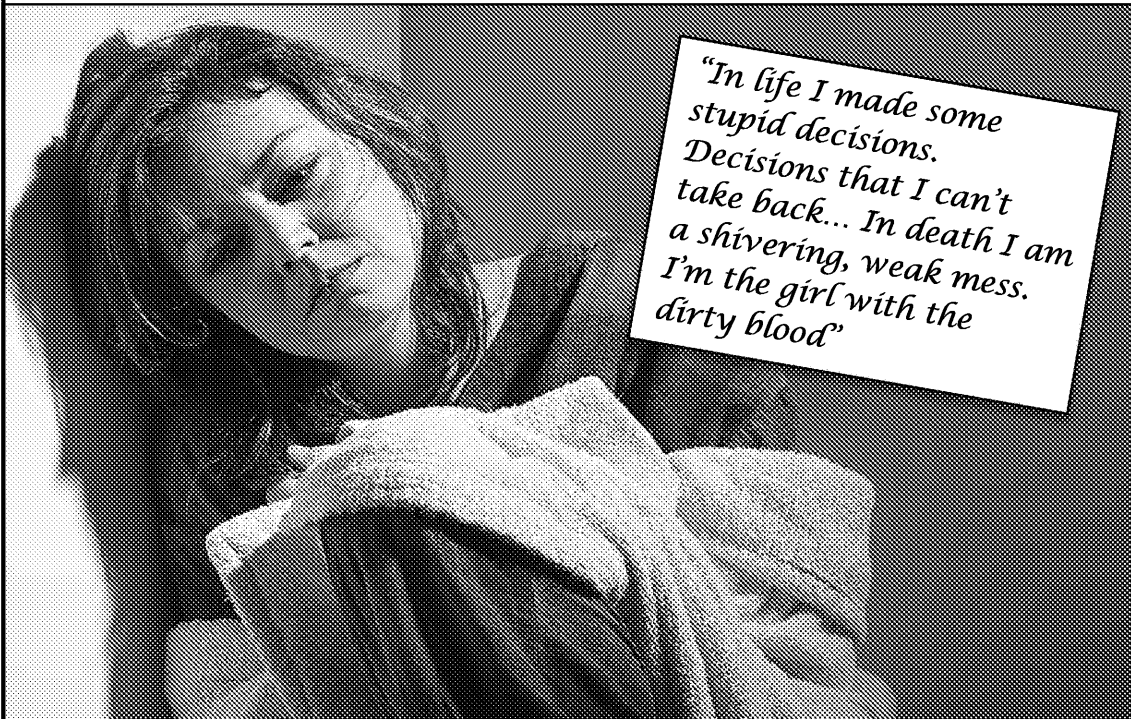


DRAMA | A LEVEL

Verbatim Theatre of Empowerment

Three Original Plays for A Level

EVIE HAYNES



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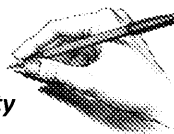
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Teacher's Introduction

As a theatrical frame, verbatim theatre is one that engages a process as much as an outcome. The Verbatim Theatre of Empowerment trilogy has been created – we should not be devising performance for the sake of an audience, but by people who are devising. While what you read in this collective of work holds strong language use and the imagery conceived, the process by which this material was created is poignant, if not more so.

All three plays have been created using the real voices of real people and facilitated theatre and all of those involved have been privy to agreeing the work today.

Acknowledgements

The work you will read in this publication has been created with a view to those who have participated in the creation, and those who then receive the production as an audience member. The Verbatim Theatre of Empowerment trilogy serves as a collective of material; however, it does not fully demonstrate the time, effort and dedication dedicated to its entirety.

With this in mind, I would like to thank all of the people whom I have worked with over the years in creating this vital work – you are some of the most beautiful and resilient people I have met and I will never forget how many lessons in life I have learnt through you. Thank you for sharing your stories and for allowing me to pass them on; without you, this would not have been possible.

I would also like to thank the young people from Tresham Institute in Ketton for their reality in performing all three pieces of work in December 2011. The emotion and commitment of these performers truly stunned me and their commitment never faltered.

Performance Licence:

If you intend to perform one of these plays in front of a paying audience, you will need to order one of the following licences:

Single Performance Licence	This licence will grant you the rights to perform this play to a paying audience at your school for one performance only. 75% of this will go directly to the playwright.
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Playwright Prelude

In her writing, *Applied Drama: The Gift of Theatre*, Helen Nicholson explores drama and the means by which the centrality of the participant is vital for the terminology ('Applied') in respect to the theatrical frame, she suggests 'activities' (Nicholson, 2005; p. 38) pedagogy and drama are aligned and the amalgamation of the qualities needed to liberate, transport and change the

Drama and pedagogy are both activities, contingent on the cultural context in place, and the process of bringing them together has been regarded as encouraging creativity and challenging creativity (Nicholson, 2005; 38)

'Encouraging' and 'challenging' are both words articulated by Nicholson in her writing, implying that the outcome of combining drama and pedagogy is a variable sequence. There is no universal pedagogic process that is in this respect; it is simply to be adapted according to the context. Perhaps the need for self-identification within the applied process as Nicholson later essential to both the process and the product of verbatim theatre.

