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SF PERUSALS

SOME EXPLICIT POLAROIDS

by Mark Ravenhill

SAMUEL FRENCH

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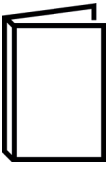
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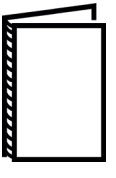
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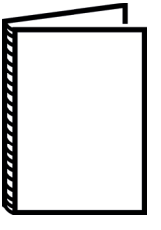
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Mark Ravenhill was born in Haywards Heath, West Sussex in 1966. He studied Drama and English at Bristol University. His first play *Shopping and Fucking* was produced by Out of Joint and the Royal Court Theatre in 1996. Subsequent plays include *Faust Is Dead* and *Handbag* (both Actors Touring Company), *Some Explicit Polaroids* (Out of Joint at the Ambassadors Theatre), *Mother Clap's Molly House* and *Citizenship* (both National Theatre), *Pool (No Water)* (Frantic Assembly at the Lyric Theatre), *The Cut* (Donmar Theatre), *Shoot/Get Treasure/ Repeat* (Paines Plough) and *Over There* (Royal Court). From 2012 to 2014, Mark was playwright in residence for the Royal Shakespeare Company, producing a new version of Brecht's *Galileo* and a new play *Candide* inspired by Voltaire (both Swan Theatre, Stratford-Upon-Avon). Mark's work in music theatre includes a new English version of Monteverdi's *The Coronation of Poppea* with additional material by Michael Nyman (King's Head); *Ten Plagues*, a song cycle for Marc Almond with composer Connor Mitchell (Traverse Theatre) and *Elysium* with composer Rolf Wallin for the Norwegian Opera. Mark is the co-creator of the ITV sitcom *Vicious*.

Some Explicit Polaroids, produced by Out of Joint Theatre Company, was first performed at the Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmonds, on 30 September 1999, prior to a run at the New Ambassadors Theatre, London.

CHARACTERS

HELEN

NICK

NADIA

VICTOR

TIM

JONATHAN

A slash in the dialogue (/) is a cue for the next actor to start their line, creating overlapping dialogue.

Scene One

HELEN'*s flat.*

NICK *and* **HELEN**. **NICK** *is very wet.*

HELEN Nick. Fucking hell. Nick.

NICK Hello, Helen.

HELEN Fucking hell.

NICK I tried to ring you.

HELEN You're / wet.

NICK Wet. Yeah. It's raining.

HELEN Right.

NICK I tried to ring you. Let you know. But I was there and I couldn't work out how to get the money in and there's a girl behind me and she says "they only take cards" and I'm like cards? What the fuck does she mean "cards"?

HELEN Listen, I have to—

NICK I'm soaked. I need to change my / clothes.

HELEN Nick, I was on my way out.

NICK I thought maybe you still had some of my gear...

HELEN Sorry?

NICK Something I could change into?

HELEN Nick. I threw it all away.

NICK What? All of it?

HELEN All of it. Years ago.

NICK Right. Right. I see. You look smart.

HELEN I've got a meeting to go to.

NICK Kid in the lift tried to sell me smack. Must have been about seven. I said: "You shouldn't be selling drugs at your age." And he said: "How else am I gonna buy a PlayStation?"

HELEN There's a lot of that goes on.

NICK What the fuck is a PlayStation? How's your mum?

HELEN Dead.

NICK Right. Right. But the council let you—

HELEN I bought it.

NICK Yeah?

HELEN Yes. I bought the flat from the council. Alright?

NICK Fucking hell, Helen.

HELEN Yeah. Propertied classes, me. So, what you going to do to me? Firebomb through the letterbox? Picket the entryphone. Or maybe you're going to kidnap / me and do all sorts of terrible things to me?

NICK No. No. No. I've changed.

HELEN Well, good.

NICK I really want to change out of these clothes. I think I might get flu or something.

HELEN Nick—

NICK Maybe if I just—

HELEN I haven't got time for this.

NICK *starts to take off his clothes.*

Nick.

NICK There's no ring. You're not / married.

HELEN No.

NICK I think that's a good choice. Not to tie yourself down like that. Keep your independence. Play the field a bit when you fancy it. I think that's a really good choice you've made there.

HELEN There was someone.

NICK Right.

HELEN For a few years but in the end she moved.

NICK She?

HELEN Yes. She moved to America.

NICK Really? / She?

HELEN She's in computing. I still get the odd card from Silicon Valley.

NICK So you're a...? What? You're...

HELEN There's been a few blokes / as well.

NICK Right. Right. You still look great.

