwards allows unpredictable possibility. Going backwards exposes that which is required.” (15)

Here we can start to get closer to what is *essential* in the storytelling. One reductive Ball analysis of *The Royale* might look something like:

- Jay is alone, because [Sc. 6]
- Fish is killed, because
- Jay is the Heavyweight Champion of the World, because
- Jay wins the Bixby fight, because
- Wynton gives Jay his autonomy (and responsibility), because [Sc. 5]
- Nina attempts to back Jay down from the Bixby fight, because
- Fish encourages Jay’s ambition, because
- Max and Wynton insulate Jay, because [Sc. 4]
- Jay is attacked by the White world, because [Sc. 3]
- Jay wants the World to recognize him as the best, because [Sc. 2]
- Jay is supported and driven, because [Sc. 1]
- Jay is the Negro Heavyweight Champion

Although this analysis is still plot-centric, we begin to see story reveal itself, specifically in how the show is built on tension and release. Even here, however, we must depart slightly from our protagonist’s line of action less we miss the death of Fish. While Fish’s death is a logical line

of action, it significantly subverts the script's expectations and results in the play's tragedy and emotional catharsis.

## **22-STEP ANALYSIS**

As the story begins to emerge through analysis, it may be time for us to depart the conventional wisdom of texts on analysis in lieu of philosophies and theories specifically on the act of storytelling. In the concluding chapter of *The Anatomy of Story*, Hollywood story consultant John Truby says, "Great story lives forever. This is not a platitude or a tautology. A great story keeps on affecting the audience long after the first telling is over. It literally keeps on telling itself. How is it possible for a great story to be a living thing that never dies?" This is the question theatre artists (especially directors) grapple with every production. This is the question script analysis would ideally answer for us. Time has yet to cement *The Royale* in its place in the Contemporary theatre cannon, if it ever will, but perhaps Truby could help us stage a deeply affecting narrative if we reverse-engineer his methods of creating remarkable story.

Truby believes that stories – in fact, all stories – have seven steps in their growth from beginning to end: weakness and need; desire; opponent; plan; battle; self-revelation; and new equilibrium. (39)

The seven steps are not arbitrarily imposed from without, the way a mechanical story structure such as three-act structure is. They exist *in* the story. These seven steps are the nucleus, the DNA, of your story and the foundation of your success as a storyteller because they are based on *human action*. They are the steps that any human being must work through to solve a life problem. And because the seven steps are organic – implied in your premise line – they must be linked properly for the story to have the audience. (Truby, 40)



This resonant passage attempts to distinguish between the mechanics and the heart of story. For this reason, I conducted the following analysis of *The Royale* by comprehensively identifying Truby's 22 steps. The steps follow not in numerical order, but in chronological order of the script, supported by the text.

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## STORY WORLD AND GHOST

The story world is almost immediately established by Max and the ensemble:

[Page 9-10]

*(Clap-Clap-Clap, Clap-Clap-Clap, Clap-Clap-Clap. MAX flashes a knowing smile.)*

**MAX.** And in *this* corner,

*(Clap.)*

Weighing in at two-hundred-ten pounds,  
Standing tall at six feet, three inches,  
Toes like Jack Nimble,  
Fists like John Henry,

*(Clap-Clap.)*

Ladies and gentlemen,  
The man you *came* for,  
The man who casts a shadow in the dark,

*(Clap.)*

Your Negro Heavyweight Champion,

*(Pinspot on JAY. Shirtless, muscular, also jogging in place, but most importantly, he's showboating.)*

You know him,  
You *love* him,

*(JAY plays to the crowd. Born to do this. Swagger for days.)*

Jay – “The Sport” – Jackson!

*(Clap-Clap-Clap, Clap-Clap-Clap, Clap-Clap-Clap. JAY smiles, all confidence. WYNTON – his trainer – calls to Jay from the ringside.)*

The story world Ramirez establishes is one of theatrical presentationalism – Max (and others) speak directly to the audience; claps are used as punctuation. And yet, these choices of style are rooted in reality. A boxing announcer *would* speak to audience; clapping *would* be heard. Boxers may even showboat or “work” the crowd. We see here that the characters are self-aware that they are part of a theatrical event, but they believe that event is a boxing match, not a play. They are not fully aware of the theatrical devices they are employing, and are completely unaware that that their actions are commentaries on their words.

Later in the script, Ramirez suggests that Jay and Fish “stare straight forward, not at each other,” and “What follows is more stream-of-consciousness indication of what goes on inside their heads than a depiction of the fight itself.” (12) Ultimately, we are in a world of psychological realism, supported by theatrical commentary, unbeknownst to the players involved.

Here we also establish, perhaps, the most important Given Circumstance for the play: Jay is the Negro Heavyweight Champion of the world. People know him. People love him. All other characters, say for Nina, are also revealed in this scene along with their relationship to/with Jay.

A “Ghost” also haunts this story, however, the audience will not see evidence of this baggage until much later in the play. I will withhold this piece of information until Truby’s 18th step, “Visit to Death.”

## **WEAKNESS AND NEED**

The first major step of creating story, according to Truby is to endow characters with weakness and need (Truby, 40):

From the very beginning of the story, your hero has one or more great weaknesses that are holding him back. Something is missing within him that is so profound, it is ruining his life... The need is what the hero must fulfill within himself in order

to have a better life. It usually involves overcoming his weakness and changing or growing, in some way.

I think one can witness Jay's weakness and need in the following passage:

[Page 11]

**JAY.** (To **FISH.**) Hey kid.

**WYNTON.** (Still coaching.) Keep it simple, Jay.

**JAY.** (To **FISH.**) Hey kid, how many rounds you want?

**FISH.** What?

**JAY.** Two? Three?

How many you want me to *give* you?

**FISH.** Um –

**JAY.** “Um” ain’t a number, boy,

How many rounds ’fore you get friendly with the canvas.

**FISH.** Well, sir –

**JAY.** (To the crowd.) Called me sir!

**FISH.** I could ask you the same question.

**JAY.** (To the crowd.) Oh, you *heard* that?

**ENSEMBLE.** HA!

Jay's weakness is not that he is confident, but overconfident. He's cocksure. Kind of an asshole. We expect, per Max's introduction of the unstoppable Jay "The Sport" Jackson and the newbie Fish, that Jay will win this match handily. Therefore, for Jay to behave this way, verbally sparring and mocking his fresh opponent, he reveals himself to be an *ungracious winner*. We can use this weakness to deduce a correlating need. Brazen and arrogant, Jay's need then is to gain humility and perspective.

Often, these weaknesses and needs, especially in contemporary theatre, are hidden in the subtext of characters' actions and dialogue, as not to bludgeon the audience with the play's moral argument. Needs may be psychological – within oneself – or moral – affecting those around them

(Truby, 40). Jay appears driven by an internal need for external validation, but not from his opponent, thus his psychological need is to seek less validation, perhaps in the form of humility. His moral need, then, to gain more empathy and consideration for those his choices impact.

### **INCITING INCIDENT**

The first incident that disrupts the continuing action of the play, is Max's notice of someone in the front row. He battles Jay briefly to get his recognition. (Ramirez, 15)

### **SELF-REVELATION, NEED AND DESIRE**

At this point, Jay has no revelation, but his need is to not be seen as the loser of this match by "the front row watching." He desires that the front row validate or otherwise look positively upon his performance. (Ramirez, 16)

### **ALLY OR ALLIES**

In scene two, we are introduced to Jay's allies: Wynton, his trainer; and Max his fight promoter. The scene will also introduce Fish as a new ally, hired as Jay's sparring partner.

### **OPPONENT AND/OR MYSTERY**

In scene two, the Allies and Jay also discuss Jay's Opponent at length:

*[Page 25]*

**MAX.** They insist Bixby's retired –

**WYNTON.** He's got a fight or two left in him –

**MAX.** He's overweight,  
Lives on an apple orchard for god's sake.  
They make cider, Wynton,  
They make doughnuts –

**WYNTON.** He's the Heavyweight Champion of the World, Max,  
That don't leave a man,  
Not for a *minute* –

“A true opponent not only wants to prevent the hero from achieving his desire, but is also competing for the same goal.” (Truby, 46) Bernard Bixby, the retired Heavyweight Champion of the World, white, is Jay’s natural opponent in this scenario. Jay wants Bixby’s title. Bixby, presumably, wants to keep the title.

Before we unpack Jay’s desire, I’d also like to note briefly that Bixby is also the show’s mystery. He is discussed a lot – even mythologized – but never actually seen on stage. His legendary prowess is limited only by the imagination of the viewer.

## **DESIRE**

With this weakness, psychological need, and moral need, and now opponent established, we may continue with our analysis (Truby, 43):

Once the weakness and need have been decided, you must give the hero desire.

Desire is what your hero wants in the story, his particular goal...

Think of the desire as the story track the audience “rides along.” Everyone gets on the “train” with the hero, and they all go after the goal together. Desire is the driving force in the story, the line from which everything else hangs.

While desire is intrinsically connected to need, they are not the same. Need is how a character may overcome a weakness from within, whereas desire is a character’s external goal which plays out. (Truby, 42). Jay first reveals his desire in scene two. On the subject of linen suits, Jay entraps Max:

[Page 25-26]

**MAX.** Okay.

Next stop, I can set it up, Jay,  
I'll get the best tailor in town,  
Get you one in every color –

**JAY.** That so?

**MAX.** Anything you want.

(**JAY** just stares at him.)

**JAY.** Anything?

(**MAX** swallows hard.)

**MAX.** I'll talk to 'em, okay?

Jay first suggests here, that he wants to box (and beat) the resistant Bixby. He also indicates that he wants his picture on the front page of the newspaper, presumably for validation; this desire becomes more apparent as the play goes on, and is in fact more overt in previous versions of the published play. There remains, however, a brief discussion in our script:

[Page 27]

**MAX.** You're a colored man on page five, Jay,  
For Christ's sake, it's remarkable –

**JAY.** Why not that front page –

**MAX.** Who cares about the front page?

**JAY.** The ones who don't *open* the paper, Max,  
The ones who don't *read* as well as we do.

Jay explicitly reinforces this dual-desire when Max offers alternatives opponents: “They ain't the *best*, Max. / ... / And you know as well as I – / A pair of black boys ain't *never* gonna see that front page.” (Ramirez, 28)

To fight Bixby and make the front page becomes the desire line that drives the remaining action of the play forward. This will generate the conflict, which gets richer in production when

actors and director introduce “tactics” into the rehearsal and performance process – the actions by which a character pursues their objective.

### **OPPONENT PLAN AND MAIN COUNTERATTACK**

Bixby’s plan – or rather, the plan of Bixby’s people – is first to humiliate Jay and financially intimidate him out of the fight. Bixby’s people say he needs three months to prepare and ninety percent of the gate. Max and Wynton begin to fold under these demands, but Jay is resolute:

*[Page 27]*

**MAX.** That’s a horrible deal!

Word gets out we took that low a figure,

No one’ll take us serious ever again,

You’ll be the laughing stock of the professional sports world.

**JAY.** And what am I *now*?

Conceding that he is considered a second-class citizen under Jim Crow, Jay’s counterattack is to stand up for his personhood and prove himself.

### **PLAN**

In order for a conflict between the protagonist and opponent to occur (as action or plot, or whichever semantic label we choose to call it), plan is vital: “The plan is the set of guidelines, or strategies, the hero will use to overcome the opponent and reach the goal.” (Truby, 47)

[Page 35-36]

**JAY.** Make the call.

(A tense beat. **MAX** thinks about it. Swallows hard. He's got no choice)

**MAX.** Okay.

I mean –  
Okay.

(**MAX** moves to leave.)

**JAY.** And Max –

(**MAX** stops.)

For the record?

(**JAY** looks right at him, with eyes like loaded guns.)

I ain't no grizzly bear.

(**MAX** nods, leaves.)

Jay will stand up for himself, but will also play by the White World's rules. Although the majority of society is against him, by yielding to its requests he will ultimately land in the ring with Bixby, and beat him.

## **DRIVE**

Jay's drive sequence begins in scene three. In this scene, Jay continues his training, sparring with Fish while *simultaneously* sparring the press with Max. Wynton appears to be somehow coaching both.

The reporters attempt to dissuade Jay from going through with the title match. The attacks while unintentional on the part of some reporters, are certainly intentional on others. They slight his race for "primal, *aggressive* behavior," question the mythology of his origin story (trotting out the "Ghost"; we'll get to this later), accuse him of targeting Bixby for his whiteness, and blame him for mixed-race violence in his name. For the most part, Jay is able to fend off their attacks with his usual cocksuredness and humor.



A theatrical device jumps us forward through time. The previously published version of the play has Wynton intermittently shouting, “Page Four,” “Page Three,” “Page Two,” indicating that Jay is in fact moving toward the front page of the newspaper (this doesn’t exist in the script licensed to us by Samuel French). At this point, Jay introduces a new tactic, showing respect for his rival Bixby: “But if you only print one thing, print this, / No matter *what* happens tomorrow, / Champ Bixby is one of the best fighters to *ever* step into that ring, / And it will truly be my honor to step into it with him. / And I mean that.” (Ramirez, 44)

A well-intentioned reporter squeezes in one last question. It is perhaps, the most lethal. In an added revelation, the reporter makes Jay aware that just before the press conference four white men were taken into custody. Four different firearms confiscated from them, presumably meant to assassinate Jay. “Do you have any worries regarding your personal safety?” the reporter asks. This is somehow the first truly personal attack against Jay, and therefore the most affective. This revelation permeates the rest of the drive sequence and play. Jay’s choices could result in personal physical violence or death. That real possibility is no longer a distant idea that can be ignored. Jay concludes the scene with his personal philosophy: “At the end of the day, the person most likely to take you down... / Ain’t even in that ring.” (Ramirez, 45)

The drive continues into scene four, carrying the added revelation with it. There is a dialogue between Fish and Wynton which foreshadows Fish’s present for Jay, endows Fish as the character of future hope and promise, and teases the “Ghost” again. After this, Jay and Max enter fresh off the press conference and argue about Jay’s personal security and protection. When Jay begins to turn physically aggressive for the first time toward Max, Wynton contributes another added revelation: he has known about the attempts on Jay’s life for some time.

At the top of scene five, Jay is alone. Preoccupied with the revelations of the previous two scenes, he shadowboxes the heavy bag, preparing for the Bixby fight that evening. Fish enters, again as the character of hope and promise, and offers Jay a present: a phonograph. Fish knows how much Jay likes “to give ‘em a little music.” (Ramirez, 57)

### **FAKE-ALLY OPPONENT**

For the first time, Nina, is introduced. She enters with the line, “Did I interrupt something?” Putting an end to Jay and Fish’s enjoyment of the phonograph, this line is poetic as she will disrupt the action of Jay’s desire line. While Nina is Jay’s sister and loves and supports him, she shortly reveals herself to be an opponent to Jay’s desire to box and defeat Bixby.

### **ATTACK BY ALLY**

After briefly exchanging their lives, as pleasantly as distant siblings can, Nina decides to do what she came to do. “I wasn’t gon’ come here, Jay. / I wanted to let you have this. / Truly.” (Ramirez 61) She exposes herself as an opponent, and reveals how Jay’s actions have impacted her family – threats against her children, Jay’s nephews. Nina believes what Jay is doing is dangerous and stupid. She pushes him to think more globally:

*[Page 63]*

**NINA.** Where’s the checkpoints in Harlem, Jay?  
Where’s the checkpoints in Memphis, New Orleans?  
'Cause you know as well as I do what happens when you knock that bastard out.

*[Page 64]*

**NINA.** One day, you won’t be the strongest one in the room, Jay.  
Some day, you’ll learn to love things outside yourself,  
And once you do, you’ll know – there’s a LOT out there to be afraid of.

## 2ND REVELATION AND DECISION: OBSESSIVE DRIVE, CHANGED DESIRE AND MOTIVE

Jay is forced to realize that nobody appointed him “spokesperson for Colored People, Incorporated” and to admit “*I want this.*” (Ramirez, 64) Jay decides to own his ambition and doubles-down on his desire to defeat Bixby and become the World Heavyweight Champion, motivated now by his blinding, obsessive drive.

## APPARENT DEFEAT

Nina reminds Jay that black people *are* dying in his name. More *will* die in his name if he continues. Ramirez suggest in the stage directions that “this is news to Jay. He tries to make like this doesn’t bother him. He fails.” (65) And then, Nina goes for the kill:

[Page 65]

**NINA.** I know you’re ready to win.

You were ready to take over the world the day you were born.

...

I just don’t think *the rest of us are.*

*(She gathers her things. She moves to leave, but stops. She looks at the room. A beat. Her eyes water.)*

Back home.

...

Everybody’s already *so* proud, Jay.

...

*Every single one of us.*

Nina invokes Jay’s home – the “Ghost,” still a mystery at this point in the story. She also gives Jay the external validation he has been pursuing throughout the play. A special kind of validation he has not been able to receive without her permission. Now, his drive is the only thing that can take him forward.

## SELF-REVELATION

Scene five moves into its third phase, another two-person interaction, this one between Jay and Wynton. Wynton reenters the story to lead Jay to the protagonist’s self-revelation (Truby, 49):

For a good self-revelation, you must be aware that this step, like need, comes in two forms, psychological and moral.

In a psychological self-revelation, the hero strips away the façade he has lived behind and sees himself honestly for the first time. This stripping away of the façade is not passive or easy. Rather, it is the most active, the most difficult, and the most courageous act the hero performs in the entire story.

Wynton, without encouraging or discouraging Jay to defeat Bixby, uses an allegory from his early boxing days at “The Royale” to grant Jay his autonomy. No matter what Jay chooses to do, Wynton assures him “You do it alone.” (Ramirez, 70)

Jay has a psychological self-revelation: he realizes that he must accept responsibility for his own actions. He does not yet, however, have a moral self-revelation: he will defeat Bixby with the consequences doing so entails.

## **BATTLE**

After Jay’s self-revelation, we approach the battle, another of Truby’s essential steps (48):

Throughout the middle of the story, the hero and opponent engage in a punch-counterpunch confrontation as each tries to win the goal. The conflict heats up. The battle is the final conflict between hero and opponent and determines which of the two characters wins the goal. The final battle may be a conflict of violence or a conflict of words.

Jay and Bixby have the same goal: The World Heavyweight Championship title. Their battle for this title is the boxing match in scene six.

## **AUDIENCE REVELATION**

The audience sees that Champ Bixby is not Jay's true opponent, but it is Nina. Nina is the physical manifestation of Bixby and the "Ghost" – Jay's origin story which will also be revealed to the audience in this scene.

## **GATE, GAUNTLET, VISIT TO DEATH**

The title fight functions similarly to the exhibition match in scene one, with offstage focus and stream-of-consciousness between the challengers. As it heats up, Nina berates Jay for his motivation to win, and he strongly protests, "It's about a pharmacy on Colby Lane." Ramirez's following direction is, "Clap. A beat. Everything stops." (Ramirez, 80) This indicates that there is a clear beat shift – a change in the way the stage will function and a change in Jay's tactic.

Jay finally exposes the "Ghost" and forces an unwilling Nina to revisit a traumatic, formative story from their childhood. The pharmacy on Colby Lane displayed promotional posters that featured beautiful, white women. Exclusively. Nina attempted to emulate them to horrifying results which Jay witnessed:

[Page 81-82]

**JAY.** Just a little boy walkin' up to a screen door,  
Smell of burning meat –

**NINA.** Jay I said stop –

**JAY.** Hears the screaming –

**NINA.** Don't put this on me –

**JAY.** And he can see her sobbin' on the kitchen floor,  
Hot iron in hand,  
Blood runnin' down her neck,  
He can see his sister,  
He can smell her skin.

**WYNTON.** Breathe.

**JAY.** He can smell the smoke that used to be her hair, Nina,  
But she won't open.

**WYNTON.** Move.

**JAY.** She won't open.

**WYNTON.** Move!

**JAY.** She's crouched and screaming and alone and there's blood runnin' down  
her neck but she won't open so he *pounds* on that door, Nina –

(*Boom –.*)

**WYNTON.** Fists up –

(*Boom!*)

**JAY.** He's pounding 'cause he just wants to help her –

(*Boom!*)

**NINA.** (*Stop.*) Please –

(*Boom!*)

**JAY.** 'Cause she was tryin' to look like *them*, Nina –

(*Boom!*)

Tried so hard she made this mess of herself –

(*Boom!*)

'Cause she ain't never seen no posters looked like *her*.

This passage brings Jay and Nina to their most emotionally vulnerable. It also foreshadows the boxer Jay would become and the true motivation (or at least his justification) for his desire to be photographed on the front page.

The visit to death concludes with the continuation of Jay's obsessive drive:

[Page 83]

**JAY.** You might find it ugly,

What I *do* –

**FISH.** Come on –

**JAY.** But every punch I ever threw,  
Every punch I ever took.

...

...

I'm just tryin' to fix that.

...

I'm still tryin' to tell you –

...

I'ma make it right.

...

*I'ma change things.*

(*Ding!*)

**MAX.** End of Round Two folks and I wish you could see the faces of both  
these men.

Never have I seen such determination,

Such willpower –

## MORAL DECISION

In the third round of the title fight, Nina makes a final attempt to put Jay on the spot, and reminds him again of the negative fallout that will result from his winning the match – the black lives that will be ended. One of those tragedies, she suggests, is very close.

Nina forces Jay to confront and make a moral decision:

[Page 87]

**NINA.** It doesn't have to be *this* -  
Do you hear me?

**JAY.** I HEAR YOU! –

**NINA.** THIS DOESN'T HAVE TO BE *YOU!*

*(A beat. Almost bullet-time. JAY takes a breath. He looks at his sister. Ding! A beat. Ding!! A beat. Ding!!! Then, almost a whisper.)*

**JAY.** I'ma make it right.

*(And boom!! A beat. Shit. NINA burns JAY a look, hangs her head, disappointed.)*

**WYNTON.** *(A whisper.)* Ohmygod.

**MAX.** *(A whisper.)* Jay?

**WYNTON.** *(A whisper.)* Ohmygod.

*(NINA starts to step out the pinspot, but she stops. She burns JAY a look. Tension in the air. But not a victory. Not yet.)*

Aware of the implication of his victory and the consequence of lives that will follow, Jay's obsessive drive wins the day. He is the Heavyweight Champion of the World. He has defeated the White Hope, but at a price not entirely predictable.

### **3RD REVELATION AND DECISION**

In the aftermath of Jay's victory, Nina reveals that Fish, who's listening to the fight via radio at a bar down the way, is murdered:



[Page 88]

**NINA.** A man walks in through the front door,  
Smells that bourbon,  
Sees the world changing around him,

**JAY.** No –

**NINA.** Forwards is backwards –

**JAY.** No –

**NINA.** And a hand *pulls out* a knife.

**FISH.** What –

**NINA.** Lamb to a slaughter, Jay –

**FISH.** Please –

**NINA.** Eyes –

**FISH.** Scream –

**NINA.** Fists –

**FISH.** No –

**NINA.** Shark in the water, Jay.

**FISH.** Knife.

**NINA.** And he's straight-circlin' now.

**WYNTON.** Breathe.

**FISH.** What's that taste?

**WYNTON.** Breathe.

**NINA.** (*To JAY.*) There it is.

**FISH.** *Blood.*

Jay realizes that Fish, the embodiment of the hope and promise for future generations he has fought for, has been killed as a result of his efforts to defend it. Max announces Jay as the Heavyweight Boxing Champion, and Nina and Wynton, experiencing the event separately, poetically bring home Jay's part in this Aristotelian tragedy:

[Page 89]

**WYNTON.** Head up, son.

**NINA.** Whatever happens –

**WYNTON.** You did it.

**NINA.** *You* did it.

All revelations. No decisions. They have already been made in this story.

## **NEW EQUILIBRIUM**

Before the play is officially over, Truby would argue that we have one final storytelling step yet to take (51):

At the new equilibrium, everything returns to normal, and all desire is gone. Except there is now one major difference. The hero has moved to a higher or lower level as a result of going through his crucible. A fundamental and permanent change has occurred in the hero. If the self-revelation is positive – the hero realizes who he truly is and learns how to live properly in the world – he moves to a higher level. If the hero has a negative revelation – learning he has committed a terrible crime that expresses a corrupt personal flaw – or is incapable of having a self-revelation, the hero falls or is destroyed.

Jay's desire is removed. He is the Heavyweight Boxing Champion. His picture will be on the front page. He has also experienced personal loss through the experience and the "victory" is bitter-sweet. Blacks must be recognized as just as capable as Whites, but unfortunately, the world does not have to recognize them as equal. That is a lethal combination. The world, his community, are not necessarily better off for his actions, but different. I believe he truly understands this for the first time, because he has experienced it. I believe he must have gained humility and perspective. He must now be a gracious winner.

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## ON INTERPRETATION

With Truby analysis complete and a thorough understanding of story, I am able to make succinct interpretations which will translate into actionable direction and establish the rules for the synthesis of the production. I believe that analysis and subsequent interpretation is useful to **establish the story framework for collaboration. A good script answers all the questions.**

My interpretations of *The Royale* follow.

## GENRE

***Basic Genre and Specific Subgenre.*** The basic genre of the play is Drama. (Our “primary colors” being drama, comedy, and horror.) As a specific subgenre, I’m inclined to classify this play as a tragedy with comedy, first; a sports drama, second. The play, however, is *not* tragicomedy – the tragedy is not comedic; the comedy is not tragic.

***Requirements.*** There are a few requirements of this kind of story, in my opinion. Psychological realism is necessary, as is some degree of athleticism. The protagonist must be a likeable, but blindly ambitious character; he must bring about his own demise. There should be a high rate of reversals per minute, RPM (I expect at least one per page). Most importantly, a quick pace will be vital. Included in this is comedic timing and fluid banter, with the judicious application of slower tempos. Some people say this play is 90-minutes. Those people are wrong.

## CHARACTERS

***Orchestration & Function.*** In *The Art of Dramatic Writing*, Lajos Egri describes the significance of well-orchestrated characters in dramatic narrative: “Orchestration demands well-defined and uncompromising characters in opposition, moving from one pole toward another through conflict.” (119) Through our Ball analysis, we can identify our protagonist-antagonist

pairing as Jay and Nina. We can see that Jay and Nina embody different values in opposition; the former represents impulsive behavior and (to an extent) selfish action, the latter imbued with calculation and socially-protective inaction. They are also opposed by conflict, Jay's desire line: Whether or not he should win the Bixby fight.

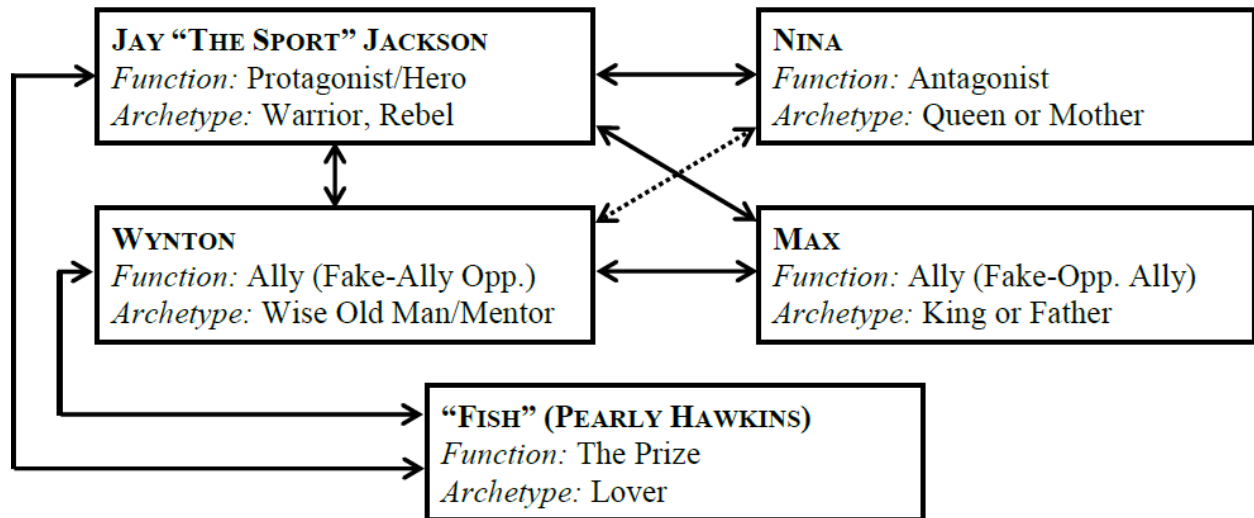
Wynton and Max, too, both allies to Jay, are orchestrated in opposition: Wynton (Black) the fake ally-opponent who enables Jay, but ultimately place's the consequences of Jay's actions on him; Max (White) the fake opponent-ally, who is an initial obstacle to the Bixby fight, but eventually enables and absolves Jay of personal responsibility for the fallout. Fish has a special function as the prize of the conflict.

*Archetype.* In identifying "character types" or archetypes, we can see that **all characters have inherent strengths and weaknesses.** Again, Truby's assistance is succinct and insightful.

Jay is the Warrior, "The practical enforcer of what is right... Can live by the harsh motto of 'kill or be killed'; may believe that whatever is weak must be destroyed and so become the enforcer of what is wrong." (Truby, 68-69). As well as the Warrior, he is also the Rebel: "Has the courage to stand out from the crowd and act against a system that is enslaving people... Often cannot or does not provide a better alternative, so ends up only destroying the system or society." (Truby, 70)

Nina is the Queen or Mother. "Provides the care and protective shell within which the child or the people can grow... Can be protective or controlling to the point of tyranny, or can use guilt and shame to hold the child close and guarantee her own comfort." (Truby, 68)

Wynton is the Wise Old Man or Mentor. "Passes on knowledge and wisdom so that people can live better lives and society can improve... Can force a student to think a certain way or speak for the glory of himself rather than the glory of his ideas." (Truby, 68)



*Character Map. Characters illustrated in orchestration, with functions and archetypes.*

Max is the King or Father. “Leads his family or his people with wisdom, foresight, and resolve so that they can succeed and grow... Can force his wife, children, or people to act according to a strict or oppressive set of rules, can remove himself entirely from the emotional realm of his family and kingdom, or may insist that his family and people live solely for his pleasure and benefit.” (Truby, 67-68)

Fish is the Lover. “Provides the care, understanding, and sensuality that can make someone a complete and happy person... can lose himself in the other or force the other to stand in his shadow.” (Truby, 70)

### **PROTAGONIST BONE STRUCTURE**

An analysis of a character’s “Bone Structure” can prove useful in the attempt to create believable, convincing behavior on stage. Physiology and Sociology yields Psychology; Psychology yields Behavior. I’ll examine our protagonist, Jay Jackson, for insights.

**Physiology.** Jay is male, in his late twenties/early thirties, and black in skin. He walks upright/erect with a powerful posture. He possesses no defects, sensitives, unique features, or hereditary illnesses to speak of. He's physically strong, and presumably healthy.

**Sociology.** His name is Jay "The Sport" Jackson. He is male (gender). Upper-class, though he wasn't always. He is a professional boxer (and the Negro Heavyweight Champion). Sufficiently educated, he appears to have had a normative childhood (poor or lower middle class) with the notable exception of a particular trauma; his origin story is mythologized and concealed for most of the play. He has no home life: he is not married, lives on the road, his allies are his family. May be some variety of Christian (based on period and class), but more likely an Atheist (based on his apparent lack of religious influence). He is a Black American. Enjoys music, boxing, and humor.

**Psychology.** Jay is a highly confident individual, with a strong sense of self-righteousness. He is straight and uncommitted; prefers relations with white women. His chief disappointment is the lack of Black representation in public images. He gets extremely frustrated – even violently so – when others try to moderate his drive and obstruct/disagree with his decisions. He has a humorous temperament, but arrogant and inconsiderate at times. Truly believes he is the best boxer. His most discernible complex is Hero Syndrome, as he seeks recognition and a desperate situation to resolve. Displays mostly extroverted tendencies. Able to take out a boxing opponent in a predetermined number of rounds. Self-aware of his own media sensationalism; fuels it. He is a strong leader. Moderate IQ, lower EQ. Seems fearless in the face of the White World and his opponent Bixby.

**Analysis.** Jay is an interesting character in that he is self-righteous, but not sympathetic to the input of those around him. He is a strong leader without a people to lead. He makes personal decisions in the name of others, but prefers to be the center of attention, taken care of, and reassured

of himself by others. He is very aware of his own status and public perception in the media/newspapers. He advocates for the Black community, but prefers intimacy with White women. Has a strong sense of humor, but takes himself incredibly seriously. He always wants what he can't have and – for better or worse – he takes it. He is impulsive: he acts, then thinks.

**Three-dimensional (and interesting) people are walking contradictions.**

**STRUCTURE**

The interpretation of structure is especially useful to the literal “shaping” of a story. Blocking rooted in a play’s inherent structure makes it possible to maintain natural visual interest in a story. Organically shaping a play’s movement and spatial relationship – whether pre-blocked or done with the actors in rehearsal – avoids the jarring disconnect of artificial design and blocking (if even “interesting”) that results when superimposed on the script. **Structure and action are the keys to revealing natural, engaging shape.**

There is a clear beginning, middle, and end (i.e. exhibition and Bixby set-up; the press, preparation, and title match; the Bixby K.O. and death of Fish). No Aristotelian Unity of Time – the play truncates large swatches of time, but the narrative accounts for all of it, chronologically. Beyond 24 hours. No Unity of Place, but all takes place in America, a boxing ring the cornerstones. High, but imperfect, Unity of Action; a subplot with Fish is connected to Jay’s pursuit. One could even argue there’s a second subplot: the developing, but unseen, Hate Crimes which follow in the wake of Jay’s actions. This, however, is manifested in the Fish-subplot.

The structure is Linear: it focuses on a “single hero who pursues a particular desire with great intensity. The audience witnesses the history of how the hero goes after his desire and is changed as a result.” (Truby, 10)

While Linear in structure, the play has a Spiral Story-feel – alternating between formalist “boxing” scenes and realistic “book” scenes as well as the swirling “ghost” mystery of Jay’s origin – but the characters are consistently driven to get Jay the Heavyweight Boxing Champion title (or to stop him entirely). The play operates as a unified whole. All the “sequences,” including the Wynton/Fish-interrogation (scene four), are directly connected to Jay’s desire line.

**Climax.** The climax of this play would be the most high-stakes event of the play, which I believe should be Nina’s final plea and Jay’s obsessive drive in the third round of the title match (scene six), the round in which Jay has predetermined to win. The climax resolves in the catharsis of the following Bixby K.O. A secondary climax immediately follows as Nina describes the fate of Fish, resolved with his death and the line “*Blood.*”

**Premise.** The Negro Heavyweight Champion must face the reigning White champion to become the (first Black) Heavyweight Boxing Champion of the World.

**Designing Principle.** Amid the racial tension and violence of the American Jim Crow era, the Negro Heavyweight Champion (based on Jack Johnson) must go head-to-head in a series of boxing matches – inside and outside of the ring – to humble himself and stop proving himself. The play is a boxing match (i.e. “a play in six rounds”).

## **CONFLICTS**

**Major Conflict.** I think the major conflict of the play is Jay versus The White World. The most important conflict is for Jay to prove himself in a hostile society. I would identify this kind of conflict as Person versus Environment. While there are moments of Jumping, overall, I think this conflict is “Rising Conflict.” (Egri, 135) This conflict embodies Personal and Impersonal, respectively. This conflict is materialized, primarily, as Jay versus Bixby and Jay versus Nina, and



to a lesser degree Jay versus Max and Jay versus the Reporter, all Person versus Person scenarios. The climax of this conflict is resolved with Jay's defeat of Bixby in scene six.

*Subplot Conflict.* The singular, main subplot conflict is Fish versus The Odds, another Person versus Environment. Fish is the "prize" of the play, ultimately lost by Jay to an armed white man. Fish's story also involves a conflict with Wynton, and crusade to elevate Jay, Person versus Person conflicts. The climax is the death of Fish.

*Interpretation.* This play explores Person versus Environment conflicts (more explicitly, Black Person versus White Society) through the expression of multiple Person versus Person conflicts, one-on-one, much like the rounds of a boxing match.

However, I believe the ultimate conflict is Jay versus Indifference, Person versus Oneself. With the realization of Jay's Psychological Need (to overcome blind ambition and gain humility) and Moral Need (to consider those who his choices impact). This interpretation works best to illustrate that transformation. It is important that at some point, Jay clearly combats himself.

## **THEME**

*Humility can only be experienced, and the sacrifice of others only understood, when the obsessive drive to prove oneself is surrendered.*

The story demonstrates this theme by having an incredibly determined, self-oriented man meet his defeat through his own success. Jay does not appreciate his own status and privilege until the hate-crime murder of Fish, resultant of his title victory. This discovery comes late in the play, during which Jay is silent. It must be a moment that is "shown," not "told."

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With analysis complete, interpretations may be brought to the team, and the realization of our production may begin.

## PART THREE: COMMUNICATION & SYNTHESIS

“Build a rhythm. Keep a rhythm. Short jabs, long hooks.”  
– Wynton, *The Royale*

### INTRODUCTION

Often design and performance are examined as separate entities. And because in many respects they are, understandably so. The crafts and skill sets are tremendously different and the work in these two generalized realms are frequently conducted, for the most part, separately. Production meetings and shop hours for the former, rehearsals for the latter. However, both sides of this same coin must work in harmony to create a unified production. To express this necessity, I will examine the communication and synthesis of both design and performance in one chapter.

In addition to avowing some of my general philosophies, I will examine some specific challenges to our production of *The Royale* and address the corresponding tools used to meet (or, attempt to meet) these challenges. For this reason, I will continue to refer to all production team and cast members by role and not by name. My aim is to critique the performances, not the performers; the designs, not the designers; the process, not the people.

### COMMUNICATION STYLES

**“Actors don’t direct actors, directors don’t give line readings.”** This is the conventional wisdom of unknown origin on the boundaries of actors and directors. Sometimes “Keep to your cave,” “Stay in your own lane,” or a slew of other less-specific colloquialisms, it is based in the

tried-and-true belief that everyone's best work comes from everyone doing their own work, not poor imitations of someone else's. Actors do not have the holistic, distant perspective to direct their colleagues in the arc of the play. Likewise, directors do not have the actor's intimate perspective nor their immediate resources to prescribe momentary behavior via result direction.

Shaping said behavior and action, however, is part of the director's job to maintain the tension-and-release cycle which sustains a narrative. Therefore, it could be said that, generally, directors may direct actors on what to do, but not the quality of the how to do it.

I find that the opposite is true of the director/designer relationship. Unlike actors, the autonomy of a designer's art is realized in the creation of something literal and tangible: stagecraft. Other than the necessity of acting areas, levels, and specific locations, a director shouldn't limit too much the possibilities of what a designer can achieve by telling them what to do; the director should maintain a production's established dramaturgical and story world rules and its relationship to the performances and action by refereeing the quality of how it is done.

In realizing this, I discreetly implement an experiment on this production: to **speak to actors in verbs, to designers in adjectives.** This practice, in this trial, seems to have been highly effective in achieving desired adjustments in the performances and designs without intruding in the actual work of the actors or designers. It is a practice I will continue.

Equally significant as allowing the team to do their work, is to push them to better work without negative judgement. For this, I find notes are best given as questions and observations.

*Scenically, everything is square. Why are these instruments round? ... Can that be clearer?*

*Why are you punching him on this line? ... Oh, I see. Your pat is reading like a punch.*

*Why is your shirt untucked? ... I wonder if it would look better tucked or just off.*

Since we are all after our best production, notes given the form of non-judgmental questions or observations are most useful. Typically, these notes result in clearer, stronger choices or satisfactorily answer my questions. I'm just a director. I'm not always right.

The communication style between myself, the stage manager (SM), and the assistant director (AD) were fluid, between casual and business-oriented. Daily check-ins were important to me to ensure that both student leaders felt empowered in their positions and had their needs met. The ten-minute rehearsal breaks, which generally occurred every 60 to 90 minutes, became a regular check-in time for the AD and myself to exchange notes and filter the AD's: what's useful, what's not useful yet, how we craft a particular note or rehearse a specific beat. The ends of rehearsals became my check-in with the SM, sessions for "on the job training" and making sure the rehearsal reports included everything we needed for the following day. Our AD and SM check-ins were also frequently personal, as we discussed matters of life, relationships, and school. These check-ins and a friendly, personable approach were vital in developing our mentor/mentee relationship. **It is important to make these students feel that they cared for, and to genuinely care** (which I did). The value of that cannot be underestimated in academic theatre and in life.

### **DESIGNING PRINCIPLE**

When I met with the technical director/lighting designer and scenic designer for our first production meeting, I had very preliminary theme and belief statements for the show: "Singular pursuits lead to consequences for many?" "Dreams are paid for by others?" I was crafting ideas that, while explored by the script, were not necessarily demonstrated through the lives of the characters. They didn't describe the protagonist's character arc, specifically.

What I did have solidified was my Designing Principle: "the show is a boxing match." Because the show opens with a bout and concludes with another as a direct result of the

protagonist's desire line, this seemed like an organic choice. I like to think Ramirez would agree with me, as the previously published version of the play was subtitled "a play in six rounds."

Generally, I'm not a huge fan of "Concepts." By that, I mean a director's changes to a play's given circumstances for the effect of illuminating the text, providing relevance, or generating interest. Concepts can be applied thoughtfully, however, too often they are artificially superimposed on a show, creating unintentional statements on the piece and raising dramaturgical questions. I will concede that a thoughtful Concept can provide guidance for a production, and even interest (if only in the "experiment" taking place onstage). This is especially true in the production of less-than-brilliant scripts. But again, good scripts should be able to answer all the questions. For this reason, I prefer to use a Designing Principle when creating the mechanics of a show. **Use the DNA of a script to realize the script.**

*Design Elements.* Much of the initial work to realize this production, however, was to create a literal, physical Story World that would inform the action to be rendered and to externalize internal elements of concept, character, and conflict. I provided a small variety of visual dramaturgy for our initial production (Appendix B): photography of boxing matches (fig. 1-8), audience blinders (fig. 9), caged and period lighting instruments (fig. 10-22), period boxing posters (fig. 23-25) (the period art sucks), and a striking, well-composed image of a boxing ring/training room (fig. 26).

The Designing Principle and boxing images had the scenic designer thinking about corners, gravitating toward the iconography of squares-on-squares. I supported this idea as it would allow us to **use levels for shaping the dramatic narrative via vertical spatial relationship.** An added benefit of this scenic concept is that it would inherently offer a variety of acting areas (options for seating and standing arrangements); **unique acting areas should exist (or potentially exist) every**

**six feet on stage.** The “boxes” would also make appropriate use of a thrust stage and put the audience “ringside” in service of the show’s theatrical presentationalism.

Because of the show’s formalism, we had a unique opportunity to allow the audience significant room for suspension of disbelief and buy-in. Like Julie Taymor, I am of the opinion that **allowing an audience to see the physical mechanics of a show at work grants them imaginative permission for the spiritual experience unique to our medium.** Early on, we decided the show, as a whole, should not “hide the magic.” For this reason, I became particularly interested in practical lighting instruments (lights that are seen by the audience) and rock-and-roll-style audience blinders. Unlike the techniques of Brecht’s Epic Theatre, we would use these instruments to punctuate and build the stakes of a boxing match, thus supporting the narrative and drawing the audience into the reality of the theatrical world, as opposed to alienating them from it.

The lighting designer was open to the concept, and then observed in our visual dramaturgy the consistent roundness of the boxing rings’ lighting fixtures and dropped grids used to light the space. We decided to make use of a dropped square grid over the main playing space to act as audience blinders and practical lighting for the space (supported by traditional hung instruments) with round instruments to contrast the squareness below. This dropped grid would also visually cutoff the height of the playing space, making the otherwise cavernous theater more intimate for the interpersonal and psychological drama to unfold. Instead of caged instruments, we added additional blinders under the main playing space, “caged” by the gates which elevated the platform. This was used to the effect of “heating up” the boxing matches, with ring as a frying pan and the lights as a burner. It also made for a visually unexpected use of space for the audience, punctuating

the boxers' landed blows. In lieu of Ramirez's "pinspots," the lights were also shutter-cut to match the square theme.

We found the period boxing posters to be of inspiration. Utilizing offset printing, they were frequently di- and tri-chromatic. This motivated us to explore the possibility of exploiting our color-changing LED Pups (wash light instruments) on a monochromatic set for similar affect. In determining our set's base color, we kept returning to white or gray. These colors were practical; the most effective for bouncing the light of the color-changing Pups and for lifting the actors' pigment off the black soft-goods hanging upstage. It was also an artistic choice; as our protagonist was operating in a White world, we literally "white washed" the boxing arena were Jay belonged. When we made this decision, it became important to me that we preserved real-world textures and shapes to keep us grounded with some mimetic aspects of reality: the light grid, the bell, the heavy bag, canvas mat, ring and the ropes. Most importantly, the boxing ring's wooden spring floor, which also provided an acoustic assist for the "stomps" to augment Ramirez's suggested "claps." White boxes alone would not have sufficiently rooted us in the play's given circumstances or story world.

As the world was coming together in the design work, we made a final decision that all furniture and props would be what you might find in a boxing ring or training room. Supported by our Designing Principle and requirements of the text; this was an easily agreeable pact. Limiting ourselves to this palette, we anticipated that our pieces would live onstage like the character Jay: belonging, but not expected.

With a live ringside bell and stomps/claps from the actors, the sound designer had the special task of organically supporting an onstage soundscape without upstaging it. He customized

an electronic keyboard with a small range of atmospheric and abstracted boxing sounds – a camera flash, a mat springing, a landed jab, a knock-out punch, and body thudding.

The costume designer worked independently from the rest of the team, however, he too grounded us in the world of boxing with simple, period costumes that fluidly transitioned between multiple scenes and locales, maintaining the pace of the show.

Peter Brook believes **there are two fundamental ways of creating theatre magic: (1) creating beautiful objects, as beautifully as possible; and (2) using the will of the actor to transform the banal into something more beautiful or more extraordinary.** (Brook, YouTube)

Our designs set us up to create a beautiful show through both avenues.

***Blocking & Action.*** In the blocking phase of rehearsal, I preferred to start the rehearsal by sitting the actors in a circle for an initial on-book read-through before getting it “on its feet.” I do this for three reasons: to begin the work with actors communicating between each other (putting the test in the other); to familiarize/refresh them with the text before adding movement; and to give myself an opportunity to be inspired by the actors’ line delivery.

