



DQP's thoughts on platforming:  
This play centers a rationally young and yet societally-described inexperienced member of society.  
It explores relatable themes such as improving upon the generation before you and uncommon  
themes like self privilege. The content warning would be around the stigma around alcoholism;  
It is suitable for a reading at Working Title Playwrights Monday Night Development Workshop.

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9/18/21

HAROLD

*The name of this play is Reporting 1-0-1  
It will last as long as it needs to last  
Which I hope won't be too long  
Because I can only handle something that lasts no more than 75 minutes  
Provided there's no intermission.  
My name is Harold.  
I'm twenty-three and a half.  
Even though this is a monologue,  
There are other characters in this play.  
Sometimes the actors will play more than two roles.  
Sometimes this is intentionally metaphorical  
Sometimes it is a device used to save funds  
And make the experience more engaging for the actors.  
Since most of the play takes place in my head,  
There will be some bouncing around.  
Don't worry if you lose track.  
I'll aim to create clarity where I can.  
Although I wonder if that's the point.  
To not trust the Narrative  
Even if it's written in a newspaper,  
The first scene takes place in a bar.  
It's probably early afternoon.  
I'm not sure because it's super dark.  
I'm with Stevie  
A peer  
Who's the most important person in the world to me right now  
Mainly because he's present.  
The play is dedicated to Ed Shockley  
And all people who are doing political canvassing for causes they're not sure about.  
Time no longer matters to me, but it might matter to you  
So let's say it's the mid 1980s  
1985 to be exact.  
If you need a place more specific than a bar  
We can say we're in New York City.*

\*\*\*\*\*.

STEVIE

It's bullshit, bullshit, bullshit.  
I can understand

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When they say "fuck you" to me.  
But your story, man.  
Your story.  
Was better than  
Anything else  
In that God damned paper.  
And I'm not talking about sports  
But everything  
Including the lingerie ads.  
They don't deserve me.  
They don't deserve you.  
If I were you,  
I'd go back there  
And demand an explanation  
Cause don't you think you're good?  
I think you're excellent.

HAROLD

At least we got paid.

STEVIE

Twenty-five bucks?!  
Plus we had to pay for our own transportation?!  
When I net out our travel time,  
I figure we made a buck fifty an hour.  
Plus we had to buy the God Damned newspaper  
To read our own stories  
Which didn't even carry our byline.  
Can you fucking believe that?  
It's the exploitation of the worker.  
It's the exploitation of us.  
I'm now officially a Marxist.  
Smoke?

HAROLD

No, thanks.

STEVIE

You should smoke.  
It's good for you.  
It gives you something to do  
With your hands.  
Plus it keeps the edge off.  
Or maybe it puts the edge on.

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Something  
That makes you feel alive.

HAROLD  
Do you have any other leads?

STEVIE  
I was going to try The New York Times  
But they say fuck you  
Before you contact them.  
You gotta know someone  
And even then  
They say  
Fuck you.  
Only nicer.

HAROLD  
You're going to give up on it?

STEVIE  
I'll go back to selling ice cream in the park.  
I hate ice cream.  
I hate the people who eat it.  
But at least I see things.  
I hear things.  
That makes me feel like I'm part of the action.  
You?

HAROLD  
I tried the Village Voice  
But they said not to come back  
Until I had meaningful experience.

STEVIE  
What did they mean by meaningful?

HAROLD  
I guess a story with my name on it.

STEVIE  
Did you tell them who you are,  
Superman?

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HAROLD

I'm not Superman.

I'm not sure I'm cut out to be Clark Kent.

STEVIE

People think they want to do something meaningful with their lives,

But there's something to be said for just getting by.

At least until it's time.

HAROLD

I thought my story was good.

STEVIE

It was excellent

I loved the way you compared the condition of the field to sponge cake.

HAROLD

That's not exactly what I wrote.

I said that when the closer came in

The kids on the bench were eating Pan di Spagna

To show how confident there were about a kid

Who signed a scholarship to go to St. John's.

STEVIE

I made a mistake in my story

By describing the Loudon coach as a drunk.

You should've smelled the alcohol on his breath.

I got tipsy talking to him.

That's a good line, isn't it?

I guess it wasn't right

For a newspaper story.

Though it made an impression

And sometimes an impression

Is all you're able to make.

HAROLD

Your story had a lot of color.

STEVIE

I think I injected too much of myself in it.

