

THE HAMILCAST

EPISODE 278 WARREN EGYPT FRANKLIN 1 TRANSCRIPT

[00:00:00] Hi, I'm stage and stage's Lin-Manuel Miranda, and you're listening to the Hamilcast.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:00:18] Hello, everyone, welcome back to the Hamilcast, I am Gillian today I am joined, I'm so excited, Warren Egypt Franklin, hey my friend.

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:00:27] This is a dream to be on here. I'm great. I am great. I'm so happy to do this.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:00:34] It's a dream to be talking to you. So before we before we go any further, real quick, can you please tell me your pronouns?

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:00:39] Yes. Is he/him

Gillian Pensavalle [00:00:41] Great. Thank you so much. You are calling in from L.A. We're recording virtually. Of course you are. Lotfy of Jefferson on the Phillip tour of Hamilton. But everyone just heard you in the Elijah Malcomb episode freestyle Friday. You were you are real life best friends. You just told me

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:00:57] We are the sons of Liberty. Me, Elijah and Desmond we like are really, really close in real life. So that's why it just translates so easy on stage because we really look out for each other real life. Those are my boys. My brothers. Yeah.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:01:09] OK, so we have a lot to talk about. You are very busy. You are running off, you have something to to film. You have a call time a little later. But we have to get in. I want to hear like the whole Warren Egypt story, the Hamilton story, what you're up to now.

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:01:24] Oh, my goodness. Yeah.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:01:25] Cause you got the Hamilton gig right out of college, is that right?

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:01:29] Yeah. I booked Hamilton two weeks after I graduated from college.

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Gillian Pensavalle [00:01:33] That's the dream. That's insane. Yeah. It all happened so quickly, right?

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:01:37] Yeah. So a little bit of back story for me. I, I was in college the first time I saw Hamilton. I was a freshman in college and Alex Lacamoire my school was doing In The Heights. That was my, my debut freshman show. So I played Graffiti Pete in In The Heights my first college show and my music director David Pepin worked on In The Heights and bring it on with Lin and Lac and everybody. So they brought Lac and Stephanie to our college to do a little workshop for Heidt. And they were also teaching the seniors they're like, the number or something like that. And it was like World from Hamilton, so. I remember because the guy who played Usnavi was rehearsing with the seniors, he wasn't with us in the room with Lac because junior sophomores, freshmen, we were all like learning the music to Hamilton. We had the music, the sheet music in front of us. Hamilton had only been. Hamilton was maybe three weeks old at this time, so no one had had sheet music like it was literally no, like nothing. There were no bootleg, there were no sound, but like literally no one knew what Hamilton was, except that public commercial where they saw it at the public. So, like, I was holding the sheet music, by the way, and the biggest music theater nerd, like everyone listening, sorry, I am a nerd.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:02:59] Don't apologize, please. You are at home.

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:03:03] But I was like, oh my God, I have the sheet music in my hand. Oh my God. Oh my God. I was freaking out. And after we did a couple of Hamilton songs, we started going over some of our material so that Lac could give us notes and we wanted to go over 96000 and we are Usnavi wasn't in the room. He was like, well, we can't go over 96000. I was like, well I'm Graffiti Pete, but also Usnavi cover. And he was like, but you can't rap against yourself in the beginning. And I was like, yes I can.

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:04:27] And he was like and he kind of looked at me like ok smart ass. Like if you think you can do it if you have the talent but go ahead and do that you can do it. So I was like rapping as Usnavi and he was like wow, I'm really, really, really impressed with you. I love your swag and how you

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brought your own your own sense of style to the to the texts, but still sticking in the red themselves. What are you coming to see Hamilton soon? So at any point I was like, actually, I had tickets to see Hamilton on my spring break. So this is right before the Tonys in March when I had my tickets over spring break. And he was like, OK, if you come, I want to introduce you to Lin, take you backstage. I want to give you the whole treatment. And, you know, when people say,

Gillian Pensavalle [00:05:11] yes, you could say anything. You want to lose a point. I'm losing my fucking mind. You're in college.

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:05:17] Oh, my God. I'm a nineteen year old kid. I'm a 19 year old kid. And, you know, people when people say shit like that and, you know, being in the industry, people say things all the time when you're like, OK, for sure. Like you're going to bring me backstage for this, you're going to do this. But like they don't follow through on, you know, usually. So I didn't think nothing of it. I went to the show and I texted my music director of the show Lac and Andres, the drummer. I was like, I'm here. I'm not expecting anything from it but I'm here. And then my music director takes me back. That great. Your name is on the list at the end of the show. You go backstage.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:05:51] Andres Ferreiro.

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:05:52] Yes. So he I had the sticks from the night I saw Hamilton.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:05:55] Stop it, Warren.

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:05:57] I saw Hamilton next to RuPaul and Sarah Jessica Parker.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:06:01] Wait a second

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:06:02] I don't I don't know what my life was, but it was crazy as a nineteen year old with freak, I mean.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:06:08] Yes. And also like Andres has been on the show. I love him. He's wonderful.

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Warren Egypt Franklin [00:06:13] So nice me. He gave me this, he was like, do you want the sticks from tonight's show. And I was like, yeah I do.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:06:19] Oh my God.

