

Chain

Directing: Chloé LaBorde

Submitted to the Board of Theater and Performance Studies, School of the Arts

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Desired Degree:

Bachelor in Theatre and Performance

Purchase College State University of New York

January 2021.

First Reader: Imani Douglas

Second Reader: David Bassuk

Table of Contents:

Artistic Aims	.....	3 - 6
Research Paper	.....	7 - 16
Technical Essay	.....	17 - 22
Director's Book	.....	23 - 49
Production Images	.....	50 - 51

ARTISTIC AIMS

For my senior project I will be directing an excerpt from *Chain* by Pearl Cleage. *Chain* takes us along a seven day journey with 16-year old crack addict Rosa chained to a radiator by her parents. Once exposed to the highest of highs, she is now experiencing the effects of rock bottom as she struggles through withdrawal. I chose this piece because I am highly attracted to the complexity of Rosa's character. Her energy bounces back and forth like a ping pong match as she battles with her thoughts.

Isolation happens to be very familiar to many people right now. All across the world. The pandemic has forced us to stay inside, confined, challenged to indulge in retrospection. For some this process is willingly, for others it is not. Pearl Cleage places Rosa in a position where her isolation is entirely by force. She is being restricted, chained and confined, forced into the process of withdrawal.

The reality of drug addiction is a harsh one, specifically crack. *Chain* takes place in Harlem in the year 1991. The 90s was known for being the 'crack era', a horrific time in Harlem. Crack was everywhere. One of the challenges I have started working on is educating myself on the crack era. What did life look like? What was the effect of crack on users? What did the high feel like? And how can I support my actress in enacting this experience? I have researched various interviews of those who are both users and in recovery with the drug. I need to inform myself of the varying effects on not just their bodies but their entire lives. Essentially that is what we see in Rosa. Not just the effects of the drug on her mind and body but how it has deconstructed her family unit.

Since I am not on campus I have to create this production under complete remote circumstances. I have made the artistic choice to film this performance. I hope to use the camera to enhance Rosa's circumstances. I can utilize closer shots during very intense moments. These closest shots allow for a very intimate interaction between the actress and the audience. Due to the fact that Rosa is going through withdrawal, she is experiencing a range of emotions, constantly changing. Alternating between a close shot and a wide shot can be a way to follow this journey she is going through. Being on zoom last semester taught me a lot about the level of engagement with a virtual audience. It is much less consistent than the level of engagement of a live audience. Knowing this, I want to make sure the piece is engaging and also not too long.

This is the first production that I am completely directing on my own. I think this process will reveal a lot about me, my strengths, weaknesses and all that I have to look forward to in my growth. I find this piece to be very challenging. It is a solo performance set under confined circumstances. The writing in solo performance has to be dealt with in a different way than ensemble pieces. Learning how to navigate the conversation between the actress and the audience (without having an actual audience) and the space she is confined in is different from a multi-voice exchange.

Doing this project during covid has reduced the amount of members on my team. I am essentially the stage manager, the producer and now also a film director. It introduces a lot of responsibilities that force extreme organization and time management skills. I think all the challenges of this project, both predetermined and unexpected will change me for the better. I will have to explore new aspects of theatre as well as trusting myself to be able to complete it all. I am also combining two mediums that I am extremely passionate about, theatre and film. While

explore both, I have to honor both. I've been asking myself, how can I honor the beauty of theatre while using the technical aspects of film to my advantage.

I once read a poem that said "It's all about packaging right? Good and bad, it's all relative." Each character in a play comes with different packaging, a different upbringing, a specific race, a reason why they are where they are. Personally, as I am growing into young adulthood I find myself heavily reflecting on my choices. There is an ever-present voice in my head telling me to make the right decision. But the reality is that this voice isn't just mine, this is the voice of my mother, of my best friend, of my younger self hoping my decisions will lead me down the right path. I know I'm not the only one. I sit and have conversations with my friends as we break down the pros and cons, the flaws in our thoughts and our world. My goal is to connect with the Purchase community and take them along on the journey with Rosa as she tries to make sense of it all, just like the rest of us are.

Addiction is a reality of human existence. Many of us carry addictive traits that we don't even realize. I chose this play for here and now because it is timeless. Although the fact that it is set during the crack era, heightening the circumstances, drugs and other addictive substances are still present in our world. Going beyond Rosa's crack addiction, this play explores her humanity and the conflict within relationships both romantic, familial and personal. It also explores the idea of love; her love for the drug, her misinterpretation of love from a friend and a father's love for his daughter.

The idea of identity is also heavily present throughout our lives. We never stop growing and changing. As humans we are constantly forced to reevaluate ourselves and the world surrounding us. The journey to finding ourselves is lifelong. The misguidance one can often

feel is also seen in this play. And just like Rosa, we also battle with ourselves to make the hard choices.

Chain blatantly asks us difficult questions. It shows us the raw unedited reality of crack addiction. And rather than judging Rosa for her addiction, Cleage embraces her love for the drug and its high. It presents the harsh truth that even after facing reality, facing yourself, sometimes the call to the dark side will ring louder than ever.

The Women of Pearl Cleage

“You gotta have a plan, honey.”

From a very young age, Pearl Cleage was immersed in the world of activism. She grew up being an active participant in her community at all times. “I don't remember a time when I wasn't going to meetings, handing out flyers, and participating in picket lines and election day activities,” (Mims). Her father was a Reverend involved in the Civil Rights Movement, her grandfather a part of the Great Migration and also founded Detroit’s first African American Congregational church (Mims). She was raised by trailblazers who can be credited for doing amazing work in the black community. Although she was surrounded by politics, she held onto her dream of being a writer. The knowledge and drive that she adopted from growing up during the Civil Rights movement was later translated in the stories she told. Pearl Cleage’s work now functions as an aid in society's journey toward enlightenment. Through her plays, novels and essays, she addresses race, feminism and historical events.

Being black and being a woman is a narrative that she speaks about specifically. A much more complex discussion lies within the intersection of race and gender. Cleage tells the stories of real black women who are truthful, flawed and relatable. She blends theatre and activism by creating women characters and relationships that provide guidance for the audience. She addresses the oppression that black women face and offers them a way out and a way to reclaim their identity. One of her most direct examples of this is at the end of her play *Late Bus to Mecca* in which she lists at the end “The lessons:

1. Take care of your sisters.
2. Be resourceful.
3. Make a plan.
4. Make a move.
5. Don’t do animals.”

These lessons are taught through different voices and conflicts in all of her plays. In teaching this, she is working to dismantle existing social constructs while also exploring the beauty and complexity that lives within the existence of black women.

Like many artists, Cleage uses her writing as a channel to share her views and perspectives on the world. In an essay called “The feminist/womanist vision of Pearl Cleage,” by Beth Turner she shares a quote from Cleage herself which states “I approach my work first as a way of expressing my emotional response to oppression, since no revolution has ever been fueled purely by intellect, no matter what the boys tell you.” She translates this in her writing through the voice of black women, a voice that is not always fully heard and acknowledged. *Chain*, *Blues for an Alabama Sky* and *Late Bus to Mecca* are a few examples of her work that contain her responses to sexual exploitation, drug addiction, sisterhood, identity, violence against women and freedom of choice.

All of these plays center around major historical moments for black people. “Cleage seeks to bring us to grips with our American past and to help us understand and acknowledge its impact on present conditions, especially with regard to issues of race and gender. She examines great historical events and movements not through the eyes of leaders and celebrities but through the experiences of the ordinary people who lived them,” (Giles, 709) *Late Bus to Mecca* directly references the famous match Muhammad Ali won after years of not fighting. After winning the fight, Atlanta became “the place to be this weekend,” (Cleage, 327). Ava describes how down in Atlanta “black folks got it so good,” so good that they call it the “Black Mecca” (Cleage, 327).

