

synergy

HE SAID SHE SAID

EDUCATION
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CONTENTS

Summary & Synopsis	3
Staging the play	5
Interviews with the Creative Team	
Contextualising the play	9
Youth violence and social media	
Workshop suggestions	7
Drama workshop & PSHE activity	
Sign posting	1

Written by Danielle Baker-Charles





SUMMARY

Written by
Directed by

Magero
Esther Baker

Encouraged by Denise, Kayla posts a snap with Yusuf to make Dre want her, but when it goes viral social rumour turns into dangerous reality.

He Said She Said fuses dialogue, verse and drill, exploring how social media platforms can be used and misused to share information and escalate conflict.

He Said She Said was produced by Synergy Theatre Project in 2022 as part of their Young People's Programme.

SYNOPSIS

This play focuses on 4 teenagers: Kayla, Andre, Denise and Yusuf. Kayla, Denise and Yusuf attended primary school together. Denise and Yusuf go to the same secondary school. Kayla is dating Andre, a member of the local KBK gang. At the top of the play Andre asks Kayla to look after a knife, she agrees to this because she loves him, believes he loves her too and that it will prove her commitment to him. Yusuf enjoys listening to drill music and anime. Denise fancies Yusuf but he doesn't realise as he's had a huge crush on Kayla since primary school. Denise tells Yusuf that he doesn't stand a chance with Kayla as she likes 'bad boys'.

Denise and Kayla are best friends, although Denise feels she lives in Kayla's shadow and Kayla puts Denise down. Denise is wary of Kayla's relationship with Andre (Dreydot) and how he treats her- she's also horrified that Kayla is holding a knife for him. When she challenges Kayla on this, Kayla accuses her of not knowing what it's like to have a boyfriend. When Andre is rude to Kayla, Denise suggests she use Yusuf to make Andre jealous, by posting a snap with Yusuf. Denise hopes this will help Yusuf see what Kayla is 'really like'.

Yusuf, Kayla and Denise meet at the shopping centre. Yusuf goes out of his way to impress Kayla. Denise tries to engage Yusuf in conversation but he only has eyes for Kayla. When Denise goes to buy herself a drink, Kayla seizes her moment to take a selfie with Yusuf but before she can, a member of the OZ gang



(KBK's opposition) appears and videos her and Yusuf together. The OZ gang member implies that Yusuf is a member of their gang (even though he isn't) and that Dreydot's girl is cheating on him with an OZ guy. Kayla expects Yusuf to tell the truth and deny this but, carried away with looking like a 'bad man', Yusuf goes along with it. Kayla is furious and storms off. The OZ gang upload the video to social media with the message 'Girlfriend of KBK member Dreydot caught playing on both sides with OZ member.' The video spreads online and gets more and more twisted, soon implying that Kayla is cheating on Andre with Yusuf and multiple other members of OZ. Kayla is horrified and tries to contact Andre to explain but he doesn't respond to her calls, instead posting cryptic messages about loyalty and revenge to his snapchat. Eventually he sends her a message summoning her to his house, asking her to bring the knife along.

Kayla goes to Andre's house and returns his knife. She attempts to explain, insisting that Yusuf is not a threat to Andre, that he's not a member of a rival gang and just a 'nerd from her primary school'. Andre doesn't believe her and demands Kayla hand over her phone so he can check what snaps Yusuf has been sending. Kayla doesn't have Yusuf's snap details but contacts Denise to get them. Denise agrees to hand over Yusuf's snap details to Kayla because she thinks Kayla is trying to clear the air after the previous day's events but before she does, she calls Yusuf to check he's happy for her to pass the details on. Yusuf mistakenly believes that Kayla wants his details because she is impressed by his new 'bad man' reputation. To impress her, he asks Denise to delay passing on his details, so he has time to record a video of himself rapping along to an OZ song whilst holding a knife giving the impression, he is a direct rival to Andre. Kayla receives the snap

details and Andre immediately checks what Yusuf has posted, Kayla insists it will likely be something about anime but is horrified to see what Yusuf has actually posted. Andre is enraged, believing Yusuf to be an opposing gang member goading him. He tells Kayla to message Yusuf and to arrange to meet him in the park- convincing her that she is meeting him to prove that there is nothing going on between them and to allow Andre to see for himself that Yusuf is no threat. Yusuf immediately agrees to meet Kayla in the park and texts Denise to thank her for setting them up and letting Denise know he is off to meet Kayla. Denise is confused by Kayla's change of heart and senses something is wrong.

At the park Yusuf meets Kayla, tries to act cool and suggests that they become a thing. Kayla is shocked and reminds him that she has a boyfriend- Yusuf still doesn't understand and leans in for a kiss after shouting anti KBK phrases. Andre appears and attacks Yusuf, brandishing the zombie knife. Kayla is horrified as the fight unfolds, reminding Andre of who he would be leaving behind should anything happen to him. This hits home for Andre who pauses his attack, allowing Yusuf a chance to fight back. In the heat of the moment Yusuf grabs for the knife and fatally stabs Andre, something he regrets immediately. Denise arrives on the scene, they call an ambulance, but it is too late.

In the final three scenes of the play, we see all the characters post Andre's death.

Andre, addressing the audience from beyond the grave, reflects on his past and the family history that may have made him susceptible

to gang recruitment and becoming involved in violence and crime. We learn more about his character and begin to understand his behaviour.

