

Brief audience feedback/discussion recorded by Charlie Davison (volunteer) immediately after:-

CONFIRMATION - CHRIS THORPE.

Colchester Arts Centre, 18th March 2015

- Charlie: *We've just come out ... um..what did you think?*
- Audience member (male 1) *I thought it was brilliant – really enjoyed it. It was very intense In places. In terms of the performance itself there was light and shade err So I think that kept it vibrant kept it interesting the whole way through so – yeah, really impressed!*
- Charlie: *Have you ever seen anything like it before? Like - as an art work, sort of thing?*
- Audience member (male 1) *I've not actually – no. It's the first one I've been to.*
- Charlie: *What sort of message do you take from it? Or do you not take a message from it at all?*
- Audience member (male 1) *Errm, there's certainly a lot to think about. I mean, confirmation bias has been something that I've been interested in for a while. I've read about it. (pause) yeah, I think he has, Mr Thorpe has brought us some really new perspectives on it – that I've not come across. So it's really made me think. I think I'm going to take a few things away. Certainly question myself – my own opinions more.*
- Charlie: *When you've been interested in confirmation bias before. Is that from a professional point of view? Are you a psychologist?*
- Audience member (male 1) *Merely an armchair psychologist! (Laughs) it's just something I find interesting.*
- Charlie: *As a piece of theatre – how did you find it? I mean as an audience member, did you feel really connected? Or...?*
- Audience member (male 1) *I did actually. Which is a surprise – because essentially it was just one person speaking for an hour and a half. I*

didn't zone out at all – so I was engaged the whole way... So, yeah! So the theatre... the space...was fantastic.

Charlie: *What about the... Do you think it was designed to shock, in any way?*

Audience member (male 1) *Um.. Yeah, I think so. Especially the bit about the Holocaust. That's a very controversial matter. Obviously it's not his own opinion, he is voicing the thoughts of someone else... but I found that quite shocking to listen to really, even knowing that it wasn't real, that it wasn't a real person's opinions. So yeah, it grated on me, even though I knew it wasn't real – so, yeah...*

Charlie: *There's a few laughs in it!*

Audience member (male 1) *Yeah – there were!*

Charlie: *And how did you find that? You know, the blend of the seriousness and the humour?*

Audience member (male 1) *Bathos, in a way. Yeah, and I think there was a couple of interesting things to throw in. There were a couple of sexual references in there and that made a lot of people titter! That I thought were unexpected – and that really lightened the mood. So I suppose that helped to keep me engaged – and the pace varied throughout, it wasn't just like a monologue... so yeah!*

Charlie: *Great – thanks very much!*

Charlie: *We've just come out. What did you think of tonight's show?*

Audience member (female 1) *I thought it was quite heavy! (Laughter) I had quite a lot of other things on my mind. So I kept dipping in and out. So I found it quite difficult to follow, actually. Some of the time, really like, wondering who he was at that moment. So... yeah, I did find it thought provoking. It does make you question your beliefs and why you have them.*

Charlie: *Yeah, have you ever been to a show quite like that one before?*

Audience member
(female 1)

No, no.

Charlie:

On the enjoyability front. On the entertainment front. How did you rate it in terms of that kind of reference?

Audience member
(female 1)

Well it's a different kind of entertainment, really isn't it? It's not kind of comedy, or anything like that. Um – well it's partly comedic, I suppose. I thought it was more thought provoking rather than entertaining.

Charlie:

Do you think he was trying to provoke particular thoughts within us?

Audience member
(female 1)

Ummm... No, I think he was possibly just asking us to question where our beliefs come from. So why we believe what we believe and whether, um, we are right – or if anybody is right. Or if our beliefs or if anybody's beliefs are right. He came across as saying.

Charlie:

Yeah, yeah. It seemed to me to be quite a big leap from seeing a pattern in numbers and confirming, you know, a previous thought that we have had. And then we ended up hearing about people kind of almost doing the same about the Norway massacre and about the Holocaust? It seemed like quite a big leap to me – but how did you find it? Did it make sense to you?

Audience member
(female 1)

Well I hadn't really kind of thought about that. But for me, what I got from it, is that, um, people aren't necessarily right or wrong. But I didn't relate that to the numbers – I'd completely forgotten about the numbers by the time we got to the Holocaust! (Laughter). So I didn't relate the two.