After the read, I would define the space (we blocked in the Lab Theater, not our venue) and then turn the actors loose to do their work. This was especially useful for the “book” scenes. For the boxing and press conference scenes, I was a little more prescriptive at the top: I limited acting area options, substituted Stops/Claps, assigned offstage foci where appropriate, and got specific with requirements for physicalizing the boxing and sparring. After offering these directions, again, I would allow them to do their work, inspired within these parameters. My job was to referee the story world and ensure that we were exploring our creative impulses in the same imaginary arena; to keep us all playing in the same playground. It is important to **define the rules, but let the actors (and designers) do their work.**



After “roughing through” a scene, I would step in with an outside eye to refine the pacing and physical use of space, encouraging actors to keep clear, strong impulse choices and ditch weak or dramatically/physically confusing ones in lieu of other possibilities. Since the play *is* a boxing match, each scene being a separate round of one bout, I would search out the two opponents sparring in each scene (or “super beat”), and look for opportunities to engage them in battle, take time out, return to or trap individuals in corners, and physicalize the characters’ physical strength, exhaustion, victories, and defeats.

I tend to observe the visual composition and movement of a scene through the lens of physical Viewpoints as adapted by Anne Bogart and Tina Landau. I paid attention to Spatial Relationship, Kinesthetic Response, Shape, Gesture, Repetition, Architecture, Tempo, Duration, and Topography, and typically made adjustments to clarify these choices. An audience will interpret *everything* on stage as a choice, so it is important to always **make specific choices, and make choices specific.** As Stanislavski said, “Generality is the enemy of all art.” (Bruder, 15)

To maintain the audience’s interest, I frequently employed the “Rule of Three.” A principal borrowed from the realm of comedy and improv, I find that it is incredibly practical in drama and visual aesthetics. The essence of this method is to **establish expectations through patterns in order to eventually meet the final expectation by subverting its anticipated delivery.** In comedy this may look like: *A character trips over a crack. Later, he trips over the same crack. Later still, he wisely bypasses the crack, clearly stepping over it only to trip on his own feet farther down the path... and land on his face.* This basic principal of establishing patterns and meeting/subverting expectations can be seen throughout the topography (floorplan) and gesture incorporated into our production of *The Royale*:

- the boxers isolated in light on their respective sides to eventually put Jay “on the spot,” isolating just him in light center stage;
- the clockwise activity around Jay at the press conference later lets Max “cut through” Jay while keeping everyone “in their corners”;
- the bell which signals the starts, breaks, and ends (or victories) of a match, later ring slower to indicate not only Jay’s victory over Bixby end of a match, but the defeat of Nina and foreshadow the death of Fish

Meeting established expectations in unexpected ways keeps an audience simultaneously satisfied and engaged, respectively. Meeting expectations as expected is unimpressive. Doing the unexpected for no end is performance art. In dramatic narrative, we need a line of logic to promote a line of action. In this case, the choice to set expectations and subvert how they are achieved is supported by the genre of the play itself: a tragedy, with an obsessively driven protagonist (establishing expectation) hoisted by his own petard (the subversion).

Blocking charts of *The Royale*’s topography/floorplan can be found in Appendix E.

## **WARM-UPS**

In an ideal world, group warm-ups would be unnecessary in any production process. Actors, with intimate self-knowledge of their instrument and demands of their specific role, would possess the technical skills and experience to self-diagnose and work on their own vocal and physical problems. We would not waste each other’s time with an ineffective, one-size-fits-all approach. Academic theatre, however, is a unique arena in this respect. Actors in the early stages of their training are only beginning to develop these skills and self-knowledge. Too often, turning student-actors loose to perform their own self-actualized vocal and physical work without guidance leads to no work being done, ineffectual work at best, damaging work at worst.

Yet it became evident that mindfully warming-up would be necessary to our process. A number of the actors were having difficulty articulating. Some were having trouble projecting sound. They all needed to be primed for the uniquely-demanding physical action of rehearsal.

For our warm-ups, I would start rehearsal by leading the cast through variations of Linklater and Feldenkrais work. Aligning the body, some days focusing on breath and the touch of sound, others on resonance, plosives and consonant stops. While only moderately effective on its own, the work we did in these allocations of time were supported and extrapolated by necessary notes in blocking, working, and polishing rehearsals.

These warm-up sessions also afforded us a couple opportunities for our assistant director to take the lead, guiding our cast through work she felt was important. When I could sense that the work was becoming too esoteric, as was the case with our AD's activity "Razzle, Sparkle, Shine," I would briefly inject merely to provide context, grounding the activity in something results-oriented for rehearsal, or to tactfully bring the work to a close. While the opportunities for our AD to lead these sessions were few and brief, I believe it was important to provide her with some hands-on leadership moments with the cast, and for the cast to experience the leadership of someone other than myself from time to time.

As the show progressively fleshed-out and we moved on to rehearsal runs of the show, we would warm-up on Scene One of the show in lieu of traditional voice and movement work, at the cast's request. This became important to us for not only physically and vocally warming-up, but for getting into the ever-important rhythm and pace of the show.

We continued to warm-up in this manner through the performance run of the show.

## **THE ESSENTIAL ACTING TECHNIQUE: ACTION**

Acting is simple, but not easy.

While collegiate shows are valuable for students to learning *to be actors*, the results-oriented nature of production means these same shows are not always the best place to learn *acting*. With that in mind, I'd like to briefly identify what acting is and entails, especially as it pertains to inhabiting a role for production. While this passage may be an oversimplification of the craft, I do believe that most acting problems are foundational problems, and that **90% of acting problems can be corrected by visiting the basics**. The uniqueness of each actor and each role is where the other 10% of problems – complex, individual problems in acting – arise; here it is hard to generalize. But on the foundations of acting, regardless of approach and its semantics, what is true is always true.

The University of New Orleans acting program is built on Practical Aesthetics, an acting technique conceived by David Mamet and William H. Macy and documented in *A Practical Handbook for the Actor*. In my undergraduate actor training, the curriculum was a hodgepodge of Meisner, Chubbuck, Stanislavski, and Method approaches (married with the Linklater Vocal Progression and Viewpoints, Laban, and Feldenkrais movement approaches) and dependent upon a student's individual ability to make assemblages. With tremendous gratitude for the depth and breadth of my undergraduate training, what I appreciate most about Practical Aesthetics, in addition its agreement with the aforementioned approaches, is its conciseness and directly-applicable methodology. As the name suggests, it's practical. Practical Aesthetics is the method I teach in my acting courses, and given my way, would be the way I would teach all introductory acting courses.

My definition of acting is Sanford Meisner's: "behaving truthfully under imaginary circumstances." According to *A Practical Handbook for the Actor*, "To act means to do, so you must always have something specific to *do* onstage or you will immediately stop acting. This is

why physical action is so very important for the actor. Simply defined, an *action* is the physical pursuance of a specific goal.” (13)

**The action, as the actor’s most powerful and incremental tool, is essential.** There are some basic “rules” for actions; according to Practical Aesthetics, *an action must* (Bruder, 13-14):

1. be physically capable of being done.
2. be fun to do.
3. be specific.
4. have its test in the other person.
5. not be an errand.
6. not presuppose any physical or emotional state.
7. not be manipulative.
8. have a “cap.”
9. be in line with the intentions of the playwright.

Concise and practical. Actions can be focused by a Scene Objective or Super-Objective. for semantic purposes, I prefer my actors to phrase Objectives in the form *To get [scene partner] to [doable action], in spite of [obstacle]*. By framing an Objective this way, actors are led to active, transitive verbs that fulfil the nine requirements. The actions then function as logical tactics and move the dramatic action forward.

## **ADJUSTMENTS**

In her book *Directing Actors: Creating Memorable Performances for Film & Television*, Judith Weston discusses the problems with Result Directions (e.g. line reading, emotional scoring, judgment) and offers six alternative forms of adjustment: Verbs, Facts, Images, Events, and Physical Tasks. “Verbs, facts, images, events, and physical tasks are more *playable* than adjectives and explanations because they are choosable and repeatable. They are more specific than adjectives and explanations. They work because they are active (verbs), objective (facts), sensory (images), dynamic (events), and kinetic (physical tasks).” (20) While her text is intended for

directors for film and television, these adjustments are commonly practiced in theatre directing, as I did in *The Royale*.

**Verbs.** By “Verbs,” Weston would precisely mean the aforementioned “Action” of Practical Aesthetics. The “Tactic” or “Intention” by other acting methodologies. Here, state-of-being verbs (*to disbelieve, to love*) and activity verbs (*to walk, to close*) are not particularly useful. The former presupposes a condition or emotion, which cannot be controlled; the latter, passive activity, cannot be played. We are in pursuit of active, transitive verbs. Something that can be *done* to someone else, which is to say something choosable and playable.

*Jay, **attack** him. Let him have it. (Instead of Get angry.)*

*Wynton, can you **soothe** him with that line? (Instead of a line reading or Do it calmly.)*

*Fish, let's **convince** Jay how great this is. (Instead of Try it with more energy.)*

*Nina, can we **shut down** his bullshit? (Instead of Can you be a real bitch to him?)*

**Facts.** Weston believes directors underutilize facts, what we also call “Given Circumstances,” and too often embellish with explanations. “Explanations weaken facts because explanations are subjective, interpretative; facts are objective. The power of an explanation rests with the persuasive abilities of the explainer. Facts speak for themselves, and often they are more eloquent than explanations.” (26)

*Jay hasn't seen his sister in years. (Instead of Jay hasn't seen his sister in years, because...)*

*Wynton sees Jay more than is own family. (Instead of You love Jay like a son.)*

*This is Fish's first professional match. (Instead of Fish is overwhelmed and can't cope.)*

*Nina's leaving right after this. (Instead of Nina can't bring herself to see Jay fight.)*

**Images.** Images are the experience of the five senses: sight, sound, taste, touch, and feel. “A successful storyteller is one who can make images come alive, who by adding sensory detail

can make us feel as if we are actually there where the story is happening.” (Weston, 29) Our major image, used for the action of the last scene and final boxing match was offered by our boxing consultant, who was inspired by Max’s line, “A battle of the elements, of water and fire.” To him, this harkened a blacksmith’s shop:

*Jay is the hammer striking on the red-hot iron. Nina is the still, cool barrel of water.*

Closely related to Images would be the “Hypothetical” or “As-If,” an imagined sensory substitution. This proved useful in Jay and Nina’s first encounter in the play which lacked tension.

*Jay, play these moments as if you are about to come out to your sister, who has no idea.*

*Nina, begin as though you need to tell him your parent has passed.*

**Events.** The event of a scene is its reason for existing. Deciding and reminding the actors and designers of the event of the scene can help refocus the action and keep the actors driving it forward.

*Scene 1: Jay remains the Negro Heavyweight Champion*

*Scene 2: Jay forces Max to arrange the Bixby Fight*

*Scene 3: Jay discovers the White world is a physical threat to his life.*

*Scene 4: Jay attacks Max... and Wynton.*

*Scene 5: Jay claims his autonomy (and responsibility).*

*Scene 6: Jay defeats Bixby and kills Fish.*

**Physical Tasks.** Also called “Tasks,” “Doings,” or “Business,” Weston believes these are the simplest thing we can ask an actor to do. I agree. However, they can be more work for the director, as moments of physical activity may need to be closely crafted for timing and may require additional props. These adjustments, however, can be highly effective, as Weston explains:

“The thrust of all these alternatives to result direction has been to look for ways to ask the actor to *do* something rather than to ask him to *be* something. Because then the actor can concentrate on what he is doing, and allow himself to be in the moment, so his behavior can be natural and spontaneous.” (33)

It takes the actor’s attention off himself. It gives him something to do and the gives the audience something to watch. Physical tasks became especially important at the top of Scene 4, which would’ve otherwise been two static men standing stationary, only metaphorically tip-toeing around accusations and insecurities. As Wynton drove the lines, Fish drove the activity.

*As Wynton says this, Fish, set down the bag, place Jay’s bottles, then pull out the gloves and straps. Take those to the table, then go back for the rags. Wynton will stop you center to attack you. To deflect him, go back to your business at the table – unlace and the wipe the gloves; you’ll be holding one when he calls you the future Jay. That can stop your business for a moment. To shake this off, resume unpacking the supplies; this should match your line. Pick up the whole bag. This should take enough time for you to consider what he’s said, before turning back.*

While the rehearsal process was more exhaustive than captured here (see Appendix D for my director’s notes and adjustments), a bulk of the rehearsal and shaping of the action shaped via these five kinds of adjustments.

## **EMOTIONAL TRAPS**

I’ve heard it claimed that Emotions are a tool of the actor. This is a philosophy I typically disagree with at face value. At the very least, whenever I teach acting in the classroom or on the academic stage, I qualify the idea. While acting is a deeply human form of expression, which emotions are party to, whenever an actor paints a performance with emotion, that’s exactly what you get; a performance that is awash in generalized indication. I prefer to suggest, rather, that



Emotional *Availability* is useful, in a way that the raw idea of “Emotion” – typically manifested as Emotional *Manufacturing* – is not. Emotions are valuable in providing human context to characters and stakes to dramatic conflicts, but should always take a back seat to the committed pursuit of an Action/Objective/Intention in the Other. **Emotions are a byproduct of Action.**

Variants of an emotional flavor may be invited to the work, or even encouraged through the close examination of certain given circumstances with or by an actor; however, emotions cannot truly be controlled. A performance should never be an accident. An actor must be in the driver’s seat of the dramatic action and, therefore, able to lose control of their emotions *without* becoming lost *in* them. Expecting or manufacturing a particular emotional result and, equally, getting “lost in the role,” distracts from the pursuit of action and test in the other, and invariably leads to Acting that is “*Acting*” – behavior on stage that is forced, selfish, masturbatory, and false. In other words: Bad Acting. As we like to say in the T.A. office, “If you want the catharsis, buy a fucking ticket.”

This kind of Bad Acting is particularly difficult to correct because it can feel good. Being consumed by an emotional state can be an intense and liberating experience, and actors tend to believe that *feeling* good is *doing* good. The sensation is attributed, falsely, to successfully inhabiting a role. The truth is an internal, personal experience almost never reads externally to an audience as intended. This fact can be hard to accept and may even cause an actor to be defiant.

## **DIFFICULT ADJUSTMENTS**

Emotional manufacturing and loss of control crept into Nina’s work in the show’s final scene. Instead of driving the show ahead, the actress’s investment in her own personal experience on stage (which she confessed to me later, was her priority and the reason she acts) created a destructive black hole consuming the energy, rhythm, and dramatic action of the show, which the

rest of the ensemble could not sustain. The ensemble was unable to outpace the actress's self-interest. Subsequently, she never learned how to drive her role in this scene. She performed with incompetence. She never learned her lines. They were not rooted in action. She leaned onto a non-existent emotional experience. A prayer she could not control. A miracle that never came.

In addition to utilizing spare rehearsal time to line-bash and create audio recordings for independent study, I addressed the underlying Bad Acting problem in notes. When attempting to make underlying adjustments (re: actions or objectives; *not* simple technical adjustments like increasing projection, refining blocking, etc.), I find that **questions and observations lead actors to their own underlying adjustments.** These notes are typically in the vein of “What are you doing at *X moment*?”, “*Y* isn't clear.”, “I'm confused by *Z*.” My note to Nina was both a question and an observation: “Why is Nina crying?” At first, I was met with denial.

*I wasn't crying... there are tears when I cry.*

Okay. Well, it reads like you're crying.

*I'm not.*

Alright, it appears like you're having a strong emotional response that is getting in the way of you dealing with Jay.

*Well, yeah, this is a very emotional situation for me [the character].*

Great! Can we use that? Can you fight through [action] that emotional trauma [obstacle] to shut down Jay [action/objective]?

*What do you mean?*

We discussed that **a strong emotional response is an obstacle, but not an objective.** (The profession is **“Acting,” not “Feeling.”**) Believing that we were on the same page, I offered her an action, in lieu of an experience; I tried to craft one with her:

So, what are you [Nina] trying to do to Jay?

*Well, he's hurting me.*

Okay... How are you going to stop him from hurting you?

*Well, I'm hurt. I'm just hurt. He's hurting me.*

Right... what are you going to do to him?

Nina was not seeing that “All life needs to take something from outside itself to inside itself in order to survive.” (Donnellan, 21) She was trying to generate everything from within. And she was not surviving. “It clearly follows that the actor playing Romeo needs to make the balcony scene more about Juliet and less about him...” (Donnellan, 25) Nina needed to make the scene about Jay and less about herself. But she wasn't ready to concede to that idea just yet.

She tried to justify her emotional-masturbation by weaponizing an out-of-context Uta Hagen “emotion is a tool” quote. Changing my tactic, I observed that this strong (still unidentified, not-crying) emotional response was also “playing the ending” too early. **Don't play the ending.**

You can't give up the fight yet. It's not over until it's over. Jay hasn't defeated Bixby, yet. You can stop him.

*Okay.*

So how are you dealing with Jay?

*Why am I dealing with Jay?*

Marco Ramirez wrote you into the scene. You must be here to do something, right?

*Well, I'm not dealing with Jay.*

Right.

*I'm not dealing with Jay?*

Exactly. You should be. Your action should have a test in the other.

*Why?*

That's a rule of action. "Test in the other."

*No! That's the whole problem with the acting here.*

Was "here" UNO? Did she mean our production? It didn't matter. I didn't care. I was done. "We can chat about it later, but I should probably move on. I've spent too much time on this note." I was no longer dealing with someone struggling to get better, but a defiant, lazy actress actively resisting improvement to maintain her own experience. Nothing good would come out of continuing to engage her this day. The soil was not ready for collaboration. **Know when a conversation is over.**

After rehearsal, she asked me how to teach her acting class...

This request may have added insult to injury, but the real issue was that this actress was actively arguing against a very basic, essential acting concept that Hagen, Meisner, Stanislavski, and all contemporary acting teachers and theorists agree on (Donnellan, 18):

Some things we can never act. The actor cannot act a verb without an object. A crucial instance is 'being': the actor cannot simply be. Irina cannot play being happy, being sad, or being angry.

All an actor can play are verbs, but even more significantly, each of these verbs has to depend on a target.

Over time, I tilled the collaborative soil and, together, we started to pull the weeds. With continued struggle, persistence, and incremental progress, we achieved a noticeably greater balance between *action* and *emotional manufacturing*. (Still manufacturing, though, not emotional availability.) I also offered a Hagen quote to help further her understanding of action in relation to

emotional substitution. My intention was also to clarify Hagen's work and prevent her from being misconstrued:

“The step in rehearsal we often leave out: that we imagine and hang on to the imaginative thing rather than *putting it on to the object or the [other] person.*” (Hagen, *Acting Class*)

While the performance improved, it was too little, too late. We were never able to root the performance of this scene in action, because the seed was planted too late. Nina never learned her lines. She was adrift, at the show's mercy, and taking everyone with her.

As a result, the final scene and climax of the play never really soared. In the words of Sheriff Woody, we were “falling with style.” With much more style some nights than others. The conclusion of the play, however, was a constant mystery every performance. A mystery we were not in control of onstage or in the tech booth. To be frank, it was painful to watch an otherwise strong production carry itself so well only to collapse just before the finish line.

Was this at least a valuable educational experience for the actress? Time will tell.

#### **AUTONOMY & RESPONSIBILITY: MY DIRECTING PHILOSOPHY**

As a director, before I begin work with designers or actors, it is important to me that I have a strong vision of how the story we are telling will be told. I read, read, read. I put myself in the performance space. I research, listen to music, daydream and imagine. This is critical to my process because I value the time of my designers and actors too much to waste it. When I meet with designers and actors for the first time, I am able to describe the world of the play, the kinds of relationships that exist, and the shape of the story. I am able to suggest dynamic blocking actors can motivate, aesthetic designers can attach to, and a story that constantly engages.

Yet play is always involved in our process. The vision I offer (as thoughtful, prepared, and specific as it is) is a framework upon which we all collaborate. I am a strong believer of **freedom**

**within structure.** Our process is an incubator which encourages actors and designers to experiment and bring forth their best work and strongest choices in the pursuit of our best production. They should be trusted to do so.

I set clear and high expectations of my team. I establish a culture that values work, play, and collaboration in which everyone contributes something significant and within their expertise.

**After setting expectations and initially creating our culture, my job is that of a servant.** As colleagues of mine will strongly agree, I am highly responsive to the needs and challenges of our team throughout the process. Always with appreciation for everyone's work, I never ignore the audience and constantly push everyone to the next level of clarity and strength in design, performance, and overall storytelling.

PART FOUR:  
**EVALUATION & FINAL THOUGHTS**

“At the end of the day, the person to most likely take you down ain’t even in that ring.”  
– Jay, *The Royale*

**THE INITIAL RUN**

While there are some aspects of the performance I would have changed (specifically, nailing the final scene), overall, I am very pleased with our Department’s endeavor and the directorial process I honed through *The Royale*. In its initial run, the production received sincere, positive feedback from audiences, local critics, and awarding bodies, as well as the Department, cast and production team. In his column “Trodding the Boards” for *Ambush Magazine*, Brian Sands admired:

On Kevin Griffith’s austere set in UNO’s large theater, graduate student Ryan M. Decker’s inventive direction and Diane K Baas’ punchy lighting illuminated *The Royale* by Marco Ramirez ... a powerful John Charles II, impressively supported by James Compton V and Shanda Quintal ... *The Royale* provided an absorbing, invigorating theatrical experience.

Theatre UNO hosted respondents from the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival (KCACTF) on November 9 and 16, 2017, with talkback sessions following those performances. Our first respondent, Dean Nolen, Assistant Professor and Head of Acting &

Directing at Texas Tech University, attended opening night. His remarks were overwhelmingly positive and much needed by the cast and crew as our run began.

Mr. Nolen remarked on how era-specific the whole production was and how well the actors inhabited the world; their clothes and a Mid-Atlantic accent harkening to another time. In addition to believing the show was “perfectly cast,” he appreciated the achromatic set which allowed the bodies of the actors to supply the life of the show. Mr. Nolen had a sense that the process was low-ego and that our production had its own agency with authorship from the team. He enjoyed the cinematic quality of the book scenes and the definition between the two styles we were able to achieve. Ultimately, he thought our attention to detail paid off, and remarked that if he were directing the show he “wouldn’t do anything differently.”

Our second respondent on November 16 was Emmy Frank, Assistant Professor of Drama at Lone Star College. Ms. Frank commented often on the clarity of the show; she thought the set was clear and well-constructed, that the playing spaces and stylized worlds were distinct, and the relationships were well-defined. She had exclusively positive notes on the characterizations by each of the actors. One thing she thought was unclear was the climax and Bixby K.O. punch. (I agree.) Ms. Frank enjoyed many of the production’s choices: the live ringside bell, the under-stage and practical lighting, their connection to the stomps and claps, the “grit” and texture added by the stomps and claps, and the convention of hard stomps for punches. She thought that the space was especially well-used.

While her critical responses were limited and mostly in the spirit of “if I were directing the show,” they were valuable. Her strongest desire was to add preshow sound, which was eventually included by way of old radio boxing broadcasts. She also wanted a longer tableau at the top of the show and longer moments at the ends of scenes; these were realized by the correct calling of light



cues. Ultimately, Ms. Frank thought our production did a remarkable job of taking an era in sports history and making it accessible.

A one-on-one postmortem took place with my major professor as part of our spring semester midterm review. His critical commentary challenged specific directorial choices and sought their justification.

While I believe that the opening tableau (with timing addressed) lived in a full, complete moment, he did not think it clearly kicked-off the play, and potentially read as a lighting/directing mistake. I argue, however, that “kicking off” the play was not intention of the tableau any more than the house lights dimming or the preshow playing. My intentions, however, were to: (1) present all the dramatist personae and introduce the mystery of their common thread; (2) clearly prioritize the black protagonist ahead of the white supporting character who chews the early parts of the play; (3) establish a callback image to later clearly indicate the end of the play, and; (4) provide a contrasting moment of calm, silence and stillness to heighten the frenetic, kinetic and percussive qualities of the first scene (which kicks off the play). I believe these objectives were warranted given the performances and style, and the tableau was successful in these respects. I concede that the moment on its own can be disorienting; however, it was intentionally crafted to have meaning and clarity in retrospection, with context supplied from the rest of the play.

My major professor also felt that the set was too large for five actors and became an obstacle they had to compete with. I disagree. While the set was large, it was simple; it created a space the actors comfortably inhabited and monopolized to their advantage, while the specificity of the lighting design clearly directed focus. I believe the set design made appropriate use of the very large thrust stage and uniquely challenging upstage shelf while meeting the practical and aesthetic needs of both our script and venue. The set managed to feel complete without neglecting

the space. There are certainly smaller-scale and potentially more effective scenic designs for this show, but I do not think such is the case in the Nims Theater. I could see, by contrast, a visceral and strikingly simple production of *The Royale* in the intimate Lab Theater with its bare wooden stage and two lone stools. These two designs, however, in opposite spaces would be confused in their meaning. Visual imagery and its messages – intended and unintended – rely on context and change when translated to a different venue. If the role of the director encompasses not only serving and shaping the play, but also the experience of the play, the physical performance space is a consideration that ought to be given its say. I believe that it will take it otherwise.

Finally, my major professor was seeking justification for the multiple acting areas and departure from the boxing ring. While the ring becomes symbolic of Jay's being caged and trapped by obstacles, I think it is important to recognize that the physical existence of the ring itself, as we suggested by the ropes and canvas, was an invention of the production team, not the playwright. Ramirez's opening stage description states, "A single heavy bag hangs from the center of the stage. Chalk residue on the floor, a couple of stools on the outside perimeter, but otherwise – the stage is bare." (9) To interpret this description as anything other than an athletic training room (the sum of the description's parts), is to take artistic license. While we opted to make the ring a central feature – a place where the desire line's major battles are played out – the script offers a variety of explicit locations beyond the ring. Designating spaces for those locations enabled us to fluidly transition with clarity between locales while maintaining the show's rhythm and pace. Furthermore, those acting areas allowed us to use the space in a manner that justified the venue. The uniform "squareness" of the areas served to keep Jay trapped no matter where he went – a metaphor of the larger world outside the ring. While Jay is successful in his pursuit of the World Heavyweight

Champion title, the results are tragic, and his attempts to cleanly break social boundaries inside and outside the ring are failed.

At the end of the show's initial run, we held a postmortem with the cast and production team moderated by our technical director and lighting designer. As they conclude two months grueling of production, these forums have the unfortunate predisposition of becoming opportunities for airing personal grievances and purging negativity. Every effort is made to avoid this, and negative feedback is curtailed into positive, productive criticism. However, this postmortem was different, as it too was overwhelmingly positive, becoming an echo chamber of practices those in attendance desired to continue.

Various production team members and cast members expressed variations on the sentiment that *The Royale*'s rehearsal and production were one of the most complete processes that had been embarked on at Theatre UNO. Individuals felt heard throughout the rehearsal and design process and believed that our approach of open dialogue, rather than that of top-down approval/disapproval, illuminated our best way forward.

Many also expressed their extreme satisfaction with our choice of material and thought that our process respected both the form and content of the script. The team enjoyed the structure of the play and the exploration of storytelling in an innovative juxtaposition of realism and theatricalism. Most significantly, students expressed an appreciation that the script tackled a real person of color perspective, with a genuine, complex struggle in a story that was not didactic.

The tech process was smooth – each element helped stylize the world and each element lined up and stacked as expected. Every production element felt organic.

The team felt we had the requisite time to work and incubate the production without killing ideas too early. The major takeaway was that the success of this production was an evocative script

paired with the openness of creative leadership and collaborators. This seems to have been the recipe for a low-ego and thoroughly complete process.

## **THE REVIVAL**

KCACTF would go on to hold *The Royale* in consideration and eventually invite the production to the Region VI festival in San Angelo, Texas. Scheduling rehearsals for the remount performances was problematic, as our spring semester included Lundi Gras and Mardi Gras, night classes, and repertoire productions of *A Doll's House* and *Hedda Gabler*. Despite these challenges, in four disparately scheduled afternoon rehearsals, we were able to restore the pace and rhythm of the show, adjust blocking for our new proscenium venue, and present one of our best performances in a low-tech, invited dress run on February 17.

Once in Texas, scheduling and unforeseen technical problems presented a new set of challenges. As we performed late in the festival, we held a line-through with the cast at the festival hotel on March 1. However, our load-in on the morning of March 2 was significantly problematic. When we finally obtained access to the building, we discovered that the previous shows in our venue had not restored the rep plot, the special request for our electrics hadn't been addressed, and all our specialty bits (T24 torx) crumbled early in the morning. Due to festival events taking place in our venue between performances, the set was dropped and installed upstage of the apron, much farther upstage than discussed. These problems compounded to extend our two-hour load-in period (7:00-9:00 a.m.) to four hours (7:00-11:00 a.m.). Our performance was at 11:00 a.m. In hindsight, I must concede that our production was not prepared to tour, nor was it able to anticipate solutions to worst-case scenarios. Having lost our two-hour window for light-focus, sound-check, and pick-up rehearsal, we without question had our absolute worst show that morning. But we survived. We were angry, but we survived.

That afternoon, after a brief, but encouraging conversation with Mr. Nolen, we rallied the cast and crew together for an impromptu 75-minute work call and rehearsal. What we were able to accomplish in that period of time was staggering. While Ms. Baas led a light focus and sound check on the stage, I held a check-in with the actors in the dressing rooms – unpacking and letting go of the morning performance, anticipating technical problems, landing on solutions, and generally supporting each other. Thirty minutes before our 8:00 p.m. curtain, I brought the cast upstairs, where lights and sound were being troubleshooted. We warmed-up on Scene 6, anticipating problem spots and folding in solutions. Satisfied with our work, we called the house open and the actors offstage.

Despite the disappointment of our morning, through mindfulness and dedicated work, the show quite literally transformed from morning to night. We went from having our worst show to one of our best a few hours later.

Our production, cast, and production team would go on to receive recognitions from the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival, The Big Easy Entertainment Awards, and UNO's Lakefront Players. (See Appendix N for complete list awards and recognitions.)

## **CONCLUSION**

In this thesis, I have attempted to demonstrate my knowledge of story and style and ability to define and execute both through a case study of *The Royale*. Additionally, throughout this thesis, I have synthesized my personal philosophies and best-practices in the areas of theatre performance and production with an interest in pedagogical and academic practices. To conclude, I would like to restate and summarize those philosophies.

When creating theatre, it is important that you do material you like and material that scares you. Preferably only and both. In pursuit of a successful production, consider what you can be the

best at, and understand that logistic limitations reveal strategic plans. When finally undertaking the production, it is essential to get the right people on the bus, establish the story as your framework for collaboration, and realize that a good script will answer all of your questions.

Physiology and sociology yields psychology; psychology yields behavior. All characters have inherent strengths and weaknesses. You should find that these three-dimensional, interesting people are walking contradictions. While rendering the action and world of the play, trust that the script's structure and action are keys to revealing natural, engaging shape. Remember "actors don't direct actors, directors don't give line readings." Speak to actors in verbs and to designers in adjectives. Use the DNA of a script to realize the script.

In practical application, use levels for shaping the dramatic narrative via vertical spatial relationship. Unique acting areas should exist (or potentially exist) every six feet on stage. Consider that allowing an audience to see the physical mechanics of a show at work grants them imaginative permission for the spiritual experience unique to our medium. There are two fundamental ways to create this magic: create beautiful objects as beautifully as possible; and use the will of the actor to transform the ordinary into the extraordinary.

It is important to make your team feel cared for, and to genuinely care. Define the rules, but let the actors, designers, and crew do their own work. Make specific choices and make choices specific. Establish expectations through patterns to eventually meet the final expectation by subverting its anticipated delivery. There is freedom within structure.

Ninety percent of acting problems can be corrected by visiting the basics. The action, as the actor's most powerful and incremental tool, is essential. "Acting" is not "Feeling." Emotions are a byproduct of Action. A strong emotional response is an *obstacle*, but not an *objective*.

Questions and observations lead actors to their own underlying adjustments. Don't play the ending.  
Know when a conversation is over.

After setting expectations which define the story world and initially creating a culture of work, play, and collaboration, the role of a director is that of a servant. With practice and luck, one may have the fortune and satisfaction of repeating this process again and again.

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## APPENDIX A PRODUCTION SCRIPT

### ABOUT THE PRODUCTION SCRIPT

On the following pages, the script of *The Royale* by Marco Ramirez is augmented with the director's blocking and action notes, as well as sound and light designs. These notes are designated by a **SAN SERIF FONT**: Blocking by Decker and the cast in **RED**, Live Sound by Decker in **YELLOW**, Recorded Sound by A. Griffith in **GREEN**, and Lights by Baas in **BLUE**. Adjustments to the text are in a **purple serif font**.

This production script is a technical manual of sorts and utilizes common theatrical shorthand, with some customization, including but not limited to\*:

#### Characters

**J** Jay            **N** Nina            **M** Max            **W** Wynton        **F** Fish

#### Directionality

**X** cross            **US** upstage        **DS** downstage    **SL** stage left     **SR** stage right  
**CS** center stage   **LC** left center    **RC** right center   (      ) final position

#### Acting Areas

**RING**        The boxing ring (central platform)

**DS-RM**      The downstage room platform

**US-MISC**    The upstage left "miscellaneous" platform (training room, bar, etc.)

*\*NOTE:* These short hand notes frequently work in combination with each other. While **DSRC**, for example, is not explicitly listed in this key, it would indicate *downstage right of center*. Therefore, **M enters RING, X USL (DSRC)** would translate to *"Max enters the ring (middle platform) and crosses upstage left, to land down right of center stage."*

### Live Sound

<b>DING!</b>	<i>Ding of ringside bell</i>
<b>S-C-C-S</b>	<i>Stomp-Clap-Clap-Stomp</i>
<b>S-C-C, S-C-C-S</b>	<i>Stomp-Clap-Clap-Stomp-Clap-Clap-Stomp</i>
<b>S/C-C-C</b>	<i>Stomp/Clap-Clap-Clap</i>
<b>STOMP!</b>	<i>A stomp indicating a character lands or receives a punch/jab</i>

### Lights

<b>Q#:</b> ___	<i>light cue number: and description</i>
<b>SQ</b>	<i>isolated, hard-edged squares of light, usually listed with stage area</i>
<b>X</b>	<i>secondary set of isolated squares, focused on the platform's diagonals</i>
<b>GRID</b>	<i>grid and practical lights</i>
<b>FLASH</b>	<i>high-intensity center stage lights or hanging audience blinders engage</i>
<b>FLOOR</b>	<i>audience blinders under the central platform (boxing ring) engage</i>
<b>+ ___</b>	<i>add lighting instrument(s) or increase light intensity of an acting area</i>
<b>- ___</b>	<i>remove lighting instrument(s) or decrease light intensity of an acting area</i>
<b>→</b>	<i>cue auto-follows or look transitions</i>

### Recorded Sound

\_\_\_< *sound begins*      \_\_\_> *sound ends*      \_\_\_ *sound executes*

Sound cues are labeled herein with their given names: **FLASH**, **BOOM**, **INHALE**, **EXHALE**, **DRONE**, **GHOST**, **ZOMBIE**, **MAT**, **TINNITUS**, and **K.O.**

Ramirez's original stage directions and commentary appear in (*gray parenthetical italics*), to indicate that they were considered, but not necessarily implemented in our production; in fact, these directions were frequently omitted or altered to stronger choices for our production.

The blocking is further supported by floorplans illustrating the approximate use of physical space in Appendix E; live sound is supported by music notation in Appendix G.

Enjoy.

PRODUCTION SCRIPT

1.

Old Radio Boxing Broadcasts (added for KCACTF)

Q1: Preshow

Q2: House to half

Preshow announcement

Q10: Blackout

Q11: CS RING glow

Tableau: in RING: V with J DSC; SR to SL: M,N,J,W,F

Q11.4: CS RING glow out

(A single heavy bag hangs from the center of the stage. Chalk residue the floor, a couple of stools on the outside perimeter, but otherwise – the stage is bare. A pinspot on MAX, in a vest and rolled-up shirt sleeves. A loud ding on a ringside bell.)

DING! (N) Q12: FLASH → Q13: RING, GRID + DSC SQ  
N at BELL (US-MISC); M DSC RING; J,W,F off USR  
DRONE<

MAX. And now, the fight you came for.

(Clap.)

S-C-C-S

FLASH

Q14: FLASH → +DSR SQ

Ladies and gentlemen, the fight you paid your hard-earned green for.

(Clap-Clap.)

S-C-C, S-C-C-S

FLASH

Q15: FLASH → -DSC SQ

In this corner,  
Weighing in at two-hundred pounds,

M X DSR

~~Standing six feet even,~~ →

Standing five feet, ten inches,

With a wingspan of a mighty black albatross,

Please welcome,

To his first ever professional fight,

Your challenger,

(Pinspot on FISH, shirtless, nervous, jogging in place.)

Q16: +SL SQ, -DSR SQ

Purley “Fresh Fish” Hawkins!

(Clap-Clap-Clap, Clap-Clap-Clap, Clap-Clap-Clap. MAX flashes a knowing smile.)

S/C-C-C, S/C-C-C, S/C-C-C

F enters X SL

FLASH

Q17: FLASH

And in this corner,

M X DSC

(Clap.)

S-C-C-S

FLASH

Q18: FLASH

Weighing in at two-hundred-ten pounds,

M showboats DS

~~Standing tall at six feet, three inches,~~ →

Standing strong at five feet, nine inches,

Toes like Jack Nimble,

Fists like John Henry,

(Clap-Clap.)

S-C-C, S-C-C-S

FLASH

Q19: FLASH

Ladies and gentlemen,  
The man you *came* for,  
The man who casts a shadow in the dark,

*(Clap.)*

Your Negro Heavyweight Champion,

*(Pinspot on JAY. Shirtless, muscular, also jogging in place, but most importantly, he's showboating.)*

**BOOM**

You know him,  
You *love* him,

*(JAY plays to the crowd. Born to do this. Swagger for days.)*

Jay – “The Sport” – Jackson!

**J enters X SR**

*(Clap-Clap-Clap, Clap-Clap-Clap, Clap-Clap-Clap. JAY smiles, all confidence. WYNTON – his trainer – calls to Jay from the ringside.)*

**S/C-C-C, S/C-C-C, S/C-C-C**

**Q22: FLASH + SR, DSR SQ →**

**Q22.1: ALL SQs (Hot SR, SL SQs)**

**WYNTON.** Keep those hands up, Jay.

**W enters USR, outside ropes; M X USC**

*(JAY nods.)*

I see those gloves go down?  
I swear to god, son,  
You're payin' for dinner.

**JAY.** Okay, old man.

*(Clap.)*

**S-C-C-S**

*(Playful.)* Like I ain't buying anyways.

**ENSEMBLE.** HA!

*(MAX addresses JAY and FISH. He serves as a kind of announcer and referee at the same time.)*

**MAX.** We want a good, clean fight!

**M X DS (still US of J,F)**

*(Clap. MAX looks at FISH, the newbie.)*

**S-C-C-S**

No biting, no spitting,  
This ain't a back alley, kid.

**M X to F**

**FISH.** Yessir.

**MAX.** *(To JAY.)* Language *clean* tonight Jay,  
There's women in that crowd –

**M X to J**

**JAY.** *(Playing the crowd.)* Believe me, I noticed.

**ENSEMBLE. HA!**

**MAX.** When I say “break” I want three steps back, boys, **M returns CS (US of F,J)**  
I don’t get that, you don’t get paid.

(Clap.) **S-C-C-S**

Make those gloves bump, nice and easy! **M X US**

(They both “glove-bump” straight forward, facing the audience. **MAX** addresses someone offstage.) **J,F X CS; bump; return**

Get the clock up! **M signals to clock/bell (DSR)**

(Clap-Clap!) **S-C-C, S-C-C-S**

**JAY.** (To **FISH.**) Hey kid.

**WYNTON.** (Still coaching.) Keep it simple, Jay.

**JAY.** (To **FISH.**) Hey kid, how many rounds you want?

**FISH.** What?

**JAY.** Two? Three? **M X to W USR; connect**  
How many you want me to give you?

**FISH.** Um –

**JAY.** “Um” ain’t a number, boy, **M returns USC**  
How many rounds ’fore you get friendly with the canvas.

**FISH.** Well, sir –

**JAY.** (To the crowd.) Called me sir!

**FISH.** I could ask you the same question.

**JAY.** (To the crowd.) Oh, you heard that?

**ENSEMBLE. HA!**

**WYNTON.** Fists up!

**JAY.** (To the crowd.) I do believe he came to fight, y’all.

(Clap.) **S-C-C-S**

I do believe he came to break a sweat. **J X DS to crowd**

**MAX.** Alright boys,  
Good luck. **M X DS (US of J,F)**  
**J returns SR**

**JAY.** Indeed.

**MAX. ROUND ONE!** **M signals bell (DSR)**

(JAY eyes FISH, vicious, ready to work.)

JAY. He gon' need it.

M signals bell (DSR), X USC

(Ding-ding-ding! Lights shift. Sharper pinspots on JAY and FISH. They stare straight forward, not at each other. What follows is more of a stream-of-consciousness indication of what goes on inside their heads than a depiction of the fight itself.)

DING-DING-DING!

Q25: RING to BLUE

J,F turn DS to "box" e/o (SR,SL SQs stay up, WHITE)

FISH. Watch out for that hook,  
You seen him fight, you know that –

JAY. Come on, Break-a-Sweat –

FISH. Watch out –

JAY. That's your new name,  
"Break-a-Sweat,"  
That's trademarked, ya heard?

FISH. Stand strong, knees bent –

JAY. If it catches on, write me a check –

FISH. Don't lock, knees bent –

JAY. (To the crowd.) Look at that face, huh?

FISH. Don't lock.

JAY. Look at that beautiful face.

FISH. Don't listen, steady breathin' –

INHALE

JAY. (To himself.) It's a shame, what you about to do, Jay,  
To that face –

FISH. Stay focused –

JAY. That's somebody son's face,  
It's a goddamn shame –

FISH. Knees bent –

JAY. Just a little Jazz, give him –

FISH. Make it to the end,  
It's two weeks' pay –

JAY. Let him know he ain't dreamin' after all –

FISH. Just pinch him,  
Let him know this ain't a –

(JAY lands a jab.)

J HIT/STOMP!; F reacts

FLASH

Q26: FLOOR



**ENSEMBLE.** OOH!

**MAX.** The Sport with a shot across the bow!

**FISH.** *(To himself.)* That wadn't nothin'...

*(Clap-Clap.)*

S-C-C, S-C-C-S

**JAY.** *(To FISH.)* Boy, that wadn't *nothin'* –

*(JAY lands another jab.)*

J HITS/STOMP!; F reacts FLASH Q26.2: FLOOR

**ENSEMBLE.** OOH!

**MAX.** *Two* from Jay Jackson!

Starting things off early here tonight!

**FISH.** Step into it –

**JAY.** Come on, now!

Don't make this easy, boy –

**FISH.** Left, left, *right* –

F throws L-L-R; J dodges MAT

**JAY.** This ain't s'posed to be easy –

**FISH.** You *got* this –

**MAX.** But the new kid's in it!

**JAY.** Is he?

**FISH.** Left-left-*right* –

F throws L-L-R; J dodges MAT

**MAX.** He's goin' at it again with the same combination!

**JAY.** Oh, you're *that* kinda pony, huh?

Pin throwin' *one trick*?

**FISH.** Switch it up, now –

*(FISH fires, lands one.)*

F HITS/STOMP!; J reacts FLASH Q27: FLOOR

**ENSEMBLE.** OOH!

**MAX.** Fish is in it!

**WYNTON.** Fists up, Sport!

*(JAY recovers, licks his lips, humored.)*

**JAY.** He gettin' brave, huh –

**WYNTON.** Move!

**FISH.** Left-right-left hook,

You got this,

J L-R-LH

Stay swift,  
Center steady,  
Give him a –

*(He does.)*

F HITS/STOMPI; J reacts FLASH Q27.2: FLOOR

**ENSEMBLE.** OOH!

**MAX.** Kid makes contact!

**JAY.** Fuck this –

**MAX.** Language!

**WYNTON.** Fists up boy!

**JAY.** *(To himself.)* Oh, they up –  
They up –  
They –

J returns to “ready”

*(JAY lands a combination.)*

J Combo, HITS/STOMPI; F reacts  
FLASH Q28: FLOOR

**ENSEMBLE.** OOH!

**MAX.** Jay’s returning fire!

*(JAY lands another.)*

J Combo, HITS/STOMPI; F reacts  
FLASH Q29.2: FLOOR

**ENSEMBLE.** OOH!

**MAX.** The kid can’t shake him! –

BOOM

*(JAY delivers one more and it’s brutal.)*

J Combo, HITS/STOMPI; F reacts  
FLASH Q29.4: FLOOR

**ENSEMBLE.** OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOH!

**MAX.** And ladies and gentlemen,  
*That’s the Sport we know –*

**JAY.** Yeah it is.

*(Clap. FISH is dizzy.)*

S-C-C-S Q30: ALL SQs (WHITE; Hot SR,SL SQs)

**FISH.** Ohmygod.

**JAY.** *(To FISH.)* Oh I’m sorry, baby boy.

*(Clap-Clap-Clap.)*

S/C-C-C

You want ’em *softer* next time?

**MAX.** Split it up!

M X CS, b/w J,F

**ENSEMBLE.** HAH!

**MAX.** Split it up, I said!

F X DSL

**JAY.** Split it up?

What's wrong, Max?

That was just getting' fun.

*(Ding!)*

M signals bell (DSR) DING! >DRONE

**MAX.** End of round one.

**FISH.** *(Disoriented.)* Switch, focus, Jesus.

J X US to USR / W

**JAY.** *(To FISH.)* You got *him* on the line already?

**MAX.** *(To FISH.)* How 'bout it, kid –

M X SL to F

**FISH.** What?

**MAX.** You okay?

**FISH.** *(Recovering.)* Yeah.

Yeah,

'Course.

*(JAY turns to the crowd. A straight-up gladiator.)*

BOOM

**JAY.** Y'all come to see a fight or what?

J turns DS to crowd, takes a step DS

**FISH.** I'm fine.

**JAY.** Y'all come to see a *fight*?!

**FISH.** I'm fine.

But *Jesus*.

**MAX.** Here we go,

Jay?

M backs CS, sees Bixby people, gestures to J

**JAY.** Get out my way, Max,

J X DL to CS / M (SR of M)

**MAX.** Front row.

**JAY.** Just let me fight, Max.

*(MAX makes a point. This is important.)*

**MAX.** *Front row.*

You see 'em?

Tell me see 'em.

