EXTRACT

THE PAPER WALL

a play

by

Alex Broun

(Additional material supplied by Beejan Olfat)

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"*Patrick's the boy next door, aren't you honey?"*

"No I'm not. I'm an evil psychopath."

American Psycho, Bret Easton Ellis

"Then what was it?"

"Darkness, Elsa! Darkness!"

The Road to Mecca, Athol Fugard

Cast

Dr Ian Wallace	mid 30s
Troy Anderson	a boy of seventeen
Stan Anderson	his father, 40s
Magistrate	Female

The Universal Space

A slightly grubby white room, lit by bright white light. Solid thick walls with two large two-way mirrors two thirds of the way up the back wall.

There is a concealed door, which we are not aware of till it is used. There is also the faint outline of a panel on the wall, near the door, with a slot for a key.

The room is completely bare except for a solid wooden table, chipping with white paint, which is bolted to the floor and two worn plastic white chairs.

PLEASE NOTE.
The use of a (*/*) indicates the next character to speak.

The Paper Wall was read at Griffin Theatre Company's Searchlight on 9th May 2006. Company as follows:

DR IAN WALLACE	**Nicholas Eadie**
TROY	**Nick Simpson-Deeks**
STAN	**Laurence Coy**
MAGISTRATE	**Elaine Hudson**
STAGE DIRECTIONS	**David Woodley**
DIRECTOR	**Beejan Olfat**

1. A court room.

A SPOTLIGHT COMES UP ON **IAN WALLACE** CENTRE STAGE. HE SITS AT THE DESK DRESSED IN A SUIT. THERE IS A FILE IN FRONT OF HIM AND HE WEARS A SUPPORT COLLAR AROUND HIS NECK.

ENTER A FEMALE MAGISTRATE.

MAGISTRATE: Doctor Wallace, thank you for coming today. We understand this has been a difficult process for you.

IAN NODS. HE SIPS FROM A GLASS OF WATER.

MAGISTRATE: Are you ready to make your recommendation?

IAN: (STANDING) I am your honour.

MAGISTRATE: Then begin.

IAN OPENS HIS FOLDER, HE TAKES A DEEP BREATH. PAUSE. HE TURNS AWAY.

IAN: (TO HIMSELF) I can't do this. I can't do this.

MAGISTRATE: Doctor Wallace. Would you like more time?

PAUSE.

IAN: No, your honour. I'm ready.

PAUSE.

MAGISTRATE: Very well then. Proceed.

IAN DOES NOT RESPOND.

MAGISTRATE: Doctor Wallace? Are you okay? Dr Wallace?

LONG PAUSE.

THE LIGHTS ON THE MAGISTRATE FADE, SLOWLY.

IAN BREAKS OUT OF THE ACTION, DOWN LEFT. HE IS DRESSED CASUALLY AND CARRYING THE FOLDER. HE NOW SPEAKS DIRECTLY TO THE AUDIENCE.

A SPOTLIGHT COMES UP ON **TROY**, RIGHT. HE SITS ON A CHAIR DRESSED IN PLAIN T-SHIRT AND OLD JEANS. HIS FEET ARE BARE.

IAN: Troy Anderson– a fairly … innocuous name for a fairly innocuous boy. My job was to find out. To defend him, or rather to find reason for his defence. My task is now in the present and unlocking the past. I begin at the beginning.

LIGHTS UP ON THE UNIVERSAL SPACE.

2 .Morning, The Universal Space.

TROY IS FACING AWAY FROM **WALLACE**. SILENCE, EXCEPT FOR THE FAINT HUM OF FLUORESCENT LIGHTS.

TROY: When can I see dad?

IAN: I'm afraid that's not possible at this stage. It’s just procedure.

TROY: When do I get out of here?

IAN: Wasn't everything explained to you?

TROY: (TURNING TO **IAN**) Nothing was explained to me. I didn't understand nothing that dickhead of a judge said. All I know is they charged me with ...

IAN: With what Troy?

TROY: I didn't do it you hear me. I didn't / do it -

IAN: I believe you Troy.

TROY: So what? And stop saying my name like that – “Troy”. Makes you sound like you wanna suck my cock or something.

PAUSE. **IAN** OPENS HIS FOLDER.

IAN: I have to ask you a few questions. Can I do that?

TROY: Is it “procedure”?

IAN: (AMUSED, SMILING) Yes.

TROY: What-ever.

IAN: How long have you been here?

TROY: I don't know. Couple of weeks. A month.

IAN: Where are you?

TROY: Some Home or something. A Detention Centre. How should I know?

IAN: How long will you remain here?

TROY: Look, stuff the questions. You gotta get me a new lawyer. The dickhead keeps talking about "reduced pleas" and crap like that. Half the time I don't even know what he means.

IAN: He's an excellent legal representative. One of the best. You're very lucky to have him.

TROY: Who cares? He thinks I did it.

IAN: And you didn't do it?

TROY DOES NOT RESPOND.

IAN: The case against you is pretty good.

TROY: (SCREAMING IN **IAN'S** FACE) You hear me deaf head? I SAID I'M INNOCENT.

IAN: I hear you. And can we wind back on the volume, just a notch.

PAUSE. **IAN** TAKES A HANDKERCHIEF FROM HIS POCKET. HE SLOWLY WIPES SOME OF **TROY'S** SPITTLE OFF HIS FACE.

