

Trampoline Hall Transcript

Trampoline Hall

August 13, 2007

Misha Glouberman: Welcome, welcome, welcome to Trampoline Hall. Welcome. (Applause) Thank you. Once again, thanks, thanks to mo, thanks to most of you who held your applause until the start of the show umm and the to the ah few of you bad apples please try to control yourselves more in the future. Umm welcome, welcome to Trampoline Hall. I'm umm going to ahh this is now, um, we are now in the show. This is the the the the break from the preshow to the show, it's ah fairly sudden. So I uh, I hope we didn't startle you. Uh, we uh, we try to warn you so that you'll know when it happens but there there's just no way to do it gradually. Uh, um, we are now in the show, um, I'm going to explain to you a little um about what's going to happen and then it will it will happen umm, as I described it to you and so even if you've never been here before you'll be like, "oh, that reminds me of something, that seems familiar." And what it will remind you of is what I'm telling you right now.

Umm, ah, the way that it works, the basic thing that happens is that people come on stage, we do this every month, ah ah, at Sneaky Dees in Canada's Toronto. Ah, people come up on stage and they give a, they give a lecture, the they the rule is they are forbidden from lecturing on subjects in which they are professionally expert. But they, ah, they are not forbidden from being good or smart or any of those things. Sometimes people complain. They're like, "Hey, that, that second lecture was actually good, I'm, I've been cheated." So we want to make that perfectly clear, in in many cases they are good smart people who have worked very hard on their lectures umm ahh, it it's just that they are not professionally expert.

Umm. Is it? Is it? Does anyone else hear like an exciting ringing feedbacky sound every time I speak? (Whoo) Awesome. Cool. That means that all you of you either, we all have the same ear infection or something's happening at the sound booth. Good. Excellent. Cool. Umm...

That's what I thought when I saw you guys pumping the jar marked "ear virus" into the ventilation system, I'm like why are they doing that? And now I know. Thank you nefarious sound guys. Umm ahhh uh uh ah so these are the kinds of details we work out so that you the audience can enjoy yourself maximally. So, what will happen is that someone will come up on stage and they will give a talk. During the talk you have no responsibilities whatsoever. You just sit there and you will you will you will, they will talk, you will listen and it will it will be, some of these people ah these people are like trying hard to understand and that it uh doesn't help, we've done studies. You clench your fist, your teeth even, you cup your hands—actually cupping your hands behind your ears actually does help a little but but don't worry about it. Umm it uh it hur it's bad

for the other people so don't worry about it. Umm ah ah and they they they they'll give a lecture and then after the lecture they ah ah ah ah ah if there's anything you didn't understand we have we have a umm ah ah ah a question and answer period and the question and answer period um I, it's a wa ah the mai the main thing in the question and answer period is that we really, we really want you to ask um a lot of questions we we encourage it and and and and we want it. If you want, if if you would like to give yourself, if you want to give yourself an extra challenge during the lecture, not that you have to, but you can try to think of uh a question. And if you want to give yourself a super like a super extra challenge the trick with the questions at the Trampoline Hall question and answer period is that in, when it comes to, you may have heard there is no such thing as a bad question, that is false, it's completely untrue. There actually is very much such a thing as a bad question and they are everywhere umm ah and and and your bad questions are, your bad questions are welcome but your good questions are are more welcome and and and if you if you if you would if if, we don't want you to get too hung up about it because the bad questions are you know okay or in a sense well, bad but but if but if you really wanna know say say if your question is good or not, umm umm I will give you some tips umm a good question by definition is a question which means it has the grammatical form of a question, which means the pitch goes up at the end, ah it probably uses one of the "W" words, it is in the interrogative mood or the interrogative mode. (Some applause) Yes. The grammarians applaud. Yes they say. We know this is true.

Umm ah ah and sometimes people, sometimes people think ah, sometimes people think, oh, I can just say a statement and raise my pitch at the end but we won't be tricked by that, or people think umm people think they say you know, might not one agree that...? Or, might it not be the case that...? And and once again your rhetorical questions here we will not be fooled by this. You you you can't, you you can't you you can't get that bias. Also, a grammarian will confirm for me that there is no such grammatical construct as a two-part question. That is that is two questions so you, we encourage you to choose the better of them and ask it. Umm ah ah and those are all the ways the other the other way that you can tell a good question is when you have one coming on is that these are all the ways you can tell by looking at the question but the other place you can look is to look inside yourself. And look look inside yourself honestly and without judgement as you would, as you would look into a friend whose introspections you you could see umm and and and and see and see what what what what feelings you might have. And we're not telling you what feelings to have. Umm but but if if if when you feel the questions coming on if what you feel are feelings of tremendous umm if you feel say, pride, if you if you think I am if you think my god I am a wonderful person—if you if you think possibly I am the most interesting person in the world, then you, and perhaps you imagine everybody holding they're holding placards and and your picture is on the placard and they're they're pointing at you and you're floating skyward, you're enormous, you're golden, umm this is, you prob, you might've you might have a bad question. (Laughter) Umm.

If but if if on the other hand you have feelings about the lecture if you're like "oh I'm very curious about per what that person said I I wanna know more

more about them," maybe even maybe even like "oh I disagree, I wanna I wanna challenge them," if you have feelings that encompass, encompass that that is possibly a sign of that you have that you have a good question. So that so that just so you know and again again it's not that good is it's not that bad is bad it's just it's just not as good as good. So y'know you know we we we we we can mix it up a little—that's okay. So so so so that's what will happen, there'll be there'll be a lecture, there'll be a question and answer period then there'll be a break where you can do basically whatever you want umm pshhh I don't care, and then, umm, then we'll do, umm the basic rules of society by the way do continue to apply at Sneaky Dees so umm so in that way you can't do whatever you want, oh oh, I can marry my sister at last! No no. (Laughter)

So the incest taboo is still in force, all of that but basically, basically you know it's time off. Then it's the second the second lecture then there'll be a second question and answer period then there will be another break where you can do more or less whatever you want then the third lecturer the third Q & A then the third break, the third break goes on forever and you can do whatever you want for the rest of your life. Umm umm so there is that. Umm ah ah I have so much to tell you today, even more than usual. People are people are often like, umm umm, Misha, Misha when I come to the show, where should I sit, where, where, where, where should I best sit and I appreciate the spirit of inquisitiveness behind the question. If you are the kind, and it uh, it depends what you're like. If you're the kind of person who likes to engage with life, if you're the type who likes to take life by the horns then um then you should sit by the front and it is it is, sorry? Oh I thought I heard, I heard one of the, I thought I heard someone say "that is I" but I was I was hallucinating the brave matador of Trampoline Hall. Umm if you're that kind of person you sit near the front and it will actually it is it it it will the image projected on your eye is actually larger and it will take up more of your brain and there will be more Trampoline Hall getting to you. If you're the type of person who who who likes to take things ah um um by the um by half measures umm um um maybe (Laughs) umm you know maybe maybe you've been in a relationship for a while and you don't know if you like the person or you know, you go to church 'cause you know, who knows it might be true then ah ah we encourage you to sit in the middle in the wafflers' section. And and and if you're, if now now now now now you might think, you might think the people who sit in the back are just people who don't want to engage with life at all you know put on the tv and give me the opioid drip and I'm set, but no it's actually there there there there are this but also the other people we encourage to sit in the back, you have a special opportunity if you are the kind of person whose idea of a good time is to go out to a public place and shush other people then my friend we have an opportunity for you. Umm which is that some of these people in the back are so far away that they're practically not at the show anymore, they they do what people do when they're not at shows which is talk to each other. We discourage that and we encourage people sitting at the back to shush strangers. So, you can do it angrily depending on your style you can actually turn to them and make a scolding gesture. Or or if you're a little shy and if you wanna practice you can just shhhhhh you can do one of those, they won't know where you come from but they'll feel ashamed. So so umm we we encourage you to do that. Umm ahh there's so much, and for every show, every show,

umm, someone chooses the lecturers, they don't, they don't choose themselves of course, and the last show ah ah the last show ah Dave Meslin ah ah chose the lecturers. And this show ah ah this show Erica Kopyto ah ah has chosen the lecturers. She is the curator. (Applause) It's fun to say her name. You'll recognize her, she's wearing the yellow dress and she's the person who handed you your programs on on the way in. Umm ah ah ah next show, next show it will be Lauren Bride. Umm, oh, what else do I have to tell you? Ther is so much but ahhh oh ok no you don't need to know this yet. Oh oh just a couple of quick things, the lecturers ahh some of our lecturers are not uh professional users of the microphone, and ah so are unfamiliar with its ways um and and rather than rather than train them which would be time-consuming and expensive, as you can well imagine, we (Giggle) we instead, ah pass the burden on to you the people and so what we would like you to do is if the lecturer drifts off the microphone we would like you to ahh scream a word at them, the word is "microphone." And ah ah then they'll what we'll do ok ok so imagine if you will that I'm a lecturer and I'm talking about something I'm saying something very interesting and maybe I'll have a chart with me and then I'll turn and...

Trampoline Hall-ers: Microphone.

Misha: And they will they will actually possibly even fall over backwards and it will be hilarious and then they will return to the microphone so thank you. Thank you for assisting with that. You know there's other things, you know, I'm not going to tell you everything. I'll tell you more later but I think now we should ah hear from our ah lecturer so, ladies and gentlemen I want to introduce you to our first lecturer of the evening: a very warm round of applause please for Joanna Falk. (Applause) You wanna take that one there there she's setting up some stuff.