*(A beat. JAY nods.)*

J sees, backs to SR

**JAY.** I see 'em.

**MAX.** Good.

*(Clap-Clap.)*

S-C-C, S-C-C-S DRONE<

*(Loaded.)*

*Good.*

**FISH.** *(To himself.)* Right hand lead,  
Left hook, recover –

M X US to USC

**MAX.** Let's keep it goin'!  
Round Two!

M signals bell (DSR)

*(Ding!)*

DING!

Q31: RING to BLUE (SR,SL SQs stay up, WHITE)

J,F turn DS to "box" e/o

J,F X e/o, trade places – J SL; F SR

**FISH.** Right hand lead,  
Don't let your let guard down,  
You worked on that –

**WYNTON.** Fists up,  
Watch the feet –

**FISH.** This ain't no different,  
This is the naval yard,  
Ain't no people watchin' –

**JAY.** We makin' music, boy –

**FISH.** He's all talk,  
He ain't nothin' –  
He ain't nothin' –  
He ain't –

**JAY.** Boom –

*(JAY delivers a solid blow.)*

J HITS/STOMP!; F reacts FLASH Q32: FLOOR

**ENSEMBLE.** OOH!

**WYNTON.** Good, but keep 'em up, Jay –

**JAY.** Oh they *up*, alright,  
They up,  
They up,  
They all up in his –

*(JAY lands another.)*

J HITS/STOMP!; F reacts FLASH Q32.2: FLOOR

**ENSEMBLE.** – OH!

**MAX.** Another from The Sport!

**FISH.** Focus,  
Breathe,  
Don't lock –

**JAY.** Lock –

**FISH.** Don't lock –

**JAY.** *LOCK* –

**FISH.** What's that taste?

**JAY.** Whatchu think?

**FISH.** Spit –

**JAY.** *There it is* –

**FISH.** Blood –

**JAY.** Try'n keep up –

**FISH.** Blood –

**JAY.** Shark in the water –

**FISH.** Spit –

**JAY.** And he's gon' *get* you, boy,  
Yessir,  
He straight-circlin' now –

**FISH.** Focus –

**JAY.** You came on the wrong night, Break-a-Sweat –

**FISH.** Shit, focus –

**JAY.** You see that front row?

*(Clap.)*

**S-C-C-S**

Naw,  
'Course you don't,  
You don't see nothin'  
Not right now,  
All you see is this –

*(JAY delivers a combination.)*

**J HITS/STOMP!; F reacts FLASH**  
**Q33: FLOOR → +DSR,USR SQs**

**ENSEMBLE.** OH!

**FISH.** What's that sound –

**MAX.** The Sport's goin' to work!

**JAY.** Oh this ain't *work*, Max –

**FISH.** Why's everything quiet –

**JAY.** You're only standin' 'cause I *want* you to –

**MAX.** Hah –

**JAY.** Front row –

**FISH.** Blurry, but I'm still standing,  
I'm here –

**JAY.** Stubborn little bastard, ain't you –

**FISH.** I'm still standing and it's –

**MAX.** Round Three!

**M X DS, signals bell (DSR)**

(*Ding!*)

**DING! M returns USC**

**JAY.** Walk right into 'em boy –

**WYNTON.** Fists up –

**JAY.** *Front row* –

**MAX.** Round Four! –

**M X DS, signals bell (DSR)**

(*Ding! FISH is still boxing. JAY turns to the crowd.*)

**DING! M returns USC BOOM  
J turns to crowd**

**JAY.** How y'all doin'?

(*Clap.*)

**S-C-C-S**

Now I must've taken a wrong turn,  
'Cause they told me there was a *boxing* match here tonight –

**J X DSR, to crowd; F X SR, still "boxing"**

(*Clap-Clap.*)

**S-C-C, S-C-C-S**

But I ain't seen, that,  
Not yet –

**J X US to SR**

**FISH.** Fists –

**JAY.** Though I *did* hear some poor motherfucker got whipped –

**MAX.** Language –

**JAY.** But I ain't seen no boxing

**MAX.** Round Five!

**J X US to USR; M X DS**

**JAY.** Not out of *this* one –

**M signals bell (DSR)**

(*Ding!*)

**DING! M returns USC; J,F turn DS to "box" e/o**

**FISH.** Eyes up,  
Eyes –

**JAY.** (*To FISH.*) You hear that crowd, boy?

**FISH.** Don't listen –  
Don't let him in –

**JAY.** Kid, I'm talkin' to you –

**FISH.** Don't let him in,  
Knees bent, breathe easy,  
You worked on this,  
You worked *so* hard –

EXHALE

**JAY.** Whose name they callin'?'  
They callin' *you*?

**FISH.** Blood,  
Focus –

**JAY.** Jab –

J thows L      MAT

**FISH.** Land one more –

**JAY.** Switch –  
Just one,  
First time,  
*Professional* –  
Switch –

J weaves      MAT

J weaves

**FISH.** So make your mark –

**JAY.** Jab, switch –

J throws L, weaves      MAT

**FISH.** Just one more –

**JAY.** Breathe –

INHALE

**FISH.** Make *your* mark –

**JAY.** Come on, boy –

**FISH.** All these people –

**JAY.** *Lamb to a slaughter* –

**FISH.** *They* might forget me –

**JAY.** Come on –

**FISH.** But when *he* looks in the mirror –

**JAY.** Hah!

**FISH.** When *he* looks in the mirror –

**JAY.** Come on! –

**FISH.** *He won't –*

**JAY.** Haha! –

**FISH.** *He won't –*

**JAY.** What you *doin'* boy? –

**FISH.** GO –

*(FISH fires a left-left-right-left hook and it works.)* **F Combo, HITS/STOMP!; J reacts**  
**FLASH**  
**Q35:FLOOR; –USR,DSR SQs**

**ENSEMBLE.** OOOOOOOOH!

**MAX.** Wait a second!

*(FISH fires another combination and holy shit.)* **F Combo, HITS/STOMP!; J reacts**  
**BOOM / FLASH** **Q35.2: FLOOR**

**ENSEMBLE.** OOH!

**MAX.** The new kid's back in it!

*(FISH fires one more decisive combination.)* **F Combo, HITS/STOMP!;**  
**J stumbles backwards, US**  
**Q35.6: FLOOR → +USR SQ**  
**TINNITUS**

**ENSEMBLE.** OOOH!

**MAX.** Landing yet *another* one-two-three!

*(Clap-Clap-Clap, Clap-Clap-Clap, Clap-Clap-Clap.)* **S/C-C-C, S/C-C-C, S/C-C-C**

**FISH.** Jesus Christ.

**WYNTON.** *(To JAY.)* Look up, boy!

**MAX.** Jay stumble!

**J gets back up, unable to return to "ready"**

The kid's got life left in him!

Jay looks thrown for a loop!

**WYNTON.** Fists up, Sport!

Do you hear me?

*(Ding! The boxers face off, looking at each other for the first time in the scene.*  
**FISH is exhilarated. He just landed something fierce, and neither can believe it.)**

**M signals to bell (DSR), X DS to CS** **DING!**  
**Q36: RING wash BLUE → AMBER**

Jay Jackson, do you *hear* me?

*(JAY recovers, licks his lips.)*



That's it, son – J X USR; F X DSL  
That's enough foolin',  
You so worried about winnin' this *crowd*,  
You up and forgot to win this *fight*.

(Clap.) S-C-C-S

Bring it on home, M X USC  
You done made 'em scream they lungs out long enough.  
Big finale, Sport,  
*Focus*,  
You hear me?

(A beat. **JAY** looks at **WYNTON** – with new razor-sharp focus.)

**JAY.** Yeah, old man, I hear you.

(Ding! **FISH** can't believe he's made it this far.) DING!

**FISH.** Ohmygod. J X DS to SR, F X US to SL

**JAY.** Just make sure they get a good look,

**WYNTON.** What?

**JAY.** What I'm about to do –

(Clap-Clap-Clap.) S/C-C-C

(With newfound intensity.)

Make sure they see it,  
*In the front row.*

(A beat. **WYNTON** looks at **JAY** earnestly – a proud smile. Ding!)

**M** signals bell (DSR), **X** DS DING!  
Q37: +DSR SQ; –AMBER wash  
**J,F** turn DS to "box" e/o; **M** returns USC

**MAX.** Round Seven!

And Jay "The Sport" Jackson comes into the ring with newfound energy!

**FISH.** Uh-oh –

**JAY.** (To the crowd.) Y'all came to see The Sport, huh?

(Clap.) S-C-C-S

Y'all came to see The *Sport*?!

**FISH.** Shift, stayed focused,  
You'll walk out of this –  
Ohmygod –

**JAY.** Just a little Jazz, give 'im –

**FISH.** Fists,  
Eyes,  
God,  
Blood –

**WYNTON.** Just a little music, Jay –

**JAY.** Put him down –

**WYNTON.** Just a little lullaby –

**MAX.** I can't remember the last time someone made Round Seven with The Sport!

**FISH.** Really?!

**F turns to see "M" (SL, in OS focus)**

*(JAY lands a deadly combination.)* **J Combo, HITS/STOMPI!; F reacts FLASH**  
**Q38: FLOOR; Return BLUE; -USR,DSR SQs**

**ENSEMBLE.** OOH!

**FISH.** Fists,  
Eyes –

**WYNTON.** Snakebite left –

**JAY.** Put him down –

**WYNTON.** Big *finale* –

**FISH.** Blood –

**JAY.** *(To himself.)* It's a shame, what you about to do, Jay,  
It's a *damn* shame –

*(Clap-Clap.)* **S-C-C, S-C-C-S MAT<**

'Cause he ain't half bad.

*(JAY delivers another deadly blow.)* **J HITS/STOMPI!; F reacts BOOM / FLASH**  
**Q38.2: FLASH / FLOOR**

**ENSEMBLE.** OOH!

**MAX.** Dear god, Jay –

*(JAY delivers another deadly blow.)* **J HITS/STOMPI!; F reacts BOOM / FLASH**  
**Q38.4: FLASH / FLOOR**

**ENSEMBLE.** OOH!

**WYNTON.** Big *finale* –

**FISH.** Blood.  
Quiet.

*(A beat. Everything stops. Bullet time. JAY delivers once more – with finality – Boom. Then quiet. Stillness. FISH looks around, shamed. A beat. Then, head*

*hung in defeat, FISH steps out of the pinspot and walks off. A sudden eruption.)*

**J HITS/STOMP!; F is K.O., on the floor**  
**K.O. >MAT >DRONE Q38.6 FLASH / FLOOR**

**MAX. THE SPORT DOES IT AGAIN!!**

**M X DSC**

*(Ding!)*

**M signals bell (DSR)**

**DING!**

Laying his challenger *out*, flat on the canvas!

*(Ding-ding!)*

**M signals bell (DSR)**

**DING-DING!**

With a *dynamite* knockout punch in the seventh round!

**J X DSC (SR of M);**  
**W enters R, X DSR**

*(Clap-Clap-Clap, Clap-Clap-Clap, Clap-Clap-Clap. MAX pats JAY on the shoulder.)*

**S/C-C-C, S/C-C-C, S/C-C-C**

Smile.

**M to J**

*(JAY does. A quick flash of light. WYNTON comes up behind JAY, tossing him a towel. JAY doesn't turn around.)*

**FLASH**

**Q39: FLASH →**

**-GRID; -SL,SR SQs; +DSR SQ; +DS-RM (SR & CS)**

**JAY. How'd that look?**

**W X DS, exits RING to DS-RM, DS of DSR RING corner;**  
**J counters to DSR RING corner, DSR of W;**  
**F starts to rise, M helps him to USL**

**WYNTON. Good.**

**JAY. Good enough?**

**WYNTON. We'll see.**

*(JAY smiles again. A beat. Another flash.)*

Kid wasn't half bad, was he?

**W takes off J's gloves**

**JAY. No.**

Not at all.

*(Another flash. JAY looks at the front row. So does WYNTON. With intensity.)*

He just came on the wrong night.

*(Ding! And black.)*

**DING!**

**Q40: FLASH → Blackout**

2.

(A locker room. Post-fight. JAY sits on a stool, a towel thrown over his shoulders. MAX and WYNTON are mid-argument.)

Q41: Lights up DS-RM

DS-RM: W DSR (with bucket, shirt); M URC stair (US);  
J on DSL table (SR, undoing wraps); gloves in chair

WYNTON. Thirty-five-hundred heads in that crowd,  
At his prime, Champ Bixby could fill an arena with two thousand,  
Two and a half, *maybe* –

MAX. I know –

WYNTON. And at this rate, the numbers Jay’s seein’, they gona be *twice* that by June – **W X M**

MAX. Your mouth to god’s ears –

WYNTON. They *have* to accept,  
You know that as well as I do –

MAX. His people were here as a *courtesy* –

WYNTON. Bullshit –

MAX. According to their office, they’re only just passing through, **M X US chair**  
Somethin’ about someone’s niece getting married –

WYNTON. Somebody’s niece by black ass –

MAX. Wynton, we’re lucky they came at *all* – **W X SL**

WYNTON. No, you sell that humble shit somewhere else,  
Max,  
*They’re lucky.*  
*Them.*  
*They’re lucky* Jay’s up and resuscitated the goddamn sport,  
A sport Bixby *himself* damn near murdered, **W lands USR J, drops bucket, hands J shirt**  
Drove into a corner wit his big fat fists – **W X USC; J puts on shirt**

(*He points at JAY.*)

**W gestures J**

Until *that* boy,  
Until *tonight*.  
Until thirty-five hundred people came out to see Jay Jackson deliver a genuine KO.

**W X USR J**

MAX. They insist Bixby’s retired –

WYNTON. He’s got a fight or two left in him –

MAX. He’s overweight,  
Lives on an apple orchard for god’s sake.

**M X CS**

They make cider, Wynton,  
They make doughnuts –

**WYNTON.** He's the Heavyweight Champion of the World,  
Max, **W X M (CS)**  
That don't leave a man,  
Not for a *minute* –

**MAX.** These negotiations,  
They are *not* easy –

**WYNTON.** You think *your job* ain't easy?

**MAX.** Wynton –

**WYNTON.** You should try'n strap some *gloves* on – **W X SL (USR J); M starts SL, stops**

**MAX.** (*With finality.*) When I said Jay's name, they laughed me off the phone.

(*A beat. WYNTON doesn't have to ask why. He knows. They all do. Finally, JAY breaks the tension.*) **Beat... then M X chair, sits; W X USR, bucket to table**

**JAY.** Linen suits, right?

**MAX.** What?

(*A beat.*)

**JAY.** Front row,  
You said that's where they were sittin'.

**MAX.** Yeah.

**JAY.** Linen suits. Three piece. Real sharp.

(*A beat. JAY looks at MAX.*)

I'ma get me one of them suits.

**MAX.** Okay.  
Next stop, I can set it up, Jay, **M stands, X toward J**  
I'll get the best tailor in town,  
Get you one in every color –

**JAY.** That's so?

**MAX.** Anything you want. **M stops (SLC)**

(*JAY just glares at him.*)

**JAY.** *Anything?* **W sits USL on RING (USR J)**

(*MAX swallows hard.*) **Beat...**

**MAX.** I'll talk to 'em, okay?  
I'm meeting them for brandy in fifteen minutes.

But I can't make you any promises, Jay.  
That ain't what I do –  
I never done it -  
It ain't good business.

**WYNTON.** Sometimes I think you forget how good this boy *is* –

**MAX.** I don't forget.

I can't – not even if I *wanted* to.

M X USL to W (SR W)

He's Jay Jackson.

So *good* at the sport that they call him "The Sport."

Ain't a paper in this country that doesn't run his picture once a week.

M DSR corner

That on I hate.

The one with the smile and the fucking hat –

**JAY.** That's a fifty-dollar hat –

**MAX.** You're a colored man on page five, Jay,  
For Christ's sake, it's remarkable –

M turns back to J

**JAY.** Why not that front page –

**MAX.** Who cares about the front page?

**JAY.** The ones who don't *open* the paper, Max,  
The ones who don't *read* as well as we do.

**MAX.** You gotta be patient with this stuff,  
It's a matter of precedent,  
Of history,  
Simple as that,  
Bixby's never fought a negro,  
No Heavyweight Champ ever *has*.  
I don't like it either,  
But that's the spread.

M X SL to J (SR J)

**JAY.** ...

**MAX.** The last thing you should do is take it personal,  
He don't mean it like that,  
It ain't like he's a bigot,  
He's got no problem with 'em,  
Likes 'em fine,  
His *driver's* a negro.

M touches J

**WYNTON.** ...

J bats M off

**MAX.** Bixby just –

What his people *say* is – they see no reason to step in that ring with you.

He's retired, alright?

He didn't come out for Crowley –

M X DSR toward door (DSR corner)

**WYNTON.** Crowley wasn't *Jay* –

**MAX.** Crowley wasn't *black*, M stops (LC), turns back to J  
And Bixby ain't comin' outta retirement for a title fight half this country won't recognize –

**JAY.** I've fought half this country, Max. M continues X DSR  
Broke three ribs in the process,  
The plan was to get his attention –

**MAX.** The *Post* says he'd disgrace his legacy just by stepping into that ring with you – M turns back  
We'd be asking the mas to piss a lot of people off –

(**MAX** turns to **WYNTON**.) M X USL to W (SR W)

How would *you* like it if I asked Jay to get in the ring with a goddamn grizzly bear?

(*A beat. JAY and WYNTON share a look. Jesus. MAX doesn't get it. Continues.*)  
W stands, moves SL; M leans into J

We'll find you a challenger, okay?  
We'll find you twenty.  
I've got three men in Nigeria right now,  
Scouting for the biggest, meanest ogre-looking boys they can find,  
We'll get 'em visas,  
We'll bring them over,  
Strap some gloves on 'em and sell a *million* tickets,  
You can knock their fucking lights out,  
Exhibition,  
One after the other,  
We'll laugh about it –

**WYNTON.** They're big, huh? –

**MAX.** They're huge – M rises, steps backward USR

**JAY.** They ain't the *best*, Max.  
...  
And you know as well as I -  
A pair of black boys ain't *never* gon' see that front page.

(*A beat. MAX checks his watch.*) M steps DR (CS), checks watch, turns back

**MAX.** Ten minutes.  
I gotta go.

...  
Look.

...  
I'll be persuasive.

**WYNTON.** Persuasive?

**MAX.** I'll try my damndest.

(WYNTON nods. MAX turns to JAY.)

All right?

(JAY stares at MAX. A beat.)

M X toward door (DSR corner)

JAY. I like you fine, Max.

(MAX moves to leave, thinking this battle won.)

M hesitates, looks back

MAX. I like you too, Jay –

M continues DSR

JAY. But if you ain't the promoter that gets me a shot at that Title, Someone else will be.

J X SR

...

J stops CS

You get me?

(A beat. Terrified, MAX nods.)

MAX. Yeah.

I –

Yeah.

(And MAX exists. JAY and WYNTON share a look.)

M exits DSR vom;

J tucks shirt X SR to chair

WYNTON. Talkin' 'bout "His driver's a negro" – W X SR to (USC)

(The share a laugh. JAY towels his sweaty head. FISH enters, nursing a bruised lip, carrying a bundle of clothes in a duffel.)

FISH. Someone wanted to see me?

[From DSL vom]

(WYNTON meets his gaze. Smiles.)

WYNTON. Yeah. Come on in.

(As FISH takes a step into the room, JAY's face emerges from under the towel. FISH stops in his tracks. JAY smiles. Devilishly. He knows no other way.)

F enters DSL w/ cold pack, shakes W's hand, steps SR;

W counters SL; F looks back to W

FISH. Why's he's here.

WYNTON. He's got a name, son.

FISH. Why's Jay Jackson here?

WYNTON. 'Cause Jay Jackson's the one wanted to see you.

J sits

(FISH moves to leave.)

F goes to exit DSL

FISH. I been embarrassed enough tonight.

(WYNTON stops him.)



**WYNTON.** Hold on, now – W stops F (SL of F)

**FISH.** Please let go my arm –

**WYNTON.** He just wanna *talk* –

**FISH.** He did enough talking in the ring,  
 Enough for the both of us, didn't he?  
 You don't let me go I'll break your hand –

**WYNTON.** You heard that Jay? W lets go, X US

**FISH.** I swear to god, sir – F turns SL to follow W

**JAY.** You fought *good*.  
*(A beat. FISH stops. Looks up at JAY.) F turns SL to J*

**FISH.** I lost.  
*(A beat. JAY can't help himself.)*

**JAY.** I noticed. J "I noticed" gesture: cracking neck

**FISH.** You call 'em *all* back here to tell 'em what a pleasure it was to whoop they ass? F X USR to J  
*(JAY smiles. So does WYNTON. They let FISH continue.)*

That was my first *real* fight, you know that?  
 First one *not* in the naval yards –

**WYNTON.** *(Impressed.)* Was it – W X SR to F (DSL of F,J)

**FISH.** My granddaddy was in that crowd,  
 And I understand this ain't choir practice –  
 Hell, I even understand losing –  
 But what you did to me out there?  
 Damn Negro Heavyweight Champion my foot, W moves into F  
 Buncha fast talk and fancy handwork,  
 You know what you need? –

**WYNTON.** Here he go – W grabs F

**FISH.** Someone to knock you flat on your *ass*. W pull F off DSC – F DRC; W ULC  
*(A beat. FISH looks up, thrown for a loop.)*

**JAY.** What I *need* is a sparring partner. J stands (SR); F,W stop

**FISH.** What?

**JAY.** How many fights we done fought, Wynton? J X DS; F X US; W X DS (SL F)

**WYNTON.** Professional?

**JAY.** Professional.

How many fights we done fought from San Diego to New York City,  
Tell the boy –

**WYNTON.** Seventy-six.

**JAY.** Seventy-six?

**WYNTON.** Hm.

**JAY.** Now tell the boy why he's *here*.

**WYNTON.** He's good?

**JAY.** *How* good?

**WYNTON.** I dunno –

**JAY.** Come on, now –

**WYNTON.** Better'n *all seventy-six*.

*(FISH stops. He's kind of proud, but still cynical.)* **F celebrates; W X SL to table**

**JAY.** For a minute out there,  
I got this feeling I ain't had in a long time,  
You see that, Wynton?

**WYNTON.** Fifth round –

**JAY.** *(To FISH.)* For a minute, I believe you knocked the wind right outta me –

**WYNTON.** Yes he did – **W sits on table (SR of table)**

**JAY.** Fifth round,  
For a minute,  
We was *boxin'*,  
You see that?

*(A beat. FISH hides a smile. Stands a little taller.)*

**FISH.** I noticed. **F "I noticed" gesture: neck crack**

*(JAY and WYNTON smile. They like this kid. It's hard not to.)*

**JAY.** Where your people *from*? **J X US to chair**

**FISH.** Mississippi.

**JAY.** And what is it you do, up in those naval yards. **J sits**

**FISH.** I'm a rope man.  
I roll 'em out.  
Check 'em for rips and tears.

**WYNTON.** They big, them ropes?

**FISH.** Thick as a man's waist. F steps SL toward W (CS)

**JAY.** You like that job?

**FISH.** Y'all ain't foolin'?' F turns back to J

**JAY.** *Do you like that job?*

**WYNTON.** *(To FISH.)* Listen to him.

**JAY.** Like it more than boxing?

*(A beat. FISH can't hide his smile.)*

**FISH.** No sir. F steps CR toward J

**JAY.** How'd you like to walk into that naval yard,  
Tell them you're pickin' up anchor and moving on, J rises, X SL toward F (SRC)  
F celebrates, X SL (SLC)  
'Cause your Mississippi ass just got hired to *spar* with Jay "The Sport" Jackson,  
For six dollars more that you were making per week.

*(A beat. FISH thinks.)* F stops

**FISH.** I'd like it more if it was *ten* dollars. F steps DS (DLC)

**JAY/WYNTON.** *(Humored.)* Oooooooh!

*(JAY offers his hand.)*

**JAY.** *Eight, Break-a-Sweat.*

*(FISH considers it. Smiles.)*

**FISH.** People call me "Fish." F X USR to J; they shake

*(They shake on it. MAX enters, very stressed out.)* M enters DSR; F,J break, slight split

**JAY.** That was fast.

*(MAX sees FISH.)*

**MAX.** The hell's *he* doing here? W stands

**WYNTON.** He works with *us* now.

**MAX.** Really?

**FISH.** Yeah.

**JAY.** *(To MAX.)* Do you?

*(A breath. MAX stares at them. The news won't be good. WYNTON pats FISH on the back.)* W ushers F to exit DSL

**WYNTON.** Wait outside, son.  
You done seen *enough* blood today.

(FISH nods, exits. There's tension in the air. MAX goes into panic mode.)  
F exits DSL; W steps DSL

MAX. I want to make sure you understand me: M X USL (CS), faces J; W X DSL (DSL corner)  
His representatives – they were very clear every time.  
And sometimes it's my job to negotiate –  
But other times – there's nothing to negotiate –  
And it's just my job to relay information.

JAY. Thought you were gonna be persuasive, Max. J steps into M, adjusts his tie

MAX. I was – I am – and I could talk the stripes off a fuckin' zebra, M steps backward DL, tucks tie in  
But I am not a miracle worker,  
I am not – a magician.

(WYNTON shoots Jay a look.)

I should remind you that those crowds have been growing steadily, Jay.  
And I should remind you that I am good –  
No –  
Great –  
At my job,  
And that you will not find anyone as dedicated to you,  
To this sport,  
Or to the pursuit of sport in general –

WYNTON. (Playful.) Uh-oh –

MAX. And I should also remind you that champs like that hardly ever come out of retirement,  
And on the rare occasion that they do, M X SL toward W (SLC)  
It's for nothing less than fifty-five-percent of the purse – M faces J  
Non-negotiable, J X SR to chair, picks up gloves  
No matter what,  
Idea being – if they're gonna put those gloves back on,  
If you're gonna wake the dragon,  
You're gonna make it worth their while, win or lose –

JAY. What did they say? J steps CL toward M

(A beat. MAX proceeds – with difficulty.)

MAX. They said he'll consider it.

(JAY and WYNTON's eyes go wide with hope.)

But he needs three months. M X DSR (DSR corner); J counters SL (SR table)  
...  
And he wants –  
As for the purse –  
Win or lose –  
... M stops, turns back

...  
He wants *ninety percent*.

(A beat. WYNTON laugh hysterically.) W laughs, sits DSL on table; M turns away

Wynton –

WYNTON. You damn right there's nothing *to* negotiate – J sits SR on table

MAX. I know,  
This is what I think *we* should do –

WYNTON. *Ninety percent??* –

MAX. Listen, Jay, M X USL to J (SR J)  
Let's give it a little time, yeah?  
Like we said before, you'll be seeing twice your numbers now by June, M touches J  
That puts us in a very different position,  
A position where we can sit down with 'em, maybe give 'em another call –

JAY. You can give 'em a call *right now* –

MAX. Don't get angry,  
I think the important thing, the thing to remember,  
Is that the conversation's *started*, right? –

JAY. *Let's give him ninety.*

(A beat. MAX can't believe it. Neither can WYNTON.) Beat...

MAX. What?

(A beat. JAY's mind is made up.)

JAY. Win or lose.  
Let's give him ninety. M X SR (SRC)  
I just wanna fight – and I wanna fight *him*. J stands; M turns back

(MAX looks at WYNTON. WYNTON shrugs.)

MAX. No one gets ninety.

JAY. No one till now.

MAX. It's a goddamn insult.

WYNTON. Jay –

MAX. I gotta tell you,  
As your partner in business,  
I feel it's my obligation – M steps SL toward J

WYNTON. (To JAY.) Hear him out –

**MAX.** That's a horrible deal!  
Words gets out we took that low a figure,  
No one'll take us serious ever again,  
You'll be the laughing stock of the professional sports world.

**JAY.** And what am I *now*?

*(A tense beat.)*

**MAX.** Explain it to him, Wynton.  
This is gonna be the fight of the decade. **M X DSR (DRC)**  
There's no precedent.  
Nothing *close*.  
This country's been waiting for this fight – whether they like it or not -  
If you agree to ninety, **W X USL to USL table/J**  
They're going to make a mint, even if you win. **M steps USL**

**WYNTON.** “*Even if*”? **W lands USL**

*(A tense beat. MAX looks at JAY.)*

**JAY.** Make the call.

*(A beat. MAX thinks about it. Swallows hard. He's got no choice.)*

**MAX.** Okay.  
I mean –  
*Okay.*

*(MAX moves to leave.)* **M X DSR to door (DSR)**

**JAY.** And Max –

*(MAX stops.)* **M stops, turns back**

For the record?

*(JAY looks right at him, with eyes like loaded guns.)*

I ain't grizzly bear.

*(MAX nods, leaves. Quiet. JAY and WYNTON stare out – pensive. They regard each other like old friends.)* **Beat... then M exits DSR; another beat...**

**WYNTON.** Ninety percent?

**JAY.** You'll get your cut.  
Regular.

**WYNTON.** Oh, I know I will. **W steps DSR (USR J)**

**JAY.** Alright.

**WYNTON.** Alright.

*(A beat. WYNTON moves to leave as well.)*

**JAY.** You gon' give me shit about it, too?

**WYNTON.** No, son.

Believe me.

*That sonofabitch?*

*(They look each other in the eye. A mutual connection. A mutual wound.)*

I'da fought 'im for free.

**W touches J; Beat...**

*(They share a knowing look, then WYNTON exits. Once he's alone, JAY takes a breath. And for the first time, we see him let down his guard. He takes a breath. A long beat as his eyes well up, emotional. And black.)*

**Q50: Blackout**

### 3.

*(Clap-Clap-Clap, Clap-Clap-Clap, Clap-Clap-Clap. A gym and a press conference. JAY and FISH spar, practicing combinations. WYNTON coaches JAY, both in in the ring and in the press conference.)*

Q51: RING

RING: W USC; J,F RCS, facing e/o (J SR, F SL)

WYNTON. Head up,

JAY. Head up.

WYNTON. Fists up,

JAY. Fists up,

WYNTON. Watch the knees,  
Back loose,  
Go sharp, stay sharp.

*(They do.)*

Short hooks, long jabs,  
There you go,  
Weave.  
Build a rhythm, keep a rhythm.

*(MAX appears in pinstop.)*

MAX. It's just a couple of questions, Jay,  
Pretty standard stuff –

WYNTON. *(To the boxers.)* Head up –

MAX. But brace yourself, it's crowded in there –

WYNTON. *(To the boxers.)* Good –

MAX. Very crowded –

WYNTON. Good!

MAX. We should've *charged* for this.

*(A flash of light as JAY joins MAX. MAX puts an arm around JAY, addresses a large group. Behind them, WYNTON and FISH continue as is the sparring is still happening.)*

Q52: RING fades down; US-MISC fades up

Sorry for the standing room only, gents,  
But we're happy to see you,  
Every one,  
Especially Mr. McCraney, there,  
Who once described me as "Not a fight promoter as much as a shark in human skin."

FLASH; DRONE<



**ENSEMBLE.** HAH!

**MAX.** I'll repeat out loud, so everyone in the back can hear,  
Don't want any o' you missing out on a single tidbit.  
This is one for the ages, boys,  
David and Goliath got *nothing* on us.

(Clap.)

S-C-C-S

FLASH

Q53: +DSC, SC SQs

J lands CS, to aud;

F lands USL corner, still sparring, facing SC

**JAY.** (*Addressing the reporters.*) How y'all doing?

**WYNTON.** Follow that beat, boy.

**MAX.** Questions begin *now*, gents –

**WYNTON.** We're makin' music –

**MAX.** Anything you got,  
Anything at all,  
Keep 'em short –

**WYNTON.** Long jabs, short hooks –

**MAX.** But keep 'em comin' –

(Clap.)

You in the back,

**WYNTON.** Round one –

Q54: RING → BLUE; US-MISC out; -DSC SQ; +X

M X to DSL corner, faces CS, as Reporter #1

Throughout J's focus is fluid b/w Reporters, DS crowd

**MAX.** How long've you been fighting, Jay?

**JAY.** On, off, ten, twelve years, I'd say?

**WYNTON.** Go again –

**JAY.** Never known nothin' else.  
Guess I never really *needed* to.

**MAX.** You enjoy it?  
You sure *look* like you enjoy it.

**JAY.** Very much, sir –

**MAX.** Why is it you think the coloreds have taken to boxing?

**JAY.** Oldest sport in the world, ain't it?  
*Poorest* sport at least.  
Don't need no ball, uniforms,  
All you need is two fists and even *then* I seen a man fight with less.

**ENSEMBLE.** HAH!

**MAX.** But don't you think your people have a predilection for fighting –

**JAY.** I dunno about that –

**MAX.** For sports exhibiting more primal, *aggressive* behavior –

**WYNTON.** Go –

**JAY.** Looking out at those first ten rows –

**WYNTON.** Hit 'im –

**JAY.** I'd say your people got a predilection for *watching*.

**ENSEMBLE.** HAH!

**MAX.** Is it true that you were born in a barn in Alabama?

**WYNTON.** Steady feet –

**MAX.** 'Cause we got ten different cities claiming to be the birthplace of Jay “The Sport”  
Jackson –

**JAY.** Oh I'm from nowhere in particular, sir –

**MAX.** *Kansas Ledger* says you started working on the railroad at thirteen –

**JAY.** (*Humored.*) Does it –

**MAX.** And one report says you have two brothers?

**WYNTON.** Steady –

**MAX.** No brothers?

**WYNTON.** Steady –

**MAX.** What exactly *is* your story?

**JAY.** My story is I wanna fight –

**MAX.** Come on, Jay, everyone's from somewhere –

**WYNTON.** Move –

**MAX.** Give us somethin' to print –

**JAY.** How 'bout my picture?

**ENSEMBLE.** HAH –

**WYNTON.** Stick 'n move boy –

**MAX.** Is it true you like to train with music?

(*Clap.*)

S-C-C-S

**WYNTON.** Listen to it –

**MAX.** Owner of a concert hall in Georgia says you paid to practice *under* the stage –

(Clap-Clap.)

S-C-C, S-C-C-S

Said they could hear you keeping rhythm with the bass?

**JAY.** Let's just call that one a trade secret –

**WYNTON.** Just a little Jazz, give 'em –

(Clap-Clap-Clap, Clap-Clap-Clap, Clap-Clap-Clap.)

S/C-C-C, S/C-C-C, S/C-C-C

FLASH

Q54.1: -X

W,M,F all X clockwise to next RING corner:

W USR, M DSR, F DSL; M as Reporter #2

**MAX.** You're fighting style is quite ostentatious – Q54.2: +X

**JAY.** Why thank you –

**MAX.** Ain't everyday boxer use *words* to defeat their opponents –

**JAY.** Right ones work better than punches –

**MAX.** Is it true you used that hook to knock out a bull in Plainsville?

**JAY.** 'Course not sir.

It was Montgomery.

And believe me, he had it comin'.

**ENSEMBLE.** HAH!

**MAX.** How's your *family* feel?

**WYNTON.** Steer clear, Jay –

**MAX.** How's your *family* feel about your meteoric rise to fame? K.O.

**WYNTON.** Move –

**JAY.** Oh, this ain't fame, sir,

Not *this*.

To be perfectly honest,

Y'all ain't seen *nothing* yet.

**ENSEMBLE.** HAH-HAH!

**WYNTON.** Round two, son –

Q54.5: -X

W,M,F all X clockwise to next RING corner –

W USL, M USR, F DSR;

M as Reporter #3; J keeps OS focus (DS)

**MAX.** Are you *targeting* Mr. Bixby?

Q54.6: +X

**JAY.** What?

**WYNTON.** Fists up, now,  
This ain't easy –

**MAX.** Are you targeting him *specifically* because he's a white man?

**JAY.** No sir –

**WYNTON.** Take it, INHALE  
Breathe –

**JAY.** I'm comin' at him because he's The Champ, that's all –

**WYTON.** *Breathe* – EXHALE

**JAY.** Ain't about bein' no Heavyweight Champion of the *White* World.  
It's about bein' champion, period.

**WYNTON.** Good boy,

**MAX.** But given your station, won't you take added pleasure in fighting a white man?

**JAY.** Oh, I never took no pleasure fighting one color over another,  
I'll fight anything you put in front of me,  
Black, white, red or green –

**WYNTON.** Stick it –

**JAY.** Like my trainer says –

**WYNTON.** Long as they climb *in* that ring,  
They comin' *out* purple.

**ENSEMBLE.** HAH-HAH!

Q54.7: -X

W,F X clockwise to next RING corner:  
W DSL, F USR; M X to J (USL J) as Max

**WYNTON.** Almost done, boy –

**MAX.** (*As MAX.*) Sir, in the back?

**WYNTON.** One more round –

M X to USL corner, as Reporter #4;  
J keeps OS focus (DS)

**JAY.** (*Not hearing.*) What was that?

**MAX.** Are you aware of the official statements made by – M turns to CS, focus on J Q54.8: +X  
The White Man's Worker's Unions,  
Liberty's Guardians,  
And The Society for the Preservation of True American Culture,

**JAY.** Yessir, 'course I am –

**MAX.** Say they won't recognize any of what happens in that ring.

**JAY.** When I'm done with Bixby, they won't recognize *him* neither.

WYNTON. Stay in it –

MAX. Would you like to comment on the recent brawl in Alabama, **ZOMBIE**  
The argument over the Bixby fight in which four men, two white and two black, were  
taken to St. Mary’s Hospital in grave condition?

WYNTON. Head up –

MAX. Do you feel *responsibility* for their injuries?

WYNTON. Head *up* –

MAX. The young negroes suffered from multiple broken ribs,  
All because they argued you were the better boxer.

JAY. Ain’t I?

MAX. What do you make of it?  
Don’t you feel any remorse, Jay?

JAY. For what?

MAX. Fellow negroes, broken ribs –

(Clap.)

**S-C-C-S**

**ZOMBIE**

WYNTON. Easy –

MAX. (As MAX.) Listen, boys, I think we’ve tired him out enough today – **M X to J (USL J) as Max**

(But JAY insists.)

JAY. Listen, I think you take *some* people, **J X DSR (DRC), still OS focus** **54.9: +DSC,DSR SQs**

WYNTON. Watch out, boy –

JAY. I think you take *some* people and you tell ’em there’s the slightest chance that the toughest  
man in the world don’t look like Champ Bixby?  
That’s tellin’ ’em the sky is red,  
Forwards is backwards, **J X SL (CS)**  
And Santa Claus ain’t real.

MAX. But he isn’t, Jay. **M touches J**

JAY. But he *was*, wasn’t he?  
Just once?

... **M releases, takes step backward USL**  
*And that’s all it took.*

**ENSEMBLE. HAH!**

WYNTON. Take control, boy – **MAT**

**JAY.** Now, first things first,  
 If you're gon' write about this fight, **M X counterclockwise US to DSR corner**  
 You gotta get all them big ideas outta your head, sir –

**WYNTON.** Good –

**JAY.** This ain't about what side of town we grew up in,  
 How we *look*,  
 How we *sound* –

**WYNTON.** Wrap it up – **M lands DSR corner**

**JAY.** It's about how we *fight*.  
 (*Clap.*) **S-C-C-S**

**WYNTON.** Stick. **MAT**

**JAY.** I thank y'all very much for comin' out,  
 But I'm steppin' into the ring with Bixby in *six weeks*.  
 (*Flash!*) **FLASH** **Q55: -DSC,DSR SQs; -X → +X**

**WYNTON.** Move – **J faces SR** **MAT**

**JAY.** In *one month* –  
 (*Flash!*) **FLASH** **Q56: -X → +X**

**WYNTON.** Move – **J faces SL** **MAT**

**JAY.** In *tend days* –  
 (*Flash!*) **FLASH** **Q57: -X → +X**

**WYNTON.** Move!! – **J faces DS** **MAT**

**JAY.** This very *Saturday*, sir,  
 And I appreciate all your questions,  
 I really do.  
 But if you only print one thing, print this,  
 No matter *what* happens tomorrow,  
 Champ Bixby is one of the best fighters to *ever* step into that ring,  
 And it will truly be my honor to step into it with him.  
 I mean that.  
 (*He does. With finality, he turns to go.*) **>DRONE**

Thank you very much – **J X USL to US-MISC**

**MAX.** Mr. Jackson – **M follows a bit USL (DRC), as Reporter #5**

**WYNTON.** Come on –

**MAX.** Mr. Jackson, one last question –

**F X DS, W X SR – form DSR triangle W/ M aimed USL  
Q58: –CS SQ;  
X → DSR (RING) & USL (US-MISC) Diagonal SQs**

**JAY.** (*Losing patience.*) Alright –

**J turns back, addresses crowd (F,M,W)**

**MAX.** At this very press conference,  
Less than one half hour ago,  
One night before the fight,  
Are you aware that four different men were stopped at the door,  
And on their persons,  
Four different firearms were confiscated?

*(FISH and WYNTON stop sparring. A beat. Quiet.)*

**JAY.** What?

**MAX.** (*Gravely.*) Four white men,  
Taken into custody, Sport,  
And it don't take much to speculate on what their intentions might've been,  
Did your representatives make you aware of this?

*(A beat. JAY flashes MAX a look. MAX can't meet his gaze. JAY looks back at the "reporter" and lies through his teeth.)*

**JAY.** Yeah.

...  
Yes.  
Of course they did.

**MAX.** Tomorrow night,  
Do you have any worries about your personal safety?

**JAY.** My personal safety?

*(A beat. WYNTON looks at JAY, coaches him.)*

**WYNTON.** Neck straight, son.  
Back loose.

...  
Breathe.

*(JAY breathes.)*

**JAY.** Not for my personal safety, sir,  
No.  
You see –  
That's one thing I've *learned* about boxing.

...  
...  
At the end of the day, the person most likely to take you down...

*(JAY burns MAX a look. Loaded.)*

Ain't even in the ring.

*(A tense beat between them. And finally – Clap-Clap-Clap, Clap-Clap-Clap,  
Clap-Clap-Clap. And black.)*

**S/C-C-C, S/C-C-C, S/C-C-C**

**Q59: FLASH**

**Q60: Blackout**

**ZOMBIE<**



4.

>ZOMBIE

Q61: Lights up DS-RM

(FISH pulls a rope and raises the heavy bag about seven feet off the ground. It now serves as a stand-in for a chandelier. FISH then carries in duffel bags, looking around the room, flabbergasted.)

DS-RM: F enters URC (stairs) w/ loaded bag,  
2 pairs of gloves, X DS

FISH. Will you *look* at this place.

(WYNTON enters, something on his mind.) W enters URC (stairs) w/ loaded bucket  
(2 bottles, wraps), stops on stairs

WYNTON. Put them bags down.

F X USR, sets bag and gloves in USR chair

Hang those wraps up to dry in the bathroom. F grabs wraps from W, exits DSR vom

FISH. (*peeking in another room.*) *That's a bathroom?*

WYNTON. We're runnin' drills in *here*.

W X SL, sets bucket on SL table (US side)

FISH. (*From the bathroom.*) They got three kindsa soap, Wynton,

WYNTON. That crowd outside's only gon' get bigger – W removes bottles, sets SL of bucket

And we ain't wastin' no time movin' through that madness just to get to the showground –

FISH. I know,

F renters, XS, grabs gloves,

We gotta keep Jay in motion,

You know how he gets when there's too much time to think –

F X SL

WYNTON. That's right.

W X SR

We do.

But first, boy,

W stops F CS

I think you and I need to talk.

(FISH is confused.)

FISH. About what?

(A beat. WYNTON thinks. Doesn't like doing this.)

WYNTON. After the showground just now,

I seen a man pull you aside.

FISH. ...

WYNTON. I seen an envelope changes hands –

FISH. And you think what –

WYNTON. Don't get smart with me, boy –

FISH. I was *born* smart –

**WYNTON.** Answer my question –

**FISH.** (*Fuck you.*) I would but you ain't even asked one yet.

(*WYNTON looks at FISH. Deadly serious.*)

**WYNTON.** Who was he?

**FISH.** None of your business,  
With all due respect, I can talk to whomever I want –

**WYNTON.** That's not true, boy –  
Not anymore –

**FISH.** After all this time, you don't *trust* me?

**WYNTON.** This ain't about trust –

**FISH.** I know how *big* this is,  
What we're doing –

**WYNTON.** I know you do,  
But the longer you take to answer my question the more I start to wonder –

**FISH.** You think I'd sell out Jay?

(*A beat. WYNTON doesn't respond. He doesn't know anymore. FISH half-  
laughs. Can't believe this.*) **Beat... F X USL, lays out gloves on table, loosens laces**

There was a man in Atlanta, too.  
He put two twenty dollars on the table, said there'd be two more if I answered some  
questions –

**WYNTON.** Whatchu tell 'im –

**FISH.** Same thing I told the man in Dallas.

... **F X SR to W (CS)**  
*Not a goddamn word.*

(*A beat. WYNTON stares at him. He's overwhelmed by all this and bad at hiding it.*)

**WYNTON.** Look, boy,  
After what happened out there today, we got to worry.  
There's certain things we got to protect, and that begins with each and every one of  
ourselves –

**FISH.** (*Plainly.*) Jay Jackson was born and raised in Creek County.

(*A beat. WYNTON's eyes go wide. FISH continues.*) **Beat...**

Weeks ago you had me goin' through old trunks, lookin' for a spare rope, **F X to USR chair**  
I found this flyer - **F grabs towel from bag, steps SL (SRC)**  
Jay's name's at the bottom.  
Small print.

The type they only use on your *first* fight.

...

“New Challenger Jay Jackson” –

F turns SR, “reads poster”

...

“Pride of Creek County.”

**WYNTON.** ...

**FISH.** I’ve heard him do his whole routine,

F turns SL, X SL to table, throws rag on table

They ask where he’s from,

F X DSR, stops DRC

He says nowhere,

They say everyone’s from somewhere,

He changes the subject –

Switch –

F turns back to W

Somehow now it’s a story ’bout how good the crawfish is in Louisiana,

But I knew –

F X USL to W (USC)

This whole time –

And I ain’t say a damn thing.

(*A beat. Loaded.*)

This is important.

I get that, sir.

But that envelope you saw exchanged between me and that man,

That was me play’ *him* for somethin’ very hard-to-come-by –

Something I bought for Jay –

You need to know what that is?

F X SL to SL table (US table)

You gon’ tear my door down like the rest of the world?

Or you gon’ let me have somethin’ that’s *mine* –

...

For once?

(*A beat. WYNTON thinks. All he can muster is this.*) F wipes down gloves with rag

**WYNTON.** Someday soon, boy,

W X SL to F

It’s gon’ be *you* in that paper,

*You* in that ring.

