

SPEAK
TRUTH
TO
POWER

VOICES FROM BEYOND THE DARK

a play by Ariel Dorfman

Based on *Speak Truth to Power: Human Rights Defenders Who are Changing the World*, a book by Kerry Kennedy Cuomo.

BARE STAGE. DARK. LIGHTS RISE ON THE EIGHT ACTORS WHO REPRESENT THE HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS: FOUR MEN, FOUR WOMEN, GROUPED SYMMETRICALLY.

FIRST VOICE (MALE)

Courage begins with one voice.
It's that simple.
I did what I had to do.
Anything else would have tasted like ashes.
That is what we know.

AS LIGHTS FADE ON THE EIGHT, WE HEAR THE VOICE OF THE MAN (NINTH ACTOR) IN THE DARKNESS.

MAN (from the darkness)

They know. They can't say they don't know. They can't say they don't walk into this with their eyes open.

LIGHTS RISE ON FIRST VOICE.

FIRST VOICE (MALE)

You walk into the corridor of death and you know. You know this moment might be your last.

LIGHTS RISE ON SECOND VOICE

SECOND VOICE (FEMALE)

You walk into the corridor of death. . .

FIRST VOICE (MALE)

. . . and you know, you know this moment might be your last.

SECOND VOICE (FEMALE)

That's what you know.

LIGHTS RISE ON FOURTH VOICE.

FOURTH VOICE (FEMALE)

That is what I know. I know what it is to wait in the dark for torture and what it is to wait in the dark for truth.

MAN'S VOICE (from the darkness)

She knows.

LIGHTS RISE ON MAN, CENTER STAGE.

She knows what it is to wait in the dark for torture and what it is to wait in the dark for truth.

FOURTH VOICE (FEMALE)

I did what I had to do.
Anything else would have tasted like ashes.

LIGHTS RISE ON THIRD VOICE.

THIRD VOICE (MALE)

I am told that as a child I reached out to others. I befriended pygmies, even though in my community, in the Congo, they were considered to be animals. I cut bread with them, I brought them to our house, I gave them my clothes. It was sick to society that I associated with pygmies, but I saw them as my friends, just like anyone else. Human rights are rooted in my life.

MAN

Guillaume Ngefa Atondoko.

THE MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME GUILLAUME NGEFA ATONDOKO APPEARS ON A SCREEN BEHIND THE ACTORS.

Yes. He befriended pygmies as a child. Yes. Of course.

FIFTH VOICE (MALE) (from the darkness)

For a month, I was sentenced to death and I had great fear.

LIGHTS RISE ON FIFTH VOICE. THE MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME WEI JINGSHENG APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

Then I thought to myself, "Wei Jingsheng, you will die anyway. Why die as a laughingstock to my enemies?" So I controlled my fear in that moment of crisis, and that moment passed. I held onto my dignity. If you cannot prepare yourself for death, then you should not decide to defy the regime. Your responsibility has to be with those who suffer. If you do not fight tyranny, the tyrants will never let you live an ordinary life.

THIRD VOICE (MALE)

You walk into the corridor of death. . .

FIRST VOICE (MALE)

My name is Hafez Al Sayed Seada.

THE MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME HAFEZ AL SAYED SEADA APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

These scars across my face are from when they pushed me through a window. When I was under investigation, they asked me if I was responsible for managing everything here at the Egyptian Human Rights Organization. I told them I was. I was responsible for everything. I wrote the report, I read it, I reviewed it, and I decided to publish it and issue it in a newspaper. I am not frightened. This is our job, to point the finger at government errors. If we don't do this, who will?

MAN

Hafez Al Sayed Seada, yes. That is his job. And he was pushed through a window. Yes.

SECOND VOICE (MALE)

If we don't do this who will? My name is Digna Ochoa.

THE MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME DIGNA OCHOA APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

I am a nun, who started life as a lawyer. My father was a union

leader in Veracruz, Mexico. In the sugar factory where he worked, he was involved in the struggles for running water, roads, and securing land certificates. I studied law because I was always hearing that my father and his friends needed more lawyers. And all the lawyers charged so much. My father was unjustly jailed for one year and fifteen days. He was then “disappeared” and tortured—the charges against him were fabricated. This led to my determination to do something for those suffering injustice, because I saw it in the flesh with my father.

The first case I worked on was against judicial police officers who had been involved in the illegal detention and torture of several peasants. First, telephone messages came telling me to drop the case. Then by mail, threats that if I didn’t drop it I would die, or members of my family would be killed. I kept working and we even publicly reported what was happening. Then, I was “disappeared” and held incommunicado for eight days by the police. They wanted me to give them all the evidence against them. I had hidden the case file well, not in my office, not in my house, and not where the victims lived, because I was afraid that the police would steal it. Now, I felt in the flesh what my father had felt, what other people had suffered.

Later, when I had managed to escape from the torture house where they were holding me, I started to work with Centro Pro. And since then, I’ve handled a lot of cases of people like my father and people like me.

I’ve always felt anger at the suffering of others. For me, anger is energy, it’s a force. If an act of injustice doesn’t provoke anger in me, it could be seen as indifference, passivity. It’s injustice that motivates us to do something, to take risks, knowing that if we don’t, things will remain the same. Anger has made us confront police and soldiers.

Something that I discovered is that the police and soldiers are used to their superiors shouting at them, and they’re used to being mistreated. So when they run into a woman, otherwise insignificant to them, who dresses monk-like and demands things of them and shouts at them in an authoritarian way, they are paralyzed.

One time we filed a habeas corpus on behalf of a man who had been “disappeared” for twenty days. The authorities denied having him in custody and then denied us access to the state hospital where we knew he was being held. I spent a whole morning studying the comings and goings at the hospital to see how I could get in. During a change in shifts, I slipped in. When I got to the door of the room where this person was, the nurse at the door told me I couldn’t go in. I told her that I would take care of myself; all I asked was that if they did something to me, she should call a certain number. I gave her my card. I took a deep breath, opened the door violently and yelled at the federal judicial police officers inside. I told them they had to leave immediately because I was the person’s lawyer and needed to speak with him. They didn’t know how to react, so they left. I had two minutes, but it was enough to explain who I was, that I had been in touch with his wife, and to get him to sign a piece of paper proving he was in the hospital. He signed. By then the police came back. Fierce. They tried to grab me to get me out of there. They didn’t expect me to assume an attack position—the only position in karate I know from movies, I suppose. Of course, I don’t really know karate, but they thought I was going to attack. Trembling inside, I said that if they laid a hand on me they’d see what would happen. And they drew back, saying,

“You’re threatening us.” And I said, “Take it any way you want.”

SEVENTHVOICE (MALE) (from the darkness)

My name is Doan Viet Hoat.

