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hurt people

**written and performed by
Allison Scarlet Jaye**

“if there is one thing
that i’ve learned in this life,
it is that hurt people
hurt people.”

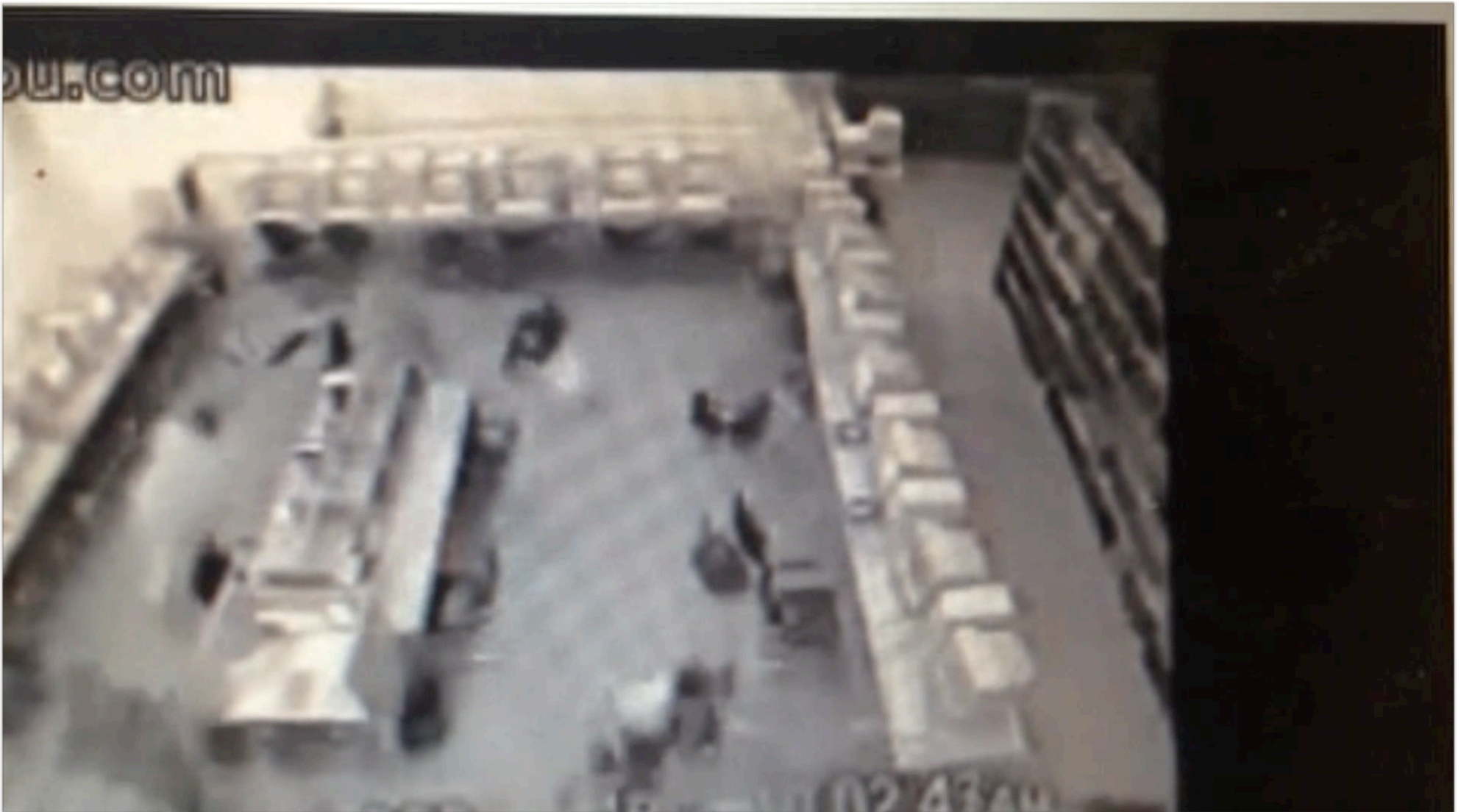
—james g.
17 years old

BACKGROUND

In the wake of the Sandy Hook shooting in 2012, Artistic Director Dr. Susan Russell commissioned Allison Scarlet Jaye to write a keystone piece for the seventh annual Cultural Conversations Festival at Penn State University, themed “The Right to Remain Violent: Gun Control F/Or a New Civilization.” After compiling a year’s worth of rigorous research, interviews, and writing, “hurt people” emerged as a one-woman play that uses multi-media, spoken word, and dynamic movement to tell a uniquely American story.

hurt people trailer

***** Viewer Discretion is Advised *****



SYNOPSIS

“hurt people” follows 17-year-old Sara whose high school is the target of a mass shooting. Separated from her twin sister, she is forced to live with her estranged, ex-military aunt to wait out the aftermath. When a piece of national news breaks, Sara is inspired to protect the future by righting the past.