HELEN I look middle-aged. I am middle-aged.

NICK No, you're... So, nobody actually around at the moment?

HELEN Maybe. No... It's none of your business actually, is it?

NICK No toy boy in the bedroom? No lady wrestlers behind the sofa?

HELEN Yeah. But they all hid when they heard the door go. Which doesn't mean I'm up for it, okay?

NICK I wasn't asking.

HELEN Alright. Just in case you were thinking of... Don't.

NICK Alright then.

HELEN You're going to have to put those on again. I've got a meeting and I'm already running late.

NICK Yeah.

HELEN You caught me on my way to a meeting.

NICK What sort of meeting?

HELEN Council meeting. I'm a councillor.

NICK Yeah?

HELEN Yes. Nowadays I'm a councillor, hence…

NICK Smart clothes.

HELEN Hence smart clothes. Look. There's some jeans and a T-shirt Finnoula left. She was quite a big girl. You can have them.

NICK I need somewhere to stay.

HELEN Oh.

NICK I'm sort of stuck and I need somewhere to stay and I thought you might just put me up until…

HELEN I'm sorry, Nick.

NICK For a short time.

HELEN No.

NICK Why?

HELEN Because I don't want to. Because I don't want you here.

NICK I did it for you.

HELEN Fuck off.

NICK I did it because you wanted me to.

HELEN What is this bollocks? This is bollocks.

NICK You said: "That bastard is the scum of the earth and someone should kill that bastard."

HELEN We all said that stuff. We said rubbish / like that all the time.

NICK I'm not blaming… Listen. Your dad, when they laid off your dad, when that bastard buys it up and they're gonna asset-strip, chuck your dad away, and you wanted him dead.

HELEN I was twenty. Everyone was a fascist or a scab or a class traitor. “Eat the rich.” We used to chant that, I mean what the fuck did that mean – “eat the rich”?

NICK And you said to me… “He should be killed.”

HELEN Did I?

NICK Yes.

HELEN Then I was very stupid.

NICK And I said: “I’ll do it.”

HELEN I don’t remember. Because I can’t imagine that I ever thought—

NICK It was real for me. Scab, class traitor. I wasn’t playing.

HELEN Yeah, well, we all thought it was real at the time. At the time, we all believed it. Do you still believe it?

NICK I’ve only just got out. I don’t understand anything now.

HELEN Well, everything’s changed.

NICK And you’ve changed?

HELEN Of course. Look at me.

NICK Let me stay.

HELEN No.

NICK Looking at you now, I still feel a lot of the same stuff. About you.

HELEN You’re looking at a different person.

NICK Same feelings.

HELEN Yeah?

NICK Yeah. And what are you feeling right now?

HELEN I don’t know.

NICK A few of the old feelings?

HELEN Maybe… Yes, a few of the old feelings.

NICK A couple of days.

HELEN ...Okay.

NICK I want to learn... I want to understand how the world works now.

HELEN Don't ask me. You start with the little stuff... Okay?

NICK Alright.

HELEN Bit by bit, you do what you can and you don't look for the bigger picture, you don't generalise.

NICK You were always a good teacher.

HELEN Yeah?

NICK Yeah. You taught me a lot of stuff.

HELEN What kind of stuff?

NICK All sorts of stuff.

They kiss.

Of course I'm a bit rusty on a few things. I need a bit of revision.

HELEN Then you sit here and revise on your own.

NICK There's a word for that.

HELEN I wouldn't know.

NICK That's all you get in prison.

HELEN That's all you're getting here.

NICK That's a shame.

HELEN I've got to go now. I'll see you later.

NICK And what's your meeting about, councillor?

HELEN Boring stuff.

NICK Go on.

HELEN It's nothing... Boring stuff.

NICK Tell me. Tell me.

HELEN It's bus companies. They've deregulated the buses and now there's hundreds of different buses whizzing around and the whole thing's a mess and I'm trying to coordinate...

NICK You're making the buses run on time?

HELEN I'm trying to make the buses run on time. Yes.

NICK Fucking hell.

HELEN You see? I knew you'd do this. I knew you'd be like that.

NICK Like what?

HELEN That you'd sneer.

NICK Did I sneer?

HELEN Yes you did. Great big fucking sneer.

NICK Well...

HELEN Well? What? What?

NICK It's a bit petty, isn't it?

HELEN To you. Maybe to you. But if you're stuck on some shitty estate and the only way to get out, the only way to get to the shops is a bus / and at the moment there is no bus, then no it's actually very important actually.

NICK Get to the shops? Get to the shops?

