THE BLACK POPULAR CULTURE LECTURE SERIES AND ONLINE RESEARCH ARCHIVE

"An Evening with Delroy Lindo"

By

T. Hasan Johnson, Ph.D.

[00:00:00]
(applause)
Prof. Melissa Knight: Thank you all for being here. What a beautiful crowd! Give yourself a hand.
(applause)
Prof. Melissa Knight: It is 6:31; we are on time.
(applause)
Prof. Melissa Knight: Did you all see these as you came in outside before I snatched them? If you didn't, they are lovely. There will be three for auction. We'll have an opportunity to do that at the end of the evening. The end of the evening; we don't want you getting excited about that and getting up and moving as we're beginning the speaking parts, which will happen shortly. But they will be on the back table. They are [going over?] a silent auction. Please do not rush to do this during the presentation. Bathrooms are all the way in the back to my left through the door behind the black curtains, and we are really about to start the program. We're so excited to see you. I'm going to bring out to the stage now, Clifford Frazier III. He's the president -- I'm sorry, the resident director at University Courtyard [forums?]. He's a graduate student, [standing counseling?], and student services, with specialization in higher education, and he is in his final year, and he has the distinct honor of introducing Dr. Johnson.
(applause)
Clifford Frazier: Good evening. (inaudible) (laughter) Dr. T. Hasan Johnson's general research focuses on how Africana resistance groups intersect religiosity, sexuality, and patriarchy on negotiating white supremacy, oppressive capitalism, and new forms of media. Dr. Johnson specializes in Africana responses to cultural, political, and intellectual aggression from internal and external sources, as well as their use of socially constructed truths as a means of reifying sexual hierarchy. Excuse me. Lastly, as an Afrofuturist, his work, addresses how technology, political ideology, icon-construction, blackness, and the imagination have been used as tools of social agency, cultural development, and political mobilization in Africana communities. He's the 2013 Fresno State Talks teaching award winner, and a 2013 provost award winner for (inaudible) faculty.
(applause)

Clifford Frazier: He founded the *ONYX Black Male Collective*, the *Hip-Hop Research and Interview Project*, and the program for which you are here tonight, the *Black Popular Culture Lecture Series and Online Research Archive*. Let's begin with Dr. T. Hasan [Johnson].

(applause)

JOHNSON: Welcome. Thank you all for coming. Glad to have everybody here. Looks like we have a full house. Always a beautiful thing to see. I wanted to start with an acknowledgement of a company that has [really made this?] possible, and we are learning about them as this is their first semester, and I'm grateful they're here. They have completely supported this event. I had a chance to speak to the gentleman for about five years before he said, "Sounds great, let's do it." So if you can please acknowledge with a round of applause, President and First Lady of Fresno State, Dr. Castro and (inaudible).

(applause)

JOHNSON: The committee for the Black Popular Culture Lecture Series and Online Research Archive is comprised of Professor Melissa Knight, who you just saw, and Dr. Francine Oputa. Is Francine here? Where is she? There she is. (applause) (inaudible) tremendous, tremendous help, between Professor Knight and Dr. Oputa, just really made all of this possible. They did the on-the-ground work that I did just, "Oh, we're supposed to do that?", so just incredibly helpful. (laughter) And she ain't playin', either. OK. I think we want to acknowledge a number of other supporters as well, so if you can hold your applause until I am finished with the section, you can applaud them as a group. So of course the president's office, the provost office as well, the College of Social Sciences, University Student Union Productions, in particular [Razzad Haleem?] and [Joseph Gianatti?], Central Valley Cultural Heritage Institute, Associated Students Incorporated, Mountain West, University Communications, and of course, black faculty and staff. You can thank them for [the evening's offerings?]. (applause)

I am a bit biased as faculty. I like to acknowledge us, me and you in the room, even if we can't do it in person. Can the faculty stand who are in the audience please? (applause)

The students that were instrumental in this project, there were a number of students. First and foremost, I'd like to acknowledge the newly-formed ONYX Black Male Collective, who were very instrumental in this idea; Phi Beta Sigma; the NAACP on campus; Black Students United; and Kappa Alpha Psi. All instrumental in [making this happen?]. (applause)

And we also cannot continue without acknowledging the community support (inaudible). We have community support coming from everywhere. Especially as soon as they heard the name of our first inaugural celebrity who came, that was it. So I definitely want to acknowledge NightVision Consulting and Coaching, the [Renos?] Company, Catherine Forbes and Doug Gordon, Fresno Metero Black Chamber of Commerce, Black Women Organized for Political Action, Training Institute for Leadership Enrichment, LA Jones and Associates, Warner Center for Performing Arts, Men and Boys of Color, and United Black Men. (applause)

I wanted to give you a short clip that I wanted to play after I speak a little bit about why this is happening. This is the first semester we've started Black Popular Culture Lecture Series and Online Research Archive. To be straightforward, in a nutshell, what it is is kind of an online oral history project. And what we envisioned was bringing significant black celebrities to the campus, but not just for the sake of having them here, but having them talk to students one, and two, having them share their stories so that their stories can be placed on our servers as research on the lives and experiences

of black folk via these particular [from?] -- and I think tonight you will find how that works. You'll get a chance to see how that comes together. And the idea came about in a couple of my classes last semester, when I [polled?] how many students were interested in going into some facet of the entertainment industry, whether it was music, whether it was athletics, or whether it was, you know -- it didn't -- almost every hand went up. And what I started to think about was if you're going to go into, in this era of reality television and get rich quick, I thought it might be fruitful to sit and listen to some who have spent decades mastering their craft, and I would place emphasis on mastering their craft. Now that is obviously in a general way what we're here to do at a university, but there are those that step beyond the pale, and there are those that move beyond just the letter of the film [00:10:00] they're in, and they raise us up in the experience of watching them perform. And I've had the distinct honor of having one of those major figures in my life come and be an example of that process. And I want that to serve to students as an example of what to strive for. So it's not just about, you know, getting into Beverly, getting a job, whatever. It's actually about being able to cultivate in yourself something beyond the letter of the job, so that people know you beyond that, where your work stands as a testament to what's possible. And that's what's behind the Black Popular Culture Archive Lecture Series. It's really about being able to capture moments where people that elevate us in that way, as an example and an opportunity for research, to inspire us each to strive for that. So that's the goal behind this program.

Now what I'd like to do is show a brief clip, just to give you a taste, and this is going to be kind of an *Inside the Actors Studio* kind of thing tonight. We're going to be watching a few different clips, and then we'll have our guest kind of talk about the experience. And I'm such a fan, I could show eight movies back to back, but I was told not to do that. (laughter)

I will say some clips aren't as short as I was told they should be, but that's because I couldn't help myself. But I did want to start with one clip just to give you a taste of what we're going to have, and then we'll go from there. So, one moment.

