

Jesus Corner

Running time: 45 Minutes

Production Notes:

Jesus Corner was written to give a brief glimpse into the stories of individuals who have had to reckon their sexual identities with their personal Christian faith. To accomplish this goal, *Jesus Corner* utilizes documentary style theatre, focusing on multiple interviews that were conducted in order to accurately depict the experience of being religious and homosexual. 100% of the dialogue coming from the characters One and 2, as well as a good portion of the Narrator's lines, were taken **directly** from these interview transcriptions.

Jesus Corner also features four puppets which are all to be controlled by the Narrator. Despite the child-like appearances of this play, the intended audience is not children. These puppets are also all to be exaggerated greatly and contrasted strongly with each other so as to make it clear to the audience they are all separate characters. However, as the play progresses they lay down their unique qualities to allow and show their connection to the Narrator himself.

Finally, the f-slur is used multiple times in this piece and so it is preferred that the actor himself be queer-identifying in some fashion.

Characters:

Narrator

Minister Meaning

One (Actor can use any name they want for this character)

Two (Actor can use any name they want for this character)

Dr. Definition

[The stage is centered around a brick wall which extends across the left half of the stage and ends in a small circle in the middle of the stage. The wall stands about four feet tall, similar to the one in Charlie Brown. On the front of the brick wall are the words “Jesus Rocks” graffitied in bright colors. Behind the brick wall a small house is set. In the corner sits a desk and a panorama of a city out of which springs a large cross. There is a bright red door with a “Welcome Home, Son” sign on it. A short cheery musical theme is heard as a young man, NARRATOR, walks through the door. He is handsome and likely in his 20s or 30s. He wears a bright dress shirt and a bowtie. He carries himself the way straight people like to think faggots carry themselves. But it’s subtle. As he walks down the stairs towards the brick wall he waves toward an audience as if it is going wild. He speaks very clearly and very exaggeratedly.]

NARRATOR: Hello boys and girls! I just want to give you all such a warm special welcome. I’m so excited to have you here at my home today! Are you guys ready to learn about the Bible?

[NARRATOR holds up his hand to his ear and waits as if he is hearing a response from the crowd.]

NARRATOR: I can’t hear you!

[NARRATOR waits a few more seconds before being satisfied.]

NARRATOR: Well we have a very special episode planned out for you today! And I just know God is watching us and he is so excited for us to learn!

[NARRATOR reacts as if he has just heard something from the audience. He holds his hand up to his ear once again.]

NARRATOR: What was that? *[NARRATOR waits a few more seconds to hear from the audience]*. What’s in my backpack? Well wouldn’t you like to know!

[NARRATOR laughs at his own joke. For maybe a little too long? Like dude shut the hell up it wasn’t that funny.]

NARRATOR: Hmmm. I don’t know if I should tell you! Can you guess?

[NARRATOR must wait until the actual play’s audience shouts out answers. If the audience fails to do so, he must prompt them to do so, saying things like “C’mon boys and girls!” or “I’m still

waiting” or “Any more suggestions?” NARRATOR must wait until the live audience has spoken, no matter how long or awkward the silence is. Once they have given a few suggestions, he must refute them.]

NARRATOR: Nope! Any more guesses? No? Well I guess I'll have to show you all then!

[NARRATOR pulls a few items out of the bag, naming them.]

NARRATOR: A roll of tape... a bottle of glue... a lock and a key... a hammer and a few nails. Hmmm. I wonder what these could mean. Any ideas?

[NARRATOR, once again, puts his hand up to his ear, prompting the audience to give answers.]

NARRATOR: Hmmm. I don't think I know either! But you know what? I think I've got one more friend in the bag here! Lemme see...

[NARRATOR reaches into the bag and pulls out a green snake puppet dressed in a three-piece minister suit. (I mean that's some pretty obvious symbolism shit right?) The puppet is very brightly colored and very friendly-looking. As he is pulled out of the bag he lets out a long peel of lovely laughter that's also a little bit scary. NOTE: throughout the piece Meaning is addressed as many different titles including reverend, minister, pastor, etc.]

NARRATOR: Well if it isn't Minister Meaning! What are you doing hiding in my backpack?

MEANING: Sssssssurprise! Well I thought you were never gonna reach the bottom of that bag!

