**MICHAEL JORDAN**

**SCRIPT ANALYSIS**

**PRODUCTION PLAN FOR *HAMLET***

“Can Fortinbras save Denmark?”

Rather than a natural tendency to make the production of *Hamlet* about the family of Hamlet, the direction I envision to take with *Hamlet* is to make Fortinbras the main character. There are many instances in the script that allude to the approach of Fortinbras.

The plot of the story will generally remain the same. The difference will come through the theme, spectacle, diction, and character. The underlying plot will be that Denmark, the heathen nation in the Elizabethans’ eyes, is the falling apart, unable to self-sustain country, and Fortinbras sets on a quest to end the turmoil. The semi-deranged actions of Hamlet, countered by the desperate efforts of Claudius to maintain the throne, will be the main contributors to the chaos and drudgery. Some key scenes concerning Fortinbras will receive special emphasis, which will be discussed later, in order to effectively communicate the main character as Fortinbras.

Each of the characters of the production will obviously have their own personalities, but an overall characteristic of the Danish characters will be compared to two things. First, in relation to each other and their personal affairs, they are like unsupervised children fighting over a toy spearheaded on each side by Claudius and Hamlet. In relation to their attitude toward Fortinbras, he is the father on the way home when the chores aren’t done. Much anxiety and desperation builds as he draws nearer, motivating many of the decisions of the characters.

The spectacle will play a large part in this particular production. For starters, Denmark and all associated characters will be ragged and dreary, with an almost hazy feeling to it. Possibilities exist of some clever lighting to emphasis this. Costumes will have obvious tattered appearances, as will the sets and props, almost as if they can’t take care of themselves, rather than just old or worn out. On the other hand, Fortinbras will appear very comely and neat, not like a rich snob, but someone who knows how to be organized, to conduct business.

An important part of the spectacle will be Fortinbras and his approaching army. Every set change will be performed by him and his army, as they march across the stage and the set is now something different. Also, every time Fortinbras is mentioned he will either appear onstage, perhaps in a slow and steady stroll through observing the characters and what’s happening, or he and his army will appear, maybe by marching through the background suggesting their continued and inevitable approach. The lighting will also lighten or clear up whenever he is mentioned or seen, as if his very presence helps to calm down the chaos, clear the haze. Shadows of great armies or of Fortinbras himself in the background also have possibility.

The music will also have a large role in the production. One idea to be played with is to have the sound of battle drums punctuate every conversation surrounding Fortinbras. Also the sound of marching soldiers and clanking armor, especially at their appearance, will add to the mix. Music during the mentioning or viewing of Fortinbras can have a different, but subtle change in it, just enough to subconsciously allow the audience to feel a bit better. He could also have his own “theme song” that could be played at times, some subtle rhythm or tune, just enough to be recognized.

And finally, to help the viewer understand more about Fortinbras, the diction of the characters will have to be carefully mapped out. To give a general idea, the bulk of the characters may speak like small, frightened animals when speaking of Fortinbras, or like the kids who know Dad is almost home and they’re still messing around. Fortinbras can have a very strong but inviting voice and manner of speech (although his actual number of lines is few), perhaps like Mufasa or Qui Gon Jinn.

From this very general view of the production, many possibilities arise which the director, designers and actors themselves will all be able to contribute to. The effect will be to present a rendition of *Hamlet* that will persuade the audience to view Fortinbras as a hero and the Danes as the children that were rescued from themselves (as a nation, not necessarily as individuals).