Next Denise visits Yusuf in prison, where he reflects on how he is haunted by what he has done, how difficult he is finding prison and the impact of his actions on his family. Denise updates him on what has been happening on the outside since Andre's death: that the people who know Yusuf know he isn't the type to have been involved with a gang and deliberately commit murder. She reveals things are still blowing up online, however, and the video he made with the OZ gang song and the knife has been used on the news thus many people who don't know him believe him to be involved with gangs and guilty of murder. Denise also tells Yusuf that she hates Kayla now and that most people believe Kayla was a set up chick, involved in luring the boys to the park so that there could be an attack. Finally, Denise confesses to Yusuf that she has feelings for him and regrets 'so much'. In the end scene Kayla addresses the audience. We learn that she and her family had to move house to avoid the abuse she has received since Andre's death and that she wasn't able to attend Andre's funeral because his gang believes she deliberately set him up to be attacked. She was nearly sent to prison on a joint enterprise charge and receives online abuse daily. She reflects on her mistakes, how she wished she had never held the knife for Andre and encouraged him not to carry it. The play ends with Kayla vowing to work on herself and continue to help her mother with campaigns around social media and accountability.



STAGING THE PLAY

INTERVIEWS WITH THE CREATIVE TEAM

MAGERO WRITER

Magero is an award nominated spoken word artist, playwright, workshop facilitator and co-founder of **The Brotherhood Creative Collective**.

With the aim of provoking thought and emotion, Magero is a vivid storyteller who incorporates a fusion of poetry, music and acting within his artistry. Known for his intricate writing style and ability to misdirect audiences through manipulating their perception within his narratives, his work often includes unexpected plot twists. Much of Magero's work is based on his lived experiences and beliefs.

He is featured in the therapeutic theatre play **So U Think Im Crazy?** And has performed at events such as The BBC Children's Global Summit, Breakin' Convention Festival, Crxss Platfxrm Festival and The BBC Music Radio Awards. His debut release **Climate Change Need Not Become The Legacy We Leave** is available to watch via BBC Ideas and His writing and performance credits include **VICE** by Ukweli Roach and **TRAPLORD** by Ivan Blackstock. **He Said She Said** is Magero's play writing debut.

What made you want to write a play like **He Said She Said**?

My initial thoughts when writing the play were that I wanted to depict how easily the misuse of social media can escalate into real life consequences. I felt it was important to reflect that, even as teenagers, you have choices and will be held accountable for the decisions you choose to make. Growing up in this social media age provides new dangers as well as

new responsibilities that we all need to be aware of and I feel this play touches on some of those dangers.

Why do you think a play that examines the impact of social media is important right now?

Social media is one of, if not the highest consumed form of media in the world especially amongst young people. As there are so many social media platforms, I know it can

be difficult for parents to monitor how their children are interacting online and what they are consuming and being influenced by. So I felt it necessary to show how an irresponsible use of social media platforms could provoke and escalate situations into physical conflict. Although social media often doesn't portray real life, it can affect real life. I also feel that the social media platforms themselves need to do more to protect their users from online abuse and censor videos that provoke violence. A play that examines the impact social media can have is important because Social media is having a huge impact on society as a whole.

What kind of research did you do to make sure the play felt true to life?

The first form of research I did was internal. I looked back at my experiences growing up with early social media and how much expectations affected the way I portrayed myself. Today the pressure is 100x worse and from discussions I've had with students during my workshops with Synergy, many of them feel the pressure to live up to social media standards first hand. Much of the character profiles are based on real conversations I've had with students and the perspectives they provided. Before writing the play, I researched actual cases of violence that began on social media or ultimately ended up on social media in taunt videos. I investigated different causes of conflict and how social media was a tool used to escalate the situations.

What were the challenges for you when writing this play?

One of the things I found most challenging writing the play was creating authentic dialogue between the girls in the story, Kayla

and Denise. I wanted to reflect as realistically as possible the various dynamics within their relationship through the remarks and comments they directed at each other and having a younger sister of a similar age to the characters definitely helped with that. I found these same challenges when writing the girls spoken word scenes.

Why did you want to fuse Spoken Word and dialogue together in the play?

Spoken word is an artform I'm extremely passionate about. In my years of performing I've learned first-hand how powerful a tool it can be to keep young people engaged but also the creative element helps to make difficult themes more digestible. I feel that the characters use of spoken word throughout the play emphasise how important expression is in our lives and poetry is a great avenue for that. I felt that the use of dialogue throughout the play would add an authentic feeling and the spoken word would allow access into the psyche of each character.

What do you think made Andre so vulnerable to becoming part of a gang?

Andre's story is a sad but surprisingly common one. Gang members often target young boys with an unstable family environment. With Andre having both experienced and witnessed abuse from a young age, he was suffering from trauma, and without the necessary healing this often leads to behavioural issues. Coupled with his abandonment issues and lack of a positive male figure, Andre was not only vulnerable to being targeted by gang members but was also searching for a community to fill the void left by his dysfunctional family which his gang managed to do.



Do you think Kayla deserves the treatment she is experiencing at the end of the play?

It's difficult to ever say anyone deserves abuse. However I do believe, just as is true for every character, she played a major part in the tragic events that conclude the play. Given that her actions played a part in an eventual death, I think many people within the story would feel her treatment is deserved. However as the audience, we know that Kayla's intentions were not to harm but rather to be loved, which I'm sure many can relate to. So in short, I don't think Kayla deserves her treatment but I can understand why she received it.

Why did you decide that Yusuf should go to prison?

