

Reality Check – an HIV/AIDS prevention play



A play on HIV/AIDS: transmission, myths and issues of gender.

By Prof Nico Luwes

2010

*Jan Brandstreet 17
Langenhovenpark
Bloemfontein
Opvoegte outeur luwes@ufs.adc.za 0823742485
or Dalro*

SET: THE PLAY CAN BE PERFORMED IN THE OPEN OR ON STAGE. WE NEED A TABLE + 2 CHAIRS THAT SERVE AS TEACHER'S TABLE AND AS KITCHEN TABLE + 2 CHAIRS THAT SERVE AS CHAIRS FOR CHILDREN AT SCHOOL. ALSO A MORE COMFORTABLE CHAIR FOR THE FATHER.

Characters

Cheril : Grade 12 girl
Boytjie: Grade 12 boy
Moeks: Cheril's mothers
Dadda: Cheril's Father
Mister Raymond: Teacher
Sister Rina: Previously a health worker who studied late in life as is now principal at school.

Scene 1 **Somewhere on the school grounds. Scene takes place on front stage or in space before stage.**

Boytjie (is waiting in school clothes with schoolbag. He is impatiently waiting for some-one. Looks at his watch and shouts off-stage): Cheril! Hey! Cheril! Come here!

Cheril (lingers lazely on in school clothes with schoolbag chewing bibblegum): Hey Boytjie... What are you shouting about? Grow up man! What's your case?

Boytjie: You're late! The bell will ring any moment!

Cheril: Get a life, Boytjie! Relax man! You're also late...

Boytjie: Relax se gat! Where have you been?

Cheril: None of your bussiness!

Boytjie: Serious Cheril! Where have you been? You know Mister Raymond. He a good teacher, but he will let your parents know you're late for school.

Cheril: Ach... Old Mister Raymond must get a life too! Old Suurgat!

Boytjie: Cheril! Don't say things like that! I've been waiting for an hour.

Cheril: What for?

Boytjie: Did you forget? I was supposed to help you with maths before school.

Cheril: What for? I won't need that in my life.

Boytjie: Huh? You wanted to become a TV star. You'll fail!

Cheril: Get a life. I'm fixed!

Boytjie: What do you mean?

Cheril: I've got my contacts... I'll be a star!

Boytjie: You'll see stars when your father gives you hiding if Mister Raymond phones your Dad.

Cheril: Ach... He won't hit me. I've got old Dadda under my nail!

Boytjie: Cheril, you should respect your father! Where have you been?

Cheril: Hi, Seuntjie. Did you see this? (She shows him a smart neckless)

Boytjie: Cheril? Where did you get it?

Cheril: My boyfriend, seuntjie. (Small little boys) You should grow up and get a girlfriend.

Boytjie: This is expensive. Where did your boyfriend get the money?

Cheril: That's why I say, you should grow up. I don't play with seuntjies! You know Mister Lollie?

Boytjie: Mister Lollie? From the hotel?

Cheril: Yes... Old Lollies. He gave it to me.

Boytjie: What?

Cheril: And the earrings are coming.

Boytjie (shocked): Is... he your boyfriend?

Cheril (laughs): Yes... he's a rich man... Nice car...

Boytjie: But he's over thirty!

Cheril: So?

Boytjie: So? He's too old for you!

Cheril: Ek sê mos! I don't play with seuntjies!

Boytjie: But he a joller! He goes out with lots of girls! I see them driving around. Cheap girls!

Cheril: But now he's got me. A girl with style...

Boytjie: Cheryl you're looking for trouble! He's bad news...

Cheril: He loves me... He said it last night. He loves me dearly. I'm his super-duper superstar!

Boytjie: Last night?

Cheril: Yes.

Boytjie: Did you go out with him?

Cheril: Well yes...

Boytjie: But your farther would never let you go with that man!

Cheril: Hey Seuntjie... I'm not stupid. I slipped out through the window.

Boytjie: You... slipped out?

Cheril: Yes. He picked me up in his BMW. Nice drive through the town.

Boytjie: I don't believe what I'm hearing

Cheril: Believe it seuntjie! Champagne the lot...

Boytjie: He gave you drinks?

