



## **Watching It Happen: The Value of Maintaining An Innocent Eye**

The articles in **Lessons From The Stage: Tell The Winning Story** are designed to help you become a much more effective communicator both in and out of the courtroom. As a trial lawyer you face multiple challenges, or “Obstacles” as I prefer to call them, in your cases as well as in your own personal lives. Each of the monthly **Lessons From The Stage** articles featured provide a framework to begin to appreciate and powerfully use your obstacles to your benefit both inside and outside the courtroom.

In this article, we will focus on a method of delivering your winning

story so that it feels “fresh” and “open” to you, and to your most important audience: the jury.

I’ve always liked to draw. Even before I got into the theater, I was drawing and making art. Drawing (and I consider doing all kind of experimenting with art still drawing) in very much the same vein as the theater, is like working in a mirror: drawing allows me a rapid access pass in checking in with how I am measuring up to the core of my being and demonstrating that to the world.

The above drawing goes through two different thought stages. The first stage was that I wanted to say that the inanimate object in the drawing-- in this case, the coffee cup to the bottom left-- was just as important as the dancer on the stage. To clarify: the object in a movie, novel, play, can be just as compelling as the character choices depending upon what's happening in the scene, or how your eye is drawn to that object. Or maybe that the little things can have just as much meaning as the big things. In the theater, when you’re on stage, *nothing* is extraneous... the small things are the big things. It all leads to the greater story you’re communicating.

*How about the object you’re referring to in the scene you’re describing within in your opening statement? Can you make that object “come to life?” Can you “breath fire” into its presence?*

The second stage of the drawing is more interesting to me. It's about the watcher, the little girl, and the juxtaposition between the little girl and the woman dancing on stage. A nice title for the drawing could be “The Dancer and The Dance.” But I like this title

better: "Watching It Happen." The little girl is off stage, veiled in the shadows, watching the dancer-- this graceful, beautiful dancer on stage. Maybe the little girl is watching her dance teacher, maybe her mother, or maybe her older, future self. The little girl is waiting in the wings, hiding behind the ladder. We don't know if she's ready to take to the stage either or if she's going to run away, back further into the shadows of the theatre. "Do I dance or not?" We don't know. Then I thought, there's more going on here.

When you're in an inspired state, you essentially become "the watcher." You fall into the innocence that I wanted to capture in the watcher, watching the dancer dance. When you're "in state" (deeply connected to the theme of your story), you have heightened awareness, and you watch "it" unfold... you watch it happen. This is what we want to experience in a great story: to be able to watch it happen. This is a great way to keep your story alive, and your audience riveted to your every word.

Some artists will describe their work as an "out of body experience." There's been times in my life where I've wanted to throw a rock at these people hearing that... except, of course, when it happens to me, and I get the privilege of saying to myself, "Dude... that was like an out of body experience." It can happen. And it can happen *intentionally* when we do the kind of work that's we're capable of in the courtroom. It's a great thing when it does happen. It's magic. And that magic can occur whether that's listening to a phenomenal rock concert or even taking out the trash. You're utterly fascinated by what is happening. You'd easily lock yourself in a library to immerse yourself more in the subject. And so you become the watcher. You're innocently looking at something. I believe we have to be more fascinated than judgmental. (Not that "judgment" or strong opinions don't have their place, certainly in the courtroom!)

If I can approach anything with "intended innocence," to put myself into my subject with the fascination of a child looking at something completely objectively, wanting, or waiting, to know how to feel about something... that is the ultimate measure of willingness in approaching the "canvas." That is the absolute desired state to create, on the lines of what Picasso was talking about, I think.

Speaking of Picasso, here are three juicy quotes where he talks about that desired state of innocence.

*"It takes a very long time to become young."*

*"Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up."*

*"It took me four years to paint like Raphael, but a lifetime to paint like a child."*

Approaching the winning story with the innocence and wonder of a child isn't always that easy when you're dealing with tons of mind-numbing facts and "dry information" in your head. In fact, it takes enormous conditioning and balance to be "open" with these given obstacles and include them in the overall "freshness" and "openness" of the winning story. It means to open up the floodgates of all our five senses, and to allow all our different ideas to step into a great gathering place so that hopefully we can experience the story with the same immediacy and wonder that an infant might see the world. Talk about creative, emotional calisthenics! "Painting like a child..." maybe not necessarily in terms of clumsy execution on the canvas or the stage, but the mental mindset. Open. Wondering. Loose. And it's always worth it.

To become the watcher. The watcher watching it happen.

*When you journey through the steps of the “Lessons From The Stage: Tell The Winning Story” experience, my goal is for you to be deeply stirred, not only by your own storytelling experience, but also by the stories of others, feeling connected by a strengthened understanding and respect for what it means to be human. As a byproduct of your experience, my hope for you is to also leave with improved skill, comfort, and confidence with your courtroom room effectiveness, and get more in touch with your true power that is always infused with passion and confidence.*

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