

YOUR FAILURE IS MY PROTECTION

[part XXVI of the ongoing **TASK** series]

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Requirements

- A small table
- A smartphone with a speech reversing application [e.g., ‘Speak Back’]
- A prerecorded audio file
- Selected props

Instructions

- This work is for solo performer and a single audience member (‘participant’).
- This piece should never be recorded. It is an ephemeral encounter.
- Prior to performance, the performer records themselves speaking a highly personal secret or regret. It should be something they are sincerely motivated to keep secret. The secret is spoken into a speech reversing application. The reversed version is exported as an audio file.
- As the participant comes on stage, do not stand, gently acknowledge their presence, and silently invite them to sit at the table across from you.
- Once the participant has settled in, improvise an instructive monologue touching on the following:
 - Talk about what you recorded. Provide no hints relating to actual substance of your recorded dialogue. Is it a secret or regret? Have you told anyone this before? etc. ***Make sure the participant knows that what you recorded is highly personal and secretive.***
 - Explain that they will soon have a chance to hear this recording. However, the content has been reversed.
 - Inform the participant of their task:
 - They are to learn to ‘perform’ the reversed version they hear. They should strive to be as accurate as possible.
 - They will have a predetermined duration to do this. As the performer, you may decide how long you’re willing to give the participant. This depends on the length of the recording; ***there should always be a real possibility that the participant will succeed in ‘translating’ the recording.***
 - After the duration has elapsed, the participant will speak what they have prepared into a speech reversal app and play the un-reversed version in front of the audience.
 - Explain the catch:
 - You [as the performer] wish to keep this secret *secret* and you will attempt to distract them and corrupt their learning process.
 - You may do anything you like to distract them. You may use any props or objects. You may not do anything that would endanger/harm the participant. You may not physically touch them or the phone.
 - You can distract with discretion during the learning period. When it comes time for the participant to record what they have prepared, **you [and the audience] must remain silent and refrain from distorting the recording with vocal/ambient sounds of any kind.**
- Once you have informed the participant, provide them with a smartphone with the audio file and speech reversing app. Begin a timer and begin the learning period. When the time ends, the participant records what they have rehearsed and plays the ‘unreversed’ recording back.
- After they play the reversed version of what they recorded, stand up, thank them, and gesture to the exit.