



Nick is a film maker. He made a film 20 years ago, and it was good. Really good. So he says. The problem is that the film happened to star a young fifteen year old girl, and the films writer and co-star, Hamish, unfortunately, got caught shortly after the movie premiered at Berlin outside a young girls window.. with images of her on his camera, topless.

And now, the Adelaide Film Festival wants to do a retrospective and a lot of questions are being asked. Who is responsible for telling what really happened? When does art replicate reality? Whose reality do we believe? And who decides what the content is?

In a world where we are constantly creating a narrative for ourselves, through social media, online platforms and masking ourselves who decides what reality is? Who decides who is cancelled and who is an artistic genius?

Commentary is for senior students, age 16 +, Yr 11 and 12.

It contains frequent coarse language, mature sexual themes, themes of age and consent.

Coarse Language

There are multiple occurrences of the words 'shit, fuck, fucking' and one use of the word 'cunt'. These are used predominantly by the character Nick, as his world slowly starts to spiral. The word 'fucked' is used to describe the character of Hamish, who we understand has substance issues, although these are not explicit.

They are not used in a violent manner toward other characters but as part of his vernacular. Younger female characters do occasionally use language but with much less frequency.

Mature Sexual Themes

Nick is married to Mish, however it becomes clear that he is having an affair with one of his students, Genevieve, aged in her 20's. We discover through the play that this is not an isolated incident.

There is a scene at the top of the play where they are depicted post sexual intercourse, this is not staged.

Stage directions:

Lights up on Gen, barely dressed, post-sex, on a bed. She's looking at Nick's laptop screen, the sound of a shower turning off. Nick is offstage. He enters with a towel around his waist

The first scene between Nick and Genevieve ends with them starting to engage in sexual activity but this will be staged behind a curtain, or opaque screen, it will also fade out quite quickly.

"Gen: I think it's only fair I get something out of this exchange.

Nick: And what do I get?

Gen undoes his towel.

Maybe the shower this time? Your neighbours.

Gen: I don't care.

Let's give them a show.

She rolls him over.

In this scene Genevieve is in control. It is clear she is very much getting something out of the affair. It is a moment where she has power over Nick. A theme relevant to the play. It is non-violent and consensual.

Nick hints to his wife after a kiss that he would like more, she replies "We don't have time"

In a scene in a cafe where Nick is sitting with Genevieve Gen puts her leg up under the table and presses it into Nick's crotch, when he pulls back she says

"I'm not some dumb girl you fuck."

As Nick's world starts to spiral and he is feeling the world is against him, he and Genevieve begin to argue:

Nick: Don't - with all due respect, don't give me any fucking advice right now. You don't have the faintest idea what you're talking about.

Gen: You got it teach. Shall I suck your dick one last time?"

Genevieve is reminding Nick of the inappropriate nature of the relationship, there is a tension between Genevieve and Nick that they both enjoy but we see it start to unravel as Nick faces more scrutiny.

It does raise the moral question of a much older University lecturer, who is/was a known film maker, having a relationship with a younger student. Whilst Genevieve is in her early 20's and of age, Nick is in his 40's and so there is a question here about the ethics across the relationship.

Themes of Age and Consent

The play deals with the original film featuring a girl, aged fourteen. It discusses the ethics of the original movie, and the subsequent charge against the writer and co-star of the movie of attacking a young girl, aged fifteen.

Nick: Does everyone think it's paedophilic?

Gen: The girls definitely do.

Nick: But he never touches her.

Gen: He just stalks her.

Nick: After she humiliates him. Which she gets away with because she's rich. It's about class. It's about obsession.

Gen: Yeah, a grown man obsessed with a teenage girl.

Nick: He's playing a seventeen year old.

Gen: Hamish never looks seventeen.

Nick: We tell you he's seventeen. We made that explicit.

Gen: But we have eyes. No seventeen year old looks like Hamish did.

Whilst Nick is in an interview with Anna Whitehead, a journalist, the following exchange occurs.

Anna: A man writes a story where he assaults a young girl - he jumps through the window to attack her -

Nick: We never show an attack.

Anna: And then, in real life, is found lurking outside the window of a young girl. We're meant to think what exactly?

This theme of consent runs throughout the play. What power does Nick, the older male film maker have, when casting a fourteen year old? When he is trying to get the perfect promo shot for the poster. How much information does he give when his young actor may be placed in a precarious position with her physical safety? What is the relationship here? Can the fourteen year old actively consent to the directors choice.

The questions raised are very much in the contemporary space. Who creates the narrative? Through the play we see Nick creating a podcast on the situation, continually trying to control the content. We continually ask the question of each of the characters - what are their moral and ethical obligations.

How this applies to the social media and online world that many young people in particular find themselves in? How can we judge and is it so clear?