

Harold Maradiaga

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Professor Locke

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It's funny how you could watch a movie and not even know what is really going on behind the scenes. What's running through their mind? We don't see the issues or turmoil that could be happening before the director says action. How would you feel if you were on a TV show set for the first time? About to make your debut. Would you be excited, would you be anxious. I wish I could say my experiences were sunshine and rainbows but the truth is it wasn't. I was a mix of things. Before I landed on the mat after taking a fake bullet to the chest there was a man who wanted to prove something. He had a chip on his shoulder. The life of an actor is signing up to be rejected hundreds of times but still having the patience to keep knocking on doors until you have that one big break. Even then the break is short lived. In every role I took in my career there was a bunch of garbage dripping out of it. I keep wanting to have that one perfect experience where nothing is wrong and I get to perform without a worry in the world but the truth is pain and evil are inevitable. I'm never going to feel perfectly happy in any performance because I'm human in a broken world. Which brings me to my first TV debut.

It was the summer and my mailbox on Backstage casting wasn't that different compared to my inbox that I text my crushes on. They were both unresponsive. It's ok to laugh, it was my intention. I visited my dad for fathers day and let's just say he was like a huge lego set. Too many pieces to put together ... easy to break off. This was a day of vulnerability. His father was gone. It was hard to keep his chin up when they ended on such bad terms. I played guitar for him but he was still down. And of course this wasn't the only thing going on. "Harold buy me a glass of wine" he mumbled under the sounds of his soccer game playing on his tv. Me being a workhorse busting my behind everyday at a fast food joint i didn't want to. I didn't want to waste my money that I earned just so he could get wasted. It just wasn't happening. "Please Harold, I need it" Wasn't phased. I'm hard headed. The charm that he uses to convince pawn owners to buy his guitars or convince others to do him favors isn't working on me. But something did work. He sat down and stared at the floor. There was a reason he wanted to get dizzy. A reason to feel something else other than the news he was given. "They said I have throat cancer Harold " there. That was the reason. Of Course i was in the moment and I thought it was crap. Another lie. I kept denying it. 'Stop playing with me man " But he kept his conviction. He didn't bat an eye "Just chill okay? I'll buy you the wine just to stop. Just tell me the truth" No matter how much I denied it. It was True. There were documents. That..became the chip on my shoulder. While all this was happening I was making connections on being part of EPOCH TIME'S TV show "A GOOD COP"

This was it. Before he leaves this world I can show him something he has never seen me do. I can make him proud.

Even though I found a positive outlook on this I still wasn't right in my head. If my mind was a color it was a melted brown and black. Again I tried to keep it together. As the days went by my debut was approaching. I asked for a few days off so I could get my mind straight. One thing I will never forget was what God was telling me the whole time. "He's gonna be ok. You don't have to do this. There is nothing to prove" Me still in shock though that chip on my shoulder was still there. God still had his hand on me though he was still with me despite my emotions. To this day I'm not sure if I did the right thing or not. All I knew was I reacted off of fear. Fear of losing him. And wanting to prove he raised a successful son. There were other reasons of course that tagged along. Having that first time experience on TV. Showing my family that anything is possible. Finally having something to show to directors when I try to audition for something. I just wish my motivations were better though. I wish I debuted from a place that wasn't so prideful and dark. But I just look at it as a lesson. Don't feel like you HAVE to do anything. That you are successful and that your parents are proud of you regardless if you're on TV or not.

Ok now that the dark stuff is over let's talk about the FUN side of this. Despite all this the morning was beautiful. Sunny and fresh, I was low key excited. My best friend Tony pulled up in his jeep and we were off to make history. I'm paranoid when it comes to this stuff though Tony is an awesome guy but He struggles with being on schedule . "Dude, are you sure we're gonna be on time?" I asked as I was tapping my hand on the outside of the door. 'Relax, relax we'll make it, ' Tony said in a calm voice.

"I don't know man, we have an hour to get there. It's 9 am. We gotta be there at 10. It's a weekend there's traffic and you always get lost." "Harold i've been doing this since the 90's we're gonna be there trust me" "If we're late i swear. I want a good rep" 'And you will just relax. When have I let you down?" He had a point. Tony never disappointed me . He was the one guy who believed in me. And I don't think I'd be where i'm at today if it wasn't for him. He met me when I was an 18 year old night school student who lived in a shelter working overnight shifts at burger king. I started to really think about it on our car ride. I'm 21 at this point and I'm amazed. We went from meeting each other across a register , To making music, To making music videos, And now We're gonna share the small screen together in the same show. Makes me question Is this by God? Was I overthinking? Did he say i don't have to do this to prove something but just to have fun with it or was he saying don't do it all? Mystery still kicks me in the head.