Joanna: Thank you Erica. Ok, hello, I'm Joanna and I'm going to be talking to you about Judy Blume. Ahhh, ok so, Why am I talking about Judy Blume? Ahh I was obsessed with her books as a child—I think the first one that I read was *Deenie* when I was 8 years old. *Deenie*, if you don't know it, is a book about a girl who has scoliosis, but it's perhaps better known as the masturbation one, umm. When I was reading it, I sort of couldn't believe that my mother had given me this book and I sort of wondered if she knew what it was about. But to be honest, I don't think I really knew what it was about either when I was reading it. I knew that Deenie had some kind of back problem, she had to wear a thing called a Milwaukee Brace which I couldn't quite picture but I've now seen pictures of it. The brace looks horrible and it gave her a rash. I knew she was in love with this guy named Buddy Brader who wanted to "feel her up"—I didn't know what that meant and she was sad that he was only going to feel metal. Umm and she also had this "special spot" that she could touch and it would make her feel better about things. And I uh, I thought, this sounds great, where is this spot? Uh, uh, the only evidence was that she touched it when she was in bed and she could rub it with a washcloth so I thought ok, it must be a place you don't touch all the time so for some reason I imagined that it was here. (Laughter)

I don't really know why. Umm since speaking to other friends now, I've learned that I wasn't the only one confused by Blume's very vague descriptions of this spot. Another friend thought it was here and another thought it was here

but all I know is that it sounded good. Umm so, despite my massive confusion over what exactly happened in this book, I knew I wanted to know more. Not about masturbation, about Judy Blume. (Laughter)

So, I went on to read 15 of her books, I just did a recount, I was mistaken I thought it was 14 but it was actually 15 in total and I own 13 of them which you see here before you piled up. Thank you. I also have Judy's autograph. When I was 10, my mom told me that she was signing autographs so of course I made my dad take me and we waited about 2 hours in line and umm I don't really remember much about it, I remember she smiled, she was very nice, I told her my name and she signed the book. But it's a bittersweet memory because of course my dad refused to buy the hardcover book she was plugging at the time, so he bought it and I didn't realize that I could have brought a book for her to autograph and I of course would have brought *Are You There God, It's Me Margaret*, which I had read 12 times at that point. Twelve. Twelve. Umm so he bought me the only book that I didn't own at that point, which was the uh the "the boy book": *Then Again, Maybe I Won't*—subtitled, the funny touching story of a boy with problems. (Laughter)

So for those of you in the front I'll just, you can see, there's the autograph, ooooh yes. (Applause.) Thank you thank you. Thank you very much.

Umm so. So this is obviously a writer I've had a deep attachment to, and I've never had a relationship with a writer like this before or since. I read some of her books about 30 years ago and I still vividly remember what they're about, as do many many many of my friends. And the reaction I've gotten from people, even boys, about this talk was like, oh my god Judy Blume. And I've never really analyzed this relationship before—unlike almost every other relationship in my life. I didn't know anything about Judy as a person, I didn't know when she read wrote these books, I didn't know if people still read them, I didn't know anything. Like I said, I read *Margaret* 12 times and I have no idea why. Um so. Why would anyone read a book that many times? What did that do to me? I started to wonder. And I guess I'm trying to figure out how my experience of her fits in with other people's experience with her which of course is a very Blumian—Blumesque?—struggle. Is my relationship with Judy normal? (Laughter)

So, after my initial wave of nostalgia and sort of thinking about this chance to come up in front of a group of people and say: "Oh when I got my period it made me think of Margaret. I didn't really want to do that because for me Judy Blume books are actually kind of dirty, people swear and smell their armpits and vomit and stuff their bras, talk about sanitary napkin belts which if you haven't read *Are You There God, It's Me Margaret*—it was written in like 1970 so the girls had to wear these belts but I found out in the 2006 version she actually took the belts out and now the girls just wear regular pads which I'm of two minds about but ok. (Laughter)

Umm so for me yeah, so sanitary belts. People get killed in these books. Sally J Freedman, she fantasizes about the Holocaust and she imagines that Hitler lives in her neighborhood, so they're pretty hardcore books, they're not just sort of fluffy, nice, girly books. Umm so the first thing I did was I talked to my mother—I'm like, Mom, why did you buy me these books? What were you thinking? Did you know what they were about? Have you read them? Umm and

were you concerned ever with what they were about? She said no. She explained that, well, she didn't explain but I knew this that she's German and that's not why she wasn't concerned.

But she said that she said she didn't know what kids read in North America. North America—she knew what she read when she was a teenager but had no idea what kids read here, she had read a newspaper article about Judy Blume's books and thought oh I'll give her those, she'll like those. And she said she never worried about what I was reading and I don't think I ever talked to her about it.

So, this conversation with my mom sort of led me to Google. I googled Judy Blume and what you get when you google Judy is a lot of stuff about censorship and her books being banned. She has actually sold more than 75 million copies of her books which is pretty amazing. But she's also called one of the most banned children's authors in the U.S. Umm 5 of her books are still on the American Library Association's 100 Frequently Most Challenged Books. Umm so, to challenge a book means not just to complain about it but that somebody actually tried to remove it from the curriculum or from a public school library. Between 1990 and 2004 she is the SECOND most challenged author behind Alvin Schwartz—anyone? Alvin Shwartz? Yeah, I didn't know who he was either. He's a children's author who wrote a series of books called *Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark*. So, of the 5 books that are banned, number 1 is umm *Forever*, which is the sex one and he names his penis Ralph. (Laughter) It's right between *Harry Potter* and the *Bridge to Terabithia* and the top ten books of most banned are children's books. What's next? Oh, but it's above *Catcher in the Rye* and Madonna's *Sex* book. (Laughter) *Blubber* is the next most challenged book at #32. *Blubber*, I know, what's the problem with *Blubber*? There's no sex in that book. I was trying to figure it out, what is the problem with that book? So, if you don't know, *Blubber* is the one where all the kids tease the fat girl. Oh, is that a call? Sorry, a beep. So they tease the fat girl and the problem is that the people who do the teasing aren't really ever punished in the end really severely so parents think that'll teach kids that that is fine and that teasing the fat girl is fun and so they'll tease people? I'm not sure. And so that's, I believe, the problem with *Blubber*. Umm *Deenie*'s next at forty-six, you probably already know what the problem with that book is. *Are You There God, It's Me Margaret* is sixty-two, right below *American Psycho* and and then *What's Happening to My Body? A Book for Boys: A Growing Up Guide for Parents and Sons*. (Laughter) That's just sad, I know. And finally *Tiger Eyes* at number at number seventy-eight, that's the one where her father gets shot and killed right after *Carrie* by Stephen King. (Laughter) So, like I said, what amazed me was how the top ten books were books for kids or young adults.

Which actually made me start to think and ask the question, are they right? Maybe we should be really careful about what we let kids read? I'm still talking about books I read a long long time ago. I think they can create a really strong impression on you, and so I started to think that after my Judy Blume period ended, I went into the inevitable, perhaps sad VC Andrews, Sweet Valley High, Sweet Dreams Romances period which horrified my mother. Umm, she claimed at 12 that she was reading *Moby Dick* which I totally don't believe but

she said she was, and in desperation, when I was 12, she paid me \$5 to read *Jane Eyre*. It looked totally boring, it had a really boring cover and tiny print but I read it and really didn't enjoy it, it really didn't convince me that I should read more serious books, it just made me better at hiding the things she didn't want me to read.

I wanted to read from about people who banned these books, I mean, what was the problem? So I looked on Amazon. I didn't really want to buy any of these books so I found a book listed on Amazon called *Saving Childhood: Protecting our Children from the National Assault on Innocence* umm written by this film critic Michael Medved and his wife who had co-authored a book with Dan Quayle. So I kind of thought what a conservative bunch of people and like I said, I didn't read the book but I read the description on Amazon and the "critiques" that other people had written on Amazon about the book. So their theme is that you should shield children from adult topics and issues until later in their lives.

This is from the book: "Childhood is perhaps the only phase of life when innocence can flourish. But to allow this, parents and others responsible for children's minds need to construct a protective shelter against the painful and frightening facets of life." Ok. Maybe. Umm so an anecdote from a guy on the Amazon site shared this: "So, the Medveds' had a 7 year old daughter who the librarian, the school librarian gave her a Judy Blume story. So she brought it home and the Medveds were shocked to find out that it was about menstruation. I'm guessing Margaret. So, umm, the parents' reaction was to take away the book and to tell the child the book was off-limits until she was older, and then to forbid the child from checking any book out of the library that was written since 1960. (Laughter)

So what, so now the poor child had to go and open every cover and say, no, '61, no sorry can't. Ok, so this was the most intelligent stuff I could find written in my short research period. The other stuff was in chat groups. There was a whole chat chat group talking about banning *Forever* in this library in Texas, so a guy said, that if he couldn't get books banned he would just—if it's just an offensive passage or two—they can usually be covered up with a black felt pen. He said "It works better than you might think. I go by the public library and do that whenever I have some extra time." Sad.

I even read academic work written about Judy. Of course there's been some Masters Theses written and a Ph.D. thesis from 1981 called *The World of Judy Blume*, which is kind of just a scientific look or analysis of the content of her books. I looked a bit at the origins and trends in teen fiction, I read and looked at a book called *Seventeenth Summer* by Maureen Daly published in 1942—which was actually great because the book, she, um, this girl Angie who spends her last summer before college falling in love with this guy Jack. But at the end of the book, she goes to college, she doesn't stay with the guy. So, I thought that was great. I didn't actually read it, I just read the descriptions of it. But I also read about the influence of feminism on books in the 1970s and the sort of backlash in the 80s, the rise of the Teen Romance novels and the conservative Reagan/Bush era against the "problem novel" of the 70s, which I'm assuming is Judy Blume.

Then I stopped doing research and now I'm trying to think of a conclusion I can come too. I do think there is a large group of women who read these books

and got some form of solace from them, and they insist on publishing schlocky books like *Everything I Learned about Being a Girl I Learned from Judy Blume*, which I don't know. Yeah. I should...I should feel excited because it makes me feel normal about my relationship with Judy, but it just, I don't know, it bothers me. I don't know why. I guess because they're schlocky stories that I didn't want to talk about in this...talk. So I, um, also read about girls who got their periods before reading a Judy Blume book and after, and how much these girls felt so much more comfortable because Margaret was like "Oh, I wanna get my period, I wanna get my period." But before that they didn't really know what it was about. But mostly I feel that I'm lucky as a reader to have read her books. I think her books have made me willing to engage in books or writing that was difficult or challenging. So after my initial shock of reading Judy that sort of became the norm and that's still the books that I respond to.

And so, in the end, I think about what books the kids are reading today, and it just sort of made me wonder, that in 30 years, if someone came up and did a Trampoline Hall, what they may be talking about. That's it. Thank you.

Misha: Joanna Falk, ladies and gentlemen. Um....umm...are there any questions? You. Yes you.

Trampoline Hall-er: Yes. This is very simple. If you were to meet Judy today, what would you ask her?

Joanna: Oh god.

Misha: The question is, What would you ask Judy Blume?

Joanna: What would I ask Judy Blume? You know she has a website and, and then there's lots of kids who've written to her who just sort of said, Oh I love you, you're great. What would I say to her? Umm.

Trampoline Hall-er: Microphone. (Laughter)

Joanna: I'm allowed to think off-mic aren't I? Do I have to think on-mic? Ah, what would I say to her? Hmmm...um, I...ah...em...ah you know I think she sort of stopped writing those teenager books now, I think she's writing nice, really really young children's books, and so I think I would think I wouldn't really ask her anything I think I would wanna boss her around I guess and try to encourage her to write hardcore kids' books 'cause I think she is still really popular—she wrote *Summer Sisters* that came out in 1998 and yeah, it was good, yeah I read it and enjoyed it but, I wasn't like oooh Judy Blume.