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:06:19] Yes it was so cute. So I go backstage, I'm meeting everyone I meet Leslie. I need my story that I love it when I get to Daveed at that time. I cannot believe you like I cannot believe this. And like Oakland, Oakland and Cleveland aren't very.... Of course, they're very different. But like, you know, David is from the hood in Oakland. You know, he he's he's his life could have a totally different way. And he always talked about how much his hometown means to him. And I'm kind of like that with Cleveland. Cleveland means everything to me. And without Cleveland, I don't think I have the tenacity and passion and work ethic that I do because I wanted to make it out. I was like, I love your story. I love what you did with this role. And for the first time as a black man, I saw myself in someone who was a leading man. And this was before you got to Tony. I can't wait for you to get a Tony but also know, I'm playing this role like I'm playing I am playing this role. He was like, I believe that brother. He was like, keep working, keep grinding, keep doing what you do, but like, keep working. So then after all that, I mean I mean, everybody in the cast just about I mean everybody. So I just still can't believe I'm also standing on the turntable on stage. I can't believe it as a kid it's was crazy. So then Lin comes in and Lin is like, OK, Warren Egypt Franklin. I've heard about you. And I was like, wait, excuse me,.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:07:45] What.

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:07:46] Yes. So I think Lac ended up telling Lin that I was coming and telling him about, you know, how great we were at the workshop and I wasn't expecting that at all. So I wasn't expecting to meet Lin. I was like, oh, he probably doesn't need to talk to people. But what I loved about Lin is we barely talked about the show. We barely talked about Hamilton at this time. Kendrick Lamar, his new album came out and we talked about what what new rap music was out and what project that he wants to do next and how I'm feeling as a person and how I'm doing as a student. And I was like, give give me

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gems on, like, what I can do to to work on myself. And he he talked to me about staying present, staying present and making sure that I'm always listening and learning. And I say, yeah. And I said, I want to be in this show so bad you have no idea. He said, you're doing everything right. Get that degree and I will see you here soon. And I said, I promise you after I graduate, I'm going to be in the show. So then fast forward to my senior year of college, I. And at my showcase, so the way I went to Baldwin Wallace University, where I got my bachelors of music and music theater, and we have four shows that we do for our showcase, the same with agencies and managers, producers, whatever. And that week was such a whirlwind for me. I after after my very first showcase I had already signed with my agent. I'm saying to the best agency, in my opinion in the world, A3 Artist formerly known as Abram's for A3. I have signed with my agent after the first showcase and my Hamilton audition was actually the morning before the next two shows because we did two shows a day. So before I had even like signed the ink and before I had even finished showcasing four other agents, I had had my Hamilton audition done. I had so much agent interest in me. I think I have 40 to agent interviews. I was only able to go to about 20, but I have 40 agent interview. I was in final callbacks for the frozen tour for Kristoff. I had audition for Wicked. I had auditioned for I had a callback for Lion King for Simba. I had this callback for Hamilton. I had a callback for a play at the Kennedy Center. And this is all within one week and I hadn't even graduated from college yet. So of course my Hamilton callback day, I got a callback after originally auditioned for, and they got back to me for that, which I was super. I wasn't expecting because some people auditioned for Hamilton. I'm sure you've heard stories like 15 and 20 times before they can get it. I have one audition, then they call my agent and they said we want him back May forth. I remember. I remember. I forget the date May 4th. They wanted me back and that was my graduation day. And I said, fuck it, I don't care. Screw this. This is I didn't come here to across the stage. They can mail me the paper. I'm going to my Hamilton call back. And he was like, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, slow down. Hamilton is going to be there. If they really want you, you should go graduate like you should go do that for your family. And I was like, I don't want to miss my window of opportunity. And he was like, no, go go to your graduation party. OK, so then I went to the callback once I had moved to New York for like a week later after graduation.

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Gillian Pensavalle [00:11:12] I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. I have 8000. We need to slow down for a second.

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:11:17] Oh, my God. Oh, my God. Please, I can go a mile a minute, please.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:11:20] I know I'm obsessed with this. I know. So I want to hear all about Cleveland, too. I want to hear about, like, you and like how you got here. Wait a second. So this so Lac and Andres, you're nineteen years old, you're doing your In The Heights, right. So that was. That was after they'd open after Hamilton opened on Broadway, but before the music was released anywhere. Is that right?

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:11:41] Yes. So this was I want to say no because I want to say the soundtrack had just dropped. But this was like the week that I don't know if you I mean, you're a friggin Hamilton fan like me. Do you remember when, like, the album wasn't out yet, but you can only listen to the tracks from NPR.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:11:57] Yes, that's that was October. Yeah. So that's October 2015.

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:12:00] That was that week.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:12:02] So basically Lac sees you rap with yourself as Usnavi and graffiti pete, like basically like pre audition for Lac essentially.

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:12:10] But I didn't even think about it like that. And I don't even think it was it wasn't like him giving me a ticket or anything because I had already had tickets. But he was just like, yo, like, are you coming to see Hamilton? Because he was like, you're so good at what you did. I hope you come and see Hamilton. And I was like, actually, I am like as hard as it is, if I can get tickets for the show, my brother surprised me and got tickets for me. So me and my brother were already going to see Hamilton on spring break, regardless of if this happened or not. We had already just happened to have tickets. And because my music director of my school had worked on in David Pepin is the best person ever. He's a music director at a wicked now, but because he had worked

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with the whole team on the whole team, music before he had looked out for me, was basically doing the corresponding and text him to be like, Yo, my boy Warren is going to be here for this and here for that, watch out for him, blah, blah, blah, blah. So that was kind of how the whole going backstage on Broadway thing happened.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:13:08] So then what? So you're talking to Daveed, you're sitting next to Rupal, you're talking to Lin. You say to Lin, I'm going to be in the show. And he says, OK, great. And I'm not saying that flippantly. I really I mean, it seems like you had such a connection before you even walked into the Rodgers. But I believe that people, you know, heard you and saw you and felt you and said, oh, yeah.

