

THE HAMILCAST

EPIISODE 326 JAY DUCKWORTH 3 TRANSCRIPT

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

Gillian Pensavalle [00:00:04] Hello, friends. I'm Gillian. Welcome back to the Hamilcast. This week, I'm wrapping up my conversation with the one and only prop master, Jay Duckworth. If you missed parts one and two, I strongly urge you to go back and listen to those. You'll hear all about how Jay came to work in the world of prop making, what it was like to be part of the process of making a show that would change the fabric of musical theater as we know it. And the magician reveals his tricks on how they made all the things you see used on stage in the show. So if you're all caught up, I'll leave you to it. Here's part three of my conversation with the fantastic Jay Duckworth.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:00:51] Jay. They're here now. Are you ready to take some questions from the Pateon Peeps?

Jay Duckworth [00:00:55] I am.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:00:57] They are beyond. Beyond, beyond thrilled

Jay Duckworth [00:01:01] Shut the front door.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:01:01] I will not. It's wide open because there's a lot of them so nervous. No, don't be nervous. They're the best. They're, like, super supportive and amazing.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:01:09] So we're going to start with the Reynolds pamphlet, ellen says.

Jay Duckworth [00:01:40] Hi, Ellen.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:01:40] Hi, Ellen. How did you break up the task of getting all the paper picked up at the end of the Reynolds pamphlet? Was it a zone defense strategy or another plan? So when Steph Klemons came on, she discussed this a bit from a choreographer's perspective, like she was saying that she had to. There's like a

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someone whose job it is in every company to be the person who like gets the papers up

Jay Duckworth [00:02:00] It had to do for me. I didn't I wasn't part of the retrieval, but I wanted to make sure that the people we use had some tooth to it, because if it was too smooth, they couldn't get it off the floor. So you yeah. You have to make sure that it has some kind of tooth. And by tooth I mean a small amount of texture. So that because it would be just, you know, it would be, you know, sometimes it's impossible to get something up off the floor.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:02:30] A wood floor. Yeah. With like and then or without like crumpling it up, you know.

Jay Duckworth [00:02:34] Exactly. So, so we just made sure that Reynolds pamphlet, vote for Burr, and Thomas Paine's in the in the opening with the Schuyler sisters were all had that kind of a tooth to it so if they fell somebody could swoop down and pick it up real quick.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:02:54] Anya says, I always wondered how many pamphlets are on stage during the Reynolds pamphlet and how many new letters and or pamphlets are used per week on average, per company. If you happen to know that.

Jay Duckworth [00:03:06] I'm not quite sure I know that you keep them for a while until they look like that to you because you still want to make sure that there's the illusion that these things were just printed and that they're distributing them because pamphlets were common, were just like as common as tweets, because if you had a voice and you wanted to say something, you would send something out. And that's why Franklin had all those different personas, because he would do a story in one of his newspapers complaining about something, and he would put the counterpoint in that same paper, and people would buy the paper just to see these people argue. So. So it I don't know the number, but I think I think they last two or three or four performances before that to warn. And a lot of them were, like you said, are are auctioned off or give it away as as as gifts.

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Gillian Pensavalle [00:04:12] Maureen is asking very straightforward, what exactly is happening during burn in that bucket? What's going on?

Jay Duckworth [00:04:18] The bucket is a it's a false front. And I have the idea that first meeting that we have.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:04:27] What is this book that you just pulled out?

Jay Duckworth [00:04:29] This book is.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:04:31] It looks like a spell book. I love it.

Jay Duckworth [00:04:33] It is almost. This is Hamilton.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:04:37] Oh, are these your notes?

Jay Duckworth [00:04:39] Yeah, we had just done a what was it by anybody? Andrew Jackson. So it was Hamilton.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:04:46] Yeah, yeah. And see a little like quill drawing and everything. Oh, that's awesome.

Jay Duckworth [00:04:53] Yeah. The quill. The guns are Washington's desk. Oh. The log bag.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:04:59] There it is.

Jay Duckworth [00:05:01] This is the the barrels. The idea for the barrels for the tavern, the size of the gun to the person, the strength of the stool, three legged stool, crown wig holder. Because I thought that someone would need a like something to hold a wig to. And there is the scuttle. So I figured it would either be a coal scuttle or a small stone. And because it was more portable. Oh, and then here's Washington's desk. Versus Hamilton's.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:05:38] This feels like I almost shouldn't be looking at the soul like, Oh, it's so cool. Oh.

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Jay Duckworth [00:05:44] The ideas for, like, the lift. When the when the center came up and, like, it was a lily pond. How to hide the supports.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:05:52] The the pool.

Jay Duckworth [00:05:54] The reflected the reflecting pool was supposed to it was supposed to open up.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:05:59] There were lilies in it.