NARRATOR: You know Minister, I really didn't see it coming! *[Addressing the audience]* Boys and girls I would like you to meet one of my best and favorite friends in the whole world, Minister Meaning. He loves big hugs and long slitherssss on the beach.

MEANING: That's right! Although the hugs would be a lot easier if I had any arms!

[MEANING lets out another long laugh and tries to hug NARRATOR as best he can. NARRATOR laughs as well. The hug they share lasts a beat too long as NARRATOR grabs MEANING almost too intimately.]

NARRATOR *[Looking deeply and intimately at MEANING]*: I am just so glad you can join us today.

MEANING *[looking down, ashamed]*: I'm glad to be here too.

NARRATOR *[still looking deeply at MEANING. He has some vague control over MEANING.]*: You look very good today Reverend. *[MEANING still looking down, shakes his head]* I like your bowtie! Nice and dressed up for my show.

MEANING *[laughing it off]*: Thank you. Woah that's a lot of ssssstuff! What is that for?

NARRATOR: Well I was hoping you could help the boys and girls guess! Can you help tell me what each item does?

MEANING *[thinking it over]*: Well... I know what the glue does!

NARRATOR: Now what does glue do?

MEANING: When you have two things that you need to stick together you can put glue and two things will stay together!

NARRATOR: Exactly! Do you know what any of the other things here do?

MEANING: Hmmmm. Well I think the hammer and nails are for building things but I don't exactly know how...

NARRATOR: You're on the right track! Do you wanna try them out?

MEANING *[exasperated but he knows he's fucking funny]*: I have no armsssss.

NARRATOR: Oh darn, well you're right. Well maybe I can come help you out there!

[NARRATOR comes beside MEANING, wrapping his arm closely around MEANING to use the hammer. Together, they hammer a nail into a piece of wood. It's intimate? But also awkward? The sound of metal being struck against metal is heard loudly. Probably a little too loudly. Realizing they are too close, NARRATOR clears his throat and continues their dialogue.]

NARRATOR: See! You can use hammer and nails to keep two things together that you want to stay together!

MEANING: I think I see a pattern here!

NARRATOR: Do you now? Now what do the other things do?

MEANING: Well tape can be used by fancy office people to stick two things together and I think a lock can keep two things together strongly too. Or it can be used to hide buried treasure!

NARRATOR *[laughs]*: Well you really hit the nail on the head!

[MEANING laughs a clear innocent laugh.]

NARRATOR: You're exactly right Pastor Meaning! Each of these can be used to keep two things together for- well, almost forever!

MEANING: Wow! Forever is a long time!

NARRATOR: Forever is a very long time! It's so long that it goes on for- for forever!

MEANING: Ha!

NARRATOR: Now Meaning! You're a pastor. Can you tell me where the Bible talks about forever?

MEANING: Well that's a tough question! The Bible talks about forever alllll the timeeeeeee!

NARRATOR *[between laughs]*: Well you're not wrong! What are some examples?

MEANING: Well... God says he's gonna love us forever... and he sayssss someday we will be with him in heaven forever! And... he says ssssssome people will be in hell forever! Ha!

[MEANING lets out another laugh. Too perfect? But also nice? Like you don't want to love it.]

NARRATOR *[a leading question]*: Well what about people? Does God ever put two people together forever? Like hammers and nails?

MEANING: All the time! When a man and a woman love each other very much God says they should get married and love each other forever! And like you said, forever is a long time!

NARRATOR *[almost genuine, looking down]*: Yeah but what about when a man and a man love each other very much?

MEANING: Oh... God doesn't like that very much!

[MEANING laughs again. It's getting annoying.]

NARRATOR: Well, today we are going to be talking about what happens when two people who God doesn't want to be together fall in love.

MEANING: Homosexuality?

NARRATOR: That's right! Homose-

[NARRATOR is cut off by the sound of a hammer striking nails, metal against metal, again. The two characters look around but it is unclear what is causing the noise. It quickly stops.]

MEANING: Yeah I mean it's wrong but I'm saying-

NARRATOR [*"breaking character" for a moment, letting MEANING droop and become, very evidently, just a puppet.*]: But it's wrong. Right? Boys aren't supposed to marry boys. [*almost shouting, metal being struck against metal is heard again.*] It's wrong.