Misha: I think that's exactly what they were. I think that's a fair description. Hardcore. Umm...any more questions? Ok. Umm, you there, I can't see in the dark, yes you.

Trampoline Hall-er: I'm all the way at the back. Umm I have a bit of a thing with Judy Blume and I would have to say that up to a certain age, up to 16 or 17, I would gauge almost every guy I met against Jeremy Dragon. I would sort of fantasize about him.

Joanna: Who's that?

Trampoline Hall-er: He's one of the lead characters in one of those books that you mentioned.

Misha and Joanna: Which one?

Trampoline Hall-er: *Are You There God, It's Me Margaret.*

Joanna: Jeremy Dragon?

Trampoline Hall-er: (Defensively) Yes. I'm wondering if there's a particular male character whom you fantasize about.

Misha: That's an excellent question.

Joanna: Well. Again, in the *Margaret* book, they all seem to be in love with Philip Leroy even though they all think he's a jerk. But they all say he's really, really good looking and that's the guy Margaret went with when she did the 7 minutes in the closet. I seem to remember she only spent 30 seconds in there but she seemed to be ok. So I think Philip Leroy. I'll go with him.

Misha: Does anyone else remember Jeremy Dragon? No...no one. So you've fallen in love with a completely obscure Judy Blume character, which is good because your chances are high. Unlike Joanna. Everyone's gonna be following Jeremy Leroy.

Joanna: Philip Leroy.

Misha: It's not gonna work out. Ah, ah, yes, you ma'am, ah yes.

Trampoline Hall-er: Umm.

Misha: Yes.

Trampoline Hall-er: You've mentioned the umm male readership and I'm curious if, umm, if you've actually come across men who've read these books?

Misha: The question is: Whether any men have read Judy Blume books, any men or boys.

Joanna: I was actually speaking to um my brother last night and he's umm umm umm about 7 years older than I am and I'm actually one of the few girls, well, not one of the few, who owns a copy of *Forever*—the really hardcore sex book with the cover that has completely come off by the way, which I don't think is a coincidence, because, you know, that's the book you pass around to your friends, but anyway. So I said to my brother, you know, I think mom bought this for you but I suspect you never read it. And umm, you know my mom, umm she gave my brother *Superfudge* and I don't think she read that either...anyway he claims that he's read all the Margaret, I mean Judy Blume books but I sort of think that's his way of sort of being a sensitive guy and I asked him, and told him that I don't actually believe that he read them, but...

Misha: Ok ok. I wanna say, I've read most of them.

Joanna: Really?

Misha: And you can quiz me if you want.

Joanna: Really?

Misha: I'm not just saying this to be cool. (Laughter) I've read the *Margaret* book, and *Then Again, Maybe I Won't*, and *Forever*. Many times. Many many times.

Joanna: How old were you?

Misha: And I read *Blubber* pretty quickly 'cause there were no dirty parts and the one about the scoliosis girl and *Superfudge*, and I was just like, that's just for kids. That...

Joanna: Yes. That's how I found out about *Freckle Juice*.

Misha: There's like nothing in that one at all. But yeah, I read them all.

Joanna: How old were you?

Misha: I was at the age where I was coming upon that special time in a girl's life, I think. (Laughter) I must, just to contextualize it, I was also in a jump-rope club. (Laughter)

Joanna: That's great.

Misha: But in the jump-rope club, *Are You There God, It's Me Margaret* was getting passed around with great passion and anticipation. And I was...

Joanna: That's great.

Misha: Maybe we've gotten away from where the Q & A should be.

Trampoline Hall-er: Oh. Yes.

Misha: Ok. Umm... ah...da...ta...ta...ah...ok. No you, ok you, yes.

Trampoline Hall-er: Do you have...or if you did have children would you feel comfortable giving them Judy Blume?

Joanna: Well, I did have...I...I...sorry...

Misha: The question is there. Would you...sorry...would you let your kids read it?

Joanna: Would I let my kids read it? I don't have, I don't have kids. I did buy it for my niece who turned 10 last year and I bought her a...a...so I bought, ok, I'm gonna give her *Otherwise Known As Sheila The Great*, which is not hardcore at all, it's very sweet and funny and then I gave her the *Margaret* book and I'm I actually think my sister-in-law never gave them to her 'cause I went 'cause my niece is one of those horsey girls, like she reads books with all the horses and I thought she needed to read a book that does not feature horses at all so umm she...so my sister-in-law is very protective and I'm not sure she gave them to her so after I uh...after doing this talk I may try and push them on her, so yes. I would. Totally yes. Absolutely.

Misha: Ah...ok, sir, you, yes.

Trampoline Hall-er: Can I just get a show of hands of what guys have read Judy Blume?

Joanna: Oh.

Misha: How many?

Joanna: Men who've read Judy Blume...

Misha: How many? And if it's just, it can't be *Forever*, so if it's only *Forever* then put your hands down. How many men have read the Judy Blume books? Wow, that's actually pretty small. That's a small number, I'm surprised.

Trampoline Hall-er: Why don't you count *Forever*?

Misha: Because that's just a sex book! It's not a sign that you're interested in the whole Judy Blum phenomenon. It's just a sign that you wanna read the one book in the public library where people fuck. (Laughter) Are you still raising your hand 'cause you've read the book, or do you have a question?

Trampoline Hall-er: Show of hands for the girls.

Misha: Ok. So the ladies, put your hands in the air. That's great. I never get to say that at a Trampoline Hall event. Now the fellas...ok, so no, there's a lot of ladies. A lot of the ladies in the house. So, ok, so I didn't know that. We've established that it's not a normal thing in our gender. Ok.

Joanna: Excellent.

Misha: Do we have to explore this further? No, I'm sick of this particular tangent. Umm...you, you, you're so far away, ok, yes, you ma'am.

Trampoline Hall-er: Are there any films made of her books?

Joanna: Yes. There were. There was a film of *Forever* with Stephanie Zimbalist and umm a guy that Judy Blume didn't much care for. He apparently had no acting experience. I'm not sure why they chose him but he...but you know Judy is pretty diplomatic about most things, so she said it was ok. She keeps talking, like everything I've read in the last 5 years, she keep saying that there's going to be a movie of *Deenie*, which I think would be great but I...I haven't seen anything more about it yet. My actual goal is to adapt something to make a musical of *Are You There God, It's Me Margaret*. (Laughter) I don't know why it would be a musical. But I would just like to see the scene where she gets her period.

Misha: Have you written any of that?

Joanna: In my head, yes. Completely. I've pictured the set. It's a bathroom stall and her underwear is down at her ankles and it's like "Oh my god" but that's it that's all I've got so far. (Laughter) Because I don't know how she would dance with her underwear down there, that's the problem. I guess she'd have to pull them up. Sorry. I'll stop there.

Misha: No. It figures you've got your stuff down and you've identified the challenges, so... (Laughter)

Joanna: That's right.

Misha: That's awesome. So, so, so there's one actual film and one not yet clearly developed musical, the musical already much better than the film. Umm... umm...anything else? Anything else people would like to know? Um...um... ok, you, ok, yes.

Trampoline Hall-er: Are there recommended reading ages for her books?

Misha: Are there ages for her books?

Joanna: Yes, on Amazon. They list umm, ahhh, uh, they list between 8 and 10 because I read this, oh, umm...oh *Iggy's House*, no, that's not a good example.

Misha: Does it say it on there?

Joanna: I don't think it says anywhere on them.

Misha: This is before they knew.

Joanna: Right. And I read this mom chat group about a girl, and this mom was like, oh my daughter wants to do her report on *Blubber*, should I let her do it? And they all went on Amazon to look and it said something like, 8 to 12 but they were all like, nooo, 8 is too young.

Misha: Alright. So there are recommended ages that are overly permissive and would ruin society.

Joanna: My copies are from the early 80s. Later versions might have some, but not mine. No warning labels. I don't know.

Misha: Does anyone know?

Trampoline Hall-er: Sometimes on the cataloguing page. It'll say on the inside.

Misha: On the cataloguing page. Ok. And it just goes by age. They haven't instituted a test or something. (Laughter)

Trampoline Hall-er: It even says grades.

Misha: Oh. It goes by grade, well, that's that's just like a test. If you're 15 years old but in grade two and you're like (Laughter), you still don't know how to touch yourself. It's probably an incentive to pass. Umm...yes, umm you sir.

Trampoline Hall-er: Has Judy faced any daunting legal or financial problems as a result of the backlash against her books?

Joanna: No, I haven't read anything like that. She talks about getting mean phone calls, but no, umm, she actually, she just recently won some big award. But no I ah, honestly I haven't read anything about legal problems.

Trampoline Hall-er: Is she very, very well-to-do?

Joanna: I think so. I think she has homes in Miami and New York and I think she does ah pretty well for herself. And I think she has a rich husband.

Misha: (Incredulous) A rich husband?

Joanna: Yeah.

Misha: That seems unfair.

Joanna: I know.

Misha: It seems like if you've sold 75 million books then...

Joanna: She's a very attractive woman.

Misha: Is she?

Joanna: She has a big, big smile. That's sort of what I remember from when I met her. Nice teeth. Big smile.

Misha: I guess that was valuable in the marriage market. I guess. I have no idea.

Joanna: Big smile.

Misha: Umm. Ok. Anything else people would like to know? Ok. Yes, yes, yes you ma'am.

Trampoline Hall-er: The sanitary napkin thing. Don't you think she should graduate to Tampax by now?

Joanna: Wow. That is a very personal choice. I would never tell any women what they should choose. (Laughter)

Trampoline Hall-er: What was the question?

Joanna: It was. Oh...

Misha: The question...oh...

Joanna: Sorry. The ques...

Misha: 'Cause I don't want to repeat that. No. no. 'Cause I'm queasy. 'Cause I'm not some sensitive guy who can talk about women's stuff easily.

Joanna: It's ok. The question was, shouldn't Margaret have graduated to tampons by this point and I, you heard the answer I guess.

Misha: By this point in history. And I'm happy that, yes, we don't have to debate that here. Yes, you ma'am.

Trampoline Hall-er: So, you talked about changing from the sanitary belt to the modern day maxipad and do you know if other adjustments have been made?

Misha: Excellent question. Have they been modernized? Have the books been modernized?

Joanna: No. She, she published a 30-year anniversary edition of *Forever* in 2005, she wrote a forward sort of explaining the culture, the sexual culture of the 70s, when AIDS and condoms weren't yet part of the culture. And so she tried to explain why those didn't exist in the book, but she didn't change the book itself.