Jay Duckworth [00:06:00] I was trying we were trying to come up. It was just a brainstorming meeting. And I was like, here's what you could probably do to just keep the. Strength. And the lilies would just be at the top with the supports underneath it. So you didn't see the top of the supports, but you saw. Yeah. And there's the lanterns. Wow. And then this is the coal scuttle with the false front that all the regular letters went down. And on the back, here is where the burn letter went. It would go down in here and burn in here. And then all the other letters would go down front so that none of those letters ever saw fire but the coal scuttle. So. So it was a coal skull that had a a piece of metal in it. And at the bottom, it had sand. And she would like the letter. The letter itself was open on two sides, so it was easy to blow out. There's also matches. Two matches at a time were taped together because one would strike and usually sometimes they would go out or just spark. But if you struck one with another match, they would strike each other and you would have it would be burn. It would burn a lot quicker. So if the if the and I had a Striker pad on it case the candle without when she was coming out on stage, she could go ahead and relight it, because again, you have to prevent. Anything that's going to stop the show. You have to be able you have to have failed things. So, Philip, as you would take the letter, crimp it a little bit. So it created a little chimney and then hold it to the the lamp. And because the heat would go up through that little crease that she put in it with her hands, it was a chimney. So it started lighting quickly and then she could hold it as long as she wished and then just drop it in there. And as it gained, it's as it started burning more, it burned brighter. She would drop the other letters and it would look like they were in with the other letters. That letter was one letter that was still on fire, would flame up and then die out.

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Gillian Pensavalle [00:08:27] Because what you're saying, just to explain the visual a little bit, the bucket that she has, there are two compartments and it.

Jay Duckworth [00:08:34] Is divided into.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:08:34] Two. Yeah, there's only one letter that's being.

Jay Duckworth [00:08:38] Actually one letter that gets burned.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:08:39] And then the other ones go into that little that. But it's to us it looks exactly the same, but it's just in one little part.

Jay Duckworth [00:08:45] But it goes down into that little mail slot in the front. So it so secretly none of those are around the flame at all.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:08:52] Okay. What's that, the texture of that paper like because it needs to burn for a certain amount of time.

Jay Duckworth [00:08:58] Yeah, it's. It's not the texture, it's the size

Gillian Pensavalle [00:09:01] Okay

Jay Duckworth [00:09:01] It's the size and the paper weight because paper comes in different weights. So we had to make sure that the timing was correct on it and it burned out before the lights out because if it continued to go, yeah, it would just it would delay the the pace of the show, the right weight paper that wouldn't turn into ash and come up. So it couldn't be too light. It had to be strong enough that when she slid it together, like the fold together, she could just, like, make a little tunnel. So that flame would come up through and then put it down.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:09:44] Yeah. Wow. So that was just all trial and error. Yeah.

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Jay Duckworth [00:09:48] Yeah. Burning paper over and over and over. Out in the ally.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:09:51] Demo. Like, when's demo of Burn and be? Like, did it burn for a long enough the 3 minutes.

Jay Duckworth [00:09:56] Oh, no. Apple iPhone. Apple phone just with the timer.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:09:58] Oh. So how long does it have to burn for exactly? Because it's not the entire song.

Jay Duckworth [00:10:03] One minute, 9 seconds, and it's done.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:10:06] I love it. I love it.

Jay Duckworth [00:10:08] It's pretty fun.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:10:09] Yeah. Rob has a few questions, but one, he says, what was the process like for the letters and burn, such as getting the timing right? Thank you, Rob, for asking. Just answer.

Jay Duckworth [00:10:18] Thank you.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:10:18] Rob asked and answered, as they say. Rob says, I would not ask you to pick your favorite child, but is there a prop you have made that became iconic or famous in a way that pleasantly shocked you? Other than the static you can't see no something else. Because I think.

Jay Duckworth [00:10:34] You mean from Hamilton itself.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:10:36] No. Does it matter? It can be, but it can be whatever you want.

Jay Duckworth [00:10:39] There are here is a technique that I did when I started out early in my career, and now people do it. It was for Terence McNally's lips together, teeth apart. And it's round about how I got to do Terence McNally's show in New York, because this was out

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in Jersey and it came out to Jersey because of the director. They have a barbecue in that show at the top of Act Two. And what I wanted to do is because our sense of smell is so tied to memory. I wanted to get hickory, soak it and run line up through the through the leg of the barbecue and put the wood chips on it on a small single like little burner and start it. So when that kettle opened, when they opened up the barbecue, smoke came out. But you also smelled that smell.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:11:43] Aha.

Jay Duckworth [00:11:44] I got to do it again on a show called Barbecue, which is by Robert O'Hara. And it's an incredible show. And. It's it's people are putting smells into place now and one of them was waitress when they started that as well where they make the pie. Yeah. And I think that is something that I, I really enjoy because anything that brings people into the environment emotionally for me is a win. You know, that's why I try to use iconic items or things that people recognize. Shape wise, style wise, because you'll never see anything that I don't want you to see. I will, you know, I will make sure. And if you if something stands out, there's going to be a reason that stands out. It's like the Checov gun, you know?

Gillian Pensavalle [00:12:42] Yeah, totally. Yeah.

Jay Duckworth [00:12:43] Smoke. Barbecues.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:12:46] I love it. Well, I'll ask you to pick a favorite kid. What's your favorite prop you made for Hamilton?

