

## JEFF AND JACOB FOY

Theater changes lives. Had I heard that when I was a 14 year-old baseball player, I would have quickly disregarded it and continued working on improving my change-up. However, in the last 6 years, my life has been turned upside down. I went from being a kid trying out for the high school baseball team to a college student opening a musical in New York City.

One night in late 2015, my dad approached me with the “crazy dream” he had. Unknowingly to me, for many years he had dreamt of writing a musical set in the ER. As he spent night after night in the ER working the graveyard shift, he began to envision songs, dances, and storylines. However, even as his vision became stronger, he still always considered his idea to be a pipedream, as he didn’t know how to play any instruments. Though I knew he had a “scientific” side, I didn’t know he also always had a creative side. He was the singer in a band in high school and loved writing music with his bandmates. As career and family took the forefront, his creative side all but faded away. It wasn’t until I quit baseball and started writing music that I saw this side of him that had been hidden for so long. The night we started writing *Emergency* was the night both of our lives changed.

Over the next several months, we worked together making up characters’ names, writing storylines, singing melodies, and recording tracks in my bedroom. We laughed until we cried, we talked until we fell asleep, and we sang until our voices were hoarse. Quickly the void we had experienced from my quitting baseball had been filled by our new musical. After completing re-writes, readings, and more re-writes, we decided we needed professional guidance. Our first google search, “how to produce a musical” yielded the response, “Don’t even bother.” But we kept searching, and ultimately we stumbled upon Ken Davenport’s website. We contacted Ken and arranged a script consultation, and with nervous hearts and shaking fingers we logged onto Skype that day in September. When Ken started the conversation by saying, “The music is fantastic,” our hearts nearly stopped. Though we had no idea how to proceed or what to do, we knew we needed to get *Emergency* on stage.

It wasn’t long after this meeting with Ken that we learned about the Inner Circle. As two guys in Indiana with dreams of getting a musical on its feet, we agreed that this would be an amazing opportunity. At our first meeting, we were in awe of our colleagues and all they were achieving. We sat around the table and listened to discussions about things we had never heard before- 29-hour readings, equity showcases, theater festivals, and more. But as out of place as we felt, Ken felt that we belonged there. And it was his belief that gave us the confidence to keep going.

We continued to re-write our show, and we listened to Ken. Even if we weren’t sure what we were doing, we did what he asked of us. Soon we had a full production at my college and had written a second show called *One Night Only*. Then Ken said, “Have a cabaret show,” and we did. Then he told us he wanted to see our show on stage in a festival, and he did. Proudly, in August of this year, *Emergency* debuted in New York as part of the New York Theater Festival to rave reviews. And Ken was there in the audience to see it. The mentorship we have received from Ken Davenport has been irreplaceable. In just 23 months, his guidance took us from being two guys nervously waiting to hear his feedback in the IU library to being two guys nervously waiting to hear his feedback after our New York debut. And we continue to gain more confidence as we approach the next steps in our show’s future. So now, as a 20 year-old theater major in college, I agree that theater changes lives. It changes the lives of the actors who work two or three jobs just to afford the chance to live their dreams. It changes the lives of the

audience members who laugh, then cry, and then go home and call that friend with whom they need to reconnect. And it changes the lives of a father and son who find themselves chasing a “crazy dream.”