Clip from ***GONE IN SIXTY SECONDS*** (2000)

Det. Roland Castlebeck: When'd you get into town, Ray?
Randall Raines: Last night.
Det. Roland Castlebeck: Last night? What for?
Randall Raines: I thought I'd catch a Lakers game. Heard we got Shaquille. You guys want to go?
Det. Roland Castlebeck: (laughter)
Randall Raines: Guess not.
Det. Roland Castlebeck: Randall, Randall, Randall. Come here. I get this call from this uniform, you know, asked him, very nice man, remembers everything. This man calls me up, says, "Guess who's back in town?" I say, "Who?" He says, "Randall Raines." I say, "Randall Raines the car thief?" He says, "Yeah." I say, "Impossible." He says, "No, he's back." I say, "No, he's not." He says, "Yes, I will bet you $200 I just saw Randall Raines."
Randall Raines: You guys said a lot. Look, detective --
Det. Roland Castlebeck: What's really, really harmonic about this, two nights ago we snared these 13 fresh stolens waiting for export. And at the time, I'm thinking, "This feels like Randall Raines." Now, it didn't have your panache, your flash, but just felt like Randall Raines, and now here you are.
Randall Raines: Look, I don't know what you boys are looking for, but I just got back, OK? It was a family

emergency, now that's the truth.

Det. Roland Castlebeck: Family emergency. Yeah, I got a family emergency too, Randall. I got to go tell my woman that I just lost $200 on a stupid deal.

Detective Drycoff: She's mean.

Randall Raines: What?

Detective Drycoff: She can be mean.

Randall Raines: Come here. Come here, Randall. Take those glasses off, man, please. Do me a favor. Six years ago you make a real smart move, you know? You retire from all that, it's going to get you busted or killed, or maybe even both. And I'm thinking, not putting you away when I had a chance was like this big cock up the ass of this real impressive career that I've had.

Randall Raines: Yeah, well, without disappointment, you can't appreciate victory.

Det. Roland Castlebeck: [Eleanor?] tell you that?

Randall Raines: Well, now that's hitting below the belt.

Det. Roland Castlebeck: Yeah. All right. Let me tell about below the belt, Randall. I tell you what, from here on in, if you walk across the street outside of the cross walk, if you roll through a stop sign, if you use an aerosol can in a manner other than directed, I mean, I don't care. You make one slip, and I will put you away for good.

Randall Raines: OK.

Detective Drycoff: By the time you get out, asshole, there won't even be cars. We'll all be cruising around in your little spaceships. (laughter) That's going to suck. Who's Eleanor?

Det. Roland Castlebeck: [It's your damn car?]. And don't ever talk about my wife.

[video ends]

(applause)

JOHNSON: Now, to introduce our distinguished guest, we have Professor Thomas Ellis, who is professor of Theater Arts, recently appointed Fulbright Scholar at the National Taiwan University. (applause)

He's directed plays in Nigeria, Cuba, and at Fresno State, and is new member of the *Screen Actors Guild*, and on campus here is known for consistently high-quality acting, high quality plays in honor of the African American theatrical tradition. So if we could please welcome professor and actor, Thomas Ellis. (applause)

ELLIS: Thank you so much. I neglected to [email?] a song by [Byron?], so I could just jot down the short version, which I think is going to be -- [which worked out every day?]. One of the things that I still want to continue to plug is -- the only good thing about being a director is you can kind of -- Mr. Lindo knows this -- you've got to constantly plug whatever you're doing right now. So I want to continue to remind you about, *First Breeze of Summer*. It opens on Friday. Thank you. It is my pleasure to introduce our guest speaker. I want to, before that, acknowledge all of the committee members that made this happen. I want you to help me with a round of applause for the committee members, for the African American faculty -- (applause) for all of the students, faculty, staff, everyone that was involved with this. [Give them a big hand?]. (applause)

Guys, [Dr. Gillis?] and the [exacerbating?], he's still new here, but putting these things on is so difficult because there's so much resistance, but fortunately, all that's going to change, because we have a new president. (applause) And he wouldn't want to stop us. The honeymoon's over. We're about to (inaudible).

(laughter) ELLIS: Mr. Lindo recently completed his work on the film *Cymbeline*, which is based on the William Shakespeare play of the same title. It co-stars Ed Harris and Ethan Hawke. Mr. Lindo has had many memorable roles in film such as David Mamet's *Heist*, such as Mr. Rose in *The Cider House Rules*. (inaudible), she plays your daughter or something, right? Excellent film. You should Google it, see it. It's a wonderful show, wonderful movie. He garnered critical acclaim in his role as Rodney in Spike Lee's drama, *Clockers*, and also worked with Mr. Lee again in *Crooklyn* and *Malcolm X*. The *Malcolm X* role earned him an NAACP Image Award nomination for his work as West Indian Archie. For those of you that are familiar with *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, he talks quite a bit about West Indian Archie, and it's really cool to see that character come to life in the film. Other notable film appearances include *Wondrous Oblivion*, *The Core*, *The Last Castle, Domino*, *The One*, *Gone in 60 Seconds*, *Ransom*, where he garnered a Best Supporting Actor nomination with the NAACP Image Awards, *A Life Less Ordinary*, *Get Shorty*, *Feeling Minnesota*, *Romeo Must Die*, *Mr. Jones.* There is one that appears to be in French. I don't know this one. Le... *L'exil du roi*...

M: *L'exil du roi Behanzin*..

ELLIS: *L'exil du roi*... Merci beaucoup. (laughter) *Devil's Advocate*, *Bright Angel*, *Mountains of the Moon*, *This Christmas*, which he also served as executive producer, and Pixar's *Up*. On television, he will be seen in the upcoming NBC series *Believe*, and recently was featured in the Fox series, *The Chicago Code.* He won the 2009 NAACP Image Award appearing in *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit*. He also starred in the NBC series *Kidnapped*, and was featured in *Lackawanna Blues* (applause) the HBO series, and *The Exonerated*, a CourtTV series. He appeared, to critical acclaim, the CBS drama *Profoundly Normal*, where he starred -- and starred as US Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas in *Strange Justice*. That role was extremely challenging, I'm sure. The show also garnered a Peabody Award presented by Showtime. And as baseball legend Satchel Paige in the HBO series, HBO drama, *Soul of the Game*. [00:20:00] Mr. Lindo also starred as arctic explorer Matthew Henson in *Glory & Honor*, a TNT production. And *First Time Felon*, an HBO production. Also for television, Mr. Lindo conceived, produced, hosted, directed, and co-edited a series of documentary interviews featuring Spike Lee, Charles Burnett, and Joe Chandler.

On Broadway, Mr. Lindo appeared as Herald Loomis in August Wilson's *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, receiving a Tony and Drama Desk Award nomination. And in *"Master Harold"...and the Boys*, the Broadway and national tour production. He played Walter Lee in the Kennedy Center in Los Angeles productions of *A Raisin in the Sun*. By the way, for those of you that don't know that, *A Raisin in the Sun* actually has two sequels, and we will be presenting the first of the two sequels, *Clybourne Park*, in about two months here at Fresno State. Mr. Lindo also worked off Broadway and extensively in musical theaters throughout the United States and Canada. Off Broadway, he recently appeared in *The Exonerated*, and played Bynum in the London Young Vic's production of *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*. Also in London, he appeared in *The Exonerated*.

As theater director, Mr. Lindo won a 2006 Los Angeles Theater Weekly Award for his work on *Medal of Honor Rag*. He also directed Tanya Barfield's *The Blue Door* and *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* to critical and commercial success at the Berkeley Rep. He most recently directed the NYU Tisch drama students in a production of [Virginia Turner's third drama, *Ob-La-Di*?].

