

Introductory Notes

1. Introductory and access information

Event name: **Commentary by Ash Flanders**

Event company: presented by **State Theatre Company SA**

Event synopsis:

Commentary is a sharp, provocative play that interrogates the ethics of artmaking, accountability, and memory in an era of public reckoning. The story centres on Nick, played by Gyton Grantley, a once-promising filmmaker turned university lecturer, whose controversial debut feature “Low” is being resurrected for a retrospective screening at the local International Film Festival. The film, co-created with his now disgraced, and former best friend Hamish, is dogged by allegations of abuse and exploitation linked to its production and content.

The play utilises live action, voice over, video projection, and live camera feed from the performers to the screens.

Warnings:

Coarse language, adult themes, sexual references, partial nudity and haze.

Run time:

90 minutes, no interval.

2. Set description

Set and Props

A rectangle of blue carpet approx. 10mW x 8mD, sits centre of the black stage floor, a rectangular platform 30cm high, 8mWx 6mD, is covered in the same blue embossed carpet and sits centrally on top.

Behind this sits a 4m high carpeted wall with a full-length feature window spanning the wall, divided into 5 panels of glass. The window has full length cream drapes which begin closed (acting initially as a projection screen) then becomes transparent with back light and are pulled open to reveal Gen’s bedroom, Saskia’s film trailer or an outdoor area.

Pre show set up / on a TV studio set -

Two banks of overhead stage lights hang on parallel lighting bars clearly visible above the platform. An industrial vacuum cleaner sits on the platform to our left and a leather satchel rests on the floor up against the platform in front.

Through the Windows into Gen’s bedroom

A queen size bed is side on to the window, with pink satin pillows on our left and matching pink Valance skirting the bottom with a pink satin throw rumped on top of cream satin sheets. A circular chrome side table with clear glass top has a cone shaped lampshade and round white base on top. To our right, across the pale wood veneer floor boards sits a contemporary chrome arm chair with wide black leather arms and seat suspended by the chrome tubular frame. A pile of discarded clothes lie crumpled on the floor in front.

Action occurs both in front and behind the windows where we variously seem to be viewing the action from outside looking in or from inside a room looking through the windows into a film location trailer or outside the house. At all times we seem to be voyeurs of the lives of the characters.

On either side of the window stands a tall projection screen panel which bookends the action. These screens stand 2m tall by 1m wide and when activated seem like two more window panels projecting photographs, or live feed transmissions of the characters in “zoom like” live video feed. Bundles of electrical cables are dumped in a mound under each screen.

Nick’s home office - is set up on the carpeted platform in front of the window/curtains closed. Furnished with a chrome contemporary tubular frame desk with black box cupboard under one side, on it sits a chrome articulated desk lamp with a swivel head, silver laptop open with a small live feed camera on a stand and behind, and a matching office chair with chrome curved frame, black leather seat and back.

A green jacket is slung over the chairback and black lace up shoes are in a pair under the table.

Saskia’s trailer/set location - Is set behind the window, the bed remains without the pink pillows or cover, A raised makeup chair on wheels has assorted beauty and makeup products, water bottle, yoga mat, hand towel. A white circular fluorescent tube light on a tall stand illuminates Saskia’s face which is caught in the camera mounted inside the circle. This live feed image is projected onto the screen on our right. Nick's face looms large, live streamed onto the screen on our left.

TV Recording Studio - On the platform, two identical contemporary chrome and black arm chairs are placed on either side of a circular chrome and glass side table, used in the bedroom scene earlier. A pair of crystal cut water glasses rest on this. In front of the platform, a microphone on a stand sits on the floor, centrally between the chairs.

In The Pub/On the Street - In a couple of scenes the characters meet in the Pub or on the street, here the front corridor of carpet in front of the platform is used as if meeting at night, the scene is blue and shadowy with the curtain in the windows behind, uplit in lavender light.

OnStage at The cinema screening- The window and curtains glow in red light, the two side screens have a white circular image in the centre of a blue background. The text stretched across the top of a ball shape reads "Go South" above the remaining

half of the ball in white with a curve of old style film celluloid depicted like a path up to the text.

Inside Gen's apartment - The bed/mattress and bedding, is now set up on the platform in front of the windows, as if we are in Gen's room Looking through the windows at a figure outside - as the figure moves toward and away from us behind the windows, a security light flicks on and off as it senses movement.

3. Characters and Costumes

Characters and Costumes

Nick, played by Gyton (Guy-ton) Grantley, is in his mid 40s. He is a filmmaker turned university lecturer, of medium build and height, with short, slightly receding brown hair and a beard that is little more than greying, designer-stubble.

When we first meet Nick he is naked except for a bath towel wrapped around his waist, revealing a well-chiselled chest and torso. He wears his watch on his right wrist and has a wedding ring.

We next meet him in his office, where he wears a stylish, white, jersey t-shirt with sleeves that hit just above the elbow, grey chinos, black invisible trainer socks giving a bare ankle look, and black slip-on loafers. A sage-green casual jacket is on the back of the chair. He puts on brown-rimmed designer glasses to read texts on his phone.

For the interview with the journalist Anna Whitehead, a smart grey jacket replaces the casual green one and, for the film festival panel, he wears a smart grey suit, shirt and tie. Later in his home office he strips down to his t-shirt and black underpants.

The six female characters are played by three actors, each with double roles:

Anna Steen plays the roles of Mish and Anna:

Mish, Nick's wife, in her early 40s, is a TV production designer. She is medium height, of slim build, with shoulder-length, very curly, blonde hair. When we first meet her she wears a yellow striped, oversized shirt with long sleeves, a white collar and deep, white cuffs, black pants and red trainers. She wears a wedding ring. Later, Mish adds a black puffer jacket and carries a Panetta linen tote bag.