That's my trouble.

I talk too much.

Without thinking.

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You.

You listen.

You're going to have success.

If you keep with it,

Superman.

I'd bet all my money on it.

If I had money.

More than 25 bucks.

Which is worth nothing

Since I'm going to frame the check

To prove I once worked for Newsday

Which is better than the News

But worse than the Post

If anyone ever read it.

I mean who reads Newsday?

Who reads any newspaper?

Hell, even if it was given away for free.

HAROLD

Maybe this isn't the right path to go.

STEVIE

It's a bullshit path.

But I think you should keep with it.

I have a gnawing feeling

You're going to go some place with it

Even if that place is hell.

HAROLD

Maybe you'll get some story ideas  
working in the park.

STEVIE

If I do,

I'm gonna pass them

onto you.

Drink?

HAROLD

I promised my Dad I wouldn't drink.

I didn't exactly promise him



After I saw what it did to him,


I promised myself.

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STEVIE

I promised my Dad I wouldn't be a fuck up.  
 He didn't believe my story was in Newsday  
 Until I showed him my notes.  
 Even then, he said it was a shit story.  
 He thinks I should get a Union job.  
 That's the last thing I want.  
 Predictability.  
 I'd rather fail as a piece-of-shit entrepreneur.

HAROLD

My father said to live each day like it was your last  
 Because some day it'll be your last.  
 He said to dream   
 But not too big.  
 He said comfort was the antithesis of risk  
 I wasn't exactly sure what he was promoting  
 Comfort Or Risk.

STEVIE

Did I tell you about Mike,  
 My Accountant friend?  
 You know what he does on the side?  
 He strips.  
 He's looking for free publicity.  
 You want me to give you his number?

HAROLD

Maybe tomorrow.

STEVIE

Fuck.  
 Don't let the dream die.  
 Even  
 If  
 it  
 kills  
 you.

HAROLD

I'll keep that in mind  
 As I continue my search.  
 For

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The Promised  
Land.

STEVIE  
Cheers.

\*\*\*\*\*

WENDY  
You didn't get the job with Newsday?

HAROLD  
I got 25 bucks.

WENDY  
Didn't that story take you 15 hours to write?

HAROLD  
Less.  
If I don't include the time I spent waiting for the bus.

WENDY  
In the same amount of time,  
You could've picked bottles out of the trash  
And made four times as much from recycling.  
I say that  
Only as a matter of  
Perspective.  
Not to make it sound like I'm a shrew.

HAROLD  
I'm motivated by more than money.

WENDY  
You'll say that until you get kicked out  
Of your Dad's rent-stabilized apartment.

HAROLD  
That gives me motivation to make things happen fast.

WENDY  
You're making spaghetti again?  
Generic?  
With tomato paste?

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HAROLD

I'm adding raisins  
As part of the celebration  
For having my story  
Make it into Newsday.  
I got two copies.  
Maybe you could show one to your family  
Or anyone else who needs to be impressed.

WENDY

The story doesn't have your name on it.

HAROLD

I can still prove I wrote it.

WENDY

Did they say what they didn't like about you?

HAROLD

They said I was raw.  
And asked why I didn't write  
In high school  
Or college.  
When I told them I was an athlete,  
They weren't impressed  
I was a long-distance runner.

WENDY

Running away or towards?  
Shit.  
I'm sorry.  
I want you to do well.  
But may it's time  
To be  
Realistic.

HAROLD

I can handle rejection.

WENDY

Maybe it's not rejection  
But a sign you should try something with more...  
Sustainability.



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HAROLD

I checked with the Village Voice  
They said not to come back until I had meaningful experience  
No, I didn't ask what meaningful experience meant.  
Yes, that would've been a good question to ask.  
I didn't think of it until now.

WENDY

My father thinks the Voice is a rag.  
He thinks all newspapers are rags  
Except The New York Times

HAROLD

Stevie said my story was superb.  
He read the original version.  
Where they didn't shove the score into the first paragraph

WENDY

Is Stevie in a position of power?

HAROLD

Stevie's the guy who failed the tryout with me  
Who now sells ice cream in the park.  
Who knows an ~~an~~ accountant named Mike  
Who's a stripper.  
Stevie hates ice cream  
But he's going to find me some good stories.  
He calls me Superman.  
He says I have powers I haven't tapped into.  
He says I shouldn't give up hope.

