

trust

study guide

Lookingglass Theatre Company

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Trust Community Engagement Partners

As the internet increasingly becomes the hunting ground for sexual predators, Trust will serve to not only raise awareness but move and empower audiences to take action in their community and within their own families. The Trust Community Consortium has been formed to facilitate this action. Below is information about each of our partnering organizations.



Rape Victim Advocates - Lead Community Partner

www.rapevictimadvocates.org

RVA is an Illinois not-for-profit organization made up of many individuals with two primary goals: to assure that survivors of sexual assault are treated with dignity and compassion; and to affect changes in the way the legal system, medical institutions and society as a whole respond to survivors.

RVA focuses on both social service and social change. Through our presence in Chicago area emergency rooms, we provide nonjudgmental emotional support to victims of sexual violence, enabling them to become survivors. By providing basic legal and medical information, and referrals to other service organizations, we help the survivor make informed decisions. We also offer survivors continued support through telephone follow-up and our staff of counselors and legal advocates. Through these services, we enable survivors to regain control over their lives as quickly as possible. Through our work with the Chicago Police Department, the Cook County State's Attorney's Office and other area institutions, we strive to improve the treatment of survivors as a group in our society. RVA offers three distinct program areas: Counseling (individual and group), Advocacy (legal and medical) and Education & Training.

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Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation

caase.org

CAASE is committed to building a global community free from sexual exploitation. We know that all forms of sexual exploitation, including sexual assault and the commercial sex trade, are detrimental to a healthy society and undermine the dignity of all people.

Chicago Foundation for Women

cfw.org

Chicago Foundation for Women believes that all women and girls should have the opportunity to achieve their potential and live in safe, just and healthy communities. Since 1985, the Foundation has improved the lives of women and girls through grants, advocacy, leadership development and public and grantee education.



Children and Family Justice Center - Northwestern University School of Law

law.northwestern.edu/cfjc

The Children and Family Justice Center (CFJC) is a comprehensive children’s law center where law students, under the supervision of attorneys and clinical professors, represent young people on matters of delinquency and crime, family violence, school discipline, health and disability, and immigration and asylum. We collaborate with communities and child welfare, educational, mental health and juvenile justice systems to develop fair and effective policies and solutions for reform.

We work with neighborhoods, law enforcement, and youth-serving organizations to create community programs that keep children out of the juvenile justice system, reduce confinement and incarceration of children, develop and teach educational programs that inform adolescents of their rights and responsibilities under the law, seek greater protections for children during pre-court police interrogations, improve conditions of confinement for children deprived of their liberty, and challenge the disproportionate presence of children of color in the public justice system.



Human Rights Watch

www.hrw.org

Human Rights Watch is dedicated to protecting the human rights of people around the world. We stand with victims and activists to prevent discrimination, to uphold political freedom, to protect people from inhumane conduct in wartime, and to bring offenders to justice. We investigate and expose human rights violations and hold abusers accountable. We challenge governments and those who hold power to end abusive practices and respect international human rights law. We enlist the public and the international community to support the cause of human rights for all.



JCARES

jfcschicago.org

Jewish Community Abuse Resources, Education and Solutions (JCARES) is a coalition of Chicagoland Jewish and secular organizations, agencies, rabbis and advocates that collaboratively create, support and influence initiatives and policies to prevent, address and respond to abuse in Jewish homes, families and relationships.

Mujeres Latinas En Accion

www.mujereslatinasenaccion.org

Mujeres Latinas en Accion is a non-profit, community-based organization in Chicago. Its mission is to empower their fellow Latinas by offering services that reflect their values and cultures and by advocating on issues that matter to Latinas. Latinas turn to Mujeres for a safe environment that addresses issues of health, safety, culture, financial security and women’s rights with a variety of programs – all in their first language of Spanish.



Pillars Community Services

www.pillarscommunity.org

Pillars is a not-for-profit social service organization that keeps our communities healthy and strong by providing quality, community-based services for over 10,000 individuals and families annually who are facing challenges and crisis. Pillars utilizes a community wraparound approach, offering a wide spectrum of fully-integrated services that collectively offer the strongest possible safety net.



YWCA of Metropolitan Chicago

www.ywcachicago.org

The YWCA is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women, and promoting peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all. YWCA Metropolitan Chicago is committed to providing women with the support and tools needed to transform their lives, be confident in their choices and make valuable contributions to their communities. We promote racial justice, embrace diversity, and inspire personal development both within our organization and throughout all our services. Our vision is to eliminate racism and empower women.

