



A Western Canada Addictions Prevention Project
 Created and performed by people who have struggled with addiction

Artistic Director's FINAL REPORT (detailed version)

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The short version

The *Shattering* project really begins on January 6, 2006, when Headlines Theatre¹ attended a meeting to which we had been invited on the Skwah (Sto:Lo) Reserve, near Chilliwack BC, organized by Marion Robinson of the Fraser Basin Council with (among others) Skwah First Nation Band Councilor Lester Mussell, Band Councilor and Elder Violet George and Grand Chief and Elder, Dr. Elizabeth Rose Charlie.

From this meeting came an invitation to do the original, critically acclaimed production that was titled *Meth*, and played in Vancouver for two weeks in late 2006 and then toured into 28 BC communities in early 2007. Complete final reports exist for this project at:

<http://www.headlinestheatre.com/Meth/reports.htm>

When we got home from the tour, we had received another 30 requests for performances. We had no way to respond to this either financially or energetically. We put *Meth* to bed.

Then, in August of 2007, a Foundation That Wishes to Remain Nameless got in touch. The Foundation had supported the original production and was very impressed with what the Vancouver run and BC Tour had accomplished. The Foundation wanted to know if it was possible to remount the project and tour it throughout Western Canada, and was prepared to put a sizeable amount of money (up to 55% of the budget) where it's mouth was.

We sent feelers out across BC, Alberta and Saskatchewan to test the waters. As we talked with people, we heard from some potential sponsors that while they wanted to invite the project into their community and loved the non-judgmental approach *Meth* took to addiction, and also appreciated how it was not at its heart about "meth", but about the root causes of addiction, they wished the title was not the name of a particular drug. *Meth* had been prevalent two years ago – now the most visible drug was "crack". The title that was appropriate in early 2006/07 was not appropriate in mid to late 2008.

And so - after a lot of discussion, we changed the title to: *Shattering*. This worked on many levels: how individuals, families, communities shatter as a result of addiction; also how the project is about shattering pre-conceptions about the issue and approaches to the issue. The play remained the same, only the title changed. There were also negative aspects to the title change, written about later in this report.

As was the case with the original production, this project was intended as a constant collaboration between Native and non-Native organizations. The collaborations were very successful many times, bringing out very broadly diverse audiences to experience the event together, and also building bridges

¹ At the meeting for Headlines were: David Diamond, Dafne Blanco, Dylan Mazur and Mumbi Tindyebwa

between what are still solitudes in some communities. In some instances, the collaborations were not successful – reflecting, on some occasions, a continuing distrust inside communities between sectors that, in my opinion, cannot effectively deal with the addiction issue in isolation from each other.

The Vancouver run at the Japanese Hall (Sept 26 – Oct 5, 2008) played to 873 people (80% houses). The Western Canada Tour (33 performances in 31 communities across BC, AB and SK in 59 days [Oct 8 – Dec 4, 2008]) played to 3,689 people (78% houses). Detailed attendance sheets are attached to this report as Appendices 1 and 2.

Successes

I think that the feedback from the communities speak volumes about the effectiveness of the project, in a way that tooting our own horn cannot. (See “Audience Quotes”, below.)

“There were a number of themes that arose in conversations with audience members (after the show). One of these was the importance of meeting people where they are at and trusting knowledge gained through lived experience. The fact that this was a point of significant learning for many people I think shows our society’s tendency to devalue users’ knowledge and experiences, and the tendency of traditional addiction education campaigns to do the same. Another theme people often talked about was coming to better understand the difference between the symptoms of addictions and some of its root causes. Prevention education has traditionally been based on the idea that “just saying no” is the primary way to deal with addiction in society. People talked about how this did not fit with their experiences, and yet many had not had the opportunity to really explore the root causes of addiction in their own worlds as a result of this focus on use/abstinence. Attached to this was the theme of safety, and coming to view safety, or rather ideas about safety as a subjective construct. This often came up in discussions with parents trying to better understand their youth in all sorts of situations not just those relating to addiction or drug use.

Many people spoke about how impressed they were with the knowledge that existed within their communities around how addiction issues might be addressed in different situations. People commented on this in relation to the youth in their communities, as well as users or people in recovery, and general community members. There was more than one occasion that people talked to me about their surprise with who went up on stage and what they contributed to the event. These were people that were typically quiet in group events and people who had lived experiences that were generally not recognized as the expertise they showed to be during the event. Many people, including supports, sponsors and general community members, talked

to me after the shows about how impressed they were with the events ability to draw out these kinds of expertise within their community and engage with individuals and groups who were often not so engaged.”²

There was a great deal of learning that happened each night in the theatre – using the interactive play to investigate approaches to addiction that are relevant to each specific community.

One of the patterns that would appear: the moments of creating true safety for *one’s self* would be the moments that rippled out and had the potential to create safety for others. The moments of trying to create safety for others, moments that often involved an imposition of a value system, whether in subtle or aggressive ways, tended to alienate the characters and, in many cases, led to far less “safe space” and sometimes violence.

This was a challenging concept for many audience members who had not themselves lived the issues, but was of immense value, I think, and at the heart of the project. I make this comment after many conversations with audience members who were ex-drug addicts, who agreed that the core moment of transformation had to come from them, and could not be imposed from outside.

Here is an excerpt from the longer report about one of the communities. I believe it applies to many of the performances:

The sponsor was blown away by what happened in the room. He says that many of the youth who were there have been attempting suicide recently, are in terrible situations, and don’t sit still for anything, and they were riveted for 2 hours and 15 minutes. Unheard of, he says. And also ‘who’ was making interventions, working things out on the stage that he knows they are trying to work out in their lives. He was struck by how true the whole story on the stage was, and how much it strikes at the centre of the issues.

33 performances in 31 communities across BC, AB and SK is monumental – the fact the tour happened is a testament, I believe, to the work.

² From the longer Addictions Counselor Report by Becky Hynes.

Challenges

While the Vancouver run played to (on average) very respectable audience sizes, attendance on the tour was, in some communities, not what we had hoped for or expected.

Various things contributed to that, some of which are dealt with in more detail in the Publicity and Outreach reports. In a nutshell, here is a shortened version:

The title change from *Meth* to *Shattering* was necessary, as detailed above, in order to book the tour. The problem we did not see at first with this, but that manifested in the publicity campaign, was that now we had a “poetic” poster image (the shattering rock) and also a “poetic” title. “Meth” had clarified the “story” of the poster. “Shattering” did not. It was harder for people to know what the project was about, without reading the fine print.

To accommodate the title change, (a much longer word), and also space for tour sponsors to put in their own material, the poster increased proportionally in size. It got too big, and was hard to use.

The original tour had garnered a great deal of press, riding on a wave of newspaper headlines in 2006/07 about methamphetamine use. By mid to late 2008 the media had moved on to something else, including the US and then Canadian elections. These were both very stiff competition for media space. Also, having already done coverage, media outlets that would normally pay attention to a Headlines’ project, felt they had already done so.

I wonder, also, if the cost per performance guarantee was too low at \$1,700. While I know that for some sponsors this was a great deal of money, it really only covered a little over 30% of the true cost of each show. The fundraising covered the rest of the budget. Many of the community sponsors were great. Some, did very little to bring an audience out, regardless of how much support we gave them. A higher per performance guarantee may have meant we reached fewer communities, but it also might have ensured that more community sponsors did the grassroots work that was necessary to bring their communities to the performances.

Reporting

All the final reports are available to anyone who wants them, via Headlines’ web site. The availability of the reports will be announced in Headlines’ monthly newsletter, and, of course, sent specifically to the funders. Our experience is that these reports are very valuable resources for researchers and practitioners all over the world.

Audience Quotes for *Shattering*

"I had the opportunity to participate in the *Shattering* project in La Ronge (in 2008). I thoroughly enjoyed the play, the way you facilitated the audience participation, and the opportunity to stop the action. After many years of addiction, recovery and healing the event strengthened my resolve to continue breaking the old patterns, trying something different to get different results, and remembering "It ain't nothin' till you call it!" I certainly hope to get another opportunity to experience your theatre and my accolades to the actors – they certainly expose themselves to lots of triggers while they are performing and getting out of the old and into the new must take lots of courage and hard work."

Alison Ballentyne, audience member, January, 2009

"Hello Headlines, here's a piece of feedback I just got about *Shattering*:

Thank you to Heather Gordon and the Substance Abuse Task Force for bringing *Shattering* to the Sunshine Coast (Sechelt). The presentation wasn't just an insight, but a jolt awake about the problems within our and every community and the ripple effect addiction has. This production forced me to address an issue with addiction in my own family. A close family friend has been battling a frightening addiction to crack cocaine for close to 10 years. After the presentation I sat down with my family and talked openly about an addiction that we have been facing for about 6 years - one that we have over looked or been scared to talk about because of someone else's addiction. Since then my sister has entered a treatment program for eating disorders. Thank you for telling where to find help, thank you for helping my community, thank you for being real!"

Sent by **Heather Gordon**, Sunshine Coast Substance Abuse Task Force, December 2008

"In the van on the ride home to Squamish from the performance of *Shattering* in Whistler, there was discussion among the group of 'at risk youth', there was tears, promises of, 'I'll never drink/smoke pot/do drugs again', other solutions offered up, comparisons of other things that had happened in their lives recently etc. It touched every one of them. I heard from one of my coworkers today that one of the youth who has had a really rough life as her alcoholic mother is often very brutal with her. Mostly this youth just ends up yelling at or running from her mom. Last night however, they apparently had an incredibly open conversation, and both ended up in each other's arms in tears, supporting each other, rather than hating each other...as a result of what the play stirred up."

Nicole McRae, Sea to Sky Community Services Society, December 2008

"The *Shattering* event in our community was an engaging and powerful night of adventure learning. As executive Director of the WCSS, I have had several personal phone calls from community members who were moved by this production, the cast and most notably the teachable outcomes for them. Thanks once again for your dedication to this type of learning.

Greg McDonnell, Executive Director, Whistler Community Services Society, Dec. 2008

"After *Shattering* in Canim Lake we sat down with a portion of the group that attended and asked for their reactions. They advised that the performance was outstanding and one of the best things they had ever been involved with. I was blown away by the quality of the theatre group and very surprised as to the involvement of this community on stage. I believe it was a "hit" in this very small community and thank you from the bottom of my heart."

Ken Tassell, Canim Lake Band, Restorative Justice, December, 2009

"*Shattering* was such an amazing performance for Golden. It arrived at a time when parts of our town are just waking up to the issues and has added to the momentum of community dialog and support for a community coalition. The performance was real, it was raw, it raised huge amounts of awareness."

Justin Telfer, Youth Addictions Counsellor, East Kootenay Addiction Services, Dec., 2008

"I think *Shattering* was effective in bringing out the fact that everyone has secrets, addictions, and dilemmas of one sort or another. I think inwardly we try to overcompensate

by trying to solve things in the lives of others the way we wish someone else would help with them in relation to ourselves or our loved ones. I think also that I learned that sometimes "Silence" is our way of keeping our secrets safe. If no one knows, then we can't be perceived as 'weak' or 'worthless', or any other number of labels that society places on our "differentness." I walked away from the performance with a new level of compassion and respect for all kinds and levels of addiction – even that of silence. I found the play to be very insightful and thought provoking, and I think it made the viewer realize that no matter how desperate the situation or circumstance - we really do have choice - maybe not always in the outcome, or events, but definitely in our own actions or reactions. Every day we consciously and unconsciously choose the pattern of our lives and to some degree the lives of those around us...in that regard the play inspired hope. Just like in the play, we can choose to be silent, or we can be willing participants for change; once again CHOICE."

Deb, (last name removed for confidentiality), audience member, November 2008

"**Shattering** was great and it had a real impact on the audience. People especially liked the (Forum Theatre) format. There was so much going on with each character that most people could personalize the issues. I was impressed by the realistic portrayal of addiction by the actors. Your work is really helping to bring social issues to the forefront."

Diane Purdy, Medicine Hat Community Drug Council, November, 2008

"**Shattering** was a huge success here. In all the years that I have been involved with Weyburn and Area Supportive Employment Services we have never had such a good turnout. The support provided by Headlines was tremendous."

Tania Grams, Weyburn and Area Supportive Employment Services, November, 2008

"What a fabulous performance the actors gave when presenting **Shattering**. The comments we heard all said how life like the play was. For all the hard work that went into getting this performance here, it was worth it!"

Renae J. Friesen, Saskatoon Health Region, Addiction Services – Humboldt, Nov., 2008

"**Shattering** was an emotional, insightful event. It was such a good play. It really got everybody thinking about addictions and the dynamics and issues and how complex they are."

Jacquie Bergerman, the Humboldt Journal, November 19, 2008

"**Shattering** is the kind of performance that causes one, no matter what their own situation, to reflect inward. For some people this is a scary place because it's a place many work hard to avoid. It seems to me to be that necessary first place of reflection - the inner self, in order to find a way to articulate outside of ourselves to the world around us the thinking and emotion that exists there. I attended the play (in Regina) and talked with several audience members after who remarked at how real the story and the characters were. The stories they shared seemed to reflect aspects of each of our own experiences in some way and this prompted us to continue talking about what we saw, and how our own stories connected... through this sharing we discovered further connections between our stories. Thanks for bringing this Theatre for Living production to our community; it provided a powerful means to get people thinking deeply about the issues our own place."

Lori Whiteman, First Nations and Métis Education Branch, Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, November 2008

"**Shattering** was a very scary show but it was an eye opener. I wish that more people could have been there to take in this event. I had to go each night in La Ronge just to get the awareness. I took my grandchildren and they enjoyed it to the fullest. I sure hope it will help them out in their choices when they become teens."

Arleen Windigo, audience member, November 2008

"Participating in the play **Shattering** was nothing short of amazing. The play certainly gave me food for thought; it's haunted me all week. I saw myself in several of the characters at various times in my life and while my solutions were a bit different, I recognized the behaviours. Addictions are symptoms of something deeper going on – root causes – the main

emphasis of the play. I've certainly been moved to explore some of my life experiences and how they have influenced my life, my behaviours. I've also had some revelations, some I know at one level and others startling, over the past few days as a result of the play.

Shattering is an experience that, like the advertisement for something I don't recall, 'keeps on giving'."

Valerie G. Barnes-Connell, in *The Northerner*, La Ronge, SK, November 13, 2008

"***Shattering*** was extremely powerful and thought provoking, providing our audience with an intense window into the world of addiction. The play generated such an intense impact that we spent most of the next day discussing and sharing thoughts, feelings, and exploring different outcomes. I cannot thank you enough for bringing Forum Theatre to our community."

Wayne Barkhouse, Bonnyville Indian Métis Rehabilitation Centre, November, 2008

"It (making an intervention in ***Shattering***) was terrifying. There's a lot of emotion. I learned two new things: One is we have to be prepared to recognize the elephants in the room – the secrets in families and individuals. The other one insight that really touched me was the point the director made that it is so easy sometimes to treat the symptom without thinking about the whole idea of root causes."

Brian Daley, audience intervener, quoted in the *Alaska Highway News*, October, 2008

"I had the opportunity to watch the ***Shattering*** performance in Kispiox B.C. I was thrilled in watching the portrayal of the effects of Meth or any other substance abuse within communities. I feel that the left brain lesson in teaching people that voicing a wrong within a family clan is awesome. I highly recommend any person to watch this play !!"

Mark Louis, audience member, October, 2008

"***Shattering*** is a must see experience for anyone who has lived with or some how experienced some sort of addiction. It offers a perspective of hope in an environment where none exists. The play taught me a lot about meth addiction and the fear that people experience when things seem out of control. It also taught me that people are compassionate and want to help, if they only knew how."

Deb Little, Transitional Life Coach, audience member, October, 2008

"Thanks for a brilliant evening at ***Shattering***. As a man in treatment 7 months clean, this play is vital for breaking down stereotypes around addiction."

Darrin (last name removed for confidentiality), Vancouver audience member, October 2008

"I was so impressed with the play ***Shattering***. I arrived 30 minutes early and sitting around me were folks who were in recovery. I also heard comments from this group as the interactive portion of the evening was taking place. Listening to them, I could hear that this play was right on. During the interactive portion of the play it was easy to see how an intervention, no matter how small, can make a difference."

Lois Brassart, Vancouver audience member, October 2008

"***Shattering*** is a brilliant piece of art and I think that it speaks very well to the underlying issues of addiction, and in general, to what it's like being a human being."

Michelle Richard, Vancouver audience member, October 2008

"I was thoroughly entertained, (by ***Shattering***) the actors were engaging, the script was believable and unpretentious, and the director fostered raw talent into budding thespians. I was truly in awe: this is an innovative intervention that blends, art, education, community participation, while also operating as a mechanism for recovery in building self esteem and a better understanding of addiction. While one can read about the issue, attend support groups, and discuss addiction with the afflicted – there are certain 'deep' and 'hidden' dimensions of addiction that are difficult to have surface – this is what ***Shattering*** accomplishes."

Katia Mohindra, Vancouver audience member, October 2008

Shattering is truly an unparalleled opportunity to witness people practicing dealing with addiction, and to practice yourself. You leave the event with fodder for initiating a conversation about addiction which is much less likely to generate a defensive reaction. Thank you for giving such a generous gift.”

Jennifer Brooks, Vancouver audience member, October 2008

“I would like to thank you on behalf of our team for your stimulating and gritty performance of ***Shattering***. I would like to thank everyone involved in this production, from the funders to the stagehands to the director and actors. I would particularly like to thank Cody for his courageous work, playing a role so close to his experience. This play empowers and enlightens its audience in a way no conventional play ever could. Bravo!”

Paul Slakov, *Alcohol and Drug Counsellor, Family Services of Greater Vanc.*, Oct. 3, 2008

“(***Shattering***) doesn’t feel like an After School Special, and is just as riveting for adults as it is for teens. Though the performances are truly gripping (Cody Gray and Kayla Cardinal stand out with their exceptionally honest portrayals of young teens discovering the dark world of meth), the creators of this production want to do more than simply entertain. They want to get the audience thinking, talking, and acknowledging its collective complacency toward addiction. ***Shattering*** offers a solid theatrical experience.”

Jean Nicolai, WestEnder Newspaper, October 2, 2008

“(***Shattering*** is) political theatre at its most immediate.”

Jerry Wasserman, Vancouver Province, October 2, 2008

“Reality TV? Forget it. The real deal is happening down at the Japanese Hall. ***Shattering*** is brave, raw theatre. Diamond has a gift for taking an often completely intuitive intervention and articulating and clarifying it. All of us have some addiction or other. His are clearly making theatre and helping others get through tough times.”

Jo Ledingham, Vancouver Courier, October 1, 2008

“Not only do the ***Shattering*** actors know the reality of the world(s) they are inhabiting, they also seem to know rather deeply that they can individually and collectively handle complex audience interventions. Part of what is so deep about the show for me is their understated confidence as Forum Theatre actors. All of which, for me, made the invitation to intervene a rich, complicated and very powerful affair.”

Adam Ward, Vancouver audience member, September, 2008

Production shots

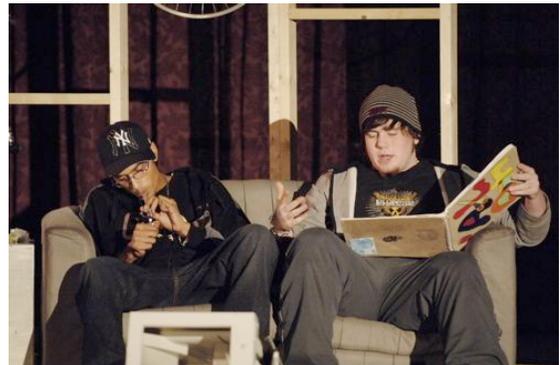
Group promo shot



Left to right:
Sophie Merasty (Denise), Herb
Varley (Clifford), Kayla Cardinal
(Karen), Betsy Ludwig (Mary),
Jordan Fields (Trey) and Cody Gray
(Adam).
Photo: David Cooper

In the Meth House

Left to right:
Jordan Fields (Trey) and Cody Gray.
Photo: David Cooper



Karen tries meth



Left to right:
Kayla Cardinal (Karen) and Jordan
Fields (Trey).
Photo: David Cooper

Karen discovers Mary drinking

Left to right:
Kayla Cardinal (Karen) and
Betsy Ludwig (Mary).
Photo: David Cooper



Late at night, back at home



Left to right:
Kayla Cardinal (Karen) and Herb Varley (Clifford).
Photo: David Cooper

Karen ponders the future



Left to right:
Kayla Cardinal (Karen) and Betsy
Ludwig (Mary).
Photo: David Cooper

The longer, detailed version

History of the original project, called *Meth*

On January 6, 2006 Headlines Theatre³ attended a meeting to which we had been invited on the Skwah (Sto:Lo) Reserve, near Chilliwack, organized by Marion Robinson of the Fraser Basin Council with (among others) Skwah First Nation Band Councilor Lester Mussell, Band Councilor and Elder Violet George and Grand Chief and Elder, Dr. Elizabeth Rose Charlie.

In the meeting crystal meth was described as “the new plague”. The drug situation, it was said, on and off Reserve, was brutal. There is a measurable demographic of grandparents raising toddlers - the young parents, strung out on meth, are absent; a whole generation is being lost in a slow genocide/suicide. There is a great deal of pain, people said, and many things are not being talked about. At the same time, they explained, community presentations from various authorities are telling them what they already know. Something else is needed.

That ‘something else’, it was suggested, could respond to the focus on crystal meth, *but also understand that the meth issue is the current manifestation of a larger issue of drug addiction in our society*. The public discussion about meth is very similar to the discussion of 8 – 10 years ago about heroin. While the meth issue is of immediate urgency, true prevention comes from an investigation of the human factors that lead people into addictive relationships with drugs, and confronting how we deal with addiction at a grassroots, human level.

A story was told in the Skwah meeting about the issue of battering and sexual assault – of a time when communities across the province found it extremely difficult to discuss those issues. Then, it was said, something happened in 1992 that was a pivot point – something that Elders in many First Nations communities still talk about as having brought the issues into the open: the BC Tour of Headlines’ **Out of the Silence**, originally co-produced with the Urban Representative Body of Aboriginal Nations and toured in co-operation with the BC Association of Indian Friendship Centres.

Out of the Silence was interactive, Forum Theatre. It opened up the potential for many communities, Native and non-Native, to deal with the issues of family violence at a community, grassroots level. A request was put forward in the Skwah meeting for Headlines to try to do the same with the issue of addiction.

³ At the meeting for Headlines were: David Diamond, Dafne Blanco, Dylan Mazur and Mumbi Tindyebwa

After the Skwah meeting we spoke with community leaders on the addiction issue in Vancouver and in other parts of BC.⁴ Response for a project was enthusiastically positive. Many letters of support for the project arrived.

Once we had the kind of permission that is indicated by the letters to embark on the project, fundraising began. Of course, getting the letters was the beginning of an ongoing networking process for the project.

Meth had a budget of approximately \$284,000 – a large sum on the surface but it covered a 20 person, week-long community workshop in which everyone was paid, and given continental breakfast and a hot, nutritious lunch, a three week creation and rehearsal process with a cast of six and professional design and technical team, a two week Vancouver run including a live, interactive tele / web cast and then a 27 community BC tour with eleven people on the road in a 15 passenger van and a 5 ton truck, lights, sound, portable stage, etc.⁵

When we got home from the tour, we had received another 30 requests for performances. We had no way to respond to this either financially or energetically. We put *Meth* to bed.

