

RACHEL MARS

GREG WOHEAD

STORY #1



Story #1 is a reckless, reflective, live thinking-through of how and why we construct narrative.

As their first collaboration, this project was an invitation Greg and Rachel made to themselves to create something very unlike what they'd tackled previously in their solo work. Despite having made a lot of contemporary performance that dispenses with narrative, they realised neither had much basic experience of committing to constructing a story from start to finish, and so that provocation was ticklish. Sometimes the traditional is abandoned for so long it becomes alternative again.

"Imagine a bullfight without the bull: it would be a set of aesthetic manoeuvres, pretty twirls and pirouettes and so on – but there'd be no danger. The bull, crucially, brings danger to the party... that's what the real is: the tip of the bull's horn."

Tom McCarthy

Greg and Rachel are interested in exploring where danger can poke through the narrative and intersect with the 'real'. In TV everything is behind a screen. In performance where we acknowledge from the top that we are all in a room together, the 'realness' of that—the real-time shifting boundaries of that contract—presents dangers far aside from content.

Story #1 consists of three parts.

Part 1:

The audience files into the theatre and sits down. Once they're settled, a screen slowly lowers down in front of them. The lights go down and an episode of the TV show *Come Dine With Me** starts to play.

The episode takes place in East Dorset and follows real people Gary, Natalie, Pauline and Phillip as they take turns hosting competitive dinner parties over the course of a week. The audience watches the full 47-minute episode.

Part 2:

Greg and Rachel enter the stage and sit at microphones. They take turns reading fan fiction they have collaboratively written about the *Come Dine With Me* contestants, Gary, Natalie, Pauline and Phillip.

Through the stories, Greg and Rachel take what we have learned about these 'characters' in the *Come Dine With Me* episode and indulge in all the pleasures, tropes and tools of fan fiction: wish fulfillment, erotic fantasy, self-insertion, queer subversion, schadenfreude and lighthearted fun.

In the fictional stories, Natalie rides to her death on a dirt bike, Gary takes part in an MMF threesome, Phillip enters a gore-loaded nightmare and Pauline—an alien—must reluctantly return to her home planet.

Part 3:

Greg and Rachel read out email correspondence in which they invite each of the four contestants to participate in the current performance of **Story #1**. The correspondence culminates with an explanation via email to Gary which confronts the audience with the reality that he might possibly be waiting just offstage.

Through this performance, Greg and Rachel hope uncover the radical possibilities of narrative; to confront how we can view a 'real' life in a framed TV context that molds people into characters, to deliberately fictionalize that life for the audience's (and our own) pleasure and finally to consider how the real possibility of that person's physical presence might feel dangerous as a result.

Note: This performance contains explicit sexual content and images and is therefore recommended for ages 18+.

**Come Dine With Me* is a British TV show featuring 4 amateur contestants who take turns hosting dinner parties in their own homes over one week. After each dinner party, the guests secretly rate the host, and at the end of the week the contestant with the highest rating wins a cash prize of £1,000. The show is now in its 34th series and the format has been taken up by broadcasters in 33 countries.



An Ovalhouse Seed Commission

Story #1 trailer: <https://vimeo.com/150737516>

Story #1 (full length; password **comedine**): <https://vimeo.com/150926882>

Workshops are available in conjunction with **Story #1**. Please contact Rachel (rachel@rachelmars.org) or Greg (greg@gregwohead.com) for details.



“Story #1 ranks as one of the truly brilliant, merciless and oddly narratively satisfying things I've encountered on stage.”

Deborah Pearson
Co-Director, Forest Fringe

"A funny and twisted exploration of our collective obsession with sensation, gore, genre and a damn good story. “

Aaron Wright
Artistic Director, Fierce Festival

“Story #1 is like a live grenade thrown at television: a thrilling exploration of truth, fiction and the strange space between. Funny, tender, shocking and sly, it’s an adventure in being an audience that asks the only real question: what happens next?”

Jonathan Wakeham
Screenwriter



Basic Technical Requirements

SPACE

- End on theatre space

EQUIPMENT

- Provided by venue: 1 projector with VGA hook up, 2 chairs, 2 microphones with stands
- Provided by artists: 1 laptop to operate projections and sound.

LIGHTING AND SOUND

- Lighting: basic cover with three specials
- Sound: PA with the ability to hook up to laptop
- Note: Lighting and sound must be operated by the performers onstage

PERSONNEL

- 2 performers
- Provided by venue: 1 technician to assist with get in, programming cues and get out

RUNNING TIME

- 120 minutes

ARTIST PROFILES

Rachel Mars is a performance maker borrowing from theatre, live art and comedy. She has performed across the UK, including at the South Bank Centre, Barbican and Summerhall. Most recently she has been commissioned by Royal Court Theatre, Fuel Theatre, Ovalhouse London and Wellcome Trust, and undertaken residencies at The Orchard Project and Asylum, New York; Playwrights' Workshop, Montreal and Cove Park, UK. She has shown work at festivals internationally including at WOW, London; Wildside, Montreal and Hot!, NYC.

She works alone and in collaboration with a number of other independent theatre makers. Rachel is a regular on BBC Radio's 'Pause for Thought' and has written for The Stage, The Guardian and The Jewish Chronicle.

For more information on Rachel and her work, visit rachelmars.org.

'a very clever piece of work... it has the rolling humour and vibrancy of a stand-up act, but it is so much more – a beautifully crafted and brilliantly performed solo theatre piece'

Total Theatre on *The Way You Tell Them*

'Equal parts hilarious and heartbreaking, a brilliant dissection of the problematic legacy of Thatcher. A simultaneous punch to the guts and the funny bone.'

★★★★ Exeunt on *The Lady's Not For Walking Like An Egyptian*

Greg Wohead is a UK-based writer, performer and live artist originally from Texas. He makes theatre performances, one-to-one pieces and audio work. He has shown and developed new work in the UK and internationally at places like Battersea Arts Centre, Bristol Old Vic Ferment, MC (Amsterdam), Orchard Project (New York), MAKE (Ireland), Bios (Athens), LAX Festival (Los Angeles), Ovalhouse, Mayfest, Shoreditch Town Hall, Forest Fringe and The Yard, where he is an Artistic Associate.

His most recent critically acclaimed solo performance, *The Ted Bundy Project*, has toured to 13 cities nationally and internationally. In 2014 he was nominated for a Total Theatre Award at the Edinburgh Fringe for *Hurtling*, an outdoor performance for one.

For more information on Greg and his work, visit gregwohead.com.

"This difficult, slippery show makes us face up to our morbid fascination... not to be missed."

★★★★ Lyn Gardner, The Guardian on *The Ted Bundy Project*

"After the small but exquisite experience of Greg Wohead's headphone piece, I walked the streets of Edinburgh with heart thumping and eyes stinging."

Catherine Love, Exeunt on *Hurtling*

CONTACT INFORMATION

For *Story #1* information and bookings:

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