



### ***Make Your Story***

**A collaboration of Purdue Libraries and School of Information Studies and  
The Brian Lamb School of Communication**

#### **Episode 4: Using Sound to Enhance Storytelling**

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AH: Andy Huttel

EM: Ele Matelan

AH: I have to say, too, like as an actor, one of the biggest transitions into doing radio work like this is honoring the Foley, truth be told. Because in our scripts we have Foley cues that are treated just like any line of dialogue. But one thing that I know I've had trouble with, and I know a number of our actors that have trouble with is allowing the Foley to happen. And so a lot of times in rehearsals, we have to kind of tell people, "Hey, you jumped on the Foley". You've got to let the sound effect happen because when you listen to say like *The Shadow*, or if you listen to any of those classic old time radio, they'll talk.....they'll say a line of dialogue. There'll be like a moment of silence and then you'll hear the footsteps and then there'll be a moment of silence and then the dialogue comes back in. And it's like that for almost any sound effect in those old time shows. So creating space for the Foley to do its thing and to really get a chance to hit so that the audience can hear it.

AB: Hello and welcome to *Make Your Story* Episode 4: Using Sound to Enhance Storytelling. At this point we've discussed researching podcasts, interviewing people, and how to market a podcast. But what is yet another way to make your style of storytelling extra special? One element that can really help listeners immerse themselves in your story is the effective use of sound. Sound has always been used to enhance storytelling, even dating back to the tradition of old time radio in the case of broadcasting audio stories. Predating television shows, old time radio was a theatre of the mind allowing viewers to imagine the different comedic antics, dramas, and romances portrayed by popular performers of the day. With only dialogue, music, and clever use of live sound effects, many audio only stories became vividly imagined scenarios in the minds of viewers. This series is a collaboration between the Purdue Libraries and School

of Information Studies and the College of Liberal Arts Communication Program. My name is Dr. Annette Bochenek, Assistant Professor of Library Science.

SH: And I'm Sarah Huber, Assistant Professor of Library Science.

AB: Today we have two guests from Locked Into Vacancy Entertainment or L.I.V.E. who will be sharing their expertise with us in incorporating sound as a storytelling tool. L.I.V.E. is a Chicago comedy group performing original radio plays and songs before a live audience. Each show is a mix of recurring segments, musical numbers and commercials from fictional sponsors. Some of the featured segments include Chi Beta Justice, The Rogers Sisters, Joe Jupiter: Space Private Eye, Generic Hospital, and Clark and Belmont. Joining us today are L.I.V.E.s Foley artist Ele Matelan as well as L.I.V.E.s artistic director and cast member Andy Huttel. Ele and Andy thank you so much for joining us.

EM & AH: Thank you so much for having us.

AB: So can you tell us a bit about your backgrounds and working with L.I.V.E.?

AH: So L.I.V.E. was a spirit of love that a friend, Shane Hill, and I came up with about....oh my gosh...about ten plus years ago at this point and it was really Shane grew up listening to all of these old time radio podcasts, you know, such as The Saint or Prairie Home Companion, you know....all those.....The Shadow is my personal favorite. He grew up listening to those and he absolutely....he started getting back into them and he's like we could do this. We can very easily do this. And so we got a couple of our friends together. We got a couple scripts and one December we performed the radio play version of It's a Wonderful Life. And then we also did this very bizarre poem, I guess, about Christmas in Hell. It had Caligula....I don't know. It was a strange.....it was a strange thing.

AB: Interesting.

AH: Yeah, so we recorded both of those. That was in December and then in about August we had gotten a bunch of other people together and we created a couple scripts, a couple characters, like you said.....Chi Beta Justice, Joe Jupiter, you know, then we recorded the show in front of a live audience in a church for a pretty sizeable crowd and unfortunately the generator popped and so we didn't get the full recording of that. The joys of live theatre. You know from there we kind of bounced around to a couple different theatres where we would perform every other month or once a month performing to our main plays, as well as, a couple songs and the fake commercials. And then we started podcasting them and putting them out on to the internet eventually the Queen of Noise, Ele, joined us. It just got better and better and better from there. She was able to make a car squeal sound using a hot water bottle and to this day I.....yeah.....just the fact that she got that.....it just....you listen to it and....the playback. I wish I could remember the episode off the top of my head but like she was....