One never reads except by identification. But... when I say identification I become. I inhabit. I enter (Nicholson, 2005; 72)

In empowering people, the theatrical frame has an ability to address and while providing a forum for development. The idea of self-identification is to identify with an issue or concept through narrative is a notion that Stanislavski performance for both the actor and the audience. The theory that the actor empathise with the role that they embody is explicit, as is the need for the actor on the stage (thus breaking down the 'fourth wall' that divides an audience) resonates the objective of self-identification; to identify with the narrative of the theatre and therefore understand and interpret the dramatic intention. A concept of self-identification and the actualisation of self in his writing of

Spectator is a bad word! The spectator is less of a man and it is necessary to strip him of his capability of action in all its fullness. He too must be a subject with those generally accepted as actors, who must also be spectators. In people's theatre have the same objectives – the liberation of the spectator from imposed finished visions of the world... The spectators in the people's theatre are passive victims of that theatre (Barba 1979; 18)

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The concept that a spectator of the theatre would merely become a 'victim' is strongly opposed. His *Theatre of the Oppressed* denied differentiation between actor and audience and insisted that, in fact, the spectator (or 'spect-actor' as viewers of his theatre should be) should be an integral part of the performative frame. Using 'image theatre' and the concept of the 'real' and the 'ideal', working towards the 'image of possibility', Boal's social journey from one to the other. With experiments across Europe to test the concept and money, the intention would be to encourage reflectivity in analysing social reality and how transition can be achieved. This notion of moving from an oppressed state to a state of liberation is closely mirrored by the verbatim process and the argument that performance can be used as a tool to empower marginalised communities and promote inclusion. Through the experiences through the process, participants can achieve a sense of empowerment and agency in experiencing the product viewers are to witness and change. Critically in *Theatre of the Oppressed*, and his definition of the 'spect-actor', there resides a need to 'reclaim the self' and restore faith in self (relieving the apparent dependency upon social structures and systems). In the structure, the participants to both process and product are to 'think themselves into the ideal' (108), striving to move from the real through self-expression. Indeed, Boal's work is subject to criticism (at times being labelled pure romanticism); however, the work of verbatim and applied practice, such as that of Chicken Shed, Theatre Company and Geese Theatre, that the techniques of Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed* are promoting the 'togetherness' of a community and eradicating exclusion.

Enjoy and reflect!

Evie

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Stand Up



Stand Up is a piece of theatre about discrimination created in a college of Education. Having identified discrimination and equality and diversity as a Voice survey, I resolved to address the issue through 'creative intervention' theatre as my solution. If I could raise awareness of the issue within the college then perhaps we could look to create a dialogue for change.

After circulating a survey inviting students to come along and discuss the issue, I interviewed 24 enrolled learners and *Stand Up* is the result. I selected the stories because of their representation of many different forms of discrimination; how the transcripts are available on the college website.

Having performed the piece as mandatory training at a range of institutions, it was showcased at the National Association of Colleges Exemplar of Excellence.

Character List

Interviewer	Can be male or female. In their 30s. Interviewer is an employee of the institute at which these stories are being told. S/he is trying to engage with the issue of discrimination. S/he is collecting the stories of the students and wishes to use the stories to ensure the issue is dealt with effectively in the future within the institute.
Callum	Male, 36. An ex-student of the college who has been made redundant after losing his qualifications in order to return to work. Has reluctantly returned to work and is subsequently a victim of discrimination because of his age.
Kira	Female, 17. A late starter on the course who is discriminated against because of her weight. She finds herself battling with several personal issues due to her weight and peers at the institute.
Maya	Female, 18. Afro-Caribbean descent. A very intelligent and hardworking student who finds herself a victim of discrimination at the institute.
Ryan	Male, 17. An autistic student who is struggling with the diagnosis of autism. His lack of support in lessons raises questions with peers.
Ben	Male, 17. A victim of homophobic bullying and discrimination, he is on the college course (hairdressing).

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Scene 1

Five seats set in a row facing forward with an individual spotlight overhead.

Callum Sad really. Just sad that at my age, at 36 and having a site for so many years that I was back in this position, this livelihood though innit??!! Like my wife and son, they want me to do better. Get a better job and give them a better life.

Kira I liked the thought of college. A new start my Mum and I like school.

Maya..... Indifferent really. That's how I feel now. Just indifferent.

Ryan..... I wanted to walk. I could of if there was something I knew that I needed this. Absolutely ridiculous but I thought; sat in a room here with this **(gestures to Dictaphone)** to talk about that.

Ben I just kept thinking maybe it's me... Maybe I am discriminated against? What's that??

Kira What is that?

Ryan..... What's that?

Maya..... So I'm thinking Stand Up or conform?

**Callum, Kira,
Ryan and Ben** Conform or Stand Up?

Lights fade.

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all kinds of ideas about race. I knew that I didn't have to say anything. But, I showed my naivety by saying, "I wish I knew I shouldn't have accepted." I guess that this experience was as simple as that... I started November

of the whole corridor. For a
complete joke, just an off int
cried, "There was nothing left



Ryan I was told I was on the Autistic Spectrum when I was diagnosed but it's dead mild. I try not to let it affect what I do. Don't tell people really... Even talking about it no

The label is one that I just can't relate to, even now. Am I Autistic? What is that? I thought it was someone who couldn't communicate properly until I knew... I think it's the stigma attached to this 'disability' that I felt. Would people have to know? Like, would it be more? Maybe it'd be easier 'cos everyone's different and it's non-judgmental right?

Starting was as hard as I thought. I made friends through school anyway. We were spoken to like people. It was perfect, everything I wanted. Then in Christmas and assignments were due. My peers asked questions about the support that I got; why was I here every day? How was it that I was getting help? I couldn't answer. Didn't know what to say really. I was a group of people you barely know that you've

Callum Why am I here today? I'm not totally sure if I'm where I ought to be... Dunno guess I'm just like anyone else. I think I should be moaning or filling out surveys or something to speak out. I told them you know, 'I feel like I'm being treated differently here'. Didn't take it too well – a 36-year-old should be able to deal with it. 'Suck it up' as my

Maya It's not like anywhere I've lived before. People were used to that the colour of your skin is indicative of who you are. I think it's kind of accepted that. The funny thing is, yeah I'm black, but I'm from London; I couldn't be

Ben This is weird. I'm not sure where to start really...

