

## DOMESTIC ABUSE AND COERCIVE CONTROL TAKE CENTRE STAGE IN LIVESTREAM PERFORMANCE OF 'ALL IN YOUR HEAD'

Women's experiences of domestic abuse and coercive control will be brought to light in the one-woman show *All In Your Head*, a pay what you can, live theatrical experience for audiences across the UK, in the socially distant setting of YouTube livestream.

Theatre has a power to transport audiences to a different time, place, mindset, or emotion. As one of the earliest forms of public entertainment, theatre has always held a mirror up to society, reflecting what is illuminated in the lights or hidden in the shadows.

*All In Your Head* is based on the real accounts of survivors, sharing their stories while showing that "just leaving" isn't as simple as it sounds.

Naomi Sparrow will portray the many subtle and covert ways that mental, emotional, and physical abuse show up in relationships as she brings the script from internationally-nominated playwright Safaa Benson-Effiom to life. Wellbeing Practitioner Lou Platt, from *I May Destroy You*, will also support the production.

The performance was originally scheduled for May 2020 as part of *Calm Down, Dear*, the feminist festival presented by Camden People's Theatre. Support from Arts Council England is now allowing the work to pivot to a digital performance instead, which will be followed by a panel discussion with survivors of gender-based violence and representatives from support organisations.

2020 will forever be remembered as the year of COVID-19, and the '[shadow pandemic](#)' too. 2020 marked five years of coercive and controlling behaviour being in the UK Serious Crimes Act, and the prevalence of coercive control and domestic abuse was made starkly public by the pandemic. Domestic abuse support services were receiving one call an hour in June 2020, a trend which only grew as restrictions tightened, causing more time to be spent with partners.<sup>1</sup>

While the statistics are shocking, it must be remembered that each statistic represents a woman or child, a survivor or a homicide victim.

*All In Your Head* producer (and CEO of Purple Moon Drama) Cheryl Ndione says:

"Throughout the pandemic we've been constantly reminded to stay safe by staying at home, but home isn't a safe place for so many people. Producing the show has given me so much insight into the reality of this, and I hope *All In Your Head* provides education, understanding, courage, and healing."

Lucy Dear - Director and creator of *All In Your Head* says:

"*All In Your Head* explores how the seemingly perfect partner can quickly become a source of fear, terror, and violence. Through Naomi Sparrow's performance we are introduced to a woman who we can all relate to, and watch how the abuser shrinks her into a fragile shell of her former self. We want this show to shift perceptions of abuse, but it is our hope that survivors feel we are telling this far too common story in a way that is considerate, educational, and respectful".

*All In Your Head* will be performed on Sunday 14th February, at 7pm. Tickets are available at [cpttheatre.co.uk](http://cpttheatre.co.uk), on a sliding scale from £0 upwards to ensure everybody who needs to see the show, can.

Anyone who requires help or support can contact the National Domestic Abuse Helpline which is open 24/7 365 days per year on 0808 2000 247 or via their website <https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/>

**ENDS**

---

<sup>1</sup> NSPCC: [Calls about domestic abuse highest on record following lockdown increase](#)

## Editor's Notes:

- **Performance Date:** Sunday, 14th of February
- **Performance Time:** 7PM
- **Location:** Online
- **Tickets:** <https://www.cptheatre.co.uk/production/all-in-your-head-digital/>
- **Twitter:** @AllInYourHeadUK
- **Instagram:** @AllInYourHeadDear
  
- Between March 23rd and April 6th 2020 - the first two weeks of lockdown - 10 women and two children were killed by men, a figure three times higher than the average of three women killed every two weeks.<sup>2</sup>
  
- From April - June 2020, approximately 20% of all criminal offences recorded by police were domestic-abuse related, with 64,283 arrests made.<sup>3</sup>
  
- Research by Women's Aid found that common reasons for the rise in violence against clients included: Escalating abuse and having to live in lockdown with an abuser; Being unable to follow through with escape plans or being unsure of their options for leaving; Perpetrators using COVID-19 itself as a tool for abuse or failing to take necessary precautions to prevent its spread.<sup>4</sup>

## The cast and crew are available for interviews or first person essays.

All In Your Head is an Arts Council funded project conceived and directed by Lucy Dear and produced by Cheryl Ndione. The script is written by Safaa Benson-Effiom, and performed by Naomi Sparrow. The team is supported by Wellbeing Practitioner Lou Platt. Anna Reid as Designer, and Helena Almeida as Sound Designer.

**For further information, imagery, or interviews please contact PR Manager Anny Ma - [annyma@outlook.com](mailto:annyma@outlook.com)**

---

<sup>2</sup> Women's Aid: ["Covid-19 does not cause domestic abuse, only abusers are responsible for their actions."](#)

<sup>3</sup> ONS: [Domestic abuse during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic, England and Wales: November 2020](#)

<sup>4</sup> Women's Aid: ["Covid-19 does not cause domestic abuse, only abusers are responsible for their actions."](#)