Then, in August of 2007, a Foundation That Wishes to Remain Nameless got in touch. The Foundation had supported the original production and was very impressed with what it had accomplished. They wanted to know if it was possible to remount the project and tour it throughout Western Canada.

We sent feelers out across BC, Alberta and Saskatchewan to test the waters. As we talked with people, we heard from some potential sponsors that while they loved the non-judgmental approach the *Meth* project took to addiction, and also appreciated how it was not at its hear about “meth”, but about the root causes of addiction, they wished the title was not the name of a particular drug. Meth had been prevalent two years ago – now the most visible drug was “crack”. What was appropriate in early 2006/07 was not appropriate in mid to late 2008.

And so - after a lot of discussion, we changed the title to: ***Shattering***. This worked on many levels: how individuals, families, communities shatter as a result of addiction; also how the project is about shattering pre-conceptions about the issue and approaches to the issue. The play remained the same, only the title changed.

⁴ Letters of support came from: BC Centre for Disease Control, Crossroads Treatment Centre, Downtown Eastside Youth Activities Society (Youth Detox Resource), Fort St. James Alcohol and Drug Counselling Services, Fraser Basin Council, Fraser House Society, Gitxsan Health Society, Grand Chief, Dr. Rose Charlie, O.B.C., Kakawis Family Development Centre, Latin American Community Council, Mission Community Justice Council, Namgis First Nation, Pacific Community Resources, Parents Together Program, Sun Country Community Futures Development Corporation, Touchstone Family Association, Vancouver Native Health Society Vanderhoof Alcohol and Drug Services, Watari Youth and Family Services, Western Canada Theatre.

⁵ The original touring company was the cast of 6 (Betsy Ludwig, Sophie Merasty, Herb Varley, Jordan Fields, Cody Gray and Kayla Cardinal) and Tim Cardinal [no relation] (Tech Director) Nicole Hawreschuk (Stage Manager) Robyn Volk (Crew), Gwen Matwick (addictions counselor), David Diamond (Director, Joker, Tour Manager)

Having done this, performances started to book and a Western Canada Tour became feasible. The Foundation agreed to contribute \$168,000 to an overall budget of \$355,000 to remount with the original cast, do 9 performances in Vancouver, and then tour into up to 35 communities across BC, AB and SK.⁶

Rehearsals

September 15, 2008

First day of rehearsal. Derek Butt (new Stage Manager) and I got there at 8:00 AM to open up and set up the room.

Everyone arrived, including most of the admin and design sides of the project. I think it is important that we are all in the room together to start. The cast, in particular, were excited to see each other after almost 2 years and also to meet Derek and Becky (new Support Person).

After intros and business items, we watched the DVD of the show, which was hard for some. Seeing one's self on TV is always a challenge.

And then....we did a run. This was a shock to the cast, that this was what I wanted to do, very first thing, but we can only begin from where we *are* and the only way to know where we are is to run the play. They were all saying, 'but I won't know my lines' and of course this would be OK, but I had a feeling that the play would be in their bodies, and of course it was. Once we started, a lot of it – really a lot – was there.

Although Derek has and needs a script for cues, the cast will be forbidden from seeing it. I don't want them memorizing lines. We have to rediscover the characters, motivations, fears, desires...and the words and emotional connections will come.

We have a chance here, because we already know the play works, to spend a luxurious and unusual amount of time on character development. I am certain this will deepen both the play and the Forum Theatre.

To that end, I did an exercise that I found for the first time doing "Here and Now", the play on gang violence a few years ago, and adapted it for this circumstance.

It seems important to remind you (reader) that all the actors in *Shattering* play characters – not themselves. We spent 30 minutes on each character, working in stages:

⁶ The touring company was the original cast of 6 (Betsy Ludwig, Sophie Merasty, Herb Varley, Jordan Fields, Cody Gray and Kayla Cardinal) and Tim Cardinal [no relation] (Tech Director) Derek Butt (Stage Manager) Robyn Volk and Tanqueray Fisher (Crew), Becky Hynes (addictions counselor), David Diamond (Director, Joker, Tour Manager)

1. the character sculpted an image of themselves in relation to the other characters in the play. We animated this image a bit.
2. we did a long character interview in which all cast members could ask questions of the character
3. with the information, the rest of the characters now placed themselves in an image, in relation to the character on whom we were focused and said 3 things:
 - a “character name”, I want you to...
 - b what each of them really dislikes about that character
 - c what each of them appreciates about that character

Taking each of them through this process proved to be very deep and it brought back and also invented new history and connections in the back story of the play. It also gave us new insights into the characters. For instance:

Mary (Betsy’s character) was beaten by her ex-husband and then thrown out of her house (drunk and naked, with only a coat) as a young mother. That was the moment she vowed her kids would never see anything like that again, and why she is so ashamed of her drinking, and is hiding bottles.

7

Denise (Sophie’s character and Mary’s daughter) always excelled at school. She ‘escaped’ her home life into study, and is still doing that – now pursuing a Masters in social work – but never venturing into the world of work. She feels safe in school – knows how to do that. Denise also married someone just like her father and when that man



started to do drugs and get abusive, she left him. He wrote letters to his daughter (Karen – Kayla’s character), but Denise never gave Karen the letters. Instead, she lied and said he had left them. Karen grew up believing this. Karen (Kayla’s character) is

8

⁷ Left to right: Cody Grey, Jordan Fields, Sophie Merasty, Kayla Cardinal, Betsy Ludwig, Herb Varley. Photo: David Diamond

⁸ Left to right: Cody Gray (on floor), Jordan Fields, Kayla Cardinal, Herb Varley, Sophie Merasty, Betsy Ludwig. Photo: David Diamond

drawn very quickly into deep connections with people, partly as a result of the above. She is very smart (like her Mom) and has been doing good in school. She wants to be a journalist. She doesn't feel she can leave home, though, until everything at home is "OK" – because she is the glue that holds it all together – everyone needs her....or at least she needs to believe that.

Adam (Cody's character) and Karen knew each other from quite young...as they matured their friendship changed and they fell in love. They had their first sex together. They had plans to run away together. Adam messed up and slept with Karen's best friend. Of course, this betrayal changed everything.

Adam entered foster care at 8 years old. He and his brother, Greg, who he worshipped, were not together, but stayed in touch. Greg was really a dad to



him. Greg and Trey's (Jordan's character) deep friendship created a "family" for Adam that he'd never really had. This is what he tries to fit back into with Trey in the play.

⁹

Trey is a business man. He and Greg had hit on a good thing, starting when they

were 13 – selling weed together, mentored by an older guy who knew that if they got caught, nothing would happen to them. They were good at selling drugs. Made a lot of money. Then one day, they got too busy and, being "double-booked" for deals, went off to separate transactions. Greg's deal went bad and he got knifed. If Trey had been there, it would have been different. Trey blames himself. He misses Greg, deeply. Maybe Adam can fill that empty space, and also reverse the downward trend for Trey; business has been bad since Greg's death. Trey doesn't function well alone.

Clifford (Herb's character) had it drummed into him early that he was a failure and would never amount to anything, although he made it all the way to Grade 11 – he dropped out during 12 when he injured his wrist and couldn't play lacrosse any more. His Aunt Denise had tried to talk him out of quitting, but he wouldn't listen. Terribly, she had been right about how hard it would be to get work with Grade 11. He is stuck now doing temporary dry-walling and such, and never satisfied with anything. He had a string of very good luck with poker, and got very deeply involved. He is certain now that a "big pot" is in the next game, and that his luck is going to change.

He is in Mary's home because it is the only place he feels safe. Adam, and the world Adam represents, is a threat to that safety.

⁹ Left to right: Jordan Fields, Cody Gray, Herb Varley, Kayla Cardinal, Betsy Ludwig, Sophie Merasty. Photo: David Diamond

All this and a lot more came today. Tomorrow, we will start standing scenes on their feet, finding rhythms.

September 16, 2008

We had a very good day today and got so much more done than I thought we would. We started working through the scenes, standing them up and made it through:

1. the funeral – Adam and Trey hook up and the re-connection with Karen becomes possible.
2. at home – we meet Cliff, Denise, Mary and Karen. We witness the family dynamics and Cliff borrows money to go gambling. Denise coerces Karen into housework, at a time when Karen really needs some space.
3. the Meth House #1 – Adam and Trey bond, and Adam ‘moves in’ to the space in Trey’s life that had been occupied by his brother, Greg.
4. the Meth House #2 – Adam has been there for days now, Karen sees how sketchy he is getting and gets introduced to meth. She leaves very worried about him, now that he is dealing with Trey.
5. Dinner – Adam comes to dinner, invited by Karen, and things explode between him and Cliff. In the aftermath, he is too sketchy to stay. Reacting to Denise’s attempts to help him, he runs away. This creates a confrontation between Denise and Mary in which family secrets about Karen’s Dad come out. Karen runs away and goes to Trey’s. Mary and Denise fight about the past – Denise leaves and Mary drinks.

Tomorrow we will do Adam’s psychotic episode and then the end of the play, back at Karen’s house and it will all be back on its feet. Amazing we have moved so fast, and amazing, too, that we are discovering new approaches to moments. The cast are happy and excited and have said numerous times that they feel like the play will be stronger and more clear this time around.

September 17, 2008

I let everyone go at 3:00 today. We got in and chatted for a bit – some schedule changes – Christopher (Publicist) pointed out that there was no space for a media call on Preview night, so we moved actor call from 6:30 to 6:00. Becky is organizing early voting for people, and absent voting, as we will be away when the election happens, etc.

We started on the psychotic episode and I took the time with them to really build the “pre-scene”...what is happening before our onstage scene starts?

I had a feeling, because this scene in particular is so physical, that it would be there, in their bodies and flow well – if we could circumvent the intellectual aspect of memory.

There is very interesting work being done these days on where memory “resides”. Neuroscientists doing physical brain experiments on rats and such are finding that memories do NOT reside solely in the brain. Memories are retained at a cellular, perhaps energetic level. Some are beginning to think that memories reside in the energy field that surrounds each of our bodies, and so, in fact “outside” the physical body. Fascinating....

At any rate, I had them improvise the 10 or so minutes that precede our onstage scene and by the time we arrived at our beginning....they were in full swing and did a great run of the onstage scene – almost word perfect – certainly with all the intensity, blocking, physicality, dramatic arc – after having been away from it for almost 2 years.

It was not so easy with the final, less physical scene in the house. Some of these particular cast members, though, also get much more caught up in their heads. And so we spent about an hour rediscovering the sequences, the ebb and flow.

Then we did a run that went 25 minutes. That was terrific. 3rd day of rehearsal and we are running 25 minutes – the play should be, I think, about 23 minutes. Of course it isn't all there yet – we do have work to do. Especially in the first half of the play – it feels a bit like they are “telling” us the story instead of “living” the story. This is perfectly understandable considering what we are doing and where in the process we are. My task will be to help them bring each moment into the present.

I did notes and then, after lunch, we cleaned up bits of scenes. We are finding, as I mentioned yesterday, small new ways to do things. For instance, there is a moment in the Meth House when Trey gives Adam the meth for the first time. The sequence used to be:

Adam what happened with my brother, man?
 Trey I don't want to talk about that. (after a pause) Here, take this.
 Adam Yeah, sweet.

The scene plays much better if Trey gives Adam the pipe ON his line, and cuts the ‘here – take this’. This small change really clarifies the moment and makes it something Trey and Adam do *together*, instead of something Trey does to Adam.

Jane (Costume Designer) is coming after lunch tomorrow with costumes – great that some of them are coming so soon.

Derek and I talked about him starting to do sound cues, but he needs the actual sound deck we will use because the play/pause mechanism will determine start/stop timings. It'd be great, now that we are into running, if we could get an early jump on this.

September 18, 2008

Another good rehearsal day today – intense – and with some surprises.

I spent the day going deeper into the scenes. We uncovered some lovely moments, new layers. What is happening is that this time around, because we know and trust what the play is, we are not worried about how it portrays the addiction issue – we already know it accomplishes that. This means we have the luxury of really focusing on the characters and the relationships between and inside the characters.

This incarnation is the same play, but at the same time, we all think it feels quite different. The relationship between Adam and Trey seems deeper – the same for Adam and Karen. The intertwining inside the family is more intricate – more full of both love and resentment.

The title change reared its head today in a way I hadn't anticipated. We are starting to work with the slide images, which are all set and burned into sequences on a DVD. Trouble is, we begin and end with a slide of the *Meth* poster.

Because these two images have to change, this means we have to rebuild the whole slide sequence for the whole play and re-burn the DVD. I am hoping Caitlin, who burned the DVD 2 years ago, still has the images...otherwise, we have to go back to Lincoln, the photographer, get the images again, do all the timings again....Oh well – there were bound to be surprises. The Devil is, indeed, in the details.

Jane brought most of the costumes in today and they look great. Some small changes to make. The furniture is also arriving. Yvan (set designer) found the meth house couch and it will work really well.

We finished the day with quite a solid run (no light, sound – but Derek is playing with slides already).

September 20, 2008

An odd day in rehearsal today, although we got some good work done. The energy this morning, after a day off, was pretty ragged. A couple of the cast members in rough shape for various reasons (not partying too hard) – I also think, as one of them said, we didn't know how hard we'd been working until we had a day off. Putting the play back up is very emotionally draining.

We started by cleaning up some of the moments from notes on the run last Friday and then worked the final two scenes. In the psychotic episode this meant really mapping out Trey's physical and emotional journey from Karen's entrance to the end of the scene and also re-establishing that the barking dogs (that are in Adam's head) are, from his perspective, situated outside the door.

We also spent some time working background on the final scene. A discovery: There is a pile of letters that Karen's father had sent for her over the years, that Denise has always been intercepting. As a reaction to Karen's whereabouts being unknowable for 28 hours, Denise, in her panic, has opened up the box of letters and has been going through them. This has taken her down a path of questioning really core decisions she has made in raising her daughter. She has started to see how her desire to protect Karen has created the same secrets in Karen's life that Denise's mother created in Denise's life.

After the scene work we did a run. The structure of the play is there, but (the cast agreed) the run lacked "juice". It felt like they were outside all the moments, showing us the play instead of experiencing it. This is such a fine line, but creates the difference between it being really exciting and kind of boring.

I think that one of the reasons this is happening is that we are, in fact, ahead of the curve; the play came back together faster than any of us anticipated, and they are already bored doing it for me, Derek and Becky. They need an audience, and we aren't getting one for a while yet – AND the play needs work.

So – instead of doing another run or scene work, which had the potential to be like beating a dead horse, I decided to start doing some Forum with them. They were quite worried about this, but it was a good choice. They remembered how much fun the Forum can be – it really raised their spirits – and they were good at it, of course.

We had a chat about not trying to teach the audience members anything as Forum actors – that their job is to tell the truth of the particular moment, to pay attention, etc.

We did this for about an hour and then, at 4:00 (we were scheduled to go until 6:00), Derek and I agreed we would let them go. Before leaving, we all had a chat about how the Forum rehearsal can remind us that the play needs to be as clear and deeply engaged as possible – it is this that the audience responds to in the Forum. This means, that regardless if they are bored doing it for the three of us or not at this point, that we need to seize the rehearsal opportunity to finish solidifying the play.

Tomorrow we will do at least 2 or 3 runs, with notes in between. The stage goes up tonight – so this will also be a new good thing, another layer.

September 21, 2008

Well – a long, complex and fruitful day. The Tech team was in last night and put the stage in, part of the set, the light trees are up (no lights yet), lots of equipment, cables. It is large. Great to see it coming together again. The stage floor's been painted. The cast was excited to be back on the stage.

I'd had an idea for the morning, seeing as we seem a little ahead of the curve right now and have some time. We went back into image work – it was very valuable for the cast when we started this remount process. I've been playing with an 'exploded' version of Complete the Image. I asked each character (each one took about 20 minutes) to place themselves on stage somewhere inside our world – anywhere that makes sense to them, in a shape that is the core emotion of the character.

Adam went on the stage stairs, in between both worlds. His head in his hands. The rest of the cast fit themselves around him into an image. We animated that and talked through the relationships, discovering new layers.

Trey placed himself on his sofa, legs and arms open, smiling...the characters placed themselves. This unlocked a sense of how oblivious Trey really is to the rest of the people around him.

Karen placed herself also in between both worlds, crouched on her knees, in a shape with the planet on her back. Characters placed themselves – no one – not one, reacting to her burden.

Cliff placed himself behind the sofa – peering over – characters placed themselves – and we delved into Cliff's sense of failure and fear.

Mary placed herself inside the Meth House! Characters placed themselves. we talked about the links between Mary and Trey.

Denise put herself on the stairs, holding both the meth pipe and the gin bottle. Characters placed themselves. This led into a discussion of Denise's childhood and her aversion to alcohol and drugs, and her quest to "win" over adversity.

What I've written just scratches the surface of the work. The two hours were very, very rich, and fed the runs in the afternoon, and also, I am sure, will help Forum. The more fleshed out that characters can be the better.

After lunch we did a run. Again, the structure is there but not necessarily the fire. We did notes and cleaned up some scenes. Adam is hurting his back in the psychotic episode – he is falling badly – we need to choreograph it again, so it happens the way it used to – his body, I think, has forgotten. For now, he isn't going to fall – until we can fix it, and I didn't want to do that with his back sore.

Another run. Many of the scenes lit up. Not all of them, but many. Of course the key to this is the actors surrendering to the play. Forgetting anything that is coming. Being secure that when the response needs to come, it will be there.

It is time for runs now. We have Monday off and then early on Tuesday, we will do a cue-to-cue for Derek so he can at least get his head and hands around slides and sound, which are coming already. Then, after the TV crew and a meal break, we will do at least another two runs.

September 23, 2008

Man, I hate days like today. We started out OK – the interview for CBC, for Almanac went well. Then I took Kayla back to the hotel and headed to Future Shop to return the \$60.00 DVD player that I got yesterday – that the salesperson promised would be able to run without onscreen “play” and “pause” signals, but it didn’t. I was told there by two different people that there is no such thing at a consumer level player that does this any more.

Word came from Christopher that the 1:30 PM 24 Newspaper interview had canceled.

Adeline Huynh (Headlines’ Production Manager) discovered that we could rent an appropriate DVD player from the place we got all the light and sound last time for a mere \$150. We weren’t doing that because we were under the impression that it was ridiculously costly – more cost effective to purchase. We had one couriered to the rehearsal hall for a 2PM start.

More of the set has arrived and the lights are now up. We started a cue to cue on just slides and sound – no light, and discovered that the DVD player goes into ‘screen-saver’ mode – an RCA logo bouncing on the screen – if it is idle for 7 minutes and, because it came without a remote, we can’t change the settings. The rental place has no remote for the machine.

The cue to cue went quite well, though, and Derek picked the slide and sound cues up really quickly, while I adjusted some of the timings. It is really interesting to come back to something after two years and see the rhythms and moments in a new way. Subtle changes.

The SHAW TV crew arrived to do a promo shoot – we gave them me, Betsy and Jordan to interview and then a scene. Suddenly they were going to air it a week later than Christopher had been told – he ended up calling and got it moved earlier so it has a chance of serving the Vancouver run.

By this time, Derek had found, through Craig Hall, (who has designed and Technical Directed for Headlines and is now the Artistic Director at Rumble) that there IS a DVD player that will do the trick for about \$100. Derek found one. After some technical difficulties getting it to display image on the screen it does work and that is now resolved – thanks Derek.

After dinner we finished the last 2 scenes of cue to cue. Jane arrived with some costume addition/changes, Yvan with some set stuff, and finally, at about 7:00 PM, having started at 2:00, we started a run of the show.

Don't get me wrong, we got a lot done during the day, it just felt so very fragmented. The cast and Derek did a pretty powerful run. Integration of the sound and slides has gone well. As this happens the ebb and flow of scenes within the context of the whole play start to become more visible, which is what the notes are starting to focus on now.

Tomorrow we will work some scenes starting at 2:00 and then get at least one run in. Dinner at 5:00. At 7:00 we have an invited Forum coming (I hope – about 12 people), so we can get our Forum feet wet. Then the next day we have full tech, integrating the lights into the slides and sound. Then preview. Then we are open!

September 24, 2008

To begin at the end, we had a great run tonight and wonderful Forum. The cast and Derek navigated it all really, really well. As Dafne (Outreach Coordinator) said to me after – the play is stronger, the characters much deeper. I think she is correct – we've done well.

Jordan and I did a good 30 minutes on the Bill Good Show (CKNW radio) this morning. The phones are ringing more now, and I understand we have 70 reservations now for opening and other nights are increasing. Congrats to all in the office.

A cold is starting in the cast – Jordan, Cody and Becky already. I need to get cold remedies tomorrow.

Only Adeline, Dafne and Christopher (all Headlines) and Charly (a friend of Adeline's) were at the invited Forum – very hard to get people out to something like this, but they did well. I am too tired to write about the Forum itself.

We have called the cast for 5PM tomorrow, anticipating we can do all of the Technical rehearsal and get at least one full run in by 10:00 PM. Tim and his helper, Peter, will be at the space until quite late tonight, finishing the set.

September 25, 2008

It is late, after 1 Am. This will be short. We had hoped to tech from 5 PM – 10 PM – it took until midnight – not too bad.

We are having DVD player control problems. There is a “disc” on the front of the DVD, about the size of a nickel. “Play” is at 3:00 and “stop” is at 6:00. It is easy, in dim light, running fast cues, to press stop instead of play. When this

happens the brand name of the machine fills the screen. Not good. Derek is trying to train his fingers. He did great tonight – took in a lot of information and made a great deal of it work. The control on the machine is ridiculous.

Sometime between the last tour and the start of rehearsals, Cody developed a back problem that he never told me about. In the last few days, doing the psychotic episode (the thrashing about) has started to really hurt his back. We did about 40 shows last time with no back pain, so at first, I thought it was that he was landing badly when falling to the floor. We reworked that but it didn't solve the problem. I suggested today we change the way the episode happens, but he doesn't want to.

He has a back brace in Prince George, which I have suggested we courier down, but he insists that he can't reach anyone in order to do that. I suggested we see a physiotherapist tomorrow. He refused. He is going to get a football back brace, which he says will help, and that Headlines will pay for.

The show will always get a little shaken up when all the light and sound get added in. The actors really hung in there for Tech and then we did not a bad run. We will get another run in at 4:00 tomorrow before the Preview, which has turned, really, into opening night.

Christopher let me know this morning that both reviewers that are coming (the Georgia Straight and the Courier) have now decided to come to Preview. This is quite a drag, as one does "preview" to get a show under the collective belt before opening officially. The reviewers shouldn't matter, of course, and they DO, of course. We really need tomorrow before we will be ready for the public. Suddenly, the pressure is on.

Tomorrow we need to finish staining all the wood in the set, paint the stage, clean up the very messy room, get the seats in, get the resource table and box office in, work some moments, have a run and notes, get a dinner break, and be calm and ready for an audience at 8:00 PM.

The Vancouver run

September 26, 2008

Preview night. Capacity: 120 Attendance: 25 = 21%

I had hoped that Cody would find a back brace today but he didn't. I've found a place that sells them and he and I are going there at noon tomorrow. I have to say, he was a trooper today. He also took my advice and we rethought how he shakes on the floor so it now mostly involves his legs and arms.

We cleaned up some transitions this afternoon and then had a pretty good run. The play is solid, and the cues are tightening. We spent quite a bit of time cleaning up the room.