EM: It was the one where Jonathan Culler was playing the Joker analog in a Chi Beta Justice where.....

AH: Oh right, The Kidder. Okay, yeah that was the one with Billionaire Man and right, right, right and he was The Kidder. Yeah....to this day that's still one of the most mind blowing sound effects I think we've ever done cause it just....the verisimilitude was just unprecedented. It just sounded like cars squealing.

EM: I'm flattered. Thank you.

SH: What did you use to make that sound? Now I'm so curious.

EM: Well actually, this is going to get a little bit down the rabbit hole a little bit earlier than I was thinking we would. I can get very ready and granular about Foley work fast so stop me if I make no sense. But one of the interesting things is how our idea of sound really has been influenced by pop culture and narrative fiction over the past century. Especially the past century, simply because everything has gotten codified, recorded, archived because of recorded media which was never a thing before the past like century or so. And so our idea of what a car tire squeal sounds like, unless we've been unfortunate enough to actually be in the receiving end of a car accident, is pretty much dictated by what we've seen in movies, and tv, and cartoons and that is actually created the same way I created it for the show which is using a rubber water bottle like the old timey folks would use to keep warm in the winter and just dragging it across the surface like this [squealing noises].

SH: That's awesome!

EM: I got that from Caoimhe Doyle....I'm probably butchering the pronunciation. She is the Foley artist on Game of Thrones and she was doing a featurette for the series and just puttering around her studio and then went, "Oh, this is a fun thing to show off". I mean not that there are many tires, breaks, squeals and car chases in Game of Thrones but she still had it handy.

AH: Man, those final season car chases in Game of Thrones were just top-notch.

SH: Wild.

EM: Yeah. Once the dragon got to mock 8, it was pretty intense.

SH: Curious Andy, like, did you guys have backgrounds in sound? You know what led you to say we can do this and just jump in?

AH: Hubris is the short answer. We said, "You know what? We're going to do this and we're going to figure it out." Shane has a superpower and that is surrounding himself by absolutely incredibly talented people. We had a stage manager whose boyfriend.....you know, we handed him a script and he just said okay and he just kind of rolled with it and the first image of him

showing up at rehearsal with pool noodles and just light up guns and do-hickeys and thing-a-ma-bobs and just....since then I'm no longer really surprised what Foley artists come up with. But that first rehearsal we were all just....our jaws just sort of dropped and we were like how is that gonna make that sound. Like that does not....what? And then, of course, during the actual production it just sort of happened. As to how we thought we could do it, I don't know. We were looking for new theatrical opportunities for ourselves, truth be told. We were just like, you know, I'm not doing anything. What do you want to do? I don't know.

EM: I've been an actor since I was in my teens. That's when I started studying theater and comedy and I have an acting degree from Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. And one of the first things they tell you when you are in your freshman year in SMU in acting is be ready to move somewhere else when you graduate because there's not enough theatre to sustain a career here. And I was really intrigued by the Chicago scene, starting in probably my sophomore year when some of the graduating class did a production of *Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind*....what is now done by the internet wrench. I was really impressed with the speed at which they created all of these stories that were supposed to be on a weekly basis to reflect where we were as a society and as individuals. So I was really impressed with how quickly they were creating all of these things and the very fly-by-night nature of what they were doing. And so I started stockpiling sweaters when I was in my junior year of college and realized I could be moving to Chicago where they had winter and I had never been through one of those before. So I started working, also, with people that I went to college with at a company called the House Cedar Chicago, which is pretty much defined by a high fantasy and spectacle aesthetic. But they also do things in a very....what they consider a Brechtian way where the audience is complicit in what's going on on stage. They can see how everything fits together which even though like the spectacle is not being hidden from them, like if they had flying samurai on stage, you would see the people that were pulling the ropes to help them fly across the stage back and forth. And that gives the audience another level of investment in this story because you're watching everything come together to make that story work, which means you care more about it working. And I think that's another thing that's really interesting about where we are in history right now, again, because everything is so recorded and so accessible. That means that we have like narrative conventions that become canonized and then cliché faster than we ever have before. And that means that we're all so familiar with the "what's" of stories and so we get to be more adventurous with "how" those stories are told.