'Cultural Conversations' Festival Aims to Foster Current-Events

Discussion Via Visual, Performance Arts

Centre Daily Times

By Jason Klose

February 7, 2014

[View full article [HERE](#)]

Local artists will use various forms of performance to talk about guns and gun ownership, a discussion of freedom, safety and security with the seventh annual "Cultural Conversations." The program, titled "The Right to Remain Violent: Gun Control F/or a New Civilization," will offer a new way to talk about how guns define who we are now and who we will be in the future. [...]

The program is led by Dr. Susan Russell, a professor at Penn State's School of Theatre and artistic director of "Cultural Conversations." ...Every year, Russell chooses a different social theme to talk about, using music, theater, dance and visual art to present the issue at hand. [...] When Russell approached [Head of Graduate Acting Director Steve] Broadnax about doing a play for "Cultural Conversations," [in 2013], Broadnax asked MFA actor/writer Allison Jaye if she would write a piece for the program. Russell was so impressed with it she commissioned Jaye for this year's festival, with a play that centers on gun control and the Second Amendment.

"Since then it's been a lot of research and reading and watching," Jaye said. "It became a lot of work, but I was honored and very excited." [...]

After reading an article in the New York Times last April [2013], Jaye was floored by the U.S. government's failure to pass stricter gun laws in the wake of the Sandy Hook tragedy. "That really became my seed for the play," she said. "The biggest thing is, I need to make it personal. What are the stories that I can tell truthfully, without having to reach too far?"

Since then, Jaye has conducted extensive research, using references from school shootings such as Columbine and Sandy Hook and other tragedies such as the Boston Marathon bombing. "A lot of the research is based on Sandy Hook, but I wasn't just looking at school shootings," she said. "I also researched the NRA and their activity, and the simple fact that these tragedies have been happening with more frequency for over 20 years." She conducted interviews with other 2nd Amendment Rights activists where she was asked if she herself had ever shot a rifle. (...continued)

“ ‘Cultural Conversations’ Festival...” continued

“The honest answer was, ‘no,’” Jaye said. “I couldn’t write a play that centers around guns without ever having shot one, that didn’t feel right. So, they taught me how to shoot rifles. My research spanned the gamut.”

With that in mind, when Jaye began to compose the play, she went to one of the most important relationships in her life – the relationship she has with her sister, with whom she is very close.

“Making this play about a girl and her family was something that I could really get behind and write about very easily,” she said.

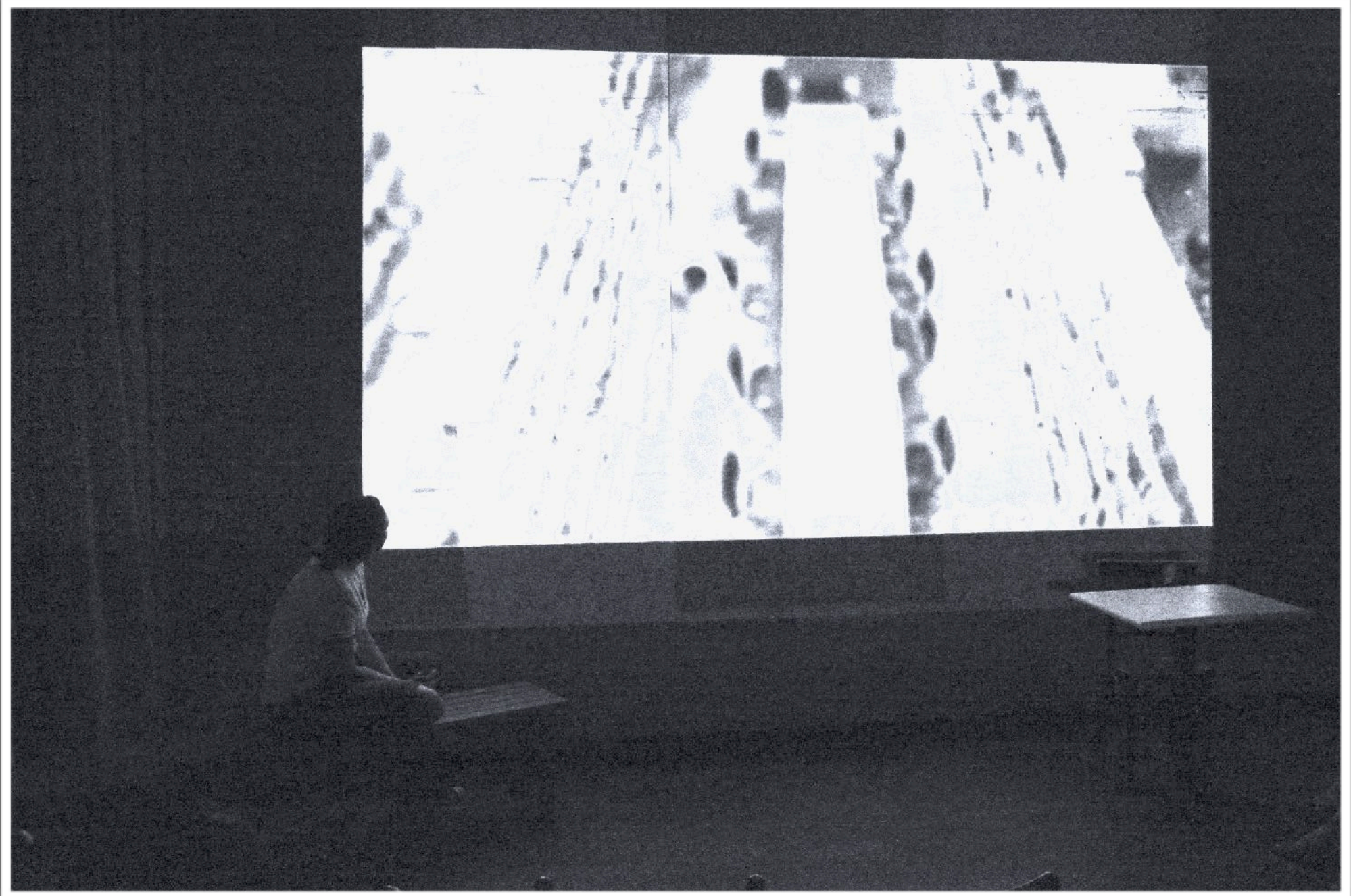
Jaye embodies three different roles in the play: Sarah; her twin sister, Elizabeth; and Mary, Sarah’s aunt, a retired commanding officer. As the characters navigate their way through this tragedy, Sarah needs help trying to put the pieces together; trying to find answers.