In *Late Bus to Mecca*, Cleage fights strongly against the stereotypes placed onto black women and emphasizes their right and ability to take their lives into their own hands. At a Detroit bus station we meet Ava and ABW, a black woman. Ava sees ABW, who Cleage

describes as “dirty and disheveled,” (Cleage 315) as Ava is dressed up with heels and makeup. Cleage leaves a note in the beginning of the play declaring that Ava is not a caricature and ABW is not every black woman but ‘A’ black woman. By emphasizing this she does not generalize the experiences of black women but instead reiterates that their existence is complex and unique and to make any sort of generalization would be to do a disservice in working towards understanding them. As Ava feeds, cleans and tries to communicate with ABW, she provides her with various lessons as she shares her dissatisfaction with her pimp’s exploitation of her and what she was going to do to make a change to take her life into her own hands. Because of her pimp, Tony’s, shortcomings, he presents Ava with the idea of having sex with animals. Ava is horrified and offended. “Black women’s relationship to prostitution has always been fraught with extra baggage because, historically, black women have been stereotyped as sexually wanton and objects of uncontrolled sexual feeling,” (Wattley, 135). Because of this, Cleage writes Ava to perform entirely against the stereotypes of her occupation. She instead is fighting against female oppression and as she tells ABW to also do, she has a plan and is going to make a move. “Cleage’s plays often focus on the oppressions black women face due to the interlocking forces of racism and sexism, and her solutions often include acts of female assertion that are strengthened through alliances with other black women,” (Wattley, 129). As Ava shares her rights and wrongs with the silent ABW, she develops a level of trust and sisterhood. Cleage removes the expectation that black female prostitution can only be associated with promiscuity and instead presents Ava as a selfless caregiver. She passes on her experience to help another woman in hopes that she will not allow the same mistreatment onto herself.

ABW is given the manual to survive. One of the first pieces of advice Ava gives her is, “You gotta have a plan, honey,” (Cleage, 329). She is provided with love and sisterhood from another black woman, and is shown that she can leave the life that has been holding her back from reaching a better state of physical and mental health. Ava is given the choice to leave, leave behind Tony and start her life anew. She is going to Atlanta to start her business and offers ABW a ticket to start over too.

Chain takes us into the brutal reality of the crack epidemic of the 90s. Harlem was suffering and people even as young as 16, like Rosa, were being drawn into the spiral. Cleage explores the magnetism of the drug through the life of Rosa and her relationships. Rosa, who is essentially used by her boyfriend Jesus to make money for drugs, demonstrates how the drug made people desperate, using the people they care about at their own expense. In the decision to chain their daughter to a radiator to force her into withdrawal, we see how crack tore through families. To get even more specific historically, Cleage based this play on a true story of a family who struggled to get their daughter back and were forced to take action on their last resort.

Chain tells the story of 16 year old crack addict Rosa who is chained to a radiator in her home by her parents. It takes us along the seven day psychological journey with Rosa as she reflects and reminisces on the drug, her boyfriend Jesus, her family and the moment that could’ve been her last. The story is solely told through the eyes and mind of Rosa which creates a level of intensity due to the state that she is in. On day three, as she sorts through her thoughts, she introduces us to Jesus, her boyfriend. She later shares that although he isn’t interested in sexual interaction with her, he teaches her how to masturbate. His detached yet reliant nature places Rosa in a position to misinterpret his commitment to her. “With the story of Rosa’s

boyfriend Jesus, Cleage broaches the seedy side of sexual politics– voyeurism, sexual exploitation, and rape. An emotionally dissociative crack addict, Jesus is able to sell and use dope dispassionately,” (Turner, 104). Although she enjoys pleasing Jesus through her acts, she adopts his ability to dispassionately perform the act for money and eventually for survival. When Jesus leaves her alone to falsely retrieve the money he owes to a group of men, Rosa turns to the sexual act as a source of survival. However, the man in the room wanted more and right before he can rape her, her father bangs on the door hoping to rescue his daughter. In this moment, Cleage addresses the violent lifestyle of drug addiction, sexual exploitation, rape and survival. As Rosa sits in the room for seven days she recalls these moments and comes to terms with the reality of how dangerous the situation was. Still, Cleage does not deny the reality of crack addiction. After coming home and watching her father cry, Rosa breaks down in the retelling of this moment sharing “That hurt me worse than anything... I love my daddy,” (Cleage, 300). But as Turner shares in her analysis “the allure of crack is stronger,” (Turner, 104). Rosa, the young, witty black girl is held captive by the drug plaguing her community.

After days of recalling what happened, Rosa is able to grasp the reality of what this drug has done to her and her life and how the people who she believed cared about her, were using her. Still, when the phone rings on day 7, Rosa can choose to run back to Jesus and the drug or she can choose herself. Cleage offers women a way out but emphasizes their humanity by presenting the reality that they might not always choose in their best interest. The play ends without telling us whether she returns to the world that was destroying her.

Blues for an Alabama Sky takes us further back in time to the Great Depression and the Harlem Renaissance. She details the effect that the Great Depression had on artists even as it made way for the Harlem Renaissance. One of the characters, Guy, is a male costume designer

who aspires to design for Josephine Baker, who was one of the most famous performers. While it is an artistic dream, he is hoping that this could be the job to place him in a financial position to take care of his friends who are also struggling to find employment post-depression. Angel, a black woman in her thirties has just been fired from her job at the Cotton Club after her gangster breaks up with her. In losing her boyfriend, she also loses her apartment and proceeds to move in with her best friend Guy who offers to look out for her. When Angel meets Leland she sees him as a secured path to financial stability. No matter how persistent he is, it doesn't change the fact that she does not truly love him. When Angel finds out that she is pregnant, she chooses to have an abortion. And although she keeps it from Leland and still has the option to marry him, she sees going to Paris with Guy as a better option. When trying to break things off with Leland she confesses that she had an abortion.

When Cleage speaks on Angel's character, she described her as "A complicated image of Black womanhood," (Turner 40). To many, Angel can be depicted as self-absorbed but on the other end, she is committed to choosing herself in a positive way. Although she has a desire for stability, she does not want to submit to the idea of being Leland's fantasy. Because in reality, although he loves her, he wants control over her and sees her as a placeholder for what he has lost. Cleage writes Angel as a character that you can disagree with because she offers her the grace to be flawed. She contrasts Angel's character with Delia, a younger black woman who is committed to creating a family planning facility. Delia is anything but selfish. In this case, Cleage offers the audience someone they can emulate but still challenges that by placing her in the center of the controversy of reproductive rights. Both women are extremely strong willed in their own way and they are actively fighting against the patriarchy that tells them to submit to the guidance of a man and instead, create the life you believe in.

In *Blues for an Alabama Sky*, Angel is given the power of choice with her body. Not only that, but Cleage personifies this idea through Delia and Sam. Delia aspires to create a family planning facility that allows for women to have help preparing for starting a family, on their own terms. In her defense towards Sam, she tells him “A woman shouldn’t have to make a baby every time she makes love!” (Cleage, 130). At the end of the play it is revealed that Sam is the one who performs the abortion procedure on Angel, leading him to be killed by Leland.

There is an excess amount of expectations and stereotypes projected onto black women in society. Oftentimes they are expected to be complacent and settle for the first thing presented to them because they are not seen as capable and worthy of more. All of Pearl Cleage’s characters are given the ability to choose. In the midst of the stigma around drug addiction, women’s reproduction and the sexual liberation of women, Cleage creates black female characters that break through these barriers. Through her work, black women are being unshackled from the conjectures about what they should and should not do. She structures these characters carefully with the absence of judgment, presenting to the audience the challenge of seeing women for who they really are.

These three plays also contain thematic and stylistic features that connect them to each other. To start, all three of these plays take place in one set location. In *Blues for an Alabama Sky*, we are in an apartment building in Harlem. Although the play takes place in two of the characters' apartments, Cleage describes that they should be accessible to each other at all times as if it is one apartment. In *Late Bus to Mecca* we sit with Ava and ABW on the Detroit bus station bench throughout the entire play. In *Chain*, throughout the seven days of Rosa’s withdrawal she remains in the same room. Although we live in these same environments throughout the entire play, Cleage removes us from it occasionally in a different way. By

breaking the fourth wall and using unique stylistic devices, she reaches out directly to the audience. These brechtian techniques are seen in both *Late Bus to Mecca* and *Chain*. In *Late Bus to Mecca*, Cleage includes a slide at the beginning of each scene, adding a sort of narration. We also move through time with audio announcements from the bus station on a loudspeaker.