HELEN We're actually making people's lives better. What did you ever do / Nick? What did we ever do? Sure talk, talk, talk, march, march, protest. Ban this, overthrow that, but what did we ever do?

NICK And what about the big targets? Why are there shitty estates? Why are they there in the first place? / You should be going for the big targets.

HELEN Oh yes. Come the revolution, down they come. But while we're waiting...

NICK Let's fiddle with the fucking bus timetables. / So fucking petty.

HELEN *picks up* **NICK***'s clothes.*

HELEN Tell me one concrete thing we ever did. Go on, Nick. Fuck off. Fuck off.

NICK I'm sorry. I...

HELEN I don't want you here. I don't want to see you. I don't ever want to see you. Go.

NICK Helen, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to do that. I...

HELEN Goodbye. There's a whole big bad world out there waiting for you. Fuck off.

Scene Two

Airport.

NADIA Because we all have our own journeys that we're travelling. Each of us has our own path and, of course, we can't always see the path, sometimes it seems like there's no sense in anything, you know? But of course there is. Everything makes sense.

VICTOR You think so?

NADIA Oh yes of course, yes.

VICTOR I don't think so.

NADIA No?

VICTOR I think everything is crazy. The whole world is fucking crazy.

NADIA Maybe it seems—

VICTOR Yes. Everything is totally crazy. I like that. I'm a crazy person.

NADIA No you're not.

VICTOR Yeah, totally fucking crazy.

NADIA I don't think you're crazy.

VICTOR Every day I wake up and I say "Another fucking crazy day. What am I going to do today?"

NADIA I think you're a very beautiful person.

VICTOR You like my body?

NADIA On the inside. Beautiful on the inside.

VICTOR You don't like my body?

NADIA Of course, you've got a great body.

VICTOR I've got a fucking fantastic body. I could have been in porno. Body like this I could be huge porno star. Guys go crazy for my body.

NADIA You've had lots of partners?

VICTOR Please?

NADIA You've had a lot of boyfriends?

VICTOR Boyfriends, yes. Many boyfriends. They go crazy for my body. But also my father, yes? My father and my brother go crazy for my body.

NADIA So…you're close as a family?

VICTOR Please?

NADIA A very loving family.

VICTOR Yes I think so. Yes. My brother he likes to photograph me, you know? Polaroid? Since I was fourteen. Polaroid of my body. See? *(offers* **NADIA** *the Polaroids)* See? Fucking fantastic body.

NADIA And that's your…? Right. Right.

VICTOR And I say to my brother when I am fourteen: I could be in porno.

NADIA Well, that's great.

VICTOR Yes?

NADIA Yes, I think it's great to have an ambition. Something you want and really go for it.

VICTOR One day I was so fucking crazy I took Polaroids and I…please word is…I…scan Polaroids on home page and I say: "Look at this great body. Great body, crazy guy. Any other crazy guys out there want to do stuff with this fucking crazy body?"

NADIA Well, I think that's fantastic. No I do. To be open.

VICTOR Yes. Open. Hungry hole.

NADIA To possibilities.

VICTOR And what do you want?

NADIA Well…

VICTOR What are you going for?

NADIA I don't know yet. I'm still trying to find out, you know? Where I really belong in the universe. Nothing's fixed for me, which is cool in a way. Sometimes you just have to let yourself be open to possibilities before you can really choose, you know?

VICTOR When will Tim be back? I really like the idea of Japanese guy. For one hundred days every year he will keep me in cave.

NADIA But you chose Tim.

VICTOR I just want to be in London.

NADIA But Tim brought you here. Tim paid for you to be here.

VICTOR Everyone in London gave up on that meaning bullshit years ago, you know? And now they enjoy theirself. I love trash, okay? I like it when everything is trash. Trash music, trash food, trash people. I love these things.

NADIA I don't think Tim is trash.

VICTOR Oh yes, he told me. His home page: "I'm one hundred per cent pure trash."

NADIA He may have said that...

VICTOR And I say: "Yes. This is the guy I want to meet. This trash guy."

NADIA I think Tim's self-esteem—

VICTOR Please?

NADIA I don't think Tim always values himself. But actually, Tim is a very beautiful person. A very loving person.

VICTOR Oh no. This is not possible.

NADIA Yes. A person with a lot of love to give.

VICTOR Why didn't he tell me?

NADIA Yes, and actually a very spiritual person.

VICTOR He has lied to me. Fuck this. Why didn't he say?

NADIA I don't know. Maybe he was ill and in a vulnerable position.

VICTOR Ill?

NADIA Maybe.

VICTOR He is ill?

NADIA No I don't...

