

SPEAK

TRUTH

TO

POWER :

Voices From Beyond the Dark

a play

by Ariel Dorfman

Adapted from **Speak Truth to Power**, a book by Kerry Kennedy.

A play for ten actors (preferably five male and five female, though can also be cast, if necessary, with four female and six male actors). Eight of these actors, four male, four female, will represent the human rights defenders. The other two (a man and a woman, or two men) represent evangelists of evil, malicious and sarcastic embodiments of fear and repression first and then, as the play advances, of the indifference which is the perpetual opposite of love. These oppressors should be dressed differently, lit differently, act differently, speak differently, from the human rights defenders. They are supposed to have more mobility, should be allowed to roam the stage at will, whispering, probing, threatening, determined to undermine the message from the heroes and heroines. This differentiation is crucial to the drama of the play.

LIGHTS RISE ON THE EIGHT ACTORS, 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.
That is what we know.
You walk into the corridor of death and you know.

LIGHTS RISE ON THE MAN AND WOMAN, TO ONE SIDE, SEPARATE FROM THE DEFENDERS.

MAN

They know. They can't say they don't know.

WOMAN

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

FIRST VOICE (MALE)

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

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 is what you know.

FOURTH VOICE (FEMALE)

I know what it is to wait in the dark for torture and what it is to wait in the dark for truth.
I did what I had to do.
Anything else would have tasted like ashes.

WOMAN

They can't say they don't know.

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.

MAN

Guillaume Ngefa Atondoko.

WOMAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME (OR IMAGE OF) GUILLAUME NGEFA ATONDOKO APPEARS ON A SCREEN.

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

FIFTH VOICE (MALE)

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

MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME (OR IMAGE OF) WEI JINGSHENG APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

Then I thought to myself, “Wei Jingsheng, you will die anyway. Why die as a laughing stock to my enemies?” So I controlled my fear in that moment of crisis, and that moment passed. If you cannot prepare yourself for death, then you should not decide to defy the regime.

THIRD VOICE (MALE)

You walk into the corridor of death. . .

IMAGE OF HAFEZ ABU SEADA APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

FIRST VOICE (MALE)

My name is Hafez Abu Seada.

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

MAN

Hafez Abu Seada, yes. That is his job.

WOMAN

And he was pushed through a window. Yes.

IMAGE OF DIGNA OCHOA APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

SECOND VOICE (FEMALE)

If we don't do this, who will?

My name is Digna Ochoa. I am a nun and 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. Then he was “disappeared” and tortured—the charges against him, fabricated. And then I myself was “disappeared” and held *incommunicado* for eight days by the police. Now I felt in the flesh what my father had felt, what other people had suffered. I've always felt anger at the suffering of others. If an act of injustice doesn't provoke anger in me, it could be seen as indifference, passivity. . . . 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. During a change in shifts, I slipped in. I got to the door of his room, 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 get him to sign a piece of paper proving he was in the hospital. Then the police came back. Fierce. 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.”

SEVENTH VOICE (MALE)

My name is Doan Viet Hoat.

WOMAN MAKES A GESTURE AND NAME (OR IMAGE OF) DOAN VIET HOAT APPEARS ON SCREEN.

SEVENTH VOICE (MALE)

I spent twenty years in Vietnamese prisons. Four of those were in isolation. I was forbidden pen, paper, 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 think of my cell as home, as though I had entered a religious way of life, like a monk. 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?

THIRD VOICE (MALE)

My name is Abubacar Sultan.

MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME (OR IMAGE OF) ABUBACAR SULTAN APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

When the war started in Mozambique, I decided to do something about the child soldiers. 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. Most of these kids were on the front, so that's where we went, into the war zones every day. On several occasions, we were almost shot down. But I didn't stop. Part of the explanation lies in religion (I'm a practicing Muslim). Yet there are many people like

myself who never considered doing what I did. It must be something deeper, something inside, perhaps a kind of gift.

FIRST VOICE (MALE)

You walk into the corridor of death. . .

