Shakespeare for Lawyers: Rhetorical Power in the Courtroom

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We Have Five Senses, Not One

Don’t forget to actively engage the five senses!

We Have Five Senses, Not One

- The easiest way to get vivid, cinematic, and sensual details into your story is to think in terms of the five senses:
- If your story can enter the listener through the senses, the listener can experience the story in real time and as if it were happening to *them*.

We Have Five Senses, Not One

Sound

Smell

Touch

Taste

Sight

Sound

- Remembering *sounds* can help to access the emotions they trigger inside you.
  - Does the ringing of a classroom bell bring back feelings of being out of place and alienated, as you felt in middle school?
  - Does the sound of an ambulance siren scare you, causing you to remember the day that your grandmother died?
  - Does the sound of a brook running make you feel peaceful?
  - Example: “He heard a loud ‘pop’ like a muffler backfiring and took cover on the ground. In John’s neighborhood, you could never be sure. More often than not, a loud pop meant that someone was firing shots. ”

Smell

- A smell can help open up the personal emotions you need to feel.
  - The stench of garbage might make you feel nauseous.
  - The fragrance of lilacs or roses could make you feel the first stirrings of romance.

Touch

- Does sand trickling through your fingers transport you to a beach?
- Does the touch of fur make you feel romantic?
- Does a cool breeze blowing through your hair remind you of the day when your husband proposed to you?

Touch

- The five senses are one big super-sense: touch. We've already covered physical touch. But how is touch triggered in the context of the other four senses?

Touch

- When we *taste* something, it touches our taste buds.
- When we *smell* something, the molecules penetrate our nose.
- When we *look* at something, the color or the light touches the back of our cornea and that's how we see it.

Touch

- In what might be surprising and even a little bit creepy, *sound* waves are touching us all the time. Even now, as I speak to you, I'm touching you with the sound of my voice.
- I send out sound waves (physical, tangible things) that travel through my mic, into the computer, out of your speakers and hit your ear drums causing inner vibrations. The vibrations that I'm sending here are literally touching you there.

Touch

- I’m fascinated with this idea of how our words and sounds are always touching people. Indeed, the sounds of people’s voices by themselves trigger certain sensations inside us. Look no further than some of your favorite narrators on Audible. Recognizing the sheer power of our voice, we should exploit it for the good of our clients when we’re speaking to the jury.

Touch

- I’m also fascinated with the power of touch through sight when we’re speaking to the jury.
- I can think of times in my life when another person “shot daggers” at me from across the room. It felt as if they had touched me when they looked at me. Indeed, it felt as if the person had “stripped me naked with their eyes.”
- Example: “The officer’s grip on John’s arm was so tight that the imprint it left was still there more than two hours later.”

Taste

- Does the taste of a bitter pill, rancid milk, or liver make you want to throw up?
- Perhaps the taste of vanilla icing makes you feel loved and special, as you did when your mother would make a birthday cake just for you, with her special vanilla icing.
- Or, maybe the sensation of a dark piece of chocolate melting in your mouth creates primal, sensual feelings.

Taste

- Example: “As he lay on the ground, he could *taste* the blood that was dripping out of his nose and onto his lips.”

Sight

- A Hawaiian sunset, an abandoned house, a dead carcass on the highway, an intimate candlelit room or a flag-draped coffin.
- What visuals create a response in you?
- Explore different images to see which ones move you. Chances are they will move the jury too!

Sight

- Examples:
- “His palms were shaking and soaked in sweat.”
- “The room looked like it hadn’t been cleaned in months.”
- “He could tell that she was holding back tears.”