VICTOR Why does this happen to me? This always happens to me. I'm a crazy guy, you know, and I just want to have fun, just want to enjoy... Why do these guys fucking lie to me? Loving, spiritual, vulnerable, ill. Fuck this.

NADIA What are you doing?

VICTOR I'm going.

NADIA But Tim isn't back yet.

VICTOR I don't want to see this liar.

NADIA Please wait for him. He'll be back with food in a minute, then we can / get the tube.

VICTOR No. I don't need this.

NADIA He wants you here. He's been looking forward to... It means so much / to him.

VICTOR Means? Means? Fuck this "means". Nothing means anything, okay?

VICTOR *moves to exit.*

I find a guy to pay my fare out of here.

NADIA Who?

VICTOR Any guy. They're all crazy for me. Some guy will fly me to Japan and I will live in cave.

Enter **TIM** *with sweets and cherryade.*

TIM Daddy's here. Look at this. Total crap, love it. Total fucking shite, the lot of it. Not a vitamin in sight, fabulous. Lucky bag for everyone. For you.

NADIA Thank you.

TIM And for you.

VICTOR No.

TIM It's for you. Special trash delivery.

VICTOR I don't want this.

TIM Cherryade? Let's all have cherryade.

VICTOR Fucking bastard.

TIM Who's a...

VICTOR You, you fucking bastard.

TIM What have I...?

NADIA Please. I'm sorry.

VICTOR Spiritual? She says you're spiritual.

TIM Well, she shouldn't have done that. Why do you always do this?

NADIA I didn't know.

TIM Just when I've met someone. Just when I'm having some fun at last.

NADIA I just wanted him to understand / that you have feelings.

TIM There's nothing to understand.

VICTOR I'm going.

TIM No.

NADIA That you feel something.

TIM No I don't. I don't feel anything, alright?

NADIA But you do, I know you do / and I know you want someone in your life because you've got this need...

TIM Don't you tell me. I want to have fun.

NADIA And we feel the need.

TIM Just because you're... Just because you've got no one.

NADIA I've got Simon.

TIM Yeah?

NADIA Sometimes, yes, often I've got Simon.

TIM And look what Simon does to you. Look at how Simon hurts / you all the time.

NADIA No. I'm not listening to all this negative… No, I'm going now. I'll make my own way back. I'm going. And who knows? I might meet someone on the way back. Because I'm open, I'm at peace with myself, I don't have to…

TIM What? What?

NADIA Pay for a…sex…slave.

NADIA *exits.*

TIM She shouldn't have said that, it isn't true.

VICTOR You don't want slave?

TIM That I feel anything, it isn't true.

VICTOR So. This doesn't mean anything?

TIM It means nothing.

VICTOR And you're trash?

TIM We're both trash. Come on eat something, eat some rubbish.

TIM *gets his pills out.*

And Nadia's trash too really. She's alright, you'll get to like her after a bit. She's been good to me. We have fun together.

TIM *takes the pills.*

VICTOR You are ill?

TIM No.

VICTOR She told me this, you are ill.

TIM No.

VICTOR Then what is this? This is medicine.

TIM This? This is total trash. More delicious chemical shite to fill my body with.

VICTOR I don't want to be near ill people. They have ugly bodies.

TIM Alright.

VICTOR I could be in any country in the world with any guy.

TIM But I paid for you. I own you.

VICTOR Please. What is it like to be ill?

TIM Are you feeling sorry for me?

VICTOR No.

TIM So what are you feeling?

VICTOR Nothing.

TIM Good boy, because I warn you, you feel anything, you're out, okay? And you pay your own way home.

VICTOR Okay.

TIM Come on.

TIM *holds up a sweet.*

Train in the tunnel. Chug, chug, chug.

TIM *feeds* **VICTOR.**

Good.

Scene Three

NADIA*'s flat.*

Dark.

NICK Where do you wanna…?

NADIA Through here.

Enter **NADIA**, *supported by* **NICK**. *We can only see their silhouettes.* **NADIA** *is wearing a knee-length coat.*

Oh shit. Shit.

NICK C'mon. You're alright now.

NADIA Fuck. I feel…

NICK Yeah?

NADIA Nauseous.

NICK Yeah?

NADIA Like I'm gonna… No. No. I'm alright. I'm alright.

NICK Right.

NADIA *turns a light on. We can now see that her lip is cut and swollen.*

NADIA That's better.

Pause.

Well…thanks.

NICK That's alright.

NADIA No really, thanks. You were amazing. Just leapt in there out of the blue like—

NICK Yeah, well… I don't like to see a bloke do that to a woman.

NADIA Of course not.

