



PUNCH is dedicated to the memory of James Hodgkinson and all victims of one-punch. James dedicated his life to the helping and healing of others. His 28 years were a testament to his outlook and values - a volunteer, a mentor, a paramedic. He was loved by his family and friends, and gave love in return.

Theatre can and should be a restorative space of empathy, and increased understanding. We hope to honour and do justice to the man James was.

James Graham

IN REHEARSAL



MY SON'S KILLER AND ME: GRIEF, PAIN AND THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS AFTER A ONE-PUNCH DEATH

Michael Segalov

When **Jacob Dunne** hit **James Hodgkinson**, he had no idea the punch would kill him. He recounts how his victim's mother, **Joan**, helped him, while she reveals why she confronted him

JACOB'S STORY:

'The power shifted in our first meeting. Joan and her family were no longer victims, faceless and silent'

I was released from prison on New Year's Eve 2012. I came out with more complex needs than I had before going in: lower self-esteem, fewer aspirations, less optimistic about the future. I was angry at myself and others. I had none of the skills required to communicate, be vulnerable or support myself. I was destined to join the 46% of people in England and Wales who reoffend within their first year post-prison. I was 20 years old with no fixed address, no qualifications or work experience and manslaughter on my criminal record.

It happened in July 2011, when I was 19. It was Saturday night and I was in Nottingham city centre after a day of drugs and drinking celebrating a friend's birthday. I got a call around 1am from a friend – it was kicking off a few streets away. Turns out, it was my friends who were looking for trouble. I should have established the facts or tried to de-escalate. I didn't. I arrived, without thinking, and threw a single punch. The person I hit fell to the ground as I ran away. A month later, the police turned up at my mum's house. I was arrested on suspicion of murder: the man I'd hit had died nine days later.

After serving 14 months, I was out. Not long after, my probation officer got in touch, asking if I'd heard of restorative justice: my victim's parents wanted to ask me questions. Questions only I had the answers to. They wanted to express the harm I had caused and to see me acknowledge the consequences of my actions.

I learned that restorative justice is a voluntary process and aims to find ways to repair the harm caused and seek a less harmful way forward. The prospect of it floored me. It's far easier to live in ignorance than to know the damage you've done. I needed some time to think, before I realised it was the least I could do for them.

All contact was through a facilitator at first. I was told the questions they wanted me to answer. Mostly, they wanted to know why I'd thrown the punch. I was ashamed of the answers I had to offer. There was no reason. There's never an excuse to punch someone, but I didn't even have a poor one to give. I couldn't even say I was protecting my friends, something I'd believed for a while. I had to be honest: I didn't ask any questions about what was happening. I was just showing off, trying to impress my mates. That's the thing about restorative justice: it's only permitted to proceed once you've taken accountability for your actions.

I was surprised when they started to ask questions about me and my background. It didn't cross my mind that they might be interested in who I was. They wanted to know about my childhood, my family and the community I grew up

in. They wanted to get a sense of me: raised in Nottingham by a single mum who did her best by us. How I struggled at school, with ADHD and all sorts of labels, then started getting into trouble as a teenager: fighting first, then selling drugs. About how Mum had battled with alcoholism. She was functioning until I went into custody, then it got out of control and she lost her house and job.

Learning about Joan, her son James and their family was humanising. It cut through the labels we use to define each other. I saw them and they saw me. The ignorance had gone and so had the (relative) bliss. Telling them about myself was one thing. But then they asked me what I wanted to do with my life... I never expected it. After what I'd done, for them to show signs of care and compassion? It blew me away. I started to realise that I too had needs that I'd been neglecting. That if I was to escape the trajectory my life was taking, I needed to show an interest in myself, just like these strangers were taking an interest in me. I could tell it was important to Joan that I'd learn from what they – what we – had been through, and not make the same mistakes again.

I wrote them a letter: I'm always reluctant to say sorry to you, why would you believe me? But I'm going to show you, through my actions.

I committed there and then to changing. I didn't know what I'd do, but I knew I'd do something. And I did. I spoke to my probation officer and came up with a plan to get back into education. I started college in September 2013, and got A*s in some of my GCSE courses. I'd never been made to believe I could amount to anything. All of a sudden there were new opportunities open to me.

Joan encouraged me to keep going. I completed a social sciences access course. Within two years, I was eligible to go to university. But systems aren't designed for rehabilitation. The universities I applied to rejected me, deeming me a risk. I had to fight, legally, to access higher education. Lots was going on in my life then: my mum died; I became a carer for my teenage brother who moved in with me. I enrolled at university to study criminology. It was then that Joan suggested we meet face-to-face.

A neutral space was chosen in Stowmarket, Suffolk, a place neither of us had a connection to. I arrived first and was put in a holding room. I sat there waiting for them to appear.

Beyond the door, I could hear the sound of their arrival; muffled speaking. A circle of chairs were laid out for us. The golden rule of restorative justice is that there will be no surprises – it's something I had to reiterate to James Graham when his play about our story, *Punch*, was being developed. A piece of theatre requires drama, but in reality, every detail is planned out to ensure there isn't a single unknown. Everyone involved knows what to expect. Each possible scenario is pre-arranged.

Still, that's not to say as I waited to be called through, I wasn't bricking it. I was overwhelmed by nerves and fear. Waiting to walk into a room to meet the parents of a man I killed. I was taken from my room, walked up a flight of stairs and to a door. I stood, staring at the handle. My life had changed so much in the two and a half years since my release from prison. And here I was, preparing to be confronted by my crime all over again. Stepping inside took courage. It would have been far easier to turn around and walk away. Then we started talking. What I said is a total blur – I've no recollection. I only remember Joan's face as she told me how much she misses James.

The power shifted in that meeting. They were no longer victims, faceless and silent. To them, I ceased being a terrifying teenage mugshot, but a young man crying in the corner. Perpetrators of crime have the right in our justice system to remain silent, but victims of crime all too often don't know they have a right to speak and have a voice. Instead, they're told if the crime is solved, and punishment dished out, that justice has been delivered. It doesn't always work that way.