Hell, with any luck, you gon’ go *further* than Jay – W touches F

(*FISH is done with this, insulted, ready to get to work.*) Beat... F daydreams

**FISH.** I’ll get those ropes –

F X SR to USR chair

(*But WYNTON stops him.*)

**WYNTON.** But even when you got your whole life ahead of you,

Don’t forget.

F pull ropes out of bag

...

F picks up bag

...

You got a whole life *behind* you as well.

(A beat. A loaded look between WYNTON and FISH. Finally, FISH just asks it.)

F steps DSL; Beat

FISH. What's in Creek County?

Beat (No answer); F turns back to W

(WYNTON just looks at FISH. Suddenly a voice offstage.)

F, W hear J,M entering; W gestures, F XSL  
(F DSL of table; W US table)

J enters URC (stairs), M follows;  
They stop SRC (J SR, M SL)

JAY. What the hell was *that*?!

(JAY and MAX come storming into the room.)

MAX. Press conferences are a pain in the ass,  
Yes, but they're *necessary* –

JAY. That ain't what I'm talkin' about –

MAX. (*Knowing.*) Just calm down –

JAY. Four men with guns come in the night before the biggest fight of my life –

MAX. They didn't "come in" anywhere,  
We got 'em at the door,  
You heard that –

W X USR, sits (ULC); F puts bucket on floor

JAY. Oh, so I should *thank* you? –

F continues wiping gloves

WYNTON. Sport –

MAX. You said it *yourself*, Jay:

M X DSR; J counters USL (URC)

This is the biggest fight of your life,  
You don't need anything *else* on your shoulders,  
Not right now,  
You've got *a lot* to worry about –  
We're *oversold* for tomorrow by two hundred seats,  
We got radio stations *bidding* to run you versus Bixby,  
Making offers no one's *ever* heard before –  
And these exhibition fights over the last couple weeks have been serving *one* purpose,  
*Exhibiting* you,  
The specimen of sport,  
Putting you in there with human punching bags god's sake –

JAY. You were gonna let me get killed?!

MAX. 'Course not,

But can you imagine if you woulda worried yourself into *losing* one of the things?  
That would've been *bad* –  
That would've been *very bad* –

JAY. I've told you I wanted protection –

MAX. It's not that easy –

JAY. I'm a target, Max, J steps into M (SR)  
Hiring a couple of men don't do anybody any harm –

MAX. Already, they say you think too highly of yourself,  
If you showed up with bodyguards, it would only get *worse* –

JAY. I think highly of myself? – J steps into M again, cornering him (DSR)

MAX. Come on, Jay –

JAY. It's getting' hard for me to tell where their opinion stops and yours begins – J pokes M

MAX. All I've ever done is *protect* you –  
From them –  
From *worrying* –  
'Cause you don't worry 'bout train tickets, M loops J USL, lands USL J (SR); J doesn't turn  
You don't worry 'bout bookings or fucking Jim Crow,  
You know how many palms I have to grease on a regular basis?  
To keep you moving? J turns SL to M  
To keep you sleepin' in *white-only* hotels?  
And you got expensive taste, Jay –  
You know how hard I work to keep this pipe dream of yours from getting' us all killed?

JAY. Ain't nobody gonna kill "us" – J steps SL into M  
They're comin' after *me* –

MAX. Four me,  
Four little pistols,  
Business as usual,  
*Taken care of,*  
By the world's only inter-racial fight promoter –

JAY. You don't like this,  
I'm sure we could find another – J X USL (USR)

MAX. No, I'm not sure you can, Jay. M X USL, cutting Jay off at stairs (URC)

JAY. You want out?

MAX. That's not what I'm saying –

JAY. You want out, there's the door, Max –

MAX. *(To WYNTON.)* Can *you* talk some sense into him? M turns, steps SL to W

JAY. Don't look at him, look at *me* –

MAX. *(To WYNTON.)* Actin' like I ain't sacrificed my whole career for this –

JAY. *You* sacrificed? – J steps DS

MAX. Jay Jackson *is* my career, how plainly do you want it – M turns back to J; Beat...

**JAY.** And what did you mean “business as usual”?

**MAX.** What?

**JAY.** “Four men, four pistols, business as usual” –

**MAX.** Oh come on – **M X DSR to DSR corner**

**JAY.** Men showin’ up –  
Men with pistols -  
You tellin’ me it’s happened before? **J steps DSR toward M (SRC)**

**MAX.** You’re about to knock out a national hero and become the first black Heavyweight  
Champion of the World,  
Yes,  
Of *course* it’s happened before.

**JAY.** Where. **J X DSR toward M**

**MAX.** This is not the time –

**JAY.** Where?

**MAX.** All you should worry about is Bixby –

**JAY.** WHERE?! **J lands DSR, cornering M (SL M)**

**MAX.** Chicago!

**JAY.** How many in Chicago?

**MAX.** It doesn’t matter!

*(JAY grabs MAX by the collar, vicious.)*

**JAY.** I ain’t gonna ask again! **J grabs M; W jumps up; F moves in, W stops him**

**WYNTON.** Seven. **W X DSR**

*(A beat. JAY turns to WYNTON. He knew.)*

...

...

There were *seven* in Chicago.  
*Three* in the city before that. **W lands DSR, touches J; F X US, sits (ULC)**  
I ain’t sure which, **W gently pulls J off M (W USC of M,J)**  
They all startin’ to blur together, now.

**JAY.** ... **J looks at F, and back**

**WYNTON.** ...

**MAX.** ...

**JAY.** ... **J X SL, leans on table (SR table); W X US (USR chair)**

**MAX.** (To **JAY.**) Better?

**M readjusts tie and vest**

**JAY.** ...

**WYNTON.** ...

**MAX.** Now that you know,

Other than adding a whole heap o' worry onto your plate, **M X SL toward J, stops SLC**  
Does it *change* anything?  
Does it change why we're here,  
Or what you're gonna do in that ring?

(**JAY** thinks about it. A deep breath.)

**JAY.** No.

(**MAX** sighs in relief.)

**MAX.** Good.

**M X SL to J; W turns DS, leans on chair (USR chair)**

(**JAY** eyes **WYNTON**. **MAX** approaches **JAY**, reassuring him.)

On my life, ain't *nothin'* gonna happen to you.

**M touches J**

...

**M turns J around**

You're gonna go in there –

You're gonna knock him out in *three*,

**M sits J down on table (SR table)**

Your name's gonna get written in history,

**M hands on J's shoulders**

And not in Black history,

Not in White history, either, Jay –

In something better –

In *Sports* history.

**JAY.** ...

**WYNTON.** ...

**M breaks from J, looks around**

**MAX.** I'm gon' outside.

**M steps USR toward W (USC)**

Talkin' to photographers,

Fanning the flames,

Tell 'em I'm offering two hundred dollars cash to whoever gets the lights-out punch.

**JAY.** ...

**M turns SL to J**

(**MAX** looks at **FISH**.)

**M turns SL to F**

**MAX.** Let's go round 'em up, kid.

**M gestures to F**

The fun's just begun.

**F exits URC (stairs), M pats F on way**

(**FISH** nods. Exits. **MAX** looks at **JAY**. His demeanor becomes paternal.)

**M turns back to J**

You're gonna do great.

There ain't no question.

(MAX moves to the door. A somber beat.) M X US to exit, stops on stairs, turns back to J

You've always *been* the Heavyweight Champion of the World, Jay.  
Tomorrow –  
We just make it official.

(MAX exits. JAY stares at WYNTON.) M exits US

**JAY.** You workin' for him or you workin' for *me*?

(WYNTON stares back. A long beat. Something's changed between them.  
Something's broken. WYNTON exits. JAY sits alone. And black.)

Q70: Blackout



5.

DRONE<

Q71: Lights up US-MISC: BLUE, Low WHITE

*(Clap-Clap-Clap, Clap-Clap-Clap, Clap-Clap-Clap. A beat. Quiet. Lights up on JAY, wrapping his hands. He's alone. Tension in the air. Anticipation. He finishes wrapping.)*

US-MISC: J puts on gloves, facing US

**JAY.** Go.

*(JAY shadowboxes Not like the "indication" of fighting from before. He throws straight-up punches. Clap-Clap-Clap. He gets into it. Clap-Clap-Clap. He turns, bobs, weaves, Clap-Clap-Clap. He moves to the lowered heavy bag, starts slamming it with his fists.*

J shadowboxes DSR, facing SR;  
then J moves US, faces heavy bag SL

Come on, now.

*(Wham.)*

J starts hitting the bag...

VOICES<

...hits become stronger, more aggressive throughout  
MAT<

That's right.

*(Wham. Wham. A hook. Then another. JAY boxes, and boxes. And boxes. Even if it takes two or three minutes, we watch it happen. Perfect form. Lighting fast. He breaks a sweat. For the first time, we see and hear his true power, and he's ferocious. His combinations build and build, and eventually, he's boxed himself to exhaustion. He leans his sweaty head on the heavy bag. Holds it like it's everything he owns.)*

GHOST<

*(A beat.)*

*(Lights up on the rest of the space. Locker room. Pre-fight. FISH enters, holding a box. He puts it down. Considers JAY.)*

>VOICES

ZOMBIE

J collapses on the heavy bag;

>MAT/GHOST

F enters US-MISC from SL

**FISH.** You been out there?

F X SR to DSR corner, faces DS

Q72: US-MISC → High WHITE

You seen those *people*, Jay?

**JAY.** ...

**FISH.** Oversold by *six* hundred now.

**JAY.** ...

**FISH.** I gave my ticket away, Jay.

*(JAY looks up for the first time.)*

J slightly lifts himself off the heavy bag

**FISH.** (*Cont.*) Figured my granddaddy's waited long enough, he should see this fight in person.

(**JAY** half-smiles. *That's sweet. But the pressure doesn't help.*)

**F** looks back at **J**; **J** looks at **F**; beat...  
**J** resumes hitting heavy bag

But I'ma be listenin' to the fight.  
Place called Elmore's down the way.  
Nice spot.  
They've got a radio.  
Cute ladies.  
And twenty-six different kinds of bourbon.

**F** X **US** to **USR** corner

**F** X **SL** to **USL** corner

**F** pops around pillar

**F** flips chair

**JAY.** ...

**F** sit backwards in chair, facing **SR**

**FISH.** Guess who just pulled up in a brand new Tin Lizzie two-door.

**JAY.** ...

**FISH.** The only time I ever seen Champ Bixby was in the paper, growin' up,  
But now?  
In person?

...  
He's *big*.

**F** stands for "big" gesture

(**JAY** doesn't budge. **FISH** changes his approach.)

Wynton's checkin',  
Double checkin' the ring,  
Under seats,  
They got ten policemen lookin' too,

**F** X **USL**, around pillar and bag

...  
This gon' be the safest buildin' on the block.

**F** lands b/w **J** and heavy bag, stopping his hits

(**JAY**'s still lost in thought, but **FISH** is happy he got a word out of him.)

**J** gestures "get out of the way"

It's true what Max says,  
About you havin' expensive taste.  
I just found out the hard way.

**F** X **DSR** to **DSR** corner

(**FISH** moves back to the box.)

I wanted to get you a lil' somethin' –  
Thought of waitin' till this was over,  
But seems like now might be a good time...  
Seem' as you so talkative.

**F** X **SL** then **US**, leans on pillar (**SL** pillar)

(**FISH** presents the box.)

**F** reveals phonograph (behind bell/pillar), X **DS** (**DLC**)  
**J** stops hitting heavy bag

New model. Just came out.  
They said it's gon' be the future,  
And I know how you like the latest and greatest.

**F inspect, presents phonograph DS**

*(JAY eyes the box.)*

Said you can take it anywhere.  
On the road,  
On a train,  
In the locker room before the fight of your life.  
Figured you might like it,  
Especially since I know – firsthand –  
How much you like to “give ’em a little music.”

**F winds the phonograph**

*(And FISH opens it – a gramophone. A very simple, early model playback device. JAY’s in awe. FISH cranks it, setting it don, and finally – A song emerges. Theatrically, not from the gramophone itself – but instead from the actor playing WYNTON. Raw, simple, accompanied only by the singer’s own clapping hands.)*

**F X USR to bar, sets down the phonograph;  
J turns SR to see (F,J face phonograph US)**

**RECORD<**

**W enters DSL vom to thrust (NOT DS-RM), faces DS**

**WYNTON.**

SHE SAID “GO ON, TAKE YOUR BOOTS OFF  
'CAUSE THE ROAD GON' EAT YOUR SOLES.”

**\*\*\*See Appendix G for original music:**

**Q75: Lights up DSL SQ thrust (NOT DS-RM), low**

**S-C-C, S-C-C-S**

SHE SAID “GO ON, TAKE YOUR BOOTS OFF  
'CAUSE THE ROAD GON' EAT YOUR SOLES.”

**S-C-C, S-C-C-S**

SHE SAID “LISTEN, TO WHAT I SAY,  
'CAUSE THE ROAD'LL TAKE 'EM ANYWAY.”  
SHE SAID “GO ON, TAKE YOUR BOOTS OFF  
'CAUSE THE ROAD GON' EAT YOUR SOLES.”\*

**S-C-C, S-C-C-S**

---

\*Licensees should improvise the melody of the song.

*(At this point, maybe JAY and FISH join in. It's a song they've heard before.)*

**JAY/FISH/WYNTON.**

'CAUSE THE ROAD GON' EAT YOUR SOLES.

**Q76: US-MISC WHITE lights out; RING lights up**

**F, J X DSR to RING; they spar around the ring**

*(They start playfully sparring to the rhythm – how JAY used to train.)*

'CAUSE THE ROAD GON' EAT YOUR SOLES.

*(FISH comes at JAY with a quick, playful combination – a moment of lightness between them.)*

~~JAY. You gon' get me with that one—~~

~~FISH. Oh I know—~~

~~JAY. Oh, do you now?~~

**JAY/FISH/WYNTON.**

SHE SAID “GO ON, TAKE YOUR BOOTS OFF ‘CAUSE THE ROAD GON’ EAT YOUR SOLES.”

**N enters DSR vom, X USL to DS-RM (URC), faces US, with book and purse (photographs)**  
**Q77: DSL SQ thrust out; DS-RM up, low WHITE → BLUE S/C-C-C, S/C-C-C, S/C-C-C** **W exits DSL vom**

*(And suddenly, the song shuts off. Someone has entered the room. NINA. She stands in the doorway. Stern, graceful, and wearing her simple Sunday best. A beat. She just looks at them.)*

**>RECORD**

**NINA.** Did I interrupt something?

*(Their lightness is broken. In an instant, tension's been brought back into the room, Like an adult walked in and caught the children playing. She shoots Jay a look.)*

**J,F stop CS RING, see N – J SR, F SL**

Jay.

*(Familiarity there, maybe even love. JAY puts on a shirt. In NINA's presence, we see flashes of his demeanor weakening. Not softening – weakening. And she hasn't even come into the room yet.)*

**JAY.** Nina.

**NINA.** Man at the front said they don't normally let dark-skinned women come back to see you. Said you developed a taste for something else. I told them he ain't *develop* nothing. Jay Jackson's *always* wanted the apple at the top of the tree. Told them I should know, *I'm his sister.*

**N X US, enters RING, steps SL facing DS;**  
**J takes off gloves, sets on US-MISC DSR corner, and X to RING USL**  
**N turns SR to look at J,F US**

*(A beat. FISH's eyes go wide. He moves to the door.)*

**FISH.** I'ma go do that thing.

*(And he's gone. NINA enters. The brother and sister size each other up. It's clear they haven't seen each other in years.)*

**F exits USL, via US-MISC**  
**Q78: Decrease US-MISC BLUE**

**JAY.** You gon' see the fight tonight?

**NINA.** I got a train back in an hour.

**N,J start circling around the RING, counterclockwise; N mostly OS focus – she's exploring, taking ownership; J mostly focusses on N – keeping her distant**

**JAY.** There's a fight tonight.  
Maybe you heard?  
Seven thousand seats sold?  
Broadcasting live in thirty-nine states,  
Somebody in Chicago's even got two look-alikes hired,  
They gon' stand and re-enact the fight as it goes.  
They sold tickets for *that*.  
And the President of Mexico wants to hear it so bad,  
He's payin' to broadcast right to his house.  
...  
I'ma fight *in Spanish*.

**NINA.** ...

**JAY.** You could stick around.  
Round here, I mean.  
They gon' have a parade tomorrow,  
Servin' up "Jay Jackson Fritters."

**NINA.** What those taste like? N lands USR, J lands DSL, looking at e/o

**JAY.** They taste how I *like* 'em to taste.

**NINA.** (*Shaking her head.*) "Jay Jackson Fritters." Circling resumes (N initiates)

**JAY.** What,

**NINA.** They got you sayin' your own name like it's merchandise, Like it's some kinda shoes,

**JAY.** They ain't shows,

**NINA.** "They taste how I *like* 'em to taste" –

**JAY.** They taste how *you* used to make 'em.

(*A beat. She raises an eyebrow.*) N lands DSC, J lands USL, look at e/o

**NINA.** Roast the corn first?

(**JAY** *nods.*)

**JAY.** "Fried up in two parts oil,

**NINA/JAY.** One part bacon grease."

(*A beat. They almost share a smile. They don't.*) Beat... Circling resumes (N initiates)

**NINA.** Must be nice,  
*This.*

**JAY.** It is.

**NINA.** Your own shower,  
Your own bath,

One locker room,  
Bigger than the house we grew up in.

**JAY.** *Smells* just like it.

*(They laugh. A sweet, almost nostalgic moment. Quiet.)*

**NINA.** Everyone back home's real proud of you.

**JAY.** ...

**NINA.** Mr. Parker bet his wagon on the fight.

Said if you don't win, he don't see no reason to leave the house anyway.

*(JAY smiles.)*

**N lands USR corner, J lands DSR corner**

And then there's these two.

**N X DSL to J; J takes a step USR (SLC);  
N hands J a photo from purse**

*(She pulls a small picture out of her purse, hands it to him. His eyes go wide.)*

**JAY.** Ain't no way.

**NINA.** Mhm.

**JAY.** What is he, *six*?

**NINA.** Eight-and-a-half, goin' on twenty-five.

Came home with a busted lip last week,

Said the kids in the schoolyard didn't believe he was the nephew of Jay "The Sport"  
Jackson.

Said he showed 'em it runs in the blood.

**JAY.** *(Charmed.)* Oh I bet he did.

*(She pulls another small picture, hands it over.)*

**NINA.** And that's my other one, George Jr.

**N hands J another photo from purse**

*(JAY smiles.)*

Eleven years old,

But *this* one –

He don't care too much for sports –

So we call him "The Doctor" –

**JAY.** *(Humored.)* Watch out, now –

**NINA.** Spends his days *and* nights buried in books,

That one.

Bigger, smarter ones that the General Store even carries,

So he saes up his pennies –

Got me orderin' from a catalog now.

...

Picks 'em up every Thursday.

**Q78.5: Increase RING intensity**

**N X USR**

You should see it –  
All the other kids are getting’ sleds, sling-shots,  
Not “The Doctor.”

J X DSL to DSL corner, looking at pictures

JAY. ...

(NINA looks around. Thinks.)

N lands USR corner, looks at book turns back to J

NINA. I wasn’t gon’ come here, Jay.  
I wanted to let you have this.  
Truly.

...

J looks back at N

But this Thursday he brings home his package,  
Wrapped in brown paper,  
You should see this boy when he smells new books,  
That *face*.

...

This Thursday he brings one up to me,  
Says “What’s this, Mama?”

N X DSL to J

...

Mama, this book’s been *written* in.”

J steps USR to N

(*She hands him a book, opened to the cover page. The blood drains from his face.*)

J,N meet SLC;

N takes photos back, hands J books, continues DSL;

J reads the book page, beat..., turns DSL to N

JAY. Who did this.

NINA. ...

JAY. Nina,

NINA. It comes from the General Store you got five, six different clerks,  
They got friends,  
Everybody knows whose package is goin’ where.

JAY. We’ll find out who –

NINA. And *then* what’re you goin’ do?

Once you get a name.

N steps USR into J

You gon’ “box” this problem away?

N mocking/“boxing” gesture

JAY. ...

NINA. Have you thought about what you’re doing?

JAY. What?

NINA. In the middle of this title-fight heavyweight champion nonsense have you stopped to think, for second –  
That you goin’ up’n get somebody killed?

**JAY.** Of course I have –

**NINA.** I don't think that's true, Jay.

No, N X SR  
I think you're so caught up playing David to Goliath,  
In being the one fish swimming upstream,  
I think you up and forgot about the rest of us, (N SRC; J SLC)  
The one's ain't as strong as you.

**JAY.** I been careful – J takes a step SR

**NINA.** (*Re: the book.*) Not careful *enough* –

**JAY.** Look –  
I'ma make a phone call.

**NINA.** To who –

**JAY.** I'm gonna wire some money –

**NINA.** I ain't I *never* needed your money –

**JAY.** I'ma have a man in front of your house tonight.  
I'ma have *ten* men. J takes another step SR  
Ain't nothin' gon' happen to my nephews, Nina,  
  
(**JAY** looks at the book.)

And as for this,  
I'm gonna find out who did it –

**NINA.** You say it like it's one person – N X DSR

**JAY.** I'ma fix this –

**NINA.** You say that like it's easy –

**JAY.** I'ma take care of this –

**NINA.** You say that like this ain't *downright stupid*, Jay – N lands DSR, turns back to J

**JAY.** What we're about to do, J takes a step DSR  
Out there,  
It's important –

**NINA.** It's dangerous –

**JAY.** Man said they can't sneak a *toothpick* into this fight.  
They got thirty-two checkpoints. J steps DS  
Ain't nothing gonna happen –

**NINA.** Where's the checkpoints in Harlem, Jay? N steps SL into J (J,N SRC)  
Where's the checkpoints in Memphis, New Orleans?  
'Cause you know as well as I do what happens when you knock that bastard out.



*(A beat. A shift for the darker. JAY stares at her. He can't believe this.)*  
Q78.6: Increase RING edge BLUE

**JAY.** Did you really come back here to tell me to lose?

**NINA.** I don't *want* you to lose,  
I'm just afraid of what happens when you win.

**JAY.** You *always* been afraid –

**NINA.** One day, you won't be the strongest one in the room, Jay. **N in J's face**  
Some day, you'll learn to love things outside yourself,  
And once you do, you'll know – there's a LOT out there to be afraid of.

*(A beat. He considers her. He shakes her off.)*

**JAY.** I ain't come all this way to just give up,  
Not like this,  
Not after all we done –  
We ain't come all this way –

**NINA.** Don't say *we* – **N back in J's face again**

**JAY.** Nina –

**NINA.** Ain't nobody appoint *you* the spokesperson for Colored People Incorporated.

**JAY.** ...

**NINA.** ...

**JAY.** *(Honest.)* I want this.

*(A beat. NINA nods.)*

**NINA.** *There* it is.

*(A shift. A beat. They consider each other. JAY tries a different approach.)*  
N X DSR (N DSR, J CS)

**JAY.** You remember that pharmacy on Colby Lane?

**NINA.** ... **N looks back at J**

**JAY.** You remember how much you liked those posters they put out front?

**NINA.** You wasn't but fourteen years old when you left, you gon' ask if *I* remember –

**JAY.** Posters for toothpaste,  
Posters for perfume – **J takes a step USR**

**NINA.** Jay –

**JAY.** How much you like those pretty ladies in them pictures – **J takes a step USR**

**NINA.** That ain't got nothing to do with this –

**JAY.** How much none o' them ladies look like *you* –

**NINA.** (*Loaded.*) *Jay.*

*(She shoots him a look that could kill a man. It's a sore spot. A mysterious one. JAY backs off. NINA collects her thoughts, takes a breath, gets somber.)*

Those men in the bar in Alabama. **N X US to J (SR J)**  
The men that made the paper.

**JAY.** You too with that?

**NINA.** All four of 'em, the whites one *and* the black ones,  
They walked outta that brawl with broken wrists – broken ribs –  
Ask me they got what they deserved.

Fightin' *over* a fight. **N takes a step DS**

Fightin' *over you.* **N turns back to J**

... **J X USL**

But *this* morning.

They found two of 'em, **J stops (USL: DS US-MISC), facing USR**

Hands cut off,

Strung up to a streetlight,

...

I need to tell you *which* two?

*(This is news to JAY. He tries to make like this doesn't bother him. He fails.)*

**Q79: Increase RING edge BLUE**

**Beat...**

**J drops book on US-MISC, sits on step (SL step),  
faces SL; Beat...**

I know you're ready to win. **N X USL to J (UCS: SR J)**

You were ready to take over the world the day you were born.

...

I just don't think *the rest of us are.*

*(She gathers her things. She moves to leave, but stops. She looks at the room. A beat. Her eyes water.)*

**Beat...**

**N X DS to exit, stops SRC, turns back to J**

Back home.

...

Everybody's already *so* proud, Jay.

...

...

*Every single one of us.*

*(A moment between them. Those who might be the most meaningful words he's heard in years. Then WYNTON enters. He sees NINA, hides in surprise, and nods politely. She stares him down. He looks away. She regards JAY, takes a breath, and leaves. WYNTON doesn't speak. Neither does JAY. The tension between them remains.)*

**Q79.5: DS-RM up, low**

W enters DSL vom, X USR to DS-RM (ULC), faces US;  
N see him, W sees her; N X DS to exit (stairs);  
W offers N a hand down; N snubs his gesture;  
N comes down the stairs, exits DSR vom; beat...

WYNTON. I know she never like me none,

But goddamn,

W starts up the stairs

Sometimes the way that woman looks at you,

...

Makes you feel like a ghost, don't it?

W lands RING DSR, looking DSR

(A beat. WYNTON senses something weird in the air. He waits for it.)

JAY. She thinks I should lose.

(WYNTON nods. He had a suspicion.)

Came in her, just now,

Called it "downright stupid," winning this fight.

WYNTON. ...

JAY. Now's the moment you're supposed to tell me she's wrong.

Now's when you're supposed to tell me I can win this –

WYNTON. Of course you *can* –

W looks back to J

JAY. And that I *should*.

J facing DSL, looks DSR at W

(A beat. WYNTON says nothing.)

W drifts away

...

(A beat. WYNTON changes gears.)

WYNTON. I ever tell you 'bout *The Royale*?

(JAY thinks, shakes his head – no.) Q81: BLUE out RING, except WHITE USC,USL

First time I ever got in a ring,

W X USL to J (SR J), turns out

Back behind a sausage factory in Quint City,

The smell of pork, so sweet it stung your nose,

Tuesday nights,

Eighty, ninety men used to gather 'round,

...

What they called *The Royale*.

...

...

Friend o' mine –

Q82: DS-RM lights out

Name Herbie Robinson, from Cleland –

Said you could make more'n a week's worth of wages if you won,

So shit,

There I was –

And a man comes,  
And he picks six of us, maybe seven,  
Takes us,  
*Blindfolded*,  
And herds us into this ring.

W sits on step w/ J (SR step/J)

...  
They take a bottle,  
They ain't even have no bell,  
They take a *bottle* and they *smash* it.  
And when you heard that noise,  
Boy,  
When you heard that smash,  
Blindfolded,  
That meant you start swinging.

...  
Couldn't tell where you were, really,  
Sound of men throwin' change,  
Sound of men screaming their throats bloody at six black boys in a ring.

...  
First time I went, I got knocked out in ten seconds flat,  
Didn't know *which* direction punches were comin' from,  
But my *second* Tuesday –

...  
Shit,  
I'm a fast learner, ain't I?

**JAY.** ...

**WYNTON.** Wadn't no "purse" at *The Royale*,  
If you should happen to make it,  
If you was the last one standing,  
*Prize was* that they take that blindfold off,  
And you got about a minute to stuff your pockets.

...  
My eyes get used to the light,  
Eighty, ninety men in suits,  
They keep throwin' change,  
I' stuffin' my trousers with nickles, quarter-dollars –  
One week, *two* week's worth of wages,  
Boy,  
I walked outta there with more money thnt I'd ever held in my life.

W rises

W X DSL

Q83: RING WHITE

W lands DSL: recalls DS, split focus on J

...  
...  
I get home.  
*Proud.*  
I empty them pockets,  
Right there on the kitchen table,

And in the middle of my pile o' coins –  
I see these things – look like pebbles.  
Covered in dirt and coered in blood,  
These –  
Other boys' teeth.

...

*(He laughs. As proud as he is ashamed.)*

And ain't *one* of them mine.  
To this day –  
Ain't a coin I hold in my hand that I don't try to wipe the blood from.

**JAY. ...**

**WYNTON. ...**

**JAY. ...**

**WYNTON.** Nine years I been with you.

**W X US**

*Us.*

Morning and night.

And when we ain't training,

**W lands US (SL J)**

We done ate at the same table,

Slept on train cars,

Drank the same whiskey,

Every day.

**JAY.** Yeah.

**WYNTON.** I seen you more often that I ever seen my woman,

My momma,

Any of my own damn kids.

But when you go into that ring, son,

You go *alone*.

...

Always have.

...

I might *be* there,

**W X DSR**

You might see me on the other side of those ropes,

But the two men throwin' punches?

**W stops SRC**

Trust me, I know –

...

They're a million miles away.

**JAY. ...**

**WYNTON. ...**

**JAY. ...**

**WYNTON.** I'll be there when it's done.

...

Whether you *step* out, whether we *drag* you out,  
Whether that crowd cheers you name or rips you apart limb from limb, **W X DS**

But whatever happens –

Whatever you *choose* to do?

**W stops DRC (stairs), looks back at J**

...

...

You do it alone.

**W looks away from J**

*(WYNTON moves to the door. He looks back at JAY. A mutual connection. A mutual wound. But no more words. WYNTON nods. Then he exits. JAY sits, alone. He stands up, walks over to the heavy bag. He studies it. He raises a fist. He stares at it with intensity, But he can't bring himself to punch it.)*

**W goes down the stairs, exits DSL vom**

**J grabs book, looks at it;**

**J grabs gloves, looks at them;**

**J rises, facing DS**

**JAY.** Okay.

*(And black.)*

**Q90: Blackout**

6.

DRONE<  
Q91: FLASH →  
Q91.1: Q13: RING (AMBER), GRID, low US-MISC  
~~(Someone in the ensemble hits a ringside bell. It dings loudly. MAX stands.~~  
Tension. Gravity in the air.) M CS RING; W,J,N,F off USR

MAX. And now, the fight you came for.

(Clap. The lights find WYNTON, ringside.) S-C-C-S FLASH Q92: FLASH

WYNTON. Yessir.

W enters RING, X DS (SR);

(Clap. The lights find FISH, who orders a drink at the bar.) S-C-C-S FLASH

MAX. Now, a fight the likes of which you will never see, M X DSR (DRC); F X SL enters US-MISC  
Not ever again,  
Not in yours or your children's lifetimes. F X DL (US-MISC DSC), facing DS

FISH. Turn that radio up sir,  
And pour me three bourbons,  
I'ma need a head start, if I wanna get through all twenty-six.

MAX. Ladies and gentlemen, it's my honor to present this clash of titans. M X SL; F resets chair  
This exquisite collision of trains. M X US (SL)

(Clap-Clap.) S-C-C, S-C-C-S FLASH  
Q93: FLASH → Q93.1: return remove RING edges

A boxing match of gargantuan proportions, M X slight DSR (DSC); F X US to bar (US-MISC USR)  
A battle of the elements of water and fire, M showboats  
A contest – dare I say it –  
Two hundred years in the making.

(Clap.) S-C-C-S FLASH Q93.2: FLASH

Up to this day, M circles RING, counterclock wise  
The greatest wars were fought on battlefields,  
By the thousands,  
But tonight we watch one bout,  
And what happens between these two men,  
In these two-hundred square feet, M lands DSC  
Will decide once and for all the holder of the title of Heavyweight Champion of either  
race from this day forward,  
So without further ado,  
I humbly present your challenger –

(Clap-Clap.) S-C-C, S-C-C-S FLASH Q93.4: FLASH

Weighing in at two-hundred-twenty pounds,  
~~Standing tall at six feet, three inches, →~~ Standing strong at five feet, nine inches,  
Toes like Jack Nimble –

(Clap.)

S-C-C-S

FLASH Q93.6: FLASH

Fists like John Henry –

(Clap-Clap.)

S-C-C, S-C-C-S

FLASH Q93.8: FLASH

The Dark, Defiant Contender,  
The Big, Black Bringer of Retribution,  
The *Negro* Heavyweight Champion of the World –

(Pinspot on **JAY** standing before the crowd, standing deadly still. All swagger is lost.)

Jay “The Sport” Jackson!

M X DSR (DRC); J enters, X DSL (SL)

J greeted by silence; what do M,W make of this?

Beat...

M X SL (DSC); F sits in US-MISC chair

(Quiet. **JAY** is alone. He looks out at the crowd, a breath.)

And in *this* corner –

(Clap-Clap-Clap, Clap-Clap-Clap, Clap-Clap-Clap.)

S/C-C-C, S/C-C-C, S/C-C-C FLASH

Q94: FLASH; +SL SQ

Out of retirement for one night and one night only –

(Clap.)

S-C-C-S

FLASH

Q94.2: FLASH

Coming all the way from Massachusetts,  
Winner of one hundred seventy-nine Title Fights,  
Weighing in at two-hundred-thirty-five pounds,  
~~Standing tall at six feet, four inches, →~~ Standing tall at six feet *even*,

**WYNTON.** (To **JAY**.) Get ’im good, son.

W X US (outside ropes, USR)

**MAX.** Ladies and gentlemen,  
Please welcome back,  
The one,  
The only,  
The unrivaled Heavyweight Champion of the World –

(Boom. And a pinspot suddenly up on the other boxer – but it’s not Champ Bixby. No. It’s **NINA**. She stands strong. **JAY** recognizes her. Is he dreaming.) **BOOM**

Put your hands together,  
For Bernard “The Champ” Bixby!

M,J focus US on Bixby (N)

(Clap-Clap-Clap, Clap-Clap-Clap, Clap-Clap-Clap.) S/C-C-C, S/C-C-C, S/C-C-C

N enters USC, X DSR (SR) FLASH

Q95: FLASH; RING to BLUE; +SR SQ

**WYNTON.** (To **JAY**.) Head up, son.  
He ain’t nothin’.



(NINA stares at JAY. JAY stares back – terrified.)

JAY. No he ain't.

(MAX leans in, addresses both JAY and NINA. Announcer/referee again.)

MAX. All eyes are *on us*, gentlemen, **M X US (USC), turns DS**  
We want a good, clean fight.

NINA. Ain't no such thing.

(MAX addresses JAY – who is close to catatonic.)

MAX. No biting, no spitting, no cursing.

JAY. Okay.

MAX. (To NINA.) You good with that Mr. Bixby, sir?

NINA. Of course.

MAX. Now when I say “break” I want three steps back.

WYNTON. (To JAY.) Just do what you *do*, son.

MAX. Can I get a good long glove-bump, for the cameras?

(NINA smiles. JAY doesn't. JAY “gloves-bumps” straight forward, facing the audience. NINA doesn't move. A flash of light.) **J,N X CS; bump Q96: CS FLASH  
FLASH  
J,N return (J SL; N SR)**

(To NINA.) Thank you, sirs.

WYNTON. Fists up!

JAY. Fists up.

MAX. Off we go!

WYNTON. Keep it simple, Jay.

JAY. Yeah.

NINA. (To JAY.) You asked for it.

MAX. Count it down! **M signals to clock/bell (DSR)**

JAY. What am I doing –

WYNTON. What you were born to do, son.

MAX. Luck to both of ya.

NINA. Yessir.

(Ding! She burns him a look.) **DING! (F) Q97: FLASH**

We gon' need it.

**MAX. ROUND ONE!**

*(Ding-ding-ding! Lights shift. Sharper pinspots on JAY and NINA. They stare straight forward, not at each other. JAY shuffles back and forth with his fists chest-level, in "fight-mode." But not NINA. NINA doesn't move. The tension is fucking electric.)*

**M signals bell (DSR)      DING-DING-DING!**

**BOOM**

**Q98: RING –AMBER (BLUE w/ SR,SL WHITE SQs)**

**J,N turn DS – J "boxes", N in embodied stillness**

**JAY.** Come on, now,

**NINA.** Stay away from that hook, Jay.

**JAY.** I know,

**NINA.** He gets you once with that hook and it's over –

**JAY.** I know –

**WYNTON.** *(To JAY.)* Fists up!

**JAY.** *(To himself.)* Fists up –

**NINA.** Don't lock –

**JAY.** *(To himself.)* Okay –

**NINA.** *(Glancing at the crowd.)* And don't look at those faces –

**JAY.** Knees bent –

**MAT**

**NINA.** Foamin' at the mouth, these people –

**JAY.** Here we go –

**NINA.** These animals –

**JAY.** Here we go –

**NINA.** We ain't come that far, have we –

*(Clap.)*

**S-C-C-S**

Not single one of us.

**JAY.** Switch,

Right,

Cross –

**MAT**

**J throws**

**FISH.** Good –

**JAY.** Come on –

**WYNTON.** Move on him, son!

**NINA.** Oh, what's this?

*(Unseen, The Champ jabs and lands one.)* **J reacts/STOMP! FLASH Q101: FLASH**  
**FLASHES grow in intensity throughout**

**ENSEMBLE.** OOH!

**MAX.** The Champ is starting it off!

**JAY.** That was fast –

**NINA.** He ain't forgot *everything*, now, has he?

*(The Champ lands a jab again.)* **J reacts/STOMP! FLASH Q102: FLASH**

**ENSEMBLE.** OOH!

**MAX.** Make that two from The Champ, now wasting any time!

**JAY.** *(To himself.)* That wadn't nothin' –

**NINA.** That wadn't *nothin'* –

**JAY.** Just a little Jazz, give him –

*(Clap.)* **S-C-C-S**

Just a little –

*(JAY lands a jab.)* **J HITS/STOMP! FLASH Q102.2: FLASH**

**ENSEMBLE.** OOH!

**WYNTON.** Show 'im –

**NINA.** Show 'im –

**JAY.** Show 'im what it's like to fight a grizzly bear –

*(JAY jabs, makes contact.)* **J HITS/STOMP! FLASH Q102.4: FLASH**

**ENSEMBLE.** OOH!

**MAX.** The Sport making a bold initial statement here!

**ENSEMBLE.** HAH!

**NINA.** You think that'll go unanswered?

*(The Champ delivers another big one.)* **J reacts/STOMP! FLASH Q103: FLASH**

**ENSEMBLE.** OOH!

**WYNTON.** Watch out, Jay,

*(The Champ delivers another.)* **J reacts/STOMP! FLASH Q103.2**

**ENSEMBLE.** OOH!

WYNTON. No,

FISH. No,

(*The Champ delivers one more, it's vicious.*) **J reacts/STOMP!**  
**Q103.4: FLASH**

TINNITUS<

ENSEMBLE. OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOH!

WYNTON. Split it up!

MAX. Split it up!

(*They do. JAY recovers.*) **M X DS (CS, b/w N,J)**

JAY. (*Dizzy.*) Okay.

MAX. Okay?

NINA. Oh, I'm sorry, Jay –

(*Clap.*) **S-C-C-S** >TINNITUS

WYNTON. (*To JAY.*) Breathe –

**INHALE**

NINA. You want 'em *softer* next time?

WYNTON. (*To JAY.*) Breathe, boy –

**EXHALE**

MAX. Keep it goin'!

JAY. Knees bent –

**M X US (USC)**

NINA. Look at the arms on him, Jay –

JAY. Move –

**MAT**

NINA. Man's a straight savage –

FISH. Move –

**MAT**

NINA. What *is* he – *ten, fifteen* years your senior?

JAY. He ain't nothin'.

(*The Champ jabs, makes contact.*) **J reacts/STOMP! FLASH Q104: FLASH**  
**FLASHES grow in intensity throughout**

ENSEMBLE. OOH!

NINA. Look like *nothin'* just got you in the face.

JAY. (*To himself.*) I got this,  
GO –

(*JAY fires – right-left-left – and hits Bixby.*) **J Combo, HITS/STOMP! FLASH**  
**Q104.2: FLASH**

**ENSEMBLE.** OOH!

**MAX.** The Sport returns fire!

**NINA.** That's it?

(**JAY** fires another – right-left-left.) **J Combo, HITS/STOMP!** **FLASH** **Q104.4: FLASH**

**ENSEMBLE.** OOH!

**MAX.** And Jackson's *just* warmin' up!

(**JAY** fires – right-right-right.) **J Combo, HITS/STOMP!** **FLASH** **Q104.6: FLASH**

**ENSEMBLE.** OOH!

**WYNTON.** *Good,*  
Get 'im –

(**JAY** fires – a furious right-left-right that does damage.) **J Combo, HITS/STOMP!**  
**FLASH / BOOM**  
**Q:104.8: FLASH**

**ENSEMBLE.** OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOH!

**MAX.** Jay lands one *solid* hook and The Champ Bixby takes two steps back –

**WYNTON.** Close it up –

**JAY.** Yes –

**WYNTON.** Yes!

**MAX.** The Champ Bixby taking a breath – **EXHALE**

**WYNTON.** Fists up!

**JAY.** (*In control.*) Fists up!

**WYNTON.** (*Triumphant.*) Step into it! **MAT**

**NINA.** Oh, you done pissed him off now –

**MAX.** The Champ's stepping back into it too –

**WYNTON.** (*To the crowd.*) They come to see a fight or what?  
What they come to see?!

**JAY.** (*To himself.*) Come on –

**NINA.** Tell 'im Jay.

(*Clap.*) **S-C-C-S**

Tell 'im why they came.

**MAX.** Look at 'em!

**WYNTON.** Look at Look at 'em!

**NINA.** *Tell 'im why you want this.*

*(Ding!)*

**DING!** Q109: RING +AMBER, +USR,DSL SQs

**MAX.** End of Round One!

**M X DS (DSC)**

*(WYNTON coaches JAY.)*

**WYNTON.** You got this far,  
Now just get 'im tired,  
Then *keep* him tired,  
You hear me?  
Strong jabs, short hooks, watch you feet –

**J X USR (USR stool), sits; N X DSR (DSR corner)**  
**M X US (USC)**

**JAY.** Yeah –

**WYNTON.** *(Re: Bixby.)* Look at him –

**NINA.** Look at *them* –

**WYNTON.** You listening to me?

**JAY.** Yeah –

**WYNTON.** Make him *earn* that ninety percent.

*(Ding!)*

**M steps DS, signals bell (DSR)** **DING!**  
Q111: RING –AMBER, –USR,DSL SQs

**MAX.** Goin' in for Round Two!

**NINA.** Here we go –

**M X US (USC); N X USR (SL); J X DS (SR)**

**JAY.** Here we go –

*(JAY fires another furious right-left-right; it makes contact.)*

**J Combo, HITS/STOMP!** **FLASH** Q112: FLOOR

**ENSEMBLE.** OOH!

**MAX.** Jay springs right into action –

**NINA.** You gon' knock him out *this* fast?

*(The Champ fires back.)*

**J reacts/STOMP!** **FLASH** Q112.2: FLOOR

**ENSEMBLE.** OOH!

**MAX.** The Champ's not backing down!

**WYNTON.** Don't stay open boy!

**NINA.** What happens when you get him on the floor.

**JAY.** Front page –

**NINA.** He hits the canvas,  
These people might just stand still – in shock –

**MAX.** *This* is a fight!

**NINA.** But they *might* just move on you –

**WYNTON.** Move on him, son – **MAT**

**NINA.** Rip you apart,  
Limb from limb – **ZOMBIE**

**WYNTON.** Move! **MAT**

**NINA.** And there won't *be* no Champ to crown.

**MAX.** This is unbelievable, folks!

**WYNTON.** Move on him now!

**NINA.** And what was all this *for*?

**WYNTON.** Come on, boy.

*(Clap.)*

It ain't gonna be him,  
You hear me?!  
It's *you*.

**JAY.** Yeah –

**WYNTON.** It's *you* –

**JAY.** Yeah –

**WYNTON.** It's *all* about you –

**JAY.** Fists up –

**NINA.** Prizes, Titles,  
Men fightin' *over* a fight –

**JAY.** Front page –

**NINA.** Sweaty animals getting' themselves killed –

**JAY.** Switch – **MAT**

**NINA.** There's no music –

**JAY.** Breathe – **INHALE**

**NINA.** There's no grace here –

**JAY.** Cross – **MAT**

**NINA.** It's the worst of what we're made of –

**JAY.** It ain't never been about this –

**MAT**

**NINA.** What?

**FISH.** Switch –

**NINA.** What did you just say?

**WYNTON.** Move –

**JAY.** (*To NINA.*) It ain't about no fight –

**MAX.** Champ's comin' at 'im!

**NINA.** Apple at the top of the tree –

**JAY.** No –

**NINA.** One fish swimmin' upstream –

**WYNTON.** *No* –

**JAY.** It's about a pharmacy on Colby Lane.

**>DRONE**

(*Clap. A beat. Everything stops.*)

**S-C-C-S**      **FLASH**  
**Q113: FLASH; BLUE → AMBER**

**NINA.** ...What?

**N looks at J**

**JAY.** Ain't about no ring,  
It's about *you*.

**J looks at N, no longer "boxing"**

(*Clap.*)

**S-C-C-S**      **FLASH**  
**Q114: FLASH w/ BLUE**

**WYNTON.** Eyes up,  
Watch his left.

**M X SR**

**NINA.** Jay...

**JAY.** It's about those posters they'd put out front.

**NINA.** *What?*

**MAX.** Both fighters focusing their approach!

**M lands USR (DSL W / DS ropes)**

**JAY.** How much you liked those pretty ladies,

~~Jab,~~

~~Cross,~~

Posters for toothpaste –

**NINA.** You're outta your mind –

**Q115: -SR,SL SQs**

**JAY.** Posters for perfume –



**WYNTON.** He ain't got *nothin'* on you boy –

**JAY.** Ain't one o' them looked like *you* –

**WYNTON.** Make him bleed, son –

**JAY.** 'Cause why *would* they –

J X SL, US of N

**WYNTON.** Let your hands go –

**JAY.** Why *would* they –

**WYNTON.** Do what you *came* to do –

**MAX.** The crowd is in-*sane*, folks!  
Jay's circling Bixby like a matador!  
Bixby's pacing like a cornered bull.  
The energy in this room is *supernatural*!

J circles back around N DS, continues DSR

**WYNTON.** Breathe.

**JAY.** Breathe.

J lands DSR, looking DSR

**WYNTON.** Focus.

**JAY.** Ain't no fight, Nina.

**WYNTON.** You got this.

**JAY.** Ain't no money,  
Ain't no people watchin',  
Just a little boy, come lookin' for his sister –

**NINA.** Stop it, Jay –

**JAY.** Ain't but nine years old –

**WYNTON.** Yes –

**FISH.** Yes –

**JAY.** Just a little boy walkin' up to a screen door,  
Smell of burning meat –

**NINA.** Jay I said stop –

**JAY.** Hears the screaming –

**NINA.** Don't you put this on me –

**JAY.** And he can see her sobbin' on the kitchen floor,  
Hot iron in hand,  
Blood runnin' down her neck,  
He can see his sister,  
He can smell her skin.

