

Site Specific Symptoms by Deirdre Logue
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#1 Night Diary

The overnight sleep study showed difficulty initiating and maintaining sleep, associated with a significant alpha-EEG disturbance. There was no polysomnographic evidence of significant bruxism on this particular night. Psychologic self ratings indicated considerable emotional distress including symptoms of depression and anxiety, which may require further psychiatric assessment. She indicated an average consumption of twenty alcoholic beverages per week, which may be compounding her sleep related symptoms. Sleep questionnaires indicated a tendency to restrict sleep, especially during her work-week. Please advise as to whether you require further assessment for this patient in this clinic.

#2 The Sky is Falling

I can't remember if it was Chicken Little or Henny Penny or both, but someone spoiled optimism for me with their insane story of the sky falling onto the fragile heads of all the adorable farm animals. I can't recall if the sky falls or if it's bread crumbs, acid rain, a plague of frogs, or a swarm of locusts. Or if it's simply the threat of something that final which makes this story so terrifying to me still. Its stupid ideas have set into motion a group of associated symptoms that in turn have provoked a set of associated films. A syndrome.

It is on uneven ground that I have felt my unconscious body for the first time. My body is alive, and in the moment that I discovered this, I also discovered that the harder the ground under my feet, the worse the anticipated fall. A sinister side of me that I have never really known has worked its way out and grows more beautiful as each day passes. It becomes more threatening as I move through these ten films.

#3 Directions to Phil's Farm

After the Mount Forest exit, things get a little dark no matter how bright the day. The last half-mile to the farm is the best part. A bridge built for one swings slightly, and it is there that the coolness catches you. Once you've passed the first bend in the dirt road and can't yet see around the second, you leave one place for another. When I travel to the farm I always get a headache, which makes me salivate and think about basketball, and my best conversations of late have all been in the darkroom. These conversations remind me of dreaming, and leave me unsettled. Standing in Phil's driveway, I realized that a tree is glorious when ripped from its root hold and thrown across a pathway, and that it's not just about a place but what happens to you in that place.

Conversation with Bill the Barber, Mount Forest, Friday, June 23rd, 4pm.

D: Hey.

B: Hey.

D: You got time to give me a quickie?

B: Pardon.

D: A haircut.

B: Don't do women's hair here.

D: Well, I went to the salon across the street but they are all busy, from weekend you know, so they told me to come and see you, and seein' as you're not busy...

B: Don't do women's cuts.

D: I don't have women's hair.
B:....Sit down.
D: Are you sure? I don't want you to do it if you're going to give me a half-assed haircut. I got a big weekend myself..
B: I'm sure.
D: Last chance..
B: Yep.
(Trimming back and sides)
B: Where you from?
D: ...just in town for a couple of weeks, up at Phil Hoffman's farm, you know Phil Hoffman? He's got a nice place out the berry farm way, does these film workshops in the summer. People from all over the world go there to make films.
B: That so.
(Clipping top and thinning sideburns)
B: What kind of farms did you say you make films about?
D: Oh, we make films about all sorts of stuff.
B: You go to different farms?
D: No, we pretty much stick around Phil's farm, but folks go all around Mount Forest to shoot stuff..
(Shaving Neck)
B: Yeah, they came in here last summer. One of them got a haircut..
D: Yeah, yeah, made a great film too. Shop looks great in it.
B: That right.
D: Yeah.

#4 Plan A: Excerpt From Grant to The Ontario Arts Council
The works rely on myself as the primary source. This approach to my production, a way of making works 'internally,' has contributed not only to its performative style but to the formal aesthetic of each piece. They are process-based, further emphasized by hand-processing and tinting techniques, surface manipulation and in-camera editing. The subject matter ranges from gender ambiguity and sexual difference to masochism, psychoanalysis and somatic illness.

Each work begins with a specific physical action, e.g. a ball hitting a head, which is compulsively developed through repetition and intercutting related images, sound and text. Sexual deception, humiliation, injury, fear and failure are common themes, however, humour plays a critical role. Though dark, the works have a curious, nonsensical quality, which provides the viewer with some distance from the complexity as well as some comic relief. It has been my experience that humour can act as a savior of sorts.