LIGHTS RISE ON SEVENTHVOICE (MALE) AS MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME DOAN VIET HOAT APPEARS ON SCREEN.

I spent twenty years in Vietnamese prisons. Four of those were in isolation. I was forbidden all pens, papers, and books. To keep my spirits up, I sang, I talked to myself. The guards thought I was mad, but I told them if I did not talk to myself I would go mad. I tried to take it easy, to think of my cell as home, as though I had entered a religious way of life, like a monk. As I had no books, I just had to use the mind. Zen meditation helped—with it you turn inside. And I managed to secretly write a report about conditions in the camp. I felt that if I kept silent in jail, then the dictators had won. I wanted to prove that you cannot, by force, silence someone who doesn’t agree with you. I continued to fight, even from within the prison walls. If we don’t do this, who will?

THIRDVOICE (MALE)

You walk into the corridor of death. . .

FOURTHVOICE (FEMALE)

I want to be free of these memories. My name is Dianna Ortiz.

MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME DIANNA ORTIZ APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

I want to be free of these memories. I want to be trusting, confident, adventurous and carefree as I was in 1987 when I came from the United States to the Western Highlands of Guatemala to teach young indigenous children to read and write in Spanish and in their native language and to understand the Bible in their culture. But on November 2nd, 1989, the Dianna I just described ceased to exist. Now, at this moment, I hardly remember the life I led before I was abducted at age thirty-one. Instead I have memories of the torture. You may think this is strange but even at this moment, I can sense the presence of my torturers, I can smell them, I can hear them hissing in my ears. I remember. That policeman raped me again.

Then I was lowered into a pit full of bodies—children, men, women, some decapitated, all caked with blood. A few were still alive. I could hear them moaning. Someone was weeping. I didn’t know if it was me or somebody else. (PAUSE). The men who tortured me were never brought to justice. The American who was in charge of my torture was never brought to justice.

Now I know what few U.S. citizens know: I know what it is to be an innocent civilian and to be accused, interrogated, and tortured. I know what it is to have my own government eschew my claims for justice and actively destroy my character because my case causes political problems for them. I know what it is to wait in the dark for torture and what it is to wait in the dark for truth. I am still waiting.

MAN

So she knows. She can’t say she isn’t walking into this with her eyes open, that we didn’t warn her. She can’t say she doesn’t know.

FIFTH VOICE (MALE) (from the darkness)

This is what I know.

LIGHTS RISE ON THE FIFTH VOICE. MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME THE DALAI LAMA APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

There was an influx of large members of Tibetans who came to see me, the Dalai Lama, in India and spoke about how their fathers or their parents or their brothers or sisters were killed and how they themselves had been tortured. I often wept. Now, after hearing so many cases, my eyes have become dry. When I hear bad news from Tibet my natural reaction is one of great sadness. Yet there is no point in being discouraged. Feelings of helpless anger do nothing but poison the mind, embitter the heart, and enfeeble the will. We must place this in context and remind ourselves that the basic human disposition toward freedom, truth, and justice will eventually prevail.

THIRD VOICE (MALE)

This is what I know.

THE MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME KOIGI WA WAMWERE APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

One night, when I had escaped to Uganda, five people, all masked, captured me, kidnapped me, and brought me to Kenya. I was put in the basement of a police cell and woke up in a sea of water. I was naked and had been sitting in it all night. I stayed in that water for about one month. About a foot of water goes into the basement cell. They could freeze that water, keep it so cold that you shivered uncontrollably, and then make it so hot you felt like you were suffocating. I was interrogated during the day. They would threaten to throw me off the roof.

MAN

A lie. We never threatened to throw him off the roof. Koigi wa Wamwere is lying. Yes. He lied about the lack of liberty in Kenya. He lied about the treatment of forest workers in Kenya. Koigi wa Wamwere lied when he wrote about corruption in government-controlled companies in Kenya and he lied when he spoke about how tribalism is being used by those in power. He lies all the time. We should have thrown him off the roof.

THIRD VOICE (MALE)

Yes. My name is Koigi wa Wamwere. Being in prison is tough, but it takes less courage to survive it than to come out of prison and continue where you left off, knowing you could go back. And I continued. I continued.

SIXTH VOICE (FEMALE) (from the darkness)

We all continued.

LIGHTS RISE ON SIXTH VOICE. MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME HINA JILANI APPEARS.

The small successes count for a lot. They may be few and far between but the point is they are significant. We feel that something is there, a light at the end of the tunnel. And we have seen that light many times.

EIGHTH VOICE (FEMALE) (from the darkness)

ness)

The phone rang and the voice said, the man said: "I know who you are."

LIGHTS RISE ON EIGHTH VOICE (FEMALE). MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME MARINA PISKLAKOVA APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

I know your name. I know where you are located. I know where you live. And I am going to come with some guys and kill you."

MAN

I know your name, Marina Pisklakova. I know where you live, Marina, my Marina. I am going to kill you, Marina Pisklakova.

EIGHTH VOICE (FEMALE)

I started the first domestic violence hotline in Russia in 1993 almost by accident. My son has a classmate and his mother asked me for advice. When a button fell off her husband's suit and it was not fixed quickly, he took a shoe and slapped her in the face. For two weeks she couldn't go out. She called me one evening, really distressed, and hurt, half her face black and blue. I asked her, "Why don't you just leave him?" And she said, "Where would I go, Marina? I depend on him completely." So I started thinking that I should help her. I should refer her to somebody. And then I realized there was nowhere to go, nobody to help her. So I started the hot line. And then in 1997, we started a new program training lawyers in domestic abuse cases.

SECOND VOICE (FEMALE)

My name is Rana Hussein. I am a journalist.

THE MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME RANA HUSSEINI APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

In the name of honor, a sixteen-year-old girl here in Jordan was killed by her family because she was raped by her brother. When I went to investigate the crime, I met with her two uncles. Why was it her fault that she has been raped? Why didn't the family punish the brother? They answered that she had seduced her brother.

MAN

She had seduced her brother, we said to Rana Hussein.

SECOND VOICE (FEMALE)

I asked them why, with millions of men on the street, would the girl choose to seduce her own brother? They only repeated that she had tarnished the family image by committing an immoral act. The only way to rectify the family's honor is to have her killed. Blood cleanses honor.

MAN

Blood cleanses honor. We told her, that journalist Rana Hussein, we told her that the only way to rectify the family's honor is to have the girl killed.

SECOND VOICE (FEMALE)

The average term served for an honor killing is only seven and a half months. But it's important to know that the people who commit the killings are also victims. If you don't kill, you are

responsible for your family's dishonor. If you do kill, you will be a hero.