We went into the preview with 40 reservations – and had a high no-show rate of almost 50%. I think this is due to 20 of the reservations being one booking. We have to be wary of this – in my experience this kind of high number in one reservation rarely means that that many are coming.

The front of the Hall, (outside) is very, very dark, to the point of us being invisible. Adeline is going to get some white Christmas lights tomorrow to put around our *Shattering* sandwich board and also around the “Japanese Hall” name.

In the audience were about 8 - 10 drug users or ex-users and they got very deeply involved in the Forum. They loved it and they were great. Even though the number was small, the Forum went really well. I do believe the reviewer from one of the papers was crying at one point.

Some highlights:

A man replaced Adam at Trey’s and (loving the art work) pushed through wanting to know about his brother, Greg. It was a very NOT naïve intervention, as he still got stoned on meth with Trey . It wasn’t about the drugs, it was about his brother and the truth. This really deepened, made more authentic the relationship with Trey. Knowing the truth also alerted him to the world he was entering – a very dangerous world – and altered, slightly, his relationship to the drugs.

A woman replaced Karen and took Adam aside when he was coming into dinner and very privately asked him if he was stoned. She did this in a very “surgical” way, so she didn’t “out” him in front of the family. When she verified her suspicion that he was stoned, she told him to go home. This had enormous ramifications. He didn’t run out of dinner later, and because there was no drama around him, neither did she run out later. There was no psychotic episode (tonight), she didn’t spend the night smoking drugs in the street (tonight). She also didn’t hear about her father (tonight) – that secret remained a secret, so there was a high price to pay, but this small act of creating safety with her family (and for Adam) resonated throughout the room and the story.

There were many lovely moments, lots of laughter, some tears. The cast were great.

Once again, we were kind of swamped after, with people telling their stories and the users, in particular, offering to network the show in their community.

We will not do an afternoon run tomorrow. I have called the company for 6:30, normal run-time call. They were proud and happy.

September 27, 2008

Opening night in Vancouver

Capacity: 120

Attendance: 115 = 96%

The cast were really pumped for opening and it was a very full and diverse house. By that I mean: people interested in Headlines and Forum Theatre, strangers to the work who were drawn to the addiction issue, people who told us they were going to have to leave early because the half-way house they are in has a curfew, layers of race, income levels, etc.

Musqueam Elder Larry Grant did a welcome into Musqueam Territory, and talked about the links between the Musqueam and Japanese (we are in the Japanese Hall). He also mentioned his own history with Headlines as a participant in the Language Loss projects at UBC and the power of the *Meth* project – now *Shattering*. He stayed until the end of the evening, something I know he does not always do when he does welcomes.

The play itself, we all agreed later, was a bit nervous. We had a better run the previous night. It is such a strange thing about opening nights. Still, it was solid. Derek's fingers also seem to have figured out the finicky controls of the DVD player, although he is still going to look at a different machine on the day off, and make a decision about whether he wants to change machines or not.

The Forum started slowly, as they often do, but once it got started there were lots and lots of interventions, many people not getting a chance to get on stage.

Every night is so different. Personally, I think Preview had a deeper authenticity of intervention than opening – this is often the case – opening night tends to attract more “tourists” to the issue than any other night. On Preview many of the interveners had obviously ‘been into the Meth House’, for instance...not the case tonight. Having said that – the interventions were deep and the expression of this audience, tonight.

A woman replaced Mary in the first family scene and did something no one has ever done. She asked Cliff what he wanted the \$20 for. Why is he always borrowing money? This pushed Cliff more “underground” though, although it also helped the relationship between Mary and Denise. Mary was starting here to name things, open up secrets, in her home. If it continued, great things could happen.

A young woman replaced Karen in the Meth House near the end of the play, before the Episode. She was very aggressive about not getting more stoned to the point where she grabbed the pipe and threw it out the window, which led to Trey punching her in the face and Adam kicking her out. This intervention

put Karen in grave danger and, at the same time, protected Adam as it diverted the evening in such a way that the Episode didn't happen. It also meant that Karen went home that night and not into the street. Interesting thoughts here about how risky creating safety in very dangerous situations can be. How far are we prepared to risk? What is "safe"?

There was prolonged applause and, from what I hear from Headlines' Staff tremendous feedback from the audience. Many stayed for the opening night reception upstairs.

Now we are really into the run. A show tomorrow and then a day off and then a week until leaving on tour.

...and the rest of the Vancouver run

September 28, 2008 Capacity: 120 Attendance: 15 = 12%

Well, that was difficult.

We went into the show with 30 reservations (very small) and then had a 50% no-show rate. In my introduction, I talked with the audience about the number of people in the room, and prepared them for a question after the play, which would be – would they want to do Forum Theatre.

The run was OK, but tired. Moments are already starting to wander. As was the case last time, we are going to have to have fairly constant notes.

We finished the play and I explained what we would do and asked the audience if they could imagine themselves participating – acknowledging that I knew there were no guarantees – but that it was against my principles to trap them into it. Six of the fifteen raised their hands. I decided to forge ahead.

Interventions were slow to start, but on the second repeat of the first scene someone did yell stop. My hope was that we had broken the ice but then when we got to the first family scene there was silence. Another intervention came in the Meth House, after quite a bit of prodding, and then one with Mary drinking.

Then an intervention that went back to the Meth House, and then nothing at dinner and nothing with the women after dinner. I started to see a pattern and spoke about it:

It was OK for this audience to do interventions about the drug and alcohol addiction but, for some reason, not in the family. We could explore the symptoms of the addiction in the Meth House, but not the causes of the addiction –the secrets, silence and trauma inside the family. Isn't this exactly

what happens in society? This reaction to symptoms, but not root causes? I challenged the audience to risk doing in the theatre what society seems, from all that we see in relation to the issue, we are reluctant or incapable of doing out in the world.

I asked them if they understood what I was referring to. They all raised their hands. We went back into the scene with the women and there was utter silence. So much silence throughout this night.

And so I did what I did last time this happened in Kitimaat Village in 2007. I sat down on the stairs and suggested we talk about the silence. I won't (and can't) drag an audience through Forum Theatre. A conversation began about the paralysis of not having clear answers, and shame, and fear. Do we need clear answers to explore solutions, I asked? And so we talked for about 20 minutes and then closed the evening, at about 10:00.

In doing so I told the story of *Meth* performing in 2007 in Gitanmaax one day – to audience members lined up to make interventions, and Kitimaat Village three days later – to deep, deep silence. Same play; different community. I explained my own belief that the power of this work is that it meets communities where they are, and it must be the case that this “living community”, in this room, tonight, is in this place. And so what happened here is not a failure, not a problem, but the appropriate thing to happen – or their reaction to this play – the same play that generated lots of interventions yesterday and the day before, would not have been so much silence.

There were, once again, a lot of compliments on the play. Some of the cast were quite disappointed in the evening, some were fine. It did feel quite fractured. We have a day off tomorrow – a good thing – many, myself included, are exhausted.

Addendum: this email arrived:

Hi David,

Good to visit with you before the show. The silence in the family scenes and the discussion at the end of the play were very powerful events for me. Lots of truth there. The cast and the production has a seasoned depth that really animates the disorienting social reality of substance abuse; the stage felt like quicksand, authentic quicksand, when I stepped onto / into it.

I appreciated the non-coercive approach you took as a joker, not wanting people to feel "trapped" or "pressured." As you already know, but I just witnessed: the non-pressured freedom you afforded the audience allowed us (as an audience) to wrestle with the meanings of our silence.

Not typing (or thinking) very clearly. It is late. Appreciated the opportunity to see it again. I was a bit fogged out afterward; wish I'd taken a moment to wave or say goodbye. The evening, especially the silence and the unfolding of Forum Theatre event into a public dialogue, gave me a great deal to chew on on the way home.

Hope Monday affords you some rest. Hope this note finds you well.

All the Best, Adam

September 30, 2008

Capacity: 120

Attendance: 49 = 41%

Good to have had a day off.

We came into the evening with over 60 reservations. This is an 18% no-show rate that is not being covered by “walk-ins”. In Headlines’ experience, the “walk-ins” (people arriving with no reservation) usually fill that gap so, this is quite frustrating. It is an indicator, I think, that the mainstream publicity is not working. It is the outreach that is bringing people into the theatre.

We had a good show tonight. I talked with the cast before-hand about “being” in the situations off the top – about the reality of the funeral and the reality of the loud TV – these two things start the Adam/Trey/Karen and the “family” scenes respectively; they start the “paths” of each story. If the actors start “on top” then it is easier to skim over. If they start “inside”, then the play can take them. This image worked well for them tonight.

The Forum was again, slow to start, but then on the second run of the first scene, after a little prodding, we got going. We got a few very calm and centred versions of Denise tonight. Denise with no need to control what is around her; Denise with no competition in regards to Mary or Cliff. In both these instances Denise was able to open up “space” inside the family for real discussion to happen and also for others to feel safe. The questions we got to talk about through this, by asking what it is that Denise needs to conquer in order to let go of her addiction to controlling everything – had to do with her dealing with her own fear that there is no expertise around her, that she has to have all the answers. If she can relax into not knowing everything, then the pressure in the whole family decreases.

There was a moment tonight that was lovely at dinner. A ‘Denise’ found a way to not crowd Adam. He and Karen went for a chat, and then went back to the house for dinner. No psychotic episode, no Karen in the street, because *Denise* controlled herself. When the audience recognized this, the breath it took was palpable. An “aha” moment about how things really are interconnected.

We also had some very powerful “Karens” on the stage tonight. Young women who were compelled to fight for their own space in Trey’s apartment. One of them got kicked out by Adam – she didn’t get what she wanted – or did she? Her insistence that he come with her, although it really pissed him off, changed something in his trajectory – Adam agreed in discussion.

The audience got to their feet tonight at the end. Our first standing ovation. Lots of congratulations from strangers, saying it was amazing. And a man from Bella Bella wanting the show to come there – not possible now – but he says he will bring people to 100 Mile House, and I gave him a brochure and explained the Community Power Play process.

October 1, 2008

Capacity: 120

Attendance: 131 = 109%

The office tells me that sometime in the afternoon the phones went crazy. Hard to know why. This was an amazing house for a Wednesday night. Hard to believe it was all due to the Courier Newspaper review that came today. Perhaps (more likely) a combination of numerous things, outreach, publicity, the Outreach help from Michelle LaFlamme and Ann Livingstone, active word of mouth (I am asking the audience each night to be a publicity “army”). A quote from the Courier:

“Reality TV? Forget it. The real deal is happening down at the Japanese Hall. *Shattering* is brave, raw theatre. Diamond has a gift for taking an often completely intuitive intervention and articulating and clarifying it. All of us have some addiction or other. His are clearly making theatre and helping others get through tough times.”

Jo Ledingham, Vancouver Courier, October 1, 2008

The Forum was a little “circus” like tonight. We had one of those nights of naïve interventions, until quite late in the play. Some of this, I think, was my fault. It started early, and built slowly, with interventions that had a “flavour” of young, peer counselor ideas; people, I think, who have themselves been through counseling, trying it out on the characters. Until a woman replaced Karen and brought a “Karen” onto the stage that was anti-drugs and preached a “no-drugs” philosophy. I stopped the intervention and reminded her that Karen had just been smoking weed and meth in Trey’s apartment. She replied. “not THIS Karen”. And I talked, again, about “magic” as I had at the beginning of the Forum.

Now, these kinds of interventions have their value. They are an indicator of the consciousness of this audience tonight. They explore and discover from where they are. Tonight, this included approaching the characters from a place some of the interveners wanted the characters to be, instead of where they are. Of course, we got a chance to talk about this.

There were also some really profound moments. A woman, who said she didn’t know what she wanted to do, replaced Denise with Mary, in the scene between the two women near the end of the play. She really struggled to speak, and got to a deep core between the two women – a core of secrets and silence, that is affecting the whole family – and through the ripple effect, Adam as well. Perhaps through Adam and Trey. It was one of those moments, and I took the opportunity to talk about it, when we were actually dealing with root causes tonight and not symptoms. The meth is a symptom, the alcohol is a symptom. As a 10 year old in the house asked tonight...WHY is Mary drinking?? When we can dig to there, we get to the addiction issue.

A young man who had obviously (and he verified this) been in a Meth House replaced Adam in the Meth House and very interestingly, latched onto the books in the drawer. Adam’s been awake for days and has been reading, and is now wondering what the meth is DOING to him. Trey won’t help, but Karen recognizes the invitation and puts her own issues aside and leaves the

apartment with Adam. No episode. No 28 hours in the street. A moment of the user finding a way to create some self-care.

And so there was pretty deep learning in the midst of the naiveté this evening and also inspiration in the experience that came onto the stage. During the course of the Forum we lost about 20 people – not all at once – trickling out. I am aware that each night some of them are from half-way houses with curfews; for others, it is just too intense and for some, I imagine, they don't like the Forum Theatre concept. We are being swamped after performances by people with such deep heartfelt thanks and appreciation. Losing some is completely OK, of course. You can't please everyone, and mustn't try.

October 2, 2008

Capacity: 120

Attendance: 76 = 63%

We went into tonight with 120 reservations. The 76 that attended include 20 "walk-ins" (no reservation). This means that 64 of the 120 didn't show. This is an outrageously high 'no-show' rate. Higher, I think than I have experienced with any show. 76 people tonight is perfectly acceptable – especially considering the Federal Election debate AND the US VP debate were tonight – but the no-show stat is mysterious and extraordinary.

The play went pretty well tonight, especially considering how very sick Cody is with a cold now. He was a real trooper. First Jordan had it, now Cody.

The audience was incredibly diverse this evening. Many of them middle to upper class, it seems; Christopher says from a "parents of addicted teens" (or something like that) program in Coquitlam. Tonight, only about 20% of the audience raised their hands when I asked if they knew what being at a Forum Theatre event meant. There were also current users in the audience, people with counselors from rehab programs. I think there is great value in this diversity experiencing the project together.

And all aspects of the audience intervened. A woman who identified herself as a heroin user was the first to yell "stop" and replaced Karen at the funeral. She pushed really hard against Adam in such a way that she alienated him, much to her surprise. Adam really wanted someone to talk to, but she needed it to be about her, and in this moment at the funeral, he needed it to be about him.

A man on crutches replaced Adam in the first meth scene. He couldn't make it up the stairs onto the stage so we played it on the floor. This Adam really pushed to find out about the brother – circumvented the meth entirely – and got "inside" Trey. He made Trey question his own life and his own choices. This man who – I believe, has some connection, somehow, with gang issues, knew what he was talking about – he had "been there".

Once again there were fewer interventions in the family scenes. I think they cut really close to home for a lot of the audience. I say this not just because of

the silences – but because people came to me after, saying that Karen or Adam was their daughter or son – and that the event had been so powerful and useful. I urged the audience to risk experimenting in the story over and over again here in the theatre, where it has no consequence.

A young guy in heavy street/gang attire, replaced Trey in the Meth House. He was full of hip hop hands and feet and almost not understandable. He wore a hat AND a hood. This Trey came into the House, after dealing in the street and talked, almost to himself, with Karen and Adam there, about how he wanted to quit. They should quit. It sounds like magic as I write – but it wasn't – it was so authentic. Adam ended up trying to introduce Karen to the meth but Karen stopped it. Something about what Trey was saying/doing, made her wonder about the drug and if it wasn't responsible for Adam's sketchiness.

What happened here? Trey took off his “mask” – the intervener and Trey both agreed – Trey has this wish and self-doubt every day. The young guy from the audience knows this well. He is currently in rehab (he shared this with us). Trey is telling the truth. Not for Karen, or for Adam, but for himself. In doing so, he changes the trajectory of everyone immensely. He does have choice, as we all do.

A woman replaced Denise at dinner and very shortly after Adam arrived, having cracked through Denise's fear (she later explained) of cracking her denial, asked Adam to leave. He did – gladly – having come for some kind of connection, but having got there, knowing he can't deal with it. He leaves and, because Denise has “created safety” in her own home, he is also on a very different trajectory for the evening. Karen is furious, but there will be no argument tonight (and no revealing of secrets). No Episode. No 28 hours in the street.

A very well intentioned young woman replaced Adam in the Meth House, before the Episode. I checked with her a couple of time about her ability to access his state. She kept saying she could, but could not in any way. It is essential for the exploration – he is hallucinating now – electric shocks through his body. It was pure magic on the stage and highly judgmental. Fascinatingly, she announced that she works with kids who have drug addiction issues, and, by her own admission, knows nothing about the reality. She “learned a lot” she said. I did not say this on stage, but will here: How can she possibly be hired to do work like that? Her lack of understanding and the judgmental things that the lack of understand led her to say and do inside the intervention, are a window into part of the problem with approaches to addiction.

A woman replaced Cliff in the final scene and wanted to assert herself as the character, but ran smack into the silencing and denying of expertise of the family – in the similar way that a woman had replaced Karen with Mary and the alcohol, and had run into her own desire not to hurt her grandmother – and the grandmother's desire not to hurt her grand daughter. This creates

the silence between them, not wanting to enter that unknown painful place from the known painful place they are currently in.

We didn't lose many at all tonight. They stayed through an event that took 2 hours and 20 minutes. And they swarmed the cast after with praise, thanks and awe.

October 3, 2008

Capacity: 120

Attendance: 137 = 114%

So – we packed 'em in there tonight. Again, a very diverse audience in every way imaginable. We also videotaped it all (two cameras) for an archival video. Off the top I explained the possible uses of the video for funding bodies, also for educational use by agencies, not for commercial broadcast. I asked each intervener if they were OK with the camera – if not it would go off – and no one asked for it to go off.

The play is solid. It is “drifting” very little. Derek and I agree that this is likely because the actors are so grounded in their characters. Much more so than in the first incarnation. Also Cody is feeling better but now it is possible Herb is getting sick.

We had a lot of interventions tonight and could have gone for hours.

Highlights:

A woman recognized Adam's need to know the details about Greg and took Trey to a bar to drink and talk. In this environment the story could be told. Today she didn't go over there. No meth, no beginning of the journey. We talked, as is often the case, about how we fill the spaces that open up inside us.

A complex intervention in which a young woman replaced Karen when she finds Mary drinking. The intervener Karen speaks plainly to her grandmother who seems to respond positively and quickly. A man in the audience took exception to this and yelled “stop” and replaced Mary in order to create safety for Mary with the new Karen. He refused to stop drinking, which started a power struggle between Mary and Karen. Karen saying ‘well, if you won't stop drinking, can I drink too?’ Panic from the intervener grandmother. “No...he said and they both dug in. Ironically, in discussion we discover that our Mary is, of course, lying to Karen about stopping. She has no intention of stopping – just getting her grand daughter off her back. The audience Mary creates a deeper “trap” by telling the “truth” and perhaps this is what Mary actually wants – to be trapped by her family – although she would never articulate it that way. The road to “safety” for Mary is full of danger.

A young guy, who obviously knew what he was talking about, replaced Trey in the Episode scene and from inside the tension, used Karen's entrance as the reason to “flip out”. He flipped the furniture over (freaking the actors out

for a second, but when I watched him I knew he was in control) and then started yelling that he'd had enough – he had to get out – he was going to Montreal, and he left. No one has ever done this before. Karen and Adam continued the scene. Adam went into a panic. He's lost Trey now as well as his brother. Karen tried to calm him down but this just infuriated him – he kicked her out and locked the door. The Episode happened and he was alone.

Our Trey agreed that he thinks about getting out every day. He doesn't because of his sense of family. The intervener Trey "takes care" of himself – and he does – he gets out of the danger he is currently in, and in the process, he abandons Adam. There is a price for things. For Karen, this meant she went to a girlfriend's – not home – but also not into the streets all drugged up. Positive and negative ramifications to Trey's actions.

A standing ovation again tonight.

October 4, 2008

Capacity: 120

Attendance: 149 = 124%

This afternoon I was on Fourth Avenue and a man's voice yelled, "Hey, Dave!" (No one who really knows me calls me "Dave", so it made me wonder immediately). It was a homeless man. He had seen the show and was really impressed with it. He told me that his friends were still talking about it and the idea of Forum Theatre. I asked him how he had heard about it. 'Through rehab', was the answer. He said he was hoping to come again and bring more friends. I explained that we only have two shows left, but he knew this already and said he'd be there. We then got to talking about how he was doing, how hard rehab was, etc. He explained that his teeth were hurting and he needed a dentist, but couldn't get in to see one. I asked him if he was going to be there, on the corner, for a while and told him I'd be back.

While in the store, I ran into a man I have known for years who does some film acting on the side and accounting as a day job. Ari told me that his daughter, a social worker, had been to see the show – and was raving to all her friends about it. She had done an intervention.

I bought the stuff I needed and some clove oil (good for tooth pain) and energy bars, went back out and gave the oil and bars to the man in the street. One of those moments where the human connection made helping somehow more imperative for me. He wanted to know if there was anything he could do in return, maybe to help the play. I gave him some leaflets and explained that even though the tickets he'd been given had "free admission" on them. He finished my sentence by saying that admission was by donation anyway. Yes, I agreed and he said he'd be happy to hand the postcards out among his friends.

We had 149 people in there tonight, although not the homeless man from this afternoon. I wish that the video cameras would have been there tonight, instead of last night. Tonight seemed more informed, which made the Forum more dynamic and, I think more interesting and challenging.

The show itself was a little loose tonight. Everyone is tired. I think I will take notes for the actors tomorrow – haven't done that since we opened, and then give the notes before the Agassiz show – tighten things back up a bit. Having said that, it went very well tonight and, once again, people were blown away.

I am actually too tired to remember individual interventions. I've been sitting here for a few minutes trying, but my mind is a fuzzy blur.

October 5, 2008 Capacity: 120 Attendance: 171 = 142%

Tim (Technical Director) and I talked about batteries. Because of the body mikes, the cast, intervener and I are wearing, we go through 70 batteries a week. (!). This is a hidden "cost" of concerts, speaking engagements, etc. – I had no idea it was so many batteries – we are running for 10 weeks! I have insisted that we have a battery recycling box in the truck and, when we return, the 700+ batteries be taken to a battery recycling depot.

Tim is also putting together emergency kits (candles, flares, water, etc) for both vehicles.

It is very late (1:30 AM) and the Headlines' Staff just left after a small celebration to mark the end of a very successful Vancouver run. We turned people away tonight, not being able to get more into the hall safely. In the end, the run performed to 80% houses, calculated at a capacity of 120 seats, which is what we were budgeting.

The show was pretty solid and the Forum hot. This audience was yelling "stop" in the first few seconds of scenes. More important than detailing that at this point, though, is some of the conversation we had tonight that is about the whole run so far.

We've done something so very important here. How? Why? Not because we are teaching people anything, but because so many people who are disenfranchised: current users, ex-users, family members and lovers of users, have come to the Vancouver run and seen themselves, their true stories on the stage. All of us at Headlines have had the experience of audience members for this production – who are people who would never be at another theatre company's show, come to us and express how important *Shattering* has been to them – to be in the room – some of them three and four times in the last nine shows. This includes people in rehab, street people, people in assisted housing, gang members, dealers, and also social workers, executives, parents, all classes (I really mean that – it is obvious in the audience) a diversity that I believe is unheard of in any other theatre company in Vancouver. We should all feel very proud.

Tomorrow the technical crew gets the set, stage, lights, sound, etc. out of the Japanese Hall and into a 5-ton truck. Derek does laundry. Adeline finishes the tour book. Consultations with tour sponsors continue. On Wednesday, we

will be at the Agassiz Hotel by 1:00 PM and begin the next leg of the adventure.