Misha: So that's the one thing, over all the things that have happened in the last 30 years, it's the one thing that she she thinks matters, is that the belt is no longer, nothing else.

Joanna: No, no everything else makes good sense, everything else makes sense.

Misha: Umm. Ok, yes.

Trampoline Hall-er: I'm gonna be teaching sixth grade for the first time and would you suggest that this is required reading for the girls? Should I stock my classroom with these books?

Joanna: Well, I have to say yes. Don't I? Don't I have to? I think at this point, yes, yes, girls? Men?

Misha: Wait, wait, ok, you, you, will you?

Trampoline Hall-er: Well, I'm not sure, 'cause what if they want to talk to me about some of that stuff and....

Joanna: Hmm, yes?

Misha: That's my fault, I've turned this into a conversation.

Trampoline Hall-er: Well I guess my question is, are they still relevant? I mean, I've actually read them when I was a kid, but I can't remember them. Are they still relevant today? For young men and ladies?

Joanna: Well. Umm...

Misha: The original question was. He's a sixth grade teacher, or you're about to be a sixth grade teacher?

Trampoline Hall-er: That's right.

Misha: Having not previously been a fifth grade teacher but having been no teacher at all. Is that right?

Trampoline Hall-er: Having been a third grade teacher but I don't think I'd be allowed to give it to them...

Misha: Ok. So, alright, they let you skip two years. And so, the, the question, is whether umm, whether the Judy Blume books should be mandatory reading especially for the girls in his sixth grade class. And I'd like to say that I hope you'll take this answer to be binding. Whatever it is. (Laughter)

Joanna: And I think the answer I have to give is yes. And umm they, they're not just all umm about sex, not that that's not a really important issue for girls to be reading about. There are books about racism, about divorce...and I think those things still happen. Don't they? (Laughter)

Misha: So that's a yes. And so will you?

Trampoline Hall-er: Oh, I hope so.

Joanna: I'll recommend some to you afterwards if you want.

Misha: I uh, I will let you do that now and I will end right here. Ladies and gentlemen, Joanna Falck. That was Joanna Falck. We'll be back in about 10 minutes with our second lecture of the evening.

BREAK

Misha: Hi welcome back, the break is over this is now the show. Welcome, welcome, welcome back to the second of three acts of Trampoline Hall. Welcome. It only takes...thank you it only takes the sound of one person clapping to officially start the show, or two, three, four, seven, seven people, a million people clapping, thank you, thank you, thank you. Welcome back...ah...um...ah, we are back...ah...ah...soon we will go back to our second lecturer. But first I have some more stuff to tell you and then things will move on to the meat of the show. A few things to tell you. At every show there is a ah...ah...set...the set is usually constructed by Leah Walker. Yes, the mere mention of whose name elicits a delayed response reaction effect. Everywhere you go, try it on the subway, anywhere you go, it does the same thing, do not try it at a funeral. (Laughter) She always does.... she always makes the set, my belief and understanding is that usually, often it's not clear what her set is about but today her her her plan was to spell it out. I still don't know what it means, it is fabric of the times and there are there are cuts out of fabric things...oh, made from periodicals of our day.

Well...I invite you...I invite you to come look at it during the break and I invite you to make your own interpretation. And I thank you because it makes me feel just a little bit safer to have this cordoned off area between me and you to know that if if if you were suddenly to break out into a riot, and then rush the stage, you might have to think it through before you broke through this flimsy piece of string and that would be the difference between mad mob violence and not...so, so, then again maybe not and and and vice versa too—who's to say I couldn't snap. It protects all of us. Umm (Laughter) but let's not think about any of that. So, I forgot to tell you there is usually at the, usually at the shows, there is umm...umm...there is music before the shows and at the breaks and it is usually local bands chosen by Carl Wilson of the *Toronto Globe and Mail* and Zoilous.com but tonight it is from Steve Kado's iPod. Is, is that correct? And what have we, what have we listened to? We've listened to Arnold Dreblat? Have we listened to Anti Family yet? We've listened to both of them. And...and...we've been fine. And...and they are local music in that all of the songs have been produced by someone who lives within 300 miles of this very club. Is that fair? Ok. So there is that to tell you. Ah...whoa...ouch. And for lecturers to be careful, you can be so focused on this part of the microphone that you can completely forget about this part of it. So, no, so don't do that. (Laughter) That was just a demonstration. A warning. A warning demonstration for the lecturers. Oh. What's that you're holding up? A sign? Oh no, it's not a sign. I thought you were holding up a message and I thought my time was up. Oh my time is up. But oh no, it's not. Laurie MacGregor is reminding you that on that very clipboard she is holding is a Trampoline Hall email list. It is a ah ah ah...if any of you have ever run a listserv before then you know that a listserv is a clipboard attached to it with a piece of string. And...ah...if you put your emails on that then you will get emails from ah from us, for as long as there is both Trampoline Hall and email. If one of them stops then we will stop sending you messages. But otherwise no. And it's good. It's the best possible way to know when the next show is. Ahh so we tell you this...button. Button. Hey what does it mean when someone yells "button button," it means I should tell you about the buttons...ah...ah...um sometimes, sometimes people are...ah, we sell buttons. (Applause) The buttons have words on them and the words correspond to the names of the lecturers and the subjects about which they speak. Needless to say, finding such buttons is very difficult for us. But we do it. And once we find the buttons we sell them to you. You the huge number of people who want to buy the buttons. The buttons can be had in exchange for nothing more than money which as you know is now worthless in society but we can take it from you and in exchange we will give you a button. In some cases the buttons are almost as big as the money itself. Umm...and they are sold to you by Becky Johnson who is wonderful. (Applause) And so that's the buttons. And here is something else. It is new and it is something we are trying out for tonight. In the sense that we will do it tonight and surely never, never, never again. What we're doing tonight and for one night only: your curator, Erica Kopyto who in addition to choosing all the lecturers tonight is also, is it, you're going to make full transcripts of the show available? Ok. So after... so so so after the show tonight a lot of people are like, oh I love the show but it is so fleeting it is so ephemeral I am afraid I'll forget a a a bon mot or a a a mo ok. Oh how...and and you know it makes people tense, that that feeling of the fleetingness of the present and and you're hoping the transcript would allow you to to to

enjoy the show more and to not have to be stressed out. Is that your motivation Erica? So what Erica will do, at the next intermission we will need a self-addressed stamped envelope. And many of you have not brought a self-addressed stamped envelope with you. I mean the more prudent among you have and we appreciate it 'cause you're like, anywhere I go, what if there are transcripts available, better have that SASE in hand but if if if you don't have one then Erica has an SASE—as you know it's called in the business—well, Erica has what's called an SE, a stamped envelope not self-addressed but all you need to do is know your own address. So what you'll do is write your address on the envelope and then give it to Erica and it's already got a stamp and what she will do is transcribe the lectures, she will. Steve will record the show and give it to Erica and she will transcribe the show, write it up and then mail it back to you, via post mail in your own home or workplace. Absolutely. (Applause) Erica, let the record show that there was applause when we mentioned that. Great. And you can use this for anything you can use it...it will help you remember the show. I know people like to act it out with their friends. This is, this is helpful for any of those purposes. Even if you...you're like, oh I want to set up my own lecture series in someplace where the copyright laws are lax you could, you could do that and maybe um...maybe they are powerless to stop you. Maybe it's not such a good idea. Umm so at the end that's what's going to happen. So after intermission that's what's going to happen. You can go get your envelopes from Erica. She will be the lady in the yellow dress behind the red curtain. We'll be giving out envelopes and you'll give them to her and she'll work it out with you. Umm...yeah, that's all I need to tell you. So, so, what I think I will do now is introduce your second lecturer of the evening. Ladies and gentlemen, a very warm round of applause please for Marcus Bornfreund. (Applause)

Marcus: I have a handouts. There's a quiz at the end. Share with a friend. Pass them back.

Misha: How many did you make?

Marcus: 50.

Misha: Marcus made 50 and there's a little over a 100 of you, so you can distribute these in any way you see fit.

Marcus: It's a test. Will you share? Will the sheet make it all the way to the back? Ok. I'm here with a purpose tonight and I think that will be clear towards the end. There will be referendum following the talk and so I'd like your help. I'd like you to place close attention. It's a very serious issue and I think it'll become more apparent but I'll get started. We're talking about wedding rings. Why? Obviously this is a question on my mind. This will become apparent during the referendum towards the end. And now I'll begin.

The wedding ring, the most famous and instantly recognizable symbol of the joining of a man and a woman as husband and wife in the institution of marriage, has a long, widespread and mysterious history. We're going to delve into that.

Its beginnings lie in the deserts of North Africa, where the ancient Egyptian civilization sprang up along the fertile flood plains of the river Nile. This

river was bringer of all fortune and life to the Pharaoh's people and the first wedding rings were fashioned from plants growing on its banks. Sedges, rushes and reeds, growing alongside the well-known papyrus were twisted and braided into rings for fingers and larger bracelets for wrists.

A circle was the symbol of eternity for the Egyptians, as well as many other ancient cultures. Like time, it had no beginning and no end. It returned to itself, like life; and the shape was worshipped in the form of the Sun and the Moon. The hole in the center of the ring was not mere emptiness, it was important in its own right as the symbol of the gateway, or door, leading to things and events both known and unknown.

It is difficult, sorry, it is not difficult therefore, to see how the ring and the gift of a ring began to be associated with immortal love, in the hope that this most worthy of emotions could take on the characteristics of the circle and capture eternity. However, it was the ancient Egyptian who established this custom of placing a ring on the finger of his wife, as a sign that he had confidence in her ability to care for his house.

These early reed rings usually lasted about a single year before wear and tear took their inevitable toll. Hemp was probably the first choice, but some decided that they wanted a longer lasting material, and opted for leather, bone or ivory. When in later years, the art of metallurgy became known this naturally took over, but surprisingly only very gradually.

In the second century B.C., the Roman bride was presented with a gold ring but this she wore only in public. Such a ring was much too precious to wear while tending to household duties; and so the groom gave the bride a second ring. This second ring was for use in the home and often had little knobs in the form of a key, the significance being that the wearer had the right to seal up the giver's possessions—similar to the Egyptian symbolism. Iron was the material of choice for key rings as the Romans believed it symbolized the strength of love a man felt for his chosen woman, though rust was, of course, a problem.

Puzzle rings, with their labyrinthine, twining bands, came next. The rings, which first showed up in Asia more than 2,000 years ago, followed earlier trade routes to the Middle East, where they were commonly used as wedding bands, especially by sultans and sheiks who required each of their wives to wear one as a pledge of devotion.