[*NARRATOR has now let his arm supporting the puppet loose and it is, again, very evidently just a puppet. NARRATOR is thinking about what he has just heard. He quickly makes a decision. He begins to stuff MEANING back into his backpack with the rest of the items as well. He pauses briefly at the hammer and nails, looking at them for a moment before putting them back in.*]

NARRATOR [*thin-lipped, still partially broken character*]: Well thank you for coming Reverend Meaning. I learned a lot.

[*NARRATOR takes a breath and regains his composure, "putting his character back on."*]

NARRATOR: Well boys and girls I hope you learned something from Minister Meaning! [*a pause*] I know I always do. [*a pause. NARRATOR is thinking. He quickly pops back into character again.*] Now homosexuality is fascinating isn't it! And I hope you guys are ready to learn even more about it because we are about to head right into Special Guest Time! Are you excited?

[*NARRATOR holds his hand up to his ear once again, waiting for a response from the audience.*]

NARRATOR: I can't hear you! [*He waits a brief second more.*] That's more like it!

[*NARRATOR quickly walks into the corner of the room which is set up like a late night talk show, complete with a small desk and a panoramic view of a city behind him. A large, life-sized cross fits into the panorama. A short musical theme is played while NARRATOR slides across the top of the desk like he is sliding over a car in Dukes of Hazard. He narrowly misses the art supplies which are scattered around on the desk. He grabs a microphone from under the desk.*]

NARRATOR [*in a grand announcer voice*]: Welllllllcome back to SGT! We are so excited to have you back boys and girls! Now we have already learned a lot about homosexuality and more importantly, what God thinks about homosexuality... But are you ready to learn more?

[*NARRATOR reacts as if the crowd is going wild.*]

NARRATOR: Please welcome our two guests One annnnnnd Two!

[*NARRATOR pulls out two greatly disfigured puppets from the desk below him. The first, ONE (Or whatever name the actor decides), has a long stitch running up the front of his body, causing*

half his body to be a deep pink and the other half a dark blue. The puppet has one leg and instead of arms, has two popsicle sticks that seem to be barely hanging on. Around the puppets face is a lion-like mane. The second puppet, TWO (or whatever name the actor decides), is all a deep tan green color. She has no limbs and resembles a sock. She has two googly eyes near the top of her face out of which are drawn a few tears which run their way down the puppet. A few long strings of hair, made from yarn, run their way from the top of the her head. A bright smile is drawn onto her face with sharpie and a short tail sticks its way out from under her. All in all, both puppets seem beaten down but bright. NARRATOR looks at both of them lovingly.]

NARRATOR: Well Hello!

ONE: Hi!

TWO: Hello!

NARRATOR: You know, I am just so excited to have you both here today!

TWO: We're excited too!

NARRATOR: Now I know both of you very well but you know what? I don't think some of our friends out there know you at all! Can you tell all of our friends out there who you are?

TWO *[trying to take the spotlight, like a sports announcer]*: My name is two and I'm 16 years old and I'm from Grandvilleeeee Michigan!

NARRATOR: Well it is lovely to meet you Two. How about you?

ONE: My name is One! And I am 18 years old *[gives side-eye at TWO, because she is two years older]*, and I am from a teeny tiny town called Molene!

NARRATOR: Now it is lovely to meet you one! I am so happy to have you both here. I hope you know that! Now do you two know why I asked you to come help me teach these boys and girls today?

[ONE quickly shakes her head and TWO, seeing ONE, follows suit].

NARRATOR: Well maybe I should give you a little hint! Today I've been talking to Minister Meaning about marriage. And! About what happens when a boy falls in love with a boy or a girl falls in love with a girl.

[TWO looks excited and ONE looks down, slightly ashamed.]

ONE: Ohhhhhhh

NARRATOR: Can you guess why I asked you both to come help me today?

ONE: Mm-hmm! I identify as bisexual!

NARRATOR: That's right! And how about you two?

TWO: Um, lesbian, but I'm kind of looking at asexuality...but not completely sure so right now we're sticking with lesbian.

NARRATOR: Well that's just great. So I'm hoping you can tell us a little bit more about what it's like to be gay. Are you ready to be our special guest on our special guest time?