At the end of the meeting we agreed a contract for the next steps. One of their requests was that something positive come from our coming together. They wanted to do some campaigning and education around one-punch deaths. I said yes. That was 2015. We've been working together on that and more for the past 10 years.

It gives me purpose, but it's complicated. I've become defined by the worst thing I ever did, the worst choice I ever made. Now, that's what I'm known best for – and always will be. I've written a book, started a podcast called *Right From Wrong*, and now there's the play, alongside all my campaigning work. I have to live with that guilt every day, I cannot hide from it. The only reason I'm able to is because the people who I harmed the most judge me the least. That's

what I hold on to when hate is directed my way: "You're a monster"; "You're a killer"; "You don't deserve a second chance and should be rotting in prison."

I often think about what might have happened if I'd never met Joan. My inner optimist likes to think I might have sorted myself out: Mum had instilled in me a sense of right from wrong. But really, I don't think I'd have ever learned to be vulnerable. I'm not sure I'd ever have become a member of society, instead remaining marginalised and angry, unable to contribute or communicate.

Life was simpler before I knew Joan and who James was. It was easier to hide behind that unknown. Now I know their pain. I'll never be able to shy away from it. I can try to hold my head high and make the best of the circumstances, but it doesn't make forgiving myself any easier.

Some people say it was a "tragic accident," what happened that night. That wording was even in the script for *Punch* at one stage in its development. Me, Joan and James's father David all pointed out the problem in this framing: you can't accidentally throw a punch. It wasn't an accident – and I have to live with that forever, even if I had no intention to cause the harm I did. We all have to live with shame and pain, that's human. The challenge is whether we turn it into something meaningful.

JOAN'S STORY: **'I started to get a vague feel for this boy who'd killed my James – that there was good in him'**

Jacob served just 14 months in prison for killing my son, James. He was 28 years old when he was taken from us. Jacob had been sentenced to four years for the one-punch killing. A year was taken off for his guilty plea, as was a further six months as Jacob was under 21. I felt my son's life was worth more than a year and a bit. I was bitter and in pain; angry at the justice system.

The judge delivered that sentence around the same time as the 2011 riots that swept across the country. I watched on

as people were getting longer for stealing televisions and trainers than my son's killer got for taking a life. Someone got six months for stealing £3.50 worth of water.

Our family tried to appeal Jacob's sentence. We lost. Jacob had pleaded guilty to manslaughter. There'd been no cross-examination, no evidence presented, no trial. David and I were left with countless questions: how had our son ended up dead that night? Was there some trivial trigger? Had he knocked someone's pint over? I needed to know what had happened – if there was a reason he'd hit James. I could never make sense of what had happened. Nobody had ever been able to tell me why. And, I needed to know whether Jacob was going to do this again, if another family was going to be put through the devastating pain we'd suffered.

28-year-old trainee paramedic, James Hodgkinson, was killed in 2011 from a single punch to his head. He had been out in Nottingham with his father, brother and three friends after watching a cricket match. His attacker, Jacob Dunne, pleaded guilty and served 13 months in prison for manslaughter. Later James's mother, Joan Scourfield, met Jacob through restorative justice.

The only way I might get answers, I was told, was through restorative justice. I was put in touch with an organisation, Remedi. Initially, I think, the caseworkers were scoping us out, ascertaining intentions. They wanted to be sure we weren't simply looking for a way to express our anger or an opportunity to take revenge on the person who'd caused us so much harm. Jacob had agreed to participate, to respond to my questions. Now, all involved wanted to ensure that if we proceeded, we'd be safe.

I had no intention of meeting him. At first, we'd communicate through a facilitator, who acted as an intermediary. If we'd asked a question, she'd deliver not just Jacob's reply, but how he'd articulated himself. Jacob looked very sheepish, we were told, when stating there'd been no reason why that fatal punch was thrown in my son's direction and that Jacob looked concerned, distraught and upset as he spoke. I started to get a vague feel for this boy who'd killed my James – that there was good in him. It gave me some hope that another tragedy might be avoidable.

We corresponded in this way for a couple of years, starting soon after his release. I asked Jacob to look at his life, what



Joan Scourfield and Jacob Dunne
Fabio De Paola/The Observer Archive

he had planned for his future. We were told he was surprised – shocked, even – that we were interested in the direction his path took next. I firmly felt he had to do something, to make something of himself. He'd dropped out of school at 14. His life was spiralling.

It was at that time I realised that fighting to see Jacob locked up for longer would have served nobody. Him sitting in prison wouldn't bring my James back and prison had done no good to support or rehabilitate Jacob. I had to consider my own health and future, too. There was no purpose, I kept thinking, in spending the rest of my life consumed by misery and bitterness.

Three years after we were first in touch, in 2015 we arranged to meet in person. It had been a tough time for Jacob. Soon after he'd done his GCSEs, his mum died. Other relatives, too. It gave him, I think, a greater understanding of loss. He persevered with a university-access course. I made sure to keep on checking his progress. I wanted to offer him some guardianship, for him to know there was someone invested in him, someone who cared.

It's fair to say that the first face-to-face meeting was harder for Jacob than for me and David. We were sitting in a room

waiting. The facilitators were there. Victim support, too. Then he walked in. It must have felt like walking into the lion's den. Before I would hear from him, however, I needed Jacob to listen. I needed him to learn about James: the boy he was; the boy we lost.

James was an adventurous boy, on the cusp of qualifying as a paramedic. We raised him in Suffolk and he'd recently moved to London for his career. He helped mentor children who didn't have families, and volunteered at Childline. He also drove me crazy with his adrenaline-hunting: skiing, jumping out of helicopters, bungee jumping in a sleeping bag. Often for charity.

Whenever he'd go on one of these trips, I'd hug him tightly, say a big goodbye, then endlessly worry. Then this one Saturday in July 2011, James told me he was off to see the cricket in Nottingham with his dad and brother. I thought nothing of it. They went to their match on the Saturday. Before I retired I was a nurse and I worked a shift that Saturday night.