Maya It's not even as if anything was blatant. Just ignored. No understanding really. Culture's complex isn't it? It's hard for people to get it, just respect it.

Ben Never really felt like the kind to whine about these things. Words 'Equality and Diversity' are banded around a lot. It's a place and of course 'bullying' is a great term – not a good one without any defining meaning in my view. That's not my view. I'm not part of that. I treat people how I expect to be treated. I guess I just expected everyone else to be the same.

Maya Discrimination isn't just about what someone says or does, it's also well as an action. Isolated, alone and completely different. That's how I felt. I can't get away from that.

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Scene 3

Interviewer – Can you think of a specific time or event when it was particularly obvious you were discriminated against?

Ryan **(almost overlapping the Interviewer)** Spacker!!
That's what they called me when they found out

Ben..... There was never a specific event; besides the in session as much as outside. The girls I worked with really rallied around me but I reckon that only my Gender-specific bullying? Do you think that's right for girls in primary?

Ryan After Christmas was particularly hard. Didn't want to. Every time my facilitator tried to help me in front of the group, I'd be so rude to her. I feel bad about that now but I didn't want to seem like I needed her.

Callum It was presentation day and I was bricking it. I did it up in front of the other lads and talk. Bearing in mind my experience of education was 20-odd years ago and I was miserable. I stood up in front of the group and did it. It was 20 minutes in length and considering it was all at PowerPoint I thought I'd done pretty well. They didn't think so.

Maya A group discussion on what it means to be British and things our debate could have been on.

Kira..... It was a Monday afternoon. I really hate Monday session always seems to drag. This day had been – theory for four hours solid, so I'd took a walk to get a skinny caramel latte and a blueberry muffin... my **(with a smile)**. By the time I arrived back the group was already talking. I sidled up to the door, partly because I hadn't finished my coffee and partly because I was talking about me. I just remember one of the girls made a particularly horrible comment with 'maybe we should bit' and then saying 'what you sticking up for'.

Callum I made a couple of statements that can't have been. The others loved it. An opportunity to belittle me **(sarcastic)**. Just comments like 'surely you should have thought you'd been in the industry mate?!' Sound like I say it but I was just so frustrated. I felt humiliated.

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Maya Britain: a place of discrimination, democracy and that's in complete denial... I tried to talk empathy though, really I did, but my view obviously wasn't

Ben I was in the little park next to the marketplace and noticed a couple of the blokes who really had it in for me a 'perve' and threatening to 'take me down and teach me to be a man'. The lads chased me away apparently, 'cos I refuse to be like that.



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Scene 4

- Interviewer**..... How do you think that colleges, schools and work places should change their approach in tackling discrimination in order to use their experience to avoid being repeated? And is there anything that you'd like to add?
- Ben**..... Are there any generic policies about these issues that apply to everyone? Do you strike rule whether you're an employer or a school? And would my opinion really be enough to determine anything?
- Kira**..... I don't know. I guess there must be something or someone that can help. It's just so easy to be a bully..
- Maya**..... People are always going to discriminate. It's just a fact. We need to be better educated. What is discrimination, what are the effects and how can every single person play a part in changing it? It's so easy to tell people what to do but there are people out there who will do it. It doesn't matter what policies are put in place or the punishment. I just wish that race and sexuality and disability laws will never change the world with my views of discrimination. I just hope that whatever this is and wherever it's going to be, I can just achieve a change in at least one person.
- Callum**..... Um I guess just to encourage talking. To know where to go to communicate with and where to go if you are a victim of discrimination.
- Ryan**..... Disability awareness? An understanding that being disabled, no matter how severe, doesn't mean you're stupid or incapable of feeling.
- Maya**..... It's time for things to change. For us to stop talking and start doing.
- Callum**..... All to be equal.
- Kira**..... To accept that you're unique, that you're unique, to be comfortable with being unique.
- Ryan**..... But that shouldn't divide us. We're all human. We all bleed, have hopes and dreams, love and hate.
- Kira**..... We may come in different packaging but look deep down we're all the same.
- Ben**..... But just to be... **(Slow fade to black out)**

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Maya Stand Up or conform. Conform or Stand Up? (stands up and leaves)

Callum Stand Up (stands up and leaves)

Kira..... Stand Up (stands up and leaves)

Ryan Stand Up (stands up and leaves)

Ben..... Stand Up (stands up and leaves)

BLACKOUT



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END



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In Life and Death



In Life and Death was created following a six-week residence in Northampton for people with long-term health conditions. The play follows the story of Jen, the youngest member of the group, who was diagnosed with pneumonia in November 2011 and concludes with a monologue from Alastair.

Character List

Jen	Female, 22.
Person 1	Male, early 20s.
Person 2	Male, early 20s.
Person 3	Male, late 20s.
Person 4	Male, early 20s.
Person 5	Male, late 20s.
Person 6	Male, late 20s.
Alastair	Male, early 60s.

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Scene 1

The lights rise and fall four times on a young girl – the first on her bed unable to sleep, second on her throwing up into a bucket. The third on her visibly sweating and crying body. The last on a peaceful, messy, sweaty figure asleep in an awkward position. Each characterisation lasting around 20 seconds and divided by blackout. Short and one mattress with a white sheet and a bucket. There are five characters (male) lined up dressed in black and with their backs facing the audience. They should be almost in

Jen..... So just explain to me again yeah. What exactly is this project gonna do for me? **(Starts quickly and directly to camera)** I'm still gonna wake up every morning knowing that I'm still gonna have to live with these ugly scars on my body and my ribs poking out. I'm still gonna ache and spend the day in and out of tears... **(starts but gradually slows and becomes more sombre)** I'm still **(close to tears, head down)** I'm still gonna wake up knowing that if I'd have just used my head, I never would have been here you know **(lifts her head)**. I'm still gonna regret. And I'm still gonna hate. **(Quick jump cut point where speech slows again)** 'Cos... Well 'cos I've got HIV aren't I?

