



## *Hit Play* Transcription

### Episode 75: Legible, Comfortable, Desirable

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### Show Intro

*Soothing electronic instrumental music plays underneath.*

**Hilary:** 75. Legible, Comfortable, Desirable.

Hi, I'm Hilary—a New York Neo-Futurist.

Our live show is back, but we just can't stop making art for your ears so *Hit Play* continues!

If you're already a fan of The New York Neo-Futurists, or any of our sibling companies, hello!

We can't wait to lay out in the sun with you.

If this is totally new to you—welcome to it!

We make art by four rules: We are who we are, we're doing what we're doing, we are where we are, and the time is now.

Simply put: we tell stories, and those stories are our own. Everything that you hear is actually happening.

*The rhythmic chop of a kitchen knife on a cutting board.*

So if we tell you that we are chopping cucumbers because we're making a salad, we are actually chopping cucumbers because we're making a salad, like I am right now.

Some of the work in this episode may contain sensitive topics. For more specific content warnings, check the timecodes in the show notes.

This episode's theme is: Legible, Comfortable, Desirable. Anooj will give us more context shortly.

But now, Jake, making his Hit Play debut, will run the numbers!

**Jake:** Hey, I'm Jake—a NY Neo-Futurist. In this episode we are bringing you 6 new plays.

This week's cast is Anooj Bhandari, Christopher Borg, Connor Sampson, Hilary Asare, and me, Jake Banasiewicz.

That brings us to 341 audio experiments on *Hit Play*. Woo! Enjoy!

## Play 1: Context (2:00)

**Anooj:** Context. **GO!**

On May 22, 2022 we—"we" being myself, Neo-Futurist Lee LeBreton and Neo alum Nicole Hill—performed our last show of *Try This on For Me*, an artistic venture conceived by Lee that brought audience members into an interactive thrift store flea market with a touch of bohemian Willy Wonka magic to explore the act of getting dressed in its perils and its joys, its desperacies and its comforts, in a contemplation of what it means to have a body. To have this thing we have to carry day in and day out, let alone adorn.

When we had our first read of the script from start to finish, there was a lump in my throat. And I knew what I was getting myself into, we had written it together, and nevertheless, I was caught off guard by how beautiful it felt to know I was diving into a show that I believed in telling from the moment it began to the moment it finished. I had pieces in the show about carrying my queer body draped in mesh across lines of culture and how the holes in my shirt served as a rift

in a space time cultural trust continuum I live navigating, pieces about my asshole functioning as the control center of my nervous system on certain days, and pieces about being sent away dressed in boxers to a multitude of spaces growing up as my parents didn't know that they were underwear.

Lee asked the audience to contend at the top of the show with three factors they believe make a perfect outfit: comfort, legibility, and desirability. Comfort being how cozy you feel in it, legibility being how yourself you feel in it, and desirable being how attractive you feel in it. As I performed the show in its 10 separate showings, there was a shift within me in how I realized my work. None of it was saying, "Look. Look here. Look how far I've come." No, it stopped saying that, what the work was saying instead to me in my own head was, "Look. Look here, look at all of the things you know about yourself that you chose to not write, that you couldn't bring yourself to write, that you are still working through."

There's a line Lee says at the end of the show that hit me in the face each time it was said, how certain clothes expose parts of themselves that have been holding on to shame, and how that shame seems to transform them. And what caught me even more off guard is that this transformation didn't come with a value judgment. Simply, an acknowledgement that it was there. Each time the end of the show came, this line was a balm for me, reminding me that the argument in my head about the quality of my relationship to my body is actually just noise for what lies behind it. A desire to say, "Look. Look here, look right where I am."

Take a look at how you're feeling right now. Are you comfortable? Legible? Desirable? Whether it's all no's or all yes's or something in between, say it to yourself, maybe with me this time... Look. Look here. Look right where I am. Look. Look here. Look right where we are.

## Play 2a: A Short Series of Shorties About Shorts (5:14)

**Jake:** A Short Series of Shorties About Shorts. **GO!**

**Jake:** I hate shorts.

## Play 3: The Authenticity of Fabulousness (5:23)

**Borg:** The Authenticity of Fabulousness. **GO!**

I'm recording this play on my birthday. Yay goals! Another year around the sun and I'm still not dead!

I've stopped making New Year's resolutions. I found that I was setting myself up for failure—I would create some unrealistic expectations that I would inevitably not meet and no matter how much effort I might have put in, I was left feeling disappointed in myself.

Not "living up to my potential" was a toxic mantra in my life, instilled by my parents and re-affirmed by a well-meaning public school system. Add to that being a gay person raised in a conservative religious community in the 80's.

