

## UNCA drama department prepares for emotional play



Photo courtesy of the UNCA drama department

Adam Wise (left) and Keegan Bates (right) play school shooters in the drama department's newest production, "columbinus."

### *Students face challenges, work on character development*

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UNC Asheville's drama department deals with difficult issues in its next play, "columbinus," which focuses on two distraught teenage boys, a school shooting and the resulting aftermath.

**Adam Wise plays Freak, one of the main characters.** Wise said his role challenges him. His last part was a supporting character in "Spring Awakening."

"I've never had the chance to play anything like this before, so it's been a good stretch and it's an important story," Wise said. "I've never had to be so emotional, like go on an emotional roller coaster like that. And I've never had to play a psychopath."

According to Wise, playing a psychopath does not put him in a great mood. He leaves the character behind at the theater in order to maintain his sanity.

"I'm not a violent person, so getting to the place where you're so angry and you hate everything and you just think that the world should essentially have a reset button - getting into that mindset

is kind of difficult," Wise said.

In the moment, playing the part is fine, but when Wise steps off the stage, he said he feels as though he essentially just did everything his character did.

"Sometimes I try not to go so deep into it, but you kind of just - you have to. Or at least pretend to," Wise said.

After doing some research, Wise said he decided Columbine is something where he feels bad for everyone involved in the situation.

"You can't excuse their actions, but they're just kind of sad individuals and Eric is just a complete psychopath, but he was still a 17-year-old kid," Wise

said.

**Sean Preston, a freshman who plays Jock,** said the play has an important message for its viewers.

"It just reinforces that we aren't here to necessarily entertain. We are not here to make people laugh. We're here to give a message and show people that these things happen and that we want to prevent them and how," Preston said.

Preston said he hopes when people see the play, the details of the aftermath and what happens, it will spread knowledge of school shootings. He also hopes it will encourage more education

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