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:13:31] And see, it's funny that you say you believe because honestly and like, I love these people, these people are like my bosses and my heroes now. But like, I didn't believe because and that this is where I think it's it's really good for people to hear about how you can fuck yourself because you can put so much stuff out to you before about Hamilton. And we'll get to this later. But when I was in that. Final call backstage and all that. I'm not going to book this because I'm too young. I'm just way too young. I don't fit in with the look of the cast, I'm twenty two, I just graduated. I'm probably going to be a swing or a cover or alternate or something just because I'm way too young. I probably don't look good with the rest of the characters. Kyle Scatliff is is much older than me. He's a much more seasoned than me. He has much more credits. Like I just you know, I talked myself into an oblivion. I was like that happen when I was like, they probably won't remember me, but like, you know, you talk yourself out of it. But what's for you? Like, whether you believe in God or a higher power, the universe or whatever, what's for you? It's for you and I seriously. The three things that could give the best advice on pray about it or manifest it, put it into the universe or whatever, work really hard and also write it out like write like everything I've ever gotten in my life. I've written it out, I've prayed about it, but I've also worked for it. And I feel like those three things, people miss it because they miss what they're really praying, they're really manifesting. But now working or they're working and they're praying, but then they're not manifesting it, writing it out, you know, like I'm I'm a firm believer in that.

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Gillian Pensavalle [00:15:05] I completely agree. I couldn't agree more. And I hear that all the time on this podcast especially.

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:15:12] And not to be cliché, but it really is fucking true. Like it's so true. But there there there is doubt and I have so many doubts and I had even more doubts when I started. Like, just because you start you make it into the big row, it's like, OK, everything doesn't go away. I'm just OK and secure now. It's like waiting now I have even I went through a thing where I had even more doubts and more scary times and it never the cycle never stops. And I think that's a good thing though, you know what I mean? It's like you you need to fall in love with. Things are totally, you know what I mean? And I think it's important.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:15:50] It absolutely is. And this is this is a throwback from, you know, if you've been a listener for years and years. But Lexie Lawson, who was Eliza on Broadway and she's a goddess and wonderful. It became a saying on this podcast called I'm Going to Lexie that is another word for manifesting because Lexie Lawson was turning down gigs before she had a Hamilton audition because she was saying to her own agent, oh, I'm going to be in Hamilton by then. I'm not going to be able to do that.

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:16:15] And I told my agent that as well. I did. Right.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:16:18] And so because her story was one of the first stories I heard on the podcast of just really I mean, saying it and putting it out there and living your life like not if what living her life as if her bags were going to be packed. And she's come to New York for this day. And then it happened. She also, exactly like you said, worked her ass off. Yeah. She she put in the work, but it became a thing like, I'm going to Lexie that shit, I'm going to Lexie. I mean, Patreon Peep some listeners, I'm going to Lexie winning the lottery. I'm going to Lexie doing literally, you know, like and it's it's been such a through line of this podcast. So hearing you speak about it so vividly is is just like, yeah, yeah. It makes complete sense to make complete sense.

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Warren Egypt Franklin [00:16:59] And I wasn't I was not supposed to and like I'm super I'm a lot of people don't know, but I'm super. I used to be super close off about my life and now I'm more so open it up because I realized the power and the platform that I have to inspire other people. But even looking at my debut date, I debuted in Hamilton August 6, 2019, on the four year anniversary of Hamilton being open. And then if you take it back, 2015, August 6, 2011, I was literally homeless. So like? Oh my gosh, yes. I had I had a crazy, like, rough kind of crazy childhood and in and out of a lot of things, but like going from like homeless and not knowing whether I would even make it through high school, then go into putting myself financially, emotionally, through college by myself to then go through that and then even graduate from college and to like. And I told the people that I was like, you know, I'm honored to even be able to audition in front of you guys, like getting a call back to you, like everything that's been going to getting the gig. And like all of this ending up like on the same day, I was like, God, it's so good. It's like it's really great.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:18:16] So, oh, my God, I want to go into all of that. But let's OK, let's go back to the Rodgers.

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:18:20] I'm getting so much. I'm getting

Gillian Pensavalle [00:18:22] I mean, I told the patron, because every month we do like a zoom, hang and tell them. I was like, I feel such a connection to Warren. I love, like, you're so warm and your emails and thank you. I'm honored that you feel so comfortable to just like, dove in and tell me everything. Yeah. So you're on the turntable, which is an unreal feeling. Absolutely. And you're standing there and so you're saying, walk me through what happened after you tell Lin and you know, Lac and David and Andres's I'm going to be in the show. So how what happens? What comes next?

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:18:53] What happens? What comes next is after I had met. Lin, we needed to walk out, but. More famous people, it was RuPaul and Sarah Jessica Parker were like at the door and there were security and I think there was someone else famous there, but like I we couldn't go that way. So then Andres was like, let's go this way and I'll just take you guys under and take you guys out. And I thought, OK, cool. So then I was

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just looking at like. All of the moving parts downstairs in costumes, and that's when he took me to the pit and was like here the sticks that I play with and I still have those big back there on my butt or my dressing room counter. Yeah, I still have those steaks and the flavor from that night. All of that is on my dressing room counter in Toronto, just sitting there. Lovely. And definitely at this point. But that's I'm sorry, but yeah. So I go under, I get the steak from him, but I'm like I just remember trying to and it sounds so cheesy but like trying to breed like. It's a Smell and only like theater nerds, nerds, nerds get this feel like the theater, the fog machine, the like snacks. I don't know what that smell is, but like there's a smell in the theater. And I just tried to like. Like, take it in, and I was just like, I'm going to be back here and I don't know when I'm going to be back. It could be 20 years from now. But I think this show has so much power that I was like, I think it's going to win every freaking Tony that it's nominated for, which just about did. And I was like, I'm going to be back here. I don't know when, but I'm going to be back. And the next time I set foot in the Richard Rodgers Theater, I had booked Hamilton and I was watching just to watch it to like they gave me tickets just to, like, see it one more time before I went out on tour. So I did what I said I was going to do.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:20:42] So tell me about that first audition. How did it happen? How was it? Where was it? Who was there?