IMAGE OF DIANA ORTIZ APPEARS ON THE SCREEN

FOURTH VOICE (FEMALE)

I want to be free of these memories.

My name is Dianna Ortiz.

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, an American citizen eager 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 Ortiz 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.

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. So 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 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.

IMAGE OF KOIGI WA WAMWERE ON THE SCREEN

THIRD VOICE (MALE)

One night, when I had escaped to Uganda, five people, all masked, kidnapped me and brought me to Kenya. I woke up in a sea of water. I was naked and had been sitting in that basement cell all night. I stayed in that water for about one month. They could freeze it, keep the water 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.

WOMAN

A lie. We never threatened to throw him off the roof. Koigi Wa Wamwere is lying. Yes.

MAN

Yes. He lied about the treatment of forest workers in Kenya. And he lied when he wrote about corruption in government-controlled companies in Kenya.

WOMAN

He lies all the time. We should have thrown him off the roof.

THIRD VOICE (MALE)

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)

We all continued.

MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME (OR IMAGE OF) 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.

MAN

A lawyer from Pakistan, this Hina Jilani.

WOMAN

As if it wasn't enough to have this Hina Jilani around, there was her sister. Also from Pakistan, also a lawyer, her sister, Asma Jahangir.

EIGHTH VOICE (FEMALE)

My children are very worried about the death threats against me. I have had to sit them down and explain to them and even sometimes joke. "Okay, now what I am going to do is get myself insurance, so when I die, you will be rich kids." But I know that our families may have to pay the price for our commitment, just like us. Just like us.

IMAGE OF MARINA PISKLAKOVA APPEARS

FOURTH VOICE (FEMALE)

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

FOURTH VOICE (FEMALE)

I started the first domestic violence hot-line in Russia in 1993 almost by accident. My son has a class-mate 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, 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 refer her to somebody. But there was nowhere to go, nobody to help her. So I started the hot line. And then we started a new program training lawyers in domestic abuse cases.

IMAGE OF RANA HUSSEINI APPEARS

SECOND VOICE (FEMALE)

My name is Rana Hussein. 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 that journalist 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.

WOMAN

Blood cleanses honor. Have the girl killed. That was the only way.

EIGHTH 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.

IMAGE OF TUTU APPEARS

FIFTH VOICE (MALE)

Many of those who have suffered most grievously in South Africa have been ready to forgive – people who you thought might be consumed by bitterness, by a lust for revenge. We had a hearing at the Truth Commission chock-a-block full with people who had lost loved ones, massacred. 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. I said, “Let’s keep quiet, because we are in the presence of something holy.”(PAUSE)

My name is Desmond Tutu.

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.”

SIXTH VOICE (FEMALE)

Because something is there

A light is there

A light at the end of the tunnel.

IMAGE OF MUHAMMED YUNUS APPEARS

FIRST VOICE (MALE)

My name is Muhammad Yunus. I started the Grameen program to provide access to credit for the poor. The professionals say development involves multi-million dollar loans for enormous infrastructure 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. 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 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.”

EIGHTH VOICE(FEMALE)

Courage begins with one voice.

My name is Juliana Dogbadzi.

MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME (OR IMAGE OF) JULIANA DOGBADZI APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

I am from Ghana. 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, a soothsayer said that my family must bring a young girl to the shrine to appease the gods.

SECOND VOICE (FEMALE)

Twelve of us, four women and eight children, lived in a one-room, thatched-roof house. 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 in the morning, go to the stream so far 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 after scrounging for leftovers. At night the priest would call one of us to his room.

EIGHTH VOICE (FEMALE)

I was about twelve when I was first raped. I had to do something that would change my life. Finally, one day, I got my chance. I don't know where my sudden confidence came from, but all my fear had disappeared. With my new born 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. This was my weapon. This is still my weapon.

IMAGE OF ELI WIESEL APPEARS

SEVENTH VOICE (MALE)

My name is Elie Wiesel. 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.

FIRST VOICE (MALE)

My name is Gabor Gombos.

MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME (OR IMAGE OF) 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?

SECOND VOICE (FEMALE)

They needed a voice. And I became their voice.

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 do not claim to have innate bravery. Rather, I'm very normal and try to shun danger when possible. 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 who organized the defense of the prisoners after the coup. That lawyer who went into the concentration camps where nobody could go.

JOSE ZALAUQUETT APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

WOMAN

That lawyer we jailed twice. Zalaquett. Like that lawyer from Argentina, Juan Méndez – he wanted to find the *desaparecidos*.

MAN

We disappeared him for a few days, so he could know what it feels like, give him a taste of it, five sessions with him a day, so he could get a quick taste of it.

WOMAN

Lawyers, lawyers! Like – what’s her name? – Patria Jiménez, that lesbian lawyer from Mexico, got elected to Congress. Or like that lawyer from Belarus, you know, that Vera Stremkovskaya - who thinks that courage is like a metal chord inside.

MAN

Like a metal chord inside. Oh yes, they are frightened.

WOMAN

Yes, so frightened. Like that other man...

IMAGE OF MARTIN O’BRIEN APPEARS

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 in North Ireland and said, “Martin 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. But the worst thing is apathy – to sit idly by in the face of injustice and to do nothing about it. It would be better to die early.

WOMAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME (OR IMAGE OF) FAUZIYA KASSINJA 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. 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 dark times
even in very dark times
there were people who stood up to protect others
there was at least one person who stood up to protect others.
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.

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: what it is to walk into the corridor of death.

WOMAN

And this is what they really fear: that nobody cares, 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.

MAN

People go to sleep. That is what they know and fear. They know that three billion people live in poverty and forty thousand children die each day of diseases that could be prevented.

WOMAN

They know that the three richest people in the world. . .

MAN

. . . 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.

WOMAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME (OR IMAGE OF)
OSCAR ARIAS SANCHEZ 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 five per cent of that figure over the next ten years, just five per cent of those billions, 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.

MAN

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

WOMAN

Who cares?

THIRD VOICE (MALE)

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

MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME (OR IMAGE OF) 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 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. 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. 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. There was a time when I wanted to shoot myself when there wasn't any water and we had to eat raw rice. 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. And yet, one day, I went to another human rights organization, that was working on something else. There, 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 heart-broken. Yes. But we had told him it was useless.

WOMAN

We had told him. We had told him he was wasting his life away. No one listened and no one cared.

SECOND VOICE (FEMALE)

Many women in Kenya did not have firewood. They needed fruits to cure malnutrition in their children and clean drinking water, but the pesticides and herbicides used on farms to grow cash crops polluted the water. We encouraged them to plant trees. 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 twenty million trees in Kenya alone. And the Greenbelt Movement has started programs in about twenty countries.

WOMAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME (OR IMAGE OF) WANGARI MAATHAI APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

SECOND VOICE (FEMALE)

This has not made us popular with the leaders. They attack us, attack me. But fortunately, my skin is thick like an elephant's. My name is Wangari Maathai.

FIRST VOICE (MALE)

My name is Kailash Satyarthi.

MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME (OR IMAGE OF) 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 conscious, 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?" So the father looked at me, for two minutes he could not answer. Then he slowly replied, "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. 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. And the number of children are going up – parallel 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. But when you free them, work has just begun.

SEVENTH VOICE (MALE)

It was extremely difficult for our voice to be heard. We Palestinians...

MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME (OR IMAGE OF) RAJI SOURANI APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

...are nearly a forgotten people, consigned to a second class existence. No one needs peace – a just peace – more than those who are oppressed. I am from Gaza. I started to fight for peace when I was very young. You see the hell of our daily life and you ask: Why are these unfair things happening? Why was our neighbor's house demolished? Why was my brother imprisoned? And I talk about

torture, I can't help but talk about torture. We have to have one standard for all people, Israeli and Palestinian. Because all human life is sacred, no matter what nationality, race or religion.

FIFTH VOICE (MALE)

All those disappearances were peasants.

MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME (OR IMAGE OF)
FRANCISCO SOBERON APPEARS ON SCREEN.

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

FIFTH VOICE (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.

WOMAN

We told him. We said well, you know, nobody cares.

SEVENTH VOICE (MALE)

The first year of my first time in prison in China, I cried almost every day. I missed my family, especially my mother who had committed suicide because I was arrested. I was Catholic, so I prayed. But after two years, there were no more tears. Life only belongs to you once. They broke my back. Later, in exile, people were calling Harry Wu a hero.

WOMAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME (OR IMAGE OF)
HARRY WU APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

But a real hero would be dead. If I were a real hero like those people I met in the camps, I would have committed suicide. Now I want to see **laogai** become a word in every dictionary. "Lao" means labor, "gai" means reform. They reform you. Before 1974, **gulag** was not a word. Today it is. So now we have to expose the word **laogai**: how many victims are there, what are the conditions the prisoners endure? I want people to be aware. Aware of the products made in China by

prison labor: the toys, the footballs, the surgical gloves. I want them to be aware that today, the Chinese people have the right to choose different brands of shampoo, but they still cannot say what they really want to say.

MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME (OR IMAGE OF)
ZBIGNIEW BUJAK APPEARS ON SCREEN.

THIRD VOICE (MALE)

To stay one step in front of the Secret Police, that was what we had to do to survive. The others in the Solidarity movement didn't know where we lived or which people were organizing for us. Every month we had to change apartments and our appearance, disguise ourselves. We put our trust in complete strangers. The reward for selling us out was huge: twenty thousand dollars and a permanent exit visa to leave Poland. But only once was someone betrayed.

SEVENTH VOICE (MALE)

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

FIFTH VOICE

We don't have the right to lose hope.
My name is Bobby Muller.

MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME (OR IMAGE OF)
BOBBY MULLER APPEARS ON A SCREEN

One of the things that really pissed me off when we were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for our work against land-mines, 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. Because 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.

FOURTH VOICE (FEMALE)

I wanted to take flowers from the garden and give them to the children.

WOMAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME (OR IMAGE OF) SENHAL SAHIRAN APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

For the children who were in prison in Turkey, being detained for years with no charges. Flowers for them. I wanted to make those children feel close to nature. I wanted those children to feel less alone.

FIFTH VOICE (MALE)

My name is Van Jones.

MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME (OR IMAGE OF) VAN JONES APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

Our organization exposes human rights violations, particularly police brutality, here in the United States. Children who come home with a broken arm or a broken jaw or their teeth shattered. Or a child that has been held in jail for four or five days with no charges. Faces of kids sprayed with pepper spray – a resin that sticks to your skin and it burns and it continues to burn until it's washed off. I mean, this stuff doesn't make our world any safer. It doesn't make law enforcement's job any easier. And Police Watch is trying to stop it.

SEVENTH VOICE (MALE)

My name is Bruce Harris.

MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME (OR IMAGE OF) 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, why the police were killing street children. Soon after that we started getting phone calls and death threats. Until one day... 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? We've come to kill him." They opened fire with machine guns. When the police came, they took away all the bullets. They took away all the evidence. 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!

FIRST VOICE (MALE)

I am a lawyer.

WOMAN MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME (OR IMAGE OF) SEZGIN TURIKULU APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

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!

SIXTH VOICE (FEMALE)

Every time I felt frightened, I would invite all our friends, other activists, and we would have a good laugh. A sense of humor, and the warmth of the people around, has made me survive. If I was sitting by myself, isolated, I would have gone crazy.

SECOND VOICE (FEMALE)

When a person comes to see you, saying, "I would have died..." . . . I would have died if you were not here," that gives us more energy. My name is Kek Galabru and I refuse to leave Cambodia.

EIGHTH VOICE (FEMALE) (*from the darkness*)

My name is – (PAUSE)

MAN MAKES A GESTURE AND NOTHING APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

My name is. . .