To conclude the performance, there is a series of slides listing the ‘lessons’ of the play.

Although it is referring to the lessons Ava shares with ABW throughout the play, in a way she is talking directly to the audience, handing them this message to leave with. It is not metaphorical or inconspicuous, she is directly telling the audience, black women, don't forget these things. In *Chain*, she also moves us through the play with slides, detailing the days passing by in each scene. She directly breaks the fourth wall by having Rosa speak directly to the audience. She yells at them and asks them questions, starting early on in the play, bringing them into the room with her from the start. These Brechtian techniques remove the audience from the facade created by the story and remind them they are watching a play in real time. It brings them closer to the characters and their journey.

Pearl Cleage shows no interest in creating a version of blackness that provides the most comfort. Her writing is direct and challenging, facing the controversies in the world head on. She writes characters that are flawed but she also addresses how they should be held accountable for their wrong doings. She extends the accountability of her fictional characters to artists of the real world. She says in one of her famous essays “Mad at Miles,” “no artist, no matter how brilliant the art, is excused from responsible behavior toward family and community, and that the creations by artists who refuse this responsibility is tainted and should be rejected by the community.” Cleage, growing up amidst activism and black nationalism, became an artist and found another way to serve her community. Her stories branch personal relationships to social

dilemmas and offer healing and progression for black women. In an essay she wrote for HowlRound Theatre Commons, she shares one of her favorite quotes from playwright Terrence McNally. This quote summarizes the purpose of her work and how it beautifully makes space for the journey of strong yet flawed black women trying to make their way through a complex world. ““If you don’t believe that the theatre has the ability to make us better people—and by ‘better’ I mean more caring, more informed, more passionately committed human beings—then there is going to be very little dialogue between us.” I love that quote more every time I read it. I love the expansive, open-ended, all-inclusive nature of it. He’s talking about humans, about entering fully into the international flow of ideas and culture because that is where we will find our shared stories, our overlapping narratives, our global community. He’s talking about trying to save the planet by believing, against all odds and evidence to the contrary, that most people are good,” (Calling in Spirits).

Bibliography

Cleage, Pearl. "Calling in Spirits". *HowlRound Theatre Commons*,
<https://howlround.com/calling-spirits>.

Cleage, Pearl. *Flyin' West and Other Plays*. Theatre Communications Group, 1999.

Giles, Freda Scott. "The motion of herstory: three plays by Pearl Cleage." *African American Review* 31.4 (1997): 709-712.

Mims, Morgan. "Pearl Cleage: Making a Life in the Theatre". *HowlRound Theatre Commons*,
<https://howlround.com/pearl-cleage>.

Turner, Beth. "The feminist/womanist vision of Pearl Cleage." *Contemporary African American Women Playwrights: A Casebook* (2007): 99-114.

Wattley, Amas. "Teaching Feminist Lessons in Late Bus to Mecca." *Pearl Cleage and Free Womanhood: Essays on Her Prose Works* (2012): 127.

TECHNICAL ESSAY

All of Spring 2020, I had been planning and invested in doing *Jesus Hopped the 'A' Train* by Stephen Adly Gurgius. But once we were sent home and had to make the choice of doing the project remotely or not, I had to make a decision. And I decided to let go of the project and start new. So by August, I was back to square one and once again, the first step was picking a play.

After being so attached to a prior project it was disappointing to just let it go. However, I was once again opened up to the world of art and all of its options. But it wasn't easy. I had to consider time, length, cast size and so many other factors but now for a virtual production. Working on zoom is not ideal for most students along with the weight of being a student during a health crisis. Being part of a production was not any easier.

Covid slowed down a lot of companies and response times were taking longer than usual. I'd send an email inquiring about rights and not hear back for a week and a half. This process started in mid-July. I realized I needed to increase my options to increase my chances of getting a response. I spoke to my advisor, friends and others to ask them for play ideas that included a small cast and dealt with my interests. I wanted to direct a play with an all black cast that discussed women and black issues. And I found it! *For colored girls who have considered suicide/ when the rainbow is enuf* was everything that I was looking for. After going in circles for weeks I was drawn back to a play that I had first been introduced to my sophomore year of college. I fell in love with it all over again. I thought to myself, how could I have overlooked this. I looked online and found it listed on Concord Theatricals and sent in a request for the rights. From there I began planning how I would film it, my concept and a potential cast. And

then I received a reply that it was unavailable. I had to pause. I had to reflect. We are in the middle of a pandemic but I still want to create my best work possible. I need to love the piece but I also need to be safe, secure and realistic. But the clock was ticking. It was one day after class that Na'shay texted me, what about *Chain*, and that was it.

It was now late September. I reached out to a former THP student who had previously done a Pearl Cleage production and she was able to give me the information to her representatives. After reaching out and a series of email exchanges I signed a contract agreeing to 4 virtual streamings of a 25-30 minute excerpt of this play. To complete the terms I had to mail in a \$200 check addressed to Pearl Cleage. One thing I didn't anticipate learning through this process was how to write a check. I also learned the importance of clear communication when dealing with legal terms. There were times when I sent emails saying "just to clarify" or "confirming that although this is not stated in the contract." And that was essential, especially since I had decided to film this production. Theatre is so sacred because of the live circumstances and I was breaking that barrier. I had to make sure that I was clear on what we agreed to in the contract to properly abide by the agent's wishes.

One of the biggest challenges of this entire process was cutting the play. The runtime is originally around 70 minutes. 70 minutes of Rosa Jenkins in withdrawal, uncovering so much of herself and her life. It was painful to do, it felt like every line counted. Cutting the play would not have been possible without Imani. When we had our first conversation about cutting the play she said to me "You just have to tell the story." I went back to the script over and over again hearing her voice in my head saying just that, I just have to tell the story. How would I cut the script, tell the story but also make the seven days of Rosa feel balanced? My goal was to cut it down to 25 minutes. It was maybe five days before we planned to film that I did my first full

run-through and Imani watched. It ran slightly under 30 minutes. That same night Imani and I sat with the script cutting it down to 20 minutes. I was terrified to go back to my actress Na'shay to tell her she now had to relearn a new script. But I had to, and I did, and she memorized it just in time.

Learning how to rehearse effectively over zoom was a process. It wasn't until the end of the process that I feel like I really grasped what was most effective for my actress and our process. We spent a decent amount of time doing table work. Rosa is a very complex character and so are her relationships and her addiction. We broke down scenes, watched interviews and discussed the crack era and the drug itself. We came together with our individual research and collaborated to inform ourselves as much as we could. But we were also running low on time. We rehearsed on zoom three days a week for two hours, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7-9pm and Wednesdays from 8-10pm. Both Na'shay Kelly (actress) and Eryn Harris (assistant director) were full-time students working part-time jobs outside of school. I was also a full-time student, a teaching assistant and in the process of searching for and then moving to a new apartment. But we came together each night, meditated to release the weight of the day and brought 100% into the room, for each other, regardless of how tired we were.

Throughout rehearsals, Eryn took immaculate notes. Since we were trying to work at a faster pace, we didn't have time to spare to keep going back on certain notes or areas. Eryn's work in rehearsal helped me keep up with our progress and added structure. She communicated with Na'shay on her own, setting up line rehearsals and confirming deadlines. It truly helped me understand the work of an assistant director and it made my life easier.