There we were. After getting lost because the address they gave us was very confusing we finally found the place. Not gonna lie. I felt like we were such badassess. The way we got out of the car, shutting the door behind us wearing sunglasses. We looked like total punks but for the first time in a long time we were stepping into something we knew was gonna change our lives. It actually felt like we were going somewhere with this. We were doing something professional.

After we stepped inside the warehouse there was a gorgeous table of french toast, eggs and bacon taunting us. "Ted the actors are here for you" the lovely assistant said as she spoke into her headset. I nodded at Tony whispering "The actors" with a side smile and eye brows raised. They told us we had time to just eat and wait for the director to come down to give us instructions but once we heard "Eat" it was game over. I can't dance, I can't read sheet music, but one thing I can do is EAT. We stacked them breakfast meals like blocks and took them to

our jeep. We were just hanging out having deep talks and I even played guitar for some cast members.

“Alright, who wants to die?” a producer announced. I wanted all the smoke. I raised my hand without hesitation. “Alright, choose your guns.” He said as he showed us 4 of them I took the Golden one. A sleek shiny pistol. It weighed like a heavy dictionary. I made the right decision of getting shot because I was on screen longer laying down as a defeated henchmen. They gave me a mat to practice falling on so I tried a few times. But there was a special landing that almost killed me..me and Tony were practicing the stunt with him mimicking the cop who was gonna shoot me and i kind of sold the fall a little too hard landing ribs first on the mat..the mat was a mat not soft at all just barely a cushion i swear it could pass for a floor. “WHOA YOU OK?” People said in unison “yeah yeah i’m good that was nothing the fall looked harder than it felt.” I said as I limped to an empty room trying to catch my breath. “Dear lord, I might have to go to the hospital after this” I whispered in the corner. Time healed thankfully. By the time the shoot happened it was so surreal. It was hard to believe I was in a legit TV shoot. We walk in and there’s monitors around there. I see sound guys, I see makeup artists touching up the leads. It felt like a dream. I couldn’t believe it yet. You would think the lead stars have a huge ego and don’t want to bother with the lower class but the lead guy was so humble and easy going. I found this out by telling a joke across the set to him. I must have had some guts back then because I’m not sure if I’d do that now. I yelled with a mexican accent “Aye i saw that badge in the dollar store homes.” he actually laughed and we started talking. I Told him he could pass for a superman role and he said he tried but they didn’t want him which surprised me. we all got a feel of each other’s character and it was great because when it came down to business it wasn’t awkward or anything there was actually chemistry. The shoot was fun but a little exhausting because each action we took needed to be shot about 15 times each. If we walked up to the protagonist we had to do that about 10 more times. If our leader of the group had to say his lines we had to stand there sucking our teeth at the cop 10 more times. The whole shootout was definitely shot 14 times. and my fall another 14. Me laying down, losing breath probably 5. And me lying there dead? I’ll give it about 11. I still remember my left butt cheek being numb from laying down on the concrete. At one point I just layed there for 30 minutes while the director was talking to the crew and I needed to stay in position for continuity. “THERE’S TOO MUCH DUST ON HIM” The director announced. He called the costume crew to wipe me down and all of a sudden I felt a bunch of hands on my legs and waist. “Yeah, see where the wallet is? Right there” the wallet was in my back pocket so you can imagine how awkward I might have felt with a group of women just wiping down my cheeks like I did a woopsie in my pants. “Tone?..dude.” I whimpered as Tony just chuckled watching me “I’m a child of God Tone” Finally the shoot is over. I limp back down with a numb cheek and I see the cop who shot me playing my guitar. Of Course I didn’t care. I was actually excited to have another conversation “Like the axe?” I asked smiling “Oh this is yours? My bad” he apologized “Nah man go crazy” my boy keeps playing and notices something that stood out on the body of my guitar..it said “John 3:16” “Hm..john 3:16” the lead read outloud “I like that..i like it alot.” The christian in me felt satisfied. I witnessed without even trying. I just let God shine through me.

Welp It's dark out andThe sun isn't burning our leftover food anymore. My pants are dusty. Tony dropped his phone down a hole in the warehouse and we both got 50 bucks. 10 am to 9pm shoot and a new clip to add to our reel: a long day in the office but well worth it if you ask me. It's funny how me and my best friends watched this whole scene without them knowing the turmoil and crazy stories behind the scenes. Everytime i look back at it I can't help but be proud of the guy who despite all the things going on he managed to fight through it and experience something he never thought would be possible while making his dad proud. My dad ended up surviving his diagnosis and I know that was only by the grace of God. I learned a lot. I learned that my parents won't be here forever and not to take that for granted. I learned to have healthy motivations when I want to seize an opportunity instead of obligation or fear. I learned that I can't change my past. I can't rewind time to make better decisions but what i can do is make better decisions now in the present. Who knows who I'll play next.. But all I know is this time..I'm going to do it right.