



For immediate release
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High-res jpegs are available

Real-life account of Alaska rape and revenge inspires new play

UAA debuts 'Stalking the Bogeyman' April 1

When he was just 7 years old, David Holthouse was raped in Anchorage by a family friend. Twenty-five years later their paths cross again, and Holthouse meticulously plans the murder of his rapist, who he ominously refers to as the Bogeyman.

The University of Alaska Anchorage production of "Stalking the Bogeyman" — based on Holthouse's true account — runs April 1-24 in the UAA Fine Arts Building. This is the play's West Coast premiere.

"Alaska has a very high incidence of sexual violence, which makes our message important," said Brian Cook, the play's director and UAA assistant professor of theater. "The play goes beyond statistics, though, and presents a story that allows the audience to grapple with the issue from a more human dimension."

This project is a partnership between UAA departments, including Theatre and Dance, Psychology, and Art, along with several community organizations. After each performance UAA offers the audience a facilitated discussion, on-site mental health resources, and interactive art installations.

Psychology faculty and students are launching several studies to measure the production's impact on cast, crew and audiences. The projects combine empirical research with creative inquiry to examine how theater can affect social change.

(MORE)

BOGEYMAN, PAGE 2 OF 2

After its Anchorage run, the play tours to several Alaska communities, including Homer, Seward, Valdez and Fairbanks.

The April production coincides with National Sexual Assault Awareness Month and National Child Abuse Prevention Month.

TICKETS

Performances of “Stalking the Bogeyman” are 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays and 3 p.m. Sundays, April 1-24, in the UAA Fine Arts Building. Tickets cost \$9-16 advance, \$14-21 at the door, with discounts for students, seniors and military. Learn more and buy tickets at uaa.alaska.edu/theatreanddance.

SCRIPT EXCERPT

This time last year I started plotting to kill a man.

This time last year I had a gun, and a silencer, and a plan.

I had staked out the man’s tract home in the Denver suburbs.

I had followed him to and from his job in a high-tech office park.

I was confident I would get away with murder, because there was nothing in recent history to connect me to him.

Homicide investigators look for motive, and mine was buried 25 years in the past.

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA ANCHORAGE

The University of Alaska Anchorage is Alaska’s largest university, educating more than 19,000 students annually and offering programs in more than 200 areas of study. UAA’s mission is to discover and disseminate knowledge through teaching, research, engagement and creative expression. Learn more at uaa.alaska.edu.

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Sexual Assault in Alaska Fact Sheet and Resources

For journalists doing stories about this play, UAA highly recommends consulting the Poynter Institute's Resources for Covering Sexual Abuse of Children, newsu.org/resources/sri/child-sex-abuse

Facts

Alaska has the most rapes per capita of any state, averaging 105 rapes per 100,000 inhabitants, nearly three times the national average (FBI 2014 Crime in the United States report)

About 15 percent of sexual assault and rape victims in the United States are younger than 12. (U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics)

Child sexual assault in Alaska is almost six times the national average. (UAA Justice Center, 2015 survey)

Half of adult women in Alaska say they have experienced intimate partner violence, sexual violence, or both. (UAA Justice Center, 2015 survey)

Resources

UAA Campus Community

Reporting sexual misconduct

UAA Title IX office, uaa.alaska.edu/equity-and-compliance/title_ix_reporting.cfm,
(907) 786-1424

UAA University Police Department, (907) 786-1120

Survivor counseling

UAA Student Health and Counseling Center, uaa.alaska.edu/studenthealth,
(907) 786-4040

UAA Psychological Services Center, uaa.alaska.edu/psych/services.cfm,
(907) 786-1795

Statewide

Standing Together Against Rape (STAR)

staralaska.com, (907) 276-7273 or (800) 478-8999

Alaska C.A.R.E.S. Children's Advocacy Center

alaska.providence.org/locations/c/cares, (907) 561-8301 or (877) 561-8301

Child Abuse Prevention Month Events in Anchorage

These are some of the Child Abuse Prevention Month events presented by the University of Alaska Anchorage and our “Stalking the Bogeyman” community partners. Events are free unless otherwise noted.

David Holthouse Presents: The Weird Turn Pro

5 to 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 29, UAA Bookstore

When the going gets weird, the weird turn pro. Alaska journalist, playwright and documentary filmmaker David Holthouse shares how he finds, reports and writes compelling stories. A Q&A follows. uaa.alaska.edu/bookstore

Go Blue Day

All day Friday, April 1, Anchorage-wide

Wear blue today to show you’re committed to preventing child abuse and supporting strong families and healthy children. Join the Alaska Children’s Trust kickoff rally at 9 a.m. in the Wells Fargo parking lot, 301 Northern Lights Blvd. alaskachildrenstrust.org

Third-annual UAA Faculty Research and Creative Activity Symposium

Strength and Resiliency in a Changing World is the theme of UAA’s faculty symposium, which features creative performances, installations and presentations. Activities related to “Stalking the Bogeyman” include:

5:30 p.m. Thursday April 7, UAA Fine Arts Building

Creative performances and activities, followed by a free performance of “Stalking the Bogeyman” at 8 p.m. Free tickets to this performance are available starting April 4 at UAA’s Performing and Fine Arts office (ARTS 302). Free tickets are limited; first come, first served.