The Western Canada Tour

Agassiz, BC

Date:	October 8, 2008
Sponsor:	Fraser Basin Council and Cheam Indian Band
Venue:	Seabird Island Indian Band Gym
Capacity: 200	Attendance: 155 = 78%

What a chaotic start. People just don't pay attention....I KNOW Headlines' staff dealt with all these things, and yet:

When Tim and crew got to the venue there was no "stove plug" (220V). We were told in writing that there was; it is part of the contract and the Sponsor Questionnaire. In fact, there was a plug, but it is a 3-prong dryer plug, not a 4-prong stove plug. There used to be a stove plug, but then the hall converted to gas, and the plug was removed. Tim called in an electrician and installed a plug.

The seats were all put out, contrary to both written and verbal requests, as recently as yesterday. This is important because the stage, cable, etc., have to go up first and the seats go out in relation to them. The seats had to be moved three times during the course of set-up. This really slowed the crew down.

There was no "space" for the actors to be. They ended up in a storage room that was quickly cleared out, and changed in public washrooms attached to a gym. The central organizer said to me that he was never told this was necessary. I said it is in the material we send out, and, I know, in the conversations with Headlines' staff, and he said: "well, I never read the material". (!!!!!) All of this is important. It is a long tour and we have to take care of the touring company.

The play itself is hanging together, although I thought some of the moments were rushed tonight. The pacing is flattening out. Interestingly, there was a whole row of very tough-looking youth in the front. Throughout the entire event, they were glued to their seats. Not a peep from them, in the midst of quite a noisy audience. And when the play ended, many were in tears.

The interventions started without a lot of coaxing. Unfortunately, the woman who started, who made three interventions in the evening, seemed very "instructive". One of the cast members (privately, and after the event) called her "showy". She wasn't coming onto the stage to explore so much, as to "show" the audience how to deal with addiction. Understandably, the

characters didn't relate to her pushiness very well. In the first intervention, in the funeral, she replaced Karen and insisted Adam come to her home and be with her family. Partly, this is a cultural moment. In Sto:Lo (and many First Nations) communities, the idea that a person would be at his brother's funeral alone is unthinkable. But Adam doesn't want to go and be with Denise and Cliff, and he reacted very negatively to this. It was after the intervention that the woman, in retrospect, commented that things might have been different if the offer had been her alone. There is an intimacy involved in this – a safety in not being exposed too much. Many of the audience recognized this when I asked them.

A really interesting intervention from a tough young man. He replaced Adam in the Meth House with Karen and, from a very sketchy place, started talking about wanting to leave. Then Trey came home and he and Trey argued. Trey gives him everything, why isn't he grateful? Karen left. He didn't go with her. What happened? Why didn't he leave if he really wanted to? This young guy was very honest. He needs to be asked to leave – he is too attached to Trey and the drugs to just go. Why didn't Karen ask him? She did, in her own way, when she said she wanted to go, hoping he would say, 'I am coming with you'. Neither would risk asking the other...so much like life. The room was so quiet, processing. How do we speak up in these situations, when the window of opportunity opens?

A young woman replaced Karen in the scene before the Episode. She entered in a panic, but then did not get into Adam's face – she controlled herself somehow – behaved herself in this very volatile environment. She did not contribute to the chaos. In doing so, she diverted the energy that leads to the Episode. No Episode. No wandering in the street for 28 hours smoking meth.

At about 9:30 (the 90 minute mark in the 135 minute evening), contrary to what we had agreed on with the Sponsor, all this food came out and was placed right in front of the Stage Management table. Of course, people started going for food. I tried to navigate this for a while, but it got to be too much – all of us having to yell through the hubbub. Twice I announced that it was really hard to do what we were doing through all the noise.

I know it sounds really chaotic, but this was really one of those moments of the work meeting the community where it is. We are in a place most theatre companies never go. It is very challenging, and also very rewarding.

And then, we got lost on the way back to the hotel – took a wrong turn in the dark. It took almost an hour to get back; a late end to a very long evening.

Langley, BC

Date:	October 9, 2008
Sponsor:	Community Justice Institute
Venue:	H.D. Stafford Secondary School
Capacity: 200	Attendance: 176 = 88%

Set up seems to have gone relatively easy, except it was quite cold in the venue. There was air conditioning on right above the stage. During the Forum, when I realized how cold it really was, I commented on it and many in the audience agreed – they were sitting in their coats. I asked for the system to be turned off and people tried to do that, but could not.

We had a talk about pacing before the show, me asking the actors to slow some sections down and speed others up. The play is becoming all one pace. This helped the run a lot. It went really well, and the cast were great tonight in Forum, as were the audience. Very, very engaged and deeply intelligent and heartfelt interventions.

I want to mention something about the cast that is different from last tour to this one. There is a maturity level now that didn't exist before. Regardless of how the day has been, their health (some have been really sick – that is now over), other life stresses... They are really “showing up” for work each and every show. The level of professionalism is great.

The very first intervention, in the funeral, was from an elderly man who replaced Adam and really aggressively went after Trey to find out about the brother. Trey got scared and angry. He can't talk about this in public, and left. As the man was going after Trey, Karen called out to Adam and he stopped, and interesting choice, stayed with Karen. He hoped she knew about the details of Greg's death, and she didn't, and now Trey was gone. This “elderly” Adam was in tears and Karen was at a real loss, not knowing what to do. In conversation, the man revealed that he had been Adam in his youth, and he related to so much of the play – so many moments. Had he got what he wanted for Adam? It seemed not, but he had in a small way: he had connected in a new way with Karen; he had expressed his grief. Stopping with her meant he did not make it to Trey's...today. This small act was very risky for Adam – this act of expressing his grief, and it had such large ramifications.

A woman replaced Denise at dinner and pulled Karen aside to ask about Adam's state. No one has ever done this before. It was very honoring of Karen and her expertise, something Denise finds very hard to do. Karen took Adam out to the porch and he decided to go back to Trey's. He wanted her to come with him. This Denise was listening at the door and called them in for dinner just then, very concerned for her daughter. Adam left and Karen went in to explain what had happened and the conversation opened up about his drug use. This was a very well navigated intervention. One of those moments that

focused on creating safety in a very small, personal way, and that had huge ripples. No Episode tonight, although Adam would still smoke his brains out. No disclosure of secrets to Karen, (maybe not a good thing, in the larger picture), but then also no 28 hours in the street. This had not been the intervener's master plan, she wasn't thinking so far in advance, but...this is life.

A young woman, who acknowledged she had life experience of the issue in this moment of the play, replaced Adam just before the Episode. She found a way to tell Karen she was "really fucked up" and scared. They went out to the park, but not before Trey loaded Karen up with about \$300.00 worth of meth and a pipe for Adam. Adam asked to go to Karen's house and she refused. She had no way to take him there in this state, but agreed she would not abandon him. They would be out all night, but together. The drugs meant she could not take him to a hospital, unless she threw them away, which would not go down well with Trey. Our real Adam agreed it would be very hard for him to reach out like this, even acknowledge that he was scared – he was too stoned. This Adam focused on the friendship and trust of Karen, who also had to be willing to set her own trauma of the night aside in order to "be there" for her friend.

There were many other interventions. After, a woman came to me and wished she had seen the project when her kids were teenagers. A psychologist came to me with superlative appreciation for the event. He was really blown away. A prolonged standing ovation from the audience.

Keremeos, BC

Date:	October 10, 2008
Sponsor:	South Similkameen Anti-Crystal Meth Initiative
Venue:	Similkameen Elem-Sec School
Capacity: 85	Attendance: 45 = 53%

Keremeos is a really small community, and the Native/non-Native communities seem quite divided. For some reason the two Okanagan Counsellors who were booked in for the event, didn't show up. The Okanagan Chief who was there was very annoyed with them. Evidently, he was so impressed with the event – loved it so much – that he wants to extend an invitation to Headlines to come deep into the community. I didn't hear this first-hand. We will see if an invitation comes.

The central organizer mentioned to me that the Chief has received intimidation from dealers in his own community, for the level at which he speaks out against the drug trade and that it is very, very hard to get anything going.

Still – 45 people came, a good mix of Native and non-Native with some driving in from Osoyoos. Tim says the volunteers for set-up were great.

The audience was completely stone silent after the play. This is the first time this has happened on this tour. Too many were crying to applaud. We worked through the warm-up and into the Forum, and much to my surprise, it started without a lot of prodding. I say surprise, because it was such a small and quiet house.

Many of the interventions tonight were very deep and considered, and innovative. An elderly man replaced Karen when Denise is asking about the funeral (this doesn't usually happen) and he broke down and cried as he played out Karen's need to talk openly about her fear and pain coming from the funeral and seeing Adam. No one has ever done this. He understood, so profoundly, Karen's need (and all the characters' needs...and our collective need) to express our true thoughts and feelings in this very self-centred and fast moving world.

A young man replaced Karen in the Episode and tried to be calm...and couldn't. In the midst of the scene he started to shake and bailed out. We talked about his desire and failed attempt NOT to be caught up in the violent and manic energy of the drugs and fear in the room. What can Karen do? Understanding that we wish she wasn't in the room at all, but that she is, how do we equip her to be safe? 'By helping her be the previous intervener', is what came from the audience. More self-aware – more able to listen and respond to that voice inside all of us that knows what is right and when it is right.

Lots more happened tonight, but I am really tired. We have a 9 – 10 hour drive tomorrow. We head north tomorrow. It is getting cold.

October 11, 2008

A long drive from Keremeos to Prince George, and now a day off tomorrow (and Thanksgiving dinner at Kayla's mother's place). It snowed on the way here today.

October 14, 2008

Canadian Federal Election day. We travel to Hazelton for a show in Kispiox tomorrow and, after dinner with the Blackwaters (adoptive family in Kispiox, where I have a lot of personal history), I will be glued to the TV.

Kispiox, BC

Date:	October 15, 2008
Sponsor:	Gitxsan Health
Venue:	Kispiox Community Centre
Capacity: 200	Attendance: 175 = 88%

This was a long day. I took some of the company to K'san this morning – the Gitxsan cultural centre, by the Skeena River. I ran into a whole bunch of people I knew there – some of them, from Kispiox, where the show was happening tonight. Not one of them knew we were performing this evening. I called Gitxsan Health, the Sponsor, and talked with the Executive Director, who is also a friend. She thought the person she had put in charge had done various things – like handbills to all the homes, etc. I talked to that person and she said she had told someone else to do these things, but didn't know if any of it had happened.

The Executive Director and I then agreed that two things needed to happen immediately: the postcards needed to be delivered into people's homes, and announcements needed to start and go for the next few hours, on local Gitxsan radio. Both these things happened.

At 7:00 (start time) there were about eight people in the audience. Then the waves of people started to arrive. At 7:20 a local Chief, the organizer and I entered the stage and started. People poured in and out throughout the evening. We had many shows like this on the *Out of the Silence* tour in 1992; this was our second on this tour, the first being Agassiz.

The play itself was a little rough, having been away from it for 5 days. I ran some scenes before sound check – but rough still – and also, the actors had to reach through all the noise and constant movement, except when the grandmother cried in the play. You could have heard a pin drop in the room.

When I asked the audience, after the play, how many recognized addiction issues in the play, about 40% of the hands in the room went up. I knew then we were in for a rough night, because knowing this community as well as I do, I also know that many more of the hands in the room could have gone up. Here we were in Kispiox, where everyone knows everyone – a tiny community – and one of the hardest things to do is talk about issues like this openly.

Of course the Forum started slowly. Then a man replaced Adam at the funeral and really pushed Trey for information about the brother, to the point where Trey left. This allowed this Adam to hook up with Karen, though, getting what he wanted, which was some kind of human connection at the funeral. What did Adam have to conquer? His own fear of expressing his true thoughts and feelings. I thought this was a great way to start this event, hoping the intervener would be an example, but it didn't play out that way.

The laundry scene went without intervention and then a little girl, a six year old, yelled stop. I checked with her, did she want to do this, have an idea? Yes...and she was very polite with her mother, did whatever Mom wanted. When I asked her why she had done this she got very uncomfortable and insisted I let her off the stage, which I did. Becky, our addictions counselor, tells me that later she started to cry and was there all by herself. I did, though, see her later playing around with other kids in the front row – one of the boys, an eight year old, also made an intervention. He replaced Cliff at dinner and wanted to apologize to Adam. I know this because he said he wanted to apologize later, in discussion. What actually happened was that he stopped talking, fell silent, and angered everyone in the family. It was very interesting, though. He SAW something and didn't know how to deal with it. This opened up a conversation with the audience of how sometimes we know what to do (it's true, an apology would help) but don't know how.

The scenes with the women created dead silence in the room. I challenged the audience. It is one thing to yell stop and deal with the meth and the alcohol – they are the symptoms of the addiction issue. In the relationship among the women in the play, lie root causes – secrets – unspoken conversations. So many were nodding yes – and still remaining silent. A woman did yell stop and replaced Denise and insisted they all get counseling. This really freaked Karen out. What happened to Mom??

A woman yelled stop, and replaced Karen in the Meth House before the Episode. She threatened to call the police and Trey hit her (theatrically, of course). Some of the men in the audience thought Trey hadn't been realistic, that he wouldn't have hit her, they said. And we got to talk about this. What kind of a tactic was this for Karen, in terms of creating safety? And is there anywhere for Karen to go? No, not in Kispiox, they said. She is going to go to a friend's and get wasted tonight.

The cast thought the evening had gone really badly. They were very disheartened by the levels of noise and what seemed like a lack of attention in the room. I knew this had not been the case, and said something in the van that I've never articulated before that seemed important:

If the work is going to present itself to be non-elitist, then it needs to be non-elitist. We cannot expect the “sacred space” of the traditional theatre. The people at the back of the room talking about the play are frustrating, but they are engaging in their way. We have to surrender to it. The kids' interventions matter. They might be difficult to navigate, but they are happening for very legitimate reasons. We are, in a way, in the trenches here. A few days later, this email arrived:

“I had the opportunity to watch the *Shattering* performance in Kispiox. I was thrilled in watching the portrayal of the effects of Meth or any other substance abuse within native communities. I feel that the left brain lesson in teaching people that voicing a wrong within a family clan is awesome. I highly recommend any person to watch this play !!”

Mark Louis, audience member, October, 2008

Burns Lake, BC

Date:	October 16, 2008
Sponsor:	Lake Babine Nation
Venue:	Lakes District Secondary School Gym
Capacity: 120	Attendance: 90 = 75%

90 people was a good turn-out for here, the audience was almost entirely First Nations; mirroring, I believe, a long-standing split that exists between the Native and non-Native communities here in Burns Lake. The audience was very varied (I know now from talking with the sponsors how much) with Elders, parents, teens, gang members, small children. A very knowledgeable crowd.

When the play finished there was very polite applause. They were very quiet. When I asked how many of them recognized issues, about 30% of the room raised their hands. When I asked if they weren't raising their hands because they thought I might ask them to do something. No one laughed. (This always gets a laugh).

Of course, as would be expected from the above, it was slow to start – but it did start and the audience loosened up beautifully throughout the evening – until the end when they got completely silent again. A very odd audience journey, in my experience.

There were some lovely and heartfelt interventions tonight. A man replaced Adam when Trey is introducing him to meth and got the information about the brother. After doing this, he wanted to “smoke a bowl” and entered the drug journey of our play. We talked about what would happen next and he surprised me by saying, ‘I’m going to get a gun or a knife and find the guy who killed my brother and kill him’. How many understand the truth of this, I asked. Many. Why? Anger; revenge; living a cycle of violence. And so how does Adam NOT do this, I asked. He has to find a different way to respect his brother, someone said; he has to conquer his anger; conquer his fear of looking weak; conquer his drug addiction, which is stopping him from thinking clearly. A moment, this, of dealing with the world the way it is, not the way we wish it was.

A fifteen year old girl replaced Karen and tried to get Cliff to get a job and pull his weight and to talk about what is bothering him. No one has ever done this before. Cliff was very resistant, but it was going in, we all knew, and he admitted it in conversation after. We got to talk about addiction to silence; very relevant for this room.

No one would intervene in the Meth Episode scene. This after a lot of interventions. It was no longer about being afraid of Forum Theatre, the room had really loosened up. I asked how many thought it was all inevitable once it started. Many. It isn't, I felt I had to tell them. We have

had many interventions in this scene in other Forums and also, the three cast members lived inside this scene and don't live there any longer – it is NOT inevitable. Does anyone want to try anything? Going once... twice... gone.

A man replaced Cliff in the final scene with Karen and said no to Denise's request for him to leave the room. He convinced her to leave him alone with Karen. Then he wanted to stop the intervention. Please, no, I asked. What happens now? There are ramifications to every action.

Karen convinced him to go with him to see if Adam was OK, and wanted to do it secretly. He refused, insisting they tell Denise who, struggling desperately, let them go. Of course Adam is alive, and life can continue, with a much deeper bond between Cliff and Karen, and also with Cliff having done something of tremendous value inside the family. Audience members tonight offered insights into how he had to get over his fear of the three very strong women in the house – something else that has never been talked about.

The organizers were full of praise about the evening, and also appreciative of what they learned from the silences in the audience. They were very struck with how much attention the gang members who they knew were in the audience paid, and how they stayed to the very end, some of them helping with getting the set down and into the truck.

Prince George, BC

Date:	October 17, 2008
Sponsor:	Street Spirits Theatre
Venue:	Civic Centre
Capacity: 200	Attendance: 177 = 88%

The media that appeared in the papers here mentioned “tickets by reservation only”. We do not know why. One of the papers gave the wrong venue. The other did a sensationalist article that referred to “healing”, and “youth at risk” and other things; all language we try very hard to steer clear of, as it is both patronizing to the cast and misleading for the potential audience.

It was, however, a very diverse audience, age, race, class, and they were very hard hit by the play. The Forum started slowly, but then really took off.

A man replaced Cliff and was quite aggressive with Adam at dinner – straightforward about Adam being stoned. Adam responded aggressively and the man got more aggressive – he ‘hit’ Adam in the face – Adam went crazy and we moved into a MUCH more violent fight than in our play. The man admitted it had all gone wrong. He had reacted to Adam's intensity,

bought into it, and wished he had kept himself calm. Of course a great lesson here for us all – and the chance to talk about how this Adam can't handle being accused of being a junkie in front of everyone – maybe a private conversation would help.

A woman replaced Karen in the Episode scene and left the room and *then* called an ambulance. Two medics came onto the stage with very different approaches. One of them started yelling at Adam, who was freaking out, that they only wanted to help him and it spiraled way out of control to where Adam had the seizure. Fascinating. It was very ugly, but the medics were there. In our play he has the seizure anyway, with no help in the room. He will blame Karen, but her call saved him from the brain damage he suffers in our play (verified by doctors).

A man replaced Trey in the Episode scene and...started singing (!), trying to calm himself down, to centre himself. As he did this Karen and Adam got more and more freaked out and he tried to breathe and sing. It was surreal and also very, very knowledgeable. It spun out of control, despite his efforts. (It was wonderful theatre.) The internal and external tensions inside and between the characters were very visible. This is the territory in which the learning of the evening lives, in this kind of creative generosity.

A man replaced Karen in the final scene with Cliff and told the truth about what had happened that night. Cliff called Karen's cell phone and verified Adam was alive and then went to Trey's to get the phone. Denise entered and this Karen told the truth to her, as well. This led to a very emotional scene between Karen and her Mom, in which we understood that the way for Denise to "create safety" for her daughter, is to "back off" and stop riding her so tightly. Denise's fear for Karen and the claustrophobic environment that this creates is the very thing that leads Karen into danger. So ironic, and understandable.

A warm and extended standing ovation tonight. We have the day off tomorrow.

October 18, 2008

I sent this letter to the Prince George Citizen newspaper today:

Thanks for the Oct. 16 coverage of *Shattering*, Headlines Theatre's production on addiction that is touring Western Canada and was in Prince George on Oct. 17. I am sure the article helped bring the 177 people who packed the performance into the Civic Centre. It is much appreciated.

I am compelled, though, to correct what I believe is a very unhelpful perspective in Frank Peebles' column: We do not refer to Cody Gray or Kayla Cardinal, (cast members from Prince George) or any other company members, as "youth at risk", or as "anyone at risk". This derogatory label is part of the larger problem, not any solution.

I hired Cody and Kayla in a professional capacity to act in a play created and performed by people who have struggled with addiction – either in their own personal lives or through the lives of loved ones. I challenge anyone reading this letter to say they have not or do not struggle with an addiction to something. Each and every one of us in our deeply addicted culture is “at risk”. Some addictions we get rewarded for – they are still addictions. Cody and Kayla’s life experiences, and their willingness to share them in a creative way, are part of what make the *Shattering* event so powerful. These actors are working in a professional theatre production in a highly professional manner, and deserve the same respect as any other professional – which includes not being burdened with sensationalist labels.

I’d also like to point out that, as is outlined in all our press material, I call my work “Theatre for Living”, not “Theatre for the Living” (as opposed to Theatre for the Dead). And while it is true that “Street Spirits” (a local theatre company) was borne out of a Theatre for Living workshop I was asked to do here 10 years ago, I did not ‘teach the theatre method to Andrew Burton’, the Director of Street Spirits. Andrew took a couple of workshops with me and has also studied with the founder of the Theatre of the Oppressed (and my mentor) Augusto Boal. Andrew has also made his own way, inventing work that is relevant to the context in which he is working here in Prince George.

Again, thanks for the much appreciated coverage.¹⁰

David Diamond
Artistic and Managing Director, Headlines Theatre

Chetwynd, BC

Date:	October 20, 2008
Sponsor:	Chetwynd Social Planning Society
Venue:	Pine Valley Exhibition Park
Capacity: 110	Attendance: 108 = 98%

The show ended up in an odd space outside town (it smelled of horses), because of a combination of other bookings for space already and our technical requirements and stage size.

It was cold. The hall was quite cool when we got there, but warmed up as we worked to get ready. A problem arose, though, that the building has zero lights outside, and people were complaining as they were arriving that they couldn’t find the way to the show. It was decided to open the outer doors, which was supposed to mean keeping the inner doors to the hall closed. Problem was, that didn’t happen, and all the heat left the building. Really, my fingers were numb. I wore a hoody over my costume – the audience was wrapped in coats and scarves – the cast were freezing.

¹⁰ I do not believe this went to print in the Prince George paper, as if it did, various people and also my “Google Alerts” would have informed me. I did hear, though, that days after sending it, the referred to article was pulled off of the newspaper’s web site.

The play was OK, but is also drifting a bit. (The cold didn't help.) I will take notes tomorrow. It is all there, just getting a little sloppy. Also, we have to find a way to ride sound levels more. They change, dynamically, as the evening progresses.

The turnout was great tonight. Chetwynd is a very small town, so 108 is a lot of people. The Forum started slowly, but the audience really warmed up.

A woman replaced Denise and, when Adam was at dinner, rang the alarm bell that he was on drugs and "should leave the house". She thought he would do that alone. Karen got very angry and went with him, much to this Denise's surprise. She didn't try to stop Karen, although she wanted to. Why not? Because she knew her daughter was angry. And so the two friends went to Trey's and got blasted. Exactly what the audience member did not want. She was quite frustrated, and thought that Karen should have stayed. Why didn't you, I asked Karen. 'Because my Mom has just embarrassed me really badly and I don't want to be here anymore.' An investigation of tactic.