SH: Wow! That's fascinating. I haven't heard that description before. Thank you. That's really interesting. Can you explain what Foley art is?

EM: Absolutely. This will be the Nickelodeon version so I'll be doing a little bit of history as well as the definition. Now Foley is originally a film term and the best way to describe it or try to define it the way it is used nowadays is that it is sound effects that are custom, which means they are for a specific piece created for that piece. Like you can then bank those sounds and add them to a sound library but it's only Foley the first time. If you're reusing something later, then it's become a sound cue. The Wilhelm scream would be a very good example of that, although that's voiceover rather than Foley. We'll get to that later. The next thing would be

that they are practical. They are sound effects that are manipulated by an artist. You could do a field recording of a waterfall, but that's not Foley. That is a sound effect. That is a field recording. And also, the laughing would be...it is synced with the action of the story. And there are different ways that that is relevant to radio theatre or the theatre than it is to film and tv. But it is still able to be applied to radio and stagecraft at this point. And we get so many of the disciplines or techniques from millennia of theatre that have been incorporated into film at this point that while it started and went with film, you hear it used a lot more nowadays because the ways that we are creating this media has been much more accessible and democratized because everyone has a camera phone. So everyone has the capability to create this kind of storytelling which is also really, really cool. So why do we call it Foley? We call it Foley because in the 1920s when film houses or production companies like Universal, Paramount, and Warner Bros. were in their heyday, they were just creating silent films which doesn't mean that they were watched silently. It just means they didn't have an audio track on them. Now in 1928, think Warner Bros. released the Jazz Singer, complete with actual jazz singing and so that was such a hit that the other production houses knew they were going to have to also incorporate sound into their stories to stay competitive. And the same summer that the Jazz Singer came out, Universal Pictures was planning on releasing a silent film adaptation of the same story as the musical Showboat. But if they were doing a silent Showboat alongside the Jazz Singer, they knew that wasn't going to fly. And so I image that Carl Laemmle, the CFO of Universal Pictures at the time, comes bursting into Jack Foley's office chomping on a cigar and says, "Foley, you gotta make this bird sing!" Now the reason why he came to Jack Foley in this instance is that before he worked as an Interstitials Director at Universal, Jack Foley was a radio man. Or at least, there's enough arguments and evidence online to suggest that, which I think makes a lot more sense than the American ideal of....no, no, he sprung from Zeus's head fully formed with a bag of corn starch in one hand and an egg beater in the other. No. The truth of it is, we are all magpies. We are all stealing the shiniest things we see from other artists that we admire and doing what we can to make it our own. And that's where a lot of the magic happens and that's another one of the reasons why we continue to make these pieces of story and pieces of artwork even to this day.

AH: One of the things that I really, truly love about it is that when done well, the Foley is another character within the radio play. I mean, if you'll see like a movie like Lost in Translation, for example. Like Japan, in and of itself, is a character within the movie. Midnight in Paris, Paris is like its own character. And very much so the Foley and the music....they're alternate....you know, they're just extra characters within and once I started writing scripts with that in mind, I really feel like things....things really started jelling. So much so that we actually eventually created a character in Generic Hospital named Dr. Foley who would only respond and only communicate through sound effects.

SH: This is really helpful because when you said, Ele, sound effects is different than Foley art....I think this is helping me understand it to think of it as a character in itself, has a life in itself as opposed to a complement to an action. Is that....?