Mr. Lindo has an honorary doctorate in arts and humanities from Virginia Union University, a bachelor of fine arts degree graduated cum laude from San Francisco State in 2003. He is currently completing a master's degree from NYU's Gallatin School of Individualized Study. When

do you have time to do all this? (laughter) He is a member of the Actors Studio and received his formal acting training from San Francisco's American Conservatory Theater. Ladies and gentleman, brothers and sisters, friends, colleagues, Mr. Delroy Lindo. (applause)

JOHNSON: Let's welcome again, Dr. Delroy Lindo.

(applause) I wanted to start pretty much as basically as you can -- and you've talked a little bit about this with some of the students -- if you could tell us about your introduction to acting. What made you want it? When did you know you wanted to do it? Just take us through from the beginning.

LINDO: I knew I wanted to -- I had a sense -- did everybody hear the question? OK. So I had a sense that I wanted to act -- do you have that [photo]? (audience laughter and "aw"s) That's right. OK, so. It's not that funny. (laughter) OK, this is me. Five years old, in the nativity play in my elementary school, and I played one of the kings. And this is actually when I believe I got the bug. (child makes noises) That's right. (laughter) That's when I believe it started for me. Something -- well, there are a couple things I remember from this experience. We had to learn our lines of dialogue on these cards, cardboard cards, that were, you know, approximately yea high and that wide. I just had a few lines. I remember my teacher in elementary school telling me that I really did very well when I spoke, when I projected, the language. The young man who's not in this photograph -- the young man's who's playing King Harrod in the nativity -- his name's [Michael Penny?], and Michael Penny had a really hard time remembering his lines. (child makes noise) [Now you can't upstage me, now?]. Who is that? (laughter) And my teacher said, "God, you've done such a good job," and she said to Michael Penny, "You should pay attention how Delroy's learning his lines, watch how Delroy does his lines, presents the character." And I believe that is when I got the bug, when I was five. And as a result of that, five years old, I just had this sense that when I grew up, I wanted to become an actor, even though I had no clue how to do that, how to make that manifest, but I believe that's when I got the bug, five years old.

JOHNSON: I think this is working. Good, OK. Now, your family. Can you tell us where they came from? Because we're talking diaspora…

LINDO: We are talking diaspora. I am of Jamaican extraction. My mom was from Jamaica. Any Jamaicans in the house?

M: Hey!

LINDO: All right, now. (laughter) So my mom, my family's (inaudible), commonly known as (inaudible), and my mom followed a path from Jamaica to England, which is how I came to be born in England, and then later -- excuse me. Later to Canada, and to Toronto specifically, and to the United States. So my mom followed that path, and I followed my mom, essentially. That's the short answer. But if you trace the path of many Caribbean immigrants, it will involve England in the '40s, '50s, '60s, and '70s, and then the North American continent, usually Canada and the United States. And my mom pretty much followed that, made that journey. What's interesting about that is that in the '40s and '50s, many of these -- the reason that many of these Caribbean peoples ended up in England is -- or in the UK -- in England and Wales and Scotland -- is as a result of what used to be called the British Commonwealth. All of the Caribbean countries that the British -- what's the word?

AUDIENCE: Colonized?

LINDO: Colonized, thank you. (laughter) That they colonized, I'm sure that when they colonized these islands, they had no clue that at one point, all of these Caribbean peoples would come to England. But that's what happened. (laughter) And stayed. (laughter) (inaudible). But it's interesting that that journey, that story is interesting as it relates to the diaspora, because it actually is a history that knew nothing about, and I learned much more s-- even though, obviously, I was born in England, I knew nothing about my personal history, and nothing about this broad diasporic history. I learned

about that starting in 2002. I went to London to do a film, this film called *Wondrous Oblivion*, and in that film, I played the patriarch of a Jamaican family that had immigrated to England. Now in researching for that project, I came across the phenomenon that's called the "Windrush generation." I knew nothing about this -- and this goes to the important of knowing one's history -- I knew nothing about the Windrush generation. The Windrush generation were that generation of Caribbean peoples who traveled [00:30:00] to England starting in the '40s, '50s, and it peaked in the '60s. July -- I hope I'm getting my dates correct -- July 28th, 1948, a boat called the *Empire Windrush* lands at Tilbury Docks in England, in London. On that boat were 300 Jamaican men immigrating to England. As a result of the passage of some legislation that had been passed in England, after World War II, the British and English needed manpower and womenpower to reconstruct the country after World War II. As a result of that, they passed this piece of legislation that made it easier for Caribbean peoples to come to England. My mom was one of those people who studied to be a nurse, and consequently, Caribbean people started to come to England in large numbers, starting in 1948. Now, to be clear, people of African descent had been in England, the island that became known as England and the UK area, since the Roman times. I didn't know that. I learned all these things, A, starting in my research for the film that I did, *Wondrous Oblivion*, and B, more immediately, uncovering a lot of this material in much more depth in pursuit of my master's degree at NYU. [So I had a sense that a very long?] (inaudible) commitment began?]. (laughter)

JOHNSON: That's what we're here for.

LINDO: (inaudible), but that's a very long-winded answer to question of how I came to be born in England, and [rooted up?] a personal history of my family's history.

JOHNSON: Taking us to how you get to acting, and here growing up, most people I knew, we were playing football in the fields, or play basketball and do all kind of -- we'd do certain things. Was acting something a lot of young black males in England did, or was it just an individual track for you?

LINDO: This was an individual track for me, because growing up in England, I had no role models. I pretty much had no black role models, period. But as far as acting, this is why this is really important, because there was something that I didn't really understand myself, that there was something, there was a lightbulb that went off, there was something that happened inside of me that created this aspiration for becoming an actor, and it is very important, because I really had no clue how I would do that. I had no clue. Fast forward to my late teens and early twenties, I had done some community theater. By this time, I was in Toronto, and I did some community -- I had done some community theater, and I had done some theater workshops, but I knew that I needed training. I instinctively knew that.

I had a couple of very critical experiences. One was Easter of 1973. I was in New York. I'll never forget. Easter 1973. I went to the theater -- and going to the theater was not something I did. I didn't have a family that did that. But Easter of 1973, I was in New York City, and there was a play on Broadway, and it was called *The River Niger*, presented by the Negro Ensemble. And I got a ticket, and I went to that theater, and I sat there. I was in the balcony. And it was an extraordinary experience for me. One, I had never seen that many black people on a theater stage before in my life. Also, I had never seen that many black people in an audience. The audience was full, mostly black people. And as a result of seeing that play, in Easter 1973, I sat there, I was stunned, and I had the sense that, oh, maybe I can do this as a profession. Maybe I can do this. Maybe I can become a professional actor and actually make a living.

And two other experiences -- what year was *Shaft*? Nineteen seventy-two? Somewhere around then. Nineteen seventy-two, when the film *Shaft*, Richard Roundtree and *Shaft* came to the movie theaters directed by Gordon Parks, going to see that film. Those two events in particular gave me a sense of possibly what I might be able to achieve as a professional actor, from seeing these two.