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:20:46] So it was I got sent an open call just to my email, I think from TLC, just based on well, for my showcase, I played my showcase a little risky. My two numbers that I did for Showcase. I'm just always trying to think for Girl from North Country wasn't out yet, but I saw it at the public and I really want to play Jill Scott. So I was like, I'm going to sing Slow Train. So I sang Slow Train and then Slow Train had transitioned into what did I miss.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:21:13] What

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:21:14] So I was like, I want the industry to see me in two roles that I can play right now and be that I can already up and play.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:21:21] Was It like a mash up.

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Warren Egypt Franklin [00:21:22] Yeah, it was just like a transition because all of our the way our Victoria busser, my mentor slash mother slash, just the most amazing person she directly showcases and everything goes from one key to the next. He there's no stopping just like it's us. It's unlike any other showcase because for thirty minutes you only need thirty minutes. It just goes from number to number to number. Some group numbers, some other numbers follow. But my little section that I had was a slow train and what did I miss. And Telsey came into our showcase and they saw me and I had based off of that I had had before I even booked with anyone. I had that audition for Hamilcast and I had to audition for Frozen. And I went I did the general packet, general mail packet, which is like what was it like except of Washington on your side and like, wait for it, I think. Yes, Washington. Yes, I know Washington on your side and Dear Theodosia, I think, is like the general mail packet. And like I said, I went home, my callback was on graduation day and I didn't go because I was like, no. So I come back once I moved to New York City like a week after graduation. And they say they want to see me for Burr and for Laf/Jeff, they didn't give me any other specifics of that. I just had to bear the whole Burr packet it in the Laf/Jef packet. So I did it. This was for Bethany, not did it. And I was so nervous. I was so nervous. And she was like, just just let it go. Like, I see what you're wearing and who you are. I have free form locks at the time and I wore like the shirt and made sure my button was like open. My chest was all exposed. I thought, I'm so sexy. I think I wear like leather pants and some boots. And like, I wanted to be like the sexy Laf/Jeff because I love Burr don't get me wrong, I love Burr. Yeah, I can sing the hell out of Burr. I love everything about her. But Laf/Jef just to me, in my humble opinion, not because I play him, is the best role in the show. Just hand down to me.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:23:23] So you did a little bit of Prince cosplay basically.

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:23:26] Yes, literally. And Prince is one of my heroes anyway. So yeah, I did it and she was like, that's great. But she barely looked up like, she looked up like she's writing down a lot of things. I'm like that can mean anything. Let me let me not let me not put any bad energy out. But I didn't hear anything for a couple of days and then like

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the next day they were like, they want to see you for Lafayette, Jefferson, the take over for one of the tours. And I said, excuse me. And they said, yes. So now just come and do the laf/jef pack it for the creative. So I come and audition for Matt Gallagher and for Patrick Vassel. And we're in the room. And I'm so nervous. And I know PV is from Cleveland, and Im from Cleveland, from Lac was good, but I'm like not trying to be too much. We're trying to be personable. And I just gave him my all. And before I left, this is where I tell you, you will sabotage yourself because you are not on the table. You don't know what the fuck you're thinking. They asked me to sing one more song and I'm like, in my mind, I'm like, I just gave you a whole packet of of material. In my mind, I'm like, fuck, they don't want me. Like, if they asked me to sing something else they must not want, why would they ask me to think of know if this is Hamilton. This isn't a new show. They're not like this isn't a summer stock. This isn't a season. They don't they don't. They know what my voice is and they know what they need from the material because they do it. They don't want people like, OK, I'll sing something. They were like saying something that Jefferson would sing and act two. That's in your book. And I have like this sexy dark core version of moves like Jagger. It's like a slow, sexy version and moves like Jagger and the chords, like some kind of like Phantom is a little bit almost like,

Gillian Pensavalle [00:25:16] OK, so of course they love that.

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:25:17] Yeah. But I saw Lac like I saw laughing and I was like, oh, maybe that was the best choice. But I'm like, what was done is done. I get downstairs and I'm like, OK, so if I, if I bomb an audition, I'm going to celebrate with a milkshake. If I do well on an audition, I'm going to celebrate with a milkshake. So I'm on my way to go get a milkshake. You know, I'm on the subway so I don't get my call. And he's like blowing me up and I didn't get it because I'm under under the fucking street or whatever. So as soon as I get out the tunnel, I get a call and it's like, hey, did you leave Telsy yet? And I was like, yeah, I got off the subway or whatever. And he was like, OK, well, tomorrow you need to go back for a dance call. And I was like a dance call. Oh, no, like, I just I hate like I think I'm a really good dancer, actually, I am a very strong mover. I'm not as great as the freakin wonderful, talented, amazing, sexy heroes of ensemble members that we have because