EM: It really depends on what the Foley is meant to.....aw man, that's a really good question, Sarah. When I'm doing stuff on stage, too, like we are working on a different standards typically, than we are in a film or studio context. Like in a studio presentation or production like a film or like a traditionally created podcast, we're probably going to be using elements both of sound design and of Foley. And I do want to make sure to point out that all Foley artists are sound designers. Not all sound designers are Foley artists simply because it is a niche within a niche in a discipline. And when I am Foleying the sounds of a character onstage, then I am acting as an extension of that character. And so there are elements of clown and there are elements of puppetry in the way that I am performing those sound effects as well. I want to make sure that I am creating something that is consistent with the actor's idea of that characterization. If they're supposed to be shutting a door, there's a big difference between whether or not their character thinks they would slam it or shut it gently. And so we want to make sure that we're reflecting that sort of thing. Whereas if I am creating the world affecting that character, that means a different type of focus. And does mean that I am now a separate character inhabiting that world with them. I will say that I didn't grow up listening to O.T.R (Old Timey Radio) like a lot of my colleagues did. I had mostly seen the discipline lampshaded or parodied on sitcoms. Like, at the risk of dating myself, I remember that episode of Punky Brewster where she did a radio play, and that episode of Frazier where he did a radio play, and The Simpsons, as well. But I was seeing a show at the American Theater Company in 2006 called Kids Simple that had a sound practitioner on stage creating all the sound effects that went along with the story and helped move the story and build the world for these characters to inhabit. And I was fascinated because unlike with these sitcoms where they would say set up a laugh line and then jump cut to the Foley practitioner doing something ridiculous for that to be a shtick more than a discipline. This artist, Scotty Iseri, is working without the luxury of a jump cut, which also meant that he was being very mindful how he was a raised props and revealing them to the audience so he wouldn't be spoiling story points moving forward in case anyone was watching him instead of the actors that were doing the rest of the scene work. And I was so fascinated by what he was doing, that that was basically my gateway into falling in love with this discipline. And I just started Googling any time something was going to be on the Chicago stage involved the words radio theatre, or audio drama, or live Foley and watching them whenever I could. And then I fell in with a theater company that had a live horror audio drama show. That was an anthology that they took open submissions for every year. And that was when I finally got my opportunity at the table. And just hung on for dear life since then.

SH: Really?

EM: And it's also important to know that while Foley's name was the one that stuck, there were other really important people doing that kind of work around the same time. Jimmy MacDonald was basically Walt Disney studios version of Jack Foley and he was a musician, he was a drummer, and he also was also an engineer. So that meant that he had a lot of musicality in the ways that he was creating these sounds for the cartoons. He was also an inventor. He was creating lots of these crazy contraptions that were also going to be incorporated. Like there's a great photo of him tuning brake drums from different sized vehicles that are ultimately going to become the chimes in Big Ben and Peter Pan. Another thing, if you

remember, Alice in Wonderland, when they smashed the white rabbit's watch and it kind of winds down like (makes sound like watch winding down) until it dies. The way he created that sound was by putting a metal nut inside an inflated balloon and just like whipping it around so its own momentum and creating that screening, whining kind of sound on its own. I also love Ora Nichols, who was a member of the trap drumming circuit on vaudeville and with the silent films before she went into radio and she was a member of the Mercury Theater on the air with Orson Welles. And she created the sounds of the original War of the Worlds broadcast. And one of the things that we most associate with her creativity....she was also very into the idea of the sound rather than the actual thing created with sound, which was something that really made her and Orson Welles butt heads. But the great time when she got her way was when the Martian crafts lid was unscrewing....because we don't have one of those laying around. And so instead she was unscrewing a jelly jar inside an empty toilet tank so it would reverberate in a way that made it sound much more...larger and more imposing.

SH: This sounds like good student competition.

EM: Oh, absolutely!

SH: What is.....what is....using the simplest items around your house can you create such-and-such sound. Who does it the best? You know, send in....send in the recording and the description of how you did it.

AH: Now if you're doing that at Ele's house you've got a distinct advantage.

EM: Yeah, I do have a different idea of what would constitute a common household object. But that is one of my favorite things. Also, when we're talking about the types of props that we use for this kind of work, there are things that are custom built. Things that are built for the job. For example, I'm going to pull out a marching machine, which is a series of wooden pegs that are lashed together that you roll to be the sound of soldiers marching in lockstep. [Sound of marching] Did that come through?

SH: Yeah.

AH: Great. Now Ele. When Locked Into Vacancy happened to produce their own version of War in the Worlds, in association with the Chicago Public Library and we performed that for the anniversary show on Halloween a few years back. What did you do to create the unscrewing of the ship?

EM: Oh no, you're putting me on the spot. It's been so many years and so many shows ago, but I'm almost certain I would have done something involving one of those singing or prayer bowls for the sound of like something big and other worldly and ethereal kind of emanating from the craft. And then probably something with crockery like big, metal crockery like unscrewing itself. And then the reveal of the monster itself with lots of vocal effects and

slapping on the metal as well. To be like the multi-tentacled creature slapping around....slap him around.