And it was years later, 1977, actually, when I received some work on television by this theater company, the American Conservatory Theater, I saw these two productions on TV, I saw PBS, a *commedia dell'arte* interpretation of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, and then I saw, the following week, *Cyrano de Bergerac*. And I saw this work, and I said to myself, "Whoever is doing this work, whoever these people are, I want that. That's what I want." I looked them up in the library -- this was obviously before computers. I went to the library -- (laughter) It's stunning now, I had to go to the library and open a book. (laughter) And I looked them up, found out where they were in San Francisco, I found out that they were auditioning for their school in Chicago. I got on a Greyhound bus, I went to Chicago, and I auditioned for the ACT. This is the summer of 1977. Actually, spring of 1977. I didn't hear anything. I didn't hear anything all summer. And as far as I knew, I had not been accepted. And I said, "No, they've got to tell me. Don't just ignore me. Tell me." I got the telephone number, I called San Francisco and said, "Look, my name is Delroy Lindo. Back in spring I auditioned, and I haven't heard anything. What's going on?" And the registrar said, "Wait, wait for one second." And she flipped and she said, "Oh, Delroy Lindo, you have a scholarship." (laughter) "Oh, OK." (laughter) I got a partial scholarship to go ACT, and started going to ACT September of 1977.

JOHNSON: Now, what are some of the other theatrical works you did around that time? And tell us about the transition into television and film. So out of the late '70s, what was that time period like?

LINDO: Out of the late '70s, theater in my world, my worldview -- and this follows on from the influence of the Negro Ensemble. At that time, the Negro Ensemble Company in New York was what every black actor aspired to. This was the company that, oh my God, if you could get a job with NEC, you've made it. They have spawned many of the great actors. NEC, the Negro Ensemble Company, was born as a result of a seminal production in New York City in, I want to say 19-- the late 1950s, 1958, '59. It was a production of a play called *The Blacks*, and in that -- and I want to say the playwright is Eugene Ionesco, I believe was a Spanish playwright. No, I'm sorry, that's wrong. Jean Genet is the playwright. Jean Genet, a Frenchman. In that production of *The Blacks*, James Earl Jones, Roscoe Lee Brown, Lou Gossett, Cicely Tyson, the sister who used to be married to [Max Welsh?], [Abby Wynne?], all of them were in that production. This is the late 1950s. As a result of that production, and the popularity of that production, one of the actors who had a bit part in that production -- his name is Douglas Turner Ward -- [00:40:00] started the NEC, started the Negro Ensemble Company with Robert Hooks, and actually Robert Hooks also later became a film actor. They started the Negro Ensemble Company. And from the early 1960s through the '70s, the early 1970s, the Negro Ensemble Company, they were the gold standard. It's what every black actor aspired to be part of.

So the path that started for me there, seeing what they could do, so I am -- when I'm going to the American Conservatory Theater, I wanted to be a theater actor. To your point about younger people wanting to be stars, I came out of a generation of actors, Sam Jackson, Denzel Washington, Mary Alice, all of these actors, we all wanted to work in the theater. We weren't thinking at that time about becoming movie stars. We wanted to work in the theater, and the reason that we wanted to work in the theater was because we came out of an ethos, we came out of a philosophy that felt the theater could change the world. We could be a part of a movement

that actually changed the world. The play, *The First Breeze of Summer*, Leslie Lee -- NEC had workshops for actors, they had workshops for writers, and Leslie Lee, I believe, came out of one of NEC's workshops to produce plays like the *The First Breeze of Summer*. So it's very important to understand that these plays come out of a continuum, come out of a tradition.

So my feeling was that I wanted to work in the theater. I wanted to be a theater actor. And so consequently, formally studying acting at the American Conservatory Theater, in 1977, all had to do with the fact that I wanted to learn the craft of acting, learn my craft, and my objective was then to go to New York and attempt to start to have a career. Television and film came much, much later. But originally, my original objective, I want to learn my craft as an actor; I want to go to ACT because they had a good solid acting program. They also were very strong with regard to classical European -- Shakespeare. And at that time, the feeling in the theater was black actors couldn't do Shakespeare. We didn't have the technical facility to handle the language. And so I was going to prove people wrong. I'm going to go to ACT, and their forte was Shakespeare. I'm going to learn how to do this. And that's one of the most important things that I got from studying at ACT. But TV and film came later, and I'll talk about that now or later if you want. But my initial objective, I wanted to be a part of the theater community, because theater could change the world.

JOHNSON: I'm a little bit selfish here, I came along during the '80s, and the first time I saw you was on the show *A Man Called Hawk*. Anybody familiar with [that?]? This was the spin-off of *Spenser: For Hire*, *A Man Called Hawk*. [If?] you're familiar with it, [give?] a round of applause [for it?]. (applause) [You're the only one?]. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) Well, what was interesting about that show is the people that were on it. It was short-lived. It was only about a year, about 13 episodes, and you had Charles Dutton, Samuel Jackson, Wesley Snipes, Moses Gunn, Angela Bassett, Keith David, Wendell Pierce, Kasi Lemmons, Vondie Curtis-Hall, and of course, Delroy Lindo. And that was my first introduction to you. So it's interesting to kind of see that connection.

LINDO: Well, when I got cast in *A Man Called Hawk*, that was one of my first TV gigs, one of my first TV jobs. I was still pretty much working in New York, out of New York, as a theater actor. Every once in a while, I would get calls for an audition for a TV show. And I went and auditioned, and I got the part. Now, God, this must have been 1998? Somewhere around there. And so I started doing, at that point, some television and small parts in film --

JOHNSON: In '89.

LINDO: Eighty-nine, '89, '89. (laughter) I'm sorry, I'm trying to take 10 years off my life. (inaudible) (laughter) Eighty-nine, '89. And in 1989, I had just recently done my second play on Broadway that was mentioned, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, and that raised my profile as an actor, both in terms of film and doing television shows. That's partially how I got to be called in to do *A Man Called Hawk*.

JOHNSON: Now, was it a smooth transition into film from there, or did you ever have to grapple with long periods of being out of work? And how did you manage that if that was the case?

LINDO: OK, so that's three different questions. (laughter) Yes, I had to deal with long periods of being out of work. I'll talk about that a little later. So, the answer to that question is yes. The transition from working in the theater to working for the camera... yes, it was a transition, but I feel I'm very fortunate. There was a young man who asked me, he said, "When I graduate, should I go Los Angeles or go to New York?" And I said, "Go to New York," because if you go to New York, and you work in the theater, it will give you a grounding as an actor. It will challenge your craft as an actor. It will compel you to learn your craft, and it's always -- my belief is that it is easier to transition from being a theater actor into working for the camera, television or film. Many actors who have done the vast majority of their work for the camera, television or film, cannot transition to

working for the theater. It is easier to transition from working in the theater to working for the camera because when you work in the theater, you have a broader grasp of the craft of acting, and your acting instrument. And I believe that was the case for me. Working pretty much for 10 years as a theater actor, I got to do a range of things as an actor. What was interesting for me, I was based out of New York City, but I worked with many regional theaters throughout the country, and working in that manner, I had grasped at my craft so that when I transitioned into film, working for the camera, I had an ethic, a way of working as an actor, that I trusted. Obviously, one had to bring one's performance down. You're no longer working onstage and having to project to the back of the house. You no longer have to do that. But I had developed a way of working, an ethic. And I understood fairly quickly that working for the camera, it's not about projecting, it's about experiencing internally, working much more internally, and the camera will find you. You don't have to reach for the camera, because the camera's right there. And somehow I understood that, and I guess one of my mantras, one of my philosophies as a film actor is -- for all the actors in the room -- if you feel it, if you work internally and feel it, something will be transmitted to the audience. You don't have to show it. You feel it and experience it internally, and the camera will pick it up, because the camera -- working for the camera, on camera, obviously is a much more intimate medium than working in the theater.