As much as I'm sure we all sympathise with Yusuf's character, I think it's important to reflect how events may have unravelled in real life. Though done without malicious intent,

Yusuf's decision to post a video brandishing a knife and reciting lyrics that insinuate violence against his eventual victim would have been used against him as evidence in the court of law. The message in this is that you are responsible for the content you upload onto your social media platforms and you will be held accountable should those actions lead to a crime being committed. There are many people currently in prison for making bad decisions and I felt it important to show that your character only counts for so much in court when there is evidence that incriminates you.

Do you think Denise should be feeling guilty?

I think Denise does feel guilty for the way things played out and for the fact it was her initial idea to involve Yusuf with Kayla for her own personal gain. Much of the guilt Denise feels stems from regret for not being honest

with Yusuf about her feelings towards him. Had Denise been honest with Yusuf, chances are the events that followed would have ended differently. If I were in Denise's position I would definitely feel guilty but I think her intentions were to make both Yusuf and Kayla happy in her own way.

If you could give a piece of advice to each character, what would it be?

I think there's a common answer for all of the characters, which is to be true to yourself and don't pretend to be something you're not for the sake of others. To be more specific I would tell Denise to express how she feels

towards Kayla about the dynamics of their friendship and how Kayla's actions make her feel. And to be honest with Yusuf about how she feels rather than covering her emotions with humour. I would tell Kayla that love would have her best interests at heart and if someone is willing to put her in danger to protect themselves, they cannot truly love her. Also that it's always okay to say no and her value isn't determined by Andre, popularity or social media but by her own standards. I would tell Andre that it's okay not to be okay sometimes, and rather than covering his pain with anger he should seek help and speak. They say a problem shared is a problem halved and

Andre only opened up about his trauma's when it was too late. I would also tell him that you are more likely to be stabbed if you walk with a knife, something he would learn in hindsight. Lastly, I would tell Yusuf that if he has to change himself for someone to like him, that person isn't for him. I'm sure we all want to shake him and just say "Kayla doesn't like you", but more importantly I would tell Yusuf to continue being the nerdy anime loving goofy kid that he is because eventually he would find his way and find people who like him as he is!

What do you hope that teacher's will take from the play and talk about/workshop with their students?

I think it's important for teachers to recognise that students of today are growing up in a social media age and therefore they have different social pressures and expectations amongst their peers than what we had in school. Therefore if and when an issue on social media is reported, it should be recorded and monitored where possible. I also think it would be beneficial for teachers to talk to students about the importance of how they present themselves on social media and how damaging their interactions can be if partaking in online bullying or sharing inappropriate posts. He Said She Said supports the notion that you are more likely to be stabbed if you carry a knife.

What do you hope that young people come away from this play thinking?

I hope that young people come away from the play with an understanding that online activities can have real life consequences. It is a play of choices and decisions and every character at some point makes a poor decision

which leads to Andre's eventual death. I hope that young people realise that the comments they post and the videos they give attention can provoke violence that could easily be avoided. One of the main messages I want young people to take from the play is that it's okay to be yourself, even if that person may not be as popular or desirable as the next. It's important to be true to yourself rather than acting different to impress your peers. A gang related lifestyle isn't one to aspire to have and young people shouldn't give in to any pressures connected with such activity.

What advice would you give to an aspiring young writer/spoken word artist?

I would say one of the most important things for a young writer is to keep writing daily whether it's a couple lines or pages it's important to keep exercising your pen and finding your voice on the page first. Everything starts from the page for me, so I think it's important to keep that relationship strong. Also I would say keep experiencing. The more you experience and connect with different people the more perspectives and stories you have to tell. In terms of spoken word, I would encourage any up-and-coming artist to learn their words and recite them meticulously. Once you have your words memorised, find the intention behind each line and practice performing with that intention. You don't have to memorise your words you can read them but that's just my preference, and when you feel ready, hit the stage and share your truth. Another good piece of advice I would say is to read more. The more words you encounter the more words you will have to choose from when writing.



ESTHER BAKER

DIRECTOR

Esther co-founded Synergy in 2000 having received a Butler Trust Development Award. She is the company's Artistic Director and directs Synergy's productions and films and has also worked for at the National Theatre Studio, Young Vic, Royal Court Theatre and in the West End.

Why did Synergy want to do this play and why now?

Synergy Theatre Project commissions plays about young people and crime which we tour to schools, pupil referral units and young offenders' prisons and in researching what to explore we talked to a lot of young people, staff in organisations working with young people and the police. The theme of social media and the way it can be abused and escalate situations to become potentially dangerous was raised by numerous people. Also the pandemic has heightened the influence of social media and increased crimes linked to it.

What do you think are the key themes in the script?

I think it is about how social media can heighten insecurity, portray untrue versions of people and events, be used to threaten,

increase tensions and how online violence can spill offline. It is about flawed people who are all acting out of insecurities which have an impact on their actions and how they treat others in the play. It is also about communication and miscommunication.

What do you think are the key moments in the play?

There are some bad decisions in the play:

- Kayla deciding to take the knife
- Denise deciding to persuade Kayla to take a selfie with Yusuf
- Yusuf putting out the snap video to the OZ drill song, rapping about Andre
- Andre going to the park with a knife to confront Yusuf

The monologues at the end are the fallout and show the characters at their most truthful

What were the challenges of staging He Said She Said?

One of the main challenges of staging the play was how to represent the social media on stage as there are so many texts, voice notes, selfies etc. Originally, I planned to use film projection for some of these but once the designer came up with idea for the set it seemed better to try and find a way to stage them. This decision was really liberating as it meant that we could keep the action moving and was a more theatrical way of communicating them.

All of my shows use minimal props, and I wanted the actors on stage during the first part of the show with characters on screens showing a world that is constantly perceived and communicated through phone screens.