AH: That is exactly what you did. You are correct.

EM: Good.

AH: So this was a test and you passed.

EM: Great! I also want to say there are things like custom builds and then there are musical instruments that show up very prominently in this kind of work as well. There are wonderful resources on YouTube of people just clowning around and creating like all these different kinds of effects with their violin or with their tuba or with any other kind of instrument. Or my favorite thing, which I think you'd also appreciate, Sarah, are found object. Because that for me is the most satisfying thing to present to an audience because when they have a previous relationship to one of these objects and then they're seeing it recontextualized like this, I think it comes from the same part of your brain that enjoys puns or plays on words by forcing something conventional or cliché into a new context. And it's a nice way of bringing that theatrical magic home with you as well.

SH: It surprises you to see something in a different perspective.

EM: Exactly. I spent most of my time in the before times when I wasn't working on a specific project, you know, just living my life squeezing stuff that I would find in grocery stores or hardware stores or toy stores. And one of my favorite examples of that would be, for the audience at home, a couple of plastic unicorn toys and I just happened to grab one at Party City and gave it a squeeze [squeezing sound] and I was so impressed because I was looking for sea gulls for a beachscape. So then I could go [squeezing sound several times] and partner that with one of those musical instruments I was talking about. This is an ocean drum. This is the version that I found is most applicable to stage work because larger than this.....this is probably twelve inches across. I got one that's sixteen inches across that I always try to bring into theatres and they say, "No, it's too loud". It's a cylinder that is closed on both sides and filled with ball bearings and you can find them in a lot of world instrument stores as well. I think Remo makes them [sound of drum]. So if you play that like ocean waves and overlay those seagulls....that can be really satisfying for a beach environment with your voice actors [sound of ocean waves].

AB: Do you have a favorite sound you like to create?

EM: No, don't make me choose. Yeah, I love the challenge of coming up with new sounds, which more often than not end up being combinations of different sounds that I've created in the past, as well. I really like doing sustained rainfall which I like to start that with a rain stick which is another traditional world instrument. It's very similar in theory to an ocean drum but instead of being a cylinder, it's a long tube that you're listening to seeds ping off each other as



they cascade down to the bottom. And so the size of that will dictate how long your rainfall can be. But if I start with that and then layer it in with Alka-Seltzer effervescing in soda water then that gives me similar enough soundscape that one sounds like the start of a rainstorm and the other sounds like it's sustained that I can then fade out as I see fit. I also, like, I said I really like doing things with found objects that the audience will recognize....I also really love playing with goblets of water. Let's see if we can get this to cooperate [sound of running your finger around the rim of a glass]. And if you have one that irregularly shaped, I'm kind of moving it back and forth to change the configuration of the water at the top so it's giving you those different....those changes in pitch. So that can be a really fun thing do if you're playing with something other worldly, something magical or maybe a transition from the past. One of the reasons why I love doing Clark and Belmont and also Thultak: Wandering Barbarian is because they usually have lots of fun science fiction-y or fantastical sounds that don't exist in real life with contemporary or modern counterparts. One of my favorite things ever that Andy's actually let me do was....and this is one of the reasons why I love doing original works, as well. I fancy myself a playwright as well and so I like to have a relationship with the playwright where I can be suggesting things for the sake of making it more relevant to the medium of audio drama and one of the Clark and Belmont's that we did was an homage to Around the World in 80 Days. So we had this big, glorious steam punky air ship that has been eluded to a couple of times. It's like, "Oh no, please, we need to hear it start. Please, please can we have it take off and start?" And so for that I incorporated a big old metal hinge and a really big metal slide bolt and then a manual egg beater and also the sound of compressed air and also the sound of a thunder tube, which is a stringed drum that reverberates to give you kind of a low rumble like the engine is continuing to go. And also, the sound of wings because, of course, it's a big, ridiculous air ship from the Victorian era so it should have wings. And that was the sound of two dish towels being flapped as it was continuing on its way.