Jay Duckworth [00:12:51] Probably a favorite. Probably for so. I love the I love the innovation on the candlesticks, the you know, the all the candlesticks that come in for the winners ball and the wedding, because the only candlesticks we could find were the thick ones. The big round ones. These guys, I had to have colonial style candle holders that fit these. So they had to be big and. I did not have a lathe at the shop to turn them. So what I did is I took our drill press and I turned our drill press into a vertical lathe so I could hand cut foam into becoming the candle up the candle holders.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:13:44] That's cool.

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Jay Duckworth [00:13:45] I'll send you a video. Yeah, there's a video. There's a video of it. It's on my. It's on my YouTube. Proctologist on YouTube. It's got that video of it. But it's the entire process of just making, like, one of them.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:13:59] Yes. Oh, my God. That's fascinating.

Jay Duckworth [00:14:02] That's probably one of my favorite things is is is making that, you know, making out of necessity comes invention.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:14:11] Oh, I love that. That's so cool. And I love that you are you are documenting how you're making them. And now we can see it. It's such a cool thing, I think.

Jay Duckworth [00:14:19] I think it's just because I want to I want people there's no there is no recognition for props people. So I want to make sure that I share all the techniques that I have and that I learn with everybody instead of keeping them secrets. Because then that raises all boats. The more I raise the people around me, the better off we all do, the better off the art will be, and we will finally get the respect we deserve as a design unit in every production.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:14:51] Yeah, I mean, I. I hope you don't feel that way here or with the peeps because we. I love.

Jay Duckworth [00:14:58] Oh, no, no, no, no. It's on. It's on. No, it's mostly when I'm working with oil, when I'm working on shows, but it's pretty much anybody in theater. Props is the last one that's that's thought about that sometimes not included on emails it's it's it's crazy.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:15:14] It's so crazy and this is also been coming up with swings this all this conversation about swing I swear word of this.

Jay Duckworth [00:15:23] Job in theater.

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Gillian Pensavalle [00:15:24] But it's this assumption not everyone. But there is this like stigma or assumption where it's like, well, that's part of the gig. They'll do it like, Oh, Jay, we'll figure it out. Not all the props people will. That's their job. And so they'll just do it. But that's not how yes, it is your job, but that's not how it should be. That's not the energy that people should be putting out there about what you're doing.

Jay Duckworth [00:15:43] Absolutely.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:15:44] Like taking taking it for granted.

Jay Duckworth [00:15:47] I will always connect myself with the assistant stage manager on a show instead of the stage manager. I will always use the assistant stage manager as a point person because the stage manager has so much going on.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:15:59] Right.

Jay Duckworth [00:16:00] That I want to respect that space. And if they need me, they'll call me, you know, I'll make sure I tell, you know, the assistant stage manager. And here's what we're doing. This is what I can bring to you. This is the da, da, da. Here's the documents, you know, and we keep a Google sheet that has our orders on it so that they know they can track things. And without having to email us, be like, where's that coal bucket? They can just go on the sheet and track it and know when it's coming in so the stage manager can set up a rehearsal knowing when that will be in-house, you know. So it's it's a lot of respect for those people, too, because they are the calm. They are the captain of the ship now.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:16:43] Oh, yeah.

Jay Duckworth [00:16:43] And that ship is crazy.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:16:45] Rob is also saying, I know a little about the story of your recent move to using nail polish. Can you elaborate here without the time constraints those other platforms limit you to?

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Jay Duckworth [00:16:55] My partner is gender fluid. They go by, they/them. And because of COVID, I had to I had to find housing that I could afford. And I moved down to Florida. And with everything that's going on with the oppressive laws about queer people, gay people, trans people, the LGBTQ+ community. I felt it was necessary to become more visual and I wanted to paint my nails to start conversations because I'm a 54 year old man and a big guy like six three and weigh a lot. I take up a lot of space because I'm down in Florida. There's a lot of older people and I have gray hair and I've gray hair. I'm bald. I have a beard. And a lot of times. Women will ask me, like older women will ask me. They're like, Did your granddaughter paint your nails? And I say I wish I had a granddaughter. But I wasn't allowed to get married because of laws in our country until 2015. So the prime of my life was taken away from me. And I'm just trying to represent for the people who can't have a voice right now. And that starts a dialog when you personalize it and show what has been taken away by being one of these older people's peers. You open up a dialog. And like I said, we are dangerous people, artists, because we create empathy. And instead of attacking them or being like, because I want to wear this or because I'm queer or because I'm gay. I approach them, meet them on their ground, and then tell them my story. And that's that's that's the honest truth. And I started doing it when the don't say gay bill happened. And so yeah. So that's that's that's why.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:19:19] How is that going?

Jay Duckworth [00:19:20] It's going well. It's going well. I get a lot more flak online about it than I do in person.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:19:31] Oh, well, because it's I mean that tracks.

Jay Duckworth [00:19:33] Yeah. Yeah. Well, it's, it's not in Tik Tok as much as my YouTube channel. Oh, it's people on YouTube.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:19:39] YouTube comments are the worst.