Luckily, the new apartment that I had just moved into had a radiator, the only essential set piece needed. Eryn and I sat and made a list- chain, phone, cigarette, camera, wireless

microphone, etc. I ordered all of my props online and scheduled a day to rehearse in person. Due to covid, I wore a mask and kept my distance as Na'shay was in the space (my living room) rehearsing. We only had a few hours to practice blocking in the space. As she moved throughout the room and I directed her, I also followed her with the camera, getting an idea of which shots I would like and doing test takes. That night I stayed up and made a shot list. After taking a few film courses I still had never been taught how to make a shot list, but my friend Drew, a former BFA film major who would be on camera, explained it was essential. So I did it. He sent me a template and I went to work researching shot names and specifying it for each scene.

Many of the scenes were supposed to be shot in dim lighting to imply that it was midday or nighttime. However, dim natural lighting is highly ineffective. It is usually artificially created but we didn't have all of the equipment needed to make that happen. As Drew and Na'shay sat in my living room, her reading over lines and him fixing the camera settings, I went to every room and gathered all the lamps I could find. Luckily my brother is a photographer but his tools were not as effective for our process. Through trial and error, we set up lamps on all sides, dimming one, tilting the other, trying to make it as clear and visible as possible. At a certain point, I had to trust that any flaws could be fixed in the editing room.

Editing takes time. I sat for hours sorting through each take, deleting flawed ones and cutting and syncing the sound with the final option. Putting the clips together was the easy part. It was adjusting the sound, removing the echo, brightening scenes and blurring out the sirens of the street that was a challenge. But it was the reality of making a piece that lacked the proper equipment. But I appreciate the way it challenged us to be creative. How to make something out of nothing. And at the end of the day, having the script and my actress is everything. But I was

lucky enough to have the tools to edit to make the piece cleaner and smoother. I struggled the most with editing the lighting. I'd edit and think this was the final one but after exporting noticed it was still too dim. The tricky part about editing lighting is that the more you do, the lower the quality becomes and then it begins to interfere with the experience as a whole. I needed to make it visible but I wanted to try to maintain it's clarity and quality.

Just a day before opening, I was in the process of sending the final edit to Jack to then be streamed by the stage manager assigned on campus but the file was too big. It said loading for hours, projecting to be done in 8 hours, but never adjusting its progress. It was extremely stressful. If I couldn't get the piece to him, how would I be able to put up this performance. So I said, what if I download the software, and stream it myself? After having to delay the opening date, I got on the phone with the stage manager and she walked me through the whole process. Every night at 7 pm I set up my laptop, turned off other wifi-using devices throughout the house and prepared to stream, praying that the wifi would remain stable for just 20 minutes.

I did not expect to learn as much as I did in directing, theatre, film and myself. This experience has changed me forever. I was faced with challenges I could never have anticipated. It tested my patience, my trust in myself and in others and most of all my will power. There's no letting go of a senior project when it feels like too much. For one it is a requirement but also this is my passion. This is only the beginning of the reality of the world I am planning on growing into. I wanted to do a piece with a female black cast that challenged both me and the audience, and *Chain* gave me that and more. Whatever I thought I knew about Rosa after my first time reading the play has completely changed after this production. Just as with ourselves, we never stop learning. Every day in rehearsal I learned more about Na'shay, Eryn, Rosa, myself, directing, it was amazing. In the midst of all the stresses in the world I was able to escape into

Rosa's world with a cast of beautiful dedicated souls. Rosa's world wasn't the prettiest either but I was able to consume myself in creativity for those two hours each night and I will remember them forever.

DIRECTOR'S BOOK

Chain by Pearl Cleage

Director: Chloé LaBorde
Assistant Director: Eryn Harris

Given Circumstances

Day One

- Harlem, New York
- Rosa Jenkins
- 16 years old
- Left ankle chained to a radiator in a dark room
- Mother and father
- Well worn furniture, a picture of JFK, MLK jr, Bobby Kennedy and a dime-store painting of a white Jesus
- Breaks family photo and almost cuts herself
- Father vs Mother

Day Two

- Awkward with the chain
- Rosa is manipulative
- Her parents are from the country
- Her father gave someone money in exchange for her
- This isn't the first time he's had to come get her
- Started smoking weed and cigarettes in junior high school
- Jesus
- She's been to rehab
- Smoked because Paula smoked
 - Did not want Paula to start smoking crack because she'd immediately become a coke hoe.
- Parents both work a lot of hours at Harlem Hospital

Day Three

- Maybe Jesus will "rescue" me
- She's gotten out of it before
- They sent her down south before bc of drugs
- "Honor system cause they in Alabama"
- Stole grandmother's social security check
- Uncle and Gma went off on her for check
 - Sent her back to New York
- Cursed out the first day they moved on their block in NYC
- Parents moved her to NY so she could go to good schools and have better opportunities
- Goody-goody for a long time

- Met Jesus and he taught her about NY
- Jesus is Puerto Rican
- Jesus thought everything was funny - weird shit
- Jesus looks black
- Jesus is hard about shit
- “It was scary unless you was wit him”
- Jesus’ mom was shot. He came back to her dead body and her boyfriend sitting in the apartment smoking her crack.
- After burying her, he thought about the boyfriend smoking and started smoking crack
- He talks about killing people when he can’t get high
- Known Jesus since she was 11 yrs old
- He sells crack
- We find out why she starts smoking
- Crack- you feel good in a personal way. The high keeps you company.
- Only problem is it doesn’t last long
- “Wish my dad would get high ONE time”
- Dad didn’t like her to be around Jesus after his mom was killed
- Dad didn’t care about her going to Jesus’ house to smoke, just not sex
- J house was always full of crackheads
- J wouldn’t have sex with her
- Thinks J wanted her to start smoking so they could do it together
- Taught her how to masturbate so he could watch
- Can’t do it if no one’s watching her. Doesn’t feel right if Jesus isn’t watching her
- Masturbated in front of men to make money
- Parents worked double shift
- Unchained her while they were home but followed her everywhere
- Screamed really loud when Dad beat her
- First whoopin at 13
 - She kept running away from rehab
- I LIKE TO BE HIGH
- How many times has she gone to rehab
- Laughs at the same things Jesus found funny
- Robbed Gma bc it feels so good

Her and Jesus’s love vs her parents love

Feeling of betrayal

- Crippled
- Took a minute to realize I can't trust everybody
- I’m so stupid for trusting
- Friends can break your heart

- Cautious
- Who can I trust

Day Four

- I WANNA GET HIGH
- Jesus doesn't care about me
- Jesus could slip her drugs under the door
- Writes a letter
- I want it. I know how to get it. But I'm chained.
- Why am I crying?
- Nobody tells you how bad you're gonna feel
- Glad to see daddy when he came to get her
- Pissed at J
- In a room full of men she's never seen
- J owes a 100 dollars
- I was trying to hang
- THAT'S WHERE I FUCKED UP
- Starts to think about how to get out of it
- Man tries to have sex with her
- Daddy starts knocking on the door
- Man says he'll blow her brains out if he doesn't pay up 100 dollars
- Daddy stops, then takes out exactly 100 dollars
- That's how she knew J sent him
- Mama keeps hugging her
- Sees Daddy crying
 - "That hurt me worse than anything"
- Never seen him cry in her life
 - Not even when his mama died
- "I love my Daddy"
- "It was almost like I was somewhere else watching it"
- Daddy sat by her bed while she slept
- Thought he was gonna rape her and that wasn't gonna be the worst of it
- So grateful for her father

*****Mother didn't see what the father saw

Day Five

- Mom said she's acting like her old self
- I stole lots of people's checks
- Even if you stop, wherever you go, something is gonna remind you about that rock
- "I don't trust nobody"
- She's not religious

- Acknowledges that Rosa is gone
- Feels pressure to be better and stay better

REHEARSAL NOTES

Wednesday October 14th,
@ 7 PM

Chloe went over **Eryn's** responsibilities as Assistant Director (AD)

- Set up the meetings
- Take notes on
 - Lighting, staging, acting

Chloe needs to

- Figure out a location for filming
 - **Na'shay** suggested asking Purchase to borrow a dorm room
- Cut the script to 30 mins