Cheril: Of course... he's a rich man! Champagne, whisky... snap you fingers and it is there.

Boytjie: How did you get back home?

Cheril: He took me and dropped me at the corner after...

Boytjie: After what? (Silence) After what Cheril?

Cheril: Hey are you a policeman now? Just leave me alone, seuntjie. You know nothing.

THE BELL RINGS

Boytjie: You did not go to the hotel with him?

Cheril: Let's go, before mister Raymond strikes a stroke (She starts to go)

Boytjie (desperate): You don't... sleep with this joller, Cheril? Do you?

Cheril (laughs in his face): Hey! I'm a grown up woman. I can think for myself, can't I?

Boytjie: So you sleep with him. Cheryl... Do you use...

Cheril: Stop worrying man! Sometimes...

Boytjie: What do you mean only sometimes?

Cheril: He does not like condoms.

Boytjie: What? And you sleep with the man. What about the others?

Cheril: Ach shut up! He got me now. And he loves me.

Boytjie: But you can get AIDS!

Cheril (very angry): Listen here, Boytjie. It's got nothing to do with you. I don't need to explain a thing to you!

Boytjie: But... he...

Cheril (laughs sneeringly in his face): You're a young poepol (asshole) man. Don't belive all the snot (bull shit) people are telling you. Let's go.

Boytjie: Cheril. Please... don't do it... I'll... I'll

Cheril (very angry and almost in tears): You wil do nothing! If you tell anybody... I'll never talk to you again. He loves me and if he leaves me... I... I will know it was you! I swear! I will never forgive you! Never! (She goes off and Boytjie follows her in disbelieve, shaking his head)

BLACKOUT

SCENE 2 IN CLASS. MISTER RAYMOND STANDS BEHIND THE TABLE MARKING BOOKS. BOYTJIE AND CHERIL COMES IN AND SIT ON TWO CHAIRS. CHERIL IS ANGRY AND IGNORES BOYTJIE.

Raymond: You're late again, Cheril! I'm getting used to that. But Boytjie? Why are you late?

Boytjie: I... I was waiting for Cheril, Sir.

Raymond: You want to become a doctor, Boytjie?

Boytjie: Yes, Sir.

Raymond: If you wait for that girl, you'll not even see your first lecture at varsity, believe me.

Cheril (smacks her mouth loudly): Is it?

Raymond: You've got a problem with me, Cheryl? I won't take that from you. Get out your books. I've got two tests to mark and then we'll start. (He marks again)

Boytjie (takes out books and begins to read): Yes, Sir...

Cheril (sighs, glares at Boytjie and lazely take out books) What-ever!

Raymond (decides to ignore her and marks in silence. He gets irretated with what he sees on the paper and looks up agrily) Cheril! What is this?

Cheril: What sir?

Raymond: Come here!

Cheril (goes to table): What is now again, sir?

Raymond (shows her the test): What is this?

Cheril: What sir?

Raymond: What? Are you blind or something? 18% Yes 18% is what I read here! What do you see?

Cheril (after a silence): 18% Sir. So what?

Raymond (explodes): So what? I see an A – candidate before me who’s marks are coming down from 84% to 60 and then 40 and now 18%. What the hell is going on with you?

Cheril: You’re swearing, sir. It’s not a...

Raymond: To hell with that! I’ll swear if I want to! They can fire if they want to! But I will not allow one of my best learners to go down the drain! What’s going on? Answer me!

Cheril: Sir... It’s got nothing to do with you!

Raymond: What did you say? (He looks as if he’s going to hit her with the book)

Boytjie (jumps up in panic): She’s got a boyfriend, sir... Mister Lollie from the hotel!

Cheril (screams): Shut –up!

Raymond: Boytjie! Sit down! How dare you talk about Mister Lollie like that! Don’t come here with your stories!

Boytjie: But, sir...

Raymond: I said shut up and sit down! Mister Lollie is an adult and a respected man. Cheril go and sit down.

Cheril (glares at Boytjie and sits down. Whispers to Boytjie): I’ll kill you!