Jay Duckworth [00:19:41] Yeah, they're they're like, you're a pedophile. If you support the if you support the don't say gay bill. And I have to be like, you know what? I, I, I think those are two

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different things. You know, I'm just queer, you know, that I couldn't afford the clothes.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:20:02] You know? I don't know.

Jay Duckworth [00:20:03] I'm sure there's an outfit you have to wear.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:20:05] I'm sure.

Jay Duckworth [00:20:06] So, yeah. And, you know, I'm not joking about pedophilia, but I think it's I think it's a projection from a group of people who are trying to demonize another people. It's the same thing that's happened throughout history. We know how it we know how it plays out. And the pendulum of time will uncoil these people and show who they truly are. Yeah, well, the thing it's about is they remember you when they set up private. They privatized prisons.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:20:32] Yes.

Jay Duckworth [00:20:33] And then more people started going directly to prison without any kind of, you know, just to move people to get to get cheap workers. Schools have been privatized, as well as child care in Florida and a couple other states where Texas you're so you're seeing that happen a couple like 2017. So now they're coming after the children so that they have to go in child services, which has now been privatized and is getting money from those people and then the schools will be sued. It's not the it's not the state that has to pay for the individual school. So the school will go bankrupt and you will have to go into private education, either a church school or some kind of other school. So it is not. It is not just because they're trying to demonize some people. It is a manipulation of money that is criminalizing a people in order for a profit. And that's the I mean, we have to look beyond because we are so angry about it. We have to look beyond the hate and follow the money. And just follow the money.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:21:48] Yes, all the time.

Jay Duckworth [00:21:50] Numbers never lie. You know, numbers never lie.

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Gillian Pensavalle [00:21:53] No. You know, my other podcast is called True Crime Obsessed, and we recap true crime documentaries. And this comes up all the time. I'm constantly quoting Hamilton, but not as a joke, but it's like, follow the money and see where it goes. Yeah, that's always been true and things. The system is just so fucked. Jay

Jay Duckworth [00:22:12] Whenever, whenever I'm talking to two young props people and they're like, I can't afford this, or they're trying to get me to do this and I can't afford it. And I was like, What can you afford? What you need to do is you need to go through and see where everything is and find out what options you have. Then you can go to your production manager instead of saying, I just can't afford this. Be like, Here's your choices. You can do this and this or this and this, but you can't do this, this, and this. And here's the numbers. And once you show them the numbers, they they are like, Oh, I understand. It's not that you're being lazy. It's not that it's going to take some time. It's that there's there's just no time, money or possibility in God's green earth, prop time. Sometimes you have to pull things out of your.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:23:00] Look at that. That's where this came from. So it's all coming together. Well, actually, Christina is saying also thank you for your social media and the videos about the nail polish. My 12 year old Jacob, he/him loves your content and he also loves to paint his nails.

Jay Duckworth [00:23:15] Jacob We're going to have to do nails some time with your ma and go out and have tea and go watch some cool dogs.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:23:26] Okay. Can I come.

Jay Duckworth [00:23:29] Yes absolutely.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:23:30] I have black nail polish.

Jay Duckworth [00:23:31] Yes, totally. We're in.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:23:33] Yeah. I just wanted you to know that, though, that there are young people watching your content and inspire and feel like Jacob feels cool because you do it and you're cool and

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Jacob is cool, and, you know, it's like, that's really important for you to know.

Jay Duckworth [00:23:45] Jay and Jacob, we have the same minute so we're we're we're clear coolio.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:23:49] Halfway to besties

Jay Duckworth [00:23:51] The thing I've got to be honest with you and I tell my partner this all the time is I have no idea how how. People know me and there are so many there are a lot of people who are just like, you're so, so cool. You've inspired me for this and I want to be a prop master and I want to do better with this. Just like I have no idea. It's just like it. It makes me cry a lot because I feel like I have. I have done. I went out to do good and I have done well.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:24:24] Absolutely. And then some I mean, we're just getting started with these questions. So you might cry.

Jay Duckworth [00:24:30] Okay. I bet I will.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:24:31] I've already cried once this podcast. Look, as Lin says about me, she's an easy cry. So much so. I love it. I love that one. The Patreon peep made something really lovely for I think it was my 200th episode and they showed him at the stage door of flats and he was like, Oh, thank you guys for being so nice to her. And then he's like, Did you cry? She's in. He's a cry. Like she cries the drop of that. I was like, wow, clocked by so wonderful. Christina's also asking, what was your favorite prop that didn't make it into Hamilton? Is there one?

Jay Duckworth [00:25:02] I'm way into leather. Let me say that in this way, I make I make shields and I make leather items. I make bags, renaissance type stuff. I have a Krampus like one of those stockings, but it's Krampus foot is hot and what's like so it's all made out of leather. And I love it because I was donated a bunch of leather from a shop that closed the materials for the arts, which is an incredible organization. And I started making stuff and I found a great love for that. And there was a leather tache that I made for when when Schlyer loses his seat. And there was supposed to be like this whole scene.

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And it was I poured my heart into it because, of course, because like same with ADHD. You know, you focus on one thing until it's absolutely perfect, then you give it to somebody. And it was cut. It was cut. And I was just like, I took it up to prop storage and I hid it away and I was like, You are going here and no one will find you and you will live here safe for the rest of your life, you beautiful, beautiful thing.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:26:21] Oh, my God.