Chloe went over the timeline until Performance day

- 1st Performance is November 19th
- We have 10 more rehearsals (maybe 11) until then
- We will film one week before the production date

Filming

Chloe needs to

- Talk with Drew (Purchase Alumni) about helping out with Filming
- Chloe's brother may also help out

Chloe set the tone for the process as whole

- She wants this to be a safe space
- If we need anything we shouldn't hesitate to say so
- Understands that this is a hard time (the pandemic, Police brutality, etc)

The Play

Character: 16 year old Rose

Mentioned Characters: Mom, Dad, Jesus

Time: Around 1991 "The Crack Epidemic"

- Interviews from crack users

- Readings, documentaries

Chloe and **Na'shay** made connections of the play to a Hulu show called *Snowfall*

- Thought the show might help with visualizing the physicality of being chained
- Watch clips from shows to see how Crack affects people

Points were made and Questions to think about

Chloe asked **Na'shay**

- How you'd feel on the high vs on the low (High on crack)

Chloe said the high is like *snaps* (its quick) and then it's gone in a second

Chloe asked/said

- Is everything Rosa says fueled by her withdrawal?
- Parents moved to New York from the South
- She finds safety with Jesus
- She sexualizes herself and has no fear in that because he's there. It's like he's the only one in the room.
- Why is it that she feels he (Jesus) is protecting her?

Connections were made between the crack epidemic and this current coronavirus pandemic

- Its consuming the world (Corona is now and crack was then)
- Killed a lot people
- Ripped families apart
- Hard to avoid

Chloe said the high was a calling. Something you can't get away from

- Rosa has layers
 - She knows her parents care
 - She remembers in the midst of everything she's not alone
- Why is it that she only wants Jesus to care?
- How would she feel if her parents stopped caring?

Na'shay said

- Maybe she's an "addict addicted to crack" instead
- Rosa has a birds eye view of society

- Truthful and honest shit is coming out of the mouth of someone who has been neglected and people don't pay attention, they write her off. But she's the one who really knows whats going on.

Chloe asked

- Who was Rosa before drugs?
- Is this (crack users) a community for her?
- Why does Rosa feel so hurt by what Jesus says to her? (I believe this is referencing their phone call)
- Why does she have to prove herself to him?
- Jesus introduced her to crack. Maybe that's why he's so important.

Na'shay said

- People will do anything for crack.
- They will tell you they love you but once they notice they can't get it (crack), the truth comes out and they are angry.

END

Thursday October 15th, at 7:30

Chloe shared an interview with Crack User Bob Williams

LINK: https://youtu.be/hxJs_94TgYE

Interview

Eryn's notes from the interview

- User takes a lot of inales as he talks
 - Effects of the crack?
- Crack is different from cocaine
- When he starts talking about crack he bites his lip
- Crack is that much of a sensation
- He once spent \$1300 in 6 hours on crack
- He is honest about how he feels
 - Speaks about how Good crack is even though he is aware of the bad
 - Reminds me of Rosa (When he goes to group therapy she says "I just like to get high")
- He is lowkey very convincing (would never try crack but he makes it sound amazing)
- Father and Daughters smoking crack together (their both hooked on the stuff)

Na'shay brings up

- How Bob says "I wouldn't tell people to try crack but once they do, I dare them to tell me it's not the best feeling they've ever had".
- He says he wouldn't say he loves crack but it's obvious he does.
- Shock factor in learning he died shortly after the interview
- Surprised he was a current user
- Crack is the boss. It controls him
- Mentioned how their were security guards in crack houses still in uniform
 - School girls in uniform. Right after school to smoke some rack

Chloe brings up

- How Bob says Crack is different because it fills your lungs and you're high as a kite in 3 to 5 seconds

The Play

Chloe said talking to **Na'shay**

- The feeling of being high vs your thoughts
 - Is like water and oil
- Trying to pour water in a cup of Oil
- Which sense do you feel affects you most?

Na'shay said it (the sense) was Auditory

- Hearing someone's story can make me cry
- Silverware scratching wooden surfaces (Similar to nails on a chalkboard)

Chloe told **Na'shay**

- To click on that sound when she's in withdrawal as Rosa
- Find the separation between that sound and silence
- When Rosa wants crack and can't get it, it's like scratching on wooden surfaces and when it's silent those are her moments of clarity.

Crack

- It increases your heart rate
- Dopamine creates a padded wall. You reach Euphoria
- You go from being at the highest of highs to the lowest and then you go lower and lower and lower
-

Chloe asked

- When does she specifically talk about crack?

Chloe points out the moment in the play when Pearl Cleage has Rosa speak specifically to the audience

- Why would she make Rosa talk to the audience?

When Rosa says *“My Dad told you not to talk to me, right? Not to listen to anything I said ‘cause i’m a dope fiend and I might trick you into doin’ something bad.”*

- Who is she talking to at that moment?

The Room (Rosa is chained in)

- What does it feel like?
- What does it smell like?
- Is it hot? Is it cold?
- Is it just hot because she's in withdrawal?

More research needs to be done on what going into Withdrawal feels like?
Specific choices need to be made about everything.

Chloe linked the idea of the chain being heavy to Rosa’s drug addiction being heavy

- What does the chain symbolize?

We see in the stage directions that she becomes more comfortable with the chain

- How does that affect her progress in her withdrawal?
- When she's going back to herself how does she deal with the chain differently?

Chloe needs to

- Find a chain
- Still needs to find a location to film
 - Chloe’s new apartment may have a basement we could use

Na’shay pointed out

- Addiction is like being a prisoner in your own body

Na’shay made a connection to wanting crack

- When she orders food and wants it right away
- When she orders a package and wants it to hurry up and get here.

Chloe said

- When are we seeing Rosa and when are we seeing a person in recovery?

Na'shay commented

- What she read and heard about withdrawal
 - The pain is so bad
 - Feels like your heart is about to burst
 - Feels like your going to die
- Crack just doesn't affect the user
 - Their relationships with other people are destroyed
 - They know they are the cause of their families stress but happy to give in if it means they get Crack
 - Relates this to Rosa.
 - She knows her Mom and Dad are stressing about her life but it doesn't stop her from smoking crack

Chloe asks

- How far do we think Rosa has made it by Day 7?
- How much progress do we think Rosa has made by then end of the play?
- What time window are we working in?
 - Are we going from Crack Rosa (day 1) back to Old Rosa (day 7)?
 - Or are we in a different window?

Richard Pryer was brought up.

- I think because he looks a little like
- Bob Williams the crack user from the interview



Na'shay shared a youtube video about crack users

The Truth About Drugs Documentary: Crack

LINK: <https://youtu.be/-GmW-BCm-UA>

Eryn's notes from the Documentary

- Users describe smoking crack as a continuous fight to chase the 1st high they ever had smoking it. That's why they smoke so much but they never reach it again
- Coming down from the high hurts
 - Feels like you're going to die
 - Feel nauseous
 - Depression like no other
- The effects overtime on using crack
 - Hard to breathe
 - One user can't even walk up the stairs without stopping a few times to catch breath
- Its starts off simple and then that's it your hooked

Eryn points out

- This documentary was convincing in an opposite way from the other interview
 - This one makes you never want to try drugs

Eryn finished the play

Na'shay is ordering the play today

Chloe is going to work on cutting the script

Everyone shared their emails

END 9:31 PM

Monday October 19th @ 7 PM

Chloe set the agenda for the meeting

- We will read through the play and stop after each day to comment.
- She figured out why she was having problems cutting its because she needed to hear the play out loud
- **Na'shay** read her part as Rosa
- **Eryn** read stage directions, even the small ones like (beat) and (laughs)

Chloe needs to

- Find a location with a Radiator
 - Call Dad and ask for use of a location
 - Using a dorm as school is not an option
 - Already agreed to do project off campus
 - Dorms at school don't have radiators
- Find a chain
 - Checked amazon

