

MEDIA RELEASE
For Immediate Release
1 JUNE 2010

True stories performed across the country during Refugee Week

WHAT: Performances of *Asylum Dialogues* and *Asylum Monologues*
WHEN: Refugee Week 13 – 20 June
WHERE: Yorkshire, Norwich, London, Edinburgh, Blackburn, Doncaster

Before an unlikely friendship developed between John Catley, a 66 year-old Birmingham accountant, and Angela, a 40 year-old Jamaican woman who cleaned his office, John admitted to believing the spin about asylum seekers perpetuated by the tabloid press and the government:

"I honestly used to say - send them all home. They shouldn't be here. Taking all our money."

John admits that he was considering voting for the BNP. But, he continues,

"Then this woman Angela turned up to clean my office and turned the world upside down."

John and Angela's story is part of *Asylum Dialogues*, a documentary play about real-life friendships between British people and asylum seekers, performed by iceandfire's outreach project Actors for Human Rights. This show will be performed as part of Refugee Week celebrations at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, in Norwich, Edinburgh, Blackburn and Doncaster.

Actors for Human Rights will also be performing their flagship script, *Asylum Monologues*, in London.

Both scripts are drawn from actual conversations with real people, revealing the relationships between British people and refugees who have fled violence and persecution in their own countries and the experiences of asylum seekers with the British system.

Actors for Human Rights is iceandfire's network of more than 500 professional actors, which tours documentary plays about human rights issues around the UK. For the past 4 years they have been telling these stories across the country for **Refugee Week** – including the launch of *Asylum Monologues* in 2006 and *Asylum Dialogues* in 2007.

BAFTA Award-winner **Juliet Stephenson**, a member of the Actors for Human Rights network and patron of iceandfire, says telling the stories of refugees and asylum seekers is important:

"I am proud of many things about the UK, but I am not proud of how we treat asylum seekers and refugees. We must insist on a more humane system."

Christine Bacon, co-Artistic Director of iceandfire, says using actors allows the stories of asylum seekers and refugees to be told to people who may not otherwise get a chance to hear them:

"As actors we can give faces and voices to the unseen and the unheard. We try to redress some of the misconceptions about asylum seekers and refugees with more accurate information and with personal stories that will appeal to many British audiences."

Interviews are available with Christine Bacon from iceandfire, and John Catley, whose story features in *Asylum Dialogues*.

For more information about this press release, please call Charlotte George, Media & Communications Officer, on 07954 199 307, media@iceandfire.co.uk
www.iceandfire.co.uk

Notes:

iceandfire explores human rights stories through performance. Since their inception in 2003, they have become a theatre company with a distinct, contemporary voice creating work of excellence across our four work strands: production, outreach, education and participation.

www.iceandfire.co.uk.

Actors for Human Rights is iceandfire's national outreach network, made up of over 500 professional actors who are dedicated to drawing public attention to a range of contemporary human rights concerns. The performers involved donate their time and their profile to encourage public acceptance of human rights and to give voice to people whose basic human rights have been violated.

www.iceandfire.co.uk/afhr

Refugee Week (14 – 20 June) is a unique opportunity to discover and celebrate the contributions refugees bring to the UK.

www.refugeeweek.org.uk