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they just break their bodies. But like I'm a confident dancer, I love to dance. But in dance halls, sometimes that's where my confidence goes because I'm like who we are. It's a lot and it's fast. I'm like, I'm a little scared, but I get to the dance called the next day and it says Warren Egypt Franklin, Hamilton, ROOM B. And I'm like, What? I thought it was a dance call. So I get in there, there's a camera set up and I want to say it was Michael. I was in there with Michael.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:26:49] Valderrama. fun

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:26:50] Yeah. And I'm like sweating and like so scared about this. And there's cameras and I'm like, what's happening? And he's like, yes. So they really love you. They love you a lot. You're the only person that they want to see for this role at this point, unless you have two left feet, you are great. We're going to film this for Steph and Andy. And don't forget, we're going to go over it twice and record it. I'm like, oh, shit. So, like, we do that. And this all happened within like a couple of days. So I think I had the general singing in the package for them. When I say moves like Jagger when I just did like Jeff and then the dance call, that was just exclusively for me. That was my Hamilton process. A week goes by, I hear nothing and I'm like, Oh, I didn't get it. But something happened. The person like who was leaving the and leaving anymore, whatever I like, kind of just try to put it out of my head. I got to Broadway Bares that night. I got the most wasted I've ever gotten in my life with my mother. I went to friends in my life, Alex know me and Alex and I would get wasted. It probably bears. I don't get in the house until like six am sure and I go to sleep. But before I go to sleep, my education, it already emailed. I'm like, it's fine. I obviously didn't book Hamilton, you know, but it's fine. We're going to move on to bigger and better things, I guess. And I gave it my all and we'll get back on the horse again with Hamilton, maybe someday, but I obviously didn't get it. This is me being, like, drunk and emotional. I sent off the email to my agent, hilarious and that was like six a.m. I go to sleep. And then the call that woke me up with my offer to go on tour.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:28:26] What a wake up call. It's so many in more ways than one.

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Warren Egypt Franklin [00:28:30] And Alex. Alex, no. About the whole thing on tape. And I was crying and emotional. I didn't even realize it was real. And I want to say that was a Monday. And they were like, you have like a week to pack your bags because next Monday you go out on tour. So I had I think I started to like June 17. And I want to say I moved out to New York like May twenty seven. So this had all happened within like a very, very short period of time.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:28:55] Yeah, this is

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:28:56] it doesn't sound real.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:28:57] I I've been doing this podcast since January of twenty sixteen. I mean, close, I'm close to three hundred episodes. I've never heard a story like this and all these years and all these people, I mean it's all next week I'll, I'll say the same thing. And last week I said the same thing, you know what I mean. Which is why I love it.

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:29:16] It's like you keep hearing that's the thing about Hamilton. And what I love so much about my job is everyone is actually super fucking dope. And I learn from everyone. I learn from everyone. I learn from every ensemble member, every swing, every lead, every crew member, every resident, like totally. I'm just constantly learning. And I feel like Hamilton wasn't just Hamilton for me. Hamilton has essentially been grad school. It's it's literally been grad school and like how to perfect all of these things. It's been a I look at people like Marcus Scheu and like, yeah, he was in the freaking original cast of a weekend. And I get to get on stage with this man, you know, like it's just it's just been a masterclass working with so many people who I looked up to growing up and people who have done amazing credits. And it's but also it's not about that. You know, what I mean is just about like good people. Good, good, good people.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:30:21] Yes. And I remember so it's so funny. Just talking to is making me have all these memories about very early on in the run of this podcast. But I remember, you know, people fell in love with Hamilton and it was the thing that was so big that even people who hated musicals and hated Broadway and hated hip hop and hated that everyone sort of came together. So there were a lot of people from who who didn't have

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a lot of experience with theater and Broadway, listening to the podcast to get more access to the show. And I remember very early on people feeling very anxious about seeing people who weren't on the original cast album. And I remember Mike. First of all, the show is the show is the show, but second, you have to remember, and I'm a New Yorker, I grew up going to Broadway, but you have to remember, these are not shlubs off the street. These are people who are athletes and excellent. And that goes for everyone for every show. This is not Hamilton specific.

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:31:22] Let me tell you one thing about about Hamilton to Hamilton was not built to be done for five show weekend. And the thing that I think is why we're all such superheroes for people who tour with this damn show it really wears and tears of your voice and body we do for Hamilton in 48 hours.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:31:40] That's insane.

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:31:41] Because there's double Saturday and double Sunday on tour coming off of a Friday night show. So like is it is a lot. It is a lot. So that's why on the weekends we all have gone crazy. But I just look at people and like I'm just like, you're so amazing. Like, you're just so amazing at any time. Any time I want to complain and Hamilton out of breath because like, of course I get tired. Truth, I'm so fatigued. But any time I want to complain, I look at the fucking badass ensemble around, like, how dare you how dare you know, they're literally slinging their bodies up like crazy. I'm like, how dare you, bro? Like they are literally out there grinding. Like if they can do it, if they can, if they can hold you up, you can hold them up. And they that's to me it's the ensemble that drives the show. Hamilton would be nothing without the ensemble.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:32:28] One hundred percent.

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:32:28] They are there. They are everything. They're everything.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:32:32] Yeah. They're superheroes. They're athletes. They are.

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:32:35] And I feel like it's I want the the culture changed so much when we get back on the stage door

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and the world will be a thing. But I remember I remember I was with our man three Trevor Miles, we were in Indianapolis or something. And the girl was so anxious to get to me, she was so anxious to get to me. And, you know, I thought that energy and I love what fans are like that, but she totally ignored him, like totally ignored him and skipped her play over. And you'll be surprised people put their playbill up so that ensemble members won't sign. And I'm just like that. That's that's problematic but Also, this man worked just as hard as me today. So, like, he deserves the credit.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:33:17] And it's fucked up and it's wrong. Yes. And and because I've heard stories like, oh, who did you play? Well, you know. WOMAN five ensemble.