AH: We had a small army helping to do this one particular moment. And it was one of those, you know, just shows like how collaborative what we do is in that....that scene wasn't written and then it ended up being one of my favorite parts of that entire episode is after Ele bats her eyes and begs and pleads, you know, we end up creating what I think is just a really cool moment. Because obviously this is all audio drama, but we do perform these live. And getting to see all of this. Getting to see the actual, like, optics of this being created is really neat too because you had people flapping dish towels. You had somebody whipping an egg beater. You had something with....you know, and then you have Ele doing about like three things at once like she's a one man band pretty much. And then getting to hear it back later, you know, it's like you can't help but like....but visualize in the theatre in the mind like what does this steam ship look like? Because you hear....even though we don't say, "Well, you know, there's the steam ship. It has 38 wings, it has a gyroscope outside, it's got this....it's got this....it's got this but just by the sound effects influence the listeners mental image of whatever it is that we're showing them which I think is one of the coolest.....one of the coolest things and I think that's where like Clark and Belmont and Thultak really lends itself to just some of the coolest moments and some of the most unique audio experiences that we've produced.

EM: And to piggyback also on the stagecraft of it, a good question to field or to consider is that the resources you have for the complexity in your soundscape often involve how much....how many pairs of hands you have at your disposal. And so, I'm not shy about drafting different members of the cast if they're not in the middle of a dialogue heavy scene into helping me every once in a while with more elaborate effects. But one of the things I really liked about the air ship in particular was two of the characters that Andy had added into the mix for this story were the Wright Brothers. And so we had them on the flapping of the wings which felt like a fun little dramaturgical Easter egg as well.

AB: So what was one of your most challenging moments in creating or using sound effects?

EM: Well, definitely the air ship would fall in that category because I knew I was excited about it. And I wasn't sure I was going to have all the personnel I needed to pull it off and so I was really lucky with that. The writer that does most of the Thultak: Wandering Barbarian scripts without fail likes to try to put at least one or two impossible things in all the scripts. I have little spreadsheets....

AH: Let me....

EM: That I write down.....

AH: Let me categorize that a little bit. In the stage directions we have four Foley.....Rob Mackelmore is the writer's name and he will very specifically say, "I don't know, some sort of big, loud hippo crashing through a glass chandelier or something. I don't know, sorry Ele.

EM: And so in response to the spreadsheets that I used to do all of my creative breakdowns for the sound effects will probably have something in there like, Rob's trying to kill me, but he also....one of these commercial parodies was somebody's house of Foley. And that was probably the one that had this sound effect of a cat falling down the stairs while screaming French. And so it's always just about breaking down the individual sounds and sometimes you need multiple props to create the sound of something that would be a single object in real life. So that's also going to be something that requires a fair amount of forethought and also as much rehearsal as you can trick your colleagues into giving you in the space and in the same time as a voice actors are going to be having their own relationship to these sounds so you can do some intense queuing. Actually, I would say doing fight scene breakdowns is one of the most challenging things because you also need to really carefully choreograph with your voice actors where their exertion sounds and where their reaction sounds are going to be folded into whatever it is you're doing at the table. You're going to have like your body blow sounds which would probably be something like....depending on the resources you have and whether or not it's in studio or stage and if you have time to clean up or things like that. You might have just a boxing glove and maybe a pair of shoes to smack a pair of blue jeans or something big and durable and sturdy with. Or you might be breaking some bones which are going to be celery and carrots, or you might be tearing someone's throat out which would be a head of lettuce or maybe bashing someone's head in which would be a head of cabbage. And there are a lot of

little things that you can be doing to protect yourself when you're in the heat of the moment and dealing with show adrenaline so you're not grabbing the wrong thing at the wrong time. One of the reasons why you may notice that with all the produce I just mentioned it was all vegetables....that's because I always avoid fruit when I can on Foley live shows because fruit has sugar and it'll make everything around it sticky once it starts getting its juices everywhere. Another thing is if I've got a big violent show that involves both a throat takeout and head bashing, I'm going to always make sure that anytime I use cabbage in a play or production, it's going to be red cabbage because that way I always know which one is the cabbage. So little things that you can do to help yourself in the....in the past for the moment are always really, really good.