**For more information please visit
lookingglasstheatre.org/resources**



Lookingglass Plays with Technology
by Margot Bordelon

LOOKINGGLASS first began blending film and theater with the 1990 production of *The Odyssey*. Since then, eleven Lookingglass plays have utilized film as a storytelling device. In many early productions video was used to create dream sequences and visual metaphor, but over the years, the company's use of multimedia has shifted. In Lookingglass' current production of *Trust*, multimedia no longer provides an escape, but acts almost as an intruder.

Follow the evolution of use of multimedia at Lookingglass.

***The Odyssey* (1990)**

Four dream sequences needed to be filmed to illustrate the Greek isles and the wind dark sea. But the show was being produced in January, and Lake Michigan, even in black and white and 16mm, was more nightmarish than dream-like. So with a budget of \$200, twelve ensemble members piled in two cars and drove to the panhandle of Florida in one day. They bunked down in two motel rooms for \$35 a night, shot all

four films and were back in Chicago the day after.

***West* (1991)**

Video was used during fight sequences to illustrate the main character's point of view. Mike (played by David Schwimmer), gets into a knock down fight and takes a serious beating. The video featured faces of characters leaning in close and asking "you okay Mike?" The disoriented images onscreen reflected the world through Mike's eyes.

***The Master and Margarita* (1993)**

This story is Lookingglass legend: there was a plan to incorporate a film dream sequence of flying Margaritas from the beginning of the process. However, it took the company until closing night to have the films ready. Hours before the last performance, the film was teched in. During the performance the actors built up the audience's anticipation singing "something big is going to happen!" The stage manager pressed play, and onscreen: the flap of the tail of the film roll. No one had rewound the film.

28 (1997)

28 was the company's first foray into how the barrage of media affects our lives. In 1997, *The Economist* reported "the average American adult will spend more than four hours a day, or twenty-eight hours a week, in front of the TV." 28 explored who we've become in the age of technology. It was an analysis of the confluence of media and fame, and how films and television set up expectations for our lives that we can't realistically meet.

***The Idiot* (1998)**

Prince Myshkin the main character suffered from epilepsy. When he would experience a fit, the audience would see his physical reaction to the seizure, juxtaposed with film sequences of the images he was seeing in his mind. Dostoevsky's novel contains detailed passages about these visions and film was an excellent way to fully realize them— a necessity in allowing the audience to understand that what Prince was seeing in his mind was his reality and therefore colored his motivations.

***Metamorphosis* (2000)**

The film in *Metamorphosis* was used sparingly and allowed the audience to see the world from a bug's point of view. It was important in establishing scale. At one point in the story Gregor was hit by an apple and onscreen the audience saw a time lapse of the apple rotting. It allowed the audience to feel the deterioration and atrophy that the character was feeling as he transformed into a bug.

***Nelson Algren: For Keeps and a Single Day* (2001)**

Nelson Algren was originally performed on the roof of the Ruth Page Center. The entire city of Chicago served as the backdrop. This immersive experience inspired the film. John Musial (director and adaptor) wanted to create a canvas that was the backdrop for the entire play. There were nine projectors and the drop took up the entire back wall to create a completely expansive experience. The film (all shot in 16mm) worked on multiple levels: it was used to progress the story, to realistically depict what was happening in the poetry, and other times it was completely expressionistic. The poetry, music and film worked interactively.



They All Fall Down: The Richard Nickel Story (2001)

American photographer and historian Richard Nickel photographed a number of Louis Sullivan Buildings before they were torn down in the 1960s and 70s. Projections of his photographs were used throughout the show to give the audience an eye into his eye, to help illustrate what he found was interesting and important about the buildings, and why he was an advocate for saving them.

Race (2003)

Race used found footage of real racial violence. It was used in one essential moment in the show: in an abstracted, dance-like way a black youth and a white youth fought one another onstage. Projected beneath them was real footage, a montage of the history of racial violence in the United States. This was before the days of YouTube, so it was much more difficult to find and compile this footage than it would be today. It took three weeks to find what would now take ten minutes.

Great Men of Science (2004)

The set was designed to look like a three dimensional box. The bottom of the cube was the stage and the two sides and the top of the cube were projection screens. It was intended to represent



the inside the main character, Jacques de Vaucanson's brain. The audience saw the gears of his brain moving whenever he was working out an equation or experiencing a scientific epiphany.

