

Moment: Angels in America

Context: This moment is by Jedidiah Schultz, a young student at the University of Wyoming. He is energetic and eager, who holds fast to his principles and his desire to be the best performer he can be. The third moment of the show, he is the second person we meet alone and serves as a glimpse into the students in and around Laramie.

Jedidiah Schultz: I've lived in Wyoming my whole life. The family has been in Wyoming well ... for generations. Now when it came time to go to college, my parents can't - couldn't afford to send me to college. I wanted to study theater. And I knew that if I was going to go to college I was going to have to get on a scholarship - and so uh they have this competitions each year, this Wyoming state high-school competition. And I knew that if I didn't take first place in uh duets that I wasn't gonna get a scholarship. SO I went to the theater department of the university looking for good scenes and I asked one of the professors, I was like, "I need - I need a killer scene," and he was like, "Here you go, this is it." And it was from Angels in America.

So I read it and I knew that I could win best scene if I did a good enough job.

And when the time came I told my mom and dad so that they would come to the competition. Now you have to understand, my parents go to everything - every ballgame, ever hockey game - everything I've ever done.

And they brough me into their room and told me that if I did that scene, that they would not come to see me in the competition. Because they believed it was wrong - that homosexuality is wrong. They felt that strongly about it that they didn't want to come see their son do probably the most important thing he'd done to that point in his life. And I didn't know what to do.

I had never, ever done against my parents' wishes. So I was kind of worried about it. But I decided to do it.

And all I can remember about the competition is that when we were done, my and my scene partner, we came up to each other and we shook hands and there was a standing ovation.

Oh, man it was amazing! And we took first place and we won. And that's how come I can afford to be here at the University, because of that scene. It was one of the best moments of

my life. And my parents weren't there. And to this day, that was the one thing that my parents didn't see me do.

And thinking back on it, I think, why did I do it? Why did I oppose my parents? 'Cause I'm not gay. So why did I do it? And I guess the only honest answer I can give is that well, (He chuckles.) I wanted to win. It was such a good scene; it was like the best scene!

Do you know Mr. Kushner? Maybe you can tell him.