





**TICKET TO WRITE**

A Night of Theatre by

**Michael Akraak** / **Khalida H. Ashrafi** / **Anita Franklin** / **Ann-Marie Frater** / **Sohail Khan**  
**Marcia Layne** / **Novid Parsi** / **Shohidur Rahman** / **Sol B. River** / **Rommi Smith**

Directed & Designed by **Vicky Featherstone**    Sound Design by **Nick Powell**  
 Lighting Design by **Dexter Tulett**    Assistant Director **Ayo Jones**

From spiritual breakthrough to celebrity breakdown; from Asian ladies lunching to hanging with the homies; from giant chickens to lost boys; from company loyalty to singing Divas; from bombs ticking to biological clocks racing...

...an evening of life-enhancing theatre by new voices with something to say.

In June 2000, Paines Plough and the West Yorkshire Playhouse commissioned ten Black and Asian writers from Leeds, Sheffield, Huddersfield, Bradford & York to write short plays for England's one and only cross-regional theatre writing venture.

The result is **TICKET TO WRITE**.

ic

All rights to the relevant Individuals /Artists/and Companies/ remain with aforementioned and will be removed at request.

### **Sohail Khan. Commentary**

Notes to Pitch the Lie

Pitch the lie was a ten minute short play that was commissioned along with nine other ten minute plays by Paines Plough the new Theatre Writing Company

Pitch the lie was my first Commission it was a rather interesting process working on it and looking at the combined and individual faces of all the assorted personalities involved.

I enjoyed writing the script and as for the contents the major issues and themes that have vexed and exercised me still evolve around identity /politics and the uses and abuses of the individual in their relationship to the culture they inhabit.

(No change there then)

The draft of the play below is the first of it with penciled in corrections before the Director got her mitts on it and cut out the emotive character directions. Its pretty much the same in dialogue as the final version which now exists somewhere on my defunct Mac SE the varied archives or past bins of other players in the project and also I am reliably informed the catacombs of the British library, perhaps.

The Director was Vicky Featherstone of Paines Plough

The Cast was: Alan Anwar – Anthony Barclay

Sindy –Ashley Miller

The Tour Guide-Archie Panjabi

Ticket to write opened at the West Yorkshire playhouse summer 2000 and toured the country

PITCH THE LIE . 5"H A^O iTO^

BY SOHA1L KHAN v

**FIRST DRAFT**

All action is set in the interior of a **deserted** Native **American tourist teepee** on the border of the **Nevada- Arizona** desert.

**Darkness, the sound of a** helicopter passing over head the noise of **its engine** Recedes. A cone of light fades up **illuminating** a circular area **in** which dead center stands Alan **Anwar**. **Frozen in a celebrity** pose arms held **wide** a shit eating grin on his face. His look is of some one who, until very recently **was** dressed and groomed in hyper fashionable style. Now his **fine** clothes are ragged and stained **and** coated with the same **sand** that is strewn **over the** Teepee floor.

Alan drops pose his smile still searing the audience.

Alan speaks with a neutral **clean** cut mid **Atlantic accent less** accent, of arelaxed genial **host-.....**

**ALAN:** .....**And Tonto** turns to the lone ranger and says."what do mean..... **'we'** **Whitey**.

*Alan responds to invisible laughter with his smile and a calming **gesture of the hands to queten the 'audience'***

ALAN: Well ladies and gentlemen, your royal highness.... **Mr.** president ( Nods towards **thier'Directions**)..... its been wonderful sharing this evening with you. In such a **bountiful** place with such a rich history. No seriously( Responding to **invisible** laughter) lets not go done that road again ( Changes his accent to **asain Apo** from **simpsons** accent)

**Iv'e** almost gotten to be liking it here in 'States. Changes back to his previous accent).....espically after that little **misunderstanding** with customs got cleared up ( **sniff,s** wipes his nose and winks at audience) Only kidding your Highness, I'll sort you out later round back (leers for a second then winks again) .....Any road (Changes **to** broad Yorkshire) Me **old mam 'ud** be proud of **me**. Standing here today. (Yorkshire accent dropping away) **Thats** a Yorkshire accent by the way for All our **amerian** cousins Yorkshire, **Ohio^".?.. Dont** worry (giving thumbs up to imaginary **T.V** camera) that one **was** for **the** folks back home. Only kidding boys **and** girls..... (Becomes **politiacian serois**) No...»..No.....**This** time I Am **serious** serious.. **I've ^ long-You've** been a **lovly**

audience and it Has been great. But before I go All of you here will of course know about my appointment as goodwill ambassador to the U.N. leaving the world of show biz for the world, Qf^ good works. But dont ya worry ill be back. I would like to thank you (Gesture^)'Mr President for your advice and assistance. ( adopting a politicians stiye a&ain^ •^ believe that it is time to put something back that the 'One World' program will not only bring the nations of the first to&ether but break the barriers between the devloping and the third.....,—..