AH: I have to say too, like as an actor, one of the biggest transitions into doing radio work like this in honoring the Foley, truth be told. Because in our scripts we have Foley cues that are treated just like any line of dialogue. But one thing that I know I've had trouble with and I know a number of our actors have trouble with is allowing the Foley to happen. And so a lot of times in rehearsals we have to kind of tell people, "Hey, you jumped on the Foley. You've got to let the sound effect happen." Because when you listen to say like *The Shadow* or if you listened to any of those classic old time radio, they'll talk, they'll say a line of dialogue, there'll be like a moment of silence and then you'll hear the footsteps and then there'll be a moment of silence, and then the dialogue comes back in. And it's like that for almost any sound effect in those old time shows. So creating space for the Foley to do its thing and to really get a chance to hit so that the audience can hear it because the audio balance is one thing that was also....we had to....we had to kind of learn how to balance the Foley and the music and the microphones because sometimes the piano would get way too loud, you know. We had a very, very, talented sound technician, Jesse Schroeder. We've had a number of them over the years who we've worked with. We have dedicated mikes set up just for Foley, so that in the theater, we can bump it up where we need to, but then we can also adjust it after the fact for the podcast so what you hear in the podcast isn't necessarily what you heard. And then you have the horrible, horrible laughter of an audience, which can sometime just completely take over and cause you to miss all sorts of things. So always the balance of all of those audio elements...it's very, very tricky when you're not used to that Foley being another character like I was saying before.

EM: Someone that I learned some of my craft from early on....I still quote every time I'm working with actors on a new project, or if I'm running a workshop at a university, I always say the trick for voice actors is to make room for the sound, but not to wait for the sound. So if you've got....two of the big ways to think about sound effects would be plot sounds versus story sounds. So story sounds are just building the world of the story....their background things that aren't necessarily moving the plot of the story forward. Whereas, plot sounds would be...."Oh no! Look out! He's got a gun!" Bang! "He shot someone!" So if you don't hear a bang but you still say, "He shot someone", it doesn't have the same kind of punch unless you're like, "He had a silencer!" That's one of the other reasons why I'm super grateful that *Locked Into Vacancy* is a comedy outfit that also has a bunch of people that have cut their teeth in improv and in

Renaissance fairs where they're doing all these really crazy things and taking risks and helping the story still move forward when things don't work out entirely the way you want them to.

AH: Which happens less often than always.

SH: Well that's what I've been thinking is it sounds like improve is in there, for sure, or needed at times.

EM: Very much so....well it's about active listening more than it is anything else which is great for any actor or stage performer to have in their back pocket. They want to make sure that they're being true to the story as it's going right now even if it's not 100% the way that it was rehearsed. And that's another one of the reasons why live sound is great to incorporate into the show as early as possible. A lot of actors are used to just getting the sound effects into the story at tech. Which I also think is kind of a lost opportunity because there's so many different ways that the way things sound really inform your character and the sense of the world that you're inhabiting in really, really cool ways.

SH: Are there some activities? Are there resources? You mentioned YouTube videos. Maybe there's websites, books, anything to help students moving towards this into their podcasts?

EM: Absolutely. Yeah. When I said YouTube, specifically like lots of sci-fi and fantasy films and stories will have making of featurettes. And the sound work is usually some of the most exciting stuff that you're going to get to see in all of those featurettes, as well. Since we seem to have gone past the days of the DVD if any of your students are old enough to remember what those were. A lot of the stuff can be found on YouTube or on streaming services. And so even if it's just a matter of films that they like and would be curious about, it never hurts to just be like well what's available on this. Let's see....David Betcher, as a director is always really, really diligent with his sound work and so you can find some really cool stuff out there about Fight Club and about Panic Room and a bunch of other films. The Cohen Brothers as well, like, if you just think about the painstaking effect that on the narrative....the air compressor sound has in No Country for Old Men, that's another thing just to revisit and think about from the perspective of the sound artist in a cool way that really augments your appreciation of the story telling. Another thing....let's see....two major sources as far as books are concerned....I love the writings of Robert L. Mott. He was a radio man who was active in the '20s through '60s I want to say until he passed away. And he was great about like his own anecdotes and he also interviewed a lot of his peers. So he's got great experiences that are going to be really resonant to artists working today still, as well, about the trial and error that goes into this creative kind of work. And also some practical advice for all those students, as well. Another thing about how Foley has been kind of taken back into its theatrical roots even though it started as a stage term....as a film term....is that Robert Mott never uses the word Foley in any of his writings. He considered himself a sound effects man or radio man or sound artist. Foley wasn't really considered even a film term until after Jack Foley passed away in the '60s. There's also the definitive book on Foley work is The Foley Grail by Vanessa Theme Ament who was a professor at Ball State University. We just got the third edition of The Foley Grail is now available as of