Raymond: The whole class shall write this test again! Your marks are pathetic! Start studying NOW! You will write tomorrow! I’m going to the office to organise the rugby tour. If I hear one voice from this room... (He leaves the stage)

Cheril (waits a few seconds and start to leave as well): Ach he won’t be back before the end of the period. He smokes in the toilet!

Boytjie (does not know what to do. He get’s up and leaves the stage calling after her): Cheril.... Wait...

BLACKOUT

SCENE 3 PRINCIPLES OFFICE. THE PRINCIPLE, SISTER RINA, IS SITTING BEHIND DESK WORKING.

Raymond (in): Good morning, Principle.

Sister Rina: Hallo Mister Raymond. How are you?

Raymond: I'm fine, Sister.

Sister Rina: How can I help you, Mister Raymond?

Raymond: I've got a problem with Boytjie.

Sister Rina: Boytjie? Why? He such a dedicated student? What happened?

Raymond: I don't know. I think he's in love with Cheril. I was talking to her about her bad marks and all of a sudden he disrupted the whole class.

Sister Rina: Boytjie?

Raymond: Yes! He shouted that Cheril has an affair with Lollie from the hotel and it was whole commotion. These kids have got no discipline!

Sister Rina: Cheril has an affair with Lollie?

Raymond: Yes that's the story he made up. Total nonsense of course... I wanted to chase him out of the class.

Sister Rina: Wait a bit, Mister Raymond. Do you not think that it might be true and that Boytjie was concerned about Cheril?

Raymond: You can't be serious! Lollie is much too old for her.

Sister Rina: Exactly! And he's got a bad reputation. I'm not so sure Boytjie's reaction was about nothing.

Raymond: You know, you might be right, but I 'm not sure.

Sister Rina: Maybe is just the old social worker experiences in me that kicks in.

Raymond (laughs): Maybe, but you're the school principle now.

Sister Rina: I know, but I worked so long as social worker, I just can't get rid of gut feelings. I suspect something is wrong here. That is not Boytjie's normal behaviour. He's a good boy.

Raymond (no also concerned): I really hope this not true... What do we do if it is.

Sister Rina: What we should do... Listen when kids try to tell us something. That's something we adults don't really do. To really listen...

Raymond: Well I don't want to get involved in all this. If we stir up dust and it is not true can you imagine the result? Her parents might sue us for slandering!

Sister Rina: Or the girl's future could be endangered if we ignore the matter. Let me talk to her. Alone... I'll try to get her to talk. I think you're right. You should stay out of it until we get the facts.

Raymond (starts to leave): Maybe you're right.

Sister Rina: Ask her to come see me after school. Don't tell her what it is about.

Raymond: I see them after interval and tell her. She'll think it is about her bad marks. She's going to hate me.

Sister Rina: Or maybe to thank you in future.

Raymond (leaves): Maybe...

BLACKOUT

SCENE 4 PRINCIPLES OFFICE. THE PRINCIPLE, SISTER RINA, IS SITTING BEHIND DESK WORKING.

Cheril (in. She is upset and cocky): Mister Raymond said miss would like to see me.

Sister Rina Good afternoon, Cheryl. Please sit down.

Cheril (sits): I must go home miss. My parents will miss me

Sister Rina: I know. It won't take long. I want to talk to you about marks. Your parents will understand

Cheril: Did Mister Raymond complain again?

Sister Rina: In fact he did. He's concerned about your future. And I am too.

Cheril: I'm fine, Miss.

Sister Rina: No... You're not fine Cheril. I've noticed a change in your behaviour and it seems as if your marks are seriously affected by it. You've always been a good learner and you always treated teachers with respect. What is wrong? You know you can trust me.

Cheril: It's nothing, Miss.

Sister Rina: It is not nothing, Cheril. Your future is not nothing... What was the commotion about in Mister Raymond's class this morning?

Cheril: (starts to cry): It's Boytjie, Miss. He talked a lot nonsense about me in class.

Sister Rina: Why would he do that, Cheril?

Cheril: I don't know, Miss...

Sister Rina: Should I call him in tomorrow and asked him why he did it?

Cheril: No, Miss... I'm OK. Please don't call him in. (Long silence and Cheril is getting nervous)

Sister Rina: (softly and tenderly): It is true Cheril, is it not?

Cheril: What, Miss?