Sunday morning, I was at home when I got the call: James had been attacked hours earlier and hadn't regained consciousness. My other son had gone to ask for James's

sunglasses back after one of Jacob's friends had taken them. Those lads were angling for a fight. After James was punched, his father chased after Jacob, but he got away. James was put into an ambulance, vomiting. By morning, he was being taken for scans, with a suspected brain injury.

My whole world was upside down. I packed a bag and my sister picked me up – I was in no fit state to drive. James was in surgery by the time I arrived at the hospital. Immediately afterwards, he was put into critical care. For nine days I sat with him. At first, it looked hopeful. The doctors started to bring James round, but something was wrong. His brain was swelling.

More emergency surgery. Afterwards, the medics said the signs were positive. Within a few days, though, he was failing. In the last 24 hours, he started deteriorating quickly. In the end I asked for the life support machine to be switched off.

It was that, or watch him deteriorate entirely over another 24 or 48 hours. The choice was impossibly hard. But it was for James – he wasn't going to get any better. We were watching him fade. Why put him through more pain? On 9 August, James died.

I have to live with all these memories. This, and so much more, we told Jacob in that room in Stowmarket. I needed him to know.

There were strict parameters to our relationship for a while, out of necessity. These mediated meetings, then some direct emails. I knew I wanted the best for Jacob, but it was hard to see him, honestly. It stirred up so many emotions. I was still grieving – it would open up new wounds.

Over time, though, we both realised we wanted to keep in touch in a way that felt more natural. More human. At first, he'd just send life updates and ask how we were doing, but then we started doing work together – speaking at events. We both do talks in prison and in schools, and lots with the Forgiveness Project. My message is this: if you've done something wrong, there's always a way to change course.

We go out for meals and coffees now. We talk about what we can do next to spread the word about restorative justice. That message is stronger when we're together. We also have a relationship – a friendship, I suppose. I often meet people now in similar situations to mine and my family's all those

years ago, victims and their families who feel our criminal justice system has been too soft on their perpetrator. I never blame them, tell them they're wrong or pass judgment. I've been there myself – restorative justice isn't for everybody. And, had Jacob been a different person, I may well have stayed feeling that way for the rest of my life. But my advice is always the same: do what feels right, yes, but if you can, give the process a try.

It's strange. Often I find I get more trolls, more abuse, from people on the internet than Jacob. People post, "Why didn't I meet him and punch his lights out?" Or, "This is sick; she's trying to replace her son?" They just don't understand.

I'd have remained very bitter if we'd never started this process. I'd have spent the rest of my life feeling a failure – like I'd never got justice for James. But I don't feel that way now. My son had a strong sense of right and wrong. He was empathetic and generous. He'd have wanted us to make something good from the tragedy – which we've done.

Jacob has written his book. Now there's the play. Each time, it brings things back. When the play was on in Nottingham, I went four times, for different reasons. I feel the daggers through my heart each time. But I need to be there through it all to make sure James is portrayed correctly. He's not here to speak for himself.

I'm in no doubt that restorative justice did more good than prison did for Jacob. Everything that he's done since is of far more value – to himself, to us and society – than him being locked up in a cell. Still, I see the pain he's in. Jacob has to learn to let go of what he's done. Especially now that he's a father: you can't begin to understand what it might be like to lose a child until you've got one of your own. Seeing his own son grow, Jacob sees what he took from me.

I've said this to Jacob: I can never forgive him for killing my son. He did and he can't change that, and I can't either, no matter what. He'll always be the boy who did that to us. But I forgive him for throwing the punch; for what he intended to do. I know now, in my heart, he didn't mean for what happened to happen. He didn't want to kill James. And knowing that helps. It offers both of us a way forward.

IN REHEARSAL





NOTTINGHAM PLAYHOUSE

in association with

KPPL PRODUCTIONS

MARK GORDON PICTURES

EILENE DAVIDSON PRODUCTIONS

present

PUNCH

BY **JAMES GRAHAM**

BASED ON THE BOOK *RIGHT FROM WRONG* BY
JACOB DUNNE

CAST

(IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER)

Raf/DS Villers/Sam **ELAN BUTLER**

David/Derek/Raf's Dad **MATTHEW FLYNN**

Clare/Nicola **GRACE HODGETT YOUNG**

Jacob **JACK JAMES RYAN**

Wendy/Mum/Sandra **LAURA TEBBUTT**

Joan/Nan **FINTY WILLIAMS**

THANKS

Derbyshire Youth Justice Team, The Forgiveness Project,
Nottinghamshire Probation Services, NTU, The Pythian Club,
Remedi and Second Chance Learning.

SUPPLIERS

Sound - Autograph

Lighting - Encore

Sponsored by



CREATIVE AND PRODUCTION TEAM

Writer	JAMES GRAHAM
Director	ADAM PENFORD
Production Designer	ANNA FLEISCHLE
Lighting Designer	ROBBIE BUTLER
Sound Designer and Composer	ALEXANDRA FAYE BRAITHWAITE
Movement Director	LEANNE PINDER
Casting Director	CHRISTOPHER WORRALL CDG
Voice and Dialect Coach	ANITA GILBERT
Associate Director	OMAR KHAN
Associate Designer	TALLULAH CASKEY
Associate Lighting Designer	CHARLOTTE BURTON
Associate Sound Designer and Composer	MATTHEW TUCKEY
Associate Movement Director	HANNAH FAIRCLOUGH
Deputy Stage Manager	AMY GELNAR
Technical Assistant Stage Manager	THEO CORRANCE
BSL Consultant	EMILY HOWLETT
BSL Interpreter	LAURA GOULDEN
Lighting Programmer	STANLEY OLDEN
Production Electrician	CHARLIE HICKEY
Talking Circle Designer	IMOGEN MELHUISH

Sets, Scenic Art, Costume, Props, Lighting, Sound, Video, Stage Management and Technical are made or managed by the Nottingham Playhouse team, supported by freelancers. Please refer to the staff list.