ONE: Well I hope I can help! I haven't been gay for very long.

NARRATOR *[laughing]*: Ho-ho I think you'll be just fine!

TWO: Eek! Well I sure hope so!

NARRATOR *[more interview-like]*: Well now, would the two of you mind sharing a little bit about yourselves? What do you like to do for fun two?

TWO: Um, I have done theater for a long time. Also I like the violin, um, I am in multiple orchestras, I like to sing, and I play piano in my freetime, so that's very fun.

NARRATOR: Wow you sound like a talented puppet! How about you One?

ONE: Hang out with my friends mostly, lots of Netflix and wandering around *[laughs]* Especially back home- just like any ol spontaneous adventure.

NARRATOR: Wow! You are both such valuable and interesting people. *[to the audience]* See boys and girls, gay people can spend their days doing the exact same stuff as us. They're not so scary! *[back to ONE and TWO]*. Are either of you friends with more gay people?

TWO: It's been difficult to participate as a part of the community, when you're not like, out publicly. There are certain individuals who I can understand on a different level because they're also part of that community. But right now, it's kind of figuring it out for myself before I join the community fully.

ONE: Well *my* brother came out to me as gay so then we kinda bonded over that and it became more of a family thing *[laughs]* but both of us were very closeted.

NARRATOR: Well where did you guys go to school and grow up?

ONE: I went to South Christian High School. So like I said Moline was a really little farm town. Um, and west Michigan in general is a very- is very dutch so you can imagine. And then, it's also a very Christian community. This pocket of the world is just very Christian, specifically CRC; Christian Reformed Church. And, yeah, so, we were surrounded by a very loving, Christian, kinda tight-knit community.

TWO: Yeah my school community was all white. Church: conservative overall. So yeah, I've grown up in a christain school very conservative, very white, um, and then for church I've worshipped all presbyterian which is also very very conservative and it's been mostly white for all of my life. Which I guess plays a part in my identity, I've figured out...um and then my family kinda follows that line of conservative too.

ONE: Me too! I didn't realize until high school how, how conservative and Republican the demographic of our area was. I mean I understood it but I didn't realize that that wasn't what the rest of the world was like. I remember conversations in middle school about politics and stuff, and I remember- I remember we found out that one kid said his parents voted for Obama and we were- the rest of us were just appalled.

[The characters laugh.]

NARRATOR: So you both still go to church? Even though, you know, God is not such a big fan of boys who love boys or girls who love girls?

TWO: Yep!

ONE: Yup. Every sunday. It was just how both my parents were raised, and so it's just what we did, every Sunday there's no excuses!

NARRATOR: Did your pastor ever teach you about what it means to be gay or what God thinks about that?

[Both puppets seem to quiet down at this question.]

TWO: Nope.

ONE: Um... no.

NARRATOR: Do you remember learning anything about the LGBT community from your church?

ONE: Not in church. I don't remember...anything...I don't think we had any sermons or anything about it that I can remember. So...no.

TWO: Nothing.

ONE: Yeah. It wasn't spoken about, I think it was a kind of a brushed under the- swept under the rug kinda thing, cus I don't think we had any- there were no gay couples that wanted to be married, there were no... gay couples that wanted to join, there was no one that really like balatantly came out at all...

TWO: Exactly! I didn't really realize that it wasn't normal to have a crush on whoever, you know? I kind of grew up with the idea in my own head. And then, it just never occurred to me that it was something different, and then once it did I was like, "oh shit, don't come out now..." *[sadly]* Don't be a prodigal son ya know?

NARRATOR: Well you must have learned something from your family?

[TWO and ONE shake their heads. There is a beat.]

ONE: I don't think my family ever talked about it.

TWO: Mine didn't either. I just didn't know why I felt the way I did. For a long time I really thought I was the only one in the world with these feelings... it was really lonely.

ONE: I think I thought that too.

[There is another beat. The puppets briefly look at each other. The sound of metal being struck against metal is heard. NARRATOR is thinking.]