It was not until about 860 A.D. that the Christians used the ring in marriage ceremonies. It was not the plain circlet that we now use, but a highly decorated device, engraved with symbolical figures of doves, lyres and even of two linked hands. Such a heathenish gadget was not given a hearty reception by the Church, but for a long time its use was discouraged, though never completely abandoned.

The 13th century brought a considerable simplification in wedding rings, and their spiritual aspect was very aptly expressed by Bishop Durant when he dubbed it a symbol of the union of hearts. In Egypt and Ireland, the people believed so strongly in the necessity for a ring that if a groom were too poor to buy one, he rented one for the occasion. Sometimes a ring was given conditionally, as is shown by the antiquated German formula: I give you this ring as a sign

of the marriage which has been promised between us, providing your father gives me a marriage portion of 1,000 reichsthalers.

Perhaps the most popular ring of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries was the Posy or Motto ring. The earlier models were impressed in French or Latin on the outside, but later rings were engraved on the inside, and also in English. Posy rings were etched with verse and frequently cited in Shakespeare's plays. "Is this a prologue or the posy of a ring?" asks Hamlet. You can laugh, come on. (Laughter)

Meanwhile, in the United States, the Puritans renounced wedding bands altogether, because they considered jewelry decadent frippery. Colonial Americans traded wedding thimbles instead of rings, arguing that thimbles were acceptable because they were practical; though, after marriage, women often sliced off the bottom of the thimble to create a wedding band. (Laughter)

Victorians lavished their rings with whimsical "twin hearts" and flowers; the Edwardians preferred intricate patterns of leaves and delicate filigree. The art deco movement, with its simple, abstract, modern lines, ruled wedding-band designs in the 1920s and 1930s.

For some couples, even personalized wedding rings are not intimate enough—they want a truly indelible symbol of their love as manifested by a tattoo encircling the ring finger. In recent times, this practice was made famous by the infamous Pamela Anderson and Tommy Lee, who had each other's names inked on their ring fingers. Other manifestations of this practice include Celtic knots, which are meant to symbolize oneness and continuity, in lieu of wedding bands.

While the permanency may seem endearing at first blush, it is in fact a complicated process. The difficult way a finger heals after the tattooing makes the result unpredictable. The tattoo might look blurry or spread out. The prevalence of divorce calls into question the wisdom of a tattoo ring; when Pamela and Tommy Lee split up, she had her Tommy wedding band tattoo altered to read Mommy. You may not be so lucky. We cannot be sure exactly how the custom of placing the marriage or betrothal ring on the third finger of the left hand arose.

Egyptians wore the ring like we do today, on the third finger of the left hand, due to their belief that the vein of that finger traveled directly from the heart. This legend was later taken up by the Greeks, when they conquered Egypt in 332 B.C. and from them passed onto the Romans, who called this the *vena amoris*, which is Latin for the vein of love.

This particular placement was most suitable for finery, as the left hand was used less than the right and the third finger would better protect the ring from injuries, inasmuch as it could not be extended but in the company with some other finger. And I challenge you to extend your ring finger alone at this point. Just to yourselves. This particular was most...sorry—still another explanation centers around the idea of the left hand denoting subjection of wife to husband. In the Christian Church service, the priest (Cough) the priest touched three consecutive fingers beginning with the thumb, saying, "In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," and placed the ring on the finger on the third, on the finger following the last finger touched. And again,

I cannot raise that ring finger but in the company of others. Come on people. (Laughter)

In countries such as Germany, Greece, Romania, Russia, Spain, India, Colombia, Venezuela and Chile, however, the wedding ring is worn on the right hand. Orthodox Christians and Eastern Europeans also traditionally wear the wedding band on the right hand. Jewish couples wear the wedding ring on the left hand, although it is placed on the right hand during the marriage ceremony. In the Netherlands, Catholics wear it on the left, all others on the right; in Austria, Catholics wear it on the right. In Belgium, the choice of hand depends on the region of the country.

Now for contemporary practice. The practice of men wearing wedding rings is relatively new. Up until the middle of the twentieth century, it was mostly only women who wore wedding rings, perhaps a reminder of the days when women were regarded as property, or perhaps a harmless custom akin to women wearing engagement rings that their husbands do not.

The double-ring ceremony, or use of wedding rings for both partners, is a relatively recent innovation. The American jewelry industry started a marketing campaign aimed at encouraging this usage in the late 19th century though the practice never became widespread.

Lessons learned from marketing innovations of the 1920s, changing economic times, and the impact of World War II, led to a more successful marketing campaign. When World War II broke out and many young men faced lengthy separations from their wives, they began wearing wedding bands as a symbol of their marriages and a reminder of their wives. By the late 1940s, double-ring ceremonies made up for 80% of all weddings, as opposed to 15% before the Great Depression.

Today, both partners often wear wedding rings, but where occupations or professions forbid or discourage the wearing of jewelry, as in the cases of actors, police, military pilots and electrical workers, either marriage partner may not wear a ring. In addition, people often remove wedding rings for comfort or safety. Others may object to the idea of precious metals, or dislike the idea of declaring their legal status through jewelry. (Laughter)

Long ago, and we're going to get to that...long ago our ancestors accepted the ring as an emblem of eternity and a symbol indicative of steadfast devotion, an interpretation quite contrary to Samuel Johnson's brusque definition of the wedding ring as a circular instrument placed upon the noses of hogs and the fingers of women to restrain them and bring them into subjection.

Nevertheless, wedding rings have stood the test of time, the most exacting of all critics. And it is no wonder. As Shakespeare wrote: "My ring I hold dear as my finger; 'tis part of it." Thank you. (Applause)

Misha: Marcus Bornfreund.

Marcus: Cocktail party information for you. Now we can get to the point. I'm, ah, engaged to a very ah beautiful, wonderful woman, Aviva Allen, please stand. She's at the back. (Applause) And we're soon to be married and the question of

course has come up. Am I to wear a ring? Now, we've agreed that ah, we're going to have a referendum here. And we will abide by it. And we're going to have two different kinds of votes, ah, just out of interest. The first, and I don't know if you're familiar with this term is a um, humocracy. Does anyone know what a humocracy is? You vote by humming. (Laughter) Ok. And this is to protect your identity. (Laughter) But out of my own interest we're going to follow up with a gender separated vote, just to get you who are with your significant others into trouble. So we'll begin first with a humocracy. The first, ah, question will be, should I wear a wedding ring, the second question will be, should I not wear a wedding ring. (Shouts and questions from audience) Sorry and I, I, yes. I'd like to invite questions for further details before we hold this very important referendum.

Misha: I'd like to say, in general, this isn't how democracy works, but if you insist on proceeding with an informed public I—yes, all the way at the back, do you have a question, yes...

Marcus: No questions from Aviva.

Misha: Who are you? Who are you? Yes, with your hand raised? You?

Trampoline Hall-er: Is it only your ring that's in question? What about your fiancé's?

Marcus: She has decided to wear a ring. It's an heirloom passed down to her... umm of course she's quite content wearing it, of course you can force your opinions on her following this lecture. Next question?

Misha: Yes, yes, yes, yes you ma'am. Yes.

Trampoline Hall-er: Does she want you to wear a wedding ring?

Marcus: Yes.

Misha: Ok. All the way in the back, all the way in the back, yes?

Trampoline Hall-er: Do you like wearing rings?

Misha: Do you like wearing rings?

Marcus: No. I wear no jewelry, I have a 1986 Swatch watch. It is light and plastic, if I lose it I will not, uh, be terribly upset. Umm, I find jewelry constraining, ah, I found outward displays of wealth reprehensible, umm, next question.

Misha: Ok. Right here at the front.

Trampoline Hall-er: She wants you to wear the ring?

Marcus: That is correct sir.

Trampoline Hall-er: **Marcus:** Ok, this is a bad question. Why would you not wear the ring?

Marcus: Freedom of choice.

Misha: Are, are you married?

Trampoline Hall-er: Oh, I'm married. I'm on my third.

Misha: So you're an expert.

Marcus: And, and, and on that point, as I've explained to her. Wedding rings tend to attract women, similar to the way (Crowd boos) similar to the way that if you attend a bar in the company of females (Crowd boos louder) you are deemed to be safe and non-psychotic, umm and you may indeed be of ah ah of interest. Thank you, I invite your boos.

Misha: Women are expressing their interest by booing, which is often how we express our interest.

Marcus: You know, I uh, I know the game, yes. But I should add that I have placed no demands on Aviva to wear a wedding ring at any time. She has chosen to because it may make her more attractive to other men.

Misha: Actually it's complicated, uh, uh, uh, yes, yes, you sir.

Trampoline Hall-er: Why does she want you to...?

Misha: Why do you think she wants you to wear a ring?

Marcus: Ah, Aviva?

Misha: Yes.

Marcus: I'm asking her.

Misha: You're asking her?

Aviva: I'm not the one on trial here.

Marcus: Yeah, you know, I thought it was worth a try, um. She would like me to wear the ring because she thinks it would um, keep other women away. I've tried to make the obvious, I mean, obviously, I'm a very desirable young man. Frankly, I don't see the worry, but, ah, um, she, she would like me to wear a ring and I'm sure she, she has a number of reasons. One of which is that she is wearing a ring.

Misha: So, for the principle of equity she wants to wear a ring, is that right? Ok. Ok. We're going to have more questions. They just want to run to vote but part of democracy is that everybody know everything. Ah, ah, ah, yes you ma'am, yes you.

Trampoline Hall-er: Is getting your ring finger tattooed on the table for you?

Marcus: It is not, no. Uh, I...I will elaborate on that in a minute. I am Jewish, tattoos are prohibited as I cannot be buried in a Jewish cemetery. I would have to have the finger cut off, prior to the burial. Which I loathe to do although I probably would not mind at that point. Umm and I will also add, in the course of this referendum that you can't prescribe the type of ring, such as a very tight one or a painful one. Uh, or one made of iron, uh, which I suspect we may be leading in that direction uh...

Misha: Ok. Ok. Ok you ma'am, yes, you ma'am, ok, yes.

Trampoline Hall-er: The issue of the ring, is it symbolic of the rest of your decisions that Aviva gets choices and you don't?

Marcus: She's actually going to make all the rest of the decisions in life. This is the last one I'm going to be allowed to make.

Misha: So, so, so it's not going to be that all decisions are going to be made by a group of strangers in a bar?

Marcus: No, no, no, she will have sole authority to direct the remainder of my life.

Misha: This is basically the end of our involvement in this marriage, unless you thought otherwise. This is it. This is it for us.