LENGTH

Approximately 2 hours and 25 minutes, including a 20-minute interval

CAST

ELAN BUTLER

Raf/Sam



Elan is an alum of Nottingham's The Television Workshop, the National Youth Theatre and East 15 Acting School, representing the latter in the Spotlight Prize final in 2021.

Television credits include: *Masters of the Air* (Apple TV); *Funny Woman* (Sky); *Maternal*

(ITV); *Casualty* (BBC).

Theatre credits include: *The Chaos That Has Been and Will No Doubt Return* (Southwark Playhouse/UK tour); *Cliffs the Musical* (The Other Palace); *Fishcat* (Nottingham Playhouse/Warwick Arts Centre); *Con-version* (The Pleasance/The Vaults); *Somebody to Love* (Old Red Lion Theatre); *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (National Youth Theatre).

MATTHEW FLYNN

David/Tony/Derek



Matthew trained at the Drama Centre London.

Theatre credits include: *The Winter's Tale*, *The Prince of Homburg*, *Julius Caesar*, *Romeo and Juliet* (Royal Shakespeare Company); *The Interview* (Park Theatre); *Private Peaceful* (Nottingham Playhouse); *Dr Jekyll and Mr*

Hyde, *The Crucible* (Storyhouse Chester); *Agnes Colander* (Ustinov Bath, Jermyn St); *Child of Science* (Bush Theatre); *Wild Honey*, *55 Days* (Hampstead Theatre); *City Stories* (55East59 New York); *I Am a Walrus* (Young Vic); *Children of the Sun*, *War Horse* (National Theatre); *The Winter's Tale*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Rose Rage*, *Henry V*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Twelfth Night* (Propeller, West End, New York and international venues); *Mare Rider* (Arcola); *Henry V*, *Troilus and Cressida* (Globe Theatre); *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Macbeth*, *Mayor of Zalamea* (Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse); *The*

Two Gentlemen of Verona (Northampton); *A View From the Bridge* (ETT); *As You Like It*, *Macbeth*, *How Many Miles to Basra?* (West Yorkshire Playhouse); *1984*, *Julius Caesar* (Royal Exchange Manchester); *The Gentlemen's Tea Drinking Society* (Belfast); *Hangover Square* (Finborough Theatre); *Hamlet* (Bristol Old Vic); *Meat* (Plymouth); *Romeo and Juliet* (Derby Playhouse); *An Ideal Husband* (Gielgud Theatre).

Television credits include: *Say Nothing* (Disney/FX); *Cobra: Rebellion* (Sky); *Finding Alice*, *Coronation Street*, *Emmerdale*, *Innocent*, *Lucan*, *Midsomer Murders*, *Foyle's War*, *After Thomas* (ITV); *Great Expectations* (BBC/FX); *Lawful Killing*, *Casualty*, *Doctors*, *Holby City*, *The Quatermass Experiment* (BBC); *The Passion* (HBO, BBC); *The King Must Die* (Channel 4).

Film credits include: *Femi*, *Sahara*, *Pride*, *A Stitch in Time*, *Franklyn*, *Broken Lines*, *Black Sheep*.

GRACE HODGETT YOUNG

Clare/Nicola



Grace graduated from Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts.

Theatre credits include: *Sunset Boulevard* (Savoy Theatre/St James Theatre – Olivier Award nominee, The Stage Debut Award winner, WhatsOnStage Award winner); *Hadestown* (Lyric

Theatre).

Television credits include: *What It Feels Like for a Girl* (BBC/Hera Pictures).

JACK JAMES RYAN

Jacob



Theatre credits include: *Sing Street* (Lyric Hammersmith); *After Life* (National Theatre); *Sing Yer Heart Out for the Lads* (Chichester Festival Theatre); *Me and My Left Ball* (Seven Dials Playhouse); *On the Mend* (Everyman Theatre Cheltenham).

Television credits include: *Break Clause*, *I Fought the Law*, *Passenger*, *Coronation Street*, *Peck 'Eds*, *Vera*, *Doctors*, *Home Grown*, *Casualty*, *Emmerdale*, *Shakespeare & Hathaway*, *Moving On*.

Film credits include: *Military Wives*, *Life Growing Up*, *Titanic: Birth of a Legend*.

LAURA TEBBUTT

Jacob's Mum/Wendy



Laura trained at the University of Leeds and the Royal Academy of Music, where she was made an Associate in 2018.

Theatre credits include: *Mrs Doubtfire* (Shaftesbury); *School of Rock* (Gillian Lynne); *Into the Woods* (Menier); *Forbidden*

Broadway (Vaudeville); *Kiss Me, Kate* (Royal Albert Hall); *Shoes* (Peacock); *The Wizard of Oz* (London Palladium); *Fiddler on the Roof* (Chichester); *And the World Goes 'Round* (Lyric Theatre, Belfast); *Love Me Tender* (UK tour); *Les Misérables 25th Anniversary Concert* (UK tour and O2 Arena).

Television credits include: *Big Night of Musicals*, *Royal Variety Performance*, *Children in Need*, *The Classical BRIT Awards*.

Radio credits include: *Friday Night Is Music Night*, *Comic Relief's Danceathon*, *Classic Rock Anthems* (all BBC Radio 2).

FINTY WILLIAMS

Joan/Nan



Theatre credits include: *Here & Now - The Steps Musical* (Birmingham Alexandra Theatre/UK tour); *The Baker's Wife* (Menier Chocolate Factory); *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* (National Theatre/West End); *The Key Workers Cycle* (Almeida); *A Pack of Lies*

(Menier Chocolate Factory); *The Night of the Iguana* (West End); *The Divide* (Edinburgh Festival/Old Vic); *Dinner With Friends* (Park Theatre); *The Vote* (Donmar); *The Armour* (Langham/Defibrillator); *Dangerous Corner* (Theatre Royal Windsor/UK tour); *The Lightning Child*, *Macbeth* (Shakespeare's Globe); *Luise Miller* (Donmar); *Twelfth Night* (National Theatre); *Bedlam* (Shakespeare's Globe); *Bedroom Farce* (Rose Theatre, Kingston/West End).