Sister Rina: You're having an affair with a much older man. Mister Lollie from the hotel.

Cheril (cries and blows her nose)

Sister Rina: I understand that you are mesmerized by this rich man, Cheril. But he's too old for you.

Cheril: He loves me, Miss. And I'm grown-up. I don't see what's wrong with it...

Sister Rina: You do believe he loves you, Cheril. But it might be that he's only using you. He has a bad reputation Cheril. You're not the first girl that he treats very well for a month or so and then moves on to his next victim. Everybody talks about it.

Cheril: But he is good to me, Miss. And he says he loves me. What is wrong with that? He changed.

Sister Rina: What is wrong is that it might be dangerous for you to go out with this man...

Cheril: He a strong man. What could be dangerous?

Sister Rina: You said that you are grown-up. I'm going to talk straight to you, because I'm concerned about you. If you sleep with this man... How do you know that he's not HIV positive?

Cheril (cries): He won't be, Miss. He said it is OK...

Sister Rina: But how do you know, Cheril? Was he tested? Did you see any paper confirming that? Please Cheril, I do not reprimand you now. I want you take a Reality Check. You are sleeping with a man much older that you who has a bad reputation for sleeping around. You do not know his HIV status and you could put your life in danger. It is serious Cheril. You are an intellent girl and you must have read or heard all the information on the dangers of AIDS. You're a grown-up girl and you must have heard about the use of condoms to prevent you from getting HIV/AIDS. It is not something far away from us, Cheril. It is here... with us. In our community. In our streets. In our houses and in our rooms. Wait, Cheril. Wait until you meet a partner you can trust with your life! Convince your partner and yourself to get tested at the clinic, before you do thing like that. It is free and they will handle everything confidential. Just do not sleep around with someone you cannot trust 100% completely.

Cheril (more calm): Yes, Miss.

Sister Rina: I see you calmed down,Cheril. It's good to take a reality check every now and then in life. I beg you not to go out with this man. Lollie. He's too old for you.

Cheril (burst out crying again): It won't help, Miss...

Sister Rina: Why? What's wrong, Cheril?

Cheril (through tears): It's not just him, Miss...

Sister Rina (shocked) What do you mean, Cheril?

Cheril: It happens...

Sister Rina: Yes...?

Cheril: At home, Miss. It is my father...

BLACKOUT

SCENE 5 CHERIL'S HOME. SITTING ROOM, DADDA, CHERIL'S FATHER, IS WATCHING TV WITH A BEER IN HIS HAND. HE IS A BIT DRUNK. HE HAS ADVANCED TB AND COUGHS EVERY NOW AND THEN.

- Cheril (comes in from school, and wants to go through to her room) I'm back.
- Dadda (drunkely): Hey! Do you not greet your Dadda?
- Cheril: I must do homework.
- Dadda What for? Your late? Where have you been? (Coughs badly)
- Cheril: I did some homework at school.
- Dadda So, come and say hallo to Dadda. Come give me a kiss. (Coughs badly)
Come here!
- Cheril (goes unwillingly closer): You must drink the TB pills, Dadda!
- Dadda It does not help. Come kiss me, my darling.
- Cheril: I'm going to get the pills on the fridge. The doctor said you must not stop drinking your TB pills! That's why it doesn't work. (She goes off stage to get the pills):
- Dadda (shout after her): And bring me another beer!
- Cheril: Dadda, you drink too much and you do not drink the pills. Your body will fall apart but you do not listen! (She brings him his pills and a glass of water) Here drink it.
- Dadda (takes the pills and pulls her onto his lap): Thank you... You ate my best little daughter. I will drink it now. (He starts stroking her leggs. And I will buy you a present, nê!
- Cheril (very uncomfortable): Don't do that, Dadda. Drink your pills.
- Dadda Don't you want a present? You know what I told you. You do something for me and I give you money for a big present, né! (He continues stroking her leggs)
- Cheril (tries to get up): Don't do that Dadda. I will tell Moeks.
- Dadda Aag Moeks is an old sheep! She won't know... Kom hie'so!
- Cheril: No! (She breaks free and gets up from his lap)

Dadda And where is my beer! (He gets up and follows her): Kom hie'so! Jou klein bitch!