FIFTH VOICE (MALE)

One of the extraordinary things that has happened in the Truth Commission in South Africa is how many of those who have suffered most grievously have been ready to forgive—people who you thought might be consumed by bitterness, by a lust for revenge. A massacre had occurred in which soldiers opened fire on a demonstration against apartheid and about twenty people were killed and many wounded. We had a hearing chock-a-block full with people who had lost loved ones. Four officers came up, one white and three black.

The white said: "We gave the orders for the soldiers to open fire"—in this room, where the tension could be cut with a knife, it was so palpable. Then he turned to the audience and said, "Please, forgive us. And please receive these, my colleagues, back into the community." And that very angry audience broke out into quite deafening applause. It was an incredible moment. I said, "Let's keep quiet, because we are in the presence of something holy."

PAUSE

My name is Desmond Tutu.

THE MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME ARCHBISHOP DESMOND TUTU APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

I did what I had to do. Anything else would have tasted like ashes. It would have been living a lie. I could have been part of the struggle in a less prominent position. But God took me, as they say, by the scruff of the neck, like Jeremiah. I have a God who doesn't say, "Ah ... Got you!" No, God says, "Get up." And God dusts us off and God says, "Try again." God says, "Try again."

FOURTH VOICE (FEMALE)

Few and far between
Few and far between
Something is there

SIXTH VOICE (FEMALE)

A light is there
A light at the end of the tunnel.

FOURTH VOICE (FEMALE)

Few and far between
We have seen that light many times.

FIRST VOICE (MALE)

My name is Muhammad Yunus. I started the Grameen program to provide access to credit for the poor.

THE MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME MUHAMMAD YUNUS APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

We received criticism from development professionals who insisted that giving tiny loans to poor women who do not have knowledge and skill does not bring change. They say development involves multimillion-dollar loans for enormous infra-

structure projects. But I work with real people in the real world. The night before a woman is going to get her thirty-five dollars from the bank, she will be tossing and turning to decide whether she is really going to be able to repay the loan. Or scared that maybe something terrible will happen to her. And then she holds the money and she will tremble and tears will roll down her cheeks and she won't believe we would trust her with such a large amount of money. Thirty-five dollars! And she struggles to pay that first installment and the second installment and she goes on for fifty weeks in sequence and every time she is braver. And when she finished her last one, she can say, she did it! She wants to celebrate.

It's not just a monetary transaction that has been completed. She felt she was nobody and she really did not exist. Now she can almost stand up and challenge the whole world, shouting, "I can do it, I can make it on my own." Proving that she can take care of herself.

SECOND VOICE (MALE)

Courage begins with one voice.
We did what we had to do.
Anything else would have tasted like ashes.

EIGHTH VOICE (FEMALE) (from the darkness)

My name is Juliana Dogbadzi.

LIGHTS RISE ON EIGHTH VOICE. THE MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME JULIANA DOGBADZI APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

I am from Ghana. I have never been to school. When I was seven years old, my parents took me from our home and sent me to a shrine where I was a slave to a fetish priest for seventeen years. My grandfather, they said, had stolen two dollars. When members of my family began to die, in order to stop the deaths, a soothsayer said that my family must bring a young girl to the shrine to appease the gods. Since I had been born just after my grandfather's death, I was sacrificed. Twelve of us, four women and eight children, lived in a one-room, thatched-roof house. It was built of mud. No windows, no doors. Rain got in. The snakes got in. The ceiling was low, just shy of our heads, and we all slept together on a mat on the floor. A typical day in the shrine: you wake up at five o'clock in the morning, go to the stream about five kilometers away to get water for the compound, sweep, prepare meals for the priest, not eating any yourself, go to the farm, work until six o'clock, and return to sleep without food or scrounge for leftovers. At night the priest would call one of us to his room and would rape us. I was about twelve when I was first raped. I had to do something that would change my life. I escaped several times. The first time I escaped, I went to my parents, but they were scared to keep me. They said if they did, the gods would strike them dead. They brought me back to the priest. I thought, no. This is not going to happen again. I had to find a way to free myself and free the other women too. One day, a man representing a non-profit organization called International Needs-Ghana came to the shrine to talk to the priest. This was my chance. I don't know where my sudden confidence came from, but all my fear had disappeared. With my newborn baby strapped to my back and my first child, Wonder, in my hands, I escaped through the bush.

Now that I have escaped, I help to diminish the women's

fears by telling them my story. What I do is dangerous, but I am prepared to die for a good cause. Unlike most of the other girls and women, I got over the fear instilled by the Trokosi system. This was my weapon.

This is still my weapon.

SEVENTH VOICE (MALE)

My name is Elie Wiesel.

THE MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME ELIE WIESEL APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

I like the weak and small. That's why in every book of mine, there's always a child, always an old man, always. Because they are so neglected by the government and by society. So I give them shelter. I think of the children today who need our voices. I owe something to the people left behind. And I hope that my past should not become your children's future.

THIRD VOICE (MALE)

We had some protection. Had I been at greater risk, I cannot claim that I would have proceeded as I did. I don't know. I do not claim to have innate bravery. Rather, I'm very normal and try to shun danger when possible. I had a commitment to justice. In the end, whatever bravery I displayed was an exercise in learning how to live with fears. After a while, I no longer took notice of the danger, in the same way a surgeon becomes accustomed to the sight of blood.

MAN

José Zalaquett. Yes. Of course. That lawyer from Chile.

THE MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME JOSÉ ZALAUQUETT APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

That lawyer who organized the defence of the prisoners after the coup. That lawyer who went into the concentration camps where nobody could go. That lawyer we jailed twice. Zalaquett.

FIFTH VOICE (MALE)

My name is Martin O'Brien.

THE MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME MARTIN O'BRIEN APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

FIFTH VOICE (MALE)

I got involved in the struggle when I was twelve years old. A group of people knocked on the door of our house and said, "M a r t i n O'Brien, do you want to go on a peace march to demonstrate against violence?" And I said I would go. I remember being frightened. Some of the marchers were attacked with bricks and bottles and a number were beaten. But we marched every weekend in different parts of Northern Ireland, and a popular movement developed, The Peace People. The worst thing is apathy—to sit idly by in the face of injustice and to do nothing about it. You don't live your life in fear and give people power over you who want to create fear. It would be better to die early.

MAN

It would be better to die early. Like Fauziya Kassindja. She wanted to die early.

MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME FAUZIYA KASSINDJA APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

SIXTH VOICE (FEMALE)

I wouldn't do it. I wouldn't marry that man. I was seventeen and he was forty-five and already had three wives. But my aunt said, "I know you don't love him now, but once you get kakiya, you will learn to love him. Tomorrow will be the day of kakiya." But with the help of my sister I escaped from Togo, I managed to make my way to the United States with a false passport. I told the immigration officer at Newark Airport that I wanted asylum. And I told her everything. Well, not everything because it is so embarrassing. I didn't mention kakiya to her because I knew she probably wouldn't understand. Whether I got asylum or not was up to the judge, she said, so you will go to prison. I began screaming, I had done nothing, why were they sending me to prison? They put me in chains. In the detention center in New Jersey, I met Cecelia Jeffrey, another prisoner. She treated me like a daughter. When I'd go to bed, she would come and tuck me in. I was so sick, and they gave me no medicine and I thought, "If I am going to die, why don't I go back?" And Cecelia said, "Are you crazy, Fauziya? Do you know what you're going back for? Do you know?"

FOURTH VOICE (FEMALE)

Even in very dark times
even in very dark times
there were people
there were people who stood up to protect others
there was at least one person who stood up to protect others.

FIFTH VOICE (MALE)

Life only belongs to you once. And courage begins with one voice.

FOURTH VOICE (FEMALE)

Let it be said that in times like these
there was at least one person who stood up to protect others.

SIXTH VOICE (FEMALE)

"Are you crazy, Fauziya?" she said. "You want to go back to Togo?" Next day Cecelia was in the shower and asked me to come and she was standing in there and she opened her legs apart and said, "Look. Is this what you want to go back to?" I didn't know what I was seeing.

"Do you know what this is?" I didn't know. It didn't look anything like female genitalia. Nothing. It was just like a really plain thing like the palm of my hand. And the only thing you could see was a scar, like the stitch. And just a little hole. That's it, no lips, nothing. Kakiya. I said, "You live with this?" And she said, "All my life. I cry all the time when I see it. I cry inside. I feel weak, I feel defeated all the time."

And I looked at her and saw the strongest woman on earth. Outside you can't really tell that she's suffering. She's the most loving person I've ever met. She made me stay. She made

me stay and win my case.

SECOND VOICE (FEMALE)

My name is Kek Galabru. I am from Cambodia.

THE MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME DR. KEK GALABRU APPEARS ON SCREEN

This is what I know. It could be easy for us to take our suitcases, pack, and then take an airplane and not look back. But then we said, "Impossible, they trust us." When a person comes to see us and they say, "I know that I would have died if you were not here," that gives us more energy. If we only save one person—it's a victory.

FOURTH VOICE (FEMALE)

Few and far between
We have seen that light many times.

MAN

Have they? Have they really seen that light many times? How many lights have they really seen? How many lives have they really saved? Few and far between, this is what they know: they know what it is to wait in the dark for torture and what it is to wait in the dark for truth. They know what it is to walk into the corridor of death. They know that this moment might be their last. And this is what they fear, what they really fear: that nobody cares, that nobody listens, that people forget, that people watch t.v. and say these are not their problems and then have dinner and then go to sleep. People go to sleep. That is what they know and fear. They know that 3 billion people live in poverty and 40,000 children die each day of diseases that could be prevented. They know that while the world as a whole consumes 24 trillion dollars worth of goods and services each year, the planet holds 1.3 billion people who live on incomes of less than one dollar a day. They know that the three richest people in the world have assets that exceed the combined gross domestic product of the poorest forty-eight countries. And that is not going to change by saving one life and then another and then another. Nothing is ever going to change. This is what they fear: that nobody really cares.

FIRST VOICE (MALE)

My name is Oscar Arias Sánchez. And I care.

THE MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME OSCAR ARIAS SÁNCHEZ APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

Military spending is not merely a consumer excess; instead it represents a huge perversion in the priorities of our civilization: 780 billion dollars each year invested in instruments of death, in guns and fighters designed to kill people, that could be spent on human development. If we channeled just 5 percent of that figure over the next ten years into anti-poverty programs, all of the world's population would enjoy basic social services. The poor of the world are crying out for schools and doctors, not guns and generals. In a world which presents such a dramatic struggle between life and death, the decisions we make about how we conduct our lives, about the kind of people we want to be, have important consequences. In this context, it is clear that one must stand on the

side of life.

MAN

Yes. Of course. The poor of the world are crying out. But who cares?

LIGHTS FADE ON ALL THE VOICES, LEAVING THE MAN BY HIMSELF ON THE STAGE.

Who cares?

LIGHTS RISE ON THIRD VOICE (MALE)

THIRD VOICE (MALE)

At that time, I stayed in the jungle and observed the terrible lives of the villagers of Burma.

THE MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME KA HSAW WA APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

In the morning, the villagers took hoes and baskets and were forced to build things for the military. They didn't get any pay. I walked to another village five days away, where I stayed for quite a while. This changed my life. Since no one was doing interviews, I talked to everyone, I talked to one mother whose son had committed suicide because a group of soldiers had forced him to have sex with her. The son killed himself out of shame. The mother was heartbroken. It was then that I made the decision to work for these people. In the beginning I had neither pen nor paper to work with. The resistance people told me that this kind of incident happened all the time and that no one cared and that I should take up arms and fight. But I made a decision to continue working on the testimonies, absorb the stories as best I could. We were very poor. There was a time when I wanted to shoot myself when there wasn't any water and we had to eat raw rice. We couldn't cook for fear that the soldiers might see the fire. In the rainy season, life was very tough. It was very cold in the hills and all we had was a sheet of plastic to cover ourselves. Although we hung our hammocks to avoid the leeches on the ground, in the morning we realized the leeches had fallen from the trees and sucked our blood. But we kept gathering stories. Finally, we met a woman from France who gave us money for paper and mailing. I was so happy that we could finally do something. A lot of my former classmates now have their Ph.D.s in the United States. They come here with money. I think to myself, "What am I doing?" I don't gain anything for myself and I can't seem to do anything to lessen the suffering of the villagers. One day, I went to another human rights organization, that was working on something else. There, in the . . . in the trash, I saw the documentation that we'd been working so hard on. It was so difficult to get that piece of paper mailed and to document the suffering that the people had endured. It had been scrunched up and thrown away.

MAN

Ka Hsaw Wa. From Burma. Yes. He felt heartbroken. Yes. But we had told him it was useless. We had told him he was wasting his life away. We had told him that nobody cares.

THIRDVOICE (MALE)

I felt heartbroken. At the same time, I can't quit. If I turn my back and walk away, I thought, who is going to do this work? Courage? I don't know if courage comes from power or from pain.

MAN

No one listened and no one even cared.

FIRSTVOICE (MALE) (from the darkness)

My name is Kailash Satyarthi.

