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Inquiry Theatre at the Studio @ 620

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Inquiry Theatre

Inquiry Theatre is a form of ethnodrama (Vanover, in press) that uses verbatim interview texts to communicate everyday life with passion. Every word in the script is spoken in the order it was voiced, as a playwright my role is cut out all that is not essential and find a core story that will come alive for the audience.

Performances are staged simply. Audience members usually read and discuss a selection of the texts that make up the script in small groups and as a whole. Dialogue commits audience members to the events evoked in the script and builds anticipation as the actors take their places and the full story is performed. After the show ends, dialogue continues as a planned part of the performance event.

No claims are made on the basis of the evidence presented during Inquiry Theatre. No judgments are rendered. No questions are answered beyond those that can be brought to light by referring to the text. The performances are intended to help audience members ask really good questions. In fields such as education that have many programs and competing perspectives, Inquiry Theatre offers researchers, professionals, and community members the opportunity to take time and listen and then to engage with others who have heard the same stories, but understand them from different points of view.

Excerpt from
“They are Only Going to Steal your Cars”

INTERVIEWER: Where was your old school?
OHIO: In the Eastside. Lake Specialty School: 4th through 8th grade. Very abusive environment. Huh, no, it's a mentally abusive environment. I have lots of stories. It's one of those schools where, if your heart is not in it, your kids are going to feel it. And, then, she gets awesome teachers, but our principal knows how to make them go away! Like I did. I stayed there for two years and, it was like—You have to believe in your kids. I have to believe. But, if you don’t believe, and if you tell your teachers “Don’t worry about it, because they are only going to steal your cars.”

Then.

Pause:
And, I remember, I remember everything.

La’Kesha O’Neal in “They are Only Going to Steal Your Cars”