A woman replaced Denise (this happened a lot tonight) and, in a very calm, controlled and firm way, talked to Karen about Adam after he left dinner. Karen did not run away. She stayed and had the conversation, even though she didn't like it. This woman wanted to "control herself" as Denise, not to panic, get angry, etc., for the sake of her daughter. What she ended up doing, without ever thinking about it, was avoiding Adam's Episode – because Karen doesn't run over there – and because of that, avoiding Karen's 28 hours in the street.

A young man replaced Karen in the Episode and did manage to get Adam out of the apartment before the Episode, but in the end, did not avoid the Episode. After they left Trey's, this Karen had no idea what to do (like the rest of us). Adam is very, very stoned. However, when the Episode happens, Karen *can* call an ambulance without compromising Trey. Adam will get the help he needs.

There was a prolonged standing ovation at the end, and lots of people wanting to help with the set. I think we did good here.

Fort St. John, BC

Date: October 21, 2008
 Sponsor: Ft. St. John Community Intervention Committee
 Venue: Dr. Kearney Junior Secondary School
 Capacity: 110 Attendance: 52 = 47%

This email went from Dafne today, after Tim contacted her from the venue:

Dear SHATTERING Sponsors,

We've had eight shows so far in this Western Canada Tour and we are already experiencing several problems with the volunteers requested for the set up and tear down of the show. Some of the issues are people not showing up or leaving before finishing the job or before the end of the show, which translates into desperate calls from the stage for audience members to help.

We've had conversations with all of you about the importance of providing volunteers and why the responsibility to provide them is in your contract. We DO understand how challenging it can be to get the commitment from six adults for a full afternoon and until midnight in some instances. However, I cannot emphasize enough the need to have them ready to help us with the set up.

As we have explained before, we have a 5-ton truck to unload, a 14-platform stage, a lot of professional theatre equipment and a lot of cable to lay. We have a crew made up of three people and it's humanly impossible to set up a professional production in five hours without the help of the volunteers. One of the reasons we can offer this professional and high quality production for only \$1,700 is that we are traveling with only 3 crew.

Please understand that we won't be able to proceed with the set up of the show if the volunteers are not available upon the arrival of the Technical Director and Crew to the venue, six hours prior to the performance time. This is a contractual obligation on your part.

Again, for your reference, we are requesting SIX able-bodied adult volunteers. They will meet the company on arrival and work for approximately four hours before the performance and two hours after the show. We prefer that the volunteers helping us to set up are the same ones helping with the tear down of the equipment, as they will have had the experience of putting it up.

We hope you can find creative ways to engage volunteers in the process.

All the best,

The above went out because two of the six volunteers showed up today. Contrary to the diagrams, the truck couldn't be driven to the venue door. Everything had to be carried across a lawn and up a hill! And then across a gym by our crew of 3 and the 2 volunteers. And so, we have to find a way to protect our crew. I have told Tim that, at his discretion, if the contractual requirements are not being met, he should refuse to unload the truck.

We saw zero posters up. The turn out was small, and mostly non-Native. The First Nations organizing collaborator didn't show up. They had a "building family" event tonight and didn't consider making the play the night's event. This speaks, I imagine, to a considerable lack of trust, communication, something...between the Native and non-Native organizations in the community here.

The audience that was there was very hard hit by the play. Like other audiences, they did warm up; and also had their own perspective: We heard this more than once: "Once an addict, always an addict", which the cast members found quite offensive. I actually had to say from the stage tonight that I thought it was important, in an event like this, that we not try to impose our values on other people.

Many of the interventions were attempts to control other characters, sometimes quite tightly. This most often led to them leaving, rebelling.

A woman replaced Adam with Trey in the Meth House, early on in the relationship. She refused the pipe and started telling Trey he was wasting his life, he was talented...he was going to end up dead and she didn't want that. He should come to "a meeting" with her. "What the hell are you talking about, Adam???" was Trey's honest response. But she wouldn't give up and, it was fascinating. She got inside Trey. When I asked for secret thoughts, his was "what am I doing with my life?"

Of course Adam is not going to Narcotics Anonymous. This is so far outside the reality of our characters. However, he MIGHT have had a light bulb go on after the death of his brother that led him to have this conversation with Trey about "life". Many things changed. They didn't smoke meth together today and while we all agreed, including the intervener, that in the world of our play the NA aspect was unrealistic, the relationship was going to be very different.

The Mayor (and an ex-RCMP officer) replaced Cliff at dinner. He attacked Adam, yelling at him and calling him a junkie. Adam pulled him out of the chair and (theatrically) punched him; lots of violence, but Cliff stood up to him. Adam left and Karen was furious. But, interestingly, she didn't leave. Something about this Cliff. It was very dramatic, and also had a calmness to it. Cliff was parenting, in a very aggressive way. And so, although Adam thought the Episode would still happen, Karen was not spending 28 hours in the street tonight, and the conversation about drugs was open in the house.

Day off tomorrow, and then a very long drive to Edmonton.

Edmonton, AB

Date: October 24, 2008
 Sponsor: An individual¹¹, Inner City Youth Development Association, Edmonton Small Press Association
 Venue: Inner City High School
 Capacity: 130 Attendance: 89 = 68%

The shows in Edmonton have SUCH a history. It will be very difficult to explain it all, but I think trying to articulate at least some of it is important, as it is a window into the complexity of community organizing.

Initially, we couldn't find anyone to take the show in Edmonton. Organizations were very interested in seeing it, but no one wanted to do the organizing work. I should have let go of Edmonton at that point, but didn't. I need to take responsibility for this. My reasons were twofold: It is the Provincial Capitol and also the University of Alberta in Edmonton is my Alma Mater. I had an emotional attachment. And so, I sent an appeal out to people I knew, explaining the situation and asking for help. A person who is both a personal friend and who has been very supportive of my work over the years offered to put up one performance guarantee IF an organization named ihuman, that works with youth was involved. My friend had research \$\$ that is attached to her work with ihuman.

We contacted ihuman, and a woman there leapt at the offer. After a lot of emails and conversations with Dafne here at Headlines, the woman at ihuman guaranteed us three shows, that also involved the Africa Centre and Inner City High School (ICH). When we froze the tour dates, we had three shows and so set aside five days in Edmonton: A day off, 3 shows, a day off. The ihuman woman then vanished and when we managed to talk to someone else at ihuman, she had no idea who we were or what we were doing. The first woman hadn't talked to anyone there, and later resigned altogether. Then, the Africa Centre decided that instead of hosting the three shows in their space, they wanted to charge \$1,000 rent per show.

Suddenly, we had zero shows, and no where to do them. And then ICH generously offered to host two shows. If my friend kept her guarantee in, they would cover another. So: Two shows in five days. We said yes to this, it being better than 5 days in Edmonton and zero shows, or unfreezing the tour, trying to change everyone's dates and losing many confirmed communities because of the chaos.

After a while, Edmonton Small Press Association (ESPA) came on board and, thankfully, offered to manage publicity. I say thankfully because ICH had been clear it would host and cover a guarantee but didn't have the person-

¹¹ I have decided to not name this person. While I think she did a wonderful thing in supporting the work, I also believe that her best intentions helped create a complexity that is really worth discussing. The best way to do that openly is without naming her.

power to do any organizing work. ESPA became the defacto organizer. The people there tried and tried to get all the “players” in the same room to talk and plan. This happened once.

Part of the issue here, I know, is that my friend’s money, as well meaning and welcome as it was, dropped in from outside. This was especially true once the first human contact disappeared. The money was trying to solve a problem, and was not an organic expression of interest from a broad base of the community.

Just one small example of the result of this was that Friday (the day before the first show), ESPA was trying to get a potential attendance number from ICH. How many seats did they want for their students on Monday? ESPA’s phone was ringing off the hook, with people wanting to go to the show. ESPA couldn’t get an answer, and had been trying for days. Finally, a few hours before our show, I spent about an hour calling in between the two parties to get a number.

The projection numbers were important because of the size of the hall. Initially (before we got to Edmonton and into the hall) we thought we could only get 80 seats into the venue. I insisted we cram 100 seats in regardless, to make room to “blend” the audience, so that the general public would have a chance to attend, not only the school constituency. Tim (Technical Director) worked magic with mirrors and found an extra 6 feet or so by reducing the amount of “throw” we needed to get the rear projections. In the end, we managed to get 130 seats.

We went into the evening with 140 reservations, which was technically oversold. There was a 32% no-show rate.

The event itself tonight was pretty good. The show was strong and the Forum very appropriate for the audience that was there, made up mostly of concerned people, and not the User community. I imagine they will be coming to the Monday matinee because, contrary to everything we said and asked, the two shows were divided up the first for the general public and the second for disenfranchised youth.

Interesting interventions: A young man replaced Trey with Adam in the Meth House and admitted that he had given Greg too much drugs, and that had killed him. This isn’t our back-story, but nonetheless, the impulse for Trey to tell the truth is very powerful. Adam left Trey’s. Not the same journey for Adam now and Trey has unburdened himself and has a better chance of moving on.

A man replaced Trey in the Episode and refused to let Karen in the room when she arrived. He tried to create safety for Trey by minimizing the chaos in the moment. Karen went to get wasted with friends – no 28 hours in the street. Adam still had the Episode and Trey imagined that he could find some other kind of help, from a neighbor, perhaps.

Some of the cast felt like the interventions tonight were “acting class”, and to some degree I have to agree, although I also know that the event met the audience where it was, and this is all it can do. A very long standing ovation from the audience.

October 25, 2008

I did a surprise interview with a video crew today who is following Nita Freire (Paulo Freire’s Widow) around on a world tour. She is in Edmonton at a Conference. Headlines’ work grows out of Freire’s work. I’ll point out that no one in Edmonton told us this was happening, (maybe no one knew) or tried to link the shows to the Conference that is happening at the same time - over this week-end. The woman coordinating the filming is a fan of Headlines and heard we were here at the last minute.

The interview is available at: <http://freire.mcgill.ca/content/david-diamond-shiley-steinberg-and-theatre-oppressed>

October 27, 2008

Capacity: 130 Attendance: 102 = 78%

Again, this second show in Edmonton was supposed to be oversold. ESPA was telling people there were no seats because of information they had from ICH about school attendance. The house was good and the show went well – far, though from oversold.

Nevertheless, 102 people arrived. I’d say about 50% were ICH students and about 10-15% ICH faculty and the other 35% social workers from outside and about 5% general public. I had invited Tom and Judy Peacocke – Tom was the Chairman of the U of A Drama Dept when I was a student there in the early ‘70’s – he was my second acting teacher, and an important figure in my life.

The play itself was very strong today. The cast were really there, even though we are “out of time sync”, used to performing at 7 or 8 PM; this was 1PM. The cast really pulled it together. Very proud of them.

The Forum started slowly, as is often the case and many of the early interventions were done by staff. A pattern formed here that came to a kind of fruition later in the event. The staff approach was to be quite “counselor” oriented, in that they would replace Karen (usually) and insist Adam had a problem and that he should let Karen help him get his life together. Of course, Adam doesn’t think anything is wrong and so is quite offended by this. Either that, or sometimes he just doesn’t take Karen seriously. This built through a few interventions in the early parts of the play until a man replaced Karen when she is smoking weed with Adam and Trey comes in. This Karen tried the same tactic and got the same brush-offs and then realized (we all saw it happen) that it just wasn’t working. This Karen

started to ask Adam honest (not leading) questions about his brother and tried to engage on that more real level. This pissed Adam off, (being confronted with the death of his brother – something he is now trying to avoid) but he was listening. This Karen was also listening and as it got hostile, she left. She took care of herself. Her leaving made Adam think. He loves and respects her. Why did she leave? This Karen isn't going to spend 28 hours in the street. Adam has started a personal enquiry.

A young guy replaced Adam at dinner and spilled the beans completely. Way over the top. He admitted to the meth, outed Karen to her mother over her meth use, and suggested they all get counseling!! Of course this is completely unrealistic inside our world, Adam would never do this. And yet, the impulses can be understood. Adam comes for dinner because he is frightened and needs to feel some connection to the safety of a family he knows. He wants to ask for help and has no way to do that. The intervener understands the desire because he has been there himself. If Adam can be honest in this way, he helps everyone.

A woman replaced Karen in the Episode scene and was successful at getting Adam out of the apartment. Then, for some reason, hoping to "hook" him further, she mentioned she thought the police were coming (!!). This sent Adam into a frenzy of worry and back to Trey's to help Trey get rid of incriminating evidence. Of course Adam did this – his life is there. And of course, ironically, the police were not coming, she had made it up – used the police as a weapon of sorts. It really backfired on her, as Adam went into the Episode under the stress.

A woman replaced Cliff and tried to talk with Karen (and Denise) and the end of the play. This intervention got very authentic and emotional. Cliff has expertise, of course. Cliff and Karen ended up alone in her room. They wavered between very emotional arguing and gentle caring. Why the roller coaster? Because this Cliff wanted to talk about Karen and addiction and Karen wanted to talk about Adam. And around and around it went. An imposition, instead of a question and then listening, regardless of how well intentioned.

One of the ICH Staff came to me after and said that he was amazed. 'The students don't sit like that for 2.5 hours for anything,' he said. He'd never seen it before. It is true, they were very deeply engaged. Off the top of the Forum none of them would answer questions, even raise a hand. By the end, so many were yelling out ideas, etc. the room had come to life.

Lac La Biche, AB

Date: October 28, 2008
 Sponsor: Lac La Biche Canadian Friendship Centre; AADAC
 Venue: Portage College Theatre
 Capacity: 130 Attendance: 95 = 73%

The Crew arrived at the theatre early expecting to hang lights in their lighting grid, as pre-arranged. No grid. One pipe. And the Technical Director at the theatre knew absolutely zero about anything in the theatre, and kept asking Tim (our TD) every 5 minutes if he could go now. Finally, Tim just told him to go.

We ended up doing a full set-up in the theatre, as if we were in a community hall, our lighting trees at the back of the hall and some lights on pipes in the wings. The stage was very shallow and so the slides were about 66% their normal size. Still, the play looked good and we had a good run. Thankfully, Tim has this kind of rock 'n roll flexibility.

Almost 100 people came. The Sponsors were very pleased. When the play finished there was dead silence. No applause. When the houselights came on so I could talk with the audience, it was obvious they were very deeply moved.

The first intervention was quite odd. A young man replaced Adam at the funeral and suggested he and Trey go watch the TV show "Dr. Who". Trey tried to be "in the scene" with this person, who started talking about how the best way to deal with problems – he has always found – is to forget them. Go do something else. The audience was laughing, it all seemed very funny, and of course the first intervention sets a tone for the evening.

I asked the audience if they thought that forgetting about the death of the brother created safety for Adam. This is the invitation we are making – to replace a character and try to create safety. 'Oh', said the intervener, 'I didn't understand that'. But then went on again about how doing this has always worked for him and that he has no problems in his life, and that it is easy to stay away from drugs. Audience members responded with how Adam actually has to deal with the brother's death, and we moved on.

Then, there were no interventions in the laundry scene at all, until Cliff and Karen were alone and Cliff is going off to Vic's (gambling). A woman replaced Karen and wanted to go with Cliff. Cliff said no, but she insisted and so he let her. He asked her if she knew a certain poker game first and she said no, and then he said, "well, its your money", and they went off.

In discussion the woman said she wanted to go with Cliff to get away from the drugs. What drugs? I asked. The drugs in the play. But you are on your way home, I said....there are no drugs in there (alcohol, yes). Well, I

want to get away from the drugs, she said. OK...Cliff – where are you going? To play poker, he said, and there is going to be alcohol and marijuana there. She was astonished by this.

Interesting here, how “true” this is, though. She is trying to get away from “A” by going to “B” and never bothers to find out what “B” is. Does that happen, I asked? Many people in the room agreed that it did.

But then she said, ‘Well, why would Cliff take me to a place like that? He’s my cousin. He’d take better care of me.’ Cliff is going gambling. You just wanted to go with him and he agreed to take you.

Who thinks Cliff is going to give up his poker night tonight, I asked, so he can take good care of his cousin? Three people out of almost 100 raised their hands. The woman on the stage was incredulous.

I am writing about this at some length because it is an example both of what happens out in the world (people acting without thinking things through) and also of the level of learning that can happen in Forum Theatre. The sensibility on the stage in this moment, and in the previous intervention, are reflections of sensibilities inside the larger community.

In the Meth House a young woman replaced Karen and tried to counsel Adam, which he reacted to badly. It was all very playful and then, the woman mentioned Adam’s brother and Adam started to yell at her, and the bottom fell out of the playing; it got really serious. The room got quiet. The two had quite an argument about Adam using the pipe so he didn’t have to feel anything. Now, finally, we got to something authentic, and the audience knew it, and I got to talk about how it was a serious world and we were not playing improvisation games tonight. I asked the audience if they knew why I had said this, and about 80% of the hands went up.

There was dead silence throughout the scenes with the women, so much so that I stopped again and talked about it being easier to deal with symptoms (the drugs and alcohol) than to deal with the root causes (the secrets, lies and silences).

And so now we started getting interventions about honesty and stopping the lies and secrets. Then we got to the Episode and once again there was dead silence. There was a speculation expressed, after I asked the question, that people were so silent because they thought if they intervened, people would think they were drug addicts. So much fear in the room, you could feel it.

There was an intervention in the final scene, that recognized how much the family needed to talk.

Even though we went late, most of the audience did stay until the very end. That says something about the event, and the sponsors were happy. We are in very different territory now than we are used to in BC.

Bonnyville, AB

Date:	October 29, 2008
Sponsor:	Bonnyville Indian Metis Rehabilitation Centre (BIMRC), AADAC
Venue:	BIMRC Gym
Capacity: 100	Attendance: 65 = 65%

This evening reminded me (and Sophie, who is in the cast) of the *Out of the Silence* tour in 1992.

BIMRC is a residential treatment centre. Most of the residents and staff came, (accounting for maybe 45 people) and general public also came, accounting for about 20. This is far less than the organizers had hoped for. However, the woman at the front desk of the hotel was very, very interested when I told her what we were doing when we checked in, and she hadn't heard anything at all about us being in town. We saw no posters up in town. I think the play in Bonnyville was pretty much invisible.

Dafne and Christopher and I had a conversation today about ways to get the tour sponsors to understand that all the various tools (aspects of outreach and aspects of publicity) are all important in getting an audience out. Posters, leaflets, phone trees, social groups, networking, radio, newspapers, etc. In fairness to them, it is very hard to know from Vancouver when people on the tour are telling you they are "doing it all", to know whether they actually are or not.

The evening, though small, was very powerful. We had interventions in places of the play that we haven't seen before and also kinds of interventions we haven't seen before. When I asked the audience how many of them recognized issues in the play, all the hands in the room went up, except the hands of three women, who were in the second row, and who were administrators with the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC).

A man replaced Cliff at dinner and invented a scenario other than ours but feasible: Cliff and Trey and Greg (Adam's recently deceased brother) had been into meth together and Cliff knew how Greg had died. (From an overdose). This Cliff told Adam at dinner. He told the truth, instead of doing what everyone in the family does, which is keep it bottled in. Doing this, of course affected Adam very deeply. He doesn't like the information he has, but at least it is information. He goes off in a bad state to process. We agree he is likely to get completely wasted tonight, and that the

Episode is unlikely. Hearing the truth about his brother, although harsh, helps ground him. Karen, though, is furious with Cliff for the truth. It exposes her world to her mother and grandmother. Cliff has opened up very dangerous territory in the family and needs to be prepared to see it through.

A man replaced Mary after Karen has run out and after the fight with Denise. Mary is alone with her bottle. The man struggled with the “demons” that bring Mary to the bottle and then dropped to his knees and prayed. The intervention was very “presentational”, very “acted” and also appreciated by the audience, although some were snickering. I asked the man what had prompted him to turn to a larger power in the moment. “God”, he said. Well, I understand that but actually, something must have happened inside you before you dropped to your knees that was a thought, an impulse, that made you decide. What was it? He had a very hard time grasping this, because for him, it seemed to be about an act of God. I asked the audience if they knew what I was talking about and most of the hands went up. What had to happen to precipitate the prayer?

Audience members offered: Mary had to realize her family was falling apart; Mary had to conquer her fear and denial of facing her own addiction; Mary had to decide that she wanted an honest connection with her family.

A man replaced Adam in the psychotic episode, just after Trey punches Adam and before the Episode starts. This man (an ex-meth addict, he told us later) started asking Trey for “the gun”... give me the gun. We have discussed many times the fact there IS a gun at Trey’s, of course there is, there are a lot of drugs there. Trey wouldn’t give him the gun, fearing Adam was freaking out and would shoot him. This Adam searched and searched, all the time Karen getting very frightened and Trey saying he had hidden the gun. Finally, he had searched so long, and taken the sofa apart. He held a gun and Trey (the actor doing exactly the right thing) accepted this Adam now had a gun. Everything went into high alert. Was this Adam going to shoot Trey? Trey started to try to calm Adam down and Adam did something even more unexpected. He started telling Trey to give him the meth pipe. Trey didn’t want to do this now – not knowing what was happening with Adam – everyone was very confused (as would be the case, of course). Adam threatened to shoot and so Trey gave him the pipe.

Adam pulled heavily, heavily on the pipe and dropped to the floor into a seizure, and there we were in our Episode scene again.

What happened here? How was this an attempt to create safety? In discussion we discover that this Adam wanted the gun to protect Trey from the people who are after him. This was the impulse. But the gun created a tension in Adam he couldn’t handle and the tension took him back to the pipe, and the pipe took him over the edge. Had you planned

this from the beginning, I asked? ‘No – it just happened that way – it took over’, he said.

Cody (our Adam) said he believed everything this audience member said and did. It was true. It was an attempt at safety – but what feels “safe” now are the very dangerous things – guns, more drugs, etc. It was a terrible and amazing insight, and pretty electric on the stage.

There was, for the first time ever with this show, complete silence at the final scene in the Forum section, (as there was for the scene where Karen catches Mary with the gin bottle). We talked about the silence. It was too close to home, people said. If they come onstage, they have to take responsibility, another said. I encouraged them to think about the silence. A woman said that the silence, and my challenge to them, was perhaps more powerful than any intervention could have been.

There was a prolonged standing ovation. The people struggling with addiction in the room thought the event had been truly amazing and real and of great value. The three women from AADAC did not stick around or talk with anyone from the company or the sponsor after. I wonder if they were very challenged by tonight by the harm reduction aspect, and by the insistence that addiction is not only a youth issue, in particular. The sponsor and I had a chat. He loved the show.

Meadow Lake, SK

Date:	October 30, 2008
Sponsor:	Meadow Lake Drug Strategy Committee
Venue:	Carpenter High School Theatre
Capacity: 300	Attendance: 315 = 105%

Who would have thought we’d have our biggest house on the tour so far in Meadow Lake, SK, the night before Halloween?!? The organizers worked really hard, obviously, and also (no coincidence) there were bought ads in both local papers, an article in the current local paper and posters all over town. The hall was full of every age group, from small children to grandparents and also a strong blending of the Native and non-Native communities.

The theatre is a weird shape but Tim did make it work. Unfortunately, the school forgot to turn OFF the heat (a reverse problem than normal) and the theatre overheats (a structural problem with airflow) and it got boiling in there, to the point that we had to open all the doors (also to the outside) during the Forum, until it got very cold and we closed them again. Still, the Forum went really well.