I'm letting go of that way of thinking, and instead, strive for personal authenticity. I prefer the word "intention," and if I were to set a birthday intention for my next trip around the sun (and maybe this play is doing just that)... it would be... more "fabulousness"... stick with me on this, It may sound shallow, but if I'm reaching toward authenticity—and if I KNOW that inside me there is a fabulous being—then an outward manifestation of fabulousness is a part of my journey. My clothes don't always reflect my level of interior fabulousness. 22 years of working as a legal assistant has muted my wardrobe to a type of business casual camouflage. While I see myself as a cross between a drag queen and a sophisticated leather daddy, I end up dressing like... a legal assistant.

I have one undeniably fabulous piece of clothing built by a designer in Washington Heights named Luis DeJesus. I'm going to describe it to you with the understanding that hearing about it really doesn't do it justice because it is a sight to behold. This garment started its life as a man's black tux jacket. But Luis is magic and transformed it into something radical and arresting. He covered the top of the coat with a mosaic of oversized white rhinestones of different shapes, there are bejeweled epaulets that on the right shoulder end in long red hair, which is repeated on the left sleeve and the right cuff, the right sleeve is finished with black, western style fringe and the left cuff is finished with naval stripes. There are multiple strands of fake diamonds all over, and a gorgeous art deco appliqué on the reverse with a bold stripe down the back. A work of art.

When I wear it I feel powerful... and glamorous. It is part ringmaster, part drag queen, and part Matador... and maybe a little muppet. But it is 100% fabulousness. I've worn it as a Master of Ceremonies of a Gala, to play the devil at Dixon Place, at a fundraiser for an LGBT theater company. I wore it the night of the Lucille Lortel Awards as a nominee—on my own red carpet in my living room during the pandemic. It's such a statement that I can't wear it often—it shouldn't be over-seen.

Is it desirable? Yes—the people that I would want to attract would be drawn to this. Is it comfortable? Well, it's a little like armor and it's too small to fit around my belly, but yes. Is it legible? Ha! I want this piece of clothing to define me... it is gay, it is beautiful, it is powerful and it is art. I don't mean that I want to dress to get attention or look like a carnival barker... just to manifest my authentic interior fabulousness and let it come through my thoughts and my words and my skin and yes... my clothes.

If you want to see the jacket, shoot me an email or a message or a text... I'll show you a picture.

## Play 2b: A Short Series of Shorties About Shorts (9:20)

**Connor:** Wearing shorts makes me think of a beach sandwich with a little too much mayo that has some granules of sand in it for reasons you can't quite understand.

## Play 4: Conspiracies (9:33)

**Connor:** Conspiracies. **GO!**

*MUSIC UNDERSCORE: Conspiratorial Vibes.*

**Connor:** This is not a play about how Pride—as a month, as a concept—has been co-opted by businesses to leverage a queer celebration, born out of riots led by Black and Latin trans women, to line the pockets of corporate overlords by ignoring history and slapping the visual representation of refracted light onto *literally* anything while donating *millions* in funding to politicians who currently support anti-LGBTQ+ legislation.

This play isn't about any of that. So you don't *need* to know that those companies include AT&T, Walmart, General Motors, Ford, Amazon, Wells Fargo, XFinity, Comcast, CVS, United Health, Deloitte, among others that got cut for time.

No. *This* play is about a lesser known, less sinister, force systemically undercutting queer joy right under our noses called...wedding season.

**SATANIC VOICE:** WEDDING SEASON.

**Connor:** Can you hear it?

*The music takes on a more sinister edge.*

**Connor:** Research may show that *baseless* theories thrive when people assume their personal experience represents global trends. But it is 2022, listeners. And this month marks the sixth year where a well-intentioned heterosexual couple whom I love has stolen the month of June from me, siphoned cash from my bank account, forced me to wear a suit, and thrown me into a hell-pit they call a “dance floor” so middle-aged women can tokenize me while choking down red wine and spewing demonic messaging like... Rock the Casbah.

Fellow citizens. Fellow queers. I wish you well. But if I don't make it through this Pride to one day dance to Kim Petras' magnum opus “Throat Goat” in a field, under the sun, wearing non-restrictive fabrics of my choosing, tell them it was wedding season.

**SATANIC VOICE:** WEDDING SEASON.

**Connor:** Shout it from the mountain tops.

## Play 2c: A Short Series of Shorties About Shorts (11:55)

**Hilary:** Wearing shorts tastes like chalk.

## Play 5: Boxers (12:01)

**Anooj:** Boxers. **GO!**

**Anooj:** (*sings*)

When I was young,  
My parents had never seen boxers before.  
They thought they were shorts.  
They thought they were shorts.

Plastic packs on walls at Marshalls,  
Checkers and stripes and little blue clouds,  
They thought they were shorts.  
They thought they were shorts.

So to school and piano lessons  
To theater, To my friend's house and  
Field trips and camp. I was sent away  
In these fun little short-shorts with a button  
Right over the crotch.

They thought they were shorts.  
They thought they were shorts.  
My brief-wearing brother, he thought they were shorts  
Sent me away, all night and all day,  
Undergarments in public spaces.  
Hiding these not-public places.