Freeze for a moment Ills voice becomes blank, neutral

Bollocks.....Bullshit.....

are you happy to eat this?Are you?

*Change of voice*

Ive got my nine in ma pocket its like a harden rocket.....

Change

well then Gezzer why dont you take your Rocket out of your pocket and stick it were the sun don't shine.....

he begins to walk in tight circle repeating as he does)

ALAN: cliche cliche

cliche,

*he stops to face the audience, all cliché'*

Alan ran across sea across the

desert you fled for from the city of light.

*He points out to the audience snaps back into celebrity mode*

ALAN:let me share with you what brought me here ladies and gentlemen, let

me pitch this to you. like they do in the industry.

*During the following speech a figure enters to walk slowly through the*

*dark, its attention focused on Alan and the circle of light that he inhabits.*

ALAN: The back of a bus, a little dark boy sitting at the back of a bus. the dusty

red uphostlcrly suggests 20 30 years ago. the little dark boy is staring into

the camera his eyes are wet. what is it that we see in his eyes. ladies and

gentlemen/ pain? supplication ? shame? a suppressed rage amazement even

all these things with no direction that will burn through the years into

hate. We see that the face and hair of the little dark boy is dripping wet

and from our point of view off camera almost in slow motion another

gobbeT of spit hits his face and then another mixing with the

tears



**Alans voice is a venom filled whisper**

ALAN: But that too is a cliché ladies and gentlemen, that image is a cliché because  
Its universal its common.

**The Figure comes to stop just outside the circle of light, its attention is**  
focused on Alan.

ALAN: It is why I'm here Success is the best form of revenge, but you neutered me  
bought me easily took me out fed me up year by year grooming me the  
acceptable face that knew its place I was gutted by you before I even knew  
it Now look at Me (Raises his arms, screams look at me) how else could I be  
here? How else to get to this place/I want me back!

*He is Screaming out into the Audience*

I want what was given back you parasitic bastards I don't want  
to be Robin Williams ! ( by now the force of his tirade has spent itself he is  
on all fours in the dust. sobbing

*The figure take one step through into the circle of light to stand on the  
inside edge. She wears worn jeans, jean jacket, all travel stained by the  
desert on her back is a rucksack. She stays by the edge of the circle of  
light watching Alan sobbing in the dust.*

**Sindy:** All you Gotto do is go outside 'an flap your arms about.  
*Her accent is a parody of a broad Southern Drawl.*

*Alan head snaps around and up to look at her, he gives a high pitched  
shreik and scurries to the opposite end of the Tepee still on his hands and  
knees, he sqats there wide eyed and trembling<£lndy walks to the central  
space he occupied and takes of her backpack, she sits placing it in front of  
her. Alan and the stranger regard each other.*

Sindy: 'Ah said all you gotta do is go.....

**^ALAN:** Quietly at first, then becoming more and more like some deranged  
f screaming cockney.

^A^A^

You what?

You what?

You what?

You what?

YOU WHAT?

Sindy:.....is stand outside and wave your arms about ( Her drawl now **disappears** though the accent is **recognizable** North American it is now educated and relaxed. She **stretches** and yawns as she says) You must of heard them They've been flying all night gathering in the sky like midges search lights stabbing the desert from **Mt Wilson** to lake **Mohave**. They sure are desperate to find **something** or someone

Alan ( Subdued croak) You what?

Sindy: (reaching into her back pack and taking out a steel flask.) I do believe that they are called helicopters.

Alan: Oh.

*Sindy uncorks the flask and takes a drink, she eyes Alan **speculatively**.*

*Alan stands fearful and uncertain he **brushes** himself down, running his - hands over his tattered clothing, **embarrassed**. Sindy gestures with her flask.*

**Sindy:** Drink?

*Alan gathers himself and smiles he becomes his public personality again. He walks towards her hand **outstretched**.*

Alan: **AlanAnwar**.

*He ends up standing over her, his hand outstretched. She stays where she is sitting. There is a **pause** and Sindy places the bottle in his hand.*

Sindy: Sure you are.

*Alan awkwardly takes the bottle and **crouchs** by her but not too near. He necks the water greedily.*

Sindy: Whoa! Whoa! slow down or you will make yourself ill.

*She takes the bottle from him*

Sindy sip it or you will throw up.

He takes the bottle and sips from it, handing it back.

rU Q^c-^ ^o<^

Alan: Erm thanks.....look if you don-t mind.....as you can see i'm going through a bit of a crisis right now.

Sindy: (Dead Pan) 'Oon't say

Alan: Yeah, well what I mean to say is that I'd rather be alone....right now.

Sindy: You want me to go?

Alan: Nothing personal its just that that right now I'm going through a rather difficult.....