JOHNSON: OK, now, this is where the little kid in me wants to jump ahead a little bit. I want to show a clip from a film that really introduced you to people on another scale. If we can get the lights?

Clip from ***MALCOLM X*** (1992)

[00:50:00]

M: Give me a whiskey.

M: [May I order the same, Jack?]

Bartender: [Dubs?] on that gentleman, Jack.

RED (Malcolm X): Who is that?

Bartender: That's West Indian Archie.

RED: Yeah? What's his angle?

Bartender: Some of this, some of that.

West Indian Archie (WIA): Come closer. I'm not fixing to bite you. You look like you're new in town. From what I can see, you're pretty handy with a buckle.

RED: He had it coming.

WIA: Pull up a chair. What do they call you?

RED: Red. Red, and I ain't no punk.

WIA: You better not be. [Any cat tore?] you down in this town, you stand up, or you make tracks.

RED: A man lives by his rep.

M: You better believe it.

WIA: So what do you for yourself, Red?

RED: Working on the trains, selling.

WIA: You like that job?

RED: Keep me out the Army.

WIA: When they're ready for your black ass, nothing can keep you out of the Army.

RED: Not this boy. So I hear tell you're a good man to know.

WIA: Where do you hear that?

RED: Boston, where I'm from.

M: That's my neck.

WIA: I ain't never been to Beantown.
RED: Well, like the man said, a man's rep travels.
WIA: How about that. You bullshitting me or what?
RED: First thing my father ever taught me was you never bullshit a West Indian bullshit artist.
WIA: Your daddy is West Indian?
RED: My momma. She from Grenada.
WIA: What do you know?
(laughter)
M: I like this guy.
WIA: Yeah, I like you, country.
Danny: But man, where did you get them goddamn vines you got on?
Cadillac: And them shoes?
M: Oh, my. But maybe we could do something about that.
Danny: Yeah, but he's putting a hurting on my vision, man. Damn!
RED: (inaudible) So how can I get ahold of you?
WIA: You can't. I get ahold of you.
RED: All right, all right.
WIA: Don't ever write anything down. File it up here like I do. If the man don't have any paper, he will never have any proof, dig?
RED: Yeah. (laughter) Yeah, I dig. Right.
WIA: Boy, look me in the face. You just now conned me?
RED: Yes, sir.
WIA: Why?
RED: Because I want in, and it don't take a lot to know that you were already there [that evening?].
M: Well, least he ain't lyin'.
WIA: [Have a look and run up to me?].
M: Let me make that run with you, Mr. [Archie?].
WIA: Uh-uh. I like your heart, and I like your style. You might just do, Mr. Red, unless of course [you're bounty trained?].
RED: I already told that man what he can do with that train.
WIA: When?
RED: Just now.
WIA: (laughter) All right. Come with me. Taking you shopping.
Cadillac: Cadillac's the name.
Danny: [Danny, man.].
WIA: You ready?
M: [Friend, we'll put these on the jacket?].
WIA: You look good.
WIA: You look smart.
WIA It's missing something?].
M: [Miss me?].
M: What?
WIA: Go ahead. (inaudible).
WIA: [That thing, right?]? Still carry it. This is my first gun. Now it's yours. Red? [All right, son?].
RED: [It's small and black?].
WIA: [No, you don't fit it?]. You ready to tackle the streets?
RED: Yeah, I'm ready.

M: Let us now turn to the gospel according to Saint --
[video ends]

[video begins]
RED: Haven't seen a West Indian Archie. Grapevine says he's living somewhere in the Bronx, if you want to call that living. [Joey?], it's been good seeing you, brother.
M: Same here, Red.
WIA: Get the hell away from me, [bitch?]. I'll pay you tomorrow.
RED: How you doing, Archie?
WIA: Man, [I'm wrecked?].
RED: Come here, man. (inaudible).
WIA: Is that really you, Red.
RED: Yes, it's me. I came to -- just to thank you. Thank you for saving my life. When I think back to, you know, the streets of Harlem, trying to gun each other down.
WIA: I wasn't going to shoot you, man. That was just my rep. All I had was my rep. But no. You tell me this. You didn't really have that number?
RED: I don't know, Archie. I really don't even remember. That's not even important. The important thing now is to get you back on your feet.
WIA: I have some [emeralds?] [haven't been figured yet?]. Help me with my arm. Yeah.
RED: It's better?
WIA: Yeah.
[video ends]
(applause)

JOHNSON: You see the difficulty I'm having, because I don't believe you could do his portrayal of West Indian Archie justice just showing the first couple minutes. You have to show where it goes. So I just wanted to acknowledge the range of acting. How did *Malcolm X* come about for you? And how did you go about preparing for that?
LINDO: *Malcolm X* came about for me (inaudible). (laughter) Spike saw me unbeknownst to me. Spike was in the audience opening night of the Broadway opening of *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*. He had -- I didn't know anything about his films. I did not know him. So he apparently was in the audience opening night of *Joe Turner* on Broadway, and he, a couple years after that, wanted me. I got a call saying he wanted me to come audition for *Do the Right Thing*, his film *Do the Right Thing*. When I saw the part that he wanted me to do, I said, "No, I don't want to do this." And so I chose not to be a part of *Do the Right Thing*. A couple of years later, when he was doing *Malcolm X*, he got in touch with me again. It was this part, West Indian Archie, and it was (inaudible), but eventually I accepted the part. He (inaudible) [during the business aspect?], but I accepted the part. Read the book twice. I read -- I had read *Malcolm X*; in preparing for the part, I read through it one more time. And one of the interesting things in the book, West Indian Archie's ability to retain numbers [01:00:00] without writing anything down, and so I assumed this is a man with a photographic memory. He has (inaudible) this ability. And there was another aspect that Alex Haley, being Malcolm's autobiographer, spoke about the fact that in another time, this man's abilities, had he chosen to go on the straight and narrow, he could have been a mathematician. He had that kind of intellectual capacity. So I took, preparing for this part, I took all of that into account, and it helped me not so much in terms of playing the scenes, but in terms of my personal understanding of who this man is, or who this man was. On this film, I wrote a biography. I wrote my own biography for West Indian Archie. His full name -- and this is my creation, not what Alex

Haley gave us -- his full name was Archibald Durell Brown, and I had the tailor who made some of these beautiful suits, I had him monogram them ADB. My attention to detail on this film was -- I tried to pay attention to every single detail. I manicured my nails, which if you look at my nails now, that's not the kind of guy I am. (laughter) I got with a number runner in Harlem, and he taught me about policy, and he taught me about how the numbers work. And I wrote this, my biography, I wrote the biography about having to do with where West Indian Archie was born, how he came to New York, who his family was. I wrote all of that out, and I remember, I wrote the biography going right up until when the camera sees him in that bar. In other words, my biography went from the day that West Indian Archie was born right up to everything he had done the day he met Malcolm. So I was very, very knowledgeable about this character. I knew things about West Indian Archie that nobody else knew, because I had created them in my biography. So I felt very, very empowered doing his part.