WOMAN MAKES ANOTHER GESTURE AND STILL NOTHING APPEARS ON THE SCREEN. BOTH OF THEM TRY AGAIN AND NOTHING. THE OTHER ACTORS LAUGH. THE EIGHTH VOICE CONTINUES TO SPEAK FROM THE DARKNESS. LIGHTS BEGIN TO FADE ON MAN AND WOMAN.

ANNONYMOUS APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

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)

If she revealed her name, she could not do her work.

LIGHTS FADE COMPLETELY ON MAN AND WOMAN.

FOURTH VOICE (FEMALE)

My name is Rigoberta Menchú.

ONE OF THE ACTORS MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME (OR IMAGE OF) RIGOBERTA MENCHU APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

FOURTH VOICE (FEMALE)

We have to reinvent hope all over again. We are the ones who have, who will have, the last words.

SECOND VOICE (FEMALE)

In America we have more riches than we know what to do with, yet we let millions of children go hungry, without shelter and other basic necessities. In a nation that has been blessed with a nine-trillion dollar economy, poverty is killing children, more slowly, but surely as guns. 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 (OR IMAGE OF) MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

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.

SIXTH VOICE (FEMALE)

My name is Helen Prejean.

ONE OF THE ACTORS MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME (OR IMAGE OF) 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, through my stories. We don't know what else to do, so we imitate criminals' worst behavior with the death penalty, that act of supreme despair. And yet I believe that if we bring people to their own best hearts, they will respond.

SEVENTH VOICE (MALE)

I am Wissa. Bishop Wissa, from Egypt.

ONE OF THE ACTORS MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME (OR IMAGE OF) BISHOP WISSA APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

These are my children. Don't they call me father? If you were at your house and someone were beating up your child, wouldn't you stop them? Wouldn't you stop them? If we don't do this, who will?

FIRST VOICE (MALE)

My name is Samuel Kofi Woods. I am from Liberia.

ONE OF THE ACTORS MAKES A GESTURE AND THE NAME (OR IMAGE OF) SAMUEL KOFI WOODS APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

You walk into the corridor of death and you know this moment might be your last. I went through this. But when a nation is so consumed in evil, it's difficult to see alternatives, unless people of conviction stand up. Even if you know this moment might be your last. If we don't do this, who will?

THIRD VOICE (MALE)

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. Like a metal chord inside.

FIRST VOICE

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?

EIGHTH VOICE EMERGES FROM THE DARKNESS.

EIGHTH VOICE

If we don't do this, who will?

WOMAN (*mockingly*)

If we don't do this, who will?

MAN

Yes. The names. José Ramos Horta from East Timor and his useless Nobel Peace Prize and the Dalai Lama and that judge from Spain, Baltasar Garzón, and Freedom Neruda, that journalist from Ivory Coast, of all places, and Maria Teresa Tula. . .

WOMAN

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

MAN

She just wouldn't stop. . .

WOMAN

. . . and meddling Natassa Kandic from Serbia and that tireless, bothersome Jaime Prieto from Colombia and Vaclav Havel and . . . All those names. Names I won't forget, not me.

MAN

Names we won't forget. Others will forget.

WOMAN

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. . .

MAN

. . . 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. . .

WOMAN

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, the expendable others beyond the lights, their voices never recorded or transcribed, their bodies beyond invisibility.

MAN

Them and me again and again, 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.

WOMAN

I also know how to wait. I also know what it is to wait in the dark. My turn always comes.

AS THE DEFENDERS SPEAK OUT FOR THE LAST TIME, LIGHTS SLOWLY DIM ON MAN AND WOMAN.

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
It would be better to die early
Anything else would have tasted like ashes
That's what you know

SEVENTH VOICE

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 is what you know
Anything else would have tasted like ashes
That is what you know
The poor of the world are crying out
For schools and doctors, not generals and guns

FIFTH VOICE

I was never alone
That's what you know
We did what we had to do, that's all

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
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 is what you know
we were never alone

SECOND VOICE

And so we continue
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
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 FINALLY FADE ON MAN AND WOMAN.