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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Pursuit of Happiness

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the
Requirements for the degree Master of Fine Arts

in

Theatre and Dance (Acting)

by

Gabriel Lawrence

Committee in charge:

Professor Kyle Donnelly, Chair
Professor Charlie Oates
Manuel Rotenberg
Professor Jim Winker

2012

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Chair

University of California, San Diego

2012

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to those poetic persons who have ever dared to dream, those who have purposed to inspire, to those who have chosen to compete far more than criticize, and lastly to the timid soles who are either too lost or too stuck to move.

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LIST OF SUPPLEMENTAL FILES

File 1. Class

File 2. Try Again

File 3. Learn to Take Direction

File 4. Listen

File 5. Singing

File 6. Only Use Words If You Have To

File 7. A Dram of Equity

File 8. Facing Demons

File 9. Sweep Them off Their Feet

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Pursuit of Happiness

by

Gabriel Lawrence

Master of Fine Arts in Theatre and Dance (Acting)

University of California, San Diego 2012

Professor Kyle Donnelly, Chair

My interest in becoming a performer began at a young age. My youth was filled with MC Hammer dance moves, visions of winning Ed McMahon's Star Search, and lengthy letters to the Mickey Mouse Club for audition purposes. Things changed as I got older. I don't know if it was because Mickey never replied or if it was the stack of late payment notices my single mother constantly received, but I soon decided to seek something more stable.

Many Americans are the same. Far too many would rather work loathsome jobs for a chance at "job security" than to boldly venture toward discovering purpose and fulfillment. It took a while, but eventually my *pursuit of happiness* led me to UCSD. Inside the stony walls of Galbraith Hall I found a tribe of creative geniuses that challenged and stretched me into a better person both on and off the stage. In my tenure I have been fortunate to retell the narratives of playwrights like August Wilson, Anton Chekhov and Tennessee Williams. Through their stories, the instruction of my professors and the skills of my colleagues, I have found more than a family. I have found meaning.

I am no more stable now than what I was a decade ago, but that is alright because I have more joy than I ever did. Therefore, as I approach my graduation I confidently trust the chapters that are closing behind me and look forward to the rollercoaster journey ahead.