

Tales from the hostile environment: 'Sometimes I Want to Go to the Home Office and Scream'

Arts charity marks 2024's so-called '[immigration election](#)' with a week of nation-wide performances based on 'unheard voices' of UK migrants.

ice&fire - the human rights arts charity and theatre company - is staging one-off performances of its ground-breaking 'Tales from the hostile environment' across the UK in the run-up to voting in the general election on 4 July.

The script is based previously unheard testimonies gathered from UK migrants over 10 years, including:

- Molly who became 'computer mummy' to her young children after Home Office rules kept her apart from her British family for a year;
- The university student forced into bankruptcy due to a mistake made by her student loan provider over her immigration status;
- The mum-to-be who was reported to immigration authorities by her hospital midwife.
- The Ugandan sports champion and her girlfriend refused asylum because a judge refused to believe they were gay

The seven unique performances, each featuring a different cast - including household name actors from stage and screen - will run over five days, starting in Oxford on 27 June, and ending in London on 2 July.

Full details of performances [here](#).

Each performance will be followed by a panel discussion, involving members of the cast and local migrants' rights campaigners.

The **London** cast includes: John McCrea, who played the title role in multi-award-winning musical Everybody's Talking About Jamie; and Tori Allen-Martin, who plays trainee detective Bilslie Fitzgerald in the long-running TV series London Kills. Other names will be added.

John McCrae says:

'The testimonies in this script are a powerful reminder of the profound impacts of increasingly punitive immigration policies and laws on migrants and the people who love them, work with them, and rely on them. I am proud to be a small part in a huge and global conversation.'

Tori Allen Martin says:

'The demonisation of migrants and refugees during political debate is toxic and tiresome. I believe conversation leads to change. Listening to the experiences of others breeds empathy and compassion which is surely what the world needs more of. There are millions of migrants who live and work here who do not have the right to vote. Their voices matter and it's on us to listen and to do better. As Dr Martin Luther King said: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere".'

Entry to the performances will be for a modest fee to cover costs (most are on a 'pay what you can' basis). The actors, directors and producers are giving their time unpaid.

'Tales from the hostile environment' was written by ice&fire co-artistic director Christine Bacon, who gathered most of the testimonies on which the script is based over the last decade. She also directs the London performance of the show.

Christine Bacon says:

'The environment for immigrants in this country has been hostile for many decades now and it's becoming clear to voters that politicians are very comfortable using migrants as punching bags with policies and laws to match. That tactic is getting really old. With this script, we want to remind people what many immigrants here are facing as a result of these policies and the fight that is ahead no matter what happens on July 4.'

Sebastian Aguirre, ice&fire co-artistic director, says:

'In the 50 minutes it takes to watch "Tales from the hostile environment", the audience will learn more about the reality of the UK's immigration policies than we did in the entire general election campaign.'

About 'Tales from the hostile environment'

'Tales from the hostile environment' is new documentary script for ice&fire's Actors for Human Rights project. The project was launched in 2006 and is a network of more than 700 professional actors dedicated to drawing attention to human rights concerns. The show will take the form of a staged reading, involving actors, directors and producers who are local to each of the venues. If you would like to stage your own reading, ice&fire is making the script free to access.

Email actors@iceandfire.co.uk to request the script and some resources for organising a successful event.

THURSDAY 27 JUNE AT 7:30PM, Burton Taylor Studio, Oxford

FRIDAY 28 JUNE, 4PM Alphabetti, Newcastle

FRIDAY 28 JUNE, 7:30PM Quaker Meeting House, Bury St Edmunds

SUNDAY JUNE 30, 2:20PM Slung Low, Leeds

MONDAY 1 JULY, 7:30PM 53TWO, Manchester

MONDAY 1 JULY, 7PM Caroline of Brunswick, Brighton

TUESDAY 2 July, 7:30PM Camden People's Theatre, London

For photos and further details, or to arrange interviews with Christine Bacon or Sebastian Aguirre or cast members, contact actors@iceandfire.co.uk

About Christine Bacon

Christine is co-artistic director of ice&fire. She is a playwright - including having her work performed at the Arcola Theatre in East London - and former actor. She migrated to the UK in 2004 and has a masters degree in Refugee Studies. She works part-time as an OISC-accredited immigration law adviser.

About Sebastian Aguirre

Sebastian is co-artistic director of ice&fire and a human rights activist. Their family came to the UK from Chile as refugees. Sebastian trained at Central School of Speech and Drama, and worked at the international secretariat of Amnesty International for seven years. They are a long- standing member of Lesbians and Gays Support the Migrants.