ONE: But I do remember- I can't remember how long ago it was or how young I was but I remember my friend knew about sex and I didn't. So she was playing with Barbies and she was like "Do you know what sex is??!!" And I was like "NOOOO" *[laughs]* so later I asked my mom. *[laughs]* I was so little! But, yeah, we were playing barbies or something and we were talking about weddings or something and my friend was like, "did you know that a boy and a boy can get married? I saw it in such and such movie or something," and I was like, "thats crazy," so I asked my mom or something,... and I don't remember what she said about it, I wish I did...

NARRATOR: Oh my! That is quite the story One. So you at least heard about it once. Did you learn anything from school?

ONE: Yeah, I mean obviously there's the verses that are like- to sleep with another man is a sin or whatever. I remember...reading about the whole thing with sodom and gamorrah or whatever, and the men and....the angels visited or something and like, "we wanna sleep with them" And I just didn't get it. Like, sodomize, like... that's so weird to me, and I still don't get it or what the relevance of that passage was. But there was stuff in the Bible but it wasn't... good *[laughs]*. So I never really... thought about it...

TWO: See I only learned stuff from the bullies like *[in "bully" voice]* "that's so gay!" and I was like *[in small child voice]* "What's gay?" *[laughs]*. I was kinda dumb. But I do remember for the abstinence talk, no LGBT stuff was mentioned... like at all. I don't know. Not having learned it in a formal setting just made me feel like I was crazy. It just made me feel like I never wanna come out. Definitely not to other Christians. I just- I don't think Christians want what's best for us. Like do I even fit the space as I am right now or am I supposed to change myself. They say come as you are but they don't really want that. Even if they're pretty accepting.

ONE: It's just- the feelings I get from so many Christians is just that I shouldn't be expressive or open about this, so if it is part of who I am, then it's a part of who I am that I should be ashamed of. Like the most you can tolerate is not who I am, I-

TWO: Yeah like in my family and church it just feels like I can't- like I can't be my authentic self, like you know, you have to like put a mask on.

[Raising tension]

ONE: And for so long there's just this hate the sin love the sinner perspective. Like you don't actually want me there I'm just a problem for you. Like at a root level I'm a problem. I- I don't want to feel like I'm a problem but it's just- you don't want to damn me but you I can't feel comfortable in the same space as you. You don't want to damn me but you don't want me to feel comfortable.

NARRATOR: So you guys really don't like Christians? I really-

TWO: You still aren't listening- We don't hate Christians.

[The pace is quickening]

ONE: I just- I think Christians still love me. I think they do. And I guess you could say they want what's best for me. But they just want what they think is best for me. They couldn't imagine the way I interpret God's love for me.

TWO: The church- sometimes it's just for show and not even about God. When you come with struggles and with problems. When you come and say you're gay they overlook it or minimize it to- a problem. I just- you can't approach people like problems. Like I am a problem to fix. At a root level.

ONE: And you're totally welcome except for... this is wrong. This part of you is wrong. It's just so- They're the same ones that quote the psalm "you were knit in your mother's womb" like "fearfully and wonderfully made." Do you really think that then? I cannot... I don't understand being able to tell someone, like... "you're loved and welcomed, except for this entire part of who you are."

NARRATOR: But what about Jesus?

TWO: What about Jesus?

[a pause]

NARRATOR: Well- what about grace?

[A pause. Perhaps a break in tension? Maybe this moment is quieter?]

TWO: I don't-. They always talk about this unconditional love this unconditional grace but I just can't see it the way they see it. Every time they say it's this unconditional thing that we are just given as we are they don't remember- they don't realize that they just told me I have to change myself. I feel like I have to do this in order to like be accepted. Every time they talk about it I can just think, ya know, God still loves you but you're not gonna... go to heaven.

ONE: When I was younger I just tried to tune out everytime they talked about grace because- well it's this great thing that everyone seems to get but me... and Christians just... don't deny that Y'know? I'm not even gonna ask for- Literally just...let me come to church with others accepted and loved and comfortable and not having to hide a part of who I am and not having to suppress anything. It's all we're asking.

TWO: You- like who we are- you don't accept it. You don't tolerate it. You don't even talk about it. And I just- I never wanna come out.

NARRATOR *[trying to regain some composure]*: So two, you're not out?

TWO *[intensely]*: No.

[There is a silence.]

