

NOTE: These examples are not to be performed or shared without consultation with Me Too Monologues. If you have any questions, please email us at metoomonologues@gmail.com

Monologue 1:

Black is
Black is not
Black is a color
Black is a race
Black is the reason you see me and label me a disgrace
And really there is nothing I can do
Cause black tells lies & black tells the truth
Black is what I am
Black is not what I try to be
Because if I check the web
It still looks like blacks are dying to me
And I ask myself what I'm trying to be
A son? A student? A success? Preferably all 3
Black is the reason I feel love when I leave the barbershop with a fresh cut
Black is not the reason I should ever see a door shut, a quickened strut, or worry in someone else's gut – and know I caused it without doing anything
Black is not the color of my skin
You see I'm really more of a mocha coffee
Black is not why I'm loud
Black is why I had to learn to speak softly
The Blacker the berry, the sweeter the juice
And yet we're still to blame even when they harvest this strange fruit.
Black is a problem that I'll have to teach my son to navigate for no fault of his own
But Black is going to make him strong, make him mature fast & make him real grown
Make him realize the reason he didn't receive the loan or his plans were postponed are tied to his skin tone
See even with all that time spent alone, black isn't going to break him.
See even with all the time it'll take him
He'll hopefully learn that Black is beautiful
And Black isn't all the same
Yet we play this game in which we constantly take aim at each other, defame one another, & spread shame to our own brother
I wonder sometimes who's keeping score
It blows my mind how people associate black with a particular behavior
Let me take this opportunity now to act as your savior
Black isn't what music I listen to, a type of shoe, or even a certain hair do.

Yet these things are written off as ghetto or ratchet, unless a white person decides to try something “new”.

Black is what I am

Black is not ALL I am

So you can put away your box, cops can put away their locks, and you just give a young man his props.

I’ve said my piece and I hope you get it.

All I want is peace and I hope you spread it.

Black is who wrote it & black is who said it.

Monologue 2:

I went to a big ass high school in a mid sized city in a very small world. I knew most things about most people, including how much money everybody had and what their parents did or didn't do to get it. I knew how god damned lucky I was and how lucky my family was. My mom would remind me every day. When I was younger, I sulked because I would never be given my own car, or didn't have the latest style in bag or shoes, my mom would look at me and scoff. She would tell me, just think about how god damned lucky you are that you will have a car to drive to school at all. Think about how god damned lucky you are to have last years bag and last year's shoes. By senior year of high school I understood that in the grand scheme of life and poverty, I was rich as fuck. Don't get me wrong, I still watched Gossip Girl and longed for their wardrobes, but now I understood that real people in real life could not possibly have that lifestyle, it was all made up for TV. I was as lucky as they come... in real life. So I proudly drove my moms car and wore last year's tory burch flats I got on sale at Nordstrom Rack. And I would pull up into my parking spot behind the trailers at my public high school and think, I am so goddamned lucky. **My high school was huge and diverse; 40% black, 40% white and 30% on free or reduced lunch.** My parents would always remind me I was sheltered and unaware of the rest of the world, and I would think, god, they're right! There was so much poverty and gang violence and drug problems in my school, and here I was cruising by all of it. I was so goddamned lucky.

The day I got into Duke my parents were naturally proud, but already thinking about their bank account balance being drained. I had always assumed I would go to my state school, where the majority of my friends were going. It was an incredible price for a high quality education. It didn't cross my mind until college visits that going somewhere else was really an option. But when I expressed my interest in visiting Duke, there was no backlash from my parents. My dad told me that wherever I decided, given enough financial aid, he would make it work. Damn, I thought, I must be rich as fuck. None of my friends were even considering schools other than state schools. I thought only rich kids went to private schools, so naturally I assumed I must be pretty damn rich. I was so goddamned lucky. I chose Duke, accepted my financial aid and I was psyched to get out of high school and enter the real world. One day my mom sat me down and told me, "honey you need to know that at Duke, the people won't be like the people in your high school. They have a lot more money, and sometimes you're not going to be able to do all the things that they are doing even though you're going to want to."