Moeks (comes in with plastic bags from shop. She is shocked): Dadda! What is going on!

Dadda: Hallo Moeks! (He staggers around a bit) She does not want to bring me my beer...

Cheril: No, Moeks. He... He...

Dadda: Shut up you bad child! Skorriemorrie! You do not respect me! I'm your father!

Moeks: Cheril, what is going here?

Cheril: I brought him his pills, Moeks. And then... And then...

Dadda: Shut up! Who speaks here? Who is the man in the house? (Coughs badly)

Moeks: Look what you have done, Cheril!

Cheril: But Moeks he...

Moeks: He what?

Cheril: He tried to do funny thing with me, Moeks!

Dadda: You liar! (Coughs badly) You see Moeks! This girl is very bad! She... does not want to bring my beer! And now... (Coughs badly and stumbles off stage)

Moeks: (furious): Now see what you have done, Cheril! Your father is a sick man! He has TB and you upset him with your filthy lies! How dare you?

Cheril: But Moeks... I brought him his pills and...

Moeks: I don't want to hear another filthy word from you! You father is a respected man! He was an attorney before he got sick! He goes to church every Sunday! If he does not stay in bed he goes!

Cheril (hopelessly): But Moeks. Listen to me! He stays in bed and then...

Dadda (stumbles on coughing badly and with handkerchief that is stained red with blood): Take me to the hospital... Take me...!

Moeks (shouting at Cheril): You see now! Get out of my house. Get out!

Cheril (runs off stage, crying): But Mamma...

Moeks: Get out! (She grabs her husband and helps him off stage to hospital) My poor man... My poor Dadda...

BLACKOUT

SCENE 6 BOYTJIE'S ROOM. HE IS STUDYING. A KNOCK ON THE DOOR.

Boytjie: Come in. It's open.

Cheril (enters shyly): Hallo Boytjie.

Boytjie: (surprized up from table): Cheril! What are you doing here?

Cheril: I'm just coming to say hallo...

Boytjie: Come in! You want to sit down?

Cheril: Ok. (Uncomfortable silence)

Boytjie: Would you like some cool drink?

Cheril: No... It's OK

Boytjie: OK... I'm glad you've come..

Cheril: Serious?

Boytjie: Yes... I thought you were angry with me.

Cheril: I was...

Boytjie: Oh...

Cheril: But not any more...

Boytjie: That's good.

Cheril: Yes... Can I stay here this afternoon... With you.

Boytjie: Of course. But will your father not mind?

Cheril (starts crying): He is in hospital. He didn't drink his pills and now...

Boytjie: (puts his arm around her): It's OK. You can stay... It's OK...

Cheril (stops crying): Thank you. Have you got a tissue for me

Boytjie: (gets some toilet paper from his pocket): Sorry, it's all I have

Cheril: It's OK. (She blows her nose. Silence)

Boytjie: So you are not agry with me any more?

Cheril: Yes.

Boytjie: I thought you were going to kill me.

Cheril (giggles nervously through her tears): Yes, I wanted to. But not anymore.

Boytjie: Gee, that is good news!

Cheril: Yes. I... came to thank you.

Boytjie: Thank me?

Cheril: Yes. (She starts to giggle and then become serious) I had a bit if a Reality Check

Boytjie: A what?

Cheril: A Realty Check. On my life and on myself...

Boytjie: Whao!

Cheril: Boytjie, you're my best friend. Are you?

Boytjie: Of course... Always. You know that.

Cheril: I know. Boytjie... I'm going to tell you things that I've never told anybody in my life. But before that you must promise me that you will go with me to the principle's house after that.

Boytjie: To Sister Rina's house? The principle?

Cheril: Yes.

Boytjie: I've never been there. You know where it is?

Cheril: Yes. She told me this morning. And she said anytime, anyday.

Boytjie: Whao!

Cheril: I want to go to her after we've talked. I need help, Boytjie. I need urgent help.

Boytjie: OK.

Cheril: Do you promise?

Boytjie: I do. Really. (They do the handshake thing that teenagers do)

Cheril: OK. In my Reality Check I realized a lot of things. Things that I thought was right and now realize were wrong. And things that ... some adults told me was OK and right. But I knew from my inside that it was wrong (She cries again)

Boytjie: It's OK...