After the stabbing the stage empties out, the phones quieten as the characters reflect on who they are and what they have lost.

The use of spoken word in the play helps to show the audience the characters internal worlds. In order to heighten these I brought them out of the scene, accompanied by sound to show a shift whilst the other characters freeze until the monologues are over. We worked with a voice coach to ensure that the amazing words were clearly being communicated.

How did you work with a designer on this production?

I have worked with the designer for many years and we always like a simple beautiful aesthetic that communicates the central ideas of the play. The set is influenced by a phone screen, and we decided on black and white as it is the more sinister side of social media that is portrayed in the play. The light boxes complimented the set with their simplicity and shape.

If you could give a piece of advice to each character, what would it be?

I think it would be to be true to yourself and try not to worry too much about what other people are saying and thinking.

What do you hope that young people come away from this play thinking?

I hope that it helps them to think about what they post on-line, to not let it have too much power over them. I also hope it makes them think about other peoples' points of view as all the characters in the play are victims and wrongdoers.

Synergy Theatre Project always cast ex-prisoners in their productions, can you explain a little bit about this process and how you think it has enhanced the play?

Synergy does a lot of work with prisoners and ex-prisoners and we offer training and employment to them on a number of projects. They are fantastic at engaging young people as they are honest and real and made mistakes when they were younger which they don't want others to make. As actors they bring their real-life experience to their performances which can be very powerful. On this show none of the cast have been in prison but the stage managers have. The actors however have experience of the care system, have had a parent in prison and a range of other difficult life experiences that they bring to the parts. All of our shows have a fusion of people with experience of the criminal justice system and professionals and everyone learns from each other.

What qualities do you think are important in a director?

You have to be able to bring out the best in people. You need to have vision as you look after the bigger picture and work with everyone (cast, crew, set, sound and lighting designers) to let them do what they are good at.

I think you need to be a leader who facilitates a warm and open but rigorous rehearsal room. And you definitely need a sense of humour!

What advice would you give to aspiring young directors?

Go on a course and then try to assist someone whose work you really like.



CONTEXTUALISING THE PLAY YOUTH VIOLENCE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

He Said She Said was commissioned by Synergy Theatre Project to explore issues related to social media and its link to youth violence and crime. This section of the education pack aims to contextualise the issue, as it stands in March 2022. There are many positive aspects of social media for young people, however in this section of the education pack we'll be looking at its more negative influence.

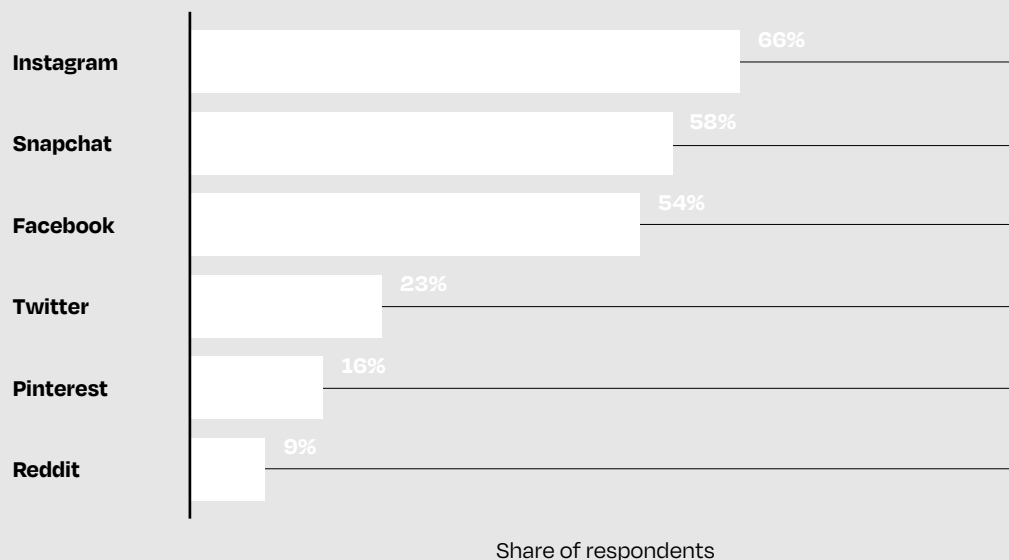
There is no denying that social media plays a large role in all our lives and for young people its influence is even more pronounced. In data collected before the pandemic, almost 9 in 10 children aged 10 to 15 years said they went online every day (ONS, 2020). The older the child, the more time they spend online. 7-8 year olds spent an average of nearly three hours a day online in September 2020 and 15-16 year olds nearly five hours. Despite most platforms setting their minimum user age at 13, by the age of 11 the majority (59%) of UK children use social media. By the age of 15, 95% of children use it. Ofcom research in 2021 found that 70% of those who use social media had seen or experienced something potentially harmful in the past three months.

There has been much speculation that social media is a key factor related to the rise in youth violence- issues can be exacerbated online and something which may previously have been a passing comment becomes a written, permanent remark which then spill over into real life. Youth worker Ciaran Thapar said to vice.com 'It happens in normal social media – people having arguments in real life over something on Twitter, for example. So, when you put that in a community with a lot of knives and trauma flying around, of course it becomes more extreme'. Gangs are increasingly using social media sites to taunt rivals and post inflammatory content, this can include comments, images, and videos that lead to physical fights, stabbings and deaths.