Screen credits include: *Run Away* (Netflix); *The Physician II* (Constantin Film); *The A List* (Netflix); *The Vote* (Donmar/More4); *Doc Martin* (ITV); *Cranford* series 1 and 2 (BBC); *Tales From the Crypt* (HBO); *Six Minutes to Midnight* (Lionsgate); *We Can Be Heroes*; *Delicious*; *The Good Night*; *Ladies in Lavender*; *The Importance of Being Earnest*; *Gosford Park*. She was also the original voice of *Angelina Ballerina*.

CREATIVES

JAMES GRAHAM

Writer

James Graham is a playwright and screenwriter. His Olivier Award-winning play *Dear England*, about Gareth Southgate's transformation of the national team, had a sold-out run at the National in 2023, transferred to the West End and was broadcast on NT Live. An updated version returned to the National Theatre before a national tour last spring, and it is being adapted for television with the BBC. His play *Punch* opened at the Nottingham Playhouse in 2024 to rave reviews and transferred to the Young Vic in March 2025. It was nominated for multiple awards and will return for an extensive UK tour this year. His new play, *Make It Happen*, starring Brian Cox, previewed at Dundee Rep in July 2025, before its world premiere at the Edinburgh International Festival. Other work includes *Tammy Faye*, having originally opened at the Almeida Theatre in 2022, it opened on Broadway in 2024, and *Ink*, originally performed in 2017 at the Almeida Theatre, which then transferred to the West End and Broadway in 2019 where it was nominated for six Tony Awards. James's breakout play *This House* - also at the National Theatre - went on to have an Olivier-nominated sell-out revival in the West End in 2017 and it was chosen by popular vote as the best play of the 2010s for the major theatre publisher Methuen.

JACOB DUNNE

Author of *Right From Wrong*

Jacob Dunne is an author, campaigner, cultural strategist and broadcaster using media, theatre and education to change how society responds to conflict and injustice. At 19, Jacob's life changed forever when a single punch led to the death of James Hodgkinson. After serving time for manslaughter and meeting his victim's parents, Joan and David, he embarked on a journey of personal transformation, working with them to advocate for restorative justice and to promote societal change.

His story inspired *Punch*, developed with playwright James Graham and director Adam Penford from Jacob's book *Right From Wrong*. Jacob has served as creative consultant throughout development.

Jacob co-founded the Common Ground Justice Project, is creative strategist at The Forgiveness Project and patron

of Literacy Volunteers. He delivers restorative training and consultancy for schools and organisations, helping communities embed conflict resolution and relational skills. He holds a first-class honours degree in Criminology and hosts the *Right From Wrong* podcast.

ADAM PENFORD

Director

Adam Penford is Artistic Director at Nottingham Playhouse. The venue has twice been awarded Theatre of the Year at The Stage Awards during his tenure.

He trained at Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts (LIPA).

Nottingham Playhouse credits include: *Punch* (also Young Vic, West End and Broadway), *Dear Evan Hansen* (also UK and Asia tour), *The Clothes They Stood Up In*, *A Christmas Carol* (also Alexandra Palace, Birmingham Rep and worldwide cinema release), *Piaf*, *Bubble*, *Holes* (also UK tour), *An Enemy of the People*, *Coram Boy*, *The Madness of George III* (also NT Live), *Wonderland*, *Dick Whittington*, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *Cinderella*, *Sleeping Beauty*.

National Theatre credits include: *A Small Family Business* (Olivier); Dorfman Opening Gala (Dorfman); *Island* (Cottesloe); Revival Director for *One Man, Two Guvnors* (West End/Broadway/UK and international tour); Associate Director for *National Theatre Live: 50 Years on Stage* (Olivier/BBC Two).

Other directing credits include: *The Sound of Music* (Chichester Festival Theatre); *Committee* (Donmar); *The Boys in the Band* (Vaudeville/Park); *Platinum* (Hampstead); *Unfaithful* (Found 111); *Watership Down* (Watermill); *Deathtrap* (Salisbury Playhouse/UK tour); *Ghost the Musical* (English Theatre, Frankfurt); *Stepping Out* (Salisbury Playhouse); *The Machine Gunners*, *Run!* (Polka).

Assistant/Associate Director credits include: *The Winter's Tale* (Propeller); *The Vagina Monologues* (national tour); *50 Ways to Leave Your Lover* (Bush); *Imagine This* (Royal Plymouth); *Dying for It* (Almeida); *Charley's Aunt* (Oxford Playhouse).

ANNA FLEISCHLE

Production Designer

Anna Fleischle is an Olivier Award-winning and Tony-nominated production set and costume designer.

She was the Creative Director and Production Designer for Lily Allen's *Saturday Night Live* performance and Creative Director and Production Designer for Lily Allen's upcoming *West End Girl* concert and arena tour.

Theatre credits include: *When We Are Married* (Donmar); *Punch* (Nottingham Playhouse/Young Vic/West End/Broadway); *The Constant Wife* (RSC/UK tour); *Hedda* (Theatre Royal Bath); *Make It Happen* (Edinburgh International Festival); *A Face in the Crowd, Nachtland* (Young Vic); *The Collaboration* (Young Vic/Broadway); *Death of a Salesman* (Young Vic/Broadway/West End); *What We Talk About When We Talk About Anne Frank* (Marylebone); *Red Speedo* (Orange Tree); *A Child of Science* (Bristol Old Vic); *The Pillowman* (West End); *Death of a Salesman* (Broadway/West End); *2:22 A Ghost Story* (West End/LA/tour/Melbourne); *Hangmen* (Royal Court/West End/Broadway – Tony Award nominee 2022, winner of Olivier Award for Best Set Design, Critic's Circle Award for Best Designer, Evening Standard Award for Best Design); *Everybody's Talking About Jamie* (West End/UK tour/LA); *House of Shades, The Writer, Before the Party* (Almeida); *The Kid Stays in the Picture* (Royal Court/Complicité); *A German Life, A Very Very Very Dark Matter, John Gabriel Borkman, Two Ladies* (Bridge); *Much Ado About Nothing, Home, I'm Darling* (National Theatre/West End/UK tour – 2019 Olivier Award nominee for Best Set Design and Best Costume Design); *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (Old Vic); *Beware of Pity* (Schaubühne, Berlin/Complicité).