NICK I don't like men who / don't respect…

NADIA Right.

NICK I can't stand that.

NADIA Of course you can't. Look. I expect you need to...

NICK Yeah.

Enter **NADIA** *to kitchen.* **NICK** *hesitates. Is he supposed to leave? Decides to wait. Enter* **NADIA** *with a packet of frozen food held up to her face. Doesn't see* **NICK**.

Who was he?

NADIA Oh. Hi. I'd just filed you away. In here. Past tense.

NICK Was he your boyfriend?

NADIA I don't know. / I'm fine now if you need to...

NICK You don't know?

NADIA I knew this would come in handy. In the fridge when I moved in. Two years ago.

NICK You don't know / if he's your boyfriend?

NADIA And I thought: It's got to be good for something. Obviously I wasn't going to eat it. I mean, "Best before December 1984", you're not going to eat it, are you?

NICK How can you not know if / he's your boyfriend?

NADIA But I thought: Hold on to it. Everything has its value. Everything is of use. Don't you agree?

NICK Who is he? A stranger?

NADIA No. Not a stranger.

NICK So? Ex-boyfriend? Ex-husband? / Pimp or...

NADIA Oooo...labels, labels. Simon's a friend who I shag once in a while. If we're in the mood.

NICK And who once in a while beats you about.

NADIA He had a difficult childhood.

NICK He's not making much of a go at being an adult.

NADIA He's doing the best he can with the knowledge that he has.

NICK Yeah?

NADIA Yes.

NADIA *moves to the ansaphone, pushes play.*

Ansaphone (female voice), "Hi. Me returning your call returning my call returning your call returning my call. / Etcetera. And so on. Ad infinitum. So. Call me."

(laughs) Can you believe it? Three months of messages and we've never actually spoken?

Ansaphone (male voice), "Hello sexy gorgeous sexy you. / You were gorgeous, I was gorgeous. Let's do it again."

Creep. Big, big mistake. I don't think so.

Pause.

Look. I'm fine now. Really, I'm okay. So if you wanna… You probably need to get back to your boyfriend.

NICK No, no.

NADIA You need to carry on looking for a boyfriend?

NICK No.

NADIA No?

NICK I'm…y'know…hetero…straight.

NADIA Really?

NICK Yeah, really. I mean, don't I look like I'm…?

NADIA You look like…

NICK A / convict

NADIA A convict. You look like a convict or a poof. And since you're not a convict…

NICK I'm not a poof.

NADIA So what are you?

NICK I was just making my way along that street...

NADIA Which is a very poofy street.

NICK To get to another street where they have a club with dancing.

NADIA Do you like dancing?

NICK I'm not much of a dancer.

NADIA Bet you / could be.

NICK I can't dance. But this club. They have, like, girls who dance on tables. With just little...things on.

NADIA Little things?

NICK Little...yes.

NADIA Hussies.

NICK Yeah.

NADIA What does a nice bloke like you want with hussies like that?

NICK Company.

NADIA Lonely?

NICK ...Yeah.

Pause. **NICK** *leans in to her. Kisses her. She screams out.*

NADIA Fuck. Fuck.

NICK I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

NADIA Bleeding again now.

NICK I'm really sorry.

NADIA Stupid cunt.

Exit **NADIA** *to bathroom.*

NICK Is there anything I can...?

NADIA *(offstage)* Yeah. Fuck off.

NICK Alright then. I'll do that. Yeah. I'll fuck off and next time Simon's beating the fucking shit out of you I won't... Yeah.

NICK *starts to go. The phone rings.*

Your phone's...

Ansaphone (male voice), "Hey listen, I just wanted to say how profoundly sorry... Look, I know I fucked up...and I really thought I'd broken this pattern of... I'm really trying to work though this...control issue or whatever it is. I'm really... I want to understand why I have this need to hurt you. And I want to, I need to talk about it. And I thought if I came over. Look. I know you're there. I know you're listening to this. And. I want to wash the blood away. I want to... I'm coming over now. I'm..."

NICK *picks up the phone.*

Simon? ...It doesn't matter who I am. It doesn't matter.

NADIA *enters. She has a hand mirror and a flannel for mopping up the blood.* **NICK** *doesn't see her.*

(to phone) Because I'm a great big enormous angry bastard and I'm staying here, so don't you come anywhere fucking near her, alright? Alright?

NICK *puts the phone down.*

NADIA You're quite a frightened person, aren't you?

NICK What?

NADIA A frightened person. And you're an angry person.

NICK Well, yeah.

NADIA Yes, they're often very linked. Fear and anger. I'm a nice person.

NICK Yeah.

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

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