1984 (2004)

Film was a natural fit for 1984 because of the perpetual presence of Big Brother. The set featured television trees: large metal structures that housed twenty different sized TV monitors. These monitors faced every direction of the theater, and the eyes of Big Brother were always present, looking in. All screens could be used together or separately. Both original and found footage were used in the show. Actors onstage interacted with characters that appeared onscreen only, (all footage that had been filmed prior to performance). Additionally, war footage from WWI through the Iraq war was used throughout the show to create a collage of modern warfare.



Trust (2010)

Trust incorporates technology like no other Lookingglass show has done in the past. The play explores how we use technology to communicate and socialize with one another. One of the functions of the set is to illustrate the bombardment of imagery we experience on a day to day basis.

The back wall is made up of a series of twenty-four screens. They're large cubes that are joined seamlessly together so that the whole screen can become one image, or there can be up to twenty-four separate images at once. The images on screen consist of text messages, pre-shot video, live internet, or a combination thereof. When the lights go down at the top of the show the first image the audience sees is a person logging in online. A Yahoo! account is entered and the current day's headlines appear along with the time of day and the Chicago weather forecast. Immediately the audience understands that the story they're seeing is happening right now, at this very moment.

Lookingglass has partnered with Bridges Media who has created a



number of the show's scene transitions. Transitions happen at a lightning quick pace. Visually they consist of original still photography that has been treated to move the audience seamlessly from one location to the next.

Trust is a completely immersive media experience.

In Conversation with David Schwimmer

Interview by Margot Bordelon



Ensemble Members Heidi Stillman and David Schwimmer

You're an active member of the Board of Directors of the Rape Foundation in Santa Monica. Will you talk a little bit about your work with the organization and how it led to your interest in writing about internet predators?

I've been supporting the work of the Rape Treatment Center for more than ten years. I have heard countless stories and met many victims of rape and sexual assault (men, women and children), and know well the devastation of this trauma—to both the victim and his or her loved ones. Much of my participation has been fundraising, promoting awareness, prevention and education, and acting in and directing several television spots that address various issues such as date rape and “rape drugs” like GHB and Rohypnol.

A few years ago, at an annual fundraiser for the Rape Treatment Center, one of our invited speakers was a father in the community who spoke about the process of coming to terms with his daughter being groomed and subsequently raped by

an internet predator, and the conflicting feelings of guilt, rage, pain, impotence and responsibility that nearly destroyed him. His incredibly frank and revealing story profoundly affected me, and I realized then I had found my path into dramatizing this delicate and difficult subject matter in a way that everyone—especially men—could relate to.

Will you describe your process in researching and writing *Trust*?

With my co-writer, Andy Bellin, I set out to write *Trust* first as a screenplay with the conviction that the story should reach the maximum number of people possible. We spent four months researching and interviewing countless experts in the medical, legal, computer and law enforcement fields, and had special access to both an agent with the FBI who I'd befriended at the Rape Treatment Center as well as Gail Abarbanel, Director of the RTC and many of the counselors of the child victims there—not to mention several brave young women who shared

their stories with us. We then spent nine months writing the script, constantly consulting with Gail as well as the police and FBI to ensure accuracy—both from a procedural standpoint as well as an emotional and psychological one. I just finished directing that script as a feature film; however, both Andy and I felt that the intimate, personal experience offered by live theatre was an equally compelling way to present this story, so we adapted the screenplay for a stage production at Lookingglass, my artistic home of twenty-one years.

What is the single most important thing you hope audiences walk away with after seeing *Trust*?

I don't know that I can narrow it down to one idea, message, or experience. It is my goal that *Trust* faithfully convey several things: the experience of a parent when their child is victimized; the many conflicting emotions and complicated psychology that a child victim experiences both in grooming and recovery; the lack of appropriate staffing, funding, publicity, and prioritization given to the police and FBI to combat this problem; and the necessity, urgency and relevance of the subject matter.



Ensemble Members Heidi Stillman and David Schwimmer with Allison Torem

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House of Mirrors: **Predatory Violence in Trust**

by Martha J. Reineke, Ph.D.

GROWING UP, I KNEW THAT AUTUMN HAD ARRIVED when the maple leaves turned red, the morning dew was frosty, and my teacher gave her annual “stranger danger” talk. Each year, as she warned of a menace that lurked on the street, I dutifully applied crayons to the same poster depicting a man standing by his car, a bag of candy in his hand, his face distorted by a leering grin. Teachers still warn children of dangers; however, anyone—an uncle, neighbor, coach—can pose a threat. Moreover, teachers have become more specific in their descriptions: children learn that their bodies belong to them and that they should report “bad touches” to their parents. For these parents, the dangers children face also have changed: the “molester” of the past is today’s “predator.” The criminal justice system has replaced the psychiatric profession as the institution most responsible for protecting children. Remaining the same across generations is our gut-level reaction to sexual violence against our children: we focus on the monstrous perpetrator in our midst and demand sanctions that will remove him from our community forever.