Charlie:

Do you think it might change the way you look at things? However briefly? Or maybe forever, for the rest of our lives!

Audience member
(female 1)

No, I'm not sure that it will. Because I do sometimes question my beliefs and where I get them from, anyway. And other people's beliefs. So I don't think it will really change how I view things. No.

Charlie: *We've only just come out. What do you think?*

Audience member (male 2) *It was very hot in there. So that's possibly a negative from the environment and the space. I had have preferred it a little bit colder. But very intense! Which is a bit different from normal plays! Which is good.*

Charlie: *How would you describe it? It wasn't 'stand up' – I don't think. And it wasn't a play...*

Audience member (male 2) *It's almost a political commentary on, you know, his view about how his mission to... maybe not even to understand... just to challenge his perceptions of society or of these people that he's trying to look at. Which is quite brave, I suppose. Because you really don't want to... he was trying to see within himself the evils of those types of opinions. If we believe that his end bit was that "I had to pull away because I didn't want to waste my time being tolerant of him any more" – is that because, he, you know, saw a little bit of himself in there? Or being dragged towards almost being too British and therefore agreeing with them almost out of niceness? Or just because he had had enough and he wanted to go back into his own little cocoon of "these are my beliefs and, don't want to" as he said, "waste my time any more being too nice. Because if I'm nice to you... then... god – I won't have enough energy left to be tolerant of anyone else!"*

Charlie: *Do you think he was trying to change our points of view in any way? Not about the subject matter. But about this idea of tolerance and this idea of seeing the other person's point of view? I mean do you think he was trying to get me to take a message away?*

Audience member (male 2) *I think there must have been some kind of thing. But it depends on his preconceptions. I mean he could've had people who completely agreed with the Nazis at the beginning of it! (laughter) Looking around the audience – it was a very white audience! And old – possibly a few young people, but, I was a bit surprised by that. Why aren't we,*

possibly, attracting more multiculturalism to events like this? – especially when it's about racism and various things like that. That's one thing. In terms of what he was trying to preach – I don't know. I mean I've got firm opinions myself – I firmly believe that all societies are inherently racist (laugh), so... It didn't confirm that or deny it. It was more of a social opinion rather than a message. He didn't try and convert us. It was his journey into understanding things, and he took us along for his ride, I think.

Charlie: *He got a few laughs. He generated a few laughs. Were you one of the ... were you laughing?*

Audience member
(male 2) *No... quizzical. I don't think that it's supposed to be funny. I mean he's obviously an engaging person, and you know, the tone of his presentation, I don't think was supposed to be meant to... if you make it funny, then you possibly make people believe what you're trying to say, or... he had his firm agenda. Which is "I am tolerant, socialist. I'm firmly... err.. anti-racist. Etcetera etcetera. And this person is bad. And therefore wanted to find out what they were". And if you try and make it too jokey, you delete your message in terms of "this is my firm opinion, and they're Nazis". So he kept it very powerful.*

Charlie: *Although there is something about it for me. About the delivery. I mean he has great comic timing. And that intrigued me. I almost wondered whether he had thought about it as a stand-up routine originally and then turned it into more of that kind of lecture format.*

Audience member
(male 2) *Maybe... I kind of more saw it as like a monologue, or something like that. Where it's a one-man play and he was playing both parts. And the dramatic... the way he had of presenting the other person – you know John and then Glenn and then the other one. It was very well done.*

Charlie: *Yes, it is quite theatrical as a piece, isn't it?*

Audience member
(male 2) *And quite powerful in the way that he presented them and gave their... he didn't*

make them out ... he was quite clever that he didn't make them out to be social demons – they were normal people. Just... just ... I want to say bad people. But that was what he was trying to say – normal people. But just with fundamentally skewed views on society.

Charlie: *Yeah, yeah. For me particularly with his description of, you know, the racist guys bungalow!*

Audience member (male 2) *Yes, yes... in the valley, with the nice perfect little wall, and the gate...*

Charlie: *And the flowers... that to me really seemed to site it...*

Audience member (male 2) *And made the people to be very normal. You never know who they are. They could be anyone.*

Charlie: *And yet this is actually someone who thinks that Anders Brevik kind of had a point!*

Audience member (male 2) *And that's the worrying thing! That he is now in mainstream politics apparently... (laughter)... which is... I can quite believe that...!! (laughs).*