

# Lambda Players Premiere a Gay Man's Trip in *Recovery Mode*

Five years ago, Matthew Crehan Higgins was bored – and horny. He logged into gay.com and within minutes made a date for a late night rendezvous with a hot, closeted bisexual man.



**Recovery Mode** author and performance artist Matthew Crehan Higgins says that having someone else write about your life is freeing, but also terrifying.

What should have been a 45-minute hookup (if the guy could last that long) turned into a tumultuous four year relationship, a one man show and now a full-length stage production.

The Lambda Players' Resident Playwright Matthew Burlingame had heard Higgins' one man show on an episode of *Cocktails & Creampuffs*, an internet podcast he co-hosts from Buffalo, NY. Knowing a good thing when he hears it, Burlingame contacted Higgins to discuss turning the solo show into a full production. Two weeks later, rehearsals began on the newly adapted six-person play *Recovery Mode*.

"I first heard it last summer and fell in love with it," says Burlingame. "It had everything; comedy, tragedy, diva moments and breakdowns – and Higgins performing it just made it even better."

When Burlingame contacted him about the adaptation, Higgins was thrilled. "It was very unexpected," he explains. "I did *Recovery Mode* as a spoken word event and made up most of it on the spot, for the purpose of finding out whether I had the material necessary to create a play. After I did it, and then [outwordmagazine.com](http://outwordmagazine.com)

again after I heard the recording, I felt like the material was there and that it felt good to get it out of my system. ... When the adaptation came up, I felt like I was getting my chance to see *Recovery Mode* come to life, but in a way that wouldn't take so much out of me."

"Not having an actual script to work from, I spent three days transcribing the audio before I could begin the adaptation," said Burlingame. "But in the end, it helped me get to know the piece, and Matt, even

better."

In *Recovery Mode*, the character of Matt (Michael Hedges), an upwardly-mobile, out gay man, leads zany therapist Susan (Bethany Hidden-Cauley) through his continuous breakups and makeups with his deeply closeted blue-collar, bisexual boyfriend Tom (Steve Thompson.)

The two have nothing in common but each other – and sometimes not even that. Filling out the cast is Matt's college BFF Marc; Sean a one night stand who made him believe in love again; and country bumpkin Adam, whose talent is best left to the imagination. Based on true-life experiences, *Recovery Mode* is a comedy about getting over Mr. Wrong.

"*Recovery Mode* is largely about a relationship going bad and the aftermath – it's very much about therapy," said Higgins. "To me, therapy at its best is when that other person puts a mirror up that makes one see not just what happened to them but also how they contributed. Answering those questions, this time to a fellow writer, gave me a chance to see that mirror from a different angle."

*Recovery Mode* runs Thurs., Fri. and Sat. at 8 p.m., Jan. 6 – Feb. 5, at the Lambda Players Theatre, 1127 21st St. Tickets are \$15, and Thursday nights are "pay-what-you-can." Reservations can be made at 916-444-8229 or online at [lambdaplayers.com](http://lambdaplayers.com)

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