Opera credits include: *L'Orfeo* (Vienna Staatsoper); *Weimar Nightfall* (LA Philharmonic/Complicité).

Dance credits include: *A Christmas Carol* (Finnish National Opera); *Message in a Bottle* (international tour); *John, Can We Talk About This?* (DV8 Physical Theatre/international tour).

Fellowships include: Trustee of Regent's Park Open Air Theatre and Founding Member of Scene/Change.

ROBBIE BUTLER

Lighting Designer

Originally from Ireland and based in the UK, Robbie is one of only a handful of Life Members of the Association for Lighting Production and Design. Having trained at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, he won the inaugural Profile Award for Outstanding Achievement in Opera, an Off West End Award for Best Lighting Design and was also the winner of the 2015 ETC Award.

Design credits include: *Punch* (Nottingham Playhouse/Young Vic/Broadway/West End); *The Glad Game* (Nottingham Playhouse); *Keli* (National Theatre of Scotland); *Reverberation, How to Win Against History* (Bristol Old Vic); *Death in Venice* (Welsh National Opera); *The Makropulos Affair* (Scottish Opera).

He has also worked with the Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh; Tron Theatre, Glasgow; Mercury Theatre, Colchester; Greek National Opera; Polish National Opera; Den Norske Opera and Ballet; Hofesh Schechter Company; and the English Theatre, Frankfurt.

Upcoming work includes projects with the Royal Shakespeare Company, Malmö Opera and Teatro Real, Madrid.

ALEXANDRA FAYE BRAITHWAITE

Sound Designer and Composer

Recent credits include: *Punch* (Broadway/Apollo Theatre/Young Vic/Nottingham Playhouse); *Summerfolk, Hamlet, Underdog: The Other Other Brontë* (National Theatre); *Giant* (Harold Pinter Theatre/Royal Court); *The Real Thing* (Old Vic); *Choir, Never Have I Ever, The Narcissist* (Chichester Festival Theatre); *Christmas Carol Goes Wrong* (Apollo Theatre/Mischief Theatre); *Liberation, A Taste of Honey, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, Wuthering Heights, Light Falls* (Royal Exchange Theatre); *A Streetcar Named Desire, Chariots of Fire, Anna Karenina, Operation Crucible, Chicken Soup* (Sheffield Theatres); *Sound of the Underground, Purple Snowflakes and Titty Wanks* (Royal Court); *Falkland Sound* (Royal Shakespeare Company); *The Good Person of Szechwan* (Lyric Hammersmith/Sheffield Theatres); *Bloody Elle* (Lyric Theatre/Traverse Theatre/Royal Exchange); *The Creakers* (Southbank Centre/Theatre Royal Plymouth); *Abigail's Party, Shining City, How Not to Drown, The Wonderful World of Dissocia* (Theatre Royal Stratford East); *Things of Dry Hours* (Young Vic); *Lost and Found* (Factory International); *The Da Vinci Code* (Salisbury Playhouse/Mercury Theatre); *Groan Ups* (Vaudeville Theatre/Mischief Theatre/UK tour); *The Cavalcadors* (Druid); *Good Luck, Studio* (Mercury Theatre/Mischief Theatre); *Kes* (Bolton Octagon); *The Climbers, Tom's Midnight Garden* (Theatre by the Lake); *A Pretty Shitty Love, A Christmas Carol* (Theatre Clwyd); *My Name Is Rachel Corrie* (Al Madina Theatre, Beirut); *Cougar, The Rolling Stone, Dealing With Clair* (Orange Tree Theatre); *Dublin*

Carol (Sherman Theatre); *Hamlet, Talking Heads, Rudolph* (Leeds Playhouse); *The Audience, Juicy and Delicious* (Nuffield Theatre); *The Remains of Maisie Duggan* (Abbey Theatre); *Toast, Enough* (Traverse Theatre); *When I Am Queen* (Almeida).

LEANNE PINDER

Movement Director

Movement Director and Choreographer credits include:

Punch (Apollo/Nottingham Playhouse/Young Vic/Broadway); *London Road* (ArtsEd); *Mini – The Boy Who Discovered Fire* (workshop/NYMT); *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (Aberystwyth); *Disruption* (Park); *Spring Awakening* (ArtsEd); *Our House* (The Wilkes Academy); *She Loves Me, The Wizard of Oz, Bare: A Rock Opera* (Mountview); *Lasagna* (short film directed by Hannah Hill).

CHRISTOPHER WORRALL CDG

Casting Director

Christopher is Associate Casting Director at the RSC and began his career as Casting Assistant at the Donmar Warehouse.

Theatre credits as Casting Director: *Henry V, All Is But Fantasy, The BFG, Fat Ham* (RSC); *Punch* (Nottingham Playhouse/Young Vic/West End – CDG Award winner); *The Real and Imagined History of the Elephant Man, The Beekeeper of Aleppo, Lava* (Nottingham Playhouse); *A Streetcar Named Desire, Rock/Paper/Scissors, Chicken Soup* (Sheffield Crucible); *Robin Hood, The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (Rose); *Arabian Nights* (Bristol Old Vic); *Assassins* (Chichester Festival Theatre); *The Red Lion* (New Wolsey); *Sucker Punch* (Queen's Theatre/UK tour); *The Misfortune of the English, Tom Fool, Two Billion Beats* (Orange Tree); *The Climbers* (Theatre by the Lake).

ANITA GILBERT

Voice and Dialect Coach

Anita originally trained as an actor before completing an MA in Professional Voice Practice from the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. She is also the co-writer of *The Jobbing Actor*, published by Nick Hern Books.