Jay Duckworth [00:26:23] I was that I was that crazy. I was like, no one gets you. You know, we are not going away for the end of the show. You're not going to any place else. You get to live in this beautiful place forever. I love surrounded by wonderful things. Oh, yeah.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:26:37] Paola says. I just want to tell you that I love your tik tok content. And I was counting the days until you were coming on to the pod. And Paolo is also saying what was the collaboration during the creation of Helpless Satisfied between props, scenography and lighting?

Jay Duckworth [00:26:54] I'll be honest, I just provided what they asked for. Choreography and lighting and scenic work, was all somebody else. Yeah. And like I said, I was. I glad I didn't know more about it because I would have been stupid. I just been huh

Gillian Pensavalle [00:27:12] Yeah.

Jay Duckworth [00:27:12] I mean, that was like.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:27:14] Oh.

Jay Duckworth [00:27:17] Instead of just it standing up and going like, what did I just watch? Andy Yeah. So it was, it was mostly just me providing the materials they needed to create that piece of art that they did and me being blown away when I saw it

Gillian Pensavalle [00:27:31] Sort of jumping on that. Denise says that she just saw in the Sydney production that Jason, who plays Hamilton, takes off his wedding ring during Satisfied when the wedding

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rewinds. But she notices that Lin doesn't do that in the movie version. So do you know anything about that or and also are there any other little things like that that get rewound from satisfied. From. Helpless to satisfied? Satisfied.

Jay Duckworth [00:27:57] Helpless, i. Don't know if Lynn had a drink, I think then I think they might have mind. It could be yeah. It could be sure. Things that they that they do I, I wouldn't have done it as a choice. Because when you reward I don't, I don't.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:28:16] Know, Gerry says. I know in Hamilton there are props in the wings that the audience doesn't see. Can you talk a little bit about those particular props?

Jay Duckworth [00:28:25] Those are, are all things that people would have practically in their home. It is a because you're building America. There is things that. Would be in a colonial home. On the walls going back some one of them. Is that that's one of my favorites is a clay pipe.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:28:56] Cool.

Jay Duckworth [00:28:57] The clay pipes are because if you forgot your pipe going to a tavern to smoke, you would break a little end of the pipe so you could smoke it and you would leave it at the tavern. That's why those churchwarden pipes, the long pipes, were all made out of clay because you could break it off until you had a little bit enough.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:29:17] Wow.

Jay Duckworth [00:29:18] The tobacco was like one of our big selling things, tobacco and wood. There was so much people when people got here, they were just like, Are you kidding me? There was a story about like somebody said, I can't remember who the researcher was that a squirrel could jump up on a tree in New York City and not have to climb down till they got to the Mississippi River, you know?

Gillian Pensavalle [00:29:43] Yeah.

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Jay Duckworth [00:29:44] And and all the places in Europe that were stripped of all tall trees could not make mastheads, could not make for for their masts, for ships, you know. So it was it was just like, come on, boys, you know, to make some Money you know?

Gillian Pensavalle [00:30:03] Yeah. Gerry's also asking, is that something that you do for all of the shows that you work on? Some shows are just Hamilton having things backstage that people can see.

Jay Duckworth [00:30:12] Periphery. I dress. I dress so stupidly. Yeah. And I dress. I will go to the extremes of the theater, like the extreme side and the extreme. The extreme right and some extreme left on every seat up the row, back row, front row. So if I can see up inside of a kitchen, I dress that or the sides to where you can just barely see something that's going to because the the story doesn't end at the door.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:30:42] I was just going to say and then it feels like there's a whole room back there. Yeah.

Jay Duckworth [00:30:47] Absolutely. There's there is a life beyond that, you know, unless it does not dictate that there was a show called The Library that we did that was just centered in that area. And I made sure, like all the props were hidden in the set like in the chairs and so that nothing was brought brought off. It was very cinematic because that was the tiny world these people were forced into.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:31:14] Carries asking, Has there ever been a prop request that initially stumped you?

Jay Duckworth [00:31:18] It was a real Edward the second Shakespeare. It was a mirror that has to be broken on stage by the actor. And it's always a challenge because people want to do a big mirror and they want to break it. They want the actor to break it, but they also want it to be safe. But then there's broken shards of whatever. They want to see it fall, but it has to be contained. So it's really it's a challenge for that. And the other big challenge that I have mirrors and clocks, because you have to be able to adjust a clock for the time that it is inside that world. So that's those are the two things that

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I'm just like, are you kidding me? Why did you write this? What are you. What's going on?

Gillian Pensavalle [00:32:11] Carrie is also asking. You might have answered it, though. If you could keep only one prop you've made, which would it be if.