Olly Stephens, who was murdered in 2021 when a snapchat disagreement spilled into real life

Social media sites or apps used by children in the United Kingdom (UK) in 2020 (Released April 2021 by Statistica)



In a Guardian article in 2018 Dr Simon Harding, a senior lecturer in criminology at Middlesex University, said: "We started noticing gangs using social media four years ago and since then (the numbers using it) have doubled every year ... it's hard to quantify that because there are no statistics or research, but every street gang I am familiar with now has an online presence,"

In He Said She Said the characters reference the use of Snapchat and a vice.com article published in 2021 suggests that the app is now one of the biggest influences in lethal youth violence, with it coming up regularly in court cases. "Snapchat is the root of a lot of problems" youth worker Natalie Gordon says in the article, "It's full of young people calling each other out, boasting of killings and stabbings, winding up rivals and

disrespecting others." When a young person is killed, details of the attack are regularly posted on the platform- young people post videos of themselves boasting about attacking rivals, accusing opposing gang members and promising revenge. The app played a key role in the murder of Olly Stephens in January 2021; Olly was lured to the park by a girl before being attacked by two teenage boys in broad daylight. Snapchat fuelled a falling out between Olly and the boys after Olly was accused of screenshotting a message and the platform was used by the murderers to display a growing obsession with violence, to plan the attack and to brag about it afterwards. The boys received minimum sentences of 12 and 13 years for murder and the 14-year-old girl who set up the trap received 5 years after admitting manslaughter.

Social enterprise Catch-22 printed a report in January 2017 that detailed several ways in which online behaviour can spill into the real world and result in youth violence. These were:

- **Music videos**

One of the concerns raised by young people and professionals regarded music videos that contained taunts and threats to individuals from rival groups. Many of these videos included displays of young people holding weapons, remarks about recent incidents of violence, and explicit threats to stab or shoot specific individuals and members of rival groups. Displays of disrespect that threaten a person's perceived reputation and self-esteem were at the heart of many incidents of face-to-face violence long before social media, but these platforms have the potential to greatly enhance the size of the audience witnessing these challenges to status and reputation. There is pressure on young people to then live up to their words in real life, so the amount of face-to-face reprisals increase.

- **Trespassing and taunting**

It was reported that young people are posting videos and photos of themselves trespassing into areas that 'belong' to rival gangs- looking for opposing members to taunt or just generally being disrespectful and painting graffiti etc. This behaviour provokes the individuals concerned and results in real life reprisals.

- **Stealing property and provocation**

Young people try and bolster their status by stealing the property of rivals and posting evidence to social media. These videos receive large amounts of views and shares, often in a very short amount of time, which means there is more to gain from indulging in behaviour that harms other young people and instances increase as young people clamour for online status. Social media also acts as an aggravating factor in another way, by provoking retaliation from the young person or people who are the victims of these incidents.

- **Live Broadcasting of violence**

Numerous episodes of serious violence have been uploaded onto social media; particularly videos of young people

attacking individuals associated with rival gangs in the community. Again, these videos not only bolstered the perceived status and reputation of the people uploading the videos, but also served to humiliate and provoke rival groups. As with Trespassing and theft, young people and professionals indicated that in many cases videos displaying young people being attacked led to violent reprisals in real life, as young people and their friends sought to get revenge for the humiliation of both the attacks themselves and the added insult of these acts being uploaded and shared over social media.

- **The prolonged and viral nature of online disrespect**

One issue seems to matter more than most is the size of the audience that views the content in question- instances of disrespect witnessed by small audiences are often dismissed or overlooked whereas instances reaching a large audience make real life retaliation more likely. It is this enhanced audience factor that seems to hold a central place in explaining the relationship between online provocation and face-to-face reaction. In addition to this enhanced audience factor, social media facilitates the transformation of events which would otherwise be confined to a single point of time into those that can be replayed endlessly at any point in time. This makes it significantly harder for a young person to ignore or overlook instances of disrespect that are shared over social media.

(Catch 22, Social media as a catalyst and trigger for youth violence 2017)

Key social media platforms

- **Snapchat**

Snapchat is an image and video sharing app. Users of Snapchat can create photos or short videos, which can then be shared with other people who follow their account. To follow someone's account, users simply need to type in a person's unique Snapchat username- a phone number isn't essential. Images and videos shared on Snapchat appear on a viewer's screen for a limited amount of time before disappearing (maximum 10 seconds), users can screenshot each other's content, however the original poster is informed of this. Snapchat is accessed via an app on a smart phone.

- **Instagram**

Instagram is an image and video sharing app. Users can set their privacy settings so that the content they upload is shared publicly (with anyone using Instagram) or privately (only with 'followers'). To follow someone's account, Instagram users simply search for a person's real name or username. Young people often have thousands of people following their accounts, they often advertise their own Instagram usernames publicly on other social media sites such as YouTube and Snapchat, and openly request that people follow them. Things can be posted permanently to Instagram via the 'grid' or it can be added to a 'story' where it is only available for 24 hours. Instagram can be accessed from a desktop computer or via an app on a smart phone.



- **Facebook**

Facebook is a website that allows users to connect with family and friends- sharing photos, videos, articles posts and private messages. Users send friend requests to each other before they can connect. Shared content can either be made publicly accessible or private for only friends/family. Unfortunately in recent years Facebook has been a platform regularly used for spreading 'fake news' and with the ease of sharing, these articles spread quickly. More recently Facebook has fallen out of favour with young people, Back in 2012, 94% of teens had a Facebook account and now only 27% of adolescents say they're on the platform, according to a 2021 survey (Insider.com). Facebook can be accessed from a desktop computer or via an app on a smart phone.