Interestingly, this audience really got the humour in the play. There were a lot of laughs at all the right places. This rarely happens. What was it about tonight? Sometimes I think it is the informed audiences who get the jokes. They are not as freaked out by the issues. Tonight, I wondered if it had to do with numbers. When there are 50 or 60 people, the audience is way more exposed. The energy of 315 people crammed in together is very different. It was great.

The Forum started slowly, as is most often the case. When I asked how many recognize issues in the play, about 40% of the room raised hands. Frightened. Silenced by the intensity. As we progressed through the evening it really loosened up and the engagement became very deep.

A woman replaced Karen in the first meth party and tried to “get Adam back”. She ended up alienating him, by judging his behaviour as “fucked up” and then moving into scare tactics around his brother’s death. Adam’s response really surprised her. She expected him to realize he had a problem. Of course, he doesn’t think that. The audience seemed to really understand the conversation about how our approach to Adam can’t be from a judgmental place. The woman, before leaving the stage, commented on how much she had learned by doing her intervention. She was very grateful.

A very young boy yelled stop and wanted to replace Adam in the Episode scene. I had big alarm bells. I told him Adam had been awake for 5 days at this point... did he understand what was going on? Yes, he said. You want to create safety? Yes. OK. Are you certain you want to do this? Yes. Although he seemed so innocent – you never know. 8 year olds and younger have made amazing interventions. We started the scene and he tried, and then insisted this Adam didn’t smoke meth. This is so hard. Adam is smoking meth like crazy in the scene This idea has no connection to the reality of the play. I stopped and explained to him that Adam is smoking a lot of meth and he started to panic. I asked him if he wanted to continue and he said no, and when I said that was OK, he started to cry. Not “issue” tears, it was fairly obvious he was embarrassed. Suddenly something became clear to me: there was a group of boys his age in the audience, who he kept looking over at. I asked him, quietly, privately, if they had sent him up, and he shook his head in my arms ‘yes’. OK. I just realized what happened, I said to him. One of the support people came to get him, as he was really crying now and I reassured him it was OK and then spoke to the boys and the audience and explained what I knew what had just happened. Is that what just happened? I asked the boys. They were nodding yes now. I explained about how very young people do make interventions in this play because they have knowledge and want to try something themselves, but how sending someone else up onto the stage is not OK. We are not playing a game tonight. In the quiet of the moment I asked the audience if they understood. Hundreds of hands went up.

After a few minutes of talking with a support person, I noticed the boy go back to his seat in the audience.

The next intervention was also in the Episode. A young man who seemed to have experience of the Meth House during his life, tried to play Adam more straight. He tried to get control inside Adam and although he tried, could not. This led to an audience conversation about what we CAN do in the moment: get Adam into a recovery pose; get him out of the room and from there, call 9-1-1, were some of the suggestions.

A man replaced Cliff at the end of the play and, in a beautiful way, made space for Karen. He convinced Denise to do the same, and this brought Mary on board. It was amazing how it was obvious this had the potential, after all the trauma, to open up transformational possibilities inside the family.

In the summing up, one of the sponsors mentioned that she had hundreds of things to think about, questions about assumptions she herself was making about addiction after experiencing the evening.

Tomorrow is Halloween. The cast have bought costumes and are going out Trick or Treating in Meadow Lake tomorrow.

Addendum:

I want to write a bit about what happened here in Meadow Lake and what seems obvious to me about what worked for the organizers, and their ability to bring 315 people out in a population of about 8,000. Partly, it seems obvious in their “thank yous” at the end of the event: they thanked a long list of people and organizations including local big stores, the newspaper, a local trucking firm. (At most shows only the central organizing body is thanked and at some, there are no thank-yous.) They had posters everywhere, they are all over town; there were ads in the local paper as well as a long article a couple of days before the show; there is a marquee in the centre of town and *Shattering* is on it. In other words they built a really broad-based community coalition to bring the play into town; a coalition that goes well beyond the “addiction community”. This IS what it is all about, and it is what it takes to fill the house.

La Ronge, SK

A very nice 500k drive to La Ronge, SK – perhaps the most north we will be.

I called a Company meeting, in consultation with Becky (support person). We thought about doing this a week ago, but the schedule just didn’t give us the time, as we haven’t wanted to do it on a day off. The travel day today was good and the whole company met in my room at 8PM, after arriving in La Ronge.

On the floor were three items:

1. A week ago people were starting to get cranky, on each other's nerves. This happens on a tour and it is best to acknowledge it and process anything that needs to be processed.
2. We had two incidents with the police in Meadow Lake. The first was me calling the RCMP putting out a missing person's report on a cast member who didn't "come home" on a night off. It turned out he was fine. He had met some people. This is none of anyone's business, including mine, it is his day off. However, phoning would have been appropriate, as people disappear every day. We were all very worried.

The second involved Halloween. Some of the company members included toy guns and other toy weapons in their costumes. Someone saw the guns and called the police, who entered a motel unit through both doors. I missed all this and heard about it after the fact. Evidently, the police said they knew they were Halloween props, were very friendly etc., and said that having got the call, they had no choice but to respond. Still... this was not a good thing.

3. There has been some pretty hard partying going on by some members of the company. This is, in fact, OK, in my mind, once in a while. We are doing a very intense thing out here over a long period of time and people need to blow off steam somehow, especially when we have no show the next day. We are not out here "preaching abstinence". I am someone, and I am certain that the others in the company agree with me, that believes that the journey from meth addict to occasional drinker is a good news story. The challenge, in fact, is to learn responsible behaviour. There are also, inside these definitions, limits.

And so, we all acknowledged that people have been getting cranky (and that the hard partying might be a contributor – as are the normal stresses of touring – a different bed every night, restaurants, loneliness...) and that the crankiness goes in waves and that actually everyone is getting along far better on this tour than in 2007.

The discussion about the police, not to my surprise, started with, "but we didn't do anything...". It took other company members to point out that actions are not being thought through – not calling to say "I am OK and not coming 'home' tonight". Also, what does buying something that looks like a gun mean in society today, etc., for the conversation to get to personal responsibility.

A better part of the conversation was that we all need to understand that we are not out here alone. It isn't like being at home where if you mess something up it might just affect you, but out here it affects all of us and also Headlines, the staff in Vancouver, all of us. We all have larger responsibilities. This also applies to looking out for each other and making sure each other are safe.

This was relevant because parts of La Ronge feel dangerous. When we got to our hotel at about 6:30 Saturday evening, there was already a crowd of very drunk people outside the hotel bar (actually called “The Zoo”). The atmosphere reminds me of the Overlander in Old Hazelton – a place I spent a lot of time in, in the late ‘80’s – where drunken fights and knives were very common.

I went out for a walk today (now Nov. 2) and just outside the hotel an elderly man, who it seemed to me had already been drinking, approached me and asked where I was from. I started to explain about the play and he said, “Come on, I’ll buy you a drink”. A gesture of friendship, hospitality, curiosity perhaps. I do know that sharing stories is important and also culturally important, but it was about 1PM Sunday afternoon. I declined, and we went on our separate ways.

November 3, 2008	Location:	La Ronge #1
	Sponsor:	Lac La Ronge Indian Band (Health)
	Venue:	JRMCC Hall
	Capacity: 100	Attendance: 88 = 88%

The dimensions we had for the hall indicated it was very narrow, but it wasn’t and we fit in there easily.

A hundred people was a good turnout for tonight. La Ronge only has a population of about 3,000. The play was a little flat, maybe not having performed for a few days, but still solid.

The Forum started without us having to play the first scene again. But then the early interventions were kind of wishful thinking: Adam doesn’t trust Trey and so does not go to his home, (Trey and Adam’s brother were best friends, and Trey has information Adam desperately wants). Adam, once he is smoking meth and living at Trey’s won’t let Karen try the drug because it will be bad for her. This was pretty fascinating, as Karen got more interested in the drug because Adam wanted to keep it from her than she would have otherwise. The man who attempted this agreed it had backfired on him.

Then we got to Karen catching Mary drinking before dinner and... silence. I spoke about addiction as an intergenerational issue, not only aimed at youth. Adam at dinner... silence... and then an 8 year old girl yelled stop. She wanted to stop the violence at dinner, but didn’t know how to.

And then the women alone...silence. I talked about dealing with root causes and not symptoms and a little voice yelled “Stop!”. A ten year old girl replaced Karen and wanted her mother and grandmother to stop yelling at her.

The cast really honoured both these children and we dealt with them well, including the fact that they knew something was wrong, wanted to fix it, and didn't know how.

We moved on to the Episode scene and... silence. I stopped and acknowledged what was happening in the room. A space had opened up in which very young children were now trying to solve the community issues, inside the silence of the teenagers and adults in the room. You could have heard a pin drop. How many of you know the truth of what I am saying? Many hands in the air. Is this what is happening "out there"?

I stopped the Forum and we started a conversation about the silence in the room, and of course people wanted to talk. A man talked a lot about how the focus has to be the youth, because you can't change the adults and the youth are the future. Others in the room challenged this idea, agreeing with the concept that addiction is an intergenerational issue and why, and that it is unfair to the youth, in fact, to make the issue their responsibility alone.

There were many comments about how the play had hit people hard, they didn't know what to do and were paralyzed in the face of a well known silence. I encouraged them to come back tomorrow, as we have a second show here. They can think overnight and then come back and try ideas.

One of the counselors for the evening spoke. He said that tonight was a true reflection of what happens, and the reason he is considering giving up and moving away. (I thought this was very courageous of him to say.) What happens, he said, was that everyone sits back, thinking, contemplating, and waiting for someone else to act.

Many came to me after and said that the comment about the children was right on, and had hit them really hard. It will be very interesting to see what happens tomorrow night.

November 4, 2008	Location:	La Ronge #2
	Sponsor:	Lac La Ronge Indian Band (Health)
	Venue:	JRMCC Hall
	Capacity: 100	Attendance: 115 = 115%

We had a very intense second night in La Ronge – this night when Barack Obama made history and was elected President of the United States. My hope, along with many others, is that finally, a broad diversity of voices will be heard in the United States – it was the same hope in a small hall in La Ronge tonight. The exuberance of the gathering in Chicago was in such relief to the silence in La Ronge and yet, we had a very profound night.

115 people came; a large turnout. Some of this must have been word of mouth from last night. The play was more "in the moment" than last night. The cast and I having talked about this and the same for the Forum.

When I asked the audience, after the play, how many of them recognized issues in the play, 30% of the hands in the room went up. This is such a (silent) small number, and I found my way to mention that. How? By acknowledging that there had been a funeral in the community just today. A funeral of a young woman who had died of a meth overdose.

And so we began. There was silence in the funeral, until, the second time around, a woman yelled stop and replaced Karen and “attacked” Adam with very aggressive “kindness and caring”, insisting that he had to talk with her, because his brother had just died. He told her to “fuck off” and left. She chased after him and continued her attack. She lost him again.

In discussion she acknowledged that her desire to help him made her overextend. What did she really want? To talk with him, to connect. She suggested that if she was wondering if she said SHE needed to talk with HIM and not that HE needed to talk with HER, that things might have been different. Adam agreed.

Silence in the laundry scene until I mentioned the silence again, and then a woman replaced Denise and, much like the first intervention, attacked Cliff for being lazy, not contributing etc. This had much the same result until, all of a sudden, she changed tactic and started talking about her own contributions to the problems in the house. It was an example of an intervener learning as she went. Of course, Cliff had a harder time dismissing this.

Silence in the meth scene at Trey’s both with Adam and Karen. Amidst a lot of silence, a woman yelled stop, but didn’t want to come onto the stage. A young girl yelled stop, came onto the stage, but then didn’t want to do anything. We moved on.

Silence when Karen finds Mary drinking, and of course I talked about addiction being an intergenerational issue and silence throughout dinner. I poked and prodded, and felt at times like I was being so mean to them, to the point that I said I didn’t want to be disrespectful and decided, then, to let the women play out their scene to the very end. After Karen ran out of the home, and after Denise left her mother in tears, a second, literally, before I was going to move on, an elderly woman (a grandmother) yelled stop, and replaced Mary (the grandmother). She wanted to start after Karen has left. She talked with her daughter. She acknowledged that she had made mistakes – held secrets – and that she saw her daughter doing the same. It got very emotional on the stage. The two women acknowledging the secrets, the lies, the distrust and the love between them. In tears, they both embraced. In a “secret thought” both of them said identical things: “I have been such a bad mother”.

You could have heard a pin drop in the theatre. What is it Mary had to conquer in order to do this, I asked? Her fear. Her fear of opening this box. She also had to do it with her daughter alone, not with Karen in the room.

The intervener made a passionate plea to the grandparents in the room to break their silence; the same silence that was in the theatre. She talked about how hard it was for her to yell stop. She recognized she had so many opportunities in her life and didn't. She realized it, she said, at this play tonight.

An intervention from a very young girl in the Episode: She called the police and got herself (theatrically) beaten up. This opened up a conversation about how dangerous the Meth House really is and about what we CAN do. I shared with them a previous audience idea that was to drag Adam out of there and then call an ambulance. It gets him help and also keeps Karen safe.

Silence in the final scene until (again) the very, very final moment of the play. A young man replaced Denise and went back to when Cliff and Karen were talking. This became a very long intervention that involved Karen and Denise talking privately in her room and then Cliff going in and asking them to stop yelling, as they were keeping them awake. This led to Cliff offering to go to Trey's with Karen, because Denise wanted to and Karen (of course) would not allow that. Cliff and Karen went and then returned home. Denise would not give up. She wanted more information, more talking. This led to Mary taking her bottle (in her purse) to her bedroom to drink herself to sleep. Why? Because this story is the story of her own childhood.

And so, Denise, with great care navigated her daughter getting what she needed. She acknowledged Cliff's expertise and (because we can't do everything, can we?) let her mother vanish with a bottle of gin.

With all the silence in the evening we went quite late and then the organizer, who had done a great job, had three pages of thank yous – then the Elder who opened with a long prayer, closed with a long prayer – and THEN there was a raffle!! At least a dozen items were given away.

There was so much heartfelt thanks from counselors, from Elders, from children. The Elder who did the prayer came to me and said he had read my bio and did something that has never happened to me in this entire project. He said, 'you have been on your own long journey from childhood until now. Thank you for all that you are, and please say this, as well, to the actors.'

We did good here, on this historic night.

"Shattering was a very scary show but it was an eye opener. I wish that more people could have been there to take in this event. I had to go each night in La Ronge just to get the awareness. I took my grandchildren and they enjoyed it to the fullest. I sure hope it will help them out in their choices when they become teens."

Arleen Windigo, audience member, November 2008

Duck Lake, SK

Date:	November 6, 2008
Sponsor:	Sobart Community High School; Willow Cree Health
Venue:	Sobart Community High School Gym
Capacity: 120	Attendance: 100 = 83%

We had pie for Robyn's birthday today. And the Sponsors had coffee, cookies, fruit, cheese for us in the staff room.

I had an idea that I talked with the cast about before the show tonight, and that was about risk. When we did the sound checks tonight (we do them every night) that involve running the first two scenes of the play, it struck me that whatever craziness happens throughout the day, at 6PM we come to sound checks and our story and characters that we know so well. The play is like a lover. And love-making can become patterned. The best love-making breaks patterns. In order to do that, we have to trust each other enough to take risks inside the love-making. Actors need to do that inside long runs. They have to risk saying their lines, experiencing the moments, for the first time. The 100th time is risky again when it is the 1st time. Trey has to "risk" asking Adam to his place. Denise has to "risk" asking Karen to do the laundry for her (what if she says no?) etc...etc...etc. This was a good note for them.

100 people in Duck Lake is not bad as the population is only 1700. Evidently, a meth presentation came through here about a year ago (I don't know what) and 14 people showed up.

The Forum started slowly, but then lit on fire. It was great to see how the room opened up and some of the counselors and teachers from the school were very, very complementary about the process and how it unfolded.

A woman replaced Denise and attacked Cliff for his laziness and how he takes advantage of Mary. The intervener was there to "help Mary" but while she was doing so, very loudly, Mary left with her bottle in her purse and started to empty the bottle. It was a perfect reaction from Mary. So much fighting and this is just increasing it. This Denise drove Mary to drink.

A woman replaced Adam with Trey at Trey's and pushed through so that he told her about Greg's death. We watched her move through Adam's anger and then confront the reality that the brother was dead – more so than at the funeral – and the realization that Trey had also lost his best friend. Agree or disagree with what Trey and Greg were doing, Trey also needs to mourn. This Adam reached out to Trey and they embraced – something I have never seen in all the Forums we have done – not because the intervener was a woman, but because they were now two humans mourning together. No pipe, no meth, and a new level of friendship. We agreed not to be naïve, they would

still smoke together, but the texture of everything would be much different; our play would not happen the way it does.

There was silence with Mary drinking, again. This usually does not happen, but has been happening a lot in these small communities, where the solution and the focus really seems to be on the Youth, and the Elders are “lost”.

A young man replaced Trey in the Episode scene and wanted to take that opportunity to tell Adam about how his brother died. He never got a chance, as the complexity of the scene took over and he ended up just trying to calm Adam down. This audience member got lost. We did, though, because of his idea, get to talk about timing. What was he trying to do? We understood he was trying to unburden himself as Trey. It is true, this could help Trey (although it didn't take into account the paranoid state Trey is in). It also, Adam was certain, still lead to him having the Episode.

A young man replaced Cliff with Denise and Karen at the end and made a tactical error. He wanted to open up some space for Karen to be able to tell whatever story she needed, but he gave Denise “too much” information. He said “I know about addiction”... and Denise, as she would do, launched in to very pointed questions that shut Karen down and put Cliff on the defensive.

Humboldt / Muenster, SK

Date:	November 7, 2008
Sponsor:	Humboldt and Area Drug Action Cttee
Venue:	St Peter's Abbey Sport Centre
Capacity: 130	Attendance: 102 = 78%

I was going to join some of the cast after the show for some food in the “beverage room” at the hotel. This is the only place close by to eat around here. There is a “hypnotist” tonight. The “hypnotist” was giving people discounts on “buckets of beer” if they would simulate sex (clothed) in public on the tables. It was just too much and I left.

The show went very well tonight. The sponsors were disappointed at the turnout, but the venue was 6 miles out of Humboldt (in Muenster) and up a long road, at an old Benedictine Monastery that is now a College. Considering how hard it was to get to, I think they did well. Why there? Our stage would not fit into the local community hall and the stage at the theatre facility is not deep enough.

The volunteer issue has been very good this last few shows. I think the terse email that went out a while ago had a good effect.

The audience was quite varied tonight. It was clear to me that there was knowledge in the room about the subject matter in a deep way, and also

people who were there because of their concern and desire for knowledge. The knowledgeable people, to a large degree, remained silent; afraid, I think, to make themselves visible in what seems to be quite a conservative community (contrary to what was happening in the “beverage room”).

A young man replaced Cliff at dinner and tried, calmly, to suggest to Adam that his behaviour was inappropriate. Adam baited him and this Cliff grabbed at the bait, the scene escalating in anger until Adam left and Karen ran out after him. This Cliff decided to chase after them (because of his concern for Karen) with Denise and they found the two in a park. Another confrontation, this one led to physical violence. How does Cliff navigate this and not have it boil over? How does he not buy into Adam’s energy?

A young woman replaced Karen during the Episode and tried to called the police. She wouldn’t give up. Trey beat her up.

This happened a few times tonight: Heroics that led to violence.

A woman yelled stop in the final scene and, as others have done, broke through Denise’s fear. She allowed Cliff and Karen time together which led them to go to Trey’s and discover Adam was OK. When they returned home Cliff and this Denise had a beautiful heartfelt talk about their childhoods. This is something that has never happened before. It was obvious that if Denise can do this, Cliff’s “place” in the family will rise, secrets will be revealed, the path will be very different.

There was an RCMP officer in the audience. The first one visible on the tour. He loved the event, appreciating how real it was and that it didn’t sugar-coat. The feedback from people after the show was tremendous, even though there had also been so much silence. Silence in the scene with the women, for instance. Silence when Mary is drinking.

Regina, SK

Date:	November 8, 2008
Sponsor:	Regina Catholic Schools
Venue:	Archbishop MC O’Neil High School Gym
Capacity: 120	Attendance: 83 = 69%

A disappointing turnout for the show. However, Saskatchewan was playing BC in the quarterfinals in football here in Regina today (who knew THAT would happen), and we had SUCH a hard time finding a sponsor here.

Lori Whiteman, an old friend who really believes in the theatre work and used to be the First Nations Liaison at the Regina School District (but could not organize) finally put us in touch with a woman at Regina Catholic Schools who did agree to organize.

The evening had an odd shape: opening up and lively, falling silent and then opening up again. I was quite pleased with the evening and also my ability to sit with the silence that built, not knowing what was going to happen, and keeping the energy open enough for the Forum to start again.

Interventions started fairly quickly. A man replaced Trey and tried to “help” Adam by saying “goodbye” to him at the funeral; no invitation to come to his place to smoke some joints. Instead he told a long story about Greg’s addiction and his own part in it.

Why would Trey do this, I asked. ‘To stop Adam from going down the same path’. What path? ‘The drugs and addiction path.’ Our Trey articulates that although the character has lost his best friend, he doesn’t really think anything is wrong. A terrible thing happened, but he has no intention or desire to change his lifestyle.

OK, I said, you want this for Adam, but you replaced Trey – what do you want for Trey? People sometimes find this concept difficult. They understand wanting to “create safety” for others (being a helper) but creating safety for themselves is, for some reason more challenging. What does Trey get? Finally, he said that Trey gets to unburden himself. Ahhh... we agreed that our Trey would likely not try to “save” Adam at this point of the play. He also can’t see the future and doesn’t know what will happen with Adam, so would not be on alert. But what was the result of Trey’s attempt at personal safety by unburdening himself and telling Adam the terrible story? Adam heard something very challenging that really disturbed him, not because Trey was laying any kind of trip on him, something that had an altruistic agenda, but simply because Trey was honest. Trey’s attempt to create safety in his own life can inadvertently inspire Adam to create safety in his own.

There were interventions in the laundry and meth scenes, and then so much silence when Karen catches Mary drinking, in the women’s scene and also back in Trey’s apartment. Finally, I sat and chatted with the audience about the silence. What is it about, I asked. Shame, helplessness, a feeling of not wanting to fail and so doing nothing, were just some of the responses.

And so we chatted for about 10 minutes, I thought we were going to close the Forum down, but out of the chat came an intervention replacing Mary, all the way back when Karen catches Mary drinking.

An elderly man replaced Mary and unburdened (her)self to Karen about the alcohol. Into this, Cliff woke up on the couch and Denise entered and a fascinating (true) thing started to happen. The family started to resist Mary’s desire to stop drinking. It really scared them, because they really do look up to her and if she changes her behaviour, what happens to them? The man was very gentle and understood this phenomenon and worked with it. It became a beautiful insight into Mary’s journey.

It was now quite late, about 9:30 (we started at 7:00). The attention span of an audience is, on average about 2 hours. We had gone back into Forum, though, so I asked the audience if they wanted to look at the final scene. About 60% raised their hands and so we continued.

A young man replaced Karen and insisted Cliff not just say “talk to me” like everyone else in the family does, but open up himself. Cliff shared, in a remarkable way about his gambling. Herb (the actor) was amazing in this new territory. Cliff talked about the size of his gambling debts and that he was in big trouble, no one would loan him money anymore and the people he owed money were threatening to cut off one of his hands. He was crying now, very frightened tears.

