

Play 3: *Just a Geezer's Car* Support Notes

Issues Covered

Damage to cars, victims, why do young people vandalise cars, consequences of damage.

Plot

Mature college student Jason is in a café with his girl-friend Sally. She's fed up because he doesn't have a job. But Jason is on a car maintenance and body-repair course; he's a star student. He says he's been offered a job by garage owner, Mr Davis, his girl-friend's boss.

Jason wants to impress Sally so that evening he brings home the car he's been working on - an American Classic car. He parks outside his house along with his four neighbours - an office-worker and single mother, a pensioner and a shop manager.

That evening two youngsters vandalise the cars, including keying and car-hopping. Everyone suffers.

But Jason suffers most of all - he loses his college place, his job offer and his girl-friend.

Suggestions for Points to Notice and Follow-up

- What things fuel the two young people's car-damaging behaviour? Could these have been dealt with or satisfied by other means? Boredom, egging each other on, believing that others are richer and 'can afford it' or won't be too put out by having to rectify the damage - not thinking through the consequences; the outcomes and effects on different individuals and their circumstances.
- What is likely to happen to the young people if they're caught? A warning, or a caution, a fine, a criminal record...
- Collect all the various ways the car-owners are affected - their time, having to do things, financially (even if insured, there is an excess), emotionally etc; is this worth a few moments 'fun'? No.
- Jason borrowed the car for the night without permission; does this mean he 'deserves what he gets'? No - but it does demonstrate that things do have consequences, and often it's best to do the right thing - you never know what's round the corner.

In addition

- How much does the likeability of someone affect our opinion of who suffers most in this play? Can we be objective? Does jealousy play a part in our own assessments of right and wrong?

Filmed Audience Response

The discussion here centres around two issues - the effect on the car-owners and talking to the vandals.

Young people quickly realise that Jason loses out most - in this extract they don't apportion blame to him (he shouldn't have taken the car). This adds an additional level of complexity to the play. Unusually, these young people quickly pick out Lucy (Range Rover) as a major victim - picking up on the fact she has children and may lose her job. Often people pick up on the pensioner and the Triumph. All four have suffered, as there will be an impact on the manager's shop being closed for business.

Questioning the vandals in role is valuable - but it's a good thing to move beyond the 'getting a buzz from it' because there are other reasons these vandals behave in the way they do. But watch the reaction from two of the boys when Lucy (as a vandal) advises going to Asda to get a pen to fill in the scratch on the car.

Role-play, Replay Possibilities

Role playing can help young people examine rights and wrongs within a powerful emotional context.

- Question the vandals in role (see above) and push them beyond the 'it was fun' argument.
- Question the victims in role.
- Jason can't get a job because he hasn't achieved his qualifications; once again, let him go and visit his ex-tutor and/or Mr Davis from the garage . . .
- Ask your young people to invent their own character and car and create their own monologues, as in the play.