LIGHTS RISE ON FIRST VOICE. THE MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME KAILASH SATYARTHI APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

When I was five or six years old, the very first day that I went to my school I found a cobbler and his son, sitting right on the doorstep of my school and they were cleaning and polishing shoes of children and as soon as I was entering there was a lot of joy and happiness. I was carrying new books and a new bag and new clothes, new uniform, everything new and I saw that child and I stopped for a while because in my knowledge, or in my consciousness, it was the first encounter like that, so one thing came to my mind, that why a child of my age is sitting and polishing shoes for children like me and why am I going to school? So I wanted to ask this question to the child but I did not have enough courage, so I entered in and my teacher welcomed me but I did not ask this question though I still had that feeling in my heart that I should, but a couple of hours later I collected all my courage and I asked my teacher, that sir, I wanted to know why this child of my age is sitting right on the doorstep and cleaning shoes? So he looked at me strangely and said, "What are you asking, you have come to study here, not for all these unnecessary things and these questions. It is not your business." So I was a little angry. I thought that I should go back home and ask these questions to my mother and I asked and she said, "Oh, you have not seen many children are working. It is their destiny. They are poor people. They have to work." I was told not to worry about it. But one day I went to the father, the cobbler, and I said, "I watch this boy every day. I have a question. Why don't you send your child to school? Why doesn't he go to school when I'm going to school? And he is of my age, he is also five or six years old?" So the father looked at me; for two minutes he could not answer. Then he slowly replied and that was something very strong. He said, "I am untouchable and we are born to work." So I could not understand why some people are born to work and why some people like us are born to go to school. How does it come from? So it made me a little bit rebellion in my mind, because nobody was there to answer. Whom should I ask? My teacher had no answer. Nobody had a good answer. And I carried that in my heart for years.

And now, I am doing something about this. About this and other things. Five million children in India alone are born into slavery. Small children of six, seven years, forced to work fourteen hours a day. If they cry for their parents, they are beaten severely, sometimes hanged upside down on the trees and branded or burned with cigarettes. They are prisoners—bidden to leave. And the number of children are going up—par-

allel to the growth of exports. The export of carpets go up and the children in servitude go up and up. So we conduct consumer campaigns. And direct actions: secret raids that free those children and return them to their families. We also do follow-up on their education and rehabilitation. But when you free them, the work has just begun. Our first task is to return them to normal childhood. Take Nagasur, for instance, a fourteen year old boy, who tried to escape. He was branded like an animal with red-hot iron rods so he'd know to whom he belonged. He had lost his ability to speak, so he could not explain anything that had happened to him. It was the other children, street friends of his, who told us his story.

FIFTHVOICE (MALE) (from the darkness)

It was extremely difficult for our voice to be heard.

SEVENTHVOICE (MALE) (from the darkness)

We Palestinians. . . .

THE MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME RAJI SOURANI APPEARS ON THE SCREEN. LIGHTS RISE ON SEVENTHVOICE

. . . are nearly a forgotten people, consigned to a second-class existence. No one needs peace—a just peace—more than those who are oppressed.

FIFTHVOICE (MALE) (from the darkness)

All those disappearances were peasants.

THE MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME FRANCISCO SOBERÓN APPEARS ON THE SCREEN. LIGHTS RISE ON FIFTH VOICE.

Andean peasants, whose main language is Quechua, not Spanish. They are considered second-class citizens, so there was not much attention paid to them.

FIRSTVOICE (MALE)

Nothing is worse for a prisoner than to feel that he or she is forgotten. And usually the tormenter uses that argument to break the prisoner and says, well, you know, nobody cares.

THIRDVOICE (MALE) (from the darkness)

The others in the movement didn't know where we lived or which people were organizing for us. So if somebody got caught by the Polish secret police, that person would know as little as possible.

THE MAN MAKES A GESTURE. THE NAME ZBIGNIEW BUJAK APPEARS ON THE SCREEN. LIGHTS RISE ON THIRD VOICE.

I stayed that first night, after martial law was declared, in a monastery; then, the next day, moved to a private apartment. From the windows, I could see the tanks, one after another, entering the shipyard. We managed to get in touch with the people of the Solidarity Strike Committee inside to figure out whether we should join them, but they suggested that the leadership should scatter to different hiding places. I got an engineer's uniform and rode the train back to Warsaw. Every month we had to change apartments and our appearance. We had to go to apartments of complete strangers, put our trust

in them. At the beginning we had this fear that these people would sell us out. The reward for doing that was huge: twenty thousand dollars and a permanent exit visa to leave Poland. But only once was someone betrayed.

SECOND VOICE (FEMALE) (from the darkness)

We put our trust in strangers. And only once was someone betrayed.

SIXTH VOICE (FEMALE) (from the darkness)

We don't have the right to lose hope.

SEVENTH VOICE (from the darkness)

If we don't do this, who will?
My name is Bobby Muller.

LIGHTS RISE ON SEVENTH VOICE. THE MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME BOBBY MULLER APPEARS ON SCREEN

One of the things that really pissed me off when we were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for our work against landmines, was the romanticized treatment in the media, to make people feel good—inspired. It was horseshit. People think that because there's an international treaty, that it's done, the job's over. Look, we live our lives largely insulated from the depth of despair of pain and anguish. That's why I feel so strongly in going after laws and making them real—the belief that you cannot allow the genocides, the Cambodias, the Rwandas of the world to play out. The world community has to say that conduct won't be tolerated. Because if we do allow it, then it's a breeding ground and sows the seeds of destruction. One day, that degree of madness is going to walk up the block and come into your neighborhood.

FIFTH VOICE (MALE)

My name is Bruce Harris.

THE MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME BRUCE HARRIS APPEARS ON A SCREEN.

What we've been trying to do at Casa Alianza in Guatemala is give children back their childhood—if it's not too late. We started just offering food and shelter—but that was naïve. I keep thinking of a priest in Brazil who said, "When I feed the hungry, they call me a hero; when I ask why the people are hungry, they call me a Communist." It's a noble task to feed the hungry, but as an agency we have matured into asking why the children are hungry and why they are being abused and murdered. So we began pushing for an investigation into why the police were killing street children, challenging the status quo, the way Guatemala had for decades operated, challenging the assumption that if a man had the gun and the uniform, he could get away with murder—literally. And soon after that we started getting phone calls and death threats. Until one day... It was mid-morning when a BMW with no license plates and polarized windows in the middle of Guatemala City came to the crisis center, here at Covenant House. Three men asked for me by name, Is Bruce Harris here? they asked, and said, "We've come to kill him." When the guard told them I wasn't there, they got back in the vehicle and came back down the street and opened fire with machineguns. When something like that hap-

pens, you call the police—funny in this case. So the police came very quickly and they took away all the bullets. They took away all the evidence. It shows how naïve we were. When Covenant House in New York heard about the incident, they sent me a bullet-proof jacket. It had a money-back guarantee, if for any reason it didn't work!

SIXTH VOICE (FEMALE) (from the darkness)

Every time I felt frightened. . .

MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME ASMA JAHANGIR APPEARS ON THE SCREEN. LIGHTS RISE ON SIXTH VOICE.

. . . every time I felt frightened, I would go to the home of the Director of the Pakistan Human Rights' Commission. I would invite all our friends there and we would have a good laugh. A sense of humor, and the warmth of the people around, has made me survive, at least me. If I sat by myself, isolated, I would have gone crazy.

Of course, my children are very worried about me. I have had to sit them down and explain to them and even sometimes joke and say, "Okay, now what I am going to do is get myself insurance, so when I die you will be rich kids."

FIRST VOICE (MALE)

My name is Sezgin Tanrikulu.

MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME SEZGINTANRIKULU APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

I am a lawyer. When I am in court here in Turkey, eye to eye with people that I am accusing of torture, when they look into my eyes and I don't look away, when they look into my eyes and I don't look away, when they look into my eyes and I don't look away, I feel that I have more courage than they do. Of course, I was followed from the moment I stepped foot outside my door every morning. There was nothing to do but find humor in the situation. Most of the time when people are killed they were assassinated with one bullet from behind. At our human rights organization, we joked at the notion of placing mirrors on our shoulders so we could see who was creeping up! So we could see who was creeping up from behind to try and kill us!

EIGHTH VOICE (FEMALE) (from the darkness)

My name is . . .

PAUSE. THE MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND NOTHING APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

My name is. . .

THE MAN MAKES ANOTHER GESTURE AND STILL NOTHING APPEARS ON THE SCREEN. THE OTHER ACTORS LAUGH, OR THEY COULD SURROUND THE EIGHTH VOICE PROTECTIVELY. THE EIGHTH VOICE CONTINUES TO SPEAK FROM THE DARKNESS. LIGHTS BEGIN TO FADE ON THE MAN.

I cannot reveal my name. I am from Sudan. My parents taught us, as children, how to love our people, however simple, however poor. Our home was always a busy home. We always had

somebody who was sick coming for treatment, or giving birth in our house. I learned to regard all the Sudanese as my own family. But I cannot reveal my name. Those whom the government suspects of working on human rights are arrested, often tortured in ghost houses or, if one is lucky, put in prison. If I revealed my name I could not do my work.

FIFTH VOICE (MALE) (perhaps echoed by the other voices, who could repeat the same words)
If she revealed her name, she could not do her work.

LIGHTS FADE COMPLETELY ON MAN.

FOURTH VOICE (FEMALE) (from the darkness)
My name is Rigoberta Menchú Tum.

LIGHTS RISE ON FOURTH VOICE. ONE OF THE ACTORS MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME RIGOBERTA MENCHU TUM APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

We have to reinvent hope all over again. These are things that are not going to be forgotten. They will not be forgotten. We are the ones that have the last words.

SECOND VOICE (FEMALE)
God has blessed us in America with more riches than we know what to do with, yet we let millions of children go hungry, without shelter and other basic necessities. Here we have poverty killing children, more slowly, but surely as guns, in a nation that has been blessed with a nine trillion-dollar economy. I am clear that if we do not save our children, we are not going to be able to save ourselves.

ONE OF THE ACTORS MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.
There comes a point in life when you look around and decide that this is not what life's about. And you have to change things. If that means dying, that's fine. Everybody needs to open up the envelope of their soul and get their orders from inside. And nobody has ever said it was going to be easy. You don't have to see the whole stairway to take the first step. If you can't run, walk, if you can't walk, crawl, if you can't crawl, just keep moving. Just keep moving, Marian Wright Edelman, just keep moving.

SEVENTH VOICE (MALE)
My name is Abubacar Sultan.

ONE OF THE ACTORS MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME ABUBACAR SULTAN APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

When the war started in Mozambique, I was finishing teacher training at the university. I was shocked by pictures of child soldiers who had been captured by government forces and others who were shot in combat. Something wrong was going on. I couldn't keep going to my classes, teaching students, while these things were happening in my country. I decided to do something Around that time, a local orphanage here in Mozambique took in thirty-five kids captured in combat. Their stories were horrifying. One particular seven year old boy changed my life. He was completely withdrawn from the world. He would be calm

one day and cry continuously the next. Finally, he started speaking. He said he was living with his family when a group of rebel soldiers woke him up at night, beat him and forced him to set fire to the hut where his parents were living. And when his family tried to escape from the hut, they were shot in front of him and then cut into pieces. I will never forget his feelings, because he allowed me to kind of go inside him. He shared with me the worst moments of his life. The images, the bad images I had from my childhood of small things that hurt me, all came alive We went into the war zones every day, documented as many children as possible, and tried to trace them to communities of displaced people inside the country, and to refugee camps in neighboring countries. Most of these kids were on the front, so that's where we went. There were no safe roads in the country then, and the only way to reach those areas was by plane. On several occasions, we were almost shot down. We had several plane accidents. Whenever we got to a frightened, I tried to remember how lucky we were even to be alive.

Many times I asked myself why I chose this work. I had two kids and until they reached the age of four or five, I didn't spend more than two or three days a month with them. I was hurting my own family. They were always worried about my safety. And yet there was something strong within myself that responded, saying that I was a human being and there were other human beings out there in danger. Part of the explanation lies in religion (I'm a practising Muslim) and part in education. Yet there are many people like myself who never considered doing what I did. Hence, it must be something deeper, something inside. It's perhaps a kind of gift you have inside yourself.

FIFTH VOICE (MALE)
My name is Gabor Gombos.

ONE OF THE ACTORS MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME GABOR GOMBOS APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

I am from Hungary. One day, doing my work, I visited an institution. There was a relatively young man with severe mental retardation in a cage. We asked the staff how much time he spent there. The answer was all day, except for half an hour when a staffer works with him. And I asked them, why do you keep this person in the cage?

SEVENTH VOICE (MALE)
I owe something to the people left behind.
Anything else would have tasted like ashes.

THIRD VOICE (MALE)
They needed a voice. And I became their voice.

EIGHTH VOICE (FEMALE) (from the darkness)
My name is Helen Prejean.

LIGHTS RISE ON EIGHTH VOICE. ONE OF THE ACTORS MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME SISTER HELEN PREJEAN APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

When I came out of the execution chamber with Patrick the first time I witnessed a man being killed, I was clear, clear inside. You are either paralyzed by something like that or you

are galvanized. Galvanized: the resurrection principle of life—overcoming death and resisting evil. Patrick was dead but I didn't have a choice. I would take people there. I would take people there through my stories. So for fifteen years, I have been working to stop the death penalty, which is an act of supreme despair. We don't know what else to do, so we imitate criminals' worst behavior. And yet I believe that if we bring people to their own best hearts, they will respond.

LIGHTS DIM ON EIGHTH VOICE.