And I was like "Okay mom, you got it, be humble, don't spend too much, think reasonably about my choices and budget accordingly, don't even worry. I'm all over it." At that point I guess I hadn't seen the statistics that only half of all Duke student's are on financial aid. And that half even includes athletes with sports scholarships, people in academic scholarship programs and people with small loans from Duke. I suppose now that seems high to me, but at that time, I assumed there weren't enough college aged kids in the US with enough money to pay full tuition to even populate half of Duke let alone get in to Duke. Half of Duke students pay full tuition. I pay half of Duke tuition. I was poor as fuck, I just didn't know it yet.

I rolled up to Duke on move in day in a beaten up red minivan with a world peace bumper sticker on the back. I made a few friends O-Week, and as one does, I naturally hit them up to see if they wanted to attend O-Week events together. The Acapella Concert, Convocation, the financial aid seminar etc. This was my first awakening, when one guy said "what is financial aid." And I was like damn, this guy is rich as fuck. I guess I have met him, I thought. I have met the 1% and honestly he is not that bright. Slowly I realized that he was not that out of the ordinary. Sure most people who

don't get financial aid, know what financial aid is, but that does not mean they really understand that it means someone has a lot less money than they do. The most common response I get when someone finds out I'm on financial aid, is the other person trying to justify why they're not. Like why they're so pissed, they did the FAFSA and got nothing! I guess I just find it hard to sympathize with someone when the system decided they can afford double what I can afford. I'm not saying they're wrong, tuition is expensive and it is a struggle for most families, but for my family paying half is still a struggle, so don't go acting like I am the lucky one in this situation every time the job application says work study students only or I get a higher allotment of foodpoints.

In class Freshman year, I found myself speaking on behalf of anyone not rich, (which, by the way, is majority of the world population.) That's kind of fucked up considering I was still half convinced I was loaded, but there was no one else who seemed to have any first hand experience to offer. No one likes to admit that they are rich. No one wants to think that there isn't much higher to reach for. Everyone wants to think they are middle class, normal, like everyone else. No matter how divided researchers are on what defines the middle class, realistically, we could not all possibly be middle class. So don't invalidate other people's financial struggles by trying to convince yourself you're average, and just recognize that you're so goddamned lucky. There's nothing wrong with being rich so long as you appreciate what you have and understand how much more you have than others have. At the end of freshman year, when I finally dug up my families income statement on ACES and looked at an income distribution graphic from one of my MMS classes I realized I am far from "wealthy" in the context of the American population, and especially not in the context of the Duke population. Statistically in America, I am irrefutably middle class. And I am so goddamned lucky.

Monologue 3:

Alrightttt folks. Quick pop quiz!

(go up to audience members)

How busy are you right now, scale of 1-10? Mhmmm, mhm.

Would you say you're busy? (improv answers)

And you sir, how's your life going? Feeling stressed at all?

Great!

Yet, here's something special. Despite this stress and busyness, you all still took time to come out to what you see as an important, sometimes funny, often sad, always eye-opening theatrical performance. Let's get some snaps for that, right?

Alright, cut that out.

We at Duke have a problem, folks. A serious, potentially fatal, problem. A disease if you will. And, fortunately, you have me here to diagnose it.

(someone calls out "you're not a doctor!")

Oh, oh. I may not be pre-med, but I play one on TV, thank you very much. Any other questions?

("what's the disease?")

Ah, I'm glad you asked. Take a seat. I'll walk you through it.

Busyness Syndrome!

Symptoms:

Inability to hold a conversation longer than two minutes with your friend.

Six to ten job interviews a week.

Leadership positions in an extracurricular. Or two. Or three or four.

Seeing the sun rise from the Perkins-Bostock bridge.

I mean, the list goes on. I won't bore you with all of the medical details. This is serious shit.

Serious. Shit.

And the scary part is, it's starting to impact every single one of our daily interactions! Tell me how many times have you all had this conversation:

"Hey man, how's it going?"

