

Some Notes on the Play

CASTING

This play was written with and for a young cast, aged from their early teens up to their mid-twenties, and all the characters can fall within this age bracket. The multi-role playing element is optional and could be worked in a number of ways, with the possibility of using as few as eight actors or more than thirty. Some characters are gender-specific and some are ethnically-specific (although this will inevitably vary in different parts of the country); others are interchangeable in the hope of providing a degree of casting flexibility.

It is, of course, quite possible for *Not in My Name* to be performed by groups whose own ethnic or gender balance does not align precisely with a naturalistic reading of the script. Indeed if the play is intended primarily as a vehicle for class discussion, it may prove constructive to allocate roles against expectation, allowing students more opportunity to identify with perspectives that may initially be perceived as alternate to their own. If the play is subsequently to be performed to a wider audience, then specific representational choices can be simply communicated through a clear and appropriate production concept.

The absence of fully comprehensive character breakdowns, either within the play or its supporting material, is intentional. Those details which are included are clearly important and should be adhered to, but it is hoped that any actor will also find considerable scope to make each part his or her own.

The original cast credits within this script provide some suggestion of role combinations that have previously proved successful, although there will of course be other possibilities. (It should also be noted that the development of Assistant 2 in the second half of the play was not incorporated into the original productions.) Thirty speaking parts are listed in order of appearance, ranging from those with just a few lines to some very substantial roles, the combination of which can hopefully offer performance opportunities for mixed groups of young

people with varying degrees of dramatic experience, ability and confidence.

For larger and more adventurous groups, a number of scenes also have the potential to incorporate significant numbers of non-speaking characters – examples of this would include the action both within and outside of the supermarket; the busy Accident and Emergency ward of the hospital; the street rioting and its immediate aftermath – all of which, if carefully choreographed, can only enhance the degree of theatrical challenge, innovation and impact.

It is important to stress that there is no central character: *Not in My Name* tells the story of an entire community pulling apart before coming together through a period of extreme crisis, and as such must be viewed as an ensemble piece within which every voice, no matter how great or small, is vital to the overall montage.

CONTENT AND STYLE

This is a verbatim play in that many of the words used and concerns raised are those of a wide cross-section of people who agreed to be interviewed as part of an extensive research period, sometimes extended by additional accounts available within the public domain. Many viewpoints are represented: inevitably some of these are contradictory and others offensive; the occasional brutality of the language and more graphic illustrations of horror are necessary components to a play that takes the representation and aftermath of a terrorist atrocity as its central theme and should not be diluted in performance unless essential.

However, while the issues are current, and the opinions and indeed many eye-witness details are real, *Not in My Name* varies from most verbatim scripts in that it is a story: a hypothesis of what *might* occur in the event and aftermath of a localised terror attack rather than a reconstruction purposefully based upon any previous disaster. As such, it is told as a cautionary tale in the hope of addressing some common misconceptions around Islam and terrorism, and stimulating meaningful discussion and debate around these and other issues relating to the

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prevention of dangerous or violent extremism – which is not in this country at the present time purely a concern over Islamic fundamentalism.

The play is intentionally anti-climactic, concerning itself with consequences rather than sensationalism, and performers are encouraged to apply this note to their own interpretations: over-dramatisation, particularly in the earlier stages of the play, may quickly lead to melodrama. It will be observed that much of the language is retrospective, and can be played directly to the audience; rarely is the fourth wall necessary, or indeed desirable, in *Not in My Name*.

Watching the television news can be a useful exercise in gauging an appropriate manner of delivery: survivors from the midst of extreme trauma seldom speak with any great animation in its aftermath; the residue of real terror is conveyed not through what is said, but by the unfilled silences where words are simply inadequate. It is hoped that most performers attempting this play will personally have no directly comparable experience from which to draw; their portrayal is likely to come closest to the verbatim truth if it is based not on imitation or assumption, but on empathy and compassion.

SETTING

The play is set in a small town somewhere in the North of England, although with minimal adaptation it could be anywhere within the United Kingdom and perhaps beyond. It should be acknowledged that this version of the script was developed in East Lancashire and as such is representative of a specific local demographic.

At the time of publication, developmental work will have started on forthcoming productions in other areas – including a cosmopolitan city and a former mining community – and anyone interested in producing *Not in My Name* or developing their own programme of work around it is welcome to discuss any locally appropriate alterations with either Alice or Andrew at Theatre Veritae (info@theatreveritae.com).