This opened up “Karen”. The authenticity of it was irresistible. Denise entered and, because Cliff was so authentic, agreed to leave them alone. Cliff and Karen went to Trey’s to see if Adam was OK. It got really complicated. “Karen” wanting to call an ambulance, police etc., a big argument broke out that was now leading to violence; a very dangerous situation.

It was fascinating to watch this audience member, this “Karen”, start from such a centred place and then slide into the chaos of Trey and Adam and Cliff’s world. Calling the police to Trey’s will get Karen hurt very, very badly. We got to open this all up because of the very complex intervention.

Again, people were blown away by the show. I wish the audience here would / could have been three times bigger.

“*Shattering* is the kind of performance that causes one, no matter what their own situation, to reflect inward. For some people this is a scary place because it's a place many work hard to avoid. It seems to me to be that necessary first place of reflection - the inner self, in order to find a way to articulate outside of ourselves to the world around us the thinking and emotion that exists there. I attended the play (in Regina) and talked with several audience members after who remarked at how real the story and the characters were. The stories they shared seemed to reflect aspects of each of our own experiences in some way and this prompted us to continue talking about what we saw, and how our own stories connected... through this sharing we discovered further connections between our stories. Thanks for bringing this Theatre for Living production to our community; it provided a powerful means to get people thinking deeply about the issues our own place.”

Lori Whiteman, First Nations and Métis Education Branch, Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, November 2008

Pasqua, SK

Date: November 12, 2008
 Sponsor: File Hills Qu’Appelle Tribal Council
 Venue: Chief Ben Pasqua Memorial Hall
 Capacity: 130 Attendance: 112 = 86%

I need to put where we are in a context. Fort Qu’Appelle is about an hour north east of Regina, in the Qu’Appelle Valley. To get to Pasqua, you travel

back along the #10 highway to a gravel road, turn right, and go north for about 15 minutes across the prairie. Suddenly, across the horizon, some buildings appear. This is the Pasqua Reserve.

We got to the hall an hour early in order to shoot scenes with a CTV News Crew for, we think, Saskatchewan broadcast. I am hoping that having got good footage, it makes it onto the National news. They said they thought it would make the local news at 11:30 tonight.¹²

At 7:05 (5 minutes after start time) there were zero people, other than us and the central sponsor, in the venue. We thought we were canceling the show. So did the sponsor. I asked him what he thought had happened and he told me that he hadn't realized how busy he was being the Principal of the local school and, not being able to manage both things, had handed everything regarding the play over to the local Health Authority and had no idea if they had done anything. Between 7:10 and 7:20, 112 people walked in the door.

The people from the Health Authority didn't come. Until a minute before starting, we thought the two local support people had not come, but one had. Someone mentioned that a woman in the audience also had experience as a counselor, and we drafted her into service as a local support person.

It was a very varied audience. Lots of youth and also elders. Interventions started without prodding in the first scene. As has been the case in the last few shows, a few of the interventions, including the first one, were aimed at "saving" other characters from the dangers of drugs. At the funeral, Trey tries to "save" Adam; in the Meth House, Karen tries to "save" Adam. The characters tend to respond very negatively to these interventions, much to the surprise of some (not all) in the audience. "Don't they know they need help?" No, they don't. This is a fascinating place to be and the beginning of such a hard journey – realizing that "safety" in one's world starts by taking responsibility for creating safety in one's own life – not imposing that safety on the lives of others.

There was mostly silence in the family scenes. Interventions in the drug scenes. Interventions on the symptoms. Silence in the root causes. Of course I pointed this out in various ways. The final intervention of the evening replaced Cliff and helped Karen find out that Adam is still alive. Then the intervener insisted that the whole family get together and talk. Of course there was resistance to this, but he was also so gentle that characters found themselves saying yes.

¹² It did not make the National News, but did broadcast locally. They referred to it as 'a controversial play, created and performed by ex-addicts', that investigates the roots of addiction. Footage of both scenes we gave them: Karen trying meth for the first time, and the fight between her and Denise at the end of the play. Good, but very short clips from me, Kayla and Betsy. A mention of the rest of the SK shows, but no way to find out when or where.

In discussion, he stepped forward and addressed his own community, with deep and barely contained emotion. He talked about the silence in the room about the family issues. He said that in his work, he runs into exactly that silence, and understands that it comes from fear of exposing long held secrets, just like in the play. He pleaded with his own community to use the examples of the evening to break the silences that were in the community.

Fort Qu'Appelle, SK

Date: November 13, 2008
 Sponsor: File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council
 Venue: Bert Fox Community High School Gym
 Capacity: 200 Attendance: 195 = 98%

Many of the cast got stopped in the street here today because of the show in Pasqua last night, and I assume this will be more on our day off tomorrow. A very good turnout here.

I had a talk with the cast before the show today about listening in the Forum. It is a long run and we are in the middle of it. Last night in a couple of the interventions, I felt like some of them were not listening, but responding to impressions of what they thought the audience member was doing. In other words, responding to memories of previous interventions. This is hard to avoid. We are tired. It is, however, bad for the Forum and we must avoid going onto automatic. It wasn't severe last night, but certainly starting. The talk seemed to have nipped it in the bud.

A young woman replaced Adam in the Meth House and, after talking with Trey about Greg, gave him back Greg's bracelet that Trey returns to Adam at the funeral. The symbolism of this was profound. Adam learns the truth and, in a way, leaves Greg with Trey. Knowing how his brother died, he decides not to stay with Trey – but also recognizes that Trey is now alone and gives him this precious item. The effect on Trey is sobering, leaving him with a lot to ponder about his own lifestyle. An example of Adam creating safety for himself, and that “rubbing off” on others.

A young woman replaced Karen in the Meth House and dove into smoking weed with Adam. When Trey arrived and was upset about the sketch book, she wanted to look at it and was very impressed with the art. She was afraid of the meth pipe and refused it, and eventually excused herself from there, having given Trey and Adam things to think about. Trey really liked this Karen. They could be good friends. She did something remarkable: she navigated being there with the guys in a really authentic way and also kept herself safe. She recognized Karen's need to do this, and was not patronizing in any way. What really surprised the audience was that the guys didn't care whether she smoked meth with them or not. Karen is not dragged into drug use. She starts because she wants to. This is far closer to a true story, not the

myth. It seemed like many in the audience wanted to believe that the guys cared if she joined them or not. They didn't. The impulse came from her and the strength can also come from her.

A young man replaced Adam in the Episode scene and got a lot more than he bargained for. He was, it seemed, up there to "perform" but Trey and Karen (and I) insisted that he be accountable for his actions as Adam, that it be real. He got more and more drawn in to the seriousness of the situation. As he got drawn in, so did the audience. Out of the intervention came a very good conversation about how important it could be to get Adam out of there, so that he can get help.

And then, after a very lively evening... dead silence in the final scene. No interventions. We chatted a bit. What is the silence now, I asked. Helplessness; shame; overwhelmed... were three of many responses.

A First Nations man (an Elder) spoke at the end of the evening. He talked about never having seen this kind of theatre and really liking it – how it dug so deep into the truth – some truths very uncomfortable, like the silence about "root causes" in the final scene.

Many people from the school talked with me. They were very excited by the event, and agreed with the Elder about the amazing depth of the evening. We did good here, and it was really nice to have a full house.

Radville, SK

Date: November 15, 2008
 Sponsor: Radville Regional High School Community Council
 Venue: Radville Regional High School
 Capacity: 100 Attendance: 70 = 70%

We had an accommodation change today. There was an error in distances from Weyburn to Estevan. We were going to be here in the Weyburn hotel tonight, do Radville from here, leave for Estevan and do that show on Sunday (it being over 130 k away), sleep there, and return to Weyburn for a show on Monday. Estevan, though is just over 80k from Weyburn and so I cancelled the Estevan Hotel today (they were very gracious). It is much better to not be moving the company.

Not a bad turnout for this very small community. However, it was our first audience with zero First Nations representation. (This is important to us, as at the heart of the tour organizing is collaborations between Native and non-Native communities to look at the issues of addiction.) No one could confirm which First Nations Territory we were in. When Becky pressed the question, she was told that none of this area was First Nations Territory. Of course, this is impossible, and an insight into where we are.

I have to say the cast was very gracious, and met this audience in their own territory, so to speak. There was such silence in the room tonight, perhaps more so, I dare say, than in any other community so far.

The first intervention in the funeral, after lots of prodding, replaced Trey and suggested Adam come over, that they stay away from drugs, and have a good talk. I remarked that Trey was a daily drug user. "Oh...but he shouldn't be", said the intervener... but he is.

Many of the interventions had "messages": don't do meth, don't drink alcohol. It was either this or silence. Silence in the laundry scene. Silence in the catching Mary drinking scene and dinner.

I sat down on the stairs and explained that it wasn't my intention or role to drag them through the Forum Theatre aspect of the evening. I asked how many of them wanted to actually do this with us. Three hands went up (out of 70) and two of them were the organizers. The third was a young man in the front row who asked if we could go back to the scene with Karen and Mary and the bottle. Of course.

He did a lovely and gentle intervention, replacing Karen, and linking Karen's fear of what was happening with Adam and her reaction to seeing her grandmother drinking out of the bottle in the middle of the day. This was so beautifully navigated in a very non-confrontational way. It really hit Mary, because this Karen was not chastising her, she was asking for help, knowing that she had entered new territory at Trey's, entering a new world of harder drugs. Of course a part of Karen is scared. The older people in the room, and they were about 50% of the audience, seemed uncomfortable with the idea that Mary's drinking was connected to Karen's meth use. It was on their faces.

After the young man's intervention, I decided to continue, because the sense of the room felt different. I did end up sitting on the stairs again, asking people to talk about the silence, but in this community we shifted back and forth from discussion to Forum a few times. It was a very different rhythm than usual.

Then later, I asked the room how many knew that the Meth House existed in Radville. What seemed to me to be every single youth in the room raised their hand. When I pointed this out, the middle age and elders were (hard to describe), so upset. They were shaking their heads and looked disgusted, shocked.

I asked them (again) what the silence was about. One older woman said, "we want it to just go away." Such an honest statement, I think. Another said that she knows, but has no idea what to do, is paralyzed. We chatted a bit about how 'not knowing what to do' can be an excuse for doing nothing.

A young woman replaced Karen and, when Mary told her she couldn't see Adam because she was on drugs, she threw it back at her. "Takes one to know one", she said. This was a real slap at the grandmother and, (it seemed) quite uncharacteristic of the evening. It was also, I think, at the heart of the evening. Mary responded to this by opening up and admitting her grand daughter was right and that they had information to share. Mary is this worried about her grand daughter. It was a lovely intervention, and really opened up the secrets in the family.

Nothing in the Episode. And then, late in the final scene, a woman yelled stop and replaced Denise. She allowed space for Karen and Cliff to talk (although she eavesdropped the whole conversation at the door). This intervention opened up a conversation about Denise's fear, and how it is the fear that drives Karen out of the house.

For this audience, this seemed like such a revolutionary concept. As was indicated in the moment about whether or not the Meth House is in the community, the parents and grandparents in the room have very little knowledge about what is going on in their own community. I believe they are certain the kids in their lives are not into drugs. Except 100% of the youth in the room, young people who came with them, know the Meth House exists and how dangerous it is. They are obviously not talking with each other.

And so, it was a very different event tonight, and still it met this community where it is. A very elderly man came to me after – a Saskatchewan farmer – he shook my hand and said, "you love what you do, and you do what you love. I see that. I do, too." And then we talked about the prairie sunset earlier in the evening.

Estevan, SK

Date:	November 15, 2008
Sponsor:	St. Joseph's Hospital of Estevan Addictions Services
Venue:	Estevan Composite High School Cafetorium
Capacity:	100 Attendance: 81 = 81%

The organizers tonight were ecstatic with the play and the Forum. It was very intense, once again, because of the long and prolonged silences in it.

One intervention really stands out. An older man replaced Mary when she is alone drinking after Karen has run out. He drank and then... he slit his wrist and died on the sofa.

I turned to Cliff and Denise and asked, "who finds her?" Denise, from offstage and in tears, said, "I do". And so on she came to find her dead mother. After about 30 seconds, Cliff came home. They were of course distraught. In "secret thoughts" all the family members, Karen included, believed it was their fault. The intervener talked about Mary's helplessness inside the silence of the

house. His version of “safety” for Mary created devastation for everyone else in the family.

I used the suicide, and how it grew out of the silence of Mary, to talk about the silence that had pervaded most of the Forum that evening. This was very intense, of course, and also, I believe an opportunity for deep reflection for this living community. Herb talked about all the people he had lost to suicide and silence. I asked the audience how many had? At least 50%.

The silence of the house was surrounded by the silence in the theatre, which was surrounded by the same silence in the community. ‘How many of you know this?’ ...So many hands in the air. And so, the silence was a teacher tonight.

Weyburn, SK

Date: November 17, 2008
 Sponsor: Wayburn Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse
 Venue: Wayburn Comprehensive School
 Capacity: 150 Attendance: 165 = 110%

I spent about an hour online today, trying to figure out whose traditional territory we are in. No luck. So, Sophie (cast member) offered to call a First Nations friend in Regina to ask: It is Treaty 4. Then I looked up “treaty 4, boundaries” and, sure enough, all of Southern SK is Treaty 4. Amazing that Sponsors haven’t been able to tell us this. And so, finally, the announcement happened from the stage tonight.

People just kept coming into the theatre. At one point there was a lineup all the way down the hall and to the door of the school. People from Estevan (last night) had been calling wanting to know if they could get in.

There was a good mix of generations. The Sponsor raffled a Wii, but in order to be eligible, a child had to come with a parent. There were posters everywhere, and also a good article in the paper. Even the hotel had postcards on the counter, the FIRST hotel of ours to have that.

Some interventions that stand out: an 8 year old boy replaced Cliff and decided not to take the \$20 from Mary. This seemed kind of magical until we explored it and it became apparent how much he understood. He knew Cliff was gambling – had an addiction – and also knew that Cliff could see how wrong things were in the family. He decided somebody had to do something, knowing that it would be a terrible struggle. Of course if Cliff can do this, space opens up inside the family for other things to happen. (Wonderfully, at the end of the evening, this kid won the Wii – he had earned it!)

There were no interventions (third show in a row) around catching Mary drinking. I asked the audience how many of them had “seen” the moment

and only about 50% raised their hands. (This isn't a directing issue – the moment between the two characters is completely visible – it is the only thing happening on the stage.) I told them that the same silence around this moment had happened in Radville and Estevan, and how unusual that was for this play. I took the opportunity to challenge them about the disconnection between “youth addiction” and the realities in people's homes.

A woman replaced Mary when she is alone, drinking. Last night this is where a man had Mary commit suicide. She talked about how the family needs counseling and that she is going to organize that. OK, how are you going to do that, I asked? Well, they just need to do it she said. Sure, but how are you going to make that happen? I am going to call a family meeting. Tonight? Yes, tonight. OK. Mary has been drinking all day. Denise and you have just had a big fight and she has run out of the room. Cliff is off gambling and Karen ran off into the night after Adam. No one knows where she is. Tonight? Yes, she insisted. OK. Denise is here. Cliff, come home. The scene played out with a great deal of accusations of hypocrisy. Cliff left again. It was going to take a great deal of work. Timing is so important.

A woman replaced Karen in the Episode scene. I understood later that her plan was to try to calm it all down. It went badly. She got caught up in the energy in the room and ended up screaming at Adam, who went all red in the face, veins popping, crying, begging her to stop yelling and... she couldn't. The Episode happened. Karen freaked out and tried to call an ambulance, just like in our play and managed to keep her phone. Trey decked her with a punch to the face.

We talked about how dangerous the environment is. How does Karen stay calm? Also, what are the things she CAN do? How many know the Meth apartment is in Weyburn?... about 50%.

A woman replaced Mary in the very last moment, when Mary is standing behind Karen, while she is holding the pipe. This has never happened before. She did a very dramatic thing. She took out her bottle and put it in between herself and her grand daughter. Here is mine, she said. Will you put in yours? Karen went into crisis and her grandmother held her hands and held them and held them. Karen put in the pipe. She did not, however, put in the drugs that were hidden in her pocket.

In discussion, the audience believed that in the morning, they would both wake up and think, “wow – that was close”, and that while very touching, this did not get to what was really going on. It dealt with the symptoms (the bottle, the pipe) but never asked Karen (or Mary) any questions about what was happening.

A standing ovation again tonight and now we are headed west and home. The next show is back in Alberta.

Medicine Hat, AB

Date: November 19, 2008
 Sponsor: Medicine Hat Community Drug Council
 Venue: Medicine Hat College Theatre
 Capacity: 200 Attendance: 191 = 96%

A lot of people. The play itself was a bit self conscious tonight, perhaps being in a theatre, a “sacred space”.

The Forum started without any prodding and the interventions never stopped coming. A very activated audience. I had a weird and scary thought: the play had been a bit “surfacy”. Did this make it easier for the audience to intervene, as they may not have been as devastated by the depth of the play?

A young woman replaced Karen at dinner and took Adam outside and, after assessing the situation, suggested Adam go back to Trey’s. It is the wrong time for a family dinner, she said. He does and she returns home. There are some questions, but because of the way she navigates this, dinner is served. Complicated. She adds to the secrecy. She also leaves Adam on his own. However, we agree that tonight there will be no psychotic episode, no 28 hours in the street. The creation of safety in Karen’s home ripples out to the Meth House.

A young man replaced Trey in the Episode and had the desire to calm everything down. Instead, he got caught up in the violent energy in the room and punched Adam in the stomach. This led to a lot of yelling and the very seizure that the intervener wanted to avoid. He did what a lot of people do and responded to the violence with violence, even through he had planned not to.

A woman replaced Karen in the final scene and asked Cliff if the two of them could move out together. This has never happened before. The woman was certain that life would be better this way, but the audience was not so sure. What is “safety” in this situation?

A great deal of appreciation after the show, and another standing ovation.

Cardston, AB

Date: November 21, 2008
 Sponsor: Cardston Community Programs
 Venue: Cardston Civic Centre
 Capacity: 100 Attendance: 82 = 82%

We saw the mountains today. An important symbolic moment. We are nearing home.

Cardston was a challenging community to bring this play into. There was great resistance here. To put it in context: as far as I understand it, if a music CD has a language advisory on the cover, the local music store will not sell it. Cardston is “dry”; no bar, no lounge, no licensed restaurant, etc. It is a deeply religious, Mormon community. They also have a growing drug problem.

The Sponsor really wanted the play here and ran into resistance around publicity. Letters of complaint started (I found out today) before we got to town. The issue is the language in the play.

And so getting 82 people out was a feat. Many of them came from the surrounding Reserves. There was a very good mix of Native / non-Native audience members. There was an audible appreciation in the room when I acknowledged we were in Blackfoot Territory.

The play ran well. Those who were really offended, 6 or 8 of the audience, left early. Becky spoke with them and tells me they were not angry – apologetic, in fact, saying it was just too much for them.

And the Forum was very lively, with a twist. Unlike most other communities we have been in, there were lots of interventions in the family, and a lot of silence around the drug scenes. It is usually the other way around. I acknowledged this from the stage. The Sponsor told me, after the show, that what happened in the hall is one of his frustrations. Of course the Meth House exists here. People think that once someone is there, they are “lost”. There is no hope, no solutions. The inhabitants are on drugs and will never think clearly. A woman in the audience said this to me tonight. They cannot change, and cannot help themselves.

Speaking personally, I think this attitude is so very dangerous and counterproductive. It is a disempowering message to anyone caught up in the addiction issue. It is also, as is proven by the very fact that this project exists, not true.

The interventions in the family scenes all dug under the surface in various, sometimes very courageous ways. People started revealing secrets, going back into family history and picking up lost threads of what happened with

absent fathers and grandfathers, started filling in the blanks and creating space for people to speak and be heard. On numerous occasions this created real, tangible, concrete change in the family and in relation to the addiction issue. The audience agreed, and knew it to be true – and also hard to do, both on and off the stage.

I have a hope: That the perceptions about “lost addicts” were shattered for at least some of the audience tonight. After all, we have three ex-meth addicts on the stage.

Calgary, AB

Date: November 22, 2008
 Sponsor: Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary
 Venue: Hillhurst Sunnyside Community Centre Gym
 Capacity: 200 Attendance: 98 = 49%

Complicated. The show itself went very well. And yet, there is a huge frustration attached to tonight:

The Friendship Centre insisted, against our constant requests, on telling people tonight was sold out. “Oversold”, they kept saying, and for weeks now, have been turning the general public away from the show, including at the door tonight!! Why? Because they wanted 200 seats for their own constituency. We tried to explain to them that because they were not charging for the tickets, they would have a 40 – 50% no-show rate. They refused to listen. As predicted, they had a 51% no-show rate.

They had wanted us to perform the play at the Epcor Centre, in the small theatre. Our stage wouldn't fit in there, though, if they wanted any space for an audience at all. And so, we were in the gym at the Hillhurst Sunnyside Community Centre. It is an extremely difficult performance space. There were at least 6 echoes, the small room was so boomy. We did our best, cutting the top ends of ranges off of the mikes and resetting sound levels to reduce ranges that would bounce. In the end, there was not a lot we could do.

Despite all this, the show went well and we had a great Forum. The audience was very activated, needing no coaxing at all and some of the interventions were very deep.

A few of them were people replacing Karen to try to “save” Adam or replacing Adam to try to “save” Trey. Lots of judgment in these moments and it makes the characters defensive. They are telling the truth (as the character) when they say they don't think they have a problem and the “friend” who treats them like they are messed up and need rescuing is offensive to them; and because they are offended the intervention is not effective. Interesting lessons here.

A woman replaced Mary with Cliff and the money. She didn't give him the \$20.00, instead asking what he wanted it for. Cliff lied, of course, saying he wanted to buy a friend, who had just had a baby, a gift. This launched a hysterically funny improvisation, that everyone knew was a lie, of Mary trying to get Cliff to agree to let her come shopping with him. Poor Cliff dug himself into a hole and then ran out without the \$20. And then I froze the moment and asked for secret thoughts and Mary's was "I can use this \$20 for more gin."

In discussion, the woman agreed that she had not planned this, it had occurred to her in the moment. She had done a lovely thing – opened up, in a tiny way, the possibility of talking about what Cliff was doing with the money (a gambling addiction) and, at the same time, fallen more deeply into her own. The complexity and truth of this was palpable in the room.

A man replaced Karen with Mary and the drinking. All he said to her was that he wished Mary would use a glass instead of the bottle. What he was getting at was asking her to stop hiding. This opened up a conversation about all the secrets in the home.

A young woman replaced Karen in the scene with the three women, after Adam has left dinner. She complained that Denise and Mary were "at her" about her drug use when they both had addictions they wouldn't talk about. She turned the spotlight back on them. Mary responded with an offer to stop drinking if Karen stopped experimenting with drugs. Denise heard the "D" word (drugs) and launched into an attack of questions about whether or not Karen was using drugs. A true moment, as Denise's fear made her miss the point altogether. Mary and this Karen managed her, though – Mary in particular – who called her daughter on her constant red alert nagging. This intervention had other wonderful ramifications. Karen does not run out to Trey's – the Episode doesn't happen – Karen doesn't spend 28 hours in the street.

A young woman replaced Karen (who got replaced a lot) in the Episode scene and tried to calm down the guys – another moment of trying to save others. While doing so she got more and more hysterical and eventually got hit by Adam, who couldn't handle her continued shrieking.

