

UC San Diego

UC San Diego Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

Changing The Story: Leading With Values and Curiosity

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6q19g9g2>

Author

Runion, Bryan

Publication Date

2019

Supplemental Material

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6q19g9g2#supplemental>

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO

Changing The Story: Leading With Values and Curiosity

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Master of Fine Arts

in

Theatre and Dance (Stage Management)

by

Bryan Runion

Committee in charge:

Lisa Porter, Chair
Lora Powell
Kim Rubinstein

2019

©

Bryan Runion, 2019

All rights reserved.

The Thesis of Bryan Runion is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

Chair

University of California San Diego

2019

DEDICATION

To Sarah for believing in me so that we can both chase our dreams together.
This is only the start.

To my family for supporting my pursuit to follow my passions in life, and for cultivating music,
art, and self-expression as I grew up.

To dad, for encouraging me to work hard and go after what really makes me happy—even if that
means I might fail.

“What makes theatre special isn’t ‘the art,’ but the people who make the art.”

“Each time I’m open to practice, I’m open to letting myself be ok with being imperfect at
something.”

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Signature Page.....	iii
Dedication.....	iv
Table of Contents.....	v
List of Supplemental Files.....	vi
Acknowledgements.....	vii
Abstract of the Thesis.....	viii

LIST OF SUPPLEMENTAL FILES

- File 1. *Everybody Black Calling* Pages 5-11
- File 2. *Everybody Black Calling* Pages 26-34
- File 3. *Everybody Black Calling* Pages 61-64

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Lisa and Chuck for continuing to push me beyond my comfort zone, allowing me to express myself as a leader, and to cultivate growth in an individual way.

To Willie and Tyler for being by my side as we took on Grad School together. I can't imagine doing it with anyone else.

To Lora, Leila, Patti, and Colleen for sharing your talents and generosity with me on my journey to discover and uncover my abilities to lead authentically and from my heart.

To my fellow collaborators for teaching me a multitude of ways to communicate, or not communicate, within various types of theatre making. I've learned a lot from you.

To the Theatre and Dance faculty for your dedication and attention to my education. Your continued support proved to be invaluable in supporting my education and practice as a professional stage manager.

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Changing The Story: Leading With Values and Curiosity

by

Bryan Runion

Master of Fine Arts in Theatre and Dance (Stage Management)

University of California, San Diego, 2019

Professor Lisa Porter, Chair

In *Everybody Black*, the Black Historian says, “Everything is just a story. It’s a choice. And ya learn from it and change. Or ya don’t.” This play examines historical narratives within and about the Black community in America, and, as a Caucasian person, the process led me to examine the way I view myself, and how my life experiences have influenced the person I have become. Growing up, “good” and “bad” were dictated to me through religion and were determined in judgement as a representation of my character. I learned to live my life governed by a value system that had no middle ground. Society dictated how I should behave, and I stifled myself in order to conform.

In the play, the Black Historian places the actors in roles that are oversimplified representations of real life. This choice felt like an analogy for the ways society and religion have

expected me to behave. In the same way the characters challenged how their stories are told, I confronted my own history. In order to connect, I chose to reveal my feelings and risk rejection. I engaged with my collaborators on a personal level, and made an effort to hear their individual histories, actively forging relationships outside of rehearsal. As I addressed my need to behave in certain predetermined ways, a weight from my past lifted, and my leadership as a stage manager evolved into invitations to collaborate rather than snap judgement.