Cheril (calms down): It's not only this thing you talked about this morning. You know... to Mister Raymond about Mister Lollie...

Boytjie: Yes?

Cheril: The things that I was told was right by adults that were wrong started many years ago. When I was ten... And it started in my home.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 7 CHERIL HOME. SITTING ROOM. MOEKS AND SISTER RINA OBVIOUSLY HAD A LONG TALK AND MOEKS IS UPSET AND ALMOST IN TEARS.

Moeks: I cannot believe what you have told me Sister... I cannot believe it...

Sister Rina (sympathetically): I know... It is very difficult for you. I know.

Moeks: My own husband? Him? How could he do that? Why didn't Cheril tell me? My own daughter?

Sister Rina: Maybe she tried to tell but you did not see it.

Moeks: She should have told me!

Sister Rina: Please don't be angry with her. Maybe she didn't know how to tell you.

Moeks: But she's my daughter?

Sister Rina: I know. It could be that she didn't want to hurt you.

Moeks: But I would not hurt her. She should have told me.

Sister Rina: She could have been scared that you would not believe her. It is normal that the mother is in such shock that they cannot consider the idea that it could be true. Remember how you reacted this afternoon towards Cheril. Your first thoughts were to take care of you husband and that Cheril was lying.

Moeks: But he was ill. I had to take him to the hospital.

Sister Rina: I know. It was natural instinct.

Moeks: And this thing of her and Lollie. Is it also true?

Sister Rina: That what she told me. And Boytjie confirmed it as the truth. That's why they came to me this afternoon.

Moeks: But she should have told me.

Sister Rina: Sometimes it is easier to tell someone else. It's easier for them. A social worker maybe of a sympathetic teacher, or someone at the clinic. These people will treat them sympathetically and with confidentiality. If only these children know that they can talk to these people or even the police, without fear of being identified.

Moeks: I am so angry! All these year in my house. I am so ashamed! What will the people say? I will have to take Cheril and move to another town.

Sister Rina: It is not you or Cheril who are the guilty ones here. Always remember that.
You are the victims.

Moeks: And my husband will go to jail for molesting his daughter and we will not have money.

Sister Rina: That's one of the fears of molested children as well. That's why they do not report it to anyone. But listen carefully now. You are not going to suffer financialy if he goes to jail. His pension and medical aid will still cover your expences. It won't be taken away from you. You've got rights. This house also belongs to you and you and your daughter are going to stay right here! You are not going to leave your house and move elsewhere because you are not the one that made the mistake.

Sister Rina: You and Cheril are not going to any prison because you did nothing wrong. And you will not create a prison for yourselves in your heads. I will not allow that and I will help you moving forward. Now is the time for you and your daughter to stand up like strong women! And you know that women are strong and that you have rights. Your future also belongs to you! Stand proud as women and you will see the respect the communittee will have for you. Believe me. You both can do it. Now is the time when you and your daughter will need one another.

Moeks: Where is she?

Sister Rina: I asked Boytjie to bring her home later this afternoon. I believe that today will be the first day of a new beginning for you and Cheril. You are the mother and she will need you. She is the daughter and you will need her. Make it work.

Moeks: I allready feel better. Thank you, Miss Rina.

Sister Rina: Whenever you need support... you know I'll be there for you.

Moeks: Thank you... Thank you.

Sister Rina: There is one thing more that I must tell you.

Moeks: What is that?

Sister Rina: It is difficult for me, but here it comes. This man Lollie... He has a bad reptation in town of sleeping around with a lot of girls of equal reputation.

Moeks: And my daughter... also...

Sister Rina: Yes. Now the danger might be that he is not tested and may be...

Moeks: HIV positive? Oh my God!

Sister Rina: I know it is shocking, but we must not now react emotionally to the possibility.

Moeks: My whole body is trembling! Oh no!!!

Sister Rina: Try to stay calm. It is now the time for us all the take a Reality Check.

Moeks: A Reality Check?

Sister Rina: The first thing we must do is to convince Cheril to go to the clinic to get her HIV status checked. If she test negative we can thank God and get on with our lives.