Jay Duckworth [00:32:18] It's a prop? I've kept what I wanted. On shows that I have because I will I will buy a prop for the show and or rent it at 75% of its costs to the show. And if it's something that I will use again the next time I rent it, it pays for itself a little extra. So I have like a maltese falcon that I bought, and I said to them in the show, I was like, I'm going to buy this. If the show goes forward, it goes to Broadway, I will rent it to you for the Broadway production as I. But this is mine. I own it and I'm going to rent it to the show. So that's what I do to get around any legal issue of things belonging to a show when if it goes to move on. But that's also how I build up a stock. I mean, you can see my plays back here.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:33:20] I'm going to say.

Jay Duckworth [00:33:22] Crazy amount of cool stuff. Yeah. It's it's when my partner and I move in together finally. Yes. It's going to be crazy because they are prop master, too, so.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:33:34] Yeah, that's incredible. You two are going to have the coolest house in town, wherever that. Oh.

Jay Duckworth [00:33:39] It's going to be so cool. So cool. For real.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:33:43] Lithia says. When I first created a TikTok account, you were one of the first people to show up on my for you page

Jay Duckworth [00:33:49] Liza minnelli.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:33:50] I know, she says. My algorithm obviously knew I needed to know all the proper secrets.

Jay Duckworth [00:33:55] Oh, it's so great.

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Gillian Pensavalle [00:33:57] You're going to love this, she says as a very, very small town theater stage manager, costumer and props person. Your willingness to share information has been invaluable to me, so I thank you for everything that you do. Oh, says one of my prized possessions is a burr pamphlet from Hamilton that I got at last year's Broadway flea market. Knowing that, you have to make sure the props for all the companies performing in Hamilton around the globe. How do you ensure continuity? Are there differences in the props used in the U.S. companies as compared to other countries like Great Britain and Australia?

Jay Duckworth [00:34:27] No. The Broadway prop master makes sure that there's one. Zoe, I think it's Zoe Lawson. Zo makes sure that all those things are the same and when they go out there, they're printed and the stage manager gets the paper and the files, so they print it whenever they need it on the road. So it pretty much stays the same.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:34:53] Yeah.

Jay Duckworth [00:34:53] Yeah.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:34:54] Cool. Isn't that great, though? Lithia is like. That is.

Jay Duckworth [00:34:57] So sweet. That is so sweet

Gillian Pensavalle [00:34:59] Jo says thank you for taking the time to share with us. I'm a self-taught prop guy for playing larps, which is live action role play.

Jay Duckworth [00:35:07] Oh, I know, I know, LARP.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:35:09] Yeah. Yeah. He says I'm huge into trying to introduce immersion into everything that goes on at an event. Could you suggest resources that would help someone like me who's trying to create a world out of nothing and has only an out of personal pocket budget to work with?

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Jay Duckworth [00:35:24] If you're looking for tools to work with, buy the cheapest tools that you can. And the one that wears out the fastest. Buy a good one next time. That way, you know, you are using that tool more than anything else to create what you need. And that falls under the category of sewing, carving. Carpentry. A heat gun, hot glue gun, whatever it is. I would also have a Pinterest account where you can build pins like little files and have those divided up. So you have your lessons. You have your examples and research all in one place so you can use those as reference guides. I go to rock and roleplaying people a lot, as well as cosplay people because they make stuff out of nothing. And so many producers want just something that looks expensive. But we have to break out of a habit and do something for as economically as economically as we can.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:36:40] Right.

Jay Duckworth [00:36:41] Right. So I would say that that's my suggestions of how to start out. And just don't be hard on yourself when you fail fail as many times as possible and fail big because you've got to be able to fail in order to improve. Don't get disappointed. Don't get disillusioned because you have to be bad. You have to be bad for a long time in order to get.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:37:06] That advice about the tools is genius.

Jay Duckworth [00:37:09] I think that's from Adam Savage. That's one of Adam Savage's advice that it's great.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:37:16] It's one of those things where you hear it and you're like, Oh, obviously. But you wouldn't think of it on your own, you know? Joe's also asking, is there a particular prop that drove you nuts? If so, what was it and how did you solve the problem? This could be anything from procuring, creating, maintaining it, etc..

Jay Duckworth [00:37:34] It was the Wall for Intelligent Homosexuals Guide to the Scripture by Tony Kushner, and it was a wall that we had to destroy every night. It was a perishable wall that someone had to break into. It was a house built in the early 1900s, late 1800s, early 1900s. And so it had it had to have living behind it and wires inside of it. So this was we had to build 18 walls at a time because they

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were broken. Five on a five show weekend. So that was so that was five we lost. And it was such a process of creating these walls. Eric Hart wrote an article for Stage Directions magazine, or it should be also on his propaganda website. Eric Hart has incredible books out there. He's yeah, he is the he teaches out at North Carolina School of the Arts is a professor there, but we worked together for the longest time. So that's not that was the tough one.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:38:46] Joel says, hi, Jay. A big shout out from Montana where I've got to know a friend of yours. Rachel, neighbor Burke.

Jay Duckworth [00:38:53] Oh, my goodness.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:38:56] I don't. That's all he says. I don't know anything about Rachel.

Jay Duckworth [00:38:59] Rachel is that we, her and her husband and I work together very early in all of our careers together. How nice. At New Jersey, at a place called George Street Playhouse. And they are just they are gems of human beings. And please give them my love.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:39:20] So great. Joel also says, I love your Etsy store. Can you give us some information on the strike and how we can support you?