WE READ DAY 1

Chloe said

- Rosa is jittery
- Her energy is ping pongy

We Read Day 2

Chloe said

- Rosa is spewing at the audience

Na'shay said

- She's really getting into the part where she wants crack badly
- She speaks of going to Rehab but that didn't work
 - **Chloe** responded
 - The fact that she's in rehab at 13 is crazy

WE READ DAY 3

Chloe said

- We try not to be, but people are products of their environments.
 - Rosa is affected by this environment of crack users.
- Rosa is never alone
 - When she was a school she's with Paula
 - In Alabama her Grandma is really on her back
 - On the streets in New York shes with Jesus
 - This is the first time she is alone in this apartment, chained to the radiator
- Rosa thinks it's Romantic that Jesus doesn't want to be vulnerable with her but will be like "let's go smoke some crack"
- Jesus's house is full of crack heads but she wants to be with him

Eryn said

- Jesus' name keeps coming up.
 - She can change subjects but always comes back to talking about him
 - he's very important to her

Na'shay said

- She understands Rosa
 - Its funny her mom wasn't surprised she was playing this role
- Rosa likes participating in something that gives Jesus pleasure (*smoking crack*)
- Smoking with him (*Jesus*) is like having sex.
 - It's an intimate encounter for them in her eyes
 - Crack is a substitute for sex
 - **Chloe** responded

- That's interesting because its like its flipped
- Sex is like a transaction for Rosa and smoking crack is intimate
 - Transaction (*She masturbates infront of people for money*)
- Rosa stole from her Grandmother so she can get crack
 - More proof that people will do anything for crack (*as expressed in the Bob Williams Interview Video*)
- What is Rosa's body doing as she's expressing all this?
 - How is not having crack affecting her?

Chloe said

- There is a lot of humor
- Challenges Na'shay to find even more humor outside of the parts that are clear

Eryn said

- Rosa says "I been laughin' at the same shit Jesus find funny, and you know what that mean!"
- What does that mean to Rosa?
 - **Na'shay** responded
 - Rosa is finding things that seem serious to other people, funny. Just like Jesus
 - **Chloe** asked
 - At what points when Rosa is spewing info is she thinking "Jesus would find this funny"?

Chloe said

- Rosa is at an age where her environment really affects her

Na'shay said

- Jesus presence allows Rosa to feel things are not so scary
- He has a power that calms Rosa

Eryn wrote

- What's Jonesin'? Where does the slang come from?

WE READ DAY 4

Chloe said

- This is where Rosa breaks
 - On page 296 she says "Goddamn it! I...want...this...shit...off...of...me!"
 - It all builds up until she gets to "Goddamn, I need to get high!" on page 297
- Does Rosa ever cry?
 - If so, where would that be?
- Sure she's heard the stories and seen it happen to other people (*loose their families, go through withdrawal, loose money*)
 - But now its happening to her
- She softens up when talking about her father
 - She says "I love my daddy"

- She says she was glad to see him, that boy could have raped her if not for her dad coming to get her
- Her father didn't even cry when his mother died but here with his daughter he is broken

Na'shay said

- We see Rosa break
- She is realizing the cracks in her relationships
 - How bad of a friend Jesus is.
- Feels like in these moments her mouth is moving faster than her brain
- She's making realizations but they aren't registering.

Chloe said

- We are seeing Rosa's age
 - How young she is and how she still needs her parents
- She's realizing her friends don't have her back as much as her parents do.
 - Realizing that is painful
 - On top of the pain of wanting the drug
 - Her parents are also in pain

Chloe

Speaking of Crack In General

- In this crack world you are bound to slip up. It doesn't matter how on top of it you think you are. You will get caught up in the favors. "I gotta do this person a favor to pay this person back. Then i gotta pay her back later after I pay him back but that means i can't pay that one"
- Jesus betraying Rosa and leaving her with the boys
 - Is this Jesus spiraling down or is this just a slip up?
 - How is he so quick to give up Rosa in his slip up?
 - Is it because he knows her father will protect her (*He has things to do and can't handle this situation, so let me dip and send her father to get her*)

Na'shay said

- As viewers we are seeing Rosa's heartbreak

Chloe said

- Rosa has been trained by Jesus
 - Eryn agreed and wrote
 - Rosa says "*So I pulled my panties to the side like Jesus showed me*"
- Rosa is beginning to see the betrayal
 - This is the reality of the world (*crack world*) she lives in

Eryn wondered and wrote

- Are we surprised by Jesus's betrayal?
 - I have to say yes and maybe that's because I was thinking like Rosa and bonded with how much he means to her.

- I could see how people who have experience in relationships would say no they were not surprised

WE READ DAY 5

Eryn said

- Rosa is starting to get comfortable in her situation
 - She's thinking things might be okay
 - She mentions having a bathroom
- I don't think these feelings are genuine (*not the right word*) possible Endurant
 - If someone were to walk in the room and offer her crack right now all of that "things are looking up" mess would go out the window

Chloe said

- Her parents are starting to trust her again and that makes her feel good.
- Rosa doesn't trust anyone.
 - Not even herself
- At the end we see a shift from the tone of the rest of the day
 - Rosa says "I even got a TV and shit, so how bad can it be? (*suddenly angry*) And what the fuck you lookin' at?"
 - **Na'shay** questions What provokes that anger at the end?
 - **Chloe** said for Na'shay to think about that
- We as the audience were like "yess Rosa your doing so good" and then she converts back at the very end
 - **Na'shay** commented "That's how it is"
 - **Eryn** wrote
 - Loving someone with an addiction is very much like that. They have good days where you are so proud of them and the next day could be the day all that progress disappears

WE READ DAY 6

Na'shay started to read

Chloe told **Na'shay**

- Take it back and really feel that he (Jesus) left her.
 - She hasn't talked to him since then.
 - She's ready to go in on him.

WE READ DAY 7

Chloe thinks about

- Cutting scene 7
- And instead ending on the Phone call in Day 6
 - Pearl doesn't say how the play ends so we don't know either way
 - it would be better to end on a high and not know what happens

Chloe and **Na'shay** reflect on how cool the blocking for this scene would be

Na'shay

- But just shares her love for Day 7
 - We see Rosa's relationship with the chain
 - She goes to put it back on but she puts it on her wrist instead.
 - Found that interesting

Chloe needs to

- needs to find a place to film
- Looked for a Chain on amazon

CLOTHING CONVERSATION

For Na'shay

- Baggy clothes (sweat pants, hoodie, thick socks for chain around ankle)

Na'shay has a black hoodie

Chloe We will reconvene **Wednesday October 21st @8**

END

Rehearsal 6

Monday October 26th at 7PM

We picked up where we left off, reading through the entire script and identifying the givens.

DAY 5 pg 302

The Givens

- Rosa has an alabama self
 - A before she met Jesus self
- Parent are starting to be proud of her
- She's experienced some rough stuff (Girl being thrown out the window naked)

Chloe said

- Rosa is shifting and she thinks she can handle it but she's realizing she can't
 - She doesn't trust anybody (not even herself)
- She's feeling the pressure of getting clean
 - People have expectations of you to go back to your old self

Eryn said

- We learn that Rosa is not religious.

- Interesting because it she went to church as a kid
- Her parents have some belief

Chloe says she loved the part when Rosa talks about why people have to make ugly faces when praising God.

Na'shay says

- Rosa acknowledges that old Rosa is gone
- Hard for addicts who are trying to get clean to hang with their crack friends.
- In the same way its hard for addicts who are trying to get clean to hang with people who have always been clean. They can't relate.
 - **Eryn** adds
 - That's why it's hard for Rosa with her parents. They can't possibly understand withdrawal they've never been on the drug.
 - **Na'shay** adds
 - Her mom doesn't even drink and her Dad just has a beer every now and then

Chloe said

- Beats in here are immediate switches
 - She goes from Alabama Rosa *snaps* to crackhead Rosa
- She has a soft spot for her Father
- She's starting to admit her faults
 - She stole a lot of people's checks not just her grandmas
 - It's like going to confession (Catholic church)
 - She has to say them out loud to rid the guilt
 - Why?