It is so interesting to see the pattern that appears: The moments of creating true safety for one's self are the moments that ripple out and have the potential to create safety for others. The moments of throwing one's self on the fire as a sacrifice to save others (in our reality, anyway), tends to piss people off.

A raucous standing ovation and a lot of interest in what the work is, and its applications on other issues after the show. It is also a tragedy that up to another 100 people could have seen the show, and so many were turned away.

Tsuu T'ina, AB

Date: November 24, 2008
 Sponsor: Tsuu T'ina Nation Health and Wellness
 Venue: Tsuu T'ina Jr. & Sr. High School Gym
 Capacity: 120 Attendance: 79 = 66%

The organizers in Tsuu T'ina were very disappointed at the turn out. They figured they would have at least 150 people, likely a lot more, although there were 120 chairs out. There were named reservations on at least 80 chairs, people who had registered to come. At least 50% of those didn't show. None of the community leaders who were invited came. The organizer says it is always the same. Everyone says they need to have programs in the community and when one happens, they don't come.

We had a good run and while the Forum was slow to start it was very active once it started. Silences in the meth scenes again, the activity mostly in the family.

A deep moment tonight when a young woman replaced Karen and tried so hard, in the scene where she smokes meth for the first time, to take care of Adam. In the process this Karen endangered herself. When we were starting to talk about this I saw the light bulb go on for her – something she already knew and lost track of in the truth of the moment: She can't take care of Adam by endangering herself. The creation of safety in her own life in the moment inside the Meth House creates safe space around her that Adam, if he desires, can share, be inspired by, ignore, make fun of...

A woman replaced Mary after dinner and cut through in very powerful ways, the silences between her and her daughter and grand daughter. She did this without accusing or preaching. She owned her own failings and created a space where even her daughter could do so. She did this, recognizing that she had fallen silent inside a bottle and was tired of not being seen and heard.

Canmore, AB

Date: November 25, 2008
 Sponsor: Town of Canmore
 Venue: Canmore Collegiate High School Theatre
 Capacity: 100 Attendance: 52 = 52%

We were all very happy to get back into the mountains today. A psychological thing. "Home" and close to the end.

The theatre here is an odd configuration. A pit stage and a very raked audience. We couldn't use their lighting grid and so put our trees up at the

back of the audience, pointing down at an extreme angle. This meant a lot of glare from the lights that was very fatiguing.

We all felt strange about the run tonight. I think it was the weird space and the very different relationship between us and the audience. I felt like we were under a microscope. The play felt self-conscious. I said this about the last formal theatre space, didn't I?

A disappointing turnout, again. Hard to know what happened with the publicity here. This is our second smallest house of the tour. I wandered around looking for breakfast this morning and saw zero posters. But there was also an article in the local paper that, I imagine, didn't help. I found it quite upsetting, and asked the sponsor, who was quoted in the article, about it. She explained:

'The reporter asked me how the play got booked for Canmore. I told her that Headlines got in touch and let us know it was touring and available, and we thought it was a great idea and brought it in.' What appeared in the paper was: "(the sponsor) said the theatre company invited itself to Canmore, not the other way around." The Sponsor was also quite upset by this.

Of course this goes against a core ethic held very dearly by me as an individual and by Headlines as an organization. I also imagine it turned a few people off of coming to the event.

A young woman replaced Karen in the Meth House leading into the episode and got very aggressive with Adam and Trey – grabbing at the pipe and yelling at Adam to calm down – getting more and more hysterical. Eventually both Adam and Trey (at the same time) had had enough and attacked her physically. At one point during the intervention she was given the opportunity, by Trey, to leave with Adam. Adam would have gone with her, he said later. She refused.

In discussion we got to a very interesting place. What did she want? She insisted she wanted to feel safe with Adam, and yet she refused to go with him. Why? Because what she really wanted, she said after more thought, was the chaos.

One of the most interesting moments, for me, happened near the end of the evening. A young woman replaced Cliff in the last scene and convinced Denise to let (him) talk privately with Karen. Karen called Trey's and found out Adam was OK. Then, this Cliff started telling Karen she needed to take Adam in for help – give him pamphlets, introduce him to a counselor. Karen reacted badly to this for a number of reasons. She would never seek outside help for Adam, that would expose her too much. She also doesn't want to be Adam's counselor or responsible for him finding one. What she wants is someone to talk to about what happened tonight. She wants to share stories with her cousin Cliff who has knowledge about what has just happened. Cliff

offers nothing of himself in this intervention. He points Karen outside the house.

When I observed this, the young woman commented, “Wow, that really hurt”. I told her that hadn’t been my intention. She said it was fine, she was having an uncomfortable “aha” moment in front of an audience. She does this, she said, she gives advice but never shares herself. How many of you in the audience recognize this from your own lives, I asked? At least 50%.

Lots of appreciation about the show from the local drama class that is getting into Forum Theatre, from an ex-RCMP officer who worked on meth issues, also from a woman from the City of Banff.

Golden, BC

Date: November 25, 2008
 Sponsor: Golden and District Alcohol and Drug Task Force and
 East Kootenay Addiction Services
 Venue: Civic Centre
 Capacity: 200 Attendance: 146 = 73%

We had a great drive to Golden. We left early and I showed the company Banff and then Lake Louise. They were very excited. I’d hoped to take them up to Takakaw Falls in Yoho National Park, a favourite spot of mine, but the road was closed. Instead, we went to a great little café in Field that they loved.

Our set didn’t fit onto the stage here. We knew this was coming, but also never know the reality until getting into the venue. Everything had to flatten out, and we spent about 45 minutes re-blocking some scenes. Anything with violence in it had to be done over and over, as it had to be safe.

A lot of people came, and the venue sponsor from the Civic Centre acknowledged from the stage that this crowd was not their usual crowd.

The interventions started slowly but then once they did, it was a very activated evening. A pattern emerged that I talked about. The Task Force Sponsor came to me after and said he thought the observation was true and a fantastic thing to point out: (once again) many of the interventions tonight were a character being replaced to help others, not create safety in one’s own life. This often led to deeply desired outcomes making the intervener very aggressive. The aggression led to violence, sometimes physical, sometimes emotional. It was very rare tonight that an audience member came on stage to create “safety” in their own life.

This is so symbolically important, it seems to me: addiction is someone else’s problem, not mine and so, I will try to help the “other” get “better”, but never investigate, challenge, confront, deal with my own issues.

This was one of those nights when no one left until the very end, and the evening went 2 hours and 15 minutes.

Canim Lake, BC (100 Mile House)

Date: November 28, 2008
 Sponsor: Canim Lake Band
 Venue: Canim Lake Band Office Gym
 Capacity: 100 Attendance: 38 = 38%

We had a beautiful Forum tonight and a tiny audience. Attendance was affected by a blizzard and also by the venue being 36 kilometers up a snowy road off the main highway. In retrospect, this tour stop should not have been listed in our material as “100 Mile House”. It should have been listed as “Canim Lake”.

The organizers in Canim Lake were very gracious and kind people. Our sponsor, Ken, wanted me to tell Headlines’ Staff about how appreciative he was of all their help. Of course the turn out was disappointing, but also understandable. He had invited people from surrounding communities, but it was obvious the weather was going to keep them away.

The Forum, though was very lively from the very start. About half a dozen of the audience had done a Forum Theatre project with Street Spirits, from Prince George last year, and one of the women had seen *Meth* in Williams Lake.

There was a deep intelligence in the room tonight from both the youth and the parents. There were no Elders there, due to the weather, we were told. There was an ability to care for one’s self and also to approach others in very respectful and non-aggressive ways, while maintaining an urgency in the situation. When I asked how many recognized issues at the top of the play, 100% of the hands went up.

Of course this seems obvious, but that moment in each show is so telling. A high percentage is not an indicator that there are more problems; a high percentage is an indicator that the community is working to confront the problems. A low percentage is not an indicator that there are fewer issues; a low percentage tends to be an indicator that the community is filled with fear and perhaps in denial, and that the Forum is going to be filled with silence.

A young woman replaced Adam at Trey’s apartment and dove into the art work. She acknowledged Adam was a meth user and, at the same time, knew that he could decide that today, because of his brother’s funeral, he was not going to smoke. He insisted that he and Trey talk about the art, and Greg’s place in the drawings. This truly changed the relationship between Adam

and Trey – sent it off on a completely different direction, by finding a different way to honour Greg.

A young woman replaced Mary in the scene with the three women. In tears, she encouraged Denise to talk with her daughter, by explaining to Denise why she (Mary) never talked to her own daughter (Denise). The secrets flowed from these two crying women, and Karen stayed, invited into this very equal and adult conversation. No psychotic episode tonight. No 28 hours in the street, because Mary stepped up to the plate.

A young man, who obviously knew Trey's life, replaced Trey in the Episode scene. He tried to get Karen and Adam to leave the apartment with him and run away from the trouble that was coming. They wouldn't. He wouldn't go without them but said that if the scene continued much longer, he would have left on his own. Ironically, Trey making this safety choice for himself (to leave town) ends up really helping Adam. With Trey gone, Karen can call the ambulance.

There was so much appreciation for the show and the cast and all that this is tonight. I had one of those nights when I went into the show worried about the small number and thinking we were in for a rough time.

Addendum: The next day. The sponsor was just here at the hotel, bringing the final payment that he forgot last night. He said he'd had some time to reflect on last night and although he is disappointed at the turnout (agrees some of it was the weather), he was blown away by what happened in the room. He says that many of the youth who were there have been attempting suicide recently, are in terrible situations, and don't sit still for anything, and they were riveted for 2 hours and 15 minutes. Unheard of, he says. And also *who* was making interventions, working things out on the stage that he knows they are trying to work out in their lives. He was struck by how true the whole story on the stage was, and how much it strikes at the centre of the issues.

Lillooet, BC

Date: November 29, 2008
 Sponsor: Lillooet Friendship Centre
 Venue: Lillooet Secondary School Gym
 Capacity: 100 Attendance: 61 = 61%

Lillooet has a remoteness to it. The Greyhound, for instance doesn't come here; the roads are (evidently) too treacherous in every direction for the bus. There is no treatment centre here. If someone needs help, it is in Kamloops. What is here? The drunk tank in the jail, is what I was told by one of the support people who, it turned out was also the President of the Board of the Friendship Centre.

The Tech Crew arrived at the school venue to volunteers and the school custodian. The set went up, although no one from the Friendship Centre was there. The crew finished at around 5:00 and left the space. The custodian was supposed to stay until we were done for the evening, but when the cast, Derek and I arrived at 5:30, she left without showing us anything like where dressing rooms were, a green room, the light switches, how to get the heat working; it was freezing in there and the vents were blowing cold air. I did the show in my hoody. Derek, Becky and the audience wore their jackets and scarves. The cast was stoic.

At 6:30 when we opened the doors for the show, no one from the Friendship Centre (by that I mean neither of our central contacts) had shown up. The only contact phone numbers in the tour book were the Friendship Centre office (this is unusual) and it was closed.

A reporter had called me earlier in the day and had come, with her young daughter, to take some photos during voice checks, and she and her daughter pitched in to sit at the door, processing audience members. The reporter told me that the only way she knew the project was in town was because she had walked into the Friendship Centre and there was a leaflet on the counter there. No posters anywhere in town, nothing on the radio, nothing in the paper. This was also mentioned to me by the man behind the desk at the hotel. He says that whenever anything comes to town, there is always a poster in the hotel window. Not this time.

The show started at 7:00 PM. At 6:45 we were still all alone at the venue. At about 6:55, one of the central organizers arrived. She said herself that she hadn't planned on coming tonight, but was curious. I asked her where the other organizer was, and she said she didn't know.

At about 7:10 all of a sudden about 60 people showed up. About 15 or 20 of the 60 were very small children. The first intervention of the evening was done by an Elder, a grandmother. When we were discussing the intervention, she mentioned that a lot of her grandchildren were in the room. I asked them to raise their hands, if this was their grandmother. About 15 kids raised their hands!! It is possible a high percentage of this audience was mostly one family.

Interestingly, we had a very good Forum, although for the first time ever there were no intervention at all in the funeral scene, even after two runs at it. After all this silence, the grandmother replaced Mary (the grandmother) in the laundry scene and asked Cliff why he wanted the money. This opened up a conversation about gambling.

Then the interventions started and came pretty easily, except for silence when Mary was drinking. As has been the case in a few other communities, funny how things go in waves, there were some very intense interventions of people replacing Karen and trying to wrestle the drugs away from Adam in the Meth House scenes. This night in both the party scene and the episode,

and, for the first time, after the episode. In all three cases this intensified until Karen got beaten up. We got to talk about how dangerous this is, about other approaches, about Karen taking care of herself and how that might affect Adam. This desire to rescue others at any cost, also when they don't want rescuing, was very strong here.

When the event was over, the organizer who was there came to me and stretched out her arms and asked if she could give me a big hug. A warm embrace from her and then also to each cast member. The support people and other audience members were very impressed with the event. I think it was much more powerful than they expected.

The next day was a day off, and I went for a walk around town. While out I didn't see a single poster. I also looked at the local paper. In it was a photo of a march the Friendship Centre did for Addictions Week. The short story attached had no mention of the play, and it was not anywhere else in the paper. I am certain that Headlines' Staff are always doing what they can to get the local organizers to do their publicity and outreach. In the end, we can't do it for them.

I am wondering, in retrospect, if the guarantees for the show should have been a lot higher than they were – maybe \$3,500 instead of \$1,700. Yes, this would have meant we did fewer communities, but the ones that we did do would, perhaps, have taken their responsibilities to do the work it takes to get larger numbers out to the play more seriously.

Whistler, BC

Date: December 2, 2008
 Sponsor: Whistler Community Services Society
 Venue: Whistler Secondary School
 Capacity: 120 Attendance: 88 = 73%

Again, the sponsor was disappointed with the turnout. They were certain they would have many more than they did. It seems this has happened with so many of the last week or so of shows. Tonight, it was various things:

1. There was a drug involved suicide last week and almost 300 people went to the memorial today. That crowd was this audience and after the memorial, they of course wouldn't come;
2. The Lil'wat, whose traditional Territory we are in, and who the organizers tried to partner with, scheduled a big Council Meeting for tonight;
3. As of last night, people at Mount Curry were going to send a bus full of people. The bus never showed.

I don't know what has changed between the last tour in early 2007 and this one in late 2008, but on this tour it has often (by no means always) been the case that, on the night, if the central organizing body was First Nations, there has been little or no non-Native involvement and if the central organizing body was First Nations, there has been little or no non-Native involvement.

Having said that, we did have a very good night. The audience, as is often the case, was completely silent after the play, in a stunned silence. The Forum started very quickly with an intervention that created a lot of safety in Adam's world by pushing through to get the information about Greg.

One lovely intervention that stood out for me was when a young woman replaced Karen at dinner and tried at first to get Adam to go out for a walk, recognizing how stoned he was. He didn't want to. He was afraid if he left, he wouldn't be allowed back. Often Adam wants to go for this walk, but in this case, there was no tension in the house, so adept was the intervener at creating calm, and so dinner was served; the first time we have served dinner ever in all the performances of this play! Adam didn't eat, but did stay. Cliff went off to watch TV in another room. No Episode. No 28 hours in the street.

A very large, intense man replaced Denise just before Karen runs away after dinner. He pleaded with Karen to stay and kept asking her about her feelings. He told her that she had "a genetic issue" – her father had been an addict and now she was prone as well – this is, according to some cast members, classic jail and then recovery talk. Karen responded furiously to this Denise and also to being lectured. We got to investigate how this Denise's choice is not to share herself and her own struggles with her daughter, but to insist that her daughter has a defect that she must be on guard about, a defect that can ruin her life. What did this news do to Karen? It drove her out of the house and over to Trey's.

In the Episode a woman replaced Karen and tried to get Adam out for some air. He refused and then she gave up. She sat on the couch as the scene spiraled, not into chaos, but into paralysis. I saw her tears – she didn't know what to do. Neither did Trey. In discussion she mentioned that she thought she would leave there now and once out, call the ambulance. This is such a dangerous choice for Karen. Trey will know who made the call and who brought the Police. He will know who got him busted. There was a lot of rehearsing going on in the room tonight.

Interestingly, there are often audience members who leave at points during the evening. Sometimes they can't handle the intensity, or their daycare window is up, or Forum Theatre just isn't their cup of tea. That didn't happen at all tonight. The audience was riveted to their seats – a very intergenerational crowd.

At the end, a man came to me and he pumped my hand and thanked me and said he got so many "take aways" from tonight. There were also at least two

youth groups there tonight. One of them surrounded Cody, many of them in tears after the show, thanking him, expressing how much it meant to them. And so the response, as always was very powerful.

“In the van on the ride home to Squamish from the performance of *Shattering* in Whistler, there was discussion among the group of ‘at risk youth’, there was tears, promises of, ‘I’ll never drink/smoke pot/do drugs again’, other solutions offered up, comparisons of other things that had happened in their lives recently etc. It touched every one of them. I heard from one of my coworkers today that one of the youth who has had a really rough life as her alcoholic mother is often very brutal with her. Mostly this youth just ends up yelling at or running from her mom. Last night however, they apparently had an incredibly open conversation, and both ended up in each other’s arms in tears, supporting each other, rather than hating each other...as a result of what the play stirred up.”

Nicole McRae, Sea to Sky Community Services Society, December 2008

Sechelt, BC

Date: December 4, 2008
 Sponsor: Substance Abuse Task Force
 Venue: Sechelt Nation Band Hall
 Capacity: 100 Attendance: 87 = 87%

After what I wrote about last night, this was a very mixed Native / non-Native and intergenerational audience, in a very small hall. Ironic – as was the case with the 1st venue on the tour, the Tech Crew arrived to this venue to find no 220v power and had to call an electrician in to install a plug. Beginnings and endings.

The cast had a good run, and were not saying “goodbye” to the play. This is something that can easily happen. We went into tonight very aware it was the final night, after a total of 80 performances between the two tours. We will not do this play again.

The Forum started slowly but once it started was very lively. An intense intervention at the funeral – an aggressive Adam wanted to know what happened with the brother – so aggressive that Trey ran away and this Adam followed him to the apartment. Adam got news he hadn’t bargained for with the murder of Greg and his anger at this truth would change the play completely. It would also leave Trey all alone.

A young man replaced Cliff at dinner and in a very quiet way created enough space for Karen to take Adam outside. But then a fight erupted in the house, that Adam overheard being about him. Feeling exposed, he went off into the night. Karen went back inside to face the music; no 28 hours in the street tonight, but maybe still the Episode.

A woman replaced Mary after dinner and tried so hard to get Karen to talk about her problems. Karen reacted beautifully by suggesting Mary and Denise talk about their problems, but they wouldn’t. They kept, in the nicest and caring of ways, insisting Karen share her life. Karen ran from this. I

wondered out loud what would have happened if Mary and Denise, instead of trying to extract information from her, offered information about themselves. Karen agreed that her reaction would have been entirely different. This would have got Mary what she wanted, instead of alienating her grand daughter further.

A woman replaced Denise in the final scene and wanted to leave Cliff and Karen alone, but got into an argument with Cliff instead. Karen ran to her bedroom. Denise went after her. Cliff, fed up, left the house, not to return. This led to Denise in Karen's room and, instead of talking, a suggestion to talk in the morning. OK, now it is morning... and a tentative conversation starts. The most interesting thing about this was the woman's comment about how different it is to imagine a solution from the audience and then to enter the world and run into the realities of the characters' lives. She explained, beautifully, why it is important to engage in Forum Theatre.

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A very nice closing night. They gave us a beautiful painted carving of a hummingbird (a symbol in Sechelt culture of healing) as a commemoration of the tour and this final performance. I called Dafne, Adeline and Christopher as well as Becky and the Crew and SM onto the stage for the final curtain. An extended standing ovation. We are all, I think, in some shock at the moment.



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¹³ The Hummingbird gift, designed, carved and painted by Anthony Paul.

¹⁴ The cast, Crew, Headlines' Staff and Sechelt Sponsors

Appendix 1

Shattering Vancouver Attendance Figures

	DATE	Total Tickets	Sold % of 120 seat House	Admission by Donation
PREVIEW	26-Sep-08	30	25%	97.01
Opening	27-Sep-08	113	94%	809.5
	28-Sep-08	19	15%	109.26
	30-Sep-08	49	40%	299.30
	1-Oct-08	131	109%	573.17
	2-Oct-08	76	63%	594.15
	3-Oct-08	135	112%	827.89
	4-Oct-08	149	124%	900.50
	5-Oct-08	171	142%	820.53
Totals:		873	80%	5031

Appendix 2

Shattering Tour Attendance figures

Day	Date	Community	Venue	Seating Capacity	Total Attend	% of Capacity
Wed	Oct. 8	Agassiz	Seabird Island Indian Band Office Comm. Gym, Cheam First Nation	200	155	77.5
Thu	9	Langley	H.D. Stafford Sec. School	200	176	88.0
Fri	10	Keremeos	Similkameen Elem-Sec. School	85	45	52.9
Wed	15	Kispiox	Kispiox Comm. Ctr	200	175	87.5
Thu	16	Burns Lake	Lakes District Sec. School	120	90	75.0
Fri	17	Prince George	Prince George Civic Centre	200	177	88.5
Mon	20	Chetwynd	Pine Valley Exhibition Park	110	108	98.2
Tue	21	Fort St. John	Dr. Kearney Jr. Sec. School	110	52	47.3
Fri	24	Edmonton	Inner City High School	130	89	68.5
Mon	27	Edmonton	same as above	130	102	78.5
Tue	28	Lac La Biche	Portage College Theatre	130	95	73.1
Wed	29	Bonnyville	BIMRC Gym	100	65	65.0
Thu	30	Meadow Lake	Carpenter High School	300	315	105.0
Mon	Nov. 3	La Ronge	JRMCC Hall	100	100	100.0
Tue	4	La Ronge	same as above	100	115	115.0
Thu	6	Duck Lake	Stobart Comm. HS	120	100	83.3
Fri	7	Humboldt	St. Peter's Abbey Sports Ctr., Muenster	130	102	78.5
Sat	8	Regina	Archbishop M.C. O'Neill HS	120	83	69.2
Wed	12	Pasqua First Nation Reserve	Chief Ben Pasqua Mem. Hall	130	112	86.2
Thu	13	Fort Qu'Appelle	Bert Fox Comm. HS	200	195	97.5
Sat	15	Radville	Radville Regional HS	100	70	70.0
Sun	16	Estevan	Estevan Comp. School	100	81	81.0
Mon	17	Weyburn	Weyburn Comprehensive School	150	165	110.0
Wed	19	Medicine Hat	Medicine Hat College Theatre	200	191	95.5
Fri	21	Cardston	Civic Ctr.	100	82	82.0
Sat	22	Calgary	Hillhurst Sunnyside Comm. Ctr. Gym	200	98	49.0
Mon	24	Tsuu T'ina Nation Reserve	Tsuu T'ina Jr. & Sr. HS	120	79	65.8
Tue	25	Canmore	Canmore Collegiate HS	100	52	52.0
Wed	26	Golden	Civic Ctr.	200	146	73.0
Fri	28	100 Mile House	Canim Lake Band Admin. Office and Gym	100	38	38.0
Sat	29	Lillooet	Lillooet Sec. School	100	61	61.0
Tue	Dec. 2	Whistler	Whistler Sec. School	120	88	73.3
Thu	4	Sechelt	Sechelt Nation Band Hall	100	87	87.0
Totals					3,689	77.9