“It’s not a play that asks why,” she said. “At the end of the day, it doesn’t matter why. It’s happening,” she said. “That’s what this play challenges – to get rid of excuses; that ‘why’ doesn’t matter. That’s not the question we need to be asking. What we need to be asking or demanding is *how* to make it stop.”

In doing her part for this six-day festival, Jaye hopes to encourage interest and participation and to provide a new work that people can relate to.

“I am vocal about it, and want to elicit conversations, emotional responses, and hopefully constructive dialogue,” she said. “This play doesn’t offer solutions but it does encourage discussion. And hopefully that discussion will lead to meaningful action.”





BRING “hurt people” TO YOUR THEATRE

Performed on a bare stage with only a bench, small table, and a folding chair, “hurt people’s” impact is in its simplicity. Expertly pantomimed to articulate objects, furniture, and location, only four practical props are brought in at the end of the play. Whether in a large theatre or blackbox studio, the play’s intimacy invites audiences to engage their imaginations and activate their hearts.

Actual news footage that contains some violent imagery is projected onto a blank back wall or screen, and the language is colorful and unapologetic.

It is the firm belief of the playwright that this piece be used as a catalyst for dialogue, education, and action. While “hurt people” has only been featured in small festivals, fundraisers, and academic settings, nearly every performance has had a talkback with the playwright and a representative from organizations like Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, Gays Against Guns, and Everytown USA. These post-show discussions help audiences digest and discuss the play and its topics, while offering a space to learn how to get involved in supporting the ongoing effort to protect their own communities, schools, and families from the threat of gun violence. The playwright and producing entity has also donated 15%-100% of all revenue to the aforementioned organizations and/or communities and families who have been directly affected by gun violence.

Since this unpredictable but certain threat continues in America, the playwright feels it her duty as a citizen and an artist to continue these traditions of outreach, engagement, and support.

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

Allison Scarlet Jaye was raised in Southern California, New York, and places between. An actor who wears many hats in and out of theatre and film, Allison has acting credits in successful regional and off-Broadway productions, as well as international tours performing in Scotland, Australia, and South Africa as an originating cast member. An avid writer and dynamic performer, Allison's work shines in characters and stories that feature big-hearted alpha-female warrior-protectors who fight to protect family, community, and humanity.



With a mission to create work that educates and engages social dialogue, Allison is in the process of composing a spoken-word poetry adaptation of *Medea* that is set against the backdrop of the LA Riots, and an original work that examines the limits of loyalty and friendship in the presence of sexual assault. Her other plays and screenplays center around topics of family dynamics, self-discovery, and challenging the status quo.

The proud big sister of a United States Air Force officer, Allison makes her home in Southern California while teaching Voice, Movement, and Solo Performance. She is surrounded by an army of loving friends, supportive family, and a host of ever-present angels.

GET IN TOUCH

To request a copy of the script or review a professionally filmed and edited performance of “hurt people,” please contact Allison via email or website:

hurtpeople.play@gmail.com

www.allisonscarletjaye.com/hurtpeople

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