The set itself needs to encompass a variety of locations and should support the fluidity of the story telling. There is no need

for this to be either literal or expensive, and it is likely that simpler solutions will prove more creatively satisfying. Exploration with available lighting resources should obviously greatly enhance the theatrical impact of any production, along with attention to the details of sound design – be these realistic, abstract or musical – that might more effectively layer an acoustic backdrop to the spoken words.

The action should always feel as though it is taking place in the present and if particular details become outdated, with particular emphasis on any developments in terror legislation or new world events, then these should be amended. The date given on the first line and in the final speech is the day before Mother's Day of the following year.



Characters

GIRLFRIEND	SISTER
GIRL 1	FRIEND
GIRL 2	TEAM MATE
GIRL 3	NURSE*
FOOTBALLER	FEMALE SBO
MANAGER	WPC 1*
SON	WPC 2*
ASSISTANT 1	INNIT BOY
ASSISTANT 2	WHITE LAD 1*
SBO*	WHITE LAD 2*
PCSO*	ASIAN LAD 1*
ASIAN TEEN*	ASIAN LAD 2*
WHITE TEEN*	WHITE LAD 3*
COLLEAGUE	MUSLIM
BROTHER	ATHEIST

* These characters all have the potential to be sub-divided if working with:

- (a) larger casts, where more roles are required.
- (b) smaller casts, if exploring feasible multi-role playing options.

It should however be noted that the SBO (Special Branch Officer) should ideally be played by a white actor in the penultimate scene of the play; also that the PCSO (Police Community Support Officer) should be played by only one actor throughout the second half of the play.

The play also provides a number of opportunities to involve further groups of non-speaking characters within particular scenes if desired: this is explored in more detail in the introductory notes on the play.

Not in My Name was first performed at Burnley Youth Theatre
23 April 2008 with the following cast:

SON, Imtannaan Abas
GIRLFRIEND / FRIEND, Safia Anwar Ume
ASSISTANT 1 / WHITE LAD 2 / ATHEIST,
Jack Anwyl
MANAGER / SPECIAL BRANCH OFFICER /
COLLEAGUE / TEAM MATE / WHITE LAD 3,
Shaun Foxcroft
POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICER /
INNIT BOY / ASIAN LAD 1, Zahoor Hussain
SISTER / MUSLIM, Bushra Irshad
FOOTBALLER / ASSISTANT 3 / WHITE TEEN /
WHITE LAD 1, Jamie McGowan
GIRL 1 / NURSE, Donna Rainford
ASSISTANT 2 / WPC, Gaby Mott
GIRL 2 / WPC 2, Steph Shaw
ASIAN TEEN / BROTHER /
ASIAN LAD 2, Mohammed Owais
GIRL 3 / FEMALE SPECIAL BRANCH OFFICER,
Pakeezah Younis

Director Alice Bartlett

Designer Jonny Quick

Project Management Kyra Milnes &
Andrew Raffle

Production Assistants (Youth Theatre) Alex Bailey &
Mariam Yousaf

Forum Emily Bowman & Jag Sanghera

Administrator Gareth Davies

For Lancashire Constabulary Rozila Kana

Not in My Name was subsequently revised for a touring production, also directed by Alice Bartlett, 1 September 2008 with the following cast:

MANAGER / ASSISTANT 1 / SPECIAL BRANCH

OFFICER 2 / WHITE LAD 1 /

ATHEIST, Craig Bennett

FOOTBALLER / ASSISTANT 2 / SPECIAL

BRANCH OFFICER 1 / WHITE LAD 2,

Shaun Foxcroft

SON / POLICE COMMUNITY

SUPPORT OFFICER 2 / INNIT BOY /

ASIAN LAD 2, Zahoor Hussain

GIRL 3 / SISTER, Madeeha Imtiaz

POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICER 1 /

BROTHER / ASIAN LAD 1 / MUSLIM,

Darren Kuppan

GIRL 2 / WPC 2, Anna Marsland

GIRL 1 / WHITE TEEN / NURSE / WPC 3,

Donna Rainford

GIRLFRIEND / FRIEND / ASIAN TEEN /

FEMALE SPECIAL BRANCH OFFICER /

WPC 1, Lina Sultana