Now, as an actor, and as a person, I am extremely neurotic, and I self-doubted frequently [in?] my work. I'm never satisfied. I'm one of these individuals you can never satisfy. I always wanted to be better; I always wanted to be better. On this film, after about the first three or four days of working, it felt really good. It worked for everybody. There was an attention to the manner in which this work was being put together by everybody working on the film. It was unspoken, but it had to do with honoring Malcolm, honoring his memory, honoring what he stood for, in addition to all of us wanting to do the best work we could. We all came with our A game. And after about the first three or four days of working, my lady said, "How's it going?" I didn't say it was really good, because I'm just not that kind of personality. What I said was, "You know, it's all right. Yeah, it's going well." I said, "It's going good." But my point is it felt good, and I knew the work was good. Not only my own personal work, but also from everybody on the film, because we were paying that much attention to everything. Now, what I understood about the art of West Indian Archie in this film -- now remember, this is a three-hour-plus film. My character, West Indian Archie, has about five or six scenes. I'm not in it for very long, but I knew that the final scene, the scene that you just saw, created for West Indian Archie a journey. Despite the fact that I was not in the film for very long, I knew from getting the script and assessing it, that the journey that West Indian Archie, I had a beginning, a middle, and an end. And I knew that going in.

Oh, so the final scene. In the script, it was written that Malcolm comes to visit West Indian Archie, and West Indian Archie is near death. Near death. And I said to Spike, "What does that mean?" On all of Spike's films, we had two weeks of rehearsal prior to filming, and it always started with a read-through. Everybody, all the cast members, get in a room and just read the script. So at the end of the read-through, I said to Spike, "Spike, what does that mean, 'West Indian Archie is near death?' What's wrong with him?" Spike said, "I don't know, man. Whatever you want." (laughter) All right. So, I decided -- not right on the spot, more I thought it out and worked on the [cast?] -- I decided to give the character a stroke, because -- why did I choose stroke? Because it would enable me to work on being physically debilitated but still be able to talk. So that's why I chose a stroke. Once I decided, "OK, I'm going to choose that this guy's had a stroke," I went to -- I arranged through the producers to visit Kings County Hospital in Brooklyn. I went on the rehab ward, people who were rehabbing from having had strokes. I went -- excuse me. I went probably five or six times. I stayed there for six or seven hours at a time, just standing in the corner, out of everybody's way, nurses and the doctors doing their work, just observing, just observing stroke victims. And I got some (inaudible). That [had?] come from what I saw. I observed this gentleman who was recovering from a stroke, and I don't know what he was doing, but there was this thing he

kept doing. He kept, every so often, (inaudible) and it didn't mean anything. So I said, "I want something. I want a gesture." And I decided what that gesture would mean, and that's how that came about. That came about directly as a result of observing stroke victims at Kings County Hospital.

JOHNSON: That's what I call mastering your craft. (applause)

LINDO: I have an ending to that story, and that is the morning that we shot this, we shot this scene, it was about 7:00 in the morning. We had been shooting all night. The scene between Angela and Denzel in the museum -- for those who you have seen the film, they shot that scene in the museum that's on Central Park in New York, the history -- the Natural History Museum. They had been shooting in the Natural History Museum all night, and they ran out of time. They had been shooting, they started shooting about 10:00, and then they -- no, five o'clock in the evening, and then they stopped about 2:00 in the morning. And the producers came to me, and they said, "We can't do the scene. We have to put it off to another time. We've run out of time." And I said, "I can't. We've got to do it," because I was working on another film, a film called *Mr. Jones* with Richard Gere, and I was scheduled the next morning to fly to Los Angeles. We were in New York, and I had to fly to Los Angeles the next morning to complete work on this other film. So I said, "I can't, you guys, we've got to do it today. I can't." Spike, Denzel, the producers, were mad at me, because they had been working all night. Everybody wanted to go home, and I said, "We've got to do the scene."

So we went down to -- this was an SRO, so this was a flophouse, a single-room occupancy hotel. And the word came down, we've got to do the scene, they dressed the set, and we got there at about 4:00 in the morning. [01:10:00] Everybody was exhausted, and we shot the scene. And because -- once again, I felt so empowered based on the research and the work that I had done, I knew what I wanted to do. Not exactly what I wanted to do, not I knew how the scene would play out, not that. But I knew, for instance, we got there at about 4:00 in the morning, I went to my camper, and I immediately started working on the physicality of the stroke victim, and when they knocked on that door, which was about at this point 5:30 in the morning, and [they?] had really been working all night, knocked on that door, and it took him about 20 minutes to get from my cabin to the set, because I was (laughter) (inaudible), and "Come on, now." I was in character. I was committed. I knew how I wanted to approach the work. And Spike said to me, he was mad, he was mad, they were all mad. They shot the scene, but they were rushing. And Spike said to me a few months later, "You know, I didn't know what you were doing, and I wanted to" -- he wanted to cut the camera, and Ernest Dickerson said, "No, no, no, man. It's good. Trust me. It's good." Spike said, "What's he doing?" "No, no, no, it's good. Trust me, it's good." And Spike said, "I didn't -- the dime didn't drop fully on what you were doing until I got into the editing room and I saw. That's when I could really see. In the room, I don't (inaudible)." He didn't see what I was doing. The DP, Ernest Dickerson, did, saw it. This -- again, a longwinded story, talking about the fact that this scene was actually shot under duress. (laughter) But, I was super committed, and Denzel, because Denzel and I knew one another, Denzel knew I was committed, and Denzel, we worked -- this is the result.

JOHNSON: I think it was a little too good, because when I give exams in my class on Malcolm X, I get answers from the movie that aren't real.

(laughter)

JOHNSON: So y'all did an excellent job.

LINDO: Thank you.

JOHNSON: There was a story that I'd heard where Laurence Fishburne and Roger Guenveur Smith,

two actors had worked with Spike, were talking. And a gentleman walked up to them -- and this was after *Boyz n the Hood* -- a young man about 16, young black man, walked up to Laurence Fishburne and started to talk to him and asking him questions and advice. And after about 15 minutes, he walked away. And Roger Guenveur Smith looked over at Laurence Fishburne and said, "You just missed everything that just happened there, didn't you?" And Laurence was kind of like, "What are you talking about?" He said, "You don't realize, after *Boyz n the Hood*, you just became a father, a surrogate father to a generation." Now, with West Indian Archie, did you notice a difference in how people responded to you? And I'm asking you kind of, you know, in a particular kind of way, because if you don't know it, I'm looking at you the same way. In 1992, when I saw this, that's precisely the impact it had on not just me, but a lot of people.