Anna, an entertainment journalist, is in her early 30s. She is of medium height, elegant in her black patent heels and tailored pants, paired with a long-sleeved, polka dot, pussy-bow blouse. The long ties attached to the collar are wound around her neck like a scarf and trail down her back. Her curly blonde hair is swept back and pinned into an elegant updo that matches her crisp, take-no-prisoners manner.

Kate Cheel plays the roles of Clea and Saskia:

Clea, a programmer at the Adelaide Film Festival, is in her early 30s. She is about 163cm tall (5'4"), a slim build, with straight, short, black hair. She is smartly dressed in an olive green cropped leather jacket, over a black hip-length top and tailored pants with flat court shoes. She carries a mobile phone and her actions are efficient and organised.

Saskia is in her mid 30s, a now successful actor who Nick discovered as a teenager. We only ever meet Saskia during zoom calls with Nick, while she is 'on set', dressing and preparing her make-up for her next camera shot. She wears a floral-patterned, kimono gown with flowing sleeves over a black bodysuit, and wears open-toe fluffy slippers. She has eight, colourful snap clips holding her straight black hair flat to frame her face, Shiny orange hydrogel patches are stuck under her eyes. She has a long scar on her right inner forearm. Saskia is animated in her hand gestures, with a wide gawping mouth, red lipstick, smoky dark eye liner and exaggerated facial expressions!

Shardae Santos plays the roles of Gen and Frankie:

Gen, is in her early 20s, she's a sassy confident film student and Nick's lover. She is a stocky build, medium height, with shoulder-length, brown hair. We first meet her in her bedroom, while Nick is showering. She wears a baggy, black t-shirt with a colourful image emblazoned on the front, blue-checked shorts and white sockettes. Later when she meets Nick in a pub, she is very chic in a slinky black top, off one shoulder revealing a black bra strap, tucked into a very short, faded black denim skirt, black sheer stockings, dark red patent-leather boots and carries a black & white tote bag and her mobile phone.

Frankie, is a 14 year old high school student, She arrives at the pub wearing a black hoodie over a black t-shirt with a slogan in yellow cursive writing, across the chest, faded blue jeans and orange trainers. Ear plug cables hang round her neck, plugged into her mobile phone, and her brown hair is pinched back into a tiny pony-tail/bunch. She has an olive green back pack.

Jessica is a 15 year old girl we never meet or see clearly. She is depicted onscreen at the start of the play, in a very blurry, poor quality video, shot through a bedroom window and later, in an instagram photo.

Scene changers

Props are set and removed, scenes are changed throughout the play by the assistant stage manager and the female actors, who make the changes while dressed in short-sleeved orange overalls with "Comms" headsets and tool belts, as though production workers on the TV set.



Video footage - All footage will be described as it is projected except for the first presentation.

During the first Voice Over at the beginning of the performance, blurry footage of a young woman in her underwear is projected onto the window. She's moving around a bedroom, doing her hair, getting dressed, unaware she is being filmed. Footage appears to be taken from outside looking through the window, the image is distorted by the closed semi transparent rippled curtains. A red recording indicator from an old school video camera flashes in the top right corner of the footage with a scrolling time code at the bottom of the screen below. The footage jumps about as if the recorder is hand held.

Creatives

Writer	Ash Flanders
Director	Petra Kalive (Kal-eeve)
Designer	Matilda Woodroofe (Wood -roof)
Lighting Designer	Nic Mollison
Composer, Sound & Video Designer	Dan Thorpe
Video Content	Matt Byrne
Accent Coach	Jennifer Innes
Intimacy Coordinator	Ruth Fallon

Cast

Nick	Gyton (Guyton) Grantley
Mish/Anna	Anna Steen
Clea/Saskia	Kate Cheel
Gen/Frankie	Shardae Santos
Jessica	Ruby Patrich

Production

Production Manager	Gavin Norris
Stage Manager	Bridget Samuel
Assistant Stage Manager	Jennifer King
Production Electrician	Alexander Ramsay
Props	Elias Papiros
AV	Aaron Herczeg
Head Mechanist	Rachael Park
Lighting Operator	Kez Scott
FOH Sound Operator/ System Technician	Jackson Price
Sound Radio Technician	Matt Birkin

4. Event details

Event location: **Space Theatre**, Adelaide Festival Centre

Event date and time: The Audio Described performances are on:

- **Saturday 29th August 2026 at 2:00pm / Relaxed Performance**, with an Introductory tour commencing at 1:00pm
- **Monday 31st August 2026 at 6.30pm / post show Q&A** with a Introductory tour commencing at 5.30pm

Audiences are invited to stay seated after the performance on Monday 31st Aug for a 20min Q&A with the Cast and Creatives.

5. Access information

Access Information

Venue Information: This production is being held at the Dunstan Playhouse, Adelaide Festival Centre.

Building works are currently underway around the Adelaide Festival Centre. If you have any access requirements or would like more information to help plan your visit, please visit <https://www.adelaidefestivalcentre.com.au/your-visit/accessibility> or call 8216 8600.

If you are driving, please plan to arrive at least 30 minutes prior to the performance start time, as it can take more than 10 minutes to find a parking spot, travel to the theatre, and be seated in time.

If travelling by car, we highly recommend parking at the [Adelaide Convention Centre's Riverbank Car Park](#) (via Montefiore Road) for easy access to the theatre. Public transportation is also recommended. Please leave extra time for your journey and pre-book where you can.

[Visit the Adelaide Festival Centre website](#) for more information on the venue.