FOURTH VOICE (FEMALE)

My name is Wangari Maathai.

ONE OF THE ACTORS MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME WANGARI MAATHAI APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

The Greenbelt Movement in Kenya started in 1977 when women from rural areas and urban centers, reflecting on their needs at organized forums, spoke about environmental degradation. They did not have firewood. They needed fruits to cure malnutrition in their children. They needed clean drinking water, but the pesticides and herbicides used on farms to grow cash crops polluted the water.

The National Council of Women, a non-governmental organization, responded by encouraging them to plant trees. In the beginning it was difficult because the women felt that they had neither the knowledge, the technology, nor the capital to do this. But we quickly showed them that we did not need all of that to plant trees, which made the tree-planting process a wonderful symbol of hope. Tree-planting was something they could do and see the results of. And so, the women actually developed forestry techniques.

We would go and collect seeds from the trees, come back and plant them the way women did with other seeds. Here is the method: take a pot, put in the soil and put in the seeds. Put the pot in an elevated position so that the chickens and the goats don't come and eat the seedlings. We planted more than 20 million trees in Kenya alone. And we have started programs in about twenty countries. This has not made us popular with the leaders. We have got into trouble with the leaders. That is what happened in 1989. President Moi wanted to take over Uhuru Park, the only park left in Nairobi where people with no money could come to. He was going to build the highest building in Africa, sixty-two stories. Next to the skyscraper he was going to put a four-story statue of himself (so you could pat his head from the fourth floor). All of downtown Nairobi would have had to be restructured. We staged a protest in the park and were beaten by the police. We were only a small group of women, because, at that time, there was a lot of fear. But we won in the end because those who were providing the money withdrew due to the public outcry. Of course, they attacked us, attacked me. But fortunately, my skin is thick like an elephant's.

LIGHTS DIM ON FOURTH VOICE.

THIRD VOICE (MALE)

My name is Juan Méndez. I am from Argentina. I did what I had to do.

LIGHTS DIM ON THIRD VOICE.

FIFTH VOICE (MALE)

My name is Van Jones. Our organization exposes human rights violations, particularly police brutality, here in the United States. I did what I had to do. If we don't do this, who will?

LIGHTS DIM ON FIFTH VOICE.

SECOND VOICE (FEMALE)

My name is Patria Jiménez. I am from Mexico. If we don't do this, who will?

LIGHTS DIM ON SECOND VOICE.

SEVENTH VOICE (MALE)

My name is Freedom Neruda. I am from Ivory Coast. If we don't do this, who will?

LIGHTS DIM ON SEVENTH VOICE.

FIRST VOICE (MALE)

My name is Samuel Kofi Woods. I am from Liberia. If we don't do this, who will?

LIGHTS DIM ON FIRST VOICE.

THIRD VOICE (MALE) (from the darkness)

If I turn my back and walk away, who is going to do this work? If we don't do this, who will?

SIXTH VOICE (FEMALE)

Did it take courage? I would say instead it took stubbornness.

LIGHTS DIM ON SIXTH VOICE. THE STAGE IS NOW TOTALLY DARK AGAIN.

FIRST VOICE (from the darkness)

Courage begins with one voice.
If we don't do this, who will?
LONG SILENCE

EIGHTH VOICE (from the darkness)

If we don't do this, who will?

MAN (from the darkness)

If we don't do this, who will?

THE MAN APPEARS, ALONE, IN STARK AND BRUTALLY WHITE LIGHT AT CENTER STAGE.

MAN

Yes. The names. Elie Wiesel and Jaime Prieto Mendez from Colombia and Natassa Kandic from Serbia and José Ramos Horta from East Timor and Harry Wu who spent years and years in re-education camps in China and refuses to consider himself a hero because he did not die and Vera Stremkovskaya, that damn lawyer from Belarus who keeps on defending those old people who nobody gives a damn about, and Baltasar Garzón that damn judge from Spain who thinks there are no frontiers for war criminals and Maria Teresa Tula from El Salvador who was arrested so many times and threatened so

many times and just wouldn't stop, she just wouldn't stop looking for the disappeared, and Senhal Sarihan, bringing flowers to the children who were detained in the Turkish prisons, and that damn lesbian legislator from Mexico, Patria Jiménez, and that Bishop Wissa and Vaclav Havel . . . All those names. Names we won't forget, not me. Others will forget these names. They're already fading from memory, those names. In spite of the triumphant, defiant finale. If we don't do this, who will? The lights on them now and the applause about to start and surround and caress them, the lights that begin to dim, go out one by one, as the audience goes home, the spectators flick on their T.V. set back home and a faraway face, perhaps one of these very faces, flares up in pain and then dies down, and it's time for dinner and it's time again for sleep, and tomorrow it will be back where it always has been, finally them and us again, them and me, them and me all over again, aware that out there, beyond us, beyond even these dim lights are the others, the ones who have never had a spotlight, whose names even I don't know, couldn't care less about, the expendable others beyond the lights, their voices never recorded or transcribed, their bodies beyond invisibility, them and us, them and me again, sharing, sharing, in the deepest recesses of the night, sharing this one scrap of knowledge. Life only belongs to you once. I am waiting here with this knowledge. I also know how to wait. My turn always comes. I also know what it is to wait in the dark.

A LIGHT RISES ON THE FIRST VOICE AND THEN ON THE OTHER VOICES AS THEY SPEAK. A LIGHT REMAINS DIMLY ON THE MAN.

FIRST VOICE

I don't want to pretend I was a hero
In the beginning I had neither pen nor paper to work with

EIGHTH VOICE

But you don't live your life in fear
and give people power over you
who can create fear
It would be better to die early
Anything else would have tasted like ashes
That's what you know

SEVENTH VOICE

Few and far between
Few and far between
Something is there
A light is there
I did what I had to do
Knowing this knowing this
The poor of the world are crying out

SIXTH VOICE

That's what you know
Anything else would have tasted like ashes
That's what you know
The poor of the world are crying out
The poor of the world are crying out
For schools and doctors, not generals and guns
You just have to believe in what you're doing, that's all

FIFTH VOICE

I was never alone
That's what you know
Only another person can give me hope
because
only another person can take hope
away from me
We did what we had to do, that's all
Anything else would have tasted like ashes

FOURTH VOICE

Did it take courage?
It took stubbornness Stubbornness
Like a metal chord inside
The feeling of inner strength like a metal chord inside
So our past does not become your children's future
Anything else would have tasted like ashes
Knowing this knowing this
We owe something to the people left behind

THIRD VOICE

And God dusts us off and God says, "Try again."
God says, "Try again."
God says,
Life will only belong to you once
only this once
And so we continue
knowing this knowing this
if we bring people to their own best hearts
they will respond
that's what you know
we were never alone

SECOND VOICE

And so we continue
knowing this knowing this
that this moment might well be
our last
waiting, waiting,
waiting in the dark for the truth
We were never really alone

FIRST VOICE

I don't want to pretend I was a hero
I did what I had to do, that's all
It's really so simple
Anything else, anything else would have tasted like ashes
That is what you know
The work has just begun

SECOND VOICE

That is what we know
We did what we had to do
The work has just begun.