IAN: Troy, it's in your best interest to co-operate with the lawyer. You have already pleaded guilty.

TROY TURNS AWAY.

IAN: Look, I know this is / hard on you

TROY: (SUDDENLY TURNING BACK) You've gotta prove I'm bonkers right?

IAN: I'm to make a recommendation to the court regarding / …

TROY: Whether I'm bonkers.

IAN: (PAUSE) Look, shall we make a little "No Bullshit" circle?

TROY: (LAUGHING) A what?

IAN: You heard me.

TROY: I can't believe you just said that. "No Bullshit circle" – you are a wanker. (MAKING WANKING GESTURE) Wank, wank, wank, wank, wank.

IAN: Okay, if you don't want to do it.

TROY PONDERS ON THIS A MOMENT.

TROY: What's it like - an imaginary circle?

IAN: Not entirely – if we both believe in it.

TROY: So how does it work.

IAN: We both step into the circle and while we remain within the circle we must tell the truth.

TROY: The whole truth and nothing but the truth.

IAN: So, you game?

TROY: I'm not scared if that's what you mean.(HE HESITATES) Hold on. How do I know it works?

IAN: If we both believe in it – it works.

TROY: Might wanna test it first.

IAN: Fire away.

TROY: (IMITATING GUN) Bang. Bang!

IAN DOES NOT RESPOND. **TROY** WALKS AROUND THE ROOM, ENJOYING HIS POWER. THE ARE NOW IN THE CIRCLE TOGETHER.

There we go Mr Wank Wank. Nice and close. Just the way you like it. So, what's your full name?

IAN: Ian Jerome Wallace.

TROY: Jerome, how pretty. And do you like working at this hole Jerome?

IAN: Sometimes.

TROY: Yes or no?

IAN: Yes.

TROY: So Jerome, you give the old fella a bit of a tug last night?

IAN: No.

TROY: Oh, you got a girlfriend?

IAN: I'm married.

TROY: Yeah. So you stick it up her?

IAN: Not last night.

TROY: Why not? Can't get it up? How many kids you got?

IAN: That's enough testing. Your turn.

TROY: Fair enough.

PAUSE. **TROY** IS RELUCTANT.

IAN: Did you do what you are accused of?

TROY: No.

IAN: Do you have any idea why you are being accused?

TROY: No.

IAN: Where were you at the time of the alleged incident?

TROY: In me room.

IAN: Doing what?

TROY SHRUGS.

TROY: Wanking. Playing X-BOX.

IAN: Why did you go to the other flat?

TROY: Heard a noise.

IAN: What noise?

TROY: Kid cryin'. I don't know.

IAN: No lies.

TROY: A child crying.

IAN: At the time of the alleged incident were you under a particular amount of stress?

TROY: What does that mean?

IAN: Were you “freakin’ out”?

TROY: I already said I didn’t do it.

IAN: I know that but were you under any stress?

TROY: What does it matter?

IAN: Answer the question.

TROY: Maybe I don’t want to answer the question.

IAN: You’re in the circle.

TROY: Forget the circle!

IAN: Were you under any stress?!

TROY: I don’t know!!

IAN: Answer me!!

TROY: NO!!

IAN: ANSWER ME!!

TROY: (LEAVING THE CIRCLE) I don’t know alright. Of course I was freakin’ out. I’m always freakin’ out – that’s cause I’m bonkers alright? Is that what you want to hear?

LONG PAUSE. **IAN** STEPS OUT OF THE CIRCLE. IAN WRITES.

TROY: Well that was fun. What’s next?

IAN: I think that’ll do us for today.

TROY: Oh come on! I was just warming up.

IAN: I’ll see you tomorrow.

TROY: I’ll be waiting.

IAN STARTS TO LEAVE.

TROY: Hey Mr Wank Wank. I've got a question for you. Why do you care so much anyway? What the does it matter what happens to me?

IAN: Let's just say I have a vested interest.

LIGHTS CHANGE.

IAN COMES FORWARD INTO THE SPOTLIGHT.

IAN: (READING FROM FILE) Name: Anderson, Troy Peter. Age: Seventeen. Father: Anderson, Stanley. Mother: Anderson, Rachel formerly Morgan. Seperated. He lived with his father. Residence: Housing Commission flats, Inner West. Schools Primary: Various - moved due to behavioural problems. Schools Secondary: Various - moved due to disciplinary action. Former criminal record: None. Former psychiatric history: Unknown. That's it. One flimsy sheet. Not much to solve a mystery. (CLOSING FILE, TO AUDIENCE) Such a violent crime, the tabloids are having a field day. You try to impress on the staff how important it is that they treat Troy just like any other person. But people are people. The pressure builds on him daily, and as it builds on him so it builds on me.

LIGHTS UP.

3. A few days later. Same.

TROY LIES ON THE FLOOR, DOWN CENTRE, HIS EYES CLOSED. **IAN** STANDS BEHIND HIM. **IAN** IS WRITING.

IAN: I've organised for your father to come in.

TROY: Yeah! When?

IAN: Saturday.

TROY: Thanks. Mr Wank Wank.

IAN: I wish you would stop calling me that.

TROY: Ooooh! Getting under his skin. Why were you at it last night? What does your Missus think? Wank, wank, wank, wank, wank.

TROY WALKS AWAY. THINKS A MOMENT.

TROY: What's your wife's name?

IAN: Cerise.