

Fall 11-28-2017

## "Looking for Bruce"

Katie Francis

katiefayfrancis@aggiemail.usu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/student\\_folklore\\_all](https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/student_folklore_all)

---

### Recommended Citation

Francis, Katie, "Looking for Bruce" (2017). *USU Student Folklore Fieldwork*. Paper 41.  
[https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/student\\_folklore\\_all/41](https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/student_folklore_all/41)

This G4: Jokes is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Folklore Fieldwork at DigitalCommons@USU. It has been accepted for inclusion in USU Student Folklore Fieldwork by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@USU. For more information, please contact [rebecca.nelson@usu.edu](mailto:rebecca.nelson@usu.edu).



Wesley Cone, MarKaye Hassan, and Caroline Robbins  
Logan, Utah  
November 28, 2017

“Looking for Bruce”  
Joke

**Informants:**

Wesley Cone: Wesley Cone graduated in 2016 with a degree in Design Technology at Utah State University. He worked as a props intern for the Lyric Repertory Company while I worked there as an actor. He is originally from Oakley, Utah, but currently resides in Saint Paul, Minnesota.

MarKaye Hassan: Markaye Hassan has been my best friend since we were both in the first grade together. She was born and raised in Logan, Utah, left the country to serve an LDS mission in Canada from 2013-2015 and, although she attended Utah State for a year and a half, is now completing a degree in Film at Brigham Young University in Provo. Her father, Dennis Hassan, is one of the Artistic Directors of the Lyric Repertory Company and also is a professor of Set Design at Utah State University. So MarKaye has been immersed in the Utah State University Theater culture since birth.

Caroline Robbins: Caroline Robbins is originally from Brigham City, Utah and graduated from Utah State University with a degree in Costume Design. She now resides in Logan, Utah with her husband and recently gave birth to her first child. She remains active in the costuming field in local community theater companies throughout the year, and professionally during the summer with the Utah Festival Opera Company.

**Context:**

The following text is taken directly from a facebook post I made on November 28, 2017 from my home in Logan, Utah. I had been reaching out to my theater colleagues and friends to ask them to share stories from their experiences with Everett, the infamous ghost of the Caine Lyric Theater on Caine Lyric Theater at 28 W Center St, Logan, UT 84321. This post received a rather large following of 98 likes and more than 30 comments. As I read through these comments, I was surprised and delighted to see a reference to a very popular inside joke among the students at Utah State University’s theater department.

The explanation of the joke is as follows: Bruce Duerden, the professor of lighting design at Utah State, is known for being very difficult to track down within the department. It is highly common that, if you ask someone where they went off to, especially if they are absent for a time from a class, they will say they were, “looking for Bruce.” Sometimes this means they were asked by another professor to track Professor Duerden down. But this phrase has actually come to be code for two students running off to make out unseen during the day. When they return, they use the excuse “we were looking for Bruce” to avoid detection.

So therefore, in this segment of a conversation taken from a larger Facebook post, you will see my friends MarKaye Hassan and Wesley Cone turn our friend Caroline Robbins’ comment about Everett the ghost into a solid reference of this earlier “looking for Bruce” joke.

**Text:**

**Caroline Robbins (November 28 at 8:50 PM):** Have you heard Bruce's story where a cd started playing backwards???

[Liked by two people]

**Katie Fay Francis (November 28 at 9:01 PM):** Ok I'm definitely talking to Bruce.

[Liked by one person]

**Wesley Cone (November 28 at 10:05 PM):** Katie Fay Francis first you have to find him

[Liked by five people]

**Katie Fay Francis (November 28 at 10:44 PM):** #lookingforbruce

[Liked by five people]

**MarKaye Lauren Hassan (November 28 at 11:55 PM):** Oooh. Who are you looking for

Bruce with?

[Liked by three people]

**Katie Fay Francis (November 29 at 12:19 AM):** Now now... [three laughing with tears

emojis]

#### **Texture:**

The tone of my three friends in this exchange is very playful. And it's delightful that all three of us (myself, Wesley, and MarKaye) instantly know what Wesley is talking about when he says "first you have to find him." It is also special to note that five people (all peers from the USU theater department who had been following the thread of comments on my post) reacted to Wesley's comment with the "Haha" reaction provided by Facebook. And the fact that Markaye says "*Who*" are you looking for Bruce *with* shows that she is playing right along with Wesley. I think to an outsider from the department, this wouldn't make any sense, but instantly, anyone who has ever had a semester in the USU theater department would know exactly what was being said between the lines.

Katie Francis  
Utah State University Logan Campus  
ENGL 2210: Introduction to Folklore

Dr. Lynn S. McNeill  
Fall 2017