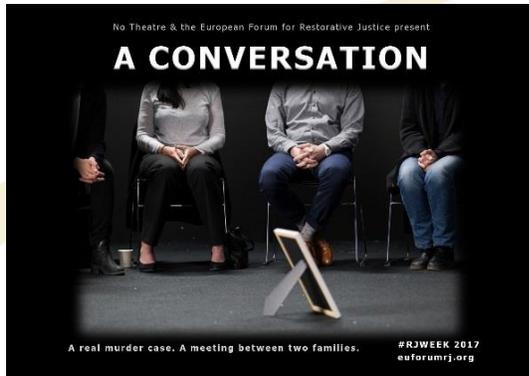


Guidelines for the Film Screening **A CONVERSATION**



On the occasion of the international #RJWeek 2017 (19-25 November), the film **A CONVERSATION**, based on a Restorative Justice (RJ) conference in a case of serious crime, will be screened all over the world. The calendar on the EFRJ website is keeping track of these screenings. Below, we share some information that could be useful to introduce the film and lead a discussion after the screening.

BEFORE THE SCREENING

- The audience must be informed that the film includes some strong scenes of serious crime (rape and murder) and everyone is allowed to leave the room if needed.
- The audience must be informed that the film does not picture a process fully in line with all methodological requirements of a RJ process. For this reason, time for a discussion must be foreseen at the end of the screening. To know more about RJ, they can also visit www.euforumrj.org
- The film presents other issues good for discussion which go beyond RJ (e.g. sociological explanation for crime and deviance; dealing with emotions in the aftermath of a crime; violence in prison for certain type of offenders; who are considered as victims of crime)
- This is a film of a play, and not a movie in its own right. In other words the script and the performance is directed to a live audience, hence might be perceived differently on video. Also, all the actors (all amateurs) have performed the play live at several occasions, but most of them have never performed in a film. The theatre play was filmed in one day (12hrs) on 22 April 2017 in Oslo.

THE PLOT

A CONVERSATION is a film based on a theatre performance. The drama it presents is based on a real case where two families meet in the presence of a facilitator, the parents of a young woman who was raped and murdered and the family of the offender. The film aims to raise awareness on the potential power of dialogue between people affected by serious crime.

THE VIMEO CHANNEL

A CONVERSATION is available on the EFRJ Vimeo channel. The trailer is open for all public, while the full film is protected by a password. This is part of the contractual agreement with No Theatre, since the film is its property and it cannot be used for commercial purposes. The Vimeo link and password are provided directly to the organisers of the screening, who are members of the EFRJ (or made a donation to No Theatre). Also, in this way the EFRJ has an overview of the screenings organised, since the film is suggested for an audience with is above 18 years old and the RJ process portrayed in the film is not always in line with all methodological requirements of a RJ process (and thus it must be introduced and followed by a discussion).

THE THEATRE PLAY

A CONVERSATION is a play written by the Australian playwright David Williamson. It was developed in close collaboration with John McDonald, a leading expert in the field of community conferencing (a method for reconciliation in criminal justice inspired by the New Zealand Maori-model), which is also one of the subjects in the play (i.e. the mediator in the original Australian play). It is not an easy play to watch, or to perform. It aims at showing how conflict can be reduced through the encounter between perpetrators and victims.

THE GROUP: NO THEATRE

No Theatre is a non-profit community theatre group based in Oslo with non-professional actors from all over the world, i.e. Norway, Spain, Germany, UK, Belgium and with a director from the UK. They all have other jobs, but they are very committed in playing A CONVERSATION since 8 years: they believe, really and passionately, about the subject of their play and they have been inspired to see that it had such a powerful effect on the audience so far. The feedback has been astonishing, as people felt that they got a unique insight into a process which is hard to understand from the outside. They sincerely hope that their play can help influence the approach of the criminal justice system and ultimately that the power of dialogue is recognised as a key factor in facilitating *reconciliation* after a crime has been committed. No Theatre will probably no longer exist after the making of this film.

More info on some key-people from No Theatre:



The theatre director **Peter Harris** (UK) worked at Wolf and Water Arts Company. He had more than 20 years of experience with drama, arts and film applied at social work. Peter passed away on 6 August 2017.

Photo: Øystein Johansen



The film director and editor **Oddbjørn Austevik** (Norway) is the technician responsible for the sound and the videos in the play. He is a musician in the bands Lady Moscow and Gardarene wine.

Photo: Ketil Hardy



The group coordinator **Siw Risøy** (Norway) has an MA in Arts and Design. She has her own company and works as a counselor at a high school in Oslo.