- **Twitter**

Twitter is an online news and social networking site where people communicate in short messages called tweets. Tweeting is posting short messages for anyone who follows you on Twitter, these messages may also be accompanied by photos and short videos. Although Twitter users may choose to make their accounts private and control who can see their tweets, the vast majority of Twitter users choose to have public accounts. Twitter users may 'follow' the accounts of other Twitter users, enabling them to automatically receive messages posted from these accounts. A person who wishes to share another person's tweet can 'retweet' the message, meaning that it is in turn shared with all of the people following the retweeter's account.

This retweeting function enables certain tweets to 'go viral', as they can be shared and viewed by millions of people in a very short space of time. Twitter can be accessed from a desktop computer or via an app on a smart phone.

- **Tiktok**

Tiktok is a video sharing app, users can create a variety of videos ranging from challenges, dance videos, magic tricks, and funny videos. Once downloaded, videos display automatically, with the app creating an individual algorithm for each user- meaning you don't need to be following someone to see their content. Very often users, content and trends go viral on Tiktok and it is becoming a legitimate and viable way for people to make a living. Tiktok is particularly popular among teenagers, with more than 37% of 13- to 17-year-olds saying they used it in March 2021 (Ofcom report 2021). TikTok is accessed using an app on a smartphone.

- **Youtube**

YouTube is a video-sharing website that enables any member of the public to upload and share videos.. People are able to browse through all of the videos available on YouTube by typing keywords into a search box. Although those uploading content have the option of restricting access if desired, the vast majority of videos are made fully available to anyone browsing the site. Youtube is used often by young people to share music videos and as a result can be where a lot of rival gangs and groups taunt each other. During the spring 2020 lockdown, nearly three-quarters of 15- to 24-year-olds said they watched short video content



online every day, and in September 2020 YouTube users aged 18-24 spent an average of 1 hour 16 minutes a day on the service (Ofcom report 2021). Youtube can be accessed from a desktop computer or via an app on a smartphone.

Whilst writing the show, Magero was heavily influenced by this Vice.com article, published in September 2021 and you may find this useful when discussing the play with your students: Snapchat Is Helping to Fuel Britain's Teen Murder Epidemic (vice.com) <https://www.vice.com/en/article/7kvnxa/snapchat-is-fuelling-britains-teen-murder-epidemic>

Sources

- <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/social-media-violence-london-croydon-phd-b1984798.html>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2018/apr/02/social-media-violence-young-people-gangs-say-experts> https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0013/220414/online-nation-2021-report.pdf
- <https://www.vice.com/en/article/7kvnxa/snapchat-is-fuelling-britains-teen-murder-epidemic>
- <https://www.catch-22.org.uk/social-media-as-a-catalyst-and-trigger-for-youth-violence/>
- <https://www.insider.com/facebook-gen-z-teens-boomer-social-network-leaks-2021-10#:~:text=Back%20in%202012%2C%2094%25%20of,teenagers%20conducted%20by%20Piper%20Sandler.>

DRAMA WORKSHOP

Below is a suggested drama workshop of **1 hour**. The intention of the workshop is to offer a creative way to further investigate the themes of the play and allow the young people more room to think about the issues raised. If you have more/less time please feel free to edit or expand on activities.

Activity	Details	Numbers	Time
Warm up	<p>Introduce workshop theme- to further explore themes raised in the show and investigate how social media can impact our choices. Set ground rules for engagement (respect, listening etc.). Warm up game options —</p> <p>Look Down/ Look Up The facilitator will ask everyone to look to the ground by saying “eyes down” when the facilitator shouts “eyes up” everyone must look at another person in the circle. If two people catch eyes they are out and must both die dramatic deaths.</p> <p>Keepy Uppy The group must keep a soft ball up in the air. You cannot hit the ball twice in a row. The group decides on a number that they'll get to and then they try to get to that number.</p>	Whole group	8 mins
Story telling	Split into groups of four, give them 5 mins to come up with their own 30 second fast retelling of the play, in whatever way they like. Focusing on or highlighting what the key or favourite moments in the play were for them. Share back.	Groups of 4	10 mins
Group brainstorm / freeze frames	<p>Ask the group to think of all the moments in the play where social media was used or mentioned. As a whole group, create a quickfire giant freeze frame to include as many of these moments as possible – start with one frozen image then add each person into the frame with a new idea either individually or as a pair/as a small group. As each person joins the picture ask them to say what moment they are re-creating and write it down on a big piece of paper. Once everyone has joined the image bring it to life for a few moments then re-freeze it.</p> <p>From the list of moments collected in the brainstorm, pick out four of the moments where social media played a negative role in the young people's lives in the play.</p>	Whole group	12 mins

Activity	Details	Numbers	Time
The ripple effect	<p>Choose one of the four moments identified in the previous task and ask the person or people who depicted that moment to stay in the frozen position as everyone else sits down.</p> <p>Discuss briefly the idea of the 'ripple effect' — how our actions can and do impact the people around us and in our communities, online and offline.</p> <p>Ask the other young people to consider the specific moment being depicted and to think who else, outside of the four characters in the play, would be impacted by that key moment, positively or negatively, both online and offline.</p> <p>Ask a few young people with ideas on the subject to add themselves to the frozen image, using space between them and the original group to show how closely they are affected by the action (i.e. stand close to the action if very affected and far away if mildly effected). Once there are a few people in position bring the whole image to life and/or tap each young person on the shoulder to tell us how their character feels and why. Discuss as a whole group.</p> <p>Get into three groups, give each group one of the remaining three key moments from the list created earlier and ask them to create similar ripple effect images for these other moments. Share back and discuss.</p>	Whole group, then split into 3 groups	15 mins
Key moments of choice	<p>Next, in groups of four, give each group a character from the play to focus on and one of the four key social media moments from the play. Ask them to create a scene where the character they have been given does or says something differently that impacts that key moment, share back and discuss.</p>	Groups of 4	10 mins
Close	<p>Check out — as a whole group everyone share back one thing the session has made them think about. What themes came up? How do we feel? What is your view on social media? What can we take away from today's session?</p>	Whole group	5 mins