WYNTON. Breathe.

JAY. He can smell the smoke that used to be her hair, Nina,  
But she won't open.

WYNTON. Move. MAT

JAY. She won't open.

WYNTON. Move! MAT

JAY. She's crouched and screaming and alone and there's blood runnin' down her neck but she  
won't open so he *pounds* on that door, Nina –

(*Boom –.*) BOOM

WYNTON. Fists up –

(*Boom!*) BOOM

JAY. He's pounding 'cause he just wants to help her –

NINA. (*Stop.*) Please –

(*Boom!*) BOOM

JAY. 'Cause she was tryin' to look like *them*, Nina –

(*Boom!*) BOOM

Tried so hard she made this mess of herself – J looks at N

(*Boom!*) BOOM

'Cause she ain't never seen no posters looked like *her*.

NINA. ...

JAY. There ain't no fight. J X US (USR – DS W,M)

(*Boom. Boom. Boom.*) K.O.

MAX. (*Quiet.*) It's a dead heat... M X SL (ULC)

JAY. No ring. J looks DS, back to "ready"

...  
No Champ Bixby.

WYNTON. (*Quiet.*) You watch yourself, son...

JAY. I'm standing at that screen,  
I'm pounding at that door,  
Where I *always* been, every minute, every day –

MAX. (*Intense.*) Neither fighter's showing signs of slowing down –

JAY. And it might sound stupid to you –

**WYNTON.** Bring it home, boy –

**JAY.** You might find it ugly,  
What I *do* –

**FISH.** Come on –

**JAY.** But every punch I ever threw,  
Every punch I ever took.

...

...

I'm just tryin' to fix that.

...

I'm still tryin' to tell you –

...

I'ma make it right.

...

*I'ma change things.*

(*Ding!*)

**M signals bell (DSR)      DING!**  
**Q117: AMBER → BLUE;**  
**+USR,DSL SQs High; +SL,SR,CS,DSC SQs Low**  
**M X DS (DSC); J X US (USR) to stool, sits, looks DSL**

**MAX.** End of Round Two folks and I wish you could see the faces of both of these men.  
Never have I seen such determination,  
Such willpower –

**N X DSL (DSL corner), looks DS to crowd**

**WYNTON.** (*To JAY.*) You got this,  
You done this,  
That apple orchard motherfucker's gon' get what's comin' to him,  
You hear me, Jay?

**M US (USC)**

**NINA.** (*To JAY.*) Eight-and-a-half, my son –

**DRONE<**

**WYNTON.** You *done* this –

**NINA.** Busted lip,  
Stubborn –

**WYNTON.** Don't let him wear you down –

**NINA.** Proud nephew of Jay "The Sport" Jackson –

**WYNTON.** Keep doin' what you do –

**NINA.** Along with my other one,  
They're listening on the radio –

**WYNTON.** His time has come –

**FISH.** *He* knows it –

**WYNTON.** *We* know it –

**NINA.** Me? I'm on a train –

**WYNTON.** You wear *him* down –

**NINA.** Goin' home fast as I can, 'cause I know what's coming' –

**JAY.** *What's comin'?*

**WYNTON.** You end his world, do you hear me?

**JAY.** (*To NINA.*) What's comin'?

**NINA.** Look at that crowd.  
Look at the dogs you're about to unleash.  
And when it happens,  
Don't say I didn't warn you.

(*Ding!*)

**M signals bell X DS (DSC) DING!**  
**Q119:–USR,DSL,DS SQ; CS SQ Low → High**

**MAX.** Round Three and the crowd is on its feet!

**M X USR (USR – DSL W); F stands, faces DR**

**JAY.** Breathe,  
Switch,  
Shoulders solid –

**J X DSL (CS), back to “boxing”**      **INHALE**  
**MAT**

**FISH.** You let him come close –

**WYNTON.** You take him down,  
You rip his lungs out if you can –

**N X USR (SL J)**

**NINA.** In Louisville there's a place –

**ZOMBIE**

**WYNTON.** (*To JAY.*) You keep your head in that ring –

**NINA.** You can hear the cheers from a colored juke joint half a mile away –

**N starts clockwise circle around J**

**WYNTON.** Head *in it* –

**NINA.** They're *loud* –

**JAY.** Right,  
Switch –

**MAT**

**NINA.** Comin' close to *too* loud –

(*JAY jabs, makes contact.*)

**J HITS/STOMP! (N DS J) FLASH**  
**Q119.1: FLOOR / FLASH**  
**FLASHES grow in intensity throughout**

**ENSEMBLE.** OOH!

**MAX.** Sport's moving in!

**NINA.** In Memphis, somebody's loading a pistol – **GHOST<**

**JAY.** I got this –

**NINA.** Kansas City,  
A man couldn't take it no more, so he just turned his radio *off*,  
Turned his porch light *on* – (N SR J)

**JAY.** Jab, J throws  
Jab, J throws  
Watch his left –

**NINA.** He's walkin' out, barefoot, to get a rope from his tool shed – (N US J)

(*The Champ delivers a heavy blow.*) J reacts/STOMP! Q119.3: FLOOR / FLASH

**ENSEMBLE.** OOH!

**MAX.** The Champ's still got some fire left in that hook!

(*JAY licks his lips, recovers.*)

**WYNTON.** (*To JAY.*) You *in* this?

**JAY.** I'm *in* this – N lands SL (SL J), looking DS

**NINA.** And somewhere close, there's a nervous hand flirting with the grip of a knife – ZOMBIE

**WYNTON.** Stay in this, boy!

**NINA.** Somewhere *close*, do you hear me?

**WYNTON.** (*To JAY.*) Show that motherfucker who's a grizzly bear! –

**NINA.** It doesn't have to be *you* –

**JAY.** Move –

(*JAY makes contact.*) J HITS/STOMP! FLASH Q119.5: FLOOR / FLASH

**ENSEMBLE.** OOH!

**MAX.** Beautiful!

**WYNTON.** Yes –

**MAX.** I've never seen anything like it!

**JAY.** Cross, J throws r MAT  
Switch –

(*JAY delivers a killer left-left-right.*) J Comb (l-l) HITS (r)/STOMP! FLASH  
Q119.7: FLOOR / FLASH

**ENSEMBLE.** OOH!

(*JAY delivers another.*) J HITS/STOMP! FLASH Q119.8: FLOOR / FLASH

**MAX.** (*To himself.*) Holy shit –

**ENSEMBLE. OOH!**

(~~Clap~~-NINA's desperation grows.) **J HITS/STOMP!** **FLASH** **Q119.8: FLOOR / FLASH**

**NINA.** In Memphis, there's a pistol –

**WYNTON.** Finish this –

**NINA.** Kansas City man,  
Tool shed,  
Walkin' out with a rope, tyin' a knot like his daddy taught him,  
And I know you don't care 'bout that –

**WYNTON.** Now, Jay –

**NINA.** But somewhere *close*, there's a hand on a knife – **ZOMBIE<**

**JAY.** Jab, **J throws**  
Switch –

(**JAY** delivers another.) **J HITS/STOMP!** **FLASH** **Q121: FLOOR / FLASH**

**ENSEMBLE. OOH!**

**FISH.** Do it –

**NINA.** Tell me that you hear me –

**WYNTON.** Do it!

**JAY.** Jab,

(**JAY** delivers another.) **J HITS/STOMP!** **FLASH** **Q121.2: FLOOR / FLASH**

**ENSEMBLE. OOH!**

**NINA.** That this is worth it –

**WYNTON.** One more –

(**JAY** delivers another.) **J HITS/STOMP!** **FLASH / BOOM**  
**Q121.4: FLOOR / FLASH**

**ENSEMBLE. OOH!**

**NINA.** That this would be a *beautiful* death.

**WYNTON.** Just a little Jazz, give 'im – **MAT**

**NINA.** It doesn't have to be *this* –  
Do you hear me?

**JAY.** I HEAR YOU! –

**NINA.** THIS DOESN'T HAVE TO BE *YOU!* **N looks at J**

(A beat. Almost bullet-time. **JAY** takes a breath. He looks at his sister. Ding! A beat. Ding!! A beat. Ding!!! Then, almost a whisper.)

**J HITS/STOMP! K.O.**  
**Q:122:FLOOR; FULL RING +X**  
**DING ... (SLOW, CHURCH BELL-LIKE)**  
**>DRONE >GHOST >ZOMBIE**  
**N drifts away, DSL**  
**DING ...**  
**DING...**

**JAY.** I'ma make it right.

(And boom!! A beat. Shit. **NINA** burns **JAY** a look, hangs her head, disappointed.) **Q123: -FULL RING (RING X, RING BLUE remain)**

**WYNTON.** (A whisper.) Ohmygod.

**W enters, X DS (DSR)**

**MAX.** (A whisper.) Jay?

**WYNTON.** (A whisper.) Ohmygod.

(**NINA** starts to step out of the pinspot, but she stops. She burns **JAY** a look. Tension in the air. But not victory. Not yet.) **DRONE< GHOST<**

**NINA.** Somewhere close.  
There's a hand on a knife.

**JAY.** You don't understand.

**MAX.** (Re: the fight.) Jay?

**NINA.** Somewhere close.  
But not here.

**MAX.** Ohmygod, Jay.

**NINA.** A man's walking into a place called Elmore's down the way.  
Twenty-six kinds of bourbon.

**MAX.** (In shock.) Ladies and gentlemen...

**NINA.** And the first thing he sees –  
A young black hand swats away a tear.

**MAX.** (In shock.) Ladies and gentlemen... **F, facing US at bar, wipes a tear**

**NINA.** But not in sadness.

**WYNTON.** (To **JAY**.) Breathe. **W turns SL to J EXHALE**

**NINA.** Not yet.

**FISH.** We did it. **F X DS (US-MISC DSC)**

(Clap. Focus shifts to **FISH** – he smiles wide.) **S-C-C-S** **Q124: US-MISC Low → High**

**MAX.** Ladies and gentlemen,

**FISH.** Turn that radio up, please.

**MAX.** It's my honor,

**FISH.** Turn it up loud as she goes, sir.

*(Clap. NINA looks at FISH.)*

**S-C-C-S**

**NINA.** A man walks in through the front door,  
Smells that bourbon,  
Sees the world changing around him,

**F X US to bar, returns DSC (US-MISC DSC), looking DS**

**JAY.** No –

**NINA.** Forwards is backwards –

**JAY.** No –

**NINA.** And a hand *pulls out* a knife.

*(FISH looks straight forward, suddenly afraid.)*

**BOOM**

**FISH.** What –

**NINA.** Lamb to a slaughter, Jay –

**ZOMBIE**

**FISH.** Please –

**NINA.** Eyes –

**FISH.** Scream –

**NINA.** Fists –

**FISH.** No –

**NINA.** Shark in the water, Jay.

**FISH.** Knife.

**ZOMBIE**

**NINA.** And he's straight-circlin' now.

~~*(A beat, Then, violently—Clap. A breath.)*~~

**WYNTON.** Breathe.

**INHALE**

**FISH.** What's that taste?

**WYNTON.** Breathe.

**EXHALE**

**NINA.** *(To JAY.)* There it is.

**FISH.** *Blood.*

**ZOMBIE >GHOST >DRONE**



(A beat. **FISH** looks around, as if suddenly it's time to leave. He steps out of his pinspot. A somber beat, broken suddenly:) **Q131: US-MISC "BLOOD" BLUE, and fade out F slowly lowers his head; Beat...**

**MAX.** ~~Standing tall at six feet, two inches!~~ Standing strong at five feet, nine inches.  
Toes like Jack Nimble! Fists like John Henry! **M X SL (USC)**

**WYNTON.** Ohmygod boy. **Q133: -X, -SR,SL SQ**  
(RING BLUE OUT, except SC SQ WHITE)

**NINA.** This ain't easy.

**MAX.** Your *new* Heavyweight Boxing Champion.

**NINA.** This ain't s'posed to be easy.

**MAX.** Jay. "The Sport." Jackson.

(**WYNTON** looks at **JAY**. He takes him in.) **M exits USC; W X USL (US J);**

**WYNTON.** Head up, son.

(**JAY** looks at his fists. Looking straight out.)

**NINA.** Whatever happens – **N X SR (DS J)**

**WYNTON.** You did it. **W stops USL J; W,N exit US center**  
**Offstage USR (sr-sl): M,N,W**

**NINA.** *You* did it.

(A beat.) **Beat...**

**WYNTON.** Head up.

(**JAY** takes a breath. Then another. And another. Clap-Clap-Clap, Clap-Clap-Clap, Clap-Clap-Clap. And black.) **DRONE<**

**J breathes**

**S-C-C, S-C-C-S**

**Q135: FLASH → CS SPOT**

**J raises his fists in victory BOOM**

**J collapses to knees in defeat (fists still up).**

**M,N,W: STOMP!**

**K.O.**

**Q140: Blackout**

**Q141: RING up**

**Curtain Call: RING: V with J DSC; SR to SL: M,N,J,W,F**

**Q141.5: Blackout (Cast exits)**

**Q142: House up**

**End of Play**

APPENDIX B  
VISUAL DRAMATURGY



*Fig. 1*



*Fig. 2*



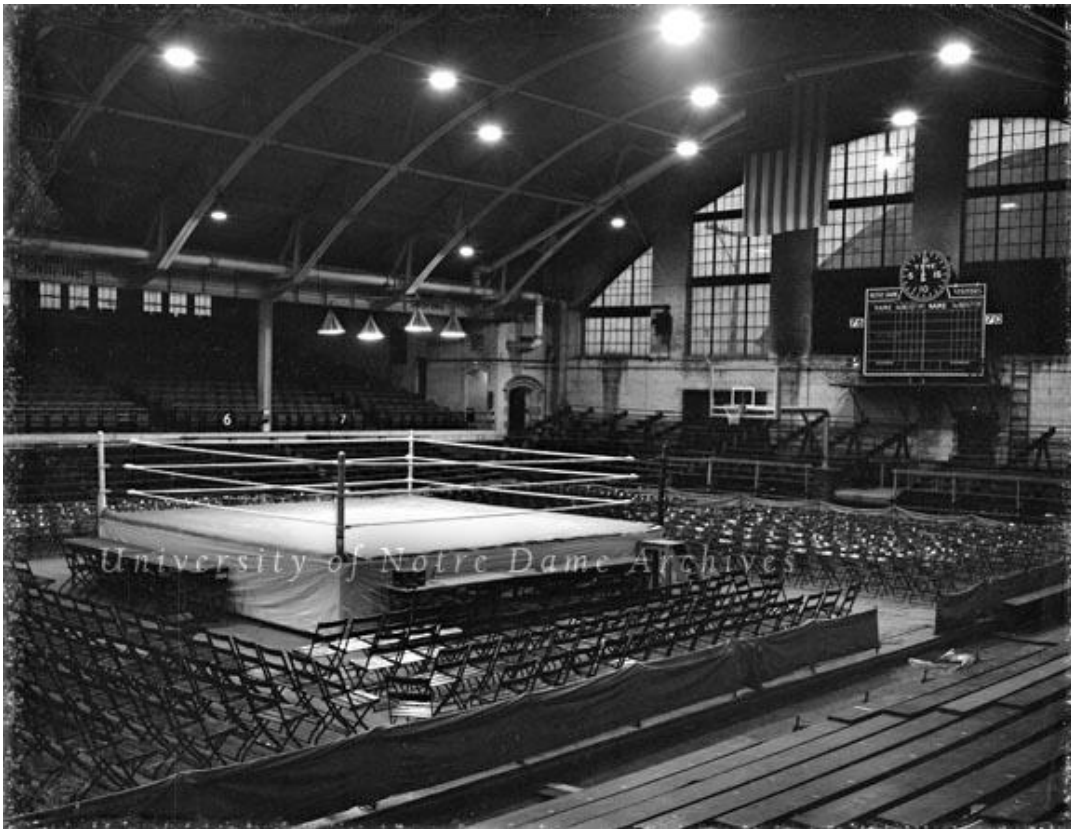
*Fig. 3*



*Fig. 4*



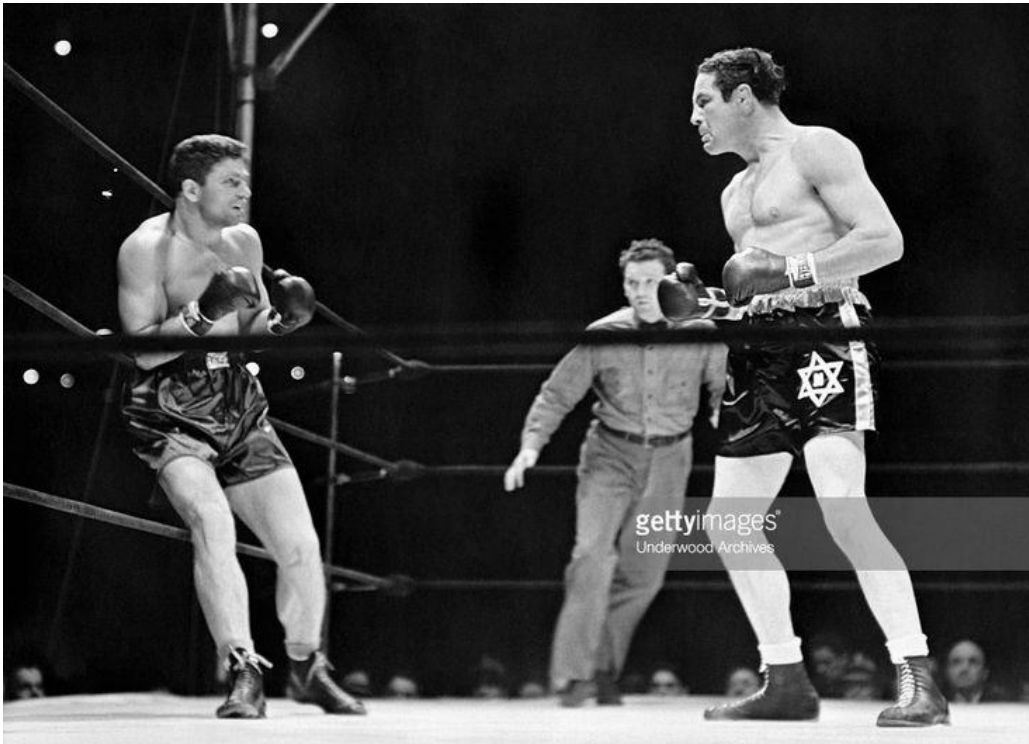
*Fig. 5*



*Fig. 6*



*Fig. 7*



*Fig. 8*





*Fig. 9*



*Fig. 10*



*Fig. 11*



*Fig. 12*



*Fig. 13*



*Fig. 14*



*Fig. 15*



*Fig. 16*





*Fig. 17*



*Fig. 18*



*Fig. 19*



*Fig. 20*



*Fig. 21*



*Fig. 22*



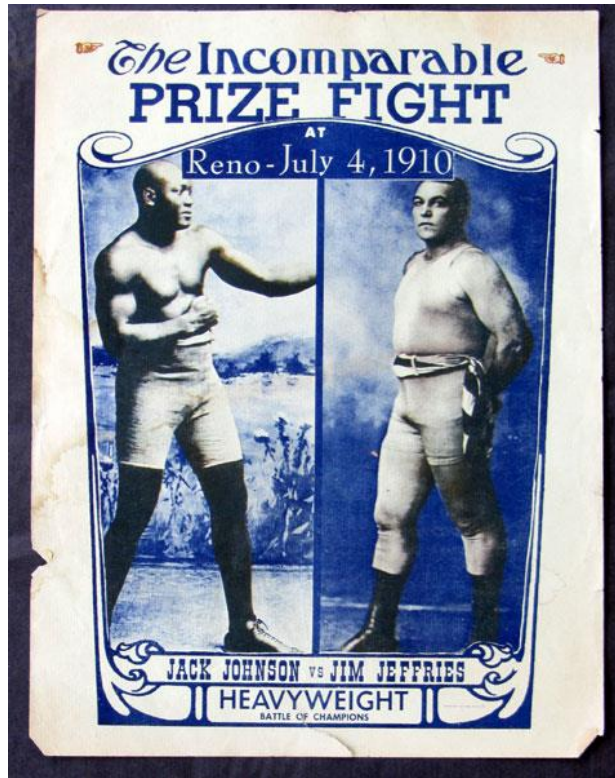


Fig. 23

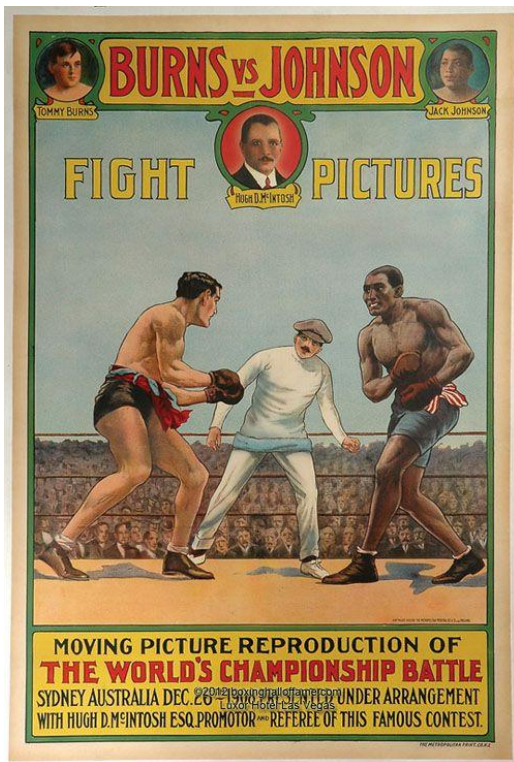


Fig. 24



Fig. 25



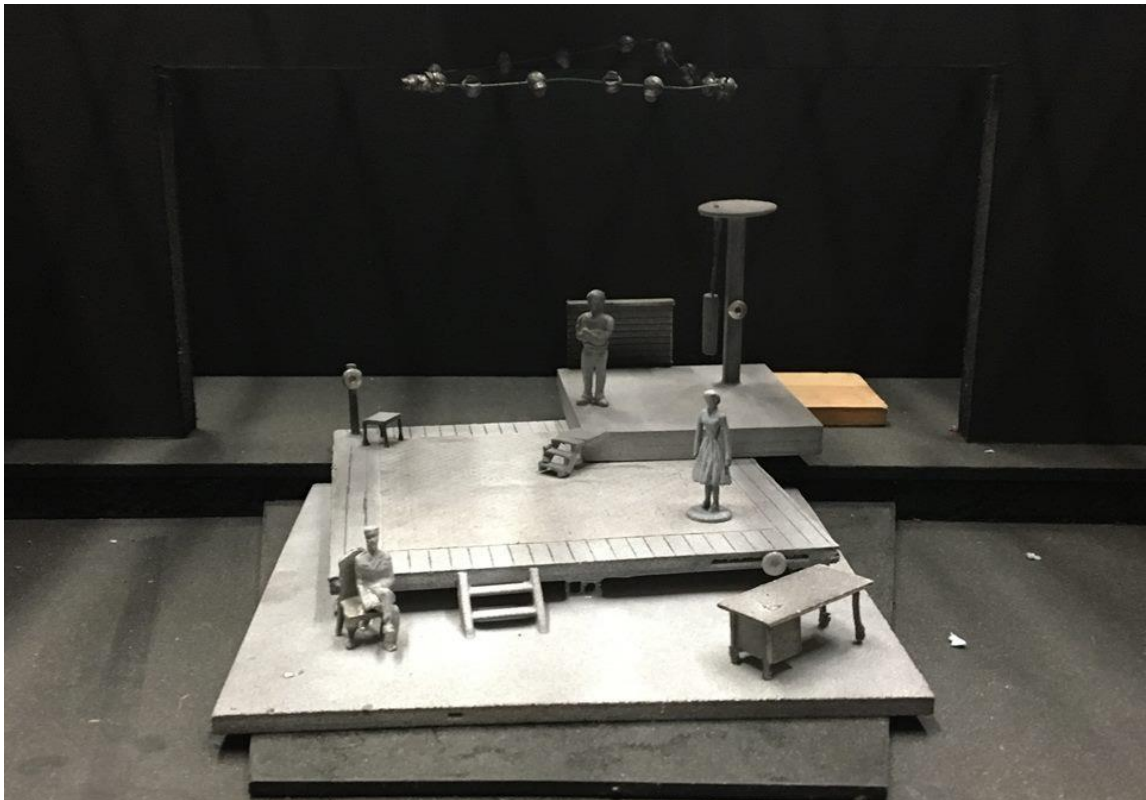
*Fig. 26*



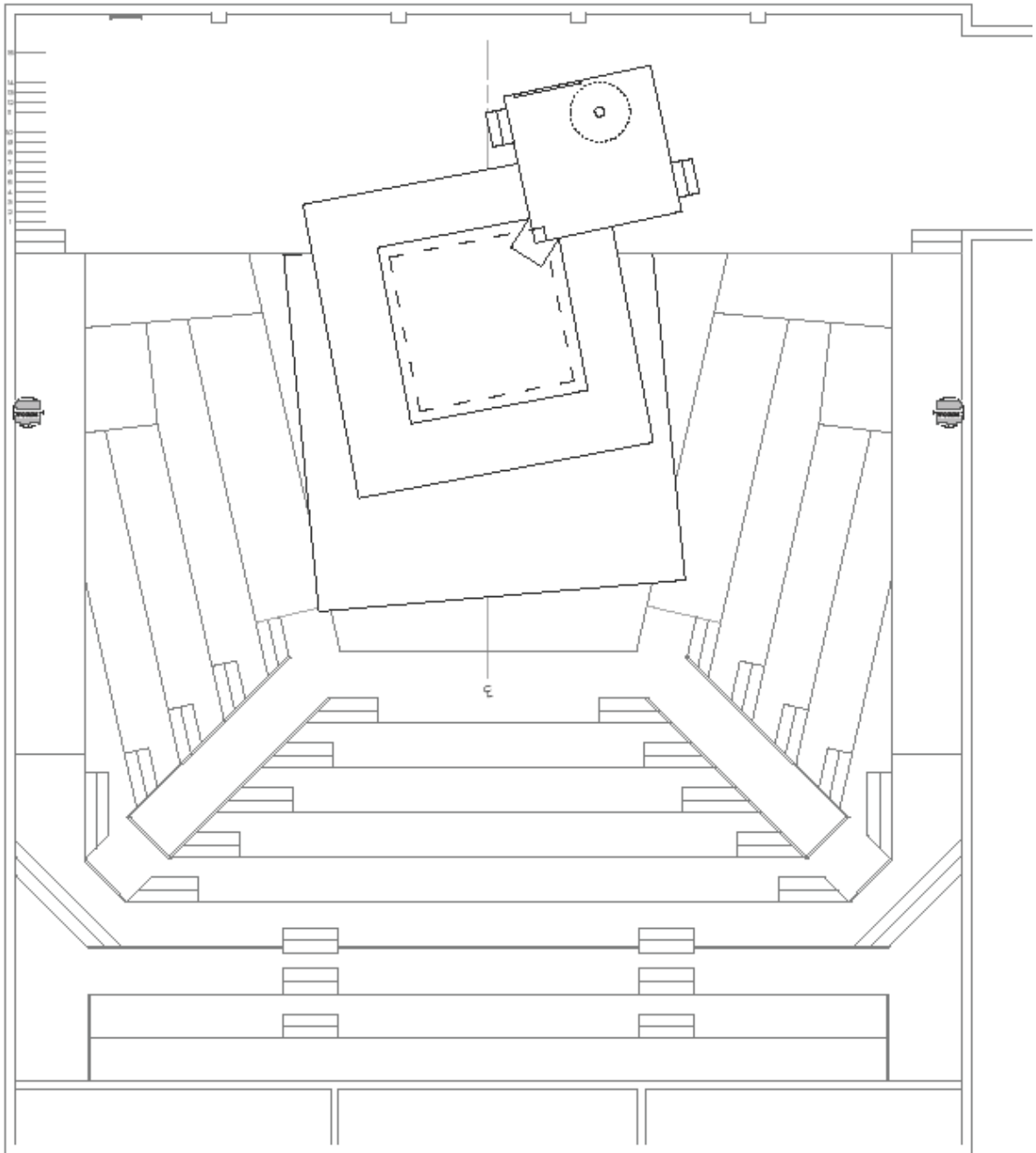
APPENDIX C  
PRODUCTION DESIGNS

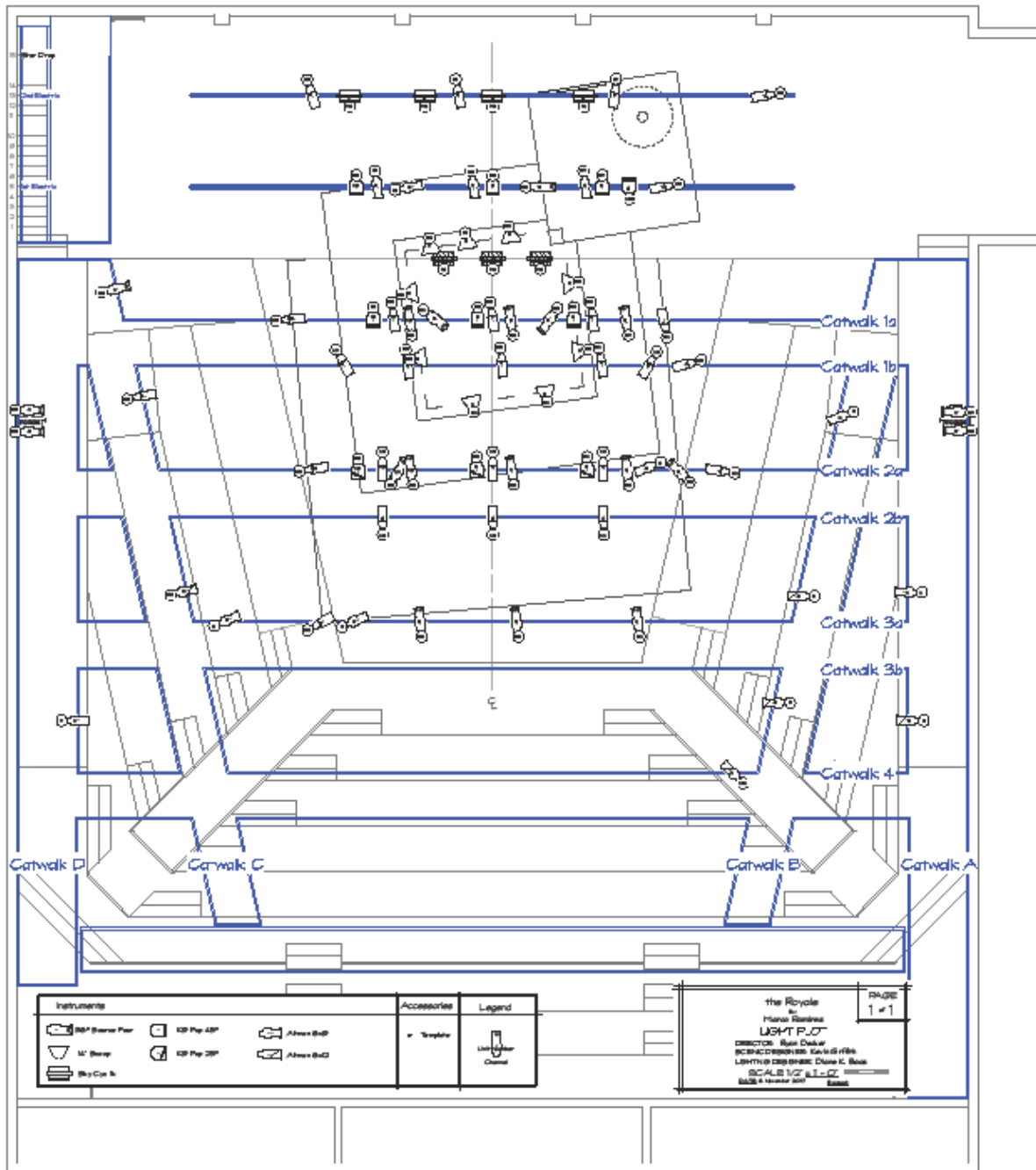


*Costume Designs. Production photo.*



*Scenic Design. Model box photo.*





*Lighting Design. Instrument plot.*

APPENDIX D  
**DIRECTOR'S NOTES / ADJUSTMENTS**

**ABOUT THE DIRECTOR'S NOTES**

Be warned that the following director's notes include some **strong expletive language**; please be aware that oftentimes, the note was filtered by the director and not orally delivered as it was written. These notes make frequent use of shorthand, described at length in the introduction to Appendix A, although incomplete.

The Director officially became a Master of Fine Arts Candidate upon passing Comprehensive Exams while rehearsal for *The Royale* was already underway; this production was identified as the subject of the thesis shortly thereafter. As a result, many early notes were not properly preserved for inclusion in this document. The reader may take solace in the fact that most early notes were never written during the blocking phase of rehearsal, but given immediately and verbally while finding the initial shape of the show together with the cast.

The written notes, in chronological order, begin with...

**16 OCTOBER 2017 – REVIEW REHEARSAL (ENTIRE SHOW)**

MAKE STOMPS AND CLAPS PART OF THE LINES, PART OF THE SHOW

ENERGY @ TOP IS ENERGY OF THE SHOW (TODAY: TOO EASY)

⊗ PLAY ON DIAGONALS; LOOK AT E/O, EXCEPT ON US PLATFORM

ROUND 1

VOLUME!!! → Rapid fire, not muddy wash

Be aware that you'll have pools of light during the fights restricting your playing space

F – don't get too defeated too early (playing the ending)

F – “Really?!” = Big discovery

M,J – Where's the front row?



## ROUND 2

J – Threaten M

J,F,W – Break the line

J – Don't "shoo" M (after "Grizzly Bear")

## ROUND 3

M – Sharper transitions to reporters

M,J – "Santa Claus": is that a private moment?

## ROUND 4

F – Holy Fuck – look at this place!

F – Lift end of "for once" → – don't die there, that's the point

## ROUND 5

F – open phonograph for music

J,N – Awkward silence is better than laugh

⊗ WORK SHANDA/JOHN

## ROUND 6

F – start on line – face out on line, can be thrown back

N – "Don't you put this on me?" – Tactic?

Lost Colby Lane – J circling

N give focus/energy to F @ end

## **17 OCTOBER 2017 – WORKING REHEARSAL (ROUND 1-2)**

## ROUND 1

Better energy

F – louder, taking the note (Round 5 lost volume)

J – Fists UP

F – K.O. Flat on the canvas

## ROUND 2

Scene's coming alive!

F – No full back DSC

Stay on platform

F – “That crowd” DSL

W – Beat before laugh, “90%”

J – NINETY – NINEDY, pick one

W – louder, “Even if”

## ROUND 1

Face out – pools/hits

F – change focus on “Really?!”

## ROUND 2

J – What's your relationship/tactic with the suits?

### **18 OCTOBER 2017 – WORKING REHEARSAL (ROUND 5-6)**

F – What are you here to do?

VOLUME – esp. US platform (W good)

F – “Locker room before the fight of your life” – That moment is now

N – enter earlier

J – Keep her away from you

N,J – signpost for landing in opposite corner: “Mr. Parker”

J – “Who did this?” (Any response? Then,) “Nina?!”

J – “As for this” X DSL

J – What is the tactic “pretty ladies in the posters” → N – Shut that shit down.

J – Get to US platform step

### ROUND 6

J – bump in

N focus – Don’t look at J, until “ain’t no fight”

Cut “Jab. / Cross.”

Build to Colby Lane

W – “Move – Move!” (build)

J – final position center

F – Radio is USR

N – You’re more of Wynton than Bixby, a coach (Fake-Opponent Ally)

### **19 OCTOBER 2017 – WORKING REHEARSAL (ROUND 3-4)**

### ROUND 3

W – stay in ring DSR corner

J – Center: joy!

J – “but he was once, wasn’t he?” – tactic?

ALL – anticipate X to DSR triangle, “Thank you very much!”

W – Like going to stop reporter

### ROUND 4

F – all bathroom lines offstage

W – a little quiet

J – don’t grab M any time before we set (preserve the threat of violence)

M,J – create a private moment at table

### ROUND 3

J – losing words – this press conference is a circus, everything is for the benefit of the crowd

W – build the “Move – Move – Move!”

F – beware arm swings

### ROUND 4

W – Good Business

F – story is starting to activate

M – Why do you give in and tell him “Chicago”?

### **23 OCTOBER 2017 – RUN SHOW WITH NOTES (*plus HOOVER NOTES*)**

### ROUND 1

⊗ REMEMBER STOMPS & CLAPS

J X DS

VOLUME

Pay attn. to groundplan – esp. J,F

J – don’t X DS after Round 1 (@ end)

### ROUND 3

J – land USP for ending

### ROUND 5

⊗ F – Blocking

USP Volume ↑

J – don’t step on USP during N

Lost the DISTANCE – threat/scene deflates

Lost “Pharmacy on Colby Lane”

N – Head rub!! = Actress lost lines

### ROUND 6

There is a cross-over

Build to “Colby Lane” lost

Pace was getting better

N – when do you turn US (toward J)?

### DAVID NOTES

Lose “Heavyweight”

Losing footwork/energy → bringing in Wallace

Δ-up some boxing blocking, more movement

Land bigger punches

Nice “jab, switch” work

F – we’re thinking could use some physical activity in book scenes

W – “Move” – who is he talking to?

F – losing words

N – why is she here?

N – less circling @ end

### **24 OCTOBER 2017 – WORKING REHEARSAL TBD (BOXING SCENES – ROUNDS 1 & 6)**

N – one circle

N – enter SR

F – no “boxing” for X SL

F – let’s keep the silence (No “Boo’s”)

## 25 OCTOBER 2017 – DESIGNER RUN

⊕ NOTHING TO SELF – EVERYTHING FOR THE CROWD

### ROUND 1

J – keep boxing bubble contained

Canvas?

F – X over; N – take chair

### ROUND 2

J – quiet: “Linen suits → Anything”

J – “\$50 hat”, question?

W – dropped “persuasive”

F – you can turn to people you are talking to, in thrust

J – having clarity issues

J – stop M before he exits platform, “Grizzly Bear”

W – Bring the bucket

### ROUND 3

J,F – more CS

⊕ “BUILD A RHYTHM, KEEP A RHYTHM”

F – Just behind M @ end

### ROUND 4

F – can we make “small print” gesture tinier?

W – can you X down to other side of table?

If you’re in a 4-person scene, on edges – play to corner or side

## ROUND 5

J – What are the pre-bag punches?

F – FACE OUT!

F – can't hear the lines, bring back the enthusiasm/moment before

I CAN'T HEAR A DAMN THING.

N – wait for song to end to interrupt

F – why do you skip all the stairs?

J – two parts ***OL-L*** (not “Aye”)

J – are you boxing your NEPHEW?

N – touching forehead – learn your lines

N – Where are you going? Stairs are DSC

W – punch right, not over head

W – grab a moment DSL

## ROUND 6

F – bring the chair

F – NO “WOOO!”

M – Delay gesture to N (don't give Bixby reveal away early)

N – Why is Nina crying?

## **30 OCTOBER 2017 – DESIGNER RUN**

### ROUND 1 – WARM-UP

It's starting to happen

J – “I do believe he came to fight, y'all...” OUT for M

KEEP VOLUME UP!

J – DS farther for RND 1

F – DS farther

N – let bell ring out

### ROUND 1

M,N – enter at same time

F – gloves out of mouth

J – keeps backing up

J – “jab, switch” quiet – leading F down path with you (RND 5)

F – less arms

N – hit bell from top or sides – looks like you are surprised by cue

N – Is the bell hammer broken?

### ROUND 2

M – X US of chair awkward

J – Fought half this country... broke three ribs...”, action?

F – don’t step off platform

F – someone to lay you flat on your ass”, action?

J,F – getting quiet

M – “can give it some time” get USL (not SL) of J

J – “I ain’t no grizzly bear”, action?

### ROUND 3

STOMP – STOMP??

F – keep jabs toward J (USL)

W,F – move on M X in to J



J – “tell people there’s the slightest... **LOOK** like Champ Bixby...”, operative?

#### ROUND 4

Getting too cinematic – more volume F,W

Littler quicker J,M entrance on heels of F line

W – be careful of stop w/ staff → too “Tim the Enchanter”

#### ROUND 5

Why start on middle level?

F – lines? (Ambling w/o purpose)

Chair – where should it live?

Stomps, claps rushing

LOUDER NINA – can’t hear you

J – keep distance, don’t chase! Aimless.

N – “I’m his sister” face DS

N – what’s your opinion on kid’s fondness of J?

N – “Gonna box this problem away?”, action?

→ launching pad to attack at J (assault on J)

N – “Knock that bastard out” → BtΔ → “Don’t want you to lose”

J,N – do to you? (Actions in other)

N – lose the Brit “Paypa,” “Dachtah”

J – Beat, then: “Now’s the moment...”

#### ROUND 5 IS DRAGGING ASS

→ (1) HYPE, (2) BATTLE, (3) FALLOUT

Everything is to get to W: “You go alone. Always have.”

## ROUND 6 – RECORDING

N – Don't let him win – is there more power in your lower register?

W – Need work on claps, stomps

## **1 NOVEMBER 2017 – BOXING POLISH *and* RUN OF SHOW**

### BOXING W/ WALLACE

- “Keep on your toes” – jump rope
- Hisses
- Gloves at temples
- Jabs aren't K.O. – heads pop back
- Use swing of bag to training advantage
- Blacksmith shop: FIRE (JAY) and WATER (NINA)

### ROUND 1

F – plant for stomps before X SL

F – more up, less side/swivel

J – could use more up

F – *flat* on canvas

N – put chair away right away

### ROUND 2

J – X to M for “Get me” moment/threat

J – lost “Fought good”

J – losing you in RND 2

W – lost “Even if”

J – “Ain't no grizzly bear” – to slam, to turn? – action not clear

### ROUND 3

J – “*polish* sport, at least”? (“poorest sport”)

### ROUND 4

How do the props end up too spread out?

### ROUND 5

Gloves?

F – Phonograph: set on bar, place needle

⊛ JAY – DON’T CHASE! KEEP DISTANCE!

J – losing articulation

N – “You weren’t but 14” – SHANDA’S VOICE! – YES!

### ROUND 6

\* “Battle of the elements of water and fire”

J – get on your toes!

N – how do you talk to your kids when you want them to STOP?

N – cut pulling string on “porch light”

F – let’s bring back the slow church bells (1st on K.O.)

## **2 NOVEMBER 2017 – POLISH TBD**

### ROUND 1

J – “ How many rounds do you want...”, bring some to aud

### ROUND 2

F,W – L hand to L hand → open

F – “Yeah!” enthusiasm – contrast w/ M

### ROUND 3

NO TALKING!?! → What's the problem?

J – get all the way to top platform

### ROUND 4

F – Showgrounds, Atlanta, Dallas → action?

W – a little too aggressive glove toss – should we tell him?

Do gloves/wraps get carried in spit bucket?

FUCKING ALIVE TODAY!

⊗ Plant activities for F

\* WYNTON COACHING FISH

### ROUND 5

What are you talking about??

⊗ Show F how to operate a phonograph

J – put a button on “Okay”

### ROUND 6

Where are the bells?

W – WHEN WILL THE FUCKING SCRIPT GO AWAY?!

F – keep it DS after “We did it”

W – Don't get too quiet at end “You did. / Head up.”

**3 NOVEMBER 2017 – EMERGENCIES TBD (NINA & JAY – ROUND 5 *plus* RUN OF SHOW)**

### ROUND 1

J – toes laces

J – don't get too quiet in Round 5

M – I wonder when you discover the front row?

## ROUND 2

N – fold up chair ASAP

J – warmed up into volume

⊗ F,W – let's work F entrance

J – “How many fights we won?”, action? → FRESH ENERGY

J – getting too quiet

J – “*Neighbor* yard?” (“Naval yard”)

What do we do with bucket (color)? [W brings]

J – ♡ “And what am I now?”

J – “Max, for the record // I ain't no grizzly bear.” → make 1 action

## ROUND 3

PACE is off

M – get a touch more distant from J in final corner

## ROUND 4

F – how far into the lobby did you get?

We have bottles

F,W – digging new scene/activities

J – Give M something to contain

J – “coming after ME”, operative?/pop

## ROUND 5

J – collapse on bag

F – pick up and move chair

F – how do we handle a phonograph?!

⊗ N – let’s work the entrance

J – KEEP DISTANCE! (After “bacon grease”)

J – get to corner before “And there are these two.”

J,N – What should we put in the book? Would you mind?

Do we need photo cases?

N – can slow down “Colored People, Inc.” line

N – “That ain’t got nothing to do with this.” = “Stop making excuses!”

N – “Found *two* of ‘em” (can’t lose number, they’re the black ones)

N – X to the stairs (Straight DS)

What are the gloves doing hanging out USR??

HAIR/MAKEUP – let’s talk hair, specifically W,M

## ROUND 6

N,F – enter from Bkstg SL

M – transformed from a doodler to a great painter

J – get SL faster – take the silence (no bouncing in that moment)

PACE off – not rapid firing

N – “Look at them” – what’s behind that line? → “Look at those killers?”

J – motivate circle around N – what are you doing to her?

N – “Stop it J”/Colby Ln. → How do you tell your kids to stop? From a position of power/authority

N – motivate arc around J

N – NO pull cord

F – even more space b/w bell rings

F – don't let drinks get to big (comical)

N – Let terror reside in F – contrast with him

COSTUMES – let's talk about shirts (specifically M time period; W lumber jack status)

### **5 NOVEMBER 2017 – 1st TECH RUN**

Sound drone @ top – a little too loud, a little too ominous

J – get specific w/ boxes → F, too (centers)

W – needs a plainer cane

J – what're the snaps (Linen suits)

M – What's going on with that collar?

F – going to add an ice pack (RND 2)

Light DSR too dark → DSR too?

Blackouts quicker → Actors WAIT for blackouts before transitions

There's a bar running through the light (RND 3)

F – tuck in shirt!

F,J – unbutton from top, not all the way OR we won't wear the shirts

NEED: water and corks in bottles

DS Reds not balanced (RND 4)

F – smaller, subtler smile – take to gloves (RND 4)

J – don't US yourself (RND 4)

SOUND – record voiceovers tomorrow

DS corners of top platform dark

W – get in center of light (song)

N – LOUDER, pull focus (“Did I interrupt...”)