Snap blackout

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Quickly, with each new sentence, ending the last and each of the figures at the back walking to surround the others.

Person..... Now I understand that what we've told you is different. At this point you will need to make a list.

Person 3 Let anybody who you have had unprotected sex with have the virus.

Person 1 It's important that we prevent the infection from
further.

(All figures to return to their original positions at the back of the stage)

Person 2 and walking towards Jen as if friends
So tell me about him then. What's he like? When
any good?

Jen..... He's lovely... Really lovely. We're taking it slow



Lights dim and Jen's attention turns back to the audience. Person 2 remains listening.

Jen..... So I'm told there's a lot more that they can do now with alternative therapies... That's all well and good but I can't live with it. The night sweats. The vomiting. The tiredness... A routine visit to investigate the spots on my left arm and I'm eventually left with a diagnosis I don't know how I go on? Like is it normal to want to think about taking your own life? A life that is like a shit shag with a guy you think's 'OK'?! You 'take the pill' still unprotected... I'm not sure that I can live with it. I've told anyone or done the 'big round' for that matter but I don't know how to.



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Scene 3

Jen laid in a heap on the bed as end of Scene 1 images. All of the figures at the back light. They remain in a line. Phone rings.

Person 1 Hello?

Person 2 Hello?!

Person 3 Yes. This is he...

Person 4 OK... Uh-huh. Yeah, I know Jen.

Person 5 A friend from many moons ago...

Person 6 Lovely girl.

Change in mood

Person 1 What??!!

Person 2 Are you kidding me??!!

Person 3 What do you mean HIV??!!

Person 4 Who is this? Jack??? You playing with me???... You're playing.

Person 5 This can't be real.

Person 6 Shit!!!!!!!!!!!!

All..... SHIT!!!!

Snap blackout

The lights rise and fall on Jen four times (as at the open of the play) – the first on her standing and turning. The second on her throwing up into a bucket. The third on her visibly shaking all over her body. The last on a peaceful, messy, sleeping figure asleep in an awkward position. Change quickly with each characterization lasting for 45 seconds and divided by blackout.

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Scene 4

Jen..... So what now? What happens next? In life and death. Well I guess in life I made some stupid decisions I can't take back... I can't go back to the day that I had unprotected sex and I won't apologise for it. I always knew that actually he was the one who should have been made responsible. He was the person who should have been made responsible. He should have known. Or perhaps... Perhaps he didn't? I don't know (takes a moment).

I got in touch with the police, did the *ring round*. I got the guilt off my back. They come back positive... And he says they weren't the one who gave me it in the first place.

In life I was me. Twenty-two years of carefree happiness, laughing with friends, getting pissed on a Friday night, loving nice clothes and loving high shoes.

In death **(takes a moment to think)**. In death I am a weak mess. I'm the girl with the dirty blood... The girl who can't be loved or feel love. The girl who will never be loved.

I died that day. I died the day they told me I was killed because I knew I could never change it... If I had my will, I never will change it.

The lights fall on Jen slowly to blackout.

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Scene 5

In a separate area, lights rise slowly on Alastair. Again, he addresses the audience with confidence of age. He is visibly an older man who is slower physically and vocally, almost act as a split scene with Jen continuing to characterise in her area of the stage. This can be a completely new scene.

Alastair..... My story? But with a positive spin (**smiles to himself**) always have believed that we should be grateful **himself as if a private joke, considering**) thank you for whatever matter what it throws at us.

I found out I was positive at 43. A little after hospital with septicaemia. I look back and I question was naïve to have thought that I'd gone in to get really that straightforward? I know mine hasn't dreamt I'd come out with this. I was angry to stay things and harm myself deliberately because I had knowledge that this was it for me. Being here, well, though, totally opened my eyes. I assumed when that I was destined to live a lonely existence... Or dog (**again smiling**) but we have some great people here. Different ages and cultures and backgrounds. I've learnt more in my time here about life than I've

Nobody asks for HIV. Whether it's contracted through carelessness or not. I don't know a single person who spend their life medicated, or judged in the way I've accepted. It's me. This is my life.

We lost Jen a short time after her 23rd birthday. It was hard to see such a young life deteriorate. I did in those last few months after she developed. I was totally convinced that had she known before... I had the education that's sorely lacking in this country. Just maybe she'd still be here.

HIV isn't purely a thing of first-world countries, of sexuality, for me it's a way of living.

Fade to blackout

END

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In Another World



In Another World was created primarily in a refuge for young parents over 16 but is subsidised with the stories of other female and male 'survivors' that (of a range of ages) in facilitating drama in the shelter.

Considering the stories of a range of young people (13 in all who wanted it) it was important that the stories of both men and women were represented and the impact upon the effects of domestic abuse on children as well as the direct victims. In the debut performance of *In Another World* (1995) directed by deLiberate Theatre, interviewees attended and commented on how necessary the work was to them and how their story had had on their own lives.