Marcus: I'd be happy if the public was informed and sympathetic to my plight, um, I bequeath you, I beg you, I will pay each of you a dollar.

Misha: Are you actually making that offer?

Marcus: Ah, perhaps, ah, yeah.

Misha: Wow. We're making it interesting now. Umm, do you have two separate questions or are you together, are you a team? Ok, alright, what is your blended question?

Trampoline Hall-er: Um, would you consider wearing a cheap ring that wasn't that ostentatious?

Misha: The question is whether you'd wear a ring that wasn't ostentatious?

Marcus: I've already investigated the materials available to me. I've already, ah, a tungsten carbide, uh, which is one step up from stainless steel, uh, it's uh, quite cheap, um, it cannot be scratched, um and ah needs to be shattered ah to be removed in the case of injury uh...

Misha: Wow.

Marcus: Yeah, I uh, I call it a nothing special ring. Not in terms of its symbolism but in terms of its material.

Misha: But if it needs to be shattered that's pretty special...

Marcus: Yeah, it's pretty tough. It's a very tough material.

Misha: Ah, anything, anything else that people would like to know before, before I proceed? Uh yes, you're all the way in the back and you're waving, yes?

Trampoline Hall-er: What's the worst that could happen if you don't wear a ring?

Marcus: From my point or or or, from my point, nothing. I'm in the safety of, uh, you fine people here. The decision will not be held against me...ahh, we've chosen to abide by it, this is what I believe is a mandatory arbitration as they call it. It's binding. (Laughter)

Misha: We have this all the time at Trampoline Hall. Ok, yes, yes, you ma'am.

Trampoline Hall-er: I'm just curious if you gave her an engagement ring.

Marcus: I did indeed. It was, uh, my mother's engagement ring, uh, she is still with us, my mother, she has a larger ring, her mother's and I gave it uh, to her and it fit perfectly. Destiny.

Misha: You seem to not be wearing an engagement ring.

Marcus: I do not wear an engagement ring. That's a whole other lecture.

Misha: Is there anything that people need to know before they could begin to vote? Ah, yes, ok you.

Trampoline Hall-er: I'm just wondering how you came, like did you have a pre-referendum before this? Like how did you come to do this?

Marcus: I'm seizing the opportunity.

Misha: So, there was no run up. You didn't...

Marcus: I didn't want to say no to her personally but I uh if you fine people choose to um, you know, you are protected. You do not have to spend the rest of your life with her. She will have no recourse. She doesn't know you—your names, or where you live. You are safe.

Misha: So, so thank you for your reassurance, does that answer your question?

Trampoline Hall-er: So like, uh, like, did you uh, did you make this decision yourself or was it...

Marcus: Well, I was invited by Erica to give a lecture, thank you Erica, and this was a topic on my mind and uh we had been discussing it, and um I thought I'd again seize the opportunity. Ah, maybe one question at the back and then maybe we'll have our vote,

Misha: Alright.

Trampoline Hall-er: Are you a rebel in many other parts of your life or is this an isolated...

Marcus: Do I look like a rebel? (Laughter)

Misha: Even answering your question with a question like that is sort of rebellious. Ok so, we're ok ok...so, we're going to have a vote and is it that humocracy that will be binding?

Marcus: The humocracy will be binding yes.

Misha: So, just to be clear, this is a lifelong binding decision basically. You're either going to wear a wedding ring 'till death do you part, or not wear a wedding ring at all, and Aviva that will be ok with you.

Aviva: Um...

Misha: Well you can't breeze into another lecture series in a year and start wearing a wedding ring, you can't, you can't...

Aviva: No. We discussed it. I do want him to wear a wedding ring but whatever you decide we're going to go with that.

Misha: And that's what, that's what marriage is about. It's about leaving decisions to a mob of strangers. (Laughter)

Marcus: It's much safer that way.

Misha: Another question before we proceed.

Trampoline Hall-er: What about wearing a ring on a chain around your neck?

Misha: I think it's a finger ring though.

Marcus: Ah, in my research I discovered that that has the same significance but no, no, thanks.

Misha: You don't want to say that you're you're going steady with someone in the 50s. That's not what you want.

Marcus: Yeah.

Misha: I think we were gonna wrap up the Q & A, and and go to the vote. So, we understand the terms, and so and so, at first people will hum—we'll do it separately? Or we'll sound different pitches? I don't know how this works.

Marcus: No, ah, we'll do it separately and I think the results will likely be clear. Um, ah, and, and Misha, you as M.C., I'm asking you to take your finely tuned ear, and you Erica as well, to judge ah, we do not have a sound meter.

Steve Kado: Oh yes we do.

Marcus: We do have a sound meter. (Applause) We will then leave this to science. (Applause) Misha and Erica you are safe.

Misha: So, I guess if you're a louder hummer then your vote counts for more.

Marcus: Yes. Do not restrain yourselves people.

Misha: So hum as loud, hum as loud as you feel.

Trampoline Hall-er: Is it a ring on the finger, or a ring period?

Marcus: A ring on the finger, I will wear the ring.

Misha: And it can't be ah ah an invisible ring or an imaginary ring or or or...

Marcus: No. No, the real, the real deal.

Misha: We understand what it means. I think we're all adults here. Ok, so, so, so, we're going to do, we're...

Marcus: Hang on. I'm nervous.

Misha: We should all be nervous. Do you want to take a little breather?

Marcus: No.

Misha: Ok.

Marcus: Go ahead.

Misha: Do you want to introduce it or should I introduce it?

Marcus: Go ahead sir.

Misha: Ok—so we'll ask you to hum for a few seconds. First I'm going to ask you to hum if you do...oh, I'm sorry, the one thing I want to do, I'm sorry, I want to be clear. You also offered everyone a dollar if you didn't have to wear the ring. (Laughter) Is there a way that you're willing to make that binding?

Marcus: Yes. I will stand at the bar and I will pay out uh, one dollar, to each person that honestly can come up and say that they voted against it.

Misha: Is that the case whether you win or not or only if you win?

Marcus: No, only if I win. (Laughter)

Misha: Ok, so, do you actually have sixty dollars in loonies with you?

Marcus: I have, uh, 40 dollars in my pocket. I will run out and get the remainder. I will go to as many establishments as necessary to get the loonies. I will go downstairs to the bar, I will go across the street to...

Trampoline Hall-er: How 'bout 5 bucks? How 'bout...

Marcus: No. (Laughter) And, I think Aviva is going to object to this actually.

Misha: Aviva, do you want to object to this?

Aviva: I will not accept a decision based on bribery.

Marcus: Ok. I tried to slip it in. (Applause)

Misha: Why are you applauding? You just lost 60 dollars.

Misha: So, you're not going to accept that?

Marcus: I think that's fair. I tried to cheat.

Misha: Alright. But, should you vote against the ring and should garbage collection in your riding get a little better, no one can point any fingers. But no money is being promised. Is that right?

Marcus: Yeah.

Misha: That was, that was a real emotional roller coaster for me. Ok. So, no money is changing hands, any clever loopholes that you're thinking of are are stricken from the record, the decision is binding in perpetuity and will be binding by the objective measure of the sound meter. Please refrain from making other sounds other than humming because it will upset the sound meter. I will ask you to hum for 5 seconds for each vote, and uh, uh, uh, yeah, I will ask you, when I ask you to begin humming, begin humming, if you think Marcus should, should wear the ring. If you think the answer is yes, he should wear the ring then please begin humming as loud as you can. Now. (The crowd hums) Ok, good. Good. How many decibels was that? Do we know that?

Steve: No, it's visual.

Misha: Ok. Now if you, uh, if you think Marcus should not wear the ring I'm going to ask you to begin humming in a few moments. Ok now. (The crowd hums) Ok stop humming.

Steve: There might be a recount in order. (Applause) It was close, it was really close.

Marcus: I think I might be wearing the ring.

Misha: Did I hear you appoint either of the counters? Ok. Are we going to do a recount? I'm sorry to make you do this twice. (Mayhem) Ok ok...just to make it fair, we'll do it the other way around. So this time, if you think if you think if you think that...um...you should hum if Marcus should not wear the ring...umm in a few moments begin humming. If you think Marcus should not wear a ring, please begin humming now. (Crowd hums) Stop. By the way this is super fun, I'd like to acknowledge that. (Laughter) I'm going to have you sing, row, row, row your boat in rounds. And now if you that, if you think Marcus should wear the ring I'm going to have to ask you to begin humming in a few moments. If you think Marcus should wear the ring please begin humming now. (The crowd hums) Ok, stop. Which is it?

Steve: It's really close.

Misha: It seems that all systems of government have gears that...

Marcus: We might need another recount.

Misha: Maybe. I can't even see what they're doing in there.

Steve: Ring.

Misha: Ring.

Trampoline Hall-er: Ring.

Marcus: I accept that. Thank you very much. I mean that sincerely. I know some people in the audience are angry with me. I can tell by their humming...I don't know why...um but thank you. (Applause)

Misha: That's Marcus Bornfreund who will wear a ring for the rest of his life thanks to you. (Applause) We'll be back in about ten minutes with our third lecture of the evening. Umm, don't forget to pick up envelopes from Erica Kopyto and put your addresses on them. You can give them back to her after the lecture, you don't have to give them back right away. Oh, wait that's right, what do they have to do? They have to fill out the forms? I'm sorry, wait, how are we going to do this? We need a gender count? How does the gender count work? How do we do it? If your, if your...um—all the ladies in the house, if you voted for the ring, put your hands in the air, and all the ladies in the house if you voted against the ring put your hands in the air. Ok, ladies voted both ways. All the fellas in the house who voted for the ring? If you voted against the ring put your hands in the air? Ok so there, there we go... I think men are a little more likely to have voted anti-ring. So there you go...congratulations.

BREAK

Misha: Welcome. Welcome. Welcome to Trampoline Hall part three. Welcome. (Applause) Welcome welcome back, welcome. So I uh uh uh uh I think we've got the basic pattern of it down so far with the lecture and the Q & A uh uh uh um: you're doing, uh, you're doing very well. Oh, one thing I forgot to mention is that the third third criterion of a good question is that that it be very loud so other people can hear it. So uh, uh please take that to heart. Once again if you'd like to know about future Trampoline shows there's an email list over there. Laurie, can you hold up the email list so they can see what it looks like? You get to write your email address on a piece of paper like that and uh find out about future shows. I told you about Leah's set or, and uh uh, and for every Trampoline Hall show the uh ticket and website and uh stuff like that are all done by Margaux Williamson. (Applause) She is not here tonight so clap as loud as you want she will not hear you. (Whistles) Thank you thank you I will tell her there was a guy who clapped really loud for you at the show and you missed it baby. Um, 'cause that's what it's all about. Um, and ah ah Once again you can receive full transcripts and buttons from tonight. How're the button sales going Becky?

