

## **THE LARAMIE PROJECT - AUDITION SCENES**

*[SCENES DO NOT HAVE TO BE MEMORIZED]*

### **ROMAINE PATTERSON – MATTHEW’S FRIEND, COLLEGE STUDENT, 21**

We never called him Matthew actually. Most of the time we called him “Choo-choo.” You know, because we used to call him Mattchew, and then we just called him Choo-choo.

And whenever I think of Matthew, I always think of his incredible beaming smile. I mean, he’d walk in and he’d be like, (*demonstrates big smile*) you know, and he’d smile at everyone ... he just made you feel great ... And he ... would like stare people down in the coffee shop ... ‘cause he always wanted to sit on the end seat so that he could talk to me while I was working. And if someone was sitting in that seat, he would just sit there and stare at them. Until they left. And then he would claim his spot.

But Matthew definitely had a political side to him ... I mean, he really wanted to get into political affairs ... that’s all his big interest was, was watching CNN and MSNBC, I mean, that’s the only TV station I ever saw his TV tuned into. He was just really smart in political affairs, but not too smart on like common sense things ...

### **MARGE MURRAY – SOCIAL WORKER, HEAVY SMOKER, 70’s**

I’ve either been in the service industry or bartending most of my life. Now I know everybody in town. Now that I’ll tell ya, here in Laramie there is a difference and there always has been. What it is, is a class distinction. It’s about the well-educated and the ones that are not. And the educated don’t understand why the ones that are not don’t get educated. That’s why I told you before my kids had to fight because their mother was a bartender. Never mind I was the best damn bartender in town.

As far as the gay issue, I don’t give a damn one way or the other as long as they don’t bother me. And even if they did, I’d just say no thank you. And that’s the attitude of most of the Laramie population. They might poke one, if they were in a bar situation, you know, they had been drinking, they might actually smack one in the mouth, but then they’d just walk away. Most of ‘em said they would just say, “I don’t swing that way,” and whistle on about their business. Laramie is live and let live.

### **REBECCA HILLIKER – COLLEGE PROFESSOR, 30-40**

I must tell you that when I first heard that you were thinking of coming here, when you first called me, I wanted to say you’ve just kicked me in the stomach. Why are you doing this to me?

But then I thought, that’s stupid, you’re not doing this to me. And more importantly, I thought about it and decided that we’ve had so much negative closure on this whole thing. And the students really need to talk. When this happened they started talking about it, and then the media descended and all dialogue stopped.

You know, I really love my students because they are free thinkers – and you may not like what they have to say, and you may not like their opinions, because they can be very redneck, but they are honest and they’re truthful – so there’s an excitement here, there’s a dynamic there with my students that I never had when I was in the Midwest, because there, there was so much Puritanism that dictated how people looked at the world that a lot of times they didn’t have an opinion, you couldn’t get them to express an opinion. And quite honestly, I’d rather have opinions that I don’t like – and have that dynamic in education.

### **TIFFANY EDWARDS – LOCAL REPORTER, 20-30**

These people are predators. Like, this one journalist actually caught one of the judges in the bathroom at the urinal and was, like, asking him questions. And the judge was like, “Excuse me, can I please have some privacy?” And the journalist was like OFFENDED that he asked for privacy. I mean, this is not how journalism started, like the Gutenberg Press, you know.

### **REGGIE FLUTY – FEMALE POLICE OFFICER – 40’s**

Matthew was tied to the fence so tight – I finally got the knife through there – we rolled him over to his left side, and when we did that he quit breathing. Immediately, I put him back on his back – and that was just enough of an adjustment, it gave me enough room to cut him free there.

It was just such an overwhelming amount of blood ... and we try to wear protective gloves, but we had a really cheap Sheriff at the time, and he bought us shit gloves, you know, you put ‘em on and they kept breaking, so finally you just ran out of gloves, you know. So, you figure, well you know, “Don’t hesitate,” and so you just keep moving and you try to help Matthew and find an airway and you know, that’s what you do, you know.

Probably a day and a half later, the hospital called me and told me Matthew had HIV. And the doctor said, “You’ve been exposed, you’ve had a bad exposure,” because you see, I’d been – been building a, uh, lean-to for my llamas and my hands had a bunch of open cuts on ‘em, so I was kinda screwed, (*She laughs.*) you know, and you think, “Oh, shoot,” you know.

### **JEDADIAH SCHULTZ – COLLEGE STUDENT, 19**

I’ve lived in Wyoming my whole life. The family has been in Wyoming well ... for generations. Now when it came time to go to college, my parents can’t – couldn’t afford to send me to college. I wanted to study theater. And I knew that if I was going to go to college I was going to have to get on a scholarship – and so, uh, they have this competition each year, this Wyoming state high-school competition. And I knew that if I didn’t take first place I wasn’t gonna get a scholarship. So I asked one of the professors, I was like, “I need – I need a killer scene,” and he was like, “Here you go, this is it.” And it was from *Angels in America*.

So I read it and I knew that I could win best scene if I did a good enough job. And when the time came I told my mom and dad so that they would come to the competition. Now you have to understand, my parents go to everything – every ballgame, every hockey game – everything I’ve ever done.