Jay Duckworth [00:39:29] The strike is over right now. We just did the strike for a week.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:39:33] Can you explain what happened?

Jay Duckworth [00:39:34] Etsy made tons of money over the pandemic and they keep raising their rates on sellers. And also you they etsy volunteers you to get advertising on google. So you're charged for advertising. So your take home money is becoming less and less and less. And so we're trying to and there's also drop shipping people like people who are like who sell things from Alibaba and things like that where you buy it off of Etsy. So it's not handmade things that are things that people just ship. And I think a lot of people are looking for a new platform to sell on. I mean, I just opened my store

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back up. It's, of course, proctologist, the Prop two ologist, and there's all kinds of really cool stuff there. And I also have a Redbubble page where I design shirts and stickers and things that are you have to have a good sense of humor with some of my stuff there. I sell like. Made appear in tablets from Birch.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:40:54] Yeah, it's Aspen with the A & S scratched off. That's like a movie from beginning to end.

Jay Duckworth [00:40:58] I love it.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:40:59] I love that beginning to end.

Jay Duckworth [00:41:01] From a police academy, I made the Blue Oyster Bar T-shirts. And then I'll pray for you. And it's pagan, like all the pagan symbols, like, you know. So it's it's kind a weird stuff. And there's one that I just created that it's that it's it's St Mary's Church of the Ascension. And it's got a picture of Jesus doing this. So it's a Y and see a it seems with Jesus and it looks like one of those adverts that, you know, one of those logos that somebody just put on there like, no, you didn't check this with anybody.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:41:46] Right. Yeah. Yeah. So.

Jay Duckworth [00:41:49] Like exit pursued by bear and like all kinds of really cool stuff.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:41:54] I'm on your store. I'm looking right now. I'm buying the I'm definitely going to get the tarot stickers. Oh, so cool. I love the vintage reprint the Halloween postcard because Halloween and Christmas are like my favorites. And anything vintage like those postcards are amazing. I'm gonna send them to my mom. She's going to love them. She's going to love everything on your store. Oh, vote for Burr stickers and you have a don't tell momma sticker. Oh, come on, Jay

Jay Duckworth [00:42:18] O the don't tell mama is is actually. I think it's a it's a fake that's a fake advertisement for the gay people didn't have cool clubs in the 1920s. So if you look that's a drag queen. That's a guy.

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Gillian Pensavalle [00:42:35] Oh, wait.

Jay Duckworth [00:42:36] So it's a it's a poster of a young drag queen from the 1920s. So it's a it's to recreate the illusion that we had a history back then.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:42:48] All right. I'm buying that to add to Cart.

Jay Duckworth [00:42:52] Yeah, there's a lot of really cool stuff in there. And then I make a tin there, these resin tin prints where I mix Mexican and Italian folk art into more modern stuff. Like you'll see the hand of the hand of glory or the skull. But there's also a Frankenstein paperweight. And like some of my collection from Pulp and gaming is in there as well.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:43:19] So cool.

Jay Duckworth [00:43:21] It's it's it's definitely very cabinet of curiosity type thing, but I'm.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:43:25] Glad you like that. Oh, my God, I love it.

Jay Duckworth [00:43:27] Check out my proptologist, just Redbubble, because, yes.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:43:30] I want that to be.

Jay Duckworth [00:43:31] Really fun there. Really? There's some fun stuff in there, too.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:43:34] And you have a sticker like for the bird cage, like the bird cage, South Beach, like as if you got it. Got the bar. Yeah.

Jay Duckworth [00:43:40] So you could get like the t shirt and it's definitely in the nineties style of South Beach

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Gillian Pensavalle [00:43:44] Hot pink in the blue when my husband and I are always saying, fuck the shrimp. Always, always, always fashion. I mean, it's.

Jay Duckworth [00:43:55] It's such a good. But you will y or me because my

Gillian Pensavalle [00:44:00] Yes. I'm afraid of your heat. Yeah. Yes, I could do. I'm afraid of your eat

Jay Duckworth [00:44:06] I could go like.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:44:07] A we also. God Robin Williams is so good. But the other day I just leaned over. I think I was, like, picking up. We just made dinner, and I was putting the plates away, and I just went, say, room for coffee to one of these. That's the only way. Yo.

Jay Duckworth [00:44:23] Yo, wasting.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:44:24] Your. Yeah, okay, fine. You're the director.

Jay Duckworth [00:44:27] So good. Just incredible. I mean, there was everything.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:44:31] And Nathan Lane made the right choice.

Jay Duckworth [00:44:33] But for. Yeah. Full circle back to not doing love, valor and compassion, but doing birdcage because it did launch his career.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:44:40] I mean, what would we do without it on a truly like I remember where I was when I first watched it way too young. But my mom, we I watched it with my parents like it was just we quote it to this day, leave room for coffee.

Jay Duckworth [00:44:52] My, my partner and I, the last time I was up visiting them have never seen it. And we made and made sure that it was something and we quoted all the time.

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Gillian Pensavalle [00:45:01] Did they love it?