My piano teacher said...

**Connor:**

"You sit around the house in your undies."

**Anooj:**

I had no clue what was meant,

I thought they were a lounging accessory,  
Couldn't focus on keys while wearing those briefs,  
I thought they were shorts  
I thought they were shorts.

My mom's friend said...

**Jake:**

"I can't drive you around in your undies."

**Anooj:**

I had no clue what she meant,

Cartoon characters flying across them,  
Slid up my thighs in the back seats of cars,  
I thought they were shorts  
I thought they were shorts.

And until I started gym class I wore them  
Then I saw people wearing my shorts,  
My shorts right under their shorts.  
I'm weary today on plaid under the waist.  
Not convinced that it's not what it isn't.

They thought they were shorts.  
They thought they were shorts.  
Gotta love 'em but my parents they thought they were shorts.  
Sent me away, all night and all day,  
Undergarments in public spaces.  
Hiding these not-public places.  
*Everybody!*

**Neo Chorus:**

He thought they were shorts.  
He thought they were shorts.  
We don't know them but his parents they thought they were shorts.  
Sent him away, all night and all day,  
Undergarments in public spaces.  
Hiding these not-public places.

**Anooj:**

I thought they were shorts.  
I thought they were shorts.  
My ten-year-old self I thought they were shorts.  
Playing away, all night and all day,  
Undergarments in public spaces.  
Hiding these not-public places.

## Play 2d: A Short Series of Shorties About Shorts (15:12)

**Borg:** Shorts sound like: shushush shushush shushush shushush

**All:** Shushhush shushhush shushhush shushhush shushhush (*fades out*)

## Play 6: for almost legible queers (15:32)

**Hilary:** for almost legible queers. **GO!**

*Hilary starts this play whisper-speaking (ASMR style) and reaches full volume at the end.  
There is bare, musical underscoring beneath her words.*

**Hilary:**

Hang on  
set your tempo,  
your rhythm,  
your pace  
your time  
if something's coming sit still and listen  
it wants you to know you  
it wants you to know you  
it wants you to know you

Hold on

And if you could tell him now, he's most handsome when he's smiling and we don't have to keep shopping in this section, you would.

And if you could tell her now, you felt it when you listened to the CD she burned for you together and she was so cool and so gorgeous and you were so shy and unsure and maybe that moment only happened in your head but that does not mean it did not happen  
Unspoken reciprocity echoes too loudly to be insignificant

Hang on Hold on

the change is coming, not change but, the blindfold, the blinders, the bindings are leaving on your schedule you can set them down today or yesterday or tomorrow  
whenever works for you-



you, in the infinite shades of gray, seeking the words and opportunity at, in, & past the threshold  
of revelation I should say we or us but my schedule has only recently crystallized and the  
muscle memory of my tongue needs more time to find and fix language it felt it could not claim  
Claim it

even as you are unsure-

Claim something, follow the hunch, the question, the inkling

until you learn what lays best on your frame as you find it

no wardrobe is built in a day

no knowledge is learned whole and complete

your forays into trial and error are valid

your queerness may not present in ways

they see / you see / we see

That does not mean it is not there.

Our queer might be the color of air and it will still be affirmed

your tribe exists if you seek it if you want it if you make space, find space

If where you landed before closes its arms when you return full in the knowledge of yourself,

there are spaces that will hold you, tighter than you imagined possible.

So much tighter than you imagined possible.

*Scattered underscoring begins to coalesce into melody*

Hang on, Hold on, Hang on, Hold on, Hang on, Hold on,

Something's coming, not change but clarity,

unification

We have a right to know ourselves and be known

our tempo,

our rhythm,

our pace

our time

You cannot be late meeting yourself—you were always with you

Hang on, Hold on, Hang on, Hold on, Hang on, Hold on

*Last line repeats into a fade as the underscore takes center stage, flowering and  
blossoming in beautiful, expected, and surprising ways. Resolves in triumph.*

## Play 2e: A Short Series of Shorties About Shorts (18:39)

**Anooj:** The human embodiment of shorts is Pat Benatar.

## Show Outro

*Soft but spunky electronic instrumental music plays underneath.*

**Hilary:** Thanks for hitting play and then listening to *Hit Play*.

If you liked what you heard, subscribe to the show, tell a friend, and leave a review on your listening app of choice! If you want to support the New York Neo-Futurists in other ways, consider making a donation at [nynf.org](http://nynf.org), or by joining our Patreon: [Patreon.com/NYNF](https://Patreon.com/NYNF).

This episode featured work by: Anooj Bhandari, Jake Banasiewicz, Christopher Borg, Connor Sampson, and me, Hilary Asare.

Our logo was designed by Gabriel Drozdov and our sound is designed by Anthony Sertel Dean.

*Hit Play* is produced by Anthony Sertel Dean, Winn Foreman, and me—Hilary Asare. Be good to yourself & Happy Pride <3!

*Music fades out!*