Character List

Interviewer	Can be male or female. In their 30s. The person facilitating drama with a range of women in the refuge for many different reasons (some who attend support groups and some who are in the shelter).
Interviewee 1/ Woman 1	Female, early 30s.
Woman 2	Friend of Woman 1, 30s. (Only needed for the 'opening', however could be double cast).
Man	Partner of Woman 1, 30s. (Only needed for the 'opening', however could be double cast).
Interviewee 2	Female, 18.
Interviewee 3	Male, late 20s.
Interviewee 4	Male, early 20s.
Sally	Support worker and mentor for Women.
The Narrators	(First Narrator, Second Narrator, Third Narrator, Fourth Narrator, Fifth Narrator, Sixth Narrator, Seventh Narrator) can be male or female and are included as 'survivors' of domestic violence. They speak from their own experiences.

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Optional Opening

The stage is set as a front room. There is a sofa centre stage with a coffee table in front of it. There are also two wine glasses partially full and some other items across the stage to suggest a home. The furniture looks fairly old and used. There are two women in their early 30s sitting on the sofa, talking and laughing. Soft music in the background. The most obvious thing about the two women is that they have a close friendship. They are at ease and enjoying one another's company. The scene slowly for much of the first 90 seconds at which point the lights are full. A young man enters. He is staring at Woman 1, swinging the keys in his hand. When the two women finally notice him, an immediate change in atmosphere as if they have done something wrong. The man looks at the room and Woman 2 exits quickly. There is an obvious tension between the pair. The man whispers something in Woman 1's ear that obviously scares her. She pulls her hair to pull her back. He talks again into her ear, and although we don't hear what he says, it is clearly above the music. He then pushes her away, she falls, and destroys the set in its entirety. He is left in the mess and is seen to be crying manically, as the lights drop slowly as at the end of the scene.



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(Long pause)



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Interviewer..... When you say it 'doesn't excuse it', what specific mean? What couldn't be excused?

Interviewee 1 The violence. The anger. But I think it's worse than completely forgotten our little girl. I could excuse relationship between him and her. There's nothing

Interviewer..... What is his relationship with your little girl like now?

Interviewee 1 There isn't one. I gave him an opportunity at the time then I just gave up. I can't look him in the eye. He knows how much you know. Anyway, this is easier for me because he's done, and I could still have someone to call and he's not the one to me that says he hit me. Punched me down the stairs and even kicked me. I wouldn't want him to do that to her. Why should I dunno. I'm confusing you as much as I confuse myself.

(Pause) In answer to your question he doesn't have a relationship with her.

Interviewer..... So what was the final straw? When, why and how did he hit her?

Interviewee 1 It was a night out for his mum's birthday. I'd never met her; stupid cow. She still haunts me!! Always put me down. Telling me how he's too good for me. How I'd forgotten 'it' **(said with contempt)**. I was no good 'cos I can't hold an estate! Think she wanted a professor or a doctor or a nursery nurse... I'd only ever stacked shelves. And she'd chosen to have a baby with me. This wasn't just about her; it was a mix of us; me and him. So what? I was never going to have preferred me to have an abortion you know. It was our place not hers.

Anyway... we went out and he cleared off. Left me eight months pregnant and massive and I wanted to know. I called him so many times to know and he just wouldn't answer. I went to bed. I fell asleep. **(Welling up with tears)**

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I woke to the feeling of my head against the floor out of bed. He was so angry. I could see it in his eyes. I put my head on the laminate flooring so that I could hear his heartbeat thumping in my ears. I was dizzy and I just kept saying 'Wake up... You wrecked everyone's life. I'm not happy?' I'd never seen him so cross. That night I was on the floor. I was too scared to even wipe the blood from my face. I wanted to be still. Not to upset him you know. I stayed there until he woke and he was snoring in the bed. Obviously he didn't care. I grabbed my clothes and that was it. I never went back.

Interviewer..... Did you ever involve the police?

Interviewee 1 No never. It was my business you know. I screwed up and I had to face the consequences.



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Scene Two

Woman 2 re-enters from behind, looking at her friend with empathy and love. She and Interviewee 1 look at one another for a moment and then she becomes First Narrator. The Narrator represents domestic abuse; women and men who are generally older but are mainly represented as people who are still 'at risk'. These scenes are to be complementary to the narrative presented.

First Narrator In another world things are different you know. We spend our days on the beach, surrounded by the sound of waves. We eat sandwiches and drink Coke, we build sandcastles and bury each other in the sand. Me and Interviewee 1

We run into the water fully clothed and jump the waves. We are both completely soaked (**smiles**). We eat ice cream. People watch and then when the sun started to set, we were exhausted from all the laughing, we walk back to the house. We watch the stars from the bedroom window until we fall asleep wrapped up in each other...

In another world we don't have to worry about money. Our next meal is coming from or how we'll afford the next day. In this world we're free (**smiles staring into the distance**). The scene refocuses on the audience staring directly at the Narrator.

In another world me and my boy live happy ever after.

Interviewee 2 appears from SR, looking on to the scene. First Narrator and Interviewee 1 look at her. Interviewee 2 leaves. Interviewee 1 looks up from her cleaning.

Interviewee 1 and

Interviewee 2 but this isn't another world is it??!! This is real life.

Interviewee 1 leaves in the opposite direction to First Narrator. Only Interviewee 2 remains. Interviewee 2 moves to a seated position on the couch. Looking out in the near darkness almost peacefully.

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Scene Three

Interviewee 2 I'm on my own with a boy. I try to be mum and dad. He's four and I'm 18. You do the maths! **(Directly to audience)** People look at me like a slut; like I'm in a house you know, for the benefits that I don't actually need. People think that they're above me.

Interviewer..... Tell us a bit more about your situation.