NARRATOR *[said in a way that cuts TWO from her intensity. In fact it fucking cuts the entire scene in half. NARRATOR can't handle the tension]*: Boys and girls do you know what the word "out" means? *[NARRATOR puts his hand to his ear.]* Well neither do I! But you know what? I think we might have a friend who can help us out. Do you know who it is? *[waits for audience response]* Dr. Definition!

[NARRATOR pulls a small puppet in a lab coat from the bottom of the desk. He is a well put together scientist-looking humanoid creature.]

NARRATOR: Dr. say hello to all the boys and girls and my two lovely gay friends One and two!

DEFINITION *[in an ambiguous accent]*: Hello everybody! What can I help you all with today?

NARRATOR: Well Dr, two here says she still hasn't come out! Even though she is 16! But I don't think our friends here know what it means to be out. Can you try to explain to everyone what it means to be out?

DEFINITION: Well that is a tough one! I'll tell you all as best I can. So since most ordinary people are straight, we never have to tell anyone that we are different. But! If you are a boy who loves a boy or a girl who loves a girl, the rest of the world won't know and so you have to tell them that you're *not* normal. Coming "out" is telling all the people you love that you're gay!

NARRATOR: Well that doesn't sound so hard! If I was gay I would want to tell the people I love.

DEFINITION: That's what I think too but sometimes, for some reason, people are afraid to-

ONE: This is shit. This is shit. That's not why two is still not out. We've been saying this our whole lives and you still don't get it it's-

[NARRATOR and DEFINITION look appalled that ONE has interrupted them. TWO, having felt shamed by NARRATOR and DEFINITION, begins to look up and a bit more happy at ONE's defense of her. There is a brief pause.]

ONE: From the get go it's a... bad thing- it is bad news. You've made it very clear that you don't want me the way I am so at a certain point I don't want me the way I am either- it is bad news.

[Another pause.]

ONE: It put a sense of pressure like...there were stakes, you know, it was...for some people I'd imagine coming out is just revealing a part of you who they are, but because of the whole stigma... It was like breaking bad news to somebody.

[There is another pause.]

ONE: I told- in probably about 7th grade one of my best friends at the time- I remember at one sleepover, saying quietly, saying, "Adri, sometimes I think I might be bi..." And she said, "sometimes I think that about me too" and it was like sharing bad news with a friend, like sharing a confession with a friend, a secret that- it'd almost be like saying, "Adri, I...stole something" or- it was this confession that could not be... shared. Bad. news.

[There is a pause. As the story sinks in ONE and TWO look at each other and begin to smile and slowly their smiling turns into laughter.]

TWO *[through laughter, as if the only way to think about it is to try to laugh about it]*: There's so much you kinda have to work through *[laughing]* to just be... ok with yourself. *[laughing. pause]*

[NARRATOR is watching both of them intently and seems to be deep in thought. When ONE and TWO begin to speak it seems to be coming more and more from him and less and less from them. ONE pauses like he is about to break news. NARRATOR, thinking deeply, finally proceeds.]

ONE: I didn't really choose to come out to my parents, so the way it happened was...by this point, almost all of my friends knew, even the ones I was hesitant to tell. My siblings both knew.

TWO: I was like, "ok i'm gonna tell her because she's my mom and I hate hiding stuff from her, it makes me feel like a terrible person-" I think i came out to... four people? Four people. Maybe? No i think yeah five, five. Um, and they were all very supportive-

ONE: So then, towards the end of the summer, I had made, a few weeks before, made just a funny video about the reason my parent's chance of having biological grandchildren were very slim; just based on each of my siblings. *[laughs]* It...it got like 50k views. It was- It blew up, it was great, lots of people related to it...

TWO: And then I kind of was like, "ok this is going super well and I kinda had the confidence I needed to go tell my mom. And then I sat her down, like in the living room at some point. And it was just us at home and I had been waiting for a chance that was just us at home just in case she... ya know started yelling at me or something-

[As NARRATOR continues he appears to become more and more attached to these stories. It begins to appear like he himself is the one speaking.]

ONE: But then, my sister had told me she heard the noise that played in the background of this video play over and over and over again and then Mom was in her room crying. It was the afternoon she spent crying in her room, very loudly. Um... like it wasn't hidden, I guess. And then yeah, Dad got home. So yeah we found out after the fact that that's how they found out, or whatever.