LIGHTS RISE FURTHER ON ALL EIGHT OF THEM FOR THE LAST TIME AS THEY DIM ON THE MAN.

SOME STAGING SUGGESTIONS FROM THE

- 1 The play has been written for nine voices and that is the ideal number for its performance. It can, however, be staged with less or more actors. If less, it probably would make sense to have at least five (two male defenders, two female defenders, one male as the Man), though it is not absolutely necessary, albeit recommended, to have each voice correspond to the gender of the original human rights defender. In a crunch, three actors could do it, but a certain rhythm would be lost. On the other hand, the play might gain immensely from having dozens of voices and participants, as long as those who have the longer speeches also get to speak some of the shorter, more lyrical lines, so that the flow and cadence of the play is not disturbed. In all case, nevertheless, only ONE actor should play the Man. (An actress can also do so, though these repressive roles have, historically, been filled out almost exclusively by men).
- 2 The play calls for a screen where the names of the defenders are shown. This can be substituted by less high-tech means: a black board upon which the names are written, large boards that are brought onto the stage, etc.: anything that allows the name to be seen and identified and also enhances the power of the Man and, later on, the power of the defenders to name themselves.
- 3 The stories told by the protagonists are inherently emotional and do not need to be delivered in overly dramatic (or melodramatic) ways. Let those voices speak for themselves, flow through the bodies of the actors and actresses in a natural manner. In other words, be wary of “acting out” the story. Each actor and actress is not pretending to be that person, but is the channel through which that person is reaching the audience. That is why it may not be a good idea

to try and create accents (Asian, African, Latino, etc.) for the voices.

- 4 The character of the Man needs some explanation. He is somewhat of a mythical incarnation, an Evangelist of multiple evils, who reminds us by his words and presence what the defenders are up against. The start of the play establishes him as dangerous, in the sense of physical damage he can inflict, a lurking presence in the State and society that is ready to spring into action, but as the voices themselves reveal that they cannot be stopped by this sort of intimidation (jail, torture, exile), the Man becomes the embodiment of something more perverse and pervasive and closer to home, to those who stage this and those who watch it: the forces of indifference and apathy who are the worst enemies of the struggle for a better world. And he couches his attack upon them less with threats than with mockery and derision, the fact that if the world does not care, why should they be sacrificing their lives? In that sense, he becomes, in a strange way, a projection of the inner fears of the human rights activists themselves, the doubts they may allow to creep into their souls as they take their stand. They have the courage to face death. The question is, do they have the stamina (and the solidarity among them) to face unconcern, the lip service to human rights which is so prevalent among the powerful (people and nations) and which does not deliver when it comes down to the wire, when we need acts rather than words. Do they have the courage to face the death in the human soul that numbs us to the suffering of others? The play does not give an easy answer to that dilemma, but stages the conflict itself, returning the question to the audience, precisely through the Man who should therefore present himself in a certain matter-of-fact preciseness, saturating his words with a nightmare quality that presumably fits in well with the general lyrical thrust of the piece, its rhythm, etc. The Man can also be staged in an active way (directing cameras if there are cameras), moving people, letting him roam over the stage space while the others remain fixed, that is until

OTHER BOOKS BY ARIEL DORFMAN

DEATH AND THE MAIDEN

This play, subsequently made into a film, takes place in an unnamed Latin American country just recovering from a dictatorship. Paulina Salas, a torture victim, believes she recognizes her torturer in Doctor Miranda, a man brought home by her husband, human rights lawyer, Gerardo Escobar. She puts him on trial and tries to make him confess. The Doctor protests his innocence. The play questions the problems of justice, memory, morality, and how victims can avoid repeating the conduct of those who damaged them irreparably. Using the suspense technique of a thriller, it both exposes the consequences of dictatorship upon the soul of a country and its inhabitants and the ways

HEADING SOUTH, LOOKING NORTH: A BILINGUAL JOURNEY.

In this memoir, the author tells the story of how he survived the 1973 coup against Salvador Allende, facing not only death at every turn, but the dilemmas of how and when to stand up to tyranny, and the consequences of repression on the survivors. In a parallel sequence, his many exiles and changes of language and countries are chronicled, so the book is also an exploration of how an American-bred child grows up in a world where poverty and injustice cry out for redress.

SELECTED RESOURCES

ANTI-SLAVERY INTERNATIONAL

Anti-Slavery International focuses on the rights of people who are particularly vulnerable to exploitation of their labor, notably women, children, migrant workers and indigenous peoples. The abuses which Anti-Slavery opposes include: slavery and the buying and selling of people as objects; trafficking of women and the predicament of migrant workers who are trapped into servitude; debt bondage and other traditions which force people into low status work; forced labor; forced prostitution; abusive forms of child labor; and early or forced marriage and other forms of servile marriage.

[Thomas Clarkson House](#)

[The Stableyard](#)

[Broomgrove Rd.](#)

[London SW9 9TL UK](#)

www.antislavery.org

THE CARTER CENTER

The Carter Center, in partnership with Emory University, is guided by a fundamental commitment to human rights and the alleviation of human suffering; it seeks to prevent and resolve conflicts, enhance freedom and democracy, and improve health. Human rights staff collaborate with Carter Center programs to find ways to incorporate human rights goals into economic development strategies, health care and nutrition policies, and other social sector activities that put ideas into practice. The Center undertakes specific projects to promote human rights including: intervening on behalf of victims of human rights abuse, working with new democracies to establish institutions to protect human rights, and fostering collaboration among nongovernmental organizations, and intergovernmental agencies.

[Carter Center](#)

[453 Freedom Parkway](#)

[Atlanta, GA 30307](#)

[Tel. \(404\) 331-3900](#)

www.cartercenter.org

DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS/MÉDECINS SANS FRONTIÈRES

Doctors Without Borders, also known as Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), winner of the 1999 Nobel Peace Prize Winner, is the world's largest independent international medical relief agency aiding victims of armed conflict, epidemics, and natural and man-made disasters, and others who lack health care due to geographic remoteness or ethnic marginalization. Established in 1971 by a group of physicians determined to offer emergency assistance wherever wars and man-made disasters occur. When medical assistance is not enough to save lives, Doctors Without Borders will speak out against human rights abuses and violations of humanitarian law that its teams witness in the course of providing medical relief.

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The Human Rights Watch is an international organization that keeps track of human rights activity around the globe.

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