Interviewee 2 I had a pretty crap upbringing. If I'm honest. Lived in Swad. Mum always stupid drunk. Dad absent. We'd share a can of beans or a cheap soup between the four of us and my brothers. I was allowed out to play only on the age of ten... Pretty rough huh? Mum'd grumble before I left about not getting involved in anything but being back by nine but generally by the time I got to bed I'd be asleep on the couch, completely out of it. She'd

I first had sex when I was 12 and a bit. It was awful. The guy was like in his late teens... or so he said. He was older. At the time it meant nothing more than sex. I'd tell my mates you know. I had no idea what I was doing. I'd get respect from the others for it. They all said I was a pro. Turns out when I told them they hadn't. All more or less the same.

Ben's dad came along when I'd just turned 13. He was a proper lad **(laughs)**. Always fighting. Got excluded from school. He really liked him you know. There was this one night we'd both been drinking and we ended up on a building site. He was hiding and jumping out on me and it just happened. We were kissing and one thing led to another. Didn't think I was 'cos I hadn't before. Six weeks later and a positive pregnancy test... He didn't wanna know. Disappeared once his mum moved him 'cos I tried his door a couple of times. Ben was born but nothing.

Interviewer..... So you've had no contact with him since your son was born?

Interviewee 2 Not at all. Tell me at the start 'cos as soon as I told him he disappeared you know. And my mum is still there. Little boys really need a male role model in my opinion. My older brothers grew up without a dad and they ended up in stints in prison the last thing I heard. I just want to be able to support me... Tell me I was doing a good job as a mum. I'm rocked up now I'd tell him where to go though.

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Interviewer..... You seem to have done really well. Ben is lovely working a decent job and getting your qualificat

Interviewee 2 Yeah I am. I'm doing a Level 1 in Childcare at college supporting in a local nursery until I've got the qualification to be a nursery nurse. Took a long time for me to realise I'd missed at school. Education is so important and I now know that from now on. I wouldn't change Ben but I definitely don't wanna be a nan by the time that I was at so I'll keep telling him how important school is and lay off the woman! ... He does love school and is a dead intelligent (smiles). Takes after his mum!

Interviewer..... Can you tell me a bit more about what it was like when you first had Ben.

Interviewee 2 Hard. Ridiculously hard. Mum would go through periods. Drinking and then not drinking. She was diagnosed with liver disease two weeks ago you know. Hasn't stopped yet. She'll lie to me and her fella about it but I know she's drinking.

My mates were OK. Charlie, my best mate, didn't react at the start. She's great now and her mum has to watch Ben if I need a bit of time out. They've been actually.

I lived in a hostel for most of my pregnancy and Ben's life. Couldn't stay with Mum. It was horrible about it and always noisy. I'd take Ben out of the house if I could. We'd walk for hours on end in the light and rain. Money was really hard but anything I got went to Ben. When we got the house everything changed. I actually started to look after mum. Started doing the things that a proper mum would do. Took him to groups with other kids his age.

The nights were hard. When Ben was in bed I might cry. Specially 'cos Charlie was there but every night doing the same stuff that a normal teenage girl'd do. I cried quite a lot.

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Scene Four

Second, Third and Fourth Narrator enter looking at a newspaper. Followed by the first Narrator (Scene 2). Sound overlaps action and everything is very physical. The merging and dividing statistics are read with the three Narrators standing still facing the audience. The action continues around this. People going about their daily lives with some very low noise and some silence for the last statistics. The Narrators read statistics initially in a very mechanical way (one) noticing the Narrators – visibly shocked and disgusted.

Second Narrator Domestic violence accounts for between 16% and 18% of all recorded violent crime

Third Narrator One incident is reported to the police every minute

Fourth Narrator 41% women and 26% men had experienced at least one incident of inter-personal violence in their lifetimes...

Second Narrator however, when there were more than four incidents, 75% of victims were women.

Third Narrator In any one year, there are 13 million separate incidents of violence or threats of violence from partners or ex-partners

Fourth Narrator 54% of all UK rapes are committed by a woman's current partner

All movement stops and silence for final statistic. All actors on stage stop to look at the statistic and change.

Second Narrator On average two women a week are killed by a man's current partner; this constitutes around one third of all domestic homicide victims...

I won't be a victim anymore **(exits the stage)**.

Pause before movement recommences; each narrator turns to the audience and repeats 'I won't be a victim anymore' before leaving the stage in silence. Suddenly a conversation begun as a gentle conversation between a male and female 'couple' erupts into a storm. The storm moves quickly through the audience and onto the stage (it is completely by the storm) and storms off.

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Scene Five

Interviewee 3 remains on stage 'do you see what I have to put up with'. Sits. Lights

Interviewee 3 I don't get what the deal is. If someone hits you no? I don't discriminate! If a bird is punching me in the face I'm gonna stop 'em. Hit them back until they stop. Should I apologise for that? In all seriousness though, my dad you know. That's all that matters. We can't stop it, we and people do fight... My Nan always used to tell me about fighting in a relationship though. You're not living off me and Kate live better than I do.

Interviewer..... Your girlfriend was pregnant when you started hitting her. Did you ever worry that you might harm the baby?

Interviewee 3 I didn't want the baby in the first place so no not really. I know Jake isn't right. He's got problems. I reckon it was fully my fault though. Probably the reason I used to smoke and get pissed more than us fight. My girlfriend was always telling me what a shit I was with her. We riled each other. People think that 'cos she was always saying it was all my fault but she wound me up. Dead handy with her to push and push until she got a reaction.

Anyway, we've put it all behind us now... well I think so you know. I see my boy all the time and we're better. We're gonna start trying for another one soon.

Interviewer..... Your son has learning disabilities is that right?

Interviewee 3 Yeah. That's what they call it. I just think he's slow. Thick like his old man! **(Laughs. Pause)** Don't really think there's nothing wrong with him really. He don't talk yet. He don't have anything to say at the age of three and a half. **(nervous laugh).**

Interviewer..... Is it correct that the GP said that the brain damage your son suffered was likely to have been caused by the violence that you and your girlfriend had when she was pregnant?