Sindy: I've plenty right to be here you know?

-/»4A /di'^

Alan: (like someone being polite at a dinner party) Really?

Sindy: Heres where they did the "Show"( Alan winces *visibly* at the word.

*Sindy stands and w/alks around ALAN he watchs her warily as one would a snake) The dances, the rituals, the hunting and battles( She does gesture for each.)*

Reenactment they called it white folks would come.here in theircars^ and they would Bus the people in from all the different reservations Chemehuevis, Mohave's, Quechans and Hopi bused em in far and wide for the white mans Reenactments ( she marks the words in the air with her hand hand as if mapping out the neon ) 'Native World. 'Genuine Traditional Native Show \* A real mix up'bout as traditional as a Hawaiian shirt made in Algiers and sold in Sydney^ Australia.

Alan: ( Settling himself on the ground) And you?

Sindy: Me?

Alan: Yeah you said( putting on pompus voice) "THE, People" What are you called?

T^r^

Sindy: (With an edge in her voice) You can call Little moon....Coyote barking at the wind.... You can even call me... (she goes to her pack and takes out a bed roll. She is standing over Alan looking down at him.

Poka.....hon.....tas.....so long as you don't call me shit for brains.

Alan: (Rolling away as she thumps the blanket roll down nearly on top of him) Oh Sorrieeeeee! ^ co.»Af ^MVC<C^ ^c<.«^fc

Sindy: (Undoes the roll and looks at him) My names Sindy.



C ^^ C^{\}

Alan: (Amused) *Sindy/Little sindy* who goes to *the maLL*

Sindy: You got a problem with that?

Alan: ( Grinning )Someone sure had a *sence* of humour.

Sindy: (Sits on the blanket facing him, she becomes calm *neutrel* piercing)

It all masks Alan, Right now I could be anyone, anything. So could you apart from what. see. *Whats* behind your mask Alan where are you from?

Do you know? do you care? Why are you here ?

^^u5^

Alan: (Jutting his face close to hers) I'm/here *becuase* there was no where else for me to go. (He leans *baA*) *fto^ ifyou^don't mind* I'm rather tired> I'm going over there to crash out (Gesture to far corner of the Tepee, he turns to stand and go.)

4Pr^(: •

Sindy: (Grabs his Hand and pulls him down to face her again.) No Alan, I meant why are you *here!*. ( She thumps her on the sand floor for emphasis scooping up a handful she holds it up in front of his eyes letting it trickle out) I mean why are you here as opposed to anywhere else? ^\ Right here and right now.

Alan: ( He becomes entranced) I ran from the city of light.

Sindy: You ran through the desert.....

Alan: To lose *myself*.....to find myself..... *(The sound of a helicopter passing over head. Alan looks up, he is terrified. He breaks contact with Sindy)*

ALAN: I don't need this *bollocks*.( He knocks her hand away and walks ^ some paces downstage. Sindy remains where she is watching him)

A-f ^ . , . , , ,  
i ' i

Sindy (Change of accent) Your *between* a rock and a hard place right now. ( Her voice softens) Your in limbo now Alan. You've run out of choices. What brought you here?

Alan: (*m* a Dream like state) I ran from the city of light. From all the thing I wanted to be.....*all* the things I worked hard to be.

*Sindy stands she if offset stage left to Alan, as she stands she pulls a hunting knife from her boot. She remains where she is eyes boring into the back of Alans head. The knife strong in her right hand.*

Sindy: *To* be what Alan?

**Alan:** To be the image the in thing. Success is the best form of revenge. I

would of been the in thing. The image I was ready.,.1 was one step from the wings into the world, the world of power. All the years and they were waiting across the footlights waiting for me. Offering it to me. I would of had the power ( His right and makes an ugly claw like gesture) No, I would of been the power.

Sindy: Was it what you wanted.

Alan: I eat shit to get to there. It didn't happen over night you know.

Sindy: And you. I'm sure did a lot of shitTing on your way up Alan. But that doesn't answer the question what made you run?

, h' - .1 ij ^f O^  
/• i v>

Alan: ( Loudly )Look upon the shitting as evolution in action. Eat shit to shit shit. ( Softly) But to answer your question Sindy I saw myself. Thats all, waiting to go on in the darkness..... I saw myself.

Sindy:(As if talking to a child.) WJiat did you see Alan?

^f^ff^r Cj^^

Alan: know-all these years there was this feeling. Something turning, burrowing in my head.....my mind (He brings the his right hand 'claw\*' to his head digging it into his scalp) And when I saw myself the feeling exploded and I was out side my body looking at myself. A lizard....A lizard dressed in a gold lame suit with dead eyes( His voice becomes terrified and high pitched as if he has no control of the words that are coming from his mouth.) and L.....went.....went into its dead eyes and it was like I was travelling down this tunnel..... and -this tunnel ,it was the years of my^ life I was travelling back to the moment.