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:33:26] Oh, absolutely.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:33:28] Excuse You.

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:33:30] And also because I know so many Hamilton fans listen to this podcast, and I don't mean to be problematic with this, but I feel like every single person who is in Hamilton who's not on Broadway can agree with me. Fans, we love you. We love you. We love you. Love you. Hamilton has the best fanbase in the world. Please stop coming to the stage door, for example. I've gotten this many times. You know, I had my worries and and I was skeptical. But like, I've seen Hamilton eight times. And you are better than Daveed. You are better than James. You were better than Paris. Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait. Those are our friends.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:34:04] Yeah. Don't do that. Don't do that.

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:34:07] Those are our friends and colleagues. So, like, when you tell us that we're better than you, you blew Angelica tore out the water. That's not. No, because a also. What are we supposed to say back to that? We all worked for the same company. So what are we supposed to say back to that? But also these people that you're comparing this to, those are our friends in our family who we like. So it's not really I think they want to say that because then we'll be like, oh, my God, I really like it'll make us like them more. And it actually just makes you look like a big douche.

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Gillian Pensavalle [00:34:38] So I agree. And I think it's it's also I don't think for the most part, thinking it in this way. But to start to start a sentence with like I was real worried

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:34:51] and I'm like, whoa,

Gillian Pensavalle [00:34:53] it's it's so I'm using the cliché the world is wide enough. You are not James Igelhart and James, I have not Franklin, and that is the way it's supposed to be.

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:35:02] And we don't we don't play our part. And like there's almost no similarities in the way we portray characters except the text. But I, I love what that man had done with with the part to make it his own. But also, like, that's the fucking genie. I've had pictures of him on my wall as a kid. How dare I be like, yeah, he was like it's just people are I just don't like when they do things like that. And I don't think they realize how problematic it is because also someone could love my performance, but someone also could be like, I didn't like that and that's OK. Like you say, whatever you like it, it's OK to be subjective art because that's what art is there to to pick it apart and to start conversation, but to compare other people's art and portrayals. It's like kind of weird if you're not if you're not, go home with your wife, get in the car. That's what we all do. We get in the car and we talk about it with our friends and our families and like, yes, that is the conversation. But that is. Great stage or etiquette, and I want us to fix the way we treat ensemble members at the stage door and also just some of the weird conversations we have, if it'll ever come back, because like, who knows? I truly don't know if we ever go back to it.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:36:15] I agree. I think you're absolutely right. I have ideas about what's better to say. But you tell me you're at the stage. I think just like you were great tonight or thank you so much.

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:36:25] You were great tonight. Thank you.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:36:27] Because people forget you don't have to do the stage door.

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Warren Egypt Franklin [00:36:30] And I've only not done the stage door. I want to say three times in my whole Hamilton career, but those three times I got in the car and it was because I was like still in vocal fatigue. And I was like, I just want to go home and go to sleep. But those three times I felt so bad because I really do love doing it. But people would do things where they do shit like that. And then that's why some people don't want to see store because they're not nice. Or some of those like, well, I might as well not go out there and nobody cares about me. They're going to scream for you. They're not gonna scream when I come out there because they don't feel like I did anything, you know what I mean? Like scream for everybody.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:37:04] For everybody. It reinforces that idea, which I don't agree with. But I understand why ensemble members would feel that way, that it's a thankless gig and it shouldn't be. It should not be. So I understand you just you know, you come out, you work your ass off and someone, like doesn't want you to see what it does to make your playbill burst into flames. What you don't want, they're like, who? Now I'm getting

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:37:31] now, saying that's why I said we need to we need to change that culture.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:37:35] We got to fix it.

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:37:35] That's why I don't know if anyone has ever talked about it on this show or. Absolutely. If fans are listening, like, please, when we come back, if that comes back, please, that that that would be great. And then would it would make us all really happy. And we are just like, yeah,

Gillian Pensavalle [00:37:50] just be nice to people because they the is like you loved the show. I know you did. I know you loved it. That's why you're boring because you had a great time. Yep. Please don't compare people. We've been through this many a time on the show.

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:38:02] Please don't do that. Absolutely.

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Gillian Pensavalle [00:38:04] So wait, OK, can we go back to how you got into this industry in general, you know, growing up in Cleveland and just like just your kind of life story?

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:38:15] Absolutely. I grew up is like what you could, I guess, say it's like a football version of Troy Bolton or the High School Musical bands out there. I play football.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:38:26] You got a bet on it?

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:38:29] I play football and I did shows in theater, but I never took it that seriously until I played. So my high school, our high school musicals were at. If you are familiar with Cleveland, you know, Cleveland has the second largest theater district outside of New York, Playhouse Square. It's really amazing and beautiful. And I have a chandelier out there. It's really amazing. But we don't do our main stage musicals at our high school. We do them where the tourists come through. So and we share like the same rehearsal space with them and like it. It's great. And I play Ren McCormack and Footloose when I was a freshman. That's cool. Yeah. And I think doing that for like a thousand people every night as a 14 year old and like hearing that roar, I was like, wait, this is this has given me more joy than any time I took a snap, you know, playing football. I'm like this. this is I think this is what I'm supposed to do. But also growing up in Cleveland, growing up in a super toxic, masculine environment, I was like, but I can't I can't just quit sports fully to do this because like a no one will believe in me, but also just being transparent. Everyone will think I'm gay. And I were already get flack of doing musicals from my friends I play football and ran track with. And it's like, oh my God, why are you they call me like, you should be taking ballet. Then if you're going to do that, like we're going to do musicals, you might as well do ballet. And I'm like, oh my God. Like, I would brush it off actually. Now it's super problematic. If young if young people are listening to this, check your friend. who who say shit like that. Because if your friends do say shit like that and that is something that you want to do and you find joy in you, you should do it also just because you may be queer or any of the above. One of the running backs in Cleveland, he was the fiercest man when he was not a running back and he was a super flamboyant I mean, feminine would catch shit from people. But