Moeks: Pray... Just pray. What if she isn't?

Sister Rina: She will be put on drugs that will enable her to live a normal life if the medicine is taken regularly.

Moeks: But people will avoid her out fear that they'll get the disease. She'll be a dog in her own community!

Sister Rina: No, no, no. Aids cannot be transmitted by living with a person with aids. It can only be transmitted through sexual intercourse and the tranfers of body fluids.

Moeks: Really?

Sister Rina: Yes! All this nonsense that you get the disease by using the same eating utensils or things like that is not true! People should know that and treat HIV/AIDS infected persons like normal people!

Moeks: If only they would.

Sister Rina: That is our biggest problem in communitees, the rejection of these people. They are normal people that need our respect and love just like anybody else. Don't fear them! Love them!

Moeks: If only they would.

Sister Rina: The last thing is the most difficult one for to ask from you.

Moeks: What is that?

Sister Rina: Your husband has TB. He did not drink his pills regularly. Am I right?

Moeks: Yes he did not. Why do you ask that?

Sister Rina: There is strong possibility that TB patients with a weakened physical resistance are more receptive to contracting AIDS.

Moeks: You mean my husband might get it?

Sister Rina: My dear woman... You know the history between your husband and Cheril. You now also know what happened between her and Mnr. Lollie. If Mnr Lollie and Cheril and your husband are not tested, we will not know

if anyone is infected. If one of the three tests is positive, then the possibility might be that all of them might be positive. The tests must be done as matter of the greatest urgency!

Moeks: It must be done tommorrow! Not a day later.

Sister Rina: I will arrange for it. And please come along when you bring Cheril.

Moeks: I will come to support her yes. I'll do that.

Sister Rina: My dear woman. This is a snake with many heads that slips through the night like a ghost. You were married to your husband. You had a normal sex life. You will have to be tested too.

Moeks: No! Do you mean I might also be positive?

Sister Rina: Please... That could be a reality. We must know your status.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 8 THE PRINCIPLES OFFICE. SISTER RINA IS PACKING HER THINGS UP IN THE OFFICE. SHE SPEAKS STRAIGHT TO THE AUDIENCE.

Sister Rina: I retired today as school principle. At 45 it is a bit early in my life, but I decided to go back to my old job as a Sosial Worker. I made my decision based on a Reality Check 5 years ago which I call the Cheril Reality Check. I realized that I would be of better service to the community as Social Worker out there. I beg a bit patience from you. I want to tell you what happend since the day when I talked to Cheril's mother.

Mister Lollie did in fact die of untreated AIDS complications some time ago. He refused to get tested. We are not sure how many other women were infested by him and might be HIV positive today.

Cheril's father died in prison and his death certificate states that he 'officially' died of TB complications. We all know what that means.

Cheril 's mother tested HIV negative is all well and works at a State supported Caring House for Aids Orphans. They take care of 47 orphans who lost their parents through Aids Infected complications.

Boytjie is studing for his final year to qualify as medical doctor. He will spend his Community Service Year at a Children's Hospital in Northern Natal that specializes in the medical care and treatment of Children with AIDS.

Sister Rina: And Cheryl? 5 years have past since that day that Cheril came into my office and I had to see her dear mother. It was because of her that I say my work here at school is done. Cheryl did it for me. She came back to school the next week after her test and told the whole school what her Reality Check in life was and what it meant for her. Since then she comes back on the first day the new school year and tells she then tells the new kids a grade 8 the same story. She tells them how lucky she was to take a Reality Check in time. Cheryl was one of the lucky ones. She tested negative and now works at Escom as a Human Recourses officer. It was close shave!

So I guess you wonder why I say I can leave the school now and go back to my old job as Social Worker? Let me tell you.

Every Friday, for the last five years, I watched through this window how learners are saying goodbye to each other on Fridays before the weekend. They give each other a high five and shout "REALITY CHECK!" before they go.

FINAL BLACKOUT

© Nico Luwes

**Copyright and performance rights: Nico Luwes
17 Jan Brandstreet
Langenhovenpark
Bloemfontein.
9300
Written on 28 May 2010
Scaena Theatre 43
UFS
0823742485**