LINDO: I didn't know it. I knew the work was good, but I didn't know that. Denzel had called me when they were getting close to completing the editing process, and he said, "I think you'll be proud of it." He had seen it; I had not. He said, "No, I think you'll be proud. You should be proud." So I knew the work was good. But then I didn't get to go to the premiere in New York because I didn't know the impact of the film. I knew the film was good, but I had gotten another film, I was doing this film *Behanzin*, this French film, in one week. And it didn't occur to me to put into my contract, when the film -- when *Malcolm X* premiered in New York, you have to let me go. You have to let me go back to New York. It just didn't occur to me. So the film is complete now, and it's getting close to opening, premiering in New York, and there's all this buzz about the film. There's all this buzz. And my wife gets on the phone, she said, "Now, you need to come back. You need to be here for this premiere. This is a big deal. Everybody's going to be there. You've got to be there." And I went to the producers, and I said, "Is there any way" -- we're on a schedule, and I was the lead actor in that particular film. And they wouldn't let me out. So I didn't get to go to the premiere. So my wife's date for that night was my cousin, Phil. (laughter) And he got to see Diana Ross, (laughter) Ossie Davis, and Ruby Dee, and Lou Gossett and [Sig?], I mean everybody was there. I wasn't. (laughter)

Now, when I came back to New York, a few weeks later, I was walking down -- and this had never happened to me before. This is when I got a sense of something. This has never happened to me before. I was walking up 8th Avenue, and a brother and sister were walking toward me. As they got maybe from here to that black thing over there, with the bars, the sister started, (inaudible). (laughter) [And the brother said, "Damn!"?] And they turned and they said, "We saw you, man! We saw you [everywhere?]! You were wonderful. (inaudible)." And that's when I started getting a sense. Then I met Sidney, Sidney Poitier, and he said something to me that almost made me cry. And I started getting these [nuggets?]. There's a great actor, [Rod Styburn?], and many of you maybe don't remember him. He's one of the great, great actors. I was at an event with him, and he came up to me and said, "What you did in Malcolm X..." So when people started saying those kind of things was when I started getting a broader sense of the larger impact of the work, even though internally I felt -- I always felt good about the work. But that's when I started getting a sense of the larger impact.

JOHNSON: I have -- I'm going to show another clip. This one is from probably one of the most controversial roles that we've seen you play. If we can dim the lights, please.

THE CIDER HOUSE RULES (1999)

WELLS: Is it true?

ROSE: What's that?

WELLS: Are you sleeping with your own daughter?
ROSE: I think you've been staying up too late at night, Homer.
WELLS: You're having sex with your own daughter.
ROSE: Ain't nobody having sex with my daughter. Let me just tell you that.
WELLS: You're lying. Aren't you ashamed of yourself? What do you care who hears? I mean, come on, they know already, don't they? They know, Mr. Rose.
ROSE: Now you know what your business is, boy! I know you don't want to be in no kind of business with me. That's what I know.
WELLS: Yeah? Well, go on. Cut my clothes. I've got other clothes.
ROSE: You going to come here talking to me about lies and shame, when those people took you in and that boy Wally is away at war?
WELLS: Yeah? Well, she's your daughter!
ROSE: And I love her! Ain't never going to do nothing to harm her.
WELLS: She's pregnant, you know that? She's pregnant.
[video ends]

[video begins]
ROSE: Nobody going to find her. She long gone. I didn't try to stop her. I just wanted to touch her hand before she go. And that's all I want to do. That's all. I swear. Where'd she get that knife, Muddy? It look like your knife. No gal need to be out here trying to hitchhike unless she got a good strong knife to hold onto. [01:20:00]
WELLS: Where'd she get you?
ROSE: Never mind. Just misunderstood me. See, I was trying to give her my knife, and I reach out my hand to touch her. See, I understand. If she don't see it like that, it's my fault. She good with that knife. Fast. She a lot better with that knife than you is, Muddy. Who do you suppose taught her?
MUDDY: You taught her, I suppose.
ROSE: That's right. That's right.
WELLS: There's more than one cut.
ROSE: That's because I took my knife and stick it in the wound. I stick my own knife in there. I poked it all around, Homer, trying to find the same spot that she got. Now, look here. When you tell the police how this happened, I want you tell it like this, yeah? My daughter run off. I was so sad about that, I stabbed myself. I was so unhappy that she left that I killed my own self. And that's the truth. Ain't that right? I want to hear you say that. I was so unhappy that my daughter run off, I killed my own self. Ain't that right, Homer?
WELLS: That's right.
ROSE: Huh, Muddy?
MUDDY: Yeah. That's what happened. You lost your only daughter, so's you killed yourself, is what we say.
ROSE: That's right. That's the truth. I'm just trying to put things straight. Sometimes you've got to break some rules, put things straight. (inaudible).
[video ends]
(applause)

JOHNSON: If you could, tell us -- now, I skipped over, because (inaudible) [skip your slides?]. There are a number of works in between, and I had to, for time, there were a number of scenes that I wanted to play. So we're skipping ahead, I understand, but please, this role -- again, how did it come about, and how did you prepare for that? By the way, his daughter is played by Erykah

Badu, so (inaudible).

LINDO: Yeah. Erykah was magnificent in this film. I had done a reading of the script with -- actually, Paul Newman was at one point attached to play Dr. Larch, the part that Michael Caine eventually played. But at one point, Paul Newman was attached to this. A few years previously, we all went up to Paul Newman's house, and we sat around and read the script. So I knew about the script, and various directors had been involved. It came back around to me, and a woman named [Ashley Vardon?] was being talked about to play this part. Anyhow, it came back to me. My agent called and said, "*Cider House Rules*." I knew the screenplay. Had not read the book at that point. They sent me a draft of the screenplay, and I said, "I don't want to do this," because Mr. Rose was much more mean. It felt one-dimensionally mean and nefarious to me, and I just said, "No, I can't do this." Then I got called -- the director, whose name was Lasse Hallström, he was at this point involved in the project, he said he wanted to meet me, and we both happened to be in Los Angeles at the same time. We met, and at the end of the lunch, he pretty much said to me, "Look, this is -- what you see, what you read is pretty much it. This is it. This is the part." And I said, "God bless you, I'm not your man. I can't do this." I don't think I said it to him. It was just one-dimensional, and I said, "I'm not going to do that. So good luck with the film. Take care. Bye." I then got a call some short time later, and apparently they had come around and they said, "Well, John Irving -- they want to talk to you again. John Irving and the director, Lasse Hallström, they want to talk to you and see what you think." So I said, "Fine." When we spoke, I pretty much said, "It's one-dimensional. We need to flesh this out. We need to see some humanity in him." I'm not necessarily afraid of an act, and for those of you who do not know, this is a man, Mr. Rose, who impregnates -- has an incestuous relationship with his daughter and impregnates her. But my feeling was I don't want him -- I don't need him to be a good guy, but I need to see some humanity, and I need to get some sense that -- I need to get a sense there will be a three-dimensional inner being. They were open to that, kind of sort of. We talked around, we talked around. Then, a light bulb went off for me. And for me, I discovered in my head, what I felt the basis of that relationship is. And for me, the basis of that relationship -- and it may be very difficult to understand, but basis of that relationship for me is love. So that this is a man who genuinely loves his daughter. So in that first scene, when I said to Tobey, to [Tobey's character?], "I love her," that had to be real for me. And I decided, this is a man who genuinely loves his daughter, and at a certain point, that love tips over into this other place. And that was my way in. I don't remember if I discussed that specifically with the director and John Irving, but I did tell them that I am looking for ways to flesh this out, right? This is the way that I can play this part. Then I went and spoke with medical people who deal with incest -- it was a male doctor and a female doctor -- and I just grilled them with all kinds of questions. I just sat with them for hours, just talked to them about what their experiences have been treating this subject. And one of the interesting things that they both said to me, independent of each other, they both said that in instances of incest, frequently the victim's response, if it is ever discovered, the victim's response is to protect the perpetrator, inasmuch as frequently, the victim feels that it is love, that they're being loved. And that kind of corroborated my kind of feeling of how I wanted to approach the character. And so my way in to play Mr. Rose was [this doesn't matter?], I love her. I love her. I love her. Love to the point that, as I say, it just tips over into this forbidden place. But my way into playing Mr. Rose was from the love of his daughter.

