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"But I Love Him" domestic violence workshop at the Hollywood Fringe

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In this year's Hollywood Fringe, actress Michelle Jewsbury demonstrates the courage of overcoming, not only by developing her own play, but by giving back as an advocate and hosting a free seminar on her experience with [Domestic Violence](#). This workshop developed from performing her piece "But I Love Him" followed by a Q& A that lasted for forty five minutes. The Hollywood Fringe compacts many shows one after the other, so Michelle decided to make the time to offer free time to discuss her show and a very important issue for today. As she puts it, "Men and women desperately need help."



Photo used with permission from Michelle Jewsbury

For 90 minutes in a small black box theater, Michelle opened up about her experience with domestic violence. Michelle's abuser knew her. She saw him as someone who might have been her "prince charming," but as she puts it "first time my head went through dry wall, I did not know it was violence." He was a man who at first pampered her. Spent large sums of money on her. The [abuse](#) started small and grew and grew.

Michelle's abuse involved hours of being raped or hit, often in public places, yet no one stopped it or helped. Twice the attacks happened in upscale hotels where there were plenty of people who should have heard her screams. One attack she went through three different walls leaving one of her eyes red for nine months. He broke a mirror over her head. Often her abuser thought she was cheating or

interested in other men. He told her "God is not going to help you now" when she prayed for him to stop. Yet the next day he would apologize, or say he did not remember doing any of it.

Why not leave? This man had taken over Michelle's life. He had wealth and they lived in his home town and he practically owned it. One time the cops came after an altercation and the police told the witnesses to leave. Everything she had, he had bought for her, from her clothes to her car to her cell phone.

There is a breaking point Michelle says, a point when she could not accept his abuse and actions anymore. It happened. She found out he was cheating. It took that to get her to finally leave. She took a trip to Africa to help "I have a Heart for Africa" to work with children in Kenya. After three years and four or five attempts to leave, she ended it. Now to take the power back she created a one woman show at the fringe and holds a position with a Non-profit for Africa. She hopes to build shelters for domestic violence victims here in Los Angeles and in Africa where often talking about domestic violence is a taboo subject.

Courageously Michelle recognizes that her abuser needs help. He needs to move on. He needs to stop the cycle of abuse. Instead he apparently went on to another woman and once again threw his next girlfriend into a wall. Now her abuser cannot be found. The second girlfriend filed charges with the police. The point of this, people need to talk and need to not be afraid to come forward. This man does a great deal for his community, but all of it is worthless, though Michelle would use a different term. Michelle wants him to get help. As she states "he needs to move on and confront his issues. He is going to kill the next person." She knows she is "risking [her] life to move forward."

In the end she gave a list of things to look for in a potential abuser, things that mirrored her own story. Does the person male or female, degrade and condemn with words like "your stupid" or "dumb?" Has the abuser secluded the victim, put them into a position where they are cut off from their prior life and friends and completely dependent on the abuser for support? An abuser will charm their victim to give up all they love and make the abuser's career and work more important and significant than anything the victim wants to do or plan. Another red flag of an abuser is laying blame on the victim of a physical assault. An abuser might tell the victim what they do is amazing but they should do something else.

One final key point, for the members of the audience who suspect they know victims of domestic abuse. According to Michelle "they are not going to make a change until ready" but "support them until they are ready."

For more information about Michelle Jewsbury's one woman show "But I Love Him, see the [Hollywood Fringe website](#). One more show on June 26, 2016 as the show reflects her experience with Domestic Violence it one had three performances. For more information on Michelle Jewsbury see [her website](#).

SUGGESTED LINKS

- "Midsummer Night's Dream" new take on a Shakespeare classic Hollywood Fringe
- 'Taming of the Show' musical prehistoric Shakespeare at the Hollywood Fringe
- Shakespeare's 'MacDeth' political commentary as farce at Hollywood Fringe
- Shakespeare four hundred plays at the Hollywood Fringe
- "Three Weeks In January" a Performance to End the Violence and Shame of Rape



Laura Tull

LA Performing Arts Examiner