TWO: And I was like, "hey, mom I've been thinking about this a lot and I don't like hiding anything from you and um, I really wanted to tell you and I've been thinking that I might- well, not might- I might be bisexual. And she just kinda looked at me for a second and she was like, "...no you're not." and I was like, "... uh what makes you say that?" And she was like, "I know you and I know you're not that kind of person you're my daughter, I know you so well-" ... And I was like, "well, I kinda know myself too-

ONE: Um, but then we just. They came down and we talked for two hours, again, it just- it just didn't go anywhere. So my mom was more- she's a little more open-minded to it. My dad was a lot more quiet the whole time. And when he did speak it just... made me angry, mostly. It was just- the way he just- "we saw this video and Ben's gay? and you're bisexual?" and the way he said it, like this scorn... yeah... invalidating, like "sure you're bisexual? You'll change your mind." It was... we were wrong. Like, not just like morally but just objectively.

[NARRATOR begins to speak in his own voice, abandoning the puppets. He stands up as he continues. The sound of metal against metal is heard once again, quietly at first.]

TWO: And then she got really upset and started crying and kinda went on this long rant about God and sexuality and how he designed his plan with Adam and Eve and like- how would I have kids? And I'm too young to even understand what that means and I ended up just ...you know apologizing and going to bed for that night...

ONE: And then my dad went into, all-... homosexuality is a choice, that's his platform. He insists on it- it's a choice! So I just, I- he says a bunch of stuff like that and I look at him and I ask him, "Can you, deny to me that the message of the Bible is just love. Like it's just love. God is love, God loves his children. We are his children and we are unworthy and we're only getting redemption because of this great love?" And Dad looks back at me and says "No." I don't know how you can possibly deny that but he says "No. It's reconciliation." And that just.. It made me mad. Like he was telling me I had *done* something that needed to be reconciled.

[NARRATOR is now speaking completely on his own. The puppets have gone limp in his arms. The sound of metal being struck against metal is growing]

TWO: For the next few days she really didn't talk to me at all, and then she kinda acted like everything was normal again, and it didn't come back up ever...and, we haven't talked about it since then, like, at all, and now she's saying, "oh when you get a husband and have kids" ..like that conversation didn't even exist.. it kinda just made me feel like a failure cus up until that point I had been the perfect child... gifted, smart, talented and then I was *gay*...

ONE: I just had to look away for so long I just had to not... not look-... look at them *[laugh]* 'cus Mom's crying and Dad's making me mad-

TWO: And it was really really hard I think for both of us because I don't think she expected that. Because like I said, I had always been the perfect kid, and then I was gay. You know? I was *gay*.

[NARRATOR has stepped in front of the desk and seems to be directly addressing the audience as himself. The puppets remain limp on his arms. He appears to be doing his best to not be yelling or tearing up. The sound of metal against metal has grown and seems to follow the volume of NARRATOR's speaking]

ONE: I just-. they kept saying, we'll work through this, we'll talk through this. And they still- they insisted very very often, we still love you. So much.

TWO: I kinda felt like I let her down and I regretted it, a lot ...and I still do,... sometimes it'll come up in news stories like the lgbt community something, or like the transgender community and I'll just feel like she's thinking about me, and the disappointment comes back...

ONE: We still love you so much and we'll work through this. You're still our child. We'll work through this as a family. But this whole time, it's leaving me thinking, "well what is there to work through?"

TWO: Then I feel like she's gonna call me out or something, or like she's coming up with all these- talking trash about them in front of me, on purpose-

ONE: And I think my brother felt the same, he's thinking, "what- what is there to work through? We're adults, we're your children, this is just part of who we are, what is there to 'work through?'"

TWO: It kinda made me want to hide it even more, cus they're making fun of it-

ONE: It was a problem to work through, like an issue we as a family needed to "work out."

TWO: But as soon as they started making fun of it I wanted to hide it and just suffocate it. Get rid of it.

ONE: I just felt... they said "you're the problem... that we need to work out"

TWO: They were just- "oh thats gross to me" "why would you *do* that"... "you're the bad one."

NARRATOR *[yelling]*: You're the bad one!