#5 Backup Plan and Other Psychic Noises
Since my first visit to the farm four years ago I have shot ten films. Having completed six of them to date, over the next three weeks I will finish the remaining four. Now, as I write and edit, I can feel the essay and the films about to collide, like siblings running in opposite directions around the kitchen table, each thinking they know what the other's strategy is, trying to watch themselves, each other, the floor and the table at the same time, picking up speed and hysteria along the way. When I write all I can think about are the films, and when I work on the films all I can think about is what to say about what I am doing. I start to wonder what I've begun, what I am trying to finish, and what will be left when it's over. Or if it will ever be over. And if it isn't what will I do? It makes me think that if I'd just spent more time preparing (scripts?) instead of wandering around myself like a tourist

and eating whip cream from the can and biting my nails twice as badly as I really want to so that I have an excuse to wear bandaids, and if I could just stop dancing like a drunk and hoping for the best, playing in the toilet and licking the bowl, and pressing my face up against the glass to see what will be left behind... Everything was fine until I started taking pictures: putting myself in between you and me, waiting for the flying object to land and watching the clock, stitching up my wounds, controlling my control, processing my process and trying to fix my mistakes. Now the monsters move and they move faster than my camera can.

#6 Trouble

Step 1: Try to Calm Down (Fall and Scratch)

This can be accomplished in a number of ways, though two come recommended. First, let your body go limp and allow your dead weight to drop directly to the ground. While on the ground try telling yourself over and over that you will survive this, and that if you really think about it, this is the best time of your life. You are making some really interesting work. It's difficult, yes, but imperative that you keep things in perspective. If this doesn't work, carefully insert one small handful of common garden thistles into your underpants and wait.

Step 2: Call a Friend or Your Local Therapist (Milk and Cream)

Under trying circumstances it can be very useful to pick up the phone and have an intimate conversation with your therapist or an old friend. They will tell you that the ideas you are working with are difficult and hard to manage, but that you are doing fine while trying your best, which is what really counts. This conversation might compel you to drink twelve to fourteen litres of ice cold, vitamin-enriched homogenized milk while lying on your back. After all, being a filmmaker is an honorable and fascinating profession and people admire what you do. (Note: Milk may cause drowsiness).

Step 3: Try to Identify the Problem (Tape)

If you don't know what's bothering you sit down for a moment and think. While sitting and thinking, take a three inch wide roll of clear plastic sticky tape and wrap up your head so that your thoughts can be contained. Hold your breath. Wait several seconds before removing the tape. Upon removal, notice that the problem is stuck to the recently discarded tape. Look at the problem and ask yourself, what is its shape and size? Continue breathing in and out.

Step 4: Fantasize (Water)

Creativity is uniquely linked to your imagined self, to fantasies of who you are and who you may wish to be. Let this concept take hold of you for a moment. Inhale deeply and plunge your head into a bucket of cold water. With your head submerged you can imagine that the things you wish for are real and that these things make you feel fulfilled, satisfied, even if it's just for a second or two.

Step 5: Call Back and Tell Them You are Fine

Having survived all of this, you realize that it's not so bad, that this is the best time of your life, that your films are the most important thing right now, that you have things in perspective, that you have great friends and a terrific therapist, that ideas can be difficult, that internal chaos is part of the process and that you can be anything you want to be. Go directly to the phone and call those in whom you have

confided. Tell them that you have figured out a few very meaningful things and that you are back on track and doing fine now, thanks. Thanks a lot.

#7 Cure (A Syndrome)

I am the primary performer, director and technician. I arrive at the events through fantasy, impulse and intuition. I perform the actions with a repetition that I have come to know so well in myself. I am most often there alone so that I can see myself without your reflection. The films demonstrate that I am permeable. When I am there, I feel relaxed with this idea, even though it frightens me. I have found a place where I can drown out my sorrows, doze off, fall down, lick the ground, bite off more than I can chew, chop off my head, watch it split open, patch it up and tape it back on. All those empty fields make it possible for me to hide in the tall grass and sneak up on myself when I least expect it. I can pretend I am the surveillance camera's well hidden lens, the physician looking for a diagnosis, the patient looking for the cure. I am the site. I am the specific. I am the moving target, the illness, the antigen and the antidote.