Jay Duckworth [00:45:02] Oh, yeah. Died.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:45:04] Die, die. Yeah. I might have to watch it later just because that's to my right. Yes. Of it's so good. So wait, should we stick with Etsy? Should we focus on Redbubble? Like what? What's better for you if we're going to support you?

Jay Duckworth [00:45:18] Etsy is great. Read Redbubble Scott. I just want people to have fun because they're fun. Things like like my red bubble has a lot of tongue in cheek stuff, but there's also some serious artwork that I've done, like some of my watercolor paintings, you know. So, so yeah, I mean, Etsy is great, but it's whatever people feel they're into, you know?

Gillian Pensavalle [00:45:43] All right. Cool.

Jay Duckworth [00:45:43] Thank you.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:45:44] Of course. Lastly, Deb is asking a little bit of a curveball here. What is your favorite type of pasta?

Jay Duckworth [00:45:55] It's got to be fresh. It's got to be made on wood and not metal. I think a good handmade ravioli is great. I could also go with a handmade linguine. If it's made that day and the reason that you want it made on wood instead of metal is the texture of the wood goes on to the pasta, creating bulbs that will hold the sauce.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:46:29] Genius.

Jay Duckworth [00:46:30] I have learned much from the old gays, so that is why. That is why our knowledge is passed down from older gays to younger gays about coffee, cocktails and pasta.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:46:42] You sound like Mrs. Coleman.

Jay Duckworth [00:46:44] But I love. Oh, it's.

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Gillian Pensavalle [00:46:48] Oh, cool. With the deal they get, we don't know where we are until we hear our name pronounced. Oh.

Jay Duckworth [00:46:59] Thank you. If it wasn't for these parents, it's.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:47:04] Oh. Diane, we used to. I don't even know who you are.

Jay Duckworth [00:47:10] Somebody's got to care about me.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:47:13] Good. Oh, that's good. Oh, my God. Sarah Jane. Oh, hold them to the shoes. They don't wear shoes because when I do, I fall down. Come on. It's written on one liners, but it's still seamless and cohesive. You know what I mean? Like, every scene is quotable.

Jay Duckworth [00:47:27] Yes, I made mud.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:47:31] I thought it would be a nice change from coffee.

Jay Duckworth [00:47:36] Oh, this has been such a joy ride.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:47:39] I'm so glad you think that I had the absolute greatest time. I would love to just stay in touch with you and just be real friends. Still think you're amazing?

Jay Duckworth [00:47:46] I we'll put you on the holiday card.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:47:48] Yes. I'll be back at you. I might send you one of your own cards back to you. So I really like your work.

Jay Duckworth [00:47:54] Well, I hand paint. I handpicked my cards for the holiday. I hand paint all of my holiday cards with watercolors and send them out. So, yeah, you'll get some original artwork.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:48:08] Well, that is a true honor. All jokes aside, that that is amazing to be for you to take the time and add,

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like, another name to your list and have that name be mine. That's really meaningful to me.

Jay Duckworth [00:48:18] Oh, nice.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:48:20] All right. Tell the people where they can find you. The tick tock. We did the Redbubble, but I'm going to link all of it. But, like, where can they find you if they want to learn more about you?

Jay Duckworth [00:48:27] Everything's under proptologist. I made sure to streamline. So my etsy is the proptologist. My Instagram is proptologist. My tick tock is proptologist. But yeah, just look for me in the western sky.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:48:44] Because that's what it is. And no one's going to bring you down. Say no. Um, look, I feel like we barely scratched the surface, so. Really. You're welcome. Any. Thank you so much. You have such a wealth of knowledge. I mean, this has been great. Thank you for spending so much time with me today.

Jay Duckworth [00:49:00] Let's rant some time. Let's do this again. Let's do this again sometime in. Right.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:49:04] Done. All right. So much. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you, peeps. Thank you for your amazing questions and diving in with me and listeners. Thank you for listening for all this time. I love everybody a lot, Jay. Thanks again. Thank you.

Jay Duckworth [00:49:17] Thank you Patreon for supporting this channel because it's so important.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:49:22] They're the best. All right. I love everybody. I'll talk to you next week. I am G. Pen.

Jay Duckworth [00:49:27] I am a big ham.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:50:03] 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

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my intro music and this custom Yorktown arrangement that I will never, ever get over. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. A big thank you to Jenson Parker Neal, my dear friend and right hand man who helps me make the thing about the thing. To become a Patreon Peep and join the best, kindest and most welcoming corner of the internet. Go to patreon.com/TheHamilcast. You can submit questions to guests, join Zoom Hangouts, get behind the scenes access and of course, my endless gratitude. On social media at the pod is @TheHamilcast and I'm @gillianwithag G-I-L-L-I-A-N-W-I-T-H-A-G. Visit THEHAMILCAST.COM for episodes, transcripts and more. You can see what's going on with Mike, you know Mike, at MichaelPaulSmith.Net True Crime Obsessed is my true crime comedy podcast with my podcast soulmate, Patrick Hinds, and we were the first podcast to ever play Broadway. Ever. Thank you so much for listening. It means the world to me. To the revolution!