J – losing clarity and volume in RND 5

N – X to stairs, not corner (Exit/RND 5)

W – Enter HR vom

J – can we ditch shirt behind bar (RND 5)

F – NO “boo”/thumbs down – too contemporary/upstaging action

Can we clean up/separate 2 Worlds (Colby Ln)

## 2ND RUN

COSTUMES – I’m so confused by M’s costume → there’s a lot of time periods going on

COSTUMES – Are W’s shoes laceless? Is that correct?

J – find time to tuck in shirt (RND 2)

NEED: Set up a props table, costumes

TOO FUCKING QUIET (F,J,W – RND 2)

NEED: monitor stage mic piped in

F – end of RND 3, wait for B.O. to X US

F – needs a shoe fitting.

**ALL – WE ARE RUNNING THE SHOW: CUES DEPEND ON WHERE YOU ARE!**

**CALL A “HOLD” FOR SAFETY – OTHERWISE WE NEED TO DEAL W/ REALITY.**

F – can’t hear your lines when you bang the chair (“36 different kinds of bourbon”)

J – let confusion/surprise catch you when N arrives

NEED: class releases from David

NEED: Laces “fixed” closed on gloves



## **6 NOVEMBER 2017 – 2nd TECH RUN**

SOUND – What are the rules of the Drone and I/X?

N – Shanda, bell early coming out of RND 5?

→ Are we getting specific with bell, or leaning on M too much?

### ROUND 1

LIGHT – Can we hold fade out of purple/blue ‘til “Split it up”?

J – hold for “How you all doing” – then move.

### ROUND 2

F – TUCK IN SHIRT!

F – don’t block face w/ cold pack

J,F – too quiet

F – do you leave w/ gloves?

SHANDA! Get out of the house!

### ROUND 3

J – quicker on “How you all doing?”

J – can’t hear you at all

J – why didn’t we button/tuck?

J – “No sir” – really build/set up joke to knock over

SOUND – wait on fade out until “Thank you very much”

→ silence for end bt. (J on plat.) – at least quiet

F – WAIT UNTIL BLACKOUT before transition

### ROUND 4

J – WTF is goin on with the shirt?

J – What leads to “business as usual”?

J – WAIT for B.O. then move

SOUND – cover transition? RND 4→5

### ROUND 5

F – don’t slam chair on line (“56 different kinds...”)

F – give lines out

SONG – faster

N – louder entrance

J – allow SHOCK/SURPRISE of N’s arrival; F – awkward

J – *oil*

N,J – PACE is off – pick up cues a little bit in OPENING BT.

N,J – let’s put writing in book, and agree on a pg.

W – enter from SR (HL) vom

J – wait longer for a reply – expect a reply you don’t get

COSTUME/PROPS – can we cover/paint jewel on cane?

J – B.O. then move

SOUND – music to cover transition?

W – can we tighten up Xover?

### ROUND 6

M – pants...

J – cross faster

SOUND – go to silence for J arrival

ALL – N,W urgency!

LIGHTS – flashes on punches do get confusing in CS

ALL – arc from “Ain’t about that”/”It’s about you”

SOUND – silence in Colby Lane bt. – comes in too hot

LIGHTS – separation of worlds – Colby Lane bt.

SOUND – Fish death too hot

F – wait for head down

⊗ CURTAIN CALL

### **7 NOVEMBER 2017 – 3rd TECH RUN**

SET – SL masking

LIGHT – Triangle pool too small

LIGHT – Darker bump after triangle, before bell

#### ROUND 1

LIGHT – Was purple w/ squares too early?

SOUND – high pitch was hot on the entrance

J – don’t step out of your light (RND 1)

LIGHT – Fade out of purple at end of round

LIGHT – long square SR came in too soon – wait for “How y’all”

LIGHT – can we get light farther US for J/tinnitus/stumble?

LIGHT – SR boxing sq looking significantly darker

J – scream doesn’t seem right

#### ROUND 2

COSTUMES – should we remove tags from the gloves?

PROPS – bucket can stay grey (first used in locker rm.)

PROPS – let’s preset cold pack wet

F – don’t get close to J before discovering him

F – hold off on celebration until “better than ALL”

J – “\$6 more” (op.) – not “WEEK”

### ROUND 3

JAY VOLUME!!! (For the crowd)

SOUND – bring down, comes in hot; I’m losing J

SOUND – pitch of drone changed – didn’t seem attached to a BtΔ

SOUND can be subtler

J – take a step into Box, “Stepping into that ring”

### ROUND 4

M – closer to DSR corner after Santa Claus bt.

F,W – is there anything we can do...

F – “All of a sudden it’s about how good the crawfish...”, meaning? action?

J – “What the hell was that!?” when you hit stairs

### ROUND 5

SOUND – I think there’s something to having the drones before → less jarring

⊛ SOUND – WHERE’S THE VOICES SOUNDSCAPE??

TECH – Opinions on how he handles the phonograph?

SOUND – no eerie sound before phonograph

LIGHT – W, DSL?

N – CAN’T HEAR YOUR ENTRANCE → Get their attention

J – Losing words/action “They even hired 2 look-alikes”

PROPS – cut mirror from purse

N,J – loving this scene: Balance – Emotional Avail + Action (RND 6, too)

J – another beat longer on “Now is the moment”

## ROUND 6

ROUND 6 is so close to being a tight, confident package → STAKES, URGENCY

LIGHT – Colby Lane too warm/normal

ALL (N) – Unfortunate thing I’m not understanding the K.O.

W – “You did it” – that’s your line; that’s the point of the show

J – tiny step US into light

ALL – CURTAIN CALL – thank you

## **8 NOVEMBER 2017 – FINAL TECH / DRESS**

SL light spill

Tinnitus in the middle of rec going?

Lights for first reporter X came too soon

♡ that it voices ends with “fellow \*\*\*roes... broken ribs”

F – “give ‘em a little music,” then X US to Bar

No W music light?

Confused by DSC sq. @ top of RND 6

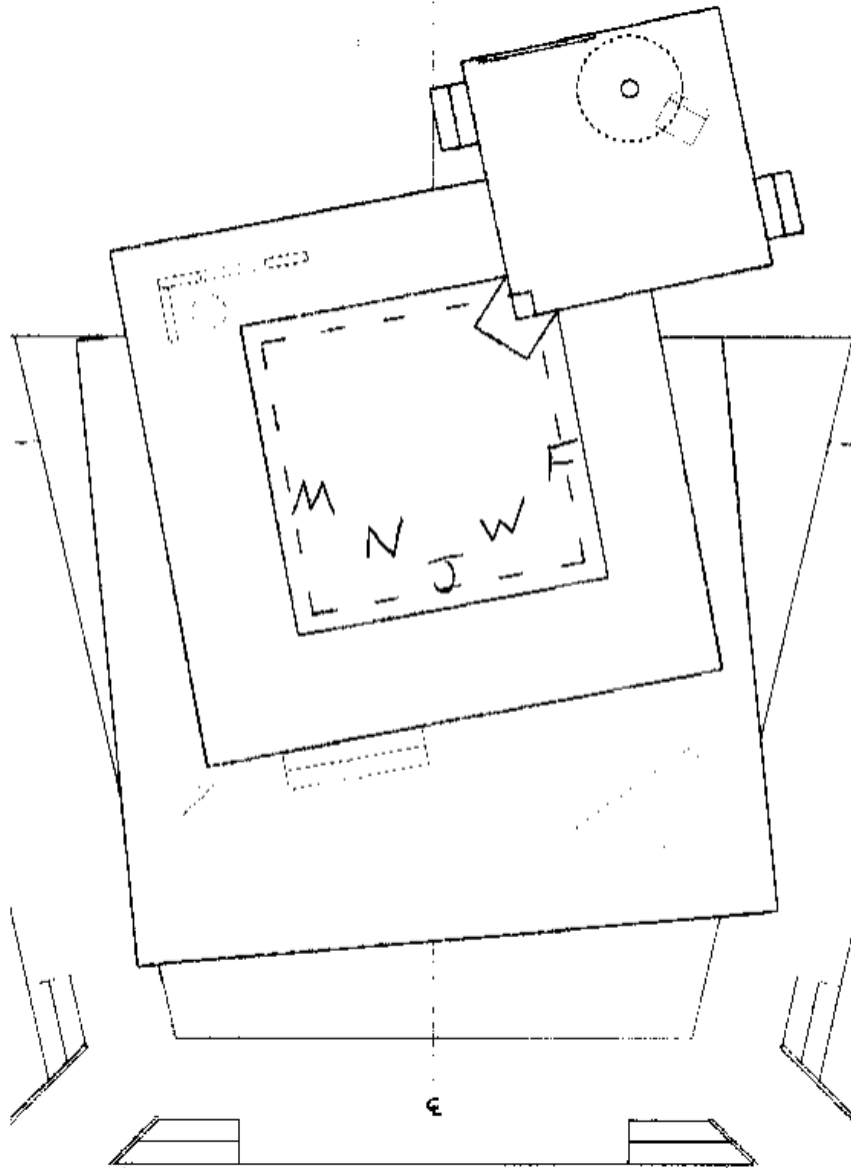
Drone can kick back in @ “and in this corner”

Add a saturated color into Colby Lane Bt?

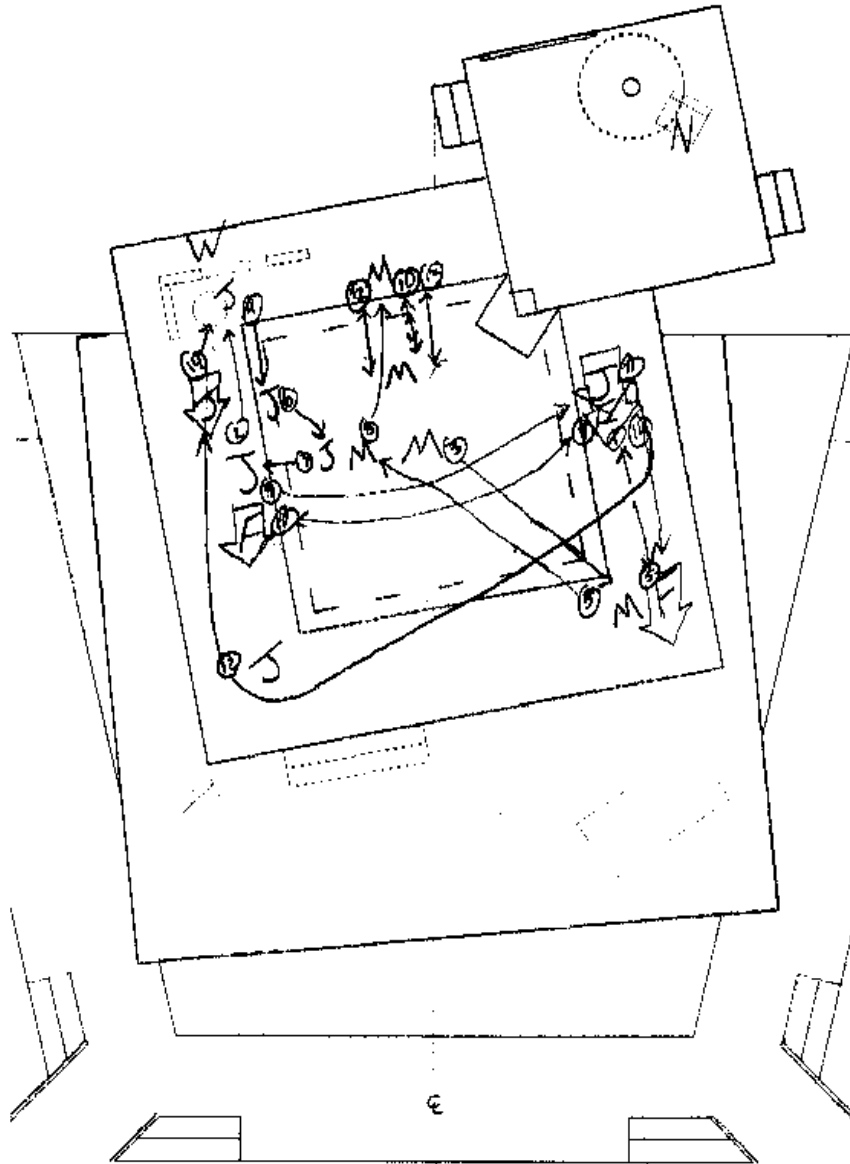
Can we get the SUPER LOUD THUD for Bixby K.O?

Blackout then GO

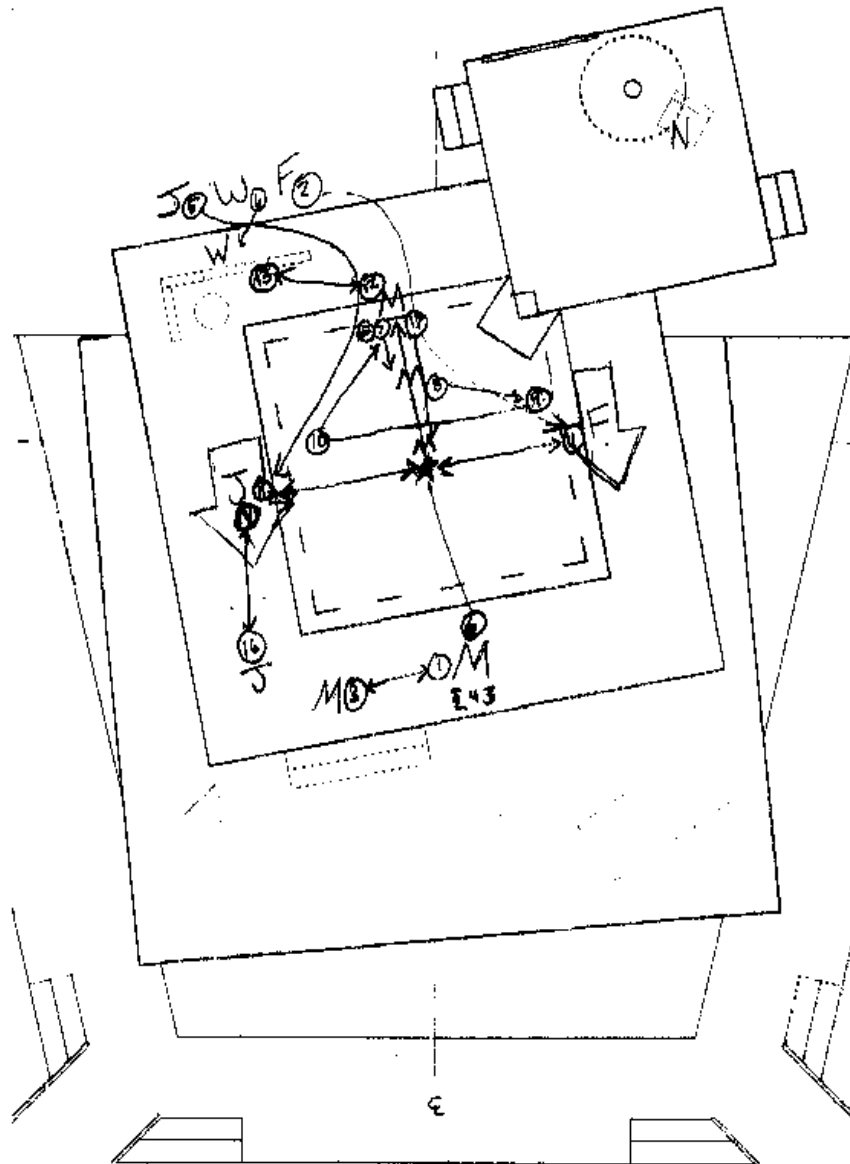
APPENDIX E  
**BLOCKING CHARTS**



*Blocking Chart 1. Top of show tableau and curtain call.*

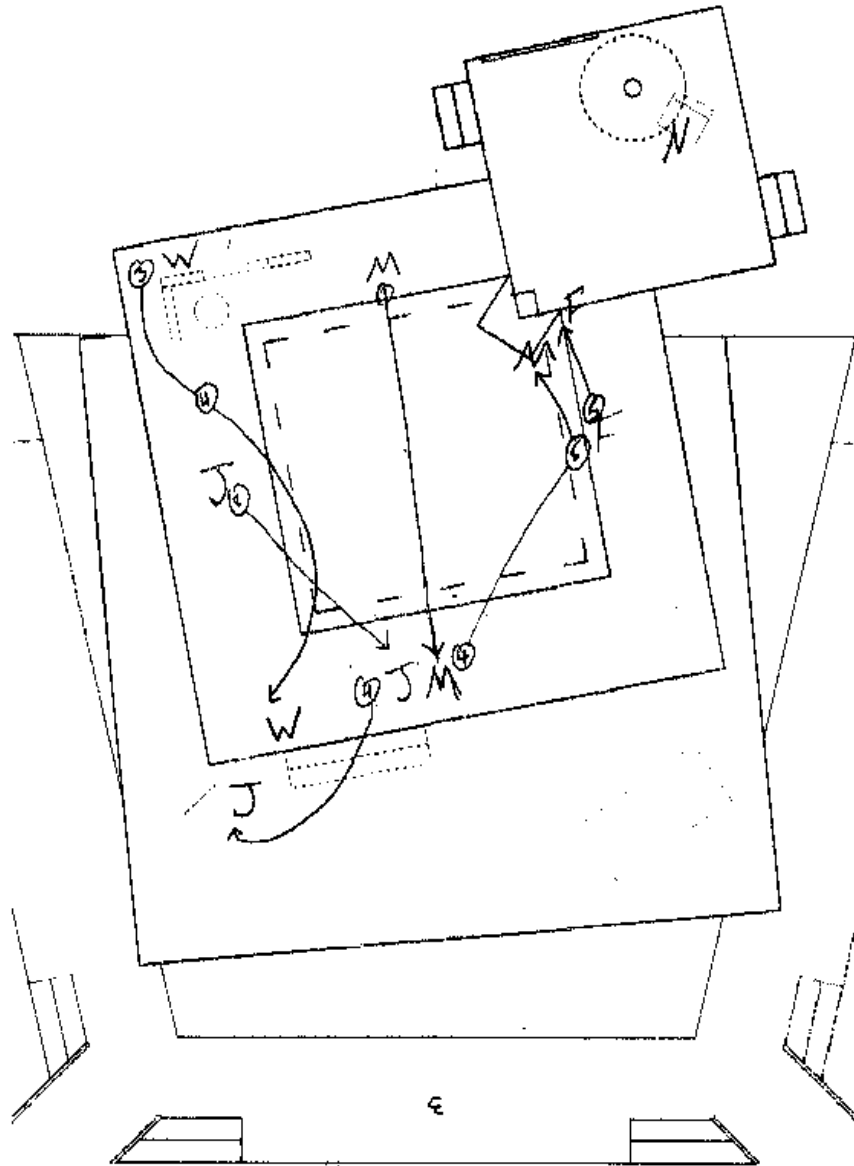


*Blocking Chart 2. Scene 1 (1/3).*

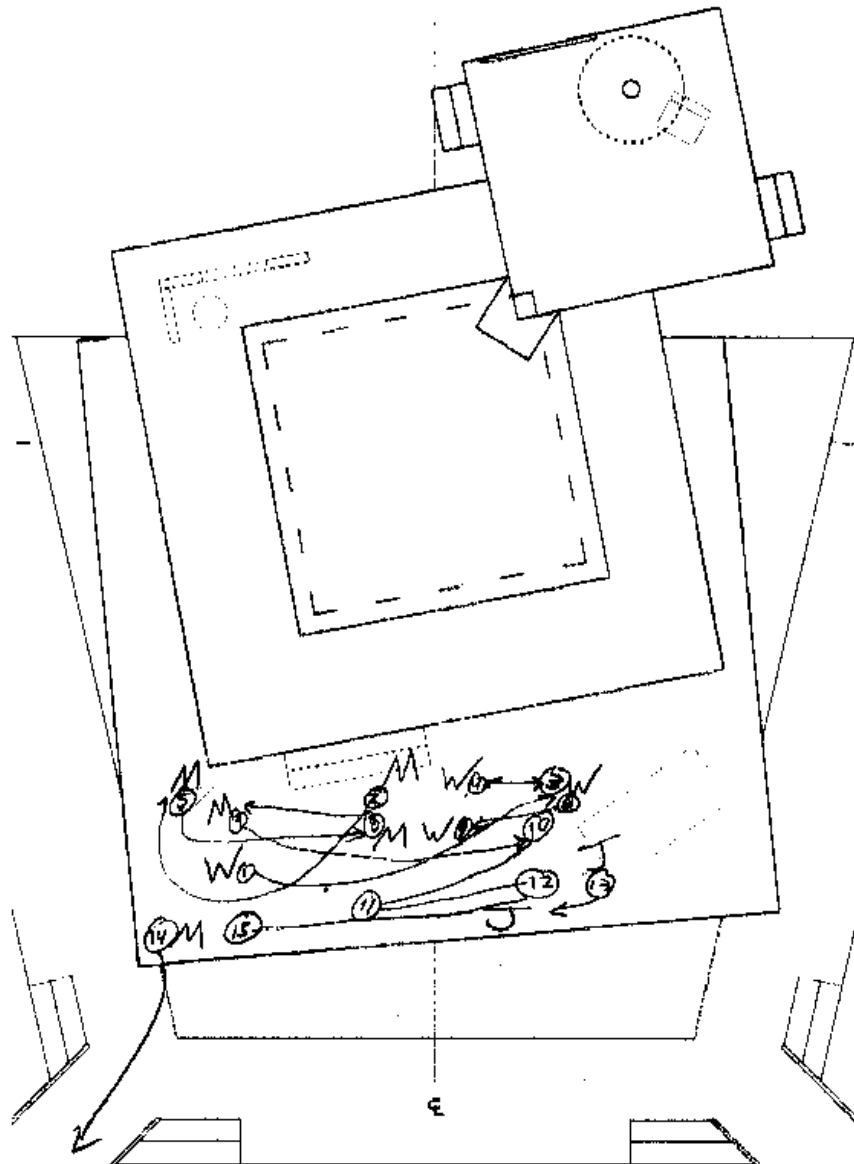


*Blocking Chart 3. Scene 1 (2/3).*

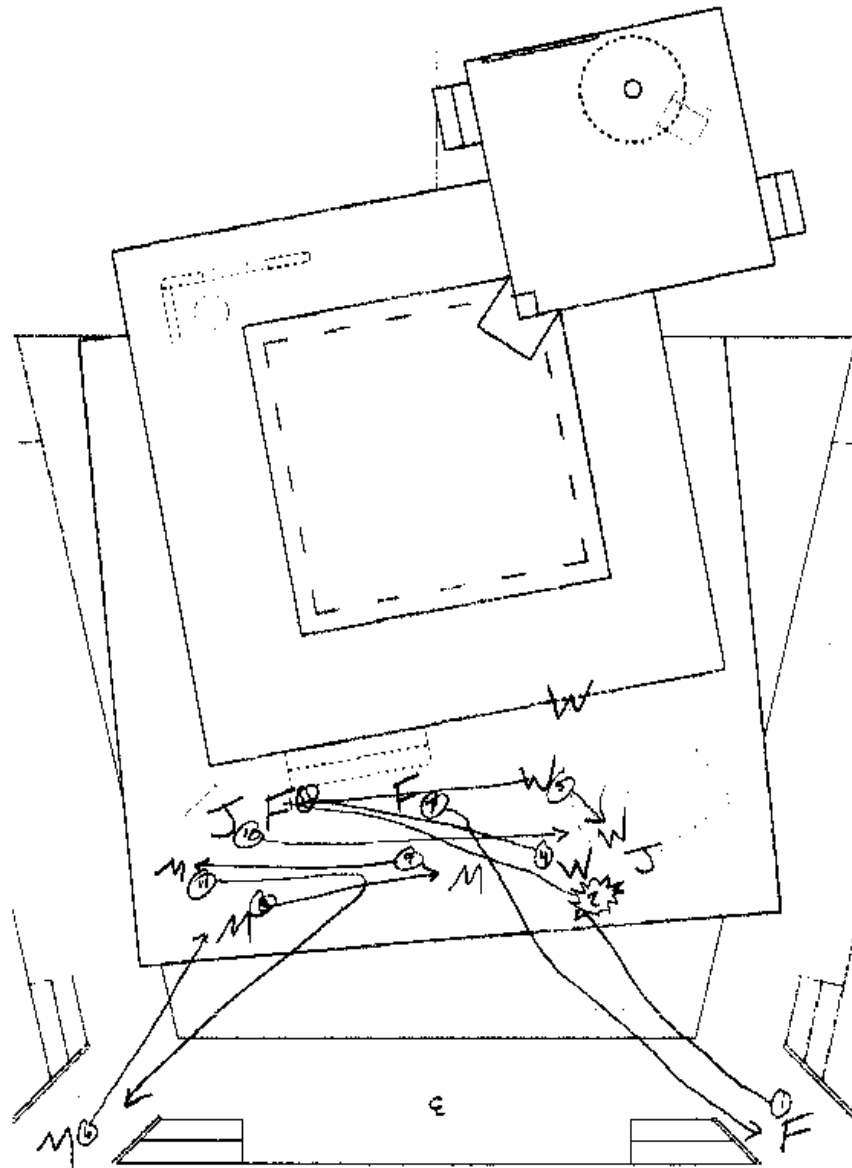




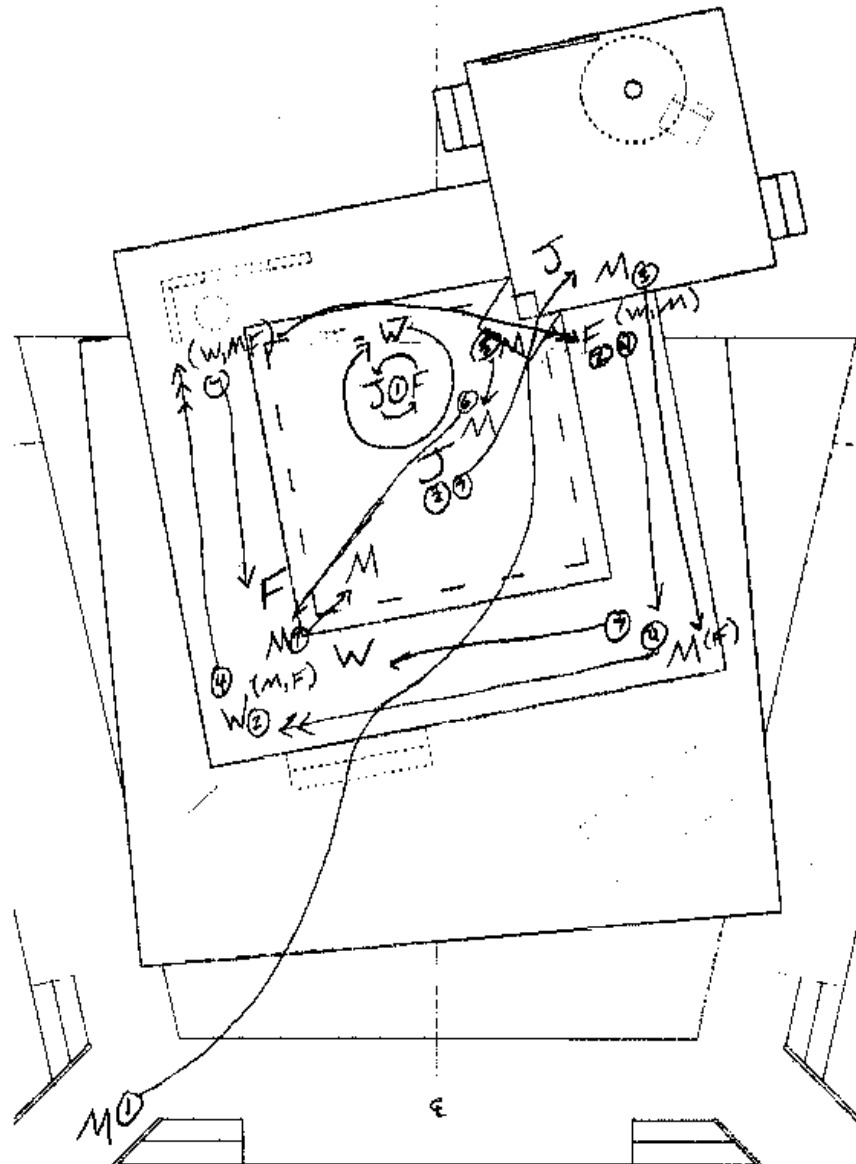
*Blocking Chart 4. Scene 1 (3/3).*



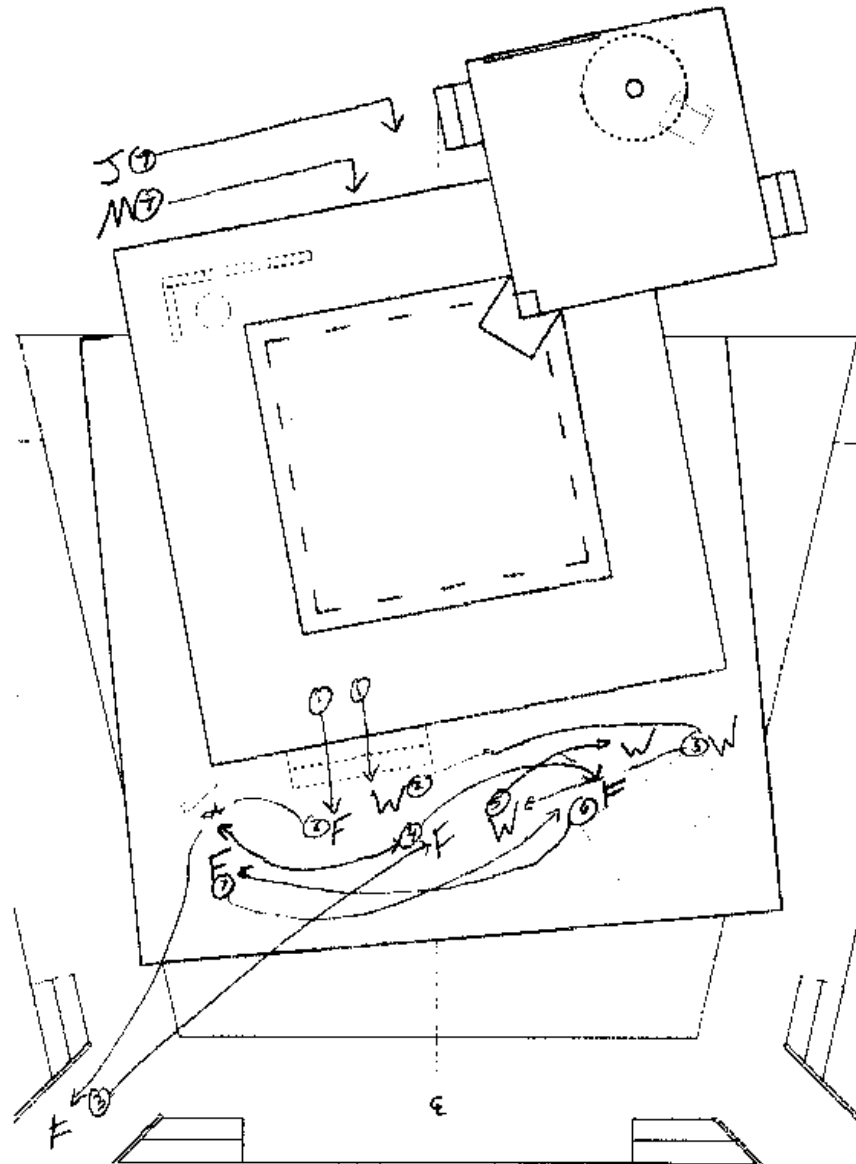
*Blocking Chart 5. Scene 2 (1/2).*



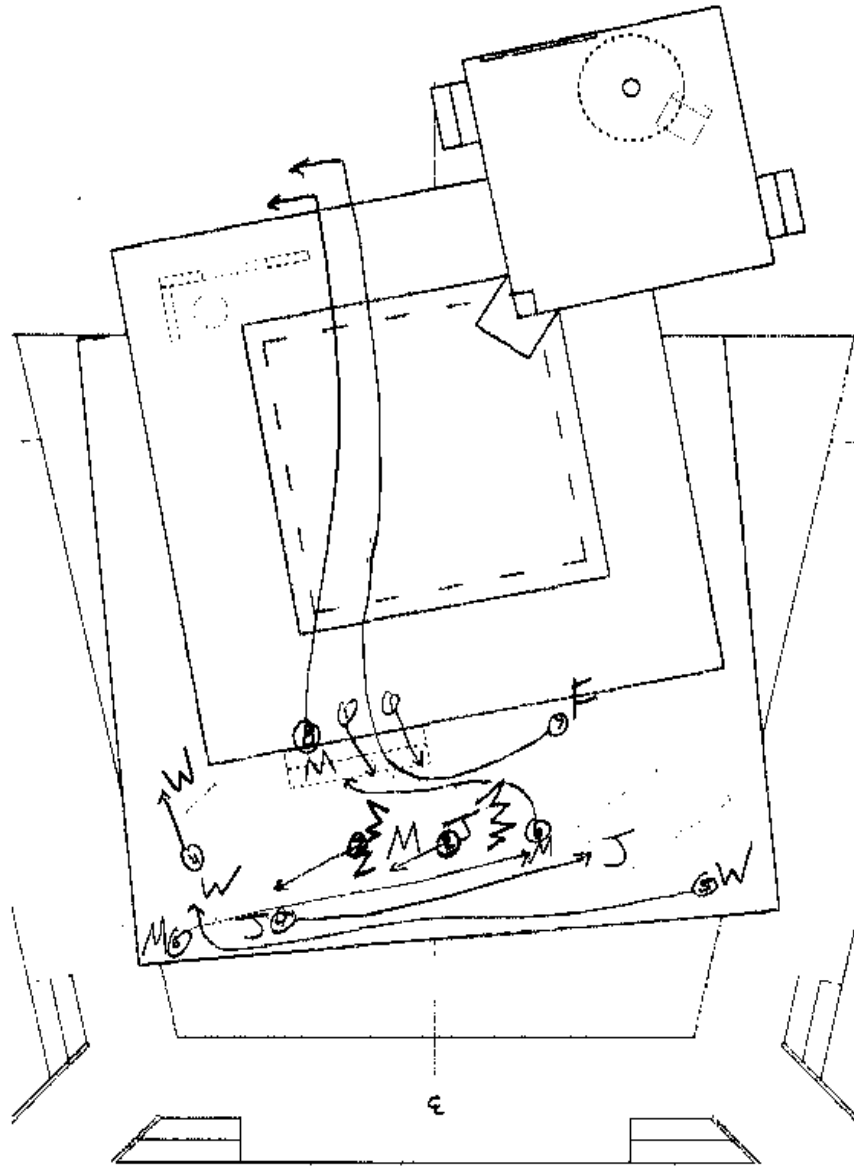
*Blocking Chart 6. Scene 2 (2/2)*



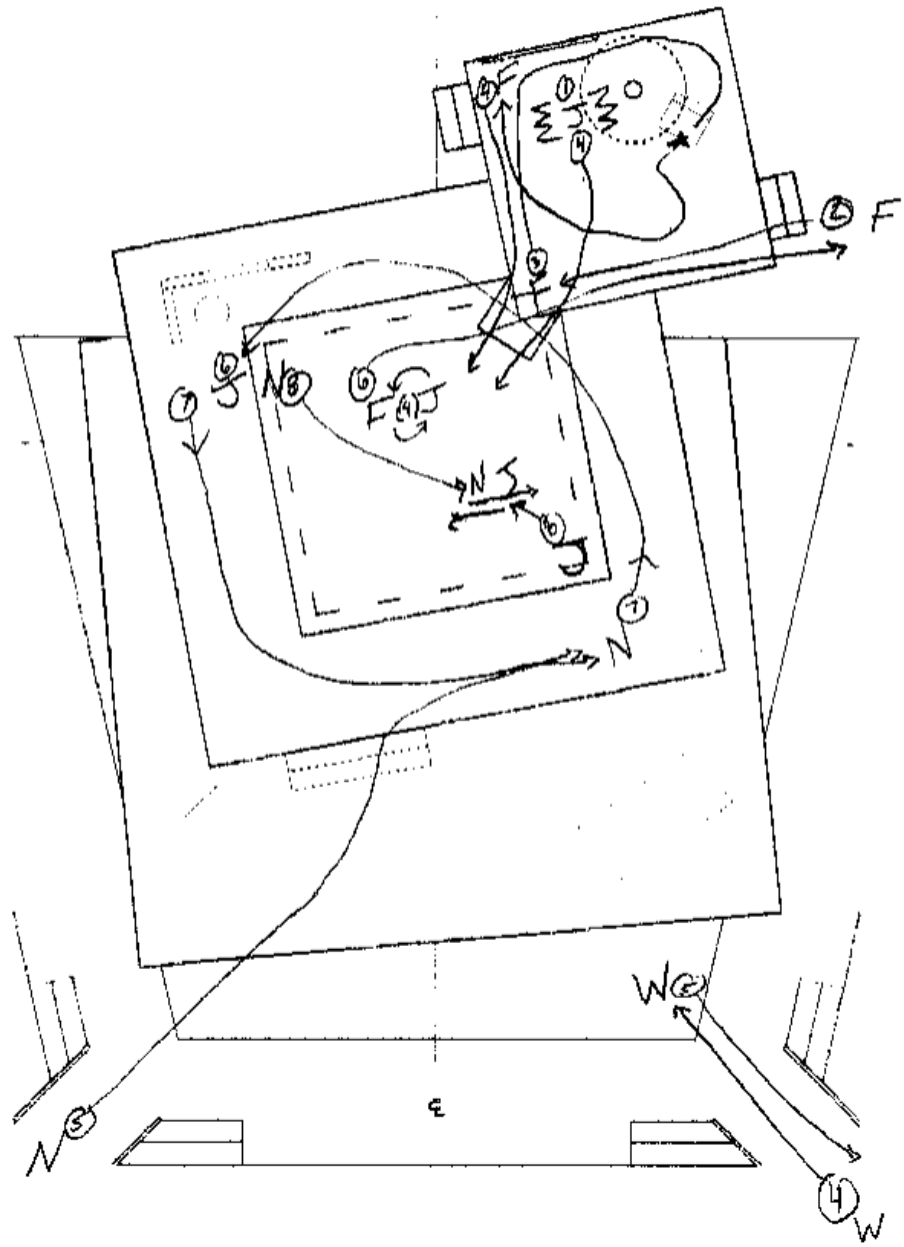
**Blocking Chart 7. Scene 3.**



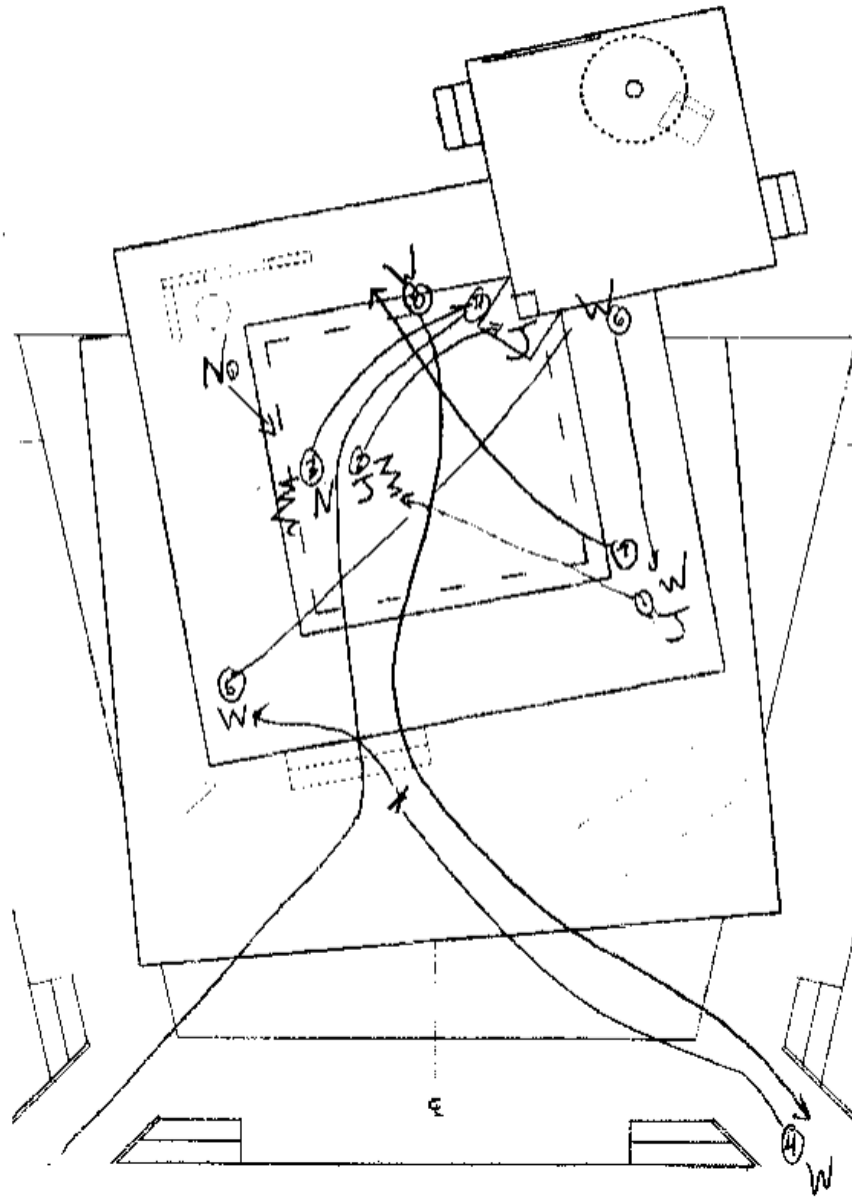
*Blocking Chart 8. Scene 4 (1/2).*



*Blocking Chart 9. Scene 4 (2/2).*

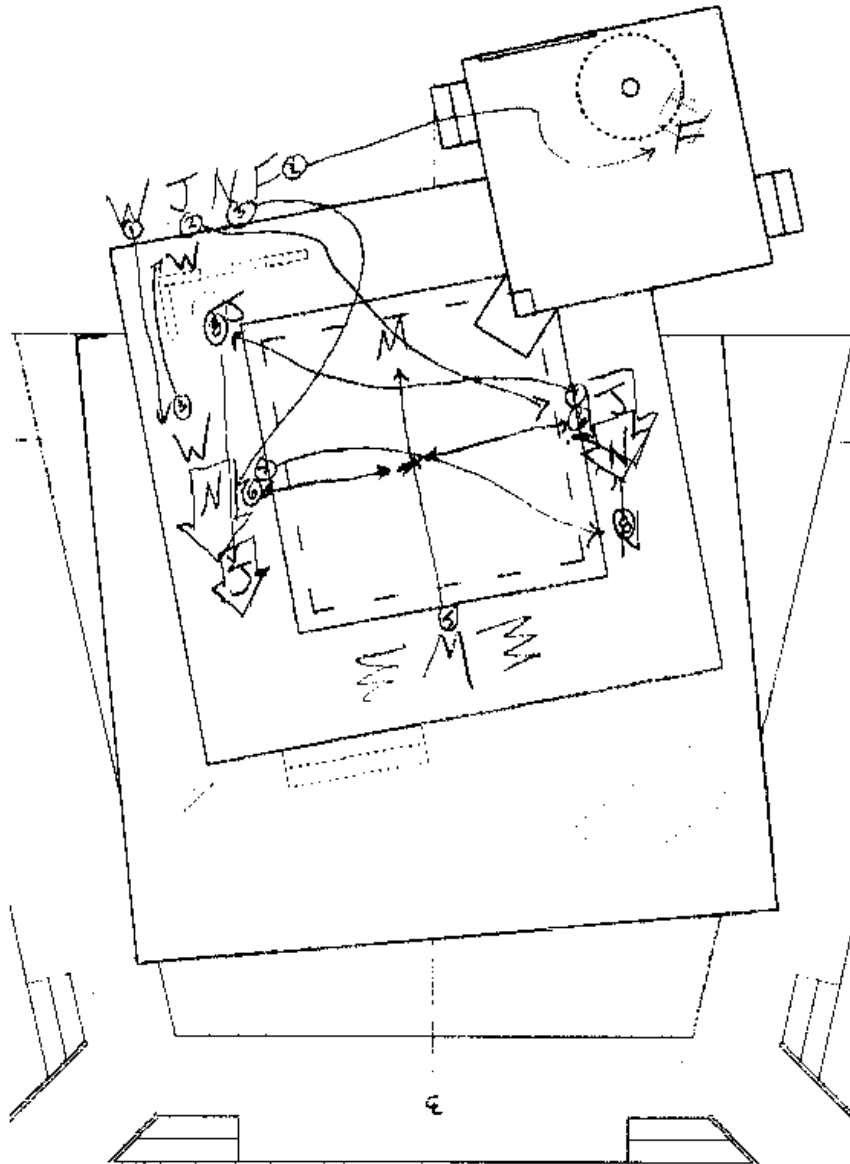


**Blocking Chart 10. Scene 5 (1/2).**

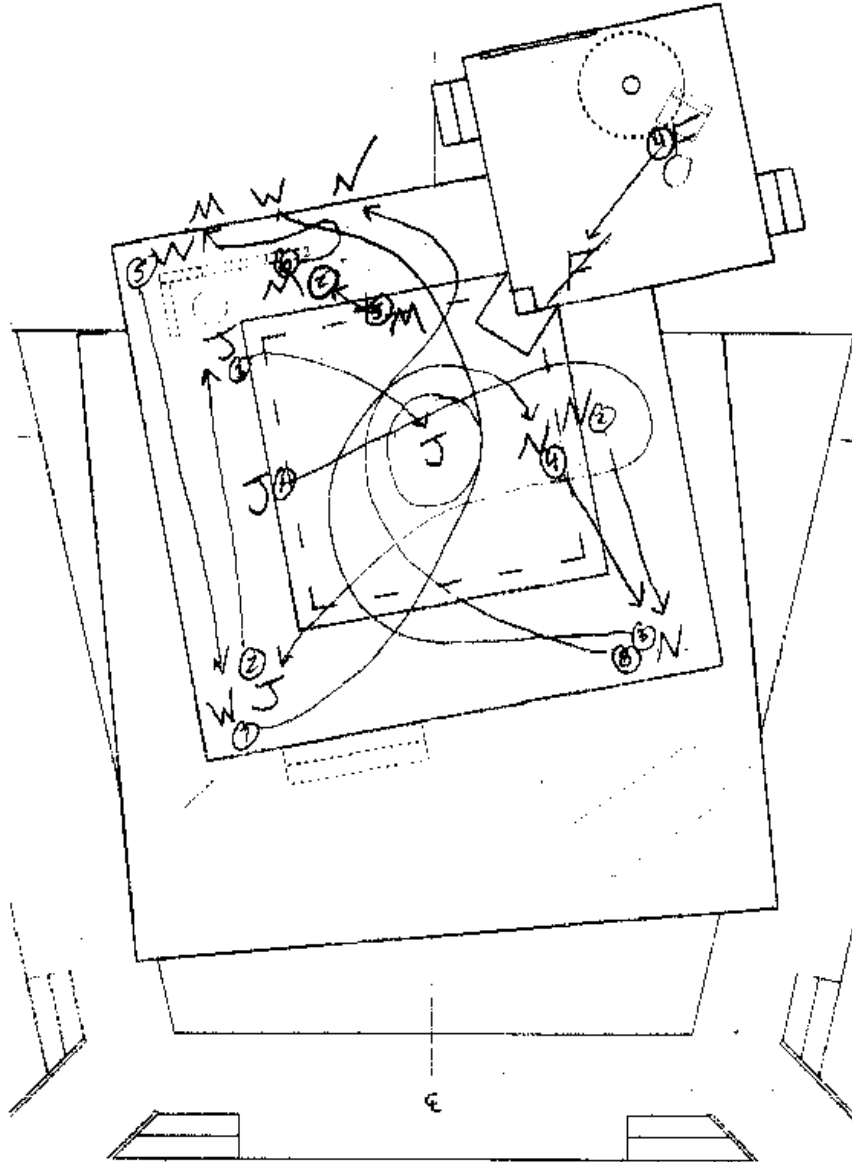


*Blocking Chart 11. Scene 5 (2/2).*





**Blocking Chart 12. Scene 6 (1/2).**



*Blocking Chart 13. Scene 6 (2/2).*

APPENDIX F  
REHEARSAL REPORTS

<b><u>The Royale</u></b>		Rehearsal Report # 1		
UNO Lab Theater		Rehearsal Date: October 2, 2017		
<b>Rehearsal Work:</b>				
Start Time: 7:46PM	End Time: 9:25PM	Break:	Break:	Break:
<b>In Attendance:</b>				
Cast: Michael Pepp (Wynton), Shanda Quintal (Nina), James Compton V (Fish), Patrick Hunter (Max), John Charles II (Jay)				
Production: Ryan M. Decker (Director), Diane K Baas (Technical Director/Lighting Designer), Kevin Griffith (Scenic Designer), Julianne Reece Glotfelty (Assistant Director)				
<b>Personnel Late/Absent:</b> John Charles II (texted, class)				
<b>Activities:</b>				
7:46pm - Go over rehearsal expectations				
7:55pm - Read through script				
9:09pm - Wrap up talk and introductions				
9:25pm - End of Day (Cast and Production)				
<b>Next Rehearsal:</b>	Time: October 3rd at 7:30PM	Space: UNO Lab Theater		
<b>UPCOMING SCHEDULE:</b>				
First Round Blocking Rehearsal				

**General Notes:**

-We will begin blocking tomorrow!