Historian Philip Jenkins questions the efficacy of our responses. In *Moral Panic: Changing Concepts of the Child Molester in Modern America*, Jenkins suggests that sexual violence against children will not abate until we are able to lift our eyes from the “evil predator” to focus more broadly on root causes of this violence. *Trust* makes an important contribution to the deeper social analysis that Jenkins recommends. Its creative vision, blending cutting-edge technology

with traditional stagecraft, draws audiences into a sustained consideration of narrative themes that expose deep issues underlying predatory violence.

René Girard reveals why *Trust* facilitates such engagement. A scholar who studies persistent forms of violence, Girard identifies key patterns in our responses to it. Girard observes that a perpetrator of violence, distinguished from us by factors such as economic class, race, or mental health, is wholly other. Even so, as our focus tightens on him and we hunt him down, in a strange kind of doubling, we find ourselves becoming more like him. His violence and our own anger become mirror-like, or what Girard calls mimetic. Escalating panic follows. Soon, suspect perpetrators are multiplying like a contagion in our neighborhoods. We try ever more desperately to separate ourselves from them, with little success. But Girard offers a solution as well: if we become aware of this mirror-work, gaining critical distance from our initial responses to violence, we can take first steps toward more effectively countering it. Let’s look more closely at how mimetic themes are visible in the stagecraft and narrative of *Trust*.

STAGING VIOLENCE

As we watch *Trust*, we become increasingly disoriented. Are the persons standing before us on the stage most real or is reality grounded in the electronically generated images behind them? Initially, screen images neatly refract experiences taking place on the stage. Electronic

gizmos—computer, video camera, cell phone—are depicted as time-saving, entertaining, functional backdrops to the real lives of the middle-class family whose lives are played out on stage. But when the daughter in this family, Annie, is victimized at age fourteen by a man she meets online, boundaries between stage and screen begin to blur. Will, the father, tries to regain control, using his computer as a weapon to hunt the predator who has assaulted his daughter. However, as stage and screen, the real and the virtual, bleed over on each other, audience and actors lose our bearings. In one terrifying scene, Will crosses over: no longer an actor on the stage, we watch him on a screen attacking a man he imagines to be the predator who assaulted his daughter. Annie too becomes a virtual presence: a pornographic image on a Photoshopped, MySpace page. The loss of clear boundaries between the real and virtual in the play generates audience anxiety. With the foundations of our own identities shaken by what we are observing, as the play progresses, we can become more fearful and our anger toward the predator can rise.

THEMATIZING VIOLENCE

If its stagecraft elicits from the audience an emotional, visceral response that attests to mimetic patterns of violence described by Girard, the narrative of *Trust* renders these patterns substantive. As the show progresses, Charlie, a teenager from a good family, becomes Glen, a predator, and we join Will in making Glen another with whom Will holds nothing in common. As imagined by Will, Glen is addicted to kiddie porn and lives in a seedy apartment, surrounded by filth. He meets his victims in run-down hotels. Everything about Glen is repulsive. He truly is a monster. But in the house of mirrors that the play becomes, Will’s world merges with

Glen’s. Will is the creative mind behind an ad campaign featuring scantily clad teens that he has created for Academic Appeal, an upscale clothing company. “Tweens” are a specific target of Will’s advertising work. At the roll-out for the campaign, Will stands in Academic Appeal’s flagship store. Girls who remind him of Annie run by him. As he stares at massive images of teens in sexually provocative poses that comprise the core of the ad campaign, he feels faint and begins to panic. Will has glimpsed the face of a monster, and this face belongs to him.

In the final scene of the play, a revelatory moment offers the audience a choice: out of the depths of mimeticized paranoia, we can vow to treat every person we encounter as a potential predator. Or, we can avail ourselves of an alternative to the violent house of mirrors in which we have become caught. Accepting that the world of the other might be my world too, we can choose to move beyond panic to confront directly a monster that may look back at us from a mirror. We can question our participation in social contexts that, as demonstrated in the play, establish conditions in which predatory violence can thrive. In bringing together the fears, dreams, and desires of its audience and actors and in offering a conclusion that invites choice, *Trust* supports forward movement toward a less violent future.

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