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when he got on that football field, he would also be the best running back. And it doesn't matter like gay people, queer people can do everything that straight people can do it better. It doesn't matter. But growing up in Cleveland, I. I wasn't at of place yet in my life and comfortable enough with my sexuality and manhood to fully just commit myself to theater, so I was juggling the two for a while. And then I had a role. I played college and went. And that was when I was like, yeah, this is what I need to do full time. This is it. And this is what I'm going to go to college for. And I don't think my parents love that. I really agree with that. But I did it anyway. And I knew that if I wanted to go to school for music theater, they would not fund and support me. So I. Saved up all the money I got from summer stocks and from from every little piece of regional theater I did before college, and I pay for myself to go to college. And I got scholarships and I worked my butt off, but I put myself through a private liberal arts university and a video alone, I mean, with some help from the federal government, of course. But like, you know what I mean? All the things that I had to pay for in rent and textbooks and food and everything, that was all for me. So that's incredible. It is one of my biggest accomplishments. Yeah, I'm super I'm super grateful for that. And the fact that God got me through that. And I also think I did have to struggle to to be more grateful for what I have now. You know what I mean? I think if you just if you're born not that, you know, I'm against anyone who is, but if you're if you're born into wealth and if you're born into opportunity, you could be talented. But it is easy. It's easy, but. The joy in the reward is here is somebody who's an underdog, who has to struggle and to grind, to get to where they are, to get there, and it really makes a success story all the more all the more amazing. I get out on that stage sometimes for Hamilton or even in front of the camera here now in L.A. and I'm like, yo, I am the boy from the Glendale area in Cleveland, from the project, from the hood. And I am now like on stages across America where people people who wouldn't wouldn't look at me twice on the street, have to listen to me and look at me now and listen to these stories that I'm telling. And it's just I have the most prolific job in the world. I'm so happy that I can.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:43:14] Yeah, I'm so thrilled for you. I'm beaming. I was just like, this is this is such a wonderful you are such a wonderful story.

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Warren Egypt Franklin [00:43:22] Thank you.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:43:23] It's making me really emotional.

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:43:25] Thank you.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:43:25] And I'm sure, like all those those those kids who are being dicks about it would love some Hamilcast tickets because that's always the way.

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:43:31] Oh, my God. People people hit me up all the time and I'm just right out of the woodwork. Right. Hey. Oh, my God. Out of the blue.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:43:40] Out of the blue. So I did some research on you.

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:43:42] Oh lawd.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:43:44] I'm going to revel in this for a minute because you Krystal unguardable, but I feel like that's all about to change. But I learned that you were in a drum corps and I want to hear all about that because I thought about that when you and I was like wait did you tell me or tell me all about first if you can please explain to the listeners if they don't know what a drum corps is and then just your experience with that, because I think it's really cool and I'd love to talk to you about it

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:44:11] I want one of my interesting little fact that I'm a p one champion snare drummer, and I used to be in a competition drum corps growing up. Yeah, Drum Corps is basically essentially it's it's a marching band, but with just drums. So it's just made up of a quad tenor bass snare that covers everything that was on cymbals cymbals, but some drum corps that actually don't have cymbals. Some do, but art has cymbals. And then of course you have like your flag people. But used to be like, like girls. But that is not true anymore because girls and guys do it, which is so great. But you have your flag people. I think there's even a better, more proper name for like or something. But don't. But yeah, I did that for a long time and I played drums for a long time. I played snare drum for a long time and it really did pay off in college because my college was the first college to do what the musical

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and I play spec and I played the drums and once and it led me to being the first African-American actor. And once everything

Gillian Pensavalle [00:45:25] Congrats belated but congrats

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:45:28] Thank you. Yeah. It was the first collegiate regional collaboration a bit and yeah I was the first African-American actor to do it and the creators had like reached out and said how cool that is. And yeah, that was an amazing experience being able to I love music. I really, really, really love music. So being able to be in a show where you are not just acting, not just dancing, not just singing, not just having these accents, these Irish and Czech accents, but also to be the music. I had never been so connected with the group of people on stage before because we literally had to breathe together to play these instruments and to keep everything in time and string up on stage and OK, I can't play it any anymore. Can you play that for me? Like like we went through so many things with that show, but never panic. Never. It was no drama, no ego, no animosity. It was such a great cast and beautiful group of people. I think about that show all the time, but I don't think I would have been able to do once if I wasn't in the competition drum corps. We. Yeah, a little bit. Yeah.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:46:38] I watched you had I can't remember exactly what the name of it was, but you had like an hour ish long Facebook hang with Rory O'Malley

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:46:49] for Playhouse Square. Yeah. Yeah.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:46:50] And you so I learned that you very much like myself love Washington on your side.