**Problems/Accidents:**

None!

**Set:**

Thank you for showing us the model!

**Props:**

None! Thanks!

**Costumes:**

-We have Michael Pepp now as Wynton, measuring needed? Probably not?

**Lighting:**

Thank you for being here tonight!

**Sound:**

-Asher and Ryan should set up time at meeting to discuss sound! Involving Jazz and percussion. Ryan has Birdman ideas!

**Script:**

-Do we still call them 'heavy weight' champions?

**Distribution List:** R.M. DECKER, D. BAAS, T. FRENCH, K. GRIFFITH, A. GRIFFITH, J.R. GLOTFELTY

<b><u>The Royale</u></b>			Rehearsal Report # 2	
			Rehearsal Date: October 3, 2017	
<b>Rehearsal Work:</b>				
<b>Start Time:</b> 7:38pm	<b>End Time:</b> 10:08pm	<b>Break:</b> 8:48pm-8:58pm	<b>Break:</b>	<b>Break:</b>
<b>In Attendance:</b>				
Cast: Michael Pepp (Wynton), John Charles II (Jay), Patrick Hunter (Max), James Compton V (Fish)				
Production: Ryan M Decker (Director), Julianne Reece Glotfelty (Assistant Director)				
<b>Personnel Late/Absent:</b>				
<b>Activities:</b>				
7:38pm - Warm up led by Ryan		8:58pm - Read/Discussion Round 2		
7:47pm - Read Round 1 with claps		9:41pm - Run twice through Round 1		
8:02pm - Blocking/Work Round 1		10:04pm - Debrief about Round 1		
8:34pm - Review Round 1				
<b>Next Rehearsal:</b>	<b>Time: 7:30PM</b>		<b>Space: Lab Theater</b>	
<b>UPCOMING SCHEDULE:</b>				
Blocking Round Two				

<b>General Notes:</b> -Still looking for an SM team
<b>Problems/Accidents:</b> None!
<b>Set:</b> None! Thank you!
<b>Props:</b> -Do we have a props person?
<b>Costumes:</b> -Do you have anything ready for us to work with? It's okay if you do not!
<b>Lighting:</b> None! Thank you!

**Sound:**

- Will need a track for rehearsal for the fight scenes
- Ryan will send you a video of Round 1

**Front of House:**

None! Thank you!

**Script:**

Distribution List: R.M. DECKER, D. BAAS, T. FRENCH, K. GRIFFITH, A. GRIFFITH, J.R. GLOTFELTY

<b><u>The Royale</u></b>			Rehearsal Report # 3	
			Rehearsal Date: October 4, 2017	
<b>Rehearsal Work:</b>				
<b>Start Time:</b> 7:06pm	<b>End Time:</b> 10:06pm	<b>Break:</b> 8:10-8:20pm	<b>Break:</b> 9:22-9:28pm	
<b>In Attendance:</b>				
Cast: M. Pepp (Wynton), J. Charles II (Jay), P. Hunter (Max), J. Compton V (Fish)				
Production: Ryan M. Decker (Director), Julianne Reece Glotfelty (Assistant Director)				
<b>Personnel Late/Absent:</b>				
<b>Activities:</b>				
7:06pm - Warm up with Julianne		7:52pm - Run through/work Round 2		
7:14pm - Review Round 1		8:25pm - Continue to run through/work round 2		
7:26pm - Work Round 7 of Round 1		9:28pm - Ryan gives notes		
7:33pm - Read through Round 2		9:43pm - Run from top of show		
7:45pm - Look at model box				
<b>Next Rehearsal:</b>	<b>Time: 7PM</b>		<b>Space: Lab Theatre</b>	
<b>UPCOMING SCHEDULE:</b>				
Blocking Round 3				

<b>General Notes:</b> No notes!
<b>Problems/Accidents:</b> None!
<b>Set:</b> -Need boxing bag ASAP
<b>Props:</b> -Hand tape needed!
<b>Costumes:</b> -Can we get the gloves here at rehearsal so they can be broken into? -Can Patrick have a pocket watch?

**Lighting:**

No notes! Thanks!

**Sound:**

No notes! Thanks!

**Front of House:**

No notes! Thanks!

Distribution List: R.M. DECKER, D. BAAS, T. FRENCH, K. GRIFFITH, A. GRIFFITH, J.R. GLOTFELTY



<b><u>The Royale</u></b>			Rehearsal Report # 4	
			Rehearsal Date: October 5, 2017	
<b>Rehearsal Work:</b>				
<b>Start Time:</b> 7:09pm	<b>End Time:</b> 9:46pm	<b>Break:</b> 8:25pm-8:35pm	<b>Break:</b>	<b>Break:</b>
<b>In Attendance:</b>				
<b>Cast:</b> Michael Pepp (Wynton), Patrick Hunter (Max), John Charles II (Jay), James Compton V (Fish)				
<b>Production:</b> Ryan Michael Decker (Director), Julianne Reece Glotfelty (Assistant Director)				
<b>Personnel Late/Absent:</b>				
<b>Activities:</b>				
7:09pm - Warm up led by Ryan		9:10pm - Run/Review Round 1		
7:16pm - Read through Round 3		9:20pm - Run/Review Round 2		
7:34pm - Stage Round 3		9:33pm - Run/Review Round 3		
8:35pm - Review Round 3 Blocking		9:41pm - Questions/End of Week notes		
8:50pm - Work round 3 w/ notes				
<b>Next Rehearsal:</b>	<b>Time: October 9th 7:30PM</b>		<b>Space: Lab Theater</b>	
<b>UPCOMING SCHEDULE:</b>				
<b>Block Round 4</b>				

<b>General Notes:</b> No notes!
<b>Problems/Accidents:</b> None!
<b>Set:</b> No notes! Thank you!
<b>Props:</b> No notes!
<b>Costumes:</b> -Can we get sparring gloves for Fish? The gloves for Jay to hit -We need laces for the new boxing gloves -No longer need the new gloves Ryan wanted

**Lighting:**

No notes! Thank you!

**Sound:**

No notes! Thank you!

**Front of House:**

No notes! Thank you!

Distribution List: R.M. DECKER, D. BAAS, T. FRENCH, K. GRIFFITH, A. GRIFFITH, J.R. GLOTFELTY

<b><u>The Royale</u></b>			<b>Rehearsal Report # 5</b>	
			<b>Rehearsal Date: October 9,2017</b>	
<b>Rehearsal Work:</b>				
Start Time: 7:34PM	End Time: 10:01	Break: 8:29-8:39pm	Break:	Break:
<b>In Attendance:</b>				
<b>Cast:</b> Michael Pepp (Wynton), Patrick Hunter (Max), John Charles II (Jay), James Compton V (Fish)				
<b>Production:</b> Ryan Michael Decker (Director), Julianne Reece Glotfelty (Assistant Director), Delilah Lee (Stage Manager)				
<b>Personnel Late/Absent:</b>				
<b>Activities:</b>				
7:34pm – Warm up w/ Ryan		8:10pm – Notes from Ryan / Discussion		
7:40pm – Read through of Round 4		8:14pm – Work Round 4 on its’ feet		
7:47pm – Discussion of Round 4		8:41pm – Stop and go of Round 4 on its’ feet		
8:02pm – Second read through		9:51pm – Run over Round 1 on its’ feet		
<b>Next Rehearsal:</b> October 10,2017		<b>Time:</b> 7:30pm		<b>Space:</b> Lab Theater
<b>UPCOMING SCHEDULE:</b>				
Blocking Round 5				

<b>General Notes:</b>
<b>Problems/Accidents:</b>
<b>Set:</b>
<b>Props:</b> We need the canvas bags, towels, bucket, wraps!

**Costumes:**

None! Thank you!

**Lighting:**

None! Thank you!

**Sound:**

None! Thank you!

**Front of House:**

None! Thank you!

**Management:**

None! Thank you!

Distribution List: R.M. DECKER, D. BAAS, T. FRENCH, K. GRIFFITH, A. GRIFFITH, J.R. GLOTFELTY, D. LEE

<b><u>The Royale</u></b>			Rehearsal Report # 6	
			Rehearsal Date: October 10, 2017	
<b>Rehearsal Work:</b>				
Start Time: 7:36pm	End Time: 10:12pm	Break: 8:55pm - 9:06pm	Break:	Break:
<b>In Attendance:</b>				
Cast: Michael Pepp (Wynton), John Charles II (Jay), James Compton V (Fish), Shanda Quintal (Nina)				
Production: Ryan Michael Decker (Director), Julianne Reece Glotfelty (Assistant Director)				
<b>Personnel Late/Absent:</b> M. Pepp (late)				
<b>Activities:</b>				
7:36pm - Warm up w/ Ryan		9:44pm - Ryan gives notes		
7:45pm - Read through Round 5		9:51pm - Run through round 5		
8:05pm - Round 5 Discussion		10:10pm - Notes from Ryan		
8:20pm - Blocking Round 5				
9:15pm - Run from top of Round 5				
<b>Next Rehearsal:</b>		<b>Time:</b> 7PM		<b>Space:</b> Lab Theater
<b>UPCOMING SCHEDULE:</b>				
Block Round 6				

<b>General Notes:</b> -We need to carve out time for shadowboxing
<b>Problems/Accidents:</b> None!
<b>Set:</b> No notes! Thank you!
<b>Props:</b> -Two photos and doctors book is needed! Thank you!
<b>Costumes:</b> -We need a purse for Nina! -Thank you for the laces!

**Lighting:**

No notes! Thank you!

**Sound:**

No notes! Thank you!

**Front of House:**

No notes! Thank you!

Distribution List: R.M. DECKER, D. BAAS, T. FRENCH, K. GRIFFITH, A. GRIFFITH, J.R. GLOTFELTY, D. HALL

<b><u>The Royale</u></b>			Rehearsal Report # 7	
			Rehearsal Date: October 11, 2017	
<b>Rehearsal Work:</b>				
Start Time: 7:10pm	End Time: 10:08pm	Break: 8:24-8:36pm	Break:	Break:
<b>In Attendance:</b>				
<b>Cast:</b> Michael Pepp (Wynton), Patrick Hunter (Max), John Charles II (Jay), James Compton V (Fish), Shanda Quintal (Nina)				
<b>Production:</b> Ryan Michael Decker (Director), Julianne Reece Glotfelty (Assistant Director), Delilah Lee (Stage Manager)				
<b>Personnel Late/Absent:</b> S. Quintal (late, texted), M. Pepp (late, texted)				
<b>Activities:</b>				
7:10pm- Warm ups with Ryan		8:36pm- Run through of Round 6 with blocking		
7:12pm- Read through of Round 6		9:02pm- Run through of Rounds 4-6 with blocking		
7:26pm- Discussion of Round 6		9:47pm- Notes from Ryan		
7:33pm- Block Round 6				
<b>Next Rehearsal:</b> October 16, 2017		<b>Time:</b> 7:30PM		<b>Space:</b> Lab Theater
<b>UPCOMING SCHEDULE:</b>				
Review/Run the whole show				

<b>General Notes:</b>
We need to take about 10-15 minutes to work out the details of Wynton's song in Round 5
<b>Problems/Accidents:</b>
None!
<b>Set:</b>
No notes, thank you!
<b>Props:</b>
No notes, thank you!
<b>Costumes:</b>
No notes, thank you!

**Lighting:**

No notes, thank you!

**Sound:**

No notes, thank you!

**Front of House:**

No notes, thank you!

Distribution List: R.M. DECKER, D. BAAS, T. FRENCH, K. GRIFFITH, A. GRIFFITH, J.R. GLOTFELTY, D. LEE, D. HOOVER



<b><u>The Royale</u></b>			<b>Rehearsal Report # 8</b>	
			<b>Rehearsal Date:</b> October 16, 2017	
<b>Rehearsal Work:</b>				
Start Time: 7:36pm	End Time: 10:31pm	Break:9:04-9:15pm	Break:	Break:
<b>In Attendance:</b>				
<b>Cast:</b> Michael Pepp (Wynton), Patrick Hunter (Max), John Charles II (Jay), James Compton V (Fish), Shanda Quintal (Nina)				
<b>Production:</b> Ryan Michael Decker (Director), Julianne Reece Glotfelty (Assistant Director), Delilah Lee (Stage Manager)				
<b>Personnel Late/Absent:</b>				
<b>Activities:</b>				
7:36pm- Covering where props and set pieces will be on stage		9:56pm- Stop and go Round 5 with only Jay and Nina		
7:40pm- Run the show from start to finish				
9:15pm- Notes from Ryan				
9:35pm- Notes from Julianne				
<b>Next Rehearsal:</b> October 17,2017		<b>Time:</b> 7:30PM		<b>Space:</b> NIMS Theater
<b>UPCOMING SCHEDULE:</b> Work Rounds 1 and 2				

<b>General Notes:</b> None!
<b>Problems/Accidents:</b> None!
<b>Set:</b> None, thank you!
<b>Props:</b> Phonograph for Round 5

**Costumes:**

None, thank you!

**Lighting:**

None, thank you!

**Sound:**

None, thank you!

**Front of House:**

None, thank you!

Distribution List: R.M. DECKER, D. BAAS, T. FRENCH, K. GRIFFITH, A. GRIFFITH, J.R. GLOTFELTY, D. LEE, D. HOOVER

<b><u>The Royale</u></b>			<b>Rehearsal Report # 9</b>	
			<b>Rehearsal Date: October 17, 2017</b>	
<b>Rehearsal Work:</b>				
Start Time: 7:35PM	End Time: 10:22PM	Break: 8:35pm-8:45pm	Break: 9:23pm-9:34pm	Break:
<b>In Attendance:</b>				
<b>Cast:</b> Michael Pepp (Wynton), Patrick Hunter (Max), John Charles II (Jay), James Compton V (Fish) <b>Production:</b> Ryan Michael Decker (Director), Julianne Reece Glotfelty (Assistant Director), Asher Griffith (Sound Designer)				
<b>Personnel Late/Absent:</b> Delilah Lee (Work conflict), Shanda (Sick, called in)				
<b>Activities:</b>				
7:35pm – Run Round 1		8:29pm – Notes w/ Ryan		
7:46pm – Run Round 2		8:45pm – Run Round 1		
8:01pm – Notes w/ Ryan		9:00pm – Run/Work Round 2		
8:09pm – Notes w/ Julianne		9:35pm – Work the Song (in Round 5)		
8:13pm – Work claps w/ Asher		10:09pm – Work w/ John and the Punching Bag		
8:19pm – Run Round 1				
<b>Next Rehearsal:</b> October 18,2017		<b>Time:</b> 7:00pm		<b>Space:</b> Lab Theater
<b>UPCOMING SCHEDULE:</b>				
Working Round 5				

<b>General Notes:</b> -We cut the lines on page 58 while Wynton is singing:  “You gon’ get me with that one-“ “Oh I know” “Oh do you now?”
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**Problems/Accidents:**

None!

**Set:**

- Downstage platforms wobble (corners)
- We don't need the two extra bells, or ca they be operated remotely
- Can we make the punching bag higher for John? About 8-9 inches?
- Thank you for everything! We are excited!

**Props:**

- We could curate a list of all the props. Ryan and Diane will chat.

**Costumes:**

- Thank you for leaving us the shoes!

**Lighting:**

None! Thank you!

**Sound:**

Thank you for stopping by!

**Front of House:**

None! Thank you!

**Management:**

We will be talking to potential ASM/Props persons!

Distribution List: R.M. DECKER, D. BAAS, T. FRENCH, K. GRIFFITH, A. GRIFFITH, J.R. GLOTFELTY, D. LEE, D. HOOVER

<b><u>The Royale</u></b>		<b>Rehearsal Report # 10</b>	
		<b>Rehearsal Date:</b> October 18, 2017	
<b>Rehearsal Work:</b>			
Start Time: 7:02pm	End Time: 10:00pm	Break: 8:26-8:36pm	Break:
<b>In Attendance:</b>			
<b>Cast:</b> Michael Pepp (Wynton), Patrick Hunter (Max), John Charles II (Jay), James Compton V (Fish), Shanda Quintal (Nina)			
<b>Production:</b> Ryan Michael Decker (Director), Julianne Reece Glotfelty (Assistant Director), Delilah Lee (Stage Manager), Asher Griffith (Sound Designer)			
<b>Personnel Late/Absent:</b>			
<b>Activities:</b>			
7:02pm- Practice Wynton's song with the claps		8:37pm- Run Round 6	
7:13pm- Run Round 5		8:51pm- Notes from Ryan	
7:31pm- Notes with Ryan		8:55pm- Stop and go Round 6	
7:49pm- Stop and go Round 5		9:40pm- Run Round 5	
8:21pm- Character breakdown of Wynton with Ryan, Julianne, and Michael			
<b>Next Rehearsal:</b> October 19, 2017	<b>Time:</b> 7:00PM		<b>Space:</b> NIMS Theater
<b>UPCOMING SCHEDULE:</b> Work Rounds 3 and 4			

<b>General Notes:</b> We have a props person, Gillian Box!
<b>Problems/Accidents:</b> None!
<b>Set:</b> None, thank you!

**Props:**

Thanking you for joining the team!

**Costumes:**

Some sort of branch cane for Wynton.

**Lighting:**

None, thank you!

**Sound:**

Thank you for stopping by!

**Front of House:**

None, thank you!

Distribution List: R.M. DECKER, D. BAAS, T. FRENCH, K. GRIFFITH, A. GRIFFITH, J.R. GLOTFELTY, D. LEE, D. HOOVER, G. BOX

<b><u>The Royale</u></b>			<b>Rehearsal Report # 11</b>	
			<b>Rehearsal Date: October 19, 2017</b>	
<b>Rehearsal Work:</b>				
Start Time: 7:02pm	End Time: 9:13pm	Break: 8:21-8:32pm	Break:	Break:
<b>In Attendance:</b>				
<b>Cast:</b> Michael Pepp (Wynton), Patrick Hunter (Max), John Charles II (Jay), James Compton V (Fish)				
<b>Production:</b> Ryan Michael Decker (Director), Delilah Lee (Stage Manager)				
<b>Personnel Late/Absent:</b> Julianne Reece Glotfelty (conflict)				
<b>Activities:</b>				
7:02pm- Warm Up with Wynton's song		7:37pm- Round 4 notes		
7:05pm- Run Round 3		7:44pm- Run Rounds 3 and 4		
7:13pm- Round 3 notes		8:06pm- Round 3 and 4 notes		
7:24pm- Rework ending of Round 3		8:33pm- Run from the top of the show through Round 4		
7:26pm- Run Round 4				
<b>Next Rehearsal:</b> October 23,2017		<b>Time:</b> 7:30PM		<b>Space:</b> NIMS Theater
<b>UPCOMING SCHEDULE:</b>				
Running the whole show, first off book rehearsal				

<b>General Notes:</b>
James is having lower back issues, but he is getting it checked out this weekend.
<b>Problems/Accidents:</b>
None!
<b>Set:</b>
None, thank you!

**Props:**

None, thank you!

**Costumes:**

None, thank you!

**Lighting:**

None, thank you!

**Sound:**

None, thank you!

**Front of House:**

None, thank you!

Distribution List: R.M. DECKER, D. BAAS, T. FRENCH, K. GRIFFITH, A. GRIFFITH, J.R. GLOTFELTY, D. LEE, D. HOOVER, G. BOX



<b><u>The Royale</u></b>			<b>Rehearsal Report # 12</b>	
			<b>Rehearsal Date: October 23, 2017</b>	
<b>Rehearsal Work:</b>				
Start Time: 7:40pm	End Time: 10:30pm	Break: 9:06-9:21pm	Break:	Break:
<b>In Attendance:</b>				
<p><b>Cast:</b> Michael Pepp (Wynton), Patrick Hunter (Max), John Charles II (Jay), James Compton V (Fish), Shanda Quinta (Nina)</p> <p><b>Production:</b> Ryan Michael Decker (Director), Julianne Reece Glotfelty (Assistant Director), Delilah Lee (Stage Manager), David Hoover (Department Chair)</p>				
<b>Personnel Late/Absent:</b> J. Compton (texted)				
<b>Activities:</b>				
7:40pm- Warm ups with Ryan		9:42pm- Second read through of Round 1		
7:48pm- Run from the top of the show off book		9:53pm- Sit down read through of Round 6		
7:53pm- Run from the top of the show with scripts		10:06pm- Second read through of Round 6		
9:21pm- Discussion with Ryan		10:18pm- Third read through of Round 6		
9:30pm- Sit down read through of Round 1				
<b>Next Rehearsal:</b> October 24,2017		<b>Time:</b> 7:30PM		<b>Space:</b> NIMS Theater
<b>UPCOMING SCHEDULE:</b> Work Rounds 1, 3, and 6.				

<p><b>General Notes:</b></p> <p>Can we have an SM extension cord to house center?</p> <p>Ryan has emailed Alex Wallace about polishing boxing.</p> <p>Changed Jay and Fish's heights to the actor's heights. Changed Bixby's height to 6 feet even.</p>
<p><b>Problems/Accidents:</b></p> <p>None!</p>

**Set:** Rehearsal bench for downstage left. We also need stairs to the top left platform on stage left, downstage right and upstage right

**Props:**

Nina's photographs, book and purse for Round 5

**Costumes:**

None, thank you!

**Lighting:**

None, thank you!

**Sound:**

None, thank you!

**Front of House:**

None, thank you!

Distribution List: R.M. DECKER, D. BAAS, T. FRENCH, K. GRIFFITH, A. GRIFFITH, J.R. GLOTFELTY, D. LEE, D. HOOVER, G. BOX

# The Royale

Rehearsal Report # 13

Rehearsal Date: October 24th, 2017

## Rehearsal Work:

<b>Start Time:</b> 7:40pm	<b>End Time:</b> 10:30pm	<b>Break:</b> 8:39pm- 8:49pm	<b>Break:</b> 9:56pm-10:06pm	<b>Break:</b>
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## **In Attendance:**

**Cast:** Michael Pepp (Wynton), Patrick Hunter (Max), John Charles II (Jay), James Compton V (Fish), Shanda Quintal (Nina)

**Production:** Ryan Michael Decker (Director), Julianne Reece Glotfelty (Assistant Director)

**Personnel Late/Absent:** 7:48pm- James Compton (texted)

## **Activities:**

7:40pm- Run through round 6	9:20pm- Run round 1 w/ worked stuff
7:55pm- Work through blocking spots for Round 6	9:33pm- Run round 1/round 6
8:02pm- Run/work round 6	10:06pm- Discussion of upcoming rehearsals
8:33pm- Discussion of Round 6	10:09pm- Read through of Round 6 twice
8:49pm- Run Round 1	
9:05pm- Run/Work Round 1	

<b>Next Rehearsal:</b>	<b>Time:</b> 7PM	<b>Space:</b> Robert E. Nims
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## **UPCOMING SCHEDULE:**

**DESIGNER RUN!**

## **General Notes:**

-Tomorrow is the designer run. We look forward to seeing you all here!

## **Problems/Accidents:**

-None!

## **Facilities:**

-Thank you for the extension cord! Super helpful!

## **Set:**

-DLC title is popping up  
-We need a folding chair for the top platform

**Props:**

-Gillian, can you make it out tomorrow?

**Costumes:**

-Thank you for the skirt!

**Lighting:**

-None! Thank you!

**Sound:**

-None! Thank you!

**Front of House:**

-None! Thank you!

Distribution List: R.M. DECKER, D. BAAS, T. FRENCH, K. GRIFFITH, A. GRIFFITH, J.R. GLOTFELTY, D. LEE, D. HOOVER, G.BOX

<b><u>The Royale</u></b>			<b>Rehearsal Report # 14</b>	
			<b>Rehearsal Date: October 25, 2017</b>	
<b>Rehearsal Work:</b>				
Start Time: 7:00pm	End Time: 10:01pm	Break: 8:13-8:25pm	Break:	Break:
<b>In Attendance:</b>				
<p><b>Cast:</b> Michael Pepp (Wynton), Patrick Hunter (Max), John Charles II (Jay), James Compton V (Fish), Shanda Quinta (Nina)</p> <p><b>Production:</b> Ryan Michael Decker (Director), Delilah Lee (Stage Manager), Gillian Box (Props), Kevin Griffith (Set Designer), Asher Griffith (Sound Designer), Diane Baas (Lighting Designer)</p>				
<b>Personnel Late/Absent:</b> S. Quinta (late, texted)				
<b>Activities:</b>				
7:00pm- Warm Ups with Ryan				
7:04pm- Run from the top of the show				
8:26pm- Notes/Discussion with Ryan				
9:11pm- Stop and go Round 5				
<b>Next Rehearsal:</b> October 26,2017		<b>Time:</b> 7:00pm		<b>Space:</b> Nims Theater
<b>UPCOMING SCHEDULE:</b>				
Work Round 6				

<b>General Notes:</b> We need a cane for Wynton.
<b>Problems/Accidents:</b> None!
<b>Set:</b> Can we move the top stage platform stairs to downstage right of the platform? Thank you stopping in and for the bell!
<b>Props:</b> Thank you for stopping by!

**Costumes:**

Do you have a cane for Wynton we can use?

**Lighting:**

Please read the sound note. Thank you for stopping by!

**Sound:**

Can we hide ceiling mics in the drop down light grid? Thank you for stopping by!

**Front of House:**

None. Thank you!

**Management:**

None. Thank you!

Distribution List: R.M. DECKER, D. BAAS, T. FRENCH, K. GRIFFITH, A. GRIFFITH, J.R. GLOTFELTY, D. LEE, D. HOOVER, G. BOX

<b><u>The Royale</u></b>		<b>Rehearsal Report # 15</b>	
		<b>Rehearsal Date:</b> October 26, 2017	
<b>Rehearsal Work:</b>			
Start Time: 7:15pm	End Time: 9:43pm	Break:8:23-8:35pm	Break: Break:
<b>In Attendance:</b>			
<b>Cast:</b> Michael Pepp (Wynton), Patrick Hunter (Max), John Charles II (Jay), James Compton V (Fish) <b>Production:</b> Ryan Michael Decker (Director), Julianne Glotfelty (Assistant Director), Delilah Lee (Stage Manager)			
<b>Personnel Late/Absent:</b> Michael Pepp (late), James Compton (late)			
<b>Activities:</b>			
7:15pm- Three runs of Round 1		8:39pm- Two runs of Round 3	
7:49pm- Run Round 6		8:58pm- Work Round 5	
8:06pm- Discussion of Round 6		9:33pm- Discussion of Round 5	
8:08pm- Second run of Round 6		9:39pm- Work Round 5	
<b>Next Rehearsal:</b> October 30,2017	<b>Time:</b> 7:30pm	<b>Space:</b> Nims Theater	
<b>UPCOMING SCHEDULE:</b> Running the whole show.			

<b>General Notes:</b> None!
<b>Problems/Accidents:</b> None!
<b>Set:</b> The upstage platform is squeaky.
<b>Props:</b> None, thank you!

**Costumes:**

Michael Pepp said he can meet with you at 11:10am and James Compton said he can meet with you at 12:10pm.

**Lighting:**

Establish together a time for Sunday tech.

**Sound:**

None, thank you!

**Front of House:**

None, thank you!

**Management:**

None, thank you!

Distribution List: R.M. DECKER, D. BAAS, T. FRENCH, K. GRIFFITH, A. GRIFFITH, J.R. GLOTFELTY, D. LEE, D. HOOVER, G. BOX



<b><u>The Royale</u></b>			<b>Rehearsal Report # 16</b>	
			<b>Rehearsal Date: October 30, 2017</b>	
<b>Rehearsal Work:</b>				
Start Time: 7:37pm	End Time: 10:17pm	Break: 8:59-9:10pm	Break:	Break:
<b>In Attendance:</b>				
<b>Cast:</b> Michael Pepp (Wynton), Patrick Hunter (Max), John Charles II (Jay), James Compton V (Fish), Shanda Quintal (Nina)				
<b>Production:</b> Ryan Michael Decker (Director), Julianne Reece Glotfelty (Assistant Director), Delilah Lee (Stage Manager)				
<b>Personnel Late/Absent:</b>				
<b>Activities:</b>				
7:37pm- Run Round 1		9:39pm- Notes from Ryan		
7:48pm- Read through of lines missed in Round 1 and notes from Ryan				
7:56pm- Run the show minus Round 6				
9:12pm- Sit down to record audio for Rounds 1, 3, and 6				
<b>Next Rehearsal:</b> October 31,2017		<b>Time:</b> 7:30pm		<b>Space:</b> NIMS Theater
<b>UPCOMING SCHEDULE:</b>				
Polish the show				

<b>General Notes:</b> We need facilities to take out the trash.
<b>Problems/Accidents:</b> None!
<b>Set:</b> The bell hammer is falling off. Also, when are we white washing everything?

**Props:**

We need a book and 2 photographs for Nina in Round 5.

**Costumes:**

We need to do photoshoots this week. Kristin is coming in to take photos, but we need costumes and such.

**Lighting:**

None, thank you!

**Sound:**

Do we have a sound design?

**Front of House:**

None, thank you!

Distribution List: R.M. DECKER, D. BAAS, T. FRENCH, K. GRIFFITH, A. GRIFFITH, J.R. GLOTFELTY, D.LEE, D. HOOVER, G. BOX

<b><u>The Royale</u></b>	Rehearsal Report # 17
	Rehearsal Date: October 31, 2017

**Rehearsal Work:**

<b>Start Time:</b> 7:34PM	<b>End Time:</b> 10:13PM	<b>Break:</b> 8:31pm - 8:42pm	<b>Break:</b> 9:28pm - 9:33pm	<b>Break:</b>
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**In Attendance:**

**Cast:** Michael Pepp (Wynton), Patrick Hunter (Max), John Charles II (Jay), James Compton V (Fish), Shanda Quintal (Nina)

**Production:** Ryan Michael Decker (Director), Julianne Reece Glotfelty (Assistant Director)

**Personnel Late/Absent:**

**Activities:**

<b>7:34PM</b> - Work through lines of Round 6	<b>9:53PM</b> - Run round 1
<b>8:42PM</b> - Work through lines of round 6 again	<b>10:07PM</b> - Wrap up discussion of rehearsal intent
<b>9:33PM</b> - Review round 1 individually	
<b>9:37PM</b> - Work through lines and claps of round 1	

<b>Next Rehearsal:</b> Nov. 1st	<b>Time:</b> 7PM	<b>Space:</b> Robert E Nims
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**UPCOMING SCHEDULE:**

Insert fighting w/ Alex Wallace and Run Round 1 & Round 6

**General Notes:**

-Alex Wallace is joining us tomorrow for fight choreography!

**Problems/Accidents:**

None!

**Facilities:**

-Trash needs to be taken out in the lobby! Thanks!

**Set:**

-Can we get the post shorter by eight inches  
-Can we get a chair rail?

**Props:**

-We need shot or bourbon glasses

**Costumes:**  
None! Thank you!

**Lighting:**  
None! Thank you!

**Sound:**  
None! Thank you!

**Front of House:**  
None! Thank you!

Distribution List: R.M. DECKER, D. BAAS, T. FRENCH, K. GRIFFITH, A. GRIFFITH, J.R. GLOTFELTY, D. LEE, G. BOX,  
D. HOOVER

<b><u>The Royale</u></b>			<b>Rehearsal Report # 18</b>	
			<b>Rehearsal Date: November 1, 2017</b>	
<b>Rehearsal Work:</b>				
Start Time: 7:03pm	End Time: 10:00pm	Break: 8:31pm-8:47pm	Break:	Break:
<b>In Attendance:</b>				
<b>Cast:</b> Michael Pepp (Wynton), Patrick Hunter (Max), John Charles II (Jay), James Compton V (Fish), Shanda Quintal (Nina)				
<b>Production:</b> Ryan Michael Decker (Director), Julianne Reece Glotfelty (Assistant Director), Delilah Lee (Stage Manager), Alex Wallace (Fight Choreographer), Asher Griffith (Sound Designer)				
<b>Personnel Late/Absent:</b>				
<b>Activities:</b>				
7:03pm- Run Round 1		7:43pm- Work Jay's solo boxing in Round 3		
7:12pm- Work on choreography with Alex		7:47pm- Run Round 6		
7:18pm- Stop and go of Round 1 with new fight choreography		8:47pm- Run from the top of the show		
7:39pm- Run and work sparring section in Round 3				
<b>Next Rehearsal:</b> November 2, 2017		<b>Time:</b> 7:00pm		<b>Space:</b> NIMS Theater
<b>UPCOMING SCHEDULE:</b>				
Reviewing the show.				

<b>General Notes:</b>
We really need the air conditioner turned off.
We need to know who our light and running crew are.
We need 2 jump ropes for warm ups.

**Problems/Accidents:**

None!

**Set:**

The boxing post is very squeaky.

Did you guys happen to see any shot glasses? Gillian said she set some in the lobby but they aren't there anymore.

We need our second chair.

**Props:**

We need the two photographs for Nina. We also need the phonograph as soon as possible.

**Costumes:**

We need to check out their boxing shoes. We also need Wynton's cane and Max's pocket watch.

**Lighting:**

None, thank you!

**Sound:**

None, thank you for stopping by!

**Front of House:**

None, thank you!

Distribution List: R.M. DECKER, D. BAAS, T. FRENCH, K. GRIFFITH, A. GRIFFITH, J.R. GLOTFELTY, D.LEE, D. HOOVER, G. BOX

<b><u>The Royale</u></b>			<b>Rehearsal Report # 19</b>	
			<b>Rehearsal Date:</b> November 2, 2017	
<b>Rehearsal Work:</b>				
Start Time: 7:03pm	End Time: 10:01pm	Break: 8:27-8:39pm	Break:	Break:
<b>In Attendance:</b>				
<b>Cast:</b> Michael Pepp (Wynton), Patrick Hunter (Max), John Charles II (Jay), James Compton V (Fish)				
<b>Production:</b> Ryan Michael Decker (Director), Julianne Reece Glotfelty (Assistant Director), Delilah Lee (Stage Manager)				
<b>Personnel Late/Absent:</b>				
<b>Activities:</b>				
7:03pm- Warm up with Round 1		9:29pm- Run Wynton and Fish's scene in Round 4		
7:14pm- Run of the show				
8:40pm- Notes with Ryan				
<b>Next Rehearsal:</b> November 3, 2017	<b>Time:</b> 7:15pm		<b>Space:</b> NIMS Theater	
<b>UPCOMING SCHEDULE:</b>				
Running Jay and Nina's scene in Round 5 and then polishing the show with everyone.				

<b>General Notes:</b>
We need two 1905 jump ropes, second set of hand wraps, two bottles of beverage (preferably water), two rags.
Reminder for Ryan to give Nina her notes.
<b>Problems/Accidents:</b>
None!
<b>Set:</b>
None, thank you!

**Props:**

The record on the phonograph is sliding around.

**Costumes:**

None, thank you!

**Lighting:**

None, thank you!

**Sound:**

None, thank you!

**Front of House:**

None, thank you!

Distribution List: R.M. DECKER, D. BAAS, T. FRENCH, K. GRIFFITH, A. GRIFFITH, J.R. GLOTFELTY, D.LEE, D. HOOVER, G. BOX



<b><u>The Royale</u></b>			<b>Rehearsal Report # 20</b>	
			<b>Rehearsal Date:</b> November 3, 2017	
<b>Rehearsal Work:</b>				
Start Time: 7:28pm	End Time: 10:43pm	Break: 9:12-9:22pm	Break:	Break:
<b>In Attendance:</b>				
<b>Cast:</b> Michael Pepp (Wynton), Patrick Hunter (Max), John Charles II (Jay), James Compton V (Fish), Shanda Quinta (Nina)				
<b>Production:</b> Ryan Michael Decker (Director), Delilah Lee (Stage Manager)				
<b>Personnel Late/Absent:</b> J. Charles (late, texted)				
<b>Activities:</b>				
7:28pm- Run Jay and Nina's scene in Round 5		10:17pm- Work Fish's entrance in Round 3		
7:46pm- Warm Up with Round 1		10:21pm- Work Nina's entrance in Round 5		
8:01pm- Run of show		10:25pm- Discussion between Ryan and Shanda		
9:30pm- Notes with Ryan				
<b>Next Rehearsal:</b> November 5, 2017		<b>Time:</b> 10:00am		<b>Space:</b> NIMS Theater
<b>UPCOMING SCHEDULE:</b>				
First tech rehearsal.				

<b>General Notes:</b>
Need to figure out lunch break on Sunday.
<b>Problems/Accidents:</b>
None!
<b>Set:</b>
Can you make the chain longer on the bell? Thank you for joining us!

**Props:**

Do we need the cases for the pictures? It may be a time period thing, but it isn't working with the purse.

**Costumes:**

Can we put elastic laces on the gloves with permanent knot to help with transitions? Also a few white handkerchiefs for Max. Wynton and Fish would both like shoe fittings, they are having difficulty boxing in their shoes. Ryan would like to discuss hair, specifically Max and Wynton. Ryan would also like Max to have a bowtie, he has a blue paisley one that may work.

**Lighting:**

None, thank you for joining us!

**Sound:**

None, thank you!

**Front of House:**

None, thank you!

Distribution List: R.M. DECKER, D. BAAS, T. FRENCH, K. GRIFFITH, A. GRIFFITH, J.R. GLOTFELTY, D.LEE, D. HOOVER, G. BOX

<b><u>The Royale</u></b>			<b>Rehearsal Report # 21</b>	
			<b>Rehearsal Date:</b> November 5, 2017	
<b>Rehearsal Work:</b>				
Start Time: 10:10am	End Time: 5:10pm	Break: 11:26- 11:36am	Break: 1:00- 2:00pm	Break: 3:27- 3:45pm
<b>In Attendance:</b>				
<b>Cast:</b> Michael Pepp (Wynton), Patrick Hunter (Max), John Charles II (Jay), James Compton V (Fish), Shanda Quinta (Nina)				
<b>Production:</b> Ryan Michael Decker (Director), Julianne Glotfelty (Assistant Director), Delilah Lee (Stage Manager), Diane Baas (Lighting Designer), Asher Griffith (Sound Designer), Kevin Griffith (Set Designer)				
<b>Personnel Late/Absent:</b> J. Compton (late, texted)				
<b>Activities:</b>				
10:10am- Put glow tape on the stage		11:08am- Set light cues for round 5		
10:17am- Start entrance with black out		11:39am- Set light cues for round 6		
10:22am- Set light cues for round 1		12:17pm- Actors change out of costumes and get together to go over lines		
10:47am- Set light cues for round 2		2:15pm- Run the show from the top with lights and sound		
10:51am- Set light cues for round 3		3:50pm- Second run of the show		
11:03am- Set light cues for round 4		4:59pm- Notes from Ryan		
<b>Next Rehearsal:</b> November 6, 2017		<b>Time:</b> 7:00pm		<b>Space:</b> NIMS Theater
<b>UPCOMING SCHEDULE:</b> Continuing tech rehearsals, adding more sound into the show.				

<b>General Notes:</b>  Ryan needs class release notes.  We should set up a props and costume area in the lobby, we also need a props table by stage left.
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Can we turn the air conditioner down or off? It's **very** cold.

**Problems/Accidents:**

None!

**Set:**

None, thank you!

**Props:**

We need an ice pack. We need a second bucket and a second rag. Water in the bottles, also corks.

**Costumes:**

The top of the cane needs to be centered. We left it in the men's dressing room for you.

Do we have a regular hooked cane? Ryan would like to chat about Max's costume. We need a shoe fitting for Wynton and Fish. Are Wynton's shoes correct, because they do not have laces. Can we get the glove laces fixed/knotted?

**Lighting:**

Diane and Ryan talked after rehearsal. Thank you for everything!

**Sound:**

The sound at the top of the show is a little too loud and a little too ominous. Can you record your Round 5 dialogue tomorrow? Is there any way to reinforce actor audibility? Thank you for everything!

**Front of House:**

None, thank you!

Distribution List: R.M. DECKER, D. BAAS, T. FRENCH, K. GRIFFITH, A. GRIFFITH, J.R. GLOTFELTY, D.LEE, D. HOOVER, G. BOX

<b><u>The Royale</u></b>			<b>Rehearsal Report # 22</b>	
			<b>Rehearsal Date:</b> November 5, 2017	
<b>Rehearsal Work:</b>				
Start Time: 7:00pm	End Time: 10:10pm	Break: 9:39-9:40pm	Break:	Break:
<b>In Attendance:</b>				
<b>Cast:</b> Michael Pepp (Wynton), Patrick Hunter (Max), John Charles II (Jay), James Compton V (Fish), Shanda Quinta (Nina)				
<b>Production:</b> Ryan Michael Decker (Director), Julianne Glotfelty (Assistant Director), Delilah Lee (Stage Manager), Diane Baas (Lighting Designer), Asher Griffith (Sound Designer), Kevin Griffith (Set Designer), Tony French (Costume Designer), Kristin Schoffner				
<b>Personnel Late/Absent:</b>				
<b>Activities:</b>				
7:04pm- Go over agenda		9:28pm- Stage curtain call		
7:15pm- Record audio promo		9:44pm- Notes from Ryan		
8:05pm- Record video of round one				
8:20pm- Run show from start to finish				
<b>Next Rehearsal:</b> November 7, 2017		<b>Time:</b> 7:00pm		<b>Space:</b> NIMS Theater
<b>UPCOMING SCHEDULE:</b> Continuing tech rehearsal.				

<b>General Notes:</b>  None!
<b>Problems/Accidents:</b> None!
<b>Set:</b> None, thank you!

**Props:**

None!

**Costumes:**

Can we cover the jewel on the cane? Do we have better fitting pants for Max?

**Lighting:**

Can we leave the blue light on?

**Sound:**

Notes given from Ryan already.

**Front of House:**

None, thank you!

Distribution List: R.M. DECKER, D. BAAS, T. FRENCH, K. GRIFFITH, A. GRIFFITH, J.R. GLOTFELTY, D.LEE, D. HOOVER, G. BOX

<b><u>The Royale</u></b>			<b>Rehearsal Report # 23</b>	
			<b>Rehearsal Date: November 7, 2017</b>	
<b>Rehearsal Work:</b>				
Start Time: 7:05pm	End Time: 10:00pm	Break: 8:46-8:59pm	Break:	Break:
<b>In Attendance:</b>				
<b>Cast:</b> Michael Pepp (Wynton), Patrick Hunter (Max), John Charles II (Jay), James Compton V (Fish), Shanda Quinta (Nina)				
<b>Production:</b> Ryan Michael Decker (Director), Julianne Glotfelty (Assistant Director), Delilah Lee (Stage Manager), Diane Baas (Lighting Designer), Asher Griffith (Sound Designer), Kevin Griffith (Set Designer), Tony French (Costume Designer), Gillian Box (Props Master)				
<b>Personnel Late/Absent:</b>				
<b>Activities:</b>				
7:05pm- Going over agenda for rehearsal and recap of notes with Ryan		8:59pm- Notes with Ryan		
7:07pm- Block curtain call				
7:15pm- Warm up of Round 1				
7:32- Run of the show				
<b>Next Rehearsal:</b> November 8, 2017		<b>Time:</b> 6:30pm		<b>Space:</b> NIMS Theater
<b>UPCOMING SCHEDULE:</b>				
Rehearsing Round 6, and then dress rehearsal				

<b>General Notes:</b>
None!
<b>Problems/Accidents:</b>
None!
<b>Set:</b>
Notes given from Ryan. Thank you for everything!

**Props:**

None, thank you!

**Costumes:**

Can we remove the tags on the boxing gloves, or make them less noticeable?

**Lighting:**

Notes given from Ryan. Thank you for everything!