JOHNSON: But then, there's also a nuance there, because even in his facial expressions when he's told that his daughter's pregnant, you can see he realizes this is too far. That nuance. How do you kind of...?

LINDO: Well, once again, with this character, I wrote a biography. (inaudible). I went back to the source. I read the book. Now, [01:30:00] I didn't read the whole book. It was a very thick book. (laughter)

But I read -- that's not the reason I didn't read it. (laughter) Let me be clear. But Mr. Rose -- the actual Mr. Rose and that whole storyline comes in about halfway through the book. And I read parts of the first half, and I read everything once the apple pickers came in. And I read it twice. Now, there were two things that I became aware of from reading the book. Tobey Maguire's character, Homer, and the character played by Charlize Theron, are all -- those two characters along with Mr. Rose, are all what I call "morally questionable." All three of them are. You don't get that in the film. But if you read the book, they're all morally questionable, and when I read that, and I got that sense, somehow psychologically, even though I kind of had a sense that that's not how it would be presented in the film, but it was liberating to me. So when I say to Homer, "You've got some nerve coming here and telling me about what I did? Uh-uh! You've got your own stuff." Even though it was not necessarily fleshed out fully in the scene, I was fully -- it was legitimate for me to respond like that, and it didn't make what I had done right, but basically, what I'm saying is, tend to your own. Clean up your own backyard. And that was part of what gave me nuance and an extra dimension in terms of playing him. This was another part in which I felt very empowered playing the part, despite what the man does. And the reason that I felt empowered was again, an attention to detail, and writing that biography, and knowing things about Mr. Rose that nobody else knew. So it really had to do with my attention to detail, and how I created a life for that man above and beyond the two hours that the audience has seen him in the film. Does that make sense?

JOHNSON: Absolutely. My next question -- are we [there?]? My next question has to do with emotional expression, range. I didn't show the clip for *Crooklyn*, but *Crooklyn*, if you haven't seen it, is a film --

(overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

(applause)

LINDO: I'm really proud. I'm proud of everything I've done this far.

(overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

JOHNSON: Can we get the lights, please?

CROOKLYN (1994) [video plays]

WOODY: Hey. Turn the TV off.

TROY: Oh, come on dad. [We watching that?].

WOODY: I got some news about your mother. Everybody listen to me real good. The doctors told me that your mother's sicker than we thought.

TROY: What?

WOODY: They found -- they found cancer.

CAROLYN: What's cancer?

WOODY: It means that your mother's going to be in the hospital for a while. Now you don't need to be afraid. Your mother's going to be fine, but she's going to have to stay in there for a while.

CAROLYN: It's not fair.

WOODY: No. I know it ain't fair, but it's going to be all right. Now listen to me, now. All y'all listen to me now. Shh, shh. Y'all ain't listening to me, now. Come on, now. Listen. Shh, shh. What they got to do is run some tests on your mother. It's going to be fine. Come on, don't be like that.

(overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

WOODY: I know it wasn't your fault. I know it wasn't your fault. Ain't nobody's fault.

[video ends]

(applause)

JOHNSON: I could have chosen a number of parts from this, but my question about emotional expression has to do with this scene, because I found it moving, and I think I can share with you, about three years ago my wife passed away, and there's something about manhood, many of us as men are awarded -- rewarded, I should say, for having a little emotional expression. Matter of fact, the more macho you are, the more distant you are from emotional expression, the more of a man you're considered to be in many respects. So even though I wanted to, I found myself not able to cry. I was sitting one afternoon watching *Crooklyn*, and when I got to this scene, I did not realize my face was drenched. And you gave me license to express something that I had been rewarded for not expressing as a man since childhood, because you know, I have friends that three-year-old sons that kick 'em in the chest, "Get up. Don't cry. Stand up." That's where it begins. How do you, in the backdrop of this kind of expectation of manhood, how can you come to this kind of expression in your work, to where you can go here? And yet, (inaudible), there was no sense of him being any kind of a negative [man?], whatever. You were a father lovingly addressing the children, and I just want to quickly add in that, images of men expressing emotion for their children, endearing, right, fatherhood, we don't often see that, especially in that kind of film. You managed to do both in a two-minute scene. How do you stay able to do that against this backdrop of manhood as macho [and?] power?

LINDO: Even though I absolutely 3,000% agree with you, everything you just said, in discussing manhood and what's considered being a strong man, I think that for us [in the?] work, no matter what one is doing, has to do with the three-dimensionality, however you approach the work, an attempt to create a three-dimensional human being, and being true, being true to who that person is. Now, I had no -- to be honest, I was not thinking about that aspect of manhood and how that's assessed. I was thinking about being honest when we were playing the scene.

Now, this is a man, Woody Carmichael, this is a man who is a struggling musician, but a musician nevertheless, and a man who is incredibly dedicated to what he does, his music. And as a result of following that path, Woody -- I -- there are things that I neglect -- neglect in terms of bill paying, taking care of the family, doing the things that I'm supposed to do to take care of the family -- in pursuit of my craft, in pursuit of my art. Now, my job with that part, and in any part like this, including playing Clarence Thomas, is to find what are the positive things that are driving this person? What causes this person to do what they do? Trying to find that truth, and then playing that truth in the scene. And what this scene -- one of the things that this scene is about has to do with making sure my kids are OK, and doing whatever I need to do to make sure the kids are OK, in spite of whatever I may be feeling. So I think it comes down to play the truth, find the truth, and play the truth no matter what.

JOHNSON: Now, for time -- just trust me, I have 20 pages of questions, [and it's not going to happen?]. What I'm going to do, I'm going to play one last clip, and from there I'm going to open it up to Q&A. This was the scene -- it wasn't a scene in a film you and I discussed. (inaudible). We're going to show a scene from that. After that, we're going to open it up for dialogue. But I want to leave the scene with this particular portrayal here.

WONDROUS OBLIVION (2003) [video begins]

[01:40:00]

M: Judy! Judy! Quick, wake up your mom and dad! Get everyone out!

(overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

M: Was anyone smoking?

M: Nobody smokes.
M: Nobody smokes in there?
M: Nobody smokes.
(overlapping dialogue; inaudible)
M: We were sleeping, man. The family was sleeping.
M: Have you got an open fire?
M: No, man. You hear it? You hear it? I had my family, all right? You see my wife and my children there, right?
M: Calm down.
M: No, I won't calm down! I won't calm down.
(overlapping dialogue; inaudible)
(woman crying)
M: Dennis! Dennis! Dennis!
(coughing)
F: Dennis?
M: Dennis? Dennis?
(overlapping dialogue; inaudible)
M: This is what we're living with. You see that?
M: You should be ashamed. We should all be ashamed. (inaudible). Ask those two. Ask them about their grandson.
[video ends]
(applause)

JOHNSON: Ladies and gentlemen, Dr. Delroy Lindo.
(applause)

END OF AUDIO FILE