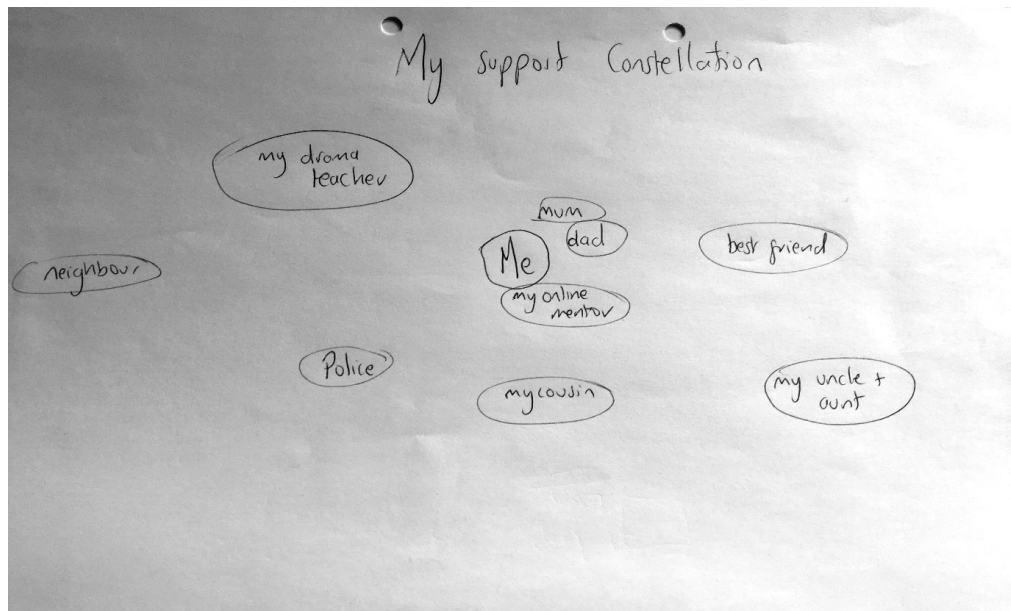
PSHE WORKSHOP

Below is a suggested reflective PSHE workshop of **1 hour 15 minutes**. The intention of the workshop is to offer a time to reflect on the issues raised in the play, particularly around youth violence and social media. The workshop can be delivered one to one with a young person or to a group/class and offers them space to interrogate the themes and, in particular, how they can stay safe online.

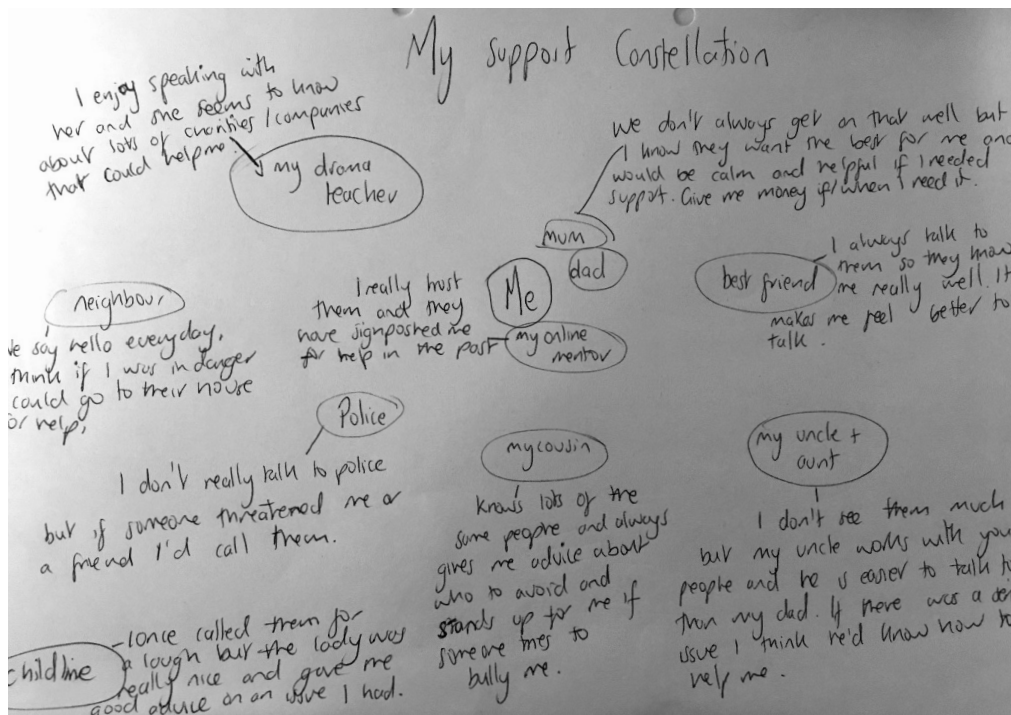
Whilst there are many risks for young people when online, in line with Synergy's expertise and the focus of **He Said She Said**, this workshop is specifically about reducing youth violence linked to the use of social media.