**Sound:**

Notes given from Ryan. Thank you for everything!

**Front of House:**

None, thank you!

Distribution List: R.M. DECKER, D. BAAS, T. FRENCH, K. GRIFFITH, A. GRIFFITH, J.R. GLOTFELTY, D.LEE, D. HOOVER, G. BOX



<b><u>The Royale</u></b>			<b>Rehearsal Report # 24</b>	
			<b>Rehearsal Date:</b> November 8, 2017	
<b>Rehearsal Work:</b>				
Start Time: 6:30pm	End Time: 9:00pm	Break: 8:41-8:53pm	Break:	Break:
<b>In Attendance:</b>				
<b>Cast:</b> Michael Pepp (Wynton), Patrick Hunter (Max), John Charles II (Jay), James Compton V (Fish), Shanda Quinta (Nina)				
<b>Production:</b> Ryan Michael Decker (Director), Julianne Glotfelty (Assistant Director), Delilah Lee (Stage Manager), Diane Baas (Lighting Designer), Asher Griffith (Sound Designer), Kevin Griffith (Set Designer)				
<b>Personnel Late/Absent:</b>				
<b>Activities:</b>				
6:30pm- Run of Round 6 with lights				
7:30pm- Run of the show				
8:53pm- Discussion of performance				
<b>Next Rehearsal:</b> November 9, 2017		<b>Time:</b> 6:45pm		<b>Space:</b> NIMS Theater
<b>UPCOMING SCHEDULE:</b>				
Opening Night!				

<b>General Notes:</b>
None!
<b>Problems/Accidents:</b>
None!
<b>Set:</b>
None, thank you!

**Props:**

None, thank you!

**Costumes:**

None, thank you!

**Lighting:**

None, thank you!

**Sound:**

None, thank you!

**Front of House:**

None, thank you!

Distribution List: R.M. DECKER, D. BAAS, T. FRENCH, K. GRIFFITH, A. GRIFFITH, J.R. GLOTFELTY, D.LEE, D. HOOVER, G. BOX

APPENDIX G  
LIVE SOUND DESIGN

**"TAKE YOUR BOOTS OFF"**

Music by Ryan M. Decker

Lyrics by Marco Ramirez, The Royale

WYNTON +J,F (stomps/claps)

She said "Go on, take your boots off 'cause the road gon' eat your soles." S C C S

5 C C S She said "Lis - ten to what I say, 'cause the road 'll\_ take 'em a - ny - way." She said

10 "Go on, take your boots off 'cause the road gon' eat your soles." S C C S C C S 'Cause the

15 road gon' eat your soles.\_\_\_\_ 'Cause the road gon' eat your soles.\_\_\_\_ She said "Go on, take your

20 boots off 'cause the road gon'\_\_ eat your soles." S/C C C S/C C C

24 S/C C C

NINA:  
"Did I interrupt something?"

S = stomp  
C = clap

**"CLAP"**

*Stomp-Clap-Clap-Stomp*

S C C S

**"CLAP-CLAP"**

*Stomp-Clap-Clap, Stomp-Clap-Clap-Stomp*

S C C S C C S

**"CLAP-CLAP-CLAP"**

*Stomp/Clap-Clap-Clap*

S/C C C

**"CLAP-CLAP-CLAP, CLAP-CLAP-CLAP, CLAP-CLAP-CLAP"**

*Stomp/Clap-Clap-Clap, Stomp/Clap-Clap-Clap, Stomp/Clap-Clap-Clap*

S/C C C S/C C C S/C C C

S = *stomp*

C = *clap*

APPENDIX H  
**REHEARSAL INFORMATION**

**CAST ANNOUNCEMENT**

Hello everyone,

I want to sincerely thank you all for auditioning for Theatre UNO's upcoming production of *The Royale*. The talent and enthusiasm displayed last week made for a difficult decision-making process. After careful consideration of multiple factors, I'm prepared to announce a cast list at this time. If you are not cast, I do hope you will remain encouraged to continue auditioning for Theatre UNO productions. Be proud of your work, and keep it coming!

**JAY** John Charles II  
**NINA** Shanda Quintal  
**FISH** James Compton V  
**MAX** Christopher Patrick Hunter  
**WYNTON** guest artist – to be announced

If you are not cast, but wished to be involved in the production, please get in touch with me! We can create opportunities for dramaturgy/assistant directing, assistant stage managing, and other production roles.

If you are cast, please initial by your name on the list posted in the PAC greenroom to accept your role. A rehearsal schedule and script check-out info will be emailed as it becomes available.

Thank you very much. Best,

Ryan M. Decker  
Teaching Associate of Acting & Directing  
Department of Film & Theatre  
University of New Orleans

# the ROYALE

# REHEARSAL SCHEDULE V.2 (9/27)

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
OCTOBER	1 URINETOWN	2 Read-Thru, Des Presentation, Tablework 7:30p	3 Block 1 7:30p	4 Block 2 7p	5 Block 3 7p	6 URINETOWN	7 URINETOWN
	8 URINETOWN	9 Block 4 7:30p	10 Block 5 7:30p	11 Block 6 7p	12 URINETOWN	13 URINETOWN	14 URINETOWN
	15 UTOWN STRIKE	16 Catch-up TBD REVIEW SHOW 7:30p	17 LOAD-IN Work 1-2 7:30p	18 Work 5-6 7p	19 Work 3-4 7p	20	21
	22	23 OFFHOOK RUN with NOTES 7:30p	24 Working TBD 7:30p	25 Designer Run/ Stumble-Thru 7p	26 Polish TBD 7p	27	28
	29	30 OFFLINE Polish TBD 7:30p	31 HALLOWEEN Polish TBD 7:30p	1 RUN with NOTES 7p	2 Polish TBD 7p	3 [EMERGENCIES] TBD	4
	5 Tech TBD	6 Tech 7p	7 Tech 7p	8 Final Dress 7p Call 7:30p GO	9 Opening 7p Call 7:30p GO	10 Performance #2 7p Call 7:30p GO	11 Performance #3 7p Call 7:30 GO
NOVEMBER	12	13	14	15 Pick-up TBD TBD	16 Performance #4 7p Call 7:30 GO	17 Performance #5 7p Call 7:30p GO	18 Performance #6 7p Call 7:30p GO
	19 Closing 2 Call, 2:30 GO Strike to follow	20	21	22	23	24	25

# *the* ROYALE

## REHEARSAL EXPECTATIONS

- **DO** come into rehearsal making choices, and **DO** expect to motivate/justify choices given to you.
- Be ready to begin rehearsal on time; arrive early of necessary.
- Conduct your own self-actualized warm-up before rehearsal.
- Be **prepared** and **collaborative**. Bring your whole and professional self to this work. Together, we will create a performance we can all be proud of and have fun doing it!
- Have: your script, a pencil, water, familiarity of rehearsal content, and character choices (no cold reading).
- Dress appropriately for rehearsal content.
- As rehearsal costumes are available, arrive early to put them on before rehearsal begins.
- Please leave electronic devices on vibrate or off in a coat pocket or purse offstage.
- Wait to ask a question until direction is completed or as invited. Don't be afraid to ask for clarity.
- Write down all notes and blocking. Expect the question, "what did you do..." and be ready with an answer. We must be able to recreate choices until they are set.
- Avoid sidebar conversations on stage. If you space out, fess up and ask the director or SM for clarity.
- Try everything asked of you and then share your "informed" hesitation.
- The script may be changed and lines altered at any time. Understand such a choice is not personal.
- Actors may be expected to arrive earlier or stay later than calls originally published in the rehearsal schedule in order to accommodate changes to rehearsal content or load-in/out of the space.
- Breaks, as announced, will be assured. They will also be prompt both in their call and in their return.
- Keep a healthy balance and perspective. Keep open communication and transparency.
- Keep a healthy body and mind. Exercise, Water, Sleep.
- **Bring commitment based on a work ethic of active engagement at all times.** The *work* of rehearsal – participation in the creative process and willingness for constant improvement and refinement – is where the *fun* of performance and process originates.

APPENDIX I  
**PRESS RELEASE**





**For Immediate Release**

October 25, 2017

Ryan Decker, rmdecke1@uno.edu  
Kristin Shoffner, keshoff1@uno.edu  
(504) 280.6317

# ***THE ROYALE***

UNO EXPLORES RACE AND COMPETITIVE SPORTS IN CONTEMPORARY PLAY

**NEW ORLEANS, LA** – Theatre UNO, the theatre production arm of the University of New Orleans (UNO) Department of Film & Theatre, continues their 2017-18 performance season with *The Royale* by Marco Ramirez at the UNO Performing Arts Center, Robert E. Nims Theater, November 9-19.

Jay “The Sport” Jackson dreams of being the undisputed heavyweight champion of the world. But it’s 1905, and in the racially segregated world of boxing, his chances are as good as knocked out. When his manager and boxing promoter sets up “the fight of the century,” “The Sport” just might land a place in the ring with the reigning white heavyweight champion.

This Theatre UNO production, directed by Ryan M. Decker (M.F.A. Performance/Directing candidate), is presented without intermission in a single fast-paced, theatrical and percussive bout. Professional sport and racial tension explore the responsibility of personal action and the complexity of its social consequences.

Bringing to life an abstracted world of early-1900s boxing are lighting designer/technical director Diane K Baas (Asst. Professor), scenic designer Kevin Griffith (Assoc. Professor), costume designer Anthony French (Professor), and sound designer Asher Griffith (guest artist). The cast includes M.F.A. Performance/Acting students Patrick Hunter, Shanda Quintal; B.A. Film & Theatre majors John Charles II, James Compton V; and guest artist Michael Pepp.

*The Royale* is this season’s entry to the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival (KCACTF), which honored Theatre UNO with multiple national accolades for last year’s production of *The Aliens*.

Evening performances begin at 7:30 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays, November 9-11 & 16-18, with a 2:30 p.m. matinee on Sunday, November 19 (No Sunday, November 12 performance). Tickets are \$12 for general admission; \$8 for students, seniors, and UNO faculty/staff. Tickets may be purchased online at [Theatre.UNO.edu](http://Theatre.UNO.edu) (credit/debit only) or in-person at the UNO Performing Arts Center box office, beginning 30 minutes before performances. For more information, visit [Theatre.UNO.edu](http://Theatre.UNO.edu).

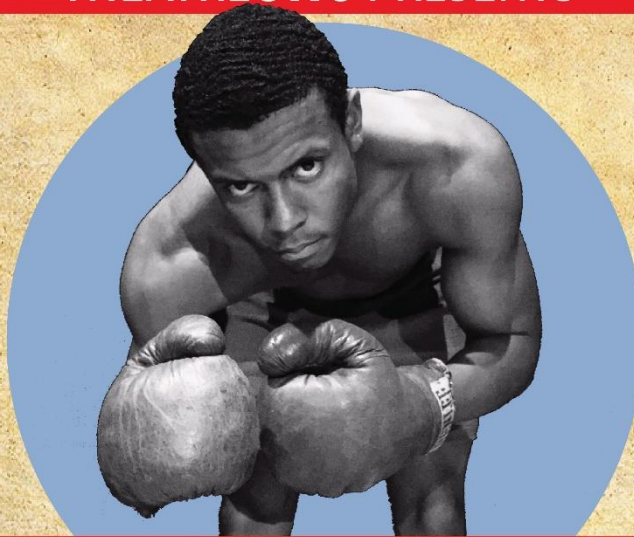
**About UNO Film & Theatre:** The Department of Film & Theatre at the University of New Orleans is committed to an interdisciplinary belief that film and theatre arts enrich one another. The Department of Film and Theatre fuses the artistic, technical and analytical dynamics of theatre and film in a collaborative environment, educating the next generation of professional storytellers. In accordance with this philosophy, the department undertakes to educate its students, enrich the UNO and larger community, and encourage faculty development.

**Editor’s Note:** Select cast members are available for photography shoots upon request.

###

APPENDIX J  
**PRODUCTION POSTER**

THEATREUNO PRESENTS



THE  
**ROYALE**

BY **MARCO RAMIREZ**  
DIRECTED BY **RYAN M. DECKER**



**NOVEMBER 9-19**

7:30 PM THURS-SAT | \$12 GENERAL ADMISSION  
2:30 PM 2ND SUN | \$8 UNO AFFILIATES

**NIMS THEATER, PERFORMING ARTS CENTER  
UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS**



***theatre.uno.edu***

Poster design by Ryan M. Decker. Photo of John Charles II as Jay by Kristin Shoffner.

APPENDIX K  
**PRODUCTION PROGRAM**





**THEATRE UNO**  
theatre.uno.edu

**URINETOWN**  
*the musical*  
WITH THE NOLA PROJECT  
SEPTEMBER 29 - OCTOBER 14

*the*  
**ROYALE**  
NOVEMBER 9 - 19

**MISCAST**  
*a fundraiser*  
DECEMBER 2

*undergrad*  
**SHOWCASE**  
JANUARY 27

*a doll's*  
**HOUSE**  
APRIL 12 - 28

**HEDDA**  
*gabler*  
APRIL 19 - 29

**2017-2018 SEASON**

*Front Cover – Exterior.  
All program layout and UNO artwork by Ryan M. Decker.*

*2017/18 Season*  
**THEATREUNO**

**URINETOWN**  
*the musical*  
BY MARK HOLLMANN & GREG KOTIS  
DIRECTED BY AJ ALLEGRA  
a co-production with The NOLA Project  
**SEPTEMBER 29 - OCTOBER 14**

*the*  
**ROYALE**  
BY MARCO RAMIREZ  
DIRECTED BY RYAN M. DECKER  
**NOVEMBER 9 - 19**

**MISCAST**  
*a fundraiser*  
AN EVENING OF MUSICAL THEATRE  
**DECEMBER 2**

*undergrad*  
**SHOWCASE**  
AN EVENING OF PERFORMANCE & DESIGN  
**JANUARY 27**

*a doll's*  
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DIRECTED BY KRISTIN SHOFFNER  
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**#PLAYON**

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THEATREUNO *presents*

*the* **ROYALE**

**BY MARCO RAMIREZ**

**DIRECTED BY RYAN M. DECKER**

scenic design by  
**KEVIN GRIFFITH**

lighting design by  
**DIANE K BAAS**

costume design by  
**ANTHONY FRENCH**

sound design by  
**ASHER GRIFFITH**

stage managed by  
**DELILAH LEE**

assistant directed by  
**JULIANNE REECE GLOTFELTY**

**NOVEMBER 9-19, 2017**

Nims Theatre, Performing Arts Center, University of New Orleans

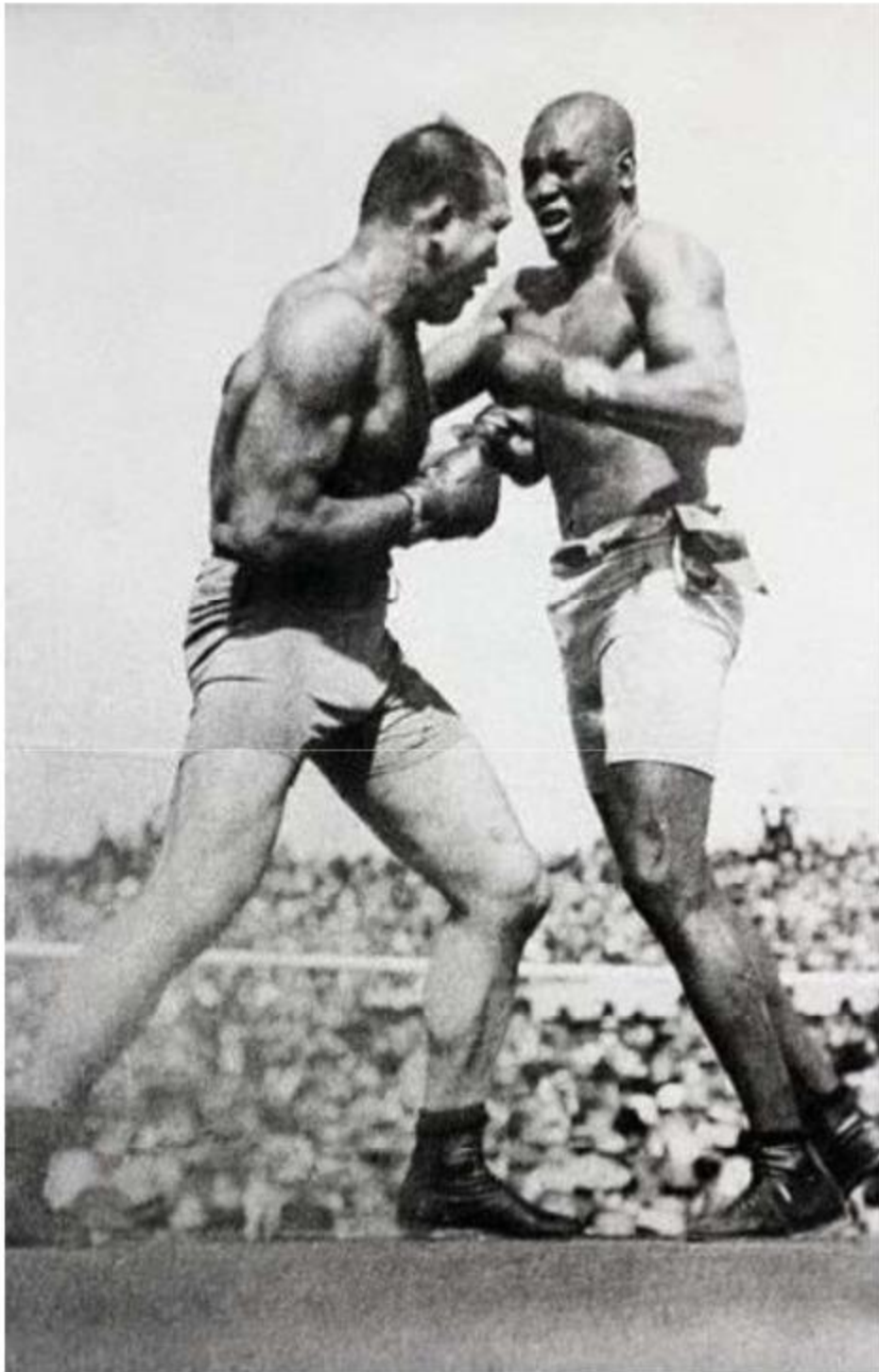
**THERE WILL BE NO INTERMISSION**

Center Theater Group/Kirk Douglas Theatre, Michael Ritchie, Artistic Director  
produced the World Premeire of THE ROYALE in Los Angeles, California in 2013.

Originally produced by Lincoln Center Theater in 2016, New York City.

THE ROYALE is produced by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.

*Interior – Page 1 (Title Page).*



*JACK JOHNSON AND JIM JEFFRIES BOX, 1910.*

*Interior – Page 2.*



## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

*The Royale* is inspired by the real-life experiences of Jack Johnson, the first African-American heavyweight world champion. Johnson left his home of Galveston, Texas in 1899, eager to forge a life around boxing. By the early 1900s, the 6'2" Johnson, who'd become known as the Galveston Giant, had made a name for himself in the black boxing circuit and had his eyes set on the world heavyweight title, which was held by white boxer, Jim Jeffries. But Jeffries refused to fight him. He wasn't alone. White boxers would not spar with their black counterparts.

Who can tell this story? And who should? As I proceeded to direct the action, rhythm, and world of *The Royale*, these questions lingered, and I return to them often. While this story is of the early 20th century, it seems tragically contemporary. Marco Ramirez has created a world that is both period and abstract, demanding formalist theatricality, as well as psychological realism. I am attracted to these apparent contradictions, which, in my opinion, bolster the play's humanity. Regardless of the storytellers, I believe it deserves to be heard by everyone.

The story of Jay Jackson, our fictionalized Jack Johnson, hinges on one decision that is believed to be within his control. Our protagonist must choose between two courses of action, both of which possess negative consequences which are not entirely predictable. To make this choice, Jay must confront his biggest challenger – himself.

—RYAN M. DECKER

*This note was written with dramaturgical research and language from Biography.com.*



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*Interior – Page 3.*

## THE CAST

JAY	<b>JOHN CHARLES II</b>
MAX	<b>PATRICK HUNTER *</b>
WYNTON	<b>MICHAEL PEPP</b>
FISH	<b>JAMES COMPTON V</b>
NINA	<b>SHANDA QUINTAL</b>

## PRODUCTION TEAM

DIRECTOR	<b>RYAN M. DECKER</b>
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR	<b>JULIANNE REECE GLOTFELTY</b>
STAGE MANAGER	<b>DELILAH LEE</b>
SCENIC DESIGNER	<b>KEVIN GRIFFITH</b>
LIGHTING DESIGNER	<b>DIANE K BAAS</b>
COSTUME DESIGNER	<b>ANTHONY FRENCH</b>
SOUND DESIGNER	<b>ASHER GRIFFITH</b>
PROPERTIES MISTRESS	<b>GILLIAN BOX</b>
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR	<b>DIANE K BAAS</b>
SCENIC CONSTRUCTION & ELECTRICS CREW	<b>JOHN CHARLES II</b>
	<b>MISSY MARTINEZ</b>
	<b>JOHN MASON</b>
	<b>TODRAS SAM</b>
	<b>JANE TARDO</b>
	<b>NICK YETTER</b>
COSTUME CONSTRUCTION	<b>SHANDA QUINTAL</b>
MARKETING & BOX OFFICE MANAGERS	<b>RYAN M. DECKER</b>
	<b>KRISTIN SHOFFNER</b>
BOXING CONSULTANT	<b>ALEX MARTINEZ WALLACE</b>
PROMO VIDEO	<b>ASHER GRIFFITH</b>

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VICE-PRESIDENTS	<b>CARLI COLLIS</b>
	<b>HAYDEN GUTHERIE</b>

\*Appears by permission from Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

*Interior – Page 4.*

## BIOGRAPHIES



**RYAN M. DECKER** (Director) is an MFA Performance/Directing candidate and Teaching Associate at UNO. Recent roles: *Twelfth Night* (Toby Belch), *The Aliens* (Evan), *Romeo & Juliet* (Friar Laurence), and *Groesome Playground Injuries* (Doug). Recent directing credits: *Hand to God*, *Avenue Q*, *The Drowsy Chaperone*, *Reefer Madness*, *The Last Five Years*, *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Special thanks to Amanda for making everything possible. Portfolio: RyanDecker.net.



**JOHN CHARLES II** (Jay) is a senior at UNO. This is the fourth production he's been a part of at UNO and he would like to thank everyone for coming out and the cast and crew for the amount of work they put in. He would also like to thank the trainers at Aaaarchitect, Ariele Davis and Lex Martin. He's grateful for the opportunity and hopes everyone enjoys the show!



**PATRICK HUNTER** \* (Max) is an MFA Performance/Acting candidate at UNO. A proud member of Actor's Equity, Patrick has spent eight seasons as a resident company member at the historic Barn Theatre in Michigan, featured in over 40 productions, recently winning a Wilde Award for his work in a 2016 production of *Guys and Dolls*. Local credits include productions with Theatre UNO, NOLA Project, JPAS and Southern Rep. Thanks to the Theatre UNO team for this opportunity!



**SHANDA QUINTAL** (Nina) is an MFA Performance/Acting student at UNO and has been working in the Louisiana film industry since 1991. She studied under the tutelage of premiere acting coach Aaron Speiser in Los Angeles. Her professional credits include Bess in the American Theatre Project's production of *Porgy*, HBO's *Treme*, A&E's *Breakout Kings* and Lifetime's *Justice for Natalie*. She wants to thank her family, especially her two boys Nico and Tai, for supporting her in following her bliss.



**MICHAEL PEPP** (Wynton) holds a BA in Theatre Performance and an MFA in Acting. He studied extensively under Jon Jory, a theatrical director instrumental in the development of Actors Theatre of Louisville; and Robert Benedetti, a distinguished teacher of theatre, and three-time Emmy and Peabody Award-winning film producer. Michael Pepp has performed with The Classical Theatre of Harlem, who's rendition of Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* inspired Pepp's political approach to theatre.



**JAMES COMPTON V** (Fish) is a freshman at UNO. He has performed in small productions at the Anthony Bean Community Theatre, as Michael in *The Glove* and Derel in *A Christmas Special*, both written and directed by Anthony Bean. He would like to thank his family for supporting him 100% with his career choice. He would like to especially thank Director Ryan Decker for this opportunity.

**KEVIN GRIFFITH** (Scenic Designer) is an Associate Professor of Design and Resident Scenic Designer for the Department of Film and Theatre at the University of New Orleans. He is also in good standing as a member of The International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Local 478.

**DIANE K BAAS** (Lighting Designer / Technical Director) is a freelance lighting designer and an Assistant Professor in the Department of Film and Theatre at the University of New Orleans, where she is also the Technical Director. She holds a BFA in Lighting and Scenic Design, and a BA in Art History and Painting, both from Tulane University in New Orleans. She also holds an MFA in Lighting Design from the School of Drama at the University of Washington in Seattle.

**ANTHONY FRENCH** (Costume Designer) is the New Orleans Theatre Association Endowed Professor and costume designer at the University of New Orleans. He has designed numerous productions at UNO, including many original plays. For Southern Rep he has designed costumes for *Airline Highway*, *Orpheus Descending*, *The Goat or Who is Sylvia*, *Yellowman*, *Bat Boy: The Musical*, *In Walks Ed*, *Vulgar Soul*, *Lillian*, and *The Little Foxes*. He designed the New York production of *Orpheus Descending*, directed by Austin Pendleton. He has worked for The Shakespeare Festival at Tulane, Actor's Theatre of Louisville, The Old Globe Theatre, and The Cincinnati Playhouse. He holds a BFA from The University of Evansville and an MFA from Carnegie-Mellon University.

**ASHER GRIFFITH** (Sound Designer) is a graduate of the University of New Orleans and doting brother of three. A good friend to most dogs, he holds a master's degree from the University of Arkansas in music composition. He currently works for peanuts as a sound designer in order to pursue his true passion: bussing tables. He hopes one day to make enough money to retire.

**JULIANNE REECE GLOTFELTY** (Assistant Director) is a sophomore theatre arts student at UNO. Julianne discovered her love for directing when she got to direct *Antigone* her senior year of high school. She has previously worked with Southern Rep where she was an Assistant Stage Manager for *Airline Highway*, and with NOLA Project as an Assistant Stage Manager for *Urinetown*. She would like to thank Ryan for giving her this wonderful AD opportunity.

**DELILAH LEE** (Stage Manager) is a freshman theatre arts student at the University of New Orleans. She has previously stage managed shows in high school as well as acting and directing. This is her first show at UNO and she cannot wait to become more involved with the Department of Film and Theatre throughout her college career.

## SPECIAL THANKS

DAVID W. HOOVER, DEBRA DANIEL, DANIEL GREEN, LINNZI ZAORSKI, FTA SCENE PAINTING CLASS

**COMING SOON**

---

# MISCAST

*musical stars, terribly cast*

A THEATRE UNO  
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*Interior – Page 7.*

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	JOHN NEISLER
	LANCE NICHOLS
	JAMES YEARGAIN
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	PATRICK HUNTER
	AMY LAWS
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# THE KENNEDY CENTER

*The Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival 50<sup>th</sup>, part of the Rubenstein Arts Access Program, is generously funded by **David and Alice Rubenstein.***

*Special thanks to The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust for supporting the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts' Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival.*

*Additional support is provided by The Honorable Stuart Bernstein and Wilma E. Bernstein; the Dr. Gerald and Paula McNichols Foundation; and Beatrice and Anthony Wolters and the AnBryce Foundation.*

*KCACTF is part of JFKC: A Centennial Celebration of John F. Kennedy, inspired by five enduring ideals often ascribed to JFK: Courage, Freedom, Justice, Service, and Gratitude. Support for JFKC: A Centennial Celebration of John F. Kennedy is provided by Ambassador Elizabeth Bagley, Chevron, the Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation, and Target.*

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This production is entered in the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KCACTF). The aims of this national theater education program are to identify and promote quality in college-level theater production. To this end, each production entered is eligible for a response by a regional KCACTF representative, and selected students and faculty are invited to participate in KCACTF programs involving scholarships, internships, grants and awards for actors, directors, dramaturgs, playwrights, designers, stage managers and critics at both the regional and national levels.

Productions entered on the Participating level are eligible for invitation to the KCACTF regional festival and may also be considered for national awards recognizing outstanding achievement in production, design, direction and performance.

Last year more than 1,300 productions were entered in the KCACTF involving more than 200,000 students nationwide. By entering this production, our theater department is sharing in the KCACTF goals to recognize, reward, and celebrate the exemplary work produced in college and university theaters across the nation.

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APPENDIX L  
**SELECT ACTING CRITIQUE PAPERS**

**ABOUT ACTING CRITIQUE PAPERS**

The following acting critique papers are representative of the highest scoring papers in the Fall 2017 course FTA 1300:02 (Acting), instructed by Ryan M. Decker. The prompt of the paper was to evaluate the acting in *The Royale*, using concepts and terminology presented in class.

Papers are included by permission of the authoring students as they were originally submitted, without format or grammatical editing. Only student names have been removed.

Ryan M. Decker

FTA 1300

November 20, 2017

### Acting Critique: The Royale

The acting in *The Royale* was very convincing. I thought all the performers did an excellent job acting but I was specifically impressed with the performance of the main character, Jay Jackson. I found that his actions really provoked the emotions and actions of his castmates. His shift in his beats were also very clear precise. His acting throughout the play gave a clear depiction of the stakes at hand.

I felt the times that Jay Jackson's performance was at his best was during the fight scenes of the play. I felt his dialogue and body movement were a fantastic example of giving a test in your scene partner. His trash talking style of fighting reminded me of Muhammed Ali. His trash talk and his body movement resulted in a tested reaction from his opposing fighter in the opening scene where his bout was against his future sparring partner. Perhaps, an even more convincing performance was his final bout for the heavyweight championship where he seemingly fought by himself. Despite Jay Jackson being the only fighter shown to the audience during the match, I felt myself having no problem imagining the other fighter in the ring with him. I credit this to his superb body movement and the convincing reactions when he got hit. Despite their being no actual blood or gore during the play, I could still feel the intensity of the fight before me.

I also really liked his scene when his sister is first introduced to the audience. I felt their chemistry on stage was excellent and very believable. It was at this point when I found myself beginning to root for Jay Jackson's success after finding out some background information on his upbringing. His beat shifts during this scene were very precise. I could feel his emotions shift from happiness and the surprise of seeing his sister, to the anger, frustration, and determination he possessed after his explanation of his motivation for taking on the championship fight despite the implication of danger and risk involved. I believe the frustration demonstrated by Jay Jackson was a result of the test put in him by his sister when she expressed her worry of what and who he might be putting in jeopardy if he were to win the fight. Their back and forth dialogue and the chemistry with it was refreshing to watch.

I also thought the role of the trainer, Wynton, was well done. His relationship with Jay Jackson was very well balanced. At times, he was a comical relief, and then the dynamic of the relationship between he and his fighter could change at the drop of a hat to a seemingly more intimate, father/son relationship between the two of them. He, more so than the other characters I believe, provided the supporting cast to Jay Jackson that made the play so great. I felt his actions were clearly demonstrated to the audience while at the same time the case wasn't always necessarily the same in the way that Jay Jackson interpreted them.

November 19, 2017

Acting 1300

Ryan Decker

### The Royale Acting Critique

The play, "The Royale", was a beautiful production with an amazing story. I enjoyed each and every one of the actors and what they brought to the performance, but the actor that played the character Jay "The Sport" Jackson really took the cake. The actor, John Charles, gave his character characteristics like determination and confidence to achieve his goal. This made it simple to see that he had high stakes considering the given circumstances. You could hear the beat shifts very well and understand his intentions while speaking to the other characters. Stakes, given circumstances, and beat shifts are things that we have discuss in our Acting 1300 class. Seeing these concepts being used in this play made it easier to see how useful they are in a production.

John Charles portrayed an African American boxer in the early twentieth century with aspiration of being the first black heavy weight champion. This is an example of a given circumstance. As we learned in class, a given circumstance is the total set of environmental and situational conditions which influences actions. Being that the character Jay Jackson is an African American in the early 1900s with big dreams, it is clear to see that he will have challenges knowing the history of that time period and the hardships of African Americans. These given circumstances gave John Charles an opportunity to put self-assurance and

determination in his character regardless of the obstacles that he will face. This also gave John Charles a chance to show the audience what his character has to gain and lose.

As I said before, John Charles placed confidence into his character, so his character can achieve his goal despite the circumstance. So that means that stakes were definitely high for Jay Jackson. Stakes are the values of what a character stand to gain or lose. In this play, Jay could gain the fame from being the heavy weight champion or lose the fight and the opportunity to be the face of boxing for African Americans.

At the beginning of the play, Jay Jackson had a cocky demeanor. His words, when speaking to Max, Fish, and Wynton, sounded demanding and bold. However, when he had a moment with his older sister Nina right before the fight, his tone of voice was soft. John Charles's actions and the way he speaks are examples of beat shifts. We were taught that beat shifts are units of actions or intentions within a text. When he was around Max, Fish and Wynton, he wanted to show his self-assurance. The conversation with his sister showed his concern for her and consideration for her opinion on him fighting.

From beginning to end, John Charles put on a great performance. His performance demonstrated some of the major lessons that we covered in our Acting 1300 class. John Charles kept the stakes high because of the given circumstances while having clear beat shifts. The way he played his character Jay Jackson made me think it was a biography of the great African American boxer Jack Johnson. His acting skills are truly superb.

Ryan M. Decker

Acting I

November 20, 2017

*Acting Critique: the Royale*

*The Royale* was a high intensity play that kept me alert and yearning for more information throughout the entire show. The cast and crew did a phenomenal job bringing the story of Jay Jackson to life. As I was watching the play I was reminded of the skills and techniques we have been learning this semester in acting I. The characters had clear objectives and used actions that had a test in the other. They also were completely invested in the stakes and had coherent beat shifts. John Charles II made me think about the definition of acting we learned in class which is, acting is behaving truthfully under imaginary circumstances. I felt he behaved as a character in his situation would and I enjoyed watching his performance.

Each characters' actions were clear-cut and always had a test in the other. There strong action choices made it easy to understand their objectives. One scene in particular stood out to me when thinking about actions and objectives. Jay and Max were debating over whether Jay should fight the Caucasian heavy weight champion. In this scene, I think Jay's objective was to get Max to schedule the fight despite Max's fear. I believe Max's objective was to get Jay to be satisfied with what he had accomplished despite his ambitions. These objectives were made clear to me through the character actions. While watching Jays performance some of the verbs that come to mind were to tear down, to beat, to defeat, and to decimate. Actions Max could have been using are to satisfy, assure, persuade, settle and to surrender. Along with these great actions, the characters had clear beat shifts.

The beat shifts in the play added to the intensity and gave the actors a realness that was fun to watch. One beat shift I noticed took place when Max was trying to convince Jay that he could win the fight. At first, he was speaking loudly and arguing with Jay then as he was walking up the stairs to leave he told Jay was already the heavy weight champion. Right before he said that he took a breath and as he told him his voice was softer. I believed Max when he said that and I think that was an important part of the story because it came at a time when Jay felt he was alone. Another beat shift took place while Jay was fighting for the title. His sister Nina was seen on stage and she was trying to convince him that it wasn't a good idea to go through with this fight. Jay was jumping, throwing jabs and talking to Nina about why this fight was so important to him. At one point he stopped, looked at Nina and explained to her why he had to win this fight. He was no longer speaking at a fast pace or through his breaths he had while fighting. He was speaking with a purpose and rawness I was waiting for the whole play. That beat shift added to the conclusion of his story and made me believe he had to win his fight.

I mentioned in the opening paragraph the definition of acting we learned in class and how Jay Jackson's performance made me think of it. Knowing the circumstances his character was in, I feel John Charles II delivered a believable performance. His strong actions and beat shifts steered the way and opened the door for the rest of the cast to act as truthfully as they could. I enjoyed watching all of the actors bring this amazing story to life on stage. Each beat shift and action choice by the actors helped them to achieve their individual objectives. In acting 1 we are asked to spend time with our scripts and find beat changes and actions we can pursue. Watching *the Royale*, I could tell these actors spent time with their characters and decided who they were and what they wanted. It was a great show and a pleasure to watch.

Ryan m. decker

Fta 1300

20 November 17

### Royale Critique

The on stage performance of *royale* is absolutely captivating and made the entire performance a gratifying watch. I must say that the whole cast did an amazing job; however, it is Patrick, who acts as max, who really does steal the show for me. His ability to be so agile on stage and portray so many different characters on the same set is both awe-stricken and commendable. His performance also makes his presence on stage an amusing and a wonderful delight under any of his character's circumstances. A pure joy to watch. As we watched Patrick perform it's apparent how much of the basis we have learned in Intro to Acting course actually comes in to life and play. During Patrick's performance, we see him act under clear objectives, proper preparation, and precise voice and movement.

While on stage, we see Patrick act with clear objectives. His objective includes promoting and protecting his wrestler jay during trying times when racial tensions are evident. It is clear, at least from an audience point of view that Patrick's character has invested in jay as we watch and learn how far he will go to protect jay both behind the curtains and while in the ring. He seems to be a man I would like in my corner. His objective is clear as we have been taught our objective should be as well. In class, we often times act on stage. In order to gain an understanding or grasp on a script, one must comprehend the characters objective.

Nonetheless, Patrick's entire performance would not be believable had he not prepared in advance. My mother always told me *proper preparation prevents poor performance*. The "5 P's"



she calls them. How could anyone disagree? The cast, as far as I can observe, executed their performance. From beginning to end, from shout to thump, it appears that Patrick and his cast members are in sync with each other and giving authentic, live portrayal to the audience. A job well done for sure. It calls me recognize the power of being prepared. An audience can easily spot if an action is incomplete.

Lastly, I would like to commemorate Patrick's ability to communicate clearly and expressively by remaining focus on voice and movement. In our play scene rehearsals we investigated how movement and something as simple as tone of voice can alter a set/scene. Tying in to objective to voice and movement are the actions that the actor uses to pursue his/her objective. It's one task to display one characters' objective, but something vary special if a person can take on multiple, even if only for a few moments. Such models include Tyler Perry and Martin who also can portray multiple characters and act in similar manners. Their talent goes beyond any one specific role, objective, or voice and movement.

Overall it takes many special components to beget a good actor, let alone great. The ability to act is not the ability to take on false circumstances, but to also be able to behave towards them truthfully with clear action understanding and most important it must be fun. Anyone can be a good actor, but what makes a great actor?

APPENDIX M  
**PRODUCTION PHOTOS**



*Jay and Fish face each other for the first time in an exhibition match.  
All production photography by Ryan M. Decker.*



*Jay and Wynton think the kid wasn't half bad.*



*Max welcomes reporters to the press conference.*



*Jay takes questions from vicious reporters while Fish and Wynton continue training.*



*Jay takes his frustrations out on the heavy bag.*

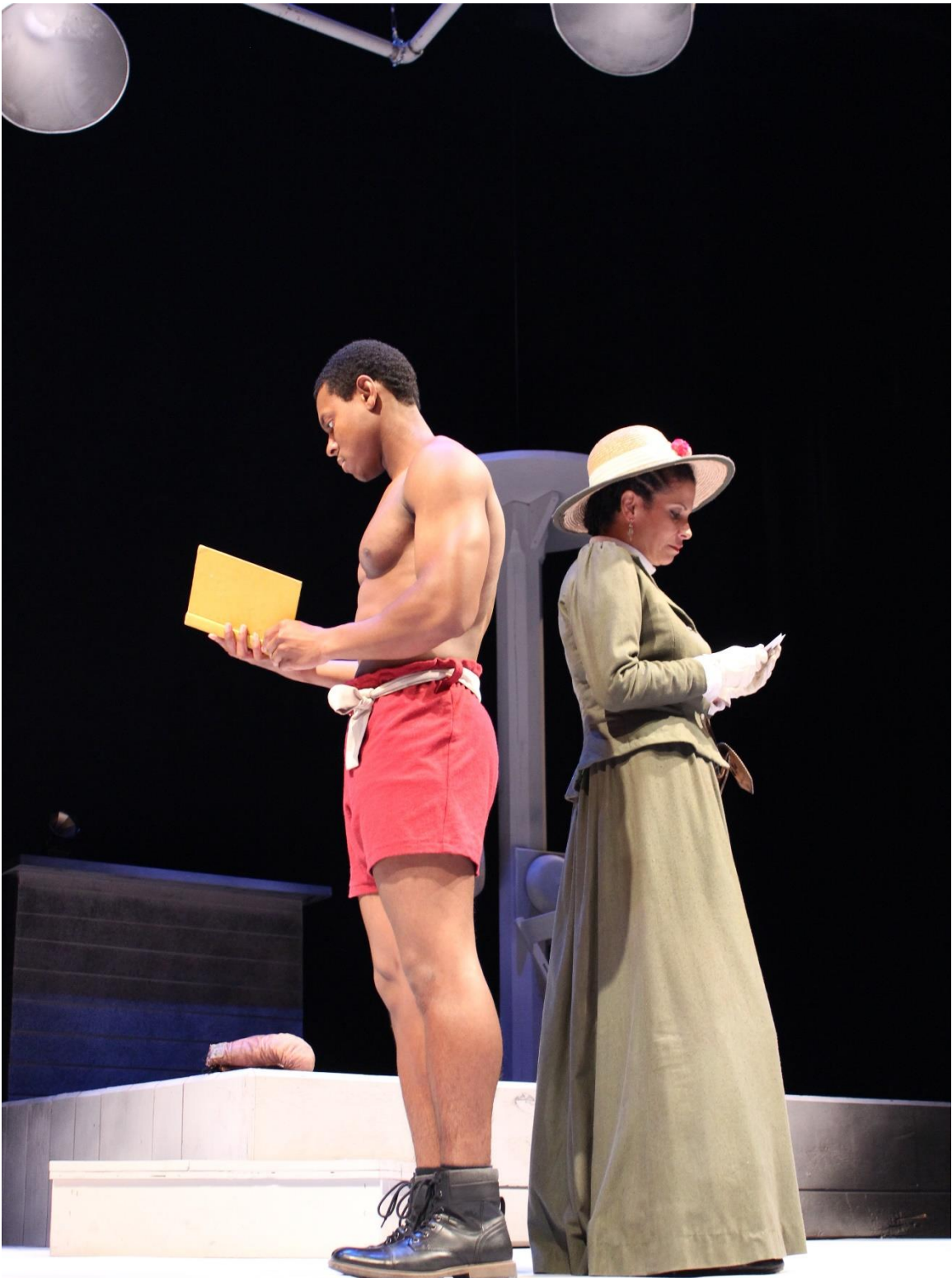




*Nina and Jay meet for the first time in a long time.*



*Nina shows Jay pictures of her children, his nephews.*



*Jay sees how the upcoming match is affecting his family. Nina looks at her children.*



*Not everyone is ready for Jay to win.*



*Jay doesn't know what to do now.*





*Wynton tells Jay about “The Royale.”*



*Wynton recalls his early boxing days.*



*The Bixby fight is about to begin.*



*The crowd does not give Jay a warm welcome.*



*Jay bumps fists with Champ Bixby... but Nina is the only person he sees.*





*Jay and Bixby go head-to-head as Nina describes the hate crimes in their wake.*



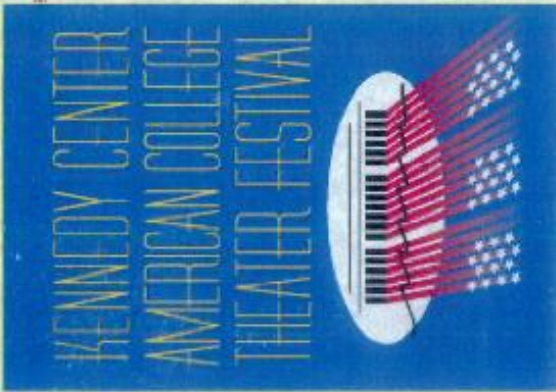
*Nina pleads with Jay.*



*Jay is the official Heavyweight Champion of the World.*

APPENDIX N  
**AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS**





*Congratulates and Commends*

**Ryan M. Decker**

*For Excellence as*

**Director**

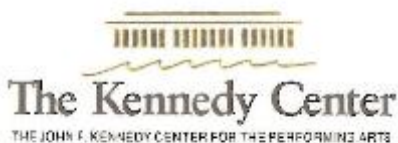
*The Royale*  
University of New Orleans  
November 16, 2017

**VI**  
**REGION**

Mike Burnett, Region Vice-Chair

Chase Waites, Region Chair

*Commendation for Excellence as Director awarded to Ryan M. Decker, KCACTF Region VI.*



*Congratulates and Commends*

**University of  
New Orleans**

*For*

**REGION**

**Invited Production**

***The Royale***

**by Marco Ramirez**

**Directed by Ryan M. Decker**

*February 28 – March 3, 2018*

Chase Waites, Region Chair

Mike Burnett, Region Vice-Chair

*Invited Production at the 50th Anniversary Regional Festival, KCACTF Region VI.*



## **ADDITIONAL HONORS**

- Commendation for Excellence as Lighting Designer awarded to Diane K Baas, KCACTF Region VI.
- Irene Ryan Acting Nominations for John Charles II, James Compton V, and Shanda Quintal, KCACTF Region VI.
- Commendation for Distinguished Performance for John Charles II as Jay, KCACTF.
- Commendation for Distinguished Performance for James Compton V as Fish, KCACTF.
- Best University Production Nomination, Big Easy Entertainment Awards.
- Best Mainstage Production (Tie with *Urinetown the Musical*), Lakefront Players.
- Best Director of a Mainstage Production (Tie with A.J. Allegra), Lakefront Players.

## VITA

Ryan Michael Decker was born to Susan and Duane Decker in Dubuque, Iowa on March 1, 1990. He graduated from Dubuque Senior High School in May of 2008 and attended the University of Northern Iowa where he earned a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Performance/Acting and minor in Music in May 2012. He was the Founding Artistic Director of Trainwreck Productions (Dubuque, IA) from 2008-2015. Ryan married Amanda Adams on May 14, 2016 and began graduate school at the University of New Orleans' School of the Arts in the fall of 2016 as a graduate assistant/teaching associate, working towards a Master of Fine Arts in Performance and Directing. At Theatre UNO, he appeared in productions of *The Aliens*, *Twelfth Night*, *Urinetown* (with the NOLA Project), *A Doll's House*, and *Hedda Gabler*; he assistant directed *Airline Highway* (with Southern Rep); and directed the 2017 Undergraduate Showcase, *Bleed*, and *The Royale*. He will graduate from the University of New Orleans in August 2018.