Na'shay said

- She keeps thinking about how Jesus left her
- She flips from being done with him to asking why he left her

Chloe said

- Day 4 is the purging.
 - Shes getting all the feelings out and shes realizing but its not sticking
- Day 5 is where its all clear and she's sorting it all out

Chloe does a visual with **Na'shay**

- It was a really good visual
- It was Jesus oriented because the phone call is next
- She's in the room with the chain thinking of everything
 - Feeling all the pain from the withdrawal
- It feels so good to get high with Jesus
 - It was good times
 - And then he betrayed her
 - Left her in a room full of guys who could have raped her, killed her
 - Its happened to people before (the girl who was thrown out the window)

- Then she looks out the window and sees Jesus
 - He's walking around free
 - He's not thinking about her being chained up
 - He got her hooked on the stuff
- Then she picks up the phone and calls him

Na'shay read after that

DAY 6

Eryn said

- It feels like Rosa feels like she has to prove to Jesus that she's doing better without him.
- She used to claim being a dope fiend and now she's like I'm not a dope fiend like you. She's no longer claiming it.

Chloe said

- Rosa says "I handled it"
- What is she talking about?
 - The situation with the boys who could have rapped her
 - She handled it while Jesus ran away
- Note the change
 - She insists she doesn't need him and she's getting better

Chloe doesn't want **Na'shay** to have to keep working against her environment.

- She can't be as loud and she wants to
- Instead **Chloe** wants to find what we can do to work with the environment's limitations
 - In moments when she feels like she wants to yell and can't. What can she do to express that physically

Chloe has a CUT of the script

- It is 22 mins

Chloe asks **Na'shay** how is she at memorizing?

- **Na'shay** says she's good

Chloe might add the part about Rosa and God back into the cut if there's time

- If cutting the script down more is detrimental to the work she isn't going to force it

Chloe needs to

- might need to put in a trigger warning for mention of Rape
- Gets a phone (prop)
 - Might use her own phone
- Contact the person she is renting the room from to
 - see what equipment is in the room
 - See if they have a black curtain
- Meet with her friend who might help film

- Might use her dad's camera
- Book the place by the end of the week
 - Will reach out to **Eryn** and **Na'shay** about scheduling before the end of the week

Na'shay read the entire cut. (No stage directions)

- Time: 22 mins

Eryn said/wrote

- Rosa is really smart
 - **Chloe** said
 - She's experienced a lot in her young age
- Jesus hasn't talked to Rosa in like 7 days and one of the first things he asked her is "How long has it been since she's been high?" it's all about the drug with him

Na'shay is clear to start memorizing Days 1-3

Chloe might still cut from Day 4

Eryn said

- She see's what **chloe** did there at the end
 - In the Cut of day 7 Rosa says "Okay, so this is a prayer...Nah i'm not doing that" then there's a knock at the door and she says "Jesus is that you" but its not the real Jesus it's her friend Jesus.
 - **Chloe** reveals that wasn't her intention but wow just realized his name is Jesus like Jesus
 - **Na'shay** says Jesus (the crackhead friend) is Rosa's Jesus (the lord)

Chloe talks about filming ideas

- After Rosa says "Nah i can't do that"
 - It will cut to black
 - There will be a knock on the door
 - And she will say "Jesus is that you" In Blackness
- She will have a light on **Na'shay** so that it feels like she is in darkness.

END

Thursday October 28, 2020

Chloe went over a tongue twister from Dr.Seuss

Na'shay Read Day 1

Chloe said

- On day 1 Rosa is pleading but she's also scheming.

Thursday October 29th @7 PM

Chloe discussed an idea for filming

- What if we started filming with the camera close on Na'shay and then as the days go on we zoom out with the camera controls
 - To show symbolize the chain

Chloe said

- Today we'd try Eryn and Chloe turning of their camera's

Na'shay Read Day 1-3

Chloe's Notes For Na'shay

- Na'shay needs to put a little more of that withdrawal into her physicality
- Explore what Rosa is like when shes High
- How does she moves when she says *"that rock is the shit. I mean, it feel so good,"*

Day 2

I know one of y'all got a damn match. **SHIFT into** I feel like shit!

Day 3

You feel so good, you own high be keepin' you company. **SHIFT into** The only problem is that shit don't last long. And once you feel that good, you gotta feel that good again, right? I mean, why wouldn't you? You gotta want something. Rock good as anything else you gonna want. And if you careful, you can handle that shit and not let it handle you.

- Anger and passion

Na'shay shared that she feels a little tripped up by

- Day 2
 - "They never would have found me if Jesus hadn't a told, with his ignorant "I'll be right back" ass....."
 - **Chloe** responded
 - All these people are in the way. Without them she could just get that rock and get high. Like she wants to.

Day 2

They never would have found me if Jesus hadn't a told, with his ignorant "I'll be right back" ass. SHIFT into Nobody else knew where I was to be sendin' somebody bustin' up in the place. No reason to. Daddy hadn't offered no reward. "Have you seen this girl? Twenty-five-dollar reward." Goddamn crack addicts will turn your ass in for a quarter so muthfuckas got signs all over the neighborhood. People be turnin' in they friends and shit. Ain't no crack addict gonna keep no secret if there's dope money comin' from tellin' it. SHIFT into If my daddy had offered a reward, I'd turn myself in! Shit! I figure ain't nobody got more of a right to collect a reward on somebody than that same somebody, right? (Forgetting the chain, she rises and heads for the kitchen. The chain jerks her back) Damn! (Rising anger) Damn!

SHIFT:

- This is Rosa at 16 years old.
- She's not taking things seriously

Chloe said speaking of Day 4

- This is where Rosa breaks and we have to build to that
- She's taken down at but in Day 3 with Jesus
- She's starting Day 4 with a little more Clarity
- The chain is a metaphor for Rosa's addiction
 - Less of a strange imposition and more protector

DAY 4

This is like a minute-by-minute trip, right? **SHIFT** I want to get high so bad... damn! My fingernails wanna get high. My damn toenails wanna get high! "One day at a time." I hate that bullshit **SHIFT** **I'm not gonna make it.**

They forget to tell you 'bout that shit, right? **SHIFT** **You know the funny shit is, I was almost glad to see my daddy when he came to get me.**

SHIFT #1:

- **Chloe** told **Na'shay**
 - This is a realization for Rosa

SHIFT #2:

- **Chloe** told **Na'shay**
 - Relief when she talks about her Dad
 - Where are you coming from before going into this shift because its not as full of rage as your portraying it
 - Don't want to give away too much at the top
 - It has to build to that rage

Chloe told **Na'shay** to imagine about Day 4

- What you want is right in front of you but you can't reach out and grab it because you are glued to the chair
- You are worn out by Day 4
- The room feels smaller
- Your stuck in this space and cannot get out
- Rosa breaks in the beginning part of day 4. She lets her guard down for the rest of the scene
- She literally thinks she's going to die
- It feels like life or death right now if she doesn't get this crack
- Take your time with each part of the story (what happened in the room with the boy)
- Remember how good that rock was and now you can't have it

- Try rocking to soothe yourself
 - In acting **Na'Shay** started rocking at “You know what the funny shit is”
- “Don’t worry ‘bout that shit, baby. I’ll be right back and we’ll go over to the house and out the rest of the niggas out and we’ll get fucked up, just me and you.” **Bullshit, right? But I’m so stupid, I believe the muthafucka.**
 - Rosa is mad at herself
- Tighten up the beats
- If you notice a shift go back and redo it

I can make him get off good by just watchin’ me ‘cause I’m that good

- **Chloe** said Rosa’s ego cannot be tamed

Chloe said speaking of Rosa Masturbating for money in day 4

- Rosa knows how this works
- She knows Niggas get brave when they got their boys watching
- She knows by looking at them if they dig it or not
 - Because she’d done this for Jesus.
 - She knows how to watch his face

So I start figuring what I’m what I’m gonna do to get out of the shit

- The craftiness of the dope fiend

That’s when my dad started beatin’ on the door and hollerin’ and shit and all hell broke loose.

