

It's True, It's True, It's True - audition monologues

1.

Can I just say, it's been eight days since I was arrested, and I was taken alone in the middle of the night? And no, I don't know, nor can I guess the reason I was arrested, or why Your Lordship wants to question me.

I've been in prison two times - no, three times. Once in Borgo, under the pretext that I had carnal relations with a sister-in-law of mine. I stayed in prison two days and was released by order of the Pope, and acquitted with no requirement of payment.

Another time? Okay, so - another time, yes, I was in prison in Tor di Nona for a triviality. You know that - Your Lordship was the judge and I was released immediately. Then, I was also questioned and tried in Livorno for having beaten someone up and I was acquitted, but I have not been questioned, tried or imprisoned at any other time. Except for those times I've just mentioned.

2.

The painting that was stolen from me. Right. Okay. So it's huge. Life size. And it's dark, very dark - but not a solid darkness, more like an endless space where you imagine things have the potential to emerge. Then from below there are these shards of light, which illuminate three figures. But they only catch fragments in the shadows - so, half a face, the tops of arms, locks of hair. A bed.

Two of the figures are women. And they're both in these rich dresses. One blue, one gold. And those colours together, they really contrast with all the blood in the painting. The blood pouring down the side of the bed. The blood coming out of this man's throat. The blood spraying out of his neck in this arc and landing on the women's arms and their breasts.

Oh, because these two women are beheading a man - did I not mention that?

3.

Caravaggio's painting of Judith is so - meek. She's got no power in her arms, and she looks like she's regretting it before she's even started. She makes it look like it's going to be so easy - like she'll be finished in a second, but I've seen executions - it's not like that.

When I was six, my father took me to see the execution of the Cenci family. He held me up in his arms above the crowd so I could see the family led up to the scaffold. The son, Giacamo, they smashed his head in with a mallet, but the women, Lucrezia and Beatrice, they beheaded them with a small, blunt axe.

And the effort that takes - the exhaustion - I've given that to *my* Judith. She's rolled up her sleeves, and you can see her muscles pushing against her skin, because yes, he's trying to fight, writhing, and he can't even scream anymore. But she's just concentrated on cutting, cutting, cutting - on shutting him up completely. Taking all that rage that she has been sitting on for months, and channeling it into action.