November and I might be in there as well in the section on radio theatre. I would also recommend checking out on Facebook there's a group for Foley artists that now has over 6,000 members in it and not only is it a great place for people to commune and to share very cool videos and effects and ask questions, but John Roesch, who is the Foley artist for Pixar and Skywalker Sound has pretty regular interviews with big figures in the field, as well. We go to interview the folks that did the Oscar winning sound for Sound of Metal last year. And so you get to learn really, really cool things from people working in this medium.

AH: I would also recommend...just so you can kind of see how all the pieces kind of come together. There's a 2012 film called, What About Dick, and it is a live performance of a radio play and it features Eddie Izzard, Tim Curry, Billy Connolly, Russell Brand, Tracey Ullman, Jane....Daphne from Frazier....I'm blanking.

EM: Jane Leeves.

AH: Thank you. And they perform everything over a series of a couple night so they were kind of able to splice it together but you've got live music. You've got live Foley. You've got all the actors in front of the mikes performing and it shows you really, really well how a radio show like that all kind of comes together in a performance like that since you used to be able to go downtown to see a radio show get performed. But nowadays there aren't as many of those as there used to be. But it's so funny too. Highly, highly, highly recommend.

EM: I think it's still available on Netflix if I remember correctly.

AH: Aw Netflix. You are correct. It is currently on Netflix.

EM: And as exercises are concerned if your students are interested in writing radio plays, start out with things like what are their favorite sounds? What would they be interested in hearing as a plot for a story? Or thinking about what stories they're already excited by and how sounds can inform those. Or if they are already in the practice of listening to podcasts or radio theatre, I find it really helpful to itemize the sounds that you're hearing, listen to and think about what sort of emotional reaction you're having to them, and then brainstorm how you would create those sounds on your own. Or listen and think about what sounds they sound like because the context of the sound sometimes influences what it actually is, or vice versa. There are a lot of things that we reuse prop-wise in sound that just depending on how we're manipulating the sound or what we expected to be in the story itself will tell us what that sound is. Let's go back to something that Andy was saying earlier. There's this great....possibly apocryphal story about when televisions were coming into everyone's homes for the first time and that was taking over as the go-to family entertainment instead of the radio and this little boy was being interviewed. The interviewer said, "Which do you prefer radio or television?" And the little boy said, "I like radio. The pictures are better!" And so it's all about building those ideas, the story in theatre of the mind.

AH: Radio Days....Radio Days is another good film that features some really great moments of radio drama and some really fun characters and different takes of how radio really was a member of the family kind of back in the '30s and '40s.

SH: I loved that movie.

AH: It's so good.

EM: Me too.

AB: So where can we access live episodes and hear more of your work?

AH: Yeah, we are on Spotify, iTunes, pretty much anywhere where you get your podcasts. You can look up Locked Into Vacancy or L.I.V.E. Radio Show. That will also come up. Those are pretty much like the main ways right now. You can also access our Facebook page which does have links as well, but pretty much I think Spotify is going to be the best place for all of your Locked Into Vacancy needs.

AB: Awesome! Well, Ele and Andy, thank you so much for joining us today to share your experiences.

AH: Yeah, thank you so much for having us.

EM: Thanks so much.

SH: And thank you to our listeners for tuning into this episode of Make Your Story. Listen to our past episodes and be on the lookout for new ones on the Make Your Story website at [lib.purdue.edu/makerpodcast](http://lib.purdue.edu/makerpodcast). And last but not least we'll be doing another callout in early April for student episodes on your stories of Making. There will be \$100 gift card awarded to the three students who best meet the criteria that will be posted with the callout. So start preparing your episodes and be looking for that callout.