[As he yells the last word the sound of metal against metal stops abruptly. NARRATOR sinks his head onto the desk and does not move. It is unclear if he is crying or not. He sits there for a long moment. The puppets slowly rise but he does not. TWO slowly pats him on the head.]

ONE: It's not great. But it gets better

TWO: It's not all of you. It doesn't have to be all of you. It's not the biggest thing about me. I think it's just a... side note. *[pause]*

TWO: I like to sing to help me feel better. Sometimes it's not even about the singing. Hey, sometimes all you can do is make some noise and let God know how you feel.

[TWO begins to sing something. Some children's bible song or some shit. It's quiet except for her voice. NARRATOR lets it fade out and realizes the situation he is in.]

[NARRATOR looks up at the puppets. He lets them both go limp. The room feels very suddenly a lot more empty as it is clear NARRATOR is really alone. The puppets are clearly inanimate. Decidedly. just. puppets.]

NARRATOR: Sometimes all you can do is make some noise and let God know how you feel.

[There is a pause.]

NARRATOR *[imitating, or mocking TWO]*: Sometimes all you can do is make some noise and let God know how you feel! Let God, with a capital G, know how you fe

E
e
eee
eel.

[NARRATOR picks up ONE and begins to speak with the puppet but without moving the puppet. He is squeezing the puppet tightly.]

NARRATOR *[through gritted teeth, using ONE's voice as if the puppet is addressing him]*: Are you a fa- *[NARRATOR is interrupted by the being struck against metal]*... Are you a fa- *[once again, he is interrupted by the sound of metal being struck against metal]*.

[NARRATOR squeezes ONE even tighter, perhaps breaking some of the popsicle stick limbs.]

NARRATOR *[still in ONE's voice, as if the puppet is addressing him, fighting over the growing sound of metal being struck against metal]*: Are you a **faggot**? *[shouting with now only a semblance of ONE's voice]* Are you a **faggot**? *[quieter]* God **hates** fa- boys who love boys.

[NARRATOR drops ONE to the ground.]

NARRATOR: Hate the sin, love the sinner.

HA hA he HE HAAAAHA
He

Haaaaa
He haaAAAAaaa

heheHEHehe hehahah

[NARRATOR lets out a peel of laughter similar to the one MEANING let out earlier. It's fucking eerie. NARRATOR walks over to the backpack with MEANING inside and dumps all the contents out, MEANING falling out last. The sound of metal against metal, hammer against nails, is still heard. NARRATOR sits criss cross applesauce on the ground as he speaks to MEANING and fumbles around with the objects on the ground.]

NARRATOR *[yelling]*: Did you hear that Minister? God *hates* boys who love boys. Hate. *[To the audience? To god? Who knows.] Listen to me!* That's what you want to hear right? You would never say it but that's what you want to hear. You don't want to damn me but you don't want me to feel commmmmmfortable right? Tear me in two pleaseeeeeee. I know you love me. I know you love me.

I know you ILLI

oooOOOoo

wVVVwVVV

EEeeeeeee.

...

Me.

And I think they do too.

[NARRATOR fiercely kisses MEANING on the forehead and promptly drops him to the ground.]

NARRATOR: But I think they love me. Except they don't like it when I'm with them and they don't like it when I don't want to be with them... but I think they love me. They tell me they love me. Why do I feel so goddamn *bad*? *You're still not listening.*

You don't want to damn me but you don't want me to feel good. You don't want to damn me but you don't want me to feel good??

NARRATOR *[quietly but deliberately, with a touch of ONE's voice]*: It's not great. But it gets better. God loves you but you're not gonna go to heaven*[in his own voice]* Isn't that *funny*?

[NARRATOR walks over to his interview desk and grabs a paint brush from the miscellaneous art supplies. After squirting out red paint onto the desk, he quickly begins painting his wrists.]

NARRATOR *[whispering to himself]*: It's not great but it gets better. It's not great but it gets better. *[yelling]* Sometimes all you can do is make some noise and let God know how you feel.

[NARRATOR, having covered his wrists in red paint, spreads his arms out to vaguely fit the cross in the panorama behind him.]

NARRATOR: *Sometimes all you can do is make some noise and let god know how you feel!!!!*

[The sound of metal against metal, hammer against nails, is heard.]