Activity	Details	Numbers	Time
Brainstorming	<p>Give the young people 5 minutes to brainstorm as many different social media platforms that are used by young people as they can.</p> <p>Then, give the young people another few minutes to write against each platform a number between 1—10, where 1 means that the young people don't use the platform at all and 10 means that they use the platform all the time.</p> <p>From this exercise identify the three platforms that the full group use the most.</p>	Individually or in pairs	10 mins
Risk assessing	<p>Have a discussion, using examples from He Said She Said about what the potential benefits and risks are of using the social media platforms, in particular the ones they have identified as using most.</p> <p>Either individually or in pairs/small groups write a list of pros and cons to using each platform. In the cons list write down the potential dangers associated with each platform.</p> <p>Against each of the cons write a number between 1-10, where 1 means the risk of 'violence' associated with that con is very low and 10 means the risk of violence is very high.</p> <p>Working in pairs/small groups or with an adult identify some mitigating measures to reduce the 'cons' associated with the highest risks of online use - .i.e. not using their personal details, not using a picture of their face, not engaging in other potentially violent posts online, reporting dangerous posts, not sharing their contact details unless they know someone well etc.</p> <p>Encourage them to think about and include when they should report something to teachers, family, friends, directly to social media platforms or to police.</p>	Individually / pairs / small groups	20 mins

Activity	Details	Numbers	Time
Safety campaign and cementing learning	<p>Use the 'mitigating measures' the young people identified earlier to design either an online campaign/short film or a poster which advises other young people how to avoid 'violence' online.</p> <p>And/or for young people who prefer creative writing ask the young person to write a letter to one of the characters in the show, imagining the character is one of their best friends and the letter is to be received before the time of show, explaining to that character how and why they should use social media safely.</p>	Individually / pairs / small groups	20 mins
Support constellation	<p>Help the young people identify what support they have already and/or how they can access support in the future by creating a support constellation. The goal of the exercise is for the young person to think about, and then create a visual representation of, their trusted support network.</p> <p>Ask the young person to put their name in the center of a piece of paper. Next, ask them to think of the names of all the people/organisations in their lives that could offer them help if they needed support with some of the issues discussed in the session. It is important for the young person to consider who they trust for support and importantly how that person can support them before placing that person or group on their support constellation.</p> <p>Then, write the names of these people/groups down on the paper in different positions depending on how much support they feel that person or organisation could offer them if they needed support. If they think they would trust that person, and that person could offer them well informed support, they write the name close to them. If they wouldn't trust that person for help or the person wouldn't be well informed, they write their name down further away from theirs on the paper etc.</p> <p>For example, the young person might not trust the police but they know that the police can offer the most immediate protection/help if they were at risk of serious violence or they witness something illegal online/are concerned for someone else's immediate welfare so the police are relatively close to the centre of the diagram. Another example is their best friend — the young person in question might be closer to their best friend than anyone else but their best friend might not be well informed about how to give support in a challenging or dangerous situation, so they aren't placed as closely to the centre of their diagram.</p> <p>By the end of the exercise, they should have a support constellation which they can take away with them to use if they need help in the future (please see below for an example of a safety constellation — you could do an example one using a character from the play as a starting point).</p>	Individually	25 mins



Example Support constellation



Example of expanded Support constellation

SIGNPOSTING

NSPCC

Contact the NSPCC Helpline on **0808 800 5000** or by emailing **help@nspcc.org.uk**, trained professionals will talk through your concerns with you and give you expert advice.

Childline

If a child or young person needs confidential help and advice about gangs, online bullying or anything else that's worrying them, you can direct them to Childline. Calls to **0800 1111** are free and children can also contact Childline online at **www.childline.org.uk**

Catch 22

Catch 22 work with children and young people of any age to help get them out of situations they're worried about and have helped lots of children and young people involved in gangs. **www.catch-22.org.uk/find-support**

St Giles Trust

St Giles Trust offers specialist services to help young people make a safe and sustained exit from gangs. Caseworkers offer both practical and emotional support to the young person and their family to help address any issue which might be driving gang involvement. **www.stgilestrust.org.uk/how-to-get-support**

Crimestoppers

If you are concerned about a young person who you know to be involved in criminal activity or you think crime is happening in your area, you can contact Crimestoppers anonymously on **0800 555 111**.

Young Minds

A mental health service designed to offer support to both young people and their parents.

Resources are available online at **www.youngminds.org.uk** or via their text line for young people **85258** or their helpline for parents **0808 802 5544**.

#knifefree

Home Office website full of resources, case studies and support to help young people go #knifefree and stop carrying weapons. They also provide lesson plans on knife crime for schools and youth organisations. **www.knifefree.co.uk**

Your Choice Your Future

Webpage featuring short films and graphics providing young people with the reality of crime, statistics and legal jargon busting. **www.ycyf.co.uk**

If any of the young people that you work with have been affected by the themes covered in **He Said She Said**, below are some charities and organisations you could refer them to.

If you think anyone is in immediate danger, contact the police on **999**.

The Ben Kinsella Trust

An organisation focused around educating young people on knife crime. They offer in school workshops and training courses to help young people turn their lives around. **www.benkinsella.org.uk**

Act on it

A website dedicated to promoting healthy teen relationships, defining what is abuse and looking at the issue of control. There is information that is young person specific and information for adults/carers/teachers who are concerned. There is also advice on talking to peers and relatives about unhealthy relationships.

www.actonitnow.co.uk / 0300 123 5101

Relate

Relate provide relationship advice for young adults, whether it's dealing with a breakup, understanding healthy relationships or relationships with family and friends. **www.relate.org.uk/relationship-help/help-young-adults**

If you have any further questions or concerns, please do feel free to get in touch with Synergy at **info@synergytheatreproject.co.uk**



synergy

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