Sindy: And the moment was?

Alan: The moment that made me. That put me in the wings..... The moment was the back of bus.

Sindy: A school bus wth dusty red upholstery.

Alan: And my vision jumped out of the wide wet eyes of a little dark boy.

Dripping with spit.....the spit mixing with tears.....andloqkmg up and-ro^k ^c ,» -^ the spitleirciing in slow motion to hit his/my face.....and),u?e<^s^ptt 'is ^'; -^coming ou^pf the mouth of a lizard in a gold lame siut.....and that is why I ran.  
Sindy: And now?

Alan: I don't know..... (Luaghs)I broke myself Sindy. ^^ ^ ^ ^ + lr>r fiv< ^ r

Sindy ( Looks at the watch on her left hand) *fcnuiSlil Ja^t-totTn*.....a few minutes another helicopter will be due..... ( *Her draw^L . returns*) All you *gottodo*.....

Alan: .....is step outside. We can *rebiuld* you we have the technology, yeah I know.

Sindy: (Softly) *IS Thats-whatyou* want. Your still important to them Alan, your their investment. There *always* a price no matter which road YOU TAKE. WHAT WILL YOU DO.

*j* ALAN: I don't know. stay *here GO HOME ^* I can't go back I know *thaTdE^* road is a *|^||€^ |-*

*Sindy with a fliud movement sheaths her knife and covers her boot top with the turn up of her jean leg.*

Sindy: *Thats* just as well then.

Alan: ( *Turning to face her and circling closer towards her*) So who are you? then? *I* mean really who are you?

**Sindy: Does it matter?**

Alan: ( *Smiling*)' I'd like to know ? «

Sindy: Maybe this is all a dream. Maybe the water I gave you was spiked. you see what you need to see *espically* out here.....Some folks speak of a lady of the winds.(*She wanders the desert searching for the soul* of her

*^.*  
is take  
lost love. *Sometimes* takes human form and comes to the aid of mortals who are in distress.

Alan : ( *Stopping in his tracks*) Is that you then?

*Sindy:* (Packing her ruck sack) No I just made that story up.( *She give him an grin*)

Alan: I never did like magic realism

*Sind^* Honey, right now its the only realism you got. *SO* you better get used to it..'  
*y*

Alan: (They are facing each other now) Your leaving.

Sindy: Yup....time to go.

Alan: Can I...?

Sindy: No..... I like you Alan..... otherwise I **would'nt** of stopped off in the first place (*Alan goes to ask A question she places her finger on his lips*)  
*Uh huh , no more questions Alan believe what you need to believe.*

Alan. (Takes her hand away but keeps hold of it) So I'm stuck with myself. By myself.

Sindy: You keep running or you stay still your still stuck with you

( Takes

*his face in both her hands*) What do you want Alan? What do you want to be?

Alan: I don't know. (*The distant sound of a helicopter engino \ \j 0^ . k^O^^*

Sindy: (*Sighs and looks heavenward as if breaking all the rules*) Then kiss me you crazy fool. Its time for **youft^Cultural** exchange.

Black out.

*Lights up. The stage is as before. In the Teepee circle of light sits a figure at the far upstage **ellipse** half in half out of the light. **Sindys** blanket role is spread in front of him on which there are a number of objects.*

*The tour **giude** enters stage right. She is speaking over her shoulder to a invisible herd of tourists she takes up a position down stage left of the circle of light. The invisible herd of tourists become our audience, whom she addresses with bored **comptency** of the professional.*

TOUR GUIDE: .....Lastly ladies and gentlemen we come to the Performance **Teppee** of "Native World" This **was** centre of the site and here **tto-fiyst** people were

**e^tr<^^**

paid. to perform **somewhat** shabby reconstructions of **th^re** rituals and **Lifestyle**. The **theme park** fell into decline in the 70's due to rerouting of a major highway the **ongoing development** of urban resorts and better economic **opportunity's** for the **nah^e'^eople**. The site was abandoned by the mid eighties and isolated as it is in the the desert became a ghost town the **source** for **storys**, of strange legends, happenings and **visitations** no doubt fuelled by **Its proximity** to area 51. Here ( She gestures) is a living /**^example?** Called the "Hermit" by the locals he was discovered living here by a **ParkRanger** who was conducting a survey into heritage sites for the **Ministry** of the Interior at the turn of the century. No one knows who he

is and though he claims no lineage he has been adopted by a number of tribes in both States (*Making a herding gesture towards the figure*) He supplements his meager income by making craft goods from found objects in the desert which you are free to buy. We would ask you however to refrain from asking prying questions, taking picture or haggling over the price of his goods out of respect for his culture.

nativ

Black out

End

< ^! r-f^ k CAI^VA^  
/ " ' " • f  
i<'>" •  
r  
^

|^