\*\*\*\*\*

UNCLE MAX

I can give you a job.  
Not just a job.  
A career.  
Not just a career.  
A piece of the action.  
I'm not saying it'll be easy,  
I'm not saying I won't work your ass off.  
At the end of the day,



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It'll be our name over the door  
Mine at first  
Then yours.

HAROLD  
I'll consider it, Uncle Max.

UNCLE MAX  
You'll never find anything more secure.

\*\*\*\*\*

INTERVIEWER  
This is your resume?

HAROLD  
I tried to be honest.

INTERVIEWER  
It doesn't give me much of a picture.

HAROLD  
I didn't put in a lot of made-up stuff.

INTERVIEWER  
Is this the way "Arizona"'s supposed to be spelled?

HAROLD  
Fuck.  
At least I got six out of the eight letters right.

INTERVIEWER  
Seventy-five percent?

HAROLD  
I'm better with people than math.

INTERVIEWER  
It doesn't seem you have a lot of experience with people.

HAROLD  
I was a lifeguard for two summers.

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INTERVIEWER

Did you save anyone?

HAROLD

No.

No one needed to be saved.

INTERVIEWER

Did anything interesting happen?

HAROLD

Mercifully, no.

INTERVIEWER

Why don't you come back when you have more to say?

HAROLD

Am I too temporary for a temporary position?

INTERVIEWER

We need people who can type, proofread and pretend they're more than they are.



\*\*\*\*\*

WENDY

My parents know someone.

High up.

Who can make something happen.

If you want it to happen.

You gotta want it.

Don't say you want it because you think you want it.

You really have to want it, want it.

Do you want it?

Once you play a card

You can't play it again.

\*\*\*\*\*

STEVIE

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Financial services.

Fuck.

Investment banking..

An even bigger fuck.

I say screw it.

There's gotta be more to life than making money.

If you're making money

You might as well do something good with it.

Like buying me another drink.

\*\*\*\*\*

UNCLE MAX

I'm not doing this to be nice.

I'm not doing this because your father drank himself to death.

I'm doing this because I need someone.

From the family.

To step up.

Who'll treat this business as their own.

Do you understand the gift I'm offering?

None of my sons want this.

They think they're above.

Plumbing fixtures.

Failing to see

How we help get

Rid

Of

The

Stench.

\*\*\*\*\*

WENDY

It's your life,

But don't you think you need to find something

More permanent

Than dog walking

Bussing tables

Helping a friend sell ice cream in the park?

\*\*\*\*\*

STEVE

Politics.

That's the way to change the world.

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The only problem with politics  
Is politicians.  
And the people  
Who try to influence them.  
They eat too much ice cream

\*\*\*\*\*

UNCLE MAX

I paid off your father's gambling debts.  
Not that I'm looking for gratitude.

\*\*\*\*\*

WENDY

Even if the landlord  
lets you stay  
in your Dad's rent-stabilized apartment,  
How will you afford it?

\*\*\*\*\*

STEVIE

Your Dad left you 25,000 bucks?  
Is that good or bad?  
If 25,000 bucks fell into my lap right now, I could make some good things happen.  
Like pay off my tab  
I'm not sure that's enough to last me the rest of my life.  
Unless I die tomorrow.  
I have a big tab.  
But 25,0000 bucks.  
I don't think that's enough  
For me to ask to borrow some of it.

\*\*\*\*\*

HAROLD

*Everyone walks away.  
Except Harold.  
He comes forth on stage.  
Trying to be the hero of his own narrative.  
He thinks he's alone  
He's not.  
There's a young woman in the distance.*

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*She could be played as the same actor as Wendy  
Or not.  
Here she comes!*

VERONICA

I can't keep waiting.  
My time is valuable.  
Death awaits.  
Someone will get killed.  
More than metaphorically.

HAROLD

Who are you?

VERONICA

Who do you need me to be?

HAROLD

A figment of my imagination?

VERONICA

Maybe *you're* a figment of *my* imagination.

HAROLD

I'm not good at this.  
Repartee.  
I mean, I'm good at it  
Only in my own head.

VERONICA

Maybe this is a conversation you're having with yourself.  
Or a conversation I'm having with myself.  
I refuse to take a back seat.

HAROLD

Can you tell me where we are?

VERONICA

Looks like a stage.

HAROLD

Who are those people?  
*End of excerpt. More to come in the play.*