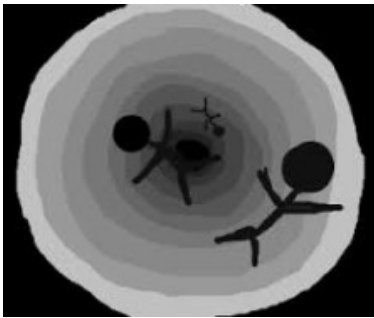


The following is a copy of a blog post Coach Banks wrote on the topic of The Gray Zone. If you would like to read more recent posts please visit <http://old.claybanksstudio.com/blog/>

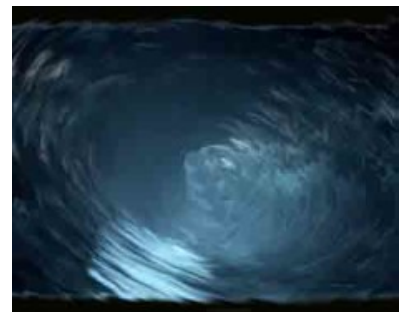
## DON'T GET CAUGHT IN THE ABYSS – NO WHERE LAND – THE GRAY ZONE

April 5, 2016 By Clay Banks



As much as we talk about the **AWESOMENESS of THE ZONE** here at CBSI — there are some zones that you really don't want any association with. You don't because they're bad! The zones I'm referring to, which are known by several names, are **THE GRAY ZONE – THE ABYSSAL ZONE – THE NO WHERE ZONE**. All of that seems a bit long. So, let's cover them for a moment and then give them a new name.

- **The Gray Zone** – An area of uncertainty.
- **The Abyssal Zone** – Or “Abyss”, is derived from the Greek word ἄβυσσος, meaning bottomless.
- **No Where Zone** – Not in or to any place; not anywhere.



I could guess after reading these actual phrase definitions that you yourself wouldn't want to be associated with any of them. I mean who would?! And yet... most 'coming about' actors play around in these zones more often than not.



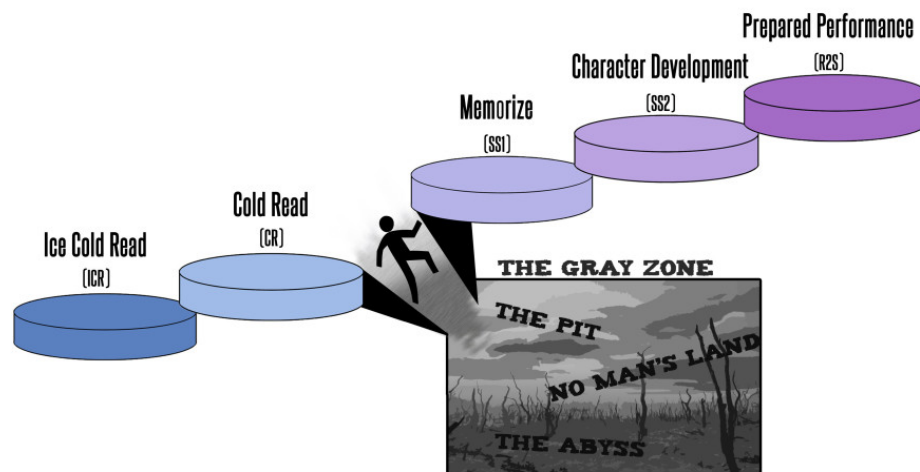
If you've been following along with our present teaching on **THE CRAFT OF THE PROCESS**, then you should be aware that this place (OK, let's just call it... **LOST**), is found in between two significant places — **THE COLD READ & FULLY MEMORIZED**. Cold Read is a place and

Memorized is another place. However, if you're not in one of those two places then I'm afraid... **YOU'RE LOST!** And, unfortunately, so is your read and your audition.

Now, I personally don't want to see any of you lost at all. All of us here at CBSI work incredibly hard to see that:



- **You know there are significant places.**
- **You know the names of these places.**
- **You have ample training to be strong in each significant place.**
- **You know there is a no place (lost).**
- **You stay out of no place (lost).**
- **Gray Zone**



Seems simple. And, it is! All it takes is knowing where to be when you're there, training hard to be 'strongly' there and working even harder to stay out of no where!

## **THE ACTORS FREEWAY - [Your free weekly exercise.]**

Look over the two monologues below. Pay attention to the speed and style at which you think they should be spoken. Try to memorize a part of each. Notice and make note of the difficulty level of each. Keep sharpening the sword!

Why, I must die;  
And if I do not by thy hand, thou art  
No servant of thy master's. Against self-slaughter

There is a prohibition so divine  
That cravens my weak hand. Come, here's my heart.  
Something's afore't; soft, soft! we'll no defence;  
Obedient as the scabbard. What is here?  
The scriptures of the loyal Leonatus  
All turn'd to heresy! Away, away!  
Corrupters of my faith; you shall no more  
Be stomachers to my heart. Thus may poor fools  
Believe false teachers; though those that are betray'd  
Do feel the treason sharply, yet the traitor  
Stands in worse case of woe.  
And thou, Posthumus, thou that didst set up  
My disobedience 'gainst the king my father,  
And make me put into contempt the suits  
Of princely fellows, shalt hereafter find  
It is no act of common passage, but  
A strain of rareness; and I grieve myself  
To think, when thou shalt be disedg'd by her  
That now thou tir'st on, how thy memory  
Will then be pang'd by me. Prithee, dispatch;  
The lamb entreats the butcher; where's thy knife?  
Thou art too slow to do thy master's bidding,  
When I desire it too.

- Imogen in Act III scene iv of Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*

It sure used to be... We stood up for what was right. We fought for moral reason. We passed laws, struck down laws, for moral reason. We waged wars on poverty, not on poor people. We sacrificed, we cared about our neighbors, we put our money where our mouths were and we never beat our chest. We built great, big things, made ungodly technological advances, explored the universe, cured diseases and we cultivated the world's greatest artists AND the world's greatest economy. We reached for the stars, acted like men. We aspired to intelligence, we didn't belittle it. It didn't make us feel inferior. We didn't identify ourselves by who we voted for in the last election and we didn't scare so easy. We were able to be all these things and do all these things because we were informed... by great men, men who were revered. First step in solving any problem is recognizing there is one. America is not the greatest country in the world anymore."

-Will McAvoy in Aaron Sorkin's *Newsroom*

NOTE TO PONDER:

Writing style matters. For some actors, Shakespeare is harder to memorize than contemporary dialogue because the syntax, grammar and vocabulary can feel so foreign on the tongue. But for other actors fast paced, modern dialogue is harder. Jeff Daniels recently told The Hollywood Reporter that the scariest part about working on Aaron Sorkin's HBO series "The Newsroom" is "the amount of dialogue and the speed of it, and to make it sound like it's thoughts falling out of my head versus I was just able to memorize it. That's the big battle with Aaron."