Friday, April 8, UAA ConocoPhillips Integrated Science Building

(time TBA) Theater professor Brian Cook and psychology professor Rebecca Robinson present the “Stalking the Bogeyman” project.

5:30 p.m. A panel of community and business leaders discusses the local impact of UAA research and creative activity.

Trusted Adult Superhero Day

All day Friday, April 8, Anchorage-wide

Show kids in our community who they can turn to for help. Wear your superhero cape to school, work or around town and join Standing Together Against Rape’s team of Trusted Adult Superheroes! staralaska.com

(MORE)

EVENTS, PAGE 2 OF 2

Standing Together Against Rape's HEART Parenting Program

Saturday, April 9 and Saturday, April 23 (time and location TBA)

Sessions in Hope, Education, Action, Response and Training (HEART) give parents and caregivers child abuse prevention tools. Learn how to recognize the signs of sexual abuse in children, how to respond if a child reports abuse, and much more.

staralaska.com

Walk a Mile in Her Shoes

11:30 a.m. Saturday, April 16, University Center Mall

Men are invited to strap on a pair of high heels in this playful international men's march to raise awareness about the serious topic of sexualized violence. This is a fundraiser, with proceeds supporting Standing Together Against Rape. staralaska.com

Resilient Families: How to Raise Them, followed by "Stalking the Bogeyman"

6:30 p.m. Saturday, April 16, UAA Fine Arts Building

Alaska Children's Trust Executive Director Trevor Storrs talks to parents and caregivers about fostering resilience in children and families, and why it's important.

alaskachildrenstrust.org. This workshop concludes just in time for the evening's performance of "Stalking the Bogeyman." Tickets cost \$9-16 advance, \$14-21 at the door, with discounts for students, seniors and military. uaa.alaska.edu/theatreanddance.

For event updates, visit uaa.alaska.edu/theatreanddance.

While *Stalking the Bogeyman*, David Holthouse Finds Healing Through Storytelling

BY ROBERT SIMONSON
OCT 30, 2014

David Holthouse finds catharsis behind anger in by sharing his traumatic childhood story *Stalking the Bogeyman*.

"If this play had existed when I was a teenager, it would have been a lifeline to me," says writer and journalist David Holthouse. "It would have saved me years of torment and wondering."

Holthouse is talking about his own play, *Stalking the Bogeyman*, currently playing New World Stages in a production directed and adapted by Markus Potter. The drama tells the true story of how Holthouse, at age seven, was brutally raped by a teenage neighbor boy he thought was his friend. Left at that, the tale would be disturbing enough, but it is framed by a second plot, set many years later, in which the adult Holthouse meticulously plans the murder of his assailant.

Needless to say, he never went through with the killing. In a different sort of emotional release, Holthouse – who by then was an accomplished journalist – decided to tell his story in a 2004 article in the Denver Westword.

"Honestly, my original intent was to try and destroy the guy's life" with the story, Holthouse admits. "Because I could no longer get away with doing this guy harm. I couldn't shoot this guy anymore. But I could destroy his life." However, after meeting with the man who abused him, the revenge instinct subsided. He did not use his name. Holthouse's traumatic story garnered new attention when he was invited to read it on public radio show "This American Life." That's when Potter heard it. He soon after tried to get in touch with Holthouse with a proposal to turn the story into a stage work. "It took a couple months," says Holthouse. "He basically just sent a message in a bottle to American Public Media. It gradually wound its way to me."

Potter's vision immediately appealed to Holthouse. "He did not use the words 'dark thriller,' which everyone who approached me from Hollywood wanting the movie rights to the story had," he explains. "They were all saying 'dark thriller' or 'love interest' – the main character is going to need a love interest. The answer to that was not only 'No,' but 'Hell no.'"

Potter, in contrast, was interested in "the conflict between the instinctual desire for revenge versus the higher consciousness of forgiveness."

Holthouse is conflicted about the outsized public presence this traumatic childhood episode has taken on since he first wrote about it.

"It's been a decade now that I've been living with this publically. I've been living my whole life with it secretly. There are times where I'm like, 'This is great. This is doing a lot of good.' And there are times where I think, 'What the hell have I done, putting my life out there like this?' I go back and forth daily. Long term trend: I think it's very healing."



PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

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Please consider airing the following PSA between March 28 and April 24. Thank you for helping us get the word out about this important issue. We couldn't do it without you.

STALKING THE BOGEYMAN

:30

When he was just 7-years-old, David Holthouse was raped in Anchorage by a family friend. Twenty-five years later, he set out to murder his childhood bogeyman. A play based on David's real-life experience runs April first through twenty-fourth at the University of Alaska Anchorage. "Stalking the Bogeyman" is a gripping experience that puts a face on Alaska's rape epidemic. Learn more and buy tickets at u-a-a (dot) alaska (dot) e-d-u

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