Becky: There's only one button left for the wedding ring.

Misha: So, for Vicki—even the buttons for the lecture that hasn't happened yet have sold out, completely sold out. So, next time you come to the show, act faster unless you want the unpopular wedding ring button in which case act as slowly as you'd like. That's a lesson for you. And once again just to remind you, full transcripts of the show are available. And feel free, if there's something you'd like to remember, if you have a phone number in your head now or even just a thing you need to do in a week or two, you can throw it in there. Even if there's a word or something that you think Erica might have a hard time spelling...ok, Erica?

Erica: There are still more chances to get a transcript.

Misha: So, there are more envelopes.

Erica: There are more envelopes.

Misha: Erica will only make as many transcripts as there are envelopes but I think she has made a thousand envelopes.

Erica: Yup.

Misha: And people have asked if the stamps are real. The stamps are real. Canada post has now lost all dignity whatsoever, they're basically like in competition with Jones Soda. It's pretty much the same thing. You can put anything on there. All the inventors and great statesmen of the past are just like, fuck you. Look, look, here's a picture of our kid peeing in the pool. He gets a stamp too. That's the way things are now. I'm gonna be on the dollar next month. Tough break, big everybody. Screw you, Queen Elizabeth. Umm, um anyhow, sorry. No, I'm excited. I'm excited about the stamp. So is there anything people want to remember? (Laughter) No? Alright. Then I have nothing else to tell you and I will introduce you to your third and final lecturer of the evening. Ladies and Gentlemen, please give a very warm round of applause for Vicki Stroich.

Vicki: Hello.

Trampoline Hall-ers: Hello.

Vicki: Oh my, everyone's friendly. I'm here to explore the question: Is the Romantic hero dead? And um, if such people are dead, who really cares? Umm I want to begin by defining what I mean by Romantic hero. I am speaking of the concept of the Romantic hero that was inspired by the lives and work of the second generation of English poets from the Romantic period of the late 18th and early 19th century. Specifically, John Keats, Percy Shelley and George Gordon known as Lord Byron.

I acknowledge that there are other poets who contributed to this first Romantic movement like William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and in many cases William Blake but they didn't die young and pretty like Keats, Shelley and Byron, so I've chosen to just mention them here. It is a complicated period with a great deal of material explored in books and essays.

My interest isn't all that literary. (Laughter) It's more social. I am interested instead about how greatly intrigued we are about their lives and the public perception of their personalities created an archetype of sorts, the Roman-

tic hero. How was that figure created? Is it even possible for it to exist now? Do they just go by a different title or is it a hollow notion? What are the characteristics? What are the criteria? Um, outlaws, rejecting status quo, rebels. Shelley and Byron both rejected traditional notions of sexuality and marriage kind of like Marcus. They were both rabble rousers; Shelley published angry pamphlets and Byron gave impassioned and impotent speeches in parliament. And all three wrote poems that were considered challenging.

Ah, they're outsiders, alienated, isolated, wandering exiles, loners. Keats was an outsider because he was a poet of a lower class and was repeatedly bashed by critics. Shelley was an unpopular figure among his peers because he looked like a girl before that was encouraged. (Laughter) And um, Byron had a bit of a limp. Byron was the most popular of the bunch of course.

Shelley and Keats languished in obscurity during their lives. They all lived fast and died young. All three died young and dramatically in exile: Keats treating his tuberculosis in Rome, Shelley in a boat which capsized. Some say it was murder, some suicide. Byron seemed to be perpetually in exile due to some sexual indiscretion or political flight of fancy and he died in Greece fighting the Turks. They were all known for an emotional depth. The sort of tempestuous poetry that they wrote often featured images suggesting something deeper.

Also, emotional ardor. The poetry was full of extremes of passion and devotion towards people and places and urns. (Laughter) Their lives were also full of passion. Letters tell us that Keats was crazed for his neighbor, and Shelley and Byron were both known for their strong passions for the people in their lives. Um, they were all about themselves. Maybe because the world rejected them or because folks just didn't understand. They valued their own thoughts and feelings above everybody maybe because their self-mythologizing and their suggestion that the world sang for them alone marked a change from the poetry that existed before—which was not about the self, but about a nation or a notion or god or something. Um, they were lovers. They were big passionate lovers. Um they believed in and practiced free love except for Keats, as mentioned before he was really crazy about his neighbour. (Laughter)

It is noted that while they certainly enjoyed their bodies, these gentlemen were known for their words and not necessarily their physical prowess. And um, they were handsome but they weren't the physical idea, ideal. Keats was short and suffered from TB and Shelley looked like a girl. And other than Byron doing some time in the Greek Army, which he ultimately died from, they weren't very macho. And this set them apart from the hero who exhibited martial courage and who was made in the image of god, and so perfect.

And so those are some major characteristics of the Romantic hero. The myth around these men created an archetype that glorified the self, that glorified wild emotion, that glorified the outsider and the voice of dissent.

It should be noted here that for all this glory, these guys weren't perfect. Umm Byron was a weirdo. (Laughter) Um, reading about his life made me think about Michael Jackson because he kept a bear. (Laughter) And he um maybe fathered his niece. He even had his own Liz Taylor. He liked to dress up in military costume. Shelley was probably a pretty flighty guy. And Keats was

probably a downer and he was dismissed by critics and condemned to die of tuberculosis. They weren't highly functional individuals but somehow they managed to become Romantic heroes. What made them, ah, what forces?

For much of the 18th century the...Europe had been politely doing what it was told within reason or for the most part. Then the French Revolution came along without so much as a merci or a comment ça va and doing what you were told by an authority wasn't so much of an imperative anymore. (Laughter) The French Revolution opened the door to outlaws taking over and it's also the kind of event that jolts the imagination awake. So they were both, they were all born during this time of turmoil. And it probably shaped who they were.

But they also grew up watching the result of the French Revolution, um born out the Age of Reason before it, squash the individual and become an authority. Idealism gone wrong um...a devotion to reason that led to madness. So they might have figured, why not be mad um why not follow our emotions to the deepest end? Why not leave our lovers and take a lot of vacations and just go for it? Reason didn't really work, so why not madness?

And the most influential man in Europe at the time was another diminutive outsider who liked to self-mythologize, so the glorifying power of the individual and its importance were quite strong. Ah, death was everywhere of course. Years of war and turmoil as well as the constant threat of poor health, they probably lived like there was no tomorrow, sucked the morrow out of life. Marrow. Ha—morrow out of tomorrow. Um so who cares about tomorrow because there probably isn't one.

And sure enough Byron probably did lay a lot of the groundwork for this archetype in his lifetime, but a vital part of the creation of this myth had to do with the early deaths of these men: the ability for the myths to grow through hearsay and scandal and mystery, with the later unearthing of all the correspondence and speculation on their complicated personal lives. Keats and Shelley's poetry didn't take off until they were dead. So they had to die young and beautiful under tragic circumstances, otherwise they would've gotten boring and no one would care anymore like Paul McCartney or Morrissey. (Laughter) There was a fetishization of "lost potential."

Um, so the Romantic hero was born out of a world of turmoil; a world of questions and uncertainty; a world that had lost its idealism; a world where the focus was shifting inward to the individual and not the glory of the state or god; where reason had failed and emotion ruled.

Is there any resemblance between that world and our own? Is our environment, speaking of North America, fertile ground for the Romantic hero? Or um...and if so, who might it be? Is there any such thing as an outlider, I mean an outlaw or outsider anymore really? With our increasing access to information and into each others' personal lives and an expanding of our tolerance now I'm not in any way suggesting that we're perfectly tolerant as a society but it's different than 1820 I think. Are we neutralizing and normalizing the outsider as soon as they get identified as being outside? What is mysterious and dangerous now? Who are our outsiders?

Has there been an event or personality that has rocked our way of looking at the world and fundamentally changed our point of view? Or are there too many events and too many folks to track any one event or person's effect?

And where is that point of view focused? Um, self-mythologizing is ah not all that difficult anymore. (Laughter) It's not just the domain of artists and politicians. We can all do it. Has anyone here engaged in any self-mythologizing today? (Laughter) A show of hands, please. I'm sure that...

Trampoline Hall-er: He's on a stamp.

Vicki: He's on a stamp. There's self-mythology right in this room. Um. And uh, so—the individual is certainly at the center again and emotions aren't all that rare anymore either.

But depth is certainly rare: depth of understanding, purpose and expression. How many of us have the time to concentrate on depth of purpose and expression when there is so much to process? Is the world too complicated for the Romantic hero?

And given our situation, the world arguably going to shit, is self-mythology and gazing very, very deeply into our navels what we should really be doing right now? Um, the focus of the Romantic heroes though, I mean to be fair...their inward focus was seen to be radical, it was a response to a mob mentality. So, uh, what is ours about? This navel-gazing perspective is a rather pessimistic way of looking at this archetype and the men who inspired it in my opinion. Delving into themselves was about understanding and expressing their feelings about their world. They were engaged in the world. They wrote poems that challenged. They looked into themselves and reflected these feelings and beliefs about the world around them back at the world. It was active.

Something that hasn't changed since the original Romantic heroes is our idolatry of lost potential. We adore the young, the bright and the dead. We airbrush them on t-shirts and the hoods of cars. We get portrait tattoos of them. And we still like them pretty, although it is harder to be pretty and sickly these days than it was back then. It is certainly harder to be mysterious. Byron and the guys were depicted in portraits not YouTube and their lifestyles could be mythologized by others because they were being experienced like the gods through tales and sort of to mag, max, magnifying the Romantic myth. We can self-mythologize all we want but we're really a society obsessed with distinguishing fact from fiction. Anyone who tries to create a myth is immediately targeted and the myth is debunked.

And um given these general comparisons between our world and Romantic period that spawned the Romantic hero I'm talking about, it seems unlikely that we could ah perhaps replicate that original archetype of the Romantic hero. So if the Romantic hero could thrive in our contemporary world, who might they be?

Let's start with what medium they might choose. There could be several. Um traditional literary forms I suppose and internet forms like blogging and things like that. We could even blast this open to rigorous debate about whether there are Romantics in all sorts of spheres including non-artistic mediums. And I hope we do. (Misha laughs) Thank you Misha.