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:46:56] Oh my God. I think Washington on your side is literally so I have two favorite songs. OK, Washington on your side of my favorite song to perform Helpless is my favorite to listen to. Like there's just nothing I know. It's always like everyone's like satisfied that a person is great, satisfied you helpless. It just makes you feel good. Like helpless makes me feel good. The storytelling, how warm the violins are, those are great chords. It's just such a really great orchestra. So, like, I just I'm I'm obsessed, I'm obsessed, I'm obsessed. I'm just. Also, one of the inspiration

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they read somewhere that Lin's found for the song is from Beyonce. And I hear it, I hear Beyonce, they all up and through that song. And my musical heroes are Michael Jackson, Prince, Beyonce and Tina Turner. So like anything equivocating to them, I'm just like, oh, so. Yeah, but Washington on your side is my shit. I feel like the baddest bitch in the world when I am performing that song. It just it I don't my soul really leaves my body and I come backstage sometimes with a headache. Actually after I do that on my couch I black out. I don't know what happens because I go so hard in that's all.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:48:56] Because, you know, I'm hearing you, I was hear you talk about the drums and that you love music and that I just because Washington on your side, the musicality of it is just so it's like smooth but slimy but slick but cool, but bad ass like that. You know, there are several songs in Hamilton where it's like, here comes, here comes. Yeah, I couldn't wait to finally, after all these years, talk to Andy Blankenbuehler about that, like hoofing move southern motherfucking

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:49:39] the after that, coming down that line with the like lights in your face. Everyone's walking behind you. I'm right in the middle leading it and it feels like I can't top in that moment I felt on top of the world,

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:50:22] I get a rush from Washington on your side. I don't even think I do. From what did I get a little nervous and what did I miss a little bit? Also, I think the status is mixed up and depending who go in that night will like for the stairs a little harder or slower. And I'm just I was like, I just want to hold on a wait till I'm like at the bottom to make sure I'm safe. But Washington, any thought that I just I love that's what

Gillian Pensavalle [00:50:50] and I just I also because now I'm going back to Lac looking at you and saying, well, you can't like, rap against yourself, like, how is that going to work? And so now I'm just thinking of just I'd love to hear your input on this, because sometimes The Jeffersons are like it's not the guns and Shep rap, it's not the guns and ships around. No Washington on your side.

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Warren Egypt Franklin [00:51:09] So for me, I'm going to give a little tidbit. For me, it is definitely Washington on your side and not guns and ships because it's just the self that, like, bitch, you don't have time to breathe or think you just do it or you don't

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:52:15] With Washington on your side, if you don't take the correct breath, you're not going to get through that in a phrase, you are just not like you have to be grounded to like that's a song. We're like, yes, you're so hyper finding yourself in it. But if you get too high, you'll be off your breath. And then you can't. You can't. You can't do it. And I had to learn pacing a lot with Hamilton and especially with that song. And I really, really found my sweet place with it, like right before we left.

Warren Egypt Franklin [00:53:16] And that's funny to touring, is that well, not even touring just doing a long show, it's like you'd be like that's the way I perform that can get no better. And like a month later, you find another nuance or thing. You're like, yo, that's so crazy. Or even for me. And I don't think a lot of people talk about this. I remember who we were in some city and for whatever reason, every time I would get on stage, I would forget the lyrics to Ships not outwardly, not outwardly, but like in my mind, like right before I jumped on the table, I said, like, what is what is the first lyric? And like, my my my mind and my body from doing it so many times, would just get through it and it would all come out. And how we get so much anxiety for like it was like two weeks, I was like, I don't like Guns and Ships because every time I jump on the table for whatever reason, now I'm about to mess up and like I went through that time where I was like, I do not like performing this song as an anxiety for whatever reason. And then it went away and it all came back and it went back to being one of my favorite numbers to perform. But I think we don't get to talk about that sometimes of like we get anxiety not only just about the show, but like certain numbers will give you random anxiety for some reason, and then it'll go away. And then it can be this number like Washington on your side could be my favorite. And then something will get changed within the number. I'm like, oh, I love that. Like, you know, but that's OK to, like, grow these Hamilton B in the Hamilcast is like being in a relationship. You are going to go through ups and downs of things that you love, the moment that you love and the moments where you that wasn't

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in it, you know what I mean? But like also, I think the great thing about Hamilton is I don't have that one shining. So I have like so many there's 60 freaking songs to get through. So like, OK, that that wasn't it then. No, wasn't great. But now I have thirty nine more to do, you know what I mean. So like that, that's what matters. So yeah.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:55:18] Yeah, I'm loving this conversation with Warren, and next week we'll be back to finish up the rest of our hang, Warren tells me about what he's been working on during the shutdown and all of his new projects. Plus, questions from the Patreon Peeps, behind the scenes with freestyle Fridays backstage at Hamilton and some fun stories like the time the turntable went the wrong way and wouldn't stop. It's funny and also a little terrifying, but other fun episodes. So until next week, stay safe. Stay healthy. I love you. I'm G. Pen.

[00:56:20] The Hamilcast is brought to you by my love of the thing TM and my complete lack of chill, please join me in raising all the glasses to Sir Alex Lacamoire for generously making my intro music and this custom Yorktown arrangement that I will never, ever get over. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. To become a patreon peep and join the best, kindest and most welcoming corner of the Internet, go to Patreon dot com, slash the Hamilcast. You can submit questions to guests, join Zoom Hangouts, get behind the scenes access and of course, my unending gratitude. I'm at the Hamilcast on all social media and you can listen wherever you get your podcasts. Visit the Hamilcast dot com for transcripts, episodes and more. You can see what's going on with Mike. You know Mike at Michael Paul Smith dot net. True Crime Obsessed is my true crime comedy podcast with my podcast soul mate Patrick Hinds of Theater People and Broadway BackStory fame. Thank you so much for listening. It means the world to me, to the revolution