



Mark Wilson & Greg Stone

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

HERE. NOW.

MARK WILSON

Jacky is a play about a man who wants to buy the flat that he rents. So far so simple.

Declan Furber Gillick tells us on the first page of his text that the play is set 'Here. Now.'

There begins the complexity, so long as we are willing to really unpack that 'Here' and that 'Now', and so long as we are willing to wrestle with how we exist in relation to that 'Here' and that 'Now.'

The play *Jacky* emerged out of the writing process on our first collaboration, *Bighouse Dreaming*. That play was a response to the abuses at Don Dale Youth Detention Centre, to the dysfunction of the youth justice system

in the Northern Territory, and to the ongoing crisis of black deaths in custody. The resulting work was tragic in form. As we developed this new work, our ambition for the project was, amongst the rest of it, that we did not make another tragedy.

So if *Jacky* isn't tragedy, what have we got? Is it comedy? History? Maybe both. Maybe it's tragedy again. An ironic tragedy? Whatever we call it, it is certainly a drama of acquiescence and of refusal. It is a drama about an individual responding to and taking action within circumstances beyond his control. It is a drama that hinges on his decisions – decisions which have definite consequences. It is also a drama

in which this individual has indissoluble ties to a collective, and in which the wrestle between individuality and collectivity is unavoidably connected to history.

Every play about 'Here. Now.' is also a play about 'There. Then.' and encourages us all – artist and audience alike – to look to the past to see how we got here, now, and hopefully prompts us to think about where we're going. To quote old Robin Boyd – 'Skin is as important as its admirers like to make it, and Australians make much of it. This is a country of many colourful, patterned plastic veneers, of brick veneer villas, and the White Australia Policy.' Much has changed since that was written in 1968, and plenty hasn't. For here, now, despite some aesthetic changes, we must still either have money, or sell ourselves to get it. What we can sell ourselves as (baker, record dealer, recruitment agent, sex worker) depends on who

we are, and on what the market will buy in the here and now. The 'queer experience' as Declan and I understand/know/conceive/live it, is inseparable from this historical, tragical, comical, material world.

He dedicates the play to the memory of Galmahra, the guide, also called Jackey Jackey, whose history gave rise to the alternate meanings of the name: in white slang, Jacky is a dismissive for any Aboriginal man; in black slang, Jacky means collaborator with the oppressor.

There is another dedication at the start of the play text, and that's to Declan's late father: Arrernte man, Stolen Generations survivor and lifelong campaigner, Land Rights activist, Kwementyaye H Furber.

With all this in mind, I invite you to wrestle with this play about a man who wants to buy the flat that he rents: here, now.



Greg Stone, Guy Simon, Mark Wilson & Mandy McElhinney