"Good! Just finished a midterm! How are midterms looking for you?"

"Pretty rough. Alright see ya!"

Hold up. What? Have you ever paused after a conversation like that and wonder what the dickens just happened? Or or or. Let's try this one.

"Hey how was your winter break?"

"Good! You?"

"Good!"

...

Are we really going to let that pass for a conversation?! I have more insightful conversations with my roommate's plant.

Do we not have more to say about whole weeks of our lives? Are we just strangers passing by each other? I sometimes feel like I'm one of those ghosts in Harry Potter or Lord of the Rings. Just kind of floating down a hallway and not noticing all of the stuff happening around me.

(actor acts out a ghost motion, complete with noises)

You know what I'm saying?

It's all a symptom of Busyness Syndrome. So many people on this campus are so caught up in their work, their color-coded calendars, their leadership roles and extracurriculars and job apps and job fairs and apps for job fairs and their pre-med track and med school and apps

for med school and pre-med fairs for apps for med school in case you don't get a job and I just want to grab everyone by the...I don't know, earlobes or something and slap some sense into them.

Look around! We are here! Together!

See, the problem isn't that YOU or YOU or YOU are busier than the people next to you. In fact, you almost certainly aren't. No matter what you think. Because, let's be honest, you often think how you are way busier than your friends. We all do!

The problem is that EVERYONE thinks they are busy. But only a certain type of busy. That they're too busy to see their friends perform standup, but yeah, they can make time for a party. That they just HAVE to cancel lunch, but when their friends come over to their room unannounced, it's totally fine. That they don't have time to invest in a relationship, but they definitely have time to fit in that Netflix show every night before bed.

We are here together, friends. Let's try to make some meaningful connections.

("but I see all my friends all the time" - audience)

Hey, bro, so do I. Technically. Look, I love shouting loving words at acquaintances on the Shooters dance floor as much as the next guy.

Something like this, right?

"unts, unts, unts" (beat of a song)

"I LOVE THIS SONG"

"WHAT?"

"THIS SONG"

"YEAH!"

"unts unts unts"

"ALRIGHT PEACE!"

"YEAH!"

But COME ON. That just can't pass for interactions. Maybe it's because I am a washed up, jaded senior, but I swear I came to college to make meaningful connections. Like, a lot of them. All of these well-worn small talk friends are going to disappear the moment we set foot off this campus.

It's up to us to make something more of these relationships. Next time you get back from a break, try to ask your friends what their favorite thing they did over break was. Or even what they're excited about for the rest of the semester. Anything besides the "how are you?" "good, you?" shitstream that we keep doing.

We are at Duke because we are curious, high-performing, impressive people. All of us. Even your friend who only talks about their new bong is impressive. Yeahhh you all know who you are. Even the person who exclusively discusses their blacked out experiences is impressive. Even the person next to you in your Comp Sci 101 lecture is impressive as SHIT.

So, if we are all so awesome, why don't we take the time to get to know each other on a deeper level? Why don't we forgo this self-imposed busyness and make time for meaningful connections?

Can we skip the small talk?

Because, I'm going to be frank, I don't reallllly care that Snu formal was "lit" or that you have a midterm in two hours that you haven't started studying for.

I do care that you read a really interesting paper for class about the evolution of whale biology or something. Tell me about that! Whales can be my THING if you talk to me.

I do care that you're really excited and scared about the relationship you just committed to. What's your partner like? I'm so down to hear about that! Well. Keep the weird details to yourselves. Or don't! I can get into that too.

Anyway.

I do care that you finally found a career path you are interested in or that you're really excited about your dance showcase or that you just attended a crazy and interesting talk where your best friend got in a fight with the speaker.

Let's TALK about that stuff.

Let's TALK.

We are in this together, folks.

We can't fight off Busyness Syndrome with a vaccine or some Tylenol. Or even with blacking out at a party, believe it or not. This is something we need to attack together.

I think we can do it. Let's swallow our pride, imagine what a campus without this Busyness Syndrome, this BS, would look like. And let's make it happen, folks.