But for the purpose of this discussion I'd like to focus on artistic mediums and posit that uh the Romantic poets of our day are probably musicians. Um they produce emotional poetry that has a profound effect and influence. There is still something arguably mysterious and rebellious and indulgent about musical artists. They have more credibility than actors. Sorry. And a larger influence than writers do. Sorry about that too. And I don't think it is too big a stretch to describe the Romantic poets discussed here as some of the original rock stars.

I suppose it could be argued that Romanticism has been mass-produced by musicians that appeal to the awkward teenage emotional phases. But that's a bit distasteful and false. So let's talk about artists whose work is widely established to have depth. Um, so who might they be: Jeff Buckley is known for emotional depth and an otherworldly voice, drowned in the Mississippi, post-humously idolized; or I think maybe Tupac Shakur may be one of the better examples. He was known as a poet and a man whose poetry had emotional depth and was both about himself and his world. A passionate, decadent man who died young and tragically and has been subsequently idolized and air-brushed. (Laughter)

One could make a case for plenty of artists who die young. Someone I know mentioned River Phoenix as a possibility yesterday. Perhaps. And I've got my eye on singer Amy Winehouse. I think her Romantic hero stocks just keep going way up. I also think that there can be gender equality when we think of the new Romantic hero. And I'm sure there are plenty of other examples that we can talk about. But who cares?

It may not be the time for navel gazing or self-indulgence and decadence, and if that is how we interpret the Romantic hero then yeah, who cares? Kill 'em off.

But if the Romantic hero is the person who encourages the exploration of self, and places value on instinct and emotion, and recognizes that reason and thought are only a part of what makes us effective and reasonable human beings, then that inspires in us the desire to go deeper and understand more. In that case we need them. So perhaps we should be looking for them. We should care. And once we've identified them we just have to worry about when they're going to die. Thank you. (Applause)

Misha: Vicki Stroich, ladies and gentlemen. Are there any questions. Yes, yes, you sir?

Trampoline Hall-er: Are there any heroes you like who are not Romantic? What kind of heroes do you like?

Vicki: Oh wow.

Misha: The question is do you have non-Romantic heroes?

Vicki: Oh I don't know. I don't know that I have many heroes actually but um—and I wasn't even certain that I uh, I...well, no. Not really. (Laughter)

Misha: Good. Well that answers your question. Anything else? Ok. Yes, you sir, Steve Kado, in the booth.

Steve: Just a quick comment before I get to my question. That statement that musicians would be like, that they, they, that they could possibly fill the social role—probably I’m guessing you don’t have many friends who do music. Because the culture and history surrounding the production of music could never yield anyone such as a...yeah, it’s just a totally, it’s the most boring job you could possibly have to be honest.

Misha: In case you don’t know, Steve is a musician who runs a small record-label. But, ah, it really is the shit of culture so (Laughter) yeah, so...

Vicki: Good to know. Thank you.

Steve: Yeah, so I’ve got some experience, but my main question is is more that umm, the belief that the Romantic hero is banished in a way serves to...I would argue that you’re creating a mythology around this banishment that’s in fact only masking the Romantic hero’s horrific and complete ultimate presence (Laughter) and that we ultimately live inside the Romantic hero permanently (Laughter)—the perception of oneself as a valuable and important individual as opposed to a mere cog motivated by god to build a cathedral that we’ll never see the end of or something like that. Or a pyramid that you have no choice about um...we we we ah we, nothing could be farther from the truth.

Misha: I’m sure a lot of you were asking yourselves the same question.

Steve: So basically, umm, isn’t the question you’re asking actually not a question at all but but but sort of an attempt to mask the horror of everyday reality? (Laughter)

Vicki: Perhaps. (Applause)

Misha: Does that answer your question?

Steve: Not really.

Misha: Alright.

Vicki: Perhaps we should talk later.

Misha: Umm, well alright, I’m going to go to you. Ok yes, you sir.

Trampoline Hall-er: I might have some reservations about the Romantic hero being the actual soldier of the commodification of space time. I can get to that later. I was wondering if maybe you can talk about the subtle differences between the Romantic hero and the prophet because it seems as though there are people who have transitioned from one to the other, right? Like we know that Mick Jagger...

Misha: Mick Jagger became a prophet?

Trampoline Hall-er: He actively identified himself with Shelly early on and then when he didn’t die young—and the same thing with Dylan, he’s still out there mumbling in front of audiences and and what happens?

Misha: So, so, I’m sorry, so the question is when they become prophets or sexy little dancing men? (Laughter) ‘Cause, ‘cause Bob Dylan sort of is a prophet but I don’t think Mick Jagger, I don’t know, I don’t know what he is. A curiosity. But but...the question is, what happens if they don’t die or...

Trampoline Hall-er: Do you see that they're separate archetypes? The Romantic hero on the one side, and the prophet on the other?

Misha: And so the question is how do prophets and Romantic heroes intersect as substantiated possibly by Mick Jagger and maybe also by Bob Dylan? (Laughter)

Vicki: Well well, I mean the prophetic voice existed even before the Romantic poet so that's I think, I think there's something about what they were calling upon, the Romantic poets. They were calling on some sort of depth or some sort of um...um...otherworldly connection between themselves and umm something. So I think there is, I think there is some connection there. Umm and they may have thought of themselves as prophetic. I think that's where the connection is.

Misha: So there, so there you go. Does that answer your question?

Trampoline Hall-er: Sort of.

Misha: Ok. That's all, that's all we ask here. You know, the the the person who came to mind for me was Kurt Cobain. What about him?

Vicki: Oh yes. I forgot about him.

Misha: 'Cause you know he was sickly and um self- self- self-aware and/or self-absorbed and he died young and he was a misfit because he of his drug addiction, I don't know and being from Seattle or whatever.

Vicki: And he's been idolized for...

Misha: Right subsequently idolized...

Vicki: Right and and self-destructive.

Misha: And a way to commodify rebellion.

Vicki: And I used musicians because I um—that seemed to be um, perhaps too obvious a choice? But certainly I um believe that it is not, the new Romantic hero is probably, if there is any, is probably not even a musician because it is a commodified thing. I mean how, how outside could any musician...I don't want to say sorry but maybe it could be that there are no outsiders anymore and maybe they don't even work.

Misha: All the way in the back, yes all the way in the back, yes you you. Yes you're so far away from me.

Trampoline Hall-er: So given that it's hard to know if we have a Romantic hero in today's society, what about your thoughts around criminals, specifically the most effective one of the past decade or so? What are your thoughts around the Columbine killers?

Misha: Are the Columbine killers Romantic heroes? Is that what you're suggesting? 'Cause that's creepy and fun to think about.

Vicki: Well, I mean, what are the criteria? Um...

Misha: They were weird.

Trampoline Hall-er: They were deep...

Misha: They saw through the superficiality of jock culture.

Vicki: Wow. This is blowing my mind. Um...I guess, well, and I suppose um, frighteningly enough they do have a legacy.

Misha: They kept journals.

Vicki: They kept journals.

Misha: I know that wasn't really one of your criteria but it feels close.

Vicki: Well, you know, it's all about exploration of self. So hmm, I didn't think about that but that's something to ponder: are those murderers Romantic...

Misha: And so are you suggesting that that's the Romantic hero our time calls for?

Trampoline Hall-er: I'm just suggesting that that may be the only category left that works.

Misha: What? Sorry?

Vicki: That that may be the only category left that works on those terms.

Misha: So, so the only place where you can really be an outsider. Now that everything else has been commodified but there's still a strong indie culture in murder. (Laughter) At least for now. Hey the Pepsi murders. Weren't those great? I don't know...does that, hmmm. Ok. Yes, yes you ma'am.

Trampoline Hall-er: Is sexual attraction a necessary part of the Romantic hero?

Misha: Does the Romantic hero have to be sexually attractive?

Trampoline Hall-er: Like the Columbine killers...

Misha: The Columbine killers were not hot.

Vicki: Well, I do, I think you maybe hit on a point that the sense of attraction and excitement is certainly a huge part of that that myth but I suppose there might be some people who are attracted to murderers but umm...there probably are yeah (Laughter), but so, that idea, yeah, that idea of idolatry and that sort of thing is a huge part of it but I don't know if that necessarily excludes them.

Misha: Were those Romantic heroes were they um—were they all lookers?

Vicki: They were all considered lookers.

Misha: They were. Not just by themselves and each other but by others?

Vicki: By other people too apparently, yeah.

Misha: Ah, yes, you, you sir.

Trampoline Hall-er: I was just wondering. You seem to almost fetishize two forms of death. You mentioned tuberculosis at least five times and the second was drowning, which you mentioned at least five or six times regarding two different people. One of them I think was one of the Romantic poets and the other was Jeff Buckley.

Vicki: Yeah.

Trampoline Hall-er: And I was just wondering if in industrialized living standards, if tuberculosis was something you can fetishize as Romantic, and do

people in the underdeveloped world like Latin America and Africa have a better chance because there is tuberculosis and polio and HIV...

Trampoline Hall-er: Would you please speak louder?

Misha: The question is, for those at the back, the question is, whether the Romantic hero is more likely to arise from the disease-rich sectors of the world? Where things like tuberculosis and polio are still in ample supply and perhaps where even drowning is more likely. Is that, is that fair?

Trampoline Hall-er: I think so.

Vicki: I think perhaps there's been, at least in North America—maybe we've responded to industrialization by fetishizing gun shots instead of instead of TB. Umm so when I bring up somebody like Tupac Shakur or someone like that then perhaps it's sort of like, that form, that form of violence has taken the place of something like TB. But perhaps the only outsiders are the outsiders who are outside a sort of safety or relative safety.

Misha: So, that helps. Being outside of North American culture helps but being shot by a gun is still an authentic way to go.

Vicki: I think it's probably, it's, it's legit.

Misha: Who's the guy who, who stabbed himself in the heart. Do you remember?

Trampoline Hall-er: Elliot Smith.

Misha: Elliot Smith. That'll, that and poison, that seems like it should win you some points. Um um, maybe we'll end, we'll just end on that mental image. Ah ladies and gentlemen, Vicki Stroich. (Applause)

Misha: That was Vicki Stroich, ladies and gentlemen. Thanks to Vicki and to our other lecturers, also to Joanna Falck, Marcus Bornfreund, thanks also to Erica Kopyto who curated the show tonight. Trampoline Hall is also Carl Wilson, Steve Kado, Leah Walker, thanks to Sneeky Dees, Jenny Ocean, Lauren Bride, Laurie McGregro, Kevin Bernel. Trampoline Hall was invented by Sheila Heti. Thanks especially to you for coming out and thanks especially to me, I'm Misha Glouberman. We'll be back next month. Have a wonderful night. Stick around and have a drink, the bar's open for a while, thanks good night.

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