Theatre credits include: *The Trials, The Ugly Duckling* (Nottingham Playhouse); *Larkrise to Candleford* (Watermill Theatre/Theatre by the Lake); *Memory of Water* (Bolton Octagon); *First Encounters: Romeo and Juliet* (RSC); *Chariots of Fire, Rock/Paper/Scissors, We Could All Be Perfect* (Sheffield Theatres); *Big Big Sky* (New Vic Stoke); *Gods of Salford* (Lowry Theatre/Not Too Tame); *Twelfth Night* (Shakespeare North Playhouse/Not Too Tame); *Oliver Twist, The Great Gatsby, Kiss Me Quickstep, Of Mice and Men, Welfare, Cinderella, Brassed Off, Jekyll and Hyde, Homegirl, Extra Time, Abi, What Fatima Did, One Man, Two Guvnors, Treasure Island, The Little Mermaid, 4 Walls, Mr Burns, The Wind in the Willows* (Derby Theatre).

Screen and audio credits include: *Witches of Essex* (Sky History); *Hollyoaks* (Lime Pictures); *Bonny Chip* (Fox & Cox Productions); *You Cannot Thread a Moving Needle* (BBC Radio 4 Drama).

OMAR KHAN

Associate Director

Omar Khan is a director, facilitator and writer based in the Midlands. His work spans theatre, film, audio, photography and VR. He is the current recipient of the Florence Kleiner Bursary at The Old Vic.

Theatre credits include: Director/Co-Writer for *A Beginner's Guide to Widowhood* (UK tour); Co-Director for *The Trials* (Nottingham Playhouse); Director for *Mr Burns: A Post-Electric Play* (Derby); Assistant Director for *Jekyll & Hyde* (Derby); Writer/Director for *Ritual* (Derby).

Film credits include: Actor for *There's Something Among Us*, Director for *Safe Man*, Director and Co-Writer for *The Sitter*.

Recordings include: Actor for *Interdimensional Phishing Scam*, Director for *kilburn (not london)*, Director for *Giraffe*, Director and Co-Writer for *Echo*.

Omar was a recipient of RTYDS's 18-month residency, where he was placed at Derby Theatre and directed the regional premiere of *Mr Burns: A Post-Electric Play*. He is also an alumnus of Birmingham Rep's Foundry scheme, Tamasha's Directors Programme and New Perspectives' Associate Programme. He was long-listed for the Sir Peter Hall Award in 2024 and 2025.

TALLULAH CASKEY

Associate Designer

Tallulah is a graduate of the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts and 2023 recipient of the Linbury Prize for Stage Design.

Design credits include: *Lady in the Dark* (Bridewell); *Centre of the Universe* (Theatre503/Summer Hall Arts); *Unfiltered* (Ludlow Assembly Rooms); *The Least We Could Do* (Hope); *Great Britain, Witness* (Paul McCartney Auditorium).

Associate credits include: *Barnum* (UK tour); *Starter for Ten* (Bristol Old Vic and Birmingham Rep); *The House Party* (UK tour); *Punch* (Nottingham Playhouse/Young Vic/Apollo).

CHARLOTTE BURTON

Associate Lighting Designer

Associate work credits include: *Punch* (Apollo Theatre); *Oedipus* (Onassis Stegi, Athens); *To Kill a Mockingbird* (UK tour); *Macbeth* (Donmar/Harold Pinter Theatre); *The Lehman Trilogy* (ACT, San Francisco/Sydney Theatre Royal/Gillian Lynne); *Underdog: The Other Other Brontë* (Northern Stage/National Theatre); *Plaza Suite* (Savoy); *Life of Pi* (UK tour); *4000 Miles* (Chichester Festival Theatre); *Alcina* (Glyndebourne); *Cinderella* (Gillian Lynne); *Back to the Future* (Adelphi); *Sunset Boulevard in Concert at Home* (Leicester Curve); *A Number, My Name Is Lucy Barton* (Bridge); *The Son* (Duke of York's); *La Clamenza di Tito* (Opera de Oviedo); *Long Day's Journey Into Night* (Wyndham's/BAM, New York/The Wallis, LA).

Lighting design credits include: *Boudica*, *Jekyll & Hyde*, *Earthquakes in London*, *A Dream*, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *Bugsy Malone*, *The Blue Road* (Royal & Derngate); *Three Decembers*, *The Medium* (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland); *The Rake's Progress* (Maggio Musicale, Florence/Royal Academy of Music); *glass human* (Glyndebourne/UK tour); *Headcase* (Bush/Trinity); *A Table Tennis Play* (Underbelly, Edinburgh Fringe); *Memoirs of an Asian Football Casual* (Leicester Curve).

Charlotte trained at LIPA, where she was awarded the prize for Creative & Technical Excellence. In 2015, she was the inaugural participant of the ALPD's Lumière Scheme.

MATTHEW TUCKEY

Associate Sound Designer and Composer

Matthew is a sound designer and sound artist working across theatre, installation and film. He is also a board member for the Association for Sound Design and Production.

Sound Designer credits include: *Isabelle* (Middle Child); *Zog* (UK tour); *Beauty and the Beast* (New Wolsey Theatre); *Dogs on the Metro*, *Champion*, *Saint Maud* (Live Theatre); *The Bounds* (Live Theatre and the Royal Court); *Festen* (The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama); *Love It If We Beat Them* (Emmerson & Ward in association with Live Theatre); *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* (Northern Stage); *Repeat Signal*, *Lost*, *Found and Told: New Tales for Northumberland* (November Club); *Wolf!* (Kitchen Zoo in association with Northern Stage); *Joey* (Gobscore in association with Greyscale Theatre); *Floorboards*, *Trolley Boy*, *Walter* (Alphabetti Theatre).

Associate Sound Designer credits include: *Punch* (UK tour); *The Koala Who Could* (UK tour); *Macbeth* (English Touring Theatre at the Lyric Hammersmith); *Underdog: The Other Other Brontë* (Northern Stage and National Theatre); *You Heard Me* (Luca Rutherford); *A Christmas Carol* (Northern Stage); *Oh No, George!* (Can't Sit Still); *Stella* (Filskit Theatre).

Sound Artist credits include: *The Rime* (multichannel immersive installation); *An Audio Diary in Binaural, January 2021* (digital piece for headphones); *South Bend (05-06/20)* (digital EP).