And they brought me into their room and told me that if I did that scene, that they would not come to see me in the competition. Because they believed that it is wrong – that homosexuality is wrong. They felt that strongly about it that they didn’t want to come see their son do probably the most important thing he’d done to that point in his life. And I didn’t know what to do. I had never, ever gone against my parents’ wishes. So I was kind of worried about it. But I decided to do it.

### **SHANNON – MALE FRIEND OF AARON MCKINNEY, 20’s**

Matthew had money. Shit, he had better clothes than I did. Matthew was a little rich bitch. (*Pause.*) Well, I’m not saying he’s a bad guy either because he was just in the wrong place at the wrong time, said the wrong things. (*Pause.*) And I don’t know. I won’t lie to you, there was times that I was all messed up on meth and I thought about going out and robbing. I mean, I never did. But, yeah, it was there. It’s easy money. (*Pause.*) If I could see Aaron right now? First of all, I’d ask him if he’d ever do anymore tweak. Then, maybe smoke a bowl with him.

### **DENNIS SHEPARD – MATTHEW’S FATHER, 40’s**

My son Matthew did not look like a winner. He was rather uncoordinated and wore braces from the age of thirteen until the day he died. However, in his all too brief life he proved that he was a winner. On October sixth, 1998 my son tried to show the world that he could win again. On October twelfth, 1998 my first born son and my hero, lost. On October twelfth, 1998 my first born son and my hero, died, fifty days before his twenty-second birthday.

Matt officially died in a hospital in Fort Collins, Colorado. He actually died on the outskirts of Laramie, tied to a fence. You, Mr. McKinney, with your friend Mr. Henderson, left him out there by himself, but he wasn’t alone. Matt’s beating, hospitalization and funeral focused worldwide attention on hate. Good is coming out of evil. People have said enough is enough.

Matt believed that there were crimes and incidents that justified the deathly penalty. I too believe in the death penalty. I would like nothing better than to see you die, Mr. McKinney. However, this is the time to begin the healing process. To show mercy to someone who refused to show any mercy. Mr. McKinney, I am going to grant you life, as hard as it is for me to do so, because of Matthew. Every time you celebrate Christmas, a birthday, the Fourth of July, remember that Matt isn’t. You robbed me of something precious and I will never forgive you for that. Mr. McKinney, I give you life in the memory of one who no longer lives. May you have a long life and may you thank Matthew every day for it.

### **DOC O’CONNOR – NYC TRANSPLANT, LIMO DRIVER, 50’s**

I love it here in Laramie. You couldn’t put me back in that mess out there back East. Best thing about it is the climate. The cold, the wind. They say the Wyoming wind’ll drive a man insane. But ya know what? It don’t bother me. Well, some of the times it bothers me. But most of the time it don’t. I like the trains, too. They don’t bother me. Well, some of the times they bother me, but most times they don’t. Even though one goes by every thirteen minutes out where I live. They used to carry cattle, them trains. Now all they carry is diapers and cars.

Let me tell you something else here. There’s more gay people in Wyoming than meets the eye. I know, I know for a fact. They’re not particularly, ah, the whatta you call them, the queens, the gay people, queens, you know, run around faggot type people. No, they’re the ones that throw hay bails, jump on horses, brand ‘em, and kick ass, you see what I’m saying? And I don’t think Wyoming people give a damn one way or another if you’re gay or straight, that’s just what I just said, doesn’t matter.

### **MATT GALLOWAY – BARTENDER, 30’s**

Okay. I’m gonna make this brief, quick, get it over with, but it will be everything – factual. Just the facts. Here we go. Ten o’clock. I clock in, usual time, Tuesday nights. Ten-thirty – Matthew Shepard shows up – alone, sits down, orders a Heineken. If you had a hundred customers like him it’d be the – the most perfect bar I’ve ever been in. Okay? And nothing to do with sexual orientation. Um, absolute mannerisms. Manners. Politeness. Intelligence.

Now approximately eleven forty-five, Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson come in. They walked in, just very stone-faced, you know. Dirty. Grungy. Rude. “Gimme.” That type of thing. Paid for a pitcher with dimes and quarters. You don’t forget that. Five-fifty in dimes and quarters. That’s a freakin’ nightmare.

**REV. FRED PHELPS – BAPTIST MINISTER, 60's**

Do you believe the Bible? Do you believe you're supposed to separate the precious from the vile? You don't believe that part of the Bible? You stand over there ignorant of the fact that the Bible – two times for every verse it talks about God's love it talks about God's hate.

We wouldn't be here if this was just another murder the state was gonna deal with. This murder is different, because the fags are bringing us out here trying to make Matthew Shepard into a poster boy for the gay lifestyle.

You don't like that attribute of God? Well, we love that attribute of God and we're going to preach it. Because God's hatred is pure. It's a determination – it's a determination that he's gonna send some people to hell. If God doesn't hate fags, why does he put 'em in hell? You see the barrenness and sterility of your silly arguments when set over against some solid gospel truth?