- **Chloe** said
 - Its about to get real
 - We are about to go back to that animated Rosa
 - Shes giving us the run down of what went on
 - Something changed when her father gets involved
 - The reality of him witnessing that moment (a gun being held to his daughters head. Her being in a room with a boy and her clothes all disheveled

SHIFT That’s how I know Jesus the one told him to come get me.

SHIFT It’s no way for me to tell him how it feels, you know what I mean?

- **Chloe** said
 - After all that storytelling. She breaks it with this
 - Her parent can’t understand
 - This is the lifestyle

“Don’t worry about me, Daddy. I’m okay.”

- **Chloe** and **Eryn** brought up how **Na’shay** delivered that line with a youthfulness and upbeat
 - She’s sad and she feels bad but it's like “Why everybody so sad? What's going on?” because she’s still coming off getting High all day

SHIFT I think that nigga was gonna rape me if my daddy hadn’t busted up in there.

“My daddy bad, though.”

- **Chloe** said
 - Hes like a superhero for her in that moment

Chloe needs to

- Find a space to rehearse so Na’shay can move around
- Get a chain

On Monday we will go through Day 1-4 and finish 5-7

Chloe set a Goal

- Film the week of November 9th

END

MONDAY Nov 2nd at 7PM

Chloe want to Film

- Thurs Nov 12th (not sure of the time yet)
- Drew will help with Camera
- Wants to pick a day, the week of Nov 8-14th before the 12th where **Na’shay** can come a rehearse all day

Na’shay has Day 1 and Day 2 memorized

- **Chloe** and **Eryn** offered to help memorize outside of rehearsal

We went back to Day 1

Chloe said

- Let's raise the stakes
- So many things are unknown and Rosa is freaking out.
- She doesn't want **Na’shay** to focus on volume
- See what happens when things are made more urgent

Na’shay read through Day 1 and Day 2

Chloe paused her at “crazy shit right” in day two and took it back to “These country ass niggas think they can keep me chained up...”

Chloe told **Na’shay**

- Keep in mind, even when shes talking like she knows it all she's scared
- After she says “Save me, Mama! Save me!” She's frustrated because it (the antics) didn't work on her Dad. Hold onto that frustration until the end of the story

SHIFT: “I feel like shit”

- **Chloe** said This beat shifts the whole thing

Chloe gave **Na'shay** notes about Day 1 and 2

- Pick up the pace
- Keep the urgency in Day 1 and 2
- Her energy is much higher in her withdrawal
- Days need to be tighter
- Keep that urgency into Day 3

DAY 3

Chloe said

- Rosa is still in the early stages of her withdrawal
- Let's see what happens if we keep up the urgency
- The pacing is different

Eryn said

- **Na'shay** took these excited breaths while speaking about how good the rock (crack) is
 - **Chloe** added
 - This was good because it showed her excitement
 - It was a physical way to show how she feels about the drug

Eryn said

- Na'shay was very convincing

Chloe had **Na'shay** close her eyes in preparation for **Day 4**

Na'shay started reading Day 4

Chloe paused at "They forget to tell you 'bout that shit, right?"

- **Chloe** said
 - Pause at "*Goddamn, I need to get high!*" And then take it down at "*When you start smokin' this shit, they don't tell you how bad your ass gonna feel*"

Chloe Paused at "So i start figuring"

- Rosa starts making a plan out of fear
- She realizes the boys were about to slit her throat like they've done to the others

Chloe Paused at "That's when my dad started beatin' on the door and hollerin' and shit and all hell broke loose."

- Its gets real here
- All hell has to break loose here

Chloe Paused at "I don't think he'd a brought me up here if he'd a known what these niggas up here were like"

- Took it back to "I think that nigga was gonna rape me if my daddy hadn't busted up in there."
 - The (laughs) that comes before " He busted up in there, though. My daddy crazy."

Chloe said

- When Rosa says "You think you ready for it, but you not ready."

- Shes talking about herself. She wasn't ready

And I'm hollerin': "Here I am, Daddy! Here I am!"

- **Chloe** said
 - How do you think she responds to him?

Imani joined rehearsal

Na'shay read through Days 1-4

DAY 5

Chloe said

- Rosa just got done realizing everything that happened
 - Now she's thinking How do I take care of me?
 - Nobody has her back
 - She only has herself and now her parent are the only ones looking out for her

"At least in here, ain't nobody fuckin' with me. I got food. I got a bathroom. I even got TV and shit, so how bad can it be?"

- **Chloe** said
 - She's not really happy here
 - She's still chained up
 - Shes alone and still dealing with the lack of the drug

"My daddy told me only God stronger than crack. I tell him this chain been doin' a pretty good job."

- **Chloe** said
 - This chain is the only thing keeping her off crack
 - She's joking around with him

"I think it made him feel bad 'cause his face got all sad and shit. (A beat)"

- **Chloe** said
 - The beat after, take it down emotionally
 - She realizes he's sad so she's no longer joking with him when she says "I told him I just meant it's hard once you can come and go when you want to not to just go anywhere you can think of goin', right?"

Chloe said speaking of Day 5 in general

- She basically says she doesn't actually believe she can stop smacking crack
- She is frustrated with the fact that even if she tried to stay clean the things that would tempt her are right there

We moved on to Day 6

Chloe said

- She finally gets the chance to tell Jesus all shes been thinking about

Eryn wrote

- **Na'shay** inhaled or like almost choked when she said " Got me started smokin' that shit and now you just don't give a damn" i'm almost sure it was an accident but i found it effective.

Chloe said

- Rosa is really hurt here
- Shes trying to prove to Jesus that she got it all together
- Shes trying to cut him off
- "You.... you... you left me!"
 - He left her for dead
 - This is what she's been trying to deal with the past few days

DAY 7

"I can't do that shit." **KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK**

Chloe said

- Prayer is her last resort
- "I can't do that shit." - Is this her giving up on being clean?
 - Is she ready to give up the drug? Jesus? This lifestyle?
- When the knock happens take a second to realize Jesus is behind that door. Is she done with him?

Imani told **Na'shay**

- She in a good place
- Find the emotional moments
 - Where does she cry?

Imani said

It would be a help for Na'shay if she blacks out her screen between Day's so it doesn;t feel like one long monologue.

END at 8:55 PM

Wednesday November 4th at 9:00 PM

Thursday's rehearsal is cancelled and moved to Saturday at 5:30 PM

We will also rehearse Friday

And Wed at 8:30

Chloe found a chain but its a plastic chain

- She has ankle weights
- Amazon has a lavalier you can attach to your phone

Chloe had some directing techniques to try out tonight

- She put **Na'shay** in the dark and had jumping jacks to get her rate up
- She then had her come right into the scene
- She had **Na'shay** turn her camera on and off between days

Chloe asked

- At the top of the piece
 - Is Rosa physically in control of her body?

“These country-ass niggas think they can keep me chained up in here like some kind of freak.”

- **Chloe**
 - This part is urgent

Chloe said

- Pearl writes that Rosa is talking to the audience. But for Na'shay she won't really have an audience
- Specifically who is she talking to?
- Rosa talks in different tenses because she's all the place
- Everything she talks about is happening right now
 - She's relieving it as she stelling it

(Laughs) Crazy shit, right?

- **Chloe** said
 - This comes from how dramatic shes being

DAY 3

Chloe said to **Na'shay**

- Remember how good that High feels

“Jesus like to get high”

- **Chloe** said
 - Rosa has been exposed to sex at such young
 - She basks in the idea of pleasing
 - Sex is fascinating
 - She keeps begging him to do it with her
 - She fascinated that Jesus taught her how to do something sexual

“he would tell me to just listen for my name and it would be easy.”

- **Chloe** told **Na'shay**
 - Bring it down at this part and get close to the camera
 - She's aroused by this guy (jesus) just watching
 - What does picture?

Chloe said

- Rosa has nothing to hide
- This is her trying to feel something

- This is a distraction from her withdrawal