HANNAH FAIRCLOUGH

Associate Movement Director

Creative credits include: Choreographer for *Cottingley Fairies* (BYMT Birmingham Hippodrome Patrick Studio); Associate Movement Director for *Punch* (Apollo Theatre).

Theatre credits include: Resident Choreographer for *Ain't Too Proud: The Life and Times of The Temptations* (Prince Edward Theatre); original ensemble cast for *Frozen the Musical* (Drury Lane); Ensemble in *The Boy in the Dress* (RSC); Swing in *Evita* (Regent's Park Open Air); Resident Director/Dance Captain for *The Lorax* (Royal Alexandra Toronto/Old Vic); Assistant Dance Captain/Swing in *Hairspray* (UK tour).

Film and television credits include: *Prince Andrew: The Musical* (Channel 4).

PRODUCERS

NOTTINGHAM PLAYHOUSE

Nottingham Playhouse is one of the UK's leading producing theatres, named Theatre of the Year 2025 at The Stage Awards.

Over 70 years, they have built a legacy of bold, ambitious and diverse productions that tour nationally and internationally. James Graham's *Punch*, commissioned and produced by Nottingham Playhouse and directed by Artistic Director Adam Penford, transferred simultaneously to London's West End and Broadway in 2025 and returns to Nottingham in 2026. The 2026 season includes: the world premieres of *Scenes From a Friendship* by Jane Upton and *The Market Deeping Model Railway Club* by William Ivory, as well as the regional premiere of Beth Steel's West End hit *Till the Stars Come Down*. Nottingham Playhouse empowers local communities and emerging artists through their Participation and Amplify programmes and is also a Theatre of Sanctuary. nottinghamplayhouse.co.uk

KPPL PRODUCTIONS

KPPL Productions is an independent production company with a social justice focus. Director Phyllida Lloyd and producer Kate Pakenham first worked together on the Donmar Shakespeare Trilogy, which they presented on stage in London and New York, on screen and in prisons and schools. Phyllida is a director with an international reputation in opera, theatre and film. Kate was previously Executive Producer of the Donmar Warehouse and Producer at The Old Vic Theatre and is now an independent producer and consultant working across the commercial and non-profit sectors.

In 2024, KPPL co-produced the National Theatre's production *Grenfell: in the words of survivors* at St Ann's Warehouse, New York and in 2025 co-produced *Punch* at the Apollo Theatre, Shaftesbury Avenue. The commercial success of *Punch* in the West End has created a catalyst fund from which a new version of the play will be developed to tour into schools in autumn 2027. In 2026, KPPL is co-producing *Julius Caesar*, starring Harriet Walter and directed by Phyllida with the RSC. The production, which originated at the Donmar Warehouse in 2012, will tour into schools around the UK and play at The Other Place, Stratford. KPPL's work on both *Punch* and *Julius Caesar* reflects Phyllida and Kate's interest in making world-class theatre that supports change in the criminal justice and education sectors.

www.kpplproductions.com

MARK GORDON PICTURES

Mark Gordon Pictures is an international film, television and theatre production company. In 2020, with its history in film (*Saving Private Ryan*, *Speed*, *The Day After Tomorrow*, 2012, *Murder on the Orient Express*, *Source Code*, *Molly's Game*, *The Patriot*) and television (*Grey's Anatomy*, *Criminal Minds*, *Ray Donovan*, *Designated Survivor*, *Quantico*, *The Rookie*), Mark Gordon Pictures expanded into theatre in the US and the UK. Select US theatre credits include: *Life of Pi* (Broadway); *Nothing Can Take You From the Hand of God* (Playwrights Horizons); *Teeth* (New World Stages/Playwrights Horizons); *Highway Patrol* (Goodman). Select UK credits include: *Punch* (West End/Nottingham Playhouse/Young Vic); *People, Places and Things* (West End); *Brace Brace* (Royal Court); *School Girls; or, The African Mean Girls Play* (Lyric Hammersmith).

EILENE DAVIDSON PRODUCTIONS

Eilene Davidson is an award-winning international producer working on Broadway and in the West End. New shows opening this fall include *Art* and *Hand of God* in NYC and the new musical *Coven* and the West End transfer of *Punch*. Recent critically acclaimed shows include: *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, *The Merchant of Venice 1936*. She is currently a co-producer on Dolly Parton's new autobiographical musical *Dolly*, which recently played Nashville and is due to open on Broadway in early 2026. Recent co-produced Broadway productions include: *Vanya*, *Redwood*, *Prima Facie*, *Death of a Salesman*, *A Doll's House*, *Plaza Suite*, *Leopoldstadt*, *Walking With Ghosts*, *Betrayal*, *Life of Pi*.

Recent West End co-productions include: *The Master Builder*, *The Seagull*, *People, Places and Things*, *Enemy of the People*, *Macbeth*, *Red Pitch*, *The Motive and the Cue*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Wagatha Christie*, *The Last Five Years*, *Anything Goes*, *Uncle Vanya*, *The Grinning Man*, *A Day in the Death of Joe Egg*, *Starry Messenger*, the first all-female West End play *Emilia*.

In 2022, EDP produced the premiere of the late great Edna O'Brien's play *Joyce's Women* at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin. Eilene formerly worked as an actress and writer in Europe and the USA. Her main interest is in new writing and she was a founder of Stage Traffic, a US/UK company specialising in producing new plays. She is in the President's Circle at BAFTA and serves on various arts boards internationally.

She also recently executive produced the critically acclaimed British film *Dragonfly*, starring Brenda Blethyn and Andrea Riseborough, and has a new play and a new film in development.

SELF CARE GUIDE

We are aware that *Punch* may be challenging for members of the audience, especially for those who have personal proximity to the topics and themes covered within the narrative.

We have collated information and resources into a Self-Care Guide with the aim of supporting audiences experiencing the performance and offering help for those who might find themselves affected by the contents or have concerns about their visit. In the guide, there is an extensive list of organisations that offer helplines and support for those affected by, or those who would like to learn more about the themes raised throughout *Punch*. Scan the QR code to view the Self-Care Guide.