Photo: Private

THE DISCUSSION

A CONVERSATION is born as an art piece for raising awareness on the transformative power of dialogue for people affected by crime and trauma. It is not meant to provide practical tools to organise and lead a RJ process and it does not show the crucial moments spent to prepare the parties and organise the meeting. Still, many aspect of the film are useful for reflections and discussions, which go beyond the RJ domain and could be led by interdisciplinary groups including RJ practitioners, victim support workers, prison officers and criminologists.

The main topics of the discussion might also depend on the audience. Are they familiar with the concept of restorative justice? If not, a short introduction to that might be really useful.

There is no single definition of restorative justice. Restorative justice is seen as a broad approach oriented towards repairing, as far as possible, the harm caused by crime or other transgressions. A core element of restorative justice is the active and voluntary participation of the victim, the offender and possibly other parties (the community) in a direct or indirect dialogue. The main questions during this dialogue are usually around what happened (how people experienced it themselves and not the 'facts'), who has been harmed, who is responsible for that harm and what can be done to make things right. Respect, voluntariness, confidentiality are key principles of restorative practices. The conversation in this film is an artistic interpretation on how such a meeting can go and the setting (offender's family meeting the victim's family) is not very usual.

In general, the discussion could start by focusing on some of these questions:

- What was your experience of watching the film? What kind of feelings and thoughts does the play evoke/provoke?

WHAT HAPPENED FIRST?

- Why would the parties decide to participate in such meeting? What could be their needs not met by the criminal justice system?
- What are the fears of all parties before the meeting (e.g. the therapist's accused of unprofessional work, the family of the offender wanting to protect him, the family of the victim re-living the crime scene)?
- What are the steps taken by a facilitator to invite the parties to meet and how should they be prepared to arrive ready for the meeting?

WHAT HAPPENED DURING THE MEETING?

- What are the emotions expressed during the meeting and how did participants deal with them?
- What are the difficulties and challenges faced by the facilitator organising and leading such meeting (e.g. dealing with signs of resistance)?
- How was this meeting helpful for the parties, and how was it challenging and maybe even harmful?

IMAGINE...

- If you were the victims' parents/ the family of the offender, how would you have reacted in this meeting?
- What happens once the parties leave the room?
- What could the society benefit from such practices? Where else they could see use of it?
- How could the film itself be useful for awareness raising, discussion and learning in various fields?
- In what way are the methods and ideas that A CONVERSATION disseminate/convey be relevant or useful for the type of work you do on a daily basis?

Other questions are useful to discuss with professional audience (knowing more the practice and principles of RJ):

- How do they see the role and work of the facilitator in this case? What are the problems a good preparation could have prevented? (e.g. hidden agendas)
- Were all participants ready to meet? What could be their motivation?
- How the principle of voluntariness is dealt with in this case?



- What can be the effect or added value of professionals attending such a meeting? (e.g. the role of the therapist in the meeting)
- What are the considerations of applying RJ in serious crime cases?

THE FILM

Plot keywords: theatre; restorative justice; crime; rape; homicide; community conferencing; true story; victim; perpetrator; family; encounter; dialogue; reconciliation.

Genre: Drama

Date of release: November 2017 (international RJ WEEK)

Length: 1h 22min

Audio: English (please note that the actors are from different countries and the English is spoken with different accents)

Subtitles: Albanian • Croatian • Dutch • English • French • German • Greek • Hebrew • Hungarian • Italian • Nepali • Polish • Portuguese • Russian • Spanish

Director: Peter Harris (UK) & Oddbjørn Austevik (NO). **Writer:** David Williamson (Australia). **Theatre coordinator:** Siw Risøy (NO).

Cast: Jonas Laberg (NO, facilitator), Bob De Wilde (BE, victim's father), Eva Walicki (NO, victim's mother), Siw Risøy (NO, therapist), Wisha Smiler (BE, offender's mother), Cecile Holtan (NO, offender's sister), Cristo Borrachero (SP, offender's brother), Alex Klein (GE, offender's uncle).

THE THEMATIC MENU

Chapters	Titles	Time codes
1.	Welcome and introductions	00:02:56,800 -->00:06:37,400
2.	The process	00:06:43,000 -->00:09:19,239
3.	The offender's statement	00:09:42,239 -->00:16:04,759
4.	A secret agenda	00:16:06,759 -->00:18:01,280
5.	The impact of crime	00:18:01,280 -->00:24:49,560
6.	The sociological context	00:25:01,079 -->00:27:30,959
7.	Medical reports	00:27:32,280 -->00:31:08,439
8.	The therapist	00:31:20,319 -->00:40:43,400
9.	Disputes and pains	00:40:52,479 -->00:59:06,600
10.	Memories	00:59:08,200 -->01:06:29,319
11.	Confessions	01:06:32,560 -->01:14:42,360
12.	End	01:14:52,200 -->01:18:39,239