Interviewee 3 Yeah but like I said, I'm not convinced.

Interviewer..... When did the violence between yourself and Kate start?

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Interviewee 3 When she first fell pregnant I told her I weren't I'd never met my own old man and I knew how I was born into a family that didn't want you. I told her she went through with it but she didn't listen. She said 'it was her body' and I just had to deal with it. No I had my own opinion. I left for a bit but then I felt back. We fought every single night. Fisticuffs. She hit the head till my ears were ringing then soon as I was on the buzzer to her mam. Couldn't do anything. She accused me of fucking other girls all the time in the general direction of another girl and I'd fancy her.

Interviewer You mentioned before that you put Katy in hospital. Can you tell me a bit more about that please?

Interviewee 3 Oh god. That makes me sound like a complete twat. I remember that she did stuff to me too. **(Grabs his nose wobbles it left to right)** she did this – headbutted my nose. And this as well **(lifts the arm of his t-shirt mark)** fag burn that...

So it was a Sunday and we were due down the prison. Mum. I was hanging from the night before so I slept out. As always she got narky, telling me what a waste I was and how I'd be an even shitter dad. She was just lightly like, telling me what a waste of space I was. No wonder my Da didn't want me. I just saw red. I went up the stairs... Regret it now but I didn't think she'd go to shut her up. She went in to have the baby me proper played on it. I ended up having to talk to the police. Ridiculous really.

Interviewer Now when you look back would you have done anything differently?

Interviewee 3 Of course every day. But you see victim Kate. Not or Kate the wind-up. She's a good mum you know. My relationship's changed but I still stand by my word. I shouldn't have had the baby and that she's as responsible as I am.

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Interviewee 3 Another world? Another life? Nothing like this.. I'd do things right. I'd look after myself properly it's time to be a kid. I'd wait for this... For the ball life 'cos it's not easy is it? Money and debts and They're responsible for the stress and the worry aren't they. **(Looks out to the audience, this time question 'are they' aren't they?? (Dragged out by Interviewee 1 and Seventh Narrator on the stage another.)**

Seventh Narrator ... And now we're here. I guess the oddest thing for me began that day. At 52, having left a husband of 30 years, I started getting my qualifications and seeing the world. I started wearing make-up and enjoying waking up every day without the depressants or anxieties or looking over my shoulder.

Two narrators are left by the bustle guarding Interviewee 4 who is sat alone in the room but do not blackout and there is a brief silence before moving straight into the next scene.



Scene Seven

Lights up on Interviewee 4. This character is visibly more nervous than the previous

Interviewee 4 I never truly appreciated what the term 'domestic violence' meant until I came here. I thought because of the word 'domestic' it was just about physicality; punches, kicks... and I... if I was in a domestic violence site, I guess it'd be laughed at by the lads I work for. (pause whilst he sips his water) Tamz controlled my life. From money, to my social life to the point where I couldn't even think for myself let alone feel. She said she did it from the start you know; to start with small things like stuff like saying when I was due to go out with the lads - but in the end she had complete control.

Interviewer When you say control what do you mean? How did you feel?

Interviewee 4 Tamz was a manipulator. She got me to a place where I couldn't go out because she'd made me feel so shit... So I was completely incapable of anything other than being with her.

OK, so a couple of years back we lost a baby. He was born a few weeks and it destroyed us. Both of us completely. Tamz started drinking heavily after that... It was before she'd fell pregnant but she had been depressed and so she grieved for a long, long time. She'd get angry and call me all sorts of names; but after we lost the baby it got worse. One night, whilst I was working, I received a call. Tamz was screaming and crying telling me that she had an overdose and that it was my fault because I was away. I lost the baby and that I'd better get home quick. She was hysterical and I was frantic. I drove home that night at a ridiculous speed, scared of what I would find. She was asleep. No overdose had been taken.

Interviewer So she'd lied to get you home?

Interviewee 4 Yeah. I mean it sounds like nothing but it was just controlling me. The only time I could go out was when she was asleep. I was scared to sabotage that as well as everything else.

Interviewer In the questionnaire that you filled out you mentioned physical abuse as well as the emotional and psychological abuse. Can you expand on that a little?

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Interviewee 4 She smashed a salad bowl on to my head at dinner. I'd put onions in the food and should know 'after all we've been together that she hates onion'! She bit my back when I was in a rage when we were in bed one morning and I was trying to make her a drink. She'd regularly throw things at me and hit my face... But, you know what, those things didn't hurt as much as the constant name-calling, the references to my need to control me. She was a poisonous person.

Interviewer Why didn't you leave?

Interviewee 4 Every time I threatened to leave, she'd cut herself or threaten to cut herself. It was like a nightmare I couldn't wake from.

Interviewer A high percentage of men who experience DV do leave. What would you say to those men considering you?

Interviewee 4 I'd say get out! And tell someone... OK so it's easier said than done, really is. But actually the people who know about DV are really supportive. And it's worked out better for me. We're both getting the help we need to move on and live our lives on our own.

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Scene Eight

There is an apparent change in atmosphere for this scene. Lighting is more general, more formal angle. The audience is able to recognise that by this point the stage is been removed signalling the near end of a 'journey'.

Interviewer..... Thank you for agreeing to talk to us today. Could you tell us how long you have been working for Women's Aid?

Sally 12... and a bit years. **(Smiles widely)**

Interviewer..... And what do you do?

Sally I work with the girls on a voluntary basis in drop-in sessions. We discuss what's going on and how we can support them. We have a support network. Then if intervention is needed, from local authorities, social services or what not, then I arrange for it.

Interviewer..... So what has particularly struck you about working with the girls who attend Women's Aid over the past 12 years?

