

Brussels, 21 November 2017

Dear audience of the film of the theatre play "A Conversation"!

After participating in several screenings of the film with different people in the audience, most of them professionals in the area of mediation and restorative justice, but as well students in criminology, psychology and sociology, I would like to share some information with you before you see the film.

The film of the theatre play is a "piece of art" and has no intention to show you "how to do" the restorative justice process in practice. Even though the author David Williamson based this theatre play on elements from several real cases of mediation from the facilitator John McDonald in Australia, the goal for No Theatre was one single performance during an amateur theatre festival in Oslo, five years ago. We never imagined that one day it would be screened worldwide, with about 3000 people watching us perform in a week. The film is special also because it represents a theatre play. When the play is performed live on stage, there is a sort of interaction with the audience, as the actors are aware of the reactions in the public, and these influence the actors during the play itself.

For one year we prepared for the first performance of the play. Our director, Peter Harris, took us through exercises and rehearsals where we had to get in touch with feelings like guilt, anger, sadness and despair. These preparations contributed to build our characters in the play, and strongly influenced on the way they appear in this film of the theatre play. All these emotions, and even more, you will see expressed in this theatre play which is **an intense "roller coaster" of feelings**. Of course the director Peter Harris used the artistic freedom to emphasize this even more than you may experience in your work in restorative justice. This theatre play is meant to provoke, to make you face unpleasant feelings watching these people in their despair and anger at a really difficult time in their life.

The professionals seeing the film of the beginning of the Restorative Justice Week 2017 confirmed that they encounter all these kind of emotional expressions in their work of mediation, but of course **not all of them at the same time**, in the same meeting. This theatre play can be more dramatic and intense, and the professional techniques used **might not be "by the book"** for how to do the process of restorative justice. Through the years and a number of performances, it has been highly appreciated as **a powerful "introduction"** for panel debates and discussions, on the subject of mediation and restorative justice, as well as in other subjects related to the criminal justice field.

On behalf of No Theatre, I will tell you we are happy and proud to have been part of this large project, which is also at the moment a symbol and a tribute to our director Peter Harris, who dedicated his artistic life, amongst other things, to working with vulnerable groups of people. I wish I could be present in each of your screenings and learn more of the great job you do to bring justice closer to people.



Siw Risøy - Actor and the coordinator of No Theatre, Norway