Sally Just how different things are. You know, we really live in a judgmental society. People assume that domestic abuse happens to people who have no money or are in a 'bad' area or are 'excluded' from general society you know and it's become more and more apparent over time that that's just not true. The stigma attached to domestic abuse is damaging. It's why I wanted to speak to you when you called. It's important that we all realise that domestic abuse can happen to anyone. **(pause)**... We just need to learn how to deal with it and support the victims.

Interviewer..... Can you tell me a little bit about the experiences you've had during your time volunteering here?

Sally I met a young girl when I started here, Lisa. Beautiful, sweet and kind mannered you know. Three children, aged 1, 7 and 19. She attended frequently for two years and told me that they were just awful to hear you know. I wanted to help her get them home and give them a good feed. Anyway everything seemed to have calmed down. One day she came in one day covered in blood, screaming and crying. Incoherent in what she was saying. Her whole body was shaking uncontrollably and I couldn't calm her down. I called the police that day and sent her off in an ambulance. Her partner had attacked and raped her in front of her four and five-year-old child had experienced this. She said her mum by a person they trusted and looked up to. I never heard from Lisa again. Tried to contact her but her phone was dead and we could only take her to the girls if they were deemed at 'risk' or vulnerable.

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Makes me laugh now because I have never known domestic abuse who wasn't 'at risk' or 'vulnerable'. I saw Lisa was on the front of a local paper. Her husband strangled her to death.

Interviewer..... Is this an extreme story or have you had any similar working at the drop-in centre?

Sally I've dealt with another case of manslaughter and rape. One that was particularly hard because the victim disclosed having found out that her nine-year-old son was also being sexually abused by the same person. It's impossible to do any more than what we do you know. It's our job here to try and protect the people, male or female. But unless they walk through the door and ask for help then there really is nothing more that we can do. We can't even hear an ear and report anything that concerns us to the police or authorities. I know that sounds blasé, believe me, but that unless we are all aware that domestic abuse should not be tolerated under any circumstance it's not going to change. I meet so many daughters and sons who are part of the 'cycle of abuse'. They seen mum or dad or their brother or even their grandparents doing it and they've accepted that the same should happen. That it's just life. I remember one lad who had been beaten up over the weekend and he said to me 'That's life. I just have to deal with it'. The life... It's not normal... And it certainly isn't accepted.



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Scene Nine

In the blackout Interviewee 4 remains, Interviewees 1, 2 and 3 join him in spaces so physical positions emulate those of previous scenes (in which they have spoken to him heard from offstage).

Interviewer..... Is there anything that you'd like to say to those in a similar situation to yours?

Interviewee 1 Don't blame yourself. Leave. Just leave. You have to leave if you know. Not just you, they will never forgive you for bringing them into this mess or hate or violence. **genuinely angry** They deserve the world... Kill them. Give me a baby for the world. Yeah I see him in the future. But she's mine and she'll learn to be strong and like me.

Interviewee 3 Ha. Don't have kids into a violent relationship? My first lads... **(Turning more serious)** But mainly for you. If this is your life tell someone.

Interviewee 2 Babies really aren't as easy as they look. They're even harder to look after myself let alone a tiny life and it's

If you think it's the way forward then fair enough, but you won't be able to put you off but I promise you, it's the way you'll ever do and people treat you like something in their shoe. Be careful; stay safe. Think of the children. They didn't ask to be brought into the world so you have to provide for them like a good mum should then you're not having unprotected sex.

Interviewee 4 Talk to someone. Tell them what's happening, not just me. It is. Take the help...

Interviewer..... And in another world?

Interviewee 3 Another world? I suppose this is where I say I won't or lash out with? That's what you want me to do? To be like everyone else? To sit and listen... Take it all. In another world I wouldn't change a thing. I wouldn't change them. The people that think they know better than they know the law... I'd change it all. The stuff that's on the paper... There is no happy ever after is there!

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Interviewee 1 Is there?

Interviewee 2 Could I be happy? Could I have what they have?

Interviewee 1 Those people...

Interviewee 4 The ones who are always smiling and have a beautiful little house on a beautiful little estate...

Interviewee 1 I deserve that don't I? To be happy.

Interviewee 2 I deserve it and it'd be happy in another world.

Sharp blackout and silence.

END



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Final Thought

The theatre has long been described as a tool for social change, with advocates like Joan Littlewood and David Hare indulging in practice that fully endorses this. Measuring the extent of 'affirmation' (or the likeness to 'real') can, at times, be complex due to the complexities of both our current socio-political conditions, and the ever-changing nature of performance, verbatim theatre has continued to provide a forum for the identification and creative expression can be achieved through both process and product (initiating this 'social change'). To empower and to be empowered is the aim of the product, and it is in the work of such verbatim practitioners that this is evident, and social inclusivity to ensure.

Good theatre works by selection and by representation. Why can't we just use real people? There is a fabulously rich and varied strand which, for many years, has been a red cell in the dramatic bloodstream? And if this kind of work does not exist, and affecting at this particular time, doesn't that tell us something about the world? (Hare, 2005; 113)

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Actor's Log

Play Title		Name of Student
Character/Role		Date
Headline (summarise your progress as an actor in a sentence)		
Learning Objectives and Outcomes		
Self-Assessment		
Strengths:		
Improvements:		
I have developed...		
I still need to develop...		
Targets for next lesson		
Character/Role development:		
Understanding:		
Additional:		

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Audience Evaluation of Performance

Performance Title

What have you learned from the performance that you have seen today?

What was particularly effective about the performance?

What do you think could have been improved?

How would you like to see this